

# 5

## Gender Management System Processes

This section sets out three interrelated processes in a Gender Management System:

- ◆ establishing a GMS;
- ◆ developing and implementing a national Gender Action Plan; and
- ◆ gender mainstreaming and engendering the National Development Plan.

These processes are interdependent and overlapping. Since each country has its own gender priorities, needs and circumstances, the GMS does not prescribe a single procedure to be used in all countries. The processes described in this section are designed to be adapted according to individual country circumstances.

### Establishing a GMS

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The process of setting up a GMS is normally initiated by the National Women's Machinery. The main steps in the process are shown in Table 1.

### Feasibility study and stakeholder analysis

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The first step in setting up a Gender Management System is to carry out a feasibility study. This may be carried out by the Lead Agency or by a technical expert hired on a consultancy basis or provided through an international donor agency.

The feasibility study should include an analysis of the situation regarding gender equality and equity in all sectors. It should review government decision-making structures, mechanisms and planning processes and identify the major links between government and non-state actors. It should identify what elements of the enabling environment for a GMS are present, and in what strengths. In particular, it should examine the resources available to determine

Table 1 Establishing a GMS

Important Interventions	
1	Feasibility Study/Stakeholder analysis, including assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the enabling environment
2	Feasibility Study Report tabled in Cabinet
3	Review of National Gender Action Plan – integrate a gender mainstreaming perspective into the Plan in consultation with key stakeholders, and seek approval at Cabinet level through the NWM
4	Engendering of the National Development Plan through the implementation of mechanisms defined in the National Gender Action Plan (refer to Taylor, 1999)
5	Setting up of GMS Structures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Gender Management Team</li> <li>◆ Gender Focal Points/Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee</li> <li>◆ Gender Caucus in Parliament</li> <li>◆ Gender Equality Commission/Council</li> <li>◆ Management Information System</li> </ul>
6	Strengthening of the National Women's Machinery to act as Lead Agency in implementing the GMS
7	Development of a gender mainstreaming training programme in collaboration with higher education/training institution(s) at the national or regional level
8	Building of gender analysis/planning expertise in the different sectors in government, towards engendering their sector plans
9	Establishment/strengthening of linkages between the NWM and other state and non-state stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ parliamentarians</li> <li>◆ NGOs, academic institutions, media, etc.</li> </ul>
10	Establishment of monitoring and evaluation, and reporting mechanisms
11	Development of a programme of public awareness through the media
12	Networking with donor agencies (inter-governmental, other multilateral and bilateral agencies, and the private sector), to find resources for the GMS and gender mainstreaming

the degree to which establishing a GMS is feasible in the particular national context. If the enabling environment is not strong enough to support a complete GMS across all ministries and sectors, the feasibility study should attempt to identify specific ministries/sectors that could provide strategic entry points for gender mainstreaming.

A stakeholder analysis provides valuable information for the feasibility study and for the ongoing functioning of a GMS. A list of stakeholders and their interests should be drawn up, to identify who should take part in ongoing consultation processes throughout the GMS. A stakeholder analysis will determine the extent to which there are gender-aware decision-makers and the gender balance of groups represented in the GMS structure. It will also help ensure that the GMS process includes a representative group of state and non-state actors.

The following checklist of questions can help identify and clarify stakeholders' interests:

- ◆ What do the stakeholders expect of the Gender Management System?
- ◆ What benefits are there likely to be for stakeholders?
- ◆ What resources will the stakeholder wish to commit or avoid committing to the GMS?
- ◆ What other interests does the stakeholder have which complement or conflict with the GMS?
- ◆ What is the relationship between the stakeholder and the other GMS stakeholders?

The sustained success of a GMS depends, in part, on the capacity of its stakeholders to acknowledge and accommodate the various objectives to be met in the process of mainstreaming gender without losing sight of the mission and the goal of gender equality. Hence, a stakeholder analysis will help to define the most appropriate strategy for implementing a GMS.

### **Prioritising goals**

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The pursuit of gender equality objectives is a dynamic process beginning from existing circumstances and moving towards the ideal. A Gender Management System seeks to remove the problem of gender inequities by altering the environment in which such inequities are created and sustained. Past experience has shown that piecemeal solutions to gender inequality are not sufficient; therefore, the GMS seeks to place gender on the agenda at all levels, attacking gender-based discrimination and injustice on all fronts simultaneously.

