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Gender-based Allocation in Federal PSDP 2020-2027

Allocation Trends, Gender Responsiveness and Institutional Analysis

A seven-year quantitative and institutional assessment of gender responsiveness in Pakistan's Federal Public Sector Development Programme

Gender Unit
Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives
Government of Pakistan

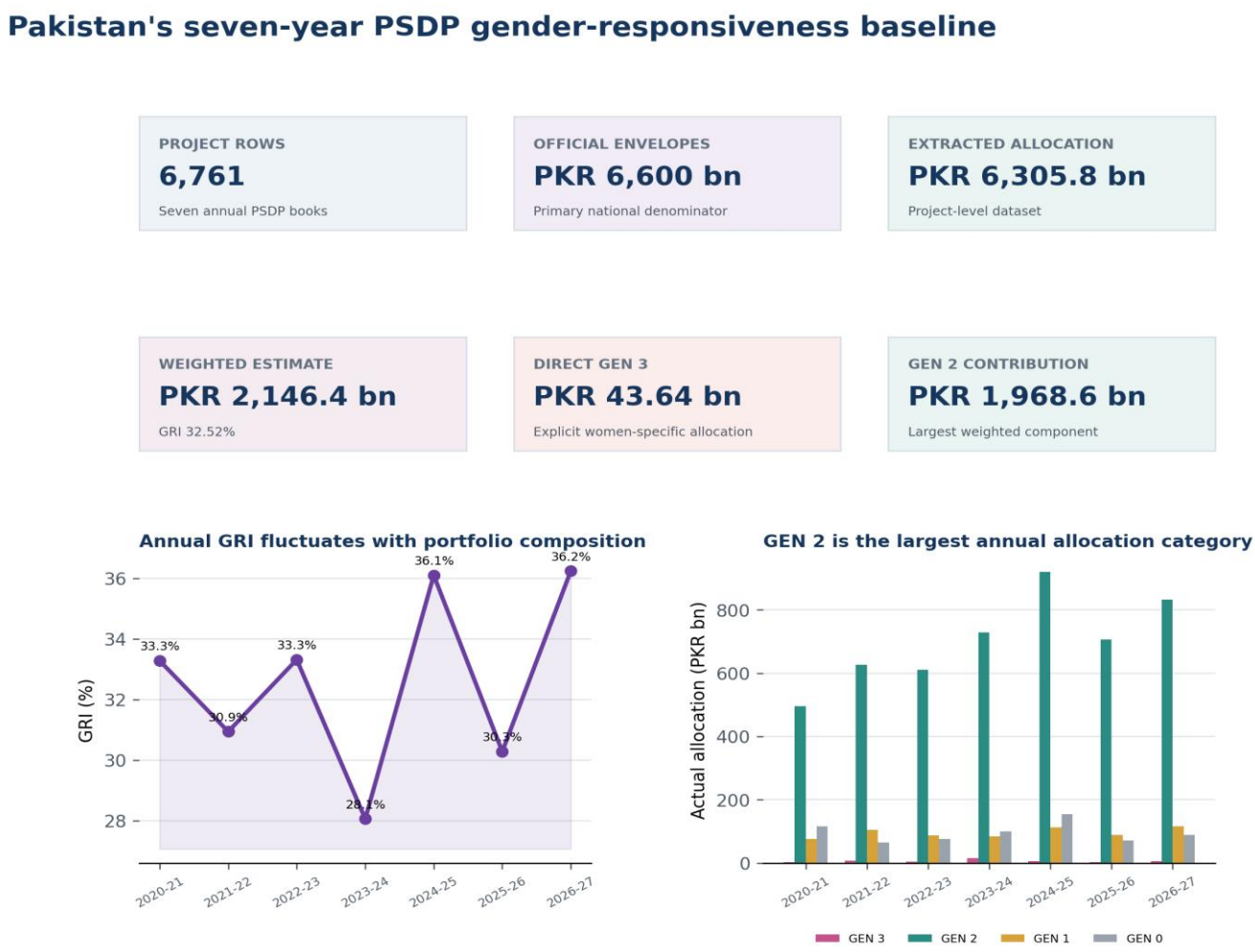
Prepared by
Ms. Amena Kamal, Ms. Barira Hanif and Sunya Sheikh
Proofread by Dr. Sauleha Kamal

1. Executive Summary

Public investment distributes more than financial resources: it determines the physical, institutional and social conditions under which women and men can travel, work, learn, obtain care and withstand economic or climate shocks. A road may shorten the distance to a market without making the journey safe or affordable; a water scheme may expand supply without reducing the unpaid labour through which scarcity is managed; and an education facility may exist without being accessible to the women and girls it was expected to serve. The gender significance of the Federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) therefore lies not only in whether women appear in project titles, but in whether unequal constraints influence the decisions through which public investment is designed and delivered.

To establish where those distributive choices enter the Federal development portfolio, this report examines the seven PSDPs from FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27 through a project-level analytical dataset covering 6,761 annual project rows drawn from the official programme books. Across the period, official Federal envelopes total PKR 6,600.0 billion, while the project-level dataset records PKR 6,305.8 billion in allocations and produces a weighted estimate of PKR 2,146.4 billion. Measured against the official envelopes, the resulting seven-year Gender Responsiveness Index (GRI), an allocation-based measure of direct, substantive and enabling routes to gender relevance, is 32.52 percent.

Yet the headline produced by that exercise, if detached from its evidentiary limits, risks suggesting a degree of precision that the source material cannot support. The GRI measures the allocation associated with direct, substantive and enabling routes to gender responsiveness; it does not measure expenditure received by women, changes in gender inequality or the quality of project implementation. Nor do extracted project totals and official envelopes always share the same consolidation boundary, since PSDP books treat block provisions, financing components and summary totals differently. The report therefore retains the official envelope as the denominator, discloses extracted allocations separately in PKR and treats the index as an allocation-based signal whose credibility depends on the evidence beneath it.



National findings dashboard: seven-year Federal PSDP gender-responsiveness baseline

Source: Authors' calculations from official Federal PSDP envelopes and the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

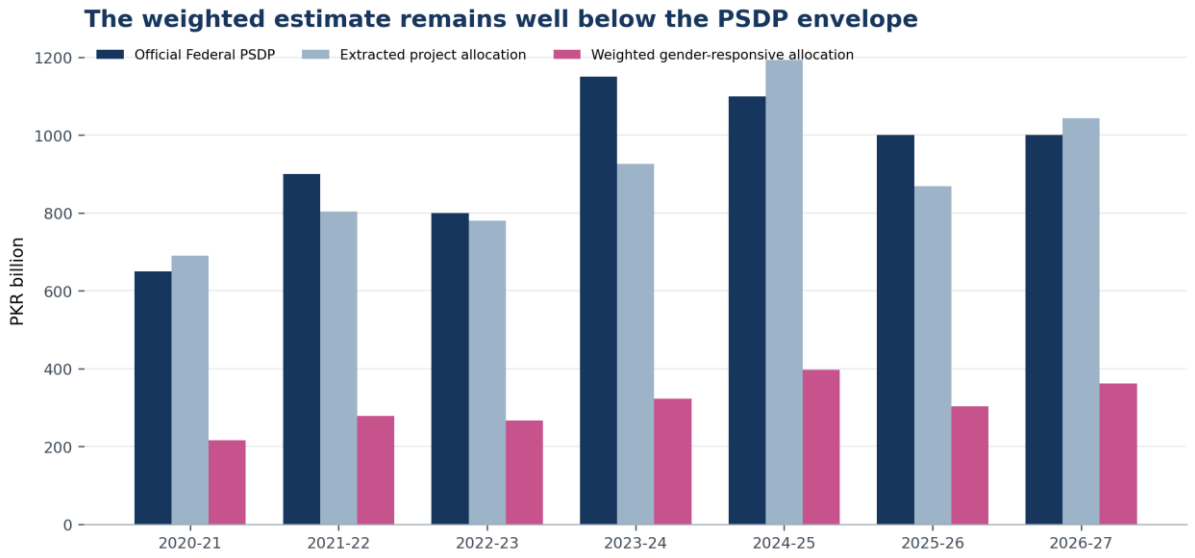


Figure 1: Federal PSDP, extracted project allocation and weighted gender-responsive allocation, FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Disaggregating the headline estimate exposes the central tension within the seven-year record. GEN 3 projects, whose stated purpose identifies women, girls or a defined gender inequality, account for PKR 43.64 billion, while GEN 2 projects contribute PKR 1,968.6 billion to the weighted estimate through infrastructure, services and regional programmes. The national result is consequently shaped less by the scale of dedicated provision than by the much larger systems through which women reach education, health care, markets, public authority and economic opportunity, even though the published allocation record seldom shows whether those systems were designed around the barriers that govern such access.

Because the larger mainstream component carries both the greatest financial reach and the weakest direct evidence of distribution, it creates the report's most important field for action as well as its greatest source of uncertainty. Roads, water, energy and territorial investment can reduce isolation, unpaid work and service deprivation across entire communities, yet the same projects can reproduce exclusion through unsafe travel, unaffordable use, unequal consultation, displacement or weak control over resources. Their classification identifies where gender matters at financial scale; a defensible claim of responsiveness requires the project record to show which constraint was recognised, how it altered design and whether the promised response survived implementation.

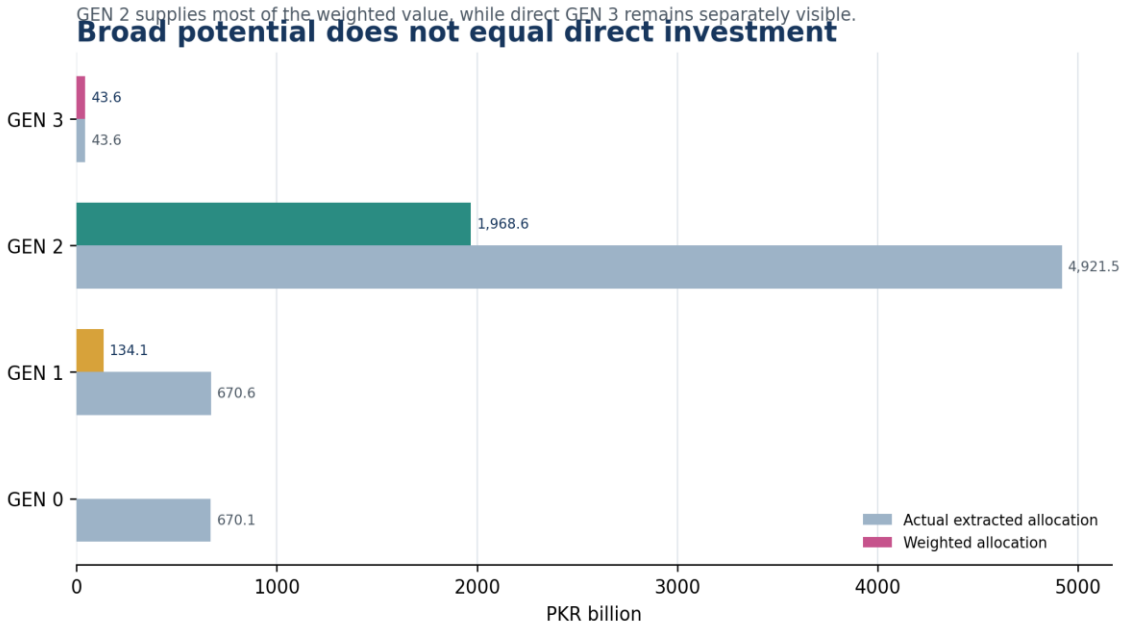


Figure 1A: Interpreting the relationship between portfolio scale and explicit gender intent

Source: Authors' calculations and analytical framework based on the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Seven findings locate the national gender-responsiveness challenge

- The formal seven-year GRI is 32.52 percent, while direct GEN 3 allocation totals PKR 43.64 billion. Reporting the two measures together prevents broad portfolio relevance from being mistaken for dedicated investment.

- GEN 2 contains 3,795 annual project rows and PKR 4,921.5 billion in actual allocation. Because this category determines most of the weighted estimate, the credibility of national reporting depends chiefly on the quality of evidence maintained by mainstream project owners.
- Annual GRI values move between 28.06 percent and 36.24 percent without forming a steady progression. Changes in the denominator, portfolio composition and a small number of large allocations explain more of this movement than any observable expansion of institutional capacity.
- Direct allocation reaches PKR 14.70 billion in FY 2023-24, contracts sharply thereafter and recovers only partially to PKR 5.90 billion in FY 2026-27, revealing a project pipeline that remains vulnerable to the completion or withdrawal of a few initiatives.
- Infrastructure and regional portfolios create the greatest leverage for mainstreaming because of their financial scale, but they also create the greatest risk of attributing responsiveness to an allocation whose distributional effects have not been documented.
- Education and health offer comparatively visible beneficiary routes, whereas mobility, energy, water and regional development require sector-specific evidence capable of explaining how access, affordability, safety, participation and displacement alter the distribution of benefits and costs.
- The institutional priority is to establish one gender evidence trail from PC-I preparation through iPAS, appraisal and allocation to implementation monitoring and evaluation, so that the reasoning used to classify a project can later be tested against its delivery.

Set against this composition, the movement of the GRI from 33.28 percent in FY 2020-21 to 36.24 percent in FY 2026-27 reflects expansion, contraction, flood reconstruction and portfolio consolidation instead of a stable path of institutional improvement. Each movement is produced by a particular combination of the official envelope, the projects entering or leaving the programme and the marker composition of large allocations. The series is valuable precisely because it reveals these changing structures, but it cannot establish that the institutions responsible became more capable, or that women experienced a corresponding improvement, unless allocation data are connected to evidence from preparation, delivery and results.

The contrast between FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 makes the distinction between direct commitment and mainstream relevance especially clear. In the first year, direct GEN 3 allocation reaches PKR 14.70 billion while the GRI falls to its lowest level; in the second, GEN 3 contracts to PKR 6.28 billion while high-value GEN 2 investment raises the index above 36 percent. The apparent reversal is not a contradiction in the data but a change in the form through which gender relevance enters the portfolio, separating explicit intervention from mainstream potential and showing why neither measure can carry the full interpretation on its own.

FY 2026-27, the final year in the series, brings that accumulated pattern into a programme whose implementation can still be examined. Its GRI is the highest in the series, but GEN 3 amounts to PKR 5.90 billion across 22 annual rows, leaving roads, regional development, water, energy and education to generate most of the weighted value. The year presents a concrete opportunity to move beyond inference by asking sponsoring agencies to identify the barrier, activity, resource, consultation, safeguard and implementation indicator attached to influential claims while project decisions remain capable of adjustment.

The institutional implications follow from this financial geography. The official Federal envelope establishes fiscal scale, extracted allocation defines the analytical boundary, GEN 3 records explicit investment and the weighted allocation and GRI indicate the wider reach of relevance, but the institutions controlling location, eligibility, design, procurement and delivery determine whether that relevance becomes an equitable result. National reporting must keep the measures separate while bringing the underlying decisions into the same evidentiary record.

Accordingly, dedicated programmes and mainstream reform should be treated as complementary responses to different forms of inequality, not as alternatives competing for the same policy meaning. Women-specific accommodation, maternal health, protection and empowerment initiatives remain necessary where general provision cannot overcome established exclusion, while the larger resources shaping mobility, work, care, service access and climate resilience continue to sit in mainstream portfolios. Pakistan's policy task is thus to sustain a needs-led pipeline of direct investment and, at the same time, require the wider development system to demonstrate how gender analysis changed the investments through which women encounter the state.

Central conclusion Pakistan's Federal PSDP already finances sectors capable of reducing gender inequality, but the allocation record rarely shows how those benefits will reach women. National reform must connect classification with project design, implementation and results.

2. Introduction and Rationale

Pakistan's gender-equality challenge is both persistent and multidimensional, extending across economic participation, education, health, political voice and the distribution of institutional power. The World Economic Forum placed Pakistan 148th among 148 economies in its 2025 Global Gender Gap Index, while the United Nations Development Programme placed the country 145th among 172 countries on the Gender Inequality Index reported in the 2025 Human Development Report. These measures use different dimensions and should not be treated as interchangeable, but their convergence near the lower end of international comparisons establishes the scale of the structural disadvantage within which public-investment decisions operate.[1]

This multidimensional disadvantage becomes especially visible in the organisation of work and care recorded by national labour statistics. Under the current international statistical framework, the Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-25 estimated a labour force of 19.9 million women and 63.2 million men, with participation rates of 22.7 percent and 68.7 percent respectively; it also recorded 66.7 million women and 50.7 million men engaged in unpaid domestic and care work. These are not conditions that a narrow portfolio of women-specific projects can resolve on its own, because participation is shaped by transport, care services, water, energy, education, digital access, safety and the location of economic opportunity.[2]

Because these inequalities are reproduced through public systems as well as household and labour-market relations, the PSDP becomes central to the analysis. A women's university, girls' hostel or maternal-health facility identifies its intended users at the point of entry, whereas the gender implications of a road, dam, digital platform or regional package emerge through location, cost, safety, consultation, resettlement, service quality and control over resources. Recognising those implications is necessary for sound appraisal, but it does not turn general development expenditure into women-specific spending or establish that a prospective benefit was realised.

Infrastructure provides the clearest test of why this public role cannot be evaluated through nominal neutrality alone. Evidence on gender-responsive transport in South Asia shows that safety, affordability and the organisation of journeys can influence women's access to education and employment, while contemporary digital evidence identifies connectivity, devices, literacy, privacy and social norms as distinct barriers even where network coverage exists. A physical or digital connection therefore acquires public value through the conditions governing its use, not through construction or availability alone.[3]

Taken together, these interdependent pathways require the report to approach gender equality as a relationship between development systems, not as a specialist concern attached to a narrow set of institutions. Women's economic participation depends on capabilities, mobility, care, safety, assets, finance, technology and the organisation of markets, while climate and regional shocks can intensify several of these constraints at once. Responsibility must therefore follow the public decisions that create or remove such barriers, including those taken by institutions whose mandates and project titles do not explicitly refer to women.[4]

2.1 PSDP Lifecycle and Entry Points for Gender-Responsive Planning

The annual PSDP is the visible outcome of a much longer public-investment cycle in which the most consequential distributional choices are often settled before a project receives an annual allocation. Sponsoring agencies define the need and prepare PC-I or PC-II documentation; appraisal functions test the proposal; approval forums determine whether it merits public resources; and annual prioritisation decides the pace of financing, after which releases, implementation, monitoring, completion reporting and evaluation follow. By the time a project appears in the PSDP, its location, principal design features and underlying assumptions may already be difficult to alter.

Within this longer investment cycle, gender analysis has its greatest value during preparation and appraisal, when an agency can still identify who experiences the problem and translate that diagnosis into beneficiaries, activities, resources and indicators. Appraisal can challenge a claim that is weak, generic or unsupported, while later monitoring can determine whether access and results developed as intended. Retrospective tagging remains necessary for portfolio oversight, but it cannot reconstruct a consultation, baseline or design choice that was never part of the project.

[1] World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2025; United Nations Development Programme, Human Development Report 2025: Pakistan country release.

[2] Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-25, Executive Summary.

[3] World Bank South Asia Gender Innovation Lab, Informing Gender-Responsive Transport, 2025; World Bank Gender Data Portal, Beyond Coverage: Closing Gaps in Digital Access and Use in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, 2026.

[4] World Bank, Women's Economic Empowerment in Pakistan, 2025.

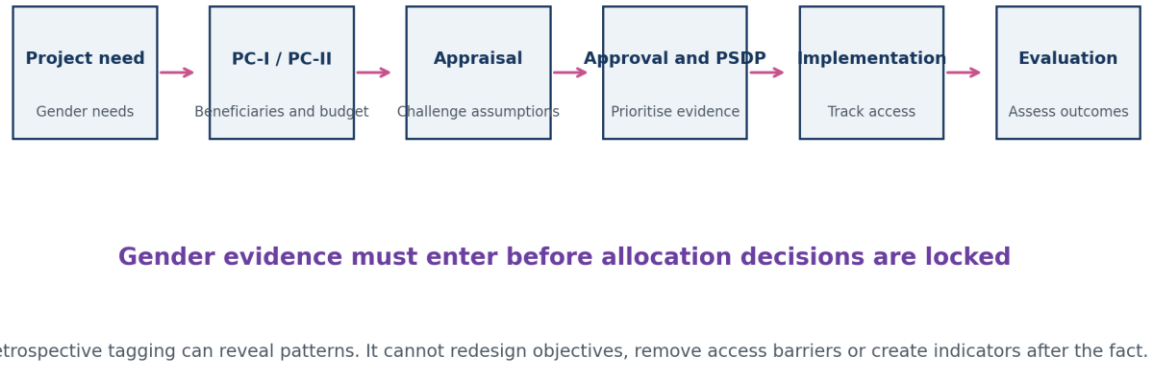


Figure 1B: PSDP lifecycle and entry points for gender-responsive planning

Source: Authors' synthesis of the federal public investment cycle and Gender Unit checklist fields.

Viewed against this sequence, portfolio tagging is diagnostic rather than corrective. It can locate visible gender intent, identify plausible routes to benefit and reveal where essential information is absent, but it operates after many of the choices determining access and distribution have been made. Its most useful function is therefore to direct reviewers back to the preparation and implementation records in which a classification can either be substantiated or revised.

Once tagging is understood in this way, responsibility can change across the cycle without becoming detached from the institution that owns the project. Sponsoring agencies possess the sector knowledge required to define the problem and design the response; sector and appraisal wings test the reasoning and adequacy of proposed measures; approval forums decide whether those measures justify public finance; and the Gender Unit maintains the common method, supports its application and reviews high-risk or disputed cases. National consistency depends on this distribution of roles, not on transferring detailed project analysis to a central unit after allocation.

This division of responsibility becomes especially important for high-value GEN 2 projects, whose titles can establish a broad service route while revealing almost nothing about its distribution. Whether a transport corridor is safe and affordable, a water scheme reduces unpaid work, electricity reaches women-owned enterprises or climate infrastructure reflects women's priorities can only be established by the institutions responsible for design and delivery, with appraisal and monitoring providing scrutiny independent of the original claim.

2.2 Gender Unit, National Gender Policy Framework and URAAN Pakistan

The Gender Unit occupies the institutional space between national commitments and the routines through which public investment is prepared and reviewed. Its role is to translate policy into a common analytical standard, support line institutions and assure the quality of significant claims, while sector knowledge and implementation evidence remain with sponsoring agencies. Effective mainstreaming therefore depends on coordinated ownership: central guidance can make expectations consistent, but it cannot substitute for the analysis required within each portfolio.

The substantive content of that translation is supplied by the National Gender Policy Framework, which identifies inequalities in education, health, economic participation, governance, safety, voice and institutional accountability and locates gender mainstreaming within Pakistan's constitutional and international commitments. Some priorities require dedicated interventions, while many depend on whether mainstream systems recognise and remove barriers embedded in the services they already finance. The Framework thus supplies more than a list of women's projects; it provides a national policy lens through which the distributional quality of the wider PSDP can be examined.[5]

Within the wider development architecture, URAAN Pakistan places the same concerns inside the 5Es-based National Economic Transformation Plan 2024-29, where productivity, human capital, resilience, digital transformation and inclusion are treated as connected conditions of national development. The relationship among the three instruments is functional rather than rhetorical:

[5]Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, National Gender Policy Framework, 2022.

the National Gender Policy Framework identifies substantive gender priorities, URAAN establishes the wider development direction and the PSDP finances the investments through which those commitments may either be realised or lost.[6]

Read together, these frameworks position gender-responsive planning as an improvement in investment quality, not as an additional social objective imposed on technical projects. An asset may be completed on time and still deliver less public value than expected because access, affordability, safety or distribution was poorly understood; by bringing those conditions into the investment case, gender analysis strengthens both the design assumptions and the basis on which results can later be judged.

2.3 Rationale and Purpose of this Analysis

The analysis begins from a structural gap between what the PSDP books authoritatively record and what gender appraisal requires. Programme books provide project titles, lead institutions and allocations, but they are not designed to contain the beneficiary analysis, consultations, costed responses, access barriers and disaggregated results through which gender intent can be verified. Published information can therefore establish explicit intent and support reasonable sector routes to benefit, while the influence of gender analysis on project design must be traced through PC-I, iPAS and implementation records.

That evidentiary gap gives the report two connected purposes. The first is empirical: to apply one classification and weighting framework consistently across the seven Federal PSDPs and establish an allocation baseline for the period. The second is institutional: to ask what the limits of that baseline reveal about preparation, appraisal, digital project records, monitoring and completion reporting. The measure concerns planned allocations and the strength of the visible route to gender responsiveness; expenditure execution, service quality and achieved equality outcomes remain distinct questions requiring different evidence.

The need for a common baseline is sharpened by the markedly different development conditions captured between FY 2020-21 and FY 2026-27, including pandemic response, economic recovery, fiscal correction, flood reconstruction, portfolio consolidation and alignment with the 13th Five Year Plan and URAAN Pakistan. Applying one method across these annual programmes makes it possible to distinguish changes caused by the official envelope from those produced by project composition, marker distribution and the entry or completion of financially influential schemes.

Precisely because the period contains these shifts, the seven-year baseline also creates continuity for future reporting. Subsequent fiscal years can be incorporated through the same source boundaries, classifications and denominator, while any future change to the method can be disclosed transparently rather than absorbed into the historical series. The report thus provides a stable point from which later movements can be explained through their underlying fiscal, sectoral and institutional causes.

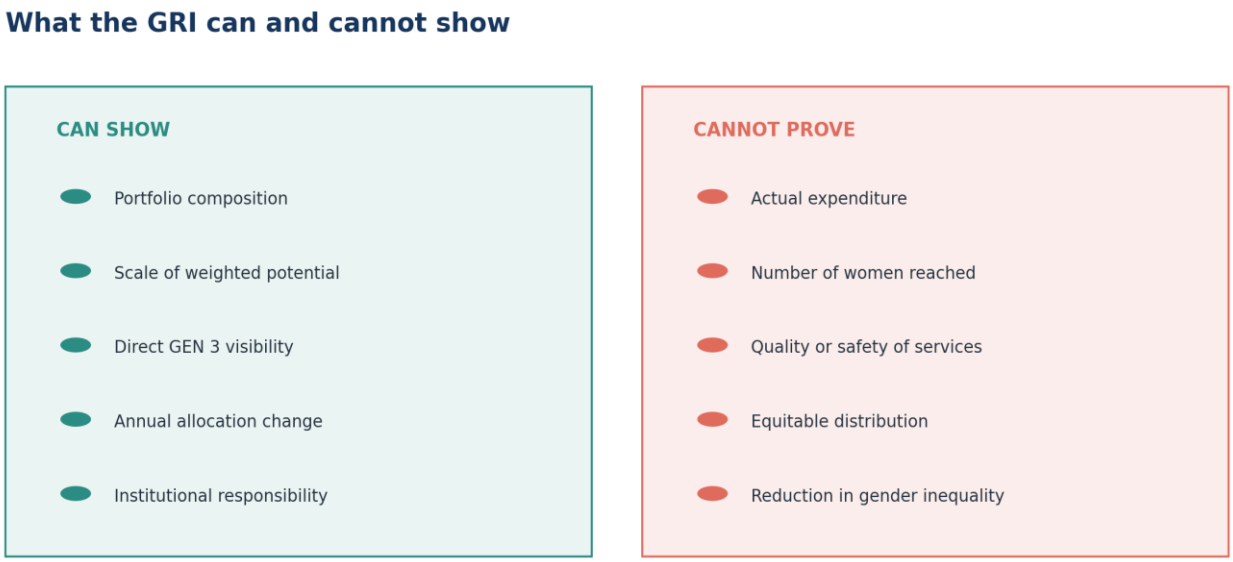
2.4 How to Read This Report

Four distinctions govern the interpretation that follows. The official Federal PSDP envelope provides the GRI denominator, whereas extracted project allocation defines the project-level dataset; actual allocation records the value listed against a project, whereas weighted allocation applies the agreed GEN coefficient; GEN 3 identifies explicit gender intent, whereas GEN 2 and GEN 1 capture progressively more indirect routes; and annual project rows measure entries in successive programmes rather than unique projects. Confusing any of these pairs changes the question being answered.

Within these distinctions, the GRI must not be described as the proportion of the PSDP spent on women. It is an indicative measure of portfolio relevance whose interpretation depends on the marker composition below the headline figure. Direct GEN 3 allocation remains visible because it answers a separate question, while a high GEN 2 value identifies a financially significant field for verification rather than demonstrating equitable benefit.

