Policy for SwedBio's work on gender equality

SwedBio, version 251209

This policy document provides comprehensive and practical guidance on **gender equality**[1] across all SwedBio activities. It serves as a reference for the SwedBio team and partner organizations, outlining clear actions for integrating gender equality perspectives into the programme activities. While its primary audience is the SwedBio team and its partners, the content may also benefit others interested in understanding how SwedBio gender mainstreams and integrates **gender-responsive,** and where possible, **gender-transformative approaches** into its overall work.

SwedBio's work focuses on sustainable and equitable biodiversity management and governance, recognizing that poverty often results from the limited realization of human rights, including access to a healthy environment. Supporting poverty alleviation involves promoting gender equality and protecting rights, in ways that are rooted in a human rights-based approach (HRBA)[2] and guided by **intersectionality** and conflict perspectives[3]. This policy acknowledges that gender equality is a fundamental right, and addressing systemic gender inequalities is a necessary condition for poverty alleviation, environmental and social justice, as well as peace.

SwedBio is fully committed to eliminating all forms of gender discrimination and **gender-based violence** (GBV)[4]. GBV is any harm or suffering inflicted on an individual or group based on their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. It affects all genders, women, girls, men, boys, and gender-diverse people with disproportionate impacts on those who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. In the context of SwedBio work, women and girls are most affected by discrimination, which reinforces gender inequalities and cycles of poverty and food insecurity. [5] Factors like discrimination based on ethnicity or disability can further escalate the risk of GBV. It is a core commitment for SwedBio to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and GBV, and central to achieving SwedBio's mission. SwedBio together with the Stockholm Resilience Centre, have also developed a Code of Conduct[6] based on Stockholm University's policies and regulations, especially in regards to harassment, sexual harassment and victimization.

SwedBio's work for gender equality emphasizes the programme's commitment to promote opportunities for all people to influence systems that affect their lives in a meaningful way. It aims for a sustainably managed world where rights are equitably fulfilled, regardless of gender, with people able to make sustainable choices for biodiversity-rich and resilient futures while thriving in harmony with nature. SwedBio applies a gender equality perspective to all its activities, partnerships, and dialogues by promoting

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[1] All bolded terms are defined in Section 4 Definition and Boundaries.

[2] See SwedBio Human Rights Based Approach Framework.

[3] See SwedBio's Conflict Perspective Policy.

[4] See Sida's Gender toolbox and brief on Preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

[5] Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition.

[6] SwedBio is dedicated to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) in line with Stockholm Resilience Centre's Code of Conduct and Sida's approach. This Code of Conduct is also discussed with partners.

the full and effective participation and knowledge of women and girls in all their diversity in policy at the local, regional, and global levels, leading to just distribution of power and resources and fulfillment of rights. SwedBio supports partners in developing methods to accelerate the implementation of gender equality guidelines and policies, respecting partners' priorities, and promoting for mutual learning.

This gender policy aligns with and supports SwedBio's HRBA and conflict perspective policies, emphasizing the importance of addressing intersecting forms of discrimination and structural inequalities. It ensures that gender equality is integrated into strategies, collaborations, and operational processes.

The policy builds on international frameworks, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Gender Plan of Action, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. SwedBio is committed to promoting **gender justice**, social inclusion, and human rights to enhance impact and foster sustainable outcomes through collaboration with partner organizations. Swedish[7] foreign policy is committed to safeguarding gender equality as an integrated part of the efforts for global management of natural resources and ecosystem services. *Swedish development assistance should be a driving force for gender equality, with a particular focus on strengthening women's and girls' full enjoyment of human rights and freedoms, empowerment, and opportunities. Gender equality is a matter of freedom, a Swedish core value, and is fundamental to democracy and democratic development*.[8]

1. Introduction

Gender inequality closely intersects with issues such as biodiversity loss, access and use of natural resources, climate change, culture, identity, and knowledge systems. It constitutes a systemic form of injustice that intersects with other forms of exclusion and discrimination including ethnicity, age, **disability**, social class, sexual orientation, and indigeneity. It is important to recognize gender inequality as a significant barrier to achieving true gender justice in environmental policies. For Indigenous Peoples and local communities, especially women, girls, **marginalized genders**, and persons with disabilities[9], gender-based exclusion is linked to environmental degradation, rights violations, impacts of colonization, land dispossession, and barriers to accessing and using resources. Environmental and biodiversity conservation efforts must ensure their inclusion and meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Promoting gender equality in SwedBio's work is not optional; it is vital.

