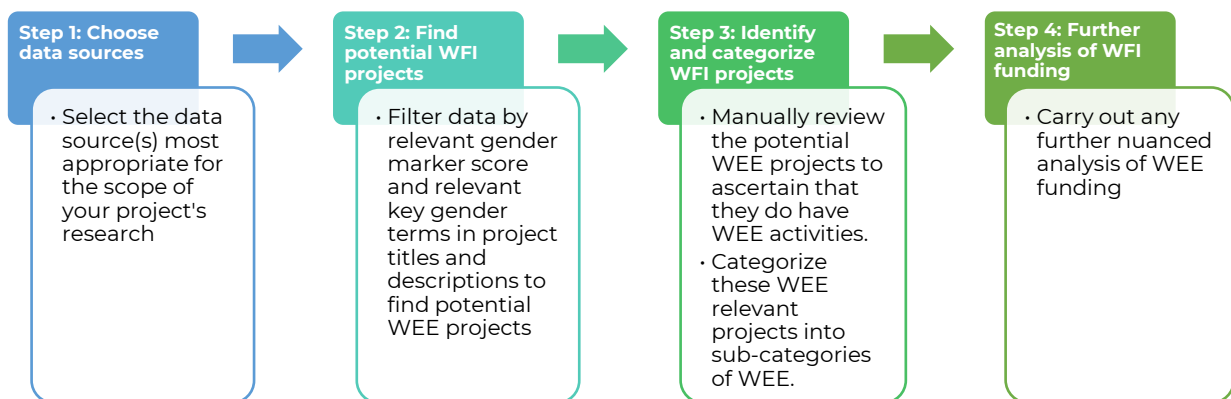


# A Tool for Tracking International Funding to Women's Economic Empowerment

## Overview

In October 2020, Publish What You Fund embarked on a multi-year project to improve the transparency of funding for women's economic empowerment (WEE), women's financial inclusion (WFI), and women's empowerment collectives (WECs), as well as gender integration (GI). The goal of the project was to track development assistance reported to open data sources that supports WEE. The project, [Women's Economic Empowerment: building evidence for better investments](#), tracked funding for WEE in Kenya, Bangladesh, and Nigeria. The findings of the research can be found [here](#).

This document outlines a replicable country-based methodology to identify international funding to WEE using project-level development assistance data gathered from a range of sources. The methodology has been piloted and adapted to ensure replicability by the Publish What You Fund team while tracking funding in Kenya, Bangladesh, and Nigeria. The full methodology for the WEE project can be found [here](#).



## Step 1: Choose data source(s)

For this study, data from four data sources that provide programmatic and financial project level information was utilised: 1) the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Creditor Reporting System (CRS), 2) the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), 3) Candid, and 4) the CGAP funder survey.

To create a usable dataset these four sources can be merged into a single dataset for each country to conduct the analysis. The methodology employed by Publish What You Fund to merge the dataset can be found [here](#). For more information on each of these data sources, please view the [data collection methodology](#).

It is possible to conduct this analysis using only one or a combination of these data sources. The following section outlines a few of the possible sources of development assistance data and the potential and limitations of each depending on users' needs. It should be noted that the IATI and CRS are both free and open data sources, whereas Candid and CGAP data can only be accessed through a paywall.

## Step 2: Find potential WEE projects

Once a dataset is finalised that meets the needs of the research, the next step is to filter for projects that potentially target WEE. To filter projects from the dataset, utilise existing relevant OECD-DAC gender marker scores (1 or 2) as well as keyword searches in project titles and descriptions. The use of gender word searches in addition to the OECD gender marker is essential because international funders do not consistently use the OECD-DAC gender marker across different data sources. Additionally, some funders use their internal gender markers, which could result in missing potential WEE projects. CANDID and CGAP also do not report the OECD-DAC gender marker.

### Gender markers

All four of the chosen data sources included some form of gender marker that publishers can use to mark their projects. However, the OECD-DAC's Gender Equality Policy Marker is the most commonly used gender marker among international funders and can serve as the guiding gender marker.

