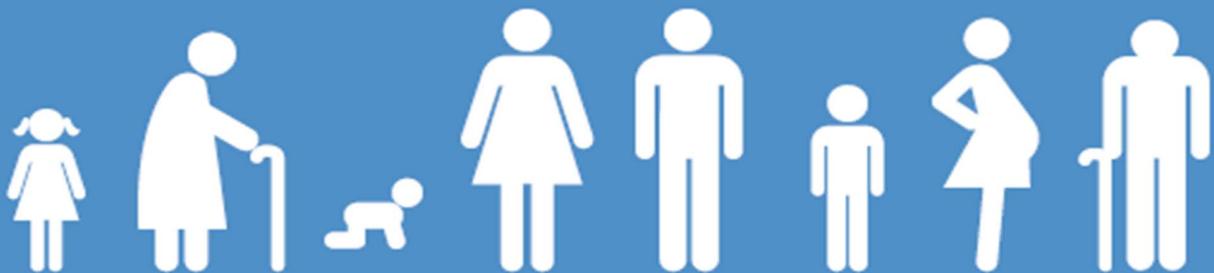




# Gender–Age Marker

REPORT  
ASSESSMENT 2014 AND 2015

*October 2018*



*Civil Protection and  
Humanitarian Aid*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms.....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
How the marker works.....	3
Objectives of the assessment.....	4
Key findings for 2014 and 2015.....	5
Remaining challenges and adjustments made.....	8
The way forward and recommendations.....	9
INTRODUCTION.....	10
I. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSESSMENT.....	11
II. METHODOLOGY.....	11
III. HOW THE MARKER WORKS.....	13
IV. LIMITATIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT.....	15
V. MAIN FINDINGS FOR 2014 AND 2015.....	16
1. Dissemination of DG ECHO's Gender Policy and Gender-Age Marker.....	16
1.1. Gender and Age Trainings for DG ECHO Staff and Partners.....	16
1.3. Capacity4dev: DG ECHO's Online Gender and Age Group.....	20
2. Using the Gender-Age Marker.....	22
2.1. Consistency in marking process (2014 and 2015).....	22
2.2. Proposal Stage.....	22
2.2. Interim Report/ Monitoring stage.....	28
2.3. Final Report Stage.....	33
2.4 Emergency Actions.....	36
3. Trends and Analyses.....	37
3.1 Overall Findings.....	37
3.2. Random Check Exercise.....	42
VI. TARGETED ACTIONS.....	48
VII. KEY FINDINGS.....	50
Remaining challenges and adjustments made.....	52
The way forward and recommendations.....	54

## **ACRONYMS**

DG DEVCO – Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development

DG ECHO – Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

EU – European Union

FichOp – Project appraisal form

GAM – Gender-Age Marker

GBV – Gender-Based Violence

GPT – Gender and Protection Team

GTC – Global Thematic Coordinator

HIP – Humanitarian Implementation Plan

HQ – Headquarters

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation

TA – Technical Assistant

SADD – Sex and age disaggregated data

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Gender matters in humanitarian assistance because **natural disasters and man-made crises have a different impact on women, girls, boys and men and elderly people**. They have differentiated needs, suffer from different vulnerabilities, face particular risks, do not necessarily have access to the same resources and services, develop diverse coping or survival mechanisms and possess specific capacities to support their families and communities during and in the aftermath of disasters and conflict. Thus, in order to respond effectively to the differentiated needs of various gender and age groups, humanitarian assistance supported by the European Union must take gender and age into high consideration.

In line with the [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#)<sup>1</sup> and following recommendations from the [Gender Review](#)<sup>2</sup> report, the Commission has adopted a gender approach for humanitarian assistance. In 2013, DG ECHO developed its gender policy '[Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance](#)'<sup>3</sup> to help foster a common understanding between staff and partners in order to promote adequate humanitarian responses to the needs of women and men of all ages. As a tool to operationalise DG ECHO's gender policy, **the Gender-Age Marker was introduced on January 1, 2014** in order to track how well gender and age dimensions are integrated into humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO.

### How the marker works

The [marker](#) consists of four criteria and is applied throughout the action management cycle namely at proposal, monitoring and final report stage. Depending on the stage of the management cycle, DG ECHO staff and partners provide different inputs upon which the marker is determined (see Figure 1).

The four criteria of the Gender-Age Marker include: 1) gender and age analysis/sex and age disaggregated data (SADD); 2) assistance adapted to the specific needs and capacities of different gender and age groups; 3) prevention and mitigation of negative effects; and 4) adequate participation. Depending on

Figure 1: The marking process step by step



<sup>1</sup> [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Gender Review](#)

<sup>3</sup> [DG ECHO - Thematic Policy Document, Gender- Different Needs, Adapted Assistance, 2013](#)

how many criteria are met, a general mark is determined, ranging from '0' (meaning that 'the action barely incorporates gender and age') to '2' (meaning that 'the action strongly incorporates gender and age').

Nearly, all types of humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO are marked. However, partners and DG ECHO staff mark urgent actions and actions funded under emergency decisions only once the final report is submitted. Also, for those few humanitarian actions that do not directly deal with affected populations – such as logistics or emergency telecommunications – the marker is considered 'not applicable' ('N/A').

The **roll-out of the Gender-Age Marker** was accompanied by several activities to ensure the correct use of the marker: a) training sessions in Brussels and in the field for both DG ECHO staff and partners, b) surveys to assess to which extent the training contents and the marker have contributed to enhance gender and age mainstreaming in humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO and c) the creation of the [DG ECHO Gender and Age Group on Capacity4Dev](#)<sup>4</sup>.

### Objectives of the assessment

This assessment reviews the use of the Gender-Age Marker for its first and second year of implementation. The main objective is to **evaluate the use of the Gender-Age Marker in 2014 and 2015 to ultimately enhance gender and age integration in DG ECHO-funded humanitarian actions**. The comparison of the outcomes of 2014 with those of 2015 provides valuable insights into the progress made by DG ECHO and partners in respect to gender and age informed humanitarian programming and helps to set a baseline for measuring advancements in the coming years.

#### **In detail, the assessment is intended to:**

- Evaluate DG ECHO's efforts to disseminate its Gender Policy and the Gender-Age Marker both internally and externally and to measure DG ECHO's capacity-building efforts' impact on the appropriate use of the Gender-Age Marker by both partners and DG ECHO staff.
- Measure and compare the marks of '0', '1', '2' and 'N/A' attributed to DG ECHO's actions in 2014 and 2015.
- Measure to what extent proposals, actions and final reports integrate gender and age considerations.
- Assess the use of the Gender-Age Marker by both partners and DG ECHO staff.

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<sup>4</sup> [DG ECHO's Gender and Age Group on Capacity4dev](#)

- Provide an overview of the amount of targeted actions funded by DG ECHO in 2014 and 2015.
- Ensure that challenges regarding the use of the marker are addressed with the final aim to enhance gender and age integration in DG ECHO-funded humanitarian actions.

This assessment reviews the Gender-Age Markers using a **combination of qualitative and quantitative data**. More precisely, it analyses the data produced by an extensive desk review which allows for the evaluation of the marker's usage at all three phases of the management cycle by partners and DG ECHO staff at both HQ and field level. The desk review is complemented by a random check exercise conducted by a group of DG ECHO gender experts.

### Key findings for 2014 and 2015

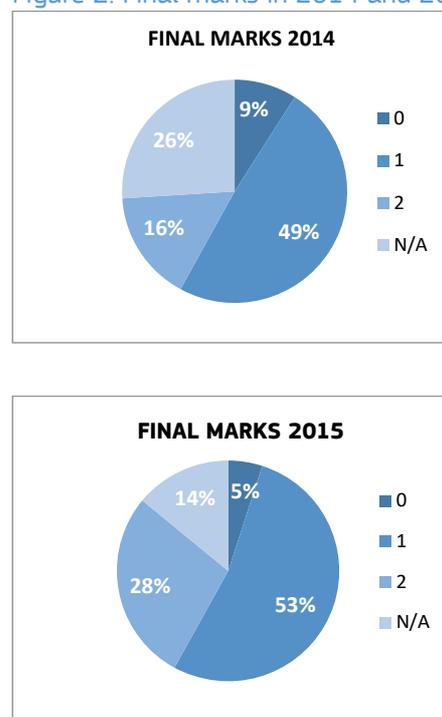
The desk review studied a total of 1,478 DG ECHO-funded actions (699 funded in 2014 and 779 funded in 2015). The use of the Gender-Age Marker is evaluated by separately examining the three phases of the marking process and the different marking tendencies of DG ECHO staff and partners. Moreover, an extensive survey inquired to which extent the training contents and the marker are perceived to have contributed to enhance gender and age mainstreaming in humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO. The assessment of the first and second year of implementation of the Marker shows that the marker was well received by both DG ECHO staff and partners and reflects a steep upwards trend in correct and frequent marking.

The following conclusions and positive improvements were found.

#### 1. AN OVERALL BETTER INTEGRATION OF GENDER AND AGE CONSIDERATIONS

The average marks provided in 2014 and 2015 reflect a considerable upwards trend and subsequently a qualitative improvement of the integration of gender and age dimensions in DG ECHO-funded humanitarian actions. In 2014, **65% of all DG ECHO-funded actions integrated gender and age considerations either 'strongly' or 'to a certain extent'**. In 2015, this number increased to **81%**. Additionally, marks provided throughout the three stages fluctuated less than in 2014, indicating that the marker is applied in a more cohesive and skilled manner. This underlines the importance of having a

Figure 2: Final marks in 2014 and 2015



quality and accountability tool in place, such as the Gender-Age Marker, to measure progress made.

This is an indication of the success of the Gender-Age Marker **to serve its purpose of inducing qualitative change of humanitarian assistance in respect to gender and age considerations**. Moreover, it underlines the importance of having a quality and accountability tool in place, such as the Gender-Age Marker, to measure progress made.

## 2. A USEFUL MARKER

According to the survey results, the majority of DG ECHO staff and partners, who participated in the training sessions as part of the practical roll-out of the marker, believe that the introduction of the DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker has fostered positive actions to enhance gender and age mainstreaming. A total of **82% of all respondents believe that the four criteria of the DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker have been either 'useful' or 'very useful'** in order to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance provided.

## 3. A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN APPLICATION OF THE MARKER

The assessment revealed a significant improvement in the **consistent application** of the Gender-Age Marker. For instance, in 2014, only 10% of all proposals received a mark by partners and DG ECHO staff at all stages. In 2015, however, this number increased to a total of **63% of DG ECHO-funded actions having received a mark by partners, DG ECHO field and desk officers at all stages**. This increase of 53% reflects **DG ECHO's commitment to allocate resources to the dissemination and application of the Gender-Age Marker at field level**.

## 4. A CONSISTENT INCREASE IN CORRECT MARKING:

'Correctly' marked implies that the general mark has been correctly calculated based on the feedback provided to each of the four criteria as outlined in the instructions in the [Gender-Age Marker Toolkit](#)<sup>5</sup>. For instance, if all criteria were deemed "not sufficiently met" the mark should then be 0. Apart from an improvement in consistency, the overall percentage of proposals that have been **correctly marked**<sup>6</sup> **generally increased from 2014 to 2015**; particularly at final report stage at which the number of correct marks provided by field officers increased **from 44% to 92%**. Partners provided correct marks to **26% more actions** in 2015 in comparison to 2014 (see Table 1).

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<sup>5</sup> See [Gender-Age Marker Toolkit](#) for information on the correct use of the Gender-Age Marker.

Table 1: Correctly marked proposals

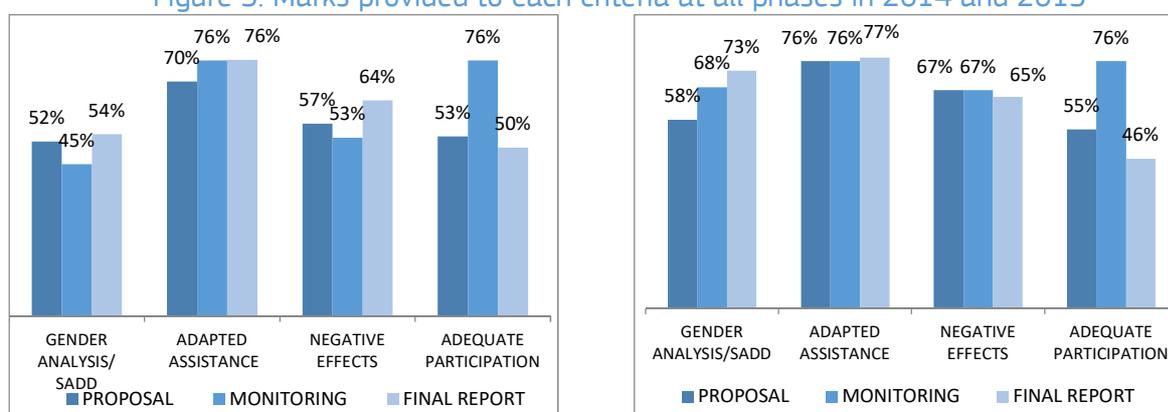
	PROPOSAL STAGE		MONITORING STAGE		FINAL REPORT STAGE	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Partners	55%	81%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ECHO Field	58%	78%	61%	72%	44%	92%

The more frequent and correct application of the marker suggests an increase in **awareness of the marker's purpose and better familiarity** with the tool among DG ECHO staff and partners. It must be noted that since July 2014 the use of the marker has **become mandatory at all phases of the action** for DG ECHO field and HQ staff, offering a potential explanation for the improvement of frequent marking throughout the different stages of the project cycle.

#### 5. A TOOL FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

For both 2014 and 2015, the criterion most often sufficiently integrated into DG ECHO-funded actions was 'criterion 2/ Adapted Assistance' (see Figure 3). The criterion which was considered the least met was 'criterion 4/ Adequate Participation', closely followed by 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis'. The finding that partners regularly struggle with incorporating these two criteria in their humanitarian activities allows DG ECHO to pay additional attention to these two aspects in i.e. dedicated training sessions to support their partners in optimising gender-sensitive humanitarian assistance. This demonstrates **how the Gender-Age Marker can be used to identify areas for improvement to which DG ECHO can then develop adequate responses**.

Figure 3: Marks provided to each criteria at all phases in 2014 and 2015



**CRITERIA MARKED WITH 'YES' IN 2014**

**CRITERIA MARKED WITH 'YES' IN 2015**

## Remaining challenges and adjustments made

### 1. APPLYING THE MARKER THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE PROJECT CYCLE

Despite the strong improvements made in terms of consistent application of the Gender-Age Marker throughout the whole project cycle, the assessment also revealed areas for improvement. A total of 63% of all DG ECHO-funded actions were marked at all stages of the project management cycle in 2015. The final goal would be to increase this number to reach 100%.

#### ADJUSTMENT MADE: AUTOMATIC GENERATION OF MARK AND MANDATORY AT EACH STAGE OF PROJECT CYCLE

In order to minimise the possible mistakes deriving from a wrong application of the coding system, the general mark is now automatically generated in the IT-system on the basis of the feedback provided to each of the 4 criterion in both the e-single form (for partners) and the project appraisal forms (FichOps)<sup>7</sup> (for DG ECHO staff). Moreover, the marker was made mandatory at each stage of the project cycle in the IT system in July 2014.

### 2. DIFFERENCES IN UNDERSTANDING THE FOUR CRITERIA OF THE MARKER AND DISCREPANCIES IN MARKS PROVIDED

The results show that there may be stark differences in the understanding of the four individual criteria among DG ECHO staff and partners. For instance, the survey conducted in 2015 to evaluate the content and structure of the training sessions conducted on the marker generated contradictory results to those produced by the desk review: in the survey, 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' had been identified by the majority of respondents as the least difficult criterion to adhere to. The desk review, however, showed that criterion 1 was among the criteria which performed the poorest in both 2014 and 2015. Therefore, the perception of gender and age analysis as being the easiest criterion to integrate into proposals is not necessarily an indication of the quality of this analysis.

In addition, discrepancy in marks provided by DG ECHO staff, partners and DG ECHO Gender and Protection team remains. Only 2 (9%) proposals have received the same mark by partners and all DG ECHO staff in 2014 and 3 (13%) in 2015. A continued dialogue between DG ECHO and partners is therefore important. In particular, the Gender and Protection Team (GPT) of DG ECHO at field-level are an important resource for support in this regard.

