

Berit Aasen

Gender equality and the multilateral development banks (MDBs)

**How the World Bank, the African Development Bank,
the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Bank
work on women empowerment and gender equality**

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Abstract: The Multilateral Development Banks have worked on gender equality for more than 20 years. This paper gives a presentation of the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank current policies and organisation of their work on women empowerment and gender equality. The paper identifies a number of 'best practices'; and ends with a note on what bilateral donors may do to strengthen this work.

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Foreword

This paper has been commissioned by the Multilateral Bank and Finance Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway. The purpose of the paper is to give an update on the Multilateral Development Bank's (MDBs) work on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE). The second part of the paper raises some issues that Norway and other bilateral donors may address in their collaboration with the MDBs in order to strengthen their gender-related work.

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The author is also grateful to the gender advisors in the four MDBs which have provided additional and up-to-date information and documentation on topics presented in this paper.

The author is solely responsible the views expressed in the paper.

Oslo, December 2009

Marit Haug

Research Director

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
BNPP	Bank-Netherlands Partnership Program Trust Fund (WB)
CAS	Country Assessment Strategies (WB)
CPS	Country Partnership Strategies (ADB)
DPL	Development Policy Lending (WB)
ETC	Extended Term Consultants
GAP	Gender as Smart Economics (WB)
GDF	Gender and Diversity Fund (IDB)
GENFUND	Norwegian/Dutch Fund for Gender Mainstreaming (WB)
GMF	Gender Mainstreaming Trust Fund (IDB)
GDTF	Gender and Diversity Trust Fund (IDB)
IDB	Inter American Development Bank
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MDB	Multilateral Development Banks
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PROLEAD	Programme for the Support to Women's Leadership and Representation (IDB)
RMC	Regional Member Countries
ToR	Terms of Reference
WB	World Bank
WBI	World Bank Institute
WEGE	Women Empowerment and Gender Equality
WRGE	Women's Rights and Gender Equality

Summary

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Gender equality and the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).

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Gender work has definitely been strengthened in the MDBs, but there are still shortcomings. The work is still to a large extent funded by extra budgetary means, the work is not systematic enough, and there are missed opportunities for improved performance.

Gender policy, strategies and action plans

All four MDBs have gender policies and strategies, many of them dating back to the 1990s. They have also recently developed action plans, to cover all areas (ADB), or specific core areas (WB/GAP). There is a tendency to merge gender issues with social inclusion and anti-discrimination in general. The MDBs are in a situation where there is currently much ongoing work to develop long-term strategic frameworks, internal reform work, and positioning the agencies better in an age of harmonisation, country ownership and result-based management. The gender equality work is affected both by the new interest and new initiatives and approaches in this policy area, but also by the general strategic work and reforms taking place in the MDBs.

Staffing and internal organisation of gender work

All MDBs have a unit of gender advisors in a central unit at headquarters, as well as gender advisors in the regional (ADB) or sector departments (AfDB). The gender advisors in regional and sector departments may also cover other topics related to social development and inclusion. Some of the MDBs have country-level gender advisors; usually they are national staff, or mainly hired long-term consultants (ADB), but not always. Internal networks include not only the gender advisors as such, but all staff with an interest in gender issues. Some have annual meetings of advisors (ADB), and annual learning weeks.

Gender trust funds

Three of the MDBs, WB, ADB and IDB have established gender trust funds, while the AfDB is considering this option as part of the start-up of their recently approved

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new gender plan of action. Many bilateral donors are reluctant to invest in gender trust funds, as they see it counteracting the responsibility the MDBs have for using their own funds for such work. Trust funds seem to be most catalytic and able to create change where there are several bilateral donors jointly funding such trust funds, with strong emphasis on results and innovations, and where good dialogues between the MDBs and bilateral donors are established.

Gender analytical work

All the MDBs carry out a substantial amount of gender-related analytical work, much of it financed by trust funds. Tools and guidelines have been developed and revised, including sector-related tools and guidelines, to help gender mainstreaming in non-traditional sectors. Efforts have been made in all MDBs to address gender issues related to priorities in the MDBs strategic plans. Two common problems in each of the Banks are: (i) the difficulties faced by the organisation in making effective use of the knowledge they generate themselves, i.e. the need for better knowledge management; and (ii) the lack of coherence between the gender analytical work and general analytical work, i.e. that gender work is not integrated into the overall country and project level work.

Gender loans, programmes and projects

There are difficulties in tracking investments in gender-sensitive loans and projects. The MDBs do not have comparative statistical systems, therefore there is no way one may compare these figures when they exist. There are also great methodological problems involved in identifying criteria for measuring gender sensitivity when doing gender mainstreaming.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Monitoring and reporting vary greatly between the MDBs and make any comparisons difficult, if not impossible. There have surprisingly been few attempts for such harmonisation between the MDBs. More work on this may be expected in the future, but the bilateral donors need to also pay attention to this and ask for progress.

Gender equality in core Bank areas

There are attempts to address core MDB areas in the gender action plans, and to align these with the MDBs' strategic plans and frameworks. However, the main impression is that there is still a lack of strong priorities in the gender work, and that resources are spread thinly over a broad area. There seems to be a gender fatigue and a substantial confusion about how to address gender in the new aid architecture and in new non-traditional areas. Targeting high profile and politically potent areas with high visibility, and documenting relevance and effectiveness of gender-related work in these areas, could improve visibility of the MDB's gender work, and give a new push in this work. A stronger focus on results and better outcome analysis could assist the MDBs in making more and better priorities to address areas that either are lagging behind, or where stronger results may be achieved with more targeted input.

Some of the challenging areas the MDBs need to address include:

- Moving WEGE work closer to core the MDBs' areas and make stronger priorities
- Documenting results and improving the quality of their gender work
- Ensuring WEGE work throughout the project/programme cycle and in all sectors
- Ensuring robustness and sustainability of WEGE work
- Systems for an reporting on gender sensitive loans – funding WEGE work
- Stronger priorities - target core corporate areas

What can bilateral donors do?

The donors are in a position to jointly raise concerns and hold the MDBs accountable to their own plans and targets for their work on WEGE as follows:

- At the Governing Board level, when new strategies are approved and by holding the MDBs accountable to their own approved WEGE strategies and action plans.
- When the Funds/MDBs are being replenished, and decisions on issues for reporting and mid-term evaluations are discussed.
- In their regular communication with the MDBs they may have WEGE as a frequent topic on their list of themes to be discussed.
- In relation to earmarked funding, they may fund initiatives, for example Gender Trust Funds or Action Plans.
- The bilateral donors may work more systematically together, and do joint assessment work, or alternatively share their assessment reports.
- The donors can join in targeted and time-bound gender trust funds which may assist in institutionalising gender equality in the MDBs, and also to provide another venue for insight into gender equality work in the MDBs.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Many aid agencies presented new or revised gender policies, strategies and plans of action in the wake of the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Gender and Development in 1995. The Beijing Conference message was that one needed a two-level strategy, both to keep a focus on women and to support projects for women's empowerment, especially where there was high gender imbalance; gender mainstreaming was also needed to integrate gender analysis and gender equality concerns in all of the analyses, country policy dialogues and operations. There has been a general trend towards gender mainstreaming as institutional policy in the new gender strategies developed by the donor agencies in the period after 1995, while women's empowerment as a strategic approach were less in focus. Specific grants for building institutional capacity on gender equality issues were discontinued, as it was expected that the agencies already had the capacity and willingness to mainstream gender equality concerns.

These strategies and policies have been evaluated (Norad 2005, 2006). The evaluations reach similar conclusions: gender mainstreaming has not been successful; women's empowerment and gender equality (WEGE) has become less visible in the period after 1995. Mainstreaming led to invisibility, and gender equality being everyone's responsibility ended up by being no one's responsibility. This does not mean that no gender work was done; many committed individual men and women continued the work, but it remained unsystematic, and with missed opportunities. Many evaluations surprisingly also found underreporting of good and important gender work, leading observers to reflect on gender work as still not sufficiently recognised as an important field of work. The evaluations also found that in implementing gender mainstreaming many agencies fall back to add-on women-focussed components, rather than dealing with gender relations and power structures and their impact on programmes and policies.

In a synthesis evaluation report assessing a number of evaluation reports and critical gender studies (Norad 2006), this author pointed to new tendencies and challenges in doing gender equality work in donor agencies:

- The importance of linking WEGE to core areas of work for the organisation, and to "high profile" areas to gain visibility and interest.

- The importance of placing WEGE squarely in the main messages of the organisations' communication with its community/environment, and in their main messages and visions.
- Movement from supply-driven gender advisory services to demand-driven work, where users are encouraged to identify needs and areas where gender equality work improves performance and results in better aid. Move from policing to inspiration and support.
- Emphasis on women as engines for development, and inclusion of more of an instrumental approach to including women. Ensuring women their rights and access to assets and resources promotes growth and development.
- Involvement of men, and especially young men, in the work on gender equality. Gender equality is about both men and women.

