



International Financial Institutions and Women's Economic Empowerment: an evidence review

William Smith and Olivia Jenkins

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Query Question: i) What strategic focus do International Financial Institutions have on women's economic empowerment? ii) To what extent has the work of International Financial Institutions (i.e. Women's Economic Empowerment sub-topics, policies, programming, partnerships) been successful in driving results for women's economic empowerment? What are the enabling and constraining factors in explaining the results? iii) What recommendations are there on how International Financial Institutions can achieve transformative women's economic empowerment outcomes?

Authors and institutional affiliations: William Smith, Independent Consultant; Olivia Jenkins, Social Development Direct

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AfDB	African Development Bank
DMC	Developing Member Country (of ADB)
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
IDA	International Development Association
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
RMC	Regional Member Country (of AfDB)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment

Executive Summary

The World Bank Group and other IFIs have all published new or revised gender strategies since 2015 when the Sustainable Development Goals framework was launched by the UN. The World Bank Group strategy is based on a framework developed in the World Development Report 2012 on Gender Equality and Development which focused on three inter-related domains: human endowments (particularly education and health), economic opportunities and voice and agency. Within each domain, a variety of persistent gender gaps are identified which the strategy sets out to narrow. For example, within the economic opportunities domain, gender gaps were identified in labour market participation, involvement in unpaid care work and the control and ownership of assets. The strategy sets out a range of approaches designed to help address these gaps. Other IFIs use similar frameworks, identifying gender gaps which their investments, projects or technical advice will address. These frameworks tend to share the following characteristics:

- IFIs strategic focus on women's economic empowerment is **articulated within their wider gender strategies**.
- **The domains articulated in IFI gender strategies are inextricably linked.** Just as gender inequality has multiple, complex causes, women's economic empowerment requires a combination of complementary approaches. For example, facilitating economic opportunities for women cannot be achieved in the context of persistent gender gaps in human endowments or in voice and agency.
- Promoting gender equity and women's economic empowerment is widely seen as an important **development objective in its own right**, but also a contributor to inclusive growth and resilience.
- IFI strategies developed post-2015 tend to give **less prominence to gender constraints and opportunities which have emerged more recently**. Issues likely to be given greater prominence in future strategy revisions include: addressing gender-based violence; economic opportunities for women in the green economy; support for childcare provision; and women's economic empowerment in fragile and conflict affected states.

There is a large amount of cross-over in terms of the strategic focus areas of the IFIs reviewed. Women's access to (high-quality) jobs, women's entrepreneurship, addressing unpaid care work, women's access to public services/infrastructure, women's leadership, and education and training are all mentioned as areas of interest for five out of seven IFIs reviewed. Women's resilience to climate shocks is mentioned less frequently. The IMF's gender mainstreaming strategy focuses less on policy and more on process issues, including data, governance, collaboration and resource use.

Approaches for promoting economic opportunities and employment for women principally focus on the supply side of the labour market rather than stimulating demand. IFI gender frameworks tend to focus on narrowing gender gaps through policies, programmes, investments or other interventions that seek to strengthen endowments, opportunities and agency of women vis-a-vis men. There are economic arguments, however, which suggest that stimulating demand and generating productive jobs is the real driver of women's economic empowerment. Proponents of the feminisation U-Curve theory observe that rates of female labour force participation are driven largely by types of employment available and, in particular, growth in higher productivity employment.

Since 2017, four of the seven selected IFIs have published internal evaluations of their gender strategies. These evaluations focus on strategy rather than project level, concentrating more on process and internal structure than systematic evaluation of the impact of individual policies and projects on women's economic empowerment.

While commitment to strategies has been strong, implementation has not matched this level of commitment. At the World Bank, for example, IDA 18 and 19 commitments included multiple gender related commitments and management and staff commitment to strategy aims is strong. However, a lot of gender staff time and resources is concentrated on project tagging in design phase and less on support for implementation. Staff also reported difficulties in engaging clients on gender gap issues .

The country-led approach to implementation of the strategy increases sensitivity to local context but results in variation in implementation. Priority gender gaps are identified through country diagnostics, but these are not necessarily given a similar level of priority in implementation. Addressing gender gaps through stand-alone projects rather than a portfolio approach at country level will also be less effective in addressing holistically the multiple roots of gender inequality.

Staff resources designated to support work on gender are insufficient. Apart from the World Bank and IFC, other IFIs have not placed as much emphasis on knowledge generation and dissemination.

While tagging of projects addressing gender gaps tends to be strong, measurement of impact and outcomes is less systematic. Projects may plan to measure effectiveness in closing gender gaps, but analysis of supervision reports show that measurement seldom takes place.

There are limited external assessments of IFI gender interventions as they heavily rely on publicly available information. Thinktank reports tend to focus on the scale of IFI programmes and the extent of gender focus in their design rather than on outcomes or impact. As part of their wider critique of IFI economic orthodoxy, some civil society organisations continue to criticise IFI gender strategies as an inadequate response to the root causes of gender inequality.

Recommendations from the report include:

- **IFI support to address gender gaps should be based on comprehensive country level diagnostics and strategy.** Persistent gender gaps vary between countries so strategies to address these gaps should be based on relevant and updated in-country diagnostics.
- **IFIs should seek to use a range of instruments to implement country strategies and address gender gaps effectively, rather than just stand-alone projects.** Instruments may include policy dialogue, policy lending, technical assistance and public and private sector investment projects.
- **High-level corporate requirements to monitor gender outcomes and impact, not just gender targeting, will incentivise organisations to prioritise action to address gender gaps.** This is clear, for example, in World Bank corporate requirements to report against IDA commitments and capital enhancement commitments.
- **Using performance ratings to measure project effectiveness in addressing gender inequality also incentivises organisations to prioritise gender action throughout the project cycle.** While an initial gender tag in project design is an important statement of intent, a gender performance rating in supervision reports or project completion reports may encourage continued focus on gender during delivery and collection of gender disaggregated data on effectiveness and impact.
- **IFIs should ensure adequate resources are available to support gender specialists and focal persons.** Gender specialists play an important role in gathering, disseminating and applying evidence on addressing gender gaps more widely within their organisations.
- **More focus should be placed on aggregating the results of project level gender impact assessments** and developing clearer hypotheses about what works well in promoting women's economic empowerment.

- IFIs should seek to update the focus of their work on areas where **gender gaps are being exacerbated by recent crises**, notably the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and the global cost of living crisis, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine.
- It is also important for IFIs to address **intersectionality** – women are not a homogenous group. Poor, less educated, rural women and women with disabilities are often at higher risk of being left behind in women’s economic empowerment policy efforts.
- In addition to exploring gender gaps and approaches to narrowing these gender gaps, IFIs should also consider greater prioritisation of measures to **stimulate labour demand** as part of their gender strategies and work on women’s economic empowerment.

