

HOW TO CONDUCT A GENDER AUDIT USING THE BALANCED SCORE CARD

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SYNTHESIS OF GENDER AUDIT PILOT CONDUCTED IN RWANDA* (in separate document)

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INTRODUCTION

These guidelines are written for senior managers and gender auditors of organisations who are interested in self assessing their progress towards their gender policy or targets.

The guidelines take as their starting point a business methodology called the Balanced Score Card. This is a helpful and well-tested methodology for examining organisational performance.

This methodology has been tested by eight organisations in Rwanda in 2007. These organisations have included bilateral and multi-lateral development agencies and international and local civil society organisations. Each organisation has adapted the basic methodology to their own preferences and style. But for all, the outcome has been useful insights into the things they do well in relation to gender equality, and the things they could do better.

KEY MESSAGES

- This Gender Audit methodology uses the Balanced Score Card.
- Organisations self-assess their performance with full staff participation.
- Support from Senior Managers is necessary.
- Staff time and other resources are required.
- The Gender Audit can be a one-off event, or it can be repeated.
- The Gender Audit approaches and outcomes can be shared and compared with other organisations.

SECTION 1: GENDER AUDITING

1.1 WHAT is a Gender Audit?

Most development organisations have policies or commitments supporting gender equality through their human resources policy and their programme strategies. But many organisations do not know how well they are achieving their commitments to gender equality.

Organisations have a choice of evaluating their programmes – that is, examining what impact they are having through their development support. But a Gender Audit is different. Its aim is to see whether the policies, practices, systems, procedures, culture and resources are being used in the most effective way to deliver the organisation's commitments to gender equality.

A Gender Audit is a guided process used by the organisation – with the participation of all its staff – to examine what they do well and what they could do better in pursuit of gender equality.

1.2 WHY conduct a Gender Audit?

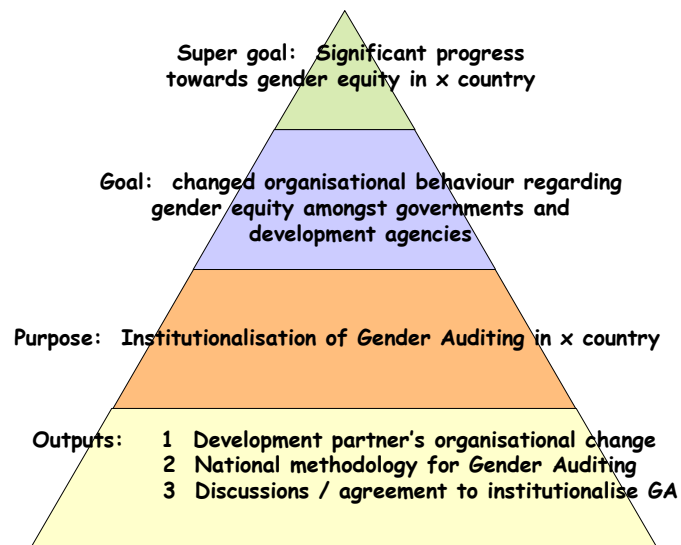
Gender Audits are conducted to identify where organisations are performing effectively and to pin-point areas that need attention.

Gender auditing starts from an assumption that the things that constrain the delivery of good gender development practice might be the organisation's ways of working. It presumes that organisations are willing to become more effective in the way they institutionalise gender practices and that this will have an effect on the support they offer to others.

The logic model for this method of gender auditing makes three assumptions:

- That the Gender Audit will help development agencies identify gaps between their own gender equality policy and practice, and the way their programmes impact on gender equality.
- That increased self-awareness and understanding of their own practices on gender will enable organisations to ask questions of their development partners, in particular the governments they work with, about their policies and practices.
- That institutionalised gender auditing can help governments and their partners to set standards under the Paris Declaration, and contribute to mutual accountability for improvements in practices and policies on gender equality.

