



Rapid Assessment of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Joint Programme (GEWE JP) in Ethiopia

Second phase



Norad
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

P.O. Box 8034 Dep, NO-0030 OSLO
Ruseløkkveien 26, Oslo, Norway
Tel: +47 23 98 00 00
Fax: +47 23 98 00 99

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of the
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Joint Programme (GEWE JP)
In Ethiopia**

**Second phase
(June 2013-November 2014)**



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Hanne Lotte Moen
Zekrie Negatu
Getahun Kassa

Front page photo: Fatima Ahmed lives in Tigray. She is one of the beneficiaries of the programme.
All photos by Hanne Lotte Moen

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Abbreviations

AWSAD	Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development
BoWCYA	Bureau of Women, Children and Youth Affairs
BoFED	Bureau of Finance & Economic Development
CEDAW	Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan?
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAG	Donor Assistance Group
Dfid	Department for International Development UK
FACE	Funding Authorization and Certificate of Expenditures
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FIP	Federal-level Implementing Partner
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEWE JP	Gender equality and Women's Empowerment Joint Programme
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HACT	Harmonised Approach to Cash Transfers
HTP	Harmful Traditional Practices
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IP	Implementing partner
JP	Joint Programme
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoWCYA	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs
MPTF	Multi-partner Trust Fund
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PIM	Programme Implementation Manual for UN assisted Programmes in Ethiopia
PMC	Programme management Committee
PoA	Platform of Action
RA	Rapid Assessment
RIP	Regional-level Implementing Partner
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive summary

Relevance:

The Gender Equality and Women's empowerment Joint Programme (GEWE JP) is aligned with and relevant to Ethiopia's international commitments on gender, to the priorities and policies of the Government of Ethiopia, and to the needs of women in Ethiopia. It is grounded in the UN Development Framework (UNDAF) for Ethiopia and relevant to the mandate of the UN agencies involved. Similarly the main donors, Sweden and Norway, hold that the programme is relevant to and aligned with their priorities.

The objectives of the programme are still valid, the activities of the programme are consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of the objectives, and the theory of change is adequate and relevant.

Effectiveness:

The second phase of the GEWE JP has only lasted about a year and a half. It is therefore too soon to assess outcomes and impact. Still, according to available reports and interviews conducted the programme has achieved a number of positive results within each outcome area.

The programme is, however, underfunded by approximately 70 percent and therefore it is not on track compared to the original goals and targets as envisaged in the programme document. The lack of funding means that less activities have been carried out and fewer beneficiaries have been reached. The underfunding results from a variety of external and internal challenges, such as unrealistic planning, the lack of ability to document progress and communicate clear results, and the financial crisis having affected donors to the programme.

Additionally, the holistic concept of the design of the programme has suffered from the limited funding. Rather than being implemented according to the holistic theory of change where the various outcome areas are meant to feed into one another to achieve synergies, the outcome areas have for a large part been implemented as isolated programmes in order to spread the scarce funding to more geographical areas. The actions of the different outcomes are therefore not as synchronized as envisaged in the programme document, and thus synergies between the components of the programme are not exploited to their full potential. Whether it is actually feasible to carry out this relatively complex and resource demanding programme design across so many geographical locations is being questioned by several of the respondents and should be assessed carefully and agreed upon.

The programme is subject to many delays. They continue to occur at all levels due to a number of reasons. An external factor having led to delays is the extensive preparations for the upcoming elections due to be held in May 2015, which seem to take up a lot of time on the part of most government employees.

There is an interesting contradiction in terms of underfunding versus a lack of ability to absorb funding. On the one hand the programme is underfunded. On the other hand it is argued that many of the regions have limited capacity to implement and report, which again ultimately leads to delays in the disbursement of funds to the regions. It is, however, clear that the capacity to absorb varies between the regions. This has turned

into a vicious circle, which is also related to the programme being under staffed at all levels and under skilled at local levels.

The GEWEJP is implemented in 126 woredas in all nine regions and the two city administrations of Ethiopia. Coupled with the limited funding available for the programme the vast geographical spread is hampering the potential holistic achievements, and leads to ad hoc and one off activities, not producing the desired results. This also implies that a multitude of stakeholders are involved at various levels, making coordination and oversight more demanding. Making changes at this stage may prove challenging and may require high level efforts, but it is perceived to be necessary if the anticipated consolidated results are to be seen within the remaining lifetime of the programme.

Coherence and synergies between the outcome areas:

The programme has contributed to increased coordination and openness between UN agencies and to some extent between sector ministries. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly when it comes to including sector ministries at the federal level.

Efficiency:

The assessment has confirmed that the programme has indeed been implemented using existing government structures and, as a result, operated with minimal additional administrative and staff costs. However, it is reasonable to assume that some of the efficiency gains obtained from this programme design were probably lost in the form of lower effectiveness and performance. Having adequate staff to carry out the work is key.

Sustainability:

The many people and agencies involved in the programme and the regular meetings related to planning and reporting increases the likelihood of sustainability. Moreover, the fact that the programme is implementing government policies on gender mainstreaming is contributing to the likelihood of continuation after the end of the GEWE JP in June 2016. The government policies and commitments are likely to remain after the programme is over. Still, there is potential for more and better involvement of the sector ministries, and improvements in this area will also improve sustainability.

Financial assessment:

The financial management of the programme is governed by the Programme Implementation Manual for United Nations Agencies assisted Programmes in Ethiopia (PIM), and government Implementing Partners operate within systems and procedures that are aligned with the government systems. The assessment shows that the financial systems of both government and CSO implementing partners visited during the Rapid Assessment have appropriate financial internal controls and safeguards.

At the macro level, the most serious financial management challenge facing the joint programme is how to align programmatic activities in the balance of the programme's life with the size of funds that can be reasonably expected from different sources. This is particularly critical because, at this moment, the financial commitments already secured from donors for the balance of the programme's life are very insignificant.

Time to make the necessary changes:

Many of the findings in this Rapid Assessment have been raised in earlier reviews and evaluations. Some of the recommendations from these previous undertakings have also been discussed in subsequent meetings and in some cases decisions have been made to follow up on the recommendations. Many people who are working with the programme in various capacities are well aware of the challenges and agree to the necessity of making changes to help the programme back on track for the remaining two years. Still, many of the recommendations have never been implemented. In light of the huge funding gap and the fact that less than 18 months remain before phase two of the programme officially ends, the necessary changes need to be put in place urgently.

Summary of the recommendations:

It is recommended that a concrete, time bound follow up plan with clear responsibilities is made taking all the recommendations below into due consideration. Due to the limited time left before the end of the GEWE JP phase 2, the recommendations should be acted upon immediately and the follow up plan should be fully implemented by the start of the next fiscal year in July 2015.

The recommendations are as follows¹:

1. The programme document should be rewritten and scaled down, resetting the targets according to the existing funding and a realistic assessment of potentially mobilized funding.
2. Staff should be hired as stipulated in the programme document.
3. The draft funding strategies need to be put into action in order to mobilize additional funding and thereby reduce the funding gap.
4. Clear exit strategies should be developed for all outcome areas in order to enhance the possibilities for sustainability.
5. Stronger involvement of sector ministries needs to be developed to enhance ownership of the gender mainstreaming agenda.
6. Donors should to the extent possible be more actively engaged and strongly encourage changes.
7. The financial management capacity assessment of implementing partners which is required under the HACT framework should continue to be a prerequisite for transferring programme funds.
8. The idea of providing all relevant financial and other information related to the programme through a single source using the Multi-partner Trust Fund website is something that should be commended because it adds to the programme's transparency in financial management.

¹ The recommendations are further elaborated on at the recommendations section in this report.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the rapid assessment

As part of its evaluation strategy the Gender Equality and Women's empowerment Joint Programme (GEWE JP) programme document provides for a Rapid Assessment (RA) and a final evaluation to be conducted during the course of the implementation of the phase two of the programme. The rapid assessment is expected to be conducted two years after the inception of the programme to allow for reorientations of the programmatic activities as relevant, in line with evolving needs and available resources. It is also meant to feed into the process of the final evaluation of the programme.

The Norwegian Embassy engaged the following review team to carry out the Rapid Assessment:

Hanne Lotte Moen (Team Leader, Norad)

Zekrie Negatu (Team member and responsible for the financial assessment)

Getahun Kassa (Team Member)

1.2. The purpose of the Rapid Assessment

There has been a huge funding gap throughout the implementation of the programme. The rapid assessment has therefore sought to identify the most important challenges and the reasons for why they have occurred. Furthermore, the assessment has looked into possible adjustments that could be made in line with the available financial resources in order to ensure improvements in performance and results in the remaining period.

The main purpose of the Rapid assessment was therefore to:

- Assess achievements and progress made against planned results
- Assess challenges and document lessons learned
- Generate recommendations for the remaining period.

As agreed in the inception phase and in the initial meeting with the main donors to the programme, the review team will not go into depth and detail at all levels, but focus on **whether or not the programme is on the right track**. This is due to the limited time and resources set aside for the Rapid Assessment.

This is a Rapid Assessment and not a full evaluation. It is primarily a formative review intended to contribute to learning. The main users of the review include JP GEWE implementing UN Agencies, donors, federal, regional and national level government partners and others. In order to respond to the findings of the Rapid Assessment, the UN Country Team (UNCT) through the Programme management Committee (PMC) will develop a management response and action plans to the review findings and recommendations.

1.3. The Programme

Description of the GEWE JP Second phase

The GEWE JP was launched in 2011 for an initial pilot phase planned to last 18 months from January 2011 until June 2012. The first phase was extended twice, first to December 2012 and then to June 30 2013 to allow for the completion of planned activities. The first phase was evaluated in 2013.

The GEWE JP phase two started in July 2013 and is expected to last until June 2016. The programme has been implemented in 126 woredas in all 9 regions and the two city administrations of Ethiopia.

Through the GEWE JP the UN is supporting the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) in its efforts to further improve the lives of Ethiopian women and support the realization of their rights, in line with its international commitments. The GEWE JP is aligned with the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), the overarching national development strategy as well as sector based plans, strategies and policies. The GEWE JP is grounded in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Ethiopia, jointly agreed by the GoE and the UN Country Team (UNCT).

The Joint Programme is designed to streamline and enhance UN support organized under UNDAF Pillar four – Women, Youth and Children. It directly contributes to the two following UNDAF Outcomes:

- UNDAF Outcome 12: By 2015, women and youth are increasingly participating in advocacy, social mobilization and decision making and benefiting from livelihood opportunities and targeted social services.
- UNDAF Outcome 13: By 2015, women, youth and children are increasingly protected and rehabilitated from abuse violence, exploitation and discrimination.

The programme's goal is to secure rural women's livelihoods and rights in the context of sustainable development and the post MDGs. According to the programme document the Joint Programme set out to achieve the following outcomes²:

1. Rural and Urban Women have increased income for improved food & nutrition security and livelihoods
2. Rural and Urban Women and girls have increased opportunities for education, leadership and decision making
3. Federal and Local level government institutions have strengthened their capacity to implement national and international commitments on gender equality
4. Federal and local level institutions and communities have enhanced their capacity to promote and protect the rights of women and girls.

The programme initially brought together six UN agencies (UNESCO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women). UNFPA and UN Women are co-lead. Recently, three more UN Agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP)

² Also described in the programme document as «outcome areas»

have joined the programme to implement a Rural Women's Economic Empowerment component of the JP. This component is still in its initial phase and is therefore not covered by this assessment.

The lead implementing agency for the GEWE JP is the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) while the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) is the overall coordinator of UN programmes in the country. Other ministries as well as other institutions (e.g. Ministry of Education, Ministry of Trade, universities, cooperatives and some NGOs) are also engaged in the implementation of the GEWE JP.

Budget

During the start of its implementation the GEWE JP had a total estimated budget of USD 35,502,304 broken down to USD 5,730,898 as contribution from participating UN Agencies, USD 4,783,688 as funded from other sources and USD 24, 987,718 unfunded portion to be mobilized.

Of the total estimated budget of USD 35,502,304 the GEWE JP. At the moment only 30 percent of the funding has been secured, leaving a funding gap of 70 percent.

Donors

The first phase of the GEWE JP was funded by Dfid. The second phase is supported mainly by Norway, Sweden, in addition to some funding from Italy.

1.4. Methodology

The Rapid Assessment is based on the methodology described in the Terms of Reference and elaborated on in the Inception Report of 13.11.2014. The data collection for this review was carried out in Ethiopia during November 2014, and the document review was conducted during November and December 2014.

This is a formative review and as such, it assesses the efforts of the programme prior to its completion with the intent of improving performance for the remaining programme period. Formative reviews often emphasizes qualitative methods of inquiry. The questions asked in formative reviews are generally more open and lead to exploration of processes, both from the viewpoint of participants and beneficiaries, but also from that of project staff and other stakeholders³. The review questions were therefore primarily addressed through the use of a qualitative design.

The review made use of a combination of complementary primary and secondary data from a variety of sources, which allows for triangulation and validation of the findings. Through this process the Rapid Assessment has been able to generate an adequate level of information to indicate the results of the GEWE JP so far.

³ http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24:formative-evaluation&catid=17:formative-evaluation&Itemid=125

Data was primarily collected through a desk study of relevant documents and through semi structured individual interviews.

