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Programme of Work: Report on Capacity Building

Training Material on Gender-Responsive Standards

Submitted by the secretariat

Summary

This training material was prepared in the framework of the project “Enhancing usage and uptake of standards for sustainable development, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”. It aims to support standards bodies to take a targeted, expert-led approach to women’s participation by presenting practical steps to address gender inequality in standardization policy and the standards development processes. The material can be utilized by any standards developing organization (SDO) to improve gender equality in workplace processes, especially in the adoption of measures targeting inclusive recruitment, balanced representation, and unconscious bias.

Document (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/INF.2) is submitted to the Annual Session for information.

1. Facilitating balanced representation and participation in standards development has the potential to accelerate progress towards the achievement of Agenda 2030.
2. With broad consensus on the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 and the resulting rolling-back of gender equality gains, targeted efforts to establish policies and practices which drive women's equal participation are a strategic priority. Drafted in close collaboration with subject matter experts, the training material guides organizations on practical steps for the full and effective participation of women in the standards development process.
3. In addressing the barriers to greater representation in the standards development process, the material offers a baseline for standards development organizations (SDOs) aiming to ensure equity in their working processes and greater efficacy in the standards they develop, in line with the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals. The training manual distils best practice on gender-responsive standards and focuses on practical, informed solutions to longstanding challenges to gender equality in standards development.
4. It is hoped that this training material will support the active and intentional efforts of all SDOs to take steps to implement changes, which strengthen commitments to gender equality and set expectations on the efficacy of gender-responsive standards. Though the content is focused on gender, many of the principles support broad, incremental change and can be applied to other groups marginalized in the standards development process.
5. The training material is presented annexed to this annual session document in the format which it is intended to be used.

Training on Gender-Responsive Standards

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ACRONYMS

ARSO	African Organization for Standardization
BIS	Bureau of Indian Standards
BSI	British Standards Institution
CEFM	Child, Early, and Forced Marriages
CEN	European Committee for Standardization
CENELEC	European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
CEP	Portuguese Electrotechnical Commission
COPANT	Pan American Standards Commission
EUTF	Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
ETSI	European Telecommunications Standards Institute
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GAD	Gender And Development
GAPs	Gender Action Plans
GMs	Gender Markers
GMO	Gender Monitoring Office
GRSI	Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IGPAI	General Inspectorate for Agriculture and Industrial Products
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JSAG	Joint Strategic Advisory Group
NSAI	National Standards Authority of Ireland

NSB	National Standards Body
RSB	Rwanda Standards Board
SAEP	Southern Africa Energy Program
SCC	Standards Council of Canada
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDO	Standards Development Organization
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TF	Task Force
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UN Women	United Nations Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WP.6	Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies
WTO	World Trade Organization

GENDER GLOSSARY

Community work	Refers to unpaid work which is undertaken for the improvement of the community. The work is unremunerated and performed by an individual or group of people. As distinct from community service, community work is voluntary – often collective – and the objective is most commonly determined by the individual or group undertaking the work.
Gender	Refers to the socially constructed identity of women and men – such as norms, roles and relationships between women and men. Gender norms, roles and relations are dynamic, vary from society to society and change over time, and have a bearing on people’s access to opportunities, resources, and services.
Gender analysis	Gender analysis (through sex-disaggregated data), identifies, assesses, and informs actions to address inequalities that arise from: 1) different gender norms, roles, and relations; 2) unequal power relations between women and men, and 3) contextual factors such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, education, or employment status.
Gender awareness	Refers to the ability to identify the consequences of gender inequality and discrimination even if these are not evident on the surface and are “hidden” or are not part of the commonly accepted explanation of what the consequences are and where the cause lies. Applied through gender analysis, gender awareness needs to be included on all levels.
Gender division of labor	Refers to who (women or men, young or old) does what in terms of different types of work, such as formal economy, which can include work in factories, in offices, and on the land; the informal economy such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for family members (participation in both formal and informal economies also possible); and community activities such as attending meetings (with or without pay).
Gender equality	Refers to the principle asserting the equality of men and women and their right to enjoy equal conditions realizing their full human potential to contribute to and benefit from the results of development. Thus, gender equity leads to substantive equality.
Gender equity	Refers to the policies, instruments, programs, services, and actions that address the disadvantaged position of women in society by providing preferential treatment and affirmative action. Such special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discriminatory and shall in no way

	entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards. These measures become obsolete when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.
Gender inclusion	Refers to the process of all persons participating equally in the economic, political, and social fabric of society without disadvantage based on gender or gender identity. Fully functional gender inclusion means that all persons and groups are valued equally.
Gender insensitive	Refers to the lack of distinction between genders and no recognition of the differences and diverse needs of women, men, girls, and boys.
Gender mainstreaming	Refers to the process of ensuring that women and men have equal access and control over resources, development benefits and decision-making, at all stages of the development process and in all government projects, programs, and policy.
Gender neutral	Can be determined only after a rigorous gender analysis has taken place and the economic, social, environmental, governance and demographic impacts on women and men have been determined both quantifiably and qualitatively.
Gender planning (or gender-sensitive planning)	Refers to the process of planning development programs and projects that are gender sensitive and that consider the impact of gender differences (due to biology and societal norms) in the target community or sector
Gender-responsive budget	Refers to an application of gender responsiveness (see below definition) in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures to promote gender equality.
Gender roles	Refers to the learned behaviors in a given society/community that condition which activities, tasks or responsibilities are perceived as male and female. Gender roles are changeable, and are affected by age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, and by the geographical, economic, and political environment. Both women and men play multiple roles in society. Women often have reproductive, productive, care and community managing roles. Men focus more on productive roles and community politics.
Gender-responsiveness	Refers to the consistent and systematic attention given to the differences between women and men with a view to addressing structural constraints to gender equality.
Gender sensitivity	Gender sensitivity is often used to mean the same as gender awareness. It is the beginning of gender awareness which is more analytical and critical.

Occupational segregation (horizontal and vertical)	<p>Horizontal segregation refers to the distribution of women and men across occupations.</p> <p>Vertical segregation refers to the distribution of men and women in the job hierarchy in terms of status and occupation.</p>
Productive roles	<p>Refers to activities carried out by women and men to produce goods and services for sale, exchange, or to meet the subsistence needs of the family. For example, in agriculture, productive activities include planting, weeding, animal husbandry.</p>
Sex	<p>Identifies the biological and reproductive differences between women and men.</p>
Sex-disaggregated data	<p>Refers to the data that identifies differences between the circumstances of women and men, girls, and boys. Sex-disaggregated data collection is an integral part of gender analysis.</p>
Triple burden	<p>Refers to the fact that women tend to work longer and more fragmented days than men as they are usually involved in three different gender roles: reproductive, productive and community work.</p>
Unpaid economy roles	<p>Refers to the activities needed to ensure the reproduction of the society's labor force. This includes childbearing, child rearing, and care for family members such as elderly, children, and workers. It is important to note that whilst these unpaid tasks are mostly undertaken by women, there are many roles that men can play in the informal economy, including care-giving, managing and performing household responsibilities (e.g., cooking, cleaning etc.).</p>

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In September 2015, the 193 Member States of the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The focus of the Agenda is to end poverty and hunger, realize human rights, and achieve gender equality, empowering women and girls while protecting natural resources for a sustainable planet. Through international co-operation, the 2030 Agenda is a global call to action for developed and developing nations alike, to address key inequalities using a set of core principles and values. The United Nations uses an established framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); each with a set of linked targets, and indicators for UN member States to adopt, monitor progress and guide to policy implementation. The SDGs balance the essential economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and align these elements with specific Goals and targets. Figure 1 provides a summary overview of the SDG – often referred to as the Global Goals - that underpin the 2030 Agenda.

Figure 1 The Sustainable Development Goals Icons



Source: United Nations

Why are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Important?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) act as a primer to improve quality of life for individuals and provide a critical framework for monitoring progress on defined Goals, targets, and indicators, with the detailed objectives listed in Table 1. The need to gauge social, economic, and environmental factors - mapping them to the key objectives in Table 1- to address inequality has never been greater.

Whilst many of the broader issues of poverty, environmental degradation and gender inequality predate the global health crisis, it has served to amplify existing structural issues, compounding disparities in income,

wealth, and opportunity. As such, in our collective efforts to recover, COVID-19 has forced us to recognize and acknowledge the deeply embedded, structural nature of the global challenges that lie ahead.

With respect to precarious working conditions, women tend to disproportionately occupy these low-paid, insecure jobs, which became increasingly hazardous with the emergence of COVID-19. These deep disparities in economic opportunity and incomes – further underscored by the disproportionate ability of some to access and leverage remote working technologies, whilst others faced precarious working conditions, often at great risk of disease transmission – must compel public and private sector actors to advance critical infrastructure and service offerings, which align with an equality-driven approach to society.

Greater recognition of the interrelated nature of the SDGs in policy and programmes generates increased demand for collaborative solutions - including strong commitments towards inclusive partnership-building – which recognize and encourage the secondary and tertiary impacts of innovation.¹

In this context, innovations which accelerate the achievement of SDG 8 (Promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work), and SDG 9 (Building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation) will improve working quality and conditions in support of the safety and wellbeing of low-wage workers. Such improvements in the condition of work play an essential role in raising the collective wellbeing, supporting the achievement of SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) by reducing inequality within and among countries.

For member States, the recovery from the health crisis represents an opportunity to instigate an unprecedented wave of innovation and creativity to accelerate action plans, to adjust policies accordingly, and create micro industries to improve working conditions and remuneration.

Just as ending poverty and addressing social injustice and human rights requires focused attention and action, so does the need to enable gender equality and empower women and girls. Research has shown that representation of women at decision-making levels in business, education and politics is proportionally low and needs to be improved. For example, in Canada where women make up almost half of the labor force, they only account for 24 per cent of Canada's experts in standardization committees at the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)².

Addressing the gender gap is not a “women's issue”; rather the equal right of women to participate in all aspects of society is a fundamental human right. Research indicates that how the subject of gender equality

¹ Innovation leads to growth in productivity which benefits consumers and businesses through increases in personnel in the workforce and their associated wages. The increased business profit and consumer spending generates further economic activity.

² Parkouda, M. (2020). When one size does not protect all: Understanding why gender matters for standardization. Ottawa: Standards Council of Canada. Available at: https://www.scc.ca/en/system/files/publications/SCC_Gender_Safety_Report_EN.pdf

is framed has significant impact on how people perceive the topic. Rather than considering gender inequality as a singular problem related to the empowerment of women, it must be regarded as a systems-issue, which requires persistent and concerted structural change across all levels of our society.

As standards development and standards globally are a significant part of our societal structures, it is useful to consider the gender gap in standards development. According to Kim et al in January 2020, 93% of all 220 committees at IEC were chaired by men, while women mostly filled lower-ranked, administrative positions. At ISO, where committees work on a much broader range of topics, female numbers were slightly higher, while the distribution of women was similarly skewed towards lower-ranked positions³.

