



Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Minimum Standards

August 2023 (Version 2)



Intended Audience and Purpose

This Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) Minimum Standards guidance is for the WISER Programme Team and Implementing Partners in Africa, MENA and the Asia Pacific. The intended audience for this guidance is programme and project managers, advisors, technical specialists and project delivery staff.

GESI is an important and central component of the WISER programme. All staff working on WISER should understand why GESI matters. For WISER project delivery teams, this guidance offers an approach to analyse and integrate GESI through the project cycle. It explains why GESI is important and how WISER projects can integrate GESI considerations into their project processes and activities, supporting a coherent approach to GESI analysis across WISER.

The aim is to ensure a common language is used, benefiting both individual projects and the WISER programme overall, while acknowledging and accommodating the different contexts in which projects work. This guidance has been developed by the WISER Programme Team, as part of its technical support to projects. It informs GESI, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning and will help generate robust evidence, enable communication and share experience and knowledge across projects and with other stakeholders interested in WISER. This guidance will be updated during the WISER programme as needed, to take account of learning from implementing GESI in practice. We invite Implementing Partners to provide feedback on what could be improved based on your experience of using the guidance. Feedback should be sent to: wiser@metoffice.gov.uk.

There is additional guidance developed by the WISER Programme Team to further support Implementing Partners with GESI, which links to this Minimum Standards guidance. This is the WISER GESI Context Analysis guidance, which is available in the [WISER Sharing Hub Site, GESI Guidance](#).

Why does GESI matter?

The WISER Programme recognises the crucial role of addressing issues of GESI to achieve its long-term impact – that **people, including the most vulnerable in Africa, Middle East and Asia Pacific, have improved resilience to prepare for and respond to the effects of extreme weather, seasonal events and climate change through the use of WISER weather and climate information services.**

Gender and other social inequalities drive vulnerability to climate change and undermine resilience. This means women, girls and marginalised people are more likely to be negatively affected by the impacts of a climate and weather-related extreme event. Social characteristics such as disability, socio-economic, migration and displacement status, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation and gender identity combine to influence who can access resources and jobs, who makes decisions, and who loses out. Understanding and addressing these inequalities is necessary to enable equitable and inclusive outcomes. Women, girls, youth, people with differing abilities and other marginalised people are critical agents of change in climate action and should not be seen primarily as ‘vulnerable groups’. Tackling the barriers they face to participation can help ensure that climate initiatives benefit

from their skills, knowledge and leadership at all levels. A failure to consider these dynamics, risks exacerbating inequalities and undermining development gains, even sometimes driving ‘mal-adaptation’, where resilience-building efforts might make things worse.

What is important for WISER?

WISER seeks to develop and implement transformative approaches to GESI¹ within weather and climate information services (WCIS), so that they are:

- Available and accessible to those who are often excluded,
- Understood and different groups have the ability and knowledge to act upon them,
- Integrated into policy and institutional levels, from community groups such as Civil Society Organisations (CSO), the urban poor or farmers groups, to the organisations and institutions WISER works with such as National Metrological and Hydrological Services, universities, or Non-Governmental Organisations

Developing and implementing transformative approaches to GESI within WCIS is to be supported in WISER projects through empowerment and the meaningful participation of women and men, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people. The aim is to contribute to greater gender equity and social inclusion as an outcome of each WISER project and the WISER programme overall. To achieve this, WISER applies an **equity-based approach**. This recognises that in different places and contexts, different groups have pre-existing and historic differences in access to resources, means to participate and opportunity to thrive.

Individuals and groups are at risk of being excluded based on their identity. The context of each region and country will influence which groups are most marginalised or excluded and in what ways. Among the most common group identities resulting in exclusion, it is possible to list, for instance, gender, age, sexual orientation, race, caste, ethnicity, religion, and disability status. These factors are often cross-cutting, overlapping or intersectional¹. Disempowerment – whether gendered, or due to sexual orientation or other social factors – can lead to lower social standing, often accompanied by less income, assets and capital, access to employment and services, and voice in regional, national and local decision making. To mitigate this:

- WISER Implementing Partners should proactively apply the Do No Harm and the Leave No-one Behind principles, understand the context, risks and seek to prevent negative consequences for those their project engages.
- WISER Implementing Partners’ collection of sex-disaggregated data should also account for intra-community diversity and complexity, including intersecting categories, such as ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and age.
- WISER Implementing Partners recognise the risk and social impacts of inter-community diversity and apply approaches to minimise safeguarding risks.

