

**GENDER MAINSTREAMING INITIATIVE:
REPORT ON TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

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I. BACKGROUND AND PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES

As part of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) global effort to strengthen its overall institutional capacity to mainstream gender, UNDP Macedonia was granted funds to implement the office-wide Gender Mainstreaming Initiative (GMI), aiming to strengthen its effectiveness and visibility in addressing gender concerns through all aspects of its operations. Furthermore, the GMI is expected to contribute to mainstreaming of gender in the United Nations Country Team in Macedonia through proactive participation of UNDP in broader UN activities.

Since the beginning of this project in the second half of 2006, UNDP Macedonia has formed the Gender Thematic Group within the country office (CO), conducted its in-house gender capacity assessment, and engaged both an international and national experts to assist the CO in producing its gender mainstreaming strategy. A draft strategy has been formulated and currently undergoing both internal and external review processes. The strategy is expected to be finalized sometime during the next few months.

While the CO continues with the development of the gender mainstreaming strategy, the decision was taken to implement office-wide gender mainstreaming trainings in order to enhance the gender mainstreaming knowledge and skills of the CO staff members in order for the CO to take proper ownership of the strategy throughout its development process and the implementation of the strategy. Through this, the CO hopes to equip its staff members with both general and thematic-area-specific gender mainstreaming knowledge and skills.

To this end, a training consultant was engaged to undertake the gender mainstreaming training component of this process. The intended outputs of this training process as communicated to the training consultant included:

- **Gender mainstreaming training programmes** designed: 1. office-wide introduction to gender mainstreaming; 2. gender mainstreaming in decentralization; 3. gender mainstreaming in environment and 4. gender mainstreaming in social inclusion
- **Gender mainstreaming training programmes** facilitated
- **A training outcome report** produced immediately after the facilitation of the training programmes

As preparation for this assignment, the training consultant conducted the following activities:

- Direct liaising with the CO Gender Focal Point and GMI Coordinator to develop appropriate agendas for each training activity:

- Review of the draft gender mainstreaming strategy currently under review, in order to gain an appropriate understanding of the current needs, capacities, challenges and opportunities facing the CO in terms of gender mainstreaming;
- As a knowledge and attitudes survey on gender mainstreaming had recently been conducted in the CO, an additional needs assessment survey was not conducted. The results of the existing survey were reviewed as part of the training needs assessment process;
- Review of a wide range of documents (e.g. country strategy note, thematic cluster activity summaries, project documents, TORs) in order to identify entry points for gender mainstreaming to be used as examples and case studies during the training.

Please see *Terms of Reference* for further details.

II. TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of preparatory activities and in consultation with the CO Gender Focal Point, the following training objectives were articulated as guiding principles for training implementation:

1. **Raising awareness** (for all CO staff but particularly for those with less knowledge of gender mainstreaming) of how gender is applicable and relevant as an important consideration in their work. It was understood that for those staff members with less exposure to and experience with gender issues, establishing in-depth competence in areas such as gender analysis, gender impact assessment and gender budgeting would not be possible in the timeframe allotted, but that **generating an open and positive responsiveness to gender mainstreaming** in general, would be nonetheless a very important training output, and a key building block for further gender mainstreaming implementation.
2. As the preparatory activities revealed, many interesting and important gender mainstreaming activities were already taking place at the programme but especially the project level. The second key objective of the training was therefore to highlight these activities and examine ways in which they could be **more systematically integrated** into programme/project processes, and for these efforts to be **more systematically captured and made visible** in monitoring, reporting and public information activities and processes. These good examples could serve as inspiration and positive reinforcement for programme and project staff.
3. In the thematic cluster trainings, a specifically articulated objective was to raise awareness and **increase substantive knowledge** of how gender issues are connected and relevant to the development issues being tackled in each thematic programme area.

4. Another important objective was to equip participants with **analytical tools for determining the level of priority and attention** that should be granted to gender considerations in their work. This was linked to **providing concrete tools for systematically “doing gender mainstreaming” in all on-going work**, regardless of the level to which gender was a priority in a given project.
5. The final objective was to introduce participants to **further information, tools and sources** that can assist them in their on-going gender mainstreaming efforts.

