

**SYNTHESIS NOTE**

# **Review of IFI experience in mainstreaming gender**

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**EBRD EVALUATION DEPARTMENT**



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# Executive Summary

## Highlights

- ✓ More progress has been made translating gender commitments to operations in the public sector though importantly, there is now increasing commitment to do so in private sector operations, with growing demand from private sector clients themselves.
- ✓ IFIs increasingly seek gender results at the level of specific sectors rather than focussing more generally on gender mainstreaming across all operations at once;
- ✓ Designing, delivering and tracking specific progress towards gender goals is critical; evaluation has until very recently not given gender results consistent consideration.
- ✓ Progress depends on committed and engaged senior management, visibility in resource allocations and accountability throughout project and HR systems.
- ✓ Quantified corporate commitments on gender results upon exit (as well as entry) make a difference.
- ✓ The gender agenda *within* an IFI is important to drive forward the operational gender agenda.
- ✓ Some important tools: Gender focal points or gender specialists working within operations; qualitative impact stories (and the business case) and documentation and dissemination of results to inform gender responsive investments both with operations teams and clients.

The main purpose of this Synthesis Note is to provide a brief review of some key features of the experience of other IFIs in order to constructively inform the internal EBRD strategy development process now underway. The EBRD has elevated gender as a strategic priority and is currently developing a Bank-wide Strategy for the Promotion of Gender. Other international financial institutions (IFIs) have substantially intensified their efforts in this area and made significant changes at the levels of

strategy, corporate structure and operations. EBRD can learn from this experience.

The paper describes significant features of the way IFIs are approaching gender today – in terms of corporate commitments, attention to private sector operations, and for the first time, a more consistent approach to incorporating gender in evaluation. It finds that having set up the corporate mechanics to support their gender commitments, IFIs have adopted a largely pragmatic approach to adapting practices for best results on the ground. Many IFIs focussed on the public sector initially to gain traction and awareness on gender. Having done this, many are now moving to include the private sector where this increased attention is balanced with increased interest from clients. Surprisingly, given the maturity and strength of the gender agenda within most IFIs, much less progress is observed in addressing gender within evaluation, though many expect substantial changes here in the near future.

What is also clear is that there are common challenges and drivers across the IFI experience. Principal internal drivers of success have been a clear senior management commitment at the centre and sector levels, quantifiable operational commitments supported by clear internal accountabilities and resourcing, rigorous gender tracking and monitoring both at entry and increasingly at exit, and informed diagnosis and visible results shared with clients. Progress on a more ambitious operational/external gender agenda appears to go hand in hand with an ambitious institutional/internal gender agenda.

The first part of the paper presents the rationale for examining the experience of other international IFIs on gender issues and the methodology used to conduct the synthesis. The following sections review the institutional approaches, policy frameworks and organisational practices of other IFIs as well as other multi- and bi-lateral organisations. The paper concludes with a short discussion of issues related to gender equality at the operational level of other IFIs. As EBRD identifies the administrative, structural and operational dimensions of achieving the objectives of the Strategy for the Promotion of Gender in EBRD, it is hoped that this review of other organisations' experiences will be useful.



## Rationale and methodology

EBRD's Medium Term Directions paper committed it to prepare a Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality.<sup>1</sup> Typically when a new strategy is planned, EvD seeks to evaluate the performance of the previous strategy. It is too early to evaluate performance of the Strategic Gender Initiative (approved in 2013), and EvD has relatively little evaluative evidence on gender. EvD and the gender team therefore agreed that a piece of work to synthesize the experience of other IFIs would help the internal conversations around gender. EvD's [approach memo](#) for this study identified several significant pieces of work comparing IFI experience on mainstreaming gender.<sup>2</sup> This Synthesis Note brings together the findings of a number of existing reviews together with new information drawn from a survey and interviews in order to draw out common experiences and views on gender mainstreaming. Its purpose is to support the ongoing discussions within EBRD at strategy and operational plan levels. The paper will also be the basis for EvD to consider how better to address gender in its evaluations – this to be a separate exercise for which planning is already underway.

The Synthesis Note is based on (i) consultations with EBRD's gender team on topics to consider; (ii) interviews with 18 people extensively involved in gender related work in five IFIs and UN Women;<sup>3</sup> (iii) the results of a perception survey of gender-focussed staff in 10 institutions, including bilateral development agencies and IFIs<sup>4</sup>; and, (iv) extraction of relevant material on various reviews and evaluations of gender mainstreaming and related topics (see Annex 2: Contemporary literature review, p 19 and Annex 3 External References, p 22). The study team committed to anonymity and therefore presents its findings without attribution. The team committed to share summary insights with the institutions taking part. This not only encouraged participation, but also leverages the value of the note and further strengthens cooperation on the gender agenda.



<sup>1</sup> Medium Term Directions for EBRD-BDS14-098/F

<sup>2</sup> This includes a report from 2011 by AfDB and 2012 ECG Paper 5 as mentioned in the Approach Memo.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this study, references to IFI also cover UN Women. The IFI group included IFC, EIB, AfDB, ADB and IADB

<sup>4</sup> The questionnaire was sent to the following 14 institutions: ADB, AfDB, DFID, EIB, EU, IADB, IFAD, IFC, ILO, NORAD, OECD, UN Women, USAID and WBG

## Institutional approach and policy framework

### Key findings

- ✓ IFIs tend to follow a dual track on delivering gender results; through direct interventions focused on gender and mainstreaming gender considerations throughout all operations.
- ✓ More progress has been made translating this commitment to operations in the public sector to date though importantly, there is now increasing commitment to do so in private sector operations.
- ✓ There is growing demand from private sector clients for support to gender elements of investments.
- ✓ A clear and active internal gender agenda within an organisation is important to drive forward its external operational gender agenda.

Most IFIs have had in place an official institutional commitment to gender mainstreaming for the last decade, often linked to a major mandate and institutional review such as resource replenishment<sup>5</sup>. Gender mainstreaming policies in place at the time of preparation of this paper typically include dual objectives of purposeful operations and mainstreamed gender considerations throughout all operations, with some also highlighting safeguards as a main vehicle.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) approved its latest Gender Strategy 2014-2018, which set out the institutional commitment as articulated in its 2013-22 Bank-wide strategy, to reduce gender inequalities by “strengthening women’s legal and property rights, promoting women’s economic empowerment, and enhancing knowledge management and capacity building” on gender equality. The strategy articulates the view that gender equality is both a goal in and of itself and also a precondition to enhance economic growth and improve other development outcomes. Its focus is dual; (i) to strengthen gender mainstreaming in all of the Bank’s country and regional operations and strategies and (ii) address the Bank’s own internal transformation to make it a more supportive and gender-responsive institution.

The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) approved its Operational Policy on Gender Equality in Development in 2010, which envisages proactive action (through mainstreaming and direct investment opportunities), and preventative action to promote gender equality as essential to its goal of accelerating the process of economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Though IADB reports on projects which incorporate gender

<sup>5</sup> Several papers discuss this in detail, including papers such as Caroline Moser and Annalise Moser: Gender Mainstreaming Since Beijing: A review of the Successes and Limitations in international institutions (2005)

at entry, its view is more nuanced than aggregating numbers on projects marked as gender informed, because here, the project is counted only if there is associated monitoring in the results framework of a project.

The World Bank Group (WBG) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) both plan to conclude gender strategies this year. The concept note for the 2016-2021 World Bank Group strategy on gender equality looks at supporting greater gender equality as an important pathway to ensure lasting poverty reduction and shared prosperity by supporting more equitable outcomes amongst women and men, especially the poorest, in terms of access to socio-economic activities. This is reinforced by the continuing commitment made during the 17<sup>th</sup> World Bank's International Development Association (IDA17) replenishment (FY15-17), to deepen mainstreaming, monitoring of projects at exit (assessing what work has been completed for projects at their completion stage), and committing to a new gender strategy for the group. Main activities concentrate on defining activities to scale-up good practice results-based interventions in relevant core business lines; develop and strengthen diagnostic tools; improve the evidence base for results; support Gender Innovation Labs (which use impact evaluation to explore evidence on critical gender gaps); improve knowledge uptake (not just through technical tools such as guidance notes but also through internal and external capacity building); and, importantly, emphasise monitoring of corporate commitments, rating projects on exit as well as the current view on entry.

The perceived importance of organisations' institutional mandates in framing gender work within an IFI is evidenced through the survey's results, where respondents identify the institutional mandates of their respective organisations as essential in influencing the way in which the organisations approached gender equality objectives. One interviewee sums up the change to develop the institutional framework: *"There was a push internally, a push within management and a push with our donors"*.

The importance of an operational plan for turning good intentions into reality cannot be overestimated as recently was stressed in a 2014 report for the African Development Bank.<sup>6</sup> This concludes that there remains an important gap between IFI policy commitment on gender and implementation, with no instance of gender mainstreaming taking place in line with United Nations Economic and Social Council definition. The section below on organisational practice aims to highlight some of the main considerations.

