

## 1. Background

Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) has become a pressing priority in recent years, as governments, the private sector, and donor agencies recognise its potential to simultaneously catalyse economic growth, spur gender equality, and contribute to broader human development outcomes<sup>1</sup>. While important efforts have been made to support development practitioners to integrate WEE considerations and objectives into their programme design, delivery, and monitoring and results measurement (MRM) systems, progress on the ground has remained slower than hoped, with practitioners struggling to navigate – and feeling overwhelmed by – the resources available.

In response to this, in 2017 the DCED's Women's Economic Empowerment Working Group (WEEWG) developed a report entitled '[How to integrate gender and women's economic empowerment into private sector development programmes: A guide for practitioners](#)'. This was targeted around practitioners' needs and provided technical guidance, links to additional best practice resources, and programme case studies, structured around the elements of the DCED Standard.

## 2. How to use *An Accompanying Guide for Policy-Makers*?

While the guide for practitioners was developed to support practitioners to better integrate WEE into private sector development (PSD) programming, a gap remains in concise, up-to-date guidance on the policy side. This document, entitled - *An accompanying guide for policy-makers*, is designed to respond to this gap. As the nature of tasks undertaken by policy-makers tends to be distinct from that of practitioners, the content and organising structure of *An accompanying guide for policy-makers* differs from that of *a guide for practitioners*. Where the focus of *a guide for practitioners* is on the project cycle, the focus of this guidance note will be on the policy cycle, with support for policy-makers structured into 6 chapters, each focused on a key task that they commonly undertake, namely:

1. Integrating WEE into PSD policy papers
2. Integrating WEE into Terms of Reference / Calls for Proposals
3. Assessing bidders/prospective grantees' approaches to WEE
4. Contract management and oversight of WEE in ongoing programs
5. Helping implementers to upgrade their approach to WEE mid-implementation
6. Building an evidence base for WEE and feeding back learnings into the policy cycle

To keep this guide concise, and to aid usability, each chapter is presented as a checklist, setting out:

- key **pointers** that policy-makers can act on to effectively integrate WEE into each policy task;
- associated **questions** that policy-makers should be able to answer affirmatively to evidence that WEE has been integrated into each policy tasks; and
- **additional guidance** that policy-makers should bear in mind.

Each chapter is designed to be discrete, and is written with specific and potentially different policy-making audiences in mind. As they can be read in isolation of each other, some replication may occur where similar concerns and recommendations relate to multiple policy tasks.

\* Links updated August 2021

<sup>1</sup> Economically empowered women create healthier, more educated, and more productive societies, with advances in health, education and security not only serving to improve women's own status, but also engendering a multiplier effect with benefits for whole societies. Women who earn and control incomes are particularly powerful agents for development because, relative to men, they invest a higher proportion of their income in the education, health and wellbeing of their families.

## Policy task 1: Integrating WEE into PSD policy papers

Policy papers can take various forms, from high-level parliamentary commitments and/or legislation on gender equality within foreign policy; to detailed donor-level strategies for integrating gender equality into development programming; to specific policy guidance on WEE (or sub-themes of WEE). Policymakers can use the checklist below to ensure WEE has been effectively integrated into policy papers. Depending on the exact nature of the policy papers, certain ‘pointers’ will be more relevant than others and flexibility and pragmatism should be applied when using the below checklist:

CHECKLIST FOR INTEGRATING WEE INTO PSD POLICY PAPERS			
WEE Pointers for PSD policy papers	Prompt questions for policy-makers	Additional guidance	Policy-maker’s confirmation of integration
1. <b>Defining WEE and other related terms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper clearly define key terms relating to Gender Equality (GE) and Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE)?</li> </ul>	Terms relating to GE and WEE are often highly contextual and their meaning is sometimes ambiguous. It is therefore critical that these are clearly defined within policy papers.	
2. <b>Clarifying the rationale for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper clearly explain why policy-makers and other stakeholders should care about WEE and why they should integrate it into broader PSD initiatives?</li> </ul>	Even where a clear rationale for promoting WEE is included in policy papers, the reasoning often focuses on WEE’s ability to realise broader development outcomes. While this is true, policy papers should also stress the importance of WEE as a rights-based issue, bringing lasting benefits to the women themselves.	
3. <b>Defining the target group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper clearly set out what it means by ‘women’, ‘adolescent girls’, and ‘girls’?</li> <li>Does it acknowledge inter-sectionality (similarities and divergences) within these groups (e.g. by age, ethnicity, geography, marital status, etc)?</li> <li>Does the policy paper recognise the role of men and boys in realising WEE?</li> </ul>	Often policy papers presume an existing and shared understanding of ‘women’ which can belie the heterogeneity of the target group. While generalisations are useful and needed at a certain point, policy papers should acknowledge key differences among women as well as between men and women. It is also useful to relate the target group to the overall objectives of the policy paper. For example, if the main objective of the policy is poverty reduction, it may imply a different target group than those considered for a women’s leadership initiative.	
4. <b>Specifying constraints and opportunities for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper set out key constraints - (economic and non-economic) impeding WEE and women/girls’ increased and improved market integration?</li> <li>Does it indicate how these constraints differ from those faced by men/boys?</li> <li>Do the constraints identified relate to access, agency, the broader enabling environment for WEE, or all of these?</li> <li>Are opportunities for the target group also highlighted?</li> </ul>	Where possible, it is useful for policy papers to give an indication of the specific gendered reasons why women have more limited access to – and ability to benefit from – market opportunities. Some of these will be <i>unique to</i> women (e.g. Social norms such as limited mobility, unpaid care burden, GBV), and some will be relevant to both sexes but <i>disproportionately felt by</i> women (e.g. financial inclusion). It can also be useful to ask how the proposed solutions would affect women/girls differently from men/boys.	
5. <b>Defining focal areas and scope for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper set out focal areas for supporting WEE through PSD? For example, a focus on gender-responsive BER and advocacy, access to finance, unpaid care, SGBV, SRHR, etc?</li> </ul>	Depending on the type of policy paper, policy makers may set out the focal areas and scope for WEE within the PSD intervention. Focal areas could include: gender-responsive BER, women’s entrepreneurship, creating more and better employment for women, gender-responsive market systems, women’s financial	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper set out what it does <i>not</i> seek to influence, either because of limitations of scope, timescales, or feasibility? (e.g. social norms or GBV)</li> </ul>	inclusion, agency and social norms-focused interventions such as those focused on mobility, lessening unpaid care, decision-making influence, economic impact of GBV, SRHR, and working with men to address normative constraints, etc.	
<b>6. Positioning the paper within the wider national and international policy environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does this policy paper contextualise WEE within the broader international policy environment?</li> <li>Does the policy paper indicate how it will contribute to international commitments, such as the SDGs and the work of the UN High-level panel on WEE or existing domestic policy/legislation?</li> </ul>	Given the level of interest around WEE, donor collaboration is essential for ensuring the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Situating each policy paper within the wider national and international policy environment for WEE is therefore useful.	
<b>7. Ensuring the policy paper's approach to WEE is feasible and can be operationalised</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the policy paper's objectives for WEE feasible based on a) the capacity &amp; willingness of stakeholders; b) the malleability of social norms; c) the resources and timeframes available?</li> <li>Can the policy paper be readily translated into clear actions and do suitable delivery mechanisms exist?</li> </ul>	Despite important policy commitments to WEE, progress in realising WEE outcomes on the ground has been slower than hoped. By foregrounding the 'operationalisation' of policy into practice within policy papers, we can start to close the gap between aspiration and reality on WEE. In order to assess the capacity and willingness of system actors, a stakeholder analysis can be helpful for identifying potential champions and blockers, together with an assessment of their power/interest/incentives.	
<b>8. Allocating budget for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper allocate budget for promoting / WEE and realising WEE outcomes?</li> <li>Does the budget / financial planning recognise the additional investment often required to overcome women's marginalised position within markets (e.g. owing to their lower literacy levels; more limited asset ownership etc)?</li> </ul>	GE and WEE are often "bolted-onto" broader PSD initiatives without additional and/or discrete funding. Supporting the private sector to adopt gender-responsive business practices often necessitates additional investment either 1) to compensate for women's historic marginalisation (e.g. additional upskilling of women required owing to their lower literacy rates) or 2) to build a contextually-relevant business case for women's improved and increased market integration. It is therefore important that sufficient budget is allocated for WEE to be properly integrated into PSD policy.	
<b>9. Resourcing and institutional capacity building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper set out a clear vision as to who within the organisation will be responsible for taking the policy forward?</li> <li>Does the policy make it clear that, while a particular individual/team/department will drive the policy, it is everybody's collective responsibility to ensure the policy is adhered to?</li> <li>Does the policy paper set out a commitment and plan as to how donor staff and implementing partners will be upskilled in the area of WEE?</li> </ul>	Ensuring that there is sufficient gender capacity for driving WEE both within the donor organisation and implementing partners is critical for policy to translate into successful practice. As per pointer 8 above, it is important that sufficient budget is allocated to gender resourcing and capacity building.	
<b>10. Acknowledging tensions and trade-offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the policy paper acknowledge potential tensions or trade-offs that may arise when integrating WEE into PSD (e.g. realising scale while working with the most marginalised of women; the role of women both as a vulnerable population and women as agents of change, etc)?</li> </ul>	It is important that policy papers recognise tensions and trade-offs that can arise when integrating WEE into PSD, e.g. how to realise scale while (a) working with the most vulnerable of women; and/or (b) pursuing innovation such as the entry of women into non-traditional sectors, and products and services designed to reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care burden.	

## Policy task 2: Integrating WEE into PSD programme Terms of Reference / Call for Proposals

While calls for proposals and programme terms of reference vary from donor to donor, the checklist below provides a set of 'WEE pointers' that can be universally applied to ensure donor commissioning documents for PSD programmes fully integrate WEE.

