# Checklist for integrating Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) across Economic development programmes

Economic inclusion is crucial for sustainable growth and good economic development planning. Economic transformation is needed in and of itself to drive economic growth and poverty reduction, but the FCDO's use of ODA money for Economic Development programming should maximise opportunities for inclusive economic transformation. Accelerated progress on the economic empowerment and inclusion of women, people with disabilities and other excluded groups is essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 pledge to Leave No One Behind.<sup>1</sup> The FCDO has committed to at least 80% of FCDO bilateral ODA programmes having a focus on gender equality by 2030 (using OECD DAC Gender Equality Policy Markers), with strong emphasis on promoting women's economic empowerment. As highlighted in its Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy, the FCDO is similarly committed to being a global leader on disability inclusion and promoting disability-inclusive economic empowerment.

The FCDO's PrOF\_Rule 9 states that: 'All programmes (and policies) must provide evidence on how their interventions will impact on gender equality, disability inclusion, LGBT+ and other equality considerations'. 69 and its supporting PrOF Guides on GEDSI for FCDO 69 staff (see further resources) considered essential to improve programmes' social impact and focus on poverty reduction, and reduce the risk of unintended consequences, whilst also improving the value for money of programmes through increased equity. Implementing Rule 9 enables the FCDO to demonstrate its compliance with public legal obligations alignment with UK policy commitments (including to the SDGs and pledge to Leave No One Behind).

This checklist provides additional tailored guidance to support improved progress against the FCDO's gender and inclusion commitments and implementation of Rule 9 across the FCDO's economic development portfolio, including the economic Centres of Expertise<sup>3</sup>. It focuses on strengthening FCDO programme support for inclusive growth and aims to help operationalise an adapted Economic Inclusion Framework/Continuum of three increasing levels of ambition (see Figure 1).<sup>4</sup> This document provides a practical tool for effective planning from the outset, and oversight to ensure that economic inclusion (related to gender equality/women's economic empowerment, disability, race/marginalised ethnic groups, LGBTQI+, children, youth, older people, and propoor considerations – often abbreviated to GEDSI) is meaningfully integrated across all different stages of the programme cycle. Detailed practical guidance is also available for key sectors, such as the tailored GEDSI toolkit for the Green Cities and Infrastructure programme (GCIP).

**Figure 1: Economic Inclusion Continuum** 

Minimum Standard
Interventions not
aimed at economically
marginalised groups,
but ensure they do
no harm and do not
reinforce inequalities

## **Empowerment**

Deliberate actions to understand and address diverse practical needs of economically excluded groups, reduce barriers, & protect and promote their rights

### **Transformative**

Leading policy approaches and interventions to transform systems/institutions that perpetuate exclusion, targeted actions for strategic needs of economically excluded groups

Source: EDPD Strategy and Policy Board

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> People are also discriminated against based on age, location, caste, religion or sexual identity <u>Leave No One Behind pledge</u>)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> (International Development Act 2002, International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014 and Equalities Act 2010)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Green Cities and Infrastructure, Green and inclusive Growth, Trade, Financial Services & Public Financial management as of 2025

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> This diagram is based on the evolving Moser/ICED/Prosperity Fund Gender and Inclusion Framework/FCDO Equalities Staircase (see Prosperity Fund Gender and Inclusion framework September 2020, FCDO British Investment Partnerships Directorate Strategy and Policy Board slides from April 2024, and ICED (2017) Transport: A Game Changer for Women's Economic Empowerment. FCDO Economic Development programming should be aiming to have most programmes categorised as "empowerment" with also some at the transformation level of ambition; only in exceptional cases would minimum standard be an appropriate level of ambition.

Have local <u>stakeholders been informed</u> about what decisions were made during programme design, including women, people from excluded groups and their

BC design?

representative organisations?