Importantly, and separate to the institutional framework for operational gender is the theme of institutional gender focus, meaning the consideration of gender within the institution. Several interviewees pointed to this as significant in driving forward the gender agenda within

their IFI. *One interviewee went so far as to summarise that "Operations cannot change unless the inside changes"*.

## Organisational practice

### Key findings

- ✓ Progress in implementing the gender agenda depends on dynamic senior management commitment.
- ✓ Other top drivers of operationalising the gender agenda are financial and human resources, accountability and visibility.
- ✓ Gender focal points or gender specialists working within operations are particularly effective.
- ✓ Financial resources for specific research into impacts help to develop the business case.
- ✓ Quantified corporate commitments on gender results upon exit (as well as entry) matter.
- ✓ Evaluation has until very recently, effectively ignored gender as a consistent consideration. Today, several IFIs are making changes to provide better accountability for the institutional gender commitments, and at the same time supporting the promotion of gender within the organisation.
- ✓ Impediments come from multiple pressures from cross cutting strategies, culture of emphasis on volume of lending rather than quality of investment.

The extent to which the approach to gender mainstreaming has evolved and has been implemented differs with each institution, though there are common areas which are mostly implemented or not. The main organisational arrangements identified by IFI respondents as mostly or fully implemented in their institutions were organisational priorities, followed by internal gender working groups/communities of practice, institutional gender strategies/actions plans/integration plan and specific monitoring requirements to assess gender impact at overall portfolio level (five out of six respondents considered that these areas were mostly or fully implemented in their institutions and one IFI respondents considered that these areas were half implemented). These are all measures that for the most part the respondents felt were important to quite important. Conversely, sex balance in staffing of gender expertise, gender roles in country/sector strategy appropriately laid out across HQ and field, and gender responsibilities explicit in operations staff job descriptions, were the organisational areas which IFI respondents viewed as less implemented or not implemented at all although several believed these to be important measures for their organisations to take.<sup>7</sup> Some interviewees also mentioned that safeguard commitments had been particularly difficult to implement, particularly given limited resources of the

<sup>6</sup> From "Beyond Repetitive Evaluations of Gender Mainstreaming", March 2014 Ria Brouwers for AfDB

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Annex 1: Survey Assessment for further detail.

gender unit.

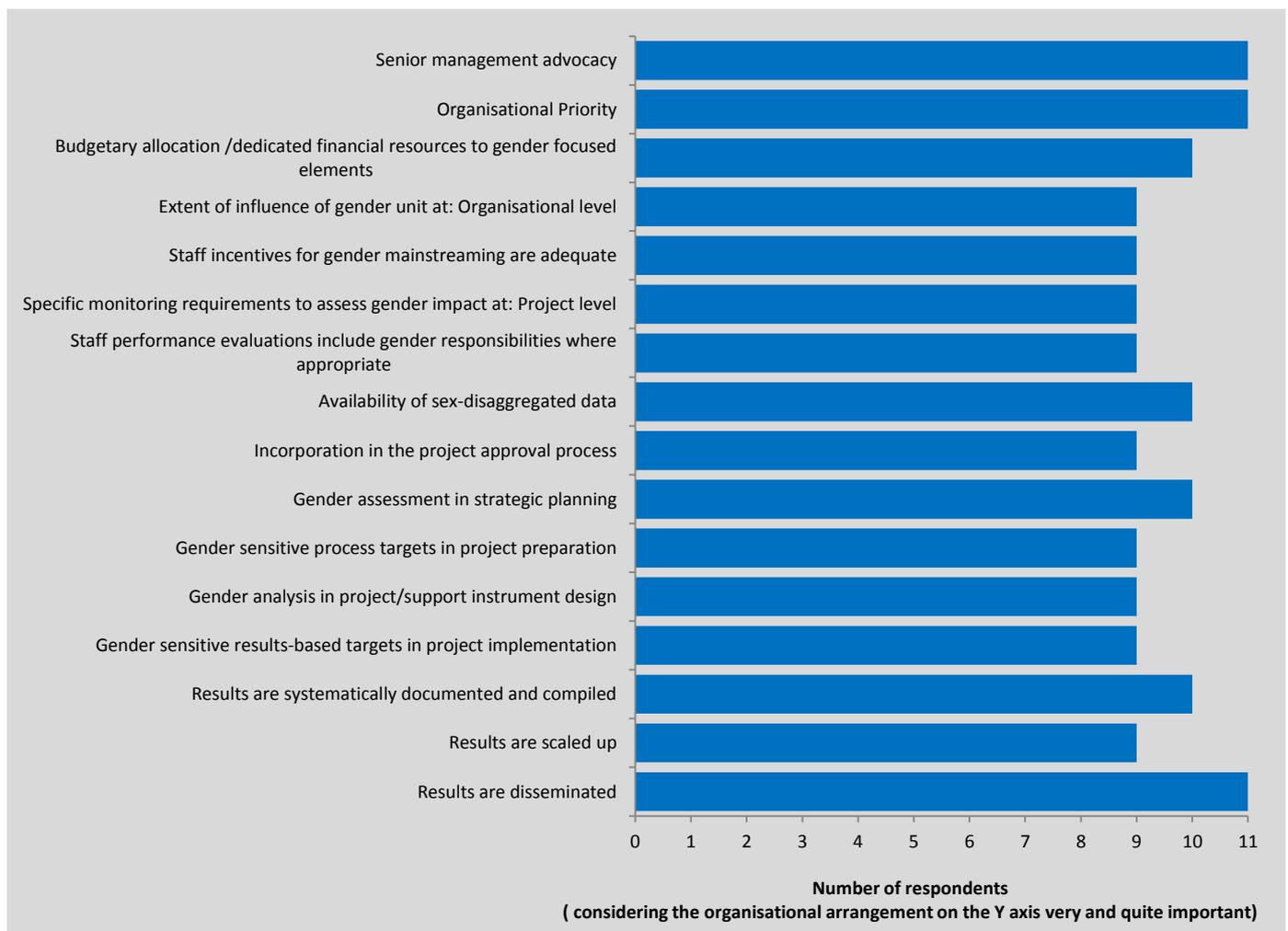
The interviews and survey indicate that institutions noting substantial progress in implementation often point to a dynamic senior management commitment as the main determinant of success, driving visibility and the necessary support framework. Similarly, of the survey respondents, all stated that senior management advocacy and the organisational priority placed on gender were very important or quite important, making these two of the factors considered most important for achieving their organisations’ gender objectives. This need for consistent sponsorship and messaging at the high level was described by the majority of interviewees as necessary because of the cultural change elements to implementing a gender strategy in such institutions. One interviewee sums this up:

“There is a culture of volume of lending and numbers and not quality of investments...In terms of making a difference for gender outcomes against corporate

commitment, being in an institution engaged in transition means you don’t get the attention for any topic that is content related and more of a niche topic.....you need board support and senior management commitment through actions”.

Conversely, one of the main impediments to further gender promotion was cited as the lack of effective and complete implementation of resolutions, decisions and other instructions from the governing body. The survey results also suggested that while respondents considered senior management advocacy to be highly important, only 3 of the 6 felt that such advocacy was a reality (i.e. fully or mostly implemented) at their organisation. To this end, including accountability for gender objectives in senior and middle management performance evaluations may be helpful, although the respondents to the survey were uneven on how important they felt such measures could be.

Figure 1: Survey results on top drivers of operationalising the gender agenda



above extracts from the survey a number of other measures on which respondents placed high value for delivering on the agenda. Aside from senior management commitment, according to the survey, critical measures

were those related to financial and human resources, accountability and visibility (see also Annex 1: Survey Assessment). One interviewee asserted this importance:

“As with any strategy, a critical component of success is whether there are the human and financial resources to implement it.”

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## Budgets / financial resources

Looking at the way the gender agenda is promoted within an organisation, institutional commitments articulated in policies are typically supported by action plans which, according to the synthesis work, are critical to show commitment, and thus, their full funding is essential. One IFI was particularly positive about the resources assigned to its gender action plan (GAP), because it has allowed the institution to fund additional resources in the operations teams (whose importance is described later), and to fund research into supporting the business case, which they found an important tool. All of the IFI representatives indicated that budgetary allocations and dedicated financial resources were quite or very important, although only one of the six felt this was fully implemented.

## Structures and networks

An essential part of the operationalisation of the gender commitment is through the gender units, which take on a variety of forms; some are central and have primary responsibility for the gender agenda; and for other IFIs, such as IADB, the gender responsibilities lie with project teams, which can call on the gender unit as needed. Four out of five IFIs placed their gender units under social and/or environmental divisions, while non- IFIs reported that gender issues were dealt with either by teams within policy and/or technical divisions or by separate gender departments. Representatives from both IFIs and other institutions ranked having an influential gender unit at organisational and project levels as important to very important, although many reported less than full implementation. Respondents from IFIs also ranked the adequacy of size of the gender team at the organisational level and the adequacy of expertise at the operational level to be important to very important. The upcoming UN-SWAP team's mapping of this architecture may help us understand some of the relative strengths of different models.

