

# Tools to support environmental sustainability, gender equality and social cohesion



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Promoting good local governance: Tools to support environmental sustainability, gender equality and social cohesion

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# Introduction

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) works in Canada and internationally in order to improve quality of life in communities by promoting strong, effective and accountable municipal government. FCM, with financial assistance from the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is working with local authorities in Aceh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka to support the reconstruction and strengthening of local government in tsunami-affected areas.

The goal of the Canada/Aceh Local Government Assistance Program (CALGAP) is to rebuild and strengthen local governance in Aceh through responsive support to local governments and the promotion of intergovernmental cooperation models. CALGAP supports improved management and service delivery and strengthened participatory mechanisms in the City of Banda Aceh, the District of Pidie and the District of Aceh Jaya.

The goal of the Canada/Sri Lanka Municipal Cooperation Program (MCP) is to support national tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in Sri Lanka, and to create an enabling environment for peace-building by increasing local government capacities and promoting good intergovernmental relations. The primary purpose of the program is to improve local governance in local authorities in tsunami-affected areas.

CALGAP and MCP have identified three broad issues which are critical to good local governance – environmental sustainability, gender equality and social cohesion. These issues are called ‘cross-cutting themes’ because they cut across all areas of work in the programs – ranging from solid waste management to planning and budgeting.

CALGAP and MCP have developed strategies for each of these themes that suggest how they can be incorporated into all aspects of a project from

planning to implementation.<sup>1</sup> This booklet has been developed to support the implementation of the strategies. It provides tools and resources to help CALGAP and MCP local partners, staff and Canadian municipal volunteers incorporate the cross-cutting themes into their projects.<sup>2</sup> It is hoped that local governments in other districts and countries will also benefit from these resources.

The booklet answers the following questions:

What are the cross-cutting themes and why are they important?

**Section 1** introduces the cross-cutting themes and explains why they are essential to good governance.

What can your initiative do to promote environmental sustainability?

**Section 2** introduces the importance of environmental sustainability, and provides a simple checklist and tool to help you identify how a project may have an impact on the environment now or in the future.

What can your initiative do to promote gender equality?

**Section 3** describes why local government needs to address gender equality, and includes a simple checklist and tool to help identify how a project may have different effects on women and men.

What can your initiative do to promote social cohesion?

Section 4 discusses the impact that local government can have on social cohesion and includes a simple checklist and tool that will help you identify the ways that your project may affect issues of peace and conflict.

<sup>1</sup>CALGAP also integrates an anti-corruption cross-cutting theme, for which tools and operating procedures have been developed to aid in program implementation.

<sup>2</sup>While this booklet specifically refers to the incorporation of themes in individual projects, the same principles and guidelines would apply to programs with multiple projects, or activities within a project.

# Section 1

## WHAT are the cross-cutting themes and WHY are they important?

CALGAP and MCP aim to restore and strengthen local government capacities, in keeping with national standards, local priorities and good governance practices. Good governance is described by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as 'participatory, transparent and accountable. It is also effective and equitable. Good governance ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and the most vulnerable are heard in decision-making over the allocation of development resources.'<sup>3</sup>

The cross-cutting themes are tools for promoting good governance practices. Each theme underlines the importance of transparent and accountable governance practices, and the need to base government decisions on the priorities of the local community. Addressing environmental sustainability calls attention to environmental assets as limited public resources, and the importance of involving all sectors of the public in managing and protecting the environment. The themes of gender equality and social cohesion suggest how governments can ensure that the needs and interests of marginalized groups are also included. Those themes also address the fair and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and benefits. By integrating each of the themes, projects will be taking steps to build good governance policies and practice.

There are two overall and complementary approaches to building equitable and sustainable governance. One is to make changes within government, for example changing organizational structures, policies and practices. This can be thought of as making improvements on the 'supply side' of governance. The second approach, equally important, focuses on creating a 'demand' for democratic, accountable and fair governance by strengthening community capacity to participate and to hold their government organizations to account.

### Making Changes Within Government

Changing the way that local government works includes:

- a) Making political commitments to sustainability and social justice. *For example:*
  - Adopting policies that commit the government to equality, justice and sustainability; publicizing those commitments; and setting an example by highlighting projects that contribute to gender equality, social cohesion and good environmental practices
  - Promoting the inclusion of all social factions in public affairs and valuing cultural and ethnic diversity in the community
  - Committing to poverty reduction through concrete measures targeting disadvantaged groups and the poor
- b) Improving practices and procedures. *For example:*
  - Developing more transparent decision-making and procurement practices
  - Developing human resource management practices that are gender-equitable, merit-based and fair
  - Establishing processes for community input into decisions
- c) Building capacity within municipal departments. *For example:*
  - Building staff awareness and capacity to consider the social and environmental implications of their work
  - Developing systems and procedures to improve public communication and consultation
  - Developing capacity to manage conflict and resolve issues of competing interests

<sup>3</sup>See Governance for sustainable human development. A UNDP policy document. <http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/policy/chapter1.htm#b>

- d) Giving priority to inclusive and equitable distribution of benefits. *For example:*
  - Ensuring that the local community receives benefit from the extraction and utilization of local resources
  - Working to achieve equal benefit for women and men from different communities
- e) Strengthening government accountability. *For example:*
  - Improving public access to information
  - Developing mechanisms for citizens to complain of corrupt practices

### **Strengthening Community Capacity to Participate and Hold Governments to Account**

A strong, aware civil society creates the demand for democratic, accountable and just government. Therefore, any effort to improve local governance needs to recognize and support the role of citizens and civil society organizations. Three of the important steps are:

- a) Supporting women and men, from all societal groups, to participate as informed citizens and to express and advocate for their interests. In order to participate effectively, citizens need:
  - Access to information
  - To understand the role of local government

- To understand the consequences of government action
- To be aware of their rights as citizens
- b) Building civil society capacity to identify and express problems that affect the local community and develop solutions. Government can contribute to this by:
  - Creating opportunities for citizen participation in local government processes
  - Strengthening civil society organizations (through legal empowerment, financial support, capacity building, etc.)
- c) Making local government representative of the community, by ensuring that government workers and officials come from different parts of the community, is also an effective strategy. Government decisions need to be based on the realities of diverse groups with the goal of ensuring that different groups benefit equally (not just receive equal opportunities). This requires access to information about the different groups within the community and good communication with civil society.



### **Creating Space for Dialogue with the Community**

An important way to promote good governance that is equitable and sustainable is by strengthening community capacity to participate and hold local government to account. Supporting women and men, from all societal groups, to participate as informed citizens and to express and advocate for their interests is an important part of this process. In this photo, the Vice Chairman of Trincomalee Urban Council in Sri Lanka takes the time to consult community members on an issue of concern to them.

# Section 2

## WHAT can your initiative do to promote environmental sustainability?

Activities of local government have an impact on the environment. Reducing the negative impact of municipal activities and decisions on the environment while increasing positive environmental impacts will help to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

The CALGAP and MCP Environmental Sustainability Strategies suggest how environmental considerations can be integrated into all aspects of a project from planning to implementation. The strategies address issues related to natural ecosystems (e.g., forests, wetlands, wildlife) as well as to human concerns (e.g., air and water quality, nuisances such as noise, dust and odours).

