**Terms of Reference**

**Icelandic Directorate of International Affairs and Development Cooperation Certification initiative**



***Virtual Appraisal Mission***

**Background**

UNDP and the International Affairs and Development Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iceland are working together to develop the **Icelandic International Affairs and Development Cooperation (IADC) Gender Equality Certification initiative.**

This initiative is based on the UNDP Gender Equality Seal[[1]](#footnote-1) initiative which is UNDP’s corporate certification initiative for motivating country offices to transform the way they work to achieve gender equality results and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The initiative aims to integrate gender equality standards in the Directorate’s policy and development work based on UNDP’s Gender Equality Seal. This methodology uses innovative incentives and rigorous standards to assist personnel and empower managers, HQ, and field offices to transform the architecture, policies, and cultures of their institution. It supports field offices to advance our work on gender equality to better support countries’ gender equality goals.

The **Gender Equality Certification initiative** is a process that helps the Directorate, its divisions and field offices to establish a baseline, fine-tune strategies, identify and address gaps and challenges, document innovations and showcase the impacts of interventions for gender equality. The Gender Equality Certification initiative draws its conceptual framework from Iceland’s commitment to gender equality as set out in IADC’s Gender Equality Policy, as well as its policies and strategies for international cooperation. The assessment tools of the Certification Initiative are adapted from UNDP’s Gender Equality Seal and are organized in seven clusters, corresponding to the elements/standards identified by the organization as essential for effective gender mainstreaming:

* Strong **management systems** and **accountability** mechanisms
* Investment in building **in-house capacities**
* An **enabling internal environment**
* Effective systems for **knowledge management and communication**
* Systems for integration of gender concerns into the **programme/project cycle**
* **Partnerships** with other actors for gender equality
* Achievement of sustainable **gender equality results.**

The process of certification is developed in four stages:

1. Online pre-screening to identify gender gaps of the Directorate, its divisions and field offices;

2. Action Plan for improvement design and implementation;

3. Final assessment based upon desk review and a virtual mission to identify level of certification; and

4. Certification and Award.

The matrix tool was used to carry out self-assessment against the standards in HQ, Uganda, and Malawi Missions. UNDP provided feedback on the baseline self-assessments, recommendations, and guidance. IADC then implemented the action plan to improve over one year (considering the delay in the process with COVID 19). At the end of this improvement period, the certification process is done through assessment of evidence on the online matrix and a virtual mission for a full-fledge review of their achievements linked to the desk review of the uploaded evidences and to reflect on lessons learned and recommendations for improvement. After the mission, they will be then awarded the certification according to their gender equality accomplishments. The certification has three levels of certification: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

**Due to the COVID19 crisis, the climate emergency and the limitations on travel, the mission will be carried out virtually using the** [**Sparkblue platform**](https://www.sparkblue.org/welcome)**.**

**Purpose of the Appraisal Mission**

The purpose of the appraisal mission is to verify evidence in order to establish the level of certification of the IADC. The appraisal mission intends to also open a meaningful dialogue on gender equality with the IADC HQ, divisions and field offices and consolidate learnings from the experience of the certification process.

**Expected outputs of the mission**

* Evidence verified against certification standards and benchmarks in order to establish the level of certification of the entity.
* Scoring document of benchmarks of the entity developed and submitted to the UNDP HQ Gender Equality Seal Team.
* Debriefing Report including level of certification of the entity, findings and recommendations (approximately 6/8 pages) developed and submitted to the UNDP Gender Equality Seal Team.

**Methodology**

The **appraisal mission methodology** is based on triangulation of data and information from both secondary and primary sources inside and outside the organization. Secondary data is collected from internal reporting and is correlated with first-hand information collected through meetings, interviews, focus groups discussions and surveys. The assessment tool is a benchmarking matrix that provides a **snapshot of the “state of play”** of gender mainstreaming in the entity. The tool scores the entity against 48 benchmarks organized in seven clusters as mentioned above, corresponding to the elements identified by IADC as essential for gender mainstreaming:

* Strong **management systems** and **accountability** mechanisms
* Investment in building **in-house capacities**
* An **enabling internal environment**
* Effective systems for **knowledge management and communication**
* Systems for integration of gender concerns into the **programme/project cycle**
* **Partnerships** with other actors for gender equality
* Achievement of sustainable **gender equality results.**

The appraisal **process** should be completed over the course of **7 days**, ideally beginning on a Monday and ending the Wednesday /middle of the following week, with the assessment team analysing the data and consolidating findings and some preliminary recommendations to be shared and validated by the IADC team on the final day. A formal report and recommendation for grading will be submitted to the Gender Equality Seal Team within a month of completion of the exercise.

