



GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN DFAT'S AID PROGRAM

GOOD PRACTICE NOTE

1. OVERVIEW

This good practice note sets out DFAT's strategic objectives for gender equality and women's empowerment and the main entry points through the aid management cycle. It sits beneath DFAT's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy as practical guidance for aid management. It supports staff to implement Australia's development strategy *Partnerships for Recovery: Australia's COVID-19 Development Response*, which commits the Australian Government to maintaining Australia's strong support and advocacy for initiatives to enhance gender equality and address gender-based violence, and to invest in gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Australian Aid supports gender equality and women's empowerment through a twin-track approach:

- 1) **Integrating gender equality into all DFAT's aid investments (gender mainstreaming)**, regardless of sector and area of focus. To support gender mainstreaming, Australia requires all new investments to include a gender equality outcome, regardless of sector. They must also meet the OECD DAC minimum criteria for gender equality to be classified as a Principal or Significant objective.¹
- 2) **Targeted investments** are gender-focused. They tackle persistent gender-related challenges where progress is slow, and challenge harmful social norms.

DFAT's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy establishes three priority areas:

- Enhancing women's voice in decision making, leadership and peacebuilding
- Promoting women's economic empowerment
- Ending violence against women and girls

These priorities are mutually reinforcing and require efforts to address gender norms to achieve lasting, transformative change.

¹ The minimum criteria for an investment to have gender equality as the principal or a significant objective are set by the OECD DAC. Gender equality is considered a significant objective where it is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the investment. The investment, in addition to other objectives is designed to have a positive impact on advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs. Gender equality is considered the principal objective where gender equality is the main objective of the investment and is fundamental to its design and expected results. The investment would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective. The minimum criteria are set out in the AidWorks DAC Sector Gender Theme Quick Reference Guide. DFAT requires new investments valued at \$3 million and over to include at least one gender equality outcome. Exemptions automatically apply to investments in a limited number of categories, as outlined in the Aid Programming Guide.¹



There are specific measures in the performance framework for *Partnerships for Recovery* which measure progress on gender equality (sexual and reproductive health, violence against women, and economic empowerment) and gender mainstreaming (percentage of investments effectively addressing gender issues).

2. CHECKLIST FOR AID MANAGEMENT

Gender equality must be considered at all stages of the aid management cycle – in policy and direction setting, planning and design, implementation and monitoring, performance reporting and evaluation. Entry points include:

Policy and Direction Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Does the CRP draw on gender analysis (existing or new) to inform the understanding of the context and priorities? ✓ Were gender equality issues addressed in other analyses undertaken, e.g. political economy analysis; poverty analysis; constraints to growth analysis? ✓ Does the CRP identify gender equality as part of each CRP objective integrated in other priorities or as a stand-alone objective? ✓ Do the performance benchmarks include gender equality outcomes or outputs in a significant way, where possible at program as well as policy level? ✓ Do the performance benchmarks and mutual obligations use sex, age and disability-disaggregated data and/or gender indicators? ✓ Does the forward pipeline identify investments that promote gender equality? ✓ Does the Performance Assessment Framework use sex, age and disability-disaggregated data, and quantitative and qualitative indicators related to gender equality to monitor the performance of the program?
Concept and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Does gender analysis (existing or new) inform the investment concept and design? ✓ Was gender expertise used during the concept preparation/ design mission/development of the design? ✓ Do the investment concept/ design clearly specify whether and how diverse groups of both women and men will participate and benefit equally? ✓ Does the concept/design include at least one gender equality outcomes (End of Program Outcome or Intermediate Outcome)? ✓ Are indicators measuring changes for women or changes in gender status included in the monitoring and evaluation framework? ✓ Has the concept/design articulated a coherent and explicit approach and strategies to promote gender equality? ✓ Has the concept/design identified and made use of entry points within existing systems and policy frameworks of the partner(s)? ✓ Has the design considered the impact (intended and unintended) that it could have on women's status and included strategies to Do No Harm? ✓ Does the budget include an allocation for activities promoting gender equality, including human resources? ✓ Does the initiative work with others to maximise gender equality outcomes?



Risk management and Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is gender equality addressed in the risk matrix? ✓ Are gender equality issues identified in the safeguards assessment, particularly for children and indigenous groups, or those at risk of resettlement? ✓ Are the gender equality deliverables clearly outlined in the scope of services, or agreement, and financed? ✓ Do the position descriptions include responsibility for addressing gender issues (not just the gender adviser but also the Team Leader and Specified Personnel, including monitoring and evaluation advisers)? ✓ Does the scope of services of contracts explicitly require gender equality deliverables?
Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is collection and analysis of sex, age and disability-disaggregated data planned for, and are there gender sensitive indicators in place for monitoring and evaluation? ✓ Is the implementing partner's performance on addressing gender equality being monitored as part of the monitoring and evaluation framework? ✓ Are sufficient resources available to collect and assess sex, age and disability-disaggregated and gender equality data? ✓ Does the evaluation assess how well the investment performed on promoting gender equality and detail lessons learned?

3. MEASURING RESULTS AND EXPENDITURE

DFAT monitors performance on gender equality through assessing investment quality and expenditure.

3.1 INVESTMENT QUALITY

Under the performance framework the Department tracks the percentage of investments effectively addressing gender issues in their implementation through the Investment Monitoring Review (IMR) of DFAT investments above \$3 million.

In rating gender equality performance, IMRs consider whether:

- analysis of gender quality gaps and opportunities substantially inform the investment
- risks to gender equality identified and appropriately managed
- the investment is making progress as expected in effectively implementing strategies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment
- the M&E system collects sex-disaggregated data and includes indicators to measure gender equality outcomes
- there is sufficient expertise and budget allocation to achieve gender equality related outputs of the investment
- partners are increasingly treating gender equality as a priority through their own policies and process as a result of the investment

Evidence shows that good performance on gender equality is built on:

- early analysis of gender equality issues,
- timely access to technical support and resources for gender equality during implementation
- strong leadership and prioritisation of gender equality issues when implementation does not go as expected.



3.2 EXPENDITURE

DFAT reports gender equality focussed expenditure to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Reported expenditure excludes core payments to multilateral organisations, departmental costs of running the aid program and Australian ODA delivered by other government agencies. DFAT does not have an expenditure target.

The [DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker](#) is used to track expenditure in AidWorks. Expenditure by investments marked as having gender equality as a significant or principal objective is counted as gender equality focussed aid and reported to the DAC, in DFAT's Annual Report and Performance of Australian Aid Report. Additional information about the criteria used for gender equality to be considered a principal or significant objective is outlined in the [DAC Sector Gender Theme Quick Reference Guide](#).

4. FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

The Support Unit for Gender Equality (SURGE) includes a panel of gender advisers in different sectors who can provide technical assistance on gender equality across the program cycle. To access the panel and for further assistance on gender equality integration please contact the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch at gender.equality@dfat.gov.au.

