

Appendix: Gender Mainstreaming in the VLR Process

Gender mainstreaming in the VLR process is possible through an inclusive and transformative approach that addresses gender disparities across all phases of the VLR process and beyond.

Gender mainstreaming in the VLR process enhances the validity and scope of findings from the VLR, enabling more accurate, informed decision-making that reflects the needs of all genders. Thereby, it ensures policy inclusivity, leading to more equitable and responsive local governance. By addressing gender-specific barriers, it helps empower women and marginalized genders, enhancing their participation in leadership and economic activities. Through involving diverse community stakeholders, including women's organisations, legitimacy and support for development plans is increased, fostering a more collaborative approach to local governance. As gender equality is central to achieving many SDGs, integrating gender into VLRs also accelerates progress across multiple global goals, such as health, education, city planning and economic development. Gender inclusivity not only delivers improvements for women and girls but tends to achieve broader social benefits, decreasing exclusion and enhancing basic infrastructure across society, in particular amongst marginalized communities.

Throughout this publication, gender mainstreaming into the VLR methodology has been explained through the five pillars - identifying gender gaps, inequalities and vulnerable groups; including the participation of women and women's organizations; design interventions that are adaptable to varying contexts; using indicators to measure the situation of women in comparison to men; and using inclusive language - with key moments throughout the process of particular importance. Specific actions for gender integration are highlighted below, along with tools to support implementation.

[Her City Toolbox](#) is UN-Habitat's digital platform to gender-transformative cities. It is a step-by-step guide to urban development from an intersectional perspective. It includes inclusive and participatory digital tools to create cities that work for all, based on gender mainstreaming of the urban development process. For a gender-sensitive and action-oriented VLR process, several Her City tools can be used. They are linked below from our [Her City Guide](#). To access the direct links shared throughout this document, please [register](#) and [login](#). To access the tools without logging in, you can review the Her City Guide with relevant page numbers attributed to each tool.

VLR Phase 1: Inception

Workplan and Deliverables

- Plan for gender to be included as a cross-cutting theme woven throughout all aspects of the VLR or dedicate a standalone chapter specifically to gender equity and inclusion.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for project setup:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Preparation | Step 2 | Project overview \(p.19\)](#)
- Allocate resources or a specific budget to support gender-related activities, including training, data collection, analysis, and interpretation, to ensure robust and meaningful integration of the gender perspective.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for resource allocation:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 7 | Finalising plans | Step 2 | Participatory](#)

[budgeting \(p.63\)](#)

Formalization of Working Group

- Actively eliminate gender biases, roles, and stereotypes when appointing members to the working group to foster inclusivity and equity. Aim for a representative and equitable gender split within the group, taking into account intersectionality, to reflect diverse perspectives and experiences.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for ensuring a representative working group:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Preparation | Step 1 | Project team](#) (p.19)
- Conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify relevant members who should be actively involved in the working group, their relationships, mandates and identify under-represented groups.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for stakeholder mapping:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Activity 2 | Stakeholder mapping](#) (p.24)
- Create conditions that ensure all genders, particularly women and underrepresented groups, can participate in meetings and decision-making processes. This includes designing inclusive mechanisms that provide equal opportunities to contribute and influence outcomes. In particular, consider the location and time of meetings. Establish an agreement between participants and the project team to set clear expectations and parameters for engagement.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for enabling equal participation:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Activity 3 | Step 3 | Agreements](#) (p.25)
- Consider designating a "gender champion" within the working group to advocate for and monitor the integration of gender-sensitive approaches throughout the process.

Enabling Assessment

- Conduct capacity-building initiatives for municipal staff, local organizations, and other partners to promote understanding of women's rights, gender equality, and the relevance of gender concepts to SDGs and the VLR process.
- Use and promote inclusive, gender-sensitive, and non-sexist language during capacity-building initiatives, workshops, and materials. Ensure gender-sensitive tools, indicators, and frameworks are integrated into technical discussions.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for capacity building workshops:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 3 | Site specific assessment | Setting Up](#) (p.33)

VLR Phase 2: Situation analysis

Stakeholder Mapping

- Conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify relevant stakeholders to consult in the VLR process, , actively involving women's organizations and gender experts in the process. Ensure participation of excluded voices, particularly those of marginalized genders and communities.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for listing stakeholders:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Activity 2 | Step 1 | Stakeholder Mapping](#) (p.24)
- When you have a long list of stakeholders, map their relations to each other, the space and the project. Position each stakeholder considering their level of power and

affinity and identify which organizations and processes women and girls are involved in and which they are not.

