



Evaluation of Gender Equality Policy 2013-2016 in Iceland's International Development Cooperation

Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Iceland
Final Report

prepared by

IPE **TRIPLELINE** 
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List of acronyms

CSO	civil society organisation
CPD	Commission on Population and Development
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
Danida	Danish development cooperation
FGM	female genital mutilation
GAP	Gender Action Plan
HQ	headquarters
HRBA	human rights based approach
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IDA	International Development Association
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
MHTF	Maternal Health Thematic Fund
MHM	menstrual hygiene management
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
NAP	national action plan
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PSS	psycho-social support
QAFMP	Quality Assurance for Fish Marketing Project
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
SRHR	sexual and reproductive health and rights
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TOR	terms of reference
UFGE	Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNU-GEST	United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training programme
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
W&S	water and sanitation
WBG	World Bank Group
WFP	World Food Programme
YMEP	Young Men as Equal Partners

Executive summary

In spring 2017 Iceland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) commissioned an 'Evaluation of the Gender Equality Policy in Iceland's International Development Cooperation'. The evaluation was carried out by IPE/Triple Line. The team was led by Dr. Sarah Forti (Critical Rights & Gender Consult, DK) and composed of Ms. Karin Tang and Ms. Rebecca Gordon (IPE/ Triple Line, UK).

The objective of the evaluation is to respond to the following overall key questions:

- ≡ What **results** has the MFA's policy for 'Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Cooperation' achieved with regards to promoting gender equality, mainstreaming and women's empowerment, and what have been the main challenges?
- ≡ How can the MFA **further strengthen its work in development cooperation on gender equality and women's empowerment**, specifically in relation to poverty reduction and promotion of human rights? What specific tools and actions can be deployed for this purpose?

These overarching evaluation questions involve understanding, at a more detailed level:

- ≡ **To what extent does Iceland 'walk the talk'?** Where are the gaps? How can improvement be made both at programmatic and organisational level?

Objectives and methodology

The evaluation has both a summative and formative scope with forward-looking recommendations emphasising the formative scope. Methods for data collection have included:

- ≡ Document review;
- ≡ Key informant interviews and focus group discussions;
- ≡ Field missions in Malawi and Uganda;
- ≡ Online survey; and
- ≡ Benchmarking comparison.

The evaluation's analytical approach comprises two core methodologies for gender analysis, i) an adapted 'gender quadrants of change' analytical tool, within ii) a gender justice framework. The evaluation's inception report presented the analytical matrix with detailed evaluation questions.

At conceptual level, Iceland's gender policy relates the concept of gender equality to human rights and has an innovative focus on men. When the gender policy was conceived, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were considered the basic point of reference for Iceland's development cooperation. Within the MDGs, maternal health and girls' education were the key thematic areas. Although Iceland's gender policy largely focused on addressing these themes through bilateral cooperation, support to gender equality thematic areas has also extended to multilateral organisations such as the United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training programme (UNU-GEST) and UN Women. Iceland has built strong partnerships both at bilateral and multilateral level with key pro-gender equality partners.

Background

According to the 2016 OECD/DAC Report, in 2015, Iceland delivered USD 39 million in net ODA, which represented 0.24% of its gross national income (GNI) and an 11.3% increase in real terms from 2014. Furthermore, Iceland is committed to achieving 0.7% ODA/GNI, and this commitment has been accompanied by an increase in official development assistance (ODA), both in terms of volume and as a share of GNI since 2012. Iceland is the 17th largest Development Assistance Committee (DAC) provider in terms of ODA as a percentage of GNI, and the 28th in terms of volume. Iceland untied 100% of its ODA (excluding administrative costs and in-donor refugee costs) in 2014, compared to the DAC average

of 80.6%. Its ODA was also fully untied in 2013 and 2012. The grant element of total ODA was 100% in 2014. Figure 0.1 provides a broad overview of Iceland's ODA volume from 1999 to 2015.

Figure 0.1: Net ODA – trends in volume and as a share of GNI, 1999 – 2015, Iceland



Evaluation results

The evaluation has found results at multilateral and bilateral level as follows:

Results achieved from multilateral support and partnership

Iceland's global advocacy work on gender equality has included the following aspects:

- ≡ Iceland's approach has focused on a clearly defined choice of multilateral agencies that either promote gender equality as their core mandate or have a clear gender equality policy. This has been the basis for Iceland's screening of multilateral agencies and the main justification for their choice and selection.
- ≡ Building strong partnership with gender equality and women's rights oriented multilateral organisations such as UN Women – providing both financial support and technical assistance. Iceland is one of the biggest donors to UN Women, per capita.
- ≡ With other multilateral organisations such as World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, some of which Iceland supports with core funding and earmarked funding (including country programmes and humanitarian aid), Iceland consistently emphasises the importance of implementing their gender policies and strategies at board meeting level.¹
- ≡ Iceland's global advocacy on gender equality was particularly visible on the HeForShe campaign², SDG negotiations and IDA18 negotiations where Iceland consistently addressed the importance of high aspirations regarding gender equality as a prerequisite for reaching the SDGs.³

Furthermore, Iceland has been visibly and actively advocating for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and vulnerable people in UN intergovernmental fora, such as the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This political support, individually and as part of broader constituencies, has helped to advance the mandates and priorities of UN agencies such as UN

¹ See for example, gender statement UNDP EB Board meeting

² Further analysed in the section below related to UN Women.

³ See IDA 18 Talking Points.

Women and UNFPA in various UN platforms. This has included issues such as SRHR, maternal health, gender-based violence, and the rights and needs of women and young people, including adolescent girls. Although Iceland's gender policy did not include a specific strategy on how to work with multilateral organisations on gender equality, Iceland has nevertheless had a visible contribution to gender equality at multilateral level.

Results achieved through bilateral support

At bilateral level, there is clear and documentable evidence of results achieved. In the water and sanitation and maternal health sectors, key results have been achieved in meeting women's practical needs, and improving access to basic social services and rights. In the education sector, support to keeping girls at school has fulfilled both their practical needs for material and practical conditions to access school as well as their strategic interests in opening up new opportunities for a better future. Gender results at bilateral level are thus mainly situated at the micro level, in terms of changes to access to and quality of social services (water and sanitation, maternal health and education). At the individual level, these have addressed women's and girls' practical needs and basic social rights, in some cases clearly saving lives. Results at the individual level related to women's strategic interests could be identified to a more limited extent within education.

Because the gender focus of Iceland's bilateral country programme is enshrined in the MDGs and essentially focuses on increasing women's and girls' access to basic social services, results in terms of strategic interests and transformative structural changes for women and girls are, as expected, more limited. To bring about strategic and transformative gender results, the focus on the fulfilment of women's basic social needs and rights would need to be complemented with other priorities addressing the contextual socio-cultural barriers women and girls face on the path to gender equality. Social services and rights are certainly fundamental, but insufficient to fully address the complexity of root causes that maintain women and girls within socio-economic and cultural inequalities. Women's strategic interests include their economic empowerment and changes to the (formal and informal) normative systems in which gender inequalities remain cemented in practice and violations of women's human rights are still legitimised in many socio-cultural contexts. This is why the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have taken a much broader and holistic approach, compared with the MDGs, to addressing gender equality, with a particular focus on women's human rights.

Although Iceland does not have an explicit human rights based approach (HRBA) in its Gender Equality Policy as such, there are nevertheless interesting elements of an HRBA that are clearly identifiable at the bilateral level. Iceland's work across sectors, with both rights holders as beneficiaries of the infrastructures built at community level and with the duty bearers in the regional administrations, has been praised by most partners. Iceland has come a long way in using genuine participatory approaches in its development cooperation and distinguishes itself amongst donors for its 'hands-off' style, very much promoting full ownership at local authority level. Thus, Icelandic cooperation is already, to some extent, implicitly working with key HRBA principles of participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency.

The operationalisation of the gender policy across priority sectors, has, in practice, resulted in the increased participation of women (*representation*) in improved social services (water and sanitation, education and health); attention to their special needs in the alleviation of their domestic burdens (*recognition*) such as the long distances women have to walk to fetch water, to give birth or to go to school. The more limited aspect of gender justice related results is that of the *redistribution of power and resources* which this evaluation has only been able to evidence with the increased representation of women at decision making level in the water and sanitation committees.

As well as thematic limitations within the MDG framework, Iceland's operationalisation of its gender policy has faced challenges commonly found across a number of evaluations of multilateral and bilateral gender policies. These have repeatedly demonstrated that the gender mainstreaming approach in vogue within

international development from the mid-nineties (post-Beijing) onwards has insufficiently targeted outcome and impact level in terms of 'gender transformational changes'. Rather, it largely focused either on including non-specific gender mainstreaming standard paragraphs in project documents or on output level results such as the quantitative participation of women in development projects and sex disaggregation of data.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this leaves Iceland with a solid basis from which to pursue and target specific gender equality outcomes, impacts and transformational changes both at multilateral and bilateral level, as well as strengthening synergies and coherence across all its various channels of support for gender equality. This would require engaging in an overall process of reflection to develop a full gender theory of change as part of the formulation process of the new gender policy. This would help to determine the vision, overall impact and specific outcomes targeted in relation to the SDGs as well as to assess the relevant risks and assumptions. This process requires consideration and careful balancing of a number of dimensions:

- ≡ At conceptual level, there is a good foundation and a clear opportunity for a) closer integration of human rights and gender equality through an explicit and combined human rights based approach and b) a broadening of gender thematic focus areas within the new SDG framework.
- ≡ Iceland's added value (documented results) achieved so far needs to be maintained and possibly deepened and replicated.
- ≡ These documented results need to be complemented with other gender thematic areas considering women's strategic interests such as women's economic empowerment and other SDG 5 targets.
- ≡ Strengthening the linkages and coherence between Iceland's different areas of support would contribute to maximising gender results.

At organisational level, there seems to be a good awareness of the Gender Equality Policy, and generally staff feel engaged with it and have used it in their work. Perceptions of leadership on gender equality within the organisation were, on the other hand, mixed. Overall, a lack of leadership and training seemed to be the key barriers for most staff to fulfilling gender equality objectives at organisational level.

- ≡ Scope for improvement was also identified in the frequency and level of gender analysis in programming and in performance monitoring and reporting on gender equality as well as the need for gender-specific outcome indicators.
- ≡ Finally, better resource allocation for gender equality was strongly highlighted.

Evaluation recommendations

Recommendations for policy and programmes

The evaluation's overall recommendations for gender policy making and programming respond to the following question and requirements:

- ≡ How can the MFA **further strengthen its work in development cooperation on gender equality and women's empowerment**, specifically in relation to poverty reduction and promotion of human rights? What specific tools and actions can be deployed for this purpose?
- ≡ Recommend **practical means for increasing the gender equality focus** of current and future programme policies, plans and activities, to more effectively address disadvantaged women's practical and strategic needs and priorities, gender equality, women's rights and male roles and masculinities in particular with reference to poverty reduction.

- ≡ Provide **practical and actionable recommendations** to further evolve and improve work on gender equality in development cooperation and provide input to a new Gender Equality Policy for Iceland's international development cooperation.

Policy recommendations

1. **For the design of the new gender policy, it is recommended that either Iceland's MFA as a whole or the Directorate of International Development Cooperation, engage in a full theory of change process and exercise to define its objectives, impact and outcomes related to gender equality and women's human rights within the framework provided by the SDGs. It is recommended that Iceland follows clear and already well developed Theory of Change guidelines, such as for example, the theory of change guidelines developed for the UN, which could be easily adapted to match Iceland's needs.**⁴

This could provide the basis for the preparation of a *strategic gender framework* and could be structured as follows:

- ≡ a first part describing the MFA's vision and overall expected impact with regard to gender equality and women's rights;
 - ≡ the definition of an effective approach such as, for example, an HRBA and a focus on women's human rights as targeted by the SDGs;
 - ≡ a definition and interpretation of gender equality specifying the gender related concepts Iceland is keen to work with and deepen in its multilateral and bilateral development cooperation. From the evaluation's findings, the gender related concepts that would be interesting to continue and/or to further explore would be: gender equality, gender justice, women's human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's economic rights and male roles and masculinities;
2. **The new strategic plan could incorporate the idea of a results-based framework working on a few key strategic gender outcomes that Iceland wishes to target specifically that relate to the SDGs. Under Monitoring and evaluation section below, some suggestions for SDGs indicators that could fit current programmes are highlighted.**

Integrating gender equality strategically where most relevant and where Iceland could have a particular added value would be a basis for focusing resources, thereby avoiding the standard and unspecific gender paragraphs found in programming documents.

In terms of possible gender strategic outcomes, beyond integrating gender equality in the sectors currently supported, Iceland's MFA, could consider further developing the following strategic gender outcomes which relate to SDG targets:

- ≡ **Women's economic rights** – including access to formal employment markets; ending labour exploitation; equal pay; redistribution of economic resources between women and men; further development of corporate social responsibility in women's rights; further development of human rights and business principles related to gender equality. This strategic area is a niche in which Iceland already has a comparative advantage at global level on the issue of 'equal pay'. This is also an area which is increasingly being addressed in light of an emphasis on trade and the private sector which needs to be balanced with an HRBA to ensure inclusive and equitable economic growth – and the equitable redistribution on resources between women and men. It could be deepened and further consolidated to ensure women's rights are duly respected and protected. For example, support to specific multilateral programmes could build on current partnerships with, for instance, UN Women and the World Bank as well as exploring

⁴ <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Theory-of-Change-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces.pdf>

relevant partnerships that focus specifically on women’s economic empowerment with, for example, the ILO, or UNDP’s new regional programme for sub-Saharan Africa on gender justice and economic empowerment. At bilateral level, all interventions within social sectors have shown a need for strengthening women’s economic empowerment and improving the distribution of resources. Specific activities related to access to women’s economic rights could be further integrated into bilateral programmes (these are included as specific recommendations in relevant sections of the report).

- ≡ A focus on **sexual and reproductive health and rights** (SRHR) should be continued at multilateral level and deepened at bilateral level with the special involvement of men and boys. A focus on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) could complement and deepen current work in SRHR.
- ≡ Given the increased number of women deployees sent by Iceland to conflict and post-conflict countries and the introductory training course provided on UNSCR 1325, the focus on **women’s active roles in conflict and post conflict situations** is an important initiative which needs to be strengthened and deepened at training and programmatic level (including seeking more programming opportunities with different academic and multilateral partners such as UN agencies). This should be supported with documentable evidence and measurable outcome indicators.

In sum, without unrealistically expanding the thematic gender focus too broadly and spreading resources too thinly (a legitimate concern) the evaluation team believes Iceland could make a difference on these strategic areas beyond the development sectors currently supported, thereby deepening results and impact as well as further substantiating its contribution to gender equality and women’s human rights.

Monitoring and evaluation

3. **It is recommended that gender outcomes and indicators in the new gender strategic framework are well defined, measurable, impact oriented and closely related to SDG targets and indicators.**

Gender is often integrated in a standard paragraph under cross-cutting issues both in the programme documents and M&E / evaluation reports. There is thus great potential for upgrading, reviewing, expanding and deepening the quality of gender objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators across the programme cycle (design, appraisal, mid-term review and evaluation). Specific questionnaires and monitoring tools at field level would also need to be developed or revised accordingly. This could be undertaken together with the preparation of the new gender strategic framework and the SDG framework, to ensure a consistent and coherently integrated M&E section.

In relation to Iceland’s current programming the following example of indicators could be considered:

Sustainable Development Goals & indicators

-
- 1** **End poverty in all its forms everywhere**
 - 1.4.1 Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services
-
- 3** **Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**
 - 3.1.1 Maternal mortality ratio
 - 3.1.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
 - 3.2.1 Under-five mortality rate
 - 3.2.2 Neonatal mortality rate

- 3.7.1 Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods
- 3.7.2 Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group

4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- 4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people:(a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and(c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and(ii) mathematics, by sex
- 4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict- affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
- 4.a.1 Proportion of schools with access to:(a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single- sex basic sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)

5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

- 5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

- 6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, by sex, age and location
- 6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water, by sex, age and location

In relation to areas of intervention that the new gender policy could consider deepening such as Women’s economic rights, SRHR and women’s active roles in conflict and post conflict situations the following SDG targets and indicators could be further considered and discussed within the Theory of Change exercise:

Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators

5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

<p>Target 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences</p>	<p>5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care</p>
<p>Target 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as</p>	<p>5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of</p>

access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure
Target 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex
8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	
Target 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex
Target 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	
Target 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age 16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause 16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months 16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live
Target 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation 16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18

<p>Target 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</p>	<p>16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions</p> <p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p>
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Recommendations for training and organisational strategies and options

The recommendations below address the specific terms of reference (TOR) requirement:

- ≡ To **recommend a training strategy** to improve understanding of all MFA staff in development cooperation and partners, to facilitate improved implementation of gender mainstreaming in all programme areas.

Proposed training strategy outline

4. **Following the formulation of the new gender strategic framework, it is recommended that a gender training strategy for all MFA staff be articulated around two components as follows:**

- ≡ Training modules based and structured around Iceland's new gender equality policy, women's human rights and the SDG strategic framework. The training should be further divided into:
 - a conceptual part ensuring a common understanding and adherence to Iceland's vision and definition of key gender related concepts, SDGs and selected implementing approaches across all MFA's departments;
 - an operational part relating to thematic priorities /sectors to ensure common skills are acquired in the implementation of the new gender strategic framework. This should integrate case studies from actual implementation experience. The point of such training would be to make it as practical and as tailor-made as possible with solid ownership amongst all MFA staff and departments, ensuring a common understanding, adherence and implementation incentive straight from the start.
- ≡ To complement the first component, the second component could provide opportunities for all staff to have access and exposure to further external training related to gender equality (as relevant to the specificities of each department's work) that could act as an organisational incentive as well as upgrading individual skills. In this respect, and in line with the internal training budget available, staff should be encouraged to search for external training with international organisations as well as local gender and human rights NGOs that could be of interest to them in furthering their knowledge and improving implementation.

An adequate budget should be set aside for all MFA staff to explore gender training courses provided by key partners such as UN Women and UNU-GEST.

5. With regard to Iceland's gender training of external partners, there are further synergies and opportunities between UNU-GEST and Icelandic bilateral cooperation at the country level that can be explored to strengthen coordination on the following aspects:

- ≡ the selection of partners to be trained – this selection could focus both on junior and promising trainees as well as on senior management to work with staff who might be more reluctant to fully absorb gender related concepts;
- ≡ the length of the training – which could be shortened to two /three weeks to avoid draining scarce resources from local authorities, or to allow for more opportunities for training;
- ≡ the follow up after the course – which could be detailed into an action plan with the allocated budgetary resources for each trainee factored into Iceland's country programme budget;
- ≡ pre-departure agreement that the knowledge acquired will be effectively used to the benefit of Iceland's objectives for achieving gender outcomes either at bilateral or multilateral level.

Organisational recommendations

6. There is a need to engage in further internal reflection and discuss different organisational set up options stemming from the benchmarking and survey results as part of the reflection process on the new gender policy.

- ≡ In the evaluation team's view, the most pragmatic option would be for gender equality to be strengthened, consolidated and coherent at leadership level first and foremost. This could then be complemented by a system of rotating gender focal points in all departments of the MFA.
- ≡ The responsibilities of the gender focal points would need to have clear terms of reference and form a part of the staff member's individual competence framework that is evaluated every year. In this way, the MFA can avoid the risk that gender is isolated in a possibly costly 'gender unit'. Instead, gender becomes part of the shared knowledge that all MFA staff (given appropriate training), men and women, would fully engage with in their work.
- ≡ Last but not least, adequate and clearly earmarked gender related resources would need to be allocated both at programming and organisational level.

In conclusion, all general recommendations above, in conjunction with the specific recommendations and lessons in the different sections of the report, need to be further discussed within the MFA. A first step towards this end materialised in the Evaluation seminar session held in October 2017 which marked the conclusion of this evaluation process but the beginning of Iceland's internal process for the formulation of the new gender policy and strategic framework or possibly gender section within the MFA's new development policy..

1 Introduction

This 'Evaluation of the Gender Equality Policy in Iceland's International Development Cooperation' began in April 2017. This Report brings together the key findings from the consultation phase of the evaluation, based on the approach and methodology presented in the technical proposal and the inception report submitted to and approved by the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in May 2017.

