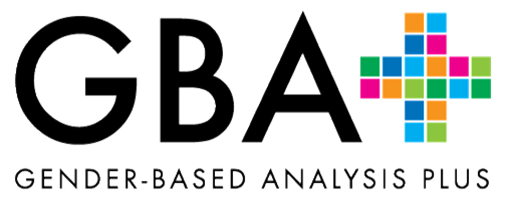
Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)

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How-to Guide

Last Updated: July 27, 2018

## Introduction

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide some guidance on how to integrate Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) into all stages of designing, implementing and evaluating projects, policies, and programmes. It is structured around key questions that you should ask and answer as you move through the various stages of developing your policy and/or program. This document focuses on the seven steps for integrating GBA+ in policy and program development process (see Annex A), but the guide is useful for other government processes, initiatives and documentation that require GBA+. The Centre of Expertise for GBA+ recognizes that this guide targets the programs and policies specifically; additional guidance materials related to services may be available through branch gender focal points.

The seven steps for the integration of GBA+ into Policy and Program Making Content have been adapted primarily and directly from resources provided from Status of Women Canada’s GBA+ online course, guidance documents, etc. National and international sources that document promising GBA+ best practices including provincial governments, foreign governments, the United Nations, etc. were consulted in the development of this guide.

## What is Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+)?

At ESDC, GBA+has been conceptualized as a process, a tool, a product, and a competency that employees should apply to all aspects of their work.

Applying GBA+ is an analytical **PROCESS** that assesses the potential impacts of policies, programs, services, and other initiatives on diverse groups of people, taking into account gender and other intersecting identify factors such as, for example, age, education, language and disability. Often, engaging in this process is referred to as applying a GBA+ lens. It requires a good understanding of the target population, the uncovering of assumptions and biases and the use of evidence and data to support analysis. A GBA+ lens provides a structured approach to inform decision-making so that policies and programs will further the overall commitment to achieve equity between all Canadians.

Following a thorough analysis and assessment of your target population and the potenital impacts of a policy, program, or initiative, GBA+ must be used as **TOOL** that addresses any issues, gaps or discrepancies uncovered as a result of the analysis. It is not enough to simply describe the target population, you must take a step further and adjust your initiative based on findings discovered in your analysis. Using GBA+ as a tool allows you to answer the question, “How do we address this problem?”. This is often reflected in your options, recommendations, implementation plan etc.

GBA+ as a **PRODUCT** is what results from undertaking the GBA+ process – it tells the story of your work using a GBA+ lens. It includes your findings and analysis and options and recommendations and can take the form of a Memorandum to Cabinet, Treasury Board submission, report, or deck. These findings can inform varioius components of the policy cycle. GBA+ outputs refer to the produced information regarding potential different impacts on diverse groups of people, and what that difference might be.

Finally, ESDC considers GBA+ as a **COMPETENCY** for all individuals to apply to their work in the department. It is an analytical skill that is strengthened with increased application. Being familiar with the GBA+ process, applying it our work, and using that information to support decision making is a competency for Government of Canada employees. GBA+ allows the work we do to better reflect and address the diverse needs of the Canadian population.

## Difference Between Sex and Gender

GBA+ begins with sex and gender. The physical and biological characteristics that distinguish male from female (sex) and the socially, culturally and historically defined characteristics associated with “feminine” and “masculine” (gender) are both important ways to identify individuals who may experience an issue in a similar way.Not all individuals identify with a binary concept of sex or gender categories of male and female, masculine and feminine. They can exist on a continuum, and can change over time.[[1]](#footnote-1) Non-binary definitions of sex and gender are often referred to as “trans”, or transgendered.

## F:\Gender Mainstreaming\SWC Resources\GBA_sexandgender.pngThe “Plus” in GBA+

We can use sex and gender as an entry point for analyzing an issue. but there are differences between women, men, boys and girls. The "plus" in the name highlights that GBA+ goes beyond gender, and includes the examination of a range of other intersecting identity factors sometimes referred to as identities, such as age, culture, language, sexual orientation or expression, education, (dis)abilities, geographic location, migration status, religion, ethnicity, race and socio-economic status, which intersect with sex and gender to create someone’s experiences.

