



# Brief on good practice examples of UNCT GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE: UNCT Kyrgyzstan experience

## I. Introduction

UN Country Team (UNCT) Kyrgyzstan shares its experience on UNCT Gender Equality Marker (GEM) application and tracking financing in support of gender equality and women empowerment (GEWE) on the example of joint programming – in support of informing GEM at the Key Activity level of the UNCT Joint Work Plan (JWP) within the UN INFO. This brief contains a detailed description of the process, results, reflection and learning, and future perspectives. The good practice example from Kyrgyzstan experience can facilitate learning for UNCTs globally – with a possibility to eventually consider, adapt and replicate practices on UNCT GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE not only for joint programming but any project or programme at the UNCT level to the specific situation and context.

## II. Summary of a good practice

### Context

In 2013, UNCT in Kyrgyzstan and the Gender Theme Group (GTG) attempted to review financial allocations towards GEWE on its programming supported by the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This donor is among the pioneers to promote GEM application and tracking financial allocations in support of GEWE. At that time one of the key challenges was to agree on what can be legitimately counted towards GEWE within GEM and how to calculate financial contributions in support of gender equality.

Later in 2017, Kyrgyzstan underwent UNCT-System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) Gender Equality Scorecard exercise. The results of this standardized UN country-level assessment on gender mainstreaming practices and performance concluded that under dimension area 6 on finances “Kyrgyzstan country team does not have in place at the time of the assessment a procedure to track consolidated budgetary data to ascertain combined funds dedicated to gender”.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andrea Esser (2017). *UNCT SWAP-Scorecard report: assessment results and action plan, UNCT Kyrgyzstan*. Available at: [https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/UNCT-SWAP-Scorecard-KR-Report-2017\\_Final-1.pdf](https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/UNCT-SWAP-Scorecard-KR-Report-2017_Final-1.pdf)

In 2018, UNCT in Kyrgyzstan started implementing another programme supported by PBF, which required GEM application and establishing financial thresholds to account programme spending in support of GEWE. As a result, under the leadership and personal commitment of the Resident Coordinator UN Women Country Office in Kyrgyzstan was requested to propose a methodology on tracking financing in support of GEWE. While the methodology was proposed, in 2019 when UNCT joined UN INFO, it had to be revised to integrate GEM processes and practices as per UNCT GEM Guidance Note. In 2020, the methodology is being piloted within a joint programme by IOM, ILO and UN Women on Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI), supported by UN PBF.

### *Planning*

In 2018, UN Women developed the methodology on tracking financing in support of GEWE to guide GEM application and track financing allocation for gender equality specifically for PBF joint programmes. UN Women consulted with members of UNCT, individual experts, UN Women and peer-reviewed the draft with members of UNCT, GTG, UN PBF, UN Women Europe and Central Asia Regional Office to collect feedback and recommendations. In addition, a practical workshop was organized in 2018 with UN programme staff and personnel and members of GTG with the aim to (i) introduce the methodology, (ii) conduct the practical exercise on calculating the budget on GEWE for one joint project example, and (iii) initiate discussions on meeting or enhancing 30% gender financing requirement.

In 2020, UN Women revised the methodology to adopt the processes as per UNCT GEM Guidance Note and UN INFO, with the focus on any UN programming. UN Women collected feedback from GTG and conducted awareness-raising and learning sessions to members of the GTG and Monitoring and Evaluation Group (MEG). More targeted practical and learning exercises on actual GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE are planned to be conducted this 2020 year. The methodology highlights five key elements on GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE:

**1) Application at the Key Activity level of the JWP:** GEM is applied and financing in support of GEWE is tracked at the Key-Activity level of the JWP, which is a programme or a project by one or several UNCT members. The methodology suggests assigning GEM codes and tracking financing in support of GEWE at the programme/project Outcome level (and project Outputs if needed) to confirm the overall GEM code and calculate the budget for the programme/project overall.

**2) Integrating results-based approach:** Methodology integrates results-oriented framework to link programmatic and financial commitments to GEWE results at the planning, during and after programme/project implementation. While generally GEM is a planning, monitoring and reporting tool it is important to link each GEM code to GEWE result (GEM0: gender blind, GEM1: gender sensitive, GEM2: gender responsive, GEM3: gender transformative). Tracking financing in support of GEWE is also based on result-based budgeting when project GEWE results are linked to resources needed to deliver that result.

**3) Introducing budget thresholds per GEM code:** While UNCT GEM Guidance Note within UN INFO does not have budgetary threshold per GEM code and suggests estimating budget allocations, the methodology proposes introducing % range per each GEM code for more objective assessment and estimation and expected financial allocation in support of GEWE: GEM0=0%, GEM1=10%-29%, GEM2=30%-79%, GEM3=80%-100%.

