



Business Environment Working Group

Meeting (Teleconference) Minutes

21 September 2021

These Minutes of Meeting are considered 'approved' after revisions were made based on comments received on or before 15 October 2021.

PRESENT

Moussa Traore (USAID, BEWG co-Chair)	Toru Homma (JICA)
Sylvia Solf (WBG, BEWG co-Chair)	Steffen Felix (BMZ/GIZ)
Anastasia de Santos (USAID)	Jonas Bolzen (GIZ)
Severine Deboos (ILO)	Arjan de Haan (IDRC)
Judith van Doorn (ILO)	Christian Brändli (SECO)
Anna Schrenk (UNIDO)	Jim Tanburn (DCED Secretariat)
Stefan Kratzsch (UNIDO)	Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat)
Siobhan Kelly (FAO)	Simon White (Consultant to BEWG)
Peter Stoffelen (Netherlands)	
Tania Ghossein (WBG)	

APOLOGIES

Brigitte Bruhin (SECO), Saul Hathaway (FCDO)

WELCOME AND CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

Moussa Traore (USAID) welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted that the main purpose of the meeting was to consider the approved BEWG Work Plan and Budget 2021-22 and the review the work items.

He spoke of webinars that had been held since the last meeting:

- Taking Public-Private Dialogue Online (13 April 2021)
- Retaining, attracting and servicing investors in COVID-19 (21 April 2021)
- BER in Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations (15 June 2021)

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 3 March 2021 had been approved by email.

There was no business arising.

He then passed over to Sylvia Solf (WBG, BEWG co-Chair) to chair the meeting.

WORK ITEM UPDATES

1. Business Environment Responses to Covid-19

Task Team: FAO, BMZ/GIZ, ILO, JICA, SECO, UNIDO, and WBG.

Sylvia Solf (WBG) provided an update on this work item. The objective of this item is to prepare policy guidance to support BER in developing economies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Particular attention will be given to SME restructuring; Investment facilitation and promotion; Country cases; a report based on member institutions' programmes, COVID recovery and potential mitigation measures; and resilience, adaptation to crises. It is anticipated that a series of webinars will be held on this topic and the pandemic continues to unfold and affect countries around the world. She welcomed suggestions on possible topics.

Tania Ghossein (WBG) described the desire to prepare a workplan on this item for the coming year. Options included the formulation of terms of reference for specific research, assessments or case studies and the production of reports and policy briefs.

Arjan de Haan (IDRC) suggested that consideration should be given to the African Trade Agreement. Severine Deboos (ILO) indicated an interest in continuing exchange with members on the impact of COVID-19 and the ways agencies are responding. However, as most work is now performed in the context of COVID-19, there may be value in specifically focused activities, rather than generic COVID-19 activities. Steffen Felix (BMZ/GIZ) supported this.

AGREEMENT

It was agreed that members consider their interests on this topic and share this with members. Please email Sylvia Solf and Simon White.

2. Dealing with Firm Informality

Task Team: WBG (lead), ILO FCDO, EU, BMZ/GIZ, ILO, IDRC, SIDA, FAO, and USAID.

Tania provided a brief update on this item. A draft report had been circulated with the meeting agenda. She indicated that draft is a valuable resource that draws on existing literature and creates links to other emerging areas of work on informality. She indicated that, once this report is completed, it will be useful to have further discussions to see if we can consider new items associated with this topic.

Simon White spoke briefly to the report, but due to a poor connection was unable to provide a PowerPoint presentation of the high-level findings. As a result, the presentation was emailed to participants immediately after the meeting.

Comment from Arjan de Haan: "I really like the approach of the paper on informality, including because of its emphasis on heterogeneity, and thinking both about formalisation and supporting informal workers latter being also important from a gender perspective."

Judith van Doorn (ILO) indicated an interest in an ongoing discussion once the report is concluded to consider further work items that may stem from this work.

AGREEMENT

It was agreed that members would provide comments to Simon White on the draft document on or before Wednesday, 6 October 2021.

3. Green business environments

Task Team: FAO (lead), DFID, EU, BMZ/GIZ, ILO, JICA, USAID

Siobhan Kelly (FAO) provided an update on this work item. The consulting firm, BSR, is underway, Currently, BSR has completed most of the interviews, background research on tools and instruments, and begun work on the final report. Responses from company interviewees have been slower than anticipated, prompting BSR to re-examine its network and issue new rounds of invitations to secure interviews. The summer holidays prolonged the delay in companies responding to and confirming

interviews. With DCED guidance and support, BSR aimed to complete the interviews before finalizing the list of instruments to research and analyse. Siobhan indicated she had learnt many things in the process and would like to see some follow-up activities, which can be considered once the report is finalised.

Siobhan spoke of the Fixing the Business of Food project, which recommends that companies test their strategies and activities across four key areas: beneficial products and strategies, sustainable business operations and internal processes, sustainable supply and value chains, and good corporate citizenship. Here is a link to [Fixing the Business of Food: Private Sector Alignment with the SDGs and Accountability to Achieve Food Systems Transformation](#).

Draft final report is due October, to be finalised and submitted in November 2021. There will be further discussions on how to distribute this report, including a webinar, and to ensure there is good visibility.

4. Enhancing the Use of Evidence, Results Measurement in BER Programming

Task Team: FCDO (lead) BMZ/GIZ, JICA, SECO, SIDA, USAID

Sylvia Solf (WBG) provided an update on this work item, with comments from Simon White via the chat window. The consultants (Just Results) have completed two out of the five deliverables and were delayed by difficulties in gaining agency responses over the summer break period. A draft literature review was circulated for comment.

