

Integrating gender into funding proposals

Addressing gender issues has become an integral component of fundraising proposals. These guidelines can help staff to develop and write proposals that comprehensively address gender, ensuring equality and long term sustainability.

You have no doubt noticed that gender has become an integral part of fundraising proposals, especially those for bilateral and multilateral aid agencies such as USAID and the GEF, as well as many private foundations. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist staff who develop and write proposals to consider gender dynamics as a fundamental piece of program design and implementation in order to increase effectiveness on the ground, respond to gender inequalities, and answer donors' specific requests on gender.

In addition to CI's personal commitment to gender equality, donors often also want to see that gender is integrated throughout the entire project process – from conceptual stage to final project evaluation. It is often no longer acceptable to simply add a sentence or two about how the project will “seek to include women and other marginalized groups whenever possible”.

The most effective way to ensure that gender inequalities are addressed is to emphasize community participation combined with transparent and participatory stakeholder analysis. Truly integrating gender into a project goes beyond just engaging women's groups and counting women involved in activities.

Some donors, such as USAID, may require proposals with a separate, specific section summarizing how gender is addressed in the project proposal. However, this is *in addition* to addressing gender throughout the proposal and is not an isolated section. A well-written proposal will address the gender-based constraints and opportunities up front and then weave strategies to address them throughout the project cycle, from strategy design to implementation of activities to monitoring and evaluation. A gender plan of action or strategy may also be included as an annex to the proposal.

Guidelines for Incorporating Gender into Proposals

Keep the following points in mind while developing and writing a proposal. You may need to consult with local partner organizations or government institutions for in-depth socio-cultural information. In some cases, it may be advisable to conduct focus group sessions with project beneficiaries to better understand the local context.

1. Gender Situation Analysis and Background¹

- What is the existing state of gender dynamics in the target area?
- What are the different ways that men and women access, use and control resources, goods and services?
- Which existing stakeholders, NGOs, government ministries and other actors are currently involved in gender-based activities, both in implementation and policy advocacy?
- How are decisions made in the family, household and/or community?
- What are the main gender-based constraints or barriers to gaining equal access to resources and benefits from proposed project activities?
- What gender-specific context variables will need to be addressed in project implementation in order to reach proposed objectives and expected results?

2. Overall Project Strategy Design

- In what ways does one's gender differentiate their connection with natural resources and ecological systems? (including knowledge, use, access, control, impact on natural resources and attitudes toward conservation)
- How do existing gender roles affect the achievement of conservation outcomes (including decision-making)? And how would the project impact these roles and program effectiveness?
- What are some gender-based constraints to achieving conservation outcomes? What are some opportunities and how will the project address these?

3. Activity Design

- What will be the program's effects (positive and negative) on women? Men?
- What are some possible unintended consequences of these activities? How might they affect women and men differently?
- What forms or methods of communication best reach women? And men? If these are different, how does the project address targeting different gender-based messages for conservation?
- Are meeting time and meeting locations appropriate for women? For men?

4. Community and Household Impact

- How might the activity impact on household and social gender structures? Examples include:
 - Impact on division of labor at the household and community levels?
 - Impact on time constraints of a particular gender?
 - Impact on subsistence activities?
 - Impact on traditional rights?
- What might be the impact on policy and regulatory changes affecting gender participation?

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Indicators should be sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive, such as number and percentage of men and women:
 - participating in an activity
 - benefiting from the project
 - demonstrating leadership in project implementation
- Other indicators could include community knowledge, attitudes and practices about female participation and leadership (e.g. change in beliefs regarding women in NRM decision making).

¹ If you do not already have this information, it is advisable to use CI's Gender Integration Guidelines to collect this data. This data-gathering stage can be built into the proposal as an initial step in project development.

6. Staffing and Budgeting

- Adequately integrating gender into your proposal and project will cost money, and this should be budgeted for upfront. Costs will depend on the project and staff members' existing knowledge.
- Consider adding a percentage of a team members' time to addressing gender components throughout the project's lifetime
- While all CI staff should be well versed in gender and certain staff members throughout the organization can act as advisors, in some cases it may be necessary to consider budgeting for a gender specialist. A gender specialist can highlight project areas that may not be equitable to men or women, and can suggest culturally-appropriate methods to reduce inequalities.

Final Checklist

- ✓ Has information on women's and men's work in the household and community been collected? Is it adequate for the purposes of this project?
- ✓ Have both men's and women's opinions been sought in project development?
- ✓ Are women's and men's unique roles reflected in the project's objectives?
- ✓ In what ways will the activities benefit men and women differently?
- ✓ Is the project likely to have adverse effects for men or women?
- ✓ What social, legal, and cultural obstacles could prevent women from participating in the project?
- ✓ What programs, activities, and services does the project have to ensure that gender-based issues and concerns will be addressed?