

# Business Environment Working Group

## Meeting Minutes

22 February 2023

Approved via email on 3 March 2023.

### **PRESENT**

Sylvia Solf (WBG, BEWG co-Chair)

Moussa Traore (USAID, BEWG co-Chair)

Stefan Kratzsch (UNIDO)

Anastasia de Santos (USAID)

Sandra Yu (ILO)

Judith van Doorn (ILO)

Toshiaki Sakamoto (JICA)

Jim Tanburn (DCED Secretariat)

Simon White (Consultant to BEWG)

### **APOLOGIES**

Toru Homma (JICA), Camilla Valeur Nygaard (Danida)

### **NOTE ON MEMBERSHIP CHANGES**

Yuka Asakawa is moving to a different department within JICA and will be replaced by Toshiaki Sakamoto. Thanks, Yuka for your participation over the years and welcome, Toshiaki.

Camilla Valeur Nygaard (Danida) has joined the group. Welcome, Camilla.

Julian Sievers (Sida) is moving to the Enhanced Integrated Framework at the WTO in Geneva. Elisabet Montgomery continues to represent Sida.

## **1 Welcome**

Sylvia Solf (WBG, BEWG co-Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed Toshiaki Sakamoto (JICA), who briefly introduced himself.

## **2 Minutes of the last meeting: matters arising**

The Minutes of the Last Meeting (14 November 2022) were previously approved by email. There were no matters arising.

## **3 Current Work Item Updates**

### **3.1 Role of the Business Environment in Global Value Chains**

Sylvia Solf (WBG) provided an update on this work item. The report has been published and is available on the DCED website [directly as a pdf](#), and is also listed on the [Business Environment Reform Knowledge Page](#) and the [BEWG Overview page](#). It has also featured in the recent DCED newsletter. Links to DCED social media posts advertising the report are: [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

Please share with your networks.

### 3.2 BER and Covid-19 Responses

Moussa Traore (USAID) provided an update on this work item. He described the progression of topics considered in this item, which now focuses on post-pandemic recovery.

A consultant, William Smith, has been commissioned and presented his work on this topic. He indicated that the report looks at general BER approaches supporting longer-term Covid-19 recovery in developing economies with a social inclusion emphasis. The report he will prepare will have two sections: (1) BER programs and (2) specific measures (e.g., digitisation). This is based on a previously circulated “approach paper”.

William specifically requested the support of BEWG members by providing him with contacts of donor-supported reform programs that can be included as case studies. He is specifically looking for BER support programs that, since around 2020, have been launched or are being designed, which may include (to a greater or lesser extent) a Covid-19 response toward a long-term recovery (e.g., supporting resilience). BEWG members are asked to contact their internal colleagues and any program staff whom William could approach.

**AGREED:** Members to provide William with contacts or leads that might help him to identify relevant case studies. These cases would include any BER support program that has been formulated in some way in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Please contact William Smith directly or via Simon White.

**TIME FRAME:** Friday, 3 March 2023.

### 3.3 BER and Investment Facilitation

Sylvia provided an update on this work item. The consultant, Marc Reichel, has prepared a first draft which has been circulated for comment.

It was agreed that more time would be provided for members to comment.

Please see the draft report attached.

**AGREED:** An extra week for comments on the draft report.

**TIME FRAME:** Friday, 3 March 2023.

### 3.4 Simplified Legal Status

Judith van Doorn (ILO) provided an update on this work item. This research draws from data collected in the preparation of the following case studies:

- Brazil - Simples/MEI
- Cabo Verde - REMPE
- OHADA Model Law Umbrella/ Zoom in into Morocco - Auto-entrepreneur
- Ecuador - SAS
- Argentina – Monotributo
- Vietnam - Law on Support for SMEs

The consultant has produced a first draft report, and the Task Team is mostly happy with the draft. However, there have been some delays with data collection for the case studies on Morocco and Vietnam, due to low response rate from national stakeholders. Judith will liaise with Sylvia and Tana on the options for slightly extending the timeframe for submission of the second draft in response to these data collection challenges.

**AGREED:** When the final draft version of the report has been received and approved by the Task Team, it will be circulated to BEWG members for comment.

**TIME FRAME (updated after the DCED meeting):** The final draft versions expected on 3 April 2023

### 3.5 BER for the Digital Transformation of the Economy

Moussa Traore (USAID) provided an update on this work item. The consultant has produced an extensive report with extra case studies (i.e., five countries). This has proved helpful in providing a range of examples at various levels of development. Six pillars of digital transformation have been examined. The final report will be ready in mid-to-late-March 2023. In the meantime, Moussa is happy to share the draft report with anyone interested.

**AGREED:** When the final draft version of the report has been received and approved by the Task Team, it will be circulated to BEWG members for comment.

**TIME FRAME:** The final draft version is expected in late March 2023.

### 3.6 Legal ID for Women

It was noted that a report on this work item is available [as a pdf](#) on the DCED website and is listed on the [BEWG Overview page](#) and the [BER Knowledge Page](#). It is also currently featured on the website's front page—social media links on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## 4 **Webinars**

Simon White updated members on this item. Two webinars are being organised:

1. BER in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Settings: 23 March 2023 at 14:00 CET
2. Measuring BER: date to be confirmed (likely early April 2023)

## 5 **Work plan and budget for 2023/24**

Simon has distributed a template for brainstorming ideas for preparing the work plan and budget for 2023/24. Members are asked to complete and submit this document to Simon before the end of February 2023.

It was agreed that a BEWG meeting would be organised in late March 2023 to consider a prioritised list of work items and agree on the general scope of work for 2023/24. This would also provide opportunities to explore links between new and previous work items. Also, some consideration could be given to the methodology that would be applied to an agreed work item.

**AGREED:** Members are to submit their brainstorming sheets to Simon.

**TIME FRAME:** Friday, 3 March 2023.

## 6 **Any other business**

The DCED Annual Meeting will be held in Geneva on 19-22 June 2023.

Moussa indicated that the BEWG could consider an in-person meeting in Geneva.

Currently, the arrangements for the DCED meetings in Geneva are:

- Monday and Tuesday (19-20 June 2023) – Working Group meetings, hosted by ITC. This is when a BEWG meeting could be organised.

- Wednesday (21 June 2023) will be the Thematic Day, at the ILO, on new evidence for business and financial services for SMEs.
- On Wednesday evening, SECO is hosting a dinner on Lake Geneva.
- On Thursday (22 June 2023), the DCED Annual Meeting Business Day will be held at the ILO. This will include an extensive session focused on updates from members and their PSD programming.

**AGREED:** Members are requested to share their views on whether an in-person BEWG meeting should be held alongside other in-person working group meetings in Geneva on either 19 or 20 June 2023.

**TIME FRAME:** Please share your views by Friday, 3 March 2023.

## 7 Next meeting

As discussed above, it was agreed that the next meeting would be in late March 2023 to discuss possible work items for inclusion in the work plan and budget.

## 8 Close of Meeting

Moussa provided a summary of the meeting and thanked everyone for their participation. He closed the meeting at 15:05 CET.