However, the systemic and structural change sought by the GMS will not be achieved overnight. It is necessary to prioritise goals

carefully, and to aim for what is achievable. The accomplishment of a relatively modest goal will yield greater results than the failure to achieve a goal that was set unrealistically high.

The task of prioritising goals will be made considerably easier by the use of a stakeholder analysis and by analysis of the comparative status of women and men in all aspects of the life of the country. Decisions can then be taken as to the strategic points of entry for gender mainstreaming where success is most likely to be achieved.

An examination should be made of the GMS structures, mechanisms and processes as described in this guide to determine which are the most useful and appropriate in the national context, and the easiest to establish, or to adapt from existing structures. This will inform the decisions as to which structures and mechanisms to prioritise in establishing the GMS. A simple approach is a SWOT analysis – identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats inherent in each area where the GMS is expected to have an impact, and prioritising the areas accordingly.

A similar analysis, based on the findings of the feasibility study, stakeholder analysis, and other information about gender differences within the national population in all sectors, should be applied to conditions in the broader civil society, so as to determine what are the most critical problems that need to be addressed in order to advance gender equality and equity. For example, two critical problems might be discrimination against women in the legal framework and constitution, and women's lack of political participation. Both of these would ultimately need to be addressed through the GMS, but it might be considered that, for example, the latter problem is easier to address than the former. It should therefore take the higher priority in the Gender Action Plan.

A further example is that of a country in which there is a high level of resistance to gender mainstreaming in government because of a general lack of awareness of the nature and extent of gender inequalities within the country. In that case, gender analysis and gender training would be priority mechanisms for bringing about the required change in awareness.

## Points of entry for gender mainstreaming

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Gender mainstreaming should ideally be undertaken in all government ministries and departments. However, where political will or resource availability does not permit this, it may be possible to target specific ministries or sectors, according to strategic priorities.

For example, the Commonwealth Secretariat is assisting a national government in the mainstreaming of gender in the health sector, in a case where health was considered to be of particular strategic importance for the advancement of gender equity. Another strategic point of entry may be finance and macroeconomic planning.

Regardless of specific national priorities, the National Development Plan is normally a key strategic point of entry for gender mainstreaming. Since the Plan informs sectoral planning and decision-making, it can, if made gender-aware and responsive to differing gender needs, be of cross-cutting influence in promoting gender mainstreaming within the various sectors.

## Setting up or strengthening GMS structures

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Setting up or strengthening the GMS structures and mechanisms include the following steps:

- ◆ institutionalising the GMS through identification of the Lead Agency; making appointments to the Gender Management Team and designing its work schedule; ensuring that sectoral ministries nominate their Gender Focal Points and determining the meetings schedule of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee;
- ◆ liaising with the Gender Equality Commission (or establishing such a body if none exists) to identify their representative for the Gender Management Team;
- ◆ ensuring that stakeholders represented in GMS structures meet regularly (i.e., not just in the policy developing and planning stage but also throughout the implementation of the Gender Action Plan and in its monitoring and evaluation;)
- ◆ setting and meeting targets for women in decision-making roles in the political, public and private sectors;
- ◆ ensuring that all the members of the GMS structures (particularly the Gender Management Team and the Gender Focal Points) receive gender training.

## The Gender Action Plan

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The structures, mechanisms, and processes of a GMS should be seen as an integrated network. The Gender Action Plan is a central component of this network. In countries where a national Gender Action Plan exists, the GMS should help to ensure that the plan is effectively implemented; this may involve revising and further developing the plan to promote a gender mainstreaming approach. In countries that are in the process of developing a national Gender Action Plan, the GMS may be equally helpful as a means of giving shape to the plan using the mainstreaming approach.

The Gender Action Plan is designed to ensure that concrete measures are taken to achieve the goals set in the policy development process. The Gender Action Plan should act as a complement to the National Development Plan and to other ongoing initiatives to make government decision-making processes more equitable including, for example, efforts to integrate gender into national budgetary processes. The Gender Action Plan should also include provisions for the engendering of the National Development Plan.