Diagram 1 below sets out the hierarchy of objectives for the Gender Audit process :



1.3 WHO conducts a Gender Audit?

- The organisation – it is a self-assessment process managed by the organisation with the participation of all its staff
- Senior management need to nominate two people to take on the role and tasks of Gender Auditors

For these people to be effective in their role as Gender Auditors, top management need to:

- demonstrate commitment to the process, and take full ownership of the results
- give visible recognition and authorisation for the Gender Auditors' work
- provide the Gender Auditors with the resources they need to do the job properly: adequate time and access to physical resources such as meeting rooms, copying facilities and documents.

External consultants with expertise in gender auditing can assist the Gender Auditors by guiding and mentoring them through the process. The audit should remain self-assessment, based on participatory methods of data collection and shared learning of results across the whole organisation. It makes no sense to have a report produced by external 'experts' to which staff of the organisation feel no personal commitment.

1.4 WHEN can a Gender Audit be conducted?

- Gender auditing can be a one-off event or it can be repeated. It can become an **ongoing process of review and improvement** in the organisation's capacity to deliver programmes and strategies that will lead to gender equality.
- Gender auditing can be a **useful tool in the organisation's performance monitoring framework**. Most organisations are required to review their programmes annually, and present their proposed workplan for the following year to their headquarters .
- The results of **the first Gender Audit will become the baseline against which to measure progress**. The gender audit action plan establishes actions to be taken in the following months or years. Its can be incorporated into the organisation's annual workplans, and its longer-term country strategy.

SECTION 2: THE BALANCED SCORE CARD

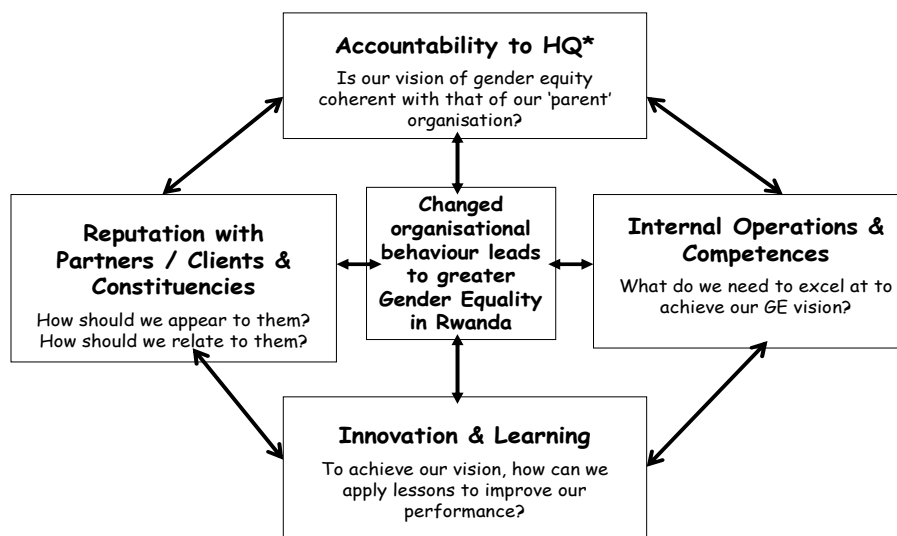
2.1 What is the Balanced Score Card?

The Balanced Score Card was originally designed as a management tool for use in business. Its purpose is to identify where and how the business needs to improve performance in order to realise strategic objectives. It has been adapted for use by development agencies doing gender auditing in Rwanda.

2.2 How is the BSC applied to gender auditing?

The Balanced Score Card provides a central framework for analysis. Organisations that gender audit examine four key areas ('core elements') of organisational policies, systems and practices. Diagram 2 shows the four core elements that were used in Rwanda:

Diagram 2: The Balanced Scorecard used in Rwanda



* HQ can refer to head offices of donors and INGOs, or Central Government ministries, or Parliament, or head office of national NGO, depending on the type and level of organisation

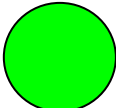
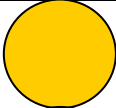
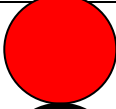

2.3 What does the BSC measure?

The indicators used in each of the four core elements of the Rwanda Gender Audits are set out in Annex A. Eight participating development agencies designed and agreed these through workshops.

