



FIRST ANNUAL REPORT TO **THE EUROPEAN UNION** **PARTNERSHIP** **INSTRUMENT**



WeEmpowerAsia



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Gender equality means good business





Report Type: First Annual Report

To: European Union Partnership Instrument

Project Title:	Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women at Work in Asia (WeEmpowerAsia)
Project Number:	Atlas Contract 00119817, Agreement # 12853
Donor Reference:	PI/2019/404-960
Project Duration:	36 Months (1 April 2019 – 31 March 2022)
Reporting Period:	1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020
Country(s) Covered:	China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam
Donor(s)/Fund(s):	European Union Partnership Instrument (EUR 7,500,000) UN Women (EUR 500,000)
Responsible Parties:	UN Women
UN Women Strategic Areas:	Women's Economic Empowerment

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWEN	ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network
BSR	Business for Social Responsibility
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CSR	corporate social responsibility
FICCI FLO	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ladies Organization
GAT	Gender Assessment Tool
GLI	Gender Lens Investment
ILO	International Labour Organization
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEA	WeEmpowerAsia
WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles



1 Executive Summary

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The launch of the innovative three-year WeEmpower Asia (WEA) programme by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the European Union Foreign Policy Instrument commemorated the International Women's Day on 8 March 2019. The overall goal is to **empower more women to lead and participate in business to advance sustainable and inclusive growth**. The project is implemented in seven Asia-Pacific countries, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, with a strong focus on activities and partnerships that strengthen the Asia-European Union linkage. This report provides an overview of the progress during the first year, 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, which includes a six-month inception phase.

During the six-month **Inception Phase**, staff was recruited, the Project Document and Results Framework were articulated through the development of a guiding programme vision and implementing principles, and the full strategy was embraced by all seven implementing countries. With a primary aim to be **catalytic**, WEA has a **strong regional component** anchored around four 'Big Rocks' that cross-cut outcome areas and complement local activities to enable systemic and large-scale programme impact. These Big Rocks – the **WEPs Activator**, the **Entrepreneurship Accelerator**, the **Industry Disruptor**, and the **Movement Creator** – have all been kick-started with implementing partners, identifying pilot countries. **Innovation** is another key guiding programme principle, leading WEA to invest new thematic priorities, such as gender-responsive procurement, gender-smart investing and addressing unpaid care work through market-based care models. To position WEA to move into full-fledged implementation in the second year of the programme and contribute to **systemic change**, the first year is characterized by strategically setting up the right partnerships, engaging the right stakeholders and networks, conducting assessments, and starting to develop strategic assets.

WEA has also emphasized adding a **more European Lens** and identifying clear linkages across the outcome areas. To this end, WEA has successfully established partnerships and collaboration with several innovative partners that have European roots and an established Asian presence. Additionally, collaboration with European Union-funded programmes of United Nations agencies is ongoing at the regional level.

Despite the challenges posed in the final quarter of the first year by the COVID-19 pandemic, the flexibility granted by the European Union to quickly amend the workplan allowed WEA to rapidly adapt to the “new normal” of implementing activities and also roll out COVID-specific activities that can use this crisis to *accelerate* the inclusion and leadership of women in business.

Underpinning the implementation of all activities, a strong Communication and Visibility Strategy ensured widespread programme outreach to more than 280,000 people through regional social media channels, the WEA [website](#), its first quarterly [bulletin](#), the #WomenRiseAboveCOVID campaign, and webinars on the economic impact of COVID-19 and gender-sensitive solutions.

Initial results from the first year indicate that the programme is on track for a successful implementation.

OUTCOME 1 To support women's networks, public institutions, and the private sector in the EU and Asia in sharing expertise and knowledge to advance an enabling business environment for women's economic empowerment.

Output 1.1 New knowledge and evidence are generated and made available for women's network, public institutions and the private companies in the region.

In the first year, the programme has paved the way to influence policy dialogue with several new knowledge products that are being developed.

- A four-part series of **Guidance Note for Action** has been completed to draw attention to the need for an [inclusive economic recovery post-COVID-19](#) and a [gender-sensitive private sector response](#) as well as the impact of the pandemic on [small and medium-sized enterprises \(SMEs\)](#) and [women migrants](#).
- **Three policy reviews** (India, Vietnam, and regional) that have been initiated allow the analysis of evidence, gaps, and knowledge needs.
- With ongoing technical support, the programme has leveraged the national policy framework review and formulation processes to mainstream gender equality and the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) in the **National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (India)**, and the **Guiding Document on Business and Human Rights (the Philippines)**.

Output 1.2 Knowledge exchange platform/network is established for cross-learning, multi-stakeholder training and capacity-building and networking among women's networks, public institutions, and the private sector in the European Union and Asia.

- More than 1,200 participants benefited from the five online and in-person knowledge exchange and networking events supported by the programme. This is a result of the strategic partnerships forged and the agility of WEA to adapt the activities to proceed despite the challenges of COVID-19.

Output 1.3 Pool of European Union-Asia Champions to serve as strategic advisors, mentors and advocates for gender equality at work is created at the regional and country levels.

- A network of WEA Gender Champions has been established and WEA also benefits from the collaboration of 17 key influencers across all programme countries.

OUTCOME 2 To contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of women-owned business and entrepreneurs to improve their knowledge and/ or influence public and private sector policies, practices and dialogues for the advancement of women's economic empowerment in selected countries in Asia and/or Europe.

Output 2.1 Women-led organizations, women entrepreneurs have increased access to entrepreneurship and leadership training programmes.

- Eight regional and national level processes have been initiated to increase access to capacity-building for women-led organizations and entrepreneurs. As a result, 254 women entrepreneurs benefited from the trainings and consultations (compared to the aspirational target of 700 in the “Power of Seven” vision). In India, 31 women entrepreneurs received interest from investors for their business ideas that were pitched during the training event. The input from the consultations has informed the programming and advocacy in the next two years.

Output 2.2 Public sector institutions and private sector companies are able to explore innovative business practices, entrepreneurship accelerators and incubators, technology and investment options to support women-owned businesses and associations, and women entrepreneurs.

- Partnerships established with key stakeholders at the national level, including government women's machinery, international organizations, private sector companies, and civil society organizations. For instance, Memorandums of Understanding have been established with the Women's Entrepreneurship Platform and UNDP Entrepreneurship Facility in India and the Government of Bangka Belitung in Indonesia.

OUTCOME 3 To support the take-up in the implementation of WEPs by private sector companies

Output 3.1 Networks of private sector companies and WEPs signatories are strengthened and expanded in European Union and Asia to enhance measurements, monitoring and reporting of their results on implementing WEPs and gender-sensitive business practices

- Systemic partnerships with organizations, such as [Amfori](#) and the [Sustainable Rice Platform](#), provide the opportunity to get access to more than 3,000 producers, suppliers, retailers, and international brands that are important to the European Union Trade agenda.
- Linkage with European companies and sectors relevant to European Union-Asia Trade was strengthened by forging partnerships with the European Chamber of Commerce at the national level. Strategic engagements with stock exchanges across the seven programme countries have resulted in strong interest to be built on in the next year.

Output 3.2 Tools, guidelines, and best practices are generated/disseminated to assist businesses and companies in developing and implementing corporate policy and practices to engage women at the workplace, marketplace, and community.

- Steady progress has been made toward achieving the targets set for the aspirational vision of “Power of Seven”. In the first year, the number of WEPs signatories increased by 56 companies in seven countries and by 130 in the Asia-Pacific region making the total 228 and 718, respectively.
- At the national level, WEPs-related material, including the translation of a practical guideline and infographic, has been developed to address local needs. At the regional level, the development of tailored WEPs tools, material, comprehensive presentations, trainings, and capacity-building are designed to mobilize companies from commitment to practice. This includes the engagement of 22 European Union companies in various events to promote WEPs.