¹ <https://www.ukpact.co.uk/blog/mainstreaming-gender-and-inclusion-into-climate-action>)

Figure 1 - A high level summary of the GESI Minimum Standards developed for WISER

The 5 WISER GESI Minimum Standards

A summary of the WISER GESI Minimum Standards is presented below. Supported by further detail later in this document, these five points should guide all stages of project design, implementation, MEL, and closure.

1. Is there a GESI context analysis to inform programming which identifies:
 - a. **Barriers and enablers** to people of different gender, ages and ability, social economic constraints, or marginalised groups accessing project services.
 - b. The risks of **project activities which might negatively impact GESI** and how to mitigate such risks?
2. Can people of different gender, ages and ability, social economic constraints, or marginalised groups with differing abilities **meaningfully participate in the design, implementation and MEL of the project**, so they can build individual agency, change gender and group relations, transform systems and structures
3. How does the project contribute to the **gender equity, protection, and longer-term empowerment** of different genders, ages and ability, social economic constraints, or marginalised people?
4. Is there a plan for **building the capacity of local partners on GESI** using these Minimum Standards and GESI upskilling?
5. Does the MEL system enable analysis of GESI issues and does the project Logframe or results framework integrate qualitative and quantitative:
 - a. **Gender and social inclusion targets**, that capture evidence of leadership, empowerment and meaningful participation in decision-making?
 - b. Sex, age, and differing ability disaggregated data and **account for intra-community diversity and complexity**?

The **Do No Harm (DNH) principle** is also critical for GESI considerations under WISER. As an ethical principle, ‘do no harm’ applies to identity just as it applies to conflict. It means recognising that the actions we take in a particular context are not neutral. Our actions will affect the relationships within that context, either for better or worse. In a context where women’s rights and social inclusion are threatened, we have a minimum obligation to pay attention to these dynamics so that we do not unintentionally exacerbate them. ²

WISER is similarly committed to the **Leave No-one behind (LNOB) principle**. This is a steadfast principle of the 2030 Agenda with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole. ³ As a UK Government funded programme, WISER contributes to the GESI targets of the **UK International Climate Finance (ICF)**.⁴ To deliver UK ambition, the majority of ICF

² Collaborative Development Associates (CDA) DNH framework by Mary B Anderson and associates.

³ [UNSDG | Leave No One Behind](#)

⁴ [ICF - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion guidance FINAL.docx](#)

programmes, including WISER, should aim to be ‘empowering’ at a minimum, working towards ‘transformation’ where possible. This is outlined in table 1.

Table 1 - GESI ambition level within ICF programmes, adapted for WISER

Ambition level	ICF guidance definition	Example based on WCIS thematic
Minimum compliance	GESI analysis used to ensure you do no harm and do not exacerbate inequality, and that you understand and address the practical needs of women, men, people with differing abilities and marginalised people.	Provision of information on short range incoming weather conditions that is accessible to men, women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people so they can make decisions on safety and preparedness based on their needs and situation
Empowerment	GESI analysis and objectives used to increase equity in access to assets, resources, capabilities, and opportunities, such as jobs, markets, services, skills, knowledge and decision-making. This helps to increase individual autonomy and choices.	Disaster preparedness initiative that aims to tackle the barriers faced by women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people in accessing shock-responsive social protection, and weather information services for disaster response. Examples include tackling the ‘digital divide’ in access to electronic information / finance, or using informal networks to disseminate information to ‘hard-to-reach’ groups
Transformation	GESI analysis and objectives used to help identify and seek to address the prevailing power relations and tackle discriminatory practices that hold back individuals and groups. It involves challenging social norms and breaking stereotypes for women, men and marginalised people. It includes support for rights-based civil society such as women’s, Indigenous Peoples, Differing Abilities, as well as enabling their leadership and collective action to strengthen their decision-making, agency and control.	Disaster preparedness initiative that does the above and aims to support women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised peoples’ leadership and participation in accessing, understanding, and using WCIS to ensure disaster planning and response, challenge social norms and enable meaningful participation, engagement and leadership of these groups. This could include directly funding and consulting rights-based groups such as women’s rights organisations and Indigenous Peoples which are often crucial first responders when disaster hits.