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<sup>7</sup> "Fiche opérationnelle", project appraisal form. Assesses the humanitarian action through its life cycle and serves later as the basis to evaluate the action.

#### ADJUSTMENT MADE: REVISION OF TRAINING CONTENTS AND INVESTMENT ON ADDITIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

In 2014 and 2015, training contents focused on the use of the Gender-Age Marker, rather than on gender and age concepts. Considering the outcomes of the surveys and the desk analysis, it has been suggested to shift the focus on more general aspects of gender and age dimensions to ensure that both partners and DG ECHO staff have a minimum understanding of issues related to gender and age before using the tool. Subsequently, capacity-building efforts in 2017 took the form of more practical workshops focusing on gender mainstreaming in specific sectors as opposed to classical training sessions, in order to enhance participation and interaction among participants and to ultimately respond to the challenges faced by DG ECHO staff and partners on the ground more effectively.

#### ADJUSTMENT MADE: THEMATIC EXPERTS ON PROTECTION AND GENDER

Since 2018, the portfolio of the DG ECHO field expert working on Gender and the portfolios of the experts working on Protection have been merged into a new "thematic expert" role on Protection and Gender, to enhance the synergies between the two thematic areas and to build upon them to enhance the quality of humanitarian assistance provided through DG ECHO funding.

### The way forward and recommendations

As shown by the adjustments made, DG ECHO is strongly committed to improving gender and age mainstreaming, including by improving the usage of the Gender-Age Marker. DG ECHO will continue to invest on building capacities of DG ECHO staff on gender and age mainstreaming. Regular assessment of the Gender-Age Marker will be conducted in order to monitor progress and continue delivering qualitative gender and age-sensitive humanitarian programming.

Nevertheless, it is of **utmost importance that DG ECHO partners mirror this commitment to gender and age mainstreaming**. To this end, DG ECHO encourages its partners to **further invest in capacity-building on gender and age mainstreaming** for their staff. Increased familiarity and understanding of the workings of the DG ECHO Gender Age Marker by partners would likely also help reduce discrepancies of marks between partners and DG ECHO staff. Partners are also **encouraged to develop internal measures to systematically assess and monitor that humanitarian actions are informed by and adjusted on the basis of gender and age analysis**.

**These efforts are crucial for the delivery of quality assistance and for adherence to the mandate to serve the most vulnerable.**

## INTRODUCTION

Gender matters in humanitarian assistance because **natural disasters and man-made crises have a different impact on women, girls, boys and men and elderly people.**

They have differentiated needs, suffer from different vulnerabilities, face particular risks, do not necessarily have access to the same resources and services, develop diverse coping or survival mechanisms and possess specific capacities to support their families and communities during and in the aftermath of disasters and conflict. Thus, in order to respond effectively to the differentiated needs of various gender-age groups, humanitarian assistance supported by the European Union must take gender and age considerations into account.

In line with the **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid**<sup>8</sup> and following recommendations from the **Gender Review**<sup>9</sup> report, the Commission has adopted a gender approach for humanitarian assistance. In 2013, DG ECHO developed its gender policy '**Gender in Humanitarian Aid: Different Needs, Adapted Assistance**'<sup>10</sup> to help foster a common understanding between staff and partners in order to promote adequate humanitarian responses to the needs of women and men of all ages.

As a tool to operationalise DG ECHO's gender policy, **the Gender-Age Marker was introduced on the January 1, 2014** in order to track how well gender and age dimensions are integrated into humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO. It consists of four criteria and is applied throughout the action management cycle in the e-Single form (the main channel for DG ECHO partners to submit their proposals) namely proposal, monitoring and final report stage. Depending on the stage of the management cycle, DG ECHO staff and partners provide different inputs to the project, in accordance with the marker. The marker will be discussed in more details below in Section 1 (page 7).

This assessment reviews the use of the Gender-Age Marker for its first and second year of implementation. The comparison of the outcomes of 2014 with those of 2015 provides valuable insights into the progress made by DG ECHO and partners in respect to gender and age informed humanitarian programming and helps to set a baseline for measuring advancements in the coming years.

It must also be noted that, following the DG ECHO funding cycle and taking into account that arguably the statistically most relevant mark is the one provided at final report stage, assessments on the use of the Gender and Age Marker can be conducted from at least one

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<sup>8</sup> [European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Gender Review](#)

<sup>10</sup> [DG ECHO - Thematic Policy Document. Gender- Different Needs. Adapted Assistance. 2013](#)

year from the start of the project to be able to capture changes in the mark throughout the action cycle management.

## I. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The main objective of this assessment is to evaluate the use of the Gender-Age Marker for the first two years of its implementation to ultimately enhance gender and age integration in DG ECHO-funded humanitarian actions.

To achieve this aim, the assessment examines the following aspects:

- To assess DG ECHO's efforts to disseminate its Gender Policy and the Gender-Age Marker both internally and externally and to measure DG ECHO's capacity-building efforts' impact on the appropriate use of the Gender-Age Marker by both partners and DG ECHO staff.
- To measure and compare the marks of '0', '1', '2' and 'N/A' attributed to DG ECHO's actions in 2014 and 2015.
- To measure to what extent proposals, actions and final reports integrate gender and age considerations.
- To assess the use of the Gender-Age Marker by both partners and DG ECHO staff.
- To provide an overview of the amount of targeted actions funded by DG ECHO in 2014 and 2015.
- To ensure that challenges regarding the use of the marker are addressed with the final aim to enhance gender and age integration in DG ECHO-funded humanitarian actions.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This assessment reviews the Gender-Age Marker's first and second year of implementation using a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. The first section of the assessment focuses on the dissemination of DG ECHO's Gender Policy and the Gender-Age Marker relying on data generated through interviews and surveys. The second section discusses the use of the Gender-Age Marker, evaluating the data produced by an extensive desk review which allows for the analysis of the marker's usage at all three phases of the management cycle by partners and DG ECHO staff at HQ and at field level. This review is complemented by a random check exercise conducted by a group of DG ECHO gender experts.

### **Qualitative data**

**Random Check:** This exercise was conducted by the Global Thematic Coordinator on Gender with the support of the Global Thematic Coordinator on Protection and two Regional Protection experts, in this assessment referred to as 'Gender and Protection Team'. The objective of the

exercise was to assess how many proposals and final reports had received a 'correct' mark<sup>11</sup> by DG ECHO staff and partners based on the proposed actions' contents. A total of 46 actions from various regions, sectors and partners were selected based on the following criteria: a) proposal must have been funded under the 2014 or 2015 Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs) respectively and b) a final report must have been already submitted by partners to be able to assess all phases.

**Interviews:** For the review of 2014, a number of interviews with partners and DG ECHO staff (both at field and HQ level) was conducted to inquire whether the Gender-Age Marker had positively influenced the process of proposal writing and the implementation of humanitarian actions.

### **Quantitative data**

**Desk review:** For 2014, 699 DG ECHO-funded actions with a start date between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2014 were reviewed; for the year 2015, 779 actions with a start date between January 1 and December 31, 2015 were reviewed, using raw data extracted from DG ECHO's e-single form, the channel for DG ECHO partners to submit their proposals and apply for funding. In order to precisely assess the performance of the Gender-Age Marker, the data set was modified to exclude wrongly calculated marks – referring to marks which did not correspond to the number of criteria sufficiently met<sup>12</sup>. These incorrect marks were created when partners or DG ECHO staff manually filled out the individual criteria in the e-single form but encountered problems to calculate the correct resultant mark. Excluding these 'human errors', the statistical analysis is based on the modified data set in which all criteria correspond to the final mark.

**Targeted actions:** Certain actions exclusively target a specific gender or age group, rather than providing assistance to most or all members of a community (i.e. boys at risk of forced recruitment by armed groups). Data was extrapolated to measure to what extent Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) actions were funded by DG ECHO.

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<sup>11</sup> 'Correctly' marked means that the instructions from the Gender-Age Marker Toolkit were followed.

<sup>12</sup> See Figure 1 on how the Marker works.

### III. HOW THE MARKER WORKS

As explained in the Gender Age Marker [toolkit](#), the Marker consists of four criteria, namely:

#### 1) Gender and age analysis/sex and age disaggregated data (SADD)

*Does the proposal contain an adequate and brief gender and age analysis and does the final report contain sex and age-disaggregated data (SADD)?* Key elements to consider include gender and age analysis at proposal stage, SADD at final report stage and for targeted actions, a justification of the choice of the target

group, information on whether the involvement of other groups is considered and, if not, what the potential consequences of not involving them are.

#### 2) Assistance adapted to the specific needs and capacities of different gender and age groups

*Is the assistance adapted to the specific needs and capacities of different gender and age groups?* Key elements to consider include systematic adaptation of assistance with concrete examples and no gaps, and measures to avoid the exclusion of certain groups from humanitarian goods and services and to ensure that all relevant gender and age groups enjoy equitable access.

#### 3) Prevention and mitigation of negative effects

*Does the action prevent or mitigate negative effects?* Key elements to consider include potential negative effects of the action on different gender and age groups identified and prevented (e.g. stigmatisation, violence or tensions between groups), and major gender or age related negative effects arising from the context identified and mitigated (e.g. discrimination, forced recruitment or sexual and gender-based violence).

#### 4) Adequate participation

*Do relevant gender and age groups adequately participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of the action?* Key elements to consider include participatory approach involving women, girl, boys and men of different ages, adapted to the context to minimise response delays and including adequate techniques and contents (e.g. same-sex consultations, child-

Figure 1: How to determine the Gender Age Marker

NUMBER OF CRITERIA MET	MARK	MEANING
The action does not deal directly with affected populations	→ N/A	= The marker is not applicable
The action meets none or only 1 criterion	→ 0	= The action barely integrates gender and age
The action meets 2 or 3 criteria	→ 1	= The action integrates gender and age to a certain extent
The action meets all 4 criteria	→ 2	= The action strongly integrates gender and age

friendly methods), and adequate composition of humanitarian teams in terms of gender, age and experience in integrating gender and age concerns.

Depending on how many criteria are met, a general mark is determined as per Figure 1.

The Gender-Age Marker is a collaborative tool used by both partner organisations and DG ECHO staff. The marker is applied throughout the action management cycle, namely at the proposal, monitoring and final report stages. The illustration below (Figure 2) provides an overview of the steps that need to be taken for using the marker.

Figure 2: The Marking Process Step by Step



Accordingly, partners self-assess to which extent their proposals fulfil the four criteria of the Gender Age Marker and suggest an initial mark which is then discussed with – and if necessary, adjusted by – DG ECHO. At monitoring stage, DG ECHO staff conducts field visits to observe the progress made in a project. On the basis of these monitoring visits, DG ECHO staff registers the mark for each proposal. At the final report stage, partners provide information against the targets set at proposal stage (and eventual changes set through modification requests). DG ECHO staff subsequently determines the final mark based on the information provided by partners in the final report.

All types of humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO are marked. However, partners and DG ECHO staff mark urgent actions and actions funded under emergency decisions for gender and age only once the final report is submitted. For those few humanitarian actions that do not deal directly with affected populations – such as logistics or emergency telecommunications – the marker is considered 'not applicable' ('N/A').

## IV. LIMITATIONS TO THE ASSESSMENT

A number of limitations for this assessment have been identified:

1. When the desk review was conducted, projects that started late in the respective year might have still been going on, entailing that monitoring missions and final reports might not have been conducted/submitted yet; hence statistics related to different stages of the cycle might be based on slightly different total numbers of actions;
2. Regarding targeted actions, they are commonly defined as targeting a specific gender or age group, rather than providing assistance to the majority or all members of a community. While this definition of targeted actions entails a wide range of actions from different sectors, this assessment solely focuses on two of these dimensions, namely gender-based violence (GBV) and Child Protection.
3. Some limitations have been identified in relation to a lack of understanding of the marking process, or in other words, who provides what inputs to the mark at which stage. The following bullet points explain the roles of partners and DG ECHO staff during the marking process, also depicted in Table 1 below.
  - a) **DG ECHO field staff** provides inputs on the four criteria and the general mark at each of the three stages (proposal, monitoring and final report).
  - b) **DG ECHO HQ staff** only provides the general mark and comments to proposals and final reports, but never provides inputs to each of the four criteria of the marker.
  - c) **Partners** are not given the opportunity to change their general mark at interim and final report phases, thus preventing the possibility to reflect changes that may occur during project implementation.
4. The Gender-Age Marker is not applicable to proposals exclusively focusing on coordination and security which therefore are marked as 'N/A'. Multi-sectorial proposals including coordination and security among other sectors, however, are considered eligible for the sake of this assessment even though, as per the [Gender-Age Marker toolkit](#)<sup>13</sup>, a deeper analysis should be conducted on the percentage of budget spent in the different sectors. Moreover, only the final mark is considered and not whether the single criteria are met which can distort the overall result.
5. Surveys on both the Gender-Age Marker and training sessions have not been conducted in the framework of the second year assessment and therefore data cannot be compared. Surveys will be conducted for the third year assessment.

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<sup>13</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender\\_age\\_marker\\_toolkit.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/sectoral/gender_age_marker_toolkit.pdf)

Table 1: Marking process

	PARTNER			DG ECHO (FIELD)			DG ECHO (HQ)		
	Criteria	General	Comments	Criteria	General	Comments	Criteria	General	Comments
Proposal	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
Monitoring	N/A	N/A	N/A	√	√	√	N/A	N/A	N/A
Interim report	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
Final report	X	X	√	√	√	√	X	√	√

## V. MAIN FINDINGS FOR 2014 AND 2015

The following chapter presents the main findings generated by the Gender-Age Marker assessment for the years 2014 and 2015. Firstly, DG ECHO's efforts to disseminate its Gender Policy and the Gender-Age Marker are considered. More precisely, all dedicated training sessions and participants' evaluation of the trainings' contents are reviewed. Secondly, the results of the extensive desk review are presented which allow for the analysis of the application of the Gender-Age Marker in all DG ECHO-funded activities between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2015. The three phases of the marking process as well as the marking behaviours of DG ECHO staff and partners are examined. Lastly, a section devoted to trends and analyses interprets the overall results and presents the findings of the random check exercise in order to assess how many proposals and final reports had received a 'correct' mark<sup>14</sup> by DG ECHO staff and partners, based on the proposed actions' contents.

### 1. Dissemination of DG ECHO's Gender Policy and Gender-Age Marker

The roll-out of the Gender-Age Marker was accompanied by several activities to ensure the correct use of the marker: a) training sessions in Brussels and in the field for both DG ECHO staff and partners; b) surveys to assess to which extent the training contents and the marker have contributed to enhance gender and age mainstreaming in humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO; and c) creation of the DG ECHO Gender and Age Group on Capacity4Dev.

#### 1.1. Gender and Age Trainings for DG ECHO Staff and Partners

Between November 2013 and December 2015, DG ECHO<sup>15</sup> conducted **19 training sessions** (5 in Brussels and 14 in the field) to roll out the Gender Policy<sup>16</sup> and Gender-Age Marker<sup>17</sup>. In

<sup>14</sup> 'Correctly' marked means that the instructions from the Gender-Age Marker Toolkit were followed

<sup>15</sup> In close collaboration with INSPIRE Consortium.

