

WeEmpowerAsia

INCEPTION REPORT

Gender equality means good business



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Abbreviations and acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ANDE	ASPEN Network of Development Entrepreneurs
AWEN	ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
FPI	Foreign Policy Instruments
EEAS	European External Action Service
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EU	European Union
G7	Group of Seven
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IW	Investing in Women
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UN Women)
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEA	WeEmpowerAsia
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WEF	World Economic Forum
WEPS	Women's Empowerment Principles

01.

Introduction

The WeEmpowerAsia (WEA) programme is a 3-year regional programme which started its implementation phase on 1 April 2019 with an inception phase running from 1 April to 30 September 2019. The WEA programme is a new and innovative kind of programme for both its partners, UN Women and the European Union (EU), and the aim to 'do things differently' has driven the thinking and co-creation of the programme since its early conceptualization. The nature of the EU funding instrument for this programme, the Partnership Instrument, contrasts a more traditional development-focused funding approach. This influences the way the programme has been developed, how it is conceptualized in the inception phase, how it will be implemented, and the way it seeks to create partnerships and results.

The Partnership Instrument aims to advance EU's core interests and support the external dimension of EU internal policies in areas such as competitiveness, research and innovation. The Partnership Instrument is also supporting EU's economic diplomacy with a view to improve access to third-country markets by boosting trade, investment and business opportunities for European companies. It encourages public diplomacy, people-to-people contacts, cooperation with academia and think tanks, and outreach activities.

This has turned out to be a very good and timely fit for UN Women's renewed focus on strengthening women's economic empowerment in the Asia Pacific region to influence the transformational change needed for the region – and the world – to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Women's economic empowerment remains one of UN Women's priority areas and is solidly grounded in the entity's triple mandate to strengthen normative frameworks for gender equality, supporting UN member states in operationalizing and implementing their commitments to the empowerment of women, and lead and coordinate the accountability of the UN system in its work on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Figure 1: UN Women's Triple Mandate



Women's economic empowerment is a priority in UN Women's current Plan 2018-2021 under the overall goal for women to have income security, decent work and economic autonomy. At the regional level this has for UN Women translated into the ambition of a stronger engagement with private sector and establishment of a network of strategic partners that can work with UN Women to ensure women's enhanced economic participation and leadership in the economies of the region.

A main focus of the WEA programme is on building a strong base of partnerships at and across the regional and country levels for women's economic empowerment, including by leveraging and creating networks for knowledge exchange and policy influence to advance an enabling business environment for women's economic empowerment; engaging the private sector to create more gender-equal business cultures (i.e. through mobilizing new signatories for the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)); and identifying the needs and existing capacity building support for women entrepreneurs at the regional and country level.

In short, with these three elements together and the synergies created between them, the goal of the WEA programme is to create more opportunities for women so they can participate and lead in business, thereby advancing sustainable and inclusive growth across the region and beyond.

Figure 2: Programme Goal and Objectives



In the successful first 6 months of the programme, this 'vision wheel' has steered the initial planning and activities as the WEA programme started to move from the written outline of the agreed project document to concrete actions and collaborations that will make this programme a reality for the people – women and men – it will engage and impact. The 'vision wheel' has been helpful in easily communicating with various stakeholders what the WEA programme is aiming to achieve. It helped to simplify the presentation of the holistic programme idea.

The WEA programme is, as mentioned, a collaborative effort of UN Women and the EU. With this programme they will leverage their common commitment to enhance women's economic empowerment globally within the larger framework of their mandates and strategies. They will also build on each their longstanding experience and partnerships in the Asian region.

UN Women will apply its triple mandate of normative, operational and coordination actions and use its convening power to bring multiple stakeholders together for effective collaboration. The EU brings valuable private and public sector partnerships across sectors as well as its solid expertise in trade and economic development. By joining forces, expertise, and partners, UN Women and the EU will be able to deepen the programme's outreach and impact for stronger results.¹

¹ Description of the Action. PI/2019/404-960. Annex I. WeEmpowerAsia (Promoting Economic Empowerment of Women at Work in Asia). March 2019

02

Background and Origin of the Programme

The signing of the programme document on 8 March 2019 – International Women’s Day – was the culmination of a lengthy formulation process (see figure 4) that had started at the end of 2017 when UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) in Bangkok was first made aware of the EU’s interest in supporting initiatives in the Asian region under its Partnership Instrument focusing on women’s economic empowerment.

Figure 3: Press Release from the Signing of the Programme on 8 March 2019

When more women work, economies grow: European Union and UN Women partner to boost women’s economic rights and opportunities in Asia

Date: Friday, March 8, 2019



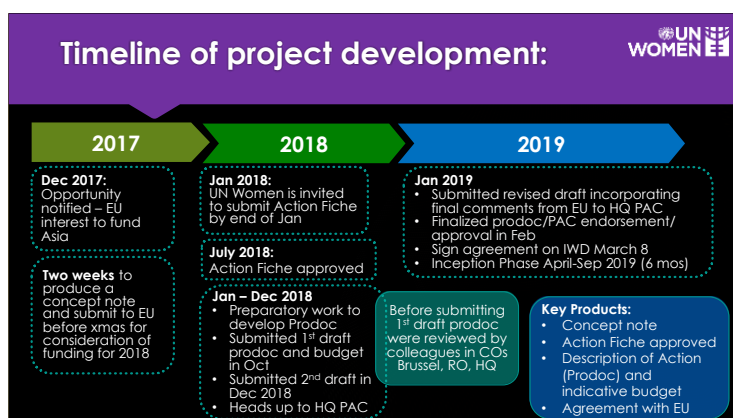
English | Bahasa Indonesia | 中文 | Tiếng Việt

Joint Press Release
For immediate release

Bangkok, Thailand – The European Union and UN Women jointly launched today a 3-year **WeEmpower Asia** programme to encourage the private sector to expand economic participation and business opportunities for women in seven Asian countries: China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The programme development undertaken by UN Women ROAP involved multiple units and staff members across the regional office, UN Women headquarters, and UN Women’s Brussels office and the relevant UN Women country offices in the region. At the same time a strong spirit of co-creation and collaboration was established with EU colleagues in the EU Delegation in Bangkok, building a partnership rather than a traditional relationship between a donor and an executive/implementing partner.

Figure 4: Timeline of the Development of the WeEmpowerAsia Programme



PowerPoint slide by [redacted], UN Women, April 2019

UN Women's investment of time and resources from very early on in the process enabled thorough consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, comprehensive gender and context analyses informing the conceptualization and development of a solid theory of change and results framework. The process also allowed for the establishment of early synergies and partnerships with key stakeholders and initiatives in the region and beyond.

2.1. Signing of the WEA Programme

Following the appropriate assessments and clearances by UN Women and the EU, the Contribution Agreement for the WEA programme was signed on 8 March 2019. This very first milestone of the programme was strategically used as an opportunity to communicate the new initiative widely with a press release that was shared through EU and UN Women channels.² For social media coverage of the signing and during the inception phase see annex 1.

One week later [REDACTED], announced the start of the programme at the 2019 Women's Empowerment Principles Forum at United Nations Headquarters in New York. At this event [REDACTED], European External Action Service (EEAS) [REDACTED], also spoke and highlighted the EU's investment in now three regional programmes in support of women's economic empowerment and engagement with the private sector to strengthen gender equality (more on the WEA programme's two sister programmes in chapter 6).

² See figure 3. For the full press release: <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/stories/2019/03/when-more-women-work-economies-grow>

03

Setting up of the Programme

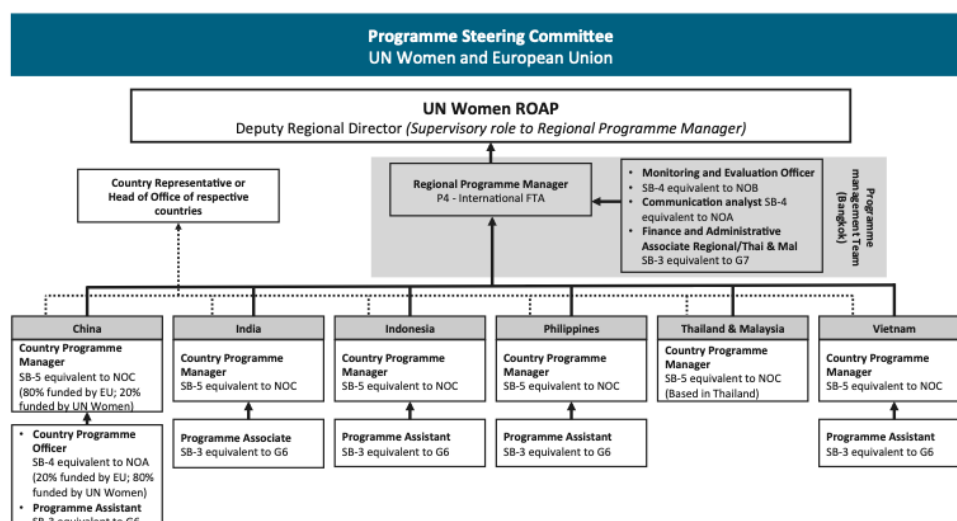
3.1. Recruitment and Staffing

The initial “custodians” of the WEA programme were staff members in the Strategic Planning and Coordination Unit of the UN Women ROAP, who had also led the conceptualization and development of the programme from late 2017. Already prior to the signing date the positions of key programme staff were advertised but with an official programme implementation start on 1 April 2019 (three weeks after signing the Contribution Agreement) UN Women ROAP recognized that it would take some months before staff would be recruited and able to start.

The services of three consultants (TORs in annex 2a, 2b, and 2c) were therefore secured in order to not delay the implementation of the inception activities, and from April/May 2019 onwards they have supported the startup of the programme, assisted in the implementation of the inception activities, set up the internal programme budget, financial management and reporting structures, and planned visibility and communication activities and strategy respectively. The three consultants have also contributed to the capacitating, training and induction of the programme staff members as they started to come on board across the region from July 2019 onwards.