SDG 5 (Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls)

As reports on gender equality reveal, there is a lack of defined indicators – in addition to a broad gender-responsive approach - across several SDGs, which must be addressed. In this section, we explore the key issues that support a solution-focused agenda to advance and collate SDG 5 data. Sex-disaggregated data gaps across the SDGs are impeding analysis for monitoring progress and reporting, making it impossible to strategically plan if there is no data to analyze. To determine the exact nature of structural changes for SDG 5, sex-disaggregated data enables policy analysis to identify gender differences and plan accordingly. Where data is available on SDG 5, global assessment of “distance to target” presents a complex picture. For example, across SDG progress reports on gender in nine areas distance to target is moderate, in two SDGs the current levels are far from target. Most concerning is the fact that in six target areas the data gaps make global assessment impossible (UN Gender Snapshot, 2021, p.20).

Based on the above evidence, it is important to understand that a core requirement is to focus on collating SDG 5 sex-disaggregated data for measuring and monitoring progress. As such, a first principle in advancing SDG 5 is to make key data available in order that we have a better understanding of gender gaps in the system. A review of the evidence suggests that key concepts in this domain, which can be integrated into action plans, do relate to inclusion of women in critical positions and in core decision making processes, development of systems, and delivery of services.

At the systems level, it is important that women are represented at the management level so that there is active participation in policy formulation and management processes. Recent reports on the impact of women on SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, report that only 26 per cent of 170 countries were actively

³ Kim, J. Y., Fitzsimons, G. M., & Kay, A. C. (2018). Lean in messages increase attributions of women’s responsibility for gender inequality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 115(6), 974–1001. Available at: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2018-63189-004>

pursuing gender mainstreaming in water resources management and in the energy sector only 22 per cent have high levels of women participating in policy and management processes.

In summary, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls has as its objective to further intensify actions to eliminate all types of discrimination against women in public and private life. Key areas where tangible improvements can be realized is in the reduction of discrimination towards women in workplace settings, and a safer and more inclusive society that delivers justice for all.

SDG 5 focuses on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but the essential underpinning of a humane, prosperous, and sustainable world

The Importance of SDG 5 (Gender Equality)

At the process level, it is important to recognize the cross-cutting nature of gender. Women and men do not form two separate homogeneous groups. Gender-responsiveness encompasses both sex and gender and it is important to distinguish between the two. Sex brings characteristics that are biologically- defined, and gender offers a social and cultural construct which defines the expectations for women and men. Gender as a construct influences several core aspects of society, including language, research, services, and systems development. As such, gender needs to be seen as a cross-cutting issue, which necessitates scrutiny across not only the SDG framework but society in general.

Bias, including gender bias, exists in every human being because it is a consequence of how our brains work and both men and women can exhibit gender bias. This bias could be conscious or unconscious and can, over time, have a direct impact on things such as the recruitment of women in key positions or the discounting or discrediting of women's opinions on committees at the decision making or service delivery level.

From the research perspective, studies by Heidari et al⁴ looked at sex and gender differences in research design, study implementation and scientific reporting, in addition to general science communication. With a panel of 13 experts representing nine countries, researchers developed a set of guidelines through a series of teleconferences, conference presentations and 2-day workshops.

Over a three-year timeline, the study developed a core resource entitled the SAGER Guidelines. The application of these guidelines in research publications contributes to optimizing transparent processes in addressing potential bias on gender-responsiveness calling for the full participation of women in all levels of

⁴ Heidari, S., Babor, T. F., De Castro, P., Tort, S., & Curno, M. (2016). Sex and Gender Equity in Research: rationale for the SAGER guidelines and recommended use. Research integrity and peer review, 1, 2. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-016-0007-6>

scientific research. As such, the guidance resource contributes to the delivery of SDG 5 key objectives by calling for full participation of women in all levels of political and economic decision-making in research.

SDG 5 seeks to address the topic of gender discrimination globally and provides scope for gender parity through empowering women with access to education, skills and training facilities, public health, and employment. Having women in more active roles in society can therefore not only improve their individual lives but also positively impact the community.

Promising evidence reports that in 46 countries women now hold more than 30 per cent of seats in national parliament in at least one chamber⁵. Despite these findings, girls continue to encounter barriers to accessing both primary and secondary education particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and Western Asia. Post-pandemic, schools closed due to the health crisis are slow to reopen, especially in low and middle-income countries. UNESCO reports from 2018 indicate that globally 128 million girls of primary or secondary school age were out of school, and concerns are expressed that these individuals may not return to mainstream education⁶.

Due to a lack of access to technology, hardware, and the internet, the most disadvantaged in society do not have the option of tele-education. This is particularly concerning in the education of young refugee girls, with many anticipated to drop-out of full-time education and not return. Such impediments are impacting future generations in the longer term and require careful monitoring and strategically directed actions plans to deliver SDG target 5.5 which focuses on full and effective participation with equal opportunities at the political, economic, and public leadership level for women in 2022.

Women's Economic Contribution

Across the globe, women confront barriers that prevent them from fully and effectively participating in political, economic, public, and private life. Women are excluded through behaviors - ranging from (un)conscious bias and stereotyping to outright discrimination, as well as gender-biased structures and systems (e.g., policies, processes etc.). The exclusion of women whether social, political, or economic— not only affects them, but also their family and society at large. Progress without the balanced participation of women is not possible and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda hinges on the implementation of effective and forward-looking measures for gender equality.

⁵ United Nations (2015). Sustainable Development Goals: Fact Sheet. Available at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Factsheet_Summit.pdf

⁶ UNESCO (2021). 2021 UNESCO Prize for Girl's and Women's Education accepting nominations. Available at: <https://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/2021-unesco-prize-girls-and-womens-education-accepting-nominations#:~:text=UNESCO%20estimates%20that%20over%2011%20million%20girls%20and,significant%20in%20these%20challenging%20times%20than%20ever%20before.>

Gender equality enables more sustainable economic development and growth, enhances economic efficiency, and improves productivity. Women-led enterprises provide benefits to their local communities that go well beyond innovation to economies: they help develop the full entrepreneurial potential of all of citizens⁷. At the macro level, increasing the potential of women generates both economic and social benefits. Over time, these benefits contribute to improving micro-efficiency, export revenue, increased employment in the workforce, productivity and living standards. Inclusive development widens the platform from which economic and social benefits can spread, so the business case for inclusive development is compelling from both a societal and economic perspective.

Inclusion is the engine of growth. Increasing the number of women in the workforce has a positive impact on the economies of both developed and developing economies

Summary

The 2030 Agenda is a global call to action for developed and developing nations alike, to address key inequalities using a set of core principles and values. The United Nations uses an established framework of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which balance essential economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and align these elements with specific Goals and targets. The United Nations intends to use this set of Goals, targets, and indicators to steer its policies and agendas. Public and private-sector actors can utilize the framework of the SDGs to undertake concerted action towards sustainable development, regardless of their size, role, or position.

Recognizing the disproportionate impact that health and humanitarian crises have on women, there is a fundamental need for sex-disaggregated data and a gender lens in rebuild and recovery efforts. SDG 5 works to further intensify efforts to eliminate all types of discrimination against women in both public and private life.

⁷ Braun, P. (2018). Developing gender-responsive trade ecosystems in the Asia-Pacific. In: *Contextual Embeddedness of Women's Entrepreneurship: Going Beyond a Gender Neutral Approach*; Shumaila Y. Yousafzi, Adam Lindgreen, Saadat Saeed, Colette Henry, Eds. London: Taylor & Francis Publishing, pp. 91-105.

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF STANDARDIZATION

The Role of Standards

Standardization (i.e., standards development activity) and standards are considered key enablers to the achievement of SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Traditionally an area dominated by men, early standards development and standards setting was rooted in the need to advance technology development, specifically the development of systems that would quantify units of measurement or enable interoperability across and between differing devices.

Through the creation of the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI) in 2016, the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation & Standardization Policies (Working Party 6, WP.6) drew attention to the pervasive and influential role of standards in society; recognizing that representation of women in standards development is below parity and that the outcomes for men and women are not systematically addressed during standards development. In terms of leverage to progress SDG 5 for the global community, it is increasingly evident that standards play a key role in shaping the material world in which we live, so standards developers are therefore making decisions that impact how and for whom the material world is shaped.

Standards were first grounded in fields related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and originated in an era where women were isolated from decision-making in the related fields of science, engineering, and political economy. As such, standards development was largely the domain of men and it remains male-dominated, despite the extension of standardization across all fields.

WP.6 has mainstreamed gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in its activities and, in doing so, identified the concerted (i) lack of representation of women in standards development and (ii) need for a standards development approach, which systematically enables the development of standards that provide equal outcomes for/benefits to men and women. In recognition of the important role of standards as tools for the achievement of SDG 5, WP.6 developed the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development, which opened for signature in May 2019⁸.

Reports investigating gender balance in standards development demonstrate that the strategic orientation of standardization organizations, their priorities and their activities can be affected by the lack of representation of women in the organizations and the standards development process. More than a century after the foundation of international standardization, the under-representation of women persists, and appears a common characteristic of the system. Since the opening of the UNECE Declaration, more than 80

⁸ UNECE (2019). Opening of the Declaration on Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development for signature. Available at: <https://unece.org/info/events/event/18241>

standards development organizations have become signatories and signaled a commitment to work towards ensuring that the standardization process and standards produced are gender-responsive.

It is important to note that a gender-responsive standard is not a separate standard, nor is it produced by a separate or distinct standards development process. A gender-responsive standard is developed via the established process, but in its development, it considers the differing needs of and impact on men and women, with the objective of ensuring equal benefits and outcome from the use of the standard.

In order to ensure standards are gender-responsive a number of defined actions are recommended such as: (i) increasing the participation of women – as subject matter experts, rather than gender experts – in standards development; (ii) guaranteeing women are active participants in all aspects and stages of standards development; (iii) make certain that standards development is a gender-responsive process; and (iv) ensure that the implications of gender differences are systematically and explicitly identified and addressed during the standards development process (in order to ensure the development of gender-responsive standards).

The Role of Gender in Standards

Standards and standards bodies can play a critical role in enabling gender equality. Adopting a gender-responsive lens in standards leads to better outcomes, making standards not only relevant to a larger percentage of the population, but better equipped to respond to current and future challenges. Gender-responsive practices can be introduced at both the organizational and standard setting level. Collecting sex-disaggregated data across standards activities helps to assess and monitor gender-responsive policies and practices.

