



Gender mainstreaming guidelines for project planning

Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2017/18-2020/21: Cross-cutting outcome
Gender equality and the empowerment of women integrated in the Secretariat's policies, frameworks, programmes and projects.

PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

This guide is to help all staff understand the concept of gender mainstreaming and how a gender analysis can be used to design appropriate projects to enable staff and members to deliver the outcomes of ComSec's Strategic Plan 2017/18-2020/21 and Delivery Plan 2017/18, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2015 Communiqué and ComSec's Gender Equality Policy.

ComSec's strategy for delivering gender mainstreaming is to ensure cross-divisional collaboration on the integration of gender equality considerations into policy-making, strategic planning, project design, programme delivery, evaluation and reporting to ensure that the different needs of men and women are identified and addressed by all Divisions.

WHAT IS GENDER?

Gender is about men and women. It refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. Your gender will dictate how you are treated and valued in your society, whether and how you have access to resources, representation and power. It will differ in each country and region and is not static, it will change over time.

WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

Gender mainstreaming means assessing from the start the implications for women and men of any planned action - including legislation, policies or programmes in any area and at all levels. It means i) recognising that women and men have different needs and that development policies can affect them differently ii) understanding that women tend to have more limited access to information and more limited opportunities to participate and iii) designing projects to ensure that men and women benefit from them equally and that neither group is inadvertently disadvantaged or ignored. It is not an isolated exercise, but an integral part of the project or policy cycle. It is not an "add on" to project work but rather a technique to employ in all planning to ensure projects are even more efficient and effective. We do not expect ComSec to achieve this overnight, it is an ongoing process improving each year.

For the most part, practical gender mainstreaming is about running through a checklist of questions to ensure you have not overlooked anything or anyone. It is about asking the right questions so that you can see where limited resources should best be directed (see Annex I for gender terms and further information).

HOW DO WE GENDER MAINSTREAM?

- Collect sex-disaggregated data - data that is collected and presented separately on women and men.
- Analyse these data by using a “gender analysis” - Who is valued? Who makes the decisions? Who has a say over resources? Who is rewarded? Who has the power to act? Who is overlooked? What strategic and practical needs are being addressed or overlooked?
- Identify the obvious, less obvious and least obvious gender equality issues and gaps through an analysis of the data and through consultations with both women and men to make an appropriate diagnosis of the problems.
- Design projects that address these issues - what kind of change is required? - Legal? Policy? Cultural? Services? Personal, Political?

Five simple questions to promote gender equality in project planning

1. Have we counted all women and men? - **data**
2. Do women/girls and men/boys have a fair share? - **analysis**
3. Have both women and men been consulted? - **voice, participatory engagement and accountability**
4. Have we invested equally in women and men? - **policy, action, resources**
5. Do decision makers and those implementing have the skills, knowledge and commitment to make a lasting change? - **individual, organisational, social change**

WHY DOES COMSEC PROMOTE GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

- Article 12 of the Charter of the Commonwealth recognises gender equality and women’s empowerment as basic human rights and essential components of human development.
- ComSec serves the men, women, boys and girls of the Commonwealth and any project or policy that does not address both genders equally will be flawed and lack credibility.
- ComSec can leverage its comparative advantage to the work on gender equality.
- Members cannot afford to ignore the contributions and capacities of both men and women in all spheres. Evidence shows that equal inclusion of men and women in all aspects of development and society pays off for the country as a whole.
- Increased attention to gender equality issues will improve the lives of individual men and women, boys and girls in all their diversities. In a democratic society based on principles of social justice, each individual has the right to the best quality of life possible. Member governments have signed on to international human rights standards and have a duty to protect and promote the human rights of men and women.
- Gender-responsive interventions are about holding governments accountable for their use of public funds and for the fulfilment of their political promises. Gender mainstreaming can offer concrete mechanisms for introducing a greater degree of accountability into governance.
- Because gender mainstreaming adopts a “human development” perspective, which has the long-term objective of creating a socially just and sustainable society, gender mainstreaming is inextricably linked to ensuring sustainable growth and development.
- Gender equality is now a widely accepted marker for international donors and agencies and is therefore a requirement for building credible and sustainable partnerships.

PART TWO

WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR PROJECTS

This section takes you through each stage of ComSec's project design document (PDD) development process and provides guidance on the kind of information and analysis that you need to apply in order to ensure that your project demonstrates that it meets the needs of both men and women, boys and girls.

The notes in *green and italics* are specific pointers for areas you will need to consider.

1 Project Summary

Ensure that you reflect in this section the gender implications of the project which you have identified and address by carrying out your analysis (below).

2 Context

Background

Identify the position of men and women prior to project development with respect to participation, access and control over resources, norms and values and rights.