The indicators for the four elements can be varied to suit the context of the Audit and the organisation’s perspective. We have tested the ones in the diagram above and at Annex A, and found them to be robust. But, it may be important to discuss indicators to ensure they “fit” the organisation.

2.4 How does scoring take place?

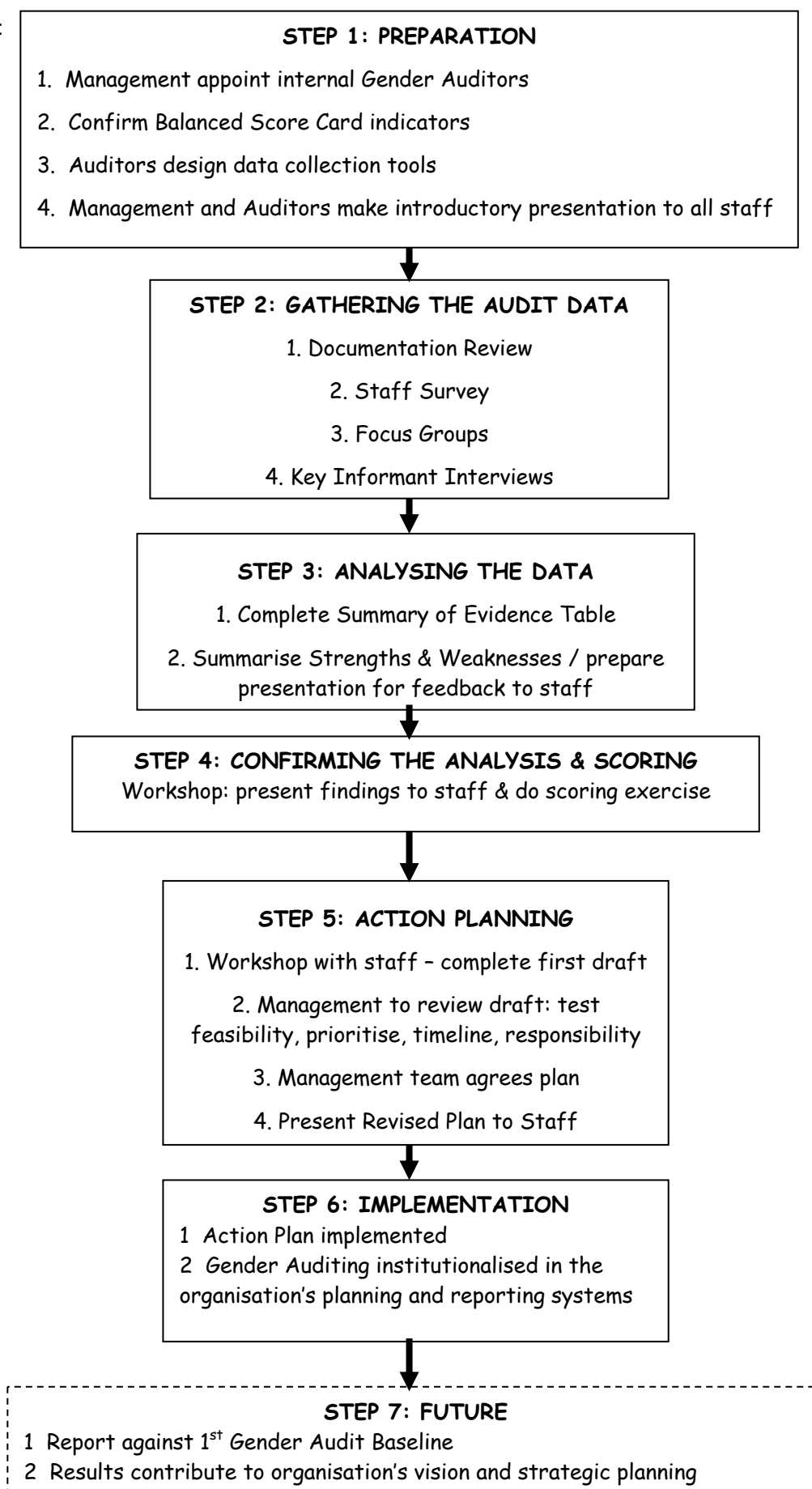
The Rwanda Gender Audit Project used a simple, easily understood, system of scoring with traffic lights. See Diagram 3 below:

| | |
|---|---|
|  | GREEN: Objective/indicator has been fully achieved. |
|  | ORANGE: Objective/indicator has been mostly achieved, and action is in place to fully achieve it |
|  | RED: Objective/indicator has been partly achieved, but there remain concerns about some aspects. |
|  | BLACK: Objective/indicator has not been achieved at all, and there are no plans for achieving it. |

SECTION 3

STEP BY STEP APPROACH TO GENDER AUDITING USING THE BALANCED SCORECARD

Diagram4:



3.1 STEP 1 : PREPARATION PHASE

| Tasks | Responsibility |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Appoint Gender Auditors and inform all staff of their task | Senior Management |
| Confirm indicators in the Balanced Score Card | Senior Management and Gender Auditors |
| Design tools for use in data collection | Gender Auditors |
| Make an introductory presentation to all staff about the Gender Audit | Senior Management and Gender Auditors |

The first shared event is a presentation of the audit to staff. The purpose is to ensure they all know what is happening and how they will be involved. They will want to know how the outcome of the audit may impact on their work styles (eg it will probably place a stronger emphasis on gender issues in programme design and impact monitoring).

3.2 STEP 2 : GATHERING THE AUDIT DATA

Quantitative and participatory tools are used to gather the data for the audit. In Rwanda these included:

- Document review
- Structured survey amongst staff
- Focus groups with staff and partners
- Key informant interviews with key HQ and country staff, and representatives of partners

i) Document review

The document review establishes the organisation's formal policy, strategy and working practice on gender equality in :

- Design and implementation of its development programmes, and
- Implementation of its internal human resource policies

The Document Matrix used by the Rwanda Gender Audit Project is at Annex B.

Examples of the documents reviewed in Rwanda are at Annex C.

Key statements on gender should be extracted from each document reviewed. If a document does not include any statements on gender make a note that this is a key omission.

For example, in Rwanda some organisations found there was no reference to sexual harassment in their HR policies or codes of practice. They felt there should be written clarification that the organisation would not tolerate such behaviour, along with instructions on where to report and discuss the matter and what action the perpetrator should expect. In another instance, instructions for issuing terms of reference to consultants did not include a requirement on gender analysis.

ii) Staff Survey

The purpose of conducting a survey amongst all staff is to establish how well informed they are about the organisation's gender policies and practices.

The survey should be conducted after the document review when extracted policy statements have identified what staff might be expected to know. The staff survey is conducted before the focus groups when issues raised by the survey are explored.

Guidance for designing the questionnaire:

- It should not take longer than 20-30 minutes to complete.
- As far as possible questions should be clearly stated with standard (tick box) answer options.
- Minimise written responses as this adds to the time it takes to complete the form and these are issues likely to be more suited to the focus group discussion
- Translate the form into locally used languages.

The questionnaire used in Rwanda is attached at Annex D.

A simple Excel sheet can be used for analysing the data.

iii) Focus Groups

- Focus groups typically comprise 6 - 10 participants who share similar interests.
- Focus groups typically cover 5-10 main questions and span of 1.5 - 2 hours.
- Focus groups can either be structured (with a set format) or unstructured (completely open). A structured group is helpful when comparing information between

groups. A well designed structure should help the conversation develop in line with the research questions.

