



RESPONSIBLE
JEWELLERY
COUNCIL

GENDER EQUALITY TOOLKIT

A PRACTICAL GUIDE ON HOW TO EMBED
GENDER EQUALITY AT THE CORE OF YOUR
BUSINESS STRATEGY.

JUNE 2022



The Responsible Jewellery Council

The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) is a not-for-profit standard-setting and certification organisation founded in 2005.

Our vision is a responsible world-wide supply chain that promotes trust in the global jewellery and watch industry.

ABOUT RJC

Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) is the leading standards organization of the global jewellery and watch industry. It has more than 1,450 member companies that span the jewellery supply chain from mine to retail. RJC Members commit to and are independently audited against the RJC Code of Practices – an international standard on responsible business practices for diamonds, coloured gemstones, silver, gold and platinum group metals. The Code of Practices (COP) addresses human rights, labour rights, environmental impact, mining practices, product disclosure and many more important topics in the jewellery supply chain. RJC also works with multi-stakeholder initiatives on responsible sourcing and supply chain due diligence. The RJC's Chain-of-Custody Certification (CoC) for precious metals supports these initiatives and can be used as a tool to deliver broader Member and stakeholder benefit. Through the implementation of the COP and CoC members contribute towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 agenda.

RJC is a Full Member of the ISEAL Alliance – the global association for sustainability standards and RJC is a member of the United Nations Global Compact since 2009. For more information on RJC Members, Certification, and Standards please visit www.responsiblejewellery.com and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

ABOUT BSR

BSR™ is an organization of sustainable business experts that works with its global network of the world's leading companies to build a just and sustainable world. BSR™ provides insight, advice, and collaborative initiatives to help you see a changing world more clearly, create long-term business value, and scale impact. BSR's Consumer Sectors team works with member companies in the luxury, jewellery, fashion and retail industries, across the spectrum of sustainable business issues, including diversity, equity and inclusion and women's empowerment. The BSR team collaborates regularly with the RJC and its member companies and, in 2018, BSR published a white paper: [Women in the Jewellery Supply Chain: Landscape Review of Barriers to Women's Economic Empowerment](#).

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Welcome

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 aims to achieve political, economic, and social equality for all women and is presented as a necessary step to achieving all 17 SDGs. In the global watch and jewellery industry, women drive 90% of demand globally and are present across the entire jewellery value chain.

According to the World Economic Forum's 2021 Global Gender Gap report, it will take a remaining 135.6 years to close the economic gender gap and with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, even the progress made in the past decades, are at risk of being rolled back. The pandemic is deepening pre-existing inequalities, exposing vulnerabilities in social, political, and economic systems, so the call to action is more eminent than ever before.

The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) believes all people have a shared responsibility to create more empowerment opportunities for women as gender equality cannot be achieved when women do not have the resources needed to empower themselves. Issues on gender equality are complex and deeply rooted, and business can play an important role in changing attitudes, building responsible practices throughout the value chain, and creating inclusive and safe work environments for everyone.

RJC is actively involved in promoting gender equality as part of our commitment to the 17 Sustainable Development goals (SDGs). By implementing RJC standards, members throughout the value chain can contribute towards





improving gender equality in the jewellery and watch industry – and the 2030 agenda as a whole. Additionally, in the past year, RJC has aligned its commitments with the UN Women Generation Equality campaign and has supported this campaign by having a series of roundtables, workshops, and trainings to start conversations within the global watch and jewellery industry, and work towards achieving collective awareness and action aimed at accelerating the SDG 5 agenda.

Moving forward, RJC strongly believe that education is critical to incorporating a culture of diversity and inclusion in all organizations, and this has led to the creation of the Gender Equality Toolkit for Small to Medium Enterprises (SME). A special thank you to BSR for developing this tool in partnership with RJC.

We hope you will use this toolkit to make gender equality a priority within your company, and look forward to receiving any feedback or suggestions you may have via training@responsiblejewellery.com



OUR VISION:

Realising women's rights in the global watch and jewellery industry for an equal future

OUR MISSION:

We re-envision the future and drive positive impact across the value chain from mining to retail



MOBILISE

- RJC Members & Supporters
- Trade Associations
- Standard & Industry Organisations
- Governments
- The Wider Industry

CATALYSE

Collective awareness & action, sparking global dialogue among different parts of the supply chain and generations

DELIVER

- Partnerships for positive impact
- Action on the ground
- Deliver education

Source: UN Women

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

ASSESS

Develop a baseline of what the key barriers are, and what the opportunities to act are, ensuring a process of continuous improvement.

AWARENESS:

Nurture partnerships to provide ongoing trainings to continue raising awareness and fostering the creation of truly inclusive cultures.

COMMITMENT:

Motivate stakeholders in the industry to commit to action on gender equality and women empowerment, and to report on progress.

ACTION

Build partnerships to support industry stakeholders in embedding gender equality at the core of their business strategy and supply chain management systems.

COLLABORATION:

Motivate multi-stakeholder collaboration to accelerate positive impact on the ground.

ADVOCATE:

Amplify the voices of the industry in advocating for progress and change towards gender equality across the value chain.

ENABLERS

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION SURVEY

WORKSHOPS

TRAINING

REPORTING



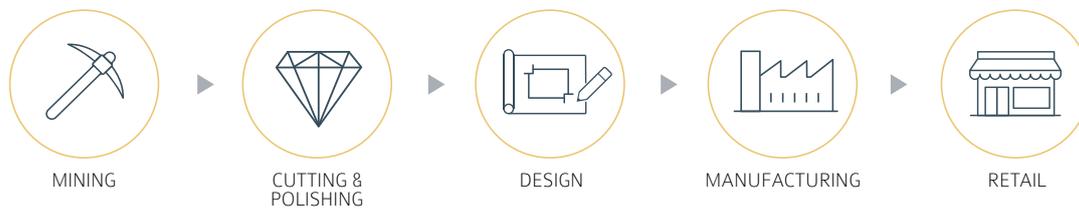
Introduction

Women drive 90% of the global jewellery demand and are key across the entire jewellery value chain.

However, opposing cultural and social norms, discriminatory laws, the failure to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work, among others, have served as systemic constraints and barriers for women entering and advancing within the industry. In general, when women are present in the jewellery value chain, they are typically found in informal and dangerous activities, where their rights are not fully recognised and are more exposed to risks of exploitation. For example, globally, in manufacturing, women make up on average 70% of the workforce, but they are often represented in lower-skilled, lower-paid roles.

The jewellery industry impacts millions of lives – such as those of the 40 million people employed in artisanal and small-scale mining.¹ Given its reach and the breadth of its impact, the jewellery sector has a tremendous opportunity to drive change!²

Snapshot of the jewellery value chain



Companies across the jewellery supply chain acknowledge that the industry can and should do more to support gender equality and advance women's empowerment. In fact, we are starting to see change and the roles for women in the jewellery industry are slowly changing and advancing. For example, there is an increasing number of women in roles such as cutting, merchandising and production, which have often been male-dominated jobs, and more women graduates are entering the industry in new roles. The growing interest of multiple stakeholders, including investors and clients, in a company's ethical practices and willingness of consumers to purchase from brands that align to their values, are two main reasons companies are interested in committing to issues like gender equality.

The large number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the jewellery sector makes SMEs uniquely positioned to advance for gender equality in industry. For example, in China, 99.8% of businesses in the country are SMEs. That means there are 44 million SMEs throughout the country³. SMEs have the opportunity to create real change and contribute to ending all forms of gender discrimination. However, SMEs may not understand the business case for gender equality, or they might be unsure on where and how to start. Indeed, a lot of the work developed around diversity in the business world has been tailored for larger enterprises⁴. The RJC has therefore developed this Gender Equality Toolkit for your small or medium-sized business, which clearly outlines the benefits for SMEs to tackle gender equality and gives guidance on how to do so.

1. Human Rights Watch (2020)
2. RJC (2021)
3. SCMP (2021)
4. Institute for Gender and the Economy (2019)



The Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC) is supporting members to become gender equality champions. RJC wants to raise awareness among members about the urgency to have gender equality strategies and include gender equality across business operations, as well as provide guidance on how to implement these. This toolkit is part of RJC's journey to move the corporate sector towards delivering Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on Gender Equality.

In March and April 2021, RJC conducted a survey of members on Gender, Diversity and Inclusion progress and challenges. Results indicate that gender equality is addressed in some ways, but a lot of progress still needs to be made:

- 21% of RJC member companies said that as an SME, policies were limited but inclusivity is promoted in other ways such as company charters that are used daily or by implementing these considerations into their company values.
- Violence against women (VAW) was recognised as one of the major barriers to women's participation in the jewellery industry, and their overall economic empowerment.
- Globally across RJC member companies surveyed, only 29% offered paid primary caregiver leave (maternity leave) and only 22% offered paid non-primary caregiver leave (paternity).

About this toolkit

RJC's mission is to have a responsible worldwide supply chain that promotes trust in the global jewellery and watch industry. This can only be possible when more jewellery supply chain actors take responsibility and implementing responsible practices. The toolkit is designed for SMEs to know where to start and how to implement a gender equality strategy in 4 steps.



START

Assess where your company stands regarding gender equality (page 25)



COMMIT

Formalise your commitment through integrating gender into policies or by creating a standalone gender policy (page 35)



INCORPORATE AND IMPLEMENT

Take concrete actions in each key area: Talent recruitment, retention & promotion, Culture of inclusion, Value chain initiatives (page 39)



REVIEW AND MONITOR

Track your progress and communicate about it (page 54)



PART 1

SMEs advancing gender equality and the challenges and opportunities

GENDER EQUALITY OVERVIEW

Before developing or implementing gender equality policies or strategies, it is important to understand the root causes of existing inequalities between men and women and how they play out in the jewellery value chain. This section aims to equip SMEs with an understanding of what gender equality means in society and in the workplace.

