

MODULE 3

DEVELOPING A GENDER STRATEGY



OVERVIEW OF MODULE 3

This module was designed to equip you with the knowledge and tools to develop a gender strategy for your innovation.

By the end of the module, you should:

- Have an understanding of what a gender strategy is, as well as its relevance to your innovation
- Know the building blocks of a gender strategy and how to apply them to your innovation
- Know what gender support is available to you from GCC

Key tools:

- Template for implementation and M&E plan
- Gender analysis questions at each level of the socio-ecological framework

OVERVIEW OF MODULE 3

In this third module, we will focus on the following topics:

- 1 Gender strategies: The basics
- 2 Gender strategy building blocks
- 3 Gender equality vision
- 4 Gender analysis
- 5 Gender equality priorities
- 6 Implementation and monitoring plan
- 7 Risk mitigation plan
- 8 Resources & other capacity needs
- 9 Communication plan



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WHAT IT IS

- ✓ A gender strategy frames an organization's or innovation's overall approach to gender integration and gender equality and articulates its commitment.
- ✓ It is based on a gender analysis which identifies key gender equality challenges relevant to the sector and community where the innovation operates as well as the product or service being offered.
- ✓ It includes an action plan to implement key priorities.

WHAT IT IS NOT

- ✗ A separate strategy that does not align with your innovation or organization.
- ✗ A static document that is never reassessed or updated as the situation changes.
- ✗ An exercise that is only carried out to comply with donor requirements.

GENDER STRATEGIES: THE BASICS

Why is a gender strategy important for my innovation?



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A gender strategy enables an innovator to set realistic and time-bound gender equality priorities that can be regularly monitored and reported on.



It clarifies responsibilities and accountabilities to people within the organization on their commitments to gender equality.



A gender strategy can spur transformational change within the organization and for target end users.



It can also be used to build a business case to attract funding from investors interested in Gender Lens Investing (GLI) opportunities.



For a reminder of why gender equality is important for your innovation, please refer to **Module 1 of the learning series: Introduction to gender equality.**

GENDER STRATEGIES: THE BASICS

Who should be involved and how much work is it?



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Developing a gender strategy can be a powerful step for an organization, but it doesn't have to be complicated or time consuming if you have limited resources.

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A general rule is that the more participatory an approach is (i.e. that innovation staff and end users are engaged and contribute to the process), the more transformative and sustainable it will be.

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TOP TIP

Approaches can be different depending on the innovator's capacity and the size of the team:

- One approach is to appoint a gender champion in senior leadership who guides the process.
- Alternatively, a gender committee formed of a staff member from each team or department can work together on the gender strategy and keep management and all staff informed of progress.



GENDER STRATEGIES: THE BASICS

GCC's expectations and support to innovators



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Transition To Scale (TTS) innovators (i.e. those that have been selected by GCC to scale their impact) are expected to develop a gender strategy in order to demonstrate their plans and commitments to gender equality during the investment period.

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If needed or requested, GCC staff may refer TTS innovators to Gender Equality Venture Advisors at Kore Global, for support in developing their gender strategy or reviewing and strengthening an existing strategy.

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GENDER STRATEGIES: THE BASICS

Where does change need to happen?



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A gender strategy can address both product/service-level and organizational priorities and commitments.

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At the **products and services** level, consider gendered barriers and opportunities for end users, ensuring that solutions not only improve access and benefits but also advance gender equality.



At the **organizational** level, you can consider the internal policies, organizational values, staff attitudes and knowledge and identify ways to increase gender equality within your organizational structure and working practices.



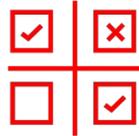
GENDER STRATEGY BUILDING BLOCKS

Here are some key components of a gender strategy. However, there can be different ways to structure a strategy document. Click on any building block to take you to the relevant page.

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Gender equality vision



Gender equality priorities



Risk mitigation plan



Communication plan



Gender analysis



Implementation and M&E plan



Resources and other capacity needs



1

This is the North Star, providing a guiding statement for what you wish to achieve with respect to gender equality and inclusion.

