Programme\(^1\) design is the process of developing a clear strategy, plan of action and budget for achieving agreed outcomes.

The outcomes – or objectives, goals, aims, results – of the programme that you are designing should have been identified from the participatory assessment – which included a gender analysis – of the situation, problems or issues where WFP is operating.

To design a successful programme with sustainable outcomes, it is critical that the design incorporate gender equality and be disability inclusive; enabling participation of diverse women, men, girls and boys.

In addition to mainstreaming gender and disability, the programmes that we design in WFP should be gender-transformative; they should contribute to the food and nutrition security of all persons without distinction and this requires shifting situations and relations of inequality to ones of equality.

WFP recognised the importance of, and officially committed to, “the gender-transformative approach to food assistance programme and policies” and to “working for gender-transformative results with its beneficiaries” in the Gender Policy 2015-2020.

A programme can be designed to be transformative by mainstreaming gender or by being targeted, where the primary focus and content is gender equality. Whether the programme involves mainstreaming gender or targeting gender equality, the design must address the strategic interests of women and men (or girls and boys as applicable), not solely their practical needs.

While it is possible to design gender-transformative programmes, it is not possible to design gender-neutral programmes. This is because gender is present in the lives of every single person; influencing their circumstances, needs, roles, responsibilities, opportunities, status, power, choices and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. For WFP to realise its mandate – including achieving the Strategic Objectives of ending hunger, improving nutrition and achieving food security – WFP’s programmes must be gender transformative and so not gender exploitative, gender blind or gender sensitive.

**Gender Exploitative:** the programme reinforces, perpetuates and exacerbates gender inequalities, discriminatory gender stereotypes and oppressive gender roles.

**Gender Blind:** the failure to recognise the influence of gender, resulting in a programme design for which the objectives, activities, participation, monitoring and resource allocation are the same for women, men, girls and boys; thereby perpetuating inequalities, potentially causing harm and delivering temporary, rather than sustainable, changes.

**Gender Sensitive:** the programme considers and aims to address the specific needs, interests, capacities and contexts for women, men, girls and boys, but does not address gender relations and the need to address the distribution of power between women and men, and girls and boys, for sustainable outcomes.

---

\(^1\) “Programme” is being used generically to encompass any WFP project, initiative, intervention, operation that has a definitive start and end; which is distinct from, for example, a Country Office which functions on an ongoing basis.
**WFP Gender Office**

**Gender & Programme Design**

**Gender Transformative:** the programme is designed – through process and outcomes - to transform (i.e. change) gender relations in favour of the equal sharing of power by women and men, and girls and boys (as applicable). This means that gender transformative programmes address the socio-cultural, political and economic structures and norms that underpin inequalities.

---

### WHY

**Design is fundamental to the proposed programme:**
- achieving the agreed outcomes
- being an empowering process
- using resources efficiently, effectively and equitably
- facilitating positive changes in the lives of women, men, girls and boys

Evidence-based, consultative, inclusive design is fundamental to ensuring that WFP’s programmes are gender-transformative; and not gender-exploitative, gender blind or solely gender-sensitive.

Programme design offers an opportunity to embed practical gender equality measures and checks in all stages of programming; which supports closing the gender gaps in food and nutrition security.

---

### WHEN & WHERE

A programme should be designed after a comprehensive and consultative context assessment, including gender analysis and incorporating lessons from related initiatives, has been completed.

**But,** design is not a one-off task; it is an iterative process. New information and more in-depth understanding will emerge during implementation and monitoring of a programme. The learning should be used to refine the design of the programme.

Approach design as a continual process requiring action, reflection and adjustment throughout the life of all programmes.

---

### WHO

Typically, one person is responsible for producing the written document that addresses each aspect of the programme design – a Programme Manager, Unit Head, Office Chief, Director etc.

Designing a programme should, however, be a consultative and inclusive process involving:
- staff from units or functional areas within WFP that will be involved in or responsible for elements of the programme, as well as those from whom lessons can be learned
- existing and/or potential partners
- other humanitarian and development actors – UN Agencies, NGOs, community-organisations
- individuals and groups that the programme targets
It is essential that diverse women, men, girls and boys participate; informing each element of the programme design. Meaningful engagement of women and men (and girls and boys as applicable) from the different stakeholders, including partner organisations and beneficiaries, is necessary to design gender transformative programmes.

To promote participation, ask:

- Have women, men, girls and boys been consulted about the proposed programme? To what extent? How?
- Have women and men (or girls and boys) had equal opportunities to contribute to each element of the programme design? If not, what needs to be done to reach the individuals and groups who have not fairly contributed?
- Did some individuals or groups speak on behalf of others? If yes, what needs to be done to hear from the individuals or groups directly?
- To what extent are individuals and women’s organizations with knowledge and experience of gender engaged in programme design?

After having completed the context assessment, including a participatory gender analysis, the programme can be designed with each of these elements.

1. Objectives

Define the objectives that the programme will achieve: In gender-transformative programmes, the objectives should be empowering and contribute to achieving gender equality. This means that the objectives should address practical needs and strategic interests in such a way as to promote the full and free exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms of women, men, girls and boys.

