

Working Document

GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

**A guide for
policy-making**



Status of Women
Canada

Condition féminine
Canada

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Status of Women Canada

Suite 700

360 Albert Street

Ottawa, Ontario

Tel.: (613) 995-7835

TDD: (613) 996-1322

Fax: (613) 943-2386

E-mail: vilas@swc-cfc.gc.ca

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GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS:

A guide for policy-making

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INTRODUCTION

In 1995, the federal government adopted a policy requiring federal departments and agencies to conduct gender-based analysis of future policies and legislation, where appropriate.

As in much of the world, Canadian society operates in ways that lead to discrimination based on gender. This often results in women and girls not receiving “a fair share” of benefits and opportunities relative to their endeavours and contributions.

This guide is a “hands-on” working document developed by Status of Women Canada to assist in the implementation of this government-wide policy. It is part of a pilot project designed to begin the implementation of this form of analysis over a period of five years. *Gender-Based Analysis: A guide for policy-making* has been developed to:

- increase awareness at all levels of government of the importance of gender as an **organizing principle** (a way of conceptualizing information; a way of looking at the world);
- facilitate the **development and assessment of policies and legislation from a gender perspective** so that they will have intended and equitable results for women and men, girls and boys¹.

The guide is divided into three sections. Section 1 defines key concepts and provides the rationale for gender-based analysis. Section 2, *Policy Development and Analysis Process*, outlines a commonly accepted policy analysis process and highlights how sensitivity to gender can be integrated into this process. Section 3, *Gender-Based Analysis Methodology*, offers a step-by-step process for gender-based analysis.

¹ Throughout this document, references to women and men include girls and boys, as appropriate. The document is also based on the recognition that women are not a homogeneous group, and promotes sensitivity to diversity such as age, ethnicity, level of ability, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, etc.

Departments and agencies may wish to adapt this guide to their own area of operation, i.e., health, environment, fiscal planning or other. You are invited to comment by using the comments form at the end of the guide and forwarding it to:

Status of Women Canada
Policy Analysis and Development Directorate
360 Albert Street, 7th floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1C3
Fax: (613) 957-3949
E-mail: vilas@swc-cfc.gc.ca

Status of Women Canada wishes to thank its many collaborators for assistance in developing this working document.

1. KEY CONCEPTS AND RATIONALE

1.1 ABOUT GENDER

SEX identifies the biological differences between women and men.

GENDER is the culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behaviour of women and men and the **relationship** between them. Gender, therefore, refers not simply to women or men, but to the relationship between them, and the way it is socially constructed. Because it is a relational term, gender must include women **and** men. Like the concepts of class, race and ethnicity, gender is an analytical tool for understanding social processes.

Only a small proportion of the difference in the roles assigned by gender can be attributed to physical differences based on sex (such as pregnancy and childbirth, or differences in physiology and bodily functions).

GENDER EQUITY is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, measures must often be available to compensate for historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. **Equity leads to equality.**

GENDER EQUALITY means that women and men enjoy the same status. Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national, political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results.

Originally, it was believed that equality could be achieved by giving women and men the same opportunities, on the assumption that this would bring sameness of results. However, **same** treatment was found not necessarily to yield **equal** results. Today, the concept of equality acknowledges that different treatment of women and men may sometimes be required to achieve sameness of results, because of different life conditions or to compensate for past discrimination. It is this notion of equality that is embedded in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Gender equality is therefore the equal valuing by society of both the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles that they play.

1.2 WHAT IS GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS?

The potentially differential effects of policies, programs and legislation on women or men can often be masked or obscured. When gender is explicitly considered in policy analysis, these effects are revealed, and previously hidden implications come to light.

Culturally defined roles can, and do change in response to policy interventions.

Gender-based analysis is a process that assesses the differential impact of proposed and/or existing policies, programs and legislation on women and men. It makes it possible for policy to be undertaken with an appreciation of gender differences, of the nature of relationships between women and men and of their different social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances. It is a tool for understanding social processes and for responding with informed and equitable options.

It compares how and why women and men are affected by policy issues. Gender-based analysis challenges the assumption that everyone is affected by policies, programs and legislation in the same way regardless of gender, a notion often referred to as “gender-neutral policy”.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

Analysis is incomplete if the impact of gender has not been considered.

