



AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION TRUST FUND (ARTF)

Gender Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Summary of Discussions

The ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) held its monthly meeting on October 9, 2018. Representatives of seven donor partners¹, Women's Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (WEE-NPP) Secretariat from MoLSAMD and the ARTF Administrator (the World Bank, or Bank) attended. The Bank and the UK co-chaired the meeting.

The agenda items were: (i) Reaching women in third party monitoring: an update from ARTF Third Party Monitoring Agent (MSI); and (ii) Gender aspects of the proposed Eshteghal Zaiee-Karmondena (EZ-Kar) Project. The GWG also briefly discussed updates to the ARTF Strategy Group.

Discussion

1. Reaching women in third party monitoring: an update from ARTF Third Party Monitoring The ARTF

MSI, the ARTF third party monitoring (TPM/Supervisory Agent) noted that they would focus on the findings from their monitoring of ARTF projects over the last year. The process of monitoring project gender related issues starts with the MSI team discussing relevant gender issues with the World Bank and implementing government ministries, as well as reviewing of the individual project environmental and social management frameworks (ESMF). The grievance redress mechanism (GRM) for the projects are also reviewed. Since early this year, MSI is also paying extra attention to reporting gender disaggregated data on GRM to understand how well women can access and use GRMs.

MSI provides monthly and quarterly reports to the Bank and the government implementing agencies on overall issues monitored as well as gender. Joint monthly coordination meetings with MSI, the Bank and the government agencies are held to discuss findings from the monitoring. MSI carries out their monitoring visits together with staff from the relevant government implementing agency.

Currently MSI has 22 female enumerators covering 22 provinces, 3 citizen monitors, and 3 monitoring coordinators based in Kabul. The monitors have gender segregated and mixed group interviews with sub-project beneficiaries on the ground. MSI pays attention to women's involvement in the sub-projects from design stage to the implementation. For ongoing sub-projects, they check whether issues raised by women at the design stage are being considered during construction. Similarly, for the Citizens' Charter Program, the enumerators conduct

¹ Canada, Denmark, European Union, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States.



meetings (individual and group meetings with women) to see how they were engaged in election and other exercises. The type of monitoring differs depending on the nature of the project. For example, for the National Horticulture and Livestock Project (NHLP) in addition to other activities, they monitor the poultry sub-project and for that they use more qualitative methods to show patterns. Both the enumerators and the citizen monitors use cameras with GPS coordinates, taking photos of the ongoing work as well as showing that they visited those sites.

The safety and security of female enumerators is of concern and can pose a challenge to monitoring of projects. Monitoring of sites can be postponed until the security situation settles to ensure safety of the TPM staff.

Findings from the past quarter for the CCAP shows strong female participation in elections and gap analysis (resource mapping) exercise (up to 60% however in some communities the participation rate is lower). However, in the seasonal calendar exercise, female community members were less involved especially in areas where they are not involved in agrarian work. MSI conducts interviews not only with female community development committee (CDC) members, but also with other females in the communities. MSI monitors take a multi-pronged approach including reviewing the CDC documents- meeting attendance/election documentation and interviewing female CDC members to validate information reported in the documents. Any discrepancy between the two is reported in the reports.

There has been varied response in gender segregated interviews- in some limited cases women were not involved in elections at the level they were expected (variation is only about 5%), but for the most part they do participate. In some cases, security and tradition also prevent participation of women in elections or in group interviews with MSI. In some instances, direct threats are made to women if they participate in CDC elections. Collaboration with the government implementing agencies is critical for keeping the MSI female enumerators safe.

CCAP female group interviews: female enumerators take time-stamped, geo-tagged pictures of group meetings with female community members. In some instances, pictures are not taken if female community members do not feel comfortable to have their pictures taken.

NHLP Female Beneficiaries: MSI was able to verify all 80 female beneficiaries of sampled site visits were independently operating their 30 poultry sub-projects. Half of the beneficiaries are participating in individual savings schemes; and female lead farmers² were available in approximately half of the communities visited.

Overall, the monitoring findings show that female community members are consulted on the design of sub-projects e.g. building roads, irrigation canals etc. MSI plans to look at education facilities designed for women, and health facilities and services for women, as part of its future monitoring work.

Discussion: A question was raised if MSI had any data on insecure provinces. MSI clarified that they were able to visit all provinces in 2017, and the same in 2018. Visits are postponed

² These are females identified by the MAIL in communities to support females in poultry and kitchen garden activities under the NHLP.



temporarily if the security situation is challenging, but once it is safe to visit MSI will visit project sites.

On the question of lessons learnt with respect to female monitoring, MSI noted that younger female enumerators sometimes find it challenging to get the respect from the community. Older women are more respected than younger ones. Another challenge in the field is the dialect; if the enumerator doesn't speak the same dialect, the translation work can be difficult. In some rare cases, male community members do not agree for female enumerators to take their pictures. A positive lesson is that female enumerators have been able to quickly learn the data collection protocols compared to their male colleagues. The Bank gender specialist also confirmed this point as she together with other bank colleagues participated in training sessions for the MSI enumerators. MSI noted that most of the female enumerators were college educated, and that in more conservative provinces it is harder to find families that are willing to allow them to participate in this kind of work. Female enumerators do have the option to take a male family member accompany them on site visits.

