

# Gender Audit- an outline for the Department of Rural Development<sup>1</sup>

*Development can only have a beneficial outcome for when the working culture, structure, systems and procedures, and underlying values of the institutions which shape women's lives themselves reflect a concern for gender equality.*

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## **Part I**

### **Background**

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007- 2012) of the Government of India which had reiterated the commitment to gender budgeting also stated that the plan “*will ensure that each Ministry/ Department of both Centre and State should put in place a systematic and comprehensive monitoring and auditing mechanism for outcome assessment. In addition, the Ministry of WCD, Ministry of Finance, and Planning Commission will ....undertake gender audits of public expenditure, programmes, and policies.....*” (Vol II Social Sector, pg 200).

Keeping this as the backdrop, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) planned to undertake schematic analysis of the programmes/schemes of the Government from a gender perspective. To facilitate the process of Gender Audit, however, it was felt essential to develop a concept note. The concept note will help to develop clarity on objectives and need for gender audit, and its definitions and concepts. There was also a need to study international practices<sup>2</sup> in gender audit and based on the learnings and best practices a methodology most suitable for carrying out gender audit of programs / schemes in the Department of Rural development, Govt of India, is prepared taking into consideration the existing Systems and Structures.

### **Gender Audit- an introduction:**

Women and men from various social groups are positioned differently in society- in the workplace and family- and have different responsibilities and needs. Due to this, women and men have different experiences, knowledge, talents and needs. Therefore, different programmes/schemes are designed to address this imbalance. Public services like education, health, transportation and welfare are utilized differently by women and men; as a result budgets impacts men and women differently.

UNESCO defines gender audit as management and planning tool. Gender Audit evaluates the gender responsiveness of an organization's culture and how well the

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared in due consultation with the members of the Advisory Group of Gender Budget Cell.

<sup>2</sup> Annexure A

organization is integrating the gender perspective into its work. The audit outcome aims to assist the organization to become more gender responsive. It is also a kind of impact evaluation that assesses or measure the impact of interventions on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Traditionally audits are commonly associated with accounting audits in the financial world, used to certify that the finances and administration are legitimate, with established rules and regulations correctly followed<sup>3</sup>. In the 1980s, quality management audit was introduced in companies to promote improvement of company performance. Following the same principles, social audits have been developed in a range of organizations to measure the extent to which they live up to "the shared values and objectives" to which they are committed. Social audit is a framework which allows an organization to build and develop a process whereby it can account for its social performance, report on that performance and draw up an action plan to improve on that performance. Gender Audit is one such form of social audit.

Therefore, it can be summed up by stating that Gender Audit is a guided process to examine "what has been done" and "what has not been done to meet the Governments stated objectives of gender equality. The definition of Gender Audit as adapted from various international definitions would be as below:

*A Gender Audit is a tool to assess the accountability to and extent of Gender Budgeting accomplished- the integration of gender concerns into policies, strategies, programmes and schemes of all types. Its aim is to see whether the policy, guidelines, practices, systems, procedures and budgets are being used in the most effective way to deliver the Government's commitments to gender equality.*

### **Characteristics of Gender Audit:**

1. Gender Audit takes into account whether internal practices and related support systems for gender mainstreaming are effective and reinforce each other.
2. Monitors and assesses the relative progress made in promoting gender sensitivity
3. Identifies critical gaps and challenges
4. Recommends ways of addressing these challenges and suggests new and more effective strategies to overcome gaps.
5. Documents good practices towards the achievement of gender equality.

### **Aim and objectives of Gender Audit in the Department of Rural Development:**

The overall aim of gender audit is to review mainstreaming of gender effectively in policies, programmes and structures of the Department of Rural Development and assesses the extent to which such policies have been institutionalized.

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<sup>3</sup> DFID Gender Audit Methodology: Its implementation in DFID Malawi By Caroline Moser

A Gender Audit provides the tools to audit the processes which have been undertaken by the Department under the various policies, schemes and programmes. It examines whether and at what level Gender Budgeting initiatives have been adopted in the planning, implementation and review of the policies and budgetary allocations of the Department. The results of Gender Audit can provide learning and guidelines for Gender Budgeting to revisit policies, programmes and schemes as well as implementing mechanisms to ensure Gender mainstreaming. The Gender Audit will help the institution to identify gaps between their own gender equality policy and practice, and the way their programmes impact on gender equality

