

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GENDER IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR



Introduction

The transport sector is a conduit for economic growth—it creates jobs, connects goods and services to markets, broadens access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities, and reduces time poverty. Transport-related spending amounted to about 2 percent of global GDP in 2015.¹ It plays a crucial role in promoting not only economic growth, but also social progress and cohesion. Further, the sector is a key lever in the drive to tackle carbon emissions and climate change.²

IN 2015, TRANSPORT-RELATED SPENDING AMOUNTED TO ABOUT 2% OF GLOBAL GDP.



Transport providers can benefit from increased ridership and optimization of operations by considering the distinct needs and travel patterns of different user groups—women, the differently abled, youth, and the elderly. Women in particular are widely underrepresented among transport sector service providers. The perspectives of women passengers are often missing, and they continue to face persistent challenges in terms of accessibility, affordability, and safety. The transport sector workforce is heavily male dominated. Women remain largely underrepresented in transport sector agencies, and their voices are often not heard in policy and planning processes. As users, global research shows that women’s travel patterns differ from that of men. For instance, women tend to travel shorter distances than men and are more likely to travel with dependents and use public transportation.³ Further, women are often more economically challenged and have less control over household resources, forming an often-disenfranchised group that stands to benefit greatly from improved transport access and the doors it can open, including jobs, education, and healthcare, which in turn can contribute to the overall growth of societies.

Expanding transport networks has the potential to improve the lives of men and women, but the extent and distribution of social benefits depend very much on how transport projects are designed and implemented. Without careful and inclusive planning, projects can exacerbate gender and income disparities. Gender-neutral planning approaches can reinforce the status quo with regards to access to power and resources. Transport projects often lack a gender lens and do not sufficiently consider women’s travel needs, safety concerns, priorities, and preferences. Transport solutions that meet women’s affordability, access, safety, and convenience considerations are critical to ensure that gendered patterns of inequality are reduced rather than exacerbated.

To make transport projects more gender-responsive, a structured approach is needed to incorporate the voices of women at each stage of the project cycle, starting with design and planning. This business case highlights the importance of considering a gender perspective in the transport sector workforce and leadership, ridership, and among community stakeholders impacted by transport projects. It then offers recommendations and guidance to increase gender inclusion in transport projects.

1. The Business Case for Inclusion of Women in the Transport Sector

Internationally, gender is slowly beginning to be recognized as an important issue in transport policy, planning, and implementation. Increasing the number of female workers expands the talent pool available to companies. Similarly, transport routes that consider the varying mobility patterns of men and women and their different travel needs, including enhanced safety, can increase women’s satisfaction and their willingness to use public transport, thus increasing overall ridership. Transport projects often require land acquisition, resettlement, or livelihoods restoration, for which community support is key to ensuring progress of construction and operations. By actively engaging women in community consultations and collecting gender-disaggregated data, companies are better equipped to meet the needs of all stakeholders and can function with stronger *social license to operate*.⁴

a. Access to safe and accessible public transport is a key catalyst for increasing women’s labor force participation.

Gender norms play a major role in defining societal expectations of men and women, and these norms extend to travel behaviors and patterns. The differences in the way men and women experience transportation are largely based on gender norms that

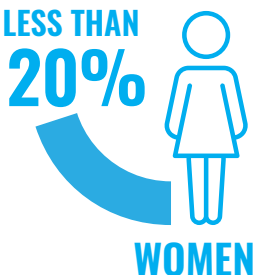
Limited access and lack of safe transport are the greatest obstacles to women’s involvement in the labor force and reduce the probability of participation by 16.5 percent.

place a double or triple burden on women to perform care responsibilities, reproductive roles, and income-generating activities, contributing to time poverty. Mobility is a prerequisite to accessing jobs, education, goods and services, and health and leisure. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), limited access and lack of safe transport are the greatest obstacles to women’s involvement in the labor force and reduce the probability of participation by 16.5 percent.⁵ Women are at higher risk of being victims of harassment and violence and perceive factors such as comfort, ease, safety, and security in a way that is different from men. Safety features in cars are primarily designed for men’s bodies, and as a result, women are 47 percent more likely to suffer severe injuries in car crashes.⁶

b. Gender-equitable transport workplaces improve safety, community satisfaction, and overall ridership.



