

Partner selection tool

How to evaluate prospective partners and their gender lens status

This partner selection tool is intended for funders (investors, grantmakers) to develop a deeper understanding of the current gender transformative status of their prospective partner organizations.

This tool was originally created to be used by Mercy Corps AgriFin in their partner selection and can be adopted by similar organizations based on needs.

Directions to use the partner selection tool:

1. We recommend this tool is used early in the partner selection process to understand if they align with your organization's gender transformation mission and if they can be engaged with further.
2. This tool should be completed by members of the grantmaking / investing institution, including (but not limited to) investment committee members, technical team members who have deeper understanding of partner organizations and a gender advisor.
3. There are 5 high level categories to assess each partner organization and users of this tool should score each partner organization from a range of 0-2.
4. Once you are done count and the sum the total scores across all categories.
5. Refer to the scoring rubric at the end of this tool to develop a deeper understanding of the current overall gender lens status of prospective partners and how to engage with them or not.
6. At the end of the tool we have provided a glossary of some commonly used terms in the tool which will aid in better understanding of some of the questions.

This tool can be used with the Gender Diagnostics Tool which allows organizations to gather understanding of their own gender lens status. Click [HERE](#) to access the gender diagnostics tool and ask your partners to fill it up and provide you with the final results.



Primary audience
Funders



Tool type
Worksheet



Personnel
Grantmaking committee,
Partner liaisons



Duration
1-3 hours

GOALS

(1) Assess at what level of gender transformation your prospective organization is.

(2) Understand which partners to onboard and engage, which ones to watch and which ones to decline partnerships with..

REQUIREMENTS

(1) No additional investment in terms of financial, human or technical resources.

(2) For some categories, you might need to coordinate with the partners to gather sufficient information.

(3) If there are terms which are unclear we suggest referring to [Gender concepts glossary](#) tool or consult your Gender Advisor if you have one.

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PARTNER ORGANIZATION ASSESSMENT

Assessing gender transformation progress and intent in a partner organization’s internal and external activities and business operations.

CATEGORY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	SCORING CHART	PARTNER SCORE (select appropriate score)
I. Service offerings: Does the potential partner’s product/service solve an identified challenge faced by women smallholder farmers? (If the answer is no, consideration process stops here)			
Prospective partner products and/or service(s)	Prospective partner’s products and/or service(s) address an identified challenge facing women smallholder farmers	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner is planning to introduce products and/or service(s) that address an identified challenge facing women smallholder farmers	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner’s products and/or service(s) do not address an identified challenge facing women smallholder farmers	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
II. Gender lens status: What is the potential partners current gender lens status? Potential partners’ gender lens status will be determined after conducting a baseline assessment using the gender diagnostic tool.			
Current gender lens status	Prospective partner is gender transformative	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner is gender intentional	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner is gender unintentional	0	<input type="checkbox"/>

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III. Gender strategy: Does the potential partner have a gender strategy/is developing or planning to adopt one?			
Gender lens strategy status	Prospective partner has a gender lens strategy	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner does not have a gender strategy but is developing/planning to adopt one	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner does not have a gender strategy and does not plan to develop/adopt one	0	<input type="checkbox"/>
IV. Intent to adopt a gender strategy: Is the potential partner willing to adopt a gender transformative strategy?			
Intent	Prospective partner is willing to commit time and/or resources to adopt a gender transformative strategy now	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner does not intend to adopt a gender transformative strategy now but is open to one in the future	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner does not intend to adopt a gender transformative strategy now and is not open to one in the future	0	<input type="checkbox"/>

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CATEGORY	KEY CONSIDERATIONS	SCORING CHART	PARTNER SCORE <i>(select appropriate score)</i>
Collection, analysis and application of gender disaggregated data	Prospective partner collects, analyzes and applies gender disaggregated data in decision making	2	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner does not collect, analyze and apply gender disaggregated data in decision making but is planning to do so	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Prospective partner does not collect, analyze and apply gender disaggregated data in decision making and does not plan to do so	0	<input type="checkbox"/>

Congratulations! You have reached the end of the partner selection tool. Refer to the next page for the scoring rubric to calculate scores and understand whether or not to engage with relevant partner organization for whom you just completed this assessment.

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SCORING RUBRIC

After you have answered all questions, count and sum up the total scores and refer to the scoring table below for results.

Total score	Partner selection results and significance to further engagement
10 - 6	Engage: There is clear added value that the potential partner can bring to the partner cohort and to your organization. There are likely a few areas of improvement that can be addressed through further support from you. This will include organisations that score reasonably high (6 - 7) and are really keen to improve.
5 - 3	Watch: There is likely moderate value add that the candidates can bring to the partner cohort and to your organization. There are likely significant areas of improvement the potential partners needs to first address before you consider any further engagement. You can also opt for further analysis of the candidates and consider stepping in to accelerate improvement to increase their potential additionality.
2 - 0	Decline: There is likely limited value add that the candidates for potential partner can bring to the partner cohort and to your organization. Your support would likely do little to nudge the potential partner's overall approach towards a gender transformative one.

KEY FACTORS THAT DRAW A REDLINE FOR PARTNER SELECTION

- Relevant service offerings and intent to adopt a gender transformative strategy are non negotiable factors regardless of the score i.e. partners who currently and plan to only focus on men farmers should be excluded
- Partners would not fit with your gender goals if (i) their products and/or service(s) do not address an identified challenge facing women smallholder farmers (ii) they are not open to adopting a gender transformative strategy
- Scores below 4 for across the selection of criteria for partners should result in partners not going forward with engagement

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RELEVANT GLOSSARY

As you work through this tool, you may have come across terms that are unfamiliar or confusing. Below is a list of some terms, knowing which would aid in better understanding of the tool. If there still are terms that you do not understand, it is recommended to refer to the [Gender Glossary](#) and other linked sources or consult with your Gender Advisor (if your organization has one).



Gender mainstreaming / integration is a process that involves embedding of a gender perspective into the entire spectrum of an organization's activities including its strategies, structures, policies, culture, systems and operations. It ensures that the needs and interests of all genders are included in the design, implementation, and M&E of any planned activity.



Gender lens refers to a perspective that aims to identify and understand gendered power differences and biases among different groups in economic, social and legal contexts by analysing the relationship between different gendered groups, their access to resources and opportunities, and the constraints they face relative to each other.



Gender intentional refers to a gender aware organisation that designs its products, service lines, and/or investments to reduce barriers in access to resources across genders or to increase the information base and awareness around gender gaps. *E.g., an agri-input loan provider designs shorter tenure loans linked to savings products to cater to the researched needs of female smallholder farmers.*



Gender unintentional refers to an organisation that does not integrate a gender lens and does not target gender gaps in its strategies, investments, product design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, internal structures and organization culture. *E.g., an agri-input loan provider that does not consider the differences in borrowing behaviour and needs of women while designing credit products and acquiring customers.*



Gender transformative refers to an organisation that aims to achieve gender empowerment and equity designs its products, service lines, and/or investments to reduce barriers in not only access to resources but also in agency and control over resources. *E.g., an agri-input loan provider can incorporate strategies to reach out to include women smallholder customers to make the final decision on loan disbursement after approval without spousal consent, thus increasing women's agency and decision making power.*