

# Gender Impact Assessment in Korea: Current Situation and Challenges

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## 1. Introduction

Gender impact assessment (hereafter GIA) is a tool to develop and enforce gender equality policies through analysis and assessment on the characteristics and the socio-economic gap between men and women. GIA is also one of the essential tools to practice gender mainstreaming, for which a legal support was provided by the amendment of the Basic Act on Women's Development in 2002 in Korea.

The Ministry of Gender Equality conducted a pilot project of GIA system on ten programs in nine government authorities in 2004 and extended to evaluate 1,524 programs in 294 authorities in 2008. Especially, the local governments have led the increase in the number of participating authorities and assessed the programs by GIA. In 2008, all of 16 local governments and 232 lower level local governments out of 234 (99%) conducted GIA.

The main reason for the rapid spread of GIA is that the Ministry of Public Administration and Security has included GIA in the evaluation of the performance by local governments. The Evaluation form of the Ministry of Public Administration and Security has a section evaluating the number of programs assessed by GIA and the training hours for the officials in charge of it. Because its objective is to realize gender equality in all the government policies, GIA does not assess the gender specific policies only for women,

but the general policies and programs with gender perspectives. The interest in the outcome and achievements of GIA rose following the recent increase in the number of participating authorities and programs evaluated by GIA. This paper is to examine the situation of implementing GIA and its achievements and to make several suggestions to effectively implement the system.

## 2. Legal Grounds for GIA

GIA is legally based on Article 10 paragraph 1 of the Basic Act on Women's Development. Article 7 and 8 of 'Implementing Ordinance of the Basic Act on Women's Development' define the assignment of the departments in charge of training and tasks, and the advisory committee, etc.

### <Box 1>

#### Supporting Article for GIA

Article 10 of the Basic Act on Women's Development (Analysis and Assessment of Policies)

- (1) The State and local governments shall, in the process of formulating and implementing policies under their jurisdictions, analyze and assess the effects of such policies on women's rights and interests and their participation in the society.
- (2) The Ministry of Gender Equality may assist or advise the State and local governments in or on the analysis and assessment of the policies under paragraph (1).
- (3) Necessary matters concerning standards of analyzing and assessing the policies under paragraph (1) shall be prescribed by the Presidential Decree.

The legal support for GIA is provided by the basic local ordinance for women's development in 16 local governments. For example, the Seoul Metropolitan Government has Article 8 paragraph 2 of 'the Basic Ordinance of Women's Development in Seoul' to conduct GIA.

Among the provisions on GIA for the realization of gender-sensitive policies by 16 local governments, Ulsan has the 'Basic Ordinance of Women's Development in Ulsan,' including the articles on the production of Gender Statistics and the disclosure of women-related information (Kim, Yanghee et al, 2007: 38).

### 3. Current Situation of GIA

#### 1) Growth of GIA

The programs assessed by GIA increased twice in 2008 compared to those in 2007. Assessment was made through GIA for 72 programs in the State government, 268 programs in local governments, 1,168 programs in lower level local governments, and 16 programs in the educational authorities of cities and provinces in 2008. The drastic increase is due to the high participation by the lower level local governments. GIA was used for the first time to evaluate ten programs executed by six central authorities and three local governments as pilot projects in 2004. It extended to eight programs with in-depth evaluation and 77 programs with self-assessment in 2005 to 11 programs for in-depth evaluation and 303 programs for self-assessment in 2006. This shows 4.5 times increase over those of 2005 (Kim, Yanghee et al, 2007:11). The total number of programs assessed by GIA in 2008 (for both in-depth evaluation and self-assessment) is 1,531.

In 2005, 53 authorities in both central and

local governments used GIA to evaluate 85 programs, and in 2006, 187 authorities reviewed 314 programs with GIA. The number increased more in 2008. By then 1,531 programs by 295 authorities have been assessed with GIA.