The 1995 government-wide policy on gender-based analysis builds upon earlier commitments to bring about equality between women and men:

- In 1976, Status of Women Canada was created to integrate the concerns of women into the overall government decision-making process.
- In 1985, sections 15 and 28 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*² were enacted, prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex.
- In 1995, Canada adopted the United Nations *Platform for Action* and the 1995 *Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development*, both of which call for a gender-based analysis process.

“Gender analysis is based on the standpoint that policy cannot be separated from the social context, and that social issues are an integral part of economic issues. Social impact analysis, including gender analysis is not just an add-on, to be considered after costs and benefits have been assessed, but an integral part of good policy analysis.”

Ministry of
Women’s Affairs,
New Zealand

Gender-based analysis is integral to the development of policies, programs and legislation. It should result in policies, programs and legislation that are inclusive and consistent with the spirit and content of the *Charter*. Gender-based analysis leads to informed policy-making and good governance.

² Section 15 guarantees women and men equality before and under the law without discrimination. It applies to all legislation, policies and practices, and supersedes all other legislation. Equality does not mean treating all groups alike to achieve true equality; it is frequently necessary for policies and programs to treat different individuals and groups in different ways. Both the intent and the result of a policy should ensure the equality of women and men. Policies that appear to be “neutral” can lead to discrimination if, in their application, they have a disproportionate impact or adverse effect on women.

2. GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS AND THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

2.1 HOW GENDER FITS INTO POLICY ANALYSIS

“Gender analysis is focused not just on outcomes, but on the concepts, arguments and language used to justify policy. How needs are interpreted and discussed is intrinsic to policy development... Gender analysis should focus on whether the policy “talk” challenges or reinforces existing power structures based on gender.”

Carrière, Elizabeth
*Seeing is Believing:
Educating Through
a Gender Lens*,
1995.

There are many approaches to developing and analyzing policy. This guide proposes eight steps that can be followed sequentially, and/or revisited with the emergence of new information or perspectives:

- Identifying, Defining, and Refining the Issue
- Defining Desired/Anticipated Outcomes
- Defining the Information and Consultation Inputs
- Conducting Research
- Developing and Analyzing Options
- Making Recommendations/Decision-seeking
- Communicating Policy
- Assessing the Quality of Analysis

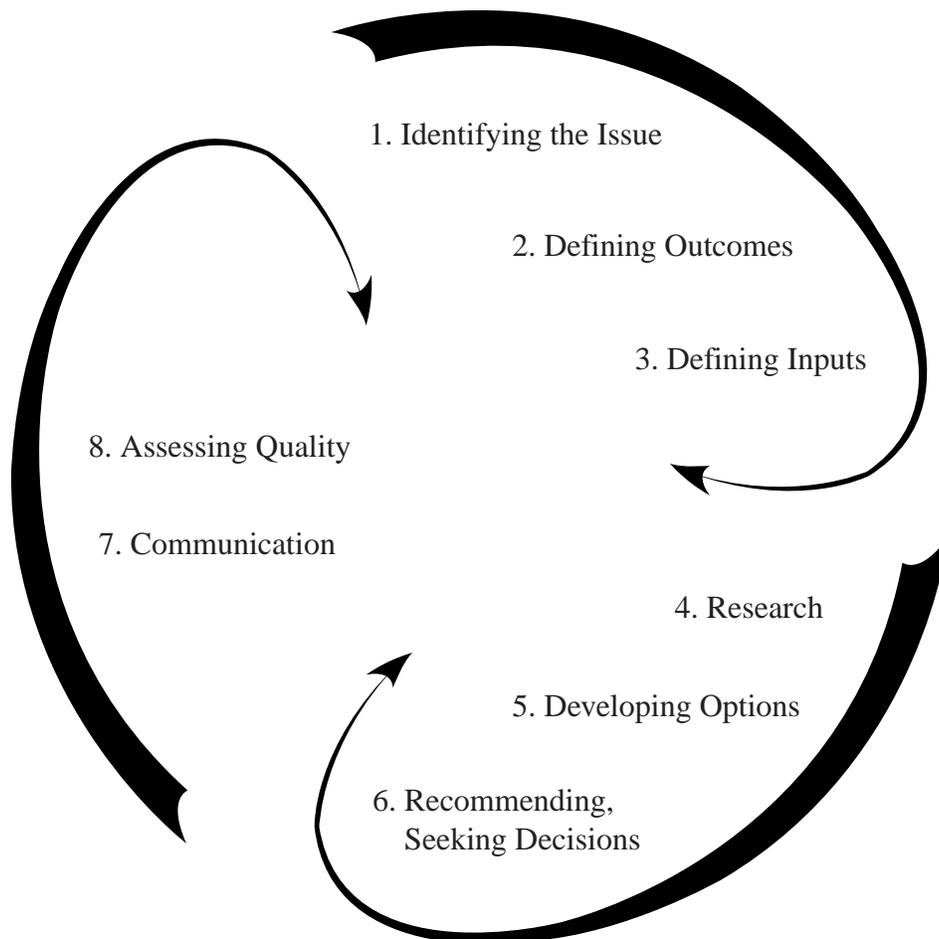
Gender-based analysis should be a common thread woven from beginning to end throughout the entire policy process, and not merely an additional heading/section in briefing notes.

