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**Evaluation of EU Support to
Gender Equality and Women's
Empowerment in Partner Countries
Executive Summary
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Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries

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The opinions expressed in this document represent the authors' points of view which are not necessarily shared by the European Commission or by the authorities of the countries involved

Executive Summary

Introduction

This final report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation of European Union (EU) Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) in Partner Countries, commissioned by the Evaluation Unit of the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO).

The objectives of the evaluation are: (a) to provide the relevant external cooperation services of the EU, Member States, the EU Parliament and the wider public with an overall independent assessment of the EU's past and current support to GEWE in partner countries; and (b) to identify key lessons, assess results thus far, and to produce strategic, operational and forward-looking recommendations in order to improve current and future EU and Member State strategies, programmes and actions.

The evaluation focuses on gender mainstreaming in EU development cooperation, as called for in the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2010–15 (GAP). In particular, the evaluation focuses on how gender mainstreaming has been implemented by the European Commission Services (EC Services), the European External Action Services (EEAS) and two Member States (MS), the Netherlands and Spain. The evaluation assesses also the extent to which EU/EC cooperation (policy, strategies, programmes/projects) has been relevant, efficient and effective in supporting sustainable impacts on GEWE in partner countries in the period 2007–13.

The evaluation is timely. Globally, discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals, the successors to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reach their conclusion in late 2015. Promoting gender equality and women's empowerment remains high on the international political agenda and is likely to form part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Concurrently, the EU is preparing the successor to the GAP 2010–15, the subject of this evaluation. EC Services, the EEAS and EU Member States are therefore in a unique position to take the lessons from their experience in the last three years of GAP implementation, to reorient their approach where necessary and make a significant contribution to international efforts in support of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment in partner countries.

Overall assessment

Some important and inspirational GEWE results have been achieved, but they are patchy and poorly documented. With a few exceptions, EU Delegations (EUDs) do not adopt an integrated three-pronged approach that effectively combines gender mainstreaming, gender-specific actions and political and policy dialogue to maximise outcomes. Nor do they consider how various instruments and modalities can be used to support GEWE outcomes. Despite successes at the international level, work on 'women, peace and security', including gender-based violence (GbV), is not well reflected in country cooperation

Below we provide an overall assessment of the extent to which the EU has demonstrated the necessary '5 Cs' – the factors of **C**ommitment, **C**apacities, **C**ash, **a**Ccountability, and understanding of **C**ontext – that would enable them to deliver against their GEWE commitments.

*Institutional **C**ommitment and leadership of GEWE agenda*

The EU is not delivering the strong institutional commitment on GEWE, as set out notably in the overarching policies governing development cooperation (the European Consensus on Development, Lisbon Treaty and Agenda for Change), the 2007 Communication on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, the 2010 Council conclusions on the MDGs and the Gender Action Plan (GAP).

EC Services and EEAS leadership¹ and management² have not clearly communicated GEWE priorities to their own staff at headquarters or in EUDs. Neither have they put in place the necessary institutional architecture and incentives to motivate staff to take GEWE issues seriously in their work and to require and facilitate delivery on the policy commitments made. As a result, staff in headquarters and in EUDs do not have a clear understanding of the GEWE policies in place or what these imply for EU cooperation strategy, programming or dialogue. In an environment where staff are overstretched and faced with competing priorities, it is this absence of strong leadership that lies at the root of the patchy GEWE results achieved by EC Services and EEAS in the period 2007–13. The results that have been achieved are the accomplishments of committed individuals, rather than of an organisational response.

GEWE Capacities

There is a mismatch between the EU's strong policy commitments on GEWE and the organisational capacity to deliver on them. There is no evidence of any capacity assessment to determine the internal capacities needed to deliver the GEWE policies, or of a strategy to build essential capacities. What exists is a piecemeal approach to the delivery of policy commitments.

EC financial commitments to GEWE have increased in the period 2007–13 but human resource capacity to manage this increasing volume of work has not. Management have assumed that staff will be able to identify and address gender issues in this work, with support from gender focal points (GFPs). However, staff do not see gender as their responsibility and so do not give it the required attention in their work. Furthermore, most GFPs have neither the time nor the adequate technical expertise with regards to gender mainstreaming.

Technical guidelines and resources are available to staff but they are not comprehensive, not adapted to staff needs and not well known or utilised by staff. In the absence of an explicit demand from the leadership for GEWE performance improvements many officials do not seek out the resources available and treat the tools and processes that are mandatory as a tick-box exercise, rather than as a means to improve the gender focus of their work.

Cash for GEWE

In line with policy commitments, EC commitments to GEWE have increased in the period 2007–13. The committed amounts for gender-specific actions have increased from EUR 106 million in 2007 to EUR 311 million in 2012 and EUR 241 million in 2013. It is not possible to determine exactly how much has been committed to gender mainstreaming, largely due to poor application of the gender marker. There are also significant questions about the quality of GEWE contributions, as gender analysis is rarely used to inform strategy and programming, and gender-sensitive indicators are not adequately integrated into programme/project results frameworks.

Systems for institutional accountability

Internal accountability for implementation and results against GEWE commitments is weak. Due to poor application of the gender marker, the EC is unable to account accurately for its spend on gender mainstreaming and gender-specific actions. EC Services and EEAS human resource procedures and internal performance reporting do not take sufficient account of performance against GEWE commitments. GEWE has not been integrated into staff job descriptions and performance appraisal and so is not seen as a responsibility for which staff are accountable. At the EUD or country level, gender is not clearly integrated into country strategy objectives or country-level review and evaluation processes, or programme

¹ This refers to the political leadership, for example, the Commissioner and the Higher Representative.

² Management refers to General Directors, Directors, Heads of Delegation and Heads of Cooperation.

and project monitoring systems. These weaknesses in turn allow poor performance to continue unchecked.

