

Developing Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy of a Sector Agency in South Asia: A Guidance Note

**Asian Development Bank
South Asia Department (SARD)**

September 2022



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CPSs	country partnership strategies
CSOs	civil society organizations
DFID	Department for International Development
EAs	executing agencies
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GESI	gender equality and social inclusion
IAs	implementing agencies
LNOB	leave no one behind
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
OP	operational priorities
PWDs	people with disability
SARD	South Asia Department
SOGIESC	sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics
ToC	theory of change

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Guidance Note

1. This guidance note provides the principles, approaches, and key points to consider in developing and operationalizing a sector agency's gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategy.¹ The overall objective is to support sectoral agencies across the developing member countries (DMCs) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) South Asia Department (SARD) to create an informed strategy for integrating GESI into their operations and institutions (i.e., policies, systems, and structures). The strategy is expected to help the sectoral agency respond to sector-related barriers to GESI experienced by women and excluded and vulnerable groups. As the prevalent gender and social norms and practices are unique to a country, this guidance note's application will need to be adapted to the country and sector-specific contexts.²

1.2 Context

2. This guidance note is an accompanying material of the SARD's GESI framework, which guides the operationalization of the mandates of the first two operational priorities of ADB's Strategy 2030 in South Asia (Box 1.1). Specifically, this note supports the fourth key area of action of the GESI framework, "*Strengthening systems, tools, and competencies of ADB staff and consultants; agencies and contractors.*" For definitions and understanding of key GESI concepts, please refer to the SARD GESI Framework.³

Box 1.1: SARD's Operational Priorities

- **The first operational priorities (OP 1)** is "addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities," whereby ADB commits to support human development and social inclusion.
- **The second OP (OP2)** is 'accelerating progress in gender equality,' whereby ADB commits to support targeted operations to empower women and girls, and gender mainstreaming that directly narrows gender gaps.

OP = operational priorities

Source: ADB. 2018. [Strategy 2030: Achieving a Prosperous, Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Asia and the Pacific](#). Manila.

1.3 Target Audience

3. This guidance note is for sectoral agencies (sector ministries, departments, and/or other relevant bodies) and ADB-supported projects' executing agencies/implementing agencies (EAs/IAs)⁴ in South Asia that seek ADB's assistance in developing a strategy for mainstreaming GESI in their organization, programs, and projects. The target audience also includes ADB SARD staff (project teams and GESI

¹ For the purpose of this note, the term 'sector/al agency' refers to a government Ministry, department, or agency, which is mandated to manage a specific sector of public administration. The GESI Strategy can be of the whole government structure for the sector e.g. for the sectoral Ministry covering its organizational structure or by one organ of the structure, e.g., one Department. For example, the Operational Guidelines for Mainstreaming GESI of two Ministries of Nepal, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport and Ministry of Urban Development provided directives for addressing GESI across the full government structures (Sources: Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. 2017. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines 2017](#). Nepal; and Ministry of Urban Development. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\) Operational Guidelines, 2013](#). Nepal).

² This guidance note should be used as complementary to any other core guidance issued by Strategy, Policy, and Partnerships Department and Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department including the gender tip-sheets.

³ ADB. 2022. *Framework for Integrating Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in SARD Operations*. Manila

⁴ "EA" refers to the executing agency, as identified in a financing agreement or technical assistance (TA) agreement, which is responsible for the carrying out of a loan, grant, or a TA grant-funded project. The EA designates an implementing agency (IA) to implement the project and recruit consultants.

teams at the ADB HQ and Resident Missions) assigned to assist ADB's partner agencies in developing a GESI strategy.

1.4 Rationale for Developing a GESI Strategy of a Sector Agency

4. A GESI strategy helps ensure that the sectoral agency adopts a GESI-responsive approach to improve women's and excluded and vulnerable groups' access to sectoral resources, opportunities, and benefits and increase their visibility in the sectoral agencies' structures (including leadership and decision-making bodies). A GESI strategy for a sectoral agency will help ensure that:

- (i) Sectoral policies, institutions, programs, and projects implemented by the sectoral agency promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and social inclusion.
- (ii) Projects and activities of the sectoral agency identify and reduce existing gender and social inequalities and undo the mechanisms that caused them.

