



# GENDER ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



## Gender Assessment Framework

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## GENDER ASSESSMENT

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The CEPPS Gender Assessment (GA) is a core component of the CEPPS inclusive monitoring, evaluation, and learning (IMEL) approach. It is designed to be leveraged in programs that bring together multiple international and local partners to support sustainable, locally led democratic development. CEPPS partners collaboratively conduct GAs focused on the gendered experiences of different groups of women in a country with CEPPS programming to better understand: the status of women in the focus country; barriers to women’s participation in political and electoral processes, including any specific target groups such as young women, rural women, women with disabilities etc.; and opportunities for change. Based on data collected on the status of women and their political participation, as well as relevant policies and procedures related to women’s participation in-country, Gender Assessments help to inform the focus of CEPPS programming.

### Gender Assessment Purpose

While there may be additional purposes specific to the program, generally a CEPPS Gender Assessment will serve to:

- Understand current levels of participation of different groups of women in political and electoral processes, including in what areas they are and are not currently engaging and priority areas for increased engagement.
- Assess the barriers and opportunities for different groups of women to participate meaningfully in political and electoral processes in the target country; and
- Inform both the program baseline or any other start-up assessments that may be taking place as well as activity design and implementation; and
- Provide the foundation for the design and implementation of the program’s Gender Action Plan to operationalize the assessment recommendations.

### CEPPS Gender Assessment Framework

The CEPPS Gender Assessment Framework forms the basis of the assessment. The overarching questions guiding the assessment are:

1. What are the barriers to women’s participation in political and electoral processes?
  - a. In particular, what barriers do different groups of women in the focus country face and how do barriers for women differ across identity groups? For example: rural women; ethnic or religious minority women; Indigenous women; women with disabilities; caste-affected women; lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex+ women; and young women.
2. What would foster greater and more meaningful participation by different groups of women in political and electoral processes?
3. What kinds of interventions would help transform inequitable gender norms?

The GA Framework expands upon these lines of inquiry. It provides a list of key questions in 15 core technical areas to elicit nuanced information on gender dynamics and the status of different groups of women in a country as well as to identify the challenges and barriers to their full and equitable

participation in public life and windows of opportunities for meaningful change. While several of these categories offer recommended question sets for any gender assessment, implementing partners determine which of the technical areas should be included and if/how they need to be tailored to be responsive to the context and planned program activities.

Assessment Topic	Assessment Question
<b>Basic Country Information (Background)</b>	What are the country's demographics (population, ethnic/Indigenous/caste/religious groups, gender and sexual identity breakdown)? What notable differences may exist in different regions? Along what lines do any social cleavages exist?
	What is the socio-economic context of the country (economy, gender and development indices, employment, education)?
	What is the political landscape of the country?
	How has the country been affected by COVID-19? Include relevant effects on health, economics, and public policy related to containing the spread of the virus and recovering from the pandemic.
	If applicable: what is the context of the conflict and how has it impacted the country?
<b>Status of Women in the Country (Background)</b>	What kind of support exists from UN agencies, international NGOs, and local NGOs for gender mainstreaming and gender equality work?
	What kind of support exists within domestic institutions for gender mainstreaming and gender equality work?
	Which international and regional conventions related to gender equality and women's rights (CEDAW, Beijing, UNSCR 1325, African Women's Protocol, etc.) has the country signed and ratified? To what extent are they being implemented? To what extent have they have been integrated into domestic law?
	What domestic legislation exists, if any, protecting women's rights and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender?
	What are the predominant gender norms? How, if at all, does this vary among and between different groups of women?
	What percentage of women participate in the workforce? What types of jobs do women hold? How do women's salaries compare to those of men? What variations exist for different groups of women?

