



6th Steering Committee of the Working for Health Programme

**Virtual meeting hosted by ILO
Wednesday, 28 October 2020, 14:30-16:30**

Draft Minutes

Participants:

ILO

1. Alette van Leur, Director, Sectoral Policies Department (Chair)
2. Oliver Liang, Head of Unit, Public and Private Services, Sectoral Policies Department
3. Christiane Wiskow Health Sector Specialist, Sectoral Policies Department
4. Maren Hopfe, Junior Professional Officer, Sectoral Policies Department
5. Mateus Girafa Lachtermacher, Junior Technical Officer, Sectoral Policies Department

OECD

1. Stefano Scarpetta, Director, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs
2. Nick Tomlinson, Global Health Advisor, Health Division

WHO

1. Jim Campbell, Director, Health Workforce Department
2. Pascal Zurn, Unit Head: Health Labour Markets, Health Workforce Department
3. Paul Marsden, Lead: Working for Health, Health Workforce Department
4. Kenza Zerrou, Technical Officer, Health Workforce Department
5. Ayat Abu-Agla, Consultant, Health Workforce Department

UN MPTF Office

1. Jennifer Topping, Executive Coordinator, MPTF Office

NORAD

1. Ingvar Olsen, Policy Director, NORAD

Silatech

1. Banan Massoud, Head of Planning & Evaluation, Silatech
2. Dr. Shadi Murtada, Head of Legal, Silatech

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (observer)

1. Erika Placella, Deputy Head of Global Program Health, SDC

Meeting Minutes

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Alette van Leur.

Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda

1. The Chair opened the 6th Steering Committee meeting and extended a special welcome to Ms Banan Massoud and Dr. Shadi Murtada who were attending the Steering Committee for the first time on behalf of Silatech, as well as to Ms Erika Placella from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, who attended the meeting as an observer. It was noted that the sixth Steering Committee meeting had been organized in a virtual manner due to the global public health situation with the main purpose of providing updates on progress of work and fund disbursement. The Steering Committee would also review reprogramming and new projects proposals in the context of COVID-19. discuss and take decisions on the proposed outline for a global project on skills and engage in a strategic discussion on the positioning of the programme during COVID-19 and beyond. Documents relating to the agenda had been sent to participants three weeks prior to the meeting.
2. The agenda for the meeting was adopted.

Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting (5th meeting, March 2020)

3. NORAD noted that the decision taken during the last meeting to organize a meeting of donors potentially in Oslo or Geneva was still outstanding due to the ongoing global public health crisis. The importance to follow-up on this point was emphasized and NORAD reiterated their commitment to this.
4. The MPTF Office drew the attention to small typos in the dates of the reporting section. Some dates should be changed from 2019 to 2020.

Decision points:

- The minutes of the last Steering Committee meeting (March 2020) were adopted with the amendments discussed under point 4.
- Incorporate corrections and circulate final meeting minutes with corrections and amendments incorporated.
- Organize a call with NORAD to follow-up on the organization of a meeting of donors.

Item 1: Updates on progress of work

5. The MPTF Office briefly introduced the Working for Health MPTF Funding Framework document that had been circulated shortly before the meeting and that reflected the latest funding streams. The document represented a standard MPTF document that is updated and circulated before every Steering Committee.
 - a. Table 1 and 2 covered the income of funds (sources of funds) as well as any transfers. So far, 4.84 million dollars had been received and 2.94 million dollars had been transferred to the three participating agencies, covering also the direct costs of the fund. Currently 1.58 million dollars were available in the account for programming, which exceeded the amount under consideration for approval in this meeting.

