

Why gender in country analysis?

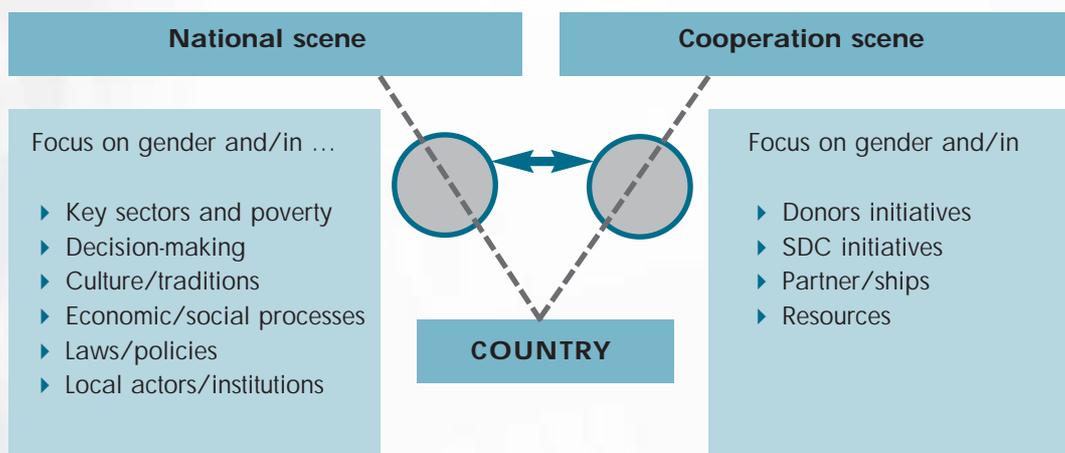
A gender-aware analysis of the national context, including policies, development sectors and actors is critical to mainstream gender in programmes and projects.

A country analysis provides a social, economic, cultural and political profile where the respective roles, contributions and needs of women and men are thoroughly described and analysed. The link between gender inequalities and other factors affecting development must be made to inform planning (see sheet 7: gender in country programme). This analysis is important to help SDC confirm or identify partners and alliances that are useful to promote gender equality.



How?

A two scene-framework is useful for this analysis (see sheet 3).



Before starting the gender-aware country analysis, the following are in place:

- A gender-aware analytical framework
- Basic gender disaggregated gender data in the targeted area/sector
- A gender competent, and, whenever possible, gender-balanced team
- A list of key interlocutors/respondents with a knowledge of gender issues

Gender machinery: A key player at national level

The Women's World Conference in Beijing in 1995 reinforced the idea that national mechanisms are needed in each country to catalyse and supervise the process of mainstreaming gender equality. In most countries, there is a Ministry, Department or Bureau for Gender Equality, or for the Promotion of Women as it is often called. The political strength and the capacity (human and financial) of these national mechanisms vary greatly from country to country, and within one country, from Government to Government. However, the world over, national gender mechanisms tend to be under-resourced and politically weak. Yet, they are a key actor in the search for gender equality.

The work of national mechanisms is usually framed by a «national gender policy» and/ or supported by an action plan for gender. Increasingly, Gender Focal Points are in place in key line ministries to assist the implementation of gender across sectors.

At country level, the analysis tries to identify major trends (economic, social, political, environmental etc.) shaping the context and SDC main sectors of interventions. Trends affecting gender relations are included, inasmuch as they represent a threat or an opportunity for equality between women and men.

«Externally enforced political repositioning has polarised modernist from traditionalist sectors in society. A first and major loser is the gender factor: It is becoming increasingly difficult for women and girl oriented empowerment programmes to function without threats».

Pakistan Annual Programme, 2002

It is important not to reinvent the wheel and to make the most of existing sources of information on gender. Of course, original research is not excluded and is particularly useful to identify qualitative gender issues that tend to be underanalysed.

All original research should involve women and men at all relevant levels as part of the consultation process. All this information is used to write up the «context» section of the Country Programme. All sections of the Country Programme must be gender-aware (see sheet 7).

There are two options to obtain a gender-aware view of a country's situation:

1. Gender is integrated as a transversal in a «general» country analysis
2. A specific gender profile (country, sector) is carried out (sheet 3) if other relevant diagnoses are incomplete in terms of gender.