Desk study:

All the documentation provided by UN Women and other stakeholders have been reviewed. These include:

- Project document and results framework
- Earlier evaluations/reviews
- Annual reports
- Annual work plans of both federal and regional implementing partners
- Minutes from relevant meetings
- Relevant government policies and strategies
- Relevant financial information such as budgets and financial reports

Semi Structured individual interviews:

In-depth interviews were one of the main tools for collecting data, and separate interview guides were prepared for each group of interviewees. Most of the interviews were conducted individually. The following people were interviewed:

- UN Women staff responsible for coordinating the programme
- Relevant people in other UN agencies
- Representatives from donors
- Government officials with responsibility for programme coordination/implementation at national, regional and woreda levels
- Implementing partners/project staff
- Finance staff at various levels

Project visits:

The team went to Mekelle to meet with regional BoFED and BoWCYA. Moreover, the team visited Woreda Finance Office in Wukro, as well as beneficiaries in Agula kebele. The team also visited Wollisso and Goro Woreda in the South-Western Oromia Zone. The field visit sites were agreed upon between the Norwegian Embassy, UN Women and the consultants, after recommendations from UN Women and in accordance with the ToR and the Inception Report. The field visits were meant to add practical examples to the Rapid Assessment.

During the field visits semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following people:

- Government officials with responsibility for programme coordination/implementation at regional and woreda levels
- Implementing partners/project staff

- Finance staff
- Beneficiaries

1.5. Limitations

As elaborated on in the Inception Report, due to the short period since the start of the GEWE JP II (1 ½ years) it is not possible to assess outcomes and impact of the programme. Moreover, the latest consolidated report at this point in time is from 2013, and the absence of updated data and figures compromises the possibility to assess progress and achievements. The review team has for this and other reasons concentrated on the overall picture rather than on the details of progress under each outcome area.

The Rapid Assessment/light review has limitations in terms of the time and resources set aside for this task. It has limitations when it comes to the number of days spent in the field and thus the number of places visited. Within the frames of this assessment it was therefore not possible to visit a completely representative sample of sites, as this would have required a much larger review process and budget. The projects selected for project visits and more in-depth review have still provided important insights covering aspects of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. However, the review team is aware that the few project sites that we have visited are not necessarily representative for the larger programme. We are therefore careful with drawing major conclusions based on information from the regions we have visited.

Lastly, due to the complexity of factors that may shape gender-related outcomes as well the diverse range of actors and programmes that may be working towards the same objectives as the GEWE JP objectives, the issues of contribution versus attribution is challenging. Therefore it may be difficult to isolate the effects of this particular programme and to attribute specific changes to its investments and technical assistance directly.

2. The Rapid Assessment: Key findings

2.1. Relevance⁴

The Gender Equality and Women's empowerment Joint Programme (GEWE JP) is aligned with and relevant to international normative commitments on gender, and the programme document refers to instruments such as the Convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination of women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action (PoA). Moreover, the programme responds to the priorities and policies of the Government of Ethiopia and is contextually relevant to the needs of women in Ethiopia. It is aligned with stated national strategies and plans, and the programme document refers to the constitutional rights of women (Article 35), the Women's policy of Ethiopia and the National Action Plan on Gender and Development (2006-10). It also refers to other efforts to improve women's rights in legislation, and finally to the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) and the Development Plan for Women and Children (2011-28). The programme document states that "There are adequate policies in place to protect women's rights, however, the implementation remains a challenge" (p. 17). The programme is designed to help the government of Ethiopia to address these challenges.

The GEWE JP is grounded in the UN Development Framework (UNDAF) for Ethiopia and is still relevant to the mandate of the UN agencies involved. Similarly the main donors, Sweden and Norway, hold that the programme is relevant to and aligned with their priorities.

The objectives of the programme are still valid and cater for the huge need to enhance gender equality and increase women's empowerment, women's income and their opportunities for education, leadership and decision making. Similarly it is still valid to work for increased gender mainstreaming in government institutions, as well as addressing violence against women, including harmful traditional practices (HTPs).

The activities of the programme are consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of the objectives, and the theory of change is good and relevant. It seems logical to address the issue of increasing women's empowerment from various angles. Even though the direct target groups may not be the same for all components, implementation of the different components in the same geographical areas would potentially be mutually reinforcing and ultimately create better conditions for women's empowerment.

However, intriguing as it may seem on paper, the good intention of working holistically implementing multiple interventions to enhance women's situation has proved challenging in practice. During the review it became clear that in many locations the programme is not implemented in the holistic manner envisaged in the programme document. As we will come back to later the four components (outcome areas) of the programme are often implemented as separate programmes in different geographical areas. Where this is the case the activities and outputs of the programme are not consistent with the underlying theory of change and will not lead to the intended consolidated impacts and effects.

⁴The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor, OECD/DAC Evaluating Development co-operation: Summary of key norms and standards, 2nd edition

2.2. Effectiveness⁵

Key programme achievements

The second phase of the GEWE JP has only lasted about a year and a half. It is therefore too soon to assess outcomes and impact. However, **according to reports and interviews with a number of respondents many achievements and good results have been achieved within each outcome area.** Taking into consideration that the latest consolidated report is the annual report from 2013⁶ it is not feasible to present recent, quantifiable results in this report. However, updated information on results achieved during phase 2 will appear in the annual review report to be launched at the annual review meeting⁷. It is also important to bear in mind the difficulties with attribution as there are many stakeholders working on women's empowerment issues throughout Ethiopia. Still, the following issues have been highlighted as main achievements of the GEWE JP II:

Outcome 1: Women have increased income for improved livelihood

During phase 2 the female beneficiaries have improved entrepreneurship skills and basic business skills, access markets and to women-friendly energy and time saving technologies, and access to revolving funds administered by the women themselves. Moreover, capacities of financial institutions, business development



service providers, cooperatives and other institutions have been strengthened to provide better services to women. Several thousands of women have benefitted from this outcome by receiving trainings and small loans to start small scale business and agricultural activities. Although it has been argued that the loans are too small and the trainings are insufficient, through these interventions, poor women, many of whom are female household heads, have been able to access finance, diversify their household income, make some savings, and taking advantage of the benefit of being a group of people with similar interests. Many have also started to repay their loans.

Zenabu Gebremedhin has received a loan of 5460 Birr through the programme. The extra money allows her to buy more products that she sells at the market. Her income has increased after she joined the programme.

⁵ To what extent are the objectives of the programme likely to be achieved? Are they on track, OECD/DAC Evaluating Development co-operation: Summary of key norms and standards, 2nd edition

⁶ More updated information on results achieved during phase 2 will appear in the annual review report to be launched at the upcoming annual review meeting.

⁷ At the time of the review this meeting was scheduled for December 18.-19, however, later it has been postponed till March 2015.

Tekle Gebreselassie joined the programme eight months ago. She has received some training and a loan of 5400 Birr. Together with 10 other women she gets the vegetables transported from Mekelle, and then they sell them individually at the market. As her husband is ill, Tekle is the bread winner of the family. With the loan from the programme she has been able to increase her income and is better positioned to sustain her husband and their four children.



Senait is running a small shop where she sells items such as coffee, biscuits, soap, candy, mobile phone cards. Added to her own savings the loan that she has received from the programme has enabled her to set up the store. "I run my own business now, and it has made me self reliant", she says proudly.



Outcome 2: Women and girls have increased opportunities for education, leadership and decision making

Through this component of the programme economically disadvantaged girls and women have been able to continue their secondary and tertiary education. One of the main objectives of this component is to empower female students through the provision of financial support and tutorial classes, and strengthen female student associations. Both beneficiaries and implementing partners talked to have noted that these activities, and particularly the financial support scheme, have contributed to reducing school dropouts, enabling female students to pursue their education, and improving female students' performance in schools. Although many respondents raised a concern that the financial support provided to each of the students is too limited and the fact that the need is immensely high compared to the limited resources for this purpose, the importance for the individual girls is unquestionable.

Within this outcome teachers, woreda gender focal points, school directors and others have also received training on various gender related issues, such as providing a gender sensitive pedagogy and school environment, gender sensitive management, and gender disaggregated data collection.

Outcome 3: Federal and local level government institutions have strengthened their capacity to implement national and international commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment

This component of the project supports gender sensitive planning, monitoring and reporting among the various layers of government institutions. The main activities include gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting among the sector agencies as well as establishing a gender resource centre. This component of the program has also supported 40 women drawn from federal and regional government offices to pursue post-graduate studies. Gender budgeting and planning tools have been developed, and subsequently, successive trainings to build capacity and enhance accountability among federal and local government institutions to integrate a gender perspective into analysis, planning, budgeting and implementation have been provided. A pool of 40 expert trainers have been trained on gender integration and responsive budgeting. These experts have then trained both parliamentarians and a range of government employees at the various levels throughout the regions of Ethiopia. Respondents also report of strengthened follow-up and reporting on CEDAW as well as improved sector coordination in terms of reviewing progress on gender equality through the gender forum of sectors convened by MOWCYA every quarter.

Several respondents identified that as a result of these interventions ownership and capacity on gender based planning and budgeting has been developed. Some also said that the gender dimension is in the process of becoming institutionalized. In particular, the progress related to bringing gender responsive budgeting into the various sectors has been highlighted as a major achievement. Respondents argue that the trainings given to parliamentary committees, government officials and experts have helped raise the attention to gender budgeting, planning, and monitoring. It was pointed out that parliamentary committees have recently started looking at and challenging ministerial plans from a gender budgeting and planning perspective. Moreover, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has passed a circular to all sector government offices instructing government offices to address gender in all budgeting and planning. As a result some government agencies are said to already show changes in their budgeting and allocation of resources. A concern raised among the respondents is the fact that only the technical people are trained, whereas they think that trainings should also be given at the management level.

Outcome 4: Federal and local level institutions and communities have enhanced their capacity to promote and protect the rights of women and girls

This outcome area focuses mainly on the fight against harmful traditional practices (HTPs) and gender based violence (GBV). Strengthened coordination mechanisms at federal and local levels, increased capacity of service providers to deliver gender responsive support, strengthened GBV response services, improved law enforcement and increased community action to protect the rights of women and girls are addressed under this outcome.

Extensive participatory community dialogues on issues such as early marriage, FGM and abduction have been conducted through community facilitators drawn from the respective project areas. Women and youth organisations are being used as entry points to addressing social norm changes. Several respondents stated

that these interventions have brought results such as a decline in the occurrence of underage marriage and an increase in the reporting of cases of sexual abuse. People talked to also believe that such dialogues have indirectly contributed to women delivering at health centres. In some project areas the community dialogues are said to have led communities to a participatory transformation by developing their own local by-laws against HTPs, and some communities are reported to have declared FGM to be condemned.

Furthermore, the programme has influenced law enforcement bodies through working with the Police University College whereby it helped to include gender aspects into the curricula. The Police University College has also developed a standalone course on ending violence against women. This is cited as an important achievement, which will contribute to the fight against GBV.

Government support to Civil Society Organizations through the joint program is another interesting feature of the GEWE JP. Examples are the support to safe houses and capacity building for women victims of gender based violence. Given the current policy and legal framework of the country in relation to Charities and Societies, this aspect of the programme was identified as a positive result in itself by one of the respondents.

The Association for Women’s Sanctuary and Development is one of four NGOs supported by the GEWE JP. The organization is providing support to women and girls who have faced physical and psychological violence. It is running safe houses for women in Addis and Adama, including a safe house for students, enabling young girls who have been subject to violence and abuse to finish their education. The women are also receiving medical and psychological counselling, legal assistance as well as skills training.



Maria Munir Yusuf is the director of AWSAD, the NGO running Safehouses in Addis and Adama. The Safehouse in Addis can take up to 50 women, but due to the enormous need there are currently 120 women staying there.

Overall, the GEWE JP is on its way to achieving many good results within each outcome area when taken into consideration the actual available budget. However, the programme is not on track against the original holistic plans as outlined in the programme document. Below we will highlight some of the bottlenecks and constraints faced by the programme and explore the possible reasons for the lacking achievements.

Underfunding versus the capacity to absorb funding

So far the GEWEJP phase 2 has only mobilized approximately 30 percent of the total estimated budget of USD 35,502,304. The reasons for the substantial underfunding are many and complex. In retrospect one can argue that the initial budget was too ambitious and unrealistic. Moreover, the programme started out with severe delays during the pilot phase, which was extended several times and ended a year later than originally planned. Combined with the lack of ability to document clear results and communicate progress, and the absence of successful efforts to market and sell the programme, this seems to have led to a reluctance among donors to come on board⁸. An external factor likely to have contributed to the difficult funding situation is the financial crisis in Europe, which has put large constraints on many donors and reduced their ability to contribute with the same level of funding as before.

The severe underfunding has seriously contributed to the lack of results compared to the planned achievements. Less funding means that less activities have been carried out and fewer beneficiaries have been reached. Additionally, the holistic concept of the design of the programme has suffered. Rather than being implemented according to the holistic theory of change where the various outcome areas are meant to feed into one another to achieve synergies, the outcome areas have for a large part been implemented as isolated programmes in order to spread the scarce funding to more geographical areas. This aspect is also raised in previous reviews and evaluations. As described in the Light review of the UN Flagship Joint Programmes in Ethiopia: “Lack of funding and overambitious planning has hampered the underlying theory of change of some flagship JP programmes...” The review further states that “Several JPs could not reach the number of people intended because they did not have the funds to do so. The theories of change of the JPs assume a certain level of coverage in order to take advantage of the holistic and complementary way in which the programmes occur” (Page 27).

