



DAC Recommendation on Gender
Equality and the Empowerment of
All Women and Girls in
Development Co-operation and
Humanitarian Assistance



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Background Information

The DAC Recommendation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance was adopted by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) on 14 May 2024. The DAC Recommendation aims to provide a framework for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance.

The need for a standard on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance

In 2013, the OECD Council adopted the overarching OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship [[OECD/LEGAL/0398](#)]. This Recommendation provides an important foundation and approach to guide governmental policy to address gender inequality across sectors. This was complemented in 2015 by the OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life [[OECD/LEGAL/0418](#)] and 2023 by the OECD Recommendation on Improving the Gender Balance in the Nuclear Sector [[OECD/LEGAL/0496](#)]. The DAC Recommendation aims to complement these standards and to address the specificities of the development co-operation sector, building on the work of the DAC and its Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) over the past decades.

The current global context, where development co-operation operates in an environment of geopolitical tensions and unprecedented global challenges, including a pushback against whole of society inclusion and gender equality, underlines the importance of setting a clear standard to hardwire gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls throughout the policies and systems of DAC members. With a view to reinforcing higher standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, the DAC Recommendation helps Adherents address this fundamental need for all societies and economies by offering a long-term accountability framework.

An iterative and inclusive process for developing the DAC Recommendation

Building on a series of DAC Guidelines on gender equality, revised regularly since their initial adoption in 1983, the DAC approved in 1999 the DAC Guidelines for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development Co-operation (OECD, 1999), which since served as guiding principles to promote gender equality in the development co-operation, humanitarian assistance and foreign policy efforts. In May 2023, following an 18-month research and consultation process, including several dedicated GENDERNET workshops, meetings held with other DAC policy communities (the DAC Reference Group on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment, the DAC Network on Development Evaluation, and the International Network on Conflict and Fragility), and consultations with external stakeholders, including non-DAC members, multilateral organisations and development banks, civil society and private sector representatives, the DAC approved the [Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls: DAC Guidance for Development Partners](#) (OECD, 2022) (the "Guidance") a practical handbook for development partners which built on the [1999 DAC Guidelines](#), and incorporated experience and good practices from a survey, interviews of DAC members, and desk research.

Following a call from DAC Ministers at the 2023 DAC High Level Meeting to explore the development of a DAC Recommendation on gender equality, the GENDERNET moved forward with developing this instrument building on the Guidance. The DAC Recommendation also benefitted from consultations within the OECD, especially to reflect the broader work of the OECD in the area of gender equality.

Scope of the Recommendation

The DAC Recommendation aims to provide a comprehensive framework that can incentivise, support and guide Adherents in their capacity as donors, and as cross-government and international community stakeholders to implement more comprehensive, coherent and aligned measures, consistent with applicable international standards and taking into account national laws, to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls globally. The Recommendation is built around six pillars:

1. Consistent global promotion of and co-operation on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
2. Policy and legal frameworks for development co-operation and humanitarian assistance.
3. Design and implementation of development, humanitarian and peacebuilding programmes and projects.
4. Financing of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including through official development assistance (ODA) and other forms of financing.
5. Monitoring, evaluating, and learning from gender equality outcomes.
6. Strengthening institutions to deliver on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

Dissemination, implementation support and review

To support Adherents with the implementation of the DAC Recommendation, the OECD and the DAC, through the GENDERNET, will aim to:

- Facilitate lesson-learning and sharing of policies, best practices, and innovative approaches to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
- Develop tools and additional analysis, and build the evidence base, picking up on topics across the six pillars of the DAC Recommendation and based on available data (including but not limited to development finance).
- Learn from and share experiences through relevant DAC processes, including the DAC peer reviews and monitoring/reviews of this and other DAC legal instruments.
- Develop approaches for more frequent documenting and sharing of progress, as appropriate.

In addition, the DAC Recommendation will be disseminated through available communication tools, including at relevant national and international events in which it participates, and through its networks, as well as during technical activities and events organised by the OECD.

