



AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION TRUST FUND (ARTF)

Gender Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, July 9, 2019

Summary of Discussions

The ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) held its monthly meeting on July 9, 2019. Representatives of seven donor partners¹, WEE-NPP, and the ARTF Administrator (the World Bank, or Bank) attended. The Bank and the UK co-chaired the meeting. The agenda items were: (i) Discussion of pipeline Afghanistan Extractive Sector Development Project; and (ii) Discussion of pipeline Afghanistan Water Supply and Sanitation Services and Institutional Support Program; (iii) Discussion on GWG co-chairmanship; (iv) AOB.

Summary

The GWG commended the Afghanistan Extractives Sector for Development (AESD) draft PAD for its very well-developed attention to gender. In a continuation of conversation begun some months ago, the GWG held a candid discussion with the project team on the complexities of addressing requirements of the new WB Environmental and Social Framework in a manner that is responsive to the actual needs in the context. The GWG had previously discussed the WB's efforts to pilot some innovations on the WB's new GBV risk assessment tool to better adapt it to needs and risks in Afghanistan. The GWG also met with the Afghanistan Water Supply and Sanitation Services and Institutional Support Program, which is currently conducting a project preparation mission, and heard an overview of how the project team hopes to incorporate gender into the design, underscoring the criticality of drinking water to household and family health. With both teams, the GWG discussed the difficulties of encouraging women to move into technical fields such as extractives and engineering and considered options for supporting women in the fields.

The GWG thanked Juliet Walton of DFID for twice serving as co-chair and welcomed the European Union's Grazia Redolfi interest in assuming the role of co-chair over the next six months. USAID has indicated its willingness to serve as GWG co-chair in the subsequent six-month cycle, beginning in 2020.

1. Pipeline Afghanistan Extractive Sector Development Project

The AESD team described key challenges and objectives in the extractives sector, and the ongoing work to prepare a new project. The project, currently in the last stages of preparation, is a 5-year initiative with a current estimated budget of US\$ 70 million, US\$ 65 million of which would be IDA funded, with the remaining US\$5 million from ARTF resources (final amounts and allocations may be subject to change as project preparations advance). The project is due to be presented at a Regional Operations Committee (a WB-wide management review process) on July 25; negotiation will follow, and at present the team expects the project to be presented to the

¹ Australia, Denmark, European Union, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.



ARTF Management Committee to approve the ARTF financing and then to the WB Board of Executive Directors to approve IDA financing in September.

The project aims to help the Afghan government create conditions to attract investment in the extractive and energy sectors through better sector governance, institutional capacity and gas infrastructure. The main counterparts are the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MOMP) and the Ministry of Information and Culture (MOIC); the project management unit will be based in MOMP.

The project comprises four components, which are: supporting mining development, sustaining gas supply, strengthening sector governance, and project management. The first component focuses on the large-scale mining operation, Mes Aynak, with attention to both the mining and cultural aspects of the site. The second component supports the sustained supply of natural gas for Sheberghan and Mazar Independent Power Producers (IPP). The third component will focus on strengthening the capacity of MOMP as well as the newly established Afghanistan Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (AOGRA), and the last will be dedicated to program management.

Women's employment in the extractives field is limited; owing to a combination of gender norms, security considerations, and the perceived and actual lack of job opportunities acting as disincentives for women to pursue related fields of study. While there are some opportunities for women in the small-scale/artisanal mining sectors, these are not a main area of focus for the project, which aims to avoid overlap with existing donor-financed initiatives active in these areas. The institutional capacity building component of the project will focus as a direct impact on supporting gender units in MOMP and AOGRA through interventions including internship programs and the establishment of a gender-balanced young professionals' program to increase the role of women's employment in the sector.

The team also discussed that AESD is being prepared under the WB's new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF), and is addressing a complex mix of safeguards considerations, including preservation of physical cultural resources at the Mes Aynak site but also importantly the consideration of gender issues in the project planning. The team is working on multiple safeguards-related documents in connection with project preparation, covering issues including but not limited to the labor and working conditions, grievance redress mechanisms, and gender-based violence. Community consultations have endeavored to incorporate women's voices equally; historically in these consultations women have raised questions about the project's impact on their families' economic interests. In addition to community consultations, the ESF requires consideration of the risk of gender-based violence as an outcome of labor influx in communities. The project may be required to provide GBV training to security forces at the project site. The team noted the potential challenge for MOMP of trying to direct a training component for security forces, as this type of cooperation between civilian and security ministries has not historically taken place.

- A question asked for additional details on how the project plans to address GBV issues related to labor influx. The team responded that currently there are 1400 to 1700 security personnel deployed around the Mes Aynak site. The WB ESF requires these security personnel to be trained in GBV. The project is exploring ways to establish cooperation between MOMP and the Ministries of Defense and Interior to ensure the personnel are trained and aware of GBV related issues. It was suggested that the team to discuss GBV challenges with UNFPA, to see



how to link up prevention activities undertaken by the project, and the response support from UNFPA's programme

