



Frequently Asked Questions: Gender and the ADS

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I. GENERAL QUESTIONS

If USAID's approach to gender equality is through integrating gender issues into all development activities/projects does this mean that we cannot specifically focus on women?

No. A gender integration approach does allow for women-specific initiatives. As women have traditionally held lower status than men in most countries around the world, USAID has developed and implemented strategies that promote increased access to resources and opportunities for women. Project effectiveness depends on how a program targeting women is designed and executed. Experience has shown that projects that only involve women, are isolated from larger institutions or systems, do not address the underlying reasons for inequality, and do not look to institutionalize change in existing structures have limited effectiveness. In fact, research shows that sustainable changes are most fully realized through activities engaging both men and women to transform harmful attitudes and behaviors regarding male and female roles and power relations.

Since USAID promotes gender equality, do all projects have to address both men and women equally?

No. It all depends on what development challenges the project is addressing and what are the barriers to achieving the project's objectives. In some cases it is appropriate to focus on women, in other cases men, and in others both women and men. Any of these could be part of a strategy to promote gender equality. The most important thing is that the rationale for selecting the prime audience is to relieve a barrier that prevents men or women from having equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development. For example, an initiative to promote boys' access to education in areas where boys are more disadvantaged than girls in getting into school would be appropriately targeted to boys. It would also be appropriate to target female farmers for special access to training where the goal of a project was to increase agricultural output if those responsible were primarily female farmers. Both are examples of activities that support gender equality. However, this does not mean to say that a program with a focus on women or on men does not engage the other sex at some level, as changing attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate rigid gender norms is essential to the process of creating social relations in which neither sex is discriminated.

How should pillar/technical bureaus apply the ADS requirements since some appear to be Mission focused?

Although some technical bureaus do not develop bureau-level strategic plans, for those that do, the ADS requirements for a gender analysis apply ([ADS 201.3.9.3](#)). Many operating units within technical bureaus do support projects/activities. In that case the technical officer is responsible for ensuring that the results of a gender analysis are used to inform the design of the activity or project he/she is responsible for ([ADS 201.3.11.6](#)). Technical bureaus are also responsible for completing Activity Approval Documents (AAD), which require that the conclusions of any gender analyses be outlined in the AAD ([ADS 201.3.11.16](#)). Finally, if technical officers intend to implement their proposed projects through an acquisition or assistance award, then they must follow the requirements as specified in [ADS 201.3.11.6](#), [ADS 302.3.5.15](#), and [ADS 303.3.6.3](#).

II. DEFINITIONS OF KEY GENDER TERMS

What are the differences between gender equality, gender equity, and gender parity?

Gender equality is a broad concept and a goal for development. It is achieved when men and women have equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development. It means society values men and women equally for their similarities and the diverse roles they play. It signifies the outcomes that result from gender equity strategies and processes.

Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality.

Gender parity most often refers to relative numbers of males and females. For example, if there is gender parity in education, then equal numbers of boys and girls attend school. Parity uses equal in the sense of being the same. If an objective of a training, for example, is to achieve gender parity in the number of male and female participants, then that would call for 50% men and 50% women in the training. Of course, gender parity as a goal in itself may not necessarily lead to gender equality since in some cases you may need to have more women represented than men to redress past disadvantages.

What is the difference between a gender-sensitive indicator and sex-disaggregated data?

Sex-disaggregated data are data that have been calculated and reported separately into two different categories: male or female. Gender-sensitive indicators point out gender-related changes in society. Gender-sensitive indicators are critical since they demonstrate changes in the status and roles of women and men over time, which can be used to measure whether outcomes related to gender equality are being achieved. Collecting sex-disaggregated data is essential but not sufficient since reporting on the number of men and women who participate in activities does not provide enough information on whether the conditions that inhibit gender equality have been changed or improved. Gender-sensitive data provide for better evaluation results, which in turn feeds into better planning and project design.

Here are examples of gender-sensitive indicators for economic growth/trade-related activities:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/pubs/Gender_Sensitive_Indicators_2.pdf.

What is the difference between gender and development and women in development?¹

The Women in Development (WID) approach began in the 1970s and was used widely up until the early/mid 1990s when it was eclipsed by Gender and Development (GAD), an approach USAID uses in working toward gender equality and women's empowerment.