<sup>16</sup> DG [ECHO Gender Policy 2013](#)

<sup>17</sup> [DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker](#)

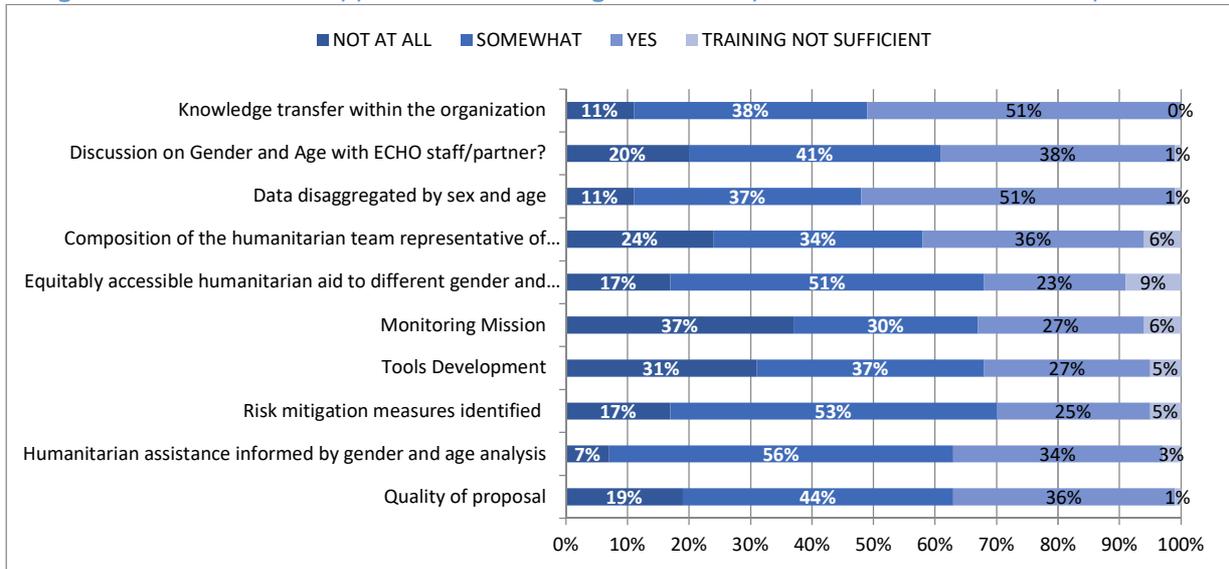
total, 143 DG ECHO staff members (25 from HQ and 118 from the field network) and 316 from partner organisations (61 from HQ/European Offices and 255 from the field) were trained.

In August 2015, a survey was developed to assess the effectiveness of these training sessions with regards to the practical use of its contents. The survey was sent to all **344 training participants** and posted on the Capacity4Dev platform (see section 2.3 for more details on Capacity4dev). The following paragraphs present the most important findings of the training evaluation.

The **majority of the respondents (87%) believed that the contents of the training have been either 'useful' or 'extremely useful'** to incorporate gender-related considerations into humanitarian actions while 78% believed this was the case for age considerations as well. Only a very small percentage of the respondents believed that the training has not been useful (2% for gender considerations and 7% for age considerations).

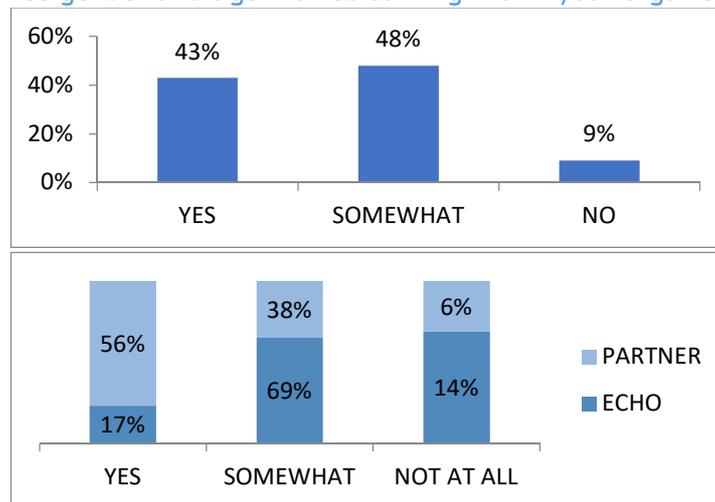
A total **56% of respondents held the opinion that humanitarian assistance operations funded by DG ECHO was 'somewhat' increasingly gender and age informed** following the introduction of the Gender-Age Marker, while only 34% believed it did so to a full extent. The areas where respondents seemed most confident about the application of the trainings were related to the **inclusion of sex and age disaggregated data and the capacity to replicate the training and transfer the knowledge internally** (see Figure 3). Overall, 81% of respondents felt that the quality of the proposals have either 'increased' or 'somewhat increased' following the training. Fairly negative feedback was expressed regarding a perceived lack of connection between training contents and participants' daily work reality: **37% of the respondents claimed that the incorporation of gender and age into monitoring missions was not at all covered in the training**, calling for more time dedicated to the development of practical tools during the sessions.

Figure 3: Feedback on application of training contents by both DG ECHO staff and partners



A total of 43% of respondents believed that the introduction of the Gender-Age Marker **fosters change and positive actions to enhance gender and age mainstreaming** in humanitarian operations (see Figure 4). Nonetheless, one specific criticism which surfaced several times is that the Gender-Age Marker is still a 'tick-box' exercise as opposed to inducing qualitative change. Respondents referred to the fact that the Gender-Age Marker was not widely known yet, especially at the field level, as part of the problem.

Figure 4: 'Did the introduction of the Gender-Age Marker foster change/positive actions to enhance gender and age mainstreaming within your organisation?'

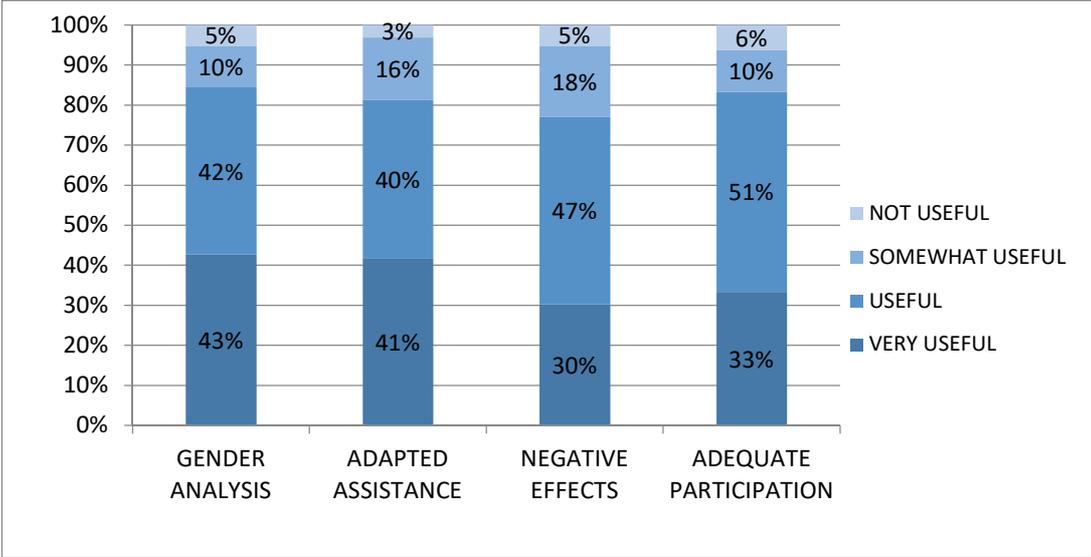


The major difficulties encountered by partners were the 'lack of practical tools to incorporate gender and age considerations into design, implementation and monitoring of action' (40%), followed by 'difficulties due to the specificity of the context' (16%) and the fact that many of them had been the only representative of their organisation to participate in the training

(13%). Some respondents mentioned a lack of understanding of gender and age concepts among colleagues.

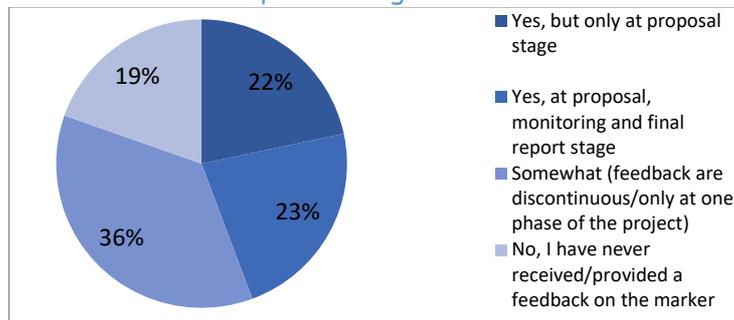
Regarding the incorporation of each of the four criteria of the Gender-Age Marker, a **total of 82% of all respondents believed that all criteria of the Gender-Age Marker were either 'useful' or 'very useful' in order to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance provided.** When evaluation the four criteria individually, 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' was considered to be the most important criterion for the purpose of enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance: 85% of respondents believed it was either 'very useful' or 'useful' (see Figure 5). 'Criterion 3/ Negative Effects' was considered the least useful with 23% of respondents considering it to be either 'somewhat useful' or 'not useful'. During training sessions, it became clear that the provision of more practical information is needed in relation to this criterion.

Figure 5: Usefulness of the separate criteria to enhance effectiveness of humanitarian assistance provided by your organisation/partners



When asked whether the respondents considered the current marking to be the result of a dialogue between DG ECHO and partner organisations, answers varied strongly with the majority indicating that **the dialogue was substantially discontinuous** (see Figure 6). Furthermore, partners repeatedly pointed out the need for more clarity from DG ECHO's side on the expectations and exact weight of the Gender-Age Marker.

Figure 6: 'Do you believe the marking is currently the result of a dialogue between DG ECHO and partner organisations?'



These findings reflect that the main objective of the conducted training sessions has been the promotion of policy coherence and a successful roll-out and dissemination of the Gender Policy and Gender-Age Marker.

### 1.3. Capacity4dev: DG ECHO's Online Gender and Age Group

Capacity4dev<sup>18</sup> is the European Commission's primary online knowledge sharing platform on development, external cooperation and policy. Launched in 2009, it now has over 21 900 members, including staff from DG DEVCO and other European Commission Directorates, the European External Action Service, EU member states, partner governments, civil society, academia and the private sector. Capacity4dev aims to improve capacity development through knowledge sharing by:

- Consolidating knowledge and building an institutional memory;
- Supporting thematic expertise;
- Enabling cross-learning among practitioners from the EU institutions and other organisations;
- Consolidating knowledge sharing tools and communities of practice around a common environment.

The platform provides an open forum for members to share ideas and expertise. Members work together in public and private groups where they can share documents, write blogs and comments, promote events, share the content of important workshops, and use a project management and reporting tool. Groups can be created to discuss issues, exchange experiences, or prepare for new initiatives; over 100 such groups have been already created, covering most of the topics and areas related to development.

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<sup>18</sup> [www.capacity4Dev.eu](http://www.capacity4Dev.eu)

In September 2013, DG ECHO created the Gender and Age Group on Capacity4dev with the aim to capitalise knowledge and experiences about gender and age sensitive programming<sup>19</sup>. The platform presents a good opportunity for DG ECHO staff to interact with partners, other donors and the wider humanitarian community. On the website, a digital library with documents of reference (handbooks, guidelines, FAQ etc.) can be found. A blog section serves as a forum for discussion and debate about practical applications and/or doubts. The platform also offers a section to share information about trainings and other upcoming events on gender.

In 2014, DG ECHO's Gender and Age Group on Capacity4dev had 155 members and 3,873 page views, with 2,825 of them being 'unique' (accessed through different IP addresses). Invitations to the website were sent after each of the training modules to all participants, leading to a peak in page views in April<sup>20</sup> and October<sup>21</sup> 2014. On average, people visited the website for 1:58 minute and accessed it from 86 different countries. Most people accessed the website in Belgium (24%), followed by Kenya (10%), France (10%), The UK (7%) and Spain (7%). Most people visited the admin page, while most time was spent on the page hosting the standard presentations and facilitators guide (2:18 minutes on average). A total of 47% of all unique visitors entered the website directly whereas 45% used a search engine. Despite the main purpose of the online portal being the creation of a platform to exchange gender and age related information, the contribution from members has been pretty low: very few comments were provided on the uploaded documents and almost no discussion initiated by members.

In 2015, the number of group members had increased to 197; however, the total number of page visits decreased by 28% to 2,024. Most people accessed the group from Kenya (22%), followed by Belgium (7%), and Jordan, Sweden and Spain (4% respectively). Out of the total of visits, 1,569 were unique. On average, visitors stayed on the page for 1:31 minutes from 42 different countries. Compared to 2014, the number of people who accessed the website directly decreased to 20% whereas 19% used Google Search- the rest entered through other various search engines and links. Similar to the previous year, activity on the website was fairly low, with few discussions and comments by partners.

The low activity rate in the group calls for stronger efforts to promote the website as a channel for qualitative gender and age considerations for DG ECHO and partners. The group contents should be revised and more attention should be put on how to animate discussions and receive feedback in order to enhance the information exchange and the participation of members in discussions.

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<sup>19</sup> [DG ECHO's Gender and Age Group on Capacity4dev](#)

<sup>20</sup> Six out of nine training sessions were conducted between February and April 2014.

<sup>21</sup> The three other trainings were conducted in September and October 2014.

## 2. Using the Gender-Age Marker

The following section presents the findings generated by the desk review of 699 DG ECHO-funded actions in 2014 and 779 in 2015. The use of the Gender-Age Marker is evaluated by separately examining the three phases of the marking process and the different marking tendencies of DG ECHO staff and partners. The funded activities took place in various sectors and regions and have been implemented by UN Agencies, INGOs and other International Organisations.

### 2.1. Consistency in marking process (2014 and 2015)

In 2014, the large majority of proposals received a mark by partners and DG ECHO staff despite the fact that the Gender-Age Marker only became mandatory in July 2014. However, the number of marked proposals declined further down the project cycle, with DG ECHO field staff leaving 65% and 69% of all projects unmarked at respectively monitoring and final report stage and DG ECHO HQ staff leaving 73% of the projects unmarked at final report stage (see Table 2). It is important to mention that this is partly due to the fact that not all final reports had been submitted at the time of the desk review.

In 2015, the amount of marked proposals at the initial stage increased significantly: both partners and DG ECHO field officers provided marks for 100% of the non-emergency proposals, whereas DG ECHO desk officers marked 97% of them. This increase relates to the change of making the marker mandatory in the IT system at all phases of the action for both DG ECHO field and HQ staff.

Table 2: Percentage of marked proposals in 2014 and 2015

	Mark proposal stage		Mark monitoring stage <sup>22</sup>		Mark final report stage <sup>23</sup>	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Partners	98%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ECHO field	68%	100%	35%	88%	31%	97%
ECHO desk	91%	97%	N/A	N/A	27%	98%

### 2.2. Proposal Stage

This section exclusively discusses the use of the Gender-Age Marker at proposal stage as well as difficulties or areas for improvement inherent to this phase. At this stage, partners self-

<sup>22</sup> This percentage has been calculated over the total number of actions for which a monitoring report has been submitted.

<sup>23</sup> This percentage has been calculated over the total number of actions for which a final report has been submitted.

assess to which extent their proposed actions fulfil the four criteria of the Gender-Age Marker and suggest an initial mark which is then discussed with – and if necessary, adjusted by – DG ECHO staff.

**Correct Marking**

Alongside the overall number of marked proposals, the number of 'correctly' marked proposals is noteworthy, as this is an indication of the extent to which the use of the Gender-Age Marker is *understood*. 'Correctly' marked implies that the general mark has been correctly calculated based on the feedback provided to each of the four criteria as outlined in the instructions in the [Gender-Age Marker Toolkit](#)<sup>24</sup>. For instance, if all criteria were deemed "not sufficiently met" then the mark should be 0. As DG ECHO desk officers only provide an overall mark and do not reflect the four criteria individually, their marks cannot be considered wrongly generated.

At proposal stage in 2014, DG ECHO field staff provided correct marks for 58% of proposals while partners correctly marked a total of 55% of proposals. Out of all the wrongly marked proposals, 71% were classified as 'N/A' although all criteria were marked. Some of the incorrect marks provided by partners can be explained by a bug in the first version of the e-single form which prevented partners from selecting a mark other than 'N/A'. The problem was, however, detected and corrected within a few hours. It must be reminded that the Gender Age Marker was introduced in 2014 and several partners and ECHO staff hadn't received any training on the new tool.

At proposal stage in 2015, partners correctly marked 81% of their proposals and DG ECHO field officers provided correct marks to 78% proposals. This improvement points to the coupling of new tools with capacity building opportunities;

Table 3: Correctly marked proposals in 2014 and 2015

	PROPOSAL STAGE		MONITORING STAGE		FINAL REPORT STAGE	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Partners	55%	81%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
DG ECHO field	58%	78%	61%	72%	44%	92%

<sup>24</sup> See [Gender-Age Marker Toolkit](#) for information on the correct use of the Gender-Age Marker.

### Differences between marks provided by DG ECHO Staff and Partners

When examining the differences between how proposals were assessed by partners and DG ECHO staff at proposal stage, a clear pattern emerges: **partners generally marked their proposals higher than DG ECHO field and desk officers** (see Table 4 and Figure 7). At proposal stage in 2014, 63% of all partners assessed themselves with the highest score possible ('2'), while DG ECHO field officers awarded this mark to 32% of all proposals. Desk staff tends to be more critical, giving 23% of all proposals a '2'.

