Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool

WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION

CONTENT

Introduction

Customs in the 21st Century requires administrations to play a wide range of roles for the benefit of the country they serve. Whether they are required to focus on revenue collection, trade facilitation, supply chain security or the protection of society, Customs administrations need also to achieve a high level of performance and commitment to service. Customs development requires considerable efforts, whether these efforts go towards the implementation of technical international standards and best practices or towards very important cross-cutting organizational development aspects. WCO Members continue to devote significant resources and energy to building their capacity with the aim of creating Customs administrations that best respond to their environment and meet the objectives set by their government.

Gender Equality and Diversity are fundamental rights outlined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) from 1948, and are considered prerequisites for achieving sustainable development and growth. Moreover, Gender Equality is a priority of the UN's International Development Agenda for 2030, where objective number 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlines the need for providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work and representation in political and economic decision-making.[1] Evidence shows that promoting gender equality fosters social and economic development and contributes to improving the overall outcomes and sustainability of activities. [2]

All partners in the Customs community agree that people are an organization's most important asset and, in this respect, careful attention must be paid to ensure the most favourable conditions are created for people to work in. A working environment free of harassment and discrimination remains a key element of staff performance, and as such the WCO believes its Members must consider addressing gender equality issues as part of their respective ongoing reform and modernization programmes.

Furthermore, encouraging gender equality and diversity in the workplace has been shown to encourage innovation and improve individual and organizational performance.[3] Organizations today must capitalize persons from diverse backgrounds who can bring different skills and perspectives. To take full advantage of everybody's competencies, the workplace should therefore present equal opportunities and internal policies in place should eliminate discrimination and unfair advantages to anyone in the organization.

Customs administrations also have a direct impact on the trading community, and as such the operational policies and procedures in place should consider the impact on different groups of the population. By way of example, much of the small-scale trade in border communities is conducted by women, and so Customs administrations should examine how their general policies and procedures could unfairly disadvantage these traders, compared with larger business, and identify remedies to balance this and ensure fairness for all.

This assessment tool will guide Customs administrations in these efforts, with a specific chapter on how to implement gender mainstreaming following a project cycle management approach, it also covers five key principles related to various fields of competence of Customs, as well as cross-cutting policies which are essential enablers to succeed in implementing sustainable gender responsive reforms. For each key principle, a series of elements and indicators are provided to guide the assessment. Some of the indicators may not be applicable in some cases, or may be contrary to national law in some countries and may therefore be set aside.

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[1] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5
[2] https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWDR2012/Resources/7778105-1299699968583/7786210-1315936222006/Complete-Report.pdf
[3] https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters

The five key principles are:

- Principle 1 – Employment and Compensation
- Principle 2 – Work-life Balance and Career Development
- Principle 3 – Health, Safety, and Freedom from Violence
- Principle 4 – Governance and Leadership
- Principle 5 – Customs Administration and Stakeholder Relations

Objective

The objective of this document is to provide a tool for Customs administrations to assess their current policies, practices and activities to address gender equality issues. As a complement to ongoing reform and modernization, this tool can also serve as guidance and suggestions for organizations in defining some of the changes they wish to bring about. The indicators offer insight into the many aspects that can have a direct impact on people and on the performance of the organization.

To obtain the best results from this tool, it is recommended that an administration set up a small team of officials from various operational and central functions, and that they together evaluate each of the indicators to determine how closely the administration has achieved implementation. It is up to each Administration to use those indicators or sections of the GEOAT that they find useful according to their needs and unique context. The assessment team should include officials from all relevant areas of the administration, namely: Human resources management, senior management, training, operations, modernization, strategic planning, and others as appropriate.

In many cases, the indicators will not have been considered previously and may seem ambitious, but in such cases they should serve to create some reflection by the team on how the issues can be approached by the administration.

The assessment will first and foremost serve to establish a baseline, the current situation of the administration in terms of policies and actions geared toward the creation of a gender responsive administration. The assessment process will also provide an opportunity to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. The process should result in the identification of specific concrete goals and objectives to strengthen gender-responsive policies, practices, and organizational culture that should be monitored over time to measure progress. These should subsequently become an essential part of the Customs reform and modernization objectives.

In countries where women have limited legal rights and protection, the administration can use this tool to advocate changes in national law, and may also take any administrative measures available to it to improve the situation of women working in the organization.

Finally, it should be noted that the perspective on gender equality and the most efficient way to achieve this, may be seen differently in different countries, cultures, over generations and by individuals. Whereas some approaches favor for instance "Affirmative actions" or quotas, to prevent or offset disadvantages of a certain/certain group/groups, others may be strongly against this, arguing it goes against the principle of fair treatment.

Moreover, gender equality is not about always reaching a 50 %-50 % gender balance in its workforce. Instead, it is about creating the conditions and opportunities to allow women and men, as individuals, to have the same type of rights and opportunities based on their skills in a respectful environment. Gender equality must be embedded in the whole organizational culture, policies and procedures in order to be fully achieved.

The aim of the GEOAT is to present an objective approach as possible to achieve gender equality, based on internationally recognized methods, with particular focus on the areas of responsibility of Customs, as employers and serving the public.

Acknowledgments

The Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool presented in this document was developed on the basis of a tool developed by the **Gender Equality Principles Initiative**, based in San Francisco, California, United States of America.

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Definitions

Affirmative action (or positive action)	Measures targeted at a particular group and intended to eliminate and prevent discrimination or to offset disadvantages arising from existing attitudes, behaviors and structures. By affirmative or positive action, we mean action aimed at favoring access by members of certain categories of people, in this particular case, women, to rights which they are guaranteed, to the same extent as members of other categories, in this particular case, men.[4]
Competency	A competency is often defined as an integrated set of knowledge, abilities and aptitudes needed to successfully perform an action or a work activity. This traditional definition can be enhanced by stressing the scalable nature of competencies: competence is to be understood as a mean to act, succeed and progress which enables to carry-out accurately tasks, professional or personal activities, and which is based on a structured body of knowledge, diverse abilities, strategies, perceptions, attitudes, etc. The competence can be translated into an observable and measurable behavior needed to perform a task with a pre-established level of performance.[5]
Competency based human resource management (HRM)	The competency-based approach enables to determine job inherent competencies and to formulate them into objectives and/or performance criteria.
	The competence is the foundation of the HR processes and the competency-based approach relies on three pillars: adaptability (to the organizational environment and strategy as well as to the job specifics); consistency (as the foundation of the HR processes it provides a reliable basis for the development of multi-modal, transparent and accessible HR tools); operability (each employee, each supervisor, benefits from a clear mapping of the competencies required for an optimal performance in a specific position, current or future).
	It is a key tool to implement consistently result-based management's principles throughout an organization's workforce.
	Identifying, developing and assessing competencies needed to support the organization's strategic plan is the foundation of competency-based management and is key to sustainable organizational development. [6]
Discrimination	Discrimination is any unfair treatment or arbitrary distinction based on a person's race, sex, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, language, social origin or other status. Discrimination may be an isolated event affecting one person or a group of persons similarly situated, or may manifest itself through harassment or abuse of authority.[7]
Diversity	The fact of there being people of many different groups in society, within an organization, etc.[8]
	Diversity is the who and the what: who's sitting around that table, who's being recruited, who's being promoted.
	Inclusion, on the other hand, is the how, the behaviors that welcome and embrace diversity.[9]

