



## GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES GOOD PRACTICE NOTE

DFAT investments valued at \$3 million and over must include a gender equality outcome (either end of program outcome or intermediate outcome). This good practice note provides guidance on developing quality gender equality outcomes to meet the mandatory requirement, which is a Tier 3 Indicator in the Performance and Delivery Framework.

More information about the requirement can be found in the [International Development Programming Guide](#). This note complements the [DFAT Design and Monitoring and Evaluation Standards](#), the [Gender Equality in Investment Design](#) and [Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation](#) Good Practice Notes.

**Gender inequalities are the result of unequal power distribution among groups of people. Men often have more power than women and people of diverse gender identities. Work to achieve gender equality therefore addresses unequal power relations.**

### WHAT IS A GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOME?

A gender equality outcome is a clearly defined end of program outcome or intermediate outcome which actively targets specific types of gender inequality. These outcomes aim not only to ensure that the benefits of international development are equitable, but that structural inequalities are sustainably reduced or eliminated.

STANDARD 3: Program Logic/Theory of Change of the [DFAT Design and Monitoring and Evaluation Standards](#) sets out the following definitions:

<b>End-of-Program-Outcome</b>	The desired development change among counterparts, change agents or beneficiaries that can be achieved within allocated resources and the timeframe of the investment. The EOPOs are anticipated to occur as a result of the combined inputs, activities, outputs and intermediate outcomes.
<b>Intermediate Outcome</b>	The short and medium-term effects of an investment’s outputs. Short term effects include, for example, changes in counterpart or beneficiary knowledge, attitudes, and skills, while medium term effects often reflect changes in behaviour, practice, and decisions. The achievement of a single intermediate outcome is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the achievement of the EOPO.

### GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES AND THE OECD DAC GENDER EQUALITY POLICY MARKER

DFAT uses the [OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker](#) to determine whether or not an investment is targeting gender equality, and if it is, whether it is a significant or principal objective.

Every investment must have a gender equality marker assigned during the design stage. The marker is applied in AidWorks, under Themes, for all investments.

The intersection between the policy marker and DFAT’s gender equality outcome requirement is set out below:

Gender Equality Policy Marker	Definition	DFAT requirement
NOT TARGETED (SCORE 0)	The project/programme has been screened against the marker but has not been found to target gender equality.	New designs must seek an <a href="#">exemption</a> from the gender equality outcome requirement. Designs must meet minimum standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a gender analysis has been conducted at the start of the investment and</li> <li>findings from the gender analysis have been used to ensure at minimum that the investment does no harm and does not reinforce gender inequalities</li> <li>sex-disaggregated data is collected for all indicators of people</li> </ul>
SIGNIFICANT (SCORE 1)	Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.	In addition to the minimum standards above, the design must include an Intermediate Outcome to advance gender equality; and may include an End-of-Program-Outcome to advance gender equality.
PRINCIPAL (SCORE 2)	Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective.	In addition to the minimum standards above, the design must include Intermediate Outcomes, and at least one End-of-Program-Outcome to advance gender equality.

## Gender mainstreaming

Gender equality outcomes should not be treated as ‘add-on’. In line with MEL Standard 3.6, gender equality should be embedded in the entire program logic/theory of change. This does not mean that the overarching intent or focus of the investment needs to change.

For example,

- Physical infrastructure investments can be designed to create opportunities for gender inequalities, including in the infrastructure sector, to be reduced. A relevant outcome could be: *All business cases for projects approved by the fund consider benefits, costs and risks related to gender and social inclusion, climate resilience and low carbon emissions.*
- When identifying technical assistance agendas for economic growth, the specific barriers faced by women as both participants and leaders in the economy can be prioritised. A relevant outcome could be: *National and Provincial economic plans and policies are designed with gender and social ministries and meaningfully engage with women’s organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities and local and indigenous peoples.*