External accountability relies substantially on annual GAP reporting by EUDs and MS. This reporting is not integrated into the external action management reports (EAMRs), where strategic dialogue between EC Services/EEAS headquarters and EUDs takes place, indicating that GEWE is not part of the EC Services/EEAS' core business. The number of EUDs submitting reports is inadequate,³ with no sanction for not doing so. The quality of reports is generally poor, a product of multiple factors: particularly weaknesses in the GAP results framework; a bias towards reporting successes, rather than critically assessing areas where progress has been slow; and weaknesses in programme/project results framework, which means that meaningful evidence of GEWE results at the country level is lacking.

National Context, coordination and complementarity

Staff in EC Services and EEAS recognise the importance of building an understanding of national context in order to identify what issues they engage in and how they should engage. However, they make little attempt to develop a robust understanding of the gender context to inform country strategy objectives, programmes/projects and dialogue. As a result, with a few exceptions, EUDs do not have a clear picture of the windows of opportunity for GEWE in their national context to inform country strategies and their implementation. This results in financial and non-financial activities being mistargeted and opportunities being missed, including for complementary working with partner governments, civil society, the private sector and other development partners.

Member States

In both the Netherlands and Spain there has been more consistent political leadership of the GEWE agenda. Both internal and external accountability systems ensure that GEWE commitments are not forgotten at strategy and programming levels, and that managers are mindful of the need to adequately resource the delivery of commitments made.

Despite limited information on results achieved by Dutch and Spanish cooperation at country level, our analysis highlights some features of their cooperation which may contribute to results and which would benefit further exploration:

- The Netherlands has opted for a limited sectoral focus, which may make the role of GFPs more manageable.
- GFPs in Dutch cooperation appear to have the technical expertise to mainstream gender across sectors, including in budget support and in dialogue.
- Gender has become part of the Spanish Cooperation's organisational culture and is a responsibility shared by all.
- Spanish Cooperation has developed extensive and detailed guidelines to aid the translation of GEWE policy commitments into programmes, including the evaluation of GEWE results.

Conclusions

C1. The EU is not delivering the strong institutional commitment on GEWE, as set out in the 2007 Communication, the 2010 Council conclusions on the MDGs, and the GAP. Senior management in EC Services and EEAS have not sufficiently prioritised the EU's ambitious GEWE commitments, which neither permeate cooperation strategies nor systematically feature in programmes, projects or political and policy dialogue. This undermines the EU's contribution to the achievement of gender equality as a fundamental human right and goes against the clear global evidence of the costs of neglecting GEWE as a policy priority. This is a systemic failure, with the EU's GEWE commitments remaining little more than rhetoric.

³ EC (2015) Commission Staff Working Document, 2014 Report on the Implementation of the EU Plan of Action On Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010–15, Brussels, 27.01.2015, SWD (2015) 11 final.

C2. As a roadmap for translating the EU's global GEWE commitments into action and results, the GAP is not fit for purpose. The GAP does not conform to results-based management principles. It sits alongside 'business as usual' for EC Services, the EEAS and MS, where other policy priorities often crowd out GEWE such that it generally receives inadequate or cursory attention. This presents the irony that the EU's plan for gender mainstreaming has not been mainstreamed into development cooperation policy or practice.

C3. Weak systems for GAP reporting and accountability are symptomatic of the low priority that GEWE has received in practice and further undermine the EU's ability to deliver to its commitments. GAP reporting operates in parallel to the main reporting and accountability lines. The number of EUDs submitting annual GAP reports is inadequate and there are no sanctions for failing to do so. The quality of reports is generally poor, a reflection of weaknesses in the GAP itself. In EUDs, reporting responsibility is delegated to the GFPs rather than the main operational sections responsible for mainstreaming gender, while in DEVCO headquarters it is the Gender Unit that compiles the annual report as a whole. Accountability for GEWE achievements is not effectively exercised horizontally within and between the EC Services, the EEAS and Member States, or vertically to the Foreign Affairs Council and the European Parliament.

C4. The limited use of country-level GEWE contextual analysis significantly weakens strategy and programme relevance and undermines the EU's ability to achieve significant GEWE results. This represents a binding constraint to improved performance. Contextual analysis should deliver an understanding of the causes of gender inequality, how it intersects with other inequalities, and how it impacts on human rights and development efforts. It should also deliver an understanding of partner governments' commitment and capacity to work on GEWE issues. The benefits of good contextual analysis are well illustrated by EU cooperation in Morocco. However, in the majority of countries, EU strategies and programmes are developed with only a superficial and often undocumented understanding of the GEWE context.

C5. The EU's mainstream monitoring and evaluation processes pay scant attention to gender. EU evaluation and results-oriented monitoring (ROM) systems do not provide adequate information on results achieved generally.⁴ The use of gender-sensitive indicators is largely limited to the social sectors, particularly health and education. Even in these sectors, the indicators are not used systematically, including in sector budget support. While gender concerns are present in the ROM Handbook⁵ and templates,⁶ ROM reports are not delivering insights into GEWE performance. Gender has not been mainstreamed into EC Services evaluation processes and generally receives little consideration in country-level and thematic evaluations. The practices and experiences of MSs provide useful lessons that could be applied by the EC Services and EEAS, which unfortunately do not actively seek to identify and apply these lessons.

C6. The Gender Marker is poorly understood and inconsistently applied by EC Services and as a result it is impossible to determine with any confidence the EU's gender spend and the extent of gender mainstreaming in programming. The application of the Gender Marker in Dutch and Spanish development cooperation is improving and provides a more effective means of tracking progress against commitments. These MS experiences indicate the potential for better use of the marker by the EC Services and EEAS, but this sharing of lessons and practices has not yet taken place.