#### <Table 1>

The Number of Participating Authorities and Programs in GIA

No. of programs / No. of governments	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
State government	7/6	51/37	60/38	78/37	78/31
Local governments	3/3	34/16	75/16	137/16	266/16
Lower level local governments	-	-	179/133	490/210	1,171/232
Educational authorities of cities and provinces	-	-	-	15/15	16/16
<b>Total</b>	10/9	85/53	314/187	720/278	1,531/295

#### 2) The Programs Assessed through GIA

GIA can be conducted in two ways: self-assessment and in-depth evaluation. Through self-assessment, the officials in charge execute evaluation and produce reports on it; in in-depth evaluation, the essential policies or policies related to social issues are analyzed and evaluated by a gender analysis expert(s), who are commissioned by the Ministry of Gender Equality.

The criteria to choose which programs and policies to be assessed are set up by the Ministry of Gender Equality. First, the policies which benefit are different or potentially different between genders according to the relevant statistics. Second, major policies that have many beneficiaries and significant impact. Third, the policies which have a large budget with national interests. Policies which

are only for women or policies planned and implemented for gender equality effects are excluded.

But some of the policies evaluated with GIA are only for women or for children and families for gender equality effects. Even the pilot project in 2004 included eight policies only for women and six for children and families, which means that 14 programs in total were selected inappropriately.

The in-depth evaluations and the self-assessments through GIA by central, local and lower level local governments in 2007 showed that there was a decrease in the portion of the policies for women, children, and families, but there were still 29 programs for women and 80 for children and families among the programs assessed through GIA. Because it is a very important procedure of GIA to make a proper selection of the target policies and programs in GIA, a systematic support is required to improve the situation.

### 3) The System and Procedure of GIA

The Ministry of Gender Equality is in charge of conducting GIA. The Ministry makes plans and manages the general procedure for GIA. It prepares the entire system of GIA, commissions in-depth evaluations, organizes workshops with experts, and holds joint meetings with experts and officials in charge of the relevant authorities. In addition, the Ministry awards prizes for good cases based on the comprehensive evaluation, and forms an advisory committee on policy-analysis in order to search improvement plans.

The relevant authorities are administrative bodies at different levels that execute policies and programs which are the subjects of GIA, select target programs, and makes evaluation plans. The department of women's affairs, if any, or a department in charge of task

performance evaluation would be in charge. The department in charge distributes the guideline for evaluation, encourages participation in the training on GIA, sets up an assessment plan, and synthesizes evaluation results.

The person in charge is the Official in Charge of Women's Policies at the central government (Article 13, the Implementing Ordinance of the Basic Act on Women's Development), and the director or head of the department in charge of evaluation. In the case of self-assessment, in which officials produce reports, the department in charge of the target programs would execute the GIA and produce a GIA report. Depending on the situation of the authorities, they may commission it to experts. In the case of in-depth evaluation, the government authority would provide information and materials on the target programs to the commissioned experts. It is the responsibilities of both of the executive department and the department in charge of evaluation to participate in various workshops and advisory meetings on GIA, and to search the measures to incorporate the suggestions of the evaluation into other policies and programs (Kim, Kyunghye et al, 2007; 343).

The researchers would conduct in-depth evaluation through GIA in cooperation with relevant authorities for information and consulting. If necessary, it would form an advisory committee and execute assessment with advice and support of GIA supporting institutes such as the Center for GIA in the Department of Gender Mainstreaming in the Korean Women's Development Institute. The Center continues to play a role in providing an overall support on the tasks of in-depth evaluation and self-assessment by the Ministry of Gender Equality in 2006 and 2007. The Center works closely with the Ministry in supporting the joint meetings and workshops

organized by the Ministry and provides consulting. It also provides continuous consulting on the tasks to the institutes executing GIA on the selected programs according to each phase of the research, formation of advisory committee, and linkage with experts.