Within human resources, it is equally important to understand how IFIs are leveraging their limited gender units. Several organisations have with success, used institutional and donor resources to place consultants in specific sectors of priority, to work exclusively alongside operations teams to help design projects which are gender-informed. Over time in one IFI, costs for these consultants have been absorbed by the sector teams, reflecting the business value of this resource. IFIs report this as more effective than one time training (with the exception of training provided to the client) or the provision of tools. IFI respondents to the survey considered establishing a consultancy pool of qualified experts as important or very important and most reported that their institutions were on the road to implementing this (all but one reporting half-way implemented or better; other non-IFI institutions do not appear to value or implement consulting pools as much). Another approach is to embed staff, either on secondment or permanently, in field and sector teams. This

has worked well for some of the IFI group interviewed, to complement and strengthen other support mechanisms for gender. One interviewee says:

“Gender didn't really shift until you hired people to push the policy, really”.

The survey reflects that learning opportunities for HQ and field staff are important for gender mainstreaming (five out of six IFIs considered that these are very or quite important) but that they are not well implemented in their organisations (only two out of six IFIs considered that learning opportunities are fully or mostly implemented). In a similar vein, gender architecture at IFIs has typically consisted of the use of gender networks, whereby colleagues are either selected or volunteer to spend a certain percentage of their time (usually less than 20 per cent), whether formalised in their key performance indicators or remaining informal, usually within their formal job description, on promoting the gender agenda and liaising between their department and the gender team. Some gender networks consist of those who are non-operational as well as operational, to truly complete the institutionalisation of the agenda, and focus both on operational as well as internal gender considerations, which has been seen as a driver of the overall agenda. The recent UN Women Independent Evaluation Office Review of Corporate Gender Equality Evaluations in the UN System, expresses elements of good practice in their gender focal point (GFP) system.

### Example of good practices for gender focal points

- ✓ Using GFP from each focus area, plus a gender specialist, during preparation of a country programme action plan
- ✓ Establishing a mandate for the GFP network as a whole, as well as for individual GFPs
- ✓ Formally including GFP responsibilities in job descriptions
- ✓ Requiring agreed work plans with unit directors that reflect their GFP responsibilities
- ✓ Committing to a minimum of 20 per cent of a GFP's time being devoted to GFP responsibilities
- ✓ Increasing the seniority of staff appointed as GFPs to P4 and above<sup>1</sup>
- ✓ Organising 'sharing and learning' meetings for the GFP network members

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## Accountability systems

Related to this, both the interviews and survey support the literature findings that there is progress in developing accountability and incentive mechanisms within IFIs at both an institutional and individual levels, and that this framework is an important driver for achieving gender objectives – on the latter, as Annex 2: Contemporary literature review describes, the recently published *Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries* report comments that weak internal accountability for implementation and results can leave poor performance to go unchecked, reflected in its experience. Interestingly on the personnel side, several IFIs indicate that with the inclusion of gender considerations into performance assessments, they observed more traction. In addition, visibility given to gender-related aspects of staff's work by senior management was identified as important to making progress in the gender agenda, according to the survey. An annual gender award to projects as well as having an annual report on implementation of gender policy to show results and progress were some of the examples given to increase visibility.

The survey results confirm that most respondents, particularly at IFI institutions, rated having gender responsibilities explicit in job descriptions, including gender responsibilities in performance evaluations and establishing adequate incentives were important to highly important. Their responses regarding implementation suggest these aspects are yet to be well implemented.

At an institutional level, at least three IFIs have already committed to including gender results in their corporate scorecards (including WBG, ADB and IADB). The present IFC scorecard includes commitments to increase access to finance and access to markets for women entrepreneurs, and to reduce gender based barriers in the business environment. The new strategy emphasises a country driven approach, setting no global targets for reducing gender gaps or particular indicators of gender inequality. Each region has a regional action plan which sets out tailored regional priorities built from country and regional context. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has had corporate targets on project gender mainstreaming as categorised at entry for a while. The Bank introduced a corporate commitment on gender at completion in 2013. This corporate commitment on gender is measured at exit: a target that 70 per cent of its projects categorised on entry as projects which mainstream gender, should be considered successful from a gender perspective at exit, as determined by the gender unit. This introduction is the first time a multilateral development bank has looked at corporate results on gender at exit, and represents a shift in quality of reporting and institutional accountability. Though its targets do not apply yet to private sector operations, there is close monitoring and already a requirement to increase number of projects year on year. One interviewee noted the importance of such targets:

“Targets in the corporate results frameworks makes a huge difference and is one of the defining characteristics for the gender agenda”

## Evaluation

One of the most important parts of the organisational practice is looking at how gender support is being evaluated and reported on. Indeed, evaluation serves as the accountability framework for the institutional mandate. Contemporary literature argues that there is a gap between policy and implementation<sup>8</sup> – best practice evaluation should be able to help guide institutions to close this gap. Several institutions have undertaken evaluations of their previous strategies, leading to revisions, but other IFI have not carried out an evaluation yet despite several years of support and considerable progress towards their gender equality goals.

Further, the research indicates that the gender agenda in operational evaluation is just taking off, with very limited consistency in approach before this year. A review of Corporate Gender Equality Evaluations in the UN System reflects on a lack of critical mass on gender; with findings on 17 corporate gender equality evaluation reports completed between 2006 and 2014 of 69 United Nations entities meant to report against the UN-SWAP<sup>9</sup>.

Other research supports this observation, and illuminates further on the current gaps within the evaluation that has taken place; the recent article from the Operations Evaluation Department of the African Development Bank Group summarised in Annex 2: Contemporary literature review describes that

“the research indicated with few exceptions, that evaluations have not investigated money flows, implying that this is partly due to the limitations of the gender marker at the design phase rather than end stage. A major methodological flaw is that results go unreported. Importantly, the article concluded that the sample evaluations made few efforts to investigate results and benefits of the programs”.

In this way, a disconnect remains between what is happening in the operations, and what is being able to be reported on. If gender impacts are not evaluated and reported, they are unlikely to be given any attention.

Gender is often cited as understandably missing from monitoring and evaluation systems for several reasons such as gender not being seen as having any importance in achieving a project or programme's results or its ultimate purpose by managers and staff, difficulties to get sex-

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<sup>8</sup> See Annex 2 conclusions from the Operations Evaluation Department of the African Development Bank Group article

<sup>9</sup> The search process found a total of 62 documents for potential inclusion, which were filtered down to 17 reports eventually included for analysis in the report. Corporate-level gender equality evaluations account for 71 per cent (13) of the portfolio, 18 per cent (3) were evaluations of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping missions and 6 per cent (1) was a system-wide evaluation.

disaggregated quantitative data from local government sources resulting in costly and time consuming remedies, and also situations in which the project/ programme design stage has not considered gender, which is consequently forgotten during implementation as well. One interviewee mentioned that:

“In terms of challenges, it is true to there is pushback from teams where they do not see it as following from the expectations or where guidelines are new. One approach is to extract relevant lessons and generate debates, taking stock of insights to date, rather than focusing on accountability.”

Notwithstanding the above, several IFIs evaluation departments are considering how to integrate gender more systematically into their evaluation work, through assigning a gender person (though not across all IFIs observed), stocktaking, diagnostics reports, and specific action plans. One IFI reported that they are starting to take into account gender in its project level reviews, with another preparing to do so through a new guidance note on incorporating gender into evaluation work. Outside the IFI system, the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) is a particularly interesting framework to explore, and provides a framework for national systems to model, since EvD understands that national statistics offices are gearing up to track these indicators. The UN-SWAP on gender equality and women’s empowerment is an accountability framework created in 2012 to accelerate mainstream gender perspectives into all institutional functions of the entities of the United Nations system. The UN-SWAP includes a set of 15 common performance indicators, clustered around six broad and functional areas: accountability, results-based management, oversight, human and financial resources, capacity and coherence, and information management. Entities provide annual reports to UN Women through an online reporting system and UN Women reviews all reports to control the quality and accuracy of ratings. After the first year of reporting there is a strong correlation between reporting and performing well on indicators. Moreover, those institutions that have gender responsive performance management in place also perform well, because this performance management system holds managers accountable.



## Gender at an operational level

### Key findings

- ✓ It is not about gender mainstreaming for mainstreaming sake, but designing, delivering and tracking meaningful progress towards gender equality goals.
- ✓ The IFI approach is increasingly to tackle specific sectors rather than looking at gender mainstreaming across all operations at once.
- ✓ Though more progress has been made in public rather than private sector, this is changing, with increased interest being seen from clients themselves.
- ✓ Value in developing qualitative impact stories to promote gender informed investments both with operations teams and clients. This allows better attribution than standard indicators, and enhances understanding of structural impact at sector level, rather than on the project surface.
- ✓ The quality of gender informed intervention varies, and current trackers may not pick this up.
- ✓ Gender tracking may be one way to unify public and private approaches.

