

OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)
**Tools for Gender Equality and the Empowerment
of all Women and Girls** in Development
Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance

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Every development intervention will have an impact on gender equality, whether intended or not.



Background

In a world marked by geopolitical tensions and unprecedented global challenges, including pushback against gender equality, it has never been more crucial to establish and maintain robust standards that promote the empowerment of women and girls. Improving gender equality enables economic competitiveness and the sustainability of development co-operation in all countries. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is committed to hardwiring gender equality into the policies and systems of its members and beyond.

The **DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance** (2024) is a legal instrument, which offers a long-term accountability framework, helping societies and economies address systemic barriers to equality.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls: Guidance for development partners (2022) provides a practical handbook for integrating gender equality into every stage of development co-operation and humanitarian efforts. From policy design and analysis to implementation and evaluation, the guidance is designed around the programme cycle and beyond, and addresses opportunities for increased financing, with ODA and other forms of finance, and improving organisational systems to deliver on gender equality in all development and humanitarian assistance efforts.

Together, these tools aim to elevate the global commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.



The Recommendation: An accountability tool

The OECD DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of all Women and Girls is a legal instrument which sets out a six-pillar framework to guide DAC members and development partners in building a robust foundation for advancing gender equality globally. Actions should be taken along the following six pillars:

1. Consistently promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls globally and in a collaborative and inclusive manner.
2. Develop policy frameworks and consider legal frameworks for development co-operation and humanitarian assistance, intended to achieve gender equality and leave no-one behind.
3. Design and implement development, humanitarian and peacebuilding programmes and projects aimed to accelerate gender equality.
4. Strive to increase financing for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls through official development assistance (ODA) and other forms of finance.
5. Ensure that mechanisms are in place to monitor, evaluate, and learn from gender equality outcomes.
6. Continually strengthen Adherents' institutions to deliver for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

The Guidance: A tool for implementation

The **Gender Equality and the Empowerment of all Women and Girls: Guidance for Development Partners** (“the Guidance”) handbook is a cornerstone resource, offering practical steps to operationalise the DAC Recommendation. With actionable checklists, examples of best practices, and resources, it covers six critical areas:

1. Leadership and policy frameworks for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Leadership commitment and a sound policy framework recognising the importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are crucial for effective development co-operation. The Guidance sets out approaches for development partners to address unequal power relations and harmful structures and norms, including working more closely with local women’s rights organisations, to achieve transformative change for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

2. Analysis and design of development programmes

Well-designed programming based on analysis, and clear policies and strategies are at the heart of development co-operation aiming to promote gender equality. Analysis of context and gender equality is critical for achieving sustainable results. Tools such as gender equality continuum frameworks help understand the complexity of what is needed to make progress. They also help to show how consideration of gender norms and roles, or ignoring them, affects the results of a programme. Data and indicators are essential for understanding the different needs, priorities, opportunities and barriers that individuals face.



3. Programme implementation

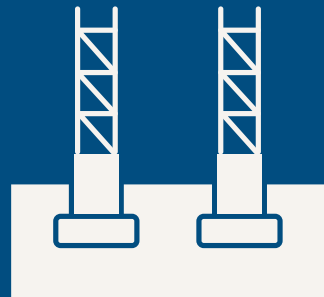
Putting programmes into practice implies tracking and adjusting to context and political shifts, with sufficient staff and information to assess and advise when efforts get off track. DAC members recognise that a dual-track approach is needed, of both implementing programmes dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and mainstreaming gender equality throughout policies and programming across sectors. Mainstreaming should include policy and political dialogue and paying attention to internal institutional set-up and human resource policies. Partnering is essential for implementation. It is good practice to consider each development partner's strengths and weaknesses in the given context. DAC members should seek opportunities to also support local women's rights organisations and feminist movements in partner countries.

4. Financing for gender equality

Financial resources, while not an end goal, are a necessary foundation for gender equality. Development finance for gender equality is measured using the DAC gender equality policy marker of the OECD's Creditor Reporting System (CRS). Sound application of the policy marker is essential to ensure the quality and usefulness of data. Private investments with a gender lens, blended finance and other types of financial flows can complement ODA for gender equality. Opportunities for DAC members to ensure flows beyond ODA also address gender inequalities include partnering financially with private actors, providing guidance and financial incentives for financial actors to work on gender equality, and providing technical support for actors in partner countries.



There is a need to **increase the quantity and quality of financial resources available for gender equality** and the empowerment of women and girls in partner countries. Financial resources, while not an end goal, are a necessary foundation.



5. Results, monitoring, and evaluation

Building a body of evidence demonstrating the achievement of gender equality can help increase political will to focus on and increase investments in this goal. DAC members should consider adapting performance measurement frameworks and other assessment tools for gender equality results to account for the timelines and the complex nature of change. This includes encouraging partners to report on unanticipated results, either positive or negative, without unduly judging programme quality. Ethical considerations must be front and centre in evaluations of gender equality efforts.

6. Institutional capacity-strengthening

Gender equality needs to be addressed holistically. Development partners need to set the tone for internal culture: “living” organisational values is essential if those values are to inspire development efforts. DAC members need to build institutions and staffing levels that help all professionals work towards gender equality through incentives and accountability systems. A sufficient number of gender equality advisers needs to be in place, as well as non-specialist employees with the knowledge and commitment to address gender inequality in their areas of responsibility.

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Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right but also **a cornerstone of global progress.** Let us work together to empower women and girls, ensuring a brighter, more equitable future for all.

How can you engage?

Reinforce higher standards globally

The DAC Recommendation represents a renewed commitment to ambitious, aligned standards for gender equality worldwide. Paired with the Guidance, these tools support development practitioners in designing and implementing co-operation efforts with long-term, measurable impacts.

Pursue adherence

Governments and intergovernmental organisations are invited to adhere to the DAC Recommendation. Adherence demonstrates a dedication to advancing gender equality and creating a more equitable global society. For any questions, contact DCD.GenderNet@oecd.org.

Collaborate with the OECD

The OECD DAC remains steadfast in its support for members and partners, ensuring commitments to gender equality are ambitious and evidence-driven. This work is overseen and supported by the [DAC Network on Gender Equality \(GENDERNET\)](#).

The GENDERNET aims to improve policies and practices in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance. Bringing together DAC members and other countries, UN organisations, financial institutions, and civil society, GENDERNET works to improve the quality, effectiveness and impact of development co-operation by identifying innovative approaches to gender equality and ensuring that resources and implementation match policy commitments.

For further engagement, contact the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Team at DCD.GenderNet@oecd.org.

SCAN QR CODES BELOW FOR:

The Recommendation



The Guidance



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