Output 3.3 Awareness and visibility of the WEPs have increased among business leaders in Asia

- Although the challenges of COVID-19 affected the events involving large-scale gathering, the visibility efforts through on-line solutions were increased throughout the year. The WEA website had a dedicated section on WEPs, highlighting the number, the list of signatories, and best practices, to attract more signatories. Six key communication packages were developed to raise awareness and visibility of the WEPs among business leaders, women’s networks, public institutions, and the private sector in the European Union and Asia.

Despite the global disruption in ‘business as usual’ caused by COVID-19, the programme has been swift in designing and implementing a comprehensive mitigation plan, and amended country workplans have allowed a series of specific activities to engage businesses, entrepreneurs, and key stakeholders in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. The ability to apply a COVID-19 lens to pre-crisis workplans is an indication that WEA has a strong foundation to develop quick solutions for a variety of challenges, pivoting potential setbacks into new opportunities. In addition to planned activities, several priority areas for new programming have been identified and are currently being conceptualized by the country teams. Looking to the next two years of implementation, the team is fully confident that WEA will achieve the programme goals.



2

Purpose and New Development (Context)

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The outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent cessation of ‘business as usual’ on a global scale has posed significant challenges to carrying out programme activities. However, the WEA team has met these challenges head-on, and the flexibility granted by the European Union has enabled the team to develop an amended workplan (Annexes B and C) and undertake new ways of working. These plans include investment in insight gathering by leveraging the existing activities and rolling out COVID-specific surveys and private sector interviews, developing an Action Brief and guidance notes to advocate for inclusive recovery, and developing assets to engage with constituencies of WEA through webinars, roundtables, and virtual workshops. The Results Framework (Annex D) has consequently been amended after the first Steering Committee meeting on 21 November 2019.



3 Key Partnerships

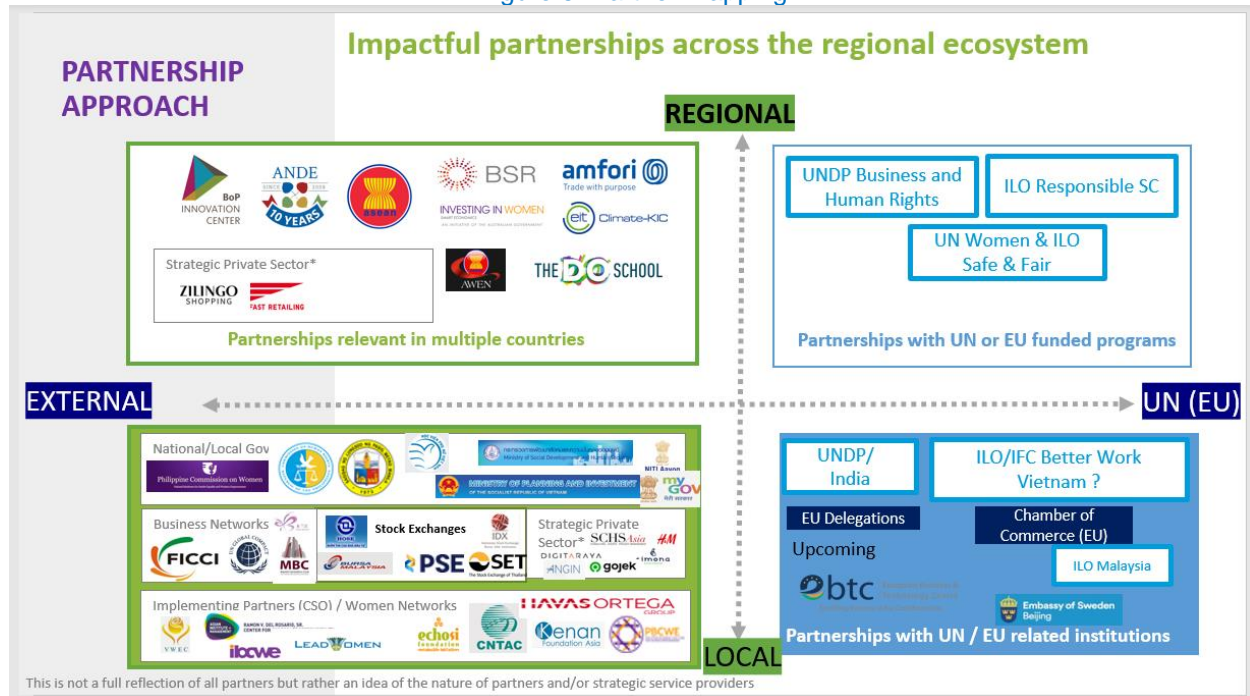
III. KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Guided by the CSI Principles, WEA has successfully established multi-faceted impact partnerships and **connected** with a wide range of stakeholders at regional and national levels, including government agencies, private companies, business associations, United Nations agencies, think tanks, social enterprises and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The 1:1 matched resource mobilization target is pursued through **catalytic** partnerships to enable more and larger-scale activities for a bigger impact. The shared mission with partners brings **sustainability** for the future of institutionalizing the tools and processes developed in the programme while **systemic** partnerships ensure influence and outreach to entire industries which will scale the programme impact. Considering the purpose of Foreign Policy Instrument and the principles of “**Impactful**” and ‘**Innovative**’, WEA has established a combination of partnerships/ collaborations to strike the right balance between testing new approaches and impact at scale. Even the selection of strategic support organizations that collaborate in the implementation of key activities has been guided by the CSI.

There are also challenges when it comes to partnerships. The European Union Chambers of Commerce are not equally successful in engaging companies despite the efforts of the local European Union Delegations and UN Women. Nevertheless, it has been agreed to continue to seek further collaboration. Equally, it was agreed that WEA partnerships won't aim to influence trade agreements but rather engage with actors across Asian-European Trade Chains and foster exchange amongst the regions. Furthermore, the partnerships in pipeline with companies such as Swarovski, Zilingo, and UNIQLO have been put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Figure below illustrates the nature of partnerships and relationships the WEA team has started over the first twelve month of the programme and Annex E provides the overview of partnerships and strategic collaborations at country and regional levels.

Figure 5: Partner mapping





IV. RESULTS

The emerging results from the first year of the programme indicate WEA is on track to achieve its goals. As per Article 3.7b of the Agreement the progress of results has been tabulated based on the logical framework matrix in Annex F.

OUTCOME 1 To support women's networks, public institutions and the private sector in the European Union and Asia in sharing expertise and knowledge to advance an enabling business environment for women's economic empowerment.

OUTCOME INDICATOR, BASELINE AND TARGET	STATUS
<p>Indicator 1: Percentage of participants targeted by outreach and advocacy events who acknowledge having engaged further on the topic on their own initiative as a result of their exposure to an event.</p> <p>2019 Baseline: 0</p> <p>2022 Target: 70 per cent</p>	<p>In progress.</p> <p>Activities are ongoing to achieve the goal by 2022. During the first year, WEA has been in the process to set up a core network of partners (government, private sectors, and key stakeholders and decision-makers) to be interviewed and surveyed on how they will take the agenda forward during the second year.</p>

The first year of the WEA programme has laid the foundation to influence policy to create an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment in a wider sense and particularly to support processes under Outcomes 2 and 3 in a more strategic way. The nature of activities conducted ranges from reviews, consultations, landscaping exercises, knowledge-sharing, conferences, advocacy, and dialogues with high-level public and private stakeholders. These activities also support all activities implemented as part of all four Big Rocks. For example, several European and Asian champions were mobilized to become WEA advocates to support Big Rock #4 – Movement Creator. This is a core element of the regional Communications and Visibility Strategy. The partnerships identified and initiated with influential key stakeholders at both regional and national levels have positively contributed to progress in achieving the outputs critical for this outcome, i.e., generating evidence and knowledge products, establishing

knowledge-sharing platforms, and network of advocates for gender equality. **As a result of engagements for knowledge exchange and advocacy detailed in the following outputs, WEA is now positioned to reach out and assess the extent of initiatives taken or planned by the participants to promote gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the seven programme countries.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has particularly influenced this outcome. As the impacts of COVID-19 pose a serious risk of regression for women's equal economic participation, new activities were identified in the COVID-19 mitigation plan (Annex B) and some targets were revised (Annexes C and D). In partnership with [Investing in Women](#) (an initiative of the Australian Government), WEA has started to conduct interviews with Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) across Asia and the European Union and also to disseminate employee surveys to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on the private sector. The compilation of COVID-19 related knowledge products and the results of these interviews and surveys will be made available publicly and used for broader advocacy efforts to advance an enabling environment by ensuring a gender lens is included in long-term recovery plans.

