

Issue #1 January 2015



USAID partners with the people and the government of the Kyrgyz Republic to improve the country's economy, governance, health and education so families can build better lives.



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Dear Reader,

This newsletter is an overview of the most significant milestones achieved by USAID and our partners from September through December, 2014.

The stories were selected to demonstrate the diversity and the scope of USAID programs in the Kyrgyz Republic and to celebrate the hard work of everyone who made these achievements happen.

Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

USAID partners to support inclusive and accountable democratic processes and to improve government policies and services to achieve a well-governed and prosperous Kyrgyz Republic.

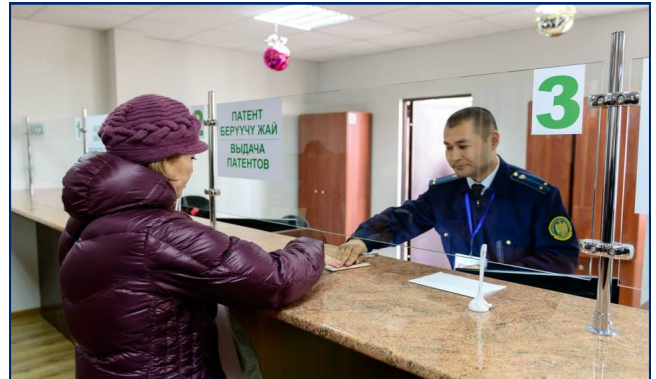
Improving Tax Service and Administration



Mission Director Michael Greene and Prime Minister Joomart Otorbaev at the Tax Center Opening Ceremony. Photo: Tazabek.kg

In recent months, the Good Governance and Public Administration Program (GGPAS) has helped the State Tax Service (STS) to develop a strategy to improve its human resources management over the coming three years based on data gleaned from human resource managers, STS employees, and taxpayers; as well as through a full participatory performance gap and business process analysis. Additionally, with GGPAS support, the STS has begun to develop a single package of training materials and standards for establishing new Service Centers with more transparent services. These materials will be piloted in two tax Service Centers, recently renovated with support from USAID -- the first

center serves nearly 7,000 businesses and entrepreneurs in Dordoi bazaar near Bishkek, and the second center provides key services to nearly 25,000 tax payers in Aravan district in the south of the country.



The Tax Service Center in Dordoi Market delivering services to tax payers Photo: GGPAS

USAID

**Good Governance and Public Administration
Strengthening Program (GGPAS)**

*Implementing organization:
International Resources Group*

Strategic Planning for the Ministry of Social Development

USAID is continuing to support the Ministry of Social Development to implement performance solutions in its central office, as identified through an institutional performance gap analysis and workflow assessment. These identified solutions include the creations of system that will improve Human Resource



Ministry of Social Development staff discussing solutions. Photo: GGPAS

Management (HRM), Information Technology (IT), and Performance Monitoring and Evaluation. Since the initial assessment, the Ministry finalized a strategic plan to institutionalize these recommendations. In early December, with support from USAID, the Ministry started piloting an innovative information technology support tool, and coaching the HRM team as they revise the scopes of work for each unit and job descriptions for each position, and establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for the entire central office of the ministry.

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Enhanced Enabling Environment and Collaborative Governance Program

Implementing organization: International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) and East-West Management Institute (EWMI)

Improving Legal Environment for Civil Society Organizations

On November 14, ICNL with the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Foundation, Civic Participation Fund, and Bir Duino met with the Minister of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Almambet Shykmamatov to discuss the Ministry's draft amendments to the Law on Noncommercial Organizations. The proposed law would prohibit unregistered civil society organizations (CSOs) and thereby violate the country's Constitution, as well as the international treaties and conventions to which the Kyrgyz Republic is party. As a result of

this meeting, Mr. Shykmamatov agreed to eliminate the provision related to unregistered CSOs from the draft law; this was announced publicly on November 24.

ICNL also supported further positive developments to the enabling legal environment for CSOs through a roundtable that socialized the draft law on State Procurement of Social Services. Vice Prime Minister on Social Issues, Vice Mayor of Bishkek Aigul Ryskulova, and representatives of other ministries, state agencies, local self-governments, and civil society organizations participated in the roundtable. The law is expected to be approved by the Prime Minister's Office and initiated in Parliament in spring 2015.