The objectives of the gender audit

### **Gender Audit of Institution of the Department and its offices**

1. Generate understanding of the extent to which gender perspective has been internalized and acted upon by the office staff and senior officers of the Ministry. This will include a qualitative assessment of gender sensitivity and perspectives of the women and men staff
2. Assess the extent of gender inclusion and responsiveness being developed in terms of infrastructure facilities, Human Resource policies etc
3. Examine the representation of women at the different levels of the Ministry

### **Gender Audit of the programme divisions of the Department**

4. Gender audit of the major schemes and programs of the Department to assess whether gender mandate of these programs have been implemented and whether the process, rules and implementing mechanisms are gender sensitive and cater to the needs of the women.
5. Also to measure progress in implementing action plans on gender mainstreaming and give recommendations as needed; and
6. Identify gaps for improvement and suggest possible strategies to make Ministry's schemes/programmes more gender sensitive.

## Part II

### **Rationale of doing gender audit:**

The fact that women and men have different access and control over resources is well known. Therefore, different project, schemes and programmes impact them differently. The way programmes and projects are designed in the Ministry has strong correlation to the gendered nature of the organization. The core premise underlying to conduct gender audit is to ensure that gender equality must be ensured in the organization's programming and organizational practices in order to bring about the sustainable change toward achieving real equality.

### **Purpose of gender audit:**

The entire process will be conducted to garner information on the status of gender equality. The audit will be carried out at two levels namely:

- i) With the different programmes of the Ministry (MGNREGA, NRLM, PMGSY, IAY and NSAP)
- ii) Within the Ministry.

The outputs of the audit process will fetch the following:

- i. A reflection of the status of gender mainstreaming and equality in the institution of the Ministry
- ii. A pool of information for discussion and analysis
- iii. A participatory process that builds organizational ownership for the Ministry's gender equality objective and ongoing plans on engendering the programmes.

The audit process will enable Ministry to identify the impact of the gender relations in the programme as well as within the organizational boundary.

## Part III

### Gender Audit Process

The gender audit process will be carried out in a methodical and participatory manner and should include voices from different levels and programme divisions. Responses from the different levels and personnel from the programme divisions of the Ministry will augment and build organizational understanding, ownership and readiness to act on gender equality.

A gender team/ advisory group comprised of senior level government officers having a sound understanding of gender issues, challenges and hands on experience on engendering policies and government programmes to prepare a plan for conducting the gender audit throughout the Ministry and its programme divisions and also able to lead the team in each step of the process.

Steps to be followed:

- i. **Preparing for a gender audit:** a comprehensive institutional assessment like gender audit needs a well thought out strategy for communicating the purpose, objective and benefits of gender audit. Through the communication strategy, Ministry should be receptive to the idea of conducting gender audit and must commit to carrying out each of the processes of the audit.

The essentials elements of the communication and orientation strategy which includes

- a. **Content:** what should the gender team tell the respondents about gender audit
  - b. **Medium:** it will be in participatory mode including power point presentations<sup>4</sup>, discussions and case study method
  - c. **Target group:** representatives from the programme divisions, senior, mid and junior level officers will be invited as the buy in is necessary for the department to regularize the activity.
  - d. **Timeline:** one day orientation/workshop may be organized to have a common understanding of what the audit aims to achieve with its objectives.
- ii. **Staff survey:** conducting staff survey for the gender audit will reveal a perception of the programme divisions about the gender integration in the programme and serves as a stock taking of what they believe can the programme, policies of the Ministry serves as a scope for furthering gender equality in the organization as well as within the programme divisions.

The goal of the survey will be to elicit as much as information possible from the respondents about what they believe about the organization is doing to

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<sup>4</sup> Annexure A

advance gender equality in its policies, schemes and programmes as well as in its internal operations. Two types of questionnaire will be designed to elicit the information. One for the programme division and second for the department (Institution). The questionnaire on programme dimension will delve into the following four dimensions like: 1. Programme planning and designing, 2. Programme implementation, 3. Monitoring and evaluation, 4. Technical expertise, 5. Partner organization.

**Type 1: programming Dimensions<sup>5</sup>**

<b>Programming Dimensions</b>	<b>Necessary information to be sought</b>
Program planning and designing	The extent to which gender sensitive methods and procedures are used to conceptualize and design the programme
Monitoring and evaluation	To what degree sex disaggregated data and case studies from the field has been collected to inform about the gender outcomes.
Technical expertise	Presence of gender expertise in the Ministry and necessary help being sought
Partner organization	The extent to which gender equity has been priority factor in selecting CSOs/NGOs to affiliate relations for carrying out the implementation at the grass root level.

