



# Caribbean Biodiversity Fund

## Gender Policy

Approved

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The mission of the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (the “CBF”) is to ensure continuous funding for conservation and sustainable development in the Caribbean.
- 1.2. To realize the bold vision of creating a Caribbean region where both its natural environment and people thrive, CBF is committed to enhancing gender mainstreaming and gender equality outcomes by fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace, promoting equitable and transformative financing and conservation programming, and ensuring leadership accountability.
- 1.3. CBF recognizes that the inclusion, collaboration, and advancement of the rights of all genders, and particularly women<sup>1</sup>, girls and gender and sexual minorities, is critical to strengthen and achieve effective, suitable and consistent biodiversity and conservation outcomes in concert with climate and sustainable development goals.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1. This Gender Policy (the “Policy”) serves to clarify CBF’s commitments and actions to advance gender equality by fostering a gender-responsive approach and ensure organizational activities do not exacerbate existing inequalities and/or marginalization.
- 2.2. The Policy aims to ground CBF’s intent to foster progress on gender equality through equity, inclusivity, integrity, and human rights in response to identified gender-based inequalities, discrimination, disparity, and biases in our CBF organization, programming, and the region we serve.
- 2.3. This Policy outlines the CBF’s approach to achieve transformative gender impacts in:
  - 2.3.1. Equitable and sustainable access to, use of, and control over natural resources;

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<sup>1</sup> This Policy includes a focus on supporting the effective engagement, empowerment and leadership of women, girls and gender and sexual minorities. The references to “women” in the principles and actions should thus be understood to include all women and girls, including from indigenous peoples and local communities, gender and sexual minorities, and those facing all forms of discrimination. Whenever engaging women, but especially from indigenous peoples and local communities, it should be done under the principle of human rights, and free, prior and informed consent.

- 2.3.2. Equitable and meaningful socio-economic benefits are generated for all, prioritizing marginalized peoples; and
- 2.3.3. Women's rights, engagement, influence and leadership are ensured in conservation governance and decision-making.

### **3. Rationale**

- 3.1. In recent years, major progress has been made in the Caribbean in promoting gender equality through legislation against gender-based violence, increased representation of women in elected positions, and the removal of discriminatory laws preventing equal employment opportunities. However, pervading social norms and cultural stereotypes continue to reinforce gender gaps and reproduce disparities in key dimensions of equality, inclusion and access in the environmental, conservation, biodiversity and natural resource governance sphere.
- 3.2. Meanwhile, the Caribbean region's rich biodiversity, landscapes and environmental heritage is under increasing threat from climate change, development, rapid urbanisation, pollution and natural disasters.
- 3.3. Research shows that there is a cyclical relationship between gender and social inequality and environmental degradation. Men, women, girls, and boys have different and unique relationships with nature, owing to (and reproducing) different roles, knowledge, dependencies and contributions to conservation and sustainable management. As a result, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and climate change tend to exacerbate existing inequalities and exclusion, reinforce gaps, and expose vulnerable and marginalised groups to greater impacts and risks.
- 3.4. Addressing these multifaceted challenges thus requires an integrated approach of mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion for achieving collectively environmental and developmental ambitions and justice.
- 3.5. Gender equality is recognized as necessary and foundational to human rights and achievement of the global Sustainable Development Agenda 2030—across all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and marked specifically by SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Women's rights and gender equality has also been established at the international level in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979) and Beijing Platform for Action (1995).

- 3.6. The importance of integrating the needs of both women and men, as well human rights principles, have been recognized in a number of multilateral environmental agreements and conventions notably:
- United Nations (UN) Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022);
  - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Climate Accords on Climate Change (the “Paris Agreement”)(2016); and
  - 2022 UN General Assembly resolution: The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment A/RES/76/300.
- 3.7. In line with national and international commitments, development agencies, donors, and partners of the CBF increasingly recognize the essential roles that women play in safeguarding the global environment and are mandating the consideration of gender and inclusion for accessing their financing, whilst global reporting frameworks are increasingly expecting disaggregated and gender indicators and outcomes.