For more info on key terms and definitions, refer to the lexicon on page 54.

Systemic barriers that contribute to gender inequality:⁵

SOCIAL NORMS

Social norms are informal rules of behaviour or understandings of what is acceptable in a society and are deeply rooted and often culturally driven, differing between regions, religions, countries, and cultures. Frequently, social norms limit women's economic empowerment as they define what women and men can and cannot do in a society and workplace, and how they should act. These are often referred to as gender norms.

LEGAL CHALLENGES

Many countries have laws that discriminate against women. Across the world, these laws can affect the ability of women to move freely, their decision to work or start a business, their salary/pay, their ability to work after having children, their access to property and the size of their pension⁶. A World Bank report shows that on average, women have just three-quarters of the rights of men⁷. In certain regions of the world, such as Middle East & North Africa, this figure can go down to women having just half of men's rights.

FAILURE TO RECOGNISE, REDUCE AND REDISTRIBUTE UNPAID HOUSEHOLD WORK AND CARE OF FAMILY

Unpaid household work includes cooking, cleaning, taking care of children or elders which directly impacts the type of paid care they can do and their working hours. Though it is not thought of as work, it keeps society running and it is essential to the functioning of the economy. Women do at least 2,5 times more unpaid care work than men⁸. For example, in developing countries, when women spend on average 4 hours 11 minutes per day doing unpaid work, men spend 1 hour and 31 minutes.



FOCUS ON SOCIAL NORMS:

Because of social norms, leadership and entrepreneurship values tend to be associated with men. As a result:

- 75.1% of members in parliament are men in China.
- In Indonesia, only 10.1% of board members of listed companies are women.
- In South Africa, 77.4% of firms are owned by men.

Source: [WEF 2021 Global Gender Gap Report](#)

5. UN WOMEN (2016)

6. World Bank (2021)

7. Ibid

8. UN Women

Gender inequalities can be seen in many different situations. This table gives an overview of common issues and how they impact women and companies.



FREE WILL AND PARTICIPATION

Women are often less likely to speak up and freely make their own decisions. This is a result of various social norms, practices, and behaviours that limit their possibilities to act upon their choices.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Women feel less comfortable speaking up to supervisors and are less aware of their labour rights. They also participate less in worker committees and in trade unions.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR COMPANIES

Consequences include reduced employees' motivation, ability to participate fully in the workplace and management being unaware of certain concerns.



VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

Women are more exposed to risks of violence and harassment. Harassment and violence can be used as a way to show dominance and power in the workplace over others. For example, it is used to intimidate, disempower, and discourage women from seeking leadership positions and roles in historically male-dominated occupations or industries. Sexual harassment may also be used to exploit employees to work hard or punish against unwanted actions.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Women's psychological, physical, and sexual health, dignity and self-esteem are affected. In the workplace, women may be victims of violence and harassment from superiors, co-employees, customers, employer agents or even non-employees. This leads to stress, anxiety, depression, poor self-esteem, or even self-harm.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR COMPANIES

Consequences include higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, and damaged workplace relations as well as company image.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Women have different economic opportunities, often in more vulnerable contract types, and are often paid less than men for equal work. This is because of opposing social norms, job exclusion (men-only jobs) and the responsibility of unpaid household work and taking care of family members.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Women often earn less over their lifetimes. This “pay gap” means that over the course of their careers, women are less able to save for their retirements, explaining why there are higher poverty rates among older women. In addition, women are disproportionately involved in informal activities, which leads to financial insecurity, stress and uncertainty.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR COMPANIES

Consequences include reduced employees’ motivation, and the inability for women to fully participate in the workplace due to the economic pressure associated with their lower wages.



LEADERSHIP

Women have obstacles to career progression. This is a result of unequal opportunities, in both education and training as well as in work, and the cultural belief that women should not be in leadership positions.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Women have less opportunities than men to progress in their career and reach decision-making positions. Even with higher qualifications, they often still occupy jobs requiring lower qualifications.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR COMPANIES

Consequences include an inability to attract the best talent, to innovate, and a decrease or lack of productivity.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Women are exposed to different job risks than men. The risks include those that are specific to women's health, those related to the impact of longer hours due to unpaid household and care responsibility, as well as those due to the different jobs and responsibilities women may have in and outside of their workplaces.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Women have different health issues than men in the workplace which are not often considered. For example, often settings do not have adequate protective equipment or measures that take into account women's special needs. This is especially true when women are pregnant or breastfeeding. In addition, women face higher risks of stress and depression due to the pressure of responsibilities both at work and outside of work.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR COMPANIES

Consequences include higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, and potential higher risks of health and safety issues.



SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS AND UNPAID CARE

Women have limited sexual and reproductive health rights, due to a lack of knowledge and access to vital services. They are expected to perform unpaid domestic and household work, including taking care of family. Opposing social norms and restrictive gender roles contribute to the problem.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN EMPLOYEES

Women are not able to make their own sexual and reproductive decisions and may be forced to have children, which limits their personal and professional opportunities. In addition, the responsibility of unpaid domestic work causes many women to look to part-time, informal work and homeworking, which, may result in additional problems regarding pay, access to benefits, job security, and safety.

POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR COMPANIES

Consequences include less representation of women in the workforce, including leadership positions, employees' motivation, higher rates of absenteeism and turnover, as well as damaged workplace relations.

How do these issues impact the jewellery value chain?

These issues are found throughout the entire jewellery industry. However, some of them can be more present in certain parts of the value chain. Below are some examples:



IF YOUR SME OPERATES IN: LARGE-SCALE MINING (LSM)⁹

Common issues: Leadership

The mining industry has typically been dominated by men. It is estimated that only 10% of employees in industrial mining are women. Where women are present in LSM, they lack access to leadership roles. In fact, women hold only 1% of top executive positions in LSM.



IF YOUR SME OPERATES IN: ARTISANAL SMALL-SCALE MINING (ASM)¹⁰

Common issues: Economic Opportunity; Violence and Harassment



Women play a large role in ASM. Their activities are often informal, causing job insecurity and reinforcing their economic vulnerability. In ASM, women are also highly exposed to risks of violence and harassment. For example, in sapphire mining in Madagascar, women and young girls are often tasked with bringing the gemstones to market to sell to the mostly male traders. Women employees report that they are frequently pressured into engaging in sexual favours to get a good price.



IF YOUR SME OPERATES IN: CUTTING & POLISHING¹¹

Common issues: Economic Opportunity

Diamond cutting and polishing is dominated by men. When women are present, they are more commonly found in diamond polishing, which is lower-skilled work. They are also found in informal factories or home-based operations where they are exposed to low wages and poor working conditions.

9. BSR (2018)

10. Ibid

11. Ibid



IF YOUR SME OPERATES IN...DESIGN¹²

Common issues: Free will and participation; Leadership



There are a growing number of women in the artisanal and boutique jewellery sector. While many of these jewellers are involved in design, women often face obstacles when opening and scaling businesses. In many developing countries, women are restricted from joining business associations or cooperatives that could provide better access to training, credit terms, and buyers.



IF YOUR SME OPERATES IN: MANUFACTURING¹³

Common issues: Health & Safety

There are many women in the jewellery manufacturing workforce. Jewellery manufacturing can involve toxic chemicals and gases, dust, loud noises, eye strain and damage, and the potential of injury from improper use of machinery. This is particularly dangerous for pregnant women.



IF YOUR SME OPERATES IN: RETAIL¹⁴

Common issues: Leadership;

In the jewellery sector, we see a higher number of women in entry-level roles. In such roles, women have limited decision-making power or strategic input, and therefore limited opportunities to rise in the company.

12. Ibid

13: Ibid

14. RJC (2021)

Gender equality & intersectionality

Intersectionality understands that individuals can experience discrimination based on multiple factors. Parts of someone's identity include: race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, health status, disabilities, education, experience and skill sets, personality, background.

For example, in society and in the workplace, being a black woman, a lesbian woman, a single mother or a woman with a disability lead to unique experiences of discrimination. So, not all women have access to the same opportunities. This requires that companies understand how different parts of someone's identity can intersect with others.

In Brazil

black women earn almost

45% less

than their white male peers in contrast to the 27% gender pay gap for white women.

[Norton Rose Fullbright, 2020](#)

In the U.K.

54%

of lesbian, bisexual and trans Black and minority ethnic women reported sexual harassment and assault compared to only 31 percent of white women.²

[TUC, 2019](#)

In the EU

20%

of women with disabilities are in full time employment comparing to 48% of women without disabilities and 64% of men without disabilities.

[European Disability Forum, 2021](#)

In the U.S.

black women earn

0.64\$

for every 1\$ earned by white* men, compared to 0.79\$ for white* women.

* [White non-Hispanic \(Centre for American Progress, 2021\)](#)



Providing equal and secure opportunities for men and women help contribute to healthy societies and a push towards a better future. Companies that invest in gender equality are more innovative, more attractive, and more trustworthy.¹⁵

Gender equality will grow your business performance

- Increase innovation: More representation and participation of women leads to greater innovation. More innovation can improve the company's financial performance.
- Make better decisions: Diverse teams have more points of view to make better decisions, which is related to improved company performance.
- Attract the best talent: Companies that focus on gender equality are more attractive to future employees and have employees that stay for longer periods of time.
- Attract investments: Companies performing well on gender equality are more likely to attract investors.

Gender equality will create a more inclusive and satisfying work environment

- Build trust: Employees report increased trust and work relations when they feel included.
- Increase motivation and interest: Employees who are offered benefits such as parental leave, childcare benefits and health coverage are more motivated to work. Gender equality at work opens more professional opportunities for employees.