Questions to ask when formulating objectives:

1. What does the programme seek to achieve? What impact will the programme have in the lives of women, men, girls and boys?
2. Do the objectives reflect priority concerns and respond to the practical needs and strategic interests of women, men, girls and/or boys?
3. If there are pronounced gender inequalities to be addressed, is this reflected in one or more of the objectives?
4. Do the objectives clearly identify the intended beneficiaries and stakeholders as women, men, girls and boys? Do the objectives explicitly refer to women, men, girls and boys?
5. Do the objectives indicate that women, men, girls and boys, will benefit equitably from the programme? If not, are the reasons for this clear and acceptable?
6. Are the ways in which the programme will equitably benefit women, men, girls and boys clearly stated?
7. Have women and men equally contributed to determining the programme objectives?
8. Do the objectives reflect the information obtained from the gender analysis? How?
9. If the programme objectives are achieved, will structures, norms and relations be transformed in favour of gender equality?
2. Strategy / Theory of Change

Describe the strategy for achieving the programme objectives: This is sometimes referred to as the ‘theory of change’ or a roadmap that clearly states the pathways that take us from where we are now to where we want to be.

Identify:
- How changes in policy and practice, ideas and beliefs occur in the key actors, including who makes decisions.
- Influencing opportunities over key decision-makers.
- Ways of bringing about the desired changes, including strengthening the capacities of the different beneficiaries and partners.
- The assumptions about how change happens in relation to the issue the programme will address.

Questions to Ask:
- What are the opportunities to bring about change – change that women, men, girls and boys want?
- What is needed for women, men, girls and boys to be, and feel, empowered?
- What steps are required to reduce gender inequalities?
- How will interactions with other actors and processes contribute to achieving the programme objectives?
- How will the programme engage with power structures at different levels to influence change?
- What is the evidence that the programme strategy will contribute to achieving the objectives?

3. Stakeholders & Beneficiaries

Identify the stakeholders:
- Are the primary and secondary stakeholders identified, including women and men stakeholders and their respective roles?
- Who has the capacity to influence the programme? To what extent do they represent the interests of the diverse women, men, girls and boys?
- Have stakeholders, representing women, men, girls and boys, been equitably consulted during the design process?

Identify the beneficiaries:
- Are the beneficiaries explicitly identified as women, men, girls and boys?
- Is there impact on workload of women/girls, men/boys considered?

4. Partnerships

Identify organisations that WFP will potentially partner with to implement the programme.

Assess the capacities of the partner organisations, including in relation to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

5. Outputs & Activities

List the activities that will be undertaken to achieve the outputs that will contribute to achieving the programme objectives.
Participation: Ensure that women and men, girls and boys, can equitably participate in the programme. If the programme targets a particular group (or groups) of people, identify any risks for members of the target group and for other population groups not involved in the programme.

Questions to Ask:
- For programmes that mainstream gender, do the planned activities involve the equitable participation of women and men (or girls and boys)?
- What measures will be put in place to ensure the active participation of women, men, girls and boys in all stages of the programme?
- For gender-targeted programmes, are there any risks of harm to the targeted group of beneficiaries or to the population groups not directly participating in the programme? For example, if an asset creation project targets women-only, is there a risk of increased domestic violence?
- Are activities planned to ensure that women, men, girls and boys can participate in all aspects of the programme? For example, do the programme activities accommodate the unpaid domestic and care work undertaken by women?
- Are any additional activities needed to ensure that gender equality is explicitly addressed by the programme?
- Do activities include opportunities for raising awareness on the benefits of gender equality benefits for all women, men, girls and boys?

6. Assumptions & Risks

List the assumptions upon which programme success is based.

List the risks that could prevent the programme objectives from being achieved.

Remember: the failure to incorporate gender equality will prevent the programme from being transformative and thus bringing about sustained changes in the lives of women, men, girls and boys.

Ask:
- Could the programme pose any risks to women, men, girls and/or boys (e.g. risk of harm, health risk, access to education)? Are women, men, girls or boys more exposed to the risk? Which women / men / girls / boys? What can be done to eliminate the risk of harm occurring?
- Could the programme perpetuate gender inequalities? (e.g. increase the unpaid domestic and care work of women?)
- Will existing, discriminatory gender roles and unequal power relations hinder programme implementation and achievement of the programme objectives?

List the measures that will be taken to eliminate or reduce the risk of harm occurring.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

Describe the monitoring, evaluation and learning framework.

Address:
- Key indicators and performance questions
  - Formulate specific, measurable sex- and age-disaggregated indicators so that you can track and measure changes for women, men, girls and boys
  - Check that the indicators measure the gender aspects of each objective
  - Check that the indicators measure gender equality impacts
- Data collection (including sex and age disaggregation), analysis and use
  - Ensure that the means of monitoring and evaluating the programme involve collecting quantitative data and qualitative information from women, men, girls and boys
- Roles and responsibilities (of monitors and evaluators)
- Participation and ownership (of the different beneficiaries)
8. Accountability

Describe the accountability mechanisms (participation, feedback, information sharing etc.) that will be employed to engage donors, partners, communities and individual women and men.

