

**Programme Evaluation of SAARC Gender Info Base of  
SAARC-UN Women, South Asia Regional Office**

January 2011

Final Report

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## Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our gratitude to SAARC and UN Women, South Asia Sub Regional Office, for providing us with the opportunity of working on this unique and enriching assignment. Special thanks to Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat, Mr. Hassan Shifau, Former Director Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat, Ms. Anne Stenhammer, Regional Programme Director, UN Women SASRO, Ms. Sushma Kapoor, Deputy Regional Director, UN Women SASRO, and Ms. Sangeeta Thapa, Programme Coordinator, UN Women Programme Office, Nepal for providing their useful perspective on various aspects of SGIB.

Sincere thanks are due to Mr. Muhammad Hizbullah, Deputy Minister, Child Development and Women's Affairs, Sri Lanka, Prof. Sayeda Mojgan Mostafavi, Technical and Policy Deputy, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Afghanistan and Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, State Minister, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh.

We would also like to thank Ms. Gita Gupta, Ms. Shreyasi Jha, Mr. Rajat Khanna, and Technical Expert Group - Dr. Chandra Bhadra and Dr. Rinchen Chopel, for their support in facilitation and coordination of the Evaluation. We sincerely thank Ms. Fathimath Yumna, SAARC nominated team member for providing her expert inputs and support at various stages of the Evaluation.

We thank Ms. Kesang Dechen, Deputy Director, SAARC Documentation Center and Core Committee members - Prof. Savitri Gunersekere, Dr. Meena Acharya and Ms. Ratna Sudarshan, for their valuable inputs pertaining to SGIB.

We take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to following officials in the Member States who devoted considerable time in supporting our review exercise by sharing the relevant data and their valuable inputs to make this evaluation possible:

- ▶ Head of Nodal Agencies
- ▶ National Committee Members
- ▶ Focal Points and Ex Focal points
- ▶ Desk Officers

## Foreword

## List of Abbreviations

BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CC	Core Committee
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DO	Desk Officer
EY	Ernst and Young Private Limited
FP	Focal Point
H.E.	His/ Her Excellency
HNSA	Home Net South Asia
HQ	Head Quarter
Info Base	Information Base
IT	Information Technology
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
N.A.	Not Applicable
NGO	Non Governmental
NPO	Nepal Programme Office
RM	Review Meeting
RMK	Rashtriya Mahila Kosh
ROSA	(UNICEF) Regional Office for South Asia
RPD	Regional Programme Director
RTM	Round Table Meeting
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAGEEP	SAARC Gender Equality and Empowerment Programme
SASRO	South Asia Sub Regional Office
SDC	SAARC Documentation Centre
SGDB	SAARC Gender Data Base
SGIB	SAARC Gender Information Base
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TEG	Technical Expert Group
ToC	Table of contents
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
USD	United States Dollar
VAW	Violence Against Women

## Executive Summary

At the Tenth SAARC Summit held in Colombo in July 1998, Heads of States of Governments of South Asia endorsed the need for a gender disaggregated database to catalyze the formulation of national and regional policies and programmes in respect of women and the girl child. This need was also repeatedly highlighted by the global instruments that monitor progress on women's empowerment and gender equality - e.g. the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

SAARC and UN Women responded to this opportunity by signing an MoU in December 2001, of which development of a SAARC Gender Database was a crucial component. SAARC Gender Info Base (SGIB) was launched on 17 January 2007, as a single pool of data/ information, both qualitative and quantitative, on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, making it a **One Stop Gender Info Shop**. SGIB is primarily a SAARC and Member States driven process and UN Women supports the process with project coordination, financial and technical resources.

Since the Programme had completed 5 years since its inception, SAARC and UN Women jointly commissioned an independent evaluation of the SGIB Programme to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made and to provide recommendations that may be useful for the Programme. The evaluation was intended to be forward looking and focus on providing strategic direction to the SGIB Programme in the coming years.

### Objectives of the evaluation

- ▶ Assess progress towards achievement of planned objectives and outcomes, and generation of regional benefits
- ▶ Assess the impact of the Programme in terms of sustained achievements
- ▶ Critically assess programme management and quality assurance, administrative and technical strategies, issues and constraints associated with this regional and multi-partner (SAARC, UNIFEM, Member States) initiative
- ▶ Identify and document lessons learnt, and assess quality of the regional processes and outputs delivered
- ▶ Submit recommendations to SAARC and partners regarding specific strategies and approaches that might be taken to improve programme implementation and sustainability of results, including recommendations about integration within national data systems; and future strategies for the Programme.
- ▶ Identify the constraints, challenges and opportunities in programme design and implementation

### Methodology

The Evaluation adopted a participatory approach that included participation of key stakeholders at relevant points during the evaluation, including stakeholders at regional level (SAARC Secretariat and UN Women SASRO) as well as the eight Member States of SAARC. Since the Programme is at a stage where assessing impact may be premature, the evaluation questions focused the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results and sustainability of the Programme.

The evaluation framework and methodology was discussed and finalized with UN Women along with the tools or evaluation questions for each category of stakeholder. The data collection



exercise was carried out in the eight SAARC Member States during November-December 2011. About a total of 88 interviews were undertaken during the Evaluation. The data collected from each of the Member State, along with the findings from the desk review carried out earlier, were compiled and analyzed in the forms of field notes and country reports. The interview notes and the analytical country reports formed the basis of developing the final evaluation report.

## **Key Achievements of SGIB Programme**

### **For Member States**

- ▶ For most Member States, SGIB provided first opportunity for gender based mapping and disaggregation of available data at the national level. For others, who were at a relatively advanced stage of gender disaggregation of data, it reiterated the existing data gaps. It has also provided a prototype for initiating national level repository of gender disaggregated data as in the case of Nepal and Bhutan.
- ▶ SGIB helped in identifying data gaps, especially in areas of VAW, trafficking and HIV AIDS. Some of the member states have taken this opportunity to initiate specific research/data collection exercise (for instance Nepal and Sri Lanka).
- ▶ Being a regional level repository of data, SGIB helped Member States to compare the availability of data with other counterparts and advocate within their countries for collection and uploading of data. Regional level meetings provide opportunity for cross learning, especially in terms of operationalising SGIB.
- ▶ For some Member States (as in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan), SGIB has helped the Nodal Agencies in planning and budgeting for programmes related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

### **For SAARC**

- ▶ SGIB has been a learning process under which, within the prescribed mechanisms and protocols, SAARC has been able to achieve consensus on issues which are relatively sensitive at a regional forum, especially the issue of VAW.
- ▶ SGIB provided precedence for working directly with line ministries at the Member State level. The organizational structure developed under SGIB is unique when compared with other regional level programs of SAARC.
- ▶ Due to close co-ordination with Member States (line ministries) through TEG, SAARC was able to ensure active participation of Member States, as evident from the participants list of Review Meetings and Focal Point meetings. In all the regional meetings held so far, all Member States have registered their participation.
- ▶ SGIB helped SAARC to identify the capacity gaps in implementing programs like SGIB. This has helped in foreseeing the expertise that may be required in future programmes.
- ▶ Close working relationship with UN Women has helped in getting inputs in other programmes relating to gender equality and empowerment of women.
- ▶ SGIB provided an opportunity for increasing the visibility of gender equality and empowerment of women agenda within SAARC. Continued interaction with the SAARC Technical Committee for Women Youth and Children on SGIB helped build the case for larger programmes like SAGEEP.
- ▶ UN Women has proved to be an active collaborator (and not a mere donor) in providing technical and operational assistance. The expertise available at UN Women is considered important and useful by SAARC beyond SGIB also.

## For UN Women

- ▶ SGIB is a regional level collaboration wherein UN Women registered its presence in eight Member States through a single programme. This is especially important since UN Women is not officially present in three of the eight Member States.
- ▶ UN Women has the credit of initiating a regional level database on gender issues, a concept that is valued by SAARC as well as Member States. By working closely with SAARC, UN Women had the opportunity to understand SAARC processes which gives them a distinct advantage over the other external agencies who work with SAARC.
- ▶ UN Women has the credit of developing a consented management structure that involves regional as well as national level mechanism.
- ▶ UN Women is one of the most valued partners for SAARC as it complements the capacity gaps at SAARC in terms of understanding of gender and its ability to design responsive programmes related to Gender Equality and Empowerment of women.
- ▶ SGIB has provided an opportunity to advance the agenda of regional co-operation on issue of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women within SAARC. Regional level interaction with key ministries (SGIB Nodal agencies) is an available forum where other emerging concerns can also be taken up.
- ▶ UN Women's current positioning in SAARC provides space for playing critical role in developing programs like SAGEEP.

## Conclusions

The conclusions are structured around the parameters of programme management, monitoring, adequacy of technical inputs, effectiveness of the Infobase and sustainability.

## Programme Management

**Conclusion 1: The concept of SGIB as a single hub for gender disaggregated data is relevant-** The concept of SGIB is appropriately aligned with the mandate and priorities of the collaborating agencies. The partnership between SAARC and UN Women SASRO provides the opportunity of regional level intervention by bringing in complementing strengths in terms of reach and technical capacities. The thematic areas selected under SGIB reflect the prevalent concerns of the Member States and their international commitments. The list of indicators under the selected thematic areas was developed through consultation with Member States. The mapping exercise for reaching the indicators was considered useful by most Member States in terms of identifying data gaps and assessing the status of gender disaggregation of data at the country level.

**Conclusion 2: SGIB as a Programme does not have a defined Results-Framework-** SGIB was not conceptualized or executed as a typical project. SAARC, as a regional forum, does not have any decision making authority on behalf of Member Nations in terms of operationalisation of the programme. However, this does not seem to be a challenge at the regional level for developing a roadmap and defining the results and indicators of progress of the program. While SAARC did not have any precedence of developing results framework, UN Women (then UNIFEM) SASRO was aware of the importance and know-how for developing which could have guided the management and monitoring of progress. Even if such a roadmap could not be developed initially (2004-2005), it would have been appropriate to develop it once the project management structure and the consequent consent building mechanism (such as Review Meetings) were in place. Similarly, needs assessment in terms of availability of data, gaps in national systems of gender disaggregated data, technical capacity (gender and statistics) available at Member States was not undertaken by UN

Women SASRO and SAARC. As such, the Programme was started without any comprehensive assessment of the inputs that Member States might need to effectively implement the Programme.

**Conclusion 3: The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders (UN Women, SAARC and Member States) are not defined-** It was observed that the role division between SAARC and UN Women was not defined or documented. Since SAARC did not have the technical capacity (in terms of gender, statistics and IT) to execute the Programme, it is assumed that UN Women SASRO was to provide the required inputs on these aspects. SAARC's influence on the Member States could have been used for drawing greater commitment for supporting and sustaining SGIB. However, since no clear understanding was developed about the roles to be played by the two partner agencies, the accountability remains ambiguous.

Role division between UN Women SASRO and Nepal Programme Office is also not defined. All aspects of Programme management were left on TEG and UN Women Nepal Programme Office without any notable inputs from SASRO. It is assumed that being the signatory to the MoU with SAARC, the accountability of success or failure ultimately lied with UN Women SASRO. While Nepal Programme Office is supposed to operationally manage the Programme, UN Women SASRO's role in monitoring, review of progress and in providing technical guidance was found to be inadequate. UN Women SASRO's role in guiding and monitoring the TEG or the UN Women Nepal Country Office was found to be missing.

Overall, due to lack of defined roles and responsibilities and also because adequate expertise in terms of statistics and IT could not be garnered by UN Women and SAARC, the Programme was not found to be effective.

**Conclusion 4: SGIB Programme has remained focused on the 'online component' (web based Infobase) -** SGIB Programme, in its seven years of implementation, has remained focused on the 'online component'. The stated objectives of the Programme also include advancing gender perspective in governance, gender mainstreaming, and promoting the use of empirical evidences in planning and policies. No specific roadmap was developed by SAARC and UN Women to address the objectives related to advocacy with national governments although representatives from Member States have expressed the need during review meetings. This compounded with the fact that the role division between UN Women and SAARC is not defined, the agenda of advocacy with Member States has not been followed up.

### **Programme Monitoring**

**Conclusion 5: Monitoring mechanisms at SAARC, UN Women and Member State levels are not defined-** As mentioned earlier, the results to be achieved through SGIB and subsequent indicators of progress were not defined by UN Women and SAARC. At the regional level, the Review Meetings and Focal Point Meetings are the forums for reviewing progress as well for discussing follow up measures. No specific guidance was found to be available to Member States about progress reporting. At the Member States also, no internal mechanism of monitoring by Nodal Agency was recorded. Among the points raised during Review Meetings, operational aspects were found to be followed up but the discussion relating to advocacy, mainstreaming, resource leveraging and ownership were not found to be objective and concrete. Monitoring and appraisal of technical inputs being provided by TEG was done by UN Women Nepal Programme Office. UN Women SASRO was not found to play any role in reviewing the performance of TEG. Communication between SAARC and UN Women SASRO regarding review of progress and TEG's performance is not evident.

**Conclusion 6: Financial review of the Programme (optimal utilization of financial resources) was not undertaken by UN Women during the Programme-** The lack of results framework also reflects in financial allocations and expenditure made under the Programme. More than 85 percent of allocations and expenditure are under the heads of 'consultants' (TEG and Core Committee) and 'travel' (for Review meetings and Focal Point meetings). The budgeting for SGIB is done as part of the annual budget of the Nepal Country Office. Further analysis shows that the items of budget allocations have remained the same in the past five years of the project, reiterating that no strategic changes were visualized during this period. Role of UN Women SASRO in financial monitoring in terms of efficiency of fund utilisation is not clear since no evidence of financial review by UN Women was provided to the Evaluation Team.

### **Technical Inputs by SAARC and UN Women**

**Conclusion 7: SAARC has made efforts towards institutionalizing SGIB within its own mechanism-** SAARC has made attempts to refer to SGIB in other available mechanisms (such as SAARC Convention on Trafficking of Women, Youth and Children, Regional Seminar on Home Based Workers and Regional Meeting on Children Affected by HIV and AIDS). However, these attempts are too recent (2010-11) to comment upon their influence on SGIB. Also it is not clear as to how effective links are being visualized between SGIB and the said mechanisms. Other measures by SAARC to institutionalize SGIB includes locating the technical backstopping to SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC), including SGIB in the overall monitoring framework and proposing SGIB as part of its larger regional program on gender equality (SAGEEP).

**Conclusion 8: Technical inputs by UN Women, SAARC and TEG for making SGIB an effective and useful Infobase are inadequate:** SGIB in its current status is not a useful database from point of view of the users (national governments, Civil Society Organisations, researchers, academicians, donors) at national or regional level. This is on account of the inconsistencies in uploading data by Member States which results in inadequate data on identified themes and indicators, even in cases where data is available at the national level. Complex validation processes, lack of support from higher level officials at the national level, limited capacities of Desk Officers (in some cases) in terms of gender and/or statistics are the primary reasons for inconsistent and inadequate uploading. Regional level reporting based on SGIB is also not possible since the data uploaded by Member States are not comparable. At the level of SAARC and UN Women, no specific guidelines were developed to check the quality and consistency of data being uploaded. Member State-specific efforts to streamline the process of uploading of data were also found to be lacking. Training on technical aspects of uploading was found to be adequate. However, at the Member State level, orientation and sensitization of higher officials, such as legislators on gender, the selected thematic areas and use of data for policy and planning was not adequately addressed. The TEG does not have statistics or IT expert that could provide guidance to Desk Officers and Focal Points.

### **Sustainability**

**Conclusion 9: SAARC and UN Women do not share a common understanding on 'exit' and 'sustainability':** For SAARC, initiating and exiting of a SAARC facilitated process is based on consensus among Member States. On the other hand, UN Women works through a limited

pool of resources and is bound by its operational framework to have a clear timeframe of support for any development programme. The term 'exit' therefore has different notions for the two partners. Sustainability of SGIB initiative is a factor of ownership of SGIB objectives as well as activities by Member States. This would need greater priority to and commitment for SGIB at the national level. While the issue of ownership by Member States has been discussed in Review Meetings, practical steps were not taken to move towards this direction. It is important to note that sustainability of SGIB relates to Member States working towards SGIB objectives beyond the 'online component'. Besides, the sustainability of the 'online component' is directly related to the usefulness of the Infobase, at Member State level as well as at the regional level. While SAARC remains committed to continue SGIB with or without support from UN Women support, these factors needs to be considered for achieving the stated objectives and for sustaining the results of the programme.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the evaluation, the Evaluation Team recommends measures that may help in making SGIB more effective. While making these recommendations, the Evaluation Team is mindful of the fact that SGIB Programme is at an advance stage of implementation which gives ample scope of generating consent among key stakeholders for future course of action. The recommended measures take into account all the stated objectives of SGIB including the online component. The key recommendations are as follows:

**Recommendation 1: SAARC and UN Women should undertake country specific baseline and develop a results framework for SGIB:** A base line assessment of existing technical assistance needs and available resources (technical and financial) may be undertaken to design country specific operational plans under SGIB including policy advocacy. Additionally, the baseline may help in leveraging funds from other donor agencies working with similar mandate. The baseline should be used for developing results framework, focusing on increasing effectiveness of the 'online component' as well as initiating systematic efforts towards advocacy at the national level so that the national governments accord priority to gender disaggregated data and use of data for policy, programming and resource allocation. The results framework should outline the desired results to be achieved, critical milestones, indicators of achievement, timelines and role and responsibility, including roles to be played by key stakeholders.

**Recommendation 2: Member States should develop country specific plan of action for effective online component, visibility of SGIB and advocacy with national governments:** It is recommended that member countries use the baseline to map available data with the indicators along the agreed thematic areas. Data source, definition and its periodicity should be clearly mapped. The exercise will help in identification of data gaps. Based on the country level mapping and assessment, a similar exercise should be undertaken at the regional level. The exercise will help in creating mechanism for data standardization ensuring comparability at the regional level. This exercise will also help in identifying the existing data gaps and will help in providing more clarity on indicators.

**Recommendation 3: Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders should be defined jointly by SAARC, UN Women and Member States:** The objectives of SGIB warrant definite roles to be played by stakeholders. The current management structure of SGIB provides an opportunity to the stakeholders to play complementing roles for making SGIB effective. For instance, SAARC's role in influencing national governments for giving greater priority to

SGIB initiative needs to be defined. Similarly, role of Member States in positioning SGIB at national level and making the database vibrant and user-friendly needs to be stated clearly. The roles of UN Women SASRO and Nepal Country Office also need to be clear and defined. Defining roles and responsibilities of stakeholders will help in setting goals for each stakeholder and in defining accountability.

**Recommendation 4: A defined system of monitoring should be developed jointly by SAARC, Member States and UN Women for tracking progress of SGIB programme:** A synchronized monitoring system at the regional and national levels should be developed for tracking progress on SGIB. The monitoring system should take into account all the stated objectives of the Programme including SGIB online component, advocacy with national governments, use of the Infobase for regional level reporting, greater commitment from national governments for gender based disaggregation of data and use of data for planning and policy.

**Recommendation 5: SAARC, UN Women and Nodal Agencies should review the current implementation mechanism and bring appropriate change for making SGIB effective at national and regional levels:** The regional and national level implementation structure needs to be reviewed and revised. At the national level, while the concept of having a Nodal Agency, Focal Point and Desk Officer is appropriate, the profile of Desk Officer should be reviewed. It may be prudent to depute Desk Officers who have proficiency in data analytics with sufficient orientation on gender issues. It is suggested to redefine National Committee to improve its functionality and contribution to SGIB. For greater project level consultation, a smaller facilitation group may be created at the national level which may include subject matter experts and representatives of UN and other multilateral agencies. At the regional level, the profile of the Technical Expert Group may be reviewed to add strong statistical and data analytics expertise. This will enable more specific statistical inputs to member countries on the quality and relevance of data being uploaded.

**Recommendation 6: SAARC and UN Women SASRO should streamline mechanisms for technical input and training:** Capacity development remains as one of the most important aspects requiring strong focus going forward in the project. Greater focus is required on key capacity development areas such as:

- ▶ Awareness and sensitization of stakeholders on gender equality and mainstreaming. The sensitization is required at the national as well as at SAARC level.
- ▶ Developing the capacity of the member countries on data collection, processing and analysis. Based on country level requirements, capacity development of line department personnel, research agencies and other data collection agencies should be developed. This will also involve sensitizing the leadership to develop the culture of using evidence based data for policy planning purposes.
- ▶ Developing capacities of the Nodal Agency, more specifically of the focal point and the desk officer on application of sound statistical principles and analytical tools for processing and analyzing data.
- ▶ Technical inputs to Nodal Agencies about the indicators that are relevant to SGIB.

**Recommendation 7: SAARC and UN Women SASRO should review the current status of the Infobase and take suitable measures to make it effective for users:** The data uploaded by Member State should be reviewed in terms of the features of the software being used, especially from the point of view of its usefulness for policy makers and researchers. This

includes data formats, downloading and analysis options for users, visual appeal, and use of analytics to record users.

**Recommendation 8: SAARC should develop guidelines for quality and consistency of data uploaded on SGIB:** SAARC, in consultation with Member States, should develop standard guidelines for consistency and quality of data being uploaded by Member States on SGIB. It should also develop a mechanism for periodic review of country wise performance in terms of consistency, adequacy and quality of data and provide feedback to the Nodal Agencies. Also the issue of validation of qualitative data needs to be addressed through consultation with Member States.

**Recommendation 9: SAARC, UN Women SASRO and Member States should take complementary measures for increasing visibility and usage of the Infobase:** At the regional level, SAARC and UN Women may consider exploring opportunities to position and promote the concept of SGIB. Efforts may be made to include SGIB in the general executive agenda of SAARC and promote discussions on SGIB at summit level meetings and during SAARC inter ministerial meetings and expert group meetings. Linking of SGIB with SAARC social charter may also be considered.

At the national level, the Nodal Agency should be entrusted and supported to create more awareness and sensitization on the importance of gender information base and its use for policy and planning. The member countries should prepare a road map for creating wider acceptance and support for SGIB from relevant line departments and ministries. The country road map should be prepared after taking due cognizance of local context, governance mechanisms and external environment. While developing the road map, the member countries should clearly articulate the support needed from SAARC and UN Women in terms of advocacy and technical inputs. SAARC, UN Women and Nodal Agencies should link SGIB to other relevant database.

**Recommendation 10: SAARC, UN Women SASRO and Member States should work towards planning sustainability of the SGIB initiative:** The SGIB initiative can be sustained by increased ownership of SGIB by Member States. SAARC can play a facilitative role by providing a regional forum and enhancing commitment by national governments through its available mechanisms while UN Women can support technical support for making the database effective and for advocacy with Member States as well within SAARC. Steps to be taken by each stakeholder (SAARC, UN Women and Member States) need to be defined along with the timelines.



# 1. SGIB: Programme Description and Management Structure

## 1.1 Introduction

SAARC Gender Info Base (SGIB) is an information base that crosses the parameters of conventional statistical data gathering exercises and databases. It aims at creating a single pool of data/ information, both qualitative and quantitative, on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, making it a **One Stop Gender Info Shop**. SGIB is primarily a SAARC and Member States driven process and UN Women supports the process with project coordination, financial and technical resources.