	What kind of women's rights movement(s) exist? What are the key women's rights organizations and where are they located? What are their particular focus areas, if any? What differences exist, if any, across different groups of women and their representation in women's rights organizations?
	How and to what extent do different groups of women experience discrimination? How and to what extent do different groups of women experience gender-based violence?
	What cultural norms and/or political, structural, financial, and social dynamics may put different groups of women at increased risk for violence before, during, or after an election?
	What is the status of minority and marginalized women (LGBTQI+, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, Indigenous peoples, youth, scheduled castes, IDPs, refugees)?
	If applicable: what has been the impact of the conflict on different groups of women?
	How have different groups of women been impacted by COVID-19? How, if at all, does this differ from the ways in which similarly situated men and boys have been affected?
<b>Civil Society</b>	What is the status of and socio-political landscape for civic organizing around women's rights and gender empowerment? How may this vary at the local, regional, and national levels? How may this vary across different groups of women?
	Are there any formal restrictions or informal barriers in place that make formal registration of CSOs difficult or inaccessible for women's CSOs?
	How active are women's organizations? What are their priority issues? How does this vary across regions, ethnicities, or other demographics?
	To what extent do democracy and governance and human rights-focused CSOs integrate priority gender and women's rights issues and perspectives into their work?
	To what extent do CSOs make efforts to specifically include women in their outreach and advocacy efforts? How might this vary across different groups of women? How might this vary across different types of CSOs?
	To what extent do women hold leadership positions in CSOs? What types of positions do they generally hold? How does vary, if at all, across different groups of women, across different regions, and/or across different sectors?

	<p>To what extent is gender sensitivity and advancing gender equality integrated into the programs and activities implemented by CSOs?</p>
	<p>To what extent is gender-based violence a concern for women CSO leaders and/or activists? How, if at all, does this vary across region, sector, and different groups of women?</p>
	<p>Does a CSO observatory or similar mechanism exist to monitor women's rights, gender equality, and implementation of relevant legislation? If so, how is it staffed and funded? What is its relationship to women's CSOs? What is its relationship to the legislature?</p>
	<p>To what extent do women's organizations provide technical expertise and/or consult with legislators and other elected/appointed officials? What variations may exist across different types of women's organizations?</p>
	<p>To what extent do women's organizations provide advocacy on the local/regional/national levels? How might this vary across different types of women's organizations?</p>
	<p>Have any CSOs submitted shadow or alternative reports to the CEDAW Committee? If so, what are the notable findings?</p>
	<p>Have any CSOs submitted shadow or alternative reports to UN committees on other international treaties? If so, have they been gender sensitive and highlighted both the specific challenges facing women and the status of women in relation to the treaty? If yes, what are the notable relevant findings?</p>
<p><b>Legal Electoral Framework and Domestic Electoral System</b></p>	<p>To what extent does the electoral legal framework provide clear provisions on the equal civil and political rights of all women and prohibit discrimination based on gender? To what extent does this hold true for other marginalized identities, as well?</p>
	<p>What aspects, if any, of the election law, political party law, or other election-related legislation and regulations indirectly or directly disadvantage women and/or create barriers to participation for them? How, if at all, does this vary among different groups of women?</p>
	<p>What laws and regulations are in place to provide protections for women candidates, voters, party supporters, or election officials? To what extent do these laws and regulations also extend to gender diverse individuals?</p>
	<p>What measures exist, if any, within the electoral framework/laws to address the additional barriers women face within the system of the country being observed? How are these measures enforced? How might this differ across different groups of women?</p>