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[4] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/concepts-and-definitions
[5] WCO Framework of Principles and Practices on Customs Professionalism (http://wcoomdpublications.org/downloadable/download/sample/sample_id/134/)
[6] WCO Framework of Principles and Practices on Customs Professionalism (http://wcoomdpublications.org/downloadable/download/sample/sample_id/134/)
[7] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/uncoordination/antiharassment.html
[8] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/diversity
[9] https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamarruda/2016/11/22/the-difference-between-diversity-and-inclusion-and-why-it-is-important-to-your-success/#54bb55e45f8f

Empowerment	The empowerment of women and girls concerns their gaining power and control over their own lives. It involves awareness-raising, building self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. This implies that to be empowered they must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but they must also have the agency to use these rights, capabilities, resources and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as is provided through leadership opportunities and participation in political institutions).[10]
Gender	Gender refers to the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women.[11]
Gender Analysis	Gender analysis is a critical examination of how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situation or contexts. Gender analysis examines the relationships between females and males and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other. A gender analysis should be integrated into all sector assessments or situational analyses to ensure that gender-based injustices and inequalities are not exacerbated by interventions, and that where possible, greater equality and justice in gender relations are promoted.[12]
Gender Audit	Assessment of the extent to which gender equality is effectively institutionalized in policies, programmes, organizational structures and proceedings (including decision-making processes), and in the corresponding budgets. A gender audit considers, normally in a participatory manner, whether internal practices and related support systems for gender mainstreaming are effective and reinforce each other, and whether they are being followed. It establishes a baseline, identifies critical gaps and challenges, and recommends ways of addressing them, suggesting possible improvements and innovations. It also documents good practices towards the achievement of gender equality. A gender audit enhances the collective capacity of the organization to examine its activities from a gender perspective and identify strengths and weaknesses in promoting gender equality issues. [13]
Gender Based Violence (GBV)	GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honor killings; and widow inheritance.
Gender Gap	The term gender gap refers to any disparity between women and men's condition or position in society. It is often used to refer to a difference in average earnings between women and men, e.g. "gender pay gap". However, gender gaps can be found in many areas, such as the four pillars that the World Economic Forum uses to calculate its Gender Gap Index,

[10] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php
[11] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=
[12] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=
[13] https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1145

	namely: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival and political empowerment.[14]
Gender Equality	This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men.[15]
Gender Equity	Gender equity denotes an element of interpretation of social justice, usually based on tradition, custom, religion or culture, which is most often to the detriment to women. Such use of equity in relation to the advancement of women has been determined to be unacceptable. The preferred terminology within the United Nations is gender equality, rather than gender equity.[16] The concept recognizes that women and men have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalances between the sexes. This may include equal treatment, or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. Though often used interchangeably, equality and equity are two very distinct concepts. While international human rights treaties refer to 'equality', in other sectors the term 'equity' is often used. The term 'gender equity' has sometimes been used in a way that perpetuates stereotypes about women's role in society, suggesting that women should be treated 'fairly' in accordance with the roles that they carry out. This understanding risks perpetuating unequal gender relations and solidifying gender stereotypes that are detrimental to women. Therefore the term should be used with caution to ensure it is not masking a reluctance to speak more openly about discrimination and inequality. [17]
Gender inclusive language	Using gender-inclusive language means speaking and writing in a way that does not discriminate against a particular sex, social gender or gender identify, and does not perpetuate gender stereotypes. Given the key role of language in shaping cultural and social attitudes, using a gender inclusive language is a powerful way to promote gender equality and eradicate gender bias. [18]
Gender Mainstreaming	Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is the chosen approach of the United Nations system and international community toward realizing progress on women's and girl's rights, as a sub-set of human rights to which the United Nations dedicates itself. [19]

[14] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php
[15] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=
[16] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=
[17] https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1175
[18] http://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/
[19] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=&fullsearch=0&page=1

Gender Pay Gap / Wage gap	The gender wage gap is defined as the difference between median earnings of men and women relative to median earnings of men. Data refer to full-time employees and to self-employed.[20]
Gender Stereotypes	Preconceived ideas whereby females and males are arbitrarily assigned characteristics and roles determined and limited by their gender. [21] Gender stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of girls and boys, women and men, as well as their educational and professional experiences and life opportunities in general. Stereotypes about women both result from, and are the cause of, deeply engrained attitudes, values, norms and prejudices against women. They are used to justify and maintain the historical relations of power of men over women as well as sexist attitudes that hold back the advancement of women.[22] *This definition can be understood in relation to the general definition for 'Stereotype' which is defined as:* A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.[23]
Gender sensitive policies or actions *(also sometimes referred to as gender responsive policies or actions)*	Policies that take into account the particularities pertaining to the lives of both women and men, while aiming at eliminating inequalities and promoting an equal distribution of resources, addressing and taking into account the gender dimension.[24]
Harassment	Harassment is any improper and unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person. Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate or embarrass another or which create an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Harassment normally implies a series of incidents. Disagreement on work performance or on other work-related issues is normally not considered harassment and is not dealt with under the provisions of this policy but in the context of performance management.[25]
Intersectionality	The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded ad creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.[26]
Inclusiveness	The quality of including many different types of people and treating them all fairly and equally.[27] The practice or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of minority groups. [28] *Diversity* is the who and the what: who's sitting around that table, who's being recruited, who's being promoted. *Inclusion,* on the other hand, is the how, the behaviors that welcome and embrace diversity.[29]

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[20] https://data.oecd.org/earnwage/gender-wage-gap.htm

[21] https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1222

[22] https://eige.europa.eu/rdc/thesaurus/terms/1222

[23] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/stereotype

[24] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/concepts-and-definitions

[25] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/uncoordination/antiharassment.html

