Australian Government
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Towards Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion in the Water-Energy-Climate Nexus

Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program (MTT)

Flagship Study and Rapid Response Projects Guidance Note





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Disclaimer

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While the Guidance Note builds on much learning, it is still a work in progress and all inputs are welcome. The aim is to continue to progress the field together, and in doing so, contribute to the larger goals of gender equality, disability and social conclusion in the project research-policy interface.

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1

MTT, FLAGSHIP STUDY, AND RAPID RESPONSE PROJECT GEDSI EXPECTATIONS

1 MTT, FLAGSHIP STUDY, AND RAPID RESPONSE PROJECT GEDSI EXPECTATIONS

1.1 Introduction: GEDSI in the MTT Program

This guidance note is designed to assist MTT Flagship Study and Rapid Response Projects in addressing gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) by providing clear expectations and guidance, in addition to contextual information to support a comprehensive understanding of GEDSI in the Water-Energy-Climate Nexus across the Lower Mekong Basin countries.

The Long-term Goal of the Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program (MTT) is to **"Contribute to improved and more equitable water and energy security, adaptation and mitigation to climate change in the Mekong Region for the benefit of all, especially the marginalized, vulnerable and at-risk communities**." Aligned to this and more concretely, the End of Program Outcome is that **"Water, energy and climate research and policy interfaces are robust and more inclusive, resulting in more effective and equitable policies, which are cross-sectoral, informed by evidence, and are responding to the needs of vulnerable groups."**[1] Evident in these aims is that MTT's focus on research and policy at the Water-Energy-Climate nexus is not only to contribute to enhanced effectiveness but equally to enhanced inclusiveness in policy processes and equity in policy and its outcomes.

To set up for success on this Goal and Outcome, MTT has committed to the research sponsored, synthesized, and recommendations that flow from it [being] gender (and socially) responsive or transformative.[2] Similarly, it has committed to policy interfaces/processes [being] gender and socially-inclusive.[3] As such, **all research and policy engagement within MTT need to integrate (mainstream) a Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) lens consistently and appropriately** across all aspects of their work.

[1]Ibid, pg 13.
[2]Ibid, pg 9. As per the Program Design document (pg 9), the third prongs of its commitments on GEDSI is: 3. Development of regional network/alliance of KBPIOs (membership, composition, processes) itself: Catalysing results and role modelling inclusion.
[3]Ibid, pg 9.

Projects granted by MTT are asked to do the following things:

Understand the **GEDSI-related actors and issues** in the context of their projects, including but not limited to:

- A social analysis of the situation on how the poor and diverse groups (as below) are particularly impacted by the social roles and forms of exclusion and representation in decision-making, specifically in the context of the project's focus on water, energy, and climate change;
- Consult with local NGOs active in the area, especially women's groups and Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs);
- Identify how the project will address the specific needs and roles of these groups, such as diverse groups of women, people with diverse disabilities, and other context-specific marginalized or underrepresented groups such as ethnic minority groups, children, youth, older people, etc.; and
- Ensure these relate to the specific project sites e.g., rural/urban, slum areas, remote rural, etc.

Designate a project **GEDSI focal point;**

Attend GEDSI **training and workshops;**

Indicate how to logically, consistently, appropriately, and feasibly incorporate a **GEDSI lens** throughout the research and project work; and

Identify **GEDSI criteria, indicators, and means of verification**, and gather sex and disability disaggregated data (these are minimum standards and could also include ethnicity, age, LGBTIQA+ identity, sex of household head, etc.) data throughout the project as a part of the project's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework. A specific outcome or output of GEDSI should be included.

This document guides Flagship Study and Rapid Response project teams regarding expectations and steps for understanding the GEDSI-related actors and issues and successfully, appropriately, and effectively incorporating a GEDSI lens. In applying a GEDSI lens, projects will be effective in mainstreaming a GEDSI perspective into their projects,[4] ensuring that the overarching objectives of inclusivity and equity core to the MTT program are also reflected in project work.

[4]Mainstreaming approaches refer to integrating and incorporating specific considerations or issues into the mainstream or core activities, policies, and practices of a project Program, organisation, or society. It involves incorporating these considerations as a fundamental part of decision-making processes rather than treating them as separate or peripheral concerns. The goal of mainstreaming these issues or considerations is to create sustainable and long-lasting change, where equity, inclusion, or sustainability becomes an integral part of the normative practices and decision-making processes rather than an isolated or peripheral concern.



2

KEY GEDSI ISSUES IN THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN WEC NEXUS

Image by Hadynyah from Getty Images Signature.

2 KEY GEDSI ISSUES IN THE LOWER MEKONG BASIN WEC NEXUS

2.1 GEDSI In the WEC Nexus

Figure 1a-c identifies the global perspectives related to water, climate change, and energy related to GEDSI, noting some considerations and recommendations for strengthening the GEDSI lens throughout the water-energy-climate (WEC) nexus.

GEDSI IN WATER

Global perspectives

- As of 2023 around 2.2 billion people - or 1 in 4 - still lack safely managed **drinking water** at home and 3.4 billion people - or 2 in 5 - do not have safely managed **sanitation**. Around 2 billion people -or 1 in 4 - cannot wash their hands with soap and water at home.
- Globally, 1.8 billion people live in households without water supplies on the premises.
- Women and girls aged 15 and older are primarily responsible for **water collection** in 7 out of 10 such households, compared with 3 in 10 households for their male peers. Girls under 15 (7 percent) are also more likely than boys under 15 (4 %) to fetch water. In most cases, women and girls make longer journeys to collect it, losing time in education, work, and leisure, and putting themselves **at risk of physical injury and dangers on the way**, including gender-based violence.
- 1.4 million lives are lost each year due to inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene. Women and girls not only face WASH-related infectious diseases, like diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections, they face additional health risks because they are vulnerable to harassment, violence, and injury when they have to go outside the home to haul water or just to use the toilet.

Considerations and recommendations for equitable policies and outcomes

- Increase the availability and quality of gender, age, and disability-**disaggregated data** on water, sanitation, and hygiene, including water governance: leadership and decision-making;
- Increase women's **leadership and meaningful participation** in water governance and integrated water management at all levels (household, community, national, and transboundary);
- Incorporate GEDSI considerations into regional, national, and local water management **strategies, plans, and policies**;
- **Challenge social norms** around unpaid care work, women's leadership, and gender-based violence.

Figure 1a: GEDSI in WEC: Global Perspectives, Considerations, and Recommendations for Equitable Policies and Outcomes[5]

GEDSI IN CLIMATE CHANGE

Global perspectives

- **Women produce 60 percent to 80% percent of the food** in developing countries. More frequent and severe drought, flooding, and pest damage due to climate change is expected to **reduce crop yields**.
- In many societies women have the primary responsibility for **collecting water and firewood**. As climate change exacerbates resource scarcity, women and girls may have to travel farther to collect water and firewood, **increasing threats to their safety**, decreasing productivity in other areas like farming, and reducing time available for schooling.
- Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. During and after natural disasters, a woman's **role as family caregiver is intensified**, potentially leading to exhaustion and illness. Studies have also shown an increase in levels of domestic and sexual violence following disasters.
- Women and people with disabilities are already more **vulnerable to undernutrition and have restricted access to medical services;** climate change can exacerbate this situation. Changing temperatures.

Considerations and recommendations for equitable policies and outcomes

- Involve women, people with disabilities, and socially marginalized groups in **vulnerability assessments** to ensure that the evaluations do not focus solely on economic sectors dominated by priviledged men.
- Involve both men and women in the prioritization and design of climate change adaptation projects, **build on their indigenous knowledge**, and consider the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Reach men and women through industrial as well as household clean energy interventions.
- Make information, training, and technologies for **climate change adaptation and mitigation accessible and relevant** for all stakeholders.
- Take advantage of **women's skills and knowledge** - such as natural resources management and social networks - in community-based adaptation.
- Incorporate GEDSI considerations into **national climate change strategies and regulations**.
- Ensure that the **burdens and opportunities** created by climate change adaptation work are **equitable**.

Figure 1b: GEDSI in WEC: Global Perspectives, Considerations, and Recommendations for Equitable Policies and Outcomes[5]

[5]Figure 1 is based on the following resources:
Crawford, E. (2020). Achieving Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 6 The case for gender-transformative water programmes. Oxfam Briefing Note. https://doi.org/10.21201/2020.5884
Habtesion, S (2016). TRAINING MODULE 2: Gender, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. UNDP. Retrieved from:https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/sskgke326/files/publications/Gender_Climate_Change_Training%20Module%202%20Adaptation%20DRR.pdf
UNICEF & WHO (2023). Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000-2022: Special focus on gender. UNICEF & WHO Joint Monitoring Report. Retrieved from: https://data.unicef.org/resources/jmp-report-2023/
UN Women and UNIDO (2023). Gender Equality and the Sustainable Energy Transition. New York and Vienna. Retrieved from: https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Gender-equality-in-the-sustainable-energy-transition-en.pdf
USAID (n.d.) Climate Change and Gender Fact Sheet. USAID's Office of Women in Development. Retrieved from: https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/46460915.pdf.

GEDSI IN ENERGY

Global perspectives

- 9 percent of the global population still lacks access to modern electricity - 733 million people in 2020 compared to 1.2 billion in 2010.
- 2.4 billion people relied on **wood, coal, charcoal, or animal waste for cooking and heating** in 2020, down from 3 billion in 2010.
- **Household air pollution** from using polluting fuels and technologies for cooking caused some 3.2 million deaths in 2019, **disproportionately affecting women and children** due to higher exposure.
- Energy is the dominant contributor to climate change accounting for more than **75 percent of total global greenhouse gas emissions**.
- The share of **renewable energy** in total final energy consumption increased slightly to 17.7 percent as of 2019 from 16.1 percent in 2010.
- Global financial investment is **far from sufficient** to achieve energy access for all by 2030.

