

Country Name	Project on Enhancing Women's Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>Under the 23 years of war and the Taliban regime, people in Afghanistan, especially women, had suffered extreme political, social, and economic hardships. In 2001, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) was established in order to improve women's political, social, and economic status. At MOWA, the Department of Economic Empowerment (DEE) and the Department of Provincial Surah* Relations (DPSR) had difficulties in grasping precise statistics and information and could not implement expected responsibilities. The Department of Women's Affairs (DOWA) at provincial level also had difficulties in grasping and evaluating the problems of women and sharing information with MOWA, and, as a result, MOWA did not fully play its role expected in policy-making.</p> <p>*Surah: community</p>												
Objectives of the Project	<p>Through identification of the roles and responsibilities of DEE by accumulating and analyzing the information collected and reported by DOWA, improvement of DPSR's information sharing system between MOWA and DOWA, collection and accumulation of information at DOWA on women/gender and communities at provincial levels as well as report to MOWA, and identification of problems of women/communities through implementation of Community Empowerment Programme for Women (CEPW) in the target provinces in Afghanistan, the project aimed at identification of the roles and responsibilities of MOWA to support women's economic empowerment, thereby contributing to establishment of mechanism to support women's economic empowerment at MOWA.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: Mechanism to support women's economic empowerment has been established at MOWA. Project Purpose: The MOWA has identified their own roles and responsibilities to support women's economic empowerment through the implementation of CEPW as well as capacity development of MOWA. 												
Activities of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project Site: Kabul, Balkh and Bamiyan Provinces* *At the start of the project, Kandahar was included in the target sites, but due to security reason, the activities in Kandahar were terminated in June 2006. Main Activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (at DEE) Implementation of training on basic administrative management, Holding of study meetings/workshops, Establishment of Working Group on income generation/Task Force, Development Manual on Marketing Measures and holding workshops on marketing measures in 34 provinces, Identification of the priority activities on women's income generation and preparation/implementation of the Annual Plan, etc. (at DPSR) Implementation of training and Establishment of Working Group on basic administrative management, Improvement of basic office management skills and information management system between MOWA and DOWA, Development of the working manuals for basic office works and information sharing as well as implementation of trainings for DOWA in 34 provinces, etc. (at DOWA) Implementation of training on basic administrative management, Data collection necessary to promote women's income generation in the concerned provinces, Identification and analysis of the measures of market expansion for women's products, Implementation of the activities for marketing measures, Monitoring of CEPW activities, Identification of the priority activities and preparation/implementation of the Annual Action Plan to be implemented by DEE, etc. (at CEPW sites) Implementation of activities for target women/communities, Sharing of outcomes of CEPW activities through seminar/presentations/case studies, Sharing the individual learning and changes by the target women/communication through the Impact/Evaluation Study. Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Afghanistan Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1) Experts: 9 persons</td> <td>1) Staff Allocated: 35 persons (cumulative total)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2) Trainees Received: 5 persons</td> <td>2) Office space</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3) Equipment: Office equipment, equipment for security measures, etc.</td> <td>3) Local expenses: utility cost for the office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4) Local expenses</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> 			Japanese Side	Afghanistan Side	1) Experts: 9 persons	1) Staff Allocated: 35 persons (cumulative total)	2) Trainees Received: 5 persons	2) Office space	3) Equipment: Office equipment, equipment for security measures, etc.	3) Local expenses: utility cost for the office	4) Local expenses	
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Project Period	February 2005 – February 2008	Project Cost	(ex-ante) 500 million yen, (actual) 448 million yen										
Implementing Agency	Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA)												
Cooperation Agency in Japan	N/A												

II. Result of the Evaluation

<Constraints on Evaluation>

- In this Ex-Post Evaluation, an evaluation judgment was made primarily by analyzing information acquired by sending and collecting questionnaires, and through telephone and e-mail interviews with persons concerned due to the impact of the COVID-19 as well as security issues. Field survey was conducted on a limited scale, with face-to-face interview with SCWPELA* and DPSR.

