

Advancing Feminist Principles in the Asia-Pacific through International Policy A Study

Terms of Reference for Authors

Background

Feminist perspectives in international policy have gained significant momentum over the past decade as part of a broader global movement for gender equality. Feminist international relations theory (IR) critiques traditional power structures that disproportionately benefit men and advocates for intersectional approaches that empower women, marginalized communities, and diverse voices in global decision-making, offering frameworks to better understand and dismantle the hierarchies embedded in international politics, development, economics and geopolitics. However, while feminist principles are gaining recognition for their transformative potential, their application in regional contexts – in this instance Asia – remains underexplored. While countries like Canada, Chile, Germany and Sweden for example have adopted feminist foreign and development policies, there is still a need to deepen evidence-based research and examine how and if these principles can be applied in diverse regional contexts.

The rise of feminist foreign policies (FFP) has not been without its challenges and criticisms. Contextually, the adoption of FFP has been met with backlash, even within some of the very countries that have championed it. This resistance can stem from various sources, including conservative political factions, nationalist sentiments, and concerns about the perceived prioritisation of gender issues over other foreign policy objectives.

Furthermore, there is a critical discourse surrounding FFP globally, including among feminists. Some feminist scholars and activists raise concerns about the potential for FFP to be performative, lacking genuine commitment or resources for implementation. Criticisms, especially among political elites in Asia, also include debates about the definition and scope of FFP, the risk of Western-centric approaches overlooking diverse local contexts, and the potential for FFP to be used as a tool for advancing other geopolitical agendas. Navigating these sensitivities and ensuring that feminist principles are adapted and contextualized to resonate within the region's unique socio-political landscapes is crucial.

Against this background, **The FES Gender Justice Competence Centre Asia Pacific** together with **The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)** calls for author(s) to **examine how feminist principles can be applied within Asia-Pacific's' diverse political, social and economic contexts**. The study will explore case studies from a range of Asia-Pacific countries. Through engage with local stakeholders, such as policymakers, women's rights organisations and community leaders, the project will identify challenges and opportunities for embedding feminist

principles into international policies across the region. The findings of the study will contribute to broader policy discussions on gender equality and feminist approaches in international relations, aiming to advance progressive discourses, while acknowledging and addressing the existing hesitations and critiques within the region.

Objectives of the study

The study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on analysing international policies from a feminist perspective. It should offer grounded, context-specific, and evidence-based insights and aim to inform policymaking, generate actionable insights, raise awareness, and advance feminist principles within Asia's international policy frameworks. In addition, the study should feed input for dialogue among the policymakers, practitioners, and civil society actors, contributing to policy discussions on gender equality and feminist approaches to international relations while being mindful of the regional specificities and sensitivities surrounding the adoption and framing of these principles.

Scope of work and thematic focus

Author(s) are expected to:

- Analyse the principles, successes, and challenges of existing feminist perspective in international policy
- Examine the intersections of feminist principles with Asia-Pacific's geopolitical realities, such as trade, development, economic justice, climate action, peace and security and regional integration
- Evaluate opportunities and barriers to implementing feminist principles in international policy in specific Asia-Pacific countries
- Identify localised strategies and best practices in feminist policymaking
- Exploration of entry points for feminist principles within national and/or regional policymaking processes
- Offer actionable, practical and context-specific recommendations for embedding feminist principles into international policy, development and governance frameworks

Authors are expected to incorporate:

- Intersectional, decolonial, feminist perspectives
- Regional policy trends and dynamics
- Engagement with stakeholders in consultation with FES and UNRISD
- Critical reflection on power dynamics in international policies and governance

Deliverables

- A detailed outline of the study
- A fully referenced manuscript ready for publication in line with FES style guide
- Executive Summary highlighting key message and findings
- Two rounds of peer review
- Engagement in review processes and incorporation of feedback
- Participation in presentation of findings and outcome dissemination

Timeline

Submission of the proposals:	27 th May 2025
Selection and contracting:	4 th June 2025
Inception meeting:	6 th June 2025 [Time TBC]
Submission of a detailed outline of the study	20 th June 2025
Online consultation for peer review	1 st week of July [TBC]
Submission of first draft	26 th August 2025
Online consultation for peer review	1 st week of September [TBC]
Finalisation of the study	19 th September 2025
Copyediting and layout	17 th October 2025
Publication of the study	10 th November 2025
Outreach events	To be mutually discussed

Payment terms

- 20 per cent of the contracted amount to be paid after the submission of the detailed outline of the study
- 60 per cent of the contracted amount to be paid after the submission of the first draft
- 20 per cent of the contracted amount to be paid after the completion of the first round of layout

Expected qualification and profile of author(s)

- Strong academic or professional background in feminist theory, international relations, development policy or related fields
- Proven experience in policy-oriented research and writing
- Demonstrated analytical and methodological ability
- Familiarity with international policy frameworks
- Demonstrated expertise in the Asia-Pacific context
- Capacity to work independently and engage with diverse knowledge systems
- Excellent command in English language

Application Guidelines

Interested author(s) are invited to submit the following by email to priyanka.kapar@fes.de.

Please indicate *Author proposal - Advancing Feminist Principles in Asia Pacific through International Policy* in the subject line.

- **A detailed proposal** capturing the objectives and scope of the study (maximum 3 MS Word page document, Calibri font 11, and single line spacing). The proposal should include:
 - o Research questions
 - o Methodology and approach
 - o Chosen countries for cases and context specific outcomes
 - o Preliminary structure
- **A writing sample** (preferably published work and relevant to the topic)
- **An updated CV** highlighting relevant experience

- **Financial proposal** (including cost breakdown and number of working days)

Deadline for submission

The deadline for submission is **27th May 2025, 11:59 pm Kathmandu time** (see your timezone here: <https://tinyurl.com/37jnexcZ>).

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

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|-------------|---|
| 25 per cent | Experience, expertise and qualification <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Strong academic or professional background in feminist theory, international relations, development policy or related fields [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Proven experience in policy-oriented research and writing [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Demonstrated analytical and methodological ability [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Familiarity with international policy frameworks [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Capacity to work independently and engage with diverse knowledge systems [5 points]</i>▪ <i>Excellent command in English language [5 points]</i> |
| 30 per cent | Strength of the proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Clarity and relevance of research question/focus aligned with the project objectives [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Analytical depth and originality [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Use of feminist/critical frameworks [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Methodology and feasibility [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Well-defined, aligned with project objectives proposal [10 points]</i> |
| 30 per cent | Cost
<i>Percentage for cost is calculated as follows:</i>

$[(\text{lowest quote}) \times 30] / \text{proposed quote}$ |
| 15 per cent | Familiarity with Asia-Pacific context <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Regional experience (work, research, or lived engagement) [20 points]</i>▪ <i>Depth and relevance of regional exposure [10 points]</i>▪ <i>Insights into regional geopolitics, gender justice, and socio-cultural dynamics [20 points]</i> |

Contact Person

Contact person for the project:

Priyanka Kapar
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