5. In line with its GESI framework, SARD will assist the sectoral agencies in developing a GESI strategy that covers all three pillars of the leave-no-one behind (LNOB) framework of the former Department for International Development of the Government of United Kingdom (DFID-UK):⁵ 'Understand for action', 'empower for change', and 'include for opportunity'. This note details the practical steps for developing a sector agency's GESI strategy along these three pillars, in ways that reflect contextual socio-economic conditions and social norms.

2 DEVELOPING THE GESI STRATEGY OF A SECTORAL AGENCY

2.1 Defining a GESI Strategy and its Key Elements

6. A GESI strategy for a sectoral agency requires integrating GESI considerations in the agency's operations and management. This includes integrating GESI into the agency's policy directives, institutional arrangements, programming, budgeting, project lifecycle, and monitoring and evaluation systems, which should begin with assessing their provisions that promote or constrain the elimination of barriers to GESI experienced by women and excluded and vulnerable groups. Overall, the formulation and implementation of the GESI strategy will depend on the national and state/local GESI laws that it is legally required to observe. This includes laws governing the following:

- (i) *external operations* (such as ensuring equality of access to the services of the sector agency, especially of women and disadvantaged groups, collecting disaggregated data by sex/gender and social indicators on beneficiaries and including these data in sector agency reports, formation of [e.g., electricity, water, transport] user committees with significant representation of women and disadvantaged groups in the management and other such policy provisions);
- (ii) *internal operations* (such as maternity leave and paternity leave, provision of childcare and breastfeeding room, gender-disaggregated toilets, occupational health and safety standards, promotion of equality in recruitment, promotion, and career development opportunities, and anti-sexual harassment mechanisms, which are covered under institutional analysis); and
- (iii) *other factors that facilitate GESI integration* (such as allocation of GESI-responsive budget, preparation of a gender or GESI action plan, assigning/formation of GESI focal points/team or GESI budget cell) of the sectoral agency.

⁵ DFID-UK is now Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office or FCDO of the Government of United Kingdom.

2.2 Planning for the Development of a GESI Strategy

7. A well-informed GESI strategy for a sectoral agency is based on a thorough understanding of existing capacities, situations, and challenges faced by target groups in accessing the benefits of the agency's projects and programs and the strengths and weaknesses of the sectoral agency itself. This responds to the 'understand' part of the GESI analytical framework.

2.3 Assessment of Existing Situation of GESI

8. It is important to conduct two assessments that should inform the GESI strategy:

- (i) An in-depth situational assessment of women and other disadvantaged groups to understand the barriers and the root causes limiting women and other excluded and vulnerable people from enjoying the full benefits of sectoral projects. Women's responsibility for household tasks may be one such barriers in all countries in the region. This will improve the sector agency's understanding of and services for disadvantaged groups.
- (ii) An in-depth analysis of country-specific sectoral commitments for the target groups and identification of key government agencies mandated to work for each category. The analysis is conducted at five operational levels according to the analytical framework: (i) sectoral policy analysis, (ii) sectoral institutional analysis, (iii) sectoral programming and budgeting analysis, (iv) sectoral reporting, and (v) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) analysis.
- (iii) The results should inform the GESI strategy. The overall process of conducting these assessments is similar to the GESI assessment for ADB's country partnership strategies (CPSs) and project design features. For detailed guidance on planning the above assessments, developing checklists of relevant questions, data collection, compilation, analysis, and validation, refer to SARD's accompanying the SARD GESI Framework.⁶

2.4 Participatory Process for Strategy Development

9. The GESI strategy formulation of a sectoral agency requires an inclusive and participatory approach with the engagement of different stakeholders, including the target groups. This process may take different forms, either in-depth with continuous involvement of representation of target groups and civil society organizations (CSOs) or a few consultations with specific interest groups. Table 2.1 provides guidance for adopting a participatory process during strategy development (Appendix 1 for an indicative outline of the GESI strategy document).

Table 2.1: Tips for Adopting a Participatory Process for Developing a GESI Strategy	
Stage of Strategy Development	Tips to Ensure a Participatory Process
Inception	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Form a task force comprising members from the sectoral government ministry, departments, and other relevant government stakeholders. The key responsibility of the task force is to provide policy and process guidance for the strategy development.▪ Form a representative working committee with 5–6 persons from this task force, which can work closely with the strategy development consultant/staff member to ensure contents are relevant for the sector and gender equality and social inclusion (GESI).▪ If considered appropriate by the sector agency, invite representatives of civil society and specific interest groups working in the sector as task force members to provide insights into the design of the strategy development process.