Gender equality will build your trust in the community

- Create opportunities: Companies which create opportunities for women contribute to a growing change in society.
- Improve brand reputation: Working to improve gender equality improves companies' reputation and develops trust among consumers and in the communities where it operates.
- Prepare for upcoming changes: Companies which work on improving gender equality are ready for a changing laws and regulations.

Finally, incorporating gender equality into your company is simply the right thing to do to build fair and just societies!

DID YOU KNOW?

Gender equality is good for businesses and for the economy:

- Gender-diverse companies outperform their competitors by 21% ([McKinsey, 2019](#))
- Employers who embrace diversity at all levels are more appealing to about 60 to 70% of job seekers ([CIO, 2016](#))
- If 600 million more women had access to the internet, annual GDP could increase by \$18 billion across 144 developing countries ([Women Deliver](#))
- According to the World Bank, countries lose \$160 trillion in wealth due to the earnings gap between women and men ([World Bank, 2018](#))

DID YOU KNOW?

There's a worldwide push to promote gender equality:

- Growing number of international frameworks: new international frameworks are shifting expectations for business. For example, in 2019 the ILO launched the [Violence and Harassment in the World of Work Convention \(C190\)](#) and [Recommendation 206](#). They set requirements on countries to take action to eliminate violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment, in the workplace.
- Increasing interest from different stakeholders: there are growing demands from many groups of people. While we see employees increasingly interested in their employer's activities on diversity, we also see growing consumer awareness. Failure to address gender issues is a reputational risk, and a legal one where there is evidence of discrimination, sexual violence, and harassment.
- Companies are getting more and more involved: an increasing number of businesses are committing to gender equality. For example, 5,799 companies had pledged to the [Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\)](#) and close to 60% of WEPs signatories have fewer than 500 employees.

THREE REASONS TO CARE AS A **BUYER**

As a buyer, implementing a gender equality strategy will help you:

- Better respond to consumers who increasingly seek to purchase from brands committing to ethics and transparency.
- Access new suppliers, such as women-owned businesses.
- Attract new talent looking to work at companies embracing values of diversity and inclusion.

THREE REASONS TO CARE AS A **SELLER**

- Attract new buyers looking to source from companies promoting gender equality.
- Anticipate upcoming laws and regulations around gender equality efforts.
- Improve your reputation in the community where you operate.

THE IMPACT OF SMEs AROUND THE WORLD

SMEs have a huge impact in many countries around the world (employment, GDP, etc.). Here are a few countries that showcase the importance of SMEs:

SMEs across South Africa represent more than
98%
of businesses

[McKinsey](#)

In India there are

63m
SMEs

and the sector continues to grow, with a lot of growth in 2020.

[India Briefing, 2020](#)

In Indonesia SMEs employ

7.9m
people

and contribute 27% to GDP

[ILO, 2019](#)

Together, SMEs can make a big difference in addressing gender inequality and creating more gender-inclusive societies!



Women's Leadership case study

Women-only diamond factory in India KP Sanghvi, a family-run diamond and jewellery company, started a women-only diamond factory in Gujarat, India in the early 2000s as a social experiment to test out women's aptitude for diamond cutting and polishing. The women employees were very successful, with powerful stories of personal enrichment. The factory grew over the past few years, the women-only factory been integrated into a co-ed factory of 5,000 employees, ending its women-only status. However, the new factory has maintained a high number of women (at almost 40 percent).

Source: [BSR \(2018\)](#)

BREAKING THE MYTHS OF ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN SMEs

Developing a gender equality strategy may seem difficult. You might have concerns about the time and resources requirements, or you might question the usefulness of this strategy in your business. Here are commonly believed challenges and actual benefits:¹⁶

Myth 1

“Putting in place a gender equality strategy is for big companies! We do not have time and resources for this.”

All companies, no matter their size and industry have a role to play in achieving gender equality. In fact, there are quick and easy steps you can take that will not disrupt your business. These are outlined in this toolkit. Finally, gender equality is a journey and steps should be implemented in the long term, at a pace that suits your company. Refer to [page 20](#) to understand why SMEs should implement gender equality strategies.

Myth 2

“A violence and harassment policy is not needed because my company has a small number of employees!”

Violence and harassment are widespread and can happen in any context. No matter the number of employees, it is important for companies to take a strong stance on violence and harassment and make clear to employees that it is taken seriously. Refer to [page 14](#) to understand why addressing violence and harassment is critical.

Myth 3

“Offering flexible work for employees with children will make employees lazy and hurt the company’s finances!”

Flexible work is known to help with motivation and productivity. Companies also experience reduced absenteeism and employees tend to stay for longer periods of time at a company. Refer to [page 44](#) to learn more about flexible policies you can implement.

Gender equality is good for society, and it is good for business. By acting on gender equality, you bring positive change to your workplace, your marketplace, and your community!

16. APEC, USAID (2018)



PART 2

Getting started and moving forward

Steps for SMEs to include gender equality across their operations

GENDER EQUALITY: OVERVIEW AND KEY THEMES

This toolkit should be used as a reference guide as you start and deepen your gender equality journey. The below framework covers all areas to include in a successful gender equality strategy. They are described throughout the 'Start' section of the report.

While this may be the first time considering this topic for some companies, others might have already begun to take action towards advancing gender equality. Either way, this section will help you figure out the next steps through a holistic approach. Move through Part 2 in the way that makes sense for your company, making sure you consider each area (Start, Commit, Incorporate & Implement, and Review & Monitor).

COMMITMENT & POLICIES

TALENT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & TRAINING

- Hiring
- Retention and promotion
- Benefits
- Training

CULTURE OF INCLUSION

- Health & safety
- Collective bargaining and employee engagement
- Flexible working
- Violence and harassment

VALUE CHAIN INITIATIVES

- Procurement
- Marketing practices
- Community

MEASUREMENT & COMMUNICATION



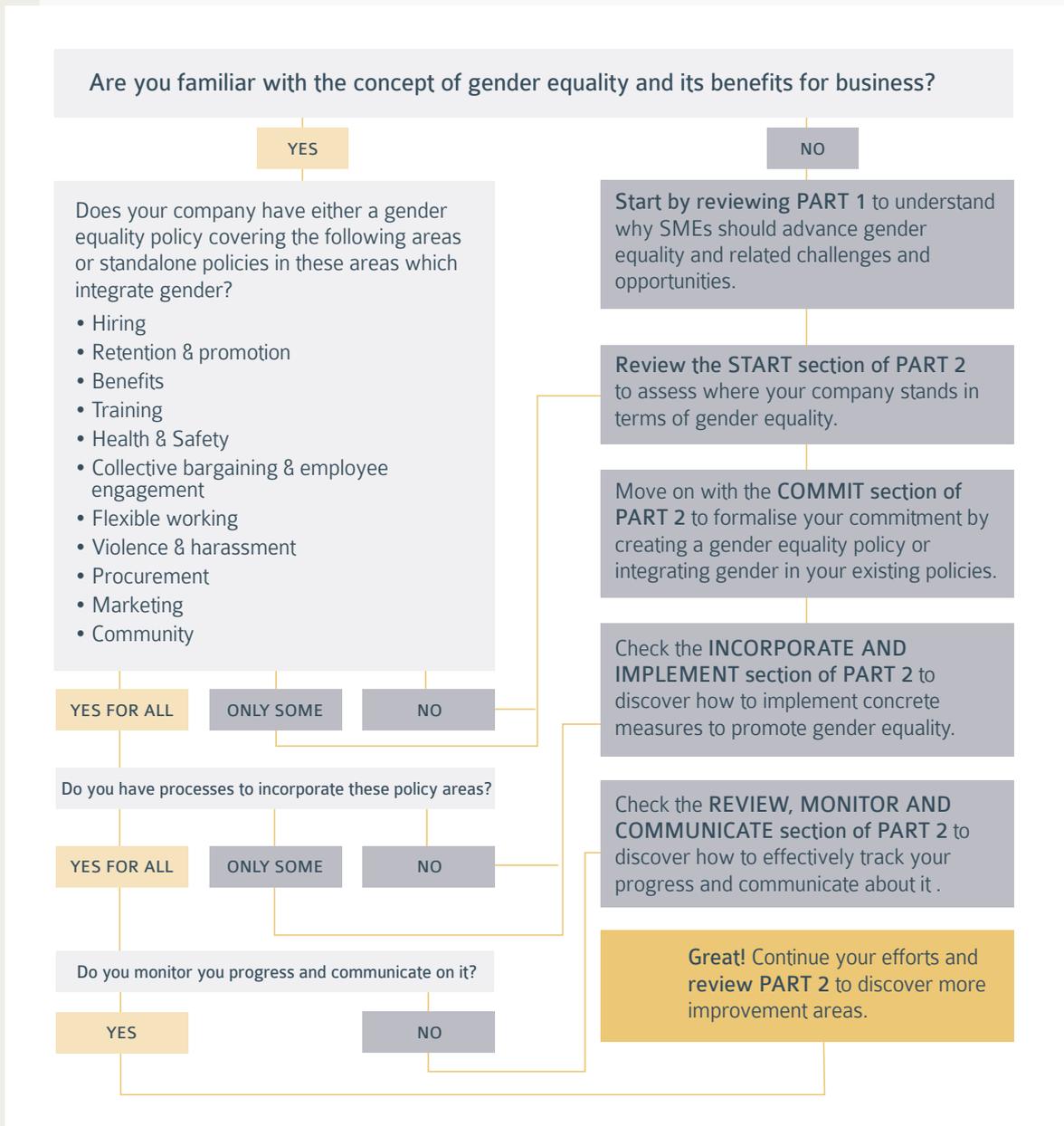
START

Starting or progressing your gender equality journey should include asking certain questions about your business.

Before you can envision what gender equality could look like or what the ideal policies are to achieve gender equality, it is vital to understand your current state and review your company's existing policies and practices. Gender issues can extend to almost every existing policy and practice your business may have. To start, the first question to ask yourself is 'What is the current state of gender equality in my workplace? Am I addressing gender equality? If so, how?'



