

Independent Evaluation Service led

Evaluation of UN Women’s contribution to Women’s Economic Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific through private sector engagement

I. Background

This evaluation is the first regional thematic evaluation in the Asia and the Pacific region on Women’s Economic Empowerment to be led by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES). Given that the regional flagship programme “WeEmpowerAsia” (WEA) is coming to an end in August 2022, this evaluation seeks to learn from the programme; ensure lessons are captured and the efforts feed into UN Women Asia and the Pacific broader strategy for WEE moving forward. The evaluation will thus focus on UN Women’s engagement with the private sector (refer to box 1) and its contributions to women’s economic empowerment in Asia and the Pacific. This forward-looking evaluation aims to support the UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and Country Offices in Asia and the Pacific in learning from experience and as input to strategic decision making; the UN Women headquarters senior management, and the WEE section may also be interested in learning from the findings. The present terms of reference (ToR) provide key information about the evaluation, including a short summary on UN Women’s work in WEE in general based on a preliminary portfolio analysis conducted by the Regional Evaluation team, and specifically the WeEmpowerAsia programme.

Box 1. Private sector definition

UN Women guidance document on use of the UN Women logo provides a definition of “Private Sector” - this definition has been adapted and will be explored and expanded upon as the evaluation moves forward:

- (a) For-profit and commercial enterprises of any size;
- (b) Corporate or philanthropic foundations;
- (c) Business associations, coalitions and alliances (including e.g. chambers of commerce, employers’ associations, cooperatives, industry and cross-industry initiatives where the participants are for-profit enterprises);
- (d) State-owned enterprises; and,
- (e) High-net worth individuals/family offices.
- (f) Women entrepreneurs that own a small to medium sized enterprise (SME)

II. UN Women’s support to Women’s Economic Empowerment in Asia and the Pacific

Investing in women’s economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth. Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in businesses, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home. But they also remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Gender discrimination means women often end up in insecure, low-wage jobs, and constitute a small minority of those in senior positions. It curtails access to economic assets such as land and loans. It limits participation in shaping economic and social policies, and, because women perform the bulk of household work, they often have little time left to pursue economic opportunities.

Several international commitments support women’s economic empowerment, including the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and a series of International Labour Organization conventions on gender equality.¹ UN Women supports Women’s Economic Empowerment in line with these, and with the growing body of evidence that shows that gender equality

¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/global-norms-and-standards>

significantly contributes to advancing economies and sustainable development. Women's Economic Empowerment was a key outcome in UN Women's Strategic Plan 2018-2021,² aligned to the targets and indicators of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 for gender equality and women's empowerment and of several other SDGs relating to inclusive growth, decent work, ending poverty, and reducing inequality, and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development. The new UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025 identifies women's economic empowerment as a key impact area, aiming to advance the economic empowerment of women so that they have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy.³ At the regional level, UN Women Strategic Note focuses on Impact Area 2 through two dedicated outcomes: "women workers, including women migrant workers, contribute to sustainable development and benefit from reduced social and economic inequality through decent work and safe migration" and More women lead, participate and access to business opportunities and leadership within the private sector to advance sustainable and inclusive growth." In all economic empowerment programmes, UN Women reaches out to women most in need, often by engaging with grassroots and civil society organizations.

Women represent two thirds of the poor in Asia. According to a recent analysis commissioned by UN Women and UNDP, as of 2021 an estimated 435 million women and girls will be living on less than \$1.90 a day — including 47 million pushed into poverty as a result of COVID-19.⁴ Economic insecurity is part of a cycle of disadvantage for women, often caused by discrimination in employment and education. Poverty magnifies this disadvantage by leading to poor health outcomes, limited decision-making power and few opportunities for women to pull themselves out of poverty. In many parts of Asia, women work in backbreaking and unsustainable agriculture for little reward. Moreover, the overseas employment of women in the informal sector, particularly as domestic workers, is an increasing area of concern. Women also tend to be under-represented in entrepreneurship, and even when they do own businesses, they are smaller, motivated by necessity rather than opportunity, where scope for profit and expansion is limited. UN Women is looking closely at the ripple effects on women's lives and is working with governments and communities to address these and other issues of women's poverty in Asia and the Pacific.

