



MAPPING GENDER-RELATED PROVISIONS IN INDONESIA'S FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS

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Abstract

International trade is increasingly recognized as a policy arena that is not gender-neutral. However, systematic mapping of gender mainstreaming across Indonesia's trade agreement portfolio remains limited. This study maps the presence and design of gender-related provisions in 19 Indonesian international trade agreements concluded up to 2025. It applies a gender-related provisions framework and assesses five agreements containing explicit provisions using the International Trade Centre instrument across ten dimensions. The study combines document-based content analysis, corpus analysis using AntConc, manual verification, and a staged scoring procedure with triangulation to reach consensus scores. The findings indicate that 14 agreements (74%) are gender-blind, while five agreements (26%) contain explicit gender-related provisions. The Indonesia–Canada CEPA (2025) achieves an Advanced Gender Responsiveness score (85%), while the remaining agreements fall into the Evolving (42.5% and 35%) and Limited (32.5% and 20%) categories. The frequency dimension is most commonly met, whereas the dispute settlement dimension is most frequently absent.

Keywords: free trade agreements, gender mainstreaming, gender responsiveness, Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Gender mainstreaming in international trade policy has developed into an important discourse within international political economy and gender-oriented international relations scholarship. The growing recognition that international trade is not a gender-neutral process has led to increased attention to how trade agreements affect women (Frohmann, 2017; Hannah et al., 2021; Korinek et al., 2021; Mengesha, 2008; World Bank & World Trade Organization, 2020). Trade agreements play a significant role in shaping the distribution of economic opportunities and risks among different social groups, including women. As scholars have noted, trade policy does not operate neutrally; rather, different positioning of men and women within economic structures creates trade liberalization as a source of asymmetrical outcomes (Hannah et al., 2021; Mengesha, 2008). Therefore, trade liberalization may exacerbate social and economic exclusion when it is not accompanied by gender-responsive policy interventions.

In the last two decades, feminist approaches to international political economy have offered a critical lens for examining how global power relations, including systemic trade structures, reproduce gender inequality (Bedford & Rai, 2010; Elias & Roberts, 2018; True, 2015). This approach rejects the notion that global trade and markets are purely objective and instead highlights how women's labor is often devalued and how women are often placed in weak, low-bargaining positions in global production and reproduction chains (Elias & Rethel, 2016; Suwandi, 2022).

Over the past two decades, feminist approaches to international political economy have provided a critical lens for examining how global power relations, including systemic trade structures, reproduce gender inequality (Bedford & Rai, 2010; Elias & Roberts, 2018; True, 2015). These approaches challenge the assumption that global trade and markets are objective and gender-neutral. Instead, they emphasize that women's labor is frequently undervalued and that women are often positioned in precarious, low-bargaining segments of global production and social reproduction chains (Elias & Rethel, 2016; Suwandi, 2022).

Attention to gender issues in international trade has gradually gained formal recognition through various global initiatives (der Boghossian et al., 2025). A key milestone was the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), which emphasized the importance of mainstreaming gender across all development policies, including macroeconomic and

trade policies (Monteiro, 2021). The BPfA called upon states to evaluate the impact of trade policies on women and to integrate gender equality considerations into international economic agreements and frameworks. Indonesia is among the countries that signed and support the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Davies, n.d.).

Another significant development occurred within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO). In 2017, Indonesia, along with 117 countries, agreed on the Declaration of Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment during the 11th Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires. It represented a significant normative advance in acknowledging that trade policy carries obligations toward women's economic empowerment (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2023; WTO, 2017). Although the declaration is voluntary and non-binding, it provides an important normative foundation for integrating a gender perspective into the multilateral trading system (Kuhlmann & Bahri, 2023).

The Indonesian government has committed to implementing the SDGs across sectors (Kementerian PPN/Bappenas, 2020). Gender mainstreaming in trade policy is directly linked to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 5, 10, and 17. SDG 5 calls for achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Specifically, target 5.C emphasizes strengthening sound policies and enforceable legislation for gender equality. SDG 10 requires states to reduce inequalities within and among countries, including gender-based disparities. At the same time, SDG 17 underscores the importance of global partnerships for sustainable development and encourages an inclusive trading systems (UN Women, 2018). Hence, integrating gender considerations into trade agreements contributes to internationally agreed sustainable development objectives.

Several international trade agreements have incorporated specific gender equality provisions or dedicated gender chapters. The Uruguay–Chile Free Trade Agreement (2016) (Frohmann, 2017), the Canada–Israel FTA, the Canada–Chile FTA, and several European Union agreements (Brodsky et al., 2021; Karam & Zaki, 2024; Monteiro, 2021) are some examples that have been studied. These agreements go beyond symbolic commitments by establishing implementation mechanisms such as policy dialogue and technical cooperation (Karam & Zaki, 2024).

Indonesia occupies an important position within the regional and global trade architecture. As an active member of ASEAN and a participant in multilateral trade frameworks such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Indonesia is also engaged in numerous bilateral trade agreements. This positioning provides both an opportunity and a responsibility to ensure that the trade agreements Indonesia concludes are not gender-neutral but instead promote women's economic empowerment.