Output 1.1 New knowledge and evidence (including good practice case studies, lessons learned, tools for implementing WEPs) are generated and made available for women's network, public institutions and the private companies in the region.	
OUTPUT INDICATOR, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS
Indicator 1.1.1: Number of knowledge-based products. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 12	1 completed and 5 in progress (various stages). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One COVID-19 Action Package (regional level) includes four Guidance Notes for Action (completed and available on the website) • Two national policy reviews in India, and Vietnam (to be completed in 2020) • One regional policy review with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (to be completed in 2020) • One policy framework: Guiding Document on Business and Human Rights for the Philippines Commission on Human Rights (first draft by August 2020) • One process to embark on the thematic area of gender-responsive procurement landscaping at the regional level and to be executed with ADB in the second year (Annex G).

Gender-analysis for economic response and recovery from COVID-19 builds knowledge in applying an inclusive and gender-responsive approach in recovery from an unprecedented global crisis.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted WEA to produce a four-part series of **Guidance Note for Action** to draw attention to the need for an [inclusive economic](#)

[recovery post-COVID-19](#), a [gender-sensitive private sector response](#), and the impact of the pandemic on [small and medium-sized enterprises \(SMEs\)](#) and [women migrants](#). WEA has also commissioned the development of a brief on unpaid care work, identifying systemic issues, public policy elements, and market-based entrepreneurship solutions inspired by WEA Champion entrepreneur, [Nadira Yusoff](#), who runs an innovative business, [KiddoCare](#), providing care services to families and companies. This knowledge product had been initially planned for the second year of implementation; however, the pandemic has triggered the need for accelerated action for this issue. This activity is also linked to Output 2.1.2.

Development of knowledge products to inform policy decisions and frameworks at national and regional levels is on track.

- Two **policy reviews** have been carried out in India and Vietnam. The scope and objectives of the policy reviews are varied and depend on the specific context of each programme countries. The first draft of the review for India has been received. The study identifies existing policies and programmes of the government, private sector, and donors that aim to promote the women's entrepreneurship and leadership in the corporate sector. In Vietnam, the study is ongoing to review, map, and assesses the government legislation supporting SMEs for women entrepreneurs and capacity-building needs. This work is complemented with the cross-thematic COVID-19 Guidance Notes for Action to ensure the relevance to the current context. The first draft is expected in the second quarter of 2020. These new studies will be made available to stakeholders in the countries for national processes (e.g., National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in India) and feed into capacity-building and advocacy activities of the programme.
- In close collaboration with the ASEAN social pillar, WEA has initiated the policy review of the enabling environment for women's economic empowerment in Asia with Value for Women (Annex G). The objective is to provide an overview of how existing public sector gender-related policies are impacting the way private companies report and act on gender equality and women's economic empowerment in ASEAN countries, China and India. Value for Women will review the existing public sector policies and regulatory requirements structured according to the thematic areas within WEPs and develop guidance and recommendations for 'mandatory' private sector gender-reporting indicators. Value for Women will also look at reporting/policy best practices of Asian and European companies. This regional review will be supplemented by the current ongoing policy reviews at the national level in India. Although the formal publication has been postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the work will be completed in the second quarter of 2020 to strategically influence the 2021-2025 workplan of the ASEAN Committee on Women.
- In addition to these ongoing policy reviews, the programme also supports the review and formulation of regional and national **policy frameworks**.
 - In **Indonesia**, WEA was successful in establishing an agreement with the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection to provide technical assistance in the development of Ministerial regulations on engaging the private sector and state-owned businesses to support women's empowerment.

- In **India**, WEA is providing technical support to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in mainstreaming WEPs in the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.
- In the **Philippines**, WEA takes part in the Philippines Commission on Human Rights network and provides technical and financial support to the drafting of the Guiding Document on Business and Human Rights for the Commission and convening of meetings. The draft is expected to be ready by August 2020.

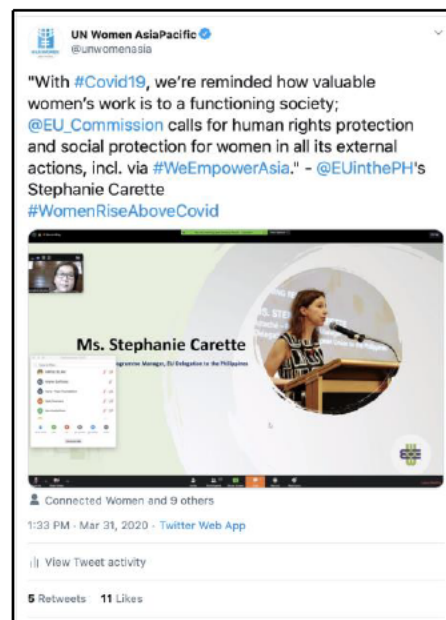
Output 1.2 Knowledge exchange platform/network is established for cross-learning, multi-stakeholder training and capacity-building and networking among women's networks, public institutions and the private sector in the European Union and Asia.	
OUTPUT INDICATORS, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS
Indicator 1.2.1: Number of communication products developed. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 20 (Revised Target: 40 communication products)	21 Communication products on key programme events and engagements including knowledge exchange platforms, networks established for cross-learning, multi-stakeholders training, and capacity-building (see Annex H).
Indicator 1.2.2: Number of participants in an event. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 2,500	1,189 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 209 (China event) • 35 (Indonesia event) • 273 (the Philippines webinars) • 672 (Regional ASEAN Women Entrepreneur's Network Event (AWEN))
Indicator 1.2.3: Percentage of participants who report having benefited from an event. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 70 per cent	An average of 93.33 per cent of participants who responded to the surveys in three events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99 per cent - China event • 88 per cent - the Philippines webinar events • 93 per cent - AWEN event

Through several stakeholder consultations and advocacy, **two partnerships were established in two countries to advance knowledge exchange**. Despite COVID-19, **knowledge exchange continued through two online events** (as of 31 March 2020). As per feedback from participants of the knowledge exchange events, trainings, and stakeholder consultations organized or supported by WEA, **there is a greater understanding of topics that help advance an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment**. WEA complemented these events and trainings with 21 communication products which have been detailed in Annex H.

- In **Indonesia**, WEA has established regular coordination with the WEPs Working Group and conducted a training for **35** participants from its network of private sector companies on how to incorporate each of the seven principles into their respective companies' policies and practices (October 2019, Jakarta). This training allows WEA to have a better understanding of gaps and needs which would lead to further engagement with the creation of individual company action plans. Based on the

feedback of participants further similar trainings are planned for the second year. Additionally, the WEPs Working Group has instituted quarterly multi-stakeholder dialogue to share best practices on the implementation of WEPs. In the Philippines, WEA approached various business associations including the Makati Business Club, a forum of business leaders aiming to address socioeconomic issues of the **Philippines**. A partnership has been formed and resulted in a strong collaboration in organizing the webinars in March 2020 (detailed further below).