At the Tenth SAARC Summit held in Colombo in July 1998, Heads of States of Governments of South Asia endorsed the need for a gender disaggregated database to catalyze the formulation of national and regional policies and programmes in respect of women and the girl child. This need was also repeatedly highlighted by the global instruments that monitor progress on women's empowerment and gender equality – e.g. the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). At South Asia level, successive Beijing Biennial Review meetings facilitated by UN Women (then UNIFEM), governments and civil society of SAARC countries expressed concerns about the inadequacy of sex disaggregated data and have continuously emphasized gender sensitive analysis as a focus area.

SAARC and UN Women responded to this need by signing a MoU in December 2001. The development of a SAARC Gender Database on "Tracking Progress towards Gender Equality in the South Asia Region" was a crucial component of the MoU. The MoU was renewed on December 2007 on mutual interest for another six years.

SGIB was launched on 17 January 2007 by His Excellency Lyonpo Chenkyab Dorji, the then Secretary General, SAARC, during the Inaugural Session of "Sixth Biennial Ministerial Conference on Commemorating Beijing" in New Delhi in the presence of Her Excellency Smt. Pratibha Patil, the Hon'ble President of India and Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the 8 Member States.

The Programme was initially named as SAARC Gender Data Base (SGDB). However, the Second SAARC Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children meeting held in October 2008 recommended that since the initiative allows collecting and collating non-conventional quantitative as well as qualitative information, the title may be revised as "SAARC Gender Info Base" (SGIB). The SGIB initiative has so far remained the main area of focus of the SAARC-UN Women partnership.

## 1.2 Key Objectives of SGIB<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ Develop a regional resource knowledge base by collecting, processing and analyzing agreed set of gender-related information in the region;
- ▶ Enable advocacy with national governments and international agencies for introducing a gender perspective in governance and bringing about greater gender equality, equity and sustainable development;

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<sup>1</sup> These are the stated objectives of SGIB Programme as per the ToR of the evaluation.



- ▶ Catalyze gender mainstreaming in the region by enabling, informing, and influencing governments to develop appropriate and gender sensitive policies, programmes and plans using the vast reservoir of gender related information;
- ▶ Facilitate drafting of a South Asia Regional Plan of Action to promote gender equality, peace and development and end gender discrimination; and
- ▶ Promote regional learning and provide a forum for dialogue on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the SAARC region.

From among a number of thematic areas identified during the Expert Group Meeting in November 2005 and later endorsed during the First Review Meeting in August 2006, three priority areas were identified and agreed upon for SGIB programme. These thematic areas relate to:

- ▶ Feminization of Poverty,
- ▶ Women's Health (including HIV/AIDS), and
- ▶ Violence against women (especially Trafficking in women and children)

### **1.3 SGIB Programme design**

The Programme has adopted a participatory approach and has supported capacity development of Member States for setting up and sustaining the data/ information base. The Programme also promotes peer learning from regional practices and collective pro-action.

Given the SAARC protocols and mechanisms<sup>2</sup>, the processes and milestones could not be pre-decided at the initiation of the Programme. Therefore, the results framework, consisting of input-output activities and indicators of success, could not be laid down in the beginning. However, over the period of time, a management structure was defined and consented. The details of the SGIB management structure along with summary of their prescribed roles are presented in the following section:

### **1.4 SGIB Management Structure**

The following section describes the institutional arrangement adopted for operationalising the SAARC Gender Info Base (SGIB). The implementation strategy adopted for functioning and managing of the Programme can be broadly understood in terms of Regional level and National level mechanism (illustrated below<sup>3</sup>):

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<sup>2</sup> SAARC works through consensus building among the Member States wherein every decision is taken together with Member States. In terms of SGIB also, the management structure and steps to be followed in implementation were discussed and consented in common meetings and could not be pre-decided at SAARC level.

<sup>3</sup> As per the ToR of the evaluation, the Round Table Meeting has been shown as Review Meeting. However, the Evaluation Team finds that the Review Meetings are regional level monitoring meetings while the Round Table Meeting is a provision for extending technical support at the Member State level. Figure 1 is therefore a modified version of the structure given in evaluation ToR.

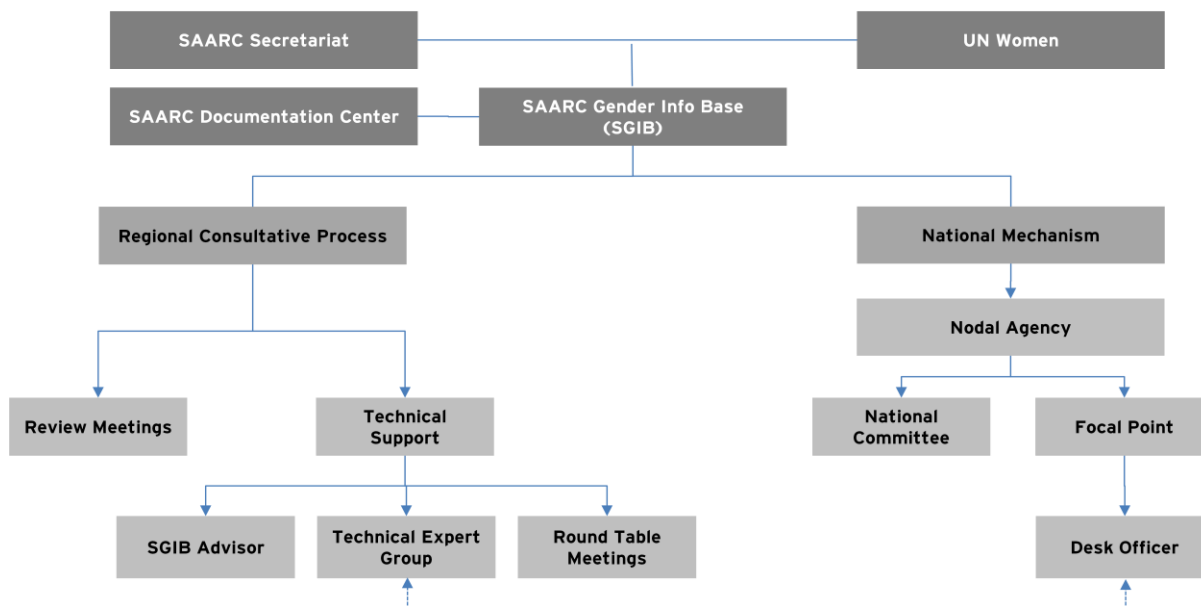


Figure 1 Management Structure of SGIB

► **Regional level mechanism**

At the regional level, though there is no written division of role between SAARC and UN Women with regard to the Programme; SAARC was expected to bring the Member States on a common platform and, together with UN Women, facilitate programme coordination and mobilization of financial and technical resources.

UN Women South Asia Sub Regional Office (SASRO) is the collaborating body and the primary funder of the Programme. All Programme related decisions, along with policy, strategic and technical inputs are to be provided by SASRO. In January 2008, for UN Women to be able to respond effectively on SGIB, the decision of delegating the responsibility of coordinating and executing the Info Base was entrusted to UN Women Nepal Programme Office. This change in arrangement was considered necessary on account of easy accessibility of the UN Women Nepal Programme Office to the SAARC Secretariat and also to garner support of other UN agencies head quartered there. However, exact division of tasks between the two offices is not documented. The UN Women Nepal Programme Office primarily acts as facilitating and coordinating body on behalf of SASRO.

Apart from SAARC and UN Women, the regional level mechanism for the Programme comprises of a Core Committee (CC), a Technical Expert Group (TEG) and SGIB Advisor. A brief overview of role and responsibilities envisaged at each level and their current status is given below:

- 1) **Core Committee** - The Committee was set up by SAARC Secretariat to act as a guiding and advisory mechanism in order to support work on SGIB in different countries. This three-member group was envisaged to work as 'conscience callers'<sup>4</sup>, a group of high level experts

<sup>4</sup> As per the former RPD, UN Women, who was one of the key proponents of SGIB.

who could ensure that the debates and issues relating to women's empowerment are kept alive in Member States. The Committee consisted of leading experts from the region who had complementary skills deemed necessary for efficient functioning of the initiative. For instance, besides gender expert and advocate, the group also comprised of a statistical expert.

- 2) **Technical Expert Group (TEG)** - The TEG was envisaged to provide technical support to UN Women, SAARC Secretariat, and Member States to realize the objectives of SGIB. The group was envisaged to work in close coordination with UN Women and to support day to day work of programme management, advocacy and liaison. It is composed of high level experts with gender and research background. TEG formally consisted of a three-member team which was subsequently reduced to a two-member team since 2009. Of the two current experts on board, one of the members is contracted on a part time basis.

Initially the TEG was planned to be housed in SAARC. However, this could not be realized due to formalities involved in reaching such arrangement with SAARC. In order to ensure better coordination and facilitation between SAARC Secretariat and SASRO, TEG is currently housed at UN Women Nepal Programme Office. The ToRs of TEG members are complementary. One of the consultants is responsible to look after the operational aspects of the Programme along with coordinating all activities pertaining to SGIB with SAARC Secretariat on behalf of UN Women. The other consultant is involved with looking after the technical and online component of the Programme. The TEG members are not directly involved in uploading of data. However, they help in resolving any technical problem faced by Desk Officers in data uploading through the super administrator at SAARC or through SDC.

- 3) **SGIB Advisor** - The position of SGIB Advisor was created on account of unanimous endorsement of the need to bring on board a person of international eminence, with extensive and substantive experience in spearheading issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment and to provide vision, leadership and guidance to the entire process. SGIB Advisor is an honorary position. There is no ToR for the SGIB Advisor.

#### 4) **SAARC Documentation Center (SDC)**

The SAARC Documentation Centre is the technical administrator responsible for all technical issues related to SGIB software. Its primary tasks are to provide IT infrastructure and security support, maintenance support and to handle back-up of the database. The SGIB online component is firmly institutionalized in SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC).

Prior to SDC, SGIB domain was handled by a private firm, Yomari. The formal handing over of the operations took place in the year 2010. One of the main reasons for this move was to address the issue of data security. In line with the SAARC protocols<sup>5</sup>, SDC is not contacted directly by Desk Officers/ Focal Points and the queries related to uploading of data are directed through TEG.

#### ► **Member State Level Mechanism**

At the National or Member State level, the institutional setup comprises of a Nodal Agency, National Committee, Focal Point and SGIB Desk Officer. A brief overview of the role and responsibilities envisaged at each level and their current status is given below

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<sup>5</sup> Under SAARC protocols, SDC is not supposed to interact directly with Member States. All communications between Member States and SDC need to be channeled through SAARC secretariat.

- 1) **National Committee:** Each Member State has constituted a National Committee which is an advisory body entrusted with the responsibility to guide, oversee and support the work on SGIB in the country. The members of the Committee are drawn from different disciplines and sectors like - government line agencies, statistics wings, women groups, research/ academic organizations. The Committee is required to proactively provide inputs, support and monitor the work being done on SGIB in the country. Furthermore, they are also required to undertake advocacy for garnering support of the government and other actors, including resource mobilization. There is no reporting mechanism for the National Committee.
- 2) **Nodal Agency:** The Nodal Agencies at Member State level host SGIB in the Member State and represent their countries at the regional level. They are also the coordinating bodies and anchors of gender information in the country. Being the host body, the Nodal Agency is entrusted with the responsibility of outlining and establishing appropriate procedures and systems, along with making appropriate infrastructural, personnel and technological arrangements to carry out the initiative in an efficient and effective manner. The Nodal Agencies in each of the Member States have been mapped below:

Table 1 List of Nodal Agencies

Member States	Nodal Agency
Afghanistan	Ministry of Women's Affairs <sup>6</sup>
Bangladesh	Ministry of Women & Children Affairs
Bhutan	National Commission for Women and Children
India	Ministry of Women and Child Development
Maldives	Department of Gender and Family Protection Services, Ministry of Health
Nepal	Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare
Pakistan	Population Census Organization
Sri Lanka	Ministry of Child Development & Women Empowerment

- 3) **Focal Point:** The Focal Point is the designated person responsible for the SGIB process in the Nodal Agency of a Member State. The Focal Point is a full time senior Government official, of Secretary/Joint Secretary or Additional Secretary level and is the principal contact person in the Nodal Agency to coordinate the overall SGIB processes at the Member State and Regional levels.

Table 2 Profile of SGIB Focal Points

Member States	Profile of FP
Afghanistan	General Director of Research & Feed, Ministry of Women Affairs
Bangladesh	Joint Secretary (Admn & Cell), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Bhutan	Programme Officer, National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan

<sup>6</sup> Afghanistan joined SGIB programme in 2008.

India	Statistical Advisor, Ministry of Women and Child Development
Maldives	Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Family
Nepal	Under Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
Pakistan	Census Commissioner, Population Census Organization, Islamabad
Sri Lanka	Secretary, Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs

4) **Desk Officer:** The Desk Officer is the operational arm of the Focal Point. The Desk Officers are involved with the end to end operationalisation of SGIB involving collection and collation of data from several sources, processing it into relevant formats, and subsequently uploading and updating data on SGIB website. The profile of Desk Officers in respective Member States is given below:

Table 3 Profile of SGIB Desk Officers

Member States	Profile of DO
Afghanistan	Consultant to Nodal Agency
Bangladesh	Assistant Director Department of Women Affairs
Bhutan	Desk Officer, National Commission for Women and Children, Royal Government of Bhutan
India	Deputy Director, Ministry of Women and Child Development
Maldives	Assistant Director, Ministry of Health and Family
Nepal	Statistical Officer, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
Pakistan	Assistant Census Commissioner, Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Islamabad
Sri Lanka	Development Assistant, Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs

In addition to the above mentioned institutional arrangement to operationalise the SGIB Programme, there are several other mechanisms that have been instituted to review and monitor progress on SGIB, namely- Review Meetings, Focal Point Meetings, Roundtable Meetings and National Committee Meetings. A brief description of each of these is given below:

Table 4 Description of Meetings held at Regional and National Levels

Type of Meetings	Participants	Description
Review Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation from the SAARC Secretariat</li> <li>• Representation from UN Women</li> <li>• SGIB Advisor</li> <li>• Members of the SAARC-UN Women Technical Expert Group</li> <li>• Representation from the Core Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main decision making body of the SGIB process</li> <li>• Organized annually at the regional level after Focal Points Meetings</li> </ul> <p><b>Main tasks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee and support the work of the SGIB and provide inputs as well as monitor the work at the Regional</li> </ul>

Type of Meetings	Participants	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 member delegations including the Focal Points from all Member States</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>level</li> <li>• Review the previous decisions of the review meeting</li> <li>• Endorsing the actions, recommendations and decisions proposed by the Focal points meeting</li> <li>• Set the way forward and actively follow up on the decisions taken at the review meeting</li> </ul>
Focal Point Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representation from the SAARC Secretariat</li> <li>• Representation from the UN Women</li> <li>• Focal points of all the Member States</li> <li>• Desk Officers</li> <li>• Members of the SAARC-UN Women Technical Expert Group</li> <li>• Core Committee Members (if required)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized annually at regional level, primarily to discuss operational issues and Programme related aspects i.e. to highlight, discuss, share coordination issues, challenges on indicators and data/information on the three thematic areas</li> </ul>
Round Table Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focal point of the respective Member State</li> <li>• Desk Officer of the respective Member State</li> <li>• National Committee Members and</li> <li>• Technical Expert Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized at Member State Level, as and when requested for, usually in between the Review and Focal Point Meetings</li> <li>• Aims to sensitize Member States on gender related issues, create awareness about the database and address the data gaps at Member State level</li> </ul>
National Committee Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focal Point of the respective Member State</li> <li>• Desk Officer of the respective Member State</li> <li>• National Committee Members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized at Member State Level to discuss the data availability and accessibility to such data and information that could go into the SGIB</li> </ul>

## 2. Scope of Evaluation and Methodology

### 2.1 Background to the evaluation

The Joint SAARC-UN Women Fourth Review Meeting on SGIB (New Delhi 5-7 April 2010) recommended that since the SGIB Programme had completed 5 years since its inception, an independent evaluation should be conducted to provide an objective assessment of how far the Programme has progressed in achieving its expected results and to provide recommendations that may be useful for the Programme. The Evaluation is intended to be forward looking and in addition to undertaking a comprehensive review of the progress made it will focus on providing strategic direction to the SGIB Programme in the coming years.

### 2.2 Objectives

The Evaluation was intended to provide an objective and independent assessment of programme implementation and its achievements. The objectives of this evaluation are as follows:

- ▶ Assess progress towards achievement of planned objectives and outcomes, and generation of regional benefits
- ▶ Critically assess programme management and quality assurance, administrative and technical strategies, issues and constraints associated with this regional and multi-partner (SAARC, UNIFEM, Member States) initiative
- ▶ Identify and document lessons learnt, and assess quality of the regional processes and outputs delivered
- ▶ Submit recommendations to SAARC and partners regarding specific strategy and approach that might be taken to improve programme implementation and sustainability of results, including recommendations about integration within national data systems; and future strategies for the Programme.
- ▶ Identify the constraints, challenges and opportunities in programme design and implementation

### 2.3 Scope

In order to meet the evaluation objectives, the evaluation exercise followed the following parameters as per the standard evaluation criteria:

1. Relevance - the extent to which the Programme meets current regional and national development priorities and organizational policies, including changes over time.
2. Effectiveness - the extent to which stated objectives have been likely to be achieved.
3. Efficiency - the efficiency of project management and resource use
4. Results - the positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, changes to and effect produced by the development intervention. Results include direct programme outputs, short to medium term outcomes, replication effects and other, local effects
5. Sustainability - the likelihood of the intervention to continue to deliver benefits for an extended period of time after completion. The Programme needs to be financially and socially sustainable.

The evaluation covered the period from 2004 to 2011 i.e. from the preparatory phase to the current implementation phase and included stakeholders at regional level (SAARC Secretariat and UN Women SASRO) as well as the eight Member States of SAARC i.e. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The key stakeholders covered under the study have been finalized in consultation with UN Women (SASRO, Nepal Country Office and Other Country Offices). These are as follows:

- ▶ **Regional Level**
  - UN Women, SASRO and Country Offices
  - SAARC Secretariat
  - SGIB Advisor
  - Technical Expert Group
  - SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC)
  - Core Committee Members
  
- ▶ **National Level:**
  - National Committee Members
  - Focal Points (and Ex Focal Points)
  - SGIB Desk Officer
  - Other Key offices (Stat/ Census etc)
  - CSOs/ Research agencies/ Experts/ Women's rights and gender equality advocates
  - Other UN Offices

*(The list of stakeholders interviewed during the Evaluation is provided as **Annexure I** of the report)*

## **2.4 Evaluation Approach**

It is understood that the online component of SGIB became operational in 2008. The period before this was the preparatory stage wherein the operational mechanism, consensus on indicators on which gender disaggregated data should be uploaded, content design and format & features of the Infobase were developed. Going by the project chronology, it was assumed that while some progress might be in a measurable stage, assessing impact might be premature. However, since the Programme is unique in being operationally embedded within the SAARC mechanism, the opportunities for course correction and possible leverage of this platform may be worthwhile to explore. The Evaluation Team, based on the ToR and discussions with UN Women, followed the following principles:

- ▶ Evaluate SGIB not merely as an information hub but also as an information sharing platform in the context of SAARC's and UN Women's mandate for gender equity as well as policy considerations and programmatic efforts of the national governments.
- ▶ Focus on interaction between SGIB operational mechanism, the information pool (created through SGIB) and usefulness of efforts for stakeholders.
- ▶ Align responses to the key evaluation concerns; relevance, concept and design, effectiveness, efficiency of the programme management and of resource use, results and sustainability.

## **2.5 Evaluation Process**

The Evaluation adopted a process oriented participatory approach that included participation of key stakeholders at relevant points during the evaluation. An Inception meeting was organized



with UN Women including representatives from UN Women (SASRO), UN Women, Nepal Programme Office (Ms. Sangeeta Thapa) and SGIB Technical Expert Group (Dr Rinchen Chopel) to provide a detailed account of the Programme to the Evaluation Team. This was followed by a meeting with Director Social Affairs, SAARC where SAARC's perspective and expectations from the evaluation was discussed. Refer Section 2.5 for details.

The process followed for evaluation is as described below:

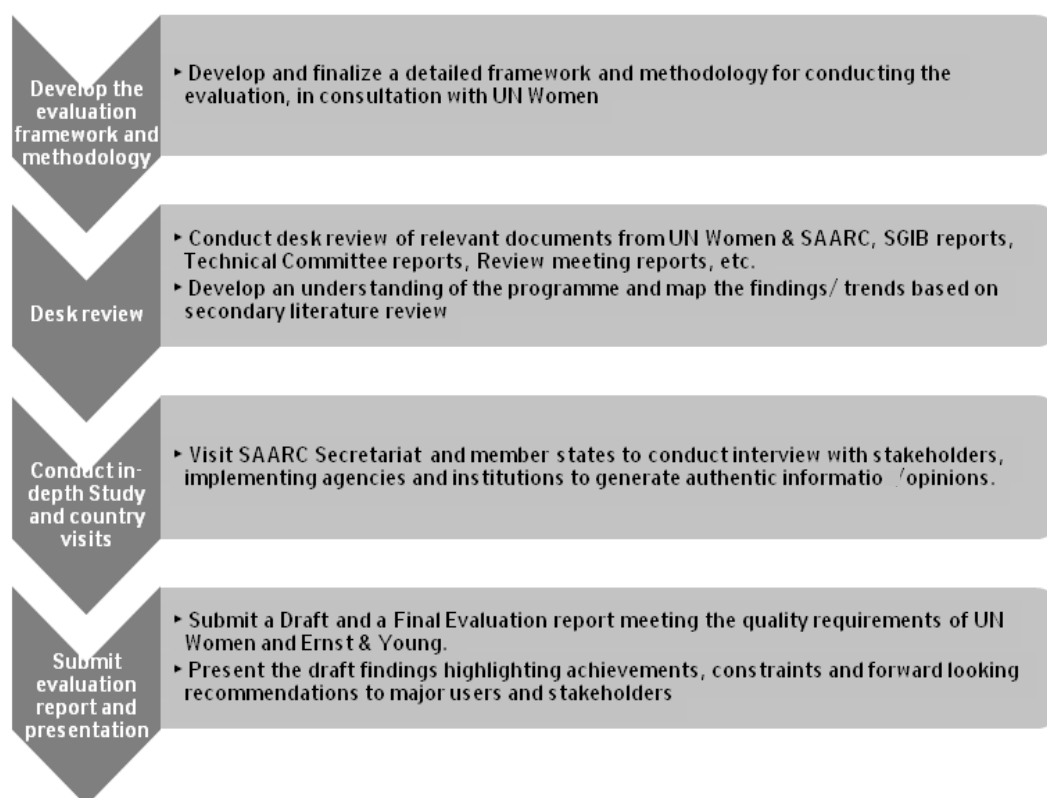


Figure 2 Evaluation Process

## 2.6 Evaluation Management

The evaluation was managed by UN Women M&E team and SGIB Programme Management as well as by the SAARC Director Social Affairs for the duration of the Evaluation process. The M&E team at SASRO facilitated the evaluation by providing co-ordination support and inputs at critical stages such as inception, stakeholder identification, and debriefing. The Evaluation Team also consisted of a SAARC nominated member to provide inputs at different stages of the Evaluation.