Recent research provides key insights into how the wider standards community is progressing with the UNECE Declaration on Gender-Responsive Standards & Standards Development to meet the objectives of SDG 5. The activities undertaken by these standards development organizations (SDOs), under their commitment as signatories to the UNECE Declaration, help to establish foundational concepts, harmonize the efforts of SDOs through the creation of best practice models and, as such, provide tried and tested measures to address gender inequality.

Many of the activities undertaken by SDOs are S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Results-based, Time-bound) and adaptable, such that another standards body can implement these measures and accelerate gender equality (e.g., recruitment, participation, representation) in all aspects of their standards development. Whether it is listening to women and girls excluded from positions of power and decision-making or supporting their development and leadership for meaningful participation in all decision-making spheres, it is critical that both standards and the standards development process and environment are gender-responsive, to support the maximum impact on realizing the objectives of SDG 5.

Standards require consensus, collaboration, and invention for the process to be effective. All interested and affected stakeholders must be enabled to participate to define the best means of accomplishing the objective of the standard, whether it relates to creating a product, providing a service, or controlling a process. Standards can help to create a common ground for understanding, communicate across disciplines, inform future plans, and guide their implementation.

Consensus, collaboration, and invention are key components in standards development

Summary

Standards and standards development organizations (SDOs) play a critical role in enabling gender equality. The Working Party has sought to strengthen the collective understanding on gender equality and mainstreamed the empowerment of women and girls in its activities. In doing so, WP.6 has identified a concerted (i) lack of representation of women in standards development and (ii) the need for a standards development approach, which systematically enables the development of standards that provide equal outcomes for/benefits to men and women.

A standard is a set of rules, guidelines, or definitions that are intended to be followed in the same way every time

A gender-responsive standard is developed via the established process, but in its development, it considers the differing needs of and impact on men and women, with the objective of ensuring equal benefits and outcome from the use of the standard.

CHAPTER 3: UNECE

The Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) was founded in the 1970s as a forum for exchange on the harmonization of non-agricultural product regulations. WP.6 aims to promote regulatory cooperation, standardization policies and activities which contribute towards reducing technical barriers to trade, promoting sustainable development in its all dimensions including, for example, gender equality, climate and environmental protection, circular economy and the adaptation to new technologies.

This work is hosted under the UNECE Market Access Section within the UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division (ECTD). The ECTD assists member States with economic integration and in promoting and enabling a better policy, financial and regulatory environment. These support an inclusive and sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery, a transition to a more circular economy, e.g. through the promotion of gender-responsive standards and through digital and green transformations.

UNECE's purpose is to foster economic cooperation and integration among its members.

Recommendation on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies

A core focus of the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)⁹ is to encourage increased regulatory coherence in specific sectors, which have a critical importance on sustainable development, and promote greater resilience to natural and man-made hazards. Sectoral initiatives and capacity-building activities are also undertaken to help achieve this goal. Governments, regulatory agencies, and administrations are welcome to participate in the Working Party, as are standards organizations, the business sector, and any other organization that contributes to a country's "quality infrastructure". In the past, WP.6 has played a crucial advocacy role in supporting the adoption of standards by policymakers and businesses supporting tools for decreasing technical obstacles to trade, advancing innovation and competitiveness, and enhancing catastrophe resilience.

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)

Since 1970, nineteen UNECE recommendations¹⁰ have been adopted by the Working Party to address standardization and regulatory issues. The recommendations set out good practice on:

- Regulatory cooperation
- Metrology
- Standards and Norms
- Conformity assessment
- Market surveillance

Table 1 UNECE WP.6 Recommendations

UNECE Recommendations	
V	Addressing Product Non-Compliance Risks in International Trade
U	Gender-Responsive Standards * (Examined in the proceeding section)
T	Standards and Regulations for Sustainable Development

¹⁰ UNECE (2022). WP.6 Recommendations. Available at: <https://unece.org/trade/wp6-recommendations>

S	Applying Predictive Risk Management Tools for Targeted Market Surveillance
R	Managing Risk in Regulatory Frameworks
P	Crisis Management within a Regulatory Framework
N	Good Market Surveillance Policies and Practices
M	Use of Market Surveillance Infrastructure as a Complementary Means to Protect Consumers and Users against Counterfeit Goods
L	International Model for Transnational Regulatory Cooperation Based on Good Regulatory Practice
K	International Model for Transnational Regulatory Cooperation Based on Good Regulatory Practice
J	Definitions
I	Education on Standards-Related Issues
H	Presentation of UNECE Recommended Standards and Harmonized Technical Regulations
G	Acceptance of Conformity Assessment Results
F	Creation and Promotion of International Agreements on Conformity Assessment
E	Treatment of Imported Products, Processes and Services
D	Reference to Standards

C	International Harmonization of Standards and Technical Regulations
B	Coordination of Technical Regulations and Standardization
A	Further Developments in International Cooperation on Technical Harmonization and Standardization Policies

RECOMMENDATION U (GENDER-RESPONSIVE STANDARDS)

The recommendations and best practice guidelines developed by (WP.6 are publicly available and extensively adopted. The European Union and the WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) have cited these recommendations as examples of excellent practice in the industry. Adopted in 2018, Recommendation U Gender-Responsive Standards aims to improve gender balance in standards development and advocates that:

“Member States consult with national standardization bodies operating within their respective jurisdictions and encourage these bodies to sign the “Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development” that has been prepared by the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies.”¹¹

DECLARATION FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE STANDARDS AND STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

Every standard-setting body is invited to sign the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development¹² and commit to making their standards, the associated processes, and environment, gender-responsive. Declaration signatories are supported to create a gender action plan (GAP) for their organization, which will enable them to monitor their progress, and collect and disseminate information related to their progress, challenges, and successes.

Sign the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development

In the Declaration Annex, standards development organizations (SDOs) are provided with suggestions for how they can implement gender-responsive standards and standards development. These suggestions can

¹¹ UNECE (2018). Recommendation U Gender-Responsive Standards. Available at: https://unece.org/DAM/trade/wp6/Recommendations/Rec_U_en.pdf

¹² UNECE (2019). UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development. Available at: https://unece.org/DAM/trade/wp6/AreasOfWork/GenderInitiative/UNECEGenderDeclaration_English.pdf

be customized and monitored to meet the specific circumstances and capacity of each SDO. Taking inspiration from these suggestions, standards development organizations are afforded a “starting point” by which they can develop, implement, and evaluate their respective gender action plans.

Figure 2 Gender Action Plan Core Content



Source : UNECE

SUMMARY

UNECE WP.6, with its longstanding history as a convener of national, regional, and international standards bodies, offers a series of innovative tools (e.g. UNECE Portal on Standards4SDGs) to guide organizations in their efforts to promote the use of standards and the full and effective participation of women in standards-development activities.

Taking inspiration from UNECE Recommendation U Gender-Responsive Standards, the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development enhances the contribution of standards in the implementation of SDG 5. Since opening in May 2019, more than 80 national, regional, and international standards bodies have elected to become signatories; making a public commitment to ensure that the content and impact of standards when implemented are gender-responsive.

CHAPTER 4: GENDER-RESPONSIVE STANDARDS

Introduction to Gender-Responsive Standards (GRS)

The UNECE 2016 report on gender mainstreaming in standards¹³ found limited evidence of gender being discussed, and addressed, in standards bodies at both international and national levels. There is a lack of literature on gender dimensions in standards, with the notable exception of studies on gender and labor standards. Anecdotal evidence points to the following concerns:

- There are barriers to women's equal participation in the development of standards.
- The work of developing standards has historically been and remains a male-dominated space.
- Standards have been presumed to be gender-neutral or been explicitly or intentionally developed to be gender-neutral or without any explicit references to or consideration of the implications of gender/gender differences.
- There is a lack of explicit gender equality policies and implementation strategies in standards development and standards development organizations.
- The evidence of the gender impacts of standards remains largely anecdotal and there is little systematic research/data collection regarding the societal impacts of standards.

Standards play a fundamental role in all aspects of everyday life, from communications and technology to food and health, infrastructure and construction, energy, and water, and much more. A gender-responsive standard (GRS) is one that equally addresses the requirements of and provides equal benefits/outcomes for both men and women. A GRS considers the biological and cultural differences between men and women, considering and addressing the implications of physical differences and those related to societal gender norms and roles.

A GRS is a standard which equally meets the needs of/provides equal benefits to both men and women by explicitly considering and effectively addressing the implications of differences based on sex and/or gender.

THE GENDER-RESPONSIVE STANDARDS INITIATIVE (GRSI)

It is vital that standards, when adopted, are gender-responsive in terms of both substance and impact. The more organizations participate in the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI) effort, the more national and international progress will be made towards SDG 5.

¹³ UNECE (2016). Gender Mainstreaming in Standardization. Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda; Twenty-sixth session of the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6). Geneva, Switzerland. Available at: https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/wp6/documents/2016/ECE_CTCS_WP6_2016_03E.pdf

To date, the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development has been signed by over 80 national, regional, and international standards development organizations. The Declaration affirms that:

- It was created to support achievement of SDG 5 and enabling gender equality as well as women's empowerment.
- The need for gender-responsive standards, on account of the impact of standards on people and society.
- Women are usually underrepresented in standards development.
- Standards and their contents provide opportunities for enabling women's equality and empowerment
- Each standards development organization operation in their own way.

Under the administration of WP.6, the GRSI works to ensure that the Declaration is supported and invites standards development organizations (SDOs) to pledge to make their standards and standards development processes gender-responsive. To drive this development, three GRSI Project Teams (PT) were established and are regarded as follows: (i) Knowledge-Sharing and Best Practice (PT1); (ii) Methodology for Assessing and Developing Gender-Responsive Standards (PT2); and (iii) Network Development (PT3).

The experts of Project Team 1 (PT1) recently developed a survey¹⁴, which identified and collected tools and resources, including training materials, from SDOs. The aim of the survey was to gather information regarding tools and resources including training materials, research studies, gender action plans and any unmet needs to support the development of a GRS resources hub for SDOs. The survey covered 4 sections: Section 1. Gender action plan (GAP); Section 2. Training; Section 3. Research; Section 4. Additional information and comments.

The survey results indicate that under half of respondents have or are completing gender action plans, with most respondents having no or informal targets/indicators. Despite the systematic implementation of gender focal points – though many at non-top-managerial level – the survey results confirm a lack of awareness and knowledge of gender-responsiveness. As a result, there is a focus on achieving responsiveness through balancing male and female participation, with little attention on the measurement of the responsiveness of completed standards.

Project Team 1 concluded that there is a fundamental lack of training, both in overall staff training and for committee members, and inconsistent internal processes in standard setting pertaining to gender. Despite a lack of gender-responsiveness research being undertaken by organizations, the survey indicated that

¹⁴ UNECE (2021). UNECE Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative Survey. Available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/W75TY5F>

organizations are interested: (i) in sharing their information and gender action plans; (ii) in receiving more gender-responsive standards information and (iii) in taking gender training in different formats and multiple languages.