Despite Indonesia's active engagement in international trade agreements, systematic and measurable mapping of how gender mainstreaming is articulated across its trade agreement portfolio remains limited (Bakardzhieva & Chehab, 2025; Monteiro, 2018). As a result, a comprehensive comparative picture of the existence, placement, and strength of gender-related provisions has not been adequately documented. Consequently, the strengths and weaknesses in the design of Indonesia's trade agreements remain insufficiently identified.

Academic studies in International Relations that examine Indonesia's involvement in international trade and the gender agenda are still scarce. Existing research in Indonesia primarily discusses gender issues in the context of the impact of trade liberalization policies on female and male workers (Kis-Katos et al., 2018), female worker migration (Saraswati, 2017), or female involvement in foreign policy-making (Prajuli et al., 2021). While there is a substantial body of literature on Indonesia's international trade agreements, these studies generally remain gender-blind (Hanifah et al., 2021; Musfiroh, 2024; Winanti, 2022).

To date, no systematic analysis has examined the extent to which gender mainstreaming principles are reflected in Indonesia's trade agreement texts. Likewise, no study has assessed whether gender clauses or gender-responsive implementation mechanisms are incorporated across the various trade agreements involving Indonesia. This article addresses this gap by analyzing the level and patterns of gender mainstreaming in Indonesia's international trade agreements and by emphasizing the importance of standardized measurement of gender-related provisions.

This study examines 19 international trade agreements concluded by Indonesia from 2006 up to October 2025 and applies systematic content analysis. It draws on the analytical framework developed by the International Trade Centre (2020). The present

study's contribution is twofold. First, it adopts a framework from International Trade Center to provide a measurable and comparative mapping of gender mainstreaming within Indonesia's free trade agreement portfolio. Second, it offers a dimension-based diagnostic assessment designed to inform the strengthening of gender-related provisions in future agreement design. The paper proceeds in four sections. The next section outlines the conceptual framework and research method. The third section presents the mapping findings and discusses their theoretical and policy implications. In the fourth, we demonstrate the conclusion with the study's limitations and directions for future research.

METHODOLOGY

Literature Review

Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Responsiveness

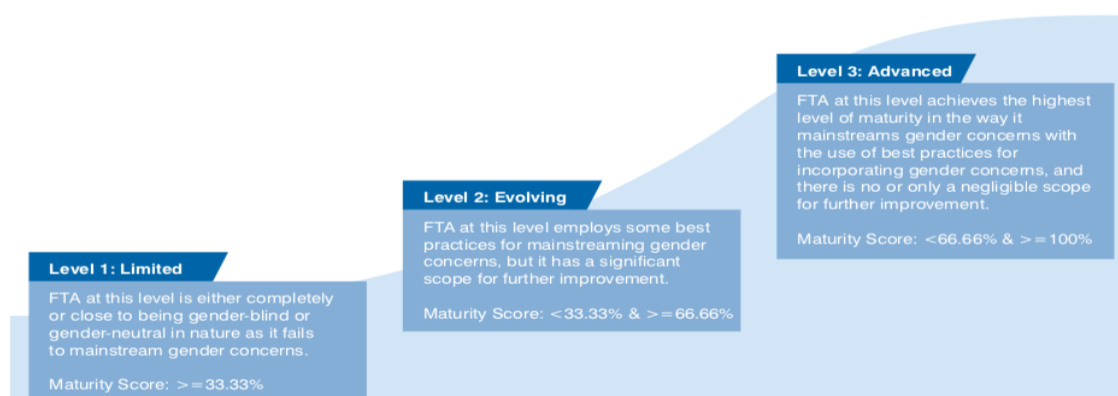
Bahri (2023) argues that gender mainstreaming in trade agreements means the systematic integration of gender considerations into the formulation and implementation of trade agreements. Negotiating states incorporate a gender perspective into the trade liberalization process and accompanying policy instruments as part of the broader agreement framework. Gender mainstreaming through trade agreements by negotiating states reflects the degree of normative commitment and institutional understanding of states in addressing gender inequality. While acknowledging the potential and adverse impacts of trade policy for women, it positions women's empowerment as a deliberate design consideration in the negotiation and architecture of trade agreements. Distinct from, though analytically related to, the concept of gender responsiveness is defined as the degree of sensitivity and commitment of a trade agreement to gender equality objectives as reflected in the substantive content of its provisions (Bahri, 2023; International Trade Centre, 2020).

