

GUIDANCE NOTE

APPLYING THE GENDER- RESPONSIVE LOCAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT TOOL



Inclusive and Equitable Local Development



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Inclusive and Equitable Local Development



UN WOMEN

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ACRONYMS

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
IELD	Inclusive and Equitable Local Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
LEA	Local economic assessment
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

1.

WHAT IS A GENDER-RESPONSIVE LOCAL ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT?

Gender-inclusive economic development enhances the capacities and opportunities of all people (men and women) to engage in development. A gender-responsive local economic assessment (LEA) is a review of how a given locality responds to gender dynamics and inequalities. These may be vested within systems, policies and practices that drive local economic development.

This guidance note summarizes the Gender-Responsive LEA Tool, detailing a four-stage methodology.

In taking a gender perspective, LEAs highlight gender-related successes, gaps, threats and opportunities that define a locality's contribution to the regional and national economy. They present qualitative and quantitative data and analysis drawn from existing reports, national policy documents and local data where available.

A comprehensive assessment is informed by stakeholder analysis conducted through workshops and

interviews with key individuals with knowledge and experience of the main gender issues impacting the local economy. Women and men (jointly and/or separately, as appropriate) and groups with knowledge of local gender dynamics and their influence on the local economy offer insights. These touch on issues such as economic sectors where women and men are concentrated or systemic barriers to women's economic participation.

The Gender-Responsive LEA Tool was developed under the global programme on Inclusive and Equitable Local Development (IELD), a joint initiative between the

BOX 1:

The Gender-Responsive LEA Tool offers guidance on:

- The role of gender analysis in establishing the foundation for a gender-responsive local economic development strategy;
- The sequencing and stages of an LEA as part of a gender-responsive process to develop the strategy;
- The types of data required to conduct a gender-responsive LEA;
- Data collection and assessment techniques that provide meaningful gender inputs to an assessment;
- External factors that affect the competitive position of a locality from a gender perspective;
- Undertaking a gender-responsive SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis; and
- Measures to foster consensus on critical gender issues affecting a gender-responsive local economic development plan and women's economic empowerment.

United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

The three-agency partnership stresses a strategic approach to achieving the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), using each entity's comparative advantages in gender equality and women's empowerment programming. The IELD initiative seeks to address underlying structural impediments that prevent women and men from entering the economy.

It emphasizes local public and private investments in women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on unlocking domestic capital.

The following pages provide step-by-step guidance on using the Gender-Responsive LEA Tool to assess local economies and implement concrete activities that embed gender into local economic development. Ultimately, assessments should promote transparency and accountability, and enhance development outcomes through strengthened collaboration between civil society, local governments and the private sector.

2.

RATIONALE FOR THIS GUIDANCE NOTE

In any locality, the needs, priorities and opinions of both women and men are essential factors in the success of a local economic development strategy aimed at creating decent work and economic opportunities for all. A central thrust of such a strategy should be ensuring that all people equitably benefit from social change and economic growth, and that gender inequalities are eliminated. In assisting local practitioners involved in gender-responsive local economic development to use the Gender-Responsive LEA Tool, this guidance note supports a wider conversation around the quality and reach of local economic development.

This guidance note provides one effective method to conduct a gender-responsive LEA. It does not reflect all possible approaches.

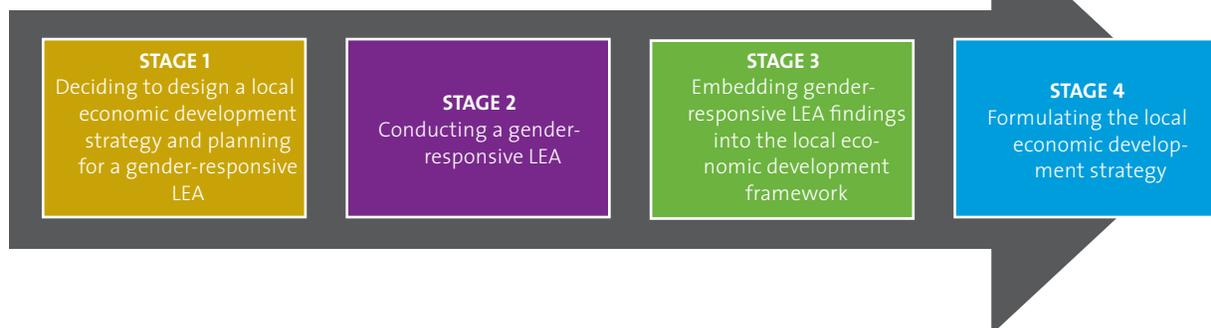
The guidance note provides a brief orientation and outline of good practices in integrating gender in LEAs. It is intended for individuals commissioning or leading an assessment. Using it will enable practitioners to understand:

- Why gender equality should be pursued at the local level;
- The explicit and implicit barriers to women's participation in the local economy; and
- Strategies for addressing gender concerns through local economic development.

The note helps identify and address the different and often complex needs and priorities of women and men. It supports women's full participation at every stage of local economic development, and the achievement of locally defined gender equality objectives and outcomes.

The note should prove especially useful for those who have not conducted a gender-responsive LEA before. At the same time, it is not a blueprint for an assessment. Instead, it provides guidance and advice on selected issues that are often most relevant to the progressive realization of gender-responsive local economic development. Because the tool will be implemented in different local environments, the guidance note stresses in-built flexibilities that should make it adaptable.

A gender-responsive LEA in the strategy development cycle



3.

WHO CAN USE THE GUIDANCE NOTE?

Intended as a step-by-step guide for local planning units and officials, the guidance note helps gather the qualitative and quantitative data necessary to design effective local economic development strategies, including as the basis for gender-equitable decision-making and planning.

Other users may include United Nations country office staff, local government authorities, development practitioners, technical experts from international and donor organizations, and other individuals tasked with developing inclusive gender-responsive LEAs.

Non-governmental organizations, business leaders, investors, civil society leaders and representatives, and members of community-based organizations may also draw on the guidance note.

Gender-responsive growth: some realities

- Women's economic empowerment is central to realizing women's rights and gender equality.
- Empowering women in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work are key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment 2016).
- When more women work, economies grow. Women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, and increases economic diversification and income equality, in addition to other positive development outcomes (International Monetary Fund 2018). Gender gaps cost economies some 15 per cent of gross domestic product (Cuberes and Teignier 2016, Ferrant and Kolev 2016).
- Women are more likely to be unemployed than men (UN Women 2018).
- Women bear disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work (ILO 2017).
- Compared to their male counterparts, women farmers have significantly less access to, control over, and ownership of land and other productive assets. In family farming, they are overrepresented as unpaid family workers with high levels of economic dependence (FAO 2016).

4.

CONDUCTING A GENDER-RESPONSIVE LEA

STAGE 1: Deciding to design a local economic development strategy and planning for a gender-responsive LEA

Stage 1 is the most important phase in developing a gender-responsive LEA.

For localities that already have a local economic development strategy, the effort will help identify probable gaps by categorically highlighting:

- The gender-responsive dimensions that the gender-responsive LEA proposes; and
- How a gender-responsive assessment can enrich the current local economic development strategy.

For localities without a strategy, the tool offers steps to design one that is gender responsive. The decision to develop a strategy typically involves the following steps.

STEP 1: Decide to design a local economic development strategy

A local economic development strategy for a small regional city or locality may take three to four months to prepare. No false expectations should be conveyed about the benefits and outcomes of the process. The assessment should respond to clear objectives highlighted in the country's national development plan or strategy, align with the strategic goals of key funding agencies, and be in step with the local development plan and global frameworks such as the SDGs. A first step is to establish a coalition and secure buy-in at the highest level to foster commitment to and leadership of the gender-responsive LEA. The decision to undertake the assessment must be owned by all stakeholders.

Key influencers and partners who should be engaged to ensure their support for the overall process and follow-up may include, among others: donors, mayors, women's representatives, local council members, private companies, financial institutions and utility companies.

