



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

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

Minutes of teleconference, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021

9<sup>th</sup> April 2021

### Participants

- Selina Haeny (SDC) – Co-Chair
- Lianne van Beek (NL RVO) - Co-Chair
- Claudia-Dominique Geiser (GIZ/BMZ)
- Gisela Strand (Sida)
- Jennifer Hansel (USAID)
- Jessica Neumann (UNIDO)
- Karen Moore (GAC)
- Lotte Harmanni (NL RVO)
- Reneta Lambreva (GAC)
- Sindy Karberg-Manuel (GIZ/BMZ)
- Virginia Rose (ILO)
- Wade Channell (USAID)
- Jim Tanburn, Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat)

**Apologies:** Laurence Mortier (SECO), Ulvinur Muge Dolun (UNIDO), Gillian Dowie (IDRC), Nozomi Ide (FAO), Adriana Sierra Leal (ILO), Lynn Reinhart (SDC), Catherine Masinde (IFC)

### Agency updates and personal introductions

#### RVO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency)

Lianne van Beek notified the group that she is moving positions but will stay on as co-chair for now.

On International Women's Day (8<sup>th</sup> March), RVO published their annual '[Women in Business](#)' E-zine with gender best practices. This included examples from women entrepreneurs in developing countries as well as in the Netherlands. They are also working on a public version of an internal guide to incorporate a gender lens in project assessment, implementation, and monitoring. [CBI](#) is part of RVO and they have recently selected Kenya for a new export promotion project with a focus on WEE and systemic change and are currently carrying out a stakeholder mapping. Lianne van Beek asked for any organisations with (recent) WEE-related activities in Kenya to contact her. RVO is closely following the developments in the area of mandatory due diligence for supply chain transparency and traceability in the Netherlands as well as in Europe. A [gender responsive due diligence platform](#) was launched by Women Win, and a [gender responsive human rights due diligence tool](#) was developed by Plan International. Lotte Harmanni joined her first meeting, as she will take over from Lianne van Beek as Gender Coordinator in RVO as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April.

## **Sida**

Gisela Strand informed the group that Sida are putting more emphasis on gender mainstreaming in all strategies. Their gender action plan is still ongoing, and Gisela Strand welcomes advice from the group on how others follow up on plans when gender is decentralised across an organisation. Sida has formed a new coalition with Germany, Bill Gates and Spain which will launch this week in Mexico. They have also [hosted several webinars recently](#) and are planning another on WEE and biodiversity for May. Sida are also producing a brief on gender and energy and have a 'gender and environment' brief launching soon.

## **GIZ/BMZ**

Claudia Geiser is new to the group and replaces Sebastian Gilcher. GIZ are currently looking at how women's accelerator programmes should differ from general ones and are collaborating with projects in the field to produce a product.

Sindy Karberg-Manuel also joined the meeting, as she has returned from leave.

## **UNIDO**

Jessica Neumann informed the group that UNIDO recently virtually hosted [an event as part of the 65<sup>th</sup> session on the Commission on the Status of Women, on Women's Leadership for Climate-Neutral and Circular Industries](#), in collaboration with Finland. Their gender mainstreaming guide has also recently been updated, and there is an internal task force working on developing an e-learning course on gender lens investing and how it fits with the topic of climate action. A [new paper has also recently been co-authored with the Regional Academy of the UN on women entrepreneurship and becoming climate neutral](#).

## **ILO**

Virginia Rose is the Coordinator of the ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship programme. They are currently focussing on COVID-19 recovery by supporting projects as well as regional and country offices. They aim to assess the impact of COVID-19 for women entrepreneurs in Central America. They are also looking into the digitalisation of service provision to women entrepreneurs in the context of COVID-19 in Asia. Also, on COVID-19, they are working on altering their training and assessment tools so that they can be accessed in a COVID-safe manner. ILO will soon publish a brief on gender-responsive procurement, in collaboration with UN Women, and are looking into the topics of formalisation and e-commerce for migrant women. They are also having initial discussions around the role of insurance for women entrepreneurs.

## **SDC**

SDC are currently working on producing internal 'inspirational' guidance for colleagues to become more aware of gender in their programming work. Selina Haeny asked for anyone with experience in similar situations to contact her. She also reached out to the group with opportunities, firstly, for contributing to the [Economic Justice and Rights Action Coalition of](#)

[Generation Equality Forum](#) and, secondly, to [a programme with A2ii to ensure financial inclusion and insurance for migrating women](#).

### **GAC (Global Affairs Canada)**

Karen Moore indicated that GAC remain focussed on the gendered division of unpaid and paid care work, and [recently hosted events around International Women's Day on the topic](#). They have [another event on the care economy coming up with Oxfam and the WBG on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April](#). GAC are also producing internal guidance on unpaid/paid care for programming and advocacy. A programming guidance note, indicators menu and results framework have been completed and shared internally as part of this. Their next step is to consider external guidance on the topic too.

### **USAID**

Wade Channell announced that this was his final meeting with the group.

