

End Term Review of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 (PoA)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005 - 2015 (PoA) provides the framework within which the Commonwealth contributes to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. It is aligned with global frameworks, and reinforces the Commonwealth's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment in the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Millennium Development Goals and United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

As part of the PoA mandate, member countries and the Secretariat are required to establish mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on their progress in implementing the PoA. The rationale underlying this requirement is that a results-based monitoring and evaluation mechanism will assist both member countries and the Secretariat to effectively chart progress, learn lessons, share experiences, identify priority issues and make informed decisions to improve policy and practice for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment across the Commonwealth.

To guide the monitoring process, including identification of key indicators and establishment of a baseline, the Secretariat facilitated the formation of a **Commonwealth Gender Plan of Action Monitoring Group (CGPMG)**. The CGPMG, established in 2005, is comprised of a rotating core of 21 heads of Commonwealth National Women's Machinerys (NWMs) and five representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from all Commonwealth regions. A strategic review of the performance, governance and accountability of the CGPMG was carried out during 2013/14 and in March 2014 members agreed to shift the focus of the group from monitoring to accountability.

In 2009, under the supervision of the CGPMG, the Commonwealth Secretariat (hereafter referred to as the 'Secretariat') embarked on a **Mid Term Review (MTR)** of the PoA covering the five year period 2005-2010. The aim of the MTR was to assess progress made by both Commonwealth countries and the Secretariat in implementing the PoA's key recommendations and identifying persistent challenges and gaps. Priority issues requiring attention were highlighted. The key MTR data collection tool used was a survey questionnaire. As there was an uneven quality of responses to the survey, conducting meaningful analyses was a challenge. Consequently, to reduce the data collection burden placed on often under-

resourced NWMs, the Secretariat opted to lead PoA monitoring through desk-based research.

In 2012, a **Baseline Assessment Report** on the status of gender equality and women's empowerment in Commonwealth countries was produced and 2004 was identified as the PoA baseline year. The Executive Committee of the CGPMG met in June 2012 to consider the baseline report, and based on data availability agreed on a revised set of nine quantitative indicators supported by eight qualitative indicators to guide PoA in case studies and Country Action and Results Submissions. Country Action and Results Submission reports outline the actions taken by member states in advancing gender equality goals in their respective countries as well as the results of those actions.

At the same time, an **Illustrative Trends Analysis** focusing on women's political development in the Commonwealth and an **Illustrative Case Study** on monitoring and evaluating the PoA were produced and endorsed by ministers at the Tenth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (10WAMM) in June 2013.

In March 2014 the CGPMG and NWMs endorsed a **Commonwealth Gender Accountability Framework** which monitors the methodology, commitment levels, investments and transformative results around women's and men's consciousness, access to resources and opportunities, informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices and formal laws, policies and accountability. This is being used by the CGPMG to assess country level progress on PoA implementation and provide constructive feedback to member countries. In March 2015, the CGPMG at its 13th Meeting endorsed the framework for the **End Term Review (ETR) of the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015**.

2. PURPOSE OF ASSIGNMENT

The PoA ends in 2015 and the Secretariat has been mandated to undertake an independent ETR of the PoA to assess the current status and trends in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Commonwealth since 2005.

The purpose of this review is to assess the current status and trends in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in the Commonwealth since 2005, highlighting the policies, practices and mechanisms that have been successfully used to implement the PoA and recommend lessons and strategic priorities moving forward.

Specifically, the ETR will:

1. Assess the extent to which Commonwealth member countries have advanced gender equality and women's empowerment goals against the four critical areas of the PoA during 2005-2015 using the nine quantitative indicators. Proxy indicators will be used, where data is unavailable.
 - Gender, democracy, peace and conflict
 - Gender, human rights and law
 - Gender, poverty eradication and economic empowerment
 - Gender and HIV/AIDS
2. Review, analyse and conduct a meta-analysis of available data to present trends in gender equality and women's empowerment in the Commonwealth from 2005-2015 by drawing on international, regional and national gender data/analyses and identify cases from which lessons can be learnt.
3. Assess the extent to which the support from the Secretariat (and other partner organisations) has contributed to member states progress in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment goals in the PoA.
4. Identify issues, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of PoA, both by the Secretariat and the member states, that can be utilized in the design and implementation of future work in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment.
5. Review and analyse member states Country Action and Results Submissions and case studies which are being documented under a separate consultancy and identify best practices for review and follow-up during the ETR.
6. Review PoA monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms, including the role of the CGPMG and recommend results based monitoring and reporting mechanisms for Commonwealth gender priorities post-2015.
7. The ETR is integral to realising the aims of the Commonwealth on gender equality and mainstreaming as enshrined in the Commonwealth Charter, the PoA and the Secretariat's institutional Gender Equality Policy and will recommend gender equality and women's empowerment priorities for the Commonwealth post-2015, taking into account the Commonwealth Charter, mandates from Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM) and the Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2013/14-2016/17.

3. END TERM REVIEW REPORT FRAMEWORK

The final draft of the ETR report will present a gender sensitive analysis of trends, policies, practices and mechanisms that bring out a comprehensive picture of

Commonwealth countries' implementation of the PoA. The report will outline key issues, challenges and lessons and present recommendations on the future strategic direction for gender equality in the Commonwealth, and will include best practice examples of PoA implementation by Commonwealth countries and the Secretariat.