Asia and the Pacific faces a large gender gap in economic participation, reflected in the wide difference between the rates at which men and women participate in the labor force. Where women do have paid employment, they end up with a disproportionate share of the most precarious jobs. UN Women works to reshape conditions across economies, from increasing women's influence in economic policymaking to providing practical skills so women can build businesses and make better livelihoods. UN Women particularly supports initiatives to enhance economic opportunities for women, while also building the capacity of economic institutions and networks to provide women with resources. UN Women supports women to reshape conditions at both ends of the economic spectrum — from boosting women's participation in economic policy-making to supporting women and their communities with practical skills for participating in market to ensure a sustainable livelihood. For instance, UN Women's Markets for Change programme backs the efforts of female market vendors in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to gain a voice in market management, advocate for their rights, and improve the cleanliness and safety of marketplaces. The WEA programme is a flagship effort in this direction that will contribute to the achievement of gender equality through enabling women's increased participation in the labor force and in the market place, improved opportunities for women entrepreneurship and business start-ups, and through strengthening of corporate sector's commitment and action to ensure gender equality in business culture and practices (refer to box 2).

² SP Outcome 3: Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy. Insert link

³ UN Women Strategic Plan 2022-2025: <https://undocs.org/en/UNW/2021/6>

⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2020/Gender-equality-in-the-wake-of-COVID-19-en.pdf>

Between 2019 to 2021, UN Women has implemented 31 projects⁵ across 18 offices which include Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Lao, Cambodia, India, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji MCO (including Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), Pakistan, Myanmar, China, Bangladesh, Timor Leste, Afghanistan and the Regional Office- Asia Pacific. The offices receiving the largest funds include Papua New Guinea, Myanmar and Pakistan.⁶ The total committed budget is USD 34.3 million USD with the largest donors being Australian DFAT and the European Commission. The common themes across all these countries will be explored during the inception phase to inform the evaluation design. The WEA project, funded by the European Commission is significant in this regard, being implemented across 7 countries (Thailand, Malaysia (although UN Women is not present), Vietnam, China, India, Indonesia and Philippines), with a total budget of more than 8.45 million USD or 24% of the overall WEE budget in the region.

Management of the regional WEE portfolio

The ROAP exercises the triple mandate of UN Women (normative, coordination and operational) and functions at a regional level and in support of UN Women’s offices and UNCTs in 24 countries across the region. The RO also oversees WEE programmes in the region, carries out advocacy and advisory initiatives, and provides integrated normative support for implementation, monitoring and reporting on global agreements norms and standards upon request, to UNCTs as a non-resident agency. ROAP seeks to position itself as a knowledge and policy advisory hub that generates new knowledge, facilitate knowledge exchange between countries in the region and explore cross-regional learning opportunities, and institutionalize policy and technical expertise for high quality programming to strengthen capacity of field offices in the region throughout the programme cycle. The WEA P4 Programme Management Specialist funded by the European Union is the only position dedicated to Women’s Economic Empowerment at the ROAP. In addition to the Programme manager, the current WEA personnel focused on the includes a team of 16: 6 Country Programme Managers and 5 Programme Associates for China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, 1 Programme Finance and Admin Associate covering both the Region and Thailand, 1 WEE international consultant, 1 M&E international consultant and a team of Communication consultants.

Box 2: Introduction to the WeEmpower Asia Programme



WeEmpowerAsia (WEA) programme

The WeEmpower Asia (WEA) programme is a collaborative effort between the Regional Office of UN Women for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and the European Union (EU) to leverage their joint commitment to enhance women’s economic empowerment globally.

The overall objective of the WEA programme is that **more women lead, participate, and have access to enhanced business opportunities and leadership within the private sector to advance sustainable and inclusive growth**. The programme (which is being implemented from April 2019 to August 2022) will achieve this through three complementary outcome areas to be implemented in seven selected middle-income countries (China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam) in Asia. These outcome areas include advocacy, business engagement and entrepreneurship with the ultimate aim of contributing to women’s economic empowerment in Asia.

Stakeholder mapping

⁵ The evaluation team used the Donor Agreement Management System. Out of these 31 projects, 4 projects are regional. 3 projects have been excluded as they are in draft/pending stage as of 13th December, 2021.

⁶ Based on Projects listed in the Donor Agreement Management System, retrieved on 13th December 2021. The Asia-Pacific Resource Mobilisation Performance, February 2021, identifies Fiji MCO, Pakistan CO and the Regional Office Asia Pacific as the largest recipients in the WEE thematic area. The information will be verified during the inception phase.

The below is an overview of key stakeholder groups relevant to the WEE agenda in the AP region. During the inception phase, the evaluation team will be undertaking a more comprehensive mapping to ensure the universe of key stakeholders is identified and to inform the sampling approach, with a specific focus on stakeholders identified under the WEA Programme.

