



Local Government Gender Assessment & Action Planning *Implementation Guide*



NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTE

APPENDIX 4: Illustrative **Research Instruments**

The below research instruments - survey template, focus group template, and interview template - are samples and are illustrative. The templates should be modified to ensure the research tools are designed to evaluate the unique objective(s) of each gender assessment, as well as amended for the local context. This editing could include the addition or removal of some of the sample questions in each template.

ILLUSTRATIVE SURVEY TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION (for all surveys)

This survey is supported by _____. As the formal governing structure closest to citizens, local governments have a unique role in improving and ensuring gender equality. This survey is part of a research methodology being conducted through a local government gender assessment and action planning process to explore how women interact with their local government as community members and/or personnel or representatives, as well as how reforms may remove barriers to women's equal role in public life. The results of this survey will be summarized, reported to the public and will help to inform future local government policies, programs, structures, services, employment practices, budgets and/or other areas of concern.

INSTRUCTIONS (for all surveys)

Your answers to these questions are confidential and anonymous. Individual responses will not be disclosed to government officials or other individuals or groups.¹ Your response is completely voluntary, and there will be no penalty for not responding. There are no “wrong” answers on this survey; your answers will help us understand how you think about and interact with your local government and to guide follow-on discussions. We value your opinion on this topic and appreciate your time and input. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

SAMPLE CORE QUESTIONS (for all surveys)

General Information

What is your gender?

Man / Woman / Transgender man / Transgender woman / Genderqueer / Gender non-conforming / Prefer to Self-Describe, below / Prefer Not to Answer
Self-Describe:

What is your age?

0–19 / 20–29 / 30–39 / 40–49 / 50–59 / 60–69 / 70+

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Primary / Secondary / Tertiary / Other

What is your current, primary occupation?

- How long have you been in that position?
- If not in an elected position now, have you ever been elected to local government office?
- If yes, what is/was your elected position and when did you serve?

Sociocultural Information

1. Which phrase best describes your community?

¹ PLEASE NOTE: this should be updated to reflect who is collecting the data and who specifically will have access to it. For example, it should be noted if only the Gender Assessment Team members will have access to it, and how this data will be protected.

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

- a. My community believes a woman should only do her domestic duties in the home and not be in public for any reason
 - b. My community believes a woman may work outside the home with the permission of her husband or family
 - c. My community believes a woman may engage in politics if she has permission from her husband or family
 - d. My community believes a woman may engage in work and politics as long as her domestic duties remain a priority
 - e. My community believes a woman may freely choose to engage in politics regardless of permission or domestic duties
 2. Please select the statements from the list below that you personally agree with:
 - a. A women's role is in the home and with domestic duties
 - b. Gender equality is a women's issue
 - c. Men make better leaders
 - d. Women who participate in local government are not qualified
 - e. Women are too emotional to serve in local government
 - f. Women are capable leaders
 - g. More women should be represented in local government
 - h. Women elected officials are effective in their jobs
 3. Negative attitudes and beliefs discourage women from participating in government, either by running as a candidate, accessing local government services or connecting with their representative.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
 4. Elected leaders and local government staff see value in taking into account how policies, services and structures will affect women.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
 5. Elected leaders and local government staff see value in communicating transparently and accessibly with different groups of women.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
-

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Institutional Information

6. Are there local government policies that address gender inequality for women serving in this local government? Please mark all that you know of:
- ☐ Pay equity
 - ☐ Family leave
 - ☐ Maternity leave
 - ☐ Paternity leave
 - ☐ Parental leave
 - ☐ Sexual harassment
 - ☐ Non-retaliation
 - ☐ Anti-discrimination
 - ☐ Responding to domestic violence
 - ☐ Health and safety
 - ☐ Lactation room access
 - ☐ Childcare benefits
 - ☐ Equal opportunity for employment
 - ☐ Recruitment
 - ☐ Professional development
 - ☐ Other: _____
7. How well are policies implemented?
- ☐ The policies exist, and all are evenly implemented, upheld and updated
 - ☐ The policies exist, but some or all are unevenly implemented, upheld and updated
 - ☐ The policies exist, but some or all are not implemented, upheld and updated
 - ☐ The local government does not have any such policies
 - ☐ I don't know
8. These policies have had a strong, positive impact on gender equality within the local government.
- Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
9. Are there local government structures or practices that address gender inequality for women serving in this local government? Please mark all that you know of:
- ☐ A “women in government” affinity group or similar
 - ☐ An office of non-discrimination
 - ☐ Effective training on sexual harassment
 - ☐ Mechanisms for safe and confidential reporting
 - ☐ Other: _____
10. These structures have had a strong, positive impact on gender equality within the local government.