### Understand the context

The first step to integrate environmental considerations in a project is to be aware of the context:

- o The institutional framework regarding the environment (laws, regulations, government guidelines or strategies, municipal policies or by-laws)
- o The environmental conditions (i.e., major environmental assets and issues/liabilities) in the area where the project will be undertaken. This information can be found in documents or through discussions with government agencies, other donors in the field and community-based groups (e.g., cooperatives, environmental NGOs).

Other less tangible factors may also affect the project, for example:

- o The attitudes of municipal staff, officials and stakeholders about environmental issues, and the value given to environment in comparison to other pressing concerns such as providing housing, promoting local economic development or increasing tax revenues
- o Community concerns about how the state of the environment can affect their quality of life

(e.g., health hazards from pollutants and nuisances) or their continued access to valued resources (e.g., fish, firewood, land for housing, etc.)

### Environmental issues in different projects

Projects that involve physical works (e.g., improvements or construction of infrastructure in areas such as waste management, water provision, transport, reconstruction of buildings) are liable to produce obvious and direct negative effects on the environment (e.g., production of contaminants, encroachment on natural ecosystems, production of important amounts of waste, production of nuisances for the community). Particular attention should be given to the long-term (often unexpected or less visible) environmental costs that may result from a project as well as its short term (often very visible) benefits.

For example, building new housing provides shelter and improves the quality of life for displaced persons. However, housing projects may result in increased pressures on municipal services such as water provision or solid waste collection or on the natural resources used for building materials, for instance because of extensive sand mining or illegal logging.

Capacity building projects which do not involve physical works may not have direct effects on the environment. However, they may result in policies, administrative practices or operating procedures that affect the environment. Situations that lead to negative effects on the environment should be avoided while environmentally friendly practices should be encouraged. Some examples are provided in the box on the next page.

Area of capacity building	Situations that should be avoided	Practices that should be encouraged
Financial planning	Incentives for polluting activities, urban sprawl or other unsustainable behaviour Not considering environmental liabilities (e.g., contaminated sites)	Tax incentives to adopt less polluting behaviour Inclusion of environmental costs in financial planning (e.g., for soil decontamination or improving water quality)
Land-use planning	Expansion of human activities into sensitive natural areas or areas where adequate environmental services (waste collection, water services, etc.) are not available on the short or medium term	Base planning on solid knowledge of the environmental constraints in the area considered
Purchase of equipment	Purchase of equipment (office equipment, vehicles, machinery) that consume large amounts of non-renewable resources or are polluting	Develop a purchase policy that favours equipment that is energy efficient, that is built with alternative materials or that can be recycled
Improving service delivery	Lack of efficiency resulting in environmental problems (e.g., accumulation of waste in streets, noisy or polluting municipal vehicles, etc.)	Set example by implementing a municipal environment management policy Enforcing the environmental regulations

### Addressing environmental sustainability when planning and implementing a project:

Planning a project can be greatly facilitated by a good knowledge of the environmental situation in the area and, perhaps more importantly, by community engagement in the process, particularly through participatory mechanisms that ensure that community knowledge and concerns are expressed and mobilized in the project, and monitored and evaluated.

Monitoring and evaluation is based on indicators that vary from project to project. These are generally linked to factors such as air, water and soil quality, energy use, contaminants emitted, nuisances to which the community is exposed.

Indicators can be quantitative (e.g., amount of contaminants in drinking water) or qualitative (e.g. community perception with respect to nuisances such as noise, dust and odours).

On pages 9 and 10, two flow charts outline what questions should be addressed to ensure that environmental sustainability is integrated into project planning (Figure 1) and monitoring/evaluation (Figure 2).

On page 11, you will find a simple checklist that can be used in consultation with concerned community members to assess the potential environmental issues for any project or program. The checklist can also be used to develop good indicators.

