



# **INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY INTO PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS**

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## INTRODUCTION

This Technical Guidance Note (TGN) is part of a series of documents on integrating gender equality into the sector operations of Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). The Notes identify key issues which lead to, and reinforce gender inequality, and propose possible solutions for addressing them.

The TGNs fall within CDB's strategic objectives of supporting inclusive and sustainable growth and development and good governance, both internally and among its Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs).

**This specific TGN Summary focuses on Public-Private Sector Arrangements (PPPs).** PPPs are defined as long term contracts between public sector agencies and private sector companies for the delivery of public assets and services.

While PPPs exist in a wide range of sectors, they focus mainly on larger scale infrastructure projects in areas such as transport, energy and water, leading to improvement in the availability and quality of infrastructure and services. These projects also provide a wide range of employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled labour.

**As a result, the inclusion of a gender perspective is critical at all stages of the PPP project cycle to ensure the initiatives contribute to gender equality, as it relates to both access to jobs and contracts as well as access to the services resulting from PPP projects.**



# KEY GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS (PPPs)

**1**

**Some BMC PPP processes and policies do not give any consideration to gender issues**

Some BMCs face fundamental limitations in integrating gender equality within PPPs, including the absence of existing gender mainstreaming processes, and the local expertise or institutional mechanism required to design and integrate gender equality into current policies and programmes.

This lack of a gender equality perspective can also result in weaknesses in the delivery of essential services such as transport, water, electricity and IT. The award of exclusive contracts, limited service delivery options and the high cost of essential services can create significant differentials in access to these services between poor and non-poor households, with female-headed households representing a high proportion of those being poor. In addition, within households of all categories, it is primarily the women who bear the burden of those disparities—for example, carrying the main responsibility for water- and energy-related household tasks.

**2**

**Current procurement processes are not gender-sensitive, allowing for the perpetuation of gender bias in the award of contracts.**

The lack of inclusion of gender issues in PPP procurement or bidding processes has resulted in inequitable access to government contracts for a wide range of goods and services. The scale of the intervention tends to favour large businesses as opposed to small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Women-owned businesses are more likely to be located in this segment of the economy. Also, SMEs tend to maintain more labour-intensive operations, providing work for both lower-income men and women.

**3**

**Female participation in the construction industry is hindered by issues related to gender bias and discrimination.**

Research suggests that female participation in the Region's construction industry is at a low of 9%, due mainly to gender stereotypes and gender discrimination. Women are often assigned to lower-skilled tasks and might face sexual harassment and workplace violence. Currently, only six BMCs have enacted national legislation to address these issues including the Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, St Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

# SOLUTIONS FOR INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY INTO PUBLIC-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS (PPPs)

## **Some BMC PPP processes and policies do not give any consideration to gender issues**

BMCs need to include social, gender and environmental analysis in the feasibility studies for PPPs to ensure that gender equality issues are considered. Critical data needs to include the differential access of women and men to public services; the impact of existing legal and regulatory standards on gender equity; male/female ability to pay for different types of services and the capacity of the institutions involved or other national agencies to provide gender training and conduct gender mainstreaming.

## **Current procurement processes are not gender-sensitive, allowing for the perpetuation of gender bias in the award of contracts**

Analysis of special procurement measures and incentives should be done to encourage PPPs to contract or sub-contract more businesses owned by women in accordance with country objectives and strategies. BMCs need also to engage in policy dialogue aimed at revising national PPP procurement policies and processes to include gender as a cross-cutting issue.

## **Female participation in the construction industry is hindered by issues related to gender bias and discrimination**

A workers' code of conduct and grievance mechanism related to general harassment, sexual harassment, equality, discrimination and workplace violence should be established for PPP contractors. In addition, work site facilities should be gender-sensitive, for example providing separate changing and sanitary facilities for women and men.

Studies should be conducted on a range of gender equality issues to inform the design and provision of relevant training to be incorporated into PPPs. Also, measures should be implemented to ensure greater equality in hiring practices. In particular, contractors in construction projects should be encouraged to hire and train women for jobs which require both skilled and unskilled labour. All PPP contractors should be encouraged to specifically target women in their outreach and job advertisements.

Outreach by Technical Vocational Education and Training institutes to female students would also be required to prepare a ready pool of skilled women to draw from.

## **CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT BANK**



P.O Box 408, Wildey, St. Michael  
Barbados BB11000



246-431-1600



246-426-7269



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