#### 4. Analysis Tools and Methods of GIA

GIA has nine indicators, as shown in Table 2. It is a basic task to collect, analyze and use the Gender Statistics properly in order to assess the gender impact of policies more objectively. The survey on the evaluation reports produced by the central and local governments in 2007 shows that 37% used existing gender-disaggregated data; 44% produced and used new data for the assessment; 18% did not use gender-disaggregated data due to the lack of statistics; and 1% did not apply the data even though they mentioned the existence of relevant gender-disaggregated data (Kim, Yang hee, 2008: 165).

<Table 2>  
GIA Indicators(2008)

	Evaluation indicators
All stages	① Production and utilization of gender-disaggregated data
<Phase 1>	② Identification of gender relevancy of the targeted policies
Drafting and Decision-making process of the policy	③ Gender equal participation in decision-making process of the policy
<Phase 2>	④ Gender equality in budget allocation
Implementation of the policy	⑤ Gender equality in delivery methods of the policy services
<Phase 3>	⑥ Gender equality in the method of advertising policy services
Evaluation of the policy	⑦ Gender equality in policy benefit including budget allocation
	⑧ Gender equality in policy impact
	⑨ Improvement plan based on the result of assessments

Some of the reports from self-assessment argue that ‘there is no gender discrimination’ without any supporting data of gender statistics

or usage of simple statistics of sex ratio. It reflects the lack of awareness of officials on the importance of gender-disaggregated data and the seldom practice to produce and utilize it.

Relevant statistics is needed to apply such indicators as gender equality in policy benefit. But in many cases, there is no gender-disaggregated data on beneficiaries, which presents obstacles in analyzing who receives more benefits from the policies. There are several cases to show the gender ratio of the beneficiaries rather than to analyze the percentage of the beneficiaries by gender in comparison with the population. For instance, there are several cases that conclude that ‘the policy to support single parent families is unequal because single mother families get more benefits from the policy,’ which disregards the fact that the population of single mother families is bigger than that of single father’s (Kim, Yang Hee, 2008; 166).

There are frequent complaints from the officials who prepare the GIA reports that it is not easy for them to understand and apply the nine indicators mostly composed of qualitative indicators rather than quantitative ones. There are some programs

and projects needed to conduct pre-implementation evaluation such as new town construction projects and mid-and-long term basic plans. There are other

programs possible for pre- and post-implementation evaluation such as a job creation project for seniors and an IT training project, but the present GIA indicators demand both pre- and post-implementation evaluation. Therefore, experts suggest that the indicators should be improved by considering the characteristics of each program.

## 5. Conclusion

The GIA has expanded rapidly in the past five years by the government authorities in Korea. Accordingly, the training on gender impact has spread expansively for the officials in charge. Experts pointed out several achievements of assessment through GIA in the countries that have used GIA in advance of Korea (Walby, 2005; Kim, Yanghee and Kim, Kyunghee, 2006).

Firstly, gender sensitivity has been improved by analyzing general policies with gender perspectives. Secondly, the assessment with GIA has provided an opportunity to be aware of the necessity of gender statistics, which is the basic data for understanding the situation. Thirdly, each authority voluntarily introduced provisions and regulations for improvement based on the outcome of GIA. Fourthly, it has shown the possibility of Gender Budgeting by reflecting the efforts in budgeting to improve gender equality in general programs. Fifthly, the improvement plans from the GIA reports were incorporated in the policies which enabled the gender equality of other policies and programs.

Along with these expectations, there are some challenges to effectively implement GIA in Korea. First of all, the training on gender perspectives should be enhanced for officials who need help for proper use of the tools and the analysis methods of GIA. It is needed to provide a legal ground to strengthen the procedure including the selection of target programs for GIA. For example, it may be

considered to set up GIA selection and evaluation committees, or to let committees related to women's policies, such as the Women's Policy Coordination Committee, play a role in effective operation of GIA. Finally, it is important to form the trio of alliance among femocrats, experts, and those of the women's movement in order to effectively continue gender mainstreaming (Woodward, 2004). The government takes initiatives in GIA but it is required that women's organizations participate actively for the realization of gender equality with the GIA system.

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