### Gender analysis

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The starting point for the Gender Action Plan is gender analysis. The feasibility study and stakeholder analysis carried out at the beginning of the process of establishing a GMS should include much of the significant analysis that is necessary for the formulation of the Gender Action Plan, which should include:

- ◆ a policy statement and sectoral plans to mainstream gender in all policies, plans and programmes in all sectors of government;
- ◆ a policy statement with clear goals and objectives, including sectoral targets, which reflect national priorities in relation to international mandates and which include such critical areas as women's economic empowerment, the participation of women in political decision-making, and women's rights as human rights;
- ◆ a strategy and timetable for the revision of existing policies and administrative procedures to bring them in line with the goals of the Plan. This may include legislative instructions from the highest political authority and accountability measures to promote effective participation at all levels in the Plan's implementation;
- ◆ guidelines on engendering macro-economic and sectoral government policies and programmes;

- ◆ a strategy and timeframe for the review of national legislation and practices to eliminate discrimination on the basis of sex, and to adopt necessary legislation for promoting and protecting women's human rights; and
- ◆ a strategy for the mobilisation of human and budgetary resources to support the Plan.

More specifically, the Gender Action Plan should provide clear guidelines on measures to be taken in each of the following areas:

- ◆ setting up or strengthening the GMS structures and mechanisms;
- ◆ engendering the work plans of all government ministries;
- ◆ timeframe for implementation; and
- ◆ indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

### **Implementing the Gender Action Plan**

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The following initiatives are important for the successful implementation of the Gender Action Plan through the Gender Management System:

- ◆ securing political and administrative commitment at the highest level, including that of the President, Prime Minister, Cabinet, individual ministers or equivalent office holders, and senior managers;
- ◆ putting in place appropriate structures, mechanisms and administrative procedures, including accountability measures, to implement the Plan;
- ◆ securing partnership and collaboration among the key stakeholders;
- ◆ developing an effective monitoring and evaluation process.

Other initiatives in the implementation of the Gender Action Plan include:

- ◆ designing and implementing a programme of training which combines gender analysis with briefings on the management of change through the GMS;
- ◆ research and information dissemination through the Management Information System; and
- ◆ an effective communication strategy to raise public awareness about and support for the Gender Action Plan, particularly through partnerships with the media.

The timeframe for the Gender Action Plan should be flexible, with

phased targets and deadlines, preferably to coincide with the national sectoral development planning process.

### **Promoting the Plan**

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Raising the public's awareness to the level of acceptance of the principle of equality and equity between women and men requires communications planning. This is critical to the success of the GMS because the first step to awareness is visibility. Promoting gender integration as a national agenda to which government is actively committed sends a powerful message. It is only through effectively publicising the work of a GMS that successes can be made visible, problem areas identified, effective strategies shared and replicated, and negative responses to the programme openly acknowledged and addressed.

The Management Information System will assist in developing a communications strategy to promote the objectives and goals of the Gender Action Plan and convey the mission of the GMS to the media. The media are a stakeholder in the Plan's development, and have a special role in promoting it. The communication strategy should seek to:

- ◆ inform public opinion of the need for gender mainstreaming;
- ◆ build and promote the advocacy efforts of a Gender Management System;
- ◆ keep women's concerns high on the national agenda and bring more women's voices into the national policy-making process;
- ◆ create opportunities to address national priorities in the context of international and Commonwealth plans of action by sponsoring roundtables, workshops, strategy meetings and news bulletins to coincide with such events as International Women's Day; and
- ◆ build a partnership with the media that will engender media sensitivity and ensure sustainable access by women's groups, Commonwealth Broadcasting Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs to the media and their technology. Long-term media programmes which consistently raise awareness of gender issues are preferable to short-term, sporadic interventions.

## Monitoring and evaluation of the Gender Action Plan

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The Gender Action Plan includes clear and measurable goals for gender equality, including sectoral targets, as well as concrete strategies to reach these goals. Once the plan has been developed, it can serve as a benchmark in tracking the country's success in achieving the goals identified. Monitoring and evaluation require the use of impact indicators to measure the outputs and performance of all government ministries and departments, and track the allocation of resources.

The Gender Management Team, in collaboration with the National Women's Machinery, should play a primary role in monitoring and evaluation. This will enable the range of representative GMS stakeholders to remain involved in the process and to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan on an ongoing basis.

The National Women's Machinery, as the institutional home for the Management Information System, will be responsible for overseeing the collection and analysis of data on key gender-sensitive indicators which, in the first instance, should be reported quarterly to the Inter-Ministerial Committee, and annually to Parliament.

Effective monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming involves the following areas:

- ◆ re-evaluating the structures and functions of the Gender Management System;
- ◆ reviewing key gender-sensitive indicators in all sectors, especially in the areas of macroeconomics, political decision-making, and the legal and social status of women in the national context, as well as health, education, agriculture and other key sectors;
- ◆ fulfilling reporting obligations under CEDAW and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development; and
- ◆ feeding findings into the next planning cycle.