APPLYING A GENDER LENS

The Global Gender Gap Index¹⁵ quantifies the gaps that exist between men and women, providing a global benchmark of gender equality across a range of criteria, including economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. According to the 2021 Index, economic participation and opportunity remains the second-largest gap tracked by the Index. While the proportion of women among skilled professionals continues to increase, there is a persistent lack of women in leadership and decision-making positions. Given the slow rate of change at least one generation of women will have to wait for gender parity.

Standards organizations have an opportunity to contribute to national, regional, and international rankings by applying a gender lens to their standards processes. Using a gender lens reveals the ways in which content and approaches are gendered – informed by, shaped by, or biased toward men's or women's perspectives or experiences. It is useful to question the assumptions and observations implicit in standards that may present a gender bias. Not applying a gender lens to standards processes may, unintendedly, entrench discrimination and cause harm.

By applying a gender lens to standards development, implementation and review processes, an organization will likely identify that these processes are not gender neutral. To ensure that standards are gender-responsive, both the SDOs and the standards developers play an important role, not only in content development, but also in terms of equal representation of both men and women at the standards development level. Since generally standards are considered for revision at least every five years, it provides an opportunity for making existing standards gender-responsive by ensuring the implications of gender differences are explicitly considered in the review process

To ensure that standards are gender-responsive, both SDOs and inclusive standards developers play an important role. It is critical that gender-focused activities, such as applying a gender lens or undertaking a gender audit, are integrated into the core working processes of the SDO, in order that the organization, the standards development processes and their related outputs are increasingly sustainable over time.

¹⁵ World Economic Forum (2021). Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021/>

GENDER AUDIT

Adopting a gender lens effectively means organizations undertake a workplace gender audit and regularly collect and report data on gender equality in their organization. Such a gender audit will shed light on components and processes of the organization that are often taken for granted and overlooked in strategy and budget design. These include

- **Human resource distribution.** An audit of human resources throughout the organization provides a picture of the gender distribution at all levels of decision-making processes. It measures gender representation throughout the organization.
- **Non-human resource distribution.** An audit of non-human resources available to people in the organization, such as time, money, and access to information, analyzes how equally resources are distributed and may be affected by prevailing gender norms.
- **Organizational circumstances.** Human and non-human resource distribution are circumstantial. An audit of organizational situations provides an understanding of the reasons for the gender disparity in representation and resource distribution. It also provides a basis for the formulation of new goals and measures on activities may be altered to promote gender equality.

Gender inequalities do not exist in a vacuum. They are always contextual and are influenced by their environment, relationships, access to services, socio-economic and community circumstances, etc. Key actions that an organization, its gender focal point and standards developers can take relate to the following principles:

Gender: Acknowledge that gender differences exist and that these differences have implications and that there are likely to be gender inequalities, gaps or biases in the group process and the standard being developed. Acknowledge that the gender inequities (in the standards development process and the respective standard) have ramifications for the men and women affected by the use of the standard.

Environment: Create a secure, safe environment based on the fundamental equality of all participants. Respect, dignity, and ensuring that physical and emotional well-being are top priorities.

Relationships: This principle is a foundation for personal growth and development. Develop relational policies, practices, and programs that promote equity and ensure that all participants in the standards development process have an equal opportunity to participate in the process and influence the standard.

Services and supervision: Services and support that are relevant and inclusive can help those participating in the standards development process to effectively participate. Appropriate governance/supervision can ensure that issues can be effectively addressed as and when they arrive.

Socioeconomic status: Recognize that because of gender inequality women may not have the same status, position or title as their male equivalents or counterparts but that this does not make their knowledge any less valuable. Further, some women may get treated differently than others based on race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Community: Foster a sense of community amongst standards developers based on valuing everyone and their knowledge and experience.

Figure 3 Guiding Principles



Source: UNECE

ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS TOOLS

In addition to applying a gender lens for internal audits of resources and processes, organizations can adopt advocacy and communication tools that encourage the internal workforce as well as engage external members and stakeholders. These types of tools assist to showcase organizations are:

- publicly embracing the concept of gender equality,
- broadcasting gender-responsive strategies and action plans.
- raising awareness of inequitable gender structures within the standards industry.
- revealing unconscious biases; and
- sharing good practices in gender-responsive practices.

Effective communication tools can be adopted through a variety of platforms and channels such as organizational websites, newsletters, blogs, and other forms of social media.

In addressing inequality in standards, sharing stories and statistics on standard setting practices (e.g., historical vs. current practices) are a powerful way to drive change and build a repository of anecdotal research and best practice. Take for example:

- **Heart attacks.** Women are three times more likely to die of a heart attack than men¹⁶. This is a sobering statistic. Why might this be the case? Most medical research, and therefore much of the medical science and knowledge is based on the male body and even today, often focuses on the male as the norm¹⁷.

When we don't consider a possible gender bias in standards and study design, something as common as a heart attack, can be fatal. A gender-bias is not necessarily only about women. Men can also be left out of the design process. For example:

- **Men's restrooms** do not have nappy change tables and fathers can find it difficult to change infants in their care. With increasing numbers of fathers taking a more equitable role in caregiving, there is a clear need for gender diverse facilities and for a change in standard setting that considers gender diverse individuals' safety and comfort.

To optimize standards, some gender champions advocate the need to go another step further and call for ethnic, sexual, cultural, and religious perspectives to be considered as well.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (COPS)

In addition to adopting advocacy and communication tools, organizations may like to consider forming or joining existing "Communities of Practice". COPS, as they are known, are groups of people who share a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact on a regular basis. COPS are a

¹⁶ Alabas, O. A., Gale, C. P., Hall, M., Rutherford, M. J., Szummer, K., Lawesson, S. S., Jernberg, T. (2017). Sex Differences in Treatments, Relative Survival, and Excess Mortality Following Acute Myocardial Infarction: National Cohort Study Using the SWEDEHEART Registry. *Journal of the American Heart Association*, 6(12). Available at: <https://www.ahajournals.org/doi/10.1161/jaha.117.007123>

¹⁷ Nowogrodzki, A. (2017). Inequality in medicine. *Nature* 550, S18–S19. Available at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/550S18a>

communication platform for like-minded professionals and can exist both within and external to an organization. COPS can be physical and/or virtual.

COPS participants are in the business of developing a collection of resources, experiences, stories, tools, and ways to address recurring problems – in short, COPS provide a learning environment to build good practices. While this takes time and sustained interaction, it also optimizes outcomes. For example, engineers who set mobile phone standards might make a concerted effort to collect, document and exchange design lessons they have learned into a shared knowledge base. A gender-responsive standards COPS, such as the GRSI, might engage members of the global standards community with a particular interest in building diverse standards committees.

SUMMARY

Women, men, and sexual and gender minorities are different in terms of their physical and social roles in society. Initiatives such as the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI) and the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development assist in reviewing current infrastructures, systems, services, and processes to realize the objectives of SDG 5.

Numerous advantages accrue from adopting gender-responsive standards. Specifically, the GRSI aims to increase the effective use of standards and technical regulations. At the social, economic, and environmental level, gender-responsive standards can act as a lever for much needed change in the development of standards.

Questioning and challenging existing practices on gender norms and exploring the distribution of resources and gender roles are integral to creating, and proactively tracking, organizational progress by collecting sex-disaggregated data, sharing, and publishing good practices. Advocacy, communication, and engagement tools complement each other and can be used both internal and external to the organization.

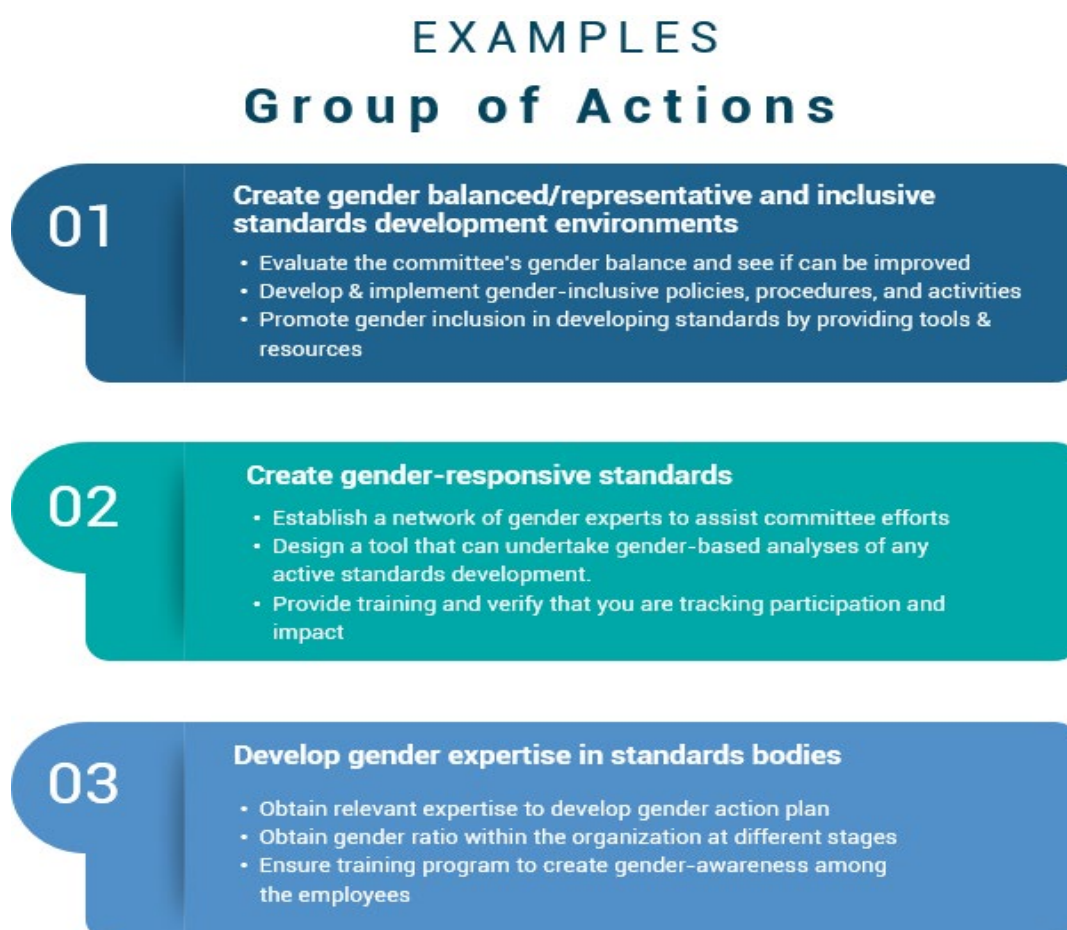
CHAPTER 5: ESTABLISHING A GENDER ACTION PLAN

Every standards development organization (SDO) that signs the Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development commits to creating a gender action plan (GAP) for their organization, tracking their progress and collecting, and sharing information on their experiences.

