Impact evaluability assessment and meta-analysis of Finland's support to women and girls and gender equality

2017/2

IMPACT EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT AND META-ANALYSIS OF FINLAND'S SUPPORT TO WOMEN AND GIRLS AND GENDER EQUALITY

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB	African Development Bank
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DG DEVCO	European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
EU	European Union
EUD	European Union Delegation
EVA	Development Evaluation Unit
GAD	Gender and Development
GESI	Gender Equity and Social Inclusion
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
HMIS	Health Management Information Systems
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands)
LDC	Least Developed Country
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MISFA	Microfinance Investment Support Facility to Afghanistan
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD–DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SWAp	Sector-Wide Approaches programme
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WID	Women in Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In alignment with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and later the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Finland's development policies from 2004 onwards have included a focus on gender equality and a commitment to enhance and protect the rights and status of women and girls. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland commissioned this study to assess the evaluability of Finland's support to women and girls and gender equality, as reported in Finnish development policies, programming documents, and evaluations published between 2004 and 2016.

Aim and approach

The meta-analysis and evaluability assessment contained in this report is intended to inform the upcoming impact evaluation of the MFA's work in support to women and girls and gender equality. The study draws lessons learned from Finnish and international experience, and offers options for evaluation questions and methods, informed by the data gathering and analysis:

- First, a meta-analysis aggregates and analyses data and findings from existing evaluation reports, policy documents, and programming strategies, providing an overview of what is already known about gender equality promotion in Finnish development interventions.

- Second, an evaluability assessment seeks to establish the extent to which Finnish activities to promote the rights and status of women and support gender equality can be evaluated in a reliable and credible manner. The evaluability assessment highlights gaps in existing evidence, suggesting areas of further investigation to be included in the upcoming impact evaluation, as well as identifying potential methods to be employed to ensure its robustness.

Findings

The research found that Finland's approach to gender mainstreaming is clearly defined at the policy level. However, the implementation of gender mainstreaming in programming, and the evaluation of the effects of gender mainstreaming onto gender equality is poor. It is unclear how gender equality is meant to be promoted through the implementation of programmes: gender is often mentioned, but there is limited evidence of its successful operationalisation. Often it is not clearly articulated how gender mainstreaming occurred or was intended to occur in practice.

Even for programmes where gender is the core focus of intervention, it is often the case that the intended results are not clearly defined. Without predefined and agreed gender-specific goals (and related indicators), the plausibility of delivering gendered results within these programmes is hard to assess.

More generally, gender analysis has been identified as a gap in the design of programmes and interventions, suggesting the need to better embed gender mainstreaming across the programming lifecycle and more systematically conduct gender analysis during the design and planning of interventions.

As a result, evidence of impact on women and girls since 2004 is limited. Gendered impacts have not systematically been documented. When they are documented, it appears that gender impacts have not been achieved or are inconclusive in many cases. Few evaluations contained any specific results based on gender-disaggregated data on outputs, outcomes and impacts, and evaluation methodologies were not sufficiently tailored to ensure that gendered impacts are assessed, or to ensure the deployment of gender-sensitive evaluation tools.

Recommendations

In light of the findings presented in this report, we recommend that:

- The Terms of Reference for the upcoming evaluation clearly outlines the evaluability limitations;

- The evaluation objectives are specific and aligned with the gender objectives of the MFA;

- A participatory evaluation approach is recommended to understand which gendered impacts can be plausibly expected and assessed;

- Specific thematic areas are selected for the evaluation to enable more focused lesson learning;

- Secondary sources are used to establish benchmarks and identify gender patterns; and

- The evaluation investigates the gap between policy and practice.

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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Aim and purpose of the report

In alignment with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and later the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Finland's development policies from 2004 onwards have included a focus on gender equality and a commitment to enhance and protect the rights and status of women and girls.

In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland commissioned this study to assess the evaluability of Finland's support to women and girls and gender equality, as reported in Finnish development policies, programming documents, and evaluations published between 2004 and 2016. The findings are complemented by lessons learned from international experiences and a small number of interviews with MFA advisors.

The meta-analysis and evaluability assessment contained in this report is intended to inform the upcoming impact evaluation of the MFA's work in this field, through two distinct but complementary analyses:

- First, a meta-analysis aggregates and analyses data and findings from existing evaluation reports, policy documents, and programming strategies, providing an overview of what is already known about gender equality promotion in Finnish development interventions.

- Second, an evaluability assessment seeks to establish the extent to which Finnish activities to promote the rights and status of women and support gender equality can be evaluated in a reliable and credible manner. The evaluability assessment highlights gaps in existing evidence, suggesting areas of further investigation to be included in the upcoming impact evaluation, as well as identifying potential methods to be employed to ensure its robustness.

To complete the two distinct but complementary tasks, the research team has conducted information gathering and analysis from a sample of MFA and other donor documents, assessing available evidence on the impact of the MFA's gender mainstreaming and gender equality activities, as well as availability of data in this field. The study draws lessons learned from Finnish and international experience, and offers options for evaluation questions and methods, informed by the data gathering and analysis.

1.2   Report structure

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides an overview of the **approach, methodology and limitations** of the study. It outlines the sampling strategy employed to select the documents reviewed, including the sample composition in terms of the type of document, geographical and thematic focus, and the extent to which gender issues feature in the documents.

- **Section 3** provides a summary of the MFA's development portfolio along with an analysis of the evolution, coherence and consistency of gender policies and programming, specifically the approach to gender mainstreaming and women and girls' programming.

- **Section 4** presents the findings from the meta-analysis to conduct an **evaluability assessment** of the long-term impact of the MFA's approach to promote the rights and status of women and girls, and gender equality more broadly.

- **Section 5** presents a review of **international experiences** in evaluating gender programming and gender mainstreaming to assess the applicability of approaches to the Finnish context.

- **Section 6** summarises the **lessons learned** from the review related to the evaluation of gender programming and gender mainstreaming.

- **Section 7** concludes the report by **identifying evidence gaps and recommendations** to be considered in the upcoming evaluation of the MFA's work in gender mainstreaming and gender equality programming, including suggestions on possible approaches and evaluation questions.

2 APPROACH, METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The Impact Evaluability Assessment and Meta-analysis aims to inform the upcoming impact evaluation of Finland's support to women and girls and gender equality. Its purpose has been to gather background information, aggregate results on impact from previous evaluations and identify possible information gaps and provide options for evaluation questions, methods, and possible new information sources. In order to do so, the study has examined the following questions (as defined in the Terms of Reference, contained in Annex 1):

- **Alignment**: How support to women and girls has been defined in different Finnish development policies from 2004 onwards?

- **Evidence generated by evaluations**: How has support to women and girls has been taken into account in different evaluations (both centralised and decentralised) commissioned by the MFA from 2004 onwards?

- **Evaluability assessment**: What is the evaluability of the long-term impact of promoting the rights and status of women and girls and gender equality?

- **Evidence of impact**: Is there evidence of impacts of Finnish support to women and girls in existing evaluation reports? And what are the lessons learned based on different evaluations, especially from an impact perspective?

- **International comparison**: What are the lessons learned from international studies and impact evaluations on the subject?

- **Evidence gaps**: What has not been studied and what issues need further analysis?

The evaluability study is based on a document review approach, complemented by a small number of interviews with MFA advisors, the findings of which are integrated into our analysis.

2.1 Research questions and criteria

The research team used the overarching questions as the starting point to develop a more detailed **analytical framework**. Table 1 below presents the agreed research questions, while a full version of the analytical framework (including judgement criteria and sources of evidence) is presented in Annex 2. This formed the basis for a detailed assessment tool used to capture the relevant findings from each of the documents reviewed.

The review instrument was a key tool used to guide the data collection and analysis, and to ensure comprehensive and consistent coverage of documents assessed. The instrument helped the research team identify what type of document would answer each question, and allowed us to consistently answer the key questions for each document that was reviewed. The framework was developed in the form of an MS Excel template, allowing for an efficient and purposive review of the data available; a clear presentation of the data collected; consistency and comparability of findings; and efficient analysis of information.

Table 1: Evaluability assessment Themes and Research Questions

Theme		Research Question
Alignment	1.1	Has Finland's approach to working with women and girls and gender mainstreaming been clearly defined in its main policy documents from 2004 until now?
	1.2	Is there coherence in terms of how the MFA defines its support to gender mainstreaming in different programmes and policies?
	1.3	Are country-level documents aligned with the MFA's policies related to gender mainstreaming of the relevant time period and thematic focus?
Evidence generated by evaluations	2.1	Do evaluations of the MFA's work contain specific evaluation questions related to women and girls?
	2.2	Do evaluations of the MFA's work report gender-disaggregated data?
	2.3	Do evaluations of the MFA's work employ gender-sensitive data collection tools?
	2.4	Do the gender analyses contained in MFA evaluations follow and/or reference the policy documents that defined the MFA's approach to gender mainstreaming?
	2.5	Are there differences between how MFA guidelines have been followed in centralised and country-level evaluations?
Evaluability Assessment	3.1	Is it plausible to expect the MFA interventions during the evaluation period to have had an impact?
	3.2	Is it feasible to assess or measure impact of MFA's activities to support women and girls?
Evidence of Impact	4.1	Do MFA evaluations clearly define what interventions were trying to achieve via their support to women and girls?
	4.2	Do MFA evaluations report that projects have achieved their expected impact?
	4.3	Do MFA evaluations report any positive or negative unintended consequence of the interventions?
	4.4	Do MFA evaluations identify lessons learned and/or identify reasons for intervention impact (or lack thereof)?
	4.5	Do MFA staff identify any additional lessons learned from the previous evaluations, especially in an impact perspective?

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Theme	Research Question	
International Comparison	5.1	Does the sample of international studies and impact evaluations find a significant impact of different donor interventions to support women and girls?
	5.2	Do international donor reports mention the evaluability and impact of interventions, and methodologies employed in the analysis?
	5.3	What are the main lessons that can be learned from impact evaluations and studies undertaken by international donors and the methodologies they employed? What constitutes international best practice in this field?
	5.4	Are the lessons learned relevant for the Finnish context? How can these be adapted to match the MFA's work, areas of interest and constraints (including financial)?
Evidence Gaps	6.1	Are there gaps in the literature and/or knowledge base on the policy and impact of Finnish development cooperation on women and girls, especially compared to international best practice?
	6.2	Is there evidence that MFA evaluations are missing any particularly relevant information, methodology, or data source compared to international best practice?

2.2   Document sampling

The research sample is comprised of documents related to Finnish development cooperation, as well as a small number of international donor documents. **The Finnish sample is composed of 94 documents** relating to strategies, programming and evaluations in the time period between 2004 and 2016. Its composition is as follows:

- **Evaluation documents**: 60, comprising meta-analyses; decentralised evaluations (country-level and programme-level); thematic evaluations; evaluations of the trade instrument; and evaluations of the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) instrument;

- **Policy and strategy documents**: 25;

- **Programming documents**: 9.

The sample has a broad geographical focus, as it includes programming and evaluation documents from Finland's long-term partner countries (Mozambique, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia, Kenya, Nepal, Nicaragua and Vietnam). Of the documents included, the majority (78%) considered gender as a cross-cutting issue, while the remainder had gender as a core focus of the report (e.g. evaluations of gender-based programmes).

The review also includes **four international donor documents** purposefully selected as examples of good practice that might offer lessons for Finland. As a starting point, the research team reviewed relevant studies and evaluations commissioned or published by the three multilateral and bilateral organisations specified in the Terms of Reference, namely the African Development Bank (AfDB), the EU, and the Government of the Netherlands. Then, we expanded

the search and identified more documents, some of which had been identified from being referenced in the previous documents. Among the relatively small number of documents identified, we applied the following criteria for selection:

- Focus on recent evaluations and studies;
- Inclusion of international donors specified by the Terms of Reference;
- Focus on documents that contain useful information on evaluability, impact, and methodologies or relevant discussion;
- Focus on relevance to Finland.

Using these criteria, the following documents were selected for review:

- A study of the premises underlying the Dutch policy for women's rights and gender equality (IOB, 2015);
- Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries (Commissioned by DG DEVCO, 2015);
- Norad Result Report: Women's rights and gender equality (Norad, 2015); and
- Policy evaluation on women's rights and gender equality (2007-2014), (IOB, 2015).

The selected documents were all published in 2015 and therefore should include the most recent lessons learned. In order to increase relevance to the MFA, our sample also includes a Norad document, as, being a donor from a Nordic country, it is similar to Finland in scale and scope of development cooperation.

2.3   Approach to analysis

After developing the research instruments and carefully selecting the sample, the research team reviewed and analysed the documents against the judgement criteria established in the analytical framework. In presenting the findings, each of the questions has been assessed against a 'traffic light' rating system, as shown in Table 2. This approach is considered appropriate, given the study's objectives of making judgements of performance without introducing a false sense of quantitative precision.

The research questions that are more future-looking in nature (Questions 6.1 and 6.2) were not assessed using the traffic light approach, but rather answered by identifying missing information, drawn from a triangulation of findings for other questions.

Table 2: 'Traffic light' system overview

Rating Symbol	Rating Description
G	Green – rates well against the judgement criteria in the analytical framework. Limited improvements could be made to strengthen performance against this criterion.
G A	Green-Amber – rates relatively well against the judgement criteria in the analytical framework. Some improvements could be made to strengthen performance against this criterion.
A R	Amber-Red – rates relatively poorly against the judgement criteria in the analytical framework. Significant improvements could be made to strengthen performance against this criterion.
R	Red – rates poorly overall against the judgement criteria in the analytical framework. Major changes need to be made to strengthen performance against this criterion.

2.4 Key informant interviews

The findings from the document review are complemented by key informant interviews, conducted with MFA advisors. This has allowed us to analyse perspectives on the MFA's work throughout the entire period studied. The findings and insights from the interviews are integrated in the analysis presented in the report.

2.5 Limitations

The study relies on a sample of MFA documents across each of the years between 2004 and 2016. The distribution of sampled documents is not equal across years, with a deliberate over-representation of documents produced between 2012 and 2016 to ensure that the most recent evidence and lessons would be reflected in the study. This approach was agreed with the MFA during the kick-off meeting for the assignment.

There is an over-representation of mid-term, rather than final, evaluations in the sample, due to the greater availability of the first type of document. Few final evaluation reports have been produced for the later years of the study period, so it is possible that the findings in the mid-term evaluations do not fully estimate the potential, longer term impacts as many of the programmes are still operating (and/or have yet to produce a final evaluation). Recognising this limitation, our initial sample frame was boosted by the inclusion of an additional five final evaluation documents.

The desk-based nature of the study means that it is **heavily dependent on explicit evidence** contained in the sampled documents. If any interventions, activities, outcomes or impacts with a gender focus have occurred, but have not been documented, then they have not been included in this analysis. This issue was mitigated by complementing findings contained in the literature with interviews with MFA advisors. However, due to time and resourcing constraints, only a limited number of interviews could be conducted. Therefore, it remains possible that some information was not captured by this study.

3 BACKGROUND TO FINLAND'S DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO AND APPROACH TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING

3.1 Overview of the MFA development portfolio

Finland's development policy aims to support developing countries' efforts to eradicate poverty and inequality and promote sustainable development. The policy is implemented through a number of means, including bilateral and multilateral support and cooperation with international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Bilateral aid and partner countries

Bilateral aid is, to a large extent, directed at long-term partner countries, most of which are classified as least developed countries (LDCs, based on UN definitions[1]). The primary goal is to build up or boost the long-term partner country's governance capacity. Table 3 below shows the MFA's long-term partner countries, as defined in its development policies since 2004. The portfolio of partner countries has experienced some small changes over time. In 2007, it was decided that support to Nicaragua would only be provided through civil society organisations. Support to Vietnam ceased in 2012, as it shifted from being an LDC to lower middle-income country.

Table 3: Finland's long-term partner countries

2004 Policy	2007 Policy	2012 Policy	2016 Policy
Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ethiopia
Kenya	Kenya	Kenya	Kenya
Mozambique	Mozambique	Mozambique	Mozambique
Nepal	Nepal	Nepal	Nepal
Nicaragua	Nicaragua	–	–
Tanzania	Tanzania	Tanzania	Tanzania
Vietnam	Vietnam	Vietnam	–
Zambia	Zambia	Zambia	Zambia
			Afghanistan
			Somalia

1 The exceptions from the 2016 partners are Kenya and Tanzania, which are not on the UN list of LDCs (as of May 2016). http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/cdp/ldc/ldc_list.pdf

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Each partner country has a specific strategy, which sets out programming actions in more detail and defines cooperation priorities. The country strategies are updated and their results reported annually[2]. Finland devoted €254.6 million to country- and region-specific development cooperation in 2015 – approximately a third of the total volume of aid provided that year (€926.6 million)[3].