The programme management team with four staff members as well as the country programme manager for Malaysia and Thailand is co-located with UN Women ROAP in Bangkok. The country programme managers and associates are co-located with UN Women country offices in China, India, Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam, under the supervision of the regional programme manager and with secondary reporting to UN Women representatives in the respective countries (see figure 5).

Figure 5: Organogram of WeEmpowerAsia



The programme management team in Bangkok, headed by the regional programme manager, is overseen by UN Women Deputy Regional Director and will lead the implementation of the programme, which is supported by EUR 7,500,000 from the EU. UN Women contributes EUR 500,000 in kind (staff time – see table 2).

By 18 November 2019 all WEA staff members have been recruited and are on board in their respective offices.

Table 1: WeEmpowerAsia Programme Staff

Position		Staff name and start date
ROAP/ Regional		
1.	Regional Programme Manager (P4)	
2.	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (NOB)	
3.	Communication Analyst (NOA)	
4.	Finance and Administrative Associate/Regional (G7)	
China		
5.	Country Programme Manager (NOC)	
6.	Programme Analyst (NOA)	
7.	Programme Associate (G6)	
India		
8.	Country Programme Manager (NOC)	
9.	Programme Associate (G6)	
Indonesia		
10.	Country Programme Manager (NOC)	
11.	Programme Associate (G6)	
Philippines		
12.	Country Programme Manager (NOC)	
13.	Programme Associate (G6)	
Thailand & Malaysia		
14.	Country Programme Manager (NOC)	
Viet Nam		
15.	Country Programme Manager (NOC)	
16.	Programme Associate (G6)	

Considering the innovative nature of the programme and partnership set-up through the EU-FPI the WEA programme looked for different staff profiles to ensure the delivery of new approaches to working with the private sector across the region. Hence, the combination of recruiting a regional programme manager with long-standing business and partnership experience and very experienced country programme managers builds a strong foundation to deliver an innovative programme.

The country manager positions are classified at an appropriately high level of experience (NOC) in order for them to manage a complex multi-stakeholder programme and to be able to engage with leaders and high-level bodies in the private and public sector. The WEA team represents a solid body of experience from the UN, from other international organisations and from the private sector.

The WEA programme is one of several regional programmes implemented by UN Women ROAP, and the WEA regional programme manager is part of the ROAP Programme team, which plans and coordinates the implementation of ROAP programmes, ensuring alignment with UN Women's internal programme management procedures.

Besides the WEA programme staff, regular UN Women staff in ROAP and in the country offices will also support implementation as UN Women's in-kind contribution to the programme as agreed in the Contribution Agreement (EUR 500,000) (see Table 2). A template for monthly reporting of these staff members' time-use has been developed during the inception phase and will be used to collect and document data for progress and financial reporting to the EU.

Table 2: UN Women's In-Kind Contribution

UN Women staff members contributing time to the programme (% of full-time)	
Deputy Regional Director, UN Women ROAP – 5%	Regional Operations Manager, UN Women ROAP – 5%
Representative (P5), UN Women Indonesia – 10%	Operations Manager (NOC), UN Women Vietnam – 5%
Head of Office (P4), UN Women Vietnam – 10%	Operations Manager (NOC), UN Women Indonesia – 5%
Representative (P5), UN Women China - 10%	Operations Manager (NOC), UN Women India – 5%
Deputy Representative (NOD), UN Women India – 5%	Country Programme Manager China (SB-5 equivalent to NOC) – 20%
Programme Specialist (P4), UN Women Indonesia – 5%	Programme Analyst China (SB-4 equivalent to NOA) - 80%

3.2. Programme Governance Structures

As stipulated in the project document and following EU and UN Women programme management procedures the programme governance structure has been set up with the Programme Steering Committee as the main decision-making body. The TORs (annex 3) have been drafted with inspiration from WEA's sister programme, Win-Win, in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

The Programme Steering Committee reflects the EU-UN bipartite nature of the programme and is established at the regional level with the following composition:

- Representatives from UN Women ROAP
- Representatives from the EU Service for Foreign Policy Instrument (both Headquarters and the FPI Regional hub for Asia-Pacific at the Delegation of European Union to Thailand)
- The Programme Management Team will participate in the Steering Committee meetings as observers with the regional programme manager as the ex-officio member to coordinate the meetings and meeting materials.
- Observers from countries – the WEA country programme managers and representatives from EU delegations.

The TORs for the WEA Programme Steering Committee are in annex 3.

The Programme Steering Committee will facilitate the effective and efficient collaboration between UN Women and the EU and provide overall guidance and direction to the work of the Programme Management Team to ensure a successful implementation of the programme.

The committee will meet 6 months after the start of the programme to approve the work plan and thereafter once a year during the other two years of the programme (three times in total).³

3.3. Set-up of Budget and Internal Procedures

Immediately after the signing of the WEA programme in March 2019 the EU transferred the first pre-financing installment of approximately EUR 2,200,000 to UN Women. While the recruitment of the programme staff was ongoing in the first quarter of the inception phase a consultant with expertise in financial management and reporting of EU-funded programmes was recruited to support the establishment of the project budgets in Atlas, which is UN Women's financial management system. To facilitate UN Women's financial reporting to the EU it was imperative to set up budgets in Atlas in alignment with the budget in the agreement.⁴

'Mapping and Budget Tables' have been created for the internal accounting of programme expenditure and reporting, especially to enable the work of the programme associates. The consultant also carried out training sessions with the programme staff as they came on board.

As per October 2019 approximately 27 per cent of the pre-financing installment has been spent (expenditure plus commitments). After the completion of the recruitment and inception phase an acceleration of expenditure is foreseen in the last quarter of 2019 to be able to request for the 2nd trench payment in the first quarter of 2020.

Regarding the overall split of the budget it is not foreseen that there will be any significant change to the budget split between the three outcome areas. The WEA programme will remain within the 25 per cent guiding rule for re-allocation between substantial budget lines.

³ The first Programme Steering Committee Meeting was held on 21 November 2019 at the offices of the EU Delegation in Bangkok. The WEA programme's presentation from the meeting is attached as Annex 13.

⁴ Annex III. Indicative Budget of the Action. Contribution Agreement, WeEmpowerAsia.

On 19-23 August 2019 UN Women ROAP held trainings for all new staff, which covered the main management procedures and policies of UN Women. All WEA staff on board at the time, incl. the regional programme manager, joined the training or selected parts of it in person or online. For the WEA staff members who joined after the training in August, specific training sessions have been organized and extra start-up support by the Bangkok-based programme management team.

3.4. Coordination of Regional Team and Country Teams

For a regional programme that covers seven countries and additionally has a comprehensive regional component it is crucial to establish agile and efficient ways to coordinate and communicate across the programme area. Following initial one-on-one conversations between the consultants and, from mid-August onwards, the regional programme manager and the country teams, regular team meetings are now held via teleconference with the complete WEA team participating.

The purpose of these meetings is to jointly plan, coordinate, and share information. Country teams have also been encouraged to engage in bi-lateral discussions to plan joint activities across the region. Team meetings have in these first months focused on team building, creation of a joint vision, and the preparations for the Inception Workshop (15-18 October) (more on the Inception Workshop in chapter 5) and drafting 3-year workplans with a strong focus on the next 12 months.

3.5. Collaboration between UN Women and EU

Starting from the very beginning of the formulation of the programme, a close partnership has been built between the WEA team and the EU delegation in Bangkok. Regular meetings to share information and discuss programme details have been held since the signing of the Contribution Agreement in March 2019.

A joint mission to Malaysia was carried out by the regional programme manager and the FPI Programme Manager, the EU Delegation Thailand, on 18-20 September to consult with potential partners and the EU Delegation in Kuala Lumpur, and representatives of the EU Delegation in Bangkok have participated in the first events of the implementation phase such as a session, organized by the WEA programme, which was part of the ASEAN Women CEO Summit held in Bangkok on 31 October 2019.

UN Women has from early on had the opportunity to engage with Ms. Hilde Hardeman, Director of the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) (under whom the Partnership Instrument is administered), and discuss the WEA programme with her. First meeting was during her visit to Bangkok on 12-13 June, where she met with [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and was given an overview of the start-up of the WEA programme, and discussed the Asian context and the links to the sister programmes in the G7 countries and in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In Brussels in July, Ms. Hardeman also met with incoming WEA regional programme manager and representatives from UN Women's office in Brussels, which gave an opportunity to discuss further the details of a joint vision for the programme.

04

Programme Context

4.1. Current Women's Economic Empowerment Situation in the Programme Countries

The WEA programme is a new initiative in the Asian region, but it is far from the only one focusing on ways to strengthen gender equality and women's economic empowerment in the region. Research of recent years has made a clear case for the need to address gender inequality from a rights perspective as well as from a business point of view as for instance the often quoted estimate that by advancing women's equality in the Asia Pacific region the countries of Asia Pacific could add USD 4.5 trillion to their collective GDP annually in 2025, a 12 per cent increase over a business-as-usual GDP trajectory.⁵

Existing data shows a large range in the rates of women's participation in the economy whether as employees or self-employed/entrepreneurs.

Table 3: Core Data on Women's Economic Empowerment in WEA Programme Countries

	Labour force participation rate (% of female population ages 15-64)	Labour force participation rate (% of male population ages 15-64)	Female to Male Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	Self-employed, female (% of female employment)	Self-employed, male (% of male employment)
Asia Pacific	44.5	74.5	78	39.4	38.0
ASEAN	55	77.9	-	-	-
China	58.9	72.3	82	36.2	36.5
India	26.1	76.2	36	81.9	78.0
Indonesia	48.8	78.3	64	58.0	46.6
Malaysia	48.8	75	59	26.5	25.1
Philippines	48.3	73.5	61	42.0	36.3
Thailand	59.8	76.5	80	53.4	82.2
Vietnam	71.8	81.7	88	64.2	53.7

Sources: ILOSTAT, International Labour Organisation/World Bank data.worldbank.org
(From The WeEmpowerAsia Project Document)

The annual ranking of countries in the World Economic Forum (WEF's) Global Gender Gap Report similarly shows that the seven programme countries are experiencing quite different development results overall and within the different social-economic categories (table 4).

