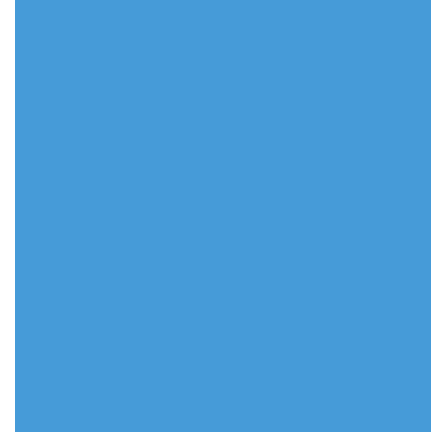


EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT of gender mainstreaming in STDF's WORK

Ignacia Simonetti





Purpose and scope

To evaluate “how (and to what effect) gender equality is addressed and how gender is mainstreamed across STDF's work”.



To assess the gender responsiveness of STDF's Knowledge and Project Work from 2015 to date

To assess to what extent elements of gender mainstreaming are visible in STDF's wide range of internal and external documents



Identify best practices in addressing gender issues associated with trade-related SPS measures

To advise on **strategies** and actions to contribute to ongoing gender mainstreaming efforts.

Methodology

The assessment adopted a multimethod qualitative evaluation approach designed to capture the extent to which the roles and needs of women are being mainstreamed in STDF's work:

- Literature Review
- Document Analysis
- Project Analysis
- Stakeholder Analysis



Evaluation Questions

OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria



Coherence

How coherent is STDF's approach to gender mainstreaming?

Effectiveness

To what extent is the STDF's gender mainstreaming approach producing results?

Efficiency

Does STDF's gender mainstreaming approach employ time and resources efficiently?