An interesting paradox related to the funding issue came up during discussions with the donors. On the one hand the programme is underfunded. **On the other hand it is argued that many of the regions have limited capacity to implement and report**, which ultimately leads to delays in the disbursement of funds to the regions. Despite the underfunding of the programme the donors are therefore experiencing that funding has not been requested on time. Both Norway and Sweden are ready to contribute with what they have committed, but the UN has still not requested the last installment for 2014 from either donor. According to the agreements with Norway and Sweden, the last installment for 2014 should be paid after a bi-annual review meeting to be held no later than September 2014. For various reasons the review meeting has yet not been conducted, and it is not known when it will be held. Subsequently no funding has been requested for the last quarter of 2014. The same situation occurred in 2013⁹.

It is, however, clear that the capacity to absorb varies between the regions. All the people talked to at regional and local levels, including government and the NGO AWSAD argue that they have the capacity to absorb more funding and that the needs in their respective areas are high. At the same time they admit that adequate and timely monitoring and reporting constitute a real challenge.

⁸ Several of these issues will be elaborated on later in this report.

⁹ Partners meeting Minutes, 7 November 2013



Figure 1: Vicious circle.

The need to scale up resource mobilization efforts was identified by the evaluation of the first phase of the GEWE JP, and has since then been discussed repeatedly among the stakeholders. In line with this, several respondents to this assessment argue that “an aggressive marketing campaign” is urgently needed. A resource mobilization strategy has been drafted, but implementation is pending. Many respondents are concerned that both the various ministries as well as heads of UN agencies have to make a serious effort to raise the interest of the donors.

Multiple delays

The second phase of the GEWE JP started a year late due to delays, and the programme has continued to suffer delays ever since. In line with this finding the evaluation of the first phase “...found that delays have been a characteristic feature of the JP” (p. 38). Similarly, according to the Light review¹⁰ “Delays in reception of funds or in implementing activities at the woreda level mirror other UNDAF joint programming challenges” (p. 20). **Delays continue to occur at all levels due to a number of reasons. There are delays in disbursement of funds, implementation delays and reporting delays, delays in conducting joint review meetings, and as we have seen there are also delays in requesting funding from the donors.**

These issues are more complicated than they may seem at a first glance, and the concerns depend on your point of departure. From the regional perspective there is a legitimate concern that initial delays often have

¹⁰ Light review of the UN Flagship Joint Programmes in Ethiopia, 2013

severe implications for the ability to report in time. Several of the people talked to expressed concern that e.g. delays in agreeing on the final annual work plan often results in cumulative delays from the onset of the fiscal year, and this ultimately results in the region losing funding: “Almost nothing happens in the first quarter starting in July. The money comes in late August or September, when only one month remains of the first quarter,” one of the informants put it. If for example procurement activities, which are often time consuming, are delayed from the onset of the year due to delays in agreeing on the annual work plan, there may not be enough time to carry out the procurement and report on it during the first quarter. Without reports submitted within the first quarter there will be no disbursement of funds for the second quarter.

An external factor having led to delays is the extensive preparations for the upcoming elections due to be held in May 2015, which seem to take up a lot of time on the part of most government employees.

Key positions

According to the programme document “The joint programme will have specialized technical as well as managerial staff within the UN and government responsible to ensure timely and effective implementation of the joint programme at different levels as well as adequate oversight in terms of coordination, monitoring, accounting and controlling, reporting etc.” (p. 49). The following people were to be hired:

UN level:

- A dedicated JP GEWE programme manager
- A JP GEWE National Programme coordinator at UN Women

Government Federal level: A National Programme Manager placed in MoWCYA

- A senior level staff as coordinator of the programme in MoWCYA
- A national M&E Specialist
- A Finance Officer

Out of all these persons only the GEWE JP National Programme coordinator at UN Women is there, but the JP is only one of her many responsibilities. The National Programme manager in the MoWCYA was hired, but left, not to be replaced. This means that **none of the people handling the GEWE JP is dedicated to the programme on a full time basis**. A large number of people talked to both at the federal and lower levels of the government and also people from UN agencies complained about not having enough time dedicated for the programme, saying that they carry out the work related to the GEWE JP on top of all the other tasks that they have.

The reasons for the lacking recruitment is said to partly result from the severe underfunding of the programme. With limited funding it does not seem right to spend too much on administration. Another reason cited by some of the respondents is the argument that having the regular government staff working on the programme rather than hiring extra staff will ensure ownership and sustainability. Issues regarding salary levels have also been seen as problematic, as for example using UN Volunteers (UNVs) with higher salaries than government employees will result in challenging working environments. These issues need to be dealt with,

and the implications of using UNVs should be explored more as using UNVs would be cost efficient option for the programme. Alternatively short term staff should be hired to alleviate work load for the permanent staff working on the programme.

The issue of human resources was widely discussed in the evaluation of phase one of the GEWE JP, which holds that: “the implementation of the JP counted on human resources available in the UN, the Government structures and potential expertise support from international and national staffs in relevant programmatic and operational areas of the UN system” (p 37). Finally, in the recommendations section it says that “**The management function of the JP GEWE requires the full complement of staff as envisaged and documented in the Programme document**” (p 50). This is still a valid recommendation and needs to be looked into. More dedicated staff could ease many of the challenges faced by the JP, including delays. Ultimately it could also improve marketing and lead to increased funding of the programme.

Lack of monitoring and reporting skills and human resources to follow up at regional and lower levels

At the regional and lower levels many respondents refer to the lack of skilled staff who can do monitoring and reporting in a satisfactory way. **Even if activities are implemented on time, the limited human resources and skills lead to lacking and inadequate monitoring data and delayed reporting.** High staff turnover is cited as an important factor leading to the lack of understanding of the programme among staff, limited institutional memory, lack of monitoring and reporting skills and constant training needs. Many people hold that work related to the programme has to be done on top of what they perceive as their main duties, and it is therefore never a top priority for them. The UNFPA and WFP Joint Programme “Leave No Woman Behind” was mentioned by a number of respondents as “a model programme” with sufficient resources in terms of full time focal points who are able to follow up implementation and reporting in an adequate way.



Figure 2: The benefits of adequate human resources

Geographical coverage

The GEWEJP is implemented in 126 woredas in all nine regions and the two city administrations of Ethiopia. Coupled with the limited funding available for the programme this constitutes a major challenge and is also addressed in the Light review¹¹. **Although the idea is that the whole nation should benefit from a national programme, the consequence is that the funding is spread out between too many woredas.** This leaves some regions with yearly amounts of as little as 1000 USD, with which they can only carry out one off ad hoc activities, not producing the desired results. Many respondents argued that with the current

¹¹ Light review of the UN Flagship Joint Programmes in Ethiopia, 2013

geographical spread too few women within each programme location are being reached. Moreover, they hold that and the financial support to each female student and the loan to each female entrepreneur is too small to have any substantial and life changing effects.

Geographical concentration has been discussed repeatedly from the start of the programme, and initially the idea was to pilot the programme in a few regions and later scale up and expand to other regions. However, reaching out to some regions and not to others has been a sensitive issue throughout the programme, and has not yet been solved. We do, however, notice that other major joint programmes such as the UNFPA and WFP Joint Programme “Leave No Woman Behind” and the Rural Economic Empowerment Programme are being implemented in only two or three regions, indicating a shift in mindset related to the geographical spread. Several respondents feel strongly that the necessity to concentrate is a clear lesson learned from the GEWE JP, whereas people talked to within MoWCYA view the extensive geographic coverage of the project as an issue of distribution and equity among regions, as well as a way of reaching more beneficiaries.

Another challenge with the large geographical spread is the multitude of stakeholders involved in planning, monitoring and reporting, requiring endless coordination. “The follow up is much bigger because the implementing partners are so many. The time you put into it is not comparable to what you have delivered to women” one respondent said. There are also many UN agencies involved. With the integration of the Rural Economic Empowerment Programme there are now nine UN agencies involved. The multitude of stakeholders further exacerbates the challenges related to a reporting system already described by some respondents as “cumbersome and bureaucratic”.

2.3. Coherence and synergies between the outcome areas

Through the joint programme, which is the first of its kind in Ethiopia, **closer ties as well as increased coordination and coherence have been established between the UN agencies.** The programme is seen to have contributed to more openness and increased knowledge about the other agencies’ programmes and cooperations with the government of Ethiopia: “The thematic working group is working well, and we frequently sit together”, one respondent said. It is important to acknowledge this positive development. **Similarly, there has been improved cooperation between sector ministries, particularly at the regional level.**

However, processes of improved coordination and cooperation will always take time, and there is still a way to go for the delivering as one modality. One respondent put it like this: “UN agencies tend to flag their own flag, and coordination is challenging. It is especially hard to come to consensus on resource allocation.” Several of the people talked to also expressed concern that sector ministries at the federal level, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, should be brought more strongly into the programme.

The programme document is envisaging a coherent approach where each outcome area feeds into the other, being complimentary and reinforcing. Addressing women’s empowerment from various angles is meant to create synergies and result in the programme becoming more than the sum of its parts. This is in line with

the description of ideal joint programmes in a recent evaluation of JPs¹². **At implementation, however, this holistic approach is often being missed out, and synergies are not systematically sought. As mentioned above the outcome areas are often implemented as separate programmes in complete isolation from each other.**

Many woredas are only implementing one component or the various components are not synchronized with each other. In Tigray for instance, outcome 4 is implemented in 7 woredas, whereas outcome 1 is implemented in 3 completely different woredas. This means that potential valuable synergies are lost, and it illustrates that the programme is not really implemented as a coherent joint programme. The complexity of the programme is highlighted by some of the respondents as a reason for the lacking synergies. One person explains it this way: “Four outcome areas for one JP is too many. Bringing together too many sectors creates complexity”. **There seems to be a need to assess the realism in achieving the desired synergies between the outcome areas.**

2.4. Efficiency¹³

By design, the Joint Programme brings together six UN Agencies, having decided to work jointly on gender equality and empowerment issues by pooling their expertise according to their specific area of competence. The strong desire to improve efficiency by reducing redundancies and excessive administrative costs was made obvious right at the inception stage through the motto of “One Programme, One Fund, One Leader, One Office and One Voice”. The decision to work through existing government structures instead of creating an independent programme is also another reflection of the concern with resource efficiency. In general, the programme design which aims to reduce duplication and fragmentation with respect to gender programming should be highly commended for promoting a high level of resource efficiency.

The assessment has confirmed that the programme has indeed been implemented using existing government structures and, as a result, operated with minimal additional administrative and staff costs. In fact, the information gathered for the assessment shows that even key programme staff were not recruited as per the programme document. This suggests that the administrative structure of the programme is even leaner in reality than what was originally envisaged in the programme document.

The above observations can lead to the conclusion that the programme was efficient because it has been able to operate with little duplication of effort and minimal additional administrative costs. Compared to what would have prevailed if each UN agency had its own programme with its own programme staff, the joint programme approach could be recommended for its efficiency. **However, questions need to be asked whether the efficiency gains were not offset by losses in performance and effectiveness.**

¹² Joint evaluation of joint programmes on gender equality in the United Nations system, 2013 (p. 15)

¹³ Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs, OECD/DAC Evaluating Development co-operation: Summary of key norms and standards, 2nd edition

As mentioned in earlier sections the information obtained during the assessment shows that the inability to hire and deploy the key programme staff and the programme's heavy dependence on the government's structure and staff has had its downside. The absence of regional and national focal persons exclusively dedicated to the implementation, monitoring and follow-up of programme activities has frequently been cited by the respondents as a serious problem which has affected performance negatively. This issue was also mentioned in the evaluation of Phase I of the JP. Therefore, while it may not be possible to quantify the tradeoff, it is reasonable to assume that some of the efficiency gains obtained from an efficient programme design were probably lost in the form of lower effectiveness and performance.

Another possible approach for evaluating the efficiency of the programme would be to measure the size of the potential benefits the programme has created at the individual beneficiary level and compare this with the amount of resources provided to each beneficiary. For example, the visits to one of the programme areas (Goro Woreda in the South-Western Oromia Zone) showed that the cash grants provided to female students were actually used in ways that go beyond covering the current consumption needs of the students. Through the creative encouragement and support provided by project staff in the area, the girls were able to start saving accounts and also use some of the money to buy sheep or goats, helping them to generate an income stream for the future. It would be fair to conclude that the money provided to each of these beneficiaries has been well spent if it has helped these students to stay in school, get introduced to a culture of saving and build assets which can generate a stream of income in the future at the same time.

2.5. Sustainability ¹⁴

At the institutional level and particularly related to outcome 3 there are several factors in the GEWE JP that enhance sustainability. Stakeholder involvement and ownership is one of them. The key government programme partners such as MoWCYA and MoFED at the federal level and their regional counterparts have been directly involved in the design and implementation of the programme. **The many people and agencies involved in the programme and the regular meetings related to planning and reporting increases the likelihood of sustainability.** Still, there is potential for more and better involvement of the sector ministries, and improvements in this area will also improve sustainability.