The graphic below can help your company answer this question and navigate the immediate next steps.



You may not have all the answers to the questions above, but they will help you and your company have necessary conversations and raise awareness internally. As a next step, review specific areas with the operations team/department to understand whether there is or is not gender discrimination and how your company can become more gender inclusive.



KEY TIP

When you make a decision for your company, ask yourself “how will this impact men? How will this impact women? Will the decision impact them differently?”



TALENT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & TRAINING

Your company's employees are your main resources. How motivated and eager they are about their workplace and management/supervisors will determine how successful your business will be. To bring out the best from your employees, it is necessary to have gender-inclusive and discrimination-free recruitment, promotion, and training practices.

HIRING¹⁸

To hire and retain the best talent, your company should make sure that your talent recruitment, retention, and training is gender inclusive. The people and processes should be aware of potential biases and actively creating practices that are free of discrimination.

- ❓ Do you have certain jobs that are for "men" and others for "women"?
- ❓ Do your current hiring policies explicitly mention that your company is an equal opportunity employer (unbiased when it comes to race, gender, religion, etc.) and anyone can apply?
- ❓ Where do you currently look for applicants/new employees? Does your company advertise jobs using different ways (internet, newspaper, sharing with your community, etc.)?
- ❓ When looking for new hires, who is part of the interviews' panels? Are women and men involved?

RETENTION AND PROMOTION¹⁹

To ensure employees are benefiting from equitable opportunities in the workplace, it is key to promote professional development. It is especially important for women who have more limited access to professional opportunities than men. By making sure women and men are considered in the talent retention strategy, businesses can provide equal access to good jobs.

- ❓ Historically, what percentage of women receive promotions at the company?
- ❓ How many and how often are women promoted to more senior roles?
- ❓ How would changes to parental leave policies affect female employee hiring, retention and promotion?
- ❓ What is the turnover rate at your company? What is the proportion of women leaving your company?

18. BSR (2017); UN Women (2017)

19. Ibid



BENEFITS²⁰

Women are often paid less for equal work because of social norms, domestic work expectations or employment type. For example, if there is a sick child, women are usually the parent responsible for taking care of them which means that they may need to be absent for work, which affects their pay.

- ① Are fair and comparable wages, hours and benefits guaranteed to all employees for their work?
- ① How are the calculations of basic wages, overtime, bonuses, and payroll deductions done in your company? Are they the same for both men and women employees?
- ① Does your company provide health insurance with consideration for women's specific health needs?

TRAINING

Providing continuous learning and training opportunities to all employees is critical to ensure the equal access to professional development and promotions. Training can cover internal policies and processes, as well as other skills such as leadership or communications.

- ① What type of trainings do your employees receive?
- ① Do men and women have equal opportunities to access and participate in all aspects of training and professional development?

20. Ibid



CULTURE OF INCLUSION

The day-to-day work life of your company's employees are important to consider and improve by addressing discrimination, harassment, and other injustices. Health and safety, collective bargaining, employee engagement and flexible work are areas to address and improve as needed.

HEALTH & SAFETY²¹

Women and men are exposed to different work-related risks, given women's unique biological needs and the impacts on health of juggling unpaid care responsibilities, as well as differences in tasks and responsibilities allocated. The health impacts on women from their job is different than men and vary through the whole value chain. For example, for women miners, urinary tract infections, poor menstrual hygiene, health consequences linked to sexual harassment, pregnancy, and a lack of access to health services are common issues. For other women employees in the jewellery industry, daily exposure to chemicals and machinery can affect their respiratory health. Proper healthcare services, safety training, breaks, etc. will help keep all employees safe and healthy, regardless their gender.

- ① Do your basic healthcare services recognize gender differences between men and women?
- ① Does your company have policies that prevent unsafe exposure to hazardous chemicals or unfit working conditions for pregnant women?
- ① Do your policies allow for breaks and rest periods (for men and women)? Can employees take time off to see non-emergency health service providers when needed?
- ① Is the workplace gender-sensitive? For example, are there sanitary pads, proper lighting and breastfeeding spaces?

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT²²

Often, trade unions and committees do not count with the participation of nor integrate the voices of women. This is often due to gender norms, male-dominated industries and leadership, as well as meeting hours that do not allow for women to participate. In general, women's voice in the workplace are heard less than men's and businesses should pro-actively seek to engage with women.

- ① Are there women in the union or committee? (If these exist.)
- ① Does the company receive feedback from women employees? (e.g., through surveys.)

21. BSR (2017); BSR (2018)

22. BSR (2017)



FLEXIBLE WORKING²³

While most individuals have responsibilities both at home and at work, women are often responsible for a lot of the work at home (children care, cooking, cleaning, etc.). This strongly impacts their ability to have a full-time job and also means that they are often considered less for promotions and raises, and are even more prone to quit. To be able to attract and retain the best people to your business, it is important to think about flexible work options, parental leave policies and having benefits include childcare options for employees.

- ❓ Do you have a parental leave policy? Does it apply to both men and women?
- ❓ What type of flexible work does your company offer? Are there specific policies or plans for pregnant or nursing women?
- ❓ Do both men and women have access to childcare services?
- ❓ Do your employees have flexible working schedules? If yes, is that true of all jobs at the company?

VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT²⁴

Violence and harassment are unfortunately common for many women across all types of work and within their own communities as well. Victims of violence and harassment often stay silent to avoid causing additional problems and/or facing punishment. Making the situation even more difficult and unfair, men employees and managers are usually not properly trained to discuss these issues.

- ❓ Do you have policies that address a both harassment (verbal, physical and sexual) and violence?
- ❓ Does your company have a process or way to address complaints of harassment or violence?
- ❓ Does your company have a policy against retaliation for anyone that reports harassment or violence?
- ❓ What kind of training does your company have to discuss the signs of harassment or violence in the workplace?
- ❓ Would employees understand what harassment looks like? Do employees know and are aware of the company's violence and harassment policies?
- ❓ Does your company discuss the types of violence that exist and how victims can get support?



VALUE CHAIN INITIATIVES²⁵

There is a lot companies can also do to promote gender equality outside of your company.

As you move through your gender equality journey, it is necessary to engage with the company's entire supply chain (suppliers, entrepreneurs, contractors and distributors) to ensure they promote gender equality. In addition, women employees and entrepreneurs along the supply chain have less business opportunities than men. This is due to social norms, as well as limited access to education and technical skills. SMEs can support them.

A company's marketing practices can also showcase gender equality to a larger audience. A gender-inclusive company bans discrimination and stereotypes in their marketing and advertising.

Finally, community projects should be part of the journey to achieving gender equality. You can drive positive impact in the communities where you work, while including your employees to participate in local activities for gender equality.

PROCUREMENT²⁶

It is essential to ask your suppliers not just about their general policies, pricing, etc. but you should also review their ability to provide a gender-inclusive workplace. In addition, there are few women-owned businesses in the jewellery value chain and your company can support them.

- ❓ Does your company have policies against working with any supplier that has a history of ignoring harassment or violence complaints from employees?
- ❓ Do your suppliers have any gender equality policies?
- ❓ Do your suppliers have any diversity programmes or trainings that address gender equality?
- ❓ Do you work with women-owned businesses?

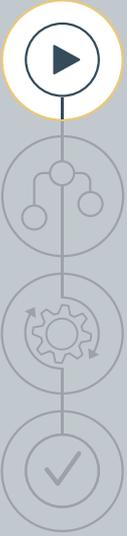
MARKETING PRACTICES²⁷

Gender-inclusive marketing can help change how women and men are seen by the public. Women are often seen as the ideal customers of the jewellery industry, so what is shown through marketing should match the reality of what women need and want in their everyday lives.

25. Equality Means Business (2021)

26. BSR (2017); Women's Empowerment Principles, Principle 5

27. Women's Empowerment Principles, Principle 5



- ① ? Does your company's current marketing include any gender-based stereotypes?
- ② ? Does your marketing show women and men as empowered actors with progressive, intelligent, and multi-dimensional personalities?
- ③ ? Have you ever received any complaints or praise for your marketing practices from customers or other parties?
- ④ ? In your company's media, advertising, and social media platforms, are gender stereotypes reinforced in any way?

COMMUNITY²⁸

Companies along the jewellery value chain often employ women and men from the local community where the company is based. Your business not only provides salaries and benefits to your employees, but can also improve the lives of your employees' families and neighbours. Gender equality should be achieved not just within a company, but also within the community they are in. It is important to work with community development programmes to make valuable and effective contributions to gender equality.

- ① ? Does the company support gender-inclusive community projects?
- ② ? What type of community projects is your company currently involved with? Are any of them helping advance gender equality?
- ③ ? Do you know the leaders (business, politics, social, etc.) within the community? If so, has gender equality and inclusion been discussed with them?

28. Women's Empowerment Principles, Principle 6



COMMIT

Senior management within a SME has a large role in achieving gender equality and getting other employees committed to the cause. For gender discrimination to be identified and eliminated from your workplace, there must be commitments from senior level.

Senior management within your company can work not only on the development and implementation of new gender-sensitive strategies and policies but can also advocate for change internally and externally and inspire other leaders.

CEOs of SMEs can also make external commitments to gender equality. By letting the public know about your business's commitment to gender equality, you are also letting potential future employees know that the company is family-friendly and appreciates the work of all employees. This will likely attract and motivate talented female and male employees who prefer to work for an employer that respects women and promotes inclusion.

When committing to gender equality from a CEO or owner level, the following steps are important:

- Communicate the company's gender equality efforts moving forward.
- Establish company-wide goals, strategies, and targets for gender equality (see more details in the section "Implement").
- Create a CEO or leadership statement outlining your company's commitment (see below example from Women's Empowerment Principles).²⁹

On the following page is an example from the Women's Empowerment Principles of what a CEO gender equality commitment statement looks like.

