



UZBEKISTAN

COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

Gender and Development / Central and West Asia / 2014

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Preface

The Uzbekistan country gender assessment builds on a previous assessment, conducted in 2005, and the experience gained by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in supporting gender equality and women's empowerment in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The 2005 assessment provided an overview of gender issues in a number of broad areas as well as general recommendations for gender mainstreaming in ADB projects. The present assessment takes a different approach. It does not review progress toward gender equality overall but instead highlights key constraints to gender equality in ADB's core operations, primarily within projects on water supply and sanitation, natural resources, energy, transport, and projects to improve access to finance and financial services.

Some of the barriers to gender equality encountered in the ADB sectors are underpinned by deeper structural disparities in the position of women and men in the economy, their access to assets and resources, their ability to influence decision making, their relative levels of education, and their access to social protection in Uzbekistan.

Report Structure

Chapter 1 of this assessment provides an overview of the current country situation and policy environment in Uzbekistan. The next chapter describes the gender landscape in Uzbekistan and how the current situation influences ADB operations. The themes presented in this section cut across sector boundaries, and readers are urged to familiarize themselves with these themes because they will serve as a useful background for the sector analysis. These crosscutting gender issues should be given consideration in any subsequent gender analysis conducted during project design or in monitoring and evaluation processes. Thus, this assessment presents an overview of key findings and suggestions for possible interventions. Chapter 3 provides a brief overview of progress toward mainstreaming gender in the ADB portfolio in Uzbekistan and provides several overarching suggestions to consider in gender mainstreaming.

The current assessment was initiated as part of the new country partnership strategy (2012–2016) and will subsequently serve as a resource for ADB staff and consultants planning and managing projects under the strategy. Although the country gender assessment has been prepared primarily for use by ADB, it is hoped that the assessment will prove a useful resource for the government, civil society organizations, and individuals working in the field of gender and development in Uzbekistan.

Methodology

This assessment comprises in-country consultations and a review of secondary sources. In October 2011, consultations were conducted with representatives of local governments, project managers, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), research centers, donor and international organizations, and gender specialists employed within key executing agencies in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and the Bukhara region. Field visits to ADB land improvement and water supply and sanitation project sites afforded the opportunity to speak with female and male local community stakeholders. The purpose of the consultations and meetings was to confirm preliminary findings and identify priorities relevant to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in future projects. Preparatory consultations and sector assessments conducted under the country partnership strategy process also provided background material for this assessment.

The report makes use of information from surveys of households and potential beneficiaries conducted under ADB projects on water supply and sanitation, electricity metering, road investment, and power supply. The surveys, carried out from 2009 to 2011, aimed to improve understanding of the socioeconomic position of the households likely to be affected by ADB projects, identify the views of the resident populations on the current situation relevant to the project area, and determine potential participatory mechanisms to enable greater involvement of local communities including female stakeholders. These surveys provided a wealth of information about the field situation and stakeholders' insights on key gender issues relating to key sector operations of ADB.

The Women's Committee of Uzbekistan also provided some material on the mission and activities of the organization for this assessment.

Acknowledgments

The country gender assessment was prepared under Asian Development Bank (ADB) regional technical assistance (RETA) 7563: Promoting Gender Inclusive Growth in Central and West Asia Developing Member Countries. The assessment process was managed and supervised by the Central and West Asia Department's gender and development team comprising Susann Roth (then social development specialist on gender and development, and now senior social development specialist on social protection with the Regional and Sustainable Development Department), Jeremy Stickings (senior social development specialist on gender and development), and Wilma Silva-Netto Rojas (gender and development specialist consultant). An initial draft of the assessment was prepared by Elisabeth Duban, technical assistance consultant. It was revised and edited by Shanny Campbell (senior social development specialist on gender and development) with guidance and input from Shireen Lateef (senior advisor on gender).

The national gender and development officer for the Uzbekistan Resident Mission Mekhri Khudayberdiyeva and RETA 7563 consultants Malika Shagzatova and Kamol Jiyankhodjaev provided assistance, information, and expertise at different stages of the assessment process. The report was also enhanced by the constructive inputs of peer reviewers at ADB headquarters in Manila, including economists, gender and development specialists, and sector specialists.

This report is also available online in English and Russian.

Abbreviations

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
CAREC	-	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
GDP	-	gross domestic product
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goal
MSMEs	-	micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises
NGO	-	nongovernment organization
SMEs	-	small and medium-sized enterprises
TVET	-	technical and vocational education and training
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	-	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	-	World Health Organization
WSS	-	water supply and sanitation
WUA	-	water user association

Currency Equivalents

(as of 8 April 2014)

Currency Unit	-	Uzbekistan sum
SUM1.00	=	\$0.00442
\$1.00	=	SUM2,262.44

Glossary

<i>aksakal</i>	- head of the <i>mahalla</i>
<i>dekhon farm</i>	- family farming plot
<i>hokim</i>	- presidential representative who is the head of the <i>khokimiyat</i>
Jokargy Kenes	- the Parliament of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, an autonomous regional administration in Uzbekistan
<i>kengash</i>	- council of people's deputies; a local elected assembly
<i>khokimiyat</i>	- local governing body
<i>mahalla</i>	- a community-based organization or council that comprises citizens from a neighborhood, village, or settlement; they are formal structures run by committees, with an elected chairperson, and fulfill local self-government functions
<i>mardikor bazaar</i>	- informal job bazaar
<i>merab</i>	- manager of agriculture water supplies
Oliy Majlis	- the National Assembly, the Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan
<i>shirkat</i>	- former state farms that were restructured as collective enterprises
<i>suvokava</i>	- district water supply and delivery organization
<i>tuman</i>	- district
<i>viloyat</i>	- region

Executive Summary

In 2011, Uzbekistan celebrated 20 years of independence from the former Soviet Union. The ensuing decades have been characterized by critical shifts as the country transitions from a state-controlled economy to a market-based system. Although reduced employment opportunities in agriculture have led to increased labor migration—both to cities in Uzbekistan and abroad—the country has prioritized job creation in new sectors, and especially in small business. Due in large part to the government’s measures taken after the 2009 global economic crisis, the country did not experience an economic recession to the same degree as other nations.

Although reform processes have certainly included initiatives to improve women’s economic opportunities in Uzbekistan, efforts to promote gender equality mostly remain separate from the nation’s development programs. Furthermore, gender equality initiatives generally are not characterized as such but instead are framed as programs to improve women’s access to key resources such as decision-making positions or to address issues that seem more relevant for women, such as maternal health and family violence.

Annual assessments of the extent to which women and men are equal in Uzbekistan indicate that although Uzbekistan scores consistently high in terms of equality in access to education (albeit in traditional female areas of study) and in health outcomes for women, these scores are tempered by the limited progress made in women’s access to economic opportunities and political empowerment.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan articulates principles of nondiscrimination and equal rights for women and men, but the government has not yet adopted an official policy on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment. However, both country welfare improvement strategies for 2008–2010 and 2012–2015 proposed target indicators for achieving gender equality in selected priority sectors. Since Asian Development Bank (ADB) conducted its last country gender assessment in 2005, the government has also approved successive national action plans to respond to issues raised by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan, which is chaired by a deputy prime minister but is considered a nongovernment organization (NGO), remains the primary agency that coordinates women’s affairs nationally, regionally, and locally.

At the practical level, the term “gender” is not in wide use in Uzbekistan, particularly not by policy makers. The term is largely considered synonymous with “women,” and gender-oriented work is almost exclusively concerned with resolving social issues. Gender equality is largely perceived as a process of being just and fair to women, but it is not generally recognized as a prerequisite for the country’s economic growth and stability.

The ADB portfolio in Uzbekistan is a positive example of how activities relevant to gender can be integrated into a range of projects that concern ADB’s core operations—specifically, projects on water supply and sanitation (WSS), natural resources, energy, transport, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and private sector development, including projects

to improve access to finance and financial services. Under the country partnership strategy (2012–2016), ADB intends to go beyond isolated improvements in women’s lives and to promote a model of more equitable gender roles and further gender equality. The critical areas of ADB focus should include the collection of sex-disaggregated statistics and data; examination of gender roles and norms, and of gender issues related to the labor market participation, political and public life, agricultural production, human development (education and health), and violence against women.

Sex-Disaggregated Statistics and Data

Although the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics has published three official compilations of sex-disaggregated statistics since the 2005 country gender assessment, no sustainable mechanism for the regular collection of gender statistics has been established, and there is limited legislative and political support for the development of such a mechanism. There are indications that new methods of data collection such as time-use and demographic and health surveys, are being introduced, but such data often are not publicly available to researchers, NGOs, or development partners undertaking project planning and design. Even when sex-disaggregated statistics are available, they are not necessarily reproduced in mainstream publications or used by the State Committee on Statistics. Sex-disaggregated data are mainly collected in the social sectors, and not in sectors perceived to be gender neutral.

In the context of planning and project development, ADB should promote the use of sex-disaggregated information. ADB also should support the collection and dissemination of gender-specific data generated during project implementation and expand the use of gender-sensitive indicators to measure progress toward any gender-related goals that are included in ADB projects.

Gender Roles and Norms

The national action plan to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee’s Concluding Observations draws attention to the need to eliminate gender role stereotypes within the Uzbek family and society. Although they are not part of any law or policy, notions about the traditional role of women, connected to motherhood, children, and family, are prevalent and are often at odds with women’s public roles in political office or in business. Such patriarchal values have become more pronounced in the years since Uzbekistan’s independence from the former Soviet Union. This should not suggest, however, that such cultural norms cannot be changed. Ways to best address stereotypes in gender equality activities should be considered. Projects should include measures to promote a more equitable model of gender relations and to expand conceptions about women’s role in society.

Gender in the Labor Market

The number of economically active women remains considerably lower than the number of economically active men, and although overall employment rates are increasing, the rate of increase for men has been almost double the rate for women. Women’s economic opportunities are still greater in the informal sector, and women are more likely to earn income through small family-based businesses such as farming or handicrafts. The government has undertaken programs to provide women with formal jobs, many of which focus on developing

home-based work. Home-based work is viewed as especially suitable for women because it enables them to earn an income and provides protection under labor law while allowing them to fulfill their household and child-care obligations.

The labor market exhibits distinct gender patterns, with women overly represented in public sector jobs (health care and education), which carry lower salaries, and men predominating in technical and other more profitable fields (construction, transport and communications, and industry). Comparing the distribution of women and men in several sectors of the labor market across time, gender gaps appear to be increasing in sectors where men predominate but decreasing in fields traditionally held by women. This dynamic suggests that men are more able than women to enter nontraditional jobs. Women also are underrepresented in upper managerial positions. Such patterns of occupational segregation—both horizontal and vertical—contribute directly to the gender wage gap and impede inclusive growth.

Unemployment and limited jobs continue to be the primary push factors for labor migration, and men represent the larger share of migrants. Still, labor migration is becoming increasingly feminized, and women's lack of competitiveness in local labor markets is leading them to seek work elsewhere. As single-income households struggle to survive on the remittances of the male migrant, women are making important contributions to the family budget.

Women's Participation in Political and Public Life

Top officials regularly voice concern about women's underrepresentation in political office and governance. Since the introduction of a quota in 2004 requiring that 30% of political party lists of candidates be women, the number of women in the Oliy Majlis (National Assembly) has increased with each election. Still, women account for only 17% of all members of legislative, representative, and executive bodies in Uzbekistan, which indicates that women have not yet obtained the critical minority considered necessary for an effective voice in decision making or agenda setting. It is, however, an improvement from 1992 to 1998, when women's representation was a fairly steady 9.4%. Although a number of women hold very high offices—for example, the speaker of the legislative chamber and the ombudsman for human rights—women remain underrepresented in other branches of government. For example, as of the date of this assessment, only 1 of the 14 ministries is headed by a female minister, and a mere 4.2% of seats in the Oliy Majlis are occupied by women. Women are also underrepresented in bodies of local authority; there are no female *hokim* (local leaders), although there are female deputy *hokim*.

Limited attention has been given to deeper structural issues that prevent women from taking office, including gender stereotypes, lack of financial resources, and limited opportunities to gain leadership experience that could be applied to a political career.

Gender in the Education System

Equal access to education is guaranteed in Uzbekistan, and gender parity is seen in the enrollment rates of girls and boys at the primary and secondary levels. At the level of specialized secondary and higher professional education, however, patterns similar to those observed in the labor market appear. Women's enrollment rates in postsecondary and higher education are lower than men's rates, and concern has been expressed about the increasing number of young women not continuing their studies beyond the 12-year compulsory

schooling. Concerning choice in academic subjects in postsecondary and higher education, young men are much more likely to pursue technical training and to concentrate in such fields as transport and communications, construction, and agriculture. Young women are the majority in traditionally “female” areas of study such as education and health care. Such educational choices are undoubtedly influenced by persistent gender stereotypes, which are then reproduced in the labor market, as noted. Technical fields of study generally correlate to jobs in higher-paying industries, whereas humanities studies lead to lower-paid jobs, often in the public sector.

Gender and Water Supply and Sanitation

Upon gaining independence, Uzbekistan inherited a well-developed network of WSS infrastructure, but the system is now outdated, in need of repair, and not operating efficiently. Urban and rural areas show considerable variation in access to safe drinking water. A significant portion of the population relies on hand pumps, public standpipes, and wells, and receives intermittent water supply or contaminated water. Access to sanitation shows a similar pattern, with portions of the population using pit latrines in the household and in public buildings such as schools and clinics. Inadequacies in the WSS system affect entire populations but particularly affect women because they are primarily responsible for water collection and storage as well as other domestic tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing, and the hygiene of children and other family members.

Because improvements to the WSS system may directly lead to positive changes in women’s lives, it is critical that women’s concerns and priorities be given consideration in WSS projects. However, with few women occupying leadership roles in local government, their priorities and interests receive little consideration in formal decision making about water issues or municipal planning and budgeting. ADB should continue to promote women’s participation in the design and implementation of its WSS projects and, at the same time, support capacity building to integrate women’s concerns into community development projects.

Gender and Natural Resources

In Uzbekistan, issues of irrigation and drainage are key to agricultural production, and limited water resources affect food security. Water user associations (WUAs) are the primary community structure for resolving disputes that arise between the managers of irrigation systems and water users. Although women represent a large portion of water users for agricultural production, they make up only a small minority of WUA members and an even smaller number of association leaders. Women are also underrepresented in government bodies—the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, for example—that deal with natural resources management. Although managing the impact of climate change has been an important policy development in Uzbekistan, limited study has been undertaken to identify the differential effects of climate change on women and men or the different practices and strategies that they use.

Gender and Energy

Much of the country has inefficient and inadequate energy because of deficient infrastructure and limited efforts to conserve energy or to seek renewable energy sources. Energy inefficiencies have serious consequences for economic growth overall. In some regions, power supplies cannot meet the needs of industry, social service provision, and households. Women perform most household chores (cooking, cleaning, and laundry) and are particularly burdened by power interruptions and the inability to use labor-saving appliances. Men are generally responsible for managing the household budget and are more likely to make decisions about the purchase of appliances or to pay energy bills. Energy investments have tended to focus on physical and infrastructure improvements rather than assistance to households to enable them to transition to modern and more efficient forms of energy.

Women's engagement in microenterprise and home-based work is seen as an important means of expanding women's economic opportunities, but many women's informal sector activities are energy-intensive and therefore affected by energy availability and price.

Gender and Transport

The government views improving transport as important to the national strategic objectives of economic growth and increasing competitiveness. In strategic planning, transport projects are seen to help reduce poverty by facilitating the mobility of people and goods, thereby improving access to markets, education and jobs, and health services. However, project implementation often gives inadequate attention to the reality that segments of the population, including women and men as distinct groups, will have varied transport needs and preferences. Government policy and programs in the road and transport sector do not reference gender but instead focus on infrastructure improvements, which are measured in terms of quantifiable outputs. Little information is available about differences in male and female road users, transport patterns, or priorities. Still, road improvements could bring real benefit to women, increasing their mobility and, therefore, their access to markets, services, and jobs.

As in other core ADB sectors, women are underrepresented in decision-making posts and transport jobs. ADB should work to ensure that women participate in designing and implementing ADB transport projects and to support capacity building to improve women's access to nontraditional work.

Gender and Private Sector Development

Support for entrepreneurship, particularly small businesses, has been a priority for Uzbekistan, because private enterprise is increasingly driving the economy. New legislation and national programs to create an environment supportive of private enterprise and to develop a market economy have meant that in many ways opportunities to start a business have improved. However, several obstacles still hinder micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise (MSME) development. Female entrepreneurs are more affected by these challenges due to differences in the size and capacity of their businesses, their spheres of operation, and prevalent gender norms.

Most enterprises started by and operated by women are informal cottage industries or home-based production. Most female entrepreneurs are involved in small-scale consumer

goods production, trade, or delivery of health, education, and other personal services. In rural regions, in particular, women's businesses are mainly micro and small enterprises. The nature of "women's business" means that mainstream MSME support projects may not adequately meet the specific needs of female entrepreneurs. Instead, business support services should be tailored to the current needs of female entrepreneurs, and efforts are needed to diversify the sectors in which women have businesses and assist them in entering nontraditional and high-level industries. Female entrepreneurs also face a number of specific gender-based constraints to doing business, including unequal access to financial services (due in large part to lack of formal property ownership and lack of collateral); bureaucratic obstacles to running a business, which are multiplied for women who balance business activities with domestic responsibilities; lack of information, business knowledge, skills, and technical resources needed to run a successful business; and cultural perceptions and stereotypes. Targeted microlending programs for women have demonstrated that businesswomen are interested in using financial services, but their access to loans through commercial banks remains quite limited. The planning of projects on private sector development should identify and respond to the distinct needs of female entrepreneurs, with a long-term view toward integrating "women's businesses" into the general MSME sector.

CHAPTER I

Background and Context

Country Situation and Policy Environment

1. Uzbekistan has a rich, ancient culture, which has seen the influence of many other traditions throughout its history. Due to the importance of key cities along the Silk Road in present-day Uzbekistan, the country continues to evoke notions of a land that spans both East and West. In many ways, this duality is reflected in contemporary gender relations, in which the women in Uzbekistan have achieved success in a number of professional fields, yet traditional notions of women as primarily responsible for domestic and supporting roles remain deeply entrenched.

Gender Issues in the Transition Period

2. In 2011, Uzbekistan celebrated 20 years of independence. The transition has not been smooth for any country in the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Uzbekistan, too, has experienced both positive and negative developments in gender equality. The status of women and men in Uzbekistan is very much shaped by the fact that the country has undergone significant and rapid change in recent years.

3. Uzbekistan is still being transformed from a state-controlled, largely agricultural economy to a market-based system. Fewer agricultural jobs, combined with population growth, have resulted in increased labor migration, primarily external but increasingly within the country. Urbanization has brought about its own challenges such as the decreasing capacity of cities to absorb growing populations because of insufficient basic infrastructure and jobs. The state has responded to these issues through many varied initiatives, but the primary focus has been on improving economic opportunities through high-level investment and reform. The Uzbekistan model of development prioritizes economic over political reform and makes the state the main agent of reform.¹

4. Several characteristics of the transformation have direct bearing on gender equality and are illuminated in greater detail throughout this assessment. In some areas, such as access to education and health care, Uzbekistan has maintained high levels of gender parity throughout the transition period. In other spheres, women have been disadvantaged and face difficulties in accessing crucial resources. For instance, state schemes to privatize management of agricultural production and land benefited former collective farm managers, who were primarily men, resulting in fewer opportunities for women to acquire land-lease rights, even though women represent a large proportion of the agricultural workforce.² Changes in the labor market have resulted in significant job losses in many specific sectors that traditionally employed women such as agricultural production on state farms, textile manufacturing, and health and education. In parallel, men have begun to find employment in previously nontraditional sectors such as retail trade and catering, which presents additional competition for female workers.³

1 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2011. The Concept of Further Deepening the Democratic Reforms. http://mfa.uz/eng/press_and_media_service/dates/the_concept/conference250411en1.mgr

2 Lassarria-Cornhiel, S. and Z. Garcia-Frias. 2005. Return to patriarchy in Uzbekistan. In Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2005. Gender and land compendium of country studies. Rome: FAO. pp. 119–121. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/008/a0297e/a0297e00.pdf>

3 United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). 2009. *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers: Central Asia and Russia*. New York.

5. Much of the country's basic services infrastructure is from the Soviet period and is now in need of rehabilitation and upgrading. Disparities in rural and urban basic services are growing more pronounced, and insufficient clean water and electricity for households particularly affect women, who traditionally take on more domestic work.

6. Underlying many of the negative changes that women have experienced during the transition is a resurgence of traditional and patriarchal values that emphasize a role for women as housewives, responsible for raising children and concerned primarily with the private sphere. Such notions are often incompatible with an image of women becoming entrepreneurs or politicians or assuming a role in public decision making. It has been acknowledged that further efforts must be made to “overcome the mass consciousness of patriarchal stereotypes about male and female roles in society.”⁴ However, transitioning to a more egalitarian view of gender roles has proven difficult in practice. Many state policies aimed at increasing opportunities for women, including women's economic empowerment, simultaneously reiterate women's principal role in family life.

Economic Outlook and Implications for Women's Empowerment

7. To facilitate overall development, Uzbekistan prioritized investment in agriculture, energy, transport, and industry. The Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan, 2008–2010 focused medium-term investments for 2011–2012 on developing and modernizing major industries, including electricity, gas, metallurgy, construction, and specific areas of manufacturing.⁵ The Welfare Improvement Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2012–2015 further emphasizes high economic growth and structural shifts in the economy based on manufacturing and services. Significant economic growth has been supported by increased production in industry (up 7.0% by the end of 2011), agriculture (a 6.8% increase), construction (an 8.1% increase), retail trade (a 16.2% increase), and paid services (a 14.2% increase). This contributed to an overall gross domestic product (GDP) increase of 8.2% in the first 9 months of 2012.⁶

8. Such macroeconomic indicators predict an improvement in living standards and opportunities for the population as a whole, and two sectors—retail trade and services—are also those with a high proportion of female employees. However, the fact that such sectors are experiencing growth is not necessarily related to any particular consideration for women's economic empowerment. Women will undoubtedly benefit from overall economic growth, but critical gender disparities in the labor market also mean that they are not in the same position as men to benefit from job creation in several priority sectors or to take advantage of new, expanding markets as business owners.

Indicators on Gender and Development for Uzbekistan

9. Indicators of human development, and particularly of the gender dimensions of development, suggest that progress toward gender equality in Uzbekistan has been slow. More significantly, while some fields exhibit positive indicators in terms of equality, others remain unsatisfactory. An overview of the findings of the key international organizations that measure gender and development internationally follows. Further details about gender and development indicators, their methodologies, and values for Uzbekistan can be found in Appendix 1.

4 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2008. *Replies to the Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) and the 23rd Special Session of the UN General Assembly (2000)*. [In Russian]. Tashkent. p. 8.

5 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2007. *Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan: Full Strategy Paper for 2008–2010*. Tashkent. <http://www.carecprogram.org/uploads/docs/UZB-Welfare-Improvement-Strategy-en.pdf>

6 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2013. *Statistical Review of the Republic of Uzbekistan*. Tashkent. p. 94.

10. Measuring progress across time, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Economic Forum both found that the state of gender equality in Uzbekistan has remained static since 2006. UNDP measured national achievements across three dimensions—long and healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living—adjusted to account for gender disparities between women and men, using the Gender-Related Development Index.⁷ Uzbekistan’s Gender-Related Development Index values were between 0.692 (in 2005) and 0.708 (in 2009), where 1 represents achievement of perfect equality. The country’s Gender-Related Development Index rank in 2009 was 99 out of 155 countries. Similarly, under the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index, Uzbekistan showed almost no progress in closing the gender gap and received a score of 0.691 (with a score of 1 representing full equality) from 2006 to 2009.⁸ The Global Gender Gap Index measures gender-based gaps in resources and opportunities, independent of a country’s level of development, and takes into consideration four basic categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment.

11. In 2012, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) included Uzbekistan in its Social Institutions and Gender Index. This index differs from other indexes because it focuses on inequitable social institutions such as early marriage, discriminatory inheritance practices, and violence against women, and does not measure gender gaps in outcomes such as employment or education. Uzbekistan was ranked 56 out of 86 non-OECD countries and received an overall score of 0.304 in 2012.⁹ In this case, a score of “0” represents a situation of equality, and “1” indicates that women experience discrimination.

12. Scores by subindex show where the gender gap is the most acute in Uzbekistan. Both the Global Gender Gap Index and the Gender Equity Index, a methodology developed by Social Watch, indicate that there is close to gender equality in the spheres of education (measuring enrollment, educational attainment, and literacy) and health (measuring the sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy).¹⁰ However, inequalities in women’s economic participation and activity (a measure of labor force participation; wage equality; and the number of female senior officials, managers, and professional and technical workers) and political empowerment (a measure of women in Parliament, ministerial positions, and as heads of state) caused the gender gap to widen overall.

13. Although these gender equality indicators do not measure particular improvements in women’s empowerment in Uzbekistan, the review processes by the United Nations CEDAW Committee¹¹ and the Universal Periodic Review¹² noted that progress has been made in increasing women’s representation in political office; gender parity exists in primary, basic secondary, and vocational education; and important actions have been taken to address the problem of human trafficking such as the 2008 Law on Combating Human Trafficking.¹³

7 Note that in 2010, UNDP replaced both the Gender-Related Development Index and the Gender Empowerment Measure with the Gender Inequality Index, a composite measure reflecting inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and the labor market. The Gender Inequality index has not been calculated for Uzbekistan because data has been unavailable since this measure was introduced.

8 Uzbekistan was not scored or ranked in 2013 due to lack of data. See World Economic Forum. 2013. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2013*. Geneva: World Economic Forum. p. 15.

9 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2012. *Social Institutions and Gender Index 2012*. Country Profiles: Uzbekistan. <http://genderindex.org/country/Uzbekistan>

10 Social Watch. 2012. 2012 Gender Equity Index. <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/14365>

11 United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. 2010.

Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Geneva.

12 United Nations General Assembly. 2008. *Compilation Prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*. Geneva.

13 Although the law is gender neutral, women are particularly vulnerable to some types of human trafficking, and the law sets forth important guarantees of victim protection and assistance.

National Policies and Institutions on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Law and Policy on Improving the Status of Women

14. Since the completion of the 2005 country gender assessment, Uzbekistan has developed several national policy documents relevant to women's rights. The government has enacted two national action plans to implement the CEDAW Committee recommendations, the first in 2006 (in response to a review of Uzbekistan's second and third periodic reports) and the second in 2010 (to implement the CEDAW Committee recommendations in its fourth periodic review). The 2010 national action plan (Attachment 1 to the minutes of the Cabinet of Ministries meeting No. 10-7) was approved by the Prime Minister and represents a high level of political commitment (Box 1).¹⁴

Box 1: National Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations CEDAW Committee Recommendations, 2010

The national action plan comprises 68 actions to be implemented by various ministries, the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan, the Office of the Ombudsman, local government bodies, media outlets, and nongovernment organizations. The plan highlights such critical issues as gender-based stereotypes, violence against women, human trafficking, and the lack of women in leadership positions.^a However, a number of activities outlined in the action plan are educational events, such as seminars and conferences, research and analysis, or unspecified "measures." Follow-up inquiries under this assessment have not been able to establish whether a budget has been allocated to implement the plan. While a timeline for its implementation is included, there is no separate plan for the monitoring and evaluation of its completion. Although the 2010 national action plan indicates the political will to address many concerns raised by the CEDAW committee, it is quite narrow in scope and does not articulate a policy for the promotion of gender equality.

a Government of Uzbekistan. 2010. *National Action Plan for the Implementation of Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Conclusions from the Fourth Periodic Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian].

15. Since the late 1990s, the government has also adopted several national plans and decrees directed toward issues of special relevance to women, mostly concerning women's reproductive health. Attention has been given to women and girls in several annual state programs such as the Year of Rural Development and Improvement (2009), the Year of Social Protection (2007), the National CEDAW Plan (2010), and the State Program on "Year of Family" (2012), though a review of official policy documents related to such programs found that none referred specifically to gender equality.

16. The government has not defined an approach to gender mainstreaming in policy setting, but the national Welfare Improvement Strategy (WIS) of Uzbekistan, 2012–2015 articulated that gender should be considered in welfare improvement strategies and reiterated Uzbekistan's commitment to including gender in policies and programs:

The further ensuring of gender equality requires a holistic approach, which is envisaged within the WIS 2012–2015 by the improvement of the institutional mechanism, this involves the strengthening of the gender component of national legislation, and the more comprehensive consideration of gender issues during the development and implementation of policy measures and national, regional and sector-based programs and projects.¹⁵

14 Government of Uzbekistan. 2010. *National Action Plan for the Implementation of Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Conclusions from the Fourth Periodic Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian] (Attachment #1 to the minutes of the Cabinet of Ministries meeting No. 10-7), 9 September 2010.

15 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2013. *Welfare Improvement Strategy of Uzbekistan for 2012-2015*. [in Russian]. <http://wis.ifmr.uz/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/WIS-2013-2015RUS.pdf>, p. 78.

17. The WIS describes the primary obstacles to achieving gender equality, calls for gender balance in community-strengthening initiatives, and advocates the collection of sex-disaggregated data. However, the strategy does not include indicators relevant to monitoring and evaluating progress toward gender equality.

18. The principle of equal rights between women and men is supported by national law, as determined in Article 18 of the Constitution and other legislative acts. For example, both the criminal code and the labor code protect against discrimination on the basis of sex. The labor code also guarantees equality in employment, working conditions, remuneration, and promotion and, in several cases, affords special protections to female workers.

19. Despite its framework for gender equality, Uzbekistan lacks “a special mechanism that deals with implementation, monitoring, and reporting of antidiscrimination provisions.”¹⁶ For instance, there is no legal definition of sex-based discrimination under national law. Notably, the Law on Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men has been drafted, and after going through both national and international expert analysis, has been sent to the legislative chamber of the Oliy Majlis (National Assembly) for review in 2006. If adopted, this law would provide further support for protecting equal rights “in public service and in the social, economic, and cultural spheres.”¹⁷ Nongovernment organizations (NGOs) note that, in the absence of a specific law on equal rights, international organizations and civil society groups have attempted to amend major legal codes to include clearer provisions prohibiting discrimination.¹⁸ Still, a finding of the previous country gender assessment for Uzbekistan holds true today: despite the existence of a sound legal framework, the regulatory instruments such as decrees, resolutions, and instructions that determine how laws are implemented “display a lack of gender sensitivity.”¹⁹

National Machinery for the Advancement of Women

20. The Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan, created soon after independence, is the primary agency that coordinates women’s affairs nationally, regionally, and locally. Its mission includes developing and implementing state policies on women’s rights, improving the social and economic status of women, and ensuring women’s participation in reforming and modernizing the country. The Women’s Committee has the status of an NGO but also has important links with government structures and plays a quasi-governmental role in policy implementation. The chairperson of the national Women’s Committee is also a deputy prime minister, an appointed position reserved for a woman. The Women’s Committee has branches in all 14 regional administrations²⁰ and 219 districts or cities, and which are led by women who hold the office of deputy *hokim* (local leader).²¹ In addition, since 2004, each *mahalla*, a local community-based organization, has an advisory position on religious, spiritual, and moral education that is reserved for a woman and is partly funded by the Women’s Committee. Currently, there are 8,348 such female advisors.²² The vertical nature of the Women’s Committee, extending from the highest level to the community level, is one of the strengths of the organization.