C7. The EC Services/EEAS reliance on a gender unit and network of GFPs to drive gender mainstreaming has been inadequate. With only three gender advisers in DEVCO headquarters and a network of often relatively inexperienced and untrained GFPs for whom

⁴ European Union (2014) EuropeAid's Evaluation and results-oriented monitoring systems, Special Report No. 18, European Court of Auditors

⁵ Gender receives 42 mentions in the ROM handbook

⁶ Gender has its own section in the template

gender is an add-on responsibility, the human resources dedicated to driving the EU's ambitious GEWE commitments are woefully inadequate given the scale of the challenge. GFPs are often working alone, unsupported by colleagues and management, and face an overwhelming workload. The majority of GFPs do not have formal gender training and lack the technical skills and expertise to take on such a challenging role. Without some gender training, they are ill-equipped to commission and use gender analysis to inform the development of country strategies, programmes and projects.

C8. EU development cooperation and political dialogue is nonetheless achieving important GEWE results in some contexts, particularly in the social sectors. However, good practice examples are the result of committed individuals who have been able to take advantage of windows of opportunity, either within the national context or within their own organisation, to drive GEWE-related work. Morocco is an exceptional example, where the EUD has put in place innovative gender programming supported by sector budget support, linked to policy dialogue and sector support where gender is effectively mainstreamed. The good practice examples provide an insight into what might be possible should the EU's leadership decide to give serious attention to the realisation of its GEWE commitments. They also show how positive change for GEWE can be achieved.

Recommendations

The recommendations below have been pitched intentionally at a strategic rather than operational level. As the conclusions clearly indicate, the EU's weak delivery against its GEWE commitments is primarily an institutional rather than a technical problem. Without leadership commitment and the institutional incentives that should flow from that leadership, then improvements to technical guidance and the like will not in themselves transform the EU's effectiveness on GEWE. The recommendations therefore focus more on what is required to bring GEWE into the mainstream of EU political dialogue and development cooperation, and through that to deliver enhanced GEWE results.

Recommendations for senior leadership and management within EC Services and EEAS, in consultation with Member States

R1. The EC Services and EEAS should revitalise their commitment to GEWE. The new leadership team in place in the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development and the EEAS should reiterate the priority that the EU places on gender equality and women's empowerment, recognising also its centrality to the achievement of all EU development goals. This ambition should be located clearly in the EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework, against which the EU will report, review and manage its development efforts. Through the principle of Policy Coherence for Development, GEWE should also gain new prominence in other spheres of EU cooperation. This recommendation responds to conclusions 1 and 2.

R2. The Commission and EEAS should lead the development of a successor to the GAP as required by the Council and engage more effectively with MS. The GAP should not be a stand-alone strategy with its own goals and processes. Rather it should be the strategy for achieving EU GEWE ambitions as set out in the EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework. We understand that work on drafting the GAP successor is already under way, but we are concerned that MS are not adequately involved and that it may remain alongside rather than integral to the Results Framework. Without this integration the risk is that institutional incentives and accountabilities for GAP delivery will remain weak. This recommendation responds to conclusion 2.

R3. The Commission and EEAS should clarify leadership and management arrangements at EUD level for achieving GEWE results and delivering against GAP commitments, including complementarity with MS. Overall leadership should rest with the Head of Delegation, with a clear schedule of delegation to the Head of Operations and Head of Political sections. These responsibilities should be incorporated into job descriptions

(see R8 below). The Commission and EEAS should require each EUD to set out how it will harmonise with MS efforts to deliver the GAP successor and align with country priorities for GEWE, which should provide an impetus for more joint strategy and programming. This recommendation responds to conclusions 1 and 7.

R4. The Commission and EEAS should clarify reporting and accountability arrangements for achievement of GEWE results and delivery of the GAP successor.

To the maximum extent possible, reporting should be through mainstream channels. As a starting point for change, EUDs should be required to include a summary of their performance on GEWE in annual EAMRs (with more detail presented in the annual GAP report) and all mid-term reviews and country-level evaluations should report GEWE results. Once progress is evident here, the gender focus of other reporting and accountability systems such as ROM and the Quality Support Group (QSG) should be strengthened. A synthesis of progress and achievements will be required at headquarters level, facilitating scrutiny of EC Services and EEAS contributions to overall performance. This should be integrated into the reporting and accountability arrangements under the new EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework – which the European Council foresees as a key tool for promoting a common results-based approach across EU institutions and MS. This recommendation responds to conclusion 3.

Recommendations for EUDs and MS embassies

R5. EUDs and MS embassies should prioritise and invest in high quality gender analysis as the basis for country-level strategy and programming. Where possible gender analysis should be conducted jointly by the EUD, MS and other stakeholders (e.g. development partners, government). Current strategies and gender-relevant programmes should be reviewed and their formulation amended to make them more gender responsive. The implications for the focus and form of political dialogue should also be made explicit. Where gender analysis does not exist or is inadequate, EUDs should ensure that analysis is undertaken or strengthened with minimum delay. Heads of Delegation should be required to report to the higher representative/vice president on the basis of EU country strategy and programming in gender analysis. This should also enable EUDs to support strengthened application of the gender marker for their existing portfolio of programmes and projects. This recommendation responds to conclusion 4.

R6. EUDs should prioritise investment in gender expertise, within the delegation team and through increased access to relevant technical assistance. In order to implement recommendation 5, the EUD will require quick access to gender expertise to support the commissioning, management, conduct and use of gender analysis. In the short term, this expertise may initially come through to the gender advisory services or technical assistance to the EC Services (for example, through framework contracts). But the longer-term aim should be to build internal capacity to effectively commission, manage and use gender analysis. Heads of section should take the lead in their respective sectors, supported by the GFP. This recommendation responds to conclusion 7.

Recommendations for DG DEVCO and EEAS middle management

R7. DG DEVCO Unit B1 should make a concerted effort to strengthen use of the gender marker and gender-sensitive indicators. This should involve further training in application of the gender marker and use of gender-sensitive indicators, both as stand-alone training modules and through incorporation into other training courses. Critically, application of these two tools should be systematically quality assured and responsibility for overseeing their effective use should be led by Unit B1. Links to the QSG should also be strengthened to ensure consistent and joined up efforts to strengthen use of the two tools. This recommendation responds to conclusions 5 and 6. For further detail, see note 1, page 8.

