



Gender equality is achieved when women and men, girls and boys, have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society.

The Gender Tool Box gathers knowledge material and method support on gender equality in the form of Tools, Briefs and Thematic Overviews.

[BRIEF]

Sida's work for Gender Equality

WHY THIS TOOL?

This tool is developed as a support to Sida and Swedish embassy staff in their work. The tool gives an introduction to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, why it is important and what it means to work for gender equality. The focus lies on gender mainstreaming in Sida's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

Sweden has a longstanding commitment to gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance. This commitment has been strengthened with the Government's Policy Framework (2016) and the Feminist Foreign Policy.¹

Sida's work for gender equality is also guided by the global legal normative frameworks, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sida's operational plan and Sida's action plan for gender equality (2021–2023).

WHAT IS GENDER EQUALITY?

Gender equality is achieved when women and men, girls and boys have equal rights, life prospects and opportunities, and the power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. Gender equality is a question of a fair and equitable distribution of power, influence and resources in everyday life and in society as a whole. A gender equal society makes use of every individual's experiences, skills and competence.

Women, men, girls and boys do not constitute homogeneous groups. Their individual ability to shape their own life is also affected by other social variables such as age, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity and religion or other beliefs.



Photo: Iza Bethdavid

By considering how gender intersects with these other identities, and how these affect each other, an intersectional analysis is carried out. By carefully listening to and understanding diverse experiences of discrimination and oppression we are more likely to react and reach transformative change for gender equality with sustainable and significant impact.

Gender transformative change

Unequal power structures, discriminatory and gender-stereotypical social norms² and attitudes affect women, men, girls and boys in all their diversity in different ways.

Girls and women suffer most of the negative impact of

¹ <https://www.government.se/government-policy/feminist-foreign-policy/>

² Social norms are shared expectations or informal rules among a set of people as to how people should behave

rigid social norms and gender discrimination. They are more likely than men and boys to experience restrictions of their freedom and mobility; have less power over their own lives and bodies; have less access and control over resources, including time use; have less decision-making power; and experience higher levels of gender-based violence and sexual harassment across their life cycles and in all contexts.

Men and boys can also experience negative consequences such as gender-based violence. Boys are, for example, more likely than girls to become child labourers. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (or queer) and intersex people experience discrimination including gender-based violence and hate crimes. Non-binary people are often under pressure to conform to certain gender norms and attitudes. All of these inequalities prevent people from reaching their full potential and contributing to society. Sida recognises that not all people are binary and work for all people's Human Rights.

What is meant by non-binary?

Non-binary is an umbrella term for people who experience a gender identity that is neither exclusively male nor female, or is in between, or beyond both.

Women, men, girls and boys, and non-binary persons can be in vulnerable or empowering situations, but they can also be actors of change in both difficult and in more favourable situations.

A gender transformative approach aspires to change inequalities. It tackles the root causes of gender inequality and seeks to change unequal power relations.

Key concepts for a gender transformative approach

Gender negative – activities that aggravate or reinforce gender inequalities and harmful social norms

Gender blind – no attention to gender, fail to acknowledge the different needs of women, men, girls and boys

Gender numbered – focus on the number [50/50] of women and men

Gender responsive – addresses different needs of women, men, girls and boys, addresses equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, but does not address the root causes of inequalities

Gender transformative – contributes to change of social norms, cultural values, power structures, and the roots of gender inequalities and discrimination

Normative guiding frameworks

Tackling gender discrimination also requires changing gender discriminatory laws and policies. Human rights of women and girls are specifically protected by conventions and declarations.

These normative frameworks and commitments should be reflected in governments policies and action plans. They are an important base for holding governments accountable and for bringing local issues to the attention of human rights bodies.

Global and regional legally binding conventions for gender equality

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention on Violence and Harassment (ILO C190).

Latin America: The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women, commonly referred to as the "Belém do Pará Convention".

Africa: The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, established by the African Union, the Maputo Protocol.

Europe: Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Other important global commitments to gender equality are expressed in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(1948\)](#) recognising women and men's equal rights; the [1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action](#); the [1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#);³ the [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#); and the [SDGs](#). Another land mark is the [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security](#) from 2000 with subsequent and supporting resolutions.⁴

WHY DOES SIDA WORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY?

