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Commodities
for sustainable fisheries

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Guidelines for an inclusive
**gender approach in
communication products**

Index

Introduction

The Global Sustainable Supply Chains for Marine Commodities Project (GMC) is an interregional initiative implemented by the Ministries and Bureaus of Fisheries and Planning of Costa Rica, Ecuador, Indonesia and the Philippines, with technical support by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), facilitated by Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The GMC Project objective is to contribute to the transformation of the seafood market by mainstreaming sustainability in the value chain of important seafood commodities from developing countries, improving emerging tools such as corporate sustainable purchasing policies and Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs), driving hanges in national fisheries policy for improved fisheries administration, and generating learnings to be shared worldwide.

As part of the **gender strategy developed for the GMC project**, a need to formulate an easy tool that serves as a starting point for the design and revision of the project's communication products was identified.

This practical and easy to follow "guidelines tool" outlines tips for how to apply a gender and inclusion lens while developing and reviewing communications materials specifically related to the GMC project.

The intention is to provide basic guidance for thinking more deeply and critically about how gender inclusion and gender equality can be adhered into communications products and the processes to develop them.

> The gender guidelines created for the GMC project can be used by other initiatives interested in incorporating the gender perspective in their communication products, especially those directly related to the fisheries sector.

▶ Why a gender and communication **easy guidelines tool for the GMC project?**

Communication is essential to promote gender equality, by transforming attitudes and social norms that perpetuate gender based discrimination, even if a project is not conceived as a gender transformative or gender responsive initiative.

Communication is closely linked to empowerment as it contributes to building confidence and skills to negotiate choices and demand for equal access to and control of resources (UNICEF South Asia, 2018).

Communication products through language and image sharing, often reflects the widely accepted socio cultural norms and beliefs that a society holds, including different roles that men and women play within a specific sector, such as the fishery sector. Through the communications products, the GMC project team involved could not intentionally lose the opportunity to contribute to "help shape cultures and challenge stereotypes".

Cultures and languages differs across the GMC target countries, but with this practical tool, users have the opportunity to challenge the way they think, and easily understand basic common mistakes that lead to a gender bias, and develop materials with a gender inclusive approach, aiming at increasing the visibility of women playing diverse roles within the GMC supported fisheries value chains and the contribution of the GMC to gender equality and women empowerment.

▶ Who is this **guidelines tool for?**

Any person responsible for managing, producing or reviewing communication material derived from the GMC project, as well as the communication teams of projects or initiatives related to the fishery sector.

▶ What are the key principles **defined for gender mainstreaming** into the GMC communication products?

In order to have an easy to follow guidelines tool that fit easily with the GMC project; and, on the other hand a tool that incorporates (and summarize) the basic principles for gender and communications defined by UNDP, three elemental principles have been defined specifically for mainstream the gender approach in to the project communications material, as presented below:

Challenging stereotypes

Using a gender inclusive language

Re-Thinking the message
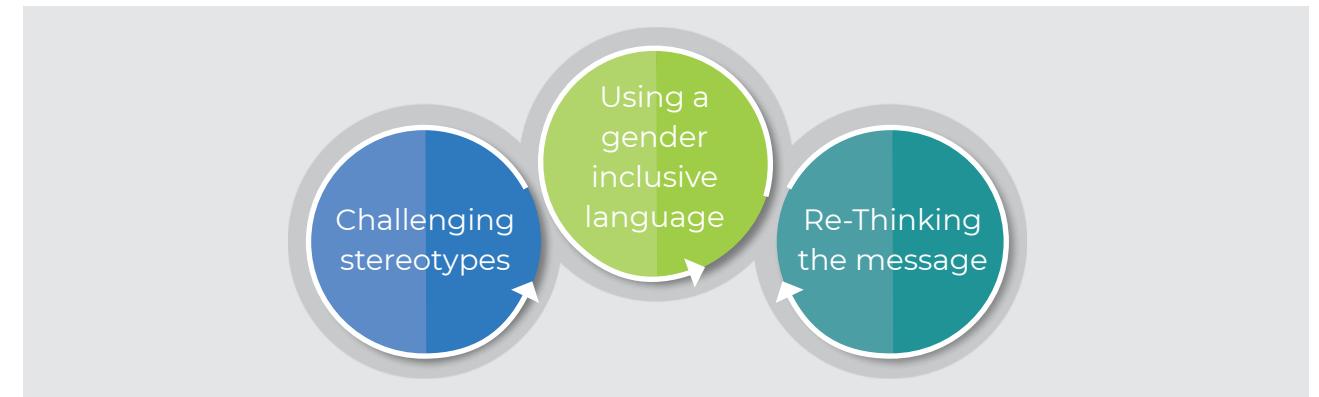
The following guidelines tool consist of a checklist, and considers each "principle" with a list of common mistakes to "**avoid**" (gender biased[1]) and "**recommendations**" (biased free) based on a gender inclusive approach. The tool provides examples appropriate to the GMC contexts and/or tips that serve as a practical guide, including a verification question defined as auto test for users. The guidelines tool apply for written and oral communications and visual or audiovisual materials as well.