In some cases, gender issues are central to the policy in question and play a major, determining role in its evolution. Other policies, at first glance, may appear to be devoid of gender implication. During the definition stage, it may be tempting to simply state that a policy is not likely to have differential gender effects. While gender implications may not be immediately obvious, they may emerge later.

Therefore, it is always good practice to keep asking the gender questions throughout the process. This requires examining sex-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data; questioning basic assumptions; and developing an understanding of the inter-relationships among each of the major economic and social sectors, and how these relate to gender.

The Government of New Zealand’s gender analysis manual provides an example of a policy that appeared gender neutral at first glance. According to its *Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Act*, those disabled by accident are entitled to receive many forms of compensation. Closer examination revealed that women and men were treated differently. A woman who became infertile because of damage caused by a contraceptive device was refused compensation because of “known risk”, while a rugby player with spinal injuries received compensation, despite the “known risk” he took in choosing to go onto the rugby field.

THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT/ANALYSIS CYCLE



2.2 VALUE CLARIFICATION AND GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

All individuals involved in policy development and analysis have an important responsibility to ensure that government policies, programs and legislation are equitable for both women and men. To fully discharge these responsibilities, those involved in policy development and analysis should have an understanding of gender issues. The skills and knowledge to do this effectively are developed through training, life and professional experiences, and specifically designed tools.

“As long as human dignity and meaning exist as important values, social science cannot achieve the rigour of the physical sciences because it is impossible to separate human beliefs from the context and process of analysis. ...Today, many students of policy analysis agree that it is important to consider values in the process of policy analysis...”

Heineman, R., Bluhm, W.T., Peterson, S. and Kearny, E. *The World of the Policy Analyst: Rationality and Decision-Making*, 1990.

Policy discussions are to a large extent about values. As influential agents, those responsible for policy development and analysis need some sense of what they bring to their work. Their own values, shaped by their background – their ways of working, knowledge base, information sources, contacts, culture and life experiences – influence the way they perceive a policy issue and the approach they take. So too do the values of the system in which they work. Bureaucratic and political processes are steeped in values that influence policy-making. These in turn help to shape, and are shaped by, all the values of society. Gender-sensitive policy may conflict, at times, with the dominant values around which society is organized. Women’s experiences and contributions are measured against a male standard rather than in their own right. Those responsible for policy development and analysis must contend with these conflicting and competing values.

Individuals involved in policy development and analysis can add a balanced and comprehensive quality to their analysis and propose options that will result in equitable outcomes through:

- awareness of their own values and those of the environment in which they work;
- understanding how these influence their decision-making; and
- sensitivity to gender issues in general.

Exploring values and perceptions can sharpen awareness of factors important to the process of analysis. This is why value clarification is part of the analysis process. It is beneficial for those involved in policy development and analysis to ask:

- How do values and experiences heighten perception and willingness to investigate?
- In what way might these cloud their vision or prevent them from asking questions and hearing answers?
- How do values – their own, those of the system, and those of society – limit the range of policy options proffered?
- How might they make these values and situations of conflicting and competing values explicit in the range of policy options put forward?

3. GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

3.1 GOALS

The goal of the gender-based analysis process is to integrate a gender perspective into policy analysis and development. The gender-based analysis process:

- is intended to be one aspect of a comprehensive approach to policy development and to enhance the quality of current analysis;
- integrates gender into each step of the policy development process; is easy to use;
- is not a check-list: the questions and examples are meant to stimulate reflection and further inquiry;
- relies on the existing expertise and abilities of those involved in policy development and analysis; and,
- assumes that those responsible for policy development and analysis will adapt the method to their own style and circumstances; as they gain familiarity and competence in gender analysis, their reliance on this guide will diminish.

