



## Terms of references

### External End of Phase Evaluation: Public Service Improvement Project (PSI)

Phase II (May 1, 2019 – July 31, 2024)

#### 1. Background

The *Public Service Improvement Project (PSI)* is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by the Consortium of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and the Development Policy Institute (DPI). The project aims at improving living conditions of people in rural Kyrgyzstan through improved public services. PSI is currently in its second phase of implementation that will end in July 2024. The project is implemented in the selected municipalities from two regions – Issyk Kul and Jalalabad.

The main goal of PSI phase I (2015 – 2019) was to “introduce sustainable, effective, efficient, accountable and responsive management solutions in targeted municipalities that address real needs and demands of citizens and that deliver tangible service improvements”. The main thrust of PSI phase II is to deepen, replicate and scale up tested models and solutions from phase I as well as to test new models (e.g. inter-municipal cooperation) to tangibly improve public services by establishing replication models and supporting national mechanism for their dissemination and scaling up the approach countrywide.

PSI II is working on achieving two outcomes that contribute to the overall goal:

*Outcome 1: Rural municipalities provide local public services in an effective and efficient manner*

*Outcome 2: The various system actors create enabling conditions – technical, legal and financial – fostering socially inclusive and gender responsive local public service provision*

During the phase II implementation (May 2019 – July 2024) the project strategy towards achieving the set results is grouped into two main interventions:

- a. Creating models and supporting tangible service improvements through inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) and active and meaningful participation of citizens in development of local service policies and practices that are gender sensitive and socially inclusive; supporting and utilizing national mechanism for dissemination and capitalization of the knowledge and best practices on effective local service provision.

At meso level PSI II works both on inter-municipal service delivery models as well as models for regional planning and management of selected services, such as waste and water resources management.

- b. At the national level building the capacity of national stakeholders to improve the policy framework and learning mechanisms for service improvements.

An internal mid-term review was conducted in autumn 2021.

Several months prior to the end of the current phase, an external evaluation of the project is planned to assess the results of the project and provide recommendations regarding its continuation and implementation of potential next (exit) phase.

## 2. Objective of the assignment

1. The end-of-phase evaluation of PSI serves to critically assess the achievements of the project goals and outcomes in terms of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (see some guiding questions below);
2. Provide recommendations for the adjustments of the project for the remainder of the phase and provide strategic inputs as a basis for planning of potential exit phase, focusing on the following main questions: how effective the already existing mechanisms for nationwide scaling-up are and what needs to be done in the exit phase to ensure that the piloted models of service improvement are scaled-up without external support of development partners?

## 3. Process and deliverables

### 3.1 Working methodology

The evaluation methodology should answer the following questions, based on the six OECD/DAC evaluation criteria:

**Relevance:** to what extent the project activities of PSI are relevant to service provision reform and local governance context in Kyrgyzstan? What do the project stakeholders and beneficiaries think of the project regarding relevance of its activities in the area of public service provision and in terms of increasing citizens' participation?

**Coherence:** how well does the project fit with other interventions in the country/sector (including those funded by SDC)?

**Effectiveness:** to what extent have the project activities of PSI achieved its objectives and targets at the national and local levels? Were the selected approaches effective (what vs. how)? What were the major factors influencing the achievements or non-achievements of the objectives? How effective was the IMC mechanism for improvement of public services at the local level? To what extent was the work at meso level effective to complement and add value to the work at national and local levels? Were coordination/synergies with other interventions and donors effective?

**Efficiency:** what is the relation between the inputs and outputs of the project? Were objectives achieved in time? Were the applied grant mechanisms (both IMC and the grant mechanism of the Union of local self-governments (ULSG)) adequate to mitigate the risks of corruption and contribute to investment sustainability and purposeful use?

**Impact:** What is the impact of the interventions to the overall situation of the target group or those affected? Are there any unexpected outcomes of the interventions and if so, is there a need to mitigate them or enhance them? What impact the project made in terms of the local governance and decentralization context?

