



AFGHANISTAN RECONSTRUCTION TRUST FUND (ARTF)

Gender Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

Summary of Discussions

An ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) Meeting was held on April 3, 2018, and was attended by 8 donor country representatives¹, the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), the Ministry of Labour's WEE-NPP Secretariat, and the ARTF Administrator (the World Bank). The meeting was co-chaired by the World Bank and Canada.

Discussion

1. **Gender Aspects of the Tackling Afghanistan's HRM and Institutional Reform (TAGHIR) Project.** The WB's public sector team and the IARCSC presented the current design of the TAGHIR Project, the successor to the current Capacity Building for Results (CBR) Project. The TAGHIR is expected to be ready for presentation to the Board at the end of June 2018. The project is at the concept stage, and an internal Bank concept review meeting was held on March 13, 2018.

The main aspects of the concept stage design elements were presented, with the caveat that some features may change between now and the appraisal stage as the project continues to be developed. The main development challenges the project will aim to address are related to human resource management (HRM) and pay, and institutional reform.

Currently there are several overlaps within government particularly on recruitment, HRM, pay and pensions, and the project will aim to address some of these by consolidating some key functions within the IACSRC. Women account for only 21.9% of the civil and are best represented in the mid-level grades, with just 6% in senior civil servant positions (Director Generals and Deputy Ministers [DMs]). In addition, recruitment processes have not yet addressed gender equity/equality in civil service recruitment.

On institutional reform, the project will support functional reviews- vertical and horizontal- within various line ministries to look at gaps and duplications in human resource capacity. The pay and grading (P&G) scale has not been adjusted over time and is not competitive with other internationally financed compensation for professional, technical and managerial positions. This has led to a long list of special compensation arrangements outside the P&G scale including supplemental allowances, overtime, and salary top-ups, which undermine pay equality, transparency and are fiscally

¹ Australia, Canada, Denmark, EU, Finland, Italy, Sweden, UK, and US.



unsustainable. It is also difficult to accurately count employees due to a lack of a functional and updated HRM information system (HRMIS). The proposed TAGHIR development objective is to contribute to the professionalization of the Afghan Civil Service through support to human resource management and institutional reform.

Some of the main interventions that the project proposes to undertake are grouped under three main components: Component 1- legal and policy framework for civil service professionalization, which will include institutionalizing merit based appointment; clarifying establishment control and removing pay disparities (including review and revision of the pay structure), and introduction of professional cadres; and the deputy minister role into the civil service ranks.

A new civil service law was recently developed and approved as of March 2018. The law allows for positive discrimination (sometimes referred to as affirmative action) in recruitment such as enabling greater hiring of qualified female staff. These first component activities are the foundation for other activities being supported by the project; Component 2- strengthening institutions through supporting improved structure and capacity of the IARCSC, and completing functional reviews of priority line ministries and agencies. A functional review of the Ministry of Public Health is about to be completed, and one for the IARCSC is already finalised, and one will soon start for the Ministry of Education; Component 3- supporting performance management by incentivising reforms through results based financing related to HRMIS, stratified P&G, and recruitment including of women, cadres, DMs, and at the sub-national level.

The IARCSC representative further highlighted that the Commission aims to increase the number of female civil servants to up to 30% of the civil service. This will be done through a newly launched policy² which outlines recruitment procedures targeting women and aims to address workplace safety. They also currently advise potential female recruits on positions to apply for, including reviewing their application documents, and ensuring that the correct documents are submitted. Some flexibilities have also been introduced such as allowing women applicants to have up to less than 3 months of the required experience shown in advertised positions; accepting work experience that is gained while going to school; and counting time spent in internships as relevant work experience. There are also efforts to retain female civil servants through training opportunities especially new university graduates. Efforts to promote safe work environments are also being looked at including policies to address harassment at work, installing security cameras in work places to reduce harassment; and support for female staff with families and young children with child care centres. The IARCSC has already started implementing most of these already, and is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policies in other government agencies.

