Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool

Towards Transformation in Development and Climate Resilience Programs and Research – Facilitation Guide

Water For Women

Working Towards Transformation in Inclusive WASH

Australian Aid

GEDSI SAT at a glance

Who is this tool for?	Program managers, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) advisers, researchers and any member of staff in your program interested in improving GEDSI practice
What is this tool for?	To support individual and collective reflective practice among staff on the extent and quality of gender equality, disability and social inclusion work in their development programs and organisation
How is the tool delivered?	Through workshops facilitated in-person or, if circumstances require, online
Who should use this tool?	Anyone working in development programs or research who wants to improve (GEDSI) practice
Who needs to be involved in the process?	• A contact point (CP) within your organisation/team/project to guide the process internally • Staff and managers from across your organisation/team/project (maximum 25 people) • An experienced facilitator, with GEDSI expertise, ideally someone external so all relevant staff can participate and to guide impartial processes and outcomes
How long does the process take?	• For agencies implementing programs: 3-day workshop plus any preparatory meetings as needed (for example, to socialise terminology used within the guidance) • For research and learning organisations: 2-day workshop plus any preparatory meetings as needed (for example, to socialise terminology used within the guidance)

What is the self-assessment process?

Preparation
- Decide who will lead and participate
- Brief participants
- Desk review and interviews (optional)

Delivery
- Guided workshops
- Participants score GEDSI work using the tool
- Desk review and interviews (optional)

Validation, reflection and planning
- Validate findings
- Plan actions to strengthen GEDSI

Background

The *Towards Transformation in Gender Equality, Disability and Social inclusion Self-Assessment Tool* (GEDSI SAT) was originally developed collaboratively by Water for Women (WfW) and Fund partners for use within WfW and by the wider water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector. It was trialled by WfW with SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) in Bhutan in 2019. Over the life of WfW, SAT facilitators from Asia (Pakistan, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Cambodia) and from the Pacific (Papua New Guinea) have been trained on the SAT and promoted its use in their organisations and with other Fund partners, in so doing strengthening the SAT through local adaptations. In 2021 the SAT benefitted from further improvements due to the Sanitation Learning Hub (SLH) incorporating the SAT into its gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) audit process.

A SAT reflections workshop, attended by the WfW partner GEDSI advisors who became a cohort of SAT facilitators, was held in July 2024. The following benefits of using the SAT with their teams, project stakeholders and partners were identified:

- demystifying GEDSI concepts
- supporting empowerment, learning and accountability
- highlighting the importance of GEDSI disaggregated data
- strengthening capacity and collaboration for GEDSI and transformative processes
- strengthening planning mechanisms for more effective and targeted interventions
- galvanising support for and commitment to GEDSI.

The WfW GEDSI Advisors also noted that the SAT enabled project teams and stakeholders to:

- move from learning to action on GEDSI issues
- strengthen partnerships, networks and intersectional understanding
- support partners to strengthen their GEDSI practice, including government stakeholders
- increase allocation of resources to GEDSI within government WASH programs
- achieve more inclusive recruitment and staffing in organisations.

In 2024–25 the SAT was redeveloped from a WASH development tool into a cross-sectoral tool with an explicit climate resilience lens. Redevelopment occurred via an iterative process of consultation and inputs from a WfW SAT working group, which consisted of organisational partners who had co-designed and delivered the original WASH-oriented SAT. The revised cross-sectoral SAT has been strengthened significantly, informed by the experience and expertise of the in-country GEDSI advisors and in-country application of the SAT. A group of 'critical friends' from a range of sectors reviewed the redeveloped tool within their discrete areas of expertise before this revised GEDSI SAT was finalised in April 2025.

This revised edition of the SAT represents the culmination of years of comprehensive collaboration from and among WfW partners, as well as experts from a range of development sectors. It is grounded in locally led approaches and deep learning.

Notes on language

A wide range of stakeholders were involved and consulted in the creation of this GEDSI SAT. We aim to reflect those diverse voices within this facilitation guide, while ensuring language accessibility to a global audience of diverse users. We acknowledge the changing nature of language used in the GEDSI space and recognise that terminology used throughout the GEDSI SAT reflects a point in time and perspective, and that language may change as our understanding and practice grows and deepens. Equally important is the need for local adaptation of language and terminology that are appropriate to the context of the sector program and research. A critical area that reflects this change over time within the Fund and more widely is the language used for LGBTQIA+ / diverse SOGIESC communities; please see the specific language note (by Emily Dwyer of Edge Effect) below.

Language use for LGBTQIA+ / diverse SOGIESC people

The world is diverse and complex, and therein lies much of its beauty as well as its challenges. Working within and being comfortable with diversity and complexity, rather than relying upon convenient simplifications, will enhance the relevance and value of our policies and programs. Stay curious, stay open, and always be respectful.

On a global level, the following terms are used widely for sexual and gender diverse communities, and may have different connotations in different settings.

- **LGBTQIA+**: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and Asexual, with the + representing more identities. This term can be empowering for some but limiting for others. There are many variations of the abbreviation, and it's important to understand their meanings and implications.
- **SOGIESC**: Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression and Sex Characteristics. All people have SOGIESC, whether it is considered usual or 'diverse', and those characteristics should never be the basis for discrimination. While less familiar than LGBTQIA+, SOGIESC is more inclusive as all of the diversity within and beyond the LGBTQIA+ acronym falls within it.
- **SGM:** Sexual and Gender Minorities. Some people use this term as an alternative to LGBTQIA+ or SOGIESC and consider it to be more accessible. However, it is best avoided unless it is common in your operating context. Some advocates argue that positioning LGBTQIA+ people as minorities is harmful and can be perceived as minimising their needs and rights.

For the purposes of the GEDSI SAT, we suggest using LGBTQIA+ or diverse SOGIESC.

Most importantly, use the same language and recommendations as local rights holder organisations working with LGBTQIA+ communities in your country context.

Four important principles to guide this work

Below are four important principles to guide your work with LGBTQIA+ people and communities in your facilitation of the SAT:

- **Understand that language choices, matter**. Local choices may be made for safety, politics, inclusion or familiarity. Language about LGBTQIA+ people changes over time, and some terms may have negative or outdated meanings. Some words may be reclaimed by some people, but not others. Always be mindful and learn what is appropriate and respectful in your context.
- **Social norms matter**. Understanding and dismantling the social norms that perpetuate discrimination, violence, and exclusion against LGBTQIA+ people is crucial. Underpinning exclusionary social norms are heteronormativity, cisnormativity, gender binarism, and endosexism (refer to Appendix A – Glossary of GEDSI definitions). These refer to assumptions or beliefs that everyone's SOGIESC should be limited to a few options that deny the rights and existence of LGBTQIA+ people.
- **Respect diversity**. Many sexual and gender identities may not slot neatly into the familiar LGBTQIA+ spectrum. Be mindful that cultural identities can have long histories that don't always match common categories.
- **Remember - intention is key**. The most important thing is to be respectful and willing to learn. Many LGBTQIA+ people will share their language, pronouns and priorities if you are respectfully curious and open-minded.

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Abbreviations

CP	Contact Point
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GEDSI	Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion
GRB	Gender-Responsive Budgeting
HR	Human Resources
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and Asexual, + more identities
OPD	Organisation of People with Disabilities
PNG	Papua New Guinea
RHO	Rights Holder Organisation
SAT	Self-Assessment Tool
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SGVB	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SGM	Sexual and Gender Minorities
SNV	SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
SOGIESC	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics
TEK	Traditional Ecological Knowledge
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WfW	Water for Women
WRO	Women's Rights Organisation
VRAP	Validation, Reflection and Action Planning

Introduction

This guide is for managers, gender equality disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) advisers, researchers and other staff across sectors who want to improve GEDSI practice in their programs and organisations. It details the specific roles and responsibilities of the contact point (CP), facilitator, participants and supporters of the self-assessment process.

The GEDSI Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) involves a facilitated self-assessment process. Ideally, one or two independent/external GEDSI advisers (facilitators) will help facilitate your organisation through the process. The facilitators should be experienced and understand the sector/s in which the project is operating. They will work with key staff members from your organisation, ideally the GEDSI staff member/s or staff member/s within the GEDSI portfolio, acting as the CP.

This guide is for the facilitators and CP, not for participants. The facilitators and CP will share information (including some of the appendices) with participants prior to the first workshop to prepare them for the process. The process will review and identify specific, context-appropriate approaches and strategies that will support GEDSI transformative practice and outcomes for project implementation and research programs, and within your organisation.

An intentional focus on GEDSI is key to sustainable and effective development programs. A central commitment to the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 13 (combat climate change and its impacts) is to 'Leave No One Behind'. Key to this concept is prioritising actions that benefit and empower women (including women in all their diversity), the poorest, people with disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and Asexual, + more identities (LGBTQIA+) people, Indigenous peoples and the most marginalised people in communities. There is ample evidence that engaging women and marginalised people results in better development outcomes, including in relation to combating the worst effects of climate change and supporting community resilience building initiatives.

In terms of climate change, we know that women and people from marginalised groups experience disproportionate impacts that can exacerbate their vulnerabilities and inequalities without intentional and targeted strategies to reduce their structural disadvantage. This is why deeper transformative change – not simply a focus on vulnerabilities – is needed. By affirming and being guided by women and other marginalised people's lived experience and knowledge, we understand the strengths brought to climate resilience solutions in decision-making at multiple levels – household, community and institutional.

Critical to transformative action for climate change is supporting climate justice, which is about addressing the ethical and political issues related to climate change. It recognises that climate change disproportionately affects marginalised and vulnerable populations, who are often the least responsible for causing it. Climate justice seeks to ensure that the burdens and benefits of climate change and its mitigation are distributed equitably. Key aspects of climate justice include protecting human rights, acknowledging historical responsibility and supporting inclusive and equitable decision-making.

As development practitioners and researchers, we have a responsibility to improve GEDSI practice in every sector in which we work. Many development programs can be a critical entry point for promoting equity, agency and leadership for women in all their diversity and marginalised groups more broadly.

The SAT is based on the GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum approach (Appendix B). The standards for scoring are based on this continuum (Figure 1), which recognises that the more deeply the program and organisation focuses on intentionally addressing intersectionalities of marginalisation, exclusion and discrimination for women and for different marginalised groups, the more transformative it is. Organisations and programs wishing to be at the transformative end of the spectrum need to apply deep GEDSI thinking and learning within as well as across their programming.

Figure 1. GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum

Materials included in this facilitation guide:

- ☑ Handouts for participants prior to the first workshop:
  - a glossary of GEDSI definitions as a reference for facilitator and participant use (Appendix A)
  - a list of domains and corresponding criteria and standards (Appendix C).
- ☑ GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum explanatory notes (Appendix B)
- ☑ Self-Assessment Tool worksheet for participants (Appendix D).
- ☑ GEDSI Action Plan template (Appendix E).
- ☑ Self-Assessment Tool results sharing report: Template for facilitators (Appendix F).
- ☑ Online facilitation methodology (Appendix G).

In setting up the self-assessment process, the following should be considered:

- ☐ Managing issues of safety and accessibility
- ☐ Reflective processes for identifying and lowering risks and for learning from and improving the self-assessment process
- ☐ Options to allow for different organisational and programmatic contexts
- ☐ Delivery mode – the current tool can be delivered either in person (the preferred delivery mode), or virtually if a SAT facilitator is based in a distant region or country (and travel budget is not available). See Appendix G for further guidance on the online delivery mode.

The SNV Bhutan team undertaking the SAT pilot with Water for Women GESI advisers
Credit: Joanna Mott, February 2019

1. Overview of the GEDSI SAT

1.1 Purpose of the self-assessment

The facilitated self-assessment:

- provides an opportunity to discuss and reflect on current strengths and how to improve processes that drive positive change in GEDSI throughout your programs and organisation
- empowers your project and organisation to measure progress towards transformative practice and outcomes
- enables participants to identify strategies to strengthen gender equality/diversity, disability and social inclusion, particularly as they relate to climate resilience building, and highlight opportunities for improvement within their work.

It is important to emphasise throughout the delivery of the SAT that its purpose is not to provide the answers on how to implement strong GEDSI work in programs and organisations. The power of the tool comes from discussing and reflecting on current strategies and implementation and working as a collective to find contextually appropriate solutions applicable to the sector in the country or regional setting.

1.2 The domains of change

The GEDSI SAT uses five (5) domains to measure change across the continuum. These domains were selected because they are relevant to every sector program. Strengthening systems (that is, **scaling up** for good and inclusive governance, policy, planning and legislation) is very much linked to improving access for everyone and ensuring no one is left behind – a critical dimension of resilience (that is, **scaling out** for equitable coverage and universal access of goods and services). However, better and more resilient systems and access cannot be realised without reducing inequalities and bringing diverse voices to the table for meaningful change that reflects everyone's interests and needs in the community (that is, **scaling deep** for understanding and working towards reducing power inequalities and norms that serve to exclude and marginalise certain people and groups in society).

Key to achieving the scaling up (domain 1), scaling out (domain 2) and scaling deep (domain 3), is working towards being a transformative organisation of people committed to equity and inclusion in their work and organisation – that is, people and organisations who really 'walk the talk' (domain 5). The learning and sharing of new and grounded evidence and knowledge (domain 4) is also critical in promoting GEDSI and transformative change within the organisation and sector, as well as more broadly.

The five domains are:

1. **Systems strengthening.** Strengthened national and subnational sector systems with greater emphasis on GEDSI and climate resilience.
2. **Leave No One Behind**. Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sector services and facilities, supporting climate resilience, particularly for marginalised communities and community members.
3. **Transformative change.** Strengthened gender equality, disability and social inclusion and climate resilience in households, communities and institutions.
4. **Knowledge and learning.** Strengthened use of new evidence, innovation and practice in GEDSI and climate resilience as it relates to the sector by other civil society organisations (CSOs), national and international sector actors.
5. **Organisational culture and practice.** Promotion of GEDSI through strengthened organisational policies, practices and workplace culture.

Each **domain of change** has a list of **criteria.** Each criterion has a list of **standards** that correspond to the GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum (Figure 1), ranging from 0 = no focus (GEDSI unaware/harmful) to 3 = very strong practice (GEDSI transformative) (Figure 2). There is a definition for each standard (0–3) against each of the criteria on the list of domains, criteria and standards in Appendix C.