A second interpretive caution concerns the relationship between project counts and allocations. A marker may be spread across many small entries or concentrated in a few financially dominant projects, and a continuing project may reappear in several fiscal years without representing a new intervention. Used together, counts and values show the breadth and budgetary influence of a category; neither establishes the quality of design or the distribution of results.

[6]Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, URAAN Pakistan: National Economic Transformation Plan 2024-29, 2024.



Interpretive guide: what the allocation-based GRI can and cannot establish

Source: Authors' analytical framework. Outcome claims require project preparation, implementation, beneficiary and evaluation evidence.

3. Quantitative Gender Responsiveness Methodology

The methodology converts a broad question about gender and public investment into a deliberately bounded measurement exercise: how much of each annual allocation portfolio can be associated, with differing strengths of evidence, with direct, substantive or enabling routes to gender responsiveness? One classification framework is applied to every annual project row from FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27, using the available wording, institutional location and service or beneficiary route. The method does not assume a gender benefit simply because a project belongs to a socially important sector, nor does it claim to observe effects that the PSDP source cannot record.

Within that bounded exercise, classification and weighting perform separate analytical tasks that must remain visible. The marker records the form of relevance that can be supported from the available project information, while the weight scales that claim for comparison across projects and years; retaining the marker, evidence level, confidence, allocation, coefficient and rationale as separate fields makes it possible to distinguish the source evidence from the judgement applied to it. This distinction is essential to auditability because a reproducible calculation can still rest on an interpretation that later evidence may strengthen or overturn.

To operationalise the distinction, projects were reviewed in a fixed sequence so that broad sector assumptions could not displace stronger project-specific evidence. Explicit references to women, girls, maternal health, gender equality, protection or women-specific facilities were considered first; where they were absent, the analysis examined whether the sector and service pathway made women and girls substantive intended users; projects concerned primarily with systems, data, research or institutional capacity were then assessed for enabling relevance; and rows for which no defensible route could be established were assigned GEN 0. The sequence imposes discipline on classification without pretending that titles contain the full project logic.

That sequence also determines how continuing projects are treated, since the unit of analysis is the annual project row and the same scheme may appear in several PSDPs with a different allocation in each year. Where the title and purpose remain stable, consistency normally favours the same marker, but review remains possible when descriptions, institutional ownership or the visible beneficiary pathway change. An auditable series must therefore balance continuity with correction: classifications should not fluctuate casually, yet neither should earlier judgements be protected from better evidence.

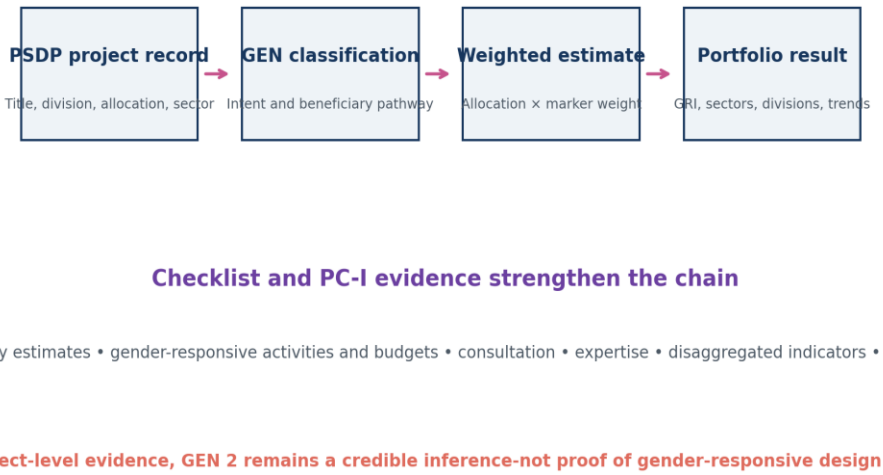


Figure 2: Project-Level Analytical Pathway Used in the Methodology

Source: Authors' methodology based on the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset and Gender Unit checklist framework.

3.1 Gender Marker Classification

Marker	Meaning	Operational threshold	Weight
GEN 3	Direct gender relevance	Women, girls, female beneficiaries, maternal health or gender equality are an explicit primary focus.	100%
GEN 2	Substantive indirect relevance	A public-facing service or infrastructure pathway can credibly benefit women and girls, but they are not the exclusive target.	40%
GEN 1	Enabling relevance	Institutional, governance, data, research, digital or capacity systems may support gender responsiveness indirectly.	20%
GEN 0	No visible relevance	No direct, beneficiary or enabling gender pathway can be established from available project evidence.	0%

GEN 3 is reserved for projects whose stated purpose makes women, girls or a defined gender inequality explicit, including women-specific institutions, maternal health, protection from gender-based violence and dedicated equality or empowerment initiatives. Social importance alone is insufficient for this classification. By maintaining a strict threshold, the methodology protects the visibility of direct investment instead of allowing it to disappear within the much larger field of generally beneficial expenditure.

Where the preceding category rests on explicit purpose, GEN 2 captures mainstream services and infrastructure for which a substantive route to women and girls can be identified even though gender is not the project's exclusive or stated purpose. Health, education, water, sanitation, transport, public energy access, social protection, skills and livelihoods frequently meet this threshold, but the marker establishes relevance only at portfolio level. Whether the expected benefit is accessible, equitable or sufficiently responsive to a gender barrier remains a question of individual design and implementation.

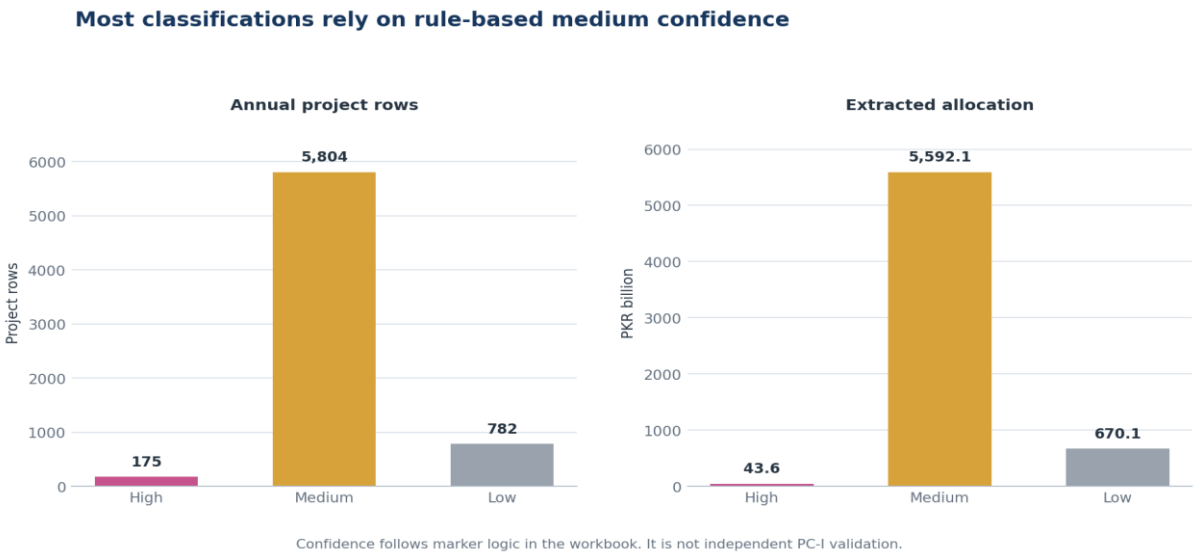
Because this second category depends more heavily on inference, borderline cases were treated conservatively: the possibility that women may use a facility is not equivalent to evidence of substantive relevance. An internal administrative building or technical installation does not become GEN 2 merely because women may work there, whereas a public-facing hospital, school, water system or transport investment can qualify when the service pathway is clear; similarly, governance or data reform can enter GEN 1 where it plausibly improves gender-relevant decisions, but not as a residual label for projects that appear socially useful. These boundaries prevent the marker from expanding beyond what the source can reasonably support.

These inclusions and exclusions clarify that the four markers represent different relationships between a project and gender equality, not successive ranks of general development value. GEN 3 records explicit intent, GEN 2 a substantive mainstream route, GEN 1 an enabling institutional function and GEN 0 the absence of a route visible in the reviewed material. Their purpose is to direct the appropriate form of scrutiny to each project, not to imply that a GEN 0 investment is unimportant or that every positively marked investment is well designed.

3.2 Evidence Levels and Confidence Scores

Level	Evidence basis	Typical marker	Confidence
A	Explicit gender evidence	GEN 3	High
B	Strong sector-beneficiary evidence	Usually GEN 2	Medium
C	Enabling or institutional evidence	Usually GEN 1	Medium
D	No visible gender evidence	GEN 0	Low

Evidence levels and confidence scores were included to make those judgements traceable, not to create a second statistical model. In the analytical dataset they follow the marker rules, distinguishing explicit wording from sector-beneficiary reasoning, enabling functions and the absence of visible evidence. Their analytical value lies in exposing where confidence derives from the source and where it derives from a reasonable but still unverified inference.



Evidence profile: confidence attached to project rows and extracted allocation

Source: Authors' calculations from the confidence field in the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset. Confidence is rule-derived and does not constitute independent PC-I validation.

Applied across the portfolio, this evidence logic places most annual rows and extracted allocation within medium confidence because the national estimate is dominated by GEN 2 and GEN 1 classifications derived principally from sector or institutional reasoning; high confidence is largely confined to the explicit language associated with GEN 3. This distribution is not a technical footnote but a substantive result. It shows that much of the allocation baseline is plausible as a portfolio inference while remaining dependent on project documents that have not yet been reviewed systematically for diagnosis, design, costing or results.

3.3 Quantitative Weights and Formulas

For each project, the weighted gender-responsive amount is calculated by multiplying the listed PSDP allocation by the coefficient attached to its GEN marker: 100 percent for GEN 3, 40 percent for GEN 2, 20 percent for GEN 1 and zero for GEN 0. These coefficients preserve the relative strength of different claims and allow aggregation across a heterogeneous portfolio; they are analytical conventions, not estimates of the proportion of women beneficiaries and not expenditure-incidence factors derived from service-use or household data.

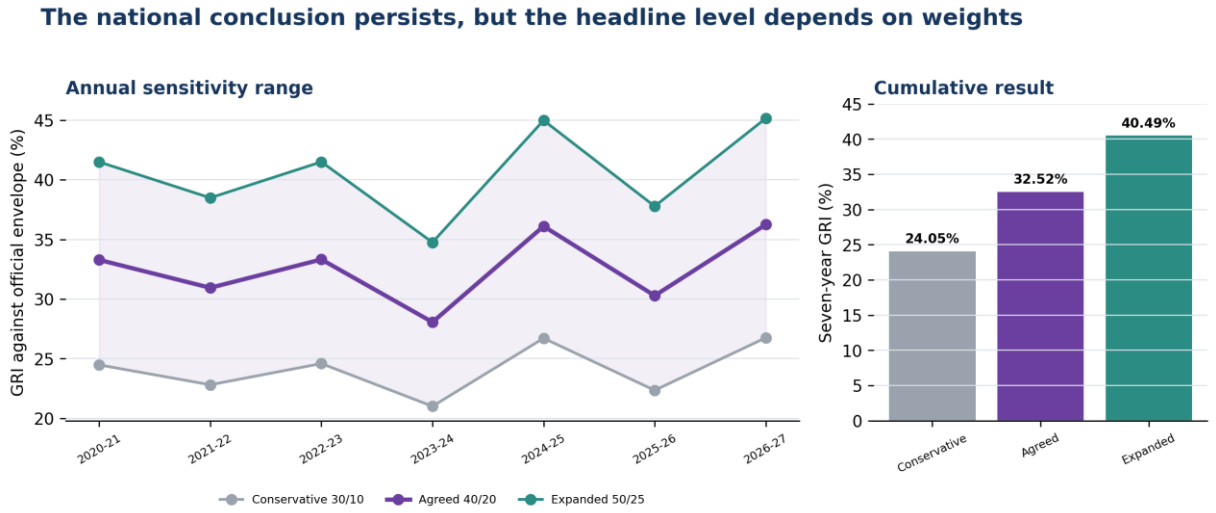
Formula 1 Weighted gender-responsive amount = project allocation x assigned GEN weight

Formula 2 Gender Responsiveness Index = total weighted gender-responsive allocation / official Federal PSDP x 100

Formula 3 Annual change = current-year allocation - previous-year allocation

To place each project-level amount within a recognised national fiscal frame, the official Federal PSDP envelope is retained as the denominator, while extracted project allocation is disclosed separately in PKR wherever project rows and headline totals follow different consolidation boundaries. This treatment does not resolve the source difference by assumption or rescaling. Instead, it prevents a technical reconciliation issue from being absorbed into the gender result and allows readers to see precisely which figure answers which question.

The distance between allocation relevance and demonstrated benefit is also reflected in the coefficients themselves. GEN 3 receives full weight because gender intent is explicit; GEN 2 is discounted because a plausible service pathway cannot show that the entire allocation responds to a differentiated barrier; GEN 1 is discounted further because its contribution is indirect; and GEN 0 receives no weight where the source supports no route. Alternative coefficients alter the level of the index, but they cannot improve the quality of a classification whose underlying project evidence remains incomplete.



Robustness test: Gender Responsiveness Index under alternative analytical weights

Source: Authors' sensitivity calculations from actual marker allocations in the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset. Conservative scenario: GEN 3 100%, GEN 2 30%, GEN 1 10%, GEN 0 0%. Agreed scenario: 100%, 40%, 20%, 0%. Expanded scenario: 100%, 50%, 25%, 0%.

Read across the three scenarios, the sensitivity exercise shows how far the headline GRI depends on the two inferential coefficients instead of treating the agreed weights as natural facts. Conservative and expanded scenarios move the result below and above 32.52 percent, yet GEN 2 remains the principal source of the estimate in every case and GEN 3 remains financially limited. The precise index is therefore sensitive to methodological convention, while the more important structural conclusion, that mainstream potential dominates explicit investment, is not.

The movement between scenarios should not be interpreted as a confidence interval or forecast; it exposes the effect of a methodological choice and thereby makes the estimate more transparent. Selecting a coefficient that produces a preferred headline would not make the measure more credible. Credibility can increase only when stronger project information improves the classification itself and implementation records establish whether the anticipated route to benefit was realised.

This transparency matters most where very large GEN 2 allocations dominate the aggregate even after discounting. The resulting weighted amount cannot be described as money traced to women without evidence on service use, location, household behaviour, expenditure execution and the distribution of benefits and costs. Since those data are not consistently available in PSDP books, the estimate should remain explicitly tied to allocation relevance rather than being extended into an unsupported incidence claim.

3.4 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance was designed to protect consistency, reconciliation and reproducibility across a seven-year dataset whose project titles, institutional labels and annual structures are not always uniform. Repeated and similarly titled projects were reviewed under common rules, FY 2026-27 mappings and formulas were checked, and all 6,761 populated annual rows were reconciled with the summary sheets. The analytical dataset contained no blank principal analytical fields or formula errors, which establishes calculation integrity without implying that every source-based classification has been validated against a PC-I.

Beyond consistent classification, the review established presentation boundaries that prevent source or naming differences from distorting interpretation. Obvious spelling and punctuation variants in ministry and division names were harmonised in aggregate charts without altering the underlying rows, while project examples and rankings were calculated directly from the master sheet rather than relying on a secondary top-project summary whose column alignment did not support dependable analysis. These decisions preserve the distinction between cleaning a label and changing an analytical result.

That presentation discipline depends on source control divided according to function. The seven official PSDP books govern annual envelopes, documentary context, institutional ownership and selected project examples, whereas the analytical dataset governs markers, project-row calculations and aggregated results. Keeping these roles separate prevents narrative interpretation from silently altering a formula-driven estimate and makes later review possible where source and calculation boundaries differ.

When these sources are reconciled, their differences are exposed rather than concealed. Extracted project totals exceed the official envelope in three years and fall below it in four, reaching PKR 6,305.8 billion across the period compared with PKR 6,600.0 billion in official envelopes; the project rows were not scaled to force agreement. Reporting both figures protects the reader from attributing a consolidation difference to gender performance and preserves the official denominator used consistently throughout the series.

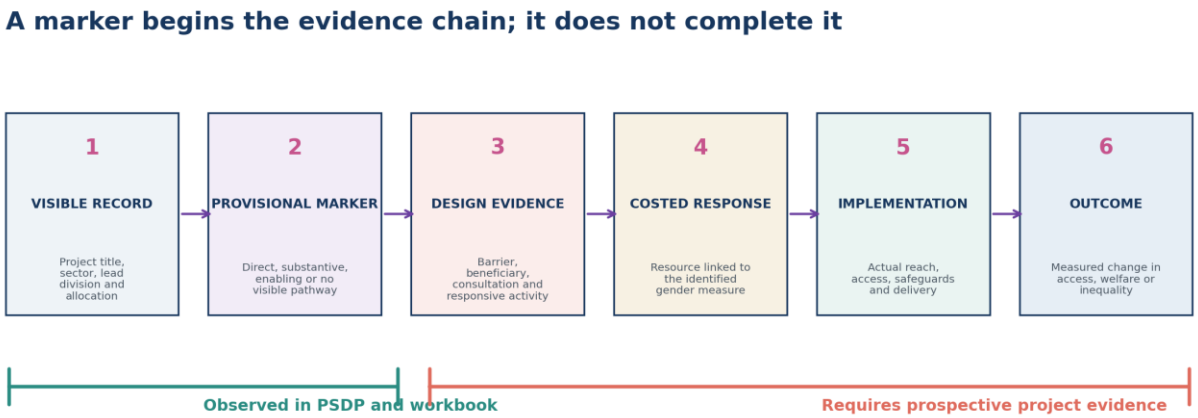
3.5 Relationship with the Checklist and Gender Budget Tagging

The three Gender Unit checklists address the information deficit that project titles cannot resolve. Across successive versions, broad questions about thematic relevance, beneficiaries and costing become more operational requirements concerning climate vulnerability, child rights, social inclusion, participation, specialist input and disaggregated assessment; comments from other departments further extend the framework to resilient infrastructure, early warning, green jobs, climate-responsive health and nutrition, and disaster-risk services. Taken together, the checklists show how a general claim of relevance can be converted into evidence that an appraiser can examine and an implementing agency can later report.

Evidence domain	Checklist requirement	Implication for this analysis
Problem and thematic area	Gender gap; climate vulnerability; social protection; education, health, violence and economic empowerment	Sometimes inferable from a title, but rarely defined as a documented inequality
Beneficiaries and intersectionality	Total, women, girls, children, transgender persons, persons with disabilities and vulnerable locations	Generally absent from PSDP books; needed to test who is expected to benefit
Costed response	Amount and type of gender-specific activity, including services, infrastructure, livelihoods, data and climate action	Not visible in headline project allocation; needed to distinguish a general budget from a financed gender response
Participation and proof	Consultation in design, implementation, steering and monitoring, with records or attachments	Not reported in PSDP project tables; needed to test voice and decision-making power
Institutional capacity	Gender, social inclusion and climate expertise; focal persons; advisers; staff and stakeholder training	Not reported in PSDP books; needed to assess whether intended measures can be delivered
Data, results and accountability	Sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data, child indicators, climate-risk information and implementation results	Mostly unavailable at allocation stage; should link estimates in PC-I with actuals in PC-III, PC-IV and PC-V

Table: Checklist evidence framework synthesised from the Gender Unit, iPAS-commented and Environment and Climate Change-commented versions supplied for this report.

Read alongside the allocation marker, the checklist therefore becomes the next stage of the same evidentiary process. A GEN 2 classification identifies a reasonable route through which a mainstream project may affect women and girls, while the checklist asks whose barrier is being addressed, what design measure responds, which resource supports it and how access or outcomes will be observed. Where those elements are absent, the marker remains a portfolio inference rather than a verified account of responsiveness; historical projects were consequently not credited with checklist evidence that could not be located in the contemporary record.



From visible project information to verified gender results

Source: Authors' synthesis of the quantitative methodology, Gender Unit checklists and the federal project cycle.

3.6 Interpreting Direct Women-Specific Allocation

GEN 3 depends least on sector inference because its intended population or inequality is explicit, as in women universities, girls' hostels, maternal and mother-and-child health initiatives, protection facilities, female accommodation and dedicated empowerment programmes. That clarity makes direct investment visible but does not establish its adequacy. Appraisal must still ask whether the project responds to a documented need at sufficient scale, reaches underserved locations and groups, and links its outputs to the outcome it is intended to change.

3.7 Interpreting Indirect Gender-Beneficiary Allocation

GEN 2 is the point at which financial scale and gender relevance most often meet, but the route between them varies by sector. Transport may alter access to education, employment and health care through safety, affordability and the organisation of journeys; water may affect health and the time allocated to unpaid domestic work; and electricity may influence household welfare, public services and productive activity. Evidence establishing these sector pathways supports their inclusion in gender analysis, but whether an individual project produces the expected gain still depends on location, reliability, participation, resettlement and the distribution of resources and risks.[7]

The 40 percent coefficient acknowledges that broad potential while preserving the distinction between a plausible pathway and an allocation fully demonstrated as responsive. GEN 2 is therefore best understood as a claim requiring progressively stronger evidence as its financial influence and implementation risk increase. The claim becomes more defensible when the sponsoring agency records the differentiated barrier, the project response, the associated resource and the result through which that response can be assessed.

3.8 Interpreting Enabling and No-Relevance Categories

Beyond direct and mainstream relevance, GEN 1 and GEN 0 define the outer boundaries of the framework. Data platforms, planning capacity, research, monitoring, laboratories, administrative facilities and digital systems may strengthen the institutional conditions for gender-responsive development without directly producing a beneficiary result, while GEN 0 applies where the reviewed material supports no identifiable route. In both cases the classification reflects available evidence rather than an immutable property of the project, leaving room for fuller documentation or later institutional effects to alter the judgement.

3.9 What the Markers Reveal About Project Design

Taken together, these four relationships create a map of different forms of intent and inference across the portfolio. GEN 3 protects the visibility of dedicated investment, GEN 2 locates the much larger mainstream field in which gendered benefit may be produced,

[7]World Bank South Asia Gender Innovation Lab, Informing Gender-Responsive Transport, 2025; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-25, section on unpaid domestic and care work; World Bank, Rising Tide: A New Look at Water and Gender, 2017.

GEN 1 identifies the systems enabling better decisions and GEN 0 records the present evidentiary boundary. The value of the map lies not in collapsing these categories into one claim, but in directing a different question and standard of proof to each.

3.10 Existing Planning Tools Supporting This Analysis

Moving from that analytical map to an auditable system does not require an entirely new planning architecture, because Pakistan already possesses most of the necessary instruments. PC-I and PC-II contain the preparation record, iPAS can retain structured and searchable evidence, PC-III and PC-IV can connect implementation and completion results, the checklists define substantive questions and the marker provides a common portfolio classification. The unresolved task is institutional integration: the same gender reasoning should follow a project through these instruments rather than being reconstructed after allocation from disconnected records.

3.11 Methodological Limitations

- The analysis relies primarily on PSDP titles, listed sectors, lead institutions and available project descriptions; it is not a substitute for appraisal of every PC-I and may understate or overstate the strength of individual project design.
- Project rows are counted annually, so a continuing project can appear in several fiscal years and should not be interpreted as a unique intervention each time it re-enters the programme.
- Weighted allocations are indicative analytical values that measure neither actual expenditure nor the incidence of benefit among women, and they cannot establish whether the intended gender result was achieved.
- GEN 2 classifications rest on defensible sector-beneficiary pathways whose credibility increases when project documentation records the barrier, response, resource and intended result.
- Annual extracted allocations do not always equal the official PSDP envelope because the two sources may follow different consolidation boundaries; both values are disclosed instead of being silently substituted or rescaled.
- The method supports consistent portfolio analysis and risk-based review, not a league table of ministries or a final assessment of their contribution to gender equality.

Taken together, the stated limitations can move the estimate in either direction. A sparse title may conceal a strong analysis contained in the PC-I, while broad sector reasoning may attribute relevance to a project whose design never addressed the corresponding barrier; differences between extracted totals and official envelopes introduce a separate source issue rather than a gender effect. The GRI is therefore most useful as a transparent signal of allocation intent whose reliability can improve as the project record becomes more complete.

For that reason, a more mature system would place the allocation baseline within a layered evidence architecture instead of asking it to explain expenditure and social change by itself. Sponsoring agencies would submit a proposed marker and checklist record with the PC-I; sector and appraisal wings would test the reasoning; financial systems would connect allocations to releases and expenditure; monitoring and evaluation would report outputs, access and outcomes through disaggregated data; and the Gender Unit would govern the national method and review difficult cases. Each layer answers a different question, and the integrity of the system depends on preserving those distinctions while linking the records.

4. PSDP Allocation Context, 2020-21 to 2026-27

The seven-year allocation context demonstrates that the size of the PSDP is a poor proxy for the gender relevance identified within it. Official envelopes range from PKR 650.0 billion to PKR 1,150.0 billion, yet the largest programme produces the lowest GRI, while the two most recent years combine an identical PKR 1,000.0 billion envelope with markedly different weighted results. Scale determines the resources available for public investment; composition determines how much of that programme enters the gender-responsiveness estimate and through which form of relevance.

Within that changing scale, the seven official Federal envelopes total PKR 6,600.0 billion while the analytical dataset records PKR 6,305.8 billion in project allocations. Because extracted totals exceed the official envelope in three years and fall below it in four, the report presents both values in PKR while retaining the official envelope consistently for the index. This disclosure is not ancillary to the analysis: without it, changes in source coverage could be misread as changes in gender responsiveness.

The meaning of those annual amounts is further shaped by the sharply different political and fiscal conditions under which the programmes were assembled, from pandemic response and economic recovery through contraction, flood reconstruction and renewed portfolio control under the 13th Five Year Plan and URAAN Pakistan. These contexts altered not only the size of available financing but the kinds of projects entering annual prioritisation, the balance between new and continuing schemes and the pressure to favour readiness or completion. Annual variation must therefore be interpreted as a product of policy context and portfolio composition rather than as a self-contained movement in the index.

FY 2023-24 provides the clearest demonstration of how context and composition interact: its PKR 1,150.0 billion envelope coincides with the lowest GRI and the highest GEN 3 allocation, combining weak weighted performance with the strongest direct commitment in the series. Conversely, FY 2025-26 and FY 2026-27 share an identical official envelope yet differ by PKR 59.6 billion in weighted allocation. What changes between these years is not the fiscal denominator but the projects within it, especially the presence and scale of high-value GEN 2 entries.

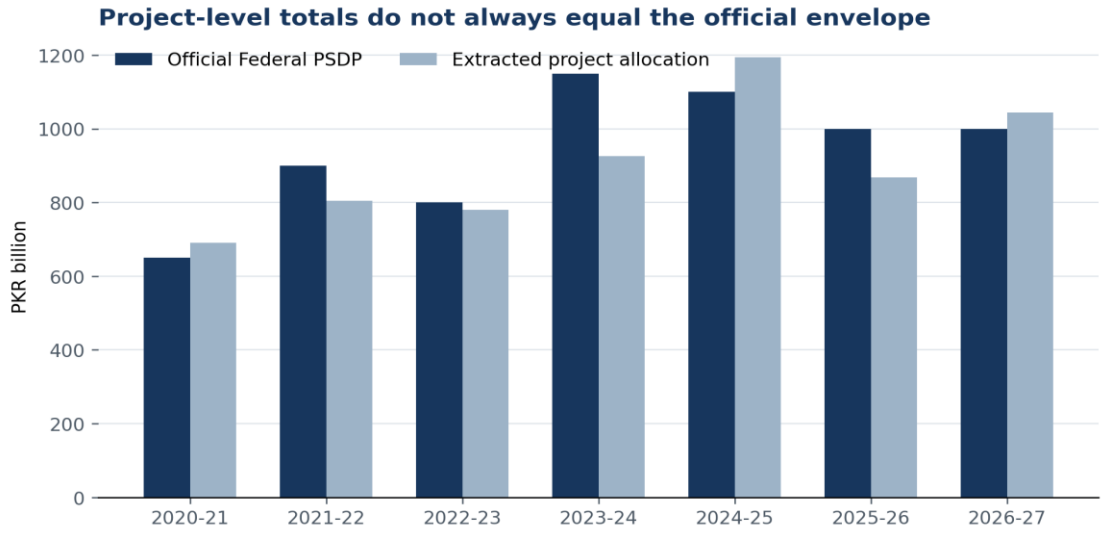


Figure 3A: Official Federal PSDP and extracted project allocation, FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27

Source: Authors' calculations from official PSDP envelopes and the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

This separation between fiscal context and extracted project data also explains why a total above the official envelope does not indicate spending beyond the approved programme, just as a lower extracted total does not represent an unrecorded gender deficit. Project entries and headline totals follow different consolidation boundaries, particularly where block provisions, financing components, public-private partnerships or summary lines are involved. The official books govern the envelope and annual context, while classifications and project-row calculations come from the analytical dataset; keeping those functions separate prevents a source-boundary issue from being converted into a substantive claim.

