WHO Gender Responsive Assessment Scale:
criteria for assessing programmes and policies

Level 1: Gender-unequal
- Perpetuates gender inequality by reinforcing unbalanced norms, roles and relations
- Privileges men over women (or vice versa)
- Often leads to one sex enjoying more rights or opportunities than the other

Level 2: Gender-blind
- Ignores gender norms, roles and relations
- Very often reinforces gender-based discrimination
- Ignores differences in opportunities and resource allocation for women and men
- Often constructed based on the principle of being “fair” by treating everyone the same

Level 3: Gender-sensitive
- Considers gender norms, roles and relations
- Does not address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles or relations
- Indicates gender awareness, although often no remedial action is developed

Level 4: Gender-specific
- Considers gender norms, roles and relations for women and men and how they affect access to and control over resources
- Considers women’s and men’s specific needs
- Intentionally targets and benefits a specific group of women or men to achieve certain policy or programme goals or meet certain needs
- Makes it easier for women and men to fulfill duties that are ascribed to them based on their gender roles

Level 5: Gender-transformative
- Considers gender norms, roles and relations for women and men and that these affect access to and control over resources
- Considers women’s and men’s specific needs
- Addresses the causes of gender-based health inequities
- Includes ways to transform harmful gender norms, roles and relations
- The objective is often to promote gender equality
- Includes strategies to foster progressive changes in power relationships between women and men

This tool/document is part of the larger WHO Gender Mainstreaming Manual for Health Managers: a practical approach. All modifications or uses should reference this source.