

52nd GEF Council Meeting
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**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE
GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

1. The GEF Secretariat shared the first Progress Report on the Implementation of the GEF Equality Action Plan (GEAP) at the 48th GEF Council meeting in June 2015. The Council noted good progress and supported further implementation of the GEAP. The report further noted that the GEF Secretariat should provide progress reports on the implementation of the GEAP on an annual basis. This is the third annual Progress Report, and as such provides an update to the GEF Council on progress over the last 12 months.

BACKGROUND

2. Responding to the GEF-6 Policy Recommendation, the GEAP was developed in close collaboration and consultation with the GEF Agencies, Secretariats of the relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and other experts.

3. The GEAP was approved at the 47th GEF Council in November 2014¹ to support implementation of the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming,² and to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of gender mainstreaming at corporate, program and project levels. Implementation of the GEAP began in fiscal year 2015 and includes actions to be undertaken throughout the GEF-6 period.

OVERVIEW

4. The first part of this report provides a brief overview of the GEAP implementation status since its inception in 2015 (please see Table 1). Further details on activities in FY15 and FY16 can be found in previous GEAP progress reports.³ The next part of this report provides details on specific actions by the GEF Secretariat, in coordination with the GEF Agencies, during the past 12 months. The report concludes with a reflection on evolving results and progress on the GEF-6 Core Gender Indicators, and a brief description of key priorities and activities in the coming fiscal year.

¹ GEF, Gender Equality Action Plan, GEF/C.47/09.Rev.01, October 2014

² GEF, GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming, GEF/C.40/10/Rev.1, May 2011

³ GEF/C.48/Inf.06 and GEF/C.50/Inf.07

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS: OVERVIEW

5. Table 1 outlines key activities undertaken to implement the GEAP since its inception in 2015.

Table 1. Overview of GEAP Implementation status

GEAP Action areas		Status
Coordination, outreach & capacity Development	Establish an Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GEF Gender Partnership (GGP) was formalized in 2015 and increasingly serves as a community of practice
	Enhance staff capacity and expertise at the GEF Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEF Gender and Social Workstream established in 2015 Senior Gender specialist hired through a competitive process in 2016 Capacity assessment completed An online training course, led by GEFSEC, GEF SGP, IUCN and UNITAR in collaboration with GGP, to be launched in 2017
	Provide support and guidance on the GEF Policy on Gender to OFPs and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender sessions are part of the ECWs and NDIs Online training course to be rolled out (see above) in 2017
Results management	Report annually on GEAP progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual GEAP progress reports have been regularly submitted to Council
	Monitor and report on the GEF-6 core gender indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The GEF scorecard includes a section on gender The Annual Performance Monitoring Review (APMR) includes a dedicated analytical section on gender An indicators mapping exercise launched to develop a menu and guidance note, to be completed 2017
	Evaluate gender equality results of GEF projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEO evaluations include sections on gender (terminal evaluation guidelines are still under review)
Knowledge management	Cross-reference GEF KM Action Plan and GEAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The KM Action Plan includes consideration of gender (e.g. establishment of a community of practice on gender)
	Develop an interactive gender webpage on GEF website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section on gender updated in 2016, with ongoing updates Regular blogs posted
	Develop analytical products on thematic issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of best practices on gender across the GEF project portfolio to be completed in 2017
Policy	Update, as necessary, GEF's Policy on Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update of GEF's Policy on Gender is expected in late 2017, to be developed through a consultative process
Program and projects	Review/update GEF project templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Templates for PIFs, PFDs, and CEO Endorsement Requests have been updated and now include sections on gender
	Develop GEF Guidelines on Mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidelines drafted, in consultation with GGP, to be finalized as part of the update of GEF's Policy on Gender expected in late 2017
	Incorporate/strengthen gender elements in key GEF programs/projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IAPs and SGP have incorporated strategy and approach on gender issues GEFSEC is reviewing proposals from a gender perspective, in line with GEF's policy and the GEAP

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS: DETAILS

6. The following provides detailed information on key activities by the GEF Secretariat, in coordination with the GEF Agencies, during the past 12 months.

