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Measuring Gender Integration in USAID Solicitation Documents Issued in 2011

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MEASURING GENDER INTEGRATION IN USAID SOLICITATIONS ISSUED IN 2011

Executive Summary

This report is commissioned by USAID's Office of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (EGAT/GenDev) to continue to track the integration of gender issues throughout USAID's portfolio. It presents the findings of a review of solicitations publicly issued during calendar year 2011.

The purpose of the review is to monitor the extent to which USAID is taking account of gender considerations in solicitations for competitive grants and contracts, pursuant to strengthened Agency guidance. Progress in gender integration across sectors and geographic regions as well as between Missions and Washington operating units is also of interest.

The methodology used for this report is the same as that used for the review of solicitations used in 2010, though the number of solicitations in 2011 is larger: 203 compared to 147. Documents were scored on a scale of zero to three, measuring gender content of "none," "minimal," "moderate," or "thorough." The 2010 review should not be treated as a baseline *per se*; among other things, the larger number of solicitations in 2011 allowed two additional sectoral categories to be designated. Some of the categories used for analysis contain a relatively small number of observations, thus, in drawing conclusions and making generalizations statistical results should be used with care.

Principal Findings

- Almost 9 out of 10 (87%) of all solicitations reviewed include at least "minimal" attention to gender, an improvement over the 2010 review, in which 80 percent of solicitations met this criterion. Only four out of the 2011 sample of 203 solicitations were judged to have contained no gender content whatsoever.
- Fifty-nine percent have "moderate" or "thorough" gender content, a promising result but a disappointing decrease from the 66 percent achieved in 2010.
- In all sectors except Environment, a majority of solicitations score in the "moderate" or "thorough" range. For Environment, only four of the 14 solicitations are in this range and the total average score for this sector is "minimal."
- The best performing sectors for "thorough" solicitations are HIV/AIDS and Democracy and Governance, with the smaller-sample Agriculture and Social Protection sectors also scoring well.
- Twelve solicitations fall under the Feed the Future Initiative. Their average score is higher than any other sectoral category reviewed, 2.25 out of 3.0. Half of these solicitations scored "thorough" while only one scored "minimal" and the remainder score "moderate."¹

¹ The principal originating sectors for these solicitations are: Agriculture (5), Economic Growth (5), Health (1) and Multi-Sector (1). The "minimal" solicitation is from the Economic Growth sector.

- On a regional basis, total average scores for all regions fall in the “moderate” range. Europe and Eurasia, Africa, Asia and Multi-region are above the overall average score of 1.54; Latin America and the Caribbean along with the Middle East score below the average (at 1.43 and 1.15 respectively).
- Average scores by Issuing Entity – Bilateral Missions, Regional Missions, and USAID/Washington – closely track the 2010 results. The Regional Missions achieved an average score of 1.76, well above the total overall average of 1.54, while Bilaterals and USAID/W scored 1.48 and 1.45 respectively.
- Classified by type of solicitation, over half of RFAs and RFPs score “moderate” and “thorough;” fewer than half of Annual Program Statements (APS) do so.

These findings indicate that while there is progress overall – a larger percentage of solicitations reviewed address gender in some form – the need remains to continue to increase the quality of gender integration design. The analysis shows that the quality of gender integration improved measurably in some sectors with room for improvement in others.

I. Introduction

This report is the third in a series commissioned by USAID’s office of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, which is tasked with promoting and monitoring the integration of gender issues throughout USAID’s programs and projects. Previous studies were conducted on solicitations issued in 2006-2007 and in calendar year 2010.²

Since November 2009, shortly after the arrival of Administrator Rajiv Shah, USAID has placed renewed emphasis on the importance of addressing gender issues and empowering women to assume an ever more active role in the progress of developing countries. Building on priorities of the Obama Administration, this emphasis is manifested in revised official guidance for project planning, design, and solicitation³ in policies directing USAID reform (USAID Forward) in hiring new gender experts at a senior level, and in programs such as Feed the Future (FtF), which identifies an emphasis on women as critical to the program’s success.

Central to the issue of gender integration is the premise that a focus on women does not, in and of itself, imply that gender issues are being addressed. Sustainable empowerment of women depends on supportive modifications in social norms and behaviors, expectations, and perceptions as well as on enabling policies. As defined by USAID,

“Gender is a social construct that refers to relations between and among the sexes, based on their relative roles. It encompasses the economic, political, and socio-cultural attributes, constraints, and opportunities associated with being male or female. As a

² In 2011, the name of this office changed from Women in Development to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

³ Automated Directives System (ADS) 200 series for planning and 300 series for Acquisition and Assistance, and their related “help documents”.

social construct, gender varies across cultures, and is dynamic and open to change over time. Because of the variation in gender across cultures and over time, gender roles should not be assumed but investigated. Note that gender is not interchangeable with 'women' or 'sex'.⁴

This report presents the findings of the analysis of gender integration in USAID solicitations for acquisition and assistance (Request for Proposal – RFP, Request for Application – RFA, and Annual Program Statement – APS) issued through public sources in calendar year 2011.⁵ This study was completed before the release of USAID’s new gender policy. Four reviewers analyzed 203 solicitations and, based on the methodology employed for the previous two reports, addressed the following questions:

- What are the levels of gender integration in USAID solicitation documents?
- Is progress in gender integration occurring evenly across sectors and geographic regions, or between field missions and Washington operating units? and,
- How do the 2011 findings compare to previous reviews of gender integration in USAID solicitations?

II. Methodology

The documents reviewed were drawn from publicly available solicitations posted on the FBO.gov and Grants.gov websites during the 2011 calendar year (January 1 to December 31, 2011). Following the procedure used in the 2010 document draw, postings for procurement of Personal Services Contracts, technical services to USAID operating units, and commodity purchases were excluded from the final review list. A relatively small number of solicitations, some addressing construction activities and others not readily falling into sector categories, were excluded, as described in Annex B. Annex C includes a detailed description of the scoring criteria. Annex D is the scoring template. Overall, the document collection process yielded 203 solicitations comprised of 107 RFAs, 65 RFPs, and 31 APSs.⁶

The documents were randomly assigned to four reviewers, who examined each solicitation based on a set of seven questions and assigned scores for gender content ranging from 0, “none” to 3.0, “thorough.” The reviewers conducted trial scorings to ensure consistency and peer-reviewed several of the more challenging documents.

