GGGI | IMPACT AND EVALUATION UNIT

# End Project Evaluation
# Green Rehabilitation Investment Project for Karakalpakstan Republic to address impacts of the Aral Sea Crisis

## Inception Report

October 2024

| Project and evaluation data | |
|---|---|
| **Project ID** | ROA02 |
| **Country** | Uzbekistan |
| **Programmatic Solutions** | PS1. Green Investment<br>PS2. Climate Action<br>PS3. Climate Resilient Agriculture |
| **Project Gender and Poverty Markers** | 1+P |
| **Project duration** | June 2021 – June 2025 (48 months) |
| **Project budget** | US$ 5.9 million |
| **Funding type** | Project earmarked and core |
| **Resource partners** | Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) |
| **Project manager** | Aaron Russell: July 2021 - September 2022; August 2023 - October 2023<br>Jinha Kim: October 2022 - August 2023<br>Gi Un Kim: October 2023 - October 2024<br>Oyunchimeg Amartuvshin: October 2024 –June 2025 |
| **Program manager** | Aaron Russell, Uzbekistan Country Representative (until December 2024)<br>Seung Yeon Lee, Uzbekistan Country Representative (from January 2025) |
| **Portfolio manager** | Jason Lee, Asia Deputy Director, Directorate for Green Growth Implementation |
| **Evaluation type** | End project evaluation |
| **Evaluation timing** | September 2024 - February 2025 |
| **Evaluator (firm and team led)** | Risk Frontiers in consortium with Juru, led by Fiona Lord |
| **Evaluation budget** | US$ 54,910 |
| **Evaluation manager** | Suyoung Park, Project Development and Partnership Specialist, Uzbekistan Program, with the support of Katelyn Jison Yoo, Consultant, Impact and Evaluation Unit |
| **Evaluation oversight** | Gerard O'Donoghue, Assistant Director-General and OIC Head of Impact and Evaluation |

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# List of acronyms

| Acronym | Written in full |
|---|---|
| agri-MSMEs | Agricultural Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussions |
| GGGI | Global Green Growth Institute |
| KEQ | Key Evaluation Question |
| KOICA | Korea International Cooperation Agency |
| M&E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| OECD DAC | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee |

# Executive summary

This inception report provides an overview of the evaluation approach, including the methods and workplan for the evaluation of the GGGI project ROA2 - Green Rehabilitation Investment Project for Karakalpakstan Republic to address impacts of the Aral Sea Crisis. The evaluation project will be delivered by Risk Frontiers and Juru between October 2024 and January 2025 and include a 4-to-5-week data collection phase, and a 3 to 4 week reporting phase. Data collection will be undertaken through a comprehensive desktop review of all relevant GGGI project documents, interviews with project stakeholders and beneficiaries, focus group meetings with beneficiaries, and a survey of capacity building participants. The evaluation methods aim to answer the key evaluation questions, which align with the OECD's Development Effectiveness Criteria.

The evaluation process and report aim to enhance learning, strengthen accountability and improve future project design. Each of the evaluation methods and data collection tools provided in this inception report can be modified during this inception phase, based on the feedback from GGGI, to ensure that they are fit for purpose and align with best practice in evaluation.

# Project overview

## Project context

The Aral Sea crisis is a severe ecological disaster, with its surface area shrinking by 75% and water volume dropping by 90% since the 1960s. This has devastated the ecosystem and economy of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan, leading to urgent intervention needs. In response, the Green Rehabilitation Investment Project for Karakalpakstan Republic to address impacts of the Aral Sea Crisis (hereafter called the Project).

The Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) was appointed to manage and facilitate the Project which aimed to foster sustainable economic development and environmental restoration in the Aral Sea region, specifically in the Kegeyli, Bozataw, Chimbay, and Karauzyak districts of Karakalpakstan. It addressed significant environmental degradation affecting over 1.9 million people due to the desiccation of the Aral Sea. By promoting climate-resilient agriculture, strategic green investments, and supportive policies, the Project sought to rebuild the local economy, enhance the investment climate, and reduce rural vulnerability to environmental risks. Key actions included setting green development targets, establishing a supportive policy framework, and introducing financial mechanisms for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in agriculture. These efforts aimed to boost farm productivity, ensure food security, and improve the health and livelihoods of the local population, aligning with Uzbekistan's national priorities and GGGI's expertise in green growth. Commencing in July 2021 and initially planned to June 2024, the project's end date has been extended to December 2024.

## Project strategy

The Project aimed to address human security issues, particularly food and livelihood security, for residents of Karakalpakstan. It focused on creating green jobs and enhancing the resilience of agricultural businesses to climate change and the Aral Sea disaster. The Project recognized women's vital role in food security, ensuring their inclusion in all activities, with 50% of capacity-building efforts and participants targeted toward women. Additionally, it aimed for 25% of participants in the capacity-building program to be youth aged 14 to 30.

The Project was faced by four main challenges:

- **Environmental and Food Security**: Desertification has caused severe salinization, affecting 45% of irrigated lands and leading to dust storms that degrade air quality and disrupt agriculture, heightening food insecurity.

- **Economic Impact**: Despite some industrial growth, ecological stress has stunted key industries. Karakalpakstan has high unemployment and poverty rates (36.1%) due to underdeveloped agriculture, fisheries, and market infrastructures.

- **Demographic Challenges**: High dependency rates, poverty among female-headed households, and significant out-migration complicate disaster response.

- **Climate Change**: Hydrological shifts and melting glaciers are accelerating desertification, worsening existing issues.