3.2 STRUCTURE

The gender-based analysis process described in this guide:

- is structured according to the steps followed routinely by those involved in policy development and analysis, as outlined in the policy development/analysis diagram presented on page 8. Beginning on page 13, each phase in the cycle is outlined. The facing page discusses gender implications using the example of policy related to youth employment, and provides space for notes. Because the sequence of analysis may vary with circumstances, and may double back several times, the gender analysis methodology can be entered at any stage;
- outlines questions and considerations to undertake in each phase, and directs those involved in policy development and analysis to consider gender issues;
- uses policy examples throughout to illustrate how the approach can be applied, and suggests data, information and consultation that may be needed when carrying out gender-based analysis.

3.3 GETTING STARTED: UNDERSTANDING AND ADAPTING THE METHOD

- ✓ Section 1 of the guide presents the conceptual framework, assumptions and values that guide the gender-based analysis process. It is an essential prelude to understanding the process.
- ✓ Section 3 gives a step-by-step description of the gender-based analysis process. The phases and questions describe your experience with policy analysis.
- ✓ You can use the gender-based analysis process to prepare an outline and plan of your policy analysis, and as a step-by-step guide for each phase.
- ✓ Begin on the page that describes your entry phase into the policy analysis cycle.
- ✓ Reflect and clarify the strengths and biases you may bring to the analysis process. Make some notes about how you can use this awareness to add to the quality of the analysis.
- ✓ Consider the questions you need to ask, who you need to involve, and what information you need at each step of the cycle.
- ✓ Move through the policy analysis process section by section. Revisit sections throughout the development and analysis as required.
- ✓ Use the questions in Step 8 – Assessing the Quality of Analysis – to check the quality and completeness of your work
- ✓ You may wish to work with your colleagues when using this process, so that your unit has a consistent approach.
- ✓ If you have any questions and concerns about how to use the gender-based analysis process, contact Status of Women Canada policy analysts who will assist you with specific information or provide further orientation to the method.

3.4 THE EIGHT STEPS OF GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

STEP 1 – IDENTIFYING, DEFINING AND REFINING THE ISSUE

Policy analysis usually begins with identifying a problem or an opportunity requiring policy development or analysis. This stage involves determining the nature, scope and importance of the issue within the context of the current policy environment that warranted placing it on the policy agenda.

The following questions are generally asked to **identify, define and refine policy issues**:

- What is the issue?
- Who says it is an issue?
- Why has it become an issue?
- How does your personal/professional/corporate background (your gender/experiences/values/beliefs/assumptions/circumstances) affect your understanding of the issue?
- What are the root causes?
- How are the root causes perpetuated?
- What factors are influencing this issue?
- Does this issue require policy analysis/development?

To ensure a gender perspective in identifying, defining and refining the issue, consider:

- defining issues and target groups so that the diverse and different experiences of women and men are taken into account. In what ways were these definitions influenced by your gender? When a cultural practice falls outside the dominant society, what steps have you taken to define what is, from a cultural and a gender perspective, acceptable and/or different?
- your background may influence your vision and prevent you from asking questions and hearing answers. Policies, programs and legislation must be careful not to reinforce stereotypes and systemic discrimination about women and men;
- that policies, programs and legislation can be effective only if they acknowledge and respond to their potential human impact. The impact on both women and men must be assessed;
- involving both women and men in identifying the issue. What do women's organizations and gender-aware researchers have to say about this issue? How has the issue been shaped by public opinion? Have women's perspectives informed the issue? What was the level of participation of the affected and disadvantaged groups of women and men in the issue identification process?

- that age and other factors modify the different experiences of males and females (e.g. pregnancy, parental responsibilities, pension benefits);
- how equity may be an issue in the policy. For example, do women and men currently receive different levels of benefits from the policy area under review? Are you looking for a policy that provides means to overcome gender inequities and/or also seeks to eliminate barriers?
- factors (cultural, economic, political, legal, socio-economic, etc.) that may affect gender equity within this issue. For example, consider how experiences of women and men will differ geographically, and are influenced by poverty, colour, aboriginal ancestry, disability/ability. Also, explore political considerations and/or events (disasters, changes, legal decisions) that may have precipitated the issue.

EXAMPLE:

Using a gender-based analysis process helps us to see the identified issue as multifaceted.