- b. Table 3 provided an overview of the expenditures by the three agencies. The MPTF office reminded everyone again that all documents were also available on the funds gateway website.
6. NORAD asked for clarification on the low expenditure rate shown in table 3. The MPTF office explained that the figures provided were based on the official expenditure figures received from the participating organizations at the end of each year, thus, the figures reflected the expenditure rates reported to the MPTF office in December 2019. Figures on the expenditure rate for 2020 would be available in May 2021. The Secretariat reported that the more updated expenditure rate was around 39% for projects approved for 2019-2020. The expenditure rate for projects approved for 2020 was low due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, which justified the request for a no-cost extension that was circulated to the members of the Steering Committee beforehand for their approval.
 7. Silatech stated that due to an internal change in leadership they were not in a position to approve any of the suggested decision points on the agenda unless their concerns that they circulated in writing to the technical secretariat on 27 October had been addressed. In addition, Silatech informed the Steering Committee that they had put forward an amendment to the Standard Administrative Agreement (SAA) and that they could not engage in the decision process before receiving feedback on their request. Despite the open issues, Silatech assured their commitment to the objectives of the programme.
 8. WHO emphasized that the role of the Steering Committee was to advise on the strategic directions of the programme and to ensure that the implementation of the programme followed the strategic objectives. WHO was concerned that Silatech's proposals could lead to imposing conditionalities on the work and decision power of the Steering Committee. All three agencies expressed their willingness to engage with Silatech on a technical level to find solutions that address their concerns.
 9. NORAD stated that it was important to acknowledge that the W4H Programme was a Multi-Partner Trust Fund which differed in terms of processes for approval from bilateral funding agreements between agencies and donors. Decisions on topics such as the no-cost extension were not subject to individual donors but rather relied on a common decision taken by all members of Steering Committee. NORAD emphasized that the idea of an MPTF was to allow for more flexibility and to not prevent implementation of projects based on individual conditions by donors. With this in mind, NORAD approved the no-cost extension.
 10. The MPTF office, in their advisory role to the Steering Committee, advised that the standard role for Steering Committees of funds was to approve the strategic directions - on such matters as adjustments of timelines, overall outcomes, the results framework – and to ensure that the projects being approved were in line with the strategic framework of the programme. In case of questions related to the technical content on the project level, the Steering Committee approved the projects in principle, providing that any issues raised were addressed at the technical level. That action had been taken to this end needed to be confirmed via email to MPTF when submitting the final project proposals.

Decision points:

- The no-cost extension was approved in principle, pending action taken to address the issues raised by Silatech at a technical level. A brief update on the actions

taken at the technical level would be given during next Steering Committee meeting.

Item 2: Concept notes

11. As decided at the last SC meeting, approval of project proposals would be done virtually, on no-objection basis, within 5 working days. The technical secretariat accordingly had submitted proposals for reprogramming in the context of COVID-19 and new country projects for virtual approval. For reference, the technical secretariat provided a brief overview on the proposals again under this item. The proposals included three types of concept notes
 - a. **proposals for reprogramming of projects (budget neutral)** -> sent out to SC members for virtual approval by no-objection on 2 Oct 2020;
 - b. **proposals for reprogramming of projects (request for additional funds)** -> sent out to SC for virtual approval by no-objection on 12 Oct 2020
 - c. **proposals for two new country projects** -> sent out to SC for virtual approval by no-objection on 12 Oct 2020
12. NORAD asked for clarification whether the proposals for budget neutral re-programming related to budget allocations within each country project or whether they would include shifting of funds among different country projects. WHO confirmed that the overall budget allocations per country project would not change. Due to the ongoing pandemic, there had been some savings in country projects for example due to a reduction in travel or in-person meetings. The technical secretariat was seeking approval to use parts of the funds for activities related to COVID-19 response as requested by countries, including the development of a mobile application on workplace safety in health facilities.
13. The MPTF office confirmed that usually MPTFs operated with some flexibility that allowed the technical secretariat to shift budget lines provided the agreed outcomes would still be achieved without consulting the Steering Committee for their approval. A paragraph to clarify this point would be part of the discussion in item 4 of this meeting.

Decision points:

- The proposals for reprogramming of projects (budget neutral), for reprogramming of projects (request for additional funds), and for two new country projects were approved in principle, pending action taken to address the issues raised by Silatech at a technical level.
 - ILO, as chair of this meeting, would complete the necessary forms for the approved proposals under items 2.1. & 2.3 of the agenda and submit to the MPTF office.
14. OECD introduced the proposed project outline for a global product on skills. It builds upon the strengths of all three agencies and aims to address skill needs in the health and social care workforce to strengthen the resilience of health systems. If approved by the Steering Committee, the technical secretariat would develop a detailed concept note and circulate it for virtual approval on a no-objection basis.
 15. NORAD supported the proposal and encouraged the secretariat to develop it into a full concept note. The secretariat should ensure that the proposal linked to the work done under the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All Financing accelerator and the work the African Union was doing on sustainable financing.
 16. WHO shared the latest Policy Brief by the UN HLCP Inequalities Task team on the topic of [COVID-19, Inequalities and Building Back Better](#) which identified building stronger, equity-oriented health systems as their number one priority. Wording used in this report

around decent work, skills and equity-oriented health systems was directly taken from the Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth, which constituted strong support for the work the W4H Programme was doing.