Transport jobs can be lucrative and offer long-term career opportunities. However, the sector remains male dominated, with highly gendered and unequal employment patterns. Accurate statistics on women’s employment in the transport sector are hard to come by, especially along different modes of transportation. However, where data is available, it tells a tale of low female participation. Globally, women form less than 20 percent of the transport workforce⁷. In the European Union, women form 22 percent of the transport sector workforce, while the share of women working in the entire EU is 46 percent⁸. In Latin America, the participation of women in the construction and operation of transport systems does not exceed 15 percent of the total labor in the sector, even though women represent 50 percent of the labor force in the region.⁹

Female participation in the transport workforce, globally



LESS THAN 20%

WOMEN

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Generally, when comparing employment in different modes, air transport tends to employ the most women, albeit less frequently in STEM or technical roles, and land and sea transport have the lowest numbers. For state-owned airlines in Singapore and South Africa, women form a sizeable proportion of the workforce at 52 percent and 50 percent, respectively.¹⁰ However, women are underrepresented in STEM jobs in the airline industry, such as pilots, technicians, and engineers. India's low-budget carrier GoAir has the highest proportion of women pilots at 13 percent.¹¹ Gender gaps are more pronounced in the maritime sector, where the population of female seafarers is estimated to be only 1-2 percent of the world's total seafaring labor force.¹² There are more nuanced patterns of segregation within transport sectors—for example, women are underrepresented in skilled jobs such as drivers, and their involvement is lower still in the higher-paid technical roles like engineering. At the same time, they are often overrepresented in lower-paid administrative roles.

The number of women in top leadership positions is particularly low globally. The World Economic Forum found that while women in the mobility sector¹³ occupy 34 percent of staff roles, they represent only 21 percent and 13 percent of middle and senior level roles, respectively.¹⁴ The overall picture is one of women in the transport sector concentrated in low-status jobs with fewer opportunities for career development.¹⁵

Poor working conditions in many transport sector jobs serve as a deterrent for women. Strenuous and late working hours and travelling long distances from home are particularly challenging expectations for truck drivers and seafarers. These challenges are reinforced by cultural prejudices about what types of jobs women and men can hold. Societal norms where women are expected to assume care responsibilities make it difficult to balance professional and household responsibilities. Further, in highly male-dominated sectors such as transport, these gender biases and prejudices are deeply embedded and can create an unwelcoming environment that discourages long-term career growth.¹⁶ Sexual harassment and bullying, lack of safety, and perceived security threats are other critical issues that affect women's low employment in the transport sector.¹⁷

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In some contexts, legal restrictions act as a barrier for women's participation in the transport sector. According to the World Bank's 2020 *Women, Business, and the Law*

report, 16 countries have at least one legal restriction that prevents women from performing tasks in the same way as men in the transport sector. For example, in Azerbaijan women are not allowed to drive a railway, metro or locomotive train, or a bus with more than 14 seats.¹⁸

The overall benefits of increasing women's participation in the workforce

Increasing women's participation in transport sector jobs has many benefits—it generates business benefits to companies and contributes to improving women's economic empowerment and overall economic growth. Through concerted efforts to recruit, retain, and promote women in the transport sector workforce, companies can attract better talent, improve public image and client satisfaction, and gain better safety results and more efficient vehicle maintenance.¹⁹ When women gain employment in well-paid jobs in transport, they can become critical agents in transforming societies and economies. With economic empowerment, women's bargaining and decision-making power in the household rise, corresponding with better nutrition outcomes²⁰ and education and human capital developments.²¹ Women also bring new skills to the table, and the productivity gains of adding women to the labor force are greater than previously thought. An International Monetary Fund (IMF) study of the bottom half of the sample of countries with poor gender equality found that closing the gender gap could increase GDP by an average of 35 percent. While a majority of the gains come from the injection of workers to the labor force, one-fifth are attributable to productivity rising as a result of gender diversity.²² Further, a McKinsey study found that global GDP could rise by \$28 trillion by 2025 if women participated in the economy at the same rate as men.²³

BOX 1 | Maersk Group Aims to Increase Women's Leadership

Maersk Group, a Danish shipping and logistics conglomerate, has adopted diversity and inclusion within the workforce as a business practice. While the gender breakdown is quite balanced within white-collar jobs, the management teams remain male dominated. To address this, Maersk has set targets for women in senior and executive leadership, manager roles, and board positions. The company also introduced a diversity dashboard in 2015 to help business units better track progress in meeting targets, as well as identify current and future challenges. Another measure is tailored training programs targeting women entering executive positions. Programs cover management topics and provide networking opportunities.