16 United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). 2009. *Advancing Equal Rights for Women and Girls: The Status of CEDAW Legislative Compliance in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*. New York. p. 49.

17 Ibid., p. 48.

18 Coalition of Uzbek Women’s Rights NGOs. 2009. *Shadow Report to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. Tashkent. p. 14.

19 ADB. 2005. *Uzbekistan Country Gender Assessment*. p. 88.

20 The 14 regional administrations of Uzbekistan represent 12 regions, the city of Tashkent, which has the status of a region, and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic.

21 National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights. 2010. *Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. [In Russian]. Tashkent. p. 108.

22 Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan. *Information Note for the Country Gender Assessment (CGA)*. Tashkent. Unpublished.

21. The CEDAW Committee has drawn attention to some limitations of the Women's Committee as the national mechanism for women's advancement. For instance, the Women's Committee is financed from the state budget, by specific development projects, and through funds from sponsors or from international organizations, each accounting for a third of the budget, but the CEDAW Committee considers this total budget to be insufficient for the Women's Committee to carry out its mandate effectively.²³ Furthermore, the Women's Committee does not have the institutional status to influence government policy making and has no authority over government bodies. Some women's NGOs have also expressed concern that the Women's Committee is not sufficiently independent from the executive office.²⁴ In 2010, in response to the CEDAW Committee's comments, plans were drawn up to revise the Women's Committee charter and to expand its authority.²⁵ However, changes to the organization have not yet been formally announced.

22. Other state institutions that play a role in protecting women's rights or monitoring implementation of commitments under CEDAW include the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Human Rights (the human rights ombudsman) and parliamentary committees on labor and social protection and on democratic institutions and civil society.

Conceptual Approaches to Gender Equality

23. The term "gender" is not widely understood in Uzbekistan, either by the public or by policy makers.²⁶ Indeed, the government has undertaken initiatives to better inform citizens and specific professional groups about gender equality and women's rights. Some NGOs contend that even members of the Women's Committee are reluctant to use internationally accepted terms that refer to gender disparities.²⁷ For the most part, "gender" is still largely considered synonymous with women, and "gender-oriented" work is almost exclusively concerned with resolving social issues. Thus, "gender inequalities are addressed primarily through social policies aimed at vulnerable groups" (particularly women and girls), while policies on issues such as economic development, financial markets, private sector development, and government spending take a wholly gender-neutral approach.²⁸

24. National law and policy enshrine the principle of equal rights for women and men, and the phrase "gender and development" appears in policy documents, but most state initiatives with gender components aim to improve the status of women. Although such an approach recognizes women's vulnerabilities, it also is a limited view that does not take into account the process of balancing the rights and opportunities of women and men, nor does it address the institutional factors that are responsible for women's disadvantaged position. In addition, a view that women are inherently vulnerable may result in short-term benefit, but ultimately it is neither empowering nor consistent with a view that women and men both benefit from gender equality.

23 United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. 2010. *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: Uzbekistan*. New York. para. 15.

24 Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs. 2009. *Women's Rights in Uzbekistan*. Briefing Note to the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Tashkent.

25 Government of Uzbekistan. 2010. *National Action Plan for the Implementation of Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Conclusions from the Fourth Periodic Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan* [in Russian] Attachment to the minutes of the Cabinet of Ministries meeting No. 10-7, 9 September 2010.

26 S. Somach and D. Rubin. 2010. *Gender Assessment: USAID/Central Asian Republics*. Washington, DC: USAID.

27 Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs. *Shadow Report*.

28 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). 2008. *Mainstreaming Gender into Economic Policies to Reach the Millennium Development Goals in Central Asia*. Geneva. p. 34.

25. Because gender issues are thought to refer exclusively to women, they are usually left to women to resolve. Men are often “excluded from the discussion and process” or are reluctant and refrain from participating in discussions to resolve what they perceive as “women’s issues.”²⁹ The lack of understanding that gender equality concerns women and men alike has “a negative impact on the quality of implementation of government projects.”³⁰ Because many ADB projects in Uzbekistan, especially to develop infrastructure, are conducted in male spheres—that is, sectors with low levels of female representation and worksites with virtually all-male staff members—it is important to consider the capacity of stakeholders to address gender issues. It may be useful to engage men directly on gender issues that have more resonance in their lives such as workplace safety (a justification used to limit women’s employment in many physically demanding jobs), labor migration, and the traditional male role as family providers.

26. Gender equality is largely perceived as a process of being just and fair to women but it is not recognized as a condition for economic growth and stability. Thus, the economic costs of inequality have not been articulated in Uzbekistan.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- Uzbekistan has a legal and policy framework for the advancement of women but has not developed policies on mainstreaming gender into national and local development processes.
- The Women’s Committee is a resource for coordinating projects to improve women’s status, and it is well placed to reach women as well as regional and local civil society organizations.
- The phrase “gender equality” is largely understood to refer to social issues of particular concern to women; integration of gender issues remains limited in hard sectors such as infrastructure development, transport, and energy.
- State programs generally address immediate concerns (for example, maternal mortality, job creation, or support for small businesses) but not underlying gender inequalities.

Recommendations

- Link ADB gender activities with the priority areas outlined in the National Action Plan for the Implementation of CEDAW Recommendations. Such links should facilitate government cooperation and ensure support for country-specific gender equality targets.
- ADB gender action plans should not inadvertently reinforce the notion that gender equality concerns only the social sphere or improving the lives of women. Gender action plans should differentiate between socially beneficial activities that are gender neutral and activities that empower women. Approaches must also show that gender equality is relevant to men.
- Support capacity building for key stakeholders involved in project design and implementation. Capacity building will help fulfill national and ADB commitments to promote gender equality.

²⁹ Coalition of Uzbek Women’s Rights NGOs. *Shadow Report*. p. 12.

³⁰ D. Alimdjanova. 2009. *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan during the Institutional Reform Period*. Tashkent: Tashkent Gender Studies Center. p. 11.

CHAPTER II

Crosscutting Gender Issues and Implications for ADB Operations

27. Gender equality is viewed as a core objective of development work and as a theme that cuts across other areas of programming and should be addressed through multiple actions. This chapter provides an overview of several broad, crosscutting gender issues. Disparities in these areas of programming contribute directly to gender inequality. For this reason, it is useful to review the gender landscape in Uzbekistan and to consider the influence of various themes on Asian Development Bank (ADB) projects.

Sex-Disaggregated Statistics and Data

28. Sex-disaggregated data can serve as the foundation for gender analysis and assessments by providing an overview of the current situation and identifying any differences in the relative status of women and men. Gender statistics also reveal information “vital to the development of policies and programs promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment ... and can contribute significantly to the achievement of sustainable and inclusive economic growth and development overall.”³¹

29. The scarcity of sex-disaggregated data and statistics is a persistent issue in Uzbekistan and for the region as a whole, and has been highlighted in international reviews and in the 2005 ADB country gender assessment.

30. There is inadequate legislative and political support and no sustainable mechanism for the regular collection of gender statistics in Uzbekistan. With support from donors and international communities, the State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics and the Women’s Committee have published the *Women and Men in Uzbekistan* statistical bulletin three times—in 2007 (covering 2000–2005), in 2010 (2004–2007), and in 2012 (2007–2010).³² The national action plan to implement CEDAW Committee recommendations includes the regular publication of such materials every 2 years.

31. These bulletins are useful because they represent the collective efforts of several organizations. However, they are complicated and time-consuming to produce; therefore, the compilations do not necessarily reflect the most up-to-date situation. For example, although there are indications that new methods of data collection, such as time-use studies and demographic and health surveys, are being introduced in Uzbekistan, such data are often not publicly available to researchers, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), or development partners undertaking project planning and design. Even when sex-disaggregated statistics are available, they are not necessarily reproduced in mainstream publications or used by the state committee on statistics.

32. The lack of timely access to sex-disaggregated data presented problems in conducting this gender assessment. Although the most recent information available was used, datasets may represent different years or regions and cannot necessarily be compared or used to illustrate trends.

31 ADB. 2012. *Gender Statistics in the Southern Caucasus and Central and West Asia*. Manila. p. 3.

32 ADB supported the publication of the 2012 *Women and Men of Uzbekistan* and similar government-issued publications (2003 and 2005) featuring gender statistics.

33. Most recently, the results of several evaluation and stocktaking exercises produced updated and original information about the situation of women, and this information could serve as a resource for future ADB projects in Uzbekistan. In 2011, fieldwork was conducted for the fourth Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, a United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) initiative to monitor the situation of women and children. The survey includes a component on water and sanitation as well as other indicators that have relevance when assessing the status of women and girls.³³ Uzbekistan also reported in the second cycle of the Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review process in 2013, and women’s rights was included among other human rights issues.³⁴

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- Limited sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, particularly in sectors covered by the ADB portfolio, complicate the process of identifying priorities and developing policy relevant to gender issues.
- The capacity to collect sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics exists but has not been adequately developed in state agencies or among project implementers.

Recommendations

- Support efforts to institutionalize the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific information.
- Promote greater use of sex-disaggregated information to set policy in fields generally considered gender neutral.
- In the context of project planning and development, support needs assessments and other forms of project-specific gender analysis to better understand current conditions.

Gender Roles and Norms

34. Gender norms, or notions of the traditional roles of women and men, exist in every society and often are unconsciously accepted as inevitable. In Uzbekistan, patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes are recognized as impediments to achieving equality. Rigid gender roles are seen to impede progress toward the fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals:

As with many CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries, the women of Uzbekistan saw their role in society decline during the past decade as traditional stereotypes made a comeback. The customary view is that men are superior to women in society and as such must be the main household caregiver and economic provider.³⁵

The 2010 national action plan outlines specific measures to use mass media to conduct informational campaigns aimed at the general public. The goal is “to eliminate stereotypes about the traditional role of each sex within the family and society and to revise stereotypes about the role of women and the equal division of domestic and family obligations between men and women.”³⁶ Unlike other activities, which have a specific term for completion, such measures are to be carried out continually.

³³ Survey results are available from UNICEF. www.childinfo.org/mics4_surveys.html

³⁴ United Nations General Assembly. 2013. Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review—Uzbekistan. Human Rights Council, Twenty Fourth Session, Agenda Item 6.

³⁵ Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and United Nations Country Team. 2006. *Millennium Development Goals Report*. Tashkent. p. 27.

³⁶ Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2010. *National Action Plan for the Implementation of Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and Conclusions from the Fourth Periodic Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan*. [In Russian] Attachment to the minutes of the Cabinet of Ministries meeting No. 10-7, 9 September 2010.

35. A study of attitudes about the preferred family model reveals that gender stereotypes remain entrenched in Uzbekistan today. Most respondents to a survey on family models (48% of those under age 30 and 54% of older respondents) preferred a patriarchal family model in which “the husband plays a dominating role in a family and bears responsibility for the material well-being, [and] the circle of duties of the wife includes the organization of family life, care of children, and care of relatives.”³⁷ Indeed, the households’ division of labor indicated that the patriarchal model is common. In 56% of households surveyed, the male head of household managed the family budget, and in 51% of households, he made decisions concerning expensive purchases. In 68% of households, the females cared for the children, and in 65% of the households, undertook household chores such as cooking and cleaning (Box 2).

Box 2: Women’s Budgeted Time for Household Tasks

Time-use studies show that women spend almost three times more time than men engaged in unpaid work. Women use almost 63.0% of this time for housekeeping, such as cooking, cleaning, laundering, ironing, and repair of clothing. Men spend only 11.5% of their time on such activities.

Focus groups conducted in three regions (Bukhara, Jizzakh, and Samarkand *viloyat*) under an ADB-supported study on electricity supply provide further insights into the amount of time that women generally spend on unpaid household labor. Female focus group participants said that women usually spend around 14 hours a day doing various household tasks, including

- | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|
| • cooking | - | 3 hours per day |
| • washing clothes (by hand) | - | 3 hours per day |
| • housecleaning | - | 2 hours per day |
| • taking children to and from school | - | 0.5 hour per day |
| • shopping for food and household items | - | 2–3 hours per day |
| • tending animals and/or milking cows | - | unspecified time |

Women and men reported that they spend 1–2 hours per day helping their children with homework or teaching them handicrafts.

The particular time burden on women has implications for ADB project planning and for development work in general. Often, women may be unable to participate in local decision making or in project activities due to time constraints. Likewise, although women may be interested in pursuing entrepreneurial activities and other income-generating schemes, it may be impossible for them to reconcile household chores with formal employment unless they are given specific support to do so (through child-care programs, for example). Finally, improvements to basic infrastructure, such as consistent access to energy supply and clean water, may lighten the burden on women’s time. However, it is also important that women are able to use the time saved for activities of their choice, including further education, leisure, or cultural activities. Attention should be given to whether women have access to such other activities and whether gender stereotypes might impede their participation.

Sources: ADB. 2011. *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project. Social and poverty analysis*. Unpublished consultant’s report. Manila: ADB. p. 111; and State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2002. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan in 2002*. [In Russian]. Tashkent. p. 105. Comparable information was not included in the more recent *Women and Men of Uzbekistan* publications of 2007, 2010, or 2012.

36. The legacy of the Soviet period, which promoted a formal policy of gender equality, has enabled the women of Uzbekistan to achieve high levels of education, be represented in the formal labor force, and participate in public life. However, in the post-Soviet period, with the dismantling of state-owned enterprises and the adoption of a market economy, traditional views and attitudes about male and female roles quickly resurfaced.

³⁷ Institute for Social Research and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). 2010. *Mutual Relations in a Family in the Situation of Society Transformation (on the Example of Uzbekistan)*. Tashkent. p. 11.

37. In rural areas, in particular, voluntary work is an important aspect of community life for women and men. A crucial difference, however, is that if the activity involves “routine work, which is free of charge, then, as a rule, it is performed by women; however, if this activity is payable or provides advancement in the social status ... then it is performed by men.”³⁸

38. Traditional gender norms are deeply ingrained in society and thus can be inadvertently reinforced by programs designed to improve women’s lives. Even official policy to improve the status of women is inhibited by widely held views that women’s primary role is closely connected to motherhood and care for the household. Both the media and national policy statements reinforce notions of women as homemakers and attribute to women characteristics of devotion, selflessness, and tenderness.³⁹ Such images are positive, but they also present women as passive and are generally not compatible with images of women in leadership roles in politics, business, or even in civil society.

39. Although women certainly benefit from national programs that address the needs of the population, the vast majority of state programs aimed at women concern reproductive and maternal health, with the important exception of special measures to increase women’s representation in political office and employment programs. In the Central Asian region, as in Uzbekistan, national strategies and policies that consider women as mothers, inseparable from issues of family and children, are “reinforcing traditional ideas about gender roles and women’s inferiority and vulnerability.”⁴⁰

40. Gender stereotypes also explain why women are underrepresented in political office and even in formal employment. Stereotypes influence women’s access to economic opportunities, managerial positions, and decision-making posts, and over whether parents invest in a daughter’s education, especially higher education.

41. Although traditional and stereotyped depictions of women and men are still common in Uzbekistan, this situation should not suggest that such cultural norms are fixed. The Women’s Committee, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Education and civil society organizations, has organized various events to “enhance the role of fathers in family child-rearing practices.”⁴¹ For instance, “fathers’ assemblies” have been promoted among men as a way to engage with their children’s teachers to discuss issues of childrearing and their role and responsibilities. Within a project on reproductive health that included the development of schools for young families, local groups initiated “fathers’ schools” to encourage men to talk about issues of reproductive health.⁴² These are important first steps toward instituting a more equitable model of gender roles and responsibilities and they should be expanded and replicated.

38 Global Water Partnership for Central Asia and Caucasus. 2005. *Gender Aspects of Integrated Water Resources Management*. Tashkent. p. 123.

39 See, for example, State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2012. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*, quoting a presidential speech announcing 2012 as the Year of the Family. Also see National Information Agency of Uzbekistan. 2012. Holiday Greetings to the Women of Uzbekistan. [In Russian]. 5 March. <http://www.uza.uz/ru/politics/13892>

40 D. Abdurazakova. 2010. *National Mechanisms for Gender Equality in Southeast and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia: Regional Study*. Geneva: UNECE. p.16.

41 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2008. Consideration of Reports Submitted by State Parties: Fourth Periodic Report of State Parties, Uzbekistan. Tashkent. p. 84.

42 Information provided by the Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- Gender norms and stereotypes have considerable influence over perceptions of the roles of women and men in society and often are inadvertently reinforced through official programs and policies.
- Despite women's achievements in many fields, strong perceptions that women are primarily associated with the private and family sphere are prevalent and often limit women's opportunities in public life.

Recommendations

- During the planning stage, consider the influence of stereotypes, but also recognize that gender norms are not fixed and are subject to change. Employ measures to promote a more equitable model of gender relations and to expand conceptions about women's roles.
- Take care not to inadvertently reinforce gender stereotypes in project development and implementation.

Gender Disparities in Employment and the Labor Market

42. Women's economic empowerment is critical to achieving gender equality and combating poverty. A legacy of the Soviet system is the generally high representation of women in the formal labor force in Uzbekistan, especially compared with other developing countries. Yet, clear gender-based imbalances persist despite changes to the overall economic climate and employment patterns. The position of women in the labor market will determine whether they will benefit equally from projects that increase employment opportunities or from economic growth in general. The economic and social costs to a country can be significant if women's talent, human capacity, and potential economic contribution are not harnessed.

43. The government acknowledges the need to promote women's economic activity and has undertaken several programs to increase overall employment and promote job creation for women, such as the Regional Program for Increasing Women's Employment for 2005–2007, which was reapproved in 2010. According to official reports, around 400,000 new jobs are created each year, 40% of which are "set aside for women."⁴³ The number of new jobs created for women increased annually, as follows: 198,400 new jobs in 2005; 204,600 in 2006; 210,800 in 2007; and 403,142 in 2009.⁴⁴ About half of such jobs targeted women in rural areas. Job creation schemes for women included a loan window for small businesses hiring mainly women or being managed by women. In 2009, Uzbekistan declared the Year of Rural Development and Improvement, and the subsequent state program included an activity to train 2,000 unemployed women in basic business skills and provide them with start-up capital.⁴⁵ The Chamber of Commerce, Association of Business Women, and Mikrocreditbank implemented the program.

43 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Consideration of Reports*. p. 101. See also Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Russian Federation. About the Protection of Women's Rights in Uzbekistan. [In Russian] <http://www.uzembassy.ru/5508.htm>

44 Akbarova. 2010. Women's Economic Empowerment. Presented at the 43rd ADB Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors. Tashkent. 1-4 May.

45 Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2008. No. PP-1046, 26 January 2009: Appendix to the Year of Rural Development and Improvement National Program. Tashkent.

44. Women's employment programs aim to create jobs that are considered particularly beneficial and suitable for women, namely by focusing on home-based work; service sector jobs (specifically during 2007 to 2010); small business development; and farming, such as raising livestock.⁴⁶

Employment and Unemployment Patterns

45. The female employment rate in Uzbekistan increased at an average of 3.4% per year from 1999 to 2008, but this may be reflective of an overall growth in employment because Uzbekistan also had one of the highest growth rates in male employment in the Commonwealth of Independent States region during the same period.⁴⁷

46. The number of economically active women remains considerably lower than the number of economically active men. Women make up almost half of the adult labor force (46%), but there is a clear gender gap in labor force participation. Official figures indicate that from 2007 to 2010 employment increased by 8.3%, but employment among men grew more rapidly than employment among women—a 10.8% increase for men but only a 5.5% increase for women.⁴⁸ From 2007 to 2010, the proportion of women in the working population decreased while the proportion of men increased. Considering that the European and Central Asian region, including Uzbekistan, saw high growth from 1999 to 2009, this widening gender gap is a cause for concern.⁴⁹

47. Like patterns of economic activity, unemployment rates in Uzbekistan show distinct gender patterns. Women's official unemployment rates have consistently remained higher than men's. There is some indication that women are not seeking jobs at the same rate as men, or at least are not using official channels for assistance. According to data from 2010, women made up 53.7% of the total unemployed population but only 43.5% of those women officially registered as unemployed.⁵⁰ Unemployed women generally spend more time looking for jobs than men and, on average, remain unemployed for more than a year.⁵¹

Home-Based Work

48. The system of home-based work was established by a presidential decree in 2006.⁵² Although this type of employment is open to both sexes, promotion of home-based work has been envisioned from its inception as a measure oriented toward women, and women are thus given priority. As a woman engaged in home-based work explained, "Working at home and not being pulled away from domestic chores and childcare is convenient and profitable."⁵³ Another stated, "Without being separated from household chores and childcare, we are contributing to the development of production and earning additional income."⁵⁴ A government report notes that home-based work provides women with opportunities to realize their economic potential "while taking into account the limited opportunities for women to combine domestic responsibilities with productive work, and gives women the opportunity to earn income without separation from the family."⁵⁵

46 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Replies to the Questionnaire*.

47 S. Sattar. 2012. *Opportunities for Men and Women: Emerging Europe and Central Asia*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

48 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2012. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*. Tashkent.

49 Sattar. *Opportunities for Men and Women*.

50 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*.

51 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2008–2010*.

52 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2006. Measures to Stimulate the Expansion of Cooperation between Large Enterprises and Service Production through Home-Based Work. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, No. UP-3706. 5 January.

53 Kh. Salimov. 2013. Home-Based Work: A Convenient Form of Labor. National Information Agency of Uzbekistan. 13 February. <http://uza.uz/ru/society/22271/>

54 Kh. Salimov. 2010. Home-Based Work: Convenient and Profitable. 4 November. <http://uza.uz/ru/society/22271/> See also <http://uza.uz/ru/business/12490/>

55 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Replies to the Questionnaire*.

49. The total number of women and men working in home-based employment has not been calculated, but it was reported that in 2008, large industrial enterprises created 97,800 jobs for women under contract for home-based work.⁵⁶ In the first half of 2008, the Women's Committee, working with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection helped create more than 138,000 "workplaces for women," around 25,000 of which were home-based.⁵⁷ In 2010, it was planned that home-based jobs would be provided to "more than 208,000 women with many children, persons with disabilities, and other citizens in need of social protection."⁵⁸

50. In its most recent country review, the CEDAW Committee expressed concern about the increasing number of female home-based workers and whether they are afforded adequate social protection under labor laws.⁵⁹ In fact, home-based work is considered formal employment and is regulated through a labor contract. Home-based work consequently provides employees with a recorded work history and access to unemployment and pension benefits. This assessment was unable to determine whether home-based work provides paid leave for illness, injury, pregnancy, or child care, but home-based workers are covered by any collective agreement to which the contracting company is a party. Companies receive tax incentives for employing home-based workers.

51. It is important that employment schemes identify the real constraints faced by women in finding employment, especially in rural areas where services such as free child care are lacking. Creating jobs through home-based work programs does not necessarily address the deeper structural reasons for women's lack of economic activity. Arguably, measures such as home-based work can reinforce notions that a woman's work must accommodate her family obligations, rather than promote a more equitable distribution of household responsibilities.

Gender Patterns in the Labor Market

52. The formal labor market in Uzbekistan exhibits both vertical and horizontal segregation, with women and men concentrated in distinct fields. Two fields of employment—agriculture and trade, and catering and sales—nearly exhibit gender balance among employees.⁶⁰ Males account for 52% of workers in agriculture and trade, and females make up 54% of employees in catering and sales. Other sectors show greater segregation. The fields of education, health care, arts, culture, and science are considered traditional for women, and approximately one-third of all working women are employed in these sectors combined.⁶¹ The majority of employees in the fields of construction and transport and communications are male, sectors that also account for just under one quarter of all working men.⁶² The sectors in which women dominate, particularly education and health, are low paying, whereas men are overly represented among the workforce in fields with comparatively high salaries.⁶³

53. Agriculture work is the largest employer of both women and men. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the proportion of women and men in the principal non-agriculture sectors of the labor market.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ UNECE. 2009. *Achievements and Prospects for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Uzbekistan*. [In Russian]. Geneva. p. 11.

⁵⁸ *Uz Daily*. 2010. In Uzbekistan in 2011, 216,200 Jobs Will Be Created through Home-Based Work. 20 December. <http://www.uzdaily.uz/articles-id-5083.htm>

⁵⁹ UN CEDAW. *Concluding Observations*.

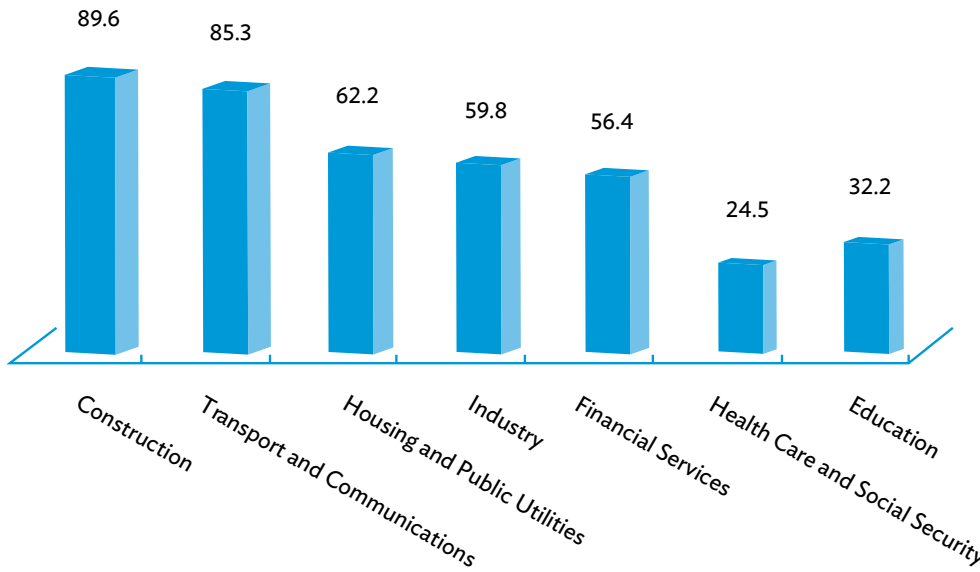
⁶⁰ National statistics compile data on male and female employees in the following sectors: (i) agriculture and forestry; (ii) construction; (iii) education, culture, art, science, and scientific services; (iv) financial services and insurance; (v) health care, physical education, and social security; (vi) housing and utilities and/or nonproductive consumer services; (vii) industry; (viii) trade, catering, sales, and marketing; (ix) transport and communications; and (x) other—uncategorized. For the purposes of this assessment, shorthand versions of these categories are used.

⁶¹ Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Replies to the Questionnaire*.

⁶² State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*.

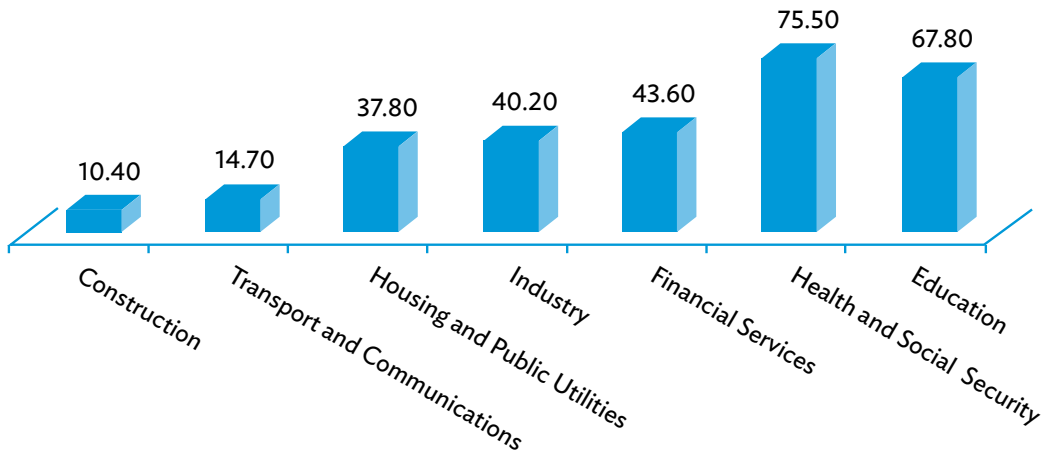
⁶³ Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and UN Country Team. *Millennium Development Goals Report*.

Figure 1: Proportion of Male Employees by Labor Market Sector, 2010



Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*, Table 4.6, p. 159.

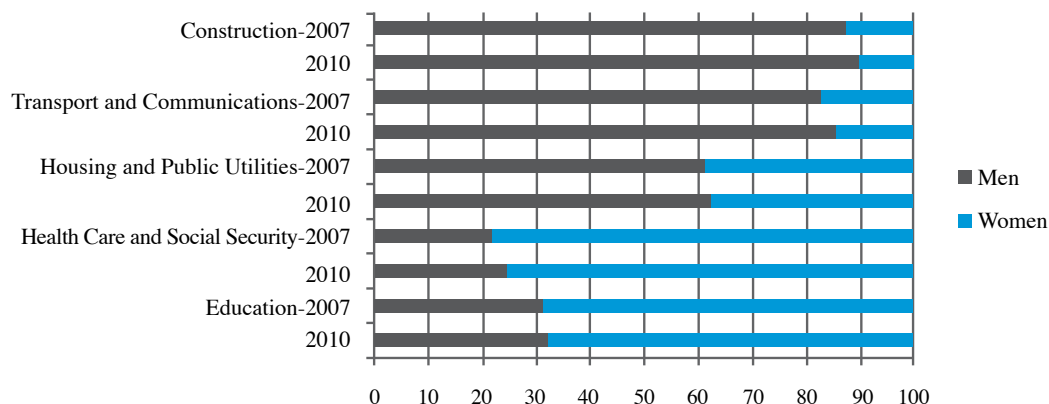
Figure 2: Proportion of Female Employees by Labor Market Sector, 2010



Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics, *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*, Table 4.6, p. 159.

54. A comparison of 2007 and 2010 labor market data indicates that gaps between males and females are increasing in the sectors that employ primarily men (construction and transport, for instance), but are decreasing in sectors where women are generally overrepresented (such as health care and education) (Figure 3). This no doubt reflects the greater overall increase in male employment—men are getting jobs in sectors previously dominated by women, and as a result, women are facing increasing competition for jobs.

Figure 3: Trends in the Distribution of Employees by Selected Labor Market Sector (%)



Sources: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2010. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2004–2007*. [In Russian]. Tashkent. p. 157 and State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2012. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*. Tashkent. Table 4.6. p. 159.

55. Women are also less likely than men to be employed in the private sector. According to World Bank data, women comprise only 34% of full-time workers in small enterprises, 36% of full-time workers in medium-sized enterprises, and 25% of workers in large enterprises.⁶⁴

56. There are a number of reasons for women's low representation in these sectors. Certainly, gender-based stereotypes play a role, and this is confirmed by the fact that a very small number of women enter higher education in fields such as industry or transport. In addition, there are legal restrictions on women's access to and entry into these fields. Article 225 of the Labor Code of Uzbekistan references an official list of "work in dangerous environments for which female labor is wholly or partially prohibited."⁶⁵ The list includes 44 categories and approximately 380 jobs in fields such as transport, construction, natural resources extraction, manufacturing and industry, refining and processing, and water supply and sanitation (WSS). The prohibited jobs are those that involve heavy physical labor or exposure to harmful and hazardous conditions. The labor code also includes provisions restricting night and overtime work and business trips for pregnant women and female employees with young children (below age 14) without the woman's consent.