A score of 1 represents a minimal level of gender integration and includes guidance statements from the ADS; a score of 2 is moderate and includes some specific gender context. Half-point increments serve to refine the scoring, allowing distinctions to be made between solicitations that address gender on a perfunctory basis from those in which efforts to provide specific country or sector context and clear guidance for the gender dimensions of a project are evident.

⁴ USAID Automatic Directives System, Chapter 200 Glossary, 07/15/2011 revision, p. 212

⁵ Annex A contains the terms of reference for this study.

⁶ The 2010 review included 147 solicitations: 99 RFAs, 31 RFPs, and 17 APSs.

In order to earn a score of 3.0, a document had to have “yes” answers for all of the six principal scoring questions, i.e. including a requirement for gender expertise among project staff. While scores of minimal or less (“sub-minimal”) tend to reflect generic, non-specific comments regarding gender, and/or neglect of gender in staff expertise or of sex-disaggregated data, the average score of 1.5 indicates awareness of the importance and relevance of gender issues in a particular country and sector context.

It is worth noting that the 0-3 methodology suggests a linear progression, in which the difference between 0 and 1 is comparable to that between 1 and 2, and so forth. In fact, given that the former could be achieved by, say, inclusion of a perfunctory statement regarding sex-disaggregated data, while the latter would likely require at least a degree of substantive gender analysis, it is worth keeping in mind the distinctions implied by higher scores. (For this reason, much of the analysis groups “moderate” and “thorough” scores together, since those categories contain the more substantive instances of gender integration.) In all cases, where only a small number of solicitations populate a given category/sector, average scores should be interpreted with discretion; only one or two outliers can dramatically change the average.

In addition to scoring, the reviewers identified solicitations by sector, region, issuing entity, and type, noting the sub-sectors or Presidential Initiatives of Conflict, Feed the Future, and Global Climate Change as appropriate. Since the small number of solicitations in the Energy sector did not warrant a separate category, all three of these were grouped under Economic Growth. Where a solicitation included activity across more than one sector or geographic region, it was designated as “Multi-sector” or “Multi-region.” The 2011 sample contains 11 multi-sector solicitations, compared with three in the 2010 sample. This is not surprising in light of USAID’s recent encouragement of multi-sector programming as a way of capitalizing on program synergies.

Two technical areas not highlighted in 2010 stand out in the 2011 sample:

- solicitations in the Environment sector (14) were sufficient to justify a separate category;
- a small but distinct set of solicitations whose common theme could be described as post-conflict or disaster rehabilitation (e.g., restoring communities in Uganda, assisting IDPs or refugees in/near Burma, or addressing gender based violence in Haiti or worldwide). These solicitations – a total of nine – are grouped under “Social Protection.” While lacking statistical significance for the sample as a whole,⁷ their content stands out from the other categories.

III. Findings

A. Distribution of Solicitations

Table 1: Frequency Distribution by Sector and Region

⁷ The minimum number of solicitations for which comparison of total average percentage calculations are meaningful, in this sample of 203, is ten, i.e., five percent. Thus, categories with less than ten entries must be treated with great care since outlier scores can have an exceptionally large impact on the total average. In this report, these categories include “Social Protection,” a new category in 2011, and “Agriculture,” with nine entries each.

Sector	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia	Europe & Eurasia	LAC	Middle East	Multi-Region	Total	Percent Total
Agriculture	5	1		1		2	9	4%
Democracy & Governance	3	12	15	5	2	2	39	19%
Economic Growth	6	9	7	5	3	6	36	18%
Education	10	4	1	3	4		22	11%
Environment	2	6		5	1		14	7%
Health	26	5	3	3		10	47	23%
HIV/AIDS	12	2	1			1	16	8%
Social Protection	2	2		3		2	9	4%
Multi-Sector	3		2	2		4	11	5%
Total	69	41	29	27	10	27	203	100%
Percent Total	34%	20%	14%	13%	5%	13%	100%	

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of the 203 CY2011 solicitations reviewed. Africa and Asia lead in terms of numbers, accounting for just over half of the total. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Europe and Eurasia (E&E), and Multi-Region solicitations account for 41 percent. All of these regions have more solicitations than in 2010. The Middle East accounts for only 10 solicitations, just five percent, compared to 10 solicitations and a seven percent share in 2010.

In terms of sector breakout, Health has the largest number of solicitations (n=47, or 23 percent of the total sample). More than half of these (26) come from Africa; Multi-region solicitations are the next most numerous at 10, versus Asia's five solicitations and three each for LAC and E&E.

The Democracy and Governance (DG) sector is the second largest, with 39 solicitations, or 19 percent of the total sample. These solicitations are concentrated in E&E (15, or 38 percent of the total) and Asia (12, or 31 percent of the total). LAC has five solicitations, Africa has three, and Middle East and Multi-Region have two each.

In the 2010 review, DG had the highest number of solicitations with 30 percent of the total, followed by Health with 19 percent.

Economic Growth (EG), with 36 solicitations, ranks a close third to DG, accounting for almost 18 percent of the sample (higher than the 15 percent achieved in 2010 when this sector was virtually tied for third place with HIV/AIDS). Asia leads with 9 solicitations, while the Middle East has only 3 and the rest are evenly divided among E&E, Africa, LAC, and Multi-Region.

Education solicitations constituted only five percent of the 2010 sample, but in 2011 they account for double that amount, almost 11 percent. Almost half of these, 10 out of 22, are concentrated in Africa; one in E&E, and the remainder in Asia, Middle East, and LAC.

In contrast to 2010, when the sector's share was 16 percent, HIV/AIDS solicitations constitute barely eight percent of the 2011 sample. Africa has 12, by far the majority of these 16 solicitations. Of the remaining four, two are in Asia and one each in E&E and Multi-Region.

The remaining 20 percent of solicitations are shared between Environment, Multi-Sector, Agriculture, and Social Protection. Most of the Environment solicitations are in Asia and LAC, while most in Agriculture are in Africa. Multi-Sector solicitations occur in Africa, LAC, E&E, and Multi-Region.

B. Level of Gender Integration: Comparison Over Time

It is instructive to compare the change over time in the frequency distribution of scores by type

Score	Year	Type of solicitation			Percent of Total
		(Percent of each category)			
		RFA	RFP	APS	
0	2011	2	3		2
	2010	5	6	12	6
	2006-07	10	21	38	18
0.5	2011	11	5	26	11
	2010	12	16	24	14
	2006-07	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1	2011	22	35	32	28
	2010	10	19	24	14
	2006-07	23	23	24	23
1.5 – 2	2011	46	35	23	39
	2010	42	52	6	40
	2006-07	37	43	33	40
2.5 – 3	2011	19	22	19	20
	2010	30	6	35	26
	2006-07	30	13	5	19

of solicitation. This metric lends itself to comparison of the three gender integration reviews (2006-2007, 2010, and 2011), with the qualification that the “sub-minimal” category was not used in 2006-2007.