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EXAMPLES

- Here is an example adapted from a digital contraceptive screen and referral service:
"We work to create a world where all people, regardless of gender, can make informed, equitable decisions about their health and well-being. We achieve this by applying a gender lens to every aspect of our work, from content to service delivery, ensuring our interventions are responsive to the unique needs of men, women, and young people."
- Here is another example adapted from an early childhood development (ECD) program for preschool-aged children:
"Our vision is a world where all children, regardless of their gender or background, have equitable opportunities to develop their skills and talents and reach their full potential. We achieve this by actively challenging restrictive gender norms from an early age and embedding gender equality in our programme design and delivery, especially for vulnerable and marginalized women and communities."

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Gender analysis: Introduction



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The gender analysis is the heart of the gender strategy. It is used to examine challenges that people of different genders—including women, men, and gender diverse people—may experience in accessing programs or services, as well as any discrimination they may face.

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It involves asking the right questions to understand if there are any barriers to people of diverse genders in accessing an innovation, and to what extent an innovation can help to address gender inequalities and promote gender equality.

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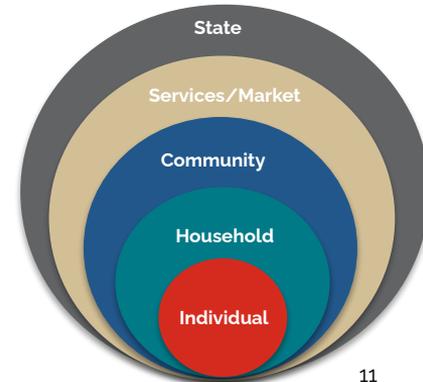
It can also include questions on how inclusive the organizational culture is, and where there are areas to increase gender equality within the organization/innovation.

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For an explanation of how to use the socioecological framework for guiding a gender analysis, please see **Module 2 of the learning series: Understanding gender equality issues in your sector.**

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Gender analysis: Methodologies



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Methodologies for your gender analysis can include:

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Desk research on relevant existing publications and data (e.g. academic research, reports from respected organizations, evaluations of similar programs).



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Review of internal policies and strategies (including HR policies, strategic plans).



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Review of national or local policies relevant to the sector you work in (e.g. health policies, gender policies).



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Consultations with key stakeholders and end users.



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Review of existing learning documentation including data from M&E reports, feedback from end users, and innovation reports





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A gender analysis doesn't have to be an overly-complicated, stand-alone research exercise.

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If you are already doing some research, that's a great opportunity to ensure you include a gender lens in your research questions.

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EXAMPLE

If you are planning some research looking at the availability of health services in a community, consider asking if there are any specific services needed by women (e.g. antenatal and postnatal care, access to modern contraceptives) in local health facilities and whether these are adequately resourced in terms of availability of services, drugs and equipment, and skilled health care staff trained in respectful care.

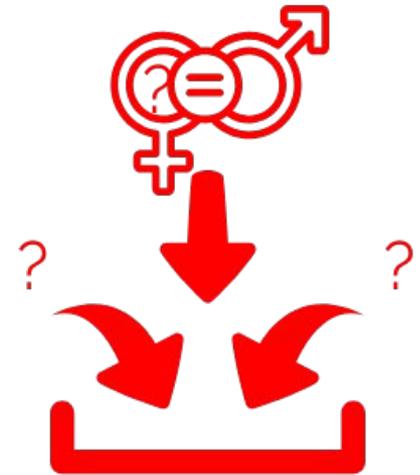
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Gender analysis: Guiding questions



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Here are some questions to guide your gender analysis. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and is meant for guidance only:

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- How do existing gender norms and stereotypes influence who participates or has access to your innovation?
- How do gender roles and inequalities influence who benefits from your innovation?
- How do other identities intersect with gender to compound existing gender barriers or inequalities?
- Does your innovation offer opportunities to advance the rights of women, girls, and/or marginalized groups and promote gender equality?
- Are there opportunities to involve men and boys with your innovation in ways that lead to reduced gender barriers and inequalities?
- What assumptions are we making about the status of women, gender-diverse people, men and their political, economic and social situations?
- What are staff beliefs, attitudes and behaviours relating to gender equality and what are the gaps in staff capacity to implement activities promoting gender equality?
- Is there any discrimination or unequal treatment experienced among innovation staff?
- Do internal policies and strategies reflect and integrate gender equality principles?

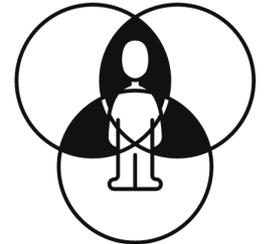
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For more questions organized according to the socio-ecological framework, please see [Annex 1](#).





