

FEDERAL PROGRAM FOR WOMEN

(AR-0231)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BORROWER AND GUARANTOR: The Argentine Republic

EXECUTING AGENCY: National Council of Women (CNM), Office of the President of the Republic

AMOUNT AND SOURCE: IDB (OC):US\$ 7.5 million
Local counterpart funding: US\$ 7.5 million
Total:US\$15.0 million

FINANCIAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Amortization period: 25 years
Grace period: 3 years
Disbursement period: 3.5 years
Interest rate: variable
Inspection and supervision: 1%
Credit fee: 0.75%
Currency: United States dollars from the Single Currency Facility

OBJECTIVE: The objective of the proposed program is to enhance the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and programs, in order to bring long-term improvements to the situation of women in the country.

DESCRIPTION: The program consists of two components: (i) institutional strengthening and (ii) support for local initiatives.

Component I: Institutional strengthening
(US\$9.8 million). This component will provide the CNM and the Provincial Women's Offices (AMPs) with the political, technical and management capacity to review, propose, formulate, monitor and evaluate public policies and programs from a gender perspective. It includes funding for the following three subcomponents.

a. Institutional strengthening for the CNM
(US\$1.9 million)

This subcomponent will provide funding for technical assistance and training needed to strengthen the technical areas of the CNM ("promotion and training", "technical assistance", "communication, information and dissemination"), its executive management, and its policy-setting bodies, the Board of Directors and the Federal Council.

b. Institutional strengthening for the AMPs
(US\$6.9 million)

The objective of this subcomponent is to overcome institutional weaknesses, both those **common** to all AMPs and those **specific** to each province, by enhancing their political, technical and management capabilities.

The "**Institutional strengthening modules**" include training and advisory workshops for formulating and monitoring provincial equity policies and plans and **sector** programs, jointly with other provincial government entities and CSOs. It will also help to strengthen negotiation and leadership capacities and the development of communication plans and strategies. To enhance *technical and management capacities*, funding will be provided for: (i) training workshops on fund raising strategies and techniques and the preparation and design of project proposals; (ii) technical assistance to the AMPs for setting up a strategic planning system; and (iii) opportunities to exchange experiences.

Technical assistance and training for the AMPs will be designed to take account of the sector policy priorities of each province, e.g. rural women, indigenous women, female unemployment and domestic violence. Assistance will also be provided for the implementation of the strategic plan.

c. Support for the National Women's Information System (SNIM) (US\$900,000)

The objective of this subcomponent is to enhance access to, and dissemination of, information needed to formulate and monitor public policies and programs from a gender perspective, nationally and provincially. The CNM will be the entity responsible for development and coordination of the SNIM.

Support will be directed at: (i) encouraging the circulation of and access to information among institutions and users at the regional and national levels, using a networking strategy (email or Internet); (ii) promoting the decentralization of the system, while maintaining comparability nationally, but encouraging evaluation and diagnostic from the regional and provincial perspectives; (iii) using new communication **networks** to facilitate the exchange of experiences, coordination of activities and integration of sector and regional perspectives, while optimizing the use of resources and the effectiveness of activities; and (iv) promoting and supporting the development of indicators and methodologies for preparing diagnostics and evaluations from a gender perspective, among institutions responsible for gathering, producing and

disseminating socioeconomic data (e.g. INDEC, SIEMPRO).

Component II: Support for local initiatives

(US\$3.0 million). This component is intended to fund proposals from organizations of civil society, including academic entities, and from other government sectors, to complement the efforts at institutional strengthening in the Provincial Women's Offices. Support will be provided for: (i) research and studies in priority areas at the provincial level; (ii) evaluating the impact of social programs from a gender perspective; (iii) sensitizing senior managers and/or officials to gender issues and equal-opportunity plans; and (iv) training and technical assistance in formulating, executing and evaluating projects from the gender perspective, directed at public and non-governmental entities.

**CONSISTENCY WITH
BANK STRATEGY
FOR THE COUNTRY
AND SECTOR:**

The proposed program is consistent with the Bank's country strategy, which focuses on three basic areas: (i) **reducing poverty and raising living standards** through actions to enhance the quality and coverage of social programs; (ii) **deepening and consolidating the modernization of the State** at the federal level, and decentralizing responsibilities to the provinces and municipalities; and (iii) **raising productivity and competitiveness** in the tradable goods sectors. The program will promote activities and interventions that will contribute to raising the quality of life among lower-income women, encouraging them to participate and organize themselves, by strengthening public and private entities responsible for their welfare and for promoting a gender focus in social policies and programs. As well, the program will support decentralization and coordination of efforts to enhance the status of women in the provinces and municipalities.

Moreover, the program is particularly consistent with the Bank's policy for women in development and for promoting gender equity, which is aimed at enhancing the participation of women in the development process, both as agents and as beneficiaries, and helping governments to build a gender focus into national policies.

