

Position Statement on Gender Equality

FMO is the Dutch entrepreneurial development bank. Since 1970, we have been a driving force behind investments enabling entrepreneurs to increase inclusive and sustainable prosperity in emerging markets. It is our role and mandate to support entrepreneurs in some of the world's most challenging economies.

This Position Statement is an integral part of the FMO Sustainability Policy Universe that steers FMO's activities. The Position Statements provide further depth to FMO's choices in relation to major global sustainability issues and further explain how we select investments, work with customers and other stakeholders, and monitor performance. They reflect our objective to apply the highest possible standard of ethics and integrity to our business activities.

FMO's Vision

FMO believes in a world in which, by 2050, more than 9 billion people live well and within planetary boundaries. To deliver this long-term vision, our investments are selected for alignment with our Sustainability Policy and to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically to foster decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), contribute to reducing inequality (SDG 10), and help mitigate and adapt to climate change (SDG 13).

Gender Equality

We understand 'gender equality' as the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for all people, regardless of their gender¹. A person's rights, responsibilities and opportunities should not be determined by their gender identity. Gender equality is crucial for sustainable development and people centred growth. Women's economic empowerment is linked to poverty reduction, women are essential to meeting agricultural productivity, and as primary energy managers in the household women play an important role in transition to sustainable energy for all.

Despite progress in some areas, significant challenges remain and the gender equality ambitions within the SDGs are off track. Women continue to be disproportionately affected by poverty and face systemic barriers that limit their political and economic participation, including their access to capital and decent work². Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) also continue to be at high levels with one out of three women experiencing violence in their lifetime³. The impacts of climate change and fragility exacerbate these inequalities, with women often being more susceptible to the negative impacts of climate change, natural disasters and conflicts.

At the root are a range of causes, from poor education and limited access to finance, to gendered cultural norms and countries' legal and regulatory frameworks such as discriminatory laws that

¹ Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women and encompasses the concepts of gender diversity and gender identity.

² United Nations. (n.d.). PROGRESS ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS. <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2024-en.pdf>

³ Ibid.

restrict women's ability to enter into contracts, own property, or receive inheritances. Gender equality is a fundamental human right. Additionally, gender equality advances sustainable economic growth through productivity gains, by magnifying development effects for future generations and through a multiplier effect on other development outcomes such as health and nutrition. Moreover, companies that have a more gender-diverse leadership team tend to perform better.

FMO's choices

While our approach to gender equality aims to be inclusive of all genders, we focus on women's economic empowerment as this is where we can be most relevant as a private sector development bank. We also acknowledge that the inequalities women face are often multidimensional, intersecting with factors such as class, race, ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic status.

We consider gender equality as both a human right and a means to drive economic development and to strengthen local markets to reach sustainable people-centered growth. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 – Reduced Inequalities is a key objective of FMO's [Strategy 2030](#). Through the lens of SDG 10 we also contribute to SDG 5 – Gender Equality. We aim to assure women's rights⁴, to understand the gender-specific impacts of our investments where relevant, and actively seek to advance gender equality through increased gender-lens investments.

Implementation

FMO has committed to gender equality in its [Sustainability Policy](#), which is our leading policy instrument in guiding our positive impacts on environmental, social and governance issues. Our assessment and management of gender impacts and risks are guided by the [IFC Performance Standards](#).⁵ There are three that are particularly relevant. IFC Performance Standard 1 requires that both women's and men's views on project impacts be captured, and that both women's and men's different concerns and priorities should be reflected. Performance Standard 2 requires customers to ensure non-discrimination and equal employment opportunities and the occupational health and safety of both women and men. Performance Standard 5 requires women to be involved in resettlement planning and implementation and that their interests be protected.

To contribute positively to the inclusion of women as participants in the economy, we proactively seek investments that support women as employees, in leadership, as entrepreneurs, as end-users of goods and services and in the supply chain. The funds that we manage on behalf of the Dutch State have gender as one of their main focal areas. We believe in the power of gender diversity in business and seek to assist customers in supporting equal opportunities for women and men in the workforce. We set out to obtain gender-disaggregated data on our impacts by monitoring direct jobs for men and women in the businesses we finance. Additionally, we engage in and support initiatives and networks focused on advancing gender lens investment, such as the [2X Global \(2XG\)](#), and are actively seeking opportunities to consider female candidates to nominate to the boards of investee

⁴ See [FMO's Position Statement on Human Rights](#).

⁵ IFC – The International Finance Corporation of the World Bank group.

companies. Moreover, we set out to increase the awareness of our staff on gender issues in order to expand and strengthen FMO's ability to generate positive impacts on gender equality.

Within FMO, diversity is promoted in internal recruitment, career management and management development, as supported by FMO's Human Resources strategy and FMO's Diversity and Inclusion Statement. Additionally, FMO has signed the Diversity Charter of *Diversiteit in Bedrijf*, and is committed to its goals of strengthening diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Feedback

We welcome feedback on our Position Statements. Please contact us at consultation@fmo.nl.

This Position Statement has been approved for implementation by FMO's Management Board on 29 August 2017, is in effect as of September 2017 and has most recently been updated in April 2025.