In order to facilitate the ETR process, a framework for the ETR report was produced in February 2013, using a gender analysis and the RBM approach. The framework assessed i) the implementation of the PoA ii) the monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms for the PoA, including the role of the CGPMG and iii) case studies and country profile reports. It highlighted that information for a number of the quantitative indicators may not be fully available and proposed that the ETR provides an analysis of trends broadly in the areas defined by the nine indicators and macro level analysis of change using Gender at Work model (Figure 1). The framework was endorsed by ministers at 10WAMM and members have already submitted Country Action and Results Submissions. In March 2015, the CGPMG at its 13th Meeting endorsed the final framework for the ETR.

During 10WAMM ministers agreed that moving forward, the Commonwealth member countries would agree key Commonwealth gender priorities in the post-2015 Development Agenda and focus on developing mechanisms to implement and monitor the targets and indicators. The ETR report will be key in helping identify these priorities for the Commonwealth.



Figure 1: Gender At Work model

4. SCOPE OF CONSULTANCY

The review will cover strategies/actions taken by the member governments and the Secretariat in the implementation of PoA between 2005 and 2015. Based on the assessment findings, the study is expected to propose both strategic and operational recommendations that would facilitate the implementation of Commonwealth gender priorities in the post-2015 Development Agenda and suggest mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

5. METHODOLOGY

The Consultant will include the following key steps, but not limited to, in the conduct of the evaluation for information collection, analysis and feedback during the review.

- Review and research of all pertinent records and data related to the implementation of the Gender PoA by the member governments, Secretariat and other organizations.
- Prepare, organise and coordinate a brief but focused gender sensitive impact survey of the relevant stakeholders associated with the PoA.
- Interview the relevant Secretariat staff (past and present) in Divisions associated with the implementation of the PoA.
- Interview selected stakeholders- governments, programme partners, collaborating institutions, and project beneficiaries- engaged in the implementation of the PoA, through field visits and electronically/ telephonically.
- Drawing upon cases studies currently being documented by the Secretariat under a separate consultancy, the Country Action Report Submissions and the results from the impact survey- identify and document best practices in the implementation of the PoA by the member states and the Secretariat.
- Undertake any additional activities as may be agreed with Strategic Planning and Evaluation Division (SPED) and the Gender Section of the Secretariat in order to enable the proper execution of the review.

6. DELIVERABLES AND TIMEFRAMES

This consultancy will provide the following deliverables:

1. An inception report with an evaluation (review) framework, including work plan and methodology (**July 2015**)
2. Draft ETR report with analysis of progress, trends and best practices in the implementing of the PoA by member states and the Secretariat. The report will include an analysis of issues, challenges and lessons learned in the implementation of PoA and recommendations on strategic priorities and monitoring mechanisms moving forward (**November 2015**)
3. Final ETR Report incorporating all feedback and comments (**February 2015**)
4. Presentation of the Final ETR Report to the Annual NWM and CGPMG Meeting (**March 2016**)

The CGPMG will provide feedback and comments on the drafts of the ETR report which will be circulated to them in November 2015. All feedback and comments from the NWMs will be received by January 2016 following which the ETR report will be finalised in February 2016. This will be presented to the NWMs and CGPMG at their meetings in New York in March 2016 for their endorsement and

recommendation to the 11th WAMM in August/September 2016 (date to be confirmed).

The deliverables must be submitted to SPED electronically as a Microsoft Word document as per the time frame specified against them. The draft (and final) ETR Report must be no more than 50 pages, excluding all annexes.

The copyright of the ETR Report shall belong to the Commonwealth Secretariat.

8. LOCATION

The consultant(s) will need to travel to:

- The Secretariat office in London, UK for inception meetings and presentation/ discussion of the draft reports and recommendations.
- The annual NWM and CGPMG meeting in New York, 2016 to present the final ETR report.
- Country field visits, as agreed with the Secretariat, for documentation of best practices, interviews with stakeholders and validation of findings

Any other relevant work is to be undertaken at the consultant(s)' normal place of work and there is no provision for any other travel.

9. SCHEDULE AND LEVEL OF EFFORT

The review is planned to commence in May/ June 2016. It is anticipated that up to 75 working days will be appropriate to complete the review, including agreed field visits to member countries for validation of findings, interviews with stakeholders and documentation of best practices.

The ETR Review will be coordinated by the Evaluation Section of SPED with technical inputs from the Gender Section in the Office of the Secretary General. It is expected that the consultant(s) will work closely with the above Secretariat Divisions during the review.

10. CONSULTANCY REQUIREMENTS

The consultant(s) should demonstrate the following:

- Substantive knowledge and experience (over 10 years) in the area of gender equality and women's empowerment and experience in undertaking similar reviews and evaluation studies.
- Demonstrated experience in undertaking evaluations of development assistance programmes.

- Ability to generate, extrapolate, synthesize, analyse and package complex mega-data across multiple countries and sectors including developing economies.
- Excellent communication skills, both spoken and written in English, including experience in the production of comprehensive reports for international/inter-governmental institutions, and delivery of development messages to a diversified audience.
- In-depth knowledge of Commonwealth policy priorities on gender equality and women's empowerment and experience of engaging with Commonwealth countries.
- In-depth knowledge of the post-2015 Development Agenda and priorities in the Commonwealth.