This guide is intended for use by federal government employees in the process of implementing gender-based analysis+ within federal departments and agencies.

The Government of Canada is committed to strengthening the use of gender-based analysis+ (GBA+) as a key tool for developing public policy and informing decision-making. Achieving concrete results using GBA+ is a shared responsibility between Status of Women Canada and federal departments and agencies. The Departmental Action Plan on GBA outlines expectations for federal organizations to develop their organizational capacity for GBA+, undertake self-assessments and report on their progress on an annual basis.
This document will guide you in the development of a departmental GBA+ framework. It consists of:

1. An overview of the components of a GBA+ framework
2. Advice on each of the six elements of the framework
3. Lessons learned and best practices from other federal departments and agencies in GBA+ framework development and implementation

A GBA+ framework consists of six core elements, all of which contribute to an organization’s capacity to learn, apply and report on its GBA+ activities. These elements are necessary to implement and sustain the practice of GBA+ and can be adapted to any organization’s needs and structure.

THE GBA+ FRAMEWORK

To implement and sustain the practice of GBA+

WHAT ARE THE CORE ELEMENTS OF A GBA+ FRAMEWORK?

The Departmental Action Plan on Gender-Based Analysis identifies six essential elements of a GBA+ framework:

1. GBA+ statement of intent or policy;
2. Responsibility centre to monitor implementation of the framework and the practice of GBA+;
3. Mandatory GBA+ training for all senior officials, analysts and other appropriate staff;
4. Guides, manuals and other appropriate tools for promoting GBA+;
5. Reporting on progress in departmental Reports on Plans and Priorities, Performance Reports or other similar documents; and
6. Annual self-assessments on implementation of frameworks and practice of GBA+ on specific initiatives.
GBA+ Framework - Key Lessons

- No single element is enough; all are necessary to achieve sustainability. For example, a statement of intent must be accompanied by tools and training that enable employees to understand and practice GBA+.

- To be effective and to maximize support from analysts and senior managers alike, your GBA+ framework needs to incorporate an accountability structure and relevant support mechanisms (e.g., GBA+ Champion, intra-departmental working group) to promote accountability.

- Creation of a framework ensures that responsibility for GBA+ extends across the entire organization and to all individuals, from the senior managers who endorse the policy or statement of intent to the experts who are best positioned to apply GBA+ to specific issues.

1. GBA+ STATEMENT OF INTENT

   To communicate the organization’s commitment to GBA+

   The statement of intent is a clearly articulated commitment to GBA+, one that demonstrates senior management’s will and effectively enables an organization’s GBA+ capacity.

   To ensure the statement of intent goes beyond the symbolic, the other elements of the framework must also be implemented. The implementation stage is often the most challenging as it requires that the organization gain a broad understanding of the benefits of using GBA+ when analysing and developing policies, programs and legislation, and involves teaching and learning new skills. It also requires effort to change long-standing work attitudes and methods.

   A GBA+ statement of intent may be embedded in a GBA+ policy or it may stand alone. Regardless of the format, the statement of intent should include the following elements:

   1. an organizational commitment to GBA+ as a mechanism to advance gender equality in Canada;

   2. a statement of the need for GBA+, with emphasis on its relevance to the organization's work/issues;
3. a clear indication of the organization’s commitment to both implementing and sustaining the practice of GBA+; and

4. a requirement that GBA+ be a standard function of a systematic, integrative and evidence-based approach to developing and evaluating research, policies, programs and legislation.

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### Statement of Intent - Key Lessons

- In developing an organizational statement of intent for GBA+, it is valuable to involve a broad cross-section of employees from various functional roles, branches/sectors and levels. Organizations that have consulted widely on their GBA+ policies receive greater cooperation and agreement on the importance and relevance of GBA+ in their work.

- Departments and agencies with experience integrating GBA+ have found that a broader, over-arching statement of intent tends to be more enduring. Specific information and detailed advice can be contained in other, more flexible elements that can be updated as necessary.

- The statement of intent should be visible, available and communicated to all staff. Organizations should create a communication strategy to ensure all employees are aware of the statement of intent. Possible features of the strategy could include awareness events, communiqués from GBA+ Champions, DMs or ADMs, intranet postings).