FY	Official	Extracted	Difference	Weighted	GRI
2020-21	650.0	690.4	+40.4	216.3	33.28%
2021-22	900.0	804.1	-95.9	278.5	30.94%
2022-23	800.0	779.7	-20.3	266.5	33.32%
2023-24	1,150.0	925.9	-224.1	322.7	28.06%
2024-25	1,100.0	1,193.5	+93.5	397.1	36.10%

FY	Official	Extracted	Difference	Weighted	GRI
2025-26	1,000.0	868.5	-131.5	302.8	30.28%
2026-27	1,000.0	1,043.7	+43.7	362.4	36.24%

Table 1: Annual allocation context. Monetary values are PKR billion.

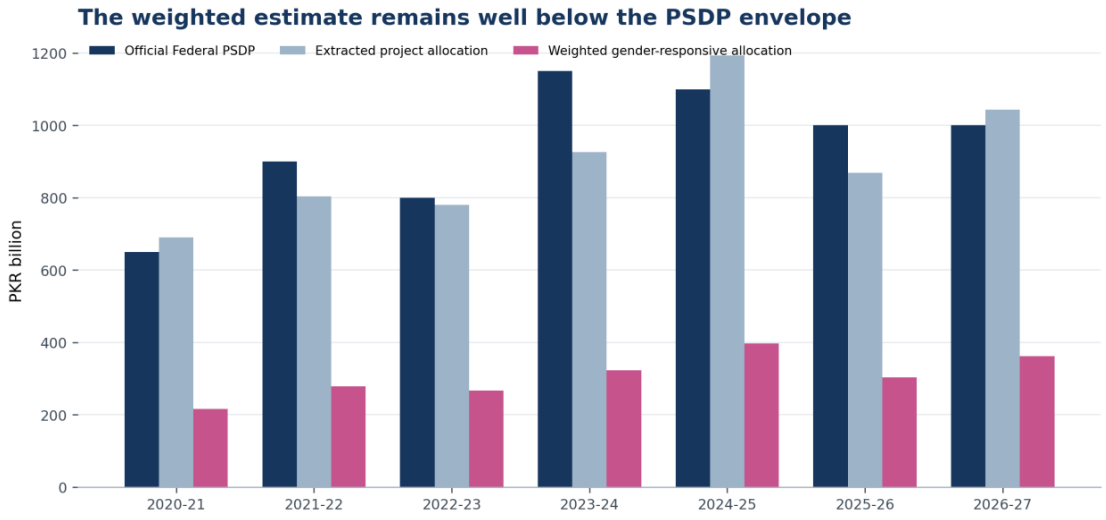


Figure 3: Federal PSDP and Weighted Gender-Responsive Allocation, FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27

Source: Authors' calculations from official PSDP envelopes and the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

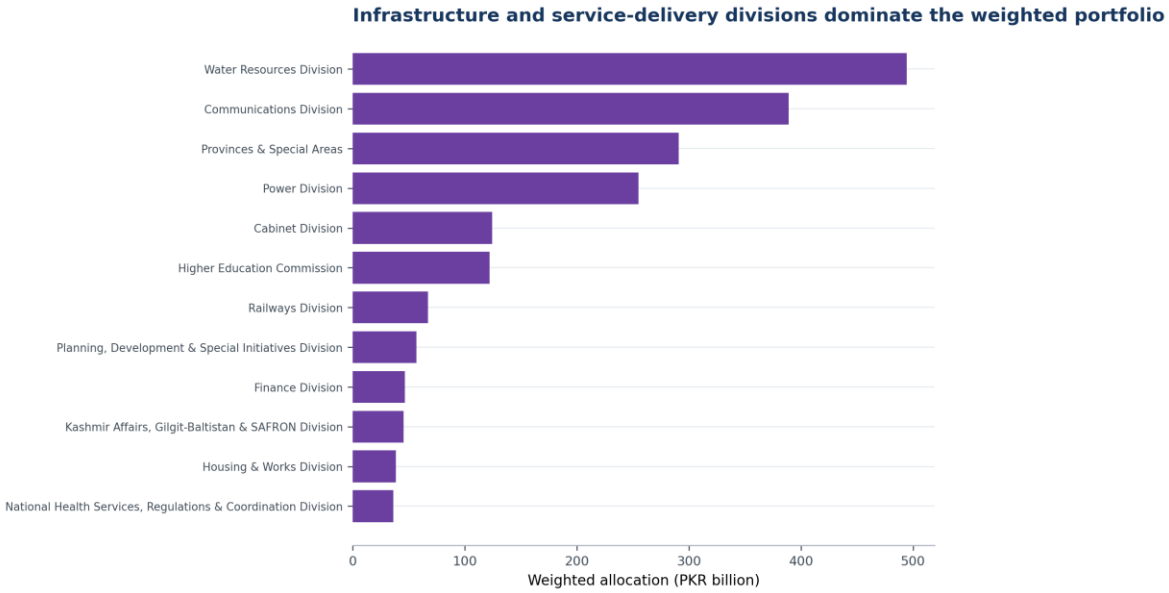


Figure 4: Division-wise Weighted Gender-Responsive Allocation, FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset. Display names harmonise obvious spelling and punctuation variants.

Once the portfolio is viewed by institutional owner, the division pattern relocates the centre of gender mainstreaming from specialist social institutions to the organisations managing infrastructure and territorial investment. Water Resources, Communications, Power and regional programmes lead the weighted values because their large GEN 2 portfolios shape access to mobility, services, energy and productive opportunities at scale. Social-sector institutions remain indispensable, particularly for direct investment, but they do not determine most of the financial estimate; any national reform that overlooks mainstream project owners would therefore address the most visible projects while leaving the largest claims comparatively unexamined.

Table 2: Division-wise allocation summary, FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27

Lead ministry/division	Rows	Actual	Weighted
Water Resources Division	488	1,263.4	494.4
Communications Division	584	1,017.6	389.1

Lead ministry/division	Rows	Actual	Weighted
Provinces & Special Areas	580	929.7	290.9
Power Division	518	678.2	254.8
Cabinet Division	44	316.3	124.3
Higher Education Commission	997	303.0	122.0
Railways Division	232	182.3	66.9
Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Division	152	170.0	56.7
Finance Division	124	135.1	46.3
Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan & SAFRON Division	45	119.5	45.3
Housing & Works Division	692	139.0	38.3
National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination Division	239	97.3	36.2

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset. Monetary values are PKR billion.

That financial concentration makes improvement more tractable and the index more vulnerable at the same time. Stronger evidence and design standards in a limited number of large portfolios could improve the credibility of a substantial part of national reporting, yet the same concentration allows a handful of annual project rows to move the GRI without indicating broader institutional change. Assurance should consequently increase with both the financial influence of a project and the indirectness of the route through which it enters the calculation.

For precisely this reason, division totals should not be read as a league table, since financial influence and gender performance are not the same attribute. A large value may reflect the scale of an infrastructure mandate, while a much smaller institution may carry the more explicit responsibility for dedicated GEN 3 work; infrastructure portfolios must demonstrate how access, affordability, safety, resettlement and distribution were addressed, whereas direct portfolios must establish the inequality diagnosed, the adequacy and reach of the response, and the quality of implementation. Accountability is therefore differentiated by mandate even where the national standard remains common.

Annual source validation and the boundaries of comparison

FY	Official	Extracted project allocation	Official documentary context	Use in analysis
2020-21	650	690.4	COVID-19 response, social sectors, food and water security, jobs, connectivity and regional development; youth and women empowerment are explicitly named.	Official book: context, envelope and project verification. Analytical dataset: markers and calculations.
2021-22	900	804.1	A PKR 250.0 billion expansion in the Federal PSDP, with transport, dams, health, higher education, social protection, climate and regional equalisation prioritised.	Official book: context, envelope and project verification. Analytical dataset: markers and calculations.
2022-23	800	779.7	Fiscal contraction, CPEC and special economic zones, water security, skills, productivity and disadvantaged districts; the envelope includes VGF and PPP provision.	Official book: context, envelope and project verification. Analytical dataset: markers and calculations.
2023-24	1,150	925.9	Flood recovery through the 4RF and 5Es frameworks, infrastructure concentration and named initiatives for women empowerment and Women on Wheels.	Official book: context, envelope and project verification. Analytical dataset: markers and calculations.
2024-25	1,100	1,193.5	The supplied source moves from contents to summary and project tables without a narrative preface; Federal PSDP is shown separately from PPP, SOEs and provinces.	Official book: context, envelope and project verification. Analytical dataset: markers and calculations.
2025-26	1,000	868.5	Severe fiscal and throw-forward constraints, with priority for near-completion, foreign-funded and high-impact core projects, plus flood recovery and human development.	Official book: context, envelope and project verification. Analytical dataset: markers and calculations.
2026-27	1,000	1,043.7	Alignment with the 13th Five Year Plan and URAAN 5Es, prioritising digitalisation, AI, connectivity, energy, water, education and special areas under strict portfolio control.	Official book: context, envelope and project verification. Analytical dataset: markers and calculations.

Table 3: Annual source validation. Monetary values are PKR billion. The different treatment of PPP, SOEs, block provisions and consolidated components across source books is one reason extracted project totals do not always equal the headline Federal PSDP envelope.

5. Year-wise Gender Responsiveness Analysis

The annual record is best understood as a sequence of different policy problems rather than a smooth path of improvement. Pandemic response and recovery altered the first two portfolios; fiscal correction raised the FY 2022-23 index even as weighted and direct allocations declined; flood reconstruction in FY 2023-24 produced the strongest direct allocation alongside the lowest GRI; the following year reversed that relationship through infrastructure-led GEN 2 growth; consolidation narrowed the FY 2025-26 portfolio; and FY 2026-27 restored the weighted estimate without changing its dependence on mainstream claims. Read together, the seven years show why the same headline movement can arise from very different fiscal and institutional decisions.

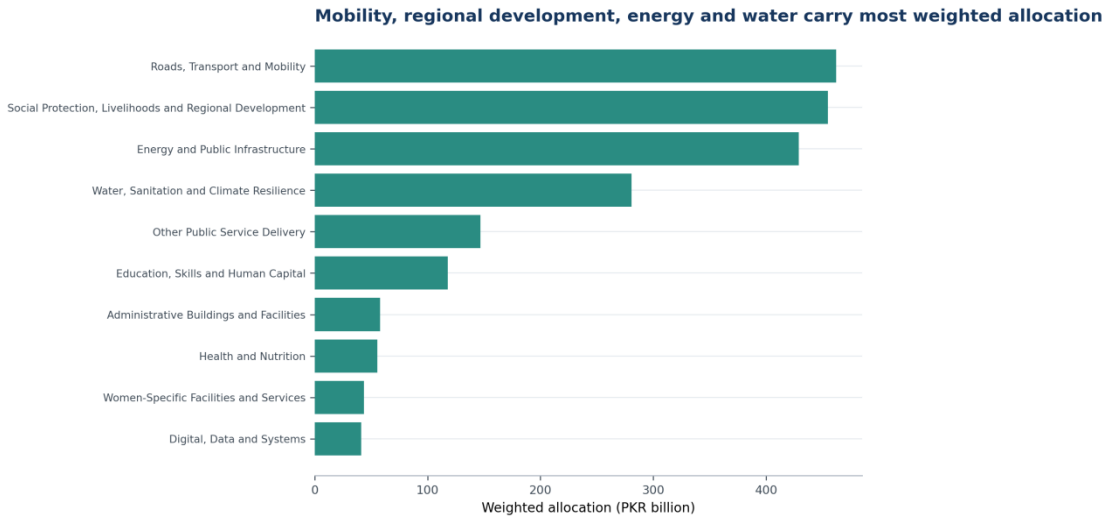


Figure 5: Sector-wise Weighted Gender-Responsive Allocation, FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

The sector composition beneath this annual sequence is dominated by mobility, regional development, energy and water, whereas education and health are more visible among dedicated projects and in beneficiary routes that can be identified with less inference, generally at a smaller financial scale. The annual chapters therefore examine more than which category increased or declined. They ask what generated the movement, which form of gender relevance expanded or contracted, and whether the corresponding project evidence is strong enough to support the interpretation attached to the allocation.

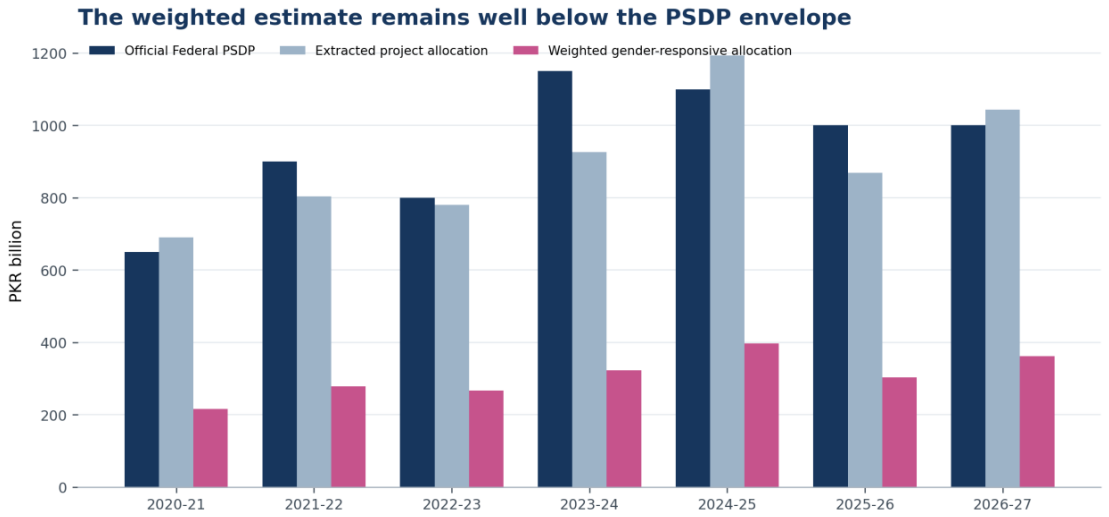


Figure 6A: Total Federal PSDP and Weighted Gender-Responsive Allocation, FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27

Source: Authors' calculations from official PSDP envelopes and the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

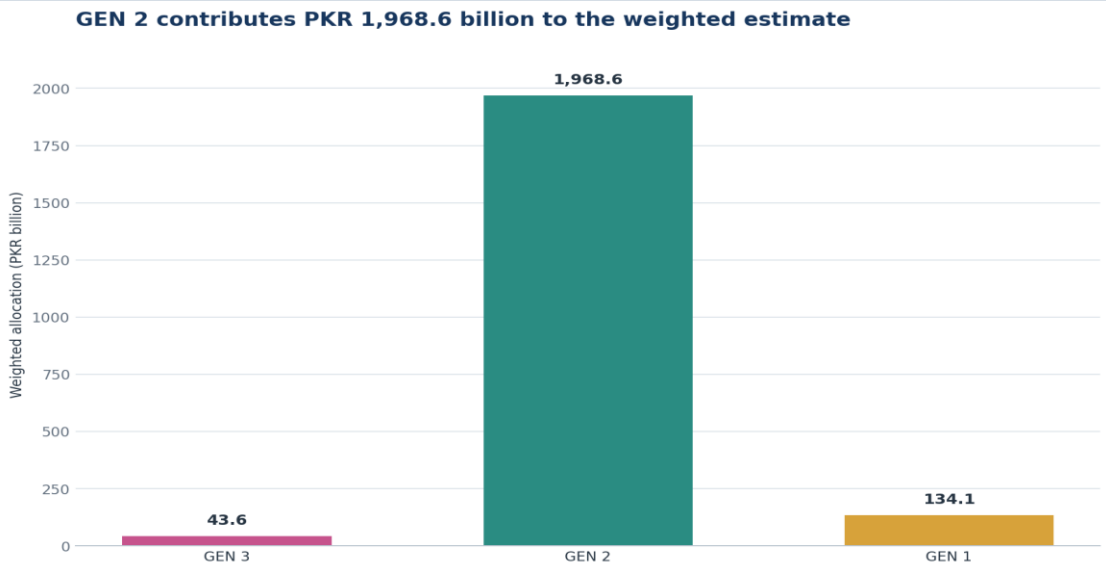


Figure 6: Weighted Gender-Responsive Allocation by GEN Marker

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

5.1 PSDP 2020-21

FY 2020-21 is not simply the numerical opening of the series; it is a test of whether an emergency programme, prepared as COVID-19 disrupted health, livelihoods, mobility and care, recognised that the crisis entered households through unequal social and economic conditions. Against an official Federal envelope of PKR 650.0 billion, the dataset records PKR 690.4 billion in project allocations and PKR 216.3 billion after weighting, producing a GRI of 33.28 percent. The scale of relevant allocation is considerable, yet the emergency setting raises a more demanding question than the index can answer: whether the unequal burdens of the crisis influenced the choices made within the projects that carried the response.

That emergency context collapsed distinctions that conventional sector planning often treats separately, exposing how care work, access to health services, water, mobility and livelihoods combine within household survival. Most of the gender-responsive value identified in the year nevertheless enters through GEN 2, led by energy and public infrastructure, mobility, regional development and water, which together place PKR 495.7 billion in actual allocation and PKR 198.3 billion after weighting into the relevant category. Their scale suggests wide potential reach, while the published tables provide little evidence that the unequal pressures of the emergency changed project design or prioritisation.

Within this enlarged field of potential relevance, direct investment presents the opposite profile: its purpose is comparatively visible, but its financial reach is narrow. GEN 3 totals PKR 2.66 billion across 23 annual rows and includes maternal and child health, women universities, girls' accommodation and female education facilities. These interventions make women and girls legible as intended users from the outset, yet their limited scale also shows why a pandemic response cannot become gender-responsive through dedicated projects alone.

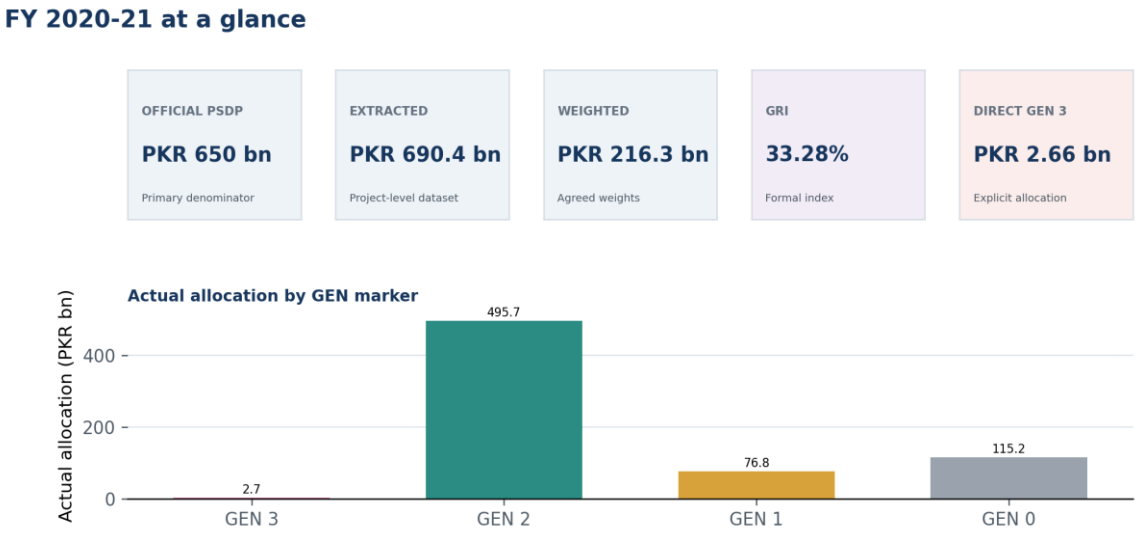
The distance between extensive mainstream potential and limited direct provision becomes especially consequential during an emergency, when apparently universal measures are delivered through unequal access to information, transport, income, documentation and time. Women may have absorbed additional unpaid care, lost informal earnings or encountered disrupted reproductive and other health services, while restrictions on movement could have made assistance more difficult to reach; the allocation record, however, rarely contains the beneficiary estimates, consultations, responsive activities or disaggregated indicators needed to determine whether those pressures altered delivery. This absence does not prove that projects excluded women, but it prevents the national programme from showing how emergency priorities were distributed across differently situated populations.

These evidentiary constraints mean that FY 2020-21 should be treated neither as a performance rank nor as a neutral baseline detached from its context. It reveals the structure that will persist throughout the series: a relatively small group of explicit interventions sits beside a far larger mainstream portfolio whose gender relevance is plausible, often socially important and insufficiently documented. The recurring policy problem begins here, in the distance between the scale at which public systems affect women and the weaker institutional record of how that effect was anticipated.

The project examples locate that contrast within actual investment choices. The National Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Programme in AJK and the development of Fatima Jinnah Women University identify the population and service constraint to which public resources are directed, whereas Dasu Hydropower and the AJK Block Allocation enter through broader energy and territorial routes. Their possible reach is considerably larger, but so is the range of unresolved questions concerning access, displacement, livelihoods, participation and the distribution of services and costs.

Read as a whole, the emergency-year portfolio shows what a prospective application of the checklist would have required from agencies confronting distinct health, care, livelihood and mobility constraints. In a crisis, this discipline is not an administrative addition to urgent delivery; it is what allows urgency to be reconciled with the fact that households do not enter an emergency with

equal resources, responsibilities or power. FY 2020-21 consequently establishes the report's first institutional lesson: speed and universality cannot substitute for evidence about distribution.



Annual dashboard: FY 2020-21

Source: Authors' calculations from the corresponding official PSDP envelope and PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Project examples from PSDP 2020-21

Marker	Lead division	Project	Source p.	PKR bn
GEN 3	National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination Division	National Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Programme AJK	52	0.334
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Development of Fatima Jinnah Women University, Campus-II, (Phase-2) Chakri Road Rawalpindi	26	0.300
GEN 2	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydro Power Project Stage-I (2160 MW) (District Kohistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)	74	80.059
GEN 2	Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan & SAFRON Division	AJK Block Allocation	46	24.500

5.2 PSDP 2021-22

FY 2021-22 shifts the analytical problem from emergency response to the distribution of recovery. The official Federal envelope expands by PKR 250.0 billion as the programme emphasises transport, regional connectivity, dams, water conservation, health, higher education, social protection, employment, climate action, agriculture and the knowledge economy. Project allocations in the dataset reach PKR 804.1 billion and the weighted amount rises to PKR 278.5 billion, yet the GRI falls to 30.94 percent because the envelope expands more quickly than the relevant numerator. Recovery therefore increases the absolute scale of investment capable of affecting women without establishing that the additional fiscal space was organised around the constraints revealed by the crisis.

Within that recovery portfolio, the scale of investment capable of shaping women's access to services and livelihoods increased, with GEN 2 rising to PKR 626.6 billion under the influence of energy, mobility, water and regional development. Yet recovery is not distributionally neutral: projects reconnect households and markets through decisions about location, travel, land, employment and service delivery, and those decisions determine who can convert renewed investment into an economic opportunity. Without evidence on safety, affordability, participation and resettlement, the allocation establishes the scale of the opportunity rather than the equity of the recovery it financed.

Alongside this mainstream expansion, GEN 3 rose to PKR 6.70 billion across 27 annual rows, driven in part by a major mother-and-child health facility and women-focused higher education projects. This increase is substantively important because it restores visibility to needs that mainstream provision may not address, but its concentration in a small number of projects reveals that direct investment had not yet become a stable cross-sector pipeline. The recovery portfolio broadened both mainstream and dedicated relevance while leaving their institutional foundations uneven.

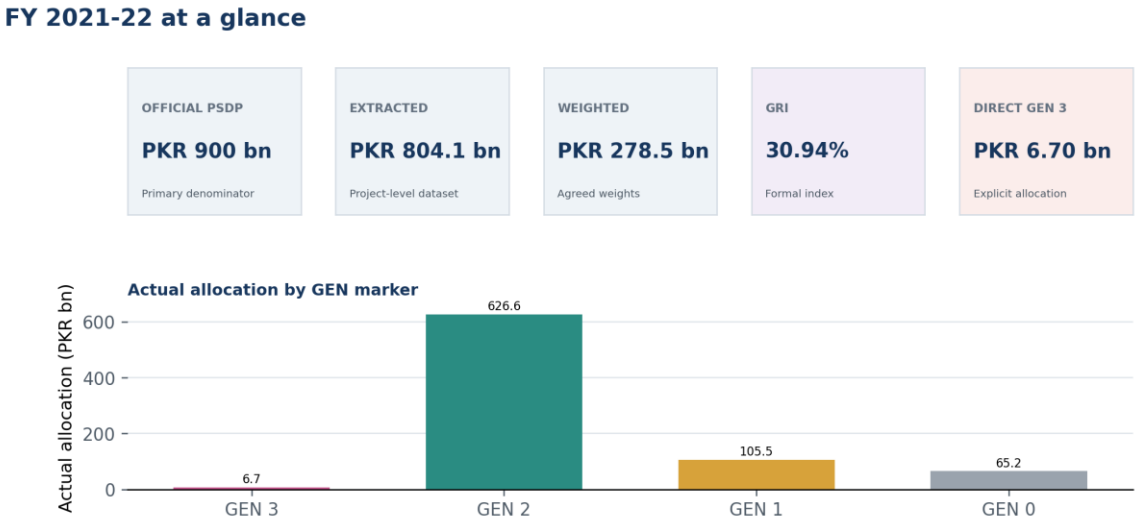
Together, these two forms of relevance shift the analytical question from whether recovery spending affected women, which is unavoidable at this scale, to whether renewed investment corrected the inequalities through which the emergency had been experienced or restored the earlier distribution of access. Dams, transport schemes and regional packages reconnect services, households and markets through decisions about location, affordability, employment, land and resettlement, all of which determine

who can convert public investment into a viable opportunity. Because these conditions sit below the annual allocation, the PSDP establishes the reach of recovery finance while leaving its distributional quality unresolved.

The annual comparison nevertheless shows that larger relevant amounts do not necessarily produce a larger index: compared with FY 2020-21, weighted allocation increases by PKR 62.1 billion and direct allocation by PKR 4.04 billion even as the GRI declines by 2.34 percentage points. The apparent deterioration in the index thus coexists with an expansion in both forms of gender-relevant allocation, illustrating why a ratio cannot be interpreted without its numerator and denominator. A lower GRI in this year does not mean that less was allocated through relevant routes; it means that those routes expanded more slowly than the Federal envelope against which they were measured.

The project mix explains why the direct and mainstream routes must remain distinct. Both belong within a national gender analysis, but they enter through different claims and require different evidence: explicit projects must demonstrate adequacy and reach, while mainstream projects must show how a plausible public-service pathway became a responsive design.

What the recovery year ultimately demonstrates is that the timing of analysis determines its usefulness. Once infrastructure routes, service locations and eligibility arrangements have entered an approved design, annual allocation has limited capacity to repair an omitted care service, safety measure, livelihood response or consultation process. Retrospective classification can reveal where a gender pathway was present, but only analysis during preparation and appraisal can decide whether recovery reconstructs the systems that produced unequal access or uses public investment to change them.