Considerations and recommendations for equitable policies and outcomes

- Women and members of socially marginalised and vulnerable groups should be acknowledged as **key agents of change** as consumers, producers, distributors, employees, and decision-makers across the energy value chain.
- An **intersectionality focus** is emerging: recognition of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination by ensuring the voices and participation of young, older, disabled and LGBTQI+ and gender-diverse persons are heeded, both as GEDSI advocates and target groups of policies and programmes within the gender-energy nexus.
- **Poverty can manifest as a facet of environmental injustice**, i.e., unequal access to natural resources, distribution of environmental hazards, protection from risks and burdens, as well as underrepresentation in decisions, and unfair treatment in access to benefits.
- **Inequities in access to energy and environmental impacts** are compounded for groups whose needs, priorities, agency, and participation remain underrepresented throughout **all stages of the energy value chain**.

Figure 1c: GEDSI in WEC: Global Perspectives, Considerations, and Recommendations for Equitable Policies and Outcomes[5]

2.2 Barriers to Decision-making for Water, Energy, and Climate Change

Politics and underlying power structures play a significant role in the decision-making and policy development in the water-energy-climate nexus. Consequently, the most marginalized stakeholders risk losing out in terms of access to assets. These assets may be what they require to sustain their livelihoods, what they need to adapt in light of a changing climate, and, in some cases, that which forms the basis for their cultural identity.

Women's voices and the voices of diverse genders are underrepresented in decision-making, both in the Lower Mekong Basin countries and in the sphere of Water-Energy-Climate policy.

Women often manage water and energy use at the household and community level and are on the front lines of understanding the impacts of climate change and changing weather patterns on livelihood activities. Women bear the brunt of the decisions that are made, and although they have the potential to bring knowledge and perspectives into the decision-making arena but are not included because of social norms, and logistical constraints of their time, among other barriers. This is especially true for Indigenous women in Laos and Myanmar, who face notable exclusion due to these deeply entrenched social structures and patriarchal norms.[6] Moreover, Indigenous women in the Lower Mekong Basin countries, already among the most marginalized, face additional layers of discrimination that hinder decision-making roles, resulting in lower education rates, health access, and employment opportunities within their communities.

Moreover, age, marital status, and ethnicity, among other factors, will influence their access to natural assets, how they use them, and how they are prioritized. For example, land ownership, a critical asset for infrastructure projects, is often registered in men's names, limiting women's access and influencing biased compensation outcomes. The lack of access to land and the absence of land ownership rights exacerbates their challenges, pushing many women further into poverty.[7] Overall, compared to men, women, in all their diversity, have limited control over management decisions at all levels.

Despite policies promoting renewable energy and gender equality in the Lower Mekong Region, a significant gap exists. While men are in top decision-making positions, women are largely excluded from decision-making roles in energy planning, focusing on technical aspects like infrastructure rather than social issues like unequal energy access for different genders. In addition, women are increasingly leading renewable energy businesses, and this leadership is socially accepted. Nonetheless, wealthy women have a significant advantage in expanding their businesses due to greater resources. Low-income women face limitations not just in terms of finances but also in terms of social expectations that prioritize domestic duties.[8]

2.3 Gender Equality, Women's Empowerment, and Social Inclusion

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, girls, boys, and people of diverse gender. **Gender equity** and wider equality are achieved when the different behaviors, aspirations, and needs of all people are equally valued and accounted for.

[6]USAID. (2021, January 6). USAID MEKONG SAFEGUARDS ACTIVITY Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis. Retrieved from https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00XH9W.pdf.
[7]Cambodia Development Resource Institute. (2020). Cambodia Gender and Inclusive Development Analysis: Women, LGBTI People with Disabilities, Cham, Vietnamese, Indigenous Peoples. Phnom Penh: USAID. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00X7PN.pdf.
[8]Resurrección, B. P., & Boyland, M. (2017). Gender equality in renewable energy in the Lower Mekong: Assessment and opportunities. Prepared for Abt Associates Inc. Retrieved from https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00SVKB.pdf.

Across the Mekong sub-region, women – particularly those widowed, single, older people, with disability, or who belong to an ethnic minority – are disproportionately affected by significant social and environmental changes, including those associated with hydropower development.[9] Despite this, women are often marginalized from decision-making at regional, national, and community levels. Much of this concerns social and cultural norms about appropriate roles for women.[10]

Women (and men) are heterogeneous groups and may have vastly different experiences based on various contextual and social factors. Poor women in rural areas have different needs and realities concerning energy or water use than better-off women in cities who do not directly rely on water or energy for their livelihood. For instance, in Cambodia's rural areas, women's reliance on traditional, inefficient cookstoves due to limited access to cleaner energy sources contributes to respiratory problems from indoor air pollution.[11]

A **GEDSI-aware approach** aims to understand risks to women, people with disabilities, and other socially marginalized groups when undertaking a project where project activities do not exacerbate existing gender biases or exclusion practices. The **'do-no-harm' principle** means that initiatives must ensure, at a minimum, that they do not pose undue risks to local people and marginalized community members and do not jeopardize their livelihoods or well-being.

Social inclusion encompasses groups that are socially marginalized or have inequitable access or control of resources to participate fully and benefit from development processes.

The Mekong sub-region is home to diverse peoples, including Indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities, who are often the poorest of the poor within their countries.[12] The percentage of the population regarded as Indigenous or an ethnic minority varies considerably from country to country: 1-1.5 percent in Thailand and Cambodia, 13.8 percent in Vietnam, and between 35 and 70 percent in Laos.[13] In Laos, people belonging to minority groups constitute 80 percent of people living in poverty while representing at least one-third of the total population.[14] In contrast, In Vietnam, 66.3 percent of ethnic minorities live in poverty, compared to 12.9 percent of the majority group. Laos and Thailand insist on referring to these groups as 'ethnic minorities' as opposed to 'Indigenous' peoples, and throughout Asia, they are also referred to as "hill tribes," "minority nationalities,"

[9]Delfau, K. and Yeophantong, P. (2020). State of knowledge: Women and rivers in the Mekong region. May 2020. Oakland, USA: International Rivers. Retrieved from: https://www.womenandrivers.com/resources/state-of-knowledge-women-and-rivers-in-the-mekong-region
Hill, C., Thuy, P.T.N., Storey, J. and Vongphosy, S. (2017). Lessons learnt from gender impact assessments of hydropower projects in Laos and Vietnam. Gender and Development, 25(3) 455-470.
Resurrección, B. P., Biskupska, N. and Nguyen, H. (2018). Gender and water governance in the Mekong region: Assessment and opportunities. June 2018. International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and Oxfam.
[10]Denney, L; Jackson, E; Yeophantong, P; & Adams, C. (2021). Inclusion in decision-making around transboundary water governance in the Mekong sub-region. La Trobe University: 17.
[11]Buysman, E. (2015). Biogas and household air quality: Study on Household Air Quality and Estimated Health Improvement of users of Biogas Stoves versus Wood-fired Stoves in Rural Cambodia. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283621936_Biogas_and_household_air_quality_-_Study_on_Household_Air_Quality_and_Estimated_Health_Improvement_of_users_of_Biogas_Stoves_versus_Wood-fired_Stoves_in_Rural_Cambodia.
[12]Errico, S. (2017). The rights of indigenous peoples in Asia: Human rights-based overview of national legal and policy frameworks against the backdrop of country strategies for development and poverty reduction. Geneva and Bangkok: International Labour Organization. (page 1).
[13]Ibid, page 13.
[14]Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2013. "Poverty and inequality disparities in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam", in Southeast Asian Economic Outlook 2013: With Perspectives on China and India (OECD Publishing).

"tribal peoples," and "natives". These terms testify to the variety of their experiences in the region, how they are viewed socially within different areas and countries, and the varying legal recognition accorded to them in their respective countries.[15]

Identifying socially marginalized groups and explaining how the project intersects with their access to assets and decision-making is essential for the project to ''do-no-harm." When socially marginalized groups and their interests are ignored, projects unwillingly contribute to and exacerbate the conditions that perpetuate poverty and exclusion.

2.4 Disability Inclusion

The term **people with disabilities** is conceptualized as including those with episodic or long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.[16]



Impairments may limit an individual's personal or social functioning compared to those who do not share the same impairment (characteristic or condition, such as hearing and/or vision impairment, developmental delay, or physical impairment. Impairments can be visible and permanent, and they can also be invisible and temporary, which can make identifying and including people experiencing impairments difficult.[17]

The full inclusion of people with impairments in society can be inhibited by attitudinal and/or societal **barriers** (such as stigma), physical and/or environmental barriers (such as stairs), and policy and/or systemic barriers, creating a disabling effect.

Disability-inclusive development promotes effective development by recognizing that, like all population members, people with disabilities are both beneficiaries and agents of development. An inclusive approach seeks to identify and address barriers that prevent people with disabilities from participating in and benefiting from development.

[15]United Nations (2013). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples. Consultation on the situation of indigenous peoples in Asia, UN Doc. A/HRC/24/41/Add.3. and United Nations (2007). 2007. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. General considerations on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous peoples in Asia, UN Doc. A7HRC/6/15/Add.3.

[16]From DFAT's Development for All 2015–2020 May 2015 Strategy (available at: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/development-for-all-2015-2020.pdf): The reference to disability is based on the characterisation of persons with a disability in Article 1 of the CRPD. The term 'episodic' has been added by DFAT in line with the 'evolving concept of disability' referred to in the Preamble (e).

[17]From DFAT's Development for All 2015–2020 May 2015 Strategy (available at: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/development-for-all-2015-2020.pdf): While prevention of impairments (for example, avoidable blindness and road safety activities) remains an important public health objective, it is outside the scope of disability-inclusive development as set out in this strategy and recognised in the mid-term review of Development for All: L. Kelly and L. Wapling, Development for All Mid-Term Review Report, October 2012, p. 31, 65, viewed 23 January 2015, <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/development-for-all-strategy-mid-term-review.aspx>.

