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The Gender Management System

If the gender mainstreaming and equality principles expressed in the Beijing Declaration and the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development are to be widely understood and effectively applied by governments, these principles need to be systematically introduced into all stages of the conception, implementation and monitoring of national development plans. To this end, the Commonwealth Secretariat is encouraging the establishment of a Gender Management System. This means that the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluations of all policies and programmes should not only ensure equality for all regardless of sex and gender, but should also take into account the contributions that can be made by all stakeholders working in the area. To cover all the issues involved in science and technology, these stakeholders will come from a very broad range of ministries and agencies apart from the Ministry of Science and Technology (where such exists), as well as from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector.

At the sectoral level, departments charged with science and technology need to intentionally introduce gender-based analysis at all levels of policy and programme elaboration. Such strategies should span both formal and informal systems of science. Modern science and technology are commonly regarded as the engines of growth in the new knowledge-based global economy, yet traditional and local knowledge systems underpin food security in many nations. Probing the gendered nature of both modern science and traditional knowledge systems will enable policy decision-makers to construct stronger and more sustainable science and technology strategies for the benefit of all members of society.

While many countries have National Women's Machineries (NWMs), most NWMs have not yet strengthened their focus on issues of science and technology policy. The relationship between NWMs and ministries and departments concerned with science and technology takes a variety of different forms. Currently, the majority of national science and technologies policies contain few measures beyond 'recruitment' to address gender imbalance. However, gender integration in science and technology must go much further than this. Training and capacity building are therefore essential. To this end, the Ministry of Science and Technology and other agencies should consult with and also harness the knowledge and skills in gender awareness and sensitisation, gender analysis and planning that exist within the Ministries of Women's Affairs, women's organisations, and Women's Studies Departments at the University and train their staff in order to fully address gender concerns in science and technology.

What is the Gender Management System (GMS)?

The Gender Management System (GMS) is an approach to gender mainstreaming developed by the Commonwealth Secretariat. It is an integrated network of structures, mechanisms and processes put in place in an existing organisational framework to

guide, plan, monitor and evaluate the process of mainstreaming gender into all areas of an organisation's work in order to achieve greater gender equality and equity within the context of sustainable development.

The GMS is intended to advance gender equality and equity through promoting political will; forging a partnership of stakeholders including government, private sector and civil society; building capacity; and sharing good practice. The GMS is described most completely in the *Gender Management System Handbook* (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1999).

What are the Objectives of the GMS?

Objectives of the GMS include the following:

- ◆ to assist government and non-state actors in implementing the 1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development and its Update, the Beijing Platform for Action, and other gender-aware international mandates;
- ◆ to strengthen National Women's Machinerys (NWMs), and the capacity of NWMs, core and sectoral government ministries, development NGOs, the private sector and other members of civil society to make gender-aware development policies, plans and programmes at all levels, and to facilitate partnership-building so as to create a broad-based national constituency committed to gender equality; and
- ◆ to create an enabling environment which takes into account both favourable factors and obstacles to the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender-aware plans and programmes.

The Enabling Environment

There are a number of interrelated factors that determine the degree to which the environment in which the GMS is being set up does, or does not, enable effective gender mainstreaming. The enabling environment includes the following:

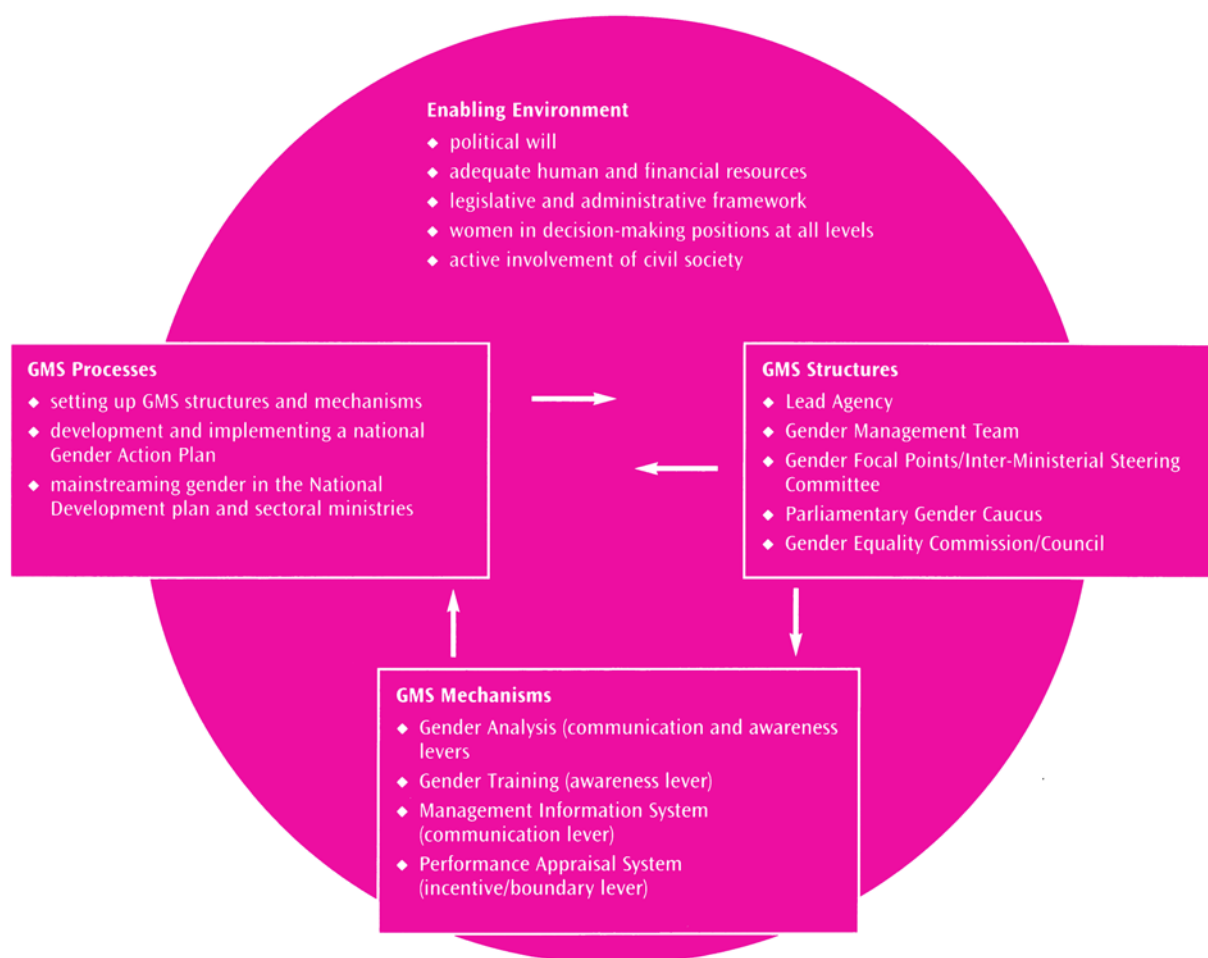
- ◆ political will and commitment at the highest level to gender equality and putting in place gender sensitive policies and programmes;
- ◆ willingness of those stakeholders and implementers who have never been exposed to issues related to gender or gender issues in science and technology to acquire knowledge and skills in gender awareness, and gender analysis and planning;
- ◆ a legislative and constitutional framework that is conducive to advancing gender equality;
- ◆ the presence of a critical mass of women in decision-making roles;
- ◆ adequate human and financial resources; and
- ◆ a supportive civil society.