⁵ The Power of Parity: Advancing women's equality in Asia Pacific. McKinsey Global Institute 2018.

Table 4: World Economic Forum (WEF) – Country Gender Gap Scores 2018

World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Score 2018										
	Rank/Score (Out of 149)		Economic participation & opportunities		Educational attainment		Health & Survival		Political empowerment	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
China	103	0.673	86	0.653	111	0.958	149	0.915	78	0.164
India	108	0.665	142	0.586	114	0.949	147	0.955	19	0.223
Indonesia	85	0.691	96	0.629	107	0.967	79	0.974	60	0.193
Malaysia	101	0.676	84	0.656	1	1.000	83	0.974	131	0.072
Philippines	8	0.799	14	0.801	1	1.000	42	0.979	13	0.416
Thailand	73	0.702	22	0.763	81	0.991	56	0.978	130	0.074
Vietnam	77	0.698	33	0.740	101	0.972	143	0.957	99	0.124

Source: World Economic Forum: Global Gender Gap Report 2018

Building on the context analysis that was part of the formulation of the WEA programme in 2018, there has been a continued focus during the inception phase on establishing a solid understanding of the current women's economic empowerment situation in the seven programme countries. Each of the WEA country teams has further elaborated on the context analysis to map out gaps to be addressed and to identify actors and initiatives in the area to inform the country specific work plans.

The WEF Gender Gap rankings in the table above show the diversity of the socio-economic status among the seven programme countries. It also shows that the high educational scoring of Malaysia, for instance, does not directly translate into an equally high level of economic participation for women and even less so for women's political influence. In India, where women score relatively high on the political empowerment criteria, there is a long way to go to achieve equal economic participation. In the Philippines, which ranks in the global top 15, the economic gender gap is still close to 20 per cent. Whilst women are equally represented in leadership positions there remains a significant gap in female labor participation.

The challenges and barriers for women's equal economic participation vary across the seven WEA countries, however a shared systemic obstacle are social norms and gender stereotypes that continue to strongly influence the kind of work that women and men chose or are expected to do. A disproportionate part of unpaid care and work are still done by women in Asia as elsewhere, thereby restricting their time to explore and seek work and/ or educational opportunities. Creating economic opportunities for women must be a prioritized action to strengthen their economic empowerment but must also be complemented with advocacy for enabling policy changes as well as norms change to allow women to truly leverage such opportunities.





4.2. Linking to WEE and EU Initiatives in the Region

The WEA programme with its focus on women in business as employees, managers, leaders, and women entrepreneurs has linkages to other ongoing regional UN Women programmes, and these linkages have been further explored during the inception phase. Specifically, the EU-funded 'Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region' offers opportunities to collaborate which will be further explored. Collaboration will be sought where there are mutual benefits and value to be created, especially regarding the issues of ending sexual harassment in the workplace, securing women's decent work, and strengthening women's entrepreneurship opportunities.

A more comprehensive mapping of other programmes with potential linkages to women's economic empowerment initiatives in the region has also been carried out to produce an overview of the potential strategic partnerships to be built with other UN and non-UN entities and identifying the countries in which collaboration can be further explored (see also chapter 5).

A focus has been placed on finding synergies with EU-funded programmes and partnerships indicated below in Table 5. While no MOUs or agreements between the WEA programme and these programmes have been finalized, they have been identified as opportunities for collaboration at local and regional level to be explored further.

Table 5: WEA's Country Overlaps with Regional WEE & EU Programmes

	WeEmpowerAsia EU PI/UN Women	Investing in Women DFAT, Australia	Responsible Business and Human Rights EU PI/UNDP	Responsible Supply Chains EU PI/ILO/OECD	Catalyzing Women Entrepreneurs ESCAP/Canada	Women MSME FinTech Innovation Fund ESCAP/UNCDF/Canada /Australia	SPOTLIGHT: Safe&Fair EU/UN Women/ILO	Promoting WEE in the Indian Ocean Rim DFAT, Australia /UN Women
EU Programme								
China	x			x				
India	x		x					x
Indonesia	x	x	x				x	x
Malaysia	x		x				x	x
Philippines	x	x		x			x	
Thailand	x		x	x			x	x
Vietnam	x	x		x	x	x	x	
Myanmar		x	x	x		x	x	
Sri Lanka			x					x
Japan	*			x				
Bangladesh					x	x		x
Nepal					x	x		
Cambodia					x	x	x	
Fiji					x	x		
Samoa					x	x		
Lao							x	
Singapore							x	x
Brunei							x	
IORA								**

* WeEmpower G7 | ** All 22 members and 9 Dialogue Partners of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

4.3. Building on Existing WEPs Work, Signatories and Resources

The promotion of the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) is a key element of Outcome 3 of the WEA programme and as part of the 're-launch' of the WEPs in the Asian region under the WEA programme, new WEPs assets will be produced to support companies in integrating gender equality into the way they do business.

However, the WEPs were first introduced in 2010, when it was created and launched by UN Women and UN Global Compact, and there are therefore 172 companies (as of October 2019) in the 7 programme countries and 588 in the Asia Pacific region (as of end of 2018) that are existing signatories to the WEPs (see Table 6).

Table 6: Current 172 WEPs Signatories in WEA Programme Countries (End Inception Phase: October 2019)

Country	No. signed	Main sector(s) involved	WEPs Highlights To Present
China	40	Chemicals	WEPs promotion at various conferences and trainings under WEE Programme Pilot training on WEPs developed and delivered to around 30 private sector managers in March 2019
India	54	Software & computer services, Health care equipment, Food producers	WEPs/Gap Analysis tool presented at the UN India Business Forum Meeting with private sector (2018) and at Global Compact Network (GCN) India's Gender Equality Summit (March 2019) Draft MOU between UN Women India and UN GCN
Indonesia	16	Forestry & paper, Food Producers	Study on WEPs implementation in 50 top companies (2018) WEPs Working Group established Development of WEPs training
Malaysia	6	-	Contact established with most recent signatory – the Stock Exchange Malaysia
Philippines	6	-	No earlier WEPs specific interventions
Thailand	6	-	Most recent signatory – Vatanika – signed in 2019
Vietnam	44	Personal goods, Support services, Electronic & electrical equipment	WEPs activities since 2012, including survey/situation analysis of 54 signatories in 2013 Guiding Manual for Application of Women's Empowerment Principles (2014) CEO workshops + Business Forum leading to several new signatories WEPs: Practical Guide for Enterprises published (2016)
Total (October 2019)	172		

It is important to note, however, that UN Women's promotion of the WEPs till recently was driven as a global campaign from headquarters with limited human or other resources for direct engagement and support to the companies that signed up in the individual countries. Only in a few countries (such as India, Indonesia and Vietnam) have there been programming activities or events in support of the WEPs in recent years which shows up in the higher numbers of signatories in these countries. However, these existing signatories may not have continued their journeys to implement the WEPs beyond their initial actions (such as the CEO Statement of Support).

The WEA team is therefore expecting that several of the existing signatories will need support and trainings at a similar level as companies signing up to the WEPs now. This may also shift the baseline in the sense that the 172 existing signatories may indeed also be seeking to participate in WEA activities as they are being rolled out, seeing that the WEA programme plans to offer a level and depth of support and capacity building that has not been provided before.


During the inception phase the WEA team has assessed the existing WEPs tools and assets to determine which new resources will be needed to engage existing and new companies. This internal assessment looked at both global training materials and materials that have been developed in the region. The global WEPs tools/assets⁶ most in use and/or deemed most useful are:

- Women's Empowerment Principles (brochure)
- CEO Statement of Support
- WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool (self-assessment tool for companies)

These are the minimum set of documents to be applied to engage and sign up companies, however, they need to be updated and aligned to new WEPs visual branding and in some cases also localized and translated to be of use in the WEA programme countries.

UN Women and UN Global Compact in Turkey and UN Women in Georgia have in recent years developed training manuals and handouts that will be used for inspiration for the development of WEPs tools in the Asian region. A WEPs Reporting Guidance also covers some important aspects of strengthening reporting and documentation of the progress achieved by WEPs signatories. Of the WEA programme countries, China, Indonesia and Vietnam have developed WEPs materials as part of UN Women initiatives prior to the launch of the WEA programme (see table 7).

Table 7: WEPs Assets and Training Materials Developed in WEA Programme Countries

Country	Title	Language and format	Target group	Current use
China	Pilot training on WEPs	Chinese, PowerPoint	Private sector in general	Update needed
China	CEO Statement	Chinese	Private sector	In use
Indonesia	Study on WEPs in 50 companies + brochure + infographic 	English and Bahasa study report, Bahasa brochure and English infographic	Private sector, current signatories	In use

⁶ All existing WEPs tools are available to download at <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/resources>

Country	Title	Language and format	Target group	Current use
Vietnam	<p>Women Empowerment in Enterprises and Capabilities of Applying WEPs to Implement Gender Equality Law in Vietnam (Situation Analysis) (2013)</p> 	Vietnamese	Private sector in general	In use
Vietnam	<p>The Guiding Manual for Application of the WEPs for Enterprises (2014)</p> 	Vietnamese and English	Private sector in general, existing WEPs signatories	In use
Vietnam	<p>A Practical Guide for Enterprises: Women's Empowerment Principles (2016)</p> 	Vietnamese and English	Private sector in general, existing WEPs signatories	In use

The assessment is that a few of the listed assets can be used or updated for use but overall there is a need to produce a range of up-to-date tools structured around the seven Principles and targeted to their exact audience. Such tools will support the WEA programme's renewed approach to existing and new WEPs signatories. The WEA programme's renewed approach to the promotion of the WEPs will be characterized by a more comprehensive and coordinated outreach to companies and with an aim to create networks of companies to learn together and from each other while they go on the 'WEPs journey'. This differs from earlier WEPs outreach (mainly from UN Women and UN Global Compact headquarters), which promoted a more individual journey for each company (more on the new WEPs approach in chapter 5).

