

World Bank Group Gender Strategy Mid-Term Review

An Assessment by
the Independent
Evaluation Group



IEG
INDEPENDENT
EVALUATION GROUP

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1818 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20433
Telephone: 202-473-1000
Internet: www.worldbank.org

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EDITING AND PRODUCTION

Amanda O'Brien

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Luisa Ulhoa

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Contents

Abbreviations	v
Acknowledgments	vi
Overview	vii
Management Comments	xv
Report to the Board from the Committee on Development Effectiveness	xxiii
1. Introduction	1
Review Audience, Analytical Approach, and Methods	6
Structure of the Review	7
2. Commitment to the Strategic Objectives	9
Management and Development Partner Commitment	9
3. Country-Driven Approach	21
Implementing a Country-Driven Approach	21
4. Coordinating Staff Designated to Support Work on Gender	32
Supporting Evidence Generation and Use	32
Management of Expertise Supporting the Gender Strategy	35
Function and Constraints of Staff Support	40
5. Ensuring and Measuring Progress	45
Monitoring for Organizational Commitments and Corporate Reporting	45
Monitoring Implementation	47
6. Conclusion	54
Constraints and Enablers in Implementing the Gender Strategy	54
Opportunities	57
Bibliography	59

Boxes

Box 1.1. Questions Answered by This Review	3
Box 1.2. Who Are the Staff Designated to Support Work on Gender?	3
Box 2.1. International Development Association and Capital Replenishment Commitments That Reinforce the Gender Strategy	10
Box 2.2. Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Gap Approaches	13
Box 3.1. Gender Analysis Informing the Niger Country Partnership Framework for Fiscal Years 2018–22	24
Box 3.2. Country-Driven Approach: Example from Sri Lanka	26
Box 3.3. Opportunities to Reduce Project Pressure with an Upstream Support Model	27
Box 5.1. Contributing to Business Intelligence While Expanding Knowledge in International Finance Corporation Gender-Flagged Investments	50
Box 5.2. Monitoring and Supervision Supporting the Closure of Gender Gaps	52

Figures

Figure 1.1. Theory of Action That Enables Implementation of the World Bank Group Gender Strategy	5
Figure 2.1. World Bank Gender-Tagged Projects out of All Lending, FY17–19	15
Figure 2.2. Gender-Flagged IFC Advisory Services out of All IFC Advisory Services, FY17–19	15
Figure 2.3. Gender-Flagged IFC Investment Services out of All IFC Investment Services, FY17–19	16

Tables

Table 4.1. Focal Points Assigned to Support Implementation of the Gender Strategy by Region	36
Table 4.2. Example Functions of Staff Designated to Support Work on Gender	36
Table 5.1. Reports Tracking Progress Indicators Related to Gender Gaps	49

Appendixes

Appendix A. Methodological Approach	68
Appendix B. Gender Analysis of Country Partnership Frameworks for Case Study Countries	79

Abbreviations

AIMM	Anticipated Impact Measurement and Monitoring
AS	advisory services
COVID-19	coronavirus
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CPSD	Country Private Sector Diagnostic
FCS	fragile and conflict-affected situation
FIG	Financial Institutions Group
FY	fiscal year
GBG	Gender Business Group
GBV	gender-based violence
GIA	Group Internal Audit
GIL	Gender Innovation Lab
GSIP	Gender Strategy Implementation Plans
IDA	International Development Association
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IS	investment services
RGAP	Regional Gender Action Plan
SCD	Systematic Country Diagnostic

All dollar amounts are US dollars unless otherwise indicated.

Acknowledgments

This review was prepared by an Independent Evaluation Group team led by Susan Caceres and Stephen Porter under the overall direction of Oscar Calvo-Gonzalez, director of the Human Development and Economic Management Department, with the guidance and supervision of Galina Sotirova, manager of the Corporate and Human Development Department. Members of the core Mid-Term Review team include Anthony Martin Tyrell, Disha Zaidi, Donna Podems, Eija Pehu, Aurora Medina Siy, and Daniel Palazov. Yezena Yimer, Jean Jacques Alain Ildevert Ahouansou, and Rocío Manchado Garabito assisted with logistical aspects of key informant interviews and focus groups. Janet Billson conducted focus groups and synthesized the findings. Elena Bardasi provided valuable comments and guidance related to the Concept Note, methods, analysis, and reporting. William Hurlbut provided editorial support. Yezena Yimer led the production of the Concept Note and the final report.

Overview

Highlights

Commitment to the gender strategy by World Bank Group management, staff, and partners has translated into progress following plans; good practices in implementing the strategy in Global Practices, industry groups, Regions, and countries; and improvements in project design, driven in part by increased gender tagging and flagging. Yet implementation actions do not consistently match this commitment, nor are they commensurate with the level of ambition in the strategy.

The implementation of the country-driven approach advocated by the strategy has been hindered by competing priorities, limited familiarity with the gender gap approach, and variability in the support models across Regions. Consequently, country-driven approach implementation has ranged from stand-alone projects addressing specific gender gaps to multiple World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) instruments used in concert to collectively address prioritized gender gaps.

Well-organized support for closing gender gaps is evident in IFC and in some World Bank Regions and Global Practices. In both IFC and the World Bank, staff designated to support work on gender are critical to connect strategic imperatives to practices in Bank Group operations. Staff designated to support work on gender are constrained in their ability to provide optimal support by the lack of clear selection criteria, insufficient time to complete required functions, limited professional development opportunities, and little recognition within performance management processes.

Although significant attention is devoted to monitoring commitments and assessing project design, less attention is paid to monitoring implementation. This reduces the Bank Group's ability to gauge the outcomes of projects and, ultimately, the outcomes of implementing the strategy.

Review Purpose and Scope

The World Bank Group Gender Strategy (fiscal year 2016–23) presents gender equality as integral to smart development policy and posits that successful implementation of the strategy will help achieve the Bank Group’s twin goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. The strategy focuses on four objectives: human endowments, jobs, asset control and ownership, and voice and agency. To implement the strategy, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) established a new methodology and targets for measuring progress via gender tags for World Bank operations and gender flags for IFC advisory and investment services.

At the midpoint in the eight-year strategic cycle, this review provides a rapid assessment of the implementation of the strategy in the World Bank and IFC. The purpose of the review is to provide evidence and reveal opportunities to maximize organizational efforts over the final four years of implementation. It reflects on what is working well and less well to support continuous monitoring and learning in the World Bank and IFC in terms of strategy implementation. The review identified the connections and coordination among four essential institutional elements for an enhanced country-driven approach: knowledge management, staff designated to support work on gender, the IFC Gender Business Group and the World Bank Gender Group, and monitoring and evaluation.

The review used a qualitative approach supplemented by descriptive statistical analysis and was entirely desk-based to provide timely inputs to the Bank Group. It did not seek to verify outcomes in countries or demand and uptake from clients, nor did it assess partnerships. It was conducted on a tight timeline that reduced data collection efforts. The review relied on interviews and focus groups with corporate, regional, and country stakeholders, which were triangulated with documents and other sources of evidence, such as tag and flag data, Independent Evaluation Group evaluations, Bank Group documents, and a review undertaken by Group Internal Audit. The Bank Group’s coronavirus (COVID-19) response was initiated after data collection was complete, so it was not considered in the review. The review sought to answer the overarching question: How well is the implementation of the gender strategy positioning the Bank Group to contribute to closing key gender gaps?

To enhance the implementation of the gender strategy, the review finds that the World Bank and IFC need to focus on coherently addressing gender gaps through country teams. These teams need to receive coordinated support from the gender groups as well as access appropriate context, sector, industry and gender expertise from staff designated to support work on gender.

Gender Strategy Commitment and Implementation

The gender strategy has garnered commitment from World Bank and IFC management, staff, and partners—a precondition for success. Interviews and documents demonstrate that the strategy and the gender flag and tag have generated attention and accountability. This buy-in is necessary for successful implementation of the strategy as management creates incentives and ensures that processes reinforce the strategy’s aims. Organizational actions to implement the strategy do not consistently match this commitment, however, nor are they commensurate with the level of ambition in the strategy. Competing priorities and a lack of familiarity with the gender gap approach constrain staff in their implementation of the strategy.

Enhancing the Country-Driven Approach

The gender strategy advances an enhanced country-driven approach as a critical pathway to support the closure of gender gaps. The enhanced approach requires that operations, supported by policy dialogue and diagnosis of gender gaps, align with Country Partnership Framework objectives in a coherent manner that helps close gender gaps. In the sample of country programs examined in the review, the approach to addressing gender gaps ranges from stand-alone projects to the collective use of multiple Bank Group instruments, with stand-alone projects being the more common approach. Part of the reason that individual projects are emphasized may be the pressure for a project to be counted toward gender-tagging targets set by Regions and Global Practices.

The prioritization process, which links diagnostics with country strategy and operations, is intended to help Bank Group country teams take a coherent

approach to closing gender gaps across the country portfolio. Systematic Country Diagnostics and other diagnostics are being used to identify gender gaps, and Country Partnership Frameworks have reflected the gender gaps among their priorities, but so far those priorities are not consistently being translated into a coherent portfolio of operations that address gender gaps. Five of the seven countries in the sample are at various stages of prioritizing gender gaps. Without prioritization, the diverse in the portfolio can appear to be “sprinkled” rather than strategic. For this reason, the Country Management Units in Bangladesh, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Kenya, Peru, and Vietnam are focusing their interventions on specific gender-related areas. In such cases, country directors and managers act as champions for gender and clearly communicate the priorities to task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers. Experience in Bangladesh and Vietnam shows that World Bank and IFC country and regional units should have central roles in implementing the strategy, with the gender groups providing the leadership and coordination that generate an environment conducive to implementation.

Coordination of Staff Designated to Support Work on Gender

The gender strategy provides few details on how to organize staff support to best use evidence in closing gender gaps. Copious resources have been focused on evidence production during the first four years of strategy implementation. However, operational staff report that this evidence can be difficult to access, overly technical, and of limited operational relevance if not accompanied by staff designated to support work on gender. When such assistance has been available, evidence has been applied to improve project design, inform development partner perspectives, and generate demand for services. When effective, staff designated to support work on gender are critical connectors among institutional, regional, and country levels; these staff often work together to provide needed operational solutions, translate knowledge, and mobilize support.

Evidence in support of operations has been produced by the gender groups of IFC and the World Bank, as well as by Gender Innovation Labs. The World Bank Gender Group conducts research, supports improving gender data, and develops specific themes. For example, the group currently works to improve the usability of World Bank gender data, which are scattered across different portals. IFC's Gender Business Group generates evidence for stand-alone gender products; for services they are incubating; and for support to regions. Among its products have been business cases to support the development of stand-alone advisory services related to insurance, childcare, and entrepreneurship. Gender Innovation Labs have produced influential evidence on what works through impact evaluations, most of which use randomized control trials. In one notable case, an innovative psychometric test used in Ethiopia and shown to be effective in supporting women's access to larger business loans has been expanded in Madagascar and Zimbabwe, with Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and Zambia also interested.

Staff highlighted that they need more knowledge and data on gender gaps at the level of sectors and subsectors specific to a country. In the interviews and focus groups, a consistent theme emerged: staff typically do not read gender-related knowledge products if those products are too technical or do not immediately seem applicable within the country or sector context. Gender-based violence is one specific area where operational teams find it difficult to translate evidence into operations.

In implementing the strategy, IFC has taken a more active role in organizing and coordinating gender leads and focal points in comparison to the World Bank. The World Bank's Gender Group takes a less active approach to the coordination of staff designated to support work on gender, though it organizes a community of practice that convenes monthly. IFC's Gender Business Group, in contrast, works through regional and product gender leads who often manage other staff at the global, regional, and country levels and coordinates with focal points in industry groups. IFC has successfully connected country-level advisory services with global programs, such as the Women's Insurance and Tackling Childcare projects. The World Bank Gender Group has a broader scope to cover, making an approach like IFC's difficult. In the World Bank, no single unit is responsible for coordinating expertise to support the gender

strategy or ensuring the adequacy of capacity and time allocation, which leads to variability in resourcing and skills.

Bank Group staff designated to support work on gender have proven to be critical to linking strategy and practice, but their work is constrained by a lack of clear selection criteria for the different functions and roles, insufficient time to complete required functions, few professional development opportunities, and little recognition within performance management processes. The selection and professional development of gender focal points in the World Bank is ad hoc, partly because a gender specialty is not a recognized career path in the Bank Group. Many staff designated to support work on gender in Global Practices, industries, Regions, and countries are filled either by volunteers or through designation by senior staff who may have sector or country expertise but are not gender experts. These constraints are less pronounced at IFC, though they do occur. Moreover, the professional development pathways are inadequate to develop staff into gender leads and experts, and little formal planning has been done to help retool staff in the World Bank and IFC.

Ensuring and Measuring Progress

Monitoring commitments and assessing the quality of project design get significant attention. Two main sets of commitments on gender attract the interest of the Board and shareholders: International Development Association replenishments and the capital increase. The World Bank collects corporate data and reports on all International Development Association commitments as well as the capital increase. IFC reports on all capital increase commitments related to gender except on annual financing dedicated to women and women-led small and medium enterprises, a situation the organization is working to change. The attention given to these requirements has yielded improvements in collecting sex-disaggregated data and ensuring the intent of the strategy translates into the results chains of projects.

Monitoring implementation gets less attention, which raises the risk of missing evidence to assess outcomes. A review of seven Country Partnership Frameworks found that they did not fully monitor gender gaps identified in their pillars. A review of 97 IFC and World Bank projects also implies there has been limited measurement of two of the four gaps: voice and agency,

and specific human endowments at a country level. Of these projects, 72 had yet to report any progress or were not intending to track gender gaps at all. Additionally, 69 had no plans to undertake their own project evaluations beyond reporting requirements. Practice managers reported that budget limitations prevent adequate monitoring of progress on gender gaps during supervision. With limitations in supervision and in monitoring and evaluation, there is a risk that making mid-course corrections in the implementation of the strategy will become very difficult, and at the end of the strategy period, there will be missing evidence on the World Bank and IFC contributions to outcomes.

Opportunities

Drawing on the analysis of enablers and constraints in implementing the gender strategy, the review identifies four opportunities to enhance implementation in the remaining years of the strategy period.

- » Strengthen synergies among Regions, Global Practices, industry groups, and country teams to develop coherence in the country’s portfolio. Good practice examples show that country teams can coherently implement priorities when staff designated to support work on gender are resourced. The gender groups can assist in enabling this process by sharing lessons from efforts between the World Bank and IFC such as childcare and women’s labor market participation. Informants reported significant challenges in addressing gender-based violence, which suggests a potential area for joint effort by the World Bank and IFC.
- » Define and maintain standards for staff designated to support work on gender in the Bank Group at the regional and country level, with the Gender Group exercising an enhanced coordination role. Implemented standards would enable greater consistency from staff designated to support the strategy. Standards should be articulated for the selection, professional development, resourcing (both human and financial), and performance management of staff, drawing on practices in the East Asia and Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia Regions. Enhanced coordination by the Gender Group entails actively supporting implementation of the standards, providing guidance, and managing knowledge across Regions. IFC, for its part, is well

organized in its approach to implementing the gender strategy, although it could provide additional training and support to investment officers to assist with the development of client demand.

- » Enable staff designated to support work on gender, task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers to work jointly on generating evidence to amplify the use of knowledge on meeting country and global priorities. The review highlights that when groups of staff work together, there is an effect on implementation beyond the use of evidence in a single operation. Focal points, task team leaders, and Global Practice gender experts and IFC gender leads, for example, reported that in jointly generating evidence they were able to translate it into other operations and share examples with internal and external stakeholders. IFC efforts could focus on identifying and documenting examples of gender-flagged investment services, especially in Infrastructure and in Manufacturing, Agribusiness, and Services. The importance of emphasizing joint working arrangements for evidence use by operational staff is confirmed in both the academic literature and in the evaluation of gender and diversity by the Inter-American Development Bank.
- » Maintain corporate monitoring and ensure attention to the monitoring and evaluation of implementation in both IFC and the World Bank. Mobilize the gender groups of the two institutions, as well as staff designated to support work on gender, to develop capacity and support monitoring and supervision during implementation. Commission outcome-focused evaluations and, potentially, impact evaluations in both IFC and the World Bank related to the closure of gaps at the country level, global level, or both.

Management Comments

Management of the World Bank Group institutions thanks the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) for the report, *World Bank Group Gender Strategy Mid-Term Review*. We appreciate the timeliness of this evaluation. We want to reaffirm the Bank Group’s strong commitment to gender equality and enhancing women’s voice and agency. Closing gender gaps continues to be one of the special themes under the 19th Replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA), the capital increase commitments, and a key Bank Group priority, with emphasis on deepening the implementation of the World Bank Group Gender Strategy.

World Bank Management Comments

Management welcomes the recognition that “management across senior levels of the World Bank and IFC [International Finance Corporation] demonstrate commitment to the gender strategy and push relevant concepts and practices downward” and that “operational staff who participated in IEG interviews and focus groups expressed their personal and professional commitment to the principle of addressing gender disparities.” Helping client countries close gender gaps is a corporate priority, widely embraced equally by management and shareholders, appropriately reflected in both the Corporate Scorecards and the IDA Results Measurement System, and embedded in the management of operations.

Management is pleased to note that 65 percent of all World Bank operations approved in fiscal year (FY)19 were designed to close gender gaps and meet or exceed the gender target in all Regions. The gender tag is an important learning tool for World Bank task teams because it helps them identify entry points for closing gender gaps in operations, designing smart approaches to addressing them, and incorporating indicators to track progress in closing those gaps. The report notes that before implementation of the strategy, only 24 percent of World Bank projects that closed between FY12 and FY14 had applied a gender lens in analysis, action, and monitoring. During the

strategy period between FY17 and FY19, projects receiving the gender tag increased by 16 percentage points (from 49 to 65 percent).

