

2023

GENDER POLICY



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1. Introduction

In order to advance sustainable development, it is crucial to address all forms of inequity, including gender inequality. Gender Equality was included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. Gender Equality seeks to ensure equal opportunities for all to satisfy basic needs and equal access to decent living.

In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 5 is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. It also underlines the importance to integrate gender in all other SDGs and therefore gender equality has been identified as a core development objective. Women play a critical role in all SDGs, as a main contributor to a family's – and by extension – a society's wellbeing and economic growth.

The following Gender Policy expresses the commitment of the Caribbean Export Development Agency (Caribbean Export) to promote gender equality internally and across the Agency's work at national, regional and global levels.

2. Objectives

Internally, Caribbean Export will offer equal opportunities to employees and will not tolerate any form of discrimination which may include gender identity, age, class, ethnic background and any other form of discrimination not listed.

In the context of programming, Caribbean Export will focus on empowering girls/women and other marginalized groups through entrepreneurship and skills that provide gateways to jobs and encourage economic growth and development. The Agency will target sectors that provide employment opportunities at scale and help girls/women and other marginalized groups benefit from international trade and investment opportunities.

The Agency's programmes will aim to advance gender equality in the areas of export and investment promotion as well as in the field of services, the new frontier of Caribbean business, and any new sector-specific area that the Agency will work in. The goal is to improve the technical and financial capacity of women-owned businesses, increase their access to export markets and achieve economic and environmental resilience through capacity building, digitalization and the transition to a green economy.

3. Scope

This Gender Policy applies to all programmes developed and implemented by Caribbean Export directly or in intermediary function and to all countries the Agency operates in. It will be reflected in Caribbean Export's internal control framework and processes, organisational structure, communication, and the partnerships the Agency engages in.

4. Institutional Action

The implementation of Caribbean Export's Gender Policy is integral to our commitment to fostering gender equality and empowerment. To ensure that the principles outlined in the policy are effectively put into action, we have developed a comprehensive Gender Action Plan. This action plan contains a detailed roadmap with specific actions, timelines, responsible parties, and key performance indicators to guide our efforts. Through the Action Plan, we will integrate gender considerations into all facets of our organization, from project design to capacity building, creating an inclusive and gender-responsive workplace environment. We will also actively engage in partnerships with local and regional stakeholders to promote gender equity throughout the Caribbean. Regular training and awareness programs will be conducted to enhance the gender sensitivity of our staff and collaborators. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be established to track progress and ensure accountability. Caribbean Export is dedicated to the effective execution of this policy and the action plan, working diligently to advance gender equality in our operations and across the Caribbean region.

Internally, the policy will support parity and equity for persons of all genders by removing all forms of discrimination, and integrating everyone's experiences, ideas, rights and issues in all spheres of organisational development and practice regardless of role, title, or position in the Agency. This will include:

- Equal opportunities for talent acquisition, progression planning and career mobility
- Equal treatment of all staff regarding job design, recruitment, training, compensation, promotion and termination
- Equitable treatment and empowerment of staff, regardless of gender identity, across all levels of the organization
- Reinforcement of the Agency's code of conduct and sexual harassment policy
- Supportive work-life balance policies and programmes
- Zero-tolerance for any forms of discrimination and abuse

Externally, Caribbean Export’s portfolio of programmes, and products will promote innovative and evidence-based programming priorities and approved sector specific interventions that incorporate gender specific needs and ensure gender issues are mainstreamed in its design. Projects outcomes must not increase gender inequality but rather optimize the benefits for all genders and ensure the promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination.

This will include but not be limited to:

- Access to finance
- Access to networking and B2B collaboration
- Access to mentors
- Access to business support services
- Access to training
- Access to childcare

5. Guiding Principles

Caribbean Export is committed to driving gender equality internally and externally. The following principals will guide the implementation of this policy:

- **Gender equality as a fundamental human right**
Women and girls represent half of the world’s population and, therefore, also half of its potential. Gender equality is crucial to achieve peaceful, productive societies, sustainable development and economic growth.
- **Respect for Diversity**
The Caribbean society is made up of individuals from various ages, races, cultures, ethnicities, faiths, sexual orientations, gender identities and socio-economic backgrounds. To ensure inclusivity, the Agency's policies and programs must accurately represent this diverse population.
- **Participation and inclusion of all**
All people have the right to participate in activities and to access information relating to the decision-making processes that affect their lives and well-being.

➤ **Transparency and accountability**

Promoting transparency and accountability is critical for the effective implementation of gender equality commitments. Transparent reporting, accountability systems and diagnostic tools support the integration of gender aspects into all areas of the Agency's operations.

➤ **Results based management**

A robust Results Based Management (RBM) system is employed to measure results and impact of all aspects of operation to advance management practices and strengthen accountability and good governance. The gender component is a major element of the Agency's Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Framework.

6. Gender Audits

The Leadership of Caribbean Export will choose one project each year to undergo a gender audit, aiming to formalize and integrate the Policy and its principles. This audit will be conducted internally and not with the intention of punishment, but rather to enhance the integration of gender considerations throughout the Agency's project development and implementation processes.

7. Responsibilities

This policy can only be put into practice if it is backed by dedicated action to institutionalize its principles and provisions. Its success is largely dependent on collective efforts. While accountability for the implementation of the policy lies with the units of the Agency and its leadership team, the Monitoring and Evaluation Function will play a critical role in providing oversight. Each staff member is individually accountable to familiarize themselves with the policy's requirements and to act as advocates for gender equality in their internal interactions with colleagues and superiors, as well as in their external interactions with stakeholders and partners.

➤ **Leadership**

The overall responsibility for the implementation of the Gender Policy lies with the Executive Director who will report the process to the Board of Directors. Reviews of the policy will be undertaken at least biennially to keep the policy up to date and relevant to the Agency's work and the socio-economic environment.

➤ Human Resource Unit

The Human Resource Unit is responsible for ensuring that the operational requirements of the policy are adhered to and for supporting a strong culture of gender equality within the Agency. This will include:

- Communicating rights and responsibilities to staff aligned with this policy
- Raising awareness for redress options
- Training of staff and management on the internal provisions of this policy
- Monitoring the application of this policy.

➤ Partnerships and Project Development Unit

The Partnerships and Project Development Unit is responsible for ensuring that gender considerations are mainstreamed in the formulation and design of the Agency's programmes.

➤ Technical Programmes Unit

The Technical Programmes Unit's responsibility is to develop guidelines, tools and procedures that will manage the implementation of interventions in accordance with this policy. They will select the project implementation plan with the relevant indicators and together with the Monitoring and Evaluation Function monitor the programmatic application of the policy.

➤ Monitoring and Evaluation Function

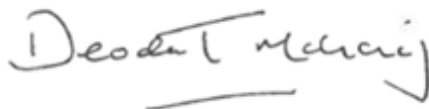
The Monitoring and Evaluation Function will work in collaboration with the Technical Programmes Unit to monitor the roll out and implementation of the policy and ensure gender aspects are included in regular reporting.

Effective Date: October 26, 2023

Review Date:

Approved By: Deodat Maharaj, Executive Director

Signature:





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