This policy document reaffirms SwedBio's commitment to gender equality as an integral part of HRBA, with rights holders and their diverse identities at the center of the work. It highlights the importance of accountability in addressing unequal power dynamics and acknowledges that knowledge systems are influenced by gender norms. Using an inclusive, culturally sensitive, and respectful approach is essential for tackling the current climate and biodiversity crises and for building a resilient ecosystem through

[7] SwedBio, as a programme based in Sweden, has operated under Swedish development cooperation since 2002 and thus been guided by Swedish priorities over time.

[8] The Strategy for gender equality and women's and girl's freedom and empowerment 2025-2028

[9] SwedBio and partner organizations are encouraged to consult Organizations of Persons with Disabilities to apply a more structural and analytical approach ensuring that disability rights and systemic barriers are addressed in programme design and implementation.

gender justice and the preservation of Indigenous and local knowledge (ILK). It is important to acknowledge that SwedBio values and respects the diverse customs, knowledge, and practices of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and recognizes the different perspectives on gender equality across cultures without compromising the rights of any people. By fostering an inclusive approach, the programme aims to bridge cultural differences while promoting shared goals.

SwedBio acknowledges potential conflicts or synergies between Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' customary laws, knowledge, and practices, and Western perceptions of gender.

The policy complements SwedBio's existing HRBA policy and guiding framework, Conflict Perspective policy and Guidelines for knowledge collaboration, ensuring consistency and cohesion in their application. It guides daily decisions by promoting critical reflection and action, affirming that gender-responsive approaches must be grounded in the diverse knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, including their traditions, religions, and cultural values.

2. Global Context: Policy approaches to Advancing Gender Equality and Biodiversity Conservation.

People of diverse identities face unequal access to land, natural resources, and ecosystem services. The roles of people of various genders managing biodiversity, along with their rights and access to these resources, are diverse and complex. These roles and rights vary across and within countries and cultures, often favoring men, even in societies with more nuanced or flexible gender identities and roles beyond just men and women. Gender roles and responsibilities that are based on social and cultural gender norms, as well as inequalities in rights and access, can lead to additional gender-specific vulnerabilities; e.g., women in coastal communities might face limited rights to access fishing grounds and resources, despite playing crucial roles in the fishing value chain[10]. Women and men face different vulnerabilities when biological resources are depleted. Women are often in more vulnerable situations than men due to structural inequalities, assigned roles and responsibilities, limited access to resources, and decision-making power. Their contributions and roles are often "invisible" compared to those of men. Policies, programmes, and initiatives may overlook gender differences in how individuals of various genders use and contribute to nature. Socio-cultural norms can hinder equitable access to and decision-making power over natural resources. Such gender gaps tend to disadvantage women and other marginalized gender groups, acknowledging that social norms on masculinity can place men in vulnerable situations as well.

Loss of biodiversity and ecosystem degradation undermine sustainable and equitable development, particularly for individuals living in multidimensional poverty[11]. Many development programmes and policy frameworks focus on men and fail to recognize the capacities and contributions of women within and beyond their binary roles and daily realities. National and global biodiversity governance often lacks the perspectives of gender-diverse people. Women are knowledge holders and innovators, and their practices are essential for biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of biodiversity, and fair and equitable sharing

[10] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). (2015). *A review of women's access to fish in small-scale fisheries* (FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Circular No. 1090). Rome: FAO. Available at: https://www.fao.org/3/i4884e/i4884e.pdf.
[11] Sida Dimensions of Poverty. Available at: https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida62275en-dimensions-of-poverty.pdf

of benefits[12]. Changes in the richness and management of biodiversity may impact different genders differently, potentially reinforcing or helping to reduce existing inequalities. Therefore, biodiversity policies and programmes are important entry points for recognizing women's contributions and their process of empowerment, but also for promoting broader gender equality and inclusivity by actively involving individuals of **all genders**, especially women and girls, to reach their full potential, including in advancing biodiversity goals. This approach fosters social equity, which is crucial, as women and girls face disproportionate impacts from climate change and biodiversity loss.