Moreover, the fact that the programme is implementing government policies on gender mainstreaming is contributing to the likelihood of continuation after the end of the GEWE JP in June 2016. The government policies and commitments are likely to remain after the programme is over. The seeds have been sown, many government employees have been trained, manuals have been produced and efforts of gender budgeting are being carried out. Many of the effects of these efforts will remain after the end of the programme, although it will be important to continue keeping the various agencies accountable for continuing to implement gender mainstreaming, planning and budgeting. Gender mainstreaming is not done once and for all, and therefore continued training, technical advice as well as work to institutionalize gender mainstreaming will be needed to sustain results in this area in the long run.

¹⁴ Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable, OECD/DAC Evaluating Development co-operation: Summary of key norms and standards, 2nd edition

Within outcome 1 seed money and training has been given to individual women. Some of the women will continue to expand their businesses, and therefore, at the individual level the programme may be life changing for some. When looking at the larger picture, however, the revolving fund will ultimately decrease, and is not likely to be sustained in the long run without additional infusion of funds. Similarly, within outcome 2, the financial support to keep girls in school may be life changing to the individual girls who are part of the programme, but the intervention is not sustainable in itself and will depend on external funding. For outcome 4 what is achieved with community dialogues and institutional strengthening may to some extent be sustained in the long run. However, considering that changing attitudes and social norms are time consuming processes, it is likely that more efforts are needed in order to ensure sustainability.

3. Financial management

3.1. The Financial Flows of the GEWE JP

The final programme document for Phase 2 puts the total estimated budget for the programme at US\$ 35,502,303, with the following composition:

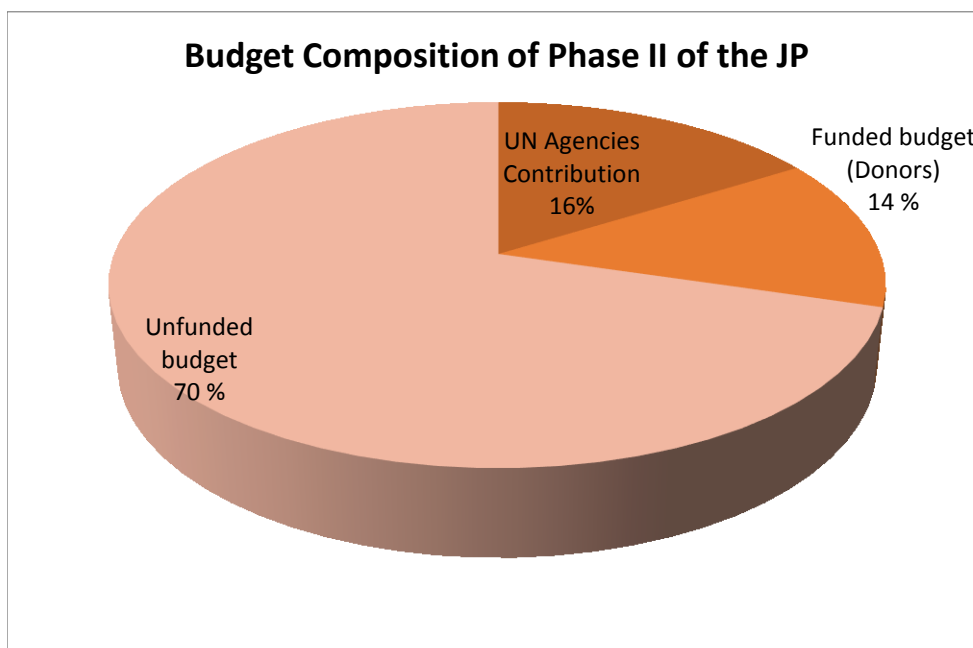


Figure 3: Budget composition¹⁵

As presented above, Phase two of the programme started with a significant proportion of an unfunded budget (70 percent). Because the resources that were planned to be obtained from donors through resource mobilization initiatives at United Nations Country Team (UNCT) level (One Fund) did not materialize, the funding gap which was already identified as a challenge in Phase one persisted in Phase two of the programme as well. As a result, during the Rapid Assessment the funding gap issue once again emerged as one of the major challenges facing the programme.

While the initial budget data summarized above sets the contributions of UN agencies at 16 percent, the latest information provided by UNFPA indicates that participating UN agencies have also been mobilizing their own resources to supplement the funds received from the UN One Fund. As summarized in the following table, the contribution of some of the agencies is very significant - in some cases overshadowing the funds provided by the One Fund. The overall average contribution of the agencies to the total funds available to the programme stands at 54 percent.

¹⁵ Based on information from the Multi-partner Trust Fund web site

Summary of Financial Status for the Flagship Joint Programme on GEWE 2014 (As of October 31, 2014)				
Agency	Fund Received from ONE FUND	Resource Allocation from the Agency	Total Available Fund	% of funds provided by Agency
UNDP	130,875.00	200,473.00	331,348.00	61%
ILO	559,656.00	30,000.00	589,656.00	5%
UNICEF	199,633.00	496,273.00	695,906.00	71%
UN Women	241,348.00	44,445.65	285,793.65	16%
UNESCO	49,418.87	10,000.00	59,418.87	17%
UNFPA	152,727.00	797,626.00	950,353.00	84%
Total	1,333,658	1,578,818	2,912,475.52	54%

Table 1: Summary of Financial Status of the JP¹⁶

Data obtained from the Multi-partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Website, on the other hand, suggest that funds that have already been committed by partners have not yet been fully transferred to the programme. As discussed previously in this report, the data presented below shows that as of November 2014, Norway and Sweden, the two most significant funders of phase 2, have deposited only 68.2 percent and 80 percent of the funds they committed to the programme.

¹⁶ Based on information supplied by UNFPA

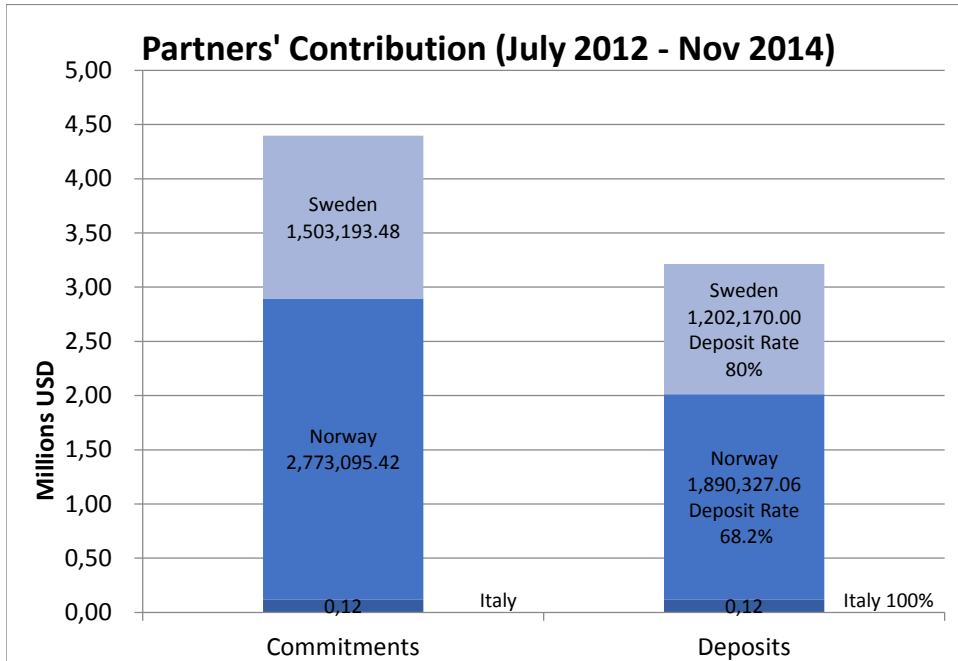


Figure 4: Partners' contribution

Source: MPTF Website. Accessed 13 November 2014, 8:00 AM GMT.

Even more serious, however, is the declining trend in the size of the commitments secured from donors for the remaining period of Phase II of the programme. The following graph presents the trend in the size of already committed funds up to 2015.

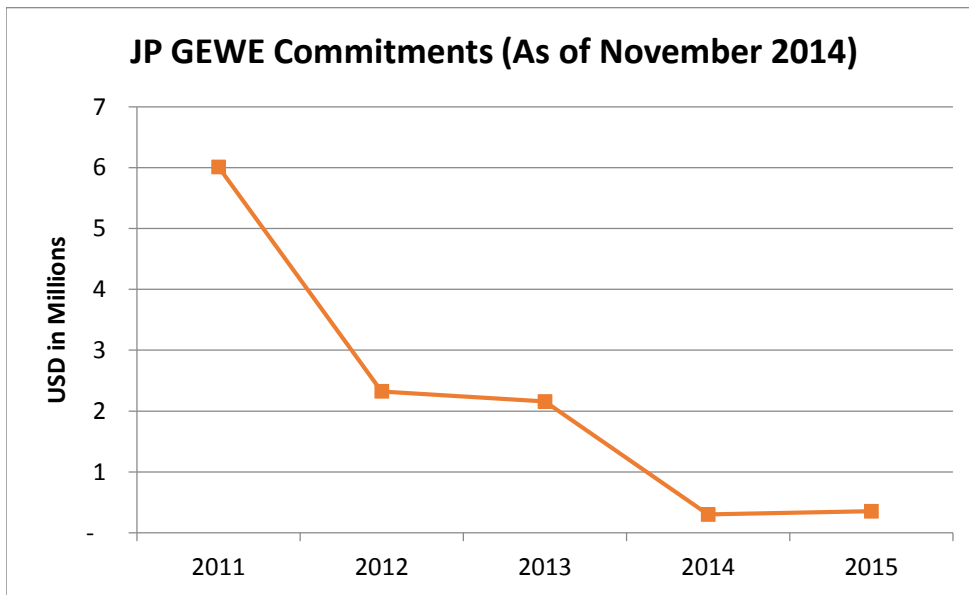


Figure 5: Commitments

Source: MPTF Website. Accessed 16, November 2014,, 2:00 AM GMT

The financial information presented in the forgoing paragraphs strongly suggest that, with only 18 months remaining before Phase two officially expires, the programme's funding status is a matter that needs to be addressed urgently through the involvement of all important stakeholders.

An issue of highest priority at the next meeting of stakeholders should be how to close the funding gap, at least partially, if not fully, for the balance of the period and resolving some of the paradoxes related to financial flows. The paradox at the moment is that, while the funding gap is apparent at the overall programme level, some of the existing donors are also reporting that the programme is not proactive in submitting requests for the release of funds which they have already committed.

The overall observation is that delay in fund transfers at all levels has been recognized as a longstanding problem and has been identified as one of the challenges in the most recent One Fund report at the disposal of the RA Team (May 2014 Ethiopia One Fund Report). Enquires made by the team to identify the reasons for these delays, however, resulted in explanations which often reflected the specific respondent's institutional affiliation. For example, government implementing partners mention that the UN agencies are late in releasing funds - especially for the first quarter - which they emphasized affects their ability to complete planned programme activities and report results on time; the UN agencies, on their part, mention delays in reporting by IPs and poor quality of information on the FACE forms submitted to them. As noted above, donors also report that requests for the timely release of already earmarked funds are not forthcoming from the UN agencies themselves. The Team feels that all of these explanations seem to have some truth and need to be addressed appropriately if the programme is to move forward.