Gender analysis: Whom to consult and how?



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You should try to engage with a range of different stakeholders and end users of different genders, ages, ability, etc. (where relevant and feasible). You could also identify any women's groups or other community-level actors whose experience and views provide useful learning.

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Here are some ethical and safety considerations when doing consultations with end users:

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Respect people's time, consider mobility constraints and cultural or traditional practices e.g. avoid holding a consultation during a religious festival day



Adopt a trauma-informed approach when asking about sensitive topics



Avoid tokenistic participation and only collect relevant data

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Put measures in place to assure confidentiality and anonymity where necessary and protect personal information



Ensure participants give informed voluntary consent



Consider holding separate discussion groups for women and men of different ages to encourage full participation

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Gender equality priorities



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Once you have completed your analysis, it's time to think about how your innovation can address some of the key challenges you identified. There are changes you can consider at the products and services level, and also changes at the level of your organization. An internal working culture that promotes gender equality is important to be able to implement gender responsive innovations and promote gender equality externally.

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What are the opportunities to promote gender equality? What adaptations can you make to your innovation to make it more inclusive and to ensure women and marginalized groups can fully benefit from it?



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What changes can you make at the organizational level to ensure your workplace is inclusive and free from discrimination and promotes gender equality?





Gender equality priorities



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So what changes should you consider? Below you'll find some thematic areas to help guide you, based on the [2X Criteria](#).

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Innovation level

- How can your products and services (further) enhance the well-being of women, girls, and gender diverse people?
- How can your products and services promote gender equality?
- How can you ensure the partners and suppliers you work with are committed to gender equality?

Organizational level

- How can you promote more women in senior leadership positions and on the Board of Directors?
- How can you ensure women and gender diverse people are represented in your workforce?
- What policies can you put in place to ensure a gender-equitable workplace?





Gender equality priorities continued



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It might not be possible to address all of the challenges that surfaced from the analysis, so it can be helpful to do a prioritization exercise to take into account **feasibility** and potential **impact**.

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It's recommended to identify at least 1 or 2 priorities at each level (products/services and organization).

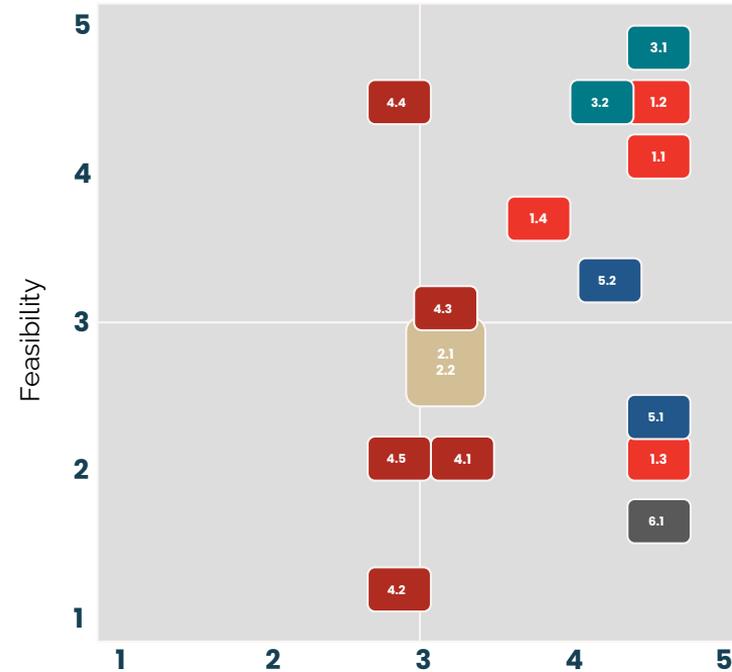
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Prioritization matrix



Importance/impact for gender equality and social inclusion within your innovation



Gender equality priorities continued



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What does this look like in practice? Here are some examples to give you an idea of the priorities identified by other innovators:

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Innovation

1. Medical Device

Innovation: A non-profit that develops medical devices with a focus on user-centered design.

Target audience includes healthcare workers in low-resource settings and people of all genders affected by health inequities.

Gender equality issue

Lack of gender-responsive design in global health: Medical supplies and equipment are often designed without a gender lens, which can result in fit failures and underutilization, entrenching gender-related health inequities for end-users and adding to the work loads of under-resourced healthcare workers, who are primarily women.