29. Equality Means Business (2021); Empower Women (2016)



**WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
PRINCIPLES**

CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles

We, business leaders from across the globe, express support for advancing equality between women and men to:

- Bring the broadest pool of talent to our endeavours;
- Further our companies' competitiveness;
- Meet our corporate responsibility and sustainability commitments;
- Model behaviour within our companies that reflects the society we would like for our employees, fellow citizens and families;
- Encourage economic and social conditions that provide opportunities for women and men, girls and boys; and
- Foster sustainable development in the countries in which we operate.

Therefore, we welcome the provisions of the Women's Empowerment Principles – Equality Means Business, produced and disseminated by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact. The Principles present seven steps that business and other sectors can take to advance and empower women.

Equal treatment of women and men is not just the right thing to do – it is also good for business. The full participation of women in our enterprises and in the larger community makes sound business sense now and in the future. A broad concept of sustainability and corporate responsibility that embraces women's empowerment as a key goal will benefit us all. The seven steps of the Women's Empowerment Principles will help us realize these opportunities.

We encourage business leaders to join us and use the Principles as guidance for actions that we can all take in the workplace, marketplace and community to empower women and benefit our companies and societies. We will strive to use sex-disaggregated data in our sustainability reporting to communicate our progress to our own stakeholders.

Please join us.

CEO Name: _____ CEO Signature: _____

Name of the company: _____

Date: _____



60% of WEPs signatories are SMEs with less than 500 employees

Source: [Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\), CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles.](#)



POLICY

Once senior management has confirmed a company's commitment, the next step is to focus on developing and implementing gender-sensitive policies. A company can look at operationalising their gender equality commitments in two ways (though these are not the only options):

1. creating a single, all-inclusive policy.
2. making certain changes and updates into existing policies areas.

HOW TO CREATE A SINGLE, ALL-INCLUSIVE GENDER EQUALITY POLICY?



KEY TIP

Questions to keep in mind when drafting a standalone gender equality policy:

- What are some of the specific barriers women face in the society or community you are in?
- What does gender equality mean to your company?
- What are you already doing which promotes gender equality?

To build out your policy, you can focus on three main areas:³⁰

1. Objectives and commitment: Outline your company's values and commitment to gender equality. This should include a short statement from senior leadership. (e.g., "We believe that gender equality is key for business and for people. We commit to creating a workplace where all women can thrive.")
2. Standards and regulations: Refer to existing guidance such as the Women's Empowerment Principles or national regulations where your company is to show how your policy works with the larger society, country, city your company operates in.
3. Areas of focus: Specify policy areas where your company will push for gender equality, e.g.:
 - Hiring
 - Benefits
 - Health & safety
 - Flexible working
 - Procurement
 - Community
 - Retention & promotion
 - Training
 - Collective bargaining & employee engagement
 - Violence & harassment
 - Marketing practices

30. WGEA (2014); ILO (2020)



HOW TO EMBED GENDER EQUALITY INTO YOUR EXISTING POLICIES?

It is likely that some of your existing policies may have some elements of gender equality. Maybe the country where your company is located, by law, states that a certain number of weeks of parental leave after the arrival of children is mandatory. Maybe your company already has flexible work that includes full-time and part-time employees. These existing policies are a good first step, but here is some guidance to help your existing company include gender equality.

- **Discrimination:** Specific language around non-discrimination that applies to both women and men should be included in the policy. It should also include a focus on the specific needs of women, especially pregnancy and childcare to ensure working mothers are not discriminated against.
- **Wages and benefits:** Language specific to equal pay for men and women for work of equal value should be part of this policy. Women are more often employed in dangerous situations or lower job categories, so policies should guarantee their job security, safety, and access to basic benefits such as sick leave. It should also include language outlining a living wage so that women can continue being employed when they become mothers and be able to provide well for their children.
- **Working hours:** Working hours should remain the same every day as recommended by national and international limits, and work targets or quotas should not be too high and unrealistic to avoid overtime pay. Bonuses and benefits should not be given based on the number of hours worked. Language in a policy needs to state that overtime is voluntary and mention specifically that an employee not working overtime will not lead to punishment, or any type of penalty.
- **Health and Safety:** It is important to focus on health, but also a worker's well-being. Make sure to include specific language that recognises the different needs between women and men. This includes access to family planning products and services and care relating to pregnancy.
- **Freedom of association and collective bargaining:** Language should include the rights of both women and men to freedom of association and collective bargaining. It should also include that any gender-based discrimination is not allowed. The policy can also specify that meetings should be held at locations and times which consider women's specific constraints.
- **Harassment and abuse:** The policy needs to include the definition of harassment and that abuse and harassment of any kind are not tolerated at any level of the business, but also that training sessions for management and employees (both women and men employees) is mandatory. Sexual harassment should be specifically mentioned and it should be clearly stated that there is no tolerance for it.³¹

KEY TIP

Create platforms or tools for employees to give and receive feedback after including gender equality in policies and processes. Make sure all employees can share comments, concerns, and complaints about any topic.

31. BSR (2017); Think business Think Equality



INCORPORATE & IMPLEMENT

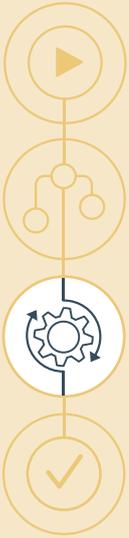
Once your company's policies are updated, it is time to incorporate them into your processes. Below are some recommendations on how to make sure your gender-inclusive policies reach everyone.

✓ KEY TIP

Create a strategy document that includes economic reasons (creating the "business case") and possible risks and opportunities for achieving gender equality within your company. The strategy document will help your company figure out where and when certain processes need updating and what possible alternative plans look like now that these processes are changing.

✓ KEY TIP

Identify the stakeholders who will be responsible for implementing the gender equality strategy. You can also appoint voluntary gender champions who will support the cause and process.



TALENT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & TRAINING

Companies are establishing access to equal professional opportunities in multiple ways. This includes efforts around recruitment to ensure women are integrated throughout the processes, as well as measures to develop and retain their talents, including via trainings.

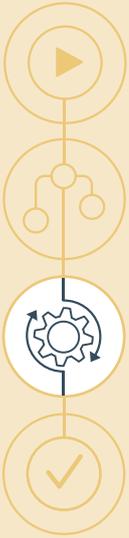
HIRING³²

- Quick wins:**
- Review all current job descriptions to remove potential bias.
 - Include at least one female/male interviewer and at least one female/male candidate on the final list before making a decision.
 - Diversify the channels where you advertise your job positions
 - Track the recent hires by gender.
- In the long-term:**
- Establish targets for recruitment of under-represented groups, including targets based on gender.
 - Conduct training on biases for hiring team.

RETENTION AND PROMOTION

- Quick wins:**
- Advertise promotion opportunities so they are easily accessed by all employees throughout the company.
 - Encourage women to apply to internal jobs, including those that are traditionally held by men.
 - Try to understand reasons why women are leaving their positions and develop retention strategies.
 - Track the turnover rate by gender.
 - Track the absenteeism rate by gender.
 - Track the promotion rate by gender.
- In the long-term:**
- Provide career development trainings for all employees.
 - Develop a strategy for women employees to grow into leadership positions.

32. Equality Means Business (2021); BSR (2017); Think business Think Equality



BENEFITS

- Quick wins:**
- Track the difference in pay between men and women for all positions in your company.
- In the long-term:**
- Guarantee equal pay for work of equal value.
 - Provide health benefits that consider women’s specific health needs.
-

UN Women Diagnosis for Equal Remuneration (DIR) has been designed to be an accessible and easy method to accurately measure possible gender pay gaps for both equal work and work of equal value. Human Resources departments will be able to enter the required data in an Excel table that performs calculations and displays graphs automatically.

Source: [UN Women](#).

INTERNAL POLICIES CASE STUDY



Jewellery retailer DAYS Jewelers has policies and business practices to support women’s empowerment internally. They include a gender pay gap review plan which includes the company president and senior executives as well as an evaluation of gender ratios in leadership positions to ensure equal opportunities are provided to women. In addition to this, a gender equality programme is led by senior management.

Source: [RJC Gender Equality Report \(2020\)](#).



TRAINING

Quick wins:

- Provide networking opportunities for women, by encouraging them to participate in women’s leadership events
- Offer skills development and learning opportunities for all employees regardless of job type

In the long-term:

- Emphasise the importance of gender equality to employees by conducting diversity bias and inclusion training
- Create mentorship opportunities for women within your company (creating women’s circles, etc.)
- Support women employees by providing leadership and skill training (i.e., training on communications, negotiation, and conflict resolution)



KEY TIP

Mentorship is vital to reaching women’s empowerment. A good way to have impact is by creating mentor-mentee relationships between women executives and junior women within the organisation.

TRAINING CASE STUDY

Las mujeres seleccionadoras de minerales de Suárez (The women mineral selectors of Suárez) in Cauca, Colombia collaborated with the Alliance for Responsible Mining to create a unified and legally-recognized group to formalise their work. Fifty-seven women came together and drew up a constitution and statutes to officially register the organization as the “Association of Women Selectors and Fighters for the Peace of the Municipality of Suárez – Cauca (ASOMUSELUPAZ)”. Since 2017, the women have held workshops on marketing, good mining practices and work safety processes. The workshops focus on teamwork and commitment to the group’s wellbeing. Today, the women in the group feel empowered and confident about their role in their community.

Source: [Responsible Mines](#).