The WEPs elements of the WEA programme will be aligned with the new visual branding of the WEPs and global assets that are under development by the WEPs Secretariat in UN Women headquarters, and also attempt to localize the forthcoming WEPs welcome package and training materials that are expected in 2020. However, in order to be able to roll out the WEPs component of the WEA programme and meet the needs of the companies in the WEA programme countries as soon as possible, the planning process has started to develop WEPs tools and assets at the regional level to be then localized in each of the WEA programme countries as needed.

The WEA programme will allow for the fostering of stronger relationships with individual companies but also design approaches to bring companies of the same sectors together and use the WEPs as an entry point to start more systemic sector-specific conversations looking at entire value chains. Some of these sectors could be garment and textile, jewelry and the financial and technology (FinTech) sector. It was also recognized during the inception phase that companies may not be willing to sign the Principles but will be interested in starting to work on specific areas. The WEA programme will work with companies with a needs-based approach with the overall objective to drive action towards a gender-inclusive business culture.

The WEA programme seeks to get at least 100 companies to fill the Gap Assessment Tool (GAT) in the coming year allowing the WEA team to gain a better understanding of companies' major gaps in achieving gender equality across their value chains and using this data to plan and target further interventions.

05.

Vision, Principles, 'Big Rocks' and Strategic Partners


5. Vision, Principles, 'Big Rocks' and Strategic Partners

The development of a strong and clear common vision for the programme has been a priority in the inception phase and steered by the regional programme manager from mid-August onwards. With the multi-country scope of the programme and three separate (but inter-connected) outcome areas, sharing one common vision and an agreed set of principles has the double purpose of:

- 1) Guiding the programme team in the same direction towards the same goal and nurture cross-collaboration across countries and the regional office, and;
- 2) Communicating clearly the programme objectives for the highest possible level of uptake and support among the broader public, stakeholders and partners.

As staff joined the programme from July onwards and during the first team-meetings (via conference calls) in August and September the momentum started to build for a programme vision and the principles to build it on. This was further fine-tuned during the Inception Workshop in October in Bangkok with participation from almost the complete WEA programme team as well as from the FPI team of the EU Delegation in Bangkok for the first part of the workshop.



, representative of the EU's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), at the WeEmpowerAsia Inception Workshop Bangkok, 2019

An early observation by the regional programme manager was the need to be catalytic and innovative in the way the team implements the programme and in the way partners are selected: Of the total budget of EUR 8 million only approximately EUR 3 million are for activities under the three outcome areas. Splitting already limited resources across the 7 countries risks very scattered programme activities with limited impact.

From the beginning a '1:2 principle' was introduced to inspire the thinking among all team members that for every investment by the programme into an activity or event, an equal share (of additional funding or cost-sharing) must be sought to the extent possible from other UN partners and donors and from private sector to enable more and larger-scale activities and outputs, reaching more stakeholders and eventually having a bigger impact. The WEA team has also been encouraged to look for ways to collaborate between the country teams to make the most of shared assets and ideas across borders through the upscaling of initiatives.

This principle is applied as an aspiration and a challenge for now and will not be a commitment at this stage. However, co-contribution (in-kind and cash) opportunities leveraged this way will be captured by the programme.

5.1. Inception Workshop

The Inception Workshop held in Bangkok 15-17 October 2019 was a crucial step in the inception phase to bring together the programme team for the first time and to jointly develop some of the major building blocks of the programme through exercises and planning processes. It also worked to further strengthen the team's mindset of 'doing things differently' to ensure maximized and sustained impact of the WEA programme. This was done by situating the team in a business 'start-up' mode to put them in the shoes of one of the primary target audiences of the programme – the business community:

The workshop⁷ was structured as a three-step journey:

- Vision and Inspiration
- 'Big Rock' Creation
- Work planning

⁷ Workshop agenda in Annex 4

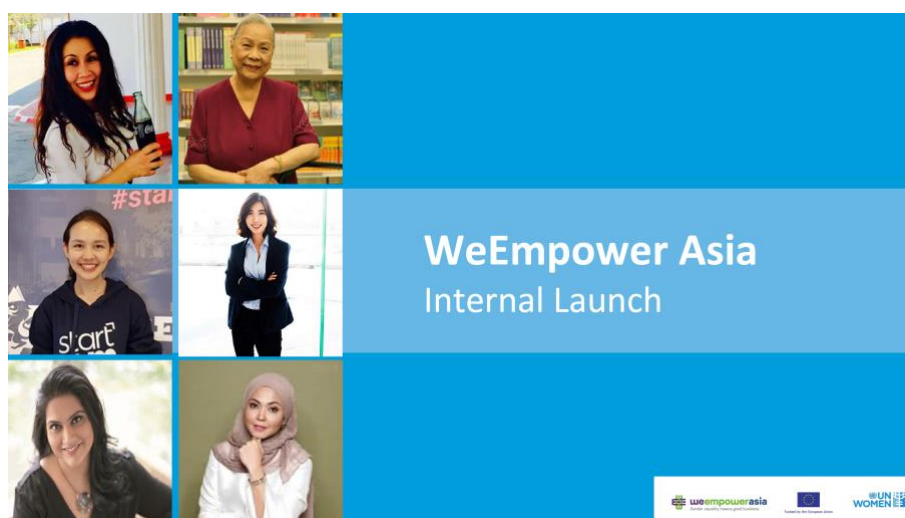
This workshop structure offered the team a kind of 'mini incubator'; a process through which to fine-tune the overall vision and ambition of the WEA programme and explore how to concretize this into 3-4 'Big Rocks' (see below) and, finally, bring the ideas into the work plans of each individual WEA country team over the remaining 2.5 years of the programme.

The workshop was facilitated by an external partner – BoP Innovation Center (BoP INC)⁸ – that over three days led the team on the journey from vision building to concrete country-specific work plans. BoP INC brought strong facilitation skills but also a lot of inspiration from its global work on inclusive entrepreneurship paired with a strong European understanding being a Netherlands-based organization. For the Inception Workshop Report see annex 5.

The workshop also included meetings with entrepreneurs and entrepreneur networks based in Thailand and a visit to one of Bangkok's many start-up accelerators – DTAC Accelerate⁹ - for inspiration on how to support entrepreneurs in innovative ways. The workshop also invited business leaders to share their perspectives.



On the fourth day (18 October 2019), the programme team presented the initial programme planning to UN Women colleagues and to selected key partners from ILO, UNDP and ESCAP at an internal launch at the UN Women ROAP premises. The presentation given to the audience at the internal launch is in annex 6.



⁸ <http://www.bopinc.org>

⁹ <https://accelerate.dtac.co.th/th/home>

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5.4. Vision and Ambition

Exercises and discussions during the Inception Workshop gave the WEA team the opportunity to collaborate and create a joint vision and goal for the programme, basing it on assumptions coming out of the specific detailed work planning but also allowing for larger and more ambitious aspirations. A pattern around the number of 7 soon materialized:

- **7** Women's Empowerment Principles
- **7** programme countries under the WEA programme
- **700** companies can be activated to implement the WEPs
- **700** women entrepreneurs can be reached and enabled to start, retain, and expand their businesses
- Impacting **700,000** people as employees, consumers and entrepreneurs¹¹, and
- Mobilizing at least **7** policy processes in support of creating more gender equal economies in the Asian region

Figure 12: The Power of 7



The WEA team assessed that these numbers can be reached over the next 2.5 years if no major political or economic changes happen to the contexts in which they will be operating and implementing the programme. Nevertheless, these are ambitious goals based on the best-case scenario and there are risks attached to achieving them.

In the revised results framework targets (Annex 7) the targets are set at a lower level, recognizing that country programme managers are still carrying out consultations with potential partners and national contexts may offer still-to-be-seen challenges. Also, some of the interventions are innovative and new with limited historical experience to calculate the risks. For example, the local teams do not have extensive experience from working with the private sector, SMEs, investors and/or women-owned enterprises. During the inception phase it has become clear that getting companies to sign up to the WEPs takes a lot of trust building and a time-intensive engagement process.

¹¹ The aspiration of impacting 700,000 people as employers, consumers, and entrepreneurs is based on the vision that through changing business culture and practice and developing more gender sensitive companies, all people who come in touch with them, who work for them, who supply to them and who buy goods or services from them will also be positively impacted.

However, the WEA team agreed to set an aspirational ambition to stretch their mindsets and apply an 'out of the box' thinking to challenge the status quo and constantly look for new opportunities and innovative partnership models and approaches whilst seeking new resources to deliver scaled-up results.

The WEA team is convinced that this aspirational ambition will position WeEmpowerAsia as an ambitious, innovative programme that generates visible impact for women, business and society across Asia and strengthens Asian-European networks.

5.5. Foundation for Systemic Change – Regional and National Policy Approach

The 'Big Rock' thinking was fine-tuned by the WEA team during the Inception Workshop to ensure a more targeted and coherent approach to the implementation of the three outcomes of the WEA programme. Prior to that, the WEA regional team had started discussing how best – on a more foundational level – to influence and strengthen the policy framework which needs to be favorable for women's economic empowerment in order for such targeted interventions to succeed.

A policy review is therefore planned in collaboration with ILO to gain an overview of the policy framework at regional (ASEAN) and national levels; to map what policies are in place; and assess how they are impacting women's economic empowerment in the ten ASEAN countries and in China and India (TORs in annex 8).

The policy review will serve as the knowledge base and advocacy tool for programme implementation and will inform and direct upcoming activities, specifically to furthering gender equality in the private sector aligned with the WEPs including SME promotion, decent employment, and social protection for women. It will equally serve as an influencing tool as a basis for dialogue with decision-making stakeholders as well as to rally government support to mobilize the private sector to take accelerated action through implementing the WEPs.

5.6. Strategic Regional Partnerships

The goal and target setting undertaken the past months has also informed the identification of strategic partnerships for the WEA programme in addition to the already established '1:2 resource mobilization principle' through innovative partnerships. The country teams continued their consultations with stakeholders at the national levels, and the team in Bangkok also met with a range of potential partners at the regional level, enabling multiple WEA country teams to forge partnerships with the same organizations to accelerate their impact.