Notwithstanding this progress, management notes the opportunities identified by the report to ensure that implementation in the remaining time frame of the strategy is even stronger. Management agrees that World Bank gender tagging efforts have helped raise awareness and create incentives for staff to design actions to close gender gaps during project preparation. To build on this success and accelerate progress, management is already exploring tangible ways to (i) strengthen synergies across the Bank Group to increase coherence in country portfolios for greater country-level impacts; (ii) acknowledge and develop competencies for staff working to implement the gender strategy; (iii) promote the use of evidence in operations and policy dialogue; and (iv) maintain corporate monitoring and evaluation of implementation across the Bank Group. Furthermore, management has begun discussing the findings of this report with Regions and Global Practices (GPs) to identify additional steps to make the implementation of the remaining years of the strategy even more effective.

Management agrees with the report's first suggestion to strengthen synergies to address country-level gender gaps in a more coherent manner and is pursuing a more systematic country approach. Increasingly, country portfolios have launched multiple operations across GPs to close gender gaps in areas such as maternal and adolescent health, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education, women's mobility and security, access to the internet and information, communication and technology services, women's employment in technical positions, ownership of land and housing, access to financial services, and prevention and response to gender-based violence. This progress builds on a more systematic approach to closing gaps ushered in by the gender strategy to improve cross-sector approaches at country-level. By calendar year 2018, 27 of 36 Systematic Country Diagnostics highlighted gaps in all four pillars of the gender strategy, 20 of 21 Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs) identified two or more gender strategy gaps, and 49 countries launched operations to close gaps in all four of the strategy's pillars: human endowments, jobs, assets, and women's voice and agency. An additional 42 countries addressed gaps in either two or three

of the pillars. New modalities are also being developed in several regions to take a more strategic portfolio approach to closing country-level gender gaps, such as the Mashreq Gender Facility (a joint World Bank and IFC initiative), Gender Platforms in all South Asian countries, and the East Asia and Pacific Regional Gender Coordination Program. More countries, including Nigeria and Ethiopia, are establishing country-level innovation policy initiatives. Progress has also been supported by a steady increase in the share of development policy operations that tackle cross-cutting constraints to closing gender gaps through specific policy reforms.

Management agrees with the report's second suggestion to define competencies for staff designated to support implementation of the gender strategy and will explore options that better acknowledge specific skills and functions. Many staff who work on implementing the gender strategy are not counted, including those in the Regional Gender Innovation Labs (GILs) and those in various GPs who produce knowledge products and analytical work, such as a jobs diagnostic or Human Capital Reviews. These staff may have specific expertise in gender analysis and diagnostics. Other staff have been trained to support colleagues on the gender tag within the GP and at the regional level but are not technical experts. Given that staff members have different competencies and play different roles, management is looking into ways to enhance the architecture for ensuring competencies and recognition of work programs.

Management agrees with the report's third suggestion to enable staff to translate knowledge into practice to accelerate progress to close gender gaps, noting the role of the World Bank Gender Group in this regard. The Gender Group plays a critical role in disseminating lessons and good practices across the institution through its training and community of practice. The Gender Group also coordinates the Federation of GILs, which is developing models to better channel operationally relevant evidence to task teams and policymakers. The Africa GIL has had much success already, having embedded its evidence into 94 Bank Group operations and 21 external projects since its inception in 2013. GILs in other regions, the Development Impact Evaluation, and other units follow this model to translate knowledge into action. To showcase innovative operations, the Gender Group publishes a quar-

terly e-newsletter, which features insights and tips from recently approved operations to help task team leaders. Each GP has an online tool that provides practical and concrete examples of World Bank projects with a strong results chain for the gender gap's analysis, actions, and indicators. Additionally, several Regions have dedicated webpages with knowledge products.

Management agrees with the report's fourth suggestion to maintain and strengthen corporate monitoring during implementation. The World Bank already reports on results in the Corporate Scorecard and the IDA Results Measurement System. Indicators in the CPF results frameworks are more routinely disaggregated by sex and many more now include specific gender indicators, which are picked up in Performance and Learning Reviews at the midterm of the CPF and in Completion and Learning Reviews at CPF completion. Systems are in place for recording and monitoring country-level targets and results, and management agrees to enhance the use of these systems to track the closure of key gender gaps.

Management agrees with the report's conclusion that fighting gender-based violence (GBV) is an important institutional priority that requires sustained efforts. The World Bank has been a leader among multilateral development banks both in terms of mitigating the risks of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) and embedding broader GBV prevention and response in operations. In our work to mitigate SEAH risks, the World Bank is now the first multilateral development bank to disqualify contractors for failing to comply with SEAH-related obligations. World Bank efforts place continuous emphasis on screening projects for SEAH risks and include survivor-centric mitigation measures. Management is aware of the complexity of addressing GBV and notes that operational teams face challenges, including in approaching the issue with government counterparts (an update will be provided to the Board of Executive Directors on the GBV Action Plan later in the spring). On prevention and response, management would like to highlight recent progress in the portfolio. Since 2017, there have been 162 Bank Group projects that incorporated actions to prevent and address GBV. These operations cut across all GPs, reflecting the need for a multisector response to eliminate GBV, including in transport; urban planning and design; in fragili-

ty, conflict, and violence; and through community mobilization and promotion of behavioral change.

To address the risk of further widening the gender gap during the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic shock, World Bank operations intentionally focus on strengthening systems and designing investments that help countries rebuild with greater strength and equality. The World Bank's COVID-19 response operations have embedded actions to address relevant gender gaps; such actions include expanding social protection systems to cover female informal workers, ensuring that the vaccine rollout not only mitigates the potential for sexual exploitation and abuse but also strengthens women's roles and leadership in health systems, and facilitating working capital and credit lines for women-owned firms through financial operations. The Gender Group will continue to share good practices from ongoing operations with task teams in the GPs and regions.

International Finance Corporation Management Comments

IFC congratulates the IEG team on a well-written report, and we are pleased that IEG recognizes IFC's private sector efforts in closing gender gaps. We welcome the learnings from the review and appreciate IEG's recognition of our commitment to the World Bank Group Gender Strategy and the quality of our implementation. Over the past several years, we have seen this agenda become a corporate priority under IFC 3.0 and the capital increase, and it is widely embraced by both management and staff. It is also reflected in both the Corporate Scorecards and IFC's Key Performance Indicators and has seen growing client demand.

We appreciate the positive recognition of IFC's well-organized implementation of the gender strategy, of its active role in developing a coordinated model, of the support provided by its staff designated to support work on gender, and of the overall commitment from management and staff. Regarding the scope of the review, we note that it is limited to an internal operational focus and does not consider an external market or client focus. Given increased client demand for gender-smart solutions, management believes

it is important and relevant to include market and client perspectives in the final evaluation at the end of the strategy period. We acknowledge the candid review and welcome the recommendations for (i) better connecting operations with expertise and knowledge; (ii) implications on resourcing and capacity building, and strengthening the mandate of gender focal points; (iii) enhancing monitoring and evaluation of implementation; and (iv) opportunities moving forward, particularly for improved Bank Group collaboration, to support a country-driven approach.

IFC's approach to supporting the closure of gender gaps is underpinned by multiple IFC instruments (research, investment, advice, and peer platforms to scale learning), collaboration with internal and external partners, as well as a programmatic approach connecting the global, regional, and country-level efforts in closing gender gaps. With this in mind, management considers it important to assess how different regions, sectors, and industries vary in approaches and lessons in implementing the strategy.

It is important to recognize the IFC Gender Group's entire mandate, as it plays a role not just in the coordination of the strategy but also in delivering client-facing gender operations. Extensive work has been done from the inception of the gender strategy, and includes, for example, research on the business case across a number of sectors and themes together with operations, peer learning platforms, innovative product development and client delivery, advice and support to operational colleagues, inputs to country strategies and diagnostics, and emphasis on building external communications and buy-in from the market. Building on this experience, IFC will place even more emphasis on targeted internal communication to facilitate better knowledge uptake by staff.

We acknowledge and agree with the finding that emphasis on project-level gender-flagging may be at odds with promoting a more multisectoral country-driven approach. We agree with IEG's assessment on the need for a more holistic country-driven approach. IFC will leverage its experience in designing multisectoral country gender programs, such as that in Sri Lanka, and replicate this approach together with the World Bank in other countries. Additionally, management infers that beyond a high-level desk review, the Country Private Sector Diagnostics (CPSDs) and IFC country strategies were

not fully part of IEG’s analysis in terms of how gender is or could be integrated, particularly since the analysis used a limited sample of countries. As the CPSDs and IFC country strategies are vital tools for assessing our country-level approach, we believe the findings to be somewhat limited in their applicability. To support its country-based program design, IFC will continue to integrate gender more systematically in its country strategies as well as the CPSDs.

The report refers to the need for greater uptake in IFC’s operational departments outside of IFC’s Gender Group and acknowledges programs such as the Financial Institutions Group’s Banking on Women. We agree and appreciate the need to broaden IFC’s operational gender footprint, particularly in terms of investments, but the level of effort that has been made to start embedding gender programs in other industry units beyond the Financial Institutions Group should be recognized. Broad uptake will take time, but compared with the period prior to the gender strategy (that is, before 2016) when industries had very limited gender capacity (for example, dedicated attention of staff or consultants and products), the situation has vastly improved because all IFC industries as well as other departments such as the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) team and Sector Economics and Development Impact team, now have some resources and support available through IFC’s industry gender focal points (as the report states, 27 focal points). IFC will continue its efforts in building capacity and incentives of its gender staff in supporting colleagues.

We acknowledge and agree with GBV being an area where more focus may be needed. Addressing GBV, including bullying and harassment, is an important topic for IFC. In this regard, it is important to consider the role of IFC’s ESG team, which addresses GBV from a compliance and risk perspective, as well as the role of the IFC Gender Group, which addresses GBV from an advisory perspective. Both roles are important in addressing GBV, and efforts are underway to continue to build expertise to further deepen our response. For instance, the ESG department recruited a global GBV expert in FY20 to address some of the issues already highlighted in the report. IFC will continue working on workplace GBV prevention and response by further exploring opportunities with our clients to create more respectful workplaces,

strengthening internal capacity, raising staff awareness, generating research and knowledge, and adding to the existing business case on why it matters.

Although we note the Bank Group's COVID-19 response was not considered in the review due to timing, it is vital to reflect how COVID-19 could potentially affect implementation of the World Bank Group Gender Strategy. Preliminary evidence suggests that the pandemic has magnified preexisting gender inequalities, therefore making it even more important to understand how our investments and advice can contribute to closing gaps between women and men. IFC's ongoing COVID-19 response across investments, advisory, and analytics reflects a gender focus, and we are proactively working on preventing further deepening of inequalities, particularly in terms of finance, care, employment, and entrepreneurship. In addition to several dedicated COVID-19 gender guidance notes and project engagements with clients, IFC and UN Women have published a report together that highlights how private sector companies can support women amid the pandemic. IFC is working in partnership with the World Bank and other development finance institutions to further our understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on women and men and to translate findings into support for our clients, enabling them to address widening gender gaps.

Report to the Board from the Committee on Development Effectiveness

The Committee on Development Effectiveness met to consider the report entitled *World Bank Group Gender Strategy Mid-Term Review: An Assessment by the Independent Evaluation Group* and management's response.

The committee welcomed the Gender Strategy Mid-Term Review (MTR) and deemed it a timely input in light of (i) the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on women and (ii) the increased challenges to progress toward shared prosperity and achievement of the gender-related Sustainable Development Goals. Members commended the strong progress made in terms of the World Bank Group commitment and efforts, and they were pleased to learn about the MTR's findings on demonstrated commitment to achieve greater gender equality, evidence of good practices, improvements in project design, and increased accountability across the Bank Group. They acknowledged management's expressed commitment to strengthening synergies across the Bank Group to increase the coherence of country portfolios in addressing gender gaps, further enhancing the use of evidence in operations and in policy dialogue, developing and acknowledging the competencies of staff working on gender, and maintaining corporate monitoring and evaluation of implementation across the Bank Group.

Members encouraged management to implement actions commensurate with the level of ambition of the gender strategy. They asked about specific course corrections aimed to further operationalize the strategy, close gender gaps, mainstream gender ambition into operations, and increase collaboration and synergy across Global Practices and vice presidential units as well as across Bank Group institutions. They stressed the importance of both ensuring that the country-level approach translates priorities into operations to close gender gaps and allocating adequate human and budget resources. Members and nonmembers alike commended management for pioneering

initiatives on gender-based violence and encouraged the Bank Group to increase dedicated resources and capacity to ensure enhanced focus on gender-based violence.

Members agreed to the Independent Evaluation Group's request to advance the disclosure of the MTR so that it could be published by March 8 (International Women's Day). They suggested that management revise their response to be more robust in incorporating further details on progress to date, achievements, ongoing initiatives, and planned actions to respond to the MTR's opportunities.

1 | Introduction

The gender strategy focuses World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) efforts on closing gender gaps in endowments, jobs, asset control and ownership, and voice and agency. The current strategy builds on the framework and domains of gender equality established in the *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development* (World Bank 2011).¹ The strategy focuses World Bank, IFC, and client attention on achievements that:

- » Improve human endowments;
- » Remove constraints to more and better jobs;
- » Remove barriers to women’s ownership of and control over assets; and
- » Enhance women’s voice and agency and engage men and boys.

The strategy introduces an outcomes-focused, evidence-driven approach to closing gender gaps, leveraging past efforts of the World Bank and IFC. It expands and enhances activities established under the World Bank’s Gender Action Plan (World Bank 2006), together with lessons from experience, to focus on economic empowerment (World Bank 2010a). It outlines an approach to enhance existing corporate processes, such as monitoring systems, diagnostics, Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs), Regional Gender Action Plans (RGAPs), and Global Practice follow-up notes. The strategy also identifies knowledge about “what works” as key. Gender Innovation Labs (GILs) have been established or renewed in South Asia, East Asia and Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East and North Africa, and a federation of all GILs convened. IFC has evolved from Gender Entrepreneurship Markets and Women in Business to business lines and global programs focused on closing gender gaps, such as the ongoing Banking on Women, Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi), Women’s Employment Program, Powered by Women, and Women’s Insurance Program.² The strategy also emphasizes the need to address gender-based violence (GBV), drawing attention to reducing intimate partner and other forms of GBV, devel-

oping interventions to improve the safety and security of women in public transport and the workplace, and developing integrated health and livelihood approaches for women in conflict.³ Through these changes, the strategy seeks to move implementation beyond being broadly gender informed to using evidence to address priorities that achieve substantive outcomes.

This report, which comes at the midpoint of the eight-year strategic cycle, provides a rapid review of the implementation of the strategy in the World Bank and IFC. The purpose of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) review is to provide evidence and reveal opportunities for strengthening implementation in the final four years of the strategy. Box 1.1 presents the questions the review set out to answer, and box 1.2 clarifies terminology the report uses to discuss staff designated to support work on gender. Successful implementation of the World Bank Group Gender Strategy (fiscal year [FY]16–23) and the ongoing effort to close gender gaps will contribute to the achievement of the twin goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Progress on the objectives of the gender strategy will especially contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 5, which seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. This report provides insights on the commitment to the strategy’s objectives, support for country-driven approaches, coordination of gender expertise, and measurement of progress (see box 1.2 discussion of staff designated to support the gender strategy). It reflects on what is working well and what is working less well to support continuous monitoring and learning in the World Bank and IFC in relation to the implementation of the strategy.

Box 1.1. Questions Answered by This Review

This review answers one overarching question:

How well is the implementation of the gender strategy positioning the World Bank Group to contribute to closing key gender gaps?

Subquestions include the following:

- » How do the knowledge products from the [Gender Group, Gender Business Group, Gender Innovation Labs, or Global Practices] serve the needs of operational teams and industry groups?
- » How valuable is the support of staff designated to work on gender for operational teams and industry groups?
- » How is the monitoring of the strategy and corporate commitments incentivizing operational teams and industry groups to close gender gaps?
- » What enablers and constraints need to be addressed in the implementation of the strategy?

Box 1.2. Who Are the Staff Designated to Support Work on Gender?

Throughout the report, an umbrella term “staff designated to support work on gender” refers to all staff in the World Bank Group who have been specifically designated to assist others and perform functions that contribute to the closure of gender gaps. Where evidence arose, the report identifies the specific role. The roles discussed in the report are listed below.

This approach has been taken as there is limited consistency in the titles, form, and function of staff designated to support work on gender in the Bank Group. Chapter 4 more fully discusses the coordination of staff support to the gender strategy.

- » World Bank Global Practice gender experts—Each Global Practice has at least two staff identified to support the closing of gender gaps. These staff have been trained and certified as Global Practice experts by the Gender Group to provide upstream support to operations seeking to get the gender tag.

(continued)

Box 1.2. Who Are the Staff Designated to Support Work on Gender? (cont.)

- » International Finance Corporation gender leads—The International Finance Corporation has appointed gender experts managed by the Gender Business Group who undertake a wide array of functions and are allocated to a region (for example, South Asia) or specific product (for example, Women's Insurance).
- » Regional gender assessor—The Gender Group has trained and certified staff members in Regions since 2019 to assess projects at Concept Note stage regarding the gender tag.
- » Focal points—A wide variety of staff help connect the gender strategy to operations. Some are gender experts who work in an industry group, Country Management Unit, Global Practice, or Region, while others have important context and sector knowledge but limited backgrounds in gender. Most of these staff are known as focal points, though to provide differentiation in the organizational hierarchy they can have varying titles, such as regional gender leads, country focal points, or gender program leads. Staff in these roles are expected to be sources of relevant information and guidance and may be certified as regional gender assessors in the World Bank.