## Rationale for GBA+

GBA+ makes good policy sense and the benefits are numerous:

* Better understanding of “clients’ needs”:  GBA+ helps us understand the characteristics and needs of the diverse individuals and communities we serve so that they are better reflected in policies, programs and initiatives. It also allows us to identify and address potential barriers and disadvantages that certain client groups mays have in accessing our services.
* More informed decision-making: GBA+ provides additional evidence-based information to support informed decision-making which results in a greater likelihood of programs and policies achieving their objectives for diverse groups of women, men, and gender-diverse people including those of different races, ethnicities, religions, ages, and those having mental or physical disabilities
* A source of lessons-learned: GBA+ allows for the identification of policies and programs that have worked well to advance vulnerable groups issues or those that have a negative impact on a particular group and need to be amended.
* Vehicle for equality: The application of GBA+ throughout the federal government is a key vehicle for ensuring that the Government of Canada meets its commitments to substantive gender equality and fair and equitable policies and programs for all residents of Canada.
* Legal commitments: GBA+ aligns with the principles outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act. Furthermore, the Government of Canada is committed to supporting the full implementation of GBA+ across federal departments and agencies.
* Government commitments: The Government of Canada is committed to improving how GBA+ is applied, the understanding of the process itself, and to ensure the quality of GBA+ across departments. In the 2016 Fall Economic Statement, the Government committed to completing and publishing a gender-based analysis of budgetary measures – in Budget 2017 and all future budgets. Budget 2017 included Canada’s first ever Gender Statement – an analysis of the ways in which measures proposed in Budget 2017 could impact women and men in different ways.

Assessing Gender and Diversity Responsiveness

The Centre of Expertise for GBA+ within ESDC is using a gender and diversity responsiveness scale to assist reporting on how GBA+ is being employed within the department. There is an indirect relationship between gender-and diversity responsiveness and GBA+. This assessment framework was grounded in the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Gender Responsive Assessment Scale which was intended to provide a gender sensitivity lens to assessing health policies and programs. Consequently, WHO’s tool was modified to align with experienced GBA+ competency levels, identify incremental stages in gender-responsiveness that is competency based, and avoid duplication between identified stages.[[2]](#footnote-2) Others can also use this scale to assess elements of their gender and diversity responsiveness.

| **Gender-Based Analysis Plus Competency Assessment Rating Dimensions** |
| --- |
| **Not Evident**   * Ignores gender and diversity norms, roles and relations * Perpetuates gender and diversity inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms over others * Privileges certain groups over others * Could lead to one group enjoying more rights or opportunities over others |
| **Improvement Required**   * Very often reinforces discrimination * Options constructed based on the principle of being fair by treating everyone the same * Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocations amongst diverse groups * Does not address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles or gender relations * Indicates gender and diversity awareness although no remedial action is identified |
| **Developing**   * Considers gender and diversity norms, roles and relations * Considers the specific need of different groups * Intentionally targets and benefits a specific group to achieve a certain policy or program goal to meet certain needs |
| **Established**   * Considers gender and diversity norms, roles and relations and how they affect access to, and control over resources * Considers the specific needs of different groups * Addresses roots causes of discrimination * Includes ways to transform harmful gender and diversity norms, roles and relations * The “object” links to governmental mandates concerning gender equality, and diversity * Includes strategies to foster progressive changes in power relations between different groups |
| **Not applicable:** Gender equality and diversity are deemed to be not applicable. For example, the proposal concerns administrative or operational issues that do not have an impact on potential program or service users. |

# 7 Steps for Integrating GBA+ into Policy and Program Development[[3]](#footnote-3)

While initiatives vary and there is no single GBA+ template, there are some key considerations and questions to ask at each step of the process. The 7 steps for integrating GBA+ into the policy and programs development as follows:



* Has the issue been examined through a GBA+ lens?
* Does content in the MC or TB Sub include a GBA+ lens?
* Does this content align with the most recent information?
* Does this information represent a variety of stakeholders’ perspectives?
* Does the content highlight how GBA+ results shaped the design?

*If the answer to any question is “no”, consider expanding the GBA+ approach.*

* Does your initiative impact one group more than another?
* Does applying a GBA+ lens identify that member of diverse groups are differently affected by the initiative?
* Does the initiative address known differences between genders (including gender diverse individuals)?
* Is there evidence available that supports this?
* If a GBA+ has not been undertaken, has a rationale and supporting evidence been provided?
* Are there historical disparities related to the initiative? (i.e. industry over-representation by one specific group)
* Is the initiative trying to address a historical wrong?
* Is the initiative considered corrective?
* Does the initiative's goal try to minimize differences between those originally affected?

*If there are different needs for the different genders and diverse groups, then the goal should be to meet all of these needs. These types of goals are “****corrective****”; they are about meeting the practical needs of the diverse Canadian population.*

* Is the goal of the initiative transformative?
* Does your initiative articulate any form of equality?
* Does your initiative articulate a specific equality?
* Does your initiative articulate equality between specific individuals or groups?

