

Executive Summary

I. Research Objectives and Methods

The gender equality policy marker is an important statistical tool to measure OECD DAC donor countries' policy commitment to improve gender equality and women's rights. Member countries screen whether their ODA was used for the purpose of gender equality and report it to DAC annually. In December 2016, OECD DAC issued new guidelines including minimum criteria to help member countries better understand and effectively apply gender marker to ODA projects/programs. KOICA in 2018 also established the 'Guideline for Gender Mainstreaming' to apply gender marker to projects/programs from 2019 abiding by the OECD DAC new standards. South Korea's gender equality focused ODA ratio based on gender marker is still far below the average of DAC member countries, raising questions on the fundamental cause of the discrepancy between Korea's ODA policy and gender marker application.

Accordingly, this research aims to achieve the following: First, it examines the recent trend (2018-2020) of gender equality focused ODA and gender marker application by the four major ODA implementing agencies including KOICA, EDCF, the Korea Rural Community Corporation (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs) and the Korea Foundation for International Healthcare (Ministry of Health and Welfare) through data analysis and in-depth interview. Furthermore, an additional interview was conducted with the Office for Government Policy Coordination, the central control tower that collects the aggregate ODA data. Second, it provides recommendations for enhancing gender-responsive ODA projects/programs and effective cooperation among KOICA and other major ODA implementing agencies.

II. OECD Gender Marker and Korean Gender Marker Strategy Analysis

Chapter 2 introduces the concept of DAC gender marker, the scoring system, and examples of gender marker 1 and 2 projects. Furthermore, this research analyzes the overall status of South Korea's ODA that targets gender equality in terms of bilateral commitments aid.

The volume of South Korea's gender equality ODA has increased more than sevenfold throughout the past decade. But the percentage of ODA focused on gender equality still ranks the second lowest among DAC member countries. Despite the efforts by South Korea to expand gender equality ODA, including gender-responsive ODA strategy, norms and policy reforms, and establishment of gender equality aid guidelines at the pan-government level, the project promotion system that enables gender marker to be effectively applied throughout the project cycle is not fully established.

Notwithstanding its consistent increase of total ODA budget in South Korea, most remain as gender marker 0 projects which do not target gender equality. The proportion of 'left unmarked' (not screened) projects also increased, which indicates that not only the screening rate but also the accuracy in screening are needed in order to increase gender marker applied projects. Gender marker 2 projects undertaken with objectives of gender equality and women's empowerment have shown no significant change except for year 2020, whereas the total amount of gender marker 1 projects has increased for the same period.

By income, gender marker 1 projects are allocated towards middle and low-income countries while gender marker 2 projects are more likely to be conducted in least developed countries. In terms of the number of projects, most of the gender-focused ODA have been conducted by KOICA and the rest of the ODA implementing agencies have carried out only 38 projects (1.9 per cent) of total number of bilateral ODA in 2020.

South Korea has established strategies to expand gender equality focused ODA including the Act on International Development Cooperation that presents the purpose, definition, value, and principles of development aid, Mid & Long-term Aid Strategy Documents, Implementation Agencies' Strategic Documents, etc. However, it seems that they do not provide specific strategies for expanding gender equality focused ODA by means of gender marker as well as comprehensive gender mainstreaming.

III. Analysis of OECD Gender Marker Implementation in South Korea' s ODA

Chapter 3 analyzes gender equality focused ODA of the major ODA implementing agencies, namely KOICA, EDCF, the Korea Rural Community Corporation, and the Korea Foundation for International Healthcare. For KOICA total bilateral aid ratio in 2018 was lower than that of EDCF, but its share almost doubled in 2020. Over the past three years, gender marker 2 projects have increased, while gender marker 0 projects have continued to decline. Currently, most of the gender marker 2 projects are carried out by KOICA and they are mainly concentrated in 'Government & Civil Society' (CRS sector code 151), more specifically 'Women' s equality organization and institutions (CRS sector code 15170)' and 'Ending violence against women and girls' (CRS sector code 15180). As for the gender marker 1 project, 'education' and 'agriculture' sector accounted for the largest portion. By region, most of the KOICA gender marker projects were concentrated in Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by East Asia.