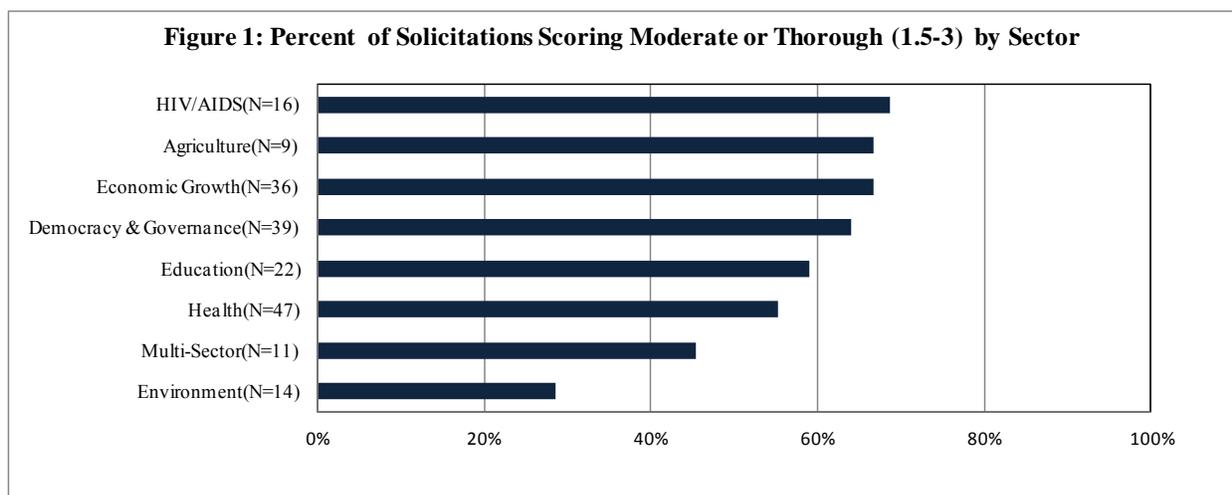
On an aggregate basis, looking at the right hand column, the most striking finding is that in 2011 solicitations with no gender content are rare. The improvement over time at this level is evident for each type of solicitation. This improvement is balanced by the lack of progress at the top end of the scale, with the percentage of “thorough” solicitations unchanged over 2006-

2007 and the roughly the same percentage of “moderate” solicitations. While in 2010 we could report that the drop in “zero” scores seemed to be matched by an increase in “thorough” scores, the 2011 data instead show an increase in the top range of “minimal” scores (1).

Performance is quite uneven among the three types of solicitation, however. At the top end of the scale, the 2011 APSs and especially the RFPs show substantial improvement over the 2006-07 data, while the APS performance compared to 2010 is disappointing. For RFAs, progress is evident at the “moderate” level.

C. Quality of Gender Integration

1. Frequency distribution by sector:



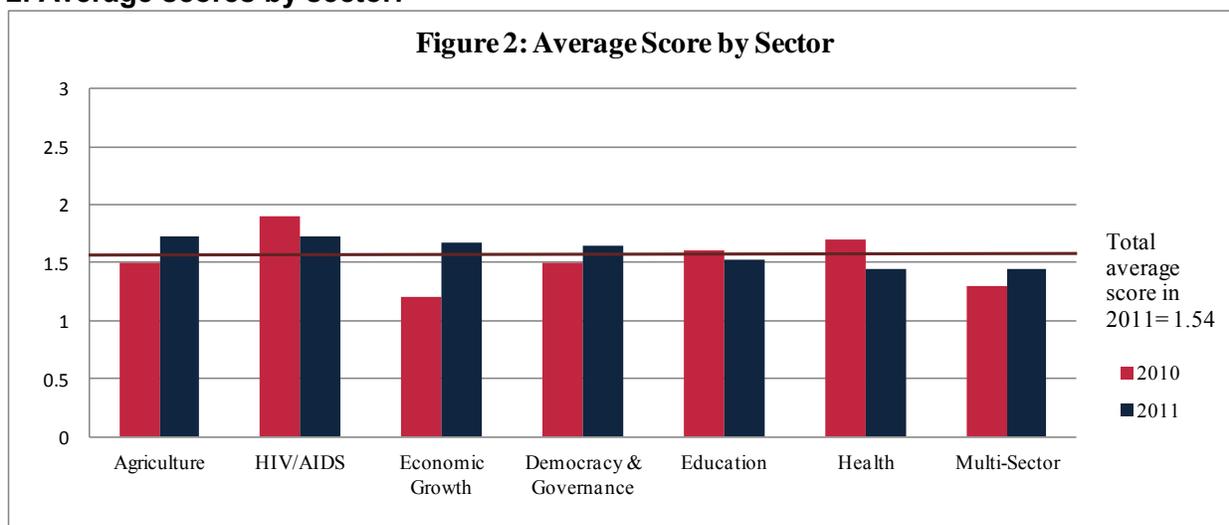
On an aggregate basis, 59 percent of all solicitations score “moderate” or “thorough.” With the exception of Environment and Multi-Sector, no sector had less than 55 percent scoring “moderate” or “thorough” (Figure 1⁸). The highest performing are HIV/AIDS, with 69 percent; Agriculture and EG, tied at 67 percent; and DG, with 64 percent. Education and Health have 59 percent and 55 percent, respectively.

Only 29 percent of Environment solicitations score “moderate” or “thorough,” while 45 percent of Multi-Sector solicitations do so. With three solicitations each, both of these sectors were too small to be addressed separately in 2010, and Environment was folded into EG.

By comparison with the 2010 sample, HIV/AIDS, while still in the lead, fell from 79 to 69 percent scoring moderate or thorough; Agriculture and EG have increased, from 56 and 53 percent respectively; DG shows virtually no change; Education fell slightly, from 63 to 59 percent; and Health dropped a surprising 22 points from a 2010 average of 77 percent scoring moderate or thorough.

⁸ The Agriculture and Social Protection sectors are too few in number to reliably discuss sectoral averages.