How the private sector can benefit from increasing women’s participation in the workforce

Being a gender-responsive employer can make a company attractive to both women and men, expanding the talent pool. Having more women applicants, and thus a larger talent pool to choose from, makes it more probable that companies will identify candidates that are a good fit. Further, by attracting both men and women, the chance of filling vacancies quickly increases, which becomes particularly relevant for positions with a shortage of skilled candidates. Snel Transport, a logistics company in the Netherlands, attributes a part of its success at managing driver shortages to its woman-friendly recruitment policies and approach. While 78 percent of Dutch logistics companies face driver shortages and an average company of Snel’s size would typically experience 10.5 unfilled driver vacancies, Snel faces no driver shortages owing to its inclusive recruitment policies.²⁴

Evidence suggests that women are not only safer drivers than men, but also more fuel efficient and take better care of vehicles. Employing more women can result in safer driving, fewer accidents, and a lower incidence of violence, as seen by Dublin Bus.²⁵ Another case study from Sofia Electric indicated that women take better care of vehicles and are less risky, which in turn leads to reduced repair and maintenance costs.²⁶

Women are also often considered better at handling client relationships, leading to more satisfied customers. Dublin Bus reported 38 percent fewer client complaints for an average woman driver in comparison to an average male driver.²⁷ Similar examples are found in Latin America and Africa. Women form one-fourth of Lima’s traffic agents and were found to be more effective in enforcing law and traffic management because of a reputation of being incorruptible.²⁸ Similarly, Buenos Aires’ city traffic management force has reached gender parity, and women in South Africa are playing an increasingly large role in transport planning.²⁹

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Gender-diverse work environments have better retention rates and improve decision making, creativity, and employee satisfaction. Lastly, employing more women can improve a company’s public image and customer satisfaction. A gender-balanced workforce better reflects a company’s clientele and creates a positive image and reputation.

c. Recognizing differences in women’s mobility patterns can help companies increase ridership.

Understanding and addressing different user needs can help not only women and societies at large, but also improve outcomes for operating entities. Improving safety and security features and designing routes, schedules, and payment mechanisms with women’s constraints and preferences in mind can directly lead to financial benefits to transport companies by encouraging ridership and reputational improvements. There are many ways in which men and women display different travel needs and patterns, as elaborated below.

Travel distance, purpose, and trip-chaining

Women display different travel patterns than men, often characterized as the mobility of care, where travel is necessitated by the caring for children and the elderly. For instance, women are more likely than men to undertake non-work travel, make daily trips to accompany children to and from school, and generally escort other passengers, usually children or dependent elderly persons. A report by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) finds

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that more than half of women’s trips in Santiago, Chile, are for care and nonwork purposes such as shopping, health, and/or picking someone up. Traveling for work represented only 15 percent of women’s trips, compared to men at 35 percent. The extra travel burden when a family decides to have children is usually assumed by women. Women’s travel as parents increases from 1.57 trips per day to 1.78 per day, while men’s remains constant at 1.73 with or without children.³⁰

Women engage in more ‘trip-chaining,’ whereby they undertake more frequent and shorter trips, at varied times, and they are also more likely to travel during non-peak hours. Thus, women have more complex travel patterns than men, who follow more linear patterns from home to workplace. Further, when traveling women tend to cover shorter distances and are more likely to work from home. Women often value flexibility and convenience over time savings in their travel choices.³¹

BOX 2 | Chile's Focus on Women Users

At 51 percent, women are a significant portion of the users of public transport in Santiago. Recognizing that women both form a sizeable portion of users and have distinct travel patterns, the Transport Ministry in Chile adopted a gender equity policy to make public transportation more fair. Santiago piloted a model that integrates buses, subways, and commuter train fares in a single payment usable for more than one trip. This greatly benefits women, as it reduces costs from trip chaining and switching between different modes of transport. The city has designed safer night routes, installed emergency buttons, and deployed mobile apps to increase safety. Buses consider women's accessibility preferences with wider seats and more space to increase ease of travel with children and elders. The policy also covers measures to increase women's employment in the sector through training for drivers and gender quotas, among other strategies.