*Perhaps elements of the institutions, structures or underlying principles that contextualize the issue hinder equality achievement. Changing these dimensions refers to goals that are “****transformative****”.*

**GBA+ at the Design Phase**

**Gender and Diversity in Outcomes**

**GBA+ and the Historical Context**

**Gender and Diversity Goals and Objectives**

**IDENTIFY KEY ISSUE**

The first step is to identify the social, cultural, and economic dimensions in which your initiative operates because initiative beneficiaries exist and operate within these contexts.

Your initiative may have a narrow objective, but it will always be linked to broader government priorities. You should begin looking at gender, sex and other identity factors.

Look beyond the topic of the Memorandum to Cabinet or Treasury Board Submission. Consider the depth and breadth of the issue

The following questions may help you explore dimensions related to GBA+. The questions are not exhaustive, but are intended to provide you with an idea of how you might start thinking about incorporating GBA+ into the breadth and depth of your work.

* Have your individual assumptions and stereotypes been identified and considered during the initiative’s development?
* Are you making assumptions about the uniformity of populations?
* Are you making assumptions that all members of a particular population experience, and interpret an issue in the same way?
* Are you abl eto remain unbiased in your research , writing and development without broader engagement?

**Personal Assumptions**

* Have institutional assumptions and stereotypes been identified and considered during the development of the initiative?
* What assumptions informed the topic identification as an issue?

**Organizational Assumptions**

* Is it possible that your assumptions prevent you from asking difficult questions?
* Is it possible that your assumptions present you from hearing uncomfortable responses?
* Whose point of view is reflected in defining the problem?
* Have a range of perspectives been considered?
* Could certain groups be affected differently? How do you know?

**Potential Discomfort**

* What has triggered the issue?
* Who says it is an issue?
* If you consider an issue “neutral”, can you support this with evidence?
* Does evidence exist that highlights the issue is not neutral?

**Hearing Diverse Perspectives**

**CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS**

We all have assumptions and biases. In addition to our individual assumptions, the institution you work for may have formal or informal policies in place that can affect the design, development, implementation and outcome of an initiative.

Remember that workplace culture, behaviours, activities or processes all shape your assumptions.

Part of challenging assumptions means moving out of your comfort zone.

Although the initiative that you are working on may appear to affect everyone equally, always challenge your assumptions and whether gender and diversity implications exist.

As a conclusion to this challenge process , identify which **key** stakeholders may be affected differently and confirm whether you understand their perspectives and how the initiative impacts them

* Have a broad range of resources been sought out?
* Have findings from various resources been incorporated?
* Has disaggregated data from reliable sources been identified?
* What elements of diversity do these disaggregated elements address?
* Have these findings been considered during initiative development?

*Don’t forget: social conditions, and economic considerations can all affect someone’s ability to participate in your consultation process*

**Gather & Using Information**

* Do policies and programs exist that are similar?
* What policies and programs are relevant/applicable to this initiative?
* Has a legislative review been undertaken?
* Do policy actions consider the potential differential impact?
* Do policy solutions consider the potential differential impact?
* Do these policies or programs offer strong gender/diversity analysis?
* Have relevant best, promising or emerging practices been identified?

**Learning from others**

* Have research data and consultation feedback findings been analyzed through a GBA+ lens?
* What types of relevant disaggregated data already exist?
* What disaggregated data is required to support understanding the GBA+ dimensions of the issue?
* What are the gaps in data that need to be addressed?
* Have resources from external organizations (thinktanks, non-governmental organizations, academic and internal/external databases) been reviewed?
* Has expert opinion been solicited?

**Dissecting Data**

*For guidance on consultations, contact the Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch which supports and facilitates sharing, building and strengthening of stakeholder relations intelligence and expertise across the Department*.

**RESEARCH AND CONSULT**

You may need to undertake research and consult with various stakeholders to get a better idea of the context, the issues, the outcomes, and ultimately the impact of the initiative.

**A. Conduct Research:** Optimally, the data used should be disaggregated (i.e. broken down by, for example, gender, age, race, region, ethnicity, or ability). General public findings cannot be applied to all groups. If this information is not available, do not abandon the analysis. Identify gaps in existing data and consider incorporating this as part of the initiative’s performance measurement and evaluation efforts.

**B. Consult stakeholders:** GBA+ should be considered in the consultation process. This means involving various stakeholders early on. Seek out multiple viewpoints.

Ensure that the process is accessible to all. Examples of thinking about accessibility include providing ample time to respond, ensuring background materials can be understood, setting up video conferencing for those from remote regions who can’t participate in person.