Annual dashboard: FY 2021-22

Source: Authors' calculations from the corresponding official PSDP envelope and PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Project examples from PSDP 2021-22

Marker	Lead division	Project	Source p.	PKR bn
GEN 3	National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination Division	The Project for Extension of Intensive Care Department of Mother and Child Health Center & Children Hospital, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Islamabad	58	2.207
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Strengthening of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar	33	0.375
GEN 2	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydro Power Project Stage-I (2160 MW) (District Kohistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)	84	56.514
GEN 2	Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan & SAFRON Division	AJK Block Allocation	51	28.000

5.3 PSDP 2022-23

FY 2022-23 presents the clearest early warning against reading a rising index as self-evident progress. Following reductions to the preceding programme, the official Federal PSDP was set at PKR 800.0 billion, including VGF and PPP provision, while the dataset records PKR 779.7 billion in project allocations and PKR 266.5 billion after weighting. Both weighted and direct allocations decline, yet the GRI rises to 33.32 percent because the official denominator contracts more sharply than the numerator. The apparent improvement is mathematically valid within the method, but its policy meaning lies in fiscal compression, not in an expansion of gender-responsive investment.

Within that compressed envelope, CPEC, special economic zones, water security, productivity, technical skills, food security and disadvantaged districts frame the official priorities, while social protection, livelihoods and regional development become the largest weighted route, followed by energy, mobility and water. Large Cabinet and special-area programmes consequently exert considerable influence over the annual result, although their broad titles reveal little about the activities, beneficiaries or local

decision-making arrangements contained within them. Fiscal correction therefore increases the need to understand what survives inside aggregated programmes, not merely which marker remains attached to the parent allocation.

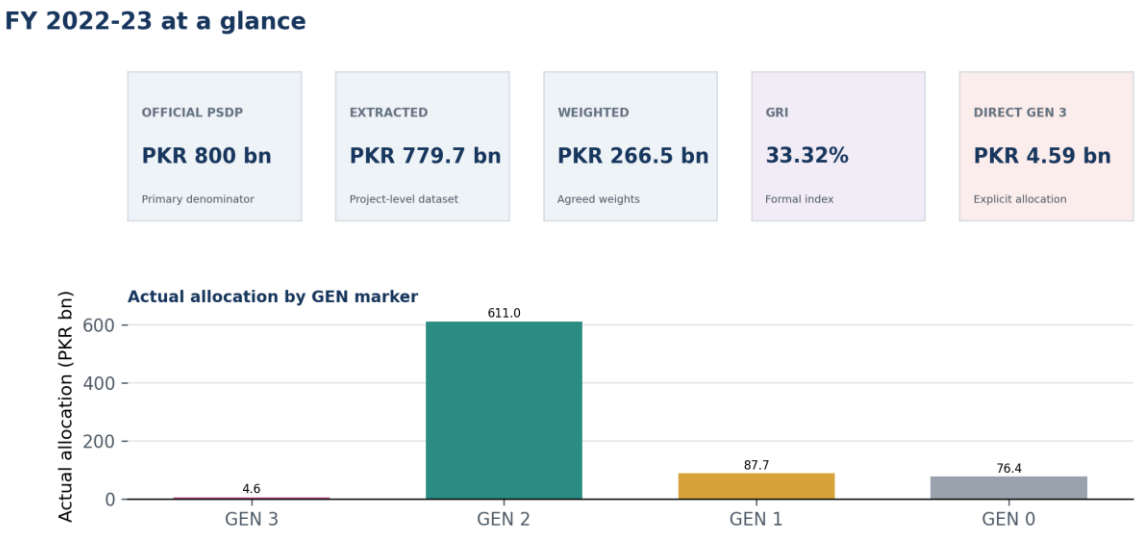
Yet direct allocation moves in the opposite direction to the headline index, falling to PKR 4.59 billion even as the number of GEN 3 annual rows increases to 29. The combination is analytically important because it separates numerical spread from financial commitment: more direct entries do not necessarily amount to a stronger response when their average scale declines. Women-focused higher education and mother-and-child health remain visible, but their presence cannot offset the contraction in resources attached to explicit gender intent.

This combination of fiscal contraction and continuing project relevance also changes what an unchanged marker can mean. A project may continue to carry the same route to relevance while its allocation is reduced, implementation slows or completion becomes less likely, leaving the beneficiary pathway formally present but materially weakened. Annual tagging cannot observe whether a training component was postponed, a safeguard underfunded or a service standard compromised; those questions require PC-III and PC-IV evidence capable of following the project through the adjustments by which fiscal correction is implemented.

The result makes the denominator effect impossible to ignore. The official envelope declines by PKR 100.0 billion, weighted allocation by PKR 11.9 billion and GEN 3 by PKR 2.11 billion, yet the GRI increases by 2.38 percentage points because the denominator contracts more rapidly than the weighted amount. A higher ratio under these conditions does not indicate that additional resources were directed towards gender responsiveness; it indicates that relevant allocations occupied a larger relationship to a smaller programme.

At project level, girls' hostel and academic facilities at Quaid-e-Azam University and the women sub-campus of Swat University continue the direct access portfolio, while the Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Programme and Dasu Hydropower remain much larger GEN 2 influences. Considered together, these examples capture the year's central contradiction: direct intent becomes more widely represented in project rows but less substantial in financial terms, while the national estimate remains dependent on broad programmes whose internal distribution is difficult to observe.

Where those large financing arrangements sit above implementable activities, VGF, PPP and block provisions intensify the problem because the published amount does not reveal the level at which employment conditions, beneficiaries, safeguards and local participation are determined. Gender analysis must follow economic zones, skills initiatives and regional packages into their components, where women's employment, enterprise ownership, occupational segregation, transport and land or livelihood disruption can be examined directly. Without that descent from financing window to implementable activity, fiscal correction may improve the ratio while leaving the distributional consequences of what was retained, reduced or delayed largely invisible.



Annual dashboard: FY 2022-23

Source: Authors' calculations from the corresponding official PSDP envelope and PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Project examples from PSDP 2022-23

Marker	Lead division	Project	Source p.	PKR bn
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Provision of Academic & Research Facilities and Girls Hostel at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad	49	0.400
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of Women sub campus of Swat University in Mingora	48	0.300
GEN 2	Cabinet Division	Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Program (SAP)	15	68.000
GEN 2	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydropower Project (2,160 MW)	115	55.383

5.4 PSDP 2023-24

FY 2023-24 is the pivotal year in the series because flood reconstruction and a substantial rise in direct investment pull the portfolio in directions that a single headline cannot reconcile. The official Federal envelope reaches PKR 1,150.0 billion, the largest of the period, while the GRI falls to 28.06 percent, its lowest point; at the same time, GEN 3 rises to PKR 14.70 billion, the strongest direct allocation recorded. Read alongside the 4RF framework and the 5Es of exports, equity, empowerment, environment and energy, the year reveals a programme in which explicit action for women became unusually visible even as mainstream weighted relevance occupied a smaller relationship to the overall PSDP.

Within this divergence, the direct increase is concentrated in 31 annual rows and owes much to major national initiatives, particularly the Prime Minister's Initiative for Women Empowerment and the Social Sector Accelerator. Their presence matters not merely because women appear in the project title, but because public investment is being organised around an inequality rather than relying on a general service to reach women indirectly. The rapid expansion also exposes an institutional fragility: when a national result depends upon a few large, time-bound initiatives, the end of their project life can produce a reversal even though the needs that justified them remain.

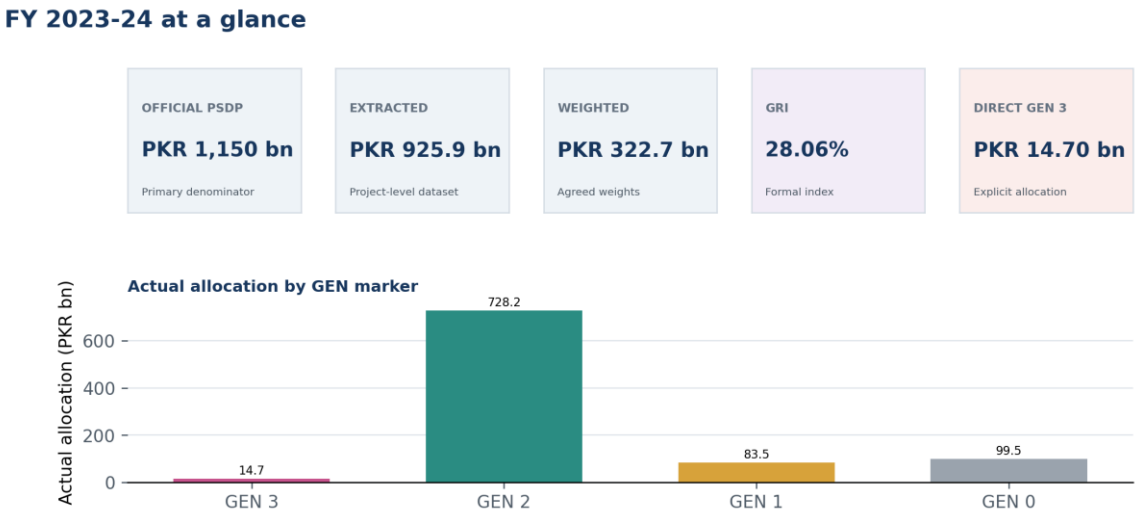
At the same time, flood reconstruction gives the mainstream portfolio a distributional significance that cannot be inferred from the location of damaged assets alone. Displacement, shelter, documentation, compensation, livelihood restoration, care, safety and participation determine whether women can recover on equal terms, particularly where property ownership, mobility or representation in local decisions is already unequal. A restored road, water system or public facility may benefit an entire community, but its gender responsiveness depends on whose losses were recognised, whose priorities shaped reconstruction and whether the rebuilt service altered or reproduced the conditions that made recovery unequal.

The coexistence of concentrated direct action and diffuse reconstruction relevance clarifies why direct and weighted measures must remain visible side by side. The GRI describes the relationship between a weighted portfolio and the official envelope; GEN 3 identifies resources whose primary intent is explicit. The former weakens in FY 2023-24 while the latter strengthens, so neither can be used as a substitute for the other without erasing an important feature of the programme: direct commitment expanded during a year in which mainstream weighted relevance occupied a smaller relationship to the overall PSDP.

Once those measures are separated, the annual result acquires a different meaning. It would be misleading to describe FY 2023-24 simply as the weakest year because the index is lowest, just as it would be misleading to call it the strongest because direct allocation peaks. It is better understood as the year in which explicit policy intent became unusually visible but remained institutionally concentrated, while the much larger reconstruction and infrastructure programme required a depth of gender evidence that published allocation tables could not supply.

The concentration underlying the direct increase also has consequences beyond annual reporting. A durable portfolio would connect the inequalities identified in national policy to geographical gaps, responsible institutions and a continuing process of project preparation, so that women-specific investment does not appear only when a flagship programme is initiated. Continuity is not the indefinite extension of one project; it is the capacity of the planning system to replace completed interventions with new responses grounded in current evidence.

Taken together, these direct and reconstruction pathways make FY 2023-24 the strongest case for treating the gender, climate and social-inclusion checklists as one appraisal instrument, not as parallel compliance exercises. Their questions on vulnerable locations, safe infrastructure, early warning, health, nutrition, livelihoods, consultation, budgets and disaggregated indicators describe the connected conditions through which a person experiences disaster and recovery. Used before designs are fixed, they would allow reconstruction finance to be judged not only by the assets restored, but by the security, agency and economic recovery those assets make possible for women and other groups exposed to unequal risk.



Annual dashboard: FY 2023-24

Source: Authors' calculations from the corresponding official PSDP envelope and PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Project examples from PSDP 2023-24

Marker	Lead division	Project	Source p.	PKR bn
GEN 3	Prime Minister's Initiatives	Prime Minister's Initiative for Women Empowerment	77	5.000
GEN 3	Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Division	Social Sector Accelerator (SSA) for Health, Nutrition, Eduction , Youth& Gender (HNEYG) National Priority Initiatives	74	3.043
GEN 2	Cabinet Division	Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Program (SAP)	10	90.000
GEN 2	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydropower Project (2,160 MW)	93	58.597

5.5 PSDP 2024-25

FY 2024-25 reverses the relationship observed in the preceding year and relocates the annual result within high-value mainstream infrastructure. Against an official Federal envelope of PKR 1,100.0 billion, the dataset records PKR 1,193.5 billion in project allocations and PKR 397.1 billion after weighting, producing a GRI of 36.10 percent, while GEN 3 falls to PKR 6.28 billion across 27 annual rows. The extracted total exceeds the official envelope because the sources follow different consolidation boundaries, but the more important shift is substantive: the rise in the index comes from the scale and composition of GEN 2 investment and not from a continuation of the previous year's direct commitment.

Within this infrastructure-led reversal, energy and public infrastructure lead the weighted allocation, followed by water, mobility and regional development, placing major hydropower and water investments at the centre of the annual result. This is precisely where gender mainstreaming is most consequential and most difficult to establish from programme tables alone. Large infrastructure can alter access to electricity, water, employment, markets and public services across whole regions, while also redistributing land, compensation, environmental risk, unpaid work and decision-making power among households and communities.

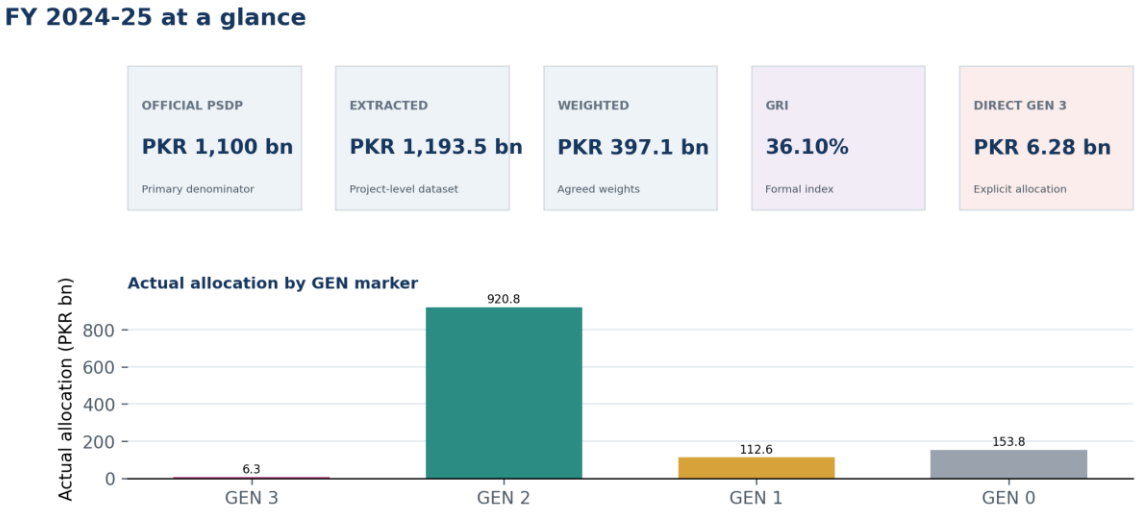
As a result, the rise of 8.05 percentage points in the GRI coexists with a decline of PKR 8.43 billion in direct allocation. The two movements do not cancel one another; together they show that the portfolio has changed form. Women universities, girls' accommodation, maternal health and the Social Sector Accelerator remain visible, but the national estimate is increasingly shaped by projects whose gender contribution depends upon design conditions not expressed by their size or sector label.

The analytical stakes become clearest in water and hydropower projects, where a large allocation conceals a chain of decisions governing access, risk and distribution. Reliable supply may reduce time poverty, improve health and support productive activity, while land acquisition, compensation, livelihood change and the location of services can distribute gains and losses unevenly within the same community. Participation in site and service decisions, recognition of climate vulnerability, access to supply, safeguards and disaggregated results are consequently not external social qualifications attached to an engineering project; they are part of the evidence required to determine what the investment produces and for whom.

These hidden decisions explain why the year warns against treating a high GRI as self-validating. Most of its movement comes through GEN 2, where the weight appropriately limits the financial claim but cannot verify the underlying design. If a small number of high-value entries can materially alter the aggregate, assurance must be concentrated where the combination of allocation size, indirectness, resettlement, climate exposure and service-distribution risk is greatest.

At the same time, this principle does not imply that projects such as Dasu Hydropower have been classified incorrectly. It recognises that the credibility of a national measure is shaped by the evidence attached to its most influential judgements. A risk-based review may confirm a marker, qualify its rationale or identify changes needed in implementation; in each case, the value lies in replacing inference from sector and title with a traceable account of barrier, response, resource and result.

A separate source limitation conditions how far the annual interpretation can go: the supplied FY 2024-25 PSDP moves from summary material into project tables without a narrative preface, and the analysis does not supply an official rationale that the source itself does not state. The programme book establishes the envelope and project record, the dataset establishes the classifications and calculations, and the report interprets the relationship between them. This boundary matters because analytical confidence depends not only on the strength of the conclusion, but on preserving a visible distinction between what government documentation records, what the method infers and what fuller project evidence would still need to establish.



Annual dashboard: FY 2024-25

Source: Authors' calculations from the corresponding official PSDP envelope and PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Project examples from PSDP 2024-25

Marker	Lead division	Project	Source p.	PKR bn
GEN 3	Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Division	Social Sector Accelerator (SSA) for Health, Nutrition, Eduction , Youth& Gender (HNEYG) National Priority Initiatives	69	0.800
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of AJK Women University, Bagh, AJ&K	32	0.500
GEN 2	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydro Power Project Stage-I (2160 MW) (District Kohistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)	85	154.897
GEN 2	Provinces & Special Areas	Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 10 Years Development Plan AREAS JAMMU & KASHMIR: Schemes:	29	42.315

5.6 PSDP 2025-26

FY 2025-26 shows how fiscal consolidation acts upon inequalities and priorities already embedded in the project pipeline. The official preface places a PKR 1,000.0 billion Federal PSDP within a PKR 4,224.0 billion national development outlay and gives precedence to projects that are high-impact, near completion or externally financed; the dataset records PKR 868.5 billion across 704 annual rows and PKR 302.8 billion after weighting, with the GRI falling to 30.28 percent. The result is more than a smaller index, since the readiness and completion criteria used to narrow a programme can only select among the needs and responses that earlier planning has converted into approvable projects.

Within that narrower programme, transport corridors, dams and power evacuation, urban water, IT parks, fiscal systems, flood reconstruction, health and education remain prominent, with mobility and regional development forming the largest weighted routes, followed by water and energy. These are legitimate priorities under fiscal constraint, but the criteria used to protect projects are not neutral with respect to gender if earlier project preparation did not recognise care, safety, access, informal livelihoods or women's productive assets. Consolidation cannot select a response that was never developed into an approvable scheme.

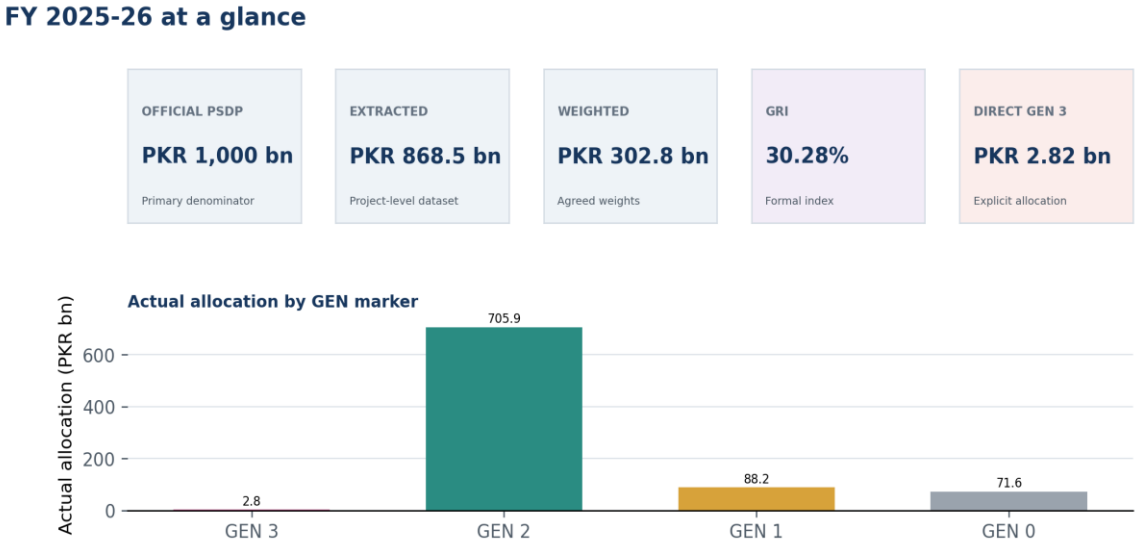
Alongside this mainstream composition, the contraction in GEN 3 makes the direct-pipeline problem visible. Direct allocation falls to PKR 2.82 billion across 16 annual rows, the lowest annual amount in the series, although women universities, girls' hostels and other social-sector projects remain. A narrow portfolio offers little resilience when a small number of projects complete, slow or lose priority, and the resulting decline may have more to do with the timing of project lives than with any reduction in the inequalities those projects were intended to address.

The implication is not that fiscal discipline and gender responsiveness are competing objectives, since both depend on a credible diagnosis, a feasible intervention and a resource path capable of delivery. Tension arises when gender analysis begins after prioritisation, when the projects most prepared to survive consolidation already embody design choices made without a systematic examination of mobility, care, safety, informal livelihoods or women's productive assets. At that stage the planning system can adjust financing, but it may no longer be able to introduce the service, safeguard or targeted response that would have made the surviving investment more equitable.

The numerical change from FY 2024-25 shows the breadth of the contraction: weighted allocation declines by PKR 94.3 billion, direct allocation by PKR 3.46 billion and annual rows from 1,002 to 704. Those figures are consistent with programme consolidation, but they also invite a more demanding question: which populations and constraints become less visible when completion and financing status are the principal filters? Answering it requires the retained pipeline to be examined for distributional coverage, not merely for aggregate sector balance.

Against that contraction, the remaining project mix illustrates the distinction between direct provision and mainstream potential. Girls' accommodation at Quaid-e-Azam University and AJK Women University responds to a readily identifiable access constraint; the Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Programme and merged-districts development plan operate through much larger territorial routes whose beneficiaries are not visible until allocations are disaggregated into activities and locations. Both forms of investment can be important, but only the first declares its intended inequality in the published title.

Taken together, these changes move the policy focus decisively upstream. If sponsoring agencies analyse differentiated constraints while the pipeline is being formed, later fiscal tightening can choose among projects in which a wider range of public needs has already shaped design; if they do not, consolidation may reproduce earlier exclusions with considerable administrative efficiency. Readiness should not protect gender-responsive projects from scrutiny, but it should include a documented account of who faces the development problem, how the proposed design responds and which commitments must survive any subsequent reduction in scope or pace.



Annual dashboard: FY 2025-26

Source: Authors' calculations from the corresponding official PSDP envelope and PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Project examples from PSDP 2025-26

Marker	Lead division	Project	Source p.	PKR bn
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Provision of Academic & Research Facilities and Girls Hostel at Quaid-i- Azam University, Islamabad (Revised)	52	0.500
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of AJK Women University, Bagh, AJ&K	50	0.300
GEN 2	Cabinet Division	Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Programme (SAP)	15	70.000
GEN 2	Provinces & Special Areas	Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 10 Years Development Plan (AIP) AREAS & Kashmir Schemes:	45	37.000

5.7 PSDP 2026-27

FY 2026-27 closes the statistical series while opening a practical window for institutional learning, since its projects can still be examined during implementation instead of being reconstructed only after completion. The Federal envelope remains PKR 1,000.0 billion within a national development outlay of PKR 3,675.0 billion, and the official preface aligns investment with the 13th Five Year Plan and URAAN Pakistan's 5Es while continuing to limit new schemes. The dataset records 777 annual rows, PKR 1,043.7 billion in extracted allocations and PKR 362.4 billion after weighting, producing the highest GRI in the period at 36.24 percent.

With the official envelope unchanged from FY 2025-26, the PKR 59.6 billion rise in weighted allocation can be attributed more clearly to portfolio composition than to the denominator. Mobility contributes PKR 109.4 billion and regional development PKR 89.8 billion, with Communications and Provinces and Special Areas leading the division totals; GEN 2 accounts for most of the increase. The apparent recovery is therefore substantively meaningful within the method, but it remains a recovery in mainstream weighted relevance rather than evidence of realised outcomes.

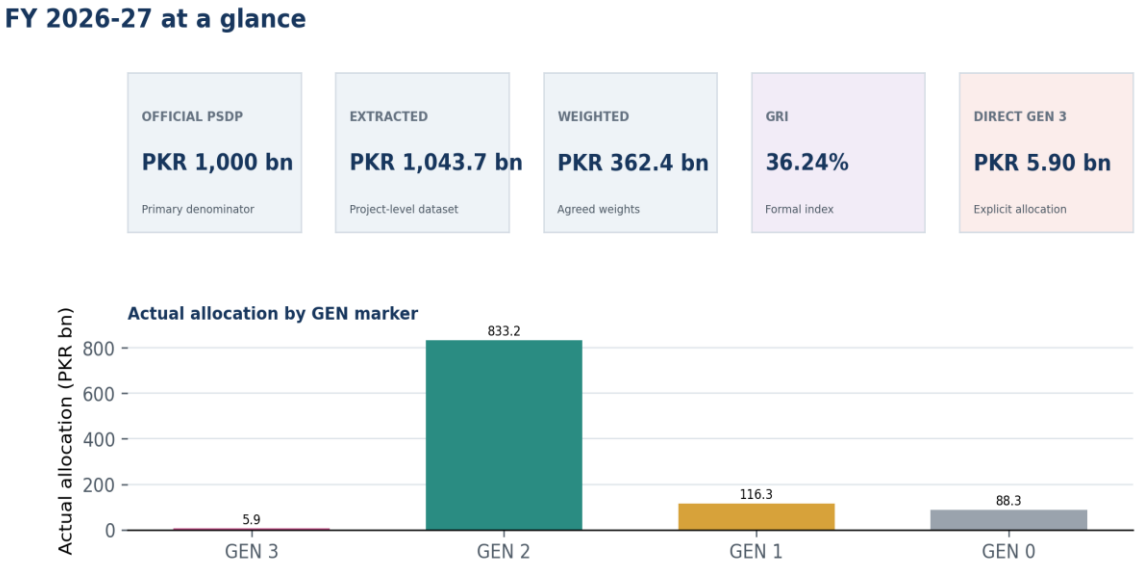
Alongside that mainstream growth, direct allocation recovers to PKR 5.90 billion across 22 annual rows, although it remains well below the FY 2023-24 peak and is concentrated largely in education and accommodation. Female officer facilities, women universities and girls' hostels or campuses make intended users visible, yet the narrow thematic range points to needs for which dedicated projects are less evident, including care infrastructure, safe mobility, climate adaptation, digital inclusion, protection, productive assets and women's economic participation.

This improved allocation profile sits within a policy language of equity, empowerment and resilience whose significance depends on whether it can be found in the decisions governing active projects. For roads, dams, digital systems, schools and regional packages, alignment becomes observable when the record identifies a differentiated constraint, shows the activity and resource used to address it, retains consultation or safeguard evidence where relevant and specifies an indicator capable of revealing unequal access or risk. iPAS and PC-III documentation create an immediate opportunity to strengthen this chain without waiting for a new project cycle.

Precisely because the denominator is stable, comparison with FY 2025-26 provides an unusually clear view of portfolio change: weighted allocation rises by PKR 59.6 billion, direct allocation by PKR 3.08 billion and the GRI by 5.96 percentage points. Even here, however, improvement should not be collapsed into a general claim of stronger institutional performance. The figures show that more of the portfolio falls within weighted routes of relevance; they do not show whether women participated in design, used the resulting services or experienced a reduction in inequality.

The stable-denominator comparison therefore brings the report's two portfolio tasks together. Pakistan needs a more deliberate pipeline of GEN 3 projects responding to documented and geographically differentiated inequalities, and it needs stronger evidence within the high-value GEN 2 portfolios that already dominate public investment. Treating the first as a substitute for mainstream reform would leave large systems unexamined; treating the second as a substitute for direct investment would leave structural barriers without a dedicated response.

An immediate assurance exercise can begin that transition within the current programme. A risk-based sample across Communications, Provinces and Special Areas, Water Resources, Power, Cabinet and major service portfolios would allow sponsoring agencies, sector wings and the Gender Unit to examine the barrier, activity, budget, consultation, safeguard and PC-III indicator supporting influential classifications. The purpose is institutional learning, not retrospective punishment: to distinguish responsive design that was invisible in the PSDP table from an unfunded intention or an unsupported sector assumption, correct the record where necessary and establish a standard that can shape preparation of the next programme.