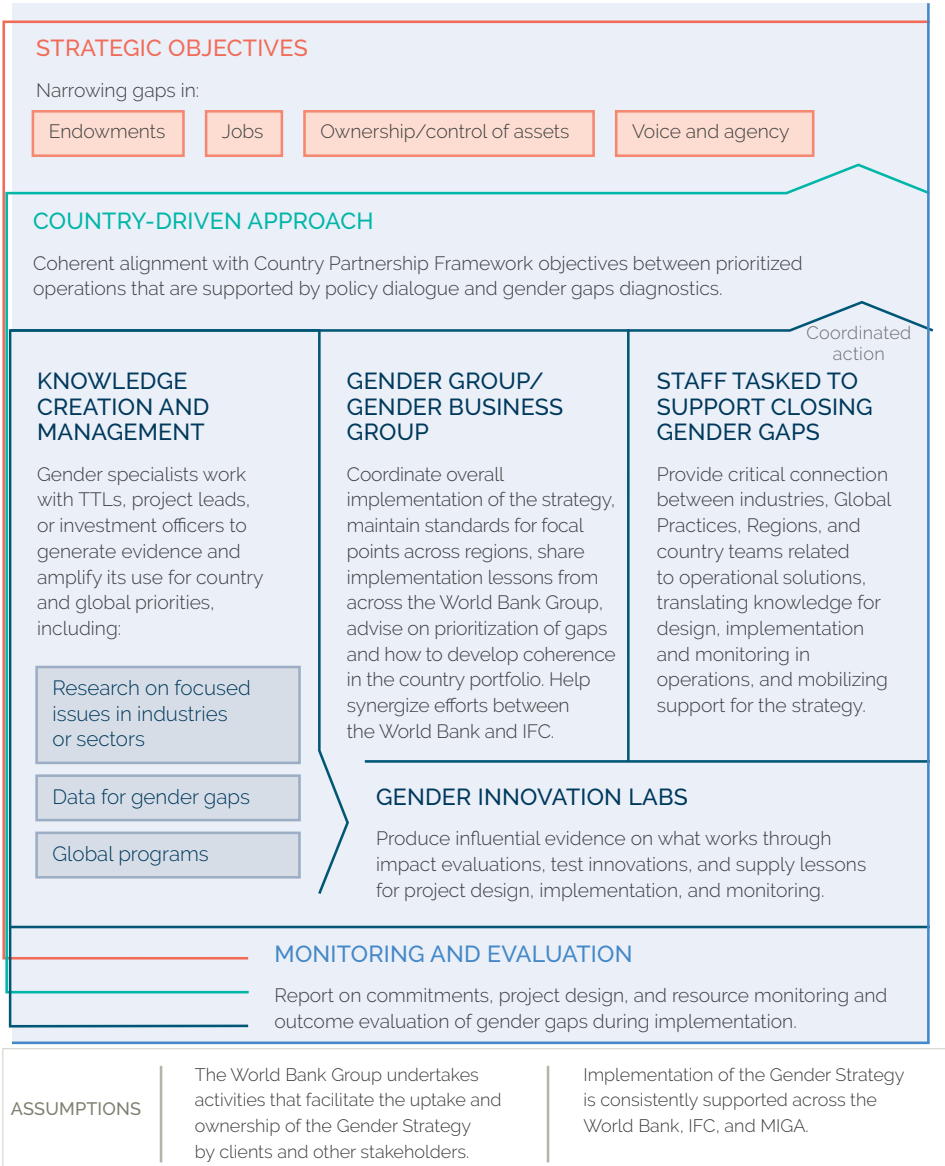
Based on the evidence gathered by the review, the team developed a theory of action that represents the institutional elements and factors that enable the implementation of the strategy. The theory of action highlights that attaining the objectives of the strategy requires a country-driven approach, within which Bank Group country teams work with clients to set priorities and develop portfolios for resolving gender gaps (figure 1.1). A country-driven approach enables synergies and coherence of implementation as well as the development of client awareness and commitment in both the public and private sectors. Key institutional elements that support a country-driven approach are the World Bank and IFC gender groups, staff designated to support work on gender, and the creation and management of knowledge—all reinforced by monitoring and evaluation. The gender groups should provide strategy leadership and create an environment conducive to implementation through coordination. Staff support provides a critical connection for implementing the strategy through client dialogue, oper-

ational solutions, knowledge transfer, and mobilization of other staff. All of these elements contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of progress.

Figure 1.1. Theory of Action That Enables Implementation of the World Bank Group Gender Strategy

THEORY OF ACTION

to Enable Implementation of the World Bank Group Gender Strategy



Source: Independent Evaluation Group.

Note: IFC = International Finance Corporation; MIGA = Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; TTL = task team leader.

Review Audience, Analytical Approach, and Methods

This review intends to inform the Boards of Executive Directors, senior management (vice presidents), the World Bank Gender Group, and the IFC Gender Business Group (GBG) about the implementation of the strategy and identify opportunities to strengthen implementation in the remaining period. Secondary audiences are the staff and managers in units tasked with implementing the gender strategy: Operations Policy and Country Services, country teams, Global Practices, and IFC regional departments and industry groups. Findings may also be relevant to bilateral and multilateral agencies and other organizations that design and finance investments to close gender gaps, as well as researchers and clients of the World Bank and IFC.

The review used a mainly qualitative approach, supplemented by descriptive statistical analysis. Interviews and focus groups of multiple stakeholders (approximately 180 people) were conducted in the Bank Group at country and corporate levels to understand the activities designed and implemented to work toward closing gender gaps. Seven countries were purposively selected for closer analysis to attain a view of gender strategy implementation under diverse conditions. The sampling considered regional distribution, the active portfolio of both IFC and World Bank projects seeking to close gender gaps, and the countries' positions on the Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum 2019). Interviews focused on the questions in box 1.1. Findings from these stakeholder reports were triangulated with gender tag (World Bank) and gender flag (IFC) data, key documents, and previous IEG reports. Analysis identified positive examples of practice and challenges, as well as factors that enabled or constrained Bank Group work. Details of the review's design, country sampling, and sources of evidence are in appendix A.

In accordance with the initial terms of reference provided by the IFC and World Bank gender groups, two streams of the Mid-Term Review were conducted, one by IEG and the other by Group Internal Audit (GIA). IEG worked from the material provided by the gender groups to develop this review. GIA provided an advisory report focused on review of the internal processes, implementation practices, and accountability structures, which this report

has drawn on for evidentiary support. Throughout the process, GIA and IEG worked collaboratively, undertaking joint interviews where possible and sharing ongoing analysis in producing their respective reports.

The review was executed with agility to provide timely input for the World Bank Group Gender Mid-Term Review. The main data collection process was completed in about six weeks, which reduced the amount of data that could be collected and analyzed and limited the scope of this review to desk analysis without the benefit of field and project visits. The Bank Group's coronavirus (COVID-19) response was initiated after data collection was complete and so is not considered within the review. The review did not conduct a broad survey of staff competencies on gender, seek to verify outcomes in countries, assess partnerships, or gather the views of clients. Travel restrictions due to COVID-19 were put in place toward the end of data collection, making client feedback difficult to collect. Instead, perceptions of staff expertise and client demand were examined with interviewees in the Bank Group and its development partners. The quality of the World Bank's gender tag and IFC's gender flag data was not assessed. Future evaluations could engage more deeply with each of these areas.

Structure of the Review

The logic of the review is based on the theory of action (figure 1.1). Chapter 2 discusses the commitment to achievement of the strategy's objectives. Chapter 3 describes the country-driven approach and the opportunity to generate further synergies among projects. Chapter 4 describes the coordination of staff designated to support work on gender and support the use of evidence. Chapter 5 outlines how strong emphasis on commitments and project design overshadows efforts for monitoring and evaluation of implementation. Finally, chapter 6 presents the conclusions and describes opportunities for the World Bank and IFC to maximize the remaining years of strategy implementation.

¹ Three premises are at the foundation of its framework: (i) households are heterogenous entities composed of individuals with varying preferences and needs; (ii) markets and institutions influence the relationship between economic development and gender equality on a direct and indirect basis; and (iii) markets and institutions are dynamic, and their attributes can change and evolve in response to society and to external stimuli, such as policy interventions. The domains of gender equality are human endowments, economic opportunity, and voice and agency.

² A Gender Entrepreneurship Markets program was launched in December 2004 to mainstream gender issues into all dimensions of International Finance Corporation work, while at the same time helping to better leverage the untapped potential of women and men in emerging markets. In 2010, the initiative was renamed Women in Business.

³ In addition to the Gender-Based Violence Task Force, the World Bank Group has developed guidance documents to safeguard protection in investment project financing.

2 | Commitment to the Strategic Objectives

The gender strategy outlines an approach that intends to translate Bank Group commitments on closing gender gaps into demonstrable results. Interviews, data, and documents demonstrating the strategic objectives of the gender strategy have received ongoing and well-documented commitment from management and development partners, a precondition for success. The organizational commitment to the strategy has translated into updated project design, as demonstrated by increased gender tagging and flagging. Further translation of organizational commitment to project implementation is constrained by the lack of familiarity with a gender gap approach among task team leaders, project leads, investment officers, and practice managers.

Management and Development Partner Commitment

The objectives of the strategy have received development partner commitment. Two development partners interviewed for the review were supportive of the strategy and its potential to help identify, address, and close gender gaps across sectors. Representatives of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and Global Affairs Canada said the gender strategy has high global visibility; stakeholders, they said, are on board with its potential. International commitment to the objectives of the strategy is further demonstrated by the incorporation of gender gaps into International Development Association (IDA) replenishments and Bank Group capital package proposals. The commitments noticeably evolved from a focus on improving Bank Group processes in the 16th Replenishment of IDA (IDA16) and IDA17 to outcome-focused gender gap targets in IDA18, IDA19, and the capital package after the introduction of the strategy. These commitments are further described in box 2.1.

Box 2.1. International Development Association and Capital Replenishment Commitments That Reinforce the Gender Strategy

Commitments agreed on by International Development Association (IDA) shareholders during the Replenishment process demonstrate the World Bank Group's enhanced focus on gender gaps and international commitment. The focus of commitments on gender has shifted from improving internal processes to closing gender gaps.

IDA16 and IDA17 Replenishments

The IDA16 and IDA17 commitments supported the development of the World Bank's approach to gender. These commitments focused on knowledge and processes, including the following:

- » Making the case in the World Development Report 2012 that investing in women and girls is smart economics (World Bank 2011).
- » Implementing and deepening the integration of gender into World Bank action plans for Regions and countries, and in the reproductive health and education sectors.
- » Strengthening results frameworks that incorporate gender mainstreaming by including indicators at the country level and for operational efforts.
- » Intensifying capacity-building efforts through experiential learning.

IDA18 and IDA19 Replenishments

The commitments for IDA18 and IDA19 shifted to focus on the following:

- » Closing first-generation gaps in human endowments, specifically in primary and secondary education and reproductive health.
- » Removing constraints for more and better jobs through developing skills, reducing occupational segregation, and addressing mobility and security needs in urban passenger transport.
- » Increasing women's financial inclusion and entrepreneurship through improving access to and use of financial services and land, reporting on financial inclusion, and supporting better participation in the digital economy and information and communications technologies.

(continued)

Box 2.1. International Development Association and Capital Replenishment Commitments That Reinforce the Gender Strategy (cont.)

- » Enhancing women's voice and agency, engaging men to respond to gender-based violence, and implementing a global task force on gender-based violence.
- » Enabling country-level action through data collection, ensuring at least basic availability of gender data and knowledge for all IDA countries through a core data package, and encouraging further investments in "what works."

In the Bank Group capital package, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Finance Corporation made commitments to meaningfully narrow gender gaps.

- » International Bank for Reconstruction and Development: Increasing the proportion of its operations that close gender gaps and taking specific actions to close gender gaps in the access to and use of financial services by fiscal year 2023 with ambition maintained or increasing to fiscal year 2030.
- » International Finance Corporation: By 2030, quadrupling the amount of annual financing dedicated to women and women-led small and medium enterprises, increasing annual commitments to financial intermediaries targeting women, and doubling the share of women directors that it nominates to boards of companies; by 2020, flagging all projects with gender components.

In the Mid-Term Review of IDA18, all targets were reported to be on track, though implementation challenges were noted in filling data gaps and in identifying and working on the highest-impact interventions in key focus areas, for example. IDA19 also sought to build interconnections with the other IDA special themes of fragility, conflict, and violence; jobs and economic transformation; and governance and institutions.

Source: World Bank 2010b, 2013, 2017c, 2020.

Development partners also confirmed strong recognition of knowledge developed by the Bank Group on gender gaps. The interviewees identified the Bank Group as producing and contributing to important research in sup-

port of gender equality, which they used to inform their own positions. The development partners also identified World Bank products that they built on in their own work, such as the report *Unrealized Potential: The High Cost of Gender Inequality in Earnings* (Wodon and de la Brière 2018); the sector report *The Rising Tide—A New Look at Water and Gender* (Das 2017); and the Women Business and the Law project and data set, which has expanded over time and analyzes laws and regulations affecting women’s economic inclusion in 190 countries. The interviewees from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and Global Affairs Canada also cited valuable IFC products and initiatives,¹ such as Energy2Equal, through which IFC is working with large and small companies across Sub-Saharan Africa to close gender gaps and increase women’s participation in the renewable energy sector. They also mentioned *Driving toward Equality: Women, Ride-Hailing, and the Sharing Economy* (IFC and Uber 2018), which explores how women and men participate in ride-hailing, particularly in emerging markets, as well as more specific work, such as the IFC (2017) case study *Gender-Smart Solutions Reduce Employee Absenteeism and Turnover in Solomon Islands*.

Management across senior levels of the World Bank and IFC demonstrates commitment to the gender strategy and pushes relevant concepts and practices downward.² IEG found strong commitment to the strategy among vice presidents and senior management in the World Bank and IFC. In interviews and focus groups, staff confirmed that top management across the institutions supports the aims of the strategy. This is also true of World Bank and IFC management at the regional level, in Global Practices, and in industry groups. For example, when RGAPs are discussed during periodic updates, staff reported evident ownership, learning, and commitment from management. IFC regional directors and industry managers we interviewed saw the strategic potential in closing gender gaps for developing new business lines. Senior management further demonstrated commitment through conspicuous and explicit support for the strategy in speeches, articles, and blogs.³

There was widespread support of the strategic focus on the four key outcomes in human endowments, jobs, asset control and ownership, and voice and agency among Bank Group management. Several vice presidents, regional directors, and country directors mentioned that their policy dialogue with governments and the private sector on gender has become much more

effective since they have been able to show data linking persistent gender gaps with hindered economic growth, rather than the more general discussions they had under the gender mainstreaming approach (box 2.2). A few senior staff cautioned that the gender gap analysis may push teams toward human endowments, where the gender differences are apparent and data are more available, compared with voice and agency.

Box 2.2. Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Gap Approaches

Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's and men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.

A gender gap approach promoted in the World Bank Group Gender Strategy seeks to address specific disparities using diagnostics and analytics to identify gaps between men and women in a country or sector that can then be targeted through operations to achieve clearly articulated results.

Source: Cited in United Nations Economic and Social Council 2018; Adapted from IFC, forthcoming a; World Bank 2015d, 2019b.

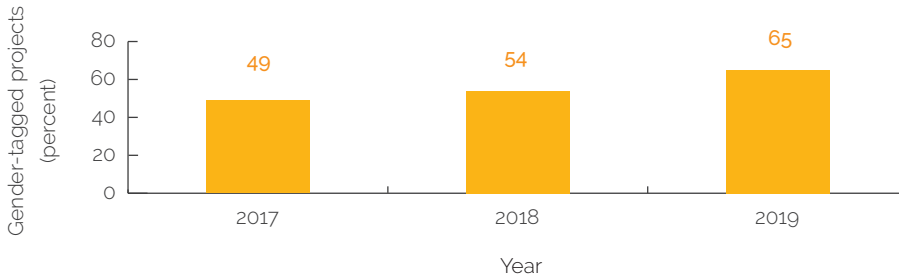
Operational Commitment

World Bank and IFC operational staff who participated in IEG interviews and focus groups expressed their personal and professional commitment to the principle of addressing gender disparities. Staff in both institutions appreciated the value of closing gender gaps, but not necessarily because they were familiar with the strategy document. They understood that the development cost of not addressing gender gaps is high and that the approach offered opportunities to develop new business with clients. IFC staff appreciated the gender community of practice that helped develop their understanding of the corporate commitment to deliver gender outcomes.

In both IFC and the World Bank, increasing percentages of projects have received the gender tag or flag based on data supplied by their reporting systems. The gender tags of the World Bank and the gender flags of IFC assess the results chains of projects by identifying whether their design has analyzed a gender gap, developed an activity to respond to the gap, and put gender gap indicators in results frameworks. Gender tags are validated by the Gender Group of the World Bank after the Board approves the operation. Gender flags are self-assigned by IFC staff, with review, advice, support, and training, but not validation, from the GBG.⁴ To provide further assurance, IFC could revisit the quality control processes of flagging, for example by reviewing a random sample of flagged projects to quantify the extent to which self-assigned flagging diverges from the guidance.

In the World Bank, 65 percent of all operations approved in FY19 were designed with the intention to close gender gaps (figure 2.1). Before the implementation of the gender strategy, an IEG review found that only 24 percent of World Bank projects that closed between FY12 and FY14 had applied a gender lens in analysis, action, and monitoring (World Bank 2016). In contrast, during the strategy period between FY17 and FY19, the number of projects that received the tag increased by 16 percentage points (49 to 65 percent). The corporate target for gender-tagged projects is currently 55 percent for World Bank, IDA, and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development projects, except for International Bank for Reconstruction and Development operations that seek to narrow gaps in access to financial services, whose target is 60 percent. In FY19, all Regions met or exceeded this target. Of the 573 gender-tagged projects between FY17 and FY19, 478 (83 percent) were investment projects. Across the three-year period, the prevalence of gender tagging was greater in IDA (59 percent) and in fragile and conflict-affected situation (FCS) countries (59 percent) than in International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and non-FCS countries.