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### 2. RESPONSIBILITY CENTRE

To monitor implementation of the framework and practice of GBA+

**MANDATE AND AUTHORITY**

A GBA+ responsibility centre’s mandate and authority may vary according to the GBA+ statement of intent and the resources accorded to such a centre, but its overall role is to **lead, enhance, support, and monitor implementation of a GBA+ framework and the actual practice of GBA+**. It could take on one or multiple roles, including:
The GBA+ Framework

- **Facilitator** – enabling the practice of GBA+ throughout the organization; supporting implementation of other framework elements including drafting a statement of intent for senior management; supporting capacity development with training; creating and disseminating tools and guides; and coordinating GBA+ reporting and self-evaluation.

- **Convenor** – stimulating debate and discussion on the application of GBA+ in the organization and its role in advancing gender equality.

- **Expert** – providing GBA+ support to colleagues in their work. Accelerated GBA+ integration and enhanced accountability occurs when the responsibility centre is integrated into planning, development and decision-making processes.

- **Monitor** – monitoring implementation of GBA+ across the organization.

Responsibility for implementing GBA+ within departments and agencies rests not only with the GBA+ responsibility centre but with all employees, across all directorates, functional communities and levels of authority.

**GOVERNANCE**

The mandate and authority of the GBA+ responsibility centre should be clearly outlined. Ideally, it should have responsibility for leadership and a governance structure with the authority to review and advise on the organization’s work with respect to gender equality.

Locating the responsibility centre in a strategic setting (e.g., strategic policy branch/directorate) and including it in policy and program development, implementation and decision-making can further assist in entrenching GBA+ within the organization’s broader machinery.

The roles and responsibilities of the responsibility centre as well as those of senior management, employees and all other relevant players should be clearly defined.
SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Although not mandated in the Action Plan, support mechanisms – such as GBA+ champions and intra- and inter-departmental working groups – will enhance implementation of GBA+ throughout an organization.

- **GBA+ Champions** – Most useful at a DG or ADM level, their role is to increase awareness of the GBA+ policy or directive and can include overseeing integration of GBA+ into the organization’s research, programs and policy development processes.

- **Intra-departmental (internal) working groups** – The role of this group is defined according to the needs of the organization but is generally to support the responsibility centre in implementing and evaluating GBA+ initiatives, to confer with inter-departmental working groups, and to promote and lead the application of GBA+ in their respective directorates.

- **Inter-departmental (external) working groups** – Government-wide GBA+ working groups promote networking and co-operation and offer support, guidance and resources for implementing GBA+ across departments and agencies. Currently these include a Status of Women Canada-led inter-departmental working group on GBA+; a GBA+ Community of Practice to encourage informal sharing of GBA+ learning, voluntarily hosted by participating departments; and various task-specific working groups (i.e., GBA+ training for specific work functions such as research).

### Responsibility Centre - Key Lessons

- In addition to sharing responsibility for GBA+ among all employees, it is essential to maintain a well-resourced responsibility centre to enhance, support, expand and monitor accountability for the systematic application of GBA+.

- The GBA+ responsibility centre is a centre of expertise on GBA+ and can offer support for integrating its use across the organization.

- The responsibility centre requires sufficient financial and human resources to sustain the practice of GBA+. 
3. GBA+ TRAINING

To increase GBA+ knowledge and capacity

The development of relevant resources, tools and training is a critical element in the implementation and sustainability of GBA+.

Training helps to transfer the practical knowledge required to implement GBA+ within an organization, and it prepares employees (not only for those within the responsibility center but for all employees) to apply GBA+ to their own work.

Status of Women Canada has a collection of valuable training materials and can assist you in developing and implementing a training program that meets the needs of the various audiences within your organization. For example, while some employees will require only general information about GBA+ implementation and accountability, others may need detailed instruction on applying GBA+ to policy development, research or evaluation.

Status of Women Canada has a network of trainers and resources to assist you. To discuss the development of your training program, please contact us at gba-acs@swe-cfc.gc.ca.

Training areas essential to the framework are:

- Senior Management Training - focused on high level analysis and accountabilities
- Introduction to GBA+ - basics of GBA+, federal accountabilities, tools, department-specific application of GBA+

Further training areas to consider:

- Function-specific training (i.e., for policy development, research, evaluation, communications, consultations, program delivery).
- Other training deemed important through a needs assessment.
Training - Key Lessons

- An awareness campaign that emphasizes departmental and individual responsibilities and accountabilities with respect to GBA+ can enhance enrolment in GBA+ training.