Gender equality enables and drives poverty eradication and sustainable development

There is a wide international agreement that gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment are enablers and drivers of poverty reduction and sustainable development. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are central to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality is its own development goal (SDG 5) and is mainstreamed in 45

³ The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted at the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, China, 1995) <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPEA%20E.pdf>

⁴ Such as UNSCR 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122.

targets and 54 gender-specific indicators of the SDGs. **Leaving no one behind** is the guiding principle for the SDGs.

Sida works with a multi-dimensional **poverty approach** which implies that poverty not only means lack of material resources, but also lack of power, voice and respect for human rights, lack of opportunities and choice, and/or lack of human security.

Gender equality is a Human Right

Gender equality is at the very heart of human rights and a fundamental principle of the **United Nations Charter** adopted by world leaders in 1945. Equal rights of men and women, and protecting and promoting women’s human rights is the responsibility of all states. Gender equality and women’s and girls’ empowerment encompass all areas of peace, development and human rights.

Sida uses a **human rights based approach** to programming.

Development cooperation is more efficient with a gender perspective

Sida, NGOs, multilateral organisations, institutions, development banks and private companies also argue that gender equality is smart and leads to better solutions. Women, men, girls and boys have different needs, experience, interest and ideas – efficient solutions to development problems are consequently best found by involving diverse groups in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Addressing gender inequality can also support legitimacy of public and private institutions and their services, improve quality of services and goods produced, support organisational and business development.⁵

HOW DOES SIDA WORK WITH GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

To explain how Sida works with gender mainstreaming, it is first important to explain what gender mainstreaming is and when it takes place.

Definition of gender mainstreaming⁶

It is the process of assessing the implications for women, men, girls and boys of any planned action, policy or programme, in all areas and at all levels before any decisions are made and throughout the whole process.

It is a strategy for making women’s and girls’ as well as men’s and boys’ concerns and experiences a part of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes to ensure equality in contribution to and benefits from development efforts.

It is a means to achieve results, not a goal in itself.

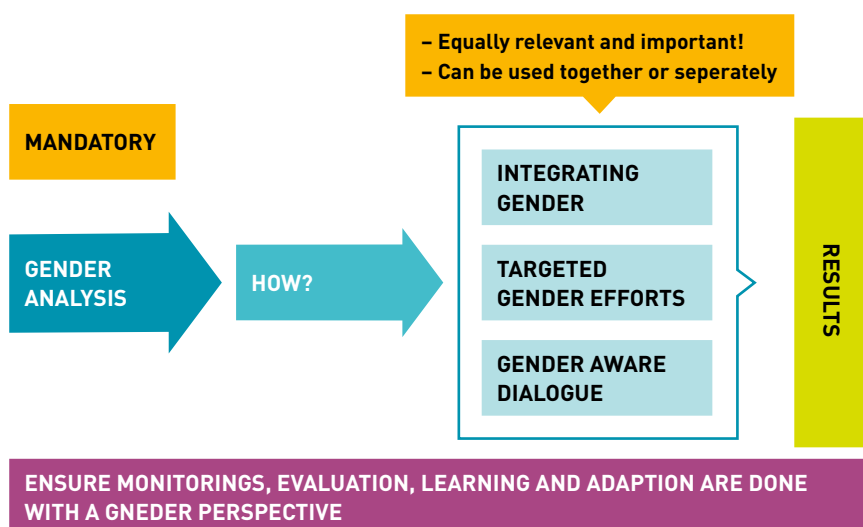
When is gender mainstreaming taking place?

Gender mainstreaming is relevant for all Sida and embassy processes such as strategy development, programming, human resource management and dialogues.

How is gender mainstreaming being done?

Gender mainstreaming in contribution management can be carried out in different steps, such as:

1. Gender analysis. Gender analysis is mandatory for all Sida contributions!
2. Identification of approaches to achieve changes (in behaviour and attitudes).
3. Identification of resources (human resources, time, money and similar) to support the change as part of the implementation.
4. Monitoring and evaluation of the changes, including learning from these and make adaptations as needed.



