



Evaluation is the assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of an ongoing or completed programme/project, its policy or strategy, its design, implementation and results at different levels. SDC distinguishes several types of evaluation:

- **Self-evaluation**, also called empowerment evaluation, is a powerful tool to enhance and support programme/project responsible teams and improve the general functioning of complex programmes (multi-levels, multi-partners...)<sup>1</sup>
- **Reviews or evaluations**, internal or external, lie inside the activities of the staff responsible for programme implementation<sup>2</sup>
- **Independent evaluations** are evaluations which are initiated and carried out by other persons than the one responsible for a programme<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See «Mirror, mirror on the wall...», SDC, 1991 and «Manual on Self-Evaluation», SDC, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> See «External evaluation 1», SDC, June 2000.

<sup>3</sup> See «Guidelines evaluation and controlling» and «English glossary/SDC», SDC, May 2002.

(Self) evaluation can be done prior to action, during it or after completion of the programme/project.

The present sheet is meant for evaluators, self-evaluation facilitators or any person involved in an evaluation action, who are well acquainted with evaluation methodologies and SDC's Programme Cycle Management concept. Its goal is to give some incentives on how to integrate gender and address gender equality issues in a) any general evaluation; b) gender thematic evaluation, i.e. evaluation which is specially designed to evaluate gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment efforts.

At present, few general evaluations have comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data about progress made for women and men over the period evaluated<sup>4</sup>. General evaluations are often gender blind. Even when some significant gender disaggregated data has been collected, gender analysis is poor and discussion on gender issues is limited to considering the participation of women. Thematic gender evaluations still focus on women, and men are not present. The word «gender» is used as a synonym of women. Several reasons might explain those weaknesses, such as a) gender blind evaluation methodologies; b) gender blind Terms of Reference (ToR); c) insufficient gender competency and/or commitment among the evaluators; d) lack of gender disaggregated monitoring information.

Efforts have to be made to engender general evaluations in a more consistent way on one hand but it might be important too, in future, to carry out more thematic gender evaluations for learning.

## Evaluation methodology

A good gender focused evaluation is first of all a good evaluation. That means that its methodology and used tools integrate gender. At present, there is a need for evaluation capacity building with a strong focus on how to address gender equality issues in evaluation. Training might be necessary for all concerned staff and consultants, including the partners.

The idea is not to treat gender mainstreaming as a goal, but as a means to reach the development objectives of achieving gender equality. It has proven to be useful to find positive/negative gender results of intervention first and then examine the factors/processes that promote good/poor performances. Problems will arise if evaluations are designed based on the assumption that mainstreaming automatically leads to gender equality outcomes. Institutional mainstreaming should not be evaluated without considering the extent to which this leads to changes in gender relations. Focus should be put on results as well as processes and institutional practices.

In any evaluation action, check if:

- Participatory methods of data collection are used, including women and men and with adequate attention to gender issues
- The questions and the indicators are gender-sensitive. This will lead to a higher quality of gender analysis and will tend to include more information on benefits (or no benefits) to women and men
- Besides highlighting women's achievements, focus also on gender relations and on the impact of development activities on gender equality
- Focus on how gender relations may influence women's capacity to participate to or benefit from the programme/project
- Partnerships on gender equality and in other areas have been built
- There is capacity and commitment of involved partners to work on changing gender relations (partner and donor organisations).
- Accountability to gender equality policies and strategies is ensured.

<sup>4</sup> J. Hunt and R. Browsers, Review on Gender and Evaluation, submitted to the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, March 2003.

### Terms of reference

Very often, ToR do not include any or, if at all, only vague references to gender. No explicit gender questions are asked. In order to engender them, systematic attention to gender issues should be brought into any evaluation concept and design. SDC staff responsible for preparing the ToR should be gender competent or call in expertise in this field. The collaboration of the Gender Unit to prepare the ToR might help to focus on relevant gender issues and represent a good practice to guarantee that ToR are engendered.

In order to engender evaluation's ToR, check that:

- The gender issues are integrated in the evaluation's objectives
- Precise reference to gender and appropriate evaluation questions to investigate differences in participation, benefits, results at all levels between women and men are included
- The demand to assess the benefits for women and men, the results related to gender equality is explicit
- Institutional approaches and change strategies are included, e.g. furthering factors/obstacles to gender mainstreaming (often interpreted as obstacles to having gender issues addressed)
- The demand to assess changes in gender relations is mentioned
- As far as possible, the demand to make links between the inclusion of a gender perspective and successful or improved programme/project outputs, outcomes or impact is explicit.

### Evaluators and evaluation teams

Gender expertise on the evaluators or on the evaluation team is required. Gender competency is today one of the criteria to mandate professional consultants. A good evaluation team is composed of women and men, if possible from the North and from the South. Donors should work towards more joint evaluations (donor/partners, women/men) in line towards sector-wide approaches and increased emphasis on national ownership. Local expertise is indispensable in most of evaluation. The involvement of local evaluators has to be considered as a capacity building exercise. It might require adequate resourcing and training.



The choice of an evaluator/evaluation team is essential for the quality of the evaluation.