It should be noted that given the limited time for training activities and the varying levels of awareness and experience of participants, it was *not* envisioned that in-depth training in areas of gender impact analysis, gender budgeting or gender statistics would be possible, although exposure to these tools and general information about them would be provided under objectives #4 and #5. Aspects of these tools would also be simplified and presented as tools that could be adapted for use in programme and project management in order to further gender mainstreaming objective. Nonetheless, such tools are important aspects of thorough and comprehensive gender mainstreaming. Further in-depth training in these areas would be recommended for those staff in project and programmes for whom it is particularly relevant and who already possess reasonably high levels of gender mainstreaming capacity (see Recommendations below).

III. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

Output 1: Gender mainstreaming training programmes designed:

As part of the preparatory activities, a detailed agenda including training objectives and activities was prepared. Additionally, two sets of information packets were prepared to be distributed during trainings. (See Annexes for copies of agendas and handouts).

It was recognized, however, that both agendas and handouts would be used as a rough guide for training implementation, and that the facilitator would be flexible in responding to the needs and wishes of participants, and in terms of gauging the length of time to be spent on each section.

Output 1 Anticipated Outcomes and Impact:

Outcomes of training programme development led logically to the successes of Output 2. Additionally, this training programme development is significant in terms of contributing to the on-going “experiential databank” in gender mainstreaming training in the region. This significance should not be underestimated, as gender mainstreaming training in the region remains an on-going experiment – rapidly growing, developing and changing alongside the gender mainstreaming situation in the region.

In terms of impact, please see the anticipated impact elaborated in more detail under Outputs 2 and 3.

Output 2: Implementation of 4 gender mainstreaming training programmes

The consultant arrived in Macedonia on July 1, 2007 and the 4 respective training programmes were implemented July 2- July 5. The first training (general office-wide training) included approximately 50 participants from the CO, project staff and UN country team members.

The content of this training included:

- Basic principles of gender equality
- Terminology and concepts related to gender mainstreaming
- History of gender issues in development work – why the current approach is most effective
- Added value of gender mainstreaming
- Identifying entry points for gender mainstreaming in our ongoing work

Methodology included presentation, large and small group discussion, break-out groups, brainstorming and application of case study examples relevant to the UNDP Macedonia experience.

The primary output here is thus the provision of training to this group of people, which focussed on awareness raising around gender issues in development, provision of justification for a gender mainstreaming approach, and illustration of how gender mainstreaming can be relevant in our daily work.

The following 3 days engaged much smaller groups for the three thematic trainings. Each training included 10-20 participants made up of both project and programme staff, and in the case of the decentralization training, a participant from UNFPA.

Each thematic training had a similar agenda and the same training materials. Issues covered included:

- Gender issues most relevant to the thematic area
- Introduction to RBEC Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit as a reference tool
- Entry points for gender mainstreaming. This was examined according to two matrices:
 - 1) according to the results-based management process (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact); and
 - 2) in terms of the various overarching goals of gender mainstreaming (raising capacity for GM; raising visibility of GM; ensuring equal opportunities for men and women in project implementation processes; ensuring outcomes and impact improve the gender equality situation, i.e. reduce inequalities for most vulnerable groups of men and women).

Obviously, there are various cross-cutting movements and overlap across and between the various levels of GM and the various objectives it aims to achieve.

- Specific examples of entry points, such as integrating GM in terms of reference (TORs)
- Gender analysis (sex-disaggregated data, gender perspective, asking gender questions)
- Gender Impact Assessment and Gender Budgeting – as tools for assessing the extent to which projects are successfully gender mainstreamed
- Developing tools for assessing the different levels of gender mainstreaming or lack thereof (gender targeted; gender sensitive; gender blind; gender negative; gender neutral or not applicable) in project interventions
- Analysis of cluster projects using LPAC gender mainstreaming template and in the process, suggesting revisions to this template

Yet again - the concrete needs of each group translated into a flexible and responsive agenda-setting process, which meant that the above issues were addressed to different extents, and obviously using different examples and case studies, with each group.