## **4. Scope and Alignment**

- 4.1. This Policy applies to all of CBF’s work financed through any of the CBF’s facilities including the Endowment. This includes all operational components of CBF, as well as implementation of grant programs, projects, and any specific measures of these, funded wholly or in part by CBF.
- 4.2. This Policy applies to all CBF stakeholders. This includes the CBF Board of Directors, CBF committees, secretariat, staff, interns, fellows, volunteers, etc., as well as delivery partners across the CBF financial architecture, consultants, suppliers, contractors, and subcontractors.
- 4.3. The Policy applies to the National Conservation Trust Funds (NCTF) that have signed a partnership agreement with the CBF and to the organisations implementing projects funded by the EbA Facility or any other Facility (the grantees). The Policy also applies to any other organisation implementing any Activity (any other grantee).
- 4.4. The Policy aligns with CBF’s Operational Policy and the Environmental and Social Policy and builds off the initial CBF Gender Policy Statement (approved March 2022). This Policy should also be used in conjunction

with the Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS), which seeks to avoid or reduce adverse social impacts, including gender inequalities.

- 4.5. The Policy strengthens the foundational work on social justice CBF has laid by catalyzing a gender-responsive approach across the CBF, so that the work of the CBF may progressively enhance and have positive environmental and social impacts on the communities, partners, and Caribbean region to the greatest extent possible.
- 4.6. This Policy aligns with CBF policies and practices in prohibiting discrimination based on sex, gender identity, and/or expression, among other protected classes of individuals or groups.
- 4.7. The NCTFs are encouraged to develop their own Gender Policies and Action Plans, to guide alignment with this Policy and institutionalise their own commitments and ambitions for pursuing gender equality in operations and programming.
- 4.8. This Policy recognizes the existence of, and aligns with, multilateral environmental agreements and international efforts to achieve gender equality and women and girls' empowerment as a precursor to and imperative for their effective implementation. This includes, but is not limited to, the CBD Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the UNFCCC resolutions for progress such as the Paris Agreement, and their accompanying gender work programs and Gender Action Plans.
- 4.9. Through this Policy and its alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework, CBF has the opportunity to support gender-responsive biodiversity outcomes for nature and all people as a key implementer and leader in the Caribbean for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

## **5. Principles**

- 5.1. CBF's recognition and approach to addressing gender inequality and the systemic marginalization of women, girls and gender minorities is underpinned by cross-cutting principles. The principles are intended to raise the ambition for implementation of gender mainstreaming within and across any and all components of operations and programming that CBF is engaged in.

## 5.2. Equality as a human right

- 5.2.1. Gender equality is an essential component to human rights and in implementing a human rights-based approach. Upholding equality as a human right protects and is critical to achieving CBF's mission and commitments. This means all CBF policies, processes, and practices are developed and implemented proactively with a lens for gender equality as a right; and in programming, all effort is made to identify and respond to gender disparities with a conscious intent to reduce inequities and gaps.

## 5.3. Intersectionality

- 5.3.1. Gender is not a stand-alone characteristic. An intersectional lens takes into account the interconnected nature of social identities as interdependent systems of circumstance, discrimination and/or disadvantage. This includes recognizing and responding to diversity in age, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, citizenship, disability, economic or educational background, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation—that result in diverse experiences, knowledge, skills, priorities, needs, and interests.

## 5.4. Diversity and inclusion

- 5.4.1. CBF recognizes that gender is varied, and that terms and definitions related to gender and social identity are diverse and continue to expand and evolve. People of all genders—with diverse intersectional identities—are included and supported by/at CBF across operations and programming.

## 5.5. Whole-of-society approach

- 5.5.1. Successfully addressing gender inequality involves everyone. All people, of all genders, are encouraged to be fully engaged in supporting and promoting gender equality to meaningfully shift harmful social norms of gender-discrimination both within CBF operational processes and in programming. This includes CBF staff and stakeholders speaking out when discriminatory behaviors occur, and proactively advocating for gender equality outcomes and approaches.



## 5.6. Coherence and coordination

- 5.6.1. Gender mainstreaming efforts and programming should build upon existing evidence and progress, rather than recreating or duplicating previous or ongoing efforts. Ensuring coherence and coordination at all levels with stakeholders expands understanding and knowledge whilst synergizing action places the CBF in a unique position to facilitate cross-regional and institutional coordination, in policy and programming.
- 5.6.2. Aligning with multilateral environmental agreements and development goals will ensure the CBF plans and executes programming and operations that support the implementation of the Global Biodiversity framework, its Gender Action Plan, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

## 5.7. Highest standard

- 5.7.1. When there is an inconsistency of standards between the CBF and other stakeholders, funders, donors, partners etc (or a national standard of a country), the most progressive, stringent and highest standard for promoting gender equality must apply.

