



GENDER EQUALITY IN MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND REPORTING

GOOD PRACTICE NOTE

1. OVERVIEW

This Good Practice Note helps DFAT staff integrate gender equality into monitoring and evaluation and ensures adequate attention to gender equality in reporting. 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.

There are specific measures in Tier 2 of the performance framework for *Partnerships for Recovery* which allow us to measure progress on key gender equality issues (sexual and reproductive health, violence against women, and economic empowerment) and in Tier 3 which will allow tracking of effective gender mainstreaming (percentage of investments effectively addressing gender issues).

Gender equality is central to economic and human development. Equal opportunity and treatment for women and men supports economic growth and helps to reduce poverty. Gender equality is critically important to achieving other development objectives and to improving development effectiveness. It is important in its own right.

Integrating gender equality into monitoring and evaluation and reporting is crucial to make sure DFAT has visible evidence to track and report on an investment's performance on gender equality and to establish which approaches to gender equality are most effective and under what circumstances. DFAT's results on gender equality need to be robust, and this requires evidence for the results we claim. It is not sufficient to collect evidence. Evidence needs to be explicit and visible in program reporting and used to guide programming decisions.

*Ensuring **sex disaggregated data** is collected and reported is a **basic minimum standard** in monitoring and evaluation to ensure programs and investments can report on benefits of DFAT's aid program that reach women and girls. To measure a program's contribution towards gender equality, **gender-responsive indicators** are frequently required.*

This Good Practice Note is based on [DFAT's Monitoring and Evaluation Standards](#), and relevant chapters of the [Aid Programming Guide](#).



2. CHECKLIST

Checklist to assess attention to gender equality in monitoring and evaluation and reporting.

- Ensure that the program logic or Theory of Change clearly articulates how gender equality gaps will be addressed
- Investments may either mainstream gender or **have an explicit gender equality objective**
- Collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data and report on differences in participation and access by men and women as a minimum standard for monitoring and reporting
- Include in the M&E framework specific indicators that measure progress towards gender equality for each activity objective and for reporting on progress implementing the program's gender strategy
- Include both quantitative and qualitative indicators
- Consider the use of targets and/or quotas for women's participation to encourage accountability for action
- Make sure that the M&E framework adequately captures results on gender equality, paying particular attention to DFAT's priority areas for gender equality: elimination of violence against women, women's economic empowerment, and women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building, and the cross-cutting issue of addressing discriminatory social norms
- Ensure gender equality indicators are captured in the baseline prepared for the M&E framework, and are included in ongoing data collection and reporting and shared with DFAT
- Ensure ethical and safety considerations are put above all others in monitoring violence against women programming, and the safety of those involved is protected
- Assign responsibility, set aside sufficient funding, and prepare staff and partner organisations for collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated and gender equality data
- Adjust your approach to collecting information to make it sensitive to the different needs and constraints of men and women, and to eliminate gender biases
- Adjust your approach to take account of intersectionality and recognise that not all men and all women have the same experience.
- Contract a gender advisor to develop or review the M&E framework and to offer guidance on how to make sure gender equality results are captured and reported
- Ensure program reporting includes performance information on gender equality under each program component, as well as a separate section detailing progress against the gender strategy that includes lessons learned and good practice examples
- Build specific questions into your evaluation to identify lessons on how your investment has performed on promoting gender equality – what worked and what didn't, including for programs without specific gender equality outcomes
- Ensure sufficient gender equality expertise in evaluation teams to capture information on outcomes and results and recommend actions and learning



3. KEY STEPS

3.1 HAVE A GENDER-INCLUSIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Getting this right starts in the design process. At this stage investments will develop a **program logic** (or theory of change). The program logic sets out the outcomes the investment intends to achieve, the activities required, and assumptions. It is important that gender equality considerations are included and explicitly addressed in the program logic, and the assumptions it identifies. To ensure the program logic mainstreams gender equality it should draw on gender analysis. This will help ensure that the program logic underpinning the design examines gender gaps and identifies how the proposed investment can address these gaps. It can be gender analysis conducted by others, or an analysis undertaken by DFAT (See [Gender Equality in Design Good Practice Note](#)).

The program logic forms the basis of the **monitoring and evaluation framework**, informing the selection of indicators to assess progress of the investment. Regardless of the degree to which the investment is expected to contribute to gender equality, the monitoring and evaluation framework needs to track the intended and unintended gender equality dimensions of the investment. This is crucial. It ensures the investment can track achievements towards gender equality and women's empowerment, identify actions that need improvement, as well as address unintended consequences and risks. Ensure the design allocates sufficient human and financial **resources** for monitoring and evaluation to measure gender equality impacts, because getting the necessary data can take extra effort.