Gender equality is a human right and essential to achieving biodiversity outcomes. Global policies that aim to secure equal rights and access to resources for women and marginalized genders provide a crucial framework for SwedBio's efforts toward the sustainable and equitable management of biodiversity and ecosystems.

The global guiding policy framework for gender equality is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). It is a legally binding instrument that serves as a blueprint and underpins other policies that promote equal rights for women and girls. It also mandates that international human rights frameworks and instruments integrate gender considerations to ensure sensitivity to women's lived experiences. CEDAW defines discrimination against women as "any distinction, exclusion, or restriction based on sex that impairs their enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms."[13]

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity recognizes the vital role women play in conserving and sustainably using biological diversity and emphasizes the importance of women's full participation at all levels of policy development, implementation, and monitoring of biodiversity conservation. The Gender Plan of Action (GPA) provides a roadmap to advance gender mainstreaming and promote gender-responsive actions in the implementation and monitoring of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), recognizing women's rights, especially those of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.[14] The GPA supports the participation and leadership of women and girls, along with legal and policy reforms for equality. Target 22 of the KMGBF ensures participation in decision-making, access to justice, and information, operationalizing the GPA's focus on women's participation, legal empowerment, and justice. Target 23 directly reflects the core objectives of the GPA.

The FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS) outlines Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems[15]. It emphasizes that responsible investment in agriculture and food

[12] CBD Gender Plan of Action, Available at: https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/f64f/e1b9/e8da56802bc2c458a56fcefa/cop-15-l-24-en.pdf

[13] CEDAW Available at: https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm#:~:text=French%2C%20Russian%20%2C%20Spanish-,The%20Convention%20on%20the%20Elimination%20of%20All%20Forms%20of%20Discrimination,bill%20of%20rights%20for%20wome

[14] CBD Gender Plan of Action Available at: https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/f64f/e1b9/e8da56802bc2c458a56fcefa/cop-15-l-24-en.pdf

[15] The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) 2014, Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems Available at: https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f05f6d3d-d434-43da-99e9-a68c04c41342/content

systems fosters gender equality and women's empowerment. Additionally, the Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition[16] guide states and other duty bearers in support of gender-equitable, human rights-based, and inclusive food systems by addressing systemic discrimination and empowering women and girls in all their diversity. The Guidelines are inclusive to all genders, but center on women and girls as they face the most significant barriers in food systems. Another hands-on guidance instrument, the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication, describes gender equality as integral to responsible fisheries and sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out an ambitious framework of universal and indivisible goals and targets to address a range of global societal challenges. Many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and associated targets relate directly to biodiversity and ecosystems. The SDGs confirm that biodiversity is at the centre of many economic activities, particularly those related to crop and livestock agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. The UNFCCC Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Action Plan[17] promote gender-responsive climate policies and actions, ensuring meaningful participation and gender diversity in both adaptation and mitigation efforts. These instruments and frameworks support food security, positive biodiversity outcomes, and climate action strategies that are resilient and transformative, all of which should fundamentally respect and uphold human rights, gender equality, and intersectionality. All instruments are mutually supportive and reinforcing, aligning with SwedBio's goals to address the interconnected biodiversity, climate, and human rights crises by nurturing inclusive and equitable collaborations that connect local knowledge and experiences with global policy, enabling transformative solutions for the well-being of people and nature.