CHECKLIST FOR INTEGRATING WEE INTO PSD PROGRAMME TERMS OF REFERENCE / CALLS FOR PROPOSALS			
WEE pointers for ToR / Call for Proposals	Prompt questions for policy-makers	Additional considerations	Policy-maker's confirmation of integration
<b>1. Giving WEE primacy in all the PSD programme's strategic objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR integrate WEE into all of its core objectives?</li> <li>Or is WEE instead 'bolted-on' as an addition or 'stand-alone' component to the core PSD work?</li> </ul>	Policy-makers can use the <a href="#">OECD DAC gender equality policy markers</a> to help determine whether gender equality is considered the main objective of the programme (termed 'principal') or whether the programme will be deemed 'significant', meaning that gender equality is an important and deliberate objective, but not the principal reason for undertaking the project/programme. Where the 'principal' marker is given, WEE is fundamentally integrated into <i>all</i> PSD strategic objectives and the programme recognises that inclusive economic development cannot be realised without WEE. In this approach, the PSD programme ToR must fully mainstream WEE. Where the 'significant' marker is given, WEE may be structured as a stand-alone objective, in which it is 'bolted-on' to the PSD activities, but afforded a 'special status'.	
<b>2. Setting out the programme's level of ambition for WEE and gender approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR clearly set out the programme's level of ambition for WEE/GE: basic, intermediate, advanced?</li> <li>Does the ToR clearly set out the programme's gender approach: Do No Harm, gender-aware; gender-mainstreamed, gender-responsive/sensitive; gender-specific / women-targeted, or a blend of the above? (See page 8 of the accompanying practitioner guide: <a href="#">How to Integrate Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment into Private Sector Development Programmes</a> for definitions)</li> </ul>	Policy makers should clarify the expected level of ambition for WEE/GE of the PSD programme (basic, intermediate, and advanced) and the gender approach (e.g., Do No Harm, gender-aware, gender-mainstreamed, gender-responsive, women-targeted, etc.) as this will inform how WEE is integrated into the ToR and programme more generally, and how grantees/bidders conceptualise and produce proposals.	
<b>3. Defining WEE and other related terms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR clearly define key terms relating to GE and WEE (including both economic and non-economic dimensions)?</li> </ul>	Terms relating to GE and WEE are often highly contextual and their meaning is sometimes ambiguous. It is therefore critical that these are clearly defined within ToRs. There is a movement among donors towards a broader definition of WEE, which policy-makers should reflect here.	
<b>4. Clarifying the rationale for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR clearly explain why prospective grantees/bidders and other stakeholders should care</li> </ul>	Even where a clear rationale for promoting WEE is included in ToR, the reasoning often focuses on WEE's ability to realise broader development outcomes. While	

	about WEE?	this is true, ToRs should also stress the importance of WEE as a rights-based issue, bringing lasting benefits to the women themselves.	
<b>5. Specifying constraints and opportunities for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR set out and analyse key constraints (economic and non-economic), impeding WEE and women/girls' increased and improved market integration within the target country / context?</li> <li>Does it indicate how these constraints differ from those faced by men/boys?</li> <li>Do the constraints identified relate to access, agency, the broader enabling environment for WEE, or all?</li> <li>Are opportunities for the target group also highlighted?</li> </ul>	The ToRs should analyse the specific gendered reasons why women have more limited access to – and ability to benefit from – market opportunities. Some of these will be <i>unique to women</i> (e.g. Social norms such as limited mobility, unpaid care burden, GBV), and some will be relevant to both sexes but <i>disproportionately felt by women</i> (e.g. financial inclusion).	
<b>6. Defining focal areas and scope for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR set out focal areas for supporting WEE through private sector development? For example, a focus on gender-responsive BER and advocacy, access to finance, unpaid care, SRHR etc?</li> <li>Does the ToR set out what it does <i>not</i> seek to influence, either because of limitations of scope, timescales, or feasibility? (e.g. social norms or GBV)</li> </ul>	Policy makers should clearly set out the focal areas and scope for WEE within the PSD intervention. Focal areas could include: gender-responsive BER, women's entrepreneurship, gender-responsive market systems, women's financial inclusion, agency and social norms-focused interventions such as those focused on mobility, lessening unpaid care, decision-making influence, economic impact of GBV, SRHR etc.	
<b>7. Positioning the paper within the wider PSD &amp; WEE programming environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR seek to collaborate and complement existing national and donor-led WEE initiatives within the target context, and provide additionality beyond this?</li> <li>Does the ToR contribute to national and international commitments to WEE?</li> </ul>	Policy makers should state how each ToR will collaborate with and complement existing national and donor-led initiatives, as well as setting out the additionality brought by the programme.	
<b>8. Ensuring the ToRs objectives for WEE are feasible and can be operationalised</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are the ToRs objectives for WEE feasible based on a) the capacity &amp; willingness of stakeholders; b) the malleability of social norms; c) the resources and timeframes available?</li> <li>Does the ToR set out clear actions and do suitable delivery mechanisms exist?</li> </ul>	By foregrounding the 'operationalisation' of programming, we can start to close the gap between aspiration and reality on WEE.	
<b>9. Allocating budget for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the budget / financial planning recognise the additional investment often required to overcome women's marginalised position within markets (e.g. owing to their lower literacy levels; more limited asset ownership etc)?</li> <li>Does the ToR allocate sufficient budget for measuring WEE (which can be more resource-intensive)?</li> </ul>	Supporting the private sector to adopt gender-responsive business practices often necessitate additional investment either 1) to compensate for women's historic marginalisation (e.g. additional upskilling of women required owing to their lower literacy rates) or 2) to build a contextually-relevant business case for women's improved and increased market integration. It is therefore important that sufficient budget is allocated for WEE to be properly integrated into PSD policy. Equally, measuring WEE can often be more resource-intensive than traditional approaches to monitoring PSD programmes because empowerment is highly contextual, and requires more qualitative and proximate enquiry methods.	