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

11. Does the local government budget reflect a commitment to gender equality for women serving in this local government? Please mark all that you know of:

- ☐ Pay equity
- ☐ Pay equity audit
- ☐ Paid family leave
- ☐ Paid maternity leave
- ☐ Paid paternity leave
- ☐ Paid parental leave
- ☐ Childcare benefits
- ☐ Space for lactation room and supplies
- ☐ Training on sexual harassment, including budgeting for external consultant
- ☐ Retirement accounts
- ☐ Employment of a gender focal point
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I don't know

12. These budget items have had a strong, positive impact on gender equality within the local government.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

13. Does the local government utilize any of the following policies, practices or actions to advance transparency and openness within the local government? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Created and implemented a local open government action plan, but with no specific commitments that target gender inequality
- ☐ Created and implemented a local open government action plan with commitments focused on advancing gender equality
- ☐ Collaborates openly and effectively with civil society
- ☐ Collaborates openly and effectively with community members
- ☐ Instituted open data policies
- ☐ Instituted access to information policies
- ☐ Instituted public accountability measures
- ☐ Instituted open procurement policies
- ☐ Regularly publishes information in an open, accessible manner (e.g., on a digital platform with access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing)
- ☐ Dedicated funding to openness and transparency practices (e.g., regular maintenance of local government website or hiring of open government focal point)
- ☐ Open budgeting
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ I don't know

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

14. These openness and transparency practices, policies or actions have had a strong, positive impact on gender equality within local government.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
15. Policies or legislation created by the local government are evaluated for impact on women and marginalized communities.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
16. Services provided by the local government are evaluated for impact on women and marginalized communities.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
17. Events held by local government officials or staff are organized in an accessible manner and are organized with women's needs in mind (e.g., time of day selected to enhance women's inclusion and participation in the event).
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
18. Services and programs that serve or affect women are appropriately staffed and resourced.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
19. Does the local government regularly collect gender-disaggregated data?
Yes / No / Somewhat / Unclear

Individual Information

20. I have the resources I need to communicate effectively and connect with those I represent, in particular diverse groups of women and other marginalized communities.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
21. I am listened to and respected by my colleagues.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
22. The workplace environment within the local government is a welcoming, respectful place for diverse groups of women to work.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
23. I face barriers in accessing resources or services I need to do my job effectively.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
24. Local government leaders take my suggestions, ideas, feedback or reports seriously.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
25. I have the resources I need to implement initiatives, policies or practices related to advancing government openness and transparency.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

26. I am utilizing open government initiatives, policies or practices to address gender inequality within the community and/or within the local government.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
-

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Institutional Information

6. The local government has utilized feedback from past assessments with gender-related data to adjust practices, policies or services.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Not Applicable
7. The local government is making progress toward addressing gender inequality and inequity within the institution.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
8. The local government adequately mainstreams gender throughout the institution.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
9. The local government's recruitment practices are effective in hiring and retaining diverse women employees.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
10. The local government has put into practice any policies, structures or practices that marginalize certain groups of women, including women with disabilities, women of all ages, races, ethnicities, religions, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) women and women who are members of other marginalized communities.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
11. If applicable, the local government's training program on harassment is effective in combating men's violence against women within the local government.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Not Applicable
(no training program provided)
12. If applicable, the local government's training program on discrimination is effective in addressing discrimination within the local government.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Not Applicable
(no training program provided)
13. The local government's interactions or rules with media do not discriminate against women elected officials and staff (e.g., do not preference men officials).
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

14. Local government campaign and political party rules do not discriminate against women elected officials.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
15. Local open government policies or action plans are meaningfully co-created with diverse groups of women in local government and women within the community.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
16. Local government evaluates and ensures the inclusion of women and gender-sensitive measures in all stages of policy development.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
17. Strategic plans integrate gender-sensitive measures.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
18. Policies are proactively co-created with community groups, including women's rights civil society organizations.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
19. The local government website, portal or other official channels are designed and regularly evaluated to understand whether diverse groups of women are able to access the mechanism.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Individual Information