* SCWPELA: Sub-directorate for Coordination of Women's Participation in Economic and Leadership Affairs. Former DEE was reorganized into SCWPELA in 2009.

- The ex-post evaluation was conducted more than 10 years after project completion and no project reports that record the achievement of the indicators were available¹. In addition, those at the implementing agency did not grasp the detailed situations at the project completion, and, as they were busy with response to the COVID-19, it was difficult to collect additional information. Therefore, the achievement of the Project Purpose at project completion was not verified.

1 Relevance

<Consistency with the Development Policy of Afghanistan at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

The Action Plan of MOWA (2003) placed priority on the promotion of assistance of woman entrepreneurs and improvement of women's employment through DEE.

<Consistency with the Development Needs of Afghanistan at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

Most Afghan women were under severe condition. Due to various social restrictions and a lack of transportation infrastructure, women's participation in economic activities did not progress. Since women were deprived of opportunities in education and employment, many were unskilled laborers.

<Consistency with Japan's ODA Policy at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

Japan pledged assistance toward women's empowerment at the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in 2002. In the Japanese assistance policy toward Afghanistan, one of the three priority areas was to support for peace process, including capacity development of government organizations².

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

<Status of Achievement of the Project Purpose at the time of Project Completion>

The achievement of the Project Purpose at the time of the project completion cannot be verified. Documents with information on the achievement of the Project Purpose at the time of project completion were not available. The information was not obtained either through the questionnaire and interview with the implementing agencies. This may be because it is more than 10 years after the project completion that the ex-post evaluation was conducted. However, in existing documents, it was confirmed that the planned activities were completed and that the capacity in implementing daily works at relevant organizations was improving after the training provided by the project.

<Continuation Status of Project Effects at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

At the time of ex-post evaluation, it was confirmed that the status aimed at the Project Purpose has been realized as a result of project activities and the project effects have been continued. MOWA has been continuously implementing their duties based on appropriate TORs with clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities (Indicator 1). SCWPELA, has been promoting economic empowerment of women through exhibitions and making recommendations to the Cabinet. SCWPELA continuously reviews legal documents and policies of the Cabinet from gender perspective and makes suggestions when needed. DPSR regularly keeps collecting information from DOWA on quarterly and annual basis and, after analysis, shares the results with relevant authorities/entities when necessary. As to the TORs (Indicator 2), MOWA, including SCWPELA and DPSR, prepares their annual action plan. Based on the action plan, the Human Resource Department prepares the TORs of the staff for each department in cooperation with the relevant departments. The TORs are carefully linked to the action plans of the relevant departments. MOWA continuously identifies issues on women's economic empowerment and, based on them, provides comments and advice on all policies and legal documents at the Cabinet. Although it is difficult to precisely define the number of issues identified and proposed, MOWA clearly contributed to the development of Women Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (Indicator 3). According to the implementing agency, those engaged in women's economic empowerment have been implementing their duties based on the experience obtained through the project. Therefore, these current situations mentioned above are considered as the results of the project. In this sense, it can be said that the project effects have been continued.

<Status of Achievement for Overall Goal at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The Overall Goal has been partially achieved. After the project completion, there was an organizational reform at MOWA. As a result, the number of staff was considerably reduced due to budget constraints and there are no personnel to be engaged in direct contact between SCWPELA and DOWA on economic empowerment issues. However, when necessary, SCWPELA communicates with DOWA through DPSR to implement their responsibilities (Indicator 1). A total of 30 to 40 coordination meetings were held by SCWPELA between 2015 and 2019, with participation by line ministries, donor agencies, and civil society (Indicator 2). The meetings function as a good platform for mobilizing resources, creating synergies, and avoiding duplications. MOWA continuously provides assistance to the national strategies and proposals to the Cabinet on women's economic empowerment (Indicator 3), such as establishment of Women Chamber of Commerce in the Cabinet and advice on the legal documents and policies, including women's economic activities, to be discussed in the Cabinet.