The regional partners described below share the goal of driving inclusive and equitable economic growth offering especially more women the opportunity to participate and lead in a level playing field.

Some of the partners work on similar issues in the same countries as the WEA programmes, others have a more aligned regional focus and/or offer interesting complementary elements to strengthen the WEA programme. Partnerships are sought in the UN family as well as in the private and public sectors. The main criteria are that a partnership must create value-add to a joint activity and/ or product developed, increase scale, scope, and/ or strengthen quality of implementation.

These are the main regional partnerships that the WEA programme has explored during the inception phase with some of them already having led to collaboration:

5.6.a Investing in Women

Investing in Women (IW) is an initiative of the Australian Government funded through the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), operating to promote the economic empowerment of women in Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines, and Vietnam. The three components of the initiative focus on impact investment for women's economic empowerment, influencing gender norms, and strengthening gender equality in the workplace. The WEA programme and IW will especially collaborate on joint activities to advance gender equality in the workplace in the three overlapping countries (Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam) through joint outreach to private sector corporations and a coordinated approach to leading companies in a process to integrate gender equality into their human resource and other practices. This will support the implementation of the WEPs Activator 'Big Rock'. The collaboration will at country level take place between the WEA teams and the Business Coalitions that IW has established. In Indonesia UN Women, UN Global Compact, and Indonesia Business Coalition for Women Empowerment have already established a partnership, resulting in a study on the application of the WEPs in 50 top companies in Indonesia in 2018. An MOU between IW and UN Women ROAP is now being drafted to formalize and guide the collaboration from the regional level.

5.6.b ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN)

The ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN) was established in 2007 under the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) to enable businesswomen in the region to exchange experiences, to promote women's entrepreneurship, and to create a favorable environment for women-led enterprises. The network consists of women entrepreneur organizations from each of the ten ASEAN countries and the chair rotates annually between the members.

In 2019, coinciding with Thailand's ASEAN presidency, the AWEN chair has been held by Thailand, i.e. by the Thai representative in AWEN, which is the Federation of Business and Professional Women of Thailand (BPW Thailand). In June 2019 the WEA programme/UN Women held a consultation dialogue with the members of AWEN in the margins of AWEN's annual Women Business Conference in Bangkok. An agreement was reached to collaborate around the three outcome areas of the WEA programme through the strengthening of networks of women entrepreneurs in the ASEAN countries.

On 30-31 October 2019 the WEA programme and AWEN collaborated on the ASEAN Women CEOs Summit held in Bangkok with participation from ASEAN countries and beyond, including a successful WEA-organised session, highlighting benefits to businesses that integrate gender equality into their practice and culture. This session was also a regional launch event of the WEA programme, marking the completion of the inception phase. Details of this session will be presented in the first progress report.

The collaboration with AWEN has the potential to support the implementation of the two 'Big Rocks': the WEPs Activator and the Women Entrepreneurs Accelerator. However, this partnership will need to be further strategized.

5.6.c Amfori

Amfori is a global business member association, headquartered in Belgium, and working for open and sustainable trade. Amfori supports retailers, importers, and manufacturers to strengthen sustainability across supply chains. The WEA programme is exploring ways to collaborate on especially the Industry Disruptor 'Big Rock' in China, India, and Vietnam, following the WEA team's participation in the 2nd Amfori Asia Sustainability Forum held in Vietnam in October. At the Forum WEA regional programme manager presented WeEmpowerAsia and the opportunities to collaborate especially around the WEPs. A formal agreement is currently being negotiated with Amfori.

5.6.d UN Global Compact

The Women's Empowerment Principles are a collaboration between UN Women and UN Global Compact and continues to be so also following the shift of oversight of the WEPs from UN Global Compact to UN Women at the global level. UN Global Compact has established local networks in all seven of the WEA programme countries, through which local businesses are engaged to strengthen their motivation and capacity to implement more sustainable, responsible and inclusive business practices aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Close working relationships are already established between UN Women/WEA in several of the WEA countries (especially Indonesia and India) and will be further explored to strengthen coordinated outreach to companies and joint activities to advance the implementation of the WEPs.

5.6.e Chambers of Commerce

Across the region the WEA programme will collaborate with chambers of commerce as an entry point to important networks of businesses. Outreach has already been done to national chambers as well as to European chambers of commerce in several of the countries including WEA participation in EUMCCI's Women in Business event in Kuala Lumpur in August followed up with further discussions.

The chambers of commerce constitute important influential networks of businesses at the national level and especially the European chambers can be strong partners in seeking to advance networks between Asian businesses and their European counterparts. Building a relationship with the European chambers of commerce is a recommendation to all in-country WEA teams and during the inception phase the teams have started to engage with the relevant stakeholders in the Chambers often facilitated through the EU Delegations.

5.6.f Safe & Fair – UN Women/ILO/EU regional programme

The Safe and Fair programme is a EUR 25 million investment by the European Union implemented through a partnership between ILO and UN Women with the objective of ensuring that labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region. Focus is on strengthening gender-sensitive labour migration governance frameworks, coordinated responsive quality services for women migrants, and strengthened data and knowledge. The WEA programme and the Safe and Fair team are exploring possible collaboration around strengthening of policy frameworks in the respective countries for women's economic empowerment and joint advocacy and events on ending sexual harassment in the workplace. The WEA programme will be seeking to also incorporate training materials developed through 'Safe and Fair' into its WEPs training.

5.6.g Responsible Supply Chains in Asia – ILO/OECD/EU Regional Programme

This regional programme, also supported under the Partnership Instrument of the EU, promotes sustainable and inclusive growth by ensuring that investors and businesses have better understanding of CSR and responsible business practices incl. in supply chains. The programme aims to strengthen policy environments conducive to promoting responsible business conduct and increased opportunities for dialogue between private sector and governments; capacity building through training of trainers from employers' and workers' associations and carrying out research on the subject.

The WEA programme and the Responsible Supply Chains programme are looking into ways to collaborate in the area of joint training and events in the countries where both programmes are being implemented (China, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam). As a first step, ILO and UN Women will collaborate on conducting a regional policy review (covering the ASEAN countries and China and India), aiming to identify areas for joint policy influencing processes.

5.6.h Responsible Business and Human Rights – UNDP

UNDP's work on responsible and inclusive business in the Asian region is closely linked to the promotion of the UN Guiding Principles of Business and Human Rights, which this year also saw the Gender Dimensions to the Guiding Principles being added by the Human Rights Council. UNDP's Business and Human Rights team and the WEA team are discussing ways to collaborate in the coming years as UNDP will launch a new EU Partnership Instrument supported programme, focusing on collaborating with governments, the business sector, and civil society to formulate national action plans for implementing the Guiding Principles. After the formal launch of the new programme in December 2019 the WEA programme will explore a more formalized collaboration with the relevant UNDP team.

The Annual Business and Human Rights Forum held in Bangkok, with a regional audience of businesses, professional associations, governments, CSOs, labour unions, etc., is another possible area of collaboration where the WEA programme could strengthen the agenda elements on gender equality and women in business.

5.7. Other Partners/Programmes to be Further Explored for Partnership:

5.7.a ILO/IFC – Better Work Programme

Collaboration between ILO and IFC to improve working conditions in the garment industry and respect of labour rights for workers and boost the competitiveness of apparel business.

5.7.b ESCAP – Women's Entrepreneurship Programme

A regional programme with a three-pronged focus on strengthening a gender-responsive entrepreneurship ecosystem, promoting innovative financing mechanisms, and applying new IC technology in support of entrepreneurship.

5.7.c UNCDF – SHIFT Programme

SHIFT aims to improve the living standards of vulnerable groups, incl. women, in Asia by opening the door towards digital financial inclusion, expanding the potential for enterprise development, employment, and increased economic participation.

5.7.d ASPEN Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)

The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) is a global network of organizations that propel entrepreneurship in emerging markets. ANDE members provide critical financial, educational, and business support services to small and growing businesses (SGBs) based on the conviction that SGBs will create jobs, stimulate long-term economic growth, and produce environmental and social benefits. ANDE, USAID, and Visa Foundation have recently launched the ANDE Gender Equality Initiative and Advancing Women's Empowerment Fund addressing the barriers women entrepreneurs in emerging markets face in accessing the resources, networks and knowledge they need to thrive. The WEA programme is exploring potential partnerships with them to leverage their existing entrepreneurship networks and expertise in the space.

5.7.e BSR – Business for Social Responsibility

BSR™ is a global nonprofit organization that works with its network of more than 250 member companies and other partners to build a just and sustainable world. From its offices in Asia, Europe, and North America, BSR™ develops sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration.

In Asia BSR offices are located in Hongkong and Japan. BSR has implemented several gender programmes relating to supply chains and has recently conducted gender-assessments in the jewelry sector. The WEA programme intends to collaborate on this initiative to further implement the WEPs.

5.7.f Bottom of the Pyramid Innovation Center (BoP Inc.)

BoP Inc. supports multinationals, SMEs and start-ups in creating inclusive business models to include also the poorest as consumers, distributors, producers, and entrepreneurs. The WEA programme has collaborated with BoP Inc. in strategizing the inception phase and will seek to expand potential collaboration in the entrepreneurship space.

5.7.g The DO School

The DO School is a global organization working for sustainability and innovation in a purposeful economy through supporting business to transform and equip people to build movements and create change. The Do School works with European and Asian entrepreneurs and is specialized in mobilizing innovative entrepreneurship solutions and helping larger corporations to foster entrepreneurship and inclusive business cultures.

5.8. Strategic Partner for Outcome 2 to Strengthen Women Entrepreneurs

During the inception phase it has emerged that especially the entrepreneurship work of the WEA programme (concentrated under Outcome 2) will face the biggest risk of being scattered across the countries without significant and sustainable impact. The WEA programme has therefore decided to work with one regional partner to ensure oversight and to bring complementary expertise, innovation skills, and the required networks for this outcome area. The process is currently on-going to identify the most suitable partner.

