

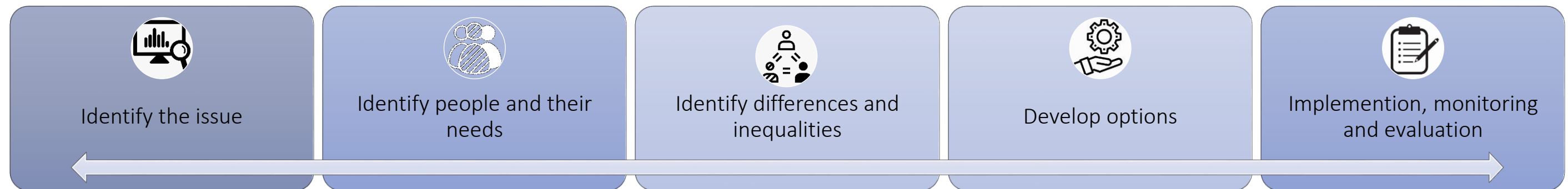
# GBA PLUS

## GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS PLUS

### Intersectionality Job Aid:

## A Guide to Applying an Intersectional Lens/Mindset to your Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus)

**Why use this tool:** The *Intersectionality Job Aid* complements the [Step-by-Step Guide to GBA Plus](#) and will help you ensure that you apply an intersectional lens/mindset as you undertake the five steps of GBA Plus for more responsive government and better service provision. An intersectional approach<sup>1</sup> to GBA Plus will help you consider the interests and needs of people in all their diversity and ensure greater inclusivity and larger reach of government initiatives. Despite its name, GBA Plus is not a gender first analytical exercise<sup>2</sup>, its focus is on the intersecting processes, by which power and inequity are produced and reproduced. These systemic and structural inequalities can be better understood and countered with an intersectional approach to GBA Plus ensuring that equality is advanced in all government actions and that inequalities are not reinforced. In addition to referring to the [Step-by-Step Guide to GBA Plus](#), other tools are also available to help take a rigorous and intersectional approach to your analysis. Public servant employees can access additional tools on GCPedia.



**Before you get started:** We recommend public servant employees to complete the [Introduction to Gender-based Analysis Plus \(INC101\)](#) online course on the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) platform. This will allow public servants to receive a certificate of completion that will remain on their CSPS profile throughout their entire career. Members of the general public are recommended to complete the [Introduction to GBA Plus](#) on the Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) website.

<sup>1</sup> The term “intersectionality” was coined in 1989 by scholar and civil rights activist Kimberlé Crenshaw to explain how race interacts with gender and other factors to produce barriers for Black women. Today, intersectionality is understood more broadly as a framework for understanding how aspects of a person's identity combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege.

<sup>2</sup> Since its inception, the notion of intersectionality has been proclaimed as “the most important theoretical contribution that women’s studies (...) has made so far” (McCall, 2005: 1771) and is, in brief, an approach to identity that recognizes that different identity categories can intersect and co-exist in the same individual in a way which creates a qualitatively different experience when compared to any of the individual characteristics involved.

## Tips for undertaking an intersectional Gender-Based Analysis Plus approach (“unpacking the plus”)

In undertaking each step of Gender-based Analysis Plus (i.e., identifying the issue, people and their needs, differences, and inequalities and in developing options, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating results), the principles of intersectionality should be considered. Applying these principles helps ensure that the needs and experiences of different groups of people are reflected, resulting in more inclusive and responsive government initiatives.

### An intersectional approach to GBA Plus requires:

#### Being reflexive and understanding that your own position, organizational culture, etc., creates potential for bias

Reflexivity is the continuous process of self-reflection that people engage in to generate awareness about their actions, feelings, and perceptions.

Reflexivity leads to greater self-awareness about the way we act, feel, and perceive things. The practice of reflexivity is useful at all stages of GBA Plus. The way we live, conduct analysis, and find meaning is shaped by our understanding of the world around us.

As public servants, our understanding of others is limited by unnoticed frames of reference. Skillful reflexivity requires practice since we are in many ways foreign to ourselves.