<b>10. Resourcing and capacity building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR set out donor expectations of grantees'/bidders' resourcing of WEE, including ensuring sufficient expertise within the core team, and proposed strategies for ensuring all staff bear collective responsibility for realising WEE outcomes (rather this being 'one person's responsibility)?</li> <li>Does the ToR set donor expectations for grantees / bidders having a gender and inclusion policy at the programme-level and clear recourse where discrimination / harassment to occur?</li> </ul>	<p>The ToR should make clear that having sufficient WEE expertise – and at a sufficiently senior level – is essential for driving WEE through PSD. Policy-makers should also request prospective grantees/bidders to propose strategies for ensuring the entire programme team is upskilled and bears collective ownership for WEE. Finally, it is important that the bidder / grantee demonstrates capacity to ensure gender equality and inclusion <i>within</i> the programme team, through the establishment of a clear policy and mechanisms to deal with any reported discrimination / harassment.</p>	
<b>11. Acknowledging tensions and trade-offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR acknowledge potential tensions or trade-offs that may arise when integrating WEE into PSD (e.g. realising scale while working with the most marginalised of women)?</li> </ul>	<p>It is important that ToRs recognise tensions and trade-offs that can arise when integrating WEE into PSD, e.g. how to realise scale while (a) working with the most vulnerable of women; and/or (b) pursuing innovation such as the entry of women into non-traditional sectors, and products and services designed to reduce and redistribute women's unpaid care burden.</p>	
<b>12. Providing a vision for how the programme will work through the private sector to deliver WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR set out an indicative vision of how the programme will work with through the private sector to deliver outcomes for women? (E.g. facilitation and market-driven responses or direct delivery-type initiatives)?</li> </ul>	<p>To improve the quality of proposals received by prospective grantees/bidders, it can be useful for policy-makers to give an indicative vision of how they envisage the programme working with or through the private sector to deliver outcomes for women.</p>	
<b>13. Providing indicative WEE indicators and measures for success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR set out how it will measure WEE outcomes? (See Chapter 2: Defining Indicators of Change section from the accompanying practitioner guide: <a href="#">How to Integrate Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment into Private Sector Development Programmes</a> for guidance on developing WEE indicators)</li> </ul>	<p>To improve the quality of proposals received by prospective grantees/bidders, it can be useful for policy-makers to provide an idea of what the measures of success will be for WEE. This might be a mix of indicators measuring changes for the target group (e.g. # of women with increased access to banking products) AND those measuring broader changes within the system (e.g. # of financial service providers designing and marketing products that specifically cater to women's particular needs). Policy-makers can then invite bidders to suggest changes to the proposed indicators or new indicators entirely as part of their proposal.</p>	
<b>14. Setting out a vision for how the programme will contribute to the international evidence base for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the ToR set out how it envisages the programme contributing to the national and international evidence base on WEE?</li> </ul>	<p>Given gaps in donor and practitioner knowledge of what works to economically empower women from different backgrounds and in different contexts, it is important for policy-makers to set out in advance, how the initiative might contribute to local and global learnings on WEE (e.g. testing measurement approaches to WEE; assessing whether asset ownership contributes to positive shifts in women's agency, etc)</p>	

### Policy task 3: Assessing bidders/prospective grantees' approaches to WEE

Conventionally, donors' assessment of grantees'/bidders' approach to WEE has been limited to one or two evaluation criteria, focused around outcomes such as female participation. While this is better than *no* evaluation of grantees'/bidders' respective capacity and commitment for delivering WEE, it narrows the focus away from more transformative systems-level changes for women. The below 'WEE pointers' for assessment criteria will help donors build a more comprehensive view of the likely WEE impact of each bidder/ prospective grantee. As might be expected, there is some mirroring from the section above, as the assessment criteria should measure how well bidders/prospective grantees respond to the WEE requirements set out in the ToR / call for proposals.

CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING BIDDERS/ PROSPECTIVE GRANTEES' APPROACHES TO WEE			
WEE pointers for assessment criteria	Prompt questions for policy-makers	Additional considerations	Policy-maker's confirmation of integration
<b>1. Bidders/grantees' commitment to meaningful WEE indicators and ambitious targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the bidder/prospective grantee set out 'meaningful WEE indicators' to understand gender-differentiated impact (see "additional considerations" to right)?</li> <li>Does the bidder/prospective grantee set out ambitious targets both in breath of impact (# of women benefitting) and in depth of impact (e.g. how transformative the change is for women)?</li> </ul>	<p>Bidders/grantees' commitment to truly integrating WEE as priority for PSD can be understood through the <u>depth</u> and <u>breadth</u> of impact that they commit to deliver through their proposed WEE indicators and targets.</p> <p>'Meaningful WEE indicators' (see left) should capture shifts in both women's access and agency, going well beyond the sex-disaggregated income increase or job creation indicators typical of PSD programmes. Indeed caution (from both bidders and policy makers) should be taken when looking to use sex-disaggregated data on income increase as a means of understanding positive change for women, as it is almost impossible (particularly in agricultural settings) to 'peel off' women's income from the rest of the household, and issues of control and influence are equally if not more important for women than increasing income per se. More information on disaggregation strategies is covered in <a href="#">Measuring Gendered Impact in Private Sector Development: Technical Reflections and Guidance for Programmes</a>. Additional information on good indicators for WEE can be found in section 2.2. of: <a href="#">How to Integrate Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment into Private Sector Development Programmes</a></p>	
<b>2. Bidders/grantees' demonstrated ability for realising WEE in similar contexts in the past (capacity statements)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the bidder/grantee have relevant experience in driving WEE outcomes in similar contexts? How convincing is the depth and breadth of this impact?</li> <li>Does the bidder/grantee demonstrate how these experiences could be adapted and learnt from within the context of the programme proposal?</li> </ul>	<p>While a growing body of literature exists to support practitioners better integrate WEE into PSD, programmes and teams that have successfully done so in practice remain few and far between. Policy makers should look to proposals that go beyond conceptual or theoretical methodologies, instead focusing on those that clearly talk through the process of realising WEE through the private sector, and the successes, failures, and learning and adaptation that they have gone through.</p>	
<b>3. Bidders/grantees' demonstrated</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the bidder/grantee demonstrate a clear understanding of the target group, including</li> </ul>	<p>It is critical that bidders/prospective grantees demonstrate a deep and nuanced understanding of the target group, both in order to design</p>	