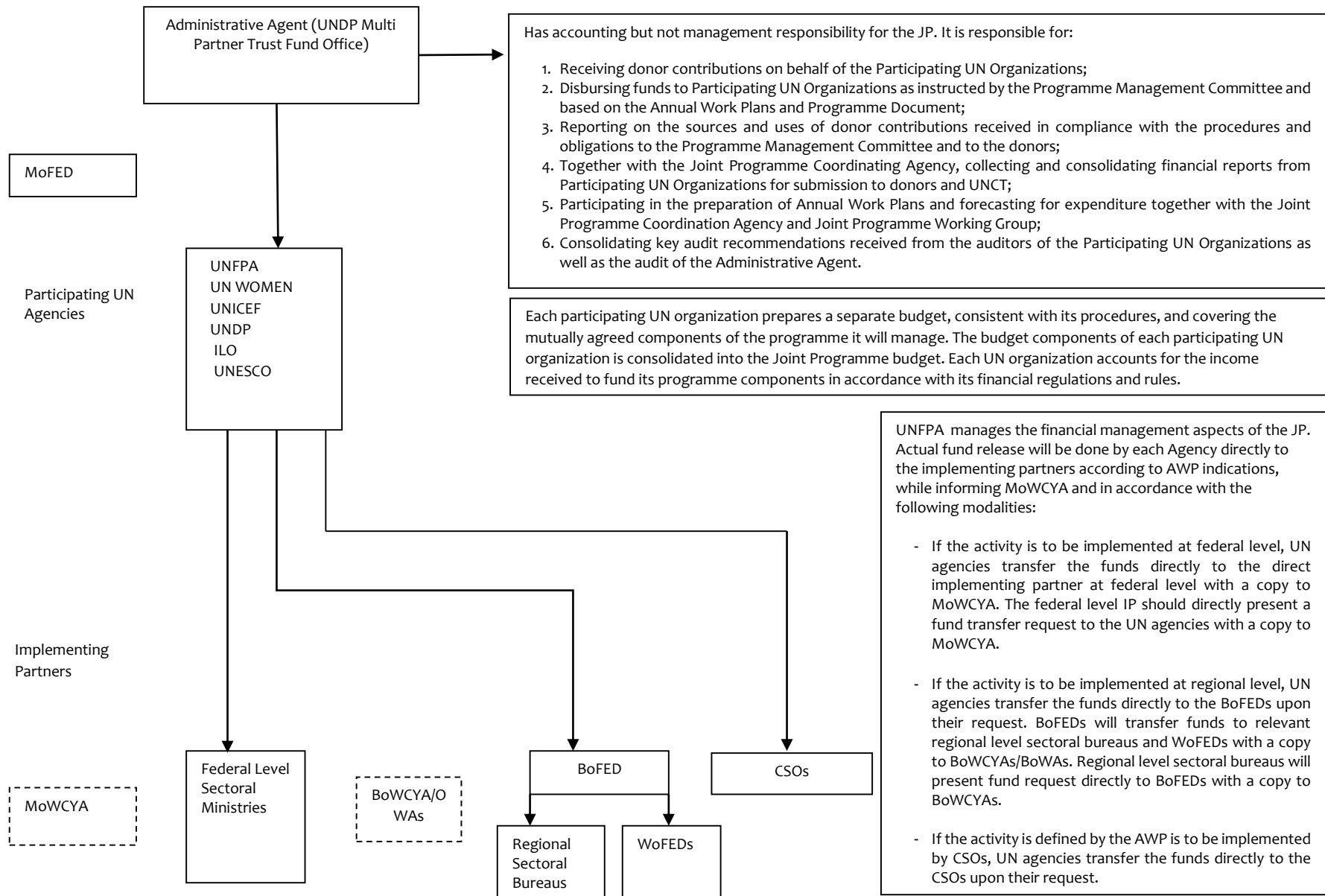
3.2. Funds Flow within the Joint Programme

The Rapid Assessment involved a quick review of the financial management and internal control systems of implementing partners to assess the overall capacity of the systems to insure that resources provided under the programme are utilized for the purposes for which they were intended.

The financial governance system of the programme is guided by a Programme Implementation Manual for United Nations Agencies assisted Programmes in Ethiopia (PIM). The Manual indicates that all UN supported programmes and projects will have to operate within systems and procedures that are aligned with Government systems in such areas as implementation arrangements, monitoring and evaluation systems, financial rules and regulations, auditing and procurement arrangements.

It was observed that a copy of the PIM was available and is used as a reference by the IPs which were visited during the Rapid Assessment. An assessment of the contents of the PIM also showed that it covers all important areas and issues which promote a transparent financial management system by IPs. The Manual clearly outlines the responsibilities of both Federal-level Implementing Partners as well as Regional-level Implementing Partners when it comes to managing finances.

The movement of funds within the Joint Programme reflect the framework set by the PIM and is presented in the following diagram:



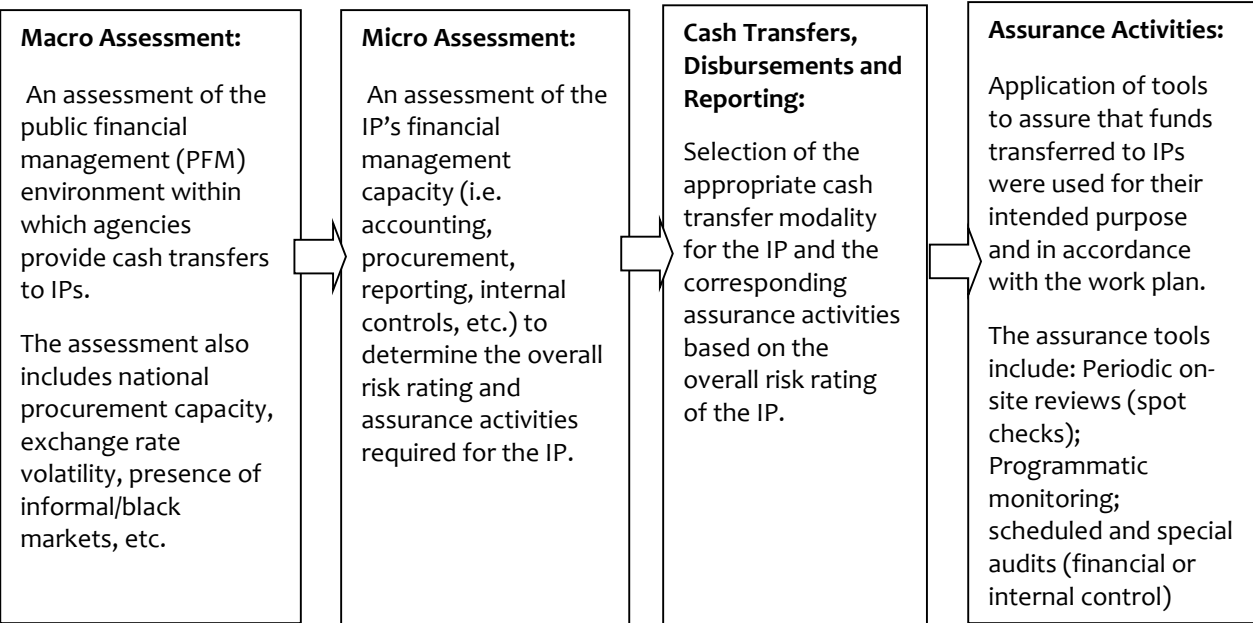
The UNDP MPTF Office has an Internet Gateway (<http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/ET100>) which was used as an important source of information during the assessment. Although not possible for the team to verify¹⁷, the Gateway states that it has a maximum delay of only two hours for updating the information on the Website once the MPTF Office receives financial reports related to the JP from the participating UN Agencies. If followed diligently, this practice of availing up-to-date financial information on the JP would clearly promote financial transparency at the macro-level. However, to be useful for readers, the information provided on the website should be updated regularly so that it would not mislead readers. For example, the website still lists the end date for the One Fund as 31 December 2015, whereas the information provided to the assessment team from other sources showed that the programme has been extended to June 2016 with a view of aligning the programme to the Growth and Transformation Plan cycle.

3.3. The Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT)

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has an extensive risk-based approach for assessing the financial management practices and capacities of both government and non-government IPs. According to this approach, the risk rating obtained from the assessment of each IP (which should be performed at least once for every programme cycle) should be used for adopting appropriate risk mitigating measures towards each IP.

HACT involves a very extensive process. It involves an assessment of the general public financial management environment at the country level as well as a micro-level examination of the areas and factors that determine the financial management capacity and risks of each specific IP.

The features and steps involved in the HACT Framework are presented in the following diagram:



¹⁷ Information available during the interviews showed that the UNFPA office compiles the financial data of the JP and submits the reports to the UNDP MPTF Office.

An attempt was made to establish how well the HACT framework was implemented within the JP. The information provided by UNFPA (which is responsible for the financial aspects of the programme) regarding the practical application of HACT in the context of the GEWE JP indicated that Ethiopia is not yet a fully HACT compliant country at this point in time and all the requirements in the HACT framework may not be in place. Furthermore, the information also states that the consensus so far is to conduct a macro-assessment and requiring micro-assessments on government IPs only when significant changes are noticed in the financial management and risks of the implementing partner as provided in the PIM.

Interviews conducted during the Rapid Assessment also indicated that except for the one CSO visited during the assessment, none of the finance staff interviewed within government IPs were able to mention (or recall) that a micro-assessment has been done on their organization as required by the HACT framework. This could possibly be explained by a number of factors including the fact that the IPs visited by the team were limited in number and potentially unrepresentative¹⁸. It is also possible that, because of the characteristically high staff turnover within finance departments, the respondents approached may not have been there when the assessment was conducted.

An interviewee from one of the participating UN agencies reported that HACT is always a pre-requisite before funds are transferred to all IPs. Attempts to obtain a sample of a HACT assessment report on an IP, however, proved difficult as the reports are reportedly not publicly available. Subsequent efforts to gain access to a sample assessment report through UNFPA and UNCIEF after securing the consent of the concerned IP were also not successful.

Given the information that Ethiopia is not a fully HACT compliant country and the limited number of IPs actually visited by the review team, it cannot be surprising that the RA was not able to conclusively establish whether or not micro-assessments have been conducted on all IPs of the Joint Programme as required by the HACT framework. Regardless of this limitation, however, the team's observation is that the HACT framework is a very valuable tool for evaluating financial management capacity and determining the risk mitigating measures that are commensurate with the risk rating of IPs. Therefore, it recommends that effort should be made to apply it systematically and vigorously in the future.

3.4. Financial Management and Internal Control Systems of IPs

A pre-designed questionnaire adapted from the HACT Framework was employed to conduct a quick assessment on the financial management capacity of the IPs visited during the Rapid Assessment. The questionnaire was used to obtain information on a number of financial management issues including;

- Organizational structure and staffing of the accounting/finance department
- Accounting policies and procedures of the IP
- Segregation of duties
- Budgeting system
- Payment procedures
- Management of cash and bank accounts
- Safeguards used on assets

¹⁸ The information is based on the responses of interviewees from the IPs visited by the team in Addis Ababa, Tigray and South West Shoa Zonal offices. Finance staff within Tigray BoFED, Addis Ababa BoWCYA, Tigray BoWCYA, the CSO in Addis Ababa as well as in Kille Awlalo, Goru Woreda and the South West Shoa Zonal Finance Office were interviewed during the financial management capacity assessment.

- Internal audit practices
- Financial audits
- Procurement systems used by the IP

The results of the questionnaire-based interviews produced the following main observations regarding the implementing partners visited in the course of the assessment:

- The finance/accounting function is separately organized with staff members that have adequate academic qualifications. However, all respondents indicated that the staffing level is not adequate for the volume of the work and there are still key positions that are vacant. They also reported very high staff turnover from their departments.
- Except for the one Civil Society Organisation (CSO) visited for the Rapid Assessment, all government implementing partners follow accounting policies and procedures based on government systems as reflected in the PIM.
- There is a sufficient level of segregation of duties between units and persons having different functional responsibilities such as giving authorization to execute a transaction, recording of a transaction and custody of assets involved in the transaction.
- The budgeting system for the joint programme follows an activity-based approach where funds are strictly allocated for specific activities already identified in the annual work plan (AWP).
- Payments are effected only after proper comparisons are made with appropriate source documents and approvals are made by designated officials.
- There are a minimum of two signatories for checks and up-to-date cash balances are maintained on computerized systems (IBEX for government IPs and Peachtree for the CSO).
- The HACT Framework appears to suggest that funds coming from each UN agency should be kept in a separate account (Micro-assessment questionnaire item 4.34). However, the PIM which provides more specific guidelines for the financial management issues of the programme states that one bank account should be opened for each sector supported by the UN Agencies. Accordingly, with the exception of the CSO, government IPs reported that funds coming from different UN agencies are put into a single bank account and are accounted for and controlled through separate ledger accounts. They also reported that monthly bank reconciliations are prepared for each source of fund based on a comparison of bank statements and ledger balances. These practices were found to be in line with the requirements of the PIM¹⁹.

¹⁹ It should also be noted that, except for the additional work load involved when tracing cash movements to specific sources during reconciliations, there will not be any loss of internal control as a result of maintaining just one bank account as long as regular bank reconciliations are made for all the funds received from the programme;

- The IPs maintain fixed asset registers and physical counts are conducted annually and control and subsidiary accounts are reconciled regularly.
- Except for the CSO, all government IPs reported that they are audited by internal auditors. Regional sector bureaus have their internal auditors and each woreda has its own auditors. The internal auditors report to higher bodies to allow a higher level of independence and objectivity.
- External financial audits for government IPs are performed by the Federal Auditor General and Regional Auditor General Offices. Some of the UN Agencies participating in the JP also send their own external auditors who conduct independent audits on the utilization of the funds they have provided.
- Procurements are conducted in line with the requirements of the PIM which reflects the Ethiopian Government's procurement policies and procedures.
- The only financial management and internal control issues which were raised by external auditors so far (as reported by the IPs) were related to the issue of keeping funds received from UN agencies in separate bank accounts and using "PAID" stamps on invoices that have been already paid in order to prevent the possible re-submission of the same documents for payment.

As discussed earlier, the issue raised by the external auditors with regards to maintaining a separate bank account may be associated with their direct interpretation of Item 4.34 of the HACT guideline - similar to the initial understanding of the review team. As noted above, this requirement has apparently been relaxed by the PIM. With respect to marking invoices with a "PAID" stamp, some of the IPs argued that this will be a redundant activity because they already use centrally printed and highly controlled government forms which cannot be presented twice for effecting payment. In any case, some of the UN agencies participating in the JP (such as UNCIEF) have already provided IPs with their own "PAID" stamp and enforce the requirement.

Summing up, the financial management of the programme is governed by the Programme Implementation Manual for United Nations Agencies assisted Programmes in Ethiopia (PIM), and government implementing partners operate within systems and procedures that are aligned with the government systems. The assessment shows that the financial systems of both government and CSO implementing partners visited during the Rapid Assessment have appropriate financial internal controls and safeguards.