**Sustainability:** To what extent did the project contribute to changing attitudes and behavior of partners (especially at the local level)? Who were the champions and those who resisted? How were the resistances overcome? How likely will the benefits of the project continue after the funding/implementation has ceased? Can IMC be scaled-up without funding from other development partners? What is the role of the Union of local self-governments (ULSG), the Local Governance Academy of Central Asia (LGACA) and other actors in sustaining the project's results? How effective were the project's intervention in strengthening the national partners' critical functions in supporting, representing and capacitating the local self-governments in order to provide sustainable, gender and socially inclusive services to their citizens? To what extent did the project contributions into the LSG system (legal framework) development affect the national policies and promote demand for improved service management system?

The evaluation should also look into the lessons learnt and specific transversal themes:

**Lessons Learnt:** What lessons have been learnt by the project and the partners, including other donors? To what extent have they been already taken into account in the interventions? Based on the lessons learnt, what recommendations can be made on the future direction of the project implementation?

**Dissemination of Knowledge and Learning:** How relevant have the project's strategies been in supporting national mechanisms for knowledge dissemination and scaling up of tested service models and practices and to what extent they take into account the general trend towards digitalization of public administration? To what extent did the capacity of national partners, in particular of the Union of LSGs and LGACA, improve? Does it make sense to shift from the Union for scaling up? Are there other national/local actors in view who could support scaling up and dissemination of knowledge (e.g. regional CSOs, LGACA)?

**Gender sensitivity and social inclusion (GESI):** To what extent have the project's approach and interventions strengthened gender sensitivity and social inclusion in local service policy and practice? What project activities on GESI promotion impacted local municipalities' policies and practices the most? To what extent have awareness raising initiatives stimulated innovative measures and solutions in addressing the needs of the vulnerable groups? How can the Project further support municipalities to be gender sensitive and socially inclusive?

### 3.2 Tasks

The following tasks should be performed in order to reach the objective of the evaluation:

**Task 1: Develop the Evaluation Plan including the evaluation methodology and tools as well as the Work Plan, and the Evaluation Mission Programme.**

The Evaluation Plan should provide feedback on the ToR, present the evaluation methodology and tools, the Work Plan and the Programme of Evaluation Mission in Kyrgyzstan. The Evaluation Plan should be approved before conducting the Evaluation Mission.

**Task 2: Evaluate the overall project implementation progress and specific progress regarding each Outcome towards the set Objectives and Targets as defined in the project Log-Frame.**

In accordance with the Evaluation Plan, the evaluation should answer the questions on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project activities.

**Task 3: Evaluate the project implementation progress in addressing the transversal themes in the area of each of the Outcomes.**

The evaluation should answer a question on how effectively and efficiently the project has addressed the transversal themes in the implementation, and present recommendations on addressing the transversal themes during potential next (exit) phase of the project.

**Task 4: Provide strategic recommendations, including on vertical and horizontal scaling up.**

The evaluation should provide specific recommendations for the remainder of the current project phase and on the strategic orientation of the next (exit) phase regarding the following issues but not limited to: coverage of new geographic areas, opportunities for multiplying effect and scaling up, thematic focus (IMC or individual service improvement or anything else), possibilities for integrating climate change adaptation into local service provision.

### 3.3. Consultant team and estimated level of effort

The assignment will be carried out by a team of consultants, which shall include local consultants. The estimated combined total level of effort for all consultants together is 50 person-days (please see the table under section 3.4.). The experts should be familiar with the country and its decentralization reforms, public service provision development in general and challenges of the post-soviet context in particular.

**Note:** An SDC governance expert might join the evaluation team as a peer evaluator. The team will be informed beforehand if it happens.

### 3.4 Timeframe of the assignment and mission program

Date 2023	Activity	Level of efforts (in person-days)
Mid-October	Preparation, study of documents, development of evaluation methodology (incl. approval by SDC Bishkek)	5
Within end of October-November	Travel to/from Kyrgyzstan	4
1-2 days after arrival	Briefing SDC Bishkek, implementing consortium, and project PIU	2
November	Field visits, interviews, discussion as per consultants methodology/work plan (national level, and Jalal-Abad and Issyk-Kul regions)	21
November	Workshop with project PIU (discussion of findings, follow-up phase), preparation of debriefing	6
1-2 days before departure	Debriefing/presentation of preliminary findings to SDC Bishkek, project consortium partners, and project PIU in Bishkek	3
15 days after return from the mission	Elaboration of draft final report	7
5 days after receiving feedbacks	Incorporation of feedbacks from project team and SDC into final report	2
January, 20 2024	Submission of final report to SDC	
	Total number of days	50