The Management team was responsible for the following:

- ▶ Providing technical overview and approval of evaluation design and processes
- ▶ Ongoing management of the evaluation study
- ▶ Facilitating of information availability for the Evaluation Team
- ▶ Reviewing and approving the draft and final deliverables from the Evaluation Team
- ▶ Approving the final report

▶ Post-evaluation dissemination strategy for the Evaluation Report

The Ernst & Young Evaluation Team was led by, Dr. Niraj seth, who provided overall guidance and direction to the engagement and Ms. Mini Thakur, who managed the overall engagement and was responsible for timeliness and quality of deliverables. The following quality assurance measures were undertaken as part of the engagement:

- ▶ A workshop was organized for the Evaluation Team members to orient them about the Evaluation and discuss key aspects of the visits.
- ▶ The Country teams comprised of 2-4 members including the Team Lead/ Engagement Manager.
- ▶ For each country, the field notes and country reports were reviewed by the Team Lead/ Engagement Manager to validate the data quality.
- ▶ Internal de-briefing session was organized after country visits to check robustness of data.

## **2.7 Use of the evaluation**

The recommendations of the Evaluation are expected to guide implementation of the current Programme phase as well as the design of subsequent Programme phases and explore possible directions for making the results sustainable in long run. The SGIB Evaluation will be helpful in generating knowledge to critically inform the work of various stakeholders, as outlined in UN Women's Evaluation Strategy.

In order to enhance the usage of the evaluation, UN Women SASRO - in close association with SAARC Secretariat - will plan a detailed dissemination strategy including forming a management response team to discuss the evaluation findings and recommendations. The findings will be shared with representatives of Member States for feedback and endorsement.

It is assumed that the findings of the evaluation will be used to review the strategic and programmatic directions for SGIB. Based on the findings and recommendations, the key stakeholders of the project may discuss the future directions, including management, monitoring of progress, technical aspects and sustainability of the Programme.

## 2.8 Methodology

The evaluation used qualitative data analysis of the available literature and primary data collected during the evaluation. A detailed evaluation framework, outlining the key questions and probe areas for each evaluation criteria i.e. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results and sustainability was developed. The framework also defined the criteria for judgment, probable data sources and method of data collection. The evaluation framework was based on the desk review and information shared with the Evaluation Team during inception meeting and took into account the objectives, management structure, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and implementation mechanism of SGIB. The evaluation framework is attached as **Annexure V**.

The data collected through desk review and primary data collection were analyzed in accordance with the evaluation criteria as defined in the framework. At the first level, the data collected at Member State level were compiled into country report formats. At the second level the primary data collected at regional level along with the compiled country reports and findings from the desk reviews were organized as per the evaluation framework. A detail account of the data collected and analysed through secondary and primary sources are as below:

**1. Desk Review:** Secondary literature review was one of the significant steps in the assignment. This phase involved extensive review of literature on the SGIB initiative and related resources. A range of documents were made available by UN Women (SASRO and Nepal Country Office). In addition, information available on the public domain (SAARC, SGIB and SDC websites) was referred to. The existing sources of information reviewed as part of the evaluation included:

- ▶ Concept note and status note on SGIB
- ▶ Reports of the monitoring mechanism for SGIB - e.g. Regional Review Meetings, Focal Points' Meetings, Round Table Meetings etc.
- ▶ Information from SGIB Validation Process/ Systems
- ▶ SGIB On-line component training reports
- ▶ Relevant global, regional, national data uploaded by Member States on SGIB website

Literature review helped in providing a comprehensive understanding on SGIB (context, relevance to UN Women, SAARC member nations and other stakeholders); Identifying key stakeholders and their role in making SGIB functional; Drafting tools for the identified stakeholders and framing country profile<sup>7</sup> of the SAARC Member States. The list of documents reviewed is provided as **Annexure II**.

**2. Primary Data collection:** Primary data collection focused on understanding stakeholders' perspective on key evaluation criteria i.e. Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Sustainability and Results. These criteria formed the basis of formulating key questions and sub-questions (probe areas) for each category of stakeholders. Evaluation Teams consisting of at least 2-4 members were sent to each of the 8 countries to reduce subjectivity in recording and interpreting the responses. The main evaluation questions were triangulated and addressed by multiple stakeholders at different levels.

The data was collected through customized interview checklists for each group of stakeholders. The tools also provided the scope of documenting the challenges/ barriers/

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<sup>7</sup> The Country profiles were prepared to provide a background of SGIB for each Member State to the visiting Evaluation Team members.

operational difficulties in programme design, implementation and monitoring. The responses were recorded first as raw notes, which formed the basis of analysis and report writing. Apart from the raw notes, Evaluation Team members for each country prepared an analytical account of the responses in form of country reports in a standard format. This approach of two-tier reporting, along with triangulation of the evaluation questions by interviewing multiple stakeholders at different levels, helped in validating data and in reducing subjectivity.

In some instances where the Evaluation Team was unable to meet stakeholders during the country visits on account of their unavailability/ prior commitment, the questions were e-mailed to them in order to get their responses/ inputs on the Programme. Also, in countries where the current Focal Point/ Desk Officer had been recently appointed, the Evaluation Team met Ex-Focal Points and Desk Officers to get their inputs on the Programme and the progress made so far.

### **3. Work steps in executing the evaluation**

**3.1. Inception meeting:** Inception meeting was organized by UN Women on 10<sup>th</sup> October where representatives from UN Women (SASRO), UN Women, Nepal Programme Office (Ms Sangeeta Thapa) and SGIB Technical Expert Group (Dr Rinchen Chopel) provided an overview to the Evaluation Team.

**3.2. Preparation of tools:** As mentioned above, the primary data collected under the evaluation involves qualitative interviews with various stakeholders. On the basis of the evaluation ToR and the secondary literature provided by UN Women SASRO, draft tools were developed for each category of respondents. The tools were finalized in consultation with UN Women. Changes related to sequencing of questions were also done after Evaluation Team's visit to Nepal which was the first country to be covered under this evaluation.

**3.3. Meeting with Director Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat, Kathmandu:** A meeting was organized with Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat on October 20, 2011. This meeting marked the initiation of evaluation execution wherein SAARC's perspective on SGIB was probed. The opportunity was also used to brief the secretariat about the Evaluation Team and key steps in evaluation.

**3.4. Orientation of Evaluation Team members:** Following the drafting of tool and meeting with Director, Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat, an orientation meeting was organized for the entire team involved in data collection on October 31. The material used for orienting the team has been shared with UN Women. The sessions included:

- ▶ About the assignment: Key elements of scope of evaluation
- ▶ Understanding SGIB: SGIB operational structure, key stakeholders and their ToRs
- ▶ Familiarizing with tools (on the basis of draft tools)
- ▶ Familiarizing with essential secondary literature review prior to data collection

**3.5. Pilot testing of tools:** Given the time constraints, it was mutually agreed by UN Women SASRO and EY that the evaluation visit to Nepal shall be considered a pilot case for use of tools. The draft tools had been shared with UN Women prior to the pilot visit. The visit was undertaken in the first week of November. In terms of revising the tools, it emerged that some change in sequencing of questions, specifically for Nodal Agency and Focal Points, may be required. Based on this exercise, the tools were revised.

**3.6. Data collection:** Data collection was scheduled from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011 in all the SAARC Member States. The SGIB Technical Expert Group coordinated the

appointments with stakeholders at the national level. Details of data collection schedule along with the visiting team members are attached as **Annexure III**.

### 3.7. Analysis and report writing

- ▶ **Data collation and compilation:** The Evaluation Team followed a two-tier reporting process for each country. At the first level, the responses were documented as per the tools into raw-data notes. Following this, each country team collated the information collected in Country Report Format, for analytical presentation of the responses under the evaluation criteria of Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Results and Sustainability. The two-tier reporting system helped in validating data, reducing subjectivity and enhancing the scope of cross country collation of responses. Following the data collection, a debriefing session was organized wherein the team members presented the preliminary findings and overall assessment made during data collection with the EY Engagement Team Leader and UN Women Evaluation Management Team.
- ▶ **Report framework:** The outline of the report was developed in consultation with UN Women, based on guidelines mentioned in the Terms of Reference. The report framework followed international guidelines on evaluation reporting.
- ▶ **Good practices/country caselets:** At the inception level, the proposed evaluation methodology included identifying and documenting country specific good practices or caselets which have positively impacted SGIB. It was assumed that good-practices/ caselets would document special methodological or implementation practice in SGIB Programme within the Member States which have positively contributed to relevance, concept and design; effectiveness; efficiency of the programme management and of resource use; results; and sustainability of SGIB.

However, during the course of data collection, it was noted that country-specific documentation may not be possible for all the member-states due to lack of equally robust data for all Member States. The Evaluation Team has therefore recorded the good efforts made by Member States within the main report (under the sections relating to effectiveness and results) instead of recording them separately.

## 2.9 Limitations to the Evaluation

- ▶ The Former Focal Point/ Desk Officers former UN Women Officials could not be met in some of the countries on account of their non availability.
- ▶ Some of the Former UN Women Officials could not be met with on account of their non availability/ prior commitment.

### 3. Findings of SGIB Programme Evaluation

This section brings forth the key findings and observations of the Evaluation Team on the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results and sustainability. The findings are based on review of relevant documents (primarily the presentations and reports of Review Meetings, Focal Point meetings, Round Table Meetings, ToRs and documents relating to SGIB operationalisation) and responses received through interviews at regional and country level. The sequence of sections follows the aforementioned evaluation criteria and the evaluation framework developed during the assignment.

#### 3.1 Relevance

- ▶ This section presents the findings on relevance of SGIB concept, its programme design and the themes and indicators covered under SGIB.

##### 3.1.1 Relevance of SGIB concept

As the leading UN agency mandated to promote Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, UN Women is well placed both in terms of technical knowledge and access to decision making bodies to position and drive the agenda of Gender Equality through evidence building, dialogues and reforms at policy and practice levels.

The SGIB Programme logic *'to have a regional repository of qualitative and quantitative data and information that would guide national and regional policy and programming for promoting women's empowerment and gender equality and thereby supporting policy reform and catalyzing research and action to bring about positive changes in the lives of women and girls in the SAARC Region'* is well placed within the mandate of UN Women. UN Women's engagement in Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW formed the basis of working at a strategic level for evidence building on issues relating to Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. UN Women's engagement with some of the SAARC Member Nations, especially engendering of national level data collection systems and Gender Responsive Budgeting also provided a continuum to arrive at the regional level effort in this regard.

On the other hand, the cause of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women has seen continued and increasing focus within SAARC<sup>8</sup>. As described in Chapter 1, Heads of States of Governments of South Asia endorsed the need for a gender disaggregated data-base on the basis of data provided by Member States to catalyze the formulation of national and regional policies and programmes related to women and the girl child at the Tenth SAARC Summit held in Colombo in July 1998. SAARC has a dedicated position of Director, Social Affairs and a Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children, reflecting the priority accorded to the issues related to social development, empowerment and equity. As such SAARC provides a critical match both in terms of mandate and level of intervention for collaboration between UN Women SASRO and SAARC.

The MoU between SAARC and UN Women (signed in 2001, renewed in 2007 and valid till 2013) outlines two broad areas of co-operation and states eight aims to be achieved<sup>9</sup>, of which *'developing a SAARC gender database to promote Gender Equality in South Asian Region'* is one.

The evaluation data reveals that the former Regional Programme Director (RPD) at UN Women

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<sup>8</sup> A compilation of SAARC's efforts in this direction has been published as 'Gender Initiatives In SAARC: A Primer', jointly published by SAARC and UNIFEM, July 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Memorandum of Understanding between SAARC and UNIFEM, December 13, 2007.

SASRO was one of the founder members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee on Women, SAARC. UN Women played an active role in 'Kathmandu Declaration for the Rights of South Asian Home Based Workers 2000' and has continuously engaged with the issues of Trafficking in the region. These associations formed the basis of considering collaboration with SAARC for promoting regional efforts on the issue of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women.

### 3.1.2 Relevance of Programme Design

At the outset, it is important to emphasize that SGIB was not conceptualized or executed as a typical project. It was continuously emphasized by SAARC, UN Women representatives and TEG that SAARC, as a forum, does not have any decision making authority on behalf of Member Nations and any pre-defined prototype would not have been possible. While steps were thought of at the regional level (primarily by TEG members in consultation with SAARC and UN Women), each idea had to be presented to Member States for suggestions and endorsement. Within SAARC also, the outcomes of meetings with Member States have to be presented to SAARC Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children for endorsement before conveying it to the SAARC desks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in each Member State. Within this context, the following observations regarding the SGIB Programme are of importance:

- ▶ While the Evaluation Team is aware that the decisions within a SAARC facilitated programme have to be consent based, it appears that the preparedness at the level of UN Women as well as at SAARC was not beyond the mandate and objectives when the initial discussions started in 2004-05. The Evaluation Team did not come across evidence of any in-depth need analysis by UN Women SASRO or SAARC before the Programme was formally launched. This was reiterated by UN Women representatives, SAARC representatives and Core Committee members. While the Core Committee consisted of eminent and capable members (in Gender and Statistics), they did not get a chance to undertake any country-specific analysis of existing data collection systems and scope of gender disaggregation of data. As a result, there was no knowledge base created at the regional level that could outline the exact capacity gaps at Member State level and subsequent technical assistance needs. It also limited the possibility of anticipating the challenges that Member States would face when they practically start sourcing and uploading data.
- ▶ The Programme was understood to be executed and gradually owned by the Member States. While there is a common understanding of objectives among stakeholders, the focus has remained on what is termed as 'the online component'. Of the five objectives stated in SGIB, at least three were devoted to advocacy, advancing gender perspective in governance, gender mainstreaming, and promoting the use of empirical evidences in planning and policies. The Evaluation Team finds that there was no roadmap about how these objectives would be achieved. The SGIB management structure was developed through consent, assuming that the Nodal Agency will '*lobby with the government to accord this initiative the necessary support for effective delivery*<sup>10</sup>'. Considering that the sustainability of SGIB is a factor of political will, commitments by Member States and advocacy efforts; no assessment was made about the level of influence the Focal Points and Desk Officers would exercise in this direction and the kind of support they might need from SAARC and UN Women. As such, this lack of 'intelligence gathering' at the beginning of the project has impacted the objectives that were related to ownership and sustainability.
- ▶ While the implementation structure was consented by the year 2007, the ToRs for most stakeholders, especially at the Member State level were developed in late 2009, reflecting

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<sup>10</sup> Source: ToR for Nodal Agency, as shared by Technical Expert Group (TEG) of SGIB.



that no particular order was followed in execution and the Programme evolved as per the needs felt by the stakeholders.

- ▶ As stated earlier, there were no defined outcomes, outputs, milestones, indicators and benchmarks of achievements.

### **3.1.3 Relevance of Themes and Indicators identified under SGIB**

The themes for inclusion in SGIB i.e. Feminization of Poverty, Health including HIV, and Violence against Women, especially trafficking were identified through the expert group meeting in 2005 which included the Core Committee members (experts). These themes were selected on the basis of their prevalence and importance in the region. They also reflected the priority areas identified under international forums and conventions, especially the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). These thematic areas were presented to and endorsed by Member States.

In case of indicators, the Member States were suggested to come up with their own list of indicators under each thematic area (irrespective of availability of quantitative data in the country on these indicators) along with the possible source of data. Finally a list of 15 indicators was consented by all Member States. A glossary of terms was then developed by the Core Committee on the basis of internationally accepted definitions of the listed indicators. The evaluation suggests that during the finalization of indicators, the variation in definitions being used by the Member States was not adequately addressed although the core committee as well as Focal Points with statistical backgrounds was aware of this challenge. The responses suggest that the focus of meetings was to initiate uploading. As a result, the glossary prepared by the Core Committee remains an isolated input while the explanation of indicator being uploaded (i.e. definitions being used by the Member States) is not available on the page. From usefulness point of view, this makes the database less resourceful than desired.

The analysis of responses reveals that Member States find the thematic areas and indicators relevant. Most States agreed that SGIB facilitated acknowledgement of prevalence of these issues in the country and gave evidence of lack of data on some indicators. The exercise was particularly useful to identify the data gaps in areas of Violence against Women and Trafficking.

Suggestions regarding revising the indicator list to include country specific concerns were also expressed by respondents during Review Meetings and Focal Point meetings as well as to the Evaluation Team. Member States expressed willingness to include indicators that are relevant to their socio-cultural concerns. However, it is not clear if such modifications will have to go through the entire process of endorsements.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The common course of endorsements includes presentation by Member States, consent in Review Meeting, presentation to SAARC Technical Committee on Women Youth and Children, SAARC Secretariat, intimation to MoFA at member state.



### Key Findings: Relevance of SGIB

- ▶ The Evaluation Team finds that the concept of SGIB is appropriately aligned with the mandate and priorities of the collaborating agencies. The partnership between SAARC and UN Women SASRO provides the opportunity of regional level intervention by bringing in complementing strengths in terms of reach and technical capacities.
- ▶ The Evaluation reveals that SGIB programme did not have a results framework at the beginning of the programme in 2004-05. The Evaluation Team is aware of the scope of authority that SAARC can exercise over Member States. As such, decisions could not be taken without consent from Member States.
- ▶ The thematic areas selected under SGIB reflect the prevalent concerns of the Member States and their international commitments. All Member States consider the thematic areas relevant.
- ▶ The list of indicators under the selected thematic areas was developed through consultation with Member States. The Evaluation Team finds that although the Core Committee members as well as representatives from Member States were aware of the variations in definitions being used by Member States, no specific measure was taken to address this challenge. While standardization may not have been possible, making provision for uploading the statistical formula and definitions used for different indicators could have been considered.
- ▶ The glossary of terms prepared by the Core Committee was based on international definitions and may not represent the definitions being used at Member State level.
- ▶ The mapping exercise for reaching the indicators was considered useful by most Member States in terms of identifying data gaps and assessing the status of gender disaggregation of data at the country level.

#### Box 1 Key Findings: Relevance of SGIB

## 3.2 Effectiveness

- ▶ This section presents the analysis of effectiveness of the programme. In accordance with the evaluation framework, the effectiveness has been probed along the following parameters:
  - Project Management Structure: Regional level, National level and at UN Women (SASRO and Nepal Programme Office) level,
  - Monitoring Mechanisms,
  - SGIB as database,
  - Visibility and Positioning of SGIB, and
  - Technical Support from SAARC-UN Women

### 3.2.1 Effectiveness of the Project Management Structure: Regional and National Levels

Chapter 1 of this report provides a description of the SGIB management structure along with the roles and responsibilities at regional and Member State level. This section analyses the effectiveness of this structure in terms execution of roles and responsibilities. The analysis is based on the desk review and also takes into account the responses received during data collection. The organizational structure was finalized in the year 2006-07 after which Member States identified the Nodal Agency, Focal Points and Desk Officers. However, the ToRs for Nodal

Agency, National Committee, Focal Points and Desk Officers were defined at the end of 2009.

### **SGIB Management Structure: Regional Level**

The Evaluation Team finds that there is no documentation of the roles and responsibilities between the primary collaborators i.e. UN Women SASRO and SAARC. From the review of literature (primarily the addresses by SAARC and UN Women officials during Review Meetings and Focal Point Meetings) and from interviews with SAARC and UN Women representatives, it is evident that UN Women SASRO was responsible for financial and technical support to the project while SAARC provided the platform for making SGIB a regional project. SAARC's role entails co-ordination with Member States for planning, implementation and monitoring, facilitating Review Meetings and positioning SGIB within SAARC mechanisms. The other important players at the regional level include the Core Committee, TEG and SAARC Documentation Centre. The key observations regarding these mechanisms are as follows:

- ▶ **Core Committee:** The role of Core Committee, as envisaged under SGIB has been elaborated in Chapter 1. The Evaluation indicates that the ToR of the Core Committee was unclear and subjective. The ToR does not indicate the specific tasks to be undertaken by the members nor does it elaborate the support to be provided to them in executing the roles given to them. The ToR also does not explicitly state who will supervise the functioning of the Core Committee or the time line of their services. As mentioned earlier, apart from defining the probable indicators under the three consented themes and compiling a glossary of these indicators as per internationally accepted terms, no definite role was assigned or undertaken by them.
- ▶ **Technical Expert Group (TEG):** The TEG arrangement has undergone several changes during the project period. Initially it was a three-member team and since 2009 it has two members. Also one of the TEG members is currently a part time consultant giving 10 days a month. The decision to reduce the size of TEG was taken in consultation with SAARC considering that one of the members was unable to provide adequate time and inputs. There was no replacement of the said member and the technical aspects (of the online component) were managed by a private firm. On review of the current ToRs of TEG members, the Evaluation Team noted that scope of work of the TEG members assigns complementary roles to each of the member where one of the members looks after the co-ordination and institutionalization while the other looks after the technical and on line component of programme including responding to technical queries raised by Desk Officers. However, there is no standard mechanism for guiding or monitoring the TEG's work. The Evaluation Team did not come across any review of their inputs and roles in the Programme. Since the TEG is contracted by UN Women Nepal Programme Office and works closely with SAARC, there is a need of greater clarity about reporting line, monitoring and appraisal of TEG so that the roles assigned to TEG could match the emerging needs of the Programme. The TEG members were hired on Short Service Agreement (SSA) basis. As per the reporting requirements of the contract, they submit Self Appraisal reports, Mission Travel Reports and reports of Review Meetings and Focal Point meetings. However, the TEG members reported that they did not receive any feedback from UN Women SASRO/Nepal Country office on these reports. The Evaluation Team was not provided with any evidence of internal appraisal of TEG's performance prior to renewal of their contract.
- ▶ **SGIB Advisor:** The desk review shows that the idea of having a person of international eminence to guide the process, garnering political commitment and advocacy was endorsed

in January 2008 during the 2nd Review Meeting held in Kathmandu<sup>12</sup>. The name of current SGIB advisor (Ms Chandni Joshi) was proposed and endorsed during the 1st Focal Point Meetings in June 2008. As mentioned earlier, this is an honorary position and there is no ToR for SGIB advisor and hence the Evaluation Team is unable to comment upon the role played by SGIB advisor. As per the current SGIB advisor, her role is limited to focus the discussions to the core objectives of SGIB i.e. gender equality and women's empowerment in the region.

### **SGIB Management Structure: National Level**

Regarding the effectiveness of the role played by the national level management structure for SGIB, following points have been observed:

- ▶ **National Committee:** The ToR of the National Committee states that the '*...committee will proactively provide inputs as well as monitor the work being done in the country to centrally collate and compile data and information that will feed into the SGIB*'. The evaluation findings reveal that in most cases, the National Committee is not aware of its ToR. There is no defined way of orienting the National Committee about their TOR but it is assumed that since it is a national level body, the Nodal Agency is responsible for orientation of the National Committee. The membership profile, as suggested under the SGIB management structure, is adhered to (wherein the key departments which have relevant data and information are part of the National Committee). In some cases, the National Committee has been reconstituted (as in the case of Nepal) or an alternative arrangement has been made (as in India where Link Officers have been identified who can provide SGIB related data). In all cases, National Committee is understood as an advisory body. However, the prescribed frequency of meetings (i.e. quarterly) is not followed in any of the Member States<sup>13</sup>. Also, in National Committee meetings, often representatives are sent instead of the nominated member. The Evaluation Team finds that despite the membership profile of the National Committee being relevant, the National Committees are unable to play any critical facilitative role at the country level. It also appears from the interviews that, except for the initial period when mapping of available data was done, Nodal Agencies do not have any clear idea about the agenda for National Committee meetings. This platform has not been able to play any role in increasing visibility of SGIB for advocating the cause of gender disaggregated data and its use in policy and planning at the country level.
- ▶ **Validation Process:** With reference to SGIB, a system of validation of data/information through both technical and political channel was instituted so as to ensure that data/information uploaded on SGIB component is not only owned but represents the Member State. Each Member State proposed specific validation process for SGIB as defined in SGIB Programme documents. The Evaluation Team noted that the proposed validation process was largely being followed by Member States. In some member states such as Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, the data generated by government offices, such as the census data does not require any validation. This arrangement is more efficient in terms of time taken between identification of data and uploading. It was also noted that the

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<sup>12</sup> Report of the Second Review Meeting (as adopted), Kathmandu, 10-11 January 2008, Section VI, 14.iv

<sup>13</sup> In Afghanistan, there is no distinct meeting of National Committee but the members are also the member of the Inter-ministerial Working Group on Gender and Statistics constituted by the MoWA for discussion on gender issues and sharing of information. This group meets quarterly and discusses SGIB among other issues.

validation committee has no role in terms of form and statistical vigour of data. As a result, often raw data is uploaded without keeping in mind its usefulness for reference and research.