20. I have experienced sexual or gender-based harassment or violence from coworkers, including those in elected or staff positions.
Yes / No / Unsure / Prefer Not to Answer
21. I have experienced sexual or gender-based harassment or violence from community members.
Yes / No / Unsure / Prefer Not to Answer
22. I am respected by men colleagues.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
23. I receive support (informal or formal) from local government officials and staff to implement initiatives related to advancing gender equality.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
24. I believe the local government is not doing enough to prioritize gender mainstreaming in the institution and reducing gender inequality in the community.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

25. I believe diverse groups of women are well-represented in the local government, including within various departments, committees and offices, as well as within elected positions.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

26. I believe the government could do more to evaluate how government openness and transparency address gender inequality.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS/THE PUBLIC

Institutional Information

6. There are local government policies that address gender inequality in the community.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

7. There are local government structures or practices that address gender inequality in the community.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

8. There are local government programs or services that address gender inequality in the community.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

9. The local government effectively communicates to diverse groups of women community members about policies and programs that address gender inequality.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

10. The local government openly and transparently shares information with diverse groups of women community members about policies and programs.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

11. Events held by local government officials or staff are organized in an accessible manner and are organized with women's needs in mind (e.g., time of day selected to enhance women's inclusion and participation in the event).

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

12. The local government budget reflects a commitment to policies and programs that address gender inequality.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Unclear

13. The local government budget reflects a commitment to inclusive public engagement.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

14. The local government practices transparency and openness with regard to its policies, structures, practices and programs.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
15. Open government actions taken by the local government have increased gender equality.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Individual Information

16. Do you believe women should serve in local government as elected officials?
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
17. Have you ever contacted/spoken with/engaged with local government officials?
Yes / No / I don't know
18. Do you believe women should serve in local government as staff?
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
19. Have you ever contacted/spoken with/engaged with local government staff?
Yes / No / I don't know
20. Do you believe women in the community should have access to local government services?
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
21. Have you ever accessed local government services?
Yes / No / I don't know
22. Did/do you face any barriers in accessing services?
Yes / No / Somewhat / I don't know
23. Do you believe women in the community should access information from the local government?
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
24. Have you ever accessed information from the local government?
Yes / No / I don't know
25. Did/do you face any barriers in accessing information?
Yes / No / Somewhat / I don't know
26. Do you believe women in the community should contact/speak with/engage with elected officials and staff from the local government?
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
27. Do you feel like you have the ability and opportunity to contact/speak with/engage with elected officials and staff from the local government?

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

Yes / No / Somewhat / I don't know

28. Have you ever contacted/spoken with/engaged with elected officials and staff from the local government?

Yes / No / I don't know

29. Do you feel like local government staff and officials take community members' suggestions, ideas, feedback or reports seriously?

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR DIVERSE GROUPS OF WOMEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Institutional Information

6. The local government publishes measures or actions it is taking to address how gender inequality and inequity are experienced within the community.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

7. Local government leaders and elected members are representative of the community.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

8. Policies and services provided by the local government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have had a positive impact on women's lives.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

9. Policies that advance openness and transparency within government have had a positive impact on women's lives.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Unclear / Not Applicable

10. Policies that advance openness and transparency within government have reduced corruptive behavior from local politicians.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree / Unclear / Not Applicable

11. Women community members have equal access to events the local government organizes.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

12. Women community members have equal access to services or programs provided or funded by the local government.

Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

13. Women community members have equal access to communications from the local government.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
14. Policies, services and programs that the local government organizes and/or funds have been effective in reducing gender inequality within the community.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
15. The local government actively collaborates with local women's rights organizations and/or diverse civil society organizations.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

Individual Information

16. I believe my representative(s) are committed to addressing my priorities and concerns.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
17. I believe my representative(s) are committed to addressing the priorities and concerns of diverse groups of women.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
18. I do not face any issues in getting in touch with my representative(s).
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
19. I believe the local government, officials and/or staff utilize inclusive and respectful language in their communications.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
20. I trust my representative(s) and their staff.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
21. I believe more diverse groups of women should be elected to office.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
22. I have been discriminated against by the local government and/or elected officials and staff.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree
23. I have experienced sexual or gender-based harassment, including violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, hate speech, exploitation, unwanted sexual contact, insults and requests for financial compensation from elected officials or staff of the local government council, agencies or departments.
Yes / No / Unsure / Prefer Not to Answer
24. I believe the local government is doing enough to address men's violence against women in the community.
Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly Disagree

CONCLUSION (for all surveys)

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey.