⁶⁴ World Bank and International Finance Corporation. 2008. *Uzbekistan Country Profile 2008: Enterprise Surveys*. Washington, DC. In the study conducted, small enterprises were defined as those employing 1–19 people, medium-sized enterprises as those with 20–99 employees, and large enterprises as those with 100 or more employees.

⁶⁵ Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2000. No. 865. Art. 225.

57. The list of jobs appended to the labor code that are restricted to men contradicts nondiscrimination principles in labor law. Such prohibitions also create a situation in which men are expected to risk exposure to hazardous working conditions by virtue of being male. As of 2011, men represented 77.8% of all employees working in conditions that did not conform to norms for sanitation and hygiene in industry and 91.6% of employees working in such conditions in construction.⁶⁶ An approach in line with international standards would require ensuring optimum occupational health and safety for all employees, regardless of sex.

58. In addition to occupational, or horizontal segregation, the labor market also exhibits vertical segregation, meaning that women are underrepresented in leadership and managerial positions. Across all economic sectors, men occupy 73.0% of management positions.⁶⁷ Notably, even in areas where women are well represented or that exhibit greater gender parity such as agriculture, health care and social welfare, and science, women account for only about one-third of managers and, in many cases, account for less than 20.0% of managers. Women are even less likely to hold managerial or leadership positions in the private sector, making up only 12.0% of managers in small enterprises, 9.0% in medium-sized enterprises, and 5.5% of managers in large enterprises.⁶⁸

Informal Employment

59. The Welfare Improvement Strategy, 2008–2010 drew attention to the increasing number of women employed in the informal economy in Uzbekistan.⁶⁹ Women are likely to earn income through small family-based businesses such as farming or handicrafts. Informal work is important in terms of contributing to the family budget, but it also leaves women without the social protection offered by formal employment such as pensions, maternity leave, sick leave, or holidays. Women in rural areas are especially vulnerable in the current labor market due to their lack of competitiveness and the limited number of jobs available to them locally. As a result, women from rural areas are more likely to accept nonqualified, informal, or seasonal work. The second Welfare Improvement Strategy, 2012–2015 committed to the “development and implementation of measures designed to improve working conditions for women, especially in rural areas, and the level of their social security at enterprises, institutions and organizations.”⁷⁰

60. Shuttle trading, or the import and export of small quantities of goods for sale across regional borders, is also an informal industry in which female traders are highly visible. Growth in this type of trade in Uzbekistan has been significantly lower than in other Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) countries, due in large part to restrictive tariff regimes, which levy up to 100% taxes on imported goods.⁷¹ However, based on the observed proportion of female vendors in bazaars (70%–80%) and bazaar-based shuttle traders (50%), it is likely that large numbers of women are involved in this industry. Women from Uzbekistan make up a significant share of border crossers to and from Kazakhstan (38%), the Kyrgyz Republic (77%), and the Tajikistan borders (65% at Dusti and 75% in Patar).⁷² The clear pattern of transiting females could be associated with frequent cross-border trading trips. Projects involving regional connectivity (that is, roads, transport, customs modernization, and trade facilitation) would do well to mainstream gender considerations.

66 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*.

67 Ibid.

68 World Bank and International Finance Corporation. *Uzbekistan Country Profile 2008*.

69 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2008–2010*.

70 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2012–2015*. p. 79.

71 K. Kaminski and S. Mitra. 2010. *Skeins of Silk*. Washington: World Bank.

72 Ibid.

61. Even women who are not engaged in the formal employment or the informal sector contribute to the economy by providing socially useful labor—that is, creating conditions that support the employment of other family members. This contribution has not been calculated in terms of economic benefit, is not factored into national accounting, and is not included when calculating GDP. “Underestimating the role of women in the labor sphere, which is still understood to refer to paid labor, gives rise to social and economic problems associated with the perception of women as inferior and secondary workers in the labor market.”⁷³ Today, there is no stigma attached to unemployed women (as was the Soviet policy toward nonworking people), and, in fact, the predominant discourse supports such woman as fulfilling her “true purpose.” However, experts also note that, in reality, women’s economically vulnerable position in the home is problematic and has even been associated with an increased risk of domestic violence.

Implications of Gender Disparities in the Labor Market

62. Occupational segregation signifies the existence of gender inequalities and impedes inclusive growth. The International Labour Organization (ILO) advises that policy objectives to promote gender equality should aim to “fight against the tendency toward a discrimination- or exploitation-based definition of ‘women’s work’ ... (by broadening) access for women to employment in an enlarged scope of industries and occupations while also encouraging male employment in sectors traditional (sic) defined as ‘female’”⁷⁴ as a means of raising both the average pay and status of the occupation.

63. The horizontal and vertical segregation of the labor market largely explains the gender-based wage gap in Uzbekistan. Women’s incomes are, on average, 64% of men’s incomes.⁷⁵ This reflects the nature of women’s employment and their greater representation as part-time employees or workers in the informal sector, which is connected to women’s need to balance working life with family and domestic responsibilities.

64. Due to their lower levels of formal employment, prevalence in part-time and informal sector work, and lower salaries, women contribute much less than men to household budgets. According to household surveys, women’s income makes up an average of around 13%–14% of a family’s budget.⁷⁶ If women are engaged in entrepreneurial activities, combined with social benefits received by women, the share of their contribution to household budget increases to 20%. In this case, more than half of women’s family income is from social benefits (that is, pensions, disability benefits, and child benefits). Women’s low contribution to family incomes hinders their ability to influence how the household budget is allocated, whether for day-to-day expenditures and large purchases or investment in energy-efficient or labor-saving devices, children’s education, and farming equipment.

65. The labor code sets forth guarantees for maternity leave and establishes parental leave, specifying that child-care leave may be used in whole or in part by the mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, or any other relative caring for the child. Data on the number of men taking child-care leave is unavailable, but given gender-based stereotypes about women’s roles in child care, it is assumed that few men are exercising their right to take parental leave.

73 ADB. 2008. *Gender Expertise of Family and Labor Codes in the Republic of Uzbekistan*. Manila. p. 60.

74 International Labour Organization (ILO). 2010. *Women in Labour Markets: Measuring Progress and Identifying Challenges*. Geneva. p. 40.

75 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). 2009. *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers—Human Mobility and Development*. New York. Table J. p. 183.

76 D. Alimdjanova. 2009. *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women of Uzbekistan, and Ways of Their Economic Empowerment*. Draft report. Manila: Asian Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and Gender Program of the Swiss Embassy. Note: The surveys were small in scale and conducted in Narpay, Samarkand in 2008.

66. Retirement age differs for women and men—age 55 for women with at least 20 years of employment and age 60 for men with at least 25 years of employment.⁷⁷ The earlier retirement age for women is a legacy of the Soviet pension system under which women received credit for years out of the labor force while raising children. Today, women’s shorter career histories and lower salaries, combined with longer life expectancy than men, mean that women often face difficulties surviving on their pensions when they reach retirement age. Thus, the risk of old-age poverty is especially significant for women.

Gender and Labor Migration

67. Labor migration is responsive to local economic conditions and opportunities. Estimates suggest that Uzbekistan is the largest migrant-sending country in Central Asia (in absolute numbers). However, the process of quantifying the number of migrants is complicated by several factors. Migration takes both legal and illegal forms; it can be temporary, especially for seasonal work; and it can involve cross-border movement or can be purely internal, when people move from rural to urban areas.

68. Uzbekistan has experienced a high level of external labor migration, primarily to the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan, for a number of years. Between 2 million and 8 million immigrants from Uzbekistan reportedly residing abroad contribute more than \$1.3 billion in remittances annually, accounting for 8% of GDP.⁷⁸ By other estimates, 7% of the economically active population has been involved in external or internal labor migration.⁷⁹ Some studies suggest that men comprise from 60% to 90% of labor migrants from Uzbekistan working abroad,⁸⁰ whereas others note that labor migration is becoming increasingly feminized. Experts estimate that women account for 11%–18% of the total number of migrant workers from Uzbekistan.⁸¹

69. A complete analysis of the trends and characteristics of labor migration in Uzbekistan is beyond the scope of this assessment. However, it is useful to review several key factors concerning gender and migration. Although external labor migration is distinct from internal migration, many of the factors that influence the decision to migrate for work are common to both forms.

70. Unemployment is the primary “push factor” for both male and female labor migrants. Limited economic opportunities and low wages, especially in rural areas, has made the traditional model of a single male breadwinner supporting a family no longer viable.

Families have to rely on dual incomes, and working women become important contributors to their family budget. However, the sectors in which women were traditionally employed in the [Central Asian] region, such as textile manufacture, clothes manufacture, and others, have considerably reduced their workforce due to the economic crisis and an inability to compete with cheap imported goods. At the same time, all women have to compete with men in sectors such as retail trade and catering in which, previously, most men were not interested in being employed. All these developments contribute to the formation of “push factors” forcing many women to search for jobs in foreign countries and, thus, to consider migration.⁸²

77 Labour Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2000. No. 865. Art. 289.

78 E. Marat. 2009. *Labor Migration in Central Asia: Implication of the Global Economic Crisis*. Washington and Stockholm: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and the Silk Road Studies Program.

79 L. Maksakova. 2006. Feminization of Labour Migration in Uzbekistan. In R. Rodriguez Rios, ed. *Migration Perspectives: Eastern Europe and Central Asia*. Vienna: International Organization for Migration. pp. 133–145.

80 Marat. Labor Migration in Central Asia.

81 UNIFEM. *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*.

82 *Ibid.*, p. 8.

71. Female labor migration is symptomatic of issues that women encounter in the labor market of Uzbekistan generally, such as women's lack of competitiveness in the market and the low cost of women's labor.⁸³ A survey of women and men participating in *mardikor* bazaars⁸⁴ (informal job bazaars) in Tashkent revealed that more than half of the women surveyed traveled to the capital to seek work, due to their inability to find jobs in their places of residence, compared to less than one-third of men who gave this as their reason for migrating.⁸⁵ Other surveys show that high numbers of women are motivated to migrate due to low salaries in their place of origin (68.8%) or due to long-term unemployment. Among internal migrants specifically, all women surveyed had been unemployed for several years, most (48.4%) for 7–10 years.⁸⁶

72. Entrepreneurship is another factor that women cite as a motivation to migrate, especially the opportunity to earn capital to start a business. The majority of surveyed migrants (56.9%) stated that entrepreneurship was the primary reason that they migrated, and of this group, 61.9% of respondents were women.⁸⁷ A separate survey, however, indicated that only 3% of women who migrated from Uzbekistan to the Russian Federation, and 5% of those who migrated from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan, were actually able to save sufficient money to start their own businesses.⁸⁸

73. Both male and female labor migrants in Uzbekistan usually support families. Although one survey of internal labor migrants showed that the share of single men is quite high (44.2%),⁸⁹ a separate survey of women from Uzbekistan working in the Russian Federation indicated that 82.0% of respondents had minor children or elderly family members, with an average of 2.5 dependents per woman.⁹⁰ Given the “lack of agricultural and non-agricultural employment opportunities in rural areas an increasing number of women [are seeking] temporary, informal, and often exploitative employment in the cities.”⁹¹

74. Women are often employed in low-skilled work, much of it in domestic services. In Tashkent, 73.7% of female migrants reported working in household washing and cleaning jobs, followed by work cleaning and preparing land (45.0%). Another survey suggested that internal female migrants are engaged more equally in trade, in agricultural work such as the sorting and packing of fruit and vegetables, and in providing cleaning services. Male migrants tend to work in temporary jobs in construction (69.0%), agriculture (36.2%), and repair work (25.8%).⁹²

75. Based on information from interviews conducted in Tashkent, internal labor migrants are generally young, lack vocational training or professional education, and have not previously been employed in the formal economy.⁹³ Many female migrants stated that they needed vocational education courses to apply for higher-level jobs abroad; 33% of women migrating from Uzbekistan to the Russian Federation and 28% migrating to Kazakhstan responded in

83 E. Abdullaev, ed. 2008. *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan: Social, Legal and Gender Aspects*. Tashkent: United Nations Development Programme and the Gender Program of the Swiss Embassy in Uzbekistan.

84 *Mardikor* are informal markets at which day laborers, typically male, are hired on a temporary and informal basis. Such work is performed without a contract, and workers have little legal protection. Women's participation in *mardikor* is a relatively new phenomenon. See Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs. *Shadow Report*. Also see Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs. *Women's Rights in Uzbekistan*.

85 E. Abdullaev, ed. *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*. p. 43.

86 L. Maksakova. *Feminization of Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*.

87 *Ibid.*

88 UNIFEM. *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*.

89 Abdullaev, ed.. *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*.

90 UNIFEM. *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*. p. 20.

91 Somach and Rubin. *Gender Assessment*. p. 60.

92 Abdullaev, ed. *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*.

93 *Ibid.*

this way.⁹⁴ A case study provided by a representative of an employment agency in Uzbekistan illustrates the situation:

There are a lot of women with experience of working in textile factories, but they have been working with old machinery, which is no longer used in Russian factories. Our women do not have the experience of working with modern equipment; their knowledge is outdated the qualifications of our women do not match their demands; the businesses in [the Russian Federation] require up-to-date specialists.⁹⁵

76. Despite the positive contributions that labor migrants make to the financial well-being of their families, labor migration also has negative repercussions for both women and men. ADB monitoring of its water and sanitation projects has shown that the population of working-age males is very low in some project areas, which means that men may be unavailable to take part in community planning and priority setting. Several ADB project gender action plans include quotas for women's participation in project activities, but in some regions it may be necessary to reexamine the assumption that women are underrepresented and consider the implications of men's absence from their communities. Male migrants returning home may also "bring health problems that compromise their future earning potential and/or aggravate family relations, such as when the migrants have suffered dangerous working or living conditions, experienced abuse related to being trafficked, or become infected with sexually transmitted infections."⁹⁶ Female labor migrants are especially vulnerable to exploitation, labor discrimination, and poor working conditions, and are exposed to the risk of human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

77. Analysis of incomes shows that female migrants consistently earn less than men (by 25%–30%) and that among migrants earning less than \$50 per month, the number of women is double that of men.⁹⁷ A survey of female migrants from Uzbekistan showed that despite increases in the material well-being of the migrants' families, the employment status of the migrants themselves did not improve. Specifically, the level of unemployment among the surveyed women in the home country had increased—partly because the women intended to migrate again and did not seek jobs in Uzbekistan, but also because they were unable to take extended breaks from work abroad. Still, it is significant that "as a rule, women do not return to their previous place of work," which suggests that female migrants may increasingly be undertaking long-term migration.⁹⁸ Migration also may have a particular psychological effect on women. Female migrants are more likely than men to face disruptions in and the deterioration of family relations, and they also face social stigma about leaving their places of residence for work, especially when their husbands or children do not accompany them.⁹⁹

78. The government recognizes the need to expand job opportunities in urban areas to accommodate labor migrants, but has primarily focused on developing "male" industries, with less attention to employment for the women who accompany them or who migrate independently. The Women's Committee, along with the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection and the chamber of commerce, has supported programs "to assist women migrants returning home as a result of the global economic crisis by creating jobs and opportunities for self-employment."¹⁰⁰ Further measures aimed at female migrants are needed, especially to help women find jobs. Further recommendations aimed at women as well as young people as potential migrants include the development of rural entrepreneurship, increasing access to microfinance, and improving the quality and orientation of vocational training to meet local labor market demands.

94 UNIFEM. *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*.

95 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

96 Somach and Rubin. *Gender Assessment*, p. 60.

97 Abdullaev, ed. *Labour Migration in Uzbekistan*.

98 UNIFEM. *A Needs Assessment of Women Migrant Workers*, p. 57.

99 Somach and Rubin. *Gender Assessment*, p. 60.

100 Abdurazakova. *National Mechanisms for Gender Equality*, p. 37.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- Women’s labor force participation rate is lower than men’s, in part as a consequence of child care and household work.
- Women are more likely to work in informal and family-based employment, which does not offer pensions, social insurance, maternity leave, or other benefits.
- The labor market in Uzbekistan shows distinct gender patterns, with women overly represented in public sector jobs (health care and education) and earning lower salaries, and men predominating in technical and more profitable fields (natural resources extraction, construction, and industry).
- Patterns of labor market segregation lead to a significant gender wage gap and also impede inclusive growth.
- Women’s lower salaries and smaller contribution to family budgets mean they have limited influence over household decision making about such things as investment in labor-saving devices, energy-efficient equipment, and children’s education.
- National employment programs for women appear to focus on creating jobs in narrow spheres that are considered appropriate for women and compatible with family responsibilities. Such programs may provide a short-term solution to unemployment but will not necessarily provide skills that are transferable to other markets. They also do not address the underlying causes of women’s lower rates of economic activity.
- Protective legislation limits women’s employment in several sectors such as transport and construction.
- Labor migration is becoming increasingly feminized, and the limitations that women face in the local labor market are also “push factors” for migration. Women are often motivated to migrate by a desire to undertake entrepreneurial activities.
- Women and men both experience the negative impacts of labor migration, such as long-term absence from their communities. Men face increased risk of work-related accidents and exposure to sexually transmitted infections, and women are exposed to abuses related to employment, including discrimination.

Recommendations

- Take special measures to facilitate the entry and reentry into the workforce of women with children. Measures should include the equalization of gender roles and responsibilities.
- Develop home-based and flexible work arrangements for women in profitable growth sectors such as information technology. Job creation for women also could include services to help women “graduate” from home-based work and enter the labor market or start a business.
- Offer training to help women enter nontraditional professions in the private sphere. The role of gender stereotypes in the labor market should be studied to better identify barriers to women entering such fields.
- Note that, due to labor market segregation, women may not benefit from jobs in sectors where ADB operates. Consider special measures to allow women greater access to jobs in those sectors.
- Support policy reform to promote safe working conditions for all employees, regardless of gender, and counter stereotypes about the kind of jobs that women and men can perform in ADB areas of focus.

- Promote adherence to Uzbekistan’s labor laws and principles of nondiscrimination in the workplace, especially in private sector enterprises.
- Ensure that programs on employment, especially technical and vocational education and programs for youth address the factors that lead women and men to migrate for work.
- Improve understanding of the links between women’s motivation to engage in entrepreneurial activities and labor migration. Consider assistance targeting both women who plan to migrate and those who return to facilitate access to start-up capital and business training.

Women’s Participation in Political and Public Life

79. A key feature of an equal society is the equal representation of women and men in the governance of their country and in public life. Women and men often have differing views about governance and distinct priorities for their country’s development. At present, women in Uzbekistan have fewer opportunities than men to influence policy or lobby their interests through formal channels because they are underrepresented in political office.

Women in Elected Office

80. Uzbekistan is an example of how positive measures can be used to facilitate women’s access to political office. During 1992–1998, women’s representation in politics was a fairly steady 9.4%. In 2003, a quota system was introduced into the Law on Elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, requiring political parties nominating members for election to the Oliy Majlis and to *kengashes* (councils) of people’s deputies to include at least 30.0% women among the total candidates. The quota has played a key role in increasing the number of women in the Parliament with each election. Before constitutional reform and the creation of a bicameral parliament, only 7.2% of members of Parliament were women. After the 2004–2005 elections, women gained 17.5% of seats in the legislative chamber (lower house) and 15.0% of seats in the Senate (upper house).

81. Still, women’s representation in elected office remains lower than what is generally considered necessary for an effective voice in decision making—the critical minority of 30% or 40%. Women presently represent 15% of the Senate and 22% of the legislative chamber, or 19% of the full Oliy Majlis. Women’s representation in the lower house has been increasing, but the number of women in the Senate has not changed from the previous election cycle.

82. No women chair any of the 11 parliamentary committees, and only two committees have female deputy chairpersons: the Committee on Labor and Social Affairs and the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Inter-Parliamentary Relations. Only 1 of 13 members of the Committee on Agriculture and Water Management and 2 of 11 members of the Committee on Industry, Construction and Trade are female.¹⁰¹ Women parliamentarians are better represented on committees concerned with labor and social affairs and with democratic institutions and civil society, which suggests that gender stereotypes about women’s responsibilities for social issues may influence women’s position within the legislative branch.

83. The Speaker of the Legislative Chamber and the Ombudsman for Human Rights, an office connected to the Parliament, are both women. During the 2007–2008 elections, a woman was also nominated to stand as a candidate for president of the country for the first time. Although these singular examples suggest that notions about women not being suited for political office may be changing, it is also important to examine the pattern of women’s

101 Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Committees. (In Russian). <http://www.parliament.gov.uz/ru/structure/committee/> (accessed August 2013).

access to elected office at various levels. For example, in 2008, several regions had no female representation, or only a single female member of Parliament, in the Oliy Majlis.¹⁰² The number of women in regional and local representative bodies, the *kengashes* of people's deputies, increases as the status of the office diminishes, suggesting that considerable barriers to women's representation in power positions remain (Table 1).

Table 1: Women in Legislative and Representative Bodies

Representative Body	Proportion of Women (%)
Oliy Majlis	
Senate (upper house)	15.0
Legislative Chamber (lower house)	22.0
Jokargy Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan	6.7
Kengashes of People's Deputies	
<i>Viloyat</i> (regional) and city of Tashkent	16.6
<i>Tuman</i> (district)	16.7
City	20.4
Legislative, representative, and executive offices combined	17.1

Sources: Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2012. *Women in National Parliaments*. (for the Oliy Majlis); and State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2012. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007-2010*. In Russian. Tashkent. Table 6.1. p. 181 (for other representative bodies).

84. The number of women in political parties has increased since the quota system was adopted, and on average, women comprised 37% to almost 50% of the five major parties in 2010 (Table 2).¹⁰³ All political parties have women's divisions dedicated to preparing women to run in elections.¹⁰⁴ However, none of the major political parties' platforms advocate gender equality or take a position on women's rights. It also does not appear that there is any particular correlation between women as party members and the number of female members of Parliament in the Oliy Majlis. Because the electoral quota stipulates a numerical goal but does not regulate how women and men are placed on party lists, it is possible that, although women make up more than two-thirds of the major parties, they occupy non-leadership roles and are thus not put forward as candidates in the same proportion as men.

102 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Consideration of Reports*.

103 Women's Committee of Uzbekistan. *Information Note for the CGA*.

104 National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights. *Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan*.

Table 2: Women's Representation in Political Parties and in the Legislative Chamber, by Party

Political Party ^a	Proportion of Female Party Members (%)	Total Seats	Number of Female Members of Parliament ^b	Proportion of Female Members of Parliament (%)
Uzbekistan Liberal Democratic Party	36.6	53	11	20.8
People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan	40.7	32	8	25.0
Uzbekistan National Revival Democratic Party (Milly Tiklanish)	47.5	31	5	16.1
Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (Adolat)	48.6	19	6	31.6

^a Information on National Democratic Party "Fidokorlar" (not listed in the table) is not available.

^b Three female members of the Parliament are without political party affiliation.

Sources: Information on the proportion of female party members for 2010 was from State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2012. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*. In Russian. Tashkent; election results for the Legislative Chamber (2009–2010) from Central Election Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2010. Elections to the Legislative Chamber End. 13 January; and the number of members of Parliament from Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. List of Deputies. In Russian.

Women in Governance

85. Although the government has undertaken measures to increase the number of women in the executive branch, it appears that women still face considerable obstacles to securing appointments. In 2008, women held only 6.2% of all executive branch positions.¹⁰⁵ Of the 14 ministries, only the Ministry of Economy is headed by a female minister. Women make up 6.5% of the Cabinet of Ministers and hold a mere 4.2% of total ministerial positions.¹⁰⁶ Women do not chair any of the 11 state committees and are only represented among members of two committees. Within the executive branch, women are more likely to be represented in deputy or department director positions. At present, there is one female deputy prime minister (the chairperson of the Women's Committee, a post reserved for a woman), but women account for 14.3% of "high-level directors" in government offices.¹⁰⁷

86. Women are also underrepresented in governing bodies of local authority. The president approves candidates for *hokim* of the 14 regional administrations.¹⁰⁸ There are currently no female *hokims*, but according to data from 2008, women represented 11.9% of deputy *hokims*.¹⁰⁹ In Uzbekistan, local bodies of citizen self-governance, *mahallas*, are organized in villages, settlements, and neighborhoods of town and cities. The *mahalla* is run by a committee of citizens, which is headed by the *aksakal*, an elected position. Of 10,126 *mahallas*, women chair 1,131 *mahalla* committees (11.2%).¹¹⁰

105 Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2010. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2004–2007*. Tashkent.

106 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*.

107 Ibid., p. 181.

108 The Republic of Uzbekistan comprises 14 regional administrations—12 regions (referred to as *viloyat*); the city of Tashkent, which has the status of a region; and Karakalpakstan, an autonomous republic.

109 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Consideration of Reports*.

110 Women's Committee of Uzbekistan. *Information Note for the CGA*.

Structural Barriers to Women Entering Government

87. The reasons for women's underrepresentation in governance structures and institutions vary, but it has been suggested that even highly educated women may lack knowledge about how to run campaigns and may have limited experience in the fields of political science and public administration.¹¹¹ It appears that the electorate may be more willing to consider women as candidates for public office, but the continued influence of gender-based stereotypes should not be underestimated. The dominant norm of the male leader and the female supporting role influences how society perceives the capacity of women to hold top government offices as well as how women themselves view their career choices and goals. In every country, politics is a demanding profession, but the fact that women are also expected to take on the majority of child care and family responsibilities means that a political career may be inconceivable for most women in Uzbekistan.

88. The increasing number of women in the Oliy Majlis, as well as state efforts to increase female leadership, should not be discounted. At the same time, it is important to ensure that attention is not devoted merely to filling numerical quotas but also to addressing the qualitative aspects of women's political participation, such as women's capacity to advance a gender equality agenda, to form coalitions, and to be reelected. The very low representation of women in regional and municipal offices is also a concern because it suggests that women have limited opportunities to participate in local and community decision making on the very issues that could have considerable influence on their daily lives.

Engagement in Civil Society

89. Civil society organizations offer another means for women and men to participate in public life and to influence policy making. Civil society in Uzbekistan includes NGOs established by grassroots initiatives, NGOs that mainly work on government programs and initiatives, NGOs associated with political parties, and NGOs based on community-driven organizations such as *mahallas*.¹¹²

90. In Uzbekistan, women are active in NGOs, and 210 women's NGOs are officially registered with the Ministry of Justice. These include national and local NGOs as well as subdivisions of central women's NGOs such as the Women's Committee.¹¹³ The National Association of Nongovernmental Nonprofit Organizations of Uzbekistan reports that 63 women's NGOs are included among its membership. In this case, women's NGOs include any organization with a mission focused on issues of concern to or involving women. These are not necessarily managed or directed by women, but the national association estimates that 70%–80% of all NGOs belonging to the association are, in fact, headed by women, confirming women's prominent role in social activities in Uzbekistan. In 2011, ADB funded the creation of a directory of gender and development organizations in Uzbekistan, the Gender and Development Database, which is accessible from the ADB website.¹¹⁴

91. Cooperation between the state and NGOs is a part of official policy, but the CEDAW Committee raised concerns about government restrictions imposed on the activities of civil society organizations and the effect this would have on groups that work on gender equality and women's empowerment, specifically.¹¹⁵ The current national action plan to implement CEDAW Committee recommendations responds to this point and confirms that NGOs that address women's issues should be supported.

111 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Replies to the Questionnaire*.

112 ADB and Uzbekistan Resident Mission. 2011. *Civil Society Briefs: Uzbekistan*. Manila: ADB.

113 National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights. *Second National Report of the Republic of Uzbekistan*.

114 ADB. 2012. *Database of Gender and Development Related Organizations*. Consultant's report. Manila (TA 7563-REG). http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/projdocs/2012/44067-012-reg-tacr-01_0.pdf

115 UN CEDAW. *Concluding Observations*.

92. Civil society organizations provide women with a means of participating in the public sphere, but the capacity of most NGOs is also limited. Few NGOs undertake advocacy work, but the Women's Committee is a "rare example [of a quasi-governmental organization] which participates in the protection of women's rights in the labor and domestic sphere."¹¹⁶ About half of all NGOs are inactive due to lack of funding, and limited funding is an especially critical issue for the small number of women's NGOs that are engaged in service provision. Some such NGOs are able to sustain their work by offering fee-based training, as in the case of business women's associations, and at least one women's NGO also operates as a microcredit organization. It is also generally understood that pro-government NGOs are the most active in Uzbekistan and receive more political and financial support; independent NGOs are more limited in their ability to work effectively.

93. An important development is a draft law on social partnership that would establish a model for cooperation between NGOs, public authorities, and the business sector to develop and implement socioeconomic projects, address humanitarian issues, and protect the rights and freedoms of different groups.¹¹⁷ The private sector has historically shown reluctance to cooperate with NGOs, but the draft law defines a role for businesses and would support the provision of grants, tenders ("social orders"), and charitable donations. The Chamber of Commerce of Uzbekistan is also supporting a dialogue on developing a policy on corporate social responsibility, and several large multinational corporations (Carlsberg Uzbekistan and Gazprom, for example) already undertake social programs for employees, address environmental issues, and sponsor charitable work, in some cases collaborating with NGOs on pilot projects.¹¹⁸ Neither women's organizations nor work on gender issues have thus far been supported by the private sector, but as policies on corporate social responsibility take shape, it will be important to explore measures to better include women's NGOs within such initiatives.

94. Information was not available about the existence of NGOs in Uzbekistan that address gender issues relevant to a male audience or that engage men in gender equality initiatives more broadly. An assessment by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recommends that "NGOs should also be encouraged to engage both women and men in their activities and to overcome gender stereotypes about what are 'men's' or 'women's' issues,"¹¹⁹ suggesting that the civil society sector is also influenced by traditional notions of the roles of women and men.

95. Individual and civic activism is generally considered limited in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan, and this situation has historical and cultural roots. Uzbekistan has long been a settled and agricultural society (in contrast to neighboring countries with nomadic traditions), and the *mahalla* developed as both an institution of self-government and an important "community framework for action."¹²⁰ Although the organization and structure of the *mahalla* differs from those of civil society organizations, the *mahalla* nevertheless represents another means by which women and men can be engaged in community-based decision making. Because local branches of the Women's Committee maintain a close working relationship with *mahallas* at the grassroots level, working with the *mahalla* on projects that aim to address women's empowerment directly may be a useful approach.

116 USAID. 2011. *2010 NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia*. 14th ed. Washington, DC. p. 215.

117 The process of drafting the Law on Social Partnership was initiated by several large civil society organizations and is supported by the Trade Union Federation. The draft law has not yet been introduced in the parliament.

118 M. Mametova. 2011. Increasing Social Responsibility. [In Russian]. 2 June. <http://uza.uz/ru/business/15104/>

119 Somach and Rubin. *Gender Assessment*.

120 UNDP. 2011. *Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies*. Regional human development report. Bratislava. p. 30.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- Women’s low level of representation in political office, particularly in decision-making roles and in agencies with mandates covering ADB priority sectors, means that women may not be significantly involved in planning or policy making.
- Government bodies, including elected offices and ministries, may lack the capacity to adequately serve female citizens.
- Women are underrepresented in administrative bodies that set priorities locally and at the level of ADB project implementation. Thus, women’s influence over project design and implementation may be limited.
- Women’s civil society organizations, especially those that work at the grassroots level, can serve as a bridge between citizens, the state, and ADB.

