



Gender Equality Policy





GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

Forest Foundation Philippines recognizes that gender equality and women empowerment are fundamental human rights, and thereby necessary to effectively, equitably, and sustainably achieve its goal and target outcomes. The Foundation recognizes that women and girls, men and boys, and LGBTQIA+ individuals must have equal rights and opportunities, and should not be discriminated against equitable and safe access to- and management of resources because of their sex or gender.

The Foundation understands that the protection and sustainable management of the forested landscape are also about influencing and changing behaviors and policies that will lead towards a just, inclusive, equitable, and sustainable use of natural resources. Forest Foundation continues to learn and adopt practices that will support the achievement of gender equality, equity, and social inclusion in its grant programs and operations, thereby supporting the overall improvement of the quality of life for all of its partners and stakeholders.

This Gender Equality Policy Statement integrates to all gender-related policies and guidelines of Forest Foundation as it actively promotes and advances gender equality and women empowerment. As with its Human Rights Policy, the Foundation's gender equality policies are embedded in its Operations Manual, Human Resources Manual, Grant Guidelines, and Environmental and Social Safeguards Guidelines (ESSG) covering diversity, environment, health and safety, staff relations, and partnerships. This Policy is aligned with the international standards including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and the global agenda set out in the Sustainable Development Goals. The Foundation respects and complies with the Philippine laws and policies on gender equality and women empowerment.





PRINCIPLES

The Foundation is committed to developing a shared understanding of gender and promoting gender equality and gender sensitive practices in its operations, programs, projects, and activities toward a just and more inclusive conservation and management of forests by:

1. Strengthening and integrating gender perspectives and gender sensitivity in its operations, programs, projects, and activities;
2. Developing a programmatic approach to ensure projects consider and integrate gender perspectives and adheres to gender equality principles in its development and implementation;
3. Allocating sufficient financial resources to implement approaches and activities related to gender equality;
4. Capturing and sharing gender-disaggregated data, information, knowledge, and experiences of men and women in its programs, projects, and activities to aid in informed planning, monitoring, and evaluation; and
5. Increasing Forest Foundation Philippines' staff, grantees, and partners' capacities in gender sensitivity and development.



I. GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FOUNDATION'S GRANT PROGRAMS

The Foundation ensures that its supported projects integrate gender perspectives and promote gender equality. Upon submission of proposals and conducting the initial evaluation process, a project proposal's **social soundness and feasibility** are also assessed based on gender equality (among others) to determine if gender sensitive perspectives were observed. Gender-based risks are assessed and mitigated throughout the entire project management stages: (a) project development; and (b) project implementation and monitoring.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

To determine the gender-associated risks of a given project proposal, the following procedures are conducted by Forest Foundation:

1. Assess the gender-associated risks following a set of criteria (see Box 1);
2. Assign a risk category (low, medium, high), based on the project type and location, project team, manageability, reversibility, duration, and budget;
3. Depending on the risk category, identify and co-develop with the Proponent corresponding actions to address and/or mitigate the identified risks. The revised proposal may be resubmitted to the Foundation for its decision to approve or decline the proposed project; and
4. Depending on the risk category, the following authorities within the Foundation shall provide the decision on the proposal:
 - a. Executive Director: for Small Grants Proposals with low and medium risk categories; and
 - b. Board of Trustees: for all Grant categories of proposals with a high risk category.



BOX 1. CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING GENDER-ASSOCIATED RISKS OF PROJECT PROPOSALS



To ensure that Forest Foundation's supported projects observe gender sensitivity and are promoting gender equality and gender-sensitive practices, its ESG provides safeguards as expressed in its performance standards on gender equality. The criteria for assessing the gender-associated risks include answering how the proposed project involve or potentially cause any of the following:

- Adverse impacts on gender equality and/or the situation of women and girls, non-binary, trans, and LGBTQIA+
- Reproducing exclusion and discrimination based on gender, especially regarding participation in design and implementation or access to opportunities and benefits;
- Limitations on the ability to use, develop, and protect natural resources, taking into account gender-based roles when accessing environmental goods and services; and
- Heighten risks of gender-based violence

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

For approved proposals, Forest Foundation Philippines shall ensure that Grant Agreements and accompanying documents include all agreed-upon commitments and actions to avoid, minimize, or mitigate identified risks. The Foundation and the Grantee shall agree on the requirements (e.g. technical report, narrative report, financial report) and deadlines to ensure that the Foundation can properly monitor the project.