5 Example of numerous studies, such as International Finance Corporation (2019), “Moving Toward Gender Balance in Private Equity and Venture Capital”

6 UN Economic and Social Council (A/52/3) 1997 (extract: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/GMS.PDF>)

1. Gender analysis

Gender analysis is the starting point for gender mainstreaming.

A gender analysis should be informed by the Multidimensional Poverty Analysis (MDPA), if one has been done in the country; but a separate gender analysis also needs to be done in relation to the intervention.

What is a Gender Analysis?

A gender analysis identifies the difference between and among women, men, girls and boys regarding differences in distribution of resources, opportunities and choice, power and voice, and human security in a given context.

A gender analysis highlights specific vulnerabilities and actors for change among these groups.

The following questions are relevant for assessing if a gender analysis has been done. These questions can also be helpful for a partner organisation which is planning to conduct a gender analysis, or in the assessment of reports.

Quantitative and qualitative data: Does the contribution/organisation have gender- and age-disaggregated data and information?

Gender roles and relations: What are the gender roles and responsibilities of women, men, girls and boys, and the relations between them? How do they spend their time? Who has power and voice at work, at home, in the community and in society e.g. who makes decisions and on what? Who has been consulted and who are the actors and decision-makers?

Intersectionality: Does the contribution consider how gender intersects with other identities such as age, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, and religion or other beliefs?

Access to /control over and benefit from resources (including land, property, financial, digital, social protection, time, equipment, services, information, education, work opportunities, etc). Does it consider who is affected by, or benefitting from, the resources provided by the contribution? Does the contribution consider what types of resources women, girls, men and boys have access to / control over and benefit from?

Human security/safety issues such as gender-based violence: Does the contribution consider who lives in insecurity or suffers from gender-based violence? Where? In the household, at work, in school, on the street? Or who suffers from what kind of conflict-related violence (physical, sexual, psychological)? Who has power over their own bodies and who has not?

Social norms: What kind of gender and social norms hinder or provide opportunities for gender equality – and how do these social norms affect women, men, girls, boys, and non-binary persons /persons with other gender identities?

Normative frameworks: What international and regional legal commitments has the country signed/ratified which are relevant for gender equality? Including potential reservations, for example on CEDAW.⁷ The country's recent Beijing-report and SDG report are other sources of information.⁸ How have these commitments been implemented, such as through a national gender equality strategy? Are there any gender discriminatory laws and policies in place?

2. Approaches for change

It is imperative to be clear what kind of change – in terms of gender equality, and women's and girls' empowerment – that a contribution should lead to.

Examples of relevant questions:

- What are the gender gaps /forms of discrimination that will be addressed?
- What is the gendered behaviour, attitude or relation / lack of relation that is expected to be changed?
- Will there be any changes in laws, policies and organisational structures that will contribute to these changes?
- Who is expected to change and who will contribute to this change?
- Which approach will be used to achieve this change?

Sida has a three-pronged approach for gender equality work; these are implemented separately or in combination:

Integrated: Gender equality is a prerequisite to further women's and girls' human rights, and it contributes to achieve the main objective of the contribution. The contribution is based on a gender analysis and addresses the needs of women, men, girls and boys. It has at least one explicit gender equality objective backed by at least one gender-specific indicator. This can e.g. include that gender equality is considered in expected results, budget, human resource allocation and activities; indicators are disaggregated; and gender sensitive methods are made use of.

⁷ Reservations can be found on the website of the State parties. Reservations which were removed can also be seen to provide a historical context. Other countries' reactions to new reservations are also possible to see.

⁸ Other sources of information may be: [Universal Periodic Review](#), [World Economic Forum Gender gap reports](#), [Human development Reports](#), [OECD Social Institutions and gender index SIGI](#), [Global database on Gender-based violence by UNWomen](#), [dataset on women, business and the law by World Bank Institute](#)

Gender mainstreaming in energy efficiency in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sida has supported a Green Economic Development Energy Efficiency project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, implemented by UNDP. To mainstream gender equality, Sida required that gender-related activities and indicators were incorporated, and that monitoring procedures were gender sensitive. As a result certain areas of the contribution, such as security, well-being and lighting in public buildings were analysed and gender mainstreamed. Furthermore, awareness-raising campaigns and trainings for energy professionals are now gender sensitive and inclusive.