Briefly, the challenges and opportunities in each group can be noted as follows:

Environment:

- Generally, this group had lower levels of experience in gender mainstreaming and considering the cluster’s work from a gender perspective. Here, we faced the related challenge of having less experience in GM to draw from in the region and to a certain extent, globally
- Good enthusiasm from the group and openness to exploring connections between gender and the environment that had not been previously considered ensured engaged discussions
- The cluster’s work included many projects that dealt with the general public as a direct target beneficiary, which translated into many direct opportunities for added value in terms of impact on vulnerable groups
- As a result of all of the above, more time was spent in this cluster discussing the substantive connections between gender equality and environmental issues. Concrete examples were taken from several projects and the identification of entry points was undertaken systematically using these project examples. Gender budgeting as a tool was not considered with this group, due to lack of time.

Decentralization:

- As this cluster focuses on various issues related to governance and the provision of services to local populations, there were many strong justification and entry points for gender mainstreaming
- Generally, the levels of awareness of and experience in gender mainstreaming in this group were mixed – those with more experience served as important resource people for the group
- Various projects in this cluster had strong on-going attention to gender issues, which could be called on as positive examples
- At the same time, many projects in the cluster focused on questions of institution building/enhancing and at times dealt more with “systems” than with people as direct

beneficiaries. As a result, the discussions needed to focus on finding the relevant entry points in these situations, and also on determining when and where gender mainstreaming may not be of the highest relevance (although activities should of course always remain “gender sensitive”).

- The presence of the cluster leader at all training sessions sent a strong message to members of the cluster in terms of the relevance and significance of gender mainstreaming

Social Inclusion:

- Comparatively high levels of awareness of gender issues and gender mainstreaming (several participants had already been exposed to advanced training, or on-the-job experience in gender mainstreaming) was key in terms of developing the level of discussion during this training
- The mandate of social inclusion includes specific attention to questions of gender equality, which provided an important baseline for gender mainstreaming
- A number of projects have either a gender targeted component or strong gender sensitivity, which form a strong base of experience for gender mainstreaming in this cluster
- This cluster includes a data collection, monitoring and analysis project (Early Warning Reports) which is an excellent existing and potential source of gender data and analysis
- The cluster is currently undergoing a transition in focus and projects, which can be an excellent opportunity for more systematically integrating a gender mainstreaming approach in the future
- As a result of all of the above, discussions focused less on the “basics” and were able to move to a higher level of analysis. Obstacles to gender mainstreaming received considerable attention, and the impact of gender mainstreaming efforts was considered from a very sophisticated point of view. In short, in this group we were able to move beyond the basic “rhetoric” of gender mainstreaming to examine its practical substance and some of its internal contradictions. This translated into careful and sophisticated consideration of the various levels and goals of gender mainstreaming and their impact. Nonetheless, time was not sufficient for in-depth training in the areas of gender impact assessment and gender budgeting, although these were touched on. Further in-depth training in these areas is recommended particularly for this cluster, which could make good use of results.

LPAC Template and Annual Reporting Form

The second related output of these training programmes included the redesign and testing of the LPAC gender mainstreaming template. This form, originally developed by the Gender Team, is now expanded and reworked to serve two functions: (1) to guide project design and development (LPAC template); and (2) to serve as an on-going monitoring and evaluation tool (Annual Reporting template) for all on-going projects during the annual reporting period. (See Annex for copies of these forms).

Cluster GM Activity Plans

The third related output of thematic cluster training programmes was comprised of suggestions for a gender mainstreaming activity plan for each thematic cluster (see Annex 3).

Output 2 Anticipated Outcomes and Impact:

As a result of the implemented training programme and its associated outputs, the following outcomes can be expected:

- Increased understanding of gender mainstreaming by all CO staff - what it is, why it adds value to one's work and how it can be implemented
- Increased visibility of gender issues in on-going monitoring and reporting activities – thanks both to a better understanding of what “counts” as gender mainstreamed, as well as through more systematic and comprehensive monitoring and reporting processes
- Increased dialogue around gender issues in the clusters, including enhanced information sharing and cooperation in terms of gender-related data gathering and analysis
- Increase in percentage of project activities and outputs that are gender-targetted and gender-sensitive, with a commensurate decrease in percentage of activities that are gender-blind or gender-negative (although the latter category was not identified as a particular risk in this Country Office).