Figure 2.1. World Bank Gender-Tagged Projects out of All Lending, FY17–19

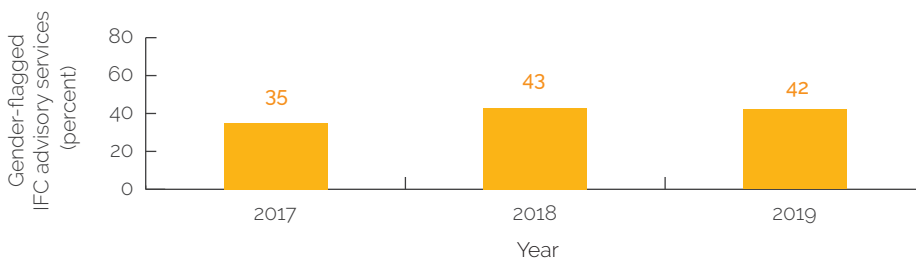


Source: World Bank gender tag data.

Note: FY = fiscal year.

Within the IFC portfolio, advisory services (AS), which were required to be gender flagged throughout the period this review examined, increased from 35 percent in FY17 to 42 percent in FY19. The corporate target for gender-flagged AS projects of 40 percent was exceeded in both FY18 and FY19. Sub-Saharan Africa and global programs contributed the most to exceeding this target in FY19, with all other regions falling below the target. For FY17–19, 185 AS projects are flagged, only 27 of which are in FCS countries (15 percent; figure 2.2). IDA countries account for the majority of tagged AS projects (117; 63 percent).

Figure 2.2. Gender-Flagged IFC Advisory Services out of All IFC Advisory Services, FY17–19

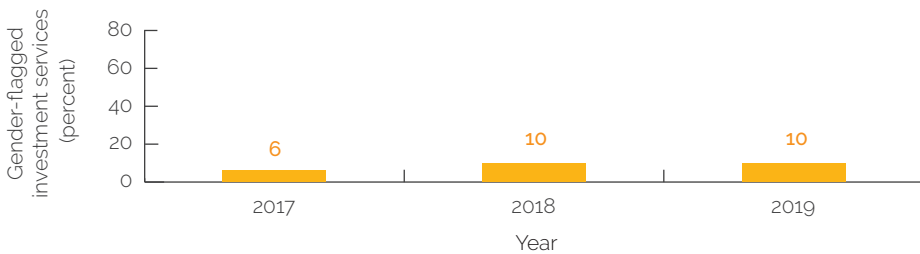


Source: International Finance Corporation gender flag data.

Note: FY = fiscal year; IFC = International Finance Corporation.

IFC investment services (IS) have a lower proportion of projects that address gender gaps than AS, with the amount flagged increasing from 5 percent in FY17 to 10 percent in FY19. Initially, the flagging of IS projects was voluntary in 2017, and it was only made mandatory in December 2018 to meet the Bank Group capital package commitment. Consequently, 38 percent of the IS projects approved for FY17 and FY18 did not record whether they addressed gender gaps. For the purposes of corporate reporting and this review, projects that did not report on the gender flag are treated as not having addressed gender gaps. Between FY17 and FY19, 66 out of 773 IS projects were flagged as addressing gaps (figure 2.3). The largest proportion of these projects was in Sub-Saharan Africa, which accounted for just over a third (23). Of the gender-flagged projects, 8 were in FCS countries and 25 in IDA countries. Just under two-thirds of the gender-flagged investments were in the Financial Institutions Group (FIG), a topic discussed further below.

Figure 2.3. Gender-Flagged IFC Investment Services out of All IFC Investment Services, FY17–19



Source: International Finance Corporation gender flag data.

Note: FY = fiscal year; IFC = International Finance Corporation.

Task team leaders, staff designated to support work on gender, and practice managers reported that the tag process in the World Bank absorbs significant time and effort given the shift from mainstreaming to gap analysis and a rigorous validation process. In the first half of the strategy, the tag process has emphasized applying the gap analysis across Global Practice portfolios, which has helped smooth the shift from mainstreaming. For example, multiple Global Practice gender experts and focal points reported that all their allotted time has gone to advising on tagging processes, which has limited

their ability to assist teams during implementation. Practice managers and task team leaders across Regions overwhelmingly believed that corporate targets (currently 55 percent) permit the strategic use of human resources and that 100-percent targets led to “force-fitting” gender gaps within operations. Force-fitting of gender gaps was not reported in IFC, where there were no reported pressures to meet additional higher targets. Chapter 5, meanwhile, provides evidence that the Bank Group needs to place more emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of implementation to close gender gaps.

The strategy aims for gender gaps to be part of every phase of the project cycle, yet staff, outside of those with gender expertise, are still insufficiently familiar with the gender gap approach. Interviews highlighted that the Bank Group lacks a requirement for gender awareness development among staff; in a minority of instances, this missing requirement was reported to lead to gender issues being deemed irrelevant. IFC and World Bank gender groups have each implemented focused training on gender tagging and flagging, and supported the development of guidance notes, a variety of reports, and information sessions to raise the awareness of staff. IFC also has an e-learning training on gender gaps. Stand-alone e-learning for the World Bank that would improve knowledge on gender gaps has been developed in 4 of 15 Global Practices—Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, Energy, and Social Sustainability and Inclusion. Although these efforts were very useful in developing general awareness, task team leaders still felt the need for support from staff with gender expertise. For example, in all Regions, staff also cited issues in maintaining client dialogue on gender gaps, especially given deep-seated norms that perpetuate gender inequality. Task team leaders and investment officers expressed the need for staff with gender expertise to be part of client dialogue, not just about design, but throughout implementation.

Task team leaders, project leads, investment officers, and practice managers stressed in interviews and focus groups that developing and maintaining a focus on gender gaps across the project cycle requires a large investment of effort, which they are sometimes unable to provide. Developing and maintaining a gender gap approach was reported to require additional efforts to identify and contextualize evidence; adapt gender analysis during restruc-

turing; and convince all staff members of the importance of gender. Since other corporate mandates (such as climate, fragility, and environmental and social compliance) compete for attention, task team leaders and investment officers reported, staff may not consider gender issues, particularly when they do not have access to gender expertise.

Many investment officers outside of FIG also reported that they lacked the knowledge to engage clients and develop demand, relying instead on focal points and gender leads. As noted above, only 66 IS projects were flagged. Of these projects, 42 out of 66 (64 percent) were in the FIG industry group, which is focused on lending to women and women-led small and medium enterprises. For example, the Banking on Women investment portfolio exceeded \$2.5 billion in commitments by February 2020. The Manufacturing, Agribusiness, and Services group flagged the second-largest number of projects (20 percent), followed by Disruptive Technologies and Funds (14 percent) and Infrastructure (3 percent). In most cases, investment officers wanted to learn more, but outside of FIG, few were sure how to proceed in their industry. Some investment officers reported that they had championed the incorporation of gender into their operations, seeing it as an important opportunity. A minority of investment officers reported gender as a burden in seeking to make deals with clients.

Interviewees suggested that undertaking repeat AS with clients could help establish IS by introducing the application of a gender lens to the business case for targeting market gaps. Examples of AS translating to IS were cited within FIG from Lebanon and West Bank and Gaza (IFC 2016b, n.d.). However, no examples were cited outside of FIG and a review of the investment project data found limited opportunities for repeat business to introduce gender issues. Interviewees reported that many IFC clients, though generally supportive, are still on a journey to understanding how to close gender gaps when working with suppliers or delivering services to customers. Many investment officers, meanwhile, reported difficulties in developing client demand. To improve the action and awareness of gender across industries, IFC has developed advisory programs and case studies to make a business case for increasing opportunities. Business cases have been implemented for Women on Boards and in Business Leadership, the Women's Employment

Program, and community stakeholder efforts in infrastructure and natural resources. Interviewees noted that these efforts were helpful, but no evidence arose during the review for how these and other services translate into new investments that would help close gender gaps or shift the way markets operate. IEG evaluations also confirm the lack of evidence in developing IS from AS (World Bank 2017d). Although corporate commitments are present within the World Bank and IFC, awareness among task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers is not yet at a level to ensure consistent implementation. Commitment is a prerequisite, but other internal actions, such as synergies in the country portfolio and the development of staff designated to support work on gender, are also needed. The next chapter describes variations in the country-driven approach to addressing gender gaps.

¹ In addition to the reports cited in this section, the International Finance Corporation developed 38 reports, over 60 case studies, and nearly 30 blogs and other documents between 2016 and 2019.

² Including the World Bank Group president; World Bank managing directors, senior vice presidents, and chief operating officer; and International Finance Corporation chief executive officer and chief operating officer.

³ See, for example, IFC 2020; Malpass 2020; World Bank 2018f.

⁴ Both the Gender Group and the Gender Business Group also track changes, such as the uptake of knowledge, training of focal points, and the treatment of gender in diagnostics and strategies. Although monitoring of internal processes can support implementation, the tag and flag provide the most direct indication of the extent to which the Bank Group intends to address gender gaps.

3 | Country-Driven Approach

The gender strategy advances a country-driven approach as a critical pathway to support the closure of gender gaps. The strategy defines a country-driven approach as coherent alignment with CPF objectives among operations that are supported by policy dialogue and the diagnosis of gender gaps to achieve sustained outcomes. This chapter describes the variations observed in the sample of countries that have implemented a country-driven approach, ranging from stand-alone projects to the collective use of multiple Bank Group instruments across the portfolio to address gender gaps. The implementation examples were derived from focus groups, key informant interviews, and document reviews. Informants pointed to the need for additional internal actions to further enhance the country-driven approach.

Implementing a Country-Driven Approach

Systematic Country Diagnostics (SCDs) proved useful in identifying gender gaps in all cases examined. All of the 25 SCDs approved between FY14 and FY16 and reviewed by the Gender Group identified gender gaps in endowments and jobs.¹ By FY18, 75 percent of 36 SCDs addressed gaps in all four key outcomes of the strategy. As experience with gender analysis in these diagnostic documents has grown, guidelines have been updated to offer clear advice and operational examples.²

CPFs and SCDs for the seven countries sampled by IEG in this review set out a high-level understanding of gender gaps consistent with key expected outcomes in the gender strategy. IEG examined a sample of documents for Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Kenya, Peru, Tajikistan, and Vietnam. The sample reviewed, including documents completed before the gender strategy, had content related to gender gaps, which is consistent with reports that all CPFs are gender informed (see appendix B).³ For example, the Côte d'Ivoire CPF (FY16–19) identifies gender gaps in health, employment, microfinance, and agriculture that inhibit women's economic empowerment

(World Bank 2015b, 8, 18). The Tajikistan CPF (FY19–23) notes the predominant role of women in the informal economy, which makes them more susceptible to economic shocks as well as to significant threats of domestic violence and early or unofficial marriage (World Bank 2019b, 14–15). The Peru CPF (FY17–21) incorporates gender and indigenous disparities in each of its three pillars (World Bank 2017a, 13). Thus, the SCDs and CPFs examined are consistent with guidance provided by the Gender Group,⁴ a finding substantiated by a GIA advisory review.

The majority of the seven CPFs examined contain content relevant to IFC's direct role in closing gender gaps. In five CPFs, the predominant focus was access to finance and credit for women (Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Kenya, and Vietnam) and support to small and medium enterprises owned or led by women (Bangladesh, Egypt, and Kenya). Other gender gaps addressed by IFC in these CPFs were skills development for women in educational institutions (Egypt and Kenya), and investment through the private sector focused on reproductive health care (Kenya). Two of the seven countries (Peru and Tajikistan) did not mention IFC's gender work, but indirectly referenced it through support for the skills agenda with tertiary education and vocational training (Peru) and increased access to finance for poor people and farmers (Tajikistan). Addressing gender gaps in jobs was an objective of all CPFs except Egypt, yet only one country (Tajikistan) had an indicator to assess progress on jobs.

Beyond the CPF, IFC also uses Country Private Sector Diagnostics (CPSDs) and country strategies,⁵ which GIA found to be underdeveloped. GIA's review of 13 completed CPSDs identified 8 with no mention of gender, 4 that mentioned gender without any detailed discussion, and 1 with a detailed discussion of gender. Currently, IFC and the Equitable Growth, Finance, and Institutions Practice Group are developing a guidance note for CPSDs to help staff better assess gender as part of this process. Within the countries IEG examined, IFC country strategies did not exist. Interviews and focus groups noted an important role for industry-specific diagnostics, rather than country-specific ones, to support implementation. The key document for IFC in defining a country-driven approach is the CPF, which is discussed by the Board and signed off by the government. The CPF is informed by the CPSD,

and depending on the timing, is either informed by or expanded on by the IFC country strategy.

Key informants in the World Bank pointed out that more attention is needed to translate the priorities expressed in CPFs to the portfolio. For example, the country team in Kenya is preparing gender diagnostics for the upcoming CPF, with the aim of prioritizing gender gaps and creating coherence across the country portfolio. Generally, task team leaders and focal points reported a need for further guidance, as the gender content in the CPF may need translation to the sector. Box 3.1 describes a good practice example of gender gap prioritization that provides a strategic platform to support operations that seek to realize the aspirations of the gender strategy.

Prioritization of gender gaps helps country teams become more coherent and strategic across the country portfolio. Five of the seven countries in the sample are at various stages of emphasizing specific outcomes in the strategy. In other words, country teams have found selecting among gender gaps makes the country programming more strategic. Interviewees recognized a need for further action beyond the CPF. Absent appropriate prioritization of gender in the program, a diverse set of projects tagged and flagged for gender in the portfolio can appear to be “sprinkled” rather than strategic. One indicative example is the Supporting Education Reform Project in Egypt (World Bank 2018a), where gender gaps in teacher development are not an area prioritized in the CPF, nor are they linked to the portfolio. In working to address gender gaps more strategically, the country team in Peru focuses on GBV and provides a more systematic way to think about gender for operational teams by creating a road map for analysis, action, and monitoring. Other country teams, such as Bangladesh and Vietnam, use gender focal points in the country and Region to ensure that operations focus on these priorities. Vietnam has interlinked elements that focus on policy change related to women’s economic empowerment. In such cases, country directors and managers clearly communicate the priorities to task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers. IEG’s *Knowledge Flow and Collaboration under the World Bank’s New Operating Model* similarly found that strong leadership is necessary for collaboration (for example, where country directors demand it) and that collaboration across teams is strongest on initiatives that are highly visible to senior management (World Bank 2019a).

Box 3.1. Gender Analysis Informing the Niger Country Partnership Framework for Fiscal Years 2018–22

The progressive development of gender in the country analysis and programming for Niger offers an evolved example of prioritization. Mainstreaming gender and strengthening governance and capacity for public service delivery was one of three strategic pillars in Niger's Country Partnership Strategy for fiscal year (FY)13–16. The Performance and Learning Review found that progress toward realizing relevant objectives was "too timid to make a notable difference" (World Bank 2015c, 7); it found also that the lowest satisfaction ratings in a stakeholder survey related to work on gender. The Performance and Learning Review also found that, as a cross-cutting issue, gender was "often swamped by other concerns in the various sectors" (World Bank 2015c, 35), making it difficult to effectively mainstream gender in project implementation. Greater effort would be needed to reach stakeholders outside of government and to increase the visibility of gender-related (and other) interventions in dissemination activities.

The Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) provided in-depth analysis of the causes and consequences of gender discrimination. It noted that social- and gender-based traps (such as attaching less value to the education of girls than of boys) may result from long-standing cultural values. The SCD noted that approaches to increase agricultural productivity must consider likely impacts on women's access to labor; childcare responsibilities and time available for farming; and access to land. It also proposed approaches to addressing those impacts through a strong focus on reducing fertility and providing community-based childcare to address the negative effects of the household dependency ratio on women's relative productivity. The SCD noted the importance of taking gender into account in policies that were not specific to gender, such as the identification of new agricultural technologies and techniques and their likely effects on women's time. Drawing on experience with conservation agriculture in Zambia, the SCD noted that some types of climate-smart agriculture may increase the burden of labor on women.

The Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for Niger for FY18–22 used the SCD analysis and accepted that gender is relevant to each of the three CPF focus areas. The CPF seeks to address female empowerment, agency, and opportunity. The analysis also identifies gender gaps in specific areas across the strategic pillars. In addition, the CPF responded to lessons from the Completion and Learning Review and the need to include gender outcomes in the results matrix.

(continued)

Box 3.1. Gender Analysis Informing the Niger Country Partnership Framework for Fiscal Years 2018–22 (cont.)

Whereas in the Country Partnership Strategy for FY13–16 there were no indicators related to gender gaps, the relevant indicators in the CPF are sex-disaggregated and measure defined gender gaps. Sex-disaggregated indicators cover standard areas, such as percentage increase in yields produced by targeted beneficiaries (men and women) in selected livestock value chains (Indicator 1.2), and seek to measure gaps, such as the number of mining permits issued to artisanal miners (Indicator 1.3) and the mobile market and internet penetration rate (Indicator 6.1). As such, the analysis and measurement of gender gaps is integral to the CPF.

Source: World Bank 2015c, 2017c, 2018d.

The gender strategy also signals the importance of joint World Bank–IFC work and the coordinated use of multiple instruments, which can be observed to some extent in Bangladesh, Egypt, Peru, and Vietnam. In Vietnam, the World Bank tackles issues similar to those of IFC in its private sector support, as these synergies have had the strongest influence on policy. Also in Vietnam, IFC and the World Bank share survey instruments and planning related to childcare, eldercare, and women’s labor force participation. In Egypt, IFC and the World Bank jointly address the regulatory and business environment constraints that inhibit women’s full participation in the economy. Working with mutual priorities has helped IFC focus at a country level, since it generally operates via regions, industries, and global programs. Within IFC’s Gender Strategy Implementation Plan (GSIP) II, a wide range of project collaborations are planned with the World Bank. The plan highlights the importance of undertaking country-driven engagements within regional plans. Another example of synergies between IFC and the World Bank is Sri Lanka, which is described in box 3.2.