The monitoring and evaluation framework will include indicators at the level of investment outcomes (what it intends to achieve), and outputs (what actions it will do). These will be qualitative and quantitative.

Where possible, **it is recommended to have an explicit gender equality objective**, measured at the outcome and output levels, using qualitative and quantitative methods, as attention to gender equality in design is linked to more effective strategies to address gender gaps during implementation.

When it comes to the task of **selecting indicators**, it is important to measure how the investment is promoting equality between women and men, girls and boys. At a basic level, this should track how different groups of women and men, boys and girls, participate and access resources and assets. Indicators that track women's and girls' participation in decision-making and their agency and realisation of their rights are also necessary. We should be seeking progress towards gender equality, where feasible, against DFAT's three focus areas: elimination of violence against women, women's economic empowerment, and women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building, and the cross-cutting issue of addressing discriminatory social norms. To track progress against DFAT's three focus areas, monitoring needs to move beyond counting women, to assessing gender equality throughout the program. For example, monitoring gender-related risks and monitoring how gender norms and social relations may impact on an investment's performance and vice versa.

Given the complexity of issues involved in addressing gender equality, **think in innovative ways** about how to measure gender equality results. It is good practice to use **a variety of instruments**, to capture the multiple elements of complex social change processes. Since progress towards gender equality is often non-linear, **leave some flexibility to capture results (positive or negative) that were not expected**. This allows the program to respond effectively to unintended effects or to build on unexpected opportunities.

It is important to remember, on some issues, such as violence against women, it is essential to put ethical and safety considerations above all else. A 'do no harm' approach needs to guide all monitoring and evaluation decisions, and the safety of everyone involved must be ensured.



If this is a DFAT contribution to a **partner-led investment**, you may find that the monitoring and evaluation is not strong enough to tell you results on gender equality. Be clear that all DFAT-financed investments are assessed each year on their effective contribution to gender equality and this needs to be included in the design and the monitoring and evaluation approach. It should be a requirement in the agreement with the implementing partner. The monitoring and evaluation systems of implementing partners may need specific attention and to be strengthened to enable, at a minimum, collection, analysis and reporting of sex-disaggregated data.

3.2 MONITOR PERFORMANCE ON GENDER EQUALITY

The second step is monitoring how the investment and its activities perform on gender equality. The base line needs to be sex-disaggregated (where feasible) and to capture gender equality data. This can then be used regularly as a tool to monitor progress. Ask questions like ***are the gender equality results tracking better- or worse- over time?*** Look at the impacts on gender equality (both intended and unintended) of any activities that were designed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as those activities that did not have a gender-specific objectives. When disaggregating data, it is also important to consider intersectionality and recognise that women are not a homogenous group all having the same experience. It is also important to take account of the experiences of sexual minorities in monitoring. Partner organisations may require training and support to analyse available data from a gender and intersectionality perspective.

When **planning monitoring visits**, DFAT staff should look for opportunities to get information about the gender equality performance of the investment. Ensure the visit gives you opportunities to speak with beneficiaries. You may need to ask for permission to speak with women and men separately to enable women's voices and perspectives to be shared. Ask questions about whether women and girls are benefiting and how, and what difference this is (or is not) making. Remember men and women may well perceive progress in different ways, as will women from different class backgrounds, caste, education, sexuality, disability status, and in urban, rural and remote areas. It is important to listen to these views to understand and measure progress towards gender equality, as well as progress in general. There may be very different views of the intended and actual outcomes, reflecting different status and power in the household, community, economy, and politics. This gives you information about what is working, what is not and for whom. It will help improve the approach and work undertaken.

3.3 ELIMINATE GENDER BIAS IN DATA COLLECTION

The third step relates to eliminating gender **biases in data collection** processes. Monitoring and Evaluation practitioners may need to review and adjust methods in response to gender inequalities in the target communities or partner institutions. For primary data collection at the individual or household level (e.g. surveys or focus group discussions), asking men and women the same set of questions and comparing the answers is one way of understanding the different views of each group. It may be necessary to include additional questions aimed specifically at one group (men or women or particular groups of women and men) to investigate in more detail any gender differences in results.

In some settings, women (especially young women and girls or women with disabilities) are unable to voice their opinion at public meetings and may be prevented from attending altogether (due to cultural restrictions but perhaps also due to considerations of cost, timing, accessibility or personal safety). In such situations, it can be preferable to hold separate focus groups for women.



