

East Asia & Pacific

Women, Business and the Law (WBL) is a World Bank Group flagship initiative providing comparable data on laws and policies impacting women's economic participation to drive jobs, productivity, and economic growth. Economies with higher WBL scores tend to have higher female labor force participation rates, more women business owners and managers, and narrower gender wage gaps.

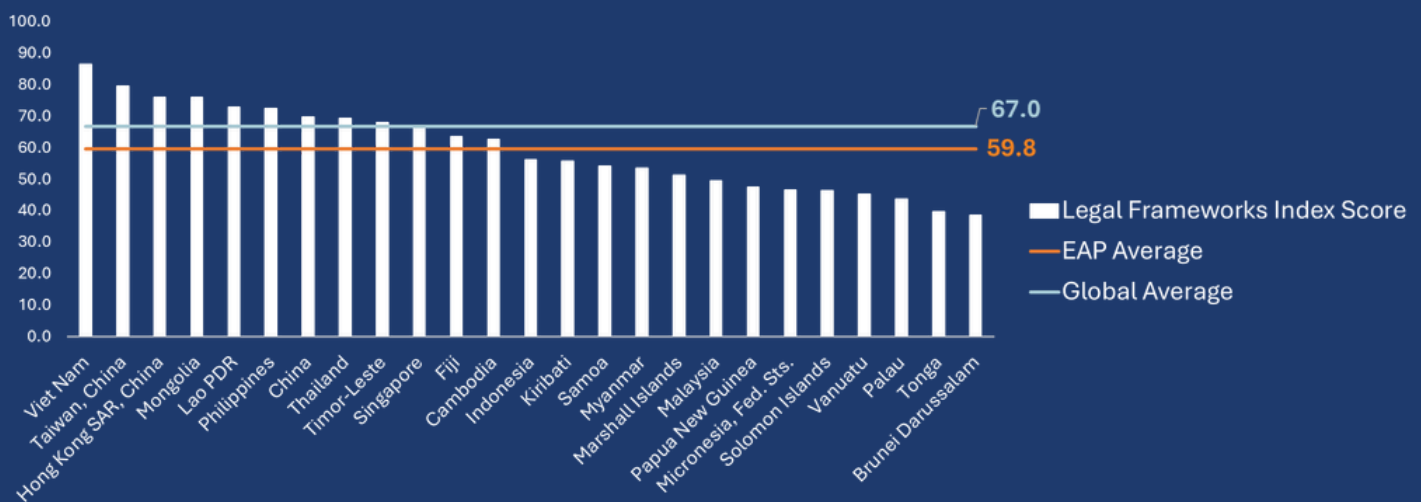
Women in the East Asia and Pacific region have about one half (59.8%) of the economic rights afforded to men. Only less than half of mechanisms (42.3%) are in place to support the implementation of laws. Experts in the region perceive that women's economic rights are enforced at less than half of their full potential (44.1%).

Reform Highlights from October 2023 to October 2025

- ✓ Four economies in the East Asia and Pacific region have enacted reforms to provide women with greater access to economic opportunities.
- ✓ In January 2025, **Singapore** enacted legislation introducing criminal penalties for domestic violence.
- ✓ In March 2024, **Philippines** allowed women to apply for a passport in the same way as a man.

[Click here for a full list of reforms](#)

Legal Frameworks Index Scores for East Asia & Pacific - WBL 2026



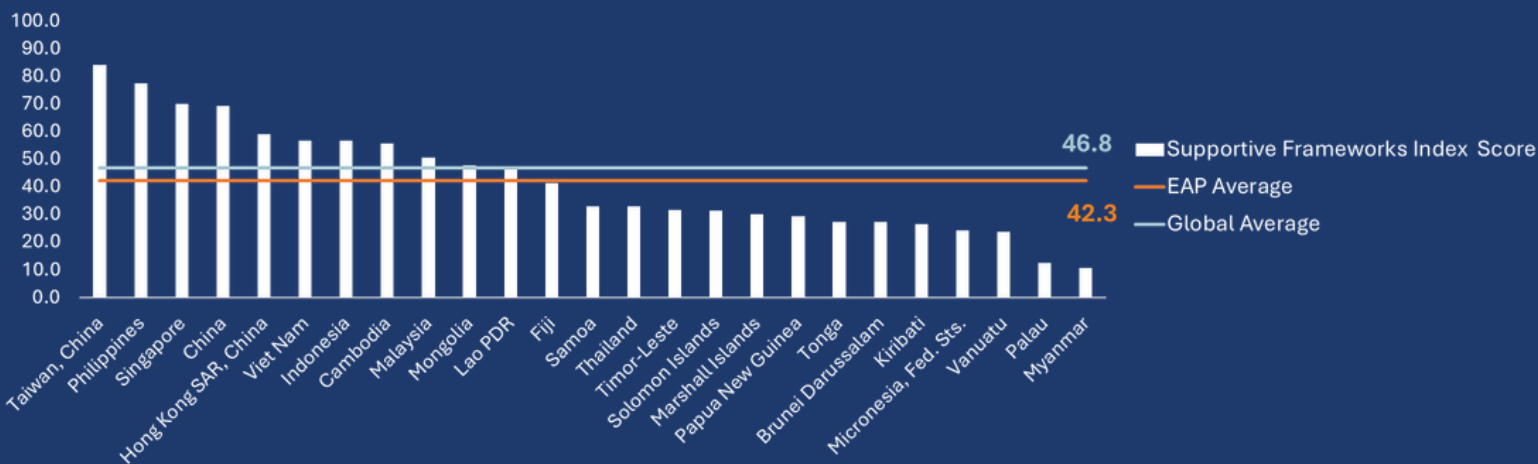
Legal Frameworks: Measuring equal rights and explicit restrictions on women's work and entrepreneurship

