



## **PUBLIC**

**Policy: Gender Equality & Social Inclusion Policy**

**Author: Principal Consultant for Gender Equality  
& Social Inclusion**

**Approver: Chief Executive Officer**

## Applies to

- Directors & Officers
- Permanent employees
- Fixed term employees
- Volunteers, Interns & Trainees
- Agency staff
- Consultants & Contractors
- Business partners
  
- Applicable to all CA operations
- Applicable only to specific CA operations  [specify project(s)/area(s) to which applicable]

## Jurisdiction *[select one]*

- All CA Group Companies
- UK only
- Country/Entity specific  [specify Country/Entity]

**Table of Revisions**

Version	Date	Description	Author	Approver
1.0	01/2024	Effective	Principal Consultant GESI	CEO

**Next review due: December 2027**

# Policy on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Programme Design and Delivery <sup>1</sup>

*I proudly present Crown Agents' first Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Policy. This policy signals the organisation's commitment to taking meaningful and decisive action to advance women's and girls' rights, needs and priorities. This is an issue dear to my heart. I have over 25 years of experience working in the global development sector. I have seen with my own eyes the devastating impact poverty, inequality, and crises have on women and girls, especially those who experience multiple and intersecting forms of marginalisation and discrimination. For example, in recent times, I've visited conflict-affected communities in Ukraine and feared for the many older women and women with disabilities who are so vulnerable to being left behind as communities seek refuge from armed forces, as well as aerial bombardments. At the same time, I've been deeply inspired by women's courage and leadership in times of crisis. For example, I have seen firsthand the courage and determination of women working on the frontlines to expand access to immunisation and healthcare in contexts such as South Sudan, which are affected by climate change, conflict and COVID-19. I firmly believe that all women have a right to participate and lead in crisis response and longer-term development efforts. I am committed to standing up for their rights and urge all colleagues and partners to do the same.*

*Fergus Drake, Chief Executive Officer*

**Approved by:** Fergus Drake, Chief Executive Officer

**Signed:**

**Approval Date:**

**Contact:** Laura Martineau-Searle, Principal Consultant for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

**Review Date:** No later than the 31 December 2027

---

<sup>1</sup> The Policy on GESI in Programme Design and Delivery shall be effective from the 1 January 2024

## Table of Contents

1. Rationale	1
2. Purpose	1
3. Scope	2
4. Legislative and Policy Alignment	2
5. Policy Commitments	3
5.1. Organisational Leadership, Strategy and Culture	3
5.2. Programming Practice Minimum Requirements	3
5.3. Partnerships	4
6. Accountability	4
7. Terminology	4

### 1. Rationale

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals offer a historic opportunity to eradicate extreme poverty. To realise this opportunity, governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector, civil society and citizens must act to ensure no one is left behind. To create lasting change, we must address the root causes of poverty, discrimination and marginalisation within and between countries and the ensuing inequalities. As a not-for-profit international development organisation committed to accelerating progress towards the SDGs, Crown Agents takes this call to action very seriously. We are committed to the ‘leave no one behind’ LNOB agenda.

At Crown Agents, our mission is to accelerate self-sufficiency and prosperity. However, gender inequality and social exclusion mean that not everyone has equal access and opportunity to achieve these things. To level the playing field, we recognise that we must do more to identify and respond to the specific and diverse needs and priorities of women and marginalised groups. These include individuals and groups that are excluded and discriminated against based on individual and intersecting factors such as sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, immigration status, disability status and more. We must also work harder to identify and address the underlying discriminatory laws, policies, norms, and practices that prevent women and marginalised groups from fully participating in and benefiting from all aspects of political, economic and social life. Without this focus on equity, we risk deepening the inequalities that drive poverty, inequality, conflict and instability.

Moving forward, Crown Agents is committed to challenging exclusion and discrimination in its development, crisis response, and recovery programmes. We will strive to ensure all our programmes are informed by the latest research, evidence and learning on what works to advance gender equality and promote inclusion for all. We will ensure everyone is treated equitably and no one is left behind in our programmes.