#### **Business Case and Programme Design** MINIMUM STANDARDS **EMPOWERMENT TRANSFORMATION** Has a GEDSI analysis been conducted to inform the overall Business Case (BC), which ☑ Does the BC consider programme ✓ Does the BC include: asks who is left behind in accessing economic opportunities, why, what harm this will do a) how the programme will provide measures to improve access to economic and how FCDO will respond to risks of this harm (see Prof Guidance on GEDSI analysis)? assets, capabilities and opportunities for strategic support to address systemic ✓ For programmes over £40m, has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been conducted. economic empowerment of excluded barriers to jobs/economic to inform the BC, which asks how FCDO will respond to the context/economic sectorgroups, and provide accountability opportunity/benefits of inclusive specific GEDSI risks and opportunities? mechanisms for this to occur? growth and challenge power Is GEDSI fully integrated across all BC sections, and has it been quality assured by a SDA? Does the draft logframe contain relevant imbalances that prevent women and If over £40m, has an EIA been carried out that sets out what impact the programme will excluded groups' participation, and realistic objectives, indicators and have on equalities (positive or negative) and what mitigating measures have been targets to show how the programme will contribution to and benefits from included in the design? achieve and measure economic inclusion economic growth? Has a draft theory of change (Toc) been produced that draws on the GEDSI analysis to (e.g. #jobs generated, business programme measures to support institutional, legal and societal wide demonstrate the extent to which economic capabilities, assets & opportunities will be environment/legislative reforms that reduce barrier of entry/access, finance built. & how social and economic exclusion will be addressed? changes for enabling more equitable Does the draft logframe: (a) contain relevant and realistic GEDSI indicators and targets? mobilised for disadvantaged access to jobs and economic (b) Have indicators disaggregated by sex, age and geography at a minimum and where businesses/sectors/geographies etc.). opportunities, and provide possible by disability status?; and (c) have indicators on safeguards that are in place to Are they disaggregated by the relevant accountability mechanisms for this ensure no harm or worsening inequalities? categories identified in the GEDSI analysis? to occur? Does the strategic case summarise how the programme will ensure GEDSI compliance Have women, people with disabilities, How diverse representative with UK equality legislation, including how it will ensure do no harm, draw on GEDSI LGBTQI+ people, youth, diverse ethnic organisations [e.g., women business analysis and use disaggregated data? networks/cooperatives. groups etc., and their representative Does the appraisal case consider GEDSI in its assessment of different economic organisations, inputted ideas about Organisations of People with intervention options? Does the appraisal case consider equity as part of the value for programme design that have been taken Disabilities (OPDs), ethnic minority money analysis? forward? Have sufficient accommodations led businesses, SME networks, trade Does the management case provide assurances that safeguards are in place to ensure been offered for people to input ideas? unions) have been engaged in cono harm to vulnerable/impacted communities and will be monitored throughout (e.g. reimbursements for time and travel. creating the programme to address implementation? accessible information and locations) the needs/barriers/priorities of their What are the reputational and operational risks and what is the risk appetite in relation Have programme risks and mitigation members (e.g as members of a to these risks and how they will be mitigated through programme design? measures been identified and developed project advisory group)? Are risks and risk mitigation measures identified including for safeguarding against ☑ Does the draft ToC and logframe reflect with local communities, including women modern slavery/sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) and unintentionally and excluded groups? ambition to address unequal power perpetuating economic exclusion or harming economic assets of the poor? Is there relations and seek systemic institutional, consideration of the interaction between social, climate and environmental risks and legal and societal changes? challenges? Have there been consultations with women, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+, ethnic groups etc (where feasible). and/or their representative organisations, including in the

