



HOW CONSULTATIONS INFORMED THE 2024-2030 WORLD BANK GROUP GENDER STRATEGY

The World Bank Group (WBG) *Gender Strategy (2024-30) 'Accelerate Gender Equality To End Poverty On A Livable Planet'* builds on the lessons from the *2016–2023 Gender Strategy*, and on feedback from a wide range of stakeholders. The Strategy underwent extensive internal and external consultations, starting with the year-long *Accelerate Equality* campaign and *informal dialogues* (Phase I, January 2022 to July 2023) and feeding into the *formal consultations* (Phase II, July to November 2023). ***We heard from over 1,000 external stakeholders from more than 110 countries, including through 28 in-country consultations. These contributors represented over 600 entities - spanning civil society, government representatives, parliamentarians, academia, private sector, multilateral organizations, donors, and others.***

The new strategy proposes to engage differently, prioritizing three strategic objectives: End gender-based violence and elevate human capital, Expand and enable economic opportunities, and Engage women as leaders.

The *consultations draft* of the Gender Strategy, *incorporating inputs from diverse stakeholders*, was released at the *Women Deliver Conference* in July 2023. It was also posted online in *English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic*. Feedback was then gathered through:

- **Country consultation missions:** Conducted in 28 countries across all seven WBG regions¹.
- **Meetings:** In-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings with diverse stakeholder groups.
- **Events:** Participation in internal and external events including the Women Deliver conference (WD2023, Kigali), the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67, New York), the Women Parliamentary Leaders Summit (Brussels), and meetings of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee on Gender Equality (OECD GenderNet, Paris).
- **Written inputs:** Feedback statements received through a dedicated email address.
- **Survey:** Stakeholders' inputs received through an online survey.

Consultation summaries from in-person and online engagements, feedback statements, and comments on the consultations draft have been *posted online*. Discussion summaries from the informal phase of engagement, which informed the consultations draft, had been *posted* earlier. The main takeaways from these consultations are summarized below:

Central Elements and Structure

Stakeholders shaped and strongly endorsed the central elements of the Strategy:

- **The strategic objectives**, particularly the urgency to address gender-based violence, persistent barriers to women's productive economic participation, and climate change and technology related outcomes, while promoting care services, women's and girls' leadership, and behavioral and norms interventions.
- **The Drivers of Change** with emphasis on financing, innovation, collective action - - particularly partnering with civil society and men and boys, acknowledging the role of government and impact of fiscal constraints

¹ The team conducted consultations in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, France, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyz Republic, Malawi, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Rwanda, Tanzania, Thailand, Türkiye, United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay.



(often linked to debt burdens) in delivering public services, alongside the need to adapt for diverse contexts and population groups.

The Ambition

The following key inputs related to the strategic objectives (End gender-based violence and elevate human capital, Expand and enable economic opportunities, and Engage women as leaders), shaped the strategy.

- **Climate change:** The disproportionate effects of climate change on women and the need to include them as leaders in climate action was highlighted. It was suggested to prioritize prevention, resilience, and climate adaptation. *The strategy endorses the priority of a livable planet and promotes needed investments in human capital and inclusion, institutional reforms, and women's leadership. The title of the strategy has been updated to 'Accelerate Gender Equality to End Poverty on a Livable Planet' aligned with the WBG's overall vision, calling on stakeholders to engage in effective mitigation and adaptation. The role of women's leadership in enhancing the design and implementation of climate actions, along with decreasing firms' carbon emissions when women are more represented in management, has been highlighted.*
- **Poverty:** It was recommended to elevate the mention of poverty and its link to gender equality. *Poverty is prominently highlighted including in the revised title 'Accelerate Gender Equality to End Poverty on a Livable Planet.' The strategy underscores that women's empowerment helps solve many dimensions of poverty, including income and nutrition security.*
- **Gender-based violence (GBV):** The emphasis on ending GBV was widely appreciated. Suggestions to bolster this component included adding extortion for sex ('sextortion'), the compounded vulnerability of displaced populations, as well as addressing GBV through school-based measures, aligning with international conventions, and engaging employers in supporting survivors. *The strategy includes legal and regulatory reforms based on international conventions, measures against extortion for sex, addressing GBV in schools and through schools by fostering mutual respect and positive gender attitudes. It also raises the role of employers in supporting employees facing sexual violence and harassment, by facilitating access to survivor services, assisting with safety planning, and raising awareness to create safe and respectful workplaces.*
- **Social protection:** Inputs drew attention to the importance of social insurance, especially for unemployment, informal sector workers and old age. *The strategy highlights the goal of universal social protection including expanding coverage to informal sector workers and ensuring old age security for women.*
- **Psychosocial support:** The importance of psychological, psycho-social, and coaching measures was underlined to enable opportunities, especially for those living in extreme poverty. *The strategy underscores the importance of psychosocial support, developing socioemotional skills, life skills training, coaching and psychosocial support, as well as increasing the effectiveness of social and economic inclusion programs.*
- **Care:** The emphasis on care work and the care economy in the consultations draft was resoundingly welcomed. Suggestions to bolster this component included drawing from the International Labor Organization's (ILO) 5R framework on decent care work with gender equality. It was also advised to acknowledge women and girls' 'time poverty,' often rooted in domestic care work, which impedes formal labor force participation. *The Strategy underscores women's and girls' time poverty as a binding constraint and source of vulnerability. It is also stated that rectifying gender inequalities requires interventions to recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work.*



The Conceptual Framework

The following key inputs related to the conceptual framework, particularly the Drivers of Change (Innovation, Financing and Collective action) and the Policy Arena (Institutions, Actors and Power relations), shaped the Strategy.