Our work is evolving rapidly in this area. We know we are embarking on a long, complex and challenging journey, but we see this as integral to achieving our vision – ***accelerating self-sufficiency and prosperity for everyone.***

### 2. Purpose

The Policy on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Programme Design and Delivery (from now on referred to as GESI Programming Policy) reflects our organisational commitment to advance gender equality and social inclusion within all areas of our core mandate. The GESI Programming Policy aims

to ensure that GESI considerations inform the design and delivery of services to the global development community.

### 3. Scope

The GESI Programming Policy applies to all Crown Agents staff and contractors as gender equality and social inclusion are a corporate priority and pertinent to every aspect of our work.

The GESI Programming Policy is to be read in tandem with other relevant policies and frameworks, including:

- Crown Agents Vision, Mission and Values Statement
- Crown Agents Strategic Plan
- Crown Agents Safeguarding Policy
- Crown Agents Introductory Guide on GESI and Programming Practice
- Crown Agents Organisational Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy/Policy (forthcoming)

### 4. Legislative and Policy Alignment

The GESI Programming Policy reflects international legislative frameworks that have been instrumental in advancing the rights of women and marginalised groups worldwide, including in humanitarian emergencies and situations of protracted crisis. These include:

- The Convention on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (1979)
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)
- UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015), including SDG5, focused on gender equality and empowering women and girls
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and successive resolutions<sup>2</sup> on the women, peace and security agenda
- The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)<sup>3</sup> and the Optional Protocol
- UN Security Council Resolution 2475 (2019), which calls on member states to protect persons with disabilities in conflict situations

The GESI Programming Policy also reflects the relevant UK Government's legislative and policy commitments, which include the following:

- The **UK International Development Gender Equality Act (2014)** stipulates that all HMG-funded development and humanitarian spending must meaningfully consider the impact it can have on gender equality.
- The **Humanitarian Reform Policy (2017)**, which commits HMG to promote respect for International Humanitarian Law, International Human Rights Law and Refugee Law, condemn violations, and ensure all UK-funded organisations place gender equality, the protection of civilians, and protection from GBV at the centre of their work.
- The **HMG Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Strategy (2022-2025)**, which sets out the UK's government's ambition to leverage its development, diplomacy and defence influence to strengthen the global effort to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and improve access to justice for survivors.

---

<sup>2</sup> Includes UNSCR 1820, 1888 and 212.

<sup>3</sup> Two specific Articles are focused on the need for inclusive humanitarian response (Article 11) and inclusive international development (Article 32)

- The **HMG Women Peace and Security National Action Plan (2023-2027)** sets out the UK's strategy to reduce the impact of conflict on women and girls and promote their inclusion to prevent and resolve conflict.
- The **FCDO Women and Girls Strategy (2023-2030)** sets out the UK Government's strategy to advance gender equality and women and girls' human rights, focusing on three priority themes (also known as 3Es) of educating girls; empowering women and girls championing their health and wellbeing; and finally, ending violence.
- The **UK Government's Disability Inclusion and Rights Strategy (2022-2030)** sets out the UK government's ambition to work with and for people with disabilities and champion their rights, voice, choice and visibility.

In line with the above international and domestic commitments, we understand that as a leading consulting firm in global development organisation, we must ensure that GESI considerations inform the design and delivery of our services, be this the provision of research and technical assistance or the management of programmes.

## 5. Policy Commitments

We commit to the following priority actions:

### 5.1. Organisational Leadership, Strategy and Culture

- ✓ We will ensure our organisational vision and mission reflect our commitment to GESI.
- ✓ The Chief Executive Officer, Executive Team, Directors and other senior managers will take collective responsibility for clearly and consistently signalling the importance of gender equality and social inclusion and holding their specific clusters, directorates, teams and direct reports to account for compliance with the GESI Programming Policy.