[26] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/intersectionality

[27] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/inclusiveness

[28] https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/inclusiveness

[29] https://www.forbes.com/sites/williamarruda/2016/11/22/the-difference-between-diversity-and-inclusion-and-why-it-is-important-to-your-success/#54bb55e45f8f

Impact Assessment	Impact analysis is a component of the policy or programming cycle in public management, where it can play two roles: *Ex ante impact analysis:* This is part of the needs analysis and planning activity of the policy cycle. It involves doing a prospective analysis of what the impact of an intervention might be, so as to inform policymaking – the policymaker's equivalent of business planning; *Ex post impact assessment:* This is part of the evaluation and management activity of the policy cycle. Broadly, evaluation aims to understand to what extent and how a policy intervention corrects the problem it was intended to address. Impact assessment focuses on the effects of the intervention, whereas evaluation is likely to cover a wider range of issues such as the appropriateness of the intervention design, the cost and efficiency of the intervention, its unintended effects and how to use the experience from this intervention to improve the design of future interventions.[30]
Policy Statement	A declaration of the plans and intentions of an organization or government.[31] A *'gender policy statement'* therefore means a declaration of the plans and intentions of an organization or government in the field of gender equality.
Sex (biological sex)	The physical and biological characteristics that distinguish males and females. [32]
Sex-disaggregated data	Sex-disaggregated data is data that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for men and women, boys and girls. When data is not disaggregated by sex, it is more difficult to identify real and potential inequalities. Sex-disaggregated data is necessary for effective gender analysis. Sex disaggregated statistics is an internationally known method part of gender mainstreaming to identify possible "gender gaps" or situations of discrimination. It can give us an indication of potential issues that needs to be adjusted (for instance, the management is composed of 90 % men and 10 % women).
Sexual harassment	Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behavior of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. While typically involving a pattern of behavior, it can take the form of a single incident. Sexual harassment may occur between persons of the opposite or same sex. Both males and females can be either the victims or the offenders.[33]
Work-life balance	The amount of time you spend doing your job compared with the amount of time you spend with your family and doing things you enjoy.[34]
Workplace reintegration	The action or process of integrating someone back into his/her job after a longer absence, for instance parental leave or sick leave.
Temporary Special Measures	This term refers to actions aimed at accelerating de facto equality between women and men that may, in the short term, favor women. Other terms that are often used to refer to such "special measures" in their corrective, compensatory and promotional sense are the terms "affirmative action", "positive action", "positive measures", "reverse discrimination", and "positive

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[30] https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/What-is-impact-assessment-OECDImpact.pdf
[31] https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/policy-statement
[32] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=S&sortkey=&sortorder=
[33] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/uncoordination/antiharassment.html
[34] https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/work-life-balance

discrimination". However, the preferred term within the UN system is temporary special measures.

The CEDAW convention (Article 4, paragraph 1) clarifies that *"Adoption by States parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved."*

The concept consists of three parts:
- **Temporary:** Such measures should therefore not be deemed necessary forever, even though the meaning of "temporary" may, in fact, result in the application of such measures for a long period of time. Temporary special measures must be discontinued when their desired results have been achieved and sustained for a period of time.
- **Special**: The term "special", though being in conformity with human rights discourse, also needs to be carefully explained. Its use sometimes casts women and other groups who are subject to discrimination as weak, vulnerable and in need of extra or "special" measures in order to participate or compete in society. However, the real meaning of "special" in the formulation of article 4, paragraph 1 of CEDAW, is that the measures are designed to serve a specific goal.
- **Measures**: The term "measures" encompasses a wide variety of legislative, executive, administrative and other regulatory instruments, policies and practices, such as outreach or support programmes; allocation and/or reallocation of resources; preferential treatment; targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion; numerical goals connected with time frames; and quota systems. The choice of a particular "measure" will depend on the context in which article 4, paragraph 1, is applied and on the specific goal it aims to achieve.

Source: General recommendation No. 25, on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on temporary special measures.[35]

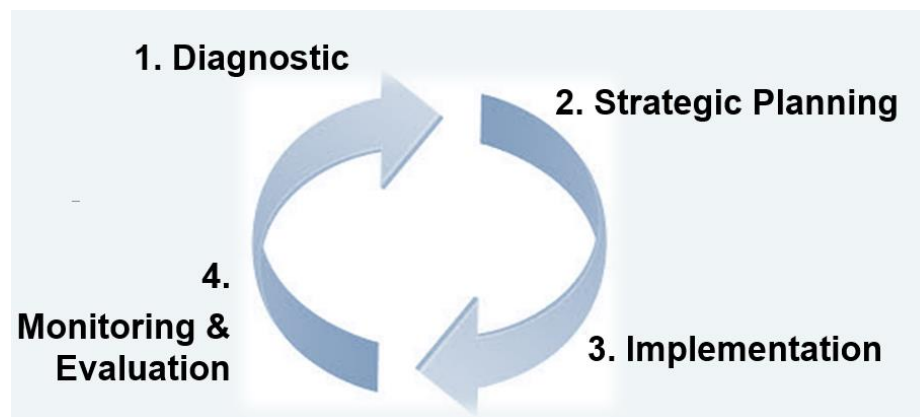[35] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php

Gender Mainstreaming – Project Cycle Management

Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing and considering the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas, at all levels and by all the actors involved. It is a method to include and address a gender perspective an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs, so that women and men equally can benefit, with the ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.[36]

As when implementing any reform and/or modernization initiative, gender mainstreaming requires a high level commitment from the senior management. Having a formal commitment is recognized both in the United Nation's Beijing Platform for Action as well as by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), as an essential condition to succeed in implementing gender mainstreaming.[37]

Such a commitment is necessary to further develop the objectives and a framework, such as an action plan, that will form the basis for implementing the necessary reform process to advance gender equality.[38]

Gender Mainstreaming is implemented by following the general project cycle management approach used for other reform and modernization initiatives, including diagnostic, strategic planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Often, these stages will turn into a cycle, with each step being repeated as changes occur. For example, when a new procedure or activity is evaluated, new gaps may reveal that need to be addressed in the next planning phase.

1. Conduct a diagnostic/assessment

Diagnostic: To get an overview of current state of play regarding Gender Equality and/or Diversity in your Administration, identify current gaps and where interventions could be needed. The first step in this to make a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the current situation in your Administration. The quantitative assessment is done by collecting and analyzing sex-disaggregated statistics in different areas (employment, recruitment, training etc.) A qualitative assessment can be done through conducting surveys among employees and/or external stakeholders or through collecting information from focus groups. The WCO Gender Equality Assessment Tool (GEOAT) can also be used as a tool for this purpose.