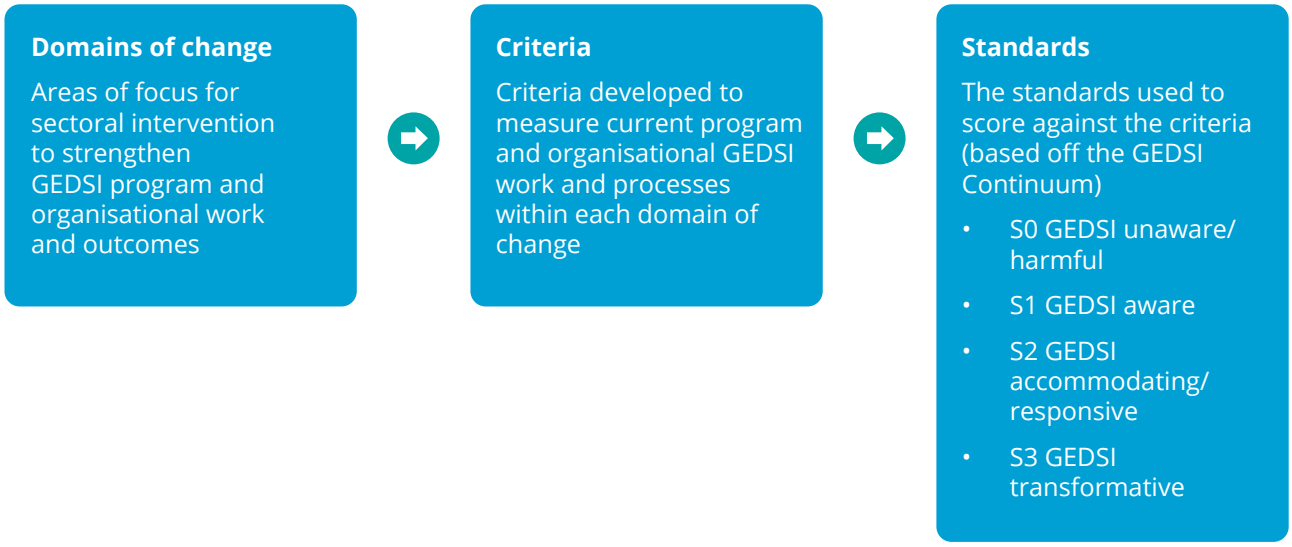

Figure 2. GEDSI SAT scoring process

Throughout the delivery of the SAT, the facilitator should reinforce the intended nature of the scoring process. Teams should not be striving to assess themselves as scoring 3, due to the idea that a lower score reflects poor quality programming. Each program and organisation operates in a specific country context, with different social norms posing their own challenges and realities when working in GEDSI. Instead, the scoring process should focus on participants understanding and reflecting on where their strengths and limitations currently lie, and prompt deeper thinking into which areas of GEDSI can be strengthened in a safe manner. A strong Do No Harm approach is vital when exploring next steps at the end of the process.

The SAT is used differently for implementation programs and research programs. All domains of change are applicable to implementing organisations, while domains 4 and 5 are applicable to organisations focused primarily on research and learning. This means that the SAT for implementing organisations will focus on all five domains (with a total of 11 criteria), and the SAT for research and learning organisations will focus on domains 4 and 5 (with a total of 6 criteria). Domain 4 for implementing organisations highlights the critical role of research and learning for implementing organisations. Domain 4 for research and learning organisations, whose core remit is about generating and disseminating knowledge and learning, has more criteria to enable research teams and stakeholders to delve deeper.

1.3 The process

Participants are facilitated through a combined process of reflection before and during participatory workshops. It is recommended that the workshops be held in person (an online delivery mode can be found in Appendix G).

Self-assessment process

- Participants reflect on GEDSI-related achievements and challenges within their program and organisation, then rank their collective understanding against each of the criteria.
- Participants justify and provide examples that support their chosen ranking. This paves the way for richer conversation among staff about their perceptions of what is working and what needs strengthening, before building consensus on an agreed score.
- The ranking of each criterion is averaged to produce a snapshot of progress towards transformation against each of the domains of change.
- Optional processes include a desk review of documents and key informant interviews completed by the GEDSI facilitator, which can provide additional data for your assessment.

Validation, reflection and action planning (VRAP)

- The facilitator/s present a synthesis of the workshops to the group for validation, discussion and reflection.
- Participants identify up to three priority GEDSI issues to address in the project or within the organisation. These are the 'Big Three' issues that can form the basis of your GEDSI action planning.

Frequency of undertaking the self-assessment

It is recommended that the self-assessment be undertaken annually. It is anticipated that the time taken to complete the SAT process will reduce each time, and that an external facilitator will be less necessary after the first self-assessment. This is because the program and organisation will be familiar with the SAT and process, and the issues discussed will be better sensitised and understood. Previous scores, justifications and action plans should be reviewed as part of each self-assessment, with participants exploring areas that can be strengthened and completing an updated GEDSI action plan.

2. Guidance for the self-assessment process

This guide provides information for the CP and facilitator/s on how to prepare and facilitate the self-assessment process with a small group of project staff and managers, either online or in person. The process can be extended to include project change agents and partners, and additional stakeholders through a desk review and/or key informant interviews.

It is important to clearly communicate 'Why we are doing this' to all staff before the first workshop and to reinforce this with participants briefly at the beginning of the workshop.

2.1 Why are we doing this?

A core tenet of internationally agreed human rights and development frameworks, including the SDGs, is to Leave No One Behind. Key to this concept is the importance of prioritising actions that benefit and empower women in all their diversity, the poorest, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people, and the most marginalised people in communities. Therefore, as development practitioners and researchers, we have a responsibility to continue to improve GEDSI practice. Your project and organisation have an important role to play in creating equality and inclusion for women and marginalised groups – people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people, ethnic minorities, Indigenous peoples, remote and poor communities, vulnerable workers – in your operating context, sector and beyond.

Every policy, activity, attitude or behaviour can reinforce or challenge harmful gender and social norms that potentially exclude individuals and groups based on their identity and/or circumstance. The self-assessment process enables you to reflect on how you and others in your organisation are doing this and where your project lies on a continuum from GEDSI unaware/harmful through to GEDSI transformative. For example, you can identify whether your program or research activities and strategies acknowledge and support the different needs of women, men, girls, boys and marginalised groups for improving access to sector services in communities in which your program works (GEDSI inclusive). Alternatively, your activities may go further, working towards shared power, resources and decision-making and reducing violence in communities (GEDSI transformative). Programs could consider undertaking the SAT as part of a design phase as a way of informing how to apply GEDSI-related approaches and concepts (minor adjustments to language may be required).

The self-assessment enables you to:

- ☑ measure progress towards transformative practice throughout your program and within your organisation
- ☑ reflect on the impacts of moving towards a more transformative approach in your program and in your organisation
- ☑ identify improvements and seek out further learning.

2.2 Who will be involved?

SAT facilitators

It is highly recommended that one or two external facilitators with GEDSI expertise/experience facilitate the process. Two facilitators are ideal because this is an intensive process that requires skilled facilitation and documentation, including synthesis of the workshop findings (see Appendix F – SAT results sharing report: Template for facilitators). Working with independent GEDSI advisers as facilitators means that all your staff are free to participate fully in the process, and the facilitator/s can provide guidance on strategies to improve GEDSI practice.

Why is it important to have independent/external facilitator/s for the first self-assessment?
If the GEDSI Advisor is the facilitator (or anyone else from the organisation/team/program), their voice and perspectives cannot be incorporated into the process in the same way as a participant's.

The first self-assessment requires specialist skills to create a safe space for Do No Harm. Because discussion can lead to challenging deeply entrenched norms, there is the potential for initial resistance among some team members in the first self-assessment, so deeper work will be required. Less resistance can be expected in subsequent self-assessments, which are more about tracking progress.

An external facilitator allows for more impartiality and gentle challenging of participants to justify the evidence and reason for their scores. This is much harder to do if the facilitator is one of the team.

Facilitators should have:

- experience in GEDSI-related work
- excellent facilitation skills – listening, creating a culture of respect, ensuring equal opportunities for sharing and dialogue, and finding ways to safely support the 'voices' of the quietest in the room
- ability to create a safe space to explore GEDSI concepts and learning (including an understanding of sensitivities in facilitating across differences in levels of power)
- experience in facilitating inclusive processes and building consensus
- confidence in presenting findings and reflections (even the most challenging).

The facilitator should seek to achieve the following goals:

- Support the CP (ideally someone on the team/in the organisation with GEDSI experience) with preparation and talking through best options for selection and preparation of participants.
- Conduct optional desk review and key informant interviews (Box 1).
- Support the scoring process (particularly if the CP has less experience with GEDSI terms and concepts and needs help interpreting the criteria and standards) by ensuring that those doing the scoring understand the criteria and standards.
- Troubleshoot if scoring responses indicate lack of understanding of the concepts and what is meant by the criteria and standards (that is, consult and give feedback to the scoring group if needed). Gently challenge participants during the workshop if scoring seems too high, giving examples of how practice might more strongly meet the standards (or conversely, encourage them to score higher if they are not recognising their own strengths).
- Facilitate the workshops to ensure the CP can participate equally with colleagues in the self-assessment process. Having two facilitators for the workshop is ideal because it is difficult for one facilitator to manage dynamics and keep the process moving (and an active facilitator presence may be needed to support multiple break-out groups).
- Provide process reflections to the CP between workshops if certain dynamics need to be addressed. If consensus has not been reached during one session of the workshop, the facilitator can encourage the organisation to create an opportunity to resolve differences (that is, to agree on a score) before the next workshop session or as part of the VRAP process.
- Remind participants of issues they identified during the discussions that need to be addressed in the action plan. Provide judicious feedback on suggested actions if necessary, and if appropriate suggest other solutions based on experience of what works in GEDSI.
- Be an objective, encouraging presence throughout the process.

Box 1. Additional evidence gathering

In addition to the steps outlined below, you may want to undertake a comprehensive review of GEDSI within the program and organisation via a desk review and/or key informant interviews. Both of these options require additional time and should be conducted prior to the SAT workshops.

The facilitators should conduct the desk review and key informant interviews, and synthesise and present the data to the participants at the VRAP workshop. This can aid the validation step of the SAT process by providing an external perspective to workshop participants.

Desk review
The facilitators can review a selection of documentation to provide additional verification of scoring by the participants. A sample of up to 10 documents is recommended, including project documents, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, organisational policies and procedures, with a mix of GEDSI-focused and mainstream approaches.

Key informant interviews
Brief interviews with partners, stakeholders and change agents can verify assumptions about what GEDSI practice within your organisation is working well and what needs improvement.

Contact person

The contact person should have:

- ideally GEDSI expertise/experience, or the GEDSI champion/focal point/adviser on the team
- a relationship with staff participating in the SAT, and comfortable in interacting with different levels of seniority within the team
- willingness and availability to coordinate and facilitate communication between facilitator/s and SAT participants
- a good understanding of GEDSI issues in the country and program contexts (strengths and challenges)
- experience in supporting inclusive processes.

The contact person is responsible for:

- ☐ preparing the team for the self-assessment
- ☐ setting the context of the project and understanding of the organisational dynamics for the facilitators
- ☐ supporting the discussion during the workshops (in person or virtual) as a key participant (and as the link with, and support person for, the facilitators)
- ☐ providing documentation and interview contacts to the facilitators (if used)
- ☐ leading development of the action plan on the identified Big Three issues with the project team.

Participants

A **maximum of 20-25 participants** is recommended for the self-assessment process. This is the maximum number that allows meaningful (and participatory) discussion and consensus building. More people can make the process unwieldy and make some participants feel unsafe in expressing opinions. Participants should be nominated by your organisation in consultation with the facilitators. It is desirable to have the project manager and relevant staff from the organisation's head office involved in the activity.

For implementing agencies, the criteria for staff nomination in the workshop should include a combination of the following:

- managers and staff working on project implementation or research programs
- managers/staff from finance, procurement and grants services
- technical staff relating to the program's sector or issue (for example, behaviour change communications, community engagement, engineers)
- GEDSI staff or staff with a GEDSI portfolio.

If considered appropriate by the organisation, key stakeholders and/or partners' participation can contribute to rich discussions and help to verify or challenge staff's assumptions.

Note that domain 5 – Organisational culture and practice – involves only staff, not partners, because it is focused on internal organisational processes.

At key points in the process, the facilitators and/or the CP should liaise with senior staff to ensure enthusiastic organisational support. Senior staff can support the CP in communicating and reinforcing the importance of the process and encouraging staff participation.

All other staff in the organisation should be kept informed about the self-assessment process. That is, all staff should be advised that the self-assessment is being undertaken, and briefed about what it involves (such as at a regular staff meeting). A report on the findings and outcomes of the self-assessment should also be shared with all staff in some way (for example, a presentation at a staff meeting).

2.3 How will we do this?

The self-assessment process involves five structured steps:

1. Preparation and planning.

2. Briefing session/s communicating and starting the process.
    - Desk review and informant interviews, if included (Box 1).

3. The workshops – domains 1–5 recommended time allocation:
    - Self-assessment workshops consisting of three days for implementing organisations (all domains), or
    - Self-assessment workshops consisting of two days for research organisations (domain 4: Knowledge and learning, and domain 5: Organisational culture and practice).

4. The VRAP workshop (2 hours) for both implementing and research organisations is included in the recommended days of workshop time allocation above.

5. Reporting, debriefing and sharing (ongoing).

It is recommended that steps 2–4 are undertaken within a three-week timeframe.

Step 1: Preparation and planning

The initial planning stage involves deciding as an organisation to undertake the self-assessment, establishing who will take the lead within the organisation, identifying and engaging two external facilitators and setting dates.

- The **facilitator/s should 'meet'** (either in person or virtually) with the CP at least once during the preparation and planning stage (and stay in touch by email) to share information and get to know each other (if they haven't met before).
- At this stage, the facilitator/s and the CP will **set dates and plan each step.**
- **Plan** a briefing/preparation process that means everyone receives information and understands the process and terminology.
- **Prioritise and confirm content and process:** in some circumstances, the organisation may choose not to assess a project against all five domains, or to involve a smaller group in the process for specific domains. Any **division of tasks** between the facilitator/s and the CP can be agreed at this stage.
- **Select participants** from the staff team, using the participant guidance. It is important to have a good cross-section of staff who understand different areas, including the program, operational aspects and GEDSI considerations.

- Decide **whether to include partners/other change agents** or only staff. Partner participation works best if relationships are strong and if open communication, sharing and learning already work well in the partnership.
- What are your **sources of evidence**? Will you work only with data from the scoring and workshops, or include additional evidence from sources such as a desk review or key informant interviews?
- Decide **which domains** to assess (depending on whether yours is an implementing or research organisation).

Q&A for Step 1

Decisions to be made	Considerations
Who should participate?	It is important to have a good cross-section of staff with differing levels of seniority who understand different areas including the program, operational aspects and GEDSI considerations.
Will it be possible and useful to include partners/other change agents, or only staff?	Partner participation works best if relationships are strong and if open communication, sharing and learning already work well in the partnership.
Which domains should be included?	As per the specific guidance given (see Appendix C), for implementing agencies, all domains should be used unless there is a very clear reason not to do so. For research programs and organisations, domains 4 and 5 are recommended.
What will be the information sources for evidence gathering?	You can work with data (for example, policies, procedures, program results and outcomes) from the scoring and workshops, or include additional evidence from a desk review or key informant interviews.
What will be the best way to brief staff about the process?	Consider whether a briefing could be included in a regular staff meeting or if a separate meeting with the participants is needed. Ensure you have enough time to talk through the process, the continuum and the terminology.

Step 2: Communicating and initiating the process

This step involves sharing and confirming the plan with the participants, ensuring they are informed about the process, dates and expectations and their availability, and making sure the content of the self-assessment is understood, including terminology (Box 2). This can be done by the facilitator/s and CP sharing materials and information by email and ideally through an initial online meeting (Table 1) with key staff members, so that they can communicate information to the wider group.

- The purpose of this step/meeting is to review the process and materials together with managers and staff who will be involved in the self-assessment process, answer questions, ensure that content, language and context is appropriate, have shared language around GEDSI (Appendix A – Glossary of GEDSI definitions, Box 2), and confirm dates and any other details.
- The facilitators must determine, in conjunction with the internal CP, the best way to prepare the participants/ staff team for the process. The CP should be able to take responsibility for this step and share any key points with the facilitators.
- The facilitator/s should share materials by email at least one week before the meeting. These materials are an outline of steps and proposed dates, the GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum explanatory notes (Appendix B), the Glossary of GEDSI definitions, and the SAT worksheet (Appendix D).
- The facilitator/s and CP should reconvene following the initial meeting with participants to discuss any issues identified (harmful power dynamics, poor comprehension of glossary terminology). This will inform the facilitator/s' approach to the delivery of the SAT.