5.9. Partnering with Sister Programmes Win-Win and WeEmpower G7

The WEA programme is leveraging its linkages to its two 'sister programmes' in the LAC region and in the G7 countries, both supported under the EU PI instrument (and with ILO as a partner in both cases). The two sister programmes – Win-Win: Gender Equality Means Good Business and Promoting economic empowerment of women at work through responsible business conduct – G7 countries (WE Empower G7) – are each approximately one year ahead in their implementation phases so as the 'youngest' sister the WEA programme has benefited from colleagues' lessons learnt, tools, and approaches (in areas such as internal structures, monitoring, and coordination as well as the recent re-branding of the WEPs).

Regular conversations between the partners (all three or bi-lateral) have been very useful in coordinating joint plans which are expected to increase now that the WEA programme has entered its implementation phase in earnest. The WEPs Secretariat, with the empowerwomen.org platform, is hosted by UN Women headquarters in New York (under the WeEmpower G7 programme). The WEA team is involved in planning processes with the WEPs Secretariat and Win-Win colleagues to develop new generic tools to meet the needs of companies that are signing up to the WEPs. These generic tools will complement the tools that WEA will develop at the regional and national levels.

The WEA team has also provided comments on other initiatives under development at the global level such as a new WEPs 'badging' system to motivate WEPs signatories to deepen their implementation of the Principles, as well as updates to the existing database of WEPs signatories, which is in the process of being further expanded.

With the WEA programme now fully up to speed further exploration will take place on how to leverage opportunities for south-south and triangular cooperation with EU as the common partner. The three programmes respond to an increasingly global movement that urges companies, suppliers, and consumers to be part of the solution and contribute to the elimination of gender discrimination, and the trio is a positive and constructive force in this movement.

To support this, the three programmes are cost-sharing a women's economic empowerment consultant based in Brussels to provide insights and analysis of relevant updates on policy developments, on companies' policies and practices, and of networks, data and information from an EU perspective that could be relevant for the three programmes. This also supports increased opportunities for joint initiatives and strengthened networks for women entrepreneurs in the three regions, which could lead to the organization of joint events and activities. The Annual WEPs Forum in New York in March is a likely collaboration that will take place again in March 2020.

06

Workplans and Updated Results Framework

6.1. Work Planning Process

As the country programme managers came on board from mid-July onwards they were briefed by the regional team and encouraged to start wide consultations in their respective countries with the aim to identify partners and activities to include in the country work plans, aligned to the overall programme objectives and goals but to be shaped by their individual expertise of the local context and partners as well as the existing priorities and other work of UN Women in the country.

In September and October the regional and country WEA programme managers were furthermore requested to participate in UN Women's own annual work planning process for 2020, attempting to integrate WEA outcomes into the regional UN Women Annual Work Plan (AWP) as well as the individual country AWP. These planning processes were not completely aligned due to diverging deadlines, but the WEA team will have the opportunity to finalize the alignment to UN Women AWP following the outcomes of its Inception Workshop (see annex 5) and guidance from the first Programme Steering Committee on 21 November 2019.

One of the first steps for the WEA team was to do a sector assessment by looking at relevant criteria for the WEA programme in each country context such as a sector's impact on the GDP, relevance to EU trade, whether a sector employs many women, opportunities for WEPs promotion, among other criteria.

Table 9: Sector Prioritization

The Sector Prioritization	Indonesia	Malaysia	Thailand	Vietnam	Philippines	India	China
Financial/Technology							
Textile/Garment/Apparel				Textile/Garment/Footwear			
Tourism				Service & Tourism			
Jewelry*							
Retail/FMCG/Media					Positive workplace culture promotion		
Other [Please add in writing]	Agriculture			Food Industry		Agriculture and allied sectors	

* Newly explored with potential interest across the region

This sector prioritization has later been fine-tuned during and after the Inception Workshop to establish that FinTech will be an overarching sector priority across all seven WEA countries.

Following the Inception Workshop and the co-creation of especially the 'Big Rocks' idea, each WEA team has further incorporated country-specific activities into their 3-year work plans. As the teams have just entered into full-fledged implementation mode, continue to consult with partners, and, in a few cases, are also catching up following a delayed start of the country programme managers (Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia), the 3-year work plans are to be seen as work in progress. Whereas the workplans with a 3-year outlook are important guidance tools it is also recognized that they will remain living documents to allow for regular alignment with changes in contexts, partners and other developments but within the overall framework and objectives set and agreed in the project document.

6.2. Fine-tuning the Results Framework

Emerging from the months of consultations, internal planning and goal-setting, and overall, translating the programme document into plans and activities at country and regional levels, the WEA team recognized a few areas in the project document which were no longer accurately representing the expected outputs of the programme or would benefit from a revised formulation for capturing a stronger and more targeted result. These are the main proposed changes:

- A re-definition of the knowledge exchange platform in Output 1.2 which will be supported by the empowerwomen.org online platform and UN Women regional website but also have a strong off-line and person-to-person element with the WEA programme as a center point for activities and events, for knowledge sharing and for capacity building.
- Changes will be made to indicators at outcome and output level to document more clearly (especially under Outcome 2) that the support provided to women entrepreneurs will also include business development and management skills as well as interventions to enable them to influence policies and the enabling environment.
- Revisions to the outcome and output indicators under Outcome 3 are proposed in order to widen the focus from solely the number of WEPs signatories and instead measure success on the deepening of companies' actual, concrete steps and actions in implanting the Principles.

The revised results framework with marked changes are in annex 7.

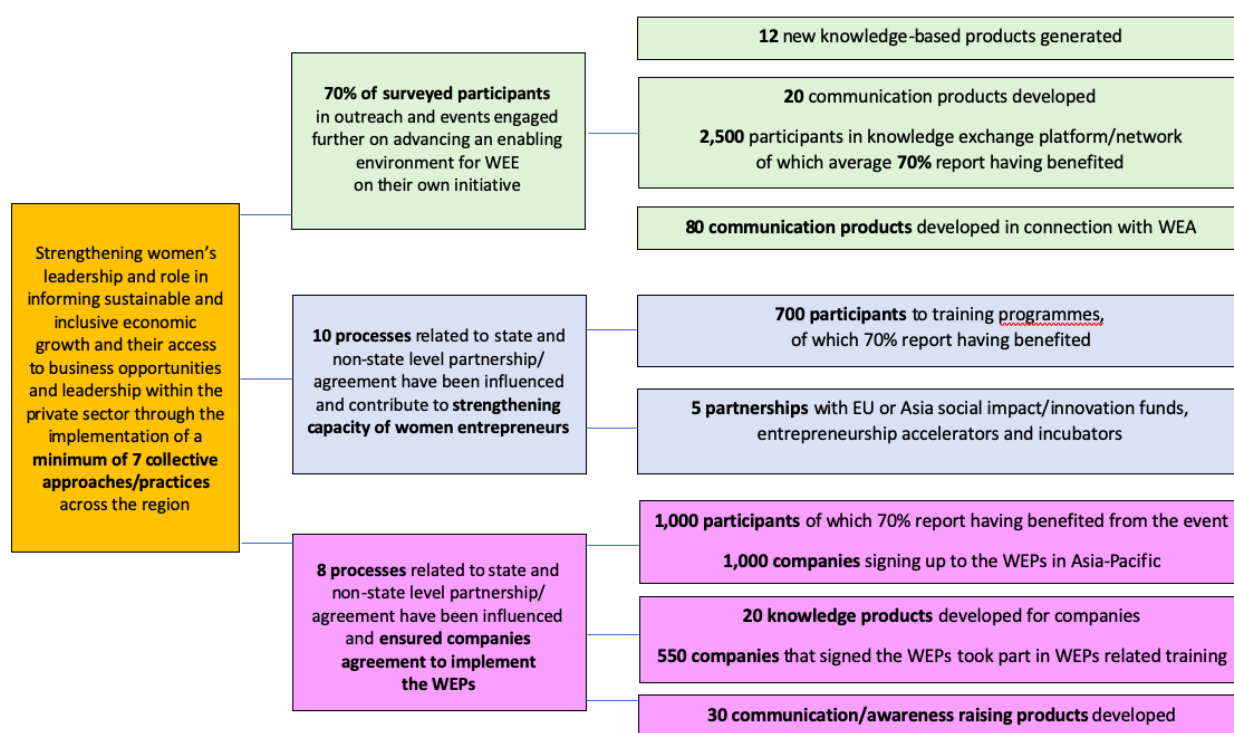
6.3. Setting the Targets for Results

The targets for the programme results were not determined during the formulation phase, allowing for the WEA programme staff to have a say in the level of ambition and realistic target-setting concerning their areas of work. During the inception phase a bottom-up exercise has taken place, in combination with and aligned to the work planning that the WEA team has undertaken at the same time.

The target-setting has been inspired by the joint vision creation that took place during the Inception Workshop (see figure 12) but required each programme manager to now look into more technical issues in their individual plans and make bold but at the same time realistic estimates of progress they will drive in the coming years.

Figure 13 (see below) presents a top-level overview of the targets after this exercise. Further details on targets and indicators per impact, outcomes and outputs are available in annex 7. Targets are accumulated totals of expected results, based on individual country planning and assessment of the context within which the WEA programming will take place. Targets have been calculated on the basis of the joint planning and ambition setting as well as individual team member's reading of the context and partners with whom they will work.

Figure 13: Targets for Impact, Outcomes and Outputs



6.4. 3-year Work Plans for the WEA Programme – Regional and Countries

The 3-year workplans for the regional component and for the country level implementation are attached in Annex 9. In the following are short overviews of planning progress in each of the seven programme countries and at the regional level.

It is important to understand the distinct regional and national responsibilities of the WEA team. The regional team will focus mainly on vision guidance, mobilize regional and global partners and/or unleash new resource opportunities, develop regional aligned assets for specific outcome areas and lead the coordination of the 'Big Rock' ideas.