Foster a Participatory Reform Process: As part of the diagnostic, it is essential to consult broadly with stakeholders to ensure that their views and needs are considered. This can include both staff representatives (internal), as well as groups representing women traders (external), who can bring new ideas on how to improve policies and procedures.

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[36] https://trainingcentre.unwomen.org/mod/glossary/view.php?id=36&mode=letter&hook=G&sortkey=&sortorder=&fullsearch=0&page=1
[37] http://beijing20.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf
[38] https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/what-is-gender-mainstreaming

Legal and Policy Review: Finally, it is also important to review the national legislative framework, as well as regional and international policies and strategies related to gender equality and diversity, to understand the existing legal and policy framework and be able to use it as a benchmark in your work.

2. Strategic Planning:

Define the objectives: Once you have an overview of the current situation in your Administration, and the broader legal and policy framework, you need to define your objectives in an Action Plan for Gender Equality and/or Diversity.

Strategic Alignment: To ensure accountability for your strategy, it's also important to ensure alignment with the overall national policy framework and seek support from joint overarching bodies and/or governmental institutions.

Assign the resources: Human, technical, financial – resources needed to implement specific policies/measures/initiatives needs to be identified and clearly defined in the Action Plan. Assigning initiative-owners also increases ownership and accountability of specific activities.

Establish a dedicated coordination body: Setting up a dedicated body (a unit, working group or individual officials) with a cross-cutting responsibility within the administration to coordinate the work on gender equality is necessary to ensure proper implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action plan. This body should be responsible for ensuring that the objectives set for other departments, units and sub-divisions are implemented according to the plan. It should also be in charge of collecting and assessing the necessary information (statistics, survey-results, reports and feedback from other units) needed for the monitoring and evaluation.

Prioritize: You may most likely not be able to do everything that you want, therefore you need to prioritize among the most important issues.

Draft the Action Plan including a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework: The action plan should include your Administrations overall objectives, the proposed activities, resources needed to implement initiatives, initiative-owners, a timeline as well as a robust monitoring and evaluation framework with specific indicators that allows following and assessing the progress of your objectives on continuous basis. References can also be made to national legislation and/or regional or international policy frameworks to further increase accountability.

3. Implementation:

Once the action plan has been established, you need to ensure that it is implemented. This will be the responsibility of the dedicated coordinating body (as explained above). In this process it is also important to involve all concerned participants, including other departments, units as well as external stakeholders to enhance the participatory reform process and ensure ownership.

Awareness raising and training on Gender Equality & Diversity: Awareness raising and training is vital and needs to be included on continuous basis, also in the implementation process to ensure that all staff understands the implications of the Administrations objectives and plan on gender equality and what needs to be done to meet these objectives.

4. Monitoring and evaluation:

Monitoring the progress needs to be done on continuous basis to ensure that activities run as planned, to meet the administrations objectives. As previously indicated, it is recommended that the dedicated coordinating body for gender equality is in charge of the monitoring and evaluation. To ensure accountability, monitoring and evaluating gender equality can be included as part of the internal audit process.

Monitoring can be done through following up the progress since the diagnostic was made, through conducting and assessing quantitative (sex-disaggregated data) and qualitative (for instance through working groups or surveys) information, including visits to observe that policies and procedures are implemented as planned.

Specific indicators to monitor and evaluate gender equality needs to be established already in the diagnostic/planning phase.

Evaluation can be done after a set period (that should be clearly indicated in the Action Plan) to measure whether the initiatives have been successful, objectives have been met and if adjustments or improvements are needed. The results of the evaluation should be clearly communicated both with senior management as well as all staff and other concerned stakeholders.

Assessing the Organization based on Gender Equality Principles

For each of the indicators, the assessment team should determine the level of implementation. For ease of qualification, the following implementation scale may be used:

5	Full implementation	Policy and implementation plan in place, widely accepted and utilized.
4	Moderate implementation	Policy and implementation plan in place, but not yet widely accepted or utilized
3	Beginning implementation	Policy in developmental phase, or pilot program, and/or minimal implementation.
2	Ad hoc arrangements	Ad hoc arrangements made for specific cases
1	Square one	No policy or plan in place; need information to get started.
0	Not applicable	Particular key element is not relevant to organization's operations.

Cross-cutting Policies - Implementation

In order to fully implement gender mainstreaming, administrations should implement policies, procedures, training, and internal reporting processes to ensure observance and implementation of this commitment throughout the organization.

Indicator 1

> We have an action plan for Gender Equality and/or Diversity that clearly outlines the administrations objectives and also includes a clear timeline, dedicated resources for implementation and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, with specific indicators that are revised periodically.

Indicator 2

> We have written policies and procedures that affirm our administration's commitment to prevent, address and protect people from all forms of harassment, including harassment based on ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression and/or religion. This can be included either in the Administrations Action Plan on Gender Equality and/or Diversity and/or in Codes of Conduct.

Indicator 3

> We have a dedicated body (a unit, working group or officials/an official) with a cross-cutting responsibility within the administration to coordinate the work on gender equality, ensuring the implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Indicator 4

> We collect and use, on regular basis, **sex-disaggregated data** in all relevant areas linked to our Gender Equality Action Plan, including recruitment, employment (per position and grade), enrolment and absence in training, enrolment in parental and sick-leave, figures on compensations other benefits etc.

Indicator 5

> We conduct, on regular basis surveys to gather information related to gender equality issues, both among employees (for instance surveys on well-being in the workplace) and among stakeholders (for instance customer satisfaction surveys).

Indicator 6

> We provide a forum and conduct focus groups where employees can voice their opinions, give ideas on how to further improve gender equality and diversity considerations in the organization and to determine whether the activities in the actions plan have affected their performance and the organization in general.

Indicator 7

> We establish accountability for gender equality policies and plans by incorporating adherence to these policies in the performance evaluation of managers, and take steps to tie gender equality performance to promotions, compensation, and/or bonuses.

Indicator 8

> We devote sufficient human, financial and technical resources to the implementation of measures aimed at advancing gender equality and diversity.

Indicator 9

We include gender equality and diversity in our procurement policies with independent contractors, thereby requiring that contractors adhere to the Administrations non-discrimination policies.

Indicator 10

We explicitly include gender equality and diversity in our administrations Communication policy to ensure our Administration showcases images of both women and men and uses a gender-inclusive language, both in internal communication (among our staff) and external communication (with other stakeholders).

Indicator 11

We have a comprehensive training strategy which includes awareness raising and training on gender equality and diversity issues, both internally (among staff at different levels) and externally, in our collaboration with external stakeholders. It is recommended to use WCO Blended Training Package on Advancing Gender Equality in Customs Administration for this purpose.