- One of the main local highlights was the 2019 International Conference on Gender Equality and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), on 26 November 2019, in **China**, Beijing, co-organized with the European Union Delegation and Swedish Embassy. This was the first official event to present WEA in China and also an effective platform for **209** members of the private sector, women entrepreneurs, and government representatives to share their experiences and to discuss the process of integrating gender equality into their respective agencies' policies and programmes. **Almost 100 per cent of participants confirmed the conference has improved their understanding of gender equality, and some companies have already committed to further engage and requested support from WEA to look into their existing policies and practices.** The WEA team in China has started follow-up and is currently carrying out outreach activities with these interested companies to further seek collaborative opportunities.
- The AWEN CEOs' Summit, "Globalization 4.0 and Beyond: Shaping the Future of Women Enterprises" (Bangkok, 30 -31 October 2019), attended by **672** participants from private sectors, government, United Nations agencies, and NGOs, was used a knowledge exchange platform. At the summit, WEA organized a programme on "Empowering Women Mean Business" with a panel discussion by representatives from the European Union, private sector's executives from Unilever, Telkomtelstra, Kiddocare, and the founder of DoSchool.
- Given the limitation in the physical gathering of participants due to COVID-19, WEA quickly adapted and organized two online knowledge exchange platforms during March in the **Philippines** with Makati Business Club:
 1. [Webinar: Women as Leaders and Frontliners: Reality Highlighted by COVID-19](#) was held on 26 March 2020 with **91** participants from the private sector and other key stakeholders, including the European Union. It provided a platform for exchange on the current situation and a discussion about practical solutions and actions that companies can take to embed a gender lens into their response and recovery efforts.
 2. [Webinar: Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on Women - Current Insights, Prospects for Recovery & Resilience-Building](#) was held on 31 March 2020 with **182** participants registered from a broad range of stakeholders, private sector, women organizations, and SMEs attended. Among the respondents of the questionnaires, 88 per cent reported to have benefited from the webinar, and 79 per cent would like to learn more about the issue and be contacted by WEA for further support and possible action.



The visibility of the programme has increased among key stakeholders through the launch of WeEmpowerAsia [website](#), which features information on the programme, its vision and approaches, partnerships, upcoming events, and the WeEmpowerAsia Bulletin. The first [bulletin](#) with information on various programme events in the region was sent to more than 400 individuals from the private sector, governments, academia, and civil society in the seven programme countries as well as the regional level.

Output 1.3 Pool of European Union-Asia Champions to serve as strategic advisors, mentors and advocates for gender equality at work is created at the regional and country levels.

**OUTPUT INDICATOR,
BASELINE, TARGET**

STATUS

Indicator 1.3.1: Number of communication products developed (in connection to the WEA Champions network). 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 80	56 Communication products including web stories, written interview pieces, video interviews, press conferences, and social media messages and public engagements, in relation to the activities of gender advocates, allies and champions (Annex H).
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The heart of this output is Big Rock #4, “Movement Creator”, through which **a network of “WEA Gender Champions” has been created** that supports awareness-raising and a more effective advocacy effort with important insights. The network provides credibility and authenticity to WEA’s communication strategy that mainly aims to mobilize collective action emphasizing on the business cases, good practices on women empowerment, and gender equality in the respective countries. In addition to the WEA Gender Champions, WEA team across all countries have been collaborating with 17 key influencers from various background and sectors who are renowned businesspersons, representatives from governmental agencies, or entrepreneurs (who potentially can become WEA Gender Champions). They are from the seven WEA programme countries and the European Union, e.g., Amfori President, Christian Ewert, who [signed the WEPs in Bangkok in March](#) and affirmed that gender equality is a global issue that must be prioritized and addressed by all countries.

The Gender Champion identification process and outreach work have been ongoing in all WEA programme countries, and the following three Champions were selected from Indonesia and Malaysia.

WEA will be formalizing further commitments of the WEA Champions in the second year. These three champions have also been instrumental in understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on women in the private sector. They contributed to a larger initiative carried out in partnership with [Investing in Women](#) in which the WEA team interviewed more than 40 CEOs and/or business leaders to understand the impacts they and their female employees are facing, their response and recovery strategies, and, most importantly, to engage them to influence their peers towards a more gender-sensitive COVID-19 recovery strategy. The interviewees were mainly, but not only, CEOs who have signed the CEO Statement of Support to WEPs and have already incorporated gender-sensitive measures in their business operations. This activity is not only serving to identify potential champions but will also inform the COVID-19 approach under Outcome 3 to raise awareness of women as a force for an accelerated and inclusive economic recovery post COVID-19. WEA also launched a social media facilitated awareness-raising campaign on 30 March 2020, [#WomenRiseAboveCovid](#), which has reached 9.8 million impressions (as of report drafting date).

Figure 7: Messages of #WomenRiseAboveCovid Campaign



OUTCOME 2 To contribute to the strengthening of the capacity of women-owned business and entrepreneurs to improve their knowledge and/ or influence public and private sector policies, practices and dialogues for the advancement of women's economic empowerment in selected countries in Asia and/or Europe.

OUTCOME INDICATORS, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS VERIFICATION
<p>Indicator 2a: Number of processes related to state-level and substate-level (bilateral, regional, multilateral) partnership strategies and policy dialogues, which have been influenced.</p> <p>Indicator 2b: Number of processes related to non-state level partnership/agreement which have been influenced.</p> <p>2019 Baseline: 0</p>	<p>8 processes initiated and ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India: Consultations with UNDP and the Government • China: Consultation process with women entrepreneurs • Philippines: Consultation process with women entrepreneurs • Indonesia process to reach out to start-up accelerator network • Vietnam process related to government legislation review

2022 Target: 10 (combined target for a and b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kick-starting process of Industry Disruptor Big Rock#3 (Pilot India and a European country) • Regional Entrepreneurship survey started to assess and design Big Rock #2 activities across all seven countries • Collaboration with AWEN through the regional ASEAN Women CEO Summit
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WEA has made significant progress towards the outcome by initiating and completing a variety of processes that will build the capacity of women entrepreneurs and women-led businesses (Big Rocks #2 and #3) by establishing strategic partnerships and collaboration with different stakeholders at the local, regional, and European Union level. This includes influential Asia-based network such as AWEN and European-based organizations that work on women entrepreneurs' access to finance (e.g., Brussels-based Women in European Union Finances Network and Impulse4women), foster concrete business opportunities between European Union and Asian women entrepreneurs (e.g., [Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs](#), [EU-Climate KIC](#), Sector Group on Women Entrepreneurship of the Enterprise Europe Network managed by the European Executive Agency for SMEs and the WinWin programme), and bring innovation to the concepts and tools being developed for WEA (e.g., [BoP Innovation Center](#), and DoSchool). These strategic partnerships have supported WEA to kick-start the regional Big Rocks with a particular focus on Big Rock #2, Entrepreneurship Accelerator, complemented by Big Rock #3, Industry Disruptor.

Eight processes were initiated at regional and national levels (detailed in the following sections). The priority countries for Big Rock #2 and #3 are India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam for Asia and Germany for Europe to look at the value-chains from production to consumption. The institutionalization of these long-term processes that were initiated in the first year will enable WEA to connect key national-level entrepreneurship programmes with these regional initiatives.

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a specifically large risk to women-owned businesses and women entrepreneurs. WEA is advocating for collective action to support SMEs. Also, the regional entrepreneurship survey as part of the Big Rock#2 has included a specific set of questions linked to COVID-19. The findings will not only guide WEA programming but also serve to inform long-term national and international SME recovery programmes.

Output 2.1 Women-led organizations, women entrepreneurs have increased access to entrepreneurship and leadership training programmes (business training, financial education and/or technical skills as per specific sectors).	
OUTPUT INDICATORS, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS
Indicator 2.1.1: Number of participants in the trainings. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 700	254 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China 35, • India 104 (in-person and online) • Philippines 34

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vietnam 81
Indicator 2.1.2: Percentage of participants in an event who report having benefited from in an event. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 70	99 per cent Participants in China and India reported having benefited from the events.