### Sector focus and entry points

One interviewee sums up the evidence on IFI approach to gender at an operational level:

“There are some things that you can’t gender mainstream of course, with all the good will in the world.”

Indeed, several IFIs explained that they have been pragmatic in the sector focus rather than trying to do everything at the same time. Several IFIs talked about the idea to work in the sectors that were completely disassociated and with the sectors that do the most volume. The sector emphasis is also coupled with where they can explain the additional development outcomes or benefits for clients.

In that respect, gender assessments in strategic planning and in sectoral work and project design were considered important to very important by all of the respondents. Supporting this, contemporary literature points out experience where the most effective operational contributions have derived from identifying and addressing structural barriers and bottlenecks<sup>10</sup>. Several IFIs reported

<sup>10</sup> See Annex 2 summary of UN’s Independent Evaluation Office recently managed an evaluation looking at the Contribution of UN Women to women’s economic empowerment (WEE) 2011-2014, published in December 2014

taking the country strategy as entry point, with diagnostic work on country profiles and gaps (supported by financial resources from gender action plans) carried out by the gender teams, and feeding into the strategic objectives where appropriate. Several IFI gender teams carry out such work systematically across countries, and provide updates to gender profiles in sectors, to help determine where investment and technical assistance for gender objectives could have the greatest impact, with the aim of better leveraging finite resources. IFIs emphasised the value in developing qualitative impact stories in addition to the profiles, to promote gender informed investments both with operations teams and clients. Ultimately they found that this effort is important to attract interest in the selected sectors.

Traditional sectors are reported to continue to be easier to promote gender in operations, including education, health, agriculture, finance, vocational training, and energy. Infrastructure is still the biggest challenge for most IFIs, though this differs as well; a project for larger highways is different from more local roads. One interviewee discussed their institutional operations:

“Almost 100 per cent of our agricultural projects are gender mainstreamed (with either a primary focus on gender equality or some gender elements), and around 25 per cent energy projects...there are some sectors where there are very high rates of gender mainstreaming because they are easily amenable, such as water and sanitation, education, agriculture. Public sector management is not so good. Road, transport and energy sectors are growing but remain challenging.”

Evidence from interviews and survey suggests that there is a lot of work to be done on private sector, and that this is an area most IFIs are now concentrating on improving. This is also reflected by the World Bank Group strategy concept note and illustrated by one IFI experience in the survey stating that:

"more than 50 per cent of one its sovereign projects and a little less than 10 per cent of non-sovereign projects (in project numbers) are categorised as gender mainstreamed projects”.

In the private sector, one IFI mentioned that progress which had been made was because of a deliberate outreach to

champions, with gender tracking to unify public and private approaches. Moreover, according to the survey respondents, the incorporation of gender mainstreaming into private sector operations happens through:

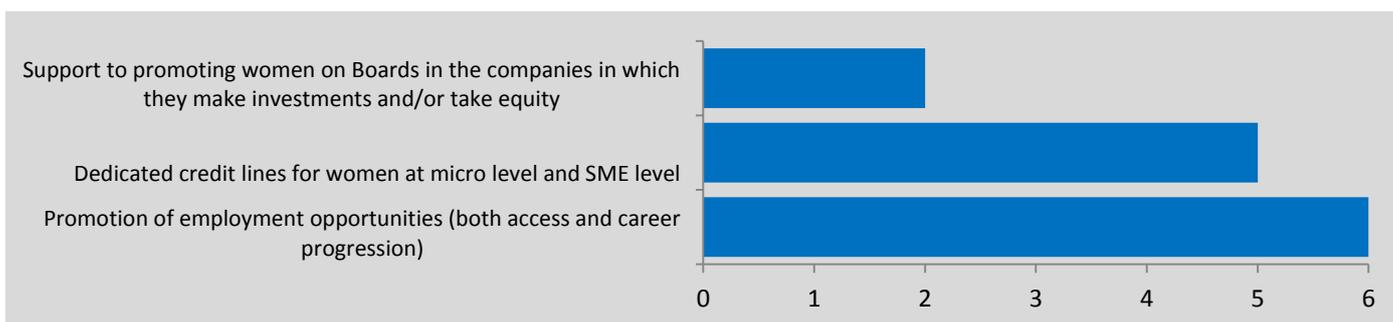
- Client-specific analytical work to promote work on gender with private sector clients (e.g. making the business case for private sector investments to promote gender equality).
- A gender marker that tracks commitment to gender equality at design, activities to support gender equality during implementation, and gender-related outcomes at completion.
- Working with and through banks, corporates and SMEs for women entrepreneurs, providing advisory services on gender inclusive employment and women-on-boards programme.
- Facilitating access to credit and support of SME activity led by women.
- Private sector initiatives including enterprise-level or sector-level services and products, as well as international-level initiatives such as gender-related Global Compact initiatives. Private sector clients may also be supported through government-led initiatives.

## Specific operational areas

Specific operational areas with gender related work are illustrated in

Figure 2 below. IFI respondents identified promotion of employment opportunities and dedicated credit lines for women at micro level and SME level as main operational areas in which their organisations have pursued gender related work other than safeguards. The survey indicated that technical assistance and policy dialogue are considered very or quite important by the majority of IFIs, though the majority thought this was not yet realised. Other interesting approaches include working on human resources issues with all corporate clients, addressing glass ceiling issues in access to credit and transition beyond micro credit and closing the gap in accessing assets and jobs.

Figure 2: Number of IFIs identifying that their organisation has pursued gender related work other than safeguards



## Tools

There were several operational tools and practical measures that representatives from the IFIs valued highly for their importance in achieving organisational gender objectives. IFIs and other institutions alike considered the availability of sex-disaggregated data and the budgets to collect those data highly important. Knowledge management tools would also be of high priority as the respondents highly valued the importance of documenting, compiling and disseminating results. High importance was also placed on gender checklists, gender action plans and strategies, as covered above. Almost all of the respondents also noted the importance of including gender in the project approval process. For all of these measures, implementation was uneven across the IFIs.

## Monitoring gender in operations

Monitoring of gender investments is an important part of the organisational system for gender, and the survey indicates that all IFIs are either using or are currently developing a way to mark and track gender in their operations. It is clear there has been inconsistent understanding of how to use the marker across many organisations. According to the interviews, several IFIs are reviewing how they have been tracking gender in order to make the existing system more effective, including rolling out mandatory training to all in operations, also echoed in the literature<sup>11</sup>. One interviewee noted that with their current system,

“there is a lot of difficulty in making sure change is transformative rather than superficial”.

Interestingly, very few organisations, when asked via the questionnaire, were able to provide the percentage of their organisation’s overall annual business that is gender related. The recent report by UN Women<sup>12</sup> highlights some of this history and also clearly articulates its potential in increasing awareness on the ground to those who design programs, support further gender sensitivity, and enable corporate wide analysis of gender sensitivity.

ADB offers an example of a more rigorous system. All public and private sector projects, whether subject to the corporate results targets or not, come to the team at concept review, and then before confirmation and final approval, in order for the gender team to verify the provisional category given by the project team. The system measures the extent to which gender designs are integrated into projects. A four category system is used to distinguish between those which integrate gender designs

and which should count towards corporate goals (projects with “gender equity theme”, or “effective gender mainstreaming”), and those which do not count, including those with “some gender elements” and “no gender elements” in design at entry. Those falling into the first two categories are classed as gender mainstreamed and are required to take action.

Effective monitoring also happens inside the organisation more informally. One interesting informal arrangement which has been working particularly effectively is for the gender unit to track sectoral progress in real time against departmental targets and report via a quarterly letter to each department lead, which takes place in the IADB.



<sup>11</sup> See Annex 2 report from the European Commission DG DEVCO as one example.

<sup>12</sup> See Annex 2

# Annex 1: Survey

## assessment

The survey was sent to 14 institutions; 11 respondents from 10 organisations participated. Six respondents reported being at 5 different international financial institutions (IFIs) and five reported working for non-financial organisations such as government agencies or international fora (non-IFIs).

The survey looks, among other themes, at the importance and the extent of implementation of a list of organisational arrangements presented below. The analysis of the answers for these two themes is presented below.

## Importance of organisational arrangements for gender mainstreaming

Participants to the survey were asked to consider a series of organisational arrangements with respect to gender mainstreaming and to rate them in order of importance from 0=Not Important to 4= Very Important.