Coordination, Outreach and Capacity Development

Coordination and Outreach

7. The need to establish an Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender was recognized during the development of the GEAP, and was supported by the GEF Council and partners. The Secretariat responded by consolidating a Working Group in 2015. The GEF Secretariat agreed with the GEF Agencies to rebrand the Inter-Agency Working Group as the **GEF Gender Partnership (GGP)**. The aim was to broaden the scope and membership beyond the inter-agency group and to better leverage the wide range of skills and experiences on gender equality and women's empowerment from partner institutions and organizations. GGP is now formally operational with active participation of gender focal points from each GEF Agency, Secretariats of relevant MEAs, as well as representatives from the GEF Independent Evaluation Office, GEF Network of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) and other key partners.

8. **GGP is increasingly serving as a community of practice**, functioning not only as a platform for consultation, but also as a space to exchange information, share lessons learned and collaborate on events and other work products. In May 2016, the GEF Secretariat organized a three-day face to face GGP workshop. This workshop discussed progress and challenges mainstreaming gender in GEF projects and programs. As such, it reflected on the GEF's Policy on Gender, and the draft guidelines to mainstream gender that had been developed by the Secretariat. **Key messages and recommendations included:**

- (a) Appreciating that GEAP serves as a good mandate for action (and that it is important to continue its implementation), and further recommending that the action plan would be updated to become a more directional platform for GEF-7;
- (b) Stressing the need to compile and provide a platform to share good practices addressing gender across the GEF project portfolio to improve/inform future programming, project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation;
- (c) Recognizing the challenges to capture gender outcomes, and proposing that the GEF-6 core gender indicators should be reviewed/revise for GEF-7;
- (d) Recommending that the GEF moves from a "do no harm" to a "do good" approach and policy framework on gender, and proposing an update of the GEF's Policy on Gender in conjunction with the development of the guidelines.

9. **The GEF is continuing to strengthen collaboration on gender with the Rio Conventions and other partners.** As part of the facilitation of the GEF Gender Partnership, the GEF Secretariat has initiated and developed a strong relationship with the designated gender experts of the three Rio Conventions, as well as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions. The Secretariat, for example, did the following:

- (a) Participated in discussion on extending the Lima work plan on gender at the UNFCCC inter-agency capacity building dialogue with the UNFCCC Secretariat technical teams co-organized by UN Women. It supported, among other things, the Master Class on access to finance event at UNFCCC COP 22, and the CBD COP 13 mainstreaming gender and social inclusion half-day session.
- (b) Collaborated on guidelines and action plans. The Secretariat continues to provide comments on toolkits and guidelines, including integration of gender into National Communications (NCs), and CBD guidelines for mainstreaming gender.

10. The GEF Secretariat has continued close communication and initiated several meetings with **other finance mechanisms**, including the GCF, CIF and the Adaptation Fund to explore opportunities to better and more systematically share lessons learned and support each other's efforts to address gender in our respective organizations.

Capacity Development

11. In collaboration with the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) and the GEF Gender Partnership, the Secretariat **launched the development of a free open-access online course and webinar series on Gender Equality and the Environment.** The development of the course is a multi-agency effort involving expert organizations including UNITAR, UN Women, IUCN, MEA Secretariats and other partners. As such, it will collate knowledge and lessons learned across a wide range of organizations, with the aim of increasing the understanding and capacity of GEF staff, stakeholders and partners to address gender in key environmental sectors. The course is specifically designed to target (i) GEF country-level stakeholders, staff and agency project managers; (ii) GEF Small Grants Programme country-level stakeholders, including: staff, steering committee members and potential grantee partners; (iii) constituencies of Multilateral Environmental Conventions (e.g. country focal points); and (iv) other key global and local partners working in environmental sectors interested in improving their ability to address gender.

12. The GEF Council has stressed the need to improve support to the GEF Operational Focal Points, Convention Focal Points and other partners on the ground in implementing the GEAP. As an initial step, the GEF Secretariat has used existing mechanisms, including the Extended Constituency Workshops (ECWs) at the sub-regional level and National Dialogue Initiatives (NDIs), to raise awareness on gender. **For the 2017 ECW program, the GEF updated**

presentation materials on stakeholder engagement and gender to include a dedicated session to raise awareness and update participants on (a) important commitments across the MEAs, which the GEF serves, related to inclusion and gender equality; and (b) the GEF's evolving policies, standards and practices with regards to stakeholder engagement and gender mainstreaming. The session is designed to provide country stakeholders with opportunity for practical reflection. They can also discuss the implications of these policy commitments as related to their respective roles in GEF project planning, design, implementation and reporting. It is expected that the online training course will be introduced as an additional capacity development tool for the GEF's country partners.