The DAC will review the implementation of the DAC Recommendation, including through the existing DAC peer review mechanism, and support lesson learning, adaptation, and sharing of best practices to build understanding and capability. A first report reviewing implementation of these measures will be produced at the same time as the report to Council on the implementation of the other OECD Gender Recommendations, with a view to contributing to that OECD-wide report.

For further information please consult: <https://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/>.
Contact information: dcd.gendernet@oecd.org.

Implementation

Practical Guidance on the implementation of the DAC Recommendation

To support the implementation of the DAC Recommendation, the [Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls: DAC Guidance for Development Partners](#) (OECD, 2022) serves as a practical handbook for development partners supporting global ambitions to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. Designed around the programme cycle and beyond, covering policies, practices and investments in gender equality, it provides practical steps for practitioners and examples of good practices, as well as checklists and recommendations on how to drive change.

Dissemination

A [brochure](#) has been developed to further support dissemination of the Recommendation and of the Guidance. The brochure synthesizes both tools, their development, and the key components of its content.

THE OECD DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE (DAC),

HAVING REGARD to the standards developed by the OECD in the area of gender equality, in particular in education, employment and entrepreneurship, in public life, and in the nuclear sector, as well as in the areas of ending sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus, and enabling civil society in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance.

HAVING REGARD to the foundation provided by international instruments on various aspects of gender equality and human rights, notably the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant provisions of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions and protocols thereto; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child; the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women.

HAVING REGARD to relevant political commitments made within the UN context, including: the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#); the [1994 Programme of Action](#) of the International Conference on Population and Development; the [1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) of the Fourth UN World Conference on Women and the outcome documents of their review conferences; the [UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#) (2000) on women, peace and security and subsequent related Resolutions; the [UN General Assembly Resolution](#) recognising the International Day of Care and Support; as well as commitments under the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#), such as the [Paris Agreement](#), the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#), including the [Global Biodiversity Framework](#), and the [UN Convention to Combat Desertification](#), and in subsequent Conferences of the Parties.

RECOGNISING that development co-operation operates in an environment of geopolitical tensions and global challenges that include: the pushback against whole of society inclusion, gender equality and the rights and empowerment of all women and girls; climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and food and water insecurity; macroeconomic imbalances; and the negative impacts of crises, conflicts, and fragile situations, in particular on low- and middle-income countries.

RECOGNISING that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls benefit society at large, and are fundamental human rights and development goals, in addition to being key enablers of sustainable development and vital to global efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

RECOGNISING that the promotion, protection, and respect of human rights must be at the core of work on gender equality, and key components of transformative change for gender equality include addressing root causes of inequalities and systemic barriers, such as unequal power dynamics, gender-based violence, discriminatory and harmful social norms and gender stereotypes, and barriers to women's economic empowerment, such as the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work they shoulder.

RECOGNISING that, whether intended or not, every development co-operation intervention will have an impact on gender equality, and that in this context it can be harmful to work within systems that perpetuate existing discriminatory gender stereotypes and norms, and accordingly that a do-no-harm approach is required, at a minimum, to ensure that interventions do not reinforce gender inequalities.

RECOGNISING that DAC members are committed to reporting their development finance for gender equality to the OECD, in the OECD Creditor Reporting System, using the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker in line with the Creditor Reporting System reporting directives.

CONSIDERING that the *Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls: DAC Guidance for Development Partners* provides guidance in the implementation of this draft DAC Recommendation.

I. **AGREES** that, for the purpose of the present DAC Recommendation, 'implementing partners' refers to government's line ministries or other public agencies, as well as partners of international

development agencies such as developing country governments, public bodies including local authorities, non-governmental and civil-society organisations, trade unions, multilateral development and humanitarian organisations and banks, and suppliers of goods and services involved in implementing aid projects or programmes or private-sector organisations recipient of aid funds.

II. AGREES that the purpose of this DAC Recommendation is to provide a comprehensive framework that can incentivise, support and guide DAC and non-DAC members having adhered to it (hereafter the “Adherents”) in their capacity as donors, cross-government and international community stakeholders to implement more comprehensive, coherent and aligned measures, consistent with applicable international standards and taking into account national laws, to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls globally.