Nine and ten respondents, respectively, said that senior management advocacy and availability of sex disaggregated data are very important elements for achieving gender objectives in an organisation. Five respondents from IFIs considered that specific monitoring requirements to assess gender impact at project level are an important arrangement for gender mainstreaming. Amongst non-IFIs, gender sensitive results-based targets in project implementation and gender assessment in strategic planning were the most important factors to achieve gender mainstreaming.

The following organisational arrangements were also considered as quite important or very important by the majority of the IFI respondents:

- Adequacy of gender markers or trackers at exit and at entry,
- Specific monitoring requirements to assess gender impact at overall level and at public portfolio level
- Extent of influence of gender unit at individual project team
- Incorporation in the project approval process
- Organisational priority

The following organisational arrangements were also considered as quite important or very important by the majority of non-IFI respondents:

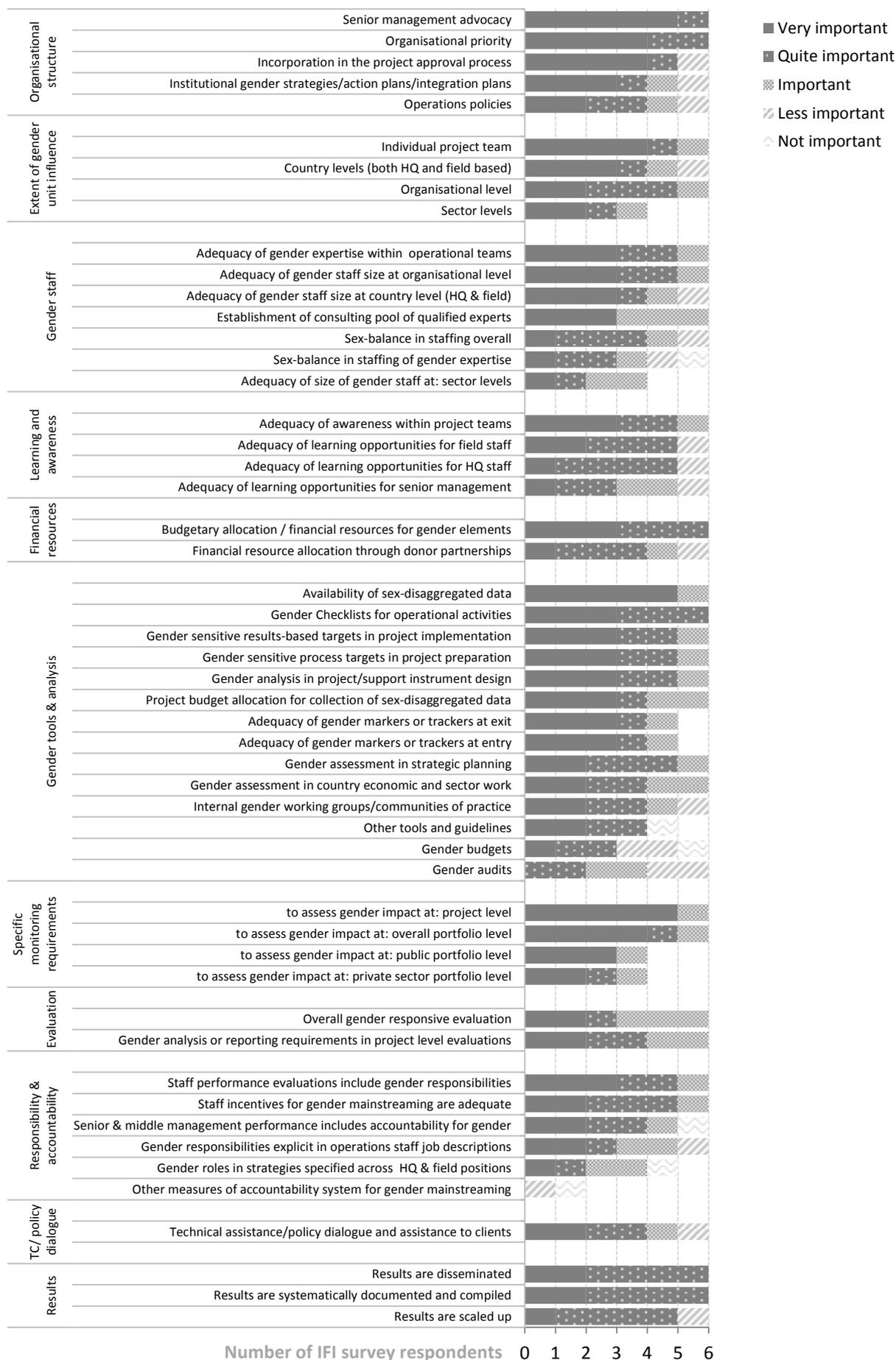
- Senior and middle management performance includes accountability for gender mainstreaming where appropriate
- Provision of project budget allocation for collection of sex-disaggregated data
- Overall gender responsive evaluation
- Gender analysis in project/support instrument design
- Gender assessment in country economic and sector work
- Incorporation in the project approval process
- Operations policies
- Organisational priority

Gender budgets, sex-balance in staffing of gender expertise and gender audits were perceived by IFI respondents as organisational arrangements that were less or not important to achieve gender mainstreaming. Non-IFI respondents considered adequacy of gender Markers or Trackers at entry or exit and institutional Gender Strategies/Action Plans/Integration Plans are less important.

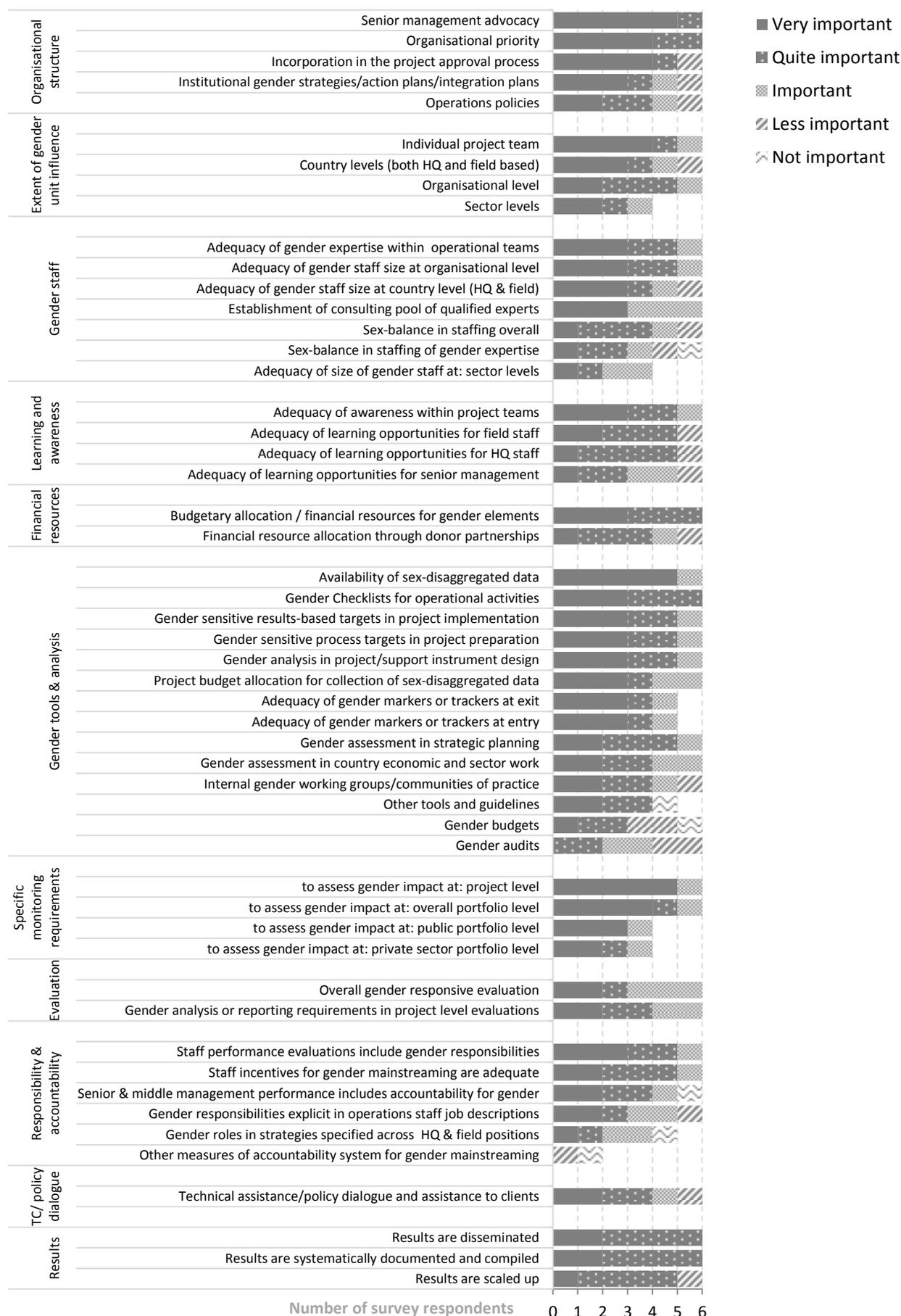
The tables below illustrate the responses divided between IFI and non-IFI respondents.