#### Intersectionality in Practice

- Undertaking GBA Plus as a group can be useful to engage in reflexive enquiry as it facilitates the process of challenging assumptions by bringing different perspectives into the process.
- Seek out people with opinions, backgrounds, or points of reference that are different from your own.
- Consider different opportunities throughout the steps of your GBA Plus to make observations and re-examine your findings. For example, it can be useful to reflect on:
  - As you define the issue (GBA Plus Step 1) think about your response in the larger contexts.
  - In developing options (GBA Plus Step 4) consider your approach within other “camps” and think about alternate choices and paths.
  - Throughout the GBA Plus process, think of your initiative as a whole and its component parts, among larger conversations.
- As you reflect on the results of each step of your analysis, include room to consider your own personal journey as you undertake your GBA. You may find it useful to ask yourself:
  - What led me to that perception?
  - How do I know that?
  - Is it possible that my assumptions have prevented me from engaging with people, asking questions and understanding answers that are outside my own experience or beyond my understanding?
  - Why did I conclude that?
- Including portions of these reflections as part of your GBA Plus analysis (e.g., as assumptions) can be effective in ensuring your analysis provides meaningful evidence for decision-makers as they too will be driven to reflect on their own positions.
- At the decision points, it then becomes easier to reflect on the assumptions that have been made and the trade offs and choices that are required.

#### Considering intersections of marginalisation/discrimination and thinking differently about equality, power, and identity

Power is a central concept in GBA Plus. The focus is not just on domination or marginalization, but on the intersecting processes, by which power and inequity are produced and reproduced.

Oppression is more than the prejudicial thoughts and actions of individuals; it is due to a combination of social norms and attitudes; institutional power structures; policies and practices that together can limit access to opportunities and are formed and perpetuated over time. This includes considering uneven power relations, histories, social norms and roles, uneven distribution of resources and other systems and structures that can create and perpetuate inequality (e.g., racism, sexism, colonialism, ableism, heterosexism, classism, ageism, Islamophobia and/or anti-Semitism). Systems of oppression run through our language, shape the way we act and do things in our culture, and are built around what are understood to be “norms” in our societies. A norm signifies what is “normal,” acceptable, and sometimes even valued in a society.

Intersectionality requires the consideration of how multiple overlapping factors shape social, health and economic opportunities and outcomes for people, as well as barriers to accessing programs or services. By examining who is impacted by an issue and how these experiences and outcomes differ between and within groups of people and why, will help to identify inequalities, and helps us to understand which elements contribute most to discrimination. You can access information on a range of identify factors as part of the [Step-by-Step Guide to GBA Plus](#).

However, the “Plus” in GBA Plus is not only to emphasize the need to analyze differential impacts but also an explicit way to acknowledge the impact of how factors intersect and impact a person’s experiences of discrimination and oppression. In this way GBA Plus is more inclusive and effective in dismantling systemic forms of social oppression and power relations that are often at the root of inequalities.

### Intersectionality in Practice

- Remember as you undertake your GBA Plus, you too are constructing categories of difference. Be mindful that this can undermine the empowerment of those who you characterize as vulnerable.
  - Think about people as innately powerful and resilient but marginalized by their context.
  - Look for ways to achieve positive goals like building resilience and empowerment.
- Throughout your GBA Plus (and in Steps 2 and 3 in particular):
  - Acknowledge that racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other institutionalized forms of oppression exist.
  - Recognize that we all have biases and misinformation about our own identity/ social group and about members of other groups.
  - Keep an open mind about what identity or other factors are most relevant – the GBA Plus process is one of investigation and discovery. Prepare to be proven wrong.
  - Make issues of systems of discrimination and oppression, (that is, heterosexism, colonialism, sexism, classism, and racism) part of your analysis.
- You can think through issues of power by asking yourself:
  - who does what (division of labour)?
  - who has what (access to resources)
  - who decides (rules and decision making)?

### Partnership approaches and harnessing the power of participation and cross-community collaboration

An intersectional GBA Plus is about the visibility and inclusion of various individuals and groups. By focussing on systemic discrimination there are opportunities to identify common barriers, build bridges between groups, create coalitions and act together on issues of common interest.

Partnerships can also help bridge relationships across differences by facilitating access to specific knowledge. It can also help guide consultation and broker relationships between interested groups.

Strive to collaborate with organizations and people from different communities, issue areas, and sectors for more holistic approaches that promote transformative change.

Taking an intersectional GBA Plus from theory to practice requires meaningful participation. People with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences are the authorities/experts and listening to their insights on barriers will not only inform your GBA Plus but contribute to a collective sense of belonging to their society. Who says there is an issue?