	What impact does the electoral system have on the opportunities for different groups of women to participate compared to men?
	What quotas or temporary special measures exist to increase the number of elected women? What, if any, measures have been taken to ensure the effectiveness and enforcement of such measures?
	Are men and women given equal treatment by the election management body (EMB) in qualifying to be on the ballot?
	Do women face additional and/or disproportionate barriers to candidate registration, such as with signature collection and/or fee requirements? How, if at all, does this vary among different groups of women?
	What is the numerical representation of women in all levels of political leadership at the national, municipal, and local level? How are multiply marginalized women, such as women with disabilities, ethnic minority women, etc. represented in these numbers?
	What is the substantive representation of women in politics at the national, municipal, and local level? How might this vary across different groups of women?
	What are the barriers to the political participation of different groups of women? How may this vary across region, ethnicity, class, etc.?
	Are there strategies, either based in the legislation, party statutes, or more informal practices, to promote women’s political participation at the national, provincial, and local levels? What variations may exist among different groups of women?
	What laws, if any, exist on violence against women in elections and politics? Where they exist, how do these laws get implemented and enforced? How effective are they?
	To what extent are gender-based violence considerations part of any existing codes of conduct? If so, to what extent are they implemented and enforced? How effective are they?
<b>Political Parties</b>	What mechanisms, if any, are in place to guarantee that women candidates are equitably fielded by the party? To what extent are these strategies consistently practiced by the parties? How effective are they? If they are not consistently utilized, what prevents them from being put into practice?
	Is there a mandate or procedures for the party to increase the representation of women in each party structure? To what extent are these procedures consistently practiced by the parties? How effective

	are they? If they are not consistently utilized, what prevents them from being put into practice?
	Does the party possess an updated database and/or lists of women qualified for elected and appointed political positions at different levels of government?
	What percentage of men and women are nominated as candidates on party lists? Were advances made in the representation of women on lists compared to the past election? How may this vary for different groups of women?
	In what position are women on party lists, if relevant?
	Does the party have policies or a code of conduct in place to prohibit members or leaders from deterring or blocking women from accepting or filling the posts to which they were elected?
	To what extent do women help determine or give input on candidate selection? Are there any ways in which the candidate selection process disadvantages women?
	How does the party actively recruit women to run for office at the sub-national (local, regional, state) levels of government? Is this mandated within the party?
	Does the party conduct trainings for women candidates to improve their chances of being elected to office?
	Does the party provide financial support to women candidates? If so, how this support compares to that provided to male candidates? How may this vary for different groups of women?
	How does the party promote fair, equitable, positive images of women politicians when developing messages to the media and selecting party spokespeople?
	How and to what extent does the party consult with women members to ensure they are participating equitably in developing the party's procedures and policies and in leadership? How is gender addressed in party statutes, regulations and/or platforms?
	Is there a women's wing, commission, or branch? How does the party provide training and/or financial support to the women's wing, commission or branch? And is this mandated in the party? Does this group have representation on the party's executive committee? Does



	<p>the leader of this group attend the annual party congress? Are there special voting rights for the women's wing, branch or commission?</p>
	<p>Does the party have an equal opportunity committee that monitors and implements regulations for equal treatment of men and women? If so, how active is that committee? To what extent are their decisions and recommendations enforced?</p>
	<p>What kind of support does the party provide support to women seeking to advance themselves internally? Are there formal and/or informal mentoring programs in which more experienced party members provide guidance to emerging women leaders?</p>
	<p>To what extent and how does the party leadership encourage and support women seeking training and development opportunities outside the party?</p>
	<p>How, if at all, does the party ensure that women leaders receive adequate training to carry-out their duties?</p>
	<p>What type of training does the party provide to members or candidates on women's issues and/or gender sensitivity?</p>
	<p>Did the party nominate women for high-level or cabinet-level government positions the last time the party was in power? To what extent, if at all, does the party take gender into account when considering candidates for high-level or cabinet-level government positions?</p>
	<p>Does the party adhere to an electoral code of conduct? If so, how does it address gender? How widely accepted is it?</p>
	<p>What types of violence (what form and content) do different groups of women in political parties' experience? Who are the perpetrators? Who are the victims?</p>
	<p>What policies, if any, do individual parties have on violence against women in politics and elections? If so, how and to what extent are these policies implemented and enforced? How effective are they?</p>
	<p>Are there private, secure mechanisms for filing complaints against sexual harassment or any form of gender-based violence (online or offline) within parties?</p>
	<p><i>In a political transition:</i> What was the party's stance on gender equality and women's political participation before the transition? Was it a priority? How do you think this platform influenced internal party rules and processes?</p>