Box 3.2. Country-Driven Approach: Example from Sri Lanka

The Women in Work Program in Sri Lanka is a five-year (March 2017–June 2022), \$11.5 million partnership with the Australian government and the International Finance Corporation's largest country-based gender program. The program aims to close gender gaps in the private sector by enhancing opportunities for women's employment and leadership; increasing access to financial and nonfinancial services for women and women-owned businesses through the financial sector; and increasing opportunities for women-owned businesses in the supply chains and distribution networks of lead firms. The country program deploys global products such as Banking on Women, Women's Insurance Program, Tackling Childcare, a peer learning network (SheWorks Sri Lanka), and Economic Dividends for Gender Equality certification. The program is led by the Gender Business Group, in partnership with International Finance Corporation industry groups such as the Financial Institutions Group, Corporate Governance, and Manufacturing, Agribusiness, and Services supported by the country manager. The program has collaborated with the World Bank on policy reform, specifically to draft a national employment act.

Source: Key informant interviews; Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and IFC, forthcoming.

The World Bank mechanism to monitor the implementation of the gender strategy (gender tags) creates incentives to focus on individual projects, rather than promoting a country-driven approach. In Côte d'Ivoire and Tajikistan (two out of seven countries examined), individual tagged operations predominantly facilitate the closure of gender gaps. The pressure to get a project counted toward targets set by Regions and Global Practices may be part of the reason individual projects are emphasized, according to task team leaders. For example, some respondents made statements along the lines of "Not getting the gender tag is not an option." IEG's citizen engagement evaluation identified similar tension between meeting corporate targets and ensuring the quality of engagement. IEG cautioned that a corporate commitment to increase beneficiary feedback in 100 percent of projects could inadvertently generate a "check-the-box" attitude, to the detriment of quality (World Bank 2018b). The new upstream support model of gender tagging

may reduce some of the tagging pressure, but this result will depend on the resources allocated by Country Management Units, Global Practices, and industry groups, as well as on country teams prioritizing gaps across operations or synergizing instruments (box 3.3).

Box 3.3. Opportunities to Reduce Project Pressure with an Upstream Support Model

During the initial years of tagging, rigor in meeting criteria (gaps, activities, and monitoring) was lax and decisions about including gender gaps in operations were often made late in the design process. To reduce variability in operational design, the Gender Group created an “upstream support model,” which was launched in November 2019. In the model, Global Practice gender experts provide support to operational teams in gap analysis and the tagging process from before they create the project Concept Note until the Project Appraisal Document is approved. This model may mitigate project pressure, as decisions about the inclusion of gaps can be made earlier. In this model, the Gender Group trains staff from the Regional Development Effectiveness offices to be regional gender assessors and designated staff from Global Practices to be trained as gender experts, who are called on upstream to provide support to task teams on entry points to close relevant gender gaps. Trained regional assessors and Global Practice gender experts take a test and are certified by the Gender Group.

Source: Independent Evaluation Group key informant interviews; World Bank 2019b.

Interviewees in IFC did not report the same imperative for flagging IS or AS projects as interviewees from the World Bank, as their incentives are different. For AS, gender discussions often occur during review processes and were reported to be focused on project improvement rather than attaining a flag. For IS, attaining a flag does not create a financial incentive for investment officers, which reduces the priority of flagging. Unlike AS, IFC has not set a target for the level of flagging in IS, nor does it track flags in key performance indicators, although GSIP II included a projection that 12–13 percent of IS projects would be flagged by FY20 (IFC, forthcoming a). An incentive to target gender gaps in both AS and IS projects comes from IFC’s Anticipated Impact Measurement and Monitoring (AIMM) system. Within AIMM, a project that provides

evidence of a substantial effect on gender gaps will receive a higher project score, which is considered in review meetings. Interviewees reported that an increased score in AIMM creates an incentive for projects to seek to close gender gaps. Additionally, the corporate awards, which provide a bonus payment, have prioritized nominations that include a gender component.

Task team leaders, investment officers, and project leads stressed that closing country gender gaps is beyond the scope, budget, and timeline of a single project. Fully addressing gender gaps takes sustained effort, spans multiple projects, and can be addressed more strategically using Bank Group instruments collectively, according to focus groups. For example, childcare regulations can be addressed with more pronounced effect using a coherent approach comprising policy change, firm practices, and investments in childcare providers supporting countrywide implementation, rather than by addressing childcare for individual firms. Similarly, focus groups reported that overcoming existing norms was a substantial challenge to attaining the aims of the strategy that required policy dialogue as well as other actions, such as involving religious and community leaders in activities.⁶

World Bank Regions, IFC, and country teams have taken additional steps to move beyond individual tagged and flagged operations. All six of the World Bank's RGAPs were completed by 2018. These plans were well consulted, bring forward regionally specific gender issues and gaps, and provide an implementation framework including indicators and targets. The East Asia and Pacific noted in its Mid-Term Review of the RGAP that the plan has improved prioritization, fundraising, and monitoring. Aligned with the regionalization of IFC, GSIP II was developed based on consultation with regions focused on client demands and business priorities. IFC's regions have detailed a range of activities under each of the objectives of the gender strategy for client work, research and evidence, peer-to-peer platforms and partnerships, and sector reform and policy.

Bank Group staff interviewed for this report noted the critical roles of country directors and managers and regional leadership, commitment, and resource allocation in implementing RGAPs and GSIP II. The World Bank implementation processes for the gender strategy vary by Region, with Middle East and North Africa, East Asia and Pacific, and South Asia provid-

ing substantial support via country and regional focal points. Among the remaining World Bank Regions, this level of support is at the discretion of country directors and managers (this topic is discussed in detail in chapter 4). The approval by several levels of IFC's regional management and also discussion with the extended management team has generated commitment to GSIP II. IFC's regional and country leadership regularly highlighted the important role of the support of the GBG's regionally embedded staff to the implementation of GSIP II. Development partners wanted the Bank Group to ensure consistent internal capacity, as they observed variability across country teams and believed this weakness should be addressed in the remaining years of strategy implementation.

In five of the seven countries examined, the country teams have shifted beyond individual tagged operations to some degree. Within these teams, implementation is on a continuum leading toward a country-driven approach. The Vietnam country team's efforts emerged out of a need to prioritize and ensure impact. The actions taken by this team began before the current gender strategy was implemented, which suggests the commitment of time and effort to develop a country-driven approach. A similar approach created increasing cohesiveness across instruments related to GBV in Kenya and Peru. For example, Peru's Centralized Emergency Response Project includes a dedicated phone line run by the Ministry of Women to cover GBV issues (where the confidentiality of callers would be maintained). GBV has also been addressed in the transport sector with the establishment of a safe and accessible transport system for women in Peru.

In Bangladesh, the country team is taking further steps to ensure the country portfolio is aligned with the gender strategy and South Asia RGAP, both of which focus on women's economic empowerment, voice, and agency. A gender and social inclusion report will be produced to update the 2008 analytical report *Whispers to Voices: Gender and Social Transformation in Bangladesh* (World Bank 2008). The report and other analytical work aim to address constraints on women's employment and asset ownership in Bangladesh. These constraints—which include the high prevalence of GBV, child marriage, and practices that limit women's inheritance of family property—also undermine the voice, agency, and safety of girls and women. This example highlights

that prioritization and further analysis of local priorities, if needed, are steps that support policy dialogue and build demand with clients to implement the country-driven approach.

The opportunity is to strengthen the country-driven approach in the remaining years of strategy implementation. Establishing a country-driven approach requires more from the World Bank and IFC than individual tagged and flagged operations. Experience in Bangladesh and Vietnam shows that country and regional units across the World Bank and IFC play a central role, with the gender groups providing the leadership and coordination that generate an environment conducive to implementation. The World Bank Global Practices and IFC industry groups have supporting roles in creating sector-specific knowledge. Staff designated to support work on gender are critical as they manage diagnostics, translate knowledge, and provide operational support and advice in generating synergies (chapter 4 discusses this role in more depth).

¹ 2017 Gender Group Update to the Board of Executive Directors.

² Guidance documents, such as gender and jobs diagnostics, and subsequent guidance documents on project tags.

³ This finding is reported in International Development Association monitoring and previous Independent Evaluation Group reports, such as early assessment of Systematic Country Diagnostics and Country Partnership Frameworks.

⁴ Country-level analyses are included in Country Partnership Frameworks, Systematic Country Diagnostics, and Gender Assessments. The sample of countries reviewed did not include any Joint Implementation Plans, and thus they were not reviewed.

⁵ Country Private Sector Diagnostics are joint World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) pieces of analysis, whereas IFC country strategies were launched in fiscal year 18 and are focused on only IFC analysis. Both documents should sit under the Country Partnership Framework, which forms the main Joint Implementation Plan between IFC and the World Bank. The Country Private Sector Diagnostic and IFC country strategy are intended to provide upstream engagement at the country level.

⁶ These are two activities of the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographics Project that aim to change social norms.

4 | Coordinating Staff Designated to Support Work on Gender

The gender strategy advances the vital role of evidence in closing gender gaps. Copious resources have been focused on evidence production during the first four years of strategy implementation—in impact evaluations, business cases, and specific studies. This evidence has been applied to improve project design, inform development partner perspectives, and generate demand for services. However, operational staff in the Bank Group report that, unless they receive assistance from staff designated to support work on gender, evidence on gender gaps can be difficult to access, overly technical, and of limited operational relevance (see box 1.2). This review shows that staff designated to support work on gender are a critical link between evidence production and implementation, and that it is an area for further development.

Supporting Evidence Generation and Use

The implementation of the strategy has expanded the amount of evidence produced on gender gaps. The strategy outlines a wide variety of products that can be used to grow the evidence base and assist in closing gender gaps, such as diagnostics, sex-disaggregated data, and impact evaluations. Evidence produced includes 20 countries with jobs diagnostics and 16 country gender assessments listed in the World Bank’s internal Gender Library. Further, the gender data portal is a source for the latest sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics covering demography, education, health, access to economic opportunities, public life and decision-making, and agency.

Copious resources have focused on generating evidence on “what works,” mainly from impact evaluations through GILs. The Umbrella Facility for Gender Equality, which is managed by the World Bank’s Gender Group, has

allocated \$74.6 million—58 percent of its total funding—to GILs to support impact evaluations (UFGE 2019). GILs operate across all Regions except Europe and Central Asia. By 2019, 110 impact evaluations, mainly randomized control trials, were in process in the Africa, South Asia, and East Asia and Pacific GILs (UFGE 2019). The Africa GIL undertook the majority (94) of these evaluations. The GILs in Latin America and the Caribbean and Middle East and North Africa launched calls for expressions of interest in 2019 to initiate impact evaluations. The GILs aim to influence project design through evidence on what and how interventions work. The Africa GIL has reported that 74 percent of its impact evaluations or policy research reports have influenced the design of projects (Africa GIL 2018).

World Bank staff reported that GILs have helped advance their understanding of gender issues “hugely, quickly, and cheaply,” implying that GILs have been an effective expert resource. For example, the Africa GIL reports that an innovative psychometric test used in Ethiopia to support women’s access to larger business loans has been scaled up in Madagascar and Zimbabwe, with Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, and Zambia also interested (Africa GIL 2018). Interviewees also reported that working with GILs when building impact evaluations into projects helped improve the rigor of project design. GILs were also considered accessible and beneficial for operational teams through periodic informal learning sessions. World Bank staff indicated that they would like more assistance from the GILs to better understand certain sector, industry, and country-specific details, as well as data to bridge gender gaps for both ongoing and new operations.

The Gender Group in the World Bank conducts research, supports improving gender data, and focuses on specific themes. The Gender Group supports the improvement of gender data, liaising with operations and other units in the World Bank and undertaking analytical products. It is currently working to improve the usability of World Bank gender data, having identified that these data are scattered across different portals, and collaborating with the Development Economics Vice Presidency and the Poverty Global Practice on household surveys to improve gender data and produce *The Little Data Book on Gender* (World Bank 2019c). In undertaking thematic support, the Gender Group also liaises with operations and produces research. For example, in providing theme support on innovation and technology, the group produced

the report *Women Wavemakers: Practical Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining Women in Coding Bootcamps* (World Bank 2018e).

The IFC's GBG generates evidence for stand-alone gender products, services they are incubating, and support to regions. Since the introduction of the gender strategy, IFC has produced 109 gender-focused knowledge products that are listed on its externally facing website. The GBG has produced business cases to support the development of stand-alone advisory services and influence the practices of the private sector related to insurance, childcare, and entrepreneurship. For example, *Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare in Myanmar* provides context-specific evidence and recommendations (IFC 2019c). The direct link between knowledge production and stand-alone gender projects at the global level has supported the translation of evidence to practice. For example, the report *SheforShield* outlines the emerging market opportunity for insurance targeting women and has been further developed into a global program (IFC 2015). In its role of developing new services, the GBG also undertakes region-specific research, which has been well received by operations, such as its report *The Impact of Domestic and Sexual Violence on the Workplace in Solomon Islands* (IFC 2019a).

Staff across the Bank Group highlighted that they need more knowledge and data on gender gaps at the level of sectors and subsectors within a country and that they have relied on support to use technical products. Investment officers in Africa indicated that they needed knowledge products that would enable them to better understand the role of women in society and how they can access finance and formal business. A task team leader from Egypt noted that contextual nuances to women's labor force participation in Egypt require further data; women's labor force participation is high, but their representation among business owners is extremely low. A consistent theme emerged in the interviews and focus groups: Bank Group staff typically do not read gender-related knowledge products if those products are too technical or do not immediately seem applicable to the country or sector context. Instead, they rely on staff designated to support work on gender to help translate applicable information to their context. For example, World Bank staff relied on Global Practice gender experts and focal points to contextualize gender tagging indicators and safeguards. IFC investment officers and project leads reported that though they rarely read reports they had not de-

veloped, they were able to work through evidence by engaging with the GBG or focal points.

GBV is another area where operational teams find it difficult to translate evidence into operations. Since GBV was prioritized in the current gender strategy and the Fragility, Conflict, and Violence Strategy, there have been challenges related to the available expertise in these areas within the World Bank and IFC, which can leave operational teams without effective support when issues emerge. For example, task team leaders reported difficulty convincing government clients to identify GBV as an issue that needed to be addressed. Likewise, in IFC, although GBV risk assessment tools and screening were developed, the extent of their implementation was reportedly inconsistent. Interviews highlighted that, although staff across the Bank Group can draw on good practices and guidance documents related to GBV prevention in Bank Group operations (for example, civil works in investment project financing), the overall coverage of GBV support is limited across the Bank Group. Some IFC country managers said that they had limited contact with IFC staff from the Environmental, Social, and Governance team, who work with a compliance and risk perspective to address GBV. These gaps in capacity were confirmed in interviews with IFC staff, who recognized the limitations in their coverage.

Management of Expertise Supporting the Gender Strategy

The strategy does not discuss how expertise to support the use of evidence should be organized. In practice—outside of the gender groups, Global Practice leads, and GILs—the staff in Regions and industry groups are organized as focal points, either as individuals or in teams. In implementing the strategy, IFC and the World Bank have developed different models of organizing and coordinating support.

The organization of support in the World Bank varies by Region and Global Practice in both form and function. This review identified no comprehensive list of staff with time allocated to support the gender strategy for the World Bank. Within the East Asia and Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and

South Asia Regions, models have been developed to bring teams together to support the gender strategy. In each of these Regions, 30 to 40 gender focal points have been appointed to work with Country Management Units, across all Global Practices and within Regional management teams (table 4.1).¹ These focal points are drawn from all levels of the organization. Far fewer people provide support in the Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa Regions, a point reinforced by interviewees. Among Regions, Global Practices, and IFC, there is no consistency in the functions that focal points are expected to perform, other than contributing to flagging and tagging (table 4.2). According to information provided by the World Bank Gender Group, of the 15 Global Practices, each have appointed two gender experts. The exceptions, where more than two gender leads have been appointed, are Education (four) and Finance, Competitiveness, and Innovation (three). Interviewees also consistently recognized that the Social Sustainability and Inclusion practice in the World Bank had a wide range of expertise on gender issues, especially within countries.

Table 4.1. Focal Points Assigned to Support Implementation of the Gender Strategy by Region

Region	Focal Points (no.)
Sub-Saharan Africa	3
East Asia and Pacific	34
Europe and Central Asia	16
Middle East and North Africa	33
Latin America and the Caribbean	1
South Asia	43

Source: World Bank list of focal points, East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Africa, Latin America and Caribbean, South Asia and Middle East and North Africa Regional Gender Action Plans, a Survey of focal points and a review of internal gender websites.

Note: Each focal point allocates 15–100 percent of their time to supporting the gender strategy, so these numbers provide a limited view of the available support.

Table 4.2 Example Functions of Staff Designated to Support Work on Gender

Functions	IFC			World Bank		
	GBG Regional/ Product Gen- der Leads (FT)	Industry Gender Focal Points (PT & FT)	GP Gender Experts (PT & FT)	EAP Focal Points (PT)	ECA Focal Points (PT)	MENA Focal Points (PT)
Prepare and update plans	X			X		
Review and monitor portfolio	X		X	X	X	
Generate diagnostics and knowledge	X		X	X		X
Identify and support project design, tagging, and flagging	X	X	X	X	X	X
Communicate and network both internally and externally	X	X	X	X		X
Provide input on strategy documents	X	X	X			
Provide support and guidance during implementation	X	X	X		X	X
Develop capacity of others	X	X	X	X		
Lead gender projects	X			X		

Source: East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Middle East and North Africa Regional Gender Action Plans; job advertisements for IFC Regional and product gender leads; terms of reference for World Bank gender leads.

Note: EAP = East Asia and Pacific; ECA = Europe and Central Asia; FT = full time; GBG = Gender Business Group; GP = Global Practice; IFC = International Finance Corporation; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; PT = part time.

