



The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development

Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEEWG) Minutes  
Copenhagen, Denmark, 16 June 2015

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Participants

Helen Bradbury, Alliances Lesser Caucasus  
Katharina Spiess, BMZ  
Melinda Kelly, Canadian DFATD  
Sumana Hussain, DFID (*by teleconference*)  
Mika Vehnämäki, Finland MfFA  
Stefanie Springorum, GIZ  
Olof Drakenberg, Gothenburg University  
Arjan de Haan, IDRC  
Virginia Rose Losada, ILO (*by teleconference*)

Johan Veul, Netherlands MoFA  
Chantal Felder, SDC  
Liliana de Sá Kirchknopf, SECO  
Gisela Strand, Sida  
Ola Nilsmo, Sida  
Peter Roslander, Sida  
Fiorina Mugione, UNCTAD  
Marie Sicat, UNCTAD (*by teleconference*)  
Jim Tanburn, Eleanor Bell, Secretariat

Apologies Polly Le Grand, DFID; Henriette Kolb, IFC; Louise Anten, Netherlands MoFA

*This was the first meeting after the departure of Joni Simpson as Chair, following her transfer within ILO; it therefore met to consider how to proceed, and who should lead the group. The Annex at the end of this document summarises the main action points agreed during the meeting.*

Member Agency Updates

**BMZ** has launched a new gender equality strategy in 2014. An action plan with concrete measures is currently being drafted. A study of how women's participation in the labour market can increase is also being prepared.

**Canadian DFATD** adopted a sustainable economic growth strategy in 2010. Women's economic empowerment is a new focus within this. Building on a conference in 2013, Canadian DFATD has invested in building tools and guidance for WEE, but take-up has not been as wide as expected.

**DFID** is using an advocacy-based approach to WEE, and welcomes any ideas on how to develop this approach. DFID is trying to mainstream WEE throughout its economic development programming. The SPRING accelerator is a new, five-year programme which identifies and supports companies with potentially innovative solutions for women and girls' learning and employment. It is currently operating in East Africa.

**Finland MfFA** has just got a new Government and Minister for Foreign Trade and Development. The Minister will emphasize the rights and welfare of women and girls as number one priority. Another priority will be the strengthening of the business environment and the business sector in developing countries as well as integration of Finnish companies in supporting development. Finland has also strengthened its approach to results-based management. Of 58 Aid for Trade projects 14 report job creation in 2014, i.e. more than 32,000 direct jobs created, 43.8% of which were for women. Gender is also prominent in Finland MfFA's green economy, governance, environment and security projects, e.g. in Nepal, Zambia and Kosovo. The other side of the coin is that Finland MfFA will be facing significant budget cuts to the magnitude of some 40 % in 2015 and onwards.

**IDRC** is increasingly focusing on the role of promoting gender equality in private sector development (PSD) and vice versa. A joint research programme with DFID and the Hewlett Foundation is investigating women's roles in promoting growth.

**ILO** has run a women's entrepreneurship development programme for 12 years. The ILO has invested considerable resources in research to gain a better understanding of what works in WED. The findings of this research have been summarised in an [Issue Brief](#) (2014), the result of an in-depth review of six meta-evaluations and 23 rigorous impact studies undertaken during the past 10 years in women's entrepreneurship development initiatives around the world. The ILO will hold an event on this topic on 18 September 2015. The two other key foci of the ILO's WED programme are involving men in WED, and increasing formality amongst women-owned enterprises.

**Netherlands MoFA** is exploring the potential of partnering with businesses and private foundations, and of linking these to grass-roots women's organisations, for WEE. It is hoped that grass-roots women's organisations can provide guidance to improve the effectiveness of programming.

**SDC** is currently exploring how to achieve a greater gender impact through public-private partnerships.

**SECO** is supporting the disaggregation of the World Bank's Indicators through the '[Women, Business and the Law](#)' project. The aim is that disaggregated indicator collection will be rolled out globally, and that the data gathered can then be streamlined into Doing Business Indicators (subject to Board approval). Entrepreneurship is a particular focus for SECO. Efforts are made to identify 'gazelle' businesses with high growth potential. A new 4-year programme by SECO in six countries targets 35% of its support to women's start-ups and businesses.

**Sida** has the aim of achieving complete gender integration into its programming. Integrating gender concerns into programmes targeting productive sectors is a strategic priority. In November, Sida will hold a capacity building conference on Women's Economic Empowerment. This will be mainly for its own staff. The DCED Guidelines on Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment at the Household Level will be piloted or presented in some way at the conference.

**UNCTAD** has published a report on [Entrepreneurship Development](#) for the General Assembly with inputs on promoting women's entrepreneurship. UNCTAD continues to work on technology cooperation, in programmes where between 30% and 50% of beneficiaries are women. A recent focus is E-Commerce, especially in relation to small and rural enterprises. The scope for women entrepreneurs to engage in E-Commerce is explored in the [Information Economy Report 2015](#). With ITC, UNCTAD has launched a call to action for women exporters.

**Alliances Lesser Caucasus (ALC)** is a market development programme intervening in the livestock sector. ALC combines gender-mainstreamed interventions with interventions that overtly target women. Programme manager Helen Bradbury noted that the programme is relatively experimental, as it is still unclear whether market development and women's economic empowerment can achieve impact at scale; [results so far](#), however, are very promising. Helen considered that in many PSD interventions, basic steps necessary to achieve and track women's economic empowerment, such as disaggregating data by gender, are still not taken.

#### Rationale and possible priority actions for the group

Jim Tanburn noted that there are two potential scenarios for members wishing to collaborate on WEE. If critical priorities to address as a group are identified, there is rationale for a Working Group. If ambitions are mainly related to sharing of information between members, forming a Community of Practice may be more appropriate. It was also emphasised that one or two members of the group need to provide intellectual leadership.

First, it was agreed that the confusion over the name of the group should be resolved, and that it

should focus on Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) rather than only on Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED).

There was discussion about what the group could do to encourage more projects to disaggregate indicators by gender, and to develop more effective gender analyses and theories of change. It was proposed that a simple, implementation-oriented document – building on the last output of the group, [Practical Guidelines for Measuring Results in Women's Economic Empowerment in Private Sector Development](#) – would add significant value. In particular, it was noted that when carrying out the latter piece of work, it had been very hard to identify programmes with an advanced WEE approach which could serve as case studies. As such, the emphasis should be on developing simple, step-by-step guidance which could realistically be piloted in the field. Helen Bradbury indicated her willingness to provide input to this guidance. It will also be important for working group members to nominate projects with experience that could be drawn on in the development of this guidance.

Gisela Strand suggested that Sida's conference in Harare in November could be the first piloting exercise for the guidelines, and also an opportunity to receive feedback from the field.

Regional training and online learning events are additional ways in which the working group and DCED Secretariat could support programmes trying to improve their WEE approach.

It was felt that there was significant potential to collaborate with the private sector on the topic of WEE. Engaging with the private sector, in particular around use of the DCED Standard and measurement of WEE, is to be explored in more detail in the future.

#### Next steps

DFID, Germany and Sida will form a task team to formulate a way forward for the group. The next working group meeting could coincide with Sida's conference in November in Harare.

#### Annex: Summary of Action Points Agreed

	What?	By Whom?	By When?
1.	Teleconference to discuss guidance on measuring WEE	Sumana Hussain, DFID Polly Le Grand, DFID Stefanie Springorum, GIZ Gisela Strand, Sida	July 3 <sup>rd</sup>
2.	Circulate proposal for work plan	Eleanor Bell	Following teleconference