



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEEWG)

Minutes of meeting, Online, 3rd April 2023

v. 21st April 2023

Participants (23):

- Karen Moore (GAC) – Chair
- Abigail Dalton (WB)
- Clara Aranda (IFC)
- Cristina Rivero (ILO)
- Diepak Elmer (SDC)
- Fabian Werner (BMZ/GIZ)
- Faith Tigere (ITC)
- Franziska Deininger (IFC)
- Heather Kipnis (IFC)
- Hind Sourat (IDRC)
- Inés Tijera von Holzen (SDC)
- Joanna Kahiluoto (EC)
- Lisanne van Beek (RVO/CBI)
- Lotte Harmanni (RVO/CBI)
- Martha Melesse (IDRC)
- Miranda Fiedler (SDC)
- Reiko Wakatsuki (JICA)
- Reneta Lambreva (GAC)
- Suzuka Sugawara (JICA)
- Valentina Verze (ILO)
- Virginia Rose Losada (ILO)
- Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat)
- Jim Tanburn (DCED Secretariat)

Apologies: Nozomi Ide (FAO), Ruta Aidis (USAID), Gisela Strand (Sida), Katia Gruetter (SECO)

Welcome, introductions, update on Chairs:

Karen Moore (GAC) opened the meeting. **She invited a Co-chair to join her**, as the position is still open, and indicated that anyone interested should contact her or the Secretariat. Karen then summarized the meeting agenda; the main purpose of the meeting was to discuss finalising the 2023/24 work plan.

Updates on current work items:

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

Task team: UNIDO, FAO, SDC, Sida

Diepak Elmer (SDC) updated the group. The task team are focussing on the suitability of business simulation games and other innovative methods to influence individuals involved in funding, in the financial sector. They have received three proposals for the first research piece and are currently scoring them. They hope to have more of an update by the next WG meeting once they have begun working with a consultancy.

- **Work item: WEE and climate**

Task team: Sida, IDRC, ILO, BMZ/GIZ

Ella Duffy (DCED Secretariat) updated the group in Gisela Strand's (Sida) absence. The task team are close to finalising terms of reference for commissioning a consultant to research and produce a set of six case studies of women collectives in the climate adaptation, mitigation and resilience space, and a short summary report. Ella thanked those members of the WG who have contributed case study suggestions from their agency.

- **Work item: Gender digital divide**

Task team: ILO, RVO/CBI, IFC, USAID

Virginia Losada (ILO) provided a short update to the group; the task team have not met since the last WG meeting and no further progress has been made.

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

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

Karen Moore (GAC) provided a short update to the group; as before, the task team has finished work on this topic but continues to disseminate the 2022 report when the opportunity arises.

- **Work item: Role of social norms**

Task team: BMZ/GIZ, Sida, USAID, ILO, RVO/CBI

Karen Moore (GAC) reiterated that the individuals who formed the task team on the role of social norms have moved on from the WG, and invited anyone who would like to kickstart work on this topic to speak.

Abby Dalton (WB) flagged that there will be a WB note on social gender norms published soon, which she will share with the group. Lisanne van Beek flagged a relevant ODI webinar on 4th April 2023 at 10:00 CET that considers whether social media can be used as a tool to change social gender norms.

Outlook on the 2023/24 Annual Work Plan:

Karen Moore opened up discussion on the 2023/24 work plan and invited discussion on the ideas for new work items previously sent by email, and invited any other suggestions.

Ella Duffy presented a work item proposal from Gisela Strand in her absence, on women's home ownership. Sida suggests a new work item focussing on the relationship between home ownership and economic empowerment, particularly in the context of increasing rural to urban migration which can affect gender relations and influence rates of intimate partner violence against women.

Heather Kipnis (IFC) shared a recently published [IFC report on housing finance for women](#). She shared that IFC are working on a second report looking particularly at home-working entrepreneurs. Heather is happy to connect bilaterally with anyone who is interested to connect on this.