<Other Impacts at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

The project has helped women earn income, which has improved gender equality in the families of the beneficiaries of the project, according to MOWA and DOWA. No negative impact has been observed.

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, the effectiveness/impact of the project is fair.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results
(Project Purpose) The MOWA has identified their own roles and	(Indicator 1) Changes in counterparts' understanding on their own roles and responsibilities	Status of the Achievement: not verifiable (continued) (Project Completion) • No information (Ex-post Evaluation) • MOWA clearly understands their own roles and responsibilities. At MOWA, SCWPELA has

¹ It seems that the project completion report was not officially published for some reason.

² Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "ODA Country Data Book in 2004 and 2005"

responsibilities to support women's economic empowerment through the implementation of CEPW as well as capacity development of MOWA.		been playing an active role in contributing to Cabinet documents and stakeholder coordination, and DPSR has been actively collecting and analyzing information from provinces and disseminating them with stakeholders.
	(Indicator 2) Quality of official TORs of concerned Departments of MOWA	Status of the Achievement: not verifiable (continued) (Project Completion) • No information (Ex-post Evaluation) • The official TORs are considered to be kept in a good quality. TORs are developed and revised on time and in the right way.
	(Indicator 3) Number of issues identified by the Task Force on Women's Economic Empowerment proposed to other concerned agencies	Status of the Achievement: not verifiable (continued) (Project Completion) • No information (Ex-post Evaluation) • MOWA continuously finds issues on women's economic empowerment to comment on all policies and legal documents at the Cabinet including the ones on economic empowerment of women and the Women Economic Empowerment National Priority Plan.
(Overall Goal) Mechanism to support women's economic empowerment has been established at MOWA.	(Indicator 1) Institutional set up within MOWA to identify the issues to develop policies on women's economic empowerment.	(Ex-post Evaluation) partially achieved • The number of DEE (now SCWPELA) staff was reduced from 25 at project completion to only four in 2018 partly due to organizational reform. When necessary, SCWPELA communicates with DOWA through DPSR.
	(Indicator 2) Number and contents of coordination with government and non-government organizations concerned with women's economic empowerment	(Ex-post Evaluation) achieved • 30 to 40 coordination meetings were held by SCWPELA between 2015 and 2019. Participants were line ministries, donor agencies, and civil society. The participants presented their portfolios and discussed obstacles towards women empowerment in Afghanistan
	(Indicator 3) Contents of the assistance to the national strategies and proposals to the Cabinet on women's economic empowerment.	(Ex-post Evaluation) achieved • Examples of assistance by MOWA to the national strategies and proposals to the Cabinet - Establishment of Women Chamber of Commerce in the Cabinet - Proposal to the Cabinet on export of Jalghoza (a type of pine nut found only in Afghanistan) with packaging prepared only by women (later approved) - Continuous reviews from gender point of view and comments on the legal documents and policies, including economic empowerment of women, to be discussed in the Cabinet.

Source: Questionnaire and interview via telephone to MOWA and DOWA

3 Efficiency

Both the project cost and the project period were within the plan (ratio against the plan: 90% and 100%, respectively). The outputs of the project were produced as planned. Therefore, the efficiency of the project is high.

4 Sustainability

<Policy Aspect>

The Women Economic Empowerment National Priority Program (2016-2020), one of the ten priority programs of Afghanistan for development, stipulates policies to promote economic empowerment of women. The Program was developed in a participatory manner by engaging all line ministries as well as the international community and other stakeholders.