To learn more about these programs [click here](#) and [here](#).



The roundtable on social procurement is opened by the Vice Prime Minister on Social Issues, Vice Mayor of Bishkek and Minister of Social Development. Photo: GGPAS

Building Trust in Local Communities

Since 2012, the USAID LTCI Project worked to increase transparency of, and public confidence in, extractive industries in the Kyrgyz Republic.

In October, the State Agency of Geology and Mineral Resources with support from USAID organized a two-day conference on Building Cooperation and Reducing Conflicts Between Stakeholders in the Mining Industry. The goal of the conference was to develop ideas to prevent conflicts and strengthen cooperation among authorities, mining companies, and local communities. Representatives of national and local government, mining companies, international groups, and non-governmental organizations took part in the conference. This conference was a follow up to a round table discussion on effective cooperation between local populations and investors with Prime Minister Joomart Otorbaev in June 2014.

Local Transparency and Cooperation Initiative (LTCI)

Implementing organization: Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia



Participants at the October conference review the background materials before a discussion. Photo: EFCA

In 2004, the Kyrgyz Republic joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) which is a global standard for extractive industries accountability. In 2011, the Kyrgyz Republic was granted the status of the follower of EITI. In December 2014, the EITI Secretariat, with USAID support, organized a seminar to discuss the country's progress on the EITI work plan for 2014-2015 and the current status of extractive industry transparency and revenue management in the country. The seminar also helped government agencies, extractive companies and civil society organizations prepare for the EITI validation procedure scheduled for 2015.

To learn more about this project [click here](#).

Supporting Establishment of Advocatura

Following the passage of the Law on Advocatura in July 2014, ABA ROLI, in coordination with the Ministry of Justice, United Nations Development Program, Soros Foundation, and GIZ, conducted six round tables throughout the country to present to the defense advocates



Deputy minister of Justice, Jyldyz Mambetalieva, is opening the Congress of Advocates. Photo: ABA ROLI

community the content and structure of the draft statutory documents for a unified defense bar. These documents were presented for consideration and approval during the first National Congress of Advocates on November 26, which brought together 650 defense advocates throughout the country. As a result of full day discussions with active involvement of every single member of the diverse advocate community, the structure and statutory documents of the unified defense bar were approved and the members to the Board of Advocates, Ethics, and Audit Commissions were elected.

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Support to the Kyrgyzstani Legal Defense Community

*Implementing organization:
American Bar Association
Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI)*

USAID/DFID Kyrgyz Parliamentary Strengthening Program(KPSP)

*Implementing organization:
Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI)*

Parliament. These requests covered various areas of interest, including linguistic analysis of bills, parliamentary oversight regulations, the compliance of laws and regulations with the Constitution and principles of justice, budgetary legislation, inflation regulation, and the regulation and encouragement of investment. Two of these requests have been successfully implemented while the others are in progress.

To learn more about these programs [click here](#).

Supporting evidence-based lawmaking

The Research Fund is a joint KPSP-Jogorku Kenesh (Kyrgyz Parliament) initiative with \$200,000 allocated for the provision of expert research assistance and policy analysis, made available to all parliamentary actors on an equal basis. To date, the Research Fund received and approved seven requests for research from the Parliament's Administration, parliamentary committees, one parliamentary faction, and an ad hoc group of Members of

Monitoring Legislation on Human Trafficking

With USAID and IOM support, Government partners hosted a Dialogue on Implementation of the Law on Prevention and Combating Trafficking



The Dialogue generated a heated discussion. Photo: IOM

in Persons (TIP) on November 3. This inter-government discussion revealed gaps in implementation and put the issues of counter-trafficking on the agenda of Parliament, catalyzing support for improvements in the law on trafficking. As a follow-up, IOM will support a Parliament initiative to create an expert group to assess TIP law implementation. The assessment findings will be presented at parliamentary hearings in 2015.

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Counter-Trafficking Project

*Implementing organization:
International Organization for Migration (IOM)*

Economic Growth

USAID builds a stronger economy and increases employment in the Kyrgyz Republic by strengthening business and government so families can build better lives.