<p><b>understanding of target group, including constraints and the normative environment</b></p>	<p>similarities and divergencies within the groups (e.g. by age, ethnicity, geography, socio-economic profile, marital status, etc)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the bidder/grantee demonstrate a clear understanding (above that set out in the ToR) of the key constraints impeding WEE and women/girls' increased and improved market integration? And how these differ from those faced by men/boys?</li> </ul>	<p>successful interventions, but also as a means of charting positive (or negative) change in women's lives as a result of the programme. Donors may wish to request a gender-specific context analysis, including a stakeholder analysis to identify early champions and blockers to tailor programming accordingly.</p>	
<p><b>4. Bidders/grantees' approach to integrating WEE into the PSD programme Theory of Change</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the bidder/grantee compellingly integrate WEE into the PSD Theory of Change, showing how interventions will ultimately lead to improvements not only in women's access but also women's agency?</li> <li>Do the assumptions and causal links hold for women (including different types of women)?</li> </ul>	<p>Unless WEE is totally integrated into the Theory of Change (with improvements to access AND agency captured alongside poverty reduction at the impact level), it will always be 'bolted-on' rather than central to the change process. Increases in women's anticipated access and agency need to be clearly depicted in the change pathway.</p>	
<p><b>5. General creativity, ambition and feasibility of bidders/grantees' approach to realising WEE through the private sector</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is it clear how the bidder/grantee will convince private sector actors to adopt more inclusive and gender-responsive business practices?</li> <li>Does the bidder/grantee recognise the role of men and boys in realising WEE and set out convincing strategies for not only generating their support for WEE but co-opting certain male influencers as 'champions' for WEE?</li> <li>Does the bidder/grantee put forward any key innovations, e.g. methods for moving women into non-traditional sectors, or technologies that reduce or redistribute of the care burden?</li> </ul>	<p>It is important that prospective implementers demonstrate both an ambitious, but realistic approach, balancing innovation with what is likely to gain traction among women and in their broader communities. One way in which bidders/grantees may demonstrate an innovative approach is forging unusual partnerships, e.g. Helping the private sector to engage with women's organisations; or supporting women to move into non-traditional sectors.</p>	
<p><b>6. Bidders/grantees' financial proposal &amp; WEE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the bidders/grantees' financial proposal align with the commitments it makes to WEE in the technical proposal? (E.g. is sufficient budget allocated to gender expertise, or testing gender-responsive business models?)</li> <li>If the financial proposal commits to payment by results, are some of the payment milestones tied to demonstrating impact for women?</li> </ul>	<p>The strength of a bidder's/prospective grantee's commitment to WEE can often be verified through the financial proposal, by assessing whether sufficient budget allocated to gender expertise, or to testing gender-responsive business models. It is not enough for bidders/grantees to 'talk the talk' on WEE; this must also be integrated into the proposed budget.</p>	
<p><b>7. Resourcing and capacity building</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the proposal commit sufficient expertise within the core team – and at a sufficiently senior level – for driving WEE through PSD?</li> <li>Does the bidder/grantee set out compelling strategies for upskilling all staff in WEE and for ensuring all staff bear collective responsibility for realising WEE</li> </ul>	<p>The likelihood of a programme realising WEE outcomes is closely aligned with the extent to which senior WEE expertise is available, the degree to which the expert(s) systematically input into strategic / management decisions, and the level of effort made to upskill all staff on WEE.</p>	



	outcomes (rather this being 'one person's responsibility)?		
<b>8. Reconciling tensions and trade-offs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the bidder/grantee set out how they will reconcile tensions and trade-offs when integrating WEE into PSD?</li> </ul>	Good proposals will demonstrate how they plan to reconcile tensions and trade-offs that can arise when integrating WEE into PSD, e.g. by purposively developing a balanced portfolio, in which the majority of interventions are focused on realising scale, with a smaller number of higher-risk interventions working with the most marginalised of women (which may require additional support))	
<b>9. Commitment to sharing learnings and building the international evidence base for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the bidder/grantee set out practical steps as to how it will contribute to the local and international evidence base on WEE?</li> </ul>	Policy-makers should expect bidders/prospective grantees to demonstrate how they will contribute to the local and international evidence base on WEE? Ideas might include: sharing of papers on learning platforms such as SEEP and BEAM; hosting webinars; exchange visits with other comparable programmes; learning workshop in country and at donor HQ, etc)	

#### Policy task 4: Contract management and oversight of WEE in ongoing programs

Once the successful bidder/grantee has been selected and programme implementation begins, donors will want to effectively contract manage the implementing partner's delivery of WEE. The below checklist provides 'WEE pointers' for ensuring effective oversight of PSD programmes.