⁶ Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis to Inform ADB's Country Partnership Strategies and Project Designs in South Asia: A Guidance Note. ADB SARD

Table 2.1: Tips for Adopting a Participatory Process for Developing a GESI Strategy	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Orient the task force and working committee on GESI concepts and processes.
Strategy Development Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a strategy development plan with the working committee, including meetings with key informants, workshops with key stakeholders at different levels, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with members from excluded and vulnerable groups to gather their insights and suggestions on the strategy content. ▪ Develop a theory of change (ToC) for the strategy on GESI (Appendix 2 provides guidance for developing a ToC). ▪ Develop a table of contents (based on a government-approved strategy outline) with the working committee for the strategy document. ▪ Validate the strategy development plan, ToC, and table of contents with the task force.
Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop instruments and tools for data collection with special emphasis on collecting disaggregated data on women and various excluded and vulnerable groups, to assess and improve the sector agency's understanding of and services for disadvantaged groups. ▪ Collect data using different methods and tools as relevant, e.g., secondary document review, meetings, consultations, workshops, and focus group discussions. ▪ Formulate gender- and social identity-differentiated labor/access/control profiles to know the existing gender and social relations in the sector.
Data Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compile, process, and analyze collected data and information. ▪ Prepare sub-sections of the draft strategy document and regularly share them with the working committee in an iterative process.
Validation and Strategy Finalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare a draft strategy with the support of the consultant/staff and share it with the task force for feedback inputs. ▪ Finalize the draft of the strategy, share it in a wide consultation meeting, and finalize the strategy incorporating feedback. ▪ Develop a logframe as part of the strategy (Appendix 3 provides guidance for developing a logframe).

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion, TOC = theory of change

Source: ADB SARD. 2022.

2.5 Guide for Developing GESI-related Policy Directives in the Sector Agency

10. GESI-related policy directives require recognition of:

- (i) The abilities and constraints experienced by women and excluded and vulnerable people to access and use the services of the sectoral agency.
- (ii) The impact of gender, income, caste/ethnicity, religion, and location differences on women and excluded and vulnerable groups, which constrains them from accessing and using the sector's resources.
- (iii) The differentiated strategies and approaches needed to promote women's and excluded and vulnerable groups' access and use of the sector's resources.
- (iv) That women and excluded and vulnerable groups are key actors with skills and capacities and that their rights are to be protected and promoted.

11. The strategy of the sector agency will need to provide policy directives that can respond to the practical issues of women and the disadvantaged with some targeted and specific provisions, e.g., to strengthen the education or health services or employable skills of women, people with disability, or disadvantaged social identity groups (responding to the 'empower for change' pillar of the GESI analytical framework). It will also be essential for the policy directives to create context-specific enabling environments by including (i) legal reforms to change discriminatory policies, policy provisions regarding participation of women and the disadvantaged in decision-making forums, and (ii) structural change in access to resources and opportunities (responding to the 'include for opportunity' pillar of the analytical

framework). Guidance for integrating GESI in the policies of the sector agencies (aligned with the three pillars of the LNOB framework or SARD's GESI analytical framework) is provided in Table 2.2. The measures described have been in practice and are part of established processes for some organizations but are absent or inadequate in others. These simple steps are important to ensure that GESI is integrated into the agency's policy work.

Table 2.2: Guidance for Integrating GESI in Policies of the Sector Agencies		
GESI Analytical Framework Pillars	Task	Guidance
Understand for Action	Policy development	Adequately address gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) issues in the concept note or terms of reference for the development or amendment of any policy. Also, include them in the policy's objectives and scope of work and tasks.
	Policy formulation team	Include a GESI expert knowledgeable of local realities in the policy development team. Conduct a basic orientation on GESI concepts for all team members.
	Literature review	Conduct literature reviews for policy development, review related GESI issues, and identify good practices and lessons learned to assess and improve the sector agency's understanding of and services for women and disadvantaged groups.
Empower for Change, Include for Opportunity	Policy formulation process	Hold consultations and discussions with 1) women and disadvantaged groups to identify their perspectives and priorities; 2) GESI experts (such as representatives of women's rights organizations) to ensure that all GESI-related issues are well covered; 3) key sectoral informants for insights regarding the GESI aspects within the sector; and 4) responsible government officials in the sector agency.
	Contents of policy documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide guidance on GESI mainstreaming in all parts of the policy document (including the methodology and document review). ▪ Clearly define target groups. ▪ Specify the reason for formulating the policy and give disaggregated data on the situation of women and disadvantaged groups in the Context and Situational Analysis section. ▪ Describe the barriers women and disadvantaged groups experience in accessing and using the agency's services in the Challenges and Opportunities section. ▪ Discuss the opportunities to address these challenges. ▪ Review who will benefit from the policy (gender, social identity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics (SOGIESC) community, class, location, ethnicity disaggregation).

