

# AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION TRUST FUND (ARTF)

## Gender Working Group Virtual Meeting

**Tuesday, November 3, 2020**

### Summary of Discussions

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The ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) held its monthly meeting virtually on November 3, 2020, which was co-chaired by the World Bank (the Bank) and Australia. Representatives of 9 donor partners<sup>1</sup>, gender and safeguards teams of WEE-RDP and CCAP projects from MRRD, WB technical teams and the ARTF Administrator attended the meeting. CARE International attended to brief the group.

The agenda for the October meeting was the following: (i) donor feedback on gender section of the PFFP 2021-2024 and next steps; (ii) CARE International study presentation on CDC approach; (iii) briefing on pipeline project CCAP additional financing; and (iv) AOB. The donor co-chair proposed adding to the agenda the previously agreed standing agenda point to agree on the GWG updates to Strategy Group (SG).

**Updates on the agreed actions of October GWG meeting and donor feedback on PFFP:** The Bank thanked donor partners for sharing their preliminary feedback/comments on the gender section of the new PFFP and anyone left with comments were welcomed to share theirs by end of the day. The comments collected will be made into a matrix of comments and answers and an updated PFFP draft will be shared with all by November 12<sup>th</sup>. Some common concerns were related to lack of development results framework including gender indicators (which will be developed at the beginning of the next PFFP starting in 2021).

The donor co-chair informed the group that in the process of PFFP preparation, WEE-NPP PCO (Project Coordination Office) at MOF had approached Australia to enquire if there was room for WEE-NPP financing in upcoming PFFP. Australia responded that in the first drafts of the PFFP there was provision for good proposals for gender equality and WEE-NPP could be one of them if it demonstrates progress, namely there is need for WEE-NPP to improve the underperformance and come up with a plan to address the shortcomings in WEE-NPP. The EU and UK representatives had also been approached about this issue. Donors agreed to coordinate on the response. There was a suggestion that if MoF officials more regularly attended GWG meetings, such issues could be aired discussed as a group.

The Bank briefly updated the GWG on the formation (changing of the finance DM to a new one) of a new Deputy Minister at MOWA under the name Women's Economic Empowerment, headed by [REDACTED], which was welcomed by the donor co-chair as a potential sign of enduring government commitment toward women's economic empowerment. An update could be more formally sought from GIRoA about the future of WEE-NPP.

**CARE International Study Presentation on CDC approach – [REDACTED]**, a CARE International consultant for this study presented on the findings of a study conducted in the Autumn 2019 as part of the 'Every Voice Counts' program in collaboration with three local CSOs namely Afghan Women's Resource Centre (AWRC), the Human Rights Research and Advocacy Consortium (HRRAC), and the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation (WCLRF). The exploratory research mainly targeted women's social inclusion in subnational and local governance decision-making processes such as CDCs formed under CCAP project of the ARTF. The research was meant to identify groups, positions, mechanisms, and sectors

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<sup>1</sup> Australia, Canada, Denmark, EU, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and US.

that provide women with opportunities to get involved in the decision-making processes as well as key enablers and key barriers in that regard, and the final outcome was a set of detailed recommendations that were shared with policy makers. They used a participation spectrum where they looked at various kinds of women's participation, level of access to join participation spaces, presence of women in these spaces, and their influence on a decision-making process. The research conducted KIIs and FGDs in 8 districts covering 280 individuals in four provinces namely Kabul, Balkh, Parwan, and Khost. Overall, the report has positive findings about the effectiveness of CDCs for women's participation in governance and public decision-making spaces. For more details, please refer to the presentation and briefs on the study already shared with the GWG.

**Briefing on the Pipeline project – CCAP additional Financing:** the project team presented the design and gender aspects for the CCAP second additional financing and added that the “Care International’s research” findings will be useful to inform the design of the project. Susan Wong, TTL of CCAP, provided updates on the current status, encouraging gender accomplishments under the project and design of the second additional financing/restructuring. Currently, the project implementation is overall moderately satisfactory despite the COVID-19 issues and delays and has steadily continued the progress towards community mobilization. So far, six studies/evaluations have been conducted covering topics such as poverty reduction impacts, CDCs and women's participation as part of women's voice and agency. It was further discussed that while women in CDCs have already achieved 50% participation, they often are unable to meet and influence decisions. In over, 90% of CDCs, women participated in planning. Health and Education Sub-Committees were recognized by men as legitimate platforms for women's involvement, thus, there will be a focus on women's participation in health and education sub-committees. Men largely hold key positions amongst Office Bearers (Chair and Treasurer). Women's inclusion, participation, and voice in CDCs reflects regional trends: East, Southeast, and Southwest Afghanistan are the most challenging areas

Regarding the additional financing and project restructuring, it was discussed that the draft project paper has been shared prior to the meeting and a final version will be shared soon. The additional financing commits US\$193 million that focuses on urban expansion, Covid-19 response, Kuchi and peace pilot with gender deliverables under each component as key objectives of the project's second phase. On the urban extension, it was added that since the project has focused on rural expansion and is covering almost one-third of the country, phase II of the project will focus on increasing coverage in the urban areas. The Project is to be extended until the end of December 2022.

**Updates to the Strategy Group** – participants appreciated both presentations and it was agreed that during the upcoming Strategy Group, the GWG co-chairs will brief the group about this meeting, where CARE International presented on multiple gender issues in community participation and decision-making and CCAP additional financing were discussed. It was also decided to raise the importance of MoWA and MoF participation in GWG, while also raising questions about WEE-NPP updates, plans and co-financing by the government.

**AOB:** The next meeting was planned for 1 December, but in the meantime co-chairs encouraged GWG members to respond to the next draft of the PFFP. It was noted the Geneva pledging conference would take place just before the next meeting.