1. Background

Purpose

FCDO seeks to conduct a mapping and critical assessment of the work carried out by International Financial Institutions (IFIs) on women's economic empowerment. This assessment aims to enable FCDO to engage with the World Bank Group as it launches a refresh of their gender strategy.

Questions

The three questions which this exercise aims to answer are:

1. What strategic focus do IFIs have on women's economic empowerment?
2. To what extent has the work of IFIs (i.e. WEE sub-topics, policies, programming, partnerships) been successful in driving results for women's economic empowerment? What are the enabling and constraining factors in explaining the results?
3. What recommendations are there on how IFIs can achieve transformative women's economic empowerment outcomes?

Methodology

The review was carried out through desk-based research. It was a rapid review of IFIs' work in this area, and not an academic paper or an evaluation, so does not follow comprehensive or systematic review methods. A list of publications reviewed is included at the end. Three semi-structured interviews were also carried out with World Bank Group representatives to better understand the organisation's strategic focus and to discuss examples of results achieved for women's economic empowerment. A list of interviewees is included in the annex. Information on IFI strategic focus is limited to the six IFIs mentioned in the Terms of Reference, with the addition of the International Monetary Fund, which recently published its gender strategy in June 2022. The review also included virtual attendance at a meeting organised by civil society organisations at the World Bank – IMF global meetings on the IMF Gender Strategy.

The response to the second question on success of IFI results summarises evidence presented in existing evaluations of IFI gender strategies, focusing at the strategic rather than project level. Case studies of best practice are provided at the project level. These were selected based on recommendations from interviewees and a rapid desk review, with case studies from differing IFIs prioritised.

Report Structure

The remainder of this report follows a structure based on the three questions outlined above. Section 2 gives an overview of the strategic focus of the selected IFIs, drawing out key characteristics which overlap and including a comparison table. Section 3 summarises IFI's contribution to women's economic empowerment results, based on internal evaluations and external commentary on IFI gender strategies. Three case studies of best practice in areas of interest at the project level are also included. Section 4 gives several recommendations for IFI's work on women's economic empowerment, split into process-oriented recommendations and content-oriented recommendations.

2. IFI strategic focus on women's economic empowerment

Overview

The World Bank Group strategy is based on a framework developed in the World Development Report 2012 on Gender Equality and Development which focused on three inter-related domains: human endowments (particularly education and health), economic opportunities and voice and agency. Since 2015 when the Sustainable Development Goals framework was launched by the UN, the World Bank Group has published a revised gender strategy, identifying persistent gender gaps within each domain. For example, within the economic opportunities domain, gender gaps were identified in labour market participation, involvement in unpaid care work and the control and ownership of assets. The gender strategy sets out a range of approaches designed to help address these gaps. This gender gap approach, focusing on addressing specific aspects of gender inequality, is an evolution from an earlier more generic gender mainstreaming approach. Other IFIs, except the IMF, use similar frameworks, identifying gender gaps which their investments, projects or technical advice will address. There is some variation in IFI categorisation of domains of activity. ADB, for example, separates 'women's resilience to external shocks' as a strategy pillar. Both AfDB and ERDB separate women's access to finance, services and infrastructure as key objectives or strategic pillars. However, the IFI gender frameworks tend to share the following characteristics:

- **IFIs strategic focus on women's economic empowerment is articulated within their wider gender strategies.** None of the IFIs have published specific women's economic empowerment strategies. This reflects the observation that economic empowerment is very closely linked to wider aspects of gender equity including human endowments such as health and education and societal factors such as voice and agency. ADB does make a terminological distinction between women's economic empowerment, a component covering jobs and entrepreneurship, and other components such as gender equality in human development, decision-making and leadership.
- **The domains articulated in IFI gender strategies are inextricably linked.** Just as gender inequality has multiple and complex causes, women's economic empowerment requires a combination of complementary approaches to be effective. Domains of gender inequality are inextricably linked. For example, facilitating economic opportunities for women cannot be achieved in the context of persistent gender gaps in human endowments or in voice and agency.
- **Promoting gender equity and women's economic empowerment is widely seen as an important development objective in its own right, but also a contributor to inclusive growth and resilience.** Many of the IFI gender strategies articulate a wider 'business case' for promoting women's economic empowerment in terms of its potential contribution to higher productivity and growth. At the company level too, improved gender equity within the company is believed to contribute to improved business performance.
- **IFI strategies developed post-2015 tend to give less prominence to gender constraints and opportunities which have emerged more recently.** Interviews with some World Bank Group representatives indicated that the following issues are likely to be given greater prominence in current and future strategy updates: addressing gender-based violence, particularly in the workplace; employment and economic opportunities for women in the green economy; support for childcare provision; and women's economic empowerment in fragile and conflict affected states. The EBRD strategy 2021-5 already identifies specific lenses on the green economy, digital

economy, care economy and gender-based violence and harassment, linking these more recent priorities to the COVID-19 impacts on women.

Approaches for promoting economic opportunities and employment for women principally focus on the supply side of the labour market rather than stimulating demand. IFI gender frameworks tend to focus on narrowing gender gaps. Strategies recommend that gaps are to be addressed through policies, programmes, investments or other interventions that seek to strengthen endowments, opportunities and agency of women vis-a-vis men. In terms of an approach to women’s economic empowerment within the labour market, this can be characterised as a ‘supply side’ approach – improving the capacity and opportunities for women to take up employment - with less emphasis on the ‘demand’ side – how to create jobs and economic opportunities more generally, but particularly for women.

There are economic arguments, however, which suggest that stimulating demand and generating productive jobs is the real driver of women’s economic empowerment. Proponents of the feminisation U-Curve theory¹ observe that rates of female labour force participation are driven largely by types of employment available and, in particular, growth in higher productivity employment rather than by the characteristics of the female labour pool in terms of education, training, agency etc. This is an argument that economic growth and investment in higher productivity sectors itself will generate greater gender equality. It is not an argument that is made explicitly in IFI gender strategies.

The IMF gender mainstreaming strategy alone focuses on ensuring gender sensitivity and responsiveness in internal processes such as data, internal governance, collaboration and resource use. This reflects its mandate of surveillance, lending and capacity building, rather than project-based financing. The IMF gender mainstreaming strategy constitutes a more generic mainstreaming approach rather than identification of specific gender gaps and support for government policy or private sector practices that aim to narrow these gaps.

Strategic focus of selected IFIs

The main strategic focus areas of seven selected IFIs are summarised in Table 1, based on the review of IFI strategies, conceptual framework and main WEE strategy pillars of IFIs in the section below. As Table 1 shows, there is a large amount of cross-over in terms of the strategic focus areas of the IFIs reviewed. One reason for so much cross-over is that many IFIs have similar remits but different regions of focus. Women’s access to (high-quality) jobs, women’s entrepreneurship, addressing unpaid care work, women’s access to public services/infrastructure, women’s leadership, and education and training are all mentioned as areas of interest for five out of seven IFIs reviewed. Women’s resilience to climate shocks is mentioned much less frequently, only by ADB, IADB and EBRD. IMF is an outlier in terms of the IFIs reviewed, as its gender strategy does not cover different focus areas of WEE.

