



Discussion on Gender Strategy with Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) 13 June 2023, Washington DC (hybrid event)

On June 13, 2023, the World Bank Group (WBG) held a discussion on the WBG Gender Strategy 2024-2030 with the [Millennium Challenge Corporation \(MCC\)](#), an independent U.S. foreign assistance agency working on reducing global poverty. The aim of this discussion was to engage, learn and better understand opportunities and challenges for gender equality and empowerment. Key inputs shared by participants are summarized below and will be considered in the development of the Strategy.

Key Takeaways

- Colleagues from MCC shared that they had adopted a gender policy in 2006, which was updated in 2011. The Gender Policy was operationalized through gender integration guidelines in 2011, which were updated in 2021. They also developed a counter trafficking in persons policy. In 2022 MCC adopted the '[Inclusion and Gender strategy](#),' which has as its objective to more routinely and systematically incorporate inclusion and gender into project objectives, program logics and indicators.
- Gender informs MCC's selection of countries for investments. Of the 20 selection indicators, at least four are related to gender, including the Gender in the Economy indicator (based in part on Women, Business and the Law survey.) Some MCC compacts also require certain legal changes reflecting gender equality before compacts can be implemented.
- A representative of the Gender & Social Inclusion (GSI) team works on every country team to conduct gender and social analysis, and use this evidence to inform the design of MCC programs. The GSI team must make the case that integration of gender considerations advances the economic growth impact that that the program seeks to achieve. They note that having access to good gender data sooner would facilitate their work. The goal of MCC's new Inclusion and Gender Strategy is to expand excluded groups' ability to have access to, participate in or derive benefits from its investments".
- The MCC representative highlighted a number of thematic areas where the WBG Gender Strategy and MCC's gender and inclusion work overlap and where continued collaboration is possible, including access to finance, access to services (e.g. WASH, transportation), gender norms and engaging men, the care economy, strategic priorities on climate change, and access and use of data. Another shared priority is amplifying the role of non-government actors.
- During the discussion MCC colleagues inquired how the WBG Gender team is obtaining buy-in from colleagues and counterparts while developing the Strategy. WBG representatives shared

the evolution of gender focus over time, highlighting the [World Development Report 2012](#), and the 2022 [Gender Equality in Development retrospective](#) that assessed the past ten years of progress toward gender equality. The WBG representatives added how interactions with leadership and clients have aided in elevating the importance of gender in projects.

- The use of evidence, including from [Gender Innovation Labs \(GILs\)](#), to highlight gender gaps and the need to address them, along with the WBG's vibrant gender architecture, that included gender specialists across regions and sectors, were emphasized by the World Bank participants.
- Lastly WBG's gender tag/ flag mechanism, that necessitates inclusion of gender components in project design, and tracking of legal reforms that affect gender equality by the [Women, Business and Law](#) initiative, were mentioned as of interest to both groups
- Colleagues from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) shared how having expanded technical instruments on gender, gender capital commitments, gender flags and gender specialists has sharpened the focus on gender equality.
- Colleagues from the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) spoke on what it took for their organization to expand its engagement on gender towards a more holistic approach, stressing that management's support was key in order to raise client awareness of importance of looking at gender not just as a risk but as an opportunity, and the importance of learning from other WBG institutions and external partners on best practices to engage on gender.
- A question was posed on how the WBG Gender Strategy would address infrastructure, as well as the nexus of gender, inclusion, and climate change. WBG representatives highlighted the thematic policy notes which are being used as inputs to the strategy around key issues, including a [Gender and Climate note](#). Much of the focus on occupational segregation and gender in the green transition has focused on infrastructure, especially in energy and transport.
- MCC noted that it concluded a productive three-year collaboration with the World Bank Africa Gender Innovation Lab, and that a new agreement with the Lab is in the planning stage. MCC and the World Bank participants concluded stating an interest in continuing to identify opportunities for dialogue collaboration to support our mutual commitments to advancing gender equality through our programs.