Transport modes

Literature shows differences between men and women in the modes of transport they choose. As trips connected to income generation are more valued than care-based trips, men who tend to be the primary breadwinners usually get access to mass and individual motorized transport before women. Women tend to walk more.³² Cycling tends to form a smaller mode share for women than men, i.e., women are less likely to cycle for their trips than men. The gender difference is starker in geographies where cycling levels are low—research found that when cycling levels are less than 7 percent, women on average are 50–60 percent less likely than men to cycle.³³ The reasons for this difference relate to road safety and personal security issues, including the risk of sexual assault³⁴, risk aversiveness, and inhibiting cultural norms in some contexts.

Differences along gender lines are also evident with motorized transport. Women often form a majority of the users of public transportation. In Latin America and the Caribbean, for example, over half of the users of public transport systems are women.³⁵ Largely, men tend to take more trips by car or motorcycle, and women make more trips by buses or certain non-motorized modes.³⁶

There also are distinctions in the modes of public transportation used by men and women. A study from 10 cities in Europe and Asia found that women use buses more than rail services.³⁷ This makes sense when one considers that rail transport is intended to cover longer distances more effectively, and we know that men traverse longer distances than women on average. In Jakarta, men traveled 42 percent further than women, and 39 percent further in Kuala Lumpur.³⁸ That women use buses more than rail services is also validated by other studies—

women in Mumbai made 45 percent more trips by bus than train,³⁹ and in Delhi, 34 percent of women commuted to work by bus compared to 25 percent of men.⁴⁰

When it comes to private vehicles, in four Southeast Asian cities men were found to be twice as likely as women to use cars as their primary transport mode.⁴¹ However, women are more likely to use door-to-door services like Lyft, Uber, etc. than men.⁴² A study by Uber and IFC found that women represent a significant portion of the user base and in Indonesia, one of the six markets surveyed, women form a majority of the riders. Over 25 percent of women surveyed said that ride-hailing increased their sense of independence; a similar percentage stated that it helps them get to places not serviced by public transportation. Going out at night is the third most popular use of ride-hailing among women globally.⁴³

Security

Violence in public spaces—and particularly on transport systems—strongly impedes the freedom of movement of women and girls. This can take the form of verbal harassment such as catcalling, teasing, and staring, as well as physical forms of violence such as groping, touching, men exposing themselves, and even rape. Women face greater risk of violence and harassment than men when using public transportation. A 2011 Gallup survey showed that 60 percent of women reported sexual harassment on the street or in public transport in cities in China, Egypt, India, Israel, Japan, Pakistan, Korea, and the United States, among other countries⁴⁴, highlighting the need to make transport systems safer for women. Data from five global cities found that 12 percent of women who have an unsafe experience in a public place never go back, 47 percent avoid going back alone, and 1 percent stop going out altogether.⁴⁵ Another study in Karachi, Pakistan, showed that over 70 percent of women have experienced harassment in public transportation, and a sizeable number of the respondents said they reduced their use of public transport after harassment.⁴⁶ Another study found that the fear of sexual harassment in public transportation is passed down from mother to children, an inter-generational issue which can hinder future ridership.⁴⁷ The lack of security in public transportation reduces women’s ridership of public transportation in addition to negatively affecting their wellbeing, access to resources, employment, education, and health.

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in cities in China, Egypt, India, Israel, Japan, Pakistan, Korea, and the United States, among other countries.

Climate emissions

The transport sector is the fastest growing contributor to climate emissions—in 2016, it accounted for over 24 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions.⁴⁸ Transport emissions primarily involve road, rail, air, and marine transportation, with the main drivers of growth being land transport, mostly light-duty vehicles such as cars, and freight transport.⁴⁹ Gender sensitivity in mobility planning can be an effective measure to increase environmental sustainability. A study in Malmo, Sweden, shows that women users choose more sustainable transport options than men—if men’s travel patterns matched that of women, CO2 emissions would go down by 31 percent, particle emissions would decrease by 21 percent, nitrogen emissions would fall by 25 percent, and the noise level would decrease by 1 decibel. Reductions in climate emissions, accidents, and noise levels would translate to annual savings of 300 million kronor (approximately \$30 million USD).⁵⁰

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In conclusion, since women rely on public transport more than men, incorporating gender mobility patterns into transport planning and operations is imperative for the success of transport networks and operating companies. When women are unable to access transportation, their education, access to the labor market, and healthcare are limited, which results in reductions in local and national GDP. Increasing women’s participation in the formal economy can reduce poverty and increase social stability. Gender-responsive transport policies also contribute to economic and social development and climate change mitigation.