## Disability and Climate Change

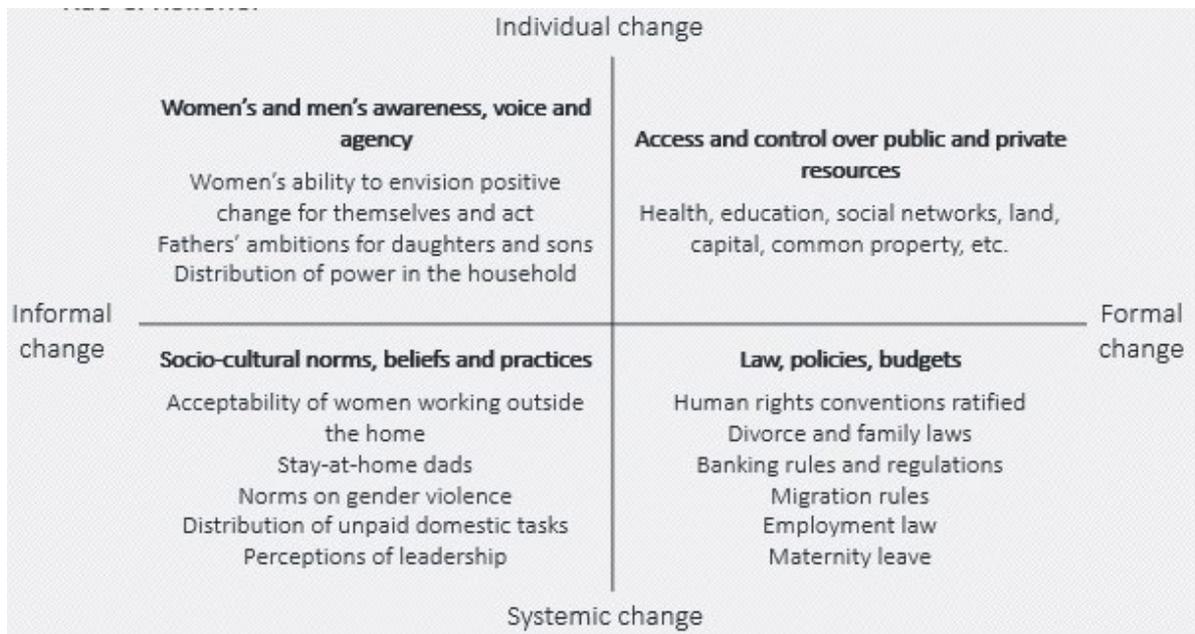
[Australia’s International Development Policy](#) identifies climate change and disability equity and rights as core issues for action, alongside gender equality. It is possible to address multiple issues in an integrated way during the design stage, through early analysis and the theory of change. This will strengthen the quality of the investment design, deliver on partner priorities and government commitments. The OECD DAC has guidance on their complementary [Policy Marker on the Inclusion and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities](#) and the [Rio Marker for Climate](#). DFAT also has a [Disability Inclusive Development guidance note](#) and guidance on [Integrating Climate Change into Australia’s Development Assistance](#), and a [Climate Change Hub](#) with a range of helpful resources.

## WHAT MAKES A GOOD GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOME

1. **Informed by GEDSI analysis** – All DFAT investments are required to demonstrate how the design was informed by gender analysis in the relevant sector or area, and DFAT recommends an intersectional approach which also analyses disability and other forms of social marginalisation. Guidance can be found in the [Gender Equality in Investment Design and Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis](#) Good Practice Notes.

Gender equality outcomes should be underpinned by evidence, including learning from successful interventions and approaches. This ensures the gender equality outcome(s) respond to the specific gendered barriers, constraints, and root causes of development challenges in the relevant location, sector and for the specific target group. The link between the situation or problem analysis and the outcomes proposed should be clear (see also MEL standard 4.11).

The [Gender At Work Framework](#) sets out different types of barriers to gender equality that an investment may address.