Table 1: A comparison of strategic focus areas for IFIs

Strategic focus areas for WEE	WB	IFC	ADB	AfDB	IADB	EBRD	IMF
Women’s access to (high-quality) jobs	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Women’s entrepreneurship		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Addressing unpaid care work	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Women’s access to public services / infrastructure	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Women’s voice and agency	✓	✓			✓	✓	
Women’s leadership in public and/or private sector	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Equitable access to education and training	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Women’s resilience to climate shocks			✓		✓	✓	

¹ See discussion of this theory in [Gender and Inclusion Evidence Review – Prosperity Fund](#); WOW Helpdesk Query 19A; William Smith and Isabelle Cardinal; April 2019 (pp. 7-9)

Strategy, conceptual framework and main WEE strategy pillars of IFIs

World Bank Group

The [World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2016-2023](#) was published in 2015 in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals launch, and as part of the Bank's International Development Association (IDA) commitments under IDA 17². The WBG Gender Strategy has four objectives:

1. Improving **human endowments** – health, education and social protection
2. Removing constraints for **more and better jobs**
3. Removing barriers to **women's ownership and control over assets**
4. Enhancing **women's voice and agency** and **engaging with men and boys**.

The strategy was based on a framework developed in the World Development Report 2012 on Gender Equality and Development which focused on three inter-related domains: human endowments (particularly education and health), economic opportunities and voice and agency. Within each domain, **the Gender Strategy identifies a number of gender gaps**. For human endowments, persistent gender gaps were identified in education and health such as maternal mortality and excess mortality of infant girls. For economic opportunities, gaps were identified in labour market participation, involvement in unpaid care work and the control and ownership of assets. Gaps in voice and agency were evident in the household and within community, local and national institutions. Examples include right to choose the age of marriage, freedom from gender based violence and representation in political processes.

The Gender Strategy conceives gender equality **as a development objective in its own right and as a contributing factor to other objectives**, including increased productivity, economic growth and poverty reduction. The strategy recognises that significant progress has been made in narrowing some gender gaps since 2000 and identified gender gaps that remained most persistent. The gender strategy is implemented through a variety of instruments, including development policy lending and investment project financing.

The WBG is currently launching **a process to refresh the strategy**, based on the recent IDA 18 commitment on gender and development. Interview respondents suggested that the revised strategy is likely to have a continued focus on closing gender gaps through support for quality reproductive health services, improved educational outcomes and women's employment, but also a new focus on preventing gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and abuse.

International Finance Corporation

As an integral part the World Bank Group responsible for engagement with the private sector, the IFC's strategic focus on gender is also **governed by the World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2016-2023**. On the basis of WBG Gender Strategy, IFC developed two, three-year implementation plans for internal management purposes. These implementation plans are matrixed, covering both industry teams and geographical regions. IFC interventions with the private sector cover all four WBG strategy pillars of endowments, jobs, assets and agency. IFC also refers to closing gender gaps in six priority areas: corporate leadership, disruptive technologies, employment, entrepreneurship, finance and insurance. Spanning these objectives, IFC's work on gender is carried out through its investment and technical advisory work, as well as through research and knowledge management activities.

² Replenishment of funds by donors for the International Development Association, the part of the World Bank that helps the world's poorest countries, covering the period July 2014 to June 2017.

Under the **corporate leadership** priority, IFC seeks greater representation of women in company boards and management. Within the **disruptive technology** priority, IFC works on developing women's role in e-commerce, online learning and ride-hailing. The **employment** priority focuses on increasing women's labour force participation by tackling childcare issues, addressing gender-based violence in the workplace and supporting diagnostic work for companies on benefits of closing gender gaps. Under the **entrepreneurship and finance** priorities, IFC works with banks to facilitate finance for women entrepreneurs. This is carried out through major initiatives such as Banking on Women and the Women Entrepreneurs Finance (We-Fi) initiative, as well as entrepreneurship training. Under the **insurance** priority, IFC has established a community of practice on women's access to insurance with in the ILO, publishing research and best practice for the industry.

Within these six priority areas, IFC has developed specific products, often associated with flagship projects. These products are aimed at developing best practice which can be tailored and applied in different country contexts.

Asian Development Bank

The [ADB's Strategy 2030](#) includes 'Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality' as one of its five operational priorities. ADB has committed to a target that by 2030, at least 75% of the number of ADB's committed operations will promote gender equality. There are five strategic priorities under [ADB's gender equality operational priority](#):

(i) Women's economic empowerment increased: ADB aims to support its developing member countries (DMCs) generate jobs and higher value-added entrepreneurship opportunities for women. This includes jobs for short-term income gains, including unskilled construction work where other options do not exist, but also a shift to supporting quality jobs, such as economic opportunities with higher skills and incomes for women.

(ii) Gender equality in human development enhanced: ADB aims to assist DMCs accelerate gender equality in education, health, and social protection. This includes providing DMCs with knowledge solutions to address the different needs of women and men in responding to new challenges such as aging, the youth bulge, rapid migration and the future of work.

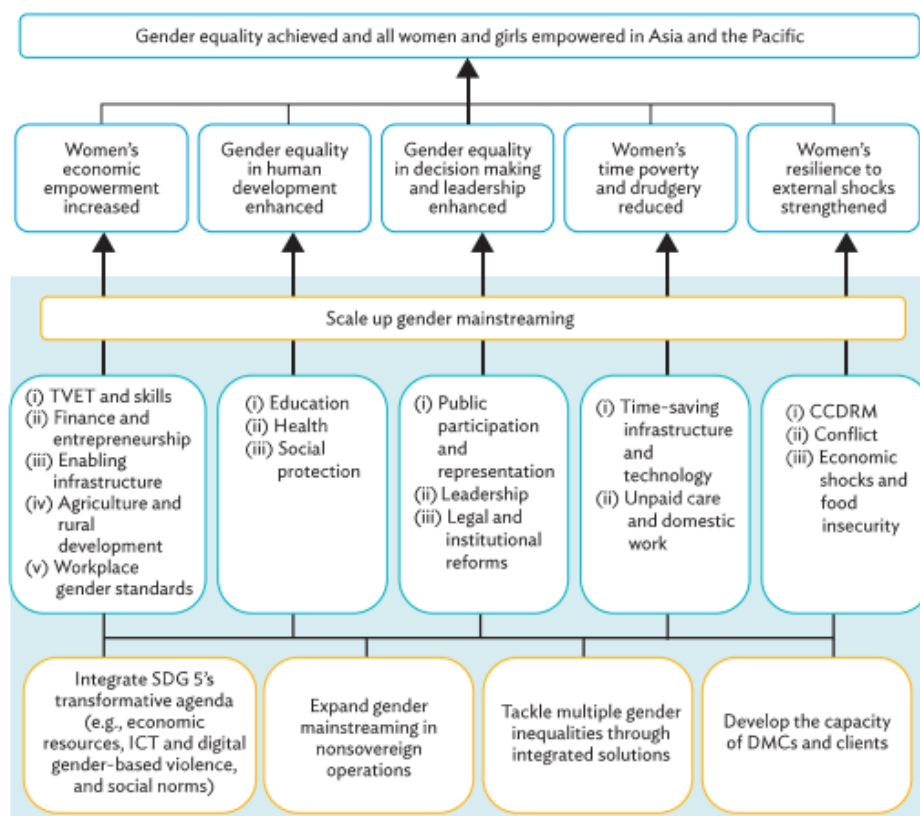
(iii) Gender equality in decision making and leadership enhanced: ADB has shifted from an approach of consultation of women in projects, towards meaningful participation of women. To enable tangible changes in public resource allocation, urban and rural infrastructure design, and public service delivery quality, ADB's support for women's participation in decision making is now more systematically linked to women's leadership development. ADB explicitly combines women's public participation and leadership with arrangements to provide child and family care support to facilitate a better work-life balance.