SwedBio works with a gender-responsive approach, aiming to align with the frameworks mentioned above and, where possible, supporting initiatives that address the root causes of gender inequality, such as power imbalances, unequal access to resources, and harmful social norms. It promotes inclusive participation in decision-making processes, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and people in vulnerable situations, through a human rights-based and intersectional approach. These approaches advance gender equality and women's rights, as well as the rights of all individuals regardless of their gender identity or expression, and are integrated into SwedBio's Theory of Change (TOC), challenging systemic barriers. The SwedBio programme, which focuses on equitable biodiversity management and governance, plays a crucial role in ensuring women's knowledge, experiences, and contributions are recognized and integrated into policy development and implementation, fostering gender-responsive strategies and inclusive governance, which leads to more effective, sustainable, and equitable biodiversity policies and solutions.

3. Gender Equality in SwedBio Work

[16] The Committee on World Food Security (CFS) he Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women's and Girls' Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition Available at: https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2223/Gender/Guidelines_Final_Agreed_Version_June_2023_CLEAN/GEWGE_Guidelines_Final_Agreed_Version_June_2023_CLEAN.pdf

[17] UNFCCC enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan Available at: https://unfccc.int/documents/210471

Gender-responsive actions and gender mainstreaming are part of all aspects of SwedBio's Theory of Change (TOC), including the actions, enabling trajectories for change, and desirable long-term changes in both of SwedBio's impact pathways: **the Partner implementation and the Knowledge and Policy pathways.**

Gender mainstreaming requires a gender equality perspective and proactive actions that address gender-based barriers, and enable gender responsiveness to all tasks within the framework of SwedBio's work for biodiversity and ecosystem management. For example, when considering how to achieve its desirable long-term change, SwedBio considers how to frame both the problem and its solutions from the perspectives of **all genders**. Working towards gender equality involves engaging with all people in a context-sensitive manner, regardless of their identities and gender, to break down harmful gender stereotypes. SwedBio recognizes that in the binary perception of gender, men and women often have unequal access to rights pertaining to biodiversity and ecosystem management and governance. This is a challenge further worsened by the limited availability of gender disaggregated data. SwedBio also considers non-binary individuals or third genders, who, although culturally acknowledged and sometimes holding spiritual roles in some societies, may also face marginalization or exclusion from natural resource governance. Additionally, racism can play a significant role in creating barriers and disparities, further complicating equitable access to natural resources. This underscores SwedBio's important role in promoting more inclusive, culturally sensitive, and adaptive approaches that consider the interactions of gender diversity and environmental justice.

In the Partner Implementation Pathway*,* SwedBio provides technical and financial support to a diverse range of organizations, including international organizations, institutes, and civil society organizations, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities' organizations in low and middle-income[18] countries. It promotes regional and global networks, emphasizing initiatives that bring diverse knowledge systems and priorities into regional and global policy agendas. SwedBio actively promotes gender equality by integrating gender perspectives from the application screening stage and regularly follows up on partners' gender equality initiatives through ongoing dialogue and monitoring. While there is a strong focus among partner organizations on women's empowerment processes and participation, SwedBio strives to keep an open discussion and encourages reflections on the inclusion of people of all genders. It recognizes that individuals of diverse gender identities might be made invisible within their own communities, putting emphasis on men also playing a crucial part in promoting gender equality by challenging gender norms and actively promoting women's empowerment. The gender perspective is treated as a cross-cutting element, aligned with human rights-based approach principles in partner collaborations. SwedBio supports partner organizations with dialogue-based guidance on gender equality, encourages the development of related policies and guidelines, and explores participatory, creative methods to incorporate women's diverse knowledge and other gendered experiences and knowledge into policy and practice. Furthermore, it supports initiatives and actions aimed at strengthening capacities for gender equality, including specific efforts to foster networks of diverse women but also networks with men

[18] To identify the regions where SwedBio works, including Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, SwedBio uses the OECD and World Bank definitions. However, we acknowledge other decolonized categorizations used by different groups, such as the Majority world and historically colonized countries, colonized and formerly colonized nations.

promoting gender equality in practice and policy. Additionally, SwedBio promotes coalition-building and networking among partners to share experiences and advance gender equality efforts.

SwedBio applies and also requests partners to implement a risk analysis and safeguard strategy to prevent putting individuals at risk. Through collaboration, SwedBio supports partner organizations to, at a minimum, identify gender inequalities and raise awareness of gender equality; to progressively become gender-responsive; and ultimately to adopt gender-transformative approaches that challenge unequal power relations and change discriminatory structures.