13. Recognizing the benefits of having a dedicated gender expert, the GEF Secretariat recruited a full-time Senior Gender Specialist in June 2016 to lead the work of the gender and social issues workstream, set up in 2015, and to support implementation of the GEAP. The Secretariat also recognized the imperative of simultaneously broadening capacity across the Secretariat to address gender. To that end, the Secretariat intends, among other things, to utilize the online course developed (mentioned above) to support capacity development of Secretariat staff.

Knowledge Management and Communication

14. In line with the GEAP and recent recommendations from the GEF Gender Partnership, the Secretariat launched, in collaboration with Agencies, **a comprehensive portfolio and good practices review in the fall of 2016**. One objective of this review, which is expected to be finalized in late spring 2017, is to capture good practices across the GEF's project portfolio to inform future programming, project design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. It is envisaged that the analysis will also inform **the forthcoming update of the GEF's Gender Policy and the impending accompanying guidelines**. The review covers projects from GEF-4 to GEF-6 replenishment periods, including examples from all GEF focal areas, as well as multi-focal areas and Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs). Preliminary findings are set to yield close to 100 examples of good practice in the latest GEF replenishment cycles. So far, they have confirmed that GEF-6 investments are seeing concerted improvements. For example, the initial findings suggest better gender analyses, improved consultation with women through project planning and design, and greater incorporation of gender dimensions in project results frameworks and M&E plans. There are likely several factors contributing towards this progress, including the GEF's policy on gender mainstreaming and increased attention to gender among Agencies and MEAs. The GEAP has also likely contributed to improved monitoring and reporting, capacity development, knowledge generation and learning among Agencies and partners.

15. The Secretariat has continued to **share experiences and lessons related to gender mainstreaming in GEF projects at international conferences and events**. These include participation at the World Conservation Congress in Hawaii, the launch of the African Human Development Report in Nairobi, and sessions on gender at both the UNFCCC COP 22 in Marrakech, Morocco and the CBD COP13 in Cancun, Mexico. Secretariat staff have also

participated and shared information at expert group and webinar meetings related to gender and environment. These events and other work, including blogs, have been increasingly promoted through the GEF's website and social media. The Secretariat is also continually improving and updating its gender webpage.

Results Management

16. As agreed in the GEAP, work is ongoing to strengthen the monitoring and reporting of core gender indicators as part of the GEF-6 Results Framework. This work is advancing in conjunction with efforts to improve the overall GEF RBM approach and system. Some initial results have been reported in the Corporate Scorecards that were introduced at the June 2016 GEF Council meeting.

17. In line with the GEAP and recommendations of the GEF Gender Partnership to explore opportunities to strengthen the GEF's monitoring and reporting system on gender, the Secretariat launched an **exercise to review the GEF-6 results framework on gender and to map gender-disaggregated and other social co-benefit indicators in the GEF project portfolio**. The objective of this exercise, which is due to be finalized in late fall 2017, is to:

- (a) Inform the finalization of the GEF's Guidelines to Mainstream Gender in the Project Cycle, and to support future project-level monitoring and evaluation frameworks and indicator development; and
- (b) Provide input to further improving the GEF corporate results framework on gender in GEF-7, and identify and recommend a small set of possible and practical indicators that could be aggregated to potentially better measure progress and gender-positive outcomes.

Policy

18. In the last year, the Secretariat determined that it would be timely and practical to **propose an update to the GEF's Policy on Gender at the November 2017 Council meeting**. This decision responds to (1) the GEF-6 Policy Recommendation (GEF/R.6/21/Rev.03) requesting the Secretariat to enhance gender mainstreaming at corporate- and focal-area levels; and (2) to the GEAP that calls on the Secretariat to review and – if needed – update the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming before FY18.