The International Trade Centre (2020) identifies explicit and implicit gender-related provisions as two distinct categories of gender-related clauses in trade agreements. Explicit gender-related provisions constitute a strong indicator that an FTA is progressing toward Evolving or Advanced Gender Responsiveness. Rather than treating them as supplementary considerations, such provisions position gender issues embedded within the core architecture of the agreement (International Trade Centre, 2020). Implicit provisions, by contrast, contain treaty content that may affect women without explicitly

referencing “gender” or “women.” These include references to human rights, protection of vulnerable groups, employment, public morality, sustainable development, environmental protection, or corporate social responsibility (CSR). While implicit provisions may create entry points for gender mainstreaming within treaty texts, they generally reflect only an initial awareness of gender-related concerns in treaty design. Agreements that rely solely on implicit provisions tend to lack instruments specifically designed to address the structural barriers faced by women in international trade (International Trade Centre, 2020).

This study employs both explicit and implicit gender-related provisions as analytical evidence to assess gender responsiveness in trade agreements based on International Trade Center framework (2020). The concept of gender responsiveness enables a structured evaluation of treaty provisions related to commitments, policies, and implementation mechanisms aimed at promoting women’s economic empowerment (International Trade Centre, 2020). Based on these two categories of provisions, the framework assesses gender responsiveness along a spectrum comprising Limited, Evolving, and Advanced Gender Responsiveness (International Trade Centre, 2020).

Figure 1 - Levels of Gender Responsiveness in International Trade Agreements



Source: International Trade Centre (2020)

The International Trade Centre (2020) developed a spectrum for assessing gender responsiveness in international trade agreements. It constitutes the primary evaluative instrument through which this study assesses the degree to which gender considerations have been integrated into international agreements. The spectrum is organized across three levels: Limited, Evolving, and Advanced Gender Responsiveness. This spectrum combines the classification of agreements based on the presence of explicit and implicit

provisions with an evaluation of design features that support implementation and accountability (International Trade Centre, 2020). The framework moves beyond textual inventory of gender-related clauses to encompass institutional and procedural conditions.

The Limited Gender Responsiveness category describes an FTA that does not contain explicit references to “gender,” “women,” “female,” “girl,” and “sex” (in the context of gender), as well as terms related to protection and rights such as “mother,” “maternity,” and “child care.” Even when potentially relevant provisions exist, they appear only in a limited or implicit form, for instance, references to human rights, protection of vulnerable groups, or sustainable development. These references do not establish specific targets or mechanisms to address gender inequality. Consequently, such agreements operate in conditions that are close to or being gender-blind. An FTA is categorized as Limited Gender Responsiveness when the *total score from* ten dimensions of gender responsiveness is less than or equal to 33.33% (International Trade Centre, 2020).

The Evolving Gender Responsiveness category describes agreements that acknowledge the importance of gender issues and incorporate elements related to gender equality within their provisions. Agreements at this level contain several explicit references, such as recognition of women’s contributions to trade and commitments to cooperate on women’s economic empowerment. While these agreements demonstrate political intent to mainstream gender, their design generally lacks robust implementation mechanisms and does not establish binding substantive obligations. An FTA is categorized as Evolving Gender Responsiveness when the *total score from* ten dimensions of gender responsiveness is between more than 33.33% and equal to 66.66% (International Trade Centre, 2020).

The Advanced Gender Responsiveness category refers to agreements that integrate gender issues through explicit provisions supported by binding substantive commitments. Also, they articulated implementation mechanisms. Agreements at this level establish institutional arrangements, such as gender committees, coordination bodies, or cooperation forums. These arrangements were designed to operationalize gender-related provisions. They may also link gender clauses to dispute settlement mechanisms or allocate funding for gender-related activities, and establish minimum legal standards binding on the parties. At this level, gender considerations form an integral part of the

agreement's architecture rather than a symbolic addition. An FTA is categorized as Advanced Gender Responsiveness when the *total score from* ten dimensions of gender responsiveness is more than 66.66% (International Trade Centre, 2020).

This study employs the ten dimensions of gender responsiveness developed by the International Trade Centre (2020) as an analytical instrument to evaluate the design of gender-related provisions in trade agreements. These dimensions assess the visibility, placement, strength of commitments, implementation mechanisms, accountability arrangements, and legal standards relevant to gender issues. Each dimension consists of two guiding questions (International Trade Centre, 2020).

Dimension 1 assesses the frequency of gender-related clauses in the main text, supporting instruments, and annexes of trade agreements. Dimension 2 examines the location of gender-relevant clauses within the structure of the agreement. Dimension 3 evaluates statements and reaffirmations of the parties' commitments to integrating a gender perspective. Dimension 4 assesses the existence of cooperation activities aimed at reducing trade barriers for women and promoting women's economic empowerment. Dimension 5 examines institutional arrangements established to monitor the implementation of gender-related provisions. Dimension 6 evaluates procedural mechanisms for addressing gender issues within the agreement. Dimension 7 assesses provisions for reviewing implementation and conducting gender impact assessments. Dimension 8 examines dispute settlement arrangements related to gender issues. Dimension 9 evaluates exceptions, reservations, or waivers referencing gender issues. Dimension 10 assesses the inclusion of minimum legal standards related to gender equality within domestic legal frameworks (International Trade Centre, 2020).