Targeted: The main objective of the contribution is to promote gender equality. This could e.g. include women's access to credit addressing harmful social norms and harmful practises; changing discriminatory laws; increasing access to decision-making and influence for women; and changing recruitment, retention and promotion policies to ensure gender equality in jobs and salaries and more.

Criminalisation of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Sudan

Sida has successfully supported the advocacy efforts of UNFPA, UNICEF and Plan International for a new law to criminalise FGM in Sudan.

This is an important first step and Sida's partners are now working for the implementation of an action plan to ensure that the legislation is enforced. According to a recent UN Women study, among Sudanese women aged 15-49, 87% have been genitally mutilated/cut. However, a positive change is afoot with decreased numbers – today 31% of girls aged 0-14 have been genitally mutilated.⁹

Dialogue: This approach is an instrumental part of Sida's contribution management in the preparation, follow-up and conclusion of support. Dialogue is part of advocating for Swedish values, priorities and universal norms.¹⁰ Sida has a central role to play in the dialogue as the expert agency on development cooperation of the Swedish Government.

Dialogue with partner organisations can involve aspects such as the importance of mainstreaming gender; stressing that partners have ensured broad participation in the design and monitoring of a project; and that the communication of a project reaches women, men, girls and boys by making use of different methods.

Structured gender dialogue with the World Bank

In March 2019, Sida initiated a pilot project on dialogue for normative change on gender equality with the World Bank. The purpose was to promote gender mainstreaming and contribute to a strengthening of results of the World Bank Group's work on gender equality at multiple levels. Another objective was to develop Sida's capacity and methods for dialogue for normative change.

A dialogue can also involve advocacy for the revision of a law, or to push and support an organisation to develop and implement a gender policy.

3. Achieving change

Once it is clear what the challenges and opportunities are (the analysis), and what gender mainstreaming strategies are used to reach changes (approaches), it is important to ensure that the expected change is supported by adequate resource allocation. The following issues could be raised:

- Is there adequate budgeting for gender integration and/or gender targeted activities?
- What type(s) of gender expertise is (are) needed and budgeted for?
- Is this expertise available in the work group (in the organisation, in the country, internationally)?
- Who are paid and how? Is the equal pay for equal work /work of equal value principle applied?

4. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is an ongoing exercise to see if intended changes are being achieved, what works and what does not, what can be learned and what kind of adaptations might be needed. Some important aspects to consider for monitoring and evaluation are:

- A clear results framework and budget which can be followed up. This should clearly state expected change/ results in relation to gender equality and how this change should be tracked (e.g. with gender- and age-disaggregated indicators).
- The perspectives of different groups should be included; this includes women, men, girls and boys.
- It may be important to consider who should interact with different stakeholders (considering aspects such as age, gender identity and gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, rural/urban ethnicity and religion or other beliefs).

Reports, field visits and innovative digital means to follow-up and engage with the partner and programme and other donors are good opportunities to discuss and learn more about how gender equality can be strengthened, how gender equality/inequality affects other results and for identifying strategies.

⁹ From [Sida website](#)

¹⁰ Sweden's government offices, together with Sida and other stakeholders, constitutes Team Sweden

NB – Identify key actors!

From analysis to monitoring and evaluation, it is important to consult or engage with key actors who work for gender equality in a specific context. These will likely be women's rights organisations or other civil society organisations, but may also be youth organisations or groups/organisations representing marginalised communities and interest groups, financial institutions and development banks, private and philanthropic organisations, multilateral actors and other donors. It is important not to duplicate, but work in complementarity and in partnership with other actors.

HOW DOES SIDA ASSESS ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

Gender mainstreaming is affected by the organisational set-up and capacity to carry out this work in the first place. Organisational capacity can be understood by assessing the following:¹¹

**Gender responsive leadership**

Is management enabling and driving for gender equality? E.g. by ensuring that adequate resources (staff, tools and budget) are allocated. Does the management raise gender equality as a priority for the organisation? Gender responsive leadership is key for successful gender mainstreaming.

What kind of **policies/guidelines** are in place to support gender mainstreaming? Is there:

- a formalised mandate for gender equality and gender mainstreaming?
- a policy or guidance on gender mainstreaming of activities/projects?
- a strategy /action plan to ensure that policies and procedures are implemented?