- Three important ground rules for focus groups: a) keep focused, b) maintain momentum and c) get closure on questions (eg do frequent summaries of the discussion).
- When practical try to get an idea of how many in the group hold a similar view (eg by using participation methods such as ranking, scaling, drawing diagrams, etc)
- Conclude the session with a summary of what has been agreed or stated.
- Capture all the essential information on flipcharts and / or by note taking. (Flipcharts are best because they are transparent and can be challenged.)
- After the focus group, type up notes while they are fresh. Agree notes and conclusions with a co-facilitator.

iv) Key Informant Interviews

The purpose of Key Informant Interviews is to investigate “deep” issues arising with the people responsible. Before the interview:

- develop a set of questions or topics
- send these to the interviewee in advance so they have time to consider their answers and gather additional information.

In addition to face to face interviews, telephone or video-conference interviews are helpful for probing people at Head Office. DFID Rwanda held two video conferences with staff at HQ.

Typically the Rwanda agencies conducted interviews with: Head of Office, Gender Officer (or whoever had responsibility for gender issues), Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, the HR Manager, the Finance Manager, and one or two representatives of key partner-organisations or clients.

3.3 STEP 3 : ANALYSING THE DATA

This step comprises two tasks:

- Summarising the evidence into a table. An example of the Rwanda Gender Audit Project is at Annex E.
- From this, summarise the Strengths and Challenges against each of the four core elements of the Balanced Score Card.

The Strengths and Challenges Table can be put into a power point presentation for use in the Staff Feedback Workshop.

Below is an example from a power point presentation matrix summarising the Strengths and Challenges of one of the agencies participating in the Rwanda audits:

Diagram 5: Example of Strengths & Challenges for Power Point presentation

| Internal Operations & Competences | |
|---|---|
| <p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HQ policy supports Gender Equality (Partially) • Strong commitment of staff to apply GE • Field level intervention strategies target women's empowerment • Leadership is supportive of GE at HQ and Country Office levels | <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff recognise they have low understanding of gender equity and need more capacity building in GE • Weak internal systems in general, eg no regular performance appraisal system • Lack of organisational structure or incentives to promote GE • Need to develop more appropriate tools (including learning from others who have tools) and to train staff in use of these • Procurement system does not promote GE |

3.4 STEP 4: FEEDBACK TO MANAGEMENT AND STAFF & SCORING EXERCISE

A Workshop is held with staff to give them the results of the Audit. The summary of Strengths and Challenges opens this workshop. In plenary or in groups, ask staff:

- Do they agree with the Strengths and Challenges listed for each core element?
- Do they want to add any more?

Scoring:





The next step is for staff to score themselves against each of the core elements and indicators of the Strengths and Challenges.

The value of the scoring exercise is open and frank discussion. It is not intended to be a rigid marking system or a means of comparing one organisation with another.

Some organisations in Rwanda were very tough and critical of themselves; others felt they should emphasise their achievements rather than their weaknesses. The

organisations that gave themselves many “green” ratings will have a tough task maintaining them in future!

Diagram 6 shows an example of how the scoring exercise can be conducted. This is done in plenary or small groups. This table uses the indicators of Core Element 2 of the Balanced Score Card.

| Task: Traffic light the following statements on Internal Operations and Competences: | |
|--|---|
| Staff are competent and incentivised to apply gender equality objectives in their work |  |
| Leadership, symbols and values support the organisation’s gender equality objectives |  |
| Systems and procedures are in place for checking progress and reporting achievements |  |
| Organisational structures and control mechanisms promote and reward gender equitable behaviour |  |

3.5 STEP 5 : ACTION PLANNING

Action Planning is about prioritising for the short term and longer term development. It should set the time expected for actions and assign responsibility within the organisation.

i) Using the Balanced Score Card in Gender Action Planning

The Balanced Score Card is a tool to assist organisational change. It helps identify the changes required in :

- the relationship with HQ
- in internal processes and systems
- In mechanisms for innovation and learning
- relationships with partners

The relevant questions are :

- a) What will be the organisation’s policy on gender equality?**
- b) How much change do we want?**

c) How will we manage the changes over the next year and beyond?