Regional Transport and Logistics Workshop



Workshop participants. Photo: ATAR

On December 18-20, USAID's Trade and Revenue project (ATAR) hosted a regional transport and logistics workshop in Bishkek, bringing together freight carriers, truck operators, freight forwarders, logistics service providers, as well as warehouse and storage operators from Afghanistan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. More than 90 participants discussed current challenges and opportunities in the South and Central Asia regional system for movement and storage of goods including the International Road Transport

(TIR) system and increasing non-tariff standards and requirements for trade. Workshop partners included ATAR, the CAREC Federation of Carriers and Forwarders Associations (CFCFA), the OSCE, and the Association of International Road Transport Operators of the Kyrgyz Republic (AIRTO-KR). Through ATAR, which has offices in Central Asia and Afghanistan, USAID assists Kyrgyz Customs and the Ministry of Economy as well as business associations, freight unions, customs brokers, and other private sector representatives with increasing regional trade and improving trade facilitation.

To learn more about these programs [click here](#).

USAID Trade and Revenue Project (ATAR)

*Implementing organization:
Chemonics*

USAID Business Growth Initiative and REFORMA

*Implementing organization:
Deloitte Consulting, Inc.*

Improving Air Safety and Commercial Aviation

In 2006, Kyrgyz cargo and passenger airlines were banned from European skies following an audit by the Air Safety Committee of the European Commission (EC), which found that the Kyrgyz Civil Aviation Agency (CAA) had an insufficient ability to implement and enforce international safety standards. Subsequent discussions with the EC conveyed that successful passage of an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

air safety audit would be an initial step for Kyrgyz airlines to be allowed to fly to the EU.

Prior to conducting the ICAI audit the Kyrgyz Republic first needed to bring national aviation law into compliance with international and ICAO standards. The current Air Code of Kyrgyzstan was developed in 1994 and amended only twice in the intervening years. USAID engaged the Kyrgyz Civil Aviation Agency and the Association of Civil Aviation Enterprises to draft a new Air Code that embodies current international best practices. Amendments include authorizing the CAA to attract and retain qualified inspectors and provide the Agency tools for more effective safety oversight. The draft Air Code was presented on December 4, 2014 to the Government authorities and civil aviation stakeholders.



Following the public discussion, the draft Air Code was submitted to the Parliament to initiate Parliamentary hearings and passage. With evidence of political will of both the Government and Parliament, the Air Code is expected to be passed in the first half of 2015. Ultimately, both the economy and the citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic will benefit from increased international confidence in the safety of the country's civil aviation system, increased access to European skies by Kyrgyz air carriers and increased inbound tourism. To learn more about these programs [click here](#) and [here](#).

Agreement signed with Local Financial Institutions

On December 31, USAID signed a loan guarantee program designed to encourage commercial lending to local entrepreneurs with Demir Kyrgyz International Bank and Bai Tushum Bank. Employing USAID's Development Credit Authority (DCA) -- which uses risk-sharing agreements to mobilize private capital -- USAID will guarantee 50% of loans made to small businesses operating in the



Small business owner in Southern Kyrgyz Republic who benefitted from USAID initiated Loan Guarantee Fund. Photo: USAID

tourism, textiles, and agriculture sectors, which employ over 200,000 workers and represent significant potential for economic growth. Loan sizes will range from \$2,000 to \$50,000 for qualifying businesses through 2021. Demir Kyrgyz International Bank and Bai Tushum Bank were selected due to their strong management, market position, and their interest in expanding lending in the sectors and regions supported by USAID's new economic growth and agriculture programs. Bai Tushum was founded in 1997 as a USAID microcredit project and is the first microfinance institution in Central Asia to transform into a fully-licensed commercial bank.

To learn more about this program [click here](#).

Development Credit Authority (DCA)

Implementing Partners:

Bai Tushum Bank and

Demir Kyrgyz International Bank

Education

USAID partners with the people and the government of the Kyrgyz Republic for quality education so every child can have a brighter future.

Transforming Reading Instruction in Early Grades

USAID Reading Together Project

*Implementing organization:
American Institutes for Research
(AIR), Save the Children*

On December 4th, the USAID Reading Together project in partnership with the National Testing Center at the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic held a round table to discuss the results of the early grade reading assessment (EGRA), conducted in 130 schools of the Kyrgyz Republic in spring. EGRA is a practical tool for policy makers, school leaders, parents and teachers in making decisions aimed at improving reading skills of school children. The representatives of the Ministry of Education of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Kyrgyz Academy of

Education, state education institutes and methodological centers, district and city education departments, and international organizations joined the round table to develop recommendations for the use of the assessment data.

