

2026

GENDER POLICY



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1. Introduction

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.

Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is dedicated to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. It also underlines the importance of integrating gender in all other SDGs making gender equality a core development objective. Women play a critical role in all SDGs, as a main contributor to family – 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, 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 financial and 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 Caribbean Export staff, consultants, interns, grantees/beneficiaries and vendors. It is also applicable to all programmes developed and implemented by Caribbean Export directly, in executing 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. It sets minimum standards for integrating gender equality and social inclusion across all programmes and operations. These standards apply to all projects, regardless of donor, and are complemented by implementation guidance and donor-specific requirements where applicable.

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.

A. Internal (Operations and Culture)

Caribbean Export will cultivate an inclusive organisational culture where gender equality is embedded in day-to-day decisions, systems and behaviours. It will support parity and equity for persons of all genders by removing all forms of discrimination regardless of role, title, or position in the Agency. Internal action focuses on the workforce and governance practices that enable consistent delivery across our portfolio.

HR & Workplace

We integrate gender equality into recruitment, pay-equity reviews, performance reviews and promotions. Managers are expected to foster flexible, safe and respectful workplaces. Policies on anti-harassment and sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) are enforced through clear procedures and non-retaliation safeguards.

Training & Capacity

All staff and key partners receive training on gender-responsive design, inclusive facilitation, SEAH response, and the operation of grievance mechanisms. Targeted coaching is provided to

program teams developing assessments, gender action plans (GAPs) and sexual, age, and disability disaggregated (SADD) indicators.

Governance & Resourcing

We designate a Gender Focal Point with authority to coordinate implementation, maintain tools and templates, and support teams. A dedicated budget line covers training, technical assistance and learning activities.

Grievance & Safety

A confidential, accessible staff grievance mechanism is maintained, including survivor-centered pathways and signposting to external services where appropriate. Lessons from grievances will be recorded and inform continuous improvement.

B. External (Programmes and Projects)

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.

Project-cycle minimum standards

- Gender assessment at design (updated at inception and, if context shifts, at mid-term) to analyse roles, power dynamics and barriers for women, men and gender-diverse people, with attention to age and disability.
- A resourced Gender Action Plan (GAP) translating assessment findings into actions with responsibilities, timelines and budget.
- Sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated (SADD) indicators embedded in the logframe/MEL and reported regularly.
- A project-level Grievance Mechanism with confidential SEAH channels, disclosed to stakeholders and linked to organisational procedures.

Partners & Procurement

Executing entities and suppliers are contractually required to align with this Policy, designate a gender focal point, implement GAP actions, operate a proportionate grievance mechanism,

and report SADD results. Terms of reference, partner agreements and procurement documents include gender-responsive provisions.

Donor-specific requirements

Additional donor requirements are addressed individually rather than in this Policy. This keeps our corporate standard stable while ensuring full compliance with all partner requirements.

Inclusion focus

We proactively reach women-led and under-represented MSMEs and remove participation barriers (timing, location, accessibility, childcare, language). Approaches are tailored with stakeholders through safe, culturally appropriate engagement.

5. Guiding Principles

Caribbean Export applies a gender-responsive and intersectional approach that advances equality for women, men, girls, boys, and gender-diverse people, recognizing how gender interacts with age, disability, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and other factors to shape vulnerability and opportunity. The following principles 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. Review and audits

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.

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 with a mixed team 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 to the Board of Directors.

➤ **Gender Focal Point**

This overarching role is responsible for the coordination of assessments, GAP quality, partner compliance, reporting, and capacity building; It is also in charge of development and maintaining of tools and templates.

➤ **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 SEAH
 - Tracking internal Gender KPIs (recruitment, pay equity, advancements)
- **Partnerships, Advocacy and Reporting Unit**
The Partnerships, Advocacy and Reporting Unit is responsible for ensuring that gender considerations are mainstreamed in the formulation and design of the Agency's programmes. They will also ensure the publication of an annual portfolio gender performance summary (SADD results, GAP progress, grievances resolved) and share with the Executive Director and Board.
- **Technical Programmes Unit**
The Technical Programmes Unit's responsibility is to embed gender in implementation plans, procurement, and TORs. They will also monitor and ensure GAP delivery.
- **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: 5/28/2026

Review Date:

Approved By: Dr. Damie Sinanan

Signature:





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