



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

## Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEEWG)

Minutes of teleconference, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022

11<sup>th</sup> April 2022

### Participants

- Selina Haeny (SDC) – Co-Chair
- Lisanne van Beek (NL RVO/CBI) - Co-Chair
- Adriana Sierra Leal (ILO)
- Claudia-Dominique Geiser (GIZ/BMZ)
- Diego Ubfal (World Bank Group)
- Farrukh Alimdjnov (UNIDO)
- Gillian Dowie (IDRC)
- Henriette Kolb (IFC)
- Jennifer Hansel (USAID)
- Jessica Neumann (UNIDO)
- Lotte Harmanni (NL RVO)
- Nicolas Schmidt (UNIDO)
- Nozomi Ide (FAO)
- Rebecca Suhner (SDC)
- Reneta Lambreva (GAC)
- Virginia Rose Losada (ILO)
- Jessica Espinoza, Jen Braswell, Alec Paxton (2X Collaborative)
- Jim Tanburn, Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat)

**Apologies:** Gisela Strand (Sida), Niall Cremen (Ireland DFA), Karen Moore (GAC), Arjan de Haan (IDRC)

### Presentation from the 2X Collaborative

Jessica Espinoza led the presentation along with her colleagues Jen Braswell and Alex Paxton ([2X Collaborative](#)).

They presented the journey of 2X since its creation at the G7 Summit in 2018. 2X fills a gap in defining and setting new standards for gender lens investing (GLI) and is backed by many DFIs and other institutions (e.g., CDC, FinDev Canada, Citi Bank, Visa Foundation). Their starting point was entrepreneurship, but they now look to define what 'good' looks like in 4 other areas of GLI: leadership, employment, consumption and investments through financial intermediaries. In their first round, ending in 2020, \$6.9bn was directly mobilized with a gender lens, and an overall \$11.4bn was mobilized. They launched as a global industry body for gender lens investing at the UN Generation Equality Forum 2021, convening the entire spectrum of capital providers and mobilizers. Their format is a structured network open to different types of organisations and their 2022-23 priorities are: Structured networks and investment platform, Standard-setting and 2X certification, Market building and mainstreaming, 2X innovation lab.

Selina Haeny (SDC) asked about membership tiers and Jen Braswell (2X) explained the tiers and pricing.

Reneta Lambreva (GAC) asked about initiatives around the care economy and GLI for infrastructure. Alec Paxton (2X) mentioned a [community of practice around the care economy](#) and welcomed those interested to connect bilaterally as this is a growing area of focus for them. Jessica Espinoza (2X) mentioned a new initiative that they are developing internally on the care economy that they will be launching soon, and 2 large gender mainstreaming infrastructure projects - they have upcoming guidance for investors and working sessions on this. They see much interest in the crossover of gender and infrastructure, in project design but also particularly on gender-based violence, and are considering creating a new community of practice around infrastructure.

Lisanne van Beek (RVO/CBI) asked about how to connect on-the-ground SME projects with 2X. Jessica Espinoza (2X) mentioned '2X Assess' – a tool that assesses if an SME is 2X aligned, so that they can then be connected with investors. For example, 2X are working with SMEs in supply chains for Amazon. She also mentioned that the IFC has accelerator programs that help SMEs get to the point that they are 2X aligned and can be invested in as a GLI investment.

#### *Updates on current work items:*

- **Work item: Gender lens investing (GLI)**

**Task team: FAO, SDC, Sida, UNIDO**

Selina Haeny (SDC) presented an update on this item. The first phase of this work is complete. A working paper, authored by the Criterion institute, has now been published with the title [Donor Agency Engagement in Gender Lens Investing: Approaches and opportunities](#). Selina mentioned that working with the Criterion Institute allowed them to consider the power dynamics involved in investing and the finance landscape.

- **Work item: Women MSEs and Care**

**Task team: GAC, IDRC, ILO, USAID, SDC**

Virginia Rose Losada (ILO) gave a brief update on this item. Currently, a report is in the editing stages with 2 consultants, after a round of feedback via email with the WEE WG. An invitation to a presentation of the final work will follow in the coming weeks.

- **Work item: COVID-19 and WEE**

**Task team: GIZ/BMZ, IDRC, SDC**

A [12-page brief has now been published](#), three podcast episodes on [WEE Talks: Small chats, big topics](#) are complete, and an online event was hosted with three diverse organisations working in the field (the [recording](#) is also available).