Annual dashboard: FY 2026-27

Source: Authors' calculations from the corresponding official PSDP envelope and PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Project examples from PSDP 2026-27

Marker	Lead division	Project	Source p.	PKR bn
GEN 3	Establishment Division	Construction of Residential Facilities for Female Officers, Sector H-8/4, Islamabad (Phase-I)	18	0.827
GEN 2	Cabinet Division	Sustainable Development Goals Achievement (SAP)	8	63.000

6. Comparative and Trend Analysis

Across seven years, the portfolio does not move along a single path of improvement or decline; it changes as fiscal conditions, project composition and the timing of large schemes interact. The official envelope alters the denominator, the distribution of markers and sectors alters the weighted numerator, and a limited number of financially dominant annual rows can relocate a substantial share of the result between years and institutions. Weighted allocation rises from PKR 216.3 billion in FY 2020-21 to PKR 362.4 billion in FY 2026-27, but the distance between these endpoints contains several different policy stories whose meaning emerges only when the source of each movement is identified.

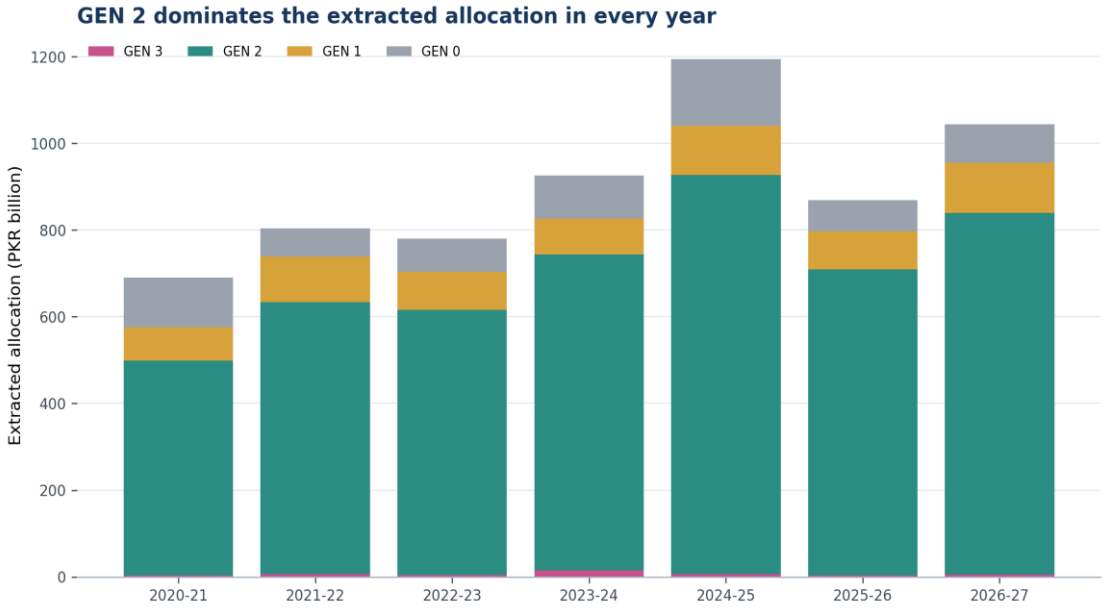


Figure 4: Actual Allocation by Gender Marker and Fiscal Year

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Within that changing annual surface lies a more persistent portfolio structure. GEN 2 is the largest allocation category in every year, placing roads, water, energy, regional development and public services at the financial centre of gender mainstreaming, while GEN 3 remains smaller and considerably more sensitive to the entry or completion of a few initiatives. The pattern leaves Pakistan with two related but institutionally different tasks: maintaining a continuing pipeline of direct responses to exclusion, and ensuring that the mainstream systems through which women encounter public investment can show how their design addressed unequal access, risk and control over resources.

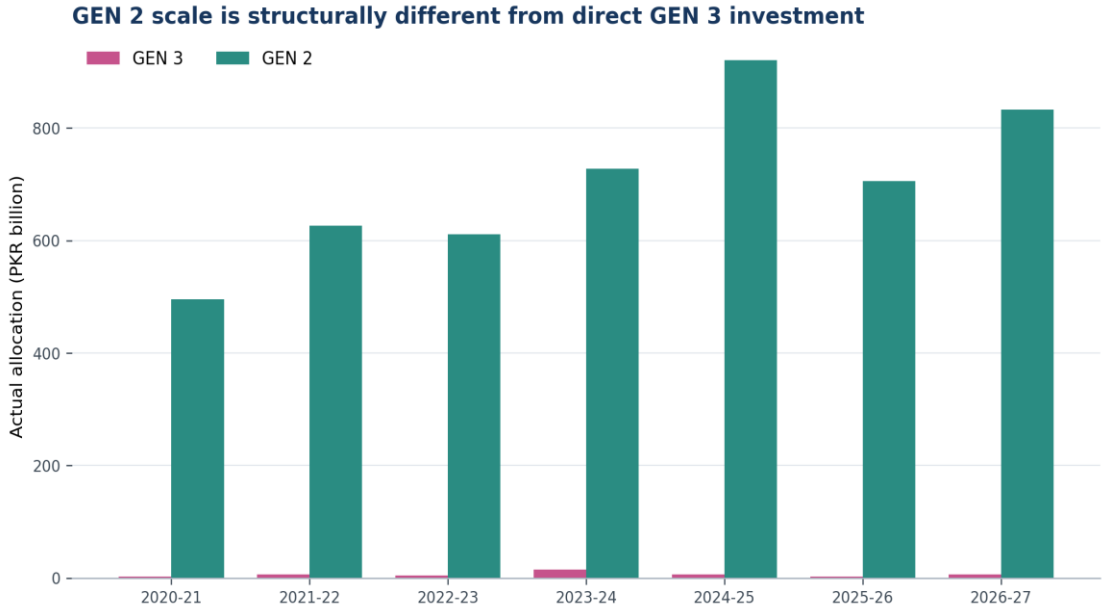


Figure 5: GEN 3 and GEN 2 Actual Allocation by Fiscal Year

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

This persistent dominance of GEN 2 over GEN 3 is not a defect that can be resolved by relabelling expenditure, but a substantive account of where public power and explicit gender intent currently sit. Removing GEN 2 would exclude the transport, service, energy and territorial systems that shape women's time, mobility, livelihoods and resilience, whereas treating its full value as

women-specific spending would elevate an inferred pathway into a claim the evidence cannot sustain. Reporting actual and weighted amounts separately preserves both truths: mainstream investment matters at scale, and dedicated investment retains a purpose that cannot be absorbed into that wider field.

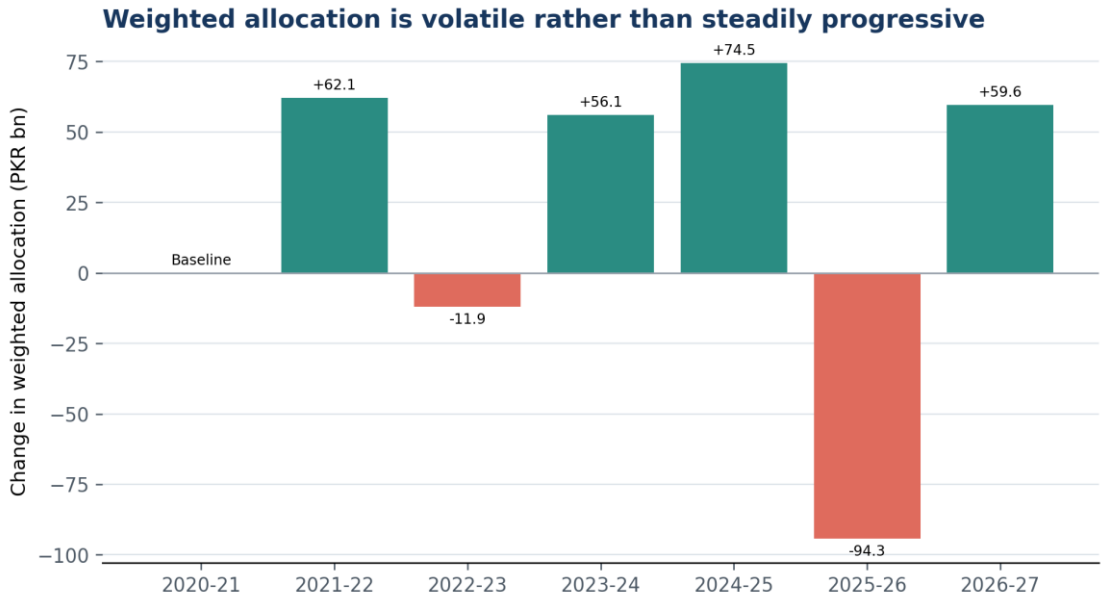


Figure 4A: Year-on-year change in weighted gender-responsive allocation

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

The distinction becomes especially revealing in years when direct allocation and the GRI move apart, because the two measures answer different questions. FY 2023-24 records the lowest index alongside the highest GEN 3 amount, while FY 2026-27 records the highest index with PKR 5.90 billion in direct allocation. One measure identifies resources whose stated purpose is explicit and the other describes a weighted relationship to the Federal envelope; their divergence shows which form of responsiveness has changed and prevents an apparently favourable aggregate from concealing contraction in the direct portfolio.

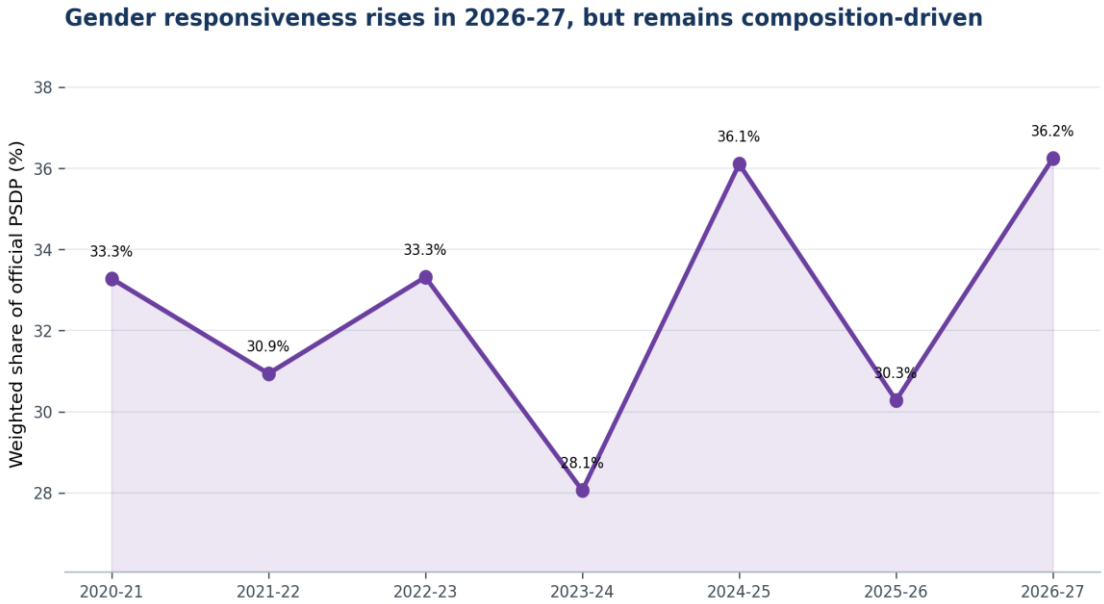


Figure 4B: Gender Responsiveness Index against the official Federal PSDP

Source: Authors' calculations from official PSDP envelopes and the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

The GEN 3 series adds a further institutional insight by showing how quickly a national commitment can become financially visible and how easily that visibility can recede when it depends on a narrow project base. Direct allocation rises from PKR 2.66 billion in FY 2020-21 to PKR 6.70 billion in FY 2021-22, reaches PKR 14.70 billion in FY 2023-24 and then contracts before recovering to PKR 5.90 billion in FY 2026-27. The peak confirms that substantial women-specific initiatives can be mobilised, but the decline that follows shows that mobilisation is not the same as institutional continuity, which requires ministries to convert persistent inequalities into successive, feasible and adequately owned proposals.

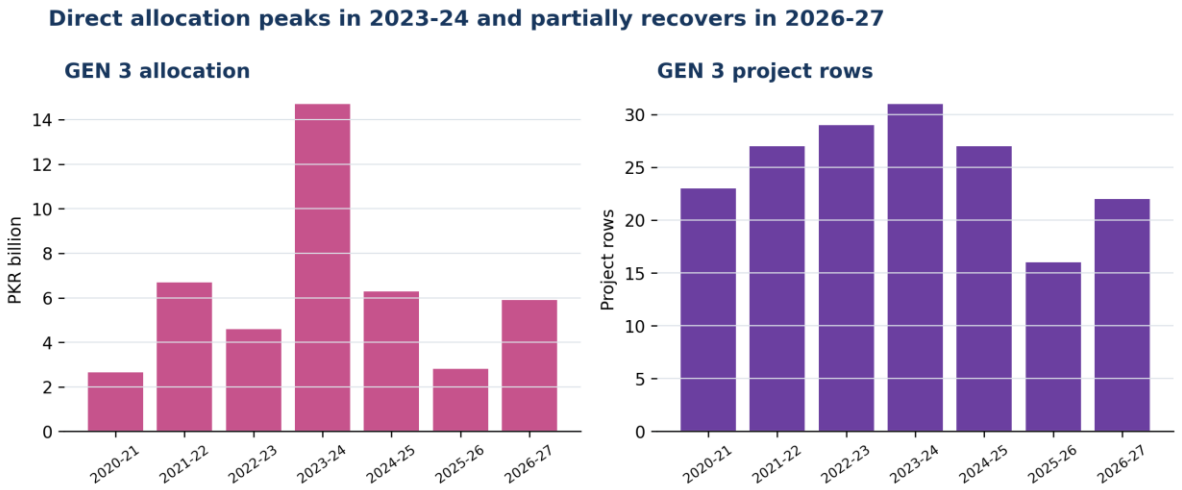


Figure 5A: GEN 3 direct allocation and project-row count by fiscal year

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Read through this decomposition, movements that initially appear contradictory become a coherent fiscal account. In FY 2021-22, weighted and direct allocations rise while the GRI falls because the envelope expands more rapidly; in FY 2022-23, the ratio rises even as both amounts contract because the denominator falls more sharply; in FY 2024-25, high-value GEN 2 investment produces the largest increase in the index while GEN 3 declines; and in FY 2026-27, the unchanged envelope makes the effect of composition unusually clear. These are different forms of change, and annual reporting weakens analysis when it describes all upward movement as though it arose from the same institutional process.

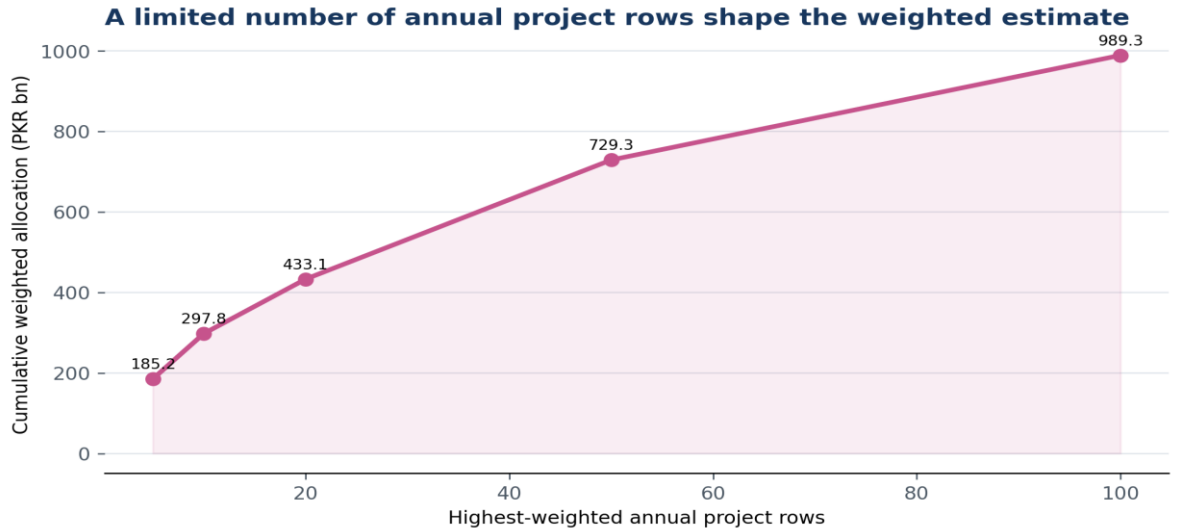


Figure 5B: Concentration of the seven-year weighted estimate in high-value annual project rows

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset. Rows refer to annual project allocations, not unique projects across the full period.

Because the estimate is financially concentrated, an interpretive concern can be converted into a manageable assurance problem. The ten highest-weighted annual rows contribute PKR 297.8 billion, the top 20 contribute PKR 433.1 billion and the top 100 contribute PKR 989.3 billion, locating a substantial part of the national estimate in a limited group of judgements. The figures neither validate nor discredit any individual classification, but they show where an unsupported assumption would matter most and where project-level review can add the greatest confidence, particularly when reviewers descend from an aggregated title to the activities, locations, beneficiaries and safeguards through which the allocation is delivered.

When the seven programmes are placed within one fiscal frame, the cumulative figures answer a broader question than any annual ratio can carry. Official Federal envelopes total PKR 6,600.0 billion and the weighted estimate reaches PKR 2,146.4 billion, producing a GRI of 32.52 percent that can serve as a baseline for future portfolio reporting. Yet accumulation also smooths the annual source-boundary differences, denominator shifts and project transitions through which the result was produced, making the cumulative measure useful for strategic orientation only when the annual record remains available to explain the forces concealed by the total.

Seen against this cumulative frame, volatility is not in itself evidence of failure, since development projects begin, expand, slow and end as needs, financing and implementation conditions change. The institutional weakness lies in the loss of reasoning between those stages: a relevant project should carry its beneficiary analysis, responsive activities, budget, consultation, risks and indicators from PC-I through PC-III and PC-IV, allowing a later allocation to be interpreted as part of an explicit and revisable design.

Without that continuity of evidence, the same project can reappear for several years while its gender relevance is repeatedly inferred from little more than title and sector.

Accordingly, an annual dashboard should make the causes of movement visible alongside the movement itself. The official envelope, extracted allocation, GEN 3 and GEN 2 actual amounts, weighted allocation and GRI can be accompanied by a concise account of the projects and decisions responsible for material change, distinguishing a stronger design standard from a new flagship initiative, a denominator shift, project completion or a classification correction. Readers can then see not only that the portfolio changed, but which part changed, why it changed and what kind of institutional response the change warrants.

FY	GRI change	Weighted change	GEN 3 change	Analytical reading
2020-21	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Starting portfolio under COVID-19 and recovery pressure
2021-22	-2.34 pp	+62.1	+4.04	Direct allocation rises while the index falls; denominator and composition dominate
2022-23	+2.38 pp	-11.9	-2.11	Index rises while direct allocation falls; improvement is mainly mainstream
2023-24	-5.26 pp	+56.1	+10.12	Direct allocation rises while the index falls; denominator and composition dominate
2024-25	+8.05 pp	+74.5	-8.43	Index rises while direct allocation falls; improvement is mainly mainstream
2025-26	-5.82 pp	-94.3	-3.46	Both indicators weaken; portfolio contraction or composition reduces visibility
2026-27	+5.96 pp	+59.6	+3.08	Both indicators improve, but the scale of GEN 2 remains decisive

Table 3A: Decomposition of annual change. Monetary changes are PKR billion; GRI change is shown in percentage points.

The decomposition table therefore condenses four trajectories that an aggregate line would otherwise blur: recovery enlarged relevant amounts without matching the growth of the envelope; fiscal correction raised the ratio while reducing those amounts; infrastructure-led expansion increased the GRI as direct commitment contracted; and the final year strengthened both measures under a stable denominator. The absence of a smooth progression does not diminish the value of the index, but it places interpretation at the centre of its use, requiring every material change to be traced to the fiscal and project decisions from which it arose.

Yet continuity of project rows across several PSDPs should not be confused with an institution that has developed continuity of practice. Hydropower and regional schemes may influence the series for years without their gender rationale being reconsidered, while a major women-specific initiative may disappear when its project life ends even though the inequality it addressed remains. Institutional continuity exists when agencies renew the evidence attached to ongoing projects and prepare new direct responses before earlier ones conclude, allowing the planning system, not accidental project duration to reproduce gender-responsive investment.

For these reasons, the trends establish the GRI as a governance baseline, not an outcome index. It shows how planned allocations are distributed across different strengths of gender relevance and directs attention towards the projects, sectors and institutions whose claims require deeper examination. Whether women used a service, gained time or income, avoided harm, exercised greater agency or experienced a narrower inequality belongs to implementation monitoring, evaluation and social statistics; the purpose of a mature reporting system is to connect these layers while preserving the distinct question answered by each.

7. Gender Marker Analysis

The marker distribution describes a portfolio divided by the form of evidence through which gender relevance becomes visible. GEN 3 identifies projects whose purpose explicitly names women, girls or a gender inequality; GEN 2 captures mainstream services and infrastructure whose route to benefit is substantial but not self-executing; GEN 1 records enabling systems whose effects depend on later institutional use; and GEN 0 marks the boundary beyond which no defensible pathway is visible in the available record. These are different relationships between public investment and gender equality, not ascending grades of virtue or a scale on which every project is expected to move upward.

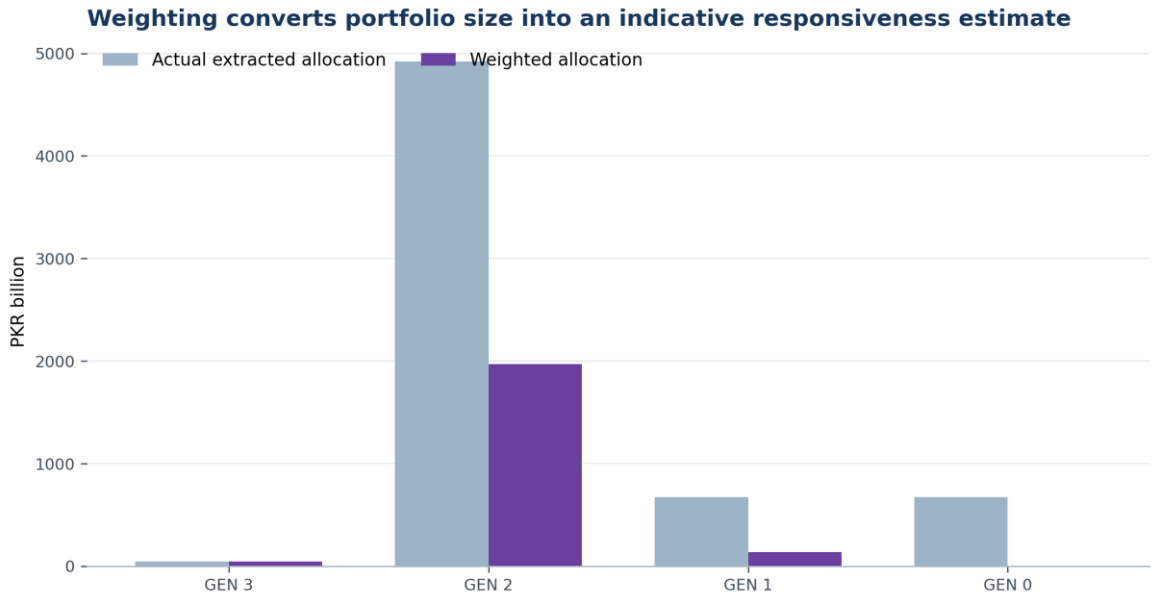


Figure 6: Actual and Weighted Allocation by Gender Marker, FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Within this distribution, weighting preserves the distinction between forms of evidence inside the calculation. GEN 3 receives full weight because gender equality or women and girls are central to its stated purpose, while the lower coefficients applied to GEN 2 and GEN 1 recognise progressively more indirect routes and GEN 0 contributes nothing to the estimate. The calculation moderates the financial claim, but it cannot transform a classification into evidence of implementation, since no coefficient can establish that an activity was funded, a barrier removed, a service used or an inequality reduced.

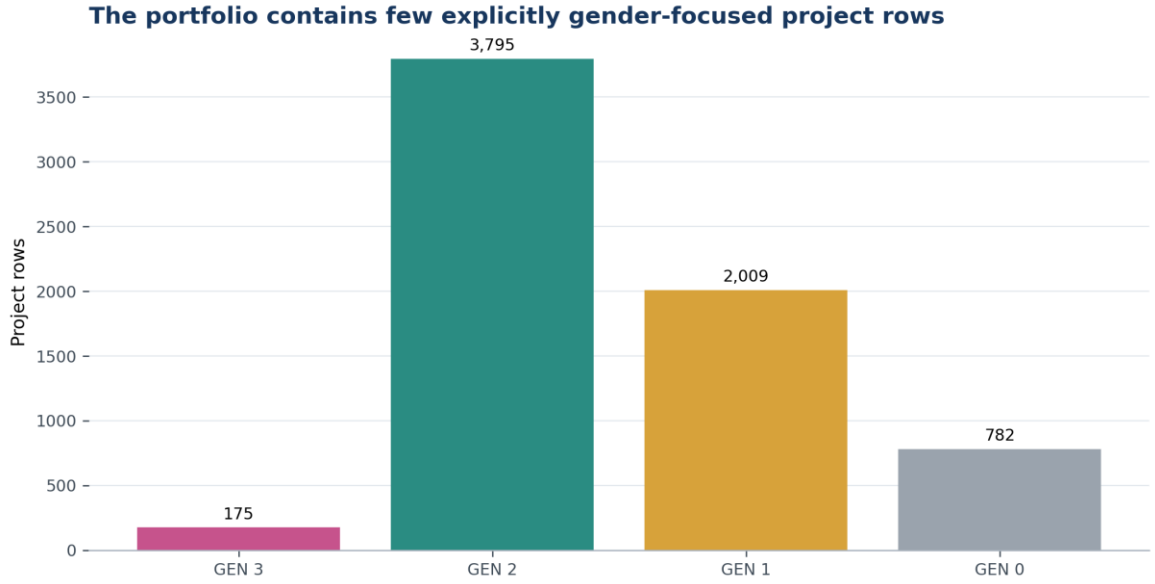


Figure 7: Project Count Distribution by Gender Marker

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Once project counts are read beside allocations, the marker distribution reveals two different dimensions of institutional reach. GEN 3 comprises 175 annual rows and PKR 43.64 billion, GEN 2 comprises 3,795 rows and by far the largest allocation, GEN 1 comprises 2,009 rows and GEN 0 comprises 782. Explicit intent is narrow in both spread and value, whereas indirect relevance extends across much of the machinery of public investment, placing the central governance challenge not in maximising the

number of positive markers but in ensuring that the evidence attached to each category is proportionate to the strength of the claim being made.

At the explicit end of the framework, GEN 3 gains analytical clarity from its stated purpose but still leaves adequacy and effect unresolved. A women university, maternal-health facility or empowerment programme must still identify the inequality it is designed to address, show whether its scale and location correspond to need, involve the groups whose access it seeks to improve and connect financed outputs to a measurable change. Direct intent allows these questions to be asked without first reconstructing the beneficiary route; only implementation and outcome evidence can show whether the response was sufficient.

By contrast, GEN 2 carries the greatest possibility for change because it sits within systems operating at national and regional scale, and the greatest assurance risk because the published route from sector to beneficiary is often incomplete. A common minimum record should be required for every material claim, with deeper review where allocations are large, titles aggregate diverse components, resettlement or safety risks are significant, climate exposure is high or the expected benefit depends on several intermediate conditions. Such proportional scrutiny concentrates institutional effort where a weak assumption could most distort both the estimate and the project itself.

GEN 1 and GEN 0, the lower-evidence categories, also require positive reasoning rather than default assignment. An enabling platform belongs in GEN 1 when its data, capacity, governance or institutional function can plausibly alter later decisions affecting gender equality, while GEN 0 is appropriate when review has asked the relevant question and found no credible route in the available evidence. Either conclusion may change when documentation improves or project design evolves, which is why periodic review should remain possible without creating an expectation that revision must always produce a higher marker.

Interpretive safeguard GEN 3 measures explicit intent. GEN 2 measures credible potential through mainstream services and infrastructure. Combining them without preserving this distinction would overstate direct investment and weaken accountability.