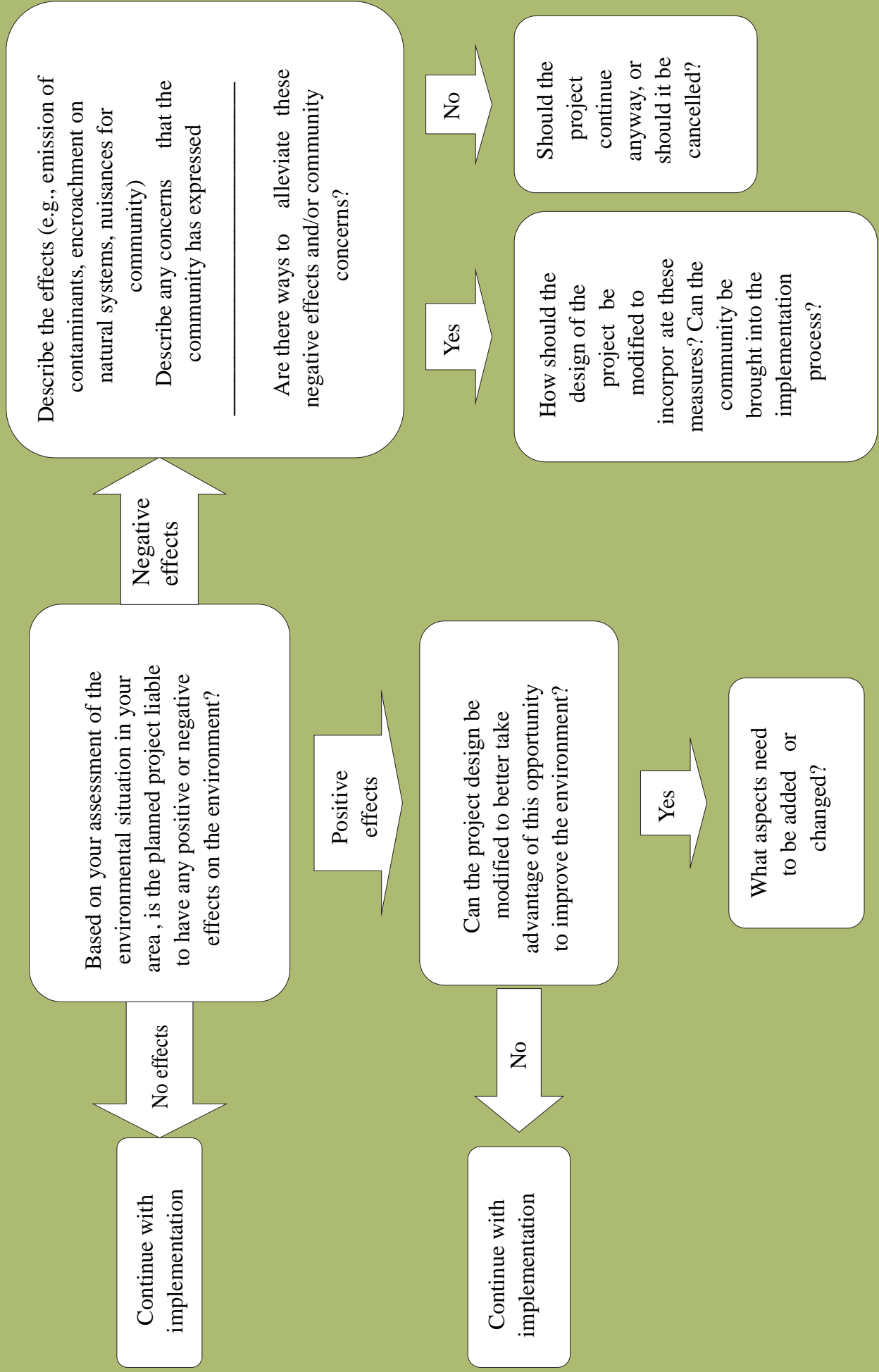


### Planning for the Environment

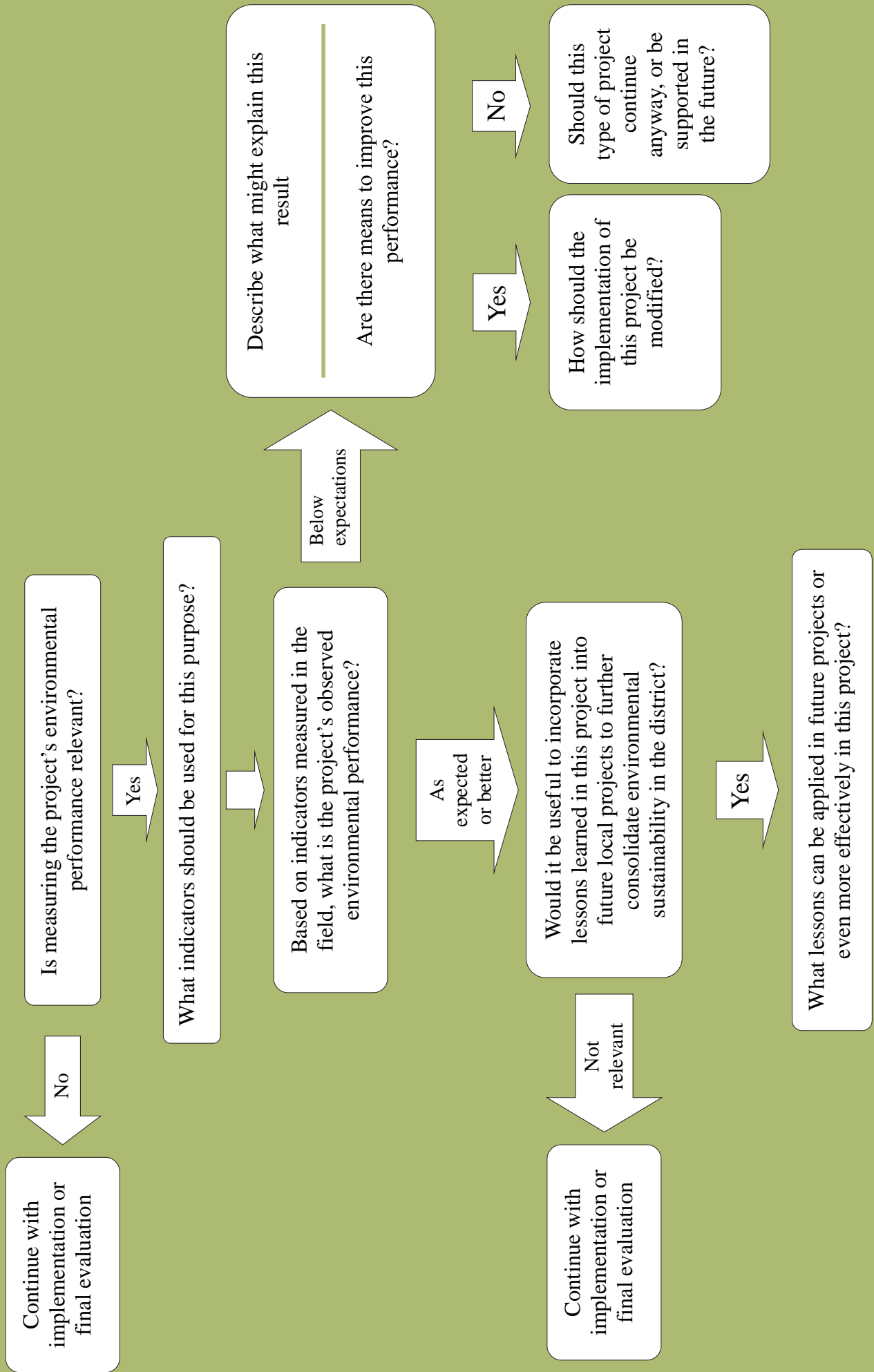
In Galle, Sri Lanka this new housing complex was built following the 2004 tsunami, providing shelter and improved quality of life for displaced persons. However, the project resulted in increased pressure on municipal services. The lack of adequate sewage system to serve the housing complex polluted the canal system as well as presented important health hazards for residents. When planning projects, an environmental assessment will help determine the potential long-term



**Figure 2.1: WHAT you can do to promote environmental sustainability when planning projects**



**Figure 2.2: What you can do to promote environmental sustainability when monitoring and evaluating projects**



# Environmental Sustainability checklist

Program:		
Project:		
Municipal Partners:	In Canada _____	In Aceh / Sri Lanka _____
Date of assessment:		

This checklist is not a decision making tool as such: rather it should be seen as an aid in identifying the environmental issues in a given project. The information should be revised regularly during the project's implementation as new issues or circumstances arise (e.g., new technical data, emerging public concerns).

Question 1. Have any other stakeholders (e.g., community groups, local NGOs,) been consulted when completing this checklist?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, which stakeholders?

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If not, why?

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Question 2. What safeguards does the project include to limit any negative effects on the environment that it may lead to?

For each environmental issue listed in the following table, check whether it is relevant or not to the project.

For each yes answer, briefly describe

- ? what factor in the project could cause the project to have negative effects on the environment (e.g., type of activity involved, lack of awareness to environmental issues; the possibility that some municipal zoning policies or fiscal incentives lead to the encroachment or destruction of sensitive habitats).
- ? the safeguards (e.g., «green» practices, mitigation measures, etc.) that are planned at this stage of the project to offset these negative effects (e.g., inclusion of environmental considerations in planning processes or standard operation procedures, training personnel on environmental issues, etc.).

Environmental issue	Relevant to project?		With respect to this issue...	
	No	Yes	what factor(s) in the project could lead to negative effects on the environment	what safeguard(s) will be included or promoted to offset these negative effects
1. Release of contaminants to the air, soil or water				
2. Reduction of the quantity of water available for certain uses (e.g., because of derivations, irrigation)				
3. Encroachment on natural habitats (e.g., wetlands, forests, marine ecosystems, etc.)				
4. Increased pressure (e.g., from over harvesting) on natural resources (e.g., fisheries, forests, agriculture, etc.)				
5. Increased the amount of waste produced				
6. Increased demand for building materials such as sand, clay, gravel or wood				
7. Increased consumption of energy				
8. Nuisances such as noise, dust and odours				
9. Risks to public health for certain groups (e.g., communities near landfills)				
10. Reduction of protection against natural hazards (e.g., by removing wind breaks, developing coastal areas)				
11. Other				

Question 3. What factors in the project can lead to improvements in the environment?

For each element in the left-hand column of the following table, check whether it is relevant or not to the project.

For each yes answer, briefly describe what is planned at this stage of the project so that its positive effects on the environment can be enhanced (e.g., by implementing outreach activities, by using environmentally friendly practices or technologies, etc.).

Areas where the environment will be improved	Relevant to project?		With respect to this element, what will be done in the project to enhance its positive environmental effects
	No	Yes	
1. Better air, soil or water quality			
2. Improved water availability			
3. Protection of natural habitats (e.g., wetlands, forests, marine ecosystems, etc.)			
4. Decreased pressure on natural resources (e.g., fisheries, forests, agriculture, etc.)			
5. Reduction of waste			
6. Sustainable use of building materials such as sand, clay, gravel or wood			
7. Decreased consumption of energy			
8. Reduction of nuisances such as noise, dust and odours			
9. Improved public health			
10. Improved protection against natural hazards			
11. Other			

Question 4. Is an environmental monitoring program relevant to this project?