Stakeholder Role	Specific Group	Main Contributions
Target groups of rights holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women owned-businesses, Women entrepreneurs and networks CSOs 	Direct beneficiaries and programme/project participants Responsible partners
Principle and primary duty bearers who make decisions and implement WEE projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN Women ROAP /CO/PP European Union UN Women Executive Board; HQ SMT/ELT/ WEE section Private sector partners, WEPS signatories ASEAN APEC UNESCAP UNDP ILO Women20 High-Level Panel on Women’s Economic Empowerment National and Provincial governments Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, Economic affairs and key ministries National financial institutions Bilateral Donors 	Development, implementation, M&E of policies and programmes Joint programmes development and responsible partners

III. Evaluation background: purpose, intended users and scope

The UN Women Evaluation Policy⁷ and UN Women Evaluation Handbook⁸ are the main guiding documents that set forth the principles and organizational framework for evaluation planning, conduct, and follow-up in UN Women. These principles are aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation⁹ and Ethical Guidelines.¹⁰ The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) evaluates the work of UN Women to enhance organizational accountability, provide evidence-based information for decision-making and to contribute to learning on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

⁷ UN Women Revised Evaluation Policy, UNW/2020/5/Rev.2 ; accessible at: <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/executive%20board/2020/second%20regular%20session/unw-2020-5-rev2%20revised%20eval%20policy%20for%20endorsement%20at%20srs%202020%203%20sept%20rev.pdf?la=en&vs=3925>

⁸ UN Women Evaluation Handbook, 2015; accessible at: <https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/en/evaluation-handbook>

⁹ UNEG, “Norms and Standards for evaluation”, 2016, available online at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>.

¹⁰ UNEG, “Ethical guidelines”, 2008, available online at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>.

Purpose

To inform the strategy for Women’s Economic Empowerment work based on the WEA programme lessons learned, this evaluation will facilitate an understanding of UN Women’s WEE portfolio, an understanding on how UN Women is defining and engaging with private sector for WEE, achievements over the course of the Strategic Note 2019-2021 including through the implementation of the WEA Programme, the opportunities, and challenges as well as gaps in programming and results.

The primary intended users of the evaluation (outlined in the box below) are the UN Women ROAP, including the WEA team, Offices in which WEA is being implemented, European Union stakeholders and implementing partners. Also, UN Women Senior Management and programme staff at the headquarters, regional and country levels with an interest in, or working in WEE and the UN Women Senior Management and relevant headquarters units. The evaluation may be useful for other actors working in WEE, including private sector, partner governments, civil society, UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs, forums and platforms, national partners, as well as other donors.

Primary & Secondary Intended Users	Primary Intended Use			
	Learning Knowledge Generation &	Strategic Decision-Making	Accountability	Capacity Development & Mobilisation
UN Women ROAP Personnel	X	X	X	X
UN Women CO/HQ Personnel (SMT, WEE)	X	X		
UN Women IEAS	X			
UN Coordination Partners	X			X
Primary Target groups (individuals, private sector companies, communities, programme / project partners)	X		X	X
National and local governments	X		X	X
Civil Society Representatives	X		X	X
Donors & Multilateral Partners	X	X	X	

Scope

The evaluation uses the UN Women regional Strategic Note 2018-2021 and the WEA programme document as its main framework. The Strategic Note for the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific includes migration programme efforts, however, these will be primarily excluded from this evaluation. Women’s Economic Empowerment efforts are also implemented across other thematic areas, such as livelihood efforts under Women, Peace and Security, however, these will be primarily excluded. Nevertheless, the evaluation will recognize that other thematic areas are inextricably linked (e.g. WPS and WEE), and UN Women’s efforts operate within a larger system (i.e. UN system) and context at regional and country level. The ROAP Strategic Note Outcome 2.1 (aligned to SP, 2018-2021 Output 8), Outcome 2.2 (linked to SP, 2018-2021 output 9)¹¹ will be the focus of this evaluation.

Several evaluations have been undertaken during the period under review, including the corporate evaluation of

¹¹ UN Women ROAP Strategic Note’s Outcome 2.1 “Women workers, including women migrant workers, contribute to sustainable development and benefit from reduced social and economic inequality through decent work and safe migration” and Outcome 2.2 “More women lead, participate and access to business opportunities and leadership within the private sector to advance sustainable and inclusive growth.”

UN Women's contribution to women's economic empowerment (2014), and the regional meta-analysis, *Advancing Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Asia and the Pacific, 2017*. For the WEA programme, an external evaluation was completed in 2021 by its donor, EU FPI. At the country level, projects which fall under the WEE thematic area have been evaluated, which include the Strengthening Qinghai women farmer's income security and resilience in a changing climate (China, 2021), Women's Access to Equal Employment and Leadership in China Programme (China, 2021), Economic Empowerment of Women Home Based Workers and Excluded Groups in Pakistan (Pakistan, 2020) and the Thematic evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment (AWEE and FWW) programme (Nepal, 2019). Further, the Country Portfolio Evaluations (Pakistan in 2021, Vietnam in 2021, Cambodia in 2021, Papua New Guinea in 2020 and Bangladesh in 2019) also take a closer look at the Women's Economic Empowerment efforts in the country as part of the overall country evaluation.