The categories of Limited, Evolving, and Advanced Gender Responsiveness represent varying levels of maturity in the design of international trade agreements with respect to gender mainstreaming. The Limited category reflects an absence of substantive recognition. The Evolving indicates initial recognition without strong implementation mechanisms. And the Advanced represents a design that incorporates institutional, procedural, and accountability elements that enable policy change. This spectrum provides an analytical basis for assessing Indonesia's position in mainstreaming gender through international trade agreements and identifying areas to strengthen the design of

gender-related provisions in future trade negotiations (Bahri, 2025; Dommen, 2021; International Trade Centre, 2020).

Research Method

Design

This study is a qualitative research, and it applies a content analysis approach to examine gender responsiveness of Indonesia in its international trade agreement texts. In International Relations research, content analysis is widely used to systematically identify patterns, themes, and meanings in textual data (Pashakhanlou, 2017). This method is particularly relevant for examining policy documents and formal institutional texts (Faggiano, 2022; Pashakhanlou, 2017).

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis of this study is Indonesia's international trade agreements. The research analyzed core and supporting documents, including modernization agreements, annexes, and supplementary instruments from 19 international trade agreements involving Indonesia, both multilateral and bilateral, concluded by the Indonesian government up to October 2025.

Table 1 - Indonesia's Free Trade Agreements

No	Agreement Name	Signing Date
1	PTA-Group of Eight Developing Countries (D-8)	May 13, 2006
2	Indonesia-Japan EPA	August 20, 2007
3	ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement	December 1, 2008
4	ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement	February 26, 2009
5	ASEAN-India FTA	August 13, 2009
6	ASEAN-Korea FTA	November 22, 2015
7	ASEAN-Hong Kong, China FTA	November 12, 2017
8	Upgrading Protocol of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA)	November 12, 2017
9	ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement	October 7, 2020
10	Indonesia-Chile Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement	December 14, 2017
11	Indonesia-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (Amendment Protocol)	November 12, 2018
12	Indonesia-EFTA Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IE-CEPA)	December 16, 2018
13	Indonesia-Australia CEPA	March 4, 2019
14	Indonesia-Mozambique FTA	August 27, 2019
15	RCEP	November 15, 2020
16	Indonesia-South Korea CEPA	December 18, 2020
17	Indonesia-United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IUAE-CEPA)	July 1, 2022
18	ASEAN-Australia and New Zealand FTA (2nd Amendment)	August 21, 2023

19	Indonesia-Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IC-CEPA)	September 24, 2025
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Source: compiled from the Directorate General of International Trade Negotiations (2025)

Data Collection

The official texts as primary data were obtained from the Electronic Database of Investment Treaties (2025) and the online repository of the Directorate General of International Trade Negotiations, Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Indonesia.

Data Analysis

The research was conducted in two main stages. The first stage involved identifying gender-related provisions in the trade agreements. Gender-related provisions were defined as clauses, articles, or textual references that explicitly mention gender-related terms, including “gender,” “women,” “female,” “girl,” and “sex” (in the context of gender), as well as terms related to protection and rights such as “mother,” “maternity,” and “child care”. Also, the study considered implicit provisions that may have implications for gender equality, including references to “SMEs/MSMEs,” “labour,” and “inclusive” (International Trade Centre, 2020). However, implicit keywords were categorized as gender-related only when the context of the relevant sentence or article indicated substantive relevance to gender issues and/or when the agreement explicitly linked these terms to women or gender in other sections. References to “women,” “female,” “girl,” or “sex” appearing solely in customs product schedules were excluded from the analysis (Bakardzhieva & Chehab, 2025).

The second stage involved qualitatively assessing the level of gender responsiveness in the five agreements identified as containing gender-related provisions. This research found that there were five trade agreements with gender-related provision. They are Indonesia–Canada CEPA, Indonesia–UAE CEPA, Indonesia–EFTA CEPA, Indonesia–Chile CEPA, and the AANZFTA Second Protocol. The assessment employed the International Trade Centre (2020) instrument and evaluated agreements across ten dimensions. Each consists of two guiding questions (indicators). Each question was scored using a graduated scale. 1 point for meeting the highest criteria (green color), 0.5 point for partially meeting the criteria (yellow color), and 0 point for not meeting the

criteria or lacking relevant provisions (red color) (Bakardzhieva & Chehab, 2025; International Trade Centre, 2020).

Figure 2 - Color code of answer from each question (indicators)

Not present (0 point)	Partially Present (0,5 point)	Fully Present (1 point)
Indicator is absent or does not address gender at all	Partially address gender with limited scope	Comprehensively integrate a gender perspective

Figure 3 - Total Score of Trade Agreement



Based on the cumulative scores across the ten dimensions, each agreement was categorized into one of three levels of gender responsiveness. Agreement with a total score above 66.66% (at least 13.5 points) was classified as Advanced Gender Responsiveness. A total score of agreement between 33.33% and 66.66% (7–13 points) were categorized as Evolving Gender Responsiveness. Agreement with a total score below 33.33% of the total (fewer than 7 points) was classified as Limited Gender Responsiveness (International Trade Centre, 2020). This categorization constitutes the primary analytical output of the study in mapping the spectrum of gender mainstreaming across Indonesia’s trade agreements.