Signatories to the Declaration have undertaken to establish and implement gender action plans (GAPs)

To assist this process, Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI) has designed a suggested framework to guide organizations in the development of their GAP. The Annex to the Declaration outlines actions that signatory bodies can include in their gender action plan.

Figure 4 Group of Actions



Source: UNECE

Whilst it is for each organization to decide what they should include in their plan; the list of actions is provided to provide a source of inspiration for SDOs. The list of actions can be grouped as follows: (1) the development

of a gender balanced/representative and inclusive standards development environment; (2) the creation of gender-responsive standards; and (3) the development of standard bodies.

The Declaration is intended to address the problem of gender inequality, and this will only happen if signatories take concerted, measurable action. As such, every signatory to the Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development is encouraged, but not required, to create a gender action plan for their organization, track their progress, collect, and share relevant data about their experiences, as well as stories about their successes.

GENDER ACTION PLAN (GAP) DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming contributes to inclusive economies and reduces inequalities¹⁸. Standards are key parts of our economic and societal infrastructures and, as such, gender mainstreaming in standards will contribute to creating inclusive economies and reducing inequalities. Placing greater emphasis on the engagement of all sectors of society, directing efforts to eliminate barriers and equally building the capacity of all participants, explicitly considering human differences has the potential to turn standards and SDOs into accelerators of change, driving progress towards inclusive economies and societies. To be effective, gender mainstreaming requires sustained effort and financial resources.

Women are underrepresented in standards development and standards do not systematically include a gender lens. Gender mainstreaming necessitates a concerted effort and requires sustained financial resources.

Gender Mainstreaming Principles

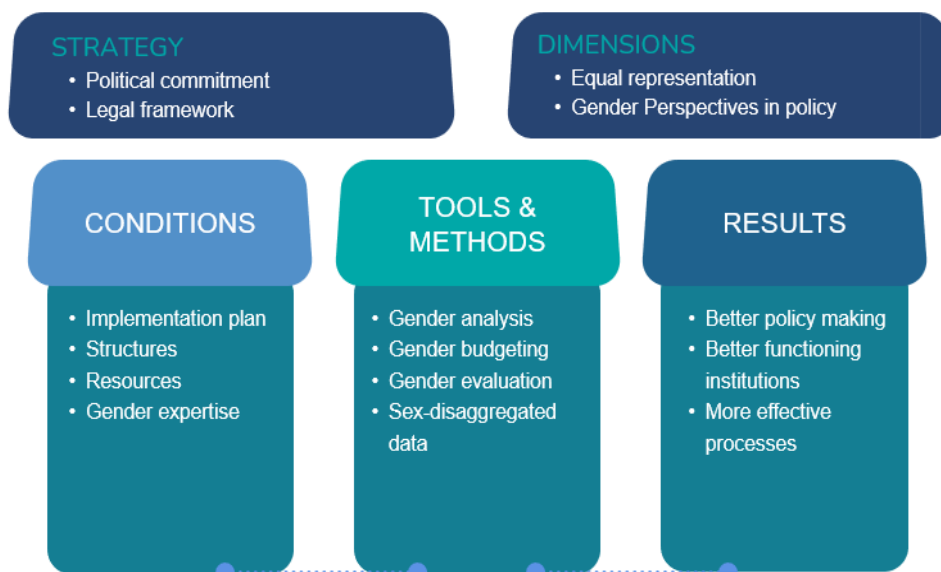
- Requires commitment and a gender mainstreaming strategy.
- Builds a culture of gender inclusion and gender expertise.
- Encourages inclusive engagement in all decision-making processes.
- Applies gender-inclusive tools and methods to all processes.
- Optimizes results and resources.

1)

¹⁸ European Institute for Gender Equality (2022). What is gender mainstreaming. Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming>

Figure 5 Gender Mainstreaming

GENDER MAINSTREAMING



2)

Source: UNECE

Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

A gender mainstreaming or gender equality strategy provides the foundation for the organizational GAP to achieve a range of goals. It provides a blueprint for accountability against measurable objectives.

A gender mainstreaming strategy or policy contains information on the organization's vision; why gender equality is important to the organization; how and who will execute the respective tasks; and by when. A mainstreaming strategy helps to create specific plans for discrete initiatives and can contain details about how to priorities actions. In summary, a gender mainstreaming/equality strategy:

- outlines a gender equality vision for the organization
- identifies practical goals
- includes measurable objectives linked to goals
- promotes active and inclusive leadership
- is easy to communicate
- holds the organization accountable for its gender equality progress
- follows a transparent governance process

- is integrated with all functions and levels of the organization.¹⁹

Action plans can be designed over multiple years (with built-in periodic review) and can include both high-level (qualitative) and task-specific (quantitative) measurable objectives. For example:

Figure 6 Objectives & Measures of Success



Source: UNECE

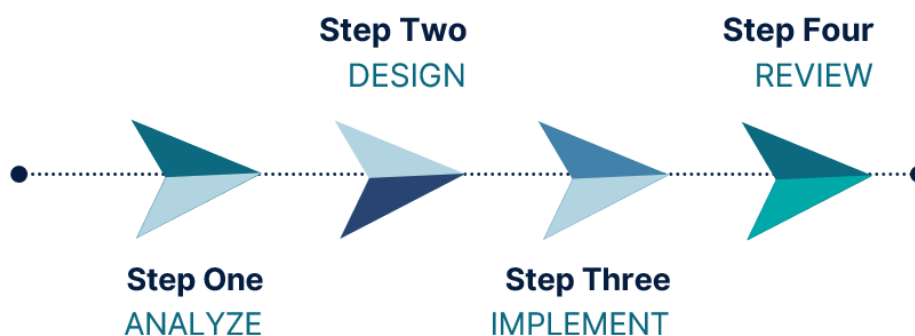
Gender Action Plan (GAP) Implementation

A gender mainstreaming strategy is a process of change. There are many different approaches and tools for implementing and managing organizational change.

Figure 7 GAP Implementation Steps 1 - 4

¹⁹ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2019). Gender equality strategy guide. Available at: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019_WGEA_GE_Strategy_Guide.pdf

GENDER ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION



Source: Workplace Gender Equality Agency²⁰

By analyzing gender disparities in standards development and review procedures as part of the GAP implementation plan, organizations are in an informed position to design and implement new, inclusive procedures. It is critical to note that this is not a one-off exercise.

1. Undertake a gender analysis at the outset to establish baseline data on women's participation, women's contribution to the organization and/or process, and barriers to women's equal participation and to consideration of gender during the standards development process.
2. Establish a culture of gender analysis, reporting and evidence-based decision-making in all aspects of standards development and with SDO operations.
3. Adequately resource gender analysis into planning and budgets to help identify and understand the role of women and men in the field which is the subject of standardization and to understand the implications of gender differences for the standard under development/revision.
4. Generate gendered insights into (trade, sector, business, community) needs and gaps, which can become opportunities for new standard initiatives, to inform proposals or to improve/call for the review of existing standards
5. Set targets for women's participation and for the creation of gender-responsive standards backed by regular review and progress reports. Targets should be set after conducting a gender analysis to identify the baseline.
6. Identify knowledge gaps and source gender expertise/knowledge – including more women in the standards development process is an objective and yet, women should not by default be considered the gender expert or be expected to explain the implications of gender differences. To ensure the

²⁰ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2019). Gender equality strategy guide. Available at: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019_WGEA_GE_Strategy_Guide.pdf

process benefits from adequate knowledge/expertise about the implications of gender differences – and how to equitably address them. In the context of the standard under development, additional participants, or knowledge (e.g., from published resources) may be required.

7. Source female talent - women who can participate in committees/panels or provide expertise in traditionally male-dominated fields, industries, or subject matters. Expert talent, including young women, may be drawn from multiple channels and levels of society, including the public, private and third sector, research, educational institutions and community groups, women networks, and professional associations.

Making women's concerns and experiences an integral part of the mainstreaming strategy is a technique for ensuring that both women's and men's interests are considered.

Summary

Women are underrepresented in standards development and gender is not a common consideration during the standards development process. Gender mainstreaming requires sustained effort and financial resources.

Every signatory to the Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development is encouraged, but not required, to create a gender action plan for their organization, track their progress, and collect and share relevant data about their experiences, challenges, and successes.

The Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative has produced a resource with three groups of practical actions that help standards organizations achieve gender-balanced/representative and inclusive standards development environments, create gender-responsive standards, and develop gender-responsive standards development organizations.

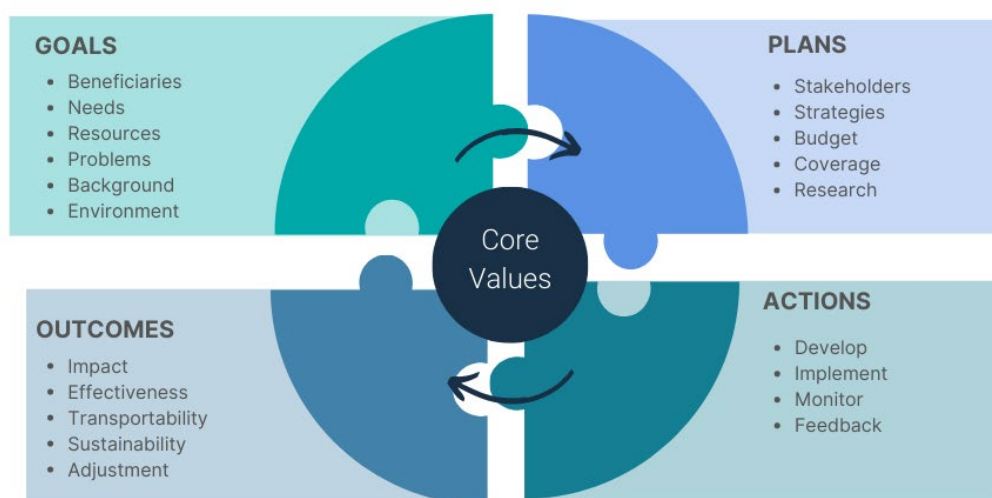
Every Gender Action Plan (GAP) should be underpinned by a gender mainstreaming strategy or policy, which outlines aspects such as: the vision of and commitment to gender equality by the organization and documents; and its intentions towards organization-wide change. By adopting a gender equality strategy as part of the implementation of their GAP, organizations facilitate change within their organization; in national and international standards development processes; in standards; and, in turn, in all the products, services and processes, which are the subject of those standards. In doing so, they contribute directly to the achievement of SDG 5.

CHAPTER 6: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The gender dimension of social inclusion is an emerging field of research to which standards development organizations can make a considerable contribution. There are myriad monitoring and evaluation (M&E) - as well as monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) - tools and models available for use²¹. Evaluation frameworks often have similar characteristics. The below model illustrates various evaluation components with a focus on plans (input evaluation), overall goals (context evaluation), the activities or components (process evaluation), and the outcomes of objectives (product evaluation).

