



Gender equality and the empowerment of women contributes to growth, development, stability and security. Ensuring equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women and men, girls and boys, is in our national interest.

Strategic direction

Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment are key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. These issues are a core part of the foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development cooperation work of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Our approach is outlined in the [DFAT Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy](#). The strategy establishes three connected and mutually reinforcing priorities that guide our investments on gender equality:

- Enhancing women's voices in **decision-making, leadership and peace-building**;
- Promoting women's **economic empowerment**; and
- **Ending violence** against women and girls.

These are three areas where progress is slowest but also where success could have the greatest impact for gender equality and broader prosperity and peace.

DFAT incorporates gender equality into all aspects of our work, across all sectors.

Results in 2017-18

DFAT's Gender Equality Fund (\$55 million annually) supports investments that promote gender equality and women's empowerment, bring multilateral partnerships to Australia's region, and pursue innovative approaches in line with the priorities set out in DFAT's [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy](#):

- The Gender Equality Fund supports Australia's development program to drive stronger gender equality performance and results.
- We are building global evidence and data collection capacity through partnerships with UN Women and the World Bank, to facilitate better tracking of progress on Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality.

- We work with the United Nations, women's organisations, civil society and governments to respond to and prevent violence against women.
- We work to strengthen women's economic empowerment in South-East Asia by strengthening employment practices for women, and increasing investment in women-led small and medium enterprises through the Investing in Women Initiative—a \$46 million four year program.

Current Priorities

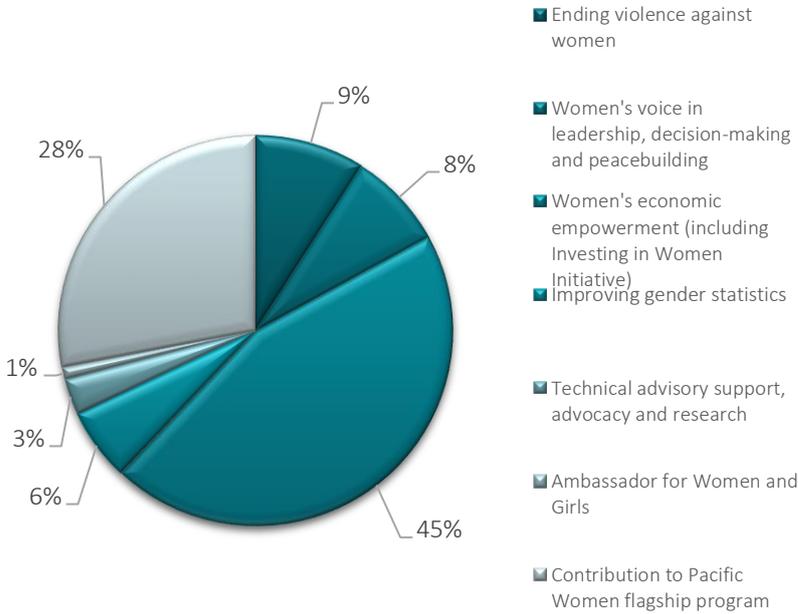
- The Gender Equality Fund supports projects across the three priority areas, including: women's access to financial services in South East Asia; building quality, robust and defensible data on the prevalence and nature of violence against women; and supporting the Women, Peace and Security agenda, especially women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding.
- The Fund also supports improved results on gender equality and women's empowerment in Australia's humanitarian action.
- Through Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, DFAT supports women, and women's interests being increasingly represented and visible at all levels of decision making.

Development cooperation expenditure targeting gender equality, 2017-18

In 2017-18, Australia spent \$1.3 billion on investments that targeted gender equality as a principal or significant objective, reflecting in large part the Department's efforts to integrate gender equality objectives across the development cooperation program. This equals 46 per cent of DFAT's country, regional and global development cooperation investments by value across a range of sectors. In 2017-18 DFAT applied the OECD-DAC Minimum Criteria for the first time (hence figures are not comparable across years).



2018-19 Expenditure for the Gender Fund (estimated)



Leaving No One Behind

Australia has entered into a partnership with Outright International to provide support for domestic violence prevention strategies for the LGBTI community through support for civil society and good governance projects.

Innovation

We helped Asia Impact Investment Exchange launch the Women's Livelihood Bond, one of the world's first listed bonds with an impact mandate, on the Singapore Exchange. The Bond has raised US\$8 million for three social enterprises in South East Asia to improve access to services and finance to 385,000 women.

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Performance in 2017-18

75% of DFAT's development cooperation investments effectively addressed gender equality during implementation, regardless of their objectives, compared to the strategic target of 80% as established in the Australian development cooperation policy Making Performance Count.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Performance on gender equality mainstreaming, 2017-18