BOX 3 | Uganda Transport Project Cancelled Following Sexual Abuse

In 2015, the World Bank cancelled a \$265 million roads project after serious allegations of sexual abuse and violence by contractors. The project to construct a 66 kilometer road in Kamwenge in Western Uganda failed to actively consider the safety and wellbeing of community members. In the construction phase, a large influx of temporary workers with little oversight led to many unplanned pregnancies and secondary school dropouts in the surrounding villages. A finding from an external report on the issue named insufficient community consultation as one of the issues during the project.⁵¹

d. Including women in transport project planning and implementation improves project outcomes.

Major transport infrastructure projects such as roads, ports, and airports can sometimes involve social and economic displacement. While companies often have resettlement and livelihood restoration plans accompanied by community engagement strategies in efforts to build positive relations with communities, many do not specifically seek to understand or accommodate the challenges of *all* community stakeholders, especially women and youth.

Companies can grow their social license to operate when they ensure gender-responsive community engagement practices, with particular attention to the safety and wellbeing of women and the prevention of gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH).

By magnifying the voices of marginalized groups, including women and youth, companies can ensure that community investments reflect the real needs of the community and secure sustainability of investments. Companies can avoid shutdowns, protests, and wasted money on ineffective community development initiatives by considering women as distinct community stakeholders.

Owing to gender norms on mobility, childcare, and household responsibilities, women are often unable to attend community engagement meetings. In some cultures, women are discouraged from expressing their views openly in the presence of men, making it difficult to share their views in mixed-group settings. Laws and legal structures in many countries discriminate against women when it comes to inheritance and land rights, which poses challenges to their inclusion as beneficiaries in resettlement and rehabilitation processes.

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In their roles as primary providers of water, food, and energy in households and communities, women are often highly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods and particularly susceptible to changes in their availability and quality. Lack of access to land, which is a precursor to rights to all other natural resources and productive inputs, can force women into particularly vulnerable positions. Lastly, the construction phase of projects leads to an influx of mostly male temporary workers in jobs not typically given to women, increasing the risk of GBVH and unplanned pregnancies, which can not only cause grave distress to women, but also to their communities. The impact can completely disrupt projects (see Box 3, above).

Experience from road projects shows that women's community groups can be particularly effective in ensuring road maintenance. When a road construction project in China was maintained by women's groups, their work resulted in continued access throughout the rainy season, as well as maintaining road conditions and access to markets, health, and school facilities. Wages from the project added a significant boost to women's incomes, increased their decision-making in households, and improved their community standing.⁵²

2. Strategies to Address Gender Gaps

Various measures can be taken to increase women's participation in roles such as drivers, technical operators, planners, etc. in the transport sector and increase business benefits for companies:

- Measuring gender equality in the workforce, leadership, and supply chain and connecting it to tangible business benefits is important to grow the business case for a company and encourage other players in the market. Demonstrating the business benefits of gender equality is needed to build buy in and continued support across an organization. Some of the indicators that can be tracked to demonstrate business benefit include the numbers of vacancies and applications by gender, the time needed to fill vacancies, retention rates, absenteeism, employee satisfaction, positive media coverage, etc. (Relevant Tools: See [TOOL 1.2: Develop a Business Case for Gender Diversity](#).)
- Getting the backing and support of senior management is critical for the success of gender-inclusive solutions and a catalyst for positive perceptions in the company about women's increased participation. Communication from senior management on the importance of gender equality helps to make it a priority and garner resources to implement programs. (Relevant Tools: See [TOOL 1.10: Terms of Reference for a Gender Equity Champion](#), [TOOL 1.14: Checklist for Senior Leadership to Demonstrate Commitment](#), and [TOOL 1.15: Creation of a Gender Task Force and Terms of Reference for a Gender Task Force](#).)

