



# Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI) Guidelines

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For BCFs Experts and Reviewers

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## Who should use these guidelines?

These guidelines have been developed to provide members of the three Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs) Expert Groups (Darwin Expert Committee, IWT Advisory Group and Darwin Plus Advisory Group) and External Reviewers with some further guidance on things to consider in terms of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) when reviewing applications and project reports.

The document:

- Outlines the key requirements that applicants and projects are required to meet in terms of their approach and integration of GESI within their work;
- Provides guidelines on how reviewers should consider GESI when reviewing applications and project reports;
- Provides some case examples from the BCFs portfolio.

## Gender Equality & Social Inclusion in the BCFs

The BCFs commits to be a GESI sensitive programme.

A GESI sensitive approach is understood to demonstrate programming **will “do no harm”, not exacerbate inequality and ensure meaningful and context appropriate engagement and participation** of those involved in the project.

While it is acknowledged there may be nuances in how projects deliver on a GESI sensitive approach through the various schemes, **all successful projects must be able to demonstrate** that they:

- Understand the GESI context in which the project is working within and ensure activities and interventions take contextual factors into account in the design and implementation of the project.
- Ensure early inclusive and meaningful participation of all those engaging with the project.
- Will not contribute to or create any further inequalities<sup>1</sup>.

The above are essential to projects achieving GESI sensitive standard, however projects are encouraged to push beyond these to deepen and improve their GESI contribution. For further information please see the GESI Ambition Statement and further resources under the 'Resources' tab on the fund websites.

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<sup>1</sup> As no action is neutral, by not giving due consideration to GESI, projects could unintentionally exacerbate inequalities, reinforce barriers or cause harm to already disadvantaged groups.

## Guidance for Reviewing Applications

Please see the below guidance on things to consider when reviewing application forms to ensure a standard approach is taken to scoring contributions to GESI across reviewers. The guidance below expands on the assessment criteria outlined in the fund specific guidance and should be used in conjunction.

As a reminder, applicants are only provided with a limited word count to outline how they have considered GESI so please be mindful of this when completing your review.

Applications
Ensure the applicant has considered the context the project is working in at the design phase and has an appropriate approach. This could include evidence of speaking with communities in designing the project but should at a minimum address any risks to ensure the project does not exacerbate any harm. For example, not appropriately acknowledging or managing risks associated with failing to acknowledge the importance of existing societal norms.
Applicants should demonstrate an understanding of what is meant by GESI and its importance, and be working to integrate in an appropriate and sensible way.
It should be clear from the application how the GESI approach outlined will translate to implementation and be achievable within the timeframe of the project.
Ensure targets are appropriate for the context the project is working in i.e. 50% attendance rate of women to a workshop is not always a sign of strong GESI considerations as this % may not be reflective of the context (i.e. is the training being provided useful/ appropriate for the participants? Does the % provide an accurate representation of the community? And are women able to engage in the setting?)
All indicators that relate to people should be disaggregated by gender and indigenous status.
Ensure comments on GESI are not isolated to project staff members but also consider project participants and stakeholders.
Ensure the applicant has considered meaningful participation <sup>2</sup> in their design and implementation.

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<sup>2</sup> Meaningful participation is defined in the [Law Insider Dictionary](#) as “engaging a diverse group of stakeholders who are representative of the communities that policies and programs will impact, not only in consultative roles to provide input, but also to co-plan or lead program development efforts, have access to data and resources to make informal decisions”.

## Guidance for Reviewing Project Reports:

The following guidance should be used by reviewers when assessing projects' Annual and Final Reports.

Project Reporting
All indicators that relate to people should be disaggregated by gender and indigenous status.
Ensure targets are appropriate for the context the project is working in i.e. 50% attendance rate of women to a workshop is not always a sign of strong GESI considerations as this % may not be reflective of the context (i.e. is the training being provided useful/ appropriate for the participants? Does the % provide an accurate representation of the community? And are women able to engage in the setting?)
Are the project activities appropriate for the context and do they provide the opportunity for participants to engage? Are the approaches likely to empower individuals beyond the lifetime of the project?
Ensure that the activities planned do not have the potential to exacerbate harm.
Is the project considering the intersections of identifies in their approach?
At a minimum, is the project addressing basic needs and vulnerabilities of women and marginalised groups?

## Project Examples:

The following section provides anonymised examples from the BCFs portfolio of approaches to integrating GESI within a project. These examples are considered to demonstrate strong approaches to GESI at both the application or reporting stage. These should be considered by reviewers as the types of GESI approaches that meet the GESI sensitive minimum requirement.

Strong examples of GESI consideration:

Example	Description
A	In their pre-project scoping, project A found that female-headed households were particularly vulnerable to issues the project aimed to address, due to gender gaps in literacy, access to education, and job opportunities. The project's inception focus groups and questionnaires were also contextually proportionate and representative of gender, with disaggregated results, which led to evidence-informed project design.
B	Project B realised that women had low representation in the fisheries supply chain in the island communities the project was working in, but were present within government agencies. The project used inclusive communications and stakeholder strategies to promote gender sensitivity, as well as including fishers' families (wives, girlfriends and children) in project activities.
C	Project C leveraged women's existing expertise and skills in collecting mushrooms, herbs and tubers to apply those methodological and diligent searching qualities to snare removal. The project further promoted female role models, including project team members and staff drawn from ethnic minorities, to promote the recruitment of women into typically male-dominated roles.