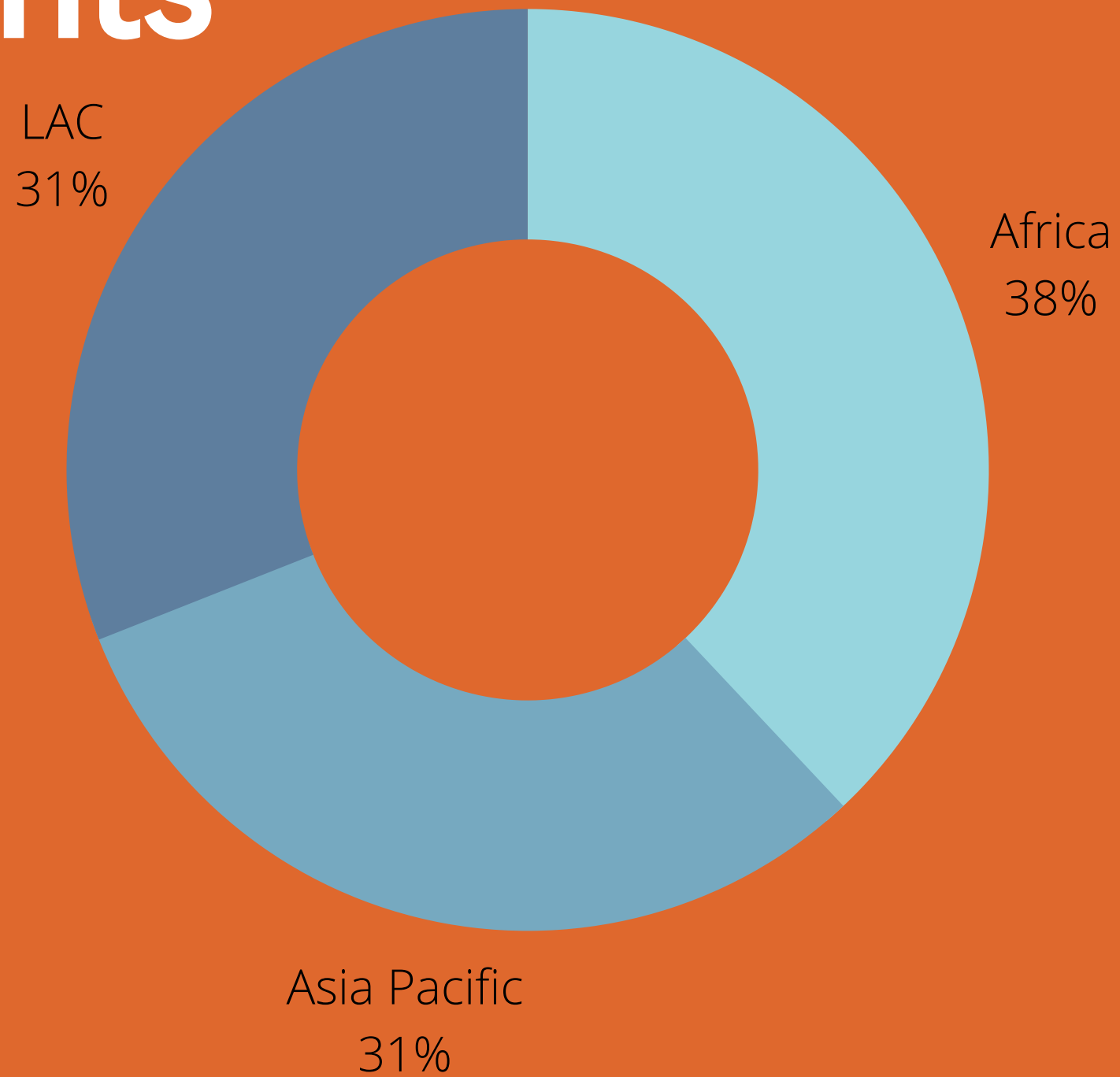
Impact

Has STDF's gender mainstreaming approach delivered higher-level outcomes?