1.2 Norway and multilateral work on gender equality

While bilateral aid agencies and the UN agencies have produced several gender evaluations, there have been fewer evaluations of the gender equality work in the multilateral development banks (MDBs). Of those evaluations that have been performed have either focussed on how the MDBs work in countries, while not looking in-depth at how the MDBs themselves have institutionalised their gender work, or the evaluations have not been made public.

When this work was started in the spring of 2008 all the MDBs were going through reforms and strategic thinking on their role(s) and where they could make the most difference. While new objectives were taken on board, such as poverty reduction in the late 1980s, the organisations have not to the same extent changed their internal working and functions and organisation to meet these new objectives (ADB 2007). Since then the financial crises has hit the world, and the MDBs urgently had to meet this new challenge, with increased budgets and rapid response, as well as long-term strategies.

This has led to a situation where there is currently much ongoing work of the MDBs to develop long-term strategic frameworks, internal reform work, and positioning the agencies better in an age of harmonisation, country ownership and result-based management, as well as rapid response to the financial crises. The gender equality work is affected both by the new interest and new initiatives and approaches in this policy area, but also by the general strategic work and reforms taking place in the MDBs.

In the spring of 2008 the Bank Section in the Division of Global Affairs of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to commission a paper on the current situation and challenges of women's rights and gender equality work (WEGE) in the MDBs, with special attention to how the bilateral donors could work more effectively and pro-actively on WEGE in the Banks.

Norway's work on women empowerment and gender equality (WEGE) has for decades had a strong focus on supporting such work in the multilateral development

banks (MDBs). Such work has included active advocacy through board-related work, policy signals through allocation letters (for core and earmarked funding), seconding experts through gender trust fund financing, and holding the organisations accountable through reporting and through regular contact between desk officers and organisations.

Gender work has definitely been strengthened in the MDBs, but there are still shortcomings. The work is still to a large extent funded by extra budgetary means, the work is not systematic enough, and there are missed opportunities for improved performance.

1.3 Scope of the work

The ToR states that “The main aim with this assignment is to make an assessment of the current status of the gender equality work in the different MDBs, in order to produce a “policy paper” making a good case for why gender equality must be addressed more holistically as a core development issue to reduce poverty”.

The ToR states that the assignment should be divided into two parts: “first the factual description and analysis of the MDBs current work with and approach to gender equality, and second the brief “policy paper” on the importance of going beyond the usual approaches”.

In order to organise the information on each MDB, the various dimensions of their gender work, the following categories have been chosen:

- Main documents: policies, strategies and action plans
- Organisation of gender work, placing of gender expertise, gender unit(s) and advisors
- Trust funds and analytical work
- Reporting and documentation on policy and action plan implementation and results

The paper has also attempted to capture to what extent the gender and development work of the MDBs mainly focus on establishing tools and procedures, or if during the last few years it has more actively made priorities to target core and high profile areas identified in the strategic frameworks of the MDBs.

This paper is based mainly on existing documentation available on the MDBs’ own web pages and other second-hand, existing documentation. Some additional documentation has been provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). As there have been few recent evaluations or assessments of the Gender and Development (GAD) work of the MDBs, it became evident that much of the documentation was out of date, and that more recent detailed information was missing. In addition answers from the gender specialists in the MDBs on a set of questions have been used and have provided valuable additional and up-to-date information of actual work taking place. There has however been a lack of recent assessments of how well the work is functioning and of the gender equality outcome of this work. A small paper such as this cannot do an independent assessment of the

gender and development work in the MDBs, but depends on such work already being done. The second section of this paper therefore is not an assessment of the current women empowerment and gender equality work of the MDBs, but raises discussions on challenges and gender issues to be addressed in the future work of Norway and other bilateral donors in their collaboration with the MDBs.

1.4 The concept – Women empowerment and gender equality (WEGE)

This report uses the term *women empowerment and gender equality*. This is a term closely related to the MDBs and development cooperation's own concepts. It should be noted that the Norwegian *Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Development Cooperation (GAP) 2007-2009* (MFA 2007) has moved to the concept of women's rights rather than women's empowerment. This is a conscious choice, as the Action Plan is developed within a rights-based approach with strong emphasis on supporting women's rights and those institutions and actions that build strong foundations for women to exercise these rights.

Still, in this paper the author has chosen to use the term women's empowerment. The MDBs gender policies and action plans are not based on a rights-based approach to the same extent, and still use the concept of women's empowerment. That is the background for retaining the concept of women's empowerment. To this author the concept of women's empowerment is closely related to women's rights. Women's empowerment is about breaking those barriers that hinders them in using their rights and achieving their hopes and wishes. Ultimately working on women's empowerment and gender equality is about contributing to social reform and changing societies (Aasen, forthcoming).

2 Women empowerment and gender equality (WEGE) in multilateral development banks (MDBs)

2.1 World Bank (WB)

Gender policy, strategies and action plans

The World Bank (WB) Gender Policy *Enhancing Women's Participation in Economic Development: A World Bank Policy Paper* was approved in 1994. A Gender Mainstreaming Strategy was approved in 2001: *Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work. A Strategy for Action*. The focus of the policy documents has clearly been on gender mainstreaming in projects and programmes. In 2007 a gender action plan, *Gender as smart economics (GAP) (2007-2011)*, was launched.

The Bank has also approved an *OP (Operational Policy) 4.20 "Gender and Development"*, which was last revised in August 2004, for assessment of gender and development in project preparations. Criticism has been voiced from outside that gender strategies as well as the OP 4.20 was limited to investment projects and programmes, and did not include development policy lending (DPL), while the reforms were seen by outsiders to produce far-reaching effects on women and gender equality. OP 4.20 was approved at the same time as the development policy lending (DPL) policy was formulated. The World Bank is, however, addressing gender through OP 8.60 on DPL and its use of Poverty and Social Impact Analysis (PSIA). A recent study of PSIA has shown that a high number of the studies include the gender dimension, while there is less information as to what extent these analysis are taken into consideration when adapting the reforms to be more gender sensitive.

Staffing and internal organisation of gender work

The corporate gender unit is the Gender and Development Group which is placed within PREM (Poverty Reduction and Economic Management) in the WB. Gender coordinators are placed in the Regional Departments, and there are also gender advisors in country offices.

Most staff members who work on gender equality (GE) have this as one of many work areas. An assessment carried out in 2006 estimated that the WB had a total of 143 staff working full- or part-time with GE work, including Extended Term

Consultants (ETC)¹. These provided a total of 64 full-time staff years. The new Gender Action Plan, *Gender Equality as Smart Economies (GAP)*, has allowed for more funding of gender advisors. The World Bank web page <http://www.worldbank.org/gender> does provide more information on this.

There is no compulsory training in the WB, but there is considerable available gender-related training. Gender issues are part of the annual PREM Week, and the regular brown-bag lunches offer presentation of gender-related topics. In addition there is the World Bank Institute which has several gender-related training programmes.

Gender trust funds

A Norwegian/Dutch Fund for gender mainstreaming in the World Bank (GENFUND) (World Bank 2007) was established in 2001 by funding from Norway. The Netherlands joined in 2003, and their support ended in 2006. The GENFUND supported gender mainstreaming in two periods, 2001-2005 and 2006-2010. The Netherlands funded an assessment of GENFUND in 2005 (World Bank 2005). Since 2007 Norway has been the sole donor to GENFUND.

In 2006 GENFUND worked closely with donors to develop a new Gender Action Plan: *Gender Equality as Smart Economies (GAP)*. The new GAP is a four-year action plan (2007-2010) with the objective of addressing core World Bank issues in including women in economic development, ensuring their access to assets and resources to achieve their integration into economic and productive activities. The GAP argues that gender equality makes sense for economic development, and uses an instrumental approach to gender mainstreaming in economic activities.

As a part of GAP, the Adolescent Girls Initiative (AGI) was launched in October 2008 to assist young women between 18 and 24, many of them in conflict areas, to gain an education and employment. This group of women has been identified as especially vulnerable, and in need of a pro-active empowerment strategy. AGI is an initiative where private foundations, such as Nike Foundation, join traditional bi-lateral donors in providing programme funding. Norway has given extra funding beyond their GAP contribution for the AGI initiative in Southern Sudan.

Since 2007 GENFUND has made a new strategy to redirect funding towards non-GAP areas, such as studies of demography and migration. GENFUND currently focuses on (i) supporting gender mainstreaming (GM); (ii) documenting benefit(s) of GM through impact evaluations and result-focussed programming; and (iii) developing and disseminating good practice examples. The GAP is expected to close down at its end in 2010, and the future of gender mainstreaming trust funds is not decided beyond this date.

