

THE LABOUR AND GENDER-RELATED SAFEGUARD FRAMEWORKS OF INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

WHAT?

This is a toolkit for trade unions in the transport sector to influence International Financial Institution (IFI) funded projects, and to effectively campaign for gender and labour rights to be included.

The toolkit aims to act as an educational and practical resource for trade union activists to understand and strategically engage with the safeguard frameworks of IFIs, with a particular focus on how such safeguards can be utilised by unions to support women transport workers.

The toolkit consists of 4 parts:

- A guide to IFIs for trade unions, covering what IFIs are, introducing IFI safeguards, and in-depth guidance on engaging with and influencing these safeguards. It also includes a number of detailed case studies as well as profiles of different IFIs
- A 3-page quick reference summary
- A COVID-19 and IFIs briefing, outlining some of the ways in which IFIs have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, including on gender equality
- A Powerpoint presentation for educators, to introduce the topic and explore why engaging with the frameworks and including a gender focus is important, as well as giving guidance on how unions can engage and influence financed projects

WHY?

International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like the World Bank are public finance institutions governed by their member states.

The funding they deliver, and the conditions they attach to that funding, can and does have a profound impact on millions of transport workers around the world.

They provide loans and technical assistance to governments, public entities and private companies in low and middle-income countries for the development of projects such as new transport infrastructure. This is meant to have the aim of promoting sustainable economic development and reducing poverty.

Each IFI has their own set of 'safeguards' which are meant to lay out environmental and social standards borrowers need to meet. These standards can cover important protections for workers, and can also contain specific provisions dedicated to protecting the rights of women and gender equality.

However, women's rights and gender equality are currently poorly protected by most IFI safeguard frameworks and the scope and content of gender-related provisions varies a great deal between IFIs. Examples of provisions that are in place include the requirement for borrowers to:

- assess and manage the gender-specific risks of a project, including those related to economic displacement;
- include women in stakeholder participation processes;
- implement measures to prevent and protect against gender-based violence ;
- protect the right to non-discrimination and equal opportunity for 'project workers; and to
- address gender-specific risks in the design of occupational safety and health measures.

Because they are linked to accessing significant amounts of finance, IFI safeguards can be a vital tool for unions to positively shape the design of transport projects and improve the conditions of workers, and women workers in particular.

This toolkit exists to help trade unions do exactly that.

Our priorities for engaging with IFIs:

1. Strengthen women's employment and end the systemic exclusion of women from transport
2. Promote decent work
3. End violence against women transport workers
4. Include women in decision-making/negotiating teams
5. Recognise trade unions as stakeholders
6. Facilitate a just and worker-led formalisation
7. Strengthen IFI safeguards, especially in the area of labour and gender