### 3.5 Logistics and Budget

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in Kyrgyzstan is available to provide logistical and administrative guidance during the consultants' stay in Bishkek. Reservations and payments for flights, hotels and transport in and to the country are in the responsibility of the consultants. International travel tickets shall be booked through the Swiss Government Travel Center. As part of the contract, the consultants shall submit the assignment budget based on the agreed offer, indicating separately the consultants fees/rates and all expenses for travel, per diem, hotels, local transport, etc.

The implementing partners, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation Kyrgyzstan and the Development Policy Institute, provide the evaluation team support for elaborating the mission program as well as with all necessary logistical support in the project areas. The PSI project team will fully support and cooperate with the mission on all logistical and thematic matters and questions. All requested project documents and data will be made available to the consultants in due time.

## 4. Expected Results, Deliverables and Deadlines

The expected result of the assignment is the end of phase evaluation report of the PSI project presenting the results of evaluation as well as the recommendations regarding relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project activities and of the strategic orientation of the next (exit) phase. An assessment grid (Annex) shall be filled in and attached to the report.

The report shall be written in English and should not exceed 30 pages (excluding annexes) including a summary with the main findings and recommendations. A draft Evaluation Report shall be submitted to SDC no later than 15 days after the return from mission, in electronic form. Comments from SDC and the implementing partners will be provided in order for the evaluation team to finalize the Evaluation Report. After incorporating comments and correcting factual errors, the final version shall be made available to SDC within 5 working days of receiving the comments from SDC. In case of differences on content and/or assessment conclusions, the consultants should add a section to report where they will be allowed to explain their perspective.

The deadline for the Evaluation report is January 20, 2024.

## 5. Qualification and Experience

The team of consultants will have at least one international expert and one (or more) local expert. The team of consultants will have a team leader who will be the point of contact for SDC. The team leader should be one of the international experts. International expert(s) will have the following minimum qualifications and experience:

- University degree in public administration, political sciences, development studies, law or in a related field;
- At least 8 years of professional experience and expertise in local governance, public resource management, public service development;
- At least 5 years of experience in evaluating large international development and grant programs. Experience in leading evaluations;
- Good understanding of service sector and local governance system in Kyrgyzstan;

- At least one of the consultants would need to have a solid experience of working/evaluating gender and social inclusion;
- Excellent analytical and report writing skills;
- Excellent knowledge of English, desirably knowledge of Russian language;
- Knowledge of SDC and previous experience of working for SDC is an advantage.

The expertise of the local consultant(s) should be complementary to the one of the international consultant(s), in particular in view of local work experience in public service development in Kyrgyzstan. Excellent knowledge of English, Kyrgyz and Russian are required.

## **6. Documents**

1. Public Service Improvement in Kyrgyzstan, Project Document Phase II, 2019-2023, including annexes;
2. Additional Credit info, extension to July 2024, including the logframe with revised targets;
3. Baseline survey;
4. End-line survey;
5. Annual reports and yearly plans of operations;
6. PSI Project – Internal Mid-Term Review 2021 and management response.

## **7. Stakeholders**

- State Agency for State Service and Local Self-Governance;
- Ministry of Economy;
- LSGs where the project works;
- LSG Union, including the two regional representatives;
- LGACA;
- Donors (e.g. USAID);
- Other relevant projects (e.g. Successful Aimak 2).

# Assessment grid (version July 2021)

**Note:** this assessment grid is used for evaluations and internal assessments of SDC or SECO financed projects and programs (hereinafter jointly referred to as an 'intervention'). It is based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria.<sup>1</sup> If specific results are not yet measurable at the time of the assessment, it requires analysing the likelihood of achieving impact and sustainability. All applicable sub-criteria should be scored and a short explanation should be provided. Additional sub-criteria may be added.