The Dutch stopped funding the GENFUND from 2006. Currently they have most of their trust fund activities grouped together in the Bank-Netherlands Partnership Program Trust Fund (BNPP), which recently reinstated a gender equality window, but which also has as a goal to mainstream GE in all the various thematic areas, such

¹ Extended Term Consultants (ECTs) are hired consultants who work on time-limited projects, often funded out of trust funds.

as governance, trade, private sector development, health, HIV/AIDS, education and environment.

Gender analytical work

Given the size of the World Bank and resources available, the Bank has always done considerable analytical work on gender. Most of the work is either related to operations, or to PREM (poverty/empowering women), to Social Protection and Social Development or Human Development (Health and Education). According to the WB the new GAP has encouraged new staff members who have not earlier worked with GE to apply for funds and carry out GE-related analytical work, and increased analytic GE work in sectors which usually had a low score on GE-related work, such as infrastructure, energy, finance and economic development.

The research department, DEC, however, has relatively few staff, and has done little analytical gender work. There have been discussions on a World Development Report on gender equality, but such a decision has not yet been taken.

Gender loans, programmes and projects

The World Bank has a database on gender sensitive loans on their web page. However, there is no classification of the gender sensitivity or gender issues involved, just a link to projects.

The gender unit reviews coverage of gender in country diagnostic work which again feeds into the Country Assessment Strategies (CAS). According to the WB all CASs in Africa and East Asia and the Pacific include gender analysis. There has also been an increase in gender analysis in Poverty Assessments (PAs). The WB publishes an Annual Monitoring Report on Gender Mainstreaming; the latest is the FY 08 report, which was published in June 2009. The coming report | 2010 is expected to show that all PAs include gender as a topic, with special emphasis on gender issues in the labour market, and on women as economic participants.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The latest evaluation *Evaluating a Decade of World Bank Gender Policy: 1990-99* was done in 2005, and was a synthesis report of two earlier evaluations from 2001 and 2002, and does not provide any information beyond 1999. Little stocktaking has taken place since then, and there is a lack of up-to-date information on institutionalisation of gender issues in the Bank today. There is however a short and informative annual report on gender mainstreaming.² It gives numbers on the progress of mainstreaming gender in operations and analytical work, and a few reflections on challenges related to aspects of institutionalising gender work in the Bank.

A new IEG evaluation on World Bank's work on mainstreaming gender equality is under way. An approach paper³ is available on the web and the report is expected to

² The Gender Mainstreaming Annual Reports for 2002, 2003, 2004-5, 2007 may be found at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:20210077~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:336868,00.html>

³ The approach paper can be found at: <http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/servlet/OEDSearchServletV656?SearchType=byField&PerPage=20&DbURL=oed/oeddoelib.nsf&Form=OEDSearch&Series=Approachpercent20Paper>

be finalised late 2009. According to the Approach Paper the focus of the evaluation is on the relevance of current strategies and policies and on country-level performance. Little attention seems to be given to Bank-wide institutionalisation of their WEGE work and to linking internal organisation of GE work to the outcome and results.

The framework for the IDA-15 agreed that there would be a report on gender at the next IDA deputy meeting in November 2009. The report will be in the format of a review of the results of the GAP to date, as mainstreaming gender in economic sector work will be seen as a relevant indicator. The deputies also asked for the WB to track progress in GE outcome and strengthen work on sex-disaggregated statistics at the country level. The WB president has as part of his GE commitments asked for a review of the IDA-funded activities with the objective of increasing the IDA investment for GE in IDA-16.

According to the WB⁴ there are plans to:

- “Present a Gender Action Plan mid-term review, with an IBRD/IDA disaggregation, at the November 2009 IDA Deputies meeting. This is essentially the GAP -year progress focusing exclusively on IDA countries.
- Present at the November 2009 IDA Deputy meeting, if ready, initial results from the Internal Evaluation Group review of the Bank mainstreaming strategy implementation, including social sectors.
- Produce a White paper on Gender in the latest IDA rounds, with a view to increasing IDA investments for gender equality in IDA 16, and containing lessons from implementation potentially including the first half of the IDA 15 portfolio and, as needed, parts or all of the IDA14 investment portfolio. Delivery expected in mid-2010.”

2.2 African Development Bank (AfDB)

Gender policy, strategies and action plans

The Gender Policy of AfDB was approved in 2001 (AfDB 2001), and its latest Gender Plan of Action was approved in 2004 for the period 2004-2007 (AfDB 2004). This Plan was supposed to be updated in 2007, and Norway provided funds for additional capacity for this in February 2008. A consultant was hired who presented a report to AfDB (AfDB 2008b) and an implementation matrix (AfDB 2008c) for an updated Gender Plan of Action (GPOA). Work to finalise the new GPOA has been slow, but the plan was finalised and approved by the Board in May 2009⁵.

The areas of intervention in the new GPOA have been selected in line with the priorities of the Mid-term Strategy of AfDB:

⁴ Information received from WB June 2009.

⁵ The updated and approved GPOA has still (December 2009) not been posted on AfDB's home page.

- Results-based focus on GE
- Transport and improved livelihood and participation of women and men in economic development
- Energy sector, clean energy and GE
- Water sector and GE
- Extractive industries and gender empowerment sensitisation
- Women farmers and food security and farm input
- Women and micro-finance and small- and medium-scaled industry
- Health services, and maternal health
- Higher education and GE

The list corresponds to the priorities of the Mid-term Strategy of AfDB, which is good. The updated GPOA (p.5) notes that the AfDB will focus on three key interventions: (i) promote women's economic empowerment; (ii) institutional capacity and knowledge building; (iii) support to regional member countries (RMCs) governance and policy reforms that strengthen gender mainstreaming. The priorities are still very broad, and might need more strategic prioritisation, not to overstretch the capacity of the staff.

Staffing and internal organisation of gender work

Current thinking in the Bank is that gender advisors should be placed as close as possible to operations, ensuring easy access to WEGE for teams working on programmes and projects.

The latest organisational reform resulted in a new Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Unit (OSUS), that works on cross-cutting issues. This unit is placed under the Vice President for Sector Operations. A small group of five gender advisors is placed in this unit. The Sustainable Development Unit has had staffing problems. The main gender advisor in the new unit, OSUS, had to act as the head of OSUS over a longer period of time. There have been a number of vacant gender staff positions, which was part of the slow staffing that is taking place, with more than 400 vacant positions. But currently (October 2009) all four gender equality staff positions in OSUS have been filled, and recruitment for the position as chief gender expert position is in progress. The delay in hiring the staff might explain the slow development of the updated Gender Plan of Action (GPOA). In addition to this central unit there are also five gender advisors in the sector departments, such as rural water and sanitation (2), Africa water facility (1), infrastructure (1), agriculture (1). In addition to these two new staff are under recruitment and will be placed in the Social Development Department.

Gender trust funds, analytical work

Until July 2009 there was no gender trust fund in the AfDB, while several donors provide extra funding for gender work, but in a non-coordinated and ad hoc manner.

In 2009 Spain supported a new Trust Fund on Micro-Financing with 15.000 Euros on women's access to credit, with Women's World Banking as partner.

An *African Women in Business Initiative (AWBI)* was established in 2004, and Norway provided ad hoc funding from 2006-2008 for a programme coordinator in the AfDB for this initiative. From 2008-2010, Norway provides 2.4 million USD to the initiative alongside a number of other donors (AfDB undated). This initiative provides funding for analytical work and for some research.

Generally the AfDB has not been strong on research, but the current management and ongoing reform in the AfDB has an objective to improve the AfDB as a knowledge bank, linking finances and knowledge. This includes both carrying out relevant research, involving African research institutions, and making use of research. Little analytical work on gender has been done to date, and a research report on gender budgeting has been completed. New reports on (i) socioeconomic assessment of the Maputo development Corridor, (ii) gender socialization in the home, and (iii) gender responsive budgets, are under planning and funded by the AfDB's administrative budget.

The main analytical work done to date includes the gender profiles⁶, many of them funded by donors over and above the general budget, but increasingly the costs are covered by the AfDB budget. For some unknown reason, many of these are not on the web page, where they should have been provided under an easily identified heading of gender profiles. The Statistics Department of the Bank also publishes *Gender, Poverty and Environmental Indicators on African Countries*. The 2008 edition, which is the 9th volume, has "Energy, Gender and Development" as a special topic.

AfDB's GE work does not seem to target specific, highly focussed areas in the reorganisation of the AfDB work, but emphasises the continued work on gender mainstreaming. This is also evident in the new GPOA which is very general in its approach, and which emphasises gender mainstreaming as institution building and tool development, without identifying important action areas to target. Although it has identified areas in the AfDB's Mid-term Strategy as areas for activities, it makes no priorities for action and will easily face hardships in managing scarce resources for such a broad thematic focus.

However, there have recently been initiatives to address gender-based violence in fragile states, something that matches the renewed focus of the AfDB on fragile states. There is also an initiative to increase investment in national capacity-building on sex-disaggregated statistics, which seems to be an area where all the MDBs could improve their collaboration with each other and with the UN system.

