

Guideline for the Cross-Cutting Objectives in the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation

The Guideline supports effective implementation of the Finnish Development Policy and its cross-cutting objectives. In line with the Human Rights Based Approach in Finland's Development Cooperation - Guidance Note (2015), this guideline aims to strengthen the quality and accountability of Finland's development policy by integrating human rights and the cross-cutting objectives to all relevant results management systems.

This Guideline consists of five parts. Part I, Our Goals, introduces the cross-cutting objectives and the requirements for applying them in Finland's development policy and cooperation. Part II contains general information about them, including definitions and relevant laws and commitments. Part III of this Guideline, the Framework for Implementation, explains in more detail how the Minimum standard is applied across different forms of cooperation. Part IV presents the Framework for Accountability. Concrete tools, including check-lists, will be provided under part V of the Guideline.

OUR GOALS

Finland's development policy is based on the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement on climate. The agenda itself is founded on the principle of Leave No One Behind. This demands addressing systemic discrimination and marginalization across all Sustainable Development Goals and calls for specific attention on discrimination based on, for example, gender, disability, age, and on increasing availability of quality disaggregated data and statistics. The principle of Leave No One Behind is an integral part of the human rights based approach adopted by Finland and its cross-cutting objectives.

Finland's ultimate goal is to ensure that the human rights of all people are realized.

CROSS-CUTTING OBJECTIVES

Finland has four cross-cutting objectives in its Development Policy. They form the structure that links the Finnish policy priorities to the overall objectives of reduction of poverty and inequality. They also carry a direct link to the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. These objectives are:

Gender equality - within a human rights framework, gender is one aspect of equality. The focus on particularly gender equality – as per Finland's cross-cutting priority – entails that specific attention needs to be paid to gendered impacts in all actions. The gendered impacts have to be looked at within the framework of human rights. The key source in the work toward gender equality is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the country and sector specific normative guidance that the Committee supervising the implementation of the convention produces.

The aim of gender equality as a cross-cutting objective is to ensure that all people, regardless of their gender, can equally contribute to and benefit from development. It does so by systematically assessing and addressing gender-based discrimination.

Non-discrimination - the principle of non-discrimination lies at the heart of the human rights based approach. It underlines the need to eradicate the root causes for non-realization of an individual's human rights. The aim of non-discrimination as a cross-cutting objective is to ensure that critical forms of discrimination are taken into account when interventions are planned, implemented and evaluated. Thus, in order to ensure the realization of the principle of non-discrimination, an assessment of the lack of equality in society is needed.

Non-discrimination as a human rights principle that covers all forms of discrimination is an important element of Finland's human rights policy. In Finland's Development Policy the focus is on addressing the discrimination against persons with disabilities. Also the focus in this guidance note will be on mainstreaming disability inclusion specifically rather than non-discrimination broadly.

Key sources in the work toward non-discrimination are the various human rights mechanisms of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the country and sector specific normative guidance they produce. For addressing discrimination against persons with disabilities, the main reference is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Climate resilience - the aim of climate resilience as a cross-cutting objective is to enhance climate change adaptation, to reduce vulnerability and to strengthen the resilience of people, ecosystems and societies to climate risks and the impacts of climate change. Climate resilience is one aspect of overall resilience that is affected, besides climate change, by multiple other factors - such as environmental degradation, economic shocks, conflicts and pandemics.

Low emission development - the aim of low emission development as a cross-cutting objective is to mitigate climate change and to facilitate the transition to low emission development, and soon after to climate neutrality, that minimizes greenhouse gas emissions and enhances sinks of greenhouse gases while taking into account wider development impacts. This will contribute to the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit the global average temperature rise to 1,5° C, or a maximum of 2° C, above pre-industrial levels.

Climate change is increasingly recognized as a human rights issue as it has huge implications for the realization of human rights. Also climate action can have human rights implications.

The four cross-cutting objectives also strongly interlink with each other. The dynamics driving poverty and inequality, including those resulting from climate change, are an interplay of multiple human dimensions and external factors.