As the proposition being tested changes across markers, accountability must change with it. GEN 3 must connect a diagnosed inequality to a dedicated response whose reach can be assessed; GEN 2 must show how a mainstream investment addressed a differentiated barrier through design, resources and indicators; GEN 1 must identify the institutional mechanism expected to influence later practice; and GEN 0 must retain a concise reason for exclusion. A marker becomes auditable when another reviewer can reconstruct this chain and reach an informed judgement from the same record.

Because those judgements can legitimately change when new evidence appears, the history of reclassification must remain visible. iPAS should retain the original marker, the materials reviewed, the validating authority, the date and the rationale for amendment, allowing future analysis to separate a genuine shift in the portfolio from a correction in method or documentation. This record also protects the integrity of national reporting by making it difficult to improve the aggregate through unsupported upward movement between categories.

Accordingly, public reporting should place marker, weight, actual allocation, weighted allocation, annual row count and evidence status beside one another without collapsing them into a composite rank. An agency may improve the quality of beneficiary analysis, costing and monitoring before the financial composition of its portfolio changes, and that institutional progress should be visible even when the GRI remains stable. Separating the measures creates room to recognise better practice without mistaking documentation, money and social results for the same achievement.

8. Sector and Benefit Category Analysis

The sector pattern challenges the institutional habit of locating gender-responsive investment principally within specialist social portfolios. Roads, transport, regional development, water, energy and public services dominate the weighted estimate because they organise the spatial and material conditions through which women reach schools, health facilities, markets, employment and public authority. Their scale gives them the capacity to alter daily life across large populations, but it does not make the direction of that change inherently equitable: an investment can reduce distance and isolation for some users while producing unaffordable access, unsafe travel, land loss or exclusion for others.

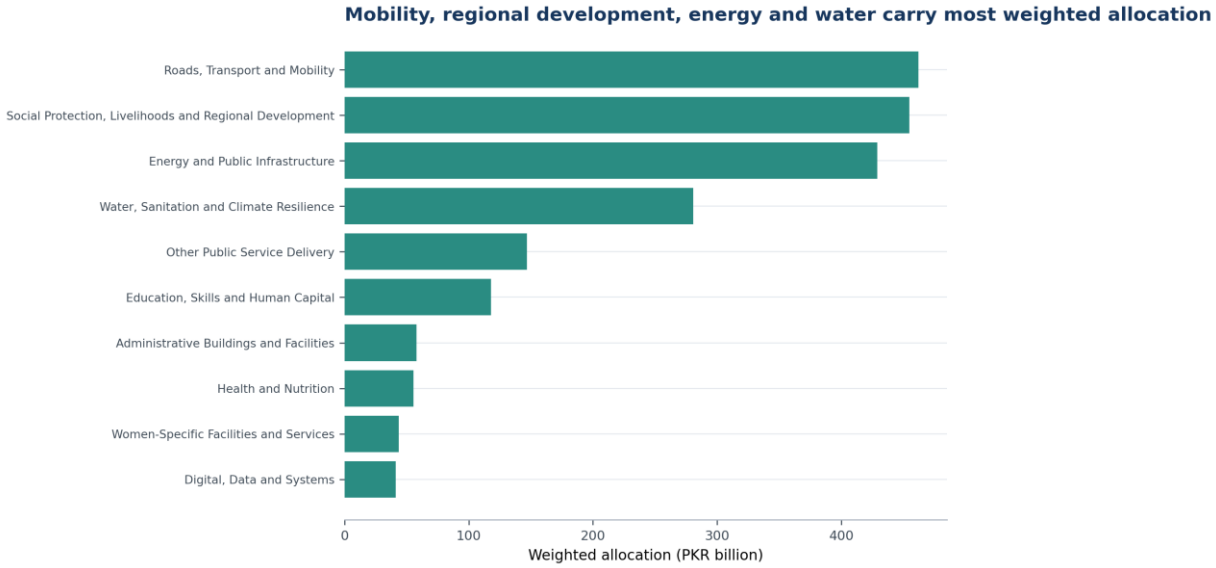


Figure 8: Weighted Gender-Responsive Allocation by Sector/Category

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Within this broader sector pattern, roads, transport and mobility form the largest weighted category because movement mediates participation in economic and social life. Physical proximity alone does not determine access, since women may depend on the availability and cost of transport, the safety of stops and vehicles, the timing of services, last-mile connections and household permission or control over travel expenditure. A road reaches its gender-relevant purpose only through these conditions of use, which means appraisal must follow the asset beyond construction and ask who can travel, to which destinations, at what cost and with what exposure to risk.

A second major concentration appears in social protection, livelihoods and regional development, often through block or territorial allocations that hold diverse interventions beneath a single programme title. Aggregation makes the national commitment visible while concealing the local decisions through which eligibility, targeting, participation, benefit levels and grievance arrangements are set; two components financed through the same parent allocation may reach different districts and livelihood systems, with sharply different consequences for women. The meaningful unit of gender analysis is the activity or sub-project at which those decisions become concrete.

Across both concentrations, a gender analysis confined to intended benefits remains incomplete. A road may extend market access while displacing households, a dam may improve service reliability while altering land and compensation relations, and a digital platform may reduce costly journeys while excluding users who lack devices, documentation, literacy or privacy. Benefits and harms are produced through the same design, and responsiveness depends on whether the project anticipates their distribution, gives affected groups a route into decisions and retains safeguards capable of responding when expected gains are accompanied by unequal costs.

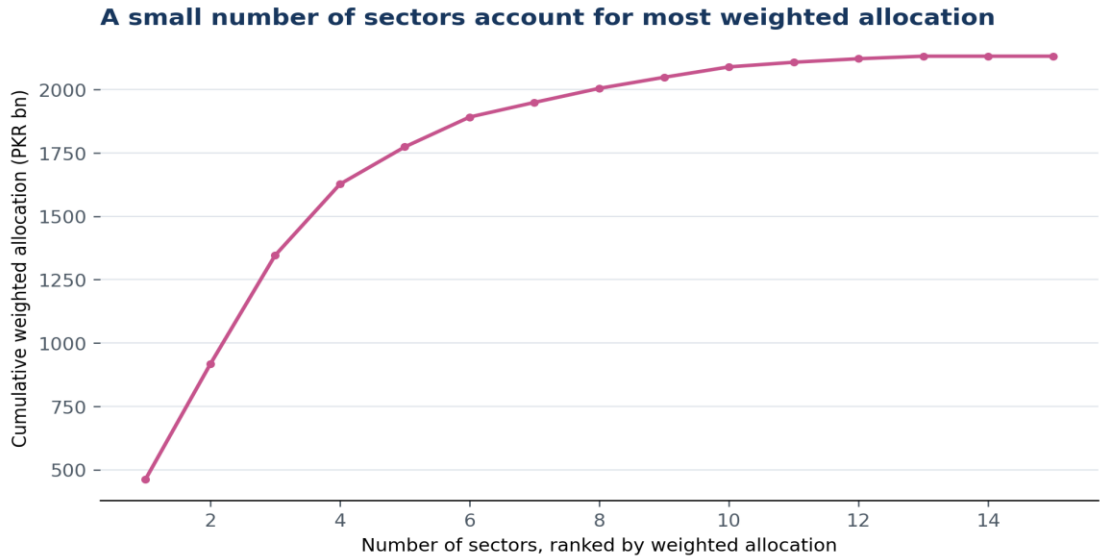


Figure 8A: Cumulative concentration of weighted allocation across sectors

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Because weighted allocation is concentrated in a relatively small group of sectors, reform is administratively feasible even though the underlying claims are diverse. Transport, water, power, regional development, education, health, climate resilience and digital systems can receive tailored guidance without fragmenting the national method, provided that every guide retains the same underlying logic: a documented barrier, a design response, an associated resource and an observable result. Sector specificity supplies the questions through which this logic becomes meaningful to engineers, service planners and territorial programmes, replacing generic declarations of benefit with evidence relevant to the decisions each profession controls.

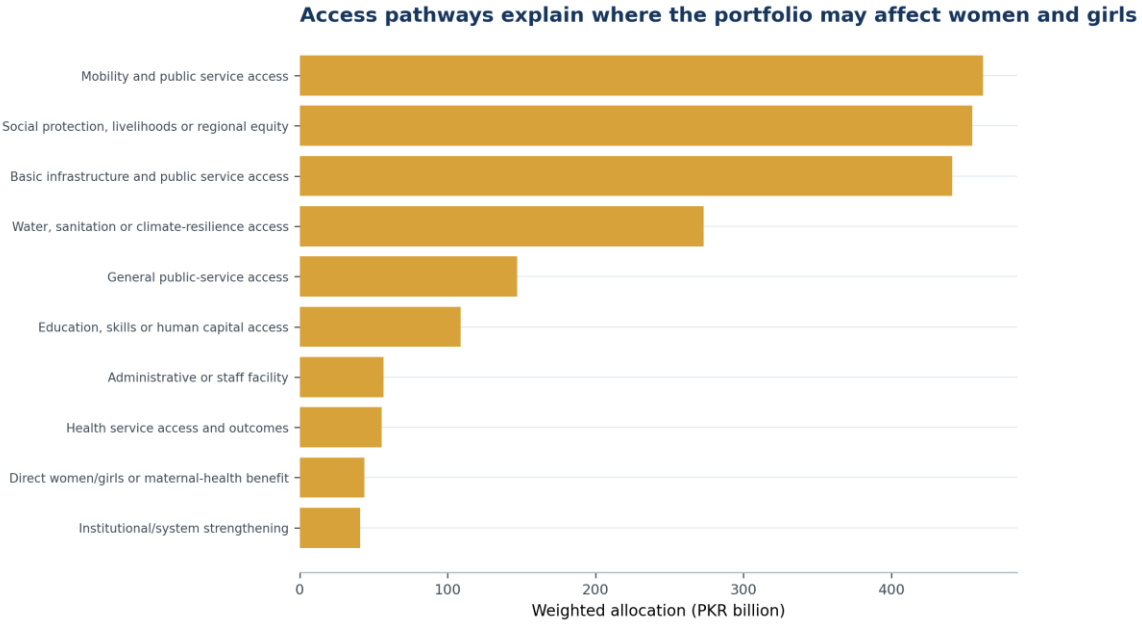


Figure 9: Weighted Allocation by Benefit Category

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

8.1 What the Sector Pattern Means for Public Investment

This sector concentration also relocates the centre of institutional responsibility. Communications, Water Resources, Power and regional portfolios manage investments large enough to shape the GRI and the everyday geography of access, which makes their appraisal criteria, technical specifications, procurement choices and monitoring systems part of the country's gender-policy machinery even when their formal mandates are expressed in engineering or administrative terms. Mainstreaming becomes credible when these decisions are recognised as distributional choices and examined by the institutions making them, instead of being annotated as gender-relevant after the principal design has been settled.

That transfer of responsibility to mainstream sectors does not diminish the case for dedicated investment. Women universities, maternal-health facilities, protection services, skills initiatives and economic-empowerment programmes address forms of exclusion that general provision may not remove, while their explicit purpose keeps structural inequalities visible within public finance. A balanced portfolio needs the two approaches to operate together: direct projects respond where need requires a targeted

institution or service, and mainstream projects alter the larger systems that determine whether women can use public resources on equitable terms.

8.2 Benefit Categories as a Bridge Between Numbers and Lived Access

To make this distributed responsibility operational, benefit categories provide a bridge between the fiscal record and the conditions through which an investment is experienced. Mobility can change journey time, safety and access to employment; water can change health, unpaid work and productive activity; education can change enrolment, retention and capability; health can change service use and maternal outcomes; and livelihood interventions can change income, assets and market participation. These are causal propositions, not observed results, and their analytical purpose is to identify the intermediate conditions that must hold before an allocation can plausibly contribute to gender equality.

For that reason, the proposed route for a material GEN 2 project should be written as an evidence chain linking the differentiated barrier to the design response, the resource used to deliver it and an indicator capable of revealing change. The content will differ by sector: transport must interrogate safety and affordability, water must examine time, reliability and participation, energy must distinguish connection from household or productive use, and regional programmes must expose sub-project allocations and beneficiaries. Consistency lies in requiring each project to make its reasoning testable, not in forcing unlike investments into identical fields or indicators.

The need for such a chain is evident in education and health, where completion of an asset is not equivalent to use of a service. A facility may increase nominal supply while distance, staffing, language, disability access, accommodation, safety, direct and indirect costs and household expectations continue to determine whether women and girls enrol, remain, seek care or receive adequate treatment. Monitoring that ends with construction leaves these mediating conditions unobserved, even though they often decide whether public provision becomes a capability in practice or remains an institution that intended users cannot reach.

The same principle applies to digitalisation, which can reduce travel and administrative burdens, improve access to information and connect women to services and markets, even though coverage alone does not establish inclusion. Evidence on digital access identifies affordability, devices, skills, safety, privacy and restrictive norms as separate determinants of use, with Pakistan displaying a particularly wide gender gap in internet use. Assisted channels, user testing, data protection and alternatives to digital-only access are therefore substantive design choices rather than supplementary conveniences.[8]

Beyond any single sector, climate risk cuts across the map because displacement, water stress, livelihood loss, heat, disease and damaged services are experienced through existing inequalities in assets, care responsibilities, mobility and voice. UN Women identifies disaster-driven displacement and gender-sensitive resilience as material concerns in Pakistan, while the Gender Unit checklists translate this intersection into reviewable fields on vulnerable locations, early warning, resilient infrastructure, green jobs, climate-smart livelihoods, health and nutrition, consultation and specialist expertise. Their value lies in preventing climate relevance from being inferred solely from a project's location or technology.[9]

Taken together, these pathways require analysis to follow an asset through the intermediate conditions that produce an equitable result. A road requires transport women can use and destinations that expand opportunity; a water system requires reliable and affordable delivery that reduces unpaid work without redistributing it; a school requires safe access, retention and learning; and a digital platform requires usable, protected and non-exclusive channels. These intermediate conditions explain both why mainstream allocations belong within gender analysis and why financial scale cannot substitute for evidence about the distribution of access, benefit and harm.

[8]World Bank Gender Data Portal, Beyond Coverage: Closing Gaps in Digital Access and Use in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, 2026.

[9]UN Women Pakistan, Strategic Note 2023-2027, section on gender-responsive resilience, climate change and disaster-driven displacement.

Sector or category	Rows	Actual	Weighted
Roads, Transport and Mobility	988	1,154.9	462.0
Social Protection, Livelihoods and Regional Development	358	1,136.6	454.7
Energy and Public Infrastructure	384	1,072.9	429.2
Water, Sanitation and Climate Resilience	544	702.0	280.8
Other Public Service Delivery	444	367.3	146.9
Education, Skills and Human Capital	768	294.5	117.8
Administrative Buildings and Facilities	715	288.7	57.7
Health and Nutrition	265	138.6	55.4
Women-Specific Facilities and Services	175	43.6	43.6
Digital, Data and Systems	380	205.1	41.0
Governance and Institutional Capacity	493	91.4	18.3
Research, Science and Innovation	300	69.9	14.0

Table 3: Leading sectors by weighted gender-responsive allocation. Monetary values are PKR billion.

9. Division-wise and Lead Ministry Analysis

Division analysis identifies where the authority to shape the national estimate is located, not which institution should be declared a better gender performer. Water Resources, Communications, Power and regional programmes lead because their GEN 2 portfolios determine access, mobility, energy, services and territorial development at financial scale, while the published programme books reveal comparatively little about the decisions through which those benefits and risks are distributed. Their prominence directs assurance towards the institutions with the greatest influence; it does not convert financial size into evidence of quality.

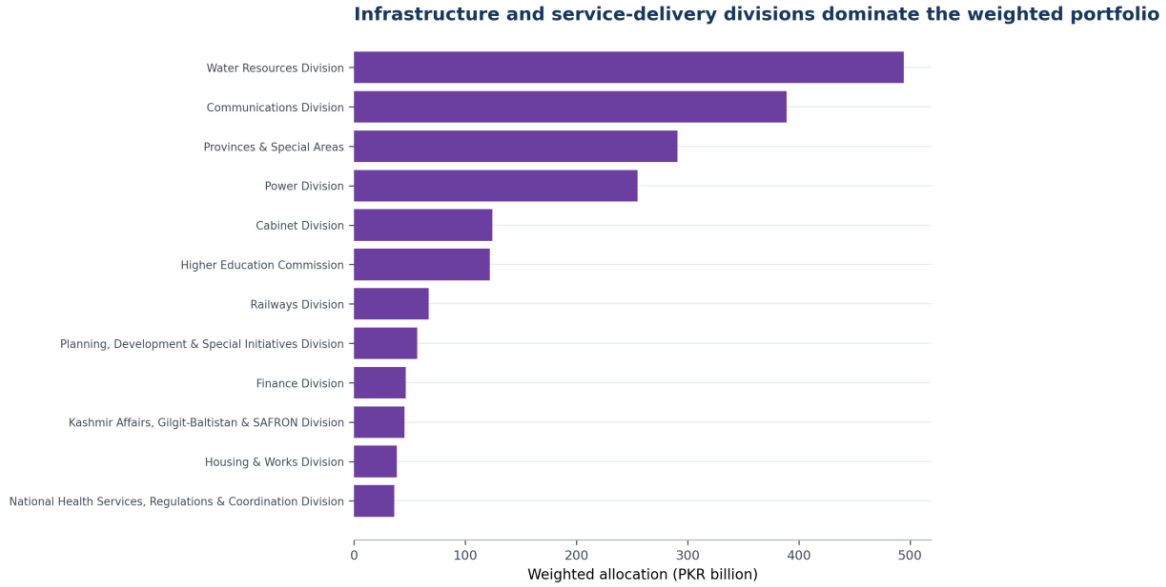
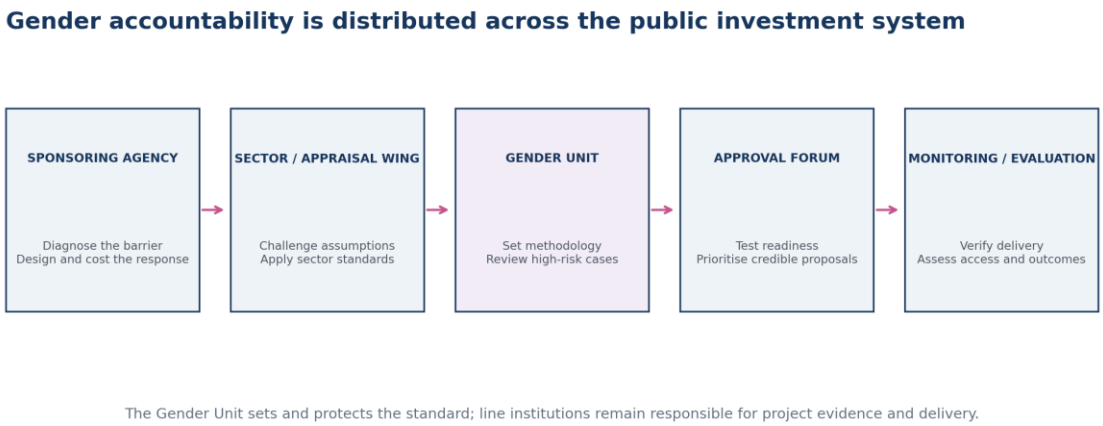


Figure 10: Weighted Allocation by Lead Ministry/Division

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset. Display labels harmonise obvious naming variants.

Within that concentration, the leading divisions combine plausible routes to widespread benefit with limited published information on beneficiaries, participation, safeguards, distribution and results. This gap is not a reason to remove their investments from gender analysis, since doing so would ignore systems central to women's lives, but it does require a stronger documentary trail where an indirect claim carries substantial financial influence. Review must be able to follow the project from a general sector effect to the barrier identified, the design measure selected and the implementation record through which the claim can be sustained or revised.

Accordingly, the evidentiary trail must differ across mandates because the decisions producing exclusion also differ. Infrastructure divisions must examine access, affordability, safety, land, resettlement and service use; education and health institutions must examine enrolment, retention, utilisation, staffing, quality and outcomes; regional programmes must disaggregate sub-projects, locations and beneficiaries; and digital or enabling portfolios must show how systems alter access, privacy, data and administrative decisions. A common standard becomes credible through these sector-specific forms of evidence through sector-specific evidence, not identical language repeated across unrelated projects.



Institutional responsibility map for gender-responsive public investment

Source: Authors' institutional framework based on the federal project cycle and Gender Unit checklist roles.

9.1 GEN 3 Lead Divisions

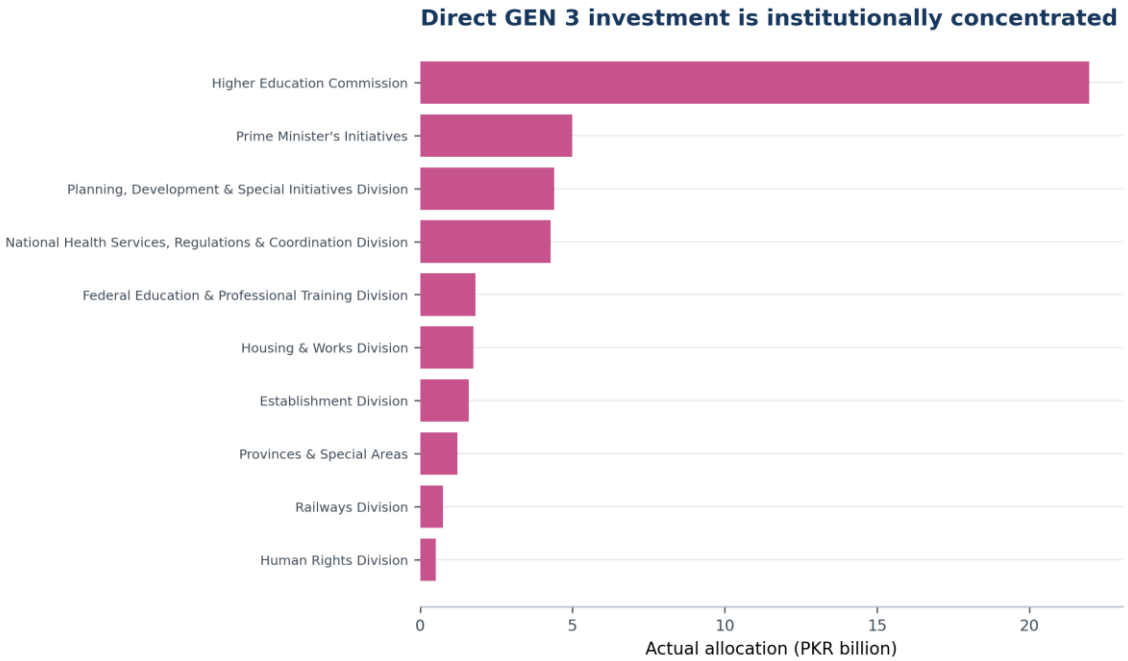


Figure 11: GEN 3 Direct Women-Specific Allocation by Lead Division

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

At the direct end of the portfolio, GEN 3 is concentrated among a narrower group of institutional owners whose mandates make intended beneficiaries easier to identify. Higher Education Commission projects support women universities, campuses and accommodation, health institutions finance maternal and mother-and-child facilities, planning and executive initiatives carry empowerment programmes, and establishment or housing portfolios provide female accommodation. This clarity creates a stronger starting point for accountability, yet the concentration of direct allocation in a few institutions and projects also leaves the national total vulnerable when a major initiative is completed, delayed or not replaced.

Because direct responsibility is narrow and project-based, a durable pipeline should begin with inequalities already identified by public policy instead of searching for existing projects that can be assigned a more favourable label. Ministries can use the National Gender Policy Framework to locate gaps in health, safety, care, accommodation, livelihoods, productive assets and institutional access, then test geographical need, delivery capacity, recurrent financing and ownership through normal project development. Direct investment becomes institutional practice when this translation from diagnosed problem to feasible proposal is repeated before annual prioritisation, instead of depending on an occasional flagship initiative.

9.2 GEN 2 Lead Divisions

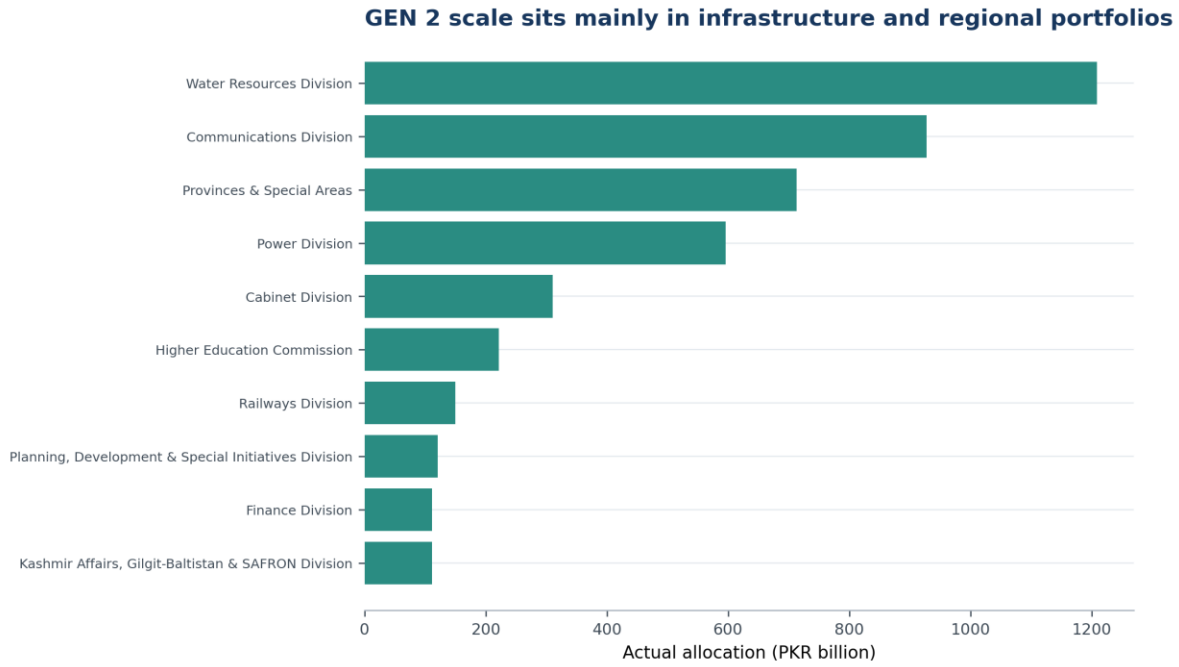


Figure 12: GEN 2 Weighted Allocation by Lead Division

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

The much larger GEN 2 field is owned principally by infrastructure, territorial and service-delivery institutions, making their everyday project practice decisive to the credibility of the national estimate. A sector pathway may justify preliminary inclusion, but it cannot identify who faces the barrier, which feature of the design responds, what resource has been committed or how access and risk will be observed during delivery. These elements depend on operational knowledge held by the sponsoring agency, which means the institution designing the investment must also be capable of explaining and defending its gender rationale.

Within this field, sponsoring agencies should remain the primary authors and custodians of the analysis, while sector and appraisal wings challenge its technical assumptions and the Gender Unit maintains the national method, supports difficult cases and reviews projects carrying high financial or social risk. Central oversight cannot recreate knowledge that was absent from project preparation, just as line ownership cannot amount to unreviewed self-certification. The system becomes accountable when these functions create a documented exchange around one project record and retain the decisions through which a claim was accepted, qualified or rejected.

Such a division of labour resolves the ambiguity often created by the language of shared responsibility. The sponsoring agency prepares and updates the evidence because it controls design; the relevant sector and appraisal functions test that evidence against mandate-specific standards; and the Gender Unit governs consistency, supports capability and resolves questions with national implications. Responsibility is shared across the project cycle, but accountability remains attributable because each institution is answerable for a defined judgement not for a general expectation that gender should somehow have been considered.

Once roles are assigned, division reporting should keep financial influence, evidence quality and implementation performance analytically separate. A large relevant portfolio can be acknowledged without assuming that women received its benefits, an evidence measure can show whether required diagnosis and design fields were completed, and implementation indicators can reveal whether the planned response reached intended users or reduced a barrier. Combining these dimensions into one score would allow allocation size to dominate the result, conceal uncertainty and weaken the very accountability that division analysis is intended to establish.

Capability to discharge those roles should be built around recurring project decisions, not general awareness alone. Infrastructure divisions require practical approaches to safety, affordability, land and resettlement; service sectors require methods for analysing utilisation, quality and outcomes; digital portfolios require standards for inclusion, privacy and assisted access; and regional programmes require visibility below the block allocation. Guidance built around live cases can turn the checklist into a technical resource used to resolve design problems, whereas generic training risks leaving officials more familiar with gender terminology but no better equipped to change a project.