The World Bank's Gender Group takes a less active approach to the coordination of staff who support the gender strategy than the IFC does. The Gender Group has 32 staff, excluding consultants, according to GIA's advisory review.² During the first part of the strategy, the Gender Group has produced and shared valuable knowledge, reviewed plans, and supported the continued visibility of the gender strategy both internally and externally. The Gender Group certifies designated staff as Global Practice experts or regional assessors to support the gender tag process upstream and has maintained a community of practice, which was constituted in 2015. The Gender Group convenes monthly meetings for the community of practice to discuss technical and process issues related to corporate commitments, new research, and good examples of projects, among other matters, that help increase the expertise of staff who participate. In executing its role, the Gender Group has not focused on organizing expertise more broadly.

The Gender Group has a limited role in ensuring the adequacy of capacity and time allocation of staff designated to support work on gender. In the current model, the Gender Group meets periodically with the Global Practice gender experts, staff trained as regional assessors, and the community of practice to provide training and share knowledge through informal informational gatherings. There are very few shared expectations for how to implement the gender strategy between Regions and Global Practices. For example, focal points have no standard terms of reference, no harmonized list of functions required to support the implementation of the strategy, and no agreed-on mix of seniority in the support model. This lack of expectations leads to task team leaders not knowing who to draw on to support implementation and reduces the consistency of support for implementing the gender strategy. Many respondents would like to see the Gender Group play a more active stewardship role with Regions and Global Practices by overseeing the coordination of staff designated to support work on gender by providing guidance and managing knowledge of successful implementation.

IFC, for its part, is well organized in its approach to implementing the gender strategy. The GBG works through an implementation model that stewards the implementation of the strategy by actively coordinating staff. The GBG plays a role in the coordination and implementation of the strategy, including by developing and testing new advisory products; co-creating thought

leadership in the market with clients and operations; and providing direct technical expertise and advice to operational colleagues on how gender components can be integrated into their projects, diagnostics, and strategies. Investment officers and project leads recognized the importance of these activities in helping them target gender gaps. In conducting these activities, the GBG manages 22 staff across headquarters, regions, and countries. The IFC gender leads and their teams are important in connecting the gender strategy and headquarters-based staff and programs to operations. They do this through proactive outreach, which was consistently appreciated by IFC staff and management.

At the outset of the gender strategy in 2016, IFC decentralized and fully re-sourced all six Regions (and certain countries) with full-time regional gender leads managed by the GBG. The regional leads aim to help connect with clients, implement gender programs in the field, and provide support to AS and IS operational staff. Although the structure is consistent, the regional directors have different approaches to working with the regional leads. For example, East Asia and Pacific have started to designate “gender anchors,” who support the flagging process, while in Sub-Saharan Africa, teams use project review processes to question the inclusion of gender.

Twenty-seven gender focal points, managed by industries, complement IFC’s GBG. There are no documented minimum requirements to become a focal point. Focal points have been appointed from a variety of grades, from analyst to manager. The IFC group of focal points has both gender and industry expertise; most of the group allocate less than 25 percent of their time to supporting the gender strategy, though at least five devote 35–100 percent of their time and have specialized gender knowledge. The roles of focal points are defined by terms of reference. Across IFC, a network of about 230 professionals meets every two months to be updated on issues related to the implementation of the GSIP II and broader gender-related issues and trends. The IFC approach to the implementation of the strategy was considered helpful across regions and by many country managers and regional directors interviewed. In many interviews with managers, the gender stand-alone products at the global level were recognized as valuable to meet local client demand, although some respondents expressed their opinions that the GBG should always work through industry groups and not directly with clients.

The model pursued by IFC's GBG does not report the same coordination challenges faced in the World Bank. The GBG works through an implementation model that stewards the implementation process by managing gender leads and their associated teams at the global, regional, and country levels who connect with other focal points. The GBG has expanded its staffing complement that assists with the coordination of IFC activities, which has been supported by expanded IFC core budget and donor funding. Regional gender leads advise IFC colleagues and work with clients to provide a connection between the global and country levels, enabling the expansion of global advisory products, the translation of knowledge into practice, and increased coordination among industry groups. However, given that 55 percent of the GBG's budget comes from trust funding, the coordinated model would be at risk if the priorities among IFC donors should change. Currently, client fees account for only 4 percent of the GBG's budget, which would need to expand rapidly should donor funding decrease.³

Function and Constraints of Staff Support

Staff in the Regions, Global Practices, and industry groups provide critical connections in implementing the strategy. For example, Regions, Global Practices, and country teams use focal points to lead diagnostics and to help report to monitoring mechanisms (see table 4.2). World Bank and IFC staff also often rely on the support of gender focal points and other consultants to provide or help with project preparation and supervision. In working with focal points, operational teams highlighted the need for a broad mix of human resources with knowledge of gender, sector, and context to provide support. Good examples of evidence influencing practice occurred when operations staff or managers engaged in developing and communicating evidence with gender leads, experts, and focal points. In other instances, by working with a consultant, staff became more comfortable with identifying and addressing gender issues in their own projects. Working in this way responds to the needs of management, task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers who require specific knowledge and data on gender gaps at the level of sectors and subsectors as well as connections at the country level.

Four main qualities of good staff support for the gender strategy emerged during the review. First, expertise in gender gaps assists staff with undertaking client dialogue and diagnostics. Second, sector and industry knowledge helps provide evidence-based operational solutions, including advice in tagging and flagging processes, supporting supervision, and providing feedback to the gender groups. Third, context-specific knowledge is required to help apply experience from elsewhere. Fourth, support for the gender strategy needs to be mobilized through building internal networks, developing country-based partners, and developing communication products. The following examples demonstrate the value of staff tasked to support closing gender gaps. These qualities were reported to be in action especially in the East Asia and Pacific, South Asia, and Middle East and North Africa Regions.

In FY18, the World Bank’s Transport Global Practice stepped up its efforts to address gender by forming a Gender Task Force with a mandate to enhance the closure of gender gaps in the transport sector. The Global Practice supports the task force with two gender experts, an economist, and a transport specialist, as well as a practice manager. The task force has three aims:

- » Design interventions that address gender equality, for example enhancing women’s mobility and employment, and mitigating disproportionate gender impacts of operations, such as GBV.
- » Lead global discussions on gender and transport through events and outreach.
- » Form or strengthen partnerships internally and externally for more effective gender outcomes.

The task force’s efforts to target operations and build internal capacity for Global Practice staff resulted in improvements in the transport projects that address gender gaps. For example, the task force has produced up to 15 country and regional analytical pieces on gender equality and transport; pursued policy engagement with a number of governments to create an enabling regulatory and policy environment for gender equality in and through the transport sector; and led global events on gender equality in transport.

In Myanmar, staff managed by the GBG and focal points have collaborated to address gender gaps across industries in the generation and distribution of renewable energy. Investments in renewable energy have gender flags, in-

cluding Deedoke Power and Yoma Micro Power, both of which were members of the Powered by Women initiative that helps renewable energy companies build the business case for gender diversity.⁴ Meanwhile, the Lighting Myanmar project, which is part of the IFC-supported Lighting Global initiative, has also contributed to closing gender gaps through partnering with women's groups to extend the benefits of solar power and run a community awareness campaign highlighting the benefits of power generation and distribution for women entrepreneurs. Gender focal points and staff from the Myanmar FIG and Manufacturing, Agribusiness, and Services teams have worked closely with the Lighting Myanmar project to leverage cross-sectoral impact, including through financing. The efforts in these projects in Myanmar arose through in-country partnerships among the GBG gender lead, industry groups, a multidonor trust fund, and leadership support from the country manager.

In addition to the qualities highlighted above, dedicated human and financial resources help the overall effort. In Bangladesh, the Country Management Unit provided \$100,000 to support the work of the gender focal point team. In that instance, team members noted that the project design phase is often well resourced, but resource constraints can lead to challenges during implementation. As one interviewee noted, "Resources helped move everyone from mild panic to feeling this was doable."

Though focal points across the Bank Group and Global Practice gender experts have proven to be important, they are constrained by unclear selection, few professional development opportunities, inadequate time to complete their required functions, and limited recognition within performance management processes. The selection and professional development of gender focal points in the World Bank and IFC is largely ad hoc, partly because a gender specialty is not a recognized career path in the Bank Group. Many staff designated to work on gender in Global Practices, industries, Regions; and countries are filled either by volunteers or through designation by senior staff. Moreover, the professional development pathways for staff are inadequate for those who wish to develop their career into a gender lead or expert, and little formal planning has been done to help retool staff.

Evidence production and use have a vital role in the implementation of the gender strategy and benefit significantly from coordinated staff support. Focal points provide a large pool of expertise that is flexible and enables connection and coordination between gender groups and GILs. The mix of context, sector, and gender expertise supporting the gender strategy opens channels for evidence to affect implementation more consistently, in accordance with the intent of the gender strategy. The management of expertise in the World Bank has not been a focus of attention during the initial strategy implementation period. IFC, in contrast, has developed a coordinated model that offers lessons for the World Bank, recognizing that there are differences in the scale of implementation and the diversity of sectors that need to be considered.

¹ Individual staff designated to support work on gender rarely have time to work across the range of functions due to the amount of support they devote to tagging and flagging processes. In a survey of 32 staff designated to support work on gender, half (16) allocated less than 15 percent of their time to working on gender. Interviewees highlighted that staff designated to support work on gender in the World Bank prioritize tagging processes above policy and client dialogue and operational solutions. The crowding-in of resources focused on tagging leaves fewer resources for other functions, especially support for implementation supervision.

Existing performance management mechanisms do not provide recognition for focal points. Providing guidance and advice on gender issues often requires considerable time, which was reported to be inadequately acknowledged in staff performance reviews and underestimated in actual duties. One gender focal point reported forgoing leave to prepare and deliver a course on gender to another multilateral development bank and receiving limited recognition for these efforts. It was reported in Group Internal Audit interviews that performance reviews only recognized work on the gender strategy where formal terms of reference exist.

² According to the Group Internal Audit advisory review, the vast majority of the World Bank Gender Group's \$8.8 million fiscal year (FY)19 funding came from the World Bank budget (\$6.3 million or 72 percent). The remaining \$2.5 million came from trust funds. The total budget from trust funds increased from approximately 20 to 30 percent between FY18 and FY19.

³ The expansion of coordination of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) Gender Business Group (GBG) has been supported by donor funding as well as an increasing total and proportional commitment from the IFC core budget and client fees. The total budget of the GBG roughly doubled between FY17 and FY19, from about \$3.5 million to just over \$7 million. This budget has proved adequate to meet current targets. The IFC core budget now pays a greater share of costs, at 41 percent in FY19 compared to 31 percent in FY17. The additional funding from IFC has decreased the GBG's dependence on trust funding, although 55 percent of the GBG budget comes from trust funds, amounting to almost \$4 million in total. The remaining 4 percent of funding is generated through client fees.

⁴ Powered by Women is led by the environmental and social advisory and the GBG.

5 | Ensuring and Measuring Progress

The gender strategy outlines a vision that targets key outcomes and pays significant attention to monitoring commitments and enhancing the quality of project design, but less attention to implementation. The World Bank and IFC both measure progress on closing gender gaps through reporting on commitments, project design, and implementation. The assessment of project design through tagging and flagging is subject to mandatory procedures that receive management attention because of target setting that overlaps with corporate commitments. Corporate commitments receive attention because they are of interest to the Board and shareholders. The contrasting limited attention to the monitoring and project evaluation processes during implementation introduces the risks of missing opportunities for adaptation and providing insufficient evidence on how the strategy contributes to outcomes.

Monitoring for Organizational Commitments and Corporate Reporting

The two main sets of commitments over the past 10 years that produce monitoring requirements are the IDA replenishments and the capital increase. Since the introduction of a gender strategy focused on results, IDA commitments on gender have shifted.¹ The commitments under IDA16 and IDA17 focused on monitoring World Bank operational issues and collecting information on direct beneficiaries, specifically those related to human development indicators. In IDA18 and IDA19, the commitments shifted to a results focus based on the objectives of the gender strategy. The evolution of the IDA commitments is outlined in box 2.1 (chapter 2). Respondents in both the World Bank and IFC consistently reported that the required measurement of progress on IDA commitments continues to focus the attention of staff and management on gender.

The World Bank collects corporate data and reports on all IDA commitments and the capital increase; IFC reports on most of the capital increase gender commitments. For IDA, all commitments are reported through Mid-Term Reviews and through indicators in its corporate scorecard. IFC, meanwhile, has incorporated three out of the four capital increase commitments on gender into its corporate scorecard.² The indicator yet to be reported by IFC is the amount of annual financing dedicated to women and women-led small and medium enterprises. These data are already available for FIG's Banking on Women clients, and GBG has started discussions in FY21 to develop a relevant methodology for applying this indicator across other industries. Interviewees in both institutions regularly cited these commitments as drivers to consider gender in project design, particularly as management reviews progress against commitments.

IDA commitments contribute to enhanced corporate reporting of data relevant to the gender strategy and project design. Project monitoring data feed sex-disaggregated and gender-relevant indicators in both separate and joint scorecards for the World Bank and IFC. In 2014, before the implementation of the gender strategy, only four indicators in the Bank Group Corporate Scorecard provided information on progress related to gender gaps. By 2019, 10 indicators reported on issues relevant to the closure of gender gaps, mainly through sex-disaggregated indicators. As discussed in chapter 2, the strategy has driven a real increase in projects that are designed to close gender gaps.

IFC also monitors a range of indicators that feed into its corporate reports. The IFC Corporate Scorecard and year-end key performance indicators results report for FY19, for example, details the percentage of gender-flagged AS projects; new billion-dollar, long-term financial commitments with financial institutions targeting women; and the percentage share of women directors nominated to IFC Board seats. IFC also requires that all operations measure two standard indicators in the implementation of IS projects: the number of women employed through these projects and the number of women in executive management positions. Changes in these two indicators are not necessarily attributable to specific project activities, so they are more useful as a description of client contexts than as reflections of organizational performance. These two mandatory indicators are augmented by sector in-

dicators that can be selected for both AS and IS projects within the reporting system, AIMM.³ Together, the IFC key performance indicator report and the standard and project-specific indicators assist in reporting as well as in the design of project monitoring systems that track the closure of gender gaps. Results and measurement staff reported that they expect to use data from these indicators to understand trends in how clients approach gender gaps.

Monitoring Implementation

Measuring contributions to the closure of gender gaps during the implementation of operations receives limited attention in the current system, with a few exceptions. The focus on the quality of project design and corporate reporting leaves fewer resources for monitoring implementation. The data analyzed here highlight a risk that paying limited attention to assessing progress through supervision and monitoring and evaluation will lead to issues reporting on the results of the strategy and missed opportunities to adapt implementation.

Interviewees reported various constraints on assessing implementation progress. Budget limitations were reported to prevent adequate monitoring of gender gaps during supervision. Existing data on gender gaps are often limited, and surveys are not resourced or are difficult to conduct in a project's context. In IFC IS projects, interviewees reported focusing on monitoring output indicators (such as the capital increase and the key performance indicator long-term financial commitments targeting women). The exception was when project loan agreements require, as a condition of disbursement, the monitoring of gender issues related to risks identified and triggered in the IFC (2012) Environmental and Social Performance Standards. The latter include, for example, gender issues related to land resettlement; community health, safety, and security (including GBV); and labor conditions. Finally, World Bank staff report challenges in defining and applying indicators on gender gaps across all Regions. These challenges were more acute when project budgets did not afford projects the benefit of assistance from gender focal points or consultants (see chapter 4 on the constraints of focal points).

The results frameworks in the CPFs of the seven countries reviewed do not fully monitor implementation based on the gender gaps identified in their strategic pillars. The CPFs reviewed each have at least one indicator to monitor the closure of identified gender gaps through sex-disaggregated data. Across the CPFs, however, measures associated with gender gaps in jobs are absent. In five of the CPFs, although jobs are identified in the pillars, there is no corresponding indicator. For example, the Egypt CPF results framework does not include indicators to assess whether the program is closing gaps in the employment of women (World Bank 2015a). Disconnects were also noted in voice and agency in Peru's and Tajikistan's CPFs (World Bank 2017a, 2019b): though both identify GBV issues, neither has a corresponding indicator.

A review of the indicators from all 97 tagged and flagged projects from FY17 to the second quarter of FY20 in the sample countries found widespread planned measurement for removing constraints on jobs and control over assets, with limited measurement of voice and agency and of specific human endowments.⁴ The planned measurement of jobs and assets occurs because these topics are often paired with other gender gaps in projects. For example, a project focused on social protection, an endowment gap, will also aim to affect jobs or assets. In total, 52 and 38 out of 97 projects have planned measures on jobs and assets, respectively. Further, the largest number of indicators measures jobs (40 percent), followed by assets (26 percent). In contrast, only 15 percent of indicators measure changes in voice and agency. Human endowments cover about a quarter of projects and 20 percent of indicators. There is great diversity in the planned measurement of endowments; the indicators included access to digital learning, women's representation in research at universities, and access to hepatitis C screening. The indicators for jobs and assets have a good degree of consistency, often focusing on the number of jobs created or the number of loans provided to individuals. For voice and agency, although Project Appraisal Documents often highlight GBV issues or a need for behavior change, as in CPFs, no indicator was present in the project results framework. These hard-to-measure areas require additional human and financial resources, which, as highlighted above, are unavailable to teams.

Review of the supervision reports of the same tagged and flagged projects found limited evidence of projects monitoring indicators that assess contributions to the closure of gaps. Table 5.1 shows that out of 91 projects approved between FY17 and FY19 (68 World Bank, 9 IFC IS, and 14 IFC AS), only 19 (13 World Bank and 6 IFC) reported progress on closing gender gaps in their Implementation Status and Results Report or in internal supervision reports.⁵ About 75 percent of projects have yet to report progress against indicators that pertain to gender gaps (54 World Bank and 14 IFC). Only 4 projects (4 percent) had no indicators to report on progress pertaining to the closure of gender gaps. Three of the 4 are IFC projects, which reflects issues that may occur with IFC self-reporting on the gender flag.

