

CSSF approach to gender

This is an information note for consideration by suppliers. It is not an instruction and it is intended to help inform understanding of how HMG deals with the related issues.

Why gender matters?

It is well known that conflict and instability affects women and men differently, and results in them having different needs and priorities. This means that how HMG intervenes in conflict affected and post-conflict settings needs to reflect the needs of all genders. Gender is not just about women and girls; tailoring programmes to the different needs of men and boys is critical too. Ultimately projects which fail to incorporate gender risk doing harm by reinforcing gender inequality.

Women and girls are the main victims of sexual violence during war and are often left the most vulnerable. In many fragile and conflict-affected states, women and girls face discriminatory attitudes, harmful social norms, poor access to basic services and unequal treatment under the law. Men and boys are more likely to be victims of forced recruitment into armed groups, sex-selective mass killings and to die in battle. In many armed conflicts, sexual violence is used as a deliberate tactic of war, primarily targeted against women and girls, but also against men and boys. While it is mainly men and boys who take up arms, in conflicts around the world, women also engage in violence, both directly (e.g. as combatants, gang members and suicide bombers) and indirectly (e.g. supporting armed groups or inciting relatives to engage in violence).

Conflict has also opened up opportunities for women to take on non-traditional roles (e.g. decision-makers in the household while male relatives are away), and in advocating and mobilising for peace. As political solutions to the conflict are found and countries rebuild, there are opportunities to consolidate gains made by women, redress past discrimination against women and girls, and engage men and boys in creating a more equal society. It is also a time to address specific gender issues that threaten long-term stability such as high male youth unemployment and impunity for sexual violence in conflict.

Policy context:

The UK has committed to putting women and girls at the centre of all our efforts to prevent and resolve conflict, to promote peace and stability, and to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. Cascading down from the [Building Stability Overseas Strategy](#) (BSOS), the [UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#) (NAP) serves as the national policy document that guides our Women Peace and Security (WPS) efforts across our security, foreign policy and development work.

UK NAP Outcomes and Outputs are structured around the 4 pillars of UNSCR 1325, with an additional pillar on Building UK Capacity. The UK **NAP implementation plan** outlines key WPS activities for the 6 NAP focus countries (Afghanistan, Burma, DRC, Libya, Somalia and Syria). Annual reports on this implementation plan and progress against the NAP will be deposited in Parliament annually from 2015. The UK is also leading global efforts to address sexual violence in conflict, spearheaded by Baroness Anelay, the Prime Minister's Special Representative (PMSR) on Sexual Violence in Conflict (see the [G8 Declaration on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict](#)).

Programme delivery is a key vehicle for delivering on our commitments and the CSSF presents a real opportunity to do more. The UK International Development (Gender Equality) Act (2014) now makes it a

legal requirement, before providing UK overseas development aid (ODA) or assistance, to consider how it will contribute to reducing gender inequality. This act applies to CSSF programmes that use ODA funds.

Why including gender is more than just a policy commitment

- **More sustainable peace.** Women's inclusion in peace processes has been found to increase the probability of reaching an agreement, and when women's groups were able to exercise a strong influence, the chances of agreements being implemented were found to be much higher. In the wake of conflict, communities with more empowered women have been found to enjoy more rapid recovery and poverty reduction.
- **More prosperous societies:** Improved gender equality will boost prosperity by maximising the contributions 50 per cent of the population (women and girls) can make.
- **Better programming.** By addressing gender differences, CSSF programmes will be more effective and lead to better results.
- **To avoid doing harm:** At a minimum, CSSF programmes should "do no harm" and avoid reinforcing gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls.

Definitions used by HMG

- **Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles and relationships between men and women. Rather than being determined by biology, gender is learned. In other words, men and women are taught certain roles and appropriate behaviours according to their sex. Gender roles are dynamic and shift over time; they often change during violent conflict.
- **Gender mainstreaming.** Mainstreaming gender equality means ensuring that women's and men's (or boy's and girls') concerns and experiences are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all legislation, policies and programmes, with the aim of making sure inequality is not perpetuated, women's and men's different rights and needs are recognised and addressed, and women and men share benefits - with the overall aim of promoting gender equality.
- **Gender-aware/gender-sensitive.** Gender-aware and gender-sensitive are terms used to refer to policies and programmes that do take into account difference and inequality between women and men.

The CSSF approach

The CSSF takes a **twin-track approach** to promoting gender equality and/or women's empowerment combining projects aimed primarily at promoting gender equality and/or women's empowerment, with gender mainstreaming into projects where gender equality is not the main objective. Both approaches are equally valid.

A CSSF programme can therefore include:

1. Projects where the main objective is to promote gender equality (e.g. a project to increase women's participation in the police, or a project to engage men and boys in advocating for women's rights); **and/or**
2. Projects where promoting gender equality is not the main objective, but gender issues are mainstreamed into every aspect of the project so that the project is still gender-sensitive. For example, a project to train military personnel on operations does not have gender equality as its main objective. However, the training should still be designed and delivered in a gender-sensitive way (e.g. by including gender issues in the content of the trainings).

Working with implementing partners

The CSSF is increasingly pushing for our programmes to meaningfully address gender inequality. This cannot be achieved without the cooperation of our implementing partners. As implementing partners we expect as a minimum that all projects delivered “do no harm” and avoid reinforcing gender inequality and discrimination against women and girls, men and boys. Consideration should be given to how projects could be used to promote gender equality. This consideration should be proportionate depending on the type, scale and complexity of the intervention. This will be reflected in the evaluation criteria used within the Invitation to Tender for a specific project.

In practice this may mean:

- **Understanding better.** Identifying and incorporating up-to-date analysis of gender issues in the sector / context of the project, or commissioning analysis. Speaking to Women’s Rights organisations. Speaking to women as well as men. Using this knowledge in project design and proposals.
- When developing a programme or project, writing a clear statement of **what the main gender equality issues are, and how your programme will address them.** Make sure this runs consistently through project objectives, theory of change, and results framework. Include budget and resources in your proposal for gender equality.
- **Developing inclusive programmes:** Ensuring programmes are developed inclusive of all genders (including transgender and intersex persons). Considering whether women and men are getting a fair share of the benefits of a programme? Confirming there is a need for a specific result targeting women’s empowerment?
- **Developing gender-sensitive approaches:** Assessing the risk of backlash to your activities? Considering whether activities should be included in a programme to build understanding and secure buy-in to promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment?
- **Pursue gender sensitive reporting / M&E:** Including gender in results frameworks. Ensuring any proposed M&E system collects sex- and age-disaggregated data; Using this analysis in on-going project decision-making. Including indicators to measure / track specific gender issues.
- **Be aware of your organisational approach to gender** and, if necessary, strengthen **gender capacity within your organisation.** The approach taken should be proportionate to the work you aim to deliver and, if necessary, you should apply the same considerations to your sub-contractors. It is important to highlight your organisational approach to gender.

Annex A: Key questions to ask on gender issues during the CSSF programme cycle