HOW DO WE REACH OUR GOALS?

Twin-track approach

Finland applies a so-called twin-track approach to the implementation of the cross-cutting objectives. This means combining **mainstreaming** (track one) with **targeted action** (track two).

Mainstreaming gender equality, non-discrimination and climate change into Finland's development policy and cooperation - within the broader framework of HRBA - means:

- Systematically addressing gender equality, non-discrimination and climate-related risks and impacts of climate change at country and intervention levels
- Systematically assessing the impacts and implications of our development cooperation on women/men, girls/boys, persons with disabilities as well as on climate
- Systematically seeking opportunities to promote gender equality, non-discrimination, climate resilience and low emission development.
- Systematically including gender equality, non-discrimination and climate change in policy dialogue and influencing.

Targeted action means specific programmes that are aimed at, for example, advancing the empowerment of persons with disabilities, or women, or aimed at climate change mitigation or adaptation as the main objective. The scope of a targeted action is clearly defined. Targeted action could be, for instance, a project designed principally to prevent and respond to gender-based violence or the core funding to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) or UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Minimum standard – Do no harm

The **minimum standard** for mainstreaming the cross-cutting objectives is that **no harm is done**.

This requirement is in line with MFA HRBA Guidance Note, which states that none of the MFA funded development interventions should further exacerbate or contribute to discrimination or human rights violations.

Finland works in different contexts through diverse partnerships and instruments for influencing and implementing its goals. The standard of Do No Harm applies equally across all these, however the strategies for implementation will vary.

Mainstreaming gender and non-discrimination

For mainstreaming gender and non-discrimination the minimum requirement is to ensure that **a human rights assessment with a focus on gender and disability has been sufficiently conducted, data is disaggregated by sex, disability and age where possible and** the principles of non-discrimination and equality, as well as inclusion and participation guide all actions.

On one hand the assessment can help identify the potential **risks** that, for example, existing inequality has on the planned cooperation and plan ways to address or mitigate them accordingly. On the other hand, it can help to identify opportunities for advancing gender equality, disability inclusion or the rights of women and persons with disabilities.

With regard to gender and non-discrimination the “do no harm” -standard implies that:

- Risks for the human rights of women, girls and persons with disabilities are assessed, avoided and mitigated.
- Barriers for equal participation and inclusion by all genders and persons with disabilities are identified and addressed
- Impacts on gender equality and disability inclusion are continuously assessed and monitored
- Data disaggregation according to sex, disability and age is systematically collected, analyzed and used.

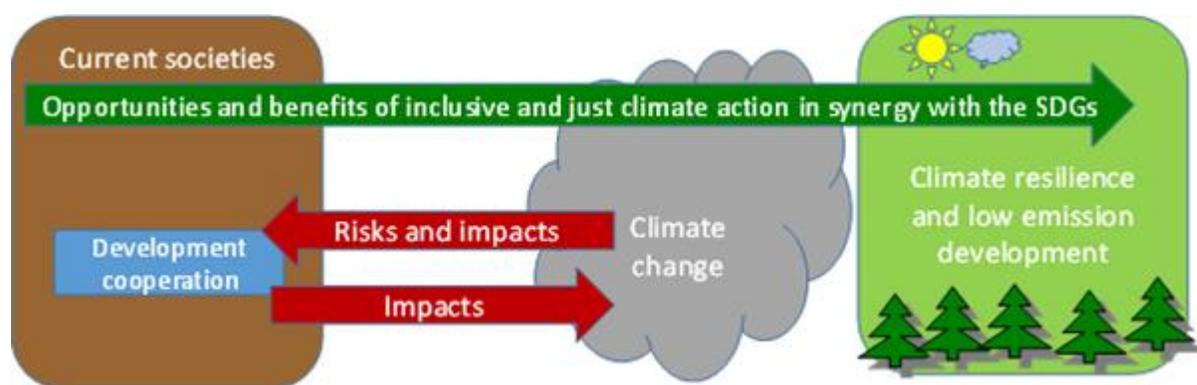
While identifying risks is important, Finland's development **cooperation should not only focus on avoiding negative impacts, but also try to make a positive contribution**. Thus, opportunities for advancing gender equality and disability inclusion should be proactively sought. The priority area on rights of all women and girls in the Finnish Development Policy contains key outcomes that contribute to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for all including persons with disabilities, and elimination of gender and disability based violence, including in fragile contexts, as targeted actions.