Questions/issues to consider

- Does the government have a statement of political will for enhancing gender equality and basic legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex? (*Constitutional law? Anti-discrimination Act? Gender Equality Policy or Strategy? Policies in each sector, policy area or domain that reflect a gender perspective? Specific policies for gender mainstreaming?*)
- How well do any laws or policies work in practice? How well are they enforced? Who has responsibility for tracking them?
- What is the division of labour between men and women at formal, informal, community and family levels?
- Who has access to and control over resources? (*Including time, information, money and economic power and opportunities, education and training, work and career, IT and communication, social services, mobility, land and productive resources*)
- What are some of the barriers to women's participation and productivity and why do they exist? (*Cultural prohibitions? Direct discrimination in legislation? Indirect discrimination in policies and services? Limited opportunities caused by low levels of education, poverty, poor health, unpaid work responsibilities? Violence against women? Confidence to speak out? Inappropriate infrastructure?*) What is the impact of these for your project?
- Is ComSec's Gender Equality Policy reflected in ComSec's operational policies and procedures? (*Human Resources Policy? Travel Policy? Procurement Policy?*)
- Does the government implement gender-responsive budgeting? (Assessing the impact of government budgets on different groups of men and women. They are not a separate budgets for women)
- What mandate does ComSec have to engage with governments and partners on gender equality?
- Does the government promote gender responsive investments with the private sector?

Problem to be addressed

Identify how your project will impact on women and men differently.

Questions/issues to consider

- Are numbers of men and women equal in terms of the project's target beneficiaries?
 - Are different values attached to women and men? Do these give rise to inequalities?
 - Do men and women have equal access to resources in order to benefit from the project?
 - How will gender stereotypes and gendered cultural and social norms and values affect men and women differently in the implementation of this project?
 - Will stereotypes and values be an obstacle for men or women in fully enjoying the benefits of the project?
 - Do men and women have equal rights to benefit from the project?
 - Will historical gaps and perceptions prevent men and women from fully benefiting from the project?
 - Does the project challenge the existing gender relations between men and women? (Division of labour, responsibilities and opportunities)
 - Does the project take into account the local contexts and realities?
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Rationale

Questions/issues to consider

- Was the need for this project identified by women or by men?
 - Who are the targets (both direct and indirect) of the proposed project? Who will benefit? Who will lose? Use sex-disaggregated data in your evidence to identify baseline and gaps for both men and women.
 - Have both women and men in ComSec, member countries and partner organisations been consulted on the problem the project is to address? Have they been treated with equal respect, as decision-makers, implementers and participants?
 - How have women been involved in the development of the project proposal?
 - What is the long-term impact of the project in regard to women's increased ability to take charge of their own lives, and to take collective action to solve problems?
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Why the Commonwealth Secretariat?

Ensure that you have considered ComSec's comparative advantage and the work undertaken by National Women's Machineries (the line ministries in countries which are directly responsible for leading on gender equality) and women's organisations in the country or region.

3. Beneficiary institutions and lessons learnt

Questions/issues to consider

- How will this project strengthen the institutions directly responsible for gender equality and women's empowerment in the country i.e. National Women's Machineries and civil society organisations?
- How will the project strengthen the ability of other ministries to gender mainstream?
- How will the project advance partnerships between National Women's Machineries and other ministries?
- How will the project bridge gaps between men and women?

Lessons learnt from previous ComSec experiences

Questions/issues to consider

- What gender gaps have you identified in this area either from ComSec's work to date or that of other organisations? (*What have been the barriers to women and men benefitting equally from past projects? Knowledge? Resources? Access? Cultural norms?*)
 - How have you addressed these in this project?
 - What practical steps have you taken to avoid reinforcing stereotypes?
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4. Gender mainstreaming

What are the gender issues in the central problem that this project aims to address? Look at the issues that you identified in Section 2.

Questions/issues to consider

- Will your project challenge current barriers to gender equality? Or will it reinforce these barriers?
 - Will any activities targeted at woman empower them? Or simply marginalise them more?
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What results relating to gender equality and empowerment of women will the project produce?

Questions/issues to consider

- Will your project result in mechanisms being established to increase participation of women in leadership roles and decision making?
 - Will your project strengthen members' capacities to eliminate violence against women?
 - Will your project result in women's increased access to economic resources?
 - Will ComSec's technical assistance and other support be more gender responsive?
 - Will policies, systems, budgets and processes have been put in place by ComSec or members for gender mainstreaming?
 - Will ComSec's organisational structures and human resources policies and procedures and practices be more gender responsive?
 - Will ComSec's communications be more gender responsive?
 - Will reporting to ComSec's governance bodies on gender equality have been improved?
 - Will performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms be more accountable for gender equality?
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What specific strategies will the project use to achieve the proposed results?

Questions/issues to consider

- Training for staff and member governments on gender analysis?
- Dedicated resources and budgets committed to gender equality projects?
- Revision and implementation of policies to reflect gender equality?
- Revision and implementation of legislation to reflect gender equality?
- Sex-disaggregated data collected?
- Partnership working with National Women's Machineries and women's organisations?
- Have you identified gender policy gaps in your current research?
- Gender monitoring structures and reporting mechanisms established/strengthened?
- Production of sector documents and guidelines on gender equality?
- Gender equality awareness raising with beneficiary institutions/agencies?

5. Collaboration

Collaborating Divisions

Questions/issues to consider

- Have ComSec's gender technical experts been consulted to ensure the potential gender implications of the project have been considered?

Collaborating Organisations

Questions/issues to consider

- To ensure credibility and sustainability have women's organisations and National Women's Machineries been involved in the design and delivery of the project?
- If the institution you are working with has not collaborated with them, ask yourself why and how this gap could be addressed.

6. Project description

Remember all strategic outcomes will have different implications for men and women which you need to address to ensure a successful outcome for both. Therefore even if the intermediate outcome you are focusing on in your project is not 3.3 (gender equality and women's empowerment) you need to still include gender specific activities, outputs and short term outcomes in your project.

7. Project description

Questions/issues to consider

- How will your outcomes address the identified needs of both men and women? If men or women are disadvantaged in the current situation, then the short term outcomes should seek to redress this imbalance.
- Do your outcomes include a broader commitment to improving gender equality and transforming institutions and attitudes that perpetuate gender inequality?
- Do your planned activities involve both men and women? Are any additional activities needed to ensure that a gender perspective is made explicit (*Training in gender issues? Additional research, Tips and Tools provided?*)
- Who will implement the project? Have these partners received gender mainstreaming training, so that a gender perspective can be sustained throughout implementation? Will both women and men participate in implementation?

8. Logical framework

Questions/issues to consider

- Do these indicators measure the gender aspects of each outcome?
 - Are the indicators sex-disaggregated and compare the situation of men to women and show an aspect of their relative advantage?
 - Are there sex-specific indicators to indicate an improvement in women's empowerment?
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9. Risk management

Questions/issues to consider

- Are there stereotypes or structural barriers that may prevent one or the other gender from fully benefitting from the project?
 - What factors might help the project to promote gender equality and what factors might hinder it? (*Is there commitment? Expertise? Knowledge? Motivation? Resistance?*)
 - How could the attitudes and commitment of the different stakeholders influence the promotion of gender equality?
 - Are your planned activities gender responsive? What needs to be revised?
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10. Monitoring and assessment plan

Questions/issues to consider

- Will both men and women be equally involved in the process of monitoring and evaluation? Will the process be gender sensitive?
 - Will ComSec gender technical experts be included in the evaluation?
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Annex I - OVERVIEW AND TERMS

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For the most part, practical gender mainstreaming is about running through a checklist of questions to ensure you have not overlooked anything or anyone. It is about asking the right questions so that you can see where limited resources should best be directed.

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TERMS

Gender Analysis

The analysis of a situation or policy that pays specific attention to existing and potential differences between men and women. Its goal is to make these often-overlooked differences visible.

Gender Equality

Everyone has equal rights and responsibilities. All human beings are free to make choices, access opportunities and develop their personal capacities without limitations based on their gender roles. It doesn't mean “the same as”, it means valuing equally the differences and similarities between men and women.

Gender Equity

Gender equity is the means to achieving gender equality. Targeted measures are often needed to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise being equals. These measures, such as affirmative action, may necessitate

different treatment of women and men in order to ensure an equal outcome. Equity leads to equality.

Gender Aware

Knowing that there are issues, differences and inequalities between women and men.

Gender Sensitive

Acknowledging differences and inequalities between women and men as requiring attention.

Gender Responsive

Responding to the different needs, aspirations, capacities and contributions of women and men by developing appropriate policies and projects.

Gender Neutral

Projects that do not challenge the existing distribution of resources, roles, responsibilities and values attributed to men and women.

Gender Transformative

Policies and initiatives that are gender responsive and challenge existing biased and discriminatory policies, practices, programmes and existing inequalities resulting in the betterment of life for all.

Practical gender needs

These respond to immediate necessities (ie increasing women's ability to access credit or providing a well close to a village to reduce the burden and risks faced by women collecting water) but they do not challenge women's subordinate position in a particular society.

Strategic gender needs

These are needs that address and question the traditional roles that women and men play in society to bring about changes in gender relations. Activities which address strategic gender needs include: a) achieving equality of legal rights such as land tenure; b) improving access to productive resources; c) enhancing participation in decision-making; d) acquiring equal opportunities in employment; e) taking up positions of power; and f) gaining the right to participate in decisions about development interventions.

Theory of change

This explains what we think we are trying to change, why we think our strategies will help us to make those changes and what kind of evidence we need to know in order to assess whether or not our strategies are working. A complete theory of change articulates the assumptions about the process through which change will occur and specifies the ways in which all of the required early and intermediate outcomes related to achieving the desired long-term change will be brought about and documented as they occur.

Gender relations

Gender is not just about interactions between men and women in the sphere of personal relationships; it is part of the social relations that underpin all aspects of life, from access to resources to the exercise of authority, from remuneration to participation in cultural and religious activities. Gender relations describe the social meaning of what it is to be a female or a male in a particular society and of its expected behaviour.

Women's empowerment

There is an increasing recognition of the centrality of women's empowerment to the success of development programmes. Women's empowerment includes their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order,

nationally and internationally. Empowered women and girls have a truly transformative role to play in their communities but they are rarely afforded the opportunities that will allow them to fulfil their potential. ComSec's work seeks to enable eliminate these obstacles for women.

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