Category 2 of the questionnaire will be designed to elicit information from the senior, mid and junior level officers on the following dimensions:

1. Gender Policy, 2. Staffing, 3. Organizational culture, 4. Human resource, 5. Financial resource allocation

<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Necessary information to be sought</b>
Gender Policy	The nature, quality, and intensity of support for the Ministry's gender policy
Staffing	Gender balance in Ministry's staffing pattern
Organizational culture	Organizational norms, structures, systems, processes
Human resource	Gender sensitive HR policies, gender considerations in hiring
Financial resource allocation	To what extent Ministry's budget had been instrumental in supporting gender equity efforts.

- iii. **Focus group conversations:** focus group conversations with selected staff are a valuable way to gather additional information and insights about the belief of the staff within the organization regarding gender equality, gender mainstreaming. The objective of the FGD will be to uncover additional

<sup>5</sup> Annexure B for programme divisions

information about the survey results and to discover participant's vision of a "gender friendly organization".

- iv. **Gender action plan:** the whole process will lead to the formulation of the Gender action plan (GAP), which is off course an on-going process and also the plan intends to promote gender integration in the organization. The results of the survey and discussion will be presented and discussed with the gender team formed for this purpose. The results of the survey and the focused group discussion will be the basis to identify recommendations and activities for planning.

## INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF GENDER AUDIT

### International Labour Organization (ILO)

ILO (A manual for gender audit facilitators: The ILO participatory gender audit methodology, 2007) defines audit as a tool to assess the extent of Gender mainstreaming accomplished – it helps to assess the differential impact of projects and policies on women and men. Its aim is to see whether the policy, programme guidelines, practices, systems, procedures and budgets are being used in the most effective way to deliver the Governments commitments to gender equality.

It states that a gender audit:

- Considers whether internal practices and related support systems for gender mainstreaming are effective and reinforce each other and whether they are being followed ;
- Monitors and assesses the relative progress made in gender mainstreaming ;
- Establishes a baseline ;
- Identifies critical gaps and challenges ;
- Recommends ways of addressing them and suggests new and more effective strategies ;
- Documents good practices towards the achievement of gender equality.

Herein a gender audit is essentially a “social audit”, and belongs to the category of “quality audits”, which distinguishes it from traditional “financial audits”. It considers whether internal practices and related support systems for gender mainstreaming are effective and reinforce each other and whether they are being followed.

The belief is that a gender audit enhances the collective capacity of the organization to examine its activities from a gender perspective and identify strengths and weaknesses in promoting gender equality issues. It monitors and assesses the relative progress made in gender mainstreaming and helps to build organizational ownership for gender equality initiatives and sharpens organizational learning on gender through a process of:

- Team building
- Information sharing
- Reflection on gender

Around 12 key areas represent the focus of analysis in their participatory gender audit. The questions are designed to raise awareness in each key area. They are intended to familiarize the facilitation team with the issues that will generate important information but are not to be used as a checklist or questionnaire. It is important that at the end of the audit enough information will have been collected to enable the audit team to report on each area. For this purpose, the participatory workshop exercises to discuss the 12 key areas of audit are conducted.

*Source: ILO Participatory Gender Audit*

**Department for International Development, Malawi (DFIDM)**

Department for International Development, Malawi, DFIDM (Moser, 2005) clarifies that the most important difference relates to the extent to which this is an internal programmatic assessment as against an internal organizational self assessment. Although it also states that the distinction is blurred. Many organisations now use the term audit for what previously they would have called an evaluation, whereas gender evaluations tend to encompass internal issues that were previously the province of audits. At the outset in Malawi, therefore it was necessary to consult DFIDM senior management about their approval and commitment to an internal self-assessment component. Agreement was reached with DFIDM that the objective of the gender audit was to assess their performance in GM by focusing on both 'external' and 'internal' aspects of DFIDM as follows:

- An external operational assessment of DFIDM's development objectives in relation to GM in its policies, programmes and projects
- An internal organizational assessment of management objectives to GM within DFIDM as an institutions

DFIDM identified the purpose of the gender audit in terms of the following five components (2004):

- To provide a systematic gender audit of DFIDM's policies, strategies and activities.
- To implement an intensive gender audit and gender analysis of at least two of DFIDM's key programmes.
- To recommend appropriate policies, strategies and activities for DFIDM under its current Country Assistance Plan (CAP), taking account of national gender mainstreaming policy, strategy, institutional framework, and activities in Malawi.
- To recommend practical means for increasing the gender equity focus of current and future programme policies, plans and activities, so that these more effectively address disadvantaged women's strategic and practical needs and priorities.
- To develop a training programme to improve understanding of all DFID staff and partners, to facilitate improved implementation of gender mainstreaming in all programme areas.

