

Gender Equality in Research and Innovation ODA

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Introduction

In 2014, the UK parliament amended the International Development Act 2002 to introduce the promotion of gender equality in the provision of overseas development assistance (ODA). The amendment requires that all ODA spending bodies must consider whether the proposed assistance will reduce poverty in a way which is also likely to contribute to reducing gender inequality.

[Extract from the International Development \(Gender Equality\) Act 2014](#)

“...the Secretary of State shall have regard to the desirability of providing development assistance that is likely to contribute to reducing poverty in a way which is likely to contribute to reducing inequality between persons of different gender.”

All BEIS research and innovation ODA spend through the Newton Fund is directly governed by the International Development Act, and therefore all Newton funded activities must also be fully compliant with the gender equality amendment. Whilst spend under the Global Challenges Research Fund is governed by the [Science and Technology Act 1965 and Higher Education and Research Act 2017](#), it is still ODA spend, and is administered in the spirit of the International Development Act. GCRF activities should therefore give due consideration to reducing gender inequality in the same way as for the Newton Fund.

BEIS and its Delivery Partners recognise the important role that research and innovation can play in supporting improved gender equality in partner countries. Consideration of gender equality in ODA funded research and innovation is a priority if we are to achieve the goals of poverty alleviation, economic development and welfare of developing countries. It is also incumbent on the research and innovation sector to tackle instances of underrepresentation, differential needs and systemic disadvantage to improve the relevance of research and innovation findings, to support inclusion, to reduce the impact of bias and ultimately, to contribute to reducing inequalities between genders. It should not be assumed that the impact of new technologies and knowledge production will have equal benefit or positive effects for everybody, and it is important that the research and innovation sector considers this alongside ensuring that there are equal opportunities to access and participate in the research and innovation process itself.

Beyond legal compliance, BEIS wants to ensure that through our research and innovation ODA funding, inequality is not perpetuated; that the different rights and needs of all genders are recognised and addressed; and that people of all genders share the benefits of research and innovation projects.

What do we mean by “gender and gender equality”?

Gender is a social scientific term used to describe shared social ideals of femininity and masculinity, associated behavioural expectations and relations between sexes.

Key definitions

Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women.

Gender equality: the state of being equal in status, rights and opportunities, and of being valued equally, regardless of sex or gender identity and/or expression.

Gender equality is part of a broader goal to ensure no one is left behind and that everybody – irrespective of their age, disability, race, religion, ethnicity, location, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic – enjoys equal opportunities, human rights and development outcomes.

Promoting gender equality is about shaping a shared future. It creates opportunities for people of different genders worldwide to be safe and to enjoy their rights, to contribute to their country's growth and economy, and to shape their community and their country's future. This will build new markets and trading partnerships for the Global Britain of the future and contribute towards global security that keeps the UK safe.

Gender equality does not mean that everyone must be the same. It means that access to life chances and opportunities for people are not constrained by, nor dependent on, their identity or sex. People of different genders have the right to define for themselves the objectives of development and to seek outcomes which are not necessarily identical to those traditionally sought and enjoyed by men. Global evidence demonstrates that higher levels of gender equality are associated with gains in income, economic growth and competitiveness.

Gender equality is a basic human right. It brings benefits to human development and wellbeing for individuals, families and societies. We know that gender inequality is a significant driver of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment which can have lifelong and intergenerational effects. Empowering people of all genders improves peace and stability, creates a level playing field on which all genders can operate equally, and can help those suffering from systemic disadvantage because of their gender to escape a life of poverty and have access to the same opportunities as others.

How is gender equality addressed through ODA Research and Innovation?

It is mandatory for all applications to Newton Fund and GCRF calls/competitions (announced and published after 1 April 2019) to include a **Gender Equality Statement** that outlines how applicants have taken “meaningful yet proportionate consideration as to how the project will contribute to reducing gender inequalities” as required by the Gender Equality Act. These statements must show that the applicants have proportionately and meaningfully considered how their project is likely to reduce inequalities between persons of different gender throughout the design of the project, implementation of the project and impact. They must acknowledge where there is potential for direct or indirect impact on people of different genders as a result of their project, should it be funded.

Guidance for applicants

All applicants to Newton Fund and GCRF calls must submit a Gender Equality Statement with their application. Guidance can be accessed via the links below. It is expected that some projects will have less impact on gender and gender relations and professional judgement of the applicants should be exercised to ensure appropriate consideration of the context and intended aims of the project. Applicants are able to reference other parts of their application within this statement, if relevant.

Applicants are required to address the below criteria, with an understanding that, depending on the nature of their research and innovation, not all questions will be applicable.

Criteria to address while considering gender impact:

- Have measures been put in place to ensure equal and meaningful opportunities for people of different genders to be involved throughout the project? This includes the development of the project, the participants of the research and innovation and the beneficiaries of the research and innovation.
- The expected impact of the project (benefits and losses) on people of different genders, both throughout the project and beyond.
- The impact on the relations between people of different genders and people of the same gender. For example, changing roles and responsibilities in households, society, economy, politics, power, etc.
- How will any risks and unintended negative consequences on gender equality be avoided or mitigated against, and monitored?
- Are there any relevant outcomes and outputs being measured, with data disaggregated by age and gender (where disclosed)?