ILLUSTRATIVE FOCUS GROUP TEMPLATE

FOR THE PLANNER (for all focus groups)

This tool is intended to be completed within a group setting. Included below is a template list of questions for the facilitator to consider, though the questions asked should be developed based on the questions and results of the distributed surveys. The Gender Assessment Team can modify the questions below and/or include additional questions. As a starting point, using the following questions, the facilitator should probe for detailed information and solicit specific examples to provide as complete an answer as possible. The facilitator has a responsibility to adequately cover all prepared questions within the time allotted.

The questions below include both closed- and open-ended questions. Many questions also include specific guidance for the facilitator on the information that is necessary to gather for the assessment; in some cases, a list of options for the facilitator to mark or refer to is included. In general, the questions in **bold** are for the facilitator to ask the participants, and the text in *italics* is guidance for the facilitator on the types of information to collect.

Throughout the interview, the facilitator's role is to guide the discussion toward these subjects to get the relevant information. The facilitator has a responsibility to encourage the participants to answer the questions and explain their answers, as much as they feel comfortable. Participants should never be compelled to answer questions if they feel uncomfortable. If participants are comfortable, some helpful ways to get more complete responses include:

- “Can you talk about that more?”
- “Help me understand what you mean.”
- “Can you give an example?”

It is good focus group practice to paraphrase and summarize long, complex or ambiguous comments. This demonstrates active listening, and ensures that the participant's intended answer has been clearly understood. The facilitator must remain neutral throughout the focus group, refraining from nodding/raising eyebrows, agreeing/disagreeing or praising/disparaging any comment made by the participant.

PREPARATION (for all focus groups)

Before selecting a space for the focus group, it should be reviewed for accessibility to ensure all participants will have access and feel comfortable in the room. Other accommodations should be made, such as securing interpretation, to ensure participants are able to effectively engage in the discussion. The room should have a door for privacy, which is closed during the discussion. It may be helpful to arrange the chairs in a circle or around a table, so that participants can see and talk to each other easily.

When participants arrive, ask them to fill out a participant information sheet, sign a consent form and take a table card. The table cards should only include numbers to identify participants, so that the notetaker can refer to participants' comments in the notes by their number rather than by name.

INFORMATION (for all focus groups)

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

Prior to beginning the focus group, please fill in the below information.

- Date and Time of Focus Group:
- Location:
- Name of Facilitator:
- Participant information:
- Other Notes/Comments:

FACILITATOR WELCOME AND INSTRUCTIONS (for all focus groups)

Please give the following welcome and introduction to the participants. This is important to ensure each is aware of the purpose and other important information about the focus group. If you have an assistant facilitator taking notes, please indicate their name and the role they will be playing as indicated in the first paragraph below.

“Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. We recognize that you are busy, and we thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. My name is ____ (your name) ____ and I will be guiding our discussion today. This focus group is supported by ____.

As the formal governing structure closest to community members, local governments have a unique role in improving and ensuring gender equality. This focus group is part of a research methodology being conducted through a local government gender assessment and action planning process to explore how women interact with their local government and how reforms may remove barriers to women’s equal role in public life. The results of this focus group will be summarized, reported to the public and will help to inform future local government policies, programs, structures, employment practices, budgets and/or other areas of concern.

Before we begin, I’d like to discuss with you some of the ideas we are exploring in this focus group:

Gender is the socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements and obligations of women and men in societies, as well as a broad spectrum of identities that do not conform to this binary. The definition and expectations of what it means to be a woman/girl or man/boy, and sanctions for not adhering to those expectations, vary across cultures and over time, and often intersect with other factors such as ethnicity, class, age and sexual orientation.

Gender norms are the social rules and expectations that govern the attributes and behaviors that are valued and considered acceptable for men and women within a given culture or social group. Norms are learned and reinforced from birth to adulthood through observation, instruction, positive and negative sanctioning, education, the media, religion, the law and other social institutions. At times, norms can be so pervasive that individuals mistakenly assume that they are “natural” and thus cannot be changed, even though they are ‘continuously negotiated, resisted and redefined in everyday interactions.’

In our study, we are trying to better understand how gender and gender norms impact women serving in the local government, the policies and programs of the local government, public

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

engagement with women community members and/or organizations that represent women and the local government budget.

