



# GENDER EQUALITY POLICY



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International Federation of  
Muaythai Associations



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	3
GOAL OF THE POLICY .....	5
OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY .....	5
COMMITMENTS .....	6
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY .....	7
LEGAL .....	7
DISCRIMINATION .....	7
DISCIPLINARY PROCESS.....	7
TRANSGENDER / GENDER REASSIGNMENT / TRANSSEXUAL ATHLETES	8
Annex 1. Definitions .....	9
Annex 2. Implementation of the Policy .....	11

## INTRODUCTION

This Policy defines commitments of the International Federation of Muaythai Amateur (IFMA) to support gender equality and the principles expressed in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including the UNESCO International Charter of Physical Education and Sport, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport. The Policy also recognizes and contributes to the gender equality objectives of Goal 5 of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Policy reflects on the principle of the Olympic Charter "to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures."

The IFMA Gender Equality Policy reflects the commitment of the IFMA Constitution Article II that all members of the IFMA family do not face discrimination of any kind including and not limited to; race, ethnicity, skin tone, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The Gender Equality Policy of the International Federation of Muaythai Amateur (IFMA) aims to promote gender equality in the sport of Muaythai.

**F**or IFMA **Gender Equality** refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of all gender identifications including; women, men, girls and boys, and equal power to shape their own lives and contribute to society. It encompasses the narrower concept of **Gender Equity**, which primarily concerns fairness and justice regarding benefits and needs. Gender equality also refers to the transformational commitment needed to make equal rights and equal power a reality, within the human rights agenda. It entails that the interests, needs, and priorities of females and males be taken into consideration, recognizing the great diversity within these groups. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women and all gender identities. Equality between all genders including; women and men, girls and boys, is seen both as a

*human rights issue and should be of concern to all. When a policy, system, or approach is **gender-responsive**, it means it is informed by an awareness of the effects of gender norms, roles, and relations as they impact sports and that it takes measures to actively reduce those effects that pose barriers to gender equality. It also assesses men and women's specific needs and interests and works toward equal outcomes for all. This includes equal access to learning and funding recourses, training and participation in competitions as well as media portrayal.*

*IFMA believes that Gender equality will benefit the position of women improving the diversity of today's sport sector, contributing positively to the quality of the services delivered across the sports of Muaythai. It will establish a safe and secure sport environment for girls and boys, young women and men as it will raise awareness of the topic, educate instructors and administrators on how to handle risks in this field and prevent harm to athletes. Gender friendly guidance and coaching may decrease the high drop-out rate of girls and women, avoid sexist gender stereotypes in sport and create a positive and social educational climate for all.*

*To conclude, it should be strongly stressed that gender equality in sport will be economically beneficial for all stakeholders in sport and related industries, including the media due to higher participation and popularity of sport and a growing workforce.*

## **GOAL OF THE POLICY**

This Policy states the commitment of the IFMA to consistently, meaningfully and strategically integrate gender equality across our programming and in our organization educating and empowering IFMA Athletes, Officials and youth using the power of sport.

The overall aim of the Policy is to ensure that sport is attractive to all, but pays particular attention to girls and women, regardless to age or background, so that they can participate, work, govern and enjoy sport, in a safe, equal and secure environment.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

IFMA Gender Equality Policy, which will take effect on 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2019 and be reviewed in four years time, is designed to:

- Establish an inclusive and enabling organizational culture free from gender bias and discrimination;
- Ensure gender equality and the empowerment of women in the work of IFMA;
- Ensure equal representation and gender sensitivity in decision making;
- Ensure “zero tolerance” to gender violence in sport;
- Ensure the fight against negative gender stereotypes in sport;

## **COMMITMENTS**

IFMA has undertaken the following commitments in support of its objectives to encourage and mainstream the gender equality:

1. To mainstream gender equality into IFMA operations and frameworks.
2. To strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat, Board, and Committees to lead on gender equality.
3. It is the stated intention of IFMA to ensure that the IFMA Executive Board and IFMA Committees aspire to 50/50 representation. IFMA Committees will continue to be based on the specific expertise required but are strongly encouraged to recruit suitably qualified, professional women to fulfill roles. However, this promotion will not be limited to increasing only the numbers of female representatives but shall extend to how IFMA recruits females onto its Committees. IFMA shall also promote the use of gender-neutral terms in its governance documents.
4. To encourage and promote a gender-aware and gender responsible organisational culture.
5. To encourage the intension of women Athletes to transit from Athlete or Official to a management position within IFMA in every possible way.
6. To integrate the principals of gender equality into IFMA educational programs.
7. To ensure Athletes, Coaches and Technical Officials have equal opportunities and access to the resources to reach their full potential.

Accordingly, this policy aims to create an open environment for all those involved in the sport of Muaythai and/or are involved in the administration of the sport.

## **CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY**

In order to provide a strategic approach to mainstream gender equality, IFMA will institutionalize gender equality and ensure that Muaythai at all levels remains free from gender bias.

It is the responsibility of IFMA to ensure that this Policy is implemented and communicated appropriately.