This should lead to a significantly enhanced UNDP country programme in terms of its **impact**: Programme resources will be used more efficiently and effectively to reach more specifically targeted beneficiary groups. Moreover, project interventions that might have been “gender blind” in that they simply preserved the status quo situation of gender equality will now be able to identify ways that the project objectives can be met *while also* enhancing gender equality through various means. This will add considerable value to existing outcomes and impact.

Output 3: A training outcome report produced.

This report represents Output 3.

Output 3 Anticipated Outcomes and Impact: This report, in combination with the finalized CO Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, can provide the basis for prioritized follow-up action in the CO.

Outcomes of action taken to implement these recommendations would include continued increased capacity in the area of gender mainstreaming for UNDP and its partners in Macedonia, increased awareness and visibility of the ways in which UNDP supports gender equality initiatives in Macedonia, and continued attention to fostering a gender-equitable working environment in UNDP.

The **impact** of following through on these recommendations would be a more strategically targeted UNDP programme where opportunities to increase gender equality are more readily identified and followed through. As a result resources could be more

efficiently used and the overall impact of UNDP's support in Macedonia would be enhanced, as described above (impact of Output 2).

IV. PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

The following data were gathered from participant evaluations of the trainings (numerical responses indicate average response of participants, from a total of 5 points, 5 being the most positive and 1 being the least positive; narrative responses indicate most frequent responses)

1. Was the facilitator organized, clear and helpful: 4.2
2. Were training materials clear and useful: 4
3. Were the case studies and group exercises clear and useful: 4.1
4. Most enjoyable sessions: Cluster-group trainings, case studies, LPAC assignment
5. Most useful sessions: LPAC assignment, Identifying concrete entry points, case studies
6. Least enjoyable and useful trainings: Sessions on the first day, lecture presentations
7. Further areas for training: Gender impact assessment, data collection and analysis, monitoring, gender budgeting, substantive gender issues in cluster area, experience from other countries
8. Overall rating of the training: 4.3
9. In the two-day training, would you say your knowledge of gender mainstreaming has increased: a reasonable amount (i.e. 3 on a 4-point scale)

Conclusions based on these responses are incorporated in the following section: Observations and Lessons Learned.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This training experience in Macedonia contributed to the on-going informal "databank" of gender mainstreaming knowledge and practice in several key ways. As such, valuable lessons can be drawn from this experience that can improve and enhance gender mainstreaming training programmes (programmes that particularly in the RBEC region are constantly evolving to meet the rapidly changing needs of trainees) in the future. These lessons include the following:

1. It became increasingly evident that the baseline attitude and knowledge about gender mainstreaming in the group as whole most often equated gender mainstreaming with ensuring equal participation of men and women in project implementation and as direct project beneficiaries – which participants (correctly) pointed out was something often beyond their direct control and influence. This points to the need to focus training activities on two interrelated areas:

- Further attention needs thus to be devoted to the subtle yet effective ways such influence can be exercised by programme and project officers, managers and assistants. This includes engagement of gender-sensitive stakeholders, requesting gender expertise and sensitivity from consultants and researchers, suggesting gender mainstreaming training or awareness raising for all stakeholders, and documenting missed opportunities for gender; mainstreaming as well as successes
 - But at the same time - while equal participation is undoubtedly a key cornerstone of gender mainstreaming efforts, more attention needs to be paid in trainings and awareness raising activities on gender mainstreaming to the medium- and long-term outcomes and impact of projects, and how these will impact men and women.
2. Similarly, because *de jure* gender equality in Macedonia (and other RBEC countries) is generally quite high, and because (relatively privileged) women hold some important positions in these societies, it is important to stress that gender mainstreaming must address men and women not as homogenous categories, but as internally diverse groups that need to be analyzed as such. Thus, the outcomes and impact of interventions on specific vulnerable groups of men and women (e.g. those living in extreme poverty, members of certain ethnic groups, those at greatest risk of social exclusion in other ways) must be highlighted as a cornerstone of gender mainstreaming.
 3. By no means can it be said that gender is completely ignored in UNDP Macedonia's programmes and projects – in fact, many interesting examples of targeted interventions and gender-sensitive implementation practices were cited throughout the trainings. GM training thus needs to acknowledge these positive accomplishments and instead consider ways of :
 - (a) making these systematic rather than “accidental”;
 - (b) rendering these more visible in monitoring, reporting and public information activities and processes; and
 - (c) acknowledging these efforts in terms of positive feedback and reinforcement, which might include positive incentive systems and ways of sharing these efforts as good and best practices.
 4. In terms of the technical aspects of the training, it was learned that the first day's training programme, which aimed to provide interactive training and implement participant-led agenda flexibility, was not entirely successful due in part to the large participant count. (This was exacerbated by hot temperatures and a loud air-conditioning system). As a cumulative result of these factors, keeping participants focused and interested was indeed challenging. This served as a good reminder to attempt to keep training groups to numbers of thirty participants or less. With larger numbers, more than one trainer would be necessary in order to deliver training in smaller break-out groups.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTION

In order to sustain the positive outputs of the training activities, the following actions are recommended:

1. Adoption of the **LPAC and Annual Reporting gender mainstreaming templates** as official UNDP Macedonia operational policy.
2. Inclusion of gender mainstreaming benchmarks for personal **performance appraisal reviews** of all CO and project staff. This should serve the double purpose of ensuring accountability to take gender mainstreaming seriously, and also to provide a positive incentive and acknowledgement to those who do.

(However, it is crucial to note that indicators such as equal participation of men and women in activities implemented or managed, or the existence of gender-targetted activities, may be superficial or accidental. They will not necessarily measure the true extent of thoughtful and analytically-based gender mainstreaming. Outputs must be measured against substantiated needs and situation of men and women. This can often be done most effectively through a qualitative narrative or description of measures undertaken to ensure gender mainstreaming.)

3. Development/finalization of a more **concrete and user-friendly UNDP MK Gender Mainstreaming Strategy** that would: rework the current analysis of the GM situation in the office undertaken by the international consultant in May into a more concise and action-oriented format. This should take into consideration the new gender mainstreaming knowledge base-line from which the office is now operating, post-training and incorporate the suggestions provided by the three clusters in terms of their activity plan. Finally, this should provide the noted information in terms of the office's broader commitment to results-based management.
4. A concise (2-4 page) **Training Briefer on gender mainstreaming** should be prepared to be distributed to all new UNDP Macedonia employees (all office staff, project staff and consultants). This should succinctly outline UNDP Macedonia's understanding of what gender mainstreaming is in clear and concrete language, and suggest clear and concrete steps that need to be undertaken by staff in order to achieve (clearly articulated) gender mainstreaming objectives and goals. Ideally, this information should be contextualized within the results-based management process. This Briefer could also include a **2-3 page glossary of key terms and concepts** relevant to gender mainstreaming that are clarified in relation to examples relevant to the UNDP Macedonia experience and situation. This Training Briefer would be more effective if it were not "stand-alone," but an integral part of a more comprehensive briefing kit for new employees.

5. At the suggestion of several training participants, a very brief **knowledge product** should be prepared that would very briefly and concisely summarize the most important steps for gender mainstreaming (max. 3 pages). It could organize this information into three sections, such as: project development; on-going monitoring and evaluation; and general operations. This product should be produced in a quick-reference, user-friendly and accessible format, so that it can be referred to by all staff at any time. Again, such a product would be most effective if the gender mainstreaming aspect of the product were actually one component of a more comprehensive “quick reference” product that included information on other key areas of programming and operations (e.g. human-rights based approach; MDGs; environmental impact, etc).
6. Ensure that other **key gender mainstreaming tools are made available** to all staff. This includes first and foremost the *RBEC Gender Mainstreaming in Practice Toolkit* (published in May 2007; to be sent to country offices in hard copy shortly, but already available in pdf form on the undp.sk website). A link to this important tool, along with a brief explanation of the information it contains can be made available on the UNDP MK intranet. Similarly, information about the RBEC Gender Library and other similar resources should be disseminated to all staff.
7. Sustained opportunities for learning and information-sharing in the area of gender should be proactively encouraged. These could include:
 - Participation of appropriate individuals in sub-regional, regional and international **learning opportunities** on gender mainstreaming (this should include key programme and project staff)
 - Semi-annual or annual **retreat** for the Gender Team to strategize and prioritize gender-mainstreaming actions and to review progress and challenges.
 - Invitation of sub-regional or regional experts to provide **half-day “trainings”** to each thematic cluster on issues of particular relevance to the work they are doing. (E.g. expert on male social and economic vulnerability in the region; expert on collecting and using gender statistics and data; expert on environmental behaviours of men and women in the region or sub-region, etc).
8. Note that at this time it is **NOT recommended that another multi-day, full staff gender mainstreaming training be conducted**. This will result in training fatigue. For the next few years, gender mainstreaming training needs should be specifically targetted and delivered in an integrated manner with on-going cluster work. After a period of significant staff turnover (perhaps 3-4 years in the future), the possibility of another comprehensive gender mainstreaming training should be reconsidered, based on the office’s progress in gender mainstreaming to that date.
9. Participants of the trainings should develop closer contact with the UN Communications team in Macedonia so that positive results of gender mainstreaming