We would like you to be as open, honest and accurate in your comments as you can. Some of the questions in this discussion may be personal and sensitive. However, you are in no way obligated to speak if you do not feel comfortable or prefer not to answer certain questions. Your participation is voluntary, and you can leave the focus group at any time without negative repercussions. Any information you share today will be kept confidential and anonymous. No statements will be attributed to an individual, or even a specific neighborhood or place where the focus group was conducted. Your data will be protected and only those serving on the Gender Assessment Team will have access to data, though no responses will be attributable to any one person. There are no right or wrong answers; all we encourage are open and honest responses. Are you willing to participate in this focus group?

There are a few ground rules for this discussion.

1. We want you to do the talking. We would like everyone to participate. When you do have something to say, please do so. There are many of you in the group, and it is important that we hear the views of each of you.
2. There are no right or wrong answers. Every person's experiences and opinions are important. Speak up whether you agree or disagree. We want to hear a wide range of opinions.
3. Only one person speaks at a time. You may want to interrupt when someone is talking, but please wait until they have finished.
4. You do not have to speak in any particular order.
5. You do not have to agree with the views of other people in the group.
6. What is said in this room should not be discussed outside of the focus group. We want everyone to feel comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up.

Do you have any questions?

OK, let's begin."

SAMPLE CORE QUESTIONS (for all focus groups)

Warm-up question:

What do you like most about living here?

Sociocultural Information

1. **What attitudes/beliefs about women's participation in local government exist for both elected and unelected officials?**
Guide the participants to share their thoughts on this topic broadly.
2. **Are there any harmful stereotypes and/or norms that prohibit women community members from engaging with the local government formally and/or informally?**

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

Guide the participants to share their thoughts on this topic broadly.

Institutional Information

- 3. How does the local government communicate about its policies and services to the community?**
 - 4. Do you feel that the local government is equally good at communicating its policies, programs, services and other information to all members of the community? For example, women, young women, gender-diverse individuals, women with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, ethnic and religious minority women, and linguistic minorities?**
 - 5. How does the local government solicit feedback on how to improve its policies, programs and services?**
 - 6. Does the local government have any specific mechanisms to consult with women community members and encourage women's participation?**
 - a. If so, are these mechanisms effective?**
 - 7. Is the local government effectively delivering services for women? If so, how? If not, why not/what are the barriers?**
-

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

- 1. Do you think diverse groups of women are sufficiently represented in all areas of the local government (e.g., different committees, events, departments, caucuses, etc.)? Why/why not?**
- 2. Do you think that women face barriers to their effective and active participation in local government?**

If yes, guide attendees to describe what barriers they believe women face.
- 3. Does the local government have any internal policies or structures that support women's effective and active participation?**

If yes, guide attendees to describe what policies or structures they have. Participants may indicate certain policies or whether they do not know. A list of potential policies is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.

 - *Pay equity*
 - *Family leave*
 - *Sexual harassment.*
 - *A "women in government" affinity group*
 - *An office of non-discrimination*

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

4. Does the local government budget reflect a commitment to gender equality? If yes, how so? If no, why not?
Participants may indicate certain budget items or whether they do not know.
 5. Are there open government champions or leaders with the local government?
 - a. If so, how has their support for an open and transparent government affected implementing open policies, services, action plans, communications, etc.?
 6. In what ways have open government policies, services, communications, action plans, etc., advanced gender equality?
 7. How would you characterize the culture within the local government? Is it welcoming to diverse groups of women? If not, how do the negative stereotypes or norms affect your ability to do your job?
 8. Are you able to have a work-life balance?
 - a. Are there any policies/services/programs — or lack thereof — that affect your ability to maintain a work-life balance?
-

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Institutional Information

1. How effective do you believe the local government is at designing and enacting gender-sensitive policies and services?
 - a. What makes it effective or ineffective?
2. How can gender-sensitive budgeting be improved?
3. In what ways can the local government, including those in elected positions, improve community outreach and communications, in particular with diverse groups of women?
4. How well does the local government implement events that are inclusive and accessible to all members of the community (e.g., town hall meetings)?

Individual Information

5. As members of the local government, have you received any feedback from women community members on how programs, policies or services have addressed their needs or concerns?
6. What is the process you take to design and evaluate gender-transformative policies, events or services?