Eight regional and national level processes have been initiated to increase access to capacity-building in entrepreneurship and leadership (accelerator opportunities) for women-led organizations and entrepreneurs.

Since the inception period, WEA has started mapping the existing opportunities for women entrepreneurs in business development, such as training and start-up/incubator schemes available in each country. This work supports the identification of gaps and opportunities as well as the right stakeholders to design the intervention that would be most appropriate to each of the programme countries for Big Rock# 2, Entrepreneurs Accelerator, and/or run their own localized programmes. Furthermore, implementation arrangements have been put in place to carry out a gender needs assessment of the entrepreneurship ecosystem across all the seven WEA countries to develop regional training materials in synergy with the conceptualization of an innovative idea connecting women entrepreneurs with a gender-lens to large multinational value-chains to address sustainability issues.

In India, three key results emerged from the Big Rock #2 process:

1. Out of 54 women entrepreneurs, 31 have received interest from investors to connect;
2. Mobilized co-funding (approx. EUR 20,000) from UNDP to co-organize workshops;
3. Replication interest indicated by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Ladies Organization (FICCI FLO) and the Government of Karnataka's Department of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises.

In this process, WEA collaborated with the Women's Entrepreneurship Platform of the Government and UNDP in organizing a series of workshops for female entrepreneurs. With the additional contribution of financial resource from UNDP, WEA was able to provide technical support to the Government in selecting women entrepreneurs (54) and investors (25) as participants of the workshops; designing and executing the workshops; and meeting with workshop participants based on their expression of interest. The workshops provided these women entrepreneurs the opportunity to pitch their business ideas to more than 25 impact, commercial and angel investors. India has been most advanced in this process, however other countries including China and the Philippines have started the process by engaging with entrepreneurs to gain a deeper understanding of the current needs of women entrepreneurs.

In China, the [consultation meeting](#) on 4 December 2019, Beijing, with **35** women entrepreneurs from different industries identified similar findings across industries. Women entrepreneurs need skills in business development, enhanced access to markets/value chains, and access to financial support. WEA is exploring the possibility to collaborate with stakeholders such as SCHS Asia (former WeConnect) and the American Chamber of Commerce (Amcham China) for capacity-building activities. The focus in China on linking women entrepreneurs to markets will contribute to the regional

activities in Outcome 1 to conduct a landscaping exercise with ADB on gender-sensitive procurement.

In the Philippines, in collaboration with the Asian Institute of Management, WEA conducted a round-table discussion in January 2020, Makati City, for **34** participants representing women entrepreneurs, government and academia, to identify gaps in promoting and ensuring women's economic empowerment. The country team has also conducted the "National Caravan" and Stakeholder Consultation in Luzon and National Capital Region. The National Caravan is a WEA initiative that aims to promote and increase awareness of the WEA programme through outreach activities (consultations, meetings, and workshops) with key stakeholders at national and subnational levels, in different major islands of the Philippines. During the first year of implementation, the National Caravan raised awareness among **40** key stakeholders in the main islands of Luzon and also improved insight regarding the needs of women entrepreneurs in the Philippines. Key issues that hinder women entrepreneurs to form formal business at scale were identified as the lack of technical know-how in starting a business, the lack of access to different kinds of resources and the complex process of formalizing a business. Also, the lack of accessible essential care facilities is one of the key barriers that women cannot fully participate in economic activities. These findings will further shape WEA's programming and advocacy in the next two years.

In Vietnam, in collaboration with the Vietnam Women Entrepreneur Council, two consultation workshops on the implementation of SME Legislations and capacity building as well as training needs for women-owned SME and women entrepreneurs were organized in Ho Chi Min City on 14 February 2020 and in Hanoi on 18 February 2020. From the two workshops, a total of **81** women entrepreneurs, including representatives from Women Business Associations and the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council were attended.

To roll out Big Rock#2 a survey focused on the European Union and Asia was designed and will be implemented in the second year. In addition, some countries, such as China, **Indonesia** started additional consultations with entrepreneurs. A collaboration is planned with [European Union-Climate KIC](#) to add a gender-lens to their entrepreneurship accelerator programme in Vietnam and another European country.

Piloting of Big Rock #3, Industry Disruptor, was kicked off **in India** to select and support innovative women-owned and/or enterprises benefitting women, who are addressing sustainability challenges in the garment industry that have a disproportional impact on women (Annex G)

At the regional level, close collaboration with AWEN has allowed WEA to institutionalize the programme activities and gain access to AWEN networks in the programme countries. WEA actively participated in the ASEAN Women CEO Summit held in Bangkok on 30-31 October 2019 and successfully organized a session to highlight the benefits of integrating gender equality into the practice and culture of businesses. With this collaboration established, WEA is expected to leverage the work with AWEN networks in its second year of implementation.

During the outbreak of COVID-19, WEA swiftly adapted by testing its new online approach with the women entrepreneurs to continue effective implementation. The first online activity with women entrepreneurs was in India where WEA, in partnership with

UNDP, organized a webinar with **50** women entrepreneurs. The online brainstorming identified immediate challenges that women entrepreneurs are expected to face during this COVID-19 induced economic slowdown and preliminary innovative solutions. WEA will further provide technical and financial support to the entrepreneurship programme with UNDP and the Government.

Output 2.2 Public sector institutions and private sector companies (both financial and non-financial service providers) are able to explore innovative business practices, entrepreneurship accelerators and incubators, technology and investment options to support women-owned businesses and associations, and women entrepreneurs.	
OUTPUT INDICATORS, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS
Indicator 2.2.1: Number of partnerships with European Union or Asian social impact/innovation funds, entrepreneurship accelerators and incubators, in the region to support women-owned innovation and business ventures. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 5	7 India: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNDP Entrepreneurship Facility • Women Entrepreneurship Programme of the Government • FICCI/FLO Indonesia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Bangka Belitung • Digitaraya • Simona • Angel Investment Network of Indonesia

Four concrete partnerships enabled WEA to reach more beneficiaries for the Big Rock #2, Entrepreneurship Accelerator, processes.

Partnerships are essential for WEA to deliver entrepreneurship targets. Particularly in this output, it will be important to enhance existing initiatives and build partnerships with experienced technical experts while UN Women adds a gender dimension to entrepreneurship at large as well as within the investment space. For this purpose, outreach activities that allow a wide scope of networking, such as participation in “Making Finance Work for Women”, organized by Women’s World Banking (Singapore, 22-23 October 2019) are continuously undertaken at the **regional level**.

At the national level, all countries have started outreach activities leading to concrete partnerships. For example, **in India**, the partnership with three major stakeholders (UNDP, Women Entrepreneurship Programme of the Indian Government, and FICCI/FLO) to co-organize capacity-building activities for women entrepreneurs also enabled WEA to upscale its activities and reach more women entrepreneurs.

In Indonesia, WEA signed a Joint Commitment with the Government of the Bangka Belitung Island Province to provide technical support to the Government in developing women’s entrepreneurship school curriculum and in training women entrepreneurs.

In the Philippines, WEA held discussions with the leading women entrepreneurs, who are also the members of AWEN, to possibly develop a women’s fund to provide gender-smart financial loans. **In Thailand**, WEA initiated a process to establish a partnership with the Division of Gender Equality Promotion, Ministry of Social Development and

Human Security, which allows WEA access their network of women entrepreneurs, provide technical assistance, and influence for women entrepreneurship policies.

WEA has sought collaboration with existing accelerator initiatives to set-up gender-sensitive start-up accelerators. For example, WEA is collaborating closely with two major **Indonesian** business accelerators, Digitalaya and Simona Venture, to create an appropriate curriculum as well as to organize women start-up boot camp, tentatively in the second quarter of 2020, once the situation of COVID-19 outbreak has improved. In the meantime, WEA is also planning to co-organize the webinar series with both accelerators. Also, a partnership has been established with the Angel Investment Network of Indonesia to conduct activities related to Gender Lens Investment (GLI)—scoping and developing guidelines in Indonesia's context. The work with investors is still nascent but there is great potential to gain a better understanding of the gender-smart investments in the region. In its initial phase, the collaboration aims to identify best practices and map existing impact investors who are interested in GLI. Initial findings indicate there is limited awareness around GLI and a lack of practical tools, capacity-building initiatives, and gender-disaggregated data at the investor level.