STEP 2: Prepare a concept note on the state of gender equality in the local economy; identify goals and priorities of the gender-responsive LEA

The concept note¹ should be focused (about one or two pages) and delineate the rationale for the assessment. It should explicitly outline the underlying benefits of gender equality to the local economy in terms of job growth, household resilience, enterprise development, gender-inclusive local growth opportunities, and engendered access to and ownership of factors of production by women, ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups. In essence, the concept note ought to highlight opportunities for locally driven and gender-informed growth that leaves no one behind.

The concept note could include:

- Implementing entity and partners

¹ Preparation of the concept note is subject to available capacity or the requirements of key influencers. If it is not required, it can be skipped.

- Background on capacity gaps and needs
- Existing legislation and specific mandates
- Elaboration of how the assessment will inform the local development plan (if available) and/or the national development plan, as well as alignment with the SDGs and other global frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- An objective that makes specific reference to gender
- Expected accomplishments under measurable outcomes that relate to the objective(s)
- Indicators of achievement
- Main activities
- A timeline

STEP 3: Develop terms of reference to conduct a gender-responsive LEA²

If standard terms of reference for the gender-responsive LEA are not available, then they should be developed. They can include:

- Background, purpose and use of the gender-responsive assessment
- Context and overview of the gender-responsive assessment
- Scope of the assessment
- Existing information sources
- Gender-responsive assessment methods and tools
- Expected products from the assessment

STEP 4: Establish an assessment team

Selecting the leader of the assessment team should be undertaken carefully given the technical nature of the exercise. Ultimately, the goal should be to have a roster of individual consultants who can conduct assessments in different contexts. The leader should have advanced formal training in gender and expertise in:

- Conducting multidisciplinary gender analysis, including on socioeconomic, political and cultural issues
- Conducting/leading local economic development processes, and familiarity with related planning methodologies
- Adopting a gender-responsive, participatory approach to an LEA
- Leading in a responsive and balanced way
- Issues around women's participation in the assessment and the broader local economic development strategy-making process
- Working with whole-of-government processes

After selecting the team leader, a core team for the assessment can be established. It may include:

- Representatives from relevant ministries, departments and agencies as well as supporting entities (UNCDF, UN Women, UNDP)
- Bilateral donors
- Civil society

To ensure cohesive planning, the team should not have more than 12 members. It needs to agree on roles and responsibilities and how internal team communication will occur.

STEP 5: Collect and compile secondary data

Undertaking a comprehensive desk review will help provide context for the locality under assessment. A review may look at existing national gender policies, local gender mainstreaming activities, reports by other actors involved in gendered growth, Demographic and Health Survey reports, national census reports, central government allocations, reports from the national gender machinery, and UN and World Bank reports, among other sources. Newspaper stories and Internet searches are options for anecdotal evidence. The desk review can shape questions to ask, the identification of stakeholders, the choice of an assessment tool, and the timeframe for the assessment, among other elements.

² This step should be undertaken only if there are no standard terms of reference developed by the IELD team.

STEP 6: Compile a list of stakeholders/ conduct a stakeholder mapping

Based on the desk review and its findings on the local economy and gender imperatives, an initial workshop involving important stakeholders should be organized. It can brainstorm ideas and identify key issues, barriers and risks in terms of gender-responsive local economic development. Such stakeholders may include: trade unions, local chambers of commerce, employers' associations, industry bodies, workers' cooperatives, associations of the self-employed, financial sector associations, women entrepreneurs and representatives of public institutions, among others.³

STEP 7: Undertake a gender analysis of the locality

Depending on the issues identified from the desk review and meetings with stakeholders, the following tools can be used to conduct a gender analysis: value chain analysis, daily activity analysis, mobility maps, appreciative inquiry, activities analysis, case studies and constraint analysis. Most of these tools have been developed by organizations undertaking similar assessments. Gender

analysis should provide a baseline understanding of the “state of gender” in the locality. It is generally undertaken using available secondary literature and informed desk reviews. Some potential tools for analysis have budget implications that may exceed local capacities. These should be assessed and understood at the start.

STEP 8: Identify gender-responsive indicators

Collecting both qualitative and quantitative information will build a detailed understanding of the role of gender in the local economy, and gender-related opportunities and weaknesses impacting local development. Measurement indicators should be chosen accordingly to provide insights into the contribution of women and men in the local economy, and the enabling environment for local economic development. To the extent possible, disaggregated data should be used to inform specific indicators at the local, regional and national levels. Indicators should also be consistent with other global indicators and frameworks such as the SDG framework and CEDAW.⁴ They should conform to standard requirements for all indicators to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely).

Stage 2: Conducting the assessment

The assessment can be conducted using several methods, including SWOT analysis, key informant interviews, observation, workshops, case studies and targeted surveys. Case studies can help dramatize and highlight the problems of an individual business, woman entrepreneur, sector, etc., and give the assessment a compelling face and a voice.

STEP 1: Assess the enabling environment

Developing a local assessment framework involves creating a matrix covering key issues that the gender-responsive assessment will consider. This can also guide the selection of baseline indicators on issues such as:

- The extent of women's leadership and participation
- Governance and women's representation
- Data availability and sex-disaggregation
- Civil society actors and advocacy

- National policies and laws (discriminatory or enabling)
- Economic opportunities and access by women and men
- The state of key social services
- Land rights and ownership
- Gender-responsive resource allocation
- Any societal/cultural practices that affect the participation of women and men in different aspects of the local economy

Defining an environment that fully enables gender equality requires a rigorous appraisal that comprehensively captures all main themes; these will vary by country and locality.

³ A full list of stakeholders can be found in the full report on the Gender-Responsive LEA Tool.

STEP 2: Assess the local economy

A comprehensive analysis of the local economy provides useful insights that can inform assessment of the level of gender-responsiveness and gauge preparedness for gender-informed local development. Several types of analysis include:

- Demographic analysis of the local population
- Economic performance analysis to show how the locality performs relative to the region or nation
- Economic structure analysis to provide insights into major sectors, the main goods and services produced, and fast-growing sectors and the participation of women and men in them
- Human capital/employment and training resource analysis to indicate the state of employment and human capital development
- Shift share analysis to help assess the extent to which employment and gender in the local economy reflect national trends, to analyse and forecast regional changes in employment, and to define why women's employment may not have increased as fast as men's
- Location quotient analysis to quantify how concentrated a particular industry cluster, occupation or demographic group is in a local area or region compared to the country

STAGE 3: Embedding gender-responsive LEA findings into the existing local economic development framework

STEP 1: Prepare a draft assessment report

A draft assessment report should capture all issues defining the gender-responsiveness of the local economy. The report should highlight the main barriers to gender responsiveness and the inclusion of marginalized groups (e.g., ethnic minorities, internally displaced persons, the elderly, migrants). It should succinctly highlight critical statistics, case studies, the potential contributions of both women and men in a gender-responsive environment, the latent comparative advantage of the local economy, and opportunities within the regional context. Other important dimensions include aspects

STEP 3: Conduct a business-enabling environment survey

A business-enabling environment survey provides a sharper focus on the local business environment. For instance, it can provide vital insights into challenges faced by local businesses when dealing with local and other tiers of government. Critical issues comprise:

- Why businesses in the locality succeed or fail
- The types of businesses that exist or have relocated out of or into the area, and for what reasons
- Typical businesses owned by women and men
- The range of and access to business development services that impact local business growth
- Regional comparative advantage

Survey questions should be guided by the local and national context.

STEP 4: Analyse gender-responsive LEA data

Analysing different data streams (collected during stage 1, steps 5 and 8) can entail diverse methods depending on the tool used. A discussion of potential methods is provided in the longer report on the Gender-Responsive LEA Tool.

of women's and men's employment, an appraisal of the local political economy, how the business environment nurtures investment by marginalized groups, and the state of small and medium enterprises.

STEP 2: Build consensus, consolidate stakeholder input

A stakeholder workshop can build consensus around the themes emerging from the gender-responsive LEA, based on the draft assessment report. The goal of the workshop is also to fill information gaps, with feedback then incorporated into consolidated findings.

STEP 3: **Prepare a final gender-responsive LEA report**

The team should consolidate all findings in the final gender-responsive LEA report, reflecting all thoughts

and insights on different aspects of the local economy. The report should include the different assessment methods used, the inputs from different stakeholders, any definitive results relating to the assessment, and a synopsis of the role of gender in the local economy with results from the different analyses.

STAGE 4: Formulating the local economic development strategy

STEP 1: **Embed findings within the local economic development strategy**

This is the ultimate purpose of a gender-responsive LEA. After the final LEA report has been prepared, its key recommendations should inform the drafting of the local economic development strategy. By this time, local economic development officers or local government team members should have had opportunities to begin inputting findings into the local economic development planning process.

addressed. If there are any new or emerging issues, these should be included if possible or noted for inclusion at either the review or in future local economic development frameworks.

The objective is to generate across-the-board consensus on all major findings of the gender-responsive LEA report. Stakeholder approval is a political process, particularly if some stakeholders feel the report may not reflect their inputs. Standard requirements for confidentiality and anonymity must be maintained while presenting the final report to stakeholders and partners.

STEP 2: **Finalize the draft local economic development strategy**

Based on key findings from the gender-responsive LEA, local economic development planners involved at the beginning of the assessment (Stage 1) should identify programmes and projects that represent quick wins or “low-hanging fruits” that can, in the short or medium term, model the results and benefits of gender-responsiveness in the local development process.

STEP 4: **Launch the gender-responsive local economic development strategy**

To further ensure that the assessment findings inform local economic development, review the checklist of critical questions guiding the strategy formulation process. Once gender-responsive elements have been included, the final local economic development strategy can be launched.

STEP 3: **Work with stakeholders to approve a final local economic development strategy with inputs from the gender-responsive LEA**

This step entails introducing key stakeholders to the final local economic development strategy with the full incorporation of findings from the gender-responsive LEA. The assessment team should ensure that all issues raised in the validation workshop have been

CHECKLIST

	Yes	No	N/A
Stage 1: Deciding to develop a local economic development strategy and planning for a local assessment			
Has a decision been made to undertake a gender-responsive LEA?			
Has a concept note on the assessment been produced?			
Have all major stakeholders been briefed on the assessment process?			
Do all stakeholders understand what gender-responsiveness means?			
Have local systems offered additional support?			
Is funding for the gender-responsive LEA available?			
Have the strategic vision, goals and priorities of the assessment been clarified to stakeholders?			
Has a liaison to the assessment been identified?			
Has the gender assessment team (including the team leader) been identified?			
Have the terms of reference been developed?			
Has a list of stakeholders been compiled?			
Has the gathering of secondary data (desk reviews, document compilation, etc.) commenced?			
Have key informants been identified?			
Has gender analysis of the locality been undertaken?			
Have tools for the gender analysis been identified?			
Have gender-responsive indicators been identified?			
Has an inception workshop been completed?			
Has the assessment team been trained to conduct the assessment?			
Stage 2: Conducting a gender-responsive LEA			
Have we identified enabling issues in the local environment?			
Have stakeholders been identified and categorized (male, female, both)?			
Have methods/tools been identified and selected?			
Are data sex-disaggregated/gender-disaggregated?			
Has data analysis been completed?			
Has the gender-responsive LEA been conducted?			
Has a business environment/attitude survey been completed?			
Has a SWOT analysis been conducted?			
Have stakeholder workshops/focus groups been conducted during data collection?			
Has a region-wide analysis been conducted?			
Have the location quotient and shift share analysis been used?			
Do we have an idea of employment patterns and gender imperatives?			
Stage 3: Embedding gender-responsive LEA findings into the local economic development framework			
Has the draft report been produced?			
Has a validation workshop been held with stakeholders?			
Have comments and inputs been adopted?			
Has the final gender-responsive LEA been produced?			
Have the findings been embedded in local economic development concepts and priorities?			
Stage 4: Formulating the local economic development strategy			
Has the local economic development strategy been finalized?			
Have stakeholders approved the final local economic development concept with gender-responsive LEA inputs?			
Has local economic development strategy formulation commenced?			

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**UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY
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GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND
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TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON
MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.**

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.



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