Select the corresponding number (0-4) representing your rating of the sub-criteria in the column “score”: 0 = not assessed; 1 = highly satisfactory; 2 = satisfactory; 3 = unsatisfactory; 4 = highly unsatisfactory

- **Highly satisfactory** (HS) – there were no shortcomings in relation to the intervention’s relevance, coherence and efficiency; the objectives at outcome level were fully achieved or exceeded and are likely to have a significant impact, which will be sustained in the future.
- **Satisfactory** (S) – There were moderate shortcomings in relation to the intervention’s relevance, coherence and efficiency. Most intended objectives at outcome level were achieved (or for mid-term: are likely to be achieved). The likelihood of achieving intended impact or sustainability of the intervention’s benefits is reasonable.
- **Unsatisfactory** (U) – There were important shortcomings in relation to the intervention’s relevance, coherence and efficiency, in the achievement of its objectives (N.B. if outputs are achieved, but do not result in the expected outcomes, consider rating relevance and/or effectiveness as unsatisfactory). The likelihood of achieving intended impact or sustainability of the intervention’s benefits is questionable.
- **Highly unsatisfactory** (HU) - There were very severe shortcomings in relation to the operation’s relevance, coherence and efficiency. Intended objectives have not been achieved, achievement of intended impact or sustainability of benefits are highly unlikely.
- **Not assessed** (na) – The criteria statement cannot be assessed. Please explain and provide details in the justifications section.

Title of the evaluated intervention: [Click here to enter intervention title.](#)

Evaluation type: [Click here to enter evaluation type.](#)

Evaluator(s): [Click here to enter assessor\(s\)’ name.](#)

Date of the evaluation: [Click to select a date](#)

---

<sup>1</sup> For more guidance see: Better Criteria for Better Evaluations. Revised Evaluation Criteria. Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2019.

Key aspects based on DAC criteria	Score	Justification (Provide a short explanation for your score or why a criterion was not assessed)
<b>Relevance</b> <b>Note:</b> the assessment here captures the relevance of objectives <u>and</u> design <i>at the time of design</i> and <i>at time of evaluation</i>		
1. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of the target group.	select	Click here to enter text.
2. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of indirectly affected stakeholders (not included in target group, e.g. government, civil society, etc.) in the country of the intervention.	select	Click here to enter text.
3. The extent to which core design elements of the intervention (such as the theory of change, structure of the project components, choice of services and intervention partners) adequately reflect the needs and priorities of the target group.	select	Click here to enter text.
If an additional sub-criteria is relevant please formulate it here	select	Click here to enter text.
<b>Coherence</b>		
4. Internal coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions of Swiss development cooperation in the same country and thematic field (consistency, complementarity and synergies).	select	Click here to enter text.
5. External coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other actors in the country and thematic field (complementarity and synergies).	select	Click here to enter text.
If an additional sub-criteria is relevant please formulate it here	select	Click here to enter text.
<b>Effectiveness</b>		
6. The extent to which approaches/strategies during implementation are adequate to achieve the intended results.	select	Click here to enter text.
7. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended objectives (outputs and outcomes).	select	Click here to enter text.
8. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended results related to transversal themes.	select	Click here to enter text.
If an additional sub-criteria is relevant please formulate it here	select	Click here to enter text.



Key aspects based on DAC criteria	Score	Justification (Provide a short explanation for your score or why a criterion was not assessed)
<b>Efficiency</b>		
9. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcomes) cost-effectively.	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
10. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcome) in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe).	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
11. The extent to which management, monitoring and steering mechanisms support efficient implementation.	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
If an additional sub-criteria is relevant please formulate it here	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<b>Impact</b>		
12. The extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate 'higher-level effects' as defined in the design document of the intervention.  Note: when assessing this criterion, the primary focus is the intended 'higher-level effects'. In the event that <i>significant</i> unintended negative or positive effects can be discerned, they must be specified in the justification column, especially if they influence the score.	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
If an additional sub-criteria is relevant please formulate it here	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
<b>Sustainability</b>		
13. The extent to which partners are capable and motivated (technical capacity, ownership) to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
14. The extent to which partners have the financial resources to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
15. The extent to which contextual factors (e.g. legislation, politics, economic situation, social demands) is conducive to continuing activities leading to outcomes.	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>
If an additional sub-criteria is relevant please formulate it here	<a href="#">select</a>	<a href="#">Click here to enter text.</a>

Additional information (if needed): [Click here to enter text.](#)