**4) Monitoring throughout the project cycle on the annual basis:** GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE is important not only at the planning stage of the programme/project but throughout the cycle (i) at the planning stage, (ii) during the implementation period to report on progress; and (iii) at the closure of the project to report on actual GEWE results to confirm the final GEM code and amount spent in support of GEWE.

**5) Using adaptive approach:** GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE is not static and should utilize adaptive approach. Changes in GEM coding and financial estimations in support of GEWE should be monitored to reflect

realistic developments when it comes to reporting *progress* and *actual* results on GEWE. UN entities can also use justification for GEM code/GEWE result to reflect on the current GEM code and recommendations for its' improvement.

Below is the summary on GEM codes, definitions, financial thresholds for tracking, and GEWE results:

Coding	Definition	Financial threshold	GEWE results
GEM0	<b>Not expected</b> to contribute to GEWE	0%	<b>Gender blind:</b> Result has no attention to gender, failed to acknowledge the different needs of men, women, girls and boys, or marginalized population.
GEM1	Contributes to GEWE in a <b>limited way</b>	15%-29%	<b>Gender sensitive:</b> Result focuses on the number of equity (50/50) of women, men or marginalized populations that were targeted; recognizes gender differences and attempt to redress existing gender inequalities.
GEM2	GEWE is a <b>significant objective</b>	30%-79%	<b>Gender responsive:</b> Result addresses differential needs of men or women and address equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights but does not address root causes of inequalities in their lives.
GEM3	GEWE is the <b>principal objective</b>	80-100%	<b>Gender transformative:</b> Result contributes to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures and the roots of gender inequalities and discriminations

### Implementing

Joint exercise on GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE was conducted within PBF supported joint GPI project “Empowering women and girls affected by migration for inclusive and peaceful community development”. In total, 8 programme personnel participated in the piloting exercise from IOM, ILO and UN Women, including GTG members who provided technical support throughout (in this specific case these were UN Women members of GTG). The team used (i) Project Document, (ii) Work Plan or Results Framework with information on project Outcomes/Outputs/Indicators/Activities, and (iii) project budget.

This joint exercise was divided into two sessions. The first session aimed to provide an overview on GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE and conduct a practical exercise on the example of one project Outcome. As a follow up to the first session, programme team then conducted joint discussions for the rest of the project Outcomes. The second session aimed at discussing the results of the dialogue and joint confirmation of assigned GEM codes and calculated budget.

During the dialogue process, programme teams jointly discussed and assessed the extent the project contributes to GEWE – by assigning GEM codes and providing justification at the project Outcome level (but also unpacking project Outputs/indicators) and then by estimating % of the budget going in support of GEWE within the financial threshold of assigned GEM code. By looking at the results of assigned GEM codes and calculating the budget per project Outcome, UN entities were then able to confirm the overall GEM code and budget for the project. The results of the dialogue and exercise were documented in the summary table on GEM application and tracking financing.

Table 1: Summary table on GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE

Outcome(s) Output(s)	Outcome(s)/Output(s) indicators	GEM code/GEWE result and estimate % of the budget towards GEWE				Justification for GEM code/GEWE result and recommendation for improvement (if applicable)	Total Budget (USD)	Budget on GEWE (USD)
		GEM0: [0%]	GEM1: [10%-30%]	GEM2: [30%-79%]	GEM3: [80%-100%]			
Outcome 1	Outcome indicator 1a	-	X%	-	-	Up to 3 sentences	X	X
Output 1.1	Output indicator 1.1a	-	X%	-	-	Up to 3 sentences		
Outcome 2	Outcome indicator 2a	-	-	X%	-	Up to 3 sentences	X	X
Output 2.1	Output indicator 2.1	-	-	X%	-	Up to 3 sentences		
X%, GEM X						Up to 3 sentences	X	X

In terms of resources, it was time investment from relevant programme personnel, including GTG members, for around 6 hours for the piloting exercise overall.

### III. Results and impact

Through the joint exercise on GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE within a joint programme, UNCT Kyrgyzstan achieved the following key results:

- **Improved awareness and commitment towards GEWE:** UNCT, GTG, MEG, UN personnel within the piloted project raised awareness on the importance of GEWE considerations in programming and tracking financing. There is a commitment by engaged UN entities to monitor GEM application and track financing during the project implementation and after its' completion to confirm *the progress* and *the actual* GEM code and budget in support of GEWE.
- **Strengthened capacities on GEM application and tracking financing among the UN entities:** the programme team strengthened their capacities on GEWE considerations by discussing in detail GEWE results of the joint programme, assigning GEM code, documenting justifications for the selected GEM code, and estimating financial allocations towards GEWE.  