19. The decision further follows analysis and consultations during the first two years of implementing the GEAP. These concluded that the GEF Policy on Gender developed in the context of the GEF's pilot on accreditation, with its focus on setting minimum requirements for Agencies, lacks clarity in terms of goals, objectives, mandatory requirements and emphasis on results.

20. Updating the Policy in 2017 will further allow the Secretariat to update the Policy as part of the current effort to develop operational guidelines on gender mainstreaming, and to

present the Policy and Guidelines as one package to the Council. It will also allow the GEF to enter the GEF-7 programming period with a more ambitious approach to gender, and clearer objectives and principles around gender equality and women's empowerment as related to global environment benefits.

Programs and Projects

21. All Agencies are required to comply with the GEF Policy on Gender Mainstreaming when designing and implementing GEF projects and programs. At the project level, the Secretariat is reviewing proposals from a gender perspective, in line with the Policy and the GEAP. The GEF Secretariat introduced improvements to the project templates and review sheets to help improve gender mainstreaming in the design and implementation of GEF projects. These templates now require Agencies to state whether the project planning phase has considered gender and to outline how gender equality and women's empowerment issues will be mainstreamed in project implementation and monitoring.

RESULTS

22. The GEAP committed the GEF to strengthen monitoring and reporting on gender mainstreaming in the GEF portfolio. The GEF's Core Gender Indicators, outlined in the GEF-6 Results Framework for Gender Mainstreaming, cover both "quality-at-entry" and "quality-at-implementation".

Table 2. GEF-6 Core Gender Indicators

Quality-at-Entry"
1. Percentage of projects that have conducted gender analysis during project preparation
2. Percentage of projects that have incorporated a gender-responsive project results framework
Quality-at-implementation
3. Share of women and men as direct beneficiaries of project
4. Percentage of monitoring and evaluation reports that incorporate gender equality/women's empowerment issues and assesses results

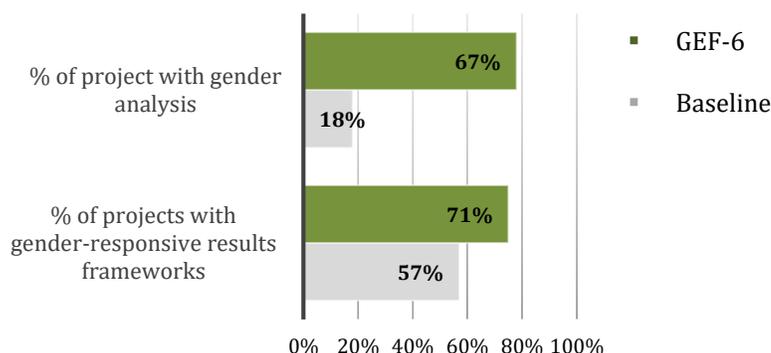
23. As part of the implementation of GEAP, the GEF's capacity to assess progress and commitment towards a gender-responsive approach have deepened since the GEF's results framework on gender was developed in 2014. **We are continuously learning, raising our standards and strengthening our approaches to analyze the portfolio.** Interestingly, although our standards are now stricter, our analysis confirms an upward trend since we started using indicators to track projects addressing gender in project design and implementation. The following describes findings related to the four indicators mentioned above⁴.

24. **In terms of "quality-at-entry",** the Secretariat analysis of 108 GEF-6 medium-sized and full-sized projects⁵ confirms a **positive trend in terms of projects that conducted a gender analysis and incorporated gender in their results frameworks.**

4 Information on core gender indicator 4 "share of convention related national reports incorporate gender dimensions" will be compiled for the 2018 May council

5 Projects endorsed/approved July 2014 – February 2017

Table 3. Progress on GEF-6 "quality-at-entry" indicators



- 1) Percentage of projects that have conducted gender analysis during project preparation: **The analysis found that 67% (73 of 108 projects) – a majority of all full-size and medium-size CEO-Endorsed projects in GEF 6 to-date – had considered gender and conducted a gender analysis.** These figures show an upward trend in terms of projects that conduct a gender analysis in project design and planning compared to the GEF 5 baseline⁶ (18%). While the findings suggest better considerations for gender on average, it is important to note that there still remain big variations with regards to the quality and scope of the gender analysis conducted during the project preparation stage (for further information please see paragraph 25).