17. ILO emphasized the great opportunity of this project to link in ILO's work and tools on youth employment and skills.

Decision points:

- Agreement was reached that the technical secretariat would proceed with developing a full concept note which will be sent to the Steering Committee for virtual approval on a no-objection basis.

Item 3: Working for Health, COVID-19 response and beyond

18. ILO, WHO, OECD and the MPTF office provided a brief overview of their organizations COVID-19 response and priorities. Due to time constraints preventing further discussion of the topic, it was agreed that the three agencies would prepare a one-page document each highlighting the most relevant documents and work for the COVID-19 response which would be shared with the members of the Steering Committee via email for information.

Decision points:

- ILO, OECD and WHO to prepare a one-page document each providing a brief overview of their organizations COVID-19 response and priorities. The documents will be compiled by ILO and shared with the members of the Steering Committee via email for information.

Item 4: Updates of the Terms of Reference and Operations Manual

19. The technical secretariat asked the members of the Steering Committee to consider an additional paragraph 67 in the Operations Manual to allow for the previously mentioned flexibility for allocation of funds.

20. NORAD asked for clarification whether the suggested flexibility of 25% would apply to the overall budget or to the budget per project per year. In addition, NORAD suggested to change "of the overall budget and when the revision includes a change of project document objectives, workplan or duration" to "of the overall budget and/or when the revision includes a change of project document objectives, workplan or duration".

21. The MPTF office confirmed that the typical flexibility for those funds lies within 25% of the overall budget allocations which are normally within a budget year. The language could be tightened to reflect that "approval of the Steering Committee is not required if the revision includes a change that is less than 25% of the overall budget per project per year and/or if the change does not imply a change to the objectives of the workplan or duration". These were adjustments that did not change the purpose of the project or have implications on timelines.

Decision points:

- The suggested addition of a paragraph concerning reprogramming in the Operations Manual was approved provided the language would be revised to add clarification as suggested in point 21.

22. The MPTF Terms of Reference and the Operations Manual stated that there was a limit of 2 donor representatives in the Steering Committee. With Switzerland a third donor is joining the programme who requests a seat at the Steering Committee. It was suggested to consider changing the ToRs and Operations Manual to allow for 3 donor representatives at the Steering Committee meeting. Once more donors joined the programme, donor representation on the Steering Committee had to be organized among the donors.
23. The MPTF office mentioned that there was no hard rule concerning the overall number of donor representatives on Steering Committees. It was important to ensure the balance between efficiency and inclusion to allow the Steering Committee to stay functioning.
24. NORAD in principle welcomed the inclusion of a third donor in the Steering Committee but emphasized the need to keep the balance between donors and participating agencies. Once more donors join the programme, a mechanism to organize donor representation needed to be in place.

Decision points:

- A proposal for wording to change donor representation from 2 to 3 in the Steering Committee will be circulated virtually. Members of the Steering Committee will submit their feedback on the suggested change in writing.

Item 5: AoB

25. WHO provided information on a recent decision taken by their Executive Board to provide updates on programme implementation and recommendations for programmes before they expire during the World Health Assembly. Following this decision, WHO is expected to submit a report on the W4H action plan 2017-2021 and the W4H programme and MPTF to its Executive Board by the end of January 2021. WHO will circulate a draft proposal for ToRs for an independent contractor to conduct a review of the relevance of the 5 Year Action Plan for Health Employment and Inclusive Economic Growth (2017-2021) and the effectiveness of its implementation through the ILO-OECD-WHO Working for Health Programme to the members of the Steering Committee for virtual approval by no-objection in the next weeks.
26. NORAD informed that their third and last installment for the programme had been made and that they are also in the process of reviewing the fund. NORAD will follow the review WHO is proposing and will add specific elements that NORAD would need for their review to avoid duplication of work.