In contrast to the other MDBs, AfDB has not mobilised donors for a multi-donor gender trust fund. The new GPOA states that the activities under the new GPOA will mainly be carried out with funding from the general budget, but that extra resource mobilisation will be considered as part of the implementation of the plan. There are arguments against the use of trust funds, as work is then sidelined, and not

⁶ The gender profiles include countries such as: Sierra Leone, Niger, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, Namibia, Uganda, Swaziland, Namibia, Zambia, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Angola, Rwanda, and Lesotho, and new ones are planned for Liberia and Gambia.

taken to be core MDB activities. On the other hand it seems that additional funding has been important, and also necessary to reach the necessary volume and quality to influence policies and programmes.

Gender loans, programmes and projects

The gender unit has previously developed a gender mainstreaming (GM) checklist for project assessments by task managers. Checklists have been prepared for infrastructure, higher education and health. Currently new checklists have been developed for rural water and sanitation, good governance and agriculture, and by the end of 2009, training was also conducted on checklists on (i) gender and climate change, (ii) gender mainstreaming in fragile states; and in the future training is planned on gender mainstreaming in country strategy papers. OSUS plan to continue this training.

No training is mandatory in the AfDB. However, by enlisting the help from the directors, most staff will participate in training in the use of the checklists. Lists of training and participants are presented to vice presidents and the president of AfDB for their information.

Training sessions were also organised on topics, such as (i) gender and agriculture; gender and infrastructure; (iii) gender and poverty reduction; and (iv) gender and MDGs.

There is no database on their homepage on gender-sensitive loans.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Historically the AfDB has been weak in reporting on GE. This has according to AfDB itself recently improved with the development of gender mainstreaming key performance indicators (KPI), which monitor project and programme design. These indicators are reported quarterly from sector departments to the AfDB performance management group, which then prepares a bank-wide assessment to the president.

The AfDB has also recently introduced a country outcome results monitoring framework, which is monitored by the Results and Quality Assurance Department, but this will only be used for mid-term and end reports on the ADF-11. The new GPOA also has a number of performance indicators, which will form the basis for reporting on progress of the GPOA. The new unit, OPUS, will then set up a reporting framework for the sector department to monitor progress during project and programme implementation.

CIDA funded a mid-term evaluation of the former GPOA in 2007. This evaluation is still being reviewed by the Board of AfDB and has not been available for review. No recent external assessment is available on the AfDB GE work, but it seems that the new results-based framework, as well as the new GPOA, might provide an improved institutional framework for monitoring and evaluation of their GE work and for more lessons learned.

2.3 Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Gender policy, strategies and action plans

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a *Policy on Gender and Development* in 1998, which replaced the Women in Development Policy from 1985 (ADB 2006b).

The first ADB Gender and Development Plan of Action 2000-2003 was approved in 2000, and a second GPOA (2004-2007) was approved in 2004. In 2006 the ADB published their Implementation Review of the Policy on Gender and Development, which they started to work on in 2004. The third ADB *Gender and Development Plan of Action (2008-2010)* was approved in December 2007. This GPOA states clearly that the “principal action proposed ... is to ensure that GE issues are addressed in all ADB projects” (ADB 2007:6).

In 2008 ADB adopted their new long-term strategic framework, *Strategy 2020*, and its *Results Framework*. According to information received from the ADB June 2009, they are currently engaged in developing outcome indicators on gender mainstreaming that will be included in the *Results Framework*. The current GPOA is supposed to be strategically aligned with Strategy 2020, and covers the three areas: “(i) country partnership strategies and lending operations; (ii) policy dialogue and capacity support to developing member countries; and (iii) operational effectiveness”.

This *Results Framework* identifies that the proportion with an annual approved project with “significant gender mainstreaming” shall increase, and the target is 40 percent by 2012, up from the baseline of 35 percent in 2004-2006. However, there has been a gradual decrease in this proportion since 2004, with only 27 percent in 2008. The reasons given are a change in the programme portfolio from human development to infrastructure and financial sector programmes, and changing financial modalities (change towards development policy lending). But it is also due to weaknesses in strategic work on GE mainstreaming into sectors such as infrastructure. This clearly poses challenges to ADB to make the necessary institutional efforts to reach the target set for 2012. ADB is mandated to report on the GE targets through its annual Development Effectiveness Review for discussions in the Board. ADB is considering changing from input oriented result-indicator (quality at entry) to outcome and Target indicators, which will improve result based management of GE directed work.

Staffing and internal organisation of gender work

The central unit for the GE work is Gender Unit in the Regional and Sustainable Development Department (RSDD) with the responsibility for central policy, advisory and management coordination. The Gender Unit is placed in the Poverty, Social Development and Gender Division of RSDD, reporting to the Vice-President for Knowledge management and Sustainable development.

In 2007 the ADB headquarters had four gender specialists, two in the Gender Unit/RSDD, and one each in the South Asia and in South-East Asia Regional Departments. In May 2009 this was reduced to two gender advisors in RSDD, and one in each of the regional departments of Central and Western Asia, South Asia and South-East Asia (there are five regional departments in total). However, of these five positions, three are under recruitment.

There is an organised “Gender and Development Community of Practice (GAD CoP)” of 200 ADB staff who are interested in gender issues, who receive regular updates on relevant GE events and new resources. This GAD CoP is headed by a nine-member Gender and Social Development Committee which according to information received from ADB “provides input to GAD annual reports, makes recommendations on personnel issues, and sponsors knowledge activities such as monthly seminars”.

In 2007 ADB had 12 positions for gender specialists posted in 11 regional missions, of whom two were national staff and ten were long-term national consultants. ADB expects to convert at least three of the consultant positions into full-time national staff positions by early 2010. Many of these positions were initially funded through the Gender Trust Fund, which had a separate window for funding such positions. There is an Annual Consultation Workshop for the Gender Specialists in the headquarters and in the regional missions; the latest meeting was in October 2008.

As in the other MDBs no GAD training is mandatory in ADB. According to information received in June 2009 from ADB, the GAD unit plans to have staff briefings in the second and third quarters in 2009 for all sector divisions on GAD, including ADB policy and commitment to GAD, GPOA 2008-2010, and GM in projects and how to develop project gender action plans. A gender mainstreaming module is being planned in the main introductory training programme for late 2009. RSDD also provided staff briefing to nearly 100 staff members in the regional departments between July-August 2009 on ADB’s institutional commitment on GE and gender mainstreaming tools.

For the two last years ADB has organised an annual Social Development Learning Week, with a focus on country office staff. There are also plans to include GAD in the project implementation training planned for the fourth quarter 2009. ADB also conduct regular Lateral Learning on Gender for government agencies every two years.

Gender trust funds

A GAD Cooperation Fund (GDCAF) was established in 2003. Norway has supported this from the beginning with an initial fund of 15 million NOK, with an additional 25 million NOK in 2006. Other donors have included Denmark, Canada, and Ireland. Total funds for the GDCAF in 2009 was 12 million USD. The GDCAF currently have six support areas⁷:

- Support for residential mission-based national gender consultants;
- Innovative mechanisms to enhance gender mainstreaming in ADB-financed loans;
- Gender and development capacity development of ADB project executing agencies and national machineries;
- Support to publishing Country Gender Assessments;

⁷ Information received from ADB October 2009.

- Gender equality results assessments; and
- Partnerships

The GDCF can fund gender specialist that assist in making project gender action plans (GAP), but the activities identified by the GAPs are funded from the loans or ADF grants. Some project GAPs are also made with no funding from the GDCF. Projects-specific GAPs are a mainstreaming tool that ADB uses to make gender specific input, implementation and monitoring aspects explicit. Project GAPs are required for all lending and ADF grants classified with GE themes or gender mainstreaming⁸.

According to the ADB efforts are made to make strategic use of the GDCF as a catalytic to influence and leverage larger ADB resources. GDCF may be used for topping up ongoing analytical and project preparation work to improve gender mainstreaming. Many capacity building activities are funded out of ADB core funding, and the External Forum on Gender has always been funded by ADB's own sources. An overall institution wide report on ADB's gender equality work that also identifies the different sources of funding has not been found.

However, both the GDCF reports and other ADB reports are formulated so that one may get the impression that gender work is the work of gender specialists who make separate project-specific gender action plans, rather than the project planning team's general responsibility of taking gender equality into consideration from the start. These reports may also indicate that continued emphasis on gender mainstreaming is dependent on extra budgetary gender trust funds which are used at the activity level, rather than used for institutionalising gender responsibilities in the organisation. This might be a problem of presentation, and of reporting on funding for example from GDCF back to donors, but it should nevertheless be addressed, in more accurate languages to capture better the catalytic character of the GDCF, and level of mainstreaming into the organisation's own staff work and procedures.