In the Knowledge and Policy Pathway, SwedBio actively promotes women's rights and gender equality in global and regional policy dialogue, emphasizing inclusivity and a broad range of perspectives from diverse women on issues related to biodiversity and ecosystem governance and management. While maintaining a focus on women in all their diversity, SwedBio also works collaboratively with partners to ensure a more inclusive approach across all genders. Development of position papers and policy briefs on topics concerning gender equality and biodiversity fosters networking, coalition-building, and support among women to find common ground and strengthen their influence in regional and global policy debates. During policy discussions, SwedBio encourages and supports the representation of diverse women, strengthens the participation of underrepresented genders, and promotes the active, meaningful participation of all genders in meetings and events to increase gender-responsiveness in decision-making processes.

3.1 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning

SwedBio supports and builds the capacity of partner organizations to engage in the monitoring of the implementation of gender equality policies in local, regional, and global contexts, as well as equal access to rights pertaining to biodiversity and ecosystem governance and management for all genders. SwedBio encourages its partners to base their project implementation on gender equality by promoting and facilitating a listening and learning approach to exchange perspectives, experiences, and recommendations regarding gender dynamics and the promotion of gender-responsive actions, and gender-transformative ones, where possible, at the intervention level. The programme's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning integrates gender analysis to ensure inclusiveness, equity, and effectiveness in addressing gender inequalities and power imbalances.

3.2 Communication and Language[19] [20]

SwedBio also implements the gender equality policy in its communication work, where gender is mainstreamed. Most of the communication materials are co-produced in collaboration with partners where we focus on all genders, especially women and girls, being portrayed as active agents of change, making sure there is a gender balance in pictures and written text, and highlighting gender equality

[19] UN Guidelines for Gender Inclusive language, Available at: https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml. These guidelines provide hands-on tips for how to write in a gender inclusive

[20] SwedBio Communication Strategy

efforts in annual reports. SwedBio communication efforts actively avoid stereotypes, bias, and tokenism, and include revisions of communication to remove exclusionary and discriminatory language to ensure protagonists feel seen and heard.

3.3. Methods for Knowledge Co-creation Processes

SwedBio supports policy and methods development for gender equality in all aspects of its work for biological diversity and ecosystem services. SwedBio acts as a 'knowledge interface,' bridging practice, policy, and knowledge, and connecting local experiences and realities in developing countries to global policy processes. SwedBio also manages collaborative partnerships by providing strategic contributions, both financial and technical, to partner organizations in low- and middle-income countries[21].

For SwedBio, systematically integrating gender dimensions into policy and methodological frameworks means intentionally addressing gender roles, inequalities, power dynamics, and relations. Following SwedBio's HRBA and conflict perspective policies, this involves targeting the root causes of inequalities and violence.

[21] To identify the regions where SwedBio works, including Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, SwedBio uses the OECD and World Bank definitions. However, we acknowledge other decolonized categorizations used by different groups, such as the Majority world and historically colonized countries, colonized and formerly colonized nations.

4. Definitions and boundaries

Concept	Short definition	What does it mean for SwedBio and the guiding questions to integrate gender perspectives into the programme?
All genders/ Diverse genders	All genders include all gender identities; regardless of identity, everyone is included. Diverse gender refers to genders beyond the traditional binary system (man/woman).	SwedBio applies the definition, understanding and application of the concept, as articulated by recognized international frameworks, without any variation or organization-specific interpretation.
Disabilities	Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Disability is an evolving concept that results from this interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers.[22]	SwedBio upholds the concept of persons with disabilities in the same terms as outlined in the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and addresses this within broader principles, including fundamental principles of non- discrimination and intersectionality.

[22] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Art. 1 and Preamble (e) Internationally agreed language (inter alia CRPD).

