

DG ECHO GENDER POLICY and GENDER-AGE MARKER – Frequently Asked Questions

Policy

1. What is the basis for focusing on gender integration?

In European Union (EU) humanitarian aid, the concept of gender integration is based on the **humanitarian principles (humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence)**, the **‘do no harm’ concept** and other EU values, such as **non-discrimination**. The concept of gender integration also reflects that EU humanitarian aid is guided by a **people-centered approach**, which means that the interests of beneficiaries are at the center of operations and humanitarian assistance is tailored to their differentiated needs. **Gender equality** thus is a foundational principle of EU humanitarian aid, as laid out in the Commission Staff Working Document "Gender in humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance" SWD (2013)290.

Strengthening gender integration in EU humanitarian aid is also a commitment made in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. The Consensus highlights the need to integrate gender considerations, to promote the active participation of women in humanitarian aid and to incorporate protection strategies against sexual and gender-based violence.

2. How is the gender policy implemented?

The design and implementation of humanitarian actions funded from the EU humanitarian budget are required to take gender issues into consideration to ensure that assistance is effectively adapted to the differentiated needs of beneficiaries. This means that every intervention in any sector, context or location and in any type of emergency or crisis **must be gender-sensitive**. The Gender-Age Marker is an important tool to help implement the gender policy for humanitarian assistance.

The Gender-Age Marker

3. What is the purpose of the Gender Marker?

The Gender-Age Marker aims at improving the quality of humanitarian aid actions. It fosters assistance that is more sensitive to the differentiated needs and capacities of women, girls, boys and men by creating a forum for the European Commission’s humanitarian staff and partners to constructively discuss gender and age issues in humanitarian projects. By doing so, it also helps to ensure coherence with the gender policy for humanitarian assistance.

4. Why does DG ECHO apply the marker if it is not related to funding decisions?

DG ECHO realizes that systematically strengthening the integration of gender and age concerns is an organizational change process for partners that can take time. To support a **joint learning approach**, DG ECHO does therefore at the beginning not link its funding decisions to the gender-age mark. Thus, important actions that are weak on gender can be funded and the process can be used to strengthen this aspect during the implementation of the project.

DG ECHO can therefore use the marker results more to **monitor its own performance in integrating gender and age** (is the share of funded actions with a high gender-age marker score increasing? Is the integration of gender and age improving over the period of implementation of projects?) than use it as a strict conditionality for funding.

5. Does DG ECHO have to meet specific targets by 2015 or 2016?

Since actions funded by DG ECHO have not been systematically assessed for their gender and age sensitivity in the past, no baseline currently exists for DG ECHO's performance in this respect. Therefore, **no specific targets** have been established for the coming years.

6. Are the criteria linked to each other?

The criteria are closely related to each other. A good gender and age analysis, for example, provides the basis for adapting assistance and for identifying and mitigating risks. For the purposes of the assessment, however, they are treated as separate. This means that the **criteria are marked individually** and all of them have the same weight.

7. How to limit bias when determining the gender-age mark?

Partners first provide a self-assessment that is complemented by an assessment done by DG ECHO staff. This should limit bias. In addition, partners and DG ECHO staff should respect the following principles when determining the gender-age mark for a humanitarian action:

- Assess whether each criterion is met to a sufficient degree.
- Assess whether all relevant groups are addressed.
- Assess results, not efforts.

8. What to include as Criteria 1 “brief gender and age analysis”?

A gender and age analysis is the necessary basis for making humanitarian assistance more sensitive to gender and age. It helps humanitarian organizations to deconstruct ‘the affected population’ and better understand what specific needs and capacities women, men, boys, girls, young children and older persons affected by an emergency have and what specific threats they face. This understanding is a precondition for providing assistance that is well targeted to the specific needs of the different groups. A gender and age analysis should – even if brief – provide answers to the key guiding questions provided in the Toolkit.