Footnotes ⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯⋯•

1. Gender Biased: Making decisions based on gender that result in favoring one gender over the other, which often results in contexts that are favoring men and/or boys over women and/or girls. A biased term is a word or phrase that promotes a preconceived opinion or prejudice.

GMC Gender and
**Communication
checklist**

Challenging **stereotypes**

Avoid ✖

Presenting information focusing on gendered roles.

For example

Men catching and women working in processing activities.

Portraying certain jobs or positions more appropriate for one gender.

For example

Portraying men behind desks or in a leading role and women standing to the side or in a supporting role, or a man explaining something to a women's only group.

Recommended ✔

Present women and men equally[2] participating in diversity of roles.

Important

Within the fishery/specific commodity value chain (even if men or women are more involved in "X" link/activity within the value chain[3]). This contributes to deconstructing stereotypes and gender norms.

Recommended

Tips

Present women and men equally[2] participating in diversity of roles.

- Choose images that show women and men in non-traditional and non-stereotypical roles and professions, such as women in decision-making positions or men as caregivers. Women inserted in catching activities and men participating in post harvesting/processing.

- Ensure (when possible[4]) equal numbers of women and men in your image selection.

- Include quantitative information (data disaggregated by sex) and complement images or videos with real data.

- Consider posture, expressions, gestures, positioning and clothing within a picture to balance, equal status and authority between men and women.
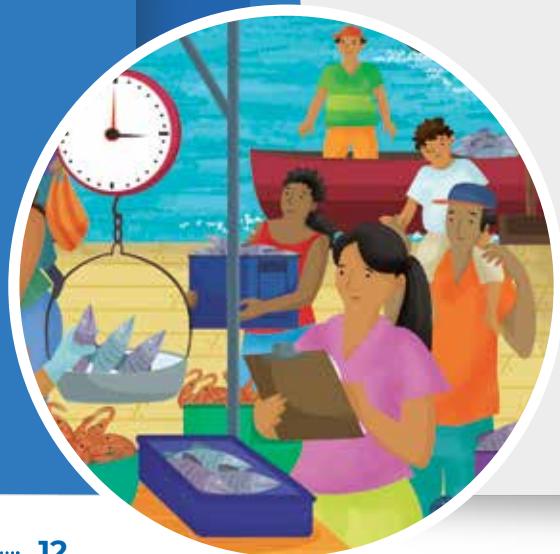
Notes

▶ Are women and men fairly and equally visible[5] in the story?

Verification questions

⬤───● YES ⬤ ────── NO ⬤

COMMENT ┈┈┈●

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Footnotes ┈┈┈┈┈┈┈●

2. Be careful, when thinking in equal participation, the rule 50-50 is not exactly as fair as it appears. When considering "fair and equally visible", the concept of "fair" is crutial, it means that a story or a photo with equal numbers of women and men in which men are presented in leadership roles and women are presented in supporting roles does not qualify as fair visibility.

3. It is not the intention of hiding information, but projecting the true potential that women and men can bring to the entire value chain. So consider quantitative information and present real data with images. Photos can be accompanied by country statistical information (if possible).

4. While it may not be possible to have an equal number of women and men in every photograph, illustration, or video, it is important that the total presentation in these media be as balanced as possible

5. Fair visibility means that our communication does not perpetuate gender stereotypes and allows men and women to be on equal footing. Fair visibility can be achieved by presenting a diversity of roles for both women and men. (UNDP, 2018).

