

TOOL 3.5

Integrate Gender Concerns into Baseline Community Assessments

- » **GOAL:** Develop a gender-sensitive understanding of community dynamics
- » **TARGET UNIT:** Community Engagement and/or Independent Gender Expert

Most infrastructure projects will include early-stage social and environmental baseline assessments to help the company understand the project-affected community. While guidance for best practices in baseline community assessments and community mapping is well documented in many industries, this tool will help ensure that these processes are gender sensitive. Including an investigation into the differing experiences of men and women in the community in these assessments is critical. It requires the collection of gender-disaggregated data about the varying roles, responsibilities, and resource access in the community, as outlined here.

If assessments have already been performed and/or if a project is already in operation, review previous baseline assessments to determine whether they included a gender dimension. If they do not, consider conducting a supplementary assessment to gather baseline data on women. This, thorough data collection and analysis, will allow community teams to understand the social and gender dynamics within a community, the potential risks and opportunities the project will introduce, and possible challenges to the acquisition of social license and pursuit of shared benefits. The findings from this assessment can help adjust community assessment and engagement programs to ensure that they are contributing to effective development programs and strong social license to operate. The results of these assessments also can serve as a benchmark for environmental, social, or human rights impact assessments.

Pre-Assessment Preparation

Before starting an assessment, use the guidelines detailed in Table 3C to ensure that your approach will lead to the design of a gender-sensitive baseline community assessment.

TABLE 3C | Preparing for Community Assessments: A Checklist

DETAIL ASSESSMENT GOALS TO IDENTIFY

CHECK
IF YES

Gender roles and responsibilities in the community

Access to and control of resources based on gender

Practical gender needs: What women and men need to help them with their livelihoods and respective daily activities, based on their roles and responsibilities

Strategic gender needs: What women need to improve their quality of life as well as their societal status and equality in relation to that of men

Potential positive or negative project impacts on any of the above factors

DESIGNATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDUCTING THE ASSESSMENT

(See [TOOL 3.4: Terms of Reference for Independent Gender Expert.](#))

CHECK
IF YES

Hire an independent gender expert or experts to conduct data collection and analysis

If a team is hired, make sure it is appropriately gender balanced

Hire the expert(s) early in the assessment process, to enable thorough understanding of the local context, culture, and customs and to enhance their ability to provide knowledgeable advice and guidance

The expert(s) should be familiar with survey, interview, and research techniques for communities, and between and within social groups

FOCUS ON DETAILS IN ASSESSMENT DESIGN

(See Tables 3E and 3F for more on compiling, comparing, and assessing data on activities, access, and control.)

CHECK
IF YES

When gathering data, examine the different roles men and women play within the community in terms of the activities that they perform as well as men’s and women’s differing access to and control of key resources. For example, women may take on significant responsibility for managing the household or for farming land, but they may not be the legal or formal owners of the property or land that they live on or use. Women also statistically have less formal access to bank accounts.

Consider the ways in which the project might impact men’s and women’s routines and daily lives. For instance, environmental pollution may require women to spend more hours of the day collecting fresh water.

Explore access and control issues:

- Possible security concerns in collecting water
- An increased time burden because of distance to water or access to services such as transport, energy, or water could make it more difficult for women to meet other responsibilities
- Women may not have control over transport to the water

UPDATE THE PROCESS FOR A GENDER-INFORMED BASELINE ASSESSMENT

CHECK
IF YES

Ensure the data is gender-disaggregated

Ensure the process is transparent

Ensure women’s participation and consultation

MAXIMIZE USE OF RESULTS

CHECK
IF YES

Share and validate the assessment results with members of the community

Ensure community understanding of indicators—specifically as they relate to women

Gather Data for Baseline Assessment

A baseline community assessment should draw from secondary sources (preexisting data) as well as primary sources (through community consultations). In all cases, it is imperative that the data is disaggregated by sex and other socioeconomic factors such as socioeconomic level, caste, religion, ethnic group, age, literacy status, marital status (single, widowed, divorced), and disability, as noted earlier. If it is not possible to disaggregate all data by sex, prioritize by highest relevance for the decisions that will be made about the project and community initiatives.

Step 1. Identify data sources

Table 3D features examples of secondary and primary data sources that can be used to inform baseline community assessments, followed by ways to ensure the gender sensitivity of this information.

TABLE 3D | Stocktaking Questionnaire for Gender in Community Engagement

SECONDARY SOURCES (PREEXISTING DATA)¹⁵ <i>Preexisting data sources usually provide quantitative data</i>	HOW TO ENSURE GENDER SENSITIVITY OF DATA
Local, regional, or national government data	Is the data gender-disaggregated, and is there an equal balance of information on women and men? Is information on women’s independence or women’s services included, such as percentage of women with land titles, or percentage of healthcare workers who are female?
Census statistics	
Health surveys from NGOs or government entities	
Data about gender-based violence	
Tax ledgers	
Ethnographic or university studies	Are women’s stories included?
Local histories or historical societies	Is data from women’s groups (women’s community groups, women business associations, etc.) included?
	Is the data gender-disaggregated?
Community, business, or trade associations	
Previous environmental, social, and/or human rights impact assessments conducted by the company	
PRIMARY SOURCES (THROUGH COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS)	HOW TO ENSURE GENDER-SENSITIVE DATA AND DATA COLLECTION
Local census	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the data gender-disaggregated? • To what extent does the census count women who are not heads of household?
Focus groups	Is there equal balance in the interviews and consultations with men and women? Are women-only focus groups held in communities/contexts in which women may not speak candidly in front of men?
Household surveys	Is there equal balance in the interviews and consultations with men and women?
Livelihood surveys	Is there equal balance in the interviews and consultations with men and women?
Open dialogue	Are women equal participants?

¹⁵ This list was adapted in part from: Minerals Council of Australia, Voluntary Community Investment: A Strategic Approach That Incorporates Gender. A Toolkit for the Extractives Industry, Canberra: Minerals Council of Australia, 2014.

Interviews with individuals	Are women equal participants?
Consultations with groups such as:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are women equal participants? • Are women-only focus groups held in communities/contexts in which women may not speak candidly in front of men?
Transect walk	Walk through various parts of the community (with community permission) to see different spheres of community life, including those dominated by women and those dominated by men.

Step 2. Ensure gender-equitable data collection: include women’s voices in the data collection process

If community engagement professionals focus only on traditional structures for community consultation (for instance, local government, local leaders, church representatives), in many communities this means prioritizing the voices of traditional leaders, who are often men. Similarly, if the community engagement team asks to meet with community representatives such as elected officials and community elders, women may not hold any of these positions. As a result, women’s needs and concerns may not be raised during these meetings and women’s perspectives could wind up being left out.

Cultural, logistical, or other reasons related to gender roles and responsibilities within the community can also mean that without a good understanding of gender roles and community structure, men and women may not be equitably included. For instance, while women may be present in negotiations or community meetings, they may not feel comfortable speaking in front of men or may not be allowed to speak while men are present. Their gender roles and responsibilities also could preclude their attendance in meetings or consultations if scheduling doesn’t take into account women’s availability, schedules, and/or transportation and other logistical constraints.

Alternative Approaches to Ensure Inclusivity

In light of these barriers to participation, community engagement professionals will need to modify their techniques in order to encourage increased women’s participation in the assessment process. Such modifications might include:

- Ensuring that both women and men are involved in the analysis
- Using additional social assessment techniques to guarantee women’s voices are accounted for, such as:
 - Conducting meetings and interviews with:
 - Key informants

- Women-only focus groups
- Mothers focus groups
- Women of varying ethnic and social classes to avoid elite capture (a situation in which resources or benefits meant for the community are usurped by individuals or groups who are more well off)
- Healthcare centers and support providers for survivors of gender-based violence
- Accommodating women to ensure their participation:
 - Determine the most convenient meeting times and locations to encourage women's attendance
 - Investigate potential obstacles to women's attendance and provide solutions (such as transportation, childcare, support for domestic work)
- Using tools to assess the differing practical and strategic needs of women and men:
 - **Practical gender needs:** What women and men need to help them with their survival and respective daily activities, based on their socially accepted roles and responsibilities
 - **Strategic gender needs:** What women need in order to advance their societal standing and equality in relation to that of men¹⁶

Step 3. Account for sensitive issues in data collection

Some of the issues to be researched during the baseline community assessment may be highly sensitive, such as violence, alcoholism, and prostitution. Some issues that may not seem sensitive—such as changing the distribution of labor within the home or community, or where project-related economic changes increase stress within a household—could touch on sensitivities, for instance, around changing gender roles.

The research team needs to be aware of these sensitivities, as well as the local context and cultural norms, so they can conduct the assessment respectfully while not compromising thoroughness. For instance, in situations in which men and women may have different perspectives or experiences, or where cultural conditions mean that men and women cannot speak freely about these concerns in front of one another, it may be important to hold gender-segregated or individual consultations, and to build trust over time with community members—especially with women community members. You also should take into consideration the individuals who will conduct the research. In fact, some companies hire contractors or local NGOs with preexisting relationships with the local communities and understanding of the local culture to perform the baseline community assessment or the other recommended activities noted in this toolkit.

¹⁶ Adriana Eftimie, Katherine Heller, and John Strongman, [Gender Dimensions of the Extractive Industries: Mining for Equity](#), Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009, 22.

Capitalizing on local knowledge and relationships can provide a great deal of added value. Still, it is important to ensure the independence of local contractors or NGOs so they can provide objective data about the community.

In addition, the research team must tread carefully when asking for sensitive information, such as trends in violence, alcoholism, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, since local residents may find it difficult to discuss these issues. Equipping researchers with information on local support and counseling services and proper referral pathways before they start probing with sensitive questions will help bridge the discomfort and enable the necessary data collection while providing genuinely needed assistance. Experience has shown that it can take some finesse—and trust-building—to get an accurate picture of such delicate and sensitive issues in many communities.

Step 4. Develop questions to integrate gender into existing baseline community assessments¹⁷

Table 3E includes sample questions that can be used to probe gender differences in common community baseline topics. While not an exhaustive list, it offers examples of ways to integrate gender into baseline assessments.

TABLE 3E | Sample Baseline Assessment Questions that Probe Gender Differences

Education

Level of education achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the level of education achieved by men and boys, and women and girls?
Access to school and frequency of attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the average school dropout rate for boys and girls? If there is a significant difference between the dropout rates of boys and girls, to what do you attribute that difference? • What is the rate of absenteeism for boys and girls during the school year? If there is a significant difference in the rate of absenteeism, to what do you attribute that difference? • Have there been any reports of sexual harassment or gender-based violence in school settings (student-on-student or teacher-on-student)?

¹⁷ Much of this list was derived from Minerals Council of Australia, Voluntary Community Investment: A Strategic Approach That Incorporates Gender; World Bank, [“Gender-Responsive Social Analysis: A Guidance Note Incorporating Social Dimensions into Bank-Supported Projects,”](#) June 2005, 17-19; and [Why Gender Matters: A Resource Guide for Integrating Gender Considerations into Communities Work at Rio Tinto,](#) 2009.

Employment

Income and access to money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the average income for men and women?
Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do men and women have equal access to training opportunities for formal employment? • Do men and women have equal access to formal employment opportunities?
Access to childcare services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can women in the community access childcare services? To what extent is income or social class the determining factor for access?

Population and Health

Life expectancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average life expectancy for men and women?
Access to healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of doctors who are female? • Percentage of nurses who are female? • Is there proper OBGYN care? • Distance/time required to travel to receive healthcare, including during labor? • Are healthcare providers trained in how to respond to gender-based violence?
Mortality rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a high prevalence of childbirth-related mortality compared to the rest of the country or the world? If so, what is the reason? • What is the time or distance women are required to wait or travel to see a healthcare provider during pregnancy or childbirth?
Nutrition status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nutritional status of men and boys, and women and girls?
Birth rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the percentage of teen/adolescent pregnancy and birth?
Health indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there are differences in these indicators between men and women, what do such differences suggest? <p><i>TIP: Place particular emphasis on indicators with strong gender implications, such as incidence of sexually transmitted infections.</i></p>
Literacy rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a correlation between gender differences in literacy rates and gender differences in rates of school absenteeism or dropouts?

Household Dynamics and Vulnerability

Household and marriage structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and percentage of female-headed households • What types of marriage structures exist in the community? Is polygamy common?
Control over financial resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In households in which men are the income earners, do women have access to this money? Are decisions about family budgeting and spending made by men and women together, or does one have more decision-making power than the other? • When women earn income, do they have control over this money? <i>NOTE: In polygamous societies, women may share their income with their husband while their husband is also receiving income from other wives.</i> • Can women hold their own bank accounts? • Is it common for women to have their own bank accounts? <i>TIP: See Table 3G for guidance on understanding access to and control of resources.</i>
Differences in socioeconomic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are female-headed households different than male-headed households, socioeconomically? • What are the reasons for these differences? • Do men and women attribute these differences to the same reasons?
Participation in household and community development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do both men and women participate in activities that contribute to household or community development? • Are these contributions based on gender, age, ethnicity, or other diversity factors? • What is the division of labor among household and domestic/family responsibilities?
Prevalence of gender-based violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is gender-based violence more prevalent in certain subpopulations of the community, such as particular social classes, economic classes, or ethnic groups?

Community

Number and percentage of women in leadership roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What types of leadership roles do women occupy? • Are women leaders in municipal government in addition to community organizations?
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Community decision making

- To what extent are women involved in consultations and community decision making?
- How is community information conveyed? (Word of mouth, newspaper, radio, community noticeboard, etc.) Do women and men get information differently?

TIP: In some communities, women and men may receive information differently because of their different daily responsibilities and social networks. For example, men may hear news directly from local leaders or businesspeople while in town or at work; whereas in some communities, women may be attending to household or agricultural responsibilities and hear news from other women or women’s groups. Women may also have less access to some information because of community gender/power dynamics or because of gaps in literacy between women and men.

- Does participation in consultations and community decisions require literacy—for example, are materials written on paper or on a bulletin board or are alternative media like radio and loudspeakers used?
- Number/percent of people belonging to indigenous/ethnic minority groups

Existence of and access to transport and mobility

- What are the common types of transport used by community members?
- Do men and women have equal access and ability to use them?
- If there are barriers to the use of these transport methods, what are these barriers?
- What are the implications of these barriers—for instance, do men or women have difficulty getting goods to market?

Crime rates

- What is the rate of gender-based violence?
- What is the rate of crimes reported that are related to gender-based violence?
- What are the policies/capacity of local authorities/police when it comes to gender-based violence? Are local law authorities trained in the handling of gender-based violence complaints? Are complaints acknowledged and taken seriously?

TIP: Note that the rate of reporting on crimes related to gender-based violence is likely much lower than incidences of those crimes.¹⁸

¹⁸ Note that in many countries, gender-based violence is not considered a crime.

Resources

Levels of access to and control over resources

- Do men and women have different levels of access to and control over:
 - Buying land/property (whether to live on, or for subsistence agriculture or cash crops)?
 - Renting or using land/property?
 - Labor?
 - Equipment?
 - Cash?
 - Bank accounts?
 - Education/training?
- If so, what are the reasons for these differences?
- Do men and women attribute these differences to the same factors?

TIP: See Table 3G for guidance on understanding access to and control of resources.

Roles and Responsibilities

TIP: Use the activity profile in Table 3F to document and analyze gender differences in roles, responsibilities, and time usage.

Time usage

- Do men and women work for equal amounts of time per day (paid or unpaid work)?
- Have women expressed interest in pursuing other activities, such as entrepreneurship, if they had more time?

TIP: Women typically have a much higher burden of unpaid work (such as household chores and family care responsibilities) than men. This limits their availability and ability to choose whether to spend their time pursuing more productive, marketable, or participatory activities, or even personal interests. This constraint, and the fact that this often reinforces their monetary poverty, exacerbates their “time poverty.”

Community roles

- Are there differences in the ways in which men and women participate in community consultations or decision making?
 - Are there differences in gender roles, responsibilities, and relations among subgroups (religious, ethnic/indigenous, socioeconomic classes, age)?
- TIP: This type of information might be obtained through secondary data.*
- Do women equitably participate in formal and informal institutions (including local government) and the decision-making processes within them?

Community roles *(cont.)*

- If not, are the barriers to this participation gender-specific—for example, are women intimidated or threatened if they attempt to participate and/or hold office?

TIP: Collecting insights about these dynamics can help companies flag risks associated with increasing women’s participation in decision making and leadership roles within a particular cultural context and inform plans for risk mitigation.

Views

- What are men’s and women’s goals and aspirations for themselves and their community?
- Where do men and women stand on their views of the infrastructure project—do they approve or disapprove?

Influencing Institutions

- What are the formal and informal institutions—companies, civil society organizations, labor unions, and national, regional, and local governments—and organizational structures that could either help or hinder gender equality efforts?
- Are there institutions that offer opportunities for women and men to voice their needs and concerns?

Legal Climate¹⁹

Do the local, regional, and national laws and constitution protect/guarantee:

- Physical well-being and safety, including from gender-based violence?
- Non-discrimination in the workplace and prevention of sexual harassment?
- Individual and group formal and informal rights to land and property?
- Equal access for women and men to employment, education, and healthcare?
- Equal access for women and men to public authorities and the justice system?

¹⁹ For more detailed suggestions on legal and institutional indicators for women’s equality, visit the World Bank’s [Women, Business, and the Law project](#).

Sample Method of Data Collection and Formulation: Activity and Access and Control Profiles²⁰

To collect the information suggested above, researchers may choose to create an activity profile of the community. This will be particularly useful in collecting and analyzing data on the roles and division of labor between men and women.

Table 3F features an example of an activity profile, with an additional row added to capture community activities and commitments. The understanding of the gender dynamics that underlie community roles and responsibilities will prove especially valuable when integrating gender into your social impact assessment (TOOL 3.6).

Compare the information gathered in the activity profile with the data from the access and control profile, shown in Table 3G. The access and control profile can guide the collection and analysis of data to help differentiate between men’s and women’s access to and control over resources. Examining men’s and women’s responsibilities compared to their level of access and control can help you understand the extent to which men and women may be differently impacted by a project, as well as their ability to respond to changes and stresses that a project may introduce. These sample profiles are based on the Harvard Analytical Framework for Gender Analysis, developed by the Harvard Institute for International Development in collaboration with USAID, and “A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment for the Extractive Industries,” developed by Australian Aid and Oxfam Australia.²¹

TABLE 3F | Activity Profile

ACTIVITIES	WOMEN	MEN	GIRLS	BOYS	WHERE / WHEN / AMOUNT OF TIME REQUIRED
Productive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal (paid) employment Informal income-generating activities such as paid labor and services Selling goods at market or from the home 					

²⁰ ILO, “Unit 1: A Conceptual Framework for Gender Analysis and Planning,” International Labour Organization and the Southeast Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team Online Gender Learning and Information Module.

²¹ C. Hill, C. Madden, and N. Collins, *A Guide to Gender Impact Assessment for the Extractive Industries*, Oxfam, Melbourne, 2017.

ACTIVITIES	WOMEN	MEN	GIRLS	BOYS	WHERE / WHEN / AMOUNT OF TIME REQUIRED
<p>Productive (cont.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture or fishing other than for household use • Other 					
<p>Reproductive/Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care of children and elderly or sick family members • Subsistence farming or fishing • Household food collection, preparation and cooking • Collecting water • Collecting fuel • Collecting fodder • Care of livestock • Healthcare • Other 					
<p>Community Involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of community infrastructure (such as water resources or education facilities) • Participation in community meetings • Political organizing • Community event organizing (such as cultural or religious ceremonies and celebrations) • Religious activities • Recreation/leisure • Other 					

TABLE 3G | Access and Control Profile

	ACCESS		CONTROL	
	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN	MEN
<p>Community and/or Household Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land for subsistence agriculture • Land for cash crops • Water • Labor • Equipment • Community infrastructure • Cash • Bank accounts • Social services • Legal services • Other 				
<p>Community (or Sociopolitical) Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income for essential family needs • Income for discretionary spending • Royalties/compensation • Decision-making authority • Other non-cash assets • Opportunities for education, training, or knowledge-building • Status or prestige • Other 				
<p>Benefits from Use of Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cash income • Assets ownership • Basic needs (food, clothing, shelter) • Education • Political power/influence • Other 				

Analyze the Data

Once the data collection for the baseline community assessment is complete, the information needs to be compiled, organized, and analyzed. Ideally, the independent gender expert who gathered the data should handle the analysis stage as well.

Full community participation—including men and women—in the analysis is key. To ensure equal women’s participation, conduct the analysis at times and places that will make it easier for them to attend (and ask women in order to determine this). Make sure to find out whether women may have difficulty attending due to needs that can be met by the company (such as childcare, transportation, etc.). Publicize the meetings broadly and extensively (and sufficiently in advance) so that all community members are aware of their schedule. Make use of multiple approaches to communicate this information, including word of mouth, radio, and posters, to ensure everyone receives the information. Your goals for the analysis are to identify in general terms:

- Gender differences along social, cultural, economic, or political lines
- Differing views and wishes of men and women

Be sure to share the results widely throughout the entire community. Request feedback so that you can validate the results with male and female community members alike.

Use the findings from the baseline community assessment and the entire assessment phase to guide your company’s planning and implementation for both the project and company-led community initiatives. **TOOLS 3.7–3.14** focus on planning and implementation—the “Address” phase—of gender-sensitive community engagement initiatives.