- 2) Percentage of projects that have incorporated a gender-responsive project results framework: **The analysis found that 71% (77 of 108 projects) endorsed by the CEO in GEF-6 included elements of a gender-responsive results framework.** These projects included sex-disaggregated information and indicators. The figures portray an increase of projects that incorporate gender compared to the GEF 5 baseline⁷ (57%). **The detailed analysis further found that 50% of projects reviewed included some specific gender activities and or had developed some type of gender action plan.**

25. The percentages for the two gender indicators above have been revised downwards in relation to the October 2016 scorecard report. This is partly due to the fact that we expanded the cohort from 29 to 108 projects and broadened the scope to include medium-sized projects as well. The analysis revealed that GEF full-sized projects score higher than medium-sized projects on the indicators the Secretariat use to track quality of entry. In addition, part of the percentage decrease could be explained by the slight revision in the criteria applied to the

⁶ Baseline information is based on (1) data provided in OPS5 Technical document #16 Sub-study on Gender Policy on Gender Mainstreaming; and (2) Mainstreaming Gender at the GEF (2008).

⁷ Same as above.

assessment of the indicators.⁸ Moreover, it is important to note that the projects that were assessed as having conducted a gender analysis in this review included projects that indicated that they had conducted a gender analysis⁹, and or planned to conduct further analysis as part of the implementation. **Considering that a gender analysis, at the planning and design stage, plays a key role in terms of informing the theory of change, activities, outputs and indicators, the findings of this analysis point to the need for greater clarity and improved standards in terms of the scope, quality and evidence of the gender analysis required at the GEF endorsement/ approval stage.** This is something that already has been discussed as part of the drafting of GEF guidelines on gender, and that is expected to be addressed as part of the forthcoming update GEF's Policy on gender.

26. **In terms of “quality-at-implementation”,** the Secretariat’s analyzed 233 Mid-Term reviews (MTRs) and Terminal Evaluations (TEs)¹⁰ submitted in FY15 and FY16, covering only GEF-4 and GEF-5 projects.

- 3) Share of women and men as direct beneficiaries of project: The share of women and men as direct beneficiaries have proved difficult to systematically track and aggregate in the current GEF results architecture. Modifications have therefore been made to the definition for this indicator. The indicator now reports on the percentage of projects that report on sex-disaggregated information on beneficiaries in the MTRs and TEs. As such, **the analysis found that 31% reported on sex-disaggregated indicators in their project results frameworks related to the share of women and men as beneficiaries.** The more detailed analysis of trends related to the different replenishment periods reveals an upward trend. **Specifically, the analysis found that 38 % of the GEF-5 projects reviewed reported on sex-disaggregated information, compared to 30 % of the GEF-4 projects reviewed.** Analysis of projects that report on beneficiaries or individuals impacted by the project however shows a wide range and variety of classifications of beneficiaries. Some projects specifically identified beneficiaries and affected populations, others discussed recipients of project activities such as recipients of capacity building activities, or members of committees or women’s associations.
- 4) Percentage of monitoring and evaluation reports that incorporate gender equality/women’s empowerment issues and assesses results: The methodology used to analyze this indicator follow the criteria that were introduced in the April 2016 scorecard to improve our ability to better understand how and to what extent GEF projects address gender issues during implementation (for further information please

⁸ The 33% of projects that were calculated, in this review, not to have conducted a gender analysis either (a) did not mention that they had conducted a gender analysis; or (b) did not provide sufficient information and or evidence of a social assessment that included gender considerations.

⁹ Including projects that, in the revised endorsement/approval templates, checked the yes “box” on whether the project had conducted a gender analysis during project preparation or not.