Regional and multilateral aid

Finland also provides support to multilateral organisations, such as regional development banks and various UN organisations. Through this channel of development aid, the focus is on influencing the organisations' decision-making processes related to funding[4]. Finland's activities with multilaterals are based on its development policy priorities, in which gender has historically been included as a cross-cutting issue, and, since 2016, as a priority area[5]. Nearly 40 per cent of total aid in 2015 was channelled through multilateral organisations, excluding the EU[6]. Finland also works to promote the realisation of its development policy goals through EU action. As an EU member state, Finland seeks to influence the future of international development policy and participates in the formulation of development cooperation at the global level[7].

Finland is involved in regional cooperation primarily through EU and intergovernmental regional institutions, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), of which eight African countries are members. Regional cooperation has been taking place with the Mekong river region, Central America, the Andean Community, Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, the Western Balkans, the Southern Caucasus, Central Asia and the Mediterranean regions. Aid is also provided to African, Caribbean and Pacific states to support the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA)[8].

Support to Finnish NGOs and International NGOs

Finland supports Finnish civil society organisations that implement projects in developing countries. This funding instrument is divided into two parts: i) programme-based funding, which is primarily granted to the multi-annual programmes of experienced organisations; and ii) project-based funding, which is awarded to a small number of NGOs for project support. Support to international NGOs is provided in a selective manner to promote Finnish goals in areas such as peace and stability, human rights, taxation, and reproductive health and rights[9].

2 One World, Common Future – towards sustainable development, MFA, 2016.
3 Kehitysyhteistyön tilastot 2015, osa 1. Available from the MFA website: (http://www.formin.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=49314&contentlan=2&culture=en-US#Statistics2015
4 MFA, Suomen Monenkeskisen yhteistyön strateginen analyysi, 2013.
5 MFA, Finland's Development Policy. One World, Common Future – towards sustainable development, 2016.
6 Kehitysyhteistyön tilastot 2015, osa 1. Available from the MFA website: (http://www.formin.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=49314&contentlan=2&culture=en-US#Statistics2015).
7 MFA, Finland's Development Policy. One World, Common Future – towards sustainable development, 2016.
8 MFA website: http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentId=328558&nodeId=49325&contentlan=2&culture=en-US
9 MFA, Finland's Development Policy. One World, Common Future – towards sustainable development, 2016.

Cooperation with the private sector

Through Finnfund, Finland provides concessional credits to promote economic and social development by making use of the experience and technology possessed by Finnish companies. Under the instrument, the financing of exports

to developing countries is supported by granting interest subsidies out of Finland's development cooperation budget. Funded projects aim to reduce poverty only indirectly, but need to be aligned with the national priorities of the recipient country[10]. The Finnpartnership programme, on the other hand, provides seed financing to joint development projects of Finnish and developing country actors, and supports pilot and demonstration projects. This programme is designed to encourage small and medium-sized companies to establish business partnerships in developing countries[11].

Humanitarian aid

Finland devotes a significant share of its development cooperation funding to humanitarian aid. In 2015, this amounted to €97.8 million (approximately 10 per cent of the total aid budget), distributed to the areas of greatest need and distress, on the basis of situation assessments[12]. Finnish aid is channelled to those in need through UN Agencies, notably, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, and Finnish aid organisations[13].

Public sector investment facility

A new generation investment support for developing countries, the Public Sector Investment Facility, has recently been introduced. It will be used to support developing countries' public sector investments in order to strengthen the capacities of developing countries with the help of Finnish technology and expertise. The investment support includes a loan to the developing country in question, guaranteed by Finnvera.

3.2   Thematic focus areas

Overview of the MFA's areas of intervention

The MFA's thematic focus areas are outlined in its development policies, which are usually updated with changes in government. The three main focus areas for each long-term partner country are outlined in the country programmes, which are normally drawn for a four-year period. Over the years, Finnish aid has come to focus on natural resources management (forestry and water); education; democracy, governance and human rights; peace and security; rural development; and economic development. Table 4 presents the thematic focus areas outlined in MFA development policies since 2004.

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10 MFA website: http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=49324&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI
11 MFA, Finland's Development Policy. One World, Common Future – towards sustainable development, 2016.
12 Kehitysyhteistyön tilastot 2015, osa 1. Available from the MFA website: (http://www.formin.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=49314&contentlan=2&culture=en-US#Statistics2015).
13 MFA, Finland's Development Policy. One World, Common Future – towards sustainable development, 2016.

Table 4: Overview of the MFA's thematic focus

2004 Policy	2007 Policy	2012 Policy	2016 Policy
Millennium Development Goals	Millennium Development Goals	Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)	Agenda 2030/ Sustainable Development Goals
Social security net-works, including employment and labour market regulation		An inclusive green economy that promotes employment	Generating more jobs, livelihood opportunities and well-being in devel-oping countries
Basic education	Education and training	Human development	
Water and sanitation	Water		Food security and access to water and energy; sustain-able use of natural resources
Natural resources management	Environment	Sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection	
Health care sys-tems, particularly sexual and repro-ductive health	Health		
HIV/AIDS			
Forestry	Forestry		
Rural development, food security	Regional and rural development sectors		
		A democratic and accountable soci-ety that promotes human rights	Societies have become more democratic and better-functioning
ICT			
	Energy		
			Enhancing the rights and status of women and girls

Cross-cutting themes and objectives

Cross-cutting themes have been part of Finnish development policies since its first development strategy in 1993, although Finland was committed to them even before then[14]. While themes have varied across development policies, the promotion of gender equality has been consistently included since 2004. Table 5 provides an overview of the cross-cutting themes in MFA development policies

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14   Ramboll-Finnconsult: Evaluation The Cross-cutting Themes in the Finnish Development, 2008.

since 2004 till 2012. In the MFA development policy of 2016, gender became one of the four priority areas governing the Finnish development's actions. Throughout this report, the terminology 'cross-cutting themes' and 'cross-cutting objectives' is used when the discussion refers to the relevant policies. 'Cross-cutting issues' when discussing gender-related issues (i.e. not related to a specific policy).

Table 5: Cross-cutting themes

2004 Policy Cross-Cutting Themes	2007 Policy Cross-Cutting Themes	2012 Policy Cross-cutting Objectives
Promotion of the rights and the status of women and girls, and promotion of gender and social equality	Promotion of the rights and the status of women and girls, and promotion of gender and social equality	Promotion of gender equality
Promotion of the rights of groups that are easily marginalized, particularly those of children, the disabled, indigenous people and ethnic minorities and the promotion of equal participation opportunities for them	Promotion of the rights of groups that are easily excluded, particularly children, persons with disabilities, indigenous people and ethnic minorities, and the promotion of equal opportunities for participation	Reduction of inequality
	Combating HIV/AIDS; HIV/AIDS as a health problem and as a social problem	
Consideration of environmental issues		Climate sustainability
		Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA)

Gender mainstreaming in MFA programming

Gender mainstreaming in Finnish development cooperation is defined as including gender considerations throughout all policy and organisational objectives, projects and operational plans, as well as implementation, monitoring and evaluation and in all aid instruments. A more thorough definition for gender mainstreaming was not found by the research team in the reviewed MFA documents[15]. In MFA programming, gender mainstreaming seems to differ from gender-based programming in terms of the level of inclusion of gender-related goals. In the latter, the promotion of gender equality is included as a programme component or an explicit goal. An important aim of political dialogue is partner country ownership of gender equality and development priorities[16].

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15 MFA: Strategy and Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Finland's Policy for Developing Countries 2003-2007, 2003. MFA: Factsheet Rights of Women and Girls, 2016. Review of internal notes on how to mainstream gender equality into the development cooperation.
16 MFA: leaflet for gender equality.

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3.3 Cooperation with other donors

Main partners

Cooperation with other donors is mostly carried out through work within the EU[17]. Within the multilateral development banks, Finland forms a group together with other Nordic countries and, in some cases, also India (multilateral influencing plans). Generally, Finland cooperates with like-minded countries (Nordic countries, the Netherlands and the UK) in promoting their common development goals.

Participation in international initiatives for women's and girls' programming and/or gender equality

Through the political commitment of its various Presidents and Ministers for Development Cooperation, Finland has been involved in several international initiatives for women's and girls' rights in recent years. President Tarja Halonen vocally defended gender equality in several fora and, together with the Liberian President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, co-chaired an international colloquium on women's leadership in March 2009. Since then, President Sauli Niinistö has actively promoted girls' rights by supporting the HeForShe and SheDecides campaigns. The MFA advisors interviewed for this study highlighted the importance of political support to gender equality in their work.

3.4 Gender Equality in Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation

Gender concerns are enshrined in the Constitution of Finland and, more specifically, in the Act on Equality between Women and Men (Equality Act), which makes it the duty of every government official to uphold gender equality. This focus is reflected in Finland's development cooperation. Since the early 2000s, Finnish development policy has been aligned with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose goal number three was to promote gender equality and empower women. This international commitment continued with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), whose goal number five relates to gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. The promotion of gender equality is also part of Finnish human rights policy. In this area, Finland has committed to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and has issued two National Action Plans (2008, 2012) for its implementation[18]. A third National Action Plan is currently being prepared.

Historical evolution of the MFA gender approach and its inclusion in programming

The promotion of gender equality in MFA policy was initially guided by the Strategy and Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Finland's Policy for Developing Countries (2003–2007). This plan has not been updated since publication,

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17 MFA 2016.
18 MFA Development Policies 2012, 2016.

due to changes in priorities at the MFA level to focus on all cross-cutting issues, and later to emphasise gender equality as an aspect of the Human Rights-Based Approach. After the 2003–2007 Strategy and Action Plan, the promotion of gender equality has been guided by several sectoral policies and manuals on how to integrate the cross-cutting themes and the Human Rights-Based Approach within development cooperation. MFA advisors also provided the desk officers with internal memos and guidance notes on how to integrate gender equality in development work. Furthermore, the MFA evaluation manual provides indications on how to follow the UNEG Guidelines to integrate human rights and gender in evaluations. The MFA has also delivered gender training for its staff. The interviewed advisors emphasised the good knowledge of MFA staff on gender equality issues.

Finland is well-known for its work on Women, Peace and Security through projects in Kenya and Afghanistan; Women and Climate Actions; and the promotion of maternal health and sexual and reproductive rights. Finland also played a pivotal role in the establishment of UN Women, as one of its founding members and one of its largest funding agencies. Furthermore, the EU and OECD are essential platforms for Finland for promoting gender equality[19].

Recently, the reduction of development aid in 2016 due to the Government's austerity plan has affected civil society organisations, which experienced a 40 per cent decrease in the total aid volume received from the MFA. In regard to gender equality, the decrease in spending has led the MFA to focus on mainstreaming of gender equality and influencing multilateral actors to focus on gender issues. However, sexual and reproductive rights have been given special priority due to cuts in US aid in this area[20]. Interviews with MFA advisors confirmed that, due to the current global political climate, this area is gaining increasing prominence in Finnish development aid.

Current policy in gender and women and girls' programming

The goal of the 2016 development policy is to enhance the rights and status of women and girls, based on a conviction that doing so benefits society as a whole, and assists in the promotion and achievement of other development goals. Here, the focus of MFA's work is defined as promoting the capability of countries to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of women and girls, including in sexual and reproductive health, and to remove the obstacles to their realisation. In addition, emphasis is placed on public health and education, as well as providing women with economic opportunities. Bilateral programming is also supported by providing assistance to organisations that promote women's empowerment[21].

Our interviews with MFA advisors revealed that high level political commitment to gender equality and gender mainstreaming is considered to be a key factor in the likelihood of achieving impact. Over the past years, Ministershave provided their support to gender equality by referencing the issue in their speeches and hence maintaining a high-profile commitment to the objectives.

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19 MFA, leaflet on gender equality, interviews.
20 MFA website.
21 MFA Development Policy, 2016.

IMPACT EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT AND META-ANALYSIS OF FINLAND'S SUPPORT TO WOMEN AND GIRLS AND GENDER EQUALITY

This high-level political commitment is a key tool in seeking to influence decision making in multilateral organisations and in the EU. Finland has continued to fund multilateral organisations that work on promoting gender equality, including UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF, despite decreased funding to other organisations as part of the government's austerity programme.

Currently, the MFA is seeking to embed gender equality into its systems and procedures through results-based planning, reporting and monitoring. Scorecards and other tools have been developed to better enable the MFA to monitor its impact on gender equality. These efforts build on investments in the training of MFA staff in gender equality issues, which has reportedly provided them with a good understanding of gender equality. The MFA has also organised trainings for consultants that implement their development programmes.

Interviews with MFA advisors also revealed some challenges, particularly due to the lack of formal guidance in the form of strategies and action plans since 2007. Particularly, after the introduction of the Human Rights-Based Approach (HRBA), understanding the differences between the HRBA and gender equality was perceived as difficult. The terminology used to describe aid effectiveness and partner country ownership was also not always clearly understood, particularly in relation to the prominence of gender issues.

Even though the policy guidance regarding gender equality has remained the same over the years, the frequent changes in political priorities at the Ministry level have affected the work related to gender equality at the MFA. Interviews revealed that different Ministers have given varying kinds of emphases to certain aspects within the policy priorities. This has, in turn, affected funding decisions within the MFA, making long-term planning and influencing activities challenging.

Coherence of the approach

Within the given timeframe for the evaluability assessment, gender equality has been formulated coherently as a cross-cutting issue. In the 2004 and 2007 development policies, the definition of this cross-cutting theme was exactly the same: *"promotion of the rights and the status of women and girls, and promotion of gender and social equality"*, benefitting to the larger development objective of contributing *"to the eradication of extreme poverty from the world"*. However, the documents included a limited discussion of the cross-cutting themes – these were mentioned briefly, with the requirement of being aligned with partner countries' national plans. In the 2012 development policy, gender equality was formulated in more detail. It was aligned with international agreements on gender equality and the definition also included boys and men. The policy also suggested that the promotion of gender equality should include economic development and wellbeing of women, as well as support their participation in decision making. The prominence of gender equality was further strengthened in the 2016 development policy, where it was included as a priority issue. The priorities in that policy were:

- Enhancing the rights and status of women and girls – through improved education and skills; better access to basic services; better opportunities influence political decision making and participate in economic activity; and reduced incidence of gender based violence.

- Developing countries' own economies have generated jobs, livelihood opportunities and well-being – with a specific reference to gender related objectives, namely: *"everyone, including women, young people and the poorest, have better access to decent work, livelihoods and income"*.

- Societies have become more democratic and better-functioning; and

- Food security and access to water and energy have improved, and natural resources are used sustainably.

The policy clearly states Finland's goals and key priorities in a clear and coherent manner. There is no policy within the evaluability timeframe that does not include gender considerations, and the definition has become more detailed and precise in succeeding iterations of development policy, providing more guidance on which issues within gender equality to focus on. During the period of study, MFA policy has aligned with global priorities, such as the MDGs and the SDGs.

3.5   Alignment

As previously mentioned, Finland's approach to gender equality was outlined in the Strategy and Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Finland's Policy for Developing Countries (2003-2007), which was formulated through a participatory process at the MFA. Immediately after its publication, a baseline document for gender equality was produced, with the aim to collect data to monitor progress in gender equality. However, as the Strategy was not updated, efforts to monitor the progress of gender equality in Finnish development cooperation did not become fully internalised in MFA processes. After the expiry of the Strategy, MFA-level policies discussed gender equality as one of the cross-cutting themes, with the tendency to reduce it to a 'tick-box' approach. Documents mention that gender equality is an important goal of Finnish development policy, but do always not outline exactly how it should be taken into account in development cooperation. A more recent Manual for Evaluation (MFA, 2013) is an exception, as it outlines how to include gender aspects in the evaluation process and provides useful examples.

A similar trend can be observed when analysing country-level documents, such as the country programmes of the long-term partner countries and the reporting by the embassies to the MFA based on these strategies. In the country programme strategies, the inclusion of gender aspects varied from country to country, and in the earlier versions (2008-2012), gender was not included as explicitly as in the more recent ones (2013-2016).

