



FONDO  
ACCION

**DOCUMENT**

Gender Policy

**Code:**

**Version: 1**

**Issue Date:**  
**January 28, 2016**

**Page 1 of 8**

## Policy on Gender Equality



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(+571) 2853862; Fax: (571) 2454145

Carrera 7 N° 32 – 33 piso 27, Bogota D.C., Colombia

[www.fondoaccion.org](http://www.fondoaccion.org)

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		<b>Issue Date:</b> <b>January 28, 2016</b>	<b>Page 2 of 8</b>

## Introduction

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The Fondo para la Accion Ambiental y la Niñez (Fondo Acción) is a non-profit, private legal entity.

Its mission is to generate significant and sustainable changes in the Colombian society in two thematic areas: (1) the conservation of biological diversity, the promotion of sustainable and equitable development, and the protection of ecosystem services and, (2) the protection and development of children, with an emphasis on early childhood.

Fondo Acción was created in 2000 in the framework of the Bilateral Agreement of the Americas Initiative, signed by the governments of the Republic of Colombia and the United States of America.

The highest government organ of Fondo Acción is the Executive Council and Administrative Council of the Americas Initiative (CAIA). The Council/CAIA is composed of:

- Five representatives from the civil society from the sectors of the academia and science, environment, children, community development and private sector;
- The National Planning Department, on behalf of the Government of Colombia;
- The Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Government of Colombia;
- The United States Agency for International Development USAID, on behalf of the Government of the United States of America.

Fondo Acción has adopted the following **organizational values**:

1. **Transparency:** We report, apply and respect the rules of the game and account for our management.
2. **Efficiency:** We operate with rationality, making the most of the resources available.
3. **Effectiveness:** We work with high performance teams, guided by certified processes to achieve results and impacts.
4. **Solidarity:** We are committed to the common interest and social benefit, within the framework of public policies.
5. **Learning:** Through support, monitoring and evaluation, we encourage learning, innovation, and organizational development and contribute to the dialogue on the public policies in the two thematic areas of our mission.



## DOCUMENT

Gender Policy

Code:

Version: 1

Issue Date:  
January 28, 2016

Page 3 of 8

Fondo Acción believes that the equity and equality of rights and opportunities between women and men is a necessary condition for sustainable development. It also is convinced that women's empowerment allows them to participate and act freely, exercise their rights and achieve their full potential as members of a more just and egalitarian society.

A policy is hereby adopted to incorporate gender equity and equality and the empowerment of women in the operations of Fondo Acción; the actions required to implement this cross-cutting policy are identified and the mechanisms and provisions are established to evaluate and update it on a regular basis.

### **Conceptual framework**

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This policy understands gender as those characteristics of behavior and roles that are socially attributed to women and men in determined historical, cultural and socio-economic contexts, beyond their biological differences, and that contribute to define responsibilities, opportunities and limitations for women and men.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of gender equality, it is understood that rights and opportunities do not depend on being woman or man, but that women and men have the same conditions to exercise their rights and opportunities, as well as develop their potential completely.<sup>2</sup>

This policy recognizes that strategies and actions for equity are a tool to achieve equality, permitting that population groups that historically have been socially, culturally and politically (among others) disadvantaged, can be compensated by promoting equity strategies, facilitating to act in equal conditions and to fully exercise their rights.

Empowerment is the process that contributes to strengthen capacities of women and men to make decisions about their lives. Empowerment processes allow that persons resume their own inner power, their self-consciousness, and autonomy to direct, determine and transform their lives.

### **Statement of the Strategy for the Gender Policy**

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1. We manage and/or execute resources in a transparent, effective and efficient manner within the framework of public policy and based on common interest.

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<sup>1</sup>. This gender definition is taken from the operational policy about Gender Equality in Development. November 2010, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Ideas adopted from the ACIDI policy on gender equality. Canada, 1999. This document can be accessed in <http://www.cida.gc.ca>.



