UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund
April 2020 Call for Proposals

Guidance Note on Gender Markers

BACKGROUND

In April 2019, the Secretary-General warned that the COVID-19 pandemic is deepening already existing inequalities and is having devastating social and economic consequences for women and girls, threatening to reverse the limited but important progress made on gender equality and women's rights. Launched on 31 March 2019, the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund (UN COVID-19 MPTF) recognises the disproportionate burden of this pandemic on women and children.[1]

As an overall principle, the UN COVID-19 MPTF will help define programmatic responses that reach the poorest and most vulnerable. Interventions supported by the Fund will promote an inclusive and human rights-based approach to the provision of services and livelihood support, ensuring that COVID-19 responses fully incorporate human rights considerations. The Fund's Terms of Reference also stipulate that *"funded initiatives need to address gender implications of COVID-19 and design tailored actions to avoid gender-based discrimination".[2]* This includes supporting gendered approaches that respond to the heavy burden the pandemic has placed on women, such as heightened exposure to domestic violence, loss of livelihoods, and rising rates of unpaid labour.[3]

The UN COVID-19 MPTF works to make sure its entire portfolio is gender mainstreamed (i.e., that all interventions it supports consider gender as part of the analysis, theory of change, implementation, results framework, budget allocation, and in monitoring and evaluation) and that dedicated interventions are supported to address heavy burden the pandemic has placed on women and exacerbation of existing gender inequalities.

UN COVID-19 MPTF GENDER MARKER

In 2018, the Secretary-General established a high-level task force on financing for gender equality to review and track UN budgets and expenditures across the system and a year later made the recommendation to continue mandatory monitoring of financial allocations to gender equality through the implementation of gender markers.[4]

In line with its Terms of Reference, the UN COVID-19 MPTF is applying high standards on gender equality throughout the proposal development and approval process, supporting and encouraging both dedicated targeted interventions and gender mainstreamed programming. To support these efforts, the Fund uses the UNCT Gender Equality Marker (UNCT GEM) to track financial allocation to interventions that promote gender equality and women's empowerment overcoming the health and development

---

[1] Secretary General's UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, Trust Fund Fact Sheet. March 2020.

[2] http://mptf.undp.org/document/download/23806

[3] http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/COV00

[4] https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/E/2019/54

crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The UNCT GEM is already used at UNCT level in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework process.

In the MPTF proposal template this 4-point scale has been translated into a 3-point scale:

UNCT GEM 4-point scale	Covid-19 MPTF proposal template – 3-point scale
GEM 3	a) Have gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls as the primary or principal objective
GEM 2	b) Make a significant contribution to gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls
GEM 0 GEM 1	c) Make a limited contribution or no contribution to gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls

Please note:
The marker selected should mirror the integration of gender equality and the empowerment of women throughout the entire proposal in a coherent way. See table on coding definitions above.

- ✓ Only a limited number of programmes coded with the category (c) marker (limited or no contribution to GEWE) will be selected. Gender blind programmes will be returned for strengthening. In case of limited contribution to GEWE, gender analysis still needs to be included and the selection of the gender marker has to be substantiated under section III of the proposal: why the problem/challenge identified is NOT related to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

The tables below provide guidance for assigning a gender marker score to the proposed programme (pages 4-6). It can be used as a 'check-list' to review and compare the project against, and allocate a marker or make the necessary changes to the proposal to reach the desired marker.

The UNCT Gender Equality Marker (UNCT-GEM) score is proposed by applicant agencies (self-scoring) within the Proposal Template. The Fund Secretariat reviews the Gender Equality Marker score by taking into consideration the extent to which gender equality/women's empowerment issues and outcomes are integrated throughout the proposal including:
 a) The analysis of the country's COVID-19 socio-economic context and description of the need/ problem the intervention seeks to address (sections I and III of the proposal template)
 b) The theory of change (section IV of the proposal template)
 c) The target population (section VI of the proposal template)
 d) The results framework
 e) The budget

HOW IT WORKS & WHO DOES WHAT
- ✓ The UNCT Gender Equality Marker is **<u>mandatory</u>** for all proposals funded by the UN COVID-19 MPTF
- ✓ The UNCT Gender Equality Marker score is proposed by **applicant agencies** (self-scoring) when submitting a proposal to the UN COVID-19 MPTF.
- ✓ The UN COVID-19 MPTF proposal template include a box on the cover page for the Gender Marker ("Universal Markers"). **Proposals that do not include a Gender Equality Marker will be returned**.

- ✓ **Where they exist, interagency mechanisms responsible for gender equality and women's empowerment can help applicant agencies** integrate a strong focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in their projects. For example, the UN Gender Theme Group/Gender Working Group/Gender and Human Rights Group.

- ✓ **The UNCT-GEM email Helpdesk [**UNCT-GEM.helpdesk@unwomen.org **] is available to provide, when needed, technical support for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment within proposals** during their development and help assess the Gender Marker prior to submission to the UN COVID-19 MPTF.

