

Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker



OECD-DAC NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY (GENDERNET)
December 2016

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Introduction

This handbook is the first guidance produced by the OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) on the DAC gender equality policy marker. It is designed to promote a better understanding of the gender marker and to support DAC member agencies in applying this tool by providing recommendations for its effective application. This is particularly timely as the international community begins the implementation of the SDGs, for which the marker is a key monitoring and accountability tool. To the extent possible, agencies are encouraged to align their reporting practices to these recommendations.

The handbook includes new recommended minimum criteria for the three categories of the gender marker¹ introduced in December 2016. They are designed to ensure a common understanding among DAC member agencies of what is the minimum baseline for projects to qualify for a 0, 1 or 2 score; facilitate the scoring process by providing a 'checklist' of minimum criteria for each category; and through these measures strengthen the comparability and accuracy of the data reported by DAC members.

I. How does the OECD-DAC track aid in support of gender equality?

The DAC gender equality policy marker

The OECD tracks aid in support of gender equality and women's rights using the **OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker** – a statistical tool to record aid activities that target gender equality as a policy objective. As part of the annual reporting of their aid to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), DAC members are required to indicate for each project/programme whether it targets gender equality as a policy objective according to a three-point scoring system. The gender marker is based on donor intentions at the design stage. Projects/programmes marked as significant and principal (score 1 and 2) are counted as **gender equality focused aid** by the DAC.

1. On the new minimum criteria, see also: OECD-DAC Network on Gender Equality (2016), *Definition and minimum recommended criteria for the DAC gender equality policy marker*.

Three-point scoring system of the DAC gender marker

NOT TARGETED (SCORE 0):	The project/programme has been screened against the marker but has not been found to target gender equality.
SIGNIFICANT (SCORE 1):	Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.
PRINCIPAL (SCORE 2):	Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective.

A gender analysis² and a ‘do no harm’ approach³ is necessary for all aid activities to ensure at minimum that the project/programme does not perpetuate or exacerbate gender inequalities.

DAC members are encouraged to monitor and report on the **gender equality results achieved** by projects/programmes marked significant and principal (score 1 and 2) in the evaluation phase. Reporting on gender equality results is essential to measure and improve performance.

A principal score is not by definition better than a significant score. The GENDERNET recommends that donors adopt a **twin-track approach** to gender equality across their development co-operation portfolio, combining dedicated/targeted interventions (usually score 2) with gender mainstreaming (usually score 1).

The CRS purpose codes

In addition to screening projects with the gender equality policy marker, DAC members are required to classify their projects under a specific **CRS purpose code⁴** to indicate the **main**

2. A gender analysis highlights the differences between and among women and men, girls and boys in terms of their relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in a given context.

3. A ‘do no harm’ approach to gender equality requires that projects/programmes conduct an analysis of the potential risks of unintentionally perpetuating or reinforcing gender inequalities in the context of the intervention, proactively monitor risks, and take corrective/compensatory measures if applicable.

4. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/purposecodessectorclassification.htm>

sector that the project or programme is designed to support (e.g. health, energy, agriculture etc.). Each project/programme can only be assigned one purpose code.⁵

Two codes are particularly relevant for tracking aid to gender equality:

- **The women's equality organisations and institutions code** (code 15170): this purpose code is used to track support for institutions and organisations whose principal focus is gender equality and women's rights. It is intended to be applied to aid that goes to women's civil society organisations and women's ministries. By default, activities recorded under this purpose code get the score principal (score 2) with the gender equality policy marker.
- **The violence against women code** (code 15180): in June 2015, the DAC formally approved the proposal submitted by the GENDERNET to introduce a new code in the DAC statistical system to track aid in support of ending violence against women and girls. This new tool will help to hold governments accountable for delivering on target 5.2 of the SDGs on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls; and target 5.3 on eliminating all harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation. The first data will be available in 2017 for 2016 aid flows.

II. What is the DAC gender equality policy marker intended to do?

The DAC gender equality policy marker is a **key monitoring and accountability tool** in the context of **2030 Agenda**. It is the only common tool available to DAC members to track bilateral aid in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) commitments on gender equality. It can contribute to identifying gaps between policy and financial commitments, and incentivise efforts to close them.

The data generated by the marker provides an **estimate** of DAC members' aid in support of gender equality rather than an exact quantification. The marker is a qualitative instrument rather than a quantitative tool. The **total amounts** of projects/programmes marked 1 and 2 by DAC donors are counted as **gender equality focused aid**.