The Gender Audit also identifies policy approaches that underpin GM interventions, distinguishing among welfare, economic efficiency and the more recently introduced human rights approach. Building on these documentary sources, in undertaking the DFIDM gender audit it was important to start by identifying a working definition of gender mainstreaming. This is defined as twin-track strategies that comprise the following:

- a) Integration of women and men's concerns (needs and interests) throughout the development process (in all policies and projects)
- b) Specific activities aimed at empowering women.

The guidelines provided by the DFID London TSP and associated manual identify four key steps of gender mainstreaming. These comprise sex disaggregated data and gender analytical information; women as well as men influencing the development

agenda; context-specific action to promote gender equality; and organization capacity building and change. They also include a listing of four gender sensitive indicators that allow measurement of benefit to women and men, although they provide no guidance as to how these may be numerically weighted. Finally they identify the PIM (Policy Information Marker) (see box below) used for the DFID internal monitoring process with the different categorization linked to the two twin-track gender mainstreaming objectives identified above.

Other than this useful background guidance, DFID does not have a standard gender evaluation methodology. Consequently the DFIDM gender audit provided the opportunity to pilot a gender audit methodology. The gender audit score card provides a useful overall methodological tool to briefly synthesize the audit findings that assess a GM strategy. This score card has been adapted from a comparative analysis of multilateral and bilateral gender mainstreaming strategies across institutions that showed a high level of consistency regarding a number of key components (see Moser 1995; 2004; Moser and Moser 2003).

#### **PIM markers are distinguished as follows**

**P – Principal project objective:** This score should be given to projects where the removal of gender discrimination or the promotion of gender equality is the whole purpose of the project that is a targeted projects working with men, women, boys or girls wholly designed to tackle elements of gender discrimination or discrimination

**S – Significant project objective:** This score should be given to projects where the removal of gender discrimination or the promotion of gender equality is an integral part of the purpose of the project e.g. projects where gender equality is mainstreamed. These include equitable access to services as well as equitable benefit from new resources

**N – A non-targeted score:** This should be given to projects that fit into neither of these categories

Source: DFID (2002, 28-29).

#### **Inter Action**

Inter Action has been instrumental in pioneering a methodology by which to measure such internal institutional progress. Participatory gender audits emphasize self-assessment and are designed to allow participants full participation and self-reflection, achieved through a two-stage process involving **programming and organizational dimensions** (see Box). These are extensive exercises with their success heavily dependent on the level of commitment from senior management.

Inter Action defines gender audit as ‘An assessment tool and process for organizations to use in identifying how gender issues are addressed in their programming portfolio and internal organizational processes’ (2004: 1). Inter Action (2003), however states that unlike regular evaluations, audits particularly participatory audits are based on self-assessments of how gender issues are addressed in programming portfolios and internal organizational processes, and not on external evaluation. In their The Gender Audit Questionnaire Handbook (2005) they have defined Gender Audit as an assessment tool and process for organizations to use in identifying staff perceptions of

how gender issues are addressed in their programming portfolio and internal organizational processes. While the second component is much shorter than the guidelines outlined in Inter Action's Gender Audit Questionnaire Handbook (Inter Action 2003), nevertheless it marks an important first stage in a shift in assessment focus from one that examines only external development objectives, to one that also recognizes the importance of internal issues of accountability and ownership.

**Box: Components of Inter Action's two-fold gender audit strategy**

A gender audit questionnaire: The first stage is designed to help organisations assess the range of understanding, attitudes, perceptions and reported behaviour among staff in their organisation. Responses to the questionnaire serve as the baseline of staff perceptions on the status of gender equality in their organisation's programmes and processes. The questionnaire focuses on five areas of programming and six areas of organisational processes. The Inter Action's questionnaire has over 120 questions & focuses on how gender equality issues have been addressed in:

**5 Programming dimensions:** Program planning & design; Program implementation; Technical expertise; Monitoring & evaluation and Partner organisations

**6 organisational dimensions:** Gender policy; Staffing; Human resources; Advocacy, marketing and communications; Financial resources and Organisational culture

Each of these is answered by choosing one out of five categories designed to 'determine the intensity of gender equality', and range from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. As designed, all staff within the organisation being audited participates in the gender audit and completes the questionnaire.