For example, young women on welfare are predominately single mothers, while very few young men have family responsibilities. Child care is a critical support need for young women who are seeking to enter/rejoin the labour market.

Young women's training and job prospects generally differ from those of young men. The paid labour market traditionally has excluded young women from training and subsequent jobs in science and technology. At a time when more emphasis is being put on technological skills, this is problematic for women. Similarly, there are fewer resource-based and blue-collar jobs – which young men traditionally entered, posing difficulties for young men. Women tend to receive lower incomes from employment than men. Both young women and young men are entering a changing job market that requires a high level of skills, during a time when job opportunities are declining.

Single parents on welfare, and their children, are vulnerable to health problems. Young women and young men without job prospects are susceptible to violence and crime, but in different ways (e.g. domestic violence, street violence, prostitution, etc.).

Society does not equitably value the skills young women develop in either paid or unpaid work: women's salaries are consistently lower. Pregnancy and peer pressure are factors in school and work drop-out, but these pressures affect young women and men in different ways.

Information for the analysis of the examples cited above can be obtained by looking at gender-disaggregated data and studies, consulting with young women and men directly about their experiences, and consulting with poverty groups and gender-based advocacy, research and service groups.

It is evident from the examples given above that issues for young women and young men differ and that there are issues of diversity. Each of the issues identified through gender-based analysis needs to be addressed in the next steps of policy development.

NOTES:

STEP 2 – DEFINING DESIRED/ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

In this stage, desired goals and anticipated outcomes for the policy are proposed. An analysis of intended/unintended outcomes usually examines the degree to which the policy can meet or hinder other policies or government objectives. Outcome indicators, monitoring processes, partners in defining outcomes, and accountability for achieving outcomes are usually considered in this phase.

The following questions are generally asked to **define the desired/anticipated outcomes**:

- What outcomes does government want to achieve with this policy? For whom?
- What outcomes would other stakeholders expect from this policy?
- For which specific outcomes should the policy be defined? On what is this priority based?
- Should any of these outcomes be achieved by means other than new or revised policy/legislation? Is the development of a policy/legislation the best means to produce the desired outcome?
- How do these outcomes meet or hinder other government values, objectives or policies?
- What outcome indicators should be identified?
- What monitoring and accountability processes are needed to ensure the outcomes?
- What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?

To ensure a gender perspective in defining the desired/anticipated outcomes, consider:

- that different measures may be required for outcomes to be equitable for both women and men (identical treatment does not necessarily assure equality);
- consciously choosing outcomes that break down societal barriers or ameliorate current inequitable situations between women and men;
- that multiple outcomes may need to be identified to take into account the effects of gender and/or other aspects of diversity on policy implementation;
- that expectations for outcomes (from government, the public, other stakeholders) should be analyzed to ensure they take into account both women and men, and that the expectations do not unintentionally incorporate existing stereotypes or biases;
- that if there are different outcomes for both women and men, these should be given equal consideration; outcomes for women should not be an add-on to a “mainstream” policy;

- that policies, programs and legislation that do not provide a “level playing field” for both women and men may produce results that undermine the objectives of the policy;
- as well, you may need different outcome indicators in order to capture the different realities for women and men;
- assigning specific monitoring and accountability for outcomes for both women and men in the policy outline. Be aware that the traditional approach is built on the male norm and that a new paradigm may be required;
- which gender-specific factors could modify the possibilities of achieving the outcomes; for example, pregnancy, harassment in the work place, lack of child care, care-giving for elders, are all variables which, if unaccounted for in the policy, could mitigate positive outcomes.

EXAMPLE:

Using a gender-based analysis process will help to identify outcomes specific to young women or men.

For example, young mothers and their children on welfare could benefit from training in parenting skills. Other outcomes identified through gender-based analysis could be:

- *more flexible child-care arrangements for children of young parents in training or at work;*
- *youth moving from welfare to salaried workplace-based training provided through government/private sector partnerships, with specific supports for child care and other gender-related needs;*
- *specially designed gender-specific counselling, work experience and preparation programs for street and abused youth;*
- *more single mothers making the transition to work, aided by transition-to-work bonuses and assistance with child-care costs;*
- *more youth leaving welfare to attend post-secondary training, aided by special financial assistance packages including child care, career planning, and special incentives for young women and young men to enter non-traditional occupational training (e.g. trades and technology for women, nursing and care-giving for young men);*
- *gender-inclusive curricula, and classroom practices that foster equality in both secondary and post-secondary institutions;*
- *flexible arrangements at post-secondary education institutions that consider safety, part-time enrolment, transition support and other gender-specific measures and supports.*

Development of these outcomes and related indicators would involve consultations with partners expert on gender-related issues such as poverty, social assistance, training and job creation, as well as with more traditional partners such as the private sector and institutions. Care should be taken to ensure that gender-specific outcomes and indicators are monitored by agencies with clearly assigned accountability; for example, educational institutions and program managers should be required to gather information and report on gender-related outcomes.