Gender	*Sex and gende*r are concepts used to make a distinction between biologically given and socially constructed differences. Sex refers to biological differences between women and men regardless of age, ethnicity, or other variables. Gender refers to socially constructed differences between the sexes, norms, and cultural expectations on women/girls, men/boys, and how femininity and masculinity are defined.[23] Gendered norms and perceptions of masculinity and femininity can be harmful to men, women, and those who do not define themselves according to these binary categories. Gender equality involves the transformation of gender norms beyond ensuring the rights of women and girls.	SwedBio applies the definition, understanding and application of the concept, as articulated by recognized international frameworks, without any variation or organization-specific interpretation.
Gender-Based Violence	Any harm or suffering that is perpetrated against women and girls, men or boys, non-binary and diverse gender persons that stems from the perpetrator's dominance and perception of the other person's gender causing physical, sexual, psychological, and/or economic harm, having a negative impact on the development and identity of the person. The cause of violence is founded in gender -based power inequalities and gender-based discrimination.[24]	Given the sensitivity of gender-based violence (GBV) the issue is addressed differently based on the focus of the partner collaboration. However, SwedBio checks if the partner organization has an anti-sexual harassment policy and how this regulates project activities. SwedBio checks whether GBV is identified as a risk by partners. Even if it has not been flagged, the topic is raised in a careful and sensitive manner. Discussions often explore whether mechanisms exist to prevent, report, and respond to GBV, always ensuring that no one is put at risk or harmed further. Where GBV risks are identified, SwedBio seeks to understand whether the projects address the structural and systemic drivers of GBV, such as harmful social norms and gender inequality, and whether affected communities are meaningfully engaged in shaping interventions and solutions based on their life experiences, which would support structural change and recovery efforts for all.

[23] Sida Gender Analysis - Principles and Elements Available at: https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61853en-gender-analysis-principles-elements.pdf

[24] Sida Gender Transformative Change - an evidence-based overview Available at: https://cdn.sida.se/app/uploads/2022/08/16125152/10206354_Thematic_Brief_Gender_Transformative_Change_2022.pdf

Gender equality	Equality between women and men (gender equality) refers to the *equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys*.[25] For Sweden's development cooperation, gender equality is a matter of freedom, a core Swedish value, and essential to democracy and its development. Gender equality signifies the equal value of every individual.[26]	When addressing efforts toward gender equality in a project, SwedBio uses a scale to assess collaboration from a gender perspective. All collaborations should be at least gender-sensitive: recognizing gender-related issues; understanding the roles and experiences of women, girls, men, and boys; highlighting differences and promoting actions toward gender equality; and acknowledging gender power dynamics. The collaboration focuses on raising awareness and recognizing gender differences and norms, as well as inequalities, while avoiding reinforcing bias and ensuring equitable treatment. On an advanced level on the scale, a gender responsive approach not only acknowledges gender power imbalances but also proactively develops actions to respond to these issues, aiming to reduce inequalities among all those involved in the project, particularly rights holders. The focus is on transforming relationships. An optimal level of support for gender equality is achieved through a gender transformative approach, where the intervention is designed to address the root causes of gender inequality, not only within communities but across society, contributing to change of social norms, cultural values, and power structures.
Gender mainstreaming	Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to achieve the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation, and monitoring of programmes and projects.[27]	The concept maintains the same meaning for the organization and is recognized as cross-cutting across other concepts. As such, it does not have specific guiding questions, since its application is broad and foundational.

[25] United Nations, UN Women https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm

[26] Ministry for Foreign Affairs Strategy for gender equality and women's and girls' freedom and empowerment 2025-2028

[27] Sida Gender Analysis - Principles and Elements Available at: https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida61853en-gender-analysis-principles-elements.pdf