(iv) Women's time poverty and drudgery reduced: ADB aims to help DMCs reduce women's time-consuming household work through basic infrastructure, and women-friendly urban and rural infrastructure to facilitate safety, mobility, and convenience for women in access to vital services and work. ADB is also exploring direct investments and policy changes for reducing or rebalancing unpaid care responsibilities to accelerate progress in women's time poverty reduction.

(v) Women's resilience to external shocks strengthened: ADB aims to help DMCs invest in women and girls by building resilience to shocks such as climate change impacts and disasters triggered by natural hazards, food insecurity, economic crisis, and conflict and other political insecurities.

Figure 1 below shows the framework for ADB's work on gender equality across the five strategic priorities.

Figure 1: Framework for ADB's Operational Priority 2 (Gender Equality) of Strategy 2030



African Development Bank

The [AfDB's Gender Strategy 2021 - 2025](#) anchors on the 'High 5s', AfDB's five development priorities (light up and power Africa; feed Africa; industrialise Africa; integrate Africa and; improve the quality of life for the people of Africa). It defines three strategic pillars:

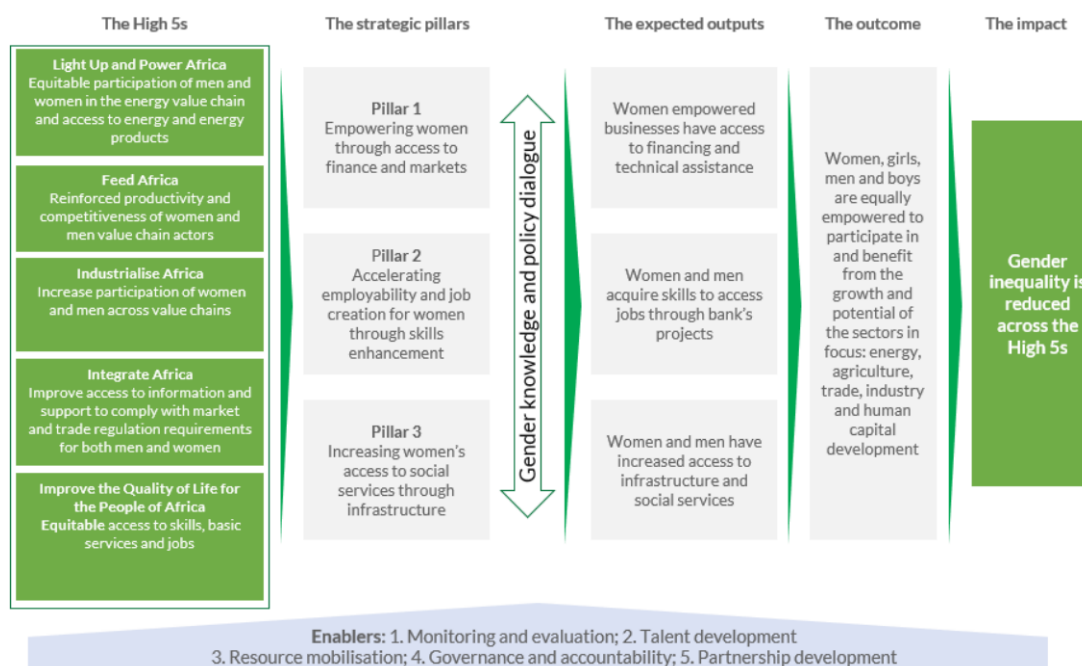
Pillar 1: Through access to finance and markets to transform women-led SMEs into productive and competitive enterprises. This includes exploring opportunities to increase the economic participation and leadership of women in the private sector and supporting Regional Member Countries (RMCs) to establish a conducive business environment for women entrepreneurs.

Pillar 2: Accelerating employability and job creation for women through skills enhancement: To enable equitable access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), AfDB mainstreams gender across its operations and investments vehicles. This includes projects related to training and 'special initiatives', such as the Jobs for Youth programme, Coding for Employment programme and Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation. AfDB also engages RMCs to adopt reforms and programmes aimed at strengthening adolescent girls' and women's skills to make them more competitive in the labour market and promote decent labour standards for women and men.

Pillar 3: Increasing women's access to social services (such as energy, health and WASH) through infrastructure. AfDB influences the development of gender-responsive quality infrastructure to guarantee women's access as well as positively benefit from infrastructure projects as stakeholders, workers and end-users. Gender mainstreaming in infrastructure projects focuses on increasing women's engagement in project design as well as women's employment and the participation of women-owned businesses in project delivery.

Figure 2 below shows the Theory of Change for the Gender Strategy, including the High 5s and strategic pillars.

Figure 2: AfDB's Gender Strategy 2021-2025 Theory of Change



Inter-American Development Bank

The [IADB's Gender and Diversity Sector Framework](#) guides the IADB's work to promote gender equality as well as social inclusion (of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and other diverse populations). The IADB seeks to close gender gaps in health, education, economic participation, and leadership in the public and private sectors. This is through three lines of action:

- (i) **expanding access to quality public services** (particularly schools) that are culturally relevant;
- (ii) **expand women's economic opportunities** by increasing female labour force participation, closing income and gender gaps in labour force participation and occupational segregation, between men and women, and improving women's access to more productive and better-paid jobs and occupations;
- (iii) **strengthen women's voice and agency** by (a) promoting their leadership in the public and private sectors and (b) supporting the prevention of violence against women and children.