### 5.2. Programming Practice Minimum Requirements

- ✓ We will ensure the design and co/design of our key programmes are informed by an intersectional gender and social inclusion analysis.
- ✓ When possible, we will prioritise budget for a more comprehensive gender and social inclusion analysis undertaken during the inception phase of a programme, which will enable findings from a secondary data review to be supplemented with consultations with affected populations and their representative organisations, movements and groups. Costs will be charged to, or shared with, clients.
- ✓ When appropriate, we will ensure a GESI strategy is in place, which sets out the programme's ambition concerning GESI, e.g., whether the programme aims to be GESI sensitive, GESI empowering, or GESI transformative. There should be a corresponding action plan to help realise these ambitions. The GESI strategy and action will be updated on an annual basis.
- ✓ We will ensure the findings from the gender and social inclusion analysis are reflected in crucial programme documents, such as the Theory of Change and Logical Framework/Results Framework.
- ✓ We will ensure that GESI is integrated into programme MEL plans, as evidenced by the collection, analysis and use of sex, age and disability disaggregated data is collected where possible. There are specific indices to measure meaningful change in the lives of women and marginalised groups.
- ✓ We will try to ensure the composition of our teams reflects the communities we seek to serve, e.g., are inclusive of men and women and local expertise. We will also ensure that

senior figures, such as the Team Leader, Programme Director, and Programme Manager, are familiar with and supportive of key GESI concepts.

- ✓ Whenever possible, we will ensure programme delivery teams include a full-time GESI Adviser, or there is a budget to draw down on GESI expertise through an STTA pool, or the GESI function has been outsourced to a credible partner organisation.
- ✓ We will include poor performance on GESI as a risk category on our programme risk registers.

### 5.3. Partnerships

- ✓ We will explore how we can add value to existing efforts to help foster, strengthen and sustain collective action to advance GESI.
- ✓ We will work with diverse organisations, including forging partnerships with national, local and grassroots organisations led by women or marginalised groups and/or working specifically with and for them. Where some clients/donors may be reluctant to do so, we will explore the reasons why and how we can address their concerns.
- ✓ We will actively participate in external events globally, regionally and nationally on GESI and global development.

## 6. Accountability

We are committed to holding ourselves accountable for successfully operationalising the GESI Programming Policy. As such, we will produce a publicly available report each year outlining what steps we have taken to implement the policy and our success in meeting the following targets:

- ✓ Organisational vision and mission have been updated to reflect our commitment to GESI
- ✓ There are demonstrable examples whereby the CEO, Executive Team and Directors have communicated the importance of the GESI Programming Policy.
- ✓ 100% of Programme Directors and Programme Managers must submit an annual report outlining the extent to which their programme is currently meeting each of the minimum GESI programme quality requirements and explain if not, why not.
- ✓ There are demonstrable examples where we have partnered with national, local and grassroots organisations led by women and marginalised groups as part of our programming.
- ✓ There are demonstrable examples of our participation and contribution to external events related to GESI and global development.

## 7. Terminology

We have developed a concise lexicon of key terms and concepts about gender equality and social inclusion, which is below.

<b>Social Inclusion</b>	Social inclusion refers to the process by which efforts are made to ensure that everyone can enjoy and exercise their human rights and participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life. Such efforts include the design of inclusive laws, policies and institutions, and interventions to transform power relations and shift harmful and discriminatory social norms, attitudes, behaviours and practices.
<b>Social Exclusion</b>	Social exclusion refers to a process by which certain groups are systematically marginalized and disadvantaged due to prejudice and discrimination based on various identity characteristics and contextual factors. Social exclusion is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon



	<p>and the composition of these characteristics and contextual factors will vary from context to context. However, people may be vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination based on their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, disability status, mental health and other considerations, such as poverty and location. Social exclusion often hinders people’s ability to enjoy and exercise their human rights fully, participate in, contribute to, and benefit from all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life.</p>
<b>Sex</b>	<p>Sex refers to the biological categorization of a person as male, female, or intersex. Sex is commonly assigned at birth based on biological indicators, such as external genitalia, internal reproductive organs, hormones and chromosomes.</p>
<b>Gender</b>	<p>Gender refers to socially and culturally constructed ideas about the capabilities of men and women and boys and girls and what constitutes appropriate roles, responsibilities and behaviour. Gender norms and expectations greatly influence the rights, resources, and opportunities available to men and women and boys and girls. Gender norms and expectations are not fixed but a form of socially learned behaviour which can and should change. The pressure to conform to gender norms and expectations and the sanctions for failing to do so greatly hinder people’s ability to exercise and enjoy their human rights.</p>
<b>Gender Identity and/or Expression</b>	<p>Gender identity refers to a person’s sense of gender, e.g., whether they are a man/boy or a woman/girl or another identity beyond this binary. A person’s gender identity may not align with the biological sex they were assigned at birth. When it does align, such a person is referred to as cisgender. When a person's gender identity does not align with the biological sex they were assigned at birth, they are referred to as transgender. Gender expression refers to how people convey their gender identity through appearance and behaviour, among other forms of expression.</p>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>Sexual orientation refers to a person’s emotional, physical and sexual attraction to others. Among other orientations, a person may identify as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual depending on whether they are attracted to a person of the opposite sex and/or gender identity, the same sex and/or gender identity, or both sexes and/or gender identities. Expectations about gender influence norms and expectations about sexual orientation. The pressure to conform to such norms and expectations and the sanctions people incur for refusal to do so can greatly hinder their ability to exercise and enjoy their human rights.</p>
<b>Intersectionality</b>	<p>Intersectionality refers to the need to recognise that gender norms and expectations may intersect with other aspects of a person’s identity, such as age, race, ethnicity, caste, religion, social class, disability status, to intensify their experience of marginalisation and vulnerability to harm. Men, women, boys and girls and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics are not homogenous groups. An intersectional approach strives to acknowledge and better understand the differences within these groups and how these</p>