Mobilisation/Procurement				
MINIMUM STANDARDS	EMPOWERMENT	TRANSFORMATION		
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	<ul> <li>☑ Does the ITT/ToR         <ul> <li>a) identify opportunities for women and excluded groups to build their economic assets and capabilities, increase quality jobs, productive employment and entrepreneurship opportunities?</li> <li>b) mention opportunities for local organisations to provide feedback to FCDO in a safe way?</li> <li>c) consider whether the consortia programme must be led by a local partner with GEDSI expertise?</li> <li>☑ Do the bid assessment criteria allow extra points for engagement of representative groups in the design, and inclusion in delivery if appropriate? Conversely, are the bid assessment criteria (especially with regard to prior track record, up-front investment, capital balances etc) tailored to facilitating and encouraging the participation of women-led organisations, collective organisations/co-operatives of informal economy workers and other excluded groups?</li> <li>☑ When reviewing the technical proposal, does it:</li></ul></li></ul>	TRANSFORMATION  ☐ Does the ITT/ToR  (a) include incentives for diversifying the suppliers bidding for contracts - i.e. attracting smaller, local suppliers and minority-owned companies? e.g. specify a % target/requirement of direct funding to local organisations led by women or excluded groups, including funding earmarked for raising their capacity?  (b) incentivise elements of risk sharing so that local organisations are not financially overburdened?  (c) cover overhead costs of local organisations?  ☑ Does the technical proposal  a) identify entry points to address systemic barriers to inclusive economic growth and to challenge power imbalances that constrain women and excluded groups' participation, contribution to and benefits from growth?  b) demonstrate a well-established reputation and visibility for its transformative influencing work on GEDSI and an active, leadership role in local or national GEDSI forums, networks or coalitions?  c) highlight mechanisms that enable women and excluded groups to hold the supplier/s to account for progress?  d) state that a reference group, made up of diverse members, can review and approve deliverables and be involved in programme-related decision making?  e) provide local insights and strategies to overcome systemic barriers to economic empowerment for women and excluded groups?		
management approach with clear assessment of GESDI risks and mitigation strategies  ✓ Is feedback on GEDSI/economic inclusion covered in award and				
non-award letters?				