Check that:

- Gender expertise is available in the team
- The team is composed of women and men evaluators
- Local expertise has been used (women and men)
- The evaluators have the capacity to identify and collect gender disaggregated information using a mix of different methods, including the capacity to develop gender sensitive indicators
- The evaluators have the capacity to analyse data collected in relation to the activities being evaluated in a systematic way.

### Report writing

Add a sentence about women at the end of a chapter or a chapter about gender is not enough to engender an evaluation report. As ToR and evaluation methodologies, report writing has to be engendered, i.e. conceived and thought from the beginning with a gender perspective.

To write an engendered report and ameliorate its quality in general, check that:

- The way the methodology and used tools have been engendered is explicit
- Sound quantitative and qualitative data about progress made for women and men over the period evaluated (no general remarks unsupported by evidence) is included

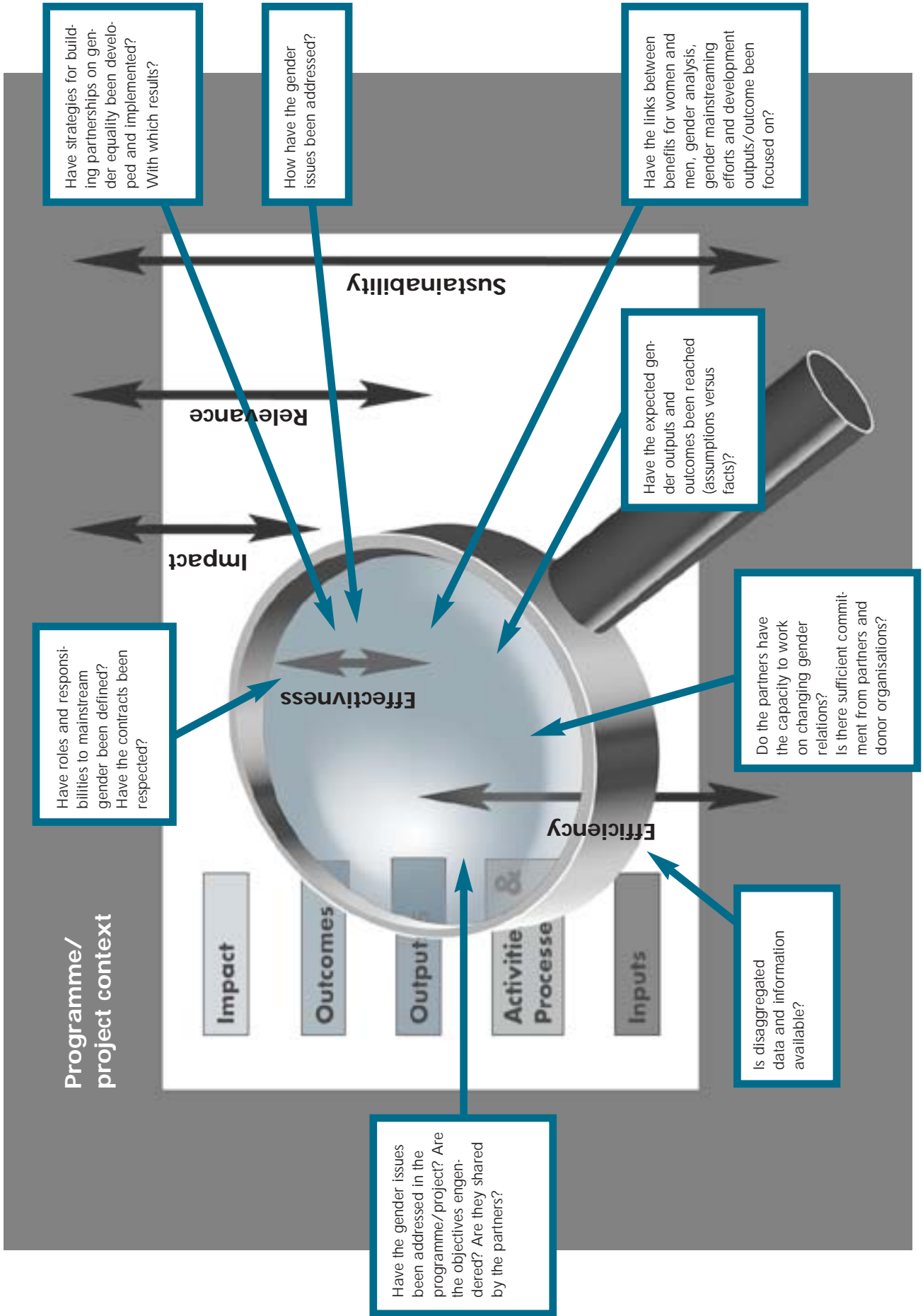
- Analysis of these data is consistent
- Recommendations and other comments regarding actions needing to be taken to ensure that gender issues are properly addressed are included.

The way a report is written is important too, as language is not neutral. Words as well as grammar are the mirror of society, in particular of the status that women and men have. Language can evolve and is not bound to immutable academic rules. Rules for engendered writing are language specific.

For report writing, evaluators should check, whatever language is used, that:

- Women and men are equally addressed and are not excluded
- The word «gender» is not taken as a synonym for «women», but highlights the relations between women and men
- No sexist formulation or stereotypes are used
- The way of writing is gender sensitive and respects the rules specific to the used language.

Reviews/Self-evaluation main focus with a gender perspective



# External/Independent evaluation main focus with a gender perspective