This practical orientation is especially important because the institutions controlling the largest investments do not always possess strong social-analysis capability, while gender specialists may be organisationally distant from engineering, procurement and implementation. The Gender Unit can bridge this divide through case review, templates and technical support, but it cannot assume ownership of choices made within a line division or compensate indefinitely for expertise excluded from the project team. Mainstreaming fails both when gender knowledge is absent from the decision and when its presence becomes a reason for the responsible institution to transfer the decision elsewhere.

A related coordination problem arises in direct investment because several persistent needs cross conventional administrative mandates. Higher education and maternal health have visible institutional homes, whereas care infrastructure, safe mobility, women-owned enterprise support, agricultural assets, climate adaptation, digital access and protection may sit between ministries or depend on several of them. Pipeline development must assign ownership before annual prioritisation and clarify which institution finances, delivers and sustains the response, otherwise a recognised inequality can remain everyone's concern without becoming any institution's project.

Division or portfolio type	Key gender pathway	Minimum evidence expected
Communications and mobility	Travel time, affordability, safety, last-mile access, connection to services	Route and user analysis, safety design, consultation, sex-disaggregated use and access indicators
Water Resources and climate resilience	Time use, reliability, displacement, livelihoods, participation and disaster exposure	Household and user baseline, safeguard evidence, participation records and resilience indicators
Power and energy	Household connection, productive use, public-service reliability and transition costs	Connection and enterprise data, service-quality indicators and distributional assessment
Regional and block programmes	Internal allocation, geographic targeting and beneficiary composition	Sub-project tagging, beneficiary records, local consultation and consolidated results
Education and health	Reach, affordability, retention, service quality, accommodation and acceptable use	Disaggregated enrolment or utilisation, staffing, quality and outcome indicators
Digital and governance systems	Device, identity, literacy, privacy, accessibility and alternative channels	User testing, exclusion analysis, safeguards and assisted-access measures

Table 3B: Division-level accountability matrix derived from the Gender Unit checklist fields and sector pathways in the analytical dataset.

The accountability matrix makes these differentiated expectations predictable. A communications project and a maternal-health facility will not share a beneficiary pathway, safeguard or result indicator, but each must connect a documented problem to a financed response and a form of change that can be observed. Sector specificity strengthens the common framework because it shows reviewers what credible evidence looks like within the decisions they actually encounter, replacing consistency of phrasing with consistency of analytical discipline.

To complete that account, GEN 2 evidence must record adverse and distributional effects alongside anticipated benefit so that both directions of change remain visible. Infrastructure can extend services while causing land loss or relocation, digital systems can widen reach while excluding users without documents, devices or literacy, and regional packages can reproduce unequal voice in local decisions. A credible division account will show how anticipated gains and risks were examined together, which groups participated in the decisions and whether the response was maintained as implementation altered the original design.

10. Gender Responsiveness Scan of PSDP 2026-27

FY 2026-27 warrants a separate scan because its significance extends beyond closing the seven-year series. The allocation calculation is complete, yet implementation remains current enough for sponsoring agencies and reviewers to strengthen, test and, where evidence requires, correct the reasoning attached to active projects. The year can thus serve as a bridge between retrospective classification, which identifies relevance from the portfolio record available after key choices were made, and prospective governance, in which the analysis is documented while activities, safeguards, budgets and monitoring arrangements can still be adjusted.

That implementation window shifts the unresolved question from completeness of the annual dataset to the depth of project-design and implementation evidence. FY 2026-27 is incorporated in every annual and cumulative calculation in the report, while fuller review is still needed to determine whether GEN 2 projects converted a credible sector pathway into a documented beneficiary analysis, responsive activity, resource provision, participation process and indicator. Preserving this distinction allows the allocation finding to remain final within its stated method without presenting the supporting assurance judgement as more complete than the available records permit.

Within this bounded question, the dataset records 777 annual project rows, PKR 1,043.7 billion in extracted allocation and PKR 362.4 billion after weighting against an official Federal envelope of PKR 1,000.0 billion, producing a GRI of 36.24 percent. The extracted amount is shown separately because project-table boundaries differ from the consolidated official envelope used as the denominator. This source difference is a feature of the fiscal record not a gender finding, and disclosing it prevents the apparent precision of the index from obscuring the distinct questions answered by the two totals.

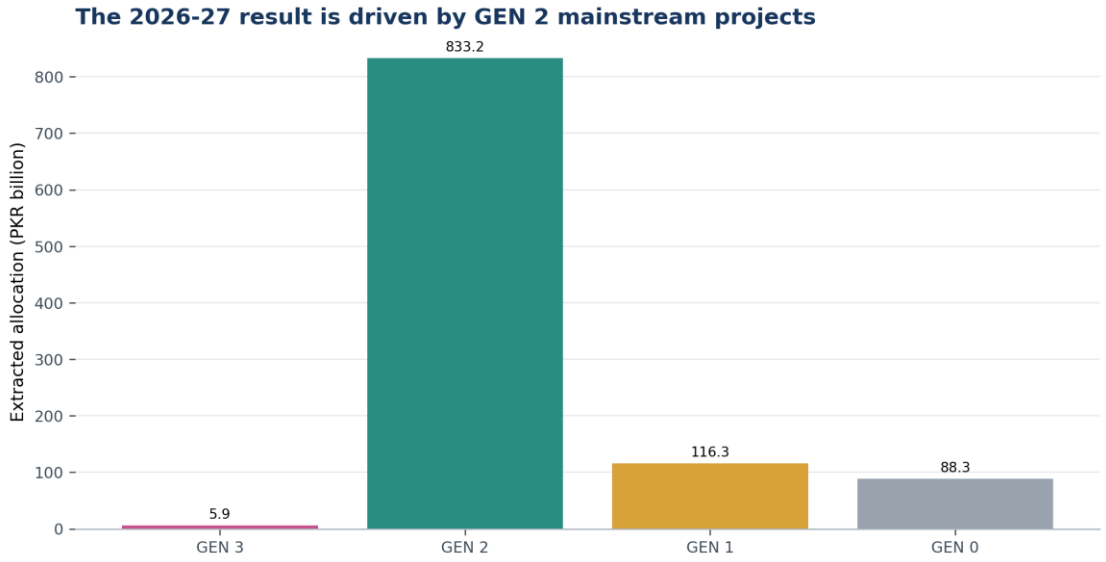


Figure 12A: FY 2026-27 actual allocation by gender marker

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

Disaggregating the annual result shows that GEN 2 contains 463 rows and PKR 833.2 billion in actual allocation, contributing PKR 333.3 billion after application of the 40 percent weight; GEN 1 adds PKR 23.3 billion and GEN 3 PKR 5.90 billion. The record GRI is consequently rooted in mainstream systems and not in a broad expansion of women-specific projects. Confidence in the annual result depends on whether those systems can show how safety, affordability, time, service quality, participation and control over resources were addressed within the projects through which the weighted amount was generated.

This concentration of mainstream value is located principally in roads, regional development, water, energy and education, which place both opportunity and risk within a tractable group of sectors. This concentration permits assurance to be selective without being arbitrary: financially influential projects can receive priority because an unsupported judgement would materially affect the national estimate, while smaller projects should enter the sample when resettlement, climate exposure, safety or exclusion creates a significant social risk. Transparent selection criteria can reconcile proportionality with the need to examine harms that financial value alone may not capture.

The policy context supplied by the 13th Five Year Plan, URAAN Pakistan and the 5Es provides a national language of inclusion, empowerment and resilience, but that commitment becomes operational only when it changes a decision within an individual project. For a road, dam, digital system, school or regional package, the connection should be visible through the constraint identified, the design response selected, the resource attached and the indicator through which access or risk will be assessed. Where this translation is absent, alignment remains an aspiration stated above the project not evidence carried through its implementation.

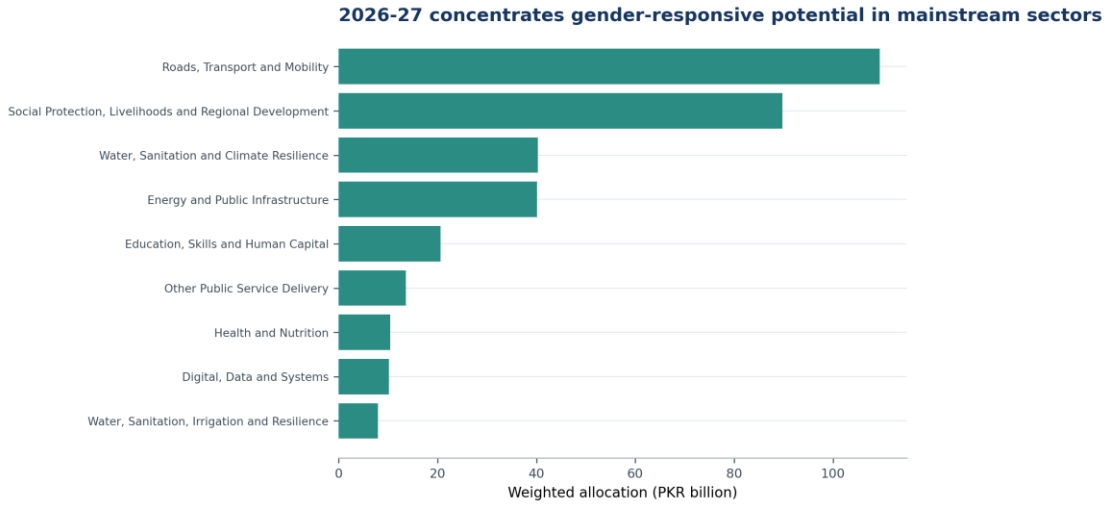


Figure 12B: FY 2026-27 sectors by weighted gender-responsive allocation

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

The sector profile makes the scale of those project-level decisions visible: roads, transport and mobility contribute PKR 109.4 billion in weighted allocation; social protection, livelihoods and regional development contribute PKR 89.8 billion; water, sanitation and climate resilience PKR 40.3 billion; energy and public infrastructure PKR 40.1 billion; and education, skills and human capital PKR 20.7 billion. Their combined scale explains why the annual result is high, but their distinct social mechanisms determine what that result might mean for women, since mobility, territorial investment, water, energy and education alter access through different decisions and constraints.

Each of these routes requires a different form of evidence: transport requires information on safety, affordability, route design, service timing and last-mile connection; regional programmes require visibility of sub-projects, locations and participation; water and climate portfolios require attention to time use, reliability, resilience, land and safeguards; energy requires a distinction between connection and household, enterprise or public-service use; and education requires evidence on enrolment, retention, accommodation, safety and fields of study. The more complex the route from asset to beneficiary, the less adequate a generic statement that women will benefit becomes.

Those requirements can be tested through a focused review linked to PC-III monitoring, converting sector questions into a stronger annual evidence base. For each selected GEN 2 project, the Gender Unit, sector wings and sponsoring agency can assemble a concise record of the barrier, response, resource, consultation, risk and indicator, then judge whether the documentation supports the assigned marker and whether implementation remains consistent with the original rationale. This additional layer would not change the purpose of the GRI; it would reveal the conditions on which its most influential claims depend.

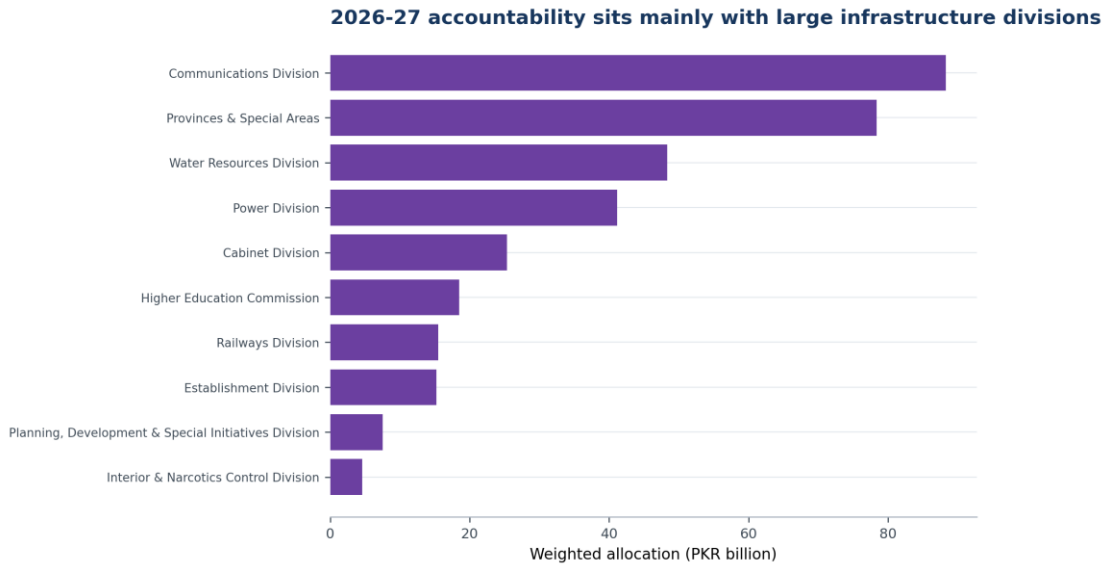


Figure 12C: FY 2026-27 lead divisions by weighted allocation

Source: Authors' calculations from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset.

The same concentration appears at division level, where Communications contributes PKR 88.3 billion in weighted allocation, followed by Provinces and Special Areas at PKR 78.4 billion, Water Resources at PKR 48.4 billion, Power at PKR 41.2 billion and Cabinet at PKR 25.4 billion. These institutions are the natural starting point for assurance because their projects carry the greatest financial influence and operate in sectors where detailed choices about route, location, land, service standards and local participation can materially change the distribution of benefits and costs.

Yet priority review should not be interpreted as a presumption that a division or project has performed poorly. It is an assurance response to the combination of financial influence and indirect evidence, since a weak classification in a large project can move the national estimate even when the underlying design has not changed. GEN 3 projects also require scrutiny, but the question begins at a different point: their intended population is visible, while the adequacy, reach and realised quality of the response still need to be established.

Direct GEN 3 projects in FY 2026-27

Marker	Lead division	Project	Source p.	PKR bn
GEN 3	Establishment Division	Construction of Residential Facilities for Female Officers, Sector H-8/4, Islamabad (Phase-I)	18	0.827
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of AJK Women University, Bagh, AJ&K	31	0.555
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Provision of Academic & Research Facilities and Girls Hostel at Quaid-i- Azam University, Islamabad (Revised)	33	0.450
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of University Campus for Women at Bannu (Revised)	33	0.400
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Strengthening of Women University Swabi (New Campus)	35	0.400
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Strengthening of The Women University Multan(Phase-II)	34	0.357
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of New Campus for Govt. College Women University Faisalabad	32	0.330
GEN 3	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of Women Sub- Campus at Batkhela, University of Malakand (Revised)	33	0.300

Table 4: Highest-allocation FY 2026-27 GEN 3 rows. Values are from the project-level classification dataset.

Within the programme as a whole, direct-project development and GEN 2 assurance should proceed together because each responds to a different weakness. Education and accommodation remain legitimate direct priorities, while the National Gender Policy Framework also points towards needs in maternal and reproductive health, protection, care, safe mobility, climate adaptation, digital inclusion, productive assets and entrepreneurship. New projects should emerge from evidence of inequality, geographical need and implementation feasibility, not from a numerical target or an effort to improve the appearance of the aggregate.

Across both routes, checklist review should begin with projects combining high financial influence, indirect beneficiary pathways or significant social and environmental risk. Reviewers would examine the assigned marker alongside the beneficiary and barrier analysis, responsive activities, budget provisions, consultation, safeguards and implementation indicators, retaining or revising the classification only where the fuller record supports that judgement. Recording the reason for the decision would allow later reviewers to see how evidence changed the analysis and whether the same reasoning remained valid as implementation progressed.

> FY 2026-27 finding The annual GRI improves to 36.24 percent, but the structure remains unchanged: mainstream GEN 2 projects produce most of the result, while direct GEN 3 allocation totals PKR 5.90 billion.

Applied in this way, the process would distinguish three problems that currently appear similar in the allocation record. Some projects may contain responsive design in PC-I or implementation documents that was never visible in the PSDP table, creating a documentary gap; others may recognise a barrier without financing or delivering a response, creating a substantive gap; still others may rely on a sector assumption that fuller evidence cannot sustain, creating an analytical gap. The remedies differ, and national assurance will remain blunt until reporting, design correction and reclassification are directed towards the problem actually found.

The initial sample can therefore include Communications, Provinces and Special Areas, Water Resources, Power, Cabinet, education and health, together with selected GEN 3 projects whose adequacy and reach merit review. Sponsoring agencies would supply and update the evidence, sector and monitoring wings would test it against technical and implementation conditions, and the Gender Unit would coordinate the method and resolve difficult cases. The earliest sign of progress would be a more complete and contestable project record, even before the headline index or longer-term gender outcomes begin to move.

11. Structural Gaps, Risks and Constraints

The constraints identified across the report arise from one institutional discontinuity: information about gender is not carried consistently from the diagnosis of a development problem into appraisal, allocation, implementation and results reporting. The same break leaves direct investment dependent on a narrow project pipeline, forces mainstream classifications to rely on incomplete evidence and allows responsibility to appear diffuse even where the sponsoring institution is identifiable. Reform must reconnect these stages around a project record that survives the cycle, since correcting one visible symptom will not repair the repeated loss of analysis between decisions.

11.1 Gender is not yet a consistent decision rule

Neither the GRI nor GEN 3 follows a stable seven-year progression because gender analysis has not yet become a consistent rule applied when agencies define problems, compare designs and prepare projects for prioritisation. Changes in the annual envelope, portfolio composition and a small number of high-value rows can alter the national result without showing that institutions have changed how they identify unequal constraints or allocate resources to address them. The weakness is procedural only in the deepest policy sense: the question of gender is not yet embedded reliably at the point where a different answer could produce a different project.

Institutionalising such a rule would not require every project to receive a positive marker or predetermine which proposal should be approved. It would require the sponsoring agency to ask whether women and men encounter the development problem differently, retain the evidence supporting its answer and show how that answer affected the design; GEN 0 would remain appropriate where no credible pathway could be established. The need to reconstruct this reasoning after allocation from titles and sectors demonstrates that the question is not yet recorded in a form through which the wider system can review it.

11.2 PC-I and PSDP data were not fully aligned for gender analysis

Official PSDP books are authoritative for envelopes, project titles, lead institutions and allocations, while the beneficiary analysis, consultation, responsive activities, specialist input, budget provisions, risks and indicators required for gender appraisal properly belong in PC-I and implementation records. The weakness is not that the annual programme fails to reproduce every project detail, but that the relevant sources are not standardised and digitally connected well enough for a national classification to be traced back to the analysis and decisions from which it should have emerged.

Because the allocation and appraisal records remain separated, analysts must infer classifications after allocation and reviewers cannot see whether a constraint identified during preparation influenced approval, design, procurement or delivery. Structured iPAS fields linked to PC documentation could allow one evidentiary record to support appraisal, portfolio analysis, implementation monitoring and completion review, reducing repeated data collection while preserving who made the judgement, which evidence was used and whether the response remained intact as the project changed.

11.3 Direct women-specific allocation remains narrow

GEN 3 totals PKR 43.64 billion across seven years and remains concentrated in a limited range of sectors and initiatives. Its sharp annual movement does not indicate that the underlying inequalities emerged and receded at the same pace; it reflects a project pipeline too narrow to sustain direct investment when a few major schemes begin, slow or end. Dedicated interventions remain necessary where general services cannot overcome structural exclusion or where a group requires an institution, service or protection mechanism designed principally around its circumstances.

To overcome this volatility, a durable pipeline would begin with priority inequalities and geographical gaps, assign responsibility to institutions capable of acting, develop technically and fiscally feasible proposals and anticipate the recurrent financing required after development expenditure ends. This sequence connects national policy to project preparation before annual competition for resources begins, allowing completed initiatives to be followed by new responses without leaving direct investment dependent on isolated flagship projects whose closure appears as a sudden reversal in national commitment.

11.4 Indirect tagging can overstate gender responsiveness if not controlled

GEN 2 is indispensable because mainstream investment has extensive consequences for gender equality, yet its combination of financial scale and indirect reasoning makes it the category most susceptible to overstatement. The 40 percent coefficient moderates the amount entering the estimate, but it cannot validate the underlying proposition; assurance still requires a documented barrier, a design response and associated resource, meaningful participation where relevant, attention to adverse effects and an indicator through which implementation or change can be observed.

The risk becomes greatest when an aggregated allocation sits above the decision affecting beneficiaries. A regional block may contain components serving different populations, a transport scheme may expand access while imposing resettlement and safety costs, and a water project may alter both service reliability and unpaid work in ways that vary across locations. Review must reach

the lowest practical level at which eligibility, location, design and delivery are determined, otherwise the marker describes a financing container whose internal interventions remain too distant to assess.

11.5 Division-level accountability is still weak

Several divisions carrying the greatest financial influence have not historically been understood as gender institutions, even though their projects organise access to land, transport, water, energy, public services and decision-making. Aggregate analysis reveals the scale of that influence but cannot show how an agency acted upon it. Accountability must follow the project owner and the operational evidence under its control, with expectations adapted to the decisions made within each mandate instead of being transferred to the Gender Unit after the fact.

The problem is not simply whether officials recognise inclusion as important, but whether they possess the sector data, practical examples, appraisal questions and authority required to alter a design. Formal responsibility, usable guidance, specialist support and quality assurance must operate together, because training without a decision requirement leaves application discretionary, while a requirement unsupported by capability or review encourages polished but formulaic compliance. The objective is professional competence applied to live project choices, not an additional narrative field that can be completed without altering the investment.

Where capability and authority are already weak, an incomplete audit trail compounds the problem by separating financial records from the gender reasoning attached to them. iPAS should retain the proposed marker, sponsoring agency, evidence source, reviewer, validation decision, date, later revisions and the indicators reported through PC-III and PC-IV. Subsequent scrutiny could then examine not only the final label, but how the judgement was reached, whether implementation maintained the promised response and whether observed evidence requires the classification or design to change.

Risk to avoid A higher tag or larger weighted total can improve the appearance of the portfolio without changing project design. The reform test is whether evidence influences decisions and whether implementation data can verify access and outcomes.

12. Way Forward

The reform agenda follows from the point at which the evidence chain repeatedly breaks. Gender analysis has its greatest public value while agencies are still defining the development problem, choosing locations and beneficiaries, comparing designs and assigning budgets and indicators; retrospective tagging can reveal patterns and direct oversight, but it cannot restore a service, safeguard or participation process omitted from an approved project. The analytical question must move upstream into preparation and appraisal, and the resulting evidence must remain attached to the project through allocation, implementation and completion so that later reporting can test what was promised against what was delivered.

That diagnosis is consistent with international practice, which reinforces a wider institutional lesson without offering a single model for imitation. Gender markers, statements, checklists and budget classifications become meaningful when they operate within arrangements that identify a responsible decision-maker, require usable evidence, subject the analysis to review and connect planned measures with performance. Pakistan's task is to assemble these functions around the PC cycle, iPAS, sector appraisal and the coordinating mandate of the Gender Unit, adapting foreign mechanisms to the points at which the national project system already makes and records decisions.

The relevance of those examples lies in connecting institutions that already exist around one continuous account of the project. Sponsoring agencies hold the knowledge needed to diagnose the problem and alter design, sector and appraisal wings can test the reasoning against technical standards, iPAS can preserve structured evidence and decisions, the Gender Unit can govern the method and consolidate national reporting, and monitoring and evaluation functions can compare intended activities and beneficiaries with delivery. Reform lies less in creating another parallel process than in making these existing functions exchange and retain evidence at the moment each becomes responsible for it.

On that foundation, a common minimum standard should apply whenever a gender-relevant route is claimed, while the depth of assurance varies with financial influence, marker, aggregation, resettlement, safety, climate exposure and implementation risk. This proportional approach avoids subjecting every project to the same extensive review and prevents the projects most capable of changing the national estimate from resting on the least developed rationale. The common requirement establishes what must be known; risk determines how deeply the claim should be tested.

12.1 Make gender marking part of project preparation

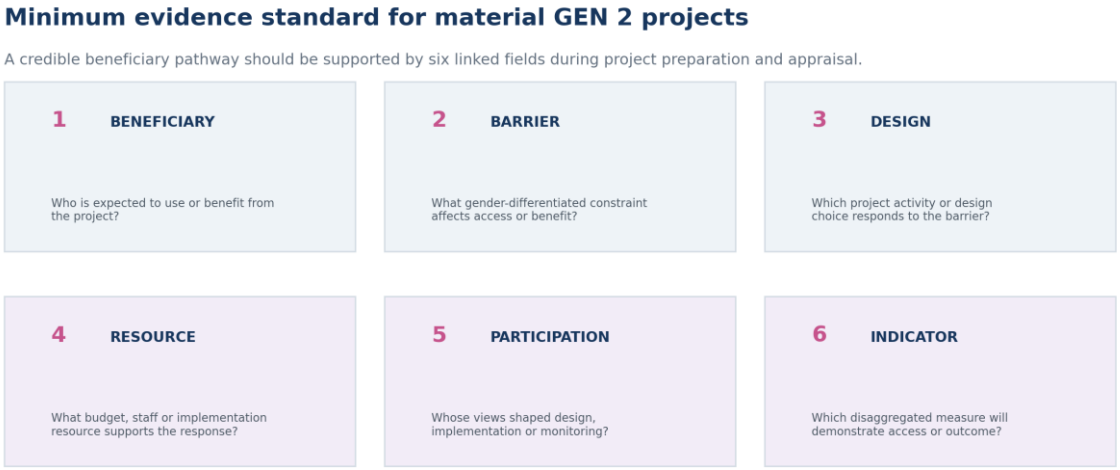
Gender marking should begin with the sponsoring agency because the development problem, beneficiary assumptions and principal design are assembled there. The PC-I should record the proposed marker, evidence level, beneficiary route and concise rationale, after which sector and appraisal wings should examine whether the evidence supports the claim and whether the response is technically adequate; the Gender Unit should maintain the national standard, provide specialist support and review disputed, high-risk or nationally significant cases. The marker would then preserve an analysed decision made before approval instead of an annotation reconstructed after allocation.

A useful international analogue for the ownership problem visible in Pakistan's GEN 2 portfolio is Canada's Gender-based Analysis Plus. Federal departments are expected to analyse how policies, programmes and initiatives may affect diverse groups, while a central function provides guidance, tools, capacity support and oversight; the analysis remains with the institution able to alter the decision instead of being transferred to a specialist body after design. Pakistan does not need to reproduce Canadian documentation or administrative structures, but it can apply the same principle by locating project-level responsibility in the sponsoring agency and making that reasoning reviewable through a common national assurance process.[10]

Yet line ownership must be accompanied by independent scrutiny if it is to produce accountability instead of self-certification. iPAS should retain the supporting note, named reviewer, validation decision and any later revision, allowing the Gender Unit and authorised reviewers to examine consistency, risk and material changes across the portfolio. This arrangement preserves sector knowledge where it is generated while creating the national audit trail that retrospective reconstruction currently lacks.

12.2 Strengthen PC-I evidence for mainstream sectors

Every material GEN 2 project should provide a concise evidence record identifying the intended beneficiaries, the gender-differentiated barrier or risk, the feature of design responding to it, the resource required, consultation where relevant and an indicator capable of showing unequal access, benefit or harm. Sector guidance should translate this common logic into the decisions characteristic of transport, water, energy, regional development, education, health, climate resilience and digital systems, so that the requirement changes technical practice instead of merely adding a standard paragraph to the PC-I.



Minimum evidence standard for material GEN 2 projects

Source: Authors' synthesis of the Gender Unit checklist fields and the quantitative methodology.

The same relationship between objective, evidence and responsibility is visible in Austria's performance-budgeting framework, which connects public objectives to outputs, outcomes and the institutions accountable for achieving them. The mechanism addresses a break repeatedly visible in the PSDP analysis, where a project may have a plausible route to gender relevance but no observable result through which that proposition can later be judged. Pakistan need not import Austria's budget architecture; the applicable lesson is to require every material claim to specify the change expected from the financed response and to retain that expectation through implementation reporting.[11]

Translated into routine practice, sector guidance should remain concise enough for appraisal while being specific enough to expose an incomplete design. Each guide can identify recurring barriers and adverse effects, feasible responses, relevant indicators and examples of claims requiring stronger evidence, with sector wings responsible for technical content and the Gender Unit responsible for coherence across portfolios. Joint authorship is important because guidance written without sector expertise risks becoming generic, while guidance developed without a national framework can produce inconsistent standards and incomparable evidence.