Gender priorities and activities

Integration of Gender Lens: The innovation formally integrated a gender lens into their product development, ensuring design and testing considered all genders and that project teams were gender-balanced.

Formal Public Commitment & Policy

Development: The innovation made a public statement on gender equality, pledging to create new policies for parental leave, safety, and personal pronoun use.

Intended gender equality impact

Medical devices are designed with a gender lens to prevent product failure and ensure their **effective use, benefiting all intended users, particularly the female-majority health workforce.**

More equitable uptake and usage of the medical innovation, directly **addressing gender-related health inequities.**



Gender equality priorities continued



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Innovation

2. Mental Health Initiative:

A project that addresses suicide by building a peer-to-peer support network of youth with lived mental health experience.

The target audience is youth aged 10-24, including LGBTQI+ individuals.

Gender equality issue

Restrictive gender norms for men:

Cultural norms discourage men from expressing emotions and discussing mental health, as this is perceived as a sign of weakness. This contributes to higher rates of injuries, substance abuse, and delayed care-seeking among men and boys. The issue is reflected in recruitment, where a higher number of female applicants was observed, highlighting a need for targeted outreach to engage other genders.

Gender priorities and activities

Proactive Inclusion of All Genders: The project leadership is intentionally diverse, and all participants are deliberately selected to reflect varied genders and sexual orientations.

Targeted Male Engagement: The project incorporated specific messaging and outreach to encourage men to participate in mental health and suicide prevention initiatives, aiming to achieve a more gender-balanced representation of male youth in the program.

Intended gender equality impact

Transformation of Gender Norms: The initiative aims to break down cultural barriers and transform negative norms that prevent men from seeking help, encouraging more open discussions about mental health.

Equitable Participation: The project ensures balanced representation of all genders among its peer-support network and beneficiaries, advancing equal participation and access to mental health resources.



Gender equality priorities continued



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Innovation

3. GBV Chatbot: A multilingual chatbot delivered via a popular messaging app that provides safe, confidential information about Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and connects users to support services.

The target audience is young people, particularly adolescent girls and young women (AGYW).

Gender equality issue

Systemic failures in GBV support: There is inconsistent geographic availability and quality of GBV services, which, along with secondary victimization by service providers, results in only a small percentage of women seeking help after sexual assault. This disproportionately affects AGYW, as well as LGBTQIA+ people, and women with disabilities, who may not know where to get information or feel safe disclosing GBV experiences.

Gender priorities and activities

Youth-Centered & Gender-Responsive Design: The chatbot was designed based on the needs and preferences of AGYW to provide a confidential and convenient digital channel for support.

Inclusive Messaging & Network: The chatbot's content is not gendered and offers specialized support for underserved groups, including LGBTQIA+ people and people with disabilities. The organization is also expanding its referral network with new partners to improve accessibility.

Intended gender equality impact

Increased Access to GBV Support: The chatbot bridges a significant gap in care by providing a critical, safe entry point for survivors to get information and connect to a network of vetted support services.

Autonomy and Safety: The tool promotes the empowerment of AGYW by giving them a sense of control over their care journey and reducing the barriers to safely disclosing their experiences.

Systemic Strengthening: By digitally monitoring and documenting GBV incidence, the project contributes to better data for national statistics and resource allocation, helping to strengthen the overall institutional response to GBV.



Implementation and M&E plan



1

Implementation of a gender strategy is best defined in an action plan, with each activity listed, along with who is responsible for making sure it happens, the timeline and budget (if required).

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Here you should include how you will measure progress in each activity, including some easy-to-track indicators.

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EXAMPLE

If your prioritized activity is to make your innovation more accessible to women, men and gender-diverse individuals living with a disability by providing voice-activated services over the phone, you can measure the number of end users with a physical disability who use the innovation and their level of satisfaction.



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Also note that there needs to be accountability at senior management level and regular reporting on progress to management and all staff.

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An example template is provided on the next slide, showing what an action plan could look like.