CULTURE OF INCLUSION³³

There are various ways companies can create workplaces where everyone feels safe, and where health and wellbeing are guaranteed. This includes confirming that health & safety standards recognize the differences between women and men, considering women's feedback, offering flexible working programmes, and following through with efforts to eliminate violence and harassment.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Quick wins:**
- Provide employees with necessary protective materials in the correct size, and train them on how to use it, especially for pregnant employees who work in dangerous environments
 - Provide time and a space for pregnant women to rest as needed
 - Provide at-work healthcare services which consider women's health specific needs (e.g., provide free sanitary pads)
 - Make sure women who are pregnant, or breastfeeding are not exposed to work and substances which can have negative effects on their health
- In the long term:**
- Do health and safety risk assessments with gender-specific elements, like sexual and reproductive health
 - Regularly inform employees about their rights and responsibilities concerning issues of health, safety, and well-being (for example via awareness raising sessions)

Focus on Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified mental health challenges in the workplace.³⁴ Women in particular have been strongly affected. There are simple ways to ensure mental health of all employees is protected.

For example, companies can:

- Share resources around mental health (documentation, hotline numbers, etc.)
- Implement meeting-free timeslots (e.g., Friday afternoons)
- Offer or give discounts to mindfulness and physical activity sessions

33. Equality Means Business (2021); BSR (2017); Think business Think Equality

34. McKinsey (2021); UN Women (2021)



COLLECTIVE BARGAINING & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Quick win:

- Seek to understand the proportion of women employees in unions or committees (where relevant)
- Encourage women employees to take part in employees' unions or committees (where relevant)

In the long-term:

- Make sure women's voices and opinions are considered during important decision-making processes, including by training management and union and committee leaders on gender equality
- Establish employee feedback mechanisms (surveys, committees, etc. as relevant) and make sure women's voices are heard
- Create spaces for all employees to freely exchange with managers and provide feedback



KEY TIP

Use available financing and funds from government and civil society to provide trainings and professional development opportunities. It is particularly important to have positive interactions and collaboration with trade unions to make these programmes are possible within your company.



FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICIES

- Quick wins:**
- Communicate to employees about their rights to parental leave and flexible working arrangements
 - Limit the number of meetings by establishing a meeting-free afternoon on a specific day, and encouraging that meetings not occur after a certain time
- In the long-term:**
- Assess and establish flexible working programmes (e.g., part-time, work from home, etc.), especially for women returning to work after having a child
 - Establish childcare support systems for parents
-

Focus on Employee Engagement

It is key for businesses to engage with their employees to understand how they perceive the workplace environment, and whether perceptions vary depending on gender. Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) has developed a [tool and guidance](#) to collect and analyse gender disaggregated data to help companies create gender-equal workplaces. It provides a set of indicators and recommendations to help improve and measure the workplace experience of all employees.



KEY TIP

Meetings where key decisions are made should take place at times that are convenient for employees with children, to ensure everyone can attend and that all voices are heard.



VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

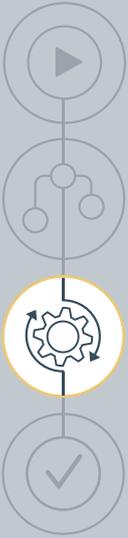
- Quick wins:**
- Share relevant resources with employees on harassment and violence (phone numbers to call for support and other support systems)
 - Share resources with employees about domestic violence (phone numbers to call for support and other support systems)
 - Communicate to all employees the company's strong position against violence and harassment (e.g., through specific meetings, posters, etc.)
- In the long-term:**
- Establish employee support groups to encourage communication, learning and safe spaces to discuss sensitive topics
 - Establish an effective and confidential grievance mechanisms for employees to share concerns or complaints that is to all
 - Conduct trainings on violence and harassment to all employees to raise awareness of long-term impacts on individuals, families, and communities
 - Conduct trainings to management to ensure they are equipped to address cases of violence and harassment in the workplace

ADDRESSING VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT CASE STUDY

DIMEXON.
FUTURE PERFECT

Diamond trade cutter polisher Dimexon has created employment opportunities for women, resulting in talent retention and very low staff turnover rates. As part of its strategy, it works on creating safe working environments, and addressing and eliminating violence and harassment.

Source: [RJC Gender Equality Report \(2021\)](#)



VALUE- CHAIN INITIATIVES³⁵

Companies can promote gender equality throughout their entire value chain. Ways to do so include reviewing suppliers' practices to check that they are inclusive of women, as well as supporting women-owned businesses. Companies may also produce specific marketing efforts to portray positive images of women and work with the community to drive gender equality, for example via employee volunteering.

PROCUREMENT

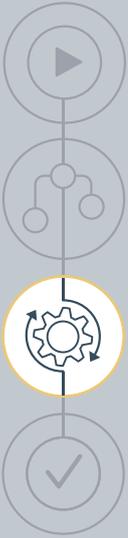
Quick wins:

- Share your company's gender equality documents and policies with your suppliers to show your commitment and encourage them to consider it as well
- Track the number of women-owned businesses you work with/are a part of your value chain

In the long-term:

- Provide gender equality trainings for suppliers
- Include gender equality as a requirement in your company's selection of suppliers (e.g., by making it clear in your Code of Conduct)
- Set targets to increase the number of women-owned businesses in your company's value chain
- Engage with your procurement team to drive responsible sourcing programs that are gender responsive
- Start collecting data disaggregated by gender across your supply chain

35. Equality Means Business (2021); BSR (2017); Think business Think Equality



TIPS TO INCLUDE GENDER EQUALITY IN A SUPPLIER CODE OF CONDUCT

- Include a clear statement at the beginning of the Code of Conduct on your company's commitment to gender equality.
- Ensure each part of the Code of Conduct refers to gender equality; e.g. under the "Health & Safety" clause, you can add that men and women employees engaged in working with hazardous materials will be informed of the potential risks to their reproductive health.

Source: [BSR \(2017\)](#)

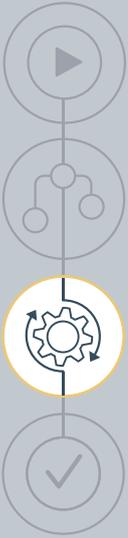
FOCUS: WHY GENDER-DISAGGREGATED SUPPLY CHAIN DATA?

Watch this video to understand why collecting gender-disaggregated data in your supply chain is important.

Source: [Ethical Trade](#)



Are you a woman-owned SME or do you want to source from women-owned businesses? WEConnect International is a global network that connects women-owned businesses to qualified buyers around the world. Check out [WEConnect International](#) for more details.



ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES



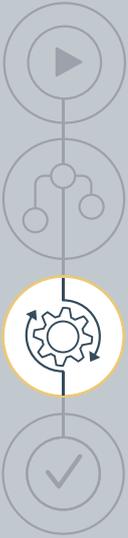
Retailer Fair Trade Jewellery has taken action to promote gender equality in its value chain. As part of its actions, it sources responsible ASM gold through IMPACT's Just Gold programme in the DRC. IMPACT's programme conducts training for women in mining communities. Results include increased literacy, empowering women to access mine sites to mine them, whereas previously they held peripheral jobs. Women are now more knowledgeable about how to trade the gold they mine, and they have greater decision-making power in their households. This all leads to greater female economic empowerment and leadership.

Source: [RJC Gender Equality Report \(2021\)](#).

M A K A L

Retailer MAKAL founder and CEO, Daniela Colaiacovo focused on empowering women in the mining sector to make mining a positive force for community development. To do so, MAKAL supports women to become legal miners, acting as the link with the authorities, helping them obtain operating licenses and authorisations. It also provides training and tools to increase women miners' efficiency and yield and to learn how to be responsible entrepreneurs. Finally, it helps women to organise themselves and form independent cooperatives of women, run by women.

Source: [RJC Gender Equality Report \(2021\)](#).



MARKETING PRACTICES

- Quick wins:**
- Review your company’s marketing materials to make sure these do not contribute to current gender stereotypes
 - When you communicate both internally and externally, use inclusive language which do not discriminate against women
- In the long term:**
- Provide gender-inclusive training to marketing and communication employees
 - Create marketing campaigns that promote gender equality and seek to challenge gender norms
-

COMMUNITY

- Quick win:**
- Organize work events, such as awareness raising sessions on important international days such as International Women’s Day (March 8) and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25)
- In the long term:**
- Work with community officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation of women and girls in the community
 - Support organizations that support gender equality by partnering with them or sponsoring them
 - Encourage employees to volunteer with community programmes that advance gender equality
-



KEY TIP

Create a quarterly internal newsletter sharing information about gender equality and ways for employees to engage on the topic in the community.



REVIEW, MONITOR & COMMUNICATE

It is important to measure the impact of gender equality policies and processes that have been implemented. As a first step, SMEs should figure out their way of collecting data and make sure it is consistent across the company and separated by gender.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) help track progress towards your company's goals. They provide a way to find where improvements can be made, inform decision making and focus on what is most important. KPIs help companies re-adjust their processes to assure they have a positive impact internally and externally.

KPIs can be both qualitative and quantitative and focus on both outputs (the immediate results that happen) and outcomes (longer term changes and effects).³⁶

GOOD KPIs ARE THOSE THAT:

- Provide evidence of progress toward achieving a desired result.
- Offer a comparison that can show the degree of performance change over time.
- Can track effectiveness, quality, behaviours, project performance, personnel performance, and how resources were used.

Source: BSR (2017)

³⁶. BSR (2019); BSR (2017)



It can be difficult to create a complete and comprehensive list of KPIs for your company. Below is a chart with some example KPIs that can help begin discussions with senior management.