The systematic review of documents has allowed the research team to assess the coherence and alignment in **20** policy and strategy and nine programming documents. Of these, **nine** documents (five policy and four programming) were related to country-level interventions. Below we assess whether the approach to gender mainstreaming was clearly defined in policy documents, and whether the approach was coherent with the relevant MFA policy of the time.

Evaluation Question: How has support to women and girls been taken into account in different evaluations (both centralised and decentralised) commissioned by MFA from 2004 onwards?

a. Has Finland's approach to working with women and girls and gender mainstreaming been clearly defined in its main policy documents from 2004 until now?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
AR	• Amber-Red – most of the documents briefly mentioned their approach to working with women and girls, and to mainstreaming gender. However, only six documents did so in a clear, operationalisable, and context-specific way. Most documents mentioned gender briefly as part of the cross-sectoral areas of focus, and four documents did not discuss gender at all.

Of the policy and strategy documents reviewed, four did not explicitly describe the approach to gender mainstreaming. In the case of the 2013 Report on Development Aid delivered to Parliament, there was a reference to cross-cutting themes, but no specific mention of gender. In the other three, gender was not mentioned at all.

The main limitation is that most of the documents that explicitly mention the approach to targeting women or mainstreaming gender rarely do so in a clear and context-specific way. Only six documents included a discussion of how gender was to be operationalised in MFA activities.

b. Is there coherence in terms of how the MFA defines its support to gender mainstreaming in different programmes and policies?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
GA	• Green-Amber – the **policy and strategy documents** performed relatively well against this criteria. Most the policy or strategy documents made explicit reference to the MFA policy, or aligned with it. The recurring mention of gender as a cross-cutting theme was aligned with the MFA's approach between 2004 and 2016.

All 20 policy documents except six made explicit reference or aligned with MFA policy. Of these, eight were assessed as having clearly followed and referenced the approach to gender mainstreaming as set out in Finland's development strategies for the relevant time period and geographic area. The frequent mention of gender as a cross-cutting theme is aligned with the MFA development policies published between 2004 and 2012.

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
G	• Green – the **programming documents** fare well against this judgement criteria, with most of the reviewed documents clearly aligning with and/or referencing the approach to gender described in the MFA's relevant development policy.

Six of the nine programming documents were found to include a description of their gender mainstreaming and targeting of women and girls, which clearly aligns with the MFA's relevant approach for that year. Only one document did

not include a specific reference to gender mainstreaming in MFA policy. The evaluation team found that gender inclusion was well integrated in the country programme strategy of Nepal, in which gender was taken to results-level and operationalised. The gender analysis also was wider than just 'women and girls'.

c. Are country-level documents aligned with the MFA's policies related to gender mainstreaming of the relevant time period and thematic focus?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
AR	• Amber-Red – the evidence of alignment with gender mainstreaming policy at the country level is limited and highly varied across countries. All reviewed documents except two did not mention gender mainstreaming at all, or referred to it briefly as a cross-cutting issue. However, as the number of documents was limited, this should not be considered as strong evidence for a lack of alignment.

The document review included nine documents related to country-level policy and programming. Overall, there is large variation across geographical locations and years. While most documents reference MFA policy, several do not specify how gender was mainstreamed in practice, namely:

- In Vietnam (2008), Mozambique (2009), Tanzania (2010) and Kosovo (2013) the approach to gender mainstreaming was **not mentioned at all**.

- In Ethiopia (2008) and Mozambique (2013), country-level policies and programming took gender into account as a **cross-cutting issue**.

- In Nicaragua (n/a), gender was **mainstreamed** in sexual and reproductive health programming, and in Nepal (2013), gender was "systematically mainstreamed into programming".

4   EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT OF THE MFA'S APPROACH AND ITS IMPACT

In this section, we assess the evaluability of the long-term impact of promoting the rights and status of women and girls and gender equality more broadly in Finland's development cooperation; in other words, to establish the extent to which Finland's support on such issues can be evaluated in a reliable and credible manner. The assessment is intended to inform the design of the planned impact evaluation of Finland's support to the rights and status of women and girls and gender equality; to reduce the risks of that evaluation providing irrelevant or unsound findings; and to inform critical design elements of the evaluation to ensure its robustness. In this research, evaluability has been assessed based on the findings from the meta-evaluation to ensure that evidence and learning from past experience are used to inform future evaluation design.

For the purpose of this assignment, the evaluability assessment has focused on the availability and quality of information to be potentially used in the evaluation. We first examine the extent to which previous evaluations have been designed and conducted with a view to gather gender-specific findings, and then go on to assess evaluability in terms of plausibility (the extent to which it is reasonable to expect that interventions will have/can be expected to deliver results based on the extent to which gender issues and gender mainstreaming are credibly incorporated into programme or project design and delivery) and feasibility (the extent to which it is possible to measure results in relation to women and girls and gender equality).

4.1   Evidence generated by evaluations

Evaluation Question: How has support to women and girls been taken into account in different evaluations (both centralised and decentralised) commissioned by MFA from 2004 onwards?

a. Do evaluations contain specific evaluation questions related to women and girls?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
	• Amber-Red – few evaluations contained research questions specifically to explore the impact and effectiveness in relation to gender, whilst others merely referenced broader cross-cutting themes or objectives of Finnish development policy without singling out gender as a specific area of investigation.

Half of the evaluation reports (30) reviewed contained evaluation questions that can be considered to be relevant to evaluating the success of interventions in relation to women and girls. However, for half of these (15), issues of gender were considered only via a single high-level evaluation question, most often phrased as *"How well did [the intervention] achieve Finnish cross-cutting development policy objectives?"* with no specific reference to gender. Several more used this terminology with the addition of *"including gender equality"*. Only in a small number of cases did evaluations contain questions specifically tailored to capture gendered results within DAC criteria.

Good examples include:

- How does the gender policy conform to the national gender issues and policy, and how has it been institutionalised by [the implementing organisations]?; Have the roles of both men and women been fully recognised in the planning and implementation of activities?; Are both men and women represented in the organisation at all levels?; How has gender mainstreaming affected gender equality in the [implementing organisations], information centres and households?; How will the activities targeted at mainstreaming the crosscutting themes be sustained? (from the External review of core support under joint financial agreement to Zambia National Farmers Union)

- Have the projects promoted gender equality and improved the women's status? Has sex-disaggregated data been collected? Has the programme created enough new jobs with respect to inputs? What is their distribution between men and women? (from the Evaluation of the Finnpartnership Programme)

- Does [the organisation] pay special attention to gender equality in its advocacy work? Do boys and girls participate equally in the Youth Group? (from the Evaluation of Programme-based Support through Finnish Civil Society Organisations. Case study Taksvärkki)

Of the remaining documents, nine (16%) did not specify evaluation questions in the report and 16 (29%) relied only a broad interpretation of OECD-DAC criteria without detailed specification of evaluation questions.

There is some evidence of improvement in the consideration of gender issues in evaluation over time. Whilst only six out of the 30 sampled evaluations published between 2004 and 2011 contained evaluation questions that can be considered to be relevant to evaluating the success of interventions in relation to women and girls, there is much greater evidence of gender-specific evaluation questions within the 30 sampled evaluation documents published between 2012 and 2016. This indicates that more emphasis has been placed on attempting to explicitly evaluate the effect of interventions on women and girls in more recent years.

b. Do evaluations report gender–disaggregated data?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
R	• Red – most evaluations do not report gender disaggregated data. This is particularly evident in those evaluations where gender is considered as a cross-cutting objective, whilst programmes that have gender as a core focus are typically better at reporting gender disaggregated data.

Few evaluations systematically collected or reported on gender-disaggregated data (see also Evidence of Impact section below). Only seven of the 57[22] evaluations reviewed did so, and where such data was reported it was prevalent in those interventions which had gender issues as a core focus of programming (such as the Midterm review of Nepal Multi-stakeholder Forestry programme), as opposed to those where gender was a cross-cutting issue. This finding conforms with those of the recent meta-evaluation of programme and project evaluations (2014/15) which noted that *"only a small number of reports dealt with gender issues, with wide differences in quality. There were only a handful of interventions that had put into place the M&E systems required to provide information on gender. Except for two projects, no other evaluation reports presented, in the main part of the report, disaggregated data based on gender (or any other similar variable for that matter) and only a few reports presented conclusions and recommendations based on the intervention's experience with gender."*

There are, however, a small number of notable exceptions where gender-disaggregated data has been reported in interventions that did not have gender as a core focus:

- The Evaluation of Finnish Cooperation in Water Sector includes a discussion on gender equality and marginalised groups based on data gathered from projects that were visited.

- The Evaluation of the Junior Professional Officer Programme includes data on men and women applicants, recruits and retention.

- The Midterm review of the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project in Nepal presents gender-disaggregated data across a range of indicators.

c. Do evaluations employ gender–sensitive data collection tools?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
R	• Red – Few evaluations actively sought to employ gender-sensitive data collection tools. Most evaluations failed to specify how gender-sensitive tools were developed and deployed in the evaluation work.

The reviewers attempted to identify any mentions of attempts to use gender sensitive tools in the evaluation reports, with particular attention to the methodology section and any annexes provided. The reviewers also attempted to note whether issues and findings were reported or discussed with a gendered lens, which can be used as a proxy for the gender-sensitive tools, and an assumption

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22 For three evaluation reports it was not possible to assess them against this criteria.

can be made that some consideration to gender sensitivity has been taken into account when designing and employing the tools.

However, in most cases, the research tools were not included in the evaluation reports, which made it difficult to independently verify the extent to which the tools referred to in the reports were gender-sensitive. Also, and while gender sensitiveness might have been considered in the design and employment of the tools, these were often not discussed in the report or provided as annexes. Therefore, the assessment presented above may under-represent the prevalence of the use of gender-sensitive evaluation tools due to a general failure to fully document them in evaluation reports.

In the sample, three quarters of evaluations either did not employ gender-sensitive tools or failed to identify any gender-sensitive approaches adopted in data collection. This suggests some failings in the operationalisation of Finnish gender equality principles and policies in evaluation of development cooperation.

There were very few instances where evaluations clearly demonstrated the use of gender-sensitive data collection tools. These have all been published between 2012 and 2016, consistent with the earlier finding that there appears to be an improvement in consideration of gender issues in evaluations over time. Examples of some of the gender-sensitive evaluation tools that have been deployed are summarised in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Gender-Sensitive Evaluation Tools

Evaluation	Gender–Sensitive Evaluation Tools Employed
Midterm review of Nepal Multi-stakeholder Forestry programme: technical report on gender equality and social inclusion	Guides for focus groups discussion and a labour, access and control profile for gender analysis were designed. Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools were used for the labour, access and control profiles, which focused on identifying the gender and caste/ethnicity/regional identity-differentiated labour, access and decision making authority of women and men of different social groups.
External review of core support under joint financial agreement to Zambia National Farmers Union	Although extensive details are not provided on the data collection tools, the report mentions that women-only focus groups had been conducted. Interview guides contained in the annexes demonstrate that questions regarding gender equality were asked to interviewees.
Programme Evaluation Marie Stopes International Afghanistan	To abide by the Afghan cultural norms where males cannot talk to women who have no prior acquaintance, female data collectors conducted most of the interviews with those women willing to participate.

d. Do evaluations refer to and/or are aligned with the MFA's approach to gender mainstreaming?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
GA	• Green/Amber – almost all evaluations refer to the relevant MFA policy and approach to gender mainstreaming at a strategic level; however, most fail to analyse alignment of the evaluated programme against these objectives.

In most cases, the evaluations demonstrate an understanding of the MFA's policies and approach to gender mainstreaming, despite shortcomings in actually operationalising such policies and approaches. More than three quarters (77%) of the evaluations reviewed made reference to the relevant MFA policy; however, most of these (67%) merely referenced the MFA policies without then undertaking any analysis of the extent to which the intervention had successfully aligned with these policies. For example:

- The evaluation of the country programme between Finland and Nicaragua, the evaluation referenced gender within MFA programming, and related it back to MFA strategies (especially the 2012 and 2016 strategies). It stated that *"Gender is being strongly resourced and advanced by the national and regional Finnish interventions, both as an aim in itself and as an enabling factor for other development improvements, though further analysis is needed on the impacts of this and especially on how and how much women's empowerment and participation contribute to the over-arching goal of sustainable, poverty-reducing economic development"*. However, a gender analysis was not conducted.

Only in one third of cases (20) have evaluations assessed the alignment of interventions with MFA policies and approaches. The robustness and level of such analysis (where it has been attempted) varies considerably:

- Evaluation of the Finnpartnership Programme (2012) – explicitly acknowledges the importance of cross-cutting issues, including gender, and states that funded projects are assessed against MFA's cross cutting objectives.

- Evaluation Sustainability in Poverty Reduction: Synthesis Report – assesses alignment with MFA policy (2007 and 2011 iterations). The analysis concluded that there was success in integrating or embedding gender issues into programming but only at the policy level. In other areas, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, MFA's achievement towards gender issues were considered weak or no evidence was found.

- Results on the Ground? – An Independent Review of Finnish Aid (2015) included a discussion of cross-cutting issues in Finnish Aid. It concluded that *"The gender strategy and action plan of 2003–2007 provided a relatively strong results framework, including concrete targets and a timeframe for implementation...."*. However, the report goes on to state that *"the integration of gender in the focus country strategies varies from vague statements to having specific support and objectives in the logical framework"*.

- Mid-term evaluation of the Responsible and Innovation Land Administration in Ethiopia – noted that *"gender issues were present in the [mapping] documents, it seems that there is still a space to approach gender issues in a more systematic manner"*. For this evaluation, the gender aspect was considered in multiple stages of the evaluation. It was mentioned when stating the objective of the programme, and then briefly discussed it in the Effectiveness section, although evidence is not always strong enough to support the finding.

These analyses are consistent with the findings emerging from this study regarding weaknesses in the operationalisation of policy objectives.

Summary of key findings regarding evidence generated by evaluations

- Around one quarter of evaluations specifically included evaluation questions to assess impact and effectiveness of interventions through a gender lens. A further 25 per cent considered gender only by reference to a broad evaluation question related to achievement of cross-cutting development policy objective or priority (of which gender is only one).

- In most cases (55%) there was no evidence that evaluations had collected or reported gender-disaggregated data. Few evaluations systematically collected or reported on gender-disaggregated data with only seven evaluations doing so. Where such data was reported, it was prevalent mostly in those interventions where gender was the core focus of the intervention.

- Few evaluations actively sought to employ gender-sensitive data collection tools, or failed to specify how gender sensitive tools were developed and deployed in the evaluation work. In the sample, three quarters of evaluations either did not employ gender-sensitive tools or failed to identify any gender-sensitive approaches adopted in the research.

- Only one third of evaluations assessed alignment of interventions with MFA policies and approaches. The robustness and level of such analysis (where it has been attempted) varies considerably across the evaluations.

4.2   Evaluability assessment

Evaluation Question: What is the evaluability of the long-term impact of promoting the rights and status of women and girls and gender equality?

a. Is it plausible to expect the MFA interventions during the evaluation period have had an impact?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
A|R	• Amber-Red – The plausibility of interventions leading to intended outcomes is medium-low due to the fact that it is rare for interventions to clearly state the gendered issues they aim to address, and few have clearly defined in the interventions goals and intended impacts with respect to gender. This is especially the case for interventions/programmes where gender is identified as a cross-cutting issue. Plausibility is higher for those interventions where gender is a core issue.

Only 27 per cent of evaluation and policy documents contained a clear statement of the specific gendered issues that the intervention aimed to address. In many cases, the evaluations and policies that contained a clear statement of gendered issues were ones where gender was the core focus of the intervention – primarily those programmes that specifically sought to tackle sexual and reproductive health issues and/or violence against women (such as the country programme with Nicaragua, Marie Stopes programme in Afghanistan and specific gender-focused interventions of UN Women). In these cases, documents typically included a clear statement of the specific gendered issues the programme or policy intended to address. These included:

- Addressing specific and wide-ranging problems of violence and oppression of women in Nicaragua, such as prohibition on abortion, high rates of teenage pregnancy and wider issues surrounding low levels of participation of women in governance and the role of religion in maintaining established gender norms.

- Addressing sexual and reproductive health challenges in Afghanistan, such as the high rate of maternal and child mortality and the low prevalence in the use of contraceptives (despite high levels of awareness of family planning methods).

- Tackling gender-based violence in Kosovo via interventions designed to raise awareness and strengthen the range and quality of support services for victims of domestic violence. Here the programme sought to deliver change by strengthening the application of the law and the country's National Action Plan for tackling domestic violence.