Gender analytical work

ADB conducts country gender assessments and 20 such assessment reports are posted on their website. Recent assessment reports cover Sri Lanka, Pakistan and the Philippines. Examples of other analytical gender-sensitive work are reports on female remittance in Vietnam, legal empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups, and two reports on Bangladesh, on gender and livestock and gender and integrated water management.

The latest GPOA recognises the value of the country gender assessments, but admits that there is a lack of connection between the gender assessments and the country partnership strategies (ADB 2007:3).

The GPOA points to gender analytical work having high quality, but that it is "not effectively distributed and used by staff in regional departments and in country offices" (ADB 2007:4).

⁸ For more information, see <http://www.adb.org/gender/gender-action-plans.asp>

ADB formulates Country Partnership Strategies. In the template for these CPSs there is a section on gender assessment, but with no reference to the obligation of annexing a gender assessment to the CPS. The latest Gender Policy from 1998 however mandates ADB to conduct gender assessments as preparations for CPSs. There is therefore a lack of coherence between the various templates and management instructions given in GAD-related documents and in the general management tools, something that is not uncommon in development agencies.

Since circa 2005 the ADB has included gender in the overall social development and social inclusion thematic area of work in the Bank. A consequence of this change is that the project Concept Papers has a section on “social aspects”, but there is no longer any reference to a specific focus on GAD, although the gender unit in RSDD encourages inclusion of GAD. However, according to ADB information received from ADB May 2009 it is mandatory to do an Initial Poverty and Social Analysis (IPSA) for investment and loan projects, and this has a specific section on GAD, which asks questions as to if and how the project impacts negatively or positively on women and girls.

During implementation loan project reports are presented, which have a mandatory annex of Summary Poverty Reduction and Social Strategies (SPRSS). There is a section on GAD which shall present key gender issues identified during the project preparations, and key actions taken.

However, project completion reports do not contain any section on GAD. This is in line with all the other MDBs, where no organisation provides such information in the completion reports, which seldom are made public.

Templates mentioned here may be found at the ADB web page:

<http://www.adb.org/Documents/Others/Social-Analysis-Toolkit/sat0700.asp>

ADB has been concerned about how the financial crises affect women, and conducted a ten-country gender study of the labour market, to be presented in Hanoi in September 2009.

According to information received from the ADB in June 2009 the gender mainstreaming work also includes developing “innovative mechanisms to mainstream gender in ‘non-traditional’ sectors such as governance/public resources management, finance, energy, and transport”.

A meeting was also held in ADB in November 2008, and co-sponsored by ADB, the World Bank and the Multilateral Development Bank Group on Mainstreaming Gender Equality in Infrastructure Projects: Asia and Pacific Meeting <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2008/Gender-Equality-Infrastructure/default.asp>, as this is a common challenge for all MDBs as the infrastructure portfolio and investment is expected to increase in volume in the years to come. Two meetings are planned for 2009 on the same topic, one for Latin America and one for Africa.

Gender loans, programmes and projects

Gender analysis for project preparations are conducted as part of the overall social analysis from 1998. When ADB developed a new business process in 2001, this was

made into a project proposal document⁹. Gender assessments are included in the social assessment, and not as a separate section. From January 2009 an Initial Poverty and Social Analysis (IPSA), which also includes a separate gender analysis section has become mandatory in programme preparations.

It is therefore not less attention to GE and mainstreaming that cause the quality of gender analysis and design elements in programmes to suffer, but that the declining amount of resources available to preparing technical project work and less time available for loan project preparations.

ADB has since 1998 developed a Gender Mainstreaming Marker and the Gender Team at the ADB review each grant/loan project to ensure that it meets the criteria for the various gender categories¹⁰.

The procedures for gender mainstreaming in loans follow the following procedures:

- First an Initial Poverty and Social Analysis (IPSA) is developed, that identify the extent and nature of gender issues involved, how much resources that is needed to do a gender analysis, and prepare gender related project design preparations.
- Project teams in regional departments initiate this process, and appraisal documents are circulated and RSDD provide comments on gender aspects.
- If a project is classified as a gender equality themes or effective gender mainstreaming¹¹, a gender plan of action is mandatory in the core annex of the project document.

ADB has a database posted on their web page on gender-sensitive loans and projects. According to ADB (ADB 2007) gender mainstreaming is strong in the design face of programmes and projects. This is due to both having resident gender advisors at the country offices, and tools and procedures for making gender action plans at the project and programme levels.

ADB has recognised that it is off-track on meeting its own 2012 gender mainstreaming targets of 40 per cent. This is mainly due to change in portfolio and weaknesses in mainstreaming GE in these more technical areas.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The most important report on GE and gender mainstreaming in ADB is the Development Effectiveness Review (DEfR). The DEfR reports on ADB's performance of the Strategy 2020 commitments and on the percentage of the projects approved with a gender theme and effective gender mainstreaming. Other useful reports are the ADB Annual Report, and the reports to the donor meetings.

Gender is usually given ample space, but with little substantial reflections on achievements and challenges (ADB 2008c). For example, the ADB 2007 Annual

⁹ This is called Report and recommendations to the President (RRP). The template was further developed in 2007 into incorporations of the social dimension in ADB operations.

¹⁰ For more information, see <http://www.adb.org/Gender/gender-categories.asp> RDSS also has a database that consolidates and monitors these categories.

¹¹ The two other categories are 'some gender benefits', and 'no gender elements'.

report has no mention of WEGE in the Policy Chapter and Knowledge and Research chapters, but does mention gender in the chapter on operation, where it in addition to mentioning the goals in the GPOA 2008-2010, states that 11 percent of the project had a strategic gender approach. Generally the reports have been weak in the results reporting of the ADB gender work. This is something ADB shares with the other MDBs. However, with the new DEfR the situation has improved.

There have been annual GAD Plan of Action Reports, and biannual thematic reports¹². There is also an annual report on the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund which is sent to the donors.

In September 2008 ADB started a Rapid Gender Assessment Phase II of the gender results of 12 projects in four countries: Indonesia, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Draft country reports have been prepared and preliminary findings discussed in July 2009.

There has been no independent evaluation of the ADB's GE work done by the Independent Evaluation Department (IED) since 2001. It seems that IED is preparing for a new evaluation, but at the time of writing (October 2009) no information was shared with RSDD on these preparations. There has, however, been some sector- (micro-finance) and country-specific (Cambodia) GE evaluations.

ADB has also established an External Forum on Gender and Development (EFG), as an external monitoring unit, "to promote and facilitate dialogue between ADB and external groups on gender and development issues". There is an annual report from the meeting of the forum. Opinions are divided as to how effective such an external forum is. It is recognised that such a forum may provide valuable comments and ensure some transparency concerning the gender work of ADB; on the other hand there is also doubt about how effective such a Forum may be in holding management accountable to their policies and commitment, as the Forum's recommendations to ADB are not mandatory. The latest meeting was in October 2008, and the 10th External Forum meeting will be held in July 2009 in Manila. The agenda and minutes from the meeting are posted on the ADB web page: <http://www.adb.org/Gender/forum/meetings.asp> .

A useful source for information and viewpoints on the situation of the GAD work of the ADB is the minutes from the annual meeting of the External Forum on Gender and Development. Given that the principle action of the GPOA is that GE is addressed in all projects, it is clearly a worrying sign that the minutes from the October 2008 meeting point to their findings of a declining number of projects with gender mainstreaming. The minutes from the meeting also point to a declining number of gender specialists in the regional departments, declining gender mainstreaming in new country partnerships, and declining sectors with GAD themes.

¹² From 2009 there will only be annual GAD Plan of Action reports.

2.4 Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Gender policy, strategies and action plans

The IDB has an old *Operating Policy on Women in Development*, from 1987 (IDB 1987), and an *IDB Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan* from 2003 (Davies 2007). The new gender equality policy and action plans are currently under revision and expected to be approved in 2010. The new policy is expected to:

- Adopt and support gender equality and women empowerment Bank objectives.
- Organise its directive around two main categories:
 - Proactively; (i) direct investment in gender equality (GE), and stronger institutional capacity to address priority GE issues; (ii) mainstreaming gender equality as a strategic dimension in IDB's work,
 - Preventive: introduce GE safeguards in the IDB's safeguard system.
- Strengthen mechanisms for implementation and compliance evaluation.
- Ensure consistency between policy and handling of gender equality, diversity, and facility-work balance in the Bank's human resources management.