Recommendations

- Support efforts to increase women’s access to formal decision-making posts.
- Take special measures to ensure that women are able to participate in and influence decisions about ADB operations that will affect them and to participate in decision making relevant to ADB projects.
- Women’s NGOs offer an avenue through which ADB can engage with female stakeholders and beneficiaries, especially locally.

Women in Rural Areas and their Role in Agricultural Production

96. Uzbekistan is becoming increasingly urbanized, and as of 2011, only 48.8% of the total population lived in rural areas, compared with 64.2% of the population in 2007.¹²¹ Urban migration reflects the fact that rural regions now provide fewer economic opportunities. Agriculture remains the main source of livelihood for rural communities and is a major employer of women. Farming enterprises represent a mixture of collective or *shirkat* farms (that is, former state farms that were restructured as collective enterprises), cooperatives, individual household plots, and independent farm units. In addition, family plots, or *dekhan* farms, are critically important for food security for a large number of rural households.

97. Despite women’s prominent role in agricultural production, agriculture also exhibits the gender imbalances observed in other sectors, particularly in control over productive resources. Although women comprised more than half of those engaged in the agriculture sector (52.6%) in 2008, only 17,000 (7.2%) of 235,000 registered farms were headed by women.¹²² It also appears that, after restructuring and merging of some *shirkats* into individual farms, the number of female-headed farms was reduced further, to 12,084 (5.5%).¹²³ Women occupy only 4.2% of managerial positions in agriculture and tend to occupy low-paid positions. Women’s salaries are only 82% of men’s salaries in the agriculture sector.¹²⁴

121 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2012. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*.

122 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Consideration of Reports*.

123 Alimdjanova. The Level of Entrepreneurship Development.

124 D. Alimdjanova. 2009. Gender Aspects of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Application for Uzbekistan. Presentation at the FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development, and ILO workshop on Gaps, Trends and Current Research in Gender Dimensions of Agricultural and Rural Employment: Differentiated Pathways out of Poverty. Rome.

98. Women have benefited substantially less than men from privatization of agricultural production and land allocation schemes because state inaction on ensuring women's rights to property has meant that "it is largely men who are in a position to acquire rights to land during privatization, a process that is facilitating the resurgence of patriarchal land rights."¹²⁵ Despite a legal framework that supports equal rights in property ownership, cultural norms and traditions about men's control of land prevail. Thus, leasehold contracts and household plots are formally in the name of the male head of household, and land rights pass to sons, who are expected to care for elderly parents. In cases of divorce, men are more likely to retain land, even family plots. The inequality of the situation means that "women have access to land through the household and provide most of the unpaid family labor that goes into food production on these plots [*dekhan* farms]. However, this does not give women *de jure* nor *de facto* rights to the land."¹²⁶ Women's inability to obtain lease rights to state land puts them at a serious disadvantage if those rights are privatized.

99. At the household level, even when women have a partial interest in land formally registered to the head of household, their lack of formal recognition means that the head of household can make land transactions without involving them.¹²⁷ Furthermore, in the absence of a male head of household, women in the family, or even other family members, may have no legal rights to participate in land transactions.

100. Changes in agriculture are closely linked to an increase in labor migration, both internally and to neighboring Commonwealth of Independent States countries. Population growth, especially in rural areas, has created jobseekers. Yet, the transformation of *shirkat* farms into single-farmer enterprises has resulted in job losses in the agriculture sector and increasing short-term agricultural migration of poor, low-skilled female workers.¹²⁸ In 2005, 32.0% of all working women and 26.4% of working men were employed in agriculture, compared to 28.5% of women and 25.5% of men in 2010.¹²⁹ Nonagriculture employment and self-employment opportunities in rural areas are limited.

101. Women in rural areas have fewer opportunities to find nonagricultural work because the type of professions generally considered suitable for women, such as teaching and primary health care, are more limited outside of city centers. Their domestic burdens also are generally heavier than that of women in urban settings because their duties include looking after livestock, family farms, or small business. Yet, the types of social support that are of particular benefit to women, such as affordable child care, are lacking or are very limited outside of towns and cities.

102. Rural areas are associated with more conservative values and with rigid gender norms, especially with regard to the role of women. Limited access to information and educational and training experiences means that rural communities have less exposure to gender-equitable models of behavior. At the same time, surveys in rural areas indicate that most people "understand the necessity for strengthening the role of rural women in solving social problems in rural regions, especially such issues as developing social infrastructure in villages."¹³⁰

125 Lastarria-Cornhiel, S. and Z. Garcia-Frias. 2005. Return to patriarchy in Uzbekistan. In Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). 2005. Gender and land compendium of country studies. Rome: FAO. pp. 119–121. <ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/008/a0297e/a0297e00.pdf>

126 Ibid.

127 FAO. Uzbekistan Country Report. Gender and Land Rights Database. <http://www.fao.org/gender/landrights/home/en/> (accessed August 2013).

128 E. Abdullaev. 2007. A Portrait of Women Migrant Workers in Uzbekistan. *Development & Transition*. 8. Bratislava and London: UNDP and London School of Economics and Political Science.

129 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2007. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2000–2005*. Tashkent. State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2010 *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*. Tashkent.

130 Global Water Partnership for Central Asia and Caucasus. *Gender Aspects of Integrated Water Resources Management*.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- About 28.5% of all working women are employed in agriculture.
- Rural women's unpaid domestic work is generally more time-consuming and burdensome because it often includes livestock rearing, working on family farms, and microenterprises.
- Agriculture is a primary source of livelihood for rural populations. Although women play a major role in agricultural production, they are underrepresented in groups responsible for decision making in agriculture.
- Female entrepreneurs operating small and micro businesses in agriculture face distinct constraints due to limited land ownership and lease rights.

Recommendations

- Women's empowerment projects should consider the needs and priorities of rural women and ensure that they can meaningfully participate in project planning and implementation. Examples may include providing child care, accommodating women's schedules, or holding meetings in accessible locations.
- Women's entrepreneurship projects should give particular attention to the needs and priorities of female farmers engaged in small business activities.

Human Development Issues for Women and Men

103. The ability of women and men to participate in and gain from development programs, especially in the long term, is dependent on factors such as their health and education. The relative health and educational status of women and men is also affected by economic status and infrastructure issues. ADB's work in sectors such as WSS, natural resources, energy, transport, and development of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and the private sector holds high potential to improve the quantity, quality, and access to health care and educational facilities.

Gender Issues in Education

104. Following the educational reforms in 2005, the educational system in Uzbekistan begins with preschool education and includes primary and secondary education (grades 1–9), provided free by the state. After grade 9, students may enter free specialized secondary education or vocational education programs that are provided by state academic lyceums and professional colleges or vocational schools. Grades 1 through 12 constitute the compulsory educational system. Higher (tertiary-level) education is provided by universities and institutes.

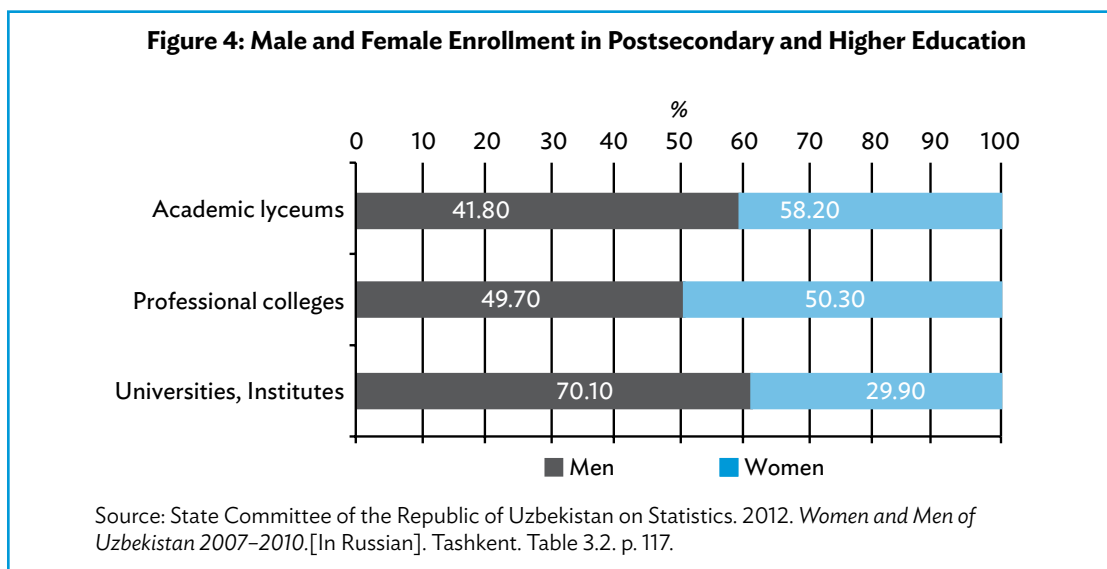
105. Equal access to education is guaranteed in Uzbekistan, and gender parity is evident in the enrollment rates of girls and boys at the primary and secondary levels. Literacy levels are equally high among young and adult women and men.¹³¹

106. Disparities in enrollment emerge at the level of specialized secondary and higher professional education, and particular concern has been expressed over the decreasing attendance rates of young women. In his opening remarks at the international conference

¹³¹ Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and UN Country Team. *Millennium Development Goals Report*.

on Preparing an Educated and Intellectually Developed Generation: The Key to Sustainable Development and Modernization of the Country held in February 2012, the President of Uzbekistan stressed the importance of young people completing 12 years of compulsory education and obtaining specialized skills and professions. He noted “this especially concerns our girls. The most important thing is that a young family is only strong when a girl has a profession, she is independent, she has her own opinion and a place in life.”¹³²

107. Female enrollment rates in postsecondary and higher education are lower than male rates, although the gap may be closing in professional colleges.¹³³ Enrollment rates for the 2010–2011 academic year are shown in Figure 4.



108. Cultural practices and traditions comprise the main specific barriers to girls continuing their education past the secondary level. Disparities in male and female enrollment, especially in tertiary education, are attributed to “the relatively early marriage of a significant number of women (aged 18–20 years—the age to enter higher education) and the existence of gender stereotypes, especially in rural areas, which prevent girls from receiving a complete education.”¹³⁴ Often, parents do not assist girls in entering postsecondary education. “If a girl is admitted to an educational institution on a fee paying basis, it is frequently an obstacle to her study as parents prefer to spend the money for training their sons who will stay with them rather than for their daughters who will ‘leave anyway because they will marry into other families.’”¹³⁵ Families may consider that compulsory secondary education is sufficient for girls, who will be primarily occupied with family life and managing a household.

109. The location of postsecondary and higher educational institutions also limits opportunities for girls. Most such educational facilities are in major cities, requiring travel or dormitory residence. Families are often reluctant for their daughters to “study far from home because they are afraid of the difficulties which [they] might encounter living in a hostel.”¹³⁶

132 I. Karimov. 2012. Twelve Years of Education Is Vital for Us, Especially in Rural Areas. [In Russian] <http://uzbekistan-ri4i.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/12.html>

133 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2004–2007*. Academic lyceums and professional colleges are 3-year institutions that provide a secondary professional education. Universities and institutes are tertiary educational institutions that prepare highly qualified professionals with a two-level program—undergraduate (generally 4 years) and master’s programs (at least 2 years).

134 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2008–2010*. p. 57.

135 UNDP. 2008. *Education in Uzbekistan: Matching Supply and Demand*. Tashkent. p. 146.

136 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

110. NGOs have noted that distance learning and correspondence courses are a preferable option for many young women because they can more easily be combined with family responsibilities.¹³⁷ Distance learning is particularly useful for women in rural regions, and more effort is needed to expand the number of participating universities and course offerings. It also would be useful to support the expansion of distance learning courses in fields that would be compatible with home-based work, are in high demand, and are in profitable fields, such as information and communication technology.

111. Ensuring that girls and boys have equal access to postsecondary and especially technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is particularly relevant, because it paves the way for future generations to find employment. The decreasing number of girls and young women entering higher education has serious implications for their ability to enter the job market and will undoubtedly limit their career opportunities.

112. The government, in collaboration with a number of international partners, has devoted considerable attention and resources to developing a system of secondary special vocational education.¹³⁸ Three-year secondary specialized vocational education became compulsory in 2009, but secondary special vocational education is managed as an independent element of the overall educational system in Uzbekistan. Creating a secondary special vocational education system that is responsive to the needs of the labor market has been a critical goal in Uzbekistan and is an issue that affects all students.

113. There are distinct gender patterns in the subjects that males and females study in both professional colleges and in institutions of higher education (that is, universities and institutes) (Table 3).

Table 3: Female and Male Students by Selected Specialization, Academic Year 2010–2011

Specialization	Professional Colleges		Higher Education Institutions	
	Female students (%)	Male students (%)	Female students (%)	Male students (%)
Education	76.3	23.7	52.9	47.1
Health care ^a	75.6	24.4	43.8	56.2
Transport and communications	28.7	71.3	10.4	89.6
Agriculture	39.6	60.4	17.7	82.3
Industry and construction	39.6	60.4	16.5	83.5
Economics and law	46.9	53.1	19.3	80.7

^a This category includes students specializing in physical fitness and sports.

Source: State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2012. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*. [In Russian]. Tashkent. Table 3.14. p. 134 and Table 3.18. p. 142.

¹³⁷ Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs. *Shadow Report*.

¹³⁸ For a description of international assistance, see UNDP. *Education in Uzbekistan*.

114. An analysis of TVET enrollment indicates that overall “there is general gender equity in the public TVET system” but that differences appear in areas of study and the selection of academic subjects.¹³⁹ The same study noted the most popular areas of study are agriculture, manufacturing, and health care. The “majority of offered specialties have [an] apparent ‘male’ face, and there is still limitation of options for girls, which is driven both by traditional choice and availability of new profiles.” Also of note, “the training curriculum is not flexible enough to allow students to change profile at a later stage of study.”¹⁴⁰ Young women tend to enter “female” fields of study, such as health care, teaching, embroidery, sewing, and hairdressing, whereas young men prefer construction, engineering, and transport and communications, fields that generally lead to higher-paying jobs.

115. Historically, there has been and continues to be a surplus of specialists in the education and the health sectors, resulting in high levels of competition for employment in these fields.

116. The predominance of men receiving higher education and technical training in fields that are experiencing growth (that is, industry, transport, and agriculture) suggests that women may not have equal access to such fields in the future. Measures to promote gender balance in choice of academic subjects and areas of study such as setting enrollment quotas or providing scholarships, stipends, or other incentives to enter nontraditional fields, should be considered (Box 3). Furthermore, although data on how women and men fare in the job market after completing TVET courses is not available, 92.1% of 2007–2008 academic year graduates were employed in 2009, but only 46.0% of them were working in their specialization.¹⁴¹ Sex-disaggregated data on post-TVET employment would be useful in identifying constraints and gaps and for better planning of TVET.

Box 3: Initiative on Female Academic Achievement

The Women’s Committee annually awards talented girls and young women prizes for their academic achievement in literature, art, science, culture, and education. Since 1999, when the national Zulfia State Prize was created, 168 girls aged 14–22 have received prizes and state scholarships, the majority in the fields of science and education. Although it is not apparent whether the Zulfia prize is intended to promote nontraditional fields of study among girls, it is worth noting that past prize winners have included female graduate students in agriculture (grain management), economics, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and chemistry.

Source: Women’s Committee of Uzbekistan.

117. Finally, the insufficient number of affordable preschool facilities in Uzbekistan is frequently cited as a critical factor influencing women’s ability to work outside the home. The number of children attending preschools has decreased annually since 2001, and rural areas are the most affected.¹⁴² Preschool attendance rates are 22% nationally but only 13% in rural areas.¹⁴³

139 European Training Foundation. 2010. *Uzbekistan: ETF Country Information Note*. Turin. p. 4.

140 *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.

141 Center for Economic Research. 2009. Narrowing the Gap between Vocational Education and the Labor Market. *Development Focus* 2.

142 The overall number of girls and boys attending preschool decreased from approximately 624,000 in 2000 to 520,000 in 2010, with consistently falling rates in rural areas. See State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. 2007. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2000–2005. Tashkent and Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*.

143 United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). Children and Women in Uzbekistan. Fact Sheet. http://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/media_11440.html (accessed August 2013).

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- Gender parity in enrollment rates exists at the primary level, but female enrollment rates at the postsecondary and tertiary levels are lower than for males and appear to be decreasing.
- At the postsecondary level, gender-streaming is evident, with young women dominating traditionally female areas of study such as health and education and young men concentrated in technical fields such as transport and communications, construction, and engineering. The technical fields generally correlate with jobs in higher-paying sectors, whereas humanities studies lead to work in lower-paid public sector jobs with higher competition.
- Both cultural practices (such as marriage after completion of secondary school) and logistical issues (such as the location of educational institutions) limit girls' access to postsecondary education.
- Improvements to technical vocational education and training are especially needed in rural areas, where labor migration rates are high.
- The lack of accessible preschool and child-care facilities inhibits women with young children from reentering the workforce.

Recommendations

- Support assessment and analysis of the factors that contribute to decreasing female enrollment rates, especially factors connected with economic status and infrastructure insufficiencies, such as location, cost, or lack of rural transport.
- Promote technical and vocational education and training for girls.
- Support measures to promote nontraditional fields of study for women in construction, transport, energy, and infrastructure through special initiatives such as scholarships, internships, mentoring programs, and incentives for industry to recruit women.
- Undertake gender analysis of the secondary special vocational education system. In particular, examine whether girls have access to fields of study that correspond to sectors of labor market demand and employment opportunities, such as information and communication technologies.
- Obtain support from the private sector and industry to award national prizes to high-achieving female students, who may serve as role models to others. The prizes could be linked to recruitment, workplace internships, or other forms of employment support.
- Encourage government to include support for preschool education in rural and urban development projects. Consider such issues as affordability and access, and include indicators that would measure the effect on women's employment.

Gender Issues in Health

118. The effect of gender differences on the health of individual women and men is a complex subject, and a full discussion is beyond the scope of this assessment. There are currently no health-related projects in the ADB portfolio for Uzbekistan, but historically ADB has supported initiatives on maternal and child health. Furthermore, several of the gender differences in health outcomes in Uzbekistan may have relevance to future ADB projects.

119. Considerable state attention has been devoted to improving reproductive health indicators, with a particular emphasis on maternal and child health. Rates of maternal mortality have been reduced, but the majority of maternal deaths are still a result of preventable causes (primarily hemorrhages).¹⁴⁴ Although the vast majority of maternal deaths occur within the health care system, there are disparities in urban and rural health care facility services, with 45% of deaths occurring in rural district hospitals.¹⁴⁵ The government acknowledges that a combination of challenges hinders improvement of maternal health, among them the prevalence of anemia, poor nutrition, “economic pressures that keep women doing hard physical work while pregnant, [and] lack of financial means [that] prevents many women from receiving adequate antenatal care.” Significantly, the “inadequate support provided by men,” in combination with women’s lack of awareness of health risks, also contributes to maternal mortality.¹⁴⁶ Further study is needed to establish the role played by deficiencies in infrastructure, such as lack of access to clean water, inconsistent energy supply, and limited transport, in poor maternal health outcomes and maternal mortality.

120. The overall focus of reproductive health programs has been on women, with “only secondary efforts to include men’s involvement in family planning,” despite high rates of sexually transmitted infections among some groups of men.¹⁴⁷ Data indicate that men are at particular risk for HIV infection. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 54% of newly diagnosed infections in 2010 were among males. The dominant mode of transmission was intravenous drug use (67% of newly reported cases where transmission mode was known) followed by heterosexual contact (31%).¹⁴⁸

121. Although it has not been studied in depth in Uzbekistan, labor migration is associated with increased risk for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, especially among male migrants. In turn, female partners of male migrants are placed in a vulnerable position, due to lack of awareness about risk factors and the inability to negotiate safe sex practices. Greater efforts are needed to provide women and men, including youth, with comprehensive information on reproductive and sexual health and to increase services tailored to men.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- Improvements have been made in maternal health, but further work is needed to address risk factors for poor maternal health outcomes and to improve men’s participation in reproductive and sexual health projects.

Recommendations

- Consider both positive and negative health outcomes to local populations when planning infrastructure projects, such as improved access to maternal health care vis-à-vis increased vulnerability to sexually transmitted infections.

144 United Nations Population Fund. 2010. *A Review of Progress in Maternal Health in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*. 2nd ed. New York.

145 Ibid.

146 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and UN Country Team. *Millennium Development Goals Report*. p. 41.

147 Somach and Rubin. *Gender Assessment*. p. 62.

148 World Health Organization (WHO). 2011. *Uzbekistan HIV/AIDS Country Profile*. Geneva.

Gender-Based Violence

122. Gender-based violence, especially domestic violence, is a critical issue for women in Uzbekistan. Globally, domestic violence is linked to women's subordinate role and a patriarchal system that privileges male power and control. The most frequently cited reasons for violence in the family were women's "independent decision making" (20%) and negligence in carrying out household duties (19%).¹⁴⁹

123. Several positive steps have been taken to improve the response to domestic violence. A draft Law on the Prevention of Violence in the Family has been developed, alongside amendments to the relevant articles of the criminal and administrative codes, though these legislative initiatives have yet to be adopted.¹⁵⁰ The lack of a law means that there is no legal definition of domestic violence or violence against women and no special liability for perpetrators of such violence. Instead, domestic violence incidents are treated under general criminal law provisions. State efforts to address domestic violence have primarily involved conferences, seminars, and training events aimed at medical professionals, law enforcement officers, judges, and *mahalla* committee members.¹⁵¹

124. Particular attention has also been given to developing centers that offer social support to women victims of domestic violence and their children. The Women's Committee created and operates Women's Social Adaptation Centers in 10 regions, which coordinate with the Women's Helpdesk, a program of the Civic Initiatives Support Center and the United Nations Population Fund. Through these initiatives, women receive psychological support and legal counseling. A shelter for domestic violence victims was opened in Bukhara in 2007, the only such shelter in the country. From 2007 to 2008, 13 women and 12 of their children received temporary housing assistance through the shelter.¹⁵² Such centers are important, but their capacities are also limited. The centers do not receive state funds and thus are dependent on outside financing.¹⁵³ Neither the Women's Social Adaptation Centers nor the Women's Helpdesk are devoted exclusively to addressing violence against women. Both institutions also conduct activities related to women's entrepreneurship and employment, raising questions about the capacity and specialized expertise of staff members and the ability of the centers to meet safety requirements and to address the complex and often long-term needs of domestic violence victims.

125. Domestic violence harms women's well-being and includes economic and social costs for the family, the community, and society. Alongside physical and psychological abuse, domestic violence can take the form of control over a woman's earnings and prohibitions against working. NGOs in Uzbekistan have documented cases in which "[the] husband and his parents prohibit the wife to work ... [m]any housewives have received higher education and were working before marriage, but fear of the wife's economic independence and the related status in society serves as a motive for prohibition to work, dependence, and violence."¹⁵⁴ A 2010 study confirmed that violence took the form of financial restrictions in 9% of surveyed households.¹⁵⁵

149 Institute for Social Research and UNFPA. *Mutual Relations in a Family*. p. 24.

150 United Nations Secretary-General's Database on Violence against Women. 2009. *Response of the Government of Uzbekistan to the Questionnaire on Violence against Women*. <http://webapps01.un.org/vawdatabase/home.action>

151 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Consideration of Reports*.

152 Ibid.

153 International Gender Policy Network. 2008. *Development Cooperation and Gender: Regional Advocacy Report for Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia*. Prague.

154 Coalition of Uzbek Women's Rights NGOs. *Shadow Report*. p. 13.

155 Institute for Social Research and UNFPA. *Mutual Relations in a Family*.

126. Women’s lower economic status and lack of financial independence are primary reasons why women remain in violent relationships—living independently while supporting children alone does not appear to be a viable option. After feelings of shame and fear of the abusive spouse or of dividing the family, victims cited financial dependence as the reason for not seeking outside assistance in cases of domestic violence (14% of cases).¹⁵⁶

127. Although the economic impact and costs of gender-based violence have not been studied in Uzbekistan, assessments elsewhere show that economic losses due to direct costs (including expenditures related to services for women, medical care, law enforcement, legal proceedings, and property damage) and indirect costs to the private sector (such as lost or reduced productivity at work or absenteeism) amount to billions of dollars per year.¹⁵⁷ Prevention efforts are generally thought to be more cost-effective than treating the consequences of violence once it has occurred.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Interventions

Key Findings

- The lack of a legal definition of domestic violence and of statistical data inhibits the development of a comprehensive legal and social response.
- Gender-based violence is a critical barrier to achieving gender equality in Uzbekistan, and such violence has implications both for women’s economic independence and for the economic well-being of the country.
- Women’s economically vulnerable position is a factor preventing them from leaving violent relationships in cases of domestic violence.
- The current system of social support for victims of domestic violence is not sufficient to provide the comprehensive services needed by victims.

Recommendations

- Support the institutionalization of collecting statistics on domestic violence within capacity-building projects to gather gender-sensitive data.
- Support research and analysis of the connections between women’s economic status and vulnerabilities to gender-based violence, especially domestic violence.
- Encourage the government to include the provision of services for domestic violence victims within urban development and urban planning projects.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ United Nations. 2006. *Ending Violence against Women: From Words to Action*. New York. Also see WHO. 2004. *The Economic Dimensions of Interpersonal Violence*. Geneva.

CHAPTER III

Mainstreaming Gender in ADB Operations

128. Strategy 2020, ADB's long-term strategic framework, includes gender equity as one of its five drivers of change.¹⁵⁸ Strategy 2020 notes that women are the largest group excluded from the benefits of economic expansion in ADB's regions, and that gender equity is essential to reduce poverty, improve living standards, and sustain economic growth.

129. ADB's policy on gender and development adopts gender mainstreaming as a key strategy for promoting gender equity and women's empowerment.¹⁵⁹ ADB adopts a dual approach to promote gender equality and women's empowerment: by treating gender as a crosscutting concern in all social and economic processes and by adopting targeted measures to address gender disparities.

Water Supply and Sanitation

130. Uzbekistan is a doubly landlocked desert country, so ensuring access to safe water and sanitation is crucial. Water is becoming increasingly scarce in the region, and experts predict that supplies to Uzbekistan will only decrease due to climate change and increased upstream demand.

131. Upon gaining independence, Uzbekistan inherited a well-developed network of water supply and sanitation (WSS) infrastructure, but the system is now outdated, in need of repair, and inefficient. Although most urban and rural areas are supplied with water, water mains in cities and towns have not been replaced in more than a decade, which leads to frequent breakage, intermittent water supply, and contamination.

132. Assessing the extent to which urban and rural populations have access to safe drinking water and sanitation is complicated by varying statistics. According to official estimates in 2006, "the availability for urban users is high, ranging from 83% to 95%. Among rural users, it ranges from 32% in Karakalpakstan to 88% in Jizzakh. On average, 6% of the urban population does not have access to safe drinking water; in rural areas, this rises to 21%."¹⁶⁰ In 2010, an estimated 98% of urban and 81% of rural residents had access to drinking water from improved water sources.¹⁶¹ Drinking water is generally piped into the premises in 85% of urban areas, but rural coverage for piped water is only 26%. Data compiled by UNDP in 2011 indicate that approximately 70% of rural populations were living in dwellings that were not connected to a public water network.¹⁶²

133. When water is not piped into the dwelling or yard, the most common sources of water are public standpipes or hand pumps (used by 23% of surveyed households), wells or boreholes (used by 13%), protected wells or springs (used by 6%), and water delivery from tanker trucks

158 ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila.

159 ADB. 2003. *Gender and Development*. Manila.

160 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and UN Country Team. *Millennium Development Goals Report*. p. 57. See also Government of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2008–2010*.

161 WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program. 2012. *Estimates for the Use of Improved Sanitation Facilities: Uzbekistan*. http://www.wssinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/resources/UZB_san.pdf

162 UNDP. *Beyond Transition*.

(used by 6%). Only 5% of households make use of unimproved water supplies.¹⁶³ According to an ADB assessment, even households, clinics, and schools that make use of public standpipes experience frequent service interruptions. Remote areas depend on *suvokava* departments (district water supply and delivery organizations) to deliver water to rural households, clinics, and schools, but such deliveries are not sufficient to satisfy high demand for potable water.¹⁶⁴ Even households connected to water pipes suffer from instability and fluctuations in the supply or are located at considerable distances from the main city water pipelines and experience low water pressure and limited water schedules during peak hours.¹⁶⁵ Even when affordability is not an issue, families purchase roof tanks for the storage of water for use during off-periods. Other households install small hand pumps and must use very hard and salty groundwater for domestic needs and sometimes for drinking.

134. Access to sanitation shows a similar pattern. As of 2006, only 38% of the country's urban population had access to centralized sanitation or municipal sewers, compared with 3%–5% of the rural population.¹⁶⁶ A more detailed survey found that urban residents without access to a piped sewer system used some type of pit latrine. Most rural residents were using pit latrines, only 4.8% of which were a flush type, and only 0.3% of rural residents had access to a piped sewer system.¹⁶⁷ A recent survey found that water deficiencies have hindered the development of sewage systems in several regions. Few respondents had access to sanitation facilities, and a lack of sewage systems was mentioned by 87.2% of respondents in the Kashkadarya region, by 73.8% in the Navoi region, and by 65.8% of urban residents and 95.9% of rural residents in Fergana.¹⁶⁸ Most households in the ADB project areas in the Fergana Valley do not have bathrooms with piped water supply or showers; instead, they use cesspits. Likewise, clinics and schools generally are not connected to a central sewage system.

Relevant Government Policies and Commitments

135. Several plans and programs have been adopted to rehabilitate water supply systems and increase coverage to both urban and rural areas. The National Water Supply and Wastewater System Development and Modernization Plan, 2009–2020 aims to achieve close to 100% water supply coverage in most urban areas and 85% in rural areas by 2020. Likewise, a presidential decree on infrastructure construction for 2011–2015 includes an objective to supply all urban and rural water consumers with meters by 2012.¹⁶⁹ However, such policy documents generally cover expansion of coverage and improving health and hygiene but do not include a gender perspective. Project objectives are described in terms of high-level outcomes, and the plans do not make use of any methodologies to capture information about the extent to which women and men will benefit from such improvements.

136. The Welfare Improvement Strategy, 2012–2015¹⁷⁰ sets targets for expanding access to public utilities and improving their quality, measured mainly in terms of areas to be provided with a centralized supply of drinking water and pipelines to be repaired or replaced.

163 UNICEF and State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2007. *Uzbekistan: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children—Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006*. Final report. Tashkent. ADB-supported household surveys conducted in the Bukhara, Jizzakh, and Samarkand regions mirrored these findings, with a slightly larger portion of the population receiving water delivered by tankers or using open water supplies. See ADB. 2011. *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*. Social and Poverty Analysis. Unpublished consultant's report. Manila (TA 7740-UZB). p. 66.

164 Information from socioeconomic analysis reports carried out under ADB WSS projects in the Fergana Valley, Kashkadarya, and Termez. 2010.