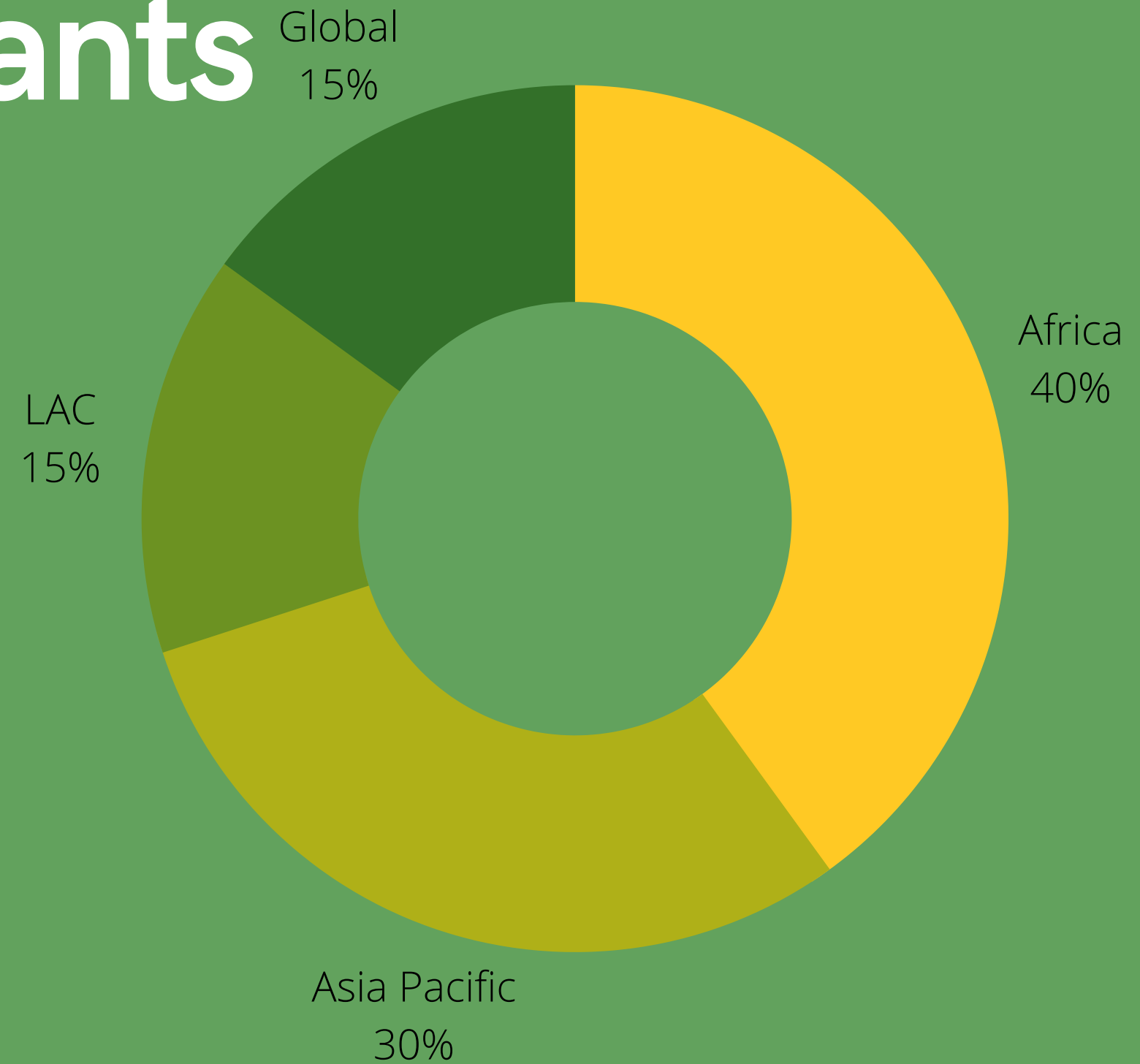
Sustainability

Are STDF's efforts and approach towards gender mainstreaming likely to be sustainable?

16 Project Preparation Grants



20 Project Grants





Finding 2

STDF's work is aligned to a moderate extent with Sustainable Development Goal 5, but lacks consistency.



Finding 4

Attention to women's needs within the STDF's work has been limited. It has made progress in addressing women's needs, especially at the project level. However, gender mainstreaming is not yet sufficiently institutionalized.

Finding 1

Evidence is limited, and additional research efforts are required to fully assess the potential impact that compliance with trade-related SPS measures has on different social groups, including women



Finding 3

Interactions with gender focused initiatives and/or gender equality instruments is limited.



More findings



Finding 5

The STDF has adapted to the new priorities, including Covid-19, by actively assessing the disruption the pandemic is having on the implementation and delivery of STDF projects. However, it has missed the opportunity to consider the needs and challenges that women may face when trying to participate as beneficiaries during this period.

Finding 6

The STDF has taken moderate steps to ensure gender mainstreaming across its workstreams, still, the absence of a Gender Plan or Guidelines has resulted in a lack of clear objectives and expected results.

Finding 7

The usefulness of the PPG and PG application templates as guidance documents to support gender mainstreaming varies.

Based on the interviews with donors and partners, there is no consensus on how to address this call for **more guidance**

While some suggested a guide book with specific questions, other interviewee recommended to edit the Project Guidelines to make sure gender issues “are an implicit part of the project and not an additional component”.

A unified approach will be needed from the Working Group to support the demand for further guidance and support.



The PPG application form asks applicants to share a brief explanation on "how cross-cutting issues (e.g. gender, environment) are relevant to the PPG and, if applicable, how they will be addressed". The **wording is not clear** enough, as it induces applicants to choose one or the other.



Both the application forms and the guidelines do not provide any definition of how gender should be adequately addressed in the project.

40% of PGs didn't address gender issues at all in their application forms and/or subsequent reports.



Finding 8

STDF's has produced a substantial number of Knowledge work related products and materials. However, the inclusion of a gender mainstreaming perspective remain limited in number and scope.

Finding 9

Despite improvements, STDF's documents support for gender mainstreaming and gender equality is limited. Efforts are required to allow for a more strategic and coherent approach.

Finding 10

The STDF is beginning to take positive steps towards collecting evidence about its targeted beneficiaries. Yet, a better understanding and definition of the concepts remains a necessary condition to excel in this effort.