- ▶ **Nodal Agency:** As described in Chapter 1, the Nodal Agencies, except for the case of Pakistan, are the lead Ministries on women empowerment within Member States. In case of Pakistan, the National Census Office is the Nodal Agency. From the interviews, it emerges that the Nodal Agencies are relevant in terms of housing SGIB since they are mandated to promote policy and planning relating to gender equality and empowerment of women. However, since a significant effort is required for identifying, sourcing and formatting data, statistical knowledge is critical among officials dealing with SGIB. On the basis of the responses, the Evaluation Team infers that the ideal balance between statistics, gender issues and advocacy is a challenge faced by most Nodal Agencies. Close co-ordination between national statistical body and Nodal Agency was observed in Nepal, Pakistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and formerly in Maldives<sup>14</sup>.

In Afghanistan, the 'Inter-ministerial Working Group on Gender and Statistics' as constituted by the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) for discussion on gender issues and sharing of information acts as the National Committee for SGIB. The said Group consists of Ministries that are most appropriate to source and advice on gender based data. For instance, it includes Ministry of Public Health for health data; Ministry of Rural and Rehabilitation Development for poverty and livelihoods related data; and High Court, Prosecutors Office, AIHRC, Interior Ministry for VAW data.

The Nodal Agency decided that this group is well placed to act as national Committee for SGIB since it already advises MoWA on data collection, analyses and using data for planning. The Group meets quarterly to discuss indicators on which data is not available, possible ways to collect data, and other related issues. It also helps in integrating SGIB efforts into the regular work of the Ministry. The SGIB database has been used inform and feed into the National Plan for Action on Women's Affairs.

In India, the head of the Nodal Agency has designated the Focal Point for all aspects of SGIB and involves only in the capacity of chairperson of the National Committee while in Sri Lanka the co-ordination with Census office which is the main data generating office was cited to be challenging.

**The desk review** also reveals that initially, apart from the Nodal Agency, a Lead Agency had to be identified<sup>15</sup>. The idea was to have a combination of agencies that lead the gender and statistics profile within the Member State. However, the Evaluation Team finds that the idea of Lead Agency could not be followed up. From the interactions at Member State level, it appears that the modality of co-ordination and division of role between the Nodal Agency and Lead Agency was not laid out clearly at the regional level or by the Member States. As a result, the Nodal Agency became the host of SGIB with the country with a defined ToR while no further reference of Lead Agency could be traced beyond the 1st Review Meeting.

The Evaluation Team is of the view that the concept of two agencies (Nodal Agency and Lead Agency) was useful in terms of complementing the statistical and advocacy capacities.

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<sup>14</sup> In Maldives the Ministry of Gender and Family was the Nodal Agency while the Ministry of Planning and National Development was the main source of data. After administrative reforms, both these Ministries do not exist and are now reduced to departments under Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance respectively.

<sup>15</sup> Presentation made during the 1<sup>st</sup> Review Meeting, Bhutan, August 2006

- ▶ **Focal Point:** In the current arrangement, the Focal Point is the most critical operational link between SAARC and Member States on matters related to SGIB. The Focal Point is supposed to provide high level co-ordination support (between the country with data sources and SGIB regional mechanism) to ensure use of SGIB for gender related reporting within and beyond country, to advocate the concept of SGIB among policy makers, and to provide overall supervision and guidance to the SGIB Programme. As described in Chapter 1, Focal Points in all Member States are high level officials of the rank of Secretary/Deputy Minister, a significant achievement in SGIB. However, being high level officials, Focal Points manage large portfolios which often becomes a barrier in giving adequate time to SGIB. Moreover, as shown in Chapter 1, Table 2, Focal Points keep changing due to transfers. It appears that there is no formal system of orienting the new officials and most of them familiarize themselves with SGIB through Review Meetings or Focal Point meetings.
  
- ▶ **Desk Officer:** Functioning as the operational arm of SGIB within Member States, the Desk Officers are involved in collecting and collating data from different sources, formatting the data as per SGIB requirement, uploading and updating of data. The Evaluation Team notes that Desk Officers are the face of SGIB within Member Nations and are responsible for co-ordinating with Focal Points, Validation Committee and National Committee. With the exception of Bhutan and wherein the position of Desk Officer is contractually supported by UN Women, in other Member States the Desk officer is a Government Official with additional charge of SGIB. In case of Afghanistan, an external consultant to the Nodal Agency was acting as Desk Officer for SGIB<sup>16</sup>. It was also observed that Desk Officer's knowledge of statistics and capacity of managing data works as a facilitating factor. However, in terms of organisational set up, the difference of levels (designations) between Desk Officers and Focal Points acts as a barrier in regular communication between the two. The Evaluation Team also notes that the Desk Officers are not communicated the ToR by previous incumbents or Focal Points/head of the Nodal Agency but get familiar with SGIB through participation in meetings and through official files.

### **Co-ordination between UN Women, SASRO and UN Women Nepal Country Office**

The delegation of SGIB to Nepal Programme Office took place in January 2008. It was noted that there is no clear division of role between the UN Women SASRO and UN Women Nepal Programme Office. The only recorded communication is an email sent to Nepal Country Office referring to the way forward of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Review meeting<sup>17</sup> (January 2008, Kathmandu) and to the discussions during SGDB launch and Delhi Declaration as a precursor to this decision. The email further states '*entrusting the total responsibility of coordinating and executing the SAARC Gender Data Base to the UNIFEM Nepal Office. Henceforth ....., Programme Coordinator, Nepal Programme Office will be fully responsible to execute the SGDB for UNIFEM*<sup>18</sup>'. Further, the said communication does not provide any clear guideline on exact roles to be played by UN Women Nepal Programme Office and UN Women SASRO in the changed arrangement. It also does not provide any clarity on who shall monitor the emerging needs of Technical Assistance and performance of TEG. Subsequent ToRs of the TEG members designate the UN Women Programme Coordinator, Nepal Programme Office as supervisor of TEG.

<sup>16</sup> It was brought to the notice of the Evaluation Team that this position is vacant for the past four months.

<sup>17</sup> The report of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Review meeting, however, does not reflect any such discussion. It is assumed that it was an internal decision (of UN Women and in consultation with SAARC) and may therefore be not part of agenda of the said review meeting.

<sup>18</sup> Source: E mail communication from RPD, UN Women (then UNIFEM) SASRO office to UN Women Nepal Programme Office dated 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

Interaction with SAARC, UN Women and TEG suggests that this decision was made due to proximity factors (since both SAARC Secretariat and UN Women Nepal Programme Office are located in Kathmandu) as well as due to presence of regional offices of other international agencies in Kathmandu. It was expressed by SAARC representative and TEG members that 2007-2008 witnessed a high pace of activities where regular meetings and close co-ordination between SAARC, UN Women (and TEG) was required. Delegating the responsibility of SGIB to Nepal Programme Office was a conscious response to this situation. However, the role division between UN Women SASRO and Nepal Country office was an internal matter of UN Women. While the Nepal Programme Office has played a critical role in co-ordination with SAARC and in organizing the Review Meetings and Focal Point Meetings, it is understood that strategic decisions such as required changes in management structure, monitoring mechanism etc are taken at SASRO level. The communication protocols among the three organizations (UN Women SASRO, UN Women Nepal Programme Office and SAARC) are not defined.

### Key Findings: SGIB Management

- ▶ The programme management structure at the Member State level was found to be adequate in terms of their roles. However, since Focal Points and often the Desk Officers are government employees, SGIB is seen as an additional responsibility. In most cases, Desk Officers are responsible of all operations regarding SGIB with occasional inputs from Focal Points.
- ▶ National Committees were not found to be an effective mechanism. In most cases (except in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan), the National Committee was not found to play any significant role in terms of advocacy, leverage of resources, or visibility of SGIB.
- ▶ At the regional level, the roles of SAARC and UN Women are not documented. The ToR of the core-committee was found to be subjective with no clarity about what are the specific inputs to be provided, except for developing thematic areas, indicators and the glossary. The Evaluation Team is of the view that although the Core-Committee members had complementary knowledge and skills, their involvement was ad-hoc and their role at Member State level was very limited. Similarly, there is no ToR or specific role for SGIB advisor. The quality of inputs and monitoring by UN Women (then UNIFEM) SASRO was found to be inadequate.
- ▶ The Technical Expert Group (TEG) is the face of SGIB operations. Given their ToRs, the role played in operationalising the management structure and responding to technical queries was appreciated by all Member States.
- ▶ At SAARC and UN Women level, there is no specific mechanism for appraisal of TEG's performance or profile.
- ▶ The current management structure does not have scope of formal internal review (between SAARC and UN Women SASRO) about the progress on objectives of SGIB, changes required in terms of strategy and technical aspects of the Infobase, adequacy and quality of data being uploaded, and national and regional level usefulness of the Infobase.

#### Box 2 Key Findings: SGIB Management

### 3.2.2 Effectiveness of Monitoring Mechanisms

As per the SGIB project management structure, the annual Review meetings and Focal Point meetings are the primary monitoring mechanism at the regional level. Apart from these, the Round Table Meetings provide an opportunity to understand and mitigate the challenges being faced at Member State level. The Evaluation Team, upon review of agenda and content of discussions during these meetings, finds that the review meetings are able to bring up the progress made and challenges being faced. It is also noted that it helps in identifying the immediate issues to be followed up by the regional set up of the project. However, since there is



no standard guideline on what is to be presented in RMs, there are significant variations in the content presented during these meetings wherein some country presentations were found to be entirely off the mark. Further, since these meetings are attended by all member nations, it is assumed that it may not be appropriate to question country specific issues relating to consistency and quality of data on this forum.

From the Review Meetings reports and Focal Point meetings reports, it appears that follow up on operational aspects was comparatively regular but those relating to advocacy, mainstreaming, resource leveraging and ownership were not followed up. A mapping of follow up of issues discussed during Review meetings is attached as **Annexure IV**. It was also noted that discussions on these issues were not concrete in terms of what possible actions could be taken and in what manner.

Another direct mechanism for monitoring and follow up are the Round Table Meetings but in the current arrangement, the requirement of the meetings has to come from the Member States. The analysis of RTM shows that there is no definite pattern in these meetings in terms of time interval. For instance Afghanistan<sup>19</sup>, India and Pakistan had just one meeting since the project was initiated in 2008 while other countries had 3-4 meetings during the same period. It is to be noted that the need for Round Table Meeting has to be raised by the Member States. While Afghanistan is a relatively new member lesser number of Round table meetings is understandable, Evaluation Team observes that India and Pakistan did not express the need for Round Table Meetings except in the initial period. These meetings focused on the challenges being faced by the Nodal Agencies in terms of identification of data, co-ordination and technical issues in uploading. A summary of issues discussed during these meetings is presented as below:

Table 5 Summary of Key Discussion Points during Round Table Meetings

Member State	Date	Key discussion points
<b>AFGHANISTAN</b>		
Round Table Meeting-1	14 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of SGIB to UNIFEM Country Office, MOWA and relevant stakeholders</li> </ul>
<b>BANGLADESH</b>		
Round Table Meeting-1	29 <sup>th</sup> December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions were held on the available statistical and qualitative information</li> <li>Issues on standardizing the indicators</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-2	18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion on developing parameters for measurement for both quantitative and qualitative data</li> <li>Identification of sources of existing data and potential sources of future data source</li> <li>Identification of indicators that require primary surveys</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-3	21 <sup>st</sup> -22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assurance from MOWCA to ensure participation of GDO and statistics personnel in the training.</li> <li>Procurement of hardware</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-4	16 <sup>th</sup> - 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion on some edition on a portal was raised</li> </ul>
<b>BHUTAN</b>		
Round Table Meeting-1	No INFO AVAILABLE	No INFO AVAILABLE
Round Table Meeting-2	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions were held in detail on the indicators</li> </ul>

<sup>19</sup> Afghanistan joined SGIB programme in 2008.

Member State	Date	Key discussion points
		and the themes.
Round Table Meeting-3	30 <sup>th</sup> October-2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of the excel formats developed by DO;</li> <li>• TEGs assisted the DO to work on the qualitative data collected</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-4	31 <sup>st</sup> August-4 <sup>th</sup> September 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on data gaps identified in the thematic area of Violence Against Women</li> </ul>
<b>INDIA</b>		
Round Table Meeting-1	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarification on the terminologies were done by TEGs</li> <li>• Discussions on indicators and possibility of usage of proxy indicators</li> </ul>
<b>MALDIVES</b>		
Round Table Meeting-1	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions on specific indicators such as fisheries and possibility of usage of proxy indicators</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-2	1 <sup>st</sup> - 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity issues and issue of availability of data</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-3	2 <sup>nd</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> April 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational difficulty in uploading the data faced by DO</li> </ul>
<b>NEPAL</b>		
Round Table Meeting-1	28 <sup>th</sup> -30 <sup>th</sup> September 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction of SGIB to relevant stakeholders</li> <li>• HR issues and close partnership with research agencies were also discussed</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-2	19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> November 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion was mainly on the validation process and uploading of the available data</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-3	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion was focused on the operational part of SGIB with respect to national level</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-4	27 <sup>th</sup> -28 <sup>th</sup> July 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis was made on the addressing the data gap</li> </ul>
<b>PAKISTAN</b>		
Round Table Meeting-1	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion was focused on the operational aspect of the programme and availability of data</li> </ul>
<b>SRI LANKA</b>		
Round Table Meeting-1	26 <sup>th</sup> October 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on the available data and possibility of using proxy indicators</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-2	29 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion on validation process</li> </ul>
Round Table Meeting-3	2 <sup>nd</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> April 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical and operational issues were discussed</li> </ul>

The table reflects that Round Table Meetings have largely focused on operational issues such as sourcing of data, technical issues in uploading and validation.

The documents and interaction at the SAARC and UN Women level do not indicate any internal monitoring of progress, quality of data, role of Core Committee, role of TEG etc. It is also not clear which of the two collaborating organizations have the primary responsibility of monitoring. In brief, there is no defined protocol of monitoring and accountability. Moreover, since there is no standard project document outlining the results to be achieved, indicators of progress and benchmarks, the Evaluation Team had limited basis for commenting on these aspects.

In terms of financial monitoring, it is understood from discussions that there is no system to monitor and review the expenditure pattern. The Evaluation Team was told that the funding of SGIB is through the 'core fund' and no donor specific financial report was needed. In practice, the budget for SGIB is included in the annual work plan and budget of the Nepal Country Office



since delegation (i.e. since 2008), which is endorsed and provided by SASRO. It is clear that the budgetary allocations were not linked to any specific activity or objective at the beginning. The cost incurred on meetings is covered on reimbursement basis following the UN norms. The Evaluation Team did not come across any evidence of reviewing the allocation or expenditure pattern during the Programme.

### Key Findings: SGIB Monitoring

- ▶ The mechanism of Review Meetings and Focal Point Meetings for progress monitoring is relevant but not highly effective in terms of cost and time involved. Together, this amounts to two meetings every year with almost similar agenda. In some cases, presentations made during these meetings are repetitive and not focused. It appears that alternative ways for more effective, on the ground monitoring, were not discussed at the regional level by UN Women and SAARC.
- ▶ From the review of reports of Review Meetings and Focal Point meetings, it appears that pertinent issues have been flagged by the participants and follow-up points are identified. Follow up on operational aspects was found to be comparatively regular but those relating to advocacy, mainstreaming, resource leveraging and ownership were not adequately followed-up. In summary, the 'what, who and how' aspects have not been worked out for the latter issues.
- ▶ Round Table Meetings are the mechanism where a closer, country specific interaction is possible. However, these meetings are held on request from Member Nations resulting into varied number of meetings in Member States. These meetings are limited to immediate problems being faced in terms of identification of data and uploading. Lack of statistical expert in the TEG limits its inputs in terms of using alternative indicators/proxy indicators.
- ▶ The role division between UN Women SASRO and UN Women Nepal Country office is not documented. It is evident that due to proximity and the need of close co-ordination, Nepal Country Office is the first point of reference for SAARC but decisions can only be taken by SASRO. Also, the supervision of TEG, as per the ToR for TEG members is with Nepal Country Office. In this arrangement, the level of involvement of SASRO in terms of technical inputs and monitoring of progress is not clear. There is no defined protocol of communication between SAARC, UN Women SASRO and Nepal Country Office. Without a documented role of the three parties involved in managing SGIB at regional level, accountability for progress and gaps cannot be attributed to any.

#### Box 3 Key Findings: SGIB Monitoring

### 3.2.3 Effectiveness of SGIB as database

Upon review of the SGIB website and on the basis of interactions held at Member State level, the Evaluation Team finds that uploading of data by Member States has remained limited and inconsistent, although the uploaded data is often updated. The key issues in uploading of data, as shared by the respondents are:

- ▶ Complicated validation process (in some Member States) which required a series of approvals for data to be uploaded, even for data generated by government bodies.
- ▶ Lack of clarity on Indicators: Although the Member States did present a list of indicators and sources of data during the initial period, pointing out the areas where data is not available; there is a general lack of clarity regarding what qualifies to be uploaded. This is particularly apparent in countries where Focal Points and Desk Officers do not have statistical background.
- ▶ Lack of clarity on the process of identifying data that can be uploaded: There is no defined way of identifying the data that can potentially be uploaded. In most cases it is left to the Desk Officer who identifies data and proposes for further approvals (as per the validation process or in consultation with Focal Point). As such, identification of data that can potentially be uploaded depends on the ability of Desk Officer. The Evaluation Team notes that technical support on the aforementioned issues, particularly in terms of identifying the data that can be uploaded, appropriateness of format (absolute numbers, proportion, percentage, etc), and quality of content that is uploaded have been lacking in the Programme. It is understood that the inputs in this regard need to be specific to Member States due to variation in indicators and definitions being used.
- ▶ Lack of clarity on uploading of qualitative data: From interactions with the core committee members, it is inferred that the idea of including qualitative data was to address the existing data gaps in areas such as Violence against Women, trafficking etc. by uploading relevant research and studies undertaken by leading academic and research agencies in the country. However, the Evaluation Team finds that the understanding among Member States regarding qualitative data is varied. There is a general resistance on the part of Nodal Agencies to validate any qualitative research undertaken by non-government agencies (including those by UN agencies).
- ▶ It was also noted that the Member States were advised to propose an academic/research agency that may be engaged to undertake qualitative studies in areas where data gaps exist. No follow up on this aspect could be noted. It also appears that the Nodal Agencies were unable to generate resources for assigning such studies as was found in the cases of Nepal and Sri Lanka, while Maldives faces the challenge of unavailability of research agencies. In countries such as India and Pakistan, credibility of research undertaken by non-government agencies, especially on the themes identified in SGIB is questioned by the government. On the other hand, Bangladesh, which has uploaded maximum, no specific quality or credibility criteria seems to be followed.
- ▶ Most Nodal Agencies express paucity of funds and human resource to undertake credible data collection exercise in areas where data gaps exist.
- ▶ In Afghanistan, all data is available in the official language i.e. *Dari*. Availability of officials with proficiency in English is also low. Language barrier was expressed as one of the pressing challenges in case of Afghanistan.

### 3.2.4 Visibility and Positioning of SGIB

One of the major concerns shared by almost all respondents in all Member States is the low priority accorded to SGIB by the national governments. From the responses, the Evaluation

Team infers the following factors for this situation:

- ▶ SGIB is understood as an obligation under SAARC. It has not been positioned as a trigger for the national governments to own the agenda of having an Infobase devoted to the cause of gender equality. As such, it often functions in isolation wherein the onus of collecting data lies on the Nodal Agency (and in effect on the Desk Officers).
- ▶ There is no specific guidance from the regional level regarding assessing the use of database. The website does not have the features to assess and record the hits. The SGIB website does not provide any links to the relevant National Ministries or to external useful databases. The Evaluation Team noted that SDC has adequate know how to apply such assessment systems if so directed by SAARC Secretariat. Nodal Agencies were not found to be taking any pro-active measure to increase the visibility of SGIB. Due to lack of visibility and no records on access, the Evaluation Team is unable to comment upon its usefulness for intended users such as academia, research agencies or development agencies.
- ▶ Some of the Member States do not have a culture of referring to data while formulating plans and policies and budget allocations are often politically driven, wherein the agenda of evidence based planning for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women gets sidelined.
- ▶ No specific funds have been earmarked either by UN Women or by Nodal Agencies for advocacy and visibility measures.

So far as the efforts of making SGIB popular and visible are concerned, the Evaluation Team observes that despite the need being expressed during Review Meetings and Focal Point Meetings, no roadmap was developed to address these concerns. While SAARC has made attempts to refer to SGIB in other available mechanisms (such as SAARC Convention on Trafficking of Women, Youth and Children, Regional Seminar on Home Based Workers and Regional Meeting on Children Affected by HIV and AIDS, it is not clear as to how effective links are being visualized between SGIB and the said mechanisms.

On the other hand, the opportunity of complementing the advocacy and visibility measures through UN apparatus (UN Women Country Offices as well as other UN Agencies active in Member Nations) do not appear to have been analyzed. In countries where the Evaluation Team was able to meet other UN agencies (such as ILO and UNFPA in Bangladesh, International Gender Specialist at UNRCO Bhutan, Gender Analyst UNDP Bhutan), it was found that most of them were either not aware or not referring to SGIB.

### **3.2.5 Effectiveness of the Technical Support from SAARC-UN Women**

As per the assessment of the Evaluation Team, the Technical Assistance needs in SGIB related to:

- i. Defining thematic areas and related indicators and consensus building
- ii. Consensus building on management structure, roles and responsibilities (ToRs)
- iii. Designing the format and content of the website (prototype) and data to be uploaded
- iv. Identifying and responding to the training and capacity enhancement needs of the stakeholders.
- v. Providing Member State specific hand holding support on statistical and technical aspects.
- vi. Defining the quality and usefulness parameters of the data posted on SGIB website and reviewing the same.

