



# GENDER MINIMUM STANDARDS

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# ACTION AGAINST HUNGER'S GENDER MINIMUM STANDARDS



Internal processes and practices contribute to an enabling environment for gender equality.



Policies and practices involving partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries are gender sensitive.



Staff are supported and encouraged to mainstream gender.



Staff capacity to mainstream gender equality is developed and reinforced.



Gender is considered in all programs.

# GENDER MINIMUM STANDARDS FAQ

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE GENDER MINIMUM STANDARDS?

Action Against Hunger's gender minimum standards were designed as measurable and verifiable standards, in line with the Gender Policy and Toolkit (2014). The standards enable all offices (headquarters or missions) within the network to be clear on what are the minimum and mandated actions to ensure gender is mainstreamed in Action Against Hunger. Every office across the Action Against Hunger network will become gender qualified once it has achieved each of the minimum standards and passed the qualification process.

## HOW DOES THE QUALIFICATION PROCESS WORK?

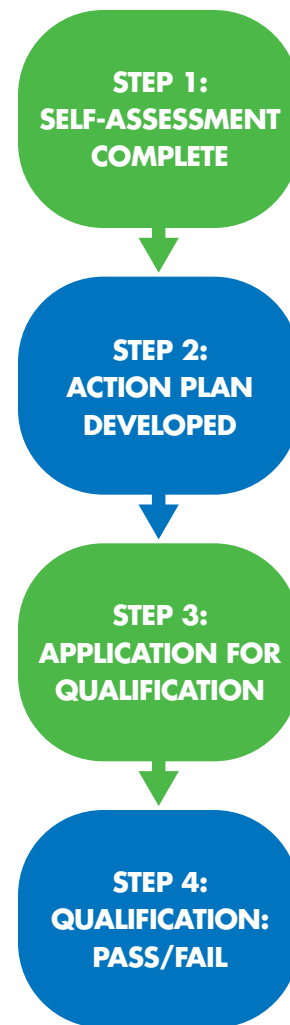
The qualification process is a structured and systematic scheme to assess the degree to which an office has achieved the gender minimum standards. The qualification process is comprised of four steps:

- **Step 1:** A self-assessment is conducted to evaluate the extent to which the minimum standards have been fulfilled.
- **Step 2:** An action plan is developed to address any unfulfilled actions to reach the standards identified in the self-assessment, including specific actions, time-frames and individuals' responsible.
- **Step 3:** Once all gender minimum standards have been met, a report is produced and the office requests an assessment.
- **Step 4:** The verification process will take place at office level. Verifications are conducted internally, by an Action Against Hunger staff that does not sit in the office that will be evaluated.

If the verification process identifies gaps in achieving the standards, the office will have 6 months to reach the outstanding actions. If completed within the period, the office will be evaluated only on the pending actions. If an assessment demonstrates an office has met the gender minimum standards, qualification is awarded. The final deadline for the gender qualification is December 31, 2019.

The gender qualification attests that an office has requested an assessment and meets the requirements of the gender minimum standards. The qualification lasts for 18 months. After that period, a revalidation of the qualification will be conducted.

Although the qualification entails some flexibility, it is a pass/fail test of compliance with the minimum standards.



## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MINIMUM STANDARDS?

All staff from every office are responsible for implementing the key actions and achieving the gender minimum standards. Gender qualification is a core indicator in the International Strategic Plan (2015-2020) – to enhance organizational gender performance with 75% of offices achieving gender qualification.

While the Gender Taskforce (namely Gender Champions and Gender Focal Points) exist to support the implementation of action plans, every staff member has a responsibility to implement and uphold the standards.



## MINIMUM STANDARD #1 INTERNAL PROCESSES AND PRACTICES CONTRIBUTE TO AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- The first step to promote gender equality is to understand the composition of an office. This will help identify any imbalances and barriers faced related to one's gender and/or age.
- Ensuring that staff have access to the same opportunities and feel safe within their work environment enhances productivity, ensures staff well-being and creates an environment that fosters professional development.
- Specific attention should be given to the different care-taking responsibilities that staff may have and can significantly impact their work. This includes childcare and care for a disabled, elderly or sick partner who is unable to care for him or herself. This also includes an individual's family status, such as "single-father" or "single-mother". This allows for the office to identify common barriers amongst certain groups.
- Using sexist language and promoting stereotypical gender roles can perpetuate gender inequality by failing to challenge existing social norms and practices. This can create a hostile and inequitable environment. Thus, efforts should be taken to ensure all communications are gender sensitive.