According to the OECD-DAC, an activity should be gender marked if it is intended to “advance gender equality and women’s empowerment or reduce discrimination and inequalities based on sex.” Please see the guidelines for using the OECD-DAC gender marker [here](#). The gender equality policy marker is used by funders in their reporting to both the CRS and IATI.

To identify the initial pool of projects, include all activities with a principal (2) or significant score (1) in the dataset. This allows for the capturing of as many potential WEE projects as possible. This approach will produce a larger number of projects to be reviewed, as can be seen in Table 1, however, the possibility of missing potential WEE projects is lower.

Table 1: Distribution of OECD gender marker scores across different data sources in 2020, by project numbers.

Data Source	No OECD gender marker score	Not targeted (0)	Significant objective (1)	Principal objective (2)
IATI (2020)	144,382 (60%)	39,402 (16%)	41,883 (18%)	13,402 (6%)
CRS (2020)	50,111 (28%)	78,382 (43%)	39,516 (22%)	12,603 (7%)

A key consideration when including *significant objective* activities in the analysis is that many projects will have mainstreamed gender into the overall project. Taking project funding amounts at face value, therefore, can overinflate the amount of funding that is relevant for WEE. However, these projects represent an important part of the gender financing landscape, so to exclude them from the analysis would underestimate the amount of funding for WEE.

The box below shows an example of a project marked with a significant OECD gender marker. Without more information given by the funder, such as an underlying gender analysis that explains the score, it is difficult to estimate how much of the total project funding targeted gender equality and WEE.

#### Box 1: Example of a project marked significant

**Title:** Dedicated Freight Corridor Project (Phase 1) (IV)

**Description:** Construction of Dedicated Freight Corridor

**Gender marker:** Gender equality as a **significant objective (1)**

**Total value:** USD \$1.2 billion

## Keyword searches

For activities that do not report an OECD gender marker score, another way to identify potential WEE activities is to conduct searches of project titles and descriptions for certain keywords that relate to gender equality. The list of refined terms used for this project can be found in this [Excel sheet](#) under the 'Gender Terms' tab.

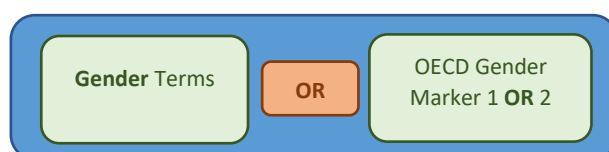
### **Box 2: Example of a project captured using gender terms**

**Title:** Empowering Young **Women** in Nairobi's Slums

**Description:** Our Project aims to provide skills training and job placement for 2,000 poor and vulnerable Adolescents **Girls** and Young **Women** (AGYWs) from the slums of Nairobi. We provide integrated training to beneficiaries and subsequently place them into employment as nannies, house-helpers, cleaners and tea-**girls** where they earn a decent salary.

## Filtering for potential WEE projects

To identify projects that potentially target WEE, filter for projects that have an OECD gender marker 1 OR 2 (*principal* OR *significant*) OR any of the gender terms from the list of key terms appropriate to your research.



## Sector & purpose codes

To narrow down the list of potential WEE projects marked for manual review, filter projects by relevant sector and purpose codes. Each sector/purpose code can be categorised under the Publish What You Fund WEE framework, outlined on page 19 of the [methodology](#). This framework was developed using an evidence-based approach and in consultation with experts and partners knowledgeable in the broad range of factors that are key to realise WEE.

These projects should then be manually reviewed further to verify their relevance to WEE. This process is outlined in the following section.

### **Step 3: Identify and categorise WEE projects**

#### Identifying WEE projects through a manual review

To complete the manual review, use a set of guiding questions to determine whether a project is indeed relevant for WEE. These questions developed by the Publish What You Fund team in consultation with the International Center for Research on Women are outlined in Annex 1.2 of the [methodology](#). Other researchers may adjust these questions based on their conceptualisation of what is and is not included in WEE.

A manual review of projects will be particularly important if the research is intended to analyse disaggregated data. Manual review will allow for granular insights into the funding as well as identification of how WEE was targeted. It can also help prevent

automatically including projects that could have an oversized impact on research findings.