The explicit inclusion of people with disabilities as active participants in development processes leads to broader benefits for families and communities, reduces the impacts of poverty, and positively contributes to a country's economic growth.

Applying a disability inclusion lens to a project requires a shift towards intentionally and proactively seeking ways to make aspects of a project more accessible to all.

Poverty and disability are interrelated. Poor people are more likely to become disabled because of the conditions in which they live;[18] disability is expected to make people poorer because of discrimination and inequality of access to education, health and social protection services, employment, the built environment, transport, and information and communication facilities.[19]

Households having members with disabilities tend to be poorer than the national average, children with disabilities attend school less, and adults with disabilities are less employed than their peers without disabilities and have lower living standards. Poverty is not only about low income but also about limited opportunities, choices, and social exclusion, all of which are particularly relevant for people with disabilities. Poverty is both a cause and a consequence of disability, as illustrated in the Figure 2. Furthermore, discrimination against persons with disabilities is a serious barrier to their participation in decision-making and society. As a result, people with disabilities become further marginalized by the decisions when they are not considered or accounted for.



Figure 2: The viscious of poverty and disability

[18]Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC), UK. 2015. Poverty and Disability. University of Birmingham.

[19]Asian Development Bank (2022). Strengthening Disability-Inclusive Development 2021–2025 Road Map. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/TCS220055-2 (page 2); and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)(2018). Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific and Beijing Declaration, Including the Action Plan to Accelerate the Implementation of the Incheon Strategy. Bangkok.

[20]Jones, H., Reed, R. A., & Reed, B. (2005). Water and Sanitation for Disabled People and Other Vulnerable Groups. WEDC, Loughborough University. Retrieved from: https://wedc-knowledge.lboro.ac.uk/resources/books/Water_and_Sanitation_for_Disabled_People_-_Complete.pdf (page 6).

To effectively reduce poverty, projects must actively include people with disabilities. People with disabilities are the most significant and most disadvantaged minority in the world. They comprise 16 percent of the global population (about 1.3 billion people), and one in six of us have a disability (WHO, 2023. Around 70 percent of people with disabilities live in Asia and the Pacific, amounting to approximately 690 million people. In the Lower Mekong Basin countries, there are approximately 9.3 million people with disabilities.[21] Their number will increase as the region's population ages, and it is estimated that more than half of all people with disabilities are over 60 years old. By 2050, one in four people in Asia and the Pacific will be over 60.[22]

Water can have special significance for people with disabilities in ways others might not immediately consider. Beyond primary uses like drinking, hygiene, and household tasks, clean water is crucial for maintaining mobility equipment, among other specific needs. Access to adequate, safe, and readily available water may be essential for people with disabilities to maintain their dignity.

Disability-inclusive development allows people with disabilities to participate equally and realize their full potential. Disability inclusion harnesses the potential contribution of all citizens, maximizing opportunities for poverty reduction and sustainable economic growth.

Disability affects a significant portion of Vietnam's population. [The General Statistics Office of Vietnam in 2016-2017 with technical assistance by UNICEF] survey found that over 7 percent of the population aged two years and older – around 6.2 million, have a disability, but an additional 13 percent, nearly 12 million, live in a household with a person with a disability. These percentages are expected to rise with the aging of the population.[23]

The slogan **'nothing about us without us'** reflects this sentiment and is commonly used by those advocating for disability inclusion to communicate the idea that no policy should be decided by any representative without the full and direct participation of members of those who that policy will impact.

A disability inclusion lens in projects can be achieved through identifying and engaging with organizations that support people with disabilities in the area where the project will take place and making special efforts to make accommodations for people experiencing or living with disabilities to participate in project activities fully.

Projects are requested to apply a **twin-track approach** to disability-inclusive development, which includes the following:

[21](Thai National Deaf Association, 2024; ILO, 2009, UNFPA, 2020; Unicef, 2019)/Thai National Deaf Association. (2024). Retrieved from https://nadt.or.th/en/ ; International Labour Organization. (2009). Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Cambodia. Retrieved from: https://webapps.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_115096.pdf.
UNICEF. (2019). Launch of Key Findings of Viet Nam's first large-scale National Survey on People with Disabilities. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/press-releases/launch-key-findings-viet-nams-first-large-scale-national-survey-people-disabilities; and United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA]. (2020). Towards better inclusion of People with Disability rights in Lao PDR. https://lao.unfpa.org/en/news/towards-better-inclusion-people-disability-rights-lao-pdr
[22]Asian Development Bank (2022). Strengthening Disability-Inclusive Development 2021–2025 Road Map. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/TCS220055-2.
[23]Launch of Key Findings of Viet Nam's first large-scale National Survey on People with Disabilities (2016).

Mainstream approach

including people with disabilities as participants and beneficiaries of general project activities.

Targeted approach

Targeting people with disabilities in project activities explicitly designed to benefit people with disabilities.

Actively including people with disabilities in mainstream project activities is necessary to ensure that broader systems, policies, and services include and benefit people with disabilities. This cannot be fully realized without complementary targeted efforts to facilitate equal access and participation for people with disabilities. For example, you can make a community's infrastructure accessible and train local decision-makers on disability inclusion (mainstream approach). Still, if a community member is deaf or has a vision impairment, these changes will not lead to equitable access and participation without a sign language interpreter or provision of the necessary assistive technology (e.g., magnifier or screen reader) (targeted approach).

People with disabilities commonly face various **barriers** to participating in society and engaging and benefitting from project activities and outcomes. The types of barriers include:

01 Attitudinal and/or societal obstacles (such as stigma)

02 Communication (such as information not being made available in accessible formats or available in one format only)

03 Physical and/or environmental barriers (such as stairs, inaccessible transport)

04 Policy and/or systemic barriers (such as legislation, policies, and procedures that explicitly or implicitly discriminate against people with disabilities).

2.5 The GEDSI Lens and Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept and lens for analysis, advocacy, and policy development that unpacks and seeks to address interlocking social and gender inequalities, discrimination, and exclusion. An intersectional approach to GEDSI starts from the recognition that individuals and groups are not defined and shaped by a single (gender or social) identity but rather by combined, overlapping identities (i.e., gender and race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, caste, migration status, ability, sexual orientation, religion, age, and so forth).

In any given context, each of those identities may be ascribed to different levels of privilege (or discrimination), which shape people's experiences, power, rights, and access to and control over resources. Identities and their implications are contextually embedded and change over time. Figure 3 illustrates some dimensions of intersectionality. These examples are based on a Canadian context, and some categories may not be the same in the Lower Mekong Basin countries. For example, speaking a local language or dialect may be considered socially marginalized compared to those who speak the national language and/or English. What constitutes a position of power may play out differently at different intersections and contexts, as will the variables and dimensions you choose to include in your project.

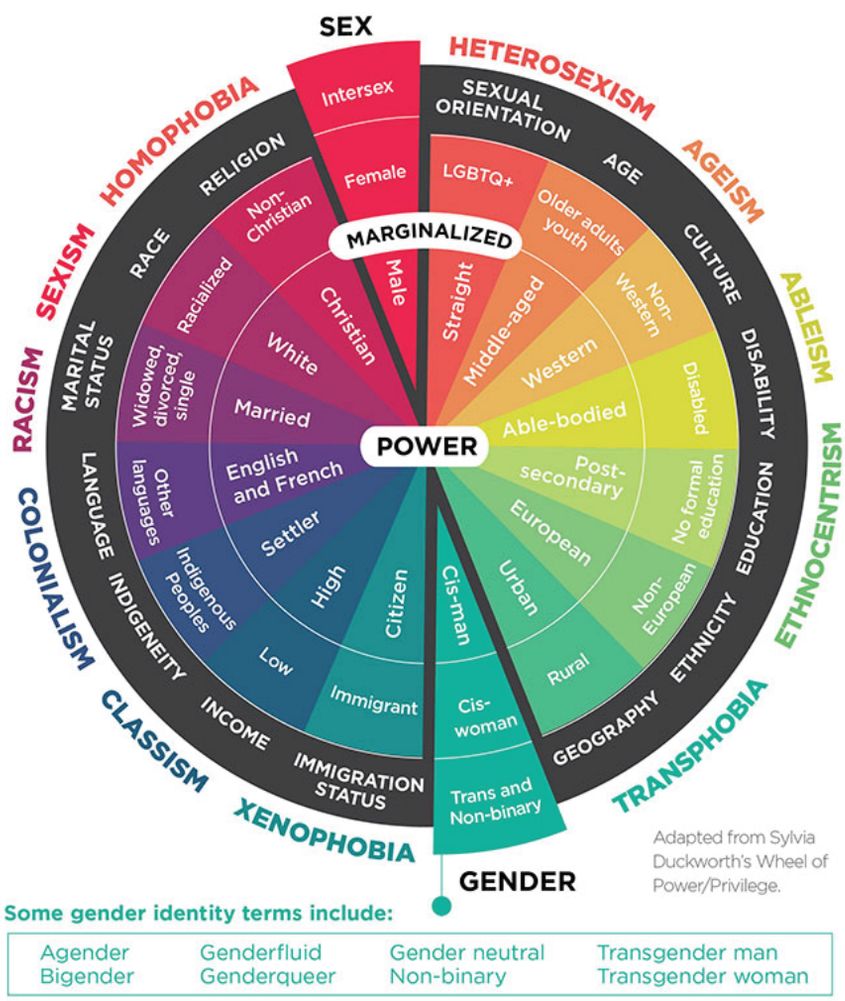


Figure 3: Possible dimensions of intersectionality [24]

[24]Image source: Bauer, Greta (2021). Meet The Methods Series: Quantitative Intersectional Study Design And Primary Data Collection Issue 3, Part 1. Retrieved from: https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/intersectional-study-design-data-collection_EN.pdf.

Additional resources for understanding intersectionality in research and projects are provided in Annex 5 of this document.