2. Average scores by sector:



The total average score for the 2011 sample is 1.54, comparable to the 2010 overall average of 1.60 (see Table 3). The HIV/AIDS solicitations again scores highest with an average score of 1.72 and is tied with the Agriculture solicitations, which represents an improvement for that sector over its 2010 average score of 1.5. EG is also above average with the second highest average score of 1.67 compared to 1.3 in 2010, and the DG sector follows closely behind with 1.64, also an improvement over its score of 1.5 in 2010. Education’s average score of 1.52 is not markedly different from 2010 – the 2011 sample contains 22 documents, compared to eight for 2010. This sector contains two of the only four solicitations with “0” scores from the sample overall: a girls scholarship program and a model schools program.

The solicitations in the new Social Protection category have an average score of 1.56, just above the average for the year. (They are not included in Table 3 because the category was not part of the 2010 review.)

Table 3: Average Score by Sector, 2010 And 2011

	HIV/AIDS	Health	Education	DG	Agriculture	EG	Average
2010	1.90	1.70	1.60	1.50	1.50	1.30	1.60
2011	1.72	1.45	1.52	1.64	1.72	1.67	1.54

Health and Environment results are disappointing. The average score for solicitations in Health is 1.45, compared with 1.7 in 2010 when this sector ranked second to HIV/AIDS. This sector contains 21 out of 47 solicitations scoring “minimal,” of which one-third score only “0.5” (or sub-minimal).

Environment, which in 2011 was included in EG because of the limited number of solicitations, comes out with an average score of 1, or “minimal.” This poor performance is seen across all regions, with only Africa and Asia achieving scores above “minimal.” Two of the four “0”

scores in the whole 2011 sample are in this sector: one related to water and the other for environmental assessment.⁹

3. Subsectors

Twenty-one solicitations incorporate technical approaches that correspond to one or more of the priority Presidential Initiatives (e.g. Feed the Future (FtF), Global Climate Change (GCC)) or the priority of Conflict/Post-Conflict. For purposes of this analysis, with the exception of one solicitation that specifies that 70 percent of its content is devoted to GCC (and the remaining 30 percent split between FtF and Water, a category not addressed here), the solicitations are double-counted in calculating a total average score for a given sub-sector.

Score	FtF	GCC	Conflict
0.5		1	1
1	1	1	
1.5	2		
2	3	3	1
2.5	2		3
3	4	1	1
Total Average Score	2.25	2.50	2.17

* Several solicitations reflect more than one of the priority initiatives and are double-counted for documentation purposes.

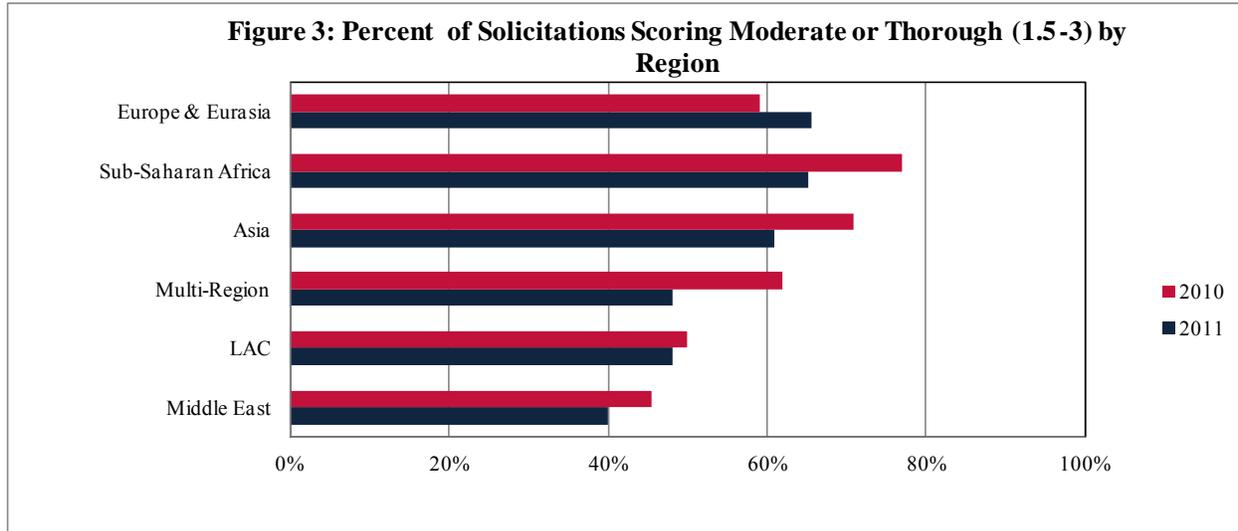
For FtF, 11 of the 12 solicitations score “moderate” or “thorough” and six achieve a score of “thorough,” a marked improvement over 2010 when six out of ten solicitations from this sub-sector were “moderate” or “thorough.” The sectors these solicitations derive from include EG, Agriculture, Health, Environment, DG, and Social Protection. The common element that makes 17 of the 21 solicitations, or 81 percent of this group, stand out is the attention given to providing informative details on the gender dimensions of the projects to be awarded.

4. Regions

On a regional basis, E&E has the highest percentage of solicitations scoring “moderate” or “thorough” – almost 66 percent, and higher than the 59 percent achieved in 2010. Africa follows with 65 percent, substantially below its 77 percent achievement in 2010. Asia is next, with 61 percent – 11 points lower than in 2010. LAC and Multi-Region both have 48 percent of solicitations in the “moderate” or “thorough” range, a small decrease for LAC over 2010, but a sizable decrease for Multi-Region, which scored 62 percent in 2010. Middle East continues to