III. RECOMMENDS that Adherents promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance and establish or strengthen their relevant systems. This includes: developing policy frameworks designed to achieve gender equality and leave no-one behind; designing and implementing development programmes and projects aimed to accelerate gender equality building on local knowledge, ownership and leadership, including women’s rights organisations and feminist movements; ensuring financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; establishing mechanisms to monitor, evaluate and learn from development co-operation for gender equality; as well as continually improving their own institutions to deliver for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. In promoting gender equality and establishing or strengthening their systems, Adherents should:

1. Consistently promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls globally and in a collaborative and inclusive manner. To this effect, it is recommended that Adherents:

- i. Accelerate progress on all development goals with a strong focus on overcoming constraints to whole-of-society inclusion and democratic governance, and the gender equality pushback by hardwiring gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in all development, humanitarian and peacebuilding policies, programmes and projects, as well as foreign policy efforts.
- ii. Prioritise gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in policy and political dialogue in a co-operative and informed way with all development partners and stakeholders, by ensuring closer co-operation and collaboration among DAC members, other partners, and international and national experts, including women’s rights organisations, feminist movements and broader civil society, and consistently promoting the topic through international partnerships, networks, negotiations, dialogues and other processes.
- iii. Mobilise consistent political leadership and foreign policy efforts at the highest level and engage relevant governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including through whole-of-government policies and strategies to deliver stronger, more sustainable and sustained impact, in particular in areas such as environment, climate and biodiversity, energy, science, technology, innovation and digital development, as well as trade.
- iv. Ensure fair, full, equal and meaningful representation and participation of all women and girls with special attention to individuals facing systemic discrimination and barriers to inclusion based on, but not limited to disability, gender identity and sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age or religion, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- v. Uphold and advocate for gender equality and the protection, including against sexual and gender-based violence, and participation of all women and girls when responding to crises and conflicts, and in fragile and humanitarian contexts.

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. To this effect, Adherents should:

- i. Adopt a dual strategy of both i) dedicated actions, and ii) integration, also referred to as mainstreaming, of a gender perspective and component when developing policies, and considering legal frameworks, for development co-operation and humanitarian assistance to advance gender equality, by:
 - Establishing the connections between gender equality and other development priorities, such as addressing declining democracy, poverty, food insecurity, environmental degradation, climate change and biodiversity loss, and increasing conflict and crises.
 - Integrating gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in sector-specific development policies and strategies, particularly where integration of gender equality is low.
 - Ensuring interventions focus on gender equality as the dedicated objective.
- ii. Enhance and focus work on transformative approaches to shift power imbalances and address root causes of gender inequalities, notably by ensuring long-term and holistic policies and programmes for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including designing interventions with youth, and with men and boys as actors of change for gender equality.
- iii. Ensure the development and implementation of policy frameworks that address different types of systemic discrimination and inequalities, including sexual and gender-based violence, faced by many individuals that intersect with and compound gender inequalities, to leave no-one behind, including but not limited to disability, gender identity and sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age or religion, bearing in mind that poverty disproportionately affects women and girls in terms of socio-economic and economic autonomy.
- iv. Support partner countries' efforts to strengthen governance systems and enabling environments for gender equality and for civil society, including working towards women's and youth's equal, full, effective and meaningful participation, in all their diversity, in all spheres of public and political life, also placing particular focus on supporting locally-based women's rights and women-led organisations and feminist movements, contributing to accelerating locally-led development by civil society, as well as supporting government and public institutions at all levels wherever possible.
- v. Build and reinforce opportunities for policy coherence and collaboration on gender equality with other parts of government and institutions, as well as with other Adherents.