In a small number of cases, specific reviews and evaluations of gender equality and social inclusion within wider thematic programmes were able to clearly define the gendered issues of concern and the strategies that the programmes had employed to tackle them (e.g. Mid-term review of Nepal Multi-stakeholder Forestry programme: technical report on gender equality and social inclusion).

However, in more than 40 per cent of the documents reviewed, there was no mention of any gendered issues or problems that the intervention aimed to address, either as a core issue or as a cross-cutting issue, and these were only briefly considered in a further 33 per cent. This lack of consideration of gendered issues is evidenced across a wide range of thematic programming, and is routinely absent from some programming documentation. This can be expected to have a filter down effect on the extent to which gendered issues are fully considered in implementation and evaluation of specific interventions within these programmes. For example, there was only cursory reference to gender challenges in the mid-term review of TVET development in school sector reform in Nepal, and, likewise, there was either only cursory or no statement of specific gendered issues across many of the agricultural and forestry programmes that have been supported by the MFA. For instance, gender issues were absent from the mid-term review of land administration in Ethiopia, and evaluations of rural development in Mozambique.

Gender issues were also not fully considered in several country level evaluations. They were missing entirely from the evaluation of the country strategies for Vietnam and Tanzania, and were only cursorily mentioned in the evaluations of the Mozambique country strategy and the 2007 evaluation of Finnish aid to Afghanistan.

This finding also helps to explain why gender issues are not comprehensively addressed in many previous meta-evaluations of Finnish aid, nor in the bi-annual reports on development evaluations. Indeed, the bi-annual reports note that gender issues were only weakly addressed in the evaluations included in the reviews. In some cases, anecdotal evidence is provided on how some gender issues have been addressed in evaluations, leading to increased time available for women and girls to attend school and positive impacts on *"relations between*

the genders", but no additional information or analysis is provided on how such results were achieved or any quantifiable measures of success (presumably because such measures were lacking in the evaluation reports on which the meta-analyses were based).

Evidence that the goals and intended impact of MFA interventions were clearly defined, as relevant to the needs of women and girls

Moving beyond the assessment of whether MFA reports contain statements of the gendered issues interventions aim to address, the research also explored the extent to which the goals and intended impacts of interventions were specifically defined in relation to the needs of different genders. Given the previous finding, it is not surprising that there is limited evidence that the goals and impacts of interventions were defined with reference to the needs and issues of different genders. Only 13 of the documents reviewed in the sample (17%) provided a clear statement of goals and impacts, while more than half (53%) made no reference at all to gender-specific goals and intended impact.

Few references were made to gendered goals and intended impacts in previous meta-evaluations, though it is encouraging that more recent studies have sought to include these. So, while earlier meta-evaluations and bi-annual reports have not included any defined gender measures, the more recent 2014/15 meta-evaluation of project and programme evaluations includes a suite of disaggregated gender indicators (both quantitative and qualitative). A small number of individual programme and project evaluations have also provided gender-specific indicators (such as the Midterm review of Nepal Multi-stakeholder Forestry programme, technical report on gender equality and social inclusion, and the main report and Midterm review of the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project in Nepal).

Whilst gender mainstreaming and gender equality was recognised as a cross-cutting issue in evaluations of country programmes, none of the evaluations reviewed have sought to clearly define gender specific goals and impacts, hence the plausibility of delivering gendered results within these programmes is low.

Even for programmes where gender is the core focus of intervention, it is often the case the intended results were not clearly defined. Broad goals of such programmes typically included aspirational statements of intent regarding gender impacts, but it is apparent that in most cases there was little or no attempt to clearly define intended impacts in any quantifiable manner. For example, the Programme Evaluation of Marie Stopes International Afghanistan provides a statement that the intervention seeks to improve access to, equity, quality and efficiency of sexual and reproductive health to women living in four provinces of Afghanistan, but does not expand on the specific intended impacts of the project. Likewise, the evaluation of the Fund for Gender Equity and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Nicaragua (Phase 1) contains clear gender-specific goals, but these were not quantified; hence, it was not possible for the evaluation to measure the impact.

Evidence that intended beneficiaries were clearly identified and targeted by the interventions, including via the identification of potential mid–targeting and an assessment of potentially excluded groups

Cascading down these sequential criteria, it is then not surprising to find that only four (7%) of the reviewed evaluations provided evidence of the interventions having clearly identified target groups, particularly women and girls. Even where target groups were specified, these were typically only identified in very broad terms, and consideration of any sub-groups of beneficiaries was rare. For thematic and country programmes where gender is a cross-cutting issue, this is perhaps not surprising (or necessary), but it is notable that even in interventions where the core focus is on gender-based interventions, programming and evaluation documents typically refer only to women as a general target group, and in a small number of instances reference is also made to girls as a specific target group. For instance, this was the case in the Evaluation of the Development of the education development strategic plan of the Palestinian Ministry of Education and the country strategies for Development Cooperation with Mozambique and Nepal.

Summary of key findings regarding plausibility of MFA interventions leading to intended outcomes

- The plausibility of interventions leading to intended outcomes is medium-low, due to the fact that it is rare for interventions to clearly state the gendered issues they aim to address, and few have clearly defined goals and intended impacts of the interventions with respect to gender. This is especially the case for interventions and programmes where gender is identified as a cross-cutting issue. Plausibility is higher for those interventions where gender is a core issue.

- Whilst broad goals in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming are often stated in programming and evaluation documents, it is most often the case that goals are only defined in very broad and vague terms, with little consideration given to the identification of specific gendered results that interventions intend to deliver.

- This suggests a widespread failure of evaluations to properly and fully consider the gendered issues within programmes, and for gender perspectives to be addressed in evaluations of programmes funded by Finland. This suggests specific methods will be required first to specify the results that the evaluation is to assess in terms of gender impacts.

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b. Is it feasible to assess or measure the impact of MFA's activities to support women and girls?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
A|R	• Amber-Red – Few evaluations contain any specific results based on gender-disaggregated data on outputs, outcomes and impacts, and evaluation methodologies are not sufficiently tailored to ensure that gendered impacts are assessed, or to ensure the deployment of gender-sensitive evaluation tools. This suggests that the forthcoming evaluation will need to explore new and different approaches to assessing impact given the lack of a strong evidence base from previous evaluations.

Evidence that there exists sufficient data and evidence to assess impact of MFA interventions

In most cases, the evaluations contained little or no data that will be useful in assessing the gender impacts of MFA programming. In our sample, less than

one in ten evaluations included any analysis of gender specific results (outputs, outcomes or impacts), with a further 29 per cent presenting some basic gender-disaggregated monitoring data, but with little or no interpretation or contextualisation of the findings. Most evaluations (53%) did not include data that would make it feasible to assess the impact of MFA's activities to support women and girls.

This presents a challenge to the forthcoming evaluation study, which may require innovative approaches to truly understand the impact of MFA activities in relation to women and girls.

Previous meta-evaluations have faced challenges in reporting on gender impacts. The Meta-Analysis of Development Evaluations in 2007 and 2008 did not include any data or analysis of issues from a gender perspective, whilst the more recent Meta-Analysis of Project and Programme Evaluations in 2012-2014 included a rating of quality of evaluation reports in gender equality, but noted that *"gender disaggregated indicators, or a lack of monitoring of gender mainstreaming was also a recurring issue"*. More specifically, the research found that *"projects were mixed in their contributions to the cross-cutting objective of gender equality, but were most often weak. Just over a third of the projects were found to be Good or Very Good, while about another third were Poor."*

Similarly, the Meta-Evaluation of Project and Programme Evaluations in 2014/2015 highlighted the absence of gender indicators as a particular weakness in the sample of documents reviewed. Our research concurs with this finding, which has implications for how the forthcoming evaluation should be approached.

In the instances where some data is presented, this is most often done so at a very high level, and different indicators and results are reported depending on the nature of the programme – a factor which will also complicate any attempt to base a future evaluation on analysis of data emerging from previous evaluations. More often it was found that evaluations contained only qualitative statements on the gender impacts of MFA programming, which are difficult to systematically analyse. For example:

- The evaluation of Programme-based Support through Finnish Civil Society Organisations noted only that *"gender equality is often addressed mechanically by balancing the number of women and men participating in project activities"* with no supporting data or evidence provided.

- The findings of the case study on complementarity in Finland's Institutional Cooperation Instrument reaches a similar conclusion to our own research in observing that, whilst gender mainstreaming is recognised at a policy level, it has proven to be more problematic to operationalise the policy and demonstrate any tangible results. The case study noted that *"90 per cent of the Finnish organisations believed that mainstreaming of gender equality had been addressed, whereas only 41 per cent of the partner organisations held this view"*.

- The midterm review of Aid for Trade (Kosovo) notes that *"the Project promotes in particular gender equality as well as reduction of inequality in general, but there is no data or analysis made. The evaluation only recommends to give priority to communities with most women-led households or measure impact by gender/age/ethnicity, but no real impact is observed at all."*

Even in gender-focused programming there is often a lack of data to credibly assess the impact of interventions. The Programme Evaluation of Marie Stopes International Afghanistan did not include primary data collection due to time and resource constraints, drawing instead on secondary data from the National Health Management Information System (HMIS) around availability of services. The lack of specific data from the programme means that any observed change is hard to attribute directly to the specific intervention. The evaluation of the Fund for Gender Equity and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights also did not gather or present any data on impacts, presenting only some learning on some best practices and more qualitative statements of impact derived from interviews.

Evidence that MFA projects and interventions have been collecting gender-disaggregated data as part of their monitoring activities

The review found that gender-disaggregated data is not being systematically included in monitoring activities of MFA funded projects and programmes. Gender-disaggregated data has been collected in one third of the interventions and programmes in our sample – though it is noteworthy that this conclusion is based only on the information gleaned from evaluation reports (as in most cases the data itself was not presented or analysed in the evaluation reports for us to be able to verify its scope or robustness). In most of these cases, the extent of monitoring involves only counting the number of male and female participants in the programme or project activities, though there are a small number of projects that are being more ambitious and pro-active in their approach to collecting gender-disaggregated data. For example, the Evaluation of the Development of the education development strategic plan of the Palestinian Ministry of Education produced monitoring data on grades achieved by boys and girls, and gender-disaggregated data on school attendance and completion rates.

Two in five of the evaluations examined were not collecting gender-disaggregated data, and for the remainder (53%) it was not possible to determine from the evaluation report whether such data was being collected or not.

Evidence that evaluations were methodologically sound, including via the availability of raw data from the studies, clear and robust sampling, availability of data collection instruments

In around a quarter of the evaluation studies reviewed the overarching methodologies appear to be sound, and generated data based on reasonably robust samples of beneficiaries and stakeholders. Evaluation approaches were almost exclusively theory-based, and most commonly based on programmes of qualitative research and interviews as a means to assessing the contribution or attribution of the intervention to any stated results. Thus the results of such evaluations are also mostly qualitative, which is consistent with the earlier finding regarding the lack of data and tangible results on the gendered impacts of

MFA-supported programming. None of the evaluations reviewed included any kind of impact evaluation approach (involving assessment of control or counterfactual groups) and very few even sought to undertake any quantitative beneficiary surveys.

Moreover, in very few instances was there any direct consideration of gender-sensitive approaches being deployed in the design and conduct of the evaluations themselves – another weakness in the implementation of the gender equality strategy that MFA may wish to seek to address in the future. In other cases, it was clear that the evaluation tools were not sufficiently gender-sensitive or able to capture women's voices. For example, one report noted that *"the interview sessions…included also women participants, although as a clear minority. Usually in such an interview session, women would not speak up. However, they did speak up in the separate sessions that were arranged only for the women."*

In around a quarter of the evaluations reviewed, the evaluation methodology was not clearly set out in the evaluation report for an assessment to be made on the approaches and methods used. Weaknesses were identified in almost half of the evaluation studies reviewed. Often this assessment reflected a lack of clarity or, in some cases, a lack of evaluation questions and overemphasis on small samples of qualitative interviews with project staff and participants.

Summary of key findings regarding feasibility of measuring the gender impacts of MFAs activities to support women and girls

- Few evaluations contain any specific results based on gender-disaggregated data on outputs, outcomes and impacts, and evaluation methodologies are not sufficiently tailored to ensure that gendered impacts are assessed, or to ensure the deployment of gender-sensitive evaluation tools.

- The widespread absence of gender-disaggregated data from interventions and their evaluations needs to be considered in the design of the forthcoming evaluation to ensure its effectiveness. A quantitative impact study may not be warranted (without investment in widespread primary data collection), hence more qualitative, process evaluation approaches and qualitative beneficiary impact stories may be more useful in seeking to understand the extent to which and how well gender mainstreaming has been implemented across programmes and projects in the MFA portfolio, as well as determining their impact on women and girls supported by the programmes.

4.3   Evidence of impact

Evaluation Question: Is there evidence of impacts of Finnish support to women and girls in the reports?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
	• Amber-Red – the evidence of impacts from MFA interventions is variable and broadly limited. There is tentative evidence that education-oriented programmes are marginally better at recording gendered impacts, but evidence in other sectors is limited.

   a. Evidence that MFA interventions have had expected impacts on women and girls

Evidence of expected gender-related impacts is variable. Of the 60 evaluation documents we reviewed, only a small number (three) stated whether an MFA intervention had the expected impact on women and girls. Moreover, a substantial minority (just under half) contained no or inconclusive evidence of interventions' impact. A further fifth stated that interventions did not have the expected impact on women and girls. This variable evidence base partly reflects the inconsistencies and lack of clarity around evaluation questions identified in some documents (as noted above).

This means that only around two fifths of evaluations documents reviewed contain any evidence of interventions' impacts on women and girls. That said, there is tentative evidence that education-focused programmes are somewhat more likely to record whether their interventions had a positive impact on women and girls. Examples of these interventions include:

- Country Programmes between Finland and Nepal, Nicaragua and Tanzania: this policy brief outlines how, in the case of *"gender equity and social inclusion (GESI), they [the Nepal CCTs] are embedded in the education SWAp"*.

- Evaluation of Finland's Development Cooperation Country Strategies and Country Strategy Modality Mozambique Country report: the report notes that *"progress has been recorded against the specific objectives [and] programme monitoring shows that gender is a clear success story in the education sector, with a large growth in female enrolment"*.

- Evaluation of the Development of the Education Development Strategic Plan of the Palestinian Ministry of Education: the evaluation notes how *"universal access to primary education has been achieved"*.

Other than education, evidence of MFA interventions' expected impacts on women and girls is confined to isolated examples and tends to be more high-level in nature. Such interventions include the 'Complementarity in Finland's Development Policy and Cooperation: a Case Study on Complementarity in the Institutional Cooperation Instrument', which notes the higher female participation rate (of 40%) in Namibia's police force. Another example is the MISFA (Microfinance Investment Support Facility to Afghanistan) where two thirds (67%) of microfinance recipients were women, but without further exploration of this intervention's expected impacts.

b. Overview of unexpected consequences (both positive and negative)

Very few of the reviewed documents record interventions' unexpected consequences (either negative or positive). Indeed, only around a tenth of the 69 programme and evaluation documents we reviewed refer to unexpected consequences.

Across these six documents, both positive and negative unexpected consequences were mentioned. However, only one of these documents lists an unexpected consequence that is gender-oriented. The Evaluation of the Fund for gender equity and sexual reproductive health and rights mentioned that *"a quarter of female-headed households said they felt less able to afford school fees and clothes, compared to one in ten households headed by males"*.

Summary of key findings regarding evidence of impact of Finnish support to women and girls

- Evidence noting MFA interventions' expected impacts on women and girls is sparse and could be improved. Clarifying the evaluation questions for these interventions would assist in defining the sorts of impacts that are to be measured, and ensuring their consideration in evaluation studies.

- Evidence of unexpected consequences (both positive and negative) is particularly limited. Moreover, most of the small number of such consequences that are listed do not tend to be related to women and girls.

5 IDENTIFYING INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE

Evaluation Question: What international studies and impact evaluations have been carried out on the subject of supporting women and girls, and what are the lessons learned based on them?

a. Does the sample of international studies and impact evaluations find a significant impact of different donor interventions to support women and girls?