It may be relevant to identify at this time any environmental monitoring issues that should be addressed, particularly if there are important effects on the environment or if the community has voiced concerns with respect to these issues.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, in the following table, list the most important indicators that should be measured, explain why they should be monitored (e.g., because of community concerns, presence of sensitive ecosystems, regulatory requirements (see question 4 on the latter point)) and identify who should be involved in the monitoring, including in certain cases community groups.

Indicator to be monitored	Why should this indicator be monitored?	Who should be involved in the monitoring?

If not, explain:

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Question 5. Is the project liable to lead to actions in the field that will require an environmental permit?

Implementing a project (e.g., improving or building infrastructure in areas such as waste management, water and sanitation, transport, etc.) may require an environmental permit from local authorities. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act may also apply when CIDA funding is involved. Municipal partners should be aware of any permitting requirements so that they can be addressed as early as possible in the project.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what regulations will be involved?

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Briefly explain how compliance to these regulations will be integrated into the project (e.g., discussions with the environmental agency about permitting requirements, particularly the technical conditions to be complied with, completion of permit application forms (including environmental impact statements, etc.).

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### Conclusion

From the above information, this project incorporates environmental sustainability because: (check one or several of the following)

- A. Environmental safeguards will be included or promoted during the project's development to limit its negative environmental effects. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Means will be taken to enhance its positive effects on the environment. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. The project will address any relevant environmental monitoring issues. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. The project will take into consideration any environmental regulations requirements. \_\_\_\_\_

### Comments

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# Section 3

## WHAT can your initiative do to promote gender equality?

### Why is gender equality important to local government?

Local government is successful when it meets the needs of citizens in ways that are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Meeting the needs of citizens includes meeting the needs of both women and men. However, women and men often have very different needs and resources. Therefore, local government officials need to understand the differences in the situation of women and men, and deliver government services in ways that meet their different needs.

Increasing the involvement of women in local government activities also increases the resources available to the community. When women are not included, governments and community organizations are working with only half the information and half the resources.

Local government is the order of government that is closest to citizens. This means that local authorities have a unique opportunity to contribute to fairness and equality for all women and men in their community. The information in this section can help local government and partners to design and implement projects and programs so that they effectively include and benefit all members of the community.

### Basic concepts for understanding gender:

Understanding a few basic concepts is important in assessing the way that local government projects may affect women differently from men:

Sex refers to the biological characteristics which define someone as being female or male.

Gender is the social meaning given to being a woman or a man. Gender refers to the roles, ideas, and practices of being a man or a woman in a particular society.

Gender Equality is the concept of women and men having equal opportunity and capacity to develop to their fullest potential. Government that promotes gender equality recognizes and considers the different capacities, aspirations and needs of women and men, and takes steps to ensure that both women and men receive equal

benefit from policies and resources. Gender equality does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

### Access to and control over resources

Resources are the goods and material needed to carry out activities of daily life, such as time, money, land etc. Resources include:

- Human resources (e.g., labour power, health and skills)
- Tangible resources (e.g., money, assets, commodities)
- Intangible resources (e.g., solidarity, contacts, information, political clout)

When women have access to resources it means that they have the opportunity to use and benefit from those resources (e.g., access to land to grow food crops).

When women have control over resources it means they can access the resource but they can also make decisions about the use of those resources. For example, control over land means that women can access land (use it), can own land (can be the legal title-holders), and can make decisions about whether to sell or rent the land.

Benefits are the results from using a resource. Benefits can include meeting basic needs (e.g., food, housing), increasing resources (e.g., income, assets, skills) and improving social position (e.g., education, status).

### Equal opportunity versus equal benefits:

Providing equal opportunity for women and men is about giving them both the same opportunities (e.g., for jobs, to participate, etc). For example, if a training program is offered to both men and women, they have equal opportunity to learn new skills.

However, because women and men have different roles and resources, women may not be able to benefit from these opportunities. For example, if the same training program is



offered at a time that interferes with women's childcare responsibilities, women may not be able to benefit from the opportunity to learn new skills.

A focus on equal benefits recognizes the different situations of women and men, and develops strategies to ensure that both can benefit from a resource. In the example above, the organizers of the training could ensure that women benefit equally from the training by organizing it at a more suitable time and providing child care services at the training centre.

The important point to remember here is that providing equal opportunity for women and men is a first step, but a focus on benefits recognizes the different situations of women and men, and helps to break down systemic barriers that discriminate against women.

## Women as decision makers

Women and men often have very different needs and resources. Including women as decision makers in local government increases the likelihood that the needs of both men and women will be taken into consideration in the delivery of services. The Community Support Facility of the CALGAP program provides an opportunity for community-based organizations to apply for funds to implement small-scale infrastructure and capital projects. In this example above, women and men both participate in the municipality of Banda Aceh's Community Appraisal Committee, which is responsible for reviewing and approving applications. The CSF incorporates gender considerations into the criteria for selection of projects.

## Integrating gender equality into projects

Developing projects that will benefit women and men equally requires a few essentials:

### 1. Political commitment:

Municipalities can also develop gender equality policies to emphasize the local commitment to inclusive government and give guidance to municipal departments and staff.

### 2. Information about gender differences:

An accurate and comprehensive understanding of the different situations of women and men is critical to developing gender-sensitive policies, projects and programs. The two most important sources of information are:

- Sex-disaggregated data.
- Input from individual women and men, and from community groups

Initiatives to change how statistics are collected in order to increase the availability of sex-disaggregated data are important steps in reducing the exclusion of women and promoting gender equality. Similarly, steps to encourage inclusive community participation will contribute to more gender-sensitive programs and policies.