**ENVIRONMENTAL
AND SOCIAL
ASPECTS:**

This operation is not expected to have any negative impacts on the environment (paragraph 4.12). According to various studies and evaluations public policies and programs that target women have a high rate of socioeconomic return. For instance, studies show that worker training programs involving gender considerations enable women to break out of the circle of poverty insofar as they are able to gain access to better jobs and consequently higher salaries, with a considerable impact on the health and education of their families (paragraph 4.7).

The activities of the program will better coordinate efforts between offices for women at the central and provincial level and public agencies for social and economic development, thereby heightening the impact of their efforts on the country's most vulnerable population groups, in which women who are poor are overrepresented. According to recent studies, in Argentina, a growing number of very poor households are headed by women. Gender inequity is most critical amongst the most vulnerable population groups, a situation reflected in access to work and in unequitable salary levels, adversely affecting women in the country (paragraph 4.15).

BENEFITS:

This program will improve the capacity of the CNM, national ministries and provincial governments to design strategies and policies for targeting public programs at the neediest segments of society, and will thus contribute to reducing poverty and promoting greater social equity. The program's emphasis on civil society, by promoting coordination between among CSO and public sector activities and fostering among such organizations a more pro-active role on behalf of women, is also intended to help increase social equity.

In addition, the program will provide the public and private sectors with an information system and data collection methods that will enhance the knowledge base on the status of women throughout the country. This information is an essential tool for helping the various sectors to work to resolve not only problems that affect women specifically but also those that affect vulnerable groups more generally, and that require a closer focus of attention.

RISKS:

The result of the institutional strengthening activities financed by the program will depend in large part on the technical profile of the human resources within the AMPs and the facilities available to them for participating in the program. To minimize this risk, it is planned that the provinces taking part in the pilot stage will serve as focal points within their region, so that they can help those that are institutionally less developed and less experienced. Similarly, institutional strengthening of the CNM is aimed largely at enhancing its capacity to provide support to the provinces.

Since changes in government administration may lead to the loss of officials already trained under the program, mechanisms have been introduced to allow academic institutions and CSOs to help by offering training at the local level. As well, the program will strengthen and improve working links between the CNM and the national sector ministries, and between the AMPs and the provincial ministries. This will help to develop technical and management capabilities

within the beneficiary jurisdictions for transmitting experience and information to new technical personnel as they are added.

**SPECIAL
CONTRACTUAL
CLAUSES:**

Conditions precedent to the first disbursement:

(i) Evidence that the National Executing Unit (NEU) has the technical and administrative personnel needed to start up the program (paragraph 3.4); (ii) evidence that agreements have been signed with at least four of the provinces that will participate in the pilot phase (paragraph 3.10); (iii) entry into force of the Operating Regulations (paragraph 3.12); (iv) an agreement signed with SIEMPRO on behalf of the Secretariat of Social Development on providing statistical information to the National Women's Information System (paragraph 3.30); and (v) submission of the first AOP (paragraph 3.44).

**POVERTY TARGETING
AND SOCIAL SECTOR
CLASSIFICATION:**

Consistent with the requirements of the Eighth Replenishment Exercise (AB-1704, paragraph 2.13), the program falls under the category "social equity and poverty reduction", to the extent that it will help to modernize the State by strengthening the public entities responsible for policies and programs to promote such equity. With respect to paragraph 2.15 of that document, however, this program cannot be classified as a poverty-targeted investment (PTI). The planned activities are in fact directed at strengthening the public sector and will not, in principle, have a direct impact on poverty. It is expected nevertheless that over the longer term, the economically more vulnerable sectors will be the prime beneficiaries of the institutional strengthening efforts for women's affairs offices in the country. Incorporating a gender perspective into public programs, especially social programs, will provide greater focus for their activities. For example, the provincial diagnostic results suggest that the most common problems facing poor women are those of unemployment, employment instability and lack of access to training. By enhancing the ability of the AMPs to assist ministries and secretariats to build a gender perspective into their programs, the project will help to expand the effectiveness and coverage for such programs, and hence will help to reduce poverty among provincial households (paragraph 4.14).

**EXCEPTIONS TO
BANK POLICY:**

None

PROCUREMENT:

Goods. In accordance with the Bank's policies, where resources from the Bank are being used and the contracting entity is in the competitive sector, international competitive bidding will be conducted for the procurement of goods in amounts equal to or greater than the equivalent of US\$350,000. The

Bank's Country Office will perform ex-post evaluations on a sampling basis for procurement of goods in amounts of less than US\$50,000, with an ex ante review of the first three procurement orders. This project is not expected to entail any construction works.

Consulting services. In accordance with the Bank's policy, in the case of contracts for amounts greater than US\$200,000, international competitive bidding will be undertaken. The Bank's nonobjection will be required for all contracts. Once the first annual report has been analyzed and compliance with Bank policies has been verified, the Country Office may amend the ex-ante review system. In this case, the nonobjection requirement will be retained when the amount of the contract exceeds US\$50,000, in the case of consulting firms, and US\$25,000 in the case of individual consultants.