Women in Development (WID) The WID approach aimed to integrate women into the development process by most often targeting them in women-only activities. Women were usually passive recipients in WID projects, which often emphasized making women more efficient producers and increasing their income without looking at the systemic reasons for their lack of power and participation. Although many WID projects improved health, income, or resources in the short term, because they did not attempt to

¹ UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework, 2003.
<http://portal.unesco.org/en/files/11483/10649049699Definitions.doc/Definitions.doc>

transform unequal relationships, a significant number did not bring about any long-term change. A common shortcoming of WID projects is that they did not consider women's multiple roles or that they miscalculated the elasticity of women's time and labor. Another is that such projects tended to be blind to men's roles and responsibility for women's lack of empowerment.

Gender and Development (GAD) The GAD approach focuses on intervening to address unequal gender relations that prevent equitable development and often lock women out of fully participating in economic, social, cultural, and political development. A GAD approach identifies, analyzes, and addresses the systemic roots of women's lack of power and inequality (see [gender analysis](#)). GAD seeks to have both women and men participate, make decisions, and share benefits as a goal. This approach often aims at meeting practical needs (basic necessities) as well as promoting strategic interests (improved status and equality).

What is the difference between a gender analysis and a gender assessment?

Gender analysis refers to the systematic gathering and analysis of information on gender differences and social relations to identify and understand the different roles, divisions of labor, resources, constraints, needs, opportunities/capacities, and interests of men and women (and girls and boys) in a given context. USAID requires that the findings of a gender analysis are used to inform the design of country strategic plans, Assistance Objectives, and projects/activities.

A **gender assessment** involves carrying out a review, from a gender perspective, of an organization's programs and its ability to monitor and respond to gender issues in both technical programming and institutional policies and practices. USAID Missions often carry out a gender assessment of their portfolio to determine whether gender issues are being effectively addressed in Mission-supported programs and projects. A gender assessment is a very flexible tool, based on the needs of the Mission, and may also include a gender analysis at the country level. If a gender analysis is included in a gender assessment, this meets the ADS requirements.

What is the difference between gender mainstreaming and gender staffing?

Gender mainstreaming is "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality". (ECOSOC Agreed Conclusions 1997/2)

Gender staffing is one of a number of strategies that have been used in the gender mainstreaming process. Gender staffing involves increasing the number of women working throughout an organization, including at the management and field levels. The purpose is to create an equitable level-playing field within an organization to improve the work environment as well as the development outcomes.

What is the difference between gender integration and gender mainstreaming?

Gender integration involves identifying and then addressing gender differences and inequalities during program and project design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Since the roles and relations

of power between men and women affect how an activity is implemented, it is essential that project and activity planners address these issues on an ongoing basis. USAID uses the term gender integration in planning and programming.

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs in any area and at all levels. It also refers to strategies for incorporating both women's and men's concerns and experiences into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and social spheres. The goal of gender mainstreaming is to render inequality between men and women obsolete. It is a broader term than gender integration.

III. ADS GENDER REQUIREMENTS AT THE PLANNING STAGE (GENDER ANALYSIS FOR STRATEGIES, AOS, PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES—[ADS 201.3.9.3](#) AND [ADS 201.3.11.6](#))

At what point in the strategy development process should a gender analysis be conducted to be maximally useful?

Since the purpose of doing a gender analysis is to use the findings to inform, shape, and guide the direction and content of the strategy, the gender analysis should be one of the first steps taken once the decision has been made to develop a strategy.

Does the revised ADS require a country-level gender assessment or just a gender analysis at the strategy (country) level?

A gender assessment and a gender analysis are two different types of analytical work. The ADS requires that a gender analysis is done as preparatory work for a country strategy and for the design of a project or activity. A gender analysis can be conducted at: the macro level, analyzing socio-cultural, economic, health, or demographic trends and legal policies and practices at the national or regional level; and/or at the micro level, examining gender relations, roles, and dynamics at the community or household level within the context provided by the macro analysis. Taking a macro or micro focus depends on the purpose for which the analysis is being undertaken. For example, a gender analysis conducted to inform a country strategic plan will most likely assess the issues from a broader, more macro level, whereas a gender analysis conducted for the design of a project/activity, may look at the issues from both a macro and micro perspective.