Challenging **stereotypes**

Avoid ✕

Ignoring multiethnicity and cultures in images and videos.

For example

Images or videos of work sessions or panels (dominated by men) and not representing the local context.

Recommended ✓

Include images of women and men interacting in a local context.

Important

Include images of women and men interacting and inserted in the fishery value chain, representing the local context, religions, races and culture of the 4 GMC Project target countries.

Recommended

Include images of women and men interacting in a local context.

Tips

- Document and portray multiethnicity and gender diversity in working groups and platforms, field visits, etc.

- Go beyond the understanding of cultural context.

- Focus on help overcoming discriminatory cultural norms, and enhance diversity, traditions and cultural aspects that combined with expressions of gender equality contribute to challenging stereotypes.

- Try to show the diversity of women and men in infographics.

- Incorporate locals in the quality assurance when possible.

Notes

Is diversity[6] portrayed?

Verification questions

YES ⚪ NO ⚪

COMMENT

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Footnotes

6. GMC target countries are characterized by a diversity of cultures, religions, traditions, races and ethnicities. It is relevant to portray diversity with a gender approach. Gender equality will not be achieved unless we understand and respond to the different experiences and needs of women and men belonging to different groups.

Challenging **stereotypes**

Avoid

Using colors traditionally associated to a gender.

For example

Pink color for women and blue color for men.

Recommended

Use non-stereotypical colors or challenge current stereotypes, inverting colors traditionally associated to a gender.

For example

Use pink color for men and blue for women to present data disaggregated by sex in graphics or diagrams.

Recommended

Use non-stereotypical colors or challenge current stereotypes, inverting colors traditionally associated to a gender.

Tips

- Choose orange, green, gray or other colors that are not commonly associated to one gender.

- The GMC visual identity have green and orange colors that could be used and match for this purpose.

Notes

Is the product using non-stereotypical colors to represent women and men?

Verification questions

YES   NO

COMMENT

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Using a gender **inclusive language**

Avoid

Using Male or Female when referring to man and woman.

For example

A reduced female representation in the company.

Addressing women by their marital status.

For example

- Fisherman's wife or fisherman´s widow
- Mrs. Lopez (Juan Lopez´s wife) is in charge of cleaning and primary processing.

Recommended

**Use women and men.
Use boy and girl.**

For example

A reduced representation of women in the company.

Consejos:

- The use of female or male is only when the biological distinction is relevant or needs to be preserved.

Use "Ms." when addressing or referring to a woman, as an alternative to "Miss" and "Mrs."

Tips

- Use "Ms." unless necessary, or if this is how individual women prefer to be addressed.
- Avoid gender-biased expressions or expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes when addressing women or men/ men and women
- If you include the title of the profession and the last name, make sure that all men and women in the document, publication or video are addressed the same

Avoid

Using gendered generic terms.

For example

Fisherman, Mother tongue, Chairman.

Recommended

Use neutral terms.

For example

Fishers, Native Tongue, Chair person

Tips:

- Avoid gender-specific nouns when making generic references to both men and women, and use gender neutral terms

- Professions and Job titles should be gender inclusive

- A good test for gender-inclusive language is to imagine a diverse group of people reading your document or watching your video, would each reader feel respected?

Avoid

Gender-specific pronoun(s) such as "he, him, his, she, her, hers" except when referring to a specific person.

For example

- Each Platform key representative will present his proposal to the committee when he is ready.

Recommended

Use the pronoun they or them as gender-neutral alternatives. This also supports the use of nonbinary language in pronouns.

For example

- Platform key representatives will present their proposals to the committee when they are ready.

Tip:

- If it works for your particular sentence, using plural forms is often an excellent option

Avoid

Men go first when referring to men and women.

For example

- Men and women are participating in the harvesting process of the Filipino octopus.

- Men and women participate in fisherfolks organizations, but men dominate decision making.

For example

- Men and women are participating in the harvesting process of the Filipino octopus.

- Women and men participate in fisherfolks organizations, but women are commonly excluded in decision making.

Tips:

- Always putting men first in such phrases gives the impression that women are afterthoughts or somehow less important than men.