165 Institute for Social Research. 2011. *Results of Sociologic Survey*. Second inception report. Tashkent (TA 7671-UZB). p. 38. Households were surveyed in the Navoi, Fergana, and Kashkadarya regions.

166 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and UN Country Team. *Millennium Development Goals Report*.

167 WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program. *Estimates for the Use of Improved Sanitation Facilities*. 2012 Country and Regional Drinking Water and Sanitation Coverage Estimates for 1990, 2000 and 2010. Excel file that can be accessed from http://www.childinfo.org/sanitation_data.php

168 Institute for Social Research. *Results of Sociologic Survey*.

169 Presidential Decree No. PP-1446. 2010. On the Acceleration of Development of Infrastructure, Transport, and Communication Construction in the Years 2011–2015. 21 December.

170 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2012–2015*.

The strategy outlines specific activities that require investment such as the reconstruction of WSS systems and the installation of water meters in domestic properties, but these activities and objectives are not linked to the gender and development issues outlined elsewhere in the strategy.

Gender Issues Related to Water Supply and Sanitation

137. The critical weaknesses of the current WSS system affect both women and men in substantially similar ways, and improving access to safe water and sanitation is directly related to reducing poverty and improving overall public health. However, reviewing the gender dimensions of WSS projects reveals that, although women “are the primary collectors, transporters, users, and managers of domestic water and promoters of home and community-based sanitation activities ... in many societies women’s views are not systematically represented in decision-making bodies. WSS projects provide major opportunities to close this gap.”¹⁷¹

138. **Improvements to water supply can ease women’s household workload.** Women are the major users of water in households (for preparing meals, cleaning, laundering, bathing children, tending household gardens and livestock, and other domestic duties) and are primarily responsible for collecting and purchasing water for domestic use as well as for storing and managing household water. Hence, women are affected more acutely by poor water quality. In a majority of surveyed households (58%), an adult female usually collects water, followed by adult males in 36% of households, but there are considerable regional differences. For instance, in households in the western region, it is much more likely for water to be collected by adult women (69%), compared with the eastern region, where water collection is shared more evenly between women and children under age 15 (both male and female).¹⁷² Although it is relatively rare for children to collect water, girls more often perform this task than boys, except in the eastern region. If water collection requires travel of several kilometers and the transport of heavy loads, men perform this work. Water collection is time-consuming, and women and children may need to collect water two to three times per week. Household surveys in rural regions report that the distance to the nearest water source varies from 1 to 3 kilometers, and women report spending from 1.5 to 2.0 hours per day collecting water.¹⁷³

139. Even when households do have access to piped water, the water may not be safe to drink, and the supply is not guaranteed. Urban female-headed households living in apartments are generally limited to the piped water supply and have few alternatives other than purchasing water. In winter, piped water supply to multistory apartment buildings can be compromised when electrical water pumps do not work due to electricity outages. In these situations, women must carry water upstairs and use bathrooms outside of the building.

140. **The gendered impacts of lack of access to clean water and sanitation services.** Women and men have different water and sanitation needs, especially in public places. Women work mainly in public institutions such as schools and clinics, whereas men are more likely to be employed by private enterprises. Many public institutions have unsatisfactory WSS facilities. According to an ADB survey in the Fergana Valley, students in educational institutions, including preschools, schools, and colleges, usually only have access to unisex latrines without piped water or hand-washing facilities.¹⁷⁴ Such sanitary conditions present risks for illness and, in schools, may also be linked to absenteeism among girls, especially adolescents. The situation in clinics and hospitals is similar, resulting in female doctors and teachers frequently engaging

171 ADB. 2006. *Gender Checklist: Water Supply and Sanitation*. Manila. p. 3.

172 UNICEF and State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Uzbekistan: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children*.

173 Global Water Partnership for Central Asia and Caucasus. *Gender Aspects of Integrated Water Resources Management*.

174 Islohotkonsaltservis Group (IKS). 2010. *Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment: Tranche 2. Poverty and social assessment*. Tashkent: ADB.

in water delivery activities at the expense of their main professional responsibilities. It is important that WSS projects that include renovating public buildings consider the hygiene and sanitation needs and priorities of women and girls.

141. Women’s responsibility for family hygiene and child care. The poor quality of water and sanitation particularly affects women because they are responsible for child care and family hygiene. The majority of households, both urban and rural, treat water before use, and women generally are responsible for this task. Most households (97%–99%) boil water or let it stand and settle for some time. A small number use solar disinfection systems.¹⁷⁵ The ability to boil water, however, depends on access to fuel and energy supplies, and due to frequent gas and electricity shortages, families often consume water that has not been boiled. The use of untreated water can result in waterborne illnesses such as diarrhea, to which young children are especially susceptible. In rural areas, people may consume untreated water from irrigation and drainage canals, which may contain impurities such as chemical fertilizers. According to ADB-supported focus group discussions and surveys, the incidence of diarrhea is five to seven times lower in households with piped water than in households that consume water from open reservoirs.¹⁷⁶ Due to their traditional caregiving roles, women are especially burdened when children or other family members in the household are ill.

142. Chronic shortages and inadequate water supply affect domestic and personal hygiene. Women are unable to clean their houses as often as necessary, contributing to the incidence of illnesses related to unsanitary conditions. A survey in the Fergana Valley found that women and girls bathe less frequently when water in the household is limited. Men and boys, who do not face the same social restrictions as women, are able to bathe publicly in rivers and canals.¹⁷⁷

143. Water supply and women’s productive and income-earning activities. Improved access to WSS should not be limited to reducing women’s household workloads. Improved WSS services also can expand women’s access to income-generating activities.

144. Home-based work and micro and small enterprises such as baking, preparing food, or making confectionaries require water and hygienic conditions. Even carpet weaving requires water for the dyeing process. Safe WSS would provide women with opportunities to operate small enterprises such as hairdressing salons, cafes, or catering businesses. Although some national programs recognize the need for improved small business connectivity to basic services such as electricity and gas supply, water supply, and heating, the extent to which women’s home-based production was considered is unclear.¹⁷⁸ It is critically important that endeavors to develop women’s entrepreneurship also consider whether the current WSS system meets the demands of micro and small businesses run from home. Further study is needed to understand the connections between the viability and profitability of women’s businesses and WSS insufficiencies.

145. Women’s participation in decision making about water supply and sanitation. Studies have shown that in Uzbekistan, there are clear differences between poor and nonpoor families’ patterns of household expenditure on water. For instance, poor families spend a greater share of their household income on food items and often try to save money by reducing their consumption of purchased drinking water. Wealthier families are able to use private cars to bring water from remote areas where there are relatively safer sources of water, such as reservoirs.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁵ UNICEF and State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Uzbekistan: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children*.

¹⁷⁶ Research conducted by the Social Center Tahlil in the towns of Galaasiya (Bukhara region) and Karmana (Navoi region), and in the city of Termez in 2009.

¹⁷⁷ IKS. Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment.

¹⁷⁸ Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2011b. *Presidential Resolution on the Year of Small Business and Entrepreneurship 2011 Program*. [In Russian]. Tashkent.

¹⁷⁹ IKS. Water Supply and Sanitation Services Investment.

It is important to understand how women factor into decision making about how the household budget will be used for water, because they are the primary water users in the home.

146. Because few women occupy leadership roles in local government, where decisions are made about WSS improvements, their priorities and interests are given limited consideration in formal decision making on water issues or in municipal planning and budgeting.

147. At the community level, ADB has included in WSS projects, activities to increase women's participation in water consumer groups and in consultative processes. Other organizations such as UNDP have also taken measures to ensure that women are included in community water management activities. Such efforts appear to be localized and project-specific. The extent to which a system or structure for women's participation in water and sanitation planning has been developed, beyond individual projects, could not be determined.

148. The Women's Committee and individual women have been active in promoting hygiene in WSS projects. Women are important stakeholders in this area, given their responsibilities for child care and domestic hygiene and their social and educational roles. However, women's high level of participation in such work is not necessarily an indicator of increased participation in decision making. In fact, there is a risk that women's engagement in promoting hygiene could reinforce stereotypes about women's roles in unpaid community or socially oriented activities.

149. **Gender mainstreaming in the water supply and sanitation sector.** The primary actors in the WSS sector have limited capacity to undertake gender mainstreaming or to advance gender-aware policies and strategies. Different line ministries (such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources; the Ministry of Health, especially the Department for Sanitation and Epidemiology; and the Uzbekistan Communal Services Agency, Uzkommunkhizmat) share responsibility for WSS projects. Uzkommunkhizmat is in charge of water and sanitation services nationally, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources coordinates regional water agencies in rural areas. It is difficult to gauge women's representation in policy-making positions in WSS overall, but nationally, there is no female leadership in either ministry that addresses water and sanitation. Men hold top leadership positions in the Uzbekistan Communal Services Agency and direct each of the agency's divisions.¹⁸⁰ Further information about staffing or human resources practices in this agency or in water supply companies was not available for the assessment.

150. Gender balance in staffing is itself an important component of gender mainstreaming and facilitates the development of gender-aware policies. Gender action plans under ADB WSS projects call for gender balance in project management units, but equal representation of women may not be sufficient to promote gender-aware policies. Gender mainstreaming requires that consideration of gender issues become standard practice, and this generally requires promotion and oversight of such practices by high-level management. It also would be useful for development partners working on WSS issues to coordinate on common schemes for the inclusion of women in key positions in the WSS sector.

151. See Appendix 2 for points to consider in preparing WSS projects.

¹⁸⁰ See the Uzbekistan Communal Services Agency (<http://www.uzkommunkhizmat.uz/UKH%20%20Rukovodstvo.htm>) for information on management, and (<http://www.uzkommunkhizmat.uz/UKH%20%20Struktura.htm>) for the structure of the agency.

Natural Resources

152. Management of natural resources is important because agriculture is the main source of livelihood for Uzbekistan's rural population. Irrigation and drainage are key to agricultural production, and water supply is critical to productivity, competitiveness, and environmental management. Limited water resources affect food production, which could potentially result in food insecurity if the population continues to increase. Currently, poor infrastructure and deteriorating equipment contribute to substantial water losses and to losses in agriculture production and farm income.

153. As in other sectors, natural resources issues can have far-reaching consequences for the entire population. It has been noted that irrigation projects can be considered pro-poor, and improving nonviable systems may be more cost-effective than creating social safety nets. In addition, gross domestic product (GDP) growth in agriculture is considered much more effective in raising incomes for the poor than growth in nonagricultural sectors.¹⁸¹

Relevant Government Policies and Commitments

154. Government policy and programs on natural resources, specifically on water resources management, are generally silent on gender and make no reference to gender equality in access to land or water resources. Various national policies supporting rural development, improving irrigation, and managing water resources and land improvement make no reference to gender issues, the need for women's involvement in decision making in these areas, women's participation in water user associations (WUAs), or improving the lot of female farmers.¹⁸² State programs and strategies are focused more on establishing regulatory and structural improvements and less on instituting temporary special measures that reduce gender gaps in participation and benefits from natural resource policies and projects.

Gender Issues Related to Natural Resources

155. **Women's participation in water user associations.** Water user associations (WUAs) were introduced to take over the role of state and collective farms in managing irrigation systems. They are independent institutions with members nominated from private farms and households. The leadership includes a chairperson, a board, and various management committees. An important role of WUAs is the management and resolution of conflicts and disputes that arise between water users and the management of irrigation systems. For women in agriculture production, representation and participation in WUAs is a significant way to be involved in formal decision-making processes about water use.

156. In 2007, there were 1,407 WUA-registered farms in Uzbekistan, yet "very few involved women in water resources management."¹⁸³ A case study of WUAs in the Fergana region noted that women made up 52.0% of agriculture workers but only 12.5% of farm leaders in one target area (Akbarabad, Uzbekistan). Only 3 of 40 WUA members were women, and there was only 1 woman among the 7 WUA council and committee members.¹⁸⁴ Female farmers from the Jizzakh, Namangan, Samarkand, and Tashkent regions who participated in focus groups under another study confirmed that none of these regions had female WUA members.¹⁸⁵

181 ADB. Water Resources Assessment for Country Partnership Strategy: Uzbekistan, 2012–2016. Unpublished.

182 See Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2008–2010*; Resolution of the President No. PP-1046. 2009. 2009 National Program for the Year of Rural Development and Improvement. 26 January; and Resolution of the President No. PP-817. 2008. State Program on Land Reclamation for 2008–2012. 19 March.

183 Alimdjanova. *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*. p. 12.

184 E. Abdullaev and M. Yakubov. 2006. *Assessing the Gender Performance of the Water Users Associations of Central Asia: Case Study from IWRM Fergana Project*. Tashkent: International Water Management Institute and Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Water Coordination Commission.

185 Alimdjanova. *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*.

157. Women’s lack of representation in WUAs has serious repercussions on their ability to take part in decisions about issues that directly affect their livelihoods. Women make up the majority of land users and workers of *dekhan* farms, and most irrigation conflicts revolve around the irrigation of such farms. Priority is given to irrigating large leasehold farms that produce wheat and cotton under government orders. Thus, although *dekhan* plots account for more than 80% of agriculture production and ensure food security for a large number of households, they are deprived of water. Unauthorized watering of garden plots is a permanent problem and a source of conflict between private farmers, the population, and WUAs. There are no specific regulations on equal water distribution for *dekhan* farms under the WUA scheme.

158. A recent gender assessment drew attention to government plans to consolidate farms, which would result in a 10-fold decrease in the number of farm owners and thus representatives in WUAs. Because women are already underrepresented among farm owners, this change could have further negative consequences on their ability to participate in the resolution of disputes about water access. It has been suggested that it will be important to base WUA representation not only on land ownership but also on land use and to include representation of residential water users, ensuring greater opportunities for women’s participation.¹⁸⁶

159. Women’s low representation in WUAs is explained by the fact that WUA membership and governance structures make no provision for women’s participation. In some countries, water and irrigation management policies mandate quotas for women’s participation. In Uzbekistan, it is not culturally acceptable for women to occupy the position of *merab* (a manager of agriculture water supplies), and this stereotype is widely upheld by male WUA members.

160. However, the taboo on women attending public meetings, observed across Central Asia, is not strong in Uzbekistan. It has been suggested that women’s participation in WUAs could be improved by deliberately inviting women to meetings, supporting the participation of a small group of active women, or developing “quotas for women in the WUA membership, management, and governance structures.”¹⁸⁷

161. Under ADB-financed projects, WUAs composed entirely of women have been created within *mahallas* in the project area. These associations are closely linked to local Women’s Committee groups and are separate entities from the official WUAs. It is important that efforts be made to increase women’s representation in mainstream WUAs and other bodies that manage natural resources, rather than creating parallel women-only structures. ADB project monitoring reports in 2012 indicated that the number of female WUA members increased from 5.0% in 2007 to 9.3% in the Bukhara, Kashkadarya, and Navoi regions during project implementation, suggesting incremental gains.

162. Policy-making bodies concerning agriculture and natural resources are male-dominated. Although women make up close to half (48.3%) of those formally employed in agriculture and forestry, they are underrepresented in government bodies concerned with agriculture reform.¹⁸⁸ For instance, there are no women among the leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources. Few women occupy leadership roles in local government, where decisions about water management presumably are made. Thus, the priorities and interests of women may not be given adequate consideration in formal decision making about water resources.

186 Somach and Rubin. *Gender Assessment*.

187 Abdullaev and Yakubov. *Assessing the Gender Performance of the Water Users Associations*, p. 9.

188 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*.

163. Female representation in professional education and training on natural resources issues remains limited. In the Tashkent Irrigation and Land Reclamation Institute, there were only 575 female students among the nearly 4,280 students enrolled during the 2006–2007 academic year. Although women represented 47.8% of all teaching staff in 2008, they made up only 22.0% of lecturers and 16.0% of professors.¹⁸⁹

164. **Gender aspects of climate change.** How gender is implicated in climate change has not been adequately studied in Uzbekistan, but the topic is highly relevant to natural resources management. International practice shows that:

climate change and gender inequalities are inextricably linked. By exacerbating inequality overall, climate change slows progress toward gender equality and thus impedes efforts to achieve wider goals like poverty reduction and sustainable development. Gender inequality can worsen the impacts of climate change meanwhile, taking steps to narrow the gender gap and empower women can help reduce these impacts.¹⁹⁰

It will be important to devote greater attention to identifying how climate change in the specific context of Uzbekistan may affect women and men differently, how women and men may each contribute to climate change responses, and the capacity of women and men to adapt to change. Gender analysis of climate change risks and management would facilitate investigation and assessment of women's vulnerability and agency.

165. See Appendix 2 for points to consider in preparing natural resources management projects.

Energy

166. Uzbekistan has abundant fossil fuel energy resources, with rich coal, oil, and gas reserves, and is also the second most energy-intensive country in the world. Although almost all households in Uzbekistan have electricity, many regions experience considerable gaps in power supply.

167. Surveys and focus groups conducted in Bukhara, Jizzakh, Samarkand,¹⁹¹ and Kashkadarya¹⁹² regions illustrate the persistent issues in access to energy. Almost all households have a grid-connected energy supply, but the quality of services can be poor and varies considerably between urban and rural settings. Although almost 89% of surveyed urban households in Jizzakh reported satisfaction with power supply stability, only 29% of surveyed rural households in Samarkand were satisfied. Among all surveyed rural households, 81% experienced daily interruptions in electricity, which generally lasted at least 1 hour and often more than 5 hours. Other issues raised by respondents included the low voltage of electricity and current fluctuations that damage electrical appliances.

168. There appears to be greater variation in energy availability for public sector institutions. In Kashkadarya, for example, it was reported that hospitals are given priority and so do not generally experience electricity shortages, but hospital staff members participating in focus groups in other regions described daily interruptions in energy supply. Such interruptions

189 Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Water Coordination Commission. 2008. Gender and Higher Education in Uzbekistan. In *Gender and Water: Newsletter of the Gender and Water Network (GWANET) in Central Asia*. Tashkent.

190 International Union for Conservation of Nature and UNDP. 2009. Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change. p. 80. http://www.preventionweb.net/files/9526_trainingofgenderlow.pdf

191 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project. Social and Poverty Analysis Report.

192 ADB. 2010b. Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project: Social and Gender Analysis of Talimarjan Clean Power Project. Unpublished consultant's report. Tashkent (Loan 2629-UZB)

affect the equipment needed for testing, refrigerating medicines, pumping water, and even preparing meals. All regions reported electricity cutoffs in educational institutions, including in dormitories.

169. Inefficient and inadequate energy supply is attributed primarily to deficiencies in the Soviet-era power infrastructure. Low energy costs to consumers also mean that there are few incentives to conserve energy, and attention to renewable sources of energy generally has been limited.

170. Energy inefficiencies have serious consequences for economic growth because existing power supplies in some regions are insufficient to meet the needs of increased industrialization. Poor supply also affects social service provision and day-to-day quality of life.

Relevant Government Policies and Commitments

171. Government policy related to the energy sector does not include provisions on ensuring women's participation or refer to gender equality goals. Rather, both national and regional strategies focus on infrastructure improvements.

172. The Welfare Improvement Strategy, 2012–2015 outlines a medium-term investment policy that includes investment projects in energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁹³ Although specific attention is given to the energy needs of the growing rural population, upgrading of inefficient equipment in public sector institutions (notably schools and hospitals), and measures to reduce consumer costs and energy demand, none of these objectives are linked to the gender and development issues outlined elsewhere in the strategy.

173. The Welfare Improvement Strategy also notes the development of the National Strategy for Renewable Energy Sources (an initiative supported by UNDP), but it does not appear that the strategy has been finalized. The draft Law on Renewable Energy Sources was discussed in early 2012 and would set targets for increased use of renewable energy for 2020 and 2030. The discussion was part of the UNDP's Supporting Uzbekistan in Transition to a Low-Emission Development Path project, which includes participatory policy discussions with the Center for Economic Research. The UNDP project calls for gender mainstreaming in activities related to climate change and a low-emission development strategy.¹⁹⁴ In theory, such policy discussions and debates should produce gender-related findings and recommendations that could be incorporated into future government policy.

Gender Issues Related to Energy Supply

174. Entire populations suffer when energy supplies are scarce and inefficient; likewise, both women and men benefit when energy supply is improved. Yet, there also are important links between gender and energy. "Although decision makers may view their energy-related choices as gender neutral, men and women are affected differently by energy policies wherever their home, work and community roles differ."¹⁹⁵ Energy planning and reform projects tend to focus on increasing supplies of electricity or fuel sources, with limited attention to women's energy demands, including the specific needs of rural women, which may differ greatly from those of women in urban areas. However, the use of "approaches that favor demand-side considerations rather than supply-side energy targets are more likely to positively reflect women's actual needs."¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2012-2015*.

¹⁹⁴ UNDP Uzbekistan. *Supporting Uzbekistan*.

¹⁹⁵ UNDP. *Gender and Energy*. p. 10.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

175. Improvements to domestic energy supply can ease women's household workload.

Women are the major users of household electricity, and frequent and prolonged power interruptions affect them more acutely and increase their time burden. Women in focus groups described the direct effect of power interruptions, highlighting their need to prioritize cooking and bathing children during the time when there is electricity supply. Because outages are inconsistent, women face difficulties budgeting their time for productive activities. The situation is especially difficult for rural women, but it also affects women in cities that are not adequately served by power supplies. Women in paid employment outside of the home are doubly affected by energy insufficiencies because they must manage household chores and family needs during nonworking hours while also coping with frequent power interruptions.

176. Insufficient and unreliable energy supply also means that households are unable to make use of labor-saving devices. For instance, most homes use gas or woodstoves for heating (only 4%–5% of surveyed households had central heating or electric heaters), and electricity is rarely used for cooking (gas is used in 61% of households and firewood in 39%). Among rural households, only 38% had wells on their property and, of these, only 7% had electric pumps. The reliance on firewood and nonelectric hand pumps present women with additional household chores in the form of collecting fuel and water. Few rural households have refrigerators (only 37%, compared to 66% in urban areas), which may require women to spend more time purchasing fresh produce or preserving food. Washing machines are rare, and thus 87% of women in urban areas and 97% of women in rural areas reported doing laundry by hand.¹⁹⁷ The time and energy burden of such tasks reduces women's time for educational pursuits, income-generating activities, family and community activities, and leisure.

177. Shortages or lack of gas for heating during winter months also significantly increases the vulnerability of women, most of whom spend more time at home than men. Women from low-income families, single mothers, and female-headed households are especially vulnerable.

178. Women stand to benefit greatly from improved access to energy, which eases household workloads and time burdens. Nonetheless, the provision of electricity alone may not necessarily reduce the time women spend on household work if attention is not also given to education about energy-efficient and labor-saving devices and promotion of the use of modern fuels. As has been noted about developing countries generally:

While small amounts of electricity at home in the evening hours may improve the quality of life for some members of the family, including through illumination for reading, and entertainment and communication through radios and televisions, for other members of the family it may simply extend the working day. In the former case it is men, and to some extent children, who benefit most, while in the latter case it is women who usually bear the burden.¹⁹⁸

179. **Insufficiencies in energy resources have gendered impacts.** Energy projects rarely focus on women's roles, needs, or priorities, especially with regard to domestic and household management. Energy investments rarely support women's household needs such as improved cooking options. UNICEF data confirm the findings from regional surveys that, in Uzbekistan, natural gas is much more commonly used than electricity for cooking, but that 23.5% of rural households use firewood for cooking.¹⁹⁹ Regional studies carried out for ADB found that 68% of surveyed households in rural areas used woodstoves, due to the unavailability of natural gas.²⁰⁰

197 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project.

198 UNDP. *Gender and Energy*. p. 10.

199 UNICEF and State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Uzbekistan: Monitoring the Situation of Women and Children*.

200 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project.

180. According to a World Bank review of its global energy access investments from 2000 to 2008, almost half of its investment was in physical improvements to electricity access, followed by supportive investments in energy access (policy development and capacity building, for example) and investments into energy efficiency.²⁰¹ Most energy efficiency investments were specifically to the Eastern European and Central Asian regions. Significantly, less than 5% of lending was devoted to promoting the transition to modern cooking fuels.

181. A three-region survey noted that very few households had washing machines or electric sewing machines (6% in urban areas and 7% in rural areas), and other surveys found that in 61% of households, men made unilateral decisions about which household appliances to buy. In only 29% of households did women and men make such decisions jointly. Women in focus groups reported that, although they would like to use washing machines, there was no incentive to purchase appliances when electricity and water supply remained inadequate.²⁰² Women participating in a survey in the Kashkadarya region explained that, even when there are electrical appliances such as vacuum cleaners, irons, or washing machines in a household, high electricity tariffs prohibit their use, and women continue cleaning and laundering by hand as an economy measure.²⁰³

182. In general, women in Uzbekistan would benefit from energy policies and projects that consider such measures as assisting households to transition to modern, more sustainable cooking fuels and improved cook stoves; tariff structures that affordably cover the electricity needs of the average family; and greater coordination of projects on access to energy, water supply, and increasing income-generating activities. Such activities could be included in projects or developed through public-private partnerships, microfinance schemes, or targeted subsidies or grants.

183. **Energy supply and women's productive and income-earning activities.** Improved energy supply also could expand women's access to income-generating activities. For example, women could use refrigeration for production and sale of prepared foods. Consistent power supply could enable women to operate small enterprises such as hairdressing salons or internet cafes. Electric lighting in public spaces, such as on streets and in bus shelters, would create a safer environment for women to participate in income-generating and community activities.²⁰⁴

184. Expanding opportunities for women to combine employment and income generation with family responsibilities through home-based work and small enterprise is a government priority. Inadequate or unaffordable energy supply is a key constraint on small or home-based businesses. Many informal sector activities such as food production, baking, handicrafts, and carpet making, are energy-intensive and therefore especially affected by energy availability, reliability, and price. The decree establishing home-based work requires workers to notify contracting companies of "the inability to fulfill orders within time limits due to circumstances not in the workers' control (lack of electricity, water, gas, etc.)."²⁰⁵ However, because home-based workers are paid by the piece, the lack of basic services still results in a loss of income. Hence, although government policy supports and promotes home-based enterprises, inadequate energy supply may make home-based work too burdensome for women to adopt.

185. Another issue highlighted in focus group discussion was the different tariff rates applied to home-based businesses, even though it is not possible to separate business from domestic electricity consumption within a household.²⁰⁶ Consumers are required to pay an

201 D. Barnes, B. Singh, and X. Shi. 2010. *Modernizing Energy Services for the Poor: A World Bank Investment Review – Fiscal 2000–08*. Washington, DC: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank.

202 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project.

203 ADB. 2010b. Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project.

204 See Y. Lambrou and G. Pianna. 2006. *Energy and Gender Issues in Rural Sustainable Development*. Rome: FAO.

205 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Measures to Stimulate the Expansion of Cooperation*.

206 ADB. 2010b. Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project.

advance based on a higher business tariff, which is 25%–30% more than the tariff for home consumption.²⁰⁷ Because women’s enterprises generally are much smaller than those run by men or are operated from the home, and because women lack access to financial capital, women are especially affected by high tariffs and power outages.

186. ADB recognizes that, compared with conventional power sources, renewable energy and technologies to increase efficiency provide a wide range of opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises. However, it also has been suggested that, in general, “modern energy technology businesses have been viewed as ‘men’s work,’ while women operate more traditional, and less profitable, biomass-based microenterprises.”²⁰⁸ Thus, it is important to provide women with opportunities to establish “modern energy businesses,” which can be accomplished in various ways, including setting targets for women to become clean energy employees and entrepreneurs; providing women with training and microcredit to adopt new technologies; partnering with women’s organizations to identify the constraints faced by businesswomen in this area; and using gender-sensitive outreach materials. Women’s participation as “green entrepreneurs” developing clean technologies and renewable energy should be linked to projects that support women and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and that promote women’s participation in climate change initiatives.

187. **Gender-specific outreach on energy efficiency and services.** The ADB-supported three-region survey in Bukhara, Jizzakh, and Samarkand revealed low levels of awareness about efficient energy use. Only 7% of respondents reported knowing about energy-saving labels on electrical appliances, and only 8% used energy-efficient light bulbs (despite the fact that 54% of all respondents said they knew of their advantages).²⁰⁹ No sex-disaggregated data were provided, so it is not clear whether knowledge levels differ between women and men.

188. Surveys in the Kashkadarya region revealed some differences in how women and men view billing and costs. Female focus group participants reported that they were willing to pay SUM80–SUM150 more per kilowatt-hour for reliable and better power supply. Male respondents, however, stated that consumers would not be ready to pay higher prices, due to old debts from unpaid bills.²¹⁰

189. According to focus groups conducted in Samarkand with vulnerable women (that is, females heading households, including widows, single mothers, and wives of labor migrants working in other countries), monthly electricity payments in the area account for 5%–15% of monthly income. *Mahalla* leaders in Samarkand and Jizzakh reported that women in vulnerable positions may request assistance from the *mahalla* to pay electricity bills. However, many women are unaware of this option or are reluctant to apply for such financial support. Gender-sensitive outreach may be needed to address men’s dissatisfaction with increased electricity prices. Also, making subsidies for single-parent households more accessible and appealing to women should be considered, in conjunction with campaigns to increase knowledge about existing programs and to remove the stigma that may be associated with requesting public benefits.

190. Surveys indicate generally limited awareness among electricity consumers about their rights and responsibilities. More than half of respondents (58%) reported that they rarely contacted utility personnel to report problems. In particular, single mothers, low-income women, and women with disabilities were found to be “quite timid” in making complaints about poor service.²¹¹ The ADB project to install advanced electricity metering systems will

207 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project.

208 Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). 2011. *Gender Equality in Financing Energy for All*. Oslo, p. 9.

209 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project.

210 ADB. 2010b. Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project.

211 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project.

include a component on raising awareness about the rights and obligations of electricity users, and attention should be given to any gender-specific barriers consumers face in protecting their rights.

191. **Women’s representation in the energy sector.** Energy services are managed and operated by the state-owned joint stock company Uzbekenergo and overseen by several ministries. In Tashkent, 42.9% of Uzbekenergo employees are female, but Tashkent may be an exception. Women represent less than 30.0% of all Uzbekenergo employees in the Bukhara region, 23.7% in Samarkand, and only 10.0% in Jizzakh.²¹² In contrast, the top management of Uzbekenergo (the chair and four deputies) is all male. Approximately 25.0% of staff members at the Talimarjan power station are female. Women in the energy sector mainly work as accountants, cleaners, telephone operators and dispatchers, inspectors, technicians, and engineers.

192. Although women are relatively well represented in the energy sector as a whole, they have not yet reached critical mass in the technical, professional, and management positions that would allow them to influence policy decisions. Further efforts could be undertaken to promote the inclusion of women in technical and higher education that would lead to careers in the energy sector. At the same time, women already working in the field should be supported to develop professionally through retraining programs, mentoring, and other measures. Limited attention has been given to these aspects of promoting gender balance in the sector. For example, only 12 female students graduated from the Energy Department of the Polytechnic Institute in Samarkand during the 2009–2010 academic year, compared to 60 male students. Twenty male employees of Samarkand Electric Networks attended retraining courses at the Uzbekenergo staff retraining center in 2010, but no female employees attended.²¹³

193. Often, “energy institutions lack a systematic framework for gender-sensitive analysis, action, and monitoring.”²¹⁴ This situation appears to be the case at the Talimarjan Power Station. “Gender concerns ... have not been an issue of discussion in the power plant before, simply because of unawareness of the management,” and, as a result, existing databases and human resources indicators are not disaggregated by sex.²¹⁵ Capacity building for gender mainstreaming is included in gender action plans under some ADB energy projects. It is important to ensure that gender policies across the sector become industry norms and that top management is engaged in modeling and promoting these practices. At the same time, greater coordination and cooperation among donors and development partners on setting gender targets and indicators for energy sector projects would be useful. See Appendix 2 for points to consider in project preparation for the energy sector.