During the inception phase, the Team Leader visited Iceland to conduct kick-off meetings with the MFA to clarify its priority needs for the evaluation; refine the evaluation approach and methodology; gather and collate evaluation documentation and stakeholder lists; and finalise the programme and logistics for field visits to Malawi and Uganda.

The data collection process began with the two field visits to Malawi and Uganda in May and June 2017. At the same time desk work started on a benchmarking exercise to provide a comparative assessment of the gender policies of other bilateral donors; and desk-based case studies to supplement the field visits, on Iceland's support to Mozambique and the Icelandic Red Cross.

In June 2017, an online survey was designed, refined together with the MFA and launched in early August.

Data collection has been supplemented by various Skype interviews and study of available documentation covering advocacy and public relations, multilateral engagement and humanitarian cooperation.

As the evaluation has both a summative and, more importantly, a formative scope, the report incorporates detailed, specific and actionable recommendations for each section and unit of analysis; as well as suggestions for more general and actionable policy level recommendations in Section 8.

2 Objectives and methodology

This section presents the objectives and overview of the methodology employed.

2.1 Objectives

The objective of the evaluation is to respond to the following overall key questions:

- ≡ What **results** has the MFA's policy for 'Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-operation' achieved with regards to promoting gender equality, mainstreaming and women's empowerment, and what have been the main challenges?
- ≡ How can the MFA **further strengthen its work in development cooperation on gender equality and women's empowerment**, specifically in relation to poverty reduction and promotion of human rights? What specific tools and actions can be deployed for this purpose?

These overarching evaluation questions involve understanding, at a more detailed level:

- ≡ **To what extent does Iceland 'walk the talk'?** Where are the gaps? How can improvement be made both at programmatic and organisational level?

The evaluation has both a summative and formative scope as follows:

Summative scope

- ≡ To provide an evaluation of the **results** of the MFA's policy on 'Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-operation', and related institutional mechanisms and processes.
- ≡ To review and analyse Iceland's gender engagement in multilateral development cooperation, bilateral development programmes and projects, peace building activities and humanitarian aid with reference to **gender equality and women's empowerment**.

Formative scope

- ≡ To recommend **practical means for increasing the gender equality focus** of current and future programme policies, plans and activities, to more effectively address disadvantaged women's practical and strategic needs and priorities, gender equality, women's rights and male roles and masculinities in particular with reference to poverty reduction.
- ≡ To recommend a **training strategy to improve understanding of all MFA staff** and partners in development cooperation, to facilitate improved implementation of gender mainstreaming in all programme areas.
- ≡ To provide **practical and actionable recommendations** to further evolve and improve work on gender equality in development cooperation and provide input to a new gender equality policy for Iceland's international development cooperation.
- ≡ To conduct a **workshop and a seminar** in Iceland for the MFA's Directorate of International Development Cooperation and other development practitioners where the results and recommendations of the evaluation are presented and discussed.

2.2 Data collection methods

Methods for data collection were undertaken as follows

- ≡ Document review
- ≡ Key informant interviews and focus group discussions
- ≡ Field missions in Malawi and Uganda
- ≡ Online survey
- ≡ Benchmarking comparison

2.3 Analytical methods

The evaluation's analytical approach comprised two core methodologies for gender analysis i) an adapted 'gender quadrants of change' analytical tool, within ii) a gender justice framework (see below).

Adapted gender quadrants of change

The evaluation applies an analytical tool inspired by and adapted from the UNDP Gender@work quadrants of change⁵, which seeks to identify gender equality related changes and effects at i) the individual level and ii) the systemic level.

At the individual level, evidence of gender related changes and effects on knowledge, awareness and behaviour is identified and analysed as well as changes and effects in terms of gender equality in access to and control of resources and services.

At the systemic level, evidence of gender related changes and effects is identified and analysed in informal cultural norms and deep structures, and evidence of changes in formal structures such as policies, laws and institutional arrangements. These effects prepare the ground, collecting and analysing data, for an analytical categorisation of effects and impact identified relating to the gender justice framework as shown in Figure 2.1.

⁵ UNDP (2015) 'Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment', <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/thematic/gender.shtml>

Figure 2.1: Adapted quadrants of change

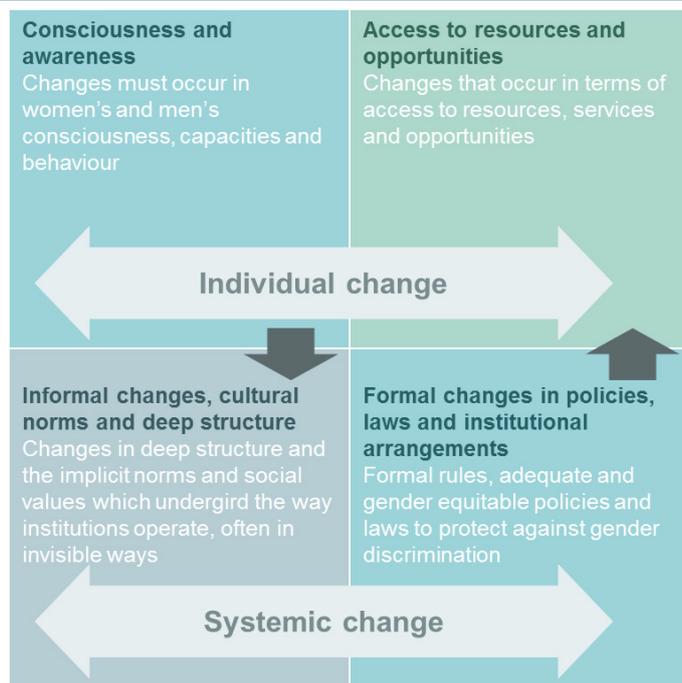
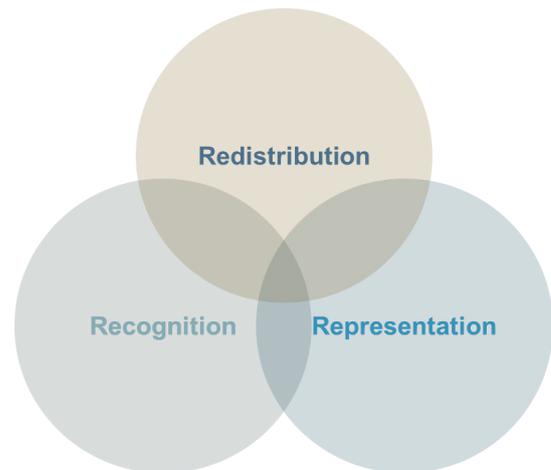


Figure 2.2: Gender justice framework



Gender justice framework

The gender justice framework is utilised to explore the possibility of a higher categorisation of results and impact identified through the quadrants of change tool in order to guide and orient recommendations for future policy design. The analytical tool thus seeks to categorise the gender *effects* within the three elements of the gender justice framework: gender equality in **representation** (equality in participation of women and men), **recognition** (of specific gender related problematic areas) and **redistribution** (of services and resources) (Figure 2.2).

An overview of the gender justice categorisation of results is presented in the evaluation report.⁶

⁶ The justice framework is based on John Rawls, A Theory of Justice' and Nancy Frasers' Scale of Justice. It was later reflected in Danida Strategic Framework on Gender Equality, Rights and Diversity (2014) as it was particularly useful in light of Danida new results-framework matrixes focusing on measuring impact and outcome level changes, to document effects in this way beyond outputs and quantitative participation of women in development processes.

3 Gender Equality Policy context

This section presents and discusses the gender related concepts and approaches applied in Iceland's Gender Equality Policy as well as the key lessons from the benchmarking exercise.

3.1 Overview of Iceland's Gender Equality Policy for Development Cooperation

Gender equality is set as a priority in Icelandic development cooperation and a specific objective of the 'Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation 2013-2016'. The gender policy, 'Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-Operation'⁷ (2013) (hereafter the Gender Equality Policy) defines gender equality as 'a basic human right' and as equality in 'status, opportunities and rights of men and women in the community'.⁸

The vision of gender equality in Icelandic development cooperation is based first and foremost on Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): 'Each individual is entitled to equal rights, opportunities and dignity.' Furthermore, it is also based on the assumption that gender equality is a prerequisite for progress and development, thus supporting economic development.⁹

Gender equality is considered a universal human right that transcends cultural relativist perspectives:

For the most part, women are less independent, have more limited means and less power to take decisions that affect their lives and their society. It is important to give consideration to different cultures but not to allow traditions to serve as an excuse for oppression of women and to exclude them from power.¹⁰

Iceland, in its gender policy, further places a conceptual emphasis on the participation of men and boys as follows:

It is important that men and boys, just as women and girls, are aware of and challenge traditional gender stereotypical assumptions and roles. Furthermore, there is a widespread need to raise awareness among the general public of the fact that women's participation in all walks of life boosts prosperity and does not come at the expense of men.¹¹

Iceland's 2013 Gender Equality Policy was framed in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which have set the agenda for Iceland's development cooperation. MDG5, to improve maternal health, and MDG3, in particular related to girls' access to education and decision making, have indeed been the major focus in Iceland's bilateral cooperation.

As an approach to the implementation of gender equality, Iceland's Gender Equality Policy underlines that 'gender equality and women's empowerment are both cross-cutting issues and a specific objective'. The strategy thus applies a two-pronged approach through i) gender mainstreaming and ii) specific measures. In practice, this implies that: i) 'all development projects and cooperation ventures should be analysed with regard to gender equality and a concerted effort is made to involve both women and men in decision-making and implementation' and also that ii) 'Iceland supports specific projects, funds and

⁷ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Icelandic International Development Agency, Gender Equality in Iceland's international Development Co-Operation⁷ (2013)

⁸ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Icelandic International Development Agency, Gender Equality in Iceland's international Development Co-Operation (2013):4

⁹ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Icelandic International Development Agency, Gender Equality in Iceland's international Development Co-Operation (2013):3

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Icelandic International Development Agency, Gender Equality in Iceland's international Development Co-Operation (2013):4

organisations whose primary objective is to promote and increase gender equality and women's empowerment'.¹²

The Gender Equality Policy then further specifies its gender related commitments within selected key sectors and areas of its development work as follows.

Education

The equal right of girls and boys, women and men to education is considered a fundamental human right and addressed as such in MDG 2, which commits countries to work towards achieving gender balance in primary education and gender equality at all levels of education. To this end, Iceland emphasises education of girls and women to improve their standards of living and, through multiplier effects, generate future socio-economic benefits.¹³

The Government of Iceland has thus promoted education for boys and girls alike. In its bilateral cooperation, it has focused on accessibility of education including construction and renovation of school buildings (e.g. classrooms, dormitories and kitchens) as well as the quality of education with the provision of school materials and extracurricular facilities. Further, Iceland has focused on providing illiterate adult women with opportunities to learn to read and write and acquire practical education. At multilateral level, Iceland has contributed to international organisations such as UNICEF with core funding and support to projects under their direction.

Health

Iceland views general public health as a prerequisite for development, and access to basic health care services as a right for every person. Iceland has thus focused on constructing facilities and providing training for health care personnel. Iceland has placed a special emphasis on women's sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. The rights of young mothers who are especially at risk through lack of access to contraceptives has been, at times, part of the focus at multilateral level through support to UNFPA's programmes on women's rights, and maternal and neonatal health.

Water & sanitation

Related to health, Iceland has also focused on access to fresh, uncontaminated water as fundamental for life and well-being, and for protection against diseases. Iceland has focused on constructing suitable water pumps, sewage and sanitary facilities, thereby facilitating women's domestic chores and saving time as they are mainly responsible for fetching water and household hygiene. As a ripple effect and as a result of time saved, there is some evidence of better health, increased opportunities for women to earn an income and for girls to attend school in a timely manner: in terms of bilateral cooperation, this has been observed during the field visit to Malawi.

Natural resources, energy and the environment

Support to this area has 'long been directed specifically towards those areas of the fishing sector that employ men while women's work and stakes have often received limited attention'. Iceland has 'striven to bring special attention in the planning of development projects in the field of fisheries to ensure that both women and men benefit from new opportunities and improve their earnings'.¹⁴ Programmes include Iceland's long-term cooperation with Norway in Mozambique to provide support to the fisheries sector

¹²The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Icelandic International Development Agency, Gender Equality in Iceland's international Development Co-Operation (2013):5

¹³ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Icelandic International Development Agency, Gender Equality in Iceland's international Development Co-Operation (2013)

¹⁴ The Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Icelandic International Development Agency, Gender Equality in Iceland's international Development Co-Operation (2013)

(see further Section 4.4) as well as the Support to Quality Assurance for Fish Marketing Project (QAFMP) in Uganda.

Energy is another focus area for Iceland. As women are generally responsible for cooking and spend much of their time in the home with their children, they are at particular risk from air pollution. In the schools visited in Uganda, the energy saving stoves clearly provided the newly constructed kitchens with improved living conditions for school staff. This is both from increased access to energy and through reduced pollution, as well as contributing to greater food security for children in schools – indirectly addressing the issue of concentration and quality of study. More generally, the main focus on energy has traditionally concentrated on geothermal exploration and training with, so far, limited gender focus.

Women, peace and security

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has adopted four resolutions that support the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325. Iceland is among the countries to have prepared a national action plan (NAP) for the implementation of Resolution 1325 (in 2008). The Government of Iceland has supported and provided a brief introductory gender training to those deployed in conflict and post conflict areas. This aimed at protecting women's rights in conflict areas and in fragile situations, and increasing their involvement in formal peace-building. Nevertheless, for the training to have tangible and measurable effects beyond providing a general overview, it would need to be further elaborated with practical application tools for employees to use during their deployment. Protection against sexual violence and support for survivors of violence is similarly an important aspect of Iceland's work in conflict areas. Iceland's new programme with UN Women in Mozambique focuses entirely on support for the implementation of Mozambique's NAP (see Section 4.4). As yet, it is too early to measure effects.

In conclusion, the main focus for Iceland's gender policy has been the MDGs which were considered the basic point of reference for Iceland's development cooperation. Within the MDGs, maternal health and girls' education were key thematic areas. Although Iceland's gender policy largely focused on the above themes in its bilateral cooperation, Iceland also supported gender equality in multilateral organisations such as the United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training programme (UNU-GEST) and has built strong partnerships, such as the partnership with UN Women discussed in Section 5.

3.2 Iceland's gender policy in context: Overview of benchmarking study

The benchmarking study (primarily desk-based) looked in brief at the gender equality policies and performance of four bilateral donors with the objective of understanding a little about how Iceland is performing relative to its peers, and identifying lessons that are relevant for Iceland as it takes its gender policy forward.

The candidates for the benchmarking were chosen purposively, from those bilateral donors whose budgets are modest, whose priority sectors and countries resemble those of Iceland, and who have in some way been recognised as leaders in gender equality and women's empowerment. The four selected were Denmark, Ireland, Norway and Sweden. The key policy documents were:

- ≡ **Denmark:** Strategic Framework for Gender Equality, Rights & Diversity in Danish Development Cooperation (2014), Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Danida
- ≡ **Ireland:** Gender Equality Policy (2004), Development Cooperation Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs
- ≡ **Norway:** Freedom, empowerment and opportunities. Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy 2016-2020 (2016), Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- ≡ **Sweden:** Policy framework for Swedish development cooperation and humanitarian assistance (2016)¹⁵, Government of Sweden

3.2.1 Summary of findings

The analysis highlighted some strong examples of policy and programming for gender equality; as well as a common gap in terms of seeing this commitment through to delivery, and monitoring and reporting on gender results. The common theme is that, in the face of diverse challenges and constraints to implementation, gender is seen as a competing priority (at least in terms of human and financial resources).

All donors have framed their commitment to gender within a rights framework; and all have their own obligations in terms of a NAP on 1325. As the rights agenda has come to the fore, the salience of gender mainstreaming appears to have waned although it remains in place with all donors.

Of the four donors, all except Norway increased their allocation to gender, as a share of overall development assistance, over the 2011-15 period. Norway's reduction came in the face of significant competing priorities (refugee crisis, falling oil price), as well as the ending of a pilot programme of support to embassies which had succeeded in catalysing gender spending.

The key findings from across the study are as follows:

- ≡ **Effective implementation starts with a consistent gender framework** across the organisation (from HQ through to country-level) and across the development assistance programme. This needs to be underpinned by clear guidance for programming and project managers. Denmark has set a strong example of this with its gender policy embedded in a human rights based approach; Ireland has succeeded in mainstreaming gender through Country Strategy Papers; and Norway has identified three clear criteria for identifying policy priorities, of which the first relates to gender.
- ≡ All donors sought to **frame their approach to gender within their own niche or area of comparative advantage**. This helps to consolidate effort, thereby strengthening results. In Denmark, this has been the human rights based approach; Ireland has focused on gender-based violence; Sweden is a leader in gender mainstreaming.
- ≡ Gender mainstreaming objectives need to be reflected in appropriate allocation of human resources: **integration of gender as a cross-cutting issue depends on gender expertise at both ministry and embassy level**. In Denmark a 'Team Gender' at ministry level has been working through a global network of gender focal points at embassies and representations; Ireland created a network of gender experts at headquarters and embassy level. However, Denmark and Norway have both seen recent decreases in specialised and experienced staff.
- ≡ While the donors have had mixed results in terms of implementing the overall gender policy at country level, Norway implemented a **pilot programme targeting resources and technical support for gender work at embassy level**. This has provided a strong model for an integrated gender approach at country level, underpinned by dedicated financial and human resources. The pilot demonstrated results in terms of increased spending on gender and mobilising local actors around policy reform.
- ≡ In Sweden, a cost-effective means of strengthening gender capacity has been the provision of **on-call specialist expertise** through an outsourced helpdesk function.

¹⁵ Since 2015, gender policy – previously a standalone SIDA policy – has been part of Sweden's Policy for Global Development

3.2.2 Iceland in comparison

The benchmarking study has highlighted a number of common themes among other bilateral donors, that are also shared with Iceland. These include availability of sufficient gender skills and expertise – both in terms of gender specialists and the gender understanding of programming and project staff generally; and gaps in gender monitoring and reporting at the project and country level. The findings of the study suggest that no donor has yet identified or devised an entirely satisfactory approach to filling these gaps, although there are several interesting initiatives that could be explored further.

The study also provides a context for considering where Iceland shows promising practice on gender, that other donors might learn from. Key among these are:

- ≡ Iceland's support for addressing male roles and masculinities as an entry point for strengthening gender equality, which is less in evidence among other donors. Iceland has championed UN Women's HeforShe campaign domestically and internationally. At country level, Iceland's partnership with the Red Cross in Malawi has sought to recruit boys as well as girls to be trained as peer educators under the HIV/Aids component, and a 'Young Men as Equal Partners' (YMEP) approach which targets young men as agents of change.
- ≡ In Mozambique, Iceland has demonstrated the scope for playing a catalytic role in mobilising UN Women's support to the NAP. This has combined i) ongoing, long-term engagement with development partners and government in governance processes to foster a more enabling environment for tackling gender issues with ii) dedicated strategic and technical assistance to UN Women to design and now implement the programme. Uniquely, Iceland is the only funder of the UN Women NAP programme in Mozambique, playing a niche role and providing an opportunity for very focused collaboration with UN Women.
- ≡ Mozambique has also provided a good example of how Iceland's partnership with UNU-GEST helps to build systemic in-country capacity: the embassy is working with graduates of UNU-GEST training to form a gender network within Mozambique as a platform for exchanging learning and sharing their experience. Seconded gender experts (currently with WFP) help to strengthen the network in-country.

3.2.3 Key lessons and conclusions

1. **There is a well-established body of work on approaches to ensuring gender equality in development cooperation**, through both mainstreaming and as an issue-based agenda. This includes conceptual frameworks such as the human rights based approach, technical tools and guidance, and the design and evaluation of a range of policy and programme approaches to gender equality. Much of this has been produced by the Nordic bilateral donors, with institutional structures and frameworks similar to those of Iceland. There is, therefore, much that Iceland can replicate, tailor and adopt, or at least learn from. Key organisational lessons include:
 - Availability of dedicated gender expertise at both ministry and country level, working within an integrated framework;
 - Where budgets do not allow for a gender cadre, Sweden's example of on-call gender expertise provides a potential alternative for accessing specialist advice;
 - The Norwegian embassies pilot holds the potential for substantial learning around a targeted initiative for integrating gender equality at country level. As well as the allocation of expert staff, this included targeted gender budgets and technical support for integration of gender in country programme planning (Ireland has focused on this also). This resulted in a notable increase in gender programming and funding.
2. **Other key donors have moved away from an emphasis on mainstreaming in favour of a more strategic rights based approach.** This is consistent with the shift in emphasis between the

MDGs and the SDGs in favour of a more strategic emphasis on human rights; and provides a more outcome-related approach that provides a strong steer and framework for policy making on gender.