Timeframe: The evaluation will cover the period between 2018 to Q1 2022, with the evaluation to be initiated in December 2021 and the aim to have the final report ready by June 2022. This timeframe will capture a comprehensive picture of the WEA programme results, which started on 1 April 2019 and will end on 31 August 2022.

Geographic scope: The evaluation will cover all countries in the UN Women Asia and the Pacific region, including all WEA countries; while all countries will be included in the evaluation, in-depth dives will be conducted with two countries (potentially one WEA and one non-WEA countries). The selection of the countries will take place during the inception phase, depending on resource availability and a selection criteria to be established.

Limitations

This evaluation will be undertaken during Q1- Q2 of 2022 and it is expected that the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to impact the ability to travel and conduct the evaluation. Thus, the evaluation will need to utilize secondary data sources and online forms of data collection. Virtual interviews and focus group discussions will be conducted, but the team may not be able to reach the same number of individuals through primary data collection (interview and survey). National consultants will be engaged to facilitate reach to rights holders and other partners at country level. The timeframe for the evaluation is also very tight, thus the evaluation will need to be narrowly scoped to deliver more in-depth information. This is the first evaluation of this thematic area at regional level. However, there are several evaluations managed by country offices and evidence from Country Portfolio Evaluations that will provide evaluative evidence, as mentioned above.

IV. Evaluation objectives

The objectives of this regional evaluation are to:

- Assess the relevance and coherence, effectiveness and organizational efficiency, and the sustainability of UN Women's engagement with the private sector for WEE (WeEmpower Asia) and the extent to which project efforts are working coherently with the priorities and needs related to WEE efforts led by Country Offices and in synergy with the UN system.
- Analyse how the human rights approach and gender equality principles are integrated in the work of UN Women's engagement with the private sector for WEE.
- Identify a "menu of evidence" of "what works" and "what doesn't work" in terms of engaging the private sector to catalyse women's economic empowerment to understand the cost of invested resources to achieve the intended outcomes with the aim of providing input to country offices' investments in this area for future programmatic work.

- Identify lessons learned and provide action-oriented recommendations to inform UN Women’s work in this area.

The evaluation will be guided but not limited to the evaluation questions listed below. The questions will be refined during the inception phase based on discussions with key stakeholders and the initial portfolio analysis and desk review. Any other relevant issues that may emerge during the evaluation process may also be explored:

- To what extent does UN Women’s support to private sector engagement for WEE (specifically through the WEA programme) align with global, regional, and national priorities (including those of the European Union donor) and speak to UN Women’s added value within the WEE space? [Relevance]
- To what extent is UN Women’s regional and country level support to private sector engagement for WEE (specifically through the WeEmpower Asia) work internally coherent with UN Women’s and UN system overall WEE efforts? [Coherence]
- To what extent is UN Women in Asia and the Pacific region contributing to the advancement of the WEE agenda, providing innovative solutions, and directly benefitting women’s economic empowerment through the approach of private sector engagement (specifically WeEmpower Asia) to advance sustainable and inclusive growth? [Effectiveness]
- To what extent did UN Women identify and engage the most marginalized groups within the context of private sector engagement for WEE (e.g. women with disabilities, LGBTQI persons) and were there any unintended results or contributions to transformative change? [HR and GE]
- To what extent did UN Women actively identify and address the social norms and structural barriers that can facilitate an enabling environment for private sector engagement for WEE? [HR and GE]
- To what extent has UN Women’s influence supported increased regional and national ownership of private sector engagement for WEE agenda and which areas of the WeEmpower Asia approach have the most potential for replication and scaling-up? [Sustainability]
- How well are UN Women’s human and financial resources at regional level used to support efficient regional and country level WEE efforts (primarily the WEA project)? [Organizational Efficiency]

Additional in-depth WEA-specific evaluation questions (see page 13) will be explored during the inception phase to assess feasibility.

VI. Evaluation design

UN Women evaluations are gender-responsive meaning that both the process and analysis apply the key principles of a human rights-based approach: they are inclusive, participatory, ensure fair power relations, and transparent; and they analyse the underlying structural barriers and sociocultural norms that impede the realization of women’s rights. Gender-responsive evaluation applies mixed-methods (quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approaches) to account for complexity of gender relations and to ensure participatory and inclusive processes that are culturally appropriate. UN Women evaluations are also utilization-focused, which means that it will be tailored to the needs of the organization through a participatory approach from the inception through to the development of recommendations, which will facilitate production of a useful evaluation. It will be carried out in accordance with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct and UN Women Evaluation Policy and guidelines and the UNEG Guidance: Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in

Evaluation. The evaluation is employing a non-experimental, theory-based approach¹². A re-constructed Theory of Change will be used as the basis for contribution analysis. The WeEmpower Asia project will be a key focus area of the evaluation assessment of contributions to outcomes, and the portfolio analysis will enable a broader assessment of alignment and coherence of WEE efforts in Asia and the Pacific.