Discussion, analysis and planning phase: The second stage reviews the results of the questionnaire through focus group discussions and planning sessions. Depending on the size of the organisation, this is undertaken with all staff (less than 50), representatives (50–300), or a Gender Task Force (over 300). The output is a detailed action plan that builds on organisational strengths and outlines initiatives, strategies, processes and guidelines to integrate gender into weaker areas. The desired outcome is 'shared ownership and action to move toward a gender-friendly organization'.

**Source: Inter Action (2004, 4)**

**Women's Law Studies And Legal Aid Center Of Peking University, CHINA (WLSLAC)**

Gender Action and the Women's Law Studies and Legal Aid Center of Peking University (WLSLAC) prepared a toolkit to provide Chinese civil society organizations with tools to hold public taxpayer-supported International Financial Institutions (IFIs) accountable for meeting their promises to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through their investments.

A gender audit is a process to assess the integration of gender concerns into policies, strategies, programs and projects of all types. They can be either organizational self assessment audits or conducted by an independent consultant. Gender audits are crucial for ensuring that policies, strategies, programs and projects adhere to the agreed global commitments to promote gender equality stipulated in international human rights instruments and standards. Within the international development field, gender equality

refers to the recognition given to the participation of men and women in development programs and the assurance that men and women equally benefit from development programs. In order to achieve gender equality, development organizations, including donors, must strive to promote a twin-track strategy which focuses on integration of women's and men's concerns in all policies and projects (equality), as well as engaging in specific activities aimed at empowering women (empowerment). It is the implementation of this twin-track strategy that most gender audits endeavor to assess.

Gender Action and WLSLAC recently completed a gender audit of a representative sample of 50 World Bank, IFC and ADB projects in China. The primary objectives of this gender audit was to

- Provide an analysis of the extent to which IFI investments in China address gender issues
- Ensure that the Chinese civil society has the opportunity to acquire gender analysis expertise in order to monitor, and
- Hold IFIs accountable, conduct advocacy, as well as take gender discrimination cases to IFI accountability mechanisms.

The gender audit found that overall well over half of IFI investments in China fail to explicitly analyze gender and relations between men and women; and over three fourths of IFI investments neither acknowledge nor redress disparities between men and women, nor consider the differential impacts on men and women.

Source: IFI Gender Audit and Advocacy, a Toolkit for Chinese Civil Society Organizations- Gender Action China

## **US AID, TANZANIA**

USAID, Tanzania published a report that documents the implementation of a gender audit in Tanzania. The audit was carried out between February and July 2006, in two phases. The gender audit survey was conducted in late February, and follow-up discussions were held in May, with the final report completed in August. A number of the gender audit survey 1 results were confirmed by the focus group discussions, including:

- That there is a wide general awareness and acceptance of USAID's mandate for gender integration across the Agency's programs and operations;
- That there is appreciation for the strong leadership from senior management on the importance of addressing gender issues;
- That there is a high level of awareness among staff of the importance of addressing gender inequalities and their effect on development work in Tanzania; and
- That the employees at USAID/Tanzania, both US and Tanzanian, feel comfortable with the working environment and feel that they are respected and valued members of a common team, regardless of their sex. Their ease in voicing their opinions is a reflection of the already high level of comfort between men and women existing in the mission and of their trust in mission leadership.