## Project objectives

- **Objective 1**: Establish an effective green rehabilitation investment plan targeted on agriculture and agri-businesses that reduces disaster risk, enhances rural food security and sustainable livelihoods, and promotes equitable employment in green and climate-smart value-chains in Karakalpakstan;

- **Objective 2:** Respond to the most urgent needs of the workforce and micro-, small-, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to tackle pressing human security needs, focusing on disaster related threats to health, livelihoods, productive assets, and agri-business risk management;

- **Objective 3:** Demonstrate viable climate resilient agri-business models to rebuild the economic foundation of Karakalpakstan's agrarian economy; and

- **Objective 4**: Support the government and banks in mobilizing green/climate finance in support of green MSMEs development in Karakalpakstan.

To meet these objectives, the Project aimed to employ sustainable solutions focused on achieving the following four outcomes.

- **Outcome 1** focused on adopting the Aral Sea Development Program through technical analyses and strategic guidance. Key activities included conducting Climate Resilient and Green Growth Assessments, prioritizing green investments, and developing a Green Bond Plan. The expected result was an enacted program with improved coordination and green employment assessments.

- **Outcome 2** aimed to rehabilitate livelihoods by enhancing small-holder agrarian communities' capacity to manage human security threats and develop climate-resilient agri-businesses. This involved training Dehkan farmers, creating disaster risk profiles, and conducting food security programs, targeting at least 25% of farmers to adopt climate-smart practices.

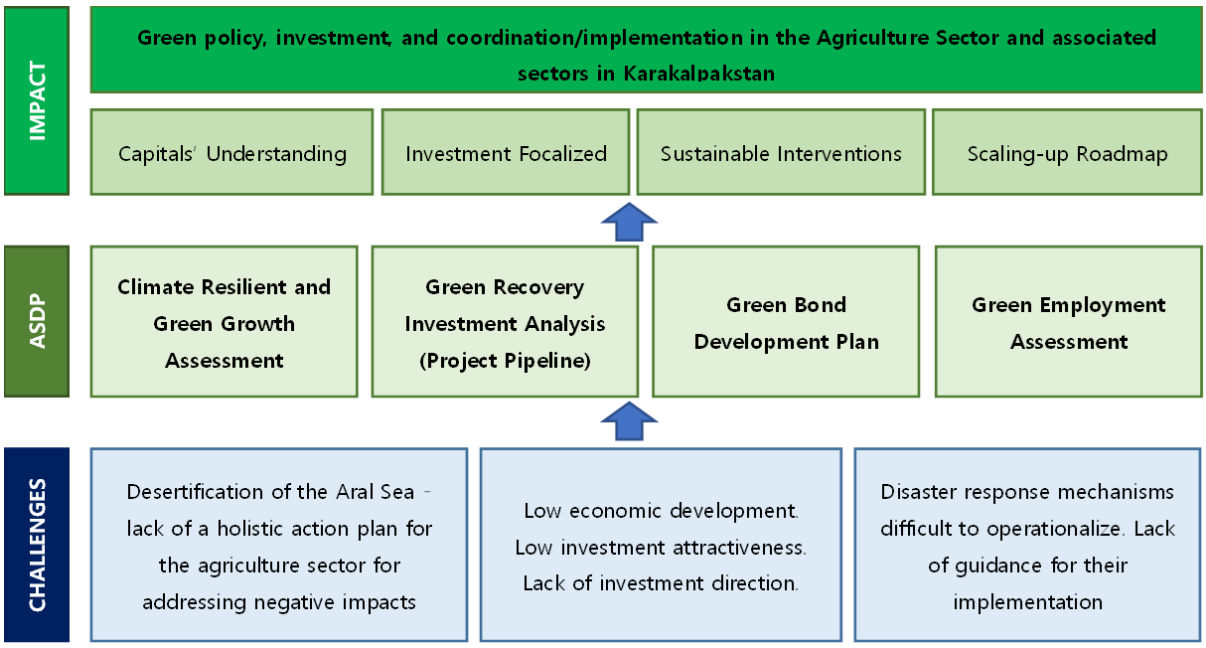
- **Outcome 3** sought to equip local entrepreneurs with climate-resilient agri-business models through value chain analyses, piloting models, and establishing a business development platform, aiming to mobilize US$ 20M in investments and increase farmers' production.

- **Outcome 4** aimed to improve access to finance for climate-resilient agri-MSMEs through risk-mitigating solutions, including a credit guarantee facility and a grant scheme, with the objective of mobilizing US$ 10M from government and climate funds for commercial lending.

**Appendix I** provides the project log frame.

The following Theory of Change (ToC) describes the intended impact of the draft Aral Sea Development Program and their relationship to the project outcomes, from the project design document[1].

[1] Project Document 220719 v10 – supplied by GGGI, page 60.




Our initial analysis of this Theory of Change for the Aral Sea Development Program in the program design document is that it is comprehensive in identifying key interventions that address the range of barriers to scaling-up climate-smart agriculture and support the rehabilitation and resilience of the KR – including through focusing on the policy gaps, investment analysis, coordination/implementation, financing and capacity development gaps. This Theory of Change aligns with the Project Log-frame, which articulates the outputs and activities related to the Aral Sea Development Program outcomes (see **Appendix I**). The main potential gaps in the Theory of Change include the potential for a fifth outcome as a cross-cutting measure to be included, which is focused on knowledge and learning – i.e. how the implementation of these interventions (financing, policymaking, investment analysis etc.) can generate new knowledge on green growth and climate resilience for Uzbekistan and for GGGI's partners more broadly, to scale-up efforts around the world in resilience, climate change adaptation and climate-smart agricultural development.