Principle 1: Employment and Compensation

Key Element A – Wages, Benefits & Pay Equity

While paying the legal wage and benefits should be basic and mandatory, it cannot be assumed that this is the case. The gender pay gap is defined as the difference in men's and women's average earnings, usually reported as either the earnings ratio between men and women or as an actual gap in wages. It is the result of a variety of forms of gender discrimination in the workplace, intentional and unintentional. These include discrimination in hiring, promotion and pay, occupational segregation, bias against mothers, and other ways in which women workers are undervalued. The gender pay gap exists, in part, because many women are still segregated into lower paying jobs, although it also occurs that women are also paid less than their male colleagues, even for the same type of job[39]. Pay equity evaluating and compensating jobs based on an individual's skill, effort, responsibility, competencies, merit and working conditions, and not on the people who hold the jobs, is a solution to eliminating wage discrimination and closing the wage gap. Comparable worth is often defined as **"equal pay for work of equal value".** Pay equity rests on the premise that the work being compared is "equal."

Indicator 1

> We pay nationally competitive and equitable wages and other benefits to all staff including apprentices, casual workers/trainees, and employees on probationary status. To do so, the administration should compare its own pay scales against similar positions in the public and private sectors job market.

Indicator 2

> We conduct on a regular basis, an audit of job classifications, compensation policies, and total benefits packages analysis to avoid both bias and adverse impact on women and men.

Indicator 3

> We pay comparable wages for comparable work and the wages take into consideration the relative risks and hardship of certain operational posts.

Indicator 4

> We have written HR policies, available to all employees, that address the way decisions on compensation and merit-based promotions are made.

Indicator 5

> We conduct a periodic review of compensation to determine whether practices are consistent with a non-discrimination policy.

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[39] https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/11/pay-equality-men-women-gender-gap-report-2017/

Key Element B – Multiple Discrimination / Intersectionality

In addition to gender-based discrimination, women and men also face discrimination based on many other factors including race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or cultural stereotypes. A combination of identities can create complex barriers and negatively affect women's access to opportunity and advancement within the workforce.

Discrimination based on marital status occurs when employees are treated differently based on whether they are married, widowed, divorced, single, or unmarried with a same-sex or opposite-sex partner.

Parental status discrimination occurs when employees are treated differently solely because they do or do not have children. Where family responsibilities are taken into account, assumptions about an employee's lack of ability or willingness to work long hours, travel, or otherwise perform at a level consistent with other employees can undermine her or his opportunity to advance, and prevent her or his performance from being judged fairly. In a number of countries, law prohibits discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

It is also often illegal to discriminate against employees based on their health status, including HIV/AIDS. Pregnancy discrimination comes in many forms beyond refusing to hire a pregnant applicant or firing or demoting a pregnant employee. It can also include denying the same or a similar job to a pregnant employee when she returns from a pregnancy-related leave, and treating a pregnant employee differently from other temporarily disabled employees.

Indicator 1

> Our HR policies and procedures consider the various gender equality and diversity dimensions. We prohibit discrimination in hiring, promotion, salary, benefits, discipline termination and layoffs. We have established written HR policies that address placement, transfer, layoff, discipline, discharge and complaints mechanisms that ensure everyone has equal chances and take into consideration the needs and circumstances of personnel.

Indicator 2

> We have implemented a non-discrimination policy that protects on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, sex, reproductive status (including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions), national origin, socio-economic background, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability, medical condition (including HIV status), caregiver status, veteran status, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, and gender identity and/or expression. We monitor its application and ensure compliance with its principles.

Indicator 3

> We educate all employees on our non-discrimination, gender equality, whistle-blower, and non-retaliation policies. All of our training products include some elements related to organizational values and whenever appropriate, also address gender equality and diversity.

Indicator 4

> We take measures to ensure all those involved in HR-related decisions are aware of work-related privileges and activities including wages, hours, benefits, job access, qualifications, and working conditions, to ensure they are free from bias.

Key Element C – Recruitment & Hiring

Public administrations must play a lead role in promoting gender and diversity responsive policies. External diversity initiatives, such as recruitment and outreach programmes, give organizations an opportunity to reach the broadest talent pool and build workforces reflective of the communities in which they operate and the customer base they serve. They also provide opportunities to improve the gender- and diversity balance of the workplace both in general and in specific positions. Organizations that proactively seek diverse job candidates to mirror the increasingly diverse workplace and marketplace benefit from greater creativity and innovation in the workplace.

Indicator 1

> We collect and use sex-disaggregated statistics in recruitment and other demographics (e.g. age, educational background, ethnic group, etc.) to identify whether there may be situations of discrimination based on gender or other grounds. We identify gaps and develop targeted recruitment efforts designed to recruit a more gender and diversity balance workforce, depending on possible gaps.

Note: *Statistics must be used with cautiousness* - When implementing Gender Mainstreaming one of the most important tools is using sex disaggregated statistics. However, although ethic background and age is sometimes monitored through statistics in some countries, you should not systematically monitor diversity aspects through statistics (such as ethnic background, religion, disability, sexual orientation etc.), as this may be considered sensitive for personal integrity reasons.

Indicator 2

> We have implemented competency based human resource management and use a competency based approach in recruitment.

Indicator 3

> We conduct interviews or focus groups with current employees (male and female) to gather suggestions for recruitment efforts and establish specific guidelines to ensure that recruitment panels are balanced from a gender equality and diversity perspective.

Indicator 4

> We seek out, establish, and maintain relationships (i.e., with academia, professional associations and recruitment firms who have a track record in diversity) to increase the number of under-represented groups, and help ensure a diverse pool of candidates.

Indicator 5

> We create internships and apprenticeships, preferably paid, to encourage career exploration and development. We pay particular attention to professions that are typically female-or male dominated to ensure that we provide opportunities for the opposite sex to access new fields.

Indicator 6

> We review job descriptions on a regular basis so that they focus on the required competencies and qualifications, and ensure they are aligned to the organizations gender equality objectives by eliminating non-performance indicators and requirements.

Indicator 7

> We regularly communicate a commitment to gender equality, and encourage women and men to apply for all vacancies in our job postings, for which they qualify.

Indicator 8

We provide training to all personnel involved in recruitment and hiring, including members of selection panels, to address barriers, stereotypes, and hidden biases based on gender, including women or men returning to the workplace after parental leave.

Indicator 9

We develop compensation and bonus programmes for recruitment professionals and hiring managers contingent upon the successful achievement of gender equality-specific recruitment goals.