Methods of data collection

Mixed methods will be employed to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data to overcome weaknesses inherent in purely qualitative and quantitative methods and ensure a gender responsive approach. As part of the inception report, the evaluation team will develop a sampling frame (area and population represented, rationale for selection, mechanics of selection, limitations of the sample) and specify how it will address the diversity of stakeholders. The evaluation team will take measures to ensure data quality, reliability and validity of data collection tools and methods and their responsiveness to gender equality and human rights; for example, the limitations of the sample (representativeness) should be stated clearly and the data should be triangulated (cross-checked against other sources) to help ensure robust results. During the inception phase the evaluation team will develop a data protection plan and ethics protocol for data collection explaining how protection of subjects and respect for confidentiality will be guaranteed.

The following methods of data collection will be employed:

- **Document review:** all key WEA and WEE related documents will be systematically reviewed and content analysis to identify emergent themes.
- **Portfolio analysis** will be conducted to determine the universe, characteristics, and trends of UN Women WEE initiatives, programmes and projects, including their investment. This analysis will guide the selection of case studies.
- **Meta-synthesis of evaluations and reviews:** is a systematic review of the evaluations to identify common findings, conclusions, and recommendations, and can provide secondary data for this evaluation. Given that there is evaluative evidence of different WEE efforts in the region, a meta-analysis of these evaluations may be included to understand the different opportunities and challenges in the Women's Economic Empowerment efforts undertaken across the region and where potential synergies exist to replicate or continue WEA approach and ensure internalization of the lessons learned based on WEA.
- **Analysis of Publications and communications products:** the production and dissemination of knowledge and communication products is an essential approach of UN Women; a survey will be sent to the target audience of key publications to determine the use of these products and the reach statistics will be gathered and analyzed.
- **Case studies:** criteria for selection of two case studies will be developed to allow for an in-depth look into two strategies employed by the WeA programme and the identification of factors of success and challenges encountered. Through the case studies, stories of impact will be explored.

¹² The theory of change approach to evaluation is a widely deployed evaluation methodology that makes assumptions explicit about how program is supposed to work and create social change. It focuses on the causal relationships between resources, activities, short-term and long-term outcomes and the context of the intervention, including its unintended consequences. Like any planning and evaluation method, the theory-driven evaluations require the stakeholders to be clear on long-term goals, identify measurable indicators of success and formulate actions to achieve goals. However, its focus on causal relations between resources, activities, outcomes and the context of intervention makes this method particularly suitable for the assessment of complex programmes. The theory-driven approach makes the programme transparent, allowing the stakeholders to see how it is thought to be working from multiple perspectives. It helps to identify critical areas and issues on which the evaluation should focus. Overall, a theory-driven approach by mapping a process of change from beginning to end establishes a blueprint for the work ahead and anticipates its effects, and it reveals what should be evaluated, when, and how.

- **Interviews with key informants** identified through the stakeholder analysis (across all stakeholder groups) will be conducted in a semi-structured format.
- **Focus Group Discussions** with female and male rights holders that have participated in programming efforts of UN Women related to the selected case studies will be explored. The COVID-19 context in the selected countries will be considered and a “do no harm approach” will be employed.
- **Surveys: UN Women personnel** working in the WEE area, including WEA personnel, and private sector partners may be conducted to identify common opportunities, challenges in WEE area of work while leveraging recent survey data to avoid duplication.

Data analysis methods

The data analysis will employ mixed methods. Quantitative data will be obtained from the survey and publications analysis and from the meta-analysis of evaluations and financial analysis. NVivo qualitative analysis software will be used to analyse qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions.

Contribution Analysis will be used by the evaluation to develop an overall ‘performance story’ for UN Women’s work on WEE in the Asia and the Pacific region with a focus on the WeEmpower Asia project. WEA contributions to outcomes and their internal coherence with WEE corporate agenda will be assessed against the reconstructed theory of change. The contribution analysis will provide a basis for understanding which interventions show evidence of being most promising for scaling up or scaling back. The evaluation will synthesize evidence from secondary sources, portfolio analysis, and case studies to assess plausible contribution to observed changes, including exploring alternative explanations. An evidence map will be utilized to map information obtained from different sources on the same evaluation question.