What **systems** are in place to support gender mainstreaming? Are there:

- formalised procedures to carry out /update gender analysis?
- results based frameworks designed that include gender equality results and indicators?
- monitoring and evaluation systems in place for gender mainstreaming (capturing results and challenges, leading to learning and adaptation)?

What kind of **knowledge** exists in the organisation? Is there an understanding and knowledge about:

- what gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is?
- why gender equality is important for their /our work?
- how gender equality is mainstreamed?

What types of gender transformative **communication** and outreach exist for gender equality? Are there:

- channels for internal and external communication related to gender equality?
- strategic communication messages to influence /carry out advocacy for gender equality?

What types of **resources** are in place?

- a dedicated budget for gender equality?
- gender focal points and gender experts in the organisational structures?
- tools/guidelines on gender mainstreaming?

Gender equality in organisations

Gender inequalities at organisational level can lead to discrimination in salaries, positions, work environment, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), and affect access to possibilities such as training and travel. A gender responsive leadership will ensure that policies, procedures and practices are in place to promote gender equality, diversity and inclusion.¹²

CONTRIBUTION MANAGEMENT AT SIDA**Management system (TRAC)**

Gender equality is integrated in the assessments of contributions in the "appraise and agree" stage of TRAC. It is essential to include gender equality considerations in assessment of relevance, results, risks and budget, monitoring, documentation and in conclusions of performance.

Tracking Gender equality

Sida's support to gender equality is measured through the OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker used by Sida and other OECD DAC member countries to provide

¹¹ Model developed by Nordic Consulting Group, 2015

¹² World Economic Forum, IFC, EBRD are actors with gender equality and equal opportunities on their agenda

a measure of aid allocated in support of gender equality.

All Sida contributions must be screened against the Gender Equality Policy Marker in order to track progress on work for gender equality. This screening should be applied at an early stage of a contribution and can be modified during the course of the contribution, for example as a result of a strengthened focus on gender equality. The Gender Equality Policy Marker is used according to a three-point scoring-system.

A contribution which has gender equality as the main objective is marked as principal (2), and if gender equality is an important and deliberate but not the main objective it is marked as significant (1). A contribution which does not target gender is scored with a 0. This scoring system facilitates the scoring process by providing a ‘checklist’ with minimum criteria for each category, and through these measures strengthens the comparability and accuracy of the data reported.

OECD DAC requires all contributions to have a gender analysis – irrespective of how it is marked. This means that non-targeted (0) contributions must also have a gender analysis. [Gender Equality Policy Marker](#)

Knowledge management

Sida provides capacity building to staff on gender equality through e-learning, workshops, seminars and coaching, and promotes the integration and inclusion of gender equality in thematic areas or topics.

Knowledge management also includes a continuous analysis of relevant processes at local, regional and global levels resulting in portfolio and thematic overviews, and thematic and method briefs and tools in Sida’s “[Gender Tool Box](#)”

The gender advisors at Sida’s operational departments provide guidance and technical assistance on global, thematic and geographical departments and programmes. Gender advisors at Sida’s geographical departments give continuous technical assistance/support to regional and country strategies. Sida also has a framework agreement and a help desk for gender equality which can be used for support and advice to Sida staff and staff at Swedish Embassies. [Links to help desk and framework agreement](#)¹³.

A network of gender advisors and gender focal points in Stockholm and in the Swedish Embassies work together to strengthen gender equality within Sweden’s development cooperation. The network is supported by the Gender Equality Hub, with gender equality experts from Sida’s departments, and it is coordinated by Sida’s Policy Support Unit. For information about the gender equality hub and network see [link to inside](#)¹⁴

Sida is also contributing towards sharing experiences and lessons learned, and by contributing towards policy development through active participation in external networks such as the OECD DAC GenderNet and the EUs Gender Group.

Additional resources

In addition to this brief, Sida has developed an e-learning module on gender equality which provides an introduction to gender equality, including why and how to mainstream gender, making use of practical examples and exercises. A specific e-learning module will address prevention and response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH).

¹³ Only available for Sida staff

¹⁴ Only available for Sida staff