Kyrgyzstan, as all other members of the United Nations, has pledged to implement and achieve 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Key to Kyrgyzstan, assisted by the United Nations. Meeting this challenge successfully is localization of the Goals so that they respond to the needs of all citizens of the country. Setting appropriate indicators and having an adequate monitoring and evaluation system in place is a prerequisite for this. A national workshop to prepare for such a system was held in Bishkek on 13-14 September 2016.

“This is the time to make sure we bridge the gap between the decision-makers and local communities by engaging a wide group of stakeholders in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the progress towards the SDGs” stated Member of the Parliament Madam Natalia Nikitenko in her opening remarks calling for a broad national ownership of the process in a two-day workshop organized by UN Women and the National Monitoring and Evaluation Network titled Building capacity of local partners in Kyrgyzstan in evaluation of SDGs with an equity-focused and gender responsive lens. The workshop gathered 73 representatives of the government, parliament, civil society, expert community and international organizations to discuss and exchange expertise on evaluation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A joint initiative by the Government of Kyrgyzstan, members of the Parliament, the National Monitoring and Evaluation Network, EvalGender+ and UN Women Country Office in Kyrgyzstan, the purpose of the workshop was to ensure synergies between the evaluation actors and build common understanding of the SDG agenda, promote an effective, inclusive and transparent framework for their evaluation, strengthen national evaluation capacity and create a working group to advocate for equity-focused and gender responsive evaluation of the SDGs on a country level. Kyrgyzstan is one of eleven countries selected for a series of workshops under the No one left behind - Technical assistance to Evaluate SDGs with an equity-focused and gender equality lens initiative led by EvalGender+, UN Women, in collaboration with EvalPartners and International Organizations for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE) - and the only one in the Europe and Central Asian region.

“With a commitment of the national authorities to evidence-based policy-making, a proper legal framework and an active expert community on evaluation in place, Kyrgyzstan has the prerequisites for setting up a robust evaluation system for the localized SDGs. The country has traditionally piloted new initiatives and holds potential for serving as a resource for replicating the best practices in the whole region” stated Gerald Gunther, Representative of UN Women Country Office in Kyrgyzstan. “The challenge is to finalize the national prioritization and localization
process, harmonize the existing monitoring and evaluation systems, ensure inclusiveness of the process and engagement of local stakeholders, and focus on the root causes of inequalities and those most vulnerable to ensure the SDG motto ‘leaving no one behind’ will be met”.

“It is important the international community builds on the lessons learned from the implementation and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals. We need to pay attention to monitoring and evaluation of the SDGs from the very beginning, assess the progress towards achievement of the crosscutting objectives on gender equality and reducing inequalities across all the goals, and avoid working in silos. The process of setting up the national evaluation system for the SDGs is a country-led and voluntary process and it is very important countries set a follow-up and review mechanism to ensure the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are systematically monitored and reviewed. In this context, we must promote integration of gender equality and equity focused perspectives into these systems – regardless of the methodological complexity and political challenges this might entail –, in order to ensure No one is left behind, stressed Isabel Suarez, UN Women’s Regional Evaluation Specialist for Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The workshop was designed on the basis of the Guidelines for evaluating the SDGs with social equity-focused and Gender responsive lens developed jointly by the EvalGender +, EvalPartners and Independent Evaluation Office of UN Women. The sessions included introduction to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, role of evaluation in the achievement of SDGs, follow up and review mechanisms, and integration of key principles of gender equality and social equity in SDG evaluation. In the final practical session, the participants identified opportunities and challenges to integrating equity focused and gender lens in the national evaluation system, and developed recommendations on how to promote and integrate equity focused and gender responsive evaluation of SDGs in the national evaluation system of the country.

Furthermore, a follow-up workshop on 15-17 September 2016 engaged key staff of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, National Statistics Committee, and professional evaluators in developing a pilot SDG monitoring and evaluation plan for the Ministry of Labor and Social Development for 2016-2017. Lessons learnt and recommendations from this activity are delivered to the Government and members of Parliament of Kyrgyzstan to inform the efforts of the other ministries and agencies in building effective monitoring and evaluation systems for SDGs. Although just a starting point for a long process, the workshops served as a first platform for multi-sectoral discussions, put forward recommendations for the government, parliament, expert community and civil society on localization, implementation and evaluation of the SDGs, and concluded with the common notion that the conditions and the enabling environment for Kyrgyzstan to be a champion for equity-focused and gender responsive evaluation of the SDGs.