<b>CHECKLIST FOR CONTRACT MANAGING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WEE IN ONGOING PSD PROGRAMMES</b>			
<b>WEE pointers for contract managing PSD programmes</b>	<b>Prompt questions for policy-makers</b>	<b>Additional considerations</b>	<b>Policy-maker's confirmation of integration</b>
<b>1. Performance against <u>meaningful</u> WEE indicators and targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the implementing partner meet its targets against 'meaningful WEE indicators' both in terms of breath of impact (# of women benefitting) and in depth of impact (e.g. how transformative the change is for women)?</li> <li>Does the implementing partner complement and explore these findings by undertaking additional qualitative analysis to build a bigger picture of gendered impact?</li> </ul>	<p>Donors / policy-makers should firstly look to assess implementing partners' performance on WEE using data captured and reported against the programmes 'meaningful WEE indicators', looking at both depth and breadth of impact realised for women. Importantly, caution should be taken not to perceive sex-disaggregated data on income increase as the primary indicator for success. This is because (particularly in agricultural settings) it is nearly impossible to 'peel off' women's income from the rest of the household, and issues of control and influence are equally if not more important for WEE than increasing income per se.</p> <p>It is therefore critical that donors / policy-makers request implementing partners to provide additional, complementary qualitative research and analysis which explores in greater depth the gender-differentiated outcomes of particular interventions. An example of this how this might be done is ELAN RDC's WEE Learning Series, the first three case studies of which can be</p>	

		accessed <a href="#">here</a> , <a href="#">here</a> and <a href="#">here</a> ).	
<b>2. Demonstrated success at shifting private sector behaviours to increase and improve female market engagement (as producers, employers, suppliers and consumers)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the implementing partner developed gender-responsive business models that are both commercially-attractive to the private sector and which will lead to women’s increased and/or improved engagement in markets?</li> <li>• Has the implementing partner successfully pitched these models to private sector actors and signed partnership agreements / MoUs to pilot these new models?</li> <li>• Do private sector partners now see the benefit of more gender-responsive business practices? Have they sustained these beyond the support of the programme?</li> </ul>	<p>The practical aim of integrating WEE into PSD is to enable private sector actors to adopt more gender-responsive business practices, including the improved targeting of female consumers with pro-women goods and services and the improved integration of female producers and employees through more inclusive recruitment, employment or procurement practices. This should be a ‘win-win’ situation in which the private sector organisation improves its commercial performance, and women enhance their economic inclusion and empowerment.</p> <p>It is therefore critical for donors / policy-makers to assess on an ongoing basis whether the interventions undertaken by the implementing partner are leading to increased interest, uptake, and adaptation of gender-responsive practices by private sector actors. While often donors / policy-makers can assess this through indicators, one of the most effective ways for donors / policy-makers to understand whether the private sector is shifting its mindset and behaviours to become more inclusive of women is simply through engaging in conversation with them. This will help to “ground-truth” more formal monitoring and results measurement findings.</p>	
<b>3. Investment of programme budget in interventions realising impact for women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the implementing partner invested budget in gender expertise and upskilling / training of its team in WEE?</li> <li>• Has the implementing partner dedicated a meaningful amount of budget to specifically working with private sector partners on the testing and adoption of gender-responsive business models?</li> <li>• Has the implementing partner dedicated sufficient budget to measuring WEE recognising that it can be more resource-intensive?</li> </ul>	<p>As noted in <i>‘Policy product 2: Integrating WEE into PSD programme Terms of Reference / Call for Proposals’</i>, supporting the private sector to adopt gender-responsive business practices can often necessitate additional investment. It is therefore important for donors / policy-makers to verify whether sufficient budget is being allocated for WEE by the implementing organisation (in resourcing/capacity building, implementation activities, and monitoring)?</p>	
<b>4. Demonstrated commitment to creating an empowering culture and all-team accountability for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the implementing partner ensured a WEE expert sits within the senior management team and is involved in key decision making?</li> <li>• Is the implementing partner ensuring all technical staff attend regular training on WEE and that each individual has ‘contribution to WEE outcomes’ as a KPI within their performance appraisal.</li> <li>• Does the programme itself have a clear Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and do staff know the process for, and feel empowered to, report discrimination?</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>In order to realise WEE outcomes, the implementing partners’ own team must themselves be committed to promoting diversity, inclusion and gender equality both through their delivery work and organisationally among their peers. Donors / policy-makers should ask the implementing organisation about their policy to prevent sexism, racism and any other form of discrimination, together with the reporting and grievance process.</p>	

<b>5. Demonstrated contribution to local and international evidence base for WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the implementing partner contributed to the local and international evidence base on WEE?</li> <li>• Is there variety in the medium and channel of these learning contributions (e.g. sharing of papers on learning platforms such as SEEP and BEAM; hosting webinars; exchange visits with other comparable programmes; learning workshop in country and at donor HQ, etc)?</li> </ul>	<p>Given gaps in donor and practitioner knowledge of what works to economically empower women from different backgrounds and in different contexts, it is important for policy-makers check that implementing partners are regularly contributing to local and global learnings on WEE.</p>	
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### Policy task 5: Helping implementers to upgrade their approach to WEE mid-implementation

It is significantly easier to realise WEE outcomes when gender has been mainstreamed from the very beginning of a programme. Nevertheless, donor expectations around WEE have increased over recent years, and many programmes that weren't initially expected to deliver WEE alongside broader PSD are now being asked to. A key challenge for donors is supporting gender-blind or gender-aware PSD programmes to upgrade their approach to WEE, mid-implementation. This is challenging: there is no silver bullet or single 'correct' approach to doing it. Nonetheless, the below checklist provides a series of 'WEE pointers' that are designed to help donors support their implementing partners to take structured steps to improving the programme's gender-responsiveness.