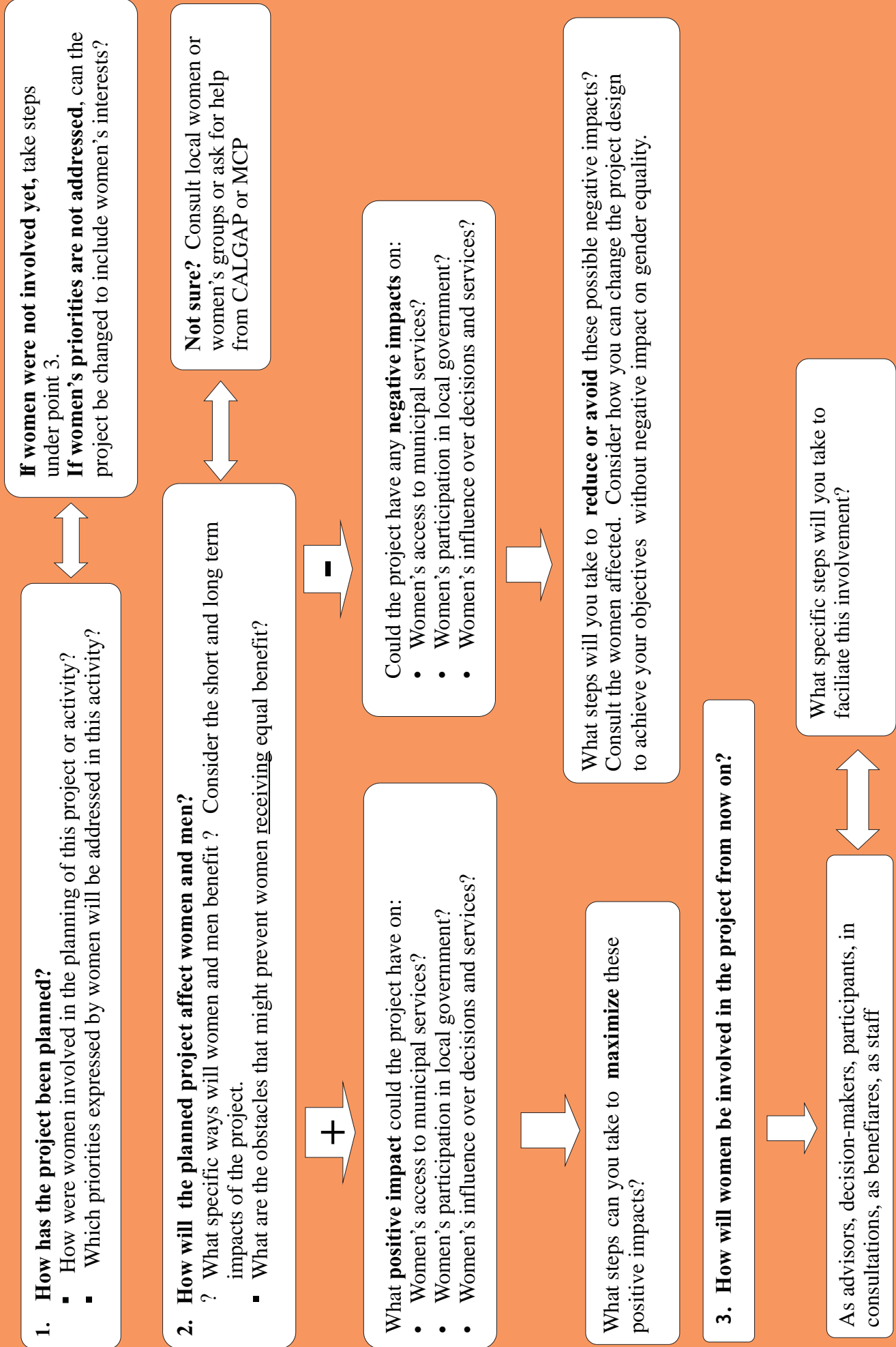
### 3. Integrating gender considerations in project design and monitoring:

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 on pages 18 to 19 highlight the questions to ask to promote gender equality during project planning and monitoring.

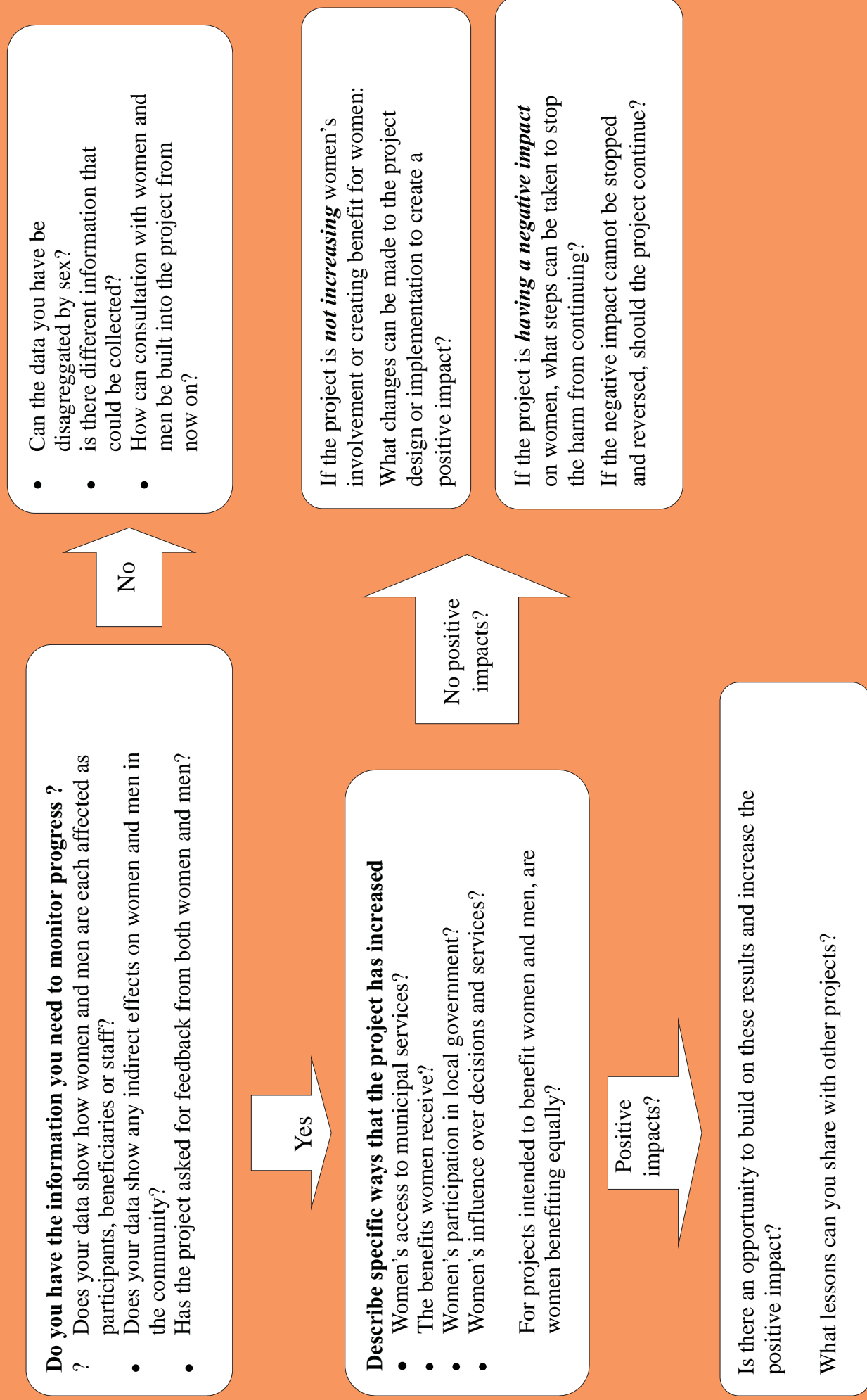
The checklist on pages 20 to 23 will help municipal staff and community groups to consider the gendered aspects of any project. Ideally this checklist will be completed in consultation with community members in order to contribute to a comprehensive situation analysis.

The checklist encourages the development of indicators that will help to measure how effectively the project is addressing the different needs, interests and resources of women and men (as beneficiaries, workers and citizens).

**Figure 3.1: WHAT you can do to promote Gender Equality when planning projects**



# Figure 3.2: WHAT you can do to promote gender equality when monitoring and evaluating project progress?



# Gender Equality checklist

Program:		
Project:		
Municipal Partners:	In Canada: _____	In Aceh/SriLanka: _____
Civil Society Partners:		
Date of assessment:		

This checklist will help you to identify the different ways that women and men may be affected by a project of local government. Based on this analysis, you can identify steps to take to ensure that women and men receive equal benefit from the project. The information should be revised regularly over the lifetime of the project, and as new issues or circumstances arise (e.g., increased public discussion about gender equality or particular issues facing women, changes in policy or priorities, etc.).