	differences can create power imbalances which render some more marginalised and vulnerable than others.
<b>Gender Relations</b>	Gender relations refers to the socially constructed power relations between people based on their sex and/or gender identity. This involves exploring how gender norms and expectations impact people’s perceived capabilities, roles and responsibilities, and access to opportunities and resources. Historically, gender norms and expectations have privileged men and boys with greater power and privilege than women and girls, thus creating a gender hierarchy and disparities, inequalities and inequities that continue to exist today. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Gender Bias</b>	Gender bias refers to prejudicial thoughts which may influence how someone relates to or interacts with people of a particular sex and/or gender identity. Gender bias can be conscious or unconscious. Gender bias can lead to unequal and unfair treatment and impact the roles and responsibilities and opportunities and resources available to men and women, boys and girls, and people with diverse gender identities, sexual orientations, gender expressions and sex characteristics.
<b>Gender Discrimination</b>	Gender discrimination refers to any distinction, restriction or exclusion made based on a person’s sex and/or gender identity, rather than that person’s capabilities. Direct gender discrimination refers to situations where the distinction, restriction, or exclusion is based explicitly on gender norms and expectations. Indirect discrimination refers to situations where a law, policy, intervention, or practice appears to be neutral, but has a discriminatory effect. Gender discrimination can result from individual behaviour or be systemic. Systemic gender discrimination describes situations where policies, behaviour and practices of an institution create or perpetuate disadvantages based on sex and/or gender identity.
<b>Gender – Based Violence</b>	Gender-based violence is an umbrella term used to refer to violence directed at an individual based on their sex, gender identity, gender expression and/or their perceived failure to conform to gender expectations. Gender-based violence includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, emotional, and economic harm and threats of such acts. Historically, gender norms and expectations have privileged men and boys with greater power and privilege than women and girls, thereby enhancing women and girls’ vulnerability to multiple acts of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting. Men and boys who do not confirm to traditional gender norms and expectations can also experience gender-based violence.
<b>Gender Equality</b>	This concept alludes to a state where men, women, boys and girls and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics have equal enjoyment of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. It does not mean everyone is the same, but rather that life chances should not be governed or limited by sex, gender identity or gender expression. Gender equality is widely recognised as a fundamental human right and a precondition for sustainable

<sup>4</sup> Please note that men and boys whose behaviour does not conform to gender norms and expectations may also be disadvantaged.

	development.
<b>Gender Equity</b>	This concept alludes to the need to recognise that men, women, boys and girls and people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, gender expressions and sex characteristics have different histories, needs and priorities, and these differences should be acknowledged and addressed in the spirit of fairness. For example, special measures may be necessary to compensate for past injustices and existing inequalities that prevent individuals from otherwise operating as equals.
<b>Women and Girls Empowerment</b>	This concept alludes to the need to transform power between relations between men and women and boys and girls so that women and girls can exercise more agency and control over their lives. This involves expanding women and girls' access to resources and opportunities, raising their aspirations and voices, and preventing, mitigating, and responding to the endemic problem of violence against women and girls.