Table 5.1. Reports Tracking Progress Indicators Related to Gender Gaps

Tracking Status of Indicators Related to Gender Gaps	Year			Total
	2017	2018	2019	
World Bank	19	21	28	68
Progress already reported	4	9	0	13
No progress reported yet	14	12	28	54
Gender gaps not tracked	1	0	0	1
International Finance Corporation	6	5	12	23
Progress already reported	2	0	4	6
No progress reported yet	4	5	5	14
Gender gaps not tracked	0	0	3	3
Total	25	26	40	91

Source: Independent Evaluation Group review of projects tagged and flagged for gender in Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Kenya, Peru, Tajikistan, and Vietnam.

Limitations in measuring the results of the gender strategy are also evident in the lack of planned project-financed evaluation. Of the 91 projects reviewed, 69 (76 percent) did not specify plans to undertake their own additional assessments. This result is to be expected for IFC investment operations, as explained in the next paragraph, but there could be opportunities for further evaluation of World Bank projects.

IFC commissions few impact evaluations of gender gaps in its investment operations. An inherent challenge in evaluating IFC's investment operations is that private sector clients may not agree to set aside financing for devel-

opment impact studies as part of their IFC loans (box 5.1 comments further on the need to shift client perceptions). This review was not able to identify any impact evaluations of investments that contributed to addressing gender gaps outside of FIG. For FIG, three evaluations and one synthesis report were identified (IFC 2016a, 2016b, 2019b, n.d.). The four studies assessed the financial performance of client banks and recipient firms and, in one case, job creation, rather than changes in the lives of recipients. The synthesis study also usefully identified some success factors in implementing the Banking on Women program. The studies do not, however, present a case for the effectiveness of the investments based on experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation designs, nor do they identify innovations that enhance the effectiveness of the intervention or provide insights on the development effects of the lending.⁶

Box 5.1. Contributing to Business Intelligence While Expanding Knowledge in International Finance Corporation Gender-Flagged Investments

The evaluation of development outcomes is often perceived as a compliance activity to provide a report to development partners who fund, but do not manage, an intervention. This perception contributes to the limited monitoring and evaluation of investment operations. For example, the lack of evaluation of small and medium enterprise financing was the single most common project flaw found in the Independent Evaluation Group's 2014 small and medium enterprise evaluation and its 2019 small and medium enterprise synthesis report. This finding highlights the need to shift client perceptions of evaluation from being a compliance activity to a business intelligence one, while also contributing knowledge of development effectiveness. This may be supported by the International Finance Corporation's work with some clients in the Banking on Women portfolio of \$2.5 billion to examine existing data and target data collection related to income, employment, and poverty reduction to identify development outcomes.

Source: World Bank 2014, 2019d.

The findings on project measurement from the seven countries included risks that may constrain the Bank Group’s measurement and reporting on gender gaps. First, there is limited reporting on project indicators in the sample. Second, if indicators were to be measured during the latter half of the strategy, the sample implies there will be limited measurement of two of the four gaps: voice and agency, and specific human endowments at a country level. Third, both projects and CPFs have a paucity of planned measurement on voice and agency, especially related to GBV. Fourth, according to documents, there are few planned evaluations of the projects tagged and flagged for gender outside of routine reporting processes, which means there would be limited additional evidence to draw on. Together, these risks highlight a lack of attention to the supervision and monitoring and evaluation systems during implementation. This could mean that at the end of the strategy period, the Bank Group will have limited evidence on its contributions to closing gender gaps.

The World Bank and IFC both offer examples of operational adaptations that support an enhanced focus on gender gaps during implementation. In these examples, task team leaders and project leads were able to build measurement systems that supported the adaptation of projects. The combination of gender and measurement expertise, interest from the clients, and the commitment of task team leaders and project leads to understanding progress on gender gaps contributed to improved measurement. Box 5.2 describes the benefits and opportunities offered by monitoring implementation.

Box 5.2. Monitoring and Supervision Supporting the Closure of Gender Gaps

Monitoring the implementation of approaches to close gender gaps can facilitate improved quality and the development of innovations when combined with supervision processes. Project implementation reports offer useful examples that highlight opportunities.

The National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project, Kenya (P153349), was approved in fiscal year 2017. Through project monitoring and supervision, adaptations were identified to improve the quality of the project's work in closing gender gaps. The work of developing gender-sensitive value chains highlighted the specific targeting of women entrepreneurs, especially those with business development services, capable of enhancing project outcomes. Further, a Gender Action Learning System is planned as part of this project. The system supports changes in household decision-making and collects related data. It exemplifies an approach that uses monitoring at a community level to support adaptation and measures progress that can be aggregated to higher levels.

An International Finance Corporation advisory services project was approved in fiscal year 2016 with the aim of incubating a commercially viable and effective technical and training program for women-owned and women-led small and medium enterprises. Ongoing monitoring and four assessments—two impact evaluations and two learning reports—supported progress toward this aim. Monitoring and evaluation were reported to have supported the supervision of the project, leading to the refinement of the delivery models and contributing to the successful development of innovations. The aim of the project was achieved, along with increased demand from clients. In addition, the products developed are being scaled up, having been incorporated into successful fundraising for the We-Fi initiative, a \$50 million fund dedicated to women's small and medium enterprises.

Source: IFC, forthcoming b; World Bank, forthcoming.

¹ Gender was introduced as a special theme in the 16th Replenishment of the International Development Association (World Bank 2010b).

² The indicators measured are the percentage of advisory services and investment services projects with gender flags; the percentage share of women directors nominated to International Finance Corporation (IFC) Board seats; and new billion-dollar, long-term finance commitments to financial intermediaries specifically targeting women.

³ In 2017, IFC piloted a new, ex ante project impact assessment tool—the Anticipated Impact Measurement and Monitoring (AIMM) system. In 2018, IFC began scoring all of its investment projects for development impact using the AIMM system. In 2019, AIMM was extended as a pilot for advisory services projects. AIMM is an end-to-end support system for impact assessment, designed to drive project selection ex ante, identify lessons learned, and promote learning and accountability ex post. Under the AIMM system, each IFC investment project is given an ex ante AIMM score, which is presented in the project board paper and is then monitored while in the portfolio. Client-facing advisory projects above \$1 million are also given an ex ante AIMM rating, which is included in the project implementation plan. Gender and economic inclusion are embedded in the AIMM system, and specific guidance has been developed on how projects can integrate these aspects into the AIMM assessment. Specific gender and economic inclusion indicators have been included in sector frameworks as relevant. IFC’s dedicated GBG assists project teams in articulating a project’s potential impacts when these claims are made. Claims are tracked via specific identified indicators documented in the relevant project documents and monitored in portfolios. Interviewees reported that an increased score in AIMM creates an incentive for investment projects to seek to close gender gaps.

⁴ These 97 projects represent all projects tagged and flagged for gender from the seven countries in this study—Bangladesh, Côte d’Ivoire, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Kenya, Peru, Tajikistan, and Vietnam—from fiscal years 2017 to 2020, quarter 2.

⁵ Six projects from fiscal year 2020, which were still in their inception phase, were excluded from this analysis.

⁶ Examples of microfinance and small and medium enterprise lending can be evaluated through evidence in the work of 3ie, Innovations for Poverty Action, and Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab. Specifically, existing methods have already been applied in linking private sector development and gender issues, such as quasi-experiments and machine learning approaches in gathering insights from loan applications (Law and Chung 2020); using World Bank data to provide evidence for public policy processes (Cox et al. 2020); and assessing the effectiveness of interventions focused on women’s empowerment (Lombardini and McCollum 2018).

6 | Conclusion

In response to the question “How well is the implementation of the gender strategy positioning the World Bank Group to close key gender gaps?” this review finds that the World Bank Group Gender Strategy has commitment and recognition across the organization and among development partners, which is a precondition for success. The organizational commitment, when backed by appropriate expertise, helped translate new knowledge directly to operations, for example by GILs, the Transport and Water Global Practices, and IFC. IFC’s *Tackling Childcare: The Business Case for Employer-Supported Childcare in Myanmar* provides context-specific evidence and recommendations that were translated into practice (IFC 2019c). Country teams such as Bangladesh and Vietnam have established substantial coherence with country programming related to gender gaps. However, task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers need support to overcome limited familiarity with a gender gap approach. These implementation challenges, the review finds, can be addressed through an enhanced country-driven approach to coherently address gender gaps led by country teams with the IFC and World Bank gender groups and staff designated to support work on gender providing context, sector, and gender expertise. Certain constraints need to be overcome to better position the World Bank and IFC to enhance the implementation of the strategy, and specific enablers can assist; these are the subjects of this conclusion.

Constraints and Enablers in Implementing the Gender Strategy

The gender strategy advances an enhanced, country-driven approach that contributes to the closure of gender gaps, yet individual projects have frequently been used to address those gaps. The implementation of a country-driven approach differs across the sample of countries examined. The enhanced approach requires that operations, supported by policy dialogue

and diagnosis of gender gaps, align with CPF objectives in a manner that helps close those gaps. In the sample of countries examined in this review, the approach to addressing gender gaps ranges from stand-alone projects to the collective use of multiple Bank Group instruments. Part of the reason that individual projects are emphasized in the World Bank may be the pressure for a project to count toward gender-tagging targets set by Regions and Global Practices. CPFs include discussion of gender gaps identified in SCDs and other diagnostics, yet there is inconsistency in how these gaps are reflected in CPF results frameworks, as well as how they are prioritized in the country portfolio. Without such prioritization, the diverse projects tagged and flagged for gender in the portfolio can appear to be “sprinkled” rather than strategic.

Country teams are able to develop a coherent country-driven approach and resolve the tension to meet corporate commitments within frameworks of regional and country support from staff designated to support work on gender. East Asia and Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia have substantial regional and country support via focal points and IFC gender leads. In the remaining Regions, this same level of support is at the discretion of individual country directors and managers. The efforts in the Vietnam country team began before the current gender strategy, suggesting that many years of effort are needed to develop a country-driven approach. The Vietnam country team has also prioritized gaps to be more strategic in its efforts, a practice also used by the country teams in Bangladesh, Egypt, Kenya, and Peru. In such cases, country directors and managers, supported by the commitment of regional management, provide strong leadership, clearly communicate the priorities to task team leaders and investment officers, and identify resources.

Coordinating staff designated to support work on gender and ensuring the consistency of their functions is critical in implementing a country-driven approach. Staff designated to support the gender strategy, for example, are critical connectors in implementing the strategy, but the criteria for selecting them are unclear. Moreover, these staff often have insufficient time to complete required functions, their professional development opportunities are limited, and current performance management processes offer little

recognition for their efforts. In implementing the strategy, IFC's GBG organizes and coordinates the work of focal points and others through proactive outreach, which was consistently appreciated by IFC staff and management. Three-year implementation plans (GSIPs) guide these efforts. In the World Bank, no unit has responsibility for institutionally coordinating staff designated to support work on gender or ensuring the adequacy of capacity and time allocation. The selection and professional development of, for example, gender focal points in the World Bank is ad hoc. Moreover, the professional development pathways are inadequate to enable a sector expert to develop gender expertise or gender experts to develop industry or sector knowledge; there has been little formal planning to help retool staff to serve in different roles.

Developing and maintaining a gender gap approach requires additional effort to connect staff to relevant knowledge. Task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers reported that understanding the gender gap approach requires considerable effort, which they are sometimes unable to provide, as they face other corporate mandates (such as climate, fragility, and environmental and social compliance) that compete for their attention. Consequently, though evidence has been produced in relation to gender gaps, it does not always translate into practice because operations staff find the evidence inaccessible, overly technical, and of limited operational relevance. Specific gaps in knowledge—for example, on GBV or sex-disaggregated mobility data in the transport sector—can also constrain practice.

The resources provided to increase the supply of evidence and its inclusion in project design are useful in addressing gender gaps. Research produced by the GILs has reportedly helped advance the understanding of gender issues. By 2019, 110 impact evaluations were in progress in the Africa, South Asia, and East Asia and Pacific GILs. These were mainly randomized control trials focused on providing high-quality knowledge about gender gaps (UFG 2019). The gender tag and flag create an incentive to use evidence in project design based on the criteria of the tag or flag. IFC's AIMM system also provides an incentive for considering gender gap evidence by providing a higher project score.

Current measurement priorities give limited attention to implementation and evaluation. This review found limitations in reporting during implementation on project indicators and on the measurement of voice and agency

and of specific human endowments at the project and country level. In addition, few tagged and flagged projects had planned evaluations outside of routine reporting processes. Together, these risks highlight a lack of attention to the implementation and monitoring and evaluation systems. This lack of attention could mean that at the end of the strategy period, the Bank Group will have limited evidence on its contributions to closing gender gaps.

Monitoring commitments and projects generates ongoing attention to gender gaps. The World Bank and IFC both measure progress on closing gender gaps through reporting on commitments and on the tagging and flagging of project designs. The number of indicators measuring gender gaps in the World Bank Corporate Scorecard has risen from 4 to 10—mainly sex-disaggregated—indicators. Respondents in both the World Bank and IFC consistently reported that the required measurement of IDA commitments continues to focus the attention of staff and management on gender.

Opportunities

Drawing on these enablers and constraints, this review suggests four opportunities to enhance the implementation of the gender strategy. Opportunities have been defined for each area of the theory of action (see figure 1.1).

Strengthen synergies among Regions, Global Practices, industry groups, and country teams to develop coherence in the country portfolios. Good practice examples show that country teams can coherently implement priorities when focal points are resourced to support operational teams. The gender groups can assist in enabling this process by sharing lessons from efforts between the World Bank and IFC, such as childcare and women’s labor market participation. Significant challenges were reported by informants in addressing GBV, suggesting a potential area for joint effort by the World Bank and IFC.

Define and maintain standards for staff designated to support work on gender in the Bank Group at the regional and country levels, with the Gender Group exercising an enhanced coordination role. Implemented standards would enable greater consistency across staff who support the gender strategy. Standards should be articulated for the selection, professional development, resourcing (both human and financial), and performance management

of staff designated to support work on gender, drawing on practices in the East Asia and Pacific, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia Regions. Enhanced coordination by the Gender Group entails actively supporting the implementation of the standards, providing guidance, and managing knowledge across Regions. IFC, for its part, is well organized in its approach to implementing the gender strategy, although it could provide additional support to investment officers in the development of client demand.

Enable staff tasked to support closing gender gaps, task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers to work jointly on generating evidence to amplify the use of knowledge on meeting country and global priorities. This review highlights that when groups with different expertise work together, there is an effect on implementation beyond the use of evidence in a single operation. Task team leaders, project leads, and staff designated to support work on gender, for example, reported that in jointly generating evidence, they were able to translate it into other operations and share examples with internal and external stakeholders. IFC efforts could focus on identifying and documenting examples of gender-flagged IS, especially in Infrastructure and in Manufacturing, Agribusiness, and Services. The importance of emphasizing joint working arrangements for evidence use by operational staff has been confirmed in both the academic literature (see, for example, Goldman and Pabari 2020; Lemos and Morehouse 2005; McCormack et al. 2002) and in evaluations of gender and diversity by the Inter-American Development Bank (2018, 43).

Maintain corporate monitoring and ensure attention to the monitoring and evaluation of implementation in both IFC and the World Bank. Mobilize the gender groups of the two institutions, as well as staff designated to support work on gender, to develop capacity and support monitoring and supervision during implementation. Commission outcome-focused evaluations and, potentially, impact evaluations in both IFC and the World Bank related to the closure of gaps at the country level, global level, or both.

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APPENDIXES

Independent Evaluation Group

*World Bank Group Gender Strategy
Mid-Term Review*

Appendix A. Methodological Approach

Review Purpose and Questions

The purpose of the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) review is to provide evidence and lessons on what is working and where challenges remain in maximizing the organizational effort to close gender gaps. To achieve this purpose, the team sought to answer one overarching question and four subquestions:

How well is the implementation of the gender strategy positioning the World Bank Group to contribute to closing key gender gaps?

- » How do the knowledge products from the [Gender Group, Gender Business Group, Gender Innovation Lab, or Global Practices] serve the needs of operational teams and industry groups?
- » How valuable is the support of staff designated to work on gender for operational teams and industry groups?
- » How is the monitoring of the strategy and corporate commitments incentivizing operational teams and industry groups to close gender gaps?
- » What enablers and constraints need to be addressed in the implementation of the strategy?

Assessment Approach and Design

The assessment used a mixed methods approach to support data collection and analysis. This included interviews with corporate, country, or donor stakeholders; regional focus groups of practice managers, task team leaders, project leads, and investment officers; document review; and analysis of flag and tag data and IEG evidence. Efforts were made not to duplicate interviewees among corporate, country, and regional processes; for example, International Finance Corporation (IFC) regional and product gender leads were predominantly interviewed as part of the corporate sample.

All sources of evidence were used to answer the overarching question (table A.1). For the subquestions, key findings from interviews and focus groups were triangulated with documents and data analysis (where relevant). From the synthesized evidence, the assessment team developed a theory of action to depict the implementation of the gender strategy in the World Bank Group.

Table A.1. Application of Review Components

Source of Evidence	Overarching Question	Subquestion			
	Position	Knowledge	Support	M&E	Enabler
Key informant interviews, corporate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Key informant interviews, country	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Key informant interviews, donors	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Regional focus groups	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Documents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tag and flag data	Yes	—	—	Yes	Yes
IEG evidence	—	Yes	—	Yes	Yes

Note: — = not available; M&E = monitoring and evaluation.