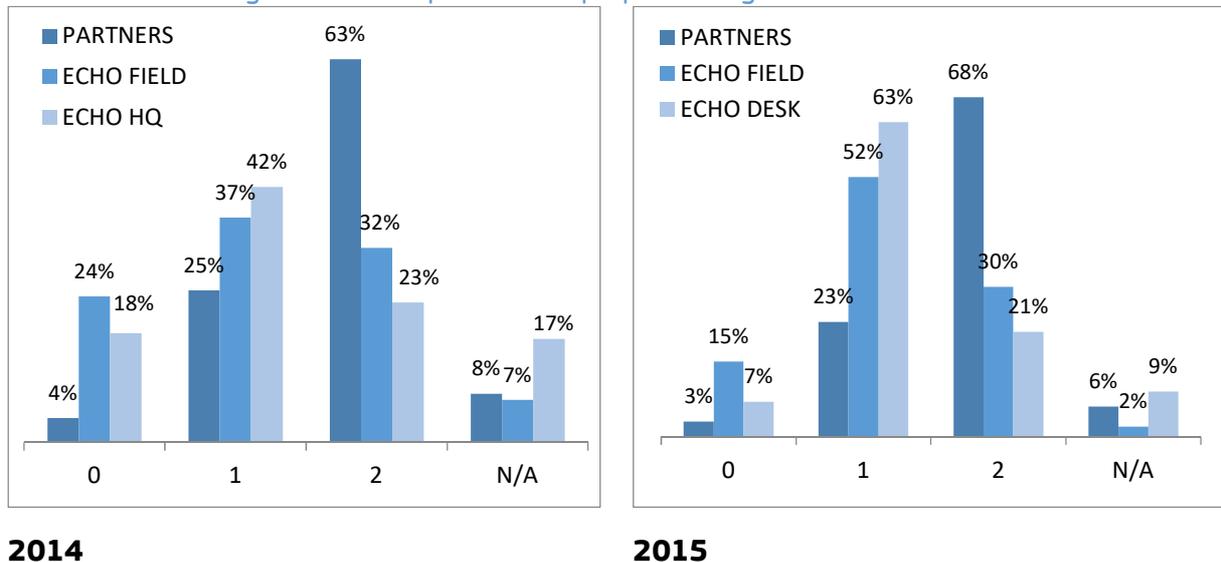
The findings of 2015 are in line with the trend identified for 2014: partners generally assessed their actions higher than DG ECHO field and desk officers. In 2015, 68% of all partners assessed their proposals with a '2' while field officers awarded that mark to only 31% of all proposals (see Figure 7). Desk staff remained more critical, assessing 21% of the proposals with a '2'.

These findings show that opinions on when proposals sufficiently integrate gender and age dimensions differed among partners, DG ECHO field and HQ staff.

Table 4: Marks provided at proposal stage for 2014 and 2015

Proposal stage	PARTNERS		DG ECHO FIELD		DG ECHO DESK	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 0	4%	3%	24%	15%	18%	7%
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 1	25%	23%	37%	52%	42%	63%
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 2	63%	68%	32%	31%	23%	21%
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH N/A	8%	6%	7%	2%	17%	9%

Figure 7: Marks provided at proposal stage in 2014 and 2015



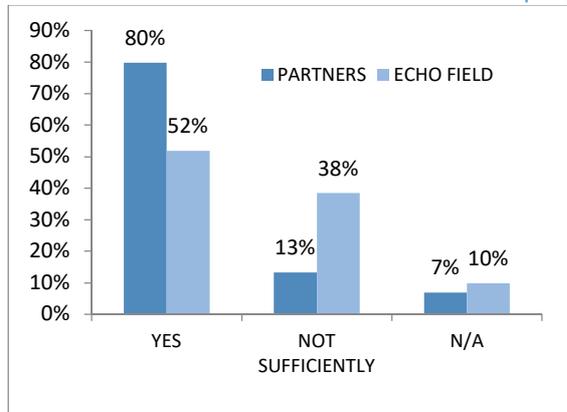
### Marking According to the Different Criteria

How the separate criteria have been assessed by partners and DG ECHO field officers at proposal stage differs considerably. In both 2014 and 2015, partners were most critical of '**criteria 1/Gender Analysis**' at proposal stage and marked 13% and 17% of all actions as not sufficiently incorporating an adequate gender and age analysis (see Figure 8). In contrast, partners were most optimistic about '**criteria 2/ Adapted Assistance**' which was most often marked as sufficiently met (87% and 92%).

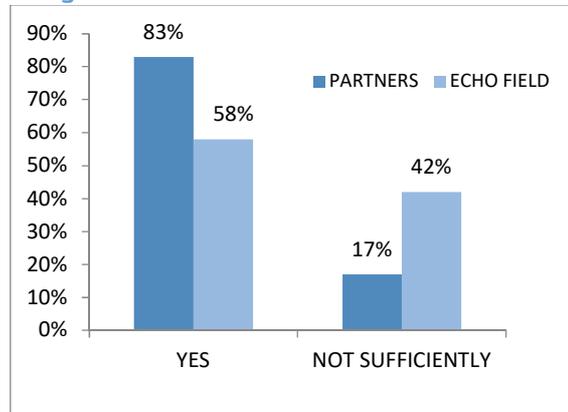
DG ECHO field officers also considered '**criteria 2/ Adapted Assistance**' as most often satisfied with 70% of all proposals in 2014 and 76% in 2015 sufficiently meeting this criterion (see Figure 8). The criterion found to be the least sufficiently met according to field officers in 2015 is '**criteria 4/ Adequate Participation**' with almost half (45%) of all proposals that did not manage to incorporate this criterion at proposal stage. This differs from the results of 2014 which showed that field officers considered '**criteria 1/ Gender Analysis**' to be the criterion met the least at proposal stage, suggesting that partners have adjusted their programmes to better include adequate analyses of gender and age dimensions.

It should be noted that these findings do not necessarily reflect the extent to which the criteria are understood based on the content provided in the e-single form.

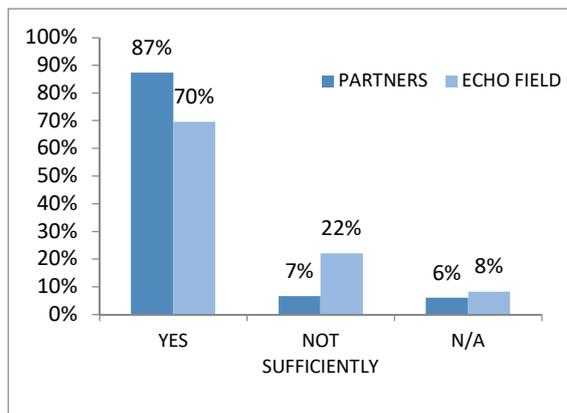
Figure 8: Marks provided to each criterion by DG ECHO staff and partners in 2014 and 2015 at proposal stage



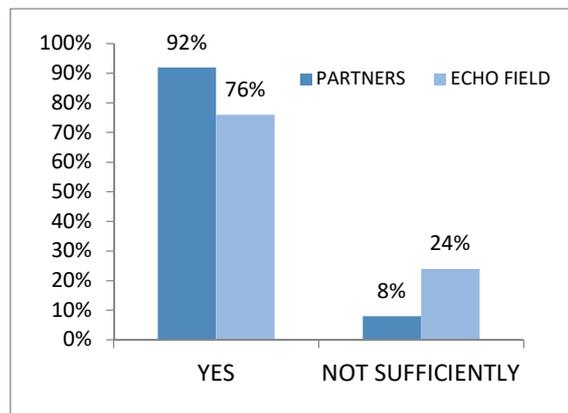
**2014: CRITERION 1: GENDER ANALYSIS/SADD**



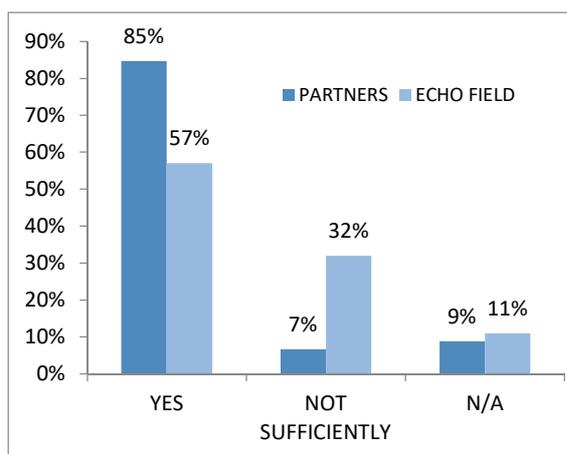
**2015: CRITERION 1: GENDER/AGE ANALYSIS - SADD**



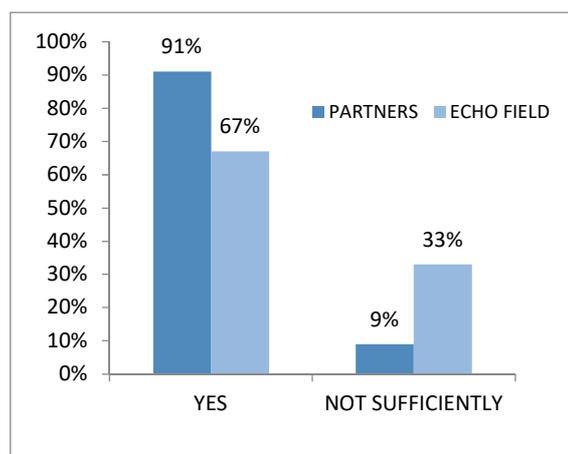
**2014: CRITERION 2: ADAPTED ASSISTANCE**



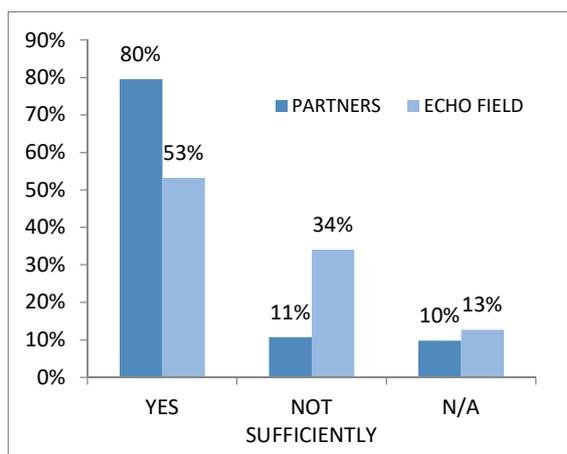
**2015: CRITERION 2: ADAPTED ASSISTANCE**



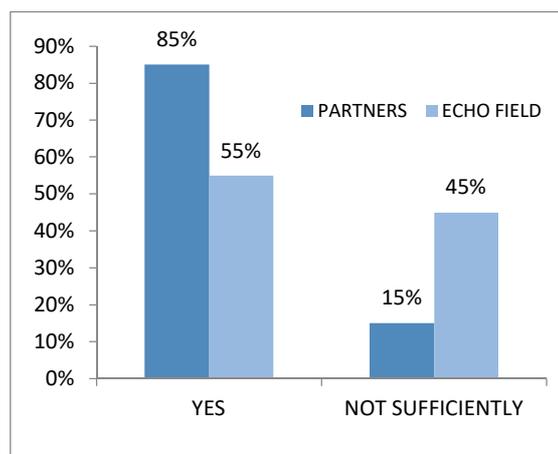
**2014: CRITERION 3: NEGATIVE EFFECTS**



**2015: CRITERION 3: NEGATIVE EFFECTS**



**2014: CRITERION 4: ADEQUATE PARTICIPATION**



**2015: CRITERION 4: ADEQUATE PARTICIPATION**

**Comments provided by DG ECHO staff and partners**

Both DG ECHO staff and partners are given the opportunity to provide additional information on the general mark and each criterion in the comment section of the e-single form. While the core of the gender and age considerations should be embedded into other sections, the comment box is designated to capture additional gender and age related information in a narrative manner, allowing users to – for instance – outline reasons why one or more criteria could not be met.

**Comments in 2014**

In 2014, additional information was provided in the comment box for a total of 542 out of 699 proposals (78%). More generic comments such as 'vulnerability linked to gender and age is taken into account during the needs assessment for each operation' were regularly added. Occasionally, partners referred to other documents such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Marker<sup>25</sup> or Oxfam’s Minimum Standards on Gender in Emergencies<sup>26</sup>. In general, more comments referred to gender than to age.

Partners who conducted activities related to health issues sometimes stated that diseases are indiscriminate and affect everybody. Usually, DG ECHO officers noted in the comment section that a gender and age sensitive approach is also demanded when carrying out activities related to health as, for example, research showed that the Ebola epidemic affected women disproportionately because of their role as caretakers.

<sup>25</sup> [Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Marker](#)

<sup>26</sup> [Oxfam Minimum Standards for Gender in Emergencies](#)

Partners regularly noted that due to lack of access and/or time it was not possible to conduct a comprehensive gender and age analysis, corresponding with the finding that DG ECHO field officers and partners were most critical of 'criterion 1/Gender Analysis' at proposal stage, suggesting that adequate gender and age analyses are challenging to implement. In line with this interpretation, DG ECHO staff commented several times that gender and age analyses were not conducted in a meaningful and exhaustive way. Other comments from both field and desk officers were concerned with 'criterion 3/ Negative Effects' and the lack of clear mechanisms to mitigate and prevent negative effects.

### **Comments in 2015**

In 2015, a total of 675 out of 779 proposals (87%) had been complemented with additional information at proposal stage via the narrative comment function in the e-single form. Similar to 2014, comments were provided in order to make available general information on how the proposed action will ensure gender and age mainstreaming, rather than focusing on additional information not included in other sections of the e-single form (e.g. reasons why a criterion cannot be met in a specific context or for a specific action; future plans to enhance gender and age consideration throughout the implementation process etc.). Despite the fact that DG ECHO's Gender Policy includes all gender and age groups, the comments predominantly refer to 'women and girls' or 'women and children' as relevant gender and age groups<sup>27</sup>.

Comments provided by DG ECHO staff still address gender dimensions more than age. It can be observed that DG ECHO officers use the opportunity to provide narrative comments mainly to explain the mark given to the respective actions.

### **2.2. Interim Report/ Monitoring stage**

At this stage, DG ECHO field staff provides important input by conducting field visits to verify information provided by partners and to get acquainted with the realities of the situation on the ground. On the basis of these monitoring visits, DG ECHO field staff registers the monitoring stage mark for each proposal. The following paragraphs evaluate the use of the marker at this stage.

#### **Correct Marking**

In 2014, 244 projects received a mark at monitoring stage by DG ECHO field officers, out of which 140 were correctly marked (63%). In 2015, field officers marked the significantly higher number of 658 projects at monitoring stage out of which 471 were correctly marked (72%).

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<sup>27</sup> [DG ECHO - Thematic Policy Document. Gender- Different Needs. Adapted Assistance. 2013. See page 3.](#)

## Overall Marking

At monitoring stage in 2014, 45 % of all actions received the mark '1' by DG ECHO field officers, followed by 33% of actions having received the mark '2' (see Table 5). The fact that the monitoring visits exposed 21% of all actions as not sufficiently integrating gender and age dimensions signals that there is a great need for improvement of gender and age considerations in humanitarian assistance and underlines the need for the Gender-Age Marker.

Comparing the overall marking at monitoring stage of 2015 with the marks of 2014, actions marked with '2' increased by 10% while actions marked with '0' and '1' decreased by 3% and 7% respectively (see Table 5). Actions considered to not at all incorporate gender and age dimensions decreased from 21% to 18%, rendering the mark '2' the most awarded mark by field officers. **This overall improvement of marks compared to 2014 suggests that gender and age dimensions were better integrated in DG ECHO-funded actions in 2015.**

Table 5: Percentage of marks provided at monitoring stage<sup>28</sup> in 2014 and 2015

Monitoring stage	PARTNERS		DG ECHO FIELD		DG ECHO DESK	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 0	N/A	N/A	21%	18%	N/A	N/A
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 1	N/A	N/A	45%	38%	N/A	N/A
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 2	N/A	N/A	33%	43%	N/A	N/A
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH N/A	N/A	N/A	1%	1%	N/A	N/A

## Changes throughout the Marking Process

In 2014, a total of 229 actions were marked both at proposals and monitoring stages by ECHO staff. Out of this number, the majority of actions (62%) received a different mark at monitoring stage than at proposal stage (see Figure 9). Precisely 67 actions were awarded a better mark and 52 received a lower mark. Of the remaining actions, 86 maintained the same mark as received at proposal stage (10 actions marked with '0', 49 actions marked with '1' and 27 actions marked with '2') while a total of three proposals moved from 'N/A' to either '0', '1' or '2'. Overall, proposals received better marks at monitoring stage compared to proposal stage (see Figure 10). This could suggest that partners adjusted their projects according to the four criteria of the marker between the two stages. Moreover, less proposals received '0' or

<sup>28</sup> Calculations have been made over the total number of actions for which a monitoring report has been submitted and excluding actions solely focusing on security and coordination.