The WISER Programme aligns to being GESI 'Empowering' under ICF programmes. This means WISER projects will be expected, **at a minimum**, to know, understand and address inequalities in gender, age, differing ability and social characteristics that exclude or marginalise people from accessing, understanding and using WCIS. This includes promoting the leadership, empowerment and meaningful participation in decision-making of women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people in decision-making.⁵

We understand that effectively integrating GESI into WISER projects is a journey. This WISER GESI Minimum Standards guidance provide a basis to help WISER projects ensure GESI Minimum compliance and work towards 'Empowerment'. We hope however that WISER Implementing Partners will strive to achieve higher levels of ambition as competencies and practices are strengthened and refined. This means, that where possible, WISER projects should aim towards being GESI 'Transformative'. In addition to ensuring greater inclusion of marginalised groups, WISER projects should therefore seek to actively address the causes of inequities that have been identified, seeking opportunities to challenge and change unequal power relations and discriminatory social norms that give rise to inequality. ⁶

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What does this mean in practice for WISER Implementing Partners?

All WISER Implementing Partners should seek to understand:

- What are the information needs of men, women and other groups?
- How do people of different gender and ages, differing social economic constraints, marginalised groups or those with differing abilities access weather and climate information such as short-range forecasts, early warning systems or seasonal forecasts?
- Do these different groups understand the WCIS provided and are they able to act on it, and if not, how can their ability to do so improve?

Answering the questions above forms the foundation of learning between WISER Implementing Partners. Therefore, all Implementing Partners must adhere to five principles

Understand the GESI issues within the country and the context the project operates in.

Ensure a GESI analysis supports partners in identifying and responding to barriers, enablers and risks associated with GESI within the context the project operates.

⁵ UKPACT

⁶ UKPACT

Answer - Who risks being left behind, why and where are they? What barriers exist and why? How could proposed activities increase harm to marginalised groups? What needs to be considered to ensure the project does no harm?

A GESI analysis must take place very early on in the project lifecycle – either to inform proposal development or as a baseline before finalising project plans.

Include data that is disaggregated by sex, age and disability, account for intra-community diversity and complexity where available and relevant as part of the project baseline, and subsequently as part of the cycle of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) with project partners as a part of reflections to inform reporting.

Ensure the development of data collection tools that enable gathering qualitative and quantitative disaggregated data.

Answer – Which different groups in society have access to information? How do they get information? Can they use it? Why? Or why not?

Ensure that the process of WCIS development actively elicits inputs from women and men, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people.

This may require some modifications to methods to reach these groups and at times that are convenient to them, and where they feel empowered to provide their contribution. Due to gender norms for example, many women are expected to not speak without the presence of their husbands in group meetings and to allow their husbands to speak on their behalf in joint meetings. Ensuring a way to speak with a husband and wife separately is more likely to elicit their individual opinions.

Ensure commitment to incorporate the results of users' experiences as evidence for future iterations of design, implementation and MEL.

Answer – How can an activity be planned to be inclusive and allow for meaningful involvement, participation or empowerment of different marginalised groups?

Consider how to support more active leadership by women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people across different project themes.

Ensure qualitative and quantitative assessments of participatory mechanisms, looking not just at the number of people of different gender and ages for example who are able to feed into decision-making or policy design, but also at the quality and results of their participation.

Answer – How can marginalised groups be empowered to own, contribute, and be represented in decision making?

Focus on embedding changes that benefit women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people in policy and legal frameworks to promote sustainability of interventions.

Ensure interventions support empowerment of those who may traditionally have been left behind in projects and across the programme.