In general, all the donors acknowledged that commitment on gender has increased during recent years at the global level, but various studies and evaluations found a gap between gender mainstreaming policies and practices[23]. The Netherlands reported that information on outcomes and impact is rare and they are often in the form of anecdotes or self-reporting. Norad also reflected that *"International norms in the area of women, peace and security have improved. However, increased awareness and strengthening of norms have not necessarily resulted in significant changes in practice"*[24], acknowledging that the resulting report is not able to provide the entire picture of Norad's contribution to gender impact. The EU report mentioned that *"some important and inspirational GEWE (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment) results have been achieved, but they are patchy and poorly documented"*[25].

The selected documents indicated that there is no presentable significant impact of their intervention to support women and girls. Although certain results seem to have been achieved, they were often qualitative, taking the form of case studies, and they were not systematically reported against indicators. This is consistent with the findings of our review of Finnish experiences in this respect.

b. Do international donor reports mention the evaluability and impact of interventions, and methodologies employed in the analysis?

The international documents show that the absence of tangible change and impact is partly due to weak evaluability, and address a number of issues leading to lack of evaluability from different angles. Typically, these are: lack of gender expertise; lack of clear gender objectives; lack of gender tools and instruments; lack of gender-specific indicators that go beyond activity/output level; lack of an M&E framework; lack of efforts at senior and middle management; and lack of commitment and capacity at the implementation level.

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23 A study of the premises underlying the Dutch policy for women's rights and gender equality (IOB, 2015).
24 Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries (COWI et al, 2015).
25 Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries (COWI et al, 2015).

As already presented in the previous section, no significant impact was reported in the selected international documents. Nevertheless, they did mention how to improve evaluability from different aspects and referred to methodologies employed and methodological consideration that we could take into account. These are further elaborated below.

    c. What are the main lessons that can be learned from impact evaluations and studies undertaken by international donors and the methodologies they employed? What constitutes international best practices in this field?

Overview of lessons learned

The four documents consist of three evaluation reports conducted by each donor's evaluation unit or commissioned to a third party, and a study summarising various reports and pieces of research. As some of them are in their nature reviews and summaries of results, they do not necessarily present lessons learned or recommendations in a clear way. However, they elaborate key findings and point out how to improve the current position.

The main lessons learned can be grouped into the following two:

- **Weak evaluability** due to lack of gender expertise, gender indicators, and monitoring system is referred to in all of the evaluation documents. Recognising that the same discussion has actually been made over time and similar recommendations have been listed before, those reports conclude that better and robust results management systems need to be established at the organisational level, along with a strong commitment to their deployment and use. For instance, development of even more specific and tailored gender guidelines for operation, incorporation of gender analysis in every intervention, improvement of monitoring and evaluation at all stages of the project cycle, and ensuring usage across projects and programmes.

Although overall evaluability is regarded as weak by the three international donor organisations, there is an "exceptional" example from the EU's evaluation. In Morocco, the EU funded a capacity-building programme where a well-functioning and persistent political and policy dialogue played an important role of having the National Plan on Gender Equality in place, enabling gender analysis, and developing programmes with gender disaggregated indicators. Furthermore, the EU thoroughly assessed each of the performance indicators and where they were not met, the EU did not disburse funding. As a result, the national government was empowered to promote and address gender equality. The partner country's efforts were also a crucial factor, but the key factors contributing to this success seem to be EUD's organisational engagement from the high level, as well as staff's consistent commitment and their compliance to the gender guideline tools provided.

- The second lesson learned was the **nature of gender issues themselves**. Changes in women's rights and gender equality are difficult to measure in general, as gender issues are often associated with many other factors, social norms, practices and customs, and it requires time to see tangible changes – thus requiring patience from donor agencies. Due to all these complexities, it becomes difficult to pinpoint the causality that has

brought about changes in women's rights and gender equality. According to EU and Norad, finding the causality becomes even more challenging in large programmes or multi-funding programmes, and therefore such programmes tend to assess contribution rather than attribution. In other words, they focus on the overall outcome, not the relationship between input and outcome. A methodological consideration tackling this issue is discussed in the next section.

Methodologies employed

Due to general challenges of assessing gender impacts, the evaluation of the EU's support on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) adopted an innovative approach. The report adopted the "5C analysis framework". It enables the evaluation of institutional efforts and commitment towards certain initiatives such as gender mainstreaming by assessing five elements: Commitment, Capacities, Cash, aCcountability, and Context (Coordination and Complementarity). These five Cs were integrated into the evaluation questions and judgement criteria and became the key issues for assessment, while achievement of the GEWE itself was also assessed separately. This 5C analysis framework is more useful for assessing readiness with regards to the extent to which a donor organisation has been placing efforts on this subject matter until now. With this analytical framework, this evaluation collected information through desk study, extensive field visits and interviews, and a rigorous survey. The interviews included EUD, national authorities, development partners and NGOs, among others, in the selected countries, and the survey targeted EUD in the world.

A short summary of what has been assessed in each criterion is presented below.

Analysis area of 5C
Commitment – Institutional commitment in the form of vision, policy and strategy commitments; leadership from the top down through the organisation; and staff commitment throughout the organisation, are key to ensuring the GEWE is operationalised.
Capacity – The organisation has the capacity to analyse, plan, implement, monitor, report and conduct dialogue in the area of GEWE.
Cash – There are financial resources allocated for GEWE programming and GEWE capacities and systems within the organisation.
Accountability – Institutional mechanisms and processes support and ensure systematic inclusion and reporting of gender equality concerns within the organisation.
Context Analysis and Coordination Among Donor Partners – donors contribute to the development of a conductive context at a national level.

IOB's study presented an interesting analysis on what has been working well when measuring higher level impacts within the sectors supported by Dutch development cooperation where women are involved to some extent. "What works" is analysed in the following sectors: violence against women, women's education, women and economic development, women's right to land, women and water sanitation, and women's political voice. It then lists the issues to be considered when creating high level indicators. For instance, for projects dealing with "violence against women", it lists health consequences such as rates

of unintended pregnancies and abortions, HIV or psychological outcomes such as post-traumatic stress syndrome, sleep and eating disorders, and low self-esteem, or even physiological impact on children who witnessed violence. For the education sector, the issues to be considered range from abolition of school fees, introducing stipends for girls, and community sensitisation on the importance of girls' education, to the recruitment of female teachers, teacher training, the development of girl-friendly teaching and learning materials and the construction of girl-friendly schools. As it is simply a list of all possible issues to be considered, its relevance needs to be carefully analysed when applying them in practice. In other sectors such as agriculture and food security, water and sanitation, and rights to land, a picture of what works is still not very clear and fewer studies have been carried out – hence no specific issues are identified for these sectors in the study.

Establishing such indicators from scratch will be a difficult task and will require resources to be devoted to the task. Norad refers to resources for data verification and says that there are *"a number of methods to measure women's rights or level of gender equality and discrimination. Widely used indices, for example those from UNDP, the World Economic Forum and Social Watch, assess inequality between men and women"*[26]. It also refers to data from Central Bureaux of Statistics, UN data or Government data. According to the EU's evaluation, UN agencies tend to refer to these global indicators that are often developed by themselves from the start to the end, while other bilateral donor organisations also use them in order to create their country strategy plans. Norad mentions that assessing changes in women's rights and gender equality is especially difficult to measure in large programmes regardless of bilateral or multilateral funding. Therefore for funding provided to a pool or to a UN body with other assistance organisations, Norad assesses based on contribution and not attribution of results. It then claims the results based on a percentage or how much Norad's funding constitutes from the overall budget.

d. **Are the lessons learned relevant for the Finnish context? How can these be adapted to match the MFA's work, areas of interest and constraints (including financial)?**

In the sector context

IOB's study of possible use of wider indicators implies that gender impact can be well assessed by sector, whilst Norad also presents their results of gender impact by sector. Furthermore, the EU's evaluation states *"there is immediate potential to ensure that the indicators on good governance, education and health are sex disaggregated by changing references to individuals or people in indicators to men, women, boys and girls"*[27]. The sample of the Finnish documents also leads to the conclusion that some sectors seem to be more ready for gender impact evaluation than others, which is also in line MFA advisors' suggestions that the forthcoming evaluation should focus on some sectors rather that seek to cover all sectors at once. Based on the evidence gathered in this

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26   Norad Result Report: Women's rights and gender equality (Norad, 2015).
27   Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries (COWI et al, 2015).

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study, projects and programmes primarily targeting women in reproductive health, gender-based violence, grant schemed addressing gender-related issues as a whole, and projects in the education sector perhaps offer the most immediate potential for successful impact evaluation.

In considering its approach to the forthcoming evaluation, the MFA should not overlook the issue mentioned by both international and Finnish documents, as well as the MFA advisors consulted – namely, that individual staff can make a significant difference in achieving and promoting gender mainstreaming. One of the MFA advisors pointed out that the extent to which gender was included in projects often depends on either the interest of the sectoral advisor to have this within the project scope or on the knowledge of the consultant, and that there are huge gaps between sectors. For example, such issues appeared to be well integrated into water and sanitation projects, but less so in forestry projects. If a theme-based or sector-based evaluation is to be conducted, the selection has to be made very carefully.

In the methodological context

The EU's evaluation states that international organisations should have a results framework with targets, gender-sensitive indicators and data, but it also acknowledges that gender equality is not fully taken into account or not at all in some interventions. For this reason, the 5C analysis was adopted as more of an alternative method to assess institutional progress that has been in advancing gender issues. In our view, this evaluability assessment for the MFA actually covers some of the Cs (Commitment, Capacity, and aCcountability) already. Commitment is to some extent elaborated in our evaluation question on alignment, and findings in evaluation reports commissioned by the MFA and interviews with MFA advisors provide some insights for analysing Capacity and Accountability. A full-fledged or partial progress analysis could be conducted before the forthcoming evaluation, which will help identify which conditions are weak and need most attention.

In the organisational context

The suggestions made at the organisational level for improving an overall results management system is highly relevant and applicable to the MFA, as these issues have been pointed out repeatedly in a number of evaluation reports commissioned by the MFA. The example of Morocco demonstrated above is claimed as an exceptional case. Since policy dialogue and capacity building was part of the broad intervention and this is not the most common way of funding, the applicability level itself might not be very high, but still the organisational commitment at the managerial and staff level is considered as the key factor. As the MFA has confirmed that it is working on a better results management system at this moment, a functional and reliable results management system has to be introduced and it has to be understood and implemented by and for everyone. In the case of Netherlands, a weak results system was already identified before 2000 and it is still the centre of discussion.

In the financial context

The overall budget for Finnish development cooperation and EVA-11 staff has decreased during the past years, and this trend seems to be continuing[28]. Since other donor agencies actively use the globally existing indicators for measuring contribution or for setting goals, it may be a useful tool for the MFA to consider in the approach to the forthcoming evaluation. Effective use of those indicators will also contribute to cost effectiveness and coordination, when they are applied appropriately.

Summary of key findings from international best practices

- Political commitment on gender has increased in general, but there is a gap between gender mainstreaming policies and practice.

- Weak evaluability is the common finding and is the reason for absence of tangible change or impact in other donor organisations. Weak evaluability is characterised by lack of gender objectives and expertise, gender-specific indicators, M&E framework, and poor organisation-wide commitment and capacity.

- Very few best practices are available. Weak evaluability and gender mainstreaming can be addressed in different ways, but organisational aspects seem to be the most common recommendations.

- Due to the challenge of assessing gender impact, the selected international organisations adopt alternative methodologies. Examples are to evaluate the progress and efforts made until now, to focus on contribution not attribution, and to apply existing indicators in the wider perspective. Some donors focus on specific sectors or themes, not gender considerations across their entire development portfolio.

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28 Evaluation Systems in Development Cooperation (OECD, 2016).

6   KEY LESSONS

Evaluation Question: What are the lessons learned based on different evaluations, especially from an impact perspective?

a. Do MFA evaluations identify lessons learned and/or identify reasons for interventions impact (or lack thereof)?

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
G	• Green – lessons learned are well identified and reported in many of the sampled documents and they address why impacts are not achieved, what prevents it, and how it happens, although the same issues are pointed out repeatedly.

As presented above in Section 4, Evidence of Impact, a good number of evaluation documents say that interventions have achieved at least some positive impacts. However, the extent to which these are documented or reported is poor in many of the documents, and few mention gender-specific lessons or impact. Half of the total documents did not find gender-related or relevant lessons learned, while the rest identified more than one lesson learned. About 90 per cent of documents with any lessons learned pointed out the general weakness of gender mainstreaming in one or more project cycles. Therefore, lessons learned are concentrated on why gender mainstreaming is not implemented, how it can be improved and why impact cannot be reported properly. Since lack of gender mainstreaming is a recurring phenomenon, many of the lessons learned and recommendations are addressed to the MFA generally. Other lessons learned are more sector- or project-specific, but several are relevant for the forthcoming evaluation, and are summarised below. Please note that these are not the recommendations of this study, but merely a reproduction of various lessons and recommendations drawn from the reports that have been reviewed.

Lessons for the MFA

- The MFA should integrate gender from the very early stages (project and programme identification or policy dialogue) to the end, and ensure that it does not disappear within the project cycle (project design, formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation). Specific recommendations propose that services delivered by a third party through tender procedures need to clearly and systematically include gender issues in their ToRs. In-depth gender analysis is also recommended as a tool to analyse the current situation and identify specific needs and interests of beneficiaries. In addition, investing more to generate baseline data and strengthening use of monitoring and evaluation indicators are recurring recommendations.

- A gender strategy at the country level should be developed and implemented.

- The MFA should earmark a certain percentage of project and programme budget for cross-cutting objectives.

- Gender mainstreaming guidelines should be more practical and specific, and further reflect on-the-ground experience.

- A systematic or obligatory arrangement should be established so that cross-cutting issues are consistently embedded within all project activities.

Lessons for MFA work with partner countries

- Country strategies should be developed by embassies and MFA country teams to better incorporate local context and knowledge.

- Within long-term sector programmes, impacts become more visible, while short-term sector programmes often come to the end before impacts can be seen.

- Rigorous analysis and collective decision making is needed. The MFA should maintain a frequent policy dialogue, but with more emphasis on gender, which will enable high quality SWAp.

- The MFA should support partner countries in developing strategies to promote participation, inclusion and equity.

Lessons for the MFA's work with multilateral donors

- Focus on a widely owned agenda and let willing members implement agreed activities with a set budget.

- Second a gender advisor in the administering organisation (multilateral donors) as part of influencing activities.

Lessons for project implementers

- Reduce the overall number of indicators and develop user-friendly indicators.

- Understand the causes of problems and address them to increase impact. Identify the factors that have led to the observed impacts, as well as ways to remove the hampering factors and barriers, and the relationships between them. For instance;

  - Poverty and economic dependency as restricting women's sexual and reproductive rights;

  - Factors which make it possible to increase the number of female employees (for instance, being able to bring family members to work, or increasing women's literacy rate); and

  - Strategies to further involve men, if they are considered to be one of the hampering factors.

- Include target beneficiaries in the team (for a project supporting SMEs, for example, include a local female entrepreneur or representative). This not only helps implementation, but also increases sustainability through capacity-building and knowledge transfer. As an alternative, involve a local gender specialist in implementation.

- Continue dissemination and advocacy work, which is more cost-efficient and could contribute to more results than funding a large technical assistance programme.

- Use secondary data sources for measuring impact, such as existing data from the UN, statistics etc.

- For grant programmes, when possible, involve a local network organisation to achieve greater outreach. Grantees should also collaborate to strengthen synergies and increase impact.

- Increase attention to men to reflect that in certain contexts, men can be more disadvantaged than women. Gender equality should be based on a GAD (Gender and Development), and not a WID (Women in Development) approach.

Considerations for future impact evaluations

- In-depth analysis in evaluation should focus on the policy areas that are clearly promoted through the intervention. It would be more relevant to acknowledge the fact that different projects implement different policy priorities directly or indirectly.

- Some sectors tend to address gender mainstreaming and equality better (gender-themed programmes, education) than other sectors (forestry or agriculture). However, generalisation is dangerous, as several studies have recognised that one single person with good expertise and drive can change the situation.

In terms of quality of the lessons and recommendations emerging from previous studies, out of 94 documents, 36 were not considered for this analysis, or not found to contain relevant information for judgement. Some 50 documents were considered to include lessons learned with high quality. Usually, high-quality lessons learned elaborate on factors and barriers hampering gender equality. However, most refer to the MFA's organisational structure or practices as a means to strengthen and ensure systematic gender mainstreaming.