The Gender and Diversity Unit has an annual work (business) plan, and the 2009 plan contains the following points:

- Strengthen support to mainstreaming gender and diversity in Bank operations and analytical work by increasing the number of lending operations that directly address gender and diversity issues.
- Conclude the formulation of an updated Gender Equality Policy and its corresponding Action Plan, and continue with the dissemination of the Indigenous Peoples Policy (OP-765) and the Strategy for Indigenous Development (GN-2387-5).
- Produce sector analytical work to establish the knowledge foundation for gender and diversity emphasising four key development areas: (i) Policy Formulation and Implementation; (ii) Promotion of Equal Economic Opportunities for Women; (iii) Cross-cutting Proposal on Adolescent Pregnancy; and (iv) Inclusive Development for African Descendants.¹³

Staffing and internal organisation of gender work

IDB created a Women in Development Unit in 1994 in the Sustainable Development Department. The unit changed name in 2005 to Gender Equality in Development Unit in (IDB 2007). A reorganisation took place in 2007 with a new Gender and Diversity Unit (GDU) in the Social Department, covering all "marginal and vulnerable peoples", including Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, and gender equality. In 2009 this unit has 13 staff positions, including two administrative

¹³ Information provided by IDB in an email in July 2009.

positions. There are only four gender advisors, all of them placed in the HQ. The GDU director left in 2009, and a new director is being recruited.

The unit also works on inequality and social exclusion across the different dimensions: gender, indigenous peoples, and Afro-descendent communities.

Gender trust funds

In 1998 IDB launched Programme for the Support to Women's Leadership and Representation (PROLEAD), to invest in women's political empowerment in the Latin-America Region. Norway joined the group of donors at a later stage. A broad network with UN agencies and international NGOs has been established through this programme.

A multi-donor Gender Mainstreaming Trust Fund (GMF) was established in 2005 with contributions from Norway and Canada. In the Operational Guidelines from 2006 it is said that the Fund was to support the new IDB Strategic Framework and Policy on Gender Equality (approval estimated the second semester 2006) and the IDB Gender Mainstreaming Action Plans (IDB 2006). None of these documents are found on the IDB web page. Norway, together with the UK and Canada, also provided support to the Social Inclusion Trust Fund.

In May 2009 IDB established a new multi-donor Gender and Diversity Fund (GDF), with 10 million USD from their own funds, of which 4 million USD was allocated in 2009, for the three areas of gender equality, Afro-descendent communities and indigenous peoples. Donors who currently support trust funds for GE, such as Norway, and for social inclusion are invited to join the new TF. The TF will support project development, institutional strengthening, and knowledge management. However, unless substantial funding is invested in this Fund, the total resources will remain very limited given the broad portfolio.

The IDB has also several years of active programming for combating gender based violence (GBV).

Gender analytical work

IDB gender equality analytical work is broad, and includes analysis related to women as entrepreneurs, women and leadership, gender-based violence, relationships between work life and family life for gender equality. The GDU 2009 plan includes plans for research and analysis on: (i) Policy Formulation and Implementation; (ii) Promotion of Equal Economic Opportunities for Women; (iii) Cross-cutting Proposal on Adolescent Pregnancy; and (iv) Inclusive Development for African Descendents.

An evaluation of the Social Inclusion Trust Fund (IDB 2008) found that most of the analysis was managed from the headquarters in Washington, and was poorly related to the work of the country level office and partner governments and stakeholders. The use of the findings was therefore not high. The evaluation also found that most of the studies were one-off short pieces of analytical work that had little effect. The recommendations were for a larger, longer term comprehensive analysis well integrated into country stakeholder frameworks to increase the use of the findings. A similar evaluation of the gender mainstreaming trust fund has not been done, but it is

likely that many of the findings and recommendations might be similar to the one on Social Inclusion.

Gender loans, programmes and projects

The report on gender equality in IDB 2002-2005 (IDB 2007) found that 26 per cent of all Bank projects mainstreamed gender issues in project design in the 2002-2005 period. The percentages were highest in the social sectors; over 60 percent of lending operations that mainstreamed gender in their designs were in the social sectors. The non-social sectors, on the other hand, continue to challenge gender-mainstreaming efforts, particularly in the areas of modernisation of the state, competitiveness, finance and infrastructure, and even saw a slight decline during these years. The IDB publishes a report biannually, and a new report is expected to be published in 2009/2010, which will provide updated information on gender mainstreaming in lending operations.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

The GDU unit will report to management biannually on gender quality. The latest report covered the gender-mainstreaming action-plan period 2002-2005 and was released in 2007 (IDB 2007).

There are two gender reports to management; the GDU reports only on activities related to the operational gender policy (OP-761), while the Human Resources Department (HRD) reports on staff issues, including HR policies on gender equality.

Gender equality in core Bank areas

As there are no new policy documents, we have to rely on the new Gender and Diversity Trust Fund (GDTF) to identify how the GE work approaches core IDB areas of work.

In the GDTF, the following areas have been singled out for gender equality work:

Priority areas of work	Thematic areas
Project development proposals Country Programming Technical Assistance to Country Programmes Pilot Initiatives	Labour Markets Rural Development Social Protection Transportation
Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Building Proposals Training/Coaching Dialogue	National and Local Women's Entities
Knowledge Management Proposals Studies/Technical Notes/Toolkits/Lessons Learned/Seminar	Decentralisation of the State Household Surveys

Monitoring & Evaluation Systems	Gender Sensitive Indicators
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A further assessment as to how the GDU's work targets core activities of the IDB in their current strategy will have to await the new policy documents and action plan.

2.5 Comparisons between the MDBs

Gender policy, strategies and action plans

All four MDBs have gender policies and strategies, many of them dating back to the 1990s. They have also recently developed action plans, to cover all areas (ADB), or specific core areas (WB/GAP). There is a tendency to merge gender issues with Social Development issues, including social inclusion and anti-discrimination in general. We find this development in ADB and IDB, where IDB has also established not only a division covering all social inclusion areas, but also included gender in a joint social inclusion trust fund.

Staffing and internal organisation of gender work

All MDBs have a unit of gender advisors in a central unit at headquarters, as well as gender advisors in the regional (ADB) or sector departments (AfDB). The gender advisors in regional and sector departments may also cover other topics related to social development and inclusion.

IDB has organised the gender work at headquarters as part of the Social Development and Inclusion Departments; ADB in the Poverty, social and gender division, but within the Regional and Sustainable Development Department; AfDB as part of their cross-cutting division on gender, climate and sustainable development, while the World Bank still has the core group of gender advisors in their Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Division (PREM).

Some of the MDBs have country-level gender advisors; usually they are national staff, or mainly hired long-term consultants (ADB), but not always.

Internal networks include not only the gender advisors as such, but all staff with an interest in gender issues. Some have annual meetings of advisors (ADB), and annual learning weeks (ADB: social development learning week) (WB: PREM learning week).

Gender trust funds

Three of the MDBs, WB, ADB and IDB have established gender trust funds, while the AfDB is considering this option as part of the start-up of their recently approved new gender plan of action. Many bilateral donors are reluctant to invest in gender trust funds, as they see it counteracting the responsibility the MDBs have for using their own funds for such work. Many have also been disillusioned about the lack of results from trust funds. However, there is no doubt that trust funds are useful instruments for furthering gender work in the MDBs and preparing new and innovative work. They seem to be most catalytic and able to create change where there are several bilateral donors jointly funding such trust funds, with strong

emphasis on results and innovations, and where good dialogues between the MDBs and bilateral donors are established.

Gender analytical work

All the MDBs carry out a substantial amount of gender-related analytical work, much of it financed by trust funds. Tools and guidelines have been developed and revised, including sector-related tools and guidelines, to help gender mainstreaming in non-traditional sectors. Efforts have been made in all MDBs to address gender issues related to priorities in the MDBs strategic plans; however, these efforts vary in degree given the human and financial resources and strategic approach of the gender-related work in the Banks.

Two common problems in each of the Banks are: (i) the difficulties faced by the organisation in making effective use of the knowledge they generate themselves, i.e. the need for better knowledge management; and (ii) the lack of coherence between the gender analytical work and general analytical work, i.e. that gender work is not integrated into the overall country and project level work. The MDBs are concerned about these shortcomings and are making initiatives to address these through better knowledge management.

The MDBs have themselves asked for more analytical work to be done in collaboration between the Banks and also with other partners, such as country gender assessments. However, most analytical work is done by the individual Bank, and there is still little collaboration and joint gender-related work.

Gender loans, programmes and projects

There are difficulties in tracking investments in gender-sensitive loans and projects. Only a few of the MDBs have such systems in place, ADB is one of them. The MDBs do not have comparative statistical systems, therefore there is no way one may compare these figures when they exist. There are also great methodological problems involved in identifying criteria for measuring gender sensitivity when doing gender mainstreaming.

The OECD/DAC has developed a statistical tool, the gender marker, as a tool to be able to compare bilateral aid to gender equality. This marker is used to classify the gender equality as an objective of the bilateral aid in the categories: as principal (main objective), significant (part objective) and not an objective. The gender marker measures what budgets are used for; they do not state anything about results. Similar markers have not been developed for the MDBs or for the UN system.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Monitoring and reporting vary greatly between the MDBs and make any comparisons difficult, if not impossible. There have surprisingly been few attempts for such harmonisation between the MDBs, even when they do have a MDB/IMF Working Group on Gender, which identified such work as important in a joint statement of the presidents of the MDBs and IMF in 2005 to their Executive Directors (AfDB, ADB, IDB, EBRD, and WB 2005). The MDBs in their meeting in June 2009 did discuss the need for harmonisation of project and institutional monitoring of benchmarks, so more work on this may be expected in the future, but the bilateral donors need to also pay attention to this and ask for progress.