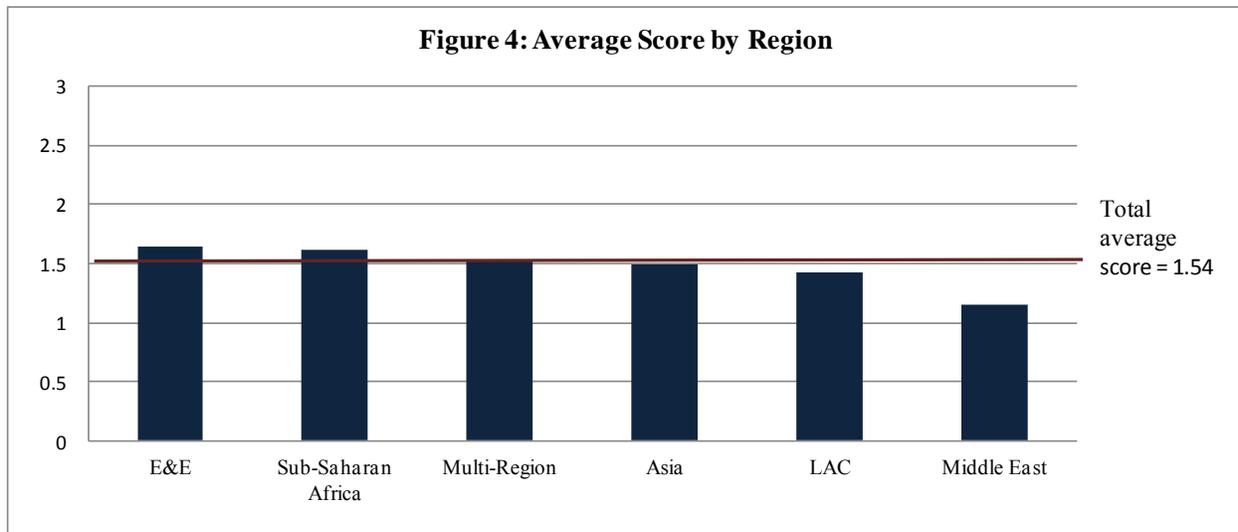
⁹ A solicitation could receive a “sub- or minimal” (rather than “0”) score if it explicitly explains why it is not relevant to include gender issues.

be the lowest with 40 percent, less than its 2010 performance of 45 percent of “moderate” or “thorough” solicitations.



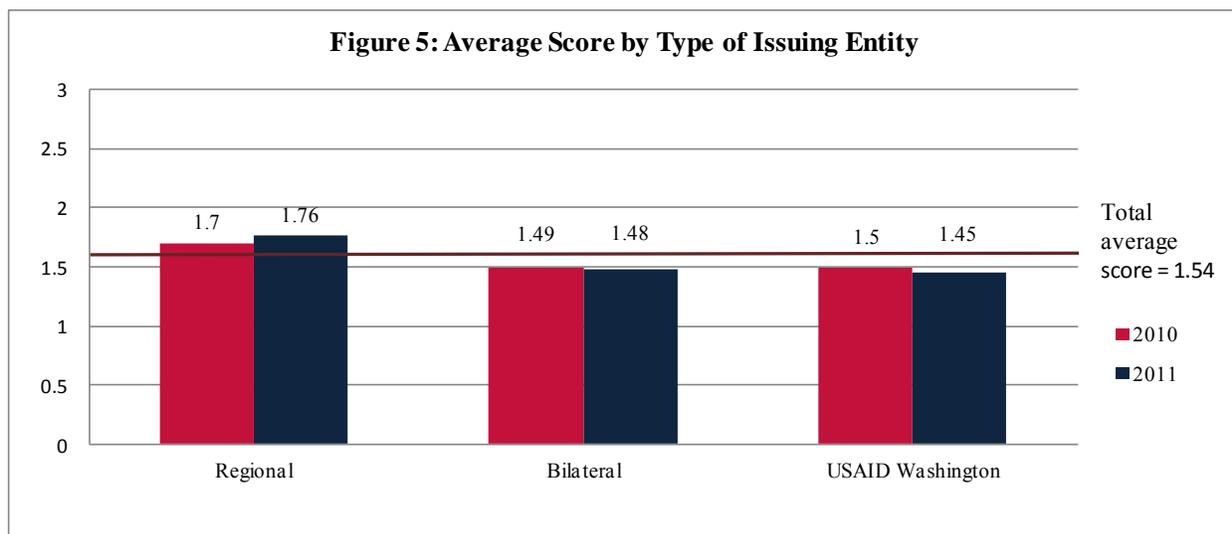
5. Average Scores by Region

Average score by region is shown in Figure 4 (the 2010 series is not presented here due to changes in groupings). E&E and Africa lead the sample with average scores of 1.64 and 1.62 respectively. Multi-Region, Asia, and LAC are close together with scores of 1.54, 1.5, and 1.43 respectively. Middle East trails at 1.15. With a similar number of solicitations (10, 11 in 2010), Middle East had two solicitations with no gender content compared with four in 2010. Both of these are mentioned above, one in environment (water) and one in education.



6. Average Scores by Issuing Entity

Bilateral Missions, Regional Missions, and USAID/W closely track the results achieved in 2010, and all fall in the “moderate” range. However, solicitations issued by Regional Missions achieve an average score of 1.76, well above the overall average of 1.54, while those issued by Bilateral Missions and USAID/W have scores of 1.48 and 1.45 respectively.



It is interesting to note that almost 70 percent of solicitations issued by Regional Missions score “moderate” or “thorough,” and 28 percent fall in the “thorough” range. This is the second highest percentage of any grouping presented in this report (behind FtF) and speaks well of the care with which gender issues were integrated in these solicitations. The “moderate” and “thorough” percentages for solicitations issued by bilateral operating units and USAID/W are 58 percent and 47 percent respectively.

Issuing Entity	Sub-Saharan Africa	Asia	LAC	E&E	Middle East	Multi Region
Bilateral	1.47 (N=52)	1.33 (N=23)	1.63 (N=20)	1.69 (N=13)	1.28 (N=9)	
Regional Mission	2.13 (N=15)	1.81 (N=16)	1 (N=2)	1.53 (N=15)	0 (N=1)	
USAID Washington	1.75 (N=2)	1 (N=2)	0.8 (N=5)	2.5 (N=1)		1.54 (N=27)

The break-down of issuing entity scores by region had not been done in the 2010 study, and may be informative. For Bilateral Missions, E&E and LAC are at the top, with average scores of 1.69 and 1.63, followed by Africa at 1.47; and Asia and ME at 1.33 and 1.28 respectively.

The break-down by Regional Missions is striking: Africa Regional Missions star, with an average score of 2.13 for 15 separate solicitations. Asia and E&E regional entities also do well, with respective scores of 1.81 (16 solicitations) and 1.53 (15 solicitations). There are insufficient numbers of solicitations to calculate average scores for Regional LAC and ME entities, as well as for USAID/W in all regions except Multi-Region.