NOTES:

STEP 3 – DEFINING THE INFORMATION AND CONSULTATION INPUTS

This step is most often done along with the research phase. It looks at what knowledge is needed, and what sources can best provide it. Available and relevant data sources, and partners in data gathering and analysis are identified.

The following questions are generally asked to **define the information and consultation inputs**:

- What do we need to know about the issue? About the underlying problem? About values influencing the issue?
- What information is required to ensure that all perspectives will be taken into consideration?
- Who should be involved in determining what information is needed?
- What information sources are available?
- Who will be partners in information gathering/provision? What processes are required to effectively consult with these partners?
- Is the available information sufficient and appropriate to define the policy? Is there a need to generate primary data?
- Should the scope of the policy be redefined in light of the availability and appropriateness of the information?

To ensure a gender perspective in defining the information and consultation inputs, consider:

- that information regarding equity groups (including aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and visible minority groups) needs to be disaggregated by gender;
- actively seeking the advice and participation of community and women's groups expert in this field when looking at sensitive issues, such as experience of sexual abuse or family violence. Take appropriate measures to ensure their full participation which could include changing the consultation processes, providing child care support;
- that gender-disaggregated data is often not available; therefore it may be necessary to seek information in the form of case experience, administrative data, or facilitate the direct participation of both young women and young men. In the absence of any of these, it may be necessary to engage in direct research to generate primary gender-specific data;
- that unique and comprehensive information, often not available through traditional data sources, can be obtained by consulting with non-government organizations. These groups often have access to information at the international, national, provincial and local levels;

- that you should take into account the operational realities of community groups when seeking their input – non-governmental organizations are not all structured the same. Women’s organizations generally have limited funds and rely almost entirely on volunteers. Responses to consultation requests take time, as decisions are generally made consensually.

EXAMPLE:

Using a gender-based analysis process helps to know more precisely what information and what kind of consultation is required. Looking carefully at types of information sources and information-gathering methods will prompt those involved in policy development and analysis to seek out alternate forms of information, partnerships, and consultation.

For example, collecting information that reflects the resourcefulness of youth, youth networks and organizations will demonstrate their contributions, not just their needs. They may have a lot to say about motivation, attempts to break down gender discrimination, and the kinds of incentives to which both young women and men will respond.

NOTES:

STEP 4 – CONDUCTING RESEARCH

This stage hones and clarifies the research design, and the type of analysis to be done (e.g. cost/benefit, social impact, relationships to government, etc.).

Tasks and methods of analysis and approaches to data presentation are discussed in this phase, and the research is carried out.

The following questions are generally asked to **define the research design**:

- What is the analysis seeking to determine (e.g. cost/benefit, social impact, effect on government priorities)?
- Who determines the research question(s)?
- What is (are) the research question(s)?
- What factors will affect the research design?
- Who will be involved in the research and the research design? How?
- Is the scope and nature of the research design appropriate for this policy issue?
- What methodology(ies) will be used?
- What type of analysis will be done?

To ensure a gender perspective in defining the research and the analysis to be done, consider:

- that policies, programs and legislation that do not address gender concerns may leave out relevant facts and data;
- that research questions must make specific reference to both women and men if the research is to address their particular circumstances;
- that the research design should include gender as an analytical tool for understanding social processes. Knowledge of issues that make gender a factor (e.g. parenthood, safety, medical issues, wages) should influence your choice of the research design to be used. The research design should be constructed in a way that disaggregated data are collected. In the case of secondary research, disaggregated data should be sought;
- that some research approaches are not sensitive to women's or men's particular needs (e.g. issues of disclosure or confidentiality for women in shelters may rule out some data collection approaches);
- that a research methodology should have "face validity" with those consulted, as well as with those who will implement the policies, programs and legislation. This will require consultation with both women and men;

- using reports, studies and guides that use gender methodologies in designing your gender-aware research. These need to be part of your research tool kit;
- gender as the primary category of analysis. It is the analytical tool to understand the issue at hand. Analysis should identify the relationships among variables so that gender differentials are exposed and understood.