7. **What is the process you take to address diverse groups of women community members' concerns and priorities? For example, if you are notified someone is having trouble accessing a local government service, what steps do you take to actively address the issue?**
 8. **Does your political party provide support to women elected officials once in office? Staff of women elected officials?**
 9. **How has COVID-19 impacted how you operate, develop policies, communicate with the community and address areas of need for women community members?**
-

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Institutional Information

1. **Do you think diverse groups of women are sufficiently represented in local government? Why or why not?**
2. **Do you think that women face any barriers to their effective and active participation in local government?**
If yes, guide FG attendees to describe what barriers they believe women face.
3. **Do you believe the local government is effectively communicating with community members about policies and programs that address gender inequality?**
Participants may indicate certain communications or whether they do not know. A list of potential communication tools is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.
 - *Newspaper*
 - *Radio*
 - *Television*
 - *Social media, including Twitter, Facebook*
 - *In-person events such as town hall meetings*
 - *Online events*
4. **What is the local government communicating about?**
Participants may indicate certain topics or whether they do not know. A list of potential topics is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.
 - *Local government policies*
 - *Local government programs*
 - *Information/data collected*
 - *Elected official activities*
 - *Upcoming in-person or online events*

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

5. How does the local government budget reflect a commitment to gender equality?

Participants may indicate certain topics or whether they do not know. A list of potential topics is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.

- *Funds programs that impact women community members*
- *Funds services for women community members*
- *Funds staff specifically to address the needs of women community members*

6. How does the local government budget reflect a commitment to public engagement?

Participants may indicate certain topics or whether they do not know. A list of potential topics is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.

- *Funds newspaper/television/radio advertisements about local government activities*
- *Funds online communications about local government activities*
- *Funds events to engage community members*

7. Does the local government utilize any of the following policies, practices or actions to advance transparency and openness within the local government?

- *Created and implemented a local open government action plan, but with no specific commitments that target gender inequality*
- *Created and implemented a local open government action plan with commitments focused on advancing gender equality*
- *Collaborates openly and effectively with civil society*
- *Collaborates openly and effectively with community members*
- *Instituted open data policies*
- *Instituted access to information policies*
- *Instituted public accountability measures*
- *Instituted open procurement policies*
- *Regularly publishes information in an open, accessible manner (e.g., on a digital platform with access for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing)*
- *Dedicated funding to openness and transparency practices (e.g., regular maintenance of local government website or hiring of open government focal point)*
- *Open budgeting*

8. Do you feel like actions taken by the local government have increased gender equality? If so, what has changed?

Individual Information

9. How often do you access local government services? What services have been most beneficial to you, and which have been the least beneficial?

10. What are the barriers to accessing services?

A list of potential answers is included below for your reference and note-taking purposes.

- *Don't know what is available*
- *Office location*
- *Office hours*

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

- *Unhelpful staff*
- *Too complicated*
- *Only available online*
- *Not in my language*
- *Office is inaccessible*

11. How often do you engage with your local government elected officials or staff? What are the barriers to your engagement?
 12. What do you wish your elected official did differently to communicate with you?
 13. Do you engage with the local government or officials as an individual or as a representative of an organization?
 14. Have you faced any issues or negative experiences when accessing events held by the local governments and/or elected officials?
-

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Institutional Information

1. How have actions, if any, taken by the local government increased gender equality for all women community members? Have some groups of women benefited more than others?
2. Do local government staff and officials take women community members' suggestions, ideas, feedback or reports seriously? Does this differ for different groups of women?
3. What could the local government do differently to increase openness and transparency to better support women community members?
4. Is the local government and its representatives using effective communication channels that reach women? Is inclusive language used?
5. To the best of your knowledge, are you aware of how the local government collaborates (or does not) with diverse groups of stakeholders to make decisions related to policy, program or service development?

Individual Information

6. Have you been impacted personally by any of the local government policies that address gender inequality? If so, what was your experience?

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

7. **Have you been impacted personally by any of the local government services and programs? Have any of these specifically targeted resources to women? If so, what was your experience?**
8. **As a sensitive and personal subject, you are not required to answer this question (just as you are not required to answer any question), and please only do so if you are comfortable responding. Have you ever experienced sexual or gender-based harassment or violence from local government staff or officials?**
9. **Have any officials committed corruptive behavior or tactics when you attempted to access local government services, programs, events, etc.?**
10. **What services, programs, events or policies not provided now would be helpful in addressing your concerns, needs or priorities?**
11. **Do you believe that men and women government officials and staff are equally likely to engage with women community members to address their concerns, needs or priorities?**

CLOSING QUESTION (for all focus groups)

This question brings the conversation to a close without abruptly ending the discussion.