All of these country initiatives will be essential and contribute to Big Rock #2, Entrepreneurship Accelerator, and allow WEA to create a wider movement around GLI. There is also an exchange planned with the other WeEmpower Programmes in Latin America and the G7 countries who have identified GLI as a core priority. The regional WEA team is working to identify synergies and will also be participating in activities planned in the European Union around GLI to identify potential linkages. Originally, the Thailand team had planned a joint mission with Thai Investors to three European Tech-Entrepreneurship gatherings which were cancelled because of COVID-19. However, WEA will seek opportunities to raise awareness on GLI with these investors and plan this mission at a later stage.

OUTCOME 3 To support the take-up in the implementation of WEPs by private sector companies.

OUTCOME INDICATOR, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS
Indicator 3: Number of processes related to non-state level partnership/ agreements which have been influenced. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 8 (7 national and 1 regional)	8 (one regional-level partnership establishment process completed and seven outreach processes to promote WEPs initiated) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indonesia: Processes for partnerships (Unilever) and for promoting the WEPs through collaboration with key stakeholders (Stock Exchange, WEPs Working Group, etc.) started. Vietnam: Process of promoting the WEPs through advocacy at business forum started. Thailand: Outreach processes to promote the WEPs started. India: Process to establish a series of partnerships for WEPs promotion with several stakeholders started.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China: Outreach to participants of CSR event to promote WEPs initiated and other partnerships started. • Philippines: Stakeholder consultation and outreach with key business associations in the country started. • Malaysia: Process to establish partnership with Stock Exchange and the negotiations with Lead Women started. • Regional/European Union: Established partnership with Amfori and Sustainable Rice Platform. Collaboration with Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), who has been a partner to UN Women in the past on the Gender Assessment Tools and WEPs, to develop new WEPs regional materials.
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As a result of initiating the processes for **seven national and one regional partnership and outreach workstreams, the number of WEPs signatories increased by 56 and reached 228**. At the country level, the programme has initiated various types of processes, including the process to promote WEPs through collaboration with key stakeholders at national levels, such as the Stock Exchanges, leading private sector companies, and business associations. For instance, in Indonesia, the WEA programme is a member of the WEPs Working Group (co-established by UN Women prior to the WEA programme) to continue close collaboration on WEPs. During the first year of implementation, WEA has greatly contributed to strengthening the group's capacity and also facilitated a strategic planning session for the WEPs Working Group.

At the regional level, the Asia-Pacific WEPs signatories increased by 130. It is a strong indication of the programme's spill-over effects, which will strengthen further after the development of concrete training materials and specific tools for WEPs that better support companies in their implementation strategies.

The groundwork for the programme's future success is laid across the region and equally the regional component ensures linkages back to Europe through partnerships, such as Amfori or the GIZ-led Sustainable Rice Platform. The intensity of the processes might vary across different countries. However, all countries have ambitious targets to increase the number of companies that take action to build more gender-inclusive business cultures. WEA has conducted multiple outreach strategies, including WEPs presentations at different business forums and workshops, and established partnerships with business associations, the European Union Chamber of Commerce, Amfori, and the United Nations Global Compact, all of which will help accelerate the uptake and implementation of the WEPs in the next years.

In light of the COVID-19 crisis, WEA has created visibility around the importance of the WEPs for the private sector response through its regional Action Brief and has incorporated a COVID-19 lens into the development of additional assets (e.g., trainings, webinars) to integrate WEPs in COVID-19 recovery plans of businesses. Although the current suspension of in-person activities may affect the ability to conduct outreach at the expected level, the team is confident that the COVID-specific training materials and

online outreach will help position WEPs as a relevant tool for the current context and beyond.

Output 3.1 Networks of private sector companies and WEPs signatories are strengthened and expanded in the European Union and Asia to enhance implementation of WEPs and gender-sensitive business practices.	
OUTPUT INDICATORS, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS
Indicator 3.1.1: Number of participants in an event. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 1,000	640 Indonesia WEPs (80) and Vietnam (70) and the Philippines (240), and India (250)
Indicator 3.1.2: Percentage of participants who report having benefited from an event. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 70 per cent	No status update. Progress to be reported during the second year of implementation
Indicator 3.1.3: Number of companies signed up to WEPs in Asia. 2018 Baseline: 588 2022 Target: 1,000	718 718 signatories in the Asia-Pacific region as of 31 March 2020

WEA partnership strategies and outreach engagements raised awareness about the business case for women's economic empowerment, including the WEPs as one tool, and advocated for more corporations to join the WEPs movement. The **engagement with the United Nations Global Compact, the European Union Chamber of Commerce, and leading business associations at national, regional, and European level has allowed WEA to establish partnerships and access companies through their networks.** Systemic partnerships with organizations, such as Amfori and the Sustainable Rice Platform, gives access to more than 3,000 producers, suppliers, retailers, and international brands that are important to the European Union Trade agenda. Besides, these partnerships are strategic as they present more systemic opportunities to influence entire industries/sectors. Both initiatives have rigorous sustainability standards and linked audit mechanisms. WEA will start evaluating these standards and mechanisms and advocate for more gender-sensitive reporting criteria. WEA will also leverage the recent signing of the WEPs by the European Banking Federation to foster a more gender-sensitive banking and finance sector in the WEA countries.

Also, WEA has actively participated in several workshops, business forums, and multi-stakeholder dialogues to promote WEPs with all event participants, which has so far **resulted in an increased number of WEPs signatories (718) in the Asia-Pacific region** (please see Output 3.2 for detailed information).

- In November 2019, a half-day workshop and multi-stakeholder dialogue was organized in Jakarta, **Indonesia**, on WEPs and attended by **80** participants representing corporations, academic, government, and civil society.
- During the **Vietnam** Responsible Business Forum, (Ho Chi Min City, November 2019), WEPs were presented to **70** participants with a positive response and has set up a solid ground for WEA to further approach the interested participants.
- In the **Philippines**, a presentation on “Positive Work Culture: Addressing Sexual harassment and Discrimination in the workplace” was delivered for **200** staff of private companies namely Filinvest Lifestyle Mall in November 2019. In partnership with the Philippines Business Coalition for Women’s Empowerment, the principles of WEPs principles were presented to **40** participants from private sectors, embassies and CSOs at the “ItsNotOK” Forum organized by Spark! in Manila, in December 2019.
- In India, through collaboration with the Global Compact Network (GCN), WEA was actively engaged in the Gender Equality Summit to mark International Women’s Day, which was held on 6 March 2020. At the summit, over 250 senior and middle management representatives from businesses, civil society organizations and industry associations were made aware about the Women’s Empowerment Principles.









These activities also provided valuable insights for future programme priorities. For example, it was confirmed that across all countries gender bias, equal pay, women in leadership, and sexual harassment in the workplace remain important topics. However, more progressive businesses pointed out new areas such as gender-sensitive procurement where they would need support. These insights will be included in the priority setting for the next years.


One of the most advanced WEA countries, in terms of stakeholder coordination, is **Indonesia**, where there is a [WEPs Working Group](#) with different key stakeholders, such as the Indonesian Global Compact Network, Indonesia Business Coalition for Women Empowerment, and WEA. As a result of the technical support from WEA, The WEPs Working Group members have a strategic plan to coordinate their actions in promoting the WEPs and other women’s economic empowerment activities with the private sector and business associations.