Often, basic gender-disaggregated data (on health, education, political participation) already exist in the country (e.g. national statistics, UNDP human development report). In addition, a wide range of information on gender in development sectors in many different countries/regions is now available on the Internet and often has the merit of being qualitative as well as quantitative.

Must have gender information in a country analysis

The national scene

- Participation and roles (qualitative/quantitative) of women's/men's in key (and SDC) sectors
- Women's/men's participation in decision-making at national level
- Gender and poverty (quantitative and qualitative data)
- Cultural practices/beliefs, customs affecting gender equality (positive/negative)
- Economic and social changes affecting gender equality (positive/negative)
- Key changes in gender relations (positive/negative) over the last 5 – 10 years
- Gender in macro (e.g. PRSP) and sector policies
- Gender specific policies/laws – objectives and means
- Local actors/institutions (government and civil society) and initiatives for gender

The Cooperation Scene

- Donors' initiatives to support gender equality
- Main results, difficulties met by these initiatives so far
- SDC past initiatives, difficulties and achievements to promote gender (see sheet 7)
- Commitment, experience, and competence of SDC current partners on gender
- Resources (human, institutional, financial) available to promote gender
- Potential for alliances

(See sheet 11 for monitoring indicators at country level and list for internet sources)

In Burkina Faso, the complexion of the cottage industry sector exhibits enormous disparities in function with the gender dimension. Women's professions are held in low esteem by society, which perceives a craftsman as a person vested with the status of a professional, while the craftswoman is first and foremost to be considered as a mother or as a wife, engaging in a secondary type of activity to earn money for subsistence needs.

Gender in a sector or thematic analysis

Policy makers and actors in social sectors (e.g. health, governance, environment, rural development) tend to be more responsive to gender than those involved in economic/macro issues (e.g. transport, infrastructures). Yet, these issues matter to gender too. In addition, it is now obvious that economic and institutional issues (e.g. structural adjustment, privatisation, trade liberalisation or reform of the state) have a different impact on women and men.

However, local partners, particularly NGO and women's organisations are becoming more vocal in demanding a dialogue on gender with donors in «hard» sectors too. Sector wide approaches (SWAPs) and decentralisation are already offering new opportunities and challenges for SDC to work with new actors and create new synergies and alliances for gender.





Must have gender information in a sector analysis

- Qualitative/quantitative data on the participation/decision-making of women and men
- Disaggregated data on the resources that women and men have access to (e.g. skills, credit, information, legal protection etc.) and the benefits they obtain (e.g. income, status, information)
- Gender imbalances in access to and control over resources and benefits
- Institutional as well as cultural factors influencing gender in the sector
- Treatment of gender in sector policy framework
- Actors/institutions in the sector **and** those promoting gender equality in the sector
- Initiatives by national machinery (e.g. Women's Ministry) in this sector
- Changes (economic, legal etc.) in the sector and effects on gender
- SDC past experience in the sector and lessons concerning gender
- Role/choice of current/future partners to promote gender

Key questions to integrate gender in policy analysis

1. *Has the policy formulation process been gender sensitive* (gender in dialogue with key actors and policy-makers, dialogue with national gender machinery and women/gender organisations, participation of women and men «beneficiaries»)?
2. *Are objectives of the policy gender-sensitive* (based on gender-disaggregated data and gender stakes, existence of gender specific objectives, inclusion of gender in assumptions/risks and impact hypothesis, capacity of proposed partners on gender)?
3. *Are strategies relevant to women and men* (use of gender lessons from the past, of arguments/documentation to illustrate gender issues/gaps, allocation of budgets and resources)?
4. *Is the policy implementation and monitoring gender sensitive?* (Commitment of policy makers, institutional changes to support gender, use of gender-balanced budgets, to measure policy impact on gender equality (sheet 11)?)

Policy analysis (by sector and or general e.g. Poverty Reduction Strategies Papers) is part of country level analysis.



Integrating gender in country analysis – including sectors, policies and stake holder's analysis – contributes to the recognition of women's and men's needs as part and parcel of national development issues and can influence the development agenda at the highest levels of decision-making.