Depending on the response, there may or may not be relevant information here for the analysis.

Do you have any other thoughts on this topic that weren't covered here today? Is there anything else you would like to add?

FACILITATOR'S CONCLUSION (for all focus groups)

Wrap up the conversation with the following.

“Thank you for participating. This has been a very successful discussion. The information you provided will be valuable for assessment. We hope you have found the conversation interesting.

If there is anything you are unhappy with or wish to provide feedback about, you may reach out to me through _____. I would like to remind you that any comments included in this report will be anonymous, and you have also agreed to keep this conversation confidential.”

###

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVIEW TEMPLATE

FOR THE PLANNER (for all interviews)

This tool is intended to be completed within an interview setting. Included below is a template list of questions for the facilitator to consider, though the final set of questions asked should be developed based on the questions and results of the distributed surveys and focus groups. The Gender Assessment Team can tailor the questions below and/or include additional questions. As a starting point, using the following questions, the interviewer should probe for detailed information and solicit specific examples to provide as complete an answer as possible. The facilitator has a responsibility to adequately cover all prepared questions within the time allotted.

Throughout the interview, the interviewer's role is to guide the discussion toward these subjects to get the relevant information. The interviewer has a responsibility to encourage the participants to answer the questions and explain their answers, as much as they feel comfortable. Participants should never be compelled to answer questions if they feel uncomfortable. If participants are comfortable, some helpful ways to get more complete responses include:

- "Can you talk about that more?"
- "Help me understand what you mean."
- "Can you give an example?"

It is good interview practice to paraphrase and summarize long, complex or ambiguous comments. This demonstrates active listening and ensures that the participant's intended answer has been clearly understood. The interviewer must remain neutral throughout the interview, refraining from nodding/raising eyebrows, agreeing/disagreeing or praising/disparaging any comment made by the participant.

INFORMATION (for all interviews)

Prior to beginning the interview, please fill in the below information.

- Date and Time of Interview:
- Location:
- Name of Interviewer:
- Name of Interviewee: (Also, title and other relevant information)
- Other Notes/Comments:

INTERVIEWER'S WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (for all interviews)

Please give the following welcome and introduction to the interviewee. This is important to ensure each interviewee is aware of the purpose and other important information about the interview.

"Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I recognize that you are busy and thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. This interview is supported by _____."

As the formal governing structure closest to community members, local governments have a unique role in improving and ensuring gender equality. This interview is part of a research methodology being conducted through a local government gender assessment and action planning process to explore how women interact with their local government and how reforms

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

may remove barriers to women's equal role in public life. The results of this interview will be summarized, reported to the public and will help to inform future local government policies, programs, structures, employment practices, budgets and/or other areas of concern.

Before we begin, I'd like to discuss with you some of the ideas we are exploring in this interview:

Gender is the socially defined set of roles, rights, responsibilities, entitlements and obligations of women and men in societies, as well as a broad spectrum of identities that do not conform to this binary. The definition and expectations of what it means to be a woman/girl or man/boy, and sanctions for not adhering to those expectations, vary across cultures and over time, and often intersect with other factors such as ethnicity, class, age and sexual orientation.

Gender norms are the social rules and expectations that govern the attributes and behaviors that are valued and considered acceptable for men and women within a given culture or social group. Norms are learned and reinforced from birth to adulthood through observation, instruction, positive and negative sanctioning, education, the media, religion, the law and other social institutions. At times, norms can be so pervasive that individuals mistakenly assume that they are "natural" and thus cannot be changed, even though they are 'continuously negotiated, resisted and redefined in everyday interactions.'

In our study, we are trying to better understand how gender and gender norms impact women serving in the local government, the policies, services and programs of the local government, public engagement with women community members and/or organizations that represent women and the local government budget.

We would like you to be as open, honest and accurate in your comments as you can. Some of the questions in this discussion may be personal and sensitive. However, you are in no way obligated to speak if you do not feel comfortable or prefer not to answer certain questions. Your participation is voluntary, and you can leave the interview at any time without negative repercussions. Any information you share today will be kept confidential and anonymous. No statements will be attributed to an individual, or even a specific neighborhood or place where the interview was conducted. Your data will be protected and only those serving on the Gender Assessment Team will have access to data, though no responses will be attributable to any one person. There are no right or wrong answers; all we encourage are open and honest responses. Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Do you have any questions?