The information requirements for monitoring and evaluation should be met by the full range of stakeholders in the GMS: the National Women's Machinery, the Gender Management Team, Gender Focal Points, government ministries and non-state organisations. The Management Information System's role is to co-ordinate the necessary information flows, to enable the Gender

Management Team to collate and synthesise the results into an evaluation of the progress of the GMS, of gender mainstreaming within government, and of the advance towards gender equality and equity in the national context.

### *Evaluating the GMS*

This is largely the responsibility of the Gender Management Team. Questions that need to be asked include:

- ◆ Are all the GMS structures in place and functioning correctly?
- ◆ How often do they meet?
- ◆ Are the desired results being achieved and do they satisfy the indicators of effectiveness?
- ◆ To what extent are these results furthering the long-term goals of the GMS?

The information should be collected by the team leader and reviewed with the team. If progress falls short of what was planned, corrective actions should be taken.

During the setting up of the GMS, provision should be made for external evaluation. This should be repeated at regular intervals, perhaps every three to five years, in line with the national development planning cycle. Evaluation should deal with all aspects of programme preparation, design, background, objectives and results, assumptions and risks, implementation, operation and impact. Recommendations should be made concerning either the programme itself or similar programmes in future.

## **Mainstreaming Gender in the National Development Plan and Sectoral Ministries**

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The following schema provides guidelines on methods to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective in each stage of the planning cycle. The guidelines can be applied to planning cycles in all sectors, and should be applied in particular to the National Development Plan.

Planning cycles can generally be seen as having five stages, as shown in Figure 2. The inclusion of a gender perspective in the different stages of each planning cycle will help to create gender-aware policies, plans, programmes and projects.

## Using gender analysis

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The GMS emphasises the importance of gender analysis in government decision-making, procedures and actions. This involves analysis of the differential impact on women and men of the National Development Plan and other government policies, plans and programmes.

In the first instance, gender analysis should be undertaken by the National Women's Machinery and by Gender Focal Points in all ministries and departments. Their findings will be reported to the GMS Management Information System and acted upon by the Gender Management Team on an ongoing basis.

Through its various resource materials, the Gender Management System Series of publications provides a set of guidelines for gender analysis and mainstreaming within specific government ministries and sectors. These resource materials are underpinned by an understanding of the potentially differential effects of government policies, programmes and legislation on women and men that are often obscured by the assumption that policies are gender neutral. Effective policy development, planning, implementation and evaluation is based on accurate information and incisive analysis of the heterogeneity of the people involved in and affected by government policy.

Particular emphasis is placed on gender analysis of:

- ◆ macroeconomic policy and national budgetary processes;
- ◆ development planning;
- ◆ constitutional and legal provisions;
- ◆ public sector reform and public service personnel management; and
- ◆ sectoral policies.

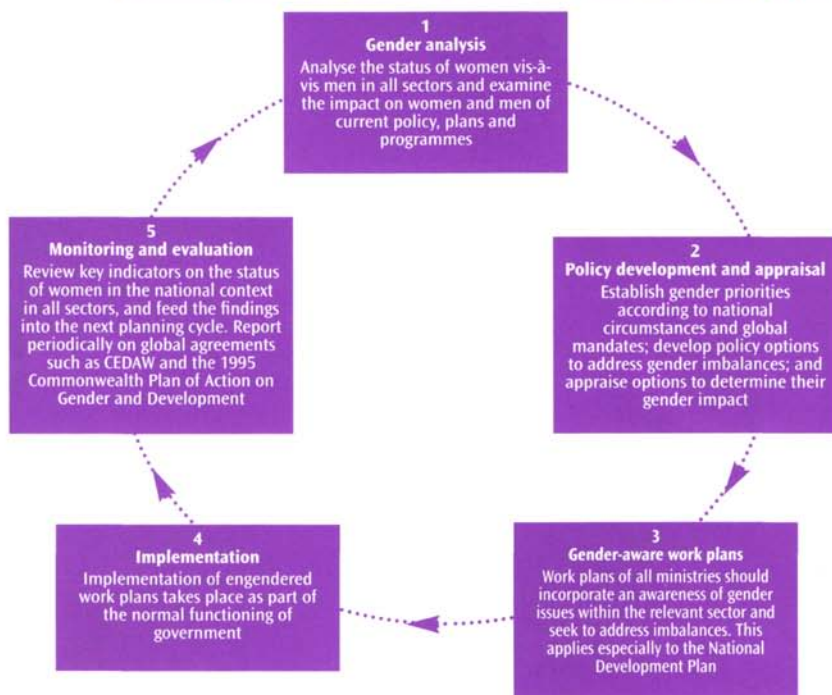
## Using GMS structures for policy development