# Evaluation background

## Evaluation purpose and scope

This evaluation has three main purposes: enhancing development learning, strengthening accountability, and informing future project design, using OECD criteria of efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability.

**Purpose 1: Enhancing Development Learning**

This goal focuses on enriching GGGI's knowledge in sustainable economic development and environmental management. The evaluation will:

- Assess the Aral Sea Development Program's efforts to rehabilitate livelihoods and support climate-resilient agri-business in Uzbekistan.
- Use OECD DAC criteria to evaluate these initiatives' effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

**Purpose 2: Strengthening Accountability**

This objective emphasizes the need for transparency in demonstrating the effectiveness of GGGI projects funded by KOICA and others. It aims to:

- Ensure clear communication with stakeholders.
- Improve Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems.
- Highlight GGGI's impact to inform future decision-making.

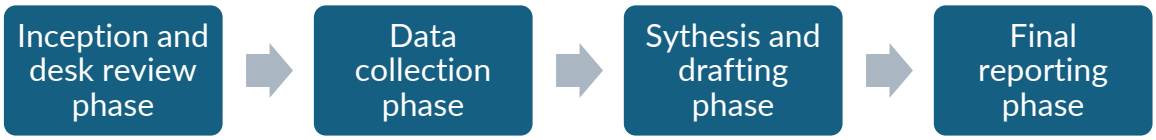
**Purpose 3: Informing Future Project Design**

This aim utilizes insights from current and past projects to shape future initiatives, focusing on:

- Scaling climate-resilient agroforestry and capacity-building programs in Uzbekistan.
- Enhancing the scalability and sustainability of new projects.
- Increasing the overall impact of GGGI's efforts towards global sustainable development goals.

## Evaluation team

The Evaluation Project will be delivered by a highly experienced evaluation team from Risk Frontiers in conjunction with a locally connected team from Juru (jointly: the 'Evaluation Team'). The Evaluation Team will deliver the Evaluation Project in four phases, as indicated by the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment and summarized in the figure below.




## Evaluation criteria and key evaluation questions

The Evaluation Project will align with the OECD Evaluation Standards and criteria, and will identify the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Project (OECD, 2021). The Evaluation Project will follow a strengths-based model, following best practices, focusing on identifying and leveraging the Project's strengths, resources and positive results. It will aim to complement and support these strengths rather than focusing solely on problems or concerns and build on these strengths in the formulation of recommendations for future program development (see Willets, et al, 2014).

*Table 1. Evaluation Weight by Key Evaluation Question*

| KEQ | Weight |
|---|---|
| KEQ1. How well did the Project's objectives align its relevance to the overarching goals and strategies of all key stakeholders? | 15% |
| KEQ2. Have Project outputs and outcomes been achieved as intended, or are they on track to be achieved? | 35% |
| KEQ3. Did the Project ensure the efficiency of the achievement of its objectives, and what mechanisms and/or factors supported this? | 15% |
| KEQ4. How sustainable are the Project's outcomes, in terms of continued benefits for the targeted communities and stakeholders beyond the Project lifespan? | 15% |
| Cross-cutting<br>• Did the Project consider gender equality and social inclusion in the planning and its delivery of its outputs and how did this influence the outcomes?<br>• How robust was the Project's MEL framework in capturing evidence of results?<br>• How adequately did the Project address key environmental, social, and fiduciary issues in its design and implementation? | 20% |

## Key Evaluation Questions and Sub questions

All data collection tools have been developed from a list of Key Evaluation question (KEQs) and sub questions. These questions are arranged into five evaluation themes as provided below and have been modified slightly from the original Terms of Reference, for clarity and to avoid duplication.

### *Relevance*

How well did the Project's objectives align its relevance to the overarching goals and strategies of all key stakeholders?

a) Are the project-funded interventions relevant, strategic, and responsive to in-country stakeholder needs and priorities?

- How did the project adapt to the changes to stakeholder priorities and strengthen the program design to address these?
- What are the challenges faced and gaps to align its relevance to overarching goals and strategies with all key stakeholders?

b) How did GGGI ensure the Project was government-led and maximize the national and local government's involvement in decision-making, approval, and implementation?

### *Effectiveness*

Have the Project outputs and outcomes been achieved as intended, or are they on track to be achieved?

a) How effectively has the Project delivered its outputs and what progress has been made towards the outcomes? Please compare this based on the Project's logical framework.

b) What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the Project outputs and outcomes?

c) Were there any unintended consequences or negative outcomes resulting from the Project outputs?

d) Have there been any significant changes or adaptations made to the Project design in response to unexpected circumstances or lessons learned?

e) To what extent did GGGI effectively implement the Project, and what unique value did GGGI bring compared to other potential implementation models (such as bilateral arrangements or other organizations)?

### *Efficiency*

To what extent did the Project ensure efficiency of the achievement of its objectives, and what mechanisms supported to ensure this?

a) How has GGGI planned and managed human and financial resources to ensure the Project is efficient in its delivery and achieved on time and within budget?

b) Could similar results have been achieved with fewer resources or a lower cost?

c) To what extent was the delivery of results affected by internal factors (such as staff turnover, procurement challenges) or external factors (such as government priorities, political will COVID)?

d) How effective was GGGI's own Project's management structure for the management and oversight of the Project?

e) How did the Project governance arrangements support coordination and decision making among the Government of Uzbekistan, GGGI, and KOICA?