Gender equality in core Bank areas

There are attempts to address core MDB areas in the gender action plans, and to align these with the MDBs' strategic plans and frameworks. However, the main impression is that there is still a lack of strong priorities in the gender work, and that resources are spread thinly over a broad area. There seems to be a gender fatigue and a substantial confusion about how to address gender in the new aid architecture and in new non-traditional areas. Targeting high profile and politically potent areas with high visibility, and documenting relevance and effectiveness of gender-related work in these areas, could improve visibility of the MDB's gender work, and give a new push in this work. A stronger focus on results and better outcome analysis could assist the MDBs in making more and better priorities to address areas that either are lagging behind, or where stronger results may be achieved with more targeted input.

3 Part II: Policy implications – improved gender equality work in the MDBs

According to the ToR, the policy brief should:

1. Provide examples of challenging areas and best practice
2. Address how the bilateral donors can work with the MDBs to:
 - Increase the number of “gender-responsive” loans
 - Assist member states in promoting gender equality

3.1 Challenging areas

Challenge 1: Moving WEGE work closer to core the MDBs’ areas and make stronger priorities

The challenge for the MDBs is to move their gender work closer to the core areas of the Bank activities and high-profile areas. All the MDBs have put systems in place for their gender equality work, and all of them base their work on the Beijing Platform of Action (BPoA) and its double strategy of both working on women-targeted projects and on gender mainstreaming in their core areas of work. There are weaknesses in the institutionalisation of their gender work, but this is a common phenomenon in all donor agencies. Gender equality has to compete for attention, staffing and resources with new and high profile areas. The MDBs need to make explicit priorities in their gender action plans and their work programme and document progress and results within these priority strategic areas. There is also a need to integrate these goals and priorities in the general overall strategic plans for the MDBs, and ensure coherence between gender strategies and action plans and overall plans.

Challenge 2: Documenting results and improving the quality of their gender work

The main challenge for all the MDBs is the same as for the bilateral donors: to make gender mainstreaming (GM) work and to document the improved result(s) from GM for women in their member states. In addition most MDBs are decentralising their activities to country or regional offices to be closer to their member states in planning, implementation and results-reporting on their loans and activities. In order to improve the quality of their gender work, the MDBs also need to invest more time and effort into analytical work and on documenting results. This is a challenge, as most of the MDBs, as in other donor agencies, are still struggling to document

results and develop results-based planning and indicator systems into which the gender results may be placed.

Challenge 3: Ensuring WEGE work throughout the project/programme cycle and in all sectors

In their evaluations and reports, all the MDBs find that WEGE issues are more present in the design phase than in the implementation and results-reporting phase of projects and programmes. This is in line with the findings in the evaluations of bilateral donors' WEGE work.

The reports also find that in the design phase WEGE issues are taken into consideration in health and education, but to a much less degree in infrastructure and projects related to economics participation. These are not new findings, but the MDBs seem to be slow to change this tendency. One reason might be that the 1990s was a period with development of social development and poverty reduction as important areas for the MDBs, and much effort was put into developing strategies and tools, including gender-related ones, in these areas. When the MDBs again moved to infrastructure in a grand way around 2005, the Banks have been surprisingly slow to move their gender expertise into these sectors. The joint MDBs' workshop on gender mainstreaming in infrastructure projects in Asia and the Pacific (the Asia and Pacific meeting), organised in November 2008, is only the first step towards ensuring gender mainstreaming in these sectors. Similar workshops on the same topic are planned to be organised on the other continents the coming year.

Challenge 4: Ensuring robustness and sustainability of WEGE work

The vulnerability of the gender work remains a challenge. Gender work might improve in periods of strong internal champions and political support internally from top management – and where there is consistent pressure from a number of bilateral donors. However, when pressure from the outside diminishes, and at the same time champions leave the organisations or take up new positions, gender work could easily be sidelined. The lessons seem to tell us that bilateral donors need to be consistent in their pressure, and at the same time relate to the internal champions in supportive ways. However, it also tells us that strong institutionalisation of gender work is difficult to achieve.

Somewhat surprisingly, both the ADB Expert Gender Group Report and World Bank GM Monitoring Report state that there is a decline in gender analytical work, and discuss ways of counteracting such decline. With the recent renewed attention to WEGE in development cooperation since 2005, one might have expected an increase in this work. The documentation of declining attention might serve as a timely reminder of the vulnerability of gender equality work - within a new aid architecture and with aid moving closer to the recipient countries' systems and management. Moving the gender work closer to core business and high profile areas of the MDBs might also increase the attention and robustness of the gender equality work of the MDBs. The MDBs are therefore advised to work harder on identifying high profile areas with the ability to document relevance and results of investing in gender in these areas.

Challenge 5: Gender sensitive loans – funding WEGE work

Funding for gender activities still remains a challenge. The MDBs still mostly depend on extra-budgetary resources for gender specific work. There are both positive and negative aspects of external funding for gender activities in the MDBs. The negative side is that the Banks then do not make WEGE a priority in their work, and set aside enough staff positions, good procedures and routines for gender-responsive lending in their work. WEGE might still be regarded by large part of the core staff as something brought from the outside, from bilateral donors, and pressure groups in these countries, and not seen as reflecting regional member country concerns. The positive side of external funding is that there is then a budget line whereby the organisations plan, implement and report on their WEGE work to the bilateral donors involved, and thereby increase sensitivity to the issues in the organisations.

Challenge 6: Stronger priorities - target core areas

The challenge is therefore to make priorities and address core business areas of the Banks. Most of the documents analysed here treat women and gender as very general topics. There are few if any attempts to link specific gender issues to specific sectoral issues and core areas. Linking gender to sectoral issues has gained more attention the last two to three years, and there are new initiatives in this direction, such as the “Gender as smart economics” Action Plan in the World Bank, which explicitly recognises that gender issues have to be related to specific issues, barriers and opportunities in sectors.

While globally gender issues have been promoted through reproductive health in the health sector and through girls’ access to education in the education sector, similar attempts to systemise strategic interventions and knowledge have been absent or much weaker in sectors dealing with production, employment, infrastructure and economic development. There are attempts to readdress this today in the MDBs, and the MDBs are advised to continue the initial joint work on gender mainstreaming in infrastructures and also to collaborate in other non-traditional areas, as well as to mitigate the impact of the financial crises on women and girls.

3.2 Best practices

Rather than call the examples provided in this chapter “best practice”, I believe it is more useful to call them “good practice”. The reason for this is that even if these represent good practice, they struggle to make sense in complex organisations with competing objectives and drivers.

Example 1: World Bank Group Action Plan: Gender Equality as Smart Economics (GAP)

The World Bank Group Action Plan: Gender Equality as Smart Economics (GAP) is a good practice example of how the bilateral donors and the World Bank have worked together to achieve WEGE work addressing core areas of the Bank. While the WB had worked actively on integrating gender equality in human development, gender equality in infrastructure and economic participation and growth lagged behind. Identifying priority areas for gender close to the core high profile areas of the MDBs is essential. This does not mean that the WB GAP is without its problems,

and that implementation is not burdened with exactly those problems that earlier were barriers to taking gender equality on board on these core issues. Rather one should interpret the problems the WB GAP implementation faces as usual problems when one introduces innovative changes in old organisations, and that implementation problems when properly revealed and discussed can lead to new solutions.

Example 2: ADB - Gender advisors at country-level/project-level gender action plans

ADB has placed 11 of their 15 gender specialists in their country offices, many of them funded through the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund. ADB has also institutionalised the practice of producing project-specific gender action plans, to ensure gender mainstreaming and also as a tool for follow-up and reporting later on progress at the project level. The preparation of project specific gender action plans is the responsibility of the project team leaders, and is supported from various parts and funding in the ADB, not only the GDCF.

Preparing the project-specific gender action plans may to some extent this be a good practice, and it certainly for the time being has positioned gender equality better in project preparations. On the other hand, it tends to enforce the stereotypical perception that gender is the task of gender specialists, rather than being mainstreamed in the project preparation team's regular work plans and performance assessments. ADB is aware of the risks of high reliance of consultants, and the need for institutionalising this work, and therefore plan to convert three consultants position into full time employment positions.