Meaningful engagement of women, men, and people with disabilities in a project requires an understanding of these barriers and proactive measures to address them. Strategies to meet with GEDSI groups need to be tailored to their needs and roles. Something as simple as the time of day and location of where project activities are held can be designed to allow for women's inclusion. Consulting with diverse women and people with disabilities may require alternative approaches and different modalities, and projects are encouraged to consider how to engage women and gender-diverse people in the various stages of their projects.

An intersectional GEDSI lens acknowledges intersectionality and supports projects to address this complexity, recognizing different experiences with gender, disability, and social marginalization result in different lived experiences and unique barriers to engaging in water-energy-climate change decision-making and policy development.

Figure 4 demonstrates how the multitudes of identities and conditions converge to affect access, control, and decision-making to shape the policies and practices that determine water, energy, and climate-related futures.



Figure 4: Identities and conditions shaping barriers to access and control over water and energy and influence over climate change mitigation and adaptation[25]

Flagship Study and Rapid Response projects are asked to consider how they can best apply an intersectional GEDSI lens to project design and implementation to consider how multiple identities may lead to multiple barriers to contributing to the project work. Annex 5 provides additional information on how to apply an intersectional lens to projects and research.

[25]Adapted from Vigil, S, Pross, C & Resurrección, B. (n.d.) Critical Gender Analysis. Guidance Note: Why apply a Gender and Social Equality lens in SUMERNET? Retrieved from: https://www.sumernet.org/media/download/orig/1199ef2ed1fdaa7f9b8636154018c2d97ddbda6e.pdf.

3

FUNDER REQUIREMENTS: DFAT POLICIES



Image by Dariolopresti from Getty Images.

3 FUNDER REQUIREMENTS: DFAT POLICIES

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is the funding agency for the MTT program. In line with the official Australian aid program policies, an analysis of GEDSI issues is required, along with the associated tracking of the initiative's impacts on the empowerment of women, people with disabilities, and people from local marginalized communities.

For more information, see DFAT policies and strategies, with more details provided in Annexes 3 and 5:



Australia's International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy:
https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/publications/australias-international-disability-equity-and-rights-strategy-advancing-equity-transform-lives



DFAT Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy:
https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment-strategy.pdf



Australia's International Development Policy:
https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/development/australias-international-development-policy



Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion Analysis Good Practice Note:
https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/gender-equality-disability-social-inclusion-analysis-good-practice-note.pdf

To support equity and inclusion through the MTT program, fulfill DFAT requirements, and implement DFAT policies, the MTT Program has a GEDSI Strategy, which can be shared with the project teams interested in seeing how a GEDSI lens cuts across all program components.

4

FS AND RR PROJECT GEDSI ENGAGEMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

Image by Kamchatka from Pexels.

4 FS AND RR PROJECT GEDSI ENGAGEMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

To meet MTT program objectives and DFAT requirements and policies, Flagship Studies and Rapid Response Projects are asked to understand **who** the GEDSI-related actors are, **what** the GEDSI-related barriers, challenges, and/or issues are in the WEC nexus context of their projects, and indicate **how** they will logically, consistently, appropriately, and feasibly incorporate a GEDSI lens throughout their research and project work. These expectations aim to ensure a GEDSI-aware approach and that, at minimum, the 'do-no-harm' principle is upheld.

Table 1 below summarises the GEDSI-related expectations, outputs, and timelines associated with these expectations. Worksheet templates are provided in **Annex 1** as models (with example text) to support meeting these expectations and can be adapted to suit project aims, approaches, and tasks.

Table 1: GEDSI-related expectations for MTT projects

1. **GEDSI-related expectation:** Understand GEDSI in the project context	
Identify the specific issues of GEDSI groups in the context of water, energy, and climate change in the specific location of the project Identify who is at risk of being excluded Identify the barriers to inclusion & equity for these groups Identify how they are involved and represented in the sector and project roles Ensure the GEDSI approaches mainstream and target these groups in the project Identify how GEDSI issues and initiatives can be tracked throughout the project cycle and integrated into the MEL	
Delivery/Output: ½ page narrative and stakeholder analysis as a part of risk assessment (see: **Worksheet Template 1**)	**Timeline:** With submission of initial project documents as a part of the risk assessment documentation.

2. GEDSI-related expectation: Designate a GEDSI focal point internal to project team	
Delivery/Output: Provide contact details of the GEDSI focal point person communicated to the MTT Secretariat.	**Timeline:** As soon as possible, by May 17, 2024.
3. GEDSI-related expectation: Participate in GEDSI online training and GEDSI workshops	
Delivery/Output: GEDSI focal point and project lead will participate in online training and GEDSI workshops.	**Timeline:** Online training: May 17, 2024; GEDSI Workshop: May 31, 2024; Regional forum: Oct 2024 (date TBD)
4. GEDSI-related expectation: Identify project activities to reflect the GEDSI lens	
Delivery/Output: Project table that illustrates how GEDSI fits in with the stages of the project, including Theory of Change, Risk analysis, research methodology, MEL, reporting and manuscripts, etc. (see: **Worksheet Template 2**) This should use a twin-track approach to address GEDSI mainstreaming and targeted initiatives.	**Timeline:** Output: 1-to-2-page GEDSI lens plan submitted to SEI within three months after the project start date.
5. GEDSI-related expectation: Demonstrate that the GEDSI lens has been applied through the identification of criteria, indicators, and means of verification	
Delivery/Output: Table linked with or supplementing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) framework documentation (see **Worksheet Template 3**).	**Timeline:** throughout the project, reflected in or alongside MEL.

Project teams are requested **to designate an internal GEDSI focal point for the project team**, who will support the implementation of a GEDSI lens across the project design, implementation, and MEL. The GEDSI focal point will lead the integration of a GEDSI lens into the project through the abovementioned expectations. The project lead will also participate in the MTT GEDSI online training and workshops.

A GEDSI online training will be provided on May 17, 2024, and workshops to support GEDSI lens integration and to share learnings and approaches across projects are tentatively scheduled for May 31, 2024, and September/October 2024 as a part of MTT events.

4.1 Stakeholder Analysis

To identify actors and issues and understand the GEDSI-related context, projects should develop a stakeholder analysis that determines **who** needs to be included at specific points in the project's cycle and **how** they will be included.

Stakeholder analysis identifies the social groups that may affect and be affected by the project and the WEC nexus interventions undertaken by the project in different ways.[26] **Fundamental stakeholder analysis should be done before project interventions are designed. It should be revisited and deepened through the design and implementation process** as more information about the context is obtained.[27] Basic training on this will be organized for the project teams, as explained in section 4.3.

4.2 Identifying a GEDSI focal point

At this early stage in the project, each team will designate a GEDSI focal point who will take responsibility for supporting and enhancing GEDSI approaches throughout the project. Please communicate who on the team will be the GEDSI focal point to the MTT Program Secretariat as soon as this individual has been identified.

4.3 Participation in GEDSI online training and GEDSI workshops

GEDSI focal point and project lead are expected to participate in on-line training and workshops to enhance the relevant capacity of the projects. The first online training for the projects will tentatively be organized by the MTT GEDSI advisors and Secretariat.

MTT GEDSI advisors will cover the basics of stakeholder analysis in the online training and look more closely at the application of stakeholder analysis and engagement from a GEDSI perspective in the subsequent workshops. In addition, **Worksheet Template 1** provides a model to work off of to identify GEDSI-related stakeholders and issues relevant to the projects.

[26]Bendtsen, E.B., Clausen, L.P.W., & Hansen, S.F. (2021). A review of the state-of-the-art for stakeholder analysis with regard to environmental management and regulation. Journal of Environmental Management, 279, 111773. https://doi. org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2020.111773.
Rietbergen-McCracken, J., & Narayan, D. (1996). Participation and social assessment: tools and techniques. Washington, D.C. (USA): World Bank. https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/673361468742834292/participation-and-social-assessment-tools-and-techniques.
[27]Holland, J. (2007). Tools for institutional, political, and social analysis of policy reform: A sourcebook for development practitioners. Washington, D.C. (USA): World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/d5250682-6e95-508e-8868-43bda4fa6dc7/content.

4.4 Project Activities to reflect a GEDSI lens

In parallel with the stakeholder analysis, a plan or approach as to how GEDSI-related issues will be identified should be provided as a part of project documentation based on what has already been proposed in the original project plan. A GEDSI lens is requested to be applied to the project's activities and tasks, e.g., desktop research, interviews, brainstorming sessions with key stakeholders and focus groups, and developing partnerships with relevant GEDSI-related organizations.

Project proponents are requested to apply an intersectional GEDSI lens to identify and address barriers to inclusion related to project planning and design, implementation, MEL, reporting, and evaluation. This GEDSI lens should also be incorporated into the MTT project documentation and reporting requirements: the Theory of Change, Risk analysis and mitigation, MEL, and Final Reporting/manuscripts (if relevant). **Worksheet Template 2** provides an example of how this can be approached.

4.5 GEDSI Indicators identified and applied throughout the project

This third expectation is that projects develop and track indicators related to GEDSI and capture these indicators in or alongside the project's MEL framework. This requirement can be met by providing a separate table that complements the MEL framework documentation, or the GEDSI indicators and means of verification can be integrated into the MEL framework documentation. **Worksheet Template 3** provides an example of identifying GEDSI criteria, indicators, and means of verification to support projects in bringing a GEDSI perspective into the MEL process.