### *Sustainability*

How sustainable is the Project in terms of continued benefits for the targeted communities and stakeholders beyond the Project lifespan?

a) Are the outcomes likely to lead to subsequent impacts, mainly in terms of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of interventions, after project closure either intended (as per the program log frame) or unintended, and either positive or negative in the future?

b) What measures are/were implemented to ensure the sustainability of Project outcomes beyond the Project lifecycle? To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?

c) Are there any potential social, political, financial, and environmental risks or barriers to the long-term sustainability that the evaluation should consider?

d) To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the Project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from this project?

e) Does the Project have a clear exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of the results achieved by the intervention, and is this exit strategy supported by stakeholders?

### *Cross cutting sections*

How did the Project consider gender equality and social inclusion and human rights in the planning and its delivery of its outputs and outcomes?

a) To what extent has the Project met relevant needs of women and youth, as identified in the original proposal?

b) How were gender-specific needs and priorities identified and incorporated into the project's design? In what ways did the Project address the distant needs and priorities of women and men throughout the implementation?

c) How did the Project facilitate the meaningful participation of women and youth in decision making processes, including project planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation? What challenges were encountered in ensuring their participation and how were these challenges addressed?

d) In what ways did the Project foster collaboration with relevant stakeholders and organizations working on gender-related issues to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to gender mainstreaming?

e) How did the Project contribute to fostering social inclusion in the agricultural sector? What measures were taken to ensure equitable access to Project resources and benefits across different social and demographic groups?

How comprehensive and effective is the Project's M&E (M&E design, implementation, and utilization) in capturing progress towards its objectives?

a) How has the Project drawn upon the knowledge and lessons from previous development initiatives – not limited to those outlined in the Project proposal?

b) How effectively does the M&E design integrate the theory of change and results framework with the operation's objectives and indicators, ensuring they are comprehensive, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound?

c) How rigorously are M&E data collected and analyzed to reflect accurate, reliable outcomes, and how effectively are methodological flaws addressed and corrected throughout the Project lifecycle?

d) To what extent is M&E data utilized for making informed management decisions, adjusting Project strategies, and influencing the design of future interventions based on performance and outcome evidence? Were there any missing gaps in the MEL data, if so please describe them.

How did the Project address key environmental, social, and fiduciary issues that arose during Project design and implementation?

a) How did the Project consider safeguards – including labor and working consideration, political exposed person – in its engagement with the agri-MSMEs, for instance?

b) What were the methodologies, implementation plan, and results for this?

# Evaluation approach and methodology

## Inception and Desk Review Phase

The inception and desk review phase aimed to set the evaluation parameters and provide the Evaluation Team with a detailed understanding of the Evaluation Project context before commencing data collection. The Evaluation Project commenced with a project inception meeting between the Evaluation Team and GGGI on 30 September 2024. The Evaluation team has since completed an initial desktop analysis of all the project documents and reports shared with the team by GGGI and made an initial assessment of the gaps in evaluation information.

# Evaluation Matrix and Evaluation Methods

This Evaluation Matrix addresses each of the evaluation questions and sub-questions and maps out the indicators and data sources, as well as the methods for data collection and analysis. The Evaluation Matrix and KEQs provide the framework for evaluating the project and the methods for collecting evaluation data and analyzing this data to answer the KEQs. The Project Evaluation Matrix can be found in **Appendix II**. The project's Theory of Change outlines the project's expected outcomes and impact, and the project logframe elaborates the activities and outputs that are to be implemented under the project to achieve the outcomes, as well as the methods for monitoring and verifying the project's performance. The Project's logframe and TOC are well aligned. Through answering the KEQs, applying the methods described below (and in the Evaluation Matrix), the evaluation team will be able to assess the extent to which the project's outputs and activities have been achieved (as set out in the logframe) and the extent to which the outcomes are also being achieved. The following data collection methods and will support the team in answering the KEQs, described as a summary here and elaborated in the sections 3.2.1 to 3.2.3 below:

- **Document analysis** (desktop review), including a review of the Project outputs and adjacent materials that relate to the rehabilitation of the Aral Sea and the broader socio-economic and environmental conditions of the Karakalpakstan republic (KR).

- **Interviews** with GGGI's Project stakeholders (project steering committee and implementation partners) – we anticipate around 20-30 interviews will be held for up to 1 hour each, with a range of stakeholders following interview guides and primarily held face-to-face (see **Appendix III**). Four unique discussion guides have been developed focusing on the four outcomes of the Project (see **Appendices VI-IX**).

- **Surveys and interviews** with Project beneficiaries in the KR, which has been designed by our team and disseminated through GGGI's Project partners in Uzbekistan (see **Appendix V**).

- **Focus group discussions** (FGDs) with beneficiaries in the KR, which have been designed by our team and will supplement the data from the surveys and interviews with Project beneficiaries (see **Appendix X**).

The following sections provide more details on the evaluation methods.

## Desktop review (document analysis)

The desktop review included a review of the following:

- Project outputs (published documents, progress reports, project steering committee meeting documents, published newsletters etc.);

- Other relevant policy/legal and background documents;

- Relevant broader academic and grey literature providing insights on best practices (for example, in climate and disaster risk resilience capacity strengthening).