## DOCUMENT

Gender Policy

Code:

Version: 1

Issue Date:  
January 28, 2016

Page 4 of 8

2. The resources provided by our customers and donors are channeled and invested to finance, co-finance and/or implement programs and projects in two priority thematic areas: (1) conservation and sustainable development; and (2) integral protection and development of early childhood, childhood and youth.
3. We recognize the importance of equity and equality between sexes and the empowerment of women in the initiatives associated with the conservation of biological diversity, access and sustainable use of natural resources, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, sustainable and equitable development, and the protection and comprehensive development of children.
4. We believe that it is essential to incorporate a gender equity and equality approach into our operations, with the objective of the greatest possible impact and reinforcing the sustainability of our interventions in the two thematic areas of our mission.

### **Objective and scope of the Gender Policy**

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The purpose of the gender policy is to incorporate equity and equality between the genders in the operations of Fondo Acción. The proper incorporation of these considerations will contribute to the following results:

1. Reduce gender inequalities in the access to, control of and benefit from resources, services and opportunities.
2. Increase the capacities and opportunities for women, men, girls, boys, adolescents and youth to fully exercise their rights, develop their potential and have an influence on the decisions taken in their homes, communities, work and society in general.

**Gender equality and childhood.** Although there might sometimes be lack of visibility in society, the way traditional roles of men and women are understood, has an impact on girls, boys and youth as it limits their opportunities and possibilities for studies, recreation and for exercising their rights to enhance their capacities and fully realize their potential as subjects of rights and citizens.

Gender influences opinions and decisions of girls, boys and youth, in terms of rights as well as opportunities and resources to determine her/his life. The process of learning and growing up is not indifferent towards gender. It is highly influenced in different roles and responsibilities established by girls, boys and youth. Behaviors, attitudes, values and norms are created and defined during childhood, through repetition and imitation of others. Family, educational, social and cultural relations reproduce social differences as well as equalities between men and women in particular contexts.

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		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Issue Date:</b> <b>January 28, 2016</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Page 5 of 8</b></p>

Discrimination and violence based in gender affect girls and women adolescents. Lack of education and opportunities affect in unequal ways girls, boys and youth, being differentially exposed to situations such as child labor, forced recruitment and commercial sexual exploitation of children, as well as diverse forms of violence.

For integral protection and attention in early childhood, childhood and adolescence, it is necessary to promote equal participation of girls, boys and youth in decisions that affect their lives and interests. Facilitating the strengthening and expansion of capacities of girls, boys and youth in protective environments, which guarantee that they can exercise their rights.

**Gender equality and conservation.** Such as gender equality recognizes differences between men and women, it also acknowledges that there are differentiated relations in the use of natural resources and conservation. The Policy on Gender Equality of Fondo Acción seeks to acknowledge the differences that exist in relation to use, access and control of natural resources to make their intervention more efficient and this way to reduce instead of broaden the gap.

To integrate gender equality in environmental initiatives implies recognizing that men and women have different knowledge and contribute in different ways to conservation and sustainable use of resources.

This policy is consistent with the Political Constitution of Colombia, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women,<sup>3</sup> the Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Objectives,<sup>4</sup> and the conventions of the International Labour Organization<sup>5</sup>.

### Actions required for the implementation of the policy

The following actions will be put into effect in order to create and maintain an environment conducive for mainstreaming and implementing this gender policy in the operations of Fondo Acción:

- **Budget:** resources will be allocated to the annual budget of the Executive Management to finance the implementation of this policy.

<sup>3</sup> Approved by means of Law 51/1981 and regulated by means of Decree 1398/1990.

<sup>4</sup> In particular, one of the objectives is to promote equality between men and women and the empowerment of women.

<sup>5</sup> Since its formation, the International Labour Organization promotes equality between men and women. The main gender-related conventions are 100/1951 on equality of remuneration, 111/1958 on discrimination in employment and occupation, 156/1981 on workers with family responsibilities, and 183/2000 on the protection of maternity.