ANNEX 1

GEDSI WORKSHEET TEMPLATES

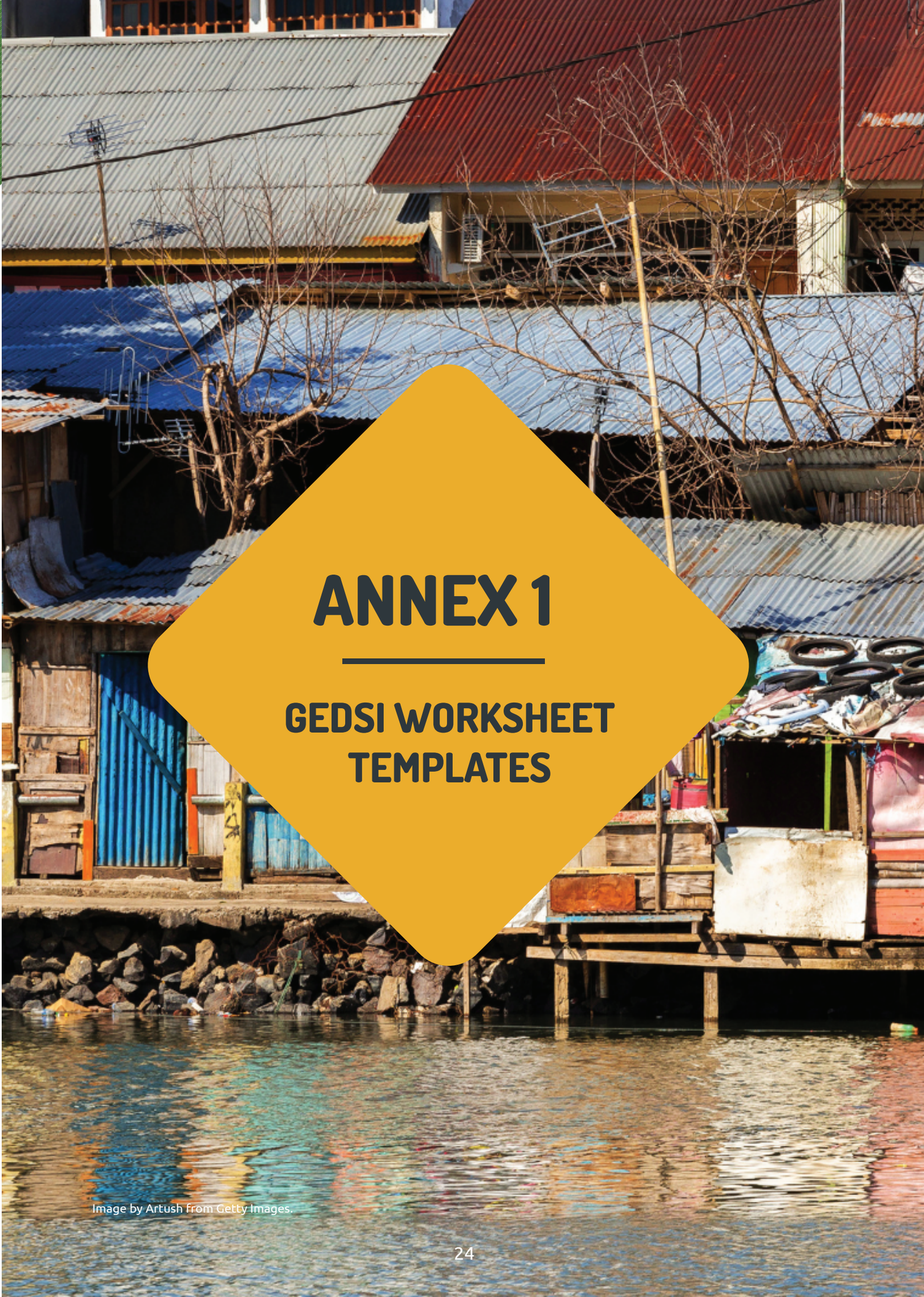


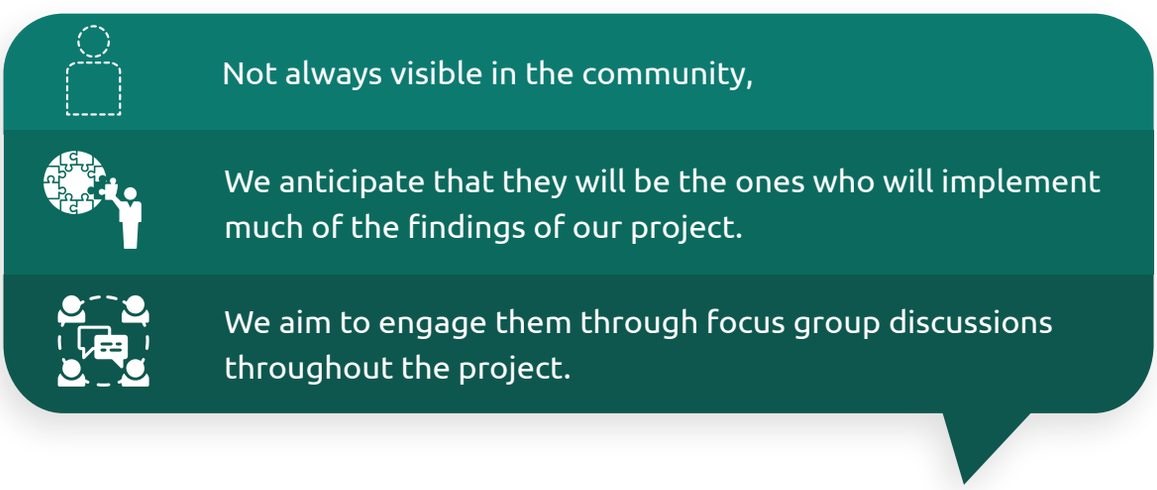
Image by Artush from Getty Images.

ANNEX 1:
GEDSI WORKSHEET TEMPLATES

The following worksheet templates are designed to provide projects with concrete guidance on how to meet the expectations. They can be adapted to suit project needs and are provided to serve as a starting point for documenting GEDSI stakeholders, outlining how a GEDSI lens will be incorporated into the project stages, and identifying GEDSI-related criteria and means of verification for MEL.

Worksheet Template 1:
Understanding the Project's GEDSI Context

Project Title: Example Project
Narrative/summary (example): *The primary GEDSI stakeholders for our project are **women who have started families or are older people:***



There are several marginalized communities (groups of urban poor, many of whom are migrants) that will need to be engaged to make sure that the project fully considers their needs and perspectives.

*People with disabilities are more difficult to engage through our project tasks, and we will be connecting with the local and national Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and working to include the needs of disabled people through **focus group discussions with women and socially marginalized groups.***

*Our project team is also bringing on **additional GEDSI support**. It will engage **a young volunteer** from the urban migrant community to ensure team diversity, build capacity at the local level, and ensure GEDSI is fully incorporated into the project work.*

Instructions: Groups to identify in the context of the project are listed below. A pro-poor lens should be used to ensure 'no one is left behind' in line with the Sustainable Development Goals:



Diverse groups of women and people with disabilities (as mandatory)

Other specific marginalized or underrepresented groups identified as particular to the study could include:



Indigenous/ethnic minority groups



Children



Youth



Older people



Female-headed households



Urban including slums



Rural- especially remote and mountainous areas



Others as specifically identified in the project context

Stakeholder / group	Interest, Influence	GEDSI issues	GEDSI risks & mitigation	Project engagement, communications
Women – aged 30 +	High interest, low to medium influence.	These women will implement many findings but are not always present in decision-making or community consultation meetings due to busy schedules, care responsibilities, and community roles.	The risk is that we will not be able to engage these women fully in each step of the project. We have identified some women leaders in our project area and will work with them consistently to set up focus group discussions with other women.	Through identified women leaders, we will establish informal focus group discussions in small groups (5-8 per FGD) to ensure sufficient engagement (at least 50 women total. We will also use these focus groups to identify persons with disabilities needing consultation or engagement to support our project aims.

Stakeholder / group	Interest, Influence	GEDSI issues	GEDSI risks & mitigation	Project engagement, communications
Migrant groups (urban)				
Other socially marginal-ized groups in the project area				
Organisa-tions for People with Disability – local				
Organisa-tions for People with Disability – national				
Persons with disabilities				

Worksheet Template 2:
Applying a GEDSI lens to the Project

Project Title: Example Project

Project element / timeframe	GEDSI consideration	Implementation approach	Comments
Design: Theory of Change	How will GEDSI stakeholders be engaged.	GEDSI stakeholders incorporated into ToC.	Need to connect with Disabled Peoples Organisations, women's gender groups actively working in the sector, etc.
Design: Risk Assessment	Collecting GEDSI disaggregated data through project interventions to ensure GEDSI-related people and issues are considered.	GEDSI-disaggregated data to be collected, sex and disability as a minimum.	Data to feed into MEL.
Design: Project team	The team needs to fully reflect the diversity of communities where the project will be implemented.	Recruit young volunteer/intern from the urban social migrant community.	Need to determine role description and management support, depending on who is recruited.
Implementation: Community-based Workshops	Schedule workshops with other community meetings to ensure greater participation and collect GEDSI-disaggregated data.	Co-lead workshops with community leaders to ensure relevance and uptake of ideas.	Even though a few women are present, only men speak. Set up separate, smaller, targeted meetings where women and other marginalized groups can participate meaningfully.
Implementation: Women Focus Group Discussions			
Implementation: Research design and methodology			
MEL			
Project reporting			
Academic manuscript			

Worksheet Template 3:
Identifying GEDSI-Related Criteria and Indicators

Project Title: Example Project

Project Task or Activity	GEDSI Criteria	Indicators and means of verification	Risks	Comments
Community-based workshops	Representation and participation of women and migrant community members.	GEDSI-disaggregated data, notes on interventions from meetings.	Very few women were present, and fewer spoke at the public meetings.	Set up separate, smaller, targeted meetings where women and other marginalized groups will feel more comfortable sharing knowledge and perspectives.
Community-based workshops	Representation and participation of women and migrant community members.	GEDSI-disaggregated data, notes on interventions from meetings.	Very few women were present, and fewer spoke at the public meetings.	Set up separate, smaller, targeted meetings where women and other marginalized groups will feel more comfortable sharing knowledge and perspectives.

ANNEX 2

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Image by Chatreep from Getty Images.