At the macro level, the most serious financial management challenge facing the joint programme is how to align programmatic activities in the balance of the programme's life with the size of funds that can be reasonably expected from different sources. This is particularly critical because, at this moment, the financial commitments already secured from donors for the balance of the programme's life are very insignificant. Therefore the programme's funding status is a matter that needs to be addressed urgently through the involvement of all important stakeholders.

4. Conclusions

1. The GEWE JP has achieved many positive results within each outcome area when taken into consideration the actual available budget. However, the programme is underfunded by approximately 70 percent and is not on track compared to the original goals and targets as envisaged in the programme document. This results from a variety of external and internal challenges, such as unrealistic planning, the lack of ability to document clear results and communicate progress, and the financial crisis.
2. The holistic nature of the programme design is relevant on paper, but the operationalization of the design has proved challenging. The ambitious and holistic programme has not reached its full potential in terms of creating synergies as the different components for a large part have been implemented as separate programmes of their own in different geographical localities. Whether it is actually feasible to carry out this relatively complex and resource demanding programme design across so many geographical locations is being questioned by several of the respondents and should be assessed carefully and agreed upon.
3. The vast geographical spread is hampering the potential holistic achievements, and leads to ad hoc and one off activities, not producing the desired results. Making changes at this stage may prove challenging and may require high level efforts, but it is perceived to be necessary if the anticipated consolidated results are to be seen within the remaining lifetime of the programme. A solution may be that the programme covers some regions whereas the government covers the remaining regions with other funding.
4. There is an interesting contradiction in terms of underfunding versus lacking ability to absorb funding. This has turned into a vicious circle, which is also related to the programme being understaffed at all levels and under skilled at local levels. Lessons learned from the programme illustrate the fact that adequate human resources must be in place to handle the extra burden of implementing, monitoring, reporting, coordinating and market such a large and complex programme. Ultimately this also affects the ability to attract donors.
5. The programme has contributed to increased coordination and openness between UN agencies and to some extent between sector ministries. However, there is still room for improvement, particularly when it comes to including sector ministries at the federal level.
6. Many of the findings in this Rapid Assessment have been raised in earlier reviews and evaluations. Some of the recommendations from these previous undertakings have also been discussed in subsequent meetings and in some cases decisions have been made to follow up on the recommendations. Many people who are working with the programme in various capacities are well aware of the challenges and agree to the necessity of making changes to help the programme back on track for the remaining two years. Still, many of the recommendations have never been implemented. In light of the huge funding gap and the fact that only 18 months remain before phase 2 of the programme officially ends, the necessary changes need to be put in place urgently.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that a concrete, time bound follow up plan with clear responsibilities is made taking all the recommendations below into due consideration. Due to the limited time left before the end of the GEWE JP II, the recommendations should be acted upon immediately and the follow up plan should be fully implemented by the start of the next fiscal year in July 2015.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. The programme document should be rewritten and scaled down, resetting the targets according to the existing funding and a realistic assessment of potentially mobilized funding. It is recommended that one or more of the following strategies are used to narrow the scope of the programme to bring it to an alignment with the amount of the available funds for the remaining period:
 - a) Reduce the geographic coverage of the programme substantially in terms of the number of regions
 - b) Reduce the number of woredas covered by the programme in each region
 - c) Reduce the number of programme components that are implemented in each region.

Reducing the geographical coverage is strongly recommended. The third strategy (c) is, however, more tricky, as it would compromise the holistic and synergetic idea of the programme. On one hand there is an unused potential related to creating more synergies between the components of the programme. To achieve this the four outcomes should ideally be implemented in the same geographical areas and a plan should be made for better communication between the outcome areas and the stakeholders involved. This would be in line with the intentions of the current programme design. On the other hand, the realism in achieving the desired synergies between the outcome areas needs to be assessed carefully. If the holistic approach is not seen to give the desired added value, concentrating by reducing the number of programme components in each region may contribute to ease implementation.

2. Staff should be hired as stipulated in the programme document. Hiring relevant people at the local levels will potentially improve implementation, monitoring and reporting, increase the capacity to absorb funding and reduce delays. At UN and federal level more staff is needed for smooth coordination as well documentation and marketing.
3. The draft funding strategies need to be put into action in order to mobilize additional funding and thereby reduce the funding gap. If more funds are secured for the programme, efforts needs to be implemented to secure capacity to absorb the funding.
4. Clear exit strategies should be developed for all outcome areas in order to enhance the possibilities for sustainability.
5. Stronger involvement of sector ministries needs to be developed to enhance ownership of the gender mainstreaming agenda.

6. Donors should to the extent possible be more actively engaged and strongly encourage for changes.
7. The financial management capacity assessment of implementing partners which is required under the HACT framework should continue to be a prerequisite for transferring programme funds. Since the risk ratings of implementing partners can change over time, an effort should be made to conduct the assessment at least once per programme cycle.
8. The idea of providing all relevant financial and other information related to the programme through a single source using the Multi-partner Trust Fund website is something that should be commended because it adds to the programme's transparency in financial management. However, the information provided on the website should be updated regularly so that it could effectively meet the needs of readers.

Annex 1: People met

No	Name	Position	Agency
1	Håvard Hoksnes	Counsellor, Head of Development Cooperation	Norwegian Embassy
2	Tsige Alemayehu	Programme Officer Human Rights/Gender Equality	Norwegian Embassy
3	Stina Karlton	Counsellor, Bilateral Development Cooperation	Swedish Embassy
4	Yelfigne Abegaz	National Programme Coordinator	UN Women
5	Desset Abebe	Programme Officer	UN Women
6	Misrak Tamiru	Programme Specialist, WEE	UN Women
7	Tsegay Woldegebriel	Bureau Head, Joint Programme Coordinator	Tigray BoFED
8	Sentayehu Demeke	Advisor to Head of BoWCYA and focal Person for UN Programmes	Addis Ababa BoWCYA
9	Ketsela Tibebe	Expenditures and Finance Support Process Head	Addis Ababa BoWCYA
10	Anteneh G/Mariam	Finance Officer	Addis Ababa BoWCYA
11	Maria Munir Yusuf	Executive Directress	Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD)
12	Meti Dereje	Programme Coordinator	Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD)
13	Saba Techane	Accountant	Association for Women's Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD)
14	Berihu Teklay	Development and planning sub-process owner	BoWCYA Tigray
15	Kiros Kahsay	Capacity building expert and representative of gender mainstreaming core process	BoWCYA, Tigray
16	Gebremeskel Haile	Project Coordinator	BoWCYA, Tigray
17	Gebreamlak Berhane	Mobilization and Organization Expert	BoWCYA, Tigray
18	Meaza Tadele	Programme Coordinator and Vice Head of the Department of Aid Mobilization and Coordination of Core Process	BoFED, Tigray
19	Laeke Haileselassie	Finance Officer (Finance focal person for GEWE JP Programme)	BoFED Tigray
20	Mohammed Abdella	Finance Officer	BoFED, Tigray
21	Daniel Hailemariam	Finance Officer	BoFED, Tigray
22	Selam G/Egziabher	Senior Accountant	BoWCYA, Tigray
23	Kalayu G/Hiwot	Office Head	Kilte Awlaelo WoFED
24	Kebatu G/Medhin	Organization & Mobilization Expert	Kilte Awlaelo, Women Affairs
25	Haftu Hailu	M&E Expert	Kilte Awlaelo, Women Affairs
26	Gebreyohannes G/Giorgis	Vice Head	Kilte Awlaelo WoFED

27	Aklilu G/Egziabher	Planning Expert	Kilte Awlaelo WoFED
28	Eyerusalem Haftu	Senior Accountant, Focal Person for UN Ex-com	Kilte Awlaelo WoFED
29	Fatima Ahmed	Beneficiary, Outcome 1	Agula kebele
30	Tekle Gebreselassie	"	"
31	Zenebu Gebremedhin	"	"
32	Senait	"	"
33	Abrehet Tessfay	Co-ordinator	Women's Affair office Agula
34	Abebe Nirea	Gender Expert	Gender Office, Mekelle University
35	Ellen Alemu	Gender & Development Specialist, UNCIEF Coordinator for JP	UNCIEF
36	Mesfin Zewdie	Programme Preparation & Resource Mobilization Case Team Leader, Focal Person for GEWE	MoWCYA
37	Haileleul Seyoum	Director of Women & Youth Mobilization and Participation Enhancement Directorate	MoWCYA
38	Addiswork Dosegnaw	Gender & Youth Mainstreaming Case Leader	MoWCYA
39	Addis G/Michael	Gender Expert	MoWCYA
40	Mekwanent Eyayu	Planning Team Leader	MoWCYA
41	Berhanu Legesse	Assistant Representative for Gender, Population & Development	UNFPA
42	Neteru Wondwossen	Director, Gender Affairs Directorate	MoFED
43	Zenebech Mamo	Office Head	Oromia, South-West Shoa Zone, Women Affairs
44	Abdeta Yadessa	Women's Capacity Building Process Owner	Oromia, South-West Shoa Zone, Women Affairs
45	Birtukan Girma	Deputy Office Head and Women Empowerment Process Head	Oromia, South-West Shoa Zone, Women Affairs
46	Minasae Kenea	Project Office	Oromia, South-West Shoa Zone, Women Affairs
47	Meskerem Bekele	Women Affairs Head	Goro Woreda, South-West Shoa Zone
48	Ayantu Mekonnen	Women Affairs Vice-Head	Goro Woreda, South-West Shoa Zone
49	Dereje Getahun	Women Empowerment Process Coordinator	Goro Woreda, South-West Shoa Zone
50	Tadelech Mulugeta	Project officer	Goro Woreda, South-West Shoa Zone
51	Bogale Gonfa	Planning & Budget Expert	Goro Woreda, South-West Shoa Zone
52	Kuribachew Habteyes	Children Affairs Process Head	Goro Woreda, South-West Shoa Zone
53	Berhanu Bikila	UN Fund Accountant	Goro Woreda, South-West Shoa Zone
54	Beri Amentie	Finance Officer	Oromia, South-West Shoa Zonal Finance Office
55	Meskerem Tadesse	Beneficiary, Outcome 2	Goro Woreda

56	Takelu Tesfaye	"	"
57	Emebet Demissie	"	"
58	Hamrya Teshome	"	"
59	Sufe Lelisse	"	"
60	Mahbuba Muze	"	"
61	Boge	"	"

Annex 2: References

Joint Programme Document for Ethiopia Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: phase II, September 5 2013

Integrated results and resources framework, GEWE JP phase 2

Standard Administrative Arrangement between MFA of Norway and UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (AA), 12.12.2012

The Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, May 2013 update

Second Consolidated Annual Progress Report on Activities Implemented under the Ethiopia One Fund, for the Period 1 January to 31 December 2012, 25. May 2013

Third Consolidated Annual Progress Report on Activities Implemented under the Ethiopia One Fund, for the Period 1 January to 31 December 2013, 30. May 2014

End Evaluation of Phase 1, final report June 20 2013, Ethiopia Joint Flagship Programme on Gender Equality and Women's empowerment (JP GEWE)

Light Review of UN Flagship Joint Programmes in Ethiopia, Final report, November 2013

Joint Evaluation of Joint Programmes on Gender Equality in the United Nations System, Final Synthesis Report, November 2013

Partner Meeting Minutes GEWE JP, 1. July 2014

Minutes of Meetings JP Participating Agencies meeting, 7. November 2013

Meeting minutes from JP Participating Agencies meeting, August 14, 2012

Minutes of meeting with development partners on II phase of JP, March 14, 2013

Minutes from JP Programme Steering Committee Meeting, 25 July 25 2013

Minute of TWG meeting, Feb 26, 2014

Minutes of TWG meeting, April 03, 2013

Minutes of GEWE JP PMC meeting, May 20, 2013

Minute of TWG group meeting, April 09, 2013

Steering Committee Meeting On Flagship Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, 20 December 2012

Minutes of GEWE JP PMC meeting, May 20, 2013

National report On The implementation of the Beijing Declaration And platform for action, 2014

Tigray Annual Report 2006E.C (July 2013 – June 2014)

Various quarterly reports for UNFPA, UNDP and UNFPA, Tigray

Association for Women Sanctuary and Development (AWSAD), Activity and final report, 2005-12)

AWSAD Progress report July-September 2014

List of JPGEWE TWG

UNCT PA list, June 2014

Annex 3: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for Consultancy JP GEWE 2012-2015 Rapid Assessment (RA)

Context and Rationale

The Government of Ethiopia has declared its commitment to gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women by stipulating the rights of women in its Constitution and by revising the Family Law and the Criminal Law in 2004. However, gender disparities remain particularly vivid in Ethiopia, despite marked progress in recent years (particularly in access to primary education). Ethiopia's ranking in the 2012 Global Gender Gap Report (118th out of 135 countries), though an improvement from the previous position, reflects the prevalence of resilient gender roles and stereotypes. The position and empowerment of women and girls in society are hindered by negative attitudes perpetuating inequality affecting all aspects of their lives. Although women's political representation has improved over the years, negative social perceptions about the leadership ability of women, their low socio-economic status, low educational and skill levels and lack of strong role models all contribute to women still being largely underrepresented in decision-making positions. The burden of household chores and inequitable access to higher education also limit women's ability to enjoy the opportunities and benefits of citizenship as men on an equal footing in the economic sphere.