- Developing a gender action plan with detailed activities, indicators to measure progress, targets, budgets, and a timeline with assigned responsibility to teams/ individual managers. The activities in the action plan may specify measures to increase the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women and could include designing gender-responsive job advertisements, requiring a percentage of women in shortlists for jobs, training, career development support, mentorship and networking, pay gap analyses, etc. (Relevant Tools: See [TOOL 1.3: Gender Audit: Introduction, Processes, and Tools](#), [TOOL 1.4: Terms of Reference for Gender Audit](#), [TOOL 1.5: Employee Scorecard](#), [TOOL 1.6: Pay Gap Survey Guidance and Terms of Reference](#), [TOOL 1.8: Gender Policy Guidance and Sample Gender Policy](#), [TOOL 1.9: Establish a Gender Equity Strategy](#), [TOOL 1.20: Sample Mentoring/ Mentee Agreement](#), and [TOOL 1.21: Guidelines for Developing Women’s Careers and Leadership](#).)
- Developing partnerships with technical schools and vocational training centers to foster women talent in the STEM pipeline. By providing scholarships, internships, and apprenticeships, companies can foster women’s participation in STEM jobs and tackle supply shortages of women in the talent pipeline.
- Addressing impediments to the recruitment and retention of women in the workforce. This could include inclusive policies such as targets and quotas that consider inclusion as well as merit when recruiting, standardized interview procedures, gender-responsive job advertisements, implicit bias training, childcare support, flexible work, and anti-harassment/non-discrimination policies. (Relevant Tools: See [TOOL 1.11: Develop Human Resources Policies and Programs to Support a Gender-Inclusive Workforce](#), [TOOL 1.12: Set Gender Recruitment Targets](#), [TOOL 1.17: Reducing Implicit Bias in the Workplace](#), and [TOOL 1.18: Guidelines for Building a Gender-Diverse Talent Pipeline and Workforce](#).)

Companies can ensure that women’s needs as users are addressed through various measures, including design features and contractual requirements:

- Considering women’s travel patterns when designing bus and train routes and schedules. Measures that might help include paying attention to off-peak transport, identifying the location of bus stops to meet women’s safety and convenience standards, flexible drop-offs, and bus design features such as lower steps, wider doors, and space for strollers that cater to the needs of the elderly, women, and mothers with children.⁵³

- Analyzing the demands of different groups, including women, in designing transport services that match demand and supply and address gendered mobility patterns. Informal or private modes of transport like minivans, taxis, and moto-taxis often fill public transport gaps and play an important role in supplementing women’s mobility requirements. Regulating these players can be a crucial step in ensuring non-price discrimination and safety for women.⁵⁴
- Designing fare schemes that reduce multimodal travel costs by reducing transfer costs, introducing cheaper daily or weekly tickets⁵⁵, or designing differential fare structures that vary based on time of day and routing can be particularly beneficial to women.⁵⁶

BOX 4 | Technology to Increase Women’s Safety

Technology can be used as a tool to increase women’s safety in public transportation. Mobile applications and helplines can facilitate reporting and coordination with the police. The ride-hailing app Uber has integrated many features to increase women’s safety as drivers and riders, including an emergency button that alerts police and shares real-time GPS tracking, the ability to share trip details with family or friends, and anonymized contact information when connecting through the app. Safetipin, a mobile application developed in India, offers an option to conduct safety audits using map-based technology and collects information from users and trained auditors to assess perceptions of urban safety in public spaces. Information is collected on nine parameters including lighting, level of crowding or emptiness, availability of public transportation, footpaths, and more. It focuses particularly on last mile connectivity and the surroundings of metro stations, and since its implementation in Delhi has been used in cities such as Bogota, Manilla, and Mexico City.

- Developing gender-inclusive messaging and communications that show women as travelers and transport employees, as well as awareness campaigns on the non-tolerance of sexual violence or harassment in public transportation.
- Instituting policies and practices that reduce women’s sense of exposure to risk. These may include the flexibility of disembarking closer to their destination in the evenings, increasing the number of stops, well-lit waiting areas and restrooms, security cameras, and better dialogue and collaboration with female police.

- Increasing driver and passenger safety in ride sharing. Installing panic buttons, providing GBVH training to drivers, offering training on sensitive and efficient complaint redressal, and designing concessions with ride-sharing companies can increase safety and last mile connectivity in peripheral city areas.
- Capacity building through trainings can improve GBVH responsiveness among bus operators, conductors, and drivers and collaborating with police and public authorities to strengthen prosecution.
- Collecting information on risk and safety through a safety audit, which generally consists of exploratory walks by groups of three to six people from local communities and often involves city planners and counselors for awareness and sensitization. Participants identify sites where potential for crime is high or where women may feel unsafe. Safety audits are meant to create awareness about violence against vulnerable groups and women and are about improving the physical environment and making spaces like bus stops and streets safer for everyone.⁵⁷

BOX 5 | Women as Active Community Stakeholders in Peru

A road project in Peru gave women the opportunity to express their transport needs in participatory workshops. Largely due to these consultations with women, 3,465 kilometers of non-motorized roads were refurbished, connecting previously isolated communities to markets and services and increasing the economic rate of return of the project. A gender impact assessment conducted found that 77 percent of women traveled more frequently and 65 percent felt they traveled more safely. It also showed that women’s participation increased project efficiency, transparency, and quality.⁵⁸