---

*"...Allocating GEWE finances should be calculated based on analysis across all interventions and in a complex manner, not just by looking at the title of the project..."* Aijan Boronbaeva, Senior Programme Assistant, IOM

---
- **Assigned GEM code and calculated budget in support of GEWE for a joint programme through collective effort at the UNCT level:** the overall project was confirmed to be GEM3/gender-transformative with 81.34% of the budget allocated in support of GEWE considerations. Assigned GEM code and justification along with estimated amount in support of GEWE will be reflected within the UNCT Kyrgyzstan's JWP, Common Budgetary Framework (CBF), and UN INFO at the stage of the reporting.

### IV. Reflection and learning

UNCT Kyrgyzstan highlighted several learnings and reflections from the GEM application and tracking financing process:

- **Uphold commitment and leadership towards GEWE at the UNCT level:** Support from heads of agencies at the UNCT level, RCO's leadership and coordination, chairs and members of the RGs and thematic groups is crucial to the success of gender mainstreaming. As an example, by introducing the GEM system, senior management supports and promotes accountability mechanisms. Ideally, GEM application and tracking financing should be a compulsory element in an overall programme management system.  

---

*"Dialogue on GEWE results was as important as the actual tracking exercise; it's not about looking at the amount of the budget but the value of the budget for making tangible changes in gender equality results and this kind of discussion requires real dialogue, analysis and joint reflection; it is not a mechanic calculation"* Sagipa Djusaeva, National Programme Officer, UN Women

---
- **Promote dialogue process on GEWE considerations in programming and financing:** GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE is a dialogue process and not a technical exercise. It is about discussing and planning desired GEWE considerations within the programmes/projects, monitoring on progress, and reporting on actual GEWE results. It is a value-driven self-commitment and accountability towards GEWE agenda and openness through a dialogue and joint reflection.

- **Use adaptive approach to improve GEWE considerations:** Assigned at the beginning GEM codes and estimated budget allocations in support of GEWE may change throughout the programme implementation. One may identify existing gaps on GEWE to timely address those but also find opportunities to improve GEWE considerations in the programming through an adaptive approach.
- **Strengthen capacities on GEM application at the UNCT level:** Often insufficient gender expertise interferes with the accuracy of coding. To achieve consistent and reliable coding practices, there should be continued practical capacity building workshops, joint dialogues and reflection exercises on GEM application, and quality assurance mechanisms in place, such as technical support from GTG, MEG, UN Women. This should be a joint learning curve on GEM at the UNCT level.

## V. Future perspectives

For future perspectives, UNCT Kyrgyzstan highlights key opportunities:

- **Adopt and roll out GEM and tracking financing across the UNCT:** Discussions are on-going at the UNCT level and with GTG on gradual or phased approach in rolling out GEM application and tracking financing in support of GEWE within UNSDCF. A roadmap is currently being developed with more guidelines for GEM application at the Key Activity level within the 2021 JWP. Planned learning sessions for thematic groups and members of RGs are one of the initial priorities in this roadmap.
- **Promote GEM application and tracking financing within COVID-19 response:** Socio-Economic Frameworks (SERFs) in response to COVID-19 may benefit from GEM application and tracking financing.
- **Complement GEM and tracking financing across UN entity-specific monitoring, evaluation, reporting, financial monitoring systems:** With diverse monitoring systems and reporting practices across the UN system, UN agencies need to integrate relevant to GEM application and tracking financing data across to be able to monitor and report on the extent of GEWE contributions in UN INFO and the UNSDCF. In addition, all UN evaluations must follow UN Evaluation Group norms and standards on conducting gender-responsive evaluations.
- **Document learnings and reflections on GEM application and tracking financing:** It is important to document the learnings and share the experience and practice with UNCTs at the global level.
- **Introduce justification column in the JWP within UN INFO:** JWP Excel template and the online version within UN INFO platform will benefit from having a column for providing justification for the selected GEM codes.
- **Introduce a column in the CBF template on budget allocation towards GEWE in UN INFO:** The CBF Excel template and the online version in UN INFO will benefit from having a column on specifying the amount and percentage of the budget towards GEWE.
- **Consider developing an e-tool for the GEM coding and tracking financing in support of GEWE:** to facilitate GEM application and tracking financing potentially there is a need to develop an e-tool or integrate it within UN INFO platform.

### Contact details

UN Women HQ,  
UN System Coordination Division  
220 East 42nd Street, New York  
E-mail: [UNCT-GEM.helpdesk@unwomen.org](mailto:UNCT-GEM.helpdesk@unwomen.org)