R8. DG DEVCO Directorate R and EEAS MDR C should develop proposals for the mainstreaming of gender into their respective human resource management

procedures. Job descriptions for all staff, including senior management themselves, should include gender mainstreaming as a specific objective to be reached. Performance appraisal procedures should be amended to assess progress in this regard. Proposals for gender mainstreaming in human resource management procedures should be available for consideration by senior management within DG DEVCO and the EEAS. This recommendation responds to conclusion 7.

R9. EC Services should mainstream gender into monitoring and evaluation procedures. The DG DEVCO Evaluation Unit should update its evaluation guidance with regard to gender based on the UN Evaluation Group work on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation. Spain has already taken this step and can provide useful guidance and lessons to enable the EC to follow suit. The Evaluation Unit should require that gender is addressed appropriately in technical proposals and evaluation reports. The Evaluation Unit should collaborate with the Unit B1 define evaluation plans of gender-specific actions as the basis of evidence-based guidance on priorities for such actions in different contexts. This recommendation responds to conclusion 5. For further detail, see note 2, page 11.

Note 1: How the EU can utilise international gender datasets

Linking to the Sustainable Development Goals

Most of the main development agencies, both bilateral and multilateral, have used the MDGs as the main basis for formulating targets and designing assessments of progress at the impact level.⁷ This also holds true for the EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework, in which indicators for global development progress (Level 1) are similar to those included in the MDGs and their post-2015 successors, the Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs.

The Open Working Group charged with developing the proposal for the SDGs has sought to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁸ effectively address gender equality and women's empowerment. To this end, the SDGs include a specific Gender Equality Goal (Goal 5), while the other sixteen Goals include gender-specific and gender-sensitive indicators where appropriate. This should ensure therefore that the EU Results Framework provides coverage of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Table N1: Illustration of how GEWE is addressed in the goals and associated indicators of the SDGs (our emphasis added)

Gender-specific goal	Example of gender-specific indicators	Example of indicators requiring gender-disaggregated data
<p>Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevalence of girls and women 15-49 who have experienced physical or sexual violence [by an intimate partner] in the last 12 months Percentage of referred cases of sexual and gender-based violence against women and children that are investigated and sentenced Percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union by age 18 Percentage of girls and women aged 15-49 years who have undergone FGM/C Average number of hours spent on paid and unpaid work combined (total work burden), by sex Percentage of seats held by women and minorities in national parliament and/or sub-national elected office according to their respective share of the population 	<p>Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption Percentage of women of reproductive age (15-49) with anaemia Prevalence of stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age Percentage of infants under 6 months who are exclusively breast fed Percentage of women, 15-49 years of age, who consume at least 5 out of 10 defined food groups Crop yield gap (actual yield as % of attainable yield) Number of agricultural extension workers per 1000 farmers [or share of farmers covered by agricultural extension programs and services] 	<p>Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population below \$1.25 (PPP) per day Proportion of population living below national poverty line, by urban/rural Multidimensional Poverty Index Percentage of eligible population covered by national social protection programs Percentage of women, men, indigenous peoples, and local communities with secure rights to land, property, and natural resources, measured by (i) percentage with documented or recognized evidence of tenure, and (ii) percentage who perceive their rights are recognized and protected. Losses from natural disasters, by climate and non-climate-related events (in US\$ and lives lost)

⁷ See for example: UNICEFs Strategic Plan, <http://papersmart.unmeetings.org/media2/3346343/2014-8-final-results-framework-of-strategic-plan-ods-en.pdf>; DFID's Results Framework, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/360906/DFID-external-results-Sep_2014.pdf; and Sida's Gender Equality Portfolio Analysis, <http://www.sida.se/contentassets/96dc9b824825465e8d6ab4d730cafee3/8e0131ab-af35-421a-b4f0-5659391fc0e1.pdf>

⁸ See the Open Working Group Proposal for the SDGs, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1579SDGs%20Proposal.pdf>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met demand for family planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nitrogen use efficiency in food systems • [Crop water productivity (tons of harvested product per unit irrigation water)] – to be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total fertility rate
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It is important to note, firstly, that the SDGs are still under development; and secondly, that they have been subject to criticism in their treatment of gender. While coherence of the EU Results Framework with the SDGs is vitally important, the EU will nonetheless need to take account of such criticisms if it is to avoid the same challenges. The most consistent criticisms relate to 'measurability' and linkages between goals. A recent critique by SciDevNet⁹ illustrates these issues:

A report published by two science organisations earlier this month criticised the current framework for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as being largely ill-defined, not based on the latest science, lacking in synergy and with no narrative of development.

The fifth SDG, 'achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls', is a good case in point. Some of the targets attached to this SDG are vague. One aims to end 'discrimination' against women and girls. But without a clear definition of discrimination how can this be addressed? ...

Furthermore, the gender equality goal needs to be linked to the other goals so there is synergy between the social and transformative concept of gender equality and the environmental and sustainable concepts that underpin this post-2015 framework. ... For instance, smallholder female farmers face specific barriers to increasing agricultural productivity, such as restricted access to technology, finance and knowledge. These barriers should be highlighted in the second goal around sustainable agriculture. ...