ANNEX 2: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

(Figure 5 at left: Climate Change and Gender Infographic)

GEDSI and water resources:

- Stroma Cole, Paula Tallman, Gabriela Salmon-Mulanovich, Binahayati Rusyidi, (2024). ***Water insecurity is associated with gender-based violence: A mixed-methods study in Indonesia.*** Social Science & Medicine, Volume 344, 2024. Spatial dimensions and types of violence related to water insecurity: ***Infographic link.***
- Infographic Link: ***Did you know the water crisis affects women more than men?***

GEDSI and climate change resources:

- ***UN Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change Factsheet***
- ***UNDP Gender And Climate Change Overview of linkages between gender and climate change***
- ***Climate change and gender Infographic source*** (figure 4)
- Infographic fact sheet: ***Addressing gender equality in climate change adaptation; From principles to practice*** – NAP Global Network

- Jazmin Mignaquy (n.d.). Gender Perspectives on Climate Change. University of New South Wales, Australia.
- ***Understanding the Gender Dimensions of Climate Adaptation*** Infographic (2013). Humanitarian Response and Development Lab at Clark University, in partnership with Integra, based on USAID data.

GEDSI and Energy:

- UN Women and UNIDO (2023). ***Gender Equality and the Sustainable Energy Transition***. New York and Vienna.
- ***UNDP Gender and Sustainable Energy Policy Brief 4. (2017).***

Resources for inclusive, equitable, and intersectional research practices:

- Thompson- Hall, Mary & Carr, Edward & Pascual, Unai. (2016). ***Enhancing and expanding intersectional research for climate change adaptation in agrarian settings***. Ambio. 45. 373-382. 10.1007/s13280-016-0827-0.
- ***A study on intersectional approaches to gender mainstreaming in adaptation-relevant interventions*** (2022)- Climate Change Adaptation Fund
- Meet the Methods Series: Questions to guide quantitative intersectional analyses Issue 3 Part 2 - October 202. ***https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/52676.html***
- Note: Meet the Methods Series: *Quantitative Intersectional Study Design and Primary Data Collection from Canadian Institutes of Health Research (2021). This two-part interview series with Greta Bauer, Ph.D., a Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Western University, provides insights on methods for intersectional approaches to quantitative health research.*
- Jones-Renaud, Lindsey, Afaf Al-Khoshman, Njeri Kimotho (2023). ***Intersectionality in Applied Research for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Agriculture and Food Systems: Training Resource Guide.*** Cynara, Washington DC. 2022.

Selected studies and cases:

- Outcomes at the Nexus: ***A handbook for developing inclusive program outcomes that address the intersection of gender equality and climate change***
- Adaptation Fund (2022) Case Study 6: Understanding women farmers' vulnerabilities to climate change through an intersectional lens (starts on page 52) in ***Study on intersectional approaches to gender mainstreaming in adaptation-relevant interventions.***

Note: There are numerous case studies in Adaptation Fund's Study on intersectional approaches to gender mainstreaming adaptation-relevant interventions (2022). Case 6 (pages 52-54) and Case 7 (page 58-60) provide useful examples of the intersectional factors that shape women's vulnerabilities, responses to climate change and their political participation and decision-making powers. The intersectional factors include gender, caste, ethnicity, education, age, household responsibilities, and culture. These cases demonstrate the complexity of the factors that enable women to be economically and politically powerful and how they intersect with cultural, economic, and structural conditions as discussed in the guidance note above.

- Bailey AM, S. and Nguon, S.K. (2014). ***Situation Analysis for Disability-Inclusive Governance and Community Development in Cambodia.*** UNICEF Cambodia - Local Governance and Child Rights.
- Buysman, E. (2015). ***Biogas and household air quality: Study on Household Air Quality and Estimated Health Improvement of users of Biogas Stoves versus Wood-fired Stoves in Rural Cambodia.***
- Dang, L.Q. (2024), ***Women and urban flooding vulnerability: A case study from Can Tho City in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta.*** Asia Pac. Viewpoint.
- Mekong Development Research Institute and United Nations Development Programme (2023). ***Pilot assessment of disability inclusion in local governance, 2023.*** A Joint Policy Research Paper on Governance and Participation commissioned by the Mekong Development Research Institute (MDRI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Viet Nam. Ha Noi, Viet Nam: January 2023. (***Press Release and Summary*** are also available.)
- UNESCO Bangkok (2009. ***Case Studies on the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities (2009).***

ANNEX 3

KEY FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE GEDSI ANALYSIS[28]

Image by Plepann from Getty Images.

ANNEX 3: KEY FEATURES OF GOOD PRACTICE GEDSI ANALYSIS[28]

Approach and analytical framework



Analysis clearly linked to an analytical framework which unpacks gender and social norms, relations, and power dynamics into key dimensions where inequities and discrimination are most prevalent and pervasive.



Analysis identifies barriers to disability with equith Organisations of People with Disabilities (OPDs), and opportunities to address these through targeted and mainstreamed measures.



Analysis takes account of intersectionality and considers people's multiple identities and how these shape their differing experiences, concerns, needs, and capabilities.

Scope



Analysis draws on both primary and secondary data that is specific to the country, target location, sector, and investment.



Where analysis relies on secondary data, that data is less than three years old and is specific to country, target location, sector, and investment.

Methodology



Analysis involves partners and local organisations, including OPDs and women's rights organisations (WROs) to better understand specific gender equality, disability, and social inclusion issues, elicit their priorities and suggestions, and ensure they have voice and agency within the analysis process.



Analysis takes a 'do no harm' approach to data collection, storage and usage, considering and minimizing potential risks and harm to both participants/respondents and enumerators/researchers.



Analysis combines quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to generate measurable gaps and disparities between diverse groups of people and identify patterns of inequality.

[28]DFAT Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis Good Practice Note: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/gender-equality-disability-social-inclusion-analysis-good-practice-note.pdf.



Analysis uses participatory methods to ensure diverse groups of people participate equally in the research and makes specific effort to engage 'hard-to-reach' groups i.e., those who are less visible within households and communities.



Analysis has been conducted by specialists in gender equality, disability, and social inclusion. This often requires more than one individual to provide the required knowledge, experience and expertise.

Analysis



Analysis is disaggregated by sex, age, and disability as a minimum and, where appropriate, gender identity.



Analysis provides a sufficient level of detail to inform the investment design and identifies:
a) where inequalities exist between women, men, girls, boys, gender diverse people and people with disabilities.
b) why these disparities exist.
c) potential constraints and barriers for women, men, girls, boys, gender diverse people and people with disabilities in accessing and benefitting from the investment; and d) potential solutions to these issues.



Analysis takes a 'do no harm' approach and considers the impact (intended and unintended) that the investment could have on women, men, girls, boys, people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics, and people with disabilities, and provides strategies for avoiding or minimizing negative impacts on these groups.

Action



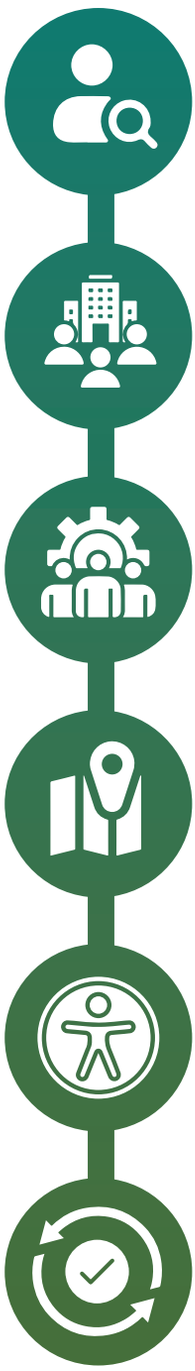
Analysis provides recommendations on where development assistance can be targeted and which gender equality, disability, and social inclusion activities should be included and/or adapted as part of the design.

ANNEX 4

DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE GEDSI-AWARE CONSULTATION STRATEGY

Image by JoshuaWells_Photography from Getty Images.

ANNEX 4: DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE GEDSI-AWARE CONSULTATION STRATEGY



Collaboratively identify stakeholders, paying careful attention to groups that are in project blind spots and socially marginalized groups within the project area;

Consult with local trusted NGOs in the areas to gauge the most effective strategies to meet with and engage local GEDSI groups;

It is preferable to have a member of the local NGO facilitate the consultations as they have the understanding of, and the trust of, the local community members and can facilitate in local languages;

Ensure the times and places are convenient, safe, and accessible to the groups being consulted;

Recognize and provide accessibility and reasonable accommodations, including possible space for children or providing invitations indicating they can bring their children if preferred/needed and

Ensure all impacted groups are represented with attention to the representation of men and women.

Note that it can often be preferable for women to meet in separate groups from men. In addition, different ethnic minority groups, men and women, may feel more comfortable if they have individual discussion groups. Accessibility and accommodations will be different for women and men with disabilities.