Figure 8 CIPP Evaluation Model

CONTEXT, INPUT, PROCESS, PRODUCT (CIPP) EVALUATION MODEL



Source:

Gender-Responsive Evaluation

The central focus of a gender-responsive evaluation is to unearth potential systemic, structural and/or procedural discrimination or inequality based on gender. This type of evaluation assesses the degree to which structural and other causes give rise to inequality and change as a result of an intervention, using a process that is inclusive, participatory, and respectful of all. An inclusive process, which includes a diverse range of participants and inputs, will have greater relevance to a wider audience and lead to improved deliverables. As such, identifying and taking corrective action on inequalities adds value to an organization.

²¹ UN Women (2022). UN WOMEN Evaluation Handbook: How to manage gender-responsive evaluation. Available at: <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022>

The evaluation process is based on inclusive and transparent stakeholder engagement. Gender-responsive evaluation promotes accountability to gender equality, human rights, and women's empowerment by providing information on the way in which processes are affecting women and men differently and contributing towards the identification of solutions to barriers/problems. It is applicable to all parts of the organization, not just gender-specific work.

Many evaluation models, including the above CIPP model, adopt an action research approach which allows for continuous improvement. Adopting a cyclical action/reflection method for gender-responsive evaluation approaches contribute to (a) greater focus on process and context, (b) the course of action to be corrected along the way, (c) deepening of monitoring and evaluation systems, (c) generation of sex-disaggregated data and gender-responsive actions; and evidence-based decision-making.

A cyclical action/reflection method includes a "formative evaluation" or monitoring component, which provides opportunity for regular feedback to stakeholders and strengthens the implementation of changes. Feedback loops are hence an important part of the action cycle. There is a focus on evaluation as a learning tool. Cyclical evaluation can include both quantitative and qualitative data collection, often combined in a mixed methods approach. It gives voice to all stakeholders and ideally is conducted in close collaboration with management.

Gender-responsive evaluation is transparent, inclusive, and reflexive. The process aims for continuous improvement.

Gender Analysis

Gender Analysis is a systematic method to examine differing conditions for women and men and acknowledging these differences in the design phase of activities, such as in standards development.

Effective gender analysis requires a systematic approach and, when adequately resourced (e.g., through allocation into the budget at inception), helps to identify and understand the role of women and men in an initiative, process, or sector.

A gender analysis generates useful insights into organizational needs and gaps, which can become opportunities for initiatives, gender-related training, and research. When adopted at the outset, a gender analysis is particularly useful to establish baseline data on women's participation which, in turn, contributes to understanding more about women's wider contribution to the economy and how enabling environments can be further improved to achieve SDG 5 goals.

Gender analysis is also useful to set targets and identify training needs. Setting targets for women's participation is one element that leads to successful outcomes, particularly when backed by regular progress

reports. Targets should be set after conducting a gender analysis or survey to identify the baseline or starting point.

Sex-Disaggregated Data Collection

Sex-disaggregated data (i.e., data collected and analyzed according to sex) is an essential input into gender analysis. The collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data is a tool that makes gender issues visible, allowing policymakers to better assess a situation and take appropriate, evidenced-based action.

At present, we lack systematic collection of sex-disaggregated data beyond basic attendance data. This obscures the actual as well as the potential contribution women make as well how standards may be differentially impacting or benefitting men and women. Hence, there is good reason to collect sex-disaggregated data as it helps to create an evidence-base from which gender-responsive policies, processes and standards can be designed. Organizations that understand the repercussions of gender inequalities and commit resources to building gender-responsive environments would see a considerable boost in the quality and impact of both their processes and outputs. Similarly, organizations which commit resources to enabling the development of gender-responsive standards would see a boost to the relevance and market share of and outcomes generated by their standards.

In addition to making the case for change, data can drive the creation of solutions. Collecting sex-disaggregated data on participation of women and men at all levels of activity, from the inception of an initiative, is critical to develop a baseline which can serve as the grounding for strategies that benefit women and men equally. Sex-disaggregated data can also be useful to design targeted training or to demonstrate a best practice, although the latter may require longitudinal data collection and analysis. Further, collecting sex-disaggregated data on impacts or benefits of standards can provide valuable insights to inform the standards development/revision process and better enable the development of standards which equally meet the needs of and provide equal benefit to men and women.

Accountability

Gender inclusion requires both commitment and accountability at all levels of the organization. A good gender action plan (GAP) is designed to include senior level commitment to and shared responsibility across all processes for the implementation of gender equality actions. Because of its cross-cutting nature across all aspects of the organization, accountability plays a major role in ensuring the implementation of the GAP.

Three key components that underpin evaluation and make gender inclusion effective: (1) gender analysis, (2) sex-disaggregated data, and (3) accountability.

Measuring Progress

Evaluations are often designed to focus on outcomes. This tends to divert attention from the process of what happened during implementation, which is influenced by economic, political, socio-cultural, ecological, and other factors in the local, national, or regional context within which initiatives are implemented. Evaluations often ignore such contextual factors.

An effective GAP uses targets and indicators to achieve a good understanding of the present situation and how to direct actions. Indicators and follow-up instruments can be set up so that progress can be tracked regularly. Since the evaluation of a GAP is context-specific, it follows that targets and indicators are similarly specific to the goals and objectives of the organization. While generating sex-disaggregated output data is context-specific, there are overarching gender measures that can be adopted for the purposes of measuring progress. Again, there are many choices to measure progress. One such choice is the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Gender Marking²² model.

Gender Markers (GMs) are a simple 3-point scale designed to increase gender awareness. The GM can be applied to both processes and activities such as strategic plans, work plans and annual reports. GMs are based on self-assessed “state of gender inclusion” with the objective of improving markers over time and attaining the highest possible level of gender inclusion (GM 3). GMs follow a simple format, so they are easy to assign and assess.

GMs can help identify whether an activity or process is designed well enough to ensure that women/girls and men/boys will benefit equally from it or advance gender equality in other ways. If the activity or process has potential to generate gender equality results, the marker predicts whether the gender results are likely to be limited, adequate or significant.

Table 2 Gender Markers

Gender Marker	Description
GM 1 – No Gender Elements (NGE)	Gender is not reflected in any component. There is risk that activities will unintentionally nurture existing gender inequalities or deepen them.
GM 2 – Limited Gender Elements (LGE)	Gender is reflected in a limited way. Gender dimensions are included to some extent across activities.

²² ALNAP (2010). Guidance note for clusters to implement the IASC Gender Marker: Creating gender-responsive projects and tracking gender-related allocations in humanitarian appeals and funding mechanisms. Available at: <http://www.alnap.org/resource//8129>

GM 3 - Effective Gender Mainstreaming (EGM)	Activities are designed to contribute significantly to gender equality. The different needs of women/girls and men/boys have been analyzed and integrated across all activities.
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Self-Assessment

Self-assessment can be conducted on and include all documented actions. The below framework offers useful themes - with pointers - against which an organization can self-assess its level of gender inclusion: (1) Leadership and Commitment; (2) Honesty and Self-Reflection; (3) Communication & Engagement; and (4) Data Collection & Analysis.

To assess the level of gender inclusion, organizations should look for evidence that they have genuinely understood, investigated, and addressed relevant gender considerations in their actions and demonstrated application of gender-inclusion, at which point the organization should be able to assign the appropriate GM level.

Each activity can be assigned its own GM level so an organization may at any one time have different GM levels for different activities. To assign an overall GM score, an organization should review all its actions for the most common ranking.

Table 3 Organization Self-Assessment Framework

		Organizations achieving gender inclusion can demonstrate they:		
		Understand the current state of gender inclusion GM Level 1	Change culture to improve gender inclusion GM Level 2	Incorporated gender-responsiveness into all activities GM Level 3
Gender Markers Self-Assessment Framework	Leadership and Commitment	Organization shows little or no leadership/commitment to gender inclusion	Some resources have been committed for gender analysis to investigate the factors contributing to gender inequity	Adequate resources have been committed to design, implement, and evaluate gender-inclusive activities

Self- Reflection	Where are the most concerning gender inequities? What, if any, successful initiatives are in place to address gender inequities?	Proposed actions have a realistic chance of being implemented and of having a positive impact on gender inclusion	A notable change in gender inclusion, e.g., substantial female participation and representation in decision-making processes
Communication and Engagement	How are stakeholders informed about and engaged in improving gender inclusion?	Feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders has been sought and incorporated into planning and decision-making	Planned actions and implementation of gender-responsive components across all activities
Data Collection and Analysis	What do the collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data suggest about the current state of gender inclusion?	According to the data, additional steps (such as training) need to occur to contribute to gender inclusion	Review reflects substantial evidence of the positive impact of actions on gender inclusion

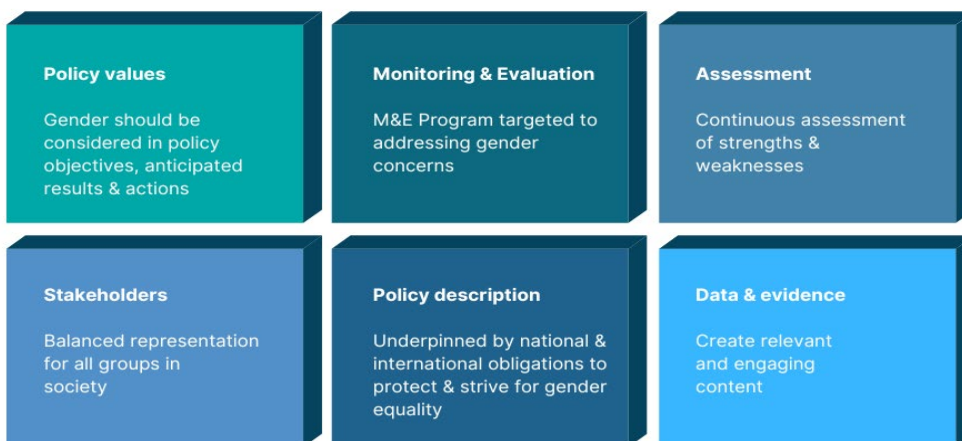
Checklist for Gender-Responsive Evaluation

To achieve gender equality, a methodical approach is required. Policy and program preparation, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation must incorporate a gender perspective to promote equality for women, men, girls, and boys. For instance, a checklist may be designed for evaluating the gender-responsiveness of standards. The checklist's structure may include:

- **Policy description:** This policy is underpinned by national and international obligations to protect and promote human rights and gender equality.
- **Stakeholders:** Men and women, as well as members of civic society, and those with gender knowledge/expertise were all represented and equally enabled to effectively participate
- **Policy values:** Gender factors should be examined in standard's scope, content and expected benefits/outcomes derived from its use:
- **Data and evidence:** Implications of gender differences relevant to the product, process, or service which is the subject of standardization was included in the standards development process.