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. 2017. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines. 2017](#). Nepal; and Ministry of Urban Development. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\) Operational Guidelines. 2013](#). Nepal (developed with the support of Nepal Resident Mission, ADB).

2.6 Guide for Developing GESI Responsive Institutional Arrangements

12. Design appropriate institutional arrangements for GESI mainstreaming at all levels, starting from the Ministry and Department at the national level to subnational levels of specific sectors. Measures to design institutional arrangements include strengthening the capacity of existing human resources on GESI through basic orientation for senior policymakers; advanced and skills-based training for other staff, especially those in the GESI teams/desks; awareness programs for internalization of GESI concepts for all staff; specifying the location of GESI responsibility at the national/sub-national sectoral

levels; promoting staff diversity that reflects GESI principles; and GESI responsive human resource policies. A common understanding of the GESI objectives and plan of the sectoral agency needs to be developed at all institutional levels. All such measures will contribute to making the organization more inclusive and contribute to changing discriminatory policies and practices in line with the 'include for opportunity' pillar of the analytical framework. Staff and managers at different levels of a sector agency will be responsible for implementing the new GESI strategy once approved. Table 2.3 provides guidance on making the institutional arrangements of sectoral agencies GESI-responsive.

Table 2.3: Guidance for Developing Institutional Arrangements for GESI		
GESI Analytical Framework Pillars	Institutional Arrangements	Guidance
Empower for Change, Include for Opportunity	Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) responsibility in the sector agency offices	GESI Section/Unit: Declare/designate a specific unit (e.g., GESI unit, social unit) as the GESI specialist section. It will be responsible for providing technical support on GESI to the sectoral agency and for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the GESI strategy developed by the sectoral agency.
	GESI in regular functions of sector agency offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment, Promotion, Transfer: Follow affirmative action/positive discrimination as far as possible during staff recruitment and promote staff diversity at each level. Include GESI-sensitive criteria for posting and transfer of staff, e.g., considering spousal location, career development of women staff, lower number of years of experience for internal promotion of women, people with disability, people from the transgender communities, i.e., any community experiencing historical disadvantage. ▪ Support for gender equality in performance: To institutionalize the participation of women and other disadvantaged groups in the sector agency's offices, clearly institute and communicate additional arrangements, e.g., facilities for childcare, breastfeeding time, and flexible timing; disabled-friendly infrastructure, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender+ responsive work environment.⁷ ▪ Grievance and redressal mechanisms: Develop grievance and redressal mechanisms in consultation with staff for handling sexual harassment and language/cultural/caste-based discrimination issues. ▪ Create a working culture that is GESI-supportive with zero tolerance of any discriminatory behavior in language or gestures. Promote a positive and safe environment that appreciates the perspectives of a diverse group of staff. ▪ Terms of references: Job descriptions and terms of references should include GESI-related tasks in assignment-related objectives, responsibilities, and required qualifications/skills. ▪ Capacity development: Plan and implement strategies to enhance capacities and skills in mainstreaming GESI. Establish quotas for women and other disadvantaged groups in training and exposure visits. ▪ Staff performance evaluation: Include an evaluation of efforts to address GESI-related issues and GESI-sensitive behavior/actions in staff performance evaluation. Ensure staff are made accountable for the actions needed to implement the GESI strategy.

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. 2017. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines 2017](#). Nepal; and Ministry of Urban Development. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\) Operational Guidelines, 2013](#). Nepal (developed with the support of Nepal Resident Mission, ADB).