	<i>In a political transition:</i> What mechanisms did the party use to consult with women members and to ensure women’s participation in important party decisions? What mechanisms will they use?
<b>Parliament and Legislatures</b>	How many women hold elected positions in parliament? What percentage of the parliament does this constitute? How many of these women represent reserved seats?
	What leadership positions, if any, do women occupy within parliament? What committee assignments do women typically receive? What is the formal basis for these assignments?
	What, if any, rules exist about membership in caucuses or other similar groups?
	What relevant affinity caucuses exist? Are they formal or informal? What is their role? How do they interact with the rest of the parliament?
	What sort of training, if any, do newly elected members of parliament receive? Does this include any training on gender analysis, gender responsive budgeting, gender equity issues, etc.?
	What resources are available to parliamentarians, for example staff, training, and/or researchers? How are these resources formally allocated? Is the current allocation gender equitable?
	What, if any, formal policies are in place negatively impact women MPs? What, if any, formal gender sensitive policies are in place that facilitate the participation of women MPs? How, if at all, do effects of these formal policies vary among different groups of women?
	What types of violence (what form and content) do different groups of women in parliament experience? Who are the perpetrators? Who are the victims?
	What, if any, informal practices are in place that negatively impact women MPs? What, if any, Informal gender sensitive practices are in place that facilitate the participation of women MPs? How, if at all, do the effects of these informal practices vary across different groups of women?
<b>Electoral Management Body and Administration</b>	What measures has the EMB taken to ensure women can serve on election management bodies at all levels and in equal numbers as men?

	<p>What positions do women hold in the election management body? (disaggregate by senior, mid, junior, ad hoc/temporary election staff and by additional relevant categories such as ethnicity, disability, etc.)</p>
<p>Does EMB have a gender unit/directorate? If so, does this department have an adequate budget and staff allocated to it? What formal and informal powers does it wield?</p>	
<p>Have decisions on election operations been taken and adjustments made with the needs of different groups women in mind? Are there any steps taken by the electoral body to mitigate gender discrimination in the election?</p>	
<p>Does the EMB’s strategic plan and/or operational plan address gender inclusion? Is this plan(s) gender mainstreamed?</p>	
<p>Has a gender audit been previously conducted by the EMB? Another body? Obtain a copy of the findings, if possible.</p>	
<p>Has the election management body adopted a clear policy on gender inclusion? If the EMB has a policy on gender inclusion, does it have an action plan or implementation plan to carry it out?</p>	
<p>Is there a specific provision in the EMB’s election budget for gender inclusion or women’s political participation activities?</p>	
<p>Does the EMB have a dedicated gender-focused staff capacity?</p>	
<p>Does the EMB disaggregate voter turnout data by sex? Is it publicly available?</p>	
<p>What is the extent of the election commission’s electoral security preparations and its relationship with domestic security forces?</p>	
<p>What is the election commission’s role in mitigating election-related violence, and role in managing election-related grievances particularly against marginalized groups?</p>	
<p>What is the election commission’s role in mitigating gender-based violence in elections?</p>	

	To what extent are diverse groups of women represented as domestic election observers?
	What is the level of confidence of citizens, particularly women, in the EMB to support and nurture a peaceful electoral environment?
<b>Voter Registration and Voters List</b>	Are different groups of women equally informed about how to register to vote, how to confirm their registration, and how to make corrections to their registration if needed? How may this vary across various groups of women?
	Do women have equal access to the voter registration process? What variations, if any, exist among various groups of women?
	What, if any, barriers exist to voter registration, including limited geographical or physical access, burdensome financial costs, or identification documents that some women would find more difficult to acquire/possess?
	What are the registration rates of different groups of men and women at all geographic levels? What are the registration rates of different groups of men and women at all geographic levels of the past election?
	What are the rates of men and women being registered as voters at all geographic levels? How does this vary among different groups of men and women? What are voting rates of women and men at all geographic levels? How does this vary across different groups of women and men?
	Is gender disaggregated voter registration information accurately collected at all geographic levels?
	Is the voters list made public in an open format such that registration rates of men and women at all geographic levels can be assessed?
	Are different groups of women disproportionately affected by problems with the voter registration process or errors on the lists?
	Does the voters list maintenance process take into account updates that disproportionately impact women, such as changes in last name?
<b>Voter Education</b>	Does the voter education conducted by the EMB, and others sufficiently address the specific needs of women? Is it effective in reaching women throughout the country? How does this vary between different groups of women?