- vii. Designing advocacy roadmap at regional and Member State level.
- viii. Leveraging resources from national governments and other donors.
- ix. Advocating the culture of gender disaggregation of data and use of empirical data for planning, resource allocation and policy development/reforms at Member State level

The desk review and primary data suggests that the technical assistance needs of the project were not clearly defined at the inception of the project. As mentioned in earlier sections, a need analysis exercise was not undertaken at the beginning. While the objectives of the project were clear to stakeholders, the roadmap was not clear. As a result, the technical needs were also identified along the course of implementation. It also appears that no parallel mechanism was created to assess and respond to the emerging needs of the project. The Evaluation Team does not find evidence of UN Women SASRO developing any strategy for providing technical assistance. Considering the fact that creation of an online Infobase involves both statistical and IT components, no specific measures could be noted towards developing robust software. No evidence of referring to existing similar databases or engaging Technical Consultant with adequate knowledge of possible features could be noted during evaluation.

During its interactions with the Evaluation Team, SAARC representatives expressed that while SAARC has access to Member States (and in this case to the Nodal Agencies albeit through MoFAs), it does not have the technical capacity to respond to the technical needs of the programme. Through interactions, it is noted that responsibility of identifying and responding to the technical and capacity building needs was left mostly on the TEG. Due to the positioning of TEG (contracted by UN Women as consultants and working in close co-ordination with SAARC), the members do not have adequate authority to influence the Nodal Agency or other offices at the Member State level.

Overall, the evaluation shows that the technical assistance needs on the first five items listed above were responded to, the other four areas have remained relatively unattended to. In terms of the training needs, the feedback from Member States suggest that while training on technical aspects (format/uploading) was adequate, sensitization on gender issues, thematic areas and indicators, particularly at higher levels is required. Nodal Agencies in Bhutan and Sri Lanka were found to have taken proactive steps to fill this gap and have organized sensitization workshops for decision makers.

#### **Management of Adequacy and Quality of Data on SGIB Website**

In terms of reviewing the consistency and quality of data being uploaded, desk review and analysis of country pages (on SGIB site) show that there are inconsistencies in data being uploaded. It is to be noted that the data uploading started in 2009. The first attempt to analyze the consistency of data being uploaded on SGIB website was done during the 5<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting, in June 2011<sup>20</sup>, which indicated that of the total data uploaded, 75% has been done by Bangladesh and Bhutan. However, this analysis does not take into account the quality or relevance of data. Inadequate uploading is particularly notable in case of India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The TEG, SAARC and UN Women are aware of the inconsistent and inadequate uploading. However, no measures are evident at the regional level to facilitate uploading in cases where data is available at the national level but is not being uploaded.

Keeping the objectives of SGIB in mind, it was critical to make the info-base robust and of high standards so that it serves the purpose of reference by researchers, policy makers and regional level stakeholders. The evaluation reflects that the component of quality control is missing in

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<sup>20</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting, Kathmandu, June 7-8, 2011, Presentation Made by SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC)

the current scheme of SGIB. Ensuring quality and usefulness of data is not mentioned in any of the ToRs developed for regional and national level actors in SGIB. Review of the data available on SGIB website reflects that quality and usefulness<sup>21</sup> concerns are not considered prior to uploading.

### Key Findings: Effectiveness of SGIB as an Infobase

- ▶ In terms of effectiveness and robustness of SGIB as an info-base, the Evaluation Team finds that the info-base, in its current status needs serious review in terms of the following:
  - Clarity on what can be uploaded (Member Specific inputs)
  - Adequacy of data (all available data is posted)
  - Quality of data and content (robustness, completeness, labeling, definitions)
  - Clarity and consent on uploading qualitative data
  - Features of the software (data formats, downloading and analysis options for users)
  - Visual appeal of the website
  - Linking of website with relevant databases including other useful websites within and beyond the country)
  - Analysis of users (using analytic tools)
  - Knowledge and skills (statistical and technical) of the Desk Officers
  - Work towards greater standardization so that the info-base is useful at regional level.
  - Increasing visibility and popularity of the website.
- ▶ The evaluation findings reflect that the technical assistance needs of the programme were not systematically identified at the beginning or during the implementation by UN Women SASRO and SAARC. This is especially true for the components of SGIB programme that relate to advocacy, ownership, sustainability and use of the Infobase. Training on technical aspects of uploading was found to be adequate. Responses suggest that greater emphasis is needed to orient and sensitize higher officials in the Member States, such as legislators on gender, the selected thematic areas and use of data for policy and planning.
- ▶ The Evaluation Team notes that while SAARC has played a positive facilitative role in establishing the management structure, Member States expect greater role by SAARC in influencing national governments for giving priority and adequate support to SGIB.

#### Box 4 Key Findings: Effectiveness of SGIB as an Infobase

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<sup>21</sup> For instance some of the uploaded tables do not give any description of the data label, definition used, methodology/formula in use. Spelling and syntax errors are also evident.

## 3.3 Efficiency

### 3.3.1 Efficiency of time utilization

The MoU signed between SAARC in 2001 provides the first reference for setting of a gender database. The first meeting of the expert group to discuss the modalities of proceeding on SGIB took place in October 2005. The reasons for this delay are not clear to the Evaluation Team except for the fact that there were frequent changes in leadership at SAARC level. Upon interaction with SAARC, TEG and UN Women, it appears that SGIB is the first opportunity for SAARC to work through line ministries in the Member States. Also SAARC does not have any authority to take any decision on behalf of the Member States. In practical terms, it means that every proposition and step has to be presented to and endorsed by the Member States. In addition, the SAARC desks in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Member State level are the first point of communication between SAARC and the Member States. This protocol has to be followed in the case of SGIB also. It was also expressed that the SAARC desks at MoFAs are individual driven with varied degrees of responsiveness.

It was shared that the initial period was utilized for sensitizing the Member States on importance of a regional effort on the SGIB thematic areas. Given the fact that some of the indicators are considered sensitive by national governments, acknowledgement of issues and consensus building did take its own time. In a unique move, SAARC has facilitated direct access to Nodal Agencies for TEG through endorsing an informal channel of communication which helped in providing timely response to technical and operational queries raised by Nodal Agencies.

As mentioned above, the practical steps in SGIB initiated in 2005. The period between 2005 and 2009 was devoted to setting up the process within SAARC and Member Nations. Several important developments took place in this period, the most important ones being- finalization of thematic areas and indicators, consent on institutional mechanism, nomination of Nodal Agency, Focal Points and Desk Officers, development of prototype for SGIB, consent on data uploading format and process, setting up of National Committees and validation committees etc. A mapping of activities against time is provided in Table 6 below. The mapping shows that majority of activities regarding developing management structure, themes/indicators and technical prototype was undertaken during 2006-2008.

Table 6 Key Activities under SGIB

Time period	Key Activities under SGIB
2001-2004	MoU signed between UN Women and SAARC of which SGIB was a component.
2004-2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Joint SAARC UNIFEM First Expert Group Meeting;</li> <li>▶ Prototype shared with Member States;</li> <li>▶ Formulation of Core Committee group;</li> <li>▶ Decision taken for standardization of operational definition, methodology and indicators for inter-country and intra-region comparability of the data;</li> </ul>
2006-2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ MoU renewed for five years;</li> <li>▶ Launch of G-Data Shop;</li> <li>▶ Website "'www.saarcgenderdatabase.org' for SGIB endorsed;</li> </ul>

Time period	Key Activities under SGIB
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ A Pilot Phase of data/information uploading initiative;</li> <li>▶ Coordination assigned to Nepal Programme Office;</li> <li>▶ Need to have SGIB Advisor on board agreed upon;</li> <li>▶ Role of SGIB Advisor re-endorsed in First Focal Point Meeting;</li> <li>▶ SGIB Advisor appointed;</li> <li>▶ Decision undertaken to change the nomenclature 'G Data Shop';</li> <li>▶ Recommendation made with regard to developing glossary of definitions ;</li> </ul>
2009 Onwards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Transfer of SGIB housing and domain to SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) completed and made operational;</li> <li>▶ The Technical Expert Group in consultation with Core Committee prepared regionally harmonized /standardized terminology for commonly used terms in SGIB process;</li> <li>▶ Finalization of ToR for SGIB Desk, Focal Points, National Committees and also the Review Meeting;</li> <li>▶ First prototype of on line component presented to Member State;</li> <li>▶ Validation process endorsed;</li> <li>▶ The training on the SGIB On-line component for Gender Desk Officers and Statistics Officers/Data Mangers;</li> <li>▶ Need for having an action plan on SGIB operationalisation at National Level expressed;</li> <li>▶ Need for SGIB Online Component to create additional portal to host unstructured qualitative information on women empowerment and gender equality in the Member States with search feature expressed;</li> <li>▶ Decision to commission joint SAARC-UN Women Evaluation of the SGIB following established practices of the SAARC;</li> <li>▶ In the Fourth Review Meeting decision undertaken for Technical Expert Group to develop the draft ToR of SGIB Advisor by end of April 2010 ;</li> <li>▶ On operational aspects, decision was undertaken to provide Member States with privileges to edit basic information available in their respective portals.</li> </ul>

The later period witnessed a gradual evolution of technical aspects such as inclusion of qualitative data in SGIB, issues relating to uploading, identification of challenges in identification of data under the consented themes etc. It is important to note that uploading of data started only in 2009-10.

The Evaluation Team observes that given the complexities of protocols and multiplicity of stakeholders, the progress made so far, especially in terms of reaching to a defined management structure has been significant. However, the time period between 2005-2009 was not effectively used for developing the statistical & technical features of the database. The reasons for this may be attributed to lack of adequate inputs from UN Women SASRO and SAARC including TEG. The activity mapping also reveals that sequencing of activities was not logical. Some specific examples are:

- ▶ SGIB was appointed in 2008 but the decision regarding developing ToR was taken in 2010.
- ▶ Management structure decided in 2006-07 but ToRs developed in 2009-10.
- ▶ G datashop was launched in 2007 but the first prototype of the online component presented to Member States in 2009.
- ▶ Member States involved from 2005 but a national level action plan recommended in 2010.

It also notes that the momentum of progress is impacted by change of leadership at SAARC and UN Women level as the transition takes its own time. It also appears that the precedence of working with line ministries through a defined and consented management structure will play a positive role in effective utilization of time in future.

### 3.3.2 Efficiency of resource utilization

As mentioned in section 3.2.4, there was no defined year-wise allocation of funds under SGIB at the Programme conception level. The anticipated activities are built in the Nepal Programme Office's work plan and budget. From interactions with UN Women (current and Ex) officials, it appears that no review of expenditure pattern was done during the evaluation period. However, the details provided by UN Women Nepal Programme Office shows that more than 85% of the allocated and utilized funds are under 'consultants' and 'travel' heads. No change in allocation pattern was noted, reiterating that no strategic changes were foreseen or planned in the last five years of the programme. An analysis of allocations and expenditure between 2007-11 is presented in Table 7 below:

Table 7 Distribution of Allocation and Expenditure

Budget Head	% of Total Allocation	% of Total Expenditure
Local Consultants	42%	41%
Travel	45%	47%
Equipment	5%	4%
Supply	1%	1%
Sundries	7%	7%

It is understood that the remunerations to Core Committee/TEG and Review/Focal Point meetings are the key areas of allocation and expenditure. However, as there are no defined measures of success of Review Meetings, the Evaluation Team is unable to make any comment on the efficiency of expenditure. It was, however, observed that the number of participants in the Review meetings and Focal Point Meetings were varied (minimum being 20 and maximum being 39).

Table 8 Number of Participants in Review Meetings and Focal Point Meetings

Meeting	Regional*	National#	Total
First Review Meeting, Aug 2006	11	28	39
Second Review Meeting, Jan 2008	8	12	20
Third Review Meeting, Mar 2009	6	16	22
Fourth Review Meeting, April 2010	13	24	37
Fifth Review Meeting, June 2011	11	17	28
First Focal Point, June 2008	10	16	26
Second Focal Point, Dec 2009	5	28	33
Third Focal Point, Oct 2010	8	23	31



\* UN Women SASRO & NPO/ SAARC Sect/ SDC/ TEG/ Core Committee/ Any other experts  
# Representatives from MS including DO, FP and UN Women Country Office Staff

Moreover, there are no internal reviews of the advantage of having two separate meetings with similar participants and near similar agenda. The Evaluation Team is of the view that an internal monitoring of the expenditure and its utility would have helped in mid-course correction and developing alternatives such as increasing the number of country specific meetings for advocacy and implementation.

### Key Findings: Time and Resource Utilisation

- ▶ Considering that there was considerable time gap between 2001, when the first MoU was signed between SAARC and UN Women (then UNIFEM), and 2004-05, when the programme practically started, there was ample time to undertake an assessment of the technical modalities and capacity gaps that an initiative like SGIB would need to address. For instance, the variation in capacities of Member Nations in terms of data collection and availability, existing status of gender disaggregation of data, and existing data gaps were not assessed. The Evaluation Team also did not find any evidence of internal discussions on strategic directions for meeting the stated objectives of SGIB. It appears that the protocols took predominance over the strategies and the programme followed a 'natural course' than a 'strategic course'.
- ▶ The budget details do not reflect any transfer of funds to SAARC or Member States. Most allocations and expenditure (more than 80%) are under the heads of 'consultants' (TEG and Core Committee) and 'travel' (for Review meetings and Focal Point meetings). The evaluation suggests that the work- plan and budget are part of the Nepal Country Offices annual work- plan and budget. It is noted that the items of budget allocations have remained the same in the past five years of the project, reiterating that no strategic changes were visualized during this period.

#### Box 5 Key Findings: Time and Resource Utilisation

## 3.4 Results

- ▶ The results of SGIB programme have been analysed along the following terms:
  - Policy formulation/ advocacy/ research,
  - Triggering data collection at Member State level,
  - Promoting gender equality and women empowerment within Member States, and
  - Promoting gender equality and women empowerment within SAARC

### 3.4.1 Policy formulation/ advocacy/ research

Two of the objectives of SGIB include:

- ▶ To enable advocacy with national governments and international agencies for introducing a gender perspective in governance and bringing about greater gender equality, equity and sustainable development.
- ▶ To catalyze gender mainstreaming in the region by enabling, informing, and influencing governments to develop appropriate and gender sensitive policies, programmes and plans using the vast reservoir of gender related information

Although there are some instances of Member States using SGIB in their national planning and budgeting exercise, SGIB has not significantly influenced policy makers and planners on the emerging issues related to women development in the region. While SGIB is fully institutionalized in the Member States and many Member States have undertaken accelerated efforts in uploading of data and information, the usage of data and information on the SGIB online component is yet to happen. Some of the factors responsible for this have been given below:

- ▶ The uploading of data started only after 2008 and more specifically in 2009 after the entire process of data and information upload including the process of validation systems were adopted.
- ▶ SGIB was perceived as a platform for providing not only gender disaggregated data across different Member States but also information on best practices, policies and legislation that are being followed across the region to address the gap on gender equality and women empowerment. However, the focus has remained on the 'online component'. Varied and inconsistent upload of data by Member States has been a key challenge in effective implementation of the 'online component' of SGIB.
- ▶ There is lack of credible quantitative as well as qualitative data especially in the areas of gender based violence and human trafficking. Further, there are no broad guidelines available for the Member States, to develop a common understanding on qualitative information/data and to guide in uploading the same.
- ▶ There is an absence of a mechanism to record user feedback to comment on use of SGIB by research agencies and CSO.
- ▶ The Evaluation Team felt that, in general, the culture of referring to data sources for formulation of policy is weak.

#### **Sri Lanka**

- ▶ SGIB has been used in developing the National Action Plan for Women and has been used by the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs for gender related data.
- ▶ SGIB has been useful in developing women's empowerment programs in Sri Lanka. Specifically, it has been used by the Economic Development Ministry for designing and implementing such programs
- ▶ SGIB helped in identification of 3 districts with highest number of reported cases of teenage pregnancy and enabled the Ministry to plan suitable programs
- ▶ SGIB has also helped the Ministry to plan and deliver an awareness program for male policy makers to sensitize them on violence against women. This was done in August 2011.
- ▶ SGIB was used to design and implement the Self Employment Program for war widows in one of the districts of Sri Lanka in collaboration with Government of India and SEWA India.

#### **Afghanistan**

- ▶ SGIB is reported to have played a significant role in the development of a National Action Plan for Women's Affairs in Afghanistan.

#### **Bhutan**

- ▶ The National Commission for Women and Children used data on violence against women to advocate for revised Domestic Violence bill.

### 3.4.2 Triggering data collection at Member State level

A positive impact of SGIB is that it has highlighted the lack of availability of gender-disaggregated data and helped identify data gaps at the Member State level, especially in the area of violence against women (domestic violence and trafficking). It has created a bottom up approach in terms of building pressure to trigger efforts by the government for collecting/collating such data in the country.

However, the Evaluation Team noted that although the need for data collection has been felt, limitations of budget, absence of an anchor at the higher level to drive the Programme and lack of resources to fund data collection have hindered progress in this regard.

The Fourth Review Meeting recommended the Member States to make every effort to engender population and agriculture census and national level surveys to incorporate SGIB indicator. In this regard, some progress has been made with some of the Member States not only initiating sourcing of funds and mainstreaming SGIB into national action plans but also initiating collaboration with Statistical, Census Organizations and other sectoral agencies to source data and information.

The Evaluation Team noted that there are significant variations among the member states in terms of availability of relevant data and data collection systems. Some Member States such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are at a relatively advanced stage in terms of availability of data at national level. However, for all Member Nations, SGIB was the first opportunity to have a national level gender disaggregated database on indicators that are relevant to the agenda of gender equality. Member States find SGIB as a relevant database where gender related data could be accessed from a single hub. Moreover, Member States also find it relevant to have comparable database for the South Asian region.

### 3.4.3 Promoting gender equality and women empowerment within Member States

The SGIB Programme logic is *'to have a regional repository of qualitative and quantitative data and information that would guide national and regional policy and programming for promoting women's empowerment and gender equality and thereby supporting policy reform and catalyzing research and action to bring about positive changes in the lives of women and girls in the SAARC Region'*.

Despite the diversity in South Asia, SGIB has been able to generate consensus among all the eight Member States on the three sensitive themes and has received support and ownership of all the Member States. However, since the Programme is in the implementation phase, it is difficult to comment on whether it has been able to move forward the agenda of gender equality and women empowerment at the Member State level. Some other reasons highlighted during the study are given below:

#### Afghanistan

- ▶ Within the MoWA, there is a discussion on reliable qualitative data collection, for which themes have been identified on the basis of SGIB including issues like HIV/AIDS, trafficking and VAW.

#### Nepal

- ▶ The Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare plan to undertake a pilot in 15 districts of Nepal to collect data on gender based violence and human trafficking in coordination with the Central Bureau of Statistics and Department of Police.

#### Bhutan

- ▶ SGIB has been responsible for initiating research and data collection on aspects of VAW. The latest round of 'Bhutan Multi-indicator Survey' included indicators on domestic violence.

- ▶ The lack of critical mass in terms of data uploaded on SGIB has hindered the process of improving the visibility of SGIB among potential users.
- ▶ The vision of involving civil society and research organizations in collection and dissemination of data/ information and in taking forward the agenda of gender equality and women empowerment has largely remained unfulfilled.
- ▶ There is lack of prioritization of SGIB at the highest level in the Ministry/ Nodal Agency and other data producing agencies.

The Evaluation Team noted that a number of Member States have undertaken exercise to engender the census and national surveys. However, in most of the other Member States, there is not enough evidence available to directly attribute the engendering of census to SGIB, with the exception of Pakistan and Nepal where the Census Office is working very closely on SGIB. The effort at operationalising SGIB has been parallel to the engendering exercise and, hence, there is a potential to link the two efforts in the country.

### 3.4.4 Promoting gender equality and women empowerment within SAARC

SGIB has been driven by SAARC and Member State with critical support from UN Women in terms of project coordination, financial and technical resources. The process has evolved over time and has successfully created a regional convergence of related National Governments and triggered convergence of different stake holders in striving towards collection of quantitative and qualitative data and information on the identified themes. The management structure created in the Member States on account of SGIB has functioned well and has set precedence for working directly with line ministries at the Member State level. In this context, SGIB is not only an important initiative for gender equality and women's empowerment but also a good strategy for UN Women's partnership with SAARC and the Member States.

#### Sri Lanka

- ▶ The Ministry, based on the information collected through SGIB, has requested the Government to include gender disaggregated data in the first full scale census to be conducted in North East Sri Lanka after a gap of 30 years, on account of the end of the internal conflict.

#### Nepal

- ▶ The efforts have been made to engender the regular census and surveys in the country has made around 50 questions on gender have been included in the Census for 2011 based on the gaps identified through SGIB.
- ▶ The MoWCSW is in the process of developing Nepal Gender Info Base to serve as a national repository of gender disaggregated data, which will then be linked with SGIB.

#### Bhutan

- ▶ The National Statistics Bureau has developed the Bhutan Gender Info Base to serve as a national repository of gender disaggregated data.

#### Afghanistan

- ▶ SGIB was used to develop the National Plan of Action on Women's Affairs by the Nodal Agency. It has also helped in identifying new areas of data collection /research such as HIV (within health data), VAW and trafficking. The fact that the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Gender and Statistics discussed SGIB in its regular quarterly meetings also indicates that SGIB is positioned well within the regular mechanism of MoWA, Afghanistan.

A desk review of documents related to SGIB was undertaken to assess the extent to which SGIB was mainstreamed into the wider SAARC mechanisms or related initiatives, including reports pertaining to 'SAARC Regional Meeting on the Convention of Trafficking of Women, Youth and Children', 'Second Meeting of the Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children', 'Regional Seminar on Home Based Workers', 'Regional Meeting on Children Affected by HIV and AIDS' and 'Gender Initiatives in SAARC: A Primer'.

The effort made by SAARC Secretariat and the SGIB Programme to position SGIB as an ideal programming approach and as the first point of reference for various SAARC Initiatives is clearly visible from the above documents. Some of these efforts are given below:

- ▶ SGIB has been endorsed as the 'First Point of Reference' for:
  - SAARC Initiative on Home Based Workers
  - SAARC programmes on Micro-finance for Women's Economic Empowerment
  - To house information related to Regional Trafficking activities
- ▶ The SAARC-UNICEF ROSA project on children affected by HIV and AIDS adopted an approach similar to that of SGIB in its implementation mechanism.
- ▶ The Gender Initiatives in SAARC: A Primer, co-developed by SAARC and UN Women, was launched in 2008 (along with the launch of SGIB) during the Sixth South Asia Regional Ministerial Conference.
- ▶ The Fourth Review Meeting recommended that the monitoring format which is being developed jointly by Bhutan and Nepal for reporting to the SAARC Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children, may incorporate the monitoring of SGIB as well.
- ▶ SGIB has provided a basis to further develop the idea of regional co-operation on the issues of Gender Equity and Women's empowerment. For example, SGIB has been central to the development of a new programme, the SAARC Gender Equality and Empowerment Programme (SAGEEP). SAGEEP has been officially endorsed by SAARC and has a commitment of USD 5 million from the SAARC Development Fund. SGIB will continue to run as a part of SAGEEP.
- ▶ The institutional linkages undertaken with Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Home Net South Asia (HNSA) and the SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) are some tangible examples of the effort made by SAARC, although these initiatives are fairly recent to comment on the results or their outputs.

One of the objectives of SGIB is to promote regional learning and provide a forum for dialogue on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the SAARC region. The Evaluation Team noted that SGIB has received full support from all the Member States and has created an important platform at the regional level (Regional Meetings and Focal Point Meetings) for Member States to come together to discuss key issues that affect gender and women's empowerment, learn from each other and also draw consensus on carrying forward the decisions arrived at.

