

Steps to Integrate Gender in Activity Design and Planning

Much of the data required to conduct a gender analysis may have been collected during the preparation of a strategic plan. However, further analysis may be required to assess and approve individual activities. The factors to consider when conducting this analysis are discussed below.

Activity Design

Analyze Information on Gender Relations that Emerge from Technical Analyses

What does the information collected in customer surveys, technical analyses, and existing research and national statistics reveal about gender relations? Are there gender differences and gender-based constraints that are likely to affect the choice of strategic objectives and program outcomes?

Assess the Potential Impact of Gender-based Constraints and Opportunities

Technical analysis documents what resources are needed to carry out an activity, whether men or women control access to these resources and if gender-based constraints limit the availability of resources (e.g. de facto preferences for male inheritance). If the AO team's initial inquiries reveal gender-specific constraints to women's or men's participation in the activities, the institutional analysis should explore mechanisms for overcoming these constraints. In the social soundness analysis, the intersection between gender and other social categories in defining needs, activities, opportunities and constraints can help the operating unit pinpoint how gender relations in one group might guide choices among and within objectives and affect or be affected by project outcomes differently than in another group.

The task of the team during planning is to collect the information to answer these questions and to build the answers into the development hypotheses that frame the activities designed to achieve results.

Activity Planning

Activities designed to achieve the objectives of the strategic plan should also address gender issues in a manner consistent with the findings of the technical analyses.

Fulfilling the policy involves developing either:

- 1) A gender statement outlining key gender issues related to the activity or
- 2) A rationale explaining why no gender issues are considered significant to results achievement.

When gender considerations are built into the results framework, the development hypothesis itself leads to attention to gender as a factor in the design of activities, the selection of implementing partners, and the choice of indicators to monitor progress. Activities will take account of specific gender-based constraints, and indicators will be developed to gauge the impact of the activities on women's status and gender equity. Any additional technical analyses undertaken in the design of specific activities should draw on the insights about the relevant gender issues and relationships in the results framework.

At the activity level, as the analysis becomes more context specific, the analysis of gender relationships also should be more specific and translated into particular program components. For example, adolescent and middle aged women may differ in significant ways for design of a reproductive health activity; whether women are in landed or landless households may be key information in a civil society activity. The nuances introduced by the interactions between gender characteristics and other social characteristics should be given particular attention at this level of design.

Activity Approval and Pre-Obligation Requirements

ADS pre-obligation requirements now stipulate that gender considerations either be integrated into the statement of work (SOW) for a competitive contract solicitation (RFP) and the program description for RFAs and the Annual Program Statement (APS) or that operating units state in the Activity Approval Document that there are no significant gender issues.

There are no *a priori* standards by which to judge whether gender should be covered in the development of acquisition and assistance instruments, including Statements of Work and Program Descriptions. The best explanation for inclusion should be drawn from the technical analyses. Since gender analysis is a required part of the planning process, the extent to which gender issues need to be addressed in the activity should be clear, as should the priority given to them in the evaluation criteria. For example, if gender-based constraints are crucial to the results of the activity, it is essential that organizations competing for an award demonstrate a strong capacity to deal with these constraints.

The ADS does not prescribe specific technical evaluation criteria. The AO Team is responsible for identifying criteria that are relevant to the solicitation under consideration. A few examples illustrate the types of criteria Operating Units might use to evaluate proposals from contractors and NGO program descriptions. The Team might assign evaluation points to demonstrated experience on the part of the contractor or NGO in one or more of the following criteria.

Illustrative Evaluation Criteria for Assessing Gender Integration in RFAs and RFPs

For Program Implementation and Evaluation:

- Gender research, analyses, or assessments, and consultations with women's advocacy groups
- Gender equitable consultation and participation in all phases of activities
- Gender considerations in activity design, training, and procurement actions
- Sex-disaggregated data for indicators and target; gender criteria for assessment of activity progress and impact

For Institutional Capacity:

- Commitment to gender in previous contracts, cooperative agreements, or grants
- Gender-equitable policies and mission statements
- Publications on gender issues

For Staff Qualifications:

- Key personnel with demonstrated sectoral and gender analysis skills
- Position descriptions that require gender expertise, especially for leadership positions

In developing specific criteria for evaluating the applicant's plan to incorporate gender issues into assistance activities the Operating Unit should consult, to the extent necessary, with Agency gender experts for guidance on structuring the criterion to evaluate the proposed activity's socio-economic impact on women, differential effects on men and women, and methods for measuring these impacts. Since not every Operating Unit has the same level of gender technical expertise, this guide and its resource bibliography is designed to assist team members in asking critical questions that may identify the most significant gender issues. Keep in mind, particularly when using a performance-based approach, the team may also ask of bidders to propose, in their response to an RFA, RFP, or APS, their own perspective on gender issues and how they would address them during implementation.

It is the responsibility of the Procurement Officer to verify that the findings from the gender analysis are adequately reflected in the activity design or that the Team has prepared a written justification for why gender issues are not relevant to the activity. In general the Operating Unit should assume that gender is relevant to most development activities. Ultimately, the burden of proof for showing that gender considerations do not apply to a particular problem falls on the AO Team. In sum, the gender statement may include a combination of identified gender issues and questions to which the bidder is asked to respond.