## Interviews with program stakeholders

The Evaluation Team Leader (from Risk Frontiers) and Lead Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist and Monitoring support staff member (from Juru) will complete a mission to Tashkent and the Republic of Karakalpakstan (RK) to meet with and interview project stakeholders. Depending on the availability of the stakeholders and their level of internet connectivity, the Evaluation Team will also arrange some interviews online, in parallel with the mission and following the mission, including with Sydney-based staff of Risk Frontiers. It is anticipated that interviewees will be drawn from participant groups including:

- **GGGI program staff** (in Karakalpakstan, Tashkent and in the headquarters);

- **Program Steering Committee members** (e.g., the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change; Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade);

- **Program implementation partners** (e.g., Human Asia, Green Asia Network, International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea - Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, United Nations Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund, GIZ, Consort Group LLC, Deutsche Sparkassenstiftung, SQB Bank, UNDP, ISCAD, Chamber of Commerce and Industry RK, ICARDA, UN Global Compact Uzbekistan, CPRO, Westminster University in Tashkent, UNCCD);

- **Program implementation partners from government** (e.g., Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction, Forestry Commission of Karakalpakstan, Chamber of Commerce of Karakalpakstan, Ministry of Public Education of Karakalpakstan, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources of Karakalpakstan).

All interviews will be conducted in English with the translation support of Juru into local language (Karakalpakstan and Uzbek), and audio recorded and transcribed. **Appendix III** includes a list of stakeholders that will be interviewed.

## Focus groups and surveys with program beneficiaries

Further interviews and focus groups will be held by the project's Lead Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist from Juru in the RK during the field visit, to disseminate surveys and hold FGDs with beneficiaries. It will target feedback from beneficiaries in local language, as summarized in the table below.

| Focus group discussion and survey dissemination | Beneficiaries | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Bozataw district office – meeting at the Public Education District Office to conduct FGDs and disseminate the survey to teachers. Teachers to disseminate the survey to students. | 10 teachers – Bozataw<br>10 teachers – Kegeyli<br>16 trainers for farmers<br>19 trainers on the health modules | 24 October 2024 |
| Karaozek district office – meeting at the Public Education District Office to conduct FGDs and disseminate the survey to teachers. Teachers to disseminate surveys to students. | 20 teachers – Karaozek<br>5 trainers for farmers<br>9 trainers on health | 29 October 2024 |
| Chimbay district office – meeting at the Public Education District Office to conduct FGDs and disseminate the survey to teachers. Teachers to disseminate surveys to students | 20 teachers – Chimbay<br>10 teachers - Kegeyli | 30 October 2024 |

A second survey has been prepared that targets the participants in the capacity building modules delivered under outcome 3 of the program. According to GGGI's presentation on the program, there have been 366 participants in training on climate resilient agri-business models, including 91 women and 138 youth. This survey should be completed only by training participants in these capacity building programs that were working in an agri-business, including

- Registered dehkan and private farmers (involved in vegetable and fruit production);

- Family-run micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and individual entrepreneurs;

- Farming households and MSMEs across Karakalpakstan, piloting green business models.

The Evaluation Team seeks the support of the GGGI office as to the best distribution method for this survey (depending on whether GGGI can contact the participants) and has currently prepared it as a paper-based survey. It can be uploaded to an online platform if necessary. GGGI is discussing with the German institution (DISK) that

has supported the training if it can distribute the second survey instrument on behalf of the evaluation to the MSME/SME trainees.

During these interviews with beneficiaries, we will capture short "stories of change" of some of the beneficiaries, recorded through video, with the participants' free and informed consent, if this is of interest to GGGI. These short (30-second to one-minute) stories could support a broader communications campaign about the results of the Project. We estimate that that we will capture 3 or 4 short videos after each FGD meeting.

We will disseminate a survey of Project beneficiaries (e.g., participants in the capacity building program) with the support of the GGGI Uzbekistan office and its partners. Surveys will be distributed in paper form during the meetings and will be returned through the project partners to the local GGGI office in Nukus. Juru will collect the paper-based surveys and collate them for analysis, with the support of GGGI (through its Telegram groups established with the local trainers). We will aim for a 20% response rate and will disaggregate the survey data by gender and other socio-economic markers agreed in the Evaluation Plan.

The survey will be supplemented with face-to-face short interviews with farmers, entrepreneurs and MSMEs during the field visits and with face-to-face Focus Group Discussions with the assistance of local partners (if needed).

Following the conclusion of the data collection phase, the Evaluation Team will meet with GGGI.

*Proposed meeting with GGGI on data collection phase*

*The Evaluation Team will report to the GGGI evaluation office on its data collection progress, at the end of the 4- to 5-week data collection phase, through a short presentation and outline of the next steps in the work plan for the analysis and reporting phases.*

## Synthesis and report drafting

The Evaluation Team will complete the project data analysis and draft the Evaluation Report structured around the KEQs and sub-questions, using the template provided by GGGI for the Evaluation Report, over four to five weeks. The Evaluation Report will present the Evaluation Team's articulation of the Project's theory of change, reflecting upon the key evaluation questions related to effectiveness and sustainability. It will also provide a reflection on the Project in comparison with the best practices identified in the literature review.

The draft Evaluation Report will include:

- An executive summary that captures all the necessary information for the primary users
- A description of the Project evaluated
- A summary of the evaluation methods
- A description of the key limitations of the methods and guidance to enable appropriate interpretation of the findings
- A response to the key evaluation questions with robust evidence, with a discussion of the strength of the evidence and implications of key findings
- A description of the circumstances in which learnings may be transferable
- A limited number of feasible recommendations, with individual positions allocated responsibility.

Once the Evaluation Team has completed its preliminary data synthesis and report drafting, the Evaluation Team will seek to provide an update on its progress through another meeting. The Evaluation Team will share a draft of the Evaluation Report with GGGI before this meeting.