*"SGIB has become an initiative with the potential to become the hub of work in the area of women empowerment and gender equality. This initiative would provide a window of opportunity to various stakeholders to initiate research work and launch projects and programmes at regional and national levels in response to emerging issues related to women empowerment".*

*Mr. Hassan Shifau, Director SAARC, Fourth Review meeting, New Delhi, April 2010*

Thus, within SAARC, SGIB has helped in building a momentum through the collective participation of the Member States and the larger SAARC mechanisms. However, the challenges of ensuring quality and adequacy of data so that it can serve as a credible reference point for gender equality and women's empowerment in SAARC and greater efforts of making SGIB a priority in Member States still remain.

#### **SGIB: Key results**

##### **For Member States:**

- ▶ For most Member States, SGIB provided first opportunity for gender based mapping and disaggregation of available data at the national level. For others, who were at a relatively advanced stage of gender disaggregation of data, it reiterated the existing data gaps. It has also provided a prototype for initiating national level repository of gender disaggregated data (as in the case of Nepal and Bhutan).
- ▶ SGIB helped in identifying data gaps, especially in areas of VAW, trafficking and HIV AIDS. Some of the member states have taken this opportunity to initiate specific research/data collection exercise (for instance Nepal, Sri Lanka).
- ▶ Being a regional level repository of data, SGIB helped Member States to compare the availability of data with other counterparts and advocate within their countries for collection and uploading of data.
- ▶ Regional level meetings provide opportunity for cross learning, especially in terms of operationalising SGIB.
- ▶ SGIB has helped national planning and budgeting exercise in some of the Member States (as in Sri Lanka and Afghanistan).

##### **For SAARC:**

- ▶ SGIB has been a learning process under which, within the prescribed mechanisms and protocols, SAARC has been able to achieve consensus on issues which are relatively sensitive at a regional forum, especially the issue of VAW.
- ▶ SGIB provided precedence for working directly with line ministries at the Member State level. The organizational structure developed under SGIB is unique when compared with other regional level programs of SAARC.
- ▶ Due to close co-ordination with Member States (line ministries) through TEG, SAARC was able to ensure active participation of Member States, as evident from the participants list of Review Meetings and Focal Point meetings. In all the regional meetings held so far, all Member States have registered their participation.
- ▶ SGIB helped SAARC to identify the capacity gaps in implementing programs like SGIB. This has helped in foreseeing the expertise that may be required in future programmes.
- ▶ Close working relationship with UN Women has helped in getting inputs in other programmes relating to gender equality and empowerment of women.
- ▶ SGIB provided an opportunity for increasing the visibility of gender equality and empowerment of women agenda within SAARC. Continued interaction with the SAARC Technical Committee for Women Youth and Children on SGIB helped build the case for larger programmes like SAGEEP.
- ▶ UN Women has proved to be an active collaborator (and not a mere donor) in providing technical and operational assistance. The expertise available at UN Women is considered important and useful by SAARC beyond SGIB also.

#### **Box 6 SGIB Key Results**

#### For UN Women:

- ▶ SGIB is a regional level collaboration wherein UN Women registered its presence in eight Member States through a single programme. This is especially important since UN Women is not officially present in three of the eight Member States.
- ▶ By working closely with SAARC, UN Women had the opportunity to understand SAARC processes which gives a distinct advantage over other external agencies who work with SAARC.
- ▶ UN Women also has the credit of initiating a regional level database on gender issues, a concept that is valued by SAARC as well as Member States.
- ▶ UN Women has the credit of developing a consented management structure that involves regional as well as national level mechanism. This structure may have the potential to strengthen SGIB as well as other SAARC regional initiative on Gender Equality.

### 3.5 Sustainability

The Evaluation Team noted that at the conception phase of SGIB, no specific timeline of support or exit was defined by the collaborating agencies. It is assumed that the timeline of MoU<sup>22</sup> is the only reference point so far as the timeline of support for SGIB is concerned. The inferences drawn in this section are therefore based on review of available documents<sup>23</sup> and responses received at SAARC, UN Women and Member State level on issues of sustainability.

At the outset, it is important to highlight that the basic premise of functioning of SAARC is through consent of Member States. As such, initiating and exiting of a SAARC facilitated process is based on consensus. On the other hand, UN Women works through a limited pool of resources and is bound by its operational framework to have a clear timeframe of support for any development programme. The term 'exit' therefore has different notions for the two partners.

Also important is the fact that in case of SGIB, no direct financial support has been provided by UN Women to Member States, except in some cases where the salary of Desk Officer or purchase of computer was supported. The infrastructure and human resource support have been largely provided by the Nodal Agency.

The Evaluation Team observed the following regarding sustainability, ownership and exit:

- ▶ Most Member States do not relate sustainability of SGIB to financial support. In some cases (such as Bhutan and Afghanistan) where the remuneration to the Desk Officer has been supported, there is ambiguity regarding supporting the same without UN Women's support.
- ▶ In terms of ownership, it was observed that while Member States see value in SGIB and record their commitment to support SGIB, they also face the challenge of getting support from their national governments. It was shared by most of the Member States that political commitments to support such initiative is low. As a result, undertaking any research of data collection exercise on indicators where data gaps exist have largely been pending despite the willingness on part of Nodal Agencies.
- ▶ From the interaction with stakeholders at Member State level, it is clear that greater support from SAARC and UN Women is expected for advocacy at national level so that adequate attention and support is provided for data collection and its use.

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<sup>22</sup> Current MoU is valid for the duration Dec 2007-Dec 2013, unless one of the parties expresses its intent in writing to terminate it six months before expiration.

<sup>23</sup> Since there is no formal document outlining the duration of support, the Evaluation Team has reviewed discussions on sustainability and exit through the addresses made by the UN Women and SAARC leaders and reports of Review Meetings. Apart from it, the responses received on the issue of sustainability have also been analyzed.



- ▶ From the remarks made by SAARC and UN Women representatives, it appears that there is a consensus on the fact the SGIB has to be ultimately owned by the Member States. However, it appears that there is neither a common understanding nor a roadmap about what 'ownership' will entail in case of SGIB. This is particularly concerning since the objectives of SGIB relate to a regional level database<sup>24</sup> as well as national level advocacy<sup>25</sup>.
- ▶ It was noted that SAARC perceives SGIB as a process that will continue irrespective of external support unless the Member States express otherwise. SAARC has taken some tangible steps in this direction which includes declaring SGIB as 'first point of reference' for its initiatives on micro finance and home based workers. Delegation of technical backstopping to SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) also points to greater institutionalization of SGIB within SAARC. It has recently allocated resources for procuring a new advanced server for SGIB and has proposed to include SGIB in its overall monitoring format. These initiatives point as SAARC's willingness to continue SGIB by linking it to available mechanisms.
- ▶ In terms of resources, SAARC has obtained internal financial commitment on a larger programme, 'South Asian Gender Equity and Empowerment Programme (SAGEEP)<sup>26</sup>', of which SGIB will become an integral part. In case the UN Women's support for Review Meetings is not available under SGIB, SAARC can use other forums/meeting opportunities for progress review.
- ▶ The Evaluation Team is of the view that while institutionalization of the implementation mechanism has witnessed positive efforts by SAARC as well as Member States, sustainability of SGIB lies in usage of the database for the stated objectives. Irrespective of support from UN Women or any other agency, the technical components (statistical and IT) of SGIB are not considered adequate for claiming it to be a data-hub. Most stakeholders expressed that the database cannot become sustainable without support from highest level of the national governments.

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<sup>24</sup> Including a South Asia Regional Plan of Action to promote gender equality, peace and development and end gender discrimination; and Promoting regional learning and providing a forum for dialogue on gender equality and the empowerment of women in the SAARC region' (drawn from stated objectives of SGIB)

<sup>25</sup> For introducing a gender perspective in governance and bringing about greater gender equality, equity and sustainable development; and catalyzing gender mainstreaming in the region by enabling, informing, and influencing governments to develop appropriate and gender sensitive policies, programmes and plans'(drawn from stated objectives of SGIB)

<sup>26</sup> Presentation made during the Fifth Review Meeting, June 2011 by the then Director Social Affairs, SAARC describes the outline of SAGEEP.

## 4. Conclusions

Based on the interviews with various stakeholders and review of documents related to SGIB implementation, this chapter concentrates on the overall conclusions emerging from the evaluation findings. The conclusions are structured around the parameters of programme management, monitoring, adequacy of technical inputs, effectiveness of the Infobase and sustainability.

### Programme Management

**Conclusion 1: The concept of SGIB as a single hub for gender disaggregated data is relevant-** The concept of SGIB is appropriately aligned with the mandate and priorities of the collaborating agencies. The partnership between SAARC and UN Women SASRO provides the opportunity of regional level intervention by bringing in complementing strengths in terms of reach and technical capacities. The thematic areas selected under SGIB reflect the prevalent concerns of the Member States and their international commitments. The list of indicators under the selected thematic areas was developed through consultation with Member States. The mapping exercise for reaching the indicators was considered useful by most Member States in terms of identifying data gaps and assessing the status of gender disaggregation of data at the country level.

**Conclusion 2: SGIB as a Programme does not have a defined Results-Framework-** SGIB was not conceptualized or executed as a typical project. SAARC, as a regional forum, does not have any decision making authority on behalf of Member Nations in terms of operationalisation of the programme. However, this does not seem to be a challenge at the regional level for developing a roadmap and defining the results and indicators of progress of the program. While SAARC did not have any precedence of developing results framework, UN Women (then UNIFEM) SASRO was aware of the importance and know-how for developing which could have guided the management and monitoring of progress. Even if such a roadmap could not be developed initially (2004-2005), it would have been appropriate to develop it once the project management structure and the consequent consent building mechanism (such as Review Meetings) were in place. Similarly, needs assessment in terms of availability of data, gaps in national systems of gender disaggregated data, technical capacity (gender and statistics) available at Member State was not undertaken by UN Women SASRO and SAARC. As such, the Programme was started without any comprehensive assessment of the inputs that Member States might need to effectively implement the Programme.

**Conclusion 3: The roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders (UN Women, SAARC and Member States) are not defined-** It was observed that the role division between SAARC and UN Women was not defined or documented. Since SAARC did not have the technical capacity (in terms of gender, statistics and IT) to execute the Programme, it is assumed that UN Women SASRO was to provide the required inputs on these aspects. SAARC's influence on the Member States could have been used for drawing greater commitment for supporting and sustaining SGIB. However, since no clear understanding was developed about the roles to be played by the two partner agencies, the accountability remains ambiguous.

The Technical Expert Group (TEG) was formed to provide the technical and operational support on behalf of UN Women and SAARC. The TEG is technically hired by UN Women Nepal Programme Office and operates through UN Women's office in Kathmandu since 2008. UN Women SASRO's role in guiding and monitoring the TEG or the UN Women Nepal Country Office was found to be missing.

Role division between UN Women SASRO and Nepal Programme Office is also not defined. All aspects of Programme management were left on TEG and UN Women Nepal Programme Office without any notable inputs from SASRO. It is assumed that being the signatory to the MoU with SAARC, the accountability of success or failure ultimately lied with UN Women SASRO. While Nepal Programme Office is supposed to operationally manage the Programme, UN Women SASRO's role in monitoring, review of progress, and in providing technical guidance was found to be inadequate.

Overall, the Programme was not effectively managed due to lack of defined roles and responsibilities and also because adequate expertise in terms of statistics and IT could not be garnered by UN Women and SAARC.

**Conclusion 4: SGIB Programme has remained focused on the 'online component' (web based Infobase)-** SGIB Programme, in its seven years of implementation, has remained focused on the 'online component'. The stated objectives of the Programme also includes advancing gender perspective in governance, gender mainstreaming, and promoting the use of empirical evidences in planning and policies. No specific roadmap was developed by SAARC and UN Women to address the objectives related to advocacy with national governments although representatives from Member States have expressed the need during review meetings. This compounded with the fact that the role division between UN Women and SAARC is not defined; the agenda of advocacy with Member States was not followed up by either of the two partners.

#### **Programme Monitoring**

**Conclusion 5: Monitoring mechanisms at SAARC, UN Women and Member State levels are not defined-** As mentioned earlier, the results to be achieved through SGIB and subsequent indicators of progress were not defined by UN Women and SAARC. At the regional level, the Review Meetings and Focal Point meetings are the forums for reviewing progress as well for discussing follow up measures. No specific guidance was found to be available to Member States about progress reporting. At the Member States also, no internal mechanism of monitoring by Nodal Agency was recorded. Among the points raised during Review Meetings, operational aspects were found to be followed up but the discussion relating to advocacy, mainstreaming, resource leveraging and ownership were not found to be objective and concrete. Monitoring and appraisal of technical inputs being provided by TEG was done by UN Women Nepal Programme Office. UN Women SASRO was not found to play any role in reviewing the performance of TEG. Communication between SAARC and UN Women SASRO regarding review of progress and TEG's performance is not evident.

**Conclusion 6: Financial review of the Programme (optimal utilization of financial resources) was not undertaken by UN Women during the Programme-** The lack of results framework also reflects in financial allocations and expenditure made under the Programme. More than 85 percent of allocations and expenditure are under the heads of 'consultants' (TEG and Core Committee) and 'travel' (for Review meetings and Focal Point meetings). The budgeting for SGIB is done as part of the annual budget of the Nepal Country Office. Further analysis shows that the items of budget allocations have remained the same in the past five years of the project, reiterating that no strategic changes were visualized during this period. Role of UN Women SASRO in financial monitoring in terms of efficiency of fund utilisation is not clear since no evidence of financial review by UN Women was provided to the Evaluation Team.

## Technical Inputs by SAARC and UN Women

**Conclusion 7: SAARC has made efforts towards institutionalizing SGIB within its own mechanism-** SAARC has made attempts to refer to SGIB in other available mechanisms (such as SAARC Convention on Trafficking of Women, Youth and Children, Regional Seminar on Home Based Workers and Regional Meeting on Children Affected by HIV and AIDS. However, these attempts are too recent (2010-11) to comment upon their influence on SGIB. Also it is not clear as to how effective links are being visualized between SGIB and the said mechanisms. Other measures by SAARC to institutionalize SGIB includes locating the technical backstopping to SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC), including SGIB in the overall monitoring framework and proposing SGIB as part of its larger regional program on gender equality (SAGEEP).

**Conclusion 8: Technical inputs by UN Women, SAARC and TEG for making SGIB an effective and useful Infobase are inadequate:** SGIB in its current status is not a useful database from point of view of the users (national governments, Civil Society Organisations, researchers, academicians, donors) at national or regional level. This is on account of the inconsistencies in uploading data by Member States which results in inadequate data on identified themes and indicators, even in cases where data is available at the national level. Complex validation processes, lack of support from higher level officials at the national level, limited capacities of Desk Officers (in some cases) in terms of gender and/or statistics are the primary reasons for inconsistent and inadequate uploading. Regional level reporting based on SGIB is also not possible since the data uploaded by member States are not comparable. At the level of SAARC and UN Women, no specific guidelines were developed to check the quality and consistency of data being uploaded. Member State specific efforts streamline the process of uploading of data was also found to be lacking. Training on technical aspects of uploading was found to be adequate. However, at the Member State level, orientation and sensitization of higher officials at the national level, such as legislators on gender, the selected thematic areas, and use of data for policy and planning was not adequately addressed. The TEG does not have statistics or IT expert that could provide guidance to Desk Officers and Focal Points.

## Sustainability

**Conclusion 9: SAARC and UN Women do not share a common understanding on 'exit' and 'sustainability':** For SAARC, initiating and exiting of a SAARC facilitated process is based on consensus among Member States. On the other hand, UN Women works through a limited pool of resources and is bound by its operational framework to have a clear timeframe of support for any development programme. The term 'exit' therefore has different notions for the two partners. Sustainability of SGIB initiative is a factor of ownership of SGIB objectives as well as activities by Member States. This would need greater priority to and commitment for SGIB at the national level. While the issue of ownership by Member States has been discussed in Review Meetings, practical steps were not taken to move towards this direction. It is important to note that sustainability of SGIB relates to Member States working towards SGIB objectives beyond the 'online component'. Besides, the sustainability of the 'online component' is directly related to the usefulness of the Infobase, at Member State level as well as at the regional level. While SAARC remains committed to continue SGIB with or without support from UN Women, these factors needs to be considered for achieving the stated objectives and sustaining the results of the programme.

## 5. Recommendations

It is important to note at the beginning of this chapter that SGIB is a unique initiative both in terms of its concept and implementation structure. Efforts made so far by Member States, SAARC and UN Women have resulted into a regional level program dedicated to promote the cause of gender equality through evidence based policy and programming. Keeping in mind the fact that SGIB so far has worked through a mechanism of consent and collective decision making by the stakeholders, the recommendations have been made for consideration by all stakeholders. However, the findings of the evaluation indicate the need of more concrete steps towards making the initiative effective and sustainable. Keeping with the overall purpose of evaluation, the recommendations are aimed to strengthen the project design; institutional structure and implementation arrangement, technical inputs needed for making SGIB an effective database and sustainability of the initiative. A summary of a logical sequence of steps or effective management of the program is provided as **Figure 3** while the suggested role for stakeholders is provided as **Figure 4** at the end of this chapter. The key recommendations are as follows:

**Recommendation 1: SAARC and UN Women should undertake country specific baseline and develop a results framework for SGIB:** It is recommended that project design and operational framework should be revised to accommodate country specific context and requirements. It may be prudent to develop a country level baseline on existing capacities, presence of research agencies, available gender disaggregated data, policies on gender equality/mainstreaming, and scope of leveraging resources at the Member State level. The baseline can be used for developing country specific operational strategies for SGIB including policy advocacy. Additionally, the baseline can also help in leveraging funds from other donor agencies working with similar mandate.

The baseline assessment shall be used to develop a results framework for the SGIB project. The results framework would define critical milestones with timelines, key assumptions and operational framework for a consented standard operating procedure (SOP). The results framework would also define measurable indicators for monitoring project progress and outputs at the intermediate level and its outcome and overall impact in the long term.

**Recommendation 2: Member States should develop country specific plan of action for effective online component, visibility of SGIB, and advocacy with national governments:** It is recommended that member countries use the baseline to map available data with the indicators along the agreed thematic areas. Data source, definition and its periodicity should be clearly mapped. The exercise will help in identification of data gaps. Based on the country level mapping and assessment, a similar exercise should be undertaken at the regional level. The exercise will help in creating mechanism for data standardization ensuring comparability at the regional level. This exercise will also help in identifying the existing data gaps and will help in providing more clarity on indicators.

**Recommendation 3: Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders should be jointly defined by SAARC, UN Women and Member States:** The objectives of SGIB warrant definite roles to be played by stakeholders. The current management structure of SGIB provides an opportunity to the stakeholders to play complementing roles for making SGIB effective. For instance, SAARC's role in influencing national governments for giving greater priority to SGIB initiative needs to be defined. Similarly, role of Member States in positioning SGIB at national level and making the database vibrant and user-friendly needs to be stated clearly. The roles of UN Women SASRO

and Nepal Country Office also need to be clear and defined. Defining roles and responsibilities of stakeholders will help in setting goals for each stakeholder and in defining accountability.

**Recommendation 4: A defined system of monitoring should be developed jointly by SAARC, Member States and UN Women for tracking progress of SGIB programme:** A synchronized monitoring system *at the regional and national levels* should be developed for tracking progress on SGIB. The monitoring system should take into account all the stated objectives of the Programme including SGIB online component, advocacy with national governments, use of the Infobase for regional level reporting, greater commitment from national governments for gender based disaggregation of data and use of data for planning and policy.

**Recommendation 5: SAARC, UN Women and Nodal Agencies should review the current implementation mechanism and bring appropriate change for making SGIB effective at national and regional levels:** The regional and national level implementation structure needs to be reviewed and revised. At the national level, while the concept of having a Nodal Agency, Focal Point and Desk Officer is appropriate, the profile of Desk Officer should be reviewed. It may be prudent to depute Desk Officers who have proficiency in data analytics with sufficient orientation on gender issues. It is suggested to redefine National Committee to improve its functionality and contribution to SGIB. For greater project level consultation, a smaller facilitation group may be created at the national level which may include subject matter experts and representatives of UN and other multilateral agencies. At the regional level, the profile of the Technical Expert Group may be reviewed to add strong statistical and data analytics expertise. This will enable more specific statistical inputs to member countries on the quality and relevance of data being uploaded.

**Recommendation 6: SAARC and UN Women SASRO should streamline mechanisms for technical input and training:** Capacity development remains as one of the most important aspects requiring strong focus going forward in the project. Greater focus is required on key capacity development areas such as:

- ▶ Awareness and sensitization of stakeholders on gender equality and mainstreaming. The sensitization is required at the national as well as at SAARC level.
- ▶ Developing the capacity of the member countries on data collection, processing and analysis. Based on country level requirements, capacity development of line department personnel, research agencies and other data collection agencies should be developed. This will also involve sensitizing the leadership to develop the culture of using evidence based data for policy planning purposes.
- ▶ Developing capacities of the Nodal Agency, more specifically of the focal point and the desk officer on application of sound statistical principles and analytical tools for processing and analyzing data.
- ▶ Technical inputs to Nodal Agencies about the indicators that are relevant to SGIB.

**Recommendation 7: SAARC and UN Women SASRO should review the current status of the Infobase and take suitable measures to make it effective for users:** The data uploaded by Member State should be reviewed in terms of the features of the software being used, especially from the point of view of its usefulness for policy makers and researchers. This includes data formats, downloading and analysis options for users, visual appeal, and use of analytics to record users.



**Recommendation 8: SAARC should develop guidelines for quality and consistency of data uploaded on SGIB:** SAARC, in consultation with Member States, should develop standard guidelines for consistency and quality of data being uploaded by Member States on SGIB. It should also develop a mechanism for periodic review of country wise performance in terms of consistency, adequacy and quality of data and provide feedback to the Nodal Agencies. Also the issue of validation of qualitative data needs to be addressed through consultation with Member States.

**Recommendation 9: SAARC, UN Women SASRO and Member States should take complementary measures for increasing visibility and usage of the Infobase:** At the regional level, SAARC and UN Women may consider exploring opportunities to position and promote the concept of SGIB at the regional level. Efforts may be made to include SGIB in the general executive agenda of SAARC and promote discussions on SGIB at summit level meetings and during SAARC inter ministerial meetings and expert group meetings. Linking of SGIB with SAARC social charter may also be considered.

At the national level, the Nodal Agency should be entrusted and supported to create more awareness and sensitization on the importance of gender information base and its use for policy and planning. The member countries should prepare a road map for creating wider acceptance and support for SGIB from relevant line departments and ministries. The country road map should be prepared after taking due cognizance of local context, governance mechanisms and external environment. While developing the road map, the member countries should clearly articulate the support needed from SAARC and UN Women in terms of advocacy and technical inputs. SAARC, UN Women and Nodal Agencies should link SGIB to other relevant database.

**Recommendation 10: SAARC, UN Women and Member States should work towards planning sustainability of the SGIB initiative:** The SGIB initiative can be sustained by increased ownership of SGIB by Member States. SAARC can play a facilitative role by providing a regional forum and enhancing commitment by national governments through its available mechanisms while UN Women can support technical support for making the database effective, and for advocacy with Member States as well within SAARC. Steps to be taken by each stakeholder (SAARC, UN Women and Member States) need to be defined along with the timelines.