The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Joint Programme (GEWE JP) articulates the support of UN Agencies to the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) in its efforts to further improve the lives of Ethiopian women and support the realization of their rights, in line with its international commitments. The GEWE JP is aligned with the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), the overarching national development strategy as well as sector-based plans, strategies and policies. The GEWE JP is grounded in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Ethiopia, jointly agreed by the GoE and the UN Country Team (UNCT).

The GEWE JP was launched in 2011 for an initial pilot phase of 18 months ending in June 2013. As the programme gained momentum, it demonstrated the ability to develop a large set of partnerships among 11 regions to promote and defend women's empowerment. The extension of the programme, initiated in line with the new UNDAF (2012-2015), jointly agreed by the Government of Ethiopia and the UN Country Team, relies on a number of lessons learnt and new opportunities for more effective delivery of results. The program primarily brought together six UN Agencies (UNESCO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women) where UNFPA and UN Women are the co-lead. Currently, three more UN Agencies, namely FAO, IFAD and WFP, that are endeavouring to accelerate the economic empowerment of poor rural women has joined in the JP to implement the merged Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE) component of the JP. During the start of its implementation the JP GEWE had a total estimated budget of USD35,502,304, broken down to USD 5,730,898 as contribution from participating UN Agencies, USD 4,783,688 as funded and USD 24, 987,718 unfunded portion to be mobilized. The current merger of the JP GEWE with RWEE had funding implications where the total budget scaled up to 41 Million (additional 5 Million USD for RWEE (unfunded)).

As part of its Evaluation strategy, the JP GEWE Pro-doc provides for one Rapid Assessment and a final evaluation that will be conducted over the course of the JP implementation. The JOINT REVIEW is expected to be conducted two years after the inception of the programme to allow for reorientations

of the programmatic activities as relevant, in line with evolving needs and available resources in addition to feeding into the process of the programme final evaluation.

In line with the above evaluation requirement and cognizant of the huge funding gap that has persisted throughout the implementation of the JP, a Rapid Assessment (RA) of the Program is planned to be carried out with a view to support adjustments to the JP in line with the available budget; to ensure improvements in performance and results in the remaining implementation period by identifying challenges and ways to overcome them and to document lessons learned.

Review Purpose and Use

The RA has the purpose of assessing the achievement and progress made against planned results, assess challenges, and draw lessons learned over the past two years implementation period of the JP GEWE. The review will also help to generate possible recommendations for fine tuning the performance of the JP GEWE for the remaining period. The RA will also highlight emerging issues that were not reflected during the design of the JP for future learning.

The RA will assess the JP results achieved thus far using commonly agreed criteria to validate the continued relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and sustainability of the program in delivering on agreed outcomes. The RA will serve as important input for the planned joint review meeting.

The main objectives of the Rapid assessment are to:

- Validate the continued relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and sustainability of JP GEWE in delivering on agreed outcomes and its contribution to national development efforts;
- Undertake analytical assessment of the progress achieved in implementing of the JP GEWE II Phase so far and to identify key success and best practices;
- Identify gaps/constraints that needs to be addressed in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Document lessons learned and make recommendations for overcoming both programmatic and operational challenges faced by key stakeholders including target group;
- Identify information to enhance the delivering capacity of the JP GEWE and provide initial recommendations to address bottlenecks;
- Assess the adequacy of implementing party's financial management systems and capabilities. The degree to which internal control systems and measures are able to prevent and avoid financial irregularities.
- Assess the efficiency of resources used compared to the planned outputs.

The main users of the review include JP GEWE implementing UN Agencies, donors, federal, regional and world level government partners and specialized agencies such as MFIs and women associations/cooperatives.

In order to respond to the findings of the RA, the UNCT through the PMC will develop

- Management response and action plans to the review findings and recommendations.

Scope of the Review

The RA review is expected to be comprehensive, thus include all JP GEWE implementing regions which will make nationwide. However, taking in to account the time allocated for the review, the review team/firm is given the prerogative to select sample regions and within the regions JP implementation Woredas to undertake field assessment. Accordingly, the review team/firm is expected to indicate its sample areas within its inception report and get it validated.

Approach and Methodology

The light review will build on the existing evaluations and the method should be able to generate adequate level of information to clearly indicate the results of joint programmes and programming process.

In the inception report the review team is expected to outline robust, detail and comprehensive methodology that will ensure data quality, validity, credibility, and reduce bias. The team can collect the required data using:

- In-depth desk review of relevant documents- A list of relevant documents will be reviewed. In addition, respective institution will provide data that are readily available from different sources. The data sources and methodology will be reviewed and analyzed during inception phase to determine the need for additional information and finalization of the detailed evaluation methodology.
- Face to face interview with Heads of agencies, Program staff/focal points, government officials, donor partners, focal points at various level, and intended implementing partners where possible.
- Focus Group Discussions
- Field observations to selected JP implementation areas/Woredas (given the short time ,the consultant can visit programs close to AA , Oromia and a couple of sites either in Tigray or Amhara (can easily fly to both destinations)
- Questionnaire (using online self-administered questionnaires)

The sources of information may include JP GEWE pro-doc, JP GEWE results framework, Annual work plans of both federal and regional IPs, both narrative substantive and financial reports, review meeting proceedings, evaluation reports and any other documents as deemed necessary by the team as sources of information.

Responsibility of the consultant (s)

An international consultancy firm will be hired for a period of 4-6 weeks to undertake the Rapid Assessment at the national level. The consultancy team should have highly qualified international and national consultants. The international consultant should team up with a national consultant to support the process in the best way possible to ensure the deliverables are achieved as outlined in this TOR. A local finance expert will be added to the team to look at the financial sides of the review. Both the international and national consultants are expected to be on board at the end of October and the International consultant will be the team leader and responsible for the final report.

Overall the consultancy will be responsible for:

- Carrying out a through desk review of available progress and JP GEWE annual reports from the Resident Coordinator’s Office and participating agencies; programme reviews from lead agencies and TWG; and JP regional focal persons to map out the overall achievement against the JP GEWE action plan;
- Consult with and interview key stakeholders to validate and complement the findings of the desk review;
- Review and compile revised JP GEWE indicators, baseline information, sources and means of verification that need amendment; Identify implementation challenges and operational issues through these reviews and consultations, and propose ways to remedy the same.
- Produce a comprehensive RA review report for the JP GEWE which clearly highlights achievements/ progress realised, strategic issues, challenges, lessons learned and concrete recommendations;

Deliverables

The team is expected to submit the inception report and conduct a meeting with JP TWG and relevant UN and government officials/focal points. At the inception phase the assessment team should further refine the overall scope, approach and questions provide detailed outline of the review methodology, selection criteria for data collection and analysis. The inception report may also include revised timeframe. After the finalization of data collection and analysis the team should submit the draft and final reports by the time frame indicated in the schedule. The final report should be submitted both in hard and soft copy. There will be a final briefing session on the review results and a power point presentation of the major findings should be presented.

Required qualifications and experience of the consultancy firm and its consultant(s)

An international consultancy firm which has prior experience on a similar exercise with the United Nations is required to present the CVs of one international (lead consultant) and national consultant to carry out this assignment. The international consultant should team up with a national consultant to support the process in the best way possible and to ensure the deliverables are achieved as outlined in this TOR. The national consultant needs to be conversant of the national /local situation of the development cooperation/partnership between the UN and the government of Ethiopia. The below required educational and work experiences are mandatory for both consultants.

Education

- Advanced university degree in development studies, international development, economics, political science, policy evaluation, public policy or relevant field of studies

Experience

- Minimum of 10 years progressive experience in development related work
- Strong analytical skills, a demonstrated ability to conduct interviews with a range of stakeholders, and experience in pulling together analysis and data into reports
- Experience in reviewing and compiling multiple data sets and strong understanding of quantitative and qualitative analysis with M&E Frameworks

- Understanding of or experience working with UN joint programmes familiarity with the UN system and the joint programming guidelines and UN Delivering as One SOP will be a strong asset.
- The consultant must have prior experience of working with complex national level M&E frameworks or strategic plans involving multiple stakeholders, and a clear understanding of Delivering as One
- Ability to identify implementation issues and operational challenges, and provide recommendations to remedy these issues to accelerate programme delivery
- Adequate understanding of human rights based approach to development, gender equality, environmental sustainability, Results based management
- Experience of carrying out similar assignment in other countries is an asset

Language requirement

- Excellent proficiency in English is required (and Amharic for the national consultant)
- Strong writing abilities is required

Ethical considerations

- The light review will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG 'Ethical guideline for review' ('Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', June 2008).

Time frame

- The RA will be conducted during November 2014.

S/No	Activity/deliverable	Time frame	Remark
1	Inception phase- Inception meeting with Norway embassy, TWG, relevant UN and government officials/focal points and preparation of inception report	Week 1	At the inception phase the review team should further refine the overall scope, approach and questions, provide detailed outline of the methodology, selection criteria for data collection and analysis. The inception report may also include a revised work plan.
2	Data collection and analysis	Week 2 & 3	
3	Draft of the RA review report	Week 3 & 4	
4	Final review report (both electronic and hard copy)	Week 5	Reporting format as provided in the Annex
5	Briefing session on the findings of the RA	Week 5	Power point presentations
6	Dissemination of the RA review results	Week 6	The co-leads of the JP GEWE will disseminate the result as appropriately to concerned UN Agencies and government partners

Review Reference Group

Review Reference Group composed of maximum of 5 members composed of representatives from MoWCYA, UN WOMEN, UNFPA, Norwegian embassy) will be established. The reference group will assist in identifying information needs and providing documentation to the reviewing team; provides overall strategic guidance to the review team and advisory support in defining the scope, objectives and methodology; reviews and provides detailed feedback on the draft inception and review reports.

Review Criteria

Financial and Technical proposal will constitute 30% and 70% respectively to provide a combined score out of 100%. Only those companies that have passed the technical evaluation (receiving 70% or above of the total score allocated for technical evaluation) will be considered for the financial evaluation. The responsive and qualified firm with the highest combined rate will be issued a contract.

Summary of Technical Proposal Evaluation Forms		Score Weight	Points Obtainable
1.	Expertise of Firm / team	30%	300
2.	Proposed Methodology, Approach and Implementation Plan	40%	400
3.	Management Structure and Key Personnel	30%	300
Total			1000

Technical Proposal Evaluation Form 1		Points Obtainable
Expertise of the Firm/team		
1.1	Reputation of firm and Staff / Credibility / Reliability and General Organizational Capability which is likely to affect implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - age/size of the firm - strength of project management support - project financing capacity - project management controls 	60
1.2	Does the proposer have demonstrated evaluation and/or research experience in conducting complex multi-stakeholders development evaluations?	80
1.3	Does the proposer have knowledge and expertise in measuring and evaluating/ reviewing UN Joint Programs?	80
1.4	Knowledge of the UN system, UN reform process and UN programming at the national or international level particularly joint programming polices and process, including ability to identify operational challenges?	60

1.5	Does the proposer have experience on projects in geographic area (Ethiopia) of the required services and having a network of local researchers and partners?	20
Total		300

Technical Proposal Evaluation Form 2		Points Obtainable
Proposed Methodology, Approach and Implementation Plan		
2.1	To what degree does the Proposer understand the task?	40
2.2	Is the scope of the task well defined and does it correspond to the TOR?	90
2.3	Does the proposal present a specific approach and a variety of techniques for gathering and analysing qualitative and quantitative data that are feasible and applicable in the timeframe and context of the Rapid Assessment (RA)?	70
2.4	Does the proposal present creative and innovative approaches to the design of <i>formats and products</i> to be used in presenting the final RA evaluation report?	70
2.5	The extent to which the timeframe and human resources indicated in the work plan are realistic and useful for the needs of the Review	50
2.6	Is the presentation clear and is the sequence of activities and the planning logical, realistic and promise efficient implementation to the project?	80
Total		400

Technical Proposal Evaluation Form 3		Points Obtainable
Management Structure and Key Personnel		
3.1	Suitability of key personnel for the review (based on CVs) including: Educational qualifications (Team leader and members)	60
3.2	Relevant professional experience and knowledge on JP evaluations (years of experience for team members) as the per the TOR	80
3.3	Relevant thematic expertise and knowledge on the specific areas to be reviewed	75
3.4	Proven previous expertise in conducting complex multi-stakeholder and Joint Program evaluations	50
3.5	Language (English) and (Amharic) for local consultant, presentation and writing skills	30
3.6	Knowledge of the country and regions	5
Total		300

Annex 4: Inception Report

Inception report Rapid assessment of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Joint Programme (GEWEJP) 2013-2016

1. Introduction

This is the inception report for a Rapid Assessment (RA) of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Joint Programme (GEWEJP). The Rapid Assessment will go on during November and December 2014.

The review team consists of the following people:

Hanne Lotte Moen (Team Leader, Norad)

Getahun Kassa (Team Member)

Zekrie Negatu (Team member finances)

The inception report is based on the Terms of Reference and dialogue with UN Women and the Norwegian Embassy. The primary purpose of this report is to create a shared understanding of the Rapid Assessment and how it will be conducted with UN Women and the Norwegian embassy and other stakeholders. A secondary purpose is to create a shared understanding within the review team of the review design and methodology.

1.1. Description of the GEWEJP Second phase

The GEWEJP I was launched in 2011 for an initial pilot phase planned to last 18 months from January 2011 until June 2012. The first phase was extended twice, first to December 2012 and then to June 30, 2013 to allow for the completion of planned activities.