'N/A' at monitoring stage; this slight improvement can be interpreted as a better understanding of the Gender-Age Marker.

In 2015, out of the 612 actions which were marked both at proposals and monitoring stages by DG ECHO staff, 321 maintained the same mark as received at proposal stage (52%), while 291 actions received a different mark than the one at proposal phase (48%) (see Figure 9). Out of the 291, 162 increased, and 117 decreased their mark and 12 proposals marked with N/A at proposal phase received a mark at monitoring phase. That provided marks did not fluctuate as strongly throughout the marking process as in 2014 could suggest that the marker is being applied in a more cohesive manner, indicating a more skilled application by DG ECHO staff.

The significant increase of actions having received the mark of '2' from proposal to monitoring stage in 2015 (from 31% at proposal to 43% at monitoring stage) supports the interpretation that partners adjust their programmes in favour of gender and age dimensions. Nonetheless, DG ECHO field staff considered more proposals to not sufficiently integrate gender and age dimensions at all (increase from 15% to 18%) at monitoring compared to proposal stage (see Figure 10), indicating that partners' actual performance in regard to gender and age considerations might vary from proposal documents to the reality on the ground.

Figure 9: Changes in marks from proposal to monitoring stage for 2014 and 2015

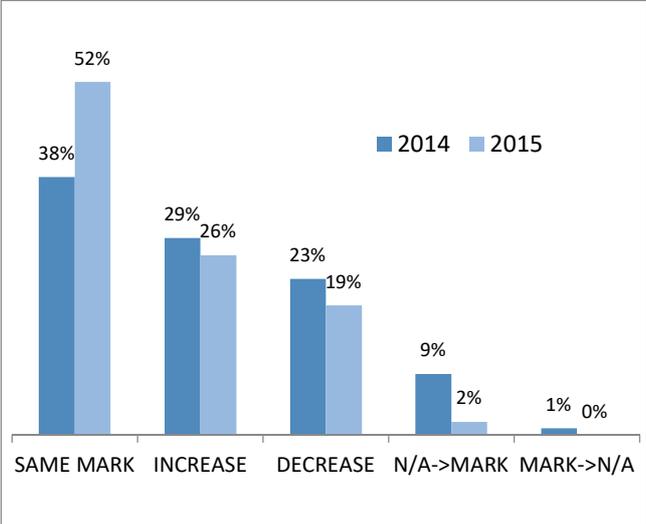
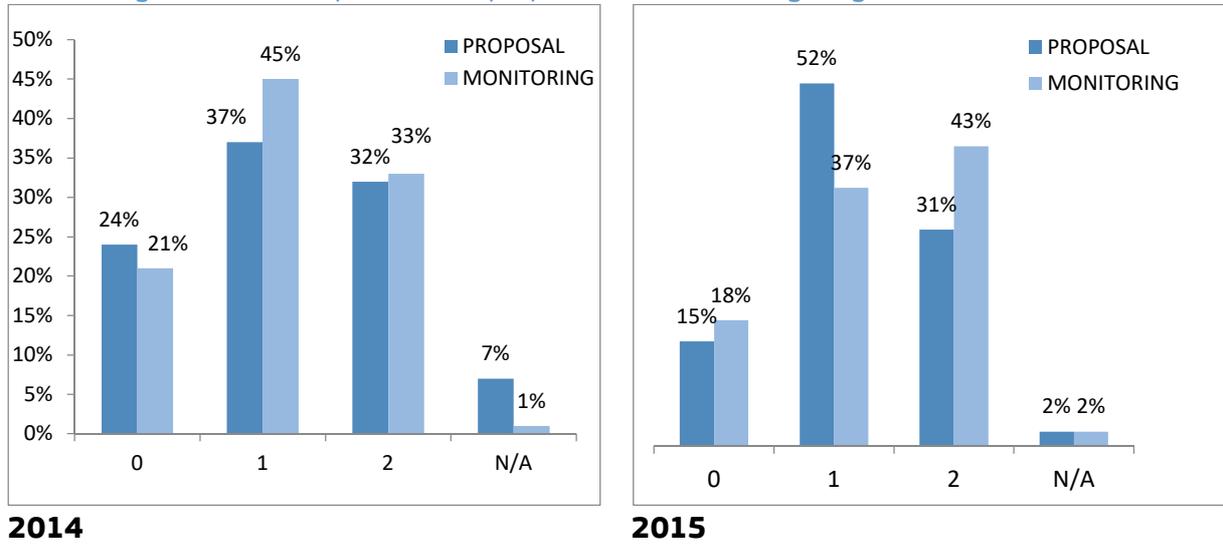


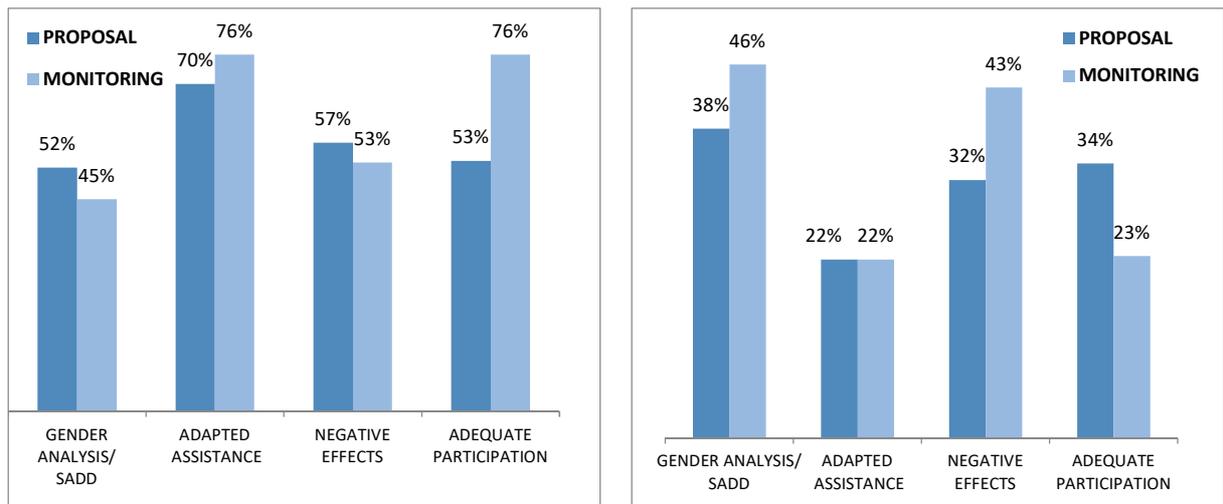
Figure 10: Marks provided at proposal and monitoring stage in 2014 and 2015



**Marking According to the Different Criteria**

In 2014, 'criterion 2/ Adapted Assistance' and 'criterion4/ Adequate Participation' were the most often met criteria at monitoring stage according to DG ECHO field staff (each 76%), while 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' and 'criterion 3/ Negative Effects' are more often considered to not be sufficiently met (46% and 43% respectively) (see Figure 11).

In general, 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' remained the least met criterion at both proposal and monitoring phases in 2014. 'Criterion 4/ Adequate Participation,' on the contrary, becomes one of the two most met criteria at monitoring phase increasing the percentage from 53% to 76%. Figure 11: Marks provided to each criteria (proposal and monitoring phase) in 2014



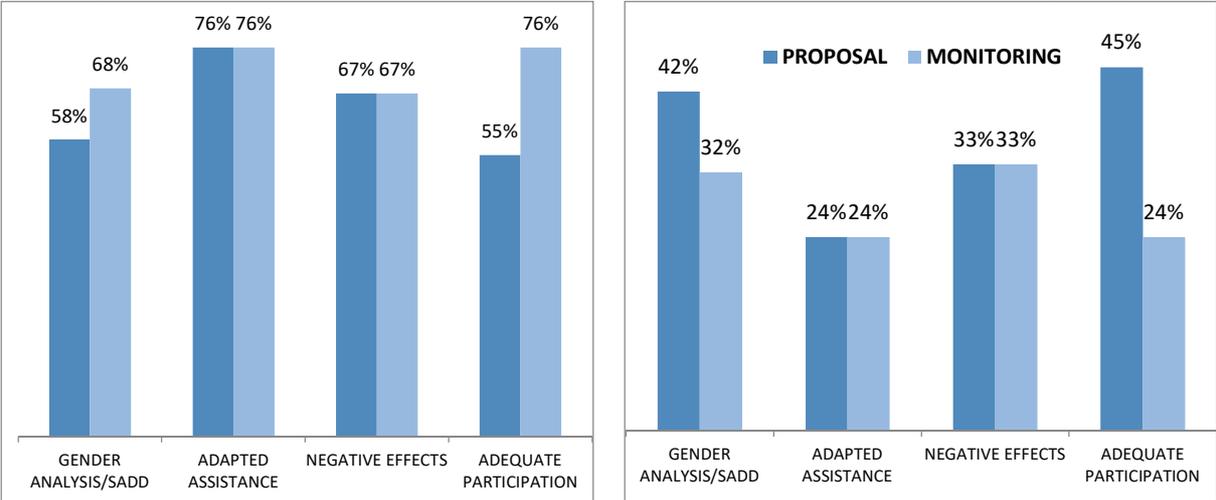
**CRITERIA MARKED WITH 'YES'**

**CRITERIA MARKED WITH 'NOT SUFFICIENTLY'**

Identical to the results of 2014, 'criterion 2/ Adapted Assistance' and 'criterion 4/ Adequate Participation' were the most often met criteria at monitoring stage in 2015 with a score of 76% each awarded by DG ECHO field staff (see Figure 12). 'Criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' and 'criterion 3/ Negative Effects' were more often assessed to be 'not sufficiently' incorporated (32% and 33% respectively).

In comparison to the proposal stage, additional 21% of all actions were considered to sufficiently meet 'criterion 4/ Adequate Participation' at monitoring stage in 2015. 'Criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' remained among the least met criteria at both proposal and monitoring stage but did experience a 10% increase towards the monitoring phase.

Figure 12: Marks provided to each criterion in 2015 (proposal and monitoring stage)



**CRITERIA MARKED WITH 'YES'**

**CRITERIA MARKED WITH 'NOT SUFFICIENTLY'**

**Comments provided by DG ECHO staff and partners**

At monitoring stage, DG ECHO field staff is in charge of applying the Gender-Age Marker and have the opportunity to provide narrative comments in order to add relevant information in respect to gender and age dimensions and highlight changes or issues. DG ECHO field staff commented on 158 out of 244 marked proposals marked monitoring phase (65%).

In these comments, the absence of (in-depth) gender analyses was frequently mentioned, occasionally linked to a lack of time. This is in line with the finding that 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' was among the least satisfied criteria at monitoring stage. Moreover, reference is made to equal gender participation and equal composition of staff as difficult to adhere to.

It is noteworthy that comments are not always indicative of the mark which proposals receive. In other words, **comments with similar content may result in different marks.**

This suggests that some marks are not substantially fair or accurate in respect to the content of actions.

### 2.3. Final Report Stage

At the final report stage, improvements or setbacks in efforts to integrate gender and age can be noted in the comment section if needed but partners are not able to revise their mark provided at proposal stage. DG ECHO staff at field level assesses the information given in the final report and determines a general mark, based on the number of criteria sufficiently met, DG ECHO desk officers then provide the official final mark based on the overall performance of the project (not only on progress made between the monitoring visit and the final report). The final mark provided by DG ECHO Desk Officers in HQ is considered the reference mark for the action and will eventually be used for official statistics.

#### **Consistent Marking**

In 2014, a total of 216 out of 699 (31%) final reports received a mark from DG ECHO field staff and 189 (27%) reports from HQ staff. It should be noted that at the time when the initial assessment was undertaken that forms the basis of this report (in 2015), some of the final reports were not ready. In contrast, 636 and 644 out of 779 (82% and 83%) reports received a mark by DG ECHO field and HQ staff in 2015. This increase demonstrates a significant improvement in terms of consistent application of the marker by DG ECHO staff; as previously mentioned, this increase most likely relates to the systemic change of making the marker mandatory in the IT system and a stronger awareness of the marker.

#### **Correct Marking**

At final report stage in 2014, field officers provided a mark to 216 projects; however, 135 of them received both a feedback to each of the criteria and a general mark; for the remaining 81, only a general mark was provided. Out of the 135 final reports that were assessed by DG ECHO field staff, 59 of them did not receive a mark that corresponded to the number of criteria met (44%) and were subsequently wrongly marked.

In 2015, out of the 752 actions for which a final report had been submitted, 92% received a correct mark by field officers.

#### **Overall Marks**

In both 2014 and 2015, DG ECHO field experts and desk officers marked the majority of final reports with '1' (see Table 6). Overall, final reports received better marks in 2015 compared to 2014; for instance, the percentage of final reports marked with '2' had increased for both desk

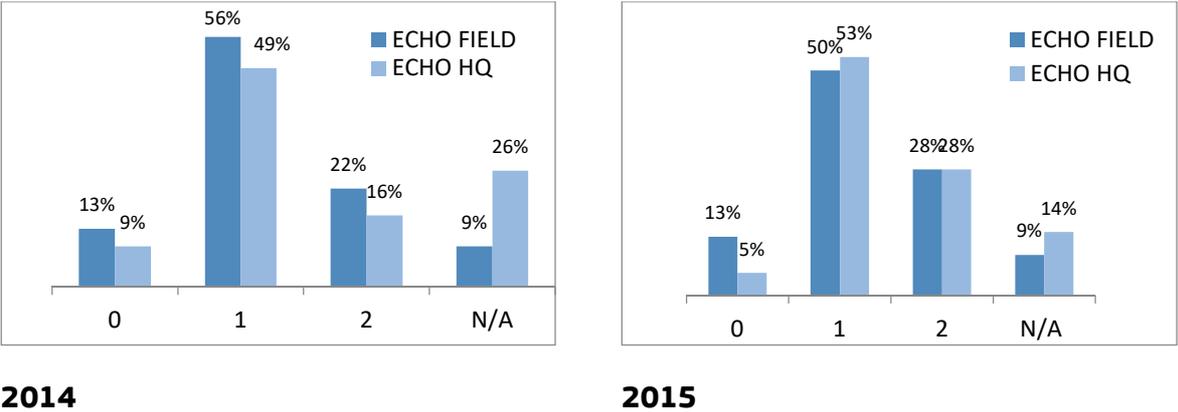
and field officers (12% and 6% respectively), suggesting a qualitative improvement of gender and age considerations in DG ECHO-funded actions.

Table 6: Marks provided at final report stage in 2014 and 2015

Final Report stage	PARTNERS		DG ECHO FIELD		DG ECHO DESK	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 0	N/A	N/A	13%	13%	9%	5%
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 1	N/A	N/A	56%	50%	49%	53%
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 2	N/A	N/A	22%	28%	16%	28%
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH N/A	N/A	N/A	9%	9%	26%	14%

According to the results above, 49% of the actions funded by DG ECHO in 2014 'integrate gender and age to a certain extent'. It must be noted that the percentage of proposals receiving a mark of '2' is higher than the one receiving a '0' (16% vs. 9%). For a considerable amount of actions (26%), DG ECHO HQ staff believes that gender and age integration is not applicable. In 2015, a slightly higher amount of DG ECHO-funded actions (53%) integrated 'gender and age to a certain extent'. Simultaneously, however, actions which 'strongly integrate gender and age' increased by 12% while the number of actions which 'barely integrate gender and age' decreased by 4% (see Figure 13).