In the case of EDCF, the total amounts of gender equality focused projects started to increase since 2016, but decreased sharply in 2020. EDCF accounted for the largest portion of projects with gender marker 1 whereas no projects gender marked 2 was carried out. As of 2020, the 'basic health' sector, of which COVID-19 emergency response, accounted for the largest portion of the gender marker 1 projects.

Apart from KOICA and EDCF, the proportion of gender equality focused projects of other implementing organizations is meager. KOFIH, the major ODA implementing agency under the Ministry of Health and Welfare, spent total amounts of its gender marker 1 projects on medical education and training. Meanwhile, in 2020, 49 per cent of projects marked 0 (not targeting gender equality) was designed to support for Maternal and Child Health and 23% was for strengthening the local primary health care system where most of the beneficiaries are women and girls. These are projects with a high possibility of at least being marked as gender marker 1 and is thus necessary to conduct an in-depth analysis for why the projects were classified as gender marker 0 projects and take measures to apply gender markers to the projects.

Throughout the years from 2018 to 2020, there was no gender marker projects reported from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The emergency food

assistance program carried out by the World Food Programme accounted for the largest proportion, followed by the agricultural development from the Korea Rural Community Corporations. In the case of emergency food assistance program, women and girls are not only the direct beneficiaries, but also it contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment by improving their nutrition and health status. Moreover, agricultural development is a key sector that can contribute to solving poverty and achieving gender equality through women's participation in rural development projects and their capacity enhancement. Therefore, it is crucial to expand gender equality focused projects both in rural development and emergency food aid program.

IV. Analysis of Gender Equality ODA Execution Capabilities within ODA Implementation Organizations

Chapter 4 analyzes the ODA project implementation system, gender marker strategy and application system, and gender equality project planning, management, and cooperation system for each agency to examine the ODA implementation capabilities within ODA agencies. In general, it appears that there is no system to expand gender equality ODA and strategically classify gender markers within each agency. On the other hand, there have been efforts to address gender issues in programming ODA, apply the gender marker to entire programmes and projects as well as develop a gender-sensitive perspective throughout agencies through peer education and training at an individual level. That is, without a well-established system and a support from ministries and the Office for Government Policy Coordination, individuals who are interested in gender have been striving to make progress in this field. In addition, the importance of education and training on a regular basis was highlighted to overcome structural barriers resulting from personnel changes.

V. Suggestions for Expanding Gender Sensitive ODA for KOICA and Major ODA Implementation Organizations

Chapter 5 sets out recommendations on how KOICA and other ODA implementing agencies can expand gender sensitive ODA according to gender marker management structure, project implementation system, and awareness improvement for project performance. The gender marker management structure is about a structural and systematic improvement that enables each agency to actively collect and properly fill in gender markers within the current gender marker process. This raises the need for an active and strategic leadership of the Office for Government Policy Cooperation. In the case of the project implementation system, this study emphasizes the importance of the scoring process, especially in the planning phase of the project cycle as well as the role of project managers/officers in improving projects through applying the marker. It also suggests a plan to effectively track and monitor gender equality from the planning to the implementation and evaluation phase. Finally, for awareness raising to improve performance, the study emphasizes that promoting awareness of gender equality and applying the gender policy marker are both equally important since they are mutually reinforcing.

On the basis of the aforementioned recommendations, this study also suggests strategies to expand gender sensitive ODA for each implementing agencies and the role of KOICA in cooperating with those agencies. In particular, KOICA is recommended to take a leading role in prioritizing gender equality and promoting gender mainstreaming across all ODA in close collaboration with the Office for Government Policy Cooperation. KOICA can also provide customized support, including guidelines, tools and training, for implementing agencies dedicated to providing grant-aid programmes. For KOFIH and the Korea Rural Community Corporation, in particular, it is suggested to establish a separate cooperative system for expert consultation. It is also expected for KOICA to be able to lead consultation for promoting gender mainstreaming at the earliest stages of the project cycle by appointing a gender expert as a resource person and support implementing agencies in applying gender guidelines and tools by utilizing its pool of gender experts. It finally suggests that KOICA would come up with a mechanism to improve collaboration with cooperation partners.