WEA Regional

Key Achievements of the Inception Phase

1. A clear vision has been established for the programme with four key cross-regional work streams ('Big Rocks').
2. (Multi-country) 'Big Rocks' defined – The WEPs Activator, The Women Entrepreneurship Accelerator, The Garment Industry Disruptor, and The Movement Creator.
3. WEPs related assets were mapped and assessed and a policy review linked to the WEPs was conceptualized. New tools and policy review will be delivered to support implementation in countries in the first quarter of 2020.
4. A strong and diverse team and clear working principles have been put in place to ensure the most efficient and impactful leverage of resources across the region.

Top Priorities for 2020

1. Deliver ASEAN + China + India Policy Review with clear recommendations.
2. Lead the implementation of the four region-wide 'Big Rocks' in strong collaboration with the countries.
3. Formalize regional partnerships (i.e. Invest in Women, Amfori, UNDP, ILO, and others) and enable resource mobilization to further strengthen the WEA programme.

Consultations

Investing in Women, ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN), Amfori, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE), Women's World Banking, Oxfam, The DO School, BSR, BoP Inc, Techsauce, DragonFly, UNDP, ILO, ESCAP, UNCDF, and ADB.



WEA China

Key Achievements of the Inception Phase

1. Alignment with the regional vision, informing a clear vision for the WEA programme in China.
2. Explore potential partnerships to build as part of the programme in China.
3. Understand the companies' motivation and concerns about signing WEPs, based on the WEPs pilot training conducted in March 2019 and the follow up activities.

Top Priorities for 2020

1. Conduct WEPs linked policy review in China to contribute to the regional policy review, followed up by policy dialogue in China.
2. Define challenges and needs of women entrepreneurs, empower them through capacity building and increasing their access to big companies, accelerators, social impact funds, etc.
3. Encourage 60 companies to sign WEPs and implement at least one Principle.

Consultations

European Chamber of Commerce, ILO China, Amfori, Mulan Club, Shaan'xi Women and Children's Development Foundation, Embassy of Sweden, China National Textile and Apparel Council (CNTAC), China Enterprise Confederation, Chengdu New Economy Committee, Shenzhen Women and Children's Development Foundation, and more.



WEA India

Key Achievements of the Inception Phase

1. A detailed work plan for 2020 developed in line with the vision and mission of the WEA Programme and implementation team recruited and functioning full time.
2. Mapping and analysis of existing programmes and initiatives on women's entrepreneurship, participation and leadership in the corporate sector as well as policy frameworks initiated to identify programmatic and policy advocacy priorities.
3. Partnership MoU finalized with Global Compact Network India for WEPs adoption and implementation in Corporate Sector and traction established with big brands in garment/textile sector.

Top Priorities for 2020

1. Initiate the WEPs Activators through formal strategic partnership with Global Compact Network India (GCNI) and industry associations, leveraging their wide network of corporate sector companies and existing initiatives to deepen WEPs implementation with existing and new signatories.
2. Convene big brands/networks in textile/garment sector (such as H&M, M&S, NEXT, Amfori etc.) to promote gender equal supply chains and implementing WEPs under 'Garment Industry Disruptor' 'Big Rock'.
3. Innovate Women Entrepreneurs Accelerator ('Big Rock') through 'Investor Consortium' initiative in partnership with UNDP, Niti Aayog/ Government for India for capacity building of entrepreneurs

Consultations

Global Compact Network India (GCNI), UNDP, Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), OXFAM India, Amfori, FairWear Foundation, NEXT, H&M, Shop Direct, Shahi Exports, and Niti Aayog/Government for India.



On 15 November 2019, a signing ceremony for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between WeEmpowerAsia and the Global Compact Network India (GCNI) was held. The MoU was co-signed by

 Photo: UN Women India



WEA Indonesia

Key Achievements of the Inception Phase

1. A broad stakeholder consultation undertaken among representatives from government, donors (incl. the EU), agencies that implement women's economic empowerment programmes, companies, NGOs, start-up assistance organizations, investor networks, fin-tech companies, and academia, which has informed the WEA Indonesia work plan and mapped implementing partners.
2. Partnership established for promotion of the WEPs in Indonesia with Investing in Women/IBCWE and Indonesia Global Compact Network (IGCN) with shared vision and plans for collaboration incl. the WEPs Working Group, a learning platform for companies on good practices in advancing women's empowerment and gender equality in business.
3. Mapping of companies who are interested in signing the WEPs and starting the implementation of the Principles with technical assistance from the WEA programme.

Top Priorities for 2020

1. Contribute to the policy review led by WEA at regional level; identify policy reform and implementation needed in Indonesia; and, based on that, conduct policy advocacy.
2. Localize WEPs assets based on regional and global tools to engage companies and carry out WEPs training, specifically the WEPs Activator.
3. Start implementation of 'Big Rocks' at country level by mapping companies and champions for the WEPs Activator innovators and engage with accelerators and potential investors to support women owned business through the Women Entrepreneurship Accelerator.

Consultations

Indonesia Global Compact Network (IGCN), Indonesia Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (IBCWE), Aksi Nusantara, and Angel Investment Network Indonesia (ANGIN). Indonesian companies such as Kumul, Sorabel, Kreavi, Gojek, Bekraf, Telkomtelstra, KOPERNIK, Simona, KLOB, and Grab.



WEA Malaysia

Key Achievements of the Inception Phase

1. Mapping of key stakeholders in Malaysia and in-country consultations during two missions to Kuala Lumpur (incl. one joint mission with EU Delegation Bangkok)
2. Discussions undertaken with a number of potential partners in Malaysia to explore collaboration on activities and events in Malaysia.
3. First champion identified (to be further discussed).

Top Priorities for 2020

1. Formalize a partnership with UN Global Compact and /or organizations like the Stock Exchange to lead on implementation of the WEPs.
2. Conduct a policy and landscape review in the SME spaces and build clear programmatic recommendations.
3. Potentially formalize a partnership with 'Safe and Fair' and 'Lead Women' to work on sexual harassment in the workplace and contribute to pass the SH Policy (tbc)

Consultations

EUMCCI, Malaysian-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, LeadWomen, 30% Club, Sisters in Islam, UN Global Compact Malaysia, AWEN Malaysia, Bursa (Malaysia Stock Exchange), Ogilvy Malaysia, iOli Communications, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, UNFPA, and others.



WEA Philippines

**Key
Achievements
of the Inception
Phase**

1. Key consultations and conversations with select, strategic partners and stakeholders involved in the women's economic empowerment work both in the Philippines and ASEAN.
2. Mapping and scoping planned to deepen overview of different involvements, interests and landscape both in the private sector and women entrepreneurs setting.
3. Have signified intention to be involved in the NAP development and drafting with the Commission on Human Rights and now in discussion with NGOs and CSOs working on it as well.

**Top Priorities
for 2020**

1. Promotion of a gender inclusive National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights and/or Inclusive Business Bill/Law.
2. Identification, training and developed champions, advocates and leaders promoting, adapting and implementing the WEPs.
3. Supporting women entrepreneurs to better manage businesses and level up market access through trainings and gender inclusive financing/funds capital access.

Consultations

PhilWEN, AWEN Philippines, Investing in Women/Philippines Business Coalition for Women's Empowerment, Makati Business Club, UN Global Compact Philippines, Filipina CEP Circle, Filinvest Mall, Commission on Human Rights ESCR Center, OXFAM Philippines, Department of Trade and Industry/Government of the Philippines, and more.



WEA Thailand

**Key
Achievements
of the Inception
Phase**

1. Successful partnership established with ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN) Thailand.
2. Initiated a network of tech and other entrepreneurs for further collaboration.
3. Explored relationships with the European Association for Business and Commerce (EABC), EU member embassies and the UN Global Compact for future partnerships.

**Top Priorities
for 2020**

1. Mapping of Thailand's top 3 industries namely jewelry, tourism and SMEs sectors.
2. Setting up of sector specific multi-stakeholder working groups in the priority sectors.
3. Organize investor consortium workshops to bring together women entrepreneurs, service providers and impacts investors.

Consultations

AWEN Thailand, UNGC, EABC, DTAC, Techsauce, Ooca, Social Giver, UNDP Thailand



WEA Viet Nam

Key Achievements of the Inception Phase

1. Clear vision created and inputs secured to develop work plan for WEA implementation in Vietnam.
2. Linkages, synergies, and resource mobilization explored with programmes such as ILO/ IFC Better Work Viet Nam, ILO/ OECD Responsible Supply Chains in Asia, Vietnam Business Coalition for Women's Empowerment (Investing in Women), and Fast Retailing.
3. Complete team and working principles are in place to ensure efficient implementation.

Top Priorities for 2020

1. Women entrepreneurs will be given skills and knowledge, as well as linked to network of entrepreneurs and larger companies (potential buyers).
2. Private companies will be strengthened to advance gender equality through implementation of the WEPs.
3. Capacity of trainer of trainers will be built, focusing on trainers from chambers of commerce and business associations working in support of women's entrepreneurship development.

Consultations

Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC), Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Viet Nam Business Council for Sustainable Development (VBCSD), VCCI Viet Nam Association of Women Entrepreneurs (VAWE), Vietnam Business Coalition for Women's Empowerment (VBCWE) (Investing in Women), and Fast Retailing Corporation

07

Communication and Visibility

Given the importance of timely, clear and effective communication and visibility for advocating for the objectives the WEA programme and the results of the WEA programme, the Programme Management Team will ensure that activities implemented have a strong communication component from the conception phase up until their implementation and monitoring. Communication and visibility will be embedded in the overall implementation of the programme both at country and regional level. The communication and visibility component will also be included in the reporting of programmatic interventions as applicable.

7.1. Communication and Visibility Strategy

An interim Communication and Visibility Strategy was included with the original project document and has now been further developed and detailed during the inception phase. The Communication Specialist Consultant, who is supporting the first year of the implementation of the WEA programme, has developed a Communication and Visibility Strategy – annex 12 – based on consultations with the WEA teams in the countries, incl. a mission to Indonesia in September 2019, and with the Programme Management Team in Bangkok.

Communication was also on the agenda during the Inception Workshop, and especially the Movement Creator 'Big Rock' will be closely linked to the communication activities, ensuring mobilization of champions to support the messaging and outreach of the WEA programme.