Outline how the different stakeholders and beneficiaries will have access to the accountability mechanisms.

9. Resources & Responsibilities

Summarise the existing resources and capacities – human, technical, technological, financial – of WFP and programme partners.

Indicate access to gender expertise, such as from an individual gender specialist, a local women’s organisation, an inter-agency gender theme group and tools within WFP.

List the WFP staff who will be involved in the programme, along with their specific roles and responsibilities.

If applicable, outline areas where WFP capacity will be strengthened.

10. Budgeting

- State the total cost of the programme in US dollars.
- Briefly explain how the cost effectiveness of the programme was calculated.
- List the funding that is available.
- Indicate if additional funds will have to be raised in order to fully implement the programme. If additional funds are required, state the strategy for mobilising the additional funds.
- Ensure that a minimum of 15 per cent of total programme funds are allocated to gender-equality – and not purely gender – outputs.
- Attach a detailed budget, referring to the programme budget template (which includes gender equality-related line items).
Key Elements of a Programme Document

- Title
- Context assessment / rationale
  - including gender analysis
  - scope
- Objectives / Outcomes / Results
- Theory of change / Strategy
- Partnerships and participation
  - beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other demographics
- Outputs, activities, timeframe
- Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning framework
- Assumptions and risks
- Sustainability and exit strategy
- Programme management (roles and responsibilities)
- Budget and funding strategy
- Logframe
Gender & Programme Design Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure that gender has been integrated throughout the programme design.

1. Rationale

- Is the programme design informed by a participatory context analysis?
- Have the results of a gender analysis been incorporated into the programme design?
- Have all relevant gender issues, including impact in the lives of women, men, girls and boys and anticipated outcomes, been systematically identified and documented?
- Have lessons from related programmes or synergies with other programmes been addressed?

2. Impact

- Do the objectives reflect priority concerns, and respond to the practical needs and strategic interests, of women, men, girls and/or boys?
- Are the ways in which the programme will equitably benefit women, men, girls and boys clearly stated?
- Have women and men equally contributed to determining the programme objectives?
- Do the objectives reflect the information obtained from the gender analysis? How?

3. Strategy (Theory of Change)

- What steps are required to reduce gender inequalities?
- How will the programme engage with power structures at different levels to influence change?
- What is the evidence that the strategy will contribute to achieving the objectives?

4. Partnership

- Do the potential programme partners have knowledge, skills and experience in gender equality and gender-transformative programming? If not, are measures in place to strengthen their gender capacities?
- Does the programme need to include gender-related capacity-building for partners?

5. Participation

- What measures are in place to ensure the active participation of women, men, girls and boys in all stages of the programme?
- For gender-targeted programmes, are there any risks of harm to the targeted beneficiaries or to the population groups not directly participating in the programme?
- Are there awareness-raising opportunities around gender equality?
6. Outputs & Activities

- Will women and men (and girls and boys, as applicable) equitably benefit from the programme outputs?
- Do planned activities equitably involve women and men (and girls and boys), as applicable to the objectives?
- Have activity targets been set to guarantee a sufficient proportion of women and men participants?

7. Monitoring & Evaluation

- Do the monitoring and evaluation tools enable collection of sex and age-disaggregated quantitative data and qualitative information?
- Do the indicators measure the gender aspects of each objective and the gender equality impacts of the programme?

8. Assumptions & Risks

- Is the assumption that gender equality is fundamental to bringing about transformative and sustained changes in the lives of women, men, girls and boys clearly stated?
- Are the risks posed by existing, discriminatory gender roles and unequal power relations to the achievement of the programme objectives identified and addressed?

9. Budget

- Have financial inputs been assessed to ensure that women and men benefit equitably from the programme and that gender capacities of staff and partners are factored in?
Gender Transformation Programming Design Checklist

Ask these questions when designing a programme, project, operation or other kind of initiative. By asking these questions you can check that the intervention that you are designing will address the specific needs, interests and priorities of women, men, girls and boys, in a way that is participatory, empowering and promotes equality.

- Have women and men, or girls and boys, been consulted (in an equitable manner) about the proposed programme, project etc.? To what extent? In what ways?

- Who does the programme, project etc. target? Women? Men? Both? Which women? Which men?

- Who will benefit from the initiative? Directly? Indirectly? How?

- What measures will be put in place to ensure the active participation of women, men, girls and boys throughout the programme cycle?

- Is there any risk that harm will come to women, men, girls and/or boys in implementing the programme, project etc.? What can be done to eliminate the risk of harm occurring?

- Will the programme, project etc. reinforce existing inequalities? How can the programme, project etc. be revised so that it contributes to greater equality?

- What are the opportunities to bring about change – change that women, men, girls and boys want? Will the programme, project etc. be empowering? For who? How? To what extent?

- How will the programme, project etc. contribute to achieving gender equality? Does the programme, project etc. address needs, interests or both? How? If the programme, project etc., only addresses practical needs what revisions can be made so that it is empowering for women, men, girls and/or boys?