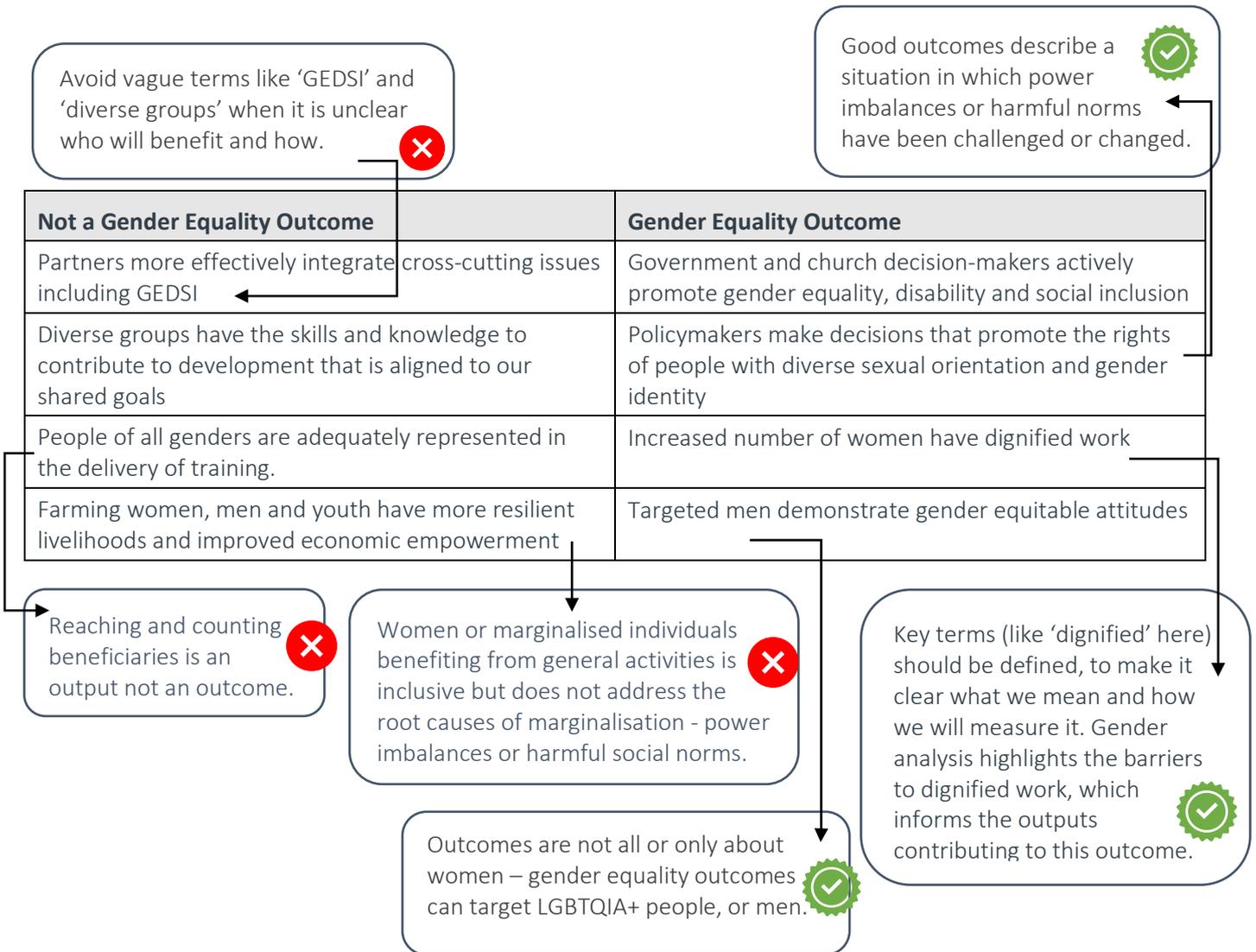


2. **Measurable and accountable** – The outcome must be clearly articulated and supported by relevant performance indicators *pitched at the right level*. End of Programme and Intermediate Outcomes are ‘below the line’, meaning that the investment is expected to deliver on these (see also MEL standards 4.2 and 5.4). The level of ambition should be aligned with the analysis and context, and with DFAT and partner priorities.
3. **Specific** – Outcomes that are too broad, vague, or that combine multiple elements are difficult to measure and demonstrate success against. They require more indicators, increasing the burden of data collection. For example, rather than *Finance Ministry staff capacity is improved*, a better outcome would be *Finance Ministry staff integrate Gender Responsive Budgeting principles in budget approval processes*. The latter statement defines who is expected to deliver or benefit, and what the expected activity, deliverable or change is.