- ✓ The **Fund Secretariat** should review the Gender Marker of all projects before they are submitted to the Designate of the Secretary-General for the UN COVID-19 MPTF and the Advisory Committee.

- ✓ **The Designate of the Secretary-General for the COVID-19 MPTF and the Advisory Committee**, when reviewing country submissions, will review the Gender Marker and where necessary recommend changes to strengthen the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment in the proposals.

UNCT GEM Email Helpdesk available at: UNCT-GEM.helpdesk@unwomen.org

In April 2020, UN Women launched its UNCT GEM Email Helpdesk (UNCT-GEM.helpdesk@unwomen.org) to support UNCTs in their application of the UNCT Gender Equality Marker (UNCT GEM) codes to Key Activities in UNCT Joint Workplans and provide technical support/advice, where needed, to interagency mechanisms responsible for gender equality and women's empowerment.

This Email Helpdesk is now being made available to support the application of this gender marker in proposals to the UN COVID-19 MPTF. Where helpful, areas of support provided by the UNCT-GEM Helpdesk can include:

- ✓ technical support for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment within a proposal during its development

- ✓ reviewing the Gender Marker scoring prior to submission to the UN COVID-19 MPTF and providing feedback

- ✓ reviewing specific components of the proposal where additional examples or suggestions may be useful, such as selection of gender-sensitive indicators

---

The table below provides guidance for applicants when assigning the UNCT GEM score to their proposal. The guidance is intended to clarify the difference between the gender marker scores in terms of how gender equality and women's empowerment is addressed throughout the proposal template. Applicants can use this as a 'check-list' to review and compare the proposal against and allocate a marker or make the necessary changes to the proposal to reach the desired marker. Further support can be accessed via the UNCT GEM Email Helpdesk (see above box) at UNCT-GEM.helpdesk@unwomen.org

GENDER MARKER a) Have gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls as the primary or principal objective (UNCT-GEM Score 3) *The principle purpose of the intervention is to advance gender equality and women's empowerment (GEEW) in the context of the crisis caused by COVID-19. Gender equality is fundamental to the proposal design and expected results. The intervention would not have been undertaken without the gender equality objective.*

Gendered analysis of the socio-economic impact and implications of COVID-19 in the country	✓ Includes a substantive gendered analysis to highlight the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 (e.g. heightened exposure to domestic violence, loss of livelihoods, and rising rates of unpaid labor) and to analyze how women, men, girls and boys and their situation, roles and responsibilities have both been impacted by the pandemic and are contributing to response and recovery efforts. Age and sex-disaggregated data are incorporated, where available.
What is the specific need/ problem the intervention seeks to address?	✓ the needs/problem analysis (section III.) also should describe in which way the crisis impacts on Women, Girls and Gender Equality in regard to the specific country as well as the theme of the programme
Solutions proposed	✓ Overcoming the health and development crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic through advancing gender equality/women's empowerment as the <u>main objective</u> of the intervention.
Who will deliver this solution?	✓ The list of RUNOs and partner organisations (section VII) mainly consists of organisations capable of dealing with women's' and girls' problems as well as providing gender expertise
Theory of change	✓ The Theory of Change clearly articulates the causal link chain that will lead to greater gender equality/women's empowerment and addressing the health and development crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
Target population	✓ Is clearly identified or proposes criteria for selection (e.g.: women-headed households; policemen; etc.) ✓ Does not have to target women only (gender equality includes working with men on gender norms) but can be exclusively focused on women if clearly articulated why this is the best approach to achieve gender equality/women's empowerment and overcome the health and development crisis caused by COVID-19.
Results framework	✓ All proposal outcomes directly contribute to gender equality/women's empowerment ✓ All data to be disaggregated by sex and age, where possible ✓ Most outcome and output-level indicators measure change in terms of gender equality
Risk analysis	✓ Includes a strong Do No Harm approach and an analysis of gender-specific risks and mitigation strategies. For example, will the intervention lead to challenging gender roles that may result in an increase in gender-based violence? Could an increase in women's participation in decision-making result in a backlash from male decision-makers or traditional male leaders? What steps will the project take to address and mitigate this?
Budget	✓ At least 90% of the budget should be allocated to GEWE

GENDER MARKER b) Make a significant contribution to gender equality and/or the empowerment of women and girls (UNCT-GEM Score 2)

Advancing gender equality is a significant objective but not the principal reason to undertake this intervention. Gender is reflected in the analysis, theory of change, implementation, results framework and budget allocation. A proposal with a UNCT Gender Equality Marker score of 2 is a strongly gender mainstreamed intervention.

