

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Analysis

Introduction

All projects funded under the Biodiversity Challenge Funds (Darwin Initiative, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, and Darwin Plus) are required to demonstrate they have appropriately considered Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) within their design. They should be meeting a minimum 'GESI Sensitive' standard¹.

A GESI Analysis can help you design projects in a GESI considerate and meaningful way. A GESI Analysis builds on previous guidance from the Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs) on how applicants and projects should consider GESI in the design and implementation of their projects.

As stated by the IUCN, "projects are more effective, efficient, and sustainable when there is equitable participation, management, and benefit distribution for women and men"². Conducting a GESI Analysis is therefore important as the results provide an insight and clearer understanding of the context a project is working within. These results can then be used to inform project design, ensuring inclusion and meaningful participation are embedded within the implementation of the project.

The results of a GESI Analysis should inform all stages of the project including: engaging with stakeholders (including who, when and how), developing activities and indicators, allocating budget, selecting partners, staffing, Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL), communications, and reporting.

You should also ensure appropriate partners are selected for the project who understand the context. Project partners and communities should also be actively engaged and involved in the design of the project.

What is a GESI Analysis?

A GESI Analysis can help you understand and identify barriers and inequalities an individual or group may experience as a result of their social identity(s) within a specific context. It is an important tool as it can not only be used to inform your understanding of your project's context, but it can also challenge any existing assumptions or biases you might have.

A GESI Analysis will help evidence the steps projects should already be taking in meeting the minimum 'GESI Sensitive' standard i.e. ensuring meaningful participation, understanding the GESI context, and ensuring projects 'do no harm'.

When should I conduct a GESI Analysis?

Ideally a GESI Analysis would be completed within the design stage of your project to allow findings to be integrated into and inform all stages of your project, and we will be asking for **future applicants** (received after April 2025) to the Biodiversity Challenge Funds to outline their GESI analysis at the application stage. If a GESI analysis wasn't completed in the design stage, there remains value in conducting a GESI Analysis at a later stage to inform the implementation of your project, and so we will be asking **current projects** who applied before April 2025 to

¹ More details about what GESI Sensitive means, as well as information on how projects can have a more ambitious GESI approach, can be found in the Biodiversity Challenge Funds GESI Ambition Statement

² Please see IUCN Gender Analysis Guide (Spring 2021), page 8

consider the principles of a GESI analysis in their regular reporting. A regular review of your GESI Analysis will also ensure the assessment remains up to date and support with reporting requirements. In summary:

- **Future applicants:** All applications received after April 2025 will be required to conduct a GESI Analysis as part of their application.
- **All projects:** All projects will be asked to consider the principles of a GESI Analysis within your Annual Reports from April 2025 onwards.

How do I conduct a GESI Analysis?

The following principles should be considered when conducting your GESI Analysis.

You will also be asked to consider and report against these principles within your annual reporting.

1. Rights: Legal and customary
2. Practice: Attitudes, customs & beliefs
3. Environment: Stressors & vulnerability
4. Roles and Responsibilities: Division of time, space & labour
5. Representation: Participation, inclusion & power
6. Resources: Access & control of assets and services

The following section provides more information on what should be considered under each of these principles and how you might go about conducting the analysis for each of these. Please note these should not be considered in isolation from one another but rather considered as interrelated.

When conducting this analysis, projects and applicants should also acknowledge the ways in which various social identities such as ethnicity, age, class, gender, and disability interact to inform how an individual or group are affected or impacted by the various principles outlined below.

Speaking with local partners and stakeholders is critical to a relevant and up to date contextual understanding across these issues. Please note some aspects of the analysis can also be conducted via desk-based review or by using existing secondary data to minimise your costs.

Under each sub-heading below you will find an overview and some guiding questions. You should consider and answer the guiding questions³.

1. Rights: Legal and customary

This section seeks to understand the rights available to individuals and groups through laws, policies, and frameworks. It is important that the local context is carefully considered to fully understand how various laws, policies and frameworks interact with one another. It is also important to consider if local communities are aware of their rights and what these rights are. You should also consider how law, policies and frameworks refer to gender and marginalised groups and how meaningful these references are. For example, policies may reference gender and marginalised groups but are these relevant and meaningful to the context? Do the policies

³ For more guiding questions please see IUCN's Gender Analysis Guide (Spring 2021)

meaningfully consider the rights of the individuals your project is focused on? Understanding the rights available to individuals and groups will help you better understand the potential challenges or opportunities of the context you are working within.