IFIs: How important do you consider each of the following for achieving gender objectives in your organisation?



Non-IFIs: How important do you consider each of the following for achieving gender objectives in your organisation?



## Extent of implementation of organisational arrangements for gender mainstreaming

Participants to the survey were asked to consider a series of organisational arrangements for gender mainstreaming and to rate the extent of their implementation in their respective organisations from 0=Not Implemented to 4= Fully implemented.

The main organisational arrangements identified by IFI respondents as mostly or fully implemented were organisational priorities), followed by internal gender working groups/communities of practice, institutional gender strategies/actions plans/integration plan and specific monitoring requirements to assess gender impact at overall portfolio level (five out of six respondents considered that these areas were mostly or fully implemented in their institutions and one IFI respondents considered that these areas were half implemented).

The following organisational arrangements were identified by four IFI respondents as fully or mostly implemented:

- Operations policies

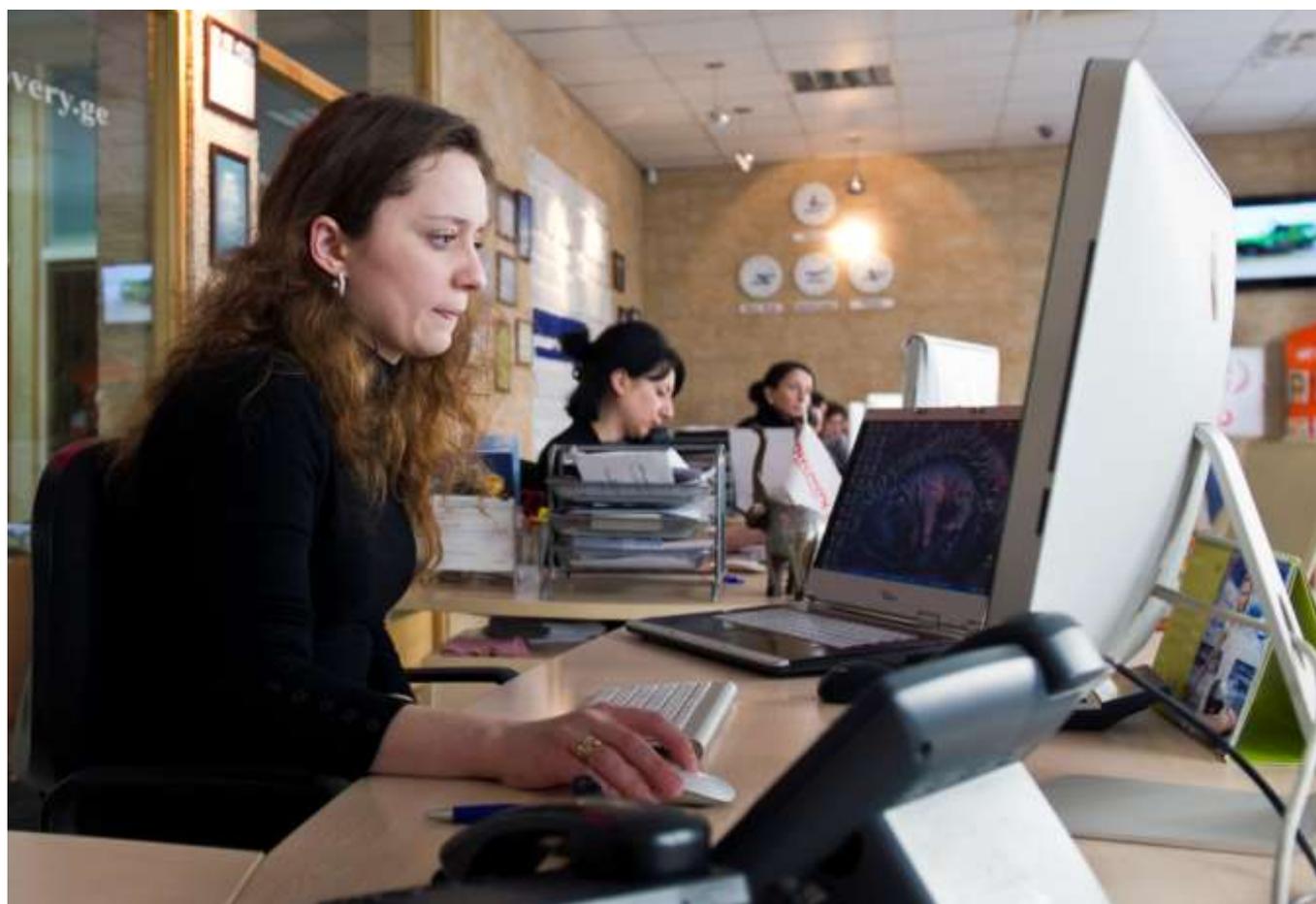
- Gender sensitive process targets in project implementation
- Gender sensitive results-based targets in project implementation
- Adequacy of gender markers or trackers at entry
- Other tools and guidelines such as: targeting gender during project design, and targeting gender during project implementation

Three out of five non-IFI respondents identified sex-balance in staffing overall as mostly implemented in their organisation.

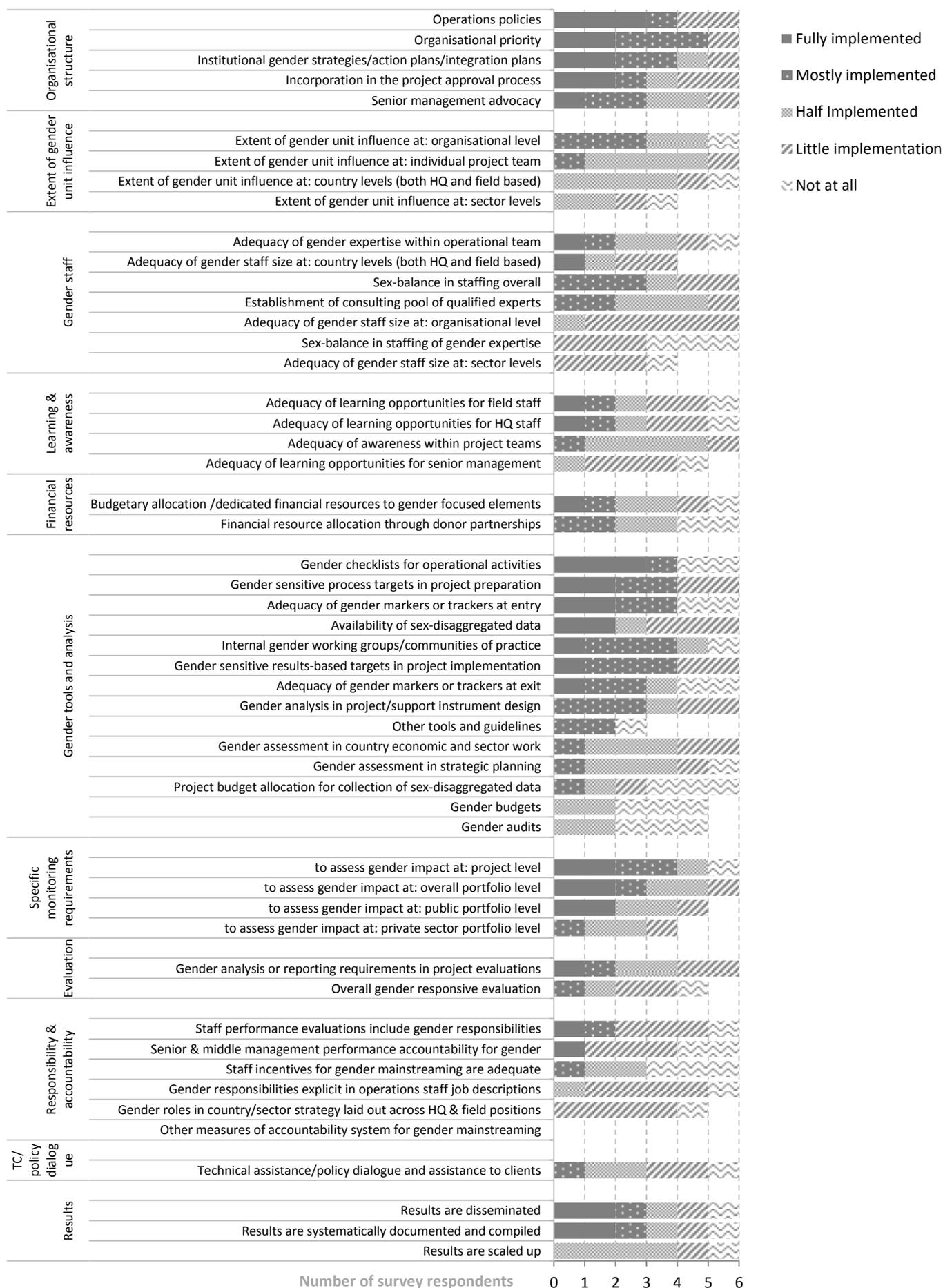
The following organisational arrangements were reported as less implemented or not implemented at all by IFI respondents:

- Sex balance in staffing of gender expertise,
- Gender roles in country/sector strategy appropriately laid out across HQ and field positions,
- Gender responsibilities explicit in operations staff job descriptions

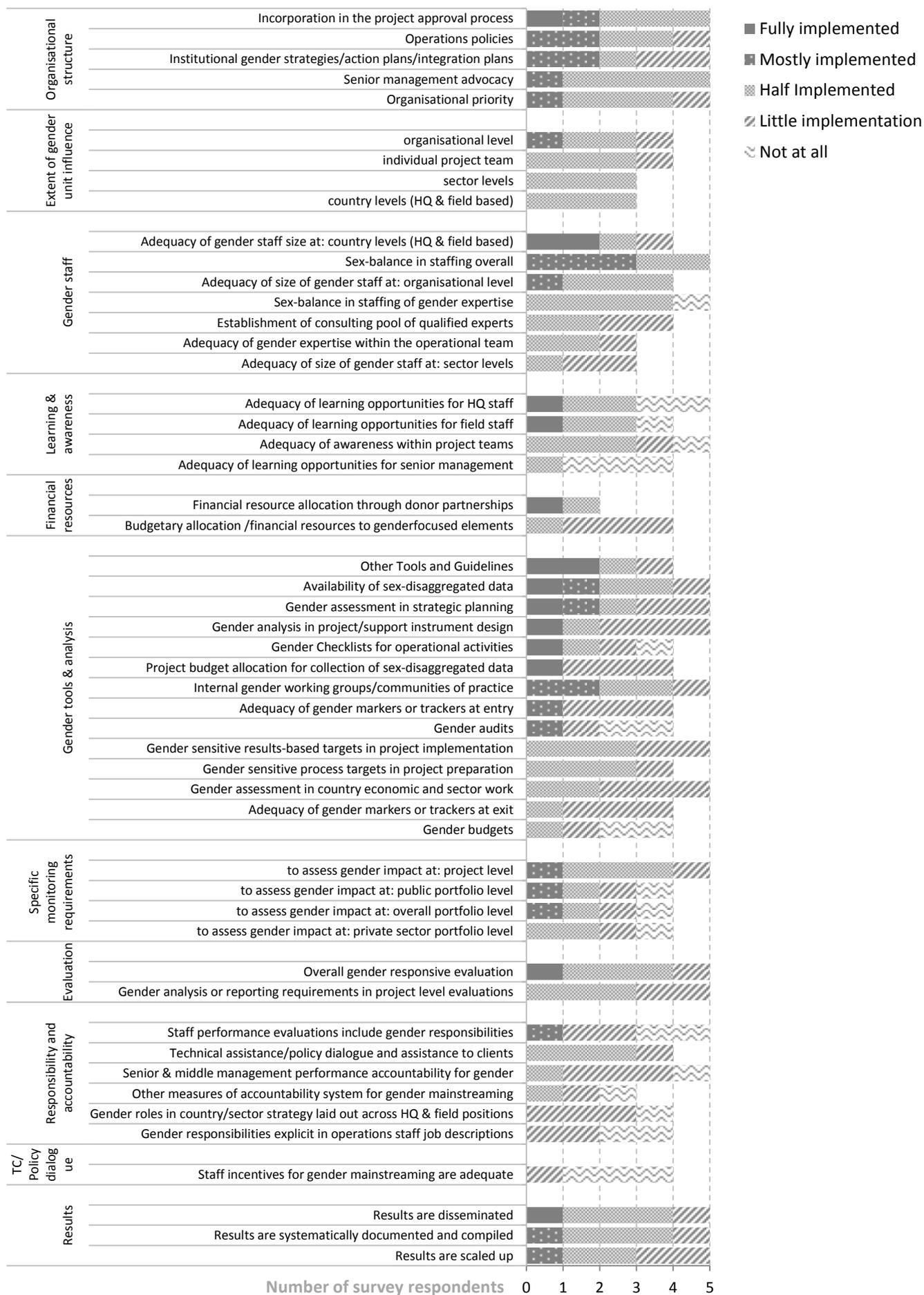
The tables below illustrate the responses divided between IFI and non-IFI respondents.



IFIs: To what extent has your organisation implemented gender mainstreaming in each of the following areas?



Non-IFIs- To what extent has your organisation implemented gender mainstreaming in each of the following areas?



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## Annex 2: Contemporary literature review

There is a growing body of evaluative work on the status of the gender agenda in development institutions; Annex 3 lists some of these. The below section identifies selected reports from current examples, along with relevant principal findings.

The European Commission's DG DEVCO Evaluation Unit has published an Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries: Final Report: volume 1: Main Report April 2015. This paper reviews the last three years of the 2010-2015 Gender Action Plan implementation. The overall assessment notes that though some important results have been achieved, they are patchy and poorly documented. The report argues that, with few exceptions, EU Delegations do not adopt an integrated three-pronged approach that effectively combines gender mainstreaming, gender-specific actions with political and policy dialogue to maximise outcomes. The report argues that the EU is not delivering the strong institutional commitment it set out in its policies through unclear communication, required institutional architecture and incentive to motivate staff; this absence of strong leadership results in accomplishments being delivered by individuals rather than an organisational response.

The report also comments on a mismatch of commitment and capacity, noting that there is no evidence of any capacity assessment to determine the internal capacities needed to deliver the Gender Action Plan (GAP)'s priorities, leading to a piecemeal approach to delivery of policy commitments.

Separately, the report commends the increase in financial commitments to the policy commitments, but notes that it is not possible to determine exactly how much has been committed due to poor application of the gender marker. Finally on this, the report notes that questions remain about the quality of financial contributions, because gender analysis is rarely used to inform strategy and programming, and gender sensitive indicators are not adequately integrated into programme/project results frameworks.

Finally, the report argues that internal accountability for implementation and results against the GAP commitments is weak, partly due to the poor application of the gender marker, lack of integration of commitments into job descriptions and performance appraisal, and lack of integration into country level strategic objectives, evaluation processes and mainstream project monitoring systems, which together allow poor performance to go unchecked.

### Review on Corporate Gender Equality Evaluations in the UN system looking at evaluation perspectives on gender actions July 2015

UN Women's Independent Evaluation Office has prepared a Review on Corporate Gender Equality Evaluations in the UN system looking at evaluation perspectives on gender actions July 2015. This report analyses the results of the corporate gender equality evaluations of United Nations entities completed in 2006 – 2014, which is after the mandated incorporation of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) work but before the roll-out of the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP), the latter being an initiative which has clearly led to much progress. In this way the review helps identify areas where continued support may be needed, contributes to establishing the baseline of the pre-UN-SWAP period for any future evaluation of the UN-SWAP and may help to identify areas for refinement or revision of the UN-SWAP in its next cycle.

One interesting observation is that the number of evaluations identified for inclusion in the study was quite low compared to the number of UN entities system wide; ultimately, only 17 corporate gender equality evaluations completed between 2006-2014 were able to be included, and only two entities completed more than one corporate gender equality evaluation within the time period under review.

The following selected insights were discussed:

- i) To further enhance the relevance and effectiveness of gender equality policies, United Nations entities should conceptually and operationally link them to corporate strategic plans;
- ii) Staff perception of the relevance of gender mainstreaming is strengthened when gender equality policies clearly articulate a link between GEEW results and the entity's overall development results;
- iii) While inclusion of overall goals for gender mainstreaming in gender equality policies is important, explicit theories of change and improved results logic would strengthen implementation even further;
- iv) Establishing or, where they already exist, strengthening gender-responsive performance management systems would enhance accountability. As an example, overall, responsibilities and main results related to GEEW were missing from staff work plans at all levels, with the exception of gender specialists or advisers. Only one entity had developed and implemented a competency-based performance criteria system for gender mainstreaming by senior managers;

- v) Gender analysis should be integrated in central strategic planning documents as well as country programme documents;
- vi) The quality of monitoring and reporting data on GEEW can be strengthened by linking it to the entity's overall results management system. In the same vein, monitoring and reporting should be focused at outcome level, in addition to activity and output levels;
- vii) Evaluations have the potential to act as credible sources of information on GEEW results, especially at the outcome and impact level, but were not yet doing so. Further, evaluations should enhance the analysis of the potential or actual linkages between GEEW institutional results and GEEW development results;
- viii) Participatory gender audits, when conducted, increased understanding and commitment to GEEW that supported gender mainstreaming performance;
- ix) Increased capacity of gender architectures (gender unit and focal points) would provide more consistent and meaningful support to gender mainstreaming efforts;
- x) United Nations entities put in place an array of supportive policies to promote GEEW, but their implementation and use within some entities remained limited, partly due to organisational culture. Further, United Nations entities have shown progress towards gender parity over time, but the factors that support or hinder its achievement were not assessed. The report gives one effective example of supporting this agenda from the International Labour Organisation (ILO), where a short-term expert on gender and organisational change was provided by the gender unit to support the human resources unit to develop baseline indicators and identify strategies and activities to promote progress on gender parity,
- xi) Clear financial benchmarks would enhance investment in GEEW,
- xii) Financial tracking systems for GEEW should be fully developed to enhance effectiveness. The report assesses that the potential of the marker is in increasing awareness on the ground to those who design programs, support further gender sensitivity, and enable corporate wide analysis of gender sensitivity.