Analysis will include using the following methods of validation:

- *Triangulation*: to validate results reached by different methods, or initiate new enquiries where findings cannot be confirmed
- *Feedback*: through programme management team engagement, meetings with Evaluation Reference Group, comments on reports, and a validation workshop
- *Identify gaps and alternative explanations*: enabling the team to seek out additional evidence or clearly state inferences based on the theory of change.

The gender results effectiveness scale may be employed to assess the extent to which the reported results are gender transformative. The Gender at Work framework may also be used to assess the extent to which the WPS area of work is stretching across the informal to the formal / individual to systems to influence transformative change. The inception report will detail the suggested approach based on the extensive desk review, portfolio analysis and stakeholder consultations.

Stakeholder participation

Ideally rights holders who have directly participated in or are affected by UN Women programming efforts will be engaged in discussing the outcomes of the programming efforts from their perspective and analyzing the findings of the evaluation. However, given both the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the cost/benefits to the participation of rights holders as evaluation participants will be assessed during the inception phase, as the evaluation will prioritize “do no harm” and does not want to take time away from livelihoods activities. In the case that it would be too costly for rights holders to participate, a representative of the rights holders engaged by UN Women will be contacted for feedback.

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) will be established representing UN Women’s key private sector, government, civil society, and UN system partners in the WEE space. The ERG will be asked to engage and provide input at every stage of the evaluation process, from inception phase to preliminary results and final draft report. The ERG plays a critical role through remote meetings in ensuring a high quality, transparent process, providing insights on the key questions and approach, ensuring factual accuracy, ensuring gaps and misinterpretation of information is avoided. They will also be key informants. The ERG also plays a key role in the dissemination of the evaluation findings and recommendations and ensuring the use of the information by UN Women and key partners.

VII. Management and quality assurance

The UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES) is responsible for the management and conduct of this evaluation, including the quality of the evaluation report and its presentation to the UN Women offices. All evaluation processes at UN Women establish mechanisms to ensure high quality evaluation processes and products as outlined in the [UN Women Evaluation Policy](#) and [Handbook](#). The Evaluation Report will follow the [United Nations Editorial Manual](#). The UN Women Evaluation Report Quality Assurance (GERAAS) criteria will be used to assure quality (See Annex 1). All products are subject to quality review by the peer reviewer, the evaluation reference group, and the evaluation management group.

This evaluation will have the following management structure:

- **Regional Evaluation Specialist** of the Independent Evaluation Service will manage the coordination and day-to-day management, and serve as the team leader, leading methodological approach, collection of data, analysis and writing; as Team Leader, the RES is also responsible for overseeing the work of the evaluation team members, managing the contracts and assuring quality of the work. The RES will also closely coordinate with other IES Evaluation Specialists engaged in similar evaluations of the thematic area (corporate evaluation and WCARO).
- **Evaluation team:** evaluation team members will include an evaluation analyst responsible for key analytical tasks, systematization of information and contribution to analysis and report and presentation preparation; WEE thematic expert to support the case studies and (i.e. private sector engagement for GEWE); National evaluators in the case study countries to support the data collection in country and provide key contextual information.
- **Evaluation Management Group** for administrative support and accountability: Deputy Regional Director, WEA Project Manager, and the Regional Evaluation Specialist.
- **Evaluation Reference Group** for substantive technical support (max 10 persons): UN Women country focal point from case study countries (max 2), private sector, National government, Civil Society, Development partners/donors, UN partners.
- **Peer Review** for methodological guidance and feedback: 1 IES staff will be engaged as a peer reviewer.
- **Quality Assurance:** IEAS Director and IES Chief.

VIII. Timeframe and evaluation products

Preparatory work for the thematic evaluation initiated in December 2021 – the team is expected to be on board to initiate the inception phase in February 2021 and the report should be delivered by June 2021. The expected deliverables of the overall evaluation are outlined below.

Phase	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul/Aug
Preparation							
Terms of Reference							

Team recruitment							
Theory of Change Workshop with WEE team (virtual)							
Inception meeting with ERG (virtual)							
Inception report							
Data collection & Analysis phase							
Survey							
Field visit / Remote KIIs							
Analysis							
Report Phase							
Preliminary findings workshop with ERG (virtual)							
Draft report shared with ERG							
Final report							
Communication products							

XI. Evaluation team composition, skills and experiences

The evaluation team will have a combination of the requisite experience in evaluation and technical expertise in gender equality and women’s empowerment and WEE. The Regional Evaluation Specialist from the IES will serve as the Team Leader, manage the evaluation process, constitute a quality assurance system, and provide administrative and substantive support, including data collection, analysis and report drafting. The composition of the evaluation team will strive for diversity and gender balance. A summary of the team profile is below. The individual TOR’s will be advertised following UN Women human resources procedures.