The process will include online meetings and interviews with key informants within the entity, virtual focus group discussions with small groups of staff members (thematic as well as cross-sectoral groups depending on the office size), on-line surveys for staff and partners, online meetings and interviews with selected counterparts and other members of the national development community, and a series of e-discussions with IADC personnel. With this purpose the assessment team will use the UNDP [Sparkblue platform](https://www.sparkblue.org/welcome), and several online tools and applications to engage with the different participants in a meaningful way. The platform will host the missions, and the tools and applications will allow the different meetings to take place.

An indicative template agenda for the mission appraisal is given below. The exact schedule for each HQ and field office will be tailor-made in discussion with the Gender Focal Team as to accommodate the concerns and constraints of HQ and the field offices.

The **appraisal team** is composed of an external expert (who serves as the team leader), and a UNDP gender specialist from the Global Gender Team. Additional support from the global Gender Teams will be provided to monitor and support effective use of Sparkblue Platform and additional online tools.). The Team Leader is the main contact point for interaction with the HQ and field offices after HQ Seal team establishes dates and receives a first draft agenda from the IADC. The Team Leader will be responsible for consolidating inputs and preparing the Benchmarking Matrix and final report.

**Before the mission: HQ and field office actions**

The **IADC** **Gender Focal Team and Gender Focal points** are responsible for coordination and oversight of the assessment exercise. The key gender advisor in IADC HQ will be the contact point for the assessment team. Senior management should ideally be involved from the first day.

To kick off the process at the entity level, the contact point should establish contact with the assessment team to discuss the process and set deadlines for actions to be taken in the preparatory phase. To kick off the process at the country level, the field office contact point should establish contact with the entity focal point to discuss the process and set deadlines for actions to be taken in the preparatory phase. These include:

(a) Putting together the background materials and documentation;

**Steps before the mission**

1.Iceland Gender Focal Team is responsible for the coordination of the mission

2.Key functions: prepare the Agenda, help with logistics, ensure all HQ, divisions and field offices are involved and well informed, and prepare additional documents.

3.Ensure engagement in the e-discussions and participation in the survey.

4.Gender Focal Team should attend and coordinate preparatory virtual meetings with Seal and mission team members.

5.Senior managers should be present and leading during this week and declare a “no travel” ban if required.

(b) Finalizing logistics;

(c) Finalizing the mission schedule.

All relevant documents not uploaded into the Teams Online Tool should be ready by the week before (22 February) the mission starts a week (1-11 March). The UNDP member of the team mission should take the initiative in addressing entity concerns and providing clarifications on the process and methodology.

The entity needs to ensure that senior managers are available during the week of the mission as well as all staff members participate in the appraisal mission possibly through declaring it a “no travel” or “no major event” week.

On the 22 February, the week before the missions starts, the assessment team will launch a survey for staff to complete online (before the end of the week) and a series of e-discussions. The purpose of the surveys is to collect information needed for the scoring of the matrix. The purpose of the e-discussions is also to enhance the learning experience of the gender certification process.

**During the appraisal mission**

**The appraisal mission covers a total period of 7 days. As the mission is virtual, some flexibility has been allowed here over 1-11 March for time zones and online participation.** An indicative schedule (including time required for various meetings and for the team to prepare between meetings and discuss the outcomes) for a typical virtual appraisal mission is given at Attachment 1. **The actual schedule should be developed by the entity and field offices and finalized after discussion with the Seal and assessment team.**

The strategy for information gathering during the mission is guided by the benchmarking matrix, which is designed as a simple and self-explanatory tool. The reliability of the methodology and the rigor of the

results depend on collecting information and insights from a representative sample of informants. The assessment team will keep a careful record of all meetings and focus groups, in order to have a valid basis for estimating percentages where these are required by the score.

The team may need to follow-up with the entity contact person to make sure the surveys are completed by close of business on Day 2 and meetings/interviews that could not take place are re-scheduled.

**Scoring method**

The **benchmarking matrix** will be scored collectively by the two team members, with positive scores being denoted by a 1 highlighted in green and negative scores by a 0 highlighted in red. Benchmarks where the entity performance is significantly above the expected level should be scored with a '**++**' with the reason for the enhanced score given in a footnote. The “++” will indicate added value while only one 1 will be counted. **Scores are given only if the information is confirmed by evidence**. The last column of the completed matrix highlights the data sources used for scoring benchmarks in each cluster.

In certain cases, it may not be possible to score a benchmark, either because it is not relevant to the entity or because the necessary information could not be collected. In all such cases, the benchmark should be highlighted in grey with the words **“Could not be assessed”,** and the reasons detailed as a footnote.

