

Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6)
Team of Specialists on Gender-Responsive Standards teleconference discussion notes and actions
29 November 2023, 12:00 CET

Item	Subject	Discussion / Action
1	Approval of the agenda	Agenda agreed with no modifications
1	Roll call	<p><u>Leadership</u>: <u>Michelle Parkouda</u> (Chair, SCC Canada), <u>Lucy Salt</u> (Vice-Chair WorkSafe New Zealand), <u>Stephanie Eynon</u> (Vice-Chair, BSI UK)</p> <p><u>Secretariat</u>: Lance Thompson (UNECE)</p> <p><u>Members</u>: <u>Alena Widder</u> (VDE Germany), <u>Analia Purita</u> (IRAM Argentina), <u>Anika Ley</u> (ILNAS Luxembourg), <u>Asja Ciarini</u>,(UNI Italy), <u>Sari Winasis Basuki</u>,(DIN Germany), <u>Biljana Stepahovic</u>,(ISS Serbia), <u>Cristian Vazquez</u> (IRAM Argentina), <u>Dorte Kulle</u> (DS Denmark), <u>Fiona O'Donovan</u> (NSAI Ireland), <u>Grace Bolan</u> (ASME USA), <u>Haukur Logi Johannsson</u> (Stadlar Iceland), <u>Ihsan Övüt</u> (SMIIC), <u>Ingvild Naess Stub</u> (SN Norway), <u>Joanna Gajdek</u> (ASI Austria), <u>Jovana Koricana</u> (RSS Serbia), <u>Kaspars Milasevics</u> (LVS Latvia), <u>Ljubica Petrovic</u> (RSS Serbia), <u>Marianna Kramarikova</u> (IEC), <u>Nydiane Razafinrahaingo</u> (WTO), <u>Paola Travaini</u> (UNI Italy), <u>Peter Morfee</u> (WorkSafe New Zealand), <u>Sarid Sriduandao</u> (TISI Thailand), <u>Sazi Zangqa</u> (SABS South Africa), <u>Sevde Özbey</u> (SMIIC), <u>Slana Zdenka</u> (CAS Czech Republic), <u>Têté Novinyo Doumashie</u> (ATN Togo)</p> <p><u>Observers</u>: <u>Alexandra Haukaas</u>, <u>Jaipal Basi</u>, <u>Maria K Bonnici</u>, <u>Mariella Noto</u>, <u>Natalia Ortiz de Zarate Crespo</u>, <u>Oisin Curtis</u>, <u>Paul Passerat</u>, <u>Pierre DePasquale</u>,</p> <p>38 participants (28 were women)</p>
	Setting the scene	<p>The meeting started with a presentation and discussion on understanding the resistance to gender-responsive standards and gender mainstreaming in general. Often when speaking on this topic, it is to audiences who are already engaged, so there is no need to convince. However, this is not always the case. Some more radical reactions might consider this to be a feminist rant; but normally, after they hear the impacts, they realized that there really is an issue that needs to be addressed. There are sceptical people, but often, it is possible to discuss the benefits with them. There are some who comment that this might be taking a best practice and making it mandatory (though, taking into consideration half the world's population is not really just a best practice). There are multiple reasons that some might show resistance to gender-mainstreaming. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status threat: diversity is sometimes seen as a “zero-sum”. If we start to give opportunities to other people, it might reduce the opportunities for self. This is an anxiety which is often not supported by the statistics. There is an example of an author who stated that it makes it harder for white men in the publishing environment (perception), but the data doesn't support that. • Merit: the myth of meritocracy. A study suggests that fifty per cent of our wealth is determined by the age of 18 (so is determined by gender, race, socio-economic status – all of which are out of our control). Many want to believe that our efforts and hard work are rewarded, so suggesting that our success is not based on merit challenges this perception. • Moral: violates one moral image. If you state that there is gender-inequality, then you are challenging that the person might be part of a system which is challenging their moral belief of equality. They don't want to be seen as part of that problem.