What the EU can learn from others

The evaluation highlighted that country strategies only use gender analysis to a very limited extent and that, in most cases, there are no strategic frameworks for the EU's activities to address gender inequalities. There are a number of ways in which the EU can make use of these international datasets in the formulation of country strategies and focal areas, in order to ensure both a greater focus on gender in the EU's strategies and to ensure that these strategies more directly address gender inequalities. The main international datasets, such as UN's Gender Inequality Index,¹⁰ the OECD Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI)¹¹ and the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index,¹² are composite indicators,¹³ covering education, health and economic and political participation. As such the individual indicators or sub-indexes can provide a broad overview of what progress has been made and where further progress is required, helping to identify relevant focal areas for a country strategy. The overall rankings can give an indication of the importance of gender issues, in comparison with other countries, indicating the need for a specific focal area or a programme of support. National reports of progress against the MDGs,¹⁴ and international reporting, such as the national CEDAW reports¹⁵ and the shadow reporting carried out by civil

⁹ <http://www.scidev.net/global/gender/analysis-blog/gender-sdg-targets-sustainability-governance.html>

¹⁰ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

¹¹ <http://genderindex.org/>

¹² <http://www.weforum.org/women-leaders-and-gender-parity#Measuring>; <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2013>

¹³ The Global Inequality Index measures gender inequalities in three important aspects of human development: reproductive health measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates; empowerment, measured by proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females and proportion of adult females and males aged 25 years and older with at least some secondary education; and economic status expressed as labour market participation and measured by labour force participation rate of female and male populations aged 15 years and older. The Global Gender Gap Index examines the gap between men and women in four fundamental categories (sub-indexes): Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment.

¹⁴ See, for example, the UNDP MDG Progress Reports for Africa, including country progress reports: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/mdg/mdg-reports/africa-collection.html>

¹⁵ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm>

society,¹⁶ can be used as a more qualitative analysis of where important obstacles to gender equality or opportunities for addressing gender inequality exist. These can be used in the development of programmes or specific projects focused on addressing gender inequalities.

The multilateral and bilateral organisations take a similar approach to the output level indicators, setting out the organisations' direct contributions to development results.¹⁷ In the case of DFID the Results Framework includes the statement that eight of DFID's Level 2 Results Framework Indicators are sex disaggregated and are used to measure progress against the results outlined within DFID's Strategic Vision for Girls and Women and that all other relevant indicators are sex disaggregated wherever feasible.¹⁸

The UN organisations differ from some of the bilateral organisations in their approach to setting outcome level targets and indicators. The UN organisations, in their strategic plans, set outcome level targets that are intended to be the product of shared action.¹⁹ These targets and indicators are based on data collected for international indicators, as well as baseline data compiled and analysed by the UN organisations themselves. Bilateral organisations, such as DFID and Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency), include such outcome level targets in their country strategy plans, but do not compile these at the international level. Many of these plans use existing data as the basis for contextual analysis, such as the Gender Inequality Index and the Global Gender Gap Index, as well as analyses, such as progress reports on the MDGs, CEDAW reporting, joint gender profiles and progress in implementing national gender strategies.

What the EU needs to do

The EU Development and Cooperation Results Framework Level 2 indicators, setting out the EU contribution to development results, only include sex-disaggregated indicators to a very limited extent – see for example, the indicators on secure tenure of land and nutrition related programmes. There is a need, therefore, to ensure that a much greater range of these indicators are sex disaggregated. For example, there is immediate potential to ensure that the indicators on good governance, education and health are sex disaggregated by changing references to individuals or people in indicators to men, women, boys and girls. It is also necessary to ensure the inclusion of sex-disaggregated indicators in other sectors, such as energy, natural resources, transport, employment, trade and conflict prevention.

To ensure that good quality monitoring data is collected and analysed at programme and project level, guidance is needed on the development and use of *gender-sensitive indicators* for all focal areas and on collecting monitoring data for assessing progress, to ensure usage across all projects and programmes. Detailed guidance already exists in the EC's own Toolkit on Gender Equality²⁰ and can be supplemented by a wide range of resources that exist, such as the ITC-ILO Introduction to Gender Analysis and Gender-sensitive Indicators.²¹ While these toolkits are useful in general terms, there is still a need to develop and share specific examples from EU programmes where gender-sensitive indicators have been developed and used. There are examples from the evaluation, of gender-sensitive indicators for budget support programmes and for programmes from a range of sectors, that can be used as the basis for developing such specific examples – see for example, the case studies for Morocco and Afghanistan.

¹⁶ <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/ngo/cedawngo#shadow>

¹⁷ See, for example, UNICEF's Output indicators in the Strategic Plan and DFID's Bilateral indicators.

¹⁸ DFID's Results Framework:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/360906/DFID-external-results-Sep_2014.pdf

¹⁹ See, for example, UNICEF's Strategic Plan - <http://papersmart.unmeetings.org/media2/3346343/2014-8-final-results-framework-of-strategic-plan-ods-en.pdf>

²⁰ See Section 1, Chapter 6, Tool 6.6, pp.93-95 - http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/toolkit-mainstreaming-gender-section-1-part-5_en.pdf

²¹ <http://www.focusintl.com/GD124d-%20Gender%20Campus%20Module%200bis%20-%20Introduction%20to%20Gender%20sensitive%20indicators.pdf>

Note 2: How to evaluate gender equality

International experiences in evaluating gender equality

In the 1997 UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) report, gender mainstreaming is defined as 'the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is gender equality'.

Evaluation of gender equality should, therefore, consist of two elements: the contribution that an organisation has made towards the ultimate goal of gender equality; and, an assessment of the extent to which the organisation has pursued gender mainstreaming to ensure that women and men's concerns and experiences are an integral dimension of all policies and programmes.

With regard to the contribution made to the goal of gender equality, the results framework of the organisation and the extent to which gender equality is included in this framework provide the basis for assessment. Such a results framework should include targets, gender-sensitive indicators and baseline data in order to provide the basis for evaluation. In the absence of such a framework, the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation²² recommends an evaluability assessment and provides a number of possible approaches in situations where gender equality has only been considered to a limited extent or has not been considered at all. The role of the evaluation is then to make an assessment of what progress has been made towards the targets set, and of the quality of the monitoring data that the organisation has collected. Where such monitoring data is not readily available it may be possible to use secondary data sources, such as is discussed in the section on International Data Sets, to make an assessment of gender equality achievements.