⁷ "SOGIESC" refers to general categorizations—all people have a sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics. "LGBTI+" refers to people who have a marginalized sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, or set of sex characteristics (Source: M.V.L. Badgett and R. Sell. 2018. [A Set of Proposed Indicators for the LGBTI Inclusion Index](#). New York: UNDP)

2.7 Guide for Budgeting for GESI in Sectoral Agency

13. Sufficient budgetary allocations must be made to integrate GESI in operations and management of the sectoral agency in line with the 'include for opportunity' pillar of the GESI analytical framework. The guidelines for addressing GESI issues in budgeting are provided in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Guidance on Budgeting for GESI in Sectoral Agencies		
GESI Analytical Framework Pillars	Budgeting Area	Guidance
Include for Opportunity	Allocation of budget between different departments of the agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct the different subdivisions within the sector agency to ensure gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) aspects are addressed in the annual program they prepare within their budget. Assess whether any division/section requires a higher budget for ensuring that GESI-related activities are effectively implemented. Follow the process of GESI-responsive budgeting while ensuring that sufficient funds are available for activities supporting women and excluded and vulnerable groups. While preparing directives and budget allocations to lower-level offices, provide direction about: the necessity of allocating sufficient budget for reaching the unreached; budget for capacity development required to address GESI mainstreaming across the sector from the ministry to the local level, and for targeting services to reach underserved areas and communities.
	Allocation of project budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decisions at the agency level about budget allocation for specific projects are to be based on the three pillars of the SARD's GESI analytical framework: "understanding for action" pillar—an understanding of the gaps in services to women and excluded and vulnerable groups; "empower for change" pillar—interventions that can improve their access to services, resources, employment, and other opportunities; and "include for opportunity"—improved services (e.g., roads, railway connections, and better transport management in the transport sector; improved drinking water and sanitation facilities in the water, sanitation and hygiene sector).

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion

Source: ADB SARD. 2022.

2.8 Guide for Developing and Implementing GESI in Sectoral Projects

14. GESI considerations must be mainstreamed throughout the life cycle of the agency's projects. Table 2.5 provides guidance for integrating and implementing GESI in sectoral projects following the GESI analytical framework components. The identified activities need to respond to the 'empower' and 'include' pillars of the analytical framework so that there are interventions for empowering women and the disadvantaged and reducing discriminatory policies and practices.

Table 2.5: Guidance for Integrating and Implementing GESI in Projects		
GESI Pillars	Project Stage	Guidance
Understand for Action	Project identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out studies to identify the barriers and capacities of women and the disadvantaged and the measures required to address gender equality and social inclusion. Identify existing disadvantaged groups and their situations through extensive community and stakeholders' consultations in the project area, recognizing intersectional inequalities. The data and evidence

Table 2.5: Guidance for Integrating and Implementing GESI in Projects		
GESI Pillars	Project Stage	Guidance
		<p>from the previous situational and policy assessments should inform these project-specific consultations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all possible steps to be taken or provisions to be made by the sectoral agency to mitigate constraints and barriers that are likely to be experienced by women and excluded and vulnerable groups.
	Needs assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a project-specific situational assessment to identify the needs of women and other disadvantaged groups in the project area to inform the project preparation team about their current situation, including dominant social norms. Ensure participation of these groups in need assessment, disaggregated by gender and other social groups (disability, age, sexual orientation, social identity (caste, ethnicity, and religion). Use appropriate tools, such as social mapping, public hearings, and focus group discussions, to assess the needs of women and disadvantaged groups.
	Project preparation	Conduct detailed feasibility studies and on-site appraisals of financial, technical, economic, and institutional aspects, identifying the requirements to empower women and the disadvantaged and shift discriminatory policies and practices.
Empower for Change, Include for opportunity	Project appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically review the studies, options considered, recommendations, and project implementation plan developed by the different sections of the sectoral agency in the project preparation stage for gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) design elements addressing the GESI analytical framework pillars before the project is approved for funding. Project Appraisal Criteria should evaluate the degree to which GESI issues are identified in the proposed project, the level of involvement of women and disadvantaged groups, and how well the project design addresses their barriers and strengthens their empowerment and shifts in discriminatory practices.
	Project implementation	<p>Integrate GESI aspects in all stages of project implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the design features which address GESI aspects are retained and fully implemented. Ensure the budgetary allocations for GESI-specific and supportive activities are implemented efficiently and effectively. Efforts to ensure the proper expenditure of the allocated budgets for women and the disadvantaged groups are essential to avoid they remain unspent while budgets for GESI-neutral items are spent. Be alert to the proper implementation of all the planned project interventions that empower women and the disadvantaged or shift discriminatory policies and practices.
	Reporting, monitoring & evaluation during project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the reporting formats, monitoring process, and criteria to reflect GESI disaggregation and information areas, and make them mandatory for the relevant sections of the sector agency's report. The sector agency will need to complete these as routine attachments to the quarterly and annual reports. Collect data disaggregated by sex and other relevant variables, such as social identity, gender identity, location, and age, to report the outputs, outcomes, and development results, as evidence of project results on women and the disadvantaged. Regularize monitoring to assess responses to GESI-related issues in projects. In addition, encourage independent benefit monitoring and evaluation by third parties. Submit reports on benefits monitoring and evaluation findings to the relevant management authorities on time. This will help project managers/planners to identify areas where the GESI aspects of the