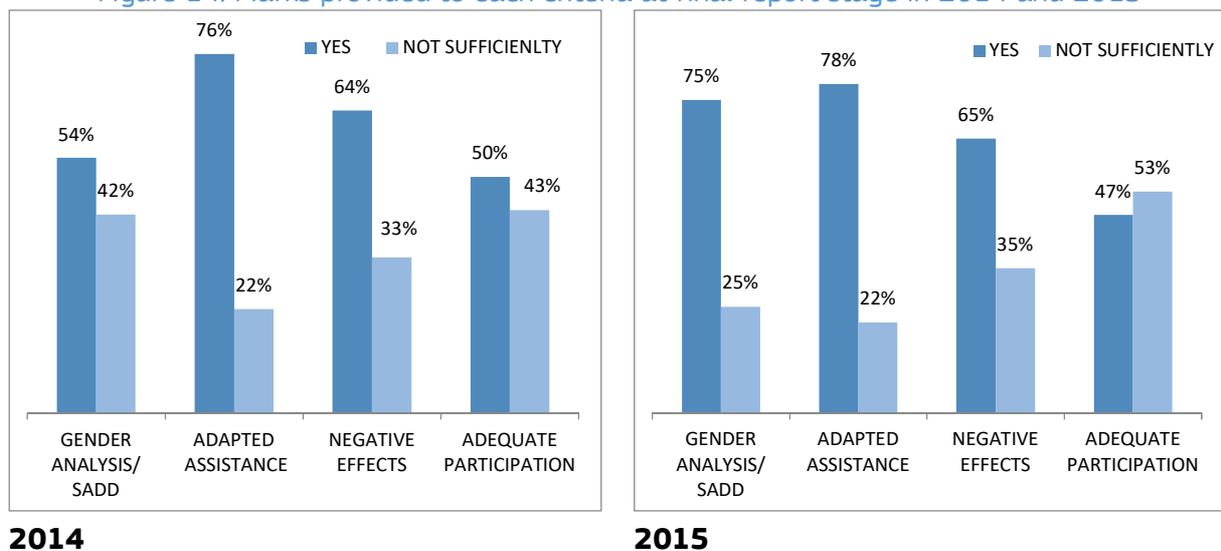
Figure 13: Marks provided at final report stage by DG ECHO field and HQ staff in 2014 and 2015



## Marking According to the Different Criteria

Out of the 216 proposals marked by DG ECHO field staff in 2014, 81 were only given a general mark, meaning that the four criteria were not marked separately. From the other 135 proposals, it becomes evident that 'criterion 2/ Adapted Assistance' remains the criterion mostly met by partners according to DG ECHO field staff (see Figure 14), followed by 'criterion 3/ Negative Effects' with 64%. 'Criterion 1/ Sex and Age Disaggregated data'<sup>29</sup> and 'criterion 4/ Adequate Participation' are the least met criteria at final report stage.

Figure 14: Marks provided to each criteria at final report stage in 2014 and 2015



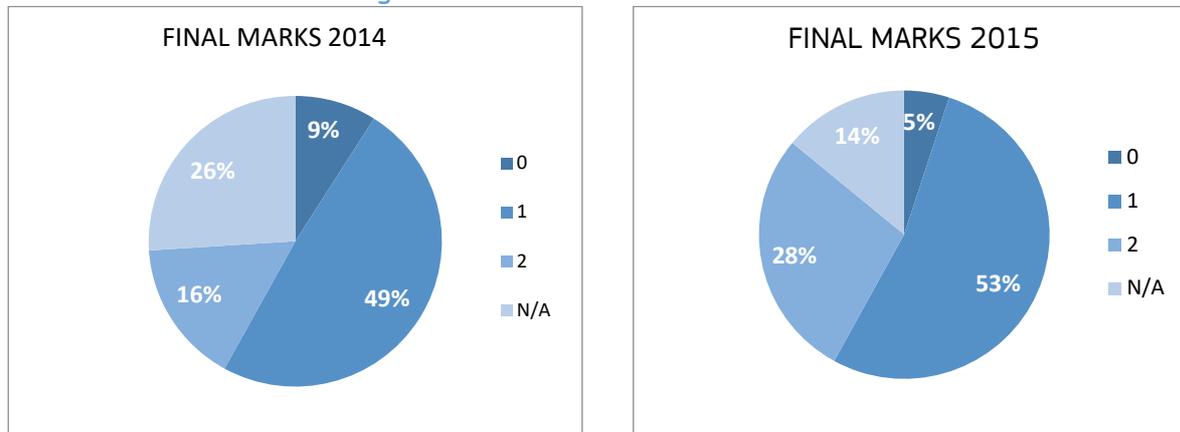
In 2015, 'criterion 2/ Adapted Assistance' remained the criterion best integrated according to DG ECHO staff with 78% of all actions sufficiently meeting this criterion in 2015 (see Figure 14). In comparison to 2014, 'criterion 1/ Sex and Age Disaggregated Data' constitutes the second most met criterion, followed by 'criterion 3/ Negative Effects'. 'Criterion 4/ Adequate Participation' performed rather poorly at final report stage in 2015 with only 47% of all actions having sufficiently met the criterion.

## Final Marks

For both years, the majority of actions received the final mark '1', namely 49% in 2014 and 53% in 2015. A promising development is the increase of actions having received the mark '2' (from 16% to 28%) and decrease of actions marked with '0', signalling a qualitative improvement of gender and age considerations in DG ECHO-funded actions. **The simultaneous decrease of reports marked as 'N/A' from 26% to 14% indicates that the marker is better understood and applied by DG ECHO staff.**

<sup>29</sup> It should be noted that at final report stage only Sex and Age Disaggregated data is assessed, the gender and age analysis is reserved for the proposal stage.

Figure 15: Final marks in 2014 and 2015



## 2.4 Emergency Actions

Partners and DG ECHO staff mark urgent actions and actions funded under emergency decisions only once the final report is submitted. Out of the 699 analysed proposals in 2014, a total of 13 were classified as emergency actions. Nevertheless, at proposal stage, partners provided a mark to 11 proposals (85%) out of which 7 were marked as 'N/A' (see Table 7). DG ECHO field officers marked 3 (23%) and desk officers 10 (77%). At monitoring stage, field officers only marked one proposal in total; the provided mark was 'N/A'. At final report stage, desk officers marked 5 actions (38%) whereas field officers marked two (15%).

Table 7: Emergency actions in 2014<sup>30</sup>

	Proposal Stage			Monitoring Stage			Final Report Stage		
	Partners	Field	HQ	Partners	Field	HQ	Partners	Field	HQ
UNMARKED	2	10	3	N/A	12	N/A	N/A	11	8
'0'	2	0	1	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	3
'1'	0	2	2	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	2	0
'2'	2	0	1	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	0	1
'N/A'	7	1	6	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	0	1

<sup>30</sup> Using a sample of 13 emergency actions.

In 2015, 42 DG-ECHO funded actions were classified as emergency proposals. Two of these focused solely on either the security or coordination sector, therefore are not eligible for the marker. Partners marked all of the 39 eligible proposals out of which 38, however, were marked as 'N/A' (see Table 8). Field officers marked 32 proposals out of which 16 (52%) were marked as 'N/A'. Desk officers marked a total of 38 proposals out of which 32 (%) were marked as 'N/A'.

At monitoring stage, field officers marked 28 actions; out of these 28 marked actions, 9 (32%) received the mark 'N/A' and 4 (14%) the mark '0'. At final report stage, field officers marked 35 final reports (out of which 15 were marked as 'N/A' and 11 as '0') and desk officers marked 40 (out of which 22 received the mark 'N/A').

Table 8: Emergency actions in 2015<sup>31</sup>

	Proposal Stage			Monitoring Stage			Final Report Stage		
	Partners	Field	HQ	Partners	Field	HQ	Partners	Field	HQ
<b>UNMARKED</b>	0	7	1	N/A	11	N/A	N/A	4	2
<b>'0'</b>	0	7	3	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	11	3
<b>'1'</b>	1	8	2	N/A	9	N/A	N/A	8	13
<b>'2'</b>	0	1	1	N/A	6	N/A	N/A	1	2
<b>'N/A'</b>	38	16	32	N/A	9	N/A	N/A	15	19

### 3. Trends and Analyses

This section is dedicated to the analysis of trends identified throughout the three stages of the project management cycle. Firstly, the overall marking process is analysed; then, the findings generated by the random check exercise are discussed.

#### 3.1 Overall Findings

##### Consistent Marking

The overall marking process significantly improved in terms of consistency from the first to the second year of implementation. The greatest improvement can be detected in proposals marked by DG ECHO desk officers at final report stage: the number of marked final reports increased by 71% (from 27% to 98%) (see Table 9). Furthermore, in 2014 only 69 actions

<sup>31</sup> Using a sample of 39 emergency actions.

(10% of all proposals) received a mark **by partners and DG ECHO staff at all stages**<sup>32</sup>, while 179 actions (26%) received a mark by DG ECHO desk officers at both proposal and final report stage.

In 2015, the number of actions having received a mark at all stages increased to 499 (63%) in 2015. It must be noted that since July 2014 the use of the marker has **become mandatory at all phases of the action** for both DG ECHO field and HQ staff, offering a potential explanation for the improvement of consistent marking at different stages.

The significant increase of marks provided at monitoring stage in 2015, however, is a promising sign of **DG ECHO's commitment to allocate resources to the dissemination and application of the Gender-Age Marker at field level**.

Table 9: Percentage of marked proposals<sup>33</sup>

	Mark proposal stage		Mark monitoring stage <sup>34</sup>		Mark final report stage <sup>35</sup>	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Partners	98%	100%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ECHO field staff	68%	100%	35%	88%	31%	97%
ECHO desk staff	91%	97%	N/A	N/A	27%	98%

### Correct Marking

Alongside the overall number of marked proposals, the number of 'correctly' marked proposals is noteworthy, as this is an indication of the extent to which the use of the Gender-Age Marker is understood. **The overall percentage of proposals that have been correctly marked generally increased from 2014 to 2015. Partners provided correct marks to 26% more actions in 2015 in comparison to the previous year** (see Table 10). DG ECHO field officers' performance in terms of correct marking also significantly improved, particularly at final report stage at which field officers provided correct marks to 48% more actions. This

<sup>32</sup> Meaning that the proposals were marked by both partners and DG ECHO desk officers at proposal stage, by ECHO field staff at monitoring and by DG ECHO desk officers at final report stage.

<sup>33</sup> When referring to the number of *marked proposals*, the general mark is looked at and not the separate criteria. For this exercise, the unaltered data set is used as this shows the total amount of proposals that received a mark.

<sup>34</sup> This percentage has been calculated over the total number of actions for which a monitoring report has been submitted.

<sup>35</sup> This percentage has been calculated over the total number of actions for which a final report has been submitted.

result and the decrease of both proposals and final reports marked as 'N/A' is **highly indicative of a better familiarity with the tool among partners and field officers.**

Table 10: Correctly marked proposals

	PROPOSAL STAGE		MONITORING STAGE		FINAL REPORT STAGE	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Partners	55%	81%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ECHO Field	58%	78%	61%	72%	44%	92%

### Overall Marking

With the exception of the marks provided by DG ECHO field staff at monitoring stage where the majority of actions received a '2', for all other phases the mark '1' was the most frequently chosen mark at both proposal and final report phase by both field and HQ staff (see Table 11). **This indicates that the majority of DG ECHO-funded actions integrate gender and age considerations to a certain extent.** The trend that marks generally increase towards the end of the project cycle suggests that partners adjust their actions according to the four criteria and thus better integrate gender and age dimensions. This hints at the success of the Gender-Age Marker **to serve its purpose of inducing qualitative change of humanitarian assistance in respect to gender and age considerations.**

The fact that certain actions (9% in 2014 and 5% in 2015) were considered to not incorporate gender or age at all underlines the need for the Gender-Age Marker to ultimately enhance gender and age sensitive humanitarian programming. Moreover, DG ECHO desk officers at final report stage considered **more projects to be eligible for the Gender-Age Marker** in 2015 than in 2014. This general decrease could be a reflection of a better familiarity with the marker among DG ECHO staff.

Table 11: Marks provided by partners and DG ECHO staff at all stages in 2014

2014	0			1			2			N/A		
	P	M	FR	P	M	FR	P	M	FR	P	M	FR
PARTNERS	4%			25%			63%			8%		
ECHO FIELD	24%	21%	13%	37%	45%	56%	32%	33%	22%	7%	1%	9%
ECHO HQ	18%		9%	42%		49%	23%		16%	17%		26%

Table 12: Marks provided by partners and DG ECHO staff at all stages in 2015

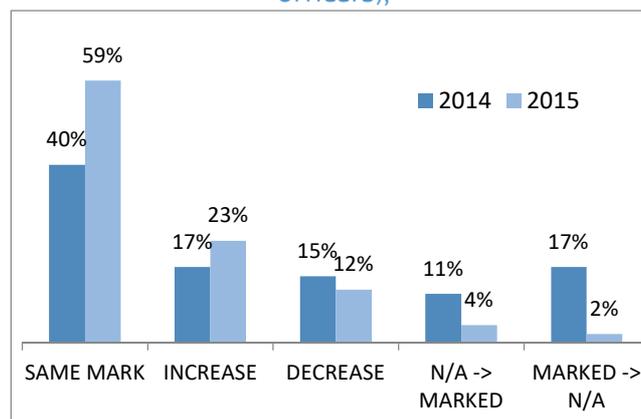
2015	0			1			2			N/A		
	P	M	FR	P	M	FR	P	M	FR	P	M	FR
<b>PARTNERS</b>	3%			23%			68%			6%		
<b>ECHO FIELD</b>	15%	18%	13%	52%	37%	50%	30%	43%	28%	3%	2%	9%
<b>ECHO HQ</b>	7%		5%	63%		53%	21%		28%	9%		14%

### Changes throughout the Marking Process

Actions with the same mark at proposal and final report stage in 2015 still represent the majority (59%) and increased compared to 2014. A 5% increase was also identified in the actions which received a higher mark at final report stage (from 17% to 23%) while actions that received a lower mark at final report stage decreased by 3% (see Figure 15).

The finding that the provided marks did not fluctuate as strongly throughout the marking process as in 2015 could suggest that the marker is **being applied in a more cohesive manner**, indicating a better familiarity with the tool by DG ECHO staff.

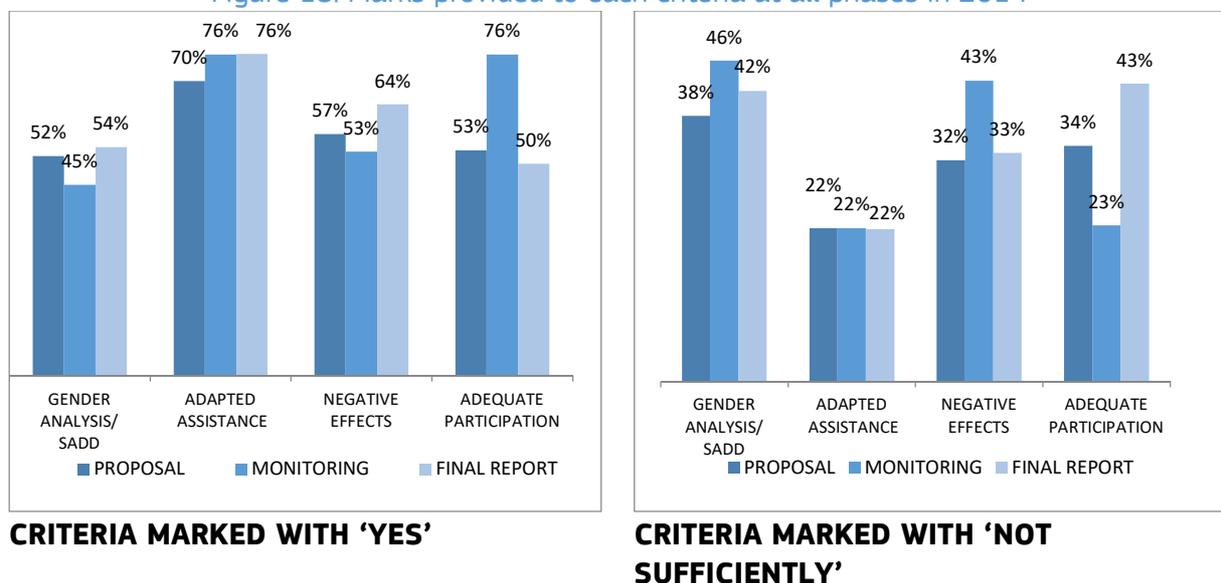
Figure 15: Change in marks from proposal to final report phase (marks provided by desk officers);



## Marking According to Different Criteria

According to DG ECHO field staff in 2014, 'criterion 2/ Adapted Assistance' was the criterion most often met at all phases, while 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' was the least met. Surprisingly, in the survey conducted in August 2015, 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' had been identified by the majority of respondents as the least difficult criterion to adhere to while 'criterion 3/ Negative Effects' was considered the most difficult criterion to take into consideration when developing a proposal. Thus, the perception of gender and age analysis as being the easiest criterion to integrate into proposals is not necessarily an indication of the quality of this analysis. The reality that partners encounter problems in conducting a sufficient gender and age analysis points to divergences in the interpretation or understanding of this criterion.