EXAMPLE:

Using a gender-based analysis process helps to identify the research questions more accurately, and guides the research design, methodology, data collection and analysis to ensure that both women's and men's circumstances are considered.

For example, if a policy outcome is to have more young women trained in trades, research should look at specific barriers and successes that young women experience in such training. These will be different than those experienced by young men. To help ensure young people's participation and input, gender-aware research events (focus groups, participatory methodologies, talking to street kids, etc.) can be designed.

NOTES:

STEP 5 – DEVELOPING AND ANALYZING OPTIONS

At this stage, options indicated by the research are articulated and refined.

Implications and outcomes of options are identified and analyzed.

The relationship of options to, and their impact on, existing policies, programs and legislation are also studied. Economic, social, equity, community, environmental, etc. impact analyses are preferably developed for each option.

Responsibility for implementation and the resources required are also examined.

The following questions are generally asked in **developing and analyzing options**:

- What options are indicated by the data/ information/research?
- How are the options directly related to the desired outcomes previously identified (see Step 2)?
- How do your values, those of the system and those of society limit the range of options being developed?
- How do these options influence or change the factors affecting the issue as previously identified (see Step 2)?
- How do each of the options meet or hinder existing policies, programs or legislation?
- Do each of the options present a “real” alternative for government?
- What are the direct and/or indirect implications of each option? Are there unintended outcomes?
- What factors will positively and negatively affect the implementation of each option?
- Who would implement each option? What resources are required for each option?
- How to ensure accountability?

To ensure a gender perspective in developing and analyzing the options, consider:

- how the options may disadvantage or provide benefits for either women or men;
- how does each option reinforce or challenge stereotypes and systemic discrimination;
- how the options will support gender equity, and avoid discrimination, or point out where equity may be compromised. This should be explicit in the cost/benefit analysis of each option;
- what are the consequences of not adopting a gender-sensitive option? For women? For government?
- including gender-specific measures in each option;
- seeking the perspectives of both women and men in developing the options and assessing their costs, benefits, acceptability and practicality.

EXAMPLE:

Using a gender-based analysis process will clearly highlight the differences among options and the respective costs and benefits for both young women and men on welfare.

For example, if one option suggests that some youth should be encouraged to return to their families for support, this step will clarify the potential impact on young women who have encountered sexual abuse within their families.

Options that include gender-specific measures can feature benefits for young women or men, such as all-female trades exploration sessions, all-female counselling environments or all-male anger-management sessions.

NOTES:

STEP 6 – MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISION-SEEKING

The recommendation of options is often a collaborative effort, and sometimes draws directly on public input and consultation.

The rationale for the recommendation is derived from the analysis of options, and presents the recommendation in terms of its favourable and unfavourable impacts and implications, and the policy environment.

The following questions are generally asked in **making a recommendation and obtaining a decision**:

- Who will be involved in choosing the option recommended?
- On what basis will the recommendation be made?
- What are the underlying assumptions and values implicit in the option being recommended?
- What sort of documentation is needed to support the recommendation? Are the underlying assumptions and values included in this documentation?
- Is the recommended option free from unintended outcomes and/or restraints (legal, economic, social, cultural, environmental, etc.)?
- Will there be further consultation on the recommended option? Who should be involved?
- What aspects of the policy environment (fiscal, government strategic priorities, other policies, current public opinion, government commitments, etc.) impinge on the recommendation?

To ensure a gender perspective in developing a recommendation and obtaining a decision, consider:

- gender equity as a significant element in weighing and recommending options;
- ensuring that the recommended option contains no legal, economic, social or cultural constraints to gender-equitable participation in the proposed measures;
- how any differential consequences based on gender, and their social and economic costs, will be communicated to decision-makers;
- explaining the consequences of the recommended option in light of government's commitment to gender equity, and if and how the recommendation supports these objectives;
- outlining in the recommendation methods to ensure that the policy is implemented in a gender-sensitive and equitable manner;
- that if your recommended option results in a conflict of values, how you would articulate your recommendations to ensure gender-sensitive decision-making.