Fabian Werner (BMZ/GIZ) presented a proposal on gender-responsive industrial policy that had been shared over email prior to the meeting. He provided the context; BMZ is focussing more on the macro level of economic development going forwards. He opened up discussion on possible directions, as his proposal is quite open currently. He suggested, for example, a focus on the of gender-sensitive industrial policy, involving a mapping of successful policies, OR looking at certain sectors where women are overrepresented (e.g., textiles) or under-represented (e.g., mining), OR instruments the public sector could use to encourage the private sector to reduce gender inequalities, OR the intersection of gender-sensitive industrial policies and green industrial policies.

Karen Moore asked for some context on the similar green industrial policy work item proposal in the Green Growth Working Group from BMZ/GIZ. Fabian Werner and Ella Duffy provided some background and asserted that it would be important not to duplicate work.

Martha Melesse (IDRC) shared that IDRC are looking at this indirectly, from the trade perspective; she is happy to share materials.

Ella Duffy mentioned the possible work item suggested by UNIDO in the previous meeting on gender-responsive post-conflict private sector development in Ukraine. Karen Moore then opened the floor to any other work item ideas.

Reneta Lambreva (GAC) circled back to the gender digital divide item. Clara Aranda (IFC) shared that she has done some research on women's participation in the digital economy, and wants to bring this expertise to the task team. She shared her concerns that the task team have not committed to meeting recently, and encouraged others to join to kickstart the work again.

Martha Melesse shared that IDRC are interested in how climate change is affecting gendered digitalisation, and are planning a call out on reskilling towards future digital jobs, which she is happy to share after this meeting.

Lotte Harmanni (RVO/CBI) suggested a possible new work item on gender-positive responsible business conduct. Lianne van Beek (RVO/CBI) added that this could be narrowed down to focus specifically on gender-responsive due diligence, or on the role of buyers in international markets in influencing women's economic empowerment in sourcing from developing countries. A possible angle within this could be on certification; there are standards for things like organic or fairtrade products, but fewer that focus on gender.

Heather Kipnis suggested that this could be a topic of interest at IFC, as they do some work on engaging buyers and aligning businesses' ability to integrate inclusion and sustainability. They have an ongoing project; [Sourcing2Equal](#), which was launched in Kenya in 2021 and with the next iteration launching in Colombia in September. Heather is happy to connect bilaterally.

Martha Melesse offered that IDRC are currently grappling with both gender and climate-related topics, and how to combine those lenses. They have work on looking at the connection of both WEE and climate with the care economy, but would welcome the opportunity to do more collaborative work with green experts.

Ella Duffy summarized the discussion on work planning so far, and provided an overview of the timeline going forwards; **the work plan must be finalised by mid-late April, so commitment to work items must be confirmed within 2 weeks.** Ella and Karen will circle back to the WG after this meeting with a draft work plan as soon as possible.

Member agency updates (please see slides – circulated with the Minutes but not posted on the website - for full updates, with links to resources mentioned):

JICA

Reiko Wakatsuki updated the group. She focussed on one major update, but referred the group to JICA's slide for others. JICA has just launched a new research project on Effective Interventions to Promote Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, with a focus specifically on gender transformative approaches. The study will collect and analyse information on gender mainstreaming in the areas of infrastructure construction, nutrition improvement, and climate change.

BMZ/GIZ

Fabian Werner updated the group. The main update from their side is that BMZ have published their [Strategy for Feminist Development Policy](#) and [Guidelines for Feminist Foreign Policy](#). The strategy will soon be available in English as well as German. The strategy sets out that, by 2025, 93% of funds should flow into GE1&2 projects, and the approach follows '3Rs'; rights, resources and representation.

ILO

Virigina Losada updated the group. In March, the ILO and IFC [launched](#) a second year-long Community of Practice on women in insurance. The [ILO GEDI's global care portal](#) was also [launched](#) in March during CSW. Lastly, their focus on childcare and women's entrepreneurship continues; the brief [Childcare leave and services from a women's entrepreneurship development perspective](#) is now available in [French](#) and [Spanish](#), and research in Moldova using a (market) systems approach to childcare (homebased nurseries and workplace crèches) is planned to be presented in April.