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Implementation and M&E plan - example template



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ACTIVITY	INDICATOR(S)	TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE	BUDGET
<i>E.g. Use existing feedback data from women, men, and gender-diverse individuals of different ages and abilities to make adaptations and improvements to the innovation to achieve greater gender equality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of end users disaggregated by gender, age and ability, participating in consultations • Number of adaptations made to innovation based on feedback received 	<p>Quarterly consultations (add specific months/year)</p> <p>Continuous throughout project implementation</p>	<p>M&E officer with support from other project staff</p> <p>Project team</p>	\$
<i>E.g. Increase awareness of women's health needs in target communities through community outreach activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people reached through outreach activities • Increase in number of women end users of the innovation 	<p>2 activities in Q1 and Q2</p> <p>Continuous monitoring of end users</p>	<p>Project team</p> <p>M&E officer</p>	\$
<i>E.g. Implement gender sensitivity training for project team</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of knowledge of staff on gender 	Q2	Gender focal point with support from external gender expert	\$



Risk mitigation plan



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What should you do if the unexpected happens or something changes in your organization? To prepare for these eventualities, **identify 1-3 risks** that might affect the implementation of the gender strategy and how you would mitigate these.

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EXAMPLE

Risk: The gender focal point does not have enough time to fulfill their gender-related duties

Mitigation strategy: Ensure the role of the gender focal point is formalized in their job description with a specified percentage of time that they should dedicate to this work.

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Are there any gender-related risks in project activities more broadly? How will your innovation mitigate these?

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EXAMPLE

Risk: Women's care responsibilities limit their ability to participate in the services offered by the innovation.

Mitigation strategy: Schedule services at times and locations that are convenient for women, or provide childcare support during sessions/meetings.

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Resources and other capacity needs



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Gender equality work doesn't need to cost a lot of money, but it does require an investment of time.

It can be useful to make a plan for how you will invest the necessary resources and think about whether you need additional capacity.



Think about whether you want to appoint a gender focal point, or a committee to work together on implementing the gender strategy.

Are there any organizations you can partner with locally, who have expertise in gender equality and who could provide some technical assistance?





Communicating your gender strategy



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One thing you should avoid is your gender strategy just sitting on a shelf after you have taken the time to develop it.

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One way to ensure this doesn't happen is to communicate your strategy and action plan to the entire organization, either through regular team meetings or with a special event.

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Another useful tip is to align the gender strategy's objectives and activities with the innovation's overall objectives and outcomes so that it aligns with the innovation's Theory of Change and MEL framework. This ensures clear lines of responsibility and accountability for strategy implementation.

It can also be useful to think of creative ways to communicate the strategy externally. A lot of donors are interested in advancing gender equality, and having a strategy you can share widely may help you to secure more funding for your innovation.



FURTHER RESOURCES

For more resources on gender strategies, see the following:

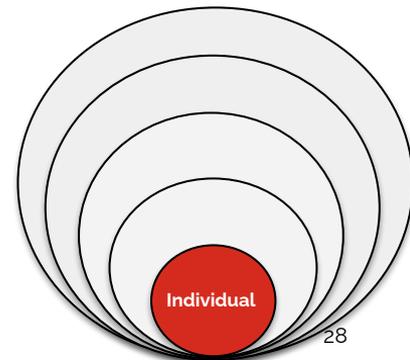
- Global Affairs Canada, [Feminist International Assistance Gender Equality Toolkit for Projects](#)
- Government of Canada, [Introduction to Gender Based Analysis Plus](#)
- European Institute for Gender Equality, [Gender Analysis](#) and [Gender Institutional Transformation Toolkit](#)
- Australian Government, [Gender Strategy Toolkit](#)

ANNEX 1 - GENDER ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Individual domain

How does your innovation consider the unique needs, preferences, assets, and capabilities of individuals of different genders?

- Start by collecting sex-disaggregated information about the market for the innovation including who will use and benefit from the innovation.
- Who are the target end users? What is the gender/age breakdown of the targeted users? (along with other relevant features, if known, such as ethnicity, urban/rural location, religion, ability, etc)
- Are there differences in the way men, women, boys and girls will use the product or service?
- Are there differences in the ways or extent that women/girls and men/boys will benefit from the product or service? (for example: timesaving, health, status, or convenience)
- Are there any limits to people of different genders' abilities to access, participate, or benefit from the innovation?
- Have women and girls been consulted in the process of designing, producing and implementing the innovation?