3. **Each of the donors has sought to find a 'niche' on which to concentrate resources so as to maximise results.** Ireland has focused on gender-based violence, Denmark on the human rights based approach, and Sweden on gender mainstreaming and measurement. Effectiveness in these niche areas is underpinned by their salience within the domestic agenda which not only provides an indicator of a country's 'comparative advantage' but also of issue areas that are more likely to receive support domestically. As a champion of the HeforShe agenda, Iceland has an opportunity to build a niche in addressing male roles and masculinities, something that other donors have not yet substantially engaged in. The partnership with UN Women in support of implementation of the NAP in Mozambique also offers a potential niche.
4. For some donors, gender policy is not specific to the development agency or foreign ministry: instead of a gender equality policy for development cooperation, **development assistance is integrated with a national policy on gender equality.** This is the case in Sweden; and is de facto the case in Ireland where the current gender policy for Irish Aid dates from 2004 and has been superseded by a number of subsequent policies addressing specific issues related to gender equality. As Iceland has a strong domestic framework for gender, the MFA could further build on opportunities to integrate its gender policy for development assistance with this domestic framework. This would also support use of Iceland's areas of comparative advantage.
5. **The critical gap in delivering a gender equality policy lies in its implementation in-country.** All donors, while benefiting from strong policies and engagement at HQ level, appear to face challenges when it comes to translating them into action on the ground. This is for a range of reasons including the salience of the gender agenda with recipient governments or other implementing partners, limited resources or capacity among embassy staff, national systems that do not report sex disaggregated data. While strong policies exist, therefore, more attention and resources need to be focused on working out tailored, context-specific approaches and mechanisms for putting them into practice in different countries.

4 Gender equality in bilateral cooperation

The findings from the evaluation's review of Iceland's bilateral cooperation are set against the following key questions in the TOR:

- ≡ To provide an evaluation of the results of the MFA's policy on 'Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-operation', and related institutional mechanisms and processes.
- ≡ To review and analyse Iceland's gender engagement in multilateral development cooperation, **bilateral development programmes and projects**, with reference to gender equality and women's empowerment.

At bilateral cooperation level, this section focuses on key findings related to the two field missions to Malawi (May 2017) and Uganda (June 2017) and findings from a desk study of bilateral cooperation in Mozambique. These do not reflect an exhaustive analysis of all programmes at bilateral level in Malawi, Uganda and Mozambique. Rather, these programmes have been selected jointly with the MFA and the respective embassies and constitute therefore a purposive sample of Iceland's work with variable gender related results.

4.1 Malawi

The Malawi Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for the period 2012-16 outlines Iceland's strategy for development cooperation focusing its support on Mangochi District in the southern part of Malawi where the agency has long experience. Iceland has contributed funds and technical assistance to the District Council and enhanced its capacity to improve services to the population. The focus of the programme has been on social infrastructure related to public health, education and water and sanitation. The field visits focused on i) water and sanitation in Mtenje village, T/A Chimwala and ii) public health in Monkey Bay community hospital and the maternal health programme at Balamanja village and Chilonga maternal health centre.

4.1.1 Key findings

Support to water & sanitation

Participation of women in decision making processes

Iceland promoted and supported the increased quantitative participation of women in water management committees which provided support to the construction of water pumps. The support aimed at a minimum of 50 percent participation of women in the project document which reached 60 percent in practice in order to ensure women would have enough influence over decision making processes. Although there are no specific qualitative studies on the degree to which women actually influenced decision making at committee level, their quantitative majority has not systematically guaranteed women an influence in decision making. However, the field visit did find that where women constituted 100 percent of the water management committees, these were well maintained and effectively managed. This was an excellent example of full ownership of the water pump by women, using their own resources to maintain the pump, keeping it clean and well-functioning.

When the vast majority of those on duty to fetch water are women and girls, it makes good sense, in terms of relevance and representation, to have this reflected in the proportion of women at management level. The challenges, especially in some regions of Malawi, are of socio-cultural and religious nature. These factors essentially discourage women from becoming too visible in society and among roles which exercise decision making power. These factors encourage the confinement of women and girls to the domestic and reproductive sphere. As confirmed by other donor partners, such as the Red Cross also working in water and sanitation in the region, insisting on a minimum of 60 percent women's participation might not systematically yield the desired effects but, depending on the context, may still represent a significant advance, even if symbolic.

For instance, greater participation by women in decision making structures creates opportunities for women to participate and access decision making powers outside the domestic and reproductive sphere, and to have a say on issues that affect their daily lives and those of their entire families. Denser socio-cultural barriers to women’s participation makes such quotas even more relevant. In regions and villages in which women are purportedly excluded from participating in decision making processes, this quantitative indicator can become a major achievement in itself.

Notion of women /girls saving time

Iceland’s support to water and sanitation included a questionnaire on time saved as a result of the water pump construction. This is a relevant and significant initiative in order to begin to assess societal changes in gender relations and inequalities, especially in terms of freeing women’s time from domestic chores for them to be able to participate in the productive sphere. Although the notion of time might have been difficult to determine with precision, the questionnaire showed that on average 30 minutes were saved on a daily basis, thus making the water pump construction relevant and useful in potentially decreasing some of the time women spent on domestic chores.

Focus group discussions further showed that women could point out specific activities in which they could reinvest the saved time. Many said that this time was reinvested in other tasks on a long list of daily domestic chores and child rearing, though some also said that they could reinvest the time in increased income generating activities, thus indirectly benefitting their livelihood. Some young girls said that they were able to attend school in a timelier manner as a result of the water pump and the reduced distance and time spent fetching water. Beyond the positive health impact of access to clean water and the time saved, the important issue is to try to document such impacts which can contribute to societal changes.

Impact

Thus, the key ‘impact’ question for gender equality within the water and sanitation support is: what kind of changes at individual and systemic level could be identified?

Table 4.1: Summary of individual and systemic level change

Individual level		Systemic level	
Saving time leads to increased time for other domestic chores as well as businesses in some cases, and timelier school attendance for young girls.	Changes in access and rights to water resources have ripple effects on health standards of women, children and the entire community (little or no incidence of cholera or diarrhoea, reduced danger to women’s and girls’ health resulting from carrying heavy loads over long and potentially dangerous distance).	Institutional level changes – women’s participation in decision making on water committees (influence+ especially in all women committees).	Improved access to basic socio-economic rights.

In this case, the most evident concentration of results and effects is in the quantitative participation of women in the management of the water pump and in the access to a fundamental socio-economic right to water. To a lesser extent, but nevertheless significant, the support aimed at reducing the time women spent on domestic chores, which it did at the sites visited by an average of 30 minutes per day. As Figure 4.1 shows, from a gender justice perspective, the redistribution effects of power and resources is less

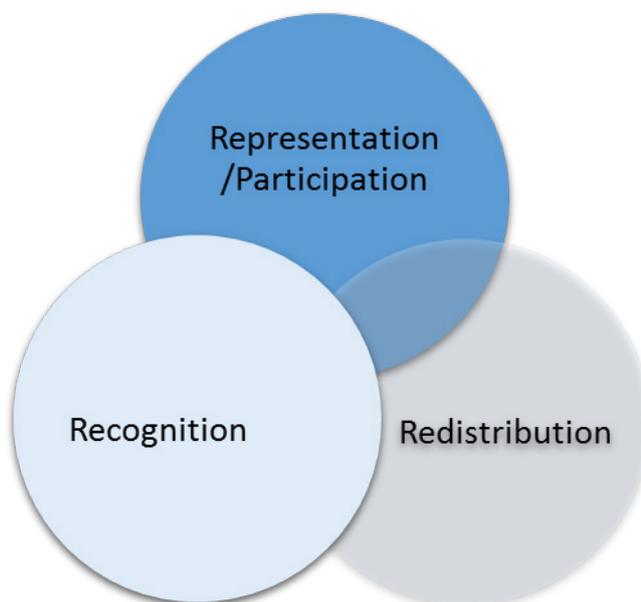
visible here (except for the increased decision-making at water committee level) and could be better addressed through the specific recommendations below.

Specific recommendations

The field visit demonstrated that there is clearly an opportunity to deepen questionnaires and monitoring tools beyond calculating the time saved to assess how, and in what activities, time was reinvested.

- ≡ To strengthen effects on redistribution of resources, specific activities for women's economic empowerment, access to income generation and development of innovative technologies could be further integrated as targets; new support could complement and boost impact on social services and living standards with equal participation of women and girls in income generating activities.
- ≡ To strengthen the redistribution of power effects, beyond the calculation of the percentage of women in water management committees, it would be interesting to analyse the extent to which women are actually influencing decisions.
- ≡ To go deeper into measuring the effects of women participating in decision making, it would be interesting to undertake comparative analyses in the different localities where Iceland is operating to assess what impact women's participation in decision making processes has had not only on the maintenance and good functioning of the water points but also on the quality of their lives, their individual sense of empowerment, and incentives to move beyond the reproductive sphere once such heavy chores such as water fetching are alleviated and time is saved.
- ≡ Finally, if the notion of male roles and masculinities would be further promoted it would be interesting to integrate specific sensitisation activities encouraging male participation in water fetching duties following the construction of water points, thereby furthering gender equality within the domestic sphere.

Figure 4.1: Gender justice in W&S, Malawi



Support to health

Maternal mortality

The gender related concepts utilised in the sphere of maternal health are mainly evolving, focusing on maternal roles within the reproductive and domestic spheres. Thus, the building of the maternal clinic focused on concepts related to motherhood such as: maternal mortality, infant mortality, pregnancy care, ante-natal care. This programme was relevant insofar as it sought to reduce maternal mortality (one of the key MDGs). Whilst Iceland provided the infrastructure to accommodate maternal health services, these services were staffed by the region and UNFPA provided family planning support for all women that came for ante-natal health care and delivery at the clinics. Thus, the gender related concepts could be expanded beyond motherhood to place more emphasis on sexual and reproductive health and rights, family planning, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), thus providing for women beyond the reproductive sphere and offering the opportunity to space out births.

The major impact that could be evidenced from the field visits at individual and systemic level are summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Summary of individual and systemic level change

Individual level		Systemic level
<p>Consciousness and awareness was raised of the importance of attending maternal health services (as well as family planning) for women and some men that accompanied their wives.</p> <p>Some village chiefs acted as male champions and role models to sensitise other men in the village to space out births and limit birth rates.</p> <p>Changes in contraceptive methods and spacing following the maternity service counselling concerned at least 70% of women interviewed – with or without the husband’s consent.</p>	<p>Increased access (coverage from 3% to 22% at District level) to improved quality of ante-natal maternal services not previously accessible but also of SRHR counselling and family planning.</p> <p>Increased access to improved post-natal services for newborns.</p>	<p>Clear decrease in maternal and infant deaths to 0% over the two last consecutive years 2015-16 which prompted the Ministry’s award to Monkey Bay maternity ward + Chilonga Heath Centre maternity ward.</p>

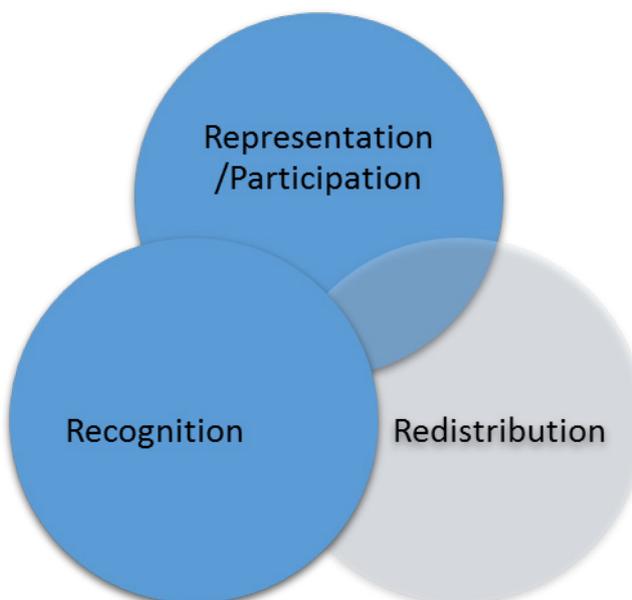
Within the justice framework this case clearly achieved significant results in terms of recognition of particular problems affecting women, and increasing the participation of women in accessing maternal health services. As in the case above, there was little, if any, redistribution of power or resources in terms of results, but rather several windows of opportunity identified for the new programme, which are reflected in the recommendations below.

Specific recommendations

Discussions on how to strengthen gender equality and women’s rights aspects have already begun within the new programme with UNFPA and UNICEF focusing on future opportunities in family planning linked to maternal health and teenage pregnancies. Iceida’s remarkable achievements in maternal health at District level in Mangochi, in terms of reduction of maternal mortality, provide a formidable entry point for opening up further opportunities to move beyond the focus on women within the reproductive sphere and to deepen impact by expanding to women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights and ultimately contribute to reducing gender inequalities in society. As already conveyed in the Malawi mission debriefing note, it is thus recommended that the new programme focuses on the following:

- Introducing SDGs and explicitly addressing and integrating SDG 5 indicators for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

Figure 4.2: Gender justice in health, Malawi



- ≡ Through family planning activities integrated into the new programme, special attention ought to be given to the sensitisation of males including boys, husbands, district, village and religious leaders. This would help to establish coherence between Iceland's advocacy for men's inclusion at multilateral level (HefForShe / Barbershop) and working in-country with men and boys on issues of gender equality, male roles and masculinities and promoting male champions for gender equality. This should aim at a change in behaviour related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, contraceptive methods and HIV/AIDS prevention so that the programme targets the root causes of high maternal mortality rates for deeper and longer-term impact.
- ≡ The linkages between family planning and access to economic rights and innovative opportunities should be further explored in the new programme including access to new technologies. It would be interesting for the women concerned to complement access to sexual and reproductive health and rights counselling which targets contraceptive methods with access to economic empowerment counselling.

4.2 Uganda

The field mission to Uganda, to complement the sectors visited in Malawi, focused particularly on equitable access for girls and boys to quality primary and secondary education. The mission included visits to the newly constructed classrooms and dormitories in schools in Buikwe and Kalangala Districts. As Buikwe's infrastructure works had just been completed, the main findings in terms of impact and outcomes are thus centred around the visit to Kalangala where infrastructure had been in use for some time and could thus provide evidence of identifiable outcomes. The supported activities, beyond construction and renovation of classrooms and dormitories and school kitchens, also included training of education officers and head teachers and provision of equipment for sports, games and performing arts.

4.2.1 Key findings

Support to education sector

Equal access to the right to education

Iceland has provided support of high relevance to the education sector at the regional level. In general, the field visits showed that school infrastructures such as classrooms and dormitories, kitchens and energy saving stoves had been improved or were in the course of being improved or inaugurated, impacting on access to basic socio-economic rights in education for both girls and boys.

As it was difficult for school head teachers to calculate with precision the extent to which school costs were reduced by these improvements. With the foreseen assistance of an accountant in the future, it will hopefully be possible to demonstrate a clear reduction of costs resulting, in turn, in the reduction of school fees and higher access to education for boys and girls. In one school in Kalangala, although precise figures were not available, the headmaster was able to provide meals for the entire 20 pupils that could not afford the lunch costs, free of charge. This was a result of a combination of energy saving stoves with solar panels, construction of staff housing, kitchen gardens, provision of school books and materials – which all contributed to the alleviation of overall school expenditures.

As shown in the various sector analyses launched by Iceland, the major barrier to accessing school has been identified as the costs. Although 'free' in principle, parents are asked for various contributions for meals, materials etc. Many in Uganda are thus not able to afford these costs, particularly the poorest section of Ugandan society. The project thus attempts to address some of the most pressing problems by helping the school to reduce its costs in an environmentally friendly way.

Recognising girls' specific needs

Particular attention was paid to the barriers girls are facing in relation to school attendance. Special VIP latrines with girls' showers / changing blocks were constructed with Iceland's support. This is addressing

and recognising the specific needs of young girls, although some challenges remain in terms of ensuring cleanliness, maintenance and water supply.

The recognition of the need to address adolescent girls' special needs was taken a step further in the 'Special girls' menstruation pilot project' currently testing the applicability of the woman's menstrual cup in the cultural context of Buikwe. The initiative, with an organisation called WoMena, has provided the cup to 50 women, and has also provided training on self-made menstrual pads. This small-scale but strategic support addresses an important cause of partial school attendance by girls.

These barriers were identified through a series of baselines and studies launched by Iceland as a first step to understanding and tracking the factors that cause drop outs and poor performance of girls at secondary school level. There is an opportunity here to deepen the gender analysis to highlight other socio-cultural barriers that keep girls away from secondary school such as early marriage and dowries, security on the way to and from school, access to contraceptive methods, sexual and reproductive health education to avoid early pregnancies.

Impact and risks

In light of the complexity and multiplicity of barriers mentioned above, the team found the most tangible impact in Kalangala District related to Iceland's support to the construction of girls' dormitories on the school premises. As documented by the school performance ratings and individual schoolgirls' accounts, there is a clear and significant correlation between girls' attendance and improved performance at school since becoming full time boarders using Iceland's newly constructed dormitories.

Through individual interviews and focus group discussions in several schools, girls testified that they no longer had to spend on average two hours in the morning before school and three hours in the evening on returning home on domestic chores (which generally included cleaning, fetching water and firewood, farming, taking care of sick family members and babies, washing). The schoolgirls said that they could sleep longer and focus more time on their homework in the morning and evening (as some dormitories were further equipped with solar panels).

In Kalangala, where thick forests separate the schools from surrounding villages, some schoolgirls said they no longer had to run to avoid unpleasant encounters; others said they no longer had to undertake sexual services, with the risk of getting HIV/AIDS infections, to pay for their lunches or school costs. Thus, to some extent, the risk of early pregnancies was reduced, although not all early pregnancies and school drop outs are caused by external factors. Risk factors also lie within the school with either fellow boy students or male teachers.

Some of these risks facing adolescent girls could be further mitigated if both girls and boys had access to adequate sexual and reproductive health education and contraceptive methods. Currently the District Health Officer provides a general lecture on the benefits of abstinence. This has proven an inadequate and ineffective strategy, at worst leaving young girls at risk and without effective means to protect themselves, given the rising incidence of SGBV and HIV/AIDS infection rate (up 28 percent in Kalangala). As the key issues concern both knowledge of sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as power to resist and self-defence in case of sexual abuse, any effective strategy would need to be comprehensive.

The discussion on including SRHR education in school curricula is still the subject of debate and controversy within the Ministry of Education and has taken a political turn in Uganda, as parents (and thus potential voters) largely believe promoting ignorance and fear on these issues is still the best protection for young girls.

