

# Food Security 1 (Food Assistance)

The IASC Gender Marker (GM) is required in all Consolidated Appeals Processes (CAPs) and other humanitarian appeals and funding mechanisms. Cluster Leads should support their partners in the use of the GM so that all cluster projects routinely ensure that ALL segments of the affected population have equal access to food assistance and that targeted support to advance gender equality is based on a gender analysis. This makes food assistance activities more effective.

By uploading gender codes onto the global Online Project System (OPS) and Financial Tracking System (FTS), donors are better placed to identify and fund high quality, gender-informed projects.

**The purpose of this Tip Sheet is to help Food Security Cluster Leads and their partners design quality food assistance projects – including direct food distribution and food-for-work and food-for-training - that reflect the distinct needs of women, girls, boys and men. The aim is to:**

1. Train users in GM coding skills and provide an opportunity to practise with the Vetting Form
2. Through the use of practical examples and tips, to improve projects by bringing gender dimensions into the needs analysis, the activities and the outcomes

## WHY DOES GENDER EQUALITY MATTER IN EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE INTERVENTIONS?

Conflicts and natural disasters affect women, girls, boys and men differently; they face different risks – one such risk is food insecurity - and are victimised in different ways. Humanitarian actors should understand these differences and ensure that services and aid delivered assist all segments of the population and do not put some at risk.

In an emergency, the focus is on primary needs and on meeting them through the delivery of aid as quickly as possible. However, distributing food – directly, or through food-for-work or food-for-training projects - will not automatically guarantee their optimal use or a positive impact on individuals or on the affected population; only a gender-sensitive, participatory approach at all stages of the project cycle can help ensure that an adequate and efficient response is provided. In order for a food assistance project to have a positive impact, women, girls, boys and men must be involved equally in the process.

Projects that analyse and take into consideration the needs, priorities and capacities of both the female and male population are far more likely to improve the lives of affected populations.

## GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PROJECT SHEET

The GM allows Cluster Vetting Teams to code projects 0, 1, 2a or 2b; each code represents the degree to which the project is designed to meet the needs of various segments of the population and/or targets groups with specific needs. The gender code is based on three elements: **Gender Analysis in NEEDS ASSESSMENT → ACTIVITIES → OUTCOMES**

**Designing and implementing a project that achieves a gender code 2a or 2b makes sense as it can enhance both project performance and funding potential.**

The **Title**, **Objectives** and **Beneficiaries** sections of the project can also provide useful additional information in order to indicate of how well the different needs of women, girls, boys and men are mainstreamed into projects.

## VETTING FORM

To code projects correctly and consistently, Cluster Vetting Teams are encouraged to use the GM Vetting Form:

Gender analysis in NEEDS ASSESSMENT	Gender in ACTIVITIES	Gender in OUTCOMES	No. of Checkmarks	GENDER CODE
✓	✓	✓	3	2a or 2b
✓	✓	-	2	1
-	✓	✓	2	1
✓	-	✓	2	1
✓	-	-	1	1
-	✓	-	1	1
-	-	✓	1	0
-	-	-	0	0