Trustworthiness

Data validation constitutes a critical step in text-based research (Grimmer & Stewart, 2013). AntConc was used in the first stage as a corpus analysis tool. It systematically detected the frequency and distribution of gender-related terms across the documents. It provided an initial mapping of relevant provisions. The results of this automated search were subsequently verified through close manual reading to ensure contextual accuracy and correct classification.

Individual analysis of each agreement were followed by a triangulation stage. This approach was used to enhance assessment reliability. Survey results and supporting

textual evidence were compiled and reviewed to identify discrepancies in interpretation and scoring among assessors (Goist & Monroe, 2020). Any differences were resolved through re-examination of the source documents, verification of cited articles within the analytical matrix, and clarification of their relevance to the ITC dimensions, until a consensus score was reached. This process was supported by an internal quality control mechanism requiring a comprehensive review of all primary documents and annexes, as well as documentary evidence for each scoring decision.

RESULT

In recent years, several countries have begun to include gender-related provisions in their free trade agreements (Bahri, 2019). Based on the mapping of Indonesia's free trade agreements analyzed in this study, gender mainstreaming is still limited. A total of 14 (74%) agreements do not explicitly include provisions related to gender in the text of the agreement, or in other words, they are *gender-blind*. Conversely, only five (5) agreements (26%) include gender-related provisions, namely the Indonesia-Canada CEPA (2025), *Second Amendment* to the AANZFTA (2023), Indonesia-UAE CEPA (2022), Indonesia-EFTA CEPA (2018), and Indonesia-Chile CEPA (2017) (see Figure 1). These findings indicate that gender-related provisions are not yet a common feature in Indonesia's trade agreement portfolio, but rather appear in only a small number of specific agreements.

Diagram 1 – Explicit and *Gender-Blind* Percentage of Indonesia's FT



Source: Compiled by the author

Table 2 – Frequency of Occurrence of *Gender Provision* Keywords in 5 Indonesian FTAs

Keywords	I-Canada (2025)	AANZFTA (2023)	I-UAE (2022)	I-EFTA (2018)	I-Chile (2017)
<i>Gender</i>	1	0	0	0	1
<i>Women</i>	77	1	1	1	0
<i>Labor</i>	71	52	1	17	16
<i>Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME/SME)</i>	19	75	49	3	2
<i>Inclusive</i>	12	3	5	3	0

Source: Compiled by the author

The level of gender responsiveness in the five agreements containing explicit gender-related provisions was subsequently assessed using the International Trade Centre (2020) instrument. The results demonstrate that only one agreement, the Indonesia-Canada CEPA (2025) achieved the Advanced Gender Responsiveness category. The remaining four agreements exhibit limited scope and depth in mainstreaming gender considerations.

The Indonesia–Chile CEPA (2017) and the Indonesia–EFTA CEPA (2018) fell within the Evolving Gender Responsiveness category, with total scores of 42.5% and 35%, respectively. The Indonesia–UAE CEPA (2022) was categorized as Limited Gender Responsiveness, with a total score of 32.5%. The Second Amendment to the AANZFTA (2023) recorded the lowest score, at 20%, and was categorized as Limited Gender Responsiveness. These results suggest considerable variation in the institutional design and substantive commitment to gender equality across Indonesia’s trade agreements.

Across the ten assessment dimensions, the “frequency of gender clauses” dimension was the most consistently fulfilled. This indicated that textual visibility through references to gender-related terms or provisions was relatively easier to achieve within agreement drafting. However, Dimension 8, relating to dispute settlement mechanisms, was the least fulfilled. Although the analyzed free trade agreements generally contain dispute settlement provisions, these mechanisms did not apply to chapters containing gender-related provisions.

In the five agreements assessed, gender-related clauses are typically located within chapters on Cooperation, Small and Medium Enterprises, or Trade and Sustainable Development. These chapters are often excluded from the scope of binding dispute settlement mechanisms. As a result, the placement of gender provisions outside enforceable sections weakens their accountability and enforceability within the overall design of the agreements.