Indicator 10

We provide career opportunities that allow all staff (both women and men) equal opportunities to follow a career path and grow within the organization.

Indicator 11

We seek temporary staffing agencies and independent contractors with positive records on gender equality. We require these groups to adhere to our organization's non-discrimination policies.

Principle 2: Work-Life Balance and Career Development

Key Element A – Flexibility Policies

At times, due in part to the lack of flexible work arrangements, some organizations can experience a higher turnover of female employees. Not only do organizations lose valuable talent, but they lose continuity in projects and client relations, and incur extensive costs when replacing these employees.

Flexible work policies include flexible scheduling (e.g., compressed work week, variable start and end times, reasonable amounts of leave without penalty, etc.) and flexible work location (e.g., telecommuting, working off-site). The ability to take a temporary career break and then re-enter the workforce, also known as a sabbatical, is also key to ensuring that organizations retain and effectively use top talent. These types of policies can, once fully implemented, benefit all employees and contribute to enhancing overall well-being at the workplace, productivity and ultimately the motivation among staff.[40]

Indicator 1

We create and promote a menu of flexible work options for employees focused on scheduling, location, leave, job sharing, shift changes and shift swapping, and workload that meet the needs of employees and the organization.

Indicator 2

We periodically assess employee needs and current use of flexible work options, through employee surveys or other means, noting employee demographics and their subsequent promotion and attrition rates.

Indicator 3

We allow time off from work for employees seeking medical care or treatment, for themselves or their dependents.

Indicator 4

We offer temporary and extended leave programmes. We help employees on temporary leave to stay connected to encourage re-entry.

Indicator 5

We communicate support from senior management for flexible work options (e.g. working from home or part-time work) and encourage managers to disclose their flexitime use to encourage employees to use flexitime when needed.

Indicator 6

Where applicable, we have established a standardized written process for requesting and using flexible work options to ensure fairness throughout the organization.

Indicator 7

We train managers on how to effectively manage workers who are using flexible work options. We inform employees of their rights and obligations in terms of flexible work options.

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[40] https://jobs.theguardian.com/article/why-now-s-the-time-to-embrace-flexible-working/

Key Element B – Dependent & Family Care

Parents lose days of work every year because of childcare problems, and equally, employees who provide care for an elderly relative also report missing work. Unfortunately, these lost days can often add up to lost productivity. Dependent care programmes have been linked to decreased absences, lower turnover, increased employee loyalty, greater morale, stronger recruitment, and an enhanced public image, all of which leads to an improved organizational performance.

Right to parental leave and leave due to care of sick children or dependents, vary from country to country depending on national policies. Although the policies vary significantly, employers can still do a lot to keep a positive approach, encourage employees to use existing benefits (especially among fathers) and support the reinsertion of employees when they return to the workplace after leave.

Indicator 1

We periodically assess employees' needs as regards childcare, care for elderly relatives, and care for ill family members. We support access to childcare either by providing childcare services or by providing information and resources regarding childcare services.

Indicator 2

We offer dependent care benefits including leave, information, and support to new parents (including new adoptive and foster parents), domestic partners, and those caring for a family member who is seriously ill or has special needs. We provide an appropriate private space for breastfeeding mothers.

Indicator 3

We have leave policies and reasonable flexible work arrangements in place that provide opportunities for parents (either mother and/or father) to be involved in childcare.

Key Element C – Career Advancement

Career advancement opportunities, such as skills training in non-traditional fields, and mentoring and coaching programmes, offer employees the opportunity to gain leadership skills, build networks, and strategically contribute to the organization. Lack of access to such programmes can hinder employees in their quest for advancement, whereas participation in these programmes often breaks down barriers in ways that allow, especially women to develop and enhance the skills needed to advance in the organization. Organizations benefit from career advancement initiatives in a number of ways, including early identification of leaders, building a pipeline of talented employees, and reinforcing the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Indicator 1

We collect, on regular basis, sex disaggregated data to analyse overall promotion rates among women and men and other demographics to identify disparities and determine appropriate career advancement programmes that may be necessary, including succession planning. We assess the demographics of existing career advancement programme participation, and address any disparities in participation based on gender.

Indicator 2

> We support employee resource groups (ERGs[41]) that meet the needs of the organization and support employees career advancement, and that if needed specifically looks at *women's career advancement**.

Indicator 3

> We establish, if needed, *specific mentoring and coaching programmes for women** that focuses on broadening networks, increasing visibility, and further developing leadership skills.

Targeted measures to support women's career advancement / Mentoring and coaching programmes specially targeting women: This is a type of "affirmative action" approach, aiming at specifically strengthening the skills of women to advance in their career. It should be used in organizations where there are few women in middle- and senior management positions, and where you have noted that this gender imbalance may be linked to limited opportunities for women to grow in their careers.

Indicator 4

> We offer flexible training and professional development opportunities that takes into account work-life-balance aspects.

Indicator 5

> We implement a "registration of interest" system for determining the job interests and career goals of employees by providing relevant information about the career paths available at the organization, and consider qualified employees who have registered when openings occur.

Indicator 6

> We assess and address issues that may prevent personnel, especially women*, from attending organization and/or training events, including timing, venue, and security concerns.

Time-issue: Due to the fact that women globally, take more responsibility than men, for unpaid care activities in the household (including taking care of children, cooking, cleaning etc.), women are in general more sensitive to the issue of working hours. According to figures from the OECD, women spend, across all regions of the world, on average between 3-6 hours on unpaid care activities, while men spend between 0.5-2 hours.[42]

Indicator 7

> We provide gender equal opportunities for and access to certified vocational and literacy skills, and information technology training.

Indicator 8

> We provide training to all personnel involved in performance evaluations to ensure that the process is free from bias.

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[41] Employee resource groups (also known as **ERGs**) are voluntary, employee-led groups that serve as a resource for members and organizations by fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace aligned with organizational mission, values, goals, business practices, and objectives.

[42] https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf

Principle 3: Health, Safety, and Freedom from Violence

Key Element A – Health Benefits

Some studies[43] have revealed that investing in employee health reduces worker absenteeism, improves worker morale, and increases employee job commitment and productivity. It is often illegal to discriminate against employees based on their health status. It is important for organizations to understand and address the different types of needs, also from a gender perspective, when developing the administration's health policies and programmes.

Indicator 1

> We provide comprehensive health coverage and insurance that are equitable for all employees and address the particular needs of women for instance related to pregnancy. We offer health plans that cover prenatal and perinatal care, fertility treatment, and contraception, including emergency contraception, without restrictions on the method of contraception.