The USAID Reading Together project supports the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science efforts to increase the reading skills and comprehension of primary school students. This is achieved by working with in-service teacher training institutes, schools and communities, as well as the private sector. To date, the project has launched in-service training in over 600 primary schools reaching almost 3,000 teachers. Together, these teachers are responsible for teaching over 143,000 elementary students in the country. In the winter and spring of 2015, the USAID Reading Together Project will continue trainings to reach approximately 7,500 teachers who collectively cover 60 percent of the Kyrgyz Republic's primary grade students. Developed and implemented in partnership with the National Testing Center and the Ministry of Education, the EGRA will serve as a baseline for the project and will be repeated at regular intervals to track progress.

To learn more about this project [click here](#).



Teachers studying new reading instruction methods.
Photo: AIR

Health

USAID supports the people and government of the Kyrgyz Republic to fight the country's most serious infectious diseases to save lives.

Optimizing Tuberculosis Diagnosis and Treatment

In 2012, the USAID Quality Health Care Project initiated a pilot in the Issyk Ata rayon of Chui Oblast to introduce a new model of tuberculosis (TB) services at the primary health care level. The model focused on early detection and treatment of TB using new GeneXpert® technology, improved TB infection control measures, and updated clinical protocols based on international standards. The model also worked to improve patient adherence to treatment by facilitating patient-centered ambulatory treatment for those not requiring or desiring hospitalization.



Staff at the Issyk –Ata FMC operating the GeneXpert® equipment. Photo: USAID

The pilot led to a number of significant improvements: increased awareness of TB symptoms among Kyrgyz citizens, improved infection control measures making health facilities safer for patients and staff, doubling of the number of confirmed TB cases detected as compared with microscopy, rapid detection and referral of drug-resistant cases, and improved treatment adherence through patient support groups. Fifty-four patients received full ambulatory treatment with a 96% treatment success rate.

Based on the resounding success of the pilot project, the Ministry of Health signed a regulation in July 2014 to scale up this model to all districts of the Chui Oblast. On September 19,

USAID Quality Health Care Project organized a round table at the Issyk-Ata Family Medicine Center (FMC) in Kant city to discuss the results of the pilot initiative on ambulatory treatment of tuberculosis in the Center. The discussion highlighted significant improvements in TB care brought forth by new diagnostic technology, and a shift away from mandatory hospitalization that will lower costs, reduce transmission rates, and improve patient comfort. *To learn more about this program click [here](#).*

USAID Supports Better Health Policymaking

Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey (DHS)

Implementing organization:
ICF International

On September 23, the Ministry of Health hosted a seminar to link the results of the USAID-funded 2012 Kyrgyz Republic Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) to policymaking decisions. The DHS collected nationwide data on a broad range of health topics, including nutrition, causes of mortality, and maternal and child health.

Using the new DHS data, experts from the National Statistical Committee and the Ministry of Health proposed policy changes and new programs to address children's nutrition, women's nutrition, adult health, and domestic violence. Representatives from the Office of the President, Prime Minister, and Parliament attended along with experts from the government, non-governmental organizations, and the media. The latest Kyrgyz Republic DHS was conducted in 2012.

To learn more about this program click [here](#).



Seminar presided over by the Chairman of the National Statistics Committee A. Osmonaliev and MP D. Niyazalieva. Photo: USAID

USAID News of Note

**USAID Projects launched
in September – December 2014**

- ◆ [Business Growth Initiative](#)
- ◆ [Agro Horizon](#)
- ◆ [SPRING](#)
- ◆ [Energy Links](#)
- ◆ [Development Credit Authority](#)
- ◆ [Enhanced Enabling Environment](#)
- ◆ [Access to Information](#)

**USAID Projects closed
in September – December 2014**

- ◆ [Kyrgyz Agricultural Enterprise
Development Project \(KAED\)](#)
- ◆ [RESET](#)
- ◆ [TB CARE I](#)
- ◆ [Defeat TB](#)
- ◆ [REFORMA](#)
- ◆ [Local Transparency and Cooperation
Initiative](#)
- ◆ [Women's Peace Banks](#)
- ◆ [Media Support Initiative](#)
- ◆ [Legal Support to Civil Society](#)



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