

**Minutes of the Fourth Project Steering Committee meeting of the regional project “EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies”**

**1-2 December 2021**

The Fourth Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting was organized online, via Zoom platform, in two two-hour sessions held on 1 and 2 December 2021. The meeting reached a quorum for decision-making. On day 1, 10 PSC members were in attendance and on day 2, 11 were in attendance. One member could not attend due to other commitments. A representative from Viet Nam nominated an alternative member to attend the meeting on his behalf. Three new members from the governments and two observers from the Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok joined the PSC meeting for the first time. All project team members also attended the meeting.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- Provide information to the PSC about the project results and challenges in the project implementation in 2021 (since the third PSC meeting);
- Present the workplan for 2022 and receive feedback and guidance from PSC members;
- Receive feedback on the implementation of the mid-term review recommendations and preparation to the final evaluation.

To inform the discussion at the meeting a set of documents was provided to the PSC members in advance of the meeting, including the interim progress report for 2021, a brief on organization of the final evaluation in 2022 and other documents.

**1. Progress to achieve the project outcome**

The overall progress to the project outcome is on track. Despite the protracted impacts of COVID-19, almost all indicator targets set for 2021 were achieved or have been exceeded. An overview of indicators and annual targets achieved was presented together with the summary information on global and regional developments in gender mainstreaming and climate change that are relevant for the project context. The key results and plans for the future work in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Viet Nam and at the regional level were presented by the project team to the PSC members.

**2. Update on the implementation of the mid-term review recommendations and preparation to the final evaluation**

The key findings, recommendations and proposed actions to implement the MTR recommendations had already been presented and discussed with PSC members during the Third PSC meeting in 2021. During this session, a final presentation of the mid-term review was given to the PSC members. The recommendations had been grouped in four themes: 1) COVID-19, 2) Thematic Areas, 3) Partnerships and Delivering Results, and 4) Monitoring and Evaluation.

Key actions and progress on the four clusters was presented, with Cluster I. Covid-19 and IV. Monitoring and evaluation being completed, and Cluster III. Partnerships and delivering results to be completed by the end of 2021. Progress has been made on Cluster II. thematic areas. A mid-term

review response management tool was developed and regularly updated to monitor the actions put into place to respond to the recommendations under the four clusters. The preparation to the final evaluation was subsequently discussed with the PSC members.

### **Recommendations by PSC**

**Final Evaluation:** PSC members suggested to focus the findings of the final evaluation on review of impacts and changes in policies, livelihoods and lives of vulnerable with the view of disseminating knowledge and reflecting these findings in the future programming. Also, it was proposed to clarify how the mid-term review informs the final evaluation. Another recommendation consisted of including failure stories alongside the success stories in order to increase the impact on learning and to integrate them into the future programmes. PSC members underlined the uniqueness of the programme that lies in its collaborative nature between UN Women and UNEP, which should be highlighted and could be seen as a lesson learned. The importance of engaging all types of stakeholders at the country level on a continuous basis by using different means of communication and engagement was pointed out, in particular those on ground level. For the evaluation it would be important to look at the linkages between this project and other projects, to make synergies with similar projects to expand impact.

### **3. Implementation progress and plans at the national level**

The progress achieved in 2021 and plans for 2022 were presented for each pilot country. The presentations covered: 1) highlights of key results in 2021, 2) quantitative estimates and qualitative description of results, 3) human face stories of people involved in the project implementation, and 4) milestones for 2022.

### **Recommendations by PSC:**

- PSC members raised the point that they would like to be more informed about what is happening on country level, in particular with regard to activities undertaken by NGOs. This would promote learning and could help to better understand the feasibility of the project.
- Focus was spent to highlight the importance of assessing the impact and systematize the information about the results.
- For Phase II PSC members would like to see more of this learning and sharing, as well as interlinkages with other projects and platforms.
- New stakeholders need to be involved as opposed to simply continue working with the same ones. In line with this thinking, it was proposed to engage investors' and entrepreneurs' networks and platforms, focusing not only on policy development and policy reviews, but also assisting governments in policy implementation processes.

### **4. Output-level results and plans at the regional level for output 5**

The project team explained the linkages between the country-level and regional activities and contributions to the global processes addressing gender equality, climate change, energy and disaster risk reduction. The presentation covered: 1) highlights of key results in 2021, 2) quantitative estimates and qualitative description of results, 3) updates on communication, visibility and outreach activities, and 4) milestones for 2022.

### **Recommendations by PSC**

- The difference between gender equality and gender equity should be taken into account.
- Questions were raised on user testing being done before disseminating the communication material, as carrying it out could provide more confidence.
- Another point was on importance of not focusing communication (only) on the negative impact (women as victims), but also/more on women as positive agents of change..
- Proposals were made in relation to the ToTs and the fact that this type of training should not only be a passing on of information but also providing future trainers with the capacity to carry out the training. It was highlighted that knowing content and knowing how to train are two very different things. It could be good to have two trainings, one on content and one on training literacy/methodology as well as to support these individuals in the next phase. There is the risk that trainers will drop out after having been trained, so there needs to be a kind of network or support service to encourage them.
- Established institutions need to be approached and create a tie-up to be able to work on a larger scale on issues relating to gender and women's access to renewables. Existing educational curricula in established institutions need to include gender issues, otherwise they will not gain mainstreaming in the sector.
- EmPower needs to be branded and marketed: the materials EmPower has created are excellent but perhaps they need to be repackaged to reach many audiences. At the same time our audience is limited, so if we share these products with others this would create a larger outreach.
- Communication should become an important priority for the final year of the project implementation, especially showcasing impacts and results achieved.

## **5. Planning for EmPower Phase II**

The project team went over the key lessons so far, explaining the journey so far and ways forward. As part of this the timeline for the proposal development of EmPower Phase II was presented.

- International agencies need to have a hand holding with national agencies to overcome barriers.
- The private sector could be brought in, because of the significant contribution to achieving SDGs, including SDG 5 and 13.
- Linkages should be built up with NGOs and communities across countries. Communities need to be supported in accessing finance, because the funds are limited and they rely on NGOs to support the writing of proposals. In order to have community-led organisations, lessons learned need to be linked with policy. The high importance of policy implementation should be kept in mind.
- With regard to the ToTs, trainers need to regularly put into practice what they have learned, otherwise they will forget what they have learned.
- The overall feedback on the Concept note for Phase II was positive.

## **6. Conclusions of the meeting**

The Chair of the meeting summarize the decisions made by the PSC:

- Endorsement of the 2021 progress
- Endorsement of the 2022 annual work plan
- Feedback on the final evaluation

### List of participants

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