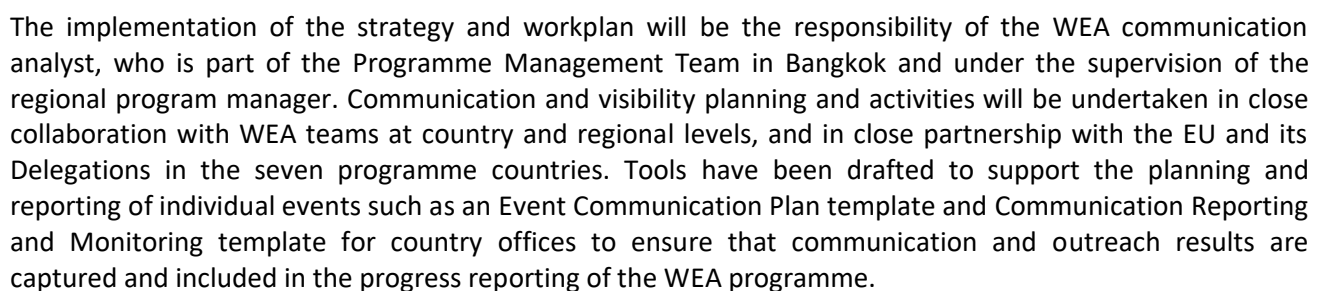
The Communication and Visibility Strategy is aligned with the EU's regional and country-level communication strategies to ensure a common voice and clear messaging for larger outreach and impact.

7.2. Communication Objective of the WEA Programme

The overall communication objective is to drive and support public visibility and awareness-raising of the programme, its activities and impact, with the aim of engaging strategic target audiences. Specific objectives are:

- To maximise and support evidence-based communication and advocacy of 'the business case' for women's economic empowerment in Asia that can be replicated and scaled up;
- To support the dissemination of capacity building opportunities for women-owned businesses and entrepreneurs;
- To facilitate networking and information-sharing among women entrepreneurs and relevant stakeholders on policies, best practices and potential partnerships for women's economic empowerment;
- To increase awareness and visibility around the Women's Empowerment Principles among business leaders in Asia;

- A branding exercise has also been carried out, aligned to the renewed branding of the WEPs and the branding of the two sister programmes (see programme logo below). A set of assets has been established to support a clear visual communication of the WEA programme.



08

Monitoring and Evaluation

The WEA programme is being implemented in seven countries and overseen and managed from the regional level. It has a complex set of outputs and activities spread over three distinct outcome areas with some existing synergies but also with an agreed approach by the WEA programme managers to be innovative and catalytic in implementing the programme. To ensure a full grasp of progress and emerging results on all levels and to capture lessons learned from the implementation process, the WEA programme will put robust monitoring and evaluation practices in place, following the requirement and guidance of UN Women's Results-Based Management policies and other programme management guidance and the EU's Partnership Instrument Monitoring System (PIMS).

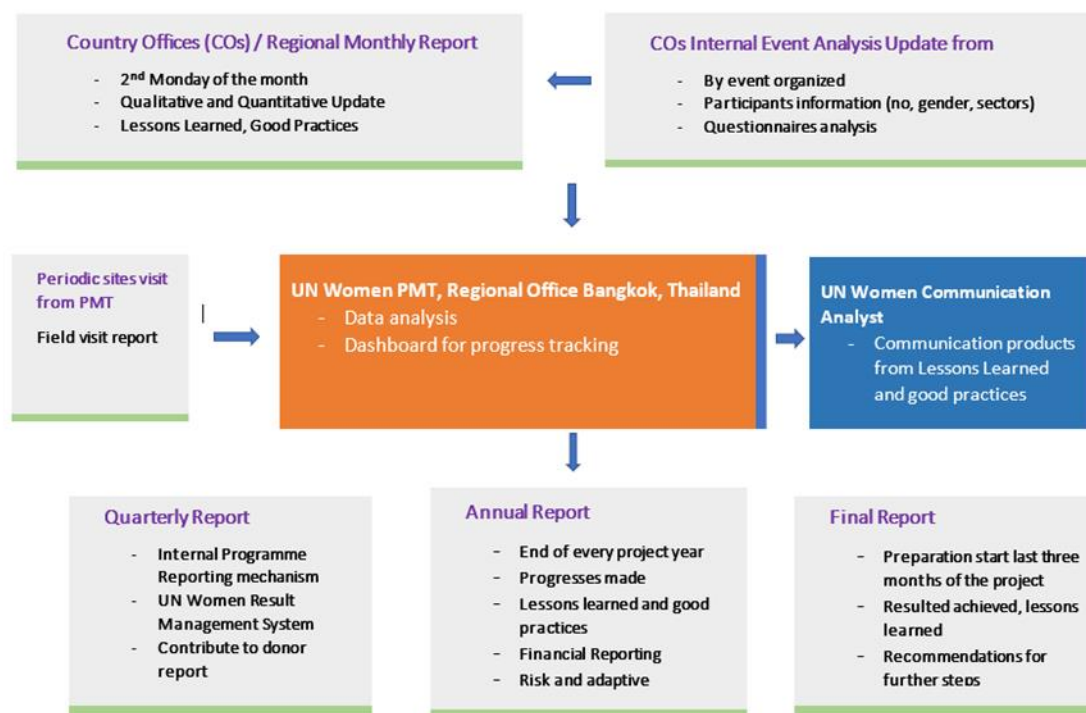
The monitoring and evaluation officer is on board as part of the Programme Management Team in Bangkok and new tools and instruments are being developed and tried out as the programme has entered its full-fledged implementation phase in the last quarter of 2019.

As part of the detailed 3-year work planning that has been undertaken in the inception phase, targets have been set for impact, outcome and output level to guide the monitoring and reporting of the progress of the WEA programme. An overview of monitoring, review, evaluation and reporting was laid out in the original programme document and has been further detailed in the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (see annex 10).

8.1. M&E Processes and Roles

To ensure the efficient compilation of information from the seven countries and the regional level so that programme achievements (progress made towards the outcomes and outputs, lessons learned and good practices) are collated and documented, the WEA Programme Management Team has developed an internal monitoring process, with indication of roles, responsibilities and regularities per the below chart.

Figure 14: WEA M&E Processes and Roles



The chart recognizes the complexity of the regional programme while also presenting a clear roadmap to secure a systematic collation and processing of data including an important link to knowledge creation and development of communication assets.

Periodic monitoring visits will be part of the M&E administration during which the Bangkok-based Programme Management Team will conduct visits to the programme countries to assess firsthand progress. Field visit reports will be prepared and circulated to the Programme Steering Committee. A monitoring plan/calendar with an agreed schedule will be developed in collaboration with the country programme managers.

8.1. Monthly Monitoring

To ensure a structured and regulated monitoring that will meet the needs for data collection while also providing a useful tool for the country programme managers to inform their implementation, a WeEmpowerAsia Monthly Report has been created to capture the achievement of activities in all countries. It is inspired by a similar tool developed by the Win-Win programme in the Latin American Caribbean region.

Figure 15: WEA Monthly Report Template



[COUNTRY]
[MONTH] [YEAR]

Outcome Indicators	Annual Targets			Progress Year 1 (April 2019 – March 2020)											
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Outcome 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				Inception period											
Outcome 2.1 Number of processes related to state-level and sub-state level (bilateral, regional, multi-lateral) partnership strategies and policy dialogues, which have been influenced.				Inception period											
Outcome 2.2 Number of processes related to non-state level partnership/agreement which have been influenced				Inception period											
Outcome 3 Number of processes related to non-state level partnership/agreements which have been influenced				Inception period											

Monthly Highlight	
Resources mobilization (new partnership, cash, in-kind)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please provide monthly highlight on resource mobilization in this box and please update the accumulative resources mobilized in the next page
Main Highlight during the reporting period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Major challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Issues to follow up/ Lesson learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Any cross-cutting issues/ Highlight for next month	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Page 1



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 (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

	Annual Targets			Progress Year 1 (April 2019 – March 2020)											
Output indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
Number of knowledge-based products				Inception period											

Activity 1.1.1: Apply existing and conduct new research as needed at country and regional levels and provide technical advice (e.g. reviews and assessment of the institutional, legal, economic and socio-cultural environment, compilation of good practices as well as key barriers to women's economic empowerment, focusing on women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses associations)

	Annual Targets			Progress Year 1 (April 2019 – March 2020)											
Activity indicator	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M
No indicator required for this specific activity				Inception period											

Quarter Q4 2019

Activity narrative report (monthly)

Page 3



The WEA Monthly Report (see annex 11 for the full template) will accumulate information month by month and by updating this report on a monthly basis, programme managers are collating information that will be easily ready for the annual reporting, and any other reporting or analysis. The WEA Monthly Report is being piloted for reporting on progress in October 2019, the first month after the inception phase.

8.3. Reporting and Review

The WEA programme will provide narrative and financial annual reports, which will be prepared to monitor progress made since the previous reporting. The annual reporting will report on:

- Progress made toward objective and programme outcomes, outputs and activities
- Lessons learned and good practices
- Financial reporting
- Risk and adaptive management

The schedule of the progress reporting is as follows:

- First annual report (covering 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020) to be submitted by 31 May 2020
- Second progress report is due 31 May 2021
- The Final Programme Report will be prepared during the last three months of the programme's duration (i.e. first quarter of 2022)

Financial reporting is part of the annual reporting, accompanied by a request for the next trench of the budget when expenditure has reached 70 per cent.

8.4. Review and Evaluation

A Mid-Term Review will be carried out at the end of 2020 to capture progress across the seven countries as well as at the regional level and to identify corrections if needed. The mid-term review will focus on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and timeliness of programme implementation. Findings and recommendations of the mid-term review will inform implementation during the final half of the programme.

An independent Final Evaluation will take place during the final six months of the programme. It will be undertaken in accordance with the Evaluation Policy of UN Women and will focus on the delivery of the programme's results and examine impact and sustainability of results, including the contribution to capacity development, private sector engagement, and the achievement of the economic empowerment of women in the framework of the Agenda 2030.