Programme Implementation				
MINIMUM STANDARDS	EMPOWERMENT	TRANSFORMATION		
<ul> <li>✓ Has the supplier been briefed on UK GEDSI &amp; safeguarding commitments/ambition at the kick-off call, and received guidance?</li> <li>✓ Has a GEDSI analysis been carried out that draws on recent GEDSI &amp; economic data? Does it identify gaps in evidence? Is it regularly updated?</li> <li>✓ Has GEDSI been integrated across programme cycle</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Has the GEDSI impact assessment assessed and informed how interventions can build assets, capabilities &amp; opportunities for women &amp; excluded groups? Have stakeholder consultations been held with groups that are less heard? (e.g. informal economy)</li> <li>✓ Does the GEDSI Strategy &amp; Action Plan include</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Does the GEDSI impact assessment identify any expected impacts on social norms?</li> <li>✓ Do programme interventions address systemic barriers to economic participation e.g. discriminatory policies, legislation or institutional processes?</li> <li>✓ Does programme leadership advocate for inclusive growth, show GEDSI commitment and capitalise on key moments for</li> </ul>		
management tools including the logframe, partnership agreements, reporting template, supplier KPIs and regularly updated risk matrix?  ✓ Has the programme been scored against OECD-DAC gender equality & disability inclusion policy markers, and has the	activities that build economic assets, capabilities & opportunities for women & excluded groups?  Have financial incentives, unpaid care and domestic work, and transportation been	GEDSI transformative change?  ✓ Are staff incentivised to apply GEDSI principles through job descriptions and performance reviews?  ✓ Is GEDSI a standard item in key programme meetings?  ✓ Is universal design mandated in all programme facilities and		
score been shared?  Has a GEDSI impact assessment been carried out that draws on the GEDSI analysis and assesses impacts of proposed interventions for different groups, and identifies GEDSI risks and mitigation measures?	addressed to enable participation of women and excluded groups? Are there reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities?  ✓ Have the constraints that women and excluded groups face in accessing more and	assets created?  ✓ Is the programme externally visible for its GEDSI work, and does it lead GEDSI-focused forums and networks?  ✓ Has unpaid care and domestic work been recognised, reduced and redistributed, including in times of crisis?		
During inception, has a <u>GEDSI Strategy and Action Plan</u> been conducted and is regularly reviewed and used? Does set up internal incentives and accountability mechanisms and are there clear synergies with other programme strategies and plans?	better jobs been addressed? Has unpaid care and domestic work and skills gaps been considered as a major constraint to economic participation and progression? Are constraints to moving up the supply chain been	<ul> <li>Have <u>collective voice and action</u> around economic participation and rights been amplified? Do <u>trade unions</u> represent issues of concern to women and excluded groups?</li> <li>Are there strategies to ensure that <u>GEDSI practices and successes are sustained</u> after programme closure?</li> </ul>		
<ul> <li>✓ Has <u>capacity building</u> been provided to project staff and partners on the programme's GEDSI/inclusive growth approach, as well as ensuring they do not perpetuate discrimination themselves?</li> <li>✓ Is <u>mandatory safeguarding training</u> completed by all staff and</li> </ul>	alleviated?  ✓ Are delivery partner employees from diverse backgrounds supported with additional resources, tools and facilities to enable meaningful participation and is this reflected	<ul> <li>Is there a <u>platform</u> for women and excluded groups to influence programme decision-making?</li> <li>Have entry points been identified for women and excluded groups to increase their <u>economic agency</u>?</li> <li>Have <u>training</u>, <u>mentorship or quotas</u> been provided for women</li> </ul>		
partners, with signed codes of conduct?  Have project-affected groups been consulted for their views on GEDSI priorities and risks? Have consultations met minimum accessibility standards?	in budgets, planning and HR policies and procedures?  ✓ Are implementing partner staff provided training to adapt their communication to align	and excluded groups to increase their leadership in governance structures, and enhance their technical knowledge, decision-making abilities and entrepreneurship skills?  Have measures been put in place to increase access and control		
<ul> <li>✓ Is the digital, physical &amp; emotional security of local partners ensured?</li> <li>✓ Do any FCDO budget cuts proportionately affect women and</li> </ul>	with the additional needs of e.g. people with disabilities?  Are social accountability mechanisms provided	over <a href="mailto:physical">physical (land, property)</a> and financial assets?  Are <a href="mailto:public services">public services</a> accessible for women and excluded groups, given their different roles and particularly women's time?		
excluded groups equally or less than other groups?  Are there accessible & diverse mechanisms in place to report safeguarding incidents and provide appropriate response (including support to survivors)?	for quality service delivery, including grievance and redress mechanisms, and are they accessible for women and excluded groups?  Are women and excluded groups equally represented in the more productive sectors and what levels?	<ul> <li>☑ Urban: Are women &amp; excluded groups represented on city governance &amp; planning decision making bodies?</li> <li>☑ Infrastructure: Are there contractual mechanisms in construction, operation &amp; maintenance (such as women's participation through quotas)? Are there. accessible design standards for people with disabilities?</li> </ul>		

Are the constraints that businesses led by	▼ Trade Facilitation/Anticorruption: Has awareness of govt
women/excluded groups been overcome?	officials been raised on the barriers for female traders and
✓ Has a <u>life course approach</u> been taken to	excluded groups? Have strategies to overcome the barriers
ensure education, skills, jobs, assets,	been integrated into guidelines, regulatory reform and
voice/collective action support women/girls	systematic engagement with representative organisations?
and excluded groups through key life	Are there safe whistle blowing procedures?
transitions?	✓ <b>Skills/Business Env</b> : Is there <u>affirmative action</u> in skills
	upgrading and support for women-owned enterprises?