A gender impact assessment conducted for a road project in Peru found that women’s participation in consultations **increased project efficiency, transparency, and quality.**

The gender impact assessment also found that



77% of women TRAVELED MORE FREQUENTLY



65% of women FELT THEY TRAVELED MORE SAFELY

Companies can increase representation of women’s perspectives in community engagement and planning by:

- Incorporating a gender lens that ensures that transport solutions meet the needs of both men and women. Gender issues can be considered in the same way as environmental and social issues in the project cycle.
- Instituting strong GBVH policies and monitoring their implementation are key steps to ensuring the safety and protection of women in communities affected by transport projects. They should include clear codes of conduct, grievance mechanisms, speedy response to incidents, and GBVH training for contractors and workers. (Relevant Tools: See [TOOL 4.12: GBVH and Respectful Workplaces Guidelines and Sample Policy](#) and [TOOL 4.15: Developing a Theory of Change for Interventions Involving GBVH.](#))
- Identifying the stakeholders correctly is a key step. Who are the beneficiaries/users? Who are the women users? Who else might be affected? Are there any women’s groups or community/NGO groups that represent these different stakeholders?
- Ensuring gender-sensitivity in stakeholder analysis. Key questions include: Do the different stakeholder groups include a group with a gender perspective? Is there gender balance in the institutions presented? Is there gender expertise available? Is there a group that would be opposed to gender mainstreaming—and if so, why? The ensuing stakeholder engagement plan that is developed out of the stakeholder analysis must consider the holistic needs of different stakeholders. By recognizing that gender norms impact men and women differently, the plan should outline strategies to ensure that the voices and perspectives of both men and women are received.
- Ensuring women’s participation in community consultations and decision-making meetings. Conducting preliminary research can help to ascertain time and mobility constraints facing women and incorporate them into plans. Projects can organize separate meetings with men and women so that women can express themselves and their concerns more freely, especially in social contexts that inhibit women from speaking in public or around men. Offering childcare services is also an effective strategy to encourage women’s participation in public consultations for transport projects. (Relevant Tools: See [TOOL 3.7: Facilitate Gender-Equitable Participation in Consultations on Infrastructure Operations.](#))

Collecting gender-disaggregated data

A critical step in providing equitable transport solutions is collecting gender-disaggregated data on users, employees, community stakeholders, and suppliers. Such data is needed at all stages, from scoping and planning to operations. Collecting data disaggregated by gender and other socioeconomic factors such as income and education improves transportation policy and responsiveness to user needs. Traditional methods such as origin-destination surveys must incorporate women's mobility patterns. Some topics to include are travel speeds according to factors such as mode, trip purpose, trip chaining⁵⁹, and safety perceptions. Further, data on the business benefits of women's employment in the sector, as outlined above, need to be captured and shared.

Conclusion

Gender-responsive transport and mobility planning is not only imperative for women's empowerment, but also for business benefits for transport companies and the overall economic and social development of cities and economies. Increasing women's participation in the transport workforce and leadership can increase the talent pool, fill vacancies quickly, increase safety, and reduce maintenance costs. By understanding and addressing gender differences in mobility patterns and needs, including safety from harassment and sexual abuse on public transportation, companies can increase ridership while women are able to better access benefits such as jobs and healthcare. Ensuring that women's perspectives are integrated into community engagement can increase companies' social license to operate and improve community relations. Gender responsiveness in planning and implementation is a necessary approach for transport projects.

APPLICABLE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1: Assessment and Management of Environmental and Social Risks and Impact

This standard establishes the importance of (i) integrated assessment to identify the environmental and social impacts, risks, and opportunities of projects; (ii) effective community engagement through disclosure of project-related information and consultation with local communities on matters that directly affect them; and (iii) the client's management of environmental and social performance throughout the life of the project. It outlines the importance of inclusive and participatory stakeholder engagement, consultations, and grievance mechanisms for affected communities. PS1 also underscores the importance of a gender-responsive approach throughout the project lifecycle when analyzing project risks, impacts and opportunities, including steps such as diagnostic, management of environmental and social risks, participatory processes, and stakeholder analysis.