To achieve these three lines of action, IADB engages in the following activities :

1. Design and implementation of **education interventions and labour policies** that support women's entry into non-traditional degrees, occupations, and sectors, such as the STEM fields, and ultimately increase female labour force participation.
2. Finance quality **childcare services** to promote women's participation in the labour force.
3. Promote **public-private partnerships** to foster women's labour force participation and leadership.
4. Develop the entrepreneurial and export capacity of **women-led SMEs**.
5. Provide **quality public services** that promote gender equality or women's empowerment (e.g. in transportation, electricity, water and sanitation, and sexual and reproductive health).
6. Promote **women's leadership** in the public sector at the national and local levels;

7. Incorporate **the prevention of violence against women** and the provision of services to female survivors into Bank operations in the areas of citizen security, health, public transportation, and urban development.
8. Design and adapt **integrated service models** for women that facilitate their labour force participation, health, and right to live a life free of violence.
9. Address the **gender issues that affect men** in the region, such as school dropout rates in certain countries and risky social behaviours.

Build the capacity of men and women to contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation through the transfer of knowledge and technology.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development published a [Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2021-5](#) which accounts for the impact of COVID-19 on women’s access to economic opportunities. The strategy seeks to mainstream gender in three focus areas:

- building inclusive and gender-responsive financial systems and business environments;
- promoting skills, employment and sustainable livelihoods; and
- creating inclusive and gender-responsive services and public goods.

The strategy also highlights four thematic lenses that cut across the focus areas: the green economy, the digital economy, the care economy and voice, agency and addressing gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH). A target has been set for 40% of annual EBRD operations integrating gender equality measures by the end of 2025 (compared with 15% between 2016 and 2020). The strategy explicitly does not address women’s civil rights or sexual and reproductive health.

International Monetary Fund

In July 2022, the International Monetary Fund published its strategy [‘Towards Mainstreaming Gender’](#). The IMF acknowledges that disparities in gender opportunities and outcomes are influenced by macro-economic and financial policies, with well-designed policies facilitating more inclusive and equitable outcomes. It also recognises that greater gender equity will contribute to economic growth, stability and resilience. The Fund seeks to **mainstream gender throughout its three core functions of surveillance, lending and capacity development**.

Figure 3: IMF Mainstreaming Gender: Closing Gender Gaps to Serve the Membership



Reflecting these core functions, the strategy is based on four pillars: i) to empower country teams with **access to relevant data and modelling tools** to conduct policy analysis; ii) to **set up a robust governance framework** to ensure that macrocritical aspects of gender are integrated in country work; iii) to establish collaboration with external partners for **knowledge sharing and peer learning** purposes; iv) to efficiently utilise resources allocated to gender by **realising economies of scale and avoiding duplication of effort**.

The pillars of the IMF gender strategy focus particularly on internal structures, processes and tools rather than recommending specific policies to spur women's economic empowerment. The strategy includes the establishment of an internal gender data hub to model the gender impacts of different macro-economic and financial policies. The proposed governance structure aims to ensure focus on gender-related issues that are likely to impact significantly on balance of payments or domestic stability i.e. issues which have 'macro-criticality'. A centralised gender and inclusion unit will be established within the IMF's Strategy, Policy and Review Department, with increased funding to staff the unit. The strategy also emphasises collaboration with other IFIs on advocacy to promote policies and reforms which reduce gender gaps.

3. IFI contribution to women's economic empowerment results

Internal evaluations of IFI gender/women's economic empowerment strategies

Since 2017, four of the six selected IFIs have published internal evaluations of their gender strategies. These evaluations, undertaken by internal evaluation departments of the IFIs, focus at the strategy rather than project level and therefore concentrate on process and internal structure more than systematic evaluation of the impact of individual policies and projects on women's economic empowerment.

While commitment to strategies has been strong, implementation has not matched this level of commitment. The mid-term evaluation of the WBG gender strategy observes strong commitment to the strategy from the organisation, management and staff. Management report that 65% of all World Bank operations approved in FY 2019 were designed to close gender gaps and contribute to regional gender targets. IDA 18 and 19 commitments included multiple gender related commitments: closing first generation gaps in human endowments (primary and secondary education and reproductive health); removing constraints to more and better jobs through addressing skills, reducing occupational segregation and addressing security on urban transport; increasing women's financial inclusion; and strengthening women's voice and agency and implementing a global task force on gender-based violence. However, the mid-term evaluation notes that implementation has not matched this level of commitment or ambition. The report suggests that a lot of gender staff time and resources is concentrated on the project tagging process in design phase and less on support for implementation. It has proved challenging to maintain focus on gender gaps throughout the project cycle. Staff also reported difficulties in engaging clients on gender gap issues. For IFC, these challenges exist particularly for investment clients.

The country-led approach to implementation of the strategy increases sensitivity to local context but results in variation in implementation. The World Bank gender strategy is implemented by individual country offices rather than a central unit and is supposed to align with Country Partnership Framework priorities and analysis of gender issues at the country level. This results in variation in implementation, with some countries favouring stand-alone projects to address gender gaps and others using multiple instruments, with Vietnam as a notable example of the latter. Priority gender gaps are identified through country diagnostics but these are not necessarily given a similar level of priority in implementation. World Bank management responded to the evaluation stating that operations to address gender gaps in all four of the strategy areas (endowments, opportunities, assets, voice and agency) were being implemented in 49 countries. Addressing gender gaps through stand-alone projects rather than a portfolio approach at country level will also be less effective in addressing holistically the multiple roots of gender inequality. The AfDB evaluation concluded that gender-informed Country Strategy Papers made the most significant contribution to gender mainstreaming in the institution.

Staff resources designated to support work on gender are insufficient. Specialist staff play an important role in helping teams to use the evidence and resources that are available to implement the gender strategy. But these specialist staff are not always available. Gender teams in World Bank and IFC, as well as the regional Gender Innovation Labs, have played an important role in developing evidence of which interventions work, including through the use of impact evaluations. By 2019, 110 impact evaluations, mainly randomised control trials, were in process in the Africa, South Asia, and

East Asia and Pacific Gender Innovation Labs. Of the 110 impact evaluations a total of 94 were being implemented in Africa. Since the introduction of the gender strategy, IFC has produced 109 gender-focused knowledge products. In the World Bank, there are insufficient staff and resources available to ensure that the lessons from these impact evaluations are synthesised, disseminated and applied in other operations. IFC has established a network of regional and product gender leads who actively manage strategy implementation whereas the World Bank gender group only organises a Community of Practice. Other IFIs have not been able to place as much emphasis on knowledge generation and dissemination. The AfDB gender strategy evaluation comments that there are few accessible gender related resources on the website and no materials on gender mainstreaming in the AfDB Document and Archiving and Records Management System. It also commented that due to decentralised decision-making, funding for Gender Specialist positions has been uneven.