- A comment observed that child labor is a common challenge in Afghanistan's mining sector and noted that the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs plays an important role in eradication/elimination of child labor. There are national laws preventing child labor in the mining sector, but the team noted it is aware of the prevalence of child labor in the underground and informal mining sites. The project is not working with informal mining sites but will support MOMP-led formalization initiatives; one objective to ensure the health and safety of labor working in mining areas (including prevention of child labor). Project documents prepared under the ESF include procedures for labor management and a labor management plan which will help to ensure proper working conditions (including prevention of child labor) at project sites. Tazkiras (national ID cards) of laborers will be screened to ensure workers are of age.
- A question asked if the project could indirectly impact women's employment/job creation, noting that some studies have suggested smaller gemstone businesses could provide economic opportunities for women. The team concurred with the research findings but noted that the project will focus on larger scale, formal mining sites. For women's employment, the team will focus on direct opportunities, including internship and training programs to help attract women to jobs in the ministry and in the sector overall. Over time, these efforts could help to open doors for other women throughout the sector. A comment observed that the gender writeup in the draft Project Appraisal Document was very well written and informative, and suggested that it could be a good model for other project PADs to follow. A member encouraged partners to review Integrity Watch Afghanistan's work on women and Afghanistan's extractives sector, which includes a [policy brief](#) from 2014.
- A GWG member asked the team about gender balance and women's condition at MOMP. The team noted that since 2016 there have been two women as acting ministers, and there are a few at the director level, and a good number in support functions. However, there are very few/no women in technical positions and engineering functions, part of the reason the project will aim to support women's employment opportunities. A comment observed that donors could help play a role in encouraging women and girls to choose technical fields through their support to various educational and training initiatives. Close coordination with the ministries of education and higher education can be helpful; the commenter cited past efforts to encourage women to enter the education field by reserving spots for women in education faculties via the Kankor university entrance examination. Australia flagged its training program for the staff of MoMP in which they previously sent a group of the ministry staff to the Indian Institute of Technology/Indian School of Mines and are now working on a second round of training. In this round, the project has secured six women (out of the total 15 MOMP staff) to attend the training. The women mostly work in MOMP's social survey departments and have education credentials in social sciences and anthropology; this confirms the WB team's observations of the difficulty of encouraging women in technical fields of the extractives sector. Australia agreed to share the training agenda with the GWG.

2. Pipeline Afghanistan Water Supply and Sanitation Services and Institutional Support Program (AWSIS)



The project at its earliest stage of design and preparation. It aims to improve access and quality of water supply service in Kandahar city and selected peri-urban areas and strengthen the performance of the Afghanistan Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Corporation (AUWSSC) and the Kandahar utility. AUWSSC is a primary counterpart. AUWSSC's main office is in Kabul; it has six Strategic Business Units (SBUs) located in various regions. The project will work closely with the Kandahar SBU. The project budget is estimated budget at US\$ 230 million, of which the WB currently expects to finance US\$ 50 million from IDA resources, and the remainder from the ARTF. AWSIS is a series of projects (SOP), the first of which focuses on improving water and sanitation services in Kandahar city and surrounding peri-urban areas. The project will complement the rehabilitation of the Dahla Dam financed partially by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), supporting construction of a 30 km transmission pipeline from the Dahla Dam to a new water treatment plant.

The project concept review was initiated on March 28, 2019, and preparation is ongoing. AWSIS is currently expected to be presented to the ARTF Management Committee and WB Board of Executive Directors in March 2020. The team expects the project to comprise four components: 1) financing water infrastructure; 2) financing capacity building and institutional strengthening of the sector; 3) project management and monitoring, and 4) contingent emergency response.

Household water supply is critical to household health and well-being, and so the project has important gender connections. The project team is focused on ensuring that the project is fully "gender tagged" in line with WB procedures, and believes it has met the requirements for the tag. The team described some of its gender-focused initiatives. Beginning with the institutional arrangements, the team has conducted an assessment of AUWSSC and found strong support for providing opportunities to female engineers and female professionals. AUWSSC has hired four additional women engineers within the last six months. The team will continue working with the corporation to encourage women to apply for available positions and to address barriers to women's employment. The project team is also in close contact with the Engineers' Association and plans to offer training for women engineers; the association has provided feedback on the types of trainings it would like to see delivered, and the team has also met around 20 women engineers to discuss training plans.

The team plans to conduct focus group discussions in Kandahar city with both women and men to generate feedback and suggestions on water supply issues in the city, which can then inform the project design. On a smaller scale, the project will draw on the expertise of the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development and their UN partners (including UNICEF) to promote awareness and training on water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) issues, particularly important as the project will move households towards a new type of water supply (from ground to treated surface water).

- A question asked why Kandahar was selected as the focus for the project activities. The team explained that GolRA selected the city because as a population center with a weak existing water supply, it is a good area for investment in improving water supplies. The existing network of wells is weak. Contamination of ground water would present a serious health risk, and existing wells are not capable of meeting the full needs of the city's growing population.
- A question noted that the project intends to introduce a tariff system for water service and asked how the project will address varying household resources and needs in the process.



The team stressed the importance of designing a tariff system that will ensure long-term sustainability of the water supply (including sufficient cash flow to maintain water infrastructure) but emphasized that it will work with AUWSSC to ensure that tariffs are introduced and adjusted gradually.

- Asked how they will seek out women's voices to ensure that they inform the project design and that concerns around construction in Kandahar City (including the prospect of labor influx that will need to be addressed in line with the WB ESF framework) are addressed, the project team explained that they will rely on insights suggested by AUWSSC's Kandahar SBU, and are considering a variety of innovative outreach methods, including outreach through local mosques, to ensure that all community members have a voice in the project.
- As project preparations advance, GWG members are encouraged to attend briefings and discussions with the task team to follow and contribute to the project's general development and its approach to gender issues in particular.

3. GWG co-chairmanship

The GWG thanked UK-DFID's Juliet Walton for serving two terms as co-chair of the working group and wished her the best for her future assignments. Grazia Redolfi of the European Union has volunteered to serve as GWG co-chair for the next six-month cycle, and the United States has indicated its willingness to serve as GWG co-chair for the first six months of 2020.

4. AOB

No other business was raised.