**The report**

The debriefing report will reflect the forward-looking intention of the exercise and will incorporate strategic suggestions based upon lessons learned that can help the entity - HQ, divisions, and field offices- to achieve a qualitative improvement in performance and achievement of results.

The overall results of the benchmarking exercise, and some preliminary findings and suggestions of the assessment team will be shared at the debriefing meeting with senior management and the Gender Focal team and all staff on the final day of the assessment. However, more detailed recommendations and insights from the desk review and mission as well as additional data, clarifications and comments emerging from this meeting will be incorporated into the report, with annotations as necessary.

A Power Point presentation summarizing the results and highlighting the main recommendations will be prepared for use at the staff meeting that closes the assessment process.

The score sheet should be reviewed and finalized by the team after making any changes that are judged necessary in response to comments from the entity team. The UNDP member of the mission team will share with the entity the final matrix and report (within a month after the mission)

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**Agenda: VIRTUAL Assessment Mission for Certification Gender Equality Seal Iceland: Directorate for International Affairs and Development Cooperation**

**(From1 March to 11 March 2022)**

**Evaluation team**

1. EXTERNAL Evaluator to UNDP
2. Gender Global Team Gender specialist, UNDP HQ
3. Gender Global Team Digital Facilitator, UNDP HQ

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Activity** | **Considerations** |
| **Preparatory Phase** | | |
| **PREPARATION**  9 Feb 2022  23 Feb 2022 | * + 9 Feb 2022: Prep Meeting to share the Iceland Virtual mission platform: The goal is to meet with you and colleagues who might be involved in supporting others with the platform (i.e. IT or communications.)   + Final submission of the Virtual Mission Agenda to the Evaluation Team   + Half days to accommodate virtual platform and time zones.   + All the evidence for the Mission Evaluation Plan is ready and translated.   + 23 Feb 2022: Virtual Mission Launch: The goal is to present the mission team and presentation of the virtual mission to the office and final review of mission objectives and an agenda. Participants: GFT including senior management. | * Gender Assessment Team, GFT, Communications and IT in charge. * GFT including senior management. |
| From 24th Feb | Two vital activities will be carried out:   * + An **electronic discussion** will be launched on 24 Feb and during the first week of the mission, through an email from senior management, including the agenda and links to meetings:   + Electronic Debate 1: Building the Office Gender Narrative: Looking Back and Looking Forward.   + The **Working Environment Survey** in the Office will be applied during the first week of the mission. | * To ensure the active participation of all staff will be pop-ups. |
| **The virtual mission** | | |
| **Day 1**  1 March 2022 | * + **1:00pm-2:00pm GMT /8:00am to 9:00am EST: Kick-off session with the Senior Management Team**   + Know national context and the background of Capital and Missions   + **2:00-3:30pm GMT/9:00am to 10:30am EST/ 4:00pm-5:30pm CAT /5:00-6:30pm EAT: Dialogue with all The Staff**   + Explain the main aspects of the Gender Seal Initiative.   + Explain the objectives of the mission, roles within the evaluation team and the new virtual methodology.   + Have a meaningful dialogue on IADC's work on gender equality.   + What are expectations, motivations and dreams for gender equality?   + **4:00pm-5:00pm GMT/ 11:00am to 12:00 EST: Interview with Gender Advisor**   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix. ; verify and understand better the uploaded evidences : what are main challenges and what are possible ways to tackle these)   + Clarify the “architecture” : who plays what role in the gender mainstreaming reality ( HQ, offices, role of gender advisor/focal team) | * *Note: all times to be adjusted to what is appropriate across zones*   *(check DST) and allow breaks between meetings*   * Participating in the meeting: Senior management team, Operations, M&E, Gender. * High level presence important. |
| **Day 2**  2 March 2022 | * + **12:00-1:00pm GMT/ 7:00am to 8:00am EST: Interview with Director General and the Deputy Director General**   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix.   + **1:00-2:00pm GMT/ 8:00am to 9:00am EST: Interview with Human Resources** **Associate:**   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix; verify and understand better the uploaded evidences: what are main challenges and what are possible ways to tackle these)   + **2:30-4:00pm GMT/9:30am** **to 11:00am EST:**  **Focus group with association of personnel** / broad representation group for all staff * Understand and capture perceptions about gender equality and women's empowerment and the working/enabling environment?   + **4:30-5:00pm GMT/11:30am to 12:00 EST: Interview with** **Communication Unit** **Coordinator**:   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix. |  |