Forest Foundation, through its authorized representative, shall monitor that gender safeguards are complied with, and shall document best practices, issues encountered, and lessons learned, to strengthen gender equality measures.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MECHANISMS

Forest Foundation Philippines recognizes the importance of promoting gender equality in the entire organization. The Foundation's management is guided by the principle that its staff are its best asset, and thus will always be treated in a just, humane, and nurturing way. The Foundation continues to enhance its own organizational arrangements to accelerate its performance and achievements in addressing gender issues.

GENDER EQUALITY PROGRAMMING

Forest Foundation Philippines shall establish baseline data through a gender analysis process that identifies potential opportunities, problems, barriers, and risks in incorporating gender sensitive practices and develop goals and standards catered to the partner organizations and communities they work with. Informed by the gender analysis process, the Foundation shall develop and support a programmatic approach to develop gender mainstreaming¹ skills, knowledge, and commitment within the organization and its partners.

The Foundation shall identify and engage champions on gender equality and women's rights to promote learning and exchange of experiences of gender sensitive processes within its staff and for its grantees and partners.

Foundation-led groups or initiatives and opportunities for scholarships and training shall aim to be composed of at least 30% women, with consideration for social and cultural contexts. Consultations or events shall also aim to have at least 30% of women to attend, with consideration for social and cultural contexts.²

EQUAL EMPLOYER

The Foundation's recruitment process is open to all qualified Filipino citizens regardless of gender, ethnic group, and religion. It does not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities and gender preferences.

¹ Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated (UN Economic and Social Council).

² The UN Economic and Social Council notes that women, at a minimum, should at least make up 30% of any decision-making body, committee, consultation, workshop, etc. This guidance is also contained within the UN Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPfA%20E.pdf>.

A WORKPLACE SAFE FOR ALL

The Foundation recognises diversity, including gender differences, in the workforce is vital in ensuring safety and health of both men and women. The Foundation applies health and safety programs in the workplace to prevent and manage gender-based issues/harassment, as well as continues the advancement of a culture of institutional safety in compliance with the laws and regulations.

The Foundation's workplace also provides a lactation station, which is safe and adequate for nursing mothers.

STANDARDS FOR PAID PARENTAL LEAVES AND SPECIAL LEAVES FOR FEMALE STAFF

At the minimum, the Foundation follows the Philippine standards on both maternity, paternity, and solo parent leaves to enable parents to spend more time with newborns and put their families first.

The Foundation adheres to the country's Magna Carta for Women, whereas its female employees, regardless of age and civil status, are entitled to special leave benefits of up to two months following surgery caused by gynecological disorders, in addition to the usual leave privileges.

PARTNERSHIPS ON GENDER EQUALITY

The Foundation actively seeks opportunities to cooperate with other organizations to support projects aimed at improving gender equity, through knowledge sharing and co-funding mechanisms.

ENHANCING IN-HOUSE GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT CAPACITIES

The Foundation recognizes the importance of raising awareness to generate and stimulate sensitivity to issues related to gender equality. It provides equal opportunity to all staff in building capacities and strengthening knowledge and skills, including those that will support the engagement with gender equality issues.

PERIODIC POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATING

The Foundation periodically reviews and updates its Gender Equality Policy (including our Operations Manual, Human Resources Manual, Grant Guidelines, and Environmental and Social Safeguards Guidelines) to address emerging gender-related issues relevant to the environment/natural resources sector, as well as align to international standards and national laws. The periodic review and updating of this Policy likewise reflects the Foundation's commitment to greater public transparency and accountability.



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