Box 2. Process and terminology

It is important that participants understand the key terms used within the domains, criteria and standards. Appendix A contains a glossary of some key GEDSI definitions; facilitators and CP are encouraged to include additional words and definitions to suit country and region-specific contexts.

Socialising these terms can be done in a variety of ways:

- Translating the glossary of GEDSI definitions, domains and criteria into local languages before distributing to participants.
- The CP (and facilitator, if possible) holding a briefing/preparation meeting following the circulation of the definitions, domains and criteria to discuss and clarify terms (as above). Let participants know they can ask for clarification via email, or other online communication channels.
- Checking throughout the workshops to see if any of the language used is confusing participants. Consider using platforms such as Mentimeter to allow for anonymous feedback.
- Creating a safe space for and encouraging discussion, conversation and questions.

Table 1: Sample briefing meeting agenda

Objectives	Activity	Approx time needed*	Resources
Circulate terminology glossary (Appendix A) prior to the meeting			
• Introduce the self-assessment tool and process and why we are doing it • Check understanding of key terminology used in the tool • Ensure that everyone is comfortable with the process	1. Introductions if needed	10 mins	Materials emailed prior to the meeting: • Self-assessment objectives, outline of steps and proposed dates • Glossary of GEDSI definitions (Appendix A) • GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum explanatory notes (Appendix B) • Self-Assessment Tool worksheet (Appendix D)
	2. Objectives of self-assessment process	10 mins	
	3. Share steps and proposed dates; briefly introduce the GEDSI continuum and scoring process	20 mins	
	4. Introduce the glossary of definitions and domains/criteria for scoring. Check all participants understand the terms and meaning of criteria and standards for which they are responsible.	20 mins	

Step 3: The workshop – domains 1–5

- Before the workshops, the CP will allocate participants into small groups for break-out discussions, keeping in mind possible power dynamics and aiming for a mix of perspectives within each group.
- Creating a safe space is essential. The first workshop will commence with agreeing on workshop rules, norms and expectations.
- The purpose of the workshops is to have a facilitated conversation among staff to reflect on current strengths and how to improve processes to influence and drive positive change in GEDSI throughout the programs and organisation.
- The most important part of a self-assessment workshop is for the facilitator to prompt thinking about forms of marginalisation and strategies for inclusion, which will differ for each context.
- Work through each domain and criterion to discuss the scores, examples and reasoning given by participants, and to validate scores. Space will be allowed for participants to disagree, share perspectives and discuss the scores, then achieve consensus. The Self-Assessment Tool worksheet (Appendix D) forms the structure of the break-out group activity/discussion. Steps for facilitating discussion on the domains of change are listed below.
- If participants aim to cover all of the domains, aim to complete domains 1 (Systems strengthening) and 2 (Universal access and Leave No One Behind) on the first workshop day (Table 2); domains 3 (Transformative change), 4 (Knowledge and learning) on the second workshop day; and domain 5 (Organisational culture and practice) and VRAP process on the third workshop day.
- If the organisation is a research organisation, cover domains 4 and 5 and the VRAP process across two days.
- The VRAP workshop is the final workshop (details in the following section).
- The agendas for these workshops, along with the time allocated, are suggestions only. The CP and facilitators can adapt them to suit project and organisational needs.

Community members conducting a participatory resource assessment, supported through CFAR's WfW project Building Climate-Resilient WASH for Climate-Impacted Vulnerable Populations
Credit: CFAR archives 2024

Table 2: Sample workshop (Day 1) – Implementing organisation

Objectives	Activity	Time	Resources
Establish expectations and norms for the workshop to create a safe space for participants to contribute freely and openly	1. Elicit workshop norms and expectations from participants; include a further warm-up activity/icebreaker to help group to relax and bond if needed and appropriate as well as establishing SAT and workshop expectations	30 mins	
Re-familiarise participants with the SAT to underpin the workshops (recap the initial meeting)	2. Overview of SAT tool ◦ Continuum scoring process ◦ Domains of change and criteria (brief overview)	1 hr	Glossary of GEDSI definitions (Appendix A) GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum explanatory notes (Appendix B)
Short break		30 mins	
Self-assessment discussion – domain 1	3. Work through criteria 1 and 2 for first domain of change (see steps below)	1 hr 30 mins	Self-Assessment Tool worksheet (Appendix D)
Lunch break		1 hr	
Self-assessment domain 1	4. Work through criteria 3 for first domain of change, and criteria 1 for second domain of change	1 hr 30 mins	Self-Assessment Tool worksheet (Appendix D)
Short break		30 mins	
Self-assessment domain 2	5. Work through criteria 2 for second domain of change	45 mins	Self-Assessment Tool worksheet (Appendix D)
Wrap up	6. Sum up, ask for informal feedback and outline next workshop sessions	15 mins	

Steps for facilitating discussion on domains of change:

1. Share the Self-Assessment Tool worksheet with participants before the workshop. These worksheets have additional explainer text to prompt better comprehension and clarity of the tool. During the workshop, you may find it useful to display/project the domain and criteria for participants' benefit, including any local language translation.

2. Work through the standards one criterion at a time.

3. Continue until all criteria against the domain of change are covered.

4. Use break-out groups to give participants time to discuss the scoring and agree on a score. The groups will need to offer examples to justify the score (Appendix D).

5. Ask each group to report on their scoring and any examples they discussed to support the score.

6. Facilitator(s) support the group to work towards consensus on a score for each criterion. If consensus cannot be reached, the facilitator(s) makes a note of this, and raises it in the VRAP meeting as an issue for the team to pursue.

Q&A for Step 2

Decisions to be made	Considerations
What guidance should be given to ensure participants understand the types of evidence to use to support the scoring?	Give clear guidance about the kind of examples that need to be provided to support the score. Examples must be concrete and specific, such as a story about a specific success or challenge encountered during a monitoring visit; simply saying that evidence is recorded in a monitoring report is inadequate. Likewise, a specific finding or example drawn from research is acceptable, but saying 'findings of research' is not. Participants must be ready to share some detailed information about their evidence.

Remember to Do No Harm!

Creating and maintaining a safe space is critical to the success of the workshop. An online workshop will require particular attention to agreed protocols to keep the space safe, to ensure honest and open reflections, and allow space for all voices to be heard.

- Allow time at the start for collective identification and establishment of workshop norms, which includes principles like respect for and an open mind to different opinions and perspectives. Explain that this is a process to challenge ourselves and enable us to think more deeply and extensively about our practice. The most important principle to remember that the SAT is a strengths-based process.
- Be particularly aware of sensitivities when lower scores are being discussed, remembering that participants might be discussing a team member's work, into which they have put a lot of energy.
- The aim is to foster learning and enthusiasm for improvement.
- If participants feel disempowered or judged they may disengage from the workshop process or be defensive and unwilling to consider how they can improve.
- Both successes and weaknesses should be discussed as a shared responsibility and not as anyone's personal fault or failing.
- Be aware of the potential for resistance to discussing / challenging entrenched norms that are exclusionary to women and marginalised groups from some staff. Familiarise yourselves with kinds of resistance and think about those you might encounter during the workshop, based on knowledge of the existing dynamics. Prepare strategies to reduce resistance. This skill requires practice, so be kind to yourselves as facilitators and work together supportively. It will be easier for external facilitator/s to gently challenge senior staff in ways that would be difficult for an employee, such as the CP.
- Be particularly aware of the difficulties that may arise due to power imbalances when discussing scores, particularly for domain 5. Consider creating a mechanism for participants to note down issues they may not have been comfortable sharing during the group discussion.
- If appropriate, consider enabling anonymous participation or feedback (for example, via Mentimeter or Survey Monkey) to ensure everyone's perspectives are captured, including those from the 'quieter' people in the room. These can then be discussed as a group.

Facilitators' and participants' comprehensive preparation is critical to the success of the workshops.

Step 4: Validation, reflection and action planning

The final workshop is a time to reflect on the results of the workshops and optional steps (if used), and plan for improvement. It includes the facilitators presenting a synthesis of the findings of the self-assessment workshops, with GEDSI related strengths and gaps. If a desk review and/or key interviews were conducted, a synthesis of findings from these other data sources should be presented too.

Participants from the organisation will be invited to:

- Validate the information presented to them and discuss the key issues that arose.
- Identify the Big Three – up to three GEDSI priority issues for the program or organisation to work on over an agreed timeframe (e.g. 1–2 years depending on the length of the program). Suggested steps to facilitate this process are listed below (Table 3).
- Agree on a process and timeline for developing a plan for advancing the Big Three, and allocate responsibility for follow-up. This may include nominating people to form a working group to progress this with staff, for example. a Big Three Action Plan working group. See an example template for the GEDSI action plan in Appendix E.

The action plan should be monitored throughout the agreed timeframe to check progress on the Big Three.

Table 3: Sample validation, reflection and action planning workshop (VRAP)

Objectives	Activity	Time	Resources needed
Recap previous workshop, norms	1. Quick energiser, remind participants of the agreements/norms	10 mins	
Data validation	2. Presentation of synthesised scoring outcomes and evidence by SAT facilitators. Option for desk review or key informant interview findings to be presented here – facilitator/s to allow additional time here as needed	15 mins	
Putting it into practice: GESI priority areas for action	3. Action Plan discussion in breakout groups	30 mins	
Break	**Short break**	**10 mins**	
Actioning our priorities (group)	4. Each group is allocated two priority areas for action planning (use the GESI Action Plan template)	30 mins	GEDSI Action Plan template (Appendix E)
Actioning our actions (plenary)	5. Report back and agreement in plenary	30 mins	
Conclusion and wrap up	6. Identify and agree on next steps to progress plan	10 mins	

Steps for facilitating discussion on the Big Three GEDSI priority actions:

1. Disperse small groups of participants to break-out rooms to brainstorm the following questions:
   What should we: keep doing /stop doing /start doing /talk more about?

2. Ask each group to report briefly on their discussions.

3. Participants vote for their Big Three (from the 'keep' and 'start doing' categories). Ask them to consider voting for a combination of quick wins and ones that will take more time but will lead to larger/more sustainable change – suggest that they include at least one of each.

4. Facilitate sharing of individuals' votes and agree on the Big Three. It is important that participants come together as a group to decide the Big Three to ensure all perspectives are heard and to create greater levels of ownership, buy-in. A poll may be needed if consensus cannot be reached.

Step 5: Reporting, debriefing and follow-up

- The facilitator(s) and the CP will need time to complete and finalise the documentation from the workshop, using the SAT results sharing report: Template for facilitators (Appendix F).
- It may be useful to have a separate discussion with key project or organisation decision-makers at this stage, because they will need to make decisions about the Big Three GEDSI priorities identified based on resources and budget. Some of these people will have participated in the self-assessment workshop, but others who haven't will need to be presented with the process and results. If feasible, having one of the facilitators present for that briefing can be helpful, because the CP may find presenting lower scores to senior decision-makers difficult, depending on their position in the organisation.
- The team should develop a GEDSI action plan within 1–3 months of the self-assessment. It should incorporate findings from the SAT result sharing report. The plan should have timelines for follow-up, and assessment of progress on actions undertaken and how these have contributed to program outcomes.
- Facilitators can follow up with the CP after the workshop to ensure that the process is complete.
- The facilitators (or CP, if the process was self-facilitated) should write a brief report outlining the process, results and steps to be taken, to inform future decision-making. The report should be reviewed and endorsed by the participants involved in the process. It should be shared with the organisation's governance and stored somewhere accessible for future reference.
- It is recommended that the SAT process is undertaken regularly (for example, annually) if programming duration allows. This allows for tracking progress against the GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum and checking for necessary adjustments to the GEDSI Action Plan. Subsequent SATs will be less resource intensive than the first. An employee with a GEDSI role or experience (preferably the CP for the initial SAT process) could facilitate subsequent SATs if they feel comfortable doing so. If subsequent SATs involve the same team/group of people as the original SAT, they should be faster and smoother, with less resistance from staff to consider and manage.

3. Resources list

Water for Women resources

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool (first edition), WfW and SLH, 2021.
https://sanitationlearninghub.org/resource/gender-equality-and-social-inclusion-self-assessment-tool/

Partnerships for Transformation: Guidance for WASH and Rights Holder Organisations, WfW, 2022.
https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/partnerships-for-transformation-guidance-for-wash-and-rights-holder-organisations.aspx

Shifting Social Norms for Transformative WASH: Guidance for WASH Actors, WfW, 2022.
https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/towards-transformation-shifting-social-norms-for-transformative-wash.aspx

The Criticality of GEDSI for Climate-Resilient WASH, WfW, 2025.
https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/the-criticality-of-gedsi-for-climate-resilient-wash.aspx

Our Resilience Builds Community Resilience: Transformative Approaches for SGM Inclusion, WfW 2024.
https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/our-resilience-builds-community-resilience-transformative-approaches-for-sgm-inclusion.aspx

Hardwiring Accessibility: Measuring what Matters for and by People with Disabilities, WfW, (pending publication, 2025).
https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/hardwiring-accessibility-measuring-what-matters-for-and-by-people-with-disabilities.aspx

Menstrual Health: A Critical Cornerstone of Community and Climate Resilience, WfW, 2024.
https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/menstrual-health-a-critical-cornerstone-of-community-and-climate-resilience.aspx

Pivotal not peripheral: Ending period poverty by prioritising menstrual health and hygiene in WASH, WfW, 2021.
https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/pivotal-not-peripheral-ending-period-poverty-by-prioritising-menstrual-health-and-hygiene-in-wash.aspx

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Gender Equality Measure [WASH-GEM - web resource], University of Technology Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures (UTS-ISF), 2021. https://waterforwomen.uts.edu.au/wash-gem/

qualKit: Qualitative methods for monitoring GEDSI transformative change [web resource], UTS-ISF, 2021.
https://waterforwomen.uts.edu.au/qualkit/

Resources referenced throughout this guide

Australia's International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy: Advancing equity to transform lives, DFAT, 2024.
https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/publications/australias-international-disability-equity-and-rights-strategy-advancing-equity-transform-lives

(En)countering resistance; Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives, VicHealth, 2022.
https://www.dewr.gov.au/employing-and-supporting-women-your-organisation/resources/vichealth-encountering-resistance-strategies-respond-resistance-gender-equality-initiatives

The Future is a choice: Absorb, Adapt, Transform Resilience Capacities, Resilience Knowledge Hub, Oxfam, 2017.
https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/handle/10546/620178

Accessibility Design Guide: Universal design principles for Australia's aid program, AusAID, 2013.
https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/accessibility-design-guide-universal-design-principles-for-australia-s-aid-program

Human Rights-Based Approach [website], United Nations Sustainable Development Group, n.d.
https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/human-rights-based-approach

Gender Pay Gap Employer Statement Guide [website], Workplace Gender Equality Agency Australia, 2025. https://www.wgea.gov.au/take-action/gender-pay-gap/gender-pay-gap-employer-statement-guide

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, United Nations, 2007. https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/un-declaration-rights-indigenous-people

Framework for Governance of Indigenous Data, National Indigenous Australians Agency, 2024. https://admin.niaa.gov.au/our-work/closing-gap/framework-governance-indigenous-data-gid-stepping-stone-indigenous-data-sovereignty

Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary of GEDSI definitions

Facilitators and participants must understand the key concepts that underpin the self-assessment (which was designed to avoid jargon or overly technical terms as much as possible). The terms below are colour-coded into two categories:

1. **Orange** terms are used directly in the SAT and are essential for familiarisation and understanding.

