



How to Integrate Gender Perspectives into Export Promotion and International Trade Policies

The key objectives of the project were to offer viable public policy initiatives that promote women's participation as workers, managers, and entrepreneurs in new trade opportunities generated by Canadian FTAs with Colombia and Peru. And to create analytical tools to monitor present and future gender-related impacts of these bilateral trade relations by sector and industry at the national level.

This policy brief was prepared for the public policy dialogues held in Colombia and Peru in June 17–21, 2013, which were part of the “Gender Equity and Canadian Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): Achieving Gender Equality Results from the Implementation of Canadian FTAs with Colombia and Peru” project under the Canada-Americas Trade Related Technical Assistance (CATRTA) Program. We thank the funder of this project, the Canadian International Development Agency.

For the “Gender Equity and Canadian Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): Achieving Gender Equality Results from the Implementation of Canadian FTAs with Colombia and Peru” project, NSI's policy recommendations for how governments can integrate gender perspectives into export promotion and international trade policies address four areas of intervention—statistics and databases, economic and trade policies, labour policy, and fundamental complementary policies. Within each area there are specific objectives and key actions. The suggested actions can inform public policies and programs, which are fundamental to achieving gender equality in each area of intervention. It is our hope that policies and programs can be adapted to roll out at international, national, and local levels.



Strategic Area: Statistics and Databases

Objectives

- Available and reliable statistics and databases will feed into the design and implementation of public policies.
- Policies and programs from a gender perspective will benefit the most vulnerable, especially women.
- Specific systems and tools will allow for the ongoing monitoring of public policies' impacts.
- Once this information is publicly available, it becomes possible to compare data sets across different time periods, which is crucial for monitoring the achievements and challenges of policies and programs.

Key Actions

- When conducting statistical data gathering, *disaggregate data by gender* so that the following relevant information can be determined: number of exporting enterprises owned, managed, and majority-operated by women; number of owners, managers, and workers who are women in each sector and industry; types, conditions, and characteristics of employment for men and women; and other directly related variables.
- Cross-reference this information at different levels through different production and sources and tools (e.g., at the national, ministerial, program, and project levels).

Rationale

- The existence of gender-disaggregated data will allow for analysis and provide specific information about women's participation in trade and economic growth, feeding into the formulation of appropriate public policies and programs from a gender perspective.
- Once this information is publicly available, it becomes possible to compare data sets across different time periods, which is crucial for monitoring the achievements and challenges of policies and programs.

Strategic Area: Trade and Economic Policies

Trade policy objective

Export and import promotion policies from a gender perspective can help increase the favourable participation of women in international trade.

Key Actions

- Support export-import enterprises owned by women through specific programs, business networks and associations.
- Promote exports from women-owned businesses by supporting international trade missions exclusively dedicated to them, which can benefit women's participation through training, help in closing deals, and monitoring the success of each trade mission.

- Support specific programs concerning the competitiveness of export industries with majorities of female workers.
- Provide incentives to export industries linked to participation in networks that promote decent labour standards.
- Develop programs for enterprises that incentivize the fulfilment of labour laws and rights and the granting of formal employment with social benefits.
- Create specific programs to support leading female managers (not only business owners) through public recognition awards and productivity initiatives to encourage successful market participation by women.
- Provide incentives for the integration of women-led and women-owned enterprises into larger production and value chains.

Economic policy objective

Entrepreneurship promotion policies from a gender perspective can be actively used to benefit women in business. These policies need to start with promoting the formalization of micro and small enterprises that include women from the informal sector.

Key Actions

- Develop programs to incentivize the creation of women-owned enterprises and/or enterprises that employ women with fair labour conditions that involve the provision of training, funding, monitoring and support through child and family care.
- Support programs to register “informal” businesses owned by women (e.g., incentives can encourage women’s participation in the formal economy).

- Develop public and private sector programs that support funding and credit for women with realistic conditions and requirements.

Strategic objectives in other areas of economic policy

Training policies that promote women’s skills development will reduce practices (formal employment with benefits) entrepreneurial and wage gaps between genders.

Other sector-specific policies such as those targeting particular export industries, agriculture, and services must include gender-sensitive delivery to ensure the equal participation of women.

Key Actions

- Increase technical training for women to reinforce and improved participation in trade missions, knowledge of export procedures, production and quality control processes, and accounting procedures.
- Actively support the raising of production standards in sectors where women constitute the majority of the labour force through awards for leading firms, tax benefits, and strategic partnerships with private sector associations.

Strategic Area: Labour Policy

Objectives

Respecting labour rights and gender equity policies and promoting registered employment with social benefits will improve women's (and men's) participation in the formal economy and reduce gender income inequality.

Key Actions

- Create incentives for businesses to comply with labour laws and good practices that respect women's conditions.
- Employ effective enforcement to guarantee minimum or fair wages, benefits as accorded by law, and decent work conditions.
- Support small and medium-sized enterprises that have good labour through tax credits, access to finance awards and certifications.

Fundamental Complementary Policies

The promotion of women's participation in international trade and the formal economy, which supports their economic empowerment, can only be effective with a comprehensive approach that includes all public policies and programs. Careful planning and coordination among different levels of government must be ensured to optimize synergies.

The following are a few examples of necessary complimentary policies.

Education policies: Formal education and training programs at different levels for girls and women.

Social policies: Child and family care programs, flexible working hours, and paternity, maternity and health leave.

Security policies: Measures that promote safety for and non-violence against women, particularly considering commuting to and from work, working and being at home, and strict laws that punish violence against women or harassment at any place and during any circumstances.

Gender policies: Strategies that reinforce women's rights, taking into account cultural contexts and regional circumstances, and policies that encourage women's economic empowerment from different perspectives to create virtuous cycles.

Institutional policies: Monitoring mechanisms for the policies that promote women's economic empowerment, especially through international trade participation, and measures to strengthen existing ministries and institutions in charge of women's affairs, such as the High Presidential Council for Women's Equity in Colombia and the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations in Peru, or other agencies with mandates and capacities to monitor gender equality and take corrective measures that can enhance it.