*Proposed meeting with GGGI on evaluation draft*

*A fourth meeting with GGGI's Evaluation Office will be held to receive feedback on the draft Evaluation Report and recommendations, prior to the final reporting phase.*

### Final reporting phase

A final reporting phase will enable the integration of recommendations and feedback from the GGGI evaluation office before final submission. The final report will address comments from all stakeholders regarding factual errors and/or omissions that could invalidate the findings and change the conclusions, issues of political sensitivity that need to be refined in the way they are addressed or in the language used and the recommendations. The final report will be translated by the Evaluation Team into the Uzbek language for publication.

Following the completion of the report and acceptance of the recommendations, the Evaluation Team will offer a presentation for GGGI staff and/or the program stakeholders on the report's key findings. The Evaluation Team will also support the distribution of the final report to the evaluation participants and stakeholders.

## Ethical considerations in the evaluation

The evaluation will require substantial interaction between evaluators, program participants, and other stakeholders through various data collection methods such as interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys. This necessitates careful consideration of the following ethical considerations.

**Information and Consent** - Participants will receive detailed information about the evaluation's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits, including how their data will be used and their right to withdraw without consequence. At the outset of each interview and focus group verbal consent will be sought from the participants.

**Confidentiality and Data Management** - All interview transcripts, survey responses, and recordings will be securely stored on the Risk Frontiers server in Sydney, with password protection. Transcripts and survey data will be de-identified and stored online. Recordings will be retained for a year post-evaluation and then deleted. The Evaluation Team will offer interviewees the chance to validate their transcripts and receive a final copy of the evaluation report (subject to GGGI's endorsement).

**Ethical Training for Evaluators** - Evaluators have extensive experience in ethical standards, including informed consent, conflict management, and confidentiality. They are skilled in using sensitive techniques when collecting data from individuals who have experienced severe trauma.

**Dissemination of Findings** - Findings will be shared through reports and presentations for GGGI. Participants will have access to the findings through GGGI once the evaluation concludes, including informing program improvements.

## Methodological limitations

The primary limitations for the methods of evaluation relate to the accessibility of the project participants for interviews, focus group discussions and the survey. The following limitations present obstacles or challenges in assessing each of the participants:

- GGGI staff – competing priorities and high workload, especially when delivering end-of-project outputs and activities, a project exit strategy and mobilizing new resources and partnerships for the next phase of the project

- Governments staff – competing priorities and high workload. Government staff could be required to attend to other urgent priorities set by the government and may not have the time to participate in interviews or complete a survey. The data collection will be occurring during the cotton harvesting season and many of the government staff working in the agricultural sector will be focusing on this as their priority.

- Project beneficiaries (farmers/fermers, students, entrepreneurs, green businesses) – competing priorities and resource constraints. Many project beneficiaries may not have the time or resources to attend an interview, focus group or participate in a survey. They also may not have access to the internet to be able to complete a survey online, although paper copies of the survey will also be distributed to the beneficiaries.

- Implementation partners (other development agencies, NGOs, etc.) – competing priorities and time/resource constraints. These partners that are focused primarily on their own project delivery may find it difficult to participate in the evaluation process.

Another constraint to the evaluation will be the extent to which the evaluation participants provide frank feedback in their responses to the questions in the interviews, focus groups and surveys. The evaluation team will seek to mitigate this risk through the consent process, providing assurance that the feedback provided will be held confidentially, and that information will be presented with anonymity in the report.

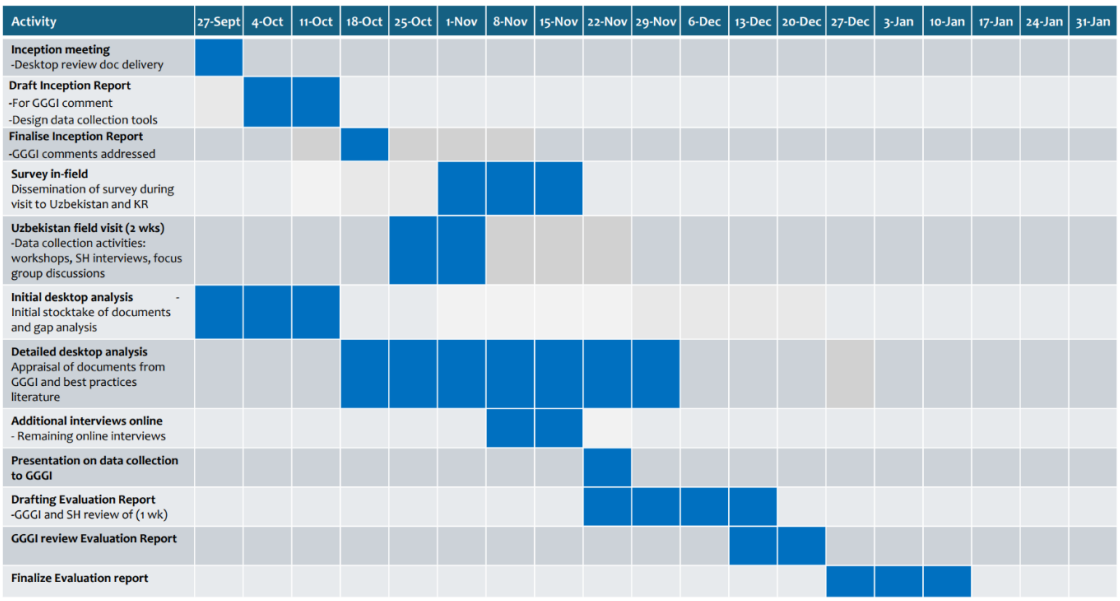
# Evaluation workplan and management

The following sections outline the evaluation workplan and management arrangements.

## Evaluation workplan

The following workplan aligns with the agreed deliverables below.