- **Partnerships:** The role of partnerships for knowledge sharing and implementation with accountability was brought up. Inputs focused on partnering with the private sector and civil society organizations – particularly women’s organizations, academia, UN agencies, local leaders, group-based organizations, and others. *The strategy promotes wider global, regional, and local stakeholder engagement and partnerships to drive change, including with civil society, community leaders, national and local women’s organizations, global advocacy groups, international organizations, private sector, academia, UN agencies and other development partners. It is envisaged that these partnerships could facilitate and enhance reforms, governance structures, transparency, accountability, corruption reduction, incentives and capacities for women’s leadership in the public and private sectors, gender equity campaigns, knowledge exchange, innovative solutions, client capacity, and reaching the most marginalized groups.*
- **Diversity of contexts:** The mention of intersectionality in the consultations draft was welcomed and it was suggested to strengthen this element, particularly highlighting adolescents, people living with disabilities, religion, and sexual and gender minorities. *The strategy aims at gender equality for all, with a country-led approach, tailored to local contexts and population groups, reaffirming the WBG’s commitments to nondiscrimination, inclusion, and equality of opportunity, encompassing sexual and gender minorities. Heightened vulnerability arising from the intersection of gender with disability and other characteristics has been acknowledged. The strategy also commits to investing in expertise on the differential development experiences and outcomes of specific groups, including adolescents.*
- **Tailoring:** Related to intersectionality, the importance of tailoring the strategy to different contexts, notably in fragile, conflict, and violence settings, and to populations, especially adolescents and vulnerable groups. *The strategy aims at gender equality for all, with a country-led approach, coordinated across the public and private sectors and tailored to local contexts and population groups. Adaptation to specific contexts, such as fragility, and helping clients test, adapt, tailor, and scale solutions, is emphasized.*
- **Role of government:** Some stakeholders raised concerns about structural limitations to gender equality, and the impact of fiscal constraints (often linked to debt burdens) on public service delivery. They called for recognizing the centrality of the government in financing and delivering core services and addressing structural conditions that drive inequality. *The strategy promotes institutional and policy reforms to address the structural limitations driving gender inequalities. It supports public sector financing for core services. It bolsters the WBG’s support to clients to advance gender equality through fiscal policy, sector strategies and budget management.*
- **Technology:** Stakeholders highlighted the need to balance the perils of unregulated technology with its transformative potential to advance gender equality, for example by bridging the digital divide. *The strategy includes technology in the elaboration of ‘Innovation’ as a driver of change. This calls for investment in technology and closing the gender digital divide for access to a range of services, investing in STEM and digital skills, and facilitating access to financial services. The promise is balanced with managing the potential perils of new technologies.*
- **Data and evidence:** Stakeholders acknowledged the WBG’s role and expertise in evidence generation and dissemination. They further urged the WBG to use gender data for country engagement and support countries in gender data collection and use. *The strategy emphasizes that the WBG will continue driving the*



production and use of gender data and gender analysis to inform policies, systems, and practices in both the public and private sector.

- **Engaging men and boys:** Stakeholders strongly appreciated that gender is not framed as just a women's issue, and gender inequality is mentioned as being harmful for all. It was recommended to recognize the central focus of investing in women and girls, while advancing gender equality for all, including men and boys. *The strategy acknowledges the centrality of investing in women and girls while recognizing the disadvantages facing men and boys. It also states that efforts to enhance girls' and women's leadership must involve boys and men, facilitating change in norms and mindsets about women's roles.*

Accountability and Results

The following key inputs related implementation shaped the strategy.

- **Measurable outcomes:** Some participants asked how the strategy will be operationalized, how implementation will be monitored and how impact will be measured? *The strategy includes actions to support implementation and a results framework. The strategy will be translated into targets and progress toward gender equality outcome measures. This is complemented by current and future corporate commitments, including the new WBG Scorecard, which features an expanded use of sex-based data disaggregation. All gender equality results indicators that measure number of beneficiaries will be tracked during project implementation and expected gender results will be reported at completion.*
- **Country focused results orientation:** The importance of complementing the gender tag/flag applied at project design with an outcome and results orientation, particularly at country level, was emphasized. *The Strategy states that country engagement will prioritize gender equality outcomes. The gender tag/ flag will motivate accountability for evidence-based actions for all projects and investments to advance gender equality, with greater accountability for outcomes. It further states that the WBG will use gender analysis and solutions in its core country analytics such as Public Finance Reviews, Poverty and Equity Assessments, Country Climate and Development Reports, Risk and Resilience Assessments in FCV countries, Country Private Sector Diagnostics and Country Economic Memoranda.*
- **Staff capacity:** It was also suggested to invest in staff capacity building for advancing gender equality. *The Strategy states that the WBG will further its technical capacity in emerging areas and expand learning programs to align gender expertise with technical expertise in each Global Practice and Industry department.*

The WBG Strategy (2024-30) has been developed as one World Bank Group encompassing the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Development Association (IDA), International Finance Corporation (IFC), and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), working in close collaboration with External and Corporate Relations (ECR) and Operations Policy and Country Services (OPCS). This document was authored by Harsh Vardhan Sahni under the guidance of Laura Rawlings. It benefited from rich inputs from Hana Brix, Andrea Kucey, Elizabeth Koechlein, Charlotte Ampaire and Meghna Chadha from the World Bank; Atia Byll-Cataria and Elizabeth Manesh from MIGA; Priyanka Tayal Kolasa, Carol Marina Tojeiro and Laila Elrefai from IFC; and Kristyn Schrader-King and Lillian Foo from ECR.