Due to the scope of the Publish What You Fund project and the number of projects captured in the initial search, a two-part process was used by the team to identify WEE projects. For OECD-DAC gender marked projects reported to sectors with direct economic outcomes (e.g. 'Banking and Financial Services') a further manual review was not employed and was assessed as relevant to WEE.

### Categorise WEE projects

To better understand which areas of WEE projects are supported, categorise the relevant WEE projects into different sub-categories based on the conceptualisation of WEE and projects' sector/purpose codes. The full list of categorisations by sector/purpose codes can be found on page 19 of the [methodology](#). Projects can be organised into three main WEE categories and their relevant sub-categories:

**Employment, entrepreneurship & productive resource access:** This category includes activities most directly related to income earning. This includes access to productive and income generating resources, such as banking and financial services.

**Rights, policies & supports:** This category includes activities which support greater economic rights for women and girls. These include funding to women's rights organisations to support WEE as well as projects that create an enabling policy environment and infrastructure for the realisation of WEE. For example, infrastructure projects, including energy access, rural development, and transport, are all important interventions to enable WEE.

**Foundational capabilities:** This category includes activities that support income generating activities by enhancing agency through knowledge acquisition, improved individual and family health, bodily autonomy, and gendered social services and protections. This includes universal rights, education, access to health, and gender-based violence.

### Step 4: Further analysis for WEE funding

After identifying international WEE funding, a researcher can perform various kinds of analyses that fit your research scope. For instance, in our [report series](#), we analyse funding trends over five years, the proportion of WEE funding compared to overall funding, how much funding went to specific sectors, and what types of financing instruments were used to support WEE. While not an exhaustive list, this section includes a few types of analysis that you can do to further understand identified WEE funding.

### Gender intentionality of WEE projects without OECD gender marker scores

WEE projects without an OECD-DAC gender marker score can further be assessed to evaluate if women are the sole intended beneficiaries of the project. This can further reduce any overestimation of funding allocated to WEE. You can do this by reviewing the descriptions of unmarked projects and evaluate if women and girls are the sole group targeted through the funding, or whether they are one of various targeted groups. We labelled such projects respectively as "PWYF exclusive focus on women" or "PWYF partial focus on women."

## Groups of women

To understand which group of women the international funding is trying to reach, a different list of search terms can be used, specific to each country to identify different groups of women who are specified when funding WEE. This provides an understanding of the potential focus from international funders for WEE and where the potential gaps are. The list of terms for each country can be found [here](#). Researchers may create a new list of key search terms to identify relevant groups of women in other countries or contexts.

## Addressing unpaid care work through WEE funding

Funding for unpaid care work (UCW) is also crucial to WEE. To track funding for unpaid care work through WEE, the [Care Policy Scorecard](#)'s framework was adapted. Identifying projects targeting UCW requires a different set of search terms. This can be done to assess if the WEE projects address UCW through their funding and, if so, which policy area is targeted. The methodology by Publish What You Fund for tracking funding to UCW can be found [here](#). Researchers may create a new list of key search terms to identify relevant groups of women in other countries or contexts.

## Impact data tracking

Understanding the impact of WEE funding is crucial for future project design or advocacy. With IATI data, publishers can report against their expected project outputs and outcomes. Additionally, they can upload project documents with results or impact information. This information may also be captured in the funders' project portals.

Unfortunately, many funders are not yet publishing (timely) results data. Only 38% of the organisations reviewed in the 2022 Aid Transparency Index published project results and only 34% published evaluations.<sup>1</sup> This means that, while analysis of the development impact of WEE funding is possible, it depends both on the availability of results and evaluation data, and on your research capacity to look through such documents for all identified projects.

## Conclusion

We hope this tool can be helpful to track and understand WEE funding for your own research purposes. A similar tool has been developed to track funding for women's financial inclusion and can be accessed [here](#)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Publish What You Fund. 2022. "Aid Transparency index." <https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/download/2022-aid-transparency-index-report/>.

<sup>2</sup> To be linked once online