

ARTF Gender Working Group Meeting

September 7, 2016

Meeting Minutes

An ARTF Gender Working Group (GWG) Meeting was held on September 7, 2016¹. The meeting was co-chaired by Wezi Msisha (Senior Operations Officer, World Bank), and Will Lewis (Deputy Director, Gender Office, USAID). Mr. Akbari (Budget Department Director, Ministry of Finance) and Mr. Amiri (Senior Specialist, Budget Department, Ministry of Finance) also participated in the meeting.

Discussion Highlights

- Najla Sabri, (Social Development Specialist, World Bank), presented on the Citizens' Charter Afghanistan Project (CCAP).
- Highlights from the presentation included:
 - A) Community Development Councils will become the central body for all development interventions at the local level
 - B) There will be a strong social inclusion focus and strengthened community-based monitoring of line ministries
 - C) There will be standardization of minimum service provision in the Health, Education, and Agriculture, and Rural Development sectors (drinking water, rural roads, small scale canals, and renewable energy)
 - D) Performance of line ministries will be incentivized in the funding structure
- Additional information on the minimum service standards, technical assistance, and project funding structure is included in the attached slides.
- CCAP will be a ten year program consisting of three phases, with each phase expected to last three to four years.
- Phase 1 of the Project (2016 to 2020) is expected to reach a third of all districts across all 34 provinces. The total Project cost is estimated at \$628 million, including a \$128 million contribution from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The districts to be included in the first phase were selected in consultation with the central and provincial government, based on several criteria including accessibility, and availability of infrastructure.
- Gender has been mainstreamed into the programming, and staffing structures, and there are gender-specific indicators (see slides).
- The first disbursement for CCAP from the government budget to cover preparation costs for the involved line ministries has been approved
- **Issue:** During the discussions, two primary concerns were noted:
 - 1) The gender indicators were output-based and really did not capture gender-related community-level decision-making by women. There were several questions about how gender would be assessed and measured.

¹ Attendees: Australia, Canada, Denmark, DFID, Ministry of Finance, Norway, Sweden, USAID, US Embassy, World Bank.

- 2) Donors also expressed concern about women simply filling positions and not having meaningful decision-making roles, especially as relates to non-gender specific programming (e.g. electricity, roads). However, the WB team clarified several activities in the Project that would aim to address these issues including- inclusion of women's priority subprojects in the Community Development Plans; mandating facilitating partners (FPs) to conduct mapping exercises in each village; mobility and socio-economic mapping and analysis; ensuring facilitation of females in meetings to develop community development plans; training of community development councils on gender equality and women's needs; etc. (see the slides)
- Representatives from the Ministry of Finance's Budget Department presented an overview of gender responsive budgeting (GRB) (see slides) and the current challenges to its full implementation in Afghanistan. They mentioned three primary **issues** to be addressed:
 - 1) Within the Ministries, there is broad lack of capacity on data collection, management, general budgeting, and GRB-specific technical skills. An external consultant is being brought to Afghanistan to work with the MoF on these issues;
 - 2) There is a low motivation in some ministries on the issue of GRB, which has resulted in poor coordination and awareness of GRB;
 - 3) Adequate gender-disaggregated data do not exist, and the government currently lacks the means to collect gender data accurately.

Action Items

- 1) Donors should consider building GRB principles into their programming with government counterparts.
- 2) Ministry of Finance needs additional staff dedicated to GRB.
- 3) Donors should make investments in gender-specific research and data-gathering to fill some of the gaps highlighted by the MoF.

2016 Work-Plan (Updated)

September 07: Gender Responsive Budgeting, with MoF/ Citizens' Charter

September: NAP-Women's Economic Empowerment/MoWA and MoLSAMD

October: Read-out of Women's Economic Empowerment Mapping Study-WB /Read out and discussion from Brussels/ Effect on ARTF

November: Health Update/ SEHAT mid-term/ Nutrition/ MoPH

December: Stock-taking Exercise/ Lessons and Achievements/ Work-Plan Updated/ New Donor Co-Chair Selected