A 2023 review of the Final Investment Monitoring Reports of nine investments with a Principal Objective to advance gender equality found that high performing investments had aspirational objectives that addressed multiple aspects of gender inequality. These objectives were balanced with outcomes that were adjusted during implementation to address the causes of gender inequality. By contrast, investments where the level of ambition was too high or lacking logical pathways between outputs and outcomes, or where intermediate outcomes were not established early on, were less effective.

## EXAMPLES AND TIPS FOR DRAFTING BETTER OUTCOMES



### Using inclusive language

Explicitly identifying target groups (men, women, boys, girls, people with diverse sexual orientation and/or gender identity, women or men with disabilities) in outcome statements is critical to show who the investment is targeting and why. This also helps identify what data needs to be collected to measure achievement of the outcome.

For example, if the gender analysis indicates that female teachers are less likely to be promoted into leadership positions, it may be useful to explicitly refer to male and female teachers (rather than just teachers), for example:

- Gender parity is achieved (or an equal number of male and female teachers are represented) on School Leadership Committees.
- A quota for leadership roles (Ministry for Education, Provincial Education Boards and Heads of Schools) held by women is established.

Using catch-all terms such as 'diverse groups' or 'people of all genders' is unhelpful. The inequalities, barriers and constraints facing different groups vary, which is why it is important to be specific about who will benefit and why. 'Women and girls in all their diversity' is an example of inclusive language designed to maintain focus on gender equality, whilst ensuring intersections with other identities – such as women with disabilities – are not neglected.

## THE DESIGN PROCESS

Before approving a design, delegates are required to check the Investment Design Document includes:

- Gender equality outcomes at the relevant level consistent with the gender equality marker
- 2 – 3 indicators against which progress and performance of the outcome (and associated activities/outputs) will be assessed, and ensure source data and information will consistently be available for those indicators.

Design documents uploaded into AidWorks are the primary source of information used to monitor compliance with the gender equality outcome requirement once a design moves into implementation. DFAT compliance with the gender equality outcome requirement is reported annually in the Performance of Australia's Development Cooperation report.

**Placing gender equality at the centre of development creates opportunities for people to thrive, making our countries stronger, more secure and more inclusive.**

*Australia's International Development Policy*

### Adaptive investment designs

Investments that do not follow standard design pathways, or are designed to be highly flexible or adaptive, are more likely to struggle to comply with the gender equality outcome requirement. **It is much harder to retrofit a gender equality outcome into a concept that did not adequately consider gender equality at the outset.**

To meet the requirement, the program logic and/or concept note (in lieu of a design document) must have at a minimum:

- An initial or indicative intermediate outcome to advance gender equality, and indicative outputs based on initial hypotheses that are tested and updated during implementation.
- At least one indicative performance indicator by which the gender equality outcome will be measured.
- A clear timeframe by which the minimum standards on gender equality will be met.

### Partner-led designs

MEL standards 4.24 and 4.27 are particularly relevant with regards to the gender equality outcome. These should (where necessary) explain the efforts DFAT has made to influence the partner-led design to deliver on Australia's gender equality policy objectives, identify any gaps in meeting DFAT's gender equality outcome requirement, and outline DFAT's strategy to ensure these gaps are addressed.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES

As work on gender equality aims to address unequal gender norms and power distribution, both quantitative and qualitative indicators are likely to be needed to assess progress towards the gender equality outcome(s). Indicator examples are in ADB's [Tool Kit on Gender Equality Results and Indicators](#).

The investment's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework and any investment-level GEDSI or [gender equality strategy](#) should be aligned. A GEDSI strategy provides clear guidance to implementing teams and partners about how GEDSI activities, policies, programs and practices will be implemented and reported on.



Consider also how you can capture case studies, lessons learned and good practice examples to strengthen the evidence and/or prove assumptions in the program logic.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch at [gender.equality@dfat.gov.au](mailto:gender.equality@dfat.gov.au). The branch has technical specialists available to provide support in developing robust gender equality outcomes for all investments, regardless of the size, context or sector.