are made more visible in **public information materials**, including project briefs for public consumption, and website materials.

ANNEX: SUGGESTED CLUSTER-SPECIFIC GENDER MAINSTREAMING ACTIVITY PLANS

ENVIRONMENT

1. *For new and pipeline projects:* Complete LPAC Gender Mainstreaming Template as a means for maximizing gender mainstreaming opportunities and entry points during project development stage and identifying potential risks or barriers to successful gender mainstreaming implementation.
Person responsible: Programme Officer
2. *For all existing projects:* Complete Gender Mainstreaming Annual Project Reporting Template as a means for tracking gender mainstreaming progress, identifying new entry points for gender mainstreaming and identifying potential risks or barriers to on-going gender mainstreaming efforts.
Person responsible: Project Manager
3. Discussion of gender mainstreaming as an agenda item during annual Environment cluster retreat.
4. Explore and make use of opportunities to raise awareness among project counterparts (Min of Env, Min of Econ, local municipalities and project partners) about relevant gender issues associated with project implementation.
5. Where possible, liaising with communications office in order to make gender mainstreaming initiatives in the environment cluster more visible in public information materials.
6. Explore opportunities to learn from experience from other countries in gender mainstreaming and environment issues (study visits, information sharing, etc).

DECENTRALIZATION

1. *For new and pipeline projects:* Complete LPAC Gender Mainstreaming Template as a means for maximizing gender mainstreaming opportunities and entry points during project development stage and identifying potential risks or barriers to successful gender mainstreaming implementation.
Person responsible: Programme Officer
2. *For all existing projects:* Complete Gender Mainstreaming Annual Project Reporting Template as a means for tracking gender mainstreaming progress, identifying new entry points for gender mainstreaming and identifying potential risks or barriers to on-going gender mainstreaming efforts.

Person responsible: Project Manager

3. Where possible, liaising with communications office in order to make gender mainstreaming initiatives in the environment cluster more visible in public information materials.
4. Prepare materials that can effectively introduce new staff in the Decentralization cluster to the requirements for gender mainstreaming in their work (may be done as part of an office-wide initiative).

SOCIAL INCLUSION

1. *For new and pipeline projects:* Complete LPAC Gender Mainstreaming Template as a means for maximizing gender mainstreaming opportunities and entry points during project development stage and identifying potential risks or barriers to successful gender mainstreaming implementation.
Person responsible: Programme Officer
2. *For all existing projects:* Complete Gender Mainstreaming Annual Project Reporting Template as a means for tracking gender mainstreaming progress, identifying new entry points for gender mainstreaming and identifying potential risks or barriers to on-going gender mainstreaming efforts.
Person responsible: Project Manager
3. Maximizing existence of Early Warning Report data collection and data analysis capacities both for application to current gender impact analysis needs and also to continue to increase quantity and quality of gender-related data. Project partners may suggest potential gender-related questions for inclusion in data surveys (regular or ad-hoc).
4. Continued exploration of priorities in the area of social inclusion that may require gender targeted activities and interventions.

N.B.: It should be noted that these plans were articulated by members of the cluster themselves. Cluster teams should be encouraged to read other clusters' plans to see if points decided by those other clusters would be relevant to them as well. For example, points 5 and 6 under the Environment cluster would likely be relevant, advisable and feasible to undertake in the Decentralization and Social Inclusion clusters as well.