

Executive Committee Teleconference - Minutes

Wednesday, 6 March 2019 9:30am-10:00am EST

Participants

Executive Committee: Nancy Smyth (Canada, Chair), Yasmine Sherif (ECW Director), Dean Brooks (INEE), Justin Van Fleet (Representative of the Chair of HLSG), Maria Agnese Giordano (GEC), Randi Gramshaug (Norway, on behalf of Camilla Fossberg), Rudolf Huber (Germany), Kerstin Holst (UNESCO), Tomas Lundstrom (SIDA, on behalf of Anna Rosendahl), Nilse Ryman (GPE, on behalf of Padraig Power), Eline Ruisendaal (Netherlands), Joseph O'Reilly (SCF), Ben Sadek (Plan International), Margriet Schreuders (Dutch Postcode Lotterie), Emma Spicer (DFID, on behalf of Alicia Herbert), Sandra Georges El Hadi (Lebanon, on behalf of Fadi Yarak)

Observers: Dana Amr (Dubai Cares), Alice Birnbaum (Canada), Zahra Boodhwani (Canada), Lisa Bender (UNICEF)

ECW Secretariat: Nasser Faqih, Zeinab Adam, David Hartstone, John Solecki, Graham Lang, Li Peng

Apologies: Annica Floren (European Commission), Nina Papadopoulos (USAID)

1. Welcome and Roll Call

- The Chair opened the meeting and noted that there was one MYRP proposal on the agenda for approval by ExCom today. The proposal was based on a comprehensive needs analysis, seeking to fill the gap between the shorter-term priorities outlined in the humanitarian response plan and long-term efforts of the MOEHE. It had gone through an extensive review process and was endorsed by both ECW Secretariat as well as the ExCom Interim Review Panel.

The Chair informed that UNICEF, Save the Children and UNESCO will stay on the call but will abstain from the decision, due to conflict of interests as they were among the grantee/implementing partners of the programme.

2. MYRP Palestine

- The Director thanked ExCom for being available for this call and for sharing comments in advance. She mentioned that United States has no objection on the condition that no U.S government funding can be used towards this proposal.
- She stressed the importance of in-country leadership (government) in this programme and noted that given the difficult situation on the ground, the ECW investment is to reach out to the children in the areas most impacted by the conflict and where the Palestinian Authority is unable to reach. She highlighted the involvement of donors, and specifically thanked Norway and DFID for their active support in the field. She also underscored the partnership with Palestinian Ministry of Education, UNDP, UNESCO, UNRWA, Save the Children and the development group in country.
- ECW Senior Advisor reassured the comprehensive review process in developing this programme and emphasized its complementarity to current interventions and resource streams, addressing Humanitarian-Development Nexus and focusing on access to inclusive quality education and safe learning.
- The Chair opened the floor for discussion:
- Norway expressed their readiness to approve the proposal and appraised its strong engagement in Palestine and the good quality of the documents. Norway raised a few points to be taken into consideration during the implementation stage, focusing on 1) ensuring there is no overlap between the mandates and activities of the five grantees; 2) open and transparent process to select sub-grantees and implementing partners, and why some NGOs were selected over others; 3) ensuring that the use of ICT tools purchases under this programme is well documented; 4) how

gender and disability issues will be addressed; 5) ensuring coordination with the Ministry on purchases of vehicles under this programme; 6) ensuring consistency across programme components on age groups targeted.

- SIDA also voiced its support in approving this proposal and raised a question about whether small funding amounts for filling the funding gap are sufficient to address the nexus and advance development. SIDA also noted that by excluding the government from receiving funding, there is a risk of losing them as a partner. Finally, SIDA expressed expectations that the concerns raised by the review panel should be thoroughly addressed in the implementation of the program.
- DFID welcomed this proposal and appraised enormous work to get to this stage. DFID noted the absence of a strong result indicator on quality of education and learning and underscored the need for proper monitoring and evaluation regarding teacher training and measuring learning outcomes. DFID also raised the concern on inputs on computers and tablets and stressed that those should be re-evaluated to ensure value for money. In addition, DFID stated that it is waiting internal clearance for disbursing DFID funds to Gaza (UNRWA), adding that this is normal procedure. This confirmation is expected in the coming days.
- Save the Children sought clarification as the representative of civil society, not as SCI. Save the Children inquired about the reason of seeking approval of the first two year's resources but not the third year, and how the decision was made regarding the amount to contribute to the overall envelope, any calculation formula and tools used to influence the decision.
- United States provided written feedback of no objection to this proposal. The US stated that given current policies, no U.S. Government funding can be used towards this proposal.
- Germany provided written feedback to ECW and consented to the proposal and decisions. Germany stressed the importance of conveying the message to the implementing agency (UNICEF) to refrain from supporting activities, including the elaboration, printing or acquisition of textbooks. This is to avoid reputational damage related to repeated and publicized criticism against Palestinian textbooks. In addition, naming of beneficiary schools needs to be acceptable for donors and all shareholders and in line with the UN core value of neutrality.
- Written feedback was also received from European Commission. EC approved the decision and made comments in relation to provision of ICTs (tablets/computers to schools) and leadership role and ownership from the Ministry. EC noted the risk of investing in technology without a sufficiently well thought through plan for how it will be used and how to get VFM. To achieve better learning, it is also important to ensure teachers' training and sufficiently good content/learning materials. EU also inquired on what the role of the Ministry is in the overall programme and would like to be reassured that the Ministry is in the lead.
- Lebanon expressed their support of the Palestine MYRP and provided written feedback after the meeting. Lebanon is especially keen on the plan to align humanitarian response and development.
- The Director noted the ownership of the government outlined in the programme document and explained that the MYRP addresses the most vulnerable children and youth in areas the government has difficulties to access and thus requires international support. She noted that ECW uses 'direct execution modality' for all its investments rather than "national execution modality," which is designed specifically for crisis contexts. She further explained that it was in-country partners who were responsible of addressing comments and ECW Secretariat will thus follow up with them on the comments to ensure these are addressed.
- ECW Programme Specialist confirmed that comments will be communicated to partners in country when they move into implementation and some of the comments have been captured in the feedback matrix already. In response to the question from Save the Children on only approving funding for two out of three years, he explained that funding model for multi-year programmes was established on the understanding of the 1+1 approach, which means one-year provision of funds plus an additional year of funding predictability, given satisfactory performance and availability of funding.

- ECW Senior Advisor then addressed the question on the formula used for the funding envelope by clarifying that it was based on the formula produced by the then Senior Economist and shared previously used for all MYRP country allocations.
- The Chair asked Secretariat to re-share the formula and stated that comments are well addressed in the feedback matrix. She requested ECW to follow up on broader issues, such as tracking implementation, strengthening the alignment of nexus, moving from humanitarian to development, as well as addressing the monitoring issues. The Chair also noted that year 3 will come on stream when we reach the RM targets.
- The Chair moved on to summarize the discussion and with no objection concluded that **ExCom**
 - a) **approved MYRP proposal for Palestine. Disbursement will await final clearance from DFID on DFID funding to Gaza (UNRWA).**
 - b) **approved seed funding for years one and two of the programme in the amount of \$5.8 and \$5.9 million respectively.**
 - c) **approved the release of year one of seed funding at this time. The year two seed funding amount will be released subject to satisfactory performance of the programme.**

3. AOB

- A reminder of the next ExCom call will be scheduled late March to discuss the preparations for HLSG meeting on 11 April.
- Canada welcomed its new Minister of International Development of International Development, The Hon. Maryam Monsef.