While tagging of projects addressing gender gaps tends to be strong, measurement of impact and outcomes is less systematic. The most important gender related metrics for World Bank Group management are the IDA and capital enhancement commitments³ relating to gender. These measure the extent to which commitments on gender have been incorporated into project designs. However, there are limitations in measuring effectiveness of implementation at country and project level, particularly in measuring gender gaps in voice and agency and in human endowments. While Country Partnership Frameworks may identify gender gaps, they seldom include indicators to measure progress, even in relation to jobs. Projects may plan to measure effectiveness in closing gender gaps, particularly in jobs and assets, but analysis of supervision reports show that measurement seldom takes place. For example, in a sample of 91 projects approved between FY 2017 and 2018, only 19 were tracking gender gaps in their supervision reports. The evaluation of AfDB gender mainstreaming (page 2) highlighted that “gender-related indicators tend to focus on outputs, and not outcomes. Furthermore, measuring progress in each of the three gender pillars has not been systematic.”

External commentary on IFI gender strategies

There are limited external assessments of IFI gender interventions as they heavily rely on publicly available information. The development think tanks Centre for Global Development and Overseas Development Institute have, however, published some commentary. These reports tend to focus on the scale of IFI programmes and the extent of gender focus in their design rather than on outcomes or impact. As part of their wider critique of IFI economic orthodoxy, some civil society organisations continue to criticise IFI gender strategies as an inadequate response to the root causes of gender inequality.

- **In the context of a significant increase in unpaid childcare work for women during the COVID-19 pandemic, CGD published a paper on IFI investment in childcare interventions⁴.** From 2000 to 2021, the research identified 348 projects from 8 IFIs⁵ which focused on childcare or included a childcare support component, with a total investment of US\$32.2 billion. A small proportion (US\$2.08 billion), mostly supported by the IADB, were focused solely on childcare. The World Bank implemented 59% of these projects, followed by IADB (14%) and IFC (10%). A total of 80% of projects were dedicated to investment in childcare facilities and 79% of projects were focused in

³ IDA commitments refer to commitments the World Bank makes for use of International Development Association funds while capital enhancement commitments refers to commitments made when grants are made to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).

⁴ A Review of Multilateral Development Banks’ Investments in Childcare; Megan O’Donnell, Kelsey Ross, and Shelby Bourgaunt; Centre for Global Development Policy Paper 223, August 2021.

⁵ 1. Asian Development Bank (ADB); 2. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB); 3. African Development Bank (AfDB); 4. Development Bank of Latin America (CAF); 5. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); 6. Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); 7. Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) 8. World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC)

middle-income countries. Over half of the projects were primarily education projects with a childcare component. Only 38 projects included indicators on outcomes for unpaid care providers. The study provides a baseline for IFI investment in the childcare sector but concludes that there is scope for this investment, and measurement of its gender impacts on unpaid care providers, to be increased and improved.

- **ActionAid recently published a [report on the IMF gender mainstreaming strategy](#).** The ActionAid report rejects the IMF strategy on numerous counts but fundamentally because it considers IMF conditionality on fiscal responsibility and debt as fundamentally inconsistent with gender equality. It sees the IMF as the chief advocate of austerity policies, including cuts to public sector wages, which it claims are being ramped up after the COVID-19 pandemic. The report argues against the conventional economic model prioritising growth, claiming that neoliberalism is at the root cause of multiple, converging crises: inequality, climate, health, education, conflict and debt. Given this stance, the report critiques the main components of the IMF gender strategy as likely to have insignificant impact in the face of the severe negative gender impacts of wider IMF policy advice. The report rejects IMF support for social protection measures aimed at ameliorating the impacts of austerity on the grounds that they are not universal benefits and that targeting is ineffective. The report also rejects the concept of gender gaps in favour of gender rights and gender equality which encompasses equality of outcomes. The report's critique of the IMF gender strategy is overshadowed by its critique of IMF economic orthodoxy which it clearly believes no gender strategy could ever mitigate.
- **In 2021, the Overseas Development Institute published a [report on the catalytic effects of investment by Development Finance Institutions on a range of issues, including gender equality](#).** The report findings, which focus on 'gender lens investing', are therefore relevant only to the private sector investment activities of IFIs, particularly IFC. Based on the findings of a range of papers presented to the European Development Finance Institutions Impact Conference, the report concludes that there has been a significant increase in gender lens investing by DFIs, notably through the 2X Challenge, which exceeded targets to mobilise \$4.6 billion investment in support of women's economic empowerment. It acknowledges, however, that measurement of the outcomes and impact of gender lens investing on women's economic empowerment is nascent and complex, with outcomes likely to be context specific. The paper argues for use of specific gender related theories of change to clarify how gender impacts are expected to be achieved, along with consistent use of ex-post evaluation to better understand causation and attribution.
- **CGD published a [paper on gender targeting of IFI social protection programme responses during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)**⁶. The paper concluded that "a substantial fraction of social protection operations launched to support countries through the COVID-19 pandemic have included some form of gender-related indicators and/or targets. Such targets generally considered gender in isolation, as few included intersectional elements. In terms of social protection, the most prevalent form of provisions by far involved cash transfers, in large part assigning quotas for support to women and girls..." The review analysed publicly available design documents for 142 projects with design documents finalised between March and December 2020. Of these, 64 projects, with a total commitment value of US\$12.15 billion, included some form of social protection. Of these 64 projects, 52 (81%) included at least one gender related indicator and 47 (73%) included a gender target, usually a quota for women recipients of cash transfers.

⁶ Gender in the MDB Social Protection Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic; Brian Webster, Alan Gelb, Megan O'Donnell and Shelby Bourgault; CGD Note August 2021.

Case studies of best practice in IFI programming

Below three case studies of best practice in IFI programming are produced that cover:

- Women's economic empowerment and climate change (e.g. women's access to green and blue jobs)
- Addressing women's unpaid care work
- Promoting women's access to high quality jobs

As shown in Table 1 above, five out of the seven IFIs emphasise women's unpaid care work and women's access to high quality jobs as areas of strategic focus. Accordingly, a large number of best practice case studies were found for these, especially for IFC's work with the private sector.

In contrast, few case studies were found on promoting green jobs for women, and none were found which had large scale reach. The ILO define green jobs as 'decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment' (ILO 2016), however this is not an agreed-upon definition globally, with 'green jobs' often used, for example, in reference to new jobs which will be created in the transition to a low-carbon economy. Several IFIs have published statements or research on women's access to green jobs, for example AfDB's '[Green Jobs for Women in Africa](#)', however, there is a lack of programming documentation in this area. One reason could be because often the sectors where women are overrepresented, such as health, care work, or the informal economy, are not included within the ILO-style definition of 'green jobs' even though they are in very low-carbon sectors, with women's rights organisations often arguing that these should count as 'green jobs'⁷ (CARE 2022). Another reason may be that 'green jobs' form less of a current focus in IFI gender strategies than for other development agencies. As Table 1 shows, climate change is rarely a focus of current IFI gender strategies. The strategic focus on climate change appears to be increasing, evidenced by the increasing published statements and research from IFIs. However, it seems to be too early to show programme

Best practice in promoting green jobs for women: [Asian Development Bank partnering with Habitat for Humanity Fiji to train women to build climate-friendly and disaster-resilient houses](#)

In 2021 ADB partnered with Habitat for Humanity Fiji to provide women with carpentry skills for building climate-friendly and disaster-resilient housing, thus promoting their access to green jobs. Habitat for Humanity Fiji's 'Women in Construction Project', implemented under ADB's 'Green Jobs for Women' technical assistance, was delivered in partnership with Australian Pacific Training Coalition who provided funding and technical support.

