

## ARTF Strategy Group Meeting

September 14, 2015

### Summary of Discussions

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An ARTF Strategy Group Meeting was held on September 14, 2015 with participation from 13 donors and the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The World Bank Operations Manager (OM), Stephen Ndegwa chaired the meeting. The agenda topics were: (i) Update on the Incentive Program; and (ii) a presentation from the ARTF Gender Working Group.

**Update on the Incentive Program:** Lead Country Economist, Claudia Nassif, provided an update on the ARTF Incentive Program. The IP Working Group (IPWG) has agreed on 10 triggers per year as well as three super triggers with higher funding allocation. IPWG has agreed upon changes in the Revenue Matching Grant disbursement formula and the O&M Facility funds flow.

The following issues were raised and discussed:

- The expected disbursements under IP this year: Approximately US\$ 140 million is expected to disburse under IP this year.
- The super triggers are updated annually. The triggers for the next three years have been identified, however, there is flexibility in changing the triggers if the needed.
- A number of reform actions that were highlighted by President Ghani during the Senior Officials Meeting are part of the IP benchmarks including the HR reforms in the Afghanistan Customs Department.

**Presentation from the Gender Working Group (GWG):** World Bank and DFID (current co-chair of the GWG) presented on the role of the Gender Working Group (GWG) and how it can support the ongoing work of ARTF and government. The World Bank Gender Specialist, Hafiza Yazdani, made a presentation on the Bank's gender mainstreaming activities including tracking project-level gender-disaggregated data, technical support to Government partners, and integrating gender concerns in knowledge products. The GWG presented a proposal to undertake a stock taking exercise of gender in ARTF Projects with funding from USAID. The World Bank OM asked the GWG to first review the information and recommendations from the World Bank's 2013/14 Gender Stocktaking Report, to determine whether this was the right time to undertake another review.

Several donors also questioned the need for the proposed exercise given the opportunities to support the government in furthering gender activities in specific areas. There was no consensus on the stocktaking proposal within the SG. The GWG was advised to have further discussions on their proposed work plans and to present a new work plan to the SG. The new six-month meeting plan should be based on the review of readily-available information on gender in the ARTF projects and the 2014 review, with the GWG focusing on areas such as commenting on new project concepts, sharing relevant knowledge that can contribute to solutions in projects, and providing technical inputs to the government's activities.

The MoF Gender Advisor also discussed the ministry's efforts to incorporate gender-sensitive budgeting into the budget process. The MoF requested donor support to pilot the Gender-responsive budgeting in select line ministries.