12.3 Keep direct women-specific investment visible

GEN 3 should remain separately visible because dedicated investment answers a question the weighted GRI cannot: which resources are organised explicitly around women, girls or a diagnosed gender inequality. The Gender Unit should preserve that reporting distinction, while ministries use the National Gender Policy Framework, administrative data and sector evidence to

[10]Women and Gender Equality Canada, What is Gender-based Analysis Plus, Government of Canada.

[11]Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance, Second Stage of the Federal Budget Reform, section on outcome-oriented budgeting and gender equality.

develop direct projects where structural exclusion, service gaps or geographical disadvantage require a response that mainstream provision is unlikely to deliver on its own.

A second relevant example is the Philippines, where agency ownership is linked to a continuing process of gender planning, costing and central review. Government agencies prepare and cost Gender and Development plans and budgets within an established policy framework, creating a recurring administrative route through which identified gender issues can be translated into funded actions and scrutinised beyond the individual project. This mechanism is relevant to Pakistan because GEN 3 rises when a major initiative enters the PSDP and contracts when it ends, revealing a pipeline that is not yet reproduced routinely across institutions; the transferable lesson is continuing agency responsibility under central scrutiny, not the adoption of a fixed spending threshold that could reward relabelling without improving design.[12]

For Pakistan, the applicable principle is that the direct pipeline should be governed by diagnosed need, not by an arbitrary financial target. Working with the Gender Unit, ministries can identify persistent inequalities and underserved locations, determine the institution capable of responding, examine delivery and recurrent-financing requirements and develop proposals before annual prioritisation begins. This approach protects the visibility of dedicated action while subjecting it to the same disciplines of evidence, feasibility and implementation that apply to other development investments.

12.4 Establish annual reporting and review

The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives should publish an annual PSDP gender statement in a stable format that preserves the distinctions on which this report depends. It should present the official envelope, extracted allocation, GEN 3 and GEN 2 actual amounts, weighted allocation, formal GRI, leading sectors and divisions, evidence status, classification revisions and selected implementation indicators, while explaining the source boundaries and material project changes responsible for movement. Stability of format would make years comparable without forcing unlike movements into the same interpretation.

This reporting sequence is supported by IMF guidance on gender budget statements and the PEFA supplementary framework, both of which place gender analysis within a chain of public-financial-management functions that includes policy appraisal, budget documentation, performance information and audit. Their relevance to Pakistan lies in this connection between stages, since the PSDP evidence problem cannot be resolved by publishing an annual statement if the project rationale, financed response and implementation record remain separate. A progressive approach can begin with standard project evidence and a consistent statement, add risk-based validation and implementation reporting as records improve, and introduce periodic independent assessment only when the underlying system can support the judgement being requested.[13]

Applied to the PSDP, an annual statement must explain causation as well as movement. The Gender Unit can identify material changes in projects, sectors and classifications, sponsoring agencies can provide the PC-I and implementation evidence explaining those changes, and reviewers can test a risk-based sample of influential GEN 2 and GEN 3 projects. Publication would then feed evidence back into the next planning cycle, turning national reporting from an account produced after the year into an instrument through which later projects are prepared and reviewed.

12.5 Integrate Checklist Fields into iPAS and PC Formats

The iPAS team, Gender Unit and custodians of PC formats should convert the checklist into interoperable fields covering the thematic diagnosis, beneficiary estimates, responsive activities and budgets, consultation, specialist input, capacity measures, disaggregated data, risks and indicators. Information entered during preparation should be reusable across appraisal and monitoring instead of repeatedly retyped, and it should later be compared with PC-III and PC-IV records so that the project retains one evidentiary history from the initial claim to delivery and completion.

Within this shared digital record, climate-related fields should identify vulnerable locations and populations, access to resilient infrastructure and early warning, green employment, renewable energy, climate-smart livelihoods and relevant health and nutrition risks, with gender, age and disability disaggregation where appropriate. Automated validation can identify missing fields or internal inconsistencies, but it cannot determine whether a project has understood the social distribution of climate risk; that judgement must remain with trained sector and appraisal reviewers who can examine how exposure, assets, mobility, care and voice interact within the project area.

12.6 Link URAAN Pakistan with Measurable Gender-Responsive PSDP Design

URAAN Pakistan's national objectives can be translated into review questions that expose their distributional content within individual investments. Human-capital projects should examine unequal access, retention and outcomes; productivity projects should examine participation in skills, finance, assets, markets and employment; infrastructure should examine mobility, safety, affordability and service use; and resilience projects should examine exposure, care burdens, displacement and livelihood risk.

[12] Philippine Commission on Women, Gender and Development Budget policy and review guidance.

[13] International Monetary Fund, How to Prepare a Gender Budget Statement, 2026; PEFA Secretariat, Supplementary Framework for Assessing Gender Responsive Public Financial Management.

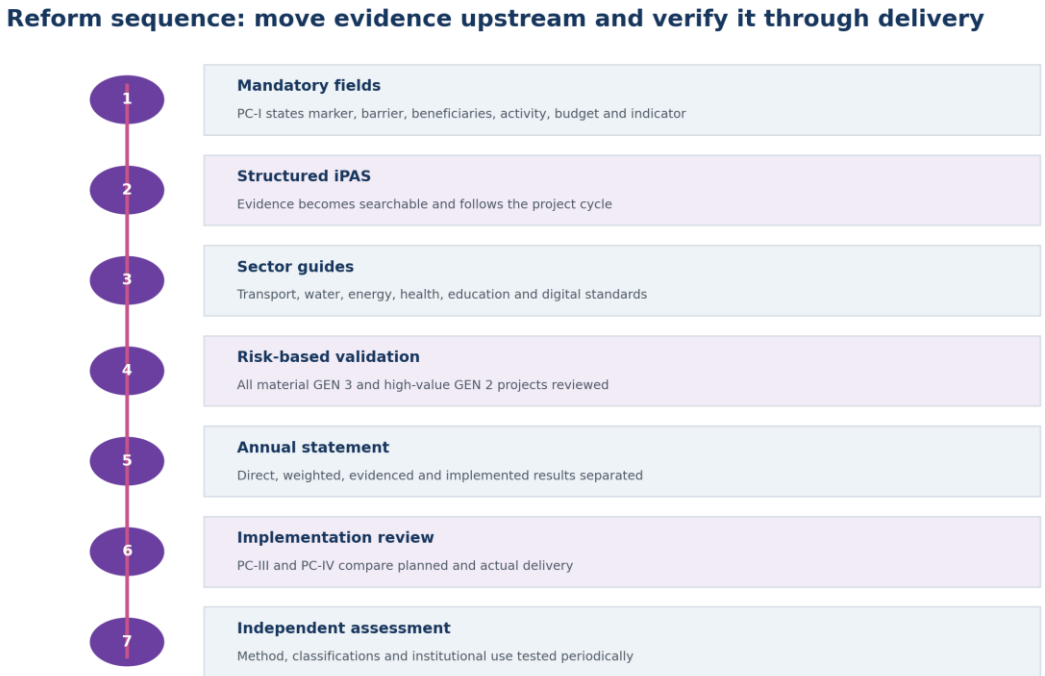
This translation makes a national commitment visible in the design choices through which it will either be realised or remain rhetorical.

To prevent those project questions from being collapsed into another ambiguous headline, a compact scorecard should keep direct investment, validated mainstream allocation, evidence completion and quality, and selected implementation or outcome indicators separate. Their relationship can be analysed, but combining them into one rank would reproduce the ambiguity the report is intended to resolve, since financial composition, institutional practice and social results move at different speeds and respond to different interventions. Progress is more intelligible when the system can show which layer changed and why.

The scorecard and its supporting evidence should be introduced in deliberate stages so that new reporting demands do not outrun the institutional capacity available to sustain them. The first annual statement can establish completion of marker and checklist fields and disclose the quality of the supporting record; validation of influential projects and selected PC-III indicators can follow, with outcome reporting expanding as comparable implementation data become available. A bounded system used consistently across the project cycle will create more public value than an ambitious composite framework whose apparent comprehensiveness rests on evidence that institutions cannot yet produce reliably.

International practice	Institutional lesson	Application to Federal PSDP
OECD framework	Institutional basis, tools, enabling environment, accountability and impact	Use a system, not a single tag
Canada GBA Plus	Upstream analysis of affected groups and access barriers	Require analysis during PC-I preparation
Austria	Gender equality integrated with performance budgeting	Link allocation to measurable outcomes
IMF and PEFA	Gender tools across the full budget and PFM cycle	Sequence statement, review and audit functions
Philippines	Agency ownership, annual planning, costing and central review	Adapt the accountability cycle, not a uniform budget threshold

Table 5: International practices translated into PSDP-relevant lessons. Sources are listed in Annex G.



Recommended reform sequence for prospective gender-responsive PSDP governance

Source: Authors' recommendations based on the report findings, Gender Unit checklists and reviewed international practice.

No.	Action	Lead	Timing	Expected result
1	Issue mandatory gender fields for new PC-I submissions	MoPD&SI Gender Unit and PC-format owners	Immediate	Issue mandatory fields and guidance for new PC-I submissions.

No.	Action	Lead	Timing	Expected result
2	Embed marker and checklist fields in iPAS	iPAS product owner with Gender Unit	6-12 months	Make the evidence structured, searchable and linked across the project cycle.
3	Develop sector evidence guides	Relevant sector wings with Gender Unit	12 months	Publish concise sector standards for high-allocation portfolios.
4	Validate high-value GEN 2 and all GEN 3 projects	Sector and appraisal wings; Gender Unit for high-risk cases	Annual	Validate influential GEN 2 and material GEN 3 claims against project evidence.
5	Publish an annual PSDP gender statement	MoPD&SI through the Gender Unit	Annual	Publish a national statement separating direct, weighted and evidenced results.
6	Review implementation evidence through PC-III and PC-IV	Sponsoring agencies with monitoring and evaluation wings	During execution	Compare planned beneficiaries and measures with actual delivery.
7	Undertake periodic independent assessment	MoPD&SI with independent reviewers	Every 2-3 years	Test the method, classifications and institutional use beyond internal reporting.

Table 6: Recommended implementation roadmap.

13. Summary of Key Findings

The seven-year record establishes that gender relevance is financially extensive across the Federal PSDP, but the evidence needed to demonstrate gender-responsive design and delivery remains incomplete. The analysis covers 6,761 annual project rows and PKR 6,600.0 billion in official Federal envelopes from FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27, producing a weighted baseline that locates potential relevance across the portfolio without converting allocation into a claim about expenditure received by women or changes in inequality. Its principal contribution is to show where the public-investment system must ask a more exacting question and which records are required to answer it.

The first implication follows from the composition of the baseline: the weighted estimate of PKR 2,146.4 billion and formal GRI of 32.52 percent are driven overwhelmingly by mainstream projects, while direct GEN 3 allocation totals PKR 43.64 billion. The distance between these measures reveals two policy deficits that cannot substitute for one another: large systems affecting women often do not preserve a visible account of how gender shaped design, and dedicated responses to structural inequality remain narrow and volatile. National strategy must strengthen the mainstream evidence base without allowing the scale of indirect relevance to obscure the continued need for explicit investment.

Within that mainstream component, GEN 2 contributes PKR 1,968.6 billion through roads, water, energy, regional development, education, health and social protection, all of which shape time, safety, mobility, service access, livelihoods and resilience. Yet a sector pathway identifies only the conditions under which benefit is plausible; confirmation requires a project record showing who faced the barrier, which design choice responded, what resource was committed, how affected groups participated, which risks were managed and whether implementation produced the intended change. The analytical distance between these two propositions is where most of the report's institutional recommendations are located.

The annual series qualifies this scale-based finding by showing why a headline trend cannot carry the interpretation alone. FY 2023-24 combines the highest direct allocation with the lowest GRI, FY 2024-25 records the largest increase in the index as direct allocation contracts, and FY 2026-27 produces the highest GRI under the same official envelope as the preceding year. Denominator shifts, portfolio composition and concentrated high-value rows repeatedly alter the result, making the series an account of changing investment structures whose institutional meaning must be reconstructed from the projects and decisions beneath it.

That concentration of weighted value places the financial centre of responsibility substantially outside specialist gender institutions. Communications, Water Resources, Power and regional portfolios influence the national result because their investments determine where services are located, who can use them, how land and risk are distributed and which livelihoods are supported or disrupted. Their responsibility is not to attach generic gender language to technical projects, but to demonstrate how decisions about access, affordability, safety, participation, resettlement and service quality responded to differentiated conditions within the populations they serve.

Across those institutions, the common weakness is a break in the project evidence chain. PSDP books provide the authoritative allocation record, PC-I should contain the diagnosis and intended response, PC-III and PC-IV should show implementation and completion, iPAS can connect these stages, and the checklists define the information through which a claim can be interrogated. Pakistan possesses the principal components of an auditable system; what remains is to integrate them around a gender rationale that is prepared by the project owner, tested during appraisal and preserved long enough for delivery to confirm or contradict it.

Once that record is connected, institutional responsibility can be organised around it. Sponsoring agencies should prepare and maintain the analysis because they control project design, sector and appraisal wings should challenge it against technical standards, the Gender Unit should govern the method, support capability and review high-risk cases, iPAS should retain the evidence and decisions, and monitoring and evaluation functions should compare planned measures and beneficiaries with what occurred. Shared responsibility becomes accountable when the task assigned to each institution is explicit and the information passed between them remains visible.

The report therefore ends with connected but distinct questions through which future progress should be judged. Are direct projects responding to documented inequalities at adequate scale and across underserved locations? Can mainstream investments identify whose constraint they address, what changed in the design, which resource was attached and how benefits and harms were distributed? Did those commitments survive implementation and appear in completion evidence? When the planning system can answer these questions routinely, gender mainstreaming will have moved from retrospective inference towards an ordinary discipline of public investment through which national policy becomes traceable in project decisions and social results.

Scale. The seven official Federal PSDP envelopes total PKR 6,600.0 billion, while the project-level dataset records PKR 6,305.8 billion across 6,761 annual rows; the two values follow different consolidation boundaries and should remain separately identified.

Weighted baseline. The methodology produces a weighted gender-responsive allocation of PKR 2,146.4 billion and a seven-year GRI of 32.52 percent, providing an allocation-governance baseline rather than a measure of expenditure incidence or social outcome.

Direct investment. GEN 3 totals PKR 43.64 billion across the period and remains concentrated in a narrow range of projects, making a continuing needs-led pipeline essential to institutional continuity.

Mainstream composition. GEN 2 contributes PKR 1,968.6 billion to the weighted estimate and therefore carries most of the national result, placing the greatest assurance responsibility in infrastructure, territorial and service-delivery portfolios.

Annual interpretation. The GRI fluctuates between 28.06 percent in FY 2023-24 and 36.24 percent in FY 2026-27, but the movement reflects different combinations of denominator change, portfolio composition and high-value entries rather than a uniform progression in practice.

Direct volatility. GEN 3 peaks at PKR 14.70 billion in FY 2023-24, contracts sharply and recovers only partly to PKR 5.90 billion in FY 2026-27, illustrating why a flagship initiative cannot substitute for an institutional project pipeline.

Sector concentration. Mobility, regional development, energy and water generate much of the weighted allocation, so gender-responsive design depends materially on the technical and implementation decisions of mainstream ministries.

Evidence boundary. Most GEN 2 classifications identify a credible pathway of potential relevance, not verified design or results; PC-I, iPAS and implementation evidence must test and retain the claim.

Institutional reform. The immediate priority is to integrate markers, beneficiary and barrier analysis, responsive budgets, consultation, risk and indicators into project preparation, appraisal, iPAS and PC-III and PC-IV reporting, with risk-based assurance of influential projects.

Reporting principle. Annual statements should preserve direct GEN 3 allocation and the broader weighted GRI as separate measures, disclose official and extracted allocation boundaries and explain the project and denominator changes responsible for material movement.

Final message The next phase of gender mainstreaming is institutional: preserve direct investment, require mainstream projects to document access and distribution, and carry the same evidence from preparation to results.

Annex A. Methodology Matrix

Component	Operational treatment
Unit of analysis	Individual annual PSDP project row
Coverage	FY 2020-21 to FY 2026-27
Primary sources	Official Federal PSDP books for envelopes and documentary context; PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset for markers and calculations
Marker weights	GEN 3: 100%; GEN 2: 40%; GEN 1: 20%; GEN 0: 0%
Primary denominator	Official annual Federal PSDP envelope
Supplementary disclosure	Extracted project allocation total, reported separately in PKR
Evidence levels	A: explicit; B: sector-beneficiary; C: enabling; D: no visible evidence
Interpretive boundary	Allocation responsiveness, not expenditure incidence or achieved outcomes
Quality assurance	Consistent classification rules, annual reconciliation, repeated-title review, formula audit, official-PDF context review and selected project-page verification

Annex B. Year-wise Summary Table

FY	Rows	Official	Extracted	GEN 3	Weighted	GRI
2020-21	938	650.0	690.4	2.66	216.3	33.28%
2021-22	1,064	900.0	804.1	6.70	278.5	30.94%
2022-23	1,104	800.0	779.7	4.59	266.5	33.32%
2023-24	1,172	1,150.0	925.9	14.70	322.7	28.06%
2024-25	1,002	1,100.0	1,193.5	6.28	397.1	36.10%
2025-26	704	1,000.0	868.5	2.82	302.8	30.28%
2026-27	777	1,000.0	1,043.7	5.90	362.4	36.24%

Monetary values are PKR billion. Project rows are annual records, not unique projects across years.

Annex C. Sector and Benefit Summary

Sector or category	Rows	Actual	Weighted
Roads, Transport and Mobility	988	1,154.9	462.0
Social Protection, Livelihoods and Regional Development	358	1,136.6	454.7
Energy and Public Infrastructure	384	1,072.9	429.2
Water, Sanitation and Climate Resilience	544	702.0	280.8
Other Public Service Delivery	444	367.3	146.9
Education, Skills and Human Capital	768	294.5	117.8
Administrative Buildings and Facilities	715	288.7	57.7
Health and Nutrition	265	138.6	55.4
Women-Specific Facilities and Services	175	43.6	43.6
Digital, Data and Systems	380	205.1	41.0
Governance and Institutional Capacity	493	91.4	18.3
Research, Science and Innovation	300	69.9	14.0
Water, Sanitation, Irrigation and Resilience	2	29.8	11.9
Agriculture and Food Security	42	24.9	9.9
Planning, Feasibility and Technical Studies	103	13.2	2.6
Institutional, Governance and Administrative Capacity	18	2.3	0.5
Security/Strategic and Specialized Infrastructure	250	220.1	0.0
Other / No Clear Gender Pathway	532	450.0	0.0

Monetary values are PKR billion.

Benefit category	Rows	Actual	Weighted
Mobility and public service access	988	1,154.9	462.0
Social protection, livelihoods or regional equity	358	1,136.6	454.7
Basic infrastructure and public service access	386	1,102.7	441.1
Water, sanitation or climate-resilience access	530	683.0	273.2
General public-service access	444	367.3	146.9
Education, skills or human capital access	764	271.8	108.7
Administrative or staff facility	652	284.0	56.8
Health service access and outcomes	265	138.6	55.4
Direct women/girls or maternal-health benefit	175	43.6	43.6
Institutional/system strengthening	377	204.3	40.9
Remaining benefit categories	1,822	918.9	63.1

Annex D. Division-wise Lead Summary

Lead ministry or division	Rows	Actual	Weighted
Water Resources Division	488	1,263.4	494.4
Communications Division	584	1,017.6	389.1
Provinces & Special Areas	580	929.7	290.9
Power Division	518	678.2	254.8
Cabinet Division	44	316.3	124.3
Higher Education Commission	997	303.0	122.0
Railways Division	232	182.3	66.9
Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Division	152	170.0	56.7
Finance Division	124	135.1	46.3
Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan & SAFRON Division	45	119.5	45.3
Housing & Works Division	692	139.0	38.3
National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination Division	239	97.3	36.2
National Food Security & Research Division	164	69.5	26.3
Federal Education & Professional Training Division	135	65.4	24.7
Prime Minister's Initiatives	8	50.0	17.0
Establishment Division	72	41.4	16.1
Information Technology & Telecommunication Division	171	87.4	15.6
Interior Division	200	67.0	11.8
Special Programmes	2	92.0	8.8
Science & Technological Research Division	212	38.0	8.5
Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Division	29	19.5	7.6
Revenue Division	84	38.2	7.6
Defence Division	101	33.8	5.3
Aviation Division	67	18.9	5.2
Interior & Narcotics Control Division	31	23.5	4.6
Inter Provincial Coordination Division	98	14.6	3.7
Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission	89	127.0	3.3
Maritime Affairs Division	67	19.1	3.0
Law & Justice Division	84	13.8	2.7
Industries & Production Division	95	22.2	2.1

Display labels harmonise obvious spelling and punctuation variants. Monetary values are PKR billion.

Annex E. Top GEN 3 Project Examples

FY	Lead division	Project	PKR mn
2023-24	Prime Minister's Initiatives	Prime Minister's Initiative for Women Empowerment	5,000.0
2023-24	Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Division	Social Sector Accelerator (SSA) for Health, Nutrition, Eduction , Youth& Gender (HNEYG) National Priority Initiatives	3,042.5
2021-22	National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination Division	The Project for Extension of Intensive Care Department of Mother and Child Health Center & Children Hospital, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Islamabad	2,206.8
2026-27	Establishment Division	Construction of Residential Facilities for Female Officers, Sector H-8/4, Islamabad (Phase-I)	827.5
2024-25	Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Division	Social Sector Accelerator (SSA) for Health, Nutrition, Eduction , Youth& Gender (HNEYG) National Priority Initiatives	800.0
2026-27	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of AJK Women University, Bagh, AJ&K	555.3
2023-24	Provinces & Special Areas	Establishment of 300 Bedded ICT Hospital, Mother & Child Hospital in Chilas (PC-II & Construction)	500.0
2023-24	Higher Education Commission	Provision of Academic & Research Facilities and Girls Hostel at Quaid- e-Azam University, Islamabad (Revised)	500.0
2023-24	Higher Education Commission	Women university campuses at Pishin and Khuzdar (SBK Women University)	500.0
2023-24	Human Rights Division	Prime Minister's Strategic Reform Initiative for Women's Mobility - Women on Wheels	500.0
2024-25	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of AJK Women University, Bagh, AJ&K	500.0
2025-26	Higher Education Commission	Provision of Academic & Research Facilities and Girls Hostel at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad (Revised)	500.0
2023-24	Housing & Works Division	Construction of Government Girls Degree College Buildings & Library with Furniture’s at Government Boys college Pretabad Hyderabad	480.0
2026-27	Higher Education Commission	Provision of Academic & Research Facilities and Girls Hostel at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad (Revised)	450.0
2023-24	Higher Education Commission	Strengthening of Existing Facilities of Government Sadiq College Women University (GSCWU), Bahawalpur	446.7
2022-23	Higher Education Commission	Provision of Academic & Research Facilities and Girls Hostel at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad	400.0
2023-24	Higher Education Commission	Strengthening of Infrastructure and Academic Programs of Government College Women University Sialkot	400.0
2024-25	Higher Education Commission	Provision of Academic & Research Facilities and Girls Hostel at Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad (Revised)	400.0
2026-27	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of University Campus for Women at Bannu (Revised)	400.0
2026-27	Higher Education Commission	Strengthening of Women University Swabi (New Campus)	400.0
2024-25	National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination Division	Strengthening Mother and Child Health EMONC 24/7 Service at Bhara Kahu ICT Islamabad	379.0
2021-22	Higher Education Commission	Strengthening of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar	375.0
2026-27	Higher Education Commission	Strengthening of The Women University Multan(Phase-II)	356.6
2023-24	Higher Education Commission	Provision of 02 Students Hostels and Transport Facilities for Students of Women University, Mardan	354.0
2021-22	Higher Education Commission	Establishment of Women Sub- Campus at Batkhela, University of Malakand	350.0

Highest-allocation GEN 3 project rows in the project-level classification dataset. The table records financial scale and does not rank project quality.

Annex F. Top GEN 2 Project Examples by Weighted Allocation

FY	Lead division	Project	Actual	Weighted
2024-25	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydro Power Project Stage-I (2160 MW) (District Kohistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)	154.9	62.0
2023-24	Cabinet Division	Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Program (SAP)	90.0	36.0
2020-21	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydro Power Project Stage-I (2160 MW) (District Kohistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)	80.1	32.0
2025-26	Cabinet Division	Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Programme (SAP)	70.0	28.0
2022-23	Cabinet Division	Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Program (SAP)	68.0	27.2
2026-27	Cabinet Division	Sustainable Development Goals Achievement (SAP)	63.0	25.2
2023-24	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydropower Project (2,160 MW)	58.6	23.4
2021-22	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydro Power Project Stage-I (2160 MW) (District Kohistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)	56.5	22.6
2022-23	Water Resources Division	Dasu Hydropower Project (2,160 MW)	55.4	22.2
2026-27	Communications Division	Dualization of Kararo - Wadh Section (83 km) & Kuchlak - Chaman Section (104 Km) of National Highway (N-25) Length: 187- km	48.0	19.2
2024-25	Provinces & Special Areas	Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 10 Years Development Plan AREAS JAMMU & KASHMIR: Schemes:	42.3	16.9
2025-26	Provinces & Special Areas	Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 10 Years Development Plan (AIP) AREAS & Kashmir Schemes:	37.0	14.8
2024-25	Water Resources Division	Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project	35.1	14.0
2025-26	Communications Division	Dualization of Khuzdar - Kuchlak Section of National Highway (N-25): Length 330.52 KM	34.0	13.6
2025-26	Communications Division	Dualization of Kararo - Wadh Section (83 km) & Kuchlak - Chaman Section (104 Km) of National Highway (N-25) Length: 187- km	33.0	13.2
2026-27	Provinces & Special Areas	AJK Block Allocation	33.0	13.2
2025-26	Provinces & Special Areas	AJK Block Allocation	32.0	12.8
2025-26	Water Resources Division	Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project (800MW)	31.2	12.5
2026-27	Power Division	500 KV HVDC Transmission System between Tajikistan and Pakistan for Central Asia-South Asia Transmission Interconnection (CASA-1000) World Bank IDA-	30.8	12.3
2022-23	Provinces & Special Areas	Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 10 Years Development Plan	30.0	12.0
2023-24	Provinces & Special Areas	AJK Block Allocation	30.0	12.0
2024-25	Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Division	Prime Minister's Programme for Re-building of Houses in Flood Affected Areas of Sindh under 4RF	30.0	12.0
2024-25	Water Resources Division	K4 Greater Water Supply Scheme	30.0	12.0
2026-27	Communications Division	Dualization and Rehabilitation of Karachi Quetta - Chaman Road (N- 25) from Karachi -Kararo (232 km) & Wadh - Khuzdar (41 Km) having total Length 273 km	30.0	12.0
2026-27	Communications Division	Construction of Hyderabad - Sukkur (306 KM), 6-Lane divided, fenced Motorway on Build Operate Transfer (BOT) basis - 2nd Revised	30.0	12.0

Monetary values are PKR billion. GEN 2 weighted allocation equals 40 percent of actual allocation.

Annex G. Source List

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Technical note on interpretation

Project counts refer to annual project rows and not unique projects across the seven-year period. The official Federal PSDP denominator is used for the primary GRI. Official and extracted allocation values are reported separately. Ministry and division names are presented as listed in annual PSDP sources, with obvious spelling and punctuation variants harmonised only in aggregate presentation.

The annual narrative was checked against the prefaces, summary tables and selected project pages of the seven official PSDP books. The FY 2024-25 book contains summary and project tables but no narrative preface, so the report makes no claim about an unstated annual policy rationale. Official books control documentary context and envelopes; the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset controls markers and calculations.

The checklist documents inform the evidence framework, structural diagnosis and recommendations. They do not retroactively supply beneficiary, consultation, budget or outcome evidence missing from historical records. International examples inform institutional design only and do not alter the PSDP classifications, weights or findings. All allocation calculations derive from the PSDP Gender Responsiveness 2020-27 analytical dataset and the official envelope values recorded within it.