GENDER MARKER	DESCRIPTION
<b>GENDER CODE 0</b> <i>No visible potential to contribute to gender equality</i>	<b>Gender is not reflected</b> anywhere in the project sheet or only appears in the outcomes. There is risk that the project will unintentionally fail to meet the needs of some population groups and possibly even do some harm. These projects are considered gender-blind.
<b>GENDER CODE 1</b> <i>Potential to contribute in some limited way to gender equality</i>	<i>There are gender dimensions in <b>only one or two components of the project sheet: i.e. in needs assessment, activities and outcomes</b>*</i> . The project does <i>not</i> have all three: i.e. 1) gender analysis in the needs assessment which leads to 2) gender-responsive activities and 3) related gender outcomes <i>*Note: Where the gender dimension appears in outcomes only, the project is still considered gender-blind.</i>
<b>GENDER CODE 2A – GENDER MAINSTREAMING</b> <i>Potential to contribute significantly to gender equality (Equivalent to Code 2 for UNDP and UNICEF projects)</i>	<b>GENDER CODE 2B – TARGETED ACTION</b> <i>Principal purpose of the project is to advance gender equality (Equivalent to Code 3 for UNDP and UNICEF projects)</i>
<p>A <b>gender analysis</b> is included in the project's needs assessment and is <b>reflected in one or more of the project's activities and one or more of the project outcomes</b>.</p> <p><b>Gender mainstreaming</b> in project design is about making the concerns and experiences of women, girls, boys and men an integral dimension of the core elements of the project: 1) gender analysis in the needs assessment which leads to 2) gender-responsive activities and 3) related gender outcomes. Gender mainstreaming in project design promotes the flow of gender equality into implementation, monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p><i>Most humanitarian projects should aim to code 2a.</i></p>	<p><b>The gender analysis in the needs assessment justifies this project in which all activities and all outcomes advance gender equality.</b></p> <p>All <b>targeted actions</b> are based on gender analysis. Targeted actions are projects that assist women, girls, boys or men who have special needs or suffer discrimination. Most targeted actions are single-sex interventions responding to the disadvantage, discrimination or special needs of one sex or a sub-group of one sex. Other targeted actions can specifically aim to advance gender equality, such as projects that are designed exclusively to provide a gender assessment/baseline for the food security response or a project where all activities contribute to women having equal participation as men in food security committees.</p> <p><i>A gender analysis will identify how many 2b projects are warranted. It is anticipated that 2b projects would make up approximately 10-15% of projects but, in some contexts, this could be more or less.</i></p>

## NEEDS ASSESSMENTS → ACTIVITIES → OUTCOMES

A **NEEDS ASSESSMENT** is the essential first step in providing food assistance programming that is effective, safe and restores dignity. A gender analysis is critical to understanding the social and gender dynamics that could help or hinder aid effectiveness. Here are examples of questions that can enrich the design of food assistance projects:

1. What are the demographics of the target group? (# of households and household composition disaggregated by sex and age; # of single heads of household who are women, girls, boys and men; # of M/F unaccompanied children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, the chronically ill; # of pregnant and lactating women)
2. What is the nutritional status of the affected population (disaggregated by sex and age)?
3. Who receives food aid on behalf of the household (men, women, girls or boys)? Do women or men decide on its use?
4. How is food shared within households? (Intra-household food distribution and consumption - who eats first and most – women, girls, boys or men?)
5. How is food being distributed and allocated? What systems to register, to distribute, to transport are in place? Are food distribution points equally accessible to males and females of all ages?
6. What are the customs, culture and traditions that may limit access to and control over food to female and male members of the household/community or any sub-section (e.g. ethnic, caste, racial) of the population at large?
7. What are the religion- and/or culture-based food restrictions/preferences for women and men in the community?

*See the IASC Gender Handbook (Dec. 2006) p 65 – 69 and GBV Guidelines (Sept. 2005) p. 49 - 52.*

**Examples of ways to incorporate gender concerns in a food assistance project:** The gender analysis in the needs assessment will identify gender gaps, such as unequal access to distributions of food or to food-for-work opportunities for women/girls and men/boys - that need to be addressed. These should be integrated into **ACTIVITIES**. Example:

Gender Analysis in Needs Assessment	Activities
<i>The needs assessment identifies that 22% of households in the target area are female-headed, but women are restricted in their movements outside the home. They rely on male children or others to procure food on their behalf.</i>	<i>Work with women to design a transparent and effective distribution system and ensure information about it reaches eligible women. Monitor to ensure similar proportions of registered women and men are accessing food relief.</i>
<i>Women's incomes and livelihoods have been disrupted to an equal or greater extent than those of men, but most</i>	<i>- Involve women and men in identifying work opportunities that can be provided by home-based women.</i>