Transport

194. The government sees the transport sector as critical to the broader national strategic objectives of economic growth and increased competitiveness. The government’s midterm strategy for 2011–2015 includes plans to complete the modernization of the road network along the three CAREC corridors that cross the territory of Uzbekistan. The ultimate goal is to provide sustainable year-round road connectivity across the country and to neighboring countries. Uzbekistan also has the potential to become part of the overland transit corridors between Europe and Southeast Asia. Although significant investments are directed to the reconstruction of existing road networks, other “soft” investments are also anticipated such as improving institutional effectiveness, planning and project management, and increasing road safety.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ NORAD. *Gender Equality in Financing Energy*. p. 7.

²¹⁵ ADB. 2010b. Talimarjan Power Generation and Transmission Project.

195. Transport infrastructure and services facilitate the movement and mobility of goods and people. Good road networks and transport services can improve access to schools, health centers, employment, and markets, and provide other income opportunities.

196. When addressing gender issues in the transport sector during project planning, it is useful to keep in mind that women have specific transport requirements. For example, the rehabilitation of large intercity highways has been a priority for both the government and ADB, but women may actually benefit more from the development of local and feeder roads that provide access to formal sector jobs, markets, health centers, schools, and farms. Likewise, as transport users, women travel to different destinations than men, and for different reasons. Such issues should be addressed at the project preparation stage, in discussions with the government, and should be included in project design.

Relevant Government Policies and Institutions

197. National programs in the road and transport sector focus on infrastructure improvements, measured in terms of quantifiable outputs (kilometers of constructed or rehabilitated roads, for example). Several programs make note of related objectives to increase employment but without reference to any measures to include women among those receiving training or to ensure the creation of jobs that would be accessible to women.

198. Since 2006, the government has adopted a number of national programs aimed at developing the road sector, with a focus on road construction and rehabilitation, to create a unified national transport system, increase the efficiency of road transport, and increase employment through job creation.²¹⁶ These programs include measures for the training of key specialists and the development of a separate program on roadside infrastructure, and they recognize the need to develop business infrastructure and services in conjunction with road construction and rehabilitation. However, these policies are silent on addressing gender issues in transport, enhancing employment opportunities for women, or meeting the needs and priorities of women in road infrastructure and transport services.

199. For example, the program on roadside infrastructure envisions the construction of 240 objects in 19 locations—campsites, motels, filling stations, service stations offering medical and emergency assistance, short-term parking spots with sanitation facilities, and tourism services.²¹⁷ The program is viewed as a source of new jobs for young people. Yet, it does not give any specific attention to the development of roadside businesses that would be particularly accessible and suitable for women, even though the hospitality sector, retail, and tourism services are all areas of women's employment. Within roadside infrastructure development, greater attention also could be given to the safety of pedestrians and to ensuring that roadside sanitation facilities meet the needs of women and girls.

Gender Issues Related to Transport

200. **Limited quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated data pertaining to transport.** Very little concrete information is available on the gender-related nature and patterns of travel, such as the number of male and female road users in Uzbekistan, public transport use disaggregated by sex, or accessibility of urban transport for women and men in terms of cost and timetables, and including such groups as single parents, the elderly, disabled people, and rural users. Likewise, sex-disaggregated data on the number of people employed in specific jobs within the transport sector would be useful for project planning. Qualitative

²¹⁶ See, for example, Presidential Decree No. PP-1103. 2009. Measures for the Development and Reconstruction of Uzbek National Highways for 2009–2014. 22 April and Presidential Decree 2009. Program of Roadside Infrastructure and Services for 2010–2015. 22 October.

²¹⁷ Uzavtoyul. 2012. Results Press Conference. 11 August. http://www.uzavtoyul.uz/en/news/company_news/?ELEMENT_ID=9

information about the effect of inefficiencies in transport infrastructure (relating to poor road conditions and transport logistics) on male and female SME owners who engage in trade also would be helpful to understanding gender differences in the sector.

201. Benefits of improved roads to women’s entrepreneurship and employment. Minimal attention has been devoted to assessing the mobility of rural populations, especially women, and whether improvements to major highways alone will increase their access to services and employment opportunities. Local authorities should be encouraged to improve local roads in conjunction with ADB and government work on major corridors.

202. Women and men in Uzbekistan may use roads to derive primary or additional income. Markets at roadside shelters provide local women with opportunities to sell fruit, bread, and other products, or to organize dining places for travelers or souvenir stalls. The relatively high level of car ownership has given rise to a specific demand for the sale of car components and spare parts, fuel, and lubricants and for maintenance services.²¹⁸ Planning processes for the national Program of Roadside Infrastructure and Services, 2010–2015 should identify ways to support women’s employment and income-generating opportunities through the program. Additionally, it is important to identify new areas of women’s employment and to build the capacity of female entrepreneurs so that they can take advantage of the new markets and opportunities created by road and transport improvements.

203. As noted in this assessment, the government has adopted programs for women’s employment and in support of women’s small and home-based businesses. ADB monitoring of transport projects confirms that women in the target areas often are not formally employed, rely heavily on family members for remittances, and are interested in developing roadside businesses for income generation. Although women in rural and isolated regions already have many skills that could be applied to home-based enterprises, they generally lack business experience and training. Improved roads and transport, combined with skill building, could greatly help women sell their goods to a larger market and expand their enterprises. Although it has not been the subject of study in Uzbekistan, the importance of gender in value chains has increasingly become a focus of economic growth programs.

204. Potential gender-specific benefits of improvements in cross-border transport and logistics. In addition to the possibility of linking transport projects to activities that support women entering into business, the improvement of transit corridors also may be beneficial to women with established enterprises. Women’s NGOs that participated in an ADB focus group raised the issue of support for businesswomen seeking to enter markets outside of Uzbekistan. Such women lack knowledge and capacity to develop export businesses, and they specifically need training on customs and tax procedures, export strategies, transport logistics, and identifying new markets. These observations are confirmed by a survey conducted among 100 female entrepreneurs in Samarkand and the city of Tashkent. The majority of respondents dealt primarily with local markets (76.7% of respondents in Samarkand and 60.3% in Tashkent) and a few also did business in neighboring areas (21.0% in Samarkand and 34.4% in Tashkent). Only 2.3% of Samarkand-based businesses and 5.2% of Tashkent-based businesses exported goods or services to international markets. In interviews, the businesswomen expressed confidence that there is a demand for their products (e.g., dried fruit and preserved foods, cotton, silk, wool, and dairy products) and services (e.g., handicraft production, embroidery, and ceramic ware production) outside of Uzbekistan, but they noted that the “current infrastructure for export activities is too complex and so small businesses are not yet able to enter international markets on their own.”²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Institute for Social Research. *Results of Sociologic Survey*.

²¹⁹ UNECE. *Achievements and Prospects*, p. 24.

205. Uzbekistan has the lowest percentage of exporting firms in the Eastern European and Central Asian region, with only 2% exporting, compared to 30% importing.²²⁰ Significantly, small enterprises are much less likely than large ones to export (15% of large firms, compared to only 1% of small firms), which further suggests that, given their smaller size, women's businesses may be particularly disadvantaged in entering foreign markets. The institutional and logistical barriers to cross-border transport faced by female entrepreneurs must be assessed, and how transport and SME support projects can reduce these barriers should be analyzed.

206. **Gender differences in access to and use of public transport.** Private car ownership has increased in Uzbekistan since 2005. According to a recent welfare assessment conducted in the Fergana, Kashkadarya, and Navoi regions, 30.3% of surveyed households own cars.²²¹ Surveys conducted in other regions (Bukhara, Jizzakh, and Samarkand) found that 31% of urban households and 25% of rural households have cars, minibuses, or jeeps. Rural households are more likely to use bicycles—31% of rural households, compared to 16% of urban households.²²² No information about gender patterns of vehicle ownership or use is available, but observers note that women are much less likely than men to drive cars in Uzbekistan, and this is supported by the common viewpoint that driving is a “male” occupation.

207. Surveys conducted among rural populations revealed few gender differences in people's perceptions about transport use. The majority of respondents in the Tashkent and Namangan regions (72.2%) reported that women and men use public transport equally, and when asked specifically about their use of public transport to travel to hospitals and clinics, a high percentage of both women and men affirmed that they use public transport rather than private cars. The majority of participants in household surveys in Karakalpakstan and the Bukhara region, however, stated that men use transport more often than women. When traveling to health care institutions, it appears that men were slightly more likely to use public transport and women were more likely to use private cars. It also was noted that men usually accompany children traveling by public transport.²²³ In general, public transport is not well developed in Uzbekistan, and people are more likely to use private minibuses that operate regularly.

208. No significant gender differences were found in respondents' reasons for using public transport (e.g., travel to markets, schools, or other public agencies or to engage in small business activities), frequency of transport use, distance traveled, or number of stops. It appears that respondents were not asked about the existence of any social prohibitions on unaccompanied women and girls using public transport or whether respondents travel on foot—all of which might have revealed greater gender differences. Given that women are infrequent drivers in Uzbekistan and are more often engaged in taking care of household and family needs than formal employment, it is important to determine what their specific transport needs are and whether there are any constraints on women's mobility that prevent them from accessing transport on equal terms with men. The level of satisfaction with current transport also should be determined for both women and men. As a general rule, women most often travel for household needs and are more likely to make relatively short trips with frequent stops. For this reason, long waiting times and poor service place additional burdens on women.

209. Finally, the limited availability of long-distance transport may have a specific effect on girls' access to education. The Welfare Improvement Strategy, 2008–2010 notes that children from remote areas, especially girls, face difficulties attending secondary and vocational educational institutions, due to long travel times and the high cost of travel.²²⁴ This is also true

220 World Bank and International Finance Corporation. 2008. *Running a Business in Uzbekistan*. Enterprise Surveys Country Note Series. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

221 Institute for Social Research. *Results of Sociologic Survey*.

222 ADB. 2011. *Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project*.

223 IKS. 2010. *Uzbekistan: CAREC Corridor 2 Road Investment Program. Poverty and socio-economic assessment*. Tashkent: ADB.

224 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Welfare Improvement Strategy 2008–2010*.

of higher educational institutions, most of which are located in regional centers or in Tashkent. Apparently under consideration is a travel card scheme for students, paid for by the local budget, that will help young people in remote areas access schools and vocational education establishments.²²⁵ If such a program is adopted, it will be important to ensure that girls have equal access to such travel cards and that other barriers to girls' mobility (such as safety on public transport) are also addressed.

210. Women and men's distinct views on such issues as the cost of transport and the efficiency and safety of transport stops and stations should be solicited when determining investment priorities in the transport sector.

211. **The cost of public transport and women's mobility.** The affordability of public transport is another issue with important gender dimensions, given women's lower incomes, limited claims on household resources, and likelihood to make frequent stops (thus requiring payment of multiple fares). A welfare assessment in several regions showed that transport expenses (including payments for gasoline) represented the largest portion of household expenses and amounted to SUM77,000 per month for urban households and SUM79,000 per month for rural households.²²⁶ In other regions, monthly expenditures on transport were somewhat lower but still made up 10% of total household expenditures (SUM55,440 for poor households and SUM71,710 for nonpoor households).²²⁷ Findings from Karakalpakstan and the Bukhara region showed that household expenses on transport were lower because respondents more often traveled on foot.

212. With the introduction of private minivans, municipal transport services have received little investment and have declined in many cities. For instance, it has been estimated that Samarkand requires 150 additional buses. In Bukhara, where there once were 25 city bus routes, 21 routes were suspended when a minibus service was introduced.²²⁸ Typically, such minibuses are privately operated and may charge more than public transport. Private minibuses also do not necessarily honor any benefits or subsidies that might be available to low-income travelers on municipal transport.

213. Further analysis is needed to determine whether public transport is currently affordable for the populations that rely on it and whether it is accessible to women in terms of cost. It is not clear whether women's reported lower use of public transport is related to the fact that they cannot afford to pay current prices. Likewise, it is not known whether any schemes exist to subsidize travel costs for women considered vulnerable (e.g., single mothers, females heading households, widows, or women with disabilities). Urban transport projects in particular should consider the business case for introduction of gender-responsive ticketing systems such as multimodal, multi-trip tickets valid for a certain duration, as opposed to point-to-point ticketing.

214. **Gender dimensions of road safety.** Government programs on roads and transport include some investment in improving road safety, a recognition that road accidents are a leading cause of injury and death in Uzbekistan. Road safety is a concern both for drivers and for populations that live along major roads and use public transport. Surveys conducted in rural areas of the Namangan and Tashkent regions under an ADB-supported poverty and socioeconomic assessment found that residents had several specific safety concerns, including the lack of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, posted speed limits, road signs, streetlights, and public transport stops and shelters. Participants in household surveys in Karakalpakstan and the Bukhara region also prioritized improvement of the safety and security of public

²²⁵ Institute for Social Research. *Results of Sociologic Survey*.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ IKS. Uzbekistan: CAREC Corridor 2 Road Investment Program.

²²⁸ IKS. 2007. *OSCE Project on Transport Issues: Final Report*. [In Russian]. Tashkent.

transport.²²⁹ These regional findings correspond to conclusions from an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe assessment that highlighted similar issues for pedestrians such as inadequate road signs and lack of motorist compliance with speed limits, as well as the fact that official data on road accidents are limited and not regularly analyzed.²³⁰

215. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), road traffic injuries account for more than one-third of all fatalities caused by unintentional injuries in Uzbekistan in 2009.²³¹ Information about the gender dimensions of road safety is limited, but official statistics indicate that men are more than three times as likely as women to die as a result of accidents or trauma.²³² In 2005, the male mortality rate from road traffic accidents was 21.3 per 10,000, compared to 4.5 per 10,000 for women.²³³ The increased mortality rate for men may be a reflection of the prevalence of male drivers. Although WHO figures indicate that the rate of fatal and nonfatal road traffic injuries involving alcohol is considerably lower in Uzbekistan than in the European Union, the much higher prevalence of alcoholism and drug abuse among males (in 2007, 91.5% of those diagnosed with alcoholism and 95.2% of those diagnosed with narcotics abuse were men) may be a significant contributing factor to male mortality associated with road accidents.

216. Such figures are an imperfect measure of the gender issues implicated in road safety, but they do suggest that greater attention should be given to the reasons behind the disparate impact on men. The WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Government of Uzbekistan have signed collaborative agreements on injury prevention, and a number of activities have been carried out, such as “mass-media campaigns raising awareness on road traffic injuries, seminars and courses on first aid, specific legislative amendments to counteract drunk-driving, excessive speed and to promote seat belt and helmet wearing.”²³⁴ There is no indication whether gender-specific messages were used to target males and to counteract risky behaviors associated with gender norms, such as alcohol consumption or lack of seatbelt or safety helmet use among men. Furthermore, WHO projects have focused on the health sector rather than on stakeholders in the road and transport industries. Social and educational programs related to road safety could be better integrated into road design projects that address the technical aspects of road safety. The Second CAREC Corridor 2 Road Investment Program (Project 1), in fact, includes a gender action plan with a component on informing women and men in the project area about traffic safety. As written, however, the gender action plan does not identify any particular gender dimensions of road safety, nor does it elaborate how public awareness programs will address issues specifically relevant to women and men or to girls and boys.

217. Issues of women’s personal safety (including risks of robbery, violence, or sexual assault) also should be considered in the context of road and transport projects. Transport routes and schedules, the location and condition of transport stations and waiting areas (including, for example, whether they are well lit and visible) as well as the times of day that women use public transit and how this affects women’s safety should all be studied in greater detail. Although ADB surveys do not provide analysis of the extent to which women and girls are exposed to

229 IKS. Uzbekistan: CAREC Corridor 2 Road Investment Program.

230 IKS. *OSCE Project on Transport Issues*.

231 WHO. *Progress in the Prevention of Injuries in the WHO European Region: Uzbekistan*. http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/98741/Uzbekistan.pdf

232 State Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics. *Women and Men of Uzbekistan 2007–2010*.

233 WHO. 2011. *Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health: Country Profiles*. Geneva.

234 WHO. 2010. *WHO Reports on Fifth Annual European Meeting of Violence and Injury Prevention. National Focal Persons of the Ministries of Health*. Copenhagen. p. 6.

physical insecurity, information from rural areas about the lack of transport stops, poor lighting, irregularity of transport service, and overcrowding of both waiting areas and transport suggest that safety is a serious concern. UN Women notes that

initiatives encouraging safe public transit for women and girls should not be limited to improving motorized forms of transport. That is, well-maintained footpaths, pedestrian streets, well-lit sidewalks, bicycle lanes ... are all integral ways of making cities safe for women and girls, as well as making them more friendly and livable in general. In concert with these efforts, public transit systems in particular must be planned and designed to accommodate women's specific needs in terms of the routes they travel, the times of day they depend on public transit, the places they wait for public transit, and the places they get dropped off by public transit.²³⁵

218. See Appendix 2 for points to consider in project preparation for the transport sector.

Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Private Sector Development

219. Since 2005, support for entrepreneurship and small businesses has been a key priority because private enterprise is increasingly a major economic driver in Uzbekistan. In 2011, small business and private enterprise combined made up 54.0% of the GDP, with micro and small firms alone accounting for 33.7% of GDP.²³⁶ According to official statistics, small enterprises employ 74.5% of the working population. More than 70% are individual entrepreneurs and 30% are engaged in micro and small businesses.²³⁷

220. New legislation and state programs to create an enabling environment for private enterprise and to develop a market economy have led to improved opportunities to start businesses. However, World Bank surveys of the business environment identify several obstacles that still hinder SME development, including informal payments related to licensing and inspections and inadequacies in the electrical power infrastructure that directly lead to lost profit (for instance, surveyed firms reported experiencing six power outages a month, on average).²³⁸ The underdeveloped financial structure is also unable to meet business demands for credit and other financial products. Although such constraints affect small businesses run by both women and men, female entrepreneurs are more affected, due to differences in the size and capacity of their businesses.

221. In Uzbekistan, national laws provide a legal framework for entrepreneurship. Enterprises are classified both by size (number of employees) and type of activity, including definitions of individual entrepreneurs or sole proprietors, microenterprises, and small enterprises (Appendix 3).²³⁹ For the purposes of this assessment, "women's micro and small enterprises" or "women's businesses" refer to women as individual entrepreneurs or to enterprises established, owned, and operated by women.

235 United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Safe Public Transit for Women and Girls. <http://www.endvavnow.org/en/articles/252-safe-public-transit-for-women-and-girls-.html>

236 Mahalla. 2012. Major Portion of Uzbekistan's GDP Is Produced in the Private Sector. [In Russian] 5 March. <http://maxala.org/economika/4013-osnovnaya-dolya-vvp-uzbekistana-proizvoditsya-v-negosudarstvennom-sektore.html#.T4r3phx9nld>

237 D. Abdurazakova. 2011. Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. Paper presented at the UNECE Policy Seminar on Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Central Asia, Geneva. http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/Event_Documents/2011/PolicySeminarWED/Session1/Sess1_2_DA_ENG.pdf

238 World Bank and International Finance Corporation. *Running a Business in Uzbekistan*.

239 See the Law on Private Enterprise, Law on Entrepreneurship, and Law on Guarantees and Freedoms for Entrepreneurial Activity. A broader overview of the SME classification system is provided in Appendix 3.

Relevant Government Policies and Commitments

222. Government commitments related to SME development have not been gender-specific; rather, a number of general decrees and policies have been adopted to improve the conditions for starting and running a business, and separate programs have focused on increasing women's employment opportunities, in part through the development of micro and home-based businesses. Several policy directives have aimed to improve women's access to credit.

223. Presidential decrees, resolutions, and national programs to improve conditions for the operation of private businesses²⁴⁰ generally recognize the major constraints facing entrepreneurs and include measures to facilitate small business growth such as the use of single-window services for business registration, permits, and customs procedures.²⁴¹ For example, the 2011 Year of Support for Small Business and Private Enterprise national program focused on improving connectivity to communication networks, electricity, gas, water, and heat supplies; improving access to land for commercial purposes; reducing unnecessary regulations that might restrict small business activities; and increasing access to commercial bank loans.²⁴² The program stimulated the creation of 22,800 SMEs;²⁴³ however, policy makers have yet to acknowledge the barriers that women face in doing business, or show serious resolve in breaking them down.

224. Separate national programs have been developed to improve employment opportunities for women through provisions in entrepreneurship. For example, the National Program on Women's Employment, 2005–2007 and the Regional Programs for Women's Employment, 2009–2010 aimed to increase jobs for women in every region, primarily through small business development and promotion of cottage industries. Programs under the Year of Rural Development and Improvement (2009) included business skills training for unemployed women.

225. In addition, special projects on women's microcredit have been implemented, and the National Bank of Uzbekistan has issued several directives on women's access to credit. Such schemes are separate from policies aimed at SMEs in general. Women's entrepreneurial activity in Uzbekistan does require specialized support at the moment, but in the future, it will be important to ensure that women in business have access to the same resources as men and that considerations of women's SMEs are integrated into policies governing the sector.

Gender Issues Related to Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises and Private Sector Development

226. Development of the micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) sector can play a significant role in improving women's access to economic opportunities and incomes. A 2007 survey conducted by the Business Women's Association of Kokand found that 10 times more women wanted to be involved in business than were currently engaged in commercial activities. The number of women expressing an interest in starting a business was five times greater than the number of men.²⁴⁴ For future programming in the MSME sector, it is important to consider two ways of supporting women in the private sector. First, greater attention should be given to addressing the gender-based constraints faced by women in initiating, managing,

240 For example, On Measures for Improving the System of Legal Protection of Business Entities (14 June 2005); On Additional Measures Stimulating Development of Micro Firms and Small Enterprises (20 July 2005); On Additional Measures to Establish a Favorable Business Environment for the Further Development of Small Business and Entrepreneurship (24 August 2011); On Measures to Eliminate Bureaucratic Barriers and Further Enhance Entrepreneurial Freedom (25 August 2011).

241 Presidential Decree No. PP-1604. 2011. On Measures to Eliminate Bureaucratic Barriers and Further Enhance Entrepreneurial Freedom. 25 August.

242 Presidential Decree. 2011. On the State Program Year of Support for Small Business and Private Enterprise. 7 February.

243 Abdurazakova. Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan. (Note that this number did not include farms and was not sex-disaggregated.)

244 Alimdjanova. *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women*.

and growing a business. An equally important issue is the extent to which the MSME sector provides employment opportunities for women, both in terms of a sufficient number of workplaces and the quality of such employment (e.g., equal pay for equal-value work, decent work conditions, safe workplaces, and opportunities for advancement).

227. Limited quantitative and qualitative sex-disaggregated data relevant to private enterprise. Gender analysis in the area of MSME development is complicated by incomplete statistical data about women. National business registration is not sex-disaggregated; therefore, there is no official information on the number or types of businesses run by women. Furthermore, there is no consensus definition of what constitutes a “women’s business,” and specifically whether the category includes private enterprises legally registered to female owners, enterprises managed by women, enterprises employing primarily women, or self-employed women engaged in various business activities, including farming.

228. Data about women’s MSME participation vary by source, and discrepancies in the reported number of women’s businesses are attributable to the use of different definitions and methodologies. According to estimates of the Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan, there were 21,000 female entrepreneurs in 2005,²⁴⁵ whereas data from the Women’s Committee indicated that there were close to 16,000 female entrepreneurs in 2008.²⁴⁶ Due to the lack of official statistics, some research has relied on proxy data. For example, in 2006, women represented 23.1% of chamber of commerce members, suggesting that women are involved in under one-quarter of all private enterprises.²⁴⁷ Recent information from the Business Women’s Association described the organization’s training program, in which more than 30,000 women have participated. Of these participants, “around 75% have started their own business”—equivalent to roughly 22,500 business ventures (not all of which are necessarily still in operation).²⁴⁸ Most information about women’s experience in entrepreneurship is based on surveys and samples of limited scope.

229. Qualitative and longitudinal information would be useful in assessing the viability of women’s entrepreneurial activities, because the long-term prospects for women’s businesses created with the assistance of national and donor projects is not clear. Data compiled by the Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan give some indication of the general dynamic in terms of the successes and failures of business start-ups. As of July 2011, there were 522,300 legal entities registered as small businesses, only 488,100 of which were active. In the first 6 months of 2011, 22,800 new small businesses were registered, and during the same period, 12,200 such enterprises were liquidated (only one-quarter voluntarily).²⁴⁹ Sex-disaggregated data would be especially useful for evaluating the contribution of female entrepreneurs to the economy.

230. Differences in male and female entrepreneurship. Despite insufficient sex-disaggregated data on the number of entrepreneurs and the size of enterprises, it is clear that much of women’s entrepreneurship differs from men’s business enterprises.

231. The World Bank estimates that women’s participation in the management of private enterprises in Uzbekistan is among the lowest in the Eastern European and Central Asian region. Only 11% of surveyed firms have a female top manager.²⁵⁰ The rate of female

245 D. Alimbekova. 2005. The Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan: Tadbirkor Ayol. [In Russian]. Paper presented at the Round Table on Gender and Economy, International Conference on Strengthening Subregional Economic Cooperation in Central Asia and the Future Role of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. Astana. 26 May.

246 Alimdjanova. *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women*.

247 UNECE. *Achievements and Prospects*.

248 G. Makhmudova. 2012. Women in Business: Success in Work and Prosperity in the Home. [In Russian]. 20 March.

http://narodnoeslovo.uz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=828:godsemyi&catid=4: economy&Itemid=10

249 Z. Tukhtakhodjaeva. 2011. Women and Business in Uzbekistan: Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges in the Development of Female Entrepreneurship. [In Russian]. Presentation at the UNECE Policy Seminar on Women’s Entrepreneurship Development in Central Asia. Geneva. 19 September.

250 World Bank and International Finance Corporation. *Uzbekistan Country Profile 2008*.

participation in enterprise ownership and in the workforce is higher, however, and closer to regional averages. Nearly 40% of firms have some female participation in ownership, but the World Bank survey aggregates small, medium-sized, and large firms. The fact that just under half of all firms in Uzbekistan are sole proprietorships suggests that most enterprises are small in scale.

232. Most female entrepreneurs are involved in small-scale production of consumer goods, retail trade, or professional services (often in health and education). The enterprises started by and operated by women generally take the form of informal cottage industry or home-based production. In rural regions, in particular, women's businesses are mainly micro and small enterprises, and women engage in agriculture production (e.g., cotton, grain, fruit, vegetables, flowers, livestock, and poultry), handicraft and souvenir production, sewing and garment production, and baking and sweet making. Much of the development of this sector is attributable to official programs on women's employment that have promoted work that is compatible with women's domestic responsibilities. It is possible that women prefer smaller-scale business ventures or, due to limited access to capital and finances, have little choice. A survey of 100 businesswomen in the Samarkand region and Tashkent found that almost two-thirds had founded businesses after 2000 and that most were microenterprises with fewer than 10 employees (74% in Samarkand and 52% in Tashkent).²⁵¹

233. Microenterprises and home-based work represent a very important means of income generation for women and are a form of work that can be reconciled with the real constraints that women face, such as family obligations; limited time, mobility, and skills in business management; and discriminatory practices in the labor market. However, characterizing such work as a business or enterprise is also misleading. Many microenterprises are more representative of self-employment or subcontracting schemes. Perhaps more importantly, although home-based work and microenterprises respond to the realities of women's lives in Uzbekistan, particularly women in rural regions, these businesses have limited potential for growth and expansion, create few jobs for the local population, and may not necessarily provide women with skills and business networks useful for future employment. There also is insufficient analysis of the extent to which such enterprises are profitable, whether they are responsive to market demands, how much income they bring to households, and whether, ultimately, women control decisions about how such income is used in the family.

234. Focusing on women's entrepreneurship at the micro level, without including measures to assist women in expanding their businesses in other sectors, also risks reinforcing stereotypes about what kind of work is "suitable" for women and thus perpetuating existing impediments to women's employment. As was noted in the WSS and energy sections of this assessment, it is not clear whether programs to support women's self-employment also take into consideration the capacity of the basic infrastructure to support the transformation of home-based work into small and medium-sized businesses, especially in rural areas.

235. **Women's businesses are less diverse in terms of economic activity.** In addition to the fact that women's businesses are characterized as small or microenterprises, they also occupy specific sectors, concentrating on trade, services, and small-scale production. If agriculture work is also included, almost one-third of women's enterprises are related to farming. The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan estimates that 36% of female entrepreneurs are in services, 32% are in farming, 30% are in trade, and only 2% are in industry or production.²⁵² When agriculture work is excluded, more than half of female entrepreneurs (50.5%) are working in home-based enterprises on handicrafts (e.g., spinning, carpet weaving, embroidery, or costume production) and food production.²⁵³ A more detailed division shows that women most often run businesses in trade and services (60%); handicrafts (20%); consultancy services (e.g., auditing, legal services, or tourist

251 UNECE. *Achievements and Prospects*.

252 Alimbekova. *The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan*.

253 Alimjanova. *The Level of Entrepreneurship Development among Rural Women*.

services, 10%); and other small industries (10%).²⁵⁴ Notably, analysis of business opportunities for rural women identified opportunities in processing and/or packaging of agriculture products (Box 4), cattle farming, catering and managing cafeterias, and public transport.²⁵⁵

236. Official data show that women represent 38% of individual entrepreneurs overall. Men represent the majority of individual entrepreneurs in every sector (Figure 5).

237. A study of male and female entrepreneurs engaged in trade found that men were starting businesses in this sector at a faster rate than women (an annual employment increase of 8% for men, compared to 2% for women). The profitability of male and female enterprises also differed, with annual income growth of 120.0% for men and 115.5% for women. Perhaps more significantly, the same survey found that, despite earning more, men spent less on the household than women, as “women basically spend their entire income for family needs, while men [spend] 80% on average.”²⁵⁶

238. Differences in the size, characteristics, and types of business that women operate suggest that business support services should be tailored to the needs of female entrepreneurs and made relevant to the sectors in which they operate. Furthermore, efforts are needed to diversify the sectors in which women have businesses and to assist them in entering nontraditional and high-level industries. A European Commission project on supporting women’s entrepreneurship in remote areas has explored the possibility of assisting women in forming sector business clusters to take advantage of economies of scale.²⁵⁷ The same project has introduced concepts of business incubators, an initiative that might help women expand their businesses generally, or which could target women for specialized training and equipment to expand within a particular industry.

Box 4: Female Entrepreneurs in Farming

Women working in agriculture, including female entrepreneurs, represent an important economic resource. In many ways, the issues faced by women in agricultural businesses are similar to those encountered by entrepreneurs operating small-scale enterprises in rural areas. For instance, female farmers generally do not hold legal titles to land and lack access to other productive resources, such as credit and microfinance, equipment, technology, and even water.