While the convening of these multi-stakeholder partners is essential, we also recognize the importance of engaging individual private sector companies, such as Lufthansa and the Charoen Pokphand Group in Thailand, H&M, Danone and Unilever in the programme countries. In Indonesia, Unilever has expressed its interest to partner with UN Women and WEA. The company has demonstrated interest of being an industry leader to influence other companies to join the WEPs and promote gender equality and women empowerment at the global level and in Indonesia, where, together with UN Women, Unilever has already translated the principles of WEPs into concrete action, such as promoting gender diversity in leadership structure. A Memorandum of Understanding between WEA and Unilever is in process to formalize the partnership to promote WEPs in Indonesia with coordinated advocacy and communication activities. These are only a few examples of future promising activities.

Output 3.2 Tools, guidelines, and best practices are generated/ disseminated to assist businesses and companies in developing and implementing corporate policy and practices to engage women at the workplace, market place and community (e.g. equal pay for equal work, gender-responsive procurement, and work of equal value, and workplace policies and programmes on health, safety and wellbeing)	
OUTPUT INDICATORS, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS
Indicator 3.2.1: Number of knowledge products. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022Target: 20	2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation of a practical guideline and infographic in Indonesia COVID -19 Action Brief Specific for Private Sectors Companies and the WEPs (complementing Output 1.1.)
Indicator 3.2.2: Number of companies that have signed the WEPs and/or participated in WEPs-related trainings. 2019 Baseline: 172 (in seven WEA countries) 2022Target: 490 (target reduced from 550 due to COVID-19)	228 228 signatories in seven WEA countries.
Indicator 3.2.3: Number of European Union companies that participated in an event. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 110	22 In Indonesia (Unilever, H&M), India (IKEA, Evry), Philippines (Havas Ortega) and China (Maverlinn, Viking, Volvo), Thailand webinar with BSR and Jewelry industry (4 European companies) – Amfori Event in Vietnam (10 companies)

During the first year of implementation, WEA successfully **increased the number of WEPs signatories by 56** to reach a total of 228 WEPs signatories in seven programme countries and regional network. The number of WEPs signatories varies between WEA programme countries, and the following table gives a snapshot of the overall situation.

COUNTRY	Baseline	Target End Year 3	Total End Year 1	New Signature End Year 1	Pipeline Year 1	Traffic Light
China	40	120	77	37	14	
India	52	100	64	12	27	
Indonesia	16	35	19	3	15	
Vietnam	45	35	46	1	7	
Philippines	6	85	8	2	23	
Malaysia	7	50	8	1	0	
Thailand	6	65	6	0	6	
WEA Total	172	490	228	56	92	

AP Total	588	1,000	718	130	92	
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A total of 92 companies were also in the pipeline across seven programme countries by 31 March 2020. It can be confidently expected to see an increase in the number of signatories during the second year as a result of the new partnerships e.g., business associations, the Stock Exchanges, etc. Particularly in India, Malaysia, and Thailand, there is a strong commitment of the Stock Exchanges that can translate into concrete action during the second year of the programme. Also, the collaboration with the European Chamber of Commerce to access their networks as well as the direct engagement with European companies, namely Danone, H&M, IKEA, Swarovski, and Unilever, indicates that the number of European companies will increase in the next year.

It is important to mention that **the emphasis for WEA is not limited to signing and advocating for the WEPs but to also create deeper impactful business programs.**

- In Indonesia, WEA has organized an International Women's Day Briefing Session with H&M to engage this business on ways to advance women's rights as well as to have a stronger commitment to the WEPs. Through its strong partnerships established during the first year of implementation, WEA is confident to reach and collaborate more with European companies during the programme second year. However, it needs to be noted that the collaboration with European Union Chambers does not yield benefits as expected yet. The WEA team is in regular exchange to support the Chambers to mobilize their members.
- To facilitate a more effective WEPs signature process, a new system is now in place with authorization transferred from UN Women Headquarters in New York to WEA regional team in Bangkok. The localization of authority has proven to improve effectiveness in the approval process and coordinated support to the signatories by enabling more focus on action and less on administration.
- At the national level, WEA has created several tools and studies, such as the translation of a practical guideline and infographic on WEPs in Indonesia. The [WEA regional website](#) was created with a dedicated section on WEPs, highlighting the number, the list of signatories and best practices, to attract more signatories.
- A strong emphasis is put on mobilizing companies to move forward from commitment to practice. A comprehensive presentation on the WEPs Gender Assessment Tool (GAT) has been created to effectively approach both the existing signatories and potential companies. The result from applying GAT would allow the companies to assess their strategic approach to gender equality; identify their gaps and opportunities for improvement, and to learn about best practice on gender equality in their business sectors and globally. This would also allow WEA to provide appropriate technical support that corresponds with the needs of each specific company. To provide more effective support to the companies, WEA regional team started coordinating with the United Nations Global Compact to translate GAT into four of the programme languages, namely Bahasa Indonesia, Chinese, Thai, and Vietnamese. The translation process is expected to start from May 2020 and will be available for wider access by June 2020.
- At the regional level, WEA is working with BSR, a global innovative non-profit organization that works primarily with private sector companies on issues of sustainability (Annex G). BSR has been involved in the development of GAT and

WEPs since its inception. BSR will assist WEA in the development of tools and materials for the promotion of the WEPs in the region, particularly, across the seven WEA countries. Furthermore, as a response to the impact of COVID-19 on private sectors, BSR will also assist WEA to develop a webinar and COVID-19-specific light GAT, enabling companies to add a gender lens into their response. This will be rolled out at the end of April 2020 to businesses through business organizations and associations across their networks.

Output 3.3 Awareness and visibility of the WEPs have increased among business leaders in Asia.	
OUTPUT INDICATORS, BASELINE, TARGET	STATUS
Indicator 3.3.1: Number of communication products developed. 2019 Baseline: 0 2022 Target: 30	6 Six key communication packages that raise awareness and visibility of the WEPs among business leaders, women's networks, public institutions, and the private sector in the European Union and Asia (Annex H).

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, some visibility activities were postponed or scaled down. The [“Ring the Bell for Gender Equality”](#) events planned in partnership with Stock Exchanges as a symbolic gesture to mark International Women's Day (8 March) were postponed in China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. In Malaysia, it was scaled down to an [internal event](#), however, the [event with the Philippines Stock Exchange in Manila](#) took place as planned and was well attended by the Board of Directors and Trustees of the Philippines Stock Exchange, key partners in the private sector, as well as representatives from embassies, including the European Union Delegation and Austrian Ambassador who delivered a special message at the event. Participants were encouraged to make commitments to improve gender equality in their work and marketplaces, such as signing the WEPs, improving diversity at senior management level and on the boards of directors, developing more gender-friendly HR policies, developing a gender-themed investment product or improving transparency on gender policies and practices at large.

To ensure effective advocacy of the programme's WEPs-related events, a total of six key communication packages (inclusion of social media messages and coverages, photos, written and video interview) were developed to raise awareness and visibility of the WEPs among business leaders, women's networks, public institutions, and the private sector in the European Union and Asia.

To mark the tenth anniversary of WEPs in 2020, UN Women and partners had planned a series of commemorative activities to take stock of the progress made and engage new partners in the WEPs journey which were cancelled, including a side event for the 64th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) in New York. Planning for the first edition of the WEPs Awards in the region to highlight the efforts of companies in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment will be revisited in the second and third quarter of 2020.



5 Communications and Visibility

V. COMMUNICATIONS AND VISIBILITY

As per the Communication and Visibility Strategy, WEA has developed several communication materials including its [website](#), the first issue of its [bulletin](#), specific communication packages related to outputs 1.2, 1.3, and 3.3, as well as promotional items such as slide decks, notebooks, stickers, banners, postcards and folders. The programme started to compile a regional database of partners to disseminate information, messages, advocacy materials, and promotional items to 415 individuals from the private sector, governments, academia, and civil society. Some of the events planned had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 such as six “[Ring the Bell for Gender Equality](#)” events.