Indicator 2

> We provide information on employee rights, benefits, and available resources to employees upon notification of pregnancy, adoption, medical situations, or illnesses requiring extended leave. We provide an appropriate private space for breastfeeding mothers.

Indicator 3

> We have mechanisms in place to monitor absenteeism or higher turnover and to understand their cause, as they may be indicators of a highly stressful or unhealthy work environment.

Key Element B – Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Gender Based Violence is a serious safety and health issue that takes many forms, including verbal and physical abuse, and in extreme cases, homicide. It is a security and liability concern, putting at risk not only the worker who is the victim of gender based violence, but other workers in the workplace who are in potential danger from the perpetrator.

Since domestic gender based violence can be less obvious than other safety hazards in the workplace, education programmes for workers and employers are critical. Raising awareness about gender based violence, and related threats are reported and that workers, not just the worker who is the victim of domestic violence, are protected from violence coming to the workplace.

Indicator 1

> We audit incidents of gender based violence to determine if the organization addresses this issue in a comprehensive way in its gender equality action plan including by having measures in place to prevent this and support staff who are victims of this.

Indicator 2

> We include and address gender based violence in our administration's gender equality action plan (or workplace safety policy) which guides employers to become aware of the

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[43] Investing in Prevention Improves Productivity and Reduces Employer Costs, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, US Government.

problem, including taking immediate action to ensure the security of both the affected employee and other employees.

Indicator 3

> We provide awareness training on gender based violence, with specific training for managers and security personnel on the warning signs of domestic violence and how to manage such a situation.

Indicator 4

> We periodically conduct an assessment of the physical security procedures in place, including working in pairs (male-female) at remote border posts and during night shifts. We also assess on regular basis the safety of employees, female in particular, when travelling to and from the workplace, and of work-related travel, and the safety of others visiting the workplace. We review history of past incidents of workplace violence to identify patterns. We note best practices and challenges in how incidents were addressed.

Indicator 5

> We have programmes and policies in place that address workplace wellbeing and support to victims of violence.

Indicator 6

> We have a publicly displayed zero tolerance policy for violent words/actions, firearms, and/or other weapons in the workplace (except as required in the performance of workplace duties). We provide a means for reporting related incidents, conduct immediate follow-up investigations, and ensure that no reprisals will be taken against employees who report or experience workplace violence.

Indicator 7

> We have an external workplace violence resource network for the organization that includes counsellors, security consultants, and local law enforcement.

Key Element C – Harassment including Sexual harassment

Harassment finds its way into many workplaces; it is an equal opportunity offender that affects employees at all levels of an organization. Employees affected by harassment have higher absentee rates, difficulty concentrating on their work, and are more likely to leave their job. The morale and performance of other employees watching the incidents or comforting the victim is impacted. Human resources costs can skyrocket if it becomes necessary to hire new employees and/or fire the perpetrators of harassment. Finally, there may be resulting lawsuits and negative publicity for the administration.

Sexual harassment refers to any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be perceived to cause offence or humiliation or to another.[44]

Indicator 1

> We have a platform and reporting and support mechanisms in place to encourage victims of discrimination or harassment including sexual harassment to come forward to report the incidents. We respond and act decisively to address such incidents.

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[44] http://www.un.org/womenwatch/uncoordination/antiharassment.html

Indicator 2

We make sure that our policies addressing all sorts of harassment including sexual harassment are clearly communicated to both our employees and the public.

Indicator 3

We conduct training on regular basis for all employees on detecting, preventing, and addressing harassment, including sexual harassment and abuse. This training is part of our administration's mandatory training curriculum.

Principle 4: Governance and Leadership

Key Element A –Governance & Management

Studies[45] have demonstrated a link between an organization's performance and the level of diversity of its governing body. Organizations need to expand this process and ensure that both women and men are represented at key positions throughout the administration. Having a gender balanced senior management also sends a strong message to employees, that the organization's commitment to diversity is not just a marketing ploy, but an actual strategic corporate value. In a global marketplace, the ability to draw on a wide range of viewpoints, backgrounds, skills, and experience is critical to an organization's success as it increases the likelihood of making the right strategic and operational decisions, encourages innovation, contributes to a more positive public image, and ensures a more balanced approach to risk management and risk oversight.

Indicator 1

We review the demographics of all executive positions, including the senior executive committee if applicable. We analyse the number of women and men promoted to management positions, including positions with budgetary decision-making.

Indicator 2

We collect and analyse sex-disaggregated data of staff enrolled in training programmes, how many employees that are offered jobs and promotions, and how many that may have refused management positions and the reasons why. We measure the impact of mentoring, sponsorship, and networking programmes on employee success.

Indicator 3

We conduct exit interviews to determine whether the reasons for the departure of women and men employees from the organization were related to gender equality issues.

Indicator 4

We measure employee feedback on gender equality and diversity practices and analyse the results by gender.

Indicator 5

We have policies and undertake proactive efforts to recruit and appoint both women and men to managerial positions. We provide specific internal guidelines to ensure that female and male candidates are part of every management position recruitment process.

Indicator 6

We expand the executive and director search process to identify potential female and male candidates who may be leaders in the organization or outside the organization.

Indicator 7

We institute a full 360-degree review process for managers to determine the extent to which they are perceived as committed to gender equality and inclusion, and include progress in implementing gender equality initiatives as a factor in manager performance reviews.

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[45] Studies including: McKinsey & Company – "Women as a valuable asset" – April 2012 and "Diversity Matters" – February 2015. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters

Indicator 8

> We examine potential adverse gender equality impacts of budget allocations on the compensation, training, recruitment and professional development to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for gender equality and diversity initiatives.

Key Element B – Leadership

An effective means for creating gender equality in an organization is to demonstrate this commitment through values, strategies, mission, and actions. A commitment from the top and visible monitoring of initiatives, in particular by the senior management, sets the tone for an administration's policies and practices.

Indicator 1

> We make gender equality a part of our overall corporate strategy, including our mission, values and strategic goals. We include a leadership statement on gender equality goals by the Head of the Administration in public materials such as our website, annual plans and reports. Our policies comply with the relevant international and regional agreements and conventions pertaining to gender equality[46].

Indicator 2

> We institutionalize oversight of gender equality performance by either integrating oversight into a committee of the board of management or electing a senior executive with responsibility for this issue. We establish organization-wide goals and targets for gender equality and procedures for monitoring progress through a monitoring framework with adequate indicators.

Indicator 3

> We ensure executive-level ownership of gender equality performance part of our Action Plan, by developing and implementing organization policies, procedures, training, and internal reporting mechanisms to ensure accountability and implementation throughout the organization.