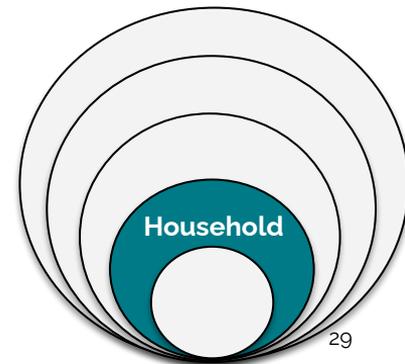
ANNEX 1 - GENDER ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Household domain

How do gender attitudes in a household affect access and usability of your innovation?

Does your product or service inadvertently reinforce discriminatory household power relations?

- Will the innovation be affected by or does it reinforce unequal decision-making ability within households, mobility restrictions on women and girls, gender-based violence, gender stereotypes, or the unequal division of care responsibilities inside the family?
- What is the availability of household resources (financial, land, digital) and are there gendered differences in use/access?



ANNEX 1 - GENDER ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

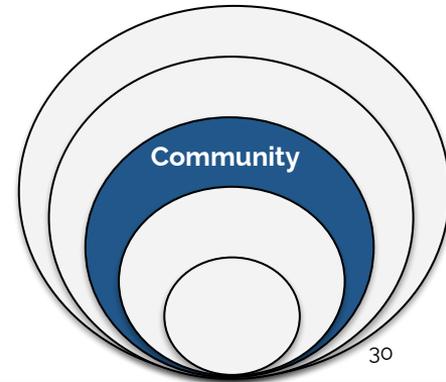
Community domain

What are the prevailing gender norms related to the issue your innovation is tackling?

How do gender norms in the community impact the uptake of your innovation?

How can your innovation challenge discriminatory gender norms?

- Are there hospitals/health facilities/schools/WASH facilities in the community? How plentiful/accessible are they? Are there differences in the ability of women and men, girls and boys, to access these facilities?
- Can women and girls use these facilities on their own? Must they get permission from a male relative? Be accompanied by a male relative?
- Do men or women have restrictions on their mobility? What restrictions? How do they influence women's access to services and/or to supportive social networks?
- How does violence or the threat of violence affect women's and girls'/men's and boys' lives, mobility, ability to work, ability to move about in public?
- Are there any particular advantages people of different genders might have (e.g. traditional knowledge; market access; the freedom to meet with others)?



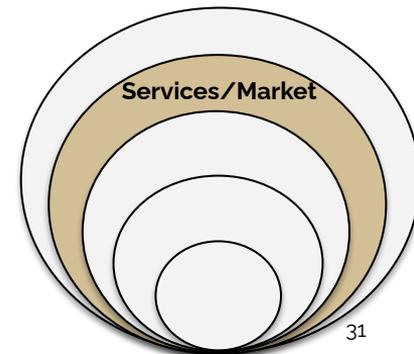
ANNEX 1 - GENDER ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Services/market domain

What barriers do individuals of different genders experience in accessing services? How accessible and affordable is your innovation for people of different genders?

Is your sector characterized by gender-imbalance or inequity in its workforce? How could your product/service contribute to gender-inclusive practices?

- What are the traditional gendered division of roles, responsibilities and power in the relevant sectors? Who does what kind of work (e.g. in health care: who are the doctors, nurses, pharmacists, birth assistants, traditional health providers) ?
- Are women and men represented in the leadership of these businesses or institutions? Do male and female staff have equal opportunities for training, advancement, etc.?



ANNEX 1 - GENDER ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

State domain

What are the existing laws, policies, and regulations related to gender equality and the issue that is the focus of your innovation?

How can your innovation ensure compliance with gender equality legislation? Are there ways in which your workplace policies can go beyond what is mandated by law in promoting gender equity?

- Is gender equality enshrined in the Constitution? Do men and women have equal status under all national, regional, and local laws? Is there anti-discrimination legislation? How well is it enforced?
- Are there discriminatory laws, regulations or practices that might affect the innovation or create obstacles for women to participate/lead? (e.g. unequal retirement age for women and men)
- Are there any restrictions (laws/regulations/practices) that affect women and men differently in terms of engaging in business? e. g. restrictions on women owning property; requirements such as women needing their husband's signature to open a bank account
- What does labour legislation say about codes of conduct, employment equity, pay equity, harassment? How well are these laws adhered to/enforced? How will this affect your innovation or business model (e.g. risk exposure, human resource policies)?
- Are there gender biases in how governments allocate resources that might impact the scaling of the innovation?