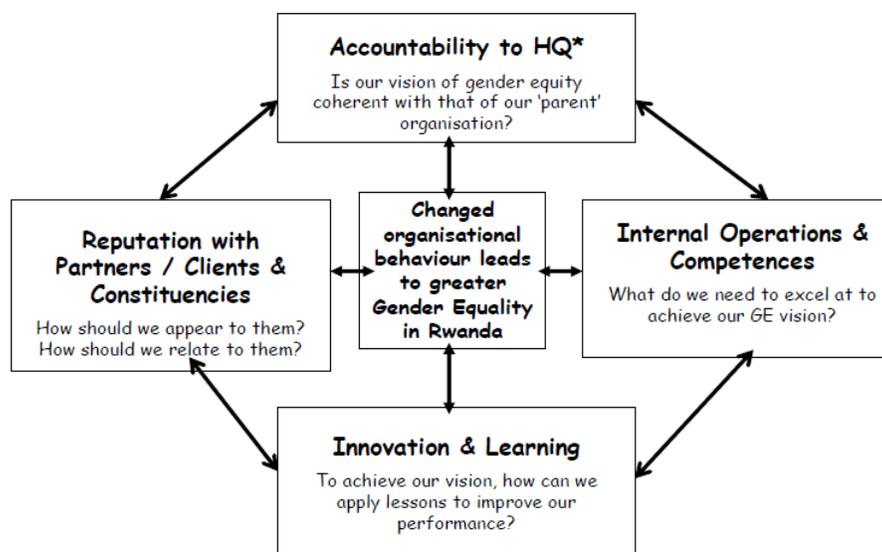
## SNV (Dutch Volunteers Foundation), Rwanda

The Rwanda Gender Audit Project used the Balanced Score Card Approach, which has been tested by eight organisations in Rwanda in 2007. These organisations have included bilateral and multi-lateral development agencies and international and local civil society organisations. Within this project “A Gender Audit is a guided process used by the organisation – with the participation of all its staff – to examine what they do well and what they could do better in pursuit of gender equality.”

Gender Audits are conducted to identify where organisations are performing effectively and to pin-point areas that need attention. Gender auditing starts from an assumption - that the things that, constrain the delivery of good gender development practice might be the organisation’s ways of working. It presumes that organisations are willing to become more effective in the way they institutionalise gender practices and that this will have an effect on the support they offer to others.

The Balanced Score Card was originally designed as a management tool for use in business. Its purpose is to identify where and how the business needs to improve performance in order to realize strategic objectives. The same was adapted for use by development agencies doing gender auditing in Rwanda. The Balanced Score Card provides a central framework for analysis. Organisations that gender audit examine four key areas (‘core elements’) of organisational policies, systems and practices.

Diagram 2: The Balanced Scorecard used in Rwanda



\* HQ can refer to head offices of donors and INGOs, or Central Government ministries, or Parliament, or head office of national NGO, depending on the type and level of organisation

SOURCE:devpartners.gov.rw

## **Power point presentation**

**Slide 1: perception regarding gender audit: a) Programming; b) within the organization**

**Slide 2: purpose**

**Slide 3: Outputs**

**Slide 4: Process**

**Slide 5: Results**

**Programme divisions:**

- A. Programme planning and design: this section will try to bring out procedures and methods to conceptualize and design programme.**
1. Was gender given a priority at the inception of the programme?
  2. If no, then does the programme design incorporate gender priority by involving their voice in planning at the local institutions?
  3. Are gender equity goals and objectives included in programme design?
  4. For each programme is there a needs assessment, including an analysis of gender roles and responsibilities in the targeted community?
  5. Are best practices in gender integration in programming incorporated in subsequent programme?
  6. Are gender indicators included in the monitoring processes?
- B. Monitoring and evaluation: this section will highlight to what extent sex disaggregated data and information is incorporated in the monitoring and evaluation system.**
1. Is gender disaggregated data collected in the programme divisions?
  2. Are there gender specific indicators for the programme?
  3. Is the gender impact of projects and programmes monitored and evaluated?
  4. Do you believe that gender disaggregated data provides information for further improving/redesigning the programme?
  5. Do you believe that the monitoring and evaluation result obtained from the field contribute to women empowerment and the changing of unequal gender relations? (any case study to support from the programme division)
- C. Technical Expertise: this section highlights the availability of gender experts for gender analysis and evaluation.**
1. Is there a person responsible for gender in the programme division?
  2. Do the staff carrying out the gender related work have necessary skills and attitude
  3. Did the programme divisions received any training on gender planning and analysis for?
  4. Do the human resources involved in programme planning; monitoring and evaluation are gender sensitive and include at least one person with specific expertise and skills on gender issues?
- D. Partner Organization: this section focuses on gender integration in the Ministry's relations with partner or local NGO affiliates:**
1. Is commitment to gender equity a criterion in the Ministry's selection of partner or local NGO affiliates?
  2. Does Ministry provides any training and tools on gender planning, analysis and evaluation to partner or local NGO affiliate staff?