AREAS TO CONSIDER	EXAMPLE KPIs ³⁷	
Talent recruitment, training, and retention	Hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of job applicants that are interviewed, by gender • Comparison of interviewers' make up, by gender • Recent hires breakdown by gender
	Retention & promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total employee breakdown by employment type, employment contract, and region, by gender • Comparison of job definition and job title, by gender • Comparison of employees' duration of stay in same job, by gender • Turnover rate, by gender • Absenteeism rate, by gender • Promotion rate, by gender
	Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of basic pay/salary pay to men by employee category, by location
	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of employees participating in training programmes, by gender
Culture of inclusion	Health & safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of health & safety assessments conducted (with consideration of gender inclusivity) and number of corrective actions taken
	Collective bargaining and employee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of women in unions or committees • Percentage of employees responding to employee survey, by gender
	Flexible work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women returning to work after maternity leave
	Violence and harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employees that completed gender equality training • Number of complaints filed about discrimination, harassment or violence and corrective actions taken
Value-chain initiatives	Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and ratio of suppliers and vendors that have a gender equality policy • Number of women-owned businesses sourced from
	Marketing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of marketing team employees who have received gender equality training
	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employees volunteering with gender equality causes/organisations

37. BSR, Making Women Workers Count. [BSR_Gender_Data_Impact_Framework_Report.pdf](#).
 Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), Implementation Guide: Equality Means Business. [weps_implementation_guide_en.pdf](#)
 (unwomen.org)



✓ KEY TIP

Make sure all employees know about the new areas of monitoring and evaluation for the company and how they can help in achieving gender equality goals and targets.

COMMUNICATE

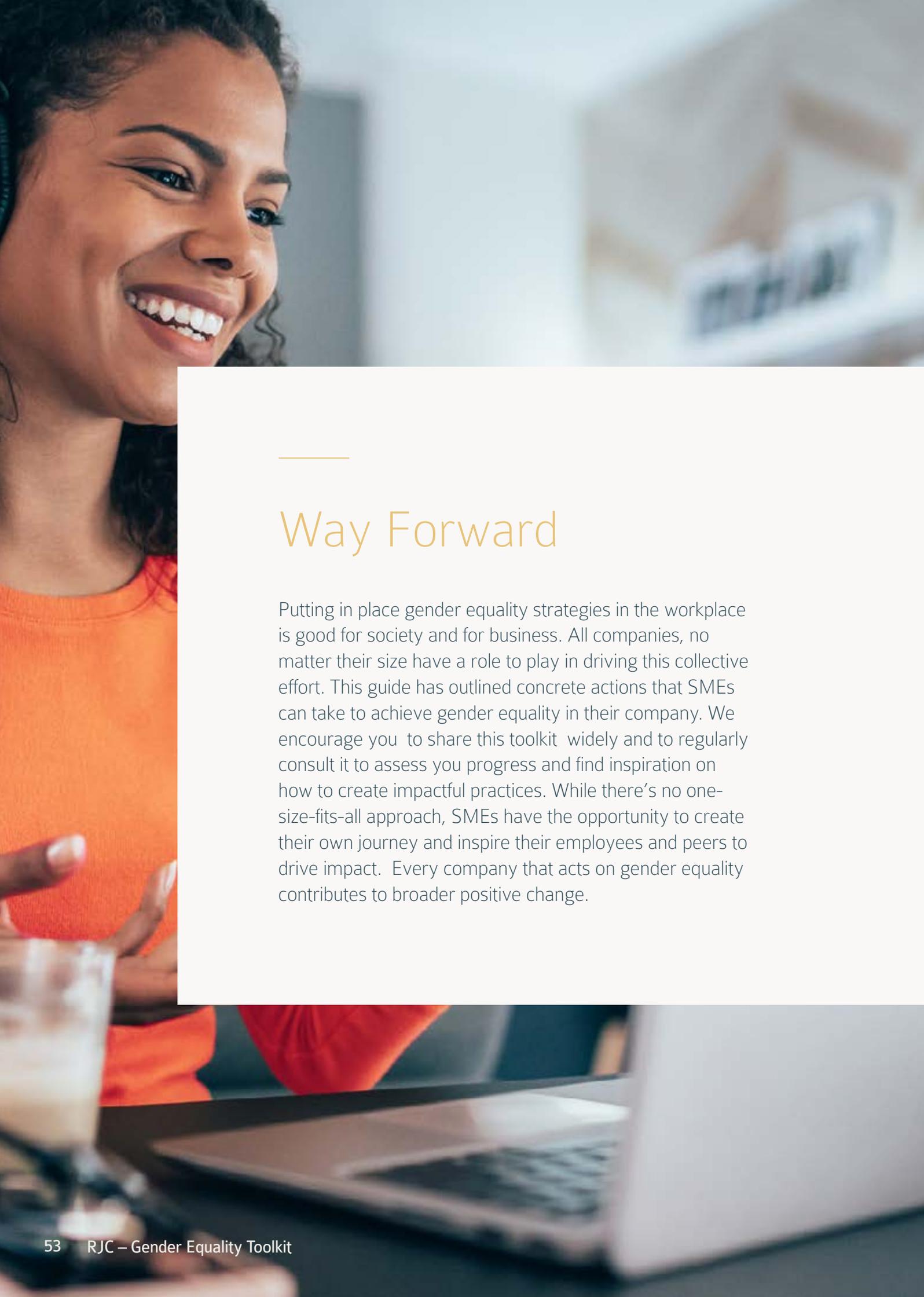
Communication is necessary to share your results and potential future changes and updates to your company's gender equality strategy. It is not just about communicating externally, but especially about communicating internally to your own employees.

Internal communication will help to make sure that all the trainings and gender-inclusive work being done by employees are being recognised and celebrated. It will encourage employee engagement, involvement, and leadership. Internal communication will also support management as they seek to understand potential challenges and roadblocks in achieving a more gender-equal workplace.

In addition, it is important to share progress reports on positive outcomes towards gender equality and actions that have been taken by the company. These updates should be provided at least annually both internally and externally (often through a report or other written communication). If there are any negative impacts from these new policies and processes, it is recommended that your company provide information of what happened and what corrective action will be taken.

Lastly, when reporting externally, consider including your company's progress in relation to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By recognizing and working with these international and highly recognized programmes, your company can form community with others in the jewellery sector, as well as attract potential investors, employees, suppliers, among other stakeholders.³⁸

38. BSR (2019)

A young woman with dark curly hair, wearing an orange top, is smiling and looking towards the right. In the foreground, a laptop is open on a desk, and a glass of coffee is visible. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a modern office or meeting space.

Way Forward

Putting in place gender equality strategies in the workplace is good for society and for business. All companies, no matter their size have a role to play in driving this collective effort. This guide has outlined concrete actions that SMEs can take to achieve gender equality in their company. We encourage you to share this toolkit widely and to regularly consult it to assess your progress and find inspiration on how to create impactful practices. While there's no one-size-fits-all approach, SMEs have the opportunity to create their own journey and inspire their employees and peers to drive impact. Every company that acts on gender equality contributes to broader positive change.

PART 3

LEXICON



GLOSSARY³⁹

TERM	DEFINITION
CARE WORK	The work of looking after the physical, psychological, emotional, and developmental needs of one or more other people.
CHILDCARE	The use of public, private, individual, or collective services to meet the needs of parents and children.
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN	Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex and gender that has the effect or purpose of stopping the recognition or enjoyment by women.
DIVERSITY & INCLUSION	Empowering people by respecting and appreciating what makes them different, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	All acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same home as the victim.
EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE	Equal pay for work, without discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status.
EXPLOITATION	The action or fact of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work.
FAMILY PLANNING	Services or programmes aiming to ensure that couples and individuals are able to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children, that they have the information and means to do so, that informed choices are made, and that a full range of safe and effective methods are made available.
FLEXIBLE/FLEX WORK	Organisation of working time, part-time work, overtime, and night work in a flexible way.
GENDER	Gender is the range of characteristics related to being female and male and the differences between them. Depending on the context, this may include sex-based social structures and gender identity.
GENDER EQUALITY	Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.
GENDER GAP	Gap in any area between women and men in terms of their levels of participation, access, rights, pay or benefits.
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	Violence directed against a person because of that person's gender.

39. European Institute for Gender Equality-Glossary & Thesaurus

TERM	DEFINITION
HARASSMENT	Unwanted conduct related to the sex of a person occurring with the purpose of violating the dignity of that person, and of creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment.
INTERSECTIONALITY	Analytical tool for studying, understanding, and responding to the ways in which sex and gender intersect with other personal characteristics/identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination.
MATERNITY LEAVE	Time off from work to which a woman has for a continuous period before and after giving birth.
PARENTAL LEAVE	Time off granted to either parent in order to care for a child.
WORKPLACE RETALIATION	A form of unlawful discrimination that occurs when an employer, employment agency or labour organization takes a negative action against an employee, applicant or other individual because he or she engaged in a protected activity.
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive environment.
SEXUAL/REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH	State of complete physical, mental and social well-being, in relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.
SOCIAL NORMS	The shared standards of acceptable behaviour by groups. Social norms can both be informal understandings that govern the behaviour of members of a society, as well as written into rules and laws.
STEREOTYPES	A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT	The process by which women gain influence and equal opportunity to pursue personal, social and economic endeavours, engaging in all parts of society on the same basis as men.
WOMAN EMPLOYEE	Person who identifies as a female that perform services for, and under the direction of, another person, in return for which she receives pay.

