



AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION TRUST FUND (ARTF)

Gender Working Group Meeting

Wednesday December 4, 2019

Summary of Discussions

The ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) held its monthly meeting on 4 December 2019. Representatives of 9 donor partners¹, and the ARTF Administrator (the World Bank, or Bank) attended. The Bank and the EU co-chaired the meeting.

Summary: The meeting received updates on issues discussed in earlier meetings: status of the Women's Economic Empowerment Program National Priority Program project transition to the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank's meeting with Ministry of Women's Affairs officials to update them on recent discussions with gender units. The World Bank also briefed participants on ongoing discussions regarding the allegations of abuse in six schools in Logar province. Participants discussed the 2018 ARTF Scorecard (an agenda item deferred from the previous meeting), and together participated in an event with Women's Economic Empowerment Rural Development program beneficiaries to mark the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign.

1. Update on agreed actions from November 2019 GWG meeting.

The Women's Economic Empowerment NPP project preparation grant team gave a brief update about the process of integrating the WEE-NPP initiative into other Ministry of Finance-led initiatives. Technical and Deputy Minister-level discussions around the logistics of the transition and future priorities for the initiative are ongoing. Preliminary priorities for the next stage of programming have been identified; earlier plans for an innovation fund have been deferred in favor of intensified focus on GMAF indicators. Brainstorming and discussion of options for the next phase of the program will continue until the new administration is inaugurated and has the opportunity formally to articulate its priorities for the next phase of programming.

The WB updated the GWG on its briefing for MOWA regarding recent discussions with gender units. The WB briefed Ministry of Women's Affairs DM [REDACTED] on the WB's recent meeting with gender units, including the facilitated discussions of gender unit colleagues' challenges and recommendations. DM appreciated this effort of the WB and would follow up on with the gender units on the issues they raised. Also she assigned Mr. [REDACTED] to attend the ARTF GWG meetings on regular basis.

The WB updated GWG members on initial responses to allegations of child abuse in six Logar province schools. The World Bank is deeply concerned about the recently reported allegations, which are serious on their own but may also indicate a problem that extends beyond one sector or one province. (For example, the WB is also concerned about emerging concerns and exposure of children seeking services in the health sector.) The WB is engaging with the government around three main themes: 1) emphasizing the need for a survivor-centric approach to investigations; 2)

¹ Australia, Canada, EU, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Switzerland, UK, and USAID

understanding what resources are available or will be provided to survivors in the short- and medium-term; and 3) supporting the development of roadmaps for strengthening GBV safeguards in the education and health sectors in the medium-term. In addition to ongoing discussions with government, the WB is forming an internal team to work on the issue, and is aiming to supplement its existing gender capacity with additional personnel both in the short- and medium-term.

In response to a question, the WB confirmed that it is not conducting an independent assessment of the allegations, which are rather being led by the government. Based on preliminary government assessments, it appears that the closed EQUIP II program may have financed some construction work at one of the six schools that may be linked to the recent allegations. The WB is mobilizing support to assist the government in addressing risks on a forward-looking basis. As discussed in previous meetings, the WB had previously completed a GBV risk assessment screening for the portfolio, and developed a roadmap for addressing projects rated as Substantial or High Risk; implementation of this roadmap will continue. Together with GWG partners, the WB had also completed a mapping of survivors' support services. As the initial focus of the list had been on services for adult women, the WB has reached out to UNICEF to enhance the list with details of services available for children, and would welcome additional contributions from GWG members.

2) Discussion of Gender in the 2018 ARTF Scorecard.

The WB offered a presentation on the 2018 ARTF Scorecard (originally planned for the previous meeting, but deferred with agreement of the GWG), beginning with an overview of the document's features. The annual report, one of a large suite of ARTF reporting products made available to donor partners, provides a high level summary of seven key areas: 1) PFFP implementation; 2) national development results in sectors the ARTF supports; 3) Recurrent Cost Window results; 4) Investment Window results; 5) ARTF operational data; 6) an annual financial report; and 7) operational risks and mitigations. The document synthesizes data from multiple sources, including ARTF governance bodies, national surveys, GoIRA finances, the World Bank Operations Portal, ARTF third-party monitors, stories from the field and information from WB staff.

The 2018 version of the document reflects a number of revisions relative to the 2017 report based on feedback from the GWG and SG. The WB highlighted five key changes, including: 1) expanded narrative explaining the achievements of ARTF programs; 2) a streamlined report structure that consolidates operational and trust fund effectiveness previously reported as two separate pillars; 3) consolidation of ARTF financial reporting previously presented as a separate report; 4) integration of links to World Bank-wide metrics including IDA commitments and the FCV agenda; and 5) enhanced attention to gender data and narrative. While the WB aims to be as responsive as possible to donor inputs and suggestions, given the wide variety of donor reporting protocols, the Scorecard is unlikely fully to satisfy all reporting needs of every partner; this is one reason the WB, with GoIRA consent, facilitates access to a wide range of ARTF-related materials.

GWG co-chair the European Union had prepared a set of comments on the Scorecard consolidating input from several GWG members; as there was not time during the meeting fully to discuss the whole document the WB committed to provide a written comment/response matrix following the meeting. A particular focus in the comments was the need some donors have to gender disaggregate all data for internal reporting purposes. The WB explained that for Investment Window performance data, the Scorecard relies primarily on results matrices as reported by publicly available implementation status and results reports, presenting data in gender disaggregated form when individual project's results matrices do the same. Not all data points are gender disaggregated in project MIS systems, but the Scorecard aims to incorporate as much

disaggregated data as possible, and expanded the number of disaggregated data points reported in 2018. Discussion touched on the value of GWG members' engagement with WB project teams during project design and preparation, to ensure that donors' inputs on gender considerations are put forward and considered by project teams so that matrices gather and report gender data to the maximum extent possible. Early in 2019, the ARTF Strategy Group agreed with the WB on a protocol for how the WB would engage donors during the project preparation phase for projects financed by the ARTF. The ARTF Steering Committee endorsed the protocol at its May 2019 meeting, and the procedures are applicable to GWG members as well as SG members – in summary, GWG members are welcome (and encouraged) to participate at all phases of the process now open to donors. The protocol is presented on page 56 of the ARTF FY1398 (2019) Update to the Partnership Framework and Financing Program: FY1397-FY1399 (2018-2020), and is also included in Annex 1 to this meeting summary for convenience.

3) 16 Days of Activism Event

At the end of the meeting, the participants attended an arts and handicrafts exhibition and informal gathering with gender specialists from ministry gender units and ARTF-financed projects. The event was organized to mark the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign. The exhibition highlighted products fabricated by rural women entrepreneurs who are supported under the WEE-RDP project, and brought together 20 female entrepreneurs from seven provinces. Three female artists joined the event, displaying their paintings.

4) Topics for next meeting:

The next GWG meeting will review discussion topics for the first 6 months of 2020, discuss the next GWG co-chair, and review gender aspects of the 2020 Incentive Program Development Policy Grant framework, as well as the WB responses to the consolidated donor inputs on the 2018 Scorecard

December 2019 Meeting Summary Annex 1

ARTF SC-Endorsed Protocol for Donor Engagement in Project Preparation



Engaging During Project Preparation

Government Request to WB
Sent by Ministry of Finance



World Bank response to MOF &
Activity Initiation Note (AIN)
[NOTIFY PARTNERS OF AIN
APPROVAL]