<i>food-for-work and cash-for-work interventions are directed at men.</i>	- <i>Involve men and women in finding ways to relieve women's household tasks so they have time for more productive work.</i>
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**OUTCOMES** should capture the change that is expected for female and male beneficiaries. Avoid outcome statements that hide whether or not males and females benefit equally. Examples of gender outcomes include:

- [Number and %] households in receipt of food for [duration], including all households headed by women, girls or boys.
- [Number] children (% girls/% boys) in the affected areas in receipt of a food incentive to address both their short-term needs and encourage school attendance for a period of [duration].
- Up to 50,000 small-scale farmers (context-appropriate % male/% female) are in receipt of food assistance for a period of [duration], through food-for-work and food-for-training activities to reconstruct basic community infrastructure and provide related support services (e.g. rubble clearing, repair of access to paths/roads, construction of drainage canals, water storage facilities and channels, provision of cooked food to labourers).
- The Food Distribution Team comprises (context-appropriate) % male / % female.

## THE ADAPT & ACT-C FRAMEWORK: A PRACTIAL TOOL TO DESIGN/REVIEW FOOD ASSISTANCE PROJECTS THROUGH A GENDER EQUALITY LENS:

The ADAPT & ACT-C Framework is a tool for use when designing or vetting a project to integrate gender dimensions. While the order of the steps in the framework may vary, as many as possible of the steps - ideally all nine - should be taken into account in the design of projects to ensure that the services and aid they provide meet the needs and concerns of women, girls, boys and men equally.

<b>A</b>	<b>ANALYSE the impact of the crisis on women, girls, boys and men</b> and what this entails in terms of division of tasks/labour, work load and access to food assistance, i.e. distributions and food-for-work opportunities. Ensure, for example, focus group discussions on the cultural, practical and security-related issues that women, girls, boys and men might expect to face in accessing food assistance are organised and that the results inform programming.
<b>D</b>	<b>DESIGN services to meet the needs of women and men equally.</b> Food assistance actors should review the way they work to ensure that girls and boys, women and men can benefit equally from their services, e.g. services are designed to reduce the burden that the receipt of food aid may pose for women beneficiaries (food distribution points established as close to beneficiaries as possible; weight of food packages are manageable for women, etc.)
<b>A</b>	<b>Make sure that women, men and girls and boys of all age groups can ACCESS food assistance, including distributions equally.</b> E.g. women's, girls', boys' and men's access to assistance projects and services is routinely monitored through spot-checks, discussions with communities, etc.
<b>P</b>	<b>Ensure women, girls, boys and men PARTICIPATE equally</b> in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of food assistance projects, programmes and strategies, and that women are in decision-making positions. E.g. women are 50% of participants at meetings to discuss and decide on the location of food distribution points, the criterion for selection of recipients of food assistance, etc.
<b>T</b>	<b>Ensure that women and men benefit equally from TRAINING or other capacity-building</b> initiatives offered by the project. E.g. equal opportunities exist for women, girls, boys and men in food-for-training/work; an equal number of women and men are employed in food distribution programmes, etc.

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<b>A</b>	<b>Make sure that the project takes specific ACTIONS to prevent risks of GBV.</b> The IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings includes a chapter on 'Food Security & Nutrition', which should be used as a tool for planning and coordination.
<b>C</b>	<b>COLLECT, analyse and report sex- and age-disaggregated data;</b> analyse and develop profiles on the different needs and realities of males and females in at-risk populations and how and whether their needs are being met by the response. For example, sex- and age-disaggregated data on programme coverage are regularly collected, analysed and reported on.
<b>T</b>	<b>Based on the gender analysis, make sure that women, girls, boys and men are TARGETED with specific actions when appropriate.</b> E.g. women are designated as the initial point of contact for emergency food distribution; men who actively prevent GBV and discrimination during food distributions are supported and publicly acknowledged; women are the food entitlement holders (except where men/boys are the single heads of households), etc.
<b>C</b>	<b>Ensure COORDINATION</b> and gender mainstreaming in all areas of work. For example, partners in the Food Assistance sector liaise with actors in other sectors – including Protection, Shelter & NFIs, WASH, Health and CCCM – to coordinate on gender issues, including participating proactively in meetings of the gender network.

