

Green Cities, Infrastructure and Energy Programme (GCIEP)

Overview of the GEDSI Lens Criteria and Toolkit for Project Developers

Infrastructure is vital for societal development and economic progress, but benefits are often not distributed equally. Inadequate consideration of barriers related to gender, disability, and other social factors (e.g. age, race and ethnicity) can result in exclusion and disproportionate impacts on groups affected by marginalisation.



In recent years, project developers and investors have paid increasing attention to the needs of local communities when designing and delivering infrastructure and energy projects. This reflects the evolving industry recognition that gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) considerations in investments and projects are not only the 'right' thing to do but can also lead to strong financial and economic results – making it the 'smart' thing to do.

To maximise the potential impact in terms of holistically promoting gender equality, disability and social inclusion, intentionality must be built in from the outset. With the recent growth in impact investing (especially gender lens investing spearheaded by [2x Global](#)), the entire ecosystem needs further support and development. This means going beyond investors

to include project developers, entrepreneurs in the supply chain, and ultimately, end users.

In response to this demand, GCIEP has developed a set of [GEDSI lens criteria](#) and a [toolkit for infrastructure project developers](#). 2X Global inspires the criteria, which have been specifically tailored for infrastructure and have been expanded to include disability and social inclusion.

The purpose of the toolkit is to provide guidance and tools to key practitioners in the infrastructure ecosystem, enabling them to design and deliver projects that meet the standards and empowerment ambitions outlined in the GEDSI lens criteria. Another key purpose of this guidance is to respond to the changing investor landscape and fill a gap by providing clear, simple, and practical metrics to translate changing investor requirements into actionable measures.

The GEDSI toolkit is structured into seven key activities that can be integrated within typical project delivery cycles. Each activity-related chapter includes the following sections:

- » Explanation of what the activity is
- » Description of why GEDSI opportunities should be maximised in the specific activity
- » How the integration of GEDSI opportunities can be achieved across the project cycle, including key messages and detailed actions presented in a table format
- » Relevant case studies for the specific activity



The seven activities are accompanied by a brief explanation of what each covers.

	Strategy development	Developing a specific strategy on GEDSI inclusion or integrating GEDSI aspects into broader project strategies for infrastructure interventions.
	Stakeholder engagement	Processes to help ensure that the specific needs and views of disadvantaged groups and individuals are considered throughout the lifecycle of the project, and that risks and opportunities for inclusion are identified and managed.
	Data collection and analysis	The need to collect, analyse and make use of data, disaggregated by relevant aspects such as sex, age, income, and disability, to inform more inclusive infrastructure.
	Leadership selection and development	The extent to which teams responsible for infrastructure project development and delivery include women, people with disabilities and local community members in decision-making roles and leadership positions across the infrastructure project life cycle.
	Workforce selection and development	The diversity of the workforce, which will support the design and delivery of the infrastructure intervention, and efforts made to increase such diversity, for example, with reference to recruitment practices and flexible working patterns.
	Procurement of supply chain partners	Commitment from the project to ensure that women, persons with disabilities and local community members are included within and/or benefit from the supply chain in infrastructure planning, design and construction.
	Inclusive design	The extent to which the perspectives of all types of people, mainly including those from marginalised groups (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, local community members) are considered and intentionally integrated into the (physical and service) design of the project.

GCIEP has growing experience of implementing the GEDSI Lens Toolkit in practice across programme work packages, creating valuable learning and evidence of its effectiveness. For example:

Positive social impact criteria were integrated into the model tender documentation (RfP) for the solar energy procurement support in Zambia, encouraging bidders to demonstrate increased citizen ownership at the Special Purpose Vehicle level, promote local content (particularly through subcontracting to women-owned and local businesses); and create employment and skills development opportunities for youth, women and persons with disabilities.

The GEDSI Toolkit was integrated into the safeguarding studies being prepared to assess the feasibility of the Baguio bulk water supply project, in the Philippines, enabling the proactive identification of opportunities that the project could generate, including employment of women, people with disabilities and local community members, as well as inclusive design of water tariff discounts and subsidies for vulnerable households connected to the small community water systems.

The GEDSI Toolkit was applied as guidance in Beira, in Mozambique, to identify appropriate targets for the involvement of women and local communities in nature-based solutions interventions, with a focus on mangrove restoration. These targets also informed the selection of attendees for training sessions on operations and maintenance for drainage.

In Nacala, Mozambique, the GEDSI Lens Toolkit guided the Urban Structure Plan and the guidelines in spatial planning and governance, using gender and social analyses and vulnerability mapping to identify barriers and opportunities in mobility, housing and public services.



Please get in touch if you would like to find out more, discuss the Toolkit in more detail or share your experience from applying the criteria and toolkit in practice.

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