- Across the region, 10 economies including **Viet Nam** and **Taiwan, China** perform above the global average, indicating relatively strong legal frameworks promoting women's access to economic opportunities.
- The **Mobility** and **Marriage** topics perform well with average regional scores of 89.5 and 85.0, respectively.
- The **Entrepreneurship** and **Safety** topics show the most room for improvement with average regional scores of 37.5 and 29.8, respectively, indicating gaps in legislation supporting women to start and run businesses and in protection from violence against women. To close such gaps, economies could establish mechanisms to promote women's entrepreneurship and introduce laws addressing violence against women.

Good Practice Legal and Policy Frameworks

- **Philippines** is the only economy in the region that has enacted comprehensive legislation addressing sexual harassment in employment, education, public spaces, and online cyber-harassment.
- **Malaysia** is the only economy in the region which prescribes a minimum representation of women on corporate boards.

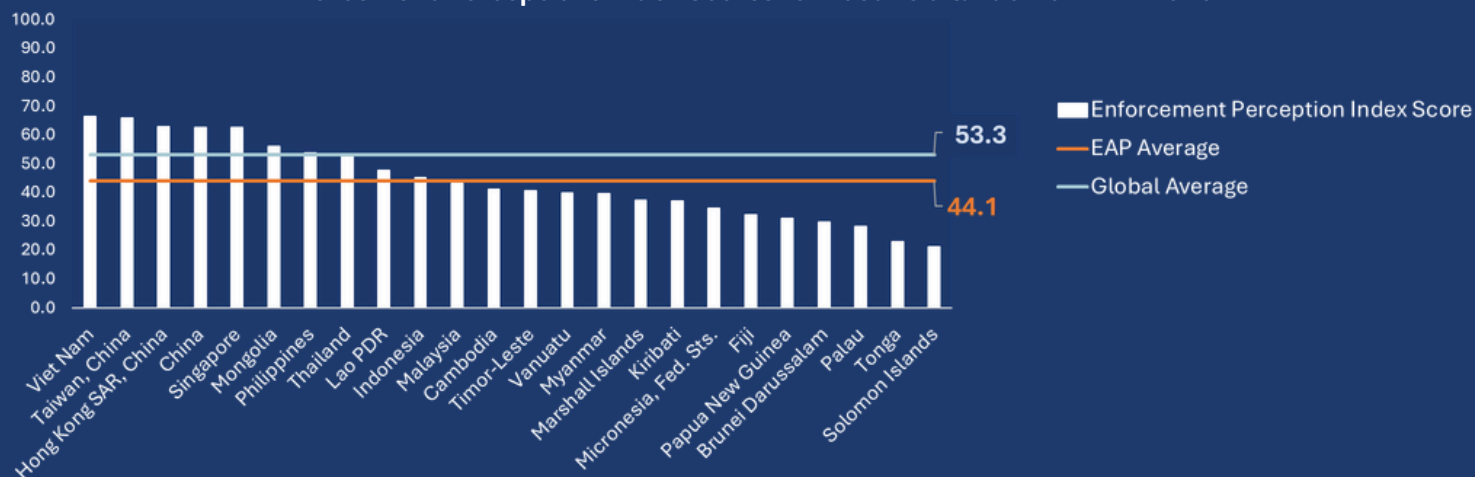
Supportive Frameworks Index Scores for East Asia & Pacific - WBL 2026



Supportive Frameworks: Examining policy instruments designed to support the implementation of laws

- Across the region, policies and institutions to implement equal opportunity laws are strongest in **Taiwan, China** and **Philippines**. Most room for improvement remains in **Palau** and **Myanmar**.
- The **Mobility** topic performs relatively well with an average regional score of 72.5.
- The **Assets** and **Childcare** topics show the most room for improvement with average regional scores of 25.0 and 21.5, respectively, indicating gaps in policies and institutions needed to support women’s property ownership and to support the affordable quality childcare services. To close such gaps, economies could develop policies to support women’s property ownership and registration as well as increasing the availability of, public finance for, and quality of center-based childcare.

Enforcement Perceptions Index Scores for East Asia & Pacific - WBL 2026



Enforcement Perceptions: Evaluating expert views of how well public authorities enforce laws in practice

- **Viet Nam** is the highest scoring economy (66.6%), suggesting that laws protecting women’s economic rights are enforced two thirds of the time. Lowest enforcement levels are perceived in **Tonga** and **Solomon Islands**.
- Across the region, experts assess the enforcement of women’s right to **Safety** at only 16.8% of their full potential and the enforcement of **Childcare** laws at only 24.1% of their full potential.