Since 2007, the data has been **publicly available** on the DAC website⁶ and the OECD produces an annual summary of aid to gender equality and women's rights by each DAC member. The data is used to track changes over time and inform decisions on funding allocations.

What does the data from the marker tell us?

The data identified through the gender equality policy marker provides information about:

- **individual gender equality focused projects/programmes**
- **the global estimate of aid** committed for gender equality;

5. Reporting on multiple purpose codes will begin in 2018 on 2017 flows.

6. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/aidinsupportofgenderequalityandwomens empowerment.htm>

- **the proportion** of DAC members' aid targeting gender equality objectives;
- **the sectors** prioritised for gender equality focused aid;
- the breakdown of gender focused aid **within the individual sectors**;
- **the countries** prioritised for gender equality focused aid;
- **how donors compare** with each other;
- **overall trends and changes over time** in gender equality focused aid.

The DAC policy markers⁷ apply to **donor spending commitments**. As such, they measure planned investments and not disbursements. Donor spending commitments are defined as *“a firm obligation, expressed in writing and backed by the necessary funds, undertaken by an official donor to provide specified assistance”*.⁸ There is very little gap over time between commitments and disbursements, but there can be some lags in the case of pluri annual disbursements (aid paid in several installments). Commitments are recorded in full at the time they are made, even if they are multi-year commitments, and irrespective of when they are disbursed. DAC policy markers apply to commitments because they:

- Provide a **forward-looking picture** by giving information about future expenditure.
- Fluctuate as aid policies change, and therefore better **reflect donors' changing political commitments**.

DAC policy markers apply to **bilateral allocable aid** and exclude core contributions to multilateral organisations. However, all funding for activities channelled through multilaterals and NGOs for the implementation of specific projects (earmarked contributions) are captured by the marker (Chart 1).

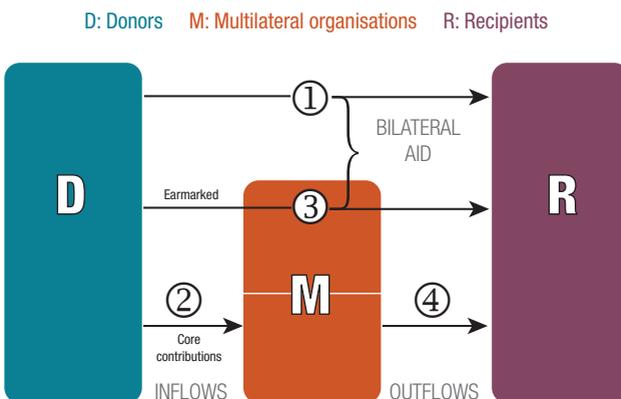
Bilateral allocable aid includes the following **types of aid**: sector budget support, core support to NGOs, support to specific funds managed by international organisations, pooled funding, projects, donor country personnel and other technical assistance, and scholarships in the donor country. It excludes general budget support, core contribution to multilateral organisations, imputed student costs, debt relief, administrative costs, development awareness, and refugee costs in the donor country – where donors' intention is considered as impossible to identify.

7. The other policy markers used by the DAC are: the Rio markers (biodiversity, climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, and desertification) and the policy markers on environment; participatory development/good governance; maternal, new born and child health; and trade development.

8. See DAC Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/dac-glossary.htm>

The marker cannot and does not intend to measure the outcome or impact of a programme or project. It must be complemented by **monitoring and evaluation instruments** to assess this.

Chart 1: Aid flows captured by the DAC gender equality policy marker



Aid flows captured by the gender equality policy marker (bilateral aid): 1+3

Aid flows not captured by the gender equality policy marker
(core contributions to multilateral organisations and outflows): 2 + 4

Box 1: How does the OECD use the data from the DAC gender equality policy marker?

- 1. Annual donor charts:** each year, the OECD publishes data for each DAC member on their aid in support of gender equality: *Aid in support of gender equality and women's empowerment – donor charts*.⁹ This publication provides information for each member on the volume and proportion of aid targeting gender equality, top ten recipients of gender focused aid, the sectoral breakdown of aid to gender equality, and trends over time.
- 2. Thematic analyses:** the OECD publishes thematic policy briefs on donor support for gender equality in topical areas of development co-operation. Recent publications include analysis of aid to gender equality in fragile contexts (March 2015), gender and climate finance (October 2016), and aid to women's economic empowerment (June 2016).
- 3. Policy dialogue:** the OECD uses its international leverage and expertise on financing gender equality to stimulate discussion among DAC members and partners on how to improve the quality and quantity of resourcing for gender equality. It offers a platform to share data, evidence and knowledge on emerging actors and trends shaping the financing landscape for gender equality (e.g. private sector, emerging donors) and seeks to identify promising and innovative practices.

9. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/aid-gender-equality-womens-empowerment-annual-statistical-charts.htm>

III. How does the scoring system of the gender marker work?

Scoring system and minimum criteria

In order to ensure the comparability of the data reported by DAC members, it is important that projects meet a set of minimum criteria that are common to all DAC donors. The GENDERNET recommends the following minimum criteria for aid activities to qualify for a 0, 1 or 2 score:

NOT TARGETED (SCORE 0):	<p>The project/programme has been screened against the marker but has not been found to target gender equality.</p> <p>This score cannot be used as a default value. Projects/programmes that have not been screened should be left unmarked – i.e. the field should be left empty.¹⁰ This ensures that there is no confusion between activities that do not target gender equality (score 0) and activities for which the answer is not known (empty field).</p> <p>It is necessary that a gender analysis is conducted for all projects/programmes. Findings from this gender analysis should be used to ensure at minimum that the project/programme does no harm and does not reinforce gender inequalities.</p>												
SIGNIFICANT (SCORE 1):	<p>Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.</p> <p>The gender equality objective must be explicit in the project/programme documentation and cannot be implicit or assumed.</p> <p>The project/programme, in addition to other objectives, is designed to have a positive impact on advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="background-color: #e6f2e6;">Minimum criteria (should be met in full)</th> <th style="background-color: #e6f2e6;">Yes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A gender analysis of the project/programme has been conducted.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Findings from this gender analysis have informed the design of the project/programme and the intervention adopts a ‘do no harm’ approach.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Presence of at least one explicit gender equality objective backed by at least one gender-specific indicator¹¹ (or a firm commitment to do this if the results framework has not been elaborated at the time of marking the project).</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data and indicators are disaggregated by sex where applicable.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Commitment to monitor and report on the gender equality results achieved by the project in the evaluation phase.</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Minimum criteria (should be met in full)	Yes	A gender analysis of the project/programme has been conducted.	✓	Findings from this gender analysis have informed the design of the project/programme and the intervention adopts a ‘do no harm’ approach.	✓	Presence of at least one explicit gender equality objective backed by at least one gender-specific indicator¹¹ (or a firm commitment to do this if the results framework has not been elaborated at the time of marking the project).	✓	Data and indicators are disaggregated by sex where applicable.	✓	Commitment to monitor and report on the gender equality results achieved by the project in the evaluation phase.	✓
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Data and indicators are disaggregated by sex where applicable.	✓												
Commitment to monitor and report on the gender equality results achieved by the project in the evaluation phase.	✓												

10. DAC members should ensure that their internal reporting system clearly differentiates between the values ‘not screened’ (blank) and ‘not targeted’ (0).

11. The indicator should be defined in “SMART” terms (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

**PRINCIPAL
(SCORE 2):**

Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective.

The project/programme is designed with the principal intention of advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs.

Minimum criteria (should be met in full)	Yes
A gender analysis of the project/programme has been conducted.	✓
Findings from this gender analysis have informed the design of the project/programme and the intervention adopts a 'do no harm' approach.	✓
The top-level ambition of the project/programme is to advance gender equality and/or women's empowerment.	✓
The results framework measures progress towards the project/programme's gender equality objectives through gender-specific indicators to track outcomes/impact .	✓
Data and indicators are disaggregated by sex where applicable.	✓
Commitment to monitor and report on the gender equality results achieved by the project in the evaluation phase.	✓

Examples of scoring

Examples of projects/programmes that can be marked as “not targeted” (score 0):

- A basic education and literacy project designed to benefit boys and girls but with no specific objectives or activities that aim specifically to address gender-specific barriers to education.
- Scholarships where most of the beneficiaries happen to be girls/women but which are not specifically targeted at supporting girls/women's enrolment in education.
- A railway project for which a gender analysis has been conducted, but where gender equality is not a deliberate objective and which does not include specific activities designed to reduce gender-based inequalities (e.g. in access to services, markets, risks, benefits and opportunities) or empower women (e.g. through gender quotas in hiring for construction work, street lighting and walkways that make transport safer for women).
- A project to construct a sports facility for local youth that includes building toilets for boys and girls in separated areas but does not include specific measures to ensure women and girls' involvement in sports activities such as gender trainings for coaches, appropriate scheduling of activities (e.g. before dusk), or awareness raising activities to combat stereotypes.

- A project aimed at supporting local farmers' access to micro-credit to purchase agricultural inputs such as pesticides or fertilisers, which does not address gender biases in access to and control over productive inputs and/or include specific measures to target women farmers.
- A project to prevent alcohol abuse and alcoholism among disadvantaged men through the setting up of support groups and counselling, which might have as an unintended side-effect a reduction in the frequency and severity of intimate partner violence.

Examples of projects/programmes that can be marked as “significant” (score 1):

- A basic education and literacy project designed to benefit boys and girls but with a specific objective and activities that address the gender-specific barriers to girls' education, for example through the provision of financial incentives to encourage disadvantaged families to allow girls to attend school.
- A project aimed at providing drinking water to a district or community, which has specific objectives and activities to ensure that women and girls have safe and easy access to the facilities.
- A project designed to respond to adolescent's sexual and reproductive health needs and reproductive rights by setting up a clinic where they can access information, HIV testing and prevention services, family planning advice, and which includes differential services for girls and boys.
- A project focusing on decentralisation and local governance processes aimed at building the capacity of local governments for improved planning and financial management, but which also defines specific objectives to strengthen women's participation in decision-making at municipal level and ensure gender-responsive services, for example through gender-budgeting initiatives.
- An infrastructure project for the construction of a new metro line which seeks to improve the utilisation of the transport system by women by taking into account their safety needs through providing secure street lighting around stations, and includes specific shop-spaces for female-owned businesses in the stations.

Examples of projects/programmes that can be marked as “principal” (score 2):

- A project that focuses specifically on girls' access to and performance in education and/or vocational training, with the main objective of empowering women and girls and reducing inequalities between boys and girls.
- A project designed principally to prevent and/or respond to gender-based violence in conflict.
- A social protection project set up with the primary purpose of empowering women and girls as a particularly disadvantaged group in society.

- A project to educate and mobilise men and boys to become advocates against gender-based violence in their community.
- A capacity-building project to support a national ministry of finance to incorporate gender equality in its national development strategy.
- A project to strengthen women's voice and participation in government at local, regional and/or national level.

IV. Recommendations for the effective application of the marker

To strengthen the accuracy and comparability of the data between DAC member agencies, the following is recommended:

1. Apply the marker from the early phases of project design

The gender equality policy marker has the most impact when it is used as a “live tool” to spark discussions about the integration of gender equality during the **early stages of the project appraisal and design**, when substantial amendments are still possible.

2. Apply the marker to entire programmes/projects

The gender equality policy marker must be applied to an entire project/programme based on an assessment of the overall intentions of the activity.

The **total budget of a project/programme** marked by DAC donors as 1 or 2 is counted as gender equality focused aid, even if gender equality is only one of the project's objectives. This approach responds to the need to preserve a simple marking process that encourages a high level of donor reporting (in terms of the proportion of projects screened with the marker).

The marker should not be applied separately for different components of a larger project. This is important as inconsistent reporting practices can have a significant impact on the amounts of aid counted as being gender equality focused (see Q&A 4).

For instance, a programme of USD 1.5 million aimed at modernising school infrastructures through refurbishing classrooms, equipping the schools with computers, and building dormitories for female students to promote girls' education should be marked significant (score 1). If the marker were to be applied separately for each component, the activity aimed at building dormitories for female students would be marked principal (score 2) while the remaining components would be marked as not targeted (score 0). In some cases, this can lead to over-reporting of the amounts of aid targeting gender equality as a principal objective and an overall decrease in the amounts of aid reported as significantly focused on gender equality (see Box 2).

Box 2: Impact of the level of application of the marker on the amounts reported to the DAC Programme A: Modernising school infrastructures in West Africa

Total budget: USD 1.5 million

Score given with the Gender Equality Policy Marker	Amounts reported if the marker is applied to the whole programme (recommended by the DAC)	Amounts reported if the programme is broken down
Principal	0	USD 200 000
Significant	USD 1 500 000	0
TOTAL reported	= USD 1 500 000	= USD 200 000

Consistency is needed across DAC member agencies in how the marker is applied.

3. Assign responsibility for applying the marker to project managers/officers

Each DAC agency is encouraged to clearly designate responsibility for assigning and validating the gender marker score.

As the marking must reflect the project's overall intentions, responsibility for applying the marker should sit with project managers/officers who have a good understanding of the project. Ideally, the application of the marker should be done in consultation with gender experts, and with verification from the statistical/quality control unit.

4. Invest in staff capacity to apply the marker correctly

Building staff capacity to apply the marker correctly is critical to facilitate the coding process and reduce the potential for error.

Options to support the coding process include:

- **Dedicated staff trainings on how to use the gender equality marker:** practical exercises on how to code projects based on concrete case studies are often seen as the most useful activity;
- **Developing internal guidance material on the marker and providing technical support** (i.e. to conduct gender analyses) within agencies to support the consistency of coding;

- **Encouraging DAC agencies to share existing material and tools** for capacity-building and training activities for officers in charge of the marking;
- **Setting up a helpdesk/nominating a contact point** to support the officers responsible for the marking.

5. Establish strong internal quality control mechanisms

DAC member agencies are responsible for putting in place quality assurance and control mechanisms to guarantee the accuracy of the application of the marker and the data that they report to the DAC. The DAC is not able to conduct in-depth checks for each member and does not have access to sufficient qualitative information to review the marking of each project.

DAC members should introduce **regular checks** to review the marking of the data before reporting it to the DAC. Verifications are more effective and less time-consuming when they are conducted individually for each project rather than at the aggregated level by the statistical unit.

Recommendations to strengthen internal quality assurance within DAC member agencies include:

- **Conducting a systematic check of the marker score** (for instance by the operational or geographic division) before the approval of the project.
- **Developing a quality assurance plan** to support consistent and robust reporting.

6. Complement the marker with strong monitoring and evaluation systems

The gender equality policy marker does not provide information on the results achieved by projects/programmes. DAC members are encouraged to develop strong **monitoring and evaluation systems** for this specific purpose.

V. Q&A

1. What is a gender analysis?

All projects/programmes should be informed by a preliminary gender analysis. A gender analysis examines the differences in women's and men's roles and responsibilities, daily routines and activities, and access to and control over resources, services and decision-making, including those that lead to social and economic inequalities. It applies this understanding to programme and policy development and to service delivery.

A gender analysis should lead to the inclusion of explicit measures in the project design which:

- avoid perpetuating or reinforcing gender inequalities (“do no harm approach”);
- overcome barriers to women’s full participation in the project;
- ensure that women and men, girls and boys, benefit equitably from the project’s results;
- incorporate specific activities to address gender inequalities and constraints, and meet gender-specific needs and priorities;
- use gender specific and/or sex-disaggregated indicators, including impact indicators, to monitor and evaluate progress and results.

2. Is a score 2 (principal objective) better than a score 1 (significant objective)?

No, a score 2 (principal objective) is not by definition better than a score 1 (significant objective). The DAC recommends that donors adopt a **dual approach** to gender equality in their development co-operation portfolio that **combines gender mainstreaming** (usually score 1 or significant objective) **with standalone projects** to promote gender equality (usually score 2 or principal objective). If gender mainstreaming is systematically practised, gender equality will often be a significant objective of projects across the whole range of sectors.

The following two approaches to an agricultural extension project distinguish between a principal and significant objective. One cannot be considered better than the other:

- A gender analysis shows that the majority of farmers in a particular area are women who have been neglected by extension services (i.e. advisory and support services to improve agricultural productivity). An agricultural extension project is consequently developed with the aim of providing women farmers with training, information, and access to inputs and services to enable them to acquire new skills and improve their food security, income, and productivity. This project would be marked as targeting gender equality as a principal objective (score 2).
- An agricultural extension project is planned with the aim of increasing crop production in a particular area. During the design phase, a gender analysis points to the need to carry out specific actions to involve and empower women-headed households who have typically been overlooked in the provision of extension services because of assumptions that farmers are men. Alongside other measures, and as part of the overall project, a specific lending and credit facility is established for women to purchase agricultural inputs such as pesticides or fertilisers. This project would be marked as targeting gender equality as a significant objective (score 1).

3. What is the distinction between the score 0 (not targeted) and the value “blank”?

The gender equality marker has three values: score 0 (not targeted), score 1 (significant objective) and score 2 (principal objective). The score 0 (not targeted) can be assigned only to **activities that have been screened against the gender equality marker and that were found not to target gender equality**. It cannot be used as a default value.

For activities that have not been screened, the score 0 must not be used. Instead, the marker field should be left empty. This way, there is no confusion between projects that do not target the objective (score 0), and projects for which the answer is not known (empty field).

4. How should donors mark large infrastructure projects/programmes where only a small component of the intervention targets gender equality?

It is important for donors to keep in mind that the **total budget** of a project/programme scored 1 or 2 is counted as gender equality focused aid.

In the case of a large infrastructure project/programme where only a small component or a few activities focus on gender equality, the decision to score the project as 0 (not targeted) or 1 (significant objective) needs to be based on an assessment of the **ambition and quality of the intended gender-related work**. If only a few activities or components of a large project/programme focus on gender equality and/or the quality and ambition of the intervention in relation to gender equality is limited, the donor might decide that it is not meaningful to mark the project as gender equality focused.

Donors are encouraged to better justify their scoring for large projects/programmes marked as targeting gender equality when reporting to the DAC. The description of activities box in the CRS reporting form should clearly communicate the gender equality objectives of the project/programme.

Example of an infrastructure project scored 1 (significant objective):

- An infrastructure project for the construction of a new metro line which seeks to improve the greater utilisation of the transport system by women by taking into account their safety needs through providing secure street lighting around stations, and includes specific shop-spaces for female-owned businesses in the stations.

Example of an infrastructure project scored 0 (not targeted):

- A railway project for which a gender analysis has been conducted, but where gender equality is not a deliberate objective and which does not include specific activities designed to reduce gender-based inequalities (e.g. in access to services, markets, risks, benefits and opportunities) or empower women (e.g. through gender quotas in hiring for construction work, street lighting and walkways that make transport safer for women).

5. Can projects focusing on service provision (such as health clinics, childcare facilities or domestic violence shelters) be marked as gender focused even without an explicit objective to challenge gender inequalities?

Yes, if they contribute to alleviating the gender-specific constraints that women face as a result of prevailing gender norms and roles in society (e.g. for childcare, access to clean water and sanitation, reproductive health and domestic violence services) or meet gender-specific needs. This is based on the understanding that meeting women's specific needs, rights and interests is important and can be a first step to achieve gender equality.

For example, the following projects focusing on service delivery should be marked as gender equality focused:

- A water and sanitation project designed to build safe drinking water facilities in a community, improve health conditions through hygiene education and improve the living conditions of the population which deliberately involves women in the design, choice of location and long-term management of the facilities. The project could be marked as significant (score 1).
- A project designed to build a maternal health clinic with skilled birth attendants, clean delivery area, and postnatal care for women and babies, and that meets their needs, rights and interests. The project could be marked as principal (score 2).

6. Should projects where half of the beneficiaries are women be automatically marked as gender equality focused (score 1 or 2)?

No, ensuring that women benefit equally from a project/programme is not enough to qualify as gender equality focused (score 1 or 2). All projects should ensure that women and men will benefit equally from the activities. Projects should only be marked as gender equality focused if they have as one of their explicit objectives to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, reduce gender discrimination or inequalities, and/or address women's specific gendered needs or constraints, and if they include specific activities to achieve this and indicators to track it.

References to women and girls in the project description (i.e. through terminology such as "including women and girls") does not mean in itself that the project is gender equality focused. The gender equality and/or women's empowerment objective must be an explicit and deliberate objective of the project/programme and cannot be unintended or assumed.

7. Can activities that target men and boys be marked as gender equality focused (score 1 or 2)?

Yes, gender equality can only be achieved if men and boys work with women and girls to transform unequal power relations and challenge discriminatory gendered norms, attitudes and behaviours. Men and boys can also benefit from gender equality and can play a critical role in advancing gender equality from the personal to the societal level, for example by modelling gender-equitable behaviour in the household and community, raising awareness of gender injustices among their peers, holding other men to account, and speaking out as gender advocates.

The projects below targeting men and boys can be marked as gender focused:

- Training for male judges, police officers or the military on women’s human rights;
- Provision of education and information on sexual and reproductive rights for male adolescents, combined with awareness raising and education on gender/women’s rights;
- Men’s groups who meet for activities to combat violence against women.
- A project that provides support services and counselling to male refugees who have experienced sexual and gender-based violence.

The following projects focusing on men and boys cannot be marked as gender focused:

- A project to support male youth employment that does not explicitly seek to address gendered barriers to men’s employment.
- A project to prevent alcohol abuse and alcoholism among disadvantaged men through the setting up of support groups and counselling, which might have as an unintended side-effect a reduction in the frequency and severity of intimate partner violence.

VI. Good practices from GENDERNET members

Complementary tracking systems based on the DAC gender marker

1. The French Development Agency’s “Sustainable development opinion mechanism”

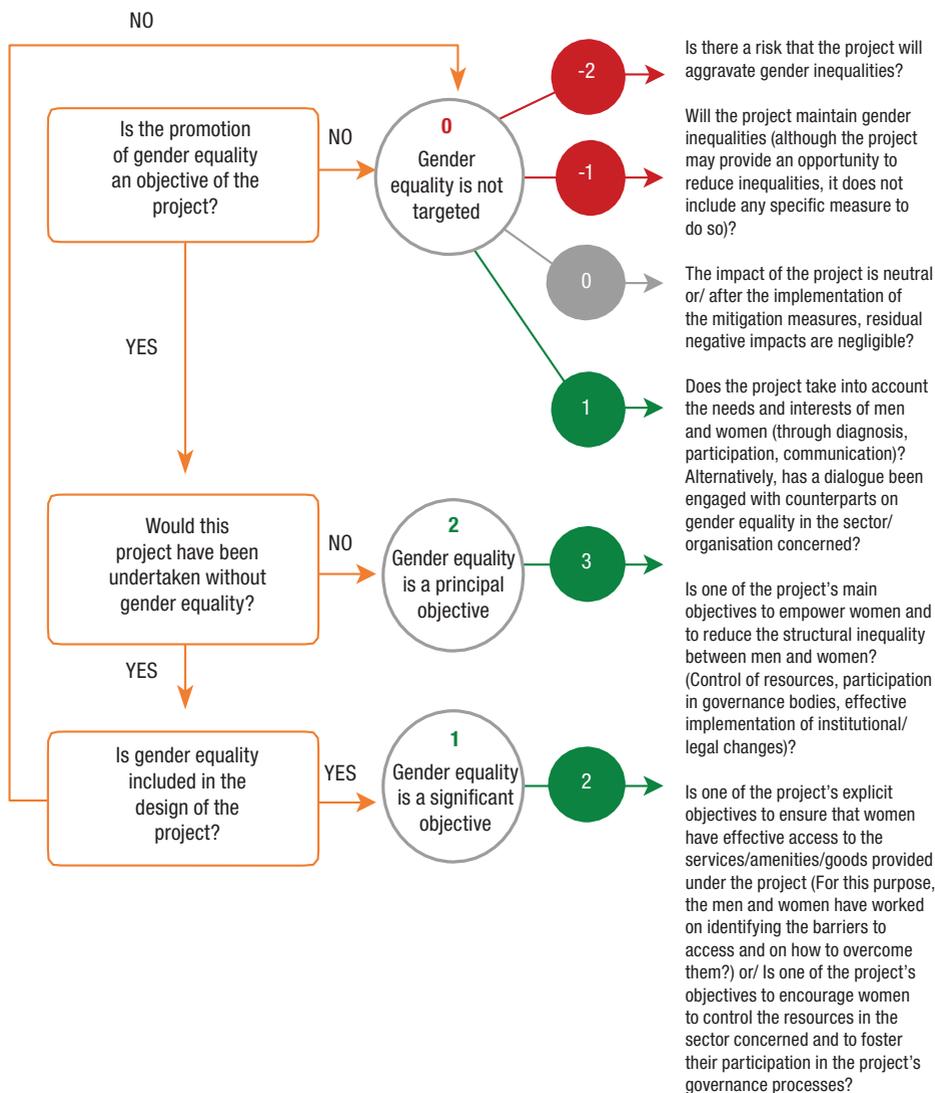
The French Development Agency (AFD) has developed the “sustainable development opinion mechanism”, a marking system to assess at the design stage how each project/programme is intended to contribute to **six dimensions of sustainable development**¹² – one of which is gender equality. The system is based on a scoring system harmonised with the scores of the DAC policy markers. It is applied in combination with the DAC markers.

12. The six dimensions of sustainable development tracked by the AFD’s “sustainable development mechanism” are: (i) economic development; (ii) social well-being and the reduction in social imbalances; (iii) gender equality; (iv) conservation of biodiversity, management of natural environments and resources; (v) fight against climate change and its impacts; (vi) sustainability of the project’s impacts and of the governance framework.

Harmonisation between the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker and the Gender Equality Dimension of the AFD's Sustainable Development Mechanism

DAC GENDER EQUALITY POLICY MARKER (OECD)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM (AFD)



Source: French Development Agency

An interesting feature of this system is that it introduces **four categories** which are all **equivalent to the DAC gender marker's 0 score** (not targeted):

- **Score minus 2:** the project **risks exacerbating gender inequalities**.
- **Score minus 1:** the project **maintains gender inequalities** or does not include any specific measure to reduce inequalities even though it may provide an opportunity to do so.
- **Score 0:** the impact of the project is **gender neutral** or potential negative impacts have been prevented through mitigation measures.
- **Score 1:** the project **takes into account the different needs and interests of men and women** or has engaged in a dialogue on gender equality with counterparts in the sector/organisation concerned, but gender equality is not an explicit objective of the project. This category acknowledges efforts made in designing gender-sensitive programmes even though the programme does not contribute to close gender gaps.

These additional categories are aimed at encouraging operational teams to better integrate gender equality across their projects and helps to track their efforts in this direction (even if projects don't qualify for score 1 or 2).

2. The Belgian Technical Cooperation's Gender Budget Scan

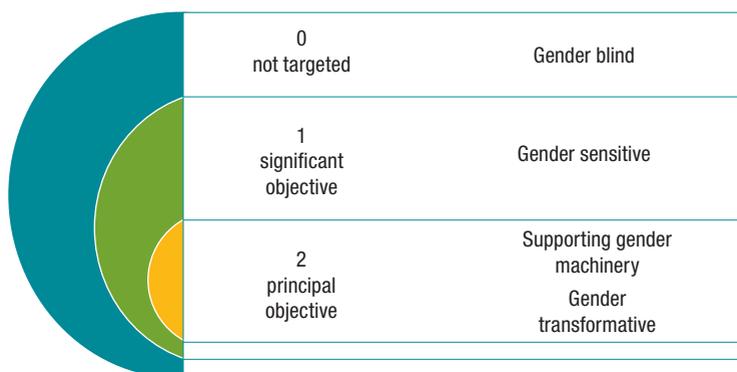
Belgium has developed the **Gender Budget Scan**, a tracking device to monitor the integration of gender equality in interventions from the design to the implementation and evaluation phase. The Gender Budget Scan is mandatory for all new project and programme designs from 2016 in all countries and sectors.

The Gender Budget Scan tracks gender equality expenditures from the planning to the implementation and evaluation phase. Budget lines are screened and classified according to **four categories**:

- (i) gender-blind: disbursements made without a gender analysis.
- (ii) gender-sensitive: based on a gender analysis, these expenditures are intended to provide different responses to meet the practical needs of men and women.
- (iii) strengthening gender machineries: expenditures aimed at strengthening the gender machinery, for instance through capacity building of gender focal points in line ministries or in partner institutions.
- (iv) gender-transformative: specific actions targeting changing gender relations and roles. These expenditures address the strategic interests of women and men and

aim to contribute to long term structural and sustainable changes in societies to promote gender equality.

Link between the GE-Policy Marker and the Gender Budget Scan



Source: Belgian Development Agency

Target setting to drive institutional performance

3. The EU's Gender Action Plan (2016-2020)

The European Union (EU) has included two specific indicators related to the DAC gender equality policy marker in its new Gender Action Plan (2016-2020) to track performance on gender equality:

5.3 Apply systematically the Gender Equality Policy Marker of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (G-marker) and justify G0 scores to management.	5.3.1 N# of justifications for OECD Marker G0 scores (defined as: "no inherent potential to impact on gender equality")	EC, MS
	5.3.2 % of new programmes that score G1 or G2 (Target: 85% of new programmes score G1 or G2 by 2020)	EC, MS

The EU has committed to have **85% of its new programmes marked 1 or 2 by 2020**. This target provides a good example of the incentive and accountability function of the marker which can be used to **improve institutional performance**. In addition, the EU requires that all 0 scores (not targeted) are justified to management.

4. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Gender and Development Strategy (2013-2017)

The **French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development** also uses the DAC gender marker to track the implementation of its Gender and Development Strategy (2013-2017). The gender marker is used to monitor Goal 1 of the Gender and Development Strategy “*Mainstream gender into all development funding instruments*” through the following indicator:

- By 2017, 100% of projects and programmes are screened with the DAC gender marker and at least 50% received the score 1 or 2 (gender equality as a significant or principal objective), except for general or sectoral budget support, or unallocated budget lines.

5. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's focus on targeted interventions

The **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)** has decided to step up its support for interventions with a principal focus on gender equality (score 2). This decision recognises the need to address the current underinvestment in standalone projects on gender equality – i.e. targeted projects designed to make a strong contribution to gender equality – alongside gender mainstreaming efforts. This decision is in line with the recommendation of the DAC which encourages donors to adopt a twin-track approach to gender equality across their development co-operation portfolio, combining targeted interventions (score 2) with gender mainstreaming (score 1). Since 2008, the proportion of projects scored 2 by Sida has more than doubled.

Other related publications:

OECD (2016), Definition and minimum recommended criteria for the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker.

Visit the GENDERNET website for:

- More information about the gender equality policy marker
- Access to gender-related aid data
- Updates about our activities
- Flyers and publications

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development>



OECD-DAC NETWORK ON GENDER EQUALITY (GENDERNET)
HANDBOOK ON THE OECD-DAC GENDER EQUALITY POLICY MARKER