Table 2.5: Guidance for Integrating and Implementing GESI in Projects		
GESI Pillars	Project Stage	Guidance
		<p>project design can be further improved to achieve its desired objectives and, to use this information to better design future projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide incentives/ awards for the projects that have addressed GESI successfully.

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. 2017. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines, 2017](#). Nepal; and Ministry of Urban Development. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\) Operational Guidelines, 2013](#). Nepal (developed with the support of Nepal Resident Mission, ADB).

2.9 Guide for Strengthening Monitoring & Evaluation Systems from a GESI Lens

15. The sector agency's existing M&E systems should cover GESI issues. Overall, monitoring and evaluation depend on the initially set GESI theory of change (ToC) and the logframe of intended outputs and impacts. Monitoring and reporting formats are required to strengthen GESI integration in the M&E systems. The progress made on GESI-related activities and objectives is to be part of the regular monitoring and reporting process and presented in a sub-section of the annual report. Additionally, the reporting on data disaggregated by sex, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC), income status, and geographic location is scheduled at frequent and regular intervals.

16. Regular systems and processes operated and managed by skilled staff are required to develop and strengthen the sector agency's systems and procedures for each phase of the organizational and project development cycle, from analysis to planning to implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Table 2.6 provides the guidance for integrating GESI in the existing monitoring, evaluation, and reporting systems of the sectoral agency and for monitoring the implementation of the GESI strategy.

Table 2.6: Guidance for GESI Integration in Existing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting Systems		
GESI Analytical Framework Pillars	Tasks	Guidance
Include for Opportunity	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure the gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) indicators developed during project design are included in the sectoral agency's internal monitoring and evaluation mechanism, processes, and formats. ▪ Assess projects and programs on whether women and excluded and vulnerable groups have benefited or not from the projects and programs and how to improve their access to resources and benefits of the projects/programs. ▪ Ensure the Ministry's plan covers the outcome indicators, how they will be measured, and the level of disaggregation identified during the project design phase. ▪ Include GESI issues in the monitoring mechanism, process, and formats. ▪ Establish monitoring and evaluation systems with the participation of concerned groups. ▪ Promote joint monitoring with local stakeholders and target groups. ▪ Collect disaggregated data and evidence on issues affecting women and excluded and vulnerable groups to inform decisions.

Table 2.6: Guidance for GESI Integration in Existing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting Systems		
GESI Analytical Framework Pillars	Tasks	Guidance
	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and revise the reporting formats to include GESI dimensions. ▪ Include disaggregated data on benefited households with data on the relevant outcome indicators. ▪ Prepare comparisons of the relevant outcome indicators for different social groups over time. ▪ Include good practices, challenges, lessons learned, and suggestions from a GESI perspective in reports. ▪ Prepare case studies that reflect women's and excluded and vulnerable groups' stories about their level of benefit from the project to identify good practices and lessons.
	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the ToR of evaluation studies, include GESI as a key responsibility. ▪ Include a GESI expert in the evaluation team. ▪ Use both quantitative and qualitative methods. ▪ Design and use instruments that clearly capture disaggregation and issues impacting women and excluded and vulnerable groups. ▪ Prepare disaggregated data and an evaluation report that captures benefits to women and excluded and vulnerable groups. ▪ Include clear documentation of the implications and impact on women and the disadvantaged.
<p>It is important to monitor the implementation of the GESI strategy, as discussed below:</p> <p><i>Monitoring the implementation of the GESI strategy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The GESI unit needs to monitor the implementation of the GESI strategy ▪ Integrate into the regular monitoring process of the sector agency the monitoring of the implementation of the GESI strategy. ▪ The reporting system of the sector agency has to report on the implementation of the GESI strategy. ▪ Consider third-party evaluation of the implementation of GESI strategy of the ministry. 		

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion

Source: ADB SARD. 2022.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Indicative Outline for GESI Strategy Document

Chapter	Key Contents
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Context (e.g., links with national and sectoral mandates regarding gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) and rationale for the sectoral GESI strategy). Objectives (e.g., GESI responsive approach adopted to ensure women and the disadvantaged access and use sectoral resources and benefits; GESI mainstreamed in sectoral programming and institutions). Definitions (e.g., of key concepts like gender equality, women's empowerment, social inclusion, masculinity, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics, equity, and equality, intersectionality). Key principles/core requirements for addressing GESI (e.g., management commitment to embed GESI as relevant in different aspects of programming, basic understanding of GESI concepts of staff, allocation of time to staff to work on GESI aspects, disaggregation of data). Methodology (e.g., participatory and inclusive approach, consultations with different stakeholders, including women and excluded and vulnerable groups).
Overview of National and Sectoral Laws	<p>Overview of laws having a bearing on GESI strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal operations: such as maternity leave and paternity leave, provision of child daycare and breastfeeding room, gender-disaggregated toilets, occupational health and safety standards, promotion of equality in recruitment, career development opportunities, anti-sexual harassment mechanisms. External operations: such as ensuring equality of access to the services of the sector agency, especially of women and disadvantaged groups, collecting disaggregated data by sex/gender and social indicators and including these data in sector agency reports, formation of (electricity, water, transport) user committees with significant representation of women and disadvantaged groups. Other factors that facilitate GESI: such as allocation of a gender-responsive budget, preparation of a gender or GESI action plan, assigning/formation of a gender focal point or gender budget cell.
Institutional Arrangements for GESI Mainstreaming	<p>Tools, measures, guidelines, and strategies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening capacity and understanding of staff on GESI concepts and skills. Location of responsibility from national to sub-national levels for GESI (e.g., the tasks of division/department/section to have responsibility for GESI in the sectoral Ministry, line agencies/government offices at sub-national levels). GESI responsive work environment (e.g., childcare breastfeeding policies, zero tolerance of sexual and other forms of harassment). Promotion of staff diversity. Ensuring a common understanding of GESI objectives and strategies at national and sub-national levels.
GESI Strategy for Sectoral Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop ToC for the GESI Strategy of the sector agency Develop tools, measures, and strategies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainstreaming GESI in the different policies of the sector agency (policy formulation, policy implementation, annual planning and budgeting, regular monitoring and evaluation) and its institutional arrangements. Integrating GESI in the sectoral project cycle covering from planning to evaluation (e.g., pre-feasibility study, environmental assessment, project cost estimate, project implementation to project monitoring and evaluation). Develop Logframe for the GESI Strategy of the sector agency.
Monitoring Implementation of GESI Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify institutional system and staff responsibilities for the implementation of the GESI strategy of the sectoral agency Monitor against the theory of change and logframe for the GESI strategy of the sector agency

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion

Source: ADB SARD. 2022.

Appendix 2: Guide for Developing a Theory of Change for the Sector GESI Strategy

A theory of change (ToC)⁸ is a method that explains how a given intervention, or set of interventions, is expected to lead to specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence. A good project design is based on an evidence-based ToC developed in consultation with, and agreed upon by, key stakeholders. A ToC is required for a GESI strategy to envision the hierarchy of objectives (from outputs to impact) that the sectoral agency seeks to achieve and the contributions required to reach the planned objectives. Table below provides guidance for developing a ToC for a GESI strategy of a sector agency.