- Relevant case studies and success stories help to advance understanding and support for GBA+.

4. TOOLS

To increase GBA+ knowledge and capacity

‘HOW TO’ TOOLS

‘How To’ tools such as GBA+ guides, manuals and checklists provide invaluable information on all aspects of GBA+, and as such, a solid foundation for GBA+. Tools have the dual purpose of both promoting GBA+ and providing guidance in conducting GBA+. Although tools shared across the federal government are very useful, many organizations are now developing in-house tools to fit their particular environments and mandate.

GBA+ guides and manuals:

- often accompany a GBA+ training course but can serve as a stand-alone resource if developed accordingly;

- outline steps in developing or assessing policies and programs or in carrying out research;

- highlight questions that may be useful for the user, and encourage them to ask additional context-specific questions;

- contain important sources of information and background material.

GBA+ checklists are useful tools, particularly when beginning the practice of GBA+. They serve as reminders of what to include in a GBA+ and may be useful when preparing Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board submissions.
Status of Women Canada and other government organizations have prepared various tools and resources, and federal organizations are encouraged to share, collaborate and build on these existing resources. Some organizations may wish to adapt existing resources for their internal purposes or create context-specific ‘how to’ tools that resonate with their particular users.

**GENDER AND DIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE RESOURCES**

Organizations may find it useful to create fact sheets on key areas related to their area of responsibility and an annotated bibliography and/or list of key resources. These can inspire employees to consider the place of gender and diversity in their own work.

There is a direct link between an organization’s understanding of gender and diversity issues and the degree to which it succeeds in implementing GBA+.

**KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER - SHARING GBA+ TOOLS AND RESOURCES**

The sharing of information, promotional and educational activities and training opportunities helps to ensure a more profound knowledge of the concepts related to gender equality and of the process of GBA+.

Dissemination of GBA+ knowledge can be achieved through channels normally used to inform and meet the specific needs of an organization, either on a large or small scale. This can be accomplished, for example, by posting GBA+ -related information on your organization’s intranet or internet sites, or by holding informal information sessions for employees.

**Tools - Key Lessons**

- The development of GBA+ tools requires dedicated financial and human resources.
- The sharing of GBA+ tools and resources amongst organizations enhances learning and reduces duplication.
5. REPORTING

To account for and communicate progress on GBA+ activities and practices

Departments and agencies are asked to report on their GBA+ activities and practices by:

- identifying their organization’s GBA+ framework and its elements in its *Reports on Plans and Priorities* (RPP);

- reporting on implementation of the GBA+ framework in their *Departmental Performance Report* (DPR) or a similar instrument;

- reporting in the DPR, or a similar instrument, if differential gender impacts were identified in the development of policy/program outcomes;

- tracking the number of Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board submissions to which GBA+ was applied or not applied;

- reporting in other similar documents, such as annual reports.

**TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT GUIDANCE ON INCLUSION OF GBA+ IN REPORTS**

Due to the nature of the documents as well as the mixed-methodological nature of GBA+, the Treasury Board Secretariat does not have a template for inclusion of GBA+ in RPPs or DPRs.

Treasury Board advises that DPRs provide an opportunity for departments and agencies to report on program activities, progress, and successes. Ultimately, however, the choice lies with the organization as to the program elements and advancements they want to highlight within the document.

In some cases, departments will highlight short term accomplishments, long-terms goals, improvements in official languages implementation or even gender equality issues that were addressed by a new program.
It is here that TBS hopes to see organizations highlight their work on GBA+, when possible, to enhance our understanding of gender implications and to highlight progress on achieving gender equality.

**REPORTING TO THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL (OAG) AND PARLIAMENT**

The Office of the Auditor General and the House of Commons Standing Committees on Public Accounts and on the Status of Women regularly ask departments and agencies to show how GBA+ informs their decision making.

### Reporting - Key Lessons

- The Treasury Board Secretariat, Privy Council Office and Status of Women Canada encourage departments and agencies to draw public attention to their advancements in GBA+, both internal as well as external.

- Gender implications are vast and can be showcased in many different ways.

### 6. ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENTS

To assess progress on GBA+ framework implementation

A self-assessment of each organization’s progress on implementing its GBA+ framework is to be submitted annually to Status of Women Canada.

The purpose of this document is to determine an organization’s capacity to integrate and sustain the practice of GBA+. 