Finding 11

While some members of the STDF Working Group recognizes the importance of paying attention to gender equality, the lack of a clear mandate has resulted in inconsistent support for the STDF Secretariat.

“There is no one **unique set of expectations** regarding what to expect from gender. Ideally we will be to move forward to a common and shared understanding”.

“Some kind of **alignment** is important, at least on the importance of gender”.



Gender equality?



“Efforts will also be made to ensure that gender equality is addressed within project and PPG applications, and that **different genders** are encouraged to submit applications” (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework, pg.23)

“For instance, how are different genders involved (e.g. as producers, farmers, traders, workers in food business operations) in particular value chains of relevance to the project, what constraints (if any) do they face and how could they be addressed to take advantage of new opportunities? How are different genders expected to benefit from the project? Inclusion of gender-specific indicators, wherever possible, is encouraged”. (STDF Project Application Form, Target beneficiaries, q.8)

Finding 12

STDF's communication efforts towards gender mainstreaming are often sporadic rather than strategic.

Finding 13

STDF's attention to gender is part of a larger effort to build gender mainstreaming capacity in the SPS context.

Finding 14

Gaps in the operationalization of gender mainstreaming at country level has limited its effectiveness, but it might be avoided by an appropriate application of gender mainstreaming practices.

Finding 15

The STDF Secretariat does not benefit from having a coherent mandate from the Working Group for its gender mainstreaming work, which limits the support provided to partners and implementing agencies in this area.



Among the PGs reviewed, 55% did not integrate gender into the project's programmatic goals and objectives. This meant that gender equality was addressed, if any, as contextual information, rather than at the design planning and implementation stage.

Findings

Finding 16

Providing practical guidance on gender mainstreaming is welcome by implementing agencies and partners, and has the potential to make gender mainstreaming more effective.



Finding 18

Gender considerations have not been systematically embedded throughout the budget cycle.



Finding 17

STDF has made considerable strides towards ensuring its systems, strategies and processes support gender equality, but not in a systematically manner.



While gender-sensitive indicators are included, independent external evaluations of STDF projects are expected to predominantly consider contributions to SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8 and 17, as agreed by the Working Group.

This notable exception prevents a more in-depth analysis of the potential gender equality outcomes of projects.

Findings



Finding 19

Overall, evidence of impact is positive but limited. Because gender mainstreaming is not yet sufficiently institutionalized, the availability of results is not consistent.

Finding 20

There is no clear plan to sustain current efforts of gender mainstreaming.

"The lack of a rationale, action plan, strategy, priorities, expected outcomes or targets diminishes the continuity of efforts carried out to this day."

Conclusion 1

The level of **awareness** of the gendered impacts of SPS measures remains low among STDF members and stakeholders, **limiting the integration of gender equality** into processes and project development.

Conclusion 2

Leadership at the Working Group level has **not consistently supported** the implementation of gender mainstreaming efforts.

Conclusion 3

Accountability for gender mainstreaming remains ambiguous at all levels.

Conclusion 4

The STDF is not sufficiently exercising its **convening power** to assess and exchange views on the situation of other partners in bringing gender considerations into an SPS context.

Reccomendations



1

The STDF Working Group should consider developing a Gender Plan or Guidelines, based on evidence-based priorities and needs, to enable a permanent support structure that embraces a vision of gender equality, backed by the necessary resources and accountability systems.



2

The STDF Working Group to adopt a leadership role in promoting the exchange of views, practices, and information through a range of platforms, so as to build momentum around the gendered nature of SPS measures.



3

The STDF should consider reviewing its operational documents (e.g. including PPG and PGs application forms, Guidelines for evaluation, and report templates) to allow for a more coherent approach and thus respond more effectively to the real and specific needs of women.



4

The Working Group should review and assess potential future changes to ensure monitoring and evaluation systems are accountable for gender equality, particularly MEL indicators.

Reccomendations



5

To establish gender support mechanisms to promote constant training, capacity building, and awareness-raising on gender mainstreaming among STDF Secretariat, to improve understanding of gender concepts and gender-equality issues in relation to SPS.



6

To make gender issues more visible in STDF's current Website and communications.