Rating Symbol	Rating description and justification
GA	• Green-Amber – 90 per cent of the documents containing lessons learned are considered to be high quality with good flow of analysis.

b. Do MFA staff identify any additional lessons learned from the previous evaluations, especially in an impact perspective?

As part of the study, we conducted four interviews MFA advisors. The main topics of discussion were: how gender has been taken into consideration in Finnish development policy; how Finland could have an impact in this area; what

are the issues guiding Finnish development policy in gender issues; and how MFA officials are trained in gender issues. Interviewees were also asked about their perceptions of Finnish aid effectiveness in tackling gender issues, and potentially about the challenges they face when trying to translate policy objectives into programming.

General issues and problems

All interviewees agreed that there is good understanding of gender equality within the MFA, and that general understanding of the issue has improved over years. This is attributed to:

- MFA-organised trainings for staff and on-the-job learning;

- Changes in the staff structure at the MFA, with more female diplomats and women in leadership positions, and greater understanding of gender issues among younger male employees; and

- An improved understanding of issues, due to developments at the global level. The understanding that gender is more than just women and girls is now emerging within the MFA staff and is likely to lead to changes in how gender equality is dealt with in the future. Furthermore, interviewees also referred to the three areas where Finland has done a great deal of work related to gender equality, such as women and climate change; women, peace and development (twinning projects in Afghanistan, Kenya); and maternal health/sexual and reproductive rights.

The presence and importance of **strong political support** were highlighted during the interviews, and it was noted that normally, political commitment also leads to more resources being devoted to the subject. When the minister stands behind an issue, it is included in his or her speeches and is taken into account at various levels externally and internally. This is also reflected on how active Finland has been on influencing multilateral development cooperation. In general, Finland has actively advocated for gender equality at UN fora. The interviewees find that this work should definitely be continued. Finland is seen as a good role model in gender equality at a global level, and should use this as a trademark, together with its reputation in innovation and use of new technologies, among other fields.

Frequent changes in ministers' priorities were often mentioned as concern during the interviews. These can lead to changing development policy programmes and, consequently, changes in priority areas and funding. This was identified as having had a significant impact on long-term planning and influencing work due to inconsistent messaging. The advisors stated that gender equality was not prioritised in the 2007 Policy, but, due to pressure from civil society, it was added as a cross-cutting theme. In this period, there were very few projects setting gender equality as the main objective, but it was still said to be mainstreamed to the extent possible. However, interviewees noted that since 2011, the MFA's development policy has stabilised and ministers have been consistently supporting gender advocacy.

Despite the good climate for gender issues, the interviewees mentioned that **resourcing** for gender equality work is weak, and expressed concerns about

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cuts in aid budgets and its impact on gender issues in development programming. One consultee suggested that this could be a parameter to measure how gender equality is appreciated at the MFA.

Human resource capacity was also mentioned as a challenge. Desk officers also have other responsibilities focusing on trade and political issues, which limits their time for development cooperation work. Nevertheless, all advisors expressed that gender equality has been somewhat mainstreamed in many of the projects, and very well in some.

The perceived lack of a strategy for gender mainstreaming and targeting cross-cutting issues was considered to be hindrance to the concretisation of work, as well as to staff commitment. In particular, the targets formulated within MFA development policies are broad and span across many issues. A clearer strategy would help make targets more concrete and better identify beneficiaries. Guidelines were developed for this purpose, but advisors felt that their tone framed this as an obligation, rather than helping to motivate the desk officers.

One of the interviewees mentioned that there is **little documentation** of good practices – for instance, there are no working papers. Additional documentation would help motivate staff, provide good examples of the work done, and assist in the influencing of others' work.

Interviewees stated that continuous training on gender equality, cross-cutting issues, and HRBA for both staff and consultants is required, and that more attention should be paid to the Terms of Reference for planning and evaluation to further ensure gender is fully embedded.

Views and suggestions for the forthcoming evaluation

Some advisors expressed that it may be too early to conduct an evaluation, as the impacts will be difficult to capture and have not yet been achieved. They also shared some thoughts and suggestions for the upcoming impact evaluation and evaluations in general:

- A clear thematic focus in the evaluation is needed. This could consist of several themes, but not encompass all MFA work on gender equality. Their suggested themes were: Women and Climate Change; Women, Peace and Development; and Sexual and Reproductive Rights, including maternal health.

- It has been suggested to focus more on formulating a strategy on how to move on with the influencing for gender equality, particularly when looking at the current global developments where funding cuts are being made to organisations working in these areas.

- It has been advised to explore how gender equality can be combined with foreign trade.

- Interviewees acknowledged the limitation of desk studies, and agreed that a limited numbers of interviews will not enable evaluations to capture the full extent of MFA impacts and achievements, unless more resources can be devoted to evaluation work.

7 EVIDENCE GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section concludes the report by identifying the evidence gaps emerging from the analysis and formulating recommendations to be considered in the planning of the upcoming evaluation of the MFA's work in gender mainstreaming and gender equality. It also presents suggestions for methodology and data sources, and other recommendations such as thematic areas of interest for the evaluation.

a. Evidence gaps in the Finnish and international documentation related to women and girls' programming and gender mainstreaming

Gaps in defining gendered objectives and conducting gender analysis

This study found that the goals and intended impacts of interventions are rarely specifically defined in relation to the needs of different genders. Even for programmes where gender is the core focus of intervention, it is often the case that the intended results are not clearly defined. Without predefined and agreed gender-specific goals (and related indicators), **the plausibility of delivering gendered results within these programmes is hard to assess**.

Beneficiary groups such as women and girls, including sub-groups of beneficiaries (age, poverty, geographical location) are not clearly identified and therefore unclearly targeted by the interventions. Where the core focus is on gender-based programming, the implementation plans and evaluation documents typically refer to women as a general target group.

More generally, **gender analysis** has been identified as a gap in the design of programmes and interventions, suggesting the need to better embed gender mainstreaming across the programming lifecycle and more systematically conduct gender analysis during the design and planning of interventions.

Gaps in methods employed and data collected

Assessed evaluations failed to properly and fully consider the gendered issues within programmes. Gender perspectives were not sufficiently addressed in evaluations of programmes funded by Finland, suggesting that specific, gender-focused evaluation objectives and evaluation questions should be included in evaluation designs on a systematic basis.

Similarly, we found that in most evaluations reviewed, there was no evidence that evaluations' gender-disaggregated data had been collected or reported. Few evaluations contained any specific results based on **gender data at the output, outcome and impact levels**, and evaluation methodologies were not sufficiently tailored to ensure that gendered impacts could be assessed. Additionally, only a limited number of evaluations actively sought to employ gender-sensitive data collection tools.

In addition to including specific gender-focused evaluation objectives and evaluation questions, this suggests that monitoring systems and evaluation tools should be redesigned in a way that captures gendered impacts.

Gaps in evidencing impact

In most cases, the evaluations contained **little or no data assessing the gender impacts of MFA programming**. Most evaluations did not include data that would make it feasible to assess the impact of MFA's activities to support women and girls. The absence of gender indicators is a particular weakness in the sample of documents reviewed, which presents a significant challenge to the forthcoming evaluation study. Furthermore, none of the evaluations reviewed included any kind of impact evaluation approach (involving assessment of control or counterfactual groups) and very few even sought to undertake any quantitative beneficiary surveys.

Gaps identified in international evidence about donor interventions in support of women and girls

Similar issues were reported in the international evidence reviewed by the team. Although certain results seem to have been achieved, these were often qualitative and took the form of case studies. Results were not systematically reported against indicators, suggesting that better results management systems need to be established at the organisational level, with a serious political commitment.

Similarly to our findings, the evidence gaps were also reported as being due to the weak evaluability of interventions.

b. Way forward and suggestions for the forthcoming evaluation

All recommendations presented here are for the MFA Evaluation Unit and relate to the design and commissioning of the upcoming impact evaluation of Finland's support to women and girls.

Recommendation #1: The Terms of Reference for the upcoming evaluation should clearly outline the evaluability limitations

We found that Finland's approach to gender mainstreaming is clearly defined at the policy level. However, the implementation of gender mainstreaming as part of Finland programming and the evaluation of the effects of gender mainstreaming onto gender equality is poor. It is unclear how gender equality is meant to be promoted through the implementation of programmes: gender is mentioned, but not operationalised, and the evidence reviewed does not specify how gender mainstreaming occurred or was intended to occur in practice.

As a result, evidence of impact on women and girls since 2004 is limited. Gendered impacts have not systematically been documented. When they were documented, it appears that gender impacts have not been achieved or are inconclusive in half of the evaluations reviewed. Few evaluations contained any specific results based on gender-disaggregated data on outputs, outcomes and impacts, and evaluation methodologies were not sufficiently tailored to ensure that gendered impacts would be assessed, or to ensure the deployment of gender-sensitive evaluation tools.

We therefore recommend that the upcoming evaluation of Finland's support to women and girls is commissioned with a clear understanding of the evaluability limitations. The limited data available in existing evaluations, as well as the difficulties inherent to assessing gender impacts where it is unclear how interventions should have delivered gendered impacts, should be highlighted in the Terms of Reference.

We also suggest that the Terms of Reference encourage proposals that include tools and methods to generate new information on gender impacts, using innovative approaches to address the evidence gap.

Recommendation #2: The evaluation objectives should be specific and should align with the gender objectives of the MFA

We found that the evidence around MFA interventions' impacts on women and girls is patchy and could be improved. One of the reasons for this is that only one quarter of the evaluations reviewed specifically included evaluation questions to assess impact and effectiveness of interventions through a gender lens. As such, clarifying the evaluation questions will likely help with this and help define the types of impacts that are to be measured.

We therefore recommend that the forthcoming evaluation of Finland's support to women and girls has a clear purpose and pre-defined objectives, reflecting the policy objectives of the MFA. Objectives should be limited in number and should consider the information and evidence available and the context in which the evaluation will be carried out. The purpose of the evaluation could be around learning, accountability and/or decision-making about future policies and programmes.

In the specific case of evaluating Finland's support to women and girls, we suggest that the evaluation objectives follow the OECD-DAC guidance, as well as the United Nations Evaluation Group guidance on integrating gender equality in evaluation[29], and focus on:

- Assessing the **relevance** of Finland aid to supporting women and girls at national levels and alignment with international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment.

  e.g. Did the activities undertaken to support women and girls meet the needs of the various groups of stakeholders? Were the interventions formulated according to international norms and agreements on human rights and gender equality? Did the results contribute to the realisation of international norms and agreements, as well as the promotion of national and local strategies?

- Assessing the **effectiveness and organisational efficiency** in progressing towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results as defined in the portfolio of policies and programmes in support to women and girls.

  e.g. Was gender mainstreaming clearly embedded across the programming lifecycle? Was gender analysis conducted when relevant and were findings

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29 Integrating Human rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance (2011).

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used to inform the design of interventions? To what extent were the planned results around gender equality and women's empowerment achieved? How did the activities undertaken to support women and girls affect boys, girls, men and women? If there were differences, why?

- Analysing how the Human Rights-Based Approach and gender equality principles are **integrated in implementation**.

  e.g. Was a participatory approach used to understand the needs of all stakeholders, and were the results used to inform the approach to implementation? Were the interventions implemented according to international norms and agreements on human rights and gender equality?

- Determining the **impact** of Finland's support to women and girls with respect to gender equality and women's empowerment.

  e.g. What expected and unexpected effects did Finland's support to women and girls have on gender relations? Which specific interventions contributed to improving gender equality and women's empowerment, and how did they achieve this?

- Assessing the **sustainability** of Finland's support to women and girls in achieving sustained gender equality and women's empowerment.

  e.g. What are the possible long term effects on gender equality? Was there a change in gender relations, attitudes, behaviours or norms? Are the changes and benefits likely to be sustained?

- Identifying and validating **lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovations** that support gender equality and human rights in different areas of intervention or sectors.

  e.g. What lessons can be learned? How can they be applied to future projects and programmes? How should policies be influenced based on lessons learned?

- Providing **actionable recommendations** with respect to Finland's support to women and girls, at each level of policy-making and implementation.

These objectives and criteria for the evaluation should be discussed within the MFA Evaluation Unit, as well as with the gender advisors working across MFA programmes. Clear definitions (of gender equality, gender mainstreaming, gender-sensitive programming, etc.) should also be agreed upon and outlined in the Terms of Reference for the evaluation, as this will help refine the scope and expected outputs of the evaluation.

Across Finland's varied portfolio of policies and programmes in support to women and girls, we would recommend covering the following aspects of gender equality[30]:

- **Leadership and decision-making** – e.g. ability to make childbearing decisions such as using contraception; accessing abortion.

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30   Women and power: what can the numbers tell us about women's voice, leadership and decision-making? (ODI 2016) https://www.odi.org/publications/10300-women-and-power-what-can-numbers-tell-us-about-womens-voice-leadership-and-decision-making Accessed on 15/03/2017.

- **Attitudes and perceptions** - e.g. attitudes to women in labour market; belief in equal rights between husband and wife in the family.

- **Legal aspects and rights** - e.g. criminal sanctions for sexual harassment; legal recognition of customary law as a source of law; validity/invalidity of customary law where it violates constitutional provisions on non-discrimination/equality.

- **Participation** - e.g. female employment levels and source of earning; female participation in village meetings; share of female police officers.

- **Access to resources** - e.g. access to fertiliser and agricultural inputs; accounting knowledge; antenatal care coverage.

Furthermore, the Terms of Reference for the forthcoming evaluation should clearly outline which type of gender approach to programming is most important for the MFA Evaluation Unit, reflecting the policy objectives of the MFA. The evaluation should focus on either (or all, if relevant to the MFA) of the following:

- **Gender mainstreaming** *"is the chosen approach of the United Nations system and international community toward realising progress on women's and girl's rights, as a sub-set of human rights to which the United Nations dedicates itself. It is not a goal or objective on its own. It is a strategy for implementing greater equality for women and girls in relation to men and boys. Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality"* (UN Women).

- **Gender-sensitive programming** *"refers to programmes where gender norms, roles and inequalities have been considered and awareness of these issues has been raised, although appropriate actions may not necessarily have been taken"* (UNFCCC, Women's Environment and Development Organisation WEDO).

- **Gender-responsive programming** *"refers to programmes where gender norms, roles and inequalities have been considered, and measures have been taken to actively address them. Such programmes go beyond raising sensitivity and awareness and actually do something about gender inequalities"* (UNFCCC, Women's Environment and Development Organisation WEDO).

Recommendation #3: A participatory evaluation approach is recommended to understand which gendered impacts can be plausibly expected and assessed

We found that the plausibility of interventions leading to intended outcomes is medium-low, due to the fact that it is rare for interventions to clearly state the gendered issues they aim to address, and few have clearly defined in the interventions goals and intended impacts with respect to gender. This is espe-

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cially the case for interventions and programmes where gender is identified as a cross-cutting issue.

To enhance the evaluability of Finland's support to women and girls, we recommend that the forthcoming evaluation invest time and effort in clarifying the gender objectives of the different programmes or projects they will select as part of the evaluation sample. The current absence of a clear pathway from interventions to gendered impacts and the lack of gender-specific indicators that go beyond activity or output level could be addressed through a participatory, learning-focused evaluation approach.

By specifying the goals and intended impacts of interventions with programme or project staff using **participatory outcome mapping**, for instance, the evaluation would be able to produce more objective and robust findings as to the results that could plausibly be achieved by these programmes. Participatory outcome mapping would also allow the evaluation to assess the distance travelled against key gender objectives, while accounting for unintended gender effects and unexpected pathways to gender equality.

To do this, we would recommend using approaches as explored by the Action Evaluation Collaborative, which proposes **participatory approaches and tools** to evidence the factors that affect women and girls' lives and their communities and brings together the perspectives of women, girls, community members and NGO staff to make sense of the progress achieved towards gender equality[31]. A good example are evaluations where evaluators worked with staff, women and their communities to define 'evaluation frameworks' (sometimes referred to a 'visions for change'), which clearly capture the changes women and girls expect to see in themselves and in their communities as a result of gender interventions.

If carried out rigorously, this type of evaluation approach can make up for the lack of a plausible pathways to gender results, as well as the lack of predefined gender indicators in the evaluation framework. The rationale for using a participatory evaluation approach is also supported by the findings around the lack of a documented approach to gender mainstreaming or gendered approach to programme implementation. In cases where gender mainstreaming is being implemented by project teams but is not reported against or clearly discussed in programming documents, a participatory evaluation approach would be able to capture undocumented examples of best practices in gender programming (e.g. stemming from personal initiatives).