### KEY ACTIONS

**1.1: All human resource data is disaggregated by sex and age, department, salary range and employment category.**

 *Human Resource Information System (HRIS)*


**1.2: An internal analysis on staff composition is conducted examining sex, age, salary, responsibility level, family status and care-taking responsibilities.**

 *Human Resources (HR) analysis report*

**1.3: All organizational safety and security plans consider gender and age.**

 *Safety and security plans*

**1.4: Staff feedback mechanisms exist and are accessible to all staff.**

 *Feedback mechanisms*

**1.5: Purpose of all feedback mechanisms is communicated to staff and explicitly encourages gender and age related concerns.**

 *Evidence of communication and promotion of mechanisms*

**1.6: Gender mainstreaming considerations are integrated into country or headquarter strategy (includes budget, HR plan, etc.) and reflected in objectives, actions and indicators.**

 *Evidence of gender within strategy*

**1.7: Internal and external communications (including written content, images, emails, meetings and webinars) use inclusive language and avoid perpetuating stereotypical gender roles.**

 *Endorsement of gender sensitive communication guidelines*



## MINIMUM STANDARD #2 POLICIES AND PRACTICES INVOLVING PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES ARE GENDER SENSITIVE

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- Creating an enabling environment for gender equality internally is just as important as remaining accountable to gender in our external practices involving our donors, stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- The work our partners carry out directly reflects our priorities and commitments as an organization. If we follow core standards and commitments to gender equality, we must ensure that our partners also remain accountable to these core principles.
- There are often a number of organizations and institutions with gender expertise working in similar contexts as Action Against Hunger. In order to maximize existing resources and avoid starting “from scratch,” it is important to be aware of this expertise and know how to engage with these actors in our geographical and thematic areas of intervention.

### KEY ACTIONS

#### 2.1: Organizational partners receive Action Against Hunger’s gender policy.

 *Verification documents were received*

#### 2.2: Organizational partners are committed to upholding core gender equality principles.

 *Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with partners*

#### 2.3: Local partners with gender expertise are mapped.

 *Stakeholder mapping*



## MINIMUM STANDARD #3 STAFF ARE SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED TO MAINSTREAM GENDER

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- Gender mainstreaming is not the responsibility of one department; everyone has a role to play. Recruiting staff based on their commitment to gender equality and their ability to be gender sensitive will ensure these responsibilities are considered relevant and important for all positions.
- Mainstreaming gender requires personnel time. To ensure all staff are accountable for mainstreaming gender and able to take the time to do so, staff job descriptions and performance objectives should reflect gender sensitivity and the appropriate responsibilities.

### KEY ACTIONS

**3.1: All job descriptions include an expectation for staff to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality.**

 *Job descriptions*

**3.2: Recruitment processes ensure assessment of gender sensitivity of all candidates.**

 *Interview guides*

**3.3: Staff commitment to gender equality is assessed through performance management processes.**

 *Performance appraisal tool*

**3.4: Staff with specific gender related responsibilities have this identified in their performance objectives (including members of the Gender Taskforce).**

 *Performance objectives*

**3.5: A minimum of one gender focal point per office.**

 *Job descriptions*



## MINIMUM STANDARD #4 STAFF CAPACITY TO MAINSTREAM GENDER IS DEVELOPED AND REINFORCED

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- All staff must understand and be aware of Action Against Hunger's gender and age approach, including key policies. This will ensure gender becomes a part of our organizational DNA.
- In order to consider gender in our offices and projects, staff must have the capacity to make it possible. Thus, gender capacity-building needs should be identified and addressed to ensure staff can fulfill gender related responsibilities.

### KEY ACTIONS

#### 4.1: Induction processes for all staff include the gender policy.

 *Induction process*

#### 4.2: Induction processes for all staff include the child protection policy.

 *Induction process*

#### 4.3: Gender capacity building needs are identified and actioned.

 *Capacity building strategy and training participant lists*



## MINIMUM STANDARD #5 GENDER IS CONSIDERED IN ALL PROGRAMS

### WHY IS THIS STANDARD IMPORTANT?

- Understanding and documenting the different roles, needs, capacities and vulnerabilities of women, men, girls and boys is vital to providing effective interventions.
- A lack of understanding and failing to monitor the different roles, needs, capacities and vulnerabilities of women and men of all ages throughout the project cycle can lead a project to not only target the wrong beneficiaries but it can also cause negative effects such as gender based violence (GBV).
- Gender considerations should be made throughout the project cycle for effective and impactful programming.
- This standard is applicable for offices that manage projects that have direct contact with affected populations and/or directly affect or determine the selection or use of resources, goods or services accessed by affected populations. If a key action is not applicable in an office, justification must be presented during the qualification process (see the verification tool for more details).