Table: Guidance for Developing a ToC for a Sectoral GESI Strategy

Step	Guidance
Defining the problem and gathering evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop the theory of change (ToC) based on a clear statement of the GESI problem and how it will be overcome by the project interventions. ▪ Review existing evidence and data (disaggregated) related to the problem and other projects with similar objectives ▪ Supplement the review with field research and consultations with relevant stakeholders, including women and men and people of disadvantaged groups in the communities, as required. ▪ Summarize the state of knowledge on the subject and identify the program's expected GESI outcomes (based on theory or empirical studies). ▪ Work backward through components of ToC, adopting a participatory process involving input and feedback from staff members and stakeholders.
Define the intended outcomes	Develop a set of GESI outcomes drawing on the analysis of the problem and evidence from the literature review or field research. Include in the definition of outcomes if counterfactual evaluation is required to measure outcomes.
Identify program outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify program outputs required for the expected outcomes. ▪ Consult stakeholders and review evidence to link the theoretical framework with practical context. ▪ Expand assumptions to connect the things the organization can control (outputs) with the changes they should produce that are outside of the organization's control (outcomes). ▪ Define GESI-related outputs that are specific and measurable and can be tracked through monitoring.
Define program activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choose activities that can address the analytical domains of change of the SARD GESI framework (understand, empower, and include) and contribute to the operational priorities (OP 1 and OP 2) pillars ▪ Specify GESI program activities that can be tracked through activity monitoring with disaggregation (as required)
Map pathways between components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reaffirm the logic of the identified activities, outputs, and outcomes. Identify additional activities to address any gaps, if any. ▪ Ensure livelihood and voice empowerment of women and the disadvantaged groups and discriminatory policies and mindsets are addressed throughout the ToC.
Identify assumptions	For each link between activity and GESI output, and GESI output and GESI outcome, identify assumptions that must hold if the program is to work as expected.
Identify risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To identify risks, ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are the forces acting against project success? ▪ What occurrences or actions might happen at any point in the project cycle that would significantly jeopardize the achievement of the intended results? ▪ Link each risk to a specific output. ▪ Do not include as risks (a) any factors that the project fully controls, (b) risks already eliminated through redesign, and (e) planned mitigation measures.

⁸ United Nations Development Group. [Theory of Change: UNDAF Campaign Guidance](#).

Step	Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For all projects and operations, list all project risks in the risk assessment and prepare a risk management plan. ▪ List mitigating measures for each identified risk in the risk management report.

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion, OP = operational priorities, ToC = theory of change

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. 2017. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines. 2017](#). Nepal; and Ministry of Urban Development. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\) Operational Guidelines. 2013](#). Nepal (developed with the support of Nepal Resident Mission, ADB).

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Appendix 3: Guide for Developing a Logframe for the GESI Strategy of a Sector Agency

Prepare a logframe for the GESI sector strategy to operationalize the ToC. Ensure GESI-related aspects are embedded in the results chain of the logframe. The Table below provides guidance for formulating GESI-related logframe components.

Table: Guidance for formulating the Logframe for the GESI Strategy of a Sector Agency

Results Level	Guidance
Activities and inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Include activities for the implementation of the strategy▪ Identify the inputs required for the implementation of the gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) strategy
Outputs	Develop outputs related to the implementation of the GESI strategy
Outcomes	Include key GESI outcome statements describing the immediate and direct benefits of achieving the outputs
Impact	Identify the impact of implementing the GESI strategy

GESI = gender equality and social inclusion

Source: Adapted from Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport. 2017. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Operational Guidelines, 2017](#). Nepal; and Ministry of Urban Development. [Gender Equality and Social Inclusion \(GESI\) Operational Guidelines, 2013](#). Nepal (developed with the support of Nepal Resident Mission, ADB).

Additionally, make sure that selected performance indicators for the GESI strategy are 'SMART' and GESI responsive. This includes ensuring the indicators are:

- Specific:** details the outputs or outcome the project seeks to achieve by specifying dimensions, such as who, where, when, quality, quantity, and cost.
- Measurable:** stated in quantifiable terms (e.g., percentage of PwDs) and feasible to collect data in time to report in project progress reports as relevant.
- Achievable:** realistic about what is to be achieved. The collective judgment of key stakeholders is needed to choose a target that is ambitious yet realistic.
- Relevant:** appropriate to the results statement it measures and useful for management information purposes.
- Time-bound:** stated with a target and baseline, both with dates.