Question 1. Who has been consulted when completing this checklist?

Local government officials:

Women: \_\_\_\_\_

Men: \_\_\_\_\_

Community groups / NGOs: \_\_\_\_\_

Which of these groups represent issues of concern to women? \_\_\_\_\_

Other stakeholders (such as private sector companies, other public sector institutions, etc.):

Women: \_\_\_\_\_

Men: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 2. What steps will the project take to include women and men?

i) Who was involved in deciding that this initiative should go ahead? Who participated in project design?

Local government officials:

Women: \_\_\_\_\_

Men: \_\_\_\_\_

Community groups / NGOs: \_\_\_\_\_

Which of these groups represent issues of concern to women? \_\_\_\_\_

Other stakeholders (such as private sector companies, other public sector institutions, etc.):

Women: \_\_\_\_\_

Men: \_\_\_\_\_

If statistics were used to determine the need for the project, were those statistics broken down by women and men so that any gender differences become clear?

If women have not been involved in project decisions, and if the statistics used for planning were not disaggregated by sex, then women's interests and needs may not be addressed.

- Are there opportunities to consult women now or in future stages of the initiative?
- ✓ What steps are needed to make sure that future projects are based on sex-disaggregated data?

**ii) Who will be involved in implementing the initiative?**

	Women	Men	
As municipal staff			Who is involved in decision-making?
			What jobs do women do? What do men do?
			What are women paid? What are men paid?
As casual workers			Who is involved in decision-making?
			What jobs do women do? What do men do?
			What are women paid? What are men paid?
As volunteers			Who is involved in decision-making?
			What volunteer jobs do women do?
			What volunteer jobs do men do?

- How are the roles of women and men on the project different? Is there an opportunity to support women to take on new roles and build new skills?
- ✓ If women are not involved in the decision-making, what steps can you take to make sure that any specific needs or interests of women are brought to the attention of the decision-makers?
- ✓ Are women and men both benefiting from employment opportunities? Are they paid the same for similar work? If not, what steps will you take to distribute work opportunities and wages more fairly?

iii) Who will benefit from the results of the project?

What will be the results of this project? (For example, a new road, an improved public service, a more efficient department, etc.)

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In what specific ways will the project results benefit men?

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In what specific ways will the project results benefit women?

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Will women and men have equal access to benefits which result from this initiative? (For example, if the project is to repair a market building, will it have facilities for women as well as men? Do both women and men sell in the market?)

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Not Sure (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

If you answered no, or not sure: What barriers might prevent women from accessing the benefits of the project? \_\_\_\_\_

What steps can be taken to help overcome these barriers?

---

If the project is intended to benefit households in the community:

- ✓ Could the resource / benefit be distributed to individual citizens rather than by household, so that women and men will have equal entitlements?
- ✓ If the resource must be distributed by household then what steps can the project take to make sure that women have equal access, and receive equal benefit, as the men in the household? (e.g., making sure that both women and men know that the resource exists and should benefit all household members.)

Question 3. How will the project promote equity between women and men:

If the project is specifically intended to benefit women or contribute to gender equality please also answer the following questions:

Gender equality issue	Relevant to project?		With respect to this issue...
	No	Yes	
1. Does the project address women in their traditional roles (e.g. as mothers or housewives, or as home-based workers?)			<p>If yes, how could the project also support women to develop skills and confidence outside their traditional roles?</p> <p>If no, how will the project help women to address any resistance they face (from their family or community) when they step out of traditional roles?</p>
2. Has the project considered women's workload and time constraints to make sure that women can participate and avoid increasing their workload?			<p>If yes, what steps have been taken?</p> <p>If no, what steps can the project take to make it easier for women to participate? For example, by changing the schedule or location of meetings, supporting initiatives that reduce women's workload, etc.</p>
3. Does the project increase women's access to resources? Resources can include skills, information, support, money, assets, etc.			<p>If yes, what resources will women gain access to?</p> <p>If women will not gain increased resources then what is their incentive for participating?</p>
4. Does the project increase women's control over resources?			<p>If yes, how will women gain control over resources?</p> <p>If no, what steps can the project take to make sure that women can continue to access the resource?</p> <p>Can the project be adapted to create opportunities for women to gain control over some resources (within the project or more generally)?</p>
5. Does the project increase women's involvement in local governance?			<p>If yes, how will the project lead to women's greater participation in local governance?</p> <p>If no, are there other ways that this project might be used to increase the links between community women and local government?</p>
6. Does the project increase women's influence over local government decisions?			<p>If yes, how?</p> <p>If no, are there opportunities to use this project to strengthen women's capacity for influencing decisions? (e.g., by involving women in project decisions, supporting women to gain confidence presenting their views, or increasing the visibility of women as citizens.)</p>
7. Other			

Question 4. Is a program needed to monitor progress on gender equality for this initiative?

Did your assessment in questions 2 and 3 identify issues which should be monitored?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, in the following table, list the most important indicators that should be measured, explain why they should be monitored (e.g., to see if women's participation in a project continues, to see if women receive the expected benefits, to learn whether a particular strategy is effective, etc. ) and identify who should be involved in the monitoring. Make sure to consider the issues on which women beneficiaries, women staff and community groups should be included in monitoring.

Indicator to be monitored	Why should this indicator be monitored?	Who should be involved in the monitoring?

If gender equality monitoring is not required, explain why:

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### Conclusion

Based on the above information, this project promotes gender equality because (check one or several of the following):

- A. Steps will be taken to ensure that women will not be disadvantaged by this project. \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Steps will be taken to support the involvement of women in the project. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Steps will be taken to make sure that women and men have equal access to project resources and receive equal benefit from the project results. \_\_\_\_\_
- D. The project specifically addresses interests or needs identified by women. \_\_\_\_\_
- E. The project specifically works to reduce inequalities between women and men. \_\_\_\_\_
- F. The project will monitor gender equality issues and outcomes \_\_\_\_\_

### Comments

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# Section 4

## WHAT can your initiative do to promote social cohesion?

Social cohesion—the ability of citizens in a given area to function cooperatively together—is invariably severely weakened when violent conflict erupts. One challenge for all stakeholders in a post-conflict situation, or even while conflict is still going on, is to contribute to a sustainable return to stability by avoiding inadvertently weakening what degree of social cohesion remains and, when possible, by identifying and pursuing opportunities to reinforce existing levels of social cohesion. Social cohesion is generally damaged when existing conflict resolution

mechanisms (e.g., courts, traditional village councils, etc.) break down or prove incapable of resolving disputes over the use of resources (e.g., land, water, government assets, etc.). When the mechanisms in question fail to produce a settlement that is acceptable (“legitimate”) in the eyes of the main groups concerned, then one or more of the groups will often feel resentful at what they perceive as an injustice and in some circumstances may turn to violence as a solution. Indeed, in some cases, individuals or political parties will actively try to create or intensify that

resentment in order to gain a personal advantage. Conflicting viewpoints are a normal part of any society. It is just when social cohesion is weak and peaceful mechanisms to resolve conflicts are ineffective that the conflicts become destructive and violent.



