

ODA Eligibility – Quick Reference Guide

What is ODA?

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is funding that supports the development and welfare of people in low- and middle-income countries. The main purpose must be **development**, not research excellence or UK benefit.

ODA Eligibility Principles

A project is ODA-eligible when:

- The **primary aim** is to benefit people in the partner country.
- The project addresses a **real development need**.
- There is a **clear pathway** showing how people will benefit.
- Local partners are involved **from the beginning**.
- Any benefit to the UK is **secondary**.
- Activities are **relevant and feasible** in the partner country.

Examples of Eligible Themes

- Health equity
- Gender equality
- Education access
- Climate resilience
- Rural livelihoods
- Poverty reduction
- Community development

Examples of Non-ODA

- Research mainly benefiting the UK
- Research with no partner-country relevance
- Purely academic work without development impact
- Projects with no local leadership or participation

What Funders Look For

- Local relevance
- Feasible impact pathway
- Local leadership or co-leadership
- Capacity strengthening
- Ethical and culturally appropriate research

Checklist Before Submission

- Does the project clearly benefit the partner country?
- Is the development problem clearly stated?
- Do local partners help shape objectives and methods?
- Can you explain the development impact in simple terms?
- Are UK benefits clearly secondary?

Gender Equality in ODA Research

Why Gender Equality Matters

Gender equality is a legal requirement for UK ODA funding. All genders must have **equal and meaningful opportunities** to participate in and benefit from the research.

The Five Mandatory Criteria

Your proposal and research design must show:

1. **Equal and meaningful opportunities** for different genders in all project stages.
2. **Expected benefits and losses** for each gender.
3. **Risks and unintended consequences**, including stereotypes and safety issues.
4. **Mitigation actions** that ensure fair, safe participation.
5. **Sex- and age-disaggregated data** collection and analysis.

What Equal Participation Might Require

- Flexible scheduling around work and caring responsibilities
- Safe, accessible locations for meetings or interviews
- Language support and translation
- Gender-matched interviewers when needed
- Private interview options for sensitive topics
- Inclusive recruitment strategies
- Access support for disabled participants

Characteristics of a Strong Gender Equality Statement

- Specific actions, not general promises
- Linked to the context and population
- Shows understanding of gender roles and barriers
- Identifies practical, realistic inclusion measures
- Shows how all genders will benefit meaningfully
- Avoids generic statements about “women” or “men” only

Characteristics of a Weak Statement

- Vague language (“We will ensure equality...”)
- No practical steps
- No link to methods or fieldwork
- Mentions only one gender
- No risks, no mitigation, no context

Before You Finalise Your Statement

- Can your measures be delivered with your budget?
- Are the measures culturally appropriate?
- Do they reflect real barriers in the setting?
- Are all genders considered?

EDI and Intersectionality – Quick Reference Guide

What EDI Means

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) ensures that people of different genders, ages, ethnicities, languages, abilities, and backgrounds can participate fairly in research.

What Is Intersectionality?

Intersectionality recognises that people experience inequality differently depending on combinations of factors such as:

- Gender
 - Age
 - Ethnicity
 - Disability
 - Language
 - Income
 - Rural/urban location
 - Migrant status
- These factors can combine to increase barriers.

Common Barriers in Fieldwork

- Literacy or language gaps
- Caregiving duties
- Cultural norms that limit who speak publicly
- Travel distance or unsafe routes
- Disability access issues
- Social stigma around participation
- Power differences between community members

Inclusive Research Practices

- Provide materials in local languages
- Use low-literacy tools (pictures, mapping, stories)
- Provide accessible venues and travel support
- Offer private spaces for sensitive topics
- Use gender-matched or culturally appropriate facilitators
- Schedule around work and seasonal demands
- Ensure disability access (physical, communication, sensory)
- Include diverse voices in sampling and recruitment

Inclusive Data Collection

- Use multiple formats (written, verbal, audio)
- Allow voice-notes for low-literacy participants
- Provide interpreters when needed
- Plan for inclusive consent processes
- Collect disaggregated data (sex, age, ethnicity, location, disability where appropriate)

Inclusive Outputs & Dissemination

- Use local languages
- Provide short summaries
- Use community meetings, radio, WhatsApp, or visual formats
- Ensure findings are accessible to all participant groups

Key Questions for Your Team

- Who might be excluded if we do nothing?
- What specific barriers would they face?
- What actions can we take to include them safely and respectfully?
- Do we have the budget, time, and skills to deliver these actions?