A gender assessment involves carrying out a review, from a gender perspective, of an organization's programs and its ability to monitor and respond to gender issues in both technical programming and institutional policies and practices. USAID Missions often carry out a gender assessment of their portfolio to determine whether gender issues are being effectively addressed in Mission-supported programs and projects. A gender assessment is a very flexible tool, based on the needs of the Mission, and may also include a gender analysis at the country level. If a gender analysis is included in a gender assessment, this meets the ADS requirements.

Does it meet the ADS requirements to attach a gender analysis as an Annex to a strategy, or do the results of the gender analysis need to be incorporated into the strategy itself?

The results of the gender analysis need to be incorporated into the strategy itself. The ADS states that gender analysis can help guide long-term planning and ensure desired results are achieved. In addition,

the ADS notes that it is required to incorporate the findings of mandatory technical analyses (i.e., gender analysis) into planning documents. You may certainly append a summary of the gender analysis in addition to incorporating the findings into the plan itself. Merely attaching a gender analysis to the strategy document without having the information gleaned from the analysis inform the plan, however, does not meet the ADS requirements.

Does the revised ADS require that we carry out separate gender analyses for each program and/or sector, or are we supposed to do one analysis at the country level that is tied to our larger strategy?

In many cases when a Mission is doing a country strategy, an analysis of multiple sectors is conducted simultaneously under one gender analysis scope of work, using a multisectoral team of consultants. However, this approach is not required and the Mission should collect and analyze the necessary information (e.g., of the sectors that will be targeted in the strategic plan) in a way that best suits its needs.

Is it ok to update an existing gender analysis at the country level rather than doing a new one to meet the requirements for gender analysis at the strategy level?

Precise guidance is not included in the ADS so this is a common sense, judgment call. If there have been changes in a country's economic, political, security, or social context, then a new gender analysis is needed to inform strategic planning. If the situation has remained completely constant, then updating an existing gender analysis might give you the information you need to develop an evidence-based approach to addressing the gender issues that impact development outcomes in that country. The time required to "update" a gender analysis must be seriously considered since regional bureau experience has shown that "updating" a current gender analysis does not necessarily save time, but can require the same level of staff resources as a new gender analysis.

Can we use external partners' gender analyses?

Yes. In fact, ADS 301.3.9.3 states, "In undertaking gender analyses, USAID OUs (Operating Units) are encouraged to draw on similar types of analyses from other donors and partners, to collaborate jointly in preparing gender analyses with other donors and partners, and to share USAID gender analyses with other donors and partners, as appropriate." Fulfilling the spirit of the ADS gender analysis requirement means collecting and analyzing a sufficient amount of data that will help you design a strategy or program that will address gender issues, resulting in stronger development outcomes. As long as the information is up to date and reliable, you are encouraged to use existing reports and studies.

Is it ok to use an existing gender assessment to inform a gender analysis at the project level?

It depends. A gender assessment is an internal review of USAID's programming and procedures from a gender perspective. If the gender assessment contains relevant information, such as past performance or lessons learned from a project similar to the one that is being designed, then the gender assessment is a good source of information. Sometimes a gender assessment will also include a gender analysis. If the findings of that gender analysis are relevant to the proposed project, then a separate gender analysis may not be required.

A gender analysis is used to gather and analyze information on gender differences and social relations to identify and understand the different roles, divisions of labor, resources, constraints, needs, opportunities/capacities, and interests of men and women (and girls and boys) in a given context, which in this case would be the subject of the project you are designing. If the gender assessment provides that level of analysis of the country context (outside of what USAID has done), then it could meet the gender analysis requirements (see [ADS 201.3.11.6](#)). If not, then a gender analysis is still required to complement the information in the gender assessment.

How long can we use an existing gender analysis before we need to do a new one?

There are no official guidelines for this so it is a common sense, judgment call. Whenever a new strategy is written, analytical work (e.g., a gender analysis) must be undertaken to support the development of the strategy. New strategies are done approximately every four to five years. If the context in which the existing gender analysis was originally done has been relatively stable, then a four-to-five-year limit may be a reasonable rule of thumb. However, if there have been recent significant economic (e.g., the global financial crisis), social, or political (e.g., conflict or post-conflict) changes or natural disasters (e.g., Pakistan flooding or Haiti earthquake) then a new gender analysis is warranted.