Figure 16: Marks provided to each criteria at all phases in 2014



For 'criterion 4/ Adequate Participation', a notable fluctuation was detected at monitoring stage: at proposal and final report stage, 53% and 50% respectively fulfilled criterion 4, whereas at monitoring stage a total of 76% of projects were considered to do so (see Figure 16).

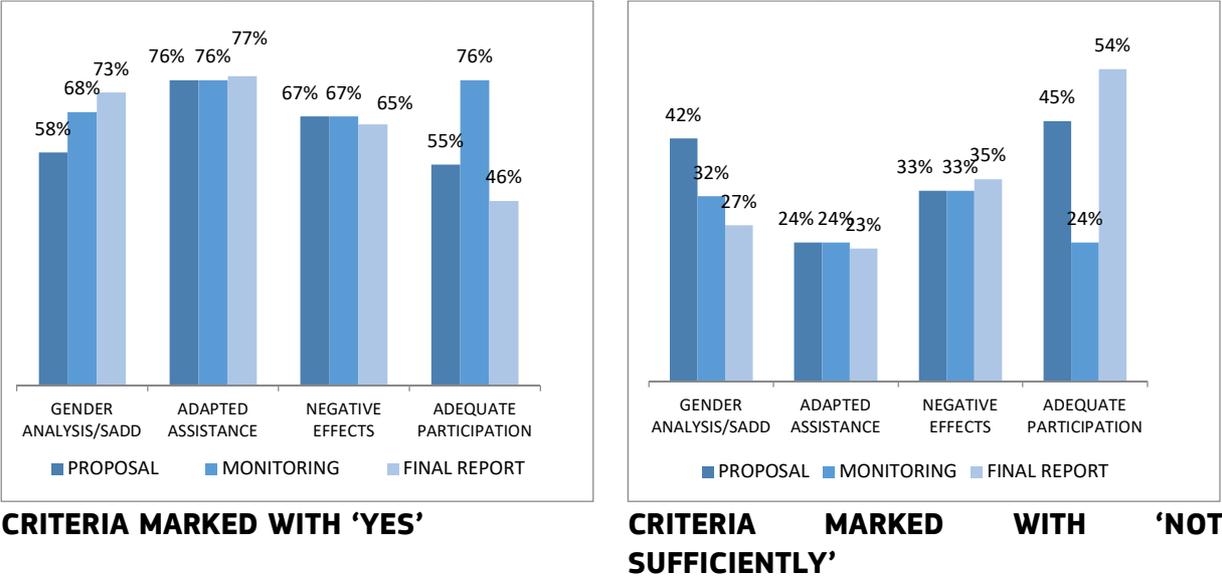
The same pattern can be identified for 2015: while 55% of actions at proposal stage and 47% at final report stage were considered to sufficiently meet this criterion, at monitoring stage 76% of actions were considered as such (see Figure 17).

This criterion, thus, moved from being considered to be among the most frequently met criteria at monitoring stage to being the least met criterion at final report stage. A possible explanation for this deviation could be that at monitoring stage, field officers mark actions based on observatory visits which might reveal certain types of information and dimensions

that appear different or are distorted when put in the e-single form, thus, entailing significant differences in marks provided for different stages.

Additionally, partners and desk officers are more involved in the marking process at proposal and final report stage, influencing the overall marks provided at these stages.

Figure 17: Marks provided to each criteria at all phases in 2015



### 3.2. Random Check Exercise

For this exercise, a total of 23 proposals were randomly selected with the objective to assess the extent to which marks have been correctly provided by both DG ECHO staff and partners, based on the *content* provided in the e-single form.

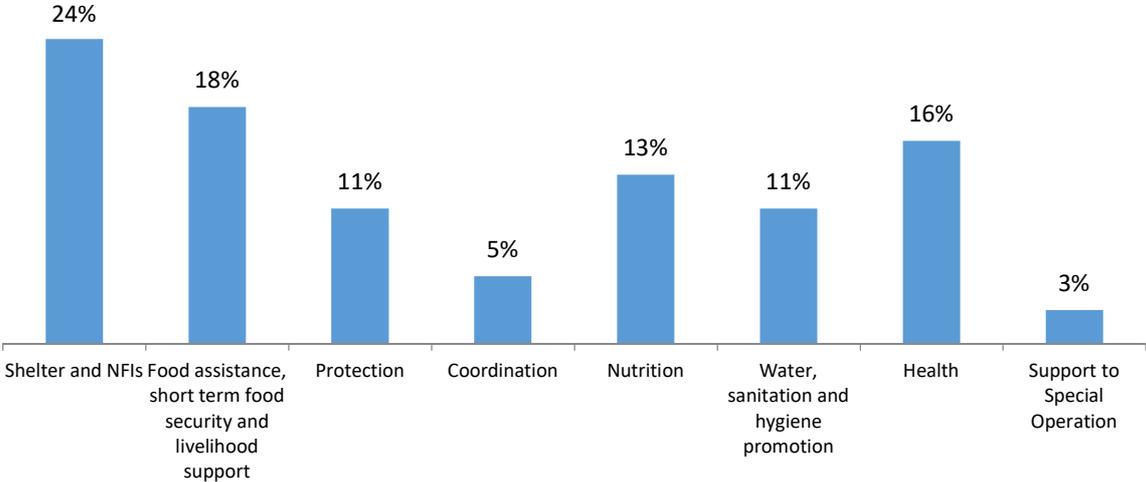
The DG ECHO GPT analysed all related documents (project proposals, final reports and comments) and provided a mark at proposal and final report stage<sup>36</sup>. This mark was then compared to those given by both partners and DG ECHO staff. A criterion for the selection of a project for this exercise is the presence of a final report in order to be able to analyse the complete marking process.

In 2014, the selected proposals represent different regions and sectors: five were selected from North Africa, Middle East and the Caucasus (22%), five from South Asia and the Pacific (22%), four from Western Africa/Sahel (17%), four from Latin America/Caribbean (17%) and five from Eastern, Central and South Africa (22%). Twelve (52%) proposals only covered one

<sup>36</sup> The mark at monitoring stage is provided by DG ECHO field staff on the basis of a monitoring mission and discussions with partners. It was therefore impossible to mark humanitarian actions at this stage, for the sake of this exercise.

sector, while eleven (49%) were multi-sectorial in nature. Three of these proposals were classified as emergency actions.

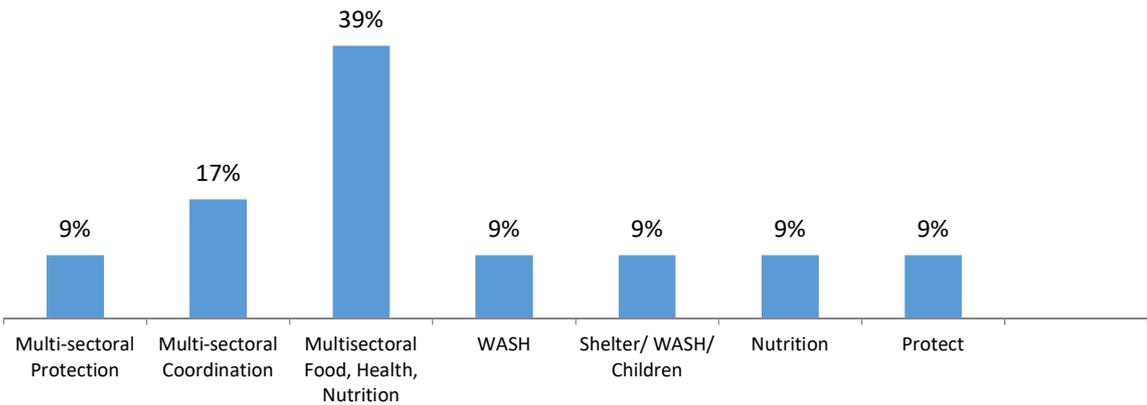
Figure 18: Selected proposals by sector in 2014



In 2015, the selected proposals represented the following regions and sectors: twelve proposals (52%) focused exclusively on one sector, two of which covered coordination, while eleven proposals (49%) were of multi-sectorial nature (see Figure 18).

Five of the 23 selected proposals were emergency actions. Most projects (48%) were implemented in Africa, followed by Asia and the Middle East (each 17%), Latin America (13%) and Eastern Europe (4%).

Figure 18: Selected proposals by sector in 2015



**Proposal stage**

In 2014, partners had marked all of the proposals selected for the exercise at proposals stage, while only 14 proposals out of the 23 revised (61%) had been marked by DG ECHO field

officers and 20 (87%) by desk officers (see Table 13). Out of the three emergency proposals included in the random check, partners did not mark any while DG ECHO field staff marked one and desk officers marked two.

In 2015, all of the 18 non-emergency proposals selected for the exercise received a mark by both partners and DG ECHO desk officers; only two proposals (9%) were not marked by DG ECHO field officers. Out of the five emergency proposals included in the random check, none were marked by partners whereas DG ECHO field staff marked three of them and HQ staff marked one.

Table 13: Marks provided to selected proposals<sup>37</sup>

	PARTNERS		DG ECHO FIELD		DG ECHO DESK		GPT	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 0	1	0	4	3	3	2	15	9
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 1	4	3	5	10	11	11	3	7
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 2	14	14	4	6	4	5	1	0
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH N/A	4	6	1	2	2	5	4	7
UNMARKED PROPOSALS	0	0	9	2	3	0	0	0

The random check exercise revealed that **marks provided to the selected actions by partners, DG ECHO staff and the GPT differed significantly at proposal stage.** In 2014, out of the 23 selected proposals, only two proposals (9%) were awarded the same mark by partners and all DG ECHO staff. Eight proposals out of the 14 marked by DG ECHO field staff (57%) received the same mark by DG ECHO field staff and the GPT; another 8 proposals out of the 20 marked by DG ECHO desk officers (40%) received the same mark by desk officers and the GPT. Four proposals (17%) received the same mark by partners and the Gender and Protection Team.

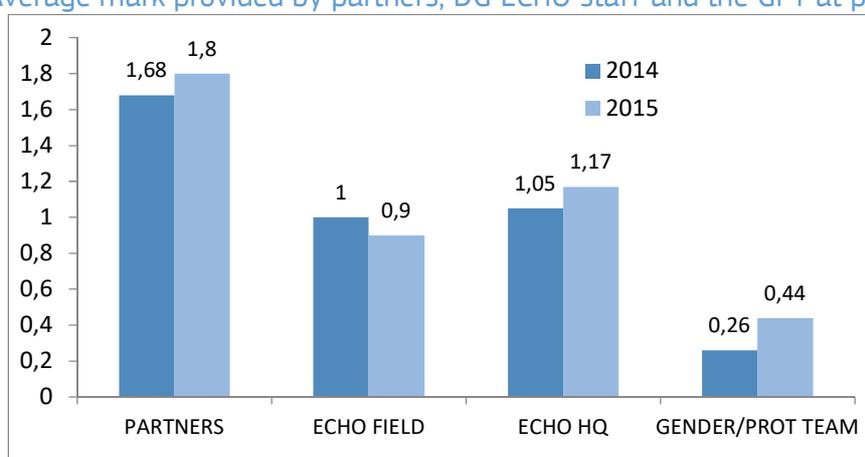
On top of the finding that the marks provided by **the GPT frequently did not match the marks provided by partners and DG ECHO staff, the data shows that the latter generally provided higher marks than the GPT.** For instance, a total of 17 out of the 23 (74%) proposals were differently marked by the GPT and partners; for 17 of them (100%),

<sup>37</sup> Marks have been calculated on the basis of the feedback provided on each criterion, rather than the correct mark.

partners had provided a higher mark. The same applies to DG ECHO field and desk officers: out of the actions which field officers marked differently than the GPT, 88% received a higher mark by field staff. For the 8 actions marked differently by GPT and desk officers, 100% were awarded a better mark by the latter.

These differences in opinion are reflected in the average mark provided by DG ECHO staff, partners and the GPT at proposal stage (see Figure 19). In 2014, on average, DG ECHO partners awarded their proposals the generous mark of 1.68. Field officers and desk officers were more critical and marked the proposed actions with 1.0 and 1.05 respectively. The average mark provided by the GPT of 0.26 constitutes a significant drop.

Figure 19: Average mark provided by partners, DG ECHO staff and the GPT at proposal stage



The results of the random check exercise conducted for the proposal stage of 2015 are in line with the findings of 2014. The marks provided by DG ECHO staff, partners and the GPT frequently did not match, with only three out of 23 proposals (13%) having received the same mark by every actor involved in the marking process. Six proposals (26%) received the same mark by partners and the GPT, 8 proposals (35%) received the same mark by field officers and the GPT and ten proposals (43%) received the same mark by desk officers and the GPT.

Similar to 2014, the marks provided by partners, field and desk officers in 2015 were generally higher than the ones awarded by the GPT. The average mark provided by partners and desk officers at this stage in 2015 increased to 1.8 and 1.17 respectively, while field officers were slightly more critical in comparison to 2014 (with a 0.1 decrease in the average mark) (see Figure 16).

Importantly, **the average mark provided by the GPT almost doubled with an increase from 0.26 to 0.44. This increase clearly and concretely demonstrates the partners' improved performance in integrating gender and age between 2014 and 2015.**

The desk research had disclosed that partners tend to overrate their proposal. **The random check exercise, however, revealed that the majority of proposals need to significantly improve their integration of gender and age.** Accordingly, the GPT's average mark of 0.26 and 0.44 at proposal stage is dramatically lower than the average mark of partners and DG ECHO officers. However, the considerable increase from 2014 to 2015 can be highlighted as a promising development.

### Final Report Stage

At final report stage, the random check exercise exposed areas for improvement in the consistent application of the marker. Thereafter, **marks provided to final reports by partners, DG ECHO staff and the GPT differed significantly.** In 2014, for instance, only 6 out of the 23 final reports selected for the exercise had been marked by both DG ECHO field and desk staff. Similarly, less than half of the 23 final reports were marked by both field staff and the GPT, and 14 by HQ staff and the GPT.

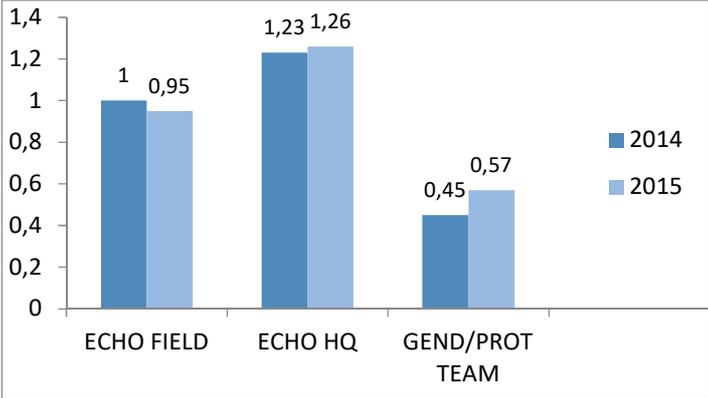
Table 14: Marks provided to selected proposals at final report stage

	PARTNERS		ECHO FIELD		ECHO DESK		GENDER/PROT TEAM	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 0	N/A	N/A	1	6	1	3	15	11
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 1	N/A	N/A	7	9	9	8	4	8
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH 2	N/A	N/A	0	5	3	8	3	2
PROPOSALS MARKED WITH N/A	N/A	N/A	3	0	1	4	1	2
PROPOSALS NOT MARKED	N/A	N/A	12	3	9	0	0	0

The results of 2015 reflect a more consistent application of the marker: all 23 proposals selected for the random check exercised were marked by DG ECHO desk officers at the final report stage out of which 14 final reports (61%) marked by both desk officers and the GPT were differently marked. Field staff provided marks for 20 out of 23 final reports (87%) out of which 12 (60%) reports received different marks by field officers and the GPT. Both desk and officers generally provided more generous marks than the GPT.