Indicator 4

> We audit gender equality initiatives on a regular basis for adequate resources and a structure for full implementation, including identifying initiative-owners and committed champions from across business units or divisions to spearhead these initiatives.

Indicator 5

> We engage policy makers to secure their support for the implementation of improved gender equality and/or diversity policies or programmes, whenever needed.

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[46]http://www.unfpa.org/gender/rights2.htm

Principle 5: Customs Administration and Stakeholder Relations

Key Element A – Customs Policies and Procedures

While the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention and the other WCO tools and standards as well as the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade Facilitation are designed to simplify Customs policies and procedures, these procedures are neither fully implemented by Customs administrations as yet, nor understood by all traders. Small informal traders, many of them women in border communities, are affected by lack of knowledge of these standards. Relative to men, studies show that women's level of literacy is lower in developing countries. In addition, several studies show that women traders often face constraints, including lack of access to finance, lack of access to formal business networks, lack of access to market information, higher probability of being exposed to non-tariff barriers, lack of information about their rights, trade regulations and procedures and higher probability of being exposed to additional difficulties at the border including corruption and sexual harassment which also makes them more sensible for the issue of safety at the border.[47] Customs administrations must therefore make every effort to ensure they implement international best practices in terms of simplification and harmonization of procedures, as well as ensuring that they publish information regarding requirements and laws in a transparent way and proactively reaches out to stakeholders to communicate this.

Indicator 1

> We ensure that all clients, regardless of gender or background, are treated equally with respect to Customs policies and procedures. We automate Customs procedures in order to reduce the incidence of corruption, we make effective use of technology and we address the divergent impacts of technological reforms in Customs procedures on women and men.

Indicator 2

> We ensure that all traders, including informal women traders are provided with relevant information on Customs policies and procedures. We take proactive steps to maintain a fruitful dialogue with women traders, through various associations of women traders (where appropriate), to ensure that we provide up-to-date and straightforward information on Customs policies and procedures and also to ensure that Customs services and facilitates are adapted to the specific needs of all traders.

Indicator 3

> We ensure that Customs procedures are simplified according to national legislation, to enable informal cross border traders, many of whom are women, to transact business with ease.

Indicator 4

> We encourage small business to make use of exemptions and preferential tariff bands, whenever the national legislation offers such options. We provide fast-track processing for small traders, whenever possible.

Indicator 5

> We organize training and familiarization workshops on all Customs policies and procedures addressing women traders' particular needs to promote increased levels of compliance.

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[47] Study by the International Trade Centre (ITC) from 2015 based on data from 20 developing countries - http://www.intracen.org/uploadedFiles/intracenorg/Content/Publications/women_in_trade_web(1).pdf; https://www.ictsd.org/bridges-news/bridges-africa/news/small-scale-cross-border-trade-in-africa-why-it-matters-and-how-it

Key Element B – Border Operations

Border areas are busy places, with heavy foot, automobile and truck traffic. The concentration of officials at the border, including Customs, immigration, police and military can be highly intimidating, especially for women and to minority groups (physically disabled, illiterate, persons from different ethnicities speaking other languages etc.), especially those that may not understand the procedures. Furthermore, the high concentration of male transients in border areas creates particular risks for women, including harassment, theft and rape.

Indicator 1

We ensure that women and men are treated with equal respect and dignity at border crossings. We establish safe and confidential means and reporting mechanisms for women and men to report wrongdoing at the border.

Indicator 2

We understand the particular risks that women face in border areas, including those from officials and those from other traders/players in the border area. We ensure that the Administration contributes to making the border a safe place for women and men. We ensure that when physical (body) inspections are carried out by Customs on women crossing the border, these checks are performed by a female Customs official, and vice versa for men or an appointed substitute female official.

Indicator 3

We ensure that service standards and key information on Customs procedures is clearly visible at the border and elsewhere as appropriate. We ensure that information provided at the border does not contain any gender or diversity bias.

Indicator 4

We establish constructive and structures dialogue with the private sector for purposes of providing information on matters of common concern. Customs broker agencies are aware of our gender equality and diversity policies, programmes and activities.

Indicator 5

We provide tools to enable employees to undertake their functions including inspections in an efficient and gender responsive manner, for example by creating a safe environment and making Customs uniforms suitable and comfortable for both female and male inspectors.

Indicator 6

We provide appropriate infrastructure and access to public services at all borders to facilitate the deployment of both female and male Customs officials in order to achieve gender equality, including adequate facilities (accommodation, male/female changing rooms and toilets) etc. We also make sure that there are separate facilities (toilets/changing rooms) for the public and for officials to avoid interaction between traders and officers, in order to minimize risks for integrity issues.

Indicator 7

We conduct evaluation surveys (assessed in different languages) to determine whether traders (both women and men and in particular SMEs) have really understood the simplified procedures, complaint reporting system, facilitation measures (for example preferential tariff) and their obligations towards Customs and other border agencies.

Key Element C – Stakeholder Relations

In order to fully understand the needs of stakeholders, Customs administrations should consult a broad range of external actors, including Customs brokers, leading importers/exporters, industry/trade associations, logistics firms, and cross-border traders. In this undertaking, it is essential that women's interests be considered during consultation with trade associations/chambers of commerce, and as part of a broader stakeholder relations strategy. In developing countries in particular, challenges faced by small cross-border traders (including lack of education, lack of information about rights and procedures, limited finance, sexual harassment etc.) may represent an incentive for small-scale cross-border traders to seek informal routes to forego potential revenues. The informal sector continues to play an important part of the economy, especially in developing countries. In Africa for instance it is estimated that the informal market represents 43 % of the gross domestic product (GDP) which is equivalent to the formal sector. Moreover, it is estimated that women represent up to 70-80 % of these small scale traders.[48]

Indicator 1

> We consult with a broad range of stakeholder groups, including those representing the unique interests of women traders, such as associations of women traders to be able to better understand and take into account the divergent needs of women and men stakeholders.

Indicator 2

> We ensure that relations between Customs and women's associations are frequently held and constructive. We support the work of women traders associations through information, education and communication campaigns. We actively promote compliance with Customs procedures among all traders.

Indicator 3

> We establish an unbiased, non-retaliatory complaints policy, procedures and mechanism (phone number of other) that provide suppliers, customers, and third parties can use to report incidents anonymity with 24/7 access, to prevent integrity issues, harassment, discriminations and violations to the greatest extent possible. We provide a breakdown of types of complaints filed using sex-disaggregated data, and data divided on other diversity criteria if needed.

Indicator 4

> We address gender equality-related issues that emanate from interaction between the stakeholders and