While most international development organisations have a commitment to gender mainstreaming, there is, as yet, no real consensus on how to evaluate the strategies that these organisations have used. There are, however, a number of reviews of experience drawn from gender evaluations, including a *review of twenty-six such evaluations carried out by the African Development Bank*.²³ The review identifies six areas where action is needed to promote gender equality for it to become embedded in the culture of an organisation, in other words for gender to be effectively mainstreamed. These six areas are: i) consistent and supportive leadership; ii) systems of accountability and incentives; iii) proper funding and trained senior staff; iv) procedures and practices to ensure momentum; v) a consistent approach to recording results and lessons; and, vi) the degree to which gender is seen as contributing to rather than competing with the drive for more effective aid and other priorities. If gender equality is to become an integral part of the culture of an organisation – part of what defines its mission, values and objectives – then consistent and sustained action is needed in all six of these areas.

A framework for evaluating gender equality

Based on these lessons and experience in carrying out evaluations of gender mainstreaming, an evaluation framework was developed to incorporate these six areas into five aspects for evaluation, with a set of criteria for assessment (Table N2).

²² UNEG (2011) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation: Towards UNEG Guidance, Task 1.1

²³ Evaluation Insights (2011) Mainstreaming Gender Equality: Emerging Lessons:
<http://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/dcdndep/48977974.pdf>

Table N2: An evaluation framework for gender equality

Areas	Criteria for Assessment – the extent to which...
<p>Commitment – Institutional commitment in the form of vision, policy and strategy commitments; leadership from the top down through the organisation; and staff commitment throughout the organisation, are key to ensuring the GEWE is operationalised.</p>	<p>...Senior and middle management make GEWE a priority by ensuring that gender equality aspects are reflected at all levels of the programme</p> <p>...There is commitment among management and staff to both mainstreaming of gender equality in strategy, programming, political and policy dialogue and specific interventions to promote women's rights and empowerment</p> <p>...Management is committed to raising the internal GEWE capacity and resourcing for GEWE, including in post-conflict and fragile contexts</p>
<p>Capacity – The organisation has the capacity to analyse, plan, implement, monitor, report and conduct dialogue in the area of GEWE.</p>	<p>...All staff have knowledge of and access to GEWE mainstreaming resources – including guidelines, toolkits, analyses, good practice examples and communities of practice – within the organisation</p> <p>...The organisation has access to external experts/consultants/helpdesks with specialised gender competence when needed</p> <p>...Recruitment of staff takes into consideration capacities in GEWE.</p> <p>...All staff have the capacity to commission and utilise gender analysis to inform strategy, programming, political and policy dialogue in the area of GEWE, as appropriate to their role in the organisation.</p>
<p>Cash – There are financial resources allocated for GEWE programming and GEWE capacities and systems within the organisation.</p>	<p>...Funding of specific GEWE interventions or women's components within programmes that support, for example, the empowerment of women and girls</p> <p>...Provision of adequate resources is consistent throughout programmes and over time</p>
<p>Accountability – Institutional mechanisms and processes support and ensure systematic inclusion and reporting of gender equality concerns within the organisation.</p>	<p>...Adequate procedures, approaches, and processes to ensure institutional consistency in the way that GEWE is dealt with across policy, guidance and mechanisms</p> <p>...Financial allocations on GEWE initiatives can be tracked</p> <p>...GEWE is integrated in monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes</p> <p>...There are incentives for staff, and particularly senior and middle management, to ensure coverage of gender and operationalisation of commitments through a range of instruments and modalities</p>
<p>Context Analysis and Coordination Among Donor Partners – donors contribute to the development of a conducive context at a national level.</p>	<p>... There is strong national-level leadership, commitment, policies on gender equality/women's rights, and/or a supportive institutional set-up for GEWE</p> <p>...Civil society and the women's movement in the country are active and have a level of capacity to be effective</p> <p>...There is collaboration, coordination and complementarity between development organisations on gender equality</p>

As well as identifying the areas in which an evaluation of gender should focus and the criteria by which achievements should be assessed, this framework also presents a normative perspective on the conditions for success when an organisation pursues gender equality through its mission or policies. Of course, in many settings some or many of these conditions may be absent or only weakly present. Context analysis can be undertaken to map out the contours of the local environment in relation to GEWE, the opportunities and challenges which it presents. In cases where conditions are weak or absent, the framework provides a useful guide to where an organisation, such as the EU, may focus its attention in building the conditions for success, for example, through policy dialogue or more direct forms of support such as capacity development or other gender specific actions.

The UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation provides clear guidance on appropriate methods and tools.²⁴ In particular, the guidance suggests that a mixed-methods approach be used. This is in response to UNEG's warning that many evaluations will face a data challenge with respect to human rights and gender equality from the onset, so that: the intervention may not have adequate results framework with clear and specific indicators addressing human rights and gender equality; information may not have been collected on a regular basis; or the quality of information may not be sufficient, good or reliable enough to inform a credible evaluation. As is discussed above, an initial evaluability assessment and the use of a mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis will help to address such data gaps and weaknesses.

²⁴ See, for example, Chapter 3: Implementing the Evaluation, and Table 3.1: Key elements of an appropriate evaluation methodology.

Summary of Findings

EQ 1.1 a) To what extent and how has the EU succeeded in introducing gender analysis in annual country and regional programming and reviews? b) To what extent are gender analyses reflected in country strategies and in programme and project design and implementation?