Table 4.3: Summary of individual and systemic level change

Individual level		Systemic level
<p>Changes in school infrastructures create incentives to attend school for boys and girls.</p> <p>Girls' dormitories have high impact changes on girls' individual performance and quality of life in terms of i) time and energy spent in long distance travel and family chores which is now redirected to homework and results in better school performance ii) increased safety and personal security.</p>	<p>Increased enrolment due to renovated facilities, classes, dorms, VIPs etc.</p> <p>Decreasing school expenditure – difficult to track but one secondary school with a functioning energy saving stove in renovated kitchen was able to feed 20 children who could not otherwise afford lunch.</p>	<p>Improved district level school performance for Kalangala in national ratings.¹⁶</p>

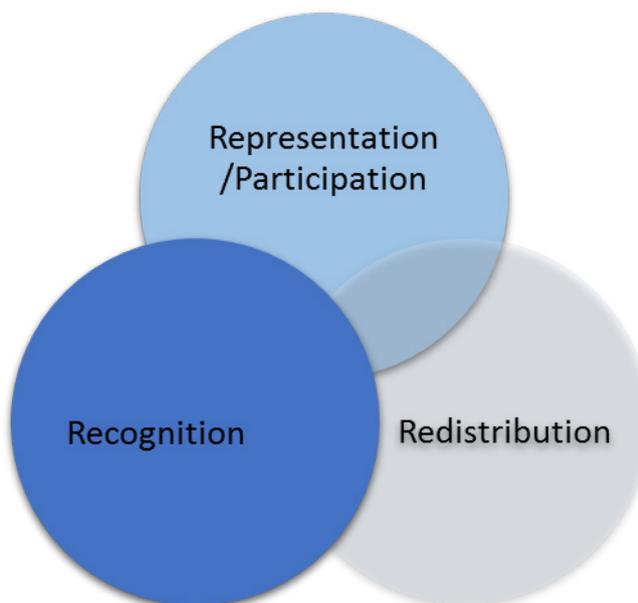
The best results in terms of effects are at individual level through recognition of girls' particular needs and the challenges they face. Representation through equal participation of girls and boys in primary and secondary school is also addressed in a willingness to reduce the gap between boys and girls in secondary school in the future. As with all bilateral level cases, there are few, if any, effects at redistribution level and the gender transformative changes at systemic level are also limited.

Specific recommendations

It is recommended that the country programme be enhanced to highlight areas where gender equality could improve the overall impact and quality of the programme as follows:

- ≡ To lower the level of schoolgirls' drop outs in secondary schools, explore focused activities to improve boys' and girls' knowledge of SRHR, HIV/AIDS prevention, sensitisation on girls' rights, SGBV, defilement, early marriage and early pregnancies – and thereby their capacity to make informed decisions. Such sensitisation should also involve the teachers, the parents and community leaders. This could be piloted by Iceland on its own or in partnership with multilaterals such as UNICEF or local civil society organisations (CSOs) that are working in this field.
- ≡ A first and concrete step in Kalangala, would be to consider expanding on the District Health Officers' team currently providing training to schoolgirls and boys on SRHR with youth organisations delivering 'straight talk' for the Red Cross. This could be an entry point for building

Figure 4.3: Gender justice in education, Malawi



¹⁶ The Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports, the education and sports sector annual performance report, Financial Year (2015/2016). available at <http://www.education.go.ug/files/downloads/ESSAPR%20FY%202015-16%20final.pdf>

synergies between Iceland's bilateral cooperation and the Red Cross, in addition to making the training more youth oriented and adequate.

- ≡ Opportunities for building synergies with advocacy on male roles and masculinities and the HeForShe campaign at the multilateral level include advocacy for SRHR with young male role models in school youth clubs.
- ≡ Sustainable, self-reliant and income generating strategies should be integrated into the programme as part of Iceland's exit strategy to ensure sustainability of results achieved. Such strategies should include a gender disaggregated analysis / marketing, special self-reliance strategies for schoolgirls and female teachers (retention of trained teachers).

4.3 Specific lessons from field missions

Both field missions revealed great potential for deepening outcomes and advancing gender equality beyond quantitative equality. Although the project documents show differences in gender focus in Uganda and Malawi, evidence of results on gender equality are clear and tangible in both countries showing stronger results at individual level, both in terms of representation and recognition, and more limited results in terms of gender transformative changes at systemic level and in terms of redistribution of power and resources.

The recommendations above identify concrete entry points to pursue more strategic and transformative gender outcomes. In addition, the synergies and cooperation with Iceland's multilateral partners, the Red Cross and UNU-GEST could be further strengthened as described in the general recommendations in Section 8.

Although Iceland does not have an explicit HRBA in its Gender Equality Policy, there are interesting elements at the bilateral level that could be integrated into a future gender policy. These could include Iceland's work across sectors both with rights holders as beneficiaries of the infrastructures built at community level and with duty bearers in the regional administrations. Iceland has come a long way in using a participatory approach in its development cooperation and distinguishes itself amongst donors for its 'hands-off' style, very much promoting full ownership at the local authority level. Such a participatory approach has been particularly praised both in Malawi and Uganda by the local authorities who feel they have a genuine partnership that allows them to fully own and further the development of their communities. Thus, the concepts of accountability and transparency would have a good foundation for further expansion in both country programmes. By selecting the regions that are most impoverished and most affected by diseases such as HIV/AIDS, Iceland is thus working with the concept of non-discrimination without explicitly mentioning it. In Uganda, there is real reflection at embassy level as to the extent to which the most vulnerable children are being reached through Iceland's support. In Malawi, the notion of participation is especially developed through the empowerment of communities to use and manage the maintenance of the water pumps.

In conclusion, Icelandic cooperation is already, to some extent, implicitly working with key HRBA principles of participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency. There is thus good potential for deepening these principles further.

4.4 Mozambique desk study

Iceland's cooperation with Mozambique dates back to 1995, with an Iceida office in Maputo which opened in 1999. Since then, the programme had gender integrated from its inception and focused in the beginning entirely on the fisheries sector. Today, operations are being scaled down ahead of the closure of the Iceland embassy at the end of 2017.

In line with the documentation available, this case study is based on the two following selected projects:

- ≡ **Programme Based Support to the Fisheries Sector 2013-2017:** Second phase of Norway and Iceland's support to the Fisheries Master Plan of the Mozambican Ministry of Fisheries which ends in 2017. Of the total US\$30.2 million budget, Iceland has committed US\$4 million, Norway US\$25 million and Mozambique US\$1.2 million.
- ≡ **Promoting Women and Girls' Effective Participation in Peace, Security and Recovery in Mozambique (2017-2020):** This new UN-Women project supports the Government of Mozambique in implementing its National Action Plan under Resolution 1325 and aims to ensure that peace, security and recovery processes contribute to gender equality, women and girls' rights and empowerment. Of the US\$2.5 million project, Iceland is contributing US\$2.3 million with the remainder provided by UN Women, which leads on implementation with support from Iceland.

Key findings

The case study found that the results of Icelandic gender policy on Iceland's development cooperation programme in Mozambique have been limited. This has reflected the changing salience of gender issues within the policy agenda of the Government of Mozambique and other donors as well as the need to make strategic decisions about where and how to engage with limited embassy resources and HQ support.

As the UN Women programme has only recently started, results are currently available only from the fisheries programme. Key gender related results have been:

- ≡ At the **individual** level:
 - Under the fisheries project, gender focal points and technical staff have received some training, but this was less than originally planned due to lack of funds. It is not clear whether this will have been sufficient to underpin implementation and institutionalisation of a gender strategy for the fisheries ministry.
- ≡ At the **systemic** level:
 - The finalisation and approval of the fisheries gender strategy has been an important milestone and it seems that there is sufficient momentum (external to the project) in support of its implementation.
 - The development of a monitoring mechanism which will report gender disaggregated data provides an important underpinning for embedding accountability for gender and understanding of differential results for women and men.

Table 4.4 presents the key results in terms of the gender justice framework, which are summarised below.

Table 4.4: Results according to Gender Justice framework

Representation	Recognition	Redistribution
Programme Based Support to the Fisheries Sector 2013-2017		
The number of women in decision making positions is still very low (no funds were available for this area) but some progress has been noted, such as increased share of women in Gaza in the joint management groups.	The gender strategy was finalised and approved in 2014. Reporting by some institutions – INAQUA, IDPPE – provides data by gender. A more general monitoring system that will provide for gender-disaggregated reporting is being developed.	

Representation	Recognition	Redistribution
Promoting Women and Girls' Effective Participation in Peace, Security and Recovery in Mozambique (expected results based on design document)		
Participation of women/women's groups in conflict prevention and resolution.	The project responds to issues of women's safety in post-conflict contexts, participation and engagement in decision-making, and their economic inclusion.	Access to economic opportunities through livelihood support (professional training, entrepreneurship development, financing and extension services).

- ≡ **Representation.** The fisheries project has had some isolated achievements with an increased number of women on the joint management group in one of the project locations. The UN Women project aims to increase women's engagement in conflict prevention and resolution through support to women's organisations.
- ≡ **Recognition.** Although mention is made of the participation rate of women in the fisheries sector, the gender component of the fisheries project has focused rather on the development and implementation of a sector gender strategy, which provides a platform for recognition of specific sector-based issues around gender. The UN Women project more directly addresses specific gender issues, in terms of preventing violence against women and girls, women's participation and engagement in decision-making, and their economic inclusion.
- ≡ **Redistribution.** There is no evidence at this stage of the projects having had a redistributive effect. The UN Women project is expected to provide access to economic opportunities through livelihood support for women.

One of the main issues has been that, under the fisheries project, the ambitions of the original project regarding gender were substantially scaled back as funding for the gender component was cut from US\$1.2 million to just US\$61,000. This came as a consequence of a significant cutback in the Norwegian contribution; the decision to cut the funding from the gender component partly reflected a view that the Ministry of Fisheries was already working on gender mainstreaming, with related support from IFAD and the World Bank. Nevertheless, some progress was made in terms of integrating gender: the gender strategy was completed and a new monitoring system made provision for ensuring gender-disaggregated data would be reported.

Other support

Iceland has also been generating results outside of these two projects. A third project in Mozambique, the Water supply, sanitation and hygiene in rural communities and schools project implemented by UNICEF, largely works towards the same objectives as the water and sanitation project in Malawi.

Beyond its project support, Iceland has led the gender donor working group in the past and has recently become more active in this group again, as part of its contribution to the development of the UN Women project. The project has been prepared in response to a new willingness on the part of the Government of Mozambique to work on gender, and specifically on its NAP, since a regional meeting of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in November 2016 urged all members to put in place a NAP.

Iceland has played a leading and coordinating role on gender among the Nordic donors in Mozambique, and there has been some interest in creating a Nordic league on the issue. Iceland has also provided specific support to gender outside of its programmes. It has seconded gender experts to UN and international organisations, and currently has seconded a gender expert to the WFP in Mozambique. As in Malawi and Uganda, Iceland has also sponsored candidates to attend UNU-GEST training in Iceland and is working with graduates of the training to form a gender network within Mozambique as a platform

for exchanging learning and sharing their experience. There are now 15 UNU-GEST alumni in Mozambique, working across government ministries and departments, UN organisations and international CSOs. A number have been promoted to middle management following their placements, and have been strategically placed. As a group, they have been quite active and are forming a network to share expertise, experience and learning and to potentially work together.

Key conclusions

The finalisation of the UN Women project design has been a considerable achievement that reflects Iceland's advocacy engagement and programming effort. As the project is currently still in its inception phase, it is too early to know what results are likely to emerge. However, the emphasis on 1325 augurs well for both individual and systemic change, and for real recognition of the conflict-related issues faced by women and girls in the current Mozambican context.

In terms of gender mainstreaming across the Icelandic programme in Mozambique, the imminent closure of the Icelandic embassy means that future efforts will need to be at arm's length, working through development partners, primarily UNICEF (given that the UN Women project has gender as a thematic objective). The availability of additional resources (from a crisis budget) to fund secondments of gender experts, together with support to local participants in the UNU-GEST training, has – at a small scale – delivered results that hold potential to evolve into systemic change (through a strengthening network of local gender expertise) and greater representation of women within decision making institutions.

Specific lessons

- ≡ As a relatively small bilateral donor, Iceland has limited scope for influencing programming priorities within a multi-donor context.
- ≡ The embassy has, however, demonstrated its ability to seize the opportunity presented by a new willingness on the part of government to engage with gender – creating a niche role as the only donor supporting UN Women in implementation of the NAP strategy. This provides potential scope for similar support in other countries.
- ≡ Strategic secondments and the UNU-GEST programme seem to be having tangible results in terms of shaping the agenda and building momentum for gender at the systemic level.

5 Support to multilateral cooperation for gender equality

The key findings below are set against the following key questions in the TOR:

- ≡ To provide an evaluation of the results of the MFA's policy on 'Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-operation', and related institutional mechanisms and processes.
- ≡ To review and analyse Iceland's gender engagement in **multilateral development cooperation**, with reference to gender equality and women's empowerment.

5.1 Contribution to gender equality in Iceland's global advocacy work

Iceland's global advocacy work on gender equality has included the following aspects:

- ≡ Besides core funding, Iceland has further contributed to a variety of events and programmes such as in Afghanistan, in Palestine, the Trust Fund to Eliminate Violence against women, Rio+20 programme.
- ≡ Iceland's approach has focused on a clearly defined choice of multilateral agencies that either promote gender equality as their core mandate or have a clear gender equality policy. This has been the basis for Iceland's screening of multilateral agencies and the main justification for their selection.
- ≡ Building strong partnership with gender equality and women's rights oriented multilateral organisations such as UN Women – providing both financial support and technical assistance. In 2016, Iceland was the biggest donor per capita to UN Women.
- ≡ With other multilateral organisations such as UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, some of which Iceland supports with core funding and earmarked funding (including country programmes and humanitarian aid), Iceland consistently emphasises the importance of implementing their gender policies and strategies at board meeting level.¹⁷
- ≡ Iceland's global advocacy on gender equality was particularly visible on the HeForShe campaign¹⁸, SDG negotiations and IDA18 negotiations where Iceland consistently addressed the importance of high aspirations regarding gender equality as a prerequisite for reaching the SDGs.¹⁹

Iceland has been visibly and actively advocating for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and vulnerable people in UN intergovernmental forums, such as the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This political support, individually and as part of broader constituencies, has helped to advance the mandates and priorities of UN agencies such as UN Women and UNFPA in various UN platforms. This has included issues such as SRHR, maternal health, gender-based violence, and the rights and needs of women and young people, including adolescent girls.

UN Women is one of the key partners in multilateral development cooperation and amongst Iceland's priority UN agencies. Iceland's and UN Women's gender and development related priorities are aligned. There are also clear synergies and alignment between Iceland's Gender Equality Policy and UNFPA's mandate and mission statement. Iceland's financial support to UNFPA has been consistent, although in small numbers, and Iceland has proven a strong voice for – and supporter of – the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and SRHR.

The sections below provide a summary of gender related activities and results achieved with selected multilateral agencies, in line with the documentation available.

¹⁷ See for example, gender statement UNDP EB Board meeting

¹⁸ Further analysed in the section below related to UN Women.

¹⁹ See IDA 18 Talking Points.

5.2 Partnership with UN Women

Iceland is a very important partner for UN Women. While its financial contributions are relatively small, in UN Women's view Iceland is an important Member State for advocacy and intergovernmental negotiations at the UN. Over recent years, Iceland has increased its core funding little by little, nearly doubling the level of core support between 2011 and 2016 (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Iceland's contributions to UN Women 2011-16 (US\$)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Core	509,000	692,088	727,712	681,339	739,824	900,000
Non-core	395,000	331,388	942,843	447,253	299,620	814,891
Total	0.90 m	1.02 m	1.67 m	1.13 m	1.04 m	1.71 m

Iceland is currently working on FA with UN Women for 2018 -2020. Furthermore, Iceland supports UN Women's work in Palestine, Jordan, Uganda, Mozambique and Afghanistan and is currently seconding an expert to the UN Women office in Ukraine. Iceland has also supported UN Women's Beijing+20 campaign, a climate change project and also the UN trust fund to End Violence against women.

UN Women has been working closely with Iceland on the 'Equal Pay coalition'. Together with ILO, Switzerland and some other Member States, Iceland was part of a high-level launch event of the Global Coalition on Equal Pay Champions at CSW61.

Although not part of this assignment, it is important to note that the Icelandic National Committee is also very active and innovative and an important partner for advocacy and visibility.

This commitment to UN Women puts Iceland in a prominent position on gender equality as intrinsic to UN Women's core mandate and its global focus on SDGs.

Amongst others, UN Women currently focuses on the SDGs within the following themes:

- ≡ Increasing women's leadership and participation;
- ≡ Ending violence against women;
- ≡ Engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes;
- ≡ Enhancing women's economic empowerment;
- ≡ Making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting.

In August 2017, UN Women carried out a meta-analysis of 36 UN Women evaluation reports independently rated as satisfactory or above according to the United Nations Evaluation Group and UN Women evaluation criteria between 2013 and 2015. In general, the analysis found that UN Women's interventions have consistently delivered relevant and effective development contributions towards gender equality outcomes and policy changes, although there remains scope for enhancing both efficiency and sustainability as highlighted below:

- ≡ Sustainability across UN Women's operational portfolio was found to be mixed, with evidence that achievements are likely to continue increasing when they have been supported through longer programming cycles.
- ≡ UN Women's role as a knowledge hub is the centrepiece of its global effectiveness, especially regarding applied knowledge in low-capacity contexts and building knowledge networks everywhere. The regional level is emerging as a strong candidate for organising this knowledge hub function.

- Examples of innovative programming are found across all of UN Women’s operational contexts and impact areas. Extending the use of communications technology is seen by evaluations as central to ensuring this innovation reaches new and previously isolated constituencies.

Although, it is difficult to find documentation and evidence of direct cause and effect linkages between Iceland’s contribution to UN Women’s relevant impact, it can be assumed that Iceland’s significant contribution to UN Women’s core funding also contributed to the meta-results enumerated above.

Based on the evidence from the available documentation and interviews, the following elements could be documented:

- Iceland has been very supportive of UN Women’s HeforShe campaign. Current Icelandic Prime Minister is a HeforShe Impact Champion and the campaign has received much visibility in Iceland with the highest number of men in relation to population numbers having signed on to the campaign. UN Women and Iceland have jointly developed a toolkit around engaging men and boys. Iceland also received the HeForShe Award from UN Women’s Executive Director in 2015.
- Within the HeforShe programme, Iceland has developed a concept called the ‘Barbershop’ initiative. Barbershop events encourage men and boys to become actively engaged in promoting gender equality. The initiative was developed jointly by the Permanent Missions of Iceland and Suriname to the UN in New York, in the context of the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2015. The first conference was introduced by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Iceland and Suriname at the UN General Assembly in September 2014. Barbershops have since been held with NATO, OSCE, the Geneva Gender Champions initiative and the Nordic Council of Ministers. Iceland is hailed as one of 10 Head of State ‘impact champions’ in terms of their commitment to i) close the gender gap, ii) parity in the media and iii) engage men in gender equality. On the equal pay commitment, this constitutes a ground-breaking commitment from Iceland – by 2022.
- In October 2017, a Barbershop conference entitled ‘Equality at Home and at Work’ took place in Copenhagen. In addition, a Barbershop Toolbox was launched on International Women’s Day 2017, as part of Iceland’s commitments as a HeForShe Head of State Impact Champion. The Toolbox is a step-by-step guide to implement Barbershop events or conferences, aiming to mobilise and motivate men to make a proactive commitment to gender equality and participate in the discussion, and to put gender equality firmly on the agenda of world leaders. It is still early for the Barbershop and the HeForShe campaign to be able to measure results as monitoring tools have yet to be developed.

Specific recommendations

As Iceland has made gender equality such a priority nationally, it also carries weight and credibility internationally as it is believed Iceland has experience, knowledge and best practices to share. Iceland was, for example, actively engaged in international negotiations leading up to the 2030 Agenda in 2015, effectively advocating for separate goals on gender equality, renewable energy and oceans, and for gender to be mainstreamed across all the goals. Specific recommendations are:

- Iceland could use its considerable experience and knowledge even more to share proven practices with other UN Member States and also private sector entities. This recommendation ties in with recommendations mentioned in the section related to bilateral cooperation, strengthening the synergies on gender equality results and impact between Icelandic bilateral and multilateral cooperation.
- Explore potential support to UN Women on measuring results from the application of the Barbershop Toolkit in the form of interactive website/apps. This is essential to trace effects of the Barbershops with a view to link results to other Icelandic support at bilateral level.

5.3 Contribution to gender equality through partnerships with other multilateral agencies

This section presents the activities and results that could be evidenced through other multilateral level partnerships such as UNICEF, UNFPA and World Bank based on the available documentation and discussions. Besides these activities that could be documented in this report, it is important to note that Iceland has also supported UNICEF's programme in Palestine as well as Health thematic and post-natal health programme.

5.3.1 Partnerships with UNICEF and UNFPA

Iceland has provided a significant core funding contribution to UNICEF since 2006 (Table 5.2). During 2013-16, UNICEF'S Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014-2017²⁰ emphasised gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women as important results across all of the seven outcomes of UNICEF'S Strategic Plan (health; HIV and AIDS; water, sanitation and hygiene; nutrition; education; child protection; and social inclusion). In addition, UNICEF has prioritised four cross-sectoral targeted priorities where UNICEF as an organisation is well-placed to make a transformative contribution.