Table 9 Summary of Recommendations

	Recommended Steps	Responsible Agencies
1.	Undertake country specific baseline and develop a results framework for SGIB	SAARC and UN Women
2.	Develop country specific plan of action for effective online component, visibility of SGIB and advocacy with national governments	Member States
3.	Define roles and responsibilities key stakeholders	SAARC, UN Women and Member States
4.	Develop a defined system of monitoring for tracking progress of SGIB programme	SAARC, Member States and UN Women

	<b>Recommended Steps</b>	<b>Responsible Agencies</b>
5.	Review the current implementation mechanism and bring appropriate changes for making SGIB effective at national and regional levels	SAARC, UN Women and Nodal Agencies
6.	Streamline mechanisms for technical input and training	SAARC and UN Women SASRO
7.	Review the current status of the Infobase and take suitable measures to make it effective for users	SAARC and UN Women SASRO
8.	Develop guidelines for quality and consistency of data uploaded on SGIB	SAARC
9.	Define measures for increasing visibility and usage of the Infobase	SAARC, UN Women SASRO and Member States
10.	Plan for making SGIB a sustainable initiative	SAARC, UN Women SASRO and Member States



## Suggested Logical Sequence for SGIB Operationalisation

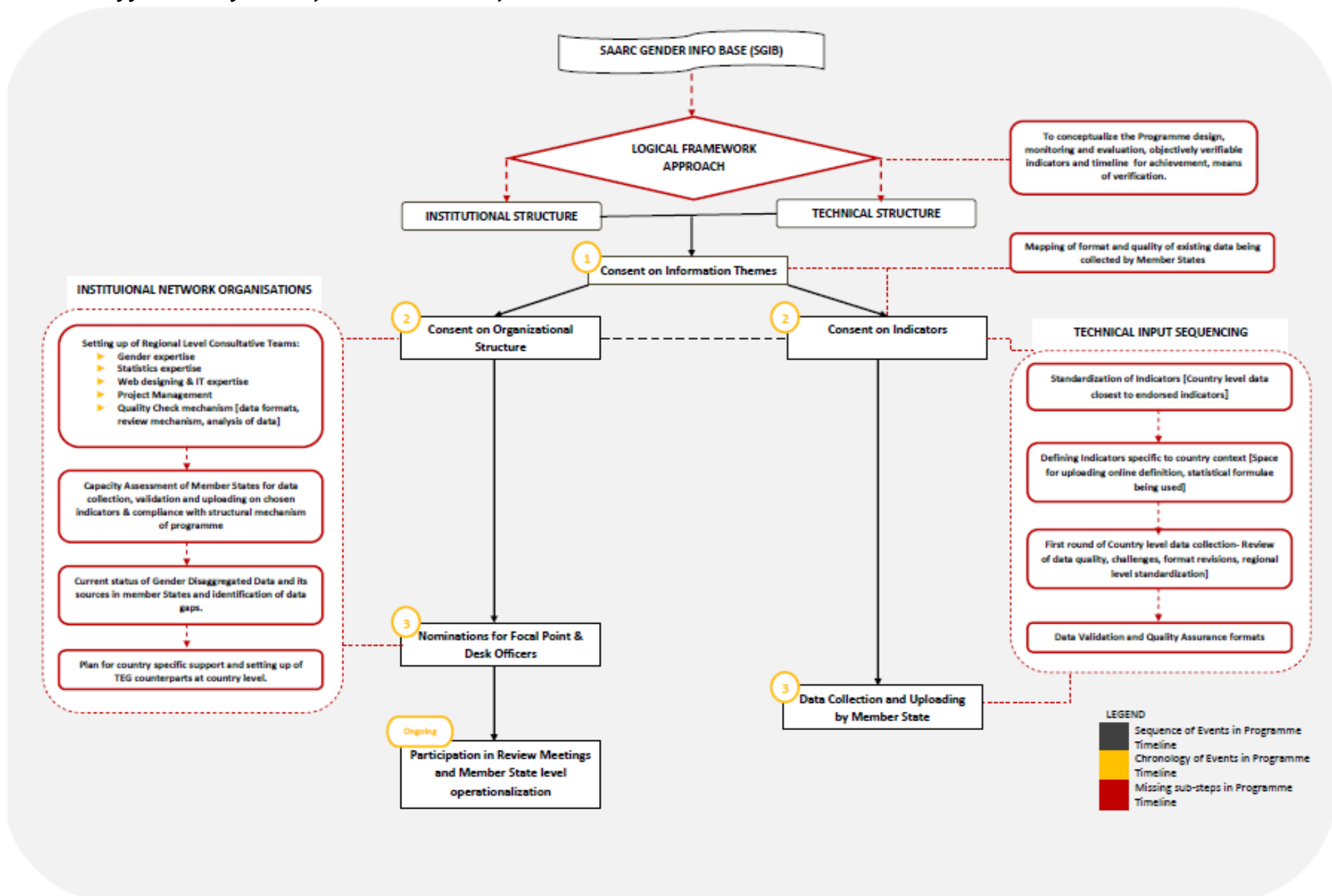


Figure 3 Suggested Logical Sequence for SGIB Operationalisation

## SGIB Programme: Proposed Steps for Way Forward

### Programme Logic:

*“to have a regional repository of qualitative and quantitative data and information that would guide national and regional policy and programming for promoting women’s empowerment and gender equality and thereby supporting policy reform and catalyzing research and action to bring about positive changes in the lives of women and girls in the SAARC Region”*

### Outcome:

Evidence for strengthening national and regional policies and programmes on gender equality and empowerment of women made available and utilized by member states.

### Output:

Web-based qualitative / quantitative data and information made available at a regional level.

### Objectives:

- ▶ Develop a **regional resource knowledge base** by collecting, processing and analyzing agreed set of gender-related information in the region;
- ▶ Enable advocacy with national governments and international agencies for **introducing a gender perspective in governance** and bringing about greater gender equality, equity and sustainable development;
- ▶ Catalyze gender mainstreaming in the region by **enabling, informing, and influencing governments to develop appropriate and gender sensitive policies, programmes and plans** using the vast reservoir of gender related information;
- ▶ Facilitate **drafting of a South Asia Regional Plan of Action** to promote gender equality, peace and development and end gender discrimination; and
- ▶ Promote **regional learning and provide a forum for dialogue on gender equality** and the empowerment of women in the SAARC region.

*On the basis of the aforementioned objectives, the Evaluation Team identifies three Strategic Result Areas: the first relates to the ‘online component’; the second relates to advocacy and mainstreaming at the national level; and the third relates to regional level dialogues and efforts.*

- ▶ **Strategic Result Areas 1: Develop regional resource knowledge base by collecting, processing and analyzing agreed set of gender-related information in the region**

SGIB Programme: Proposed Steps for Way Forward	
Proposed Action Areas	Key responsibility
Develop country level baseline on existing capacities, presence of research agencies, available gender disaggregated data, policies on gender equality/mainstreaming in each of the member countries, and scope of leveraging resources.	SAARC-UN Women SASRO
Use baseline for : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identifying specific areas of support and facilitation for each country.</li> <li>▶ Developing the results framework with defined indicators of success and timelines</li> </ul>	SAARC-UN Women SASRO
Use baseline for country-specific operational plan including advocacy and leveraging resource	SAARC-Nodal Agency-UN Women SASRO
Review usefulness of National Committee National Committee. Propose a smaller facilitation group (TEG counterpart) with expertise in statistics, analysis, qualitative research and willing donors. Involvement of potential users who can also be contributors to the program (UNICEF, World Bank, ADB and other bilateral agencies apart from Government may also be considered.	SAARC-Nodal Agency-UN Women SASRO
Review the composition of Technical Expert Group-involve statistician and database experts.	SAARC-UN Women SASRO
Attain a level of standardization by helping Nodal Agencies/Desk Officers in identifying all relevant indicators/alternative indicators/proxy indicators.	SAARC-Nodal Agency-UN Women SASRO
Standardize the basic minimum quality criteria to be adhered before uploading (for instance formats, labels, definitions, source, date)	SAARC-UN Women SASRO
Generate clarity on uploading qualitative data: address credibility, quality, validation and ownership issues.	SAARC-Nodal Agency-UN Women SASRO
Consider developing an upgraded software with advanced features of downloading, data analysis, assessing users/hits, feedback from external users, web-links	SAARC-UN Women SASRO
Undertake extensive review of the status of SGIB website at the regional level: data adequacy, consistency, quality, scope of use for research/reference/planning/policy, features of the existing software and scope of improvement. The findings of the review shall form the basis of consultation with Member States to address the challenges and desired improvements.	SAARC-UN Women SASRO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Strategic Result Area 2: Advocacy with national governments and international agencies for introducing a gender perspective in governance and gender mainstreaming in the region by enabling, informing, and influencing governments to develop appropriate and gender sensitive policies, programmes and plans using gender related information</b></li> </ul>	

SGIB Programme: Proposed Steps for Way Forward	
Proposed Action Areas	Key responsibility
Define Member State specific advocacy/visibility efforts	SAARC-Nodal Agency-UN Women SASRO
Use SAARC forums for advocacy and commitment for SGIB concept and activities.	SAARC Secretariat
Involve the SAARC desks at MoFAs in strategic meetings relating to SGIB. Promote SGIB in all national/international forums on gender.	SAARC Secretariat
Involve highest level policy and planning bodies (such as planning commission in India) at national level advocacy/visibility events.	Nodal Agency
Outline areas where orientation and capacity building is required such as importance of gender related data, using data for policy, planning and resource allocation. Identify agencies that may be willing to collaborate for capacity building at the national levels.	SAARC-UN Women SASRO-Nodal Agency
▶ <b>Strategic Result Area 3: Promote regional learning and provide a forum for dialogue on gender equality and Facilitate drafting of a South Asia Regional Plan of Action to promote gender equality, peace, and ending discrimination.</b>	
Proposed Action Areas	Key responsibility
Mainstream SGIB within available SAARC mechanisms.	SAARC Secretariat
Use SAARC mechanisms for greater commitment from national governments for promoting SGIB objectives.	SAARC Secretariat
Greater visibility for SGIB at higher level meetings such as Inter-Ministerial meetings and Summits.	SAARC Secretariat
Encourage regional level reporting and publications on gender equality and women's empowerment	SAARC Secretariat
Develop definite and documented strategy for linking SGIB with other regional programmes.	SAARC Secretariat

Figure 4 SGIB Programme: Proposed Way Forward

## Annexure

### I. List of Stakeholders Interviewed

#### Regional level

<b>UN Women, SASRO &amp; Country Offices</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ms. Anne Stenhammer Regional Programme Director, UN Women, South Asia Sub Regional Office (SARO), New Delhi</li><li>2. Ms. Sushma Kapoor Deputy Regional Director, UN Women South Asia Regional Office (SARO), New Delhi</li><li>3. Ms. Gita Gupta Programme Coordinator, UN Women South Asia Regional Office (SARO), New Delhi</li><li>4. Ms. Sangeeta Thapa Programme Coordinator, UN Women Programme Office, Kathmandu</li><li>5. Ms. Khadija Khondker National Programme Manager, UN Women Bangladesh</li><li>6. Mr. Sadiq Sayed UN Women Afghanistan Country Office</li><li>7. Ms. Alice Shackelford, Country Office, Pakistan</li></ol>
<b>SAARC Secretariat</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mr. Ibrahim Zuhuree, Director Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat</li><li>2. Mr. Hassan Shifau Former Director Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat</li></ol>

	<p>3. Mr. Haleem Thowfeeq Computer Programmer, SAARC Secretariat, Super Administrator, SGIB</p>
<b>SGIB Adviser</b>	<p>Ms. Chandni Joshi SGIB Regional Adviser/Former RPD/UNIFEM</p>
<b>Technical Expert Group</b>	<p>1. Dr. Rinchen Chopel Member, SAARC-UN Women Technical Expert Group</p> <p>2. Dr. Chandra Bhadra Member, SAARC-UN Women Technical Expert Group</p>
<b>Core Committee Member</b>	<p>1. Dr. Meena Acharya SGIB Core Committee Member, Nepal</p> <p>2. Ms. Ratna Sudarshan SGIB Core Committee Member, India</p> <p>3. Prof. Savitri Goonersekere SGIB Core Committee Member, Sri Lanka</p>
<b>SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC)</b>	<p>1. Ms. Kesang Dechen, Deputy Director, SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC), New Delhi</p> <p>2. Mr Indra Sen, SDC-NFP Co-ordinator (India)</p> <p>3. Mr. Mukesh Pund, Principal Scientist, NISCAIR, Former SDC National Focal Point Coordinator</p> <p>4. Mr. Rajeev Kumar, Computer Programming Officer, SDC</p>

## National Level

### 1. Afghanistan

S. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Ms. Sayeda Mogjan Mostafavi	Deputy Minister - Technical and Policy, Ministry of Women's Affairs
2.	Ms. Gull Ghutai Azimi	Head, Statistics & Research, Dept. of International Relations, Ministry of Women's Affairs (SGIB Focal Point)
3.	Mr. Iftikhar Ahmed Kakar	Former Desk Officer, Former UNDP Consultant to Ministry of Women's Affairs
4.	Ms. Rahila Arif	Head, Demography and Social Statistics Department, CSO
5.	Ms. Noor Zia Kohislani	Women Council Director, Ministry of Rural and Rehabilitation Development
6.	Ms. Homa Sabri	UN Women Afghanistan
7.	Mr. Sadiq Syed	UN Women Afghanistan
8.	Ms. Samira Hamidi	Director, Afghan Women's Network

### 2. Bangladesh

S. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Mr AYM Golam Kibria	Jt Secy Ministry of Women and Children Affairs - SGIB Focal Point
2.	Ms. Mumita Tanjeela	Assistant Director, Department of Women Affairs, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs - SGIB Gender Desk Officer
3.	Mr. Tariq-ul-Islam	Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs - SGIB Nodal Agency
4.	Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury	State Minister, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs - SGIB Nodal Agency
5.	National Committee	Representatives from MoWCA, Mo Social Welfare, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Mo Primary and Mass Education
6.	Ms. Riti Ibrahim	Secretary, Statistics Division, Ministry of Planning
7.	Ms. Khadija Kondker (UN Women) and UN representatives of Joint Programme on VAW	Representatives from ILO and UNFPA Country offices and UN Women Bangladesh Programme Office
8.	Ms Rokeya Kabir	Member National Committee and Executive Director Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha

### 3. Bhutan

S. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Phub Sangay	Discussion with Chief- Survey and Data Processing, National Statistical Bureau
2.	Mr. Kuenga Tshering	Discussion with Director, National Statistical Bureau
3.	Mr. Sonam Penjor	SGIB Focal Point
4.	Mr. Tshering Samdrup	SGIB Gender Desk Officer
5.	Ms. Angela Rossinini Ison	International Gender Specialist UN RCO Bhutan
6.	Ms. Rinzi Pem	Gender Analyst ,UNDP Bhutan
7.	Ms. Phintsho Choeden	Executive Director, National Commission for Women and Children(NCWC)/Head of SGIB Nodal Agency
8.	National Committee	National Committee

### 4. India

S. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Aditya Prakash	Statistical Adviser (SGIB Focal Point), Ministry of Women & Child Development
2.	Ms. Pratima Gupta	Deputy Director (SGIB Gender Desk Officer), Ministry of Women & Child Development
3.	Ms. S. Jayalakshmi	ADG, Social Statistics Division (Ex-SGIB Focal Point), Formerly in Ministry of Women & Child Development and currently in Ministry of Statistics & Implementation

### 5. Maldives

S. No.	Name	Designation/department/organization
1.	Ms. Fathimath Aafia	Deputy Minister (Head of SGIB Nodal Agency and SGIB Focal Point), Department of Gender and Family Protection Services, Republic of Maldives
2.	Ms. Mamdhooha Ali	Assistant Director (SGIB Gender Desk Officer), Department of Gender and Family Protection Services



S. No.	Name	Designation/department/organization
3.	Mr. Fuwad Thowfeek	Chairman, Election Commission, Republic of Maldives (earlier in Ministry of National Planning and Statistics- former SGIB Nodal Agency)
4.	Mr. Muhammad Naseer	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (former Director Social Affairs, SAARC) SGIB initiated during his Directorship at SAARC
5.	Ms. Ateefa	Earlier In-charge of Strategic Action Plan (SAP) with the then Ministry of Gender and Family Protection Services (MoGFPS). Acted as SGIB Focal Point
6.	Ms. Fathimath Muna	Deputy Director, Ministry of Education and National Committee Member
7.	Mr. Khalil	Chief Immigration Officer and National Committee Member
8.	Ms. Fathimath Yumna	Ex SGIB Focal point

## 6. Nepal

S. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Ananda Raj Pokharel	Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare (SGIB Nodal Agency)
2.	Mr. Mahendra Narayan Shreshtha	Ex-Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare
3.	Mr. Ram Prasad Bhattari	Focal Point, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare
4.	Mr. Laxmi Tripathi	Ex-SGIB Focal Point, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare
5.	Mr. Gaja Rana	Ex-SGIB Focal Point, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare
6.	Mr. Ritu Raj Bhandari	Ex-SGIB Focal point, Ministry of Women, Children & Social Welfare
7.	Mr. Nebin Shreshtha	Central Bureau of Statistics (Ex-National Committee member)
8.	Mr. Rabi Prasad Kayastha	Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation (Ex- National Committee member)
9.	Ms. Manamai Bhattarai	Women Trafficking Control Desk, Department of Women and

S. No.	Name	Designation
		Children (Ex-National Committee member)
10.	Mr. Rudra Suwal	Central Bureau of Statistics (Ex-National Committee member)
11.	Mr. Bharat Raj Sharma	SGIB Gender Desk Officer

## 7. Pakistan

S. No.	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Touseef ul Hai Khan	Assistant Census Commissioner, Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Islamabad (SGIB Gender Desk Officer)
2.	Mr. Mohammad Sheikh Saddiq	Ex-Desk Officer
3.	Mr. Saeed Ahmed	SGIB Statistical Officer
4.	Dr. Bahrawar Jan	Deputy Director General, Federal Bureau of Statistics (National Committee and Validation Member)
5.	Ms. Azra Aziz	Director Research, National Institute of Population Studies (National Committee and Validation Member)
6.	Mr. Habib Ullah Khan	Census Commissioner, Population Census Organization, Islamabad (SGIB Focal Point)
7.	Mr. Jawad Afzal	Deputy Director, Special Education
8.	Wing Commander (Ret.) Khalid Raza	Director IT, Bait -ul- Mal, National Committee Member (Islamabad)
9.	Dr. Aliya H khan,	Professor & Chairperson , Department of Economics, Quaid- e - Azam University, Islamabad
10.	Mr. Khizar Hayat Khan	Head of SGIB Nodal Agency
11.	Miss. Uzma Quresh	Point of Contact for UN Women

## 8. Sri Lanka

S.No.	Name	Designation
1.	Mr. Muhammad Hizbullah	Deputy Minister of Child Development and Women's Affairs - SGIB Nodal Agency
2.	Ms. Sumithra Rahubaddhe	Secretary, Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs (SGIB Focal Point)
3.	Prof. Swarna Jayaweera	CENWOR (NC Member)
4.	Mr. Cecil De Silva	Director, Child & Women's Bureau of Department of Police (NC Member)
5.	Mr. K.G Tilakaratne	Department of Census & Statistics (NC Member)
6.	Dr. Neela Gunasekera	Chairperson, National Commission for Women (NC Member)
7.	Mr. Asoka Alawatta	Addl Secretary, MoCDWA
8.	Mr. Hemantha Wanniarachchi	Senior Assistant Secretary, MoCDWA
9.	Mrs. Kumari Kosgahakubura	Asst. Secretary, MoCDWA
10.	Ms. K.Y.C.M. Kumari	Development Assistant, MoCDWA (SGIB Gender Desk Officer)
11.	Dr. Savitri Goonesekere	CENWOR (Core Committee Member)

## II. List of documents reviewed

- ▶ MoU between SAARC and UN Women, 2001 & 2007
- ▶ A Preliminary Concept Note - Expert Group Meeting on Preparation of SAARC Gender Database
- ▶ SAARC Gender Infobase Outline
- ▶ SGIB User guide & Status Reports
- ▶ ToRs
  - SGIB Desk
  - SGIB Focal Point
  - SGIB Core Committee
  - SGIB National Committee
  - SGIB Review Meeting
  - SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC)
  - TEG
- ▶ Review Meeting Reports (First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Meeting)
- ▶ Focal point Meetings Report (First, Second and Third Meeting)
- ▶ Core Committee Report (Fourth Meeting)
- ▶ Round Table Meetings Report

### III. Data Collection Schedule

Country Visited	Period	Team
Nepal	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2011-4 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	Mini Thakur, Shveta Bhardwaj, Fathimath Yumna
Bhutan	5 <sup>th</sup> November 2011- 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	Ajay Pandey, Abha Saxena, Fathimath Yumna
India	7 <sup>th</sup> November 2011-10 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	Mini Thakur, Shveta Bhardwaj, Divya Trikha
Sri Lanka	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2011 - 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	Dr. Niraj Seth, Shveta Bhardwaj, Divya Trikha, Fathimath Yumna
Pakistan	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2011 - 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	Mona Khan, Nazish Shekha, Sidra Minhas
Afghanistan	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2011 - 23 <sup>rd</sup> December 2011	Dr. Niraj Seth, Abha Saxena
Maldives	21 <sup>th</sup> November 2011 - 24 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	Mini Thakur, Ajay Pandey, Fathimath Yumna
Bangladesh	21 <sup>th</sup> November 2011-24 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	Dr. Niraj Seth, Abha Saxena, Anchita Ghatak

#### IV. Follow up on Issues Discussed in Review Meetings

First RM, 29-30 August 2006, Paro Bhutan	
<p><b>Operation Issues:</b></p> <p>One Nodal Agency with a specified Contact Person within that Agency has been identified.</p>	Followed up
<p>Prototype will be sent to Member Countries by SAARC Secretariat by 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006. The Member States will provide their acceptance and comments if any by 15 November 2006.</p>	Followed up
<p>The statistical format demonstrated by UNIFEM at the Meeting will be modified on receipt of the finalized indicators from the Member Countries and submitted to the SAARC Secretariat within three months of receipt. SAARC Secretariat will then forward it to the Member States.</p>	Followed up
<p>SAARC Secretariat will channel all communications to the Member Countries through their Foreign Ministries. SAARC Secretariat will also send a copy to Nodal Agencies.</p>	Followed up
<p><b>Technical Issues:</b></p> <p>If some problems are encountered in operating the Prototype and/or engendering the data, UNIFEM upon request from nodal agencies will explore possibilities of organizing training and capacity building in the field.</p>	The first training provided to DO /FP was in this regard
<p>The indicators identified by Member Countries will be sent to the SAARC Secretariat by 15 October 2006. The Core Committee Members in consultation with the SAARC Secretariat and UNIFEM will come up with a common framework by 15 November 2006, which in turn will be sent to the SAARC Secretariat, for purposes of circulation to the Member States by 20 November 2006.</p>	Followed up.
<p>Five years time frame was agreed as the period for back-tracking of the qualitative and</p>	