Example 3: ADB - Tracking gender equality's financial resources

The documentation of WEGE financing has been an issue within development cooperation for decades. While OECD/DAC Statistics developed a gender-marker system for bilateral donors in the 1990s, both the UN agencies and the MDBs have been slow to follow, and have not done so in a coherent manner, which makes comparisons across agencies difficult. With the assistance of CIDA ADB has developed a tracking system for their loan portfolio. This system does not track financial resources allocated for gender work, but the number of projects approved with gender mainstreaming and gender action plans. This has made it possible for the ADB to report on gender-sensitive aid, and on progress within this field. Unless one develops decent statistics and proper measuring systems, this is not possible in the other MDBs. There has not been any attempt to develop a joint system for the MDBs, and as a result of this, it will not be possible to compare across the MDBs when separate systems are developed. On the other hand a statistical system with markers may track changes within each bank, which might be more relevant given the differences between the MDBs and their regional member countries.

Example 4: ADB: Gender equality web page – communication of results

Good information and documenting performance are important in sustaining WEGE work. ADB's web page on gender: <http://www.adb.org/Gender/default.asp> has a good layout and useful information on policies, donor support, and activities, as well as analytical work, and performance. Listed on the web page is also a database

with 665 projects and their gendered aspects and components. None of the other MDBs have a similarly detailed disclosure of their gendered work as does the ADB.

The AfDB has recently improved their web page. The gender page at <http://www.afdb.org/en/topics-sectors/sectors/gender/> remains weak; it is not possible to find either the GPOA, or the 2007 evaluation of the GPOA. There are three guidelines available for mainstreaming gender within (i) infrastructure, (ii) education, with special emphasis on higher education, and in (iii) health. The Gender Profiles are not placed on the AfDB web page, and it does not seem that bilateral donors request this to be done, even when they fund this directly.

Example 5: CIDA's gender performance report

CIDA has developed a general tool *Gender Equality Performance Review*, which they use across the board for both partner countries, NGOs and MDBs. When used on the MDBs, it is an analytical tool, where a team from CIDA visits the Banks and conducts a gender performance assessment according to the guide. The performance assessment results in a matrix of findings and discussion points, which are raised with the Bank at the end of their visit. The strength of the tool is that CIDA staff has been mandated to make a proper assessment by their headquarters and director, which ensures that they may demand transparency of the gender work in the Banks. It further gives CIDA a tool and a template to document their findings – and this creates an informed basis for discussions between CIDA and the Banks. This makes for a more detailed and strategic discussion compared to a more general discussion embedded in general objectives of improving WEGE work in the Banks. Being specific in the documentation, the discussion points, and the questions posed make a difference, and help both parties address core issues, and agree on their follow-up.

The weakness of the tool is that it is an internal CIDA tool and that it is not shared with other donors and made into a common platform for informed discussions and dialogue with the MDBs. There should be ample potential for developing the tool into a joint tool, in the spirit of the new aid architecture of harmonisation of aid.

Example 6: The Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) Working Group on Gender

This could potentially be a good practice example, even if it is doubtful that it is so today. The reason for including it is the efforts that are being made in organising joint regional meeting on gender equality mainstreaming in infrastructure projects; the first one was organised in Manila in November 2008. Collaborative arrangements between MDBs seem to be difficult to organise; it is however disappointing that so little interaction takes place on women's empowerment and gender equality work in the MDBs.

3.3 What can bilateral donors do

The ToR asks “What can bilateral donors do to increase the number of ‘gender-responsive’ loans and assist member states in promoting gender equality”?

The perspective here is that the test of the MDBs' WEGE work is performance at the member state level.

The bilateral donors hold important key positions in the MDBs' governing boards, but they do so jointly with the regional member countries. The donors are in a position to jointly raise concerns and hold the MDBs accountable to their own plans and targets for their work on WEGE as follows:

- At the Governing Board level, when new strategies are approved and by holding the MDBs accountable to their own approved WEGE strategies and action plans.
- When the Funds/MDBs are being replenished, and decisions on issues for reporting and mid-term evaluations are discussed.
- In their regular communication with the MDBs they may have WEGE as a frequent topic on their list of themes to be discussed.
- In relation to earmarked funding, they may fund initiatives, for example Gender Trust Funds or Action Plans.

However, all the reports from the MDBs point to the recent changes and decentralisation reforms under way, where decisions are moved from MDBs' headquarters to the country level, and where country offices are more and more responsible for negotiating new loan programmes. If regional member countries have an increasingly higher decision-making power on type of project and of project design, it will be important to work more on how one at the country level may manage a dialogue on gender mainstreaming in selection of projects and in project design. Bank staff members in these positions need to have sufficient WEGE competence and willingness to engage in such discussions.

What more can the donors do? They can work together. This is already done to a large extent by close collaboration with the members of the same constituency groups, the Nordic+ collaboration, etc. However, this collaboration would benefit from being more systematic. Gender performance assessment, similar to the one CIDA carries out, could be done jointly by likeminded donors and shared, to provide a better and informed knowledge base for entering into dialogues with the MDBs on improved WEGE performance.

The donors can join in targeted and time-bound gender trust funds which may assist in institutionalising gender equality in the MDBs, and also to provide another venue for insight into gender equality work in the MDBs. Reporting on trust funds from the MDBs to the bilateral donors is a way to hold the Banks accountable for their WEGE work.

Many bilateral donors are sceptical to trust funds, as these are seen as replacing the MDBs' own responsibility to address trust fund topics, such as gender equality. One should avoid funding a gender trust fund which is not time limited and bound to specific action plans and targets with result frameworks. Mechanisms can also be put in place whereby the MDB takes full responsibility, for example of staff initially funded by a trust fund. This said, trust funds seem to have come to stay.

All MDBs have now developed common and streamlined systems for trust fund management. The World Bank in its latest trust fund management revision has emphasised the need to include a higher overhead for paying bank staff to manage

trust fund projects; this de facto has led to an increase in staff funded out of trust funds, in a situation where there is a zero-growth policy on the number of staff from the president. Trust funds may have important roles to play in giving additional funding and focus on important themes and actions. They are strongest when linked to specific and time-bound action plans, such as the latest World Bank GAP, with clear targets, and close evaluations and assessments during the lifetime of the action plan and trust fund.

The role of bilateral donors has often been to hold MDBs accountable to their own strategies, policies and action plans and commitments. The bilateral donors may also have another role, as partners of cooperation, especially at the country level. Bilateral donors may benefit from more synergy at the country level by coordinating their bilateral and multilateral efforts. OECD/DAC GENDERNET warns against trying to do results reporting on gender work from individual donors. Achievements in gender equality they state arise from joint efforts, and it is important in this work that both bi- and multilateral donors support country capacity and competence for WEGE reporting at the country level, and the development of the sex-segregated statistics that are necessary for such work to be done. Bilateral donors may also provide valuable institutional cooperation from their home country institutions that may support strategic institutions in partner countries, which again may assist in increasing the demand from these countries for gender mainstreaming.

However, bilateral donors may also benefit from the analytical work they fund through gender trust funds in the MDBs. Bilateral donors may seek to increase the synergy in analytical work in areas such as energy, infrastructure, economic participation and gender, areas where the MDBs are expected to be active the coming years.

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Gender Equality and the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)

The multilateral development banks have worked on gender issues for a number of years, focussing on targeted gender actions and mainstreaming of gender concerns. The paradigms have changed over time, and several gender strategies and action plans co-exist today. The main aim with this assignment is to make an assessment of current status of gender equality work in the different MDBs, in order to produce an analytical paper with recommendations on how gender equality can be addressed more holistically as a core development issue to reduce poverty.

The goal of the paper is to make a case for how gender equality can be transformed into a major issue for the MDBs; in which areas of gender equality the banks should be particular active; how the banks can work better to mainstream the gender equality dimension into their core work areas; and finally to identify some good examples to illustrate the above points.

In order to prepare this brief paper it will be necessary to get a better understanding of how the different MDBs work on gender equality. The assignment may therefore be divided into two parts - first the factual description and analysis of the MDBs current work with and approach to gender equality and second the brief "policy paper" on the opportunities and options of going beyond the usual approaches.

The paper will consist of two parts:

1. The description and analysis.

On the basis of available documentation. Make a description an analysis of how the MDBs have institutionalised their gender work, what tools and instruments are used, and how result reporting on gender equality is organised and presented. This may include where relevant and with sufficient available documentation; assessing the "gender profile" of the organisations, including percentage of "gender-responsive" loans, Gender results framework and diagnostic work such as "Country Gender Assessments", Country Assistance Strategies and inclusion of gender issues in key strategies of the banks, TA activities- to which extent do they cover gender, Knowledge products focused on gender, the current thinking (strategy)/ prioritisation in the organisation on Gender work.

2. The "policy paper"; on opportunities and options for making gender equality a major issues and related to core topics of the MDBs.

On the basis of the topics covered above, discuss opportunities and options for making gender equality major issues and related to core topics of the MDBs,

addressing challenging areas for the banks where further efforts are needed. How can the banks increase their "gender responsive" loans and assist member states in promoting gender equity?