<Institutional/Organizational Aspect>

The structure to promote women's economic empowerment is organized and each relevant agency implements its duties. There is a shortage of manpower, however, as the number of staff at each organization has been reduced since project completion due to budget limitation. The existing structure and human resources in SCWPELA, DPSR and DOWA are sufficient to undertake their basic roles but they are fully occupied with routine administrative works in the office and too busy to sufficiently conduct data collection and advocacy to promote empowerment of women outside MOWA. They need more staff to advocate and further promote women empowerment efforts in the line ministries and at the district/village levels.

<Technical Aspect>

Those engaged in the project still use the experiences they gained throughout the project in their career although some of the Working Group members had difficulties to acquire knowledge and skills during the project period. The staff at SCWPELA have necessary skills such as reviewing and commenting the Cabinet documents and monitoring & evaluation, although they need to improve communication skills, including English writing, with stakeholders in particular the donor community. At DPSR, they have skills necessary to implement their duties to a large extent. The staff members of the SCWPELA and DPSR have not attended trainings to acquire new knowledge or to improve their skills. The manuals and technical materials developed during the project have not been utilized after project completion. At DOWA, it is desirable to allocate economic experts, as there used to be before 2009. This can let SCWPELA directly communicate with the DOWA for matters related to economic empowerment of women. Besides, economic expertise would be helpful to further promote women's economic empowerment according to their specific needs.

<Financial Aspect>

Both MOWA and DOWA have budget to implement their duty but the government fund for promoting women's economic empowerment is not sufficient. Neither SCWPELA nor DPSR has development budget for economic empowerment of women in 2020, although MOWA in some years allocated small amount of development budget for awareness raising as well as organizing events/anniversaries for DPSR. In 2020 the amount of about US\$ 8,000 is allocated to DOWA of Bamyan for organizing awareness raising. Budget for economic empowerment of women mostly comes from international community.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, some problems have been observed in terms of the institutional/organizational, technical and financial aspects of the implementing agency. Therefore, the sustainability of the project effects is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The achievement of the Project Purpose of improvement of MOWA's support to women's economic empowerment at the time of project completion cannot be verified because sufficient information was not available. However, it is considered that the project effects have been brought about through implementation of planned activities and continued to the time of ex-post evaluation, because relevant agencies at MOWA are conducting their responsibilities based on appropriately developed TORs and MOWA continuously identifies issues on women's economic empowerment to support other relevant agencies. The Overall Goal of establishment of mechanism to support women's economic empowerment has been partially achieved. Coordination meetings have been continuously held by SCWPELA, and MOWA continuously provides comments and advice to the Cabinet. However, the number of staff at SCWPELA has been greatly reduced. Regarding sustainability, some problems have been observed in the institutional/organizational, technical and financial aspects because of insufficiency of manpower, training opportunities and financial resources but policy sustainability is high. Considering all of the above points, this project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations for Implementing Agency:

- MOWA's operations and services should reach the women at the district and village levels sufficiently. Currently MOWA and DOWA's operations are limited to the capital Kabul and centers of provinces and not provided sufficiently at district and village level partly because there is no MOWA staff at district level. It is desirable that MOWA/DOWA assign a team to work on the district level so that service delivery at the district and village levels increases and women's issues are addressed. To implement this measure, it is recommended to request international support when necessary.
- It is preferable that MOWAI allocates more staff members with sufficient qualification for advocating and promoting economic empowerment of women in relevant entities beyond MOWA.

Lessons learned for JICA:

- The project had some difficulties in transferring technical knowledge as was planned to some of MOWA staff of the Working Group during the project, partly because technical knowledge to be transferred was not suitable to the previous experiences and background of some of them. In order to effectively conduct capacity building, it is necessary to make sure that all target officials have the suitable knowledge/skills required for learning from the capacity-building program and the program is designed considering their background/experiences.
- The manuals, templates and other project management tools that are produced by the project should be user friendly to the extent possible, and preferably developed endogenously by improving the existing ones. If such documents and tools are completely new and complicated, it is highly likely that the recipient organization does not use them after project completion.