Eleven participants undertook both classroom and practical training, with graduates earning Certificates II and III in Construction, a recognized Australian qualification issued through Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Queensland. As part of practical training, 20 small climate-friendly and disaster-resilient houses were constructed and provided to selected beneficiaries in Fijian communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

This project was designed to raise awareness and demonstrate the importance of vocational training and employment opportunities for women in the growing green economy. It promoted women's access to jobs in a traditionally male-dominated construction sector. In line with ADB's commitment to address gender equality, disaster response/recovery and climate change, the project empowered women to contribute to the rebuilding of houses and their communities.

results.

⁷ For example, [Labour market changes for a green and caring economy: Feminist Green New Deal Policy Paper](#); UK Women's Budget Group and Women's Environmental Network; May 2022.

Best practice in addressing women's unpaid care work: [IFC's 'Tackling Childcare' programme](#)

IFC's Global Tackling Childcare Advisory Programme focuses on improving employer-supported childcare and family-friendly practices by working with client companies, the World Bank, governments, and related entities. The programme is implemented through advisory engagements, business case research, and peer learning collaborations, as well as by informing childcare policies, conducting market research to address care demand and supply barriers, and identifying investment potential in the care economy.

The programme has recently published a [Spotlight on Grupo Altex – Supporting Employees through Childcare](#) in Mexico. Grupo Altex is a leading agro-industrial business serving national and international clients, with over 7,000 employees, including 51% women, although only 12% women in executive management positions. Grupo Altex has established a series of policies, benefits, and initiatives aimed at making working mothers, fathers, and their families feel supported in the workplace. For example:

- Grupo Altex offers **subsidised childcare services** for employees' children aged 1-6 years old as well as for community members. Employees pay a small amount for high-quality service near their workplace—most of the workplaces are in rural areas where this type of childcare offer is rare.
- **Lactation breaks** are provided.
- The company has implemented **flexible work arrangements** for certain roles and operations centres, a policy that has been expanded due to COVID-19.

All Altex employees, regardless of contract type, receive **paid maternity and paternity leave in accordance with Mexican law**. This means women receive 42 days of paid leave before giving birth and 42 days after the child is born while men are entitled to five days of leave.

In the past decade, Altex has been featured among *Mejores Empresas Mexicanas* (Best Mexican Companies) several times and recognized twice by the Workplace Wellness Council in Mexico for being a responsible and healthy organization.

Altex's HR team believes investments in childcare have contributed to an **improvement in staff retention** because lack of childcare is one of the main reasons cited by working mothers in the past for why they were leaving the company. **Absenteeism rates**, which are often associated with 'personal matters' such as childcare, have reduced since 2019 down to 4% in 2021.

Best practice in promoting women's access to high productivity jobs: [The World Bank's 'Albania Gender Equality in Access to Economic Opportunities' project](#)

The World Bank supported the Government of Albania's efforts to enhance the policy framework for gender equality in access to economic opportunities, with a focus on (i) improving women's access to assets; **(ii) levelling the playing field to enhance labour market opportunities for women**; and (iii) strengthening institutional arrangements for gender-informed policy making.

In 2018, the structural gender gaps in labour-force participation in Albania represented an economic loss of about 20% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). To **level the playing field to enhance labour market opportunities for women**, three measures were brought in:

- 1) Government procurement tenders (estimated at about 7.5% of GDP in 2018) introduced a self-declaration form to the standard bidding document that required **bidders to self-certify adherence to non-discrimination principles** for public contracts and to equal pay for work of equal worth.
- 2) The quality and availability of childcare services was improved by changing the teacher:student ratio for pre-school - by 2021 all municipalities had ratios below 18:1. A pilot after-school enrichment program was also launched, aiming at extending the school day in basic education (grades 1-9) on an optional basis.
- 3) Through the Employment Promotion Law, delivery of employment services to vulnerable women (e.g. young women, single women heads of household with dependent children, ethnic minorities, and victims of trafficking and gender-based and domestic violence) was prioritised. There was also the provision of **childcare subsidies for registered unemployed women who enrol in training or gain employment**.

4. Recommendations

These recommendations focus on lessons learned on IFI strategy implementation, with a focus particularly on internal IFI structures, policies and resources. However, some suggestions are included on critical emerging women's economic empowerment issues that IFIs may wish to consider in future strategy development and revision.

Process oriented recommendations

IFI support to address gender gaps should be based on comprehensive country level diagnostics and strategy. Persistent gender gaps vary between countries so strategies to address these gaps should be based on relevant and updated in-country diagnostics. Projects focusing on gender gaps should align with wider country level strategies to address specific gender gaps. These country level strategies should set out indicators and targets to narrow gender gaps to which project results should contribute.

IFIs should seek to use a range of instruments to implement country strategies and address gender gaps effectively, rather than just stand-alone projects. Instruments may include policy dialogue, policy lending, technical assistance and public and private sector investment projects. A portfolio approach is needed to tackle persistent gender inequality rather than just individual projects seeking to achieve a gender 'tag'.

High-level corporate requirements to monitor gender outcomes and impact, not just gender targeting, will incentivise organisations to prioritise action to address gender gaps. This is clear, for example, in World Bank corporate requirements to report against IDA commitments and capital enhancement commitments.

Using performance ratings to measure project effectiveness in addressing gender inequality also incentivises organisations to prioritise gender action throughout the project cycle. While an initial gender tag in project design is an important statement of intent, a gender performance rating in supervision reports or project completion reports may encourage continued focus on gender during delivery, as well as collection of gender disaggregated data on effectiveness and impact.

IFIs should ensure adequate resources are available to support gender specialists and focal persons. Gender specialists play an important role in gathering, disseminating and applying evidence on addressing gender gaps more widely within their organisations. They support programme and project staff to ensure projects are designed to address gender gaps and to deliver effectively. Standards should be set for the selection, professional development and performance management of gender specialists. Joint work by gender staff across projects to generate evidence on what works should be encouraged. This has proved more effective than generating evidence from individual projects in encouraging dissemination and adoption across operations. Early involvement of gender experts in project concept development can also help to mitigate against less effective attempts to retrofit gender into project design in an attempt to achieve gender tagging. However, resources should be available to enable gender staff to provide support throughout the project cycle, not only during design.

