

Definition and minimum recommended criteria for the DAC gender equality policy marker



The new minimum criteria for the DAC gender equality policy marker were introduced in December 2016. They provide recommendations for common minimum criteria for the three categories of the marker (score 0, 1 and 2). The recommendations are not binding but set a common benchmark that DAC members are encouraged to meet.

The purpose of the minimum criteria is to ensure a common understanding among DAC member agencies of what is the minimum baseline for projects to qualify for a 0, 1 or 2 score; facilitate the scoring process by providing a ‘checklist’ of minimum criteria for each category; and strengthen the comparability and accuracy of the data reported by DAC members.

For more information about the DAC gender marker, please also refer to the Handbook on the OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker.

What is the DAC gender equality policy marker?

The OECD tracks aid in support of gender equality and women’s rights using the OECD-DAC gender equality policy marker – a statistical tool to record aid activities that target gender equality as a policy objective. As part of the annual reporting of their aid to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), DAC members are required to indicate for each project/programme whether it targets gender equality as a policy objective according to a three-point scoring system. The gender marker is based on donor intentions at the design stage. Projects/programmes marked as significant and principal (score 1 and 2) are counted as **gender equality focused aid** by the DAC.

A gender analysis¹ and a ‘do no harm’ approach² is necessary for all aid activities to ensure at minimum that the project/programme does not perpetuate or exacerbate gender inequalities.

DAC members are encouraged to monitor and report on the gender equality results achieved by projects/programmes marked significant and principal (score 1 and 2) **in the evaluation phase**. Reporting on gender equality results is essential to measure and improve performance.

A principal score is not by definition better than a significant score. The DAC recommends that donors adopt a **twin-track approach** to gender equality across their development co-operation portfolio, combining dedicated/targeted interventions (usually score 2) with gender mainstreaming (usually score 1).

NOT TARGETED (SCORE 0):	The project/programme has been screened against the marker but has not been found to target gender equality.
SIGNIFICANT (SCORE 1):	Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.
PRINCIPAL (SCORE 2):	Gender equality is the main objective of the project/programme and is fundamental in its design and expected results. The project/programme would not have been undertaken without this gender equality objective.

What is the marker intended to do?

The DAC gender equality policy marker is a **key monitoring and accountability tool** in the context of **2030 Agenda**. It is the **only common tool** available to DAC members to track bilateral aid in support of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) commitments on gender equality. It can contribute to identifying gaps between policy and financial commitments, and incentivise efforts to close them.

The data generated by the marker provides an **estimate** of DAC members’ aid in support of gender equality rather than an exact quantification. The marker is a qualitative instrument rather than a quantitative tool. The **total amounts** of projects/programmes marked 1 and 2 by DAC donors are counted as **gender equality focused aid**.

Since 2007, the data has been **publicly available** on the DAC website³ and the OECD produces an annual summary of aid to gender equality and women’s rights by DAC member. The data is used to track changes over time and inform decisions on funding allocations.

1. A gender analysis highlights the differences between and among women and men, girls and boys in terms of their relative distribution of resources, opportunities, constraints and power in a given context.

2. A ‘do no harm’ approach to gender equality requires that projects/programmes conduct an analysis of the potential risks of unintentionally perpetuating or reinforcing gender inequalities in the context of the intervention, proactively monitor risks, and take corrective/compensatory measures if applicable.

3. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/aidinsupportofgenderequalityandwomensempowerment.htm>

What are the minimum criteria recommended for each category of the marker?

In order to ensure the comparability of the data reported by DAC members, it is important that projects meet a set of minimum criteria that are common to all DAC donors. The GENDERNET recommends the following minimum requirements for aid activities to qualify for a 0, 1 or 2 score:

<p>NOT TARGETED (SCORE 0):</p>	<p>The project/programme has been screened against the marker but has not been found to target gender equality.</p> <p>This score cannot be used as a default value. Projects/programmes that have not been screened should be left unmarked – i.e. the field should be left empty.⁴ This ensures that there is no confusion between activities that do not target gender equality (score 0) and activities for which the answer is not known (empty field).</p> <p>It is mandatory that a gender analysis is conducted for all projects/programmes. Findings from this gender analysis should be used to ensure at minimum that the project/programme does no harm and does not reinforce gender inequalities.</p>														
<p>SIGNIFICANT (SCORE 1):</p>	<p>Gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme.</p> <p>The gender equality objective must be explicit in the project/programme documentation and cannot be implicit or assumed.</p> <p>The project/programme, in addition to other objectives, is designed to have a positive impact on advancing gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls, reducing gender discrimination or inequalities, or meeting gender-specific needs.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="298 853 1461 1234"> <thead> <tr> <th>Minimum criteria (should be met in full)</th> <th>Yes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A gender analysis of the project/programme has been conducted.</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Findings from this gender analysis have informed the design of the project/programme and the intervention adopts a ‘do no harm’ approach.</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Presence of at least one explicit gender equality objective backed by at least one gender-specific indicator⁵ (or a firm commitment to do this if the results framework has not been elaborated at the time of marking the project).</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Data and indicators are disaggregated by sex where applicable.</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Commitment to monitor and report on the gender equality results achieved by the project in the evaluation phase.</td> <td>✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Minimum criteria (should be met in full)	Yes	A gender analysis of the project/programme has been conducted.	✓	Findings from this gender analysis have informed the design of the project/programme and the intervention adopts a ‘do no harm’ approach.	✓	Presence of at least one explicit gender equality objective backed by at least one gender-specific indicator ⁵ (or a firm commitment to do this if the results framework has not been elaborated at the time of marking the project).	✓	Data and indicators are disaggregated by sex where applicable.	✓	Commitment to monitor and report on the gender equality results achieved by the project in the evaluation phase.	✓		
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4. DAC members should ensure that their internal reporting system clearly differentiates between the values ‘not screened’ (blank) and ‘not targeted’ (0).

5. The indicator should be defined in “SMART” terms (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

Examples of scoring

Examples of projects/programmes that can be marked as “not targeted” (score 0):

- A basic education and literacy project designed to benefit boys and girls but with no specific objectives or activities that aim specifically to address gender-specific barriers to education.
- Scholarships where most of the beneficiaries happen to be girls/women but which are not specifically targeted at supporting girls/women’s enrolment in education.
- A railway project for which a gender analysis has been conducted, but where gender equality is not a deliberate objective and which does not include specific activities designed to reduce gender-based inequalities (e.g. in access to services, markets, risks, benefits and opportunities) or empower women (e.g. through gender quotas in hiring for construction work, street lighting and walkways that make transport safer for women).
- A project to construct a sports facility for local youth that includes building toilets for boys and girls in separated areas but does not include specific measures to ensure women and girls’ involvement in sports activities such as gender trainings for coaches, appropriate scheduling of activities (e.g. before dusk), or awareness raising activities to combat stereotypes.
- A project aimed at supporting local farmers’ access to micro-credit to purchase agricultural inputs such as pesticides or fertilisers, which does not address gender biases in access to and control over productive inputs and/or include specific measures to target women farmers.
- A project to prevent alcohol abuse and alcoholism among disadvantaged men through the setting up of support groups and counselling, which might have as an unintended side-effect a reduction in the frequency and severity of intimate partner violence.

Examples of projects/programmes that can be marked as “significant” (score 1):

- A basic education and literacy project designed to benefit boys and girls but with a specific objective and activities that address the gender-specific barriers to girls’ education, for example through the provision of financial incentives to encourage disadvantaged families to allow girls to attend school.
- A project aimed at providing drinking water to a district or community, which has specific objectives and activities to ensure that women and girls have safe and easy access to the facilities.
- A project designed to respond to adolescent’s sexual and reproductive health needs and reproductive rights by setting up a clinic where they can access information, HIV testing and prevention services, family planning advice, and which includes differential services for girls and boys.
- A project focusing on decentralisation and local governance processes aimed at building the capacity of local governments for improved planning and financial management, but which also defines specific objectives to strengthen women’s participation in decision-making at municipal level and ensure gender-responsive services, for example through gender-budgeting initiatives.
- An infrastructure project for the construction of a new metro line which seeks to improve the utilisation of the transport system by women by taking into account their safety needs through providing secure street lighting around stations, and includes specific shop-spaces for female-owned businesses in the stations.

Examples of projects/programmes that can be marked as “principal” (score 2):

- A project that focuses specifically on girls’ access to and performance in education and/or vocational training, with the main objective of empowering women and girls and reducing inequalities between boys and girls.
- A project designed principally to prevent and/or respond to gender-based violence in conflict.
- A social protection project set up with the primary purpose of empowering women and girls as a particularly disadvantaged group in society.
- A project to educate and mobilise men and boys to become advocates against gender-based violence in their community.
- A capacity-building project to support a national ministry of finance to incorporate gender equality in its national development strategy.
- A project to strengthen women’s voice and participation in government at local, regional and/or national level.

Other related publications:

OECD (2016), Handbook on the OECD-DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker.

OECD (2016), Aid in Support of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment - Donor Charts.

Visit the GENDERNET website for:

- More information about the gender equality policy marker
- Access to gender-related aid data
- Updates about our activities
- Flyers and publications

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development>

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