<p>quantitative data/information.</p> <p>Qualitative and non-traditional data will be identified/obtained and analyzed through pilot studies and researches.</p> <p>Standardization of operational definition, methodology and indicators will be done for inter-country and intra-region comparability of the data.</p>	<p>----</p> <p>No discussions about how this could be done. No specific commitments received from Member States.</p> <p>Glossary of Terms developed by Core Committee members and presented in 4<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting</p>
<p>Second RM, 10-11 January 2008, Kathmandu, Nepal</p>	
<p><b>Operational issues:</b></p> <p>Finalization of prioritized Indicators for Statistical Database will be provided by the Member States within three months (by mid-April 2008).</p> <p>Collection of qualitative data by the Member States will commence with immediate effect.</p> <p>SAARC Secretariat will upload qualitative data on the G-Data Shop during the Pilot Phase.</p> <p>Round Tables will continue to be conducted by the SAARC-UNIFEM Technical Group at the request of the Member States, and/or to facilitate ongoing processes.</p> <p>The Meeting requested SAARC Secretariat and UNIFEM to assess, explore and develop a plan of action for resource mobilization at national, SAARC and international levels</p>	<p>Member states did send in their prioritized indicators.</p> <p>No discussion on validation of qualitative data noted recorded.</p> <p>No Information</p> <p>1<sup>st</sup> Roundtable Meeting started in 2007 and thereafter more meetings were held.</p>

<p>including multi/bilateral organizations to address the requests of the Member States for financial, technical, equipment and capacity building support.</p> <p>Given that the SAARC Gender Database in its continuing phase will require greater political commitment, ongoing advocacy and resource mobilization at national, regional and global levels and to provide vision, leadership and guidance to the entire process, the Second Review Meeting endorsed the urgent and critical need to bring on board a person of international eminence, with extensive and substantive experience in spearheading issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment; and has a conceptual understanding of the criticality of knowledge and information to bring visibility and prominence to the SAARC Gender Database at national, regional and global levels.</p> <p><b>Technical issues:</b></p> <p>Formats for data entry will be developed by the SAARC-UNIFEM Technical Group and sent to the Member States through the formal channels by mid-February 2008.</p>	<p>2 trainings on uploading of Data conducted</p> <p>The 1<sup>st</sup> Focal Points meeting held in June 2008 endorsed Ms. Chandni Joshi as the Advisor. (no ToR available)</p> <p>Followed up</p>
<p>Third RM, 16-17 March 2009, Male, Maldives</p>	
<p><b>Operational Issues:</b></p> <p>UNIFEM to support operationalizing of SGIB process in the Member States through its country offices. There is also a need of increased dialogue among nodal agencies of the Member States and UNIFEM country/program offices to strengthen institutional capacity. Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka which do not have UNIFEM country/program offices, may formalize their linkages with the SGIB regional initiative based in UNIFEM Nepal Program Office.</p> <p>Development of Terms of Reference for SGIB Desks, Focal Points, National Committees and also for the Review Meeting. The Meeting recommended that the draft TOR will be prepared by the Technical Expert Group and submitted for consideration of the Meeting of the Focal Points to be held in September 2009 and finalization during the Fourth Meeting of the Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children.</p>	<p>No evidence of any documented guidance to UN Women Country Offices in SGIB.</p> <p>TORs presented in the 4<sup>th</sup> Review Meeting, April 2010</p>



<p>As for the issue of cross linking of SGIB with other SAARC mechanisms, namely, Micro-finance and Home-based workers, the SAARC and UNIFEM will hold bilateral consultations with relevant organizations to formalize the linkages.</p> <p><b>Technical Issues:</b></p> <p>The Technical Expert Group in consultation with the Core Committee should prepare regionally harmonized/ standardized terminology for commonly used terms in the SGIB process.</p> <p>The Review Meetings along with Core Committee and Technical Expert Group should initiate identification of emerging gender issues in women and development in the Member States for eventual expansion of prioritized thematic areas beyond the current set of agreed themes and components. This process may be conducted parallel to the ongoing process of collection and uploading of information on agreed themes.</p> <p>The Meeting revised the regional guideline for Validation proposed by the Meeting of the Focal Points of SAARC Gender Info Base (Kathmandu, June 2008).</p>	<p>This happened in July 2011</p> <p>Glossary of Terms were presented in the 4<sup>th</sup> Review meeting</p> <p>Emerging issues were identified during 4<sup>th</sup> Core Committee members meeting held on February 2010</p> <p>Followed up</p>
<p>Fourth RM, New Delhi, India, 5-6 April 2010</p>	
<p><b>Operation Issues:</b></p> <p>SGIB should have sufficient data and information to justify its purpose and in view of this, Meeting agreed that Member States will upload data and information by 24 April 2010.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Member States should make every effort to engender population and agriculture censuses and national level surveys to incorporate SGIB indicators</li> </ul>	<p>This was raised in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Review meeting as well.</p> <p>No discussion on operational aspects</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Based on the information and data on the SGIB Online Component, Member States may initiate collaborative efforts/initiatives among each other to support work in this area.</li> <li>▶ SGIB should be able to bring to the notice of policy makers and planners, the emerging issues related to women development in the region. The emerging issues thus identified by the Core- Committee with background information will be posted on SGIB online component for information of the Member States</li> </ul> <p>Member States may develop Action plans, which includes advocacy component and strengthening of capacity for operationalisation of SGIB at national level</p> <p>Member States may allocate appropriate resources and logistical facilities to enable full operationalization of SGIB at national level</p> <p>The transfer of SGIB housing and domain to SAARC Documentation Centre (SDC) to be completed and made operational by 24 April 2010.</p> <p>Regarding monitoring of SGIB, the Meeting recommended that the reporting format which is being developed jointly by Bhutan and Nepal for reporting to the SAARC Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children, may incorporate the monitoring of SGIB as well. UNIFEM agreed to facilitate the development of the SGIB monitoring component</p> <p>The Meeting decided that SAARC-UNIFEM Technical Expert Group will enhance the current list of definitions and post it on the SGIB online component by end April. Member States will provide their inputs by end May 2010.</p>	<p>of such effort. No evidence of Member Specific discussions on such possibilities.</p> <p>Apart from few Members states others are yet to submit Action Plan. Capacity issues was mentioned during 3<sup>rd</sup> Review Meeting</p> <p>No mechanism was set to monitor this.</p> <p>Followed up and completed.</p> <p>Yet to be formalized</p>
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<p>The Meeting appreciated the efforts of SAARC-UNIFEM Technical Expert Group in preparing the draft Terms of Reference and decided that Member States would forward their comments on the draft TORs to the Secretariat within one month i.e. by end April 2010. It was also decided that the approved modalities for housing of SGIB Online Component with SDC, should form part of the documentation for institutionalization of the SGIB. The Meeting further decided that SAARC-UNIFEM Technical Expert Group would develop the draft TOR for SGIB Advisor by end April 2010.</p> <p><b>Technical Issues:</b></p> <p>SGIB Online Component needs to create additional portal to host unstructured qualitative information on women empowerment and gender equality in the Member States with search feature.</p> <p>Joint SAARC-UNIFEM evaluation of the SGIB will be undertaken following established practices of the SAARC.</p>	<p>No evident follow up.</p> <p>TOR for SGIB Advisor not available</p> <p>No evident follow up.</p> <p>Followed up and in progress.</p>
<p>Fifth RM, 7-8 June 2011, Kathmandu, Nepal</p>	
<p><b>Operation Issues:</b></p> <p>SAARC Secretariat may submit a detailed proposal on SAARC Gender Equality and Empowerment Programme to the Technical Committee on Women, Youth and Children for its consideration.</p>	<p>Followed up.</p>

<p>The Meeting reiterated its earlier recommendation regarding frequent turnover of personnel involved with the SGIB in the Member States, and the need to institutionalize the process of capacity building, peer learning, cooperation between Member States with technical assistance through UN Women and other sources.</p> <p>Member States should continue to upload and update data/information as frequently as possible so that it could become a major source of information on women empowerment in the region and a hub for new regional initiatives, research and projects etc.</p> <p>Noting the data gaps on the thematic area 'Violence Against Women', it was felt that Member States should have more information collected on the same, by carrying out survey/studies. For this, Member States may seek support of UN Women and other partner agencies.</p> <p>Member States would endeavor to make their country portals more dynamic and reader-friendly. The Member States would also be provided with privileges to edit basic information available in their respective portals.</p> <p>Technical backstopping, Round Table Meetings and other mechanisms would continue to undertake capacity building activities in the Member States.</p> <p><b>Technical Issues:</b></p> <p>SAARC would facilitate development of monitoring format to be developed jointly by Bhutan and Nepal, which should include the SGIB monitoring component. UN Women would extend its support to Bhutan and Nepal for development of monitoring format for SGIB component.</p> <p>The Meeting agreed on the 'Disclaimer' and the User Guide for the website as at <b>Annex-VIII</b> and <b>Annex-IX</b> respectively.</p> <p>As mentioned in paragraph-11 above, the SGIB Evaluation would be conducted as per the recommendation of Fourth Review Meeting and the Third Meeting of the Focal Points.</p>	<p>Issues raised from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Review Meeting onwards</p> <p>No guidance given to Member States and no evident follow up.</p> <p>No evidence of follow-up. No specific guidance provided.</p> <p>No evidence of follow-up. No specific guidance provided.</p> <p>In progress.</p> <p>Not Applicable Evaluation commenced in Oct 2011</p>
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## V. Evaluation Framework

### A. Evaluation Criteria: Relevance

Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
What is UN Women's comparative advantage in designing and implementing SGIB?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does SGIB fit into the mandate strategic priorities of UN Women?</li> <li>▶ Does it fit into SAARC's mandate and priorities?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SGIB objectives are aligned with UN Women's mandate and strategic priorities.</li> <li>▶ SGIB is aligned with SAARC Gender priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> <li>▶ SAARC</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
Is the programme need based?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What kind of need analysis was undertaken before conceptualizing SGIB?</li> <li>▶ Were the current data gaps in SAARC member nations analyzed before designing the content and format of SGIB?</li> <li>▶ Was there an analysis of the comparability of data available with Member Nations?</li> <li>▶ Was the need analysis used for framing the results?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Need analysis carried out to identify the components of the SGIB project.</li> <li>▶ Need analysis used to define the project outcomes and 'value-add'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> <li>▶ SAARC</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
Is the programme result-oriented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Were the outputs, outcomes and indicators clearly laid out?</li> <li>▶ Is there a clarity and consent among stakeholders about the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Outcomes, outputs and indicators of results were developed.</li> <li>▶ Result milestones were defined.</li> <li>▶ The value-add of SGIB was clear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> <li>▶ SAARC</li> <li>▶ TEG</li> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews

Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
	<p>outcomes/results and milestones?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ What value-addition does SGIB bring to national/credible databases available at the Member State level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SGIB provides new data or new collated database than previously exists.</li> </ul>		
Is the programme design (implementation framework) relevant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Are the identified themes and indicators relevant for the country?</li> <li>▶ Have these indicators helped in identifying existing data gaps in the national data collection system?</li> <li>▶ Is the Nodal Agency a relevant office to host SGIB? What advantages does it have to function as Nodal Agency?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identified themes and indicators are relevant and complement the available data on the identified themes.</li> <li>▶ The Nodal Agencies identified as per the need of the project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ Focal Point</li> <li>▶ National Committee members</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews

## B. Evaluation Criteria: Effectiveness and Efficiency

Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
Effectiveness of project management at regional level?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is the project management structure defined?</li> <li>▶ Is there clarity on roles and responsibilities between UN Women SASRO-UN Women Nepal Country Office and SAARC?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The project has a defined management structure</li> <li>▶ The roles and responsibilities of collaborators (SAARC-UN Women SASRO) are defined and consented.</li> <li>▶ The roles and responsibilities of the UN Women SASRO and Nepal Programme Office are well defined</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> <li>▶ UN Women NPO</li> <li>▶ SAARC</li> <li>▶ TEG</li> <li>▶ Nodal Agency/FP/DO</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
Effectiveness of Project Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is there a defined internal monitoring of the progress by UN Women and SAARC?</li> <li>▶ What is the financial review mechanism? Is cost benefit analysis done internally?</li> <li>▶ Are the role and transitions required at TEG level monitored?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Project monitoring is defined, regular and adequate for mid-course correction.</li> <li>▶ Regular project monitoring was undertaken and reports made available to all stakeholders</li> <li>▶ PE of UN Women supported TEG was regularly undertaken and consistent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SAARC</li> <li>▶ UN Women</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
Effectiveness of the SGIB implementation structure (at Member State level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How aware are the concerned officials (Focal Points/Desk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Roles (ToRs) are clear to the national level officials.</li> <li>▶ The defined roles are played by the national level stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ National Committee Members</li> <li>▶ Focal Points</li> <li>▶ Desk Officers</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews

Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
	<p>Officer/National Committee) at the national level about their ToRs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ How frequently have the FP and DOs changed?</li> <li>▶ Is the membership profile of the national committee appropriate (as per ToR)? What role do they currently play?</li> </ul>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Have adequate efforts been made towards visibility of SGIB and involvement of top officials (head, Nodal Agency) in SGIB?</li> <li>▶ Is there any internal monitoring system for tracking progress on SGIB at the Nodal Agency level?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Visibility measures undertaken</li> <li>▶ SGIB discussed at national level forums/opportunities</li> <li>▶ SGIB monitored internally at the Nodal Agency level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ National Committee Members</li> <li>▶ Focal Points</li> <li>▶ Desk Officers</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
Effectiveness of SGIB as database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is SGIB data updated with respect to data available through national data collection systems? If not, what factors deter updating?</li> </ul>	Data is regularly made available Latest, publicly available. data is uploaded on the database		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Does the Nodal agency make any effort to analyze the users or get feedback from them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Clarity about users</li> <li>▶ Efforts made to get feedback from potential users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ National Committee</li> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ Focal Points</li> <li>▶ Desk Officers</li> </ul>	Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is the validation process functional and followed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The defined validation process is functional</li> <li>▶ Effectiveness of the validation process (facilitative/complex)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ National Committee</li> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ Focal Points</li> <li>▶ Desk Officers</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is there clarity on uploading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Understanding of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ National Committee</li> </ul>	Desk Review



Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
	qualitative data? Is qualitative data being uploaded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ importance of qualitative data</li> <li>▶ Efforts made/mechanism available for uploading qualitative data</li> <li>▶ Clarity on validating qualitative data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ Focal Points</li> <li>▶ Desk Officers</li> </ul>	Interviews
	Is there clarity on uploading qualitative data? Is qualitative data being uploaded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Uploaders and users are satisfied with the current format and features of the application</li> <li>▶ Scope of improvement in format/features.</li> <li>▶ Barriers/challenges in sourcing and uploading data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ National Committee</li> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ Focal Points</li> <li>▶ Desk Officers</li> <li>▶ Users (researchers/CSOs/Census offices/statistical bureaus)</li> <li>▶ SDC</li> </ul>	Interviews
Effectiveness of the technical support from SAARC UN Women				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Were the technical inputs needed for the project identified and defined by UN Women-SAARC?</li> <li>▶ Is the profile of technical experts relevant to the project needs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Required technical inputs identified and used for profiling of core committee and Technical Experts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SAARC Secretariat</li> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ Focal Point</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Was the technical assistance (through Core Committee and TEG) adequate?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The core committee and TEG able to provide the technical inputs required for the project.</li> <li>▶ This would need to be gauged through the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Nodal Agencies</li> <li>▶ Focal Point</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews

Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
		recipient of the technical support		
	▶ Have the capacity Building needs been addressed by SAARC-UN Women?	▶ Capacity building needs identified and addressed.	▶ Focal Points ▶ Desk Officers	Desk Review Interviews
	▶ What is the response time on queries related to technical problems in uploading? Are the queries adequately addressed?	▶ Technical backstopping adequate	▶ Focal Points ▶ Desk Officers	Interviews
	▶ Were effective measures taken by SAARC to ensure that SGIB gets high level recognition at the Member state level?	▶ Efforts made towards increasing SGIB's visibility	▶ SAARC Secretariat ▶ UN Women SASRO ▶ TEG	Desk Review Interviews
	▶ Were effective measures taken by SAARC -UN Women to resolve the emerging issues regarding the inconsistencies/variations in uploading?	▶ Issues related to uploading of data (including sourcing, validation and technical specifications) reviewed and resolved.	▶ SAARC Secretariat ▶ UN Women SASRO ▶ Super Administrator ▶ SDC ▶ TEG	Desk Review Interviews
	▶ Were effective measures taken by SAARC -UN Women to resolve the emerging issues regarding the format/features/user-friendliness of the database?	▶ Issues related to format and features of application reviewed and resolved.	▶ SAARC Secretariat ▶ UN Women SASRO ▶ Super administrator ▶ SDC ▶ TEG	Desk Review Interviews
Is the progress justified compared to the time taken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is the time investment made by UN Women justified in terms of the project gains?</li> <li>▶ Is the time taken to realize the project (between SAARC and UN Women) justified?</li> <li>▶ Has the time been invested by UN Women been optimally utilized for</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Justification for time utilization/lags available</li> <li>▶ Time investments leading to concrete progress.</li> <li>▶ Timelines defined and followed up during</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SAARC Secretariat</li> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> <li>▶ TEG</li> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews

Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
	<p>project management and technical inputs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is the time invested by Member States justified?</li> </ul>	<p>implementation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶</li> </ul>		
Are investments made under the project optimal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Are the investments made by UN women justified in terms of the results?</li> <li>▶ Have the investments been reviewed at the UN Women SASRO /HQ level?</li> <li>▶ Are opportunity costs by Member Nations accounted for?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Clarity on investment and expected results at Un Women SASRO level at the time of project initiation.</li> <li>▶ Analysis of investment Vs results done.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> <li>▶ SAARC Secretariat</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Has the project expenditure pattern been reviewed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Scope of altering financial support arrangements reviewed internally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews

### C. Evaluation Criteria: Results

Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
What are the tangible results with respect to SGIB objectives?				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Has SGIB helped in informing national plans, policies, research or data collection exercise?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Evidences of SGIB being referred in plan documents of the Nodal Agency and other concerned offices such as the Census Office/Statistical bureau/Planning Commission etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Member States</li> <li>▶ UN Women</li> <li>▶ SASRO</li> <li>▶ TEG</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Has SGIB triggered collection of data on indicators for which data was not available through national systems of data collection?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Evidence from Member States</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Member States (National Committee, Nodal Agency, FP)</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Has SGIB helped in moving forward on the agenda of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women within Member States?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SGIB reference in discussions on need of gender disaggregated data at country level (evidence from Member states)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Member States (National Committee, Nodal Agency, FP)</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is SGIB a reference point for SAARC for other related programmes?</li> <li>▶ Has SGIB helped in envisioning the agenda of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women within SAARC?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SGIB reference in discussions on the agenda of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women within SAARC/SAARC supported programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SAARC Secretariat</li> <li>▶ UN Women</li> <li>▶ SASRO</li> <li>▶ TEG</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is SGIB a useful database for policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SGIB being referred by intended users (Said</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ National Committee</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews

	makers/researchers/gender advocates	stakeholder group)	members ▶ CSOs/women groups/other UN Offices	
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#### D. Evaluation Criteria: Sustainability

Probe Areas/Key Questions	Sub questions	Criteria for Judgment	Source of data	Data collection method
What is the long term vision for SGIB?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Was exit strategy defined at the point of initiating the project?</li> <li>▶ Were exit strategy/options discussed between the collaborators (SAARC-UN Women SASRO)?</li> <li>▶ Is there clarity on the implications of UN Women limiting its support to the SGIB?</li> <li>▶ Is there a long term vision for continuing SGIB at SAARC-UN Women level?</li> <li>▶ Is there a long term vision for continuing SGIB at Member State level?</li> <li>▶ Are there indications of Member States supporting SGIB in long run? How many years is 'long-run'?</li> <li>▶ Are their indications of SAARC supporting SGIB in long run?</li> <li>▶ Is there clarity on components where support from UN Women is needed in near future?</li> <li>▶ Have financial support options (apart from UN Women) been identified by SAARC?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Exit strategy defined and discussed.</li> <li>▶ Clarity on exit options available.</li> <li>▶ Long term view on SGIB available at SAARC-UN Women level and Member State level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ SAARC Secretariat</li> <li>▶ UN Women SASRO</li> <li>▶ Nodal Agency</li> <li>▶ National Committee</li> </ul>	Desk Review Interviews

## VI. Snapshot of Evaluation Team

### 1. Niraj Seth- Team Leader

Niraj is a development professional with over 20 years of experience, leading teams on a number of development issues including women's empowerment, education, mental health and child protection. With extensive experience at the grassroots level as well as in national and international level organizations, she has a comprehensive perspective of development sector. Niraj is a social worker by training and holds a Ph.D. degree.

### 2. Mini Thakur- Engagement Manager

Mini has over 10 years of social development experience at the national, state and grassroots level. She has done her Masters in Migration Studies from the University of Sussex, Brighton. Mini has worked extensively in the area of reproductive & sexual health, unsafe mobility and migration. Her key expertise lie conceptualizing monitoring and evaluation strategies, evidence building and documentation, formulating strategies for partnership building, advocacy and policy debates.

### 3. Mona Khan – Team Member

Mona is a Chartered Accountant with over 11 years of experience in the area of NGO reviews and poverty alleviation, Corporate Social Responsibility, anti-money laundering, internal audit, financial & operational reviews, risk management and process documentation. She set up the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practice in Ernst & Young Pakistan.

### 4. Shveta Bhardwaj – Team Member

Shveta is a post graduate in Business Economics from University of Delhi and has over 4 years of experience in grant expenditure evaluations, review of internal control systems and procedures for various development programs. She has extensively worked on projects concerning monitoring and evaluation and process reviews for developmental organizations.

### 5. Ajay Pandey-Team Member

Ajay has over 10 years of experience of working in the development sector. A post-graduate in Rural Development from Xavier Institute of Social Services, Ranchi, Ajay has extensive experience in program development and management, project appraisal, planning, management and monitoring & evaluation.

### 6. Abha Saxena – Team Member

Abha has double Masters degree from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the London School of Economics and Political Science with development sector experience of over 4 years at the grassroots level. Her core competencies lie in community social psychology, community participation, field intervention, advocacy and qualitative research methodologies. She has engaged in several community based interventions with thrust on health, mental health, HIV/AIDS and disability related issues.

### 7. Divya Trikha – Team Member

Divya is a post graduate from the Delhi School of Economics and comes with sound theoretical knowledge on various aspects relevant to the development sector. She has been actively involved in primary and secondary data collection and literature review. Her core competency lies in program evaluation, project support & documentation, data analysis and coordination aspects of the assignments.

**8. Nazish Shekha – Team Member**

Nazish has over 5 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation, policy advocacy, research and documentation and gender sensitization and development. She has done her Masters in Gender & Development from University of Melbourne, Australia. She works with E&Y Pakistan.

**9. Shradha Pathya - Team Member**

Shradha is a graduate in Finance from Delhi University with a specialization in Finance. She is currently working as an Analyst with Development Advisory Services of Ernst and Young Private Limited (Ernst and Young). Her core competencies include documentation, data analysis, literature review and assistance in program execution.

**10. Anchita Ghatak - External Consultant**

Anchita holds a Masters Degree in Arts and her areas of experience include Gender equity, violence against women and girl child education. She has expertise in monitoring and evaluation, training and development and research & documentation.

**11. Sidra Minhas - External Consultant**

Sidra holds a Masters degree in Public Administration and her areas of expertise include gender mainstreaming and gender auditing, policy advocacy, not for profit research, project management, training and capacity building.



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