3. Design and implement development, humanitarian and peacebuilding programmes and projects aimed to accelerate gender equality. To this effect, Adherents should:

- i. Undertake gender equality analyses as a starting point, including consideration for the inequalities that intersect with gender, to capture the specific local needs in the political and socio-economic reality of the partner country, using disaggregated data when designing programmes and projects, and consulting relevant stakeholders, including civil society in partner countries, in equitable, meaningful, safe and ethical ways, and with full, prior and reversible consent to engage in consultation with confidentiality if and as required. This includes involving men and boys as allies in gender equality efforts, given that gender inequalities also adversely affect them and that their engagement is crucial in changing systems and norms.
- ii. Use the findings of the gender equality analyses for the full programme cycle: inform the design, procurement process and implementation of programmes; include at least one explicit gender equality objective and indicator in all possible programmes; and aim to ensure appropriate indicators and data, as well as monitoring and reporting on the gender equality results achieved, and allocate the score of the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker in the design phase, whenever possible. All development co-operation should integrate gender equality objectives or be dedicated to gender equality. In particular, in crisis contexts, the needs of all women and girls should be addressed with a humanitarian, development and peace approach to ensure long-term sustainable development.

- iii. Design and implement programmes and projects allowing for flexibility in changing circumstances, while maintaining longer-term gender equality objectives, building on local knowledge, ownership and leadership, and the comparative advantage of each development partner and stakeholder.
- iv. Identify, assess and monitor the risks for gender equality across programming and contexts with local actors, including risks specific to different groups or organisations, especially individuals in vulnerable situations, activists and human rights defenders, and the risk of sexual and gender-based violence and SEAH in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance; and decide on measures to strengthen prevention, and address and mitigate those risks.
- v. Carefully consider the comparative strengths and expertise of implementing partners on gender equality, including locally-based women's rights and women-led organisations and feminist movements and, as needed, incentivise and support the partner to reinforce its expertise and mandate on 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. To this effect, Adherents should work to:

- i. Design measures to increase funding of programmes and projects that are dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and those that integrate gender equality objectives across sectors.
- ii. Increase financing for local women's rights organisations, feminist movements and women's funds, and government partners to promote gender equality.
- iii. Promote the availability of different forms of finance for gender equality, including ODA but also other official flows such as those used in blended finance, bonds, guarantees and private investments on issues of climate change and sustainable development, and consider development modalities such as South-South and triangular co-operation, to align with the policy priority of gender equality, and prioritise support for the integration of gender dimensions in developing country governments' public financial management, procurement and domestic revenue mobilisation.
- iv. Set up a quality assurance and due diligence process to ensure the robust and correct application and reporting of the OECD Creditor Reporting System DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker scores, including by ensuring that relevant staff have awareness of, understand, and correctly apply, the Marker to ensure accountability and transparency for development finance for gender equality. This reporting should include ODA and can be applied to other official flows on a voluntary basis,
- v. Encourage multilateral organisations, development finance institutions, the private sector and civil society organisations to report financing using the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker or a system common to, or comparable to, the DAC policy marker.

5. Ensure that mechanisms are in place to monitor, evaluate, and learn from gender equality outcomes. To this effect, Adherents should:

- i. Set up internal frameworks for monitoring, evaluation performance measurement and knowledge management that account for the complexity of achieving gender equality, including negative change or unintended outcomes, as appropriate. This means developing inclusive and participatory monitoring, evaluation, learning and knowledge management approaches that include a diversity of women's voices and perspectives as a source of data, as well as the use of both quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure and assess gender equality results, and improved accountability for ending SEAH.
- ii. Provide financial and technical support, as appropriate, to implementing partners to strengthen their internal mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and learning and adaptation processes in order to enhance accountability, and reduce related reporting burdens on implementing partners, ensuring space and flexibility for them to operate in a way that does not require excessive

adaptation of their systems and, where possible, align the reporting systems with current structures in place, such as agreed development goals, national population-based surveys, and statistics data collection mechanisms.

- iii. Develop and resource a learning and knowledge management agenda to build the evidence base on gender equality, inform programme and project design, and ensure a continuous reflection with all partners to identify lessons learned with a particular focus on addressing gaps in learning and evidence on diversity and inclusion.
- iv. Improve and finance, where appropriate, disaggregated data and information on the progress toward gender equality results, that includes quantitative and qualitative gender and intersectional data, to enable change across organisations, locations, and time, to learn and detect trends and gaps to inform policy making and programming by using existing evidence.