The consultants proposed a meeting to present a proposed revised theory of change and welcomed member participation in this discussion. Several people expressed an interest in participating in this, including:

- Andrew Griffiths (FCDO)
- Sylvia Solf (WBG)
- Moussa Traore (USAID)
- Severine Deboos (ILO)
- Jonas Bolzen (BMZ/GIZ)
- Toru Homma (JICA)
- Siobhan Kelly (FAO, indicated she may have colleagues who would like to join).

There was some discussion on how the recent WBG announcement to discontinue the annual Doing Business assessment would affect donor and development agency support for BER. It was suggested that this changing context would be important to consider in relation to this work item. One possibility would be to hold a webinar on the results of the work being conducted by Just Results and to position this in relation to how to fill the void created by the termination of Doing Business.

AGREEMENT

It was agreed that members would:

- 1. Provide comments to Simon White on the literature review as soon as possible.**
- 2. Indicate their interest to Simon White in participating in the discussion on the proposed revised theory of change.**

5. Role of business environment in GVCs (new work item)

Task Team: WBG (lead), BMZ/GIZ, FAO, JICA, and UNIDO.

A draft Scope of Work for this item was sent to members with the meeting agenda.

Sylvia introduced the topic and spoke to the Scope of Work, which examines how BER can support integration into global value chains (GVCs) and how regulatory sandboxes can be used to

leverage, upgrade or improve GVCs. She highlighted her interest in how domestic firms can become more involved in GVCs.

Via the chat, Stefan Kratzsch (UNIDO): “Concerning UNIDO, our participation concerns the two WGs on “BEWG and C-19” and “Role of business environment in integration into global value chains”. Concerning the latter & connecting to earlier discussions, we would be interested if a future study could explore the nexus between local supplier identification for GVC integration and impact investing. Connecting to 2017 DCED Impact Investing Papers is also a good idea to ensure continuity. This dovetails in the need for an institutional support function to help SMEs not to get lost in the plethora of available ESG standards with changing complexities and configurations in industry-specific contexts. There have been recent developments that our analysis could consider such as the [EU’s Taxonomy on Sustainable Activities](#).

AGREEMENT

It was agreed that the Task Team will review and agree on the draft Scope of Work. Any further comments from BEWG members are welcome. (BEWG members who have not yet expressed interest in participating in the task team please kindly send an email to Sylvia Solf and Simon White.)

6. Legal identification for women (new work item)

Task Team: USAID (lead), WBG and BMZ/GIZ.

A draft Scope of Work for this item was sent to members with the meeting agenda.

Anastasia de Santos (USAID) introduced the topic and spoke to the Scope of Work, which seeks to survey the evidence on economic benefits of improved gender equality in legal identification, as well as on what has worked for different approaches to improve their legal identification.

The discussion included the importance of understanding the meaning of ‘legal identification’ and how this applies in different contexts and the overall scope of work, which can be overly broad.

The scope of work will be revised and shared with the DCED Women’s Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEE WG). Consultant selection criteria will be drafted, and the Task Team will then consider how to search and select a consultant(s) (e.g., using own networks, DCED website, World Bank e-consult platform, all these).

AGREEMENT

It was agreed that the Task Team will review and agree on the draft Scope of Work. Any further comments from BEWG members are welcome.

7. Role of social dialogue (new work item)

Task Team: ILO (lead), BMZ/GIZ; EU.

A draft Scope of Work for this item was sent to members with the meeting agenda.

Severine Deboos introduced the topic and spoke to the Scope of Work, which seeks to examine the role of social dialogue and inclusion of both employers’ and workers’ perspective in business environment reforms, and to identify lessons learned about how to improve reform processes. Some revisions to the draft scope have already been made.

Plan is a revise terms of reference by mid-October. The revised TOR will be circulated for comment. Consultant selection criteria will be drafted, and the Task Team will then consider how to search and select a consultant(s) (e.g., using own networks, DCED website, World Bank e-consult platform, all these).

Via the chat, Siobhan asked if this work would include consumers associations. Severine indicated in may under the title “Social Dialogue Plus”.

AGREEMENT

It was agreed that the Task Team will review and agree on the draft Scope of Work. Any further comments from BEWG members are welcome.

8. Webinars:

Next webinar: Social protection in small enterprises in COVID-19; Another in the series of webinars on Using BER to Build Back Better; Tuesday, 12 October 2021: 14:00-15:30 hrs CET.

OTHER BUSINESS

a) Forthcoming webinar designing economic growth guidance.

Moussa spoke of a forthcoming webinar on 29 September 2021 (3:00pm CEST, 9:00am EDT) organised by the DCED Secretariat with USAID and the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs to share their current experiences in designing economic growth guidance. Their presentation will be followed by Q&A and discussion. Topics to be covered include:

- key elements of the new economic growth guidance in the agency;
- how to consider systemic change in programming (and links to DCED guidance);
- practical examples or pilot initiatives to operationalise the guidance; and
- experiences in the process of developing new guidance and programming approaches.

b) End of Doing Business

Anastasia asked whether any agencies were considering a response to the recently announced termination of the annual WBG Doing Business assessments. Members did not indicate any specific agency responses yet.

NEXT MEETING

AGREEMENT

It was agreed that the next meeting would be in the week beginning 17 January 2022.

Note: Proposed meeting: 19 January 2021, 14:00CET

CLOSE OF MEETING

Moussa Traore provided a summary of the meetings main conclusions and then closed the meeting thanking everyone for their participation.