### Contribution of UN Women to women's economic empowerment (WEE), 2011-2014

The UN Women's Independent Evaluation Office recently managed an evaluation looking at the Contribution of UN Women to women's economic empowerment (WEE) 2011-

2014, published in December 2014. Its broad conclusions are repeated here:

- i) **Relevance:** The report concluded that UN Women is well placed in the system to influence WEE at the global, regional and country level and that its current comparative advantage is its policy and normative work on WEE;
- ii) **Effectiveness:** The report argues that despite limited resources, UN Women's normative mandate has enabled it to effectively influence international discourse, standards and national policies and its coordination and joint programming have made important contribution to advancing WEE within the UN system, especially at the country level. The most effective operational contributions have derived from identifying and addressing structural barriers and bottlenecks. The report discusses further opportunities for effectiveness through partnerships and becoming more strategic and selective;
- iii) **Gender Equality and Human Rights:** Women's economic, social and cultural rights stand in a disadvantaged position in relation to the dominant political economic paradigm. In this context, UN Women needs to mobilize and give voice to all the allies it can—including men, civil society, and the private sector—from the position of legal authority that human rights frameworks provide;
- iv) **Organisational Efficiency:** During its transition phase, UN Women undertook intentional efforts to focus outwards to engage with and begin influencing its wider network and environment. To enhance its institutional ability to contribute to WEE, there is now a need to consolidate inwards and strengthen a consistent approach to WEE-related leadership at all levels within the organisation.

### Policy Dialogue as an Instrument in Swedish Development Cooperation; the case of gender equality, June 2015

SIDA recently published an evaluation of Policy Dialogue as an Instrument in Swedish Development Cooperation; the case of gender equality, June 2015, which looked at the period 2007-2013 and took a formative exploratory approach, rather than looking at the impacts per se, aiming to better understand what constitutes successful policy dialogue on gender equality in different contexts. From a gender equality perspective, success was defined as policy dialogue that leads to actual transformational change in male/female power relations and in access to resources and opportunities.

The report concluded that both formal and informal policy dialogue were necessary to promote gender issues effectively, and that through these efforts, SIDA had been able to contribute to increased gender equality, with most influence on the development or revision of the legal

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framework, and least on advocating for increased resource allocation to gender equality by governments.

Policy dialogue was reported as particularly successful where embassies used multiple dialogue approaches explicitly complemented with related dialogue support processes, particularly with regard to policy reform and development. Approaches commonly found to be effective included raising gender equality issues in negotiations of multi-year development co-operation strategies and annual high-level dialogues with government, and raising gender equality as a dialogue issue with stakeholders in specific sectors or programme interventions. The most effective dialogue support processes included providing support for policy-related research to provide evidence for dialogue discussions and building the capacity of state and non-state actors to be able to advocate such issues effectively.

The report notes lack of political will and the existence of highly-patriarchal societies as the largest external constraints. In terms of enabling factors, the report identified SIDA's strong commitment to gender equality, as well as that of embassy staff, and also international conventions and regional agreements that provided a legal basis for promoting increased accountability on the part of state actors.

In March 2014 the Operations Evaluation Department of the African Development Bank Group published an article which analysed the findings of evaluation studies on gender equality over the past 20 years, and provided an update to 'baseline review' carried out by OECD-DAC of Gender and Evaluation which was published in 2000, largely showing that the same issues persist today.

This article argued that none of the 21 sample evaluations differentiated between looking at the results of interventions related to mainstreaming and those related to stand-alone projects. Similarly, the research indicated with few exceptions, that evaluations have not investigated money flows, implying that this is partly due to the limitations of the gender marker at the design phase rather than end stage. A major methodological flaw is that results go unreported. Importantly, the article concluded that the sample evaluations made few efforts to investigate results and benefits of the programs.

In terms of common views from the sample, the article mentions that a main conclusion of every report is the gap between policy and implementation, with none concluding that gender mainstreaming in line with ECOSOC definition was taking place. The article also voices concerns about the weakness of documentation, monitoring, and evaluation from the entire sample. Concerns included low quantity of baseline or sex-disaggregated data, as well as low quality of monitoring.

In terms of approach, gender analysis at the project level is discussed as one area of progress, whereas gender at the country strategy level not so effective, partly due to the lack of use of those documents for making programming decisions.

The article goes on to discuss gender performance in different sectors, citing conclusions from the sample of evaluations that the areas of education, health, nutrition, water supply and sanitation, population, agriculture, and rural development, were areas where gender performance was comparatively high, and conversely, infrastructure, transport, energy, program loans, and private sector development, areas of worst performance.

Recommendations from the note include a change in terminology away from gender mainstreaming to a less abstract and more culturally transferrable concept such as equal rights for women, a change in focus to support selected direct action in areas that matter most, within select local contexts, and support all this through results oriented evaluations.

In addition to the above, the UN-SWAP inter-agency coordination team is preparing a comparison of different organisational models for responsibility on the gender agenda, UN Women is preparing a Review on Gender-Responsive evaluation which looks at UN system and at national level systems for gender-responsive evaluation and to assess what were the strengths, gaps and to help identify areas/avenues to further strengthen such systems in the UN and national level, and in addition to this, UN-WOMEN is also leading an initiative to develop a roster of evaluators with GEEW experience.

It is important also to comment on several lessons learned from the World Bank's Experience with its previous strategy which have been picked during the development of the Group's new strategy. These come from the concept note that goes over some of the Bank's experience. The report notes that the World Bank's experience of the past two decades suggested five lessons particularly relevant for gender mainstreaming: i) the importance of building the evidence base showing that closing principal gaps between males and females and enhancing women's voice and agency is central to poverty reduction and shared prosperity; ii) the need for a country-based approach; iii) the need to move to a results-based approach; iv) the need to have more and better country sex disaggregated data and sex-disaggregated baseline data; v) the value of metrics and monitoring and vi) the importance of being more selective and focus in the approach.

## Annex 3: External references

Year	Authors	Title
2000	Mark A. Pollack and Emilie Hafner-Burton	Mainstreaming gender in the European Union
2002	The World Bank	Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work: A Strategy for Action
2003	Sylvia Walby University of Leeds	Gender mainstreaming: Productive tensions in theory and practice
2005	Mieke Verloo	Displacement and Empowerment: Reflections on the Concept and Practice of the Council of Europe Approach to Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Equality Mainstreaming gender equality In Europe. A critical frame analysis Approach
2009	The World Bank	Implementing the Bank's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy: FY08 Annual Monitoring Report
2010	Caroline Moser and Annalise Moser	Gender mainstreaming since Beijing: A review of success and limitations in international institutions
2012	The World Bank	World Development Report: Gender Equality And Development
2012	Evaluation Cooperation group	Gender Equality and Development Evaluation Units: Lessons from Evaluations of Development Support of Selected Multilateral and Bilateral Agencies
2012	African Development Bank Group	Mainstreaming Gender Equality: A Road to Results or a Road to Nowhere?
2012	Mayra Buvinić, Rebecca Furst-Nichols and Emily Courey Pryor	A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment
2012	IFC	Gender Impact of Public Private Partnerships Literature Review Synthesis Report
2013	IDB	Implementation Guidelines for the Operational Policy on Gender Equality in Development
2014	Ria Brouwers	Beyond Repetitive Evaluations of Gender Mainstreaming
2014	UN Women Independent Evaluation Office	AN EMPOWERED FUTURE Corporate evaluation of UN Women's contribution to women's economic empowerment
2015	UN Women Independent Evaluation Office	Review of Corporate Gender Equality Evaluations in the United Nations System
2015	The World Bank	World Bank Group Gender Strategy (FY16-21) Promoting Gender Equality to Reduce Poverty and Boost Shared Prosperity
2015	SIDA: Dana Peebles, Jonas Lövkrona, Nadine Jubb	Evaluation of Policy Dialogue as an Instrument in Swedish Development Cooperation - the case of Gender Equality
2015	European Commission	Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries Final Report
2015	UN Women Independent Evaluation Office	Review of policies and practices to promote gender-responsive evaluation systems