* Have the results of research and consultation fed into the development of options and recommendations?
* Have both the positive, and negative impacts identified in the GBA+ been incorporated into the options as opportunities or risks?
* Do the options and recommendations incorporate a strategy to address existing gender and diversity differences?
* Do the options and recommendations incorporate a mitigation strategy to address future gender and diversity differences?
* Has a policy or program component been developed to address possible future differences?

**Informing Design**

* What do decision-makers need to know in order to make an informed decision?
* How will gender and diversity factor into the decision-making process?
* How will gender and diversity be weighted in presenting recommendations, and options?

**Decision-Making Needs**

* What will implementing the option bring to diverse groups of people?
* What are the costs associated with option implementation?
* How do stakeholders perceive the options in terms of costs, benefits, acceptability and practicality?
* What are the opportunity costs of not implementing options?

**Exploring Options**

* What are desired ultimate results of the initiative?
* What outcomes will improve the current inequitable situation between diverse groups of people?’

**Equality Outcomes**

**DEVELOP OPTIONS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Your choice of words can also have an impact — consider them carefully.

Findings should be used to inform your options and recommendations at all initiative stages. Ensure that the options you propose respond to the specific issues you have identified.

If the initiative could have differential impacts or unintended barriers, suggest strategies that could minimize these differences to ensure equality and improve results for Canadians.

*The Government of Canada defines performance monitoring as the ongoing, systematic process of collecting, analyzing and using performance information to assess and report on an organization's progress in meeting expected results and, if necessary, make adjustments to ensure these results are achieved. Evaluation is the systematic and neutral collection and analysis of evidence to judge merit, worth or value. Evaluation informs decision making, improvements, innovation and accountability. Evaluations examine questions related to relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.*

* Are GBA+ considerations featured in initiative results?
* Should GBA+ considerations be featured in initiative results?
* Do GBA+ dimensions appear in the initiative’s results at all?
* Are GBA+ dimensions embedded in results documentation (such as DRF, PIP, PMFs, logic models and theories of change)?
* Does the initiative’s results framework incorporate GBA+ in outcomes and indicators, but in processes as well?

**Aligning GBA+ and Results**

* What indicators are being used to gauge the initiative’s results?
* How do the identified indicators contribute to capturing changes in equality?
* Do the identified indicators capture differences between diverse groups of people?
* Will indicators measure changes over time?
* Will both qualitative and quantitative GBA+ information be produced/used?
* Is either qualitative or quantitative information regarded as more valuable than the other? *Question your assumptions as to why.*
* What is the cost of setting up performance monitoring systems that capture GBA+ information?
* What is the cost of not implementing these systems?

**GBA+ and Indicators**

Objectives of including gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation including tracking the evolution of gender relations, exploring the degree to which mainstreaming is including in activities and outcomes, ensuring equitable access to activities and outcomes, and creating gender mainstreaming learning opportunities. (source: AQOCI’s Comite Quebecois femme et developpement (CQFD) Community of practice “gender practice”. (2015). *Guide on Mainstreaming Gender Equality into the Program Cycle.*).

**Objectives**

**MONITOR AND EVALUATE**

The new [Policy on Results](https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=31300)(2016) supports the development of a strengthened culture of performance measurement, evaluation and innovation in program design and delivery. GBA+ is explicitly referenced in the accompanying suite of policy tools including the [Directive on Results](https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=31306), and the [Interim Guidance on Results](http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/The_Results_Portal). These resources identifying GBA+ as a federal government priority should be considered within the Departmental Results Framework (DRF), Program Inventory, and Performance Information Profiles (PIP).

Monitoring and evaluating can also help produce GBA+ information, building GBA+ capacity, and address inequality.

An integral component of monitoring and evaluating includes the development and implementation of indicators that produce GBA+ specific information. These indicators should be both qualitative and quantitative.

* Does the communication strategy take into account the needs of different groups of people?
* Does the communication strategy use messaging that reaches diverse groups of people?
* Do identified target audiences reflect the diversity of people affected?

**Recognizing diversity in strategies**

* Does the communication strategy use examples, language and symbols that are appropriate for diverse groups of people?
* Are appropriate concepts, ideas and definitions being used and understood?
* Do these communication needs differ from other initiative participants?
* Does the communications strategy perpetuate any stereotypes or assumptions about diverse groups of people?

**Identifying GBA+ appropriate communications**

* Do different groups read different publications?
* Do different groups watch or listen to different media sources?
* Do media consumption patterns vary for different groups?
* Do different groups have different credibility criteria?
* Do different groups have different values that cause them to respond to certain messages in different ways?

