

Trade and

Women's Economic Empowerment

We want *Trade for All* to support gender equity and opportunities for New Zealand women to participate in trade. Find out about current research in this area and ideas on what others are doing. Take a look and have your say...

Why is gender equity important for successful and resilient economies?

Participation of women in economic activity is key to building a successful and resilient economy and reducing inequality within society. This has been demonstrated by international research, as outlined by the World Economic Forum article "[This is the global price of gender inequality](#)".

What is the current status of gender equity in trade in New Zealand?

The New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) report "Distributional aspects of New Zealand's tradable and non-tradable sectors" found that average incomes are higher in the tradable sector. It also found that women are less likely than men to be employed in this sector. We don't yet know whether there are specific barriers to women's participation in the tradable sector, or how these might be addressed through trade agreements. This is one area of particular focus for our Trade for All engagement and consultation.

Does New Zealand's trade policy support gender equity?

New Zealand has not traditionally negotiated specific rules around women's participation in trade in our trade agreements. The Trade for All process is an opportunity to discuss the assumptions underlying this approach. These are:

- our domestic laws do not discriminate against the participation of specific genders in economic activity
- our trade policy and the commitments we make in trade are based on a gender-equitable domestic legal framework and are gender-neutral
- we do not agree to commitments in trade agreements that allow our trade partners to discriminate against New Zealanders based on their gender, and
- the gender neutrality of our trade policy delivers equality of opportunity to our exporters.

What are examples of gender equity goals being reflected through trade agreements?

Several countries and organisations are supporting structural changes to address gender inequality through negotiating provisions in trade agreements that encourage or require parties to take domestic action to promote women's participation in trade. Strategies include:

- **Trade and gender chapters**, as negotiated by Chile in its trade agreements with Uruguay, the European Union, and Canada. For more information see "[Gender Equality and Trade Policy](#)" by Alicia Frohmann, Senior Researcher at the Institute of International Studies at the University of Chile.

- Initiatives to facilitate and support women's participation in trade regionally and globally. These are underway in organisations in which New Zealand participates, such as [Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation](#) (APEC) and the [International Trade Centre](#).
- Specific rules and commitments that reflect women's economic participation in particular sectors or particular business forms such as small and medium enterprises (one third of which are owned by women worldwide as noted in the Centre for International Governance Innovation article "[Will CPTPP Offer Tangible Improvements for Women?](#)").
- International initiatives to support women's economic empowerment: for example, the CPTPP [Joint Declaration](#) signed by Chile, Canada, and New Zealand, available at www.mfat.govt.nz; and the World Trade Organization's [Buenos Aires Declaration](#) on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment, signed by 118 WTO members including New Zealand.
- [The European Union's Sustainability Impact Assessment](#) approach, which considers the gender dimension amongst other measures of sustainability in analysing the impact of trade agreements.

What are the opportunities to address gender issues through trade agreements?

- **Measurement, analysis and evaluation:** New Zealand could undertake a detailed analysis of economic participation by gender as a guide to negotiations, and develop a gender-impact model for assessing agreements after they enter into force.
- **Rules:** New Zealand could build on the work done internationally to develop a model trade and gender chapter for its FTA negotiations.
- **Trade and gender chapters through future negotiations:** The EU-NZ negotiation includes objectives to address gender equality issues as part of the free trade agreement. Elements of this could include a framework for joint cooperation on a range of issues related to gender and trade. For further information on [New Zealand's objectives for the EU-NZ FTA negotiations](#), see www.mfat.govt.nz.
- **Coalition-building:** New Zealand could continue to work in trade negotiations and international fora to grow the pool of like-minded countries seeking to use trade as a means to facilitate women's economic empowerment.

Have your say at www.haveyoursay.mfat.govt.nz or send a submission to tradeforall@mfat.govt.nz

- What gender equity issues can and should be addressed through trade agreements?
- What further opportunities do you see for women to participate in trade?