The Stakeholder Framework

The GMS adopts a stakeholder approach to gender mainstreaming. This recognises that the state is not the only player in efforts to achieve gender equality and equity, but must work in partnership with other social partners or stakeholders. The key stakeholders in a GMS are the NWM, other government ministries and departments, NGOs, the media, academic institutions, professional associations, inter-governmental organisations, donor agencies and women and men in the broader civil society. Within the stakeholder framework, the GMS is based on three broad principles:

- ◆ Empowerment: providing representation on decision-making bodies and control over the distribution of resources;

Figure 2 The Gender Management System



- ◆ **Integration:** transforming structures that create and perpetuate gender and other inequalities, rather than making piecemeal interventions; and
- ◆ **Accountability:** creating incentive systems that reward and boundary systems that set standards and impose sanctions in order to motivate change.

GMS Structures

Enabling all the key stakeholders to participate effectively in the mainstreaming of gender into government's policy and programming requires the establishment and/or strengthening of formal institutional arrangements within and outside government. These arrangements can be summarised as follows:

- ◆ a **Lead Agency** (usually the Ministry of Gender or Women's Affairs or other National Women's Machinery), which initiates and strengthens the GMS institutional arrangements, provides overall co-ordination and monitoring and carries out advocacy, communications, media relations and reporting;
- ◆ a **Gender Management Team** (consisting of representatives from the Lead Agency, key government ministries and civil society), which provides leadership for the implementation of the GMS; defines broad operational policies, indicators of effectiveness and timeframes for implementation; and co-ordinates and monitors its performance;

- ◆ an **Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee** whose members are representatives of the Lead Agency and the Gender Focal Points (see below) of all government ministries, and which ensures that gender mainstreaming in government policy, planning and programmes in all sectors is effected and that strong linkages are established between ministries;
- ◆ **Gender Focal Points** (senior administrative and technical staff in all government ministries), who identify gender concerns, co-ordinate gender activities (e.g., training); promote gender mainstreaming in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all activities in their respective sectors; and sit on the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee;
- ◆ a **Parliamentary Gender Caucus** (consisting of gender-aware, cross-party female and male parliamentarians), which carries out awareness raising, lobbying and promoting the equal participation of women and men in politics and all aspects of national life and brings a gender perspective to bear on parliamentary structures and procedures and matters under debate; and
- ◆ **representatives of civil society** (a National Gender Equality Commission/Council, academic institutions, NGOs, professional associations, media and other stakeholders), who represent and advocate the interests and perspectives of autonomous associations in government policy-making and implementation processes.