Table 3 – Location of the Keyword “Gender/Women” in Indonesia’s 5 FTAs

Agreement Name	Location of the Keyword "Gender/Women"
I-Canada (2025)	Chapter 8. Trade in Services; Chapter 10. Financial Services; Chapter 13. Investment; Chapter 17. Trade and Sustainable Development; Chapter 18. Trade and <i>Small and Medium Enterprises</i> ; Chapter 21. Good Regulatory Practices and Regulatory Cooperation; Chapter 22. Transparency, Anti-Corruption, and Responsible Business Conduct; Chapter 24. Dispute Settlement <i>Example: “Chapter 17 Trade and Sustainable Development Section D: Trade and Women’s Economic Empowerment Article 17.39: General Understandings 1. The Parties affirm the importance of incorporating a women’s economic empowerment perspective into the development of their respective policies and practices that promote equality between women and men, [...] 2. The Parties recognise [...], and treatment for women to benefit from this Agreement. 3. The Parties recognise [...] in order to advance the empowerment of women [...]. 4. The Parties affirm that it is inappropriate to weaken or reduce women’s rights in their respective laws and regulations in order to encourage trade or investment. 5. The Parties recognize that women are entitled to economic rights, and affirm that it is important to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in areas of economic life.”</i>
AANZFTA (2023)	Chapter 13. Trade and Sustainable Development <i>Example: Chapter 13 Trade And Sustainable Development “Article 3. The Parties recognise trade and sustainable development [...] to strengthen the Parties’ joint and individual efforts and capacities to protect [...] women’s economic empowerment issues, as they strengthen their trade and investment relations.”</i>
I-UAE (2022)	Chapter 13. Small and Medium Enterprises <i>Example: “Chapter 13 (Small and Medium Enterprises) Article 13.2: Cooperation 1. The Parties shall strengthen their cooperation under this Chapter, which may include: [...] (b) strengthening their collaboration on activities to promote SMEs owned by women and youth, as well as start-ups, and [...]”</i>
I-EFTA (2018)	Chapter 8. Trade and Sustainable Development <i>Example: “CHAPTER 8 TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT Article 8.5 Social Development 1. The Parties recall the obligations [...] 2. The Parties underline the need to protect the welfare and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable groups such as women [...].”</i>
I-Chile (2017)	Chapter 9. Cooperation <i>Example: Chapter 9. COOPERATION Article 9.1. Basic Principles 1. The Parties shall, in accordance with their respective laws and regulations, promote cooperation under this Agreement [...]. 2. For this purpose, the Parties shall [...] Article 9.4. Fields of Cooperation Fields of cooperation under this Chapter shall include: [...] (i) trade-related gender issues;</i>

Source: Compiled by the author

Table 4 - Results of Gender Mapping Survey in Indonesian Trade Agreements

		I-Canada CEPA (2025)	AANZFTA 2nd Amendemen (2023)	I-United Arab Emirates CEPA (2022)	I-EFTA (2018)	I-Chile CEPA (2017)
No	Dimension	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value
1	Frequency of Gender Clauses in Trade Agreements					

	1. Does this Free Trade Agreement—in the main text, supporting instruments, or annexes—contain terms related to "gender/women/female/girl/sex/mother/maternity"?					
	2. How many times are terms related to gender mentioned in the text of the Free Trade Agreement, including in supporting instruments, footnotes, and/or annexes (excluding mentions in the context of product names)?					
	Location of Relevant Clauses					
2	1. Does the preamble to the Free Trade Agreement mention or acknowledge gender-related issues?					
	2. In which part of the Free Trade Agreement are 50% or more of the clauses explicitly addressing gender issues?					
	Statements and Reaffirmation of Commitments					
3	1. Does the agreement demonstrate the political will/commitment of members to integrate a gender perspective into economic growth and development, policies, programs, decision-making processes, policy formulation, and practices at the national level?					
	2. Are there any references/affirmations/or reaffirmations of other international conventions/declarations/instruments that are directly or indirectly related to gender issues?					
4	Cooperation Activities					

	1. Does the Agreement contain clauses regulating cooperation activities aimed at removing or reducing trade barriers for women and increasing women's empowerment?					
	2. Does the Agreement include initiatives that cover improving women's access to education or skills development?					
	Institutional Arrangements					
5	1. Is there a committee or other institution that monitors the implementation or operationalization of provisions focused on gender issues?					
	2. Does the agreement specify the duties, functions, frequency of meetings, and other organizational provisions of the committee or institution established to implement or operationalize provisions focused on gender issues?					
	Procedural Arrangements					
6	1. Does the agreement establish procedural mechanisms for addressing gender issues, such as action plans, frameworks, dialogues, information exchanges, exchanges of best practices and experiences, programs, or regulatory instruments?					
	2. Do member countries encourage or seek to collaborate on studies, research, or publications related to gender and trade issues?					
	Review and Funding					
7	1. Does the agreement contain provisions requiring: (i) review of the implementation of					

	provisions focusing on gender, and/or (ii) assessment of the gender impact of the agreement?					
	2. Have member states provided funding or identified measures to finance plans, processes, institutions, activities, and other commitments related to gender issues?					
	Dispute Settlement					
8	1. Are there consultation or discussion mechanisms to resolve conflicts specifically related to gender issues (excluding conflicts arising from cooperation activities)?					
	2. Are most of the provisions on gender (excluding those mentioned in cooperation activities) in the agreement subject to dispute resolution mechanisms?					
	Exceptions, Reservations, and Exemptions					
9	1. Does the agreement establish any form of exemption that refers to gender issues?					
	2. Does the agreement allow the parties to submit reservations or waivers that explicitly favor women or explicitly refer to gender issues?					
	Minimum Legal Standards					
10	1. Does the agreement establish minimum legal standards that explicitly relate to gender issues for the domestic laws of each country?					
	2. Does the agreement contain provisions that encourage industries or companies to integrate minimum CSR standards that explicitly relate to gender issues?					