Regional issuing entities are responsible for both multi-country solicitations and for solicitations originating in Bilateral Missions (where no procurement officer may be present). Further analysis could identify the characteristics of solicitations contributing to the good performance of Africa and Asia regional issuing entities

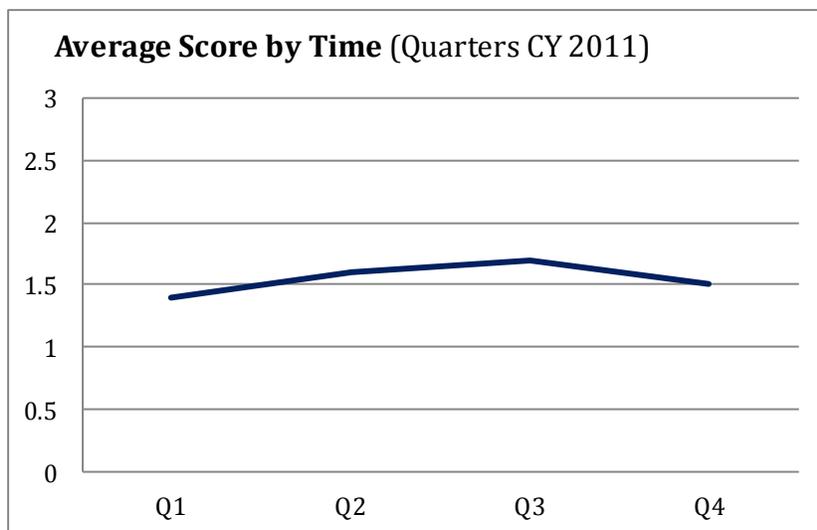
D. Special Considerations

A frequency distribution of solicitation scores by quarter in 2010 showed a correlation between the issuance of gender guidance and a detectable improvement in average scores, to a high of 1.8 in the fourth quarter. A similar distribution by quarter in 2011 shows an increase in Quarters 2 and 3, but a decline in Quarter 4.

One explanation for the increase in the middle of the period could be the issuance, on April 25, 2011, of Administrator Shah's message on Strengthening USAID's Gender Programming and Organizational Structure. The message announced the creation of the Policy Task Team charged with crafting a new policy on gender equality and women's empowerment for the first time in 30 years.¹⁰ It also formally announced the recruitment of senior experts in the Deputy Administrator's office as well as in the Policy, Planning, and Learning Bureau. The addition of high-level gender champions able to engage both USAID/W and field managers and staff in recognizing the importance of gender issues and improving the quality of gender work may have been instrumental in the increased performance shown in the figure below.

One might expect the third calendar quarter, coinciding with intense activity at the end of the fiscal year, to show some slowdown, but instead, solicitations issued in this quarter continued to improve. The slack occurs instead at the end of the calendar year. One hypothesis for this change might be that solicitations issued reflect technical work done several months earlier.

¹⁰ The policy mentioned in the announcement was released on March 1, 2012, and may be noteworthy in future measurement exercises.



IV. Conclusion

The overall level of gender integration in USAID solicitations continues to increase, as documented by the review of documents issued in 2011. Progress in the quality of integration continues to be uneven across sectors and regions, however, in spite of continued USAID/W guidance and strengthened leadership. The best sector performers, in rank order, are HIV/AIDS tied with Agriculture, EG, and DG, compared with HIV/AIDS, Health, Education, and DG in 2010. By region, the results are similar to 2010: Europe and Eurasia, Africa, and Asia lead the others.

Positive elements of this review include the noteworthy performance of documents issued under the Feed the Future (FtF) initiative and those focused on post-conflict themes, as well as the performance of regional issuing entities compared to other USAID issuing entities.

A number of factors might account for these differences:

- Some of the solicitations represent “cutting-edge” work where, in fact, very little is known about the gender issues relevant to the proposed project. In the 2011 sample, a few solicitations with low gender content require the bidder to conduct gender analysis at the outset. Some of the higher scoring solicitations refer to recently completed gender assessments as sources of information. Further study is required to correlate these higher-scoring solicitations with recent gender focused TA in a given mission.
- A solicitation requesting concept papers may be less demanding in terms of gender because this aspect is expected to be addressed later, in the full submission. It must be noted that in the 2011 sample, there are examples of such two-stage solicitations that have sufficient gender content to reach a “moderate” score. Some treat in detail the scoring criteria for full applications, even though they only call for short initial papers.
- Limited gender content may reflect, in part, greater compliance with the letter of the law represented by USAID gender policy and guidance at the time of release of these

solicitations, at the expense of concern for the substance of gender issues. Generally, USAID technical officers are responsible for contextual information and for identifying sector-specific gender issues that need attention in a project, while procurement officers are responsible for assuring that gender is addressed in the directions for submission of proposals or applications. Where time (or staff) available to prepare solicitations is limited, requesting offices may deem this approach sufficient and issuing officers may agree. In some 2011 solicitations, it seems that a “gender statement” may be taking the place of integration of gender issues, which may be more painstaking integration of gender throughout the document.

- In general, it is likely that relatively shorter term or more modestly funded activities may accord a lower priority to gender integration
- To the extent that the increase in emphasis on use of host country systems may focus on building institutional capacity, rather than providing services, requesting offices may not see a need for a gender component. They should, in these cases, include a clear statement that gender is not applicable to the particular activity.
- Solicitations calling for training are generally clear about requiring gender equality (or an effort to achieve this) in terms of numbers of participants. They may not always focus on gender issues in terms of recruiting participants, however.

It is also possible that, in 2011, an unquantifiable difference occurred in central office support, as EGAT’s Office of Women in Development was reorganized into the Office of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, with attendant staff changes. This reorganization may have resulted in discrete changes, such as in levels of gender training offered or TA provided. Similarly, might it be possible that Regional and Bilateral Mission staff may have benefited over time from more gender training opportunities, i.e. than staff in USAID/W?

Given the mobility of USAID staff, continued learning about and understanding of gender issues is clearly an important element of improved performance. Support for gender manifested repeatedly at the highest levels of USAID management, and made evident through the high profile afforded to gender issues in USAID’s recently formulated operational principles, is invaluable.

Annex A: Terms of Reference

Background

In 2007, EGAT/WID completed a four-stage review of USAID solicitation documents to measure the degree of attention to gender concerns. This review consisted of reviewing a sample of 147 full and open solicitations (RFPs, RFAs, APS and LWAs) posted on USAID public solicitation websites for contracts and for grants (www.fbo.gov and www.grants.gov), drawn at four three-month intervals (May 3, 2006, August 3, 2006, November 3, 2006, and February 2, 2007), and covering a period of approximately one year. Utilizing gender measurement methodology developed specifically for this activity (rating scale of “none,” “minimal,” “moderate,” and “thorough” was used), the review found that, on average, USAID procurements reflect a “moderate” amount of gender integration, with two-fifths of the solicitations offering only “lip service” to the issue or failing to mention it at all. Higher gender integration scores were present in sectors where women’s issues and the importance of gender have been clearly articulated and are more widely understood and acknowledged as important, i.e. Health, Education, and Agriculture.