Discussion: The GWG asked how the IARCSC plans to help female staff to grow and get promoted. The IARCSC reported that the Civil Service Capacity Commission plans

² Policy on increasing Women Participation in Civil Service. Available: <https://iarcs.gov.af/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/11/Policy-on-Increasing-Women-Participation-in-Civil-Service--English.pdf>



to have programs to support capacity building programs targeted for women. It was also clarified that constraints on promotion are not only limited to female staff, but is a general problem which the project aims to address through introduction of professional cadres for common civil service functions such as procurement, financial management etc. These cadres would not be limited to working in one ministry but would over time be able to grow in different positions and move across different line ministries. The issue of positive discrimination was discussed- some interventions currently being discussed include advertising certain positions as female only, and instituting quotas to have a certain proportion of female staff in all civil service agencies, and potentially having an online computer scored application/testing system and removing in-person interviews to avoid discrimination of female applicants. IARCSC noted that there was a need to have more training on the issue of harassment and professional workplace behaviour. Processes for reporting and addressing harassment allegations- IARCSC clarified that having open door policies within offices, use of cameras would help, may help increasing reporting of harassment by women. Every civil service organisation is required to have an anti-harassment policy which is reviewed by the IARCSC.

2. **Gender Aspects of the Incentive Plus Program Design:** The MOF's Director General for Monitoring, Analysis & Reporting and the World Bank's (WB) macroeconomics team presented the progress on developing the next phase of the existing ARTF Incentive Program (IP)- to be called the Incentive Program Plus (IP+).

The IP+ builds on the existing IP which was set up in 2008 to support fiscal stability and a reform program that aims at achieving greater fiscal self-reliance and sustainability through increasing domestic revenue mobilization and strengthening expenditure management. The proposed IP+ will have 2 main pillars: (i) the ANPDF Pillar- for strengthening the policy framework to support state effectiveness, private investment, and social inclusion; and (ii) the Fiscal Performance Improvement Program (FPIP) pillar.

The main gender-related aspects that are being considered for inclusion in the IP+ include civil service reforms (supported through the TAGHIR Project) - provision of a gender based recruitment system in the Civil Servants Law; supporting female access to digital finance; land governance-improving the process of issuance of land occupancy/ownership certificates to women. It was noted that gender is mainstreamed across the civil service reform activities, and that the IP+ program document would outline in more detail the gender specific interventions that would be undertaken.

Discussion: It was noted that the TAGHIR Project will collect gender disaggregated data related to senior level recruitment, as well as overall female retention in the civil service. Data from the TAGHIR will feed into the IP+ results framework.

The IP working group (IPWG) will meet on April 9th at 3:30 pm at the World Bank Office to further discuss development of the IP+, and the GWG members were encouraged to liaise with their IPWG representatives to provide any inputs for the meeting/attend the meeting if interested.



3. **Points to be raised at the April ARTF Strategy Group Meeting.** The GWG had no points to raise at the April 18th ARTF Strategy Group meeting.

4. **AOB**

- The GWG members were reminded to send the updated contact information for their agencies to the World Bank.
- A slightly revised version of the GWG meeting schedule was shared with the GWG and is attached to these minutes.



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Gender Working Group Meeting Schedule

January - July 2018³

Timing	Topic	Format
9 January 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening the Role of the GWG 	2-hour meeting
6 February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank Gender Tagging Gender in EQRA Project 	2-hour meeting
6 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender in the Sehatmandi Project Discussion Topics for 2018 GWG Meetings 	2-hour meeting
3 April 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afghanistan Human Resource Management & Institutional Reform (TAGHIR) Program Incentive Program Plus 	2-hour meeting
1 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender in Citizens Charter Afghanistan Program 	2-hour meeting
5 June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of analytical work: jobs in Agriculture-Gender Note WEE-RDP Preparation WEE-NPP Implementation 	2-hour meeting
3 July 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update from the government on operationalization of the anti-harassment policy 	2-hour meeting

³ The ARTF GWG meets on the first Tuesday of every month.