While this type of participatory, learning-focused evaluation approach would be an ex post evaluation, it would at least **clarify the gender theory of change** as it exists in stakeholders and beneficiaries' mind sets. The evaluator will then be in a position to search for and collect evidence around the outcome areas defined with stakeholders, by selecting a few projects or programmes in countries where the MFA operates.

Implicitly, a participatory evaluation approach also implies adopting a **contribution approach to assessing impact**. This relates to one of the lessons learned

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31 https://actionevaluationcollaborative.exposure.co/ Accessed on 15/03/2017.

from the international review of best practices. Changes in women's rights and gender equality are difficult to measure in general, as gender issues are often associated with many other factors, social norms, practices and customs, and it requires time to witness tangible changes. It is therefore difficult to pinpoint the causality between interventions and changes in women's rights and gender equality. As such, assessing contribution when evaluating gender is key, in particular for a high-level evaluation looking at the gendered impacts of a large portfolio of projects and programmes.

Finally, focusing on **beneficiaries and project participants' own analysis and qualitative self-assessment** of their experience with gendered programmes or gender interventions is crucial to ensure that beneficiary feedback is appropriately collected. Recent publications such as the OECD paper *Measuring Empowerment? Ask Them* (2010)[32] suggest that results-based management using people's own analysis of outcomes has been successful: *"the learning and knowledge accumulated by the people themselves is translated into qualitative and quantitative information which supports a more people-oriented management system for development results"*. To do this, the approach adopted follows two clearly distinct phases. First, a participatory procedure gathers perceptions and insights from people regarding the benefits and motivations resulting from participating in the project, which is important for people's own learning, planning and progress. Second, the collation and analysis of data is carried out separately, in order to meet the demands of results-based management, that is, to inform programme design, assess staff performance and to respond to donors' requirements and needs for reliable information.

Recommendation #4: Specific thematic areas should be selected for the evaluation to enable more focused lessons learning

As part of the objective to identify and validate **lessons learned, good practices and examples of innovations** that support gender equality and human rights in different areas of intervention or sectors, we recommend that the forthcoming evaluation focuses on selected thematic areas to explore the differences in gender mainstreaming across sectors.

Education, reproductive health, and water and sanitation programmes are seen as being relatively more successful at mainstreaming gender compared to forestry programmes, for instance. The evaluation should explore the reasons behind this and identify good practices as well as barriers (resources, time, staff, attitudes) to gender mainstreaming in specific sectors. Due to the limited and isolated documented evidence of gendered impacts across programmes addressing gender as a cross-cutting issue, primary data collection will be crucial to capture the specificities of gender issues across sectors. Sectoral advisors should be consulted to determine which sectors are more likely to be of interest to the MFA, reflecting its policy objectives across its development portfolio.

While some sectors may be more suited and 'ready' to be part of a gender impact evaluation (such as programmes primarily targeting women around reproductive health or gender-based violence), it is also important that **less 'gender-prone'**

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32 https://www.oecd.org/countries/bangladesh/46146440.pdf. Accessed on 16/03/2017.

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sectors (for instance, agriculture and food security) are explored as part of the evaluation from a comparative perspective. If well-identified and formulated, lessons learned from one sector are likely to be applicable to other sectors.

We also recommend that the sectors of interest are selected in line with the **MFA interests in terms of future programming** in the years to come.

Recommendation #5: Secondary sources should be used to establish benchmarks and identify gender patterns

In the absence of programme or evaluation data to assess the gender impacts of MFA programming, a key reference for **establishing a gender baseline** for the upcoming evaluation should be the MFA's *Gender Baseline Report* (2005)[33]. This study aimed to establish the current status of gender mainstreaming in Finland's development cooperation in order to support the effective implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Finland's Policy for Developing Countries for 2003–2007.

Additionally, **secondary sources of data are available** to establish benchmarks across the above dimensions of gender equality. The upcoming evaluation should make use of such information to identify patterns of evolution across indicators, and where possible, use disaggregated figures for different geographical areas where MFA programmes are being implemented. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) published a briefing and a database in relation to *Women and power: what can the numbers tell us about women's voice, leadership and decision-making?*, which outlines the methodological and definitional issues that should be taken into account when using these indicators[34].

Using a 'big data' approach could also be explored. This is a nascent field, especially in gender mainstreaming. There are several aspects of a 'big data approach' that could be considered. On one end of the spectrum is a data mining approach. This would involve re-structuring and linking together different quantitative datasets from individual programmes in novel ways to identify new gender patterns and impacts. At the other end, there are techniques such as text scraping from published media articles, social media posts, blogs and other digital content, and then analysing that more qualitative data for gender impacts. Given the lack of programme-level data identified in this report, the content analysis option would appear to be the most practical option for MFA.

Such approaches are technologically feasible, but various limitations will need to be borne in mind. First, many platforms (including some of the well-used ones, such as Facebook) have substantially tightened their privacy policies, making it hard to extract the required content to conduct robust analysis. Second, there might be a problem of attribution. Some social media and digital commentators might talk about gender impacts in particular countries or regions, but not specifically link those impacts back to MFA programmes (or even know they are a result of MFA's work). Third, there might not be enough

digital content to draw solid conclusions. Finally, such an approach is text-dependent and wouldn't take into account other forms of digital discussion (e.g.

33 http://www.oecd.org/derec/finland/37220791.pdf. Accessed on 16/03/2017.
34 https://www.odi.org/publications/10300-women-and-power-what-can-numbers-tell-us-about-womens-voice-leadership-and-decision-making. Accessed on 15/03/2017.

via broadcast media, vlogs or Instagram posts). That said, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Foundation in their report *No Ceilings* identify high-level gender trends through the analysis of 850,000 data points (rather than media analysis)[35].

Recommendation #6: The evaluation should investigate the gap between policy and practice

As noted from the review of international evidence, a key barrier to achieving results in gender equality and women's empowerment is the gap between gender policies and implementation practices. While very few examples of international best practice are available, improving organisational aspects and the ways in which policies are translated into guidelines and programming are among the most common recommendations to achieve better gender results.

Across the portfolio of MFA programmes and policies, we also find that while goals in relation to gender equality and gender mainstreaming are often mentioned in programming and evaluation documents, it is often the case that goals are only defined in broad and vague terms. It is unclear how gender equality is meant to be promoted through programme implementation: **gender is mentioned, but not operationalised**, and the evidence reviewed does not specify how gender mainstreaming occurred or was intended to occur in practice.

We therefore recommend that the forthcoming evaluation follows the 'translation' of gender policy objectives at each level of the programming cycle – from the MFA's approach to gender mainstreaming and policy objectives, to the practical implementation of gendered interventions on the ground. More concrete strategies for achieving gender equality are needed, and while guidelines around gender programming, monitoring and evaluation are available, they tend to still be considered as a tick-box exercise in many cases.

To better understand the reasons behind the poor translation of gender policy objectives into practical implementation, the MFA Evaluation Unit should consider **integrating a process evaluation component as part of the upcoming evaluation**. The focus of this component should be on the programming processes and the effectiveness question in relation to the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming should be assessed against process indicators, rather than impact-level indicators of gender equality, which are often hard to influence in the short or medium term. Interviews with project staff and gender advisors at each level of the policy-to-implementation cycle should provide insightful findings regarding the staff's capacity to embed gender considerations in the delivery of interventions. Since the efforts to integrate gender aspects into implementation are not new[36], it would be useful to produce evidence and lessons learned around the barriers which seem to hinder current processes.

Finally, the evaluation should produce specific recommendations for each level of the programming cycle: from the MFA policy advisors, to the country strategy coordinators, to the programme and project staff, to the partners working as part of the MFA portfolio of activities, and to the evaluators of Finland's aid in support of women and girls.

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35 http://www.noceilings.org/report/report.pdf. Accessed on 16/03/2017.
36 http://www.oecd.org/derec/finland/37220791.pdf. Accessed on 16/03/2017.

IMPACT EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT AND META-ANALYSIS OF FINLAND'S SUPPORT TO WOMEN AND GIRLS AND GENDER EQUALITY

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

9.12.2016

IMPACT EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT AND META-ANALYSIS ON
FINLAND'S SUPPORT TO RIGHTS AND STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Promotion of rights and status of women and girls and gender equality is a part of both human rights policy and development policy in Finland. In regard to the human rights policy Finland has committed to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and issued two National Action Plans for its implementation. In regard to the development policies Finland was committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in which the goal 3 was to promote gender equality and empower women and later on Finland committed to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in which goal 5 is gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. These commitments have been integrated in corresponding development policies of Finland.

In development policy 2004 it was stated that "the UN Millennium Declaration provides a framework for Finland's development policy" and promotion of the rights and status of women and girls and promotion of gender and social equality was nominated as one of the cross-cutting themes of the policy. The development policy programme 2007 stated that "the main goal of development policy is to eradicate poverty and to promote sustainable development in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals" and the cross-cutting theme of gender equality was retained exactly the same as in previous policy. In the development policy programme 2012 it was stated that "the overarching goal of Finland's development policy is the eradication of extreme poverty and securing a life of human dignity for all people in accordance with the UN Millennium Development Goals". Three cross-cutting objectives were nominated and they were gender equality, reduction of inequality and climate sustainability. The current development policy states that the goal of Finland's development policy is the eradication of poverty and inequality and the promotion of sustainable development. There are four specific priorities in which the first is the rights and status of women and girls. Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for reporting to the parliament on results and impacts achieved regarding the specific priorities.

A Strategy and Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Finland's Policy for Developing Countries 2003–2007 was released in 2003. In addition, there have been several sectoral policies and manuals in which the cross-cutting themes should have been integrated. In 2012 Finland adopted human rights based approach (HRBA) in its development policy and cooperation.

The promotion of the rights and status of women and girls and promotion of gender and social equality as a cross-cutting theme has been assessed in all centralized evaluations commissioned by EVA-11/MFA. A thematic evaluation on cross-cutting themes was carried out in 2008 by EVA-11. In the same year National Audit Office of Finland carried out a performance audit on implementing cross-cutting themes in Finnish development cooperation.

Due to its cross-cutting nature the promotion of rights of women and gender equality should also have been assessed as a part of all project and programme evaluations commissioned by implementing units of MFA.

1. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Since it has been a core theme of Finnish development policies for a long time and it is one of the specific priorities to be reported to the parliament MFA is planning to carry out an impact evaluation on Finland's support to rights and status of women and girls and gender equality. Prior to the possible impact evaluation a meta-analysis and impact evaluability assessment is needed to gather background information, aggregate already evaluated results on impact, identify possible information gaps and to inform the design of the impact evaluation by providing options for evaluation questions, methods, possible new information sources, resources and expertise.

The purpose of the meta-analysis is to prepare the upcoming impact evaluation by gathering background information on gender issues and synthesize gender related results from different evaluations. The purpose of the evaluability assessment is to inform the design of the upcoming evaluation by providing options for evaluation questions, methods, resources and expertise. The meta-analysis and evaluability assessment will be used for the planning and preparation of the impact evaluation, enabling a quick, focused and efficient start. The objective of the study is to produce information on impacts of gender promotion in Finnish development cooperation during different periods of time.

The meta-analysis is expected to gather and aggregate evidence on impact of gender promotion in Finnish development cooperation from different evaluation reports. The evaluability assessment is expected to produce suggestions on relevant evaluation questions and scope for the upcoming impact evaluation.

Gender issues have been promoted in different ways during time depending on the focus of different governments. Therefore gender has also been evaluated from slightly different perspectives in different occasions. The meta-analysis will aggregate and analyze results and other information produced by evaluation reports commissioned by different MFA units and other commissioners and summarize what is already known about gender promotion impacts in Finnish development policies and cooperation. The evaluability assessment will point out which areas are not yet covered and need to be studied further in the upcoming impact evaluation.

The scope of the evaluability study and meta-analysis will be limited to Finnish development policies, thus leaving the broader human rights policy as a starting point of the evaluation out. Time scope for the meta-analysis and impact evaluability assessment is from 2004 development policy up to date so that decentralized evaluations included in Meta-Analysis of Development Evaluations in 2006 (Evaluation report 2007:2) will form a starting point for the background material of decentralized evaluation reports.

2. APPROACH AND TASKS

The impact evaluability assessment and meta-analysis is a desk study. The method used in this meta-analysis and impact evaluability assessment will be a literature review. The main sources of information will be documented international and Finnish experiences i.e. evaluation reports, policy reports, studies, research papers and reports as well as data bases and other statistics on women and girls.

First, the evaluability team will map and select a representative portfolio of relevant material and data related to rights and status of women and girls and gender equality from the development policy perspective to be studied and analyzed. This will include both centralized and decentralized evaluations, development policy papers, guidelines and strategies, manuals and guidelines for evaluation and project management, studies etc. The portfolio consists of thematic evaluations related to women and girls in development co-operation as well as evaluations where gender is considered as a crosscutting objective or a theme. Policy documents, research and other studies will be used as contextual background information. In comparison some relevant evaluations done by other donors will be included in the portfolio. The Evalnet Derec database will be searched for this purpose.

Second an evaluability assessment will be done laying a special emphasis on impact.

Based on findings of the evaluability assessment and meta-analysis, a synthesis of findings and conclusions will be done. The study should also propose options for evaluation designs of the upcoming impact evaluation, including scope and evaluation questions.

Three following main questions must be analyzed from all available material:

1) If gender is analyzed how it has been done, from what perspective

2) What is said about impact in the evaluation reports, what is already known about gender impact and what are the information gaps

3) Based on the evaluation reports what is the impact evaluability of gender

In addition, the evaluability team will select 5–10 most relevant international evaluations/studies on gender impact and analyze them from the perspective of:

- Evaluability (what do the reports say about evaluability of gender impact)

- Impact (what do the reports say about impact, can generalizations be made based on them)

- Methodology (what kind of methodologies were used in the reports, what worked and what not)

Examples of most recent evaluations on gender impact are: AfDB, EU, and Netherlands.

The impact evaluability assessment is expected to introduce innovative ways of strengthening the evaluability and suggest new methodologies to evaluate long-term impact of gender.

The study will focus, but not limited, on the following questions:

- How has support to women and girls been defined in different Finnish development policies from 2000 onwards?

- How has support to women and girls been taken into account in different evaluations (both centralized and decentralized) commissioned by MFA from 2004 onwards?

- What are the lessons learned based on different evaluations, especially from the impact perspective?

- What is the evaluability of long-term impact of promoting rights and status of women and girls and gender equality?

- Is there evidence on impacts of Finnish support to women and girls in the reports?

- What has not been studied and/or what issues need further analysis?

- What international studies have been carried out of the subject and what are the lessons learned based on them?

The tasks of the meta-analysis and evaluability assessment will include:

- Mapping of key documentation (e.g. project evaluation reports, policy reports, research papers, studies and reports as well as data bases and other statistics) related to Finland's support to women and girls.

- Mapping evaluations or assessment reports related to international ODA support to women and girls by utilizing OECD DAC Evalnet database and other sources.

- Based on the documented experiences, identifying the key issues and questions, approaches and methodologies, as well as possible results and recommendations.

- Producing a meta-analysis on the existing information.

- Preparing an analytical report, highlighting the aspect of evaluability of Finland's support to women and girls, areas of interest for the possible forthcoming evaluation and pointing out areas where in-depth study is needed.

3. DELIVERABLES

The consultant will prepare a meta-analysis and impact evaluability assessment report. The report will be kept clear, concise and consistent (max 50 pages + annexes). The language of the report is English. The consultant is responsible for the good quality of the report as well as editing, proof-reading and quality control of the language. The report must be edited according to EVA-11´s writing instructions and report template.

Deliverable: Meta-analysis and impact evaluability assessment report on Finland's support to women and girls.

4. EXPERTISE REQUIRED

The team will consist of 2 or 3 experts. The Framework agreement contractors are invited to suggest a team of at least one KEH-1 level expert and at least one KEH-5 level expert for the meta-analysis and impact evaluability assessment. Successful conduct of the assignment requires from the experts a profound understanding and experience of international development policy and cooperation as well as conducting development policy/cooperation evaluations and/or meta-analysis and knowledge on gender issues. Many of the documents are in Finnish and therefore a good command of Finnish language is required from one of the experts. The minimum requirements and evaluation criteria are indicated in the Invitation to tender letter and the cv-form. The participation to the meta-analysis and impact evaluability assessment will not form a conflict of interest to participate in the upcoming impact evaluation.