RESULTS	Advanced (85%)	Limited (20%)	Limited (32.5%)	Evolving (35%)	Evolving (42.5%)
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Source: Compiled by the author based on the International Trade Centre (2020) framework

DISCUSSION

Gender mainstreaming in Indonesian trade agreements remains limited, with only one agreement, the Indonesia–Canada CEPA (2025), achieving the Advanced Gender Responsiveness category. This pattern reflects a broader trend in the Asia-Pacific region, where gender considerations in trade agreements are often limited or absent (Bahri, 2023). The restricted integration of gender issues in Indonesia’s trade agreements is attributed to several factors, including institutional barriers (Nurdin, 2024), the absence of comprehensive gender policy frameworks (Kusumawardhana & Abbas, 2018), and gaps in negotiating capacity (Bahri & Amaral, 2024). These challenges underscore the need for stronger policy approaches to ensure that trade agreements are able to promote gender equality. There remains considerable scope for improvement, including through strategic domestic policy reform (Chi, 2024; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2023) and enhanced international collaboration, particularly with partners that have institutionalized gender-responsive trade policies (Bahri & Amaral, 2024).

The Indonesia–Canada CEPA (2025) is an important milestone in Indonesia's trade agreements, as it is the only trade agreement that has achieved the *Advanced Gender Responsiveness* category. This agreement serves as a model for integrating gender considerations into trade policy. This agreement explicitly includes a specific section on gender and trade (*Section D. Trade on Women's Economic Empowerment*) in Chapter 17. *Trade & Sustainable Development*. Furthermore, the placement of the words gender/women is not limited to just one chapter. Meanwhile, the placement of the words gender/women in the Indonesia–Chile CEPA (2017), Indonesia–UAE CEPA (2022), and Indonesia–EFTA FTA (2018) is still limited to only one chapter, where provisions and references related to women/gender tend to be placed in a limited chapter, namely *SMEs, Trade and Sustainable Development*, or *Cooperation*. The provisions in these specific chapters indicate compartmentalized mainstreaming, rather than integrated mainstreaming across economic sectors in the agreement. Gender mainstreaming should not be limited to certain sections but should be present throughout the agreement. This

ensures that gender considerations influence all aspects of policy, which will lead to more holistic and effective results (Amaral & Jaller, 2023).

The Indonesia-Canada CEPA clearly demonstrates a commitment to thematic cooperation, institutional mechanisms, funding provisions, and dispute settlement options related to gender clauses. The inclusion of the Indonesia-Canada CEPA in the highest category confirms that Indonesia was capable of producing gender-responsive agreements when its trading partners were committed to gender-responsive trade policies. Indonesia's trade policy model did not yet have gender mainstreaming standards. The advanced gender integration has only emerged in agreement with Canada, which already has feminist trade policies (Hannah et al., 2022). Thus, the Indonesia-Canada CEPA is a positive anomaly and not a general reflection of Indonesia's trade policy.

The classification of the Indonesia–Chile CEPA (2017) and Indonesia–EFTA CEPA (2018) within the Evolving Gender Responsiveness category indicates that gender mainstreaming is present. However, it remains underdeveloped. While these agreements contain relevant gender provisions, they lack the comprehensiveness and institutional depth found in the Indonesia–Canada CEPA. Meanwhile, the Indonesia–UAE CEPA (2022) and the AANZFTA Second Amendment (2023) fell within the Limited category. They reflected initial efforts to introduce gender-related provisions that remain narrow in scope and unevenly integrated within the agreement architectures.

The presence of gender provisions in Indonesia's trade agreements was associated with partners that have established traditions of incorporating social and gender issues into trade policy, including Canada, the UAE, Chile, Australia, New Zealand, and EFTA member states (Bakardzhieva & Chehab, 2025; Bustamante & Navia, 2023; MacDonald, 2024; Viju-Miljusevic & Weinar, 2024). This pattern suggests that improvements in gender responsiveness have been driven by external partner preferences.

Consistent with institutionalist arguments that negotiation outcomes were influenced by the number of participating actors (Axelrod & Keohane, 1985). The findings indicate that bilateral agreements tended to be more gender-responsive than multilateral ones. Bilateral formats provide greater flexibility and negotiation space for inserting explicit and integrated gender provisions (Bustamante & Navia, 2023). The AANZFTA experience illustrated this dynamic. Prior to the adoption of the Second Amendment, the agreement was gender-blind. The addition of a new chapter on Trade

and Sustainable Development introduced gender considerations into the agreement (Minister for Trade and Tourism, 2022). As gender mainstreaming gains broader acceptance within the international community, both bilateral and multilateral agreements may increasingly incorporate gender-related commitments (Bustamante & Navia, 2023; Monteiro, 2021).