In this project in the Pidie district of Aceh, a new bridge provides benefits to the community. In order to promote transparency and accountability in the project, a sign was mounted in full public view that indicates the amount of funds the community received for the project, the project's duration, and the contribution made by the community. Building this level of transparency into the project helps inform the community of what is being planned and who will benefit, promotes trust in local government, and minimizes the risk that some groups in the community will feel excluded.



If a local government or local organization wishes to make a contribution to strengthening social cohesion, it needs to understand any sources of resentment and tension that parts of the community may feel and how local conflict resolution mechanisms might be made more legitimate or stronger in the eyes of all community members. Fundamentally, the first question to ask oneself when planning a project or activity is “What might be the effect of our planned activity on tensions between different parts of our community or between the community and their local government, i.e. the effect on social cohesion?”

### **Questions to consider**

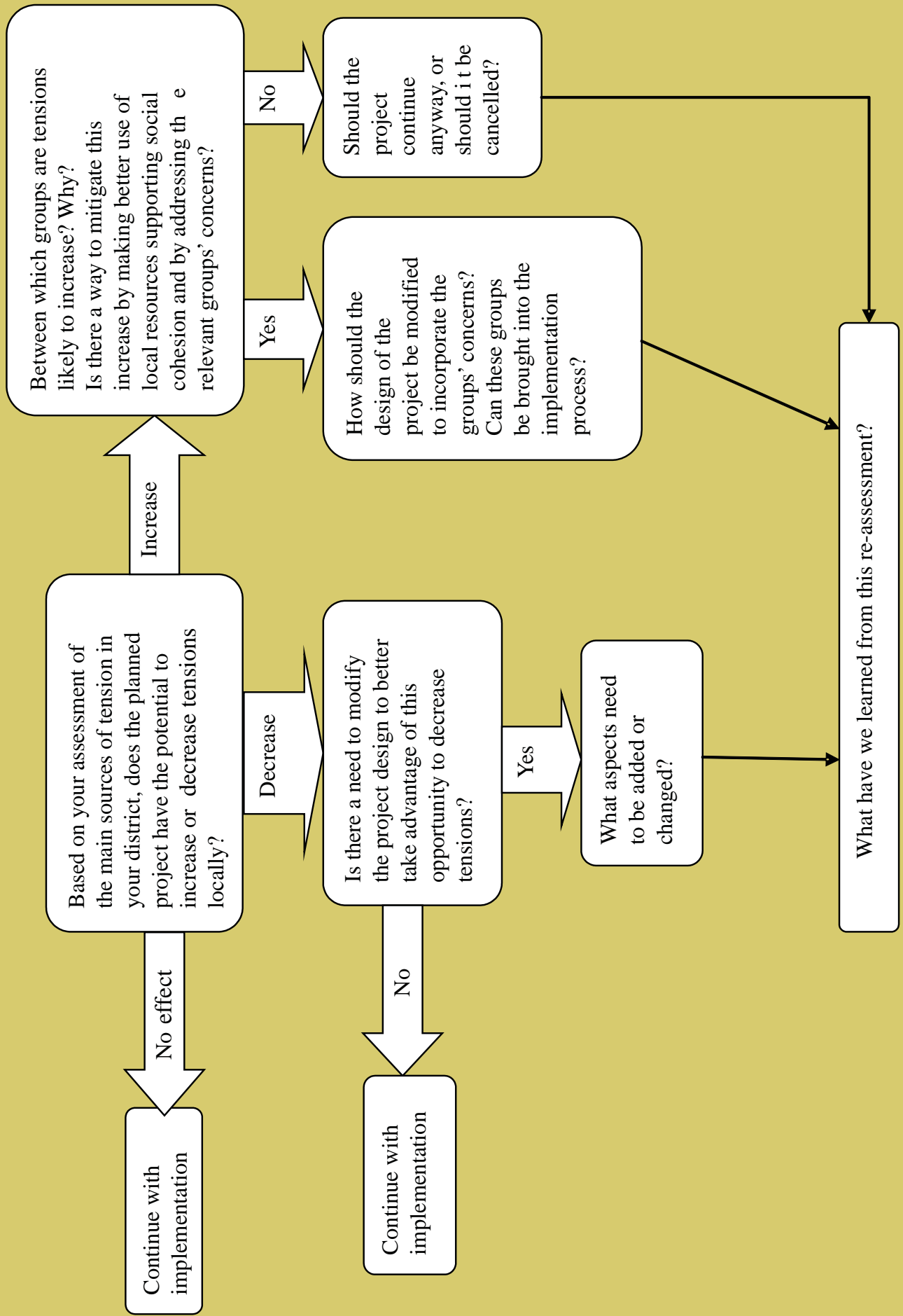
Practically, in trying to predict the likely effect on social cohesion, there are a few standard questions you can ask, based on universal human principles as fairness, transparency, accountability and effectiveness:

- Will all parts of the community have reasonable access to the benefits of the project, roughly in proportion to their needs, or is there a risk that some parts will be excluded?
- Has an attempt been made to explain to the community, via public meetings, notices, radio announcements, etc., what is being planned, why this is being done and how the project will be carried out?
- Are there mechanisms planned (public meetings, an office to register complaints, meetings with community organizations, etc.) that will allow community members to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the project and to offer suggestions about how to improve it?
- Will details about how the project resources are intended to be used and how they are indeed used (e.g. a clear budget and financial reports) be available to anyone who wants to see them?