3.4 ENSURE REPORTING ON GENDER IS EXPLICIT AND VISIBLE IN PROGRAM REPORTING

The fourth step is to ensure that reporting on gender equality and women's empowerment progress and results is explicit and visible in reporting such as 6-monthly and annual reports. Reports should include performance information on gender equality under each program component, as well as a separate section detailing progress against the gender strategy or gender components that includes lessons learned and good practice examples. The following points should be addressed in reporting:

What progress have you made in integrating gender equality in the program?

This level of reporting is essentially the first step of the reporting process focused at the output level. It provides an opportunity to reflect on progress and challenges. It should address some of the following points:

- To what extent has the gender strategy or gender components of the program been implemented?
- Have there been any challenges to implementation?
- Are the gender strategy or gender components still appropriate and effective?
- What barriers may be hindering progress, and is there anything that can be done to address them?
- Have any new opportunities to promote gender equality and women's empowerment emerged during implementation?

This section should pay attention to reporting on how the program is implementing its work in line with DFAT's twin track and do no harm principles. For example, it should report progress of mainstreaming activities and specific activities designed to explicitly promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

What gender equality and women's empowerment results have been achieved?

This part of the report should track how diverse groups of women and men participate and access resources and assets provided by the program. It should analyse and report on indicators that track women's and girls' participation in decision-making and their agency and realisation of their rights and report, where feasible, against DFAT's three focus areas: elimination of violence against women, women's economic empowerment, and women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peace-building, and the cross-cutting issue of addressing discriminatory social norms. Programs that provide capacity building should report on how individual and organisational capacity to address gender equality and women's empowerment has improved and any policy impact. This section can also report on results related to how men have been engaged to promote gender equality and any evidence of **changes in power structures or in gender and social relations** due to the program's activities (e.g. differences in the way women and girls are viewed or treated within the household and community).

What processes and factors helped to achieve gender equality, and women's empowerment results?

Where positive or negative gender equality results have been identified, what caused or contributed to these results? For example, what are the key features of your gender strategy or approach that have contributed to the achievement of positive gender equality, and women's empowerment results?

- What steps have been taken, including research, analysis, evaluations and training, to integrate gender equality into the intervention at program and/or policy level?
- What accountability mechanisms have been put in place to ensure attention to gender equality and women's empowerment in program implementation and reporting?
- To what extent has the strategy been institutionalised into intervention management, monitoring and partner systems and processes?
- What has been done to ensure partner ownership of gender equality, and to build partner capacity?



Given the complex nature of gender equality and recognising that progress requires changes in attitudes and behaviours, and in power dynamics, reporting on the questions above is particularly important so that the investment can contribute to the evidence base about what works and what does not. This step is also particularly important for investments that are in their early stages of implementation. Where gender equality results are yet to emerge, are there any activities or outputs or internal processes, such as the above, that are designed to generate results during the life of the investment that you can report on.

3.5 GET EVIDENCE ON GENDER EQUALITY FROM EVALUATIONS

It is important to ensure that the approach to evaluation reflects the gender equality approach, objectives (if any) and performance of the investment. This should start when **evaluation questions** are identified. These questions set the scope and terms of reference for the evaluation, so it is important they include an assessment of the gender equality outcomes and impacts, even where there are no specific gender equality objectives. Where an investment was designed with no attention to gender equality, the evaluation should comment on this and consider unintended gender equality results.

In addition to reporting on gender equality performance and results, the evaluation should also assess how gender equality results have contributed to the intervention's overall outcomes and effectiveness. For example, where positive or negative gender equality and women's empowerment results have been demonstrated, how have these results (or the lack of them) influence the achievement of overall investment objectives or outcomes, effectiveness and sustainability of the investment?

When planning the evaluation, build in time into the evaluation methodology, the data collection processes and interviews, to ensure sufficient information is being collected and captured on gender equality dimensions of the intervention. Consider any gender bias that may occur in the methodology and team composition and identify strategies to address this.

Finally, ensure the evaluation identifies recommendations for review and learning that arise from the analysis of the gender equality outcomes in the evaluation, and captures case studies of good practice.

4. FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

- [DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards](#)
- [ADB 2014 Tool Kit on Gender Equality Results and Indicators](#)
- [ODE Ethical considerations for research and evaluation on ending violence against women and girls](#)
- [ODE evaluation: Ending Violence against women and girls: Evaluating a decade of Australia's development assistance](#)

For further assistance on gender equality in monitoring and evaluation contact Gender Equality Branch at gender.equality@dfat.gov.au