Table 5.2: Support to UNICEF, 2006-16 (ISKm)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Core	25.0	46.2	40.0	24.2	44.1	76.9	69.8	73.4	72.4	99.0	109.9
Non core	56.0	34.0	84.6	134.0	72.2	61.2	83.0	102.9	111.1	58.6	106.1
Total	81.0	80.2	124.6	158.2	120.3	138.1	152.8	176.3	183.5	157.6	216.0

The organisation's four corporate priorities on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls during the 2014-17 period are:

1. Promoting gender-responsive adolescent health;
2. Advancing girls' secondary education;
3. Ending child marriage;
4. Addressing gender-based violence in emergencies.

Lessons learned from the implementation of the UNICEF GAP can be summarised as follows:

- ☐ UNICEF has made progress in mainstreaming gender and is moving in the right direction, even as challenges remain and successful efforts need to be further strengthened. An important contributor to progress has been the marked visibility of gender in the Strategic Plan, accompanied by management's commitment to resources, leadership, and accountability. The role of the executive-level Steering Committee in providing oversight and guidance has been especially important.
- ☐ The four targeted priorities in the GAP brought attention to the intense and interlinked forms of gender inequality faced by adolescent girls, helping UNICEF and partners to catalyse global and local investment and action on issues such as child marriage and girls' secondary education. Nevertheless, not all targeted priorities have shown equal progress.
- ☐ Equally important, the pathways for the engagement of boys and men need to be better articulated within UNICEF'S programme priorities, as do the specific pathways for advancing UNICEF'S work on gender equality and children's rights in fragile and humanitarian contexts.

²⁰ E/ICEF/2014/CPR.12, UNICEF Gender Action Plan 2014-2017, (April 2014)

- ≡ Perhaps the most critical contributing factor to progress under the GAP has been the investment in senior-level gender expertise. Adequate gender expertise at the country level and within sectors at all levels of the organisation, however, remains a challenge that will be a priority under GAP 2018-21.

As with UN Women above, although it is difficult to find documentation and evidence of direct cause and effect linkages between Iceland's contribution to UNICEF'S relevant gender equality results (beyond participation in board meetings), it can be assumed that Iceland's contribution to UNICEF'S core funding also contributed to the main achievements and lessons enumerated above.

Besides core funding, Iceland has further contributed to a variety of events and programmes. Below are a few examples of those where results could be documented.

UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation

Iceland is one of the main donors of the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation: Accelerating Change. Iceland has provided about US\$1.8 million to the programme since 2011. This is one of the largest global programmes addressing the elimination of female genital mutilation (FGM) and as such plays a critical role in achieving SDG 5 which calls for the elimination of all harmful practices by 2030. Iceland is a key partner of UNFPA in support to the mandate of sexual and reproductive health and rights and occasionally participates in the Steering Committee sessions.

The Joint Programme has reported the following results:

- ≡ Providing a global framework for channelling funding for FGM programming;
- ≡ Bringing the agenda of FGM to the global level resulting in UN General Assembly Resolutions on FGM and adoption of the specific SDG 5 target 5.3 on the elimination of FGM;
- ≡ Contributing to the knowledge base in FGM/cutting programming; enhancing capacity in planning and monitoring at different levels;
- ≡ Furthering the engagement of regional bodies such as the African Union, Arab League, Regional Economic Commissions and Parliamentarians establishing the Network of Regional Faith Based Organisations and developing the capacity of 110 CSOs and 17 governments to implement a comprehensive response to FGM.²¹

UNFPA and UNICEF launched the second phase (from 2014 to 2017) of the Joint Programme, expanding its work to 17 countries.²² In 2016, the Joint Programme completed the third year of Phase II and substantial progress was made across the three focus areas of intervention. The key results at the national level, from this second phase can be summarised as follows:²³

²¹ Accelerating Change by the Numbers” analyses progress in quantitative terms, strategic interventions at global and regional levels and offers profiles of each of the 17 programme countries; <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/accelerating-change-numbers>;

²² Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Uganda, Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen -- while also supporting regional (Africa and the Arab States) and global efforts to eliminate FGM.

²³See evidence and documentation at http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA_UNICEF_FGM_14_Report_PDA_WEB.pdf <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/2015-annual-report-unfpa-unicef-joint-programme-female-genital-mutilationcutting>; <http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/FGMC-humanrights.pdf>

See <http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-INTRODUCTION-COVER.pdf>; <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/accelerating-change-numbers>; <http://www.unfpa.org/publications/seventeen-ways-end-fgmc>

Changes at formal structural level

- ≡ At national level, all the countries supported by the Joint Programme have put in place a functional national coordination mechanism, and have continued to implement an integrated and holistic approach towards galvanising the new social norm of keeping girls intact thanks to the collaboration between government and CSOs.
- ≡ Strengthened political commitment: 13 out of 17 countries have legal and policy frameworks banning FGM, and two countries are working towards the adoption of similar laws. Capacity development of the judiciary system and law enforcement led to about 700 cases of the enforcement of FGM legislation. In all countries, policies and plans of action related to gender, SRHR and SGBV have integrated FGM.
- ≡ Increased government ownership and institutional changes: National government coordination mechanisms have been established in all 17 countries and decentralised committees are actively monitoring the practice.
- ≡ Increased allocation of resources: 12 countries established budget lines to specifically address FGM.

Individual level changes and changes to informal structural norms

- ≡ Access to appropriate and quality services: The Joint Programme supports prevention efforts such as social norm change, linking FGM screening and response to existing SRH and maternal health services, and building the capacity of the police, judicial, and social service sectors. As a result of this capacity building support, 2.4 million girls and women²⁴ benefited from strengthened FGM-related protection and care services. Ensuring the needs and rights of girls and women at risk and affected by FGM are met through access to medical, psychological, and legal support points. FGM has also been integrated in schools, from primary level to tertiary, and in medical, paramedical and social worker training curricula.
- ≡ Community-led responses and changes in informal structural norms: The Joint Programme works to empower communities to bring about positive social transformation and sustainable development through a holistic non-formal education programme based on human rights. It raised awareness of the health risks of FGM and also tried to change the deeply rooted social norms that perpetuate the practice. In community class sessions, participants learn about their right to health and their right to be free from all forms of violence, and discuss the responsibilities they share as a community to protect those rights. They also learnt about the potential harmful consequences of the practice and discussed ways to prevent these health problems in the future. By mobilising community leaders, encouraging dialogues and raising awareness, 25 million individuals in 18,756 communities made public declarations to abandon FGM.

Specific recommendations

- ≡ From a UNFPA/UNICEF perspective, it will be key to have Iceland's contribution increased over time. The SDG goal is to end FGM by 2030. This will require important investment to accelerate social norm changes. It will be also important to have multi-year commitments, which facilitate planning of interventions.²⁵
- ≡ In order to play a bigger role in the Steering Committee, it would be of strategic importance if Iceland raised its voice and expressed the way they would like the work to be done. In UNFPA's view this is of particular importance to ensure the Steering Committee's different constituencies are

²⁴ This data is only from Phase II implementation of the Joint Programme.

²⁵ see recommendation from 2013 evaluation <http://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/unfpa-unicef-joint-evaluation-unfpa-unicef-joint-programme-female-genita>

well balanced. As Iceland has not regularly participated in the steering group, there was a specific request for Iceland's voice to become more prominent.

- ≡ UNICEF on the other hand, and beyond this specific joint programme, would welcome Iceland's broader thematic support.

UNFPA's Maternal Health Thematic Fund

During the period 2013-16, Iceland has provided a valuable co-financing contribution (nearly US\$400,000) to UNFPA's Campaign to End Fistula, a programme within UNFPA's Maternal Health Thematic Fund (MHTF). As of 2017, Iceland moved funding for UNFPA from MHTF to core funding, thus contributing to its broader mandate on women's sexual reproductive health and rights.

The MHTF supports critical interventions in countries with high maternal mortality and morbidity to strengthen health systems and ensure that women and adolescent girls have quality maternal health services when they need them. The persistence of obstetric fistula – primarily among the poorest, most vulnerable and underserved women and girls worldwide – reflects severe inequity, and inadequate access to quality SRHR services, including family planning, skilled birth attendance and referral to emergency obstetric and new-born care when needed. The MHTF makes it possible for UNFPA to lead and coordinate the global Campaign to End Fistula, an initiative of more than 90 global partners operating in more than 50 countries across Africa, Asia, the Arab States and Latin America.

In UNFPA's view, Iceland's leadership in advocating for an end to obstetric fistula – both globally and within the European community – has been exemplary. With the help of Iceland and other MHTF-donors, UNFPA has been able to increase awareness of the causes and effects of fistula, and advocate for fistula-affected countries to develop costed, time-bound national strategies and action plans for eliminating the condition.

Key results²⁶ have been summarised as follows:

Changes at the formal structural level

- ≡ UNFPA has helped countries in establishing and successfully operating national task forces for eliminating fistula. In 2015, 28 MHTF-assisted countries had set up task forces.
- ≡ Since 2012, UNFPA has made available two types of fistula repair kit with all the necessary items for the surgical repair of fistula. MHTF funding ensured these kits could be procured and distributed where needed, and 34 UNFPA country offices ordered them between 2012 and 2015 to distribute to hospitals and health facilities.
- ≡ The majority of MHTF-assisted countries also supported social reintegration and the acquisition of income-generating skills critical for fistula survivors to provide for themselves and their families, and rebuild their sense of dignity and agency.

Changes at the individual level

The Campaign to End Fistula has contributed to more than 13,000 fistula repair surgeries and training of more than 900 fistula survivors in income-generating activities in 2015 – enabling vulnerable and marginalised women and girls to 'come out of the shadows' and reclaim their health, dignity and empowerment.

²⁶ [Maternal Health Thematic Fund: Annual Report 2015](#); [Maternal Health Thematic Fund: Annual Report 2014](#); [Maternal Health Thematic Fund: Annual Report 2013](#)

Specific recommendations

- ≡ In UNFPA's view, core resources are the bedrock of all contributions to their organisation, allowing them to plan long-term, to respond flexibly to emerging priorities and sustainably support programmes that improve the lives of women and young people in developing countries.
- ≡ In early 2017, Iceland announced it would triple its contribution in 2017 from US\$100,000 to US\$300,000 exclusively allocated to core funding. UNFPA hopes that this commitment to core funding will continue in the years ahead. During the Family Planning Summit 2020 in July 2017 Iceland furthermore pledged one million USD to UNFPA in Syria (paid over 5 years, 2018-2022).
- ≡ UNFPA looks to Iceland to help using the momentum built around the 'She Decides' movement (to support the fundamental rights of girls and women to decide freely and for themselves about their sexual lives) and align financial contributions to political commitments for women and girls and to remain a strong advocate for the ICPD agenda and SRHR in different multilateral fora.

5.3.2 UNU-GEST

The Government of Iceland funds four thematic United Nations University programmes in Iceland. Amongst them is the Gender Equality Studies and Training programme, piloted in 2009, launched in 2013 and hosted by the University of Iceland. An evaluation of the UNU training programmes in Iceland was commissioned in 2017 by the MFA to enhance accountability and learning based on an assessment of the processes and achievements of the four programmes²⁷.

The overall goal of the programme is to 'educate and train women and men from developing countries and conflict/post-conflict societies in gender equality methods and theories and to strengthen their professional capacities for advancing and implementing gender sensitive projects in their home countries.' The target group for the UNU-GEST diploma programme consists of 'professionals from developing countries and post-conflict societies working for government ministries and agencies, civil society organisations and educational institutes.'

UNU-GEST offers short courses and post-graduate degree studies. According to the recent evaluation, it has so far had few resources to do so. GEST's five-month programme grants academic credits and its curriculum is articulated around six thematic modules, one of which consists of a final project assignment. The 'curriculum builds upon scholarship in gender equality and on development studies incorporating major interdisciplinary agenda, on intellectual debates and on recent methodological practices'. For the 2017 academic year, two educational tracks are offered: Gender and Security, and Gender and Health

GEST has actively sought to develop its non-training activities. GEST's strategic plan outlines wide ambitions in relation to both research and the promotion of transnational dialogue.²⁸ Main activities have consisted of co-hosting different events,²⁹ and GEST has developed several projects for which it has

²⁷ Niras indevelop, Evaluation of the UNU Programmes in Iceland, Final Report (September 2017)

²⁸ It has set itself a vast research scope: *Sustainability*, encompassing Climate Change, Energy, Natural Resources, Resilience, and Land Restoration; *Human Security* encompassing Peace and Conflict, Transitional Justice and Legal Frameworks, Migration, Violence, Health and Bodily Integrity; and, *Societal Transitions* covering Transformative Education for Change, Governance, Social Inclusion, Social and Economic Inequalities, Citizenship and Democracy, and Gender Responsive Budgeting.

²⁹ the launching of the Human Development Report in Iceland in conjunction with MFA and UNDP; the upcoming Nordic Women Mediators Network with MFA; an annual public lecture series with RIKK Institute for Gender, Equality and Difference held since 2015; and three international conferences on Women, Peace and Security since 2009.²⁹ In 2015, almost all of the 15 speakers and panellists at the last such conference were from abroad, but only one represented a developing country institution.

sought external funding.³⁰ According to the evaluation, GEST has, however, not been granted much funding for this area of work³¹.

The evaluation demonstrates that there are many important macro, meso, and micro level results in the partner developing countries that the UNU Iceland programmes have contributed to. It highlights the following key results:

- ≡ Outcomes of the UNU Iceland programmes at the level of contributions to changes in national policy and governance systems are difficult to quantify. In spite of this, the evaluation has been able to collect a number of examples indicating that the programmes are having an impact at the *macro level*. An average of one in every five fellows has engaged with policy processes upon returning home, and approximately one in eight has seen her or his research used in policymaking. While acknowledging that their contribution is but one among many, all those interviewed recognised that their ability to fulfil their role owed much to the training in Iceland. Outcomes at the *macro level* seem to depend in part on who is recruited to the programme.
- ≡ Results at the *meso level*, in terms of changes in the systems, practices, methods, and more broadly the 'behaviour' of organisations are also significant in number and diversity. Fellows are also playing key roles in developing or leading new projects and programmes in their organisations and beyond, often based on the project work undertaken in Iceland.
- ≡ As expected by the evaluation, the greatest contribution of the UNU Iceland programmes has been at the *micro level*, in terms of the change experienced by the individual fellows attending the training in Iceland. The types and intensity of contributions at this level are impressive. A majority of fellows report that they have been promoted upon returning to their workplace as a result of the training. The vast majority of fellows also reported gaining confidence and motivation, applying new knowledge, approaches, and skills, and being handed greater responsibility. Some have been awarded new professional development opportunities, including at the international level.

Some of these successes have been confirmed in our evaluation and in particular during the Malawi field mission. A UNU-GEST fellow employed in the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare undertook a number of significant initiatives upon returning from the GEST programme, based on his UNU project related to gender responsive budgeting; another led the process leading to the 2017 constitutional amendment that sets the legal age for marriage at 18. Another, however, based in the Kalangala's administration, came back to a less rewarding welcome, without recognition from his management and without the means to implement the knowledge and skills he had acquired in Iceland.

From both field missions in Malawi and in Uganda, it could be observed that although there was a high level of awareness of the UNU-GEST work by the respective embassies, there were little if any synergies between the UNU-GEST programmes and MFA's country programmes.

³⁰ For instance, GEST is supporting the production of a documentary on gender disparities and discrimination in the geothermal sector that is financed by grant from the Icelandic Gender Equality Fund (10 million ISK) and is seeking grants to support. Last year it undertook an evaluation for MFA concerning Iceland's national action plan in relation to UN resolution 1325. It is entering a relationship with the World Food Programme to support it in building its gender equality capacity through a smart phone application. GEST has also recently been included as a partner in the Icelandic-funded UN Women project "Promotion of Women and Girls' Effective Participation in Peace, Security and Recovery in Mozambique 2017-2020". It has yet, however, to secure funding for a project concerning capacity building of civil society in Afghanistan with regards to women, peace and security.

³¹ Most progress has been in relation to research on gendered value chains in small-scale fisheries conducted between 2015 to 2016 as part of an NDF-funded project. In 2017, MFA have granted GEST the equivalent of around USD 35,000 for gendered value chain analysis in aquaculture.

Specific recommendations

In the case of a cross-cutting issue like gender equality, much could be gained by using resources in the same country strategically. This could include allocation of follow-up resources to work with fellows to explore how they can implement their knowledge and contribute to changes at country level. Mozambique also provides an example of where the embassy is working with graduates of UNU-GEST training to form a gender network within Mozambique as a platform for exchanging learning and sharing their experience. Such initiatives will need to be adequately measured and monitored.

Recommendations as to strengthening the synergies and avoiding fragmentation of aid are made to that effect in the general recommendations section.

5.3.3 IDA 18 and partnership with World Bank

Table 5.3: Overview of Iceland's support to the World Bank and trust funds in ISK

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
IDA	234.1	234.1	204.0	204.0	204.0	506.0	506.0
GAP/UFGE	52.0		19.3	18.8	18.3	52.3	23.0
NTF for Human Rights	5.7				6.5	6.5	5.7

During the implementation period of Iceland's Gender Policy (2013-16), Iceland has helped advance the gender equality agenda at the World Bank Group (WBG) in a number of ways. Some of them can be described as follows:

- ≡ It leveraged its seat on the WBG's Board of Executive Directors to voice support for renewing the World Bank's 2001 Gender Strategy, and subsequently endorsing the new World Bank Group Gender Strategy (2016-23) finalised in 2015.
- ≡ Iceland continued its engagement and support during the IDA18 negotiations, as donors acknowledged that while progress toward closing gender gaps has been made, significant unfinished business remains. By identifying gender equality as a special theme for the third consecutive replenishment, the IDA Deputies underscored the importance of maintaining focus on gender equality and setting robust, results-oriented targets that are both ambitious and meaningful.
- ≡ Iceland is also one of 13 donors that have contributed to the Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality (UFGE), a multi-donor trust fund established in 2012 as a catalyst for accelerated progress towards greater gender equality through investment in data, knowledge and evidence – resources to improve the effectiveness of the WBG's project design and policy advice, and contribute to expanding the global knowledge base on what works (and what does not work) to close economic gaps between men and women, and to promote development partners' take-up of this knowledge.

Iceland's support for the renewed Gender Strategy for the WBG, has been continued through to support for maintaining gender as a special theme in IDA18 with robust and concrete policy commitments that are aligned with the Gender Strategy, and financial support for the UFGE (which is the sole programmatic trust fund dedicated to support the WBG's Gender Strategy and Regional Gender Action Plans through investment in data, knowledge and evidence).

In the WBG's perspective, the renewed WBG Gender Strategy and IDA18 policy commitments significantly raise the bar and position the WBG to be a more effective actor in tackling specific gender gaps, emphasising measurable results based on data and evidence of what works. In their view, Iceland's

financial contributions to the UFGE have helped fill a critical financing gap for public goods that strengthen policies and projects.³²

WGB views Iceland's contribution to the WBG's gender equality agenda as an example of 'punching above their weight through smart use of money and positioning'. It has used its 'Board and IDA partner status to leverage strategic commitments, and despite a financial crisis provided reliable financial support (US\$1.1 million)'.

5.4 Key conclusions and recommendations for multilateral cooperation

According to the World Bank, Iceland has made smart use of its financial resources and positioning and should continue this approach across its multilateral cooperation whilst linking of its cooperation with multilateral development agencies to the new outcomes of its new gender policy.

The UN agencies and WBG will continue to rely on Iceland's political leadership and its financial support to fill financing gaps for programmes, data and knowledge needed to push the frontiers of the gender equality agenda, equip policy makers and development experts with innovative solutions.