¹⁰ The analysis did not include projects implemented by the World Bank that have reached mid-term as the structure and reporting format used by the World Bank is different from the other agencies

see annex 1). In line with these criteria, **the analysis found that 51% (score 1-3) incorporated gender in their monitoring and evaluation reports.** While this is a slight decrease from the percentage (54%) reported earlier in the October 2016 scorecard, findings continue to show a positive trend in terms improvements in relation to the replenishment periods. Specifically, the analysis found that **64% of the GEF-5 projects reviewed incorporated gender in their reports, compared to 44 % of the GEF-4 projects reviewed.**

27. Although, the findings suggest a positive trend in the number of projects that report on gender, the in-depth analysis highlights the fact that **many projects still do not systematically or adequately report on activities, progress and results on gender equality** in their Mid-term reviews and Terminal evaluations. While it is important to note that most of the projects, included in this review, were developed before the GEF Policy on Gender (2011) and prior to the start of the implementation of GEAP (2015), **this analysis point to missed opportunities for capturing lessons learned and reporting on progress and gender outcomes in GEF projects, and across the GEF portfolio at large.** While upgrades in the GEF's overall results architecture could play an important role in improving GEF's ability to capture and use this kind of information, findings of this review point to need to further strengthen the requirements, guidance and incentives for Agencies to report on gender. This is an issue that the GEF Gender Partnership discussed in the face to face meeting (May 2016) and is something that is expected to be addressed as part of the forthcoming update of the GEF's Policy and guidelines on gender.

MOVING FORWARD

28. The work plan for the coming fiscal year will be a blend of activities that will include continued implementation of the GEAP with an increasing focus on elaborating on the GEF's approach to gender in GEF-7

29. Particular highlights in terms of implementing the GEAP include:

- 1) Finalize the portfolio and best practice review analysis in close collaboration with the GEF Gender Partnership;
- 2) Finalize the results framework review and indicator mapping exercise;
- 3) Complete and launch the online training module on gender and the environment in collaboration with the GEF Small Grants Programme;
- 4) Develop a proposal to update GEF Policy on Gender, and finalize accompanying guidelines, by November 2017, in close consultation with GEF Agencies and experts;
- 5) Capacity building and training of Secretariat staff to support the implementation of the new Policy and related outreach/awareness raising activities to the GEF partners and national constituencies.

30. Considering the proposed shift in GEF-7 from stand-alone projects towards a more programmatic framework, with Impact Programs that critically intersect with aspects of gender equality, considerable attention will be placed over the next fiscal year on upstream analytical work and consultations. This will include work, in close collaboration with the GEF Gender Partnership, Agencies and other partners, developing an effective approach to gender as part of GEF-7 programming directions.

ANNEX

Detailed Methodology and criteria that the GEF Secretariat used to score the indicator tracking the percentage of projects that incorporate of gender in evaluation and monitoring reports gender.

Results indicator, with accompanying criteria for scoring

Indicator	Criteria	Score
Percentage of projects that expect to contribute (in some way) to gender equality or women's empowerment	<p>Evidence of gender analysis (e.g., identification of gender barriers, and analysis of different rights, roles, priorities, and capabilities between women and men).</p> <p>Evidence of gender-responsive stakeholder engagement processes or plans (e.g. stakeholder mapping and analysis consider both women's and men's interests).</p> <p>Evidence of specific project components, activities or budget allocated to narrowing gender disparities and/or to address distinctive needs of women.</p> <p>Results framework includes gender-disaggregated indicators and mechanisms to monitor gender impact (e.g., level of income generated from project activities for women and men).</p>	3
Percentage of projects that mainstream and/or address gender equality or women's empowerment issues	<p>Evidence of gender analysis (e.g. identification of gender barriers, and analysis of different rights, roles, priorities, and capabilities between women and men).</p> <p>Evidence of gender-responsive stakeholder engagement processes (e.g., stakeholder mapping and analysis consider both women's and men's interests).</p> <p>Evidence of specific project components, activities or budget allocated to address gender (e.g., evidence that activities to mainstream gender occur).</p> <p>Results framework includes gender-disaggregated indicators, and mechanisms to monitor gender at the output level (e.g., share of women and men as direct beneficiaries).</p>	2
Percentage of projects that partially mainstream gender	<p>Evidence that gender is reflected in the project analysis, activities, and/or the stakeholder approach.</p> <p>Results framework may or may not include gender-disaggregated indicators.</p>	1
Percentage of projects that have no or very limited mention of gender	Gender equality or women's empowerment is not significantly discussed	0
Percentage of projects stating that gender is not deemed relevant	Project document mentions that gender is not relevant	n/a