Female farmers are particularly in need of specialized training and education on such topics as the establishment of cooperatives and unions; legal literacy; specific types of management of leasehold farms; taxes, credits, and legislation on development of farming; increasing agricultural knowledge; business management; insurance systems; and business development, management, and planning.

It is important to consider the needs and priorities of this segment of female entrepreneurs, from the perspective of micro, small and medium-sized enterprise development and in connection with agricultural reform projects and farm planning and privatization schemes. A dialogue with female farmers could be promoted to identify gender-specific problems connected with farming to help overcome inequalities in the sector. One mechanism to encourage such dialogue could be the creation of a forum of female farmers, with joint representation from the Women’s Committee, local businesswomen’s associations, and structures that provide assistance to farmers (for example, farmer’s associations and chambers of commerce). Such an expert group could serve as an informational and consultative body that receives information about reform in the agriculture sector and, by taking gender into consideration, improves rural business development and increases the status of women. Likewise, better links among female entrepreneurs, representatives of local administrations, branches of the Women’s Committee, and agricultural institutes could be supported.

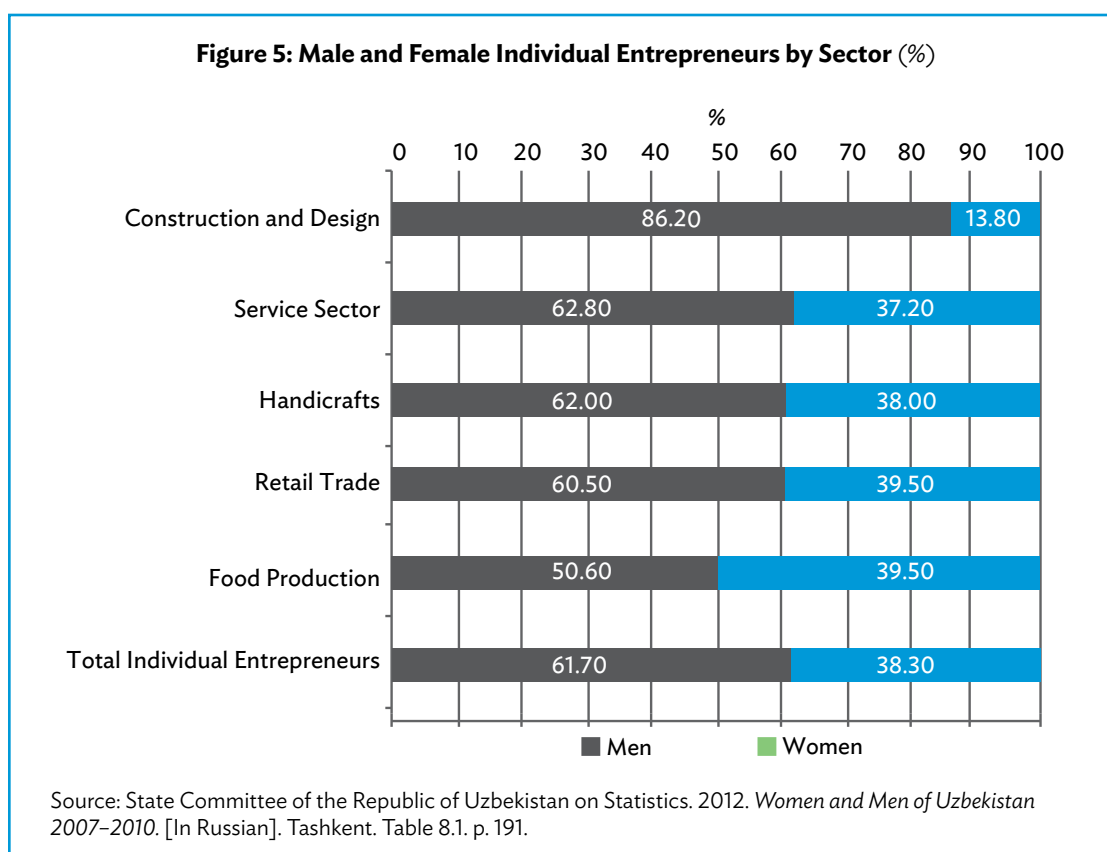
Source: Author.

254 Abdurazakova. Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan.

255 Institution Building Partnership Programme. 2010. *Women Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas: Opportunities, Constraints, Mitigation Measures*. Newsletter. Brussels: European Commission.

256 International Global Network. 2008. *Gender Aspect of Central Asia Trade Policy in the Context of WTO Accession*. Manila: ADB. p. 26.

257 The Support of Women and Youth Entrepreneurship in Remote Districts of Uzbekistan project, carried out in the Surkhandarya and Jizzakh regions from 2009 to 2011.



239. Women’s motivations for starting a business. The profile of female entrepreneurs offers insights into their motivations for starting a business and their potential for success. A 2008 survey of 100 women with enterprises in the Samarkand region and in Tashkent offers a representative profile of female entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan.²⁵⁸ The majority of women (52.5% of respondents) started their business after age 40, stating that at this age they felt “psychologically ready,” had fewer family responsibilities, and had families in need of additional resources. Interestingly, the large majority of women stated that they were motivated to become entrepreneurs for personal reasons and opportunity rather than out of necessity. More than 73% of respondents stated that they saw opportunities in the market for profitable businesses. Over 72.0% said they wanted to work for themselves and be their own bosses, whereas only 4.2% started a business after losing a job. Such findings are important because they suggest that female entrepreneurs are prepared, highly motivated, and thus well positioned to benefit from training and technical assistance projects.

240. More than half of the respondents had careers in civil service before starting their own businesses. Interviewees considered public sector work especially beneficial because it provided knowledge about working within bureaucratic systems and “served as protection against abuses of power by regulatory agencies.”²⁵⁹ The next largest group of businesswomen had previously worked in other private enterprises, where they gained knowledge about specific products and markets. A very small number of women (4% in the Samarkand region and 10% in Tashkent) had taken over and invested in preexisting companies.

²⁵⁸ UNECE, *Achievements and Prospects*, pp. 21–23.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

241. Notably, the female entrepreneurs included in the survey employed a considerable number of women. Among the Samarkand-based firms, 60% of employees were women; in Tashkent businesses, the figure was 75%. Both groups showed higher rates of female employment than the World Bank-calculated averages for small firms (34% of employees) and medium-sized firms (36% of employees). Only 5% of the total employees were family members, and, on average, each female-owned enterprise created 17 jobs.²⁶⁰ The high rate of female employment is undoubtedly linked to the fact that women’s micro and small enterprises are clustered in spheres that are traditionally considered “female,” but the fact remains that promoting women’s entrepreneurship is an important tool to increase women’s employment opportunities within the private sector.

242. Under a separate survey, female entrepreneurs in agricultural businesses expressed a specific interest in learning how to manage their enterprises and create associations, not only to improve their crops but also to create jobs for young people in the community who are at risk of migrating to find work elsewhere.²⁶¹ Such studies suggest that women who engage in small business ventures often have a particular interest in and motivation to employ members of the local population. Finally, during interviews with female entrepreneurs in the Samarkand region and Tashkent, those over age 55 noted that they were preparing to transfer their businesses to their children, very often to daughters who had already been working in the business. All of those who took part in the survey emphasized the importance of supporting young women in entering business (especially in terms of training and access to specialized knowledge) to develop female entrepreneurship overall.

243. **Women face specific barriers in entrepreneurial activities.** Despite many positive characteristics in terms of motivation and level of education shared by women engaged in micro and small businesses, women still face considerable barriers to running and expanding their enterprises. Many of these constraints are felt by all starting entrepreneurs, but even these common issues can have a distinct impact on women. Other barriers are specifically related to women’s lower economic status and the greater demands on women’s time. Several studies have examined the kinds of difficulties that female entrepreneurs encounter.²⁶²

244. **Unequal access to financial assets.** Female entrepreneurs have less access to start-up capital, financial services such as credit and loan programs, and financial consulting services. Lack of financing is a major obstacle identified by female entrepreneurs.

245. **Bureaucratic obstacles.** Both women and men in the MSME sector face constraints related to taxation, inspections, and other required payments. By one estimate, reporting to tax authorities requires 49 person-hours annually.²⁶³ Time and capacity are both required to respond to bureaucratic requirements, and women face more severe time constraints due to domestic duties. The specific lack of preschool facilities in both urban and rural areas means that women with young children are time-poor in terms of running a business. Furthermore, because women more often run microenterprises, they are less likely to have specialized staff or departments to deal with legal regulations and taxation.

246. **Unequal access to human assets or knowledge and information.** Studies on female entrepreneurs highlight their lack of business skills and difficulties accessing business education—both formal education and training on business start-up. One survey of 100 businesswomen found that most had low levels of awareness of national mechanisms to support entrepreneurship. The majority receive information from their accountants

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Alimdjanova. *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*.

²⁶² Tukhtakhodjaeva. *Women and Business in Uzbekistan*.

²⁶³ Abdurazakova. *Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan*.

(25.5% in Tashkent), business associations (22.0% in Samarkand), official publications (24.5% in Tashkent), and newspapers. A significant number (22.0%) receive information from other entrepreneurs, indicating that networking is an important means of information sharing among businesswomen.²⁶⁴

247. A survey of women in farming enterprises found that the majority had considerable professional knowledge and had received higher education in agricultural technology. Despite this background, however, most reported that they were not informed about agriculture sector reform, knew little about their rights and obligations relating to credit, and lacked technical knowledge on such topics as pest control and how to run a business.²⁶⁵

248. Women are in need of specialized training on a number of topics such as business planning, expanding a business beyond the micro level, evaluating markets, and the regulatory framework in Uzbekistan. Women in rural areas are particularly isolated from information and networks and often are unaware of changes in legislation. In rural areas, “educational seminars, trainings, and forums are held infrequently.”²⁶⁶

249. **Unequal access to physical assets and/or technical resources.** Several studies have found that women in the MSME sector require assistance to help them access new technology. Related to financial constraints and limited access to information, female entrepreneurs are often unable to make use of new equipment or materials. A survey of female entrepreneurs in farming found that of 35 women, only 5 owned their own machinery and others made use of machine tractor fleets or hired from private owners.²⁶⁷ The female farmers noted that the machine tractor fleets are considerably lower in cost but also are in poor repair and lack spare parts. Subsequent breakdowns led to delays that resulted in lower crop yield.

250. **Traditional cultural perceptions and stereotypes.** Gender norms play different roles in limiting women’s participation in the MSME sector. The gender division of labor means that women must balance entrepreneurship activities with unpaid care work, which consumes a considerable amount of time and personal resources. Additionally, stereotypes and cultural taboos about business, especially the belief that large-scale business is not a feminine sphere of work, mean that women encounter bias and negative attitudes that men generally do not.

251. **Gender neutrality in small and medium-sized enterprise policy making and the invisibility of female entrepreneurs.** Legal regulation of the business environment is gender neutral, and government and donor programs on MSME development have tended to focus on women in limited and separate pilot projects. “Policies and programmes focus on men because they form a larger portion of the formal [SME] sector.”²⁶⁸ Women’s MSMEs are smaller in number and scale, making them less visible to policy makers. As a result, there are no special incentives or positive measures for women in the areas of taxation, financial services, and business registration.²⁶⁹

252. The disparate effect of gender-neutral laws and regulations on women in the MSME sector has not been analyzed in detail, but there is some suggestion that female entrepreneurs, just by the nature of their enterprises, may be affected in substantially different ways. For instance, a focus group participant in an ADB-supported survey noted that there are regulatory complications to operating a home-based business from a rented flat rather than from a privately owned house, due to the requirement that the property be registered as a place

264 UNECE. *Achievements and Prospects*.

265 Alimdjanova. *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*.

266 UNECE. *Achievements and Prospects*. p. 11.

267 Alimdjanova. *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*.

268 Abdurazakova. *Business Environment for Women and Men Entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan*.

269 Tukhtakhodjaeva. *Women and Business in Uzbekistan*.

of business. As a result, very few people in the surveyed regions run businesses from city apartments.²⁷⁰ Because home-based work has been especially promoted among women, this regulation may have an unintended and negative consequence for women in urban areas.

253. Female entrepreneurs have limited access to commercial loans but have greater access to microcredit. Access to finance is critical in the MSME sector and, as noted, this problem is especially acute for women who lack start-up capital and collateral for loans. State support and development of female entrepreneurship is at an early stage, and women do not have the resources that would allow them to expand their operations to the level of an SME. Official data about the proportion of women among borrowers were calculated in 2002 and have not been updated since that year. At that time, only 15% of microcredit loans were made to women.²⁷¹ Based on the expansion of credit options since 2002 (through credit unions, for example), it is likely that the number of women who have received loans has increased, but it is not clear to what extent the proportion of women among total borrowers has increased.

254. Although the options for obtaining credit have changed since the early 2000s, the institutional barriers that limit women's access to financial services have changed very little. As the Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan noted, "most women cannot provide guarantees to the bank because joint (family) property is registered in men's names [and] high interest rates limit the pool of entrepreneurs who are interested in obtaining loans. Inflation is an equally important factor that worries women who do not want to put their businesses at risk."²⁷²

255. Several distinct barriers that make access to credit an especially acute problem for female entrepreneurs have been identified.

256. Unequal access to collateral. Women and men have equal rights to receive credit against real estate and to make use of other forms of financial borrowing. In practice, however, women are disadvantaged in terms of access to start-up capital and lack collateral for loans because they do not own income-generating resources. Historically, women were not well positioned during the process of privatization of state enterprises; consequently, they did not gain ownership of or land-lease rights to firms and farms.

257. The Family Code regulates the ownership rights of spouses and guarantees equal rights to own, use, and dispose of joint property. Women have the right to inherit property equally with men. In reality, however, tradition and culture play a significant role. A wife is generally considered to be "given" to the husband's household, and thus land and other property is registered in the names of male household members (such as the husband, his father, a brother, or a son). An ADB-supported survey conducted in three regions of Uzbekistan found that, in 77% of urban households, the house or apartment where the family lives is officially registered to a male family member; in rural areas this figure is 85%.²⁷³ A focus group conducted by ADB with female entrepreneurs—all of whom were members of the National Association of Businesswomen with Disabilities—revealed that most of the women did not have physical assets in their own names. The few that had legal ownership of property and equipment were unwilling to risk such assets as collateral for bank loans out of fear of losing them if their businesses failed.²⁷⁴

270 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project.

271 Alimbekova. The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan.

272 Ibid.

273 ADB. 2011. Uzbekenergo: Advanced Electricity Metering Project.

274 N. Nayar and D. Tadjabaeva. 2012. *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise Development Projects*. Preliminary report for Asian Development Bank. Frankfurt: Frankfurt School of Finance and Management.

258. Farmers face particular difficulties in accessing loans “because banks do not consider properties in rural areas as liquid, although *dekhan*, peasants’ farms, and lease farms would, in principle, qualify as collateral.”²⁷⁵ Women’s lack of title to such farms means that they would face further complications in obtaining loans. Among banks and credit unions, loans for agriculture purposes represent a small portion of total portfolios.²⁷⁶

259. **Interest rates and repayment terms.** Because women’s businesses tend to be very small in scale, operate in the informal sector, and may take the form of home-based or irregular (seasonal) work, high interest rates and loan repayment may be especially burdensome. According to a May 2012 assessment, interest rates on SME loans ranged from 20% to 24% per annum. Female focus group participants considered such interest rates to be high and recommended that rates be lowered for clients with good repayment records. The same women also explained that making monthly repayments can be difficult because they generally cannot predict the income from their types of businesses.²⁷⁷

260. Female entrepreneurs in farming also face difficulties obtaining financial assistance, due to high interest rates. Of female entrepreneurs participating in a survey, only 10% had obtained credit from banks; none had applied to credit unions due to the high interest rates; and most would instead rely on loans or financial assistance from family members.²⁷⁸

261. **Loan application procedures.** A 2008 survey of female entrepreneurs in two regions found that women were investing in their businesses mainly because they wanted to keep pace with market conditions and customer needs (64.9% of respondents in Samarkand and 88% of respondents in Tashkent).²⁷⁹ However, these entrepreneurs rarely applied for credit, and they identified the loan application procedure (as well as collateral requirements) to be particular stumbling blocks for micro and small businesses. It would be useful to further identify the specific difficulties women encounter when applying for loans, which could include the time and cost of drawing up and notarizing documents or the need to travel to urban centers.

262. **Limited information and knowledge of financial services.** In general, women engaged in SMEs “lack awareness about banks and banking products and services.”²⁸⁰ Women’s lack of knowledge about financial services may be particularly acute in rural regions. Only 40% of those in the Samarkand survey sample had ever applied for credit, compared to 54% of those in Tashkent. Among those who had applied for credit in Tashkent, 78.0% were successful, but only 38.2% of those in the Samarkand region obtained loans. The difference in the numbers of businesswomen applying for credit was attributed to the fact that “women in rural areas lack the knowledge and skills to apply for loans through banks or funds, and so it is much easier for them to borrow through credit unions, family members or friends.”²⁸¹

263. **Psychological and cultural barriers.** In addition to institutional issues, studies have suggested that cultural attitudes about women in business and women’s lack of confidence in themselves and the banking system limit their access to loans. ADB-led focus groups found that most women engaged in small business who had not applied for loans expressed a lack of trust in banks.²⁸² This sentiment, when combined with their uncertainty about banking procedures, discouraged them from taking perceived risks to grow their businesses. A survey of 100 businesswomen found that, in addition to a lack of awareness of microlending and technical support for enterprises, they “did not have sufficient confidence in the organizations

275 FAO. Uzbekistan Country Report.

276 Alimdjanova. *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*.

277 Nayar and Tadjabaeva. *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise Development Projects*.

278 Alimdjanova. *Experiences of Women Farmers in Uzbekistan*.

279 UNECE. *Achievements and Prospects*.

280 Nayar and Tadjabaeva. *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise Development Projects*. p. 11.

281 UNECE. *Achievements and Prospects*. p. 24.

282 Nayar and Tadjabaeva. *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise Development Projects*.

and agencies that provide business support.” In fact, “often a single failure to obtain credit stopped the women from reapplying for loans instead of them learning from the bitter experience and trying again.”²⁸³

264. Due to culture and tradition, even businesswomen may be unable to exercise sole control over assets and decisions about financing. Women may need to seek the permission of a spouse or other family member to make key business decisions, a scenario that would unlikely apply to male entrepreneurs. As an ADB assessment noted, “women are not always comfortable informing their mother-in-laws [*sic*] that they are borrowing from banks, creating problems for the loan officers who have to visit the home and business premises for monitoring.”²⁸⁴

265. Due to these limitations, when female entrepreneurs do receive business loans, it is most often through targeted microlending programs. Credit unions were the primary lending agency that women used (Box 5), but the establishment of the joint-stock commercial bank Mikrocreditbank under the 2006 Law on Microfinance facilitated greater opportunities for small businesses, especially for female entrepreneurs, to access banking services.

Box 5: Role of Credit Unions in Women’s Entrepreneurship

The development of microfinance in Uzbekistan is, in part, a result of the introduction of credit unions in 2002. When the Law on Credit Unions was adopted, women’s nongovernment organizations became particularly active in credit unions. As of June 2011, there were 123 active credit unions in Uzbekistan, and 33 national credit unions were established by female entrepreneurs.

From 2005 to 2011, total deposits in credit unions grew from \$4.9 million to about \$150.0 million, and total outstanding loans increased from about \$6.0 million to about \$177.0 million. By mid-2011, there were 244,678 credit union members, 46% of whom were female entrepreneurs. More women than men (60%) deposited their savings in credit unions for education, household renovations, and family events such as weddings. As of January 2011, 46% of all credit union loans were to women.

In July 2011, under instruction from the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan, credit unions ceased to accept deposits or extend new loans. Some credit unions have had their licenses revoked in reaction to alleged corrupt practices (double accounting or Ponzi-type schemes). Other potential reasons for revoking licenses include a legal and regulatory framework that has not kept pace with the rapid development of credit unions since 2002, and concerns over financial stability due to rapid credit expansion and high lending rates.

The abolition of credit unions has profound effects on women entrepreneurs. Credit unions are an attractive option for female borrowers because they are responsive to the types of issues that make women ineligible for bank loans. They attract clients below the \$10,000 segment and offer “easy access to loans, with simplified procedures, quick approval, and disbursement in cash and foreign currency, without collateral.” The long-term effect of the restrictions and closures of credit unions on women’s economic opportunities is not yet clear.

Sources: ADB. 2012. *Financial Sector Assessment for Country Partnership Strategy: Uzbekistan, 2012-2016* and N. Nayar and D. Tadjabaeva. 2012. *Gender in Small and Microenterprise Development Projects*. Preliminary report for ADB. Frankfurt: Frankfurt School of Finance and Management. p. 3.

283 UNECE. *Achievements and Prospects*. p. 9.

284 Nayar and Tadjabaeva. *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise Development Projects*. p. 13.

266. At a business forum of bankers and entrepreneurs organized by the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan in early 2012, plans were announced to allocate SUM123.7 billion in support of women's entrepreneurship and SUM2.3 billion to recent graduates for business projects. Under the national Year of the Family Program for 2012, business partnerships between commercial banks and entrepreneurs will be strengthened, "with a focus on developing family and women's businesses, crafts and other business directions."²⁸⁵

267. The Business Women's Association of Uzbekistan plays an advocacy role in assisting female entrepreneurs who have been denied bank credit. The association may consider the specific case, examine the business plan and other information about the applicant. If all the arguments are in favor of the specific project, the association can approach the bank and facilitate the issuance of credit. In this regard, the association cooperates with Mikrocreditbank and other major commercial banks.²⁸⁶

268. The SABR Socio-Economic Development Center is an example of an NGO that provides microfinance and support for women's microenterprises in Samarkand. Since initiating its microfinance program in 2001, the center has made 12,373 loans totaling more than €1.3 million (about \$1,722,519), with an average loan of €188 (about \$249). The portfolio comprises 66.7% female borrowers.²⁸⁷ In addition to providing access to credit, the center offers consultations and support groups as well as training and educational programs. Data for 2010 indicated that most entrepreneurs receiving microcredit were in trade (58%), followed by small production (20%), animal husbandry (18%), and services (4%). On average, women living in rural areas and from low-income families increased their income by 65% after receiving microfinance under the SABR program.²⁸⁸

269. Special programs to provide female farmers with financial assistance also exist, such as the Fund for the Support of Social Initiatives, working with the Mekhr Nuri Fund and the Women's Assembly Public Association, which provided microcredit to over 70 women in seven regions, averaging SUM500,000 as "start-up capital for further development of farming."²⁸⁹ In a second stage, an additional 70 female farmers received microcredit of SUM3 million–SUM5 million each.

270. The banks generally view the women who have received loans as good customers, "as they are responsible, disciplined and regular with their repayments."²⁹⁰ However, only a minority of banks are aware of the specialized needs of women engaged in microenterprises, or engage in direct marketing to attract women as customers.

271. **Women have limited access to housing finance.** The regulatory framework for housing finance improved after 2005 after the passage of a presidential decree on developing a mortgage lending support fund²⁹¹ and the Law on Mortgage Financing (enacted 4 October 2006). Nonetheless, development of housing finance has not been equally beneficial to women and men, and women face limited opportunities to obtain financing for house reconstruction and improvement. Women also are a minority of beneficiaries of rural housing programs, and of all loan applications processed and approved by the Qishloq Qurilish Bank from 2009 to 2010,

285 Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2012. Tashkent Hosts Business Forum of Entrepreneurs and Bankers. [In Russian]. February. <http://cbu.uz/ru/press.php?date=2012-02-07%2011%3A56%3A34>

286 G. Makhmudova. Women in Business: Success in Work and Prosperity in the Home.

287 M. Shirinova. 2011. *The Experience of the SABR Center in Developing Women's Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas*. [In Russian]. Presentation at the UNECE Policy Seminar on Women's Entrepreneurship Development in Central Asia. Geneva.

288 SABR Socio-Economic Development Center. 2010. *Analytical Report for 2009*. [In Russian]. Samarkand.

289 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. *Consideration of Reports*. p. 116.

290 Nayar and Tadjabaeva, *Gender in Small and Micro Enterprise Development Projects*, p. 5.

291 Presidential Decree No. 69. 6 May 2005.

only 22% of applicants were women.²⁹² One-fifth of these were single women. Women also represented 37% of coborrowers for approved loans. In 2011, only 15% of approved loan applicants were women, the majority of whom (80%) lived in their relatives' house.

272. Women's access to housing finance is limited for virtually the same reasons their ability to obtain loans for entrepreneurial activities is limited: women are much more likely to lack a regular source of income and are unable to provide the required collateral for loans. As has been noted, land and other property are rarely registered in women's names, even in the case of marital property that is legally considered to be jointly owned. The Rural Housing Program also exacerbates this problem by issuing certificates to houses and land plots under the name of the registered borrowers, who are primarily male. Even women who are actually co-owners are not included in the registration and thus remain invisible for legal purposes.

273. The gender action plan for the ADB Housing for Integrated Rural Development Investment Program (Tranches 1 and 2) includes activities to improve the loan selection process and criteria to reach qualifying women and to increase their access to new housing. Additionally, improvements are to be made to the Qishloq Qurilish Bank database, which should support a more comprehensive gender analysis of housing finance. See Appendix 2 for points to consider in project preparation for private sector development and finance.

292 Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2011c. Social and Poverty Reduction Strategy, Housing Program Tranche 1.

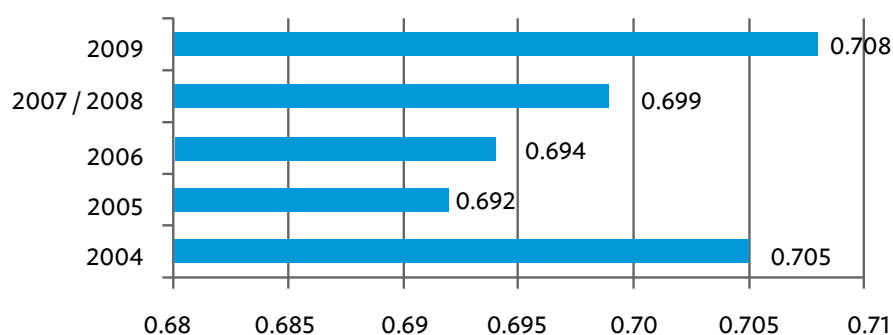
APPENDIX 1

Additional Notes on Gender and Development Indicators, Methodologies, and Values on Uzbekistan

Gender-Related Development Index

- Developed by the United Nations Development Programme, the Gender-Related Development Index (Figure A1.1) was replaced by the Gender Inequality Index in 2010.¹
- Countries received a value from “1” (representing maximum achievement with perfect equality) to “0”.

Figure A1.1: Gender-Related Development Index Trends for Uzbekistan, 2004–2009



Source: UNDP. 2009. *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers—Human Mobility and Development*. New York.

Social Institutions and Gender Index

- This index was developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2009 to capture information about “discriminatory social institutions, such as early marriage, discriminatory inheritance practices, violence against women, son preference, restricted access to public space and restricted access to land and credit.”²

¹ Gender Inequality Index scores are not yet available for Uzbekistan.

² Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). What is the Social Institutions and Gender Index. <http://genderindex.org/content/team>

The Social Institutions and Gender Index comprises 14 variables grouped by subindex: discriminatory family code, restricted physical integrity, son bias, restricted resources and entitlements, and restricted civil liberties (Table A1).

- Countries are assigned values on a scale in which “0” represents a situation of equality and “1” indicates that women experience discrimination.

Table A1: Social Institutions and Gender Index Values by Subcategory for Uzbekistan, 2012

Subcategory	Value
Discriminatory family code	0.404500
Restricted physical integrity	0.904000
Son bias	0.571642
Restricted resources and entitlements	0.347300
Restricted civil liberties	0.308600
Social Institutions and Gender Index Value 2012	0.304442

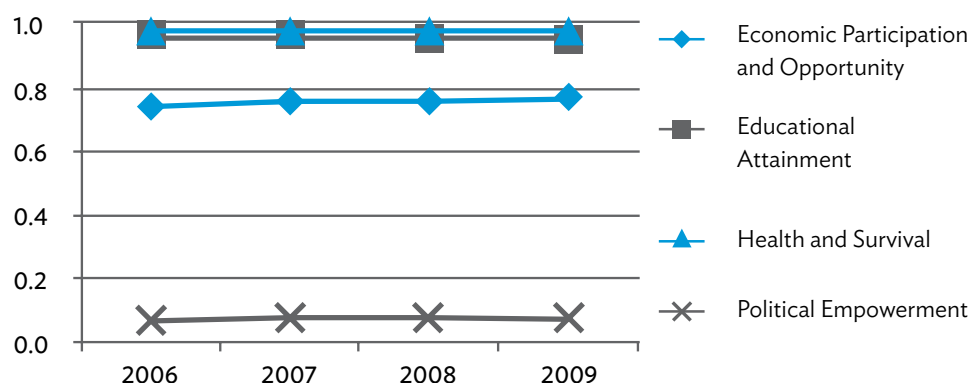
Note: Numbers may not sum precisely because of rounding.

Source: OSCE. 2006. Social Institutions and Gender Index 2012, Country Profiles: Uzbekistan.

Global Gender Gap Index

- This index was developed by the World Economic Forum to measure the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities and to track national progress over time.
- The Global Gender Gap Index measures gender-based gaps in resources and opportunities in four categories: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment (Figure A1.2).
- Educational attainment measures the literacy rate and enrollment in primary, secondary, and tertiary education. Health and survival includes the sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy. Economic participation and opportunity measures labor force participation; wage equality; and the number of senior officials, managers, and professional and technical workers. Political empowerment measures women in Parliament, in ministerial positions, and as heads of state.
- Countries are given a score on a scale in which “1” is the highest (full equality) and “0” the lowest.

Figure A1.2: Yearly Comparison of Global Gender Gap Index Scores by Subcategory

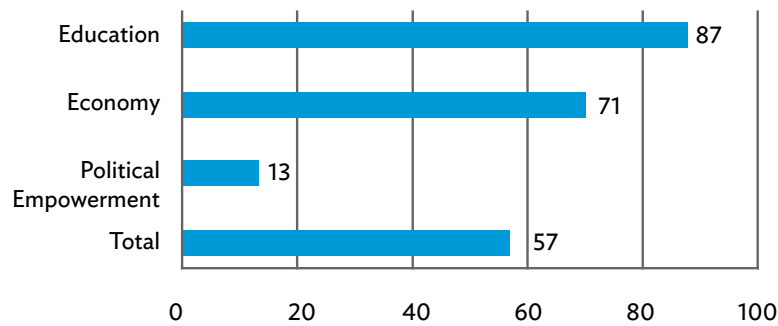


Source: World Economic Forum. 2011. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2011*. Geneva.

Gender Equity Index

- This index was developed by Social Watch in 2007 to measure gaps between women and men in three dimensions: education, the economy, and political empowerment (Figure A1.3).
- Education measures gender gaps in school enrollment and literacy rates. Economic participation measures gaps in wage and employment. Political empowerment measures gaps in highly qualified jobs, Parliament, and senior executive positions.
- Countries are assigned a value in each of the three areas from “0”, a situation of complete inequality, to “100”, perfect equality. The gender equity index is an average of the three dimensions.