9. How partners may prevent/mitigate the potential negative effects?

In some cases, the assistance itself may also have unintended negative effects on the population. Humanitarian organizations should therefore carefully analyse risks and potential negative effects and develop prevention and mitigation measures. Communities affected by crises and emergencies are exposed to a broad range of risks and negative effects. Without an

adequate analysis, including a gender and age analysis, humanitarian assistance may fail to reduce or mitigate these effects. The risks may be created by the action itself, or by the context.

10. What if we have a perfect gender-age mark but other groups are discriminated in context?

This is a gender-age marker and it marks gender and age not diversity. Partners do have to explain diversity in the SF but we are marking gender and age only.

11. How should we handle proposals that are very well designed, but lack gender and age components?

The gender and age sensitivity of the proposal is marked, not the quality of the design. If we consider that the proposal does not fulfill all or most of the criteria, the proposal should receive a '0'. DG ECHO staff should then engage in a conversation with the partner on how to improve the gender and age sensitivity of the action.

12. How can we make the difference between “yes” and “not sufficiently”?

Partners and DG ECHO staff need to assess whether the four criteria are met to a sufficient degree in proposals, reports and project implementation. For that, actions do not have to include all possible details regarding gender and age. Rather, they need to consider all relevant aspects relating to the four criteria and the key elements specified for each. The key elements under each criterion (as highlighted in the Gender-Age Marker Assessment Card) help to identify the most important aspects to consider within the four criteria. Applying the marker requires making a judgment, drawing on information related to the action and utilizing knowledge about the local context and the sector of operation. If a criterion is respected to a sufficient degree, it should be marked as 'yes'. If an important aspect relating to the criterion was not considered, the criterion should be marked 'not sufficiently'.

13. The partner organization did all it could but circumstances made tackling all relevant gender and age issues difficult. How should this be reflected?

The gender-age mark should reflect how well an action manages to integrate gender and age. This means that an action should receive a low gender-age mark even if the partner organization did all it could but circumstances made tackling all relevant gender and age issues difficult. A low gender-age mark in a difficult context does therefore not necessarily mean that a partner performs badly – it only means that the action did not comply with certain criteria. In order to reinforce this understanding, partners should mention challenges to integrating gender or age in the Gender-Age Marker section of the Single Form.

14. Who is responsible for validating the appraisal?

The final responsibility lies with **DG ECHO desk officers**. The process starts with the partner proposes the initial mark. DG ECHO field staff verify that assessment and, if necessary, engage in dialogue with the partner. In line with their usual responsibilities, responsible desk officers validate the appraisal. The mark determined by the designated desk officer shows

automatically in the APPEL system, so that the partner is informed about DG ECHO's final assessment.

15. Can actions have different marks at different stages of the project cycle?

Yes. The marker is applied throughout the action management cycle, at the proposal; monitoring and final report/liquidation stages. The mark can change in either direction at each stage as project implementation changes or DG ECHO field staff receives more information about the project. What counts in the end is the final mark at evaluation stage.

16. How to apply the marker?

All types of humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO are marked. However, partners and DG ECHO staff mark actions funded under DG ECHO urgent actions and actions funded under emergency decisions for gender and age once the final report is submitted. For those few humanitarian actions that do not only deal directly with affected populations – such as logistics or emergency telecommunications – the marker is considered as 'not applicable (N/A)'. DG ECHO's Gender-Age Marker is a collaborative tool used by both partner organizations and DG ECHO staff.

17. Where is access to humanitarian assistance considered?

DG ECHO suggests assessing whether or not different gender and age groups enjoy equitable access according to their need under the criterion of "Adapted Assistance".

18. Where to include the information on gender and age in the Single Form (SF)?

Partners can include information relating to the integration of gender and age in their actions in different sections of the Single Form. The partner provides information relating to the four criteria (gender and age analysis and SADD, adapted assistance, prevent or mitigate negative effects, adequate participation) in the draft proposal or proposal in the designated sections of the Single Form, ensuring a coherent integration of gender and age concerns throughout the entire form.