The programme was launched through different advocacy activities. The regional team organized a [launch ceremony](#) at the United Nations in Bangkok to introduce the programme to sister agencies and other partners. Programme countries also conducted events to officially start their work at the national level. China, for example, hosted a [national launch](#) within the framework of a larger event hosted in partnership with the European Union and the Swedish Embassy. Similarly, the [launch](#) in India, which was co-led by the European Union Ambassador, garnered impressive turnout by [top business leaders](#) and culminated with the country’s largest annual [Gender Equality Summit](#) a day later.

In its first year, the programme has worked extensively to establish partnerships with key stakeholders, which allow outreach to a broad audience and enhance programme visibility across the European Union and Asia. For example, the [partnership with Amfori](#), and more recently, the collaboration with [Zilingo](#), a regional e-fashion marketplace platform connecting the supply chain in 15 countries, had garnered extensive [media coverage](#).

In addition, programme teams have started collaboration with champions and advocates in different sectors ranging from [entrepreneurship](#), [private sector](#), [market regulators](#), [social influencers](#), [multi-stakeholder platforms](#), and policymakers to establish the WEA Gender Champions network as one of the big rocks identified during the inception phase. The interview with official signatories of the WEPs, such as Thailand’s top fashion designer “[VATANIKA](#)”, was to be featured at CSW64.

Communication and visibility efforts have been regularly documented on the regional website and social media channels. In the first year of implementation, the programme

posts on the regional social media channels alone (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) reached a total of 288,467 persons, generating a total of 10,801 organic interactions and engagement from the audience. A total of 4 press releases, 9 website stories, 4 media advisories, and 22 video clips (including [interviews](#)) were published (Annex H).

Responding to the COVID-19 crisis, the [#WomenRiseAboveCovid](#) campaign was launched on 30 March 2020 to promote the acknowledgement, engagement, and empowerment of women in business and essential sectors on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response. The campaign is aligned with the programme's new/amended COVID-19 specific activities and is being coordinated in partnership with the European Commission and European Union Delegations in the seven programmatic countries. This initial campaign ends April 30 and has had a very positive response thus far:

- Over 9.8 million Twitter users reached organically in one month with over 1,345 Twitter engagements;
- Supported by Hilde Hardeman, Head of the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. Ms. Hardeman's tweet tagging EU Commission President, EU Foreign Affairs High Representative, and UN Women Executive Director: <https://twitter.com/HardemanHildeML/status/1245418454288666626>
- See WEA tweet: <https://twitter.com/unwomenasia/status/1244887569617182721>

The team has also been exploring innovative ways to pivot offline activities into engaging online events using platforms that offer live polling, breakout rooms for small-group discussion and interactive whiteboards (Annex H).

Essential to the communication strategy is also the support from the European Union Office of UN Women as well as the European Union through their respective channels in amplifying the programme campaigns and messages. WEA was selected by the European External Action Service to be featured on their [International Women's Day press release](#).



6 Learnings and Pathways Forward

VI. LEARNINGS AND PATHWAYS FORWARD

Despite challenges, it has been a successful year and valuable lessons can be drawn for the future implementation of the programme. Some of the key challenges across the WEA countries materialized during the preliminary consultations of the programme design and inception phase. For instance, the **lack of public awareness on gender equality** and **limited gender-related data**, such as segregated data in business and workplace impedes understanding and acknowledgement of the barriers and the opportunities of women's economic participation. Often companies showed a lack of interest and were not cognizant of the necessity for the private sector to address this issue. WEA will deal with these issues through further compelling presentation of the business case for gender equality, research, especially on the study of hidden bias against women in business sectors. It will be first conducted in Thailand and through deeper stakeholder consultations as well as knowledge exchange platforms to enable WEA Gender Champions to raise awareness among peer private sector companies. Further strategies need to be identified on how to unleash the power of the Champions to engage the 'non-converted' business audiences.

Another challenge is the **lack of localized knowledge and training materials** which has significantly impacted implementation, particularly in China, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam where it has constrained the country team in motivating the potential companies. Many of the companies requested more material in local languages, such as communication products, internal training packages, and best practices. Efforts have been made to translate some of the programme products to local languages, including GAT and a suite of training materials developed at the regional level to support countries in this area. For instance, the development of WEPs awareness and training materials will be done in close collaboration with the local country offices.

The **global COVID-19 pandemic** has posed a significant challenge to the programme. Widespread lockdowns and social distancing measures have meant that all in-person events have been cancelled or postponed. Given the significant impacts of COVID-19 on the private sector, WEPs outreach to companies has also become more difficult and slight amendments of targets were required. However, the team has been very agile in its response and already initiated a range of adapted and/or new activities to ensure that the difficulties posed by COVID-19 are channelled/transformed into opportunities to spotlight and accelerate progress towards WEA's outcome areas. Notably, COVID-19 specific WEPs tools are being developed at the regional level. India and the Philippines

have co-organized successful online consultations with participants, and the China team has managed to secure 37 new WEPs signatories using only online outreach.



7 Outlook

VII. OUTLOOK

Immediate outlook and approach to address COVID-19

To quickly meet the significant challenges posed by the pandemic, the WEA team has developed a comprehensive COVID-19 mitigation plan (Annex B) and amended country workplans (Annex C) that cover April-June and will be reviewed on a regular basis. The implementation of the COVID-19 plans began in early March and include a series of specific activities across the three outcome areas to engage businesses, entrepreneurs, and key stakeholders in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

All country teams have been swift in pivoting offline to online work modalities and exploring the use of innovative online platforms to continue large-scale gatherings. The India team successfully used [Mural](#) to co-host the interactive webinar “**Social Mapping for COVID-19 with women entrepreneurs**”. Learnings from this and other online activities are continuously being integrated into the ongoing mitigation activities. The ability to apply a COVID-19 lens to pre-crisis workplans is an indication that WEA has a strong foundation to develop quick solutions for a variety of challenges.

A strong approach to drive results post-crisis

As the crisis caused by COVID-19 continues to evolve and impact WEA countries in different ways and at different times, the WEA team will apply the same innovative, catalytic approach in seeking out strategic partnerships and collaborations, finding ways to repurpose resources and develop tailored support for businesses and entrepreneurs to achieve outputs across the three outcomes. The significant progress achieved during the first year of implementation, in addition to the successful outcomes of initial COVID-19 adapted activities, provides a strong case for the ability of WEA to carry forward and adapt pre-COVID activities as necessary to advance the overall programme goal.

WEA activities across the three outcome areas are affected by the outbreak of COVID-19, however, the nature of change is predominantly a shift of timelines rather than changing the activities. While WEA activities and in particular ways of working are certainly impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19, the programme is not expecting any major underachievement in terms of the planned deliverables other than the need to slightly decrease one target (Indicator 3.2.2).

In addition to planned activities, several priority areas for new programming have been identified and are currently being conceptualized by the country teams.

- **Unpaid care work:** Exploring how to address women's disproportionate share of unpaid care work through integrated and entrepreneurship-based care model;
- **Up-skilling of women owners of SMEs and women entrepreneurs** with a focus on building ICT and e-commerce skills to strengthen their preparedness and the resilience of their business against future shocks;
- **Gender-sensitive supply chain recovery programmes,** including gender-responsive procurement measures to focus on priority sectors linked to the European Union trade agenda;
- **Technical advice and advocacy** on the issue of stimulus packages and other public recovery measures following COVID-19.

Moving into the final two years of the programme, this agile approach will enable WEA to use this crisis to *accelerate* the inclusion and leadership of women in business, and to position the programme as a key driver of strengthened linkages for inclusive business and trade between the European Union and Asia-Pacific region. A detailed workplan and budget forecast for the second year are provided in Annex C.



8 Financial

VIII. FINANCIAL REPORT

A Financial Report as per Article 3.7f of the Agreement is attached.