EXAMPLE:

Using a gender-based analysis process in the recommendation phase will result in a clear outline to decision-makers of the gender implications of the recommended option. It will also demonstrate links between the recommended option and the government's wider objectives for gender equity.

***For example**, a recommended option to increase the number of young women re-entering education and moving to a training allowance will contribute to a reduction of government expenditures on welfare. At the same time, it will support government objectives for gender equity.*

In weighing a recommendation, such as the eligibility of single youth for welfare benefits, the gendered social costs (e.g. health of children and mothers) should be communicated to decision-makers.

NOTES:

STEP 7 – COMMUNICATING POLICY

Communicating the recommended or chosen option can play a significant role in its acceptance and implementation.

Timing, choice of media, language, and public involvement are important to ensure that government intent and the impacts of the policy, program and legislation are understood.

The participation and acknowledgement of partners and consulting groups can be a key part of communicating policies inside government and to the public.

The following questions are generally asked in **communicating policy**:

- What is the message we want to communicate?
- To whom do we want to communicate it?
- What is the main message to be communicated to each audience?
- How will the policy be communicated? What information will be given to whom? How?
- What measures will be taken to communicate the policy, program and legislation to those who participated in its development?

To ensure a gender perspective in communicating policy, consider:

- that the message should address both women and men;
- designing communication strategies that reach both women and men;
- how information will be communicated to women and men who are members of equity groups;
- how to highlight gender implications of the policy;
- how the participation and contributions of both women and men in the policy development and analysis process will be acknowledged and communicated;
- the ways that organizations that share similar equality-seeking goals could participate in the communication of policies;
- how to ensure that examples, language, and symbols used in the communication are gender-aware and diversity-appropriate.

EXAMPLE:

Using a gender-based analysis process will help you ensure that the message is formulated and distributed in a way that is respectful of both young women and men on welfare.

For example, you will want to ensure that the information is received by, and makes sense to, those individuals who need it most. In addition to sending information to those involved in consultations and research, you can send information to schools, community centres, women's organizations or service groups. Lists of, and advice on, suitable groups can be obtained from Status of Women Canada or other organizations including provincial/territorial status of women offices across the country.

You should continue to involve youth and others in the preparation of communication materials and approaches. Acknowledge their contribution in a way that is respectful. Different communication approaches may be required for young women and men. Policies, programs and legislation that have differential impacts on women and men will need to be explained, as will any measures in the policy intended to address imbalances.

NOTES:

STEP 8 – ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF ANALYSIS

At this stage it is important to review the analysis process.

The following questions are generally asked in **assessing the quality of analysis**:

- How will we know our policy analysis and advice was appropriate and effective?
- Who will establish the criteria to judge this?
- How and to whom are we accountable for the quality of our analysis?
- Who will review/analyze the quality of the analysis? To whom will the assessment be reported? Who will report it?

To ensure a gender perspective in assessing the quality of analysis, consider:

- integrating questions concerning gender throughout the analysis;
- clarifying gender implications within the context of the policy, and within the policy priorities of government;
- clearly presenting what the gender implications are for each option, and why the recommended option will support gender equity, and promote (not restrict) women's autonomy, opportunities and participation;
- substantiating these claims with relevant, reliable gender-disaggregated data, and/or, reliable information from credible informants;
- balancing this information with appropriate considerations of the policy environment, such as historical information, the policy context, comparative information from other jurisdictions, community-based information and studies;
- presenting recommendations concerning the policy that support gender equity in a credible and practical way, and demonstrating how gender equity considerations are balanced and congruent with other government priorities and considerations.

CONCLUSION

This guide establishes the use of gender as the primary category of analysis and as an approach in policy, program and legislation development processes. It outlines a framework and methodology to assist in analyzing policies, programs and legislation from a gender perspective.

It is presented as a first step in building a more sector-specific gender analysis framework, and in developing well-researched background documentation that incorporates gender-disaggregated data.

Policy, programs and legislation can change gender relations. The challenge is to create the questions and formulate the analytical procedures that will produce solutions to support gender equality.

COMMENTS FORM

To: STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA
Policy Analysis and Development Directorate
360 Albert Street, 7th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1C3
Fax: (613) 957-3949
E-mail: vilas@swc-cfc.gc.ca

From: Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

Internet E-mail Address:

Subject: STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA'S GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS GUIDE FOR
POLICY-MAKING

The following are my comments and suggestions regarding the Gender-Based Analysis Guide:

