

ANNEX 7:

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN A/CORS AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS DURING THE GENDER ANALYSIS AND GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A close and collaborative relationship between a project's Agreement/Contracting Officer's Representative (A/COR) and implementing partner(s) (IP) is essential for successfully implementing all project activities, including the development of a gender analysis and gender equality action plan (GAP). This document provides key questions and best practices to facilitate a discussion between an IP and their A/COR. It is a practical tool for both IPs and A/CORs. The goal of this discussion is to establish mutual, realistic expectations and how to effectively coordinate during the gender analysis process.

PREPARATION

- **REVIEW RESOURCES ON GENDER ANALYSES.** Familiarize yourself with the latest recommendations and guidance on post-award gender analyses. Key documents include: the [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy](#); [Automated Directives Systems \(ADS\) 205](#); and [Developing a Gender Analysis that Informs a Gender Equality Action Plan: A Toolkit for USAID Implementing Partners](#).
- **EXAMINE AWARD.** Review the award (contract or cooperative agreement) to determine if a GAP is required, and how to budget for developing a gender analysis (discussed in point 3 below). Identify areas where gender integration is present and where it may be lacking, in the activity's Scope of Work (SOW), work plan, deliverables, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) plan.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS THAT THE PROJECT NEEDS TO FULFILL? WILL THE PROJECT BE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE A GENDER ANALYSIS, GAP, OR BOTH?

- Unless specified in the award, a gender analysis and GAP are not required. Many projects, however, include gender requirements within their award. In such cases, developing a gender analysis and GAP is considered best practice for identifying specific steps to fulfill those requirements.
- If a gender analysis is specifically required by the award contract, it should always lead to the development of a GAP that informs the project's work and MEL plans. Stand-alone gender analysis reports should be avoided if they do not result in a GAP or updates to the work or MEL plans.

2. IS THERE A PREFERRED FORMAT FOR THE DELIVERABLE?

- Final gender analysis findings and recommendations can be presented in various formats such as a slide deck, Excel matrix, formal report, or simplified table format in Word. The format should be organized to provide useful content for developing the project's GAP, typically by aligning with the project's results framework rather than with ADS 205 domains. See [Annex 2: Post-Award Gender Analysis Template for Analyses Formatted as a Report](#) and [Annex 13: Gender Analysis Matrix Template](#) for templates for how to organize gender analysis findings.

- Clarify whether there is an intention to produce any public products. Some A/CORs may prefer all resulting products to be shared with partners and posted on the [Development Experience Clearinghouse \(DEC\)](#), while others may prefer to make the report public and keep the GAP internal to the project. Ensure that sufficient budget is allocated to produce any required public products. When possible, gender analysis findings should be shared with partners and participants, perhaps through a two-page summary in local languages.

3. IS THERE A BUDGET LINE DEDICATED TO DEVELOPING A GENDER ANALYSIS AND GAP?

- If the project's budget includes a dedicated line for a gender analysis, prepare a detailed budget in order to understand the level of primary data that can be collected with the available funds. Review information together, and discuss mutual expectations for the scope of the gender analysis based on the budget.
- Examples of gender analysis costs include: consulting fees, transportation to communities for primary data collection, coffee breaks for interviews and focus groups, travel stipends for participants, workshop costs for training data collectors, and cost of the validation workshop.
- If the project's budget does not include a dedicated line, work together to set common expectations for the level of primary data collection (if any). Explore lower-cost alternatives to primary data collection, and discuss where those costs can be funded in the budget. See Box 7-1 for options when resources are limited.

BOX 7-1: OPTIONS WHEN RESOURCES ARE LIMITED

After assessing relevant factors (e.g., staff availability, time, funding, etc.), your steering committee may find that resources are limited. Below are some low-cost options for accessing gender expertise, identifying secondary data, and collecting primary data:

- Leverage in-house and local expertise: Identify staff with strong research, analytical, and writing skills; engage qualified gender specialists representing local women's groups or gender-focused organizations in your project's target area(s) to support your staff. You can draw on their specialized knowledge to provide insights and guidance. Be sure to provide some form of compensation and recognition to any contributions made by local organizations. This is a good option when financial resources are insufficient to contract an external consultant or when an in-house gender focal point is unavailable to conduct the gender analysis.
- Update existing gender analyses: See Box 11 in [Toolkit for Implementing Partners: USAID Gender Analysis and Gender Equality Action Plans](#) for guidance on updating an existing gender analysis in lieu of conducting a new gender analysis. Also, remember that reviewing the existing pre-award gender analysis conducted by USAID should always be a first step, regardless of available resources.
- Harness insights from staff and partners: Conduct a rapid gender analysis based on secondary data; collect additional insights from your team and partners. Ask for their input in identifying gender analysis lines of inquiry and suggesting findings based on their experiences and observations. Integrate their perspectives with your analysis of secondary data, while identifying unknowns to be examined through the project's learning processes.
- Integrate research questions into MEL activities: Examine opportunities within your MEL data collection. For example, if your MEL team is scheduled to conduct baseline data collection, this may offer a cost-effective opportunity to make sure relevant data is collected for a gender analysis. Gender-related questions can be added to baseline surveys, focus groups with participants, and interviews with partners during start-up.

4. ARE THERE PARTICULAR FOCUS AREAS FOR THE GENDER ANALYSIS?

- A post-award gender analysis and GAP should focus on areas of inquiry and actions that are both feasible and aligned with the scope of the project's results framework and planned activities. Discuss whether there are specific components, work plan activities, subgrant initiatives, or outreach campaigns that would benefit from being a focus of the gender analysis.
- Confirm the opportunities (or limitations) for updating the work plan and MEL plan based on the gender analysis findings.

5. WHAT EXISTING DATA IS AVAILABLE TO BUILD ON? DID USAID CONDUCT A GENDER ANALYSIS TO INFORM THE SOLICITATION, AND CAN THE PROJECT UTILIZE THIS ANALYSIS?

- A key starting point to a gender analysis is accessing recent analyses. Discuss whether the A/COR can share any pre-award gender analysis, or recent relevant Country Development Cooperation Strategy or sector-level gender analyses conducted in the last year or two. A/CORs may also have direct knowledge of key issues related to gender and your project, serving as important key informants during the process.
- If another organization has conducted a relevant, high-quality gender analysis, explore the possibility of building on that analysis.

6. HOW SHOULD WE COMMUNICATE THROUGHOUT THE GENDER ANALYSIS PROCESS? AT WHAT STAGES WILL THE A/COR PROVIDE FEEDBACK?

- Keep communication lines open and honest. An IP should inform its A/COR in a timely manner of any challenges encountered during the planning and implementation, such as changes in context, staffing, or timeline, to collaboratively adapt or develop solutions.
- Identify points for the A/COR to provide feedback at critical steps of the gender analysis and GAP process. Clarify which deliverables they want to review or approve. The critical steps in the gender analysis and GAP process typically include: 1) gender analysis SOW; 2) preliminary presentation of findings and recommendations; 3) final presentation of findings and recommendations; 4) draft GAP.
- Discuss whether the A/COR will participate in relevant planning sessions, validation workshops, and GAP development meetings, to facilitate ongoing input and feedback. See [Annex 6: Providing Feedback Throughout the Gender Analysis and GAP Development Process](#) for more details on key considerations at critical steps of the process.