ANNEX 5

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR GEDSI-AWARE PROJECTS AND RESEARCH

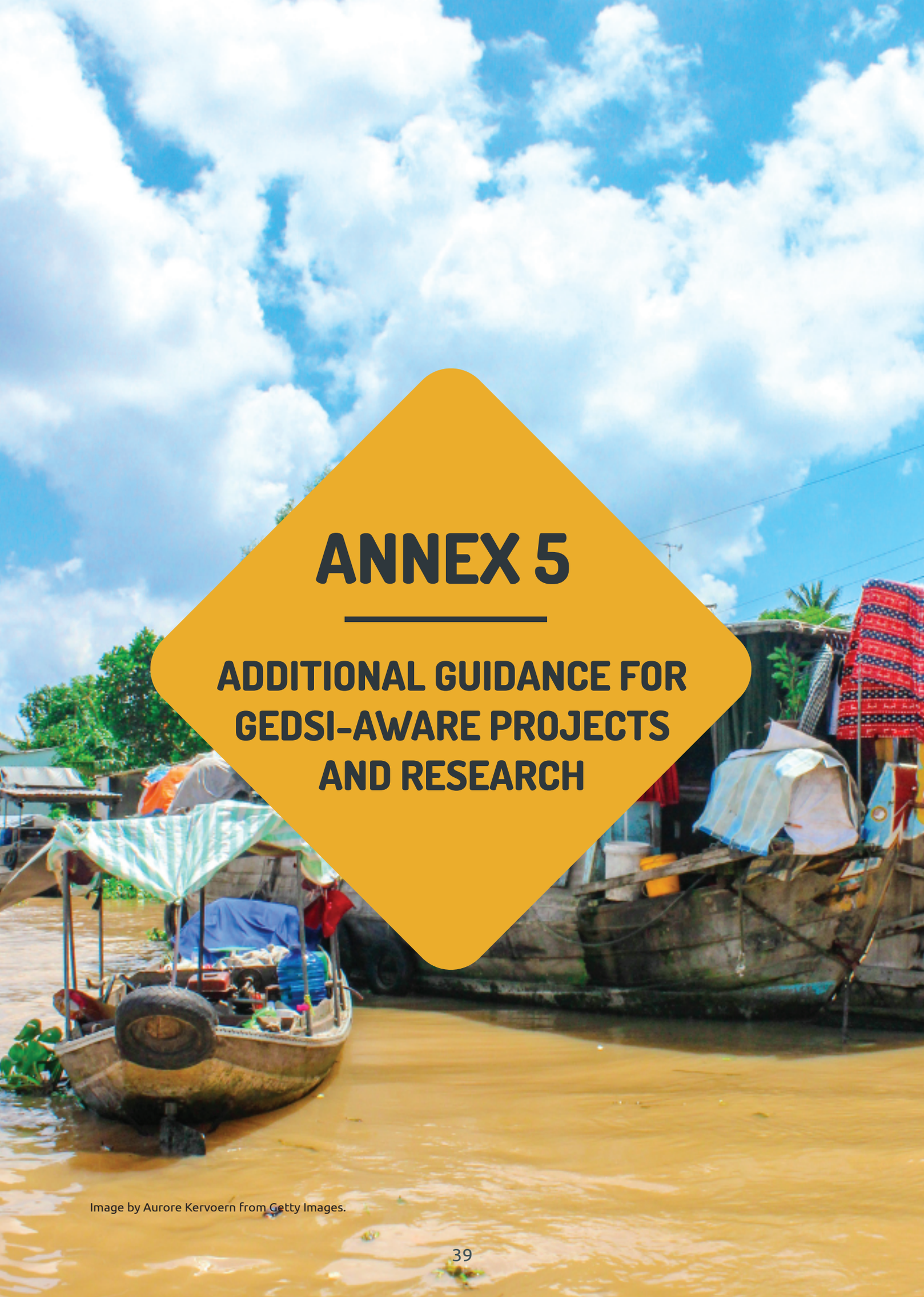


Image by Aurore Kervoern from Getty Images.

ANNEX 5: ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR GEDSI-AWARE PROJECTS AND RESEARCH

This annex aims to outline methodology principles for GEDSI-aware projects and research and introduce projects on how to apply an intersectional lens to research methods.

GEDSI Analysis Methodology Principles

The following methodology principles are adapted from DFAT's 2023 GEDSI Good Practice Note.[29] Although the methodology depends on the scope of the analysis, the below principles ensure that all GEDSI analysis is high quality, evidence-based, and sufficiently comprehensive:

Recognises and provides accessibility and reasonable accommodation. Accessibility refers to measures that aim to target a wide range of needs. Reasonable accommodation is the tailored provision of support, modifications, and/or adjustments that meet the needs of individuals with disabilities to ensure they enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis to others.



Good GEDSI analysis seeks to provide accessibility and reasonable accommodations to enable the participation of people with disabilities.



Accessibility measures include using accessible meeting venues and documents in accessible formats (e.g., electronic versions compatible with screen readers or versions in more straightforward language and illustrations for people with intellectual disabilities).



Reasonable accommodation may include the provision of alternative transportation, support people, and sign-language interpreters.

It makes visible the inequities and identifies opportunities to transform power imbalances. Good GEDSI analysis collects data highlighting how women, men, girls, boys, people with disabilities, and gender-diverse people negotiate the social norms, relations, barriers, and power dynamics that influence their lives.

[29]Retrieved from: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/gender-equality-disability-social-inclusion-analysis-good-practice-note.pdf (pp.9-10)

It provides critical analysis across these areas and highlights:



Where inequalities exist between different social groups;



Why these disparities exist;



Potential barriers for different social groups to benefit from the project or research;



Potential solutions to these issues.

A 'do no harm' approach. Good GEDSI analysis takes a 'do no harm' approach and considers the impact (intended and unintended) a project or research could have on different social groups.



Addressing marginalization and stigma can generate backlash, which programs must be designed to manage.



It recognizes the risks to the safety of LGBTQIA+ individuals in countries where they may face additional discrimination and/or lack protection.



GEDSI analysis supports social safeguarding by providing an understanding of the specific harms and risks experienced by some social groups.



It recognizes that for people with disabilities (including cognitive and psychosocial disabilities), there can be additional risks, unintended consequences, and discrimination, including denial of legal capacity, forced sterilization, and institutionalization.

Assessments of risks should consider gender-based violence, child protection risks, sexual exploitation and abuse, and human rights violations.

Goes beyond women, men, girls, and boys. Good GEDSI analysis goes beyond a binary understanding of gender. It not only asks which men and which women (which girls and which boys) may face barriers in benefiting from a project but also includes gender-diverse people and diverse categories of women, men, boys, and girls based on other intersecting forms of discrimination.



Good GEDSI analysis looks for differences between different social groups, seeks to understand these, and considers how the project design should respond.

Combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Good GEDSI analysis is based on two types of data: 1) quantitative sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data, and 2) qualitative analytical information. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods enhances the robustness of findings.

Quantitative methods are best suited for generating information on measurable gaps and disparities between different groups of people and for identifying patterns of inequality. Qualitative methods provide insight into how and why different groups of people have different experiences – and how these affect their capacity to participate in, influence, and benefit from program activities.

Uses participatory approaches. Good GEDSI analysis requires that different groups of people participate equally in the research. Participatory research methods are essential for engaging with groups directly to understand their needs and identify solutions for their participation in the project.

Participatory methods:



Collect data that is relevant and accurate;



Enables those targeted by an investment to share their experiences and provide recommendations for program strategies and activities.

Good GEDSI analysis also engages the 'hard-to-reach' group. For example, some people with disabilities may be unable to leave their homes or may be purposely hidden due to social stigma, people with communication or cognitive disabilities may face challenges participating in surveys or focus group discussions, and women may face barriers to participation because of their heavy workload burdens.

Disaggregates data by sex, age, and disability as a minimum and, where safe and appropriate, gender identity. Good GEDSI analysis presents sex, age, and disability-disaggregated statistics. First, all analyses should be disaggregated by sex as a minimum. However, some people do not identify with the male/female binary. In other instances, people may not wish to disclose gender.

The collection of **gender-disaggregated data**, which enables GEDSI analysis participants to identify based on their gender, allows for a dignified approach but can raise concerns about privacy, identity, self-determination, and security. The appropriateness of collecting gender-disaggregated data, therefore, depends on the context. Consider the degree to which individuals requested to identify their gender may understand and/or react to diverse gender identities. GEDSI analysis must consider potential risks and 'do-no-harm' to those conducting and/or participating in the analysis. Safety and confidentiality are a primary concern.

Disaggregation by age is also recommended. Disaggregation by three age brackets from childhood to adolescence (0-5; 6-12; 13-17) and 10-year age brackets after that is the internationally accepted standard. Depending on the type of project, other age groups may be better suited for analysis. For example, if designing a nutrition program for children, smaller intervals may be used for those younger than five years.

When collecting **disability disaggregated data**, the focus should be on people's experience of their individual level of function, which better captures the relationship between their disability, the environment, and barriers to participation and the enjoyment of rights. The Washington Group Short Set (WG-SS) of Disability Questions[30] standardizes the collection of disability disaggregated data and can be rapidly and easily deployed in various settings. Finally, when data on sex, gender, age, or disability are unavailable, this should be identified as a gap and addressed as an opportunity through the investment monitoring, evaluation, and learning system.

Intersectionality in Research

The selected text below reviews some of the main conceptual frameworks for intersectionality, including from Kimberlé Crenshaw. Using a framework from the article "Methods of Intersectional Research" by Joya Misra and her colleagues (2021), this annex introduces a set of methodological tenets and ideas for how to apply these tenets throughout the research process.[31]

[30]Available at: https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/

[31]Joya Misra, Celeste Vaughan Curington & Venus Mary Green (2021) Methods of intersectional research, Sociological Spectrum, 41:1, 9-28, DOI: 10.1080/02732173.2020.1791772. Link: https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2020.1791772

Key Terms and Concepts

Conceptual frameworks for intersectionality in research

The paper, Making Sense of 'Intersectionality': a manual for lovers of people and forests (Colfer et al. 2018) provides valuable summaries of three vital conceptual frameworks for intersectionality from the works of the scholars Kimberlé Crenshaw, Leslie McCall, and Olena Hankivsky. Crenshaw and Hankvisky's frameworks help understand 'intersectionality' as a theory and concept, whereas McCall's framework helps describe the different approaches to determining categories for comparison in intersectional research.

Types of intersectionality

According to Colfer et al., Kimberlé Crenshaw "recognizes three types of intersectionality", which the authors summarise in the following way (p. 6-7):



Structural intersectionality: "The intersection of race and gender means that women of color experience violence and policies aimed to remedy adverse conditions qualitatively differently from white women."



Political intersectionality: "Politics, whether feminist or antiracist, has paradoxically rendered violence against women of color a marginal concern – exemplified by the invisibility of black women."



Representational intersectionality: "Women of color are misrepresented in their cultural construction (stereotypes and narratives that further marginalize them), thus exacerbating their disempowerment.