How long does a typical gender analysis take?

It depends on how much information is readily available through existing reports and research. When an Operating Unit uses an external consultant to conduct the gender analysis, the assignment can often require two-three weeks in country (if an expatriate consultant or USAID/Washington staff member is used) with an additional few weeks for report writing. See this link for illustrative scopes of work for gender analyses: http://inside.usaid.gov/EGAT/off-wid/gender_SOWs.html.

What types of responses should we expect to these questions:

How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household affect the work to be undertaken?, and
How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?

These two questions are the guiding questions to be answered through a gender analysis. From [ADS 201.3.9.3](#): “The purpose of the first question is to ensure that: 1) the differences in the roles and status of women and men are examined; and 2) any inequalities or differences that will impede achieving program or project goals are addressed in the planned work design. The different roles, responsibilities, and status of men and women within the community, political sphere, workplace and household (e.g., roles in decision-making and different access to and control over resources and services) must be addressed.

The second question calls for another level of analysis in which the anticipated programming results are: 1) fully examined to discern the possible different effects on women and men; and 2) the design is adjusted as necessary to ensure equitable and sustainable program or project impact (see [ADS 203.6.1](#)). For example, programming for women’s income generation may have the unintended consequence of domestic violence as power shifts from men to women. This potential negative effect could be mitigated by working with men to anticipate change and be more supportive of their partners.” In the ADS the questions are stated in very general terms, which need to be made specific to the context in which a gender analysis is being conducted.

First Question: How will the different roles and status of women and men within the community, political sphere, workplace, and household affect the work to be undertaken?

Here are examples of more specific queries to answer the first question:

- Do men and women have different roles (in employment, the household, the community, politics)?
- Who has access to and control of resources and assets?
- Do women and men have differing daily responsibilities?
- Do cultural norms include 'acceptable' behavior for men and women?
- What levels of decision making are women and men involved in?

Here are examples of how the above questions can be made sector specific. In this case to the health sector:

- Do men's and women's different responsibilities within the household make them more or less susceptible to infectious disease (e.g., contact with waste water, fumes from indoor cooking fires, bodily fluids, or animal meat)?
- Do perceived differences in men's and women's knowledge, decision-making processes, and behaviors influence how healthcare providers communicate with male and female patients?
- Do boys/men and girls/women at health and education facilities have access to separate, on-site latrines and clean water? How does this affect men's and women's vulnerability to violence and disease?

Second Question: How will the anticipated results of the work affect women and men differently?

Here are examples of more specific queries to answer the first question:

- Will promoting men's participation in the project undermine or support women's empowerment and autonomy?
- How have similar projects in the past affected gender dynamics within the household and community?

Here are examples of how the above questions can be made sector specific. In this case to the health sector:

- Will promoting men's participation in the project (family planning/reproductive health interventions) undermine or support women's empowerment and autonomy?
- How have similar projects in the past affected gender dynamics within the household and community?
- Will women's expanded knowledge of and access to reproductive health and family planning methods intensify their risk of domestic violence? Will men's engagement in family planning and women's reproductive health help to mitigate this risk?

IV. ADS GENDER REQUIREMENTS AT THE ACTIVITY APPROVAL DOCUMENT STAGE ([ADS 201.3.11.16](#))

How should gender be integrated into AADs?

From a gender perspective an Activity Approval Document (AAD) requires at a minimum: a) a brief description of the project or activity including planned inputs and outputs and, where applicable, improvements or changes in the Assistance Objective (AO) results to which the project will contribute; and b) an outline of the gender issues that need to be considered during activity implementation and description of what outcomes are expected by considering these issues (or, if the Operating Unit

determines that there are no gender issues, provide a brief rationale to that effect). It is strongly recommended that the outline of gender issues is integrated into the project or activity description so that the issues are not overlooked, sidelined, or marginalized as the project moves from concept to solicitation. No new analytical work should be necessary for completing the AAD requirements; the gender findings should be available from either the gender analysis developed for the strategic plan and/or Assistance Objective or the gender analysis developed for the proposed project. In addition, USAID officers are always encouraged to draw upon the analytical work conducted by other members of the development community.