The “temperature” of organisations differ – each must decide how best to respond to the findings of the Gender Audit. So far in Rwanda, some organisations have made large scale changes while others have adopted an incremental approach by adopting small changes. The scale and rate of change needs to be agreed with senior management.

ii) Workshop with staff to complete first draft Action Plan

Scoring at the Staff Feedback Workshop produces a set of 4 x 4 (16 in total) scores for each organisation. This is the basis for action planning. Action planning concentrates on the lowest scoring indicators – that is, the blacks and the reds.

Diagram 7 is a matrix for workshop-based action planning.

Diagram 7: Action Planning Matrix

| Core Element 2. Internal Operations and Competencies How do we want to change our systems and processes? | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| | <i>We rated ourselves as:</i> | <i>What do we need to do to stay at "green" or to get to "green" over the next 2-3 years</i> | <i>Whose area of responsibility does this action fall within?</i> |
| <i>2.1: Staff are competent and incentivised to apply gender equality objectives in their work</i> |  | | |
| <i>2.2: Leadership, symbols and values support the organisation's gender equality objectives</i> |  | | |
| <i>2.3: Systems and procedures are in place for checking progress and reporting achievements</i> |  | | |
| <i>2.4: Organisational structures and control mechanisms promote and reward gender equitable behaviour</i> |  | | |

The workshop is used to build staff consensus on ways to overcome weaknesses and gaps. But this is not the conclusion :

- At this stage the Action Plan is a provisional draft
- Gender Auditors and senior managers now need to test the feasibility of each action and establish priorities and timeframes

It is helpful to test the Action plan using three techniques :

- 1) Review the plan to see if it meets organisational objectives:
 - Whether responsibility and workload has been reasonably spread?
 - Who, if anyone, needs to be given more time to implementing the plan?
 - Whether senior management taken on specific responsibilities?
 - Whether the action plan crosses all activities of the organisation?

2) List all staff in the organisation down one axis and establish what contribution each individual is making to the gender action plan:

| Staff Category? | Contribution to Gender Action Plan? |
|---------------------------|--|
| Head of Country Office | |
| Head of Programmes | |
| Head of Finance and Admin | |
| HR Manager | |
| Gender Officer | |
| etc | |

3) Reformatting the Action Plan according to time:

| | Next 3 Weeks | Next 3 Months | Next 6 Months | Next 2 Years |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| <i>(Insert Action 1)</i> | | | | |
| <i>(Insert Action 2)</i> | | | | |
| <i>(Insert Action 3)</i> | | | | |
| <i>etc</i> | | | | |

This format will:

- add urgency
- allow an assessment of the fit between the Gender Action Plan and other activities and events going on in the organisations
- help to establish sequencing between different actions
- assist progress monitoring.

The revised plan should then be endorsed by the Senior Management Team and presented back to all staff for their endorsement.

Examples of the kinds of action included in the Rwanda Gender Audit Action Plans are at Annex F

3.6 STEP 6 : IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

There are two critical tasks in this phase:

- (obviously!) implementing the Action Plan and ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the listed actions: if they are not being implemented, why not?
- institutionalising the Gender Audit methodology within the organisation's planning and reporting systems.

3.7 STEP 7 : THE FUTURE

Gender Audits can be one-time events or can be repeated. The first Gender Action Plan can be used as a baseline against which to routinely assess the organisation's future progress on gender equality.

Gender auditing can also be a part of the organisation's broader strategic planning processes. In this way gender auditing can be institutionalised within the organisation as part of its regular performance monitoring and evaluation.

SECTION 4: GENDER AUDITING ACROSS AGENCIES

Eight organisations participated in the Rwanda Gender Audit pilot. In addition to developing Gender Action Plans within their own organisations they also met regularly to monitor progress. This provided them with other opportunities:

- a forum for **shared learning**. A peer review mechanism has been suggested to monitor implementation and effectiveness of each other's Gender Action Plans.
- a forum for **joint action**. For example, a shared procurement database has been suggested detailing suppliers in Rwanda with a gender equality policy.
- Individual gender audits could be adopted nationally to codify **standards for good practice** under the Paris Declaration.