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The challenge of the GMS is to help close the gap between commitments to gender equality articulated in gender policy statements and the full attainment of these goals. An overall framework for gender-aware policy development is provided by the commitments, obligations, and guidelines of CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development. The Management Information

System seeks to ensure that government policy, programmes and legislation reflect the commitments embodied in these international agreements. Information about globally and regionally agreed principles, frameworks and strategies for achieving gender equality will therefore be a central resource of the GMS.

Figure 3 Promoting Gender-Awareness at Each Stage of the Planning Cycle



The ongoing participation and input of representative stakeholders is a key element in the making of gender-sensitive policy. It is through partnerships nurtured by the GMS structures that ownership can be developed and political commitment maintained and translated into resource allocation or other administrative decisions, including securing the accountability of key stakeholders. If policy is not formulated through a participatory process involving key decision-makers and social actors within and

across sectors, there may be insufficient commitment to its implementation and goal attainment.

One of the key roles of the Gender Management Team is to guide policy development. The development of a gender-aware National Development Plan and a Gender Action Plan should be undertaken with the full consultation of all stakeholders, particularly those in the Ministries of Planning and Finance.

The GMS also provides a means of integrating gender concerns into sectoral policy-making processes, an essential component of any serious attempt at gender mainstreaming. The members of the Gender Management Team, assisted by their respective Gender Focal Points, should strive to ensure that policy-makers in sectoral line ministries are gender-aware and, if necessary, receive gender training.

The national development plan sets the overall macro-economic objectives, sectoral emphases and budgetary allocations for the country. Gender planning should not be seen as a separate, parallel process to mainstream development planning, but should be designed to reorient development planning such that it addresses the needs of women and poor people generally through an economically, physically, environmentally and socially sustainable process in a progressive manner (Taylor, 1999).

### Box 3

#### Stakeholder Involvement in Policy Development

Special efforts should be made to include minority or marginalised groups in policy consultations. In many countries, grassroots women and their organisations form the backbone of the productive sector but are frequently and easily overlooked in the formulation of such plans. Steps to involve them should include:

- ✦ workshops at the community level, such that women's situations and time constraints are taken into consideration;
- ✦ support to women's organisations and local NGOs in the form of resources, capacity development and advocacy skills;
- ✦ use of local languages;
- ✦ use of participatory processes and networking; and
- ✦ ongoing collaboration with NGOs active at the local level.

## **Gender-aware work plans**

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The GMS structures and mechanisms are designed to facilitate an integrative approach to gender planning. Through the Gender Management Team and the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee, key decision-makers and stakeholders in the development of the National Development Plan and macro-economic and sectoral policies and plans will be brought together on a regular basis. One outcome of the implementation of the GMS should be that the National Development Plan and the individual work plans of all government ministries should be gender-aware and work to redress gender imbalances.

## **Monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Plan and sectoral work plans**

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The monitoring and evaluation of the National Development Plan and sectoral plans should incorporate a gender perspective. This requires the use of gender-sensitive indicators to compare actual achievements at various levels against the objectives, as well as qualitative analysis of the gender impact of plans, programmes and projects, on both practical and strategic gender needs. The findings of such monitoring and evaluation exercises should be made available to the Management Information System, to enable cross-sectoral analysis.

### *Feeding findings into next planning cycle*

Monitoring and evaluation should not be seen as isolated activities that exist solely for the purpose of determining how successful a policy, programme or project has been. The findings of monitoring and evaluation exercises should feed back into the policy analysis and development phase of the next cycle. The Gender Management System, by virtue of its network of participants connecting the National Women's Machinery to other government ministries, provides links by which such feedback can be established.

### *Reporting on CEDAW and the Commonwealth Plan of Action*

International agreements such as CEDAW and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development include mechanisms for governments to report to the respective intergovernmental organisations on a range of gender-related indicators. This process helps governments to retain a focus on the

gender issue and maintain the thrust towards gender equality. The fulfilment of reporting requirements under CEDAW provides an opportunity for governments to examine progress in such areas as empowerment and political decision-making, violence against women and women's human rights, and legal and cultural matters.