MI	NIMUM STANDARDS	EN	IPOWERMENT	TR.	ANSFORMATION
Z Z	When reviewing technical proposals – is there evidence of relevant MEL expertise in the core team, demonstrating GEDSI skills, experience and technical knowledge?  Does the <u>ToC</u> (a) describe causal pathways through which basic	V	Are there <u>indicators</u> and <u>targets</u> related to <u>building</u> economic assets, <u>capabilities</u> and <u>opportunities</u> for women and excluded groups, and is this tied into the programme ToC & Logframe?	<b>V</b>	Does the <u>ToC</u> highlight an explicit intention to transform unequal power relations and test critical GEDSI assumptions about how to tackle the root causes of inequality and exclusion?
3	economic needs of women and excluded groups will be met, using findings from a GEDSI analysis and impact assessment?; (b) list GEDSI assumptions and risks that are regularly reviewed?	<b>V</b>	Have women and excluded groups made decisions about the design and implementation of MEL frameworks and indicators etc.?	V	Have <u>action plans</u> been produced based on evaluation findings that address GEDSI gaps and propose policy or structural changes to advance
$\overline{\mathbf{V}}$	Does the <u>logframe</u> contain relevant and realistic GEDSI indicators and targets, and are indicators disaggregated by sex at a minimum and where possible by disability status, age & location?	<ul><li>✓</li></ul>	Are women and vulnerable/excluded groups in MEL roles?  Have women and people from excluded groups	<b>V</b>	equality, accessibility and inclusion over time? Have <u>transformative indicators</u> been developed, with targets, that assess not only participation but also
V	Has data been <u>disaggregate</u> d by sex, age, disability status and location where possible, both in monitoring and evaluations?		received <u>capacity development</u> on MEL processes, so they can engage in MEL and interpret data that		shifts in power dynamics, institutional and social attitudes over time, and are the indicators tied into
	Do <u>programme reports</u> provide information on GEDSI and inclusive economic development?	<b>V</b>	affects them?  Have people from diverse groups <u>provided feedback</u>	<b>V</b>	the programme ToC?  Do GEDSI and wider programme learning products
<b>✓</b>	Are there <u>data protection</u> systems in place? Are <u>MEL processes</u> transparent and accountable to ensure sustained programme commitment to GEDSI?	✓	on their experiences, and has this been reported on such as in Annual Reviews?  Are there <u>feedback loops</u> for women and excluded		represent women and excluded groups in ways that portray them in active ways, in non-traditional forms of work and address the root causes of inequality and
V	Is there a systematic process in place to monitor and report against the GEDSI Strategy & Action Plan and update it on a regular basis to reflect current realities?		groups that participated in research and evaluation to validate, access and be able to use findings and recommendations?		exclusion?
✓	Do <u>communications</u> emphasise inclusive and diverse narratives rather than stereotypes?				
V	Is there evidence that tools and methodologies are <u>accessible</u> for people from excluded groups?				
V	Have the GEDSI findings and recommendations been <u>regularly</u> <u>communicated</u> in an accessible manner to ensure women and excluded groups have equal access to information?				

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☑ Is there a strong commitment to <u>safeguarding</u> at leadership level	
e.g is it reviewed at the Board level on a regular basis and	
reported on to FCDO at least quarterly? Are expectations on	
safeguarding adequately cascaded and embedded through all	
downstream partners?	

Programme completion				
MINIMUM STANDARDS	EMPOWERMENT	TRANSFORMATION		
	<ul> <li>✓ Are there plans and activities to link women and excluded groups to available local resources, networks and service providers, which will continue after programme closure?</li> <li>✓ Have women and people from excluded groups contributed to decisions about how the programme should be closed and been consulted in the PCR process and any GEDSI impact assessments?</li> <li>✓ Has GEDSI guidance /capacity building been provided to local partners/service providers in continuing key activities or finding alternative funding sources?</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>✓ Are there strategies to ensure that GEDSI practices and successes are sustained within local communities, institutions and policies after the programme has ended?</li> <li>✓ Has a funded advocacy group with suitable capacity been formed (e.g., a women's council) that can influence long-term structural change and tackle discriminatory norms and stereotypes during and after programme closure?</li> <li>✓ Have local capacity and partnerships between community institutions with local leaders, government, women's rights organisations and OPDs etc. been strengthened to continue GEDSI efforts after programme closure?</li> <li>✓ Do local stakeholders understand the importance of GEDSI, and have they committed to continuing progress? Have lessons learned/findings on the transformative elements of the programme, such as addressing unequal power relations and</li> </ul>		
of Practice?  Has there been clear and accessible communication with local stakeholders, including women/excluded groups, about project closure?  Have critical services or support systems been identified that need continuity, and have referral pathways been identified to help women and excluded groups to access resources/services?  Have staff affected by closure, especially women and people from excluded groups, received support such as assistance to find—and upskill for—new roles?  Has a programme post-closure debriefing been held to discuss what worked for GEDSI and what could be improved?		harmful social norms, been documented and shared?  Is there a <u>framework for tracking GEDSI</u> impacts post-closure, possibly collaborating with local entities to monitor outcomes? Is this work funded? Are any community-led monitoring exercises envisaged?		

