Gender-sensitive Communication

Choosing whether to mention gender

You will have to decide whether to include gender explicitly on a case-by-case basis.

Guiding questions for choosing between gender-neutral language and gender-sensitive language:

1 **Will mentioning gender shed light on key aspects of the issue you are discussing?**

   If so, use gender-sensitive language. If not, use gender-neutral language.

2 **Are you referring to people in general or a specific group?**

   If you are mentioning people in general, it may be acceptable to use gender-neutral language (in some cases), whereas if you are mentioning a specific group it is usually relevant to discuss gender.

3 **Are you explicitly aiming to be inclusive to those of a non-binary gender?**

   If so, you may wish to opt for gender-neutral language (particularly the third person plural: "they", "them", etc.) or else to use gendersensitive language that includes this group, making use of inclusive new terms such as "zhe" or "e".

 Tips:

We recommend that **law and policymakers always aim to use gender- sensitive language** rather than gender-neutral language. Giving visibility to gender is an important way for public policy to positively affect all members of society. The gender perspective may not immediately be obvious, but there is almost always an important gender dimension to public policy.

Do not automatically assume transgender people identify as 'non-binary'. Many transgender people do identify with one gender; this gender may just differ to the one assigned to them at birth.

If you introduce a gender dimension to your policy or programme, you should **aim to research differences in the actual situation of women and men** (based on statistical information and other relevant research), rather than guessing or assuming what these differences are. This will enable you to assess specific needs more effectively and design your policies and programmes in a gender-sensitive way.