Consultation

The review team engaged IFC and World Bank gender groups throughout the assessment process. First, the team discussed the approach and scope of the review with the Gender Group (World Bank) and the Gender Business Group (IFC). The design was revised to address comments on the Concept Note from relevant World Bank and IFC units. Second, during data collection, the gender groups provided the team with data, documents, and lists of stakeholders. The gender groups also provided feedback on preliminary findings and emerging messages.

Regional Focus Groups and Regional Key Informant Interviews

The focus group discussions sought to elicit the full range of ideas, attitudes, experiences, and opinions held by a selected sample of respondents. The discussions also sought to capture variations between Regions and positions (Task team leaders, practice managers, project leads, and investment officers) in relation to the four subquestions. Linked to the overall approach, these interviews sought to build an understanding of how front-line staff relate their work to the gender strategy. Focus group discussions were conducted between February and March 2020, either in person in Washington, DC, or via videoconference from country offices across Regions. Sixty-three respondents participated in focus groups or individual interviews.¹

Selection criteria and recruitment process. Only those staff members managing a gender-tagged or -flagged intervention were eligible for the regional focus groups and interviews.² This approach ensured that respondents had some direct experience working on gender-related projects. The pool of respondents for the World Bank was derived from a list of gender-tagged projects from fiscal year (FY)17 to the second quarter of FY20, drawn from the standard reports portal of the World Bank. IFC's Gender Business Group provided two data sets that contained lists of staff managing projects: one list of all advisory operations and a second of all investment operations.

The pool of respondents was then divided into three groups across the six Regions: Task team leaders, World Bank practice managers, and IFC operations staff. There were six Regions at the time of the assessment design.³ Staff were then selected into one of 18 groups with the intention of getting four respondents in each group (table A.2).

Table A.2. Distribution and Type of Focus Group Participants

Respondent Type	Middle East and North Africa		Sub-Saharan Africa		Latin America and the Caribbean		East Asia and Pacific		South Asia		Europe and Central Asia		Targeted Number of Respondents
	Group	TTL	Group	TTL	Group	TTL	Group	TTL	Group	TTL	Group	TTL	
Task team leaders	Group	TTL 1	Group	TTL 2	Group	TTL 3	Group	TTL 4	Group	TTL 5	Group	TTL 6	24
IFC investment officers/project leads	Group	IO 1	Group	IO 2	Group	IO 3	Group	IO 4	Group	IO 5	Group	IO 6	24
Practice managers	Group	PM 1	Group	PM 2	Group	PM 3	Group	PM 4	Group	PM 5	Group	PM 6	24
Total	3		3		3		3		3		3		18 (72 respondents)

Note: IFC = International Finance Corporation; IO = investment officer/project lead; PM = practice manager; TTL = task team leader.

To support the desired response rate, the assessment team oversampled potential respondents; at least 10 staff were selected for each group. For example, for the Middle East and North Africa, 10 Task team leaders, 10 IFC staff, and 10 practice managers were targeted. The selection of potential respondents was purposive in Regions where more than 10 staff members had gender-tagged or -flagged projects. Staff members with a greater number of tagged and flagged projects were selected first. In Regions with 10 or fewer staff members, all were selected for the group.

Initially, all potential respondents were allocated to a single focus group slot and contacted via email, with the intent to complete data collection rapidly. Practice managers were contacted individually by an IEG manager. Task team leaders and IFC staff were initially contacted by group email. As the process progressed, attendance in focus groups did not reach targeted numbers because the focus group schedule conflicted with other scheduled meetings or mission travel. As a result, the assessment team added another phase of regionally focused data collection in March. The recruitment of investment officers and practice managers was facilitated by directly scheduling individual interviews. Additional respondents were recruited with a targeted sampling by Region to fill gaps from the first phase of data collection. The recruitment of Task team leaders was replaced with nominations and invitations from their practice managers. These measures led to satisfactory participation across Regions, as shown in table A.3.

Table A.3. Respondents for Regional Focus Groups and Key Informant Interviews

	SSA	EAP	ECA	LAC	MENA	SAR	No Region	
IFC								
Investment officers/ project leads	3	2	2	2	2	2	—	13
World Bank								
Task team leaders	5	5	4	4	6	6	—	30
Practice managers	2	1	3	3	2	6	—	17
Gender focal points							3	3
Total	10	8	9	9	10	14	3	63

Note: — = not available; EAP = East Asia and Pacific; ECA = Europe and Central Asia; LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; SAR = South Asia; SSA = Sub-Saharan Africa.

Country-Level Interviews

The aim of the country-focused interviews was to understand how the gender strategy was treated within seven country contexts and to capture variations between countries. The interviews focused on the perspectives of those delivering and managing operations, similar to the regional focus. The interviews were undertaken based on a specific protocol and covered all four subquestions. The review team conducted the group and individual interviews, predominantly by videoconference and phone, between February and March 2020. The team interviewed 47 operational staff, managers, and directors from the World Bank and IFC.

Selection criteria and process. Countries were selected to attain variation (table A.4) based on seven criteria:

- » Region
- » Containment of both tagged and flagged operations of gender gaps

- » Extent of gender tagging and flagging since FY17
- » Level of gender inequality (with a weighting toward those with larger gender gaps)
- » Country portfolio composition (size, number of Global Practices and industry groups with projects)
- » Client engagement in the gender strategy formulation
- » Fragility, conflict, and violence and International Development Association designation

In selecting the countries, the review team was responsive to feedback from the World Bank and IFC gender groups as well as feedback received from across the Bank Group.

Within the seven selected countries, the review team contacted a sample of staff with gender-tagged or -flagged operations, the IFC country manager, and the country director for interviews. For the World Bank, six Task team leaders were targeted per country based on a proportionate sample across Global Practices for gender-tagged and -flagged operations. This meant more Task team leaders were selected from Global Practices with more operations. The IFC sample targeted four staff per country, two investment officers and two advisory project managers, as well as a country focal point (as relevant). At the level of the Country Management Unit, the assessment team sought interviews with the country director, the IFC country manager, and a variety of operations managers and program leaders, depending on the staff composition in the country office.

To arrange interviews, IEG management contacted the country director. The assessment team then followed up with sampled participants to arrange interviews.

Table A.4. Countries Sampled

Country	Region	GPs (no.)		Gender-Tagged Approved Projects (percent)		Active Portfolio Tagged (percent)		Gender Gap Index		Consulted on Gender Strategy		IFC Gender Flag AS		IFC Gender Flag IS		FCV		Gender Gaps Targeted (out of 4)		Finance	
Côte d'Ivoire	SSA	13	74 (14/19)		50		142		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	4			IDA, HPIC
Kenya	SSA	14	50 (7/14)		27		109		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	3			Blend
Vietnam	EAP	10	56 (9/16)		28		31		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	4			IBRD
Tajikistan	ECA	11	75 (6/8)		44		134		No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	1			IDA
Peru	LAC	8	29 (2/7)		13		90		No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	1			IBRD
Egypt, Arab Rep.	MENA	10	75 (6/8)		39		140		No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	2			IBRD
Bangladesh	SAR	14	77 (24/31)		51		141		No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	4			IDA

Source: Standard reports gender tag FY17–20Q2; Gender Group gender tag analysis FY17–FY19Q2; Gender Business Group flag data for IS and AS FY17–20Q2; United Nations Development Programme Gender Inequality Index; World Bank gender strategy consultations.

Note: AS = advisory services; EAP = East Asia and Pacific; ECA = Europe and Central Asia; FCV = fragility, conflict, and violence; GP = Global Practice; HPIC = Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative; IBRD = International Bank for Reconstruction and Development; IDA = International Development Association; IFC = International Finance Corporation; IS = investment services; LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean; MENA = Middle East and North Africa; SAR = South Asia; SSA = Sub-Saharan Africa.

Corporate-Level Interviews in the World Bank and IFC

The aim of the corporate interviews was to understand how the gender strategy was being received and responded to across different levels of the Bank Group. The interviews were conducted based on their own protocol and covered all four subquestions. Interviews were completed between February and March 2020 and were done both in Washington, DC, and via videoconference with regionally based staff. Sixty-four people were interviewed.

Selection criteria and process. Respondents were initially selected by the IFC and World Bank gender groups. The review team then contacted the suggested respondents by email. The interview process resulted in snowballing as respondents recommended additional interviewees. The interviews provided a cross-section of perspectives from Regions, Task team leaders, IFC staff, staff designated to support work on gender, staff members of the gender groups, and the Gender Leadership Council. Some respondents on this list were also interviewed by the Group Internal Audit assessors. The World Bank and IFC gender groups identified potential development partner respondents. IEG's reviewers interviewed representatives of the ministries of finance and foreign affairs, as well as the development agencies, of Sweden (eight representatives) and Canada (three). The interviewees for each development partner were identified by their respective institutions.

Regional, Country, and Corporate Data Collection and Analysis

Following the interviews, individual notes were transcribed. On completion of each set of interviews, the notes were organized into three overall reports according to the four subquestions for both the World Bank and IFC to preserve the different sources.

Each report was analyzed to produce grounded themes separately for IFC and World Bank responses. The reviewers discussed these themes, noted nuances, and revised the themes accordingly. As the data were compiled, the review team discussed emerging findings weekly and noted emerging

themes. Once all three interview processes were complete, the reviewers gathered and clustered overarching themes from across all three reports in an Excel spreadsheet. They then developed an initial list of messages, which were further refined in the process of writing the report.

Document and Descriptive Statistic Review

The analysis of the interviews was augmented with descriptive statistics of project tag and flag data and reviews of documents to triangulate emerging findings and themes. As the assessment team developed key messages, documents were reviewed to identify whether and how they confirmed findings. Analyses of all gender-tagged and -flagged projects and Country Partnership Frameworks from sampled countries were undertaken and collated in tables to support ease of comparison and the identification of trends. Through this process, the assessment team sharpened and added nuance to its findings. Drawing on standard corporate reports, the reviewers then undertook descriptive statistical analysis of the locations, sectors, and trends in gender-tagged and -flagged operations for the entire portfolio. Additionally, the document review drew on a wide range of information sources provided by the IFC and World Bank gender groups, internal documents sourced by IEG, and external documents identified through web searches.

IEG Evidence

IEG documents were used to help triangulate emerging findings and themes. The team reviewed these documents throughout the process. At the initiation of the review, previous IEG studies on gender in the World Bank were examined. As analysis was conducted, IEG documents were referenced to help confirm or rebut findings.

Quality Assurance

This review was subject to IEG's standard quality review. Given the reduced timeline, the processes were implemented with agility. To expedite the process under coronavirus pandemic restrictions, the report was subject to a virtual review. The external peer reviewers were Svetlana Negroustoueva (principal evaluation officer at African Development Bank Group) and Jon-

athan Rose (economic lead specialist at the Office of Evaluation and Oversight, Inter-American Development Bank). The team also followed IEG's quality assurance process and worked closely with IEG's Methods Advisory Team during all phases of the review.

Limitations

The data collection timeline was short (approximately four weeks). For this reason, the scope of the review and the amount of data that could be collected and analyzed had to be limited.

Exploration of examples. The scope of this review did not allow for in-depth investigation of cases. This meant that although the team identified trends and variations in enabling and constraining factors for consideration, it is not able to provide generalized statements on positive and negative attributes of implementation.

Partner perspectives. The review team did not seek to verify outcomes in countries, nor did it gather client perspectives. It also did not assess partnerships with United Nations agencies and the private sector or changes in client practices. Instead, the review team discussed client demand, uptake, and constraints through interviews with informants in the Bank Group and among key donors.

Data. The assessment team used corporate sources to review gender tag and flag data. The gender tag data were downloaded from the World Bank's standard reports intranet portal in February 2020. IFC gender flag data were provided by the Gender Business Group and were updated to the end of the second quarter of FY20. The review team supplemented these data with the coding of project documents and the Country Partnership Frameworks for the sample of countries.

Generalizability of focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Because of the small numbers involved in focus group discussions and interviews, participants are not thoroughly representative of the target populations from which they are drawn. Findings cannot reliably be generalized beyond their number. However, the structured research design and careful recruitment mean that these participants enable us to identify trends, enablers, and constraints in the Regions and positions from which they were drawn.

Appendix B. Gender Analysis of Country Partnership Frameworks for Case Study Countries

This appendix presents an analysis of the World Bank’s Country Partnership Frameworks (CPFs) for seven sample countries, assessing how the documents cover gender dimensions. Three aspects are analyzed: the gender gap in the CPF; the specific gender components; and link between the CPF and indicators.

Methodology: The analysis is based on a desk review of the CPFs for Bangladesh, Côte d’Ivoire, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Kenya, Peru, Tajikistan, and Vietnam. Table B.1 categorizes the area of focus in each CPF relative to the gender strategy based on the four gender gap types: (i) improving human endowments (such as health, education, and social protection); (ii) removing constraints for more and better jobs (employment, addressing skills gaps and childcare constraints, and the like); (iii) ownership and control over assets (such as land, technology, access to capital, and agricultural employment); and (iv) women’s voice and agency (such as gender-based violence, early marriage, and reversing gender norms).

Table B.1 shows that all CPFs mention gender gaps that were identified in the gender strategy, but this did not necessarily translate to the CPF results matrix. For example, in Kenya, gender gaps were identified in education, employment, and land ownership, but these gaps were not included in the results matrix. In other countries, such as Peru, Tajikistan, and Vietnam (three of seven country cases), the gender gaps from the CPF document were only “partly” included in the results matrix. In such scenarios, like in the case of Tajikistan, although the CPF text recognized gender gaps in education, labor force participation, access to finance, and domestic violence, the

results matrix included only one gender-focused indicator on employment; other issues were not measured through the results matrix.

Table B.1. Coverage of Gender Gaps from the Gender Strategy in the CPF and CPF Results Matrix

Country	Gender Gap from Gender Strategy in CPF	Component of the Gender Gap Covered in the CPF	Gender Gap–Related Indicator in the CPF Results Matrix
Bangladesh	Gender gap 1: human endowments	Health, education	Sex-disaggregated data on (i) number of children previously out-of-school enrolled in primary school; (ii) increased secondary enrollment for the poorest quintile; (iii) percentage of deliveries by skilled birth attendants in the two lowest wealth quintiles; and (iv) number of women receiving postnatal care within 48 hours (supplemental indicator)
	Gender gap 2: jobs	Employment	No gender indicators
	Gender gap 3: control over assets	Access to finance	Sex-disaggregated indicators on (i) number of farmers adopting improved agricultural technology and (ii) number of farmers in area with improved irrigation and drainage service
	Gender gap 4: women's voice and agency	Participation in community organizations	Women participating in community-based decision-making structure by 2020 (SPI)
	Other gaps	Increased resilience of population to natural disasters in urban and coastal areas	Sex-disaggregated data on (i) access to shelters in coastal districts and (ii) number of people protected from tidal and storm surges
Côte d'Ivoire	Gender gap 1: human endowments	Education	Sex-disaggregated data on (i) percentage of participating graduates employed and (ii) percentage of students in science, engineering, and math courses
	Gender gap 2: jobs	Jobs	No gender indicator

(continued)

Country	Gender Gap from Gender Strategy in CPF	Component of the Gender Gap Covered in the CPF	Gender Gap-Related Indicator in the CPF Results Matrix
	Gender gap 3: control over assets	Agriculture, microfinance	Sex-disaggregated data on (i) number of farmers reached in cashew production (SPI) and (ii) number of land parcels with use or ownership rights recorded as a result of the project
	Other gaps	Delivery of water services	Sex-disaggregated data on access to improved water resources in national urban population
Egypt, Arab Rep.	Gender gap 3: control over assets	Access to finance	Number of women served through the lines of credit in micro, small, and medium enterprise portfolio of financial institutions
	Other gaps	Natural gas connections	Female project beneficiaries from Household Natural Gas Connections Project
Kenya	Gender gap 1: human endowments	Health, education (but no education indicator)	Number of women with access to basic package of health, nutrition, or reproductive health services
	Gender gap 2: jobs	Employment	No gender indicators
	Gender gap 3: control over assets	Asset ownership (land)	No gender indicators
	Other gaps	Access to water resources	Number of women with access to increased water sources
Peru	Gender gap 2: jobs	Employment and wage gaps	No gender indicator
	Gender gap 3: control over assets	Access to financial institutions	Value (in dollars) of new loans for micro, small, and medium enterprises by IFC, including \$ million value for women
	Gender gap 4: women's voice and agency	Gender-based violence	No gender indicator

(continued)

Country	Gender Gap from Gender Strategy in CPF	Component of the Gender Gap Covered in the CPF	Gender Gap-Related Indicator in the CPF Results Matrix
Tajikistan	Gender gap 1: human endowments	Education	No gender indicator
	Gender gap 2: jobs	Labor force participation	Sex-disaggregated data on (i) decreased NEET rate of 15- to 24-year-olds in project areas and (ii) employment rates of 25- to 54-year-olds in project areas
	Gender gap 3: control over assets	Access to finance	No gender indicator
	Gender gap 4: women's voice and agency	Domestic violence	No gender indicator
Vietnam	Gender gap 2: jobs	Employment	No gender indicator
	Gender gap 3: control over assets	Asset ownership (land), access to finance	Percentage of land use rights certificates with names of women, number of women borrowers through microfinance institutions, value of microloans disbursed to women farmers
	Other gaps	Urban upgrading programs	Number of people benefiting from urban upgrading programs (disaggregated by gender)

Note: "Other gaps" refers to gender gaps included in the CPF but not identified by the gender strategy. CPF = Country Partnership Framework; IFC = International Finance Corporation; NEET = not in employment, education, or training.

¹ Practice managers were interviewed either individually or in pairs to facilitate their availability. Individual interviews were also scheduled with respondents to facilitate the participation of those based in country offices with large time differences with Washington, DC.

² In the World Bank, projects are gender tagged; in the International Finance Corporation, projects are gender flagged.

³ These six Regions were Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia.



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The World Bank
1818 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20433