### KEY ACTIONS


#### 5.1: A gender analysis is conducted for the geographical and thematic areas of intervention. \*

 Gender analysis report

#### 5.2: All projects are based on the gender analysis. \*

 Project proposals

#### 5.3: All data is sex and age disaggregated throughout the project cycle from assessment and implementation, to monitoring and evaluation. \*

 Proposals and reports

#### 5.4: Gender indicators - which are informed by the project design - are integrated, monitored and evaluated in every field-level project. \*

 Proposals and reports

#### 5.5: Beneficiary feedback and complaint mechanisms are gender and age sensitive. \*

 Feedback mechanism

\* These key actions may not be applicable to certain offices, such as those that do not implement projects or if the project does not have direct contact with affected populations and do not directly affect or determine the selection or use of resources, goods or services accessed by affected populations. If this is the case, justification must be given during the qualification process for not completing these key actions.

# ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

## ABOUT THE ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE AVAILABLE

The following tools and guidance provide clarification and offer recommendations on how to achieve the key actions in the minimum standards. These tools and guidance documents will be continually developed and adapted as the needs arise.

## GUIDANCE FOR THE QUALIFICATION PROCESS

The qualification process is a structured and systematic scheme to assess the degree to which an office has achieved the gender minimum standards. The qualification process is comprised of four steps that include a self-assessment, action plan, the application for qualification and final qualification (pass/fail).

Gender qualification is an 18 month cycle that is open to any Action Against Hunger office. The gender qualification, although it entails some flexibility, is a pass/fail test of compliance with the gender minimum standards. If it is determined that an office has not reached all the standards during the verification process, the office will be given six months to achieve those standards. Beyond the six month period, the office must start the verification process from the beginning.

### Tools Available

There is an Excel sheet that is available on the [No Hunger Forum \(NHF\)](#) that provides a self-assessment tool, action plan template, and verification tool.

## TOOLS AND GUIDANCE FOR GENDER QUALIFICATION

### Self-assessment and Action Plan Template

The document provides a template to conduct a self-assessment to determine if an office has sufficiently met the minimum standards and action plan template to achieve the pending key actions.

### Verification Tool

The verification tool is to be used during the final verification process to measure if an office has become gender qualified.

### Guidance for Final Verification

This guidance document is intended to support the individual who conducts the final verification to determine if an office is gender qualified.

### Resources Required

The required resources will vary according to the internal processes of each office and the corresponding headquarter. The resources required, including personnel time, financial contributions and technical support, should be defined in the office action plan.



## GUIDANCE FOR STANDARD #1 INTERNAL PROCESSES AND PRACTICES CONTRIBUTE TO AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

### **Action 1.2: An internal analysis of staff composition is conducted examining sex, age, salary, responsibility level, family status and care-taking responsibilities.**

*Purpose: To provide guidance on elements to be considered when conducting an internal analysis of staff composition.*

The main components that should be included in the analysis are:

- Sex
- Age Ranges: 18-25, 25-35, 35-45, 45-55, over 55
- Salary Range: 4 or 5 categories are recommended
- Responsibility level: Include factors such as autonomy, influence, complexity and skills\*
- Care-taking responsibilities

\*For more guidance on responsibility levels, see the [Skills Framework for the Information Age \(SFIA\) Foundation website](#).

### **Action 1.3: All organizational safety and security plans consider gender and age.**

*Purpose: To provide guidance on how organizational safety and security plans should consider differences based on gender and/or age.*

When developing safety and security plans that consider gender and age, the following should be included:

- Consider gender and age: Safety and security should be analyzed using a gender and age lens. Participation from women and men of all ages is key to understanding the specific vulnerabilities and capacities of everyone. This analysis will then inform safety and security plans to ensure gender is mainstreamed.
- Consider the context: Understanding acceptable behaviours, habits, attire and social norms, can give us a clear picture of the rules that should be followed by Action Against Hunger staff of all ages. Consider the differences required for women and men of different ages.
- Consider sexual orientation: Specific considerations for differences in sexual orientation including heterosexuality and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer) must be included in the risk analysis.