- ≡ For Iceland to be able to strengthen the provision of innovative solutions and base its advocacy work on evidence of results, stronger synergies with its bilateral cooperation need to be established. For example, as mentioned in the bilateral section above, further synergies between the HeforShe advocacy at multilateral level and working with male roles and masculinities in bilateral projects; For example Iceland did support the HeforShe campaign in Uganda through UN Women with a small amount in 2013 (3.3 million ISK – approx. 30.000 USD).
- ≡ Synergies between UNU-GEST and bilateral country programmes (see also general recommendations) and engaging in a more general reflection on coherence between global advocacy on gender equality and gender equality in country programmes.
- ≡ Identifying relevant documentation of results and evidence of outcome and impact at multilateral level has been challenging. In this context, strengthening the measurement of gender equality results, outcomes and impact at bilateral level is essential to bring extra knowledge and strengthened arguments for global advocacy work. More systematic documentation of possible effects of advocacy work at the global level through relevant follow-up activities and qualitative studies would enhance the visibility of results at the global level.
- ≡ As mentioned in the specific recommendations on bilateral cooperation, some programmes at multilateral level / global advocacy – like the HeForShe campaign – could benefit from being further tested and grounded on concrete experience in the field.

³² e.g. a growing body of data collection and research on unpaid care in ECA, EAP and LAC has already strengthened policy dialogues on child- and eldercare provision in China, Chile, Poland, Vietnam, and work is ongoing in Colombia; innovative pilots and adaptations of promising solutions to preventing and responding to gender-based violence are increasingly being integrated into the WB's operational portfolio—such as a \$15m urban violence prevention project in Honduras that adapted a proven community-based approach from Africa to addressing intimate partner violence (for more examples see the [2016 annual report for the UFGE](#)).

6 Gender equality in humanitarian cooperation

The key findings below are set against the following key questions in the TOR:

- ≡ To provide an evaluation of the results of the MFA's policy on 'Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-operation', and related institutional mechanisms and processes.
- ≡ To review and analyse Iceland's gender engagement in **humanitarian aid** with reference to gender equality and women's empowerment.

6.1 Icelandic Red Cross

The Icelandic Red Cross is the largest CSO in Iceland and an important partner to the MFA in carrying out both development projects and humanitarian assistance. The projects receiving support from the MFA are implemented mostly in partnership with the Icelandic Red Cross as well as local chapters and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). This case study is based on the two following projects:

- ≡ **Malawi:** Integrated Community Based Health Care & First Aid Project, a three-year (2013-15) project implemented by the Malawi Red Cross Society to improve the health, sanitation and well-being of around 9,000 families in the Mangochi district.
- ≡ **Uganda:** Population Movement, an Emergency Appeal launched by the Uganda Red Cross and IFRC in August 2016 to shelter and meet the basic survival needs of more than 130,000 refugees from South Sudan. Iceland is providing financial and in-kind support, with in-kind contributions in the field of psycho-social support (PSS) which is an area of specialist expertise for Iceland.

Key findings

Both of these projects have been well designed with good consideration of gender issues. The Malawi project, in particular, has been strong, not just in addressing issues facing women and girls, but also in mainstreaming gender equality into its delivery. For instance, the project document routinely provides sex disaggregated data and commits to ensuring equality in delivery through:

- ≡ Gender-responsive budgeting and planning to ensure an adequate gender balance, preferably more than 50 percent of beneficiaries to be women;
- ≡ Ensuring that equal numbers of girls and boys are recruited for educational support;
- ≡ Advocating for the appropriate balance of women and men in all decision-making committees;
- ≡ Mainstreaming gender in all aspects of health and not only in reproductive health issues. Data are to be disaggregated to identify any gender imbalances;
- ≡ Awareness-raising and community mobilisation around gender-based violence;
- ≡ Targeted activities under the HIV/AIDS component to train girls and boys as peer educators: 'girl groups' will be formed and learn about concepts of empowerment while boys will learn about the role of men in society through a 'Young Men as Equal Partners' (YMEP) approach which targets young men as agents of change.

In the case of the Uganda project, the earmarking of Icelandic support to PSS means that the tangible gender-specific results (distribution of menstrual hygiene management kits) fall outside of this support. On the other hand, PSS training included inter alia SGBV session. That came in the 2nd Phase of Red Cross support which was however not supported by the MFA.

At the organisational level, the MFA has been working with the Icelandic Red Cross to integrate gender into programming more strongly through, for instance, improved gender criteria for the selection of projects and a revised grant making process which allows for engagement with grant applicants while a

project is at draft stage to provide more opportunity for ensuring gender considerations are taken into account. This is in the context of the signing of a new framework agreement between the MFA and the Red Cross (to provide more predictable funding going forward, rather than depending on individual appeals).

Key gender related results from the two projects have been:

☰ At the **individual** level:

- Clear – if modest – results have been reported in Malawi in terms of raised awareness of issues relating to the health of women and mothers.
- Menstrual hygiene management (MHM) support for women and adolescent girls in Bidibidi camp in Uganda – 3,000 MHM kits to be provided.

☰ At the **systemic** level:

- In Malawi, attendance at health clinics and delivery units has increased.
- Girl groups and YMEP have laid foundations for improved sharing of roles and responsibilities between girls and boys with regards to SRH.

Table 6.1 presents the key results in terms of the gender justice framework, these are summarised below.

Table 6.1: Results according to Gender Justice framework

Representation	Recognition	Redistribution
Malawi CBHFA		
<p>Targeted beneficiary selection, including differential interventions for girls and boys under the HIV/AIDS component.</p> <p>Among the volunteers, there were some wide gender discrepancies: 80 men and 8 women for nutrition training; 17 men and 1 woman for family planning agent training and 11 male and 2 female HSAs. (2015 Annual Report)</p> <p>No sex disaggregated data is provided on water committees, teachers trained, or evidence of strategic approach to selection of female/male volunteers.</p> <p>No reported effort to ensure equal representation of women in capacity building activities for MRCS.</p>	<p>The first objective/component of the project specifically targets women's and children's health. This is based on a clear problem statement and recognition of the specific issues facing women.</p> <p>Some of the women interviewed reported an increased feeling of empowerment through the skills they had acquired (farming and trade) and a greater autonomy through the income gained from the selling of food in the markets (they could now buy soap with the income generated).</p> <p>Under the malaria component, the project also tracked the percentage of women sleeping under LLIT nets.</p>	<p>Some participants in the Backyard Gardens scheme were able to save part of the income to buy a bigger piece of land in order to further increase their harvest for next year.</p> <p>The project succeeded in providing greater access to health services by women (and children).</p>
Uganda Population Movement		
<p>Clear assessment of at-risk population, disaggregated and identifying the disproportionate vulnerability of certain female groups; the intervention targets</p>	<p>Outreach to women's groups as part of the needs assessment identified specific needs relating to MHM. Other groups of women with special needs such as</p>	<p>No redistributive effects identified.</p>

Representation	Recognition	Redistribution
<p>more vulnerable groups including women.</p> <p>No results data, so currently not possible to assess actual impacts in terms of participation of women vs men.</p>	<p>pregnant and lactating mothers had not yet been fully identified.</p>	

- ≡ **Representation.** Targeting under both projects has identified priority female groups as beneficiaries. However, less attention has been paid to equality in participation in terms of delivery mechanisms – either through the volunteers recruited to support the projects or within implementing partners.
- ≡ **Recognition.** Project documents for both documents have demonstrated an appreciation and understanding of the specific needs of women and girls in the given context.
- ≡ **Redistribution.** The Malawi project has had small re-distributional effects through the ‘Backyard Gardens’ scheme.

Key conclusions

In spite of clear and robust gender strategies at the IFRC level, there is currently little evidence in these two projects of the principles and practices endorsed by the overarching strategies feeding through – and less so of any influence through the Icelandic funding. The projects are strongly designed and well-intentioned in the face of the specific needs of women, and directly address those needs with some tangible results emerging. These gender results are difficult to monitor because this is an emergency project and not yet completed. MHM is however being monitored and has focus groups and registration to improve procedures and better attend women’s needs. It may thus be difficult to compare a development project in Malawi and a humanitarian project in Uganda.

Specific lessons and recommendations

- ≡ The Malawi project design demonstrates exemplary commitment to gender not only as a thematic objective but as an operational principle, incorporating sex disaggregated data and provisions for ensuring gender equality through implementation.
- ≡ There is perhaps an opportunity for Icelandic support to work with partners at the country level to strengthen their implementation of strategies and guidelines in place at the IFRC level. This could be integrated into the framework agreement currently being prepared between the MFA and the Icelandic Red Cross.

6.2 ICRU deployments and humanitarian assistance

ICRU has aimed at ensuring gender balance in deployments of experts. In 2011, for the first time, more women were deployed. This is also when there was an increase in deployments of experts to humanitarian organizations vs deployments to NATO and peacekeeping missions. Since, focus has been on deploying gender experts as well as including gender issues in ToR for other deployments where possible. During the time period 2013-2017, 13% of the deployees were deployed as gender experts.

ICRU has special training guidelines that among other issues highlight the importance of gender equality.

ICRU's induction courses, are held once a year, and include a special module/session on gender training. UN Women in Iceland has delivered this session. All experts who are deployed have received the induction training in UNSCR 1325 through Iceland MFA’s cooperation with UN Women in Iceland.

Experts have also been sent to take special gender courses at the Nordic Gender Training Centre (SWEDINT).

Prior to deployment, deployees are also required to complete on-line course: Gender and humanitarian action: Different Needs - Equal Opportunities. This self-directed ecourse (3 hours) provides basic steps a humanitarian worker must take to ensure gender equality in programming. The course includes information on the core issues of gender and how it relates to other aspects of humanitarian response, including camp management and coordination, education, food issues, gender-based violence, health, livelihoods, non-food items, protection, shelter, water, sanitation, and hygiene.³³ In addition, sensitisation of deployees on SGBV is also undertaken through short film, such as the film entitled: *'To Serve with Pride: Zero Tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse'*. This is a 20-minute film made to raise awareness among UN and related personnel about the impact of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse on individuals and communities as well as providing clear obligations for all UN staff and deployees.³⁴

Humanitarian assistance:

Iceland has concluded four framework agreements with the following humanitarian agencies: OCHA, CERF, WFP and UNHCR. Furthermore, an agreement is underway with UNRWA and should be concluded by the end of this year. In all these agreements, Iceland includes a special reference to gender issues. This is also in line with Iceland's commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit.³⁵

This important work presents much opportunities for further development and deepening. Specific recommendations on gender and post conflict /humanitarian cooperation are included under the recommendation section below. It proposes some specific SDG related targets and indicators that could be both considered for deployment and Humanitarian assistance at outcome level in Iceland future gender strategies.

³³ Netnámskeið: <http://www.iasc-elearning.org/>

³⁴ As stated in the [Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse](#)

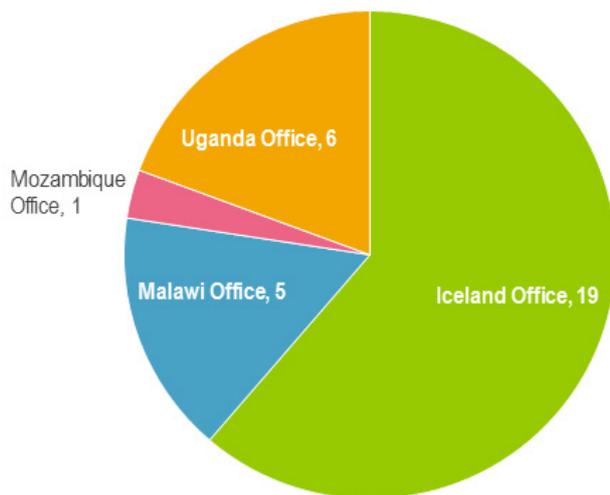
³⁵ <https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/explore-commitments/indv-commitments/?combine=iceland#search>

7 Organisational issues: Gender survey results

7.1 Survey overview

This survey was developed in order to: determine staff's experience of Iceland's Gender Equality Policy, their experience and opinions regarding gender mainstreaming, organisational capacity on gender more widely and gather staff assessments of performance in relation to gender equality commitments.

Figure 7.1: Profile of respondents by location



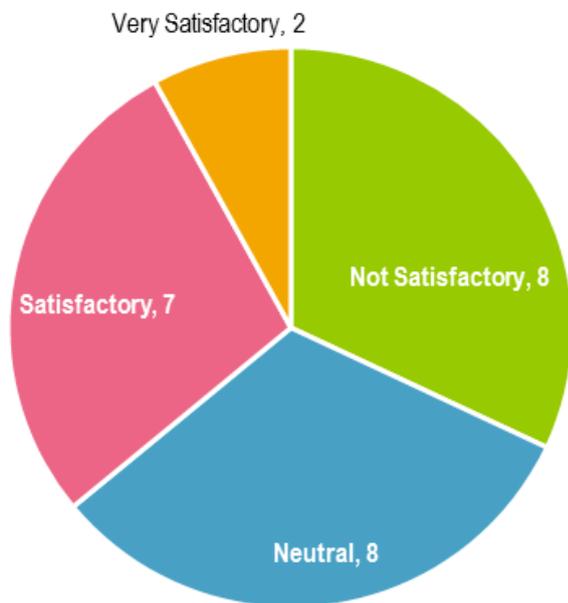
Awareness and understanding of the Gender Equality Policy

When asked about their *awareness of the Gender Equality Policy in Iceland's International Development Cooperation*, all staff were aware of the policy. However, two staff had not engaged with the policy and five further staff had low levels of engagement with the policy. Of the other respondents, those who assessed their engagement with the Gender Equality Policy at 100 percent (seven respondents) were predominantly those who were in high level positions across all offices. Only two respondents indicated that overall in their work they were not able to address or advocate for gender equality,

because it was not in their job description. However, 23 respondents had addressed or advocated for gender equality in: planning and designing of programmes (two respondents specified that gender was a key point of focus in all programmes), through M&E design and evaluations of programmes and through advocacy and policy-making, including with multilateral organisations, bilateral programmes and Iceida funded programmes. Respondents also pointed to addressing and advocating for gender equality in-house, noting equitable access and rewards, resources and opportunities for all staff regardless of gender, gender issues in HR – including encouraging women in the office to upgrade their education levels – and training on gender equality through sharing of staff expertise and during staff inductions.

When asked about *gender-related responsibilities within the organisation*, eight respondents stated that there was adequate leadership on gender; noted was leadership on policy commitments and programme leadership at the design and planning level. Three respondents indicated that they did not feel that leadership on gender was yet adequate, although it was close to being adequate; one respondent stressed that leadership on gender needed to be more consistently supported and prioritised. Six responses did not believe leadership on gender to be adequate, noting that the gender focal point in their office was only part-time, with another respondent stating that there is a lack of women in the top positions.

Figure 7.2: To what extent do you feel the current allocation of responsibility for addressing gender equality is satisfactory?



As can be seen in Figure 7.2, most respondents did not believe that the *current allocation of responsibility for addressing gender equality* was satisfactory (8). The same number of respondents gave a neutral response to this statement (8). Seven respondents believed that current allocation of responsibility was satisfactory, with only two respondents believing that allocation of responsibility for addressing gender equality was very satisfactory.

Reasons given for these responses varied greatly: some respondents believed that gender needed to be taken more seriously and that there was a lack of visibility of leadership on gender equality alongside a lack of gender experts. Another respondent noted that sometimes there do not seem to be mechanisms to ensure that staff are engaged and held accountable on gender equality.

Other respondents indicated that they were unclear about the current allocation of responsibility, or that the issue appears to be left

up to individuals and their own interest, rather than as a responsibility with direction from senior levels. Similarly, another respondent noted that whilst there were gender champions, this was not institutionalised and based on individual interest; one respondent suggested the importance of ensuring that all staff know it is their responsibility to ensure gender equality, but that a specified focal point is also needed to ensure these responsibilities are kept.

For those who answered ‘satisfactory’ or ‘very satisfactory,’ they noted that programmes and planning involve extensive gender mainstreaming before approval, that all staff were committed to gender equality, although some were better trained and concerned than others and that there was engagement from both internal and external stakeholders on gender equality.

Respondents were given four options and asked to identify which they thought would best fit the organisation. These options were: i) a gender unit at top management level within HQ with qualified expertise providing leadership and gender advice to the rest of the staff, ii) an intensive gender training for all managers coupled with the responsibility for integrating gender equality in their respective department, sectors and embassies, iii) a part-time gender expert positioned in each department, sector and embassy at operational level and iv) a combination of the above. Ten respondents identified Option (ii), and ten stated that Option (iv) would be the best fit, with only two respondents identifying Option (i), and three respondents identifying Option (iii).

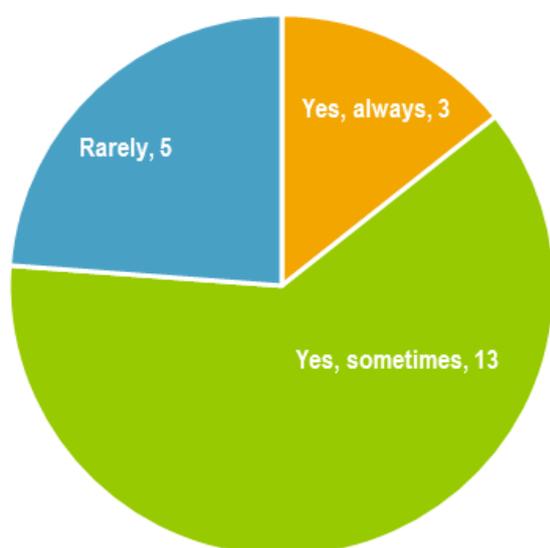
Those who preferred a combination of all these approaches believed that Options (i)-(iii) combined would be best. This was because there need to be gender experts (or focal points) in all units and offices, as well as gender training for all staff alongside an overall gender unit based at HQ. Essentially, most of these respondents believed that in order for gender to be properly integrated, Options (i)-(iii) all needed to be implemented as well as commitment at country level and programming level. Gender experts at every level of the organisation, as well as better knowledge and commitment to gender equality by all managers, was another reason given for the need for a combination of these options.

In the final question regarding leadership, respondents were asked about how committed they thought leadership within the organisation is to gender in development cooperation in terms of programming,

implementation and monitoring and evaluation. In terms of programming, 12 respondents rated leadership commitment as over 75 percent. 11 respondents rated leadership commitment as between 50-75 percent, and two respondents rated commitment as between 25-50 percent. In terms of implementation, seven respondents rated commitment as over 75 percent, nine respondents as from 50-75 percent, with nine respondents rating leadership commitment on gender equality in implementation between 18-49 percent. In terms of monitoring and evaluation, 11 rated leadership commitment at over 75 percent, seven between 50-75 percent and seven between 0-40 percent.

Interesting to note is that those in leadership positions tended to rate leadership commitment in each of these areas in the 75-100 percent range, with many rating it at 100 percent, whilst those in less senior positions generally rated leadership commitment as being lower. There may therefore, be an issue with communication of leadership commitment to gender.

Figure 7.3: Do you feel that a gender analysis is regularly used?



Assessment of organisational capacity on gender

As can be seen from Figure 7.3, the majority of respondents did believe that a gender analysis was used ‘sometimes’ (13 respondents), three believed that gender analysis was always used, and five respondents thought that gender analysis was rarely used.

When respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statement, ‘*performance regarding gender equality is well monitored and reported within the organisation*’, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement (9). Two respondents strongly agreed. Six respondents responded neutrally to this statement and four respondents disagreed with the statement.

When asked *what was missing in terms of M&E related to gender equality*, respondents mostly

mentioned gender-sensitive indicators and output indicators and the need to incorporate these in project plans and in M&E frameworks from the beginning. One respondent felt that there is a lack of accountability and that approaches to M&E in terms of gender are inconsistent and another felt that there needed to be more gender experts involved in M&E.

When asked to what extent they agreed with the statement ‘*gender equality within the organisation is given adequate human and financial resources*’ six respondents rated their agreement at between 75-100 percent, eight respondents at between 50-75 percent and 10 respondents between 14-40 percent. Suggestions on *how gender resources could be better prioritised or allocated* were wide ranging: that every approved programme should have gender equality specific actions reflected in the budget, systematic use and better focus of existing tools developed within financial and human resources to promote gender equality and that there is a need for gender auditing of finances and gender responsive budgeting and planning.

When asked whether ‘*My knowledge and training on gender equality is good*’, the majority of respondents agreed (9) and three agreed strongly. Seven respondents gave a neutral answer and only two respondents disagreed. When asked if they felt that they *needed further gender training*, 12 respondents believed that this is essential, seven believed that further gender training would be useful but not essential and only one respondent believed they did not need further training.