Gendered analysis of the socio-economic impact and implications of COVID-19 in the country	✓ Includes a substantive gendered analysis to highlight the gender dimensions of the COVID-19 (e.g. heightened exposure to domestic violence, loss of livelihoods, and rising rates of unpaid labor) and to analyze how women, men, girls and boys and their situation, roles and responsibilities have both been impacted by the pandemic and are contributing to response and recovery efforts. Age and sex-disaggregated data are incorporated, where available.
What is the specific need/ problem the intervention seeks to address?	✓ the needs/problem analysis (section III.) describe in which way the crisis impacts on Women, Girls and Gender Equality in regard to the specific country as well as the theme of the programme
Solutions proposed	✓ Gender equality and women's empowerment is a <u>significant objective</u> of the intervention.
Who will deliver this solution?	✓ The list of RUNOs and partner organisations (section VII.) also includes organisations capable of dealing with women's' and girls' problems as well as providing gender expertise
Theory of change	✓ The Theory of Change articulates how progress in gender equality/women's empowerment will come about as a result of programming efforts to address the health and development crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Progress in gender equality and women's empowerment is an important objective although not the primary one.
Target population	✓ Men, women, boys and girls are targeted by the intervention and their distinct needs and capacities are reflected in the proposal template. ✓ Some activities address barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment. ✓ Efforts and special measures must be made to ensure equal representation as much as possible
Results framework	✓ All data to be disaggregated by sex and age, where possible ✓ At least one outcome-level indicator aims at measuring impact on gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of addressing the health and development crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and, when possible, gender mainstreamed throughout all outcomes **OR** ✓ At least one output-level indicator per outcome aims at measuring impact on gender equality or women's empowerment in the context of addressing the health and development crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
Outcome total budget	✓ At least 50% of the budget should be allocated to GEWE
Risk analysis	✓ Includes a strong Do No Harm approach and analysis of gender-specific risks and mitigation strategies

GENDER MARKER c) – (UNCT-GEM Score 0 and 1) *Gender is integrated in the analysis and findings from it ensure that the project does no harm and is not reinforcing gender inequality, but gender equality is not a significant objective of this project or addressed in the intervention(s). A proposal with a UNCT Gender Equality Marker score of 1 is not considered a well mainstreamed project but does not contribute to gender inequality.*	
Gendered analysis of the socio-economic impact and implications of COVID-19 in the country	✓ Mentions women and gender but does not provide a substantive analysis of the gender dimensions of the socio-economic impact and implications of COVID-19 within the country. Makes reference on how to ensure that the design and programming of the intervention does not reinforce gender inequality.
Solutions proposed	✓ Will contribute in some way to gender equality and women's empowerment, but not significantly.
Theory of change	✓ The Theory of Change makes no reference to programme approaches or methods that deliver outcome(s)/outputs dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment.
Target population	✓ Mentions women but typically among other groups and does not identify specific criteria
Results framework	✓ Indicators are disaggregated by sex and age (where possible) but no gender-sensitive indicators are identified
Budget	✓ No less than 10% of the programme budget should be allocated to GEWE
Risk analysis	✓ Includes Do No Harm approach

ANNEX A: DEFINITIONS

Gender: Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes.

Gender Equality: Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men/girls and boys are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men/girls and boys. Gender equality is not a woman's or a girl's issue but should concern and fully engage men and boys as well. Equality between women and men, girls and boys, is seen as both a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.[5]

Gender Mainstreaming: The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.[6]

Gender-sensitive indicators: Are indicators that track gender related changes over time. They point to changes in the status and roles of women and men/girls and boys over time and how a project or interventions affects them. A key element of a results framework is the indicators that are selected to measure progress on delivering outputs and achieving outcomes and impact to include both age and gender-sensitive as well as sex-specific/sex-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative indicators or data collection methods. Without this information it is difficult to monitor progress on advancing gender equality or women's empowerment.

---

[5] OSAGI (now UN Women): Concepts and definitions: http://un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm)

[6] Agreed Conclusion of ECOSOC Coordination Segment on Gender Mainstreaming, A/52/3, 1997

ANNEX B: RESOURCES

Gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of COVID-19

Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women (9 April 2020)

https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=127_127000-awfnqj80me&title=Women-at-the-core-of-the-fight-against-COVID-19-crisis (OECD)

Data:

https://data.unwomen.org/resources/covid-19-emerging-gender-data-and-why-it-matters

https://globalhealth5050.org/covid19/

Country / regional level:

https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/03/the-covid-19-outbreak-and-gender

https://www.aa.com.tr/en/americas/peru-panama-introduce-gender-based-rules-for-covid-19/1790453

Thematic documents:

https://www.unfpa.org/resources/covid-19-gender-lens

https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2319

https://eige.europa.eu/topics/health/covid-19-and-gender-equality

UNCT Gender Equality Marker Guidance Note

UNCT Gender Equality Marker Guidance Note

Other Gender Markers materials

UNSDG Guidance, Background Note and Steps to Develop a Gender Equality Marker

UNW Training Centre: How To Series - Module 1: Implementing Gender Equality Markers

UNW Training Centre: Module 1: Implementing Gender Equality Markers – Coding Definitions

CEB FBN Guidance notes on Coding Definitions and Quality Assurance