An inclusive practice should lead to vulnerable and marginalized people having greater voice and agency over the decisions that affect their everyday lives as well as their resilience.

#### Intersectionality in Practice

- Invite diverse groups to participate in advisory committees or working groups to fill knowledge gaps, inform outreach.
- Consider who is at the table and more importantly who is not. Ensure you have the involvement of key partners – the ones who can help ensure inclusive engagement with an identified population.
- Practice the "led by and for" principle by providing venues for partners and diverse people to inform and influence your initiative.
- Incorporate the input of others throughout the GBA Plus process in the decision-making process.
- When timelines are tight, consider whether other federal government organizations have knowledge, networks, relationships, etc., that can be leveraged to help inform your analysis.

#### Emphasizing action-oriented approaches to advance equality, empowerment, and collective action to address structural inequalities

Embedding intersectional principles as part of GBA Plus is about striving to make change by producing knowledge that promotes action on the variety of factors that affect people's access to opportunities.

Progress on advancing equality and fairness for all people requires concrete actions during every step of the GBA Plus process. Changing systems that privilege some, while oppressing others requires that all public servants engage in everyday actions that advance equity and fairness for all people, particularly those at risk for the most marginalization based on their identities.

Advancing equality is both a critical component of the GBA Plus process as well as its primary goal. GBA Plus should be seen as a means to an end and not as an end in and of itself. It is about leveraging all government actions to advance equality objectives and reduce disparities between individuals and groups.

#### Intersectionality in Practice

Putting this into practice is about building individual and organizational capacity to take action. This includes enabling federal partners and a broad range of players in different sectors of society to act. This can be achieved by:

- Ensuring there is awareness and understanding of the "end game" (i.e., advancing fairness and equality and reducing inequalities) so that equality objectives are "baked" into the initiative. The measure by which success in advancing equality will be measured should be articulated as part of Step 1 of your GBA Plus where issues are being identified.
- Growing capabilities and ensuring broad access to tools and resources so that diverse players can leverage opportunities in their sphere of activity to effect change.
- Tracking and reporting back on the impact of GBA Plus in progressing towards organizational and whole-of-government priorities.
- Enabling collective action also requires providing space for dialogue and addressing resistance or divergent thinking. Consideration of different perspectives is integral to an intersectional GBA Plus.

#### Gathering an equality evidence base

Equality evidence refers to data and other information that allows for a description of equality and inequality and can be quantitative or qualitative.

Sources of evidence include academic or grey literature and formal or informal data collection methods. It can also include focus groups and interviews with target audiences, program participants and other partners or potential partners.

Equality data gives a more accurate picture of reality. Accurate and comprehensive data is the basis for identifying and solving problems, supporting the development of initiatives based on facts - not intuition.

Accurate data collection and rigorous analysis provides powerful insights into problems and guides the creation of solutions to address discrimination and inequalities.

Collecting data and information is not done for the sole purpose of 'knowing' - it is also about 'knowing why'. Reviewing the evidence gathered can provide direction on exploring why there are inequalities.

While the power of intersectional evidence is widely recognized, the lack of disaggregated data<sup>3</sup> continues to be raised as a barrier to rigorous and intersectional GBA Plus. Documenting data gaps and taking action to fill gaps is critical to continued progress.

#### Intersectionality in Practice

It is not necessary for everyone to have advanced data analysis skills. It is, however, important to know where to turn to access capacity to produce, interpret, and use data. Consider the following:

- Throughout the GBA Plus process and in Steps 2 and 3 (Identify People and their Needs and Inequalities) in particular, think about what indicators reveal equality/inequality in the issue area?
- Determine the types of disaggregated<sup>3</sup> data that are available and identify information and data gaps. (Steps 2 and 3 can be strengthened by thinking about reference indicators of interest against demographic variables).
- Note evidence gaps and how you might fill them with literature review by commissioning research, etc.
- As you develop your options (GBA Plus Step 4), include information on how the approach can help generate new evidence (e.g., through administrative data).
- In Step 5 of your GBA Plus as you are implementing, monitoring and evaluating your initiative, ensure that the data collection guidelines, forms, processes and assessment are designed to collect and monitor data that is disaggregated by identify factors and personal characteristics.
- Engage with relevant players in your organization and advocate for disaggregated.

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<sup>3</sup> Disaggregated data refers to data broken down by age, race, ethnicity, income, education, etc.