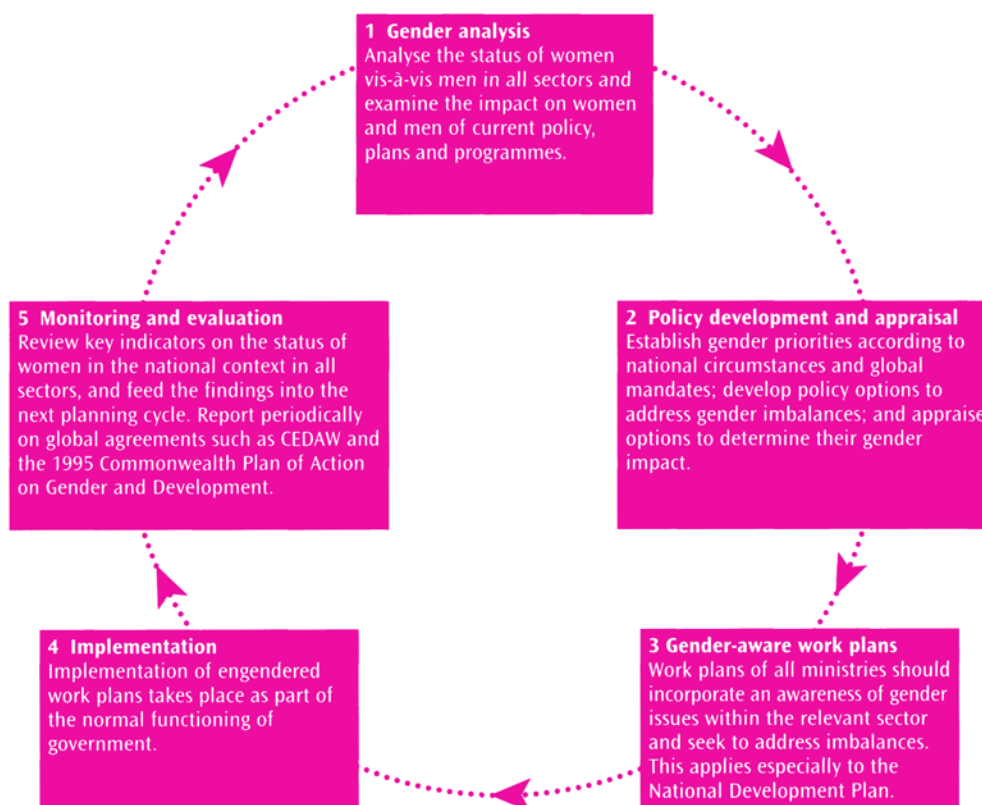
GMS Mechanisms

There are four principal mechanisms for effecting change in an organisation using a GMS:

- ◆ **Gender-based analysis (GBA):** GBA is a tool for understanding social processes and for responding with informed, effective and equitable options for policies, programs and legislation. When gender is explicitly considered as a category of analysis, information on the actual realities of women and men, girls and boys, is presented so that similarities and differences can be examined. In addition, information on the nature of relationships in the family, society and the economy is revealed. Using gender-based analysis means taking into account this information in exploring how policy options could impact on individual women and men, and on societal structures. This contributes to an enhanced knowledge base for decision-makers.
- ◆ **Gender training:** Many of the stakeholders in a GMS will require training in such areas as basic gender awareness and sensitisation, gender analysis, gender planning, the use of gender-sensitive indicators, monitoring and evaluation. Since the GMS aims at the gradual transformation of organisations and a realignment of the belief systems, power structures and policy and planning processes in them, training must also include segments on overcoming hostility to gender mainstreaming and may also need to include conflict prevention and resolution and the management of change.
- ◆ **Management Information System:** This is the mechanism for gathering the data necessary for gender analysis and sharing and communicating the findings of that analysis, using sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators. The Management Information System is much more than just a library or resource centre; it is the central repository of gender information and the means by which such information is generated by and disseminated to the key stakeholders in the GMS.
- ◆ **Performance Appraisal System:** Based on the results of gender analysis, the GMS should establish realisable targets in specific areas. The achievement of these targets should be evaluated both at the individual and departmental level through a gender-aware Performance Appraisal System. This should not be separate from whatever system is already in place for appraising the performance of employees;

rather the present system should be reviewed and overhauled to ensure that it is gender-sensitive. The Performance Appraisal System should also take into account the level of gender sensitivity and skills (e.g. as acquired through gender training or field experience) of individuals. The Gender Management Team should work in partnership with the central personnel office of government and sectoral personnel departments to ensure that the Performance Appraisal System in place reflects these concerns.

Figure 3 Promoting Gender Awareness at Each Stage of the Planning Cycle



Commonwealth Secretariat, 1999: 49

What does a GMS Achieve?

A Gender Management System can have the following beneficial impacts:

- ♦ development policies and programmes that work because they take into account the realities of, and draw upon the skills of women as well as men;
- ♦ a stronger science and technology human resource base because it seeks to remove systemic barriers to the participation of women and to maximise the full potential of the best and brightest minds in the country regardless of gender
- ♦ a fair and equitable distribution of power, resources and decision-making which will introduce diverse perspectives and values into the elaboration of policy and programmes to serve society as a whole;

- ◆ government ministries and institutions that are able to respond to the needs of both women and men in their respective sectors;
- ◆ staff who are trained and experienced in addressing issues from a gender perspective;
- ◆ bridges to partners in civil society undertaking gender scholarship and supporting actions to provide for the full integration of girls and women in science and technology; and
- ◆ an efficient and effective mechanism for meeting reporting requirements under international treaties and agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).