## **LEGAL**

This Gender Equality Policy will remain in force until it is amended, replaced or withdrawn.

IFMA will continue to update this policy to incorporate any changes in equality legislation.

A copy of this Policy will be available on the IFMA website.

## **DISCRIMINATION**

IFMA recognises that discrimination in any form, direct or indirect, on the grounds of gender, is unacceptable. Any breach of this Policy in the form of discrimination, victimization or bullying whilst carrying out duties on behalf of IFMA or otherwise acting as a representative of IFMA, shall result in disciplinary proceedings.

## **DISCIPLINARY PROCESS**

Any breach of this Policy will result in disciplinary action being taken under the IFMA Constitution and applicable regulations.

For this Policy to have full effect, any individuals participating in IFMA event, representing IFMA or carrying out duties on behalf of IFMA, who believes that they have suffered maltreatment under the scope of this Policy may raise the matter submitting a confidential complaint through the IFMA whistleblowing complaints form at [www.ifmamuythai.org](http://www.ifmamuythai.org) and the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures primarily via the IFMA Ethics Commission.



The IFMA Disciplinary Commission has the full power and authority to investigate, consider and determine breaches of this Policy. Decisions of the Disciplinary Commission may be appealed to the Chair of IFMA Legal Commission: Mervyn Tan (mervyntan@ymail.com).

**TRANSGENDER / GENDER REASSIGNMENT / TRANSSEXUAL ATHLETES**

Respecting the important element of fair play, IFMA, as a gender-affected sport, aims to allow transgender Athletes the ability to compete at the highest level. IFMA recognizes the fact that decisions about participation must be taken on an individual basis as the integrity of male and female Muaythai must also be duly respected.



## **Annex 1. Definitions**

**Gender** identifies the social and cultural relations between men and women. It refers to the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, male and female and how this is socially constructed. Gender roles are dynamic and change over time also dependent on context and cultural considerations.

**Gender-based violence** is defined as violence directed against a person due to gender (including gender identity/expression) or as violence that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately. In this report this includes sexual violence (including rape, bullying, intimidation, threatening behavior, sexual assault, abuse and harassment).

**Gender equality** is the result of the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in opportunities and the allocation of resources or benefits or in access to services.

**Gender equity** entails the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. The concept recognises that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalances between the sexes.

**Gender-based harassment** is unwelcome conduct related to a person's gender and has the effect or purpose of offending another person's dignity.

**Gender identity** is a person's sense of being male or female, resulting from a combination of genetic and environmental influences and a person's concept of being male and masculine or female and feminine, or as otherwise specified. Gender identity is also an expression of gender self-identity to which for many is not binary; male or female. Gender identity is not to be confused with sexual identity.

**Intersectionality** refers to a situation where several grounds operate and interact with each other at the same time in such a way that they are inseparable. The shape of the social behavior commonly exemplified by women and men often goes together with other (unequal) power relations due to the ethnicity, religion, culture, disability sexual orientation and age.

**Multiple discrimination** in this context is to be understood as any combination of discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

**Sexual abuse** refers to tricking, forcing or coercing a person into any sexual activity the person does not want, or is not sufficiently mature to give their consent.

**Sexual harassment** refers to behaviour of a sexualized nature which is unwanted, exploitative, degrading, coerced, forced and/or violent.

**Direct Discrimination** Treating a person less favorably than you would treat others due to their gender.

**Indirect Discrimination** Applying, without reasonable justification, some criteria or practice which appears to apply equally to all but which, in practice, disadvantages a person due to their gender.

IFMA recognizes that various terms may be used when referring to transgender people therefore, for sensitivity and respect, the following terms have been adopted:

**Transgender** An umbrella term including but not limited to; transsexual women/men, intersex people, androgyny and polygender people, cross dressing and transvestite people whose gender identity or expression, is different to the sex that was assigned to them at birth.

**Gender reassignment** A person who is undergoing or who has undergone treatment with the objective of changing, altering their physical sex.

**Transsexual** people are a subgroup within the transgender umbrella, referring to a person who has transitioned and/ or feels they belong to the opposite sex they were assigned at birth. A transsexual male refers to someone who has transitioned from female to male and vice versa. This term is not to be confused with cross-dresser or transvestite.

## **Annex 2. Implementation of the Policy**

Within the first year following the adoption of this Gender Equality Policy, IFMA will provide National Associations directives regarding the following:

- a) a minimum standard of representation for female athletes, coaches, and officials, including specifying instances where female representation will be mandatory;
- b) a deadline by which Associations must have updated their policies and bylaws to reflect the new Gender Equality Policies;
- c) guidelines and a deadline by which associations must have developed a strategic plan towards achieving gender equality and equity in Muaythai in their countries;
- d) a timeline and mechanism via which all associations will report on demonstrable progress regarding the implementation of their respective strategic plans;
- e) the accountability structure under which any disciplinary action related to the Gender Equality Policy will proceed.

IFMA will also develop a gender-based equality assessment tool that will be applied to all new applications for IFMA membership.

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**Approved at Executive Board Meeting**

**Bangkok, Thailand**

**25/7/2019**