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2: Labor and Working Conditions

This standard covers working conditions, protection of the workforce, operational health and safety, third party workers, and workers involved in the supply chain. With regard to gender, it promotes non-discrimination and equal opportunity, health and safety of the workforce, protection of potentially vulnerable workers. It applies to workers directly engaged by the client (direct workers), workers engaged through third parties to perform work related to core business processes of the project for a substantial duration (contracted workers), as well as workers engaged by the client's primary suppliers (supply chain workers).

PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4: Community Health, Safety, and Security

This standard recognizes that business activities and infrastructure projects may expose local communities to increased risks and adverse impacts related to worksite accidents, hazardous materials, spread of diseases, or interactions with private security personnel. PS4 helps companies adopt responsible practices to reduce such risks including through emergency preparedness and response, security force management, and design safety measures. Women, as a sub-set of the affected community, can face differential risk—arising, for instance, from health issues or gender-based violence. The risks to affected communities as outlined in PS4 (emergency preparedness and response, hazardous materials, security personnel, etc.) should be assessed and mitigated for gender differentiated impacts during project design and implementation.

Endnotes

- 1 McKinsey, [Bridging Infrastructure Gaps: Has the World Made Progress?](#) 2016.
- 2 See the World Bank's [Transport site](#).
- 3 Sustainable Urban Transport Project, [Approaches for Gender-Responsive Urban Mobility](#), 2018.
- 4 While there isn't a universally accepted definition, social license to operate is the idea that there is more to running a business successfully and sustainably than legal and regulatory compliance, and that companies need to earn the support of the community and society in which they operate. It means ongoing acceptance by the people who live in the area of impact or influence of a project; it is also a form of risk management against delays, conflict, and additional costs ([World Bank, 2014](#)).
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- 8 European Commission, [Business case to increase female employment in Transport](#), 2018.
- 9 IDB, [Relationship between Gender and Transport](#), 2016.
- 10 Inka Schomer and Alicia Hammond. [Stepping Up Women's STEM Careers in Infrastructure: An Overview of Promising Approaches](#). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group, 2020.
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- 12 ILO, [Promoting the employment of women in the transport sector - Obstacles and policy options](#), 2013.
- 13 Defined as Aviation and Travel, Automotive, and Supply Chain and Transportation.
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- 24 European Commission, [Business case to increase female employment in Transport](#), 2018.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 SUTP, [Approaches for Gender-Responsive Urban Mobility](#), 2018.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 SUTP, [Approaches for Gender-Responsive Urban Mobility](#), 2018.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Goel, R et al., [Cycling behaviour in 17 countries across 6 continents](#). 2021
- 34 Mona Chalabi, ["Why women don't cycle."](#) FiveThirtyEight, 2014.

- ³⁵ IDB, [Relationship between Gender and Transport](#), 2016.
- ³⁶ ITF, [Understanding Urban Travel Behavior by Gender for Efficient and Equitable Transport Policies](#), 2018.
- ³⁷ SUTP, [Approaches for Gender-Responsive Urban Mobility](#), 2018.
- ³⁸ ITF, [Understanding Urban Travel Behavior by Gender for Efficient and Equitable Transport Policies](#), 2018.
- ³⁹ World Bank, [A gender assessment of Mumbai's Public Transport](#), 2011.
- ⁴⁰ Chennai City Census (2011). Retrieved [here](#).
- ⁴¹ ITF, [Understanding Urban Travel Behavior by Gender for Efficient and Equitable Transport Policies](#), 2018.
- ⁴² Ibid.
- ⁴³ IFC, [Driving toward equality: Women, ride-hailing, and the sharing economy](#), 2018.
- ⁴⁴ Jennifer L. Solotaroff and Prabha Pande Rohini, [Violence against Women and Girls: Lesson from South Asia](#). The World Bank Group, 2014.
- ⁴⁵ Plan International, [Unsafe in the City](#), 2018.
- ⁴⁶ ADB, [A Safe Public Transportation Environment for Women and Girls](#), 2015
- ⁴⁷ FIA Foundation, [She moves safely](#), 2015.
- ⁴⁸ From IEA Data and Statistics, available [here](#).
- ⁴⁹ World Health Organization, 2018.
- ⁵⁰ European Charter for Equality, [Making public transports more equal](#).
- ⁵¹ *The Guardian*, ["World Bank cancels funding for Uganda road amid sexual assault claims,"](#) 2016; World Bank [statement](#), 2016.
- ⁵² Asian Development Bank, [Community Based Routine Maintenance of Roads by Women's Groups](#), 2011.
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