BSTDB Gender Policy

Approved by the BSTDB Board of Directors, 8 September 2026

1. Purpose & Scope

This document is a Policy defining BSTDB's approach towards addressing gender-related issues in its operations.

2. Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Wording of Abbreviation
E&S	Environmental and Social
ESAP	Environmental and Social Action Plan
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation

3. Policy

I. GENDER COMMITMENT STATEMENT

BSTDB recognizes gender equality as a fundamental human right and a prerequisite for sustainable and inclusive development. Women and girls already face heightened, disproportionate risks of gender-based discrimination and violence, and global challenges, both current and emerging, exacerbate existing inequalities. Acknowledging that gender equality is essential for more fair, resilient and prosperous societies, the Bank commits to integrating gender considerations into its operation cycle and the operations it finances. Reflecting the principles of 'leave no one behind', 'do no harm', equal opportunity and non-discrimination, BSTDB will assess and address the potential gender-related risks and impacts of its operations and promote the equal access of everyone, regardless of gender, to finance, entrepreneurship, employment, skills, benefits, products, services, leadership, and decision-making. The Bank upholds a strict zero-tolerance approach to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) at the institutional level and throughout its operations.

II. INTEGRATING GENDER CONSIDERATIONS INTO BSTDB OPERATIONS

a. Identifying gender-related risks, impacts, and opportunities

BSTDB strives to ensure that its operations do not inadvertently cause, contribute to, or exacerbate adverse human rights impacts, such as normative, discriminatory, and exploitative gender inequalities that give rise to Gender-Based Violence (GBV), including SEAH. In line with this, the Bank is committed to making the resources, services, opportunities, and benefits associated with its operations equally accessible to women and men alike, so that no individual is disadvantaged on the basis of gender and everyone can contribute to and derive value from the Bank's supported operations.

To this end, as part of the required environmental and social (E&S) assessment that all operations are subject to, the Bank makes sure that:

a. Any potentially adverse or disproportionate gender-related risks and impacts related to its activities are identified and assessed, including gender-based discrimination and GBV/SEAH, paying attention to differential burdens, barriers, and vulnerabilities;

b. Potential opportunities to promote equality of opportunity and women's socioeconomic empowerment, thereby advancing gender equality, are explored and integrated into the operation structure, where feasible, by raising Borrower awareness.

Any potential gender-related risks and impacts identified are factored into the overall social risk of an operation and, in conjunction with all other E&S social risks and impacts, contribute proportionally to the operation's categorization. The depth to which potential gender-specific risks and impacts are assessed is commensurate with their nature and significance. For more complex or detailed gender-related risk assessments, the Bank may retain, or require the Borrower to retain, a specialized third-party expert.

As part of the E&S assessment, the Bank also considers the local socioeconomic and gender context, as appropriate, to gain an informed understanding of existing gender inequalities and gaps and thus be able to identify the differing needs and constraints of women and men in relation to the operation. While operations cannot realistically be expected to resolve wider, intractable issues, understanding the underlying context helps ensure that BSTDB's operations do not exacerbate harm and, where possible, make a targeted positive impact. Sex-disaggregated baseline data is collected at an appropriate level of detail, including through meaningful, gender-responsive stakeholder engagement where necessary, to inform the assessment process and establish a benchmark against which future progress can be measured.

b. Addressing gender-related risks and impacts

BSTDB's primary focus is on preventing adverse gender-related impacts from occurring wherever possible. Where prevention is not feasible, the Bank ensures that appropriate mitigation measures are applied, proportionate to the scale and nature of the identified gender-related risks and impacts.