Definitions/0	Glossary	
DISABILITY	Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.	
ECONOMIC INCLUSION	The process of ensuring that excluded groups have equal opportunities to participate in and benefit from economic growth.	
GENDER EQUALITY	The absence of discrimination on the basis of gender in opportunities, in the allocation of resources or benefits, or in the access to services, such that all individuals can enjoy equal standards of well-being. It is the full and equal exercise by all, of their human rights, regardless of their gender identity.	
INCLUSIVE GROWTH	Economic growth that benefits all societal groups, particularly excluded groups.	
INFORMAL WORK	Working arrangements that are in practice or by law not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, or entitlement to social protection or other employment guarantees; for example, advance notice of dismissal, severance pay, or paid annual or sick leave.	
LOCALLY-LED DEVELOPMENT	Empowering people and organisations in low- and middle-income countries to drive development according to their communities' specific needs and priorities.	
RACIAL JUSTICE	Working towards systemic change and solutions, by targeting the root causes of racia oppression as it intersects with patriarchy, colonialism and slavery as well as economic inequality.	
SAFEGUARDING	Preventing and responding to harm caused by violence, exploitation, abuse and harassment caused in international cooperation work. The aim is to minimise the likelihood and impact of these actions towards both people that are targeted in programmes, and also people who are working in the sector.	
SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY	Mechanisms—both formal and informal—through which citizens and civil society organizations engage to hold state officials or service providers accountable.	
SOCIAL INCLUSION	The removal of institutional barriers (formal and informal) and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities.	
SOCIAL NORMS	Shared standards of acceptable behaviour within a group or society that influence and regulate social life.	
UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK	Unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) are all unpaid non-market services provided by individuals within a household or family for the benefit of its members.	
WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT	Women having the ability to succeed and advance economically, and the power to make and act on economic decisions to enhance their well-being and position in society	

# **Further resources**

- FCDO Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy 2022-2030
- FCDO Disabillity Inclusion Helpdesk (enquiries@disabilityinclusion.org.uk)
- FCDO Disability Inclusion How To <u>Guide</u>
- Equalities Resource Hub
- FCDO Equality and Inclusion Principles Guidance and checklist
- Framework for Economic Inclusion (or Inclusion in Economic Development): Presentation to ECGD Policy and Strategy Board (March 2022)
- Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Analysis Toolkit (Sept, 2023, SD Direct for UKAid)
- Green Cities and Infrastructure Programme (GCIP) GEDSI Lens Toolkit for infrastructure and urban programmes
- FCDO How to Guidance Note on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion: A Beginner Level Guide\_to embedding equality into your work activities from diplomatic engagement to programmes (2023)
- Inclusive Data Charter
- Integrating Inclusion in DFID's Economic Development Work: Challenge Questions (2020) EDI- Claudia Fumo, Miguel Laric, Anna Downs and Jack Edwards
- FCDO <u>International Women and Girls Strategy 2023-2030</u>
- Leaving no one behind: Our promise (Updated 2019)
- PrOF Rule: Gender, Disability and other Equalities PrOF rule 9
- 1. <u>UK Strategy on Safeguarding Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment in the Aid Sector</u>
- 2. O The Common Approach to Protection from SEAH (<u>CAPSEAH</u>) tool provides a detailed <u>practical</u> <u>guidance</u> on how <u>minimum actions</u> can be implemented at different levels of the sector e.g. programme, national, international
- 3. O Safeguarding Against SEAH Tool Kit internal FCDO toolkit of guides, resources and presentations to support staff
- 4. Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub
- 5. Social safeguards Proportionate Risk Management Tool
- Work and Opportunities for Women (WOW) Helpdesk (enquiry@WOWHelpdesk.org.uk)

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