ACRONYMS

ASM	Artisanal small-scale mining
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KPI	Key performance indicator
LSM	Large-scale mining
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	Small and medium enterprises
VAW	Violence against women
WEPS	Women's Empowerment Principles

CHECKLIST

AREAS		SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS	ACTIONS	KPIs
Talent recruitment, training, and retention	Hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have certain jobs that are for “men” and others for “women”? • Do your current hiring policies explicitly mention that your company is an equal opportunity employer (unbiased when it comes to race, gender, religion, etc.) and anyone can apply? • Where do you currently look for applicants/new employees? Does your company advertise jobs using many different ways (internet, newspaper, sharing with your community, etc.)? • When looking for new hires, who is part of the interviews’ panels? Are women and men involved? 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all current job descriptions to remove potential bias • Include at least one female/male interviewer and at least one female/male candidate on the final list before making a decision • Diversify the channels where you advertise your job positions • Track the recent hires by gender <p>In the long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish targets for recruitment of under-represented groups, including targets based on gender • Conduct training on biases for hiring teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of job applicants that are interviewed, by gender • Comparison of interviewers’ make up, by gender • Recent hires breakdown by gender
	Retention & promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically, what percentage of women receive promotions at the company? • How many and how often are women promoted to more senior roles? • How would changes to parental leave policies affect female employee hiring, retention and promotion? • What is the turnover rate at your company? What is the proportion of women leaving your company? 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise promotion opportunities so they are easily accessed by all employees throughout the company • Encourage women to apply to internal jobs, including those that are traditionally held by men • Try to understand reasons why women are leaving their positions and develop retention strategies • Track the turnover rate by gender • Track the absenteeism rate by gender • Track the promotion rate by gender <p>In the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide career development trainings for all employees • Develop a strategy for women employees to grow into leadership positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total employee breakdown by employment type, employment contract, and region, by gender • Comparison of job definition and job title, by gender • Comparison of employees’ duration of stay in same job, by gender • Turnover rate, by gender • Absenteeism rate, by gender • Promotion rate, by gender
	Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are fair and comparable wages, hours and benefits guaranteed to all employees for their work? • How are the calculations of basic wages, overtime, bonuses, and payroll deductions done in your company? Are they the same for both men and women employees? • Does your company provide health insurance with consideration for women’s specific health needs? 	<p>Quick win:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track the difference in pay between men and women for all positions in your company <p>In the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal pay for work of equal value • Provide health benefits that consider women’s specific health needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratio of basic pay/ salary pay to men by employee category, by location

Talent recruitment, training, and retention	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of trainings do your employees receive? • Do men and women have equal opportunities to access and participate in all aspects of training and professional development? 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide networking opportunities for women, by encouraging them to participate in women’s leadership events • Offer skills development and learning opportunities for all employees regardless of job type <p>In the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasise the importance of gender equality to employees through diversity bias and inclusion training • Create mentorship opportunities for women within your company (creating women’s circles, etc.) • Support women employees by providing leadership and skill training (i.e., training on communications, negotiation, and conflict resolution) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of employees participating in training programmes, by gender
Culture of inclusion	Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your basic healthcare services recognise gender differences between men and women? • Does your company have policies that prevent unsafe exposure to hazardous chemicals or unfit working conditions for pregnant women? • Do your policies allow for breaks and rest periods (for men and women)? Can employees take time off to see non-emergency health service providers when needed? • Is the workplace gender-sensitive? For example, are there sanitary pads, proper lighting and breastfeeding spaces? 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide employees with necessary protective materials in the correct size, and train them on how to use it, especially for pregnant employees who work in dangerous environments • Provide time and a space for pregnant women to rest as needed • Provide at-work healthcare services which consider women’s health specific needs (e.g., provide free sanitary pads) • Make sure women who are pregnant, or breastfeeding are not exposed to work and substances which can have negative effects on their health <p>In the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do health and safety risk assessments with gender-specific elements, like sexual and reproductive health • Regularly inform employees about their rights and responsibilities concerning issues of health, safety, and well-being,(for example via awareness raising sessions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of health & safety assessments conducted (with consideration of gender inclusivity) and number of corrective actions taken
	Collective bargaining and employee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there women in the union or committee? (If these exist) • Does the company receive feedback from women employees? (e.g., through surveys) 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek to understand the proportion of women employees in unions or committees (where relevant) • Encourage women employees to take part in unions or committees (where relevant) <p>In the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure women’s voices and opinions are considered during critical decision-making processes • Establish employee feedback mechanisms (surveys, committees, etc. as relevant) and make sure women’s voices are heard • Create spaces for all employees to freely exchange with managers and provide feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of women in unions or committees • Percentage of employees responding to employee survey, by gender

Culture of inclusion	Flexible working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a parental leave policy? Does it apply to both men and women? • What type of flexible work does your company offer? Particularly for pregnant women or nursing? • Do both men and women have access to childcare services? • Do your employees have flexible working schedules? If yes, is that true of all jobs at the company? 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate to employees about their rights to parental leave and flexible working arrangements • Limit the number of meetings, by establishing a meeting-free afternoon on a specific day, and encouraging that meetings not occur after a certain time <p>In the long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and establish flexible working programmes (e.g., part-time, work from home, etc.), especially for women returning to work after having a child • Establish childcare support systems for parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of women returning to work after maternity leave
	Violence and harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have policies that address about both harassment (verbal, physical and sexual) and violence? • Does your company have a process or way to address complaints of harassment or violence? • Does your company have a policy against retaliation for anyone that reports harassment or violence? • What kind of training does your company have to discuss the signs of harassment or violence in the workplace? • Would employees understand what harassment looks like? Do employees know and are aware of the company's violence and harassment policies? • Does your company discuss the types of violence that exist and how victims can get support? 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share relevant resources with employees on harassment and violence (phone numbers to call for support and other support systems.) • Share resources with employees about domestic violence (phone numbers to call for support and other support systems) • Communicate to all employees the company's strong position against violence and harassment (e.g., through specific meetings, posters, etc.) <p>In the long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish employee support groups to encourage communication, learning and safe spaces to discuss sensitive topics • Establish an effective and confidential grievance mechanisms for employees to share concerns or complaints that is to all • Conduct trainings on violence and harassment to all employees to raise awareness of long-term impacts on individuals, families, and communities • Conduct trainings to management to ensure they are equipped to address cases of violence and harassment in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employees that completed gender equality training • Number of complaints filed about discrimination, harassment or violence and corrective actions taken

Value-chain initiatives	Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your company have policies against working with any supplier that has a history of ignoring harassment or violence complaints from employees? • Do your suppliers have any gender equality policies? • Do your suppliers have any diversity programmes or trainings that address gender equality? • Do you work with women-owned businesses? 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share your company’s gender equality documents and policies with your suppliers to show your commitment and encourage them to consider it as well • Track the number of women-owned businesses you work with/are a part of your value chain <p>In the long-term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide gender equality trainings for suppliers • Include gender equality as a requirement in your company’s selection of suppliers (e.g., by making it clear in your Code of Conduct) • Set targets to increase the number of women-owned businesses in your company’s value chain • Engage with your procurement team to drive responsible sourcing programs that are gender responsive • Start collecting data disaggregated by gender across your supply chain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and ratio of suppliers and vendors that have a gender equality policy • Number of women-owned businesses sourced from
	Marketing practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your company’s current marketing include any gender-based stereotypes? • Does your marketing show women and men as empowered actors with progressive, intelligent, and multi-dimensional personalities? • Have you ever received any complaints or praise for your marketing practices from customers or other parties? • In your company’s media, advertising, and social media platforms, are gender stereotypes reinforced in any way? 	<p>Quick wins:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review your company’s marketing materials to make sure these do not contribute to current gender stereotypes • When you communicate both internally and externally, use inclusive language which do not discriminate against women <p>In the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide gender-inclusive training to marketing and communication employees • Create marketing campaigns that promote gender equality and seek to challenge gender norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of marketing team employees who have received gender equality training
	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the company support gender-inclusive community projects? • What type of community projects is your company currently involved with? Are any of them helping advance gender equality? • Do you know the leaders (business, politics, social, etc.) within the community? If so, has gender equality and inclusion been discussed with them? 	<p>Quick win:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise work events, such as awareness raising sessions on important international days such as International Women’s Day (March 8) and International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25) <p>In the long term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation of women and girls in the community. • Support organizations that support gender equality by partnering with them or sponsoring them • Encourage employees to volunteer with community programmes that advance gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of employees volunteering with gender equality causes/ organisations

Useful Resources

COMMITMENTS & POLICIES

- [Online Form to Join the Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\)](#)
- [WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool](#)
- [WEPs CEO Statement of Support](#)
- [HeForShe Movement](#)
- [UN Global Compact Target Gender Equality](#)
- [Understanding Gender, Reimagine Gender](#)
- [Understanding Unconscious Bias](#)
- [European Institute for Gender Equality Thesaurus](#)

TALENT RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND TRAINING

- [Glassdoor Report: How to analyze your gender pay gap: an employer's guide](#)
- [UN Women's Diagnosis for Equal Remuneration](#)
- [UN Women Guidance Note: Mentoring in the Workplace](#)
- [How Business Can Build a 'Future of Work' That Works for Women, BSR](#)

CULTURE OF INCLUSION

- [UN Women: Unpaid Care Work Interactive Tool](#)
- [ILO Convention 183: Maternity Protection](#)
- [ILO Convention 156: Employees with Family Responsibilities](#)
- [UN Women Guidance Note: Attracting and Retaining Talent through Inclusive Family-Friendly Policies](#)
- [Addressing Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Emerging Good Practice for the Private Sector, IFC](#)
- [What Works? Preventing & Responding to Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, CARE International](#)

VALUE-CHAIN INITIATIVES

- [WE Connect International: a Global Network to connect Women-Owned Businesses to Global Buyers](#)
- [Women Win Gender Responsible Procurement Course and Playbook](#)
- [BSR Gender Equality in Codes of Conduct Guidance](#)
- [Gender Impact Assessments for Projects and Policies Related to Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining](#)
- [Could gendered language be responsible for excluding women from power? World Economic Forum](#)
- [Unstereotype Alliance](#)

MEASUREMENT & COMMUNICATION

- [BSR Gender Data and Impact Framework](#)
- [SEDEX Guidance for Collecting and Monitoring Gender Information](#)
- [Data 2x Gender Data](#)



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