Preventive and mitigation measures are integrated into the operation's Environmental and Social Action Plan (ESAP), or equivalent document, as appropriate, together with any dedicated actions that may have been formulated to harness opportunities for advancing gender equality and enhancing the operation's overall social impact. When it is necessary to address specific or heightened risks, the Bank may require targeted Action Plans, e.g. a GBV/SEAH Action Plan to be developed. All measures proposed to address the gender-related risks and impacts of an operation will be monitored throughout its lifecycle and adapted as needed.

c. Gender-Responsive Stakeholder Engagement

Any stakeholder consultation process associated with a BSTDB operation needs to be conducted in a gender-responsive, culturally aware, non-discriminatory, and socially inclusive manner. Women and men alike, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, shall be provided with equal opportunity to be meaningfully and continuously engaged in formal and informal consultations in relation to an operation, expressing their views on potential risks, impacts, and mitigation measures. The Bank therefore expects that, to the extent feasible within an operation's sphere of influence, gender-based barriers hindering equal participation are appropriately addressed, including through tailored enabling measures adopted by the Borrower, where necessary. Depending on the context and need, such measures may include setting appropriate meeting times, offering practical arrangements, such as childcare or transport assistance, or convening separate focus group discussions, particularly when dealing with sensitive topics such as GBV/SEAH risks. Consultations may address potential GBV/SEAH risks, trends, and mitigation measures, but should not solicit information about individual experiences of GBV/SEAH.

Consultations must ensure that stakeholders are informed, at the earliest opportunity of the stakeholder engagement process and in an accessible, culturally appropriate manner, about the availability of and ways to access the BSTDB Complaints Mechanism and, where established, the operation-level Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM).

d. Operation-level Complaints Mechanism & Survivor-Centered Response to SEAH

All workers and stakeholders potentially affected by the Bank's operations have access to the BSTDB Complaints Mechanism, the Bank's independent accountability mechanism. However, as appropriate and depending on an operation's E&S categorization, BSTDB, to the best of its efforts, will help its Borrowers develop or enhance an operation-level GRM to effectively receive and address concerns and complaints related to the operation's E&S impacts, including gender-related impacts. The GRM should be readily accessible to all, regardless of gender or other socioeconomic characteristics, transparent, gender-responsive, and proportionate to the operation's potential risks and impacts. It should provide multiple confidential and culturally appropriate reporting channels, free from interference, manipulation, coercion, and retaliation, that allow individuals to safely raise concerns and report incidents, including those relating to GBV/SEAH.

Addressing incidents and allegations related to SEAH requires the Borrower to establish specific response procedures based on a survivor-centered approach. This entails prioritizing the survivor's safety, rights, and needs; engaging with them in a sensitive, objective, understanding, and non-judgmental manner; ensuring transparent communication of available redress options, the survivor's participation in the decision-making process, and their prior informed consent for all information handling. Appropriate safeguarding measures should be included to protect complainants, survivors, and witnesses of SEAH from retaliation, including by enabling individuals to remain anonymous if requested. Furthermore, the mechanism should include modalities to provide survivors with timely referral to support services, such as medical care, psychosocial support or legal assistance. Any referral or provision of support should be undertaken with prior informed consent and in coordination with the survivor. Finally, the Borrower is expected to ensure safe and ethical documentation of SEAH cases and the actions taken to address them, such as through a dedicated Incident Log or a Grievance Case Register. Incidents and allegations of SEAH should be reported to the Bank and addressed in a timely manner.

e. Mainstreaming Gender in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

To ensure accountability and evidence-based learning, BSTDB is committed to monitoring and evaluating the gender impact of its financed operations. This entails reviewing the Borrower's performance and progress in mitigating gender-related risks and impacts, as well as in implementing any planned dedicated measures to advance gender equality within the operation's sphere of influence, ensuring that all commitments established in the ESAP, or equivalent document, are delivered according to the agreed scope, schedule, and quality requirements.

To this end, the Bank will seek to establish operation-specific, risk-based and feasible gender-specific or sex-disaggregated indicators and targets, at outcome and output levels, to monitor progress against agreed gender results and capture contributions to gender equality and women's socioeconomic empowerment. These indicators and targets will be operation-specific, risk-based, proportionate and feasible, and will be agreed with the Borrower and set out in the relevant operation documents. They are intended to support monitoring and learning on gender outcomes and should not be applied as employment quotas or preferential requirements in employment-related decisions, except where required by law.

By capturing valuable lessons learned from its M&E activities, BSTDB strives to continuously improve how it addresses gender gaps in its operations, and fosters sustainable, inclusive development in its Member States.