Respondents indicated that the main areas in which they wanted training was: basic training on theories and concepts related to gender, gender auditing and budgeting, gender-sensitive M&E, practical training regarding gender equality in programming and implementation (and specific training for specific projects – training on all new projects). One staff member also indicated that a refresher on the UNU-GEST training from 2014 would be beneficial to staff.

Finally, when asked about *what the best incentives for integrating gender within the organisation* would be, six respondents believed that *'integrating gender results aspects in staff's personal evaluations'* would be beneficial, one respondent believed that *'rewarding gender champions across departments/sectors/embassies'* would be effective, one respondent said *'organising gender competitions across departments/sectors/embassies'* and one respondent specified *'delivering administrative sanctions for staff obstructing gender equality results'*. Seven believed there should be a combination of all of the above incentives, whilst four gave other suggestions, including: having a gender expert with the responsibility of ensuring gender equality results are reached and having clear guidelines on gender equality.

Figure 7.4: Are quantitative and qualitative gender indicators adequately included and useful in multilateral and bilateral programme documents



Assessment of organisational performance regarding gender

Respondents were asked whether quantitative and qualitative gender indicators were adequately included and useful in multilateral and bilateral programme documents. As can be seen in Figure 7.4, seven respondents believed they were, five respondents did not think that they were adequately included. Two respondents did not know, and five respondents gave other options, including: that generally this is lacking, and due to a lack of resources no further work has been done on this; that they think this is done in bilateral programme documents, but are not sure about multilateral programme documents; and that qualitative indicators were not included, but quantitative indicators were.

When asked to consider projects and programmes funded by Iceland, respondents were asked if they felt that there are current M&E system in place to monitor gender equality in implementation and impact. Only two respondents believed that these

systems were in place and were adequate. Eight believed that they were in place, but were not adequate, or that improvements could be made. Eight respondents believed that systems were in place, but only for some programmes. Only one respondent believed that these systems were not in place.

When asked to what extent respondents *believe that gender equality commitment are fulfilled in practice*, seven respondents rated their response at being 75-100 percent, seven respondents between 50-75 percent and five respondents between 25-41 percent. In response to the question asking *whether there have been internal or external barriers that have facilitated or hindered achievement of the Gender Equality Policy's objectives'* four respondents did not think there had been any barriers. Other responses mentioned: a lack of guidelines; high workload; a lack of leadership; a lack of training; a lack of interest; external barriers within bilateral programmes, such as compliance by local governments; people 'talking the talk, but not walking the walk'; the side-lining of some staff who have been strong advocates of gender and context-specific barriers such as religious beliefs, cultural beliefs and education levels.

Gender training and support from higher levels was identified as useful in being able to mitigate any barriers.

Key conclusions

There is a good awareness of the Gender Equality Policy, and generally staff are engaged with it and have used it in their work. Staff responses to leadership on gender equality within the organisation were mixed, but the majority did feel that leadership was based on individual interest rather than being institutionalised. Those at higher levels within the organisation thought that leadership was **more** committed to gender equality in programming, implementation and M&E; however, those not in leadership positions ranked this commitment much lower. There may, therefore, be a problem with the **communication** of leadership commitment to gender equality. Overall, staff were happy with gender analysis and performance monitoring and reporting on gender equality, although improvements were identified as being needed through gender mainstreaming in programme planning and in M&E frameworks and a need for gender-specific outcome indicators. Staff also mostly believed that there should be better resource allocation for gender equality. Most staff thought their knowledge and training was satisfactory, but wanted more training and in general are very committed to ensuring that Iceland's commitment to gender equality is 'the best.' Systems of monitoring and evaluation in funded programmes were generally satisfactory, although staff indicated that improvements could be still made. Most staff had not experienced many barriers to the Gender Equality Policy's objectives, but overall a lack of leadership and training seemed to be the key barriers.

Specific lessons

- ≡ Better communication and designation of gender equality responsibilities and commitments is needed. An option of a core unit at HQ with gender experts was supported, as well as the need for gender focal points in all offices and regular training for all staff on gender equality.
- ≡ Strong leadership is essential, and all of those in senior positions (not only female staff³⁶) must communicate their commitment to gender equality effectively.
- ≡ There is a need for better integration of gender equality in programme planning and M&E frameworks from the outset, with a need for gender disaggregated data.
- ≡ Resource allocation for gender equality needed to be improved, with gender sensitive budgeting and gender equality allocations within budgets.
- ≡ Training for all programme staff is essential and continuous and regular training on gender equality is both wanted and needed.

³⁶ There was some mismatch of thinking – some people seem to think that having 'women in management positions' or 'we have 60% management women' – are reasons why leadership on gender equality is good, but it should not just be the job of women in the organisation. Overall, however, staff of both genders recognised the need for their strong leadership on gender equality.

8 General conclusions and recommendations

8.1 Overall conclusions

- ≡ What **results** has the MFA's policy for 'Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-operation' achieved with regards to promoting gender equality, mainstreaming and women's empowerment, and what have been the main challenges?

8.1.1 Results achieved from multilateral support and partnership

Iceland's global advocacy work on gender equality has included the following aspects:

- ≡ Iceland's approach has focused on a clearly defined choice of multilateral agencies that either promote gender equality as their core mandate or have a clear gender equality policy. This has been the basis for Iceland's screening of multilateral agencies and the main justification for their choice and selection.
- ≡ Building strong partnership with gender equality and women's rights oriented multilateral organisations such as UN Women – providing both financial support and technical assistance. Iceland is one of the biggest donors to UN Women, per capita.
- ≡ With other multilateral organisations such as World Bank, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA, some of which Iceland supports with core funding and earmarked funding (including country programmes and humanitarian aid), Iceland consistently emphasises the importance of implementing their gender policies and strategies at board meeting level.³⁷
- ≡ Iceland's global advocacy on gender equality was particularly visible on the HeForShe campaign³⁸, SDG negotiations and IDA18 negotiations where Iceland consistently addressed the importance of high aspirations regarding gender equality as a prerequisite for reaching the SDGs.³⁹

Furthermore, Iceland has been visibly and actively advocating for gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and vulnerable people in UN intergovernmental fora, such as the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This political support, individually and as part of broader constituencies, has helped to advance the mandates and priorities of UN agencies such as UN Women and UNFPA in various UN platforms. This has included issues such as SRHR, maternal health, gender-based violence, and the rights and needs of women and young people, including adolescent girls. Although Iceland's gender policy did not include a specific strategy on how to work with multilateral organisations on gender equality, Iceland has nevertheless had a visible contribution to gender equality at multilateral level.

8.1.2 Results achieved through bilateral support

At bilateral level, there is clear and documentable evidence of results achieved. In the water and sanitation and maternal health sectors, key results have been achieved in meeting women's practical needs, and improving access to basic social services and rights. In the education sector, support to keeping girls at school has fulfilled both their practical needs for material and practical conditions to access school as well as their strategic interests in opening up new opportunities for a better future. Gender results at bilateral level are thus mainly situated at the micro level, in terms of changes to access to and quality of social services (water and sanitation, maternal health and education). At the individual level, these have addressed women's and girls' practical needs and basic social rights, in some cases

³⁷ See for example, gender statement UNDP EB Board meeting

³⁸ Further analysed in the section below related to UN Women.

³⁹ See IDA 18 Talking Points.

clearly saving lives. Results at the individual level related to women's strategic interests could be identified to a more limited extent within education.

Because the gender focus of Iceland's bilateral country programme is enshrined in the MDGs and essentially focuses on increasing women's and girls' access to basic social services, results in terms of strategic interests and transformative structural changes for women and girls are, as expected, more limited. To bring about strategic and transformative gender results, the focus on the fulfilment of women's basic social needs and rights would need to be complemented with other priorities addressing the contextual socio-cultural barriers women and girls face on the path to gender equality. Social services and rights are certainly fundamental, but insufficient to fully address the complexity of root causes that maintain women and girls within socio-economic and cultural inequalities. Women's strategic interests include their economic empowerment and changes to the (formal and informal) normative systems in which gender inequalities remain cemented in practice and violations of women's human rights are still legitimised in many socio-cultural contexts. This is why the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have taken a much broader and holistic approach, compared with the MDGs, to addressing gender equality, with a particular focus on women's human rights.

Although Iceland does not have an explicit human rights based approach (HRBA) in its Gender Equality Policy as such, there are nevertheless interesting elements of an HRBA that are clearly identifiable at the bilateral level. Iceland's work across sectors, with both rights holders as beneficiaries of the infrastructures built at community level and with the duty bearers in the regional administrations, has been praised by most partners. Iceland has come a long way in using genuine participatory approaches in its development cooperation and distinguishes itself amongst donors for its 'hands-off' style, very much promoting full ownership at local authority level. Thus, Icelandic cooperation is already, to some extent, implicitly working with key HRBA principles of participation, non-discrimination, accountability and transparency.

The operationalisation of the gender policy across priority sectors, has, in practice, resulted in the increased participation of women (*representation*) in improved social services (water and sanitation, education and health); attention to their special needs in the alleviation of their domestic burdens (*recognition*) such as the long distances women have to walk to fetch water, to give birth or to go to school. The more limited aspect of gender justice related results is that of the *redistribution of power and resources* which this evaluation has only been able to evidence with the increased representation of women at decision making level in the water and sanitation committees.

As well as thematic limitations within the MDG framework, Iceland's operationalisation of its gender policy has faced challenges commonly found across a number of evaluations of multilateral and bilateral gender policies. These have repeatedly demonstrated that the gender mainstreaming approach in vogue within international development from the mid-nineties (post-Beijing) onwards has insufficiently targeted outcome and impact level in terms of 'gender transformational changes'. Rather, it largely focused either on including non-specific gender mainstreaming standard paragraphs in project documents or on output level results such as the quantitative participation of women in development projects and sex disaggregation of data.

8.1.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, this leaves Iceland with a solid basis from which to pursue and target specific gender equality outcomes, impacts and transformational changes both at multilateral and bilateral level, as well as strengthening synergies and coherence across all its various channels of support for gender equality. This would require engaging in an overall process of reflection to develop a full gender theory of change as part of the formulation process of the new gender policy. This would help to determine the vision, overall impact and specific outcomes targeted in relation to the SDGs as well as to assess the relevant risks and assumptions. This process requires consideration and careful balancing of a number of dimensions:

- ≡ At conceptual level, there is a good foundation and a clear opportunity for a) closer integration of human rights and gender equality through an explicit and combined human rights based approach and b) a broadening of gender thematic focus areas within the new SDG framework.
- ≡ Iceland's added value (documented results) achieved so far needs to be maintained and possibly deepened and replicated.
- ≡ These documented results need to be complemented with other gender thematic areas considering women's strategic interests such as women's economic empowerment and other SDG 5 targets.
- ≡ Strengthening the linkages and coherence between Iceland's different areas of support would contribute to maximising gender results.

At organisational level, there seems to be a good awareness of the Gender Equality Policy, and generally staff feel engaged with it and have used it in their work. Perceptions of leadership on gender equality within the organisation were, on the other hand, mixed. Overall, a lack of leadership and training seemed to be the key barriers for most staff to fulfilling gender equality objectives at organisational level.

- ≡ Scope for improvement was also identified in the frequency and level of gender analysis in programming and in performance monitoring and reporting on gender equality as well as the need for gender-specific outcome indicators.
- ≡ Finally, better resource allocation for gender equality was strongly highlighted.

8.2 Recommendations for policy and programmes

The evaluation's overall recommendations for gender policy making and programming respond to the following question and requirements:

- ≡ How can the MFA **further strengthen its work in development cooperation on gender equality and women's empowerment**, specifically in relation to poverty reduction and promotion of human rights? What specific tools and actions can be deployed for this purpose?
- ≡ Recommend **practical means for increasing the gender equality focus** of current and future programme policies, plans and activities, to more effectively address disadvantaged women's practical and strategic needs and priorities, gender equality, women's rights and male roles and masculinities in particular with reference to poverty reduction.
- ≡ Provide **practical and actionable recommendations** to further evolve and improve work on gender equality in development cooperation and provide input to a new Gender Equality Policy for Iceland's international development cooperation.

8.2.1 Policy recommendations

1. **For the design of the new gender policy, it is recommended that either Iceland's MFA as a whole or the Directorate of International Development Cooperation, engage in a full theory of change process and exercise to define its objectives, impact and outcomes related to gender equality and women's human rights within the framework provided by the SDGs. It is recommended that Iceland follows clear and already well developed Theory of Change guidelines, such as for example, the theory of change guidelines developed for the UN, which could be easily adapted to match Iceland's needs.**⁴⁰

This could provide the basis for the preparation of a *strategic gender framework* and could be structured as follows:

⁴⁰ <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Theory-of-Change-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces.pdf>

- ≡ a first part describing the MFA's vision and overall expected impact with regard to gender equality and women's rights;
- ≡ the definition of an effective approach such as, for example, an HRBA and a focus on women's human rights as targeted by the SDGs;
- ≡ a definition and interpretation of gender equality specifying the gender related concepts Iceland is keen to work with and deepen in its multilateral and bilateral development cooperation. From the evaluation's findings, the gender related concepts that would be interesting to continue and/or to further explore would be: gender equality, gender justice, women's human rights, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, women's economic rights and male roles and masculinities.

2. The new strategic plan could incorporate the idea of a results-based framework working on a few key strategic gender outcomes that Iceland wishes to target specifically that relate to the SDGs. Under Monitoring and evaluation section below, some suggestions for SDGs indicators that could fit current programmes are highlighted.

Integrating gender equality strategically where most relevant and where Iceland could have a particular added value would be a basis for focusing resources, thereby avoiding the standard and unspecific gender paragraphs found in programming documents.

In terms of possible gender strategic outcomes, beyond integrating gender equality in the sectors currently supported, Iceland's MFA, could consider further developing the following strategic gender outcomes which relate to SDG targets:

- ≡ **Women's economic rights** – including access to formal employment markets; ending labour exploitation; equal pay; redistribution of economic resources between women and men; further development of corporate social responsibility in women's rights; further development of human rights and business principles related to gender equality. This strategic area is a niche in which Iceland already has a comparative advantage at global level on the issue of 'equal pay'. This is also an area which is increasingly being addressed in light of an emphasis on trade and the private sector which needs to be balanced with an HRBA to ensure inclusive and equitable economic growth – and the equitable redistribution on resources between women and men. It could be deepened and further consolidated to ensure women's rights are duly respected and protected. For example, support to specific multilateral programmes could build on current partnerships with, for instance, UN Women and the World Bank as well as exploring relevant partnerships that focus specifically on women's economic empowerment with, for example, the ILO, or UNDP's new regional programme for sub-Saharan Africa on gender justice and economic empowerment. At bilateral level, all interventions within social sectors have shown a need for strengthening women's economic empowerment and improving the distribution of resources. Specific activities related to access to women's economic rights could be further integrated into bilateral programmes (these are included as specific recommendations in relevant sections of the report).
- ≡ A focus on **sexual and reproductive health and rights** (SRHR) should be continued at multilateral level and deepened at bilateral level with the special involvement of men and boys. A focus on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) could complement and deepen current work in SRHR.
- ≡ Given the increased number of women deployees sent by Iceland to conflict and post-conflict countries and the introductory training course provided on UNSCR 1325, the focus on **women's active roles in conflict and post conflict situations** is an important initiative which needs to be strengthened and deepened at training and programmatic level (including seeking more programming opportunities with different academic and multilateral partners such as UN

agencies). This should be supported with documentable evidence and measurable outcome indicators.

In sum, without unrealistically expanding the thematic gender focus too broadly and spreading resources too thinly (a legitimate concern) the evaluation team believes Iceland could make a difference on these strategic areas beyond the development sectors currently supported, thereby deepening results and impact as well as further substantiating its contribution to gender equality and women's human rights.

8.2.2 Monitoring and evaluation

3. It is recommended that gender outcomes and indicators in the new gender strategic framework are well defined, measurable, impact oriented and closely related to SDG targets and indicators.

Gender is often integrated in a standard paragraph under cross-cutting issues both in the programme documents and M&E / evaluation reports. There is thus great potential for upgrading, reviewing, expanding and deepening the quality of gender objectives, outcomes, outputs and indicators across the programme cycle (design, appraisal, mid-term review and evaluation). Specific questionnaires and monitoring tools at field level would also need to be developed or revised accordingly. This could be undertaken together with the preparation of the new gender strategic framework and the SDG framework, to ensure a consistent and coherently integrated M&E section.

In relation to Iceland's current programming the following example of indicators could be considered:

Sustainable Development Goals & indicators

1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
1.4.1	Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services
3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
3.1.1	Maternal mortality ratio
3.1.2	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel
3.2.1	Under-five mortality rate
3.2.2	Neonatal mortality rate
3.7.1	Proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods
3.7.2	Adolescent birth rate (aged 10-14 years; aged 15-19 years) per 1,000 women in that age group
4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
4.1.1	Proportion of children and young people:(a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and(c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and(ii) mathematics, by sex
4.5.1	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict- affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated
4.a.1	Proportion of schools with access to:(a) electricity; (b) the Internet for pedagogical purposes; (c) computers for pedagogical purposes; (d) adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; (e) basic drinking water; (f) single- sex basic

Sustainable Development Goals & indicators

sanitation facilities; and (g) basic handwashing facilities (as per the WASH indicator definitions)

5 Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location

6 Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, by sex, age and location
6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water, by sex, age and location

In relation to areas of intervention that the new gender policy could consider deepening such as Women's economic rights, SRHR and women's active roles in conflict and post conflict situations the following SDG targets and indicators could be further considered and discussed within the Theory of Change exercise:

Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators

5	Target 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	5.6.1 Proportion of women aged 15-49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use and reproductive health care
	Target 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws	5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure
	Target 5.b Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex
8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	
	Target 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex

productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	
Target 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	<p>8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities</p> <p>8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>

16 Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Target 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	<p>16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age</p> <p>16.1.2 Conflict-related deaths per 100,000 population, by sex, age and cause</p> <p>16.1.3 Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months</p> <p>16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live</p>
Target 16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	<p>16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation</p> <p>16.2.3 Proportion of young women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18</p>
Target 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	<p>16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions</p> <p>16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group</p>

8.2.3 Recommendations for training and organisational strategies and options

The recommendations below address the specific terms of reference (TOR) requirement:

- ≡ To **recommend a training strategy** to improve understanding of all MFA staff in development cooperation and partners, to facilitate improved implementation of gender mainstreaming in all programme areas.

Proposed training strategy outline

4. **Following the formulation of the new gender strategic framework, it is recommended that a gender training strategy for all MFA staff be articulated around two components as follows:**

- ≡ Training modules based and structured around Iceland's new gender equality policy, women's human rights and the SDG strategic framework. The training should thus be further divided into:
 - a conceptual part ensuring a common understanding and adherence to Iceland's vision and definition of key gender related concepts, SDGs and selected implementing approaches across all MFA's departments;
 - an operational part relating to thematic priorities /sectors to ensure common skills are acquired in the implementation of the new gender strategic framework. This should integrate case studies from actual implementation experience. The point of such training would be to make it as practical and as tailor-made as possible with solid ownership amongst all MFA staff and departments, ensuring a common understanding, adherence and implementation incentive straight from the start.
- ≡ To complement the first component, the second component could provide opportunities for all staff to have access and exposure to further external training related to gender equality (as relevant to the specificities of each department's work) that could act as an organisational incentive as well as upgrading individual skills. In this respect, and in line with the internal training budget available, staff should be encouraged to search for external training with international organisations as well as local gender and human rights NGOs that could be of interest to them in furthering their knowledge and improving implementation.

An adequate budget should be set aside for all MFA staff to explore gender training courses provided by key partners such as UN Women and UNU-GEST.

5. **With regard to Iceland's gender training of external partners, there are further synergies and opportunities between UNU-GEST and Icelandic bilateral cooperation at the country level that can be explored to strengthen coordination on the following aspects:**

- ≡ the selection of partners to be trained – this selection could focus both on junior and promising trainees as well as on senior management to work with staff who might be more reluctant to fully absorb gender related concepts;
- ≡ the length of the training – which could be shortened to two /three weeks to avoid draining scarce resources from local authorities, or to allow for more opportunities for training;
- ≡ the follow up after the course – which could be detailed into an action plan with the allocated budgetary resources for each trainee factored into Iceland's country programme budget;
- ≡ pre-departure agreement that the knowledge acquired will be effectively used to the benefit of Iceland's objectives for achieving gender outcomes either at bilateral or multilateral level.