Figure A1.3: Gender Equity Index Scores for Uzbekistan, 2012



Source: Social Watch. 2012. 2012 Gender Equity Index. <http://socialwatch.org/node/14365>

APPENDIX 2

Points to Consider in Project Preparation

Points to Consider in Project Preparation for Water Supply and Sanitation

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into Asian Development Bank (ADB) activities relevant to water supply and sanitation (WSS) in Uzbekistan, as well as suggested questions to consider.

Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation. Also, consult best practices for developing gender-sensitive projects in the WSS sector.

- Review national programs that address women's issues. What are the entry points relevant to WSS? For example, how is water supply implicated in national programs to promote women's microenterprise?
- Has the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality been engaged in consultations and project planning?
- Have WSS projects that address women's specific needs been considered (e.g., improving household water supply both for domestic use and for home-based businesses)?

Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, project monitoring, and the collection of endline data to show the gender impacts of WSS projects.

- Have time-use studies been carried out to measure any decrease in the burdens on women's time devoted to collection and treatment of water? Has qualitative information been collected on decreasing workloads for women? Have methods been considered to assess how women are using any time saved?
- Have baseline data been collected on the incidence of waterborne diseases by sex and age? Has qualitative information been collected on the impact of illness on other family members, specifically women, in terms of time spent caring for ill people, days of lost work, and cost of medicines and treatment?
- Have assessments established the gender impact of poor sanitation services in schools, such as girls' decreased school attendance or the impact on female staff members? What indicators or methodologies have been used to measure positive changes due to improved sanitation?
- Are targets for women's participation in project implementation related to assessments of women's current representation in key organizations, such as water consumer groups? How will women's effective participation in project and community decision making be measured?

Ensure that hygiene promotion activities are gender-sensitive and do not reinforce gender stereotypes.

- Are informational materials responsive to different hygiene practices of women and men, girls and boys? Are different messages used to target women and men, based on their differential knowledge and household roles?
- What measures can be taken to ensure that women's engagement in hygiene promotion activities does not reinforce stereotypes about women's roles in unpaid community or socially oriented activities? Are women engaged in hygiene-promotion activities within WSS projects given formal job descriptions, and/or are they paid for this work? Can hygiene-promotion activities be formalized and compensated?

Promote participation of women in design and implementation of infrastructure projects. Additionally, take into consideration the perspectives of women and men regarding water use and sanitation facilities.

- Are women's voices included in community discussions and decision making about WSS investments? Is their inclusion in such discussions proportionate to their role in household work that affects specific water consumption patterns?
- Are there water user groups that address domestic water issues? What is women's representation in such groups? What factors may be preventing women from participating in such groups and/or taking on leadership roles?
- Are investments made in areas that will directly benefit women and girls (such as construction of separate toilet facilities in schools or prioritization of WSS projects in health care facilities)?
- Have women's nongovernment organizations (NGOs) that advocate on behalf of specific groups of women (e.g., women with disabilities, single mothers, self-employed women, or women in rural regions) been included in consultations with the government? With ADB? Have women been included in project design?
- What measures have been taken to ensure that women's participation in projects becomes a general practice and continues beyond the life of the project? Are activities included to empower women to take on leadership roles and to develop their capacities to represent their interests in public forums?
- Are customer satisfaction surveys, disaggregated by sex, used to determine whether WSS services have improved and are, in fact, meeting the distinct needs of women and men?

Create opportunities for income generation and employment for women in WSS projects.

- Identify the constraints facing women in home-based, micro, and small enterprises that are specifically related to weaknesses in current WSS services. What business opportunities could women take advantage of if they had consistent supply?
- In what types of income-generating activities do women in the target area engage? Do these include small businesses or home-based activities that could be expanded or supported by the provision of clean WSS services?
- Can women be encouraged and supported to gain employment within water supply companies, especially in support services or as water-meter controllers? How can employers be encouraged and supported to recruit women? What measures are taken to counter stereotypes among employers about "women's work"?

Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other key stakeholders to mainstream gender in WSS-related planning and analysis.

- Are gender-sensitive information and sex-disaggregated data on such topics as time devoted to water collection, consumption patterns, and costs regularly collected and used in policy setting? Do stakeholders have the capacity to collect such data?
- How do male leaders view their responsibilities to female citizens and women users of public services?
- Among government officials, municipal and community leaders, ministries, and WSS sector employees, is there adequate understanding of the needs and preferences of women in terms of WSS facilities? Are the management and staff members of executing agencies informed about women's needs and the agency's responsibilities toward women?
- Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyze questions about the gender aspects of WSS improvement and the implications for project design?
- What is the representation of women either in leadership positions in the WSS sector or on the staff of executing agencies? What barriers have prevented women from holding such positions? What opportunities are there to support increased participation by women in professional, technical, and decision-making positions?
- Is there gender balance among consultant teams, including gender specialists and international experts?
- Has gender been mainstreamed into the national WSS development plan? Does the national plan allow for periodic surveys to collect sex-disaggregated data and/or gender-sensitive information?

Points to Consider in Project Preparation for Natural Resources Management

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to natural resources management, primarily water resources, in Uzbekistan, as well as suggested key questions to consider.

Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation. Also, consult best practices for developing gender-sensitive projects in such areas as natural resources management, closing gender gaps in agriculture, and climate change.

- Review national programs that address women's issues. What are the entry points relevant to natural resources management and particularly to access to water resources? For example, how is irrigation implicated in national programs to promote women's microenterprises, looking particularly at farming as an entrepreneurial activity? Do programs on microlending to women address women's limited title to and control over land (and thus lack of collateral for bank loans)?
- Can links be made between ADB projects on land and water resources and projects on women's economic empowerment or initiatives to implement the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)? For instance, projects on natural resources could include awareness raising among women about their equal rights to own land, as well as education targeting men about the importance of women's rights to property and inheritance.
- Has the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality been engaged in consultations and project planning?
- Have projects that address women's specific needs regarding natural resources been considered (e.g., improving female farmers' access to water for irrigation)?

Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring, and in the collection of endline data to show the gender impacts of projects on natural resources.

- Have baseline data been collected on women and men's access to and control over natural resources? Has information been gathered to establish whether there are differences in how women and men manage water resources (i.e., inefficient use)? What indicators or methodologies have been used to measure positive changes in access to and efficient use of natural resources?
- Has baseline data been collected on women's specific roles in agriculture production—for example, about the number of women managing and working in various types of farming enterprises? What are women's roles in both private farms and household agricultural production?
- In what specific agricultural areas are women and men represented as owners or managers? Where are women and men represented along agriculture value chains? How are natural resources—especially water—implicated in the productivity of different crops and/or livestock and for activities at various points along value chains?
- What indicators or methodologies have been used to measure the effect of improvements in water resources management on women's lives (in such areas as productivity of small businesses and family plots, employment, and income-generating opportunities)?
- Are targets for women's participation in project implementation related to assessments of women's current representation in key organizations such as farmers' associations or water user associations (WUAs)? How will women's effective participation in project and community decision making be measured?
- Have assessments established the gender impacts of climate change? Specifically, what might be the impact on women of decreased water supply and food scarcity? Has there been analysis of the behaviors and practices of women and men that could either exacerbate or offset environmental changes?

Promote participation of women in design and implementation of projects on natural resources management. Additionally, ensure that the perspectives of women and men regarding water and land use are addressed in project design.

- Are women's voices included in community discussions and decision making about irrigation investments and improvements? Is their inclusion in such discussions proportionate to their role in agricultural production and especially in managing small farms or family plots?
- Are there WUAs that address issues concerning irrigation? What is the level of representation of women in such groups? What factors may be preventing women from participating in such groups and/or taking on leadership roles?
- Have measures been taken to ensure that women are integrated into mainstream associations and committees that make decisions concerning natural resources? What steps have been taken to overcome any stereotypes about women's roles in natural resources management? Have good practices to increase the number of female members of WUAs under ADB projects been studied and replicated?
- Have women's NGOs or other organizations that advocate on behalf of women farmers been included in consultations with the government? With ADB? Is there support for the establishment or development of women farmers' associations? Could networking and cooperation between such associations and existing women's groups, such as the Women's Committee or associations of businesswomen, be facilitated? Have women generally been included in project design?

- Are women's groups and women's NGOs, especially those active in the environmental movement, included in national and international discussions of climate change?
- What measures have been taken to ensure that women's participation in projects becomes a general practice and continues beyond the life of the project? Are activities included to empower women to take on leadership roles and to develop their capacities to represent their interests in public forums?

Create opportunities for income generation and employment for women in natural resources projects.

- Identify the constraints facing women engaged in farming as a business. Do female farmers have the same access to resources as male farmers (including credit, equipment, machinery, tools, seeds, knowledge, and skills)? What barriers do women in farming face in accessing such resources, and how can these barriers be addressed in projects on land improvement?
- Have specific programs been developed to support female entrepreneurs in agriculture in terms of training, technical assistance, and access to credit?

Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other key stakeholders to mainstream gender in planning and analysis under agriculture and natural resources projects.

- Are gender-sensitive information and sex-disaggregated data on patterns of water use in agriculture production and access to irrigation channels regularly collected and used in policy setting? Do stakeholders have the capacity to collect such data?
- Are gender-specific data and information about health problems resulting from waterborne diseases attributable to environmental degradation (see also the WSS section) used in policy discussions on climate change?
- Among government officials, municipal and community leaders, and ministries and employees responsible for land and water management, is there adequate understanding of the needs and preferences of women and men in terms of water use for irrigation?
- What measures are planned to address the prevailing gender-based stereotype that domestic water concerns women, but water as a natural resource concerns men? How will progress toward dispelling stereotypes be measured?
- Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyze questions about the gender aspects of natural resources management and the implications for project design?
- Are there processes for public consultations on water and irrigation investments, and do they include mechanisms to ensure that women's voices are heard?

Points to Consider in Project Preparation for the Energy Sector

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to the energy sector in Uzbekistan, as well as suggested key questions to consider.

Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation. Also, consult best practices for developing gender-sensitive projects in the energy sector.

- Review national programs that address women's issues. What are the entry points relevant to energy supply? For example, how are consistent electricity supply or energy efficiency implicated in national programs to promote women's microenterprise?

- Can links be made between ADB projects to promote energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy and projects on women's economic empowerment? For instance, projects to support female entrepreneurs could include incentives for establishing modern energy businesses and modeling clean energy practices.
- Have the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality been engaged in consultations and project planning?
- Have energy projects that address women's specific needs been considered (for example, improving household energy supply for both domestic use and home-based businesses and assisting in the transition to modern cooking fuels)?

Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring, and in the collection of endline data to show the gender impacts of energy projects.

- Have time-use studies been carried out to measure any decrease in the burdens on women's time if sufficient electricity is supplied to allow women the use of labor-saving devices in the home? Has qualitative information been collected on decreasing workloads for women? Have methods been considered to assess how women are using any time saved?
- Are indicators and assessment methodologies used to measure the effect of infrastructure improvements on women's lives (including such topics as access to consistent, sufficient, and affordable electricity supply that would allow the use of labor-saving devices in the home or the use of modern cooking fuels and technologies)?
- Have household surveys been conducted that provide information about male and female energy consumption patterns and needs, household expenditure on utilities, and access to clean energy? Are there sex-disaggregated data about female-headed households, single parents, pensioners, etc.?
- Have gender audits been conducted in Uzbekenergo (and its branches) and relevant power plants to establish information about gender balance in staffing, levels and positions occupied by women and men, recruitment systems, women's access to managerial positions, barriers to advancement, and family-friendly policies and working environment? Do such audits include input from the women and men working in the relevant organizations?
- Are targets for women's participation in project implementation related to assessments of women's current representation in key organizations? How will women's effective participation in project and community decision making be measured?

Promote participation of women in design and implementation of energy infrastructure projects. Additionally, take into consideration the perspectives of women and men regarding energy consumption and energy efficiency.

- Are women's voices included in community discussions and decision making about energy investments? Is their inclusion in such discussions proportionate to their role in household work that implicates specific patterns of energy consumption patterns?
- Are investments made in areas that will have a direct benefit to women such as the promotion of modern cooking fuels and ensuring access to efficient cook stoves and heaters?
- Do installation or connection costs and rate structures take into account the energy needs and incomes of poor households, particularly of economically vulnerable women? Has consideration been given to credit or other arrangements that would enable households and small enterprises to access new services? Have bill payment assistance schemes for poor households been considered? If so, are there any barriers that might

prevent women from using such schemes, and how will they be addressed?

- Are methods included to address the level of satisfaction of male and female consumers with energy supply and costs as well as the level of knowledge among women and men of their rights as customers? Consider how the perspectives of different groups of women and men, such as single mothers, women heading households, or pensioners, may differ.
- Are separate and specific messages for women and men needed in promotional materials about energy use? Does the promotion and marketing of advanced metering technology and energy efficiency take a gender-sensitive approach? Are different messages used to target women and men, based on their differential knowledge, household roles, and consumption patterns?
- Are activities used to promote consumer rights, and have critical differences in how women and men protect their rights as consumers been identified? What gender-specific messages, information, and advice can be promoted?
- Have women's NGOs that advocate on behalf of specific groups of women (e.g., women with disabilities, single mothers, self-employed women, or women in rural regions) been included in consultations with the government? With ADB? Have women been included in project design?
- What measures have been taken to ensure that women's participation in projects becomes a general practice and continues beyond the life of the project? Are activities included to empower women to take on leadership roles and to develop their capacities to represent their interests in public forums?

Within energy projects, create opportunities for income generation and employment for women.

- Identify the constraints facing women in home-based, micro, and small enterprises that are specifically related to weaknesses in energy supply. What business opportunities could women take advantage of if they had consistent and affordable energy supplies?
- In what types of income-generating activities do women in the target area engage? Do these include small businesses or home-based activities that could be expanded or supported by the provision of efficient and affordable energy?
- What kinds of measures could be taken to improve women's access to income-generating activities connected to energy improvements such as reduced or delineated tariffs for home-based business, small grants for microfinance for the purchase of energy-efficient equipment, or new technologies?
- Can women be encouraged and supported to gain employment within the energy service provider, especially in support services? How can employers be encouraged and supported to recruit women? What measures are taken to counter stereotypes among employers about "women's work"?

Support employers in the energy sector to undertake gender mainstreaming of the work environment.

- Have there been any initiatives to identify reasons for low participation related to the demand or supply of professional women?
- Have measures been taken to address any barriers to women's participation? Have efforts been made to invest in projects that will have a greater impact on women's employment opportunities (for instance, in developing models of customer service)? Are workplace policies in place that support work and family life balance?
- What measures can be included in project design to address prevailing attitudes and

gender stereotypes about women's potential to be employed in the energy sector? How will progress toward dispelling stereotypes be measured?

- What actions are being taken to work with employers to change attitudes and hiring practices and facilitate the hiring of women in nontraditional jobs?
- Is professional training to aid women to enter nontraditional fields included in the project design? What additional support will be offered women such as career counseling, job placement, or mentoring?

Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other stakeholders to mainstream gender in energy-related planning and analysis.

- Are gender-sensitive information and sex-disaggregated data on energy availability, consumption patterns, and costs regularly collected and used in policy setting? Do stakeholders have the capacity to collect such data?
- How do male leaders view their responsibilities to female citizens and users of public services?
- Among government officials, municipal leaders, ministries, and energy sector employees, is there adequate understanding of the needs and preferences of women in terms of energy consumption? Are management and staff of executing agencies informed about women's needs and the agency's responsibilities toward women?
- Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyze questions about the gender aspects of improvement to energy supplies and the implications for project design?
- What is the representation of women either in leadership positions in the energy sector or on the staff of executing agencies? What barriers have prevented women from holding such positions? What opportunities are there to support increased participation by women in professional, technical, and decision-making positions?
- Is the national energy development plan gender mainstreamed? Does the plan allow for periodic surveys to collect sex-disaggregated data?

Points to Consider in Project Preparation for the Transport Sector

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to transport in Uzbekistan, as well as suggested key questions to consider.

Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation. Also, consult best practices for developing gender-sensitive projects in the transport sector.

- Review national programs that address women's issues. What are the entry points relevant to transport? For example, how are restrictions on women's mobility (due to such factors as poor-quality feeder roads or availability and cost of transport) implicated in national programs to promote women's microenterprises?
- Can links be made between ADB projects to develop roadside infrastructure and projects on women's economic empowerment? For instance, projects to support female entrepreneurs could be included within road construction and rehabilitation projects to ensure that women's businesses are included among roadside enterprises.
- Has ADB engaged with the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality in consultations and project planning?

- Have projects that address women's specific needs in terms of mobility and transport been considered (such as rehabilitation of local and feeder roads or provision of transport on routes primarily used by women)?

Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring, and in the collection of endline data to show the gender impacts of transport projects.

- Have assessments been conducted on male and female transport patterns, such as representation among drivers and pedestrians, and the reasons for such choices? Are there any specific barriers to women or men's mobility (such as certain roads that are not accessible, the cost of fuel and transport, limited coverage to rural areas, or social prohibitions on travel)? Have women and men been polled about their satisfaction with current transport options?
- Are indicators and assessment methodologies used to measure the effect of road improvement projects on the lives of women and girls (including in such areas as access to markets, education, health services, and income-earning opportunities)?
- Have surveys been conducted on use of public transport disaggregated by sex, including such issues as accessibility of urban and rural transport for women and men in terms of cost and timetables? Are specific groups such as single parents, students, the elderly, and persons with disabilities included?
- Are sex-disaggregated data collected on the incidence of road accidents and fatalities among drivers, passengers, and pedestrians?
- Have studies been conducted on the specific vulnerability of men working in the transport sector to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections? Have surveys been undertaken to identify the nexus between increased mobility, labor migration, commercial sex work, and human trafficking in Uzbekistan?
- Are targets for job creation for women related to assessments of women's current representation in key industries, either as employees in construction companies or as entrepreneurs? How will improvements in women's economic opportunities be measured?

Promote participation of women in design and implementation of transport projects.

Additionally, take into consideration the perspectives of women and men regarding road construction and transport.

- Are women's voices included in community discussions and decision making about transport and road construction? Is their inclusion in such discussions proportionate to their domestic role that results in specific travel needs, for example, to markets, schools, or health care facilities?
- Do transport projects take into consideration the development of corresponding roadside infrastructure such as sanitary facilities and facilities specifically for people traveling with children?
- Have women's NGOs that advocate on behalf of specific groups of women (such as women with disabilities, single mothers, self-employed women, or women in rural regions) been included in consultations with the government? With ADB?
- How will the gender dimensions of road safety be addressed? What specific messages and initiatives will be directed toward men's risk for road-related accidents and fatalities?

- Do road safety initiatives also take into consideration issues of women's personal safety as pedestrians and transport users in terms of, for example, pedestrian crossings, visible and well-lighted transport stops, transport timetables, or overcrowding on public transport? Is consideration also given to the safety issues of adult pedestrians or transport users and the children traveling with them?
- What measures have been taken to ensure that women's participation in projects becomes a general practice and continues beyond the life of the project? Are activities included to empower women to take on leadership roles and to develop their capacities to represent their interests in public forums?

Within transport projects, create opportunities for income generation and employment for women.

- In what types of income-generating activities do women in the target area engage? Do these include small businesses or other activities that could be expanded or supported through greater access to feeder roads or major highways?
- What kinds of measures could be taken to improve women's access to income-generating activities connected to roadside infrastructure improvements, such as in highway rest stops or the hospitality and tourism industries?
- Can women be encouraged and supported to take a greater role as owners and/or operators of transport services? Can women be supported to start businesses in new industries that are connected to road development, such as auto parts and fuel retail services, maintenance services, or roadside rest stops?
- Identify any constraints facing women in home-based, micro, and small enterprises that are specifically related to limitations on mobility. What business opportunities could women take advantage of if they had improved access to markets?
- What specific constraints do women with established businesses face in terms of accessing larger markets, transport logistics, or export strategies? Can these issues be addressed within activities on job creation for women in transport projects, for example, through educational and training programs?
- Can women be encouraged and supported to gain employment within transport and construction companies? How can employers be encouraged and supported to recruit women? What measures are taken to counter stereotypes among employers about "women's work"?

Support key employers in the transport sector to undertake effective gender mainstreaming of the work environment.

- What is the representation of women in the staff of key institutions implicated in road and transport projects (for example, the Republic Road Fund, Uzavtoyul, Uzbekistan Railways, and others)? What is the representation of women in the staff of ADB implementing partners and consultants? What positions do women hold?
- Have there been any initiatives to identify reasons for low participation related to the demand or supply of professional women?
- Have measures been taken to address any barriers to women's participation? Or have efforts been made to invest in projects that will have a greater impact on women's employment opportunities (for instance, in developing models of customer service)? Are workplace policies in place that support work and family life balance?
- What measures can be included in project design to address prevailing attitudes and gender stereotypes about women's potential to be employed in the construction and transport industries? How will progress toward dispelling stereotypes be measured?

- What actions are being taken to work with employers to change attitudes and hiring practices and facilitate the hiring of women in nontraditional jobs?
- Is professional training to aid women to enter nontraditional fields included in the project design? What additional support will be offered to women, such as career counseling, job placement, or mentoring?

Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other key stakeholders to mainstream gender in transport-related planning and analysis.

- Are gender-sensitive information and sex-disaggregated data on mobility, transport patterns, costs, and satisfaction with transport options regularly collected and used in policy setting? Do stakeholders have the capacity to collect such data?
- Among government officials, municipal leaders, ministries, and employees, is there adequate understanding of the needs and preferences of women in terms of transport options? Are management and staff of executing agencies informed about women's needs and the agency's responsibilities toward women?
- Do managers and planners have the skills to formulate and analyze questions about the gender aspects of transport infrastructure improvement and the implications for project design?
- What is the representation of women either in leadership positions in the transport sector or on the staff of executing agencies? What barriers have prevented women from holding such positions? What opportunities are there to support increased participation by women in professional, technical, and decision-making positions?

Points to Consider in Project Preparation for Private Sector Development and Finance

The following represent opportunities for gender mainstreaming into ADB activities relevant to micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and private sector development, as well as suggested key questions to consider.

Reflect national policy and goals on gender equality and improving the status of women in project planning and negotiation. Also, consult best practices for developing projects that aim to improve the economic status of women and to increase opportunities for women's employment.

- Review national programs that address women's issues, particularly programs on women's access to economic resources. What are the entry points relevant to private sector development? Do such national programs provide support for female owners or managers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as home-based and microenterprises? Are there measures to increase women's employment in the private sector?
- Consider how goals on women or gender equality are integrated into national programs on SME support or microfinance. How can issues affecting women in business be integrated into general private sector development projects, in addition to specific activities that target women as a distinct group? How can ADB projects draw connections between policies oriented toward women and more general programs in finance sector development?
- Has ADB engaged with the appropriate national machinery for the promotion of women's empowerment and/or gender equality in consultations and project planning?

Include gender-sensitive information in the collection of baseline data, in project monitoring, and in the collection of endline data to show the gender effects of private sector development projects.

- Is there consensus on how “women’s business” or “female entrepreneurs” are defined in the local context? For example, will projects target women who are sole proprietors of businesses, joint owners, or managers? Will specialized finance options be available only to women interested in developing a business themselves or also to women and men with businesses that primarily employ women?
- Are data available on the number of women who own or manage businesses, further disaggregated by other indicators? Is there support for the development of a methodology and creation of a database on female entrepreneurs that would include such information as size, age, and location of a business; sphere of activity; or number of male and female employees?
- What indicators and assessment methodologies are used to measure the effect of improvements to financial services on women’s entrepreneurship? (For example, is sex-disaggregated data being collected on such indicators as number of start-up businesses, number of active businesses, longevity of businesses, or the number of businesses liquidated or declaring bankruptcy?)
- Are there set targets for increasing women’s access to credit, housing loans, or microcredit related to assessments of women’s current representation among bank clients? Are targets realistic, given project time frames? How will women’s ability to access improved financial services and expand and improve their businesses be measured?
- What assessment methodologies are used to measure the longer-term effect on the ability of women to access a variety of financial services, beyond the life of the project? For example, are banks undertaking outreach to female clients? Have loan application procedures and requirements or interest rates been modified?

Support business advisory services and training programs that respond to the distinct needs of female entrepreneurs.

- Do mainstream micro, small, and medium-sized enterprise advisory services have the capacity to respond to the needs of female entrepreneurs, in terms of information about women’s businesses and identification of the specific obstacles that women face?
- Are support and advisory services tailored to the different needs of women at the start-up level, in microbusiness, or in running small and medium-sized businesses? Are the needs of more established businesswomen—for instance, how to access new markets and export strategies and logistics (see section on transport)—also being met?
- Are there free or affordable business advisory services for women offered independently of loan application processes?
- Do training programs for female entrepreneurs address a range of topics, including business and financial planning, vocational skills, and specialized technologies, and also address psychological barriers? In parallel, what interventions can be used to counter widely held stereotypes about women in business, property rights, and financial decision making?
- Are training and educational programs accessible to businesswomen in rural areas? Do they address knowledge gaps and the specific constraints faced by rural enterprises?
- Have specific programs been developed to support female entrepreneurs in agriculture in terms of training, technical assistance, and access to credit?

Increase women’s opportunities to expand micro and small-scale businesses and to enter new sectors.

- To what extent are women’s enterprises limited by sector? In addition, what are the implications of this limitation? For example, are there female-owned businesses in high-growth sectors? Where are they represented along value chains?
- Are women represented as business owners or managers in sectors that are being addressed by the ADB portfolio? Can projects on transport, WSS, and infrastructure development include activities that promote and expand women’s entrepreneurship?
- What are the reasons for women’s underrepresentation in nontraditional fields of business, such as construction and industry? How can female entrepreneurs be assisted to enter higher-revenue industries?
- What mechanisms can be used to assist women to network with other entrepreneurs, learn about innovations, expand their businesses, and reach new markets—for example, women’s cooperatives, associations, business clusters, or incubators?
- Have plans been put in place to assist female entrepreneurs in transitioning from microcredit to other loan and/or financial instruments? Are banks and financial institutions taking steps to ensure equal access to women through outreach, specialized financial products, or by other means?
- What is the effect on female entrepreneurs of the closure of credit unions? Have any alternative mechanisms been established to fill this gap?
- What measures could be taken to overcome structural barriers to women in business such as time constraints related to domestic duties, stereotypes, and the lack of visibility of female entrepreneurs?
- What measures are being taken to ensure that women have equal title to and control over resources (such as land, property, and equipment) that can be used for securing loans? Measures can include simplified regulations that allow lending institutions to accept other forms of collateral, initiatives to raise women’s awareness about their equal right to own and inherit land and property, and education for men about the importance of protecting the rights of female family members such as wives or daughters.

Improve links between women’s home-based employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

- Is there support for women working in home-based production (contract or piecework) to transition to individual or micro entrepreneurship?
- What barriers to expansion are faced by home-based enterprises? Are they included within the general understanding of “small businesses,” and can they benefit from SME services? If not, are services through other channels adequate to enable these enterprises to move from the subsistence level to a business level?

Expand employment opportunities for women in SMEs, and improve conditions of women’s employment in the private sector.

- What training opportunities are available to help women enter nontraditional professions in the private sphere?
- What steps have been taken to reduce gender gaps in employment and in earnings?
- What steps are being taken to monitor the extent to which private sector enterprises follow domestic labor law and nondiscrimination in, for example, hiring, promotion, maternity or parental leave, or equal pay? Are there any initiatives to promote family-friendly working environments that could be supported and replicated?

Strengthen the capacity of executing agencies and other key stakeholders to mainstream gender in the planning and implementation of private sector development projects.

- Evaluate the extent to which gender-neutral activities in micro and SME-support projects may be insufficient to address the significant barriers to women's entrepreneurship.
- What gender-sensitive information and sex-disaggregated data on women-owned and women-managed businesses are needed for future project planning and should be collected at the national level? Who is responsible for such data collection, and what institutional mechanism is required?
- Have existing financial products been improved to allow greater access by women, taking into account such issues as women's lack of collateral, unfamiliarity with banking procedures, distrust of banks, and bureaucratic hurdles? Have new application procedures, financial products, and services been developed that meet the needs of female entrepreneurs?
- What are the long-term implications of microcredit programs or other "women-targeted" financial services in terms of possibly limiting women's access to larger loans from mainstream banking institutions?
- Do managers and planners in banking institutions have the skills to formulate and analyze questions about the gender aspects of entrepreneurship and the implications for project design? Are market research and consumer satisfaction surveys, disaggregated by sex, used to assess whether existing banking services are meeting the needs of women?
- To what extent do mainstream business associations represent the interests and concerns of female business owners?
- To what extent is the Women's Committee integrated into general policy discussions on development of the micro and SME sector?
- What role do businesswomen's associations and other NGOs play in advocating on behalf of their members for policy change that will improve the business climate for women?

APPENDIX 3

Common Terminology and Definitions for Private Enterprises

*As defined by the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Guarantees and Freedoms for Entrepreneurial Activity.*¹

The following types of businesses are considered small enterprises:

Individual entrepreneurs or sole proprietors. Persons who are engaged in business activities without forming a legal entity, without hiring employees, and based on property owned by the entrepreneur or common (family) property. Individual businesses include family businesses and some farming activities. Individual entrepreneurs are limited to businesses within a list of 74 approved fields (including retail trade, crafts, and a range of personal services, such as repair work, cleaning, hairdressing, tutoring, catering, veterinary services, and home food production).¹

Micro firms. Organizations that can be classified in three groups: businesses with an average of no more than 20 employees annually in manufacturing; businesses with an average of no more than 10 employees in services and other nonmanufacturing activities; or businesses with no more than 5 employees in wholesale, retail, or catering.

Small businesses. Organizations that can be classified in three groups: businesses with an average of no more than 100 employees in food processing and light industries, metal and wood processing, equipment building, and production of construction materials; businesses with an average of no more than 50 employees in machine building, metallurgy, fuel and chemical industries, agricultural processing, construction, and other industrial and manufacturing fields; or businesses with an average of 25 employees in science, transport, communications, services (excluding insurance companies), trade and catering, and other nonmanufacturing activities.

Note that the State Committee for the Republic of Uzbekistan on Statistics also uses this definition of small enterprises to include small businesses, micro-firms, and individual entrepreneurs.

Medium-sized and large businesses are not defined in the above-mentioned laws, but the Embassy of Uzbekistan to the United States offers the following classification.

In accordance with national legislation, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises are defined as follows:

Individual entrepreneurs	
Micro firms	- 0–10 employees
Small enterprises	- 10–40 employees
Medium-sized enterprises	- 40–100 employees

¹ Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2011a. As regulated by Ministerial Decree on Approving the List of Activities that Can Be Undertaken by Individual Entrepreneurs without Establishing a Legal Entity of 7 January 2011.

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Uzbekistan: Country Gender Assessment

In 2011, Uzbekistan celebrated 20 years of independence. The transition has not been smooth for any country in the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Uzbekistan, too, has experienced both positive and negative developments in gender equality. The status of women and men in Uzbekistan is very much shaped by the fact that the country has undergone significant and rapid change in recent years. Uzbekistan is still being transformed from a state-controlled, largely agricultural economy to a market-based system. Several characteristics of the transformation have direct bearing on gender equality and are illuminated in greater detail throughout this assessment.

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