EC Services and EEAS have not systematically integrated gender analysis into country strategies, programme/project design and implementation, and in country and regional reviews. The limited technical capacity to commission (conceptualise the scope of work and draft Terms of Reference), manage and utilise gender analysis is an important contributory factor in this. However, the roots go much deeper. This situation is a reflection of the low priority afforded to gender by EC Services and EEAS leaders and senior managers, and weaknesses in internal accountability systems that allow major policy commitments to be overlooked at critical junctures in EU cooperation. Ironically, the missing links between gender analysis, country strategic objectives, programming and reviews do not necessarily mean that gender concerns are entirely absent from programming. There are examples where gender analysis in country strategies is weak but significant attention is given to gender in some programmes.²⁵ Where this happens, it is due to committed and energetic individuals who are able to drive action.

The Netherlands and Spain integrate gender analysis into country strategies more consistently, although more attention to indicators is needed to better monitor progress against GEWE-related objectives. The two countries have adopted different approaches to the translation of strategic objectives into programming. Spain has invested in developing detailed guidelines to support country missions, while the Netherlands largely leaves this process to the discretion of country missions. With the available evidence it is difficult to determine which approach is more effective.

EQ 1.2 To what extent and how have the EU and MS contributed to gender mainstreaming in the various EU dialogue processes and consultations with third countries and regions?

Gender issues receive limited attention in EU dialogue processes and consultations with partner countries, although the frequency with which they are addressed is increasing. The national context is a critical factor in determining the space for gender-focused political and policy dialogue. This, however, should not be seen as an excuse for EU inaction. Rather, it is the very reason why political and policy dialogue should be founded on robust political economy and gender analysis, which can aid decision-making on when, with whom and how to engage. EUDs often engage in consultation and coordination with civil society organisations (CSOs) and development partners but this interaction is primarily focused on information sharing. This is a missed opportunity and demonstrates a lack of understanding of how certain partners can be allies in achieving one's political and policy objectives.

EQ 1.3 To what extent and how (through gender-specific activities and gender-responsive indicators) is gender equality mainstreamed in all EU-funded programmes/projects, including budget support?

EC Services and the EEAS have not mainstreamed gender systematically in development cooperation and political dialogue, although some examples of good practice can be identified. Guidance materials to aid gender mainstreaming in programmes and projects are inadequately adapted to country contexts, while guidance on budget support does not adequately integrate gender mainstreaming considerations. There is, in any case, low staff awareness of available gender mainstreaming resources. However, the challenges go much deeper with many staff members unable to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the

²⁵ For example, DRC and Nicaragua.

importance of mainstreaming gender in their work despite EU policy and obligations, and evidence of good development practice.

EQ 1.4 To what extent and how have the EU and MS ensured gender mainstreaming within their organisations – through adequate procedures and approaches, processes, capacity building initiatives as well as adequate resources?

EC Services and EEAS have not mainstreamed gender in line with GEWE commitments. GEWE priorities are not clearly communicated to EUDs,²⁶ which are not obliged to critically appraise their GEWE performance. In this context many officials treat the tools and processes intended to aid gender mainstreaming as a tick-box exercise.²⁷ EC financial commitments to GEWE have increased but the human resource capacity to manage them has not. Management has assumed that staff will be able to identify and address gender issues in their work, with support from GFPs. However, staff do not see gender as their responsibility and so do not give it the required attention. Most GFPs have neither the time nor adequate technical expertise to compensate for weak incentives and capacity.

The Dutch cooperation shows mixed gender mainstreaming performance. Internal and external accountability frameworks are an important driver. GFPs are technically well qualified and able to work effectively with colleagues to mainstream gender concerns. However, the lack of implementation guidelines is likely to result in inefficiencies between country programmes.

Spanish Cooperation performs well in gender mainstreaming, although there is room for improvement at the country level. The organisational culture, where gender is a 'trade-mark', a technically qualified network of gender experts, and an extensive set of implementation guidelines are all contributory factors to success.

EQ 2.1 To what extent and how has the Commission fostered complementarity – understood as a task division based on comparative advantages – between its actions for GEWE and those of EU MS? What has helped or hindered progress?

The EC Services and EEAS have not systematically fostered complementarity between their GEWE actions and those of MSs. Where coordinated activity has occurred, it is a result of leadership by national government and other development partners. The GAP has not further stimulated EU complementary action and no other guidance is available on how complementarity could be achieved.

EQ 2.2 To what extent and how has the EC ensured a complementary use of the various instruments (geographic, thematic, as well political dialogue) and modalities (e.g. budget support, projects) available to supporting GEWE?

The EC has not ensured a complementary use of the various geographic and thematic instruments and modalities available to support GEWE outcomes. Guidance on the use and sequencing of various instruments and modalities makes only general references to complementarity and gives no specific details of how they should be used synergistically to promote GEWE. The few examples identified where this has been done are the achievements of individual staff members rather than an organisation-wide approach.²⁸ The lack of guidance, technical support and incentives to deploy a systematic approach to instruments and modalities are critical obstacles. Morocco provides an example of best practice, where instruments such as policy and political dialogue have been used in concert with sector support.

EQ 2.3 How far has the Commission been able to engage with partner governments and other partners on the promotion of GEWE, notably in combating gender-based

²⁶ Implementing the EU Gender Action Plan 2010-2015: Challenges and Opportunities, 2013, O'Connell H., ODI; More of the Same, or Radical Change? Options for the Successor to the EU's Gender Action Plan 2010-2015, 2014, O'Connell, ODI.

²⁷ The gender marker, the gender checklist and the Quality Support Group.

²⁸ For example, in the Philippines health sector; microcredit in PNG; in support to education in Morocco; and support to women's voice in Afghanistan; see relevant Country Case Studies.

violence, and to identify the relevant support strategies, including in terms of adapting to different country contexts (conflict, post-conflict and fragile countries)?

The EC Services and EEAS have actively engaged on GEWE and GbV at the international level, but engagement at the country level is patchy. The limited use of gender analysis to inform programming decisions means that, with a few exceptions,²⁹ opportunities for addressing GbV at the country level are being missed.³⁰ Most EC funding for GbV interventions is channelled to non-state actors rather than government partners, and has a focus on advocacy and awareness raising. This contribution is valuable, particularly when combined with advocacy to encourage government to deliver their obligations as duty bearers, but consideration needs to be given to how effective but relatively small-scale interventions can be scaled up to bring wider benefits.