## 5.8. Transparency and accountability

- 5.8.1. The Policy's success and full implementation will require the involvement and commitment of all CBF staff and delivery partners, including CBF leadership to enact accountability measures. Regular tracking and reporting, public access, and processes to assess and provide adaptive pathways for implementation will anchor and sustain the Policy. The cross-cutting nature of this Policy necessitates implementation and monitoring be done in a collaborative and decentralized way.

# 6. **Implementation**

- 6.1. CBF's approach to mainstreaming gender as a tool—and means to gender equality—is implemented through an integrated approach across the internal institutional operations, and CBF programs and projects.
- 6.2. The implementation of this Policy seeks to build upon areas of existing work by CBF and the initial Gender Policy Statement (2022) and will be

operationalised through an accompanying Gender Action Plan (GAP). An updated GAP will be developed with periodic frequency (suggested every two years) to continually evolve to meet the current needs, utilize learning and best practices, and allocate available resources for gender mainstreaming in the CBF.

- 6.3. The accompanying GAP describes implementation actions, indicative outputs, timeline/ frequency, and responsibility for institutional operations and programming across focus areas.

- 6.4. Institutional Operations

Tools, resources, and means to execute gender mainstreaming approaches are clarified and strengthened for gender-responsive institutional operations, including:

- 6.4.1. Staffing practices and processes
- 6.4.2. Human and financial resourcing
- 6.4.3. Knowledge management and communication
- 6.4.4. Engagement and coordination
- 6.4.5. Monitoring and evaluation

- 6.5. Programming and projects

Gender-responsive approaches are mainstreamed in programmes and projects, utilizing evidence-informed processes and practices to guide all aspects, with intentionality and accountability for gender equality, including:

- 6.5.1. Gender-responsive data collection and planning
- 6.5.2. Human and financial resourcing
- 6.5.3. Knowledge management and communication
- 6.5.4. Engagement and coordination
- 6.5.5. Safeguarding
- 6.5.6. Monitoring and evaluation

- 6.6. The Action Plan should be reviewed and revised every 2 years, under the responsibility of the CBF Leadership and Gender Specialist.

## 7. Glossary of key terms

- 7.1. **Gender:** sociocultural expectations of the roles and behaviors of women and men—as well as individuals with a non-binary gender identity—and the relations between them, including economic, political and socio-cultural attributes, constraints and opportunities. Gender is expressed within a cultural context through various behaviors, mannerisms, and appearances. Gender is different than biological sex; and gender roles, behaviors and identity, as well as the relations between people based on their gender, are dynamic and can change over time and vary widely within and across a culture. (World Health Organization; and Dazé and Church).
- 7.2. **Gender Equality:** Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development. (UN Women).
- 7.3. **Gender equity/equitable:** Refers to the process of treating women and men fairly, according to their respective needs. This can include equal treatment, but also distinct forms of treatment or measures that compensate for historical and structural disadvantages that prevent women and men from accessing or enjoying the same opportunities. This also applies to people of non-binary gender identities. Equity leads to equality. (Dazé and Church).
- 7.4. **Gender Mainstreaming:** The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action in all areas and at all levels. It is an approach for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs. **Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) mainstreaming** refers to the approach of considering issues of gender and social inclusion across all operations and activities and not limiting discussions of inequality to the margins, or specialised projects or actions.

Gender mainstreaming in activities means that all people, regardless of gender, have opportunities and are empowered to participate in decision-making and that their knowledge, priorities, needs and contributions are fully recognised and utilised throughout processes. (United Nations).

- 7.5. **Gender-Responsive:** Gender responsiveness refers to outcomes that reflect an understanding of gender roles and inequalities and which make an effort to encourage equal participation and equal and fair distribution of benefits (UNDP). A gender-responsive approach also requires empowering women and ensuring that they know their rights, so that they can avail themselves of the services and recourse they are entitled to. (UN Women).
- 7.6. **Intersectionality:** A prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other (Kimberley Crenshaw). An intersectional approach shows the way that people's social identities can overlap, creating compounding experiences of discrimination. (UN Women).
- 7.7. **Marginalized Populations:** Groups and communities that experience discrimination and exclusion (social, political and economic) because of unequal power relationships across economic, political, social and cultural dimensions. (National Collaborating Center for Determinants of Health).

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