OK, let's begin."

SAMPLE CORE QUESTIONS (for all interviews)

Warm-up question:

What do you like most about living here?

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

Institutional Information

1. To the best of your understanding, does the local government regularly evaluate its policies, services, events or structures for how it is affecting diverse groups of women?
 2. Is local government information accessible to diverse groups of women? If so, how? If not, what are the barriers to accessibility?
 3. In what ways do you see the local government instituting policies, communications, practices, services and events in an open and transparent manner?
-

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Institutional Information

1. Are there avenues put in place to ensure women's access to leadership positions (either elected or unelected)?
2. How are men, women and gender-diverse individuals selected to participate in committees, councils or other internal structures or groups?
3. Are the rules of the local government gender-sensitive? Please elaborate.
4. How are diverse groups of women staff members recruited, hired and represented within the staffing structure of the local government or other internal structures?
4. Is the local government upholding commitments, laws or treaties signed or enacted by the national government? If so, how? If not, why not?

Individual Information

5. As a sensitive and personal subject, you are not required to answer this question (just as you are not required to answer any question), and please only do so if you are comfortable responding. Have you experienced any form of sexual or gender-based harassment or assault while working for the local government?
6. Do you feel the local government, or its leaders, takes seriously and does enough to appropriately address reports of men's violence against women — both within the governing institution and within the community?
7. Have you ever received information from constituents or community members that they have experienced sextortion, requests for bribes or harassment from local government employees, representatives or service providers?

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

8. Do you feel you have the resources, funding, staff support and/or training needed to effectively serve different groups of women community members and help to meet their needs? If not, what do you see as the barrier to obtaining those resources?
-

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Institutional Information

1. Where do you see the local government is failing to meet the needs of diverse groups of women?
 2. How well did the local government adjust and respond to COVID-19's disproportionate impact on women?
 3. Does the local government utilize any funding from the national government to address gender inequality? If so, in what ways?
-

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Institutional Information

1. How do you think local government elected officials and staff would evaluate the policies, services, events or structures for different groups of women community members?
2. How would you evaluate the local government policies, services, events or structures for different groups of women community members? If there is a gap, why?
3. How do you think local government elected officials and staff would evaluate the availability/accessibility of government information for different groups of women?
4. How would you evaluate the availability/accessibility of government information for different groups of women? If there is a gap, why?
5. How do you think local government elected officials and staff would evaluate their communications and other outreach efforts to different groups of women community members?
6. How would you evaluate the local government's communications and other outreach efforts to different groups of women community members? If there is a gap, why?

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

7. Do you feel the local government reflects a commitment to gender equality and provides sufficient funding for services, programs and communications? If not, what do you see as the barrier to obtaining those resources?

Individual Information

8. What do you think are the barriers for women serving as elected officials or staff in this local government?
 9. Does this response differ for different groups of women?
 10. What do you think are the barriers for women community members engaging with this local government formally and/or informally?
 11. Does this response differ for different groups of women?
-

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR WOMEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Individual Information

1. As a sensitive and personal subject, you are not required to answer this question (just as you are not required to answer any question), and please only do so if you are comfortable responding. Have you experienced any form of sexual or gender-based harassment or assault while engaging with local government elected officials and/or staff?
2. Is sexual or gender-based harassment or violence prevalent in the local community? How has the local government attempted to address it? Have any measures been effective in preventing sexual or gender-based harassment or violence?
3. What do you wish the local government was doing (more of) to increase gender equality and equity? What are some short, medium, or long term changes you wish to see in your community?
4. Is there a particular local government service, program, or event you engage with more than others offered? What has this experience been like?
5. What could the elected officials do to increase your trust in the institution or in their work to represent you?

INTERVIEWER'S CONCLUSION (for all interviews)

Wrap up the conversation with the following.

“Do you have any other thoughts on this topic that weren’t covered here today? Anything you would like to add?”

Local Government Gender Assessment and Action Planning Implementation Guide

Thank you for participating. This has been a very successful discussion. Your opinions will be valuable for assessment. We hope you have found the conversation interesting.

If there is anything you are unhappy with or wish to provide feedback about, you may reach out to me through _____. I would like to remind you that any comments included in this report will be anonymous, and you have also agreed to keep this conversation confidential.”

####