- o Gender mainstreaming tools for identifying stakeholder relations:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Activity 2 | Step 2 | Stakeholder mapping \(p.24\)](#)
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Activity 2 | Step 3 | Stakeholder mapping \(p.24\)](#)
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Activity 2 | Step 4 | Stakeholder mapping \(p.24\)](#)

Stocktaking

- Undertake a desk review to build necessary background on gender, youth and access in the particular context. Include a review of urban policies and planning frameworks already in place and gather spatial and statistical data from open source platforms to map the current trajectory of urban life and the role of women and girls within it. Search for and prioritize existing gender-sensitive documents and indicator frameworks.
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for conducting a desk review:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Activity 1 | Step 1 | Desk review \(p.21\)](#)
- Ensure data is collected from women and girls to understand unique experiences and acute differences in how spaces are experienced based on gender.
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for identifying priority areas:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 2 | City wide assessment \(p.29\)](#)

Prioritization and Selection of Indicators

- Select indicators that address issues relevant to women and gender disparities.
- Develop gender-sensitive indicators tailored to the specific locality to capture unique gender-related challenges and opportunities.
- Modify existing indicators to incorporate a gender perspective where applicable. Select indicators together with community stakeholders and relevant partners, using prioritisation tools to rank the incorporation of additional indicators relevant to community members.

Data Availability

- Ensure data is disaggregated by gender, not just reported at the population level.
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for data disaggregation:
 - [Her City Toolkit | Block 2 | Activity 2 | Collecting data \(p. 29\)](#)
- Where gender-disaggregated data is unavailable, identify indicators for further exploration through stakeholder and community engagement
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for data collection:
 - [Her City Toolkit | Block 2 | Activity 2 | Collecting data \(p. 29\)](#)

Data Collection

- Conduct data collection and stakeholder engagement with women, girls, and women's organizations to supplement available data with the necessary depth for gender-centric analyses. Explore how you can involve communities in data gathering through observation activities, photography, exploratory walks, and counting methods. Ensure rapid and effective data collection that will help later on generate a dashboard with spatial maps highlighting priority areas for urban development.

- o Gender mainstreaming tool for undertaking observation activities
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 3 | Activity 1 | Step 1 \(p. 35\)](#)
- o Gender mainstreaming tool for data collection through photography:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 3 | Activity 1 | Step 2 \(p. 35\)](#)
- o Gender mainstreaming tool for counting methods
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 3 | Activity 1 | Step 4 \(p. 36\)](#)
- o Gender mainstreaming tool for exploratory walks:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 3 | Activity 1 | Steps 5 \(p.36\)](#)
- Account for potential constraints on women's availability to attend in-person activities , such as timing and location, to ensure inclusive participation. Ensure meeting and activity invitations are sent in a timely manner so women are able to make arrangements to attend.
 - o Gender mainstreaming tools for securing inclusive participation:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Engaging participants | Step 1 \(p. 25\)](#)
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 1 | Engaging participants | Step 2 \(p. 25\)](#)

Data Analysis

- Assess patterns of space usage across the urban area through QGIS. In particular, consider differences in accessibility, distribution, quantity, quality and network by emphasising data disaggregation by gender and analyzing intersectional factors (including age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status) that exacerbate gender disparities.
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for data cleaning:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 2 | Activity 3 | Step 1 \(p. 30\)](#)
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for data disaggregation:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 2 | Activity 3 | Steps 2 \(p. 30\)](#)
- Look for trends where gender inequalities are most pronounced and identify the root causes, whether structural, cultural, or policy-related. Pay special attention to the most marginalized genders within your locality (e.g., rural women, women with disabilities, LGBTQ+ communities), as they may be underrepresented or misrepresented in existing data.
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for data analysis:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 2 | Activity 3 | Steps 3 \(p. 30\)](#)
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for prioritising findings:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 2 | Activity 3 | Steps 4 \(p. 30\)](#)

VLR Phase 3: Review and strategy

Comprehensive Review and Analysis

- Review data through a gender lens, identifying disparities and trends between genders in relation to SDG targets. Consider intersectional factors such as age, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status in analyzing gender outcomes.
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for strategy development
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 8 | Activity 3 | Strategy and mainstreaming \(p. 69\)](#)
- Integrate qualitative data from community engagement to provide deeper insights into gender-specific barriers and opportunities. Use quality scoring tools including the girls opportunity star to evaluate challenges and map indicators, delving deeper into the experiences and challenges of women and girls. by defining the current situation, rating privileges and needs.
 - o Gender mainstreaming tool for scoring quality:

➤ [Her City Toolbox | Block 3 | Activity 3 | Quality Scoring \(p. 38\)](#)

- Contextualize findings within local gender norms and practices, which may influence how gender disparities manifest in specific communities. Identify key areas for intervention to improve women's opportunities and address disparities, using data-driven insights and community feedback.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for contextualising challenges:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 4 | Analysing challenges \(p. 43\)](#)

Visioning

- Develop a vision for the locality that reflects the needs, aspirations, and challenges of all genders, based on the collected evidence. Co-develop the vision with diverse stakeholders, ensuring the inclusion of women, marginalized genders, and underrepresented groups to ensure that the vision is equitable and inclusive. Explore the use of digital tools such as Minecraft to visually imagine and co-create versions of the future space and the role women and girls would have in the new urban environment.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for visioning:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 4 | Activity 3 | Define joint vision \(p. 46\)](#)
- Generate policy recommendations and actionable steps in collaboration with stakeholders, with a focus on promoting gender equality and addressing gender-specific challenges.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for generating policy recommendations:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 4 | Activity 3 | Step 4 \(p. 46\)](#)