Consult your program office for more detailed guidance.

How can we help people understand that gender analysis is not an isolated part of the Activity Approval Document (AAD)?

It is important to get out the message that the spirit of the gender analysis requirements is to have evidence-based strategies and projects informed by best practices and a cutting-edge analysis of the issues that impact development outcomes. Given that, it is critical that the findings, conclusions, and issues from a gender analysis clearly influence the design of projects/activities and are evident in the project/activity description required in an AAD. AADs also require an outline of the gender issues. If those gender issues are part of the project/activity description rather than in an isolated paragraph, this will best reflect the intent of the ADS.

V. ADS GENDER REQUIREMENTS AT THE PROJECT/ACTIVITY SOLICITATION STAGE ([ADS 302.3.5.15](#) AND [ADS 303.3.6.3](#))

How should gender issues be integrated into the technical evaluation/selection criteria?

In general, gender issues must be integrated into the generic evaluation categories such as technical understanding and approach, monitoring and evaluation, and personnel. The findings from the gender analysis that was required at the project-planning stage are of critical importance in providing the Activity Manager with the information to do so.

How does an Agreement/Contracting Officer evaluate whether a procurement request has met the requirements for gender integration?

A Contracting Officer will review to see whether gender issues have been highlighted in the Statement of Work Section (also known as “Section C” in the request for proposal), the most relevant parts being the background, objectives, scope of work, and performance monitoring plan sections. An Agreement Officer will review to see whether gender issues have been highlighted in the Program Description, the most relevant parts being the background, plans for achieving results, description of activities deemed essential to achieve planned results, and plans for monitoring and evaluation sections.

A Contracting Officer will then review the instructions to offerors (“Section L”) and the technical evaluation criteria (“Section M”) to make sure that offerors are being asked to: a) propose meaningful approaches to address gender issues identified in the Statement of Work and b) demonstrate their expertise and capacity to address gender issues. An Agreement Officer will make a similar review of the instructions to applicants and the technical selection criteria.

Agreement and Contracting Officers do not make a judgment as to how well the procurement request has met the requirements in [ADS 302.3.5.15](#) (acquisition) or [ADS 303.3.6.3](#) (assistance), just whether it has been done or not.

Does a designated gender advisor (or other authority) have to 'clear' that gender has been appropriately addressed in a given procurement?

No, a designated gender advisor does not have to clear. Whether a procurement request meets the ADS requirements or not is the determination of the Assistance (AO) or Contracting Officer (CO). However, it is the responsibility of the technical officer (also known as the Activity Manager) to provide the CO with a statement of work, instructions to offerors, and evaluation factors for award that meet the ADS requirements. Likewise, in assistance solicitations, the Activity Manager is responsible for providing the AO with a program description, instructions for submission, and technical selection criteria that meet the ADS requirements. If Activity Managers need technical assistance, they should consult their USAID Mission/Office or Bureau gender specialist or the Office of Women in Development (WID) in the Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade (EGAT) at the **very beginning** of the activity/project design process. It is usually not very effective to consult the gender specialist just before the procurement request is to be given to the AO/CO for approval.

VI. EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Do the ADS requirements mean that Results Frameworks must include gender-sensitive indicators?

Yes, but the level at which the indicator appears may vary. A results framework conveys the development hypothesis, which is a description of the causal linkages between intermediate results and the assistance objective. A gender analysis conducted as part of the process to formulate a development hypothesis, will identify the impact that gender issues will have on the development problem being addressed. Gender issues need to be identified within the results framework as they causally relate to the assistance objective and various levels of results.

How can we ensure gender-sensitive indicators are included in the Operational Plan and in the performance reporting process?

There is joint responsibility between technical and program officers to make sure that gender-sensitive indicators are used for planning and reporting purposes. When designing programs technical officers need to include gender-sensitive indicators in their Performance Monitoring Plans.

Do the ADS revisions mean that a separate gender Results Framework must be generated?

No, a separate gender Results Framework does not have to be generated.

VII. SUPPORT: RESOURCES AND TOOLS

How can the pillar/technical bureaus support the Mission Gender Advisors to ensure that gender is integrated at the activity level?

Gender Advisors in pillar/technical bureaus can support Mission Gender Advisors by providing them with up-to-date guidance and tools that promote gender integration and alerting them to training opportunities.

