

Business Environment Working Group

Online meeting, 23 March 2026

Minutes

26 March 2026

Participants

World Bank (2 participants)

JICA

GIZ (3 participants)

DCED Secretariat

ILO

Agenda

1. **Confirmation of new BEWG Co-Chair**
2. **Updates on current and upcoming work items**
3. **Work item ideas for FY26-27 and next steps**

1. Confirmation of new BEWG Co-Chair

Tobias Leeg stepped down from the Co-Chair role due to a change in portfolio within GIZ. Karin Wedig, Head of Sector Program Sustainable Economic and Financial Systems, was confirmed as new Co-Chair. She will be supported by André Castro, Technical Advisor at GIZ, who will also join the BEWG.

2. Updates on current and upcoming work items

- Earlier this financial year, webinars were organised on share insights from the BEWG reports on the renewed **SME agenda in the context of the just transition**, and on **BER and competition policy for a green transition**.
- A report on **whole-of-government approaches** to MSME formalisation is due to be finalised shortly, pending final comments from FAO. A webinar will be organised after publication.
- The report and policy brief on **BER for private capital mobilisation** have been published and a webinar is due to be organised in the second half of April.
- A consultant for the assignment on **economy-wide effects of industrial parks** will be contracted shortly. Key candidates have been shortlisted based on feedback from the task team and interviews are being scheduled.

BEWG members agreed that USD 14K from the budget originally foreseen for the now cancelled work item on AI and BER should be re-purposed to co-finance the cross-working group **mapping of donor approaches and experiences to achieving mutual benefits to PSD**. The draft ToR were also approved in principle, with the following comments:

- The review should cover mitigation strategies for any negative development effects that may result from a focus on mutual benefits.
- It would be useful to consider how different donor agencies are engaging with partner governments in this agenda.
- The consultants should explore ways to feature perspectives from private sector representatives in donor countries.
- It would be useful to cover results measurement metrics for domestic benefits.

3. Work item ideas for FY26-27 and next steps

The meeting served as an initial brainstorming among members on possible BEWG work items for FY 26-27. Ideas will need to be concretised by the end of April, for review and approval by the DCED ExCo in early May, and for approval by the DCED Annual Meeting in June. Each Working Group has a minimum budget of USD 45K from the Trust Fund, with any additional funds subject to unused allocations from other Working Groups.

There are also opportunities for cross-working group collaborations, by forming task teams on shared interests. For example, there is interest already in three different Working Groups in trade corridors, how to effectively bring together inclusive economic development, mutual benefits and trade considerations as part of these initiatives.

The following broader areas of interest were shared by BEWG members:

- **World Bank:**
 - Private capital mobilisation
 - Job creation in high-potential sectors (Agribusiness, tourism, high-value manufacturing; energy transition/critical minerals value chains; care industry
 - Regulatory frameworks for energy transition minerals
- **GIZ:**
 - Private sector mobilization beyond just capital, including investment climate improvements for local companies, and for European companies only when local capacity insufficient;
 - Infrastructure / trade corridors, including how to avoid colonial extraction patterns and how to facilitate economic policy coordination between corridor countries; ecological sustainability aspects of infrastructure corridors
 - Peace-positive economic policy and employment creation
- **ILO:**
 - Sustainable procurement; SME accessibility w.r.t. sustainability requirements; Procurement policy integration with linkage policies
 - Data work overlaying input-output, firm, and employment data (Proof of concept in Philippines with national enterprise surveys; potential expansion to countries with stronger data systems)
 - Collaboration opportunities with market systems group on scale issues
- **JICA**
 - Jobs as core overwhelming issue for post-SDGs

- Regional value chains along trade corridors with inclusive job creation
- One Stop Border Post (OSBT) utilization beyond trade facilitation

Next steps: It was agreed that all BEWG members could share any other work item ideas in writing with the Secretariat by 16 April. The Secretariat will then organise the ideas, and members will be invited to prioritise possible work items either over email or in another BEWG meeting by the end of the month.