## DESIGNING MINIMUM GENDER COMMITMENTS FOR EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE:

In order to translate the cluster and organisational commitments to gender-responsive food assistance projects into reality, minimum gender commitments can be developed and applied systematically to the field response. The commitments must be articulated in a way that can be understood clearly by all, both in terms of value added to current programming and in terms of the concrete actions which need to be taken to meet these commitments. They should constitute a set of core actions and/or approaches (maximum five) to be applied by all partners in the cluster. They should be practical, realistic and focus on improvement of current approaches rather than on drastic programme reorientation. Finally, they should be measurable for the follow-up and evaluation of their application.

The commitments should be the product of a dialogue with cluster members and/or within the organisation. A first list of commitments should be identified and then discussed, amended and validated by the national cluster and sub-clusters and/or organisation's staff working in the sector. It is important to note that commitments need to reflect key priorities identified in a particular setting. *The commitments, activities and indicators below are samples only*

- 1. Consult women and girls as a priority at all steps in project design, implementation and monitoring; consult them separately from men and boys; and, consult particularly on the times and place of distributions**

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Conduct focus group discussions with women, girls, boys and men of diverse backgrounds on the composition of food packages, on recipient selection criterion and on safe distribution points and methodologies; results feed into programming.</i>	<i>All programming on food distribution is informed by participatory consultations with women, girls, boys and men in the affected population.</i>

- 2. Register the adult woman in all households (except single-male headed households) as the primary recipient of food assistance in order to reinforce ownership and control of women as the primary target of food assistance and avoid excluding second wives and their children in polygamous families.**

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Develop a communication campaign - targeting both women and men - about this approach to ensure that communities understand why women are registered as the primary recipients of aid.</i>	<i>By [date], a communication, which can be transmitted verbally, in writing and in illustrative formats – has been developed and disseminated.</i>

- 3. Establish confidential complaints mechanisms to receive and investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse experienced by women, girls, boys and men in seeking or receiving assistance through food assistance programmes.**

Sample Activities	Sample Indicators
<i>Develop (in written, verbal and illustrative formats) and display the Code of Conduct on SEA and where and how people may make reports confidentially.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ <i>The Code of Conduct is displayed in public areas throughout the camp in written and illustrative formats.</i></li> <li>✦ <i>A confidential complaints mechanism has been established.</i></li> </ul>
<i>Ahead of planned distributions, a communication on distribution entitlements (written, verbal and illustrative formats) is disseminated widely.</i>	<i>All distribution recipients are fully informed of their entitlements ahead of the distribution.</i>

- 4. Equal numbers of female and male residents are involved in distributions and receive equal pay for the same work.**

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Consult women on what arrangements – childcare, transport, lodgings, etc. - would need to be in place for them to work on distribution campaigns.</i>	<i>[Representative %] of all distribution staff are women</i>

- 5. Women, girls, boys and men have equal access to all food-for-work (FFW), food-for-training (FFT), take-home-rations (THR) and supplementary feeding initiatives**

Sample Activity	Sample Indicator
<i>Routinely collect, analyse and report sex- and age-disaggregated data on FFW, FFT, THR and supplementary feeding initiatives.</i>	<i>All data on FFW, FFT, THR and supplementary feeding initiatives is disaggregated by sex and age</i>

For more information on the **Gender Marker** go to [www.onereponse.info](http://www.onereponse.info)

For more information on Food Security (Distribution), see **The Sphere Handbook 2011** and **WFP's Gender Policy 2009**

For the e-learning course on **"Increasing Effectiveness of Humanitarian Action for Women, Girls, Boys and Men"**, see [www.iasc-elearning.org](http://www.iasc-elearning.org)