**Values**

**COMMUNICATE**

Communications both internal to the organization, and external communications should reflect GBA+ sensitivities. When communicating externally identify your target audiences and tailor messaging appropriately. This means demonstrating how your initiative supports diversity. Use inclusive language, examples and symbols.

Communications materials should not perpetuate stereotypes. If possible, choose images and languages that challenge stereotypes (i.e. that girls/women can be scientists).

When communicating internally, follow these guidelines but don’t forget to share or discuss your GBA+ results as well. This will help demonstrate how your initiative is aligned with the federal government’s commitment to gender equality, demonstrate what different parts of the organization are doing, and potentially identify areas for further action.

*For guidance on communication standards, engage with the Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch which serves as the focal point for strategic and operational communications advice, products and services in support of departmental outcomes, as well as for the initiatives and priorities that support them.*

* Is your GBA+ process documented?
* Is your GBA+ process a component of another study effort?
* Does your GBA+ set out what resources (financial, time expertise) contributed?
* Is the rationale for undertaking the GBA+ (or not) explicitly identified?
* Is the rationale valid?
* Would others think the same?
* Are the contextual considerations relating to the GBA+ clearly identified?

**Documenting GBA+ Rationale**

* Is the relationship between the GBA+ analysis, findings, conclusions and recommendations clearly documented?
* Are the GBA+ analysis considerations explicitly identified?
* Do the GBA+ findings support the conclusions drawn?
* Do the GBA+ recommendations flow naturally from the conclusions?
* Is the GBA+ relevant information presented in relation to other information?

**Ensuring a Logical Flow**

* How are GBA+ findings, conclusions and recommendations presented?
* Is attention drawn specifically to GBA+ findings, conclusions and recommendations within the report (or presentation)?
* Is the GBA+ information presented to complement other information?
* Is it clear how the GBA+ results influenced the proposed approach?
* If conducting ta GBA+ was a challenge, is this acknowledged and addressed for future action?

**Presenting GBA+ results**

**DOCUMENT**

Documenting your GBA+ is essential throughout the lifecycle of the initiative.

The background information provides meaningful context, but also provides evidence that a GBA+ was conducted. It also helps to explain the process that guided the GBA+.

Additionally, if a GBA+ was not conducted, documentation should contain a rationale as to why. This evidence also needs to be in place.

Your GBA+ Centre of Expertise is here to assist you. Questions can be submitted to Francois Lachancef and Bryan Hamel.

*Additional information on GBA+ can be found on* [*ESDC’s internal SharePoint site*](http://dialogue/grp/GBA/SitePages/Home.aspx)*, the* [*SWC website*](http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acs/index-en.html) *and SWC’s* [*GBA+ GCpedia page*](http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/GBA+_(Gender-based_Analysis+))

*Your GBA+ Center of Expertise Team is here to help you along the way! You can submit your questions to:*

* *Francois Lachance;*
* *Bryan Hamel;*

Annex A[[4]](#footnote-4):



**Policy Approval**

**Diagnostic   
and analysis**

**Policy Options**

**Policy/Program Implementation**

**Policy/ Program Monitoring**

**Policy/ Program Evaluation**

**Definition   
of issue**

GBA+ in research and consultations

**Policy/Program Design**

GBA+ in federal Budget

GBA+ in Memorandum to Cabinet

GBA+ in TB submissions

GBA+ in Departmental Results Framework, Program inventories, Performance Information Profiles, Departmental Plans, Departmental Results Report

GBA+ in terms and conditions, directives, Memorandum of understanding, funding agreements

GBA+ in Evaluation

GBA+ in program performance indicators and data collection

GBA+ in legislations and regulations

Statistics Canada GBA+ Portal

GBA+ in Budget 2-pager

GBA+ Outputs in the Policy Life Cycle

1. For more information on non-binary gender identities, please refer to some of the following resources: “What does it mean to be non-binary?”, Sexpression UK: <http://sexpression.org.uk/non-binary-gender/>; and

   “Lecture 11 – What is a Non-Binary Gender Identity?”, *Health Across the Gender Spectrum*, Stanford University: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/health-gender-spectrum/lecture/Rg8jN/what-is-a-non-binary-gender-identity> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WHO Gender Responsive Assessment Scale. World Health Organization, Department of Gender, Women and Health (2011). Gender mainstreaming for health managers: A practical approach. WHO Press: Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved from : http://www.who.int/gender-equity-rights/knowledge/health\_managers\_guide/en/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The 7 steps and corresponding content below have been adapted from Status of Women Canada’s GBA+ training. For more information please: <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acs/course-cours-en.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Source: SWC [↑](#footnote-ref-4)