- 1. Evaluation Analyst:** The evaluation analyst will be a core team member leading the portfolio analysis, key analyses for the inception report, data collection, case studies, staff survey and drafting of the presentations and synthesis report.
- 2. Women Economic Empowerment – Private sector Specialist Consultant:** The WEE Evaluation Consultant is expected to review all evaluation products and provide substantive review to ensure thematic area is captured accurately. The WEE Evaluation Consultant is expected to take the lead on the case studies in collaboration with the evaluation analyst and with oversight of the evaluation team leader and draft summaries that can be stand alone and integrate sections into the evaluation synthesis report.
- 3. National evaluator/s:** The National Evaluation Consultant/s will be recruited after the case studies have been selected during the inception phase. They are responsible for ensuring that contextual information on the case study countries selected have been well understood and articulated, reviewing data collection tools, methodological design. The National Consultant/s are expected to conduct or support data collection with key stakeholders in country and translate notes into English.

XII. Ethical code of conduct

UN Women has developed a [UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form](#) for evaluators that must be signed as part of the contracting process, which is based on the [UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct](#). These documents will be annexed to the contract. All data collected by the team members must be submitted to the evaluation manager in Word, PowerPoint or Excel formats and is the property of UN Women. Proper storage of data is essential for ensuring confidentiality and a data protection plan will be developed during

the inception phase. The evaluation's value added is its impartial and systematic assessment of the thematic area. As with the other stages of the evaluation, involvement of stakeholders should not interfere with the impartiality of the evaluation. The evaluator(s) have the final judgment on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation report, and the evaluator(s) must be protected from pressures to change information in the report. Proper procedures for data collection with rights holders who may have been affected by violence must be adhered to as outlined in the [WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for research on violence against women](#). Additionally, if the evaluator(s) identify issues of wrongdoing, fraud or other unethical conduct, [UN Women procedures](#) must be followed and confidentiality be maintained. The [UN Women Legal Framework for Addressing Non-Compliance with UN Standards of Conduct](#), and accompanying policies protecting against retaliation and prohibiting harassment and abuse of authority, provide a cohesive framework aimed at creating and maintaining a harmonious working environment, ensuring that staff members do not engage in any wrongdoing and that all allegations of wrongdoing are reported promptly, investigated and appropriate action taken to achieve accountability.

ANNEXES

- 1. [UN Women GERAAS evaluation report quality checklist](#)
- 2. [UN Women Evaluation Consultants Agreement Form](#)
- 3. [UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System](#)
- 4. [UN Women Evaluation Handbook](#)

Annex 5. Potential WEA-specific Evaluation Questions to be explored during inception phase

Criterion	Key Evaluation Questions	Specific Action/ Questions
Relevance	<i>To what extent was the programme consistent with key beneficiaries' (private sector and women entrepreneurs), requirements, countries and region's needs, as well as donor priorities?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the relevance of the programme increased during the COVID-19 pandemic? If yes, how? • To what extent has the programme met the needs of the key stakeholders, at a national and regional level? What could have been done differently? • To what extent has the programme aligned with the strategic priorities set out by the donor (EU FPI), as well as EU policies on Gender Equality? • To what extent were the programme's supporting or contributing activities relevant/in line with national and regional policies and/or strategies. Please specify the areas of relevance. Please provide specific examples of good contributions to date. • To what extent did the program embrace an innovative approach to gender equality and women's economic empowerment?
Effectiveness	<p><i>To what extent were the expected results achieved against the planned timeframe, targets and performance indicators?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent were the programme's Mid-Term findings and recommendations been addressed?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent were the programme's approaches, mechanisms, tools and strategies, effective?</i></p> <p><i>Was the programme innovative and forward-looking?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the programme's implementation strategy provide the most effective route towards expected results, both in connection to the initial programme design and the programme adaptation to the COVID-19 context? • How did the programme mainstream or address cross-cutting UN Women thematic areas? • To what extent has the programme met its performance indicators against the targets initially set? • What were major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of results? • To what extent have the programme stakeholders benefitted from the programme? Were they satisfied? How did WEA contribute/trigger further actions? • To what extent was the programme's partnership approach to engaging and collaborating with key implementing partners (Responsible Partners) been effective? • How effective was the programme's communication/visibility strategy and execution? How were these efforts perceived by the programme's beneficiaries? • To what extent were the programme's monitoring mechanisms effective for measuring progress and results? • Which Mid-Term findings and recommendations have been implemented? Which ones remain pending and why have they not been addressed? • What strategies and approaches demonstrative the programme's innovative and forward-looking attitude?
Efficiency	<i>To what extent did the management structure</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the coordination mechanisms, implementation arrangements/relationships between WEA Programme Management

