

EU Gender Action Plan II: opportunities for civil society participation to kick-start implementation

What is the Gender Action Plan (GAP)?

The new EU Gender Action Plan 2 (GAP II) “Joint Staff Working Document - Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020” provides the framework for the European Commission's (EC), the European External Action Services' (EEAS) and European Member States' (MS) approach to gender equality through external action. The four focus areas are:

1. Ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity (6 sub-objectives)
2. Promoting the economic and social rights / empowerment of girls and women (4 sub-objectives)
3. Strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation (4 sub-objectives)
4. Shifting the Commission services' and the EEAS' institutional culture to more effectively deliver on EU commitments.

What is the “Guidance note on the GAP”?

To support the implementation of the GAP, DEVCO (European Commission) HQ and EU Delegation (EUD) operational and management staff at all levels, involved in programming, policy development and political dialogue were provided with a comprehensive guidance note on 8 March 2016. EEAS HQ, ECHO, DG NEAR and Member States (MSs) are responsible themselves to ensure implementation of the GAP via that or other guidance. This guidance note includes numerous entry points for cooperation with CSOs and MSs, which are highlighted below.

How CSOs can contribute to the gender analysis EU Delegations are expected to carry out until June 2016:

- **Share available data/reports/analyses on gender equality in your country with EU delegations now** (as soon as possible, definitely before end of May), preferably with the responsible Gender Focal Point (GFP) of the EU Delegation. An existing gender analysis can be used – provided it is credible and adapted – or a new one can be conducted, possibly with an external consultant. The “work done by CSOs active on gender equality” is acknowledged as a reliable and credible data source.
- **Consider organising a (joint) NGO briefing** for the EU delegation and EU member states present in your country, they are encouraged to undertake national capacity-building for gender equality by fostering partnerships with stakeholders, such as CSOs.

- **Help select priority gender objectives:** If you have concrete (and evidenced) suggestions regarding which of the GAPII sub-objectives¹ should be selected as priority in your country, please share this recommendation with the EU delegation before the end of June. Please note, that implementation of these gender-related sub-objectives should happen through existing concentration sectors, where these have been previously agreed and negotiated with national (or other) partners.
- **Ask the Gender Focal Point (GFP) of the EUD to share the compiled gender analysis/country gender profile** which should be completed by the end of June and “is a public document”. The analysis might only be considered as an exclusively internal document if it contains “sensitive information”, in which case you might not receive the document.

Policy dialogue and international processes: CSOs can

- **Claim their right to be consulted and participate** in policy dialogue at all stages and in a timely manner. In particular in the context of EU budget support (Sector Reform or Good Governance and Development contracts), EU actors can seek to ensure that gender actors (including CSOs) are involved in policy formulation.
- **Present themselves or partner organisations as ally to EU Delegation in promoting international gender equality processes:** To pressure the government on issues not in line with international and regional commitments (e.g. CEDAW, Beijing, ICPD, SDGs), Delegations are asked to find allies/agents of change (e.g. partner governments, as well as national stakeholders). Explain what you can deliver/bring in terms of added value.

Claiming the possibility of being involved in the monitoring

- Gender actors (including CSOs) can be involved in monitoring and/or as a minimum gender expertise is part of **monitoring missions**.
- EU Delegation staff involved in Budget Support should consider gender impact via accountability systems and **financial tracking**.
- Via the EU Results Framework, final results for women and girls, disaggregated by sex and age, will be made publicly available. In this context, please note that

Delegations and thematic units will be evaluated against the following **performance milestones**, whether and how they:

¹ You can find the sub-objectives of the focus areas from page 26 of the GAP: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/staff-working-document-gender-2016-2020-20150922_en.pdf

1. carried out a gender analysis that informs the sectors they prioritise
2. collaborated with Member States to identify common ground and/or modalities collaboration
3. identified the indicators of GAP II thematic priorities against which they will report
4. empowered their staff to monitor performance against these indicators
5. capacity to demonstrate that all their programmes have been assessed for gender impact

If you are an implementing partner:

- The Heads of Delegations and Heads of Cooperation are supposed to inform you about GAP II and **how it will impact you in your role.**
- You will have to **systematically disaggregate data for reporting** at least by sex. Please note that EU Delegations are to ask partners in advance to gather the necessary data or adjust programming where needed.
- Delegations are also tasked to think through how to redress **systematic failure by partners** to report as required for the GAP

Who to talk to:

- **Heads of Delegations and Geographical and Thematic Directors** are responsible of the implementation in the EU Delegations
- **Gender Focal Points (GFPs)** might be a staff member who is already in charge of gender, an existing staff member whose responsibilities are shifted towards gender, or a new recruitment (in that case, the Head of Cooperation remains responsible in the meantime). GFP should spend 40-60% of their weekly time on gender issues. Duties notably include:
 - Maintaining contact with CSOs, women's groups, European and global networks and collaborating in identifying partner organisations representing women's and gender equality interests related to the technical areas of interest
 - Soliciting a gender-balanced participation of experts used for EC-funded activities
 - Maintaining a roster of gender-sensitised experts to call upon whenever needed for review, evaluation, etc. for all activities

A Gender champion might be appointed among EUD or MS staff in addition, if helpful.

- **The role of EU Member States:** The GAP applies to DEVCO, EEAS, DG NEAR, and ECHO, as well as to EU Member States, who endorsed the joint staff working document in their Council adopted Conclusions on the Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 on October 26, 2015. Yet the guidance note only applies to DEVCO (HQ+EUDs) and EEAS (only at EUD level), Member States are to generate their own guidance or adapt this one. There are thus numerous ways for CSOs to also engage with EU Member States at national level, as well as with their representations worldwide to make sure that **Member States fulfil their role in implementing the GAP**. Coordination among Member States, notably in relation to policy dialogue, is encouraged through the gender coordination group. One Member State might take the lead in such activities.

Timeline

- **1st March – 15th June 2016:** Delegations expected to become familiar with GAP and present it to MSs and partners, and to identify capacities, priorities, responsibilities, and lines of accountability
- **By June 2016:** The above mentioned gender analysis should already be ongoing at the Delegations by the Gender Focal Point (GFP) with support of HoCs and HoUs in collaboration with key stakeholders.
- **July 2016:** Delegations have to specify a minimum of **3 sub-objectives of the GAP** (one per thematic focus area) to which they will contribute. An Annual Action Programme will include: the chosen objectives, actions planned for the implementation, and result indicators. Delegations are alerted to the role of implementing partners, and are asked to ensure GAPII objectives are included in calls for proposals.
- **September 2016:** Reporting will be done through various channels (OECD-DAC Gender-marker, End of Project ROM Results reporting, EAMR...) and it is not yet clear which will be made public, but it will happen in August-September (at Delegation level)
- **By mid-2016 onwards:** Budget support must reflect the Gender Analyses and lead on the implementation of activities previously identified.
- **February 2017:** The compiled report will be published by DEVCO B1.
- **By mid-2017 onwards:** Budget Support will need to include indicators. All data on beneficiaries must be sex-disaggregated.
- **All future programmes from now on:** All Calls for Proposals should also include implementing partners who are capable of contributing to GAPII. All programmes and their actions should include a gender analysis.