Gender responsive	The process of ensuring that programmes, policies, and organizations take into account the different needs and experiences of people based on their gender identity. Actions are responsive to the diverse needs, experiences, and realities of people, including those who may face discrimination or disadvantage because of their gender.[28] Gender responsive actions address equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, but does not address the root causes of inequality.	A gender-responsive approach is fostered in all collaborations, securing funding and support for women- and girls-led initiatives. Collaborations are fostered to support the process of empowering and strengthening women's and girls' organizations, increasing their participation in decision-making at various levels—including within their communities, encouraging sex-disaggregated data and indicators, and ensuring their protection and enjoyment of human rights while ensuring access to opportunities. Collaborations also make space to discuss work targeting men and their perception of women's rights, and ways to support to gender equality. The collaboration addresses the issues and responds, aiming to transform relations. Guiding questions: Have you observed any specific gender-related significant change? How are gender equality efforts integrated, and how could they be strengthened? Were there any opportunities to increase gender equality, and are there areas where there is a need to engage different actors? Are activities accessible and culturally appropriate for all genders? Are there any gender related risks identified? Have you observed any signs of gender-based violence (GBV), and do you have any mechanisms to prevent or mitigate it? How do you see the project contributing to reducing gender inequalities?
Gender transformative approaches	Gender transformative approaches seek to tackle the root causes of gender inequality and challenge unequal power relations. This approach moves away from a deficit model that focuses entirely on individual 'empowerment' and towards transforming the structures that reinforce gender inequality.[29]	Interventions using a gender-transformative approach are designed to address root causes of gender inequality at community, institutional, and societal levels.
Intersectionality	Gender is a social variable that intersects with other social identities like age, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, and	SwedBio strives to exchange with partners, reflect and take action on intersectionality.

[28] Consolidated guidance notes for the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework. Available at: https://www.cbd.int/gbf/files/km%20gbf%20targets%201%20to%2023-%20consolidate%20guidance%20notes.pdf

[29] The United Nations Inter-agency network on women and gender equality (IANWGE) Intersectionality Informed Gender Analysis Toolkit

	sexual orientation. Intersectionality helps understand how these identities interact to create unique experiences in relation to privilege and oppression. For example, a woman's experience is also shaped by her ethnicity, age, or sexuality. An intersectional approach shows how systems of power, such as racism, sexism, and classism, operate through institutions, policies, and cultural norms, affecting people in interconnected ways. Oppressions based on ethnicity, gender, or disability don't act alone but influence each other. It's crucial to specify which group of women or men is being discussed, as experiences are diverse. This framework can be a tool for resistance and social change by addressing how structures of inequality can be transformed.[30] [31] [32]	<u>Guiding questions:</u> What are the rights holders and their intersecting identities? Do you foresee any barriers, particularly based on the intersecting identities? How can invisible realities and groups be visible? Will the project, in any case, exacerbate the barriers and inequalities? What are the risks? How will barriers be addressed? How can SwedBio support the participation of all? Will the interactions and inclusion process be sustainable and continue beyond the implementation period? Given the identified existing intersections of discrimination/ marginalization, do you need to apply any specific measures to ensure active and meaningful participation, influence, leadership, or other? How were intersecting forms of discrimination and structural inequalities identified and addressed?
Marginalized genders	Marginalized genders refer to gender identities that are systematically disadvantaged, excluded, or underrepresented in social, economic, political, or cultural systems. This term typically includes women (cis and trans), non-binary people, queer individuals, agender individuals, and others whose identities fall outside the dominant cisgender male norm. In the context of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), understanding and addressing the challenges faced by marginalized genders is essential to creating fair, equitable, and inclusive environments.	The concept maintains the same meaning for the organization and is viewed as cross-cutting across other concepts. Guiding questions are similar to the ones mentioned under intersectionality.

[30] Sida Gender Equality in Practice https://www.sida.se/om-sida/publikationsarkivet/gender-equality-in-practice

[31] Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 139–167.

[32] Hill Collins, Patricia, and Sirma Bilge. *Intersectionality*. Cambridge, UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2016.

Note on this document's development and evolution:

This policy document was initially developed by SwedBio's team with valuable support from Ramboll in 2020. Their expertise and guidance provided a solid foundation for our work. Over time, as SwedBio's work evolved and understanding deepened, SwedBio's team revised the document and adapted it to stay relevant and aligned with the programme. SwedBio acknowledges Annica Holmberg, a Gender and HRBA specialist, for her insightful contributions during the revision process. The updates reflect a commitment to continually strengthening gender equality and offer guidance that addresses the daily needs of the work. SwedBio recognizes and appreciates the contributions of everyone involved, past and present, including partner organizations, for their collaboration and mutual learning, which helped shape this living document.