What training is available to help us do gender analyses and build other skills related to implementing the ADS guidance?

Training is periodically provided throughout the Agency. Check with your Regional or Pillar Bureau Gender Advisor.

Where can we get good examples of SOWs for gender analyses?

This URL (http://inside.usaid.gov/EGAT/off-wid/gender_SOWs.html) will access the following SOWs:

[Scope of Work for Gender Analysis at the Strategy Level](#) (pdf 88kb)

[Scope of Work for Gender Assessment/Analysis at the Assistance Objective Level](#) (pdf 115kb)

[Scope of Work for Gender Audit at the Mission Level](#) (pdf 120kb)

[Scope of Work for Gender Analysis at the Activity Level](#) (pdf 71kb)

[Scope of Work for Gender Training](#) (pdf 75kb)

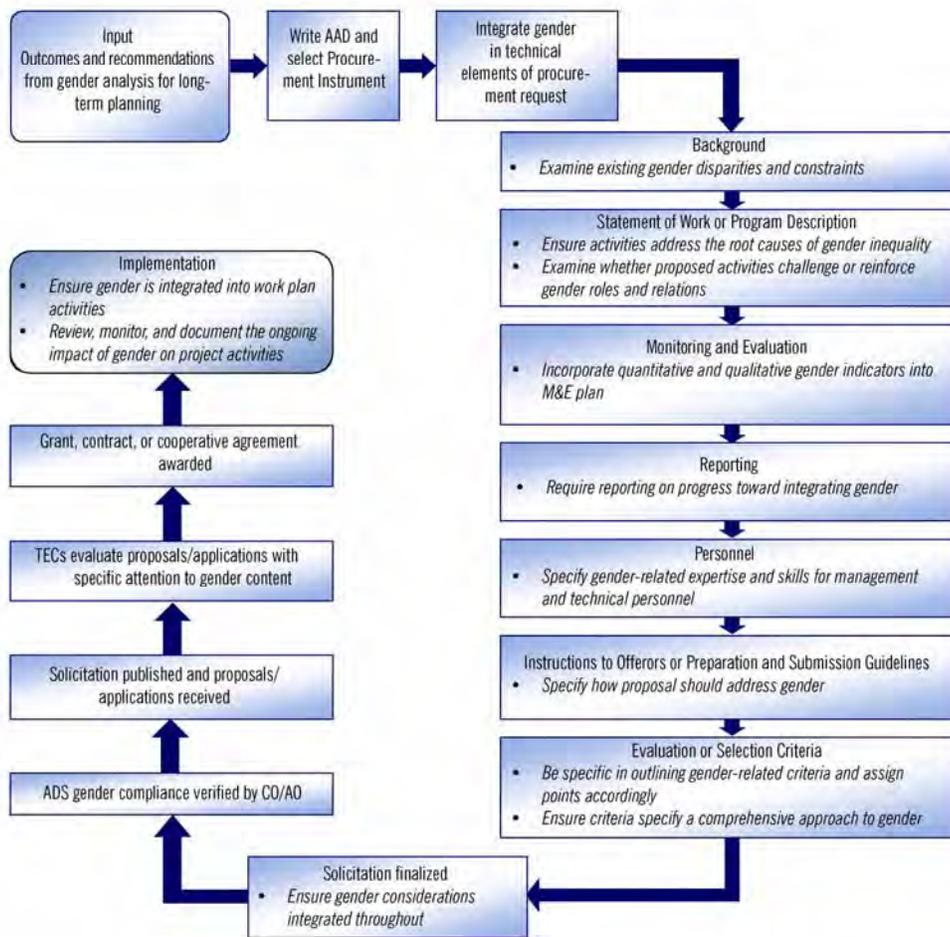
What mechanisms are available to do gender analyses?

The Office of Women in Development has a task order that provides technical assistance in conducting gender analyses. This task order expires in March 2011. Contact Ed Lijewski, COTR at elijewski@usaid.gov for more information.

How can gender focal points/advisors support the COTRs/AOTRs to ensure that the plans for gender integration are actually implemented at the activity level?