As the Evaluation Team will rely on the in-country support of GGGI's Uzbekistan team, it will be flexible on the dates for the Uzbekistan field mission and can delay the field mission by a week if necessary.



## Field Mission Agenda – proposed and under discussion with GGGI

The following agenda is being developed by the Evaluation team and GGGI to facilitate the arrangement of interviews, field site visits and focus group discussions for the data collection phase. The evaluation team is flexible and open to adjustment of this schedule based on the feedback of GGGI. The following agenda is provided as of 17 October 2024 and will likely be updated depending on the availability of the interviewees (being confirmed by GGGI staff).

| | Time | Agency | Agenda | Meeting Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **22/10/2024 (Tue)** | 8:00-9:00 | Breakfast with GGGI | Breakfast meeting | |
| | 9:00-10:00 | MEEPCC - Jackhongir (International Department) | Project implementation and scale-up | |
| | 10:30-11:30 | MIIT - Dilshod or Barno | Project implementation and scale-up | |
| | 12:00-13:30 | Lunch with GGGI | Lunch meeting | |
| | 14:00-15:00 | Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan | | |
| | 15:30-16:30 | Agrobank | Outcome 4. Green financing | |
| | 17:00-18:00 | MPHSTF | | |
| | 20:00 | Travel to Nukus | | |
| **23/10/2024 (Wed)** | 9:00-10:00 | CMRK & Ministry of Investment of KAR | Project in general | Azamat Uteuliev, Marhabay Nurmanov, Aziz Shamshaddinov, Damir Joldasov |
| | 10:30-11:30 | Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction & Monocentre | Drip irrigation in moncenter | Deputy Min. Nietbay, Rustem, trener (mono) |
| | 12:00-13:30 | Lunch with CMRK | | |
| | 14:00-15:00 | Ministry of Public Education of KR (MPE) | Outcome 2. Training students/ToT in Schools | Quwanish Jubanov, Rita Kalillaeva, Mirigul XXX |
| | 15:30-16:30 | Chamber of Commerce and Industry of KR | Outcome 3. 4 Green Business models | Mels Kosnazarov |
| | 17:00-18:00 | Committee of Forestry of the KR | | Aminov Aybek, Ernizyaz Akimnoyazov |
| **24/10/2024 (Thu)** | 9:00-10:00 | Bozataw Hakim meeting room | Project in general | |
| | 10:00-12:00 | FGD and survey introduction in Hakim office | Farmers, teachers, students (gender balances impt) | 10 teachers - Bozataw, 10 teachers - Kegeyli<br>16 trainers for farmers (set 3) Boz-Keg<br>19 trainers on helth (set 2) Boz-Keg |
| | 12:30-14:00 | Lunch | | |

| | Time | Agency | Agenda | Meeting Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 14:00-15:00 | Farm visit in Bozatau (Aktuba Jaylau) farmer | Farm visit - Drip Irrigation/Hose Reels/Sprinklers | 1 farmer from drip irrigation - Salamat Esimbetov<br>1 farmer from hose reels<br>1 farmer from sprinklers |
| | 15:00-16:00 | Bozataw 'Forestry Enterprise - director | Forestry Enterprise | Kuwat Jamalov |
| | 17:00-18:00 | Agroimpex farm (Kegeyli district) | Farm visit - Drip Irrigation | Salawatdin Habibullarev - farmer |
| | 22:00 | Travel to Tashkent | | |
| **25/10/2024 (Fri)** | 9:00-10:00 | KOICA | | |
| | 10:30-11:30 | SQB | | |
| | 12:00-13:30 | Debrief lunch with GGGI | Debrief | |
| | 14:00-15:00 | Consult group | BDP Partner | |
| | 16:00-17:00 | Departing Tashkent at 17:30pm | | |
| **28/10/2024 (Mon)** | 9:00-10:00 | Ministry of Water Management of the KR | GGGI office | Bahtiyar Juzbaev, Aybek Urazimbetov, Abu Kudabaev |
| | 10:00-11:00 | Committee on Environmental Protection and Ecology of the KR | | Makset Ametov |
| | 11:30-12:30 | International Innovation Centre for the Aral Sea Basin (IICAS) office | Migrogreen training | Bahitjan Habibullaev, Gulzar |
| | 13:00-14:00 | Lunch | Nukus | |
| **29/10/2024 (Tue)** | 9:00-10:00 | Karaozek Hakim office | Project in general | |
| | 10:00-13:00 | FGD and survey introduction in Hakim office | Farmers, teachers, students (gender balances impt) | 20 teachers - Karaozek<br>16 trainers for farmers (set 3) Chim-Kar<br>19 trainers on helth (set 2) Chim-Kar |
| | 13:00-14:00 | Lunch | Karaozek | |
| | 14:00-15:00 | Karaozek 'Forestry Enterprise | Forestry Enterprise | Ibrahim Akimniyazov, Makset, Aman |
| | 15:00 -16:00 | Askhat Rufat farm | | Askhat Salihov |
| **30/10/2024 (Wed)** | 10:00 | Chimbay district | | |
| | 10:00 - 13:00 | FGD and survey introduction in Hakim office | Farmers, teachers, students (gender balances impt) | 30 teachers - Chimbay<br>XX trainers for farmers (set 3) Chim<br>XX trainers on health (set 2) Chim |
| | 13:00-14:00 | Lunch | Chimbay | |
| | 14:00-16:00 | Juzbasi farm | Site visit | Jetker Abdirasuliev |

| | Time | Agency | Agenda | Meeting Participants |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 20:00 | Travel to Tashkent | | |
| **31/10/2024 (Thu)** | 9:00-10:00 | GIZ | | |
| | 10:30-11:30 | UNDP | | |
| | 12:00-13:30 | Lunch | | |
| | 14:00-15:00 | German Sparkassenstiftung (DISIK) | | |
| **1/11/2024 (Fri)** | 9:00-10:00 | GGGI - Debriefing | | |
| | 10:30-11:30 | ICARDA | | |

Please note that the evaluation team is also available for interviews online, and these can be arranged in parallel with the Sydney-based team members (Steven, Lucinda and Fiona), and the following week (starting 4 Nov) for the Tashkent based team members (Azizbay and Dinara).