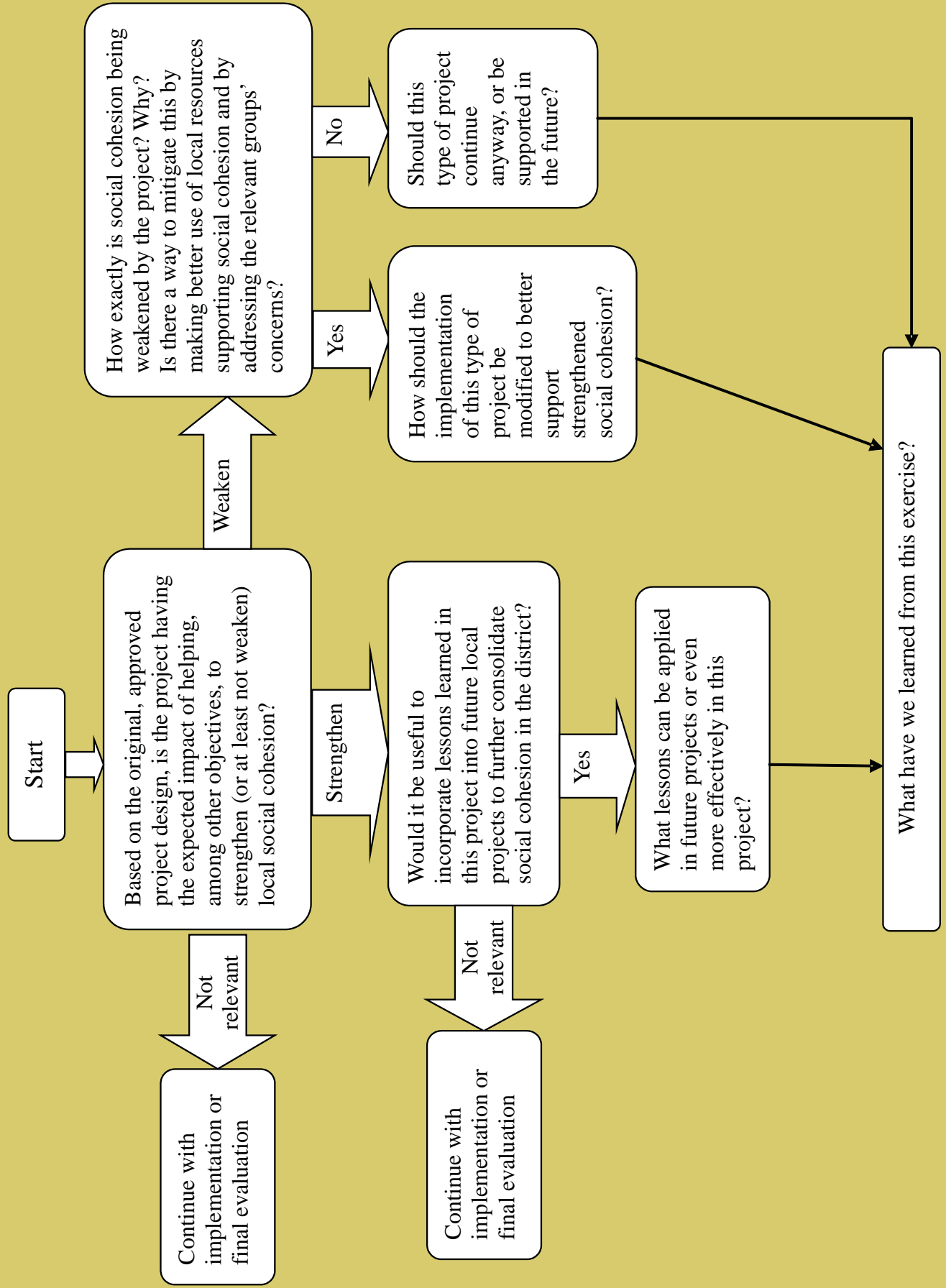
- Depending on the duration of the project, will there be periodic or a final evaluation to assess if the project has reached its objectives as planned and, if not, what were the problems? Will there be an opportunity for the community to provide input to such an evaluation?
- In the event of serious disagreements with a part or parts of the community about how the project is to be carried out or about how it is progressing, is there a way for this disagreement to be resolved in a reasonably timely manner and in a way that is likely to be seen as acceptable (although probably not ideal) by all parts of the community?

Similar questions can be asked during the monitoring of the project implementation. A simple checklist beginning on page 28 can be used to assess these issues. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 on pages 26 and 27 show the reasoning process involved in considering the impact of a project on social cohesion during the planning and monitoring phases.

**Figure 4.1: WHAT you can do to promote social cohesion when planning**



**Figure 4.2: WHAT you can do to promote social cohesion when monitoring and evaluating the project**



# Social cohesion checklist

Program:		
Project:		
Municipal Partners:	In Canada _____	In Aceh/Sri Lanka: _____
Date of assessment:		

This checklist is not a decision making tool as such: rather it should be seen as an aid in identifying possible social cohesion issues in a given project. The information should be revised regularly during the project's evolution as new issues or circumstances require (e.g., increased or decreased social tensions, changes in the political environment).

Question 1. Are there any links between the project objectives or activities and known tensions within the communities in any part of the project target area?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, do you believe the project objectives or activities are likely to lessen these tensions or exacerbate them? If the likely effect is to exacerbate tensions, what can be modified to avoid this?

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If the answer is "no", is there nevertheless a way to adjust the project design to help lessen some of the existing tensions in the project area?

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Question 2. What safeguards does the project include to limit any possible negative effects on the level of social cohesion in the project area?

For each social cohesion issue listed in the following table, check whether it is relevant or not to the project. For each "yes" answer, briefly describe

- ? what aspect of the project could result in negative effects on social cohesion (e.g., type of activity involved, lack of understanding of social context, the choice of land where project activities will take place, the targeting of beneficiaries, etc.).
- ? the safeguards or mitigating measures that are planned at this stage of the project to offset these negative effects (e.g., Community consultations, adjustment of targeting criteria, more public information about the project, etc.).

Possible social cohesion issue	Relevant to project?		With respect to this issue...	
	No	Yes	what aspect(s) of the project could produce negative effects on local social cohesion?	what safeguard(s) or measures will be included to offset these possible negative effects?
1. Inequitable treatment of certain parts of the community				
2. Weaknesses in project transparency about objectives, budget and activities, adding to mistrust between local government and the community, as well as between sections of the community				
3. Project benefits (e.g. jobs, contracts, outputs) seen as unfairly distributed, or being captured by particular groups (corruption, intimidation, favouritism, etc.)				
4. The feeling by certain groups that they have suffered particularly from previous conflict and therefore deserve special consideration				
5. Inadequate resources within the project to meet the needs of everyone who would like to benefit from it				
6. Community and individual empowerment: the project, despite its benefits, doesn't help give the targeted communities and individuals a sense that they are regaining control over their own lives				
7. Other				

Question 3. What factors in the project can lead to improvements in levels of local social cohesion?

For each element in the left-hand column of the following table, check whether it is relevant or not to the project. For each "yes" answer, briefly describe what is planned at this stage of the project so that its positive effects on social cohesion can be enhanced (e.g., by involving the community more, by encouraging collaboration between groups who don't normally work together, by making local government decision-making processes more open and more subject to citizen input, etc.)

Areas where social cohesion will be improved	Relevant to project?		With respect to this element, what will be done in the project to enhance its positive effects on social cohesion?
	No	Yes	
1. Equitable treatment for all parts of the community			
2. Project transparency measures to develop trust between local government and the community, as well as between sections of the community			
3. Fair distribution of project benefits (e.g. jobs, contracts, outputs), rather than having them captured by particular groups (corruption, intimidation, favouritism, etc.)			
4. Addressing the feeling by certain groups that they have suffered particularly from previous conflict and therefore deserve special consideration			
5. Using limited project resources creatively, in the face of enormous needs, so that the community in general feels that the benefits have been maximized and distributed fairly			
6. Community and individual empowerment: does the project make a contribution to giving the targeted communities and individuals a sense that they are regaining control over their own lives?			
7. Other _____			

Question 4. Is a social cohesion monitoring effort relevant to this project?

It may be relevant to identify at this time the degree of social cohesion monitoring that should be carried out during the project, particularly if significant effects (positive or negative) on local social tensions are expected or if the community has voiced concerns or worries with respect to the project. Therefore, in your opinion, should some monitoring of social cohesion be carried out during this project or in the months that follow its completion?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If the answer is “yes”, in the following table list the most important project aspects (e.g. transparency, equitable access to project benefits, community involvement in planning and/or implementation, inter-group collaboration, etc.) that should be monitored, explain why (e.g., because of expressed community concerns, pre-existing social tensions, related social “triggers” like land issues, etc.) and identify who should be involved in the monitoring, including, when relevant, community groups.

Aspect to be monitored	Why should this aspect be monitored?	Who should be involved in the monitoring?

**If the answer is “no”, please explain why you think social cohesion monitoring will not be useful:**

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Conclusion

Based on the above responses, we believe this project promotes social cohesion because (check one or more of the following):

- A. Social cohesion measures will be included or promoted during the project’s planning and implementation to limit its negative effects. \_\_\_
- B. Means will be taken to enhance its positive effects on social cohesion. \_\_\_
- C. The project will address any relevant social cohesion monitoring issues \_\_\_

Comments

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**For more information on CALGAP and MCP strategies regarding environmental sustainability, gender equality and social cohesion, contact:**

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