- **Monitoring and evaluation framework:** Inclusion of tools for monitoring and assessing standards

Checklist Gender-Responsive Process



use/impact that are specifically geared to assess gender inclusion.

- **Assessment of strengths and weaknesses:** there are means to regularly assess success of GAP activities and continuously improve.²³

Figure 9 Checklist for Gender-Responsive Process

Source: UNECE

Gender equality is a goal, mainstreaming is a strategy, gender analysis is a tool.

Summary

To integrate a gender perspective into the organization, all actions across every level must be evaluated for their effect on women and men. This requires a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan that is fully integrated

²³ World Health Organization (2010). Checklist for assessing the gender responsiveness of sexual and reproductive health policies. Pilot document for adaptation to national contexts. Available at: https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/68916/E93584.pdf

into the gender action plan (GAP). M&E plans have as their core objective to (1) undertake a gender analysis; (2) collect sex-disaggregated data; and (3) build accountability for gender inclusion in all activities within the organization.

Organizations are encouraged to

- Integrate M&E into their GAP to understand the current state of gender inclusion.
- Endeavour to foster a gender-responsive M&E culture.
- Generate sex-disaggregated data and share M&E success stories.

Organizations not familiar with gender analysis, sex-disaggregated data collection/analysis and gender-responsive M&E may wish to explore collaborating with external partners with strong gender-related expertise in their respective field.

CHAPTER 7: GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

This chapter offers a set of good practices to assist organizations with their efforts to develop gender-responsive organizations and standards development practices.

Standards can be developed by national, regional, and international standards development organizations. They can also be developed by consortia of businesses to address a specific marketplace need, or by government departments to support regulations. While there are overarching gender themes within SDG 5 relevant to standards development organizations (SDOs), it is useful to keep in mind that a gender action plan (GAP) is always contextual to its environment and the focus and targets of the GAP will vary according to the objectives of the organization.

Figure 10 Standards Bodies National, Regional, and International



Source:

To demonstrate the growing number of gender action plans and best practices examples on gender equality and women's inclusion, this chapter presents a selection of short case studies drawn from national, regional, and international standards bodies.

Gender Action Plans: National Standards Bodies

Rwanda Standards Board (RSB)

The Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) and the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO) Affiliated to the Office of the Prime Minister have joined forces to develop a single national action plan for implementing the Declaration's primary objectives, in support of gender equality. As a result, women and girls in the industry and service sectors will benefit from the initiatives to encourage gender-responsiveness throughout standards and standards development activities.

Together with the GMO, the RSB has developed a national action plan to implement the gender equality principle. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) will provide financial assistance to the two entities involved in developing a gender certification seal as part of the implementation of this statement. The certification scheme will recognize organizations, which have demonstrated their dedication to achieving gender equality.²⁴

Gender parity and the empowerment of women and girls are essential if societies are inclusive, fair, prosperous, and peaceful.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the National Standards Body of India, responsible for standard formulation and conformity assessment activities. The Constitution of India conveys a powerful mandate for equality of women and the BIS was amongst the very first standards bodies to sign the UNECE Declaration in May 2019.

To act on their signatory commitments – as enshrined by the Declaration – BIS established a Task Force, which was mandated to develop a gender action plan, monitor progress, and disseminate data, information, and best practices on the implementation of the GAP. The Task Force developed an implementation plan, with the organizational goals of: (i) create gender-responsive standards; (ii) represent women in national standards bodies; and (iii) engage Indian stakeholders to achieve organizational objectives. To deliver the goals, the SDO agreed upon the following action items:

- **Action 1. Inclusive standards development:** Assess gender balance in BIS committees; connect with organizations and seek a gender balanced environment; implement through committees with a dedicated agenda item on gender-responsive standards; ensure committee leadership support in all

²⁴ Rwanda Standards Board (2020). RSB signs the Declaration on Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development. Available at: https://www.rsb.gov.rw/index.php?id=34&tx_news_pi1%5Bnews%5D=518&tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=563cdc065a45b33a3717affa1b4876f2

activities; hold meetings at times convenient for maximum participation (particularly for women experts); raising awareness of UNECE Declaration to all involved in standardization; encourage the appointment of women in positions of leadership; support committees and Chairs to share information/data/experiences about gender inclusivity projects to identify best practices.

- **Action 2. Create gender-responsive standards:** Develop methodology/tools to assess the gender neutrality of existing/proposed standards; communicate with NGO, Ministry of Women, child development groups and other stakeholders to identify new standards for gender-responsive standards; train stakeholders and measure participation & impact; collaborate using existing frameworks to share expertise; institutionalize successful and effective practices/procedures/policies to ensure future sustainability.
- **Action 3. Create gender-responsive standards body:** – Collect data on the gender ratio of employees across the organization; create training tools to support greater understanding of gender-responsive standards; monitor and record the participation and impact of the training
- **Action 4. Promotion activities:** – Engage the public through the BIS website (e.g., blog with public comments) and social media channels, including the BIS Facebook, Instagram, and twitter.²⁵

Standards Council of Canada (SCC)

The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) is the country's national standards and accreditation body. Gender equality is a key priority for the Government of Canada which is advancing a comprehensive Feminist Foreign Policy. The Government of Canada has committed to ensuring a Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is a consideration for all departments and agencies. SCC is supporting these initiatives through their role as Canada's national standards body.

In 2019, the national standards body signed the UNECE Declaration. As part of the NSB's commitment, they created a five-year strategy to strengthen gender equality in standardization. Given the lack of literature on the topic of how standardization impacts women, the SCC prioritized research as a key element in the five-year strategy. Utilizing information from 106 countries, the SCC developed the report "When One Size Does Not Protect All: Understanding Why Gender Matters for Standardization"²⁶. This research constitutes an important step in the collective understanding of women and standardization and has enabled the SCC to build a convincing case for action.

²⁵ Bureau of Indian Standards (2020). Gender-responsive standards: A vital benchmark of a progressive society. Available at: https://www.services.bis.gov.in/php/BIS_2.0/BISBlog/what-is-united-nations-sustainable-development-goal-5-achieving-gender-equality-and-empowering-all-women-and-girls-is-one-of-the-sustainable-development-goals-sdg-5-set-by-the-united-nations/

²⁶ Parkouda, M. (2020). When one size does not protect all: Understanding why gender matters for standardization. Ottawa: Standards Council of Canada. Available at: https://www.scc.ca/en/system/files/publications/SCC_Gender_Safety_Report_EN.pdf

The SCC is committed to developing a standardization system that champions inclusion and equality, regardless of gender. To foster greater inclusion and increase the representation of Canadian women in technical committees, the SCC created an internal working group tasked with developing and implementing the organization's gender action plan and supporting greater inclusivity in the standards development process. The SCC has developed a Gender and Standardization strategy and work plan which prioritizes across three work areas:

- **Improving gender representation:** The organization will examine the gender balance of standards development, through its mirror committees, to identify where there are opportunities for improvement. It is crucial that all targets are informed and feasible.
- **Building gender expertise:** The organization through the development of guidance material will enable greater understanding of gender in the development of standards.
- **Contributing sound research:** The organization is committed to developing robust research and analysis on the intersection of gender and standards.²⁷

The SCC is actively involved in the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI), and a representative of the SCC leads GRSI Project Team 2 on Gender-Responsive Standards Methodology. The SCC intends on reviewing and updating their strategy and work plan on an annual basis. As the work evolves, there will be opportunities to refine and update the activities. At the nascent stage, the work is targeted towards building knowledge and capacity.

Instituto Português da Qualidade (IPQ)

The Instituto Português da Qualidade (IPQ) is Portugal's national standardization body and the national metrology institution. The organization is responsible for activities including:

- The coordination of the Portuguese Quality System (SPQ) and other regulatory qualification systems
- The promotion and coordination of Portuguese standards, ensuring their coherence and alignment with international norms
- Guaranteeing the accuracy of measurements, ensuring comparability, and maintaining of the standards of the units of measurement.

In May 2019, IPQ became a signatory to the UNECE Declaration and undertook two actions: (i) direct communication with all standards experts (approximately 4,700 in Portugal) regarding the importance of the

²⁷ Standards Council of Canada (2019). Gender and Standardization Strategy (2019 – 2025). Available at: <https://www.scc.ca/en/flagships/gender#:~:text=SCC%20is%20proactively%20taking%20steps,standardization%20works%20for%20all%20Canadians>.

Declaration and its commitments; and (ii) meeting in November 2019 with all 54 sectorial standards bodies, qualified by IPQ, for the development of standardization activity.

The IPQ supports non-discrimination and has sought to reflect, in its standardization activities, the organization's concern for gender equality and women's empowerment issues. In supporting and encouraging the creation of gender-responsive standards and related processes, the organization has drawn further attention to important areas for standardization, including family and professional life-balance, equal pay for women and men, and wellbeing and organizational happiness.

As part of the organization's GAP, the IPQ has achieved the following:

- Certification integrated ISO 9001 and NP 4552 "Work, family and personal life-balance management system"²⁸.
- NP 4552 was included in a Government Program called "three in line" that was adopted as a tool for the promotion of gender equality in Portuguese organizations.
- Undertaken a gender analysis of the organization's gender representation in management and on Technical Committees.
- Identified predominantly male, predominantly female, and similar representation in several sectors.
- Conducted 1444 hours of training in 2021 for standardization experts on the need to promote greater female representation in technical committees and the concerns pertaining to female stereotyping in product and service standards, which is often overlooked.

GENDER ACTION PLANS: REGIONAL Standards Bodies

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) & European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC)

CEN and CENELEC see an inclusive system as the gateway for standardization in Europe. They are committed to an inclusive, transparent, and open standardization system through stakeholder engagement for a better understanding of user needs. The CEN and CENELEC GAP (2020-2022)²⁹ is based on priorities identified by members via an online survey and inspired by members' good practices and action examples.³⁰

²⁸ Instituto Português da Qualidade (2019). NP 4552:2016 - Sistema de gestão da conciliação entre a vida profissional, familiar e pessoal. Available at: http://www1.ipq.pt/PT/Site/EspacoQ/historico/docs/2019/07-julho/Acao_IPQ_APEE_NP4552_Set2019.pdf

²⁹ European Committee for Standardization (CEN) European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC) (2022). Work Programme. Available at: https://www.cencenelec.eu/media/CEN-CENELEC/News/Publications/2022/cen-cenelec_work_programme2022.pdf

³⁰ Wautier, D. (2019). CEN-CENELEC Gender Action Plan: Survey outcome. Available at: https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trade/wp6/documents/2019/PPTs_AnnualSession/21am_2_Debo rah_Wautier_CEN_CLC_Gender_Action_Plan_-_Survey_results_and_analysis.pdf

The 3-year agile plan is steered by an Informal Coordination Group on Gender Diversity & Inclusivity made up of 16 CEN and CENELEC members. The group holds online discussions four times a year. Its goals and scope include (1) Promote and Raise awareness of the UNECE Declaration on Gender-Responsive Standards & Standards Development amongst the European standardization community; (2) Collect and exchange views, ideas, experiences, and best practices; (3) Ensure link between activities and outcomes at national and international levels for alignment, collaboration, and complementarity; and (4) Collaboration & Joint actions with members.