5. BUDGET AND TIMETABLE

The meta-analysis and evaluability assessment will not cost more than 100 000 € (VAT excluded). Therefore a price tender is not needed. A detailed budget according to the prices of the framework agreement will be included in the mini tender.

The report to be produced is subject to the approval by EVA-11. The payment will be made only after the approval of the report. The tentative starting time of the evaluability assessment is in January 2017. The final report will be submitted to EVA-11 by 31 March 2017.

6. MANAGEMENT OF THE META-ANALYSIS AND EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

EVA-11 will be responsible for the management of the meta-analysis and impact evaluability assessment. The assignment will be done as a desk study at consultant's own facilities. However, the KEH-5 expert must be able to spend time in MFA's archives. The deliverable is subject to being approved by EVA-11.

The consultant shall not store any official documents given by the MFA, classified as restricted use documents (classified as IV in levels of protection in the MFA) in any cloud services and shall not use google translator or any other web based translators to these documents.

7. MANDATE

The consultant does not represent the MFA in any capacity. The consultant has no immaterial rights to any of the material collected in the course of the evaluation or to any draft or final reports produced as a result of this assignment.

Authorization

Helsinki, 9.12.2016

Jyrki Pulkkinen

Director

Development Evaluation Unit

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

ANNEX 2: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Theme	Evaluation Question	Evaluation Sub-questions	Judgement Criteria	Inter-views with MFA staff	Desk Review – MFA documents			Desk review – Inter-national donor documents
					Policy	Evaluation	Programming	
Alignment	i) How has support to women and girls been defined in different Finnish development policies from 2004 onwards?	i) Has Finland's approach to working with women and girls and gender mainstreaming been clearly defined in its main policy documents from 2004 until now?	i) Extent to which the MFA's approach to working with women and girls and gender mainstreaming have been defined in a specific and operationisable way during the evaluation period, as reflected in policy documents.	✓	✓			
		ii) Is there coherence in terms of how the MFA defines its support to gender mainstreaming in different programmes and policies?	i) Extent to which the MFA has defined its approach to gender mainstreaming in a coherent way across its various programmes and policies, following the relevant Finnish strategy for this period.		✓		✓	
		iii) Are country-level documents aligned with the MFA's policies related to gender mainstreaming of the relevant time period and thematic focus?	i) Extent to which country-level documents were aligned with the relevant MFA policies related to gender mainstreaming during the period of interest.		✓		✓	

IMPACT EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT AND META-ANALYSIS OF FINLAND'S SUPPORT TO WOMEN AND GIRLS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Theme	Evaluation Question	Evaluation Sub-questions	Judgement Criteria	Interviews with MFA staff	Desk Review – MFA documents			Desk review – International donor documents
					Policy	Evaluation	Programming	
Evidence generated by evaluations	i) How has support to women and girls been taken into account in different evaluations (both centralised and decentralised) commissioned by MFA from 2004 onwards?	i) Do evaluations of the MFA's work contain specific evaluation questions related to women and girls?	i) Evidence that evaluation documents have used evaluation questions related to women and girls, reflecting the MFA's policy of the relevant time period.			✓		
		ii) Do evaluations of the MFA's work report gender-disaggregated data?	i) Evidence that the MFA has collected and reported gender-disaggregated data in its evaluations.			✓		
		iii) Do evaluations of the MFA's work employ gender-sensitive data collection tools?	i) Evidence that the MFA has used gender-sensitive data collection tools in its evaluations.			✓		
		iv) Do the gender analyses contained in MFA evaluations follow and/or reference the policy documents that defined the MFA's approach to gender mainstreaming?	i) Evidence that MFA evaluations contain gender analyses that are aligned with and/or reference the MFA's approach to gender mainstreaming.			✓		
		v) Are there differences between how MFA guidelines have been followed in centralised and country-level evaluations?	i) Extent to which MFA guidelines have been followed the same way at the headquarter and at the country level.			✓		

Theme	Evaluation Question	Evaluation Sub-questions	Judgement Criteria	Interviews with MFA staff	Desk Review – MFA documents			Desk review – International donor documents
					Policy	Evaluation	Programming	
Evaluability Assessment	i) What is the evaluability of the long-term impact of promoting the rights and status of women and girls and gender equality?	i) Is it plausible to expect the MFA interventions during the evaluation period to have had an impact?	i) Extent to which MFA reports contain a clear statement of the gendered issues the intervention aims to address.			✓	✓	
			ii) Evidence that the goals and intended impacts of MFA interventions were clearly defined, as relevant to the needs of women and girls (and specific sub-groups, if relevant).			✓	✓	
			iii) Evidence that intended beneficiaries (including sub-groups) were clearly identified and targeted by the interventions, including via the identification of potential mis-targeting and an assessment of potentially excluded groups and those which might experience negative results.			✓	✓	
		ii) Is it feasible to assess or measure impact of MFA's activities to support women and girls?	i) Evidence that there exists sufficient data and evidence to assess impact of MFA interventions (from previous evaluations, programming documents, and interviews).	✓		✓	✓	
			ii) Evidence that MFA projects and interventions have been collecting gender-dis-aggregated data as part of their monitoring activities.	✓		✓	✓	
			iii) Evidence that evaluations were methodologically sound, including via the availability of raw data from the studies, clear and robust sampling, availability of data collection instruments.	✓		✓	✓	

IMPACT EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT AND META-ANALYSIS OF FINLAND'S SUPPORT TO WOMEN AND GIRLS AND GENDER EQUALITY

| Theme | Evaluation Question | Evaluation Sub-questions | Judgement Criteria | Inter-views with MFA staff | Desk Review - MFA documents | | | Desk review - Inter-national donor documents |
					Policy	Evaluation	Programming	
Evidence of Impact	i) Is there evidence of impacts of Finnish support to women and girls in the reports?	i) Do MFA evaluations clearly define what interventions were trying to achieve via their support to women and girls?	i) Evidence that MFA evaluations clearly defined the intervention's expected impact on women and girls.			✓		
		ii) Do MFA evaluations report that projects have achieved their expected impact?	i) Evidence that MFA interventions have had expected impacts on women and girls.			✓	✓	
		iii) Do MFA evaluations report any positive or negative unintended consequence of the interventions?	i) Evidence that MFA interventions have had positive and/or negative unintended consequences.			✓	✓	
	ii) What are the lessons learned based on different evaluations, especially in an impact perspective?	i) Do MFA evaluations identify lessons learned and/or identify reasons for intervention impact (or lack thereof)?	i) Evidence that the MFA has identified lessons learned from its evaluations, especially in an impact perspective, and systematically included these in its reporting.			✓	✓	
			ii) Extent to which the lessons learned are high quality and relevant for the MFA's future evaluations.			✓	✓	
		ii) Do MFA staff identify any additional lessons learned from the previous evaluations, especially in an impact perspective?	i) Extent to which MFA staff identified additional lessons learned from previous evaluations, especially in an impact perspective, which should be taken into account in upcoming impact evaluations.	✓				

Theme	Evaluation Question	Evaluation Sub-questions	Judgement Criteria	Interviews with MFA staff	Desk Review – MFA documents			Desk review – International donor documents
					Policy	Evaluation	Programming	
International comparison	i) What international studies and impact evaluations have been carried out on the subject of supporting women and girls, and what are the lessons learned based on them?	i) Does the sample of international studies and impact evaluations find a significant impact of different donor interventions to support women and girls?	i) Extent to which there exists international evidence on the impact of donor interventions to support women and girls.					✓
		ii) Do international donor reports mention the evaluability and impact of interventions, and methodologies employed in the analysis?	i) Extent to which the evaluability and impact of interventions, as well as methodologies employed, are outlined in the sample of international donor reports.					✓
		ii) What are the main lessons that can be learned from impact evaluations and studies undertaken by international donors and the methodologies they employed? What constitutes international best practice in this field?	i) Extent to which other donors have identified lessons learned from their impact evaluations of policies for women and girls, constituting international best practice relevant for the MFA's activities and priorities.					✓
		iii) Are the lessons learned relevant for the Finnish context? How can these be adapted to match the MFA's work, areas of interest and constraints (including financial)?	i) Extent to which lessons learned from international donors can be adapted to the Finnish context, in order to support the MFA's work, areas of interest and constraints (including financial).	✓				✓

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Theme	Evaluation Question	Evaluation Sub-questions	Judgement Criteria	Inter-views with MFA staff	Desk Review – MFA documents			Desk review – Inter-national donor documents
					Policy	Evaluation	Programming	
Evidence gaps	i) What has not been studied and/or what issues need further analysis?	i) Are there gaps in the literature and/or knowledge base on the policy and impact of Finnish development cooperation on women and girls, especially compared to international best practice?	i) Extent to which there exist identified gaps in the literature regarding the policy and impact of Finnish development cooperation on women and girls, especially compared to studies produced by international donors, and as confirmed by interviewees.	✓		✓		✓
		ii) Is there evidence that MFA evaluations are missing any particularly relevant information, methodology, or data source compared to international best practice?	i) Extent to which MFA evaluations have been identified to lack relevant information, methodologies, and/or data sources, especially cimpared to international best practice.	✓		✓		✓

ANNEX 3: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Doc #	Document name
1	Meta-Analysis of Development Evaluations in 2007 and 2008
2	BI-ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010 OF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION
3	BI-ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012 OF DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION
4	Meta-Analysis of Project and Programme Evaluations in 2012-2014
5	Suomen monenkeskisen yhteistyon strateginen analyysi
6	Meta evaluation of project and programme evaluations in 2014/2015
7	Meta-Analysis of Development Evaluations in 2006
8	Evaluation of Finland's Development Cooperation Country Strategies and Country Strategy Modality
9	Evaluation of Finland's Development Cooperation Country Strategies and Country Strategy Modality Ethiopia Country report
10	Evaluation of Finland's Development Cooperation Country Strategies and Country Strategy Modality Mozambique Country report
11	Evaluation of Finland's Development Cooperation Country Strategies and Country Strategy Modality Vietnam Country report
12	Evaluation of Finland's Development Cooperation Country Strategies and Country Strategy Modality Zambia Country report
13	Evaluation Finland's Development Cooperation with Kenya in 2007-2013
14	Evaluation Country Programme between Finland and Nepal
15	Evaluation Country Programme between Finland and Nicaragua
16	Evaluation Country Programme between Finland and Tanzania
17	Country Programmes between Finland and Nepal, Nicaragua and Tanzania. Policy brief
18	Evaluation Finnish Development cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus
19	Evaluation of Fund for gender equity and sexual reproductive health and rights
20	Evaluation Finnish Aid to Afghanistan
21	Midterm review of Nepal Multistakholder Forestry programme, technical report on gender equality and social inclusion and the main report
22	Midterm review of the Rural Village Water Resources Management Project in Nepal
23	Midterm review of TVET development in school sector reform plan in Nepal
24	Midterm evaluation of the Cowash project and the planning of the Finnish future support to water sector in Ethiopia
25	Midterm evaluation of the Responsible and innovation land administration in Ethiopia
26	Mid-term review of the Tana-Beles Project
27	Midterm evaluation of Support to Rural development in Zambezia province in Mozambique
28	Midterm review of Tanzania information society and ICT sector development project
29	EVALUATION OF "FUND FOR GENDER EQUITY AND SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS" (FED), PHASE I
30	Final evaluation of Mainstreaming MDGs in Kenyas Development process

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31	External review of core support under joint financial agreement to Zambia National Farmers Union
32	Program Evaluation Marie Stopes International Afghanistan
33	Evaluation of the Development of the education development strategic plan of the Palestinian ministry of education
34	Results on the Ground? – An Independent Review of Finnish Aid
35	Evaluation Inclusive Education in Finland's Development Cooperation in 2004-2013
36	Evaluation Finnish support to development of local governance
37	Evaluation Finnish cooperation in Water Sector
38	Evaluation Agriculture in the Finnish Development Cooperation
39	Evaluation The Cross-cutting Themes in the Finnish Development
40	Forests in Focus: Results from the Forest Sector Development Cooperation
41	Complementarity in Finland's Development Policy and Co-operation A Case Study on Complementarity in the Institutional Co-operation Instrument
42	Evalaution Junior Professional Officer Programme Finland
43	Evaluation Sustainability in Poverty Reduction: Synthesis
44	Evaluation Humanitarian Mine Action
45	Gender Baseline Study for Finnish Development Cooperation
46	Lessons from Evaluations of Women and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation
47	Mainstreaming Gender Equality: Emerging Evaluation Lessons
48	Evaluation Support to Development Research
49	Evaluation of Finnish Aid for Trade 2012-2015
50	Evaluation Finnish Concessional Aid Instrument
51	Evaluation of the Finnpartnership Programme
52	Midterm review of the project Aid for Trade, Kosovo
53	Evaluation of SCADA DMS System project Pleiku city Vietnam
54	Evaluation: Programme-based Support through Finnish Civil Society Organisations
55	Evaluation: Programme-based Support through Finnish Civil Society Organisations. Case study Felm
56	Evaluation: Programme-based Support through Finnish Civil Society Organisations. Case study Taksvärkki
57	Evaluation DEMO Finland Programme
58	Evaluation Finnish Partnership Agreement Scheme
59	EVALUATION OF SUPPORT ALLOCATED TO INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (INGO) in Finnish
60	Strategy and Action Plan for Promoting Gender Equality in Finland's Policy for Developing Countries 2003-2007
61	Human Rights Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation. Guidance Note, 2015
62	Finland. A Land of Solutions. Strategic Programme of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's Government 29 May 2015
63	Country Strategy for Development Cooperation with Mozambique and reports in Finnish
64	Country Strategy for Development Cooperation with Nepal and reports in Finnish
65	Etiopia. Osallistumissuunnitelma 2008-2012
66	Vietnam. Osallistumissuunnitelma 2008-2012
67	Government Report on gender equality
68	Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy
69	Suomen kehitysyhteistyö

70	Hallituksen vuosikertomus 2013. Osa 1/4 Hallituksen vaikuttavuusselvitys
71	Development Cooperation Report 2016: Finland
72	Aid in support of gender equality 2012-13
73	Suomen kehitysyhteistyö pitkäaikaisissa kehitysmaissa 2013-2016
74	Reducing Inequalities. A Human rights-based approach in Finland's development cooperation with special focus on gender and disability
75	Implementing the human rights based approach in Finland's development policy
76	Government Report to Parliament on the human rights policy of Finland 2009
77	SUOMEN VAIKUTTAMISSUUNNITELMA AFRIKAN KEHITYSPANKISSA (AfDB), tuloskortti
78	VAIKUTTAMISSUUNNITELMA: Vihreä ilmastorahasto (Green Climate Fund)
79	VAIKUTTAMISSUUNNITELMA: YK:N HIV/AIDS-OHJELMA UNAIDS, seurantataulukko
80	Nordic Influence in Multilateral Organizations: A Finnish Perspective
81	Goals of Finland in influencing the EU development policy, in Finnish
82	Manual for Bilateral Programmes
83	Manual for Bilateral Programmes
84	Cross-cutting objectives in the development policy programme of Finland; guidelines
85	UN security council resolution 1325. Finlands National Action Plan 2012 2016
86	Suomen ihmisoikeusperustainen lähestysmistapa kehitykseen: ohjeita ihmisoikeusperustaisen kehitysyhteistyön suunnitteluun, toteutukseen ja arviointiin
87	Suomen ihmisoiekusperustainen lähestymistapa kehitykseen: ihmisoikeusperiaatteet ja normatiiviset kriteerit
88	Sukupuolinäkökulman valtavirtaistaminen hanketyössä
89	Evaluation Manual
90	Documento Base: Fondo para la equidad y los derechos sexuales y reproductivos Fase I (2009-2013)
91	Midterm evaluation of the Responsible and innovation land administration in Ethiopia
92	Appraisal of Farmers' clubs for wealth creation among smallholder farmers in Mozambique
93	The Information Society and ICT Sector Development Project - TANZICT
94	SUPPORT TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMBÉZIA PROVINCE, MOZAMBIQUE – PHASE II
95	Support to addressing Gender Based Violence in Kosovo through strengthening the Implementation of the Kosovo Law, National Action Plan and Strategy against Domestic Violence 2010-2013
96	VAIKUTTAMISSUUNNITELMA: YK:N TASA-ARVOJÄRJESTÖ UN WOMEN
97	VAIKUTTAMISSUUNNITELMA: YK:N TASA-ARVOJÄRJESTÖ UN WOMEN

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