



M31 RESEARCH
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M31 RESEARCH • POLICY DOCUMENT

CORPORATE GENDER POLICY

M31 Research's commitment to gender equality, equal opportunity, and gender-responsive research and operations

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out M31 Research's commitment to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, both within our organisation and through the research and implementation work we deliver. It exists to ensure equal opportunity and fair treatment for people of all genders, to prevent discrimination and gender-based harassment, and to embed gender-responsive practice across all of our projects.



2. Scope

This policy applies across all M31 Research offices, project sites, and research activities in every country in which we operate, and to the design and delivery of all our projects. The table below summarises who and what it covers.

Applies to	Does not apply to
All M31 Research employees, associates, consultants, enumerators and field teams, interns, and volunteers, and the design and delivery of all research and implementation projects.	Independent third-party vendors and subcontractors, except where bound by contract; they are nonetheless expected to uphold equivalent gender-equality standards.



3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Gender	The socially constructed roles, behaviours, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for women, men, girls, boys, and people of other gender identities; distinct from biological sex.
Gender equality	The equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of people of all genders.
Gender equity	Fairness of treatment according to need, which may require different treatment in order to achieve equality of outcomes.
Gender mainstreaming	Integrating a gender perspective into the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all activities and research.
Gender-based violence (GBV)	Any harmful act directed at a person on the basis of their gender, including sexual harassment, abuse, and exploitation.
Sexual harassment	Any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.



4. Policy Statement

M31 Research is committed to the following principles:

- Provide equal opportunity in recruitment, pay, promotion, training, and all conditions of employment, regardless of gender.
- Maintain a workplace free from discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence, applying zero tolerance to such behaviour.
- Work towards balanced gender representation at all levels of the organisation, including leadership and decision-making roles.
- Apply the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.
- Mainstream gender across the full research cycle, including gender-sensitive design, sex-disaggregated data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- Ensure the safe, dignified, and equitable participation of women, girls, and other vulnerable groups as research participants and field staff.
- Support work-life balance through fair leave entitlements, including maternity, paternity, and parental leave, and flexible working arrangements where feasible.
- Provide accessible and confidential channels for reporting discrimination, harassment, or gender-based violence, and respond promptly and fairly.
- Build the capacity of staff and field teams on gender equality and gender-responsive research methods.



5. Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Leadership / Board	Accountable for this policy. Champions gender equality, allocates resources, and reviews organisational gender performance.
Policy Owner	The Managing Director owns and maintains this policy, ensures it is integrated into HR and project processes, and reports performance to the Board.
Managers	Implement the policy fairly, ensure equal opportunity within their teams, address concerns promptly, and model inclusive behaviour.
All Staff	Treat colleagues and research participants with respect, comply with this policy, and report any discrimination, harassment, or GBV.
HR / Gender Focal Point	Coordinates implementation, training, and reporting on gender; receives and tracks complaints confidentially; and supports gender mainstreaming across projects.



6. Procedures

1. Apply gender-neutral, merit-based criteria in recruitment and selection, and monitor the gender balance of applicants and appointments.
2. Review pay and benefits periodically to ensure equal pay for work of equal value.
3. Integrate gender analysis into project design, including gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data collection.
4. Brief field teams on gender-sensitive data collection, the safe interviewing of women and girls, and referral pathways for any disclosure of gender-based violence.
5. Provide and track gender-equality and anti-harassment training for all staff and field teams.
6. Operate confidential channels for reporting discrimination, harassment, or gender-based violence, with clear timelines for response.
7. Investigate complaints promptly, fairly, and confidentially, and apply appropriate corrective or disciplinary action.
8. Monitor and report gender indicators, such as representation, pay equity, and complaints, to leadership.



7. Compliance & Monitoring

Compliance with this policy is mandatory. M31 Research will monitor adherence through:

- monitoring of gender-balance, pay-equity, and complaint data by Human Resources and leadership;
 - the inclusion of gender-mainstreaming checks in project quality and inception reviews;
 - periodic review of training completion and corrective actions.
- Breaches may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or contract and, in cases of harassment or gender-based violence, referral to the appropriate authorities.



8. Related Documents

- M31 Research Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy
- M31 Research Safeguarding Policy
- M31 Research Anti-Harassment and PSEAH (Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment) Policy
- M31 Research Human Resources and Recruitment Policy
- M31 Research Social & Environmental Management Policy
- Zambia Gender Equity and Equality Act No. 22 of 2015, and equivalent gender legislation in other countries of operation
- UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality), CEDAW, and IASC gender guidance



9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months, or sooner if circumstances change, such as new legislation, revised client or funder requirements, or significant changes to M31 Research's operations.



10. Contact

Questions about this policy?

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