These types reflect the original Black, feminist, and United States context in which Crenshaw coined the term.

Principles of Intersectionality

Hankivsky offers a broader application of intersectionality and emphasizes "the malleability of social categories and the fact that they are not inherent." Colfer et al. have summarised Hankvisky's approach into eight principles:



Together, these principles show the dynamism and complexity of intersectionality as a concept. The implication for researchers is that applying intersectionality is more of a process than a specific method.

Approaches to determining analytical categories for intersectional research

The third conceptual framework presented by Colfer et al. is from Leslie McCall. This framework helps consider applying the concept when designing and determining analytical categories for research.

Anticategorical is an approach of avoiding using categories because of their fluidity and instability. According to Colfer et al., it is a valuable approach for research that includes "individual life histories" or other projects that seek to "demonstrate how individuals' experiences are mediated by different social relations, life-cycle processes, and personal agency" (p. 7).

Intracategorical is an approach that uses categories but also critiques them. According to Colfer et al., intra-categorical is an approach that focuses on the "processes by which social categories are produced, experienced, reproduced and resisted daily" (p. 7). and is most suitable for in-depth case studies.

Intercategorical is an approach where the researcher adopts "provisionally existing analytical categories" to document differences and inequalities between them (p. 7). It is often suitable for macroquantitative research. It should be complemented by background research and potentially qualitative research to produce a more nuanced analysis of differences across and within categories.

Methodological tenets of intersectional research

Misra et al. build on these conceptual frameworks by proposing six methodological tenets of intersectionality for research (2021), summarized below.

One of the most important takeaways about these tenets is that intersectionality is not solely concerned with comparing multiple social groups. It is also meant to address oppression, understand privilege, embrace complexity and contradictions, ground research in a historical, political, social, and economic context, and deconstruct the nuances and fluidity of the groups your research is comparing.



Oppression is core to intersectional research. An intersectional approach would make oppression core to the research's purpose and use the research to change inequalities (e.g., through policy change). In addition, the researcher must recognize their positionality and power within the context of oppression.



Relationality goes hand-in-hand with the tenet of oppression. It is an acknowledgment of the reality that the experiences of people with privilege and people with disadvantage are linked: “Oppression for some groups is interconnected with opportunity for others” (p. 12). To apply this tenet, researchers would emphasize the link between the experiences of privileged and disadvantaged people.



Complexity calls for researchers to not shy away from nuance and contradictions. Researchers who take an intersectional approach will avoid the Western epistemological tendency to think in binaries, for example, about people, issues, histories, and perspectives. Complexity goes together with the next tenet, context: “Carrying out intersectional research requires being cognizant of how a variety of socially constructed dimensions of difference intersect with each other and with different contexts to shape outcomes” (p. 13).



Context means that the research shows a deep understanding of the historical and local context and its influence on the situation and systems of oppression being researched. It can also help researchers determine which analytical categories to focus on by grounding that decision in a localized, historical, political, economic, and social context.



Comparison is what most people think of when they think of intersectional research. It is the comparison of experiences of different groups. Importantly, however, it should be applied with the next tenet, deconstruction.



Deconstruction is the essential step of questioning the categorization of people into groups. Researchers do "intersectional research through comparison, while also identifying the inherent instability of categories, or deconstruction" (p. 11). Researchers would design their research, analyze data, and write up the paper or report in a way that looks for and acknowledges the malleability and fluidity of social categories like gender identity, race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, and so on.

Application in the research process

Misra et al. (2021) points out, it is not necessary to incorporate all these tenets in a research project for that research to be considered intersectional. These are guideposts, not a checklist. There are many opportunities throughout the research process to incorporate these tenets. Below are some ideas for different phases of a research process, many of which were generated collectively by CGIAR gender researchers in the context of this course.



1. Identification of research topic and research questions

- Issues of oppression are core to intersectional research. Is this clear from your research focus? Does your research acknowledge or seek to understand better those who benefit from systems of oppression and those who are disadvantaged? Institutions like CGIAR are well-positioned to address oppression in the agricultural sector through their research.
- Self-reflection is the power dynamics of the researcher and their institution (e.g., CGIAR) vis-à-vis their research partners and the people who are the research subjects. As Vasupradha Srikrishna writes, "...can knowledge ever be unbiased? Is there no bias when I decide what research problem to explore or work on? Does bias not begin with the organization or the researcher identifying his or her research area?" (2020). Are there accountability mechanisms you can put in place to help you continue this critical self-reflection throughout the resource process?
- Ground the research in a historical and localized context, including as it relates to the systems of oppression in the area and among the groups you are researching. How well do you know the historical, political, social, and economic dynamics of your research area? Be cognizant of who is producing the knowledge you are using for context; how important is local knowledge compared to that produced by INGOs to your research?

- Intersectional research typically involves comparing the experiences of different groups of people. Use the other tenets (e.g., context and oppression) to help you identify which groupings are "most salient" to explore.
- The tenets of complexity and deconstruction suggest innumerable ways of categorizing people and population segments. In what ways will your research be open to deconstructing the social groups you are comparing?



2. Design research methods

- It can be challenging for quantitative methods to represent the complexity of a situation and the nuances within and among the groups you are comparing. Complement quantitative methods with background research and qualitative research that help you capture complexity and enable deconstruction.
- Reflect critically on how research methods may exploit power dynamics and existing systems of oppression. For example, who is benefiting from this research?
- Design methods that produce knowledge together with the people being researched, such as participatory research methods, to balance power relations in creating knowledge (relationality).



3. Determine sampling

- If this is not articulated in your overall research topic, identify the most salient categories for comparison, considering context (background research), complexity (qualitative analysis), and oppression. Where are significant inequalities related to your research topic currently, and which groupings do they affect positively and negatively?
- From the outset, design a sample size and plan that will enable you to analyze and compare participants across and within the categories you've identified for comparison—for example, rural women, urban women, rural men, and urban men. With research partners, develop a way of tracking respondents throughout data collection to ensure you have met the targets needed to analyze across and within these groups (comparison).

4. Working with national and community partners

- Self-reflect on the power dynamics between and among researchers and research institutions (oppression and relationality). Which partners are benefiting from the research? How can you structure these partnerships to avoid reproducing oppressive power hierarchies? For example, you could examine how one partner supervises the other and how the institution directly contacts the donor and communicates research results with different partners.
- Acknowledge that communities know how aid and development work and have lived experience and knowledge about the context that outsiders cannot have. Their knowledge and methods should be valued and incorporated (context).
- Acknowledge that national partners are not homogenous (complexity and context). There are different partners and many different factors that underpin the power relations in a research team.
- Provide opportunities for national partners to self-reflect on their power vis-à-vis research subjects and the methodological tenets of intersectionality. Do not assume that because a partner is from the country of study, they don't have biases about others in that country.

5. Data collection and analysis

- Seek information and data about systems and structures (oppression) and related assumptions, practices, rules, roles, capacities, etc. (deconstruction). Who benefits from those systems and structures, and at whose expense (comparison and relationality)?
- Ground the analysis in a historical, political, social, economic, and localized context.
- Disaggregate data by different groups and the intersections of those groups based on your analysis of which groupings are most salient. Where possible and where it makes sense, make comparisons across different combinations of groupings to identify nuances and contradictions (comparison and deconstruction).
- Acknowledge the complexity of the research throughout the documentation process.

- Triangulate your findings with previous research and reports. Pay particular attention to your conclusions about the gaps they address and the work that needs to be done in the future.

6. Writing reports and recommendations

- Self-reflect on the impact of what you write will have on the community from the privilege of being a researcher. When writing recommendations, consider oppression and relationality. For example, who will benefit from the recommendations? Which groups? Which stakeholders? And at whose or what expense, if any?

- Write about what you learned from comparing different categories and category combinations based on what matters most for the research question and in the context of oppression. But avoid binary representations of people and situations. Seek out nuance and show the complexity and depth of the problem. Acknowledge how there are differences within various categories (deconstruction).

- Describe the context in which the investigation was performed, precisely the context of oppression. Describe what and why a particular context makes your analysis's analytical categories relevant. Don't shy away from describing historical and political contexts, which are essential for understanding systems of oppression.

- Consider different approaches to data presentation using tables and visual figures that are clear and user-friendly.

7. Research ethics

- Avoiding harm is the priority. Given power relations and oppression, be cognizant of potential taboos related to the types of oppression you are researching, such as sexual orientation in areas where LGBTQIA+ people are criminalized and persecuted. People stigmatize illnesses (like HIV/AIDS) or disabilities.

- Reflect critically on the concept of consent. Given the circumstances, you sometimes need to ask whether complete consent can be genuinely given. Always seek ways to provide research participants opportunities to consent or decline participation. For example, remind them that they do not have to answer questions or speak in focus groups if they do not want to.

- There are creative ways to inform vulnerable populations about what they are consenting to, such as a pre-consent quiz.
- Provide training and guidance for team members about intersectionality, power, cultural competency, identifying stereotypes and biases, and respectful communication methods.
- Use inclusive language, but remember that individuals often have different preferences about what language to use to identify themselves, particularly regarding gender identity, ability, sexuality, and racial or ethnic identity. For example, some people may prefer the identity label "autistic," whereas others will prefer "neurodivergent" or "person with autism" (see Casio et al. 2021). Some people do not identify with binary gender labels, such as women or men, male or female.

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Summary

The Mekong Thought Leadership and Think Tanks Network Program aims to work with national and regional knowledge-based policy influence organizations to enhance their effectiveness and inclusiveness in policy engagement. This will be combined with communications based on high-quality research, practical advice generated by the program, cross-learning among relevant organizations in the subregion, and drawing upon relevant Australian and other expertise and experiences in water security, energy security, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The program partnership comprises 25 organisations, including eight consortium members, that not only help to ensure technical competency across the water, energy, and climate domain, but also draw upon critical insights and connections. The program is supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Government of Australia.

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