Answer – How do activities support GESI mainstreaming and contribute to long term transformation?

What GESI looks like will be different in every context, based on local conditions – but considering the importance of the above steps at different stages in the project lifecycle reminds us to ensure that these issues are not overlooked and that we do not have projects that are ‘GESI-blind’

What are the GESI Minimums for WISER Implementing Partners?

WISER’s ambition is to empower, build capabilities and opportunities for women and men, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people, and support transformational change. WISER Implementing Partners are to take this commitment to heart and ensure GESI implications are consistently discussed as a standing agenda point in project and team meetings, both internally and with other stakeholders.

We aim that all staff that work on the WISER programme and projects have a shared understanding why GESI is important and how it is everyone’s responsibility to ensure GESI is a central concern in the programme and projects.

WISER supports a GESI Champions Network to assist Implementing Partners in driving this awareness forwards and integrating GESI across the programme to encourage and facilitate support and learning. This is to ensure legitimacy and that GESI has a real impact and is a key component to be analysed in the work of each organisation as well within WISER projects. GESI is important at organisational level, as well as project and programme level.

A five-point checklist of WISER GESI Minimum Standards is presented below, to guide all stages of project design, implementation, MEL and Project Completion Reports. The WISER GESI Minimum Standards are adapted from the FCDO Gender Minimum Standards for the PHENOMENAL Programme and Care Gender Marker.⁸ All WISER Implementing Partners must meet the GESI Minimum Standards which respond to GESI Empowerment of the GESI ambition level within ICF programmes. The boxes on the right below offer suggestions to help answer the Minimum Standards questions throughout the WISER project cycle.

WISER will work with Implementing Partners in the process of applying GESI in all stages of the project cycle, learning and documenting the process and the emerging successes and lessons. We recognise that measuring GESI mainstreaming progress is based upon:

- Understanding together with our Implementing Partners about the process in applying the GESI Minimum Standards,
- Documenting the process with partners, within and across regions, and

⁸ [care_gender_marker_guidance_english.pdf](#)

- Generating stories of change to illustrate GESI within both within and beyond our Logframe targets

GESI Minimum Standards for Implementing Partners will be discussed and explored with each organisation, relative to the size of the funding award.

Minimum Standard 1

<p>Is there a GESI context analysis to inform programming which identifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers and enablers to people of different gender, ages and ability, social economic constraints, or marginalised groups accessing project services and/or opportunities to access? • The risks of project activities which might negatively impact GESI and how to mitigate such risks? 	<p>GESI <u>Context</u> Analysis seeks to understand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender roles, and their impact on access and power, • The situation for women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people, • Capacities, needs, roles, relationships, and risks, • Power dynamics of and between individuals and groups, • Barriers to GESI within the country or geographical context; and, • Potential risk to have unintended negative consequences in terms of GESI <p>Consideration of agency, structure, and relations</p> <p>GESI <u>Project</u> Analysis seeks to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the project plan informed by an in-depth, project specific GESI analysis of the distinct needs, roles, relationships, protection risks and power dynamics of and between women and men, young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people?
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Minimum Standard 2

<p>Can people of different gender, ages and ability, social economic constraints, or marginalised groups with differing abilities meaningfully participate in the design, implementation and MEL of the project, so they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build individual agency? • Change gender and group relations? • Transform systems and structures? 	<p>Project Information, Participation and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has relevant information about the project been shared with participants of all genders, ages and groups in a format that is clear and transparent? • Are women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people able to safely access this information? • Are women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people offered meaningful opportunity to be involved in decision-making throughout the project cycle? • Can women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people speak up and represent themselves in community consultations? • Does the project have an intentional process to receive feedback from participants that ensures voice of different groups on how to improve programming? • Does the project have a standard procedure for responding to this feedback? • Can women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people safely report complaints and other forms of feedback? • Are there procedures in place to prevent negative consequences from participation in terms of GESI?
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Minimum Standard 3