| **Day 3**  3 March 2022 | * + **12:15pm-1:00pm GMT/7:15am to 8:00am EST: Interview with Operations** **Coordinator**:   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix.   + **1:15pm-2:00pm GMT/ 8:15am to 9:00am EST: Interview with Results and Evaluation Advisor**:   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix.   + **2:30pm to 4:30pm GMT/ 9:30am-11:30am EST: Focus Group with Divisions**: International organisations & political affairs; Human rights; regional development and partnerships; Multilateral development cooperation; bilateral development cooperation; World Bank; Humanitarian Aid.   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix, particularly for area 1 on strategy and 5 on programming |  |
| **Day 4**  4 March 2022 | * + **3:00pm to 4:00pm EAT /7:00am to 8:00am EST: Interview with Head of Mission Uganda**   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix.   + **4:00-5:00pm EAT/3:00-4:00 CAT /8:00-9:00am EST:** **Focus group with Office Staff across Uganda and Malawi Missions:**   + Understand and capture perceptions about gender equality and women's empowerment in the Office.   + **5:00-6:00pm EAT/ 9:00-10:00am EST:**  **Interview with Government Strategic Partner Uganda:**   + Learn about the experience of collaboration with Iceland.   + Better understand the added value provided by Iceland.   + Capture partners' perceptions of Iceland's contribution to improving gender equality in the country.   + **6:00-7:00pm EAT/ 10:00-11:00 EST Focus group with feminist and women's organizations in Uganda**   + Learn about the experience of collaboration with Iceland.   + Better understand the added value provided by Iceland.   + Capture perceptions of Iceland’s contribution to improving gender equality in the country. | Times will need to be adjusted to what is appropriate  Times will need to be adjusted to what is appropriate |
| **Day 5**  7 March 2022 | * + **2:00-3:00pm CAT/ 7:00am to**  **8:00am EST: Interview with Head of Mission Malawi**   + Understand roles, responsibilities, achievements, challenges, and learning needs/interests.   + Collect topic-specific information for the matrix.   + **3:00-4:00pm CAT/ 8:00am to 9:00am EST:** **Interview with Government Strategic Partner Malawi:**   + Learn about the experience of collaboration with Iceland.   + Better understand the added value provided by Iceland.   + Capture partners' perceptions of Iceland's contribution to improving gender equality in the country.   + **4:00-5:00pm CAT/ 9:00am to 10:00am EST: Focus group with feminist and women's organizations in Malawi**   + Learn about the experience of collaboration with Iceland.   + Better understand the added value provided by Iceland.   + Capture perceptions of Iceland’s contribution to improving gender equality in the country. | Times will need to be adjusted to what is appropriate |
| **Day 6**  8 March 2022 | * + **1:00-1:45pm GMT/8:00am to 8:45am EST:** **Focus group with the Nordic + or DAC Group:**   + Understand the work in the countries and the role of Iceland within it.   + Assess integration of gender concerns into the current joint plan.   + Identify strategies to strengthen inter-institutional partnerships.   + **4:00-5:30pm CAT/5:00-6:30pm EAT/ 2:00-3:30pm GMT/ 9:00 am** **to 10:30 EST**: **Focus group with Gender** **Equality Team of the Capital, and missions in Uganda and Malawi**   + Understand the role of the group, their main achievements and challenges and how they see their work in the future.   + Know the process of gender mainstreaming and analyze opportunities and challenges. | Times will need to be adjusted to what is appropriate |
| **Day 7**  9 March 2022 | * + **1:00-1:45pm GMT /8:00am to 8:45am Debriefing Senior Management** * Submit draft findings and recommendations from Evaluation Team. * Provide office with space to make additional/final recommendations to the mission team, both with respect to evaluation and methodology. * Provide suggestions for follow-up.   + **4:00pm-5:30pm CAT /5:00-6:30pm EAT/2:00-3:30pm GMT /9:00am to 10:30am EST Debriefing with all staff of the Office chaired by the Senior Management** | Times will need to be adjusted to what is appropriate |
|  | **Final phase of the mission** |  |
| **April 2022** | * + Delivery of the final report of the mission with the results and recommendations |  |

**Annexes**

*Iceland to include names and positions:*

* **The Gender Focal Team/ Working group is made up of:**
* **The Entity's Joint Staff Focus Group will include:**
* **The Entity's Division Staff focus group will include:**
* **The Field offices Uganda focus group will include:**
* **The Field offices Malawi focus group will include:**

1. <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/Gender%20Equality%20Seal%20for%20UNDP%20entities%20brocure.pdf>

   and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zGJLoUia_Q> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)