		<p>We need to also recognize that we could ourselves be subject to a negative bias. We often focus in on negative comments even when there are a majority of positive or neutral comments.</p> <p>An example was provided in engineering and electrical area where the majority of experts are men. The challenge is that these experts don't consider gender to be a priority – the priority is on safety. So, gender impact is pushed back to the end. They don't reject the gender aspects, but that it is not a priority.</p>
	<p>Invited guest speaker</p>	<p>Ms. Joanne T. Yaccato was invited to speak on the potential gender bias in the credit market. Joanne has worked around the world in the finance industry and especially in developing/transitional economies. The vast majority of people she deals with are men at the executive level. Financial institutes are particular in their approach in that they have a sense that they know everything, so it is very difficult to get them to broaden their perspective. She has worked for thirty years on the topic and has developed a specific methodology to reduce the reticence to understand what gender is all about.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her methodology relies on creating a safe space so that participants feel that they can speak freely. This is accomplished largely through humour – if they are laughing, it is hard for them to get angry. • It often helps that this work is done by an external third party – the message seems to receive more merit than if it was someone internally. • It is important to get them to realize gender biases on their own, that they come the realization themselves. If it is fed to them through a PowerPoint presentation for example, they will likely not integrate the message. By guiding them to the realization, it helps change their perspective and has a higher success rate of them actually acting on it in the future. • Once you demonstrate the need and open their own mind, they see things completely different afterwards. They don't need continual training if they come to the conclusion themselves, you just need to open their mind. • The initial contacts are often with the executives (mostly men) who are asked to provide their view on gender equality, specifically concerning the women entrepreneurial market. This is then compared with market research. This research will include what women in the market are saying that they need. • It is important to approach the topic from an equity point of view rather than an equality point of view (it is not just about everyone getting a pair of shoes; it is also that the shoes fit). If asked, most in the financial institutions will respond that they believe gender equality has been achieved. However, they perceive gender neutral to be the same as gender equality (which it is not). • One key driver of this work is to demonstrate the positive results when taking into account gender. The financial sector is highly competitive and there is not much margin to increase profitability. However, taking into account gender has helped some institutions to increase the number of women entrepreneurs by up to 30%, generating new gains. • There are also some instances of middle-aged, married women being attributed a lower credit score automatically. But research showed that it was not that these women were actually a risk, but their husband for example has a bad score and send his wife to go in for loans. All middle-aged married women had been penalized for this when in actuality, the bank should check the husband's situation instead. • One of the initial exercises performed is to separate the training into a group of women and a group of men who are each asked to answer the same questions (both from what they perceive the opposite sex would respond and what they think for their own sex). Responses are usually completely different and help to initiate to the differences in perception. <p>One key message: if you make it women-friendly, it becomes everybody-friendly. Another key takeaway which could be applied to GRS is that we need to develop more stories on the benefits and net gains. Until now, most of the impacts provided have been negative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive stories can help to attract new supporters of gender-mainstreaming.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it a business case and identify low-hanging fruit so that they can feel that things are progressing. • This will be challenging though because impact is not always easy to measure for standards and other technical-related work. The impact often takes years to see and standards may only be a partial contributor the results (there may be other factors). <p>A comment was also raised on the potential benefits of technology for alleviating gender biases.</p> <p>Another comment was raised that it would be important to consider gender beyond the man-woman dichotomy and the impact on other genders (i.e. transgender)</p>
Update from 33 rd session	<p>We now have 86 signatories to the Declaration.</p> <p>We are working on next steps of this work on gender action plans and all standards bodies are encourages to respond to the survey template on the topic</p> <p>Two important publications have now been finalized and printed: Guidelines on Developing Gender-Responsive Standards and Why Gender Responsive Standards are Better for Everyone</p> <p>The Code list project was noted at the annual session and will now move to the next steps (publishing on the website, then brought forward for use within electronic data exchange)</p> <p>It was nice to see emphasis on the gender work. Gender segregated data from other groups. Beyond the ToS-GRS, a new publication on The Basics of Quality Infrastructure for Trade was launched at this meeting (there is a chapter on gender-responsive standards).</p> <p>There was also a conference on the continuous compliance of products with embedded digital technologies such as AI (there was a presentation on the gender-related aspects)</p> <p>And the working practices of WP.6 were noted and will help to provide transparent and harmonized procedures for the future.</p>
Update from secretariat	<p>The Forum of WP.6 subgroups is planned for 2 to 5 April 2024. The meetings of ToS-GRS would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday 3 April 09:00-12:00 = working meeting (probably hybrid) • Wednesday 3 April 14:00-18:00 = conference (in person only) • Thursday 4 April 09:00-12:00 = working meeting (probably hybrid) <p>A social dinner with all subgroups would be planned on Wednesday evening.</p> <p>The other groups would meet with a similar timing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems: 2 to 3 April • Advisory Group on Market Surveillance: 4 to 5 April • START group (one day only, no morning session the next day): 5 April • Education on Standardization initiative (one day, no conference): 2 April <p>(Each day: morning two parallel working meetings, afternoon one conference)</p> <p>More information will be made available soon.</p> <p>Secretariat will circulate a survey to poll how many think they might be able to participate (in order to plan the correct size room).</p> <p>Experts were asked if they had any ideas on possible conference themes for 3 April PM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps a conference on implementation impact, concentrating on the positive aspects. Maybe checking different methodologies and ways to measure impact. This may help us to develop good news stories / business cases / framework • Impact of circular economy and AI on achieving the gender outputs <p>Experts are welcome to provide ideas during the next two weeks.</p>
New projects	<p>The Programme of Work foresees that we continue our work. During the next period, we should advance the work on gender action plan best practices, capacity building / awareness raising and tailoring the message.</p>
	<p><u>Next ToS-GRS meetings: 7 Feb., 5 June, 11 Sept., and 6 Nov. 2024</u> (all 12:00-14:00 Geneva-time)</p> <p><u>And ToS-GRS annual session: 3-4 April</u></p>