- **Work item: Creation of a WEE Gateway**

**Task team: GIZ/BMZ, ILO, RVO, SDC**

Lisanne van Beek (RVO/CBI) updated the group. The WEE Gateway work aims to create an interactive, digital, hands-on toolkit to support project design and implementation to better integrate a gender lens in PSD. Women Win mapped existing tools, courses and reports, and designed a selected number of tools, including a decision tree, film, infographic and case studies. The task team is now confirming details with a website developer, to integrate the WEE Gateway into the DCED website. Dissemination will follow.

- **Work item: The role of social norms for WEE**

**Task team: BMZ/GIZ, SIDA, USAID**

Claudia-Dominique Geiser (BMZ/GIZ) presented. This item will focus in detail on the knowledge that currently exists on the role of social norms for WEE, and what has worked in practice for challenging or overcoming social norms that restrict WEE. The task team has met in recent months and draft terms of reference are in progress. They have taken time to define a common direction as it is a complex topic.

- **Work item: Webinar and podcast series**

Selina encouraged task teams to include the preparation of podcast episodes or webinars in terms of reference, including additional thoughts on opportunities for dissemination.

### **Outlook on the 2022/23 Annual Work Plan**

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) presented the results of the work plan survey. Lisanne van Beek (RVO/CBI) shared a poll via Mentimeter to help prioritize future work items. Addressing gender dimensions of the climate crisis came out as the most popular topic. The gendered digital divide was also popular. **The DCED Secretariat and Co-chairs will follow up over email** to allow members to vote on which work item(s) to pursue.

### **Member agency updates**

#### **WBG**

Diego Ubfal updated the group with 2 key updates; an [upcoming series of events](#) as part of the Accelerate Equality Initiative and a new report: [Breaking Barriers: Female Entrepreneurs Who Cross Over to Male-Dominated Sectors](#). He also mentioned a [recent RCT](#) on the effect of providing information on trade-specific earnings on trade choice in DRC, from the African Gender Innovation Lab.

Lisanne van Beek (RVO/CBI) queried how they define male-dominated sectors – Diego Ubfal said that they considered it in terms of both products and services.

#### **ILO**

Virginia Rose Losada updated the group, mentioning updates from both ILO-WED (e.g., a new [Gender Inclusive Service Provision Guide](#), a soon-launching Gender Sensitive Value Chain

Development Guide, a report on [Putting Gender at the Heart of Business Environment Reform](#)) and other ILO units (e.g., a new [GEDI Report on Care](#) and a [podcast on Social Finance](#)).

Henriette Kolb (IFC) mentioned that she is very happy to hear that the ILO work on insurance continues. Selina Haeny (SDC) also shared the link of an [SDC/a2ii report on inclusive insurance](#).

## IFC

Henriette Kolb asked the group to refer to her slide for full updates and links to resources.

## IDRC

Gillian Dowie updated the group. The [GLOW program](#) (Gender Equality in a Low-Carbon World) has launched, with 12 research projects across the world. They mostly focus on agriculture, partly because of the low-carbon opportunities but also because it is a sector with a high proportion of women involved.

The [TCEII](#) program (Transforming the Care Economy through Impact Investing) is underway, in collaboration with various other organisations. Core Global are leading a mapping study on what impact investing in the care economy looks like, and what acceleration should look like for care organisations. They are engaging with impact investors in the process, including through 2X. On care, Gillian also shared their [Care Economy Knowledge Hub](#).

IDRC are also doing some scoping work on gender and clean and renewable energy. They have a Sub-Saharan and North Africa focus this year but will be expanding into Asia and Latin America next year, probably from different entry points. This will be a multi-year research agenda covering the inclusion of gender in research on circularity and global value chains. Scaling care solutions – in the ideas stage. Lastly, IDRC have a presence at [some CSW events](#) this week.

## FAO

Nozomi Ide presented. FAO are represented at [some CSW side events](#) this week, with a focus on climate and sustainability (reflecting the priority theme of the CSW66). Internally, they have developed the [FAO Gender Action Plan](#) 2021, in alignment with the new Strategic Framework 2022-31 under the leadership of the new DG. She also mentioned some relevant publications: [Youth-sensitive value chain analysis and development: Guidelines for practitioners](#) (2022) and [Recommended reads](#) (2021; prepared ahead of the Food Systems Summit 2021 for Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods). They have also on-going work on bioeconomy and gender; gender and trade policy in Africa; and gender in the workplace of global banana industry.