Recommendation

- Prioritize recommendations that foster women's leadership, economic empowerment, and access to essential services, ensuring gender equality is central to implementation strategies. Ensure that all policy recommendations align with the local vision, and are informed by the needs of marginalized genders and communities.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for designing change:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 6 | Recommendations for action \(p. 55\)](#)
- Set clear, measurable gender-sensitive targets for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation to track progress and ensure accountability.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for measuring impact:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 9 | Activity 3 | Measuring Impact \(p. 73\)](#)

VLR Phase 4: Finalization

Submission Draft

- Focus specifically on language inclusivity, ensuring that all communication aligns with principles of equality and avoids reinforcing stereotypes.
- Follow a participatory and capacity-building approach to ensure ownership over the submission draft amongst community members and involved participants. Strive for engagement with various levels of governance, to reinforce the crucial role of governments, alongside communities, in the implementation of findings.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for involving participants in sharing results:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 8 | Sharing results \(p. 67\)](#)

VLR Phase 5: Beyond the VLR

Launch, Dissemination, and Advocacy

- Adopt inclusive, non-sexist language in all communications, ensuring program materials reflect equality and inclusivity, while avoiding gender stereotypes.
- Develop a communications strategy that effectively highlights gender-related findings and recommendations, positioning gender equality as a central message in all advocacy and dissemination efforts.
 - Gender mainstreaming tools for communicating findings:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 8 | Activity 1 | Step 1 \(p. 68\)](#)
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 8 | Activity 1 | Step 2 \(p. 68\)](#)
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 8 | Activity 1 | Step 3 \(p. 68\)](#)
- Involve community members, in particular women and girls, in the presentation of outcomes and the dissemination of program material. Identify and engage key stakeholders, including women's organizations, gender experts, policymakers, local leaders, and community groups, to ensure wide-reaching support and advocacy for gender equality initiatives.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool for delivering public presentations:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 8 | Activity 2 | Public presentation \(p. 68\)](#)
- Gather feedback from participants on their experience of engaging with the process, in particular to understand any benefits women and girls felt from their involvement in the process or challenges the design of the programme created. Ensure a reflective evaluation process from which best practice can be consolidated and any learning implemented in future iterations of the VLR process.
 - Gender mainstreaming tool to gather participant feedback:
 - [Her City Toolbox | Block 9 | Activity 1 | Participant Feedback \(p. 71\)](#)

Further materials and tools to support urban transformation beyond the VLR

The intention of the VLR is to inform the development of urban environments. After identifying gaps and requirements for gender transformative urban developments it is key that action is taken to enact change, delivering interventions and legislating policy change. Below are several tools which can be used by governments, authorities, and community groups to continue to move beyond the VLR process and enact inclusive and participatory urban programmes:

I Know Gender: A free online training programme developed by UN Women to discuss how gender equality and women's empowerment help integrate gender perspectives into specific policies. This is a virtual course composed of 17-modules to teach gender concepts and apply them across international contexts.

Our City Plans: A toolbox and step-by-step participatory and flexible methodology to guide local governments and other stakeholders in their urban planning processes. The aim is to achieve sustainable territorial development and contribute to the implementation of SDG 11 at the local level, through processes that promote spatial inclusion and build capacities among governments and urban stakeholders.

MyNeighbourhood - Evidence-based Methodology for Sustainable Urban Design: This publication serves as a comprehensive guide to Evidence-Based Urban Planning and Design, demonstrating how spatial analysis can inform urban planning and design decisions for sustainable urban transformation. It addresses the challenges many cities face in formulating policies and action plans due to limited resources, unreliable databases, and insufficient GIS capabilities, which hinder their ability to identify and address urban issues effectively. The methodology is framed around five key city objectives— Compact, Connected, Inclusive, Vibrant, and Resilient—ensuring an integrated approach that aligns with the New Urban Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This document provides practical tools and examples of spatial analysis to help decision-makers understand, diagnose, and transform their cities through an evidence-based process.

Rapid Planning Studio (RPS): The RPS is a 12-week 'rapid' planning process aimed to quickly harness the knowledge of city stakeholders and identify actionable outcomes. It focuses on essential strategic elements to direct future development and investment to achieve sustainable outcomes. Based on UN Habitat principles for sustainability, it integrates three basic pillars of sustainable development: urban legislation, urban finance and economy, and urban planning and design.

The Spatial Development Spatial Framework Guidelines – Strategic Planning for Metropolitan and Regional Development: The Spatial Development Framework (SDF) is a methodology to support strategic decision-making of metropolitan, regional, subnational, national and transnational governments on where, what, why and how to prioritise investments to guide the spatial implementation of development policies and strategies. Under the leadership of concerned governmental institutions and with due consideration of local communities, the process is based on the adequate combination of two main methods, the Matrix of Functions (MoF) and the Strategic Investment Planning (SIP). This combination helps governments gain a deeper understanding of their territories to ensure investments where they have the most significant impact.