	<p><i>(including human resource management) support efficiency for programme implementation?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent were the human and financial resources sufficient and efficiently used to achieve the objectives?</i></p>	<p>Team (PMT), Programme Country Offices and other key programme stakeholders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How efficient was the information flow between WEA and EU delegations? • Has the programme activities been implemented in a timely manner in line with the workplans? • Were funds used and utilize in a timely manner? • Were there any budget shifts/re-allocations? If yes, what was the justification? (e.g. shift in priorities, additional human resources were needed, etc.) • To what extent has the programme used the least costly resources possible to achieve the desired results? • Identify concrete examples of how the programme team has increased efficiency in its work (for example through improved programme delivery, reduced transaction costs, consolidation of large number of small projects into a limited amount of larger programmes). • Review any delays in programme implementation, identify the causes (internal or external e.g. COVID) and examine if they have been resolved. • What were successful risk mitigation actions taken by the programme to resolve challenges? • How did the programme leverage resources and partnerships to catalyze the achievement of desired results? • Were there comparable (e.g. Win Win and G7) lower-cost strategies/ approaches/ modalities that would have helped the programme achieve its results in a timelier and more resource-efficient manner?
<p>Impact</p>	<p><i>To what extent did the programme's interventions contribute to achieving an enabling environment to support women economic empowerment and gender equality? What were measurable / tangible changes?</i></p> <p><i>What were unintended effects (positive or negative) of the programme?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent have the programme activities contributed to policy change at a national level? • To what extent have the capacities of programme key stakeholders (women entrepreneurs, private sectors, WEPs signatories, policy makers, governments) strengthened as a result of the programme activities? • To what extent ha the private sector strengthened their commitment to the WEPs and initiated action to ensure gender equality in business culture and practices? • To what extent has the programme knowledge products contribute to creating an enabling environment for women economic empowerment and gender equality in the region? • To what extent has the programme increased the number of WEPs signatories and number of companies who have taken the GAT tool in the region? • To what extent have the programme knowledge-based products, knowledges exchanges platform and pool of champions, advance women's economic empowerment? • To what extent have the programme events and outreach efforts raise

		<p>awareness of the WEPs and strengthened the network of private sector companies and WEPs signatories to enhance implementation of WEPs and gender-sensitive business practices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent has the programme strengthened EU visibility in Asia and Europe around gender-equality? • What could have the programme done better to achieve a larger impact? • What were unintended (positive or negative) by-products of the programme?
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p><i>How will the programme results be sustained in the long-term post programme closure?</i></p> <p><i>What is the programme's exit strategy?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent has the program created opportunities for replication and scaling-up?</i></p> <p><i>How could the WEA programme be resourced beyond 2022 and what areas would be the most important ones to invest in to maximize impact from phase 1?</i></p> <p><i>Which additional and new areas were incubated during the first phase of the programme and are most impactful beyond 2022?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a potential to sustain, scale and/or replicate WEA or continue its WEE work at regional/ national/local level? Why or why not? • What indications are there that the government, private sectors, or other partners will be involved in supporting/ scaling WEA efforts after the programme end? Which aspects of the programme are contributing to these efforts? • What financial opportunities and risks at the end of the program? How likely is it to be able to mobilize additional/new resources (consider potential resources from multiple sources that will be adequate for sustaining programme outcomes) to further sustain WEA in the original countries and/or scale-up to other geographies? • Which areas of the programme have the highest potential to align with EU strategic priorities, policies and interests beyond 2022? • What has been done by the programme team to ensure programme sustainability? What should be done differently to ensure sustainability is embedded in the project as of now? • Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of programme outcomes? • What are the supporting conditions and challenges for WEA to implement a phase two? What is needed and what may prevent the programme to do so? • What could be the aspects that WEA taking forward from its sister programmes, once they are completed? How?

<p>Lessons Learned</p>	<p><i>What were limiting factors / main challenges encountered and how did they affect the programme implementation?</i></p> <p><i>What were best practices, lessons learned and innovative approaches developed / adopted by the programme to tackle challenges and mitigate risks?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were key challenges (e.g. shifts in programmatic activities, resource limitations, administrative/logistical difficulties) at a national / regional level? • How did these challenges affect project implementation, results and impact? • Identify best practices with regard to staff and capacities, availability and capacity of local partners, engagement of government bodies, challenges reaching or engaging the public and marginalized communities, etc. • Identify the most important lessons learned and explain how the programme team responded to these lessons (including programmatic/ operational, normative, UN system coordination, partnerships, etc.) • Formulate S.M.A.R.T. recommendations on how remaining challenges and gaps can be further addressed, what kind of intervention is needed and by whom.
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