CHECKLIST FOR HELPING IMPLEMENTERS UPGRADE THEIR APPROACH TO WEE MID-IMPLEMENTATION			
WEE pointers for helping implementers to upgrade their approach to WEE mid-implementation	Prompt questions for policy-makers	Additional considerations	Policy-maker's confirmation of integration
<b>1. Assessing and increasing 'willingness' for WEE within the programme's leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the Team Leader and wider management team vocal champions of WEE?</li> <li>• Is the programme's leadership incentivised to make WEE a priority (e.g. through clear programme targets, upon which funding depends; or through their own KPIs and remuneration)?</li> </ul>	<p>Where donors are looking to support implementers upgrade their approach to WEE mid-implementation, the starting point should always be in assessing leadership's commitment to WEE. Where this is lower than required (which is often the case), donors may need to look at how the programme's leadership is currently incentivised (e.g. do KPIs exist for senior management around WEE, etc) and whether levers exist for driving an increased interest in WEE. Exchange visits with programmes that are more effectively pursuing WEE is one of many mechanisms that can be used to increase senior management's interest in the WEE agenda.</p>	
<b>2. Assessing capacity within the programme team and strengthening resourcing of WEE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the programme have sufficient WEE expertise within the core team?</li> <li>• If so, is the WEE expert(s) of a sufficiently senior level and engaged in strategic and management decisions?</li> <li>• Is sufficient budget available for WEE?</li> <li>• Is sufficient budget available for strengthening</li> </ul>	<p>Beyond senior management's 'willingness' for WEE, another reason programmes often underdeliver on WEE is because of a lack of expertise within the programme team. To support implementers upgrade their approach to WEE mid-implementation, donors can help to assess whether sufficient expertise is available within the team, suggest experienced consultants in the field, and help to restructure the budget (or, if required, make more funds available) to ensure WEE is properly resourced. It might</p>	

	gender/WEE capacity (if required)?	be the case that sufficient WEE expertise <i>is</i> available but that the individual(s) is not engaged in strategic and management decisions. Here, donors can support implementing organisations to recognise the need for the WEE expert(s) to be involved in all core decision making processes.	
<b>3. Revisit research/analysis through a gendered-lens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does the programme’s foundational research capture gender-differentiated data, including differences in men and women’s ability to access and <i>benefit from</i> economic opportunities?</li> <li>Does the programme’s research investigate the constraints that are unique to – or disproportionately felt by – women, such as unpaid care, mobility, SGBV, SRHR voice, choice and control?</li> <li>Does the programme’s foundational research explore the impact of social norms on women’s full and valued economic participation? If not, is there acceptance for additional research on the programme’s gender/WEE outcomes?</li> </ul>	Research and analysis conducted in the early stages of programmes often fail to capture gender-differentiated data, e.g. key differences in access to assets/markets/income/information between men and women, sex-disaggregated data on time spent on unpaid care, etc. Early programme research also often overlooks important differences that exist between different types of women, e.g. from different generations, ethnicities, educational levels. In such cases, policy-makers should encourage implementing partners to undertake complementary research and analysis to better understand the target group.	
<b>4. Assessing current WEE impact and setting priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have clear efforts to design interventions aimed at transforming inequitable gender relations been made?</li> <li>Are these interventions showing signs of success (both formally through the M&amp;E/MRM system and through observational feedback)?</li> <li>Based on the revised research, what 3 priorities should the programme focus on (a mix of ambition, need, and potential for impact should be considered)?</li> </ul>	Donors can help implementing organisations to objectively assess how effective existing activities/interventions are at realising impact for women. While it might be that small ‘tweaks’ are all that is needed for the programme to become more gender-responsive, often new WEE priorities need to be established. If a more radical ‘upgrading’ is needed, donors can help implementing partners to identify a small, focused number of priorities.	
<b>5. Mainstreaming gender within programme management and decision-making processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are WEE prompt questions integrated into all programme templates, including concept notes, business cases, partnership agreements / MoUs, measurement planes etc?</li> <li>Are ‘WEE reflection points’ integrated into key strategic decision points?</li> </ul>	Donors can support implementing partners by helping them to mainstream gender within programme management and decision-making processes, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embedding WEE prompt questions into all programme templates, including concept notes, business cases, intervention logics, partnership agreements / MoUs, etc.</li> <li>Incorporating a ‘WEE reflection point’ into key strategic decision points, such as portfolio reviews or annual business plans.</li> </ul>	
<b>6. Revisiting measurement approaches</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the implementing partner set meaningful, SMART WEE indicators?</li> <li>Has the implementing partner established gender-sensitive research and data collection practices?</li> </ul>	As a programme takes steps to improve its gender-responsiveness, it is critical that the M&E/MRM system is also ‘upgraded’ to effectively measure gendered impact / WEE outcomes. Donors can support implementing partners to improve the programme’s ability to measure gender-	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the implementing partner integrated WEE into results chains and measurement plans?</li> </ul>	<p>differentiated impact by helping: to set meaningful, SMART WEE indicators; establish gender-sensitive research and data collection practices; and integrate WEE into results chains and measurement plans</p> <p>Further guidance on how practitioners can upgrade their measurement approaches to WEE be found here: <a href="#">How to Integrate Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment into Private Sector Development Programmes</a></p>	
<b>7. Upskilling the team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the implementing partner using compelling strategies for upskilling all staff in WEE? (E.g. using a range of capacity building techniques, from traditional training, to e-modules, to coaching?)</li> <li>Has the implementing partner introduced mechanisms to ensure that each staff member bears collective responsibility for realising WEE outcomes (e.g. By including KPIs on having contributed to WEE in performance plans and appraisals?)</li> </ul>	<p>Donors can support implementing partners to upskill the programme team's by helping to organise regular whole-team trainings on WEE, to demystify concepts, provide practical tips on how to 'do WEE', and set clear expectations that WEE is 'everybody's business' and not the responsibility of a single staff member. Other complementary support might include providing access to e-modules, coaching and mentoring opportunities, and buddy systems with other programmes. Donors should also expect each staff member to have clear KPIs on their contribution to WEE integrated to their performance plan and appraisal process.</p>	