USAID are currently updating their [strategy](#) with internal and external resources. They are particularly interested in the gendered digital divide and the risks that women face in the world of technology. They are also interested in WEE and border control, including trade across borders.

Jennifer Hansel will be representing USAID in this working group going forward and spoke about publicity efforts over International Women's Day. They have also recently created a [library of resources tagged by subject](#). Jennifer shared other links that may be of interest, on USAID's work on [WEE and COVID-19](#), and on an [online wiki with information on the gender digital divide, and trade facilitation](#).

### **Work item 1: Research into COVID-19 and WEE**

**Task team: GIZ/BMZ, IDRC, SDC, contributions from all members**

Claudia Geiser (GIZ/BMZ) presented progress on the actions for this work item:

1. The overview of what DCED members are doing on gender and COVID-19 is complete. The task team welcomes additions.
2. A policy brief giving a summary and gap analysis of COVID-19 and WEE resources: ToR have been finalised, and contracting is under way.
3. A podcast series featuring 'voices from the field' is less urgent and will be done after action point 2 on the policy brief.
4. An online event presenting the main findings of the policy paper and the podcast series will be thought about after action points 2 and 3 are complete.

Lisanne van Beek (RVO) asked whether an overview of funds that women entrepreneurs can directly access would be included in this item. Claudia Geiser (GIZ/BMZ) responded saying this was outside the original scope of the work, but that the task team could discuss this.

### Work item 2: Creation of a WEE Gateway

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

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. It involves a consultancy mapping existing tools, courses and reports, conducting a gap analysis, and designing and producing a selected number of interactive tools, chosen based on the research of what is already out there. Sindy Karberg-Manuel (GIZ/BMZ) presented on progress thus far.

A kick-off meeting with Women Win was completed 2 weeks prior to this meeting, and Women Win are beginning the work. The task team will share drafts of the platform in the coming months, with the final idea of the product presented in June or July.

### Work item 3: Introduction to Gender lens investing (GLI)

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

The work item on GLI involves hiring a consultant to a) map GLI in the developing world with the title *“I work for a DCED member agency and I want to implement Gender Lens Investing; what do I need to know?”* and b) provide a framework for assessing GLI.

Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) presented progress thus far on this work item. The Criterion Institute were selected, and will commence the work in April, with another meeting with Criterion Institute and the task team planned for May. The deliverables are:

1. Briefing Paper to map the field of gender lens investing in developing countries
2. Guidance paper for assessing impact
3. Presentation to DCED Women’s Economic Empowerment Working Group
4. List of contacts interviewed
5. List of literature for our internal library

### Work item 4: Care economy

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

This work item has not progressed since the last working group meeting of the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

Reneta Lambreva (GAC) indicated that Canada is enthusiastic about the gender dimension of paid and unpaid care. Jennifer Hansel (USAID) flagged an [IFC article on the care economy](#) that may be of interest to the task team, if the work item is re-activated.

## Results of Survey of members of the WG

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) presented the results of the survey of working group members on their expectations of these meetings, and their thoughts on the 2021/22 work plan.

On the topic of more informal ways to connect, Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) indicated that they have experimented with [wonde.me](#) and [Runtheworld](#) for facilitating informal bilateral meetings.

## Work plan 2021/22

### **Social norms (new):**

A potential new work item on social norms was presented by Claudia Geiser (GIZ/BMZ), which would look to map what tools already exist on this topic for donors.

Gisela Strand (Sida) offered her support, as did Jennifer Hansel (USAID). Reneta Lambreva (GAC) said that GAC is also interested in the social norms item, but probably could not commit to a task team. Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) may be interested in joining the task team as well.

### **Digitalisation (new):**

Jessica Neumann (UNIDO) would be interested in seeing a work item on digitalisation, especially on applying a gender lens to technological assessments. Jennifer Hansel (USAID) indicated that USAID are looking at gender-based violence in online spaces and would be interested in joining work on digitalisation. The group discussed and decided that the COVID-19 work item could look to focus on digitalisation in the future, rather than creating a new work item.

### **Care economy:**

There was a discussion on the focus of this item. The group was reminded of the description in the previous work plan, and it was decided that there would be a separate meeting for those interested in the topic to discuss routes forward and form a new task team. Reneta Lambreva (GAC), Virginia Rose (ILO), Jennifer Hansel (USAID), Selina Haeny (SDC) and Karen Moore (GAC) will join the call.

### **WEE Gateway:**

In addition to the current task team, Virginia Rose (ILO) will join with Adriana Sierra Leal (ILO) to support the WEE Gateway.

*Jim Tanburn (DCED Secretariat) reminded the group of deadlines for submitting the work plan and budget, by the end of April. Selina Haeny (SDC) therefore set a deadline for task teams to*

*submit proposals by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April. The co-chairs will then consolidate them and share the final document with the DCED Secretariat.*

*Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) is to share the 2020/21 work plan, the document of personal introductions and a list of who to contact to get involved in each work item.*

## **AOB**

The group discussed the next working group meeting. It was decided to meet after the Annual Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> June, and to try out some of the informal virtual meeting tools discussed. Selina Haeny (SDC) welcomes suggestions for a thematic focus, or for speakers.