6. Continually strengthen Adherents' institutions to deliver for gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. To this effect, Adherents should:

- i. Prioritise and invest in gender equality as an institutional value to ensure an organisational culture of gender equality, and ensure inclusive, non-discriminatory, diverse, and gender-balanced work environments and opportunities, free from SEAH in all its forms, through policies, strategies, codes of conduct and guidance on goals, values, behaviours, and expectations, including by encouraging gender-equitable pay, recruitment, retention, promotion, and career development and the recruitment of individuals who belong to minorities or marginalised groups in senior leadership and throughout organisations.
- ii. Establish clear roles, responsibilities, mandates, and lines of accountability of key governmental and oversight bodies in implementing dedicated gender equality initiatives and integrating, also referred to as mainstreaming, a gender perspective across initiatives including to promote whole-of-government approaches as per the standard developed by the OECD in the area of gender equality in public life.
- iii. Ensure sustained institutional leadership with high and senior-level engagement, and commitments to shift or sustain positive organisational culture and norms in relation to gender equality, including through regular high and senior-level discussions on how these issues are addressed.
- iv. Increase, where possible, staff capacity for dedicated work on gender equality, and strive for the hiring of enough specialist staff with diversity, gender equality and human rights expertise across institutions and in thematic and regional units capable of:
 - Developing and overseeing implementation and follow-up on gender equality policies, programmes and projects, including managing for gender equality results, supported by adequate resources; as well as dedicated organisational capacity, including in leadership roles.
 - Supporting and co-ordinating work on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.
- v. Ensure staff across the institution have sufficient knowledge and skills to implement policies, programmes and projects that effectively address gender inequalities, including by offering training and online resources on all aspects of gender equality for all staff to exchange and learn.
- vi. Consider implementing diversity and gender equality reviews, as well as knowledge management and sharing methodologies as tools for introducing and managing institutional change, for verifying achievements and deficiencies and for reinforcing an organisation's collective capacity to analyse its activities from an inclusive gender perspective.
- vii. Accelerate efforts to bolster the integrity and accountability of institutions and the international development sector, including through ending SEAH as a way to ensure that development and humanitarian assistance 'does no harm' by establishing mechanisms for SEAH prevention and response, and strengthening accountability.

- IV. INVITES** the Secretary-General to disseminate this DAC Recommendation.
- V. INVITES** Adherents to disseminate this DAC Recommendation, particularly throughout their development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding agencies and partners, and across government.
- VI. INVITES** non-Adherents to take account of and adhere to this DAC Recommendation.
- VII. ENCOURAGES** relevant non-governmental partners, contractors, and grantees to disseminate and follow this DAC Recommendation.
- VIII. INSTRUCTS the DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) to:**
- i. Support mutual and multi-stakeholder learning, sharing and adaptation on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in development co-operation, humanitarian assistance and foreign policy, through which Adherents, via consultative processes, continue to share policies, best practices, and innovative approaches, and develop tools for the implementation of this DAC Recommendation;
 - ii. Review and learn in the implementation of this DAC Recommendation, including through the existing DAC peer-review mechanism and thematic chapters or reviews, as well as develop approaches to support more frequent documenting, and sharing of progress and good practices building on examples by individual Adherents, in order to enable and support continuous lesson-learning and adaptation to build understanding and capability; and
 - iii. Develop a report thereon for the approval of DAC at the same time as the report to Council on the implementation of the other OECD Gender Recommendations, with a view to contributing to that OECD-wide report, using information available from DAC peer reviews and mutual learning, as appropriate.

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- **Substantive Outcome Documents** are adopted by the individual listed Adherents rather than by an OECD body, as the outcome of a ministerial, high-level or other meeting within the framework of the Organisation. They usually set general principles or long-term goals and have a solemn character.
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- **Arrangement, Understanding and Others:** several other types of substantive legal instruments have been developed within the OECD framework over time, such as the Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits, the International Understanding on Maritime Transport Principles and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Recommendations.