### Policy task 6: Building an evidence base for WEE and feeding back learnings into the policy cycle

There exist critical gaps in donor and practitioner knowledge of what works to economically empower women from different backgrounds and in different contexts. It is therefore essential that donors and policy-makers support implementing organisations to share learnings, in an open and honest way, and that these are rapidly fed back into the policy making process. The below checklist provides 'WEE pointers' for building an evidence base and feeding learning back into the policy cycle:

CHECKLIST FOR BUILDING AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR WEE & FEEDING BACK LEARNINGS INTO THE POLICY CYCLE			
WEE pointers for building an evidence base and feeding learning back into the policy cycle	Prompt questions for policy-makers	Additional considerations	Policy-maker's confirmation of integration
<b>1. What reporting to request from implementing partners for aggregation at a central level</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there common indicators relating to WEE that can be requested across different types of programmes, e.g. business environment reform, trade, market systems, access to finance, etc?</li> </ul>	<p>While each donor will require slightly different aggregated data, the World Bank's '<a href="#">Women, Business and the Law</a>' provides a strong list of indicators to measure women's relative position in the economy. These indicators can be adapted to apply across a given portfolio of PSD programmes, therein providing consistency of measurement for a particular donor. If an implementing partner cannot report on the Women, Business and the Law in their entirety, is useful for them to nonetheless draw on the following measurement themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to and management of economic <b>assets</b> (e.g. land, property,</li> </ul>	

		<p>direct income, etc);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to, and uptake of <b>jobs</b> (and if possible, <b>better jobs</b>);</li> <li>• <b>Policy changes</b>, including access to institutions;</li> <li>• Access to <b>credit</b> and other financial services;</li> </ul> <p>Similarly, certain of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators lend themselves to high-level aggregation, and would help to build the international evidence base. Particularly relevant indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.4.1: Proportion of population living in households with access to basic services</li> <li>• 1.4.2: Proportion of total adult population with secure tenure rights to land, with legally recognized documentation and who perceive their rights to land as secure, by sex and by type of tenure</li> <li>• 5.4.1: Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies</li> </ul> <p>IFPRI’s Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index is particularly useful for standardising empowerment measures across agricultural programming.</p> <p>Finally, while agency-focused indicators are often difficult to collect en-masse and then aggregate (owing to their contextually-dependent and qualitative nature), some welfare-related indicators are feasible and reporting against these should be strongly encouraged by donors, e.g. women’s decision making influence within the household; and perceptions of men and family towards women’s financial inclusion.</p>	
<p><b>2. Structuring WEE learnings around thematic and geographical areas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the donor/policy ensured that all learning papers are keyword tagged by thematic area and by geography?</li> </ul>	<p>To improve the sharing and ‘searchability’ of evidence on WEE, donors may wish to structure learnings into thematic areas (e.g. advocacy, access to finance, unpaid care, SGBV, etc). Given the highly contextual nature of WEE, it may also be useful to organise learnings around geographical region</p>	
<p><b>3. Tips for sharing lessons internally within donors and donor learning platforms</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the donor/policy-maker shared learnings in multiple formats internally?</li> <li>• Has the donor/policy-maker shared learnings in multiple formats outside of the donor agency, through international learning platforms?</li> </ul>	<p>Policy-makers/donors should think of ways in which learning can be shared within the donor organisation (e.g. through informal learning sessions including brown bag lunches (possibly in conjunction with implementing partners); to more formal evidence papers available on donor portals). Policy-makers/donors may also wish to consider how emerging evidence can be shared through international learning platforms (for example the High Level Panel on WEE; PSD/MSD-led initiatives such as BEAM-DCED, the GROW WEE Research Series, etc. The format of learning and dissemination should also be considered, e.g., learning paper, blog, webinar, social media, etc.</p>	