The average marks provided at final report stage are fairly similar to those given at proposal stage (see Figure 20 and 21). Apart from a 0.5 increase in 2015, field officers' average mark remained constant in between proposal and final report stage. Both desk officers and the GPT generally provided better marks at final report stage in comparison to proposal stage; the GPT's marks, in particular, improved towards the end of the project cycle with a 19% increase in 2014 and a 13% increase in 2015.

Figure 20: Average mark provided by DG ECHO staff and the GPT at final report stage



The findings generated by the random check exercise at final report stage confirm the result that a significant proportion of DG ECHO-funded actions need to significantly improve their integration of gender and age dimensions. Nonetheless, the comparison of the results of 2014 with those of 2015 is indicative of **a strong upwards trend in terms of the marker's quantitative and qualitative application**. These results highlight the relevance of this exercise for the evaluation process, as it confirms the need to regularly involve gender and protection experts in the review of the marker.

**Marking According to the Different Criteria**

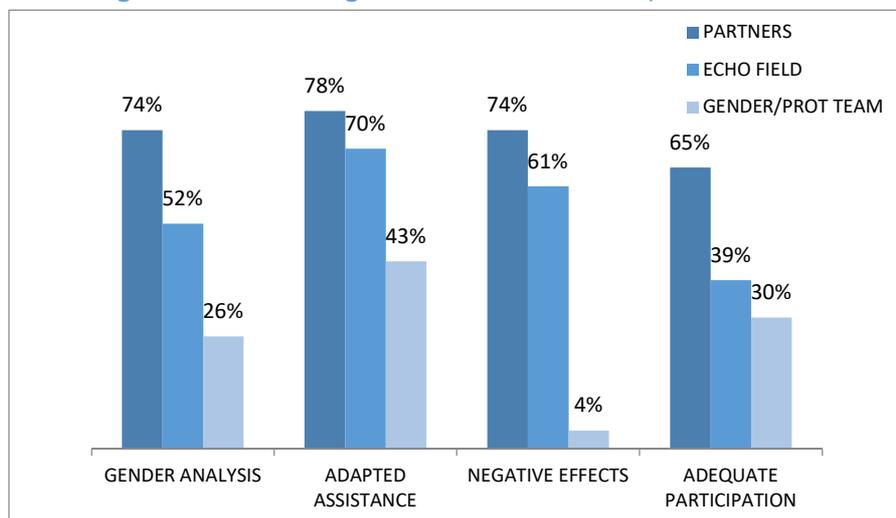
The random check exercise also took into account how the four individual criteria were assessed by DG ECHO staff and partners as opposed to the GPT's assessment. For both assessed years, the GPT considered 'criterion 2/ Adapted Assistance' to be most often sufficiently met, with 26% of the 23 selected actions in 2014 and 43% in 2015 adequately incorporating this criterion.

Concerning the least met criteria, the GPT found the greatest need for improvement in the integration of 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' in 2014. In 2015, partners and DG ECHO field staff evaluated 'criterion 4/ Adequate Participation' as the least met, while the GPT identified 'criterion 3/ Negative Effects' as the least sufficiently incorporated (see Figure 18).

These results reflect that certain criteria are better understood and translated into action than others. It is essential to integrate these criteria-specific findings into capacity-building efforts

in order to improve the future application of the marker and the overall quality of the humanitarian action in terms gender and age.

Figure 21: Percentage of criteria sufficiently met in 2015



## VI. TARGETED ACTIONS

Certain actions exclusively target a specific gender or age group, rather than providing assistance to most or all members of a community. A targeted action can focus, for example, on boys at risk of forced recruitment by armed groups, or women and girls at risk of sexual abuse and rape. It is sometimes assumed that these types of action are automatically sensitive to gender and age; in reality, however, these actions **run the risk of being based on stereotypical assumptions concerning gender and age roles**. This section serves to reiterate the importance of separately examining the results from general projects' performance in terms of gender and age sensitive programming and projects specifically targeting problems related to gender and age.

Nonetheless, it is important to mention systemic obstacles to accurately measuring such targeted actions. As the e-single form enquires whether partners' actions target groups with specific vulnerabilities, partners tend to generously select several of these groups which might indirectly benefit from the proposed action but not to such an extent that the proposal could qualify as a targeted action according to DG ECHO's definition. Subsequently, it creates obstacles to single out these actions which can be considered to sufficiently qualify as a targeted action.

The following paragraphs briefly summarise DG ECHO's financial support to projects which exclusively focussed on GBV and child protection, excluding such cases where GBV or child protection was part of a multi-sector response.

### **Gender-based violence (GBV)**

It is estimated that in 2014, DG ECHO contributed EUR 8 million to programmes aimed at preventing or responding to GBV in emergency settings; in 2015, DG ECHO contributed close to EUR 14 million to such actions. The review of how the Gender-Age Marker was applied to these actions revealed the same trend identified for the majority of all DG ECHO-funded actions: partners generally tend to overrate their proposals while DG ECHO staff is more critical, causing a strong discrepancy between the partners' self-assessment and the judgement of field and desk staff. This indicates that actions specifically targeting GBV are not automatically gender and age sensitive but require in-depth analysis and monitoring to ensure that gender and age dimensions are sufficiently integrated.

### **Child Protection**

DG ECHO contributed EUR 11 million to targeted actions related to child protection in 2014 (not including projects where child protection was a part of a multi-sector response) and close to EUR 15 million in 2015<sup>38</sup>. Similar to the findings generated for GBV actions, despite the proposals' focus on a specific vulnerable group and their strong link to gender and age dimensions, the assessment of Gender-Age Marker exposed the need for improvement in these projects' fulfilment of the four criteria.

These findings reiterate the importance of and need for a quality and accountability tool such as DG ECHO's Gender-Age Marker to ensure that essential gender and age considerations are taken into account in humanitarian responses.

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<sup>38</sup> This figures includes EUR 5,354,338.29 under the "Education, training and educational activities" sub-sector.

## VII. KEY FINDINGS

The desk review studied a total of 1,478 DG ECHO-funded actions (699 funded in 2014 and 779 funded in 2015). The use of the Gender-Age Marker is evaluated by separately examining the three phases of the marking process and the different marking tendencies of DG ECHO staff and partners. Moreover, an extensive survey inquired to which extent the training contents and the marker are perceived to have contributed to enhance gender and age mainstreaming in humanitarian actions funded by DG ECHO. The assessment of the first and second year of implementation of the Marker shows that the marker was well received by both DG ECHO staff and partners and reflects a steep upwards trend in correct and frequent marking.

The following conclusions and positive improvements were found.

### 1. AN OVERALL BETTER INTEGRATION OF GENDER AND AGE CONSIDERATIONS

The average marks provided in 2014 and 2015 reflect a considerable upwards trend and subsequently a qualitative improvement of the integration of gender and age dimensions in DG ECHO-funded humanitarian actions. In 2014, **65% of all DG ECHO-funded actions integrated gender and age considerations either 'strongly' or 'to a certain extent'. In 2015, this number increased to 81%**. Additionally, marks provided throughout the three stages fluctuated less than in 2014, indicating that the marker is applied in a more cohesive and skilled manner. This underlines the importance of having a quality and accountability tool in place, such as the Gender-Age Marker, to measure progress made.

This is an indication of the success of the Gender-Age Marker **to serve its purpose of inducing qualitative change of humanitarian assistance in respect to gender and age considerations**. Moreover, it underlines the importance of having a quality and accountability tool in place, such as the Gender-Age Marker, to measure progress made.

### 2. A USEFUL MARKER

According to the survey results, the majority of DG ECHO staff and partners, who participated in the training sessions as part of the practical roll-out of the marker, believe that the introduction of the DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker has fostered positive actions to enhance gender and age mainstreaming. A total of **82% of all respondents believe that the four criteria of the DG ECHO Gender-Age Marker have been either 'useful' or 'very useful'** in order to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance provided.

### 3. A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN APPLICATION OF THE MARKER

The assessment revealed a significant improvement in the **consistent application** of the Gender-Age Marker. For instance, in 2014, only 10% of all proposals received a mark by partners and DG ECHO staff at all stages. In 2015, however, this number increased to a total

of **63% of DG ECHO-funded actions having received a mark by partners, DG ECHO field and desk officers at all stages.** This increase of 53% reflects **DG ECHO's commitment to allocate resources to the dissemination and application of the Gender-Age Marker at field level.**

#### 4. A CONSISTENT INCREASE IN CORRECT MARKING:

'Correctly' marked implies that the general mark has been correctly calculated based on the feedback provided to each of the four criteria as outlined in the instructions in the [Gender-Age Marker Toolkit](#)<sup>39</sup>. For instance, if all criteria were deemed "not sufficiently met" the mark should then be 0. Apart from an improvement in consistency, the overall percentage of proposals that have been **correctly marked**<sup>40</sup> **generally increased from 2014 to 2015;** particularly at final report stage at which the number of correct marks provided by field officers increased **from 44% to 92%.** Partners provided correct marks to **26% more actions** in 2015 in comparison to 2014 (see Table below).

Table 15: Correctly marked proposals

	PROPOSAL STAGE		MONITORING STAGE		FINAL REPORT STAGE	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Partners	55%	81%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
ECHO Field	58%	78%	61%	72%	44%	92%

The more frequent and correct application of the marker suggests an increase in **awareness of the marker's purpose and better familiarity** with the tool among DG ECHO staff and partners. It must be noted that since July 2014 the use of the marker has **become mandatory at all phases of the action** for DG ECHO field and HQ staff, offering a potential explanation for the improvement of frequent marking throughout the different stages of the project cycle.

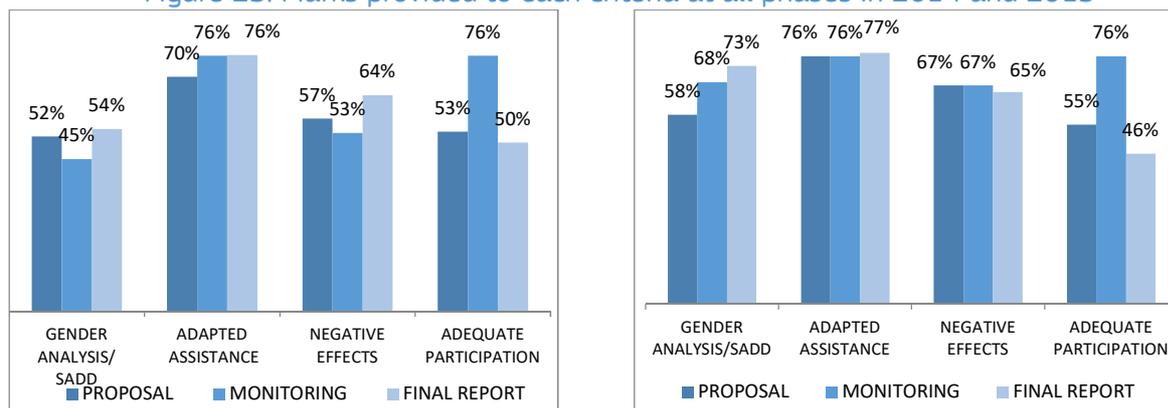
#### 5. A TOOL FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT

For both 2014 and 2015, the criterion most often sufficiently integrated into DG ECHO-funded actions was 'criterion 2/ Adapted Assistance' (see Figure 23 on next page). The criterion which was considered the least met was 'criterion 4/ Adequate Participation', closely followed by 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis'. The finding that partners regularly struggle with incorporating

<sup>39</sup> See [Gender-Age Marker Toolkit](#) for information on the correct use of the Gender-Age Marker.

these two criteria in their humanitarian activities allows DG ECHO to pay additional attention to these two aspects in i.e. dedicated training sessions to support their partners in optimising gender-sensitive humanitarian assistance. This demonstrates **how the Gender-Age Marker can be used to identify areas for improvement to which DG ECHO can then develop adequate responses.**

Figure 23: Marks provided to each criteria at all phases in 2014 and 2015



**CRITERIA MARKED WITH 'YES' IN 2014**

**CRITERIA MARKED WITH 'YES' IN 2015**

## Remaining challenges and adjustments made

### 1. APPLYING THE MARKER THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE PROJECT CYCLE

Despite the strong improvements made in terms of consistent application of the Gender-Age Marker throughout the whole project cycle, the assessment also revealed areas for improvement. A total of 63% of all DG ECHO-funded actions were marked at all stages of the project management cycle in 2015. The final goal would be to increase this number to reach 100%.

#### ADJUSTMENT MADE: AUTOMATIC GENERATION OF MARK AND MANDATORY AT EACH STAGE OF PROJECT CYCLE

In order to minimise the possible mistakes deriving from a wrong application of the coding system, the general mark is now automatically generated in the IT-system on the basis of the feedback provided to each of the 4 criterion in both the e-single form (for partners) and the project appraisal forms (FichOps)<sup>41</sup> (for DG ECHO staff). Moreover, the marker was made mandatory at each stage of the project cycle in the IT system in July 2014.

<sup>41</sup> "Fiche opérationnelle", project appraisal form. Assesses the humanitarian action through its life cycle and serves later as the basis to evaluate the action.

## 2. DIFFERENCES IN UNDERSTANDING THE FOUR CRITERIA OF THE MARKER AND DISCREPANCIES IN MARKS PROVIDED

The results show that there may be stark differences in the understanding of the four individual criteria among DG ECHO staff and partners. For instance, the survey conducted in 2015 to evaluate the content and structure of the training sessions conducted on the marker generated contradictory results to those produced by the desk review: in the survey, 'criterion 1/ Gender Analysis' had been identified by the majority of respondents as the least difficult criterion to adhere to. The desk review, however, showed that criterion 1 was among the criteria which performed the poorest in both 2014 and 2015. Therefore, the perception of gender and age analysis as being the easiest criterion to integrate into proposals is not necessarily an indication of the quality of this analysis.

In addition, discrepancy in marks provided by DG ECHO staff, partners and DG ECHO Gender and Protection team remains. Only 2 (9%) proposals have received the same mark by partners and all DG ECHO staff in 2014 and 3 (13%) in 2015. A continued dialogue between DG ECHO and partners is therefore important. In particular, the Gender and Protection Team (GPT) of DG ECHO at field-level are an important resource for support in this regard.

### ADJUSTMENT MADE: REVISION OF TRAINING CONTENTS AND INVESTMENT ON ADDITIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING

In 2014 and 2015, training contents focused on the use of the Gender-Age Marker, rather than on gender and age concepts. Considering the outcomes of the surveys and the desk analysis, it has been suggested to shift the focus on more general aspects of gender and age dimensions to ensure that both partners and DG ECHO staff have a minimum understanding of issues related to gender and age before using the tool. Subsequently, capacity-building efforts in 2017 took the form of more practical workshops focusing on gender mainstreaming in specific sectors as opposed to classical training sessions, in order to enhance participation and interaction among participants and to ultimately respond to the challenges faced by DG ECHO staff and partners on the ground more effectively.

### ADJUSTMENT MADE: THEMATIC EXPERTS ON PROTECTION AND GENDER

Since 2018, the portfolio of the DG ECHO field expert working on Gender and the portfolios of the experts working on Protection have been merged into a new "thematic expert" role on Protection and Gender, to enhance the synergies between the two thematic areas and to build upon them to enhance the quality of humanitarian assistance provided through DG ECHO funding.

## The way forward and recommendations

As shown by the adjustments made, DG ECHO is strongly committed to improving gender and age mainstreaming, including by improving the usage of the Gender-Age Marker. DG ECHO will continue to invest on building capacities of DG ECHO staff on gender and age mainstreaming. Regular assessment of the Gender-Age Marker will be conducted in order to monitor progress and continue delivering qualitative gender and age-sensitive humanitarian programming.

Nevertheless, it is of **utmost importance that DG ECHO partners mirror this commitment to gender and age mainstreaming**. To this end, DG ECHO encourages its partners to **further invest in capacity-building on gender and age mainstreaming** for their staff. Increased familiarity and understanding of the workings of the DG ECHO Gender Age Marker by partners would likely also help reduce discrepancies of marks between partners and DG ECHO staff. Partners are also **encouraged to develop internal measures to systematically assess and monitor that humanitarian actions are informed by and adjusted on the basis of gender and age analysis**.

**These efforts are crucial for the delivery of quality assistance and for adherence to the mandate to serve the most vulnerable.**