In January 2011, three years after the completion of the original review, the situation regarding CY 2010 procurements was assessed to determine what if any changes took place in average levels of gender integration. That follow-on review determined that, given the limitations of the methodology, eighty percent of solicitations included at least minimal attention to gender; sixty-six percent, or two-thirds of solicitations had moderately or thoroughly integrated gender, an improvement over the earlier study. The percentage of solicitations rated “Thorough” went from 19% to 26% compared to the analysis conducted in 2006-7. The changes, including variations across sectors and regions and procurement vehicles, pointed to the importance of continuous reinforcement of gender integration principles and gender learning among USAID staff.

Purpose

The purpose of the solicitation document review task is to monitor the extent to which USAID is taking account of gender considerations in solicitations for competitive grants and contracts. This follow-up review for CY 2011 procurements may identify the continuing effect of USAID’s revised and strengthened Automated Directives System (ADS) guidance on integrating gender on USAID procurement documents— and by extension also in USAID development activities. The task may detect whether progress in gender integration is occurring evenly across sectors and geographic regions, or between field mission and Washington operating units.

Solicitation Document Monitoring (review of IQCs, RFPs, RFAs, LWAs and APSs)

Approach/Methodology The review of procurement solicitations will be identical to the CY 2010 review in terms of scoring methodology, i.e. the same tiered scoring system will be used. The solicitations to be included in the review will include all those released/issued during CY 2011. It will not include those solicitations for which a draft solicitation was released, except where a final solicitation did follow during the period. (The CY2011 analysis will track those latter instances.)

The purpose of this review is to monitor the extent to which Agency operating units are incorporating gender into their solicitations for competitive procurement of contracts and grants. Procurement solicitation documents lay the essential groundwork for what is to actually happen during implementation in accordance with the project design.

All documents that fall within the designated period (January 1 – December 31, 2011) will be reviewed as per the earlier approved Solicitation Document Review questions (6 questions), score guide, and instructions (attached). The review, findings, and a summary will be expected no later than 30 days after the sample draw.

Tasks

- The monitoring will be completed by designated STTA&T Task Order/DevTech staff with EGAT/GenDev concurrence.
- Initially, reviewers and the EGAT/GenDev technical leader will review two selected procurement documents and compare and discuss the scores, to calibrate and ensure consistency among reviewers.
- A database format will be developed by DevTech and distributed to reviewers for recording numerical scores to facilitate analysis by region and sector, and to make comparisons over time.
- All documents available on FedBizOps.gov and Grants.gov, the designated websites, during calendar year 2011 will be downloaded for review. Procurements for personal services, technical support to USAID operating units, and commodity purchases will be excluded. Documents for construction/engineering services projects will be cursorily reviewed for the presence of a rationale for excluding gender, and otherwise removed from further scoring. Strategic plans or other documents that are not leading directly to a solicitation will also be excluded.
- An STTA&T technical staff person/consultant will analyze the numerical scores and prepare the draft summary report of the Solicitation Document Review (see outline).

A draft report will be due to EGAT/GenDev thirty days after the completion of review of the documents. Not later than ten days after receipt/incorporation by DevTech of comments from EGAT/GenDev the final report will be submitted to EGAT/GenDev. The Solicitation Document Monitoring Review should include an overview interpretation of the findings, and offer comparisons, where relevant, to previous reviews of gender integration in USAID procurements. Implications for EGAT/GenDev leadership on gender integration in USAID development programming should be noted. The entire report should be about 7 to 10 pages, including graphs/graphics. It will be accompanied by an Executive Summary; electronic annexes may be used to archive scoring documents.

Deliverables

- Scoring sheets for all procurement documents included in the study.

- Summary of the quantitative analysis of numerical scores.
- Draft and final report as described above

Level of Effort

The estimated level of effort for the review of procurement documents and preparation of the report, including analysis, will depend on the number of solicitations included in the sample, and the number of analysts scoring the documents. The period of performance will include time for revision and finalization.

Schedule

The solicitation document review will commence o/a January 23rd, 2012, and all tasks and the final report will be completed by March 30, 2012.

Annex B: Methodology

A. Solicitation Document Selection

The reviewed documents were drawn from publicly available USAID project solicitations posted on the FBO.gov and Grants.gov websites during the 2011 calendar year (January 1 to December 31, 2011).

Following the procedure used in the 2010 document draw, postings for procurement of Personal Services Contracts, technical services to USAID operating units, and commodity purchases were excluded from the documents reviewed. The Terms of Reference for this study included construction/engineering services documents to be reviewed for the presence of a rationale for the exclusion of gender in the document. These documents were treated separately, and their scores are not part of the main analysis. A number of documents were excluded from consideration for reasons described below.

The final document collection yielded 203 solicitations comprised of 107 Requests for Assistance - RFAs, 65 Requests for Proposal - RFPs, and 31 Annual Program Statements - APSs

B. Scoring Criteria

Four reviewers examined and scored the documents. All the documents were scored based on the methodology applied in 2010. The reviewers conducted trial scorings to ensure consistency. Annex C includes a description of scoring criteria used.

As in the previous phase, seven “yes/no” questions about specific elements of gender integration were used to score each document. The reviewer then graded the solicitation with a numeric score:

- Documents that rated as “none,” “sub-minimal,” or “minimal,” with scores of 0, 0.5, or 1, indicate a low level of gender consideration. The “sub-minimal” category was created for this review in order to describe documents that had some passing mention of gender but still ranked below “minimal.”
- A score of 1.5 reflects the mid-range of the scoring system, indicating an awareness of the importance and relevance of gender issues.
- Scores from 2.0-3.0 represent the top of the scoring rubric; these documents demonstrate high levels of thought regarding gender and its context for the project landscape.
- In order to earn a score of 3.0, a document had to have “yes” answers for all of the six main scoring questions.

Those documents scoring the highest ranking demonstrated close adherence to ADS guidance on contracts (**ADS 302.3.5.15**) and grants (**ADS 303.3.6.3**). These directives call for gender issues to be integrated in the different performance components of a procurement document such as an RFP, RFA or APS, including the Statement of Work or program description, project deliverables, key personnel qualifications and monitoring and evaluation requirements. If gender issues are not included, the rationale must be provided. In addition, gender issues must be reflected in the corresponding technical evaluation criteria or technical selection criteria, including, but not limited to, technical understanding and approach, monitoring and evaluation, and personnel.