- Count the number of times women and men are mentioned (together) in the document and alternate the order to make a balance

- When launching a communication product (meetings, platforms, other activities within the GMC project), rather than using ladies and gentlemen, use generic terms that favor neither sex and more accurately reflect the purpose of the gathering or meeting. Examples are colleagues, delegates, or members of the working group.

Recommended

Alternate the word order in phrases, so that neither women nor men always go first.

▶ Is the communication product using a gender-inclusive language[7]?

Notes

Verification questions

• YES ◯ •••• NO ◯

COMMENT •••••

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Footnotes ••••••••••••••••••••••••••

7. Forms of communication that exclude women are found within words or phrases that unnecessarily differentiate between men and women, subsecuently trivializing or diminishing either gender. Language is a fundamental part of gender inequality and, as the main vehicle of human interaction, also provides for a frame to where social context is grounded. When reading masculine forms intended to be generic, readers tend to associate men and exclude women. Using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identity, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. *Given the key role of language in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using gender-inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias (United Nations, 2019)*

For further examples and details, look at
https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml

Re-thinking
the message

Avoid

Message that portrays/present women as victims or passive recipients of cooperation.

For example

- "Maritoni Santos needed a lot of money and technical support to grow a sustainable blue swimming crab business. With the aid and investment of the GMC strategic allies, she was able to increase her business with a sustainable approach..."

- Pictures of women in victimized ways.

Recommended

Include language, images and message that present women as agents of change.

For example

- "Maritoni Santos is the head of a small blue swimming crab business in Philippines. Through a grant obtained by the Private Sector organizations and by attending a Sustainable fishery training from the BSC FIP, she is now trading abroad, reinvesting her profits, and giving employment to five more women from her community..."

Recommended

Include language, images and message that present women as agents of change.

Tips

- Portray women in dignified ways.

- Promote the potentials of men and women and what they have achieved as active participant of development.

- Triangle and present information related to sustainability options when the cooperation finish or the project close.

Notes

Are women in the story presented as agent of change instead of victims or passive beneficiaries of the GMC project?

Verification questions

YES ○ NO ○

COMMENT

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Re-thinking
the message

> I encourage women working in all activities of the fishery supply chain to participate in **the Sustainable Marine Commodity Platforms** since is a way to express our concern and be part of the decision making that could affect our participation or insertion in different jobs.

Avoid

Stories that portrays just women[8] but with confusing messages.

For example

- "I am Maria Lopez and is not easy for me to have the position I have in this post harvesting company dominated by men, since men do not trust me until they see that I do things right"

- "Women participate in all activities within the fishery value chain, so come and participate in the platforms, since 4 countries are participating…"

Recommended

Stories portraying "women" or "women and men", but with clear message of what is concerning to men and/or women.

For example

- Maria Lopez is the only women working at the local post harvesting company in a Costa Rican port. The company is dominated by men, but despite the barriers faced by women in the sector, Maria has overcome the obstacles to reach a leading position. Now she became the main supervisor at the company.

- "Women participate in all activities of the fishery value chain, but women do not have the same access to resources and decision making than men do".

Recommended

Stories portraying "women" or "women and men", but with clear message of what is concerning to men and/or women.

Tips

- Ask yourself who is visible and who is invisible, who is active and who is passive in the communication product.

- What is the material supposed to demonstrate? What do you want to say with the material? Make sure what do you specifically want to transmit in terms of men and women concerns that need to be address or; make sure that you are transmitting a clear message of success (women and men, or women) related to the GMC or the fishery industry.

- Portray women accomplishing great results in spite of structural gender inequalities, not in spite of their gender.

- It is important to see and listen to the people telling their story in a video, but in some cases is necessary to additionally include a narrator to present a clearer message (use women and men voices equality).

- Use the gender analysis by country developed for the GMC gender strategy as a basis to incorporate the gender dimension in to the communication material messages.

Notes

Is there a clear message (incorporating the gender perspective) in the communication product?[9]

Verification questions

•······ YES ⬤ ·······NO ⬤

COMMENT ·······•

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Footnotes ·····························•

8. Covering stories that raises women voices is relevant, but be careful when producing material that just present women without a clear message.

9. Mixing too much messages tend to lose the real message.

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