It was noted that it might be useful to incorporate some of the TPM's gender findings into the future versions of the ARTF Scorecard where possible.

2. Gender aspects of the proposed EZ-Kar Project

The Ministry of Economy provided an overview of the (EZ-KAR) Program which will involve 5 government ministries- Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Economy, IDLG, and the Kabul Municipality.

The proposed program will be implemented over 5 years and aims to address several development challenges including the unemployment and poverty rates; large influx of Afghan returnees; high number of internally displaced people; and poor market infrastructure that constrains the business enabling environment.

The proposed development objective of the program is to strengthen the enabling environment for economic opportunities in cities where there is a high influx of displaced people. The program proposes to have 5 main components: (i) support for Afghan refugees in Pakistan; (ii) Short-Term employment opportunities and market enabling infrastructure; (iii) market enabling infrastructure and reforms for Kabul Municipality; (iv) Prioritised Urban Investments in 4 provincial capital cities; and (v) Project management, implementation support and national regulatory reforms.

The gender analysis for the program has identified specific gaps that the MoEc will aim to support and aligned with the government's commitments to increase women's participation in the labour force. The program intends to facilitate women's access to consular services and information in Afghan missions in Pakistan by employing female staff for information help desks and consular services. Female markets will be supported, as will be improved gender analysis to support relevant reforms and policy.

Discussion: It was suggested that the EZ-KAR program should work with the National Statistical Information Agency (NSIA) on the gender data/analysis. DFID also noted that they support a program related to women's financial inclusion and labour force participation that may



be useful to collaborate with the EZ-KAR program. DFID will put the team in contact with their bilateral program.

The GWG asked whether any lessons were being taken from the Citizens' Charter Maintenance and Cash Grant scheme to inform the short-term employment opportunities activities. The MoEc noted that the program would not replace the CCAP MCCG activities, rather the MCCG would be expanded to cover urban CDCs. Currently the MCCG scheme in CCAP is only supported in rural CDCs. The EZ-KAR program will support activities in urban areas that are relevant to business creation.

The team clarified that it is being proposed to include 2 female CDC members in the Municipality Advisory Boards. One of the participants suggested that in case the government moves ahead with the municipality councils to replace the advisory board, it is important to ensure that women's participation is considered. The team noted that the program will take a whole of community approach, with business enabling grants being provided to entire gozars and not just to returnee communities. Females will be supported to develop their business e.g. development of business infrastructure such as shops, construction of roads to women only markets, street lighting. The team noted that some aspects of the program will be implemented in Kabul only, and others will target 11 cities in other provinces around the country. A comment was made that women only markets would be more useful in provinces where it is harder for women to access markets.

The team noted that they have consulted with UN Women on potentially supporting the Safe Markets initiative, as well as with the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The MoEc clarified that activities are planned to be implemented separately since Kabul Municipality is independent, it will have its own activities, while the other 11 cities that fall under the IDLG will be supported separately under another component.

The team noted that initial work on the gender analysis of the program, but additional assessments are planned to be done to then inform the design that will be outlined in the Project Appraisal Document. Further gender analysis that have been done for complementary ongoing programs e.g. CCAP, Kabul Municipality Development Program will be used to inform the gender aspects of this program. The group noted the importance of also reflecting global lessons learnt from other fragile contexts such as Syria when designing the interventions specific to women.

The issue of seeking support from the Afghan diaspora was raised. The team noted under CCAP there has been some discussion on potentially setting up bank accounts for the diaspora to support their home communities.

The team pointed out that draft PAD will soon be shared with the GWG for further inputs. A session to brief the ARTF partners on the updated design during the appraisal mission is tentatively planned for the second half of October. The project is expected to be presented to the World Bank Board on December 18, 2018.

There was a suggestion to use interactive voice response as part of the ARTF TPM efforts.



3. Updates to ARTF Strategy Group

The GWG suggested the following be raised at the ARTF Strategy Group meeting scheduled for October 17, 2018.

On third party monitoring: the importance of TPM for getting a deeper understanding of the gender dynamics of projects that are not always available through quantitative reporting. Suggest that we could use more qualitative data (possibly available through TPM) in the next version of the Scorecard and emphasise that the GWG is very supportive of the greater roll-out of TPM in the future.

On EZ-KAR: the GWG welcomed the EZ-KAR's offer to "crowd-source" ideas on gender, and GWG members committed to link the team with their other programmes operating in the area (notably MoLSAMD on WEE-NPP, and the UK on our Investment Climate programme). We would welcome a discussion with the ARTF donors when the EZ-KAR team are next in country and we would encourage the team to integrate our suggestions into the PAD.

4. AOB

- The next GWG meeting will be held on Tuesday November 6, 2018.