2. **Blue** terms are key GEDSI concepts that are not used directly in the SAT but nonetheless support a deeper level of GEDSI understanding.

Orange-coded terms should be discussed with participants in the briefing meeting to ensure they can apply and think about the criteria.

The success of the self-assessment depends on giving participants adequate time and space to explore these terms and helping them to identify associated context-specific language, for example, whether to use SGM, LGBTIQ+, SOGIESC etc.

Allyship

'An active, consistent, and arduous practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person in a position of privilege and power seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalised group'.[1] This approach asks those in power to recognise the danger of speaking 'for' a marginalised group. Being a good ally means understanding that solutions and empowerment can only be achieved by supporting the marginalised to have their own voice and agency 'to speak for' themselves and their lived experience.

Cisnormativity

The societal assumption that all individuals are cisgender – that is, their gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. This assumption can have the effect of stigmatising people who do not have a cisgender identity.

Disability equity and rights

People with disability have the same human rights and fundamental freedoms as people without disability. Disability equity and rights means grounding action in the principles set out in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: human dignity, non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, respect for difference, equality of opportunity, accessibility, gender equality and respect for the rights of children. People with disability have specific needs, priorities and perspectives based on their individual identities and have a right to access quality, integrated services that respond to their needs.[2]

Do No Harm

Assessment of risks to women and other marginalised people in participating in and/or leading program activities, particularly when they take non-traditional roles and/or have a public voice in consultations and decision-making, and implementation of strategies to manage those risks.

A robust Do No Harm approach in programming means pre-empting risks and developing strategies to minimise or prevent them. Inherent in this is understanding that backlash and resistance is inevitable when challenging norms and the status quo, hence the need for proactive strategies.

At the heart of Do No Harm is the understanding **that doing nothing is doing harm** because doing nothing intentional perpetuates/reinforces power inequalities.

Duty bearers

State and non-state and sector actors (including individuals, organisations, authorities and institutions operating in the government, non-government and private sectors) who have an obligation to respect, promote and realise human rights for all citizens (that is, rights holders). They work for formal and informal authorities that make decisions and allocate resources.

Empowerment

Empowerment is the process of gaining or building self-confidence, access to opportunities and choices, access to and control of resources, and power within structures and institutions. Empowerment must happen both from within and with support from others.

Endosexism

An endosex person is a person born with sex characteristics that are typically considered as male or female (the opposite of intersex). Endosexism is the privileging of endosex people over intersex people in systems or practices.

Equality

All people enjoy equal status and respect, rights, responsibilities and opportunities. The interests, needs and priorities of all people are considered, recognising their diversity. Equality is a human right and key to development. Equality does not mean that everyone becomes the same.

Equity

To achieve equality, some groups of people may require treatment that responds to differences in their situations, needs, interests, capacities, socio-economic status and circumstances. Equality is an outcome, and equity refers to the processes needed to achieve it.

[1] See: https://theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship/

[2] Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), *Australia's International Disability Equity and Rights Strategy - Advancing Equity to Transform Lives*, DFAT, ACT, 2023. https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/publications/australias-international-disability-equity-and-rights-strategy-advancing-equity-transform-lives

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) responsive budgeting

Developing budgets that ensure interventions and investments reflect gender-equitable, disability-equitable and socially inclusive targets, resourcing and funding allocations. This is achieved through multi-stakeholder participatory and consultative processes, including with rights holder organisations (RHOs) and their members.

GEDSI mainstreaming or integration

Considering the impacts on women and marginalised groups of all decisions and actions, both internal (to the organisation) and external (its programs or services), and adjusting so that groups benefit equally. Processes are integrated into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any planned policies or programs. Internally, this includes assessing and improving organisational processes and culture to ensure that it provides safe, fair and equitable treatment to all.

Gender binarism

A system that categorises gender into two mutually exclusive and fixed options: male and female. This classification is based on biological characteristics, such as reproductive organs. In binary gender systems, individuals are expected to conform with dominant societal norms associated with their assigned gender at birth. Binary gender has been deeply engrained in many cultures and societies, shaping perceptions of masculinity and femininity, and influences many aspects of life, including language, clothing and social roles. However, this rigid classification fails to acknowledge the diversity and complexity of gender identities beyond the binary.[3]

Heteronormativity

The privileging of heterosexuality as the normative human sexuality. It assumes the gender binary (that is, that there are only two distinct, opposite genders) and that sexual relations are most fitting between people of opposite sex. This assumption can have the effect of stigmatising people who are not heterosexual or gender binary.

Inclusion

Recognising the dignity, diversity, autonomy and worth of all people, and all people's rights to access life opportunities equally with others. Inclusion involves identifying and removing barriers that prevent full and effective participation in society and seeks to reduce the disadvantages experienced by specific groups. For example, disability inclusion addresses the multiple barriers faced by people with disabilities, such as attitudes, systems and physical barriers.

Intersectionality

The interconnected nature of social categories such as ethnicity, indigeneity, class, sexuality and gender, as they apply to a given individual or group, that create overlapping systems of discrimination or disadvantage. While all marginalised groups are potentially subject to discrimination, intersectional disadvantage occurs when an individual faces more than one form of potential discrimination (for example, gender plus disability or gender plus sexual orientation), which compounds the risk of discrimination.

Leave No One Behind

Leave No One Behind not only entails reaching the poorest of the poor and marginalised groups but requires combatting persistent discrimination and inequalities within and among countries and their root causes.

LGBTQIA+

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex and Asexual, with the + representing more identities. Please refer to language note on its use.

Locally led development / localisation

Underpinning the SAT is the commitment to localisation and supporting locally led development processes, approaches and outcomes. DFAT defines locally led development cooperation as the 'sustainable and effective development co-operation that supports locally led development by respecting and enabling the agency, leadership and decision-making of diverse local actors in framing, design, delivery, resourcing and accountability, in given local and operating contexts.... Locally led approaches do not translate into 'one size fits all' solutions. Careful consideration is needed in the

[3] The Oxford Review, *Binary Gender - Definition and Explanation* [web resource], The Oxford Review Briefings - People and Organisational Research, n.d. https://oxford-review.com/the-oxford-review-dei-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-dictionary/binary-gender-definition-and-explanation/

design, partnering and early implementation stages to ensure that locally led intent is realised through tangible localisation approaches and that performance is assessed through monitoring and evaluation.'[4]

Marginalisation

Treatment of a person, group or concept as insignificant or peripheral. Marginalisation results in exclusion from programs, benefits of policies and services, opportunities, power and resources (which leads to increased vulnerability of a person/groups).

Marginalised groups

Marginalised people or groups include women, people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ / diverse SOGIESC people, plus other groups relevant to the context of the country and location of your program. They may be people from religious or ethnic minority groups, caste groups, Indigenous peoples, people from remote communities, people living in poverty, sanitation workers and other vulnerable worker groups. Life stage, health condition and age are also dimensions that should be considered in issues of marginalisation.

Reasonable accommodation

Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, such as adapting processes and/or providing reasonable supports, to enable the meaningful participation of people with disabilities on an equal basis with others. Reasonable accommodation is an important factor to consider in GEDSI-responsive budgeting.

Reflection

The ability for individuals and organisations to reflect on their actions and engage in learning, paying attention to values, theories and other factors that inform our everyday actions, including recognising and challenging our unconscious biases.

Resilience

The ability to recover from or adapt to difficult, challenging, or stressful situations. It involves bouncing back from adversity, setbacks or hardships, and can also be the capacity to stay strong, flexible and resourceful in the face of challenges. True resilience is about building agency for individuals, communities, and organisations to support themselves and their ecosystems to cope with, withstand and respond to climate stresses, hazards and uncertainty.

Resilience capacities

Resilience capacities are defined as absorptive, adaptive and transformative. These are defined in *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities*.[5]

Absorptive capacity. Characterised by the ability to bounce back: the capacity to take intentional protective action and to cope with known shocks and stress. It is needed as shocks and stress will continue to happen, for example due to extreme weather events caused by climate change, protracted conflict, and disasters.

Adaptive capacity. Characterised by the ability to be flexible: making appropriate changes in order to better manage or adjust to a changing situation. A key aspect of adaptive capacity is accepting that change is ongoing as well as highly unpredictable. That is why adaptive capacity is about flexibility, and the ability to make incremental changes on an ongoing basis through process of continuous adjusting, learning, and innovation.

Transformative capacity. Characterised by deep structural change: the capacity to make intentional change to stop or reduce the causes of risk, vulnerability, poverty, and inequality, and ensure the more equitable sharing of risk so it is not unfairly borne by people living in poverty or suffering from discrimination or marginalisation.

[4] DFAT, *Guidance Note: Locally led Development*, DFAT, n.d. p3. https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/business-opportunities/business-notifications/dfat-guidance-note-locally-led-development

[5] Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities*, Resilience Knowledge Hub, Oxfam International, 2017. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/absorb-adapt-transform-resilience-capacities-620178/

Resistance and backlash

Important elements of Do No Harm, resistance and backlash can occur when women and marginalised people take new roles and speak up in public. Programs should actively counter negative stereotypes and stigma and pre-empt and reduce resistance and backlash. *(En)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives* contains a useful spectrum of forms of resistance to gender equality in the workplace.[6]

Rights holders

Individuals or social groups who have entitlements in relation to specific duty bearers. In general terms, all human beings are rights holders, but the rights of some social groups may not be fully realised in particular contexts. A rights-based approach considers rights holders as active agents in the realisation of human rights and development, both directly and through organisations representing their interests.

Rights holder organisation

Rights holder organisations are made up of and/or advocate for and raise the voices of marginalised people and groups. They include women's organisations, organisations of persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ / diverse SOGIESC organisations, ethnic minority organisations, and organisations that represent people who are economically disadvantaged. RHOs make up significant parts of civil society and focus on amplifying the interests and voices of a broad range of marginalised groups.

Sexual and gender minorities

Gender minorities are people whose gender identity or expression does not necessarily fit into the male–female binary (including some transgender people). Gender minorities include non-binary and trans identities and third genders. Sexual minorities are people whose sexual orientation does not align with the dominant heterosexual norm. Sexual and gender minorities often experience stigma, discrimination and marginalisation. Please refer to the language note on use of this term.

SOGIESC

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sexual Characteristics. Although this term is inclusive of everyone, it is used mostly to refer to diverse SOGIESC – people of diverse genders and/or sexualities.

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)

A cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (including humans) with one another and with their environment.[7]

Transformation

Transformation is both a process (something that can be done) and an outcome that can be achieved. Transformative processes include marginalised people in activities and decision-making. This requires shifting power, strengthening voice and agency. By genuinely listening to new voices, we can create lasting change. By supporting marginalised people's voice and influence, we can change the usual way of doing things.

Transformative practice

An intention and action to transform unequal power relations and go beyond improving the lives of women and other marginalised groups to improving their social position (how they are valued in society) and the full realisation of their rights. It actively promotes the sharing of power and control over decision-making, resources and benefits.

Twin-track approach

To achieve change towards transformation in relation to gender or any other issue of marginalisation, it is necessary to take both a 'mainstreamed' and a targeted approach.

GEDSI mainstreaming is a widely used approach of assessing the implications for women, men and gender-diverse people of all decisions and actions, both internal (to the organisation) and external (its programs or services), and adjusting so that

[6] VicHealth, *(En)countering resistance: Strategies to respond to resistance to gender equality initiatives*, VicHealth, 2022, p4. https://www.dewr.gov.au/employing-and-supporting-women-your-organisation/resources/vichealth-encountering-resistance-strategies-respond-resistance-gender-equality-initiatives

[7] See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traditional_ecological_knowledge

benefits are equal and inequality is not perpetuated. Context-specific inclusive strategies are identified and implemented to ensure the inclusion of women, people with disabilities, sexual and gender diverse people and other marginalised groups in ways that Do No Harm in sector-specific activities.

Alongside mainstreaming, it is necessary to create specific targeted activities, projects or components aligned with the priorities, needs and capacities of women, sexual and gender diverse people, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups, and provide opportunities for their advancement and empowerment. This includes strategies that support safe spaces for learning, creating collective action and exercising agency and solidarity.

Sexual and gender-based violence

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner defines sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as: 'Sexual violence is a form of gender-based violence and includes any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using force or coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting. Gender-based violence is any harmful act directed against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender. It may include sexual violence, domestic violence, trafficking, forced/early marriage and harmful traditional practices.' [8]

Universal design

It is recommended that measures to achieve accessibility in public spaces (such as schools, health centres, public institutions and public places such as markets, or any information and communications for the public) apply the principles of universal design.[9] This set of principles is used to design products, services or information and communications to be 'accessible and usable by the majority of people without the need for adaptation by the user.'

Application of the principles relies upon a process by which the full range of end users are included in the design, implementation, and evaluation process. Universal design is a key mechanism for facilitating social participation of marginalised groups.

The Australian Government's guidelines for universal design is a useful reference, and includes 10 tips for universal design for people with disabilities in Box 5.[10]

At the least, a universal design approach should include consultation processes across the project cycle with end users, such as organisations and individuals representative of people with different types of impairments (sensory, physical, psychosocial and intellectual), as well as people with other characteristics (such as pregnant women, children, elderly persons, LGBTQIA+ people, Indigenous peoples, ethnic and religious minorities).

[8] United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commission (OHCHR), *Sexual and gender-based violence in the context of transitional justice*, OHCHR, 2014. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/OnePagers/Sexual_and_gender-based_violence.pdf

[9] Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD), *The 7 Principles* [web resource], CEUD, n.d. https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design/the-7-principles

[10] DFAT, *Accessibility Design Guide: Universal Design Principles for Australia's Aid Program*, Australian Aid, 2013. https://www.dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/accessibility-design-guide-universal-design-principles-for-australia-s-aid-program

Appendix B – GEDSI Towards Transformation Continuum explanatory notes

Background facilitator notes on the GEDSI Continuum

These notes are intended to complement the definitions in the GEDSI Continuum (Figure 1) and facilitate participant understanding. Familiarity with the key terms listed in Appendix A, particularly - marginalised groups, marginalisation, Do No Harm and rights holder organisations - is critical to understanding the continuum.

GEDSI unaware/harmful

Programs can be GEDSI harmful in several ways. GEDSI unawareness is the failure to recognise the different roles, responsibilities, needs, interests, ability to enact power, access to resources, and capacities of different people and identities. An intervention may be intended to affect all people in the same way but in fact produce impacts that vary due to pre-existing gender and social inequalities. A GEDSI unaware program will fail to recognise the different roles and power of women and men and other segments of the community and will fail to address barriers to participation in processes related to the issue or sector addressed by the program, decision-making and benefits. GEDSI unaware policies or programs will only result in equitable outcomes by accident, if at all. Through maintaining the status quo they are likely to perpetuate, and even exacerbate existing social inequalities. Alternatively, programs may be GEDSI harmful by recognising the different situations of different groups but either failing to take these into account; deliberately targeting those who are easier to reach and thus further marginalising others;[11] or exploiting differences to achieve program goals.

Climate resilience – does not acknowledge GEDSI-related risks to climate change, so resilience capacities to diverse groups are not addressed.

GEDSI aware

A program is GEDSI aware if it demonstrates basic recognition that women and diverse groups in the community have different roles, responsibilities, needs, interests, capacities, ability to enact power, access to resources and, but takes only minimal action to respond to these differences. A GEDSI-aware program recognises differences but does not explicitly address inequality. It may aim to increase access to services or opportunities for different groups but will not explicitly address the different barriers or vulnerabilities such as the risk of violence or challenge discriminatory social norms that are faced by marginalised groups. It will focus more on practical needs (conditions) than strategic interests (position and power) of different marginalised groups. Do No Harm may be evident in relation to safeguarding.

Resilience refers to the ability to recover from or adapt to difficult, challenging, or stressful situations. It involves bouncing back from adversity, setbacks, or hardships, and it can also be the capacity to stay strong, flexible, and resourceful in the face of challenges. True resilience is about building agency for individuals, communities, and organisations to support themselves and their ecosystems to cope with, withstand and respond to climate stresses, hazards and uncertainty.

[11] This can occur at design stage, when deciding on the locations or communities in which the program will work. It may also happen during program implementation, when marginalised groups within the target location or community are not prioritised or afforded the effort needed to reach them and ensure their meaningful participation.

GEDSI-aware efforts to build climate resilience focus on absorptive resilience capacity.

Absorptive capacity 'is the capacity to take intentional protective action and to cope with known shocks and stress. It is needed as shocks and stress will continue to happen, for example due to extreme weather events caused by climate change, protracted conflict, and disasters.' [12]

GEDSI responsive/accommodating

A program is GEDSI responsive when it is based on a clear understanding of barriers faced by women in all their diversities, by people with disabilities and different marginalised groups (including Indigenous peoples where present), and includes a clear intention to overcome these barriers. It will include some recognition of intersectional inequalities. It will recognise barriers at the household, community, organisational, institutional, sectoral and/or structural levels. It will meet both practical needs and strategic interests, supporting marginalised groups to have increased access and control over resources and benefits. It may recognise different kinds of biases and resistance to positive change towards equity and equality. It will recognise the importance of meaningful participation by and representation of marginalised groups. It may include GEDSI-accommodating strategies, which recognise and work around existing attitudes and barriers but may result in superficial or temporary results rather than deep, sustainable, structural change. Stronger and more intentional Do No Harm approaches are evident.

GEDSI-responsive/accommodating efforts to build climate resilience focus on both absorptive (see GEDSI aware) and adaptive resilience capacities.

Adaptive capacity 'is about making appropriate changes to better manage or adjust to a changing situation. A key aspect of adaptive capacity is accepting that change is ongoing as well as highly unpredictable. That is why adaptive capacity is about flexibility, and the ability to make incremental changes on an ongoing basis through process of continuous adjusting, learning, and innovation.' [13]

GEDSI transformative

A program is GEDSI transformative when it explicitly challenges harmful social and gender norms and power imbalances in order to change the position of women in all their diversities, people with disabilities, and people from other marginalised groups, such as LGBTQIA+ communities (and Indigenous peoples where they are present). It recognises the significance of violence as a barrier and as a risk relating to challenging power and takes a clear and strong Do No Harm approach. It takes an iterative approach to building relationships and understanding issues based on the lived experience of those affected. It understands the intersections between various oppressions. It aims for genuine and equal representation at all levels. It resources all necessary GEDSI strategies, including supporting local rights holder organisations (RHOs) representing the rights of women, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people and other marginalised groups. It is alert to and committed to minimising unintended consequences and potential harms. It is committed to protection of all vulnerable people and has articulated channels for referral to services where available and advocacy for services where there are gaps.

[12] Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities*, Resilience Knowledge Hub, Oxfam International, 2017. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/absorb-adapt-transform-resilience-capacities-620178/
[13] Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities*.

It understands bias, resistance and backlash and has nuanced approaches to reduce them. It reflects the principle of transformation starting with oneself, recognising that organisations and individual staff/workforces that do not work to be transformative in the way they conduct themselves cannot achieve transformative outcomes for their target communities or systems. Strong, intentional Do No Harm approaches that pre-empt and actively reduce potential and actual risks of resistance and backlash to empowerment initiatives are evident.

GEDSI-transformative strategies aim to reduce power imbalances for deeper structural change, so require time and dedicated resourcing. A project can only be truly transformative in outcomes if it spans multiple years to reinforce messaging and practice.

GEDSI-transformative climate resilience building focuses on absorptive, adaptive and transformative resilience capacities.

Transformative capacity 'is the capacity to make intentional change to stop or reduce the causes of risk, vulnerability, poverty, and inequality, and ensure the more equitable sharing of risk so it is not unfairly borne by people living in poverty or suffering from discrimination or marginalisation.' [14]

[14] Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities*.

Appendix C – List of domains, criteria and standards

For implementing organisations in sectors such as WASH, water resource management, education, health, infrastructure, agriculture, energy, climate, food security/nutrition and social protection

Please see the explanatory notes below the table on marginalised groups, the twin-track approach and menstrual health.

For some criteria, standards build on their predecessors. For example, in criterion 1.2, the program would need to fulfill both S2 **and** S3 to score a three (S3). This is relevant for criteria 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3.

Domain	Criteria	Standards
1. Strengthened national and subnational sector systems with greater emphasis on GEDSI and climate resilience	1.1 The program seeks to meaningfully engage with rights holder organisations (RHOs) for improved sector and GEDSI outcomes	**S0** The program does not engage with RHOs or engages in an unstructured/infrequent way
		S1 The program engages directly with RHOs to support delivery of the program's services or activities (this might be directly in communities and/or at sector coordination meetings)
		S2 The program works with RHOs regularly and supports their participation in sector coordination fora, including providing some resourcing and/or capacity building support[15]
		S3 The program provides resourcing and/or capacity to support RHOs' direct engagement with government and private sector to influence sector issues/systems/decisions, and to advance RHOs' own rights agendas
	1.2 The program works within the sector to promote GEDSI in planning, budgeting, monitoring and review	**S0** No engagement with monitoring and evaluation of performance on GEDSI targets or data at sector level
		S1 The program advocates for the inclusion of at least one of the following: GEDSI targets and/or disaggregated data and/or gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in subnational/local government and/or national sector planning, monitoring and review mechanisms
		S2 One or more of the options from S1, **plus** the program provides targeted support to the sector at subnational and/or national levels to develop or strengthen GEDSI targets, collection of disaggregated data or GRB
		S3 S2 **plus** the program supports participatory engagement in GEDSI accountability mechanisms such as SDG monitoring or alignment with national policies on rights of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups
	1.3 The program takes a climate risk informed approach in planning, budgeting, monitoring and review, recognising that GEDSI is central to addressing these climate risks	**S0** The program does not seek to understand issues relating to climate risks and disproportionate impacts on women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups
		S1 The program acknowledges climate risks for climate stressed areas/locations and collects/uses data to inform sector policy and planning. There is evidence that GEDSI data related to climate risks is being collected but not being used to influence policy or planning
		S2 the program recognises the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women (in their diversity), people with disabilities and marginalised groups, and seeks to address these vulnerabilities in planning processes, including in sector monitoring and review systems. This includes collecting/using GEDSI-disaggregated climate risk data and linking with social safeguarding programs
		S3 S2 **plus** the program recognises the value of diverse knowledges in climate resilience solutions, takes a GEDSI strengths-based approach and adopts measures to actively support and engage diverse rights holders and RHOs in climate resilience/adaptation decision-making and policy development

[15] Water for Women's *Partnerships for Transformation: Guidance for WASH and Rights Holder Organisations* offers insights into effective partnerships between WASH sector organisations and RHOs. It provides practical recommendations for effective collaboration in all types of partnerships and is designed to support organisations looking to begin, build or strengthen partnerships to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. While it was originally designed for WASH organisations, the principles and ways of working recommended in the guidance are applicable to all sectors. See: https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/partnerships-for-transformation-guidance-for-wash-and-rights-holder-organisations.aspx

Domain	Criteria	Standards
2. Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sector services and facilities, supporting climate resilience, particularly for marginalised communities and community members	2.1 The program seeks to understand and overcome the barriers preventing women/girls, men/boys and other marginalised groups (for example, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people and/or other groups marginalised in the operating context) from accessing resilient services or engaging in activities relevant to the sector	**S0** There is no or little understanding of barriers for women/girls/men/boys in sector access
		S1 The program (and any implementing partners in the sector) undertakes basic GEDSI analysis and consults with women and people with disabilities during general consultations with communities. Some barriers faced by women and people with disabilities to access sector services and participation in community decision-making are addressed
		S2 S1 **plus** the program design is informed by a GEDSI and power analysis and the program (and any implementing partners in the sector) develops strategies based on this analysis. The program consults separately with at least one other marginalised group and seeks ways to support their access to sector relevant services and community decision-making. Some work on Do No Harm for these initiatives is evident
		S3 S2 **plus** the program and implementing partners undertake a strong rights-based approach and actively support women,[16] people with disabilities and one other or more marginalised groups to influence community planning and decision-making as a core aspect of sector programming. The program undertakes deeper GEDSI analysis of intersectional disadvantage experienced by marginalised groups and develops and implements an intentional Do No Harm approach based on this analysis
	2.2 The program seeks to understand and address GEDSI barriers related to climate risks and build the resilience capacities of women and marginalised groups (for example, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people and/or other groups marginalised in the operating context)	**S0** The program does not analyse climate risks and differential impacts on women and marginalised groups to inform climate resilience planning activities and mechanisms
		S1 The program undertakes basic analysis of climate risks and the differential impacts on women (in their diversity) and marginalised groups. However, strategies focus on supporting the absorptive resilience capacities of climate-stressed communities as a whole without focusing on addressing intra-community inequalities,[17] and tend to involve one-size-fits-all solutions
		S2 The program undertakes a GEDSI and climate risk analysis and has considerable focus on differential GEDSI impacts of climate change. It implements strategies to strengthen the adaptive resilience capacities of climate-stressed communities,[18] including strategies targeted to build these resilience capacities of women (in their diversity) and marginalised groups within these communities.
		S3 S2 **plus**, based on GEDSI and climate risk analysis, the program seeks to support the transformative resilience capacities of women (in their diversity) and marginalised groups in the community.[19] It actively supports their voices and agency in identifying and implementing their own absorptive and adaptation strategies and solutions (via local mapping, planning and monitoring of risks, adaptation and mitigation). Do No Harm features strongly (as per S3 in 2.1)

[16] See: United Nations Sustainable Development Group, *Universal Values Principal One: Human Rights-Based Approach* [web resource], UNSDG, n.d. https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/human-rights-based-approach

[17] 'Absorptive capacity' is the capacity to take intentional protective action and to cope with known shocks and stress. It is needed as shocks and stress will continue to happen, for example due to extreme weather events caused by climate change, protracted conflict, and disasters. See: Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities*, Resilience Knowledge Hub, Oxfam International, 2017. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/absorb-adapt-transform-resilience-capacities-620178/

[18] 'Adaptive capacity' is about making appropriate changes in order to better manage or adjust to a changing situation. A key aspect of adaptive capacity is accepting that change is ongoing as well as highly unpredictable. That is why adaptive capacity is about flexibility, and the ability to make incremental changes on an ongoing basis through process of continuous adjusting, learning, and innovation. See: Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities*.

[19] 'Transformative capacity' is the capacity to make intentional change to stop or reduce the causes of risk, vulnerability, poverty, and inequality, and ensure the more equitable sharing of risk so it is not unfairly borne by people living in poverty or suffering from discrimination or marginalisation. See: Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities.*

Domain	Criteria	Standards
3. Strengthened GEDSI and climate resilience in households, communities and institutions	3.1 The program encourages duty bearers to promote the equal division of labour and decision-making between women and men at household level[20]	**S0** The program does not attempt to understand household dynamics or encourage duty bearers to consider household dynamics or division of labour
		S1 The program does some analysis of the division of labour between women and men in the household during consultation processes and takes this into account in activity planning. The program differentiates the effects of climate change on household work for different household members
		S2 S1 **plus**, based on a more intersectional GEDSI analysis (including disability and age), the program understands risks of control and violence. It includes activities to promote the equal division of labour and decision-making between women and men in the household, and/or systematically influence duty bearers to do so. Some Do No Harm strategies are evident but not systematically applied and resourced
		S3 S2 **plus** strategies to address household division of labour and rights (and/or to influence duty bearers to do so), including care roles, violence prevention and workload, are identified and implemented. A strong Do No Harm lens is applied. Extent of progress and success is monitored
	3.2 The program supports empowerment and leadership of women, people with disabilities and from other marginalised groups in community decision-making processes and structures and in the sector workforce	**S0** The program does not promote women's empowerment and participation in community decision-making processes or encourage duty bearers to do so
		S1 The program sometimes directly supports women, people with disabilities and at least one other marginalised group to participate in community decision-making processes and/or structures (such as committees) and/or encourages duty bearers to promote this
		S2 The leadership of women (in their diversity) and people with disabilities in community decision-making structures is integrated into the program's activities and processes, with attempts to promote the rights and involvement of at least one other marginalised group. Women's opportunities to work in the sector in diverse roles are actively supported. Some Do No Harm strategies are evident. The program investigates disadvantaged groups' representation in community decision-making structures related to climate change impacts (for example, village disaster committees)
		S3 S2 **plus** engaging men at community and institutional levels to change attitudes and support diverse leadership/empowerment and changing attitudes about women/girls, people with disabilities and one or more other marginalised groups, and influencing duty bearers to do so. Intentional, resourced and locally led Do No Harm strategies reduce possible resistance and backlash. An intersectional approach to marginalisation and diversity is evident and the Do No Harm strategies reflect this

[20] See: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), *Reinforcing capacities of duty bearers* [webpage], International Programme for the Development of Communication, UNESCO, n.d. https://www.unesco.org/en/international-programme-development-communication/duty-bearers

Domain	Criteria	Standards
4. Strengthened and use of new evidence, innovation and practice in GEDSI and climate resilience as it relates to the sector by other civil society organisations (CSOs), national and international sector actors	4.1 The program undertakes research and/or learning and documentation on GEDSI dimensions related to the sector and climate resilience, and shares learning with the sector	**S0** The program does not facilitate opportunities for research, sharing and learning on GEDSI and climate resilience
		S1 The program facilitates some opportunities for research, sharing and learning on GEDSI and climate resilience in the sector
		S2 S1 **plus** the program's research is power informed and reaches diverse audiences with sharing and learning on GEDSI and climate resilience (for example, with other sectors and/or with RHOs) using accessible media. For organisations in the Global North, partnerships with local organisations involved in the relevant knowledge sector are actively pursued and engaged, and decolonising research is an explicit focus of the work. Research participants are active in setting research and learning agendas, not just contributing as respondents
		S3 S2 **plus** the program creates opportunities for amplifying the voices of women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups and influencing policy and practice (within and beyond the sector), based on evidence resulting from GEDSI/climate resilience and relevant sector research

Domain	Criteria	Standards
5. Promotion of GEDSI through strengthened organisational policies, practices and workplace culture	5.1 The organisation has sufficient financial and human resources (HR) committed to GEDSI	**S0** Few or no financial and HR are committed to GEDSI or GEDSI capacity building
		S1 A staff member (advisor or focal point) has a dedicated GEDSI portfolio, and/or at least some staff members' role/ position descriptions include responsibility for GEDSI. Some staff training/capacity building on GEDSI is provided
		S2 A staff member has a dedicated GEDSI portfolio (larger teams should have two GEDSI specialists – one with disability-specific expertise), or (if the team is very small) a GEDSI focal point has time dedicated to GEDSI mainstreaming. All team members' position descriptions include clear GEDSI responsibilities, and they are supported with capacity building/training. Resourcing is allocated to reasonable accommodations in the workplace
		S3 S2 **plus** budget support for local organisations representing rights of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. GEDSI expectations are included in service agreements with sector partner organisations
	5.2 The organisation has policies to promote gender balance and diversity in staffing and management	**S0** The organisation has no policies that promote gender balance and diversity in staffing and management
		S1 The organisation has HR policies that support equitable practices and procedures, such as flexible work practices and access to professional development. This includes collection of GEDSI data to enable resolution of gender parity and pay differences. Disability barriers are considered, and some action is taken to eliminate them
		S2 S1 **plus** the organisation has policies and strategies that promote gender equality and diversity (such as parental leave, and targets for diverse women in technical, management and non-traditional positions), and which address barriers for people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups
		S3 S2 **plus** the staff team includes (close to) equal numbers of men and women staff members and is representative of diverse groups from the community, including those with disabilities and from marginalised groups. There is evidence of public commitment to GEDSI, including moving towards pay parity and reporting on organisational GEDSI indicators[21]
	5.3 Organisational culture does not support GEDSI	**S0** The organisational culture does not actively support GEDSI
		S1 Management and colleagues expect staff to treat each other with respect and value diversity and equality. Policies, of which all staff are aware, reflect zero tolerance for sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination
		S2 plus management demonstrates and supports positive GEDSI attitudes and practices, and all staff have received GEDSI training. This training may include sensitisation for staff around GEDSI-related risks in climate events. Grievance processes are clearly articulated, accessible to all and reviewed regularly
		S3 S2 **plus** regular opportunities are created for discussion about GEDSI issues that affect staff members and the organisation. Women and people from marginalised groups report feeling safe in the organisation and the organisation actively seeks feedback on staff well-being, including feeling safe. The organisation actively promotes and supports staff who are women (in their diversity), people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups, across all roles including technical and management and/or leadership positions

[21] For an example, see: https://www.wgea.gov.au/take-action/gender-pay-gap/gender-pay-gap-employer-statement-guide

For research organisations

Domain	Criteria	Standards
4. Strengthened and use of new evidence, innovation and practice in GEDSI and climate resilience as it relates to the sector by other CSOs, national and international sector actors	4.1 The program undertakes learning and research activities to better understand sector-relevant issues relating to women, people with disabilities and from other marginalised groups	**S0** GEDSI issues (including their connection to climate resilience) are not considered explicitly in learning and research activities
		S1 Learning and research includes targeted activities focused on GEDSI, including climate resilience implications
		S2 S1 **plus** GEDSI is mainstreamed into all learning and research activities (twin-track approach) Organisations in the Global North pursue and engage in partnerships with local organisations involved in the relevant knowledge sector, and decolonising research is an explicit focus of the work. Data sovereignty of local rights holders (that is, the right to control, protect and develop their culture, knowledge and intellectual property) is a key principle of the research. Research participants are active in setting research and learning agendas, not just contributing as respondents
		S3 S2 **plus** a research and learning approach that engages rights holders and RHOs as knowledge holders, co-researchers and active participants/leaders in learning. The research responds to knowledge gaps and learning needs identified by women (in their diversity) and marginalised groups. Opportunities are identified for sharing and learning with women and people from marginalised groups (including sharing back to communities and groups who participated in the research). Local early-career researchers are engaged and supported
	4.2 The program facilitates opportunities for sharing of new GEDSI and climate resilience learning and evidence	**S0** Research and dissemination activities do not foster opportunities for sharing learning about GEDSI and climate resilience issues and evidence
		S1 Research and dissemination activities foster some opportunities for sharing learning about GEDSI and climate resilience issues and evidence
		S2 S1 **plus** reaching diverse audiences, other sectors and/or with RHOs, via accessible formats. There is a commitment to and process for sharing learning with actors (rights holders and duty bearers) who were involved in the research
		S3 S2 **plus** creating opportunities for amplifying the voices of women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups and to influence policy (within and beyond the sector) using evidence generated through the research
	4.3 The program uses evidence to influence GEDSI-transformative practice for women, people with disabilities and from other marginalised groups	**S0** GEDSI evidence from learning and research is not used to influence practice in the sector
		S1 To some extent, evidence from research informs GEDSI-transformative practice for climate resilience
		S2 The research/learning provides a clear plan (including resource allocation) to facilitate uptake of GEDSI-transformative practice for climate resilience
		S3 S2 **plus** investment in monitoring outcomes from uptake of GEDSI-transformative practice, and documentation of successful locally led approaches to contribute to the GEDSI, climate and relevant sector evidence base

Domain	Criteria	Standards
5. Promotion of GEDSI through strengthened organisational policies, practices and workplace culture	5.1 The organisation has sufficient financial and human resources committed to GEDSI	**S0** Few or no financial and human resources are committed to GEDSI or GEDSI capacity building
		S1 A staff member (advisor or focal point) has a dedicated GEDSI portfolio, and/or at least some staff members' role/ position descriptions include responsibility for GEDSI. Some staff training/capacity building on GEDSI is provided
		S2 A staff member has a dedicated GEDSI portfolio (larger teams should have two GEDSI specialists – one with disability-specific expertise, or (if the team is very small) a GEDSI focal point has time dedicated to GEDSI mainstreaming. All team members' position descriptions include clear GEDSI responsibilities and they are supported with capacity building/training. Resourcing is allocated to reasonable accommodations in the workplace
		S3 S2 plus budget support for local organisations representing rights of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. GEDSI expectations are included in service agreements with sector partner organisations
	5.2 The organisation has policies to promote gender balance and diversity in staffing and management	**S0** The organisation has no policies that promote gender balance and diversity in staffing and management
		S1 The organisation has HR policies that support equitable practices and procedures, such as flexible work practices and access to professional development. This includes collection of GEDSI data to enable resolution of gender parity and pay differences. Disability barriers are considered and some action is taken to eliminate them
		S2 S1 plus the organisation has policies and strategies that promote gender equality and diversity (such as parental leave, and targets for diverse women in technical, management and non-traditional positions), and which address barriers for people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups
		S3 S2 plus the staff team includes (close to) equal numbers of men and women staff members and is representative of diverse groups from the community, including those with disabilities and from marginalised groups. There is evidence of public commitment to GEDSI, including moving towards pay parity and reporting on organisational GEDSI indicators[22]
	5.3 The organisation's culture supports gender equality, disability and social inclusion	**S0** The organisational culture does not actively support GEDSI
		S1 Management and colleagues expect staff to treat each other with respect and value diversity and equality. Policies, of which all staff are aware, reflect zero tolerance for sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination
		S2 S1 plus management demonstrates and supports positive GEDSI attitudes and practices, and all staff have received GEDSI training. This training may include sensitisation for staff around GEDSI-related risks in climate events. Grievance processes are clearly articulated, accessible to all and reviewed regularly
		S3 S2 plus regular opportunities are created for discussion about GEDSI issues that affect staff members and the organisation. Women and people from marginalised groups report feeling safe in the organisation and the organisation actively seeks feedback on staff well-being, including feeling safe. The organisation actively promotes and supports staff who are women, people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups, across all roles including technical and management and/or leadership positions

[22] For an example, see https://www.wgea.gov.au/take-action/gender-pay-gap/gender-pay-gap-employer-statement-guide

Explanatory Notes

Marginalised groups

Marginalised people or groups include people with disabilities and people from the LGBTQIA+ / diverse SOGIESC communities, plus other groups relevant to the context of the country and location of your program. They may be people from religious or ethnic minority groups, caste groups, Indigenous peoples, people from remote communities, people living in poverty, sanitation workers and other vulnerable worker groups. Marginalised groups can also include those living in informal situations, including in environmentally precarious settings that, under local law or custom, may not have legal protections. Life stage and age are also dimensions that should be considered in issues of marginalisation.

The more the program/organisation explicitly and intentionally implements an intersectional approach to marginalisation, the higher the SAT score. Intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of social categories such as ethnicity, class and gender that create overlapping systems of discrimination or disadvantage. While all marginalised groups are potentially subject to discrimination, intersectional disadvantage occurs when an individual faces more than one form of potential discrimination (for example, gender plus disability or gender plus sexual orientation), which compounds the risk of discrimination. This requires an understanding of the types of discrimination that may occur based on the different identities, that all people in one identity group will not face the same discrimination, and that at some times and in some situations, one aspect of an individual's identity may be more important or relevant to their experience than others. Most crucially, understanding the nature of intersectionality in your program context requires asking the experts – the relevant RHOs (or, at community level, rights holders themselves)!

In terms of climate change and climate justice, we know that women (in their diversity) and people from marginalised groups, including people with disabilities and LGBTQIA+ people, experience disproportionate impacts which can exacerbate their vulnerabilities and inequalities, if there are not intentional and targeted strategies in place to address their structural disadvantage. And this is why deeper transformative change is necessary, where we do not simply focus on vulnerabilities. Rather by affirming and being guided by their lived experience and knowledge, we understand the strengths they bring to climate resilience solutions in decision-making at multiple levels – household, community and institutional. For delving deeper into the critical connections between GEDSI and climate resilience, refer to the learning brief: *The Criticality of GEDSI for Climate-Resilient WASH*[23]

In alignment with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, twin-track approaches should be developed and implemented to support the agency and voice of Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) should be recognised and valued, and therefore the importance of encouraging the inclusion of their voices in sector processes and decision-making. Recognising TEK may require supporting locally led research or acknowledging the value of knowledge that has been transmitted orally rather than documented in Western formats. Key to TEK and working with Indigenous peoples (as well as all marginalised rights holder groups) on monitoring, learning and research activities is the principle of data sovereignty. This term refers to a group or individual's right to control and maintain their own data, including its collection, storage, and interpretation.[24]

[23] Water for Women, *The Criticality of GEDSI for Climate-Resilient WASH*, WfW, 2025. https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/the-criticality-of-gedsi-for-climate-resilient-wash.aspx

[24] Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM), *Data Sovereignty* [web resource], NNLM, n.d. https://www.nnlm.gov/guides/data-glossary/data-sovereignty

Twin-track approach

To achieve change towards transformation in relation to gender or any other issue of marginalisation, it is necessary to take both mainstreamed and targeted approaches.

Mainstreaming GEDSI involves assessing the implications for women, men and gender-diverse people of all decisions and actions both internal (to the organisation) and external (its programs or services), and adjusting them to ensure that benefits are equal and inequality is not perpetuated. Context-specific inclusive strategies are identified and implemented to ensure the inclusion of women (in their diversity), people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people and other marginalised groups (relevant to the operating context) in ways that Do No Harm in sector-specific activities.

Alongside mainstreaming, it is necessary to create specific targeted activities, projects or components that address the priorities, needs and capacities of women, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups, and provide opportunities for their advancement and empowerment. This includes strategies that support safe and accessible spaces for learning, creating collective action and exercising agency and solidarity, as well as providing supports and services to meet specific needs.

For SAT scoring at standards 2 and 3 in all domains and criteria, there should be evidence of a twin-track approach and related strategies (including filling key gaps in service delivery for marginalised groups, such as for people with disabilities). At standard 3, the twin-track approach and related strategies will be more comprehensive and better resourced, with evidence of a robust Do No Harm approach that intentionally and actively addresses potential issues of resistance and backlash in relation to empowerment initiatives (see Appendix A – Glossary of GEDSI definitions).

Menstrual health

Menstrual health is about the physical, mental and social well-being and health of women, girls and gender-diverse people who menstruate, in relation to their menstrual cycle and ability to manage their menstruation. Climate related hazards are severely impacting the ability of people who menstruate to manage their menstruation hygienically and with dignity. For more information on menstrual health and climate-related impacts, please refer to the learning brief: *Menstrual Health: A Critical Cornerstone of Community and Climate Resilience*[25]

All sectors – but particularly the WASH, education and health sectors – can support the menstrual health, dignified menstruation and resilience of people who menstruate, in households, communities, workplaces, and institutions, as it is key to building the resilience of all people. A GEDSI-aware approach is about supporting the practical needs of people who menstruate (in terms of access to menstrual-friendly facilities, information and materials). Moving up the continuum to GEDSI responsive/accommodating and transformative requires a strong focus on deeper systems and norms change that works to actively engage with community and institutional leaders on menstrual health policy and resource allocation, and with men and boys on tackling stigma and cultural taboos associated with menstruation.

[25] Water for Women, *Menstrual Health: A Critical Cornerstone of Community and Climate Resilience*, WfW, 2024. https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/menstrual-health-a-critical-cornerstone-of-community-and-climate-resilience.aspx

Appendix D – Self-Assessment Tool worksheet

Self-Assessment Tool worksheet

Self-assessment criteria for all five domains (for implementing organisations ONLY)

The worksheet includes explanatory notes to further guide and frame requirements needed to be able to score the program at a particular level.

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
Domain 1: Strengthened national and subnational sector systems with greater emphasis on GEDSI and climate resilience					
	1.1 The program seeks to meaningfully engage with rights holder organisations (RHOs) for improved sector and GEDSI outcomes				
S0	The program does not engage with RHOs or engages in an unstructured/infrequent way	RHOs represent women and people from specific marginalised groups and promote their rights. Marginalised people or groups include people with disabilities and people from the LGBTQIA+/diverse SOGIESC communities, plus other groups relevant to the context of the country and location of your program. These may include people from religious or ethnic minority groups, caste groups, Indigenous peoples, people from remote communities, people living in poverty, sanitation workers and other vulnerable worker groups. Marginalised groups can also include those living in informal situations, including in environmentally precarious settings that, under local law or custom, may not have legal protections. Life stage and age are also dimensions that should be considered in issues of marginalisation			
S1	The program engages directly with RHOs to support delivery of the program's services or activities (this might be directly in communities and/or at sector coordination meetings)	To meet S1, the program should consider women (including addressing menstrual hygiene) and people with disabilities at a minimum To meet S2 or S3, the program should consider multiple relevant groups using an intersectional lens – that is, recognising that individuals may belong to more than one marginalised group and responding to specific needs at that 'intersection' Throughout the SAT, specific mention is made of women, disability and other marginalised groups. However, it is assumed that the work also takes a pro-poor, Leave No One Behind approach RHOs might include local women's groups who are informed by a rights perspective, women's rights organisations (WROs), organisations of people with disabilities (OPDs), representative organisations of LGBTQIA+ / diverse SOGIESC people or any other marginalised group of significance to the locality For this criterion, to meet S1, the organisation should engage with WROs and OPDs at a minimum. To meet S2 or S3, the program should engage with WROs and OPDs and other RHOs as appropriate			

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
S2	The program works with RHOs regularly and supports their participation in sector coordination fora, including providing some resourcing and/or capacity building support				
S3	The program provides resourcing and/or capacity to support RHOs' direct engagement with government and private sector to influence sector issues/systems/decisions, and to advance RHOs' own rights agendas				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	1.2 The program works within the sector to promote GEDSI in planning, budgeting, monitoring and review				
S0	No engagement with monitoring and evaluation of performance on GEDSI targets or data at sector level				
S1	The program advocates for the inclusion of at least one of the following: GEDSI targets and/or disaggregated data and/or gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) in subnational/local government and/or national sector planning, monitoring and review mechanisms				
S2	One or more of the options from S1, **plus** the program provides targeted support to the sector at subnational and/or national levels to develop or strengthen GEDSI targets, collection of disaggregated data or GRB				
S3	S2 **plus** the program supports participatory engagement in GEDSI accountability mechanisms such as SDG monitoring or alignment with national policies on rights of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	1.3 The program takes a climate risk-informed approach in planning, budgeting, monitoring and review, recognising that GEDSI is central to addressing these climate risks				
S0	The program does not seek to understand issues relating to climate risks and disproportionate impacts on women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups				
S1	The program acknowledges climate risks for climate-stressed areas/locations and collects/uses data to inform sector policy and planning. There is evidence that GEDSI data related to climate risks is being collected but not used to influence policy or planning				
S2	The program recognises the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women (in their diversity), people with disabilities and marginalised groups, and seeks to address these vulnerabilities in planning processes, including in sector monitoring and review systems. This includes collecting/using GEDSI-disaggregated climate risk data and linking with social safeguarding programs				
S3	S2 **plus** the program recognises the value of diverse knowledges in climate resilience solutions, takes a GEDSI strengths-based approach and adopts measures to actively support and engage diverse rights holders and RHOs in climate resilience/adaptation decision-making and policy development				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
Domain 2: Increased equitable, universal access to and use of sector services and facilities, supporting climate resilience, particularly for marginalised communities and community members					
	2.1 The program seeks to understand and overcome the barriers preventing women/girls, men/boys and other marginalised groups (for example, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people and/or other groups marginalised in the operating context) from accessing resilient services or engaging in activities relevant to the sector				
S0	There is no or little understanding of barriers for women/girls/men/boys in sector access				
S1	The program (and any implementing partners) undertakes a basic GEDSI analysis and consults with women and people with disabilities during general consultations with communities. Some barriers faced by women and people with disabilities to access sector services and participation in community decision-making are addressed				
S2	S1 **plus** the program design is informed by a GEDSI and power analysis and the program (and any implementing partners in the sector) develops strategies based on this analysis. The program consults separately with at least one other marginalised group and seeks ways to support their access to sector relevant services and community decision-making. Some work on Do No Harm for these support initiatives is evident	This may include consulting with RHOs representing LGBTQIA+ people (where safe to do so), and/or taking an intersectional approach (see previous note on intersectional lens). Do No Harm means to be informed of possible risks to women and other marginalised people in participating and leading in program activities, particularly when they take non-traditional roles and/or have a public voice in consultations and decision-making, and to have strategies to deal with those risks			
S3	S2 **plus** the program and implementing partners undertake a strong rights-based approach and actively support women, people with disabilities and one other or more marginalised groups to influence community planning and decision-making as a core aspect of sector programming. The program undertakes deeper GEDSI analysis of intersectional disadvantage experienced by marginalised groups and an intentional Do No Harm approach is developed and implemented based on this analysis	To score 3 in Do No Harm, the program recognises the potential for resistance and backlash, including an increased risk of violence, can occur when women and marginalised people take up new roles and speak up in public, particularly if they act in ways contrary to gender and other social norms. If the program is pre-empting and addressing potential resistance and backlash and taking active measures to counter negative stereotypes and stigma, then it is more likely to score 3 rather than 2. Furthermore, a transformative approach to Do No Harm is consulting with women and marginalised groups themselves (including with RHOs) about what they identify as the risks and what support strategies they would like to see implemented by the program			

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	2.2 The program seeks to understand and address GEDSI barriers related to climate risks and build the resilience capacities of women and marginalised groups (for example, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ people and/or other groups marginalised in the operating context)				
S0	The program does not analyse climate risks and differential impacts on women and marginalised groups to inform climate resilience planning activities and mechanisms				
S1	The program undertakes basic analysis of climate risks and the differential impacts on women (in their diversity) and marginalised groups. However, strategies focus on supporting the absorptive resilience capacities of climate-stressed communities as a whole and ignore intra-community inequalities, and tend to apply one-size-fits-all solutions	Resilience refers to the ability to recover from or adapt to difficult, challenging, or stressful situations. It involves bouncing back from adversity, setbacks, or hardships, and can also be the capacity to stay strong, flexible and resourceful in the face of challenges. True resilience is about building agency for individuals, communities and organisations to support themselves and their ecosystems to cope with, withstand and respond to climate stresses, hazards and uncertainty. Absorptive capacity 'is the capacity to take intentional protective action and to cope with known shocks and stress. It is needed as shocks and stress will continue to happen, for example due to extreme weather events caused by climate change, protracted conflict, and disasters'[1]			
S2	The program undertakes GEDSI and climate risk analysis and has considerable focus on differential GEDSI impacts of climate change. Strategies are in place to strengthen the adaptive resilience capacities of climate stressed communities, including targeted strategies to build these resilience capacities of women (in their diversity) and marginalised groups within these communities	For Do No Harm, see explanatory notes in 2.1. Please refer to Appendix A: Glossary of GEDSI definitions for relevance of Do No Harm. Adaptive capacity 'is about making appropriate changes to better manage or adjust to a changing situation. A key aspect of adaptive capacity is accepting that change is ongoing as well as highly unpredictable. That is why adaptive capacity is about flexibility, and the ability to make incremental changes on an ongoing basis through process of continuous adjusting, learning, and innovation'[2]			
S3	S2 **plus**, based on GEDSI and climate risk analysis, the program seeks to support the transformative resilience capacities of women (in their diversity) and marginalised groups in the community. It actively supports their voices and agency in identifying and implementing their own absorptive and adaptation strategies and solutions (through local mapping, planning and monitoring of risks, adaptation and mitigation). Do No Harm features strongly (as per S3 in 2.1)	For Do No Harm, please see explanatory notes in 2.1. Transformative capacity 'is the capacity to make intentional change to stop or reduce the causes of risk, vulnerability, poverty, and inequality, and ensure the more equitable sharing of risk so it is not unfairly borne by people living in poverty or suffering from discrimination or marginalisation'[3]			

[1] Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities*, Oxfam International, 2017. https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/absorb-adapt-transform-resilience-capacities-620178/

[2,3] Oxfam International, *Absorb, Adapt, Transform: Resilience Capacities.*

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
Domain 3: Strengthened GEDSI and climate resilience in households, communities and institutions					
	3.1 The program encourages duty bearers to promote the equal division of labour and decision-making between women and men at household level				
S0	The program does not attempt to understand household dynamics or encourage duty bearers to consider household dynamics or division of labour	Duty bearers are state and non-state and sector actors (including individuals, organisations, authorities or institutions operating in the government, non-government and private sector) who have an obligation to respect, promote and realise human rights for all citizens (that is, rights holders). They work for formal and informal authorities that are responsible for decision-making, promotion of and allocation of sector resources			
S1	The program does some analysis of the division of labour between women and men in the household during consultation processes and takes this into account in activity planning. The program differentiates the effects of climate change on household work for different household members				
S2	S1 **plus**, based on a more intersectional GEDSI analysis (including disability and age), the program understands risks of control and violence. It includes activities to promote the equal division of labour and decision-making between women and men in the household, and/or systematically influence duty bearers to do so. Some Do No Harm strategies are evident but not systematically applied and resourced				
S3	S2 **plus** strategies to address household division of labour and rights (and/or to influence duty bearers to do so), including care roles, violence prevention and workload, are identified and implemented. A strong Do No Harm lens is applied. Extent of progress and success is monitored				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	3.2 The program supports empowerment and leadership of women (in their diversity), people with disabilities and from other marginalised groups in community decision-making processes and structures and in the sector workforce				
S0	The program does not promote women's empowerment and participation in community decision-making processes or encourage duty bearers to do so				
S1	The program sometimes directly supports women, people with disabilities and at least one other marginalised group to participate in community decision-making processes and/or structures (such as committees) and/or encourages duty bearers to promote this				
S2	The leadership of women (in their diversity) and people with disabilities in community decision-making structures is integrated into the program's activities and processes, with attempts to promote the rights and involvement of at least one other marginalised group. Women's opportunities to work in the sector in diverse roles are actively supported. Some Do No Harm strategies are evident. The program investigates disadvantaged groups' representation in community decision-making structures related to climate change impacts (for example, village disaster committees)				
S3	S2 **plus** engaging men at community and institutional levels to change attitudes and support diverse leadership/empowerment and changing attitudes about women/girls, people with disabilities and one or more other marginalised groups, and influencing duty bearers to do so, are key strategies. Intentional, resourced and locally led Do No Harm strategies reduce possible resistance and backlash. An intersectional approach to marginalisation and diversity is evident, and Do No Harm strategies reflect this				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
Domain 4: Strengthened and use of new evidence, innovation and practice in GEDSI and climate resilience as it relates to the sector by other CSOs, national and international sector actors					
	4.1 The program undertakes research and/or learning and documentation on GEDSI dimensions related to the sector and climate resilience, and shares learning with the sector				
S0	The program does not facilitate opportunities for research, sharing and learning on GEDSI and climate resilience				
S1	The program facilitates at least some opportunities for sharing and learning on GEDSI and climate resilience in the sector				
S2	S1 **plus** the program's research is power informed and reaches diverse audiences with sharing and learning on GEDSI and climate resilience (for example, with other sectors and/or with RHOs) using accessible media. For organisations in the Global North, partnerships with local organisations involved in the relevant knowledge sector are actively pursued and engaged, and decolonising research is an explicit focus of the work. Research participants are active in setting research and learning agendas, not just contributing as respondents				
S3	S2 **plus** the program creates opportunities for amplifying the voices of women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups and influencing policy and practice (within and beyond the sector), based on evidence resulting from GEDSI/climate resilience and relevant sector research	Amplifying the voices of women and marginalised groups includes at minimum sharing first-hand lived experience (with informed consent); it may include providing a direct platform for representatives to speak for themselves in public fora with other sectors and beyond. To meet S3, representatives should be actively involved in GEDSI learning and sharing processes (not only as subjects but as knowledge holders and active participants in the research process)			

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
Domain 5: Promotion of GEDSI through strengthened organisational policies, practices and workplace culture					
	5.1 The organisation has sufficient financial and human resources (HR) committed to GEDSI				
S0	Few or no financial and HR are committed to GEDSI or GEDSI capacity building				
S1	A staff member (advisor or focal point) has a dedicated GEDSI portfolio, and/ or at least some staff members' role/ position descriptions include responsibility for GEDSI. Some staff training/capacity building on GEDSI is provided				
S2	A staff member has a dedicated GEDSI portfolio (larger teams should have two GEDSI specialists – one with disability-specific expertise), or (if the team is very small) a GEDSI focal point has time dedicated to GEDSI mainstreaming. All team members' position descriptions include clear GEDSI responsibilities and they are supported with capacity building/training. Resourcing is allocated to reasonable accommodations in the workplace				
S3	S2 **plus** budget support for local organisations representing rights of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. GEDSI expectations are included in service agreements with sector partner organisations				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	5.2 The organisation has policies to promote gender balance and diversity in staffing and management				
S0	The organisation has no policies that promote gender balance and diversity in staffing and management				
S1	The organisation has HR policies that support equitable practices and procedures, such as flexible work practices, and access to professional development. This includes collection of GEDSI data to enable resolution of gender parity and pay differences. Disability barriers are considered and some action is taken to eliminate them				
S2	S1 **plus** the organisation has policies and strategies that promote gender equality and diversity (such as parental leave, and targets for diverse women in technical, management and non-traditional positions), and which address barriers for people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups				
S3	S2 **plus** the staff team includes (close to) equal numbers of men and women staff members and is representative of diverse groups from the community, including those with disabilities and from marginalised groups. There is evidence of public commitment to GEDSI, including moving towards pay parity and reporting on organisational GEDSI indicators				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	5.3 The organisational culture supports GEDSI				
S0	Organisational culture does not actively support GEDSI				
S1	Management and colleagues expect staff to treat each other with respect and value diversity and equality. Policies, of which all staff are aware, reflect zero tolerance for sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination				
S2	S1 **plus** management demonstrates and supports positive GEDSI attitudes and practices, and all staff have received GEDSI training. This training may include sensitisation for staff around GEDSI-related risks in climate events. Grievance processes are clearly articulated, accessible to all and reviewed regularly				
S3	S2 **plus** regular opportunities are created for ongoing discussion about GEDSI issues as they affect staff members and the organisation. Women and people from marginalised groups report feeling safe in the organisation and the organisation actively seeks feedback on staff well-being including feeling safe. The organisation actively promotes and supports staff who are women, people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups, across all roles including technical and management and/or leadership positions				

SAT Domains and criteria for research and learning organisations ONLY (domains 4 and 5)

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
Domain 4: Strengthened and use of new evidence, innovation and practice in GEDSI and climate resilience as it relates to the sector by other CSOs, national and international sector actors.					
	4.1 The program undertakes learning and research activities to better understand sector-relevant issues relating to women, people with disabilities and from other marginalised groups				
S0	GEDSI issues (including their connection to climate resilience) are not considered explicitly in learning and research activities				
S1	Learning and research includes targeted activities focused on GEDSI, including climate resilience implications				
S2	S1 **plus** GEDSI is mainstreamed into all learning and research activities (twin-track approach). Organisations in the Global North pursue and form partnerships with local organisations involved in the relevant knowledge sector, and decolonising research is an explicit focus of the work. Data sovereignty of local rights holders (that is, the right to control, protect and develop their culture, knowledge and intellectual property) is a key principle of the research. Research participants are active in setting research and learning agendas, not just contributing as respondents	Throughout the SAT, 'marginalised people' includes people with disability and sexual and gender minorities, plus other groups relevant to the context, for example religious or ethnic minorities. Throughout the SAT, to meet S1, the program should consider women (including addressing menstrual hygiene) and people with disabilities at a minimum; for S2 or S3 the program should consider multiple relevant groups including efforts to use an intersectional lens, i.e. recognising that individuals may belong to more than one marginalised group and responding to specific needs at that 'intersection'. Throughout the SAT, specific mention is made of gender, disability and other marginalised groups. However, it is assumed that the work also takes a pro-poor, Leave No one Behind approach			
S3	S2 **plus** research and learning approach engages rights holders and RHOs as knowledge holders, co-researchers and active participants/leaders in learning. The research responds to knowledge gaps and learning needs identified by women and marginalised groups. Opportunities are identified for sharing and learning with women and people from marginalised groups (including with communities and groups who participated in the research). Local early-career researchers are engaged and supported	Rights holders in this standard means women, people with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities and/or other marginalised groups. Research should apply an intersectional lens to marginalisation as appropriate, for example gender and ethnicity, gender and age, gender and disability			

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	4.2 The program facilitates opportunities for sharing new GEDSI and climate resilience learning and evidence				
S0	Research and dissemination activities do not foster opportunities for sharing learning about GEDSI and climate resilience issues and evidence				
S1	Research and dissemination activities foster some opportunities for sharing learning about GEDSI and climate resilience issues and evidence				
S2	S1 **plus** reaching diverse audiences, other sectors and/or with RHOs, via accessible formats. There is a commitment to and process for sharing learning with relevant actors (rights holders and duty bearers) who were involved in the research	Throughout the SAT, 'rights holder organisations' refers to organisations that represent women and people from specific marginalised groups and promote their rights. Marginalised people or groups include people with disabilities and people from the LGBTQIA+ / diverse SOGIESC communities, plus other groups relevant to the context of the country and location of your program. These may include people from religious or ethnic minority groups, caste groups, Indigenous peoples, people from remote communities, people living in poverty, sanitation workers and other vulnerable worker groups. Marginalised groups can also include those living in informal situations, including in environmentally precarious settings that, under local law or custom, may not have legal protections. Life stage and age are also dimensions that should be considered in issues of marginalisation			
S3	S2 **plus** creating opportunities for amplifying the voices of women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups and to influence policy (within and beyond the sector), using evidence generated through research	Amplifying the voices of women and marginalised groups includes at minimum sharing first-hand lived experience (with informed consent). It may include providing a direct platform for representatives to speak for themselves in fora with (WASH and other) sector or public audiences. To meet S3, representatives should be actively involved in GEDSI WASH learning and sharing processes (not only as subjects)			

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	4.3 The program uses evidence to influence GEDSI transformative practice for women, people with disabilities and from other marginalised groups				
S0	GEDSI evidence from learning and research is not used to influence practice in the sector				
S1	To some extent, evidence from research informs GEDSI-transformative practice for climate resilience				
S2	The research/learning provides a clear plan (including resource allocation) to facilitate uptake of GEDSI-transformative practice for climate resilience				
S3	S2 **plus** investment in monitoring outcomes from uptake of GEDSI-transformative practice, and documenting successful locally led approaches to contribute to the GEDSI, climate and relevant sector evidence base				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
Domain 5: Promotion of GEDSI through strengthened organisational policies, practices and workplace culture					
	5.1 The organisation has sufficient financial and human resources committed to GEDSI				
S0	Few or no financial and HR are committed to GEDSI or GEDSI capacity building				
S1	A staff member (advisor or focal point) has a dedicated GEDSI portfolio, and/or at least some staff members' role/position descriptions include responsibility for GEDSI. Some staff training/capacity building on GEDSI is provided	Engaging an external consultant (or RHO representative) is acceptable practice, particularly for small organisations without the HR base to justify a dedicated position. However at least one GEDSI-knowledgeable staff member should work with the consultant to guide and monitor implementation of any outcomes/recommendations			
S2	A staff member has a dedicated GEDSI portfolio (larger teams should have two GEDSI specialists – one with disability-specific expertise), or (if the team is very small) a GEDSI focal point has time dedicated to GEDSI mainstreaming. All team members' position descriptions include clear GEDSI responsibilities and they are supported with capacity building/training. Resourcing is allocated to reasonable accommodations in the workplace	See above			
S3	S2 **plus** budget support for local organisations representing rights of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups. GEDSI expectations are included in service agreements with sector partner organisations				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	5.2 The organisation has policies to promote gender balance and diversity in staffing and management				
S0	The organisation has no policies that promote gender balance and diversity in staffing and management				
S1	The organisation has HR policies that support equitable practices and procedures, such as flexible work practices, and access to professional development. This includes collection of GEDSI data to enable resolution of gender parity and pay differences across the organisation. Disability barriers are considered and some action is taken to eliminate them				
S2	S1 **plus** the organisation has policies and strategies that promote gender equality and diversity (such as parental leave, and targets for diverse women in technical, management and non-traditional positions), and that address barriers for people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups				
S3	S2 **plus** the staff team includes (close to) equal numbers of men and women staff members and is representative of diverse groups from the community, including those with disabilities and from marginalised groups. There is evidence of public commitment to GEDSI, including moving towards pay parity and reporting on organisational GEDSI indicators				

Standard	Domain and or criteria	Explanatory notes	Score	Justification/reasons	Examples
	5.3 The organisational culture supports GEDSI				
S0	Organisational culture does not actively support GEDSI				
S1	Management and colleagues expect staff to treat each other with respect and value diversity and equality. Policies, of which all staff are aware, reflect zero tolerance for sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination				
S2	S1 **plus** management demonstrates and supports positive GEDSI attitudes and practices, and all staff have received GEDSI training. This training may include sensitisation for staff around GEDSI-related risks in climate events. Grievance processes are clearly articulated, accessible to all and reviewed regularly				
S3	S2 **plus** regular opportunities are created for ongoing discussion about GEDSI issues as they affect individuals as staff members and the organisation. Women and people from marginalised groups report feeling safe in the organisation and the organisation actively seeks feedback on staff well-being including feeling safe. The organisation actively promotes and supports staff who are women, people with disabilities and people from marginalised groups, across all roles including technical and management and/or leadership positions				

Appendix E – GEDSI Action Plan template

The following sample template can be used or adapted for the development of the yearly or two-year GEDSI Action Plan based on the GEDSI priority issues identified in the self-assessment workshop. Please note that this is to be developed by the partner organisation after the self-assessment. It is hoped that an outcome of the self-assessment activity is agreement on the process (including timeline and resourcing) for the development of the GEDSI Action Plan. This should be an active document that is regularly referenced and updated to reflect the status and progress of planned activities and strategies.

GEDSI Action Plan template

GEDSI priority issue	Change strategy/ies to address the issue	Activities to implement the strategy/ies	By when	Responsible	With whom	Resources required for implementation
1.	1.1 1.2 1.3					
2.						
3.						

Appendix F – SAT results sharing report: Template for facilitators

For implementation programs

Domain	Strengths	Gaps	Recommended actions
1. Systems strengthening			
2. Leave No One Behind			
3. Transformative change			
4. Knowledge and learning			
5. Organisational culture and practice			

For research programs

Domain	Strengths	Gaps	Recommended actions
4. Knowledge and learning			
5. Organisational culture and practice			

Appendix G – Online workshop delivery methodology

This GEDSI SAT was originally published and rolled out online during the COVID-19 pandemic. While in-person workshops are the preferred delivery mode, they are not always feasible. SAT facilitator/s or colleagues may be based in different countries or regions and lack travel budget, or travel may be restricted for reasons related to natural disasters, politics or health (for example, COVID-19). This appendix was created to support online delivery of the SAT, which has been tested thoroughly and found to work well.

The recommended methodology for online delivery of the SAT is detailed below. Recommendations (for example, relating to number of participants, external facilitator/s, number of domains, criteria and standards) are the same for in-person and online facilitation.

How long will the process take?

For organisations implementing programs – an introductory briefing (1 hour), four workshops (2 to 3 hours each), plus individual preparation (approximately 2 hours). Total: 11 to 15 hours.

For research and learning organisations – an introductory briefing (1 hour), three workshops (2 hours each), plus individual preparation (approximately 2 hours). Total: 9 hours.

The process can be adapted to suit the needs and availability of the personnel involved.

Meeting and workshop breakdown for online SAT facilitation of implementing and research and learning organisations

Meeting and workshop	Purpose	Resources
Introductory briefing meeting	Introduce facilitator/s and participants Introduce tool • Definitions and language • Continuum, domains, criteria	Appendices A, B & C
Workshop 1	**Implementing organisations** Introduce and work through domains 1 and 2 (5 criteria)	Appendices A, B, C & D
	Research and learning organisations Introduce and work through domain 4 (3 criteria)	
Workshop 2	**Implementing organisations** Introduce and undertake domains 3 and 4 (3 criteria)	Appendices A, B, C & D
	Research and learning organisations Introduce and work through domain 5 (3 criteria)	

Workshop 3	**Implementing organisations** Introduce and work through domain 5 (3 criteria)	Appendices A, B, C & D
	Research and learning organisations Recap domain findings, work through VRAP, wrap up SAT process	Appendix E
Workshop 4	**Implementing organisations** Recap domain findings, work through VRAP, wrap up SAT process	Appendix E
	Research and learning organisations N/A	

Preparatory work (prework) is particularly important when delivering the SAT online. The facilitator/s and contact point (CP) should emphasise the need for prework in the lead-up to the briefing meeting and individual workshops. Prework prior to the briefing meeting should focus on reviewing the continuum and glossary definitions to identify areas where greater clarity and explanation are required. Prework prior to the workshops should focus on reviewing the upcoming domains and criteria being worked through. This prework will enable efficient use of the time allocated to the online workshops, which are shorter than the in-person workshops.

Sample briefing meeting agenda | 1 hour

Objectives	Activity	Approx time needed	Resources
• Introduce the SAT and process and why we are doing it • Check understanding of key terminology • Ensure that everyone is comfortable with the process	1. Introductions (if needed)	10 mins	Materials emailed prior to meeting: • Self-assessment objectives, outline of steps and proposed dates, • Appendices A & B
	2. Objectives of self-assessment process	10 mins	
	3. Share steps and proposed dates; briefly introduce the GEDSI continuum and scoring process	20 mins	
	4. Introduce the glossary of definitions, and domains/criteria for scoring. Ensure all participants understand the terms and the meanings of the criteria and standards	20 mins	

Refer to Step 2 for further information relating to the initial meeting with SAT participants.

Sample workshop 1 – implementing organisations | 2 to 3 hours

If possible, allocate 3 hours for the first workshop covering domains 1 and 2 so that all 5 standards can be worked through. Workshops 2, 3 and 4 can be limited to 2 hours. Below is a sample workshop covering domains 1 and 2.

Objectives	Activity	Time	Resources needed
Establish ground rules for the workshop and create safe space for participants to contribute freely and openly	1. Brief re-introductions, collectively agree and establish group norms and expectations for the workshop; include a further warm-up activity/icebreaker to help group to relax and bond if needed and appropriate	15 mins	
Self-assessment overview	2. Review and summarise the self-assessment tool. Explain the breakout groups and methodology	10 mins	Appendix C
Self-assessment discussion – domain 1	3. Work through criteria for domain 1 (breakout group discussions)	50 mins	Appendix D
Domain 1 cont.	4. Breakout groups report back to plenary; discussion with all participants	20 mins	
Short break		**30 mins**	
Domain 2	5. Work through criteria for domain 2 (breakout group discussions)	40 mins	
Domain 2 cont.	6. Breakout groups report back to plenary; discussion with all participants	10 mins	
Wrap up	7. Sum up, ask for informal feedback and give reminder about next workshop/s	5 mins	

Refer to Step 3 for further information relating to SAT facilitation.

Sample workshop – validation, reflection and action planning (VRAP) | 2 hours

This template can be adapted to suit the 2 hour workshops for both implementing and research programs.

Objectives	Activity	Time	Resources needed
Energiser and norms	1. Quick energiser, remind participants of the agreements/norms	5 mins	
Recap previous workshop, data validation	2. SAT facilitators present synthesised scoring outcomes and evidence. Desk review or key informant interview findings can be presented too – facilitator/s to allow additional time as needed	15 mins	
Putting it into practice: GEDSI priority areas for action	3. Action plan discussion in breakout groups	40 mins	
Break	**Short break**	**10 mins**	
Actioning priorities (group)	4. Each group is allocated two priority areas for action planning (use the GEDSI Action Plan template)	20 mins	Appendix E
Actioning priorities (plenary)	5. Report back and reach agreement on priorities in plenary	20 mins	
Conclusion and workshop feedback	6. Identify and agree on next steps to progress plan	10 mins	

Refer to Step 5 for further information relating to the VRAP process.

Q&A for online facilitation

Decisions to be made	Considerations
Which applications and/or platforms are best suited for online facilitation and SAT delivery?	The facilitator/s and CP should determine the platform with which the participants are most comfortable (for example, Zoom, Teams or organisation-based conference call software). The platform chosen should ideally have the following capabilities – breakout rooms, closed captions or transcription in-built for improved accessibility, reactions (for example, hand raising), and video, in addition to audio if internet bandwidth allows. Applications such as Mentimeter enable anonymous responses, but some participants may not have the technology or be familiar with it. Time is very tight for the online workshops, so if in doubt, stick to low-tech methods.
How will participants call into the workshops? Will several participants call into the online platform from the one room?	The CP should try to arrange for participants to call in individually to the workshop to facilitate meaningful engagement. If circumstances do not allow for this, the facilitator/s should consider how to gauge individual levels of understanding and prompt discussion (for example, by utilising Mentimeter).

Citation: Water for Women. (2025). *Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Self-Assessment Tool: Towards Transformation in Development and Climate Resilience Programs – Facilitation Guide.* https://www.waterforwomenfund.org/en/news/gender-equality-disability-and-social-inclusion-self-assessment-tool.aspx

Cover image: After visiting the existing water source, WfW partners from SNV and International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Nepal, the Rural Municipal Vice Chairperson and community members reflect on climate risks to their water supply and community in Lohtse, Dailekh. Credit: SNV / Ram Prakash Singh

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About Water for Women

Water for Women supports improved health, gender equality and well-being in Asian and Pacific communities through climate-resilient and socially inclusive WASH projects and research. It is the Australian Government's flagship WASH program, investing AUD159.9 million over seven years. Water for Women partnered with civil society organisations, research organisations and local partners to deliver 40 projects in 16 countries from 2018 to 2024. Knowledge and learning are central to Water for Women, positioning the Fund as an important contributor to global knowledge development and sharing in climate-resilient, inclusive WASH. Water for Women's Learning Agenda promotes collaborative learning, knowledge development and sharing to support long-term transformative change to WASH policy and practice globally.

Find out more at
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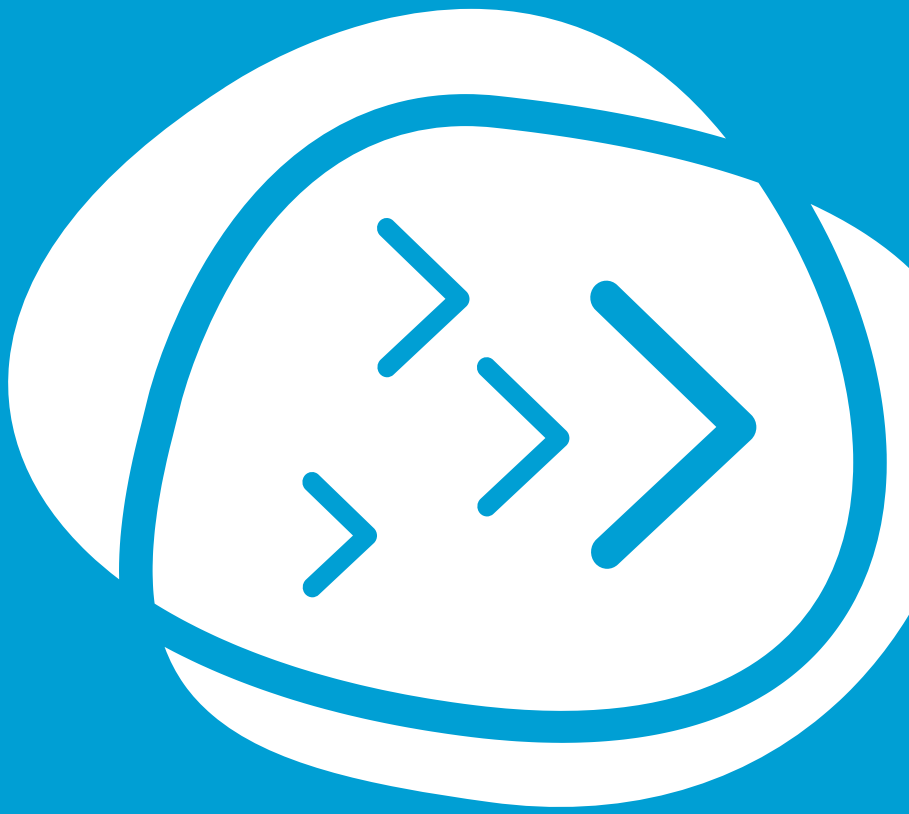

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