In the light of global momentum following the WTO Buenos Aires Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment (2017), this research found that only five agreements included gender-related provisions, while the majority remain gender-blind. Indonesia exhibits a pattern of selective and gradual adoption rather than uniform change across its agreement portfolio. Gender provisions have begun to appear in certain agreements. However, they have not yet become a standardized design feature. Thus, the global proliferation of gender-related trade provisions does not automatically translate into comprehensive internalization within Indonesia's trade policy. A gap remains between normative commitments and institutional design. This condition contrasts with certain developed countries that have implemented gender-related provisions more systematically (Karam & Zaki, 2024).

Moreover, gender mainstreaming in Indonesian agreements tended to occur through the addition of discrete clauses within specific chapters rather than through cross-cutting integration. Gender provisions were placed in politically less contentious areas, such as cooperation, sustainable development, or SME/MSMEs. They were visible but not necessarily accompanied by robust implementation and accountability mechanisms (Amaral & Jaller, 2023). Strengthening gender mainstreaming, therefore, requires more than increasing the number of references or adding symbolic clauses. It demands political will to strategically embed gender considerations within the core architecture of agreements. Also, it needs to be supported by institutional and procedural arrangements that enable systematic monitoring and reporting (Bahri, 2025; Chi & Yin, 2024; der Boghossian et al., 2025; Monteiro, 2018). Only under such conditions trade agreements can contribute more effectively to gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

This study focuses on mapping gender-related provisions within the texts and supporting documents of Indonesia's free trade agreements using the International Trade Centre (2020) framework. It does not assess the implementation or practical impact of these provisions. Future research should therefore examine how varying levels of design

responsiveness translate into domestic policies and programs. Further research is also needed to determine whether agreements classified as more gender-responsive correlate with measurable improvements in women's economic opportunities, including market access, export participation, employment conditions, and entrepreneurial capacity. Finally, to better understand the sources of variation in agreement design, future studies should examine the negotiation dynamics of gender-responsive trade agreements as part of broader efforts to strengthen Indonesia's trade policy toward greater inclusivity and accountability.

CONCLUSION

This study maps gender mainstreaming across 19 Indonesian international trade agreements concluded up to October 2025 through document content analysis based on the International Trade Centre (2020) instrument. Gender responsiveness is assessed based on provisions explicitly articulated in the main texts of the agreements and their supporting documents. The mapping reveals that 14 agreements (74%) do not explicitly include gender-related provisions and may therefore be categorized as gender-blind, while five agreements (26%) contain explicit gender-related provisions. These five agreements are the Indonesia–Canada CEPA (2025), the Second Amendment to the AANZFTA (2023), the Indonesia–UAE CEPA (2022), the Indonesia–EFTA CEPA (2018), and the Indonesia–Chile CEPA (2017).

The measurement of gender responsiveness across the five agreements demonstrates variation in the depth and institutional design of gender integration. The Indonesia–Canada CEPA (2025) achieved the Advanced Gender Responsiveness category with a score of 85%. The Indonesia–Chile CEPA (2017) and Indonesia–EFTA CEPA (2018) fell within the Evolving Gender Responsiveness category, with scores of 42.5% and 35%, respectively. Meanwhile, the Indonesia–UAE CEPA (2022) and the Second Amendment to the AANZFTA (2023) were categorized as Limited Gender Responsiveness, with scores of 32.5% and 20%.

The ITC-based diagnosis reveals an imbalance in the design of gender mainstreaming elements across Indonesia's trade agreements. The dimension relating to the frequency of gender clauses was the most fulfilled. This indicates that textual visibility was relatively easier to achieve. In contrast, the dispute settlement dimension is the least

fulfilled. Gender-related provisions were generally excluded from enforceable dispute settlement mechanisms. Furthermore, in the four agreements other than the Indonesia-Canada CEPA, gender-related provisions tended to be concentrated within a single chapter rather than integrated across multiple substantive chapters.

The policy implications of these findings underscore the need to strengthen the design of gender provisions in Indonesia's free trade agreements, particularly by embedding gender clauses across relevant substantive chapters. Furthermore, the Indonesian government and its trade partners should consider enhancing implementation and accountability mechanisms in accordance with the ITC dimensions. These include the establishment of institutional, procedural, review, and funding mechanisms. In doing so, gender commitments in FTAs can move beyond symbolic towards substantive and enforceable obligation.

This study confines its claims to mapping the design of treaty provisions using the International Trade Centre (2020) framework. It does not evaluate the implementation of these agreements or their empirical impact on women's economic opportunities. Future research should therefore examine the negotiation dynamics of gender-responsive trade agreements in Indonesia. Also, scholars of gender studies need to pay close attention to assess whether variations in agreement design correlate with measurable changes in women's economic participation, market access, and economic empowerment outcomes.

DECLARATION

AI assistance was utilized as part of research process to compile relevant literature and translate source documents. Artificial intelligence tools were additionally employed to support the refinement of language, grammar, and paragraph structure throughout the manuscript. All substantive analysis and scholarly arguments presented in this study remain entirely the work of the authors.

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