This assessment can be done through desk-based reviews and analysis of current legal systems and procedures along with interviews of relevant parties. This could include communities, local partners, and/or government stakeholders.

Guiding Questions:

- What are the national commitments to international and regional conventions related to gender equality, human rights, the rights of indigenous people and local communities, natural resources, and the environment?
- What rights are outlined within laws, policies and frameworks and are local communities aware of these?
- How are national laws applied in the local context and do customary rules and norms take precedence? If so, how?

2. Practice: Attitudes, customs & beliefs

This section seeks to understand the various attitudes, customs and beliefs, and power dynamics which may exist in a given context. It is extremely important to understand the cultural norms and traditions to ensure interventions and project activities are relevant and appropriate.

It is important to engage with local communities to fully understand the various attitudes, beliefs, and power dynamics at play. This can be done via workshops or focus group discussions but must recognise culturally appropriate and 'do no harm' approaches. For example, you should consider engaging with different social groups⁴ at different times to ensure people feel comfortable speaking freely and ensure meaningful participation.

Guiding Questions:

- What are the attitudes, beliefs, and power dynamics which exist within the context? And could these present challenges or barriers to individuals engaging with project activities?
- How will the project ensure these attitudes, beliefs, and power dynamics are appropriately considered within the design and implementation of the project?
- Does the project need to adjust its approach to ensure activities are relevant and appropriate?

3. Environment: Stressors & vulnerability

This section seeks to understand how individuals and groups are affected by environmental stressors and vulnerabilities such as climate change, pollution, urbanisation, and use and control of natural resource. Studies have demonstrated that individuals are impacted by these environmental changes differently depending on their gender and social background. For example, in many parts of the world women are the water collectors. With the impacts of

⁴ Social group is used within this document to refer to individuals with similar social identities such as ethnicity, age, class, gender, and disability.

climate change contributing to increasing droughts, women in many parts of the world are now having to walk further to collect water for their families and communities. It is therefore important to ensure these differences and vulnerabilities are understood in the design of your project.

This assessment can be done through desk-based reviews and engagement with local communities.

Guiding Questions:

- What are the main environmental stressors and vulnerabilities that impact individuals in the project area?
- How do these stressors and vulnerabilities impact women and marginalised groups work, income, health, and wellbeing?
- Who is responsible for current environmental related activities, and who will take responsibility for any activities introduced? Does this reflect an equitable distribution of costs and benefits from resource management?
- Have resource scarcity or stressors had an impact on the dynamics within households or communities? If so, are there any personal security risks or acts of violence that have emerged?

4. Roles and Responsibilities: Division of time, space & labour

This section seeks to understand the various roles and responsibilities of individuals within a specific context. This should include consideration of the division of time, space, and labour. It is important to consider all forms of labour and not simply that which is paid. You should also consider traditional roles and responsibilities within the context and how this may impact the ability for individuals to engage.

It is important to engage with local communities to fully understand these. This can be done via workshops or focus group discussions but must recognise culturally appropriate and 'do no harm' approaches.

Guiding Questions:

- Are there cultural norms or restrictions for women or marginalised groups engaging in certain types of work?
- Could the proposed project activities place specific burden on a certain social group?
- Are there any potential barriers to certain social groups engaging with project activities?
- Are there social stigmas related to specific types of work?
- Do different roles and responsibilities impact the way in which women or marginalised groups engage with wider community activities?

5. Representation: Participation, inclusion & power

This section seeks to understand the ability in which individuals and groups can participate and speak out vs where they are excluded from decision-making processes. Understanding where there are gaps and opportunities within how an individual can participate in society can inform a project how best to ensure meaningful participation is integrated into the design of the project.

It is important to engage with local communities and provide safe spaces for individuals to share given potential sensitivities.

Guiding Questions:

- What types of networks, forums, or decision making bodies exist?
- Are there any social barriers or challenges for individuals to engage in these?
- What resources and considerations are required to ensure all individuals are able to participate equally?

6. Resources: Access & control of assets and services

This section seeks to understand what access and control individuals and groups have over resources and services. Gender and social dynamics may have an impact on how individuals and groups can access and use resources. It is therefore important to understand these dynamics and how these may impact the ability (or inability) to access resources.

This assessment can be done via desk-based reviews and engagement with local communities.

Guiding Questions:

- How do gender and social dynamics play a part in how individuals access and control resources?
- What are the barriers to equitable distribution of benefits from resources?

Additional Resources:

- [IUCN Gender Analysis Guide](#)
- [WWF Conduct Gender Analysis](#)
- [Care International: Rapid Gender Analysis](#)