## SDC

Selina Haeny presented. She shared details of a new project – Innovation Fund Tanzania – which includes a strong gender component. Every SME applying to the Tanzania Innovation

Fund has to undergo a gender analysis, so there is a technical assistance aspect to the project. SDC is also focussing on engaging more with financial institutions, for example through a new 3-year strategic partnership with GenderSmart.

### GIZ/BMZ

Claudia-Dominique Geiser presented. Germany has had a new government since December 2021, with a stronger focus on feminist policy, both internally and externally. What that means for development policy is not yet completely clear, but they are already seeing more focus on gender, both in terms of focussed projects and an appetite for gender mainstreaming. Germany also holds the G7 presidency. Deliverables are being discussed at high political level at the moment. Claudia also shared their [Handbook for Accelerating Women Entrepreneurs](#).

### UNIDO

Jessica Neumann and Nicolas Schmidt presented. UNIDO's new DG was previously a Minister in the German Government; he has joined the [International Gender Champions](#) network. UNIDO has 4 technical cooperation departments, but their gender mainstreaming is managed by the UNIDO Gender Office and the Departmental Gender Focal Points. Recently, UNIDO has launched the [Gender and Energy Compact](#), a coalition between a variety of governments and stakeholders from the public and private sector, academia and civil society committed to achieving a gender-responsive sustainable energy transition. Jessica invites any organisation represented here to also join the Compact. They also ask the group to **share the new [UNIDO Gender Lens Investing e-learning with stakeholders](#)**.

### RVO

Lotte Harmanni updated the group. They have published an external version of the [RVO Gender Guide](#), and a long-read for International Women's Day (currently only in Dutch but a version in English will be published soon). Internally, Lotte's team is helping draft theories of change for different programmes so that they include a gender aspect. RVO are also aiming to broaden their external network of gender experts, and request that **WEE WG members connect bilaterally if they have any suggestions of individuals to connect with**.

### CBI

Lisanne van Beek updated the group. Based on recent review of 20 projects on gender and youth, CBI is working on upscaling projects according to the categorisation as gender blind/aware/transformational. Lisanne once again asked for **any WEE WG members to get in touch if they work on WEE in Kenya**, as CBI are taking an ecosystems approach to their work there and want to know every active organisation. CBI is also developing a new Gender transformational project in Benin.

### GAC

Reneta Lambreva updated the group. The WEE team at GAC is very small and they focus mostly on paid and unpaid care. The allocation of CAD\$[100million has recently been announced](#) to

fund the care economy by the government, and they are prioritising engagement with civil society and women's rights organisations on this. It has been difficult to identify projects focussing on care *and* gender equality. They also want to advance the issue with climate change in mind.

## USAID

Jennifer Hansel shared with the group. The USAID FY 2023 Budget [will request \\$2.6 billion](#) for foreign assistance programs that promote gender equality worldwide, more than doubling the amount requested for gender programs last year. Also, the first-ever [U.S. Women's Economic Security Strategy](#) is being developed by 12 U.S. Departments and Agencies under the first-ever National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality. Jennifer also flagged that the State Department held a roundtable on the Care Economy last week, and this March, [USAID Marketlinks blog](#) is focusing on the Care Economy, e.g. last week's blog on [Three Ways Improving the Care Economy Increases Women's Wage Employment and Economic Growth](#). USAID is also holding a webinar on the care economy at the end of March and have recently hosted a lot of events for Women's History Month on Climate and Gender and Gender and Finance.

## AOB

Henriette Kolb (IFC) mentioned that it would be good to discuss our own institutions in terms of targets on diversity employment, procurement, etc., to get a sense of internal progress.

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) shared that Gisela Strand (Sida, not present) asks all WEE WG Members to **send their definitions of WEE to her via email**. Ella also mentioned that the DCED **Business Environment WG would still welcome someone to join the legal ID for women task item – anyone interested should connect with Ella via email** - and that there is a DCED webinar on informality next week that may be of interest.

Lisanne van Beek (RVO/CBI) invited everyone to an event hosted by the Practitioners' Network, at which the DCED WEE WG will be presented by the Co-chairs. Ella will follow up with a calendar invite.

Selina Haeny (SDC) announced that she is stepping down as Co-chair. Lisanne thanked Selina for her commitment and enthusiasm to the WEE WG and welcomed Claudia-Dominique Geiser (GIZ/BMZ) as the new Co-chair.