Sida

Ella Duffy presented Gisela Strand's update from Sida, sent in advance of the meeting. Sida's new [WEE thematic overview](#) was launched on March 8th, and a series of internal webinars on WEE related to the five technical notes included in the Overview will be rolled out during 2023. Sida continues its work on strengthening its system and routines on integrating SEAH in its

contribution management including ensuring that there is a specific paragraph in all Sida's agreements on preventing and responding to SEAH, as well as available training for Sida staff and partners. Sida also continues focus on gender-lens investing; they are currently gathering Swedish gender-lens investing actors (e.g., SEB, Swedish Bank, Swedfund, Vinnova) to come together in a learning and sharing session.

Gisela Strand would be interested in engaging in discussions with other WEE WG members on the World Bank's gender strategies, as Sida are engaged in commenting on the WB's new gender strategy.

GAC

Karen Moore indicated that GAC will share a larger update at the next WG meeting.

IDRC

Martha Melesse updated the group. IDRC have recently launched action research in collaboration with GAC on scaling care innovation, identifying proven solutions in reducing the unpaid care burden for women in sub-Saharan Africa. Martha will share more details of this in future meetings. IDRC have also launched an [online dashboard](#), mapping pathways to WEE in specific sectors in 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It includes information on key indicators for each country, and lots of other resources.

IFC

Fransiska Deininger updated the group. This is her first time joining a WEE WG meeting; she works on gender and climate-related issues. In this area, IFC are currently undertaking some research pieces. Firstly, a piece on green entrepreneurship which will be presented at COP28. Secondly, they are submitting a proposal internally to conduct a landscape analysis on high-impact financing gaps in the green and just transition. Thirdly, they are working on the World Bank country climate development reports, which cover investment diagnostics examining high priorities in climate adaptation and mitigation.

RVO/CBI

Lisanne van Beek updated the group. For the first time in CBI's history, they are reporting on the number of women entrepreneurs that they support. Following internal discussions, they are defining 'women entrepreneurs' using ISO international workshop number 34 [definitions](#), defined by ITC and the Swedish Institute for Standards. Lisanne asked the group if others are familiar with this definition, and Karen Moore offered to ask internally at GAC.

Karen Moore closed the member updates session and invited anyone with further updates to circulate those over email.

[The 45th DCED Annual Meeting in Geneva, 19-23 June 2023](#)

Jim Tanburn explained the logistics of the 45th DCED Annual Meeting, 19-23 June in Geneva, and encouraged anyone who is planning to join to confirm their attendance as soon as possible. 19 and 20 June will comprise of WG meetings, 21 June is the [Thematic Day](#) and 22 June involves the Business Session. Information is uploaded to the [DCED website](#) when it is available. Ella Duffy added on WEE WG logistics; the WEE WG will meet all day on Tuesday 20 June at the ITC. Further details will be confirmed in the coming weeks over email.

Lisanne van Beek asked about whether the WEE WG will present at an open session, and if yes, then we should keep in mind coordinating with other WG's open sessions to avoid overlap. Ella Duffy clarified that the WEE WG meeting can include open sessions that other individuals present at the Annual Meeting could be invited to, and that she will be liaising with Secretariat colleagues supporting other WG's to avoid clashes.

Reneta Lambreva suggested a focus on gender strategies, possibly as an open session.

Martha Melesse suggested an open session joint with the DCED Green Growth WG, particularly with regards to the collaborative WEE & Climate work item, but also more broadly on cross cutting themes.

Karen Moore and Ella Duffy will circle back over email with a list of possibilities and draft agenda as soon as possible.

AOB

Ella Duffy mentioned that the EU Practitioners Network would still welcome presentations of recent work related to access to finance for women to an event on 20 April 2023. She requested anyone interested to follow up over email.

Karen Moore thanked everyone for joining and closed the meeting.