Organisational recommendations

6. **There is a need to engage in further internal reflection and discuss different organisational set up options stemming from the benchmarking and survey results as part of the reflection process on the new gender policy.**

- ≡ In the evaluation team's view, the most pragmatic option would be for gender equality to be strengthened, consolidated and coherent at leadership level first and foremost. This could then be complemented by a system of rotating gender focal points in all departments of the MFA.
- ≡ The responsibilities of the gender focal points would need to have clear terms of reference and form a part of the staff member's individual competence framework that is evaluated every year. In this way, the MFA can avoid the risk that gender is isolated in a possibly costly 'gender unit'. Instead, gender becomes part of the shared knowledge that all MFA staff (given appropriate training), men and women, would fully engage with in their work.
- ≡ Last but not least, adequate and clearly earmarked gender related resources would need to be allocated both at programming and organisational level.

In conclusion, all general recommendations above, in conjunction with the specific recommendations and lessons in the different sections of the report, need to be further discussed within the MFA. A first step towards this end materialised in the Evaluation seminar session held in October 2017 which marked the conclusion of this evaluation process but the beginning of Iceland's internal process for the formulation of the new gender policy and strategic framework or possibly gender section within the MFA's new development policy.

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Gender Equality Policy in Iceland's International Development Co-operation

Background

Promoting gender equality is a priority in Icelandic development cooperation and a specific objective of the Parliamentary Resolution on the Strategy for Iceland's International Development Co-operation 2013-2016. [...] This is based on the conviction that gender equality is a human right, as equality is in fact one of the core principles of the concept of human rights. Evidence shows that in societies where the struggle for gender equality has been most successful, the social and economic rights of the general public are greater. The vision of gender equality in Icelandic development cooperation is also based on the assumption that gender equality is a prerequisite for progress and development.

The above statement comes from the Policy for Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (the Policy) of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Iceland ("MFA").⁴¹ The Policy stipulates that efforts shall be made to promote gender equality and empower women in Iceland's development co-operation, both through gender mainstreaming and through specific measures. The gender equality policy came into effect in March 2013, to provide guidance in Iceland's development cooperation. At that time bilateral cooperation was carried out by the Icelandic International Development Agency ("ICEIDA") and multilateral cooperation by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In January 2016 ICEIDA was merged with the MFA, which is now responsible for all of Iceland's development cooperation. ICEIDA as a brand name has, however, been retained.

Iceland's gender equality policy for development co-operation has four focus areas which reflect the emphasis of the Parliamentary Resolution on the Strategy for Iceland's International Development Cooperation 2013-2016 (Strategy), 1) education, health, 3) natural resources and the environment and 4) women, peace and security.⁴² In line with the Policy, efforts are made to promote gender equality and empower women in Iceland's development co-operation through gender mainstreaming and through specific measures. According to the Policy, gender mainstreaming shall be a key focus in all official development assistance. Gender equality is considered a cross-cutting theme which means that all development projects and cooperation ventures shall be analysed with regard to gender equality.

All ICEIDA's country strategies, for instance, included gender equality emphasis and all cooperation programmes and projects include gender checklists as part of the preparation work and implementation. When it comes to international/multilateral organisations and other partners, MFA uses every opportunity to highlight the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment. The emphasis on gender equality is also reflected in cooperation with key multilateral organizations, including UN Women, UNICEF, the World Bank as well as support to the United Nations University Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST).

⁴¹ <https://www.mfa.is/media/throunarsamvinna/UTR-GenderEquality-2013.pdf>

⁴² Issues pertaining to women, peace and security, are under Iceland's national action plan on UNSCR 1325, which has been subject to a review in 2016.

It is in this context that the MFA is commissioning an evaluation of its Gender Policy with reference to its strategies, plans and projects. This evaluation will focus on the effectiveness of the Policy and efforts to promote and implement gender mainstreaming and gender specific activities in Iceland's development cooperation. The evaluation shall assess the Policy and institutional mechanisms in the context of all MFA's development cooperation, including multilateral cooperation, humanitarian assistance, Country Strategy papers and on-going programmes in Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda as well as regional projects. A key objective of the evaluation is to go beyond analysis of past and present results and challenges and provide the MFA with concrete and actionable recommendations and toolkit on how to strengthen its work on gender equality and gender specific activities in its multilateral and bilateral development cooperation, and on this basis provide recommendations for a new action oriented Gender Equality Policy in Iceland's international development cooperation.

The undertaking of this assignment therefore represents MFA's Iceland on-going efforts to improve its processes for work on gender equality in its development cooperation.

Purpose and Rationale

In the Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation, the promotion of gender equality it is stated as a priority and a specific objective. The Strategy underlines the importance of equal opportunities for women and men to have an impact on, participate in, and enjoy the benefits of projects that Iceland supports. It highlights gender equality and women's empowerment as both a cross-cutting issue and a specific objective. The Development Strategy further stipulates that in external evaluations of development projects, a specific assessment shall be made of gender mainstreaming.

Despite good intentions for mainstreaming gender in international development, recent findings from gender evaluations and reviews⁴³ indicate that gender mainstreaming in development work has not yielded concrete results for gender equality.⁴⁴ As the African Development Bank notes in their review: "Currently, there is a strong informal perception that mainstreaming gender equality is consistently underperforming across the majority of donor organizations."⁴⁵ This implies that organizations need to take a critical look at their strategies for gender equality and find effective, practical and actionable means to address it in their development cooperation. Similarly, while MFA/ICEIDA have made various efforts to incorporate gender aspects in all of its projects and cooperation, various project evaluations and reviews have indicated that concrete actions and results may have been lacking.

In light of the above, MFA is preparing this Terms of Reference for an external evaluation of its Gender Policy in international development and its implementation, including results and challenges. This evaluation will provide recommendations on how MFA can further strengthen its efforts in incorporating gender aspects into project planning and implementation of its development cooperation, and provide recommendations for a new Gender equality policy with a practical and actionable focus. The results will also assist

⁴³ See e.g. Brouwers (2014) Beyond Repetitive Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming, In Evaluation Matters March 2014.

⁴⁴ See for example: Beyond Repetitive Evaluations of Gender Mainstreaming.
http://independentevaluation.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/opev/Documents/Evaluation_Matters_March_2014_-_Gender_Inequality_and_You_-_article_1_.pdf

⁴⁵ http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Evaluation-Reports-_Shared-With-OPEV_/Evaluation_Mainstreaming%20Gender%20Equality_Synthesis%20Report_www.pdf

implementing partners to improve the implementation of gender mainstreaming and gender specific activities in programmes and projects.

Working effectively towards gender equality is meant to be an on-going process in all of MFA's work in the field of development cooperation. Therefore it is essential for all aspects of its operations, from planning to evaluation, to get information on how this process is evolving and what can be done to address any obstacles or shortcomings. Importantly, the evaluation is meant to go beyond simply pointing out challenges or ineffectiveness in implementing gender mainstreaming, and provide concrete and results-oriented recommendations.

Scope and focus of the evaluation

Scope of the assignment

- To provide an evaluation of the effectiveness and results of MFA's policy on *Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-operation*, and related institutional mechanisms and processes.
- Review and analyse Iceland's gender engagement in multilateral development cooperation, bilateral development programmes and projects, peace building activities and humanitarian aid with reference to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- To recommend practical means for increasing the gender equality focus of current and future programme policies, plans and activities, to more effectively address disadvantaged women's practical and strategic needs and priorities, in particular with reference to poverty reduction.
- To recommend a training strategy to improve understanding of all MFA staff in development cooperation and partners, to facilitate improved implementation of gender mainstreaming in all programme areas.
- To provide practical and actionable recommendations to further evolve and improve work on gender equality in development cooperation and provide input to a new Gender Equality Policy for Iceland's international development cooperation.
- To conduct a workshop and a seminar in Iceland for MFA's Directorate of International Development Cooperation and other development practitioners where the results and recommendations of the evaluation are presented and discussed.

Evaluation questions:

Two key questions are posed for this assignment:

- (1) What results has the MFA policy for *Gender Equality in Iceland's International Development Co-operation* achieved with regards to promoting gender equality, mainstreaming and women's empowerment and what have been the main challenges?
- (2) How can MFA further strengthen its work in development cooperation on gender equality and women's empowerment, specifically in relation to poverty reduction and promotion of human rights. What specific tools and actions can be deployed for this purpose?

This assignment is therefore both positioned as a summative and formative evaluation. It is meant to aid improvement in future work, emphasising learning from past practices to further assist MFA to contribute towards gender-equitable development with a focus on poverty reduction and human rights.

Sub-questions are posed in relation to MFA's operations in development cooperation in general. The evaluation shall address, but not be limited to, the following sub- questions:

- To what extent have country strategies in partner and focus countries and bilateral programmes and projects embraced and implemented MFA's gender policy and gender checklists to promote gender equality?
- Do Partnership or Project Documents show linkages with gender equality policies of the respective partner countries or those of multilateral organizations?
- To what extent has Iceland as a donor and development partner achieved results or contributed to more attention to gender issues within key partner multilateral organizations, through its advocacy for gender equality?
- To what extent is gender equality given adequate consideration in Iceland's support to multilateral organizations and NGOs, both in the field of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation?
- To what extent are human and financial resources adequate for integrating gender in programing, management and monitoring processes?
- To what extent have differences in needs of women and men been taken into account in programme planning and implementation?
- To what extent are responsibilities clear for integrating gender considerations into the programmes and other forms of cooperation?
- How can incentives be created to promote gender equality, both internally at the Directorate and externally among programme partners?
- Can MFA make further use of linkages with other organizations and NGOs, for instance the United Nations University Gender Equality Studies Training Programme (UNU-GEST), in its work on gender equality?

Methodology

Methods: data collection, analysis, involvement of stakeholders

The study shall be conducted through a consultative process and with input from MFA staff, implementation partners, recipients as well as a review of relevant documents and studies. The review shall use information documented in earlier reports and from key documents together with data collected in the final evaluation. The evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with the prevailing OECD DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation.

The methods will include, but not be limited to:

- Review MFA relevant documents in development cooperation, including Policies, Country Strategy Papers, Project Documents, Mid-term reviews, Final Evaluations etc.
- Review relevant Gender Equality Policies in the respective countries and those of Multilateral Institutions with which MFA cooperates (Including World Bank, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, UNHCR, OCHA, UNRWA and the four UNU Training Programmes in Iceland).

- Interview MFA staff involved in development cooperation.
- Fieldwork in Malawi, Uganda and Palestine, including interviews with MFA staff and implementing partners as well as recipients in development projects (expected around 5 days in each country). The proposal shall budget for flights and travel expenses accordingly.
- Telephone interviews with key partner multilateral institutions (gender experts)

In the technical proposal the Consultant shall elaborate on the methodology to be applied in the evaluation.

Process and Deliverables

The Project is budgeted with an estimated input from the consultant of up to 14 weeks (70 days), to be delivered over a period of maximum 20 weeks. It is expected that the evaluation will commence in March 2017.

The deliverables in the consultancy consist of the following activities and outputs:

Expected activities:

1. Kick off meeting (in Iceland) and review of key documents for Inception report, delivered to evaluation management
2. Data gathering, interviews and analysis (in Iceland and telephone interviews),
3. Interviews and field work focusing on partner institutions, recipients and outputs and outcomes of projects in Malawi, in Uganda and Palestine.
4. Data analysis and preparation of first draft report, delivered to evaluation management
5. Preparation of second draft report based on feedback
6. Presentation of revised second draft report to stakeholders through a workshop in Iceland
7. Seminar on gender equality in development cooperation, to be held in Iceland for MFA's Directorate of International Development Cooperation and partners, including UNU programmes and NGOs
8. Preparation of final report based on feedback.

Deliverables

1. An Inception report detailing the method, process and workplan of the evaluation.
2. First draft report for distribution to main partners. Focus on preliminary results of document review, fieldwork and interviews.
3. Second draft report, including an outline of how feedback was addressed and recommendations.
4. One day workshop in Iceland, where the consultant presents the main findings and recommendations of the evaluation and discusses in detail recommendations for improving gender mainstreaming in development projects. In particular, this workshop shall present and gain feedback on the recommended toolkit and activities to improve MFA's work on gender mainstreaming in development cooperation.
5. One day seminar on gender equality in development cooperation for MFA and others, to be held in Iceland, after the workshop.
6. Final report, including an outline of how feedback was addressed (structure, facts, content, conclusion).

The final evaluation report shall, drawing from the scope of the evaluation and reporting format approved as part of the inception report: describe the evaluation and methods used, put forward the Consultant's findings, conclusions, present recommendations and lessons learned.

All presentations and reports are to be submitted in electronic format in English in accordance with the deadlines set in the work plan. MFA retains the rights with respect to all distribution, dissemination and publication of the deliverables.

MFA reserves the right to accept or decline reports and to comment on each report. Such comments will normally be made within one or two weeks of delivery.

Time schedule

A maximum total input of 14 weeks is estimated for the assignment. The Inception report shall be submitted within two weeks from the start of the assignment. The Final Evaluation Report shall be submitted no later than 20 weeks after the project initiation. It is expected that the project will start in late March 2017.

Management and Logistics

With respect to the overall management and execution of the evaluation the following assignment of responsibilities is expected.

The Evaluation Manager at MFA

The Director of Evaluation, in the Directorate for International Development Cooperation at MFA, will be the primary MFA representative for this evaluation. As such, he will serve as the Evaluation Manager and be the focal point for communication with other MFA personnel when required. The Evaluation Manager is responsible for:

- Facilitating the Consultant's access to pertinent MFA documents and personnel.
- Providing overall management responsibility for the evaluation.
- Facilitating logistical support to the Consultant from Icelandic Embassies in Malawi and Uganda.
- Approving all deliverables.

The Consultant

The Consultant is responsible for:

- Conducting the evaluation in accordance with the ToR and the Contract.
- Managing day-to-day operations related to the evaluation.
- Making all relevant travel arrangements related to assignment.
- Arranging all applicable visas and health procedures as may be required.
- Providing regular progress updates to MFA's Evaluation Manager.
- Producing deliverables in accordance with the contractual requirements.

Consultant's Qualifications

The evaluation team (The Consultant) may be comprised of one or two key experts as deemed necessary to fulfil the requirements of this ToR. The Consultant should combine core evaluation competencies with strong experience in international development evaluations in particular involving gender aspects. Specific qualifications and experience of the Consultant:

1. An advanced university degree in relevant discipline.
2. A minimum of 10 years experience in evaluations for international development, demonstrated by at least two evaluation reports.
3. Good experience in gender related work for international development, promotion of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in development projects.
4. Demonstrated professionalism in all aspects of work, possess excellent communication and interpersonal skills as well as good planning and organizational skills.
5. Excellent command of oral and written English.

Application procedure

The Consultant shall prepare and submit the following:

1. A cover letter, outlining the qualifications of the consultant/team for the assignment, including references to previous relevant work.
2. Technical proposal (4-5 pages), responding to this ToR, outlining the envisioned evaluation process, methods and workplan.
3. CV's of key experts proposed, detailing relevant skills and experience.
4. Two examples of recent evaluation reports for international development.
5. Financial proposal, in a separate file, based on the premises outlined in this ToR, including expected travel costs as may be applicable.
6. A contactable reference from a similar assignment.

Evaluation of proposals will be based on QCBS, where quality will weigh 80% and cost 20%. The evaluation of quality will be based on the following criteria:

1. Adequacy and quality of the proposed methodology, work plan and team composition in responding to the Terms of Reference (60%)
 - a. Approach and methods
 - b. Workplan and team composition
2. Key Experts' qualifications and competence for the Assignment (40%)

The minimum technical score required to pass is 75.

For inquiries or clarifications on this assignment, please send an email to tenders@mfa.is. Responses to all inquiries will be posted on the website: <http://www.iceida.is/english/partner-countries/regional-cooperation/procurement>

MFA is not bound to accept any proposal, and reserves the right to annul the selection process at any time prior to Contract award.

Proposals shall be submitted in electronic format to tenders@mfa.is, before 16:00 Icelandic time, 10 February 2017. Proposals received after this time will not be considered.

Annex 2. Field mission agenda and list of interviewees

(See attached annex 2 file)

Annex 3. Bibliography

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- ≡ External Evaluation, Development of a Short Training Course on Gender and Climate change, Uganda (June 2013)
- ≡ Evaluation of the ICEIDA project support to Monkey Bay Health Care (2006-2007)
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- ≡ OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality (GENDERNET) (2014) 'From ambition to results: Delivering on gender equality in donor institutions'

- ≡ Gender statement UNDP EB Board meeting
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Annex 4. Evaluation matrix

Figure A.1 illustrates the process for synthesising evaluation data and evidence into higher-level findings and recommendations in response to the evaluation objectives.

Figure A.1: Synthesis evaluation matrix



Figure A.1 also illustrates the scope of the evaluation and evaluation questions across the four areas of intervention i) the multilateral, ii) bilateral and NGO cooperation, iii) post-conflict and peace building and iv) humanitarian aid.

Table A.1 presents the evaluation matrix with evaluation questions structured around the OECD DAC criteria.

Table A.1: Evaluation matrix

OECD DAC criteria	Key evaluation questions
Relevance – <i>Clarity of gender related concepts and extent of gender concepts integration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Which gender related concepts (e.g. women, mothers, girls, women and girls' empowerment (economic /political) gender equality, women's human rights, male roles and masculinities etc.) have been utilised in the selected strategies and interventions? (including through document word screening of gender concept) To what extent are the gender related concepts clear? ■ To what extent have country strategies in partner and focus countries and bilateral programmes and projects embraced and implemented gender equality both at advocacy and programme level? To what extent does the MFA's gender policy and gender checklists was utilised in the selected intervention and help to promote gender equality? ■ How extensive has the integration of gender been in the selected interventions? To what extent is gender equality given adequate consideration in Iceland's support to multilateral organisations and NGOs, both in the field of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation, at advocacy and programme level? ■ Do partnership and project documents show linkages and/ or joint collaboration with gender equality policies of the respective partner countries or those of multilateral organisations?

OECD DAC criteria	Key evaluation questions
Results/impact – gender related results and effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Given the gender related concepts utilised, how did they influence the results and possible impact? ■ Was a gender analysis carried out at the onset of design and, if so, did it influence the objectives of the interventions? To what extent have differences in the needs of women and men been taken into account in programme implementation? What are the strengths and weaknesses? ■ What are the effects of the results achieved? What individual and systemic level changes can be identified? What are the strengths and weaknesses? Did the changes and effects achieved contribute to gender justice in terms of more equal representation? Increased recognition of specific gender issues? Increased gender equality in access to and control over resources and services? ■ To what extent has Iceland as a donor and development partner achieved gender related results or contributed to more attention to gender issues within key partner multilateral organisations, through its advocacy for gender equality?
Sustainability – sustainability of gender results and diversification of donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ How sustainable are the gender results and effects achieved once the intervention is over? ■ How well could the intervention partner diversify funding sources? ■ To what extent has there been cooperation and synergies with other donors on gender within the same intervention?
Effectiveness – gender and M&E and organisational issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Are the current M&E systems in place adequate to monitor the implementation and impact of gender equality? ■ To what extent are gender related indicators included in programme documents? To what extent evaluations and reviews have included an assessment of gender related issues? ■ To what extent are responsibilities clear for integrating gender considerations into programmes and other forms of cooperation? ■ To what extent are human resources adequate for integrating gender in programming, management and monitoring processes? Where are the gaps and how could these be addressed? ■ Are there adequate incentives at organisational level to promote and follow up on the implementation of gender equality? Where are the gaps and what would constitute ‘adequate incentives’ at organisational level?

**Efficiency –
allocation of gender
human and
financial resources**

- What **overview can be depicted of gender resource allocation per sector**, according to OECD DAC gender markers? What does the overview tell us about how gender resources are being prioritised?
- To what **extent are financial resources adequate** for integrating and implementing gender equality at organisational level? Where are the gaps and how could these be addressed? What are the possible options?