The second phase started in July 2013 and is expected to last until June 2016.

Through the GEWEJP UN Agencies support the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) in its efforts to further improve the lives of Ethiopian women and support the realization of their rights, in line with its international commitments. The GEWEJP is aligned with the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP), the overarching national development strategy as well as sector based plans, strategies and policies. The GEWE JP is grounded in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Ethiopia, jointly agreed by the GoE and the UN Country Team (UNCT).

The Joint Programme Outcomes are as follows:

5. Rural and Urban Women have increased income for improved food & nutrition security and livelihoods
6. Rural and Urban Women and girls have increased opportunities for education, leadership and decision making
7. Federal and Local level government institutions have strengthened their capacity to implement national and international commitments on gender equality
8. Federal and local level institutions and communities have enhanced their capacity to promote and protect the rights of women and girls.

The programme initially brought together six UN agencies (UNESCO, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and UN Women). UNFPA and UN Women are co-lead. Currently, three more UN Agencies (FAO, IFAD and

WFP) has joined the programme to implement the merged Rural Women Economic Empowerment component of the JP.

The lead implementing organisation for the GEWEJP is the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) while the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) is the overall coordinator of UN programmes in the country. Other ministries as well as other institutions (e.g. education, trade, universities, cooperatives & NGOs) are also engaged in the implementation of the GEWEJP.

1.2. Budget

During the start of its implementation the JPGEWE had a total estimated budget of USD35,502,304 broken down to USD 5,730,898 as contribution from participating UN Agencies, USD 4,783,688 as funded from other sources and USD 24, 987,718 unfunded portion to be mobilized. The current merger of the JPGEWE with a new programme on Rural Women Economic Empowerment (RWEE) had funding implications where the total budget scaled up to USD 41,502,304 (additional 5 Million USD for RWEE, which remains unfunded).

Of the total estimated budget of US\$ 41,502,304 the GEWEJP has so far received US\$ XXX. This translates into a funding gap of USD: YYY (information to be given by the UNW).

1.3. Donors

The first phase of the GEWEJP was funded by Dfid. The second phase is supported by Norway, Sweden and Italy.

2. The Rapid Assessment

2.1. The Purpose of the Rapid Assessment

As part of its evaluation strategy the JP GEWE programme document provides for a Rapid Assessment and a final evaluation to be conducted during the course of the JP implementation. The RA is expected to be conducted two years after the inception of the programme to allow for reorientations of the programmatic activities as relevant, in line with evolving needs and available resources. It will also feed into the process of the final evaluation of the programme.

There has been a huge funding gap throughout the implementation of the programme. The Rapid Assessment will therefore look at the adjustments that needs to be made in line with the available financial resources in order to ensure improvements in performance and results in the remaining period.

The main purpose of the Rapid Assessment is therefore to:

- Assess achievements and progress made against planned results
- Assess challenges and document lessons learned
- Generate recommendations for the remaining period.

The Rapid Assessment will also take into account how emerging issues have impacted the achievements of the outcomes.

As agreed with the Norwegian Embassy it will not be possible to assess impact at this early stage of the programme implementation. Impact assessment would also require a different approach and methodology, which is not feasible within the frames of this RA.

The main objectives of the RA are to:

- Validate the continued relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of GEWEJP;
- Undertake an analytical assessment of the progress achieved by GEWEJP II Phase so far and to identify key success and best practices,
- Identify gaps/constraints that needs to be addressed in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Document lessons learned and make recommendations for overcoming both programmatic and operational challenges faced by key stakeholders, including target groups
- Identify information to enhance the delivering capacity of the GEWEJP and provide initial recommendations to address bottlenecks;
- Assess the adequacy of the implementing partners' financial management systems and capabilities, including the degree to which internal control systems and measures are able to prevent and avoid financial irregularities.
- Assess the efficiency of resources used compared to the planned outputs

This is primarily a formative review, and it shall contribute to learning. The main users of the review include JP GEWE implementing UN Agencies, donors, federal, regional and national level government partners and others. In order to respond to the findings of the RA, the UNCT through the PMC will develop a management response and action plans to the review findings and recommendations.

2.2. The scope of the RA

The RA is expected to be comprehensive and cover the totality of the JP. However, taking in to account the limited time allocated for the review, the review team will not be able to go into depth and detail at all levels, but focus on whether or not the programme is on the right track. Some specific examples of best practices and key successes will, however, be added to the review. These will be generated from field visits to sample regions and JP implementation Woredas as well as from reports and other data sources.

2.3. The Rapid Assessment methodology

This is a formative review and, as such, it assesses the efforts of the program prior to its completion with the intent of improving performance for the remaining programme period. Formative reviews often emphasizes qualitative methods of inquiry. The questions asked in formative reviews

are generally more open and lead to exploration of processes, both from the viewpoint of participants and beneficiaries, but also from that of project staff and other stakeholders²⁰.

The review questions will therefore primarily be addressed through the use of a qualitative evaluation design. The main data collection tool will be a comprehensive Review Worksheet, which will include all the review questions. It will be used to prepare for the desk review, to make interview guides for semi-structured interviews and guides for focus group discussions.

The review will make use of a combination of complementary primary and secondary data from a variety of sources, which will allow for triangulation and validation of the findings. Through this process the Rapid Assessment anticipates to be able to generate an adequate level of information to indicate the results of the GEWEJP so far. The following data collection methods will be used:

- Desk study
- Semi Structured individual interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Observation

Desk study:

A list of relevant documents will be reviewed. It is the duty of the review reference group to inform the team about and make available all relevant documents in a timely manner for the review team. These include:

- Project document and results framework
- Revised JP GEWE indicators, baseline information, sources and means of verification that need amendment
- Evaluation of the first phase of JPGWE
- Other evaluations/reviews
- Annual reports
- Annual work plans of both federal and regional implementing partners
- Minutes from relevant meetings
- Relevant government policies and strategies
- Relevant financial information such as budgets and financial reports
- review meeting proceedings

Semi Structured individual interviews:

In-depth interviews will be one of the main tools for collecting data. Separate interview guides will be prepared for each group of interviewees. Most of the interviews will be conducted individually, although in some cases interviews may be conducted in small groups. The following people will be interviewed:

²⁰ http://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24:formative-evaluation&catid=17:formative-evaluation&Itemid=125

- UN Women staff responsible for coordinating the programme
- Relevant people with knowledge about the GEWEJP in the other eight UN organisations
- Representatives from donors (Dfid, Sweden, Italy and Norway)
- Government officials with responsibility for programme coordination/implementation at national, regional and woreda levels
- Implementing partners/project staff
- Finance staff at various levels

Project visits:

Projects in Addis Ababa and one site close to Addis, most probably Adama, will be visited. If feasible another site may be visited by the national consultants for comparison and to get a more complete and representative picture of the programme. UN Women will coordinate and arrange field visits.

During the field visits we will conduct semi-structured interviews with

- Government officials with responsibility for programme coordination/implementation at regional and/or woreda levels
- Implementing partners/project staff
- Finance staff
- Beneficiaries

Focus group discussions:

If time allows the team will conduct focus group discussions and/or individual or small group interviews with beneficiaries at the selected field sites. It will be important to talk to both women and men of various ages, and preferably representatives of those who have benefitted from the programmes as well as those who have not benefitted directly from the interventions.

Observation:

Project premises and surrounding areas will be observed. If feasible, training sessions, meetings or other project activities will be observed while in progress.

2.4. Key deliverables

The Rapid Assessment will result in a report of approximately 25 pages with conclusions and concrete and practical recommendations for improved future programming for the GEWEJP.

The review report will include the following elements:

- Background
- Key programme achievements including key successes and best practices
- Assessments of key criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability)
- Financial management systems and internal control systems
- Challenges
- Lessons learned
- Conclusions
- Recommendations for future programming

2.5. Limitations and challenges

Given the size, complexity and the vast geographical and technical coverage of the programme it will not be feasible to go into depth and detailed levels within the time frame and with the resources set aside for the review. However, the Rapid Assessment will still serve its main purpose and indicate progress and challenges and make recommendations to guide the way forward.

Impact assessment in the OECD/DAC sense of the term will not be conducted, firstly because time-lag issues mean that activities may not yet have delivered demonstrable results at this point in time, secondly because the TOR is much broader and contains many other issues than impact, and thirdly since impact level results are the most challenging to obtain and would require a different set of resources and methodology.

Given the complexity of factors that may shape gender-related outcomes as well the diverse range of actors and programmes that may be working towards the same objectives as the GEWEJP objectives, the issues of contribution versus attribution may prove challenging. Therefore it may be difficult to isolate the effects of this particular programme and to attribute specific changes to its investments and technical assistance directly. When relevant the review report will address this issue.

Practical issues of timing and available informants will influence the quality of the review. The review team is dependent on excellent and efficient coordination of the meetings and field visits so that all relevant stakeholders can be met during the time set aside for the mission.

The review team is dependent on information about and timely access to all relevant documents provided by the review reference group. The quality of the existing monitoring data and documented results will also influence the results of the Rapid Assessment.

The projects selected for project visits and more in-depth review will provide important insights covering aspects of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. However, the review team is aware that the few project sites that we will be able to visit are not necessarily representative for the larger programme. We will therefore use these cases as illustrative elements, and at the same time be careful with drawing major conclusions based on single cases.

2.6. The review questions and issues

A comprehensive Review Worksheet with detailed questions will be developed. The worksheet will be a living document and may be continuously updated and altered throughout the process. The main review questions will be centered around the following issues:

1. Progress and main programme achievements:
 - a. Progress against planned outcomes
 - b. Key successes
 - c. Best practices
 - d. Key success stories
 - e. Key challenges, gaps and constraints
 - f. Main lessons learned
 - g. Emerging issues not reflected in the design

2. Operational and financial issues
 - a. Key successes
 - b. Key challenges
 - c. Delivering capacities
 - d. Bottlenecks
 - e. Financial management systems and capabilities
 - f. Internal control systems and measures

3. Assessment criteria:
 - a. Relevance
 - b. Effectiveness
 - c. Efficiency
 - d. coherence
 - e. sustainability

3. Suggested timetables

Suggested timetable for the Rapid Assessment process:

Task	Delivery	Responsibility	Date
Drafting inception report	Draft Inception report	HLM	November 6
Commenting on inception report	Feed back	Review reference group/UNW/Norwegian Embassy/local consultants	November 10
Delivery of all relevant documentation	All relevant docs sent to consultants	Review reference group/UNW/Norwegian Embassy	November 14
Finalization of inception report	Final inception report	HLM	November 14
Review of documents and preparations of mission	Finalized agenda/meeting appointments	UNW/Norwegian Embassy	November 14
	Review docs and finalize review worksheet	HLM/GK/ZN	November 5-17
Rapid Assessment mission (Data collection)	Meetings undertaken with all relevant stakeholders	HLM/GK/ZN	November 18-25
Analysis and drafting of review report	Draft report	HLM/GK/ZN	December 19
Commenting on the draft review report	Email with collective feedback from stakeholders	Review reference group/UNW/Norwegian Embassy	January 7
Finalization of review report	Final report	HLM/GK/ZN	January 9

Briefing session on the findings of the RA	Power presentations	point GK/ZN with input from HLM	January 2015
The co-leads of the JP GEWE will disseminate the result as appropriately to concerned UN Agencies and government partners	Dissemination of the RA review results	The co-leads of the JP GEWE will disseminate the result as appropriately to concerned UN Agencies and government partners	January 2015

Detailed timetable for the Rapid Assessment mission November 18-25:

To be finalized with input from UN Women.

Date	Place	Task	Responsibility
November 17	Addis	Arrival of team leader in Addis	HLM
November 18	Norwegian Embassy?	09:00-10:00: Team meeting, introductions and task ahead	For setting up meetings and project visits: UNW
	Norwegian Embassy?	10-11:30 meeting with donors (Norway, Dfid, Sweden, others?)	
	UNW?	11:30-12:30 Lunch	For conducting meetings: HLM and team
	Elili Hotel	13:00-14:00: Meetings with UNW and UNFPA	
	Elili Hotel	14:00-17:00 meeting with UN agencies	
November 19	Elili Hotel	09:00-13:00 meeting with UN agencies	
		12:00-13:00 Lunch	
	MoWYA	13:30-15:30 Meetings with MoWCYA (various involved persons)	
November 20	Oromia (Sheno or Ambo)	Meetings with local govt, project staff, beneficiaries	
November 21	Mekelle	Meetings with local govt, project staff, beneficiaries etc	
November 22	Mekelle	Meetings with local govt, project staff, beneficiaries etc	
November 23	Addis	Preparations for further meetings	
November 24	Addis	09:00-11:30 Meetings with government counterparts 11:30-12:30 Lunch 12:30-17:00: project visit Addis	

November 25	Debrief for UN agencies and donors Departure team leader	Any other meetings (NGOs?) Team meeting preparations for debrief 15:00-16:00 Debrief	
November 26	Oslo	Arrival Norway	HLM

Norad

Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

Postal address:

P.O. Box 8034 Dep, NO-0030 OSLO

Office address:

Ruseløkkveien 26, Oslo, Norway

Tel: +47 23 98 00 00

Fax: +47 23 98 00 99

postmottak@norad.no

www.norad.no