The evaluation team plans to hold interviews online (via Zoom) with all current and former GGGI staff over the period 21 October to 1 November, led by Stephen George.

## Project timeline – Deliverables

A table illustrating key targeted timeframe for project deliverables is provided below.

| Components | Duration | Due date |
|---|---|---|
| Commencing (kick off meeting) | Start | 2024/09/30 |
| Inception report due for GGGI comment | 2 weeks | 2024/10/11 |
| GGGI review (Project team, IEU) | 4 days | 2024/10/16 |
| Final Inception Report | 4 days | 2024/10/20 |
| Field Visit and Data Collection Report<br>• Australian team leader (21 - 25 Oct) in Uzbekistan with Juru to c0mmence in-country data collection<br>• Data collection will continue the following week in person undertaken by Juru (27 Oct - 1 Nov)<br>• Final interview data collection through online interviews and survey collection online (until 15 Nov)<br>• Data collection presentation to GGGI by 21 November | 5 weeks | 2024/11/21 |
| Draft evaluation report | 3 weeks | 2024/12/10 |
| GGGI review (PT, IEU) | 1 week | 2024/12/17 |
| Final evaluation report (2 weeks and vacation) | 3 weeks | 2025/01/07 |
| Buffer | 1 week | 2025/01/14 |

## Roles and responsibilities

Defining project responsibilities upfront enables a smooth process of implementation. The following table outlines all the responsibilities for the evaluation project.

| Group | Responsibilities |
|---|---|
| Risk Frontiers and Juru | Lead overall evaluation project, design of evaluation methodology, lead data collection, lead data analysis and report writing, and prepare final reports (including a PPT/ workshop to share the evaluation findings). Formatting and editing of the final report and translation will be undertaken by the consultants. |
| GGGI Headquarters | Lead the commissioning of the project evaluation, feedback to Risk Frontiers and Juru, and the finalization of the project deliverables. Distribute the evaluation report findings to the participants, if requested. |
| GGGI Uzbekistan team | Provide logistical support to the evaluation team, including arranging the interviews, field site visits, focus group discussions, and supporting the survey dissemination. Review draft deliverables and provide feedback to the evaluation team, with GGGI HQ. |
| Evaluation participants | Provide informed consent to participate in the evaluation project, and complete an interview and/or survey, and/or participate in the focus group discussion.<br>Receive feedback on the evaluation findings from GGGI. |

## Quality assurance

Quality assurance will be provided through:

- Clear and concise interview questions, and interviewing techniques, to ensure participants understand the questions and can provide clear feedback.
- Audio-recording and transcription of interviews and focus group discussions, to ensure the responses are accurately captured.
- Thematic analysis of transcripts and survey data, to answer the key evaluation questions, using qualitative research software.
- Triangulation of data sources in the analysis of data will ensure that the findings made are backed by multiple sources of evidence.
- Seeking a high level of participation in the evaluation process, e.g. 20-30 interviews, 10-15 focus groups with beneficiaries, and at least a 20% response rate for the survey.
- Maintaining independence as evaluators throughout the process and avoiding bias or the perception of bias through rigorous data collection methods and analysis.

## Risk management and mitigation measures

The following table provides an overview of the potential risks and mitigation measures.

| Potential Risk | Mitigation measure |
|---|---|
| Low level of participation in the evaluation process by key stakeholders due to one or more of the following reasons:<br>• Insufficient notice<br>• Other priorities<br>• Low level of buy-in<br>• Lack of resources to participate | • GGGI in-country support to the evaluation team will ensure that official protocols are followed to enable the participation of government officials<br>• Risk Frontiers and Juru remain flexible to hold interviews online to correspond with the availability of the interviewees |
| Low level of participation in the survey due to technology barriers or a lack of awareness or information about the survey | • The evaluation team will also disseminate paper copies of the survey to the extent possible<br>• GGGI in-country support help with the distribution of the surveys and organization of the focus group discussions to maximize participation |
| Timeframes for the project are not suitable for delivering the deliverables | • Unforeseen challenges may occur that prevent the Evaluation Team delivering the outputs on time<br>• The team will maintain close communication with the GGGI staff in headquarters and in Uzbekistan if there is a slippage in the timeline due to unforeseen circumstances. |
| Health – Covid-19 | • Infectious diseases including Covid-19 remain a persistent risk. The evaluation team will seek to minimize the risks of infectious diseases spreading through practicing hand sanitation, social distancing, holding meetings online where feasible, and proactive measures to reduce exposure. |

## Logistical support required

The evaluation team seeks the following logistical support from GGGI:

- Organization of interviews, focus groups and field visits to project sites
- Support for dissemination of the survey instrument
- Provision of documents for desktop review
- Guidance on any local protocols to be practiced during the interviews/meetings, focus groups and payments or incentives needed for participants (as necessary)
- Support the organization of catering (tea/coffee) and venues for focus groups and/or meetings to disseminate the survey (with implementation partners if needed, e.g., local district administrations of KR ministries)

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