<p>How does the project contribute to the gender equity, protection and longer-term empowerment of different genders, ages and ability, social economic constraints or marginalised people?</p>	<p>Project Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are project activities designed to meet the specific needs and priorities of women and men, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people in the GESI analysis? • Are targeted actions taken to support their leadership, voice and meaningful participation in decision-making? • Can services provided by the project be safely and inclusively accessed by all participants? Have any adaptations been made to ensure this is the case? • Are there project activities to advance GESI that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build individual agency? ○ Change gender and group relations? ○ Transform systems and structures? <p>Project Protection Risks and Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the safety and security risks (including gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse risks) for women, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people identified and routinely monitored throughout programming? • Are the causes of these risks identified? • Are project staff supported to proactively prevent unintended negative consequences in terms of GESI? • Is this information used to inform programming? • Is this information used to regularly adapt the project and its activities to respond to any changes in access to rights, safety, and security?
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Minimum Standard 4

<p>Is there a plan for building the capacity of local partners on GESI using these Minimum Standards and GESI upskilling?</p>
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Minimum Standard 5

<p>Does the MEL system enable analysis of GESI issues and does the Project Logframe or results framework integrate qualitative and quantitative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender and social inclusion targets, that capture evidence of leadership, empowerment and meaningful participation in decision-making • Sex, age, and differing ability disaggregated data and account for intra-community diversity and complexity? 	<p>Project MEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection and analysis teams include women, youth, people with differing abilities and other marginalised people with the needed skills and capacity to engage different groups. <p>The M&E system collects and analyses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex, age and background disaggregated data: Data that is collected and analysed by male, female, and different age and types of groups. This provides information on how capacities, needs, risks, barriers and access, change according to sex and age and group. However, protection and dignity of the individual are key in recognising intra-community diversity and complexity. • The age segments for age disaggregation may vary by country or sector; however, commonly used segments include children 0-9; adolescents: 10-19; very young adolescents 10-14; older adolescents 15-19; adults 19-60; women of reproductive age 19-45; elderly adults 60. • Protection risks and needs: In this context, ‘protection’ refers to work that aims to protect an individual’s human rights, including safety, security and dignity; access to services; or data protection and privacy. While not all projects will consider all of these domains, all WISER projects must consider ‘do no harm’ in their initial analysis and throughout project implementation and MEL processes. • Analysis of unintended consequences: Unintended consequences are the changes and effects that occur from programming that were not expected. These can be both positive and negative and must inform programming to prevent unintended negative consequences in terms of GESI. Not limited to MEL but applied across the project cycle. • Monitoring changing roles and relations: Roles and relations are changing all the time. These can be tracked through the MEL system. This includes progress in GESI mainstreaming. • Data and evidence from the MEL system is used to regularly adapt the project to changing needs, risks and capacities
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GESI in Practice: Looking forwards together

WISER recognises the importance of building shared learning on GESI between all Implementing Partners. WISER seeks to champion GESI in WCIS by gaining and sharing knowledge and experience. The WISER Programme Team, with Implementing Partners, seeks to:

- Strengthen WISER's internal capacity and understanding of GESI integration, building a shared understanding of the GESI Minimum Standards at all levels of the WISER programme and projects, GESI upskilling of staff and partners,
- Promote peer learning and develop and disseminate case studies and best practice by establishing a platform for the GESI Champions community, with the aim to develop a GESI Champions Network
- Generate peer learning and case studies to support influence and action within and beyond the life of the WISER programme.

The GESI Champions Network aims to bring together partners, including technical experts and project delivery staff, and where possible, local partners, other relevant stakeholders, and community change-makers to understand what approaches best help the WISER community understand and communicate learning around the following aspects:

- What are the issues relating to the needs and barriers of women and men, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people in the different contexts WISER operates in?
- What are the risks, barriers and opportunities to the voices of these different group being heard, and how can these risks and barriers be addressed, or opportunities maximised?
- What does this mean for how weather and climate information, such as short-range forecasts or seasonal weather forecasts, get to women and men, the young and elderly, people with differing abilities and needs, inclusive of LGBT+ and marginalised people? Are these different groups able to understand and act on the information they receive? And if not, how can their ability to do so improve?