EQ 2.4 How effective is the three-pronged approach (specific actions, cross-cutting issues and political/policy dialogue) used by the EC in promoting gender equality? What has helped or hindered effectiveness?

With only a few country exceptions, the three-pronged approach is not being implemented as an integrated approach to promote gender equality. Consequently there is a lack of evidence of the utility of such an approach, further undermining the EC's ability to understand and build on its performance in this regard. Limited staff awareness of the three-pronged approach is a significant hindering factor, leading to poor internal coordination of political/policy dialogue, gender mainstreaming and specific actions.

EQ 2.5 To what extent and how have political and policy dialogues contributed towards the realisation of GEWE in partner countries? What has helped or hindered this contribution?

While the extent to which GEWE features in EUDs' political and policy dialogue with partner countries is increasing it is difficult to determine the contribution EUD political and policy dialogue has made to the realisation of GEWE at the country level. This is primarily due to political and policy dialogue being carried out in an ad hoc manner, rarely informed by gender analysis, and without GEWE specific objectives and indicators to track progress. Limited staff skills in the identification and prioritisation of GEWE issues to be addressed through dialogue, as well as in taking forward the dialogue, are critical constraints to progress in this area. Country cooperation in Afghanistan and Morocco are, however, examples of good practice in political and policy dialogue, offering important learning for EC Services and EEAS.

EQ 2.6 How far have specific actions or measures to empower women contributed to redress inequalities and improve gender balance?

Some specific actions to empower women supported by EC Services/EEAS appear to have achieved results in redressing inequalities and improving gender balance within the target populations. However, the lack of clear country level performance assessment frameworks – with clear gender-sensitive indicators, targets and explicit links to programming – means that the extent of these achievements is not measured and the aggregate contribution made by EC Services and EEAS to improving the gender balance at a national level in partner countries cannot be determined.

EQ 2.7 To what extent and how have EC-supported capacity building programmes, targeted at national/local governments, regional organisations and civil society contributed to empowering and enabling these actors to promote GEWE in their respective areas of work?

Evidence of EU/EC country level or regional contributions to empowering and enabling actors to promote GEWE in their respective areas of work is very limited primarily because

²⁹ For example, in DRC.

³⁰ For example, in Bolivia and Nicaragua.

support to targeted GEWE-focused capacity building programmes is very limited.³¹ More critically, there is little evidence of a strategic and coordinated approach to GEWE capacity building of partners in either country or regional programming. EC Services do support some GEWE capacity building through GEWE specific projects, mainly implemented by non-state actors, but these are relatively small-scale interventions with limited impact.

EQ 2.8 To what extent and how have EC efforts to ensure an effective implementation of UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security – as well as 1888 and 1889 in fragile, conflict, or post-conflict countries – contributed to progress towards respect for women's rights?

Internationally, EC Services/EEAS have significantly contributed to the promotion of UNSCRs 1325 and 1820³² but this robust international-level engagement is not well reflected in EU regional or country-level strategy or programming. Of the regional EU strategies, only the Africa-EU strategic partnership mentions peace and security, as one of its four areas of focus, but it does not specifically refer to gender issues. None of the country strategies reviewed address women, peace and security issues in any substantive way or explicitly reference strategies to implement UNSCRs 1325 or 1820. Reporting on EC Services/EEAS actions to implement UNSCRs 1325 and 1820 focuses primarily on contributions to processes, rather than outcomes, making it difficult to determine the contribution made. At the country level, there is evidence that EC Services/EEAS support has increased access to justice of women survivors of sexual violence and increased awareness among key stakeholders responsible for legislative and policy formulation of women's rights relating to GbV.³³

EQ 2.9 To what extent and how has the Commission developed its internal capacities to deal effectively and efficiently with GEWE?

The EC Services and EEAS have not put in place appropriate internal capacities to deliver on their GEWE commitments. What exists is a piecemeal approach to the delivery of policy commitments. Staff do not have a detailed understanding of the gender policies and their implications for development cooperation. Without this, and in the absence of organisational systems that force staff to give adequate and appropriate attention to gender in all aspects of development cooperation, GEWE results are likely to be limited. Staff do not perceive GEWE as a priority. As a result, they largely do not seek out technical guidance in any format and the benefits of technical resources available³⁴ are diminished.

EQ 2.10 To what extent and how have the senior and middle management established a conducive overall institutional architecture to deal with gender in an efficient and effective manner?

EC Services and EEAS senior and middle management have not adequately prioritised the GEWE agenda or put in place an institutional architecture to enable their organisations to deliver on GEWE policy commitments. Managers suggest that technical and administrative deficiencies are the root causes of this problem. Yet the few inspirational EUDs that have brought GEWE centre stage in their cooperation demonstrate that these deficiencies are surmountable where there is a will. Without strong commitment among senior and middle managers to drive GEWE within country cooperation, policy commitments and targets will largely remain as rhetoric. Existing systems – staff performance management systems, organisational systems for GEWE reporting – do not generate the levels of commitment for GEWE required from staff. The fact that reporting against the GAP is not integrated into core reporting such as the EAMRs and that there are no sanctions for failing to submit an annual

³¹ Ethiopia and Morocco are exceptions to this.

³² As set out in the 2008 Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security and in 2009 in the Inter-institutional Women Peace and Security Task Force.

³³ Country Case Studies for DRC and the Philippines.

³⁴ Available technical resources include: the Gender Advisory Services, the Gender Toolkit, various guidelines such as those on the gender marker or budget support, online and in person gender training and online knowledge management platforms.

GAP report delivers an implicit message to staff that GEWE is not core business. As a result, achievement of GEWE objectives is left to a network of overstretched and under-supported GFPs.