## DOCUMENT

Gender Policy

Code:

Version: 1

Issue Date:  
January 28, 2016

Page 6 of 8

- **Training:** This cross-cutting approach will be included in the annual training priorities, with the purpose of developing and strengthening the skills of the team of Fondo Acción to address gender issues and to measure progress on this front.
- **Disclosure:** This policy will be published on the website of Fondo Acción and will be disseminated among the staff and implementing and partner organizations.

### Framework for the implementation of this policy

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This policy covers the following organizational aspects and processes: (1) communications; (2) design and implementation of projects and programs; (3) information management; (4) support, monitoring and evaluation; (5) organizational learning; (6) human resources policies and practices.

The **Guide for Implementation** contains definitions, recommendations and guidelines to facilitate the adoption of the actions necessary in each of the processes:

1. **Communications.** Fondo Acción will disclose the gender policy to the public in general on its institutional webpage. The Policy will be annexed to Terms of References of calls for projects (sub-grants). Stereotypes of gender, age, and race will be avoided in all communications of Fondo Acción; and no sexist images or language will be used in dissemination strategies.
2. **Design and implementation of projects and programs.** Fondo Acción will incorporate gender equity and the empowerment of women and girls since the design phase of the programs and projects carried out directly or financed to third parties (subgrants). The proposals will include a specific section on the gender and empowerment approach that will be applied to every program and/or project, and will present a set of indicators that will allow monitoring the fulfillment of this approach.
3. **Information management.** The executors (including Fondo Acción in the case of direct execution projects) will collect information disaggregated by gender since the preparation of the baseline and will use it in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs and projects. This disaggregation means having data on the participation and roles of men and women, boys and girls.
4. **Support, monitoring and evaluation.** The team of Fondo Acción will support executors (including Fondo Acción in the case of direct execution projects) in the follow-up to gender

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Gender Policy

Code:

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Issue Date:  
January 28, 2016

Page 7 of 8

results and indicators in projects and programs. Fondo Acción will design a set of aggregate indicators to monitor the implementation of the policy and the achievement of the results expected.

5. **Organizational learning.** The team of Fondo Acción will analyze the indicators reported directly or by executors to determine whether operations, through projects and programs, are reaching the results expected within the framework of this policy. The management of knowledge on the incorporation of the gender and empowerment approach will promote the improvement of the skills and competencies of the individuals and organizations associated with or allied to Fondo Acción, through lessons learnt and internal and external good practices.
6. **Human resources policies and practices.** Within the framework of this policy, Fondo Acción ratifies its firm commitment to avoid any type of discrimination in recruitment, performance evaluation processes, and in other human resources management practices adopted in the organization.

### Roles and responsibilities

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The fulfillment of this policy is the responsibility of the entire personnel of Fondo Acción.

- The Executive Management and Area Managements will be responsible for:
  - Allocating resources from the annual budget of the Executive Direction for the implementation of this policy.
  - Preparing, adopting and disseminating the Guide for Implementation of this policy.
  - Including this theme within annual training priorities, with the purpose of developing and strengthening the skills of the team of Fondo Acción to address gender issues and to measure progress on this front.
  - Promoting organizational learning associated with the implementation of this policy.
  - Assessing the effectiveness of the policy and adjust it in accordance with the periodicity agreed upon.
- The coordination of the area of communications will disclose this policy on the Fondo Acción website and will prepare materials to communicate it to the personnel and implementing and partner organizations.
- Project and program coordinators will be responsible for applying the Guide for Implementation of this policy in the project cycle, including the design, information management and support, monitoring and evaluation.

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**Page 8 of 8**

**Evaluation and Updating**

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Fondo Acción will evaluate, review and, if necessary, adjust this Policy when required by changing conditions and circumstances.