Since gender equality and non-discrimination are relevant in all sectors of society, it is necessary to address these in all development policy. Supporting agency and leadership and equal participation of women and persons with disabilities, strengthening duty bearer capacity, supporting gender sensitive and disability inclusive policies, services and institutions are needed in all sectors.

Disaggregated Data

Disaggregating data according to sex, disability and age is realised progressively. This means that in cases where e.g. disability disaggregation is not yet applied, the plan should include actions to advance data availability. Data helps us to determine whether we are reaching our targets in terms of the implementation of the cross-cutting objectives. Data is essential for learning and for guiding the Finnish Development Policy and Cooperation in the right direction. The minimum standard includes the disaggregation of data on the basis of sex, disability and age when this is considered relevant and when it is possible. Tracking also age in addition to gender and disability helps us to implement an **intersectional approach** to development. This element of the minimum standard will evolve over time. In situations where disaggregation is currently not possible, Finland will actively influence and support partners to make this happen. It is also acknowledged that in some cases it may be more relevant to disaggregate data on the basis of other factors, for example rural/urban.

Mainstreaming climate resilience and low emission development



The figure above illustrates the approach to mainstreaming climate resilience and low emission development into Finnish development policy and cooperation. Climate-related risks and the impacts of climate change affect current societies and ecosystems. If not managed, the impacts of climate change

could hurt or undermine the results of our development cooperation. On the other hand, our development cooperation should not cause adverse impacts on climate or increase vulnerability to climate change. Therefore, **with regard to climate change, the “Do no harm” principle implies that**

- Climate-related risks and impacts of climate change on the intervention are screened, if necessary assessed, and then avoided or minimized and managed.
- Adverse impacts on climate are screened, if necessary assessed, and then avoided or minimized and managed.

If the risks or impacts cannot be avoided or minimized and managed, then the intervention should not be funded.

However, our **development cooperation should not only focus on avoiding negative impacts, but also try to make a positive contribution**. Thus, opportunities to enhance the transition to low-emissions, climate-resilient societies should be proactively sought and supported. The priority area on climate change and natural resources in the Finnish Development Policy contains key outcomes that contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation as targeted actions. Since climate change touches upon nearly all spheres of life, opportunities to take climate action should not be limited to this priority area only. Improving capacities, policy and regulatory frameworks, institution building as well as transfer of technologies and innovation are needed in all sectors to facilitate the transition to climate resilience and low emission development. The partner countries’ priorities and needs should always be the starting point, including their nationally determined contributions (NDC)¹, long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (LTS)², national adaptation plans (NAP)³, disaster risk reduction plans as well as other relevant plans.

Climate action (mitigation and adaptation) can contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals and vice versa. However, these synergies are not automatic. Achieving combined economic, social and environmental benefits requires supporting a just and inclusive transition as well strengthening the health of ecosystems. The human rights based approach as well as the cross-cutting objectives of gender equality and non-discrimination need to be integrated in all MFA funded climate action. While the cross-cutting objectives of Finland’s development policy do not include environmental considerations, in practice it is vital to also consider the links between climate change and the environment, especially biodiversity.

¹ The Paris Agreement requires countries to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs) that it intends to achieve as a response to climate change.

² In accordance with the Paris Agreement countries should strive to formulate and communicate long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies (long-term strategies, LTS).

³ The national adaptation plan (NAP) process helps countries formulate and implement medium- and long-term climate adaptation planning.