### **Action 1.7: All internal and external communications (including written content, images, emails, meetings and webinars) use inclusive language and avoid perpetuating stereotypical gender roles.**

*Purpose: To provide guidance on how to use gender inclusive language.*

Action Against Hunger specific guidance documents provide recommendations on how to ensure gender sensitive communications, including specific guidance on using inclusive language in English, French and Spanish. Find these in the [gender section of the No Hunger Forum \(NHF\)](#).

At times gender sensitive communications could inhibit beneficiaries' understanding of the message being communicated. For example if we include images of men in sensitization materials, beneficiaries may fail to understand the message. If this is the case, the materials should prioritize the understanding and core message.



## GUIDANCE FOR STANDARD #2 POLICIES AND PRACTICES INVOLVING PARTNERS, STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES ARE GENDER SENSITIVE

### **Action 2.2: Organizational partners are committed to upholding core gender equality principles.**

*Purpose: To offer a template of core principles that should be added to the memorandum of understanding's (MoUs) signed with partners.*

Core gender equality principles for Action Against Hunger International:

Action Against Hunger is...

- ...committed to working towards gender equality organizationally across departments and programmatically across sectors – food security and livelihoods, water sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, and mental health and care practices – with nutrition at the center of its strategy and mandate.
- ...committed to ensuring the different needs, capacities, vulnerabilities and experiences of women, men, girls and boys are understood and acted upon.

*\* Note: the core principles are based on the gender policy (2014)*

### **Action 2.3: Local partners with specific gender expertise are mapped.**

*Purpose: To provide clarification on what is meant by “gender expertise”.*

Gender expertise refers to an actor that has existing gender capacity, knowledge and experience. Actors with gender expertise can include international non-governmental organizations, institutional actors such as UN Women, local non-governmental organizations, academics, etc.

It is important to map both gender sensitive and gender transformative organisations. Actors with gender expertise provide information to support the production of a gender analysis such as information on the core areas of inquiry. Actors with gender expertise can also share good programmatic and institutional practices that can be applicable to our offices and interventions.



## **GUIDANCE FOR STANDARD #3 STAFF ARE SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED TO MAINSTREAM GENDER**

### **Action 3.1: All job descriptions include an expectation for staff to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality.**

*Purpose: To provide examples of ways to include expectations for staff to demonstrate a commitment to gender equality in job descriptions.*

Gender sensitivity can be added to job descriptions, primarily where specific requirements are outlined. For example, the sentence might include:

- “Strongly committed to Gender Equality.”
- “Strongly committed to Gender Equality and the Humanitarian Principles.”
- “Demonstrated experience and/or personal commitment to promoting gender equality within the humanitarian and/or development work.”

### **Action 3.2: Recruitment processes ensure assessment of gender sensitivity of all candidates.**

*Purpose: To provide sample questions that can be used in an interview to assess a candidate’s sensitivity to gender or knowledge of gender issues.*

Experienced-based:

- Please share a previous experience where you have used gender-sensitive skills in your work. What was the result?
- Can you tell us about a time you had to work with someone from a different cultural and gender background from yours?

Scenario-based:

- During a general ration distribution, could you name any risks for women and men to receive their ration and what kind of action would you take to prevent or reduce these risks?
- During a cash for work program, could you name any protection risks women, men, girls and boys may face? What kind of actions would you take to prevent or reduce these risks?
- If, as a manager, you receive a report about a case of gender-based discrimination, how would you proceed?



## GUIDANCE FOR STANDARD #5 GENDER IS CONSIDERED IN ALL PROGRAMS

### **Action 5.1 : A gender analysis is conducted for the geographical and thematic areas of intervention.**

*Purpose: To provide clear guidance on how to conduct a gender analysis in Action Against Hunger.*

The Gender Analysis Manual provides clear steps and guidance on how to conduct a gender analysis in Action Against Hunger. The manual can be found in the [gender section of the No Hunger Forum \(NHF\)](#).

### **Action 5.4: Gender indicators— which are informed by the project design — are integrated, monitored and evaluated in every field-level project.**

*Purpose: To provide guidance and templates for developing gender sensitive indicators.*

Gender sensitive indicators are important to measure how the results from the gender analysis are integrated and inform our interventions. These indicators are primarily condition indicators concerning people's basic wellbeing. Condition indicators aim at improving individual situations whereas position indicators aim at shifting women's and men status in society.

Tool 14 within the Gender Analysis Manual provides more information on creating gender sensitive indicators, which can be found in the [gender section of the No Hunger Forum \(NHF\)](#).

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