Some of the most outstanding documents identified and addressed gender issues throughout the document, provided in-depth cultural context of gender issues and specified issues of concern related to the project. Some solicitations exceeded the requirements. Of particular note are an education project, an agriculture, nutrition and livelihoods project and a worldwide economic growth project.

The education project was founded on two key principles, including: “Enhance gender equality in educational reform to promote institutional effectiveness.” Applicants were required to address this principle “throughout a proposal” and “describe clearly and comprehensively their ability to affect gender related constraints to sustainably improve learner performance.” In addition, it was required that the “technical approach must integrate demonstrable methodology for incorporating a gender consideration...” Gender differences were identified and addressed throughout this solicitation, specific gender qualifications were required for key staff, sex-disaggregated data was required and the technical evaluation reflected the importance placed on gender by awarding points for gender methodology. The document was further strengthened by incorporating many references to a recent country gender assessment and multiple links to relevant specific gender related documents.

A project dealing with agriculture, nutrition, and livelihoods also reflected a very strong commitment to gender integration in the project development process. The introduction to the scope of work stated that “clarity on the role of gender dynamics in households and communities” was one of five principles of project operations, and this was reinforced in a later statement that the project would go “beyond traditional sectoral interventions, (and) place increased focus on the role of women in the household, especially regarding food security, decision-making processes, and the use and distribution of resources.” Extensive contextual gender information and analysis was provided. With respect to evaluation criteria, it was specified that “the successful applicant will demonstrate a clear strategy and vision of how household-level gender relations will change as a result of the program, as well as give examples of specific approaches to apply to address gender relations and norms.”

Incorporating contextual gender dimensions substantively into worldwide projects can be challenging, since there must be some degree of generalization. However, the importance of identifying and addressing specific gender issues was clearly reflected in a USAID/W solicitation for a collaborative research support program which noted that “gender (is an) important cross cutting theme that should be recurrent throughout the portfolio regardless of specific substantive issues addressed.” This document highlighted specific gender concerns, noting that “promoting greater participation of women in higher-value value chains, is especially important” and that research “that promotes a better understanding of how to stimulate financial service provision to agricultural enterprises and smallholder producers, especially women and other underserved community members, would be of tremendous value to USAID field Missions.” Applicants were

instructed to use gender as one lens of analysis even for research activities that were not primarily focused on gender, and build gender considerations into research methodology, including sex-disaggregated data collection. This solicitation also specified articulation of gender issues as a component in evaluation criteria and noted that experience in gender integration was a preferred qualification for the COP.

C. Categorization by Sector and Region

The reviewers designated a “sector” and “region” for each solicitation. Most documents were assigned to a given sector based on their evident and principal focus, and according to USAID conventions. For statistical reasons, the few solicitations falling in the Energy sector did not justify separate categorization and were grouped within the Economic Growth (EG) sector. When a solicitation’s content robustly addressed more than one sector, a solicitation was labeled as “Multi-sector.”

The study also specified region, based on the geographic region of the development activity. Where a solicitation included activity across more than one region, it was designated “Multi-region.” A sufficient number of solicitations in the Environment sector (i.e. 14, or over 5% of the total) justified the creation of an additional category. In addition, a category labeled “Social Protection” is designated and includes nine distinct solicitations that do not otherwise fit into other existing categories.

D. Comparison with Previous Studies

This report presents a summary of 2011 data, and does include comparisons with the 2010 and—to a more limited extent—the 2006/2007 cohorts. While the 2011 study contains two additional scoring categories, the 14 solicitations in the Environment sector are numerous enough to stand alone, and those in the Social Protection category respond to social needs such as prevention of gender-based violence, most of the sectors analyzed in 2010 can serve as a baseline for 2011. The possible exception is Economic Growth, which in 2010 also contained the three Environments solicitations that were contained within the sample.

Annex C: Scoring Criteria

Scoring criteria explained:

Score	Explanation
0	No reference to gender
0.5	Includes some passing reference to gender, perhaps only a few words
1.0	Includes reference to USAID guidance and/or the principle of gender inclusion, but is not necessarily tailored to the country context; many of the gender references may be generic
1.5	Includes a gender statement, limited contextual information and/or limited or not specific concerns/issues for implementers
2.0	Includes a gender statement, informative contextual information, more country or project/specific articulation of concerns and issues for implementers
2.5	Gender is well integrated throughout. One or two of the questions (e.g., gender in staff qualifications) is not addressed.
3.0	Gender is well integrated throughout, in a country and/or issue-relevant and substantive way. Gender qualifications for staff are required.
NOTE	A solicitation focused on women and girls should also address gender roles and responsibilities, given that socio-cultural context or norms will have an impact on the sustainability of the activity.

Annex D: Score Sheet Template

Information Sheet Solicitation Document Review

Fill out the top of the form. Provide a simple yes/no answer for each question. Compile and note relevant text references and comments at the right. Note: it is not necessary to break out evidence/examples by question. Allocate a score for the full solicitation, using the Score Guide.

Country:		Doc ID No:		Score (0-3):
Solicitation Type: ___ RFP (Contract) ___ RFA or ___ APS (Grant)				
Solicitation Number:			Solicitation Date:	
Sector:		If applicable, subsector (Conflict/FTF/GCC/Water):		
Date Sheet Prepared:				
Key Questions	Yes	No	Evidence/Examples	
<i>A1. Overall: Are gender considerations discussed in the document (gender statement or similar)? If gender is not discussed, note at right whether or not an approved rationale for not doing so is referenced.</i>				
<i>A2. Gender considerations are presented, but are generic and not adequately integrated into the body of the solicitation.</i>				
B. Specific Gender Considerations –				
Provide details at right				
<i>1. Identification of Gender Concerns: Does the document provide any contextual information on gender and/or identify specific gender concerns or priorities?</i>				
<i>2. Gender Aspects of Proposed Approach: Does the statement of work task proposers with addressing gender considerations in general or specific gender issues in their proposals?</i>				
<i>3. Gender Expertise: Does the document outline any gender-related requirements for key personnel or capacity of other staff?</i>				
<i>4. Program Monitoring: Does the document require collection of sex-disaggregated information to monitor the gender-differentiated effects of the project?</i>				
<i>5. Gender-Related Elements of Technical Evaluation Criteria: Do the criteria include any gender-related elements?</i>				