The biggest challenge is to make sure that Contracting Officer Technical Representatives (COTRs) and Assistance Officer Technical Representatives (AOTRs)--also known as Activity Managers during the planning part of the project implementation cycle--are aware of what they need to do and when. For example, it is frustrating for everyone when an Activity Manager asks for technical assistance during the final stages of preparing an AAD and you discover that a gender analysis was never done. The Activity Manager needs to be aware that a gender analysis should be done as soon as a project is being conceptualized and plan accordingly. A gender focal point can be proactive and reach out to Activity Managers who are at the very beginning of the program cycle by briefing them on the ADS requirements and offering help to make sure that the ADS requirements are followed in a timely fashion.

The figure on the next page is a flow chart of the keys tasks that need to be undertaken to integrate gender issues into solicitations. This is from the Global Health Bureau's *Integrating Gender into Health Programs: A Guide to Implementing ADS Requirements*.



Source: This figure was adapted from *Tip for Gender Integration in USAID Education Sector Solicitations* (Washington, DC: USAID, 2008).

Where can we get sector specific tools to facilitate gender integration?

Check with your Regional/Pillar Bureau Gender Advisor. Many bureaus also have gender web pages you can consult for resources:

Office of Women in Development:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/wid/
<http://inside.usaid.gov/EGAT/off-wid/index.html>

Africa Bureau:

<http://inside.usaid.gov/AFR/sectors/gender/>

Asia and the Middle East Bureau:

http://www.usaid.gov/locations/middle_east/sectors/gender/
<http://www1.usaid.gov/locations/asia/sectors/gender/>

Europe and Eurasia Bureau:

<http://inside.usaid.gov/EE/dgst/st/index.php?q=node/158>

Global Health Bureau:

<http://ghintranet.usaid.gov/GH/elements/Gender/index.html>

Interagency Gender Working Group:

<http://www.igwg.org>

VIII. GENERAL PROGRAMMING/IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS

Are health programs that mostly target women to be considered “gender” programs or health programs?

It depends. By “gender” we assume you mean a program that promotes gender equality and/or women’s empowerment. This encompasses activities that:

- alleviate constraints that disproportionately affect either women or men to enable them to better contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political development where they have been historically discriminated against due to their sex;
- increase access to and benefit from programs to persons who have been historically excluded due to their sex; and
- facilitate the critical examination and subsequent transformation of male or female gender roles and norms that negatively affect either women or men.

On the one hand, a health program targeting mostly women can contribute to both health and gender equality outcomes. In fact, we encourage technical officers to think in terms of “and/and”, meaning that projects can be explicitly designed to support both sector (e.g., health, education, economic growth) and gender equality/women’s empowerment outcomes. Taking gender issues into account in project/activity designs should be seen as complementary and not in conflict with achieving technical sector objectives.

On the other hand, just because a project targets mostly women does not automatically mean that it promotes gender equality or women’s empowerment. It depends on the approach taken. For example, a family planning/reproductive health (FP/RH) project could work solely with women as clients and treat them without taking into account any systemic issues that may create barriers to their achieving good reproductive health (e.g., women’s limited mobility, which decreases their ability to seek medical care; lack of decision-making power to space children or use modern family planning methods, etc.). This approach could result in maintaining the status quo regarding unequal power dynamics or underlying structures that perpetuate gender inequalities. There may be positive health outcomes, but from a gender equality/women’s empowerment point of view, this is a missed opportunity for sustainable change. Conversely, another approach would be to engage the women’s partners in the program to promote positive male engagement in sharing responsibility and decision-making regarding family planning.

How can gender be addressed in cross-cutting programs, for example in public sector capacity building?

The first step would be to conduct a gender analysis of the public sector's capacity to identify issues that constrain men or women's ability to equally contribute to and benefit from development. In that way, interventions to increase public sector capacity would be informed by data, research, and analysis. This analysis could reveal, for example, the required changes in policies and institutions needed to promote gender equality. A possible intervention could be increasing staff capacity to generate and analyze gender-sensitive data for decision-makers.

How can we address gender in programming policy development support?

A good start is to do a thorough analysis using gender analysis methodologies to identify what are the policy constraints and barriers that may prevent men and/or women from achieving equal rights, freedoms, conditions, and opportunities for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefiting from economic, social, cultural, and political development. Once those data have been analyzed, the next step is to develop projects with interventions to relieve those barriers.