More focus should be placed on aggregating the results of project level gender impact assessments and developing clearer hypotheses about what works well in promoting women's economic empowerment. Think tanks and research organisations could also be encouraged to carry out systematic reviews of impact assessments carried out by the Gender Innovation Labs, to facilitate greater practical application of lessons learned.

Content oriented recommendations

Gender inequality has **multiple, complex and deep-seated roots which vary in different contexts**. It is not appropriate, therefore, to identify specific sectors, approaches, policies or investments on which IFIs should focus. Evaluating impact, particularly in such areas as increasing women's voice and agency, is also a complex issue.

Clearly, however, IFIs should seek to update the focus of their work on areas where **gender gaps are being exacerbated by recent crises**, notably the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and the global cost of living crisis, exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. These types of global challenges have reversed hard-won gains in women's economic empowerment, in certain areas more than others. For example, COVID-19 has increased women's unpaid care work as a result of school closures and reduced care supply (both formal care services and family) (Duragova 2020). IFIs could respond to this by, for example, increasing their work on private or public childcare services, increasing investment in gender-sensitive infrastructure to reduce and redistribute the time women spend on unpaid care work, and design and implement care policies that are rights- and needs-based.

It is also important for IFIs to address **intersectionality** – women are not a homogenous group. Poor, less educated, rural women and women with disabilities are often at higher risk at being left behind in women's economic empowerment policy efforts. Intersectionality is not a strong feature of any of the current IFI gender strategies reviewed, except for IADB's 'Gender and Diversity Framework Document', which focuses both on women and girls, and the social inclusion of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants, and other diverse populations. Many of the IFIs are likely to have separate disability inclusion strategies, but these were not identified as part of this review.

In addition to exploring gender gaps and approaches to narrowing these gender gaps, IFIs should also consider greater prioritisation of measures to **stimulate labour demand** as part of their gender strategies and work on women's economic empowerment. Creation of dignified, high-productivity jobs, including jobs within the green economy, remains an important driver of female labour force participation and economic empowerment in addition to measures to enhance women's endowments, opportunities, assets and agency. This prioritisation could include focus on sectors with high rates of female employment or sectors considered to have potential for high rates of female employment. An approach to boost economic growth together with targeted supply-side interventions to women to encourage their higher participation in high productivity sectors.

Annex 1: Documents reviewed

Strategies

The African Development Bank Group Gender Strategy 2021–2025; February 2021

Asian Development Bank, Strategy 2030: Operational Plan for Priority 2: Accelerating Progress in Gender Equality, 2019-2024; September 2019.

Inter-American Development Bank, Gender and Diversity Sector Framework Document, 2017.

World Bank Group Gender Strategy 2016-2023: Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth.

IMF Strategy towards mainstreaming gender; International Monetary Fund; July 2022

Strategy for the Promotion of Gender Equality 2021-2025; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Evaluations

World Bank Group Gender Strategy Mid-Term Review: An Assessment by the Independent Evaluation Group.

Evaluation insights on International Financial Institutions' support to gender mainstreaming; EBRD Evaluation Department; November 2021

Evaluation of the Bank's Support for Gender and Diversity Office of Evaluation and Oversight (OVE); Inter-American Development Bank; May 2018

Thematic Evaluation: Asian Development Bank Support for Gender and Development (2005–2015); ADB; May 2017.

Evaluation Synthesis of Gender Mainstreaming at the AfDB Summary report; AfDB; January 2020.

External review of IFI interventions from a gender perspective

A Review of Multilateral Development Banks' Investments in Childcare; Megan O'Donnell, Kelsey Ross, and Shelby Bourgault; Centre for Global Development Policy Paper 223, August 2021.

Gender in the MDB Social Protection Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic; Brian Webster, Alan Gelb, Megan O'Donnell and Shelby Bourgault; CGD Note August 2021.

The Care Contradiction: The IMF, Gender and Austerity; ActionAid International 2022.

Case Study documents

Asian Development Bank; Green Jobs for Women: Construction Skills for Fijian Women, August 2021.

World Bank; Albania Gender Equality in Access to Economic Opportunities DPF, Implementation Completion and Results Report; May 2022.

IFC; Spotlight on Group Altex, Mexico: Supporting Employees through Childcare, June 2022.

Other

CARE (2022) A gender-just green transition is a triple win for people, the planet and economies, *CARE International blog* 13th October 2022, <https://www.careinternational.org.uk/gender-just-green-transition-is-a-triple-win-for-people-the-planet-and-economies>

Duragova, E. (2020) Unpaid care work in times of the COVID-19 crisis: Gendered impacts, emerging evidence and promising policy responses, *UNDESA*
[https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2020/09/Duragova.Paper .pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2020/09/Duragova.Paper.pdf)

Interviews

Ian Walker (Manager) and Federica Saliola (Lead Economist), Jobs Group, World Bank

Andrea Kucey (Manager, Gender Group) and Alessandra Heinemann (Senior Social Protection Specialist and Gender Lead), World Bank.

Priyanka Tayal (Strategy Lead, Gender and Economic Inclusion Group), IFC.

Attended virtual meeting: “Fit for purpose? IMF Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and taxation approaches during multiple intersecting crises”; held at the World Bank-IMF Annual meetings 11th October 2022.

Annex 2: Glossary of commonly used women’s economic empowerment terms

Term	Definition
Agency	Ability to use endowments (such as education and skills) and take advantage of economic opportunities to achieve desired outcomes.
Asset	Resource with economic value that an individual, corporation or country owns or controls with the expectation that it will provide a future benefit.
Endowments	Endowments encompass education, health, land and other assets such as financial resources that people accumulate during their lifetimes.
Gender	The social, behavioral, and cultural attributes, expectations, and norms associated with being male or female.
Gender-based violence	Harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power, and harmful norms.
Informal economy	All economic activities by workers on economic units (for example, households, enterprises or firms) that are — in law or practice — not covered by formal arrangements. Formal arrangements entail work that provides legal or social protection.
Intersectionality	The intersections of gender with other areas of discrimination and exclusion, including but not limited to race, class, caste, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, gender identity, disability, nationality, immigration status, geographical location, and religion.
Sexual exploitation and abuse	Sexual exploitation: Actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual abuse: Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions
Violence against women and girls	Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
Women’s economic empowerment	Women have the ability to succeed and advance economically, and the power to make and act on economic decisions to enhance their well-being and position in society.
Women-owned business/enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≥ 51% owned by a woman/women; or • ≥20% owned by a woman/women; and have ≥1 woman as CEO/COO (President/Vice-President); and have ≥ 30% of the board of directors comprised of women, where a board exists; and • For those women entrepreneurs with a loan from a financial institution, the loan size at origination would be between \$5,000 to \$1 million.