Parallel continuous activities include dedicated involvement in sectoral initiatives such as Women4Cyber Foundation; Women in Energy Club; UNECE GRSI Working Groups. Participation in European initiatives for women professionals in priority sectors; exchanges with Women in Standards initiative; and joint actions and involvement around key dates such as Women in Engineering Day, International Women's Day.

The group has achieved inclusion of gender inclusive language during revision of CEN CENELEC Internal rules, and in overall corporate communication materials. In 2022 Policy Groups will discuss and recommend the next CEN CENELEC Gender Action Plan in line with Strategy 2030 priorities.

[African Organization for Standardization \(ARSO\)](#)

The African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) is a signatory to the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development (2019). With this commitment, ARSO decided to facilitate the need for gender inclusive standards development organizations; gender-responsive standards; gender balance at all levels of the organization (including in governing bodies); and to enhanced expertise to create and deliver gender inclusivity.

For its gender action plans, ARSO developed a gender policy document with the following objectives: (i) Act as a tool for the implementation of ARSO programmes to ensure gender-responsive standards and outcomes; (ii) Advocate for the promotion of gender-responsive standardization and facilitate better understanding of gender gaps in standardization; (iii) Create awareness on the need for gender-responsive standards and standards development and promote the development of guidelines and gender management systems and mechanisms that facilitate gender equality in ARSO programmes and activities; (iv) Create awareness on the strategic importance of standards as tools for ensuring gender equality and address gender-based barriers in the ARSO standardization programmes, projects and activities; (v) Understand the challenges and opportunities in facilitating gender-responsive standardization; and (vi) Motivate governments and policymakers, NSBs and the private sector to facilitate gender-responsive programmes and action plans, benchmarked to international best practices and programmes for gender mainstreaming in standardization.

Additional gender actions include: (i) Promotion of gender balancing in its Technical Committees and their leaderships; (ii) Awareness raising on the need for the involvement of Women in standardization issues and for Gender Mainstreaming in Standardization; and (iii) Cultivating women as experts.

The Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT)

Founded in 1949, the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT) is a civil non-profit association, which comprises the national standards bodies (NSBs) of the Americas. At present, there are currently 32 active members and 10 adherent members. COPANT works to promote cooperation for the development of the Americas, through effective national standardization, engagement with international standardization, and the application of conformity assessment procedures.

Under the organization's commitment to supporting gender equality, COPANT has worked to strengthen understanding at the international level. COPANT, amongst other activities, engaged members and stakeholders in a virtual workshop for the exchange of good practices for the inclusion of gender in standardization held in August 2021. The workshop aimed to (1) raise awareness of standards and the ISO gender policy in support of gender equality and women's empowerment, (2) improve understanding of the potential gender implications of selected ISO standards, and (3) create tools to support Technical Committees to ensure that the standards they develop/review are gender-sensitive.

96 delegates representing 24 NSBs participated in the virtual workshop. Countries attending the event included: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, and the United States.³¹

GENDER ACTION PLANS: INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS ORGANIZATIONS

International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

As a signatory to the UNECE Declaration, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) developed a gender action plan, which was approved by the organization's Council in September 2019. The 2019-2021 ISO GAP provided an operational framework to deepen the understanding of gender representation in ISO work, assess the gender implications of standards, and ensure that ISO activities include a gender perspective. The 2019-2021 GAP placed a focus on data collection, building a network to share best practices,

³¹ The Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT) (2019). Virtual workshop for the exchange of good practices for the inclusion of gender in standardization. Available at: https://copant.org/phocadownload/cpnt_pub_2021/eng/2021-09-16%20-%20EXCHANGE%20WORKSHOP%20ON%20GENDER%20EQUITY%20IN%20STANDARDIZATION.pdf#:~:text=The%20Virtual%20Workshop%20on%20EXCHANGE%20OF%20GOOD%20PRACTICES,through%20the%20Zoom%20platform%2C%20with%20simultaneous%20translation%20spanish-English.

and promoting awareness of standards that support gender equality and empower women³². To achieve its goals, the ISO 2019-2021 GAP had five priority areas: (i) collect data on gender representation; (ii) collect case studies & best practices in support of gender equality; (iii) assess the responsiveness of ISO standards; (iv) raise awareness of standards which support gender equality; and (v) ISO's policy on gender (i.e., articulate long-term objectives about women's empowerment and gender equality).

After the completion of the first ISO GAP (2019 – 2021), ISO launched the second GAP (2022-2025)³³. The new GAP outlines five priority outcomes that the organization believes are crucial to achieving gender equality:

- **Outcome 1. Data is collected and analyzed:** Gather information on gender representation (governance positions, technical experts, ISO/CS)
- **Outcome 2. Participation and representation in technical work is balanced:** Examine obstacles to women's participation in standards development and facilitate inclusion in technical work
- **Outcome 3. ISO deliverables are gender-responsive:** Develop tools to mainstream gender in standards development, in addition to training and guidance material on gender-responsive standards for technical committee members and standards writers.
- **Outcome 4. ISO/CS supports gender equality within the ISO system:** Place gender at the heart of the organization's communication and support workplace diversity and inclusion.
- **Outcome 5. ISO members are supported on gender equality:** Deliver capacity-building to members on the intersection of gender and standards.

The ISO gender action plan is considered a living document. The initial plan (i.e., GAP 2019 – 2021) took stock of the issue, with the second phase (2021-2023) now working towards tackling the problem. ISO recognizes that the success of this second phase will hinge on providing members, experts and stakeholders with the appropriate knowledge and tools necessary to fully understand the link between gender equality and standards.

³² International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (2019). ISO Gender Action Plan 2019-2021. Available at: https://www.iso.org/files/live/sites/isoorg/files/news/News_archive/2020/05/Ref2512/Gender%20Action%20Plan_en.pdf

³³ International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (2022). ISO Gender Action Plan (2022-2025). Available at: <https://www.iso.org/strategy2030/key-areas-of-work/diversity-and-inclusion.html#:~:text=Gender%20equality%20means%20that%20everyone%20enjoys%20the%20same,outcomes%20critical%20for%20advancing%20gender%20equality%20in%20standardization.>

The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC)

The Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) is an intergovernmental platform which seeks to enhance quality infrastructure and improve the connectivity and integration of its 41 member States. By setting new market-relevant standards and reducing technical barriers to trade, the organization works to: support sustainable economic growth; ensure product safety and consumer welfare; enable innovation; and strengthen environmental protections.

In 2021, the SMIIC published the 2021-2030 SMIIC Strategic Plan³⁴, a ten-year plan for uniformity in standardization, metrology, and accreditation activities across its member States. As a long-term, dynamic document, the SMIIC Strategic Plan will be reviewed according to the requirements of the organization.

Building on the foundations set by the 2016 – 2020 SMIIC Strategic Plan, the new ten-year strategy aims to accelerate the organization's efforts in the promotion of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)/SMIIC standards and increase the representation of women experts in standards development.

Under the strategic objective "Improve the standardization process", key performance indicator (KPI) 11 asks the organization to amend internal processes and increase the percentage of women involved in standards projects. According to information collected as part of the 2016 – 2020 Strategic Plan, the percentage of women involved in SMIIC standards projects is 31%, with the target of the 2021 – 2030 SMIIC Strategic Plan being a 1% increase in women's participation per year.

International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC)

To accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) Council Board created the Task Force (TF) on Diversity to analyze the current situation, including gender in governance and IEC operations, as well as proposals for improving it³⁵. IEC's Diversity Statement³⁶ is one of the TF's primary outputs, which consider gender, geography, and stakeholder diversity. In addition to the TF on diversity, IEC established a Task Force on SDGs. With a focus on SDG 5 Gender Equality, the TF on SDGs is crucial for identifying and actively engaging with gender issues within the organization.

The IEC Diversity Statement defines the organization's commitment to formally recognize diversity at all levels, including standards development, conformity assessment and governance. The statement

³⁴ Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (2021). SMIIC Strategic Plan 2021-2030. Available at: <https://www.smiic.org/mysql/upload/files/202108/611ccb6e88b7a-1629277038.pdf>

³⁵ International Electrotechnical Committee (2021). The need for diversity and inclusion in standards. Available at: <https://www.iec.ch/blog/need-diversity-and-inclusion-standards#:~:text=IEC%20establishes%20Task%20Force%20for,and%20make%20recommendations%20for%20improvement.>

³⁶ International Electrotechnical Committee (2020). Diversity Statement. Available at: <https://www.iec.ch/basecamp/diversity-statement>

acknowledges that stakeholder diversity is a core principle at IEC, adding value by fostering creativity and providing a range of perspectives and ideas. The organization commits to monitoring stakeholder diversity across its membership and establish stakeholder engagement activities to mitigate gaps.

Within the IEC Diversity Statement is the IEC Gender Diversity Statement, which acknowledges the organization as a signatory of the UNECE Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development. The Gender Diversity Statement underscores the organization's support for Goal 5, commits the organization to help raise awareness on the value of gender diversity and acknowledges that representation of women in standards development activities needs improvement.

As a final point in the Gender Diversity Statement, the IEC commits to create, implement, and track progress of a gender action plan for IEC. The action plan will include the following elements:

- Gender inclusive processes, including training to increase inclusiveness
- Gender-responsive standards and conformity assessment activities
- Training to enhance expertise in gender inclusivity
- Collaboration with other organizations developing similar gender diversity initiatives; and
- Collecting and sharing data as well as success stories and good practices.

Summary

Organizations around the world are creating gender action plans (GAP). The implementation of GAP happens at several levels (including the national, regional, and international level) and requires concerted action. As the basis for operationalizing the results and recommendations of a gender analysis, the GAP targets and design often reflect the unique working culture of the organization, the institutional support for gender equality, the contextual challenges associated with women's empowerment, and the data and resources available to the policymaker

As the GAP is implemented additional revisions may be required and as demonstrated in the above case studies, the plan is often considered a living/dynamic document which requires refinement. The commitments of signatory organizations may come in the form of a distinct action plan, or as part of a broader strategic initiative.

The Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative works to support all standards development organizations to make their standards and standards development process gender-responsive. Through capacity-building and awareness-raising activities and knowledge tools, the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative supports SDOs to create dynamic gender action plans and undertake activities which leverage standards for sustainable development.