	<p>Through what media (radio, television, in-person, posters, social media, etc.) do women receive information about political activities? How does this vary across different groups of women and in different geographic areas?</p>
	<p>Is there voter education specifically tailored for/targeting women? If so, which actors are producing this information? What information do EMBs/CSOs/international actors use to tailor this content?</p>
	<p>Does existing voter information/education have images that show different groups of women equally and in various roles? As voters, election officials, etc.?</p>
	<p>Are women and men equally able to access the information they need to make informed choices about their participation as voters, candidates or election officials? How does this vary, if at all, among different groups of women?</p>
<p><b>Campaigning</b></p>	<p>Are all parties able to campaign freely? Are there any restrictions? Does this impact different groups of men and women differently?</p>
	<p>Are women candidates able to campaign freely and securely, without undue restrictions, threats, coercion, or other forms of violence, including online? How, if at all, does this vary among between different groups of women and/or women in different regions?</p>
	<p>What efforts do political parties and candidates make to reach out to different groups of women and address their concerns and needs during the campaign? How are campaigning efforts and materials tailored to effectively reach different groups of women?</p>
	<p>Do women and men candidates campaign door to door? How, if at all, does this vary for different groups of women? How effective is this approach? What might be the impact for each one in terms of winning the vote?</p>
	<p>How are women campaigning versus men? How does this vary among different groups of women?</p>
	<p>Do women candidates have fair and equal access to public funds (where relevant), campaign funds, and any state-owned or controlled facilities? Are there formal and/or informal factors that disadvantage women in seeking and acquiring private campaign funding?</p>
	<p>Do campaign finance rules provide equal opportunity to women candidates to seek and spend campaign funds, and are those rules enforced equally?</p>
	<p>What types of electoral violence are seen in the electoral process? Are different groups of women affected differently by such violence when</p>

	compared to men? How, if at all, is the violence used against women different from that used against men?
	What types of gender-specific electoral violence are used against women? How do gender norms and/or political and social dynamics put different groups of women at an increased risk for violence?
	Are there perceived “limits” to women’s participation that are enforced through violence?
	What are the root causes, early warning signs, and incidents of violence against women in elections (VAW-E) that threaten electoral integrity?
	Do stakeholders have the capacity and political will to monitor and respond to early warning signs and incidents of violence targeting politically active women?
<b>Media and Disinformation</b>	How do the media generally portray women and their role in politics and leadership? How may this vary across different groups of women?
	Does election coverage typically fairly portray women candidates? How does this vary among different groups of women?
	To what extent is there disinformation, hate speech, perpetuation of negative stereotypes, and/or violence against women in traditional media? On social media platforms?
	To what extent is there gender-biased disinformation spread about candidates, women as voters, etc.? How is it spread? What is its impact?
	To what extent does the media convey equitable, fair, positive images of different groups of women as voters, candidates, and political leaders? If not, what are the impediments to doing so?
	To what extent do the media cover instances of violence against women in politics and elections? When addressed, how is this violence typically covered?
	What, if any, policies exist on free media time on state-run media outlets? If they exist, how equitably are they enacted?
	What types of professional media positions do women typically fill - editors, writers, assistants, etc.?
	Are female media representatives able to cover and report on electoral activities without hinderance or fear? How does this vary among different groups of women?

<b>Violence Against Women in Politics and Elections</b>	What types of electoral violence are seen in the electoral process? Are different groups of women affected differently by such violence as compared to similarly situated men? How, if at all, is the electoral violence used differently against women as against men?
	What types of gender specific electoral violence are used against women? How do existing gender norms and/or political and social dynamics put different groups of women at an increased risk of violence?
	Are there perceived "limits" to women's participation that are enforced through violence and/or intimidation?
	Do stakeholders have the capacity and the political will to effectively monitor and respond to early warning signs and incidents of violence targeting politically active women?
	Does an early warning system exist for violence in the pre- and post-election periods? If so, to what extent is this system gender responsive?
<b>Complaints Adjudication and Electoral Dispute Resolution</b>	Is the judicial system seen as independent? How may this vary among different groups of women and men and in different regions?
	Are women equally informed about the complaints process and how to bring election disputes to the correct bodies? How, if at all, does this vary among different groups of women?
	Do women face additional or disproportionate barriers in filing complaints?
	What are the rates of reported complaints by women as compared to men? How does this vary across different groups of women? What is the nature of the reported complaints?
	Do female contestants and others filing disputes believe there will be equality before the law, equal protection of the law, and due process? What, if any, differences exist among different groups of women?
	To what extent do legal bodies enforce existing laws on VAW-E?
	Do legal bodies provide remedy to electoral complaints in a timely, fair manner to women as compared to men?
	Do women have adequate resources (time, money, transportation, access to legal counsel, etc.) to bring election disputes and complaints to the correct bodies? How does this vary across different groups of women?

	What, if any, alternative dispute resolution processes exist that could provide additional support for women complainants?
<b>Election Day Voter Services and Operations</b>	Are polling places segregated by gender, and if so, what efforts are in place to ensure consistent and equitable conditions at both men and women’s’ polling places? In segregated polling places, are transgender women able to easily and safely access the polling site that corresponds to their gender?
	Are polling locations safe to get to and accessible for women? How does this vary across different groups of women?
	Are women able to vote in an accessible, secure, safe, secret, and free manner? Does this vary among different groups of women?
	What are the percentages/number of women poll workers, observers, and party agents? What are the percentages of women leaders in these positions? Is this representative of the diverse groups of women in the country?
	Are women international and citizen election observers able to observe all aspects of the electoral process?
	Are women active as election monitors at all levels, and in leadership positions? What roles do they play? Are there differences across different groups of women?
	Are women poll workers, observers, and party agents able to participate in a safe and secure way? How might this vary across different groups of women?
	What is the gender distribution of votes cast at each polling station?
	Are polling station counting processes and results accessible and safe to women? Are there differences across groups of women?
<b>Post-Election - Results Tabulation and Announcement</b>	What are the rates of voter turnout among men and women? How does this vary across different groups of women and men?
	Is the tabulation conducted in a transparent manner so that all women’s’ votes are counted?
	Are results announcements made openly and accessible so that women can see who their elected officials are? Are there variations across different groups of women?
	Are women equally able to assume the positions to which they have been elected or appointed without fear or threat of violence? How, if at all, does this vary across different groups of women?





## The Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening

The Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS) is comprised of nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organizations dedicated to advancing and supporting democratic practices and institutions around the globe. Established in 1995, CEPPS pools the expertise of three premier international organizations dedicated to democratic development: the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, the International Republican Institute, and the National Democratic Institute.

CEPPS has over 25 years of experience in collaboration and leadership in democracy, human rights and governance support. As a mission-driven, nonprofit democracy organization, we differ from many development actors by maintaining long-term relationships with political parties, election management bodies, parliaments, civil society organizations and democracy activists. CEPPS has experience supporting local partners in more than 140 countries. We have worked with our partners in all aspects of democratic governance, including civic organizations, political parties, elected bodies, and women's organizations. We have also conducted international election observations in more than 40 countries, as well as supported citizen election groups to mobilize millions of citizen observers to monitor elections and referenda.