Gender Equality in Monitoring and Evaluation

Good Practice Note

1. Overview

This Good Practice Note is to help DFAT staff integrate gender equality into monitoring and evaluation. It supports implementation of DFAT’s policy, *Australian aid: Promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability*, and the performance framework, *Making Performance Count: enhancing the accountability and effectiveness of Australian aid*, particularly the new performance target for gender equality in aid:

Empowering women and girls: More than 80% of aid investments, regardless of their objectives, will effectively address gender issues in their implementation.

Integrating gender equality into monitoring and evaluation is crucial to make sure DFAT has the 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.

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 required.

This Good Practice Note is based on DFAT’s standards for Monitoring and Evaluation, and relevant chapters of the Aid Programming Guide.

2. Checklist

*Checklist to assess attention to gender equality in monitoring and evaluation*

- ✔ Ensure that the program logic or theory of change draws on gender analysis, and reflects the opportunities to promote gender equality in the investment
- ✔ Make sure that the M&E framework adequately captures results on gender equality
- ✔ Include both quantitative and qualitative indicators to capture the number of beneficiaries and changed attitudes
- ✔ Include in the M&E framework specific indicators that measure progress towards gender equality for each activity objective
- ✔ Build into the M&E framework a combination of methods to measure progress towards gender equality
- ✔ 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
- ✔ Ensure gender equality indicators are captured in the baseline prepared for the M&E framework, and are included in ongoing data collection and reporting
✔ 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

✔ Ensure you have adequate gender equality expertise in developing the M&E framework and all M&E specialists have gender equality deliverables

✔ Engage with DFAT’s gender specialists and consider contracting 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

✔ Build specific questions into your evaluation to identify lessons on how your investment has performed promoting gender equality – what worked and what didn’t, even for mainstream 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 monitoring and evaluation for gender equality 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 program 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.

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 program outcomes (what it intends to achieve), and outputs (what actions it will do). These will be qualitative and quantitative. It is recommended to have one or more gender equality objectives in an initiative, measured at the outcome and output level, 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 women and men 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, with a view to addressing discriminatory social norms.

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 collection 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 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 improve women’s participation and empowerment, as well as those activities that did not have a gender-specific objectives. Partner organisations may require training and support to analyse available data from a gender 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 really 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 users 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 making comparisons between 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) 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, or personal safety). In such situations, it can be preferable to hold separate focus groups for women.

### 3.4 Get evidence on gender equality from evaluations

It is important to ensure that the approach to an evaluation reflects the gender equality objectives 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 programs themselves are gender blind, evaluations should comment on this and consider gender equality results.

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 assistance. 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

ADB 2014 Tool Kit on Gender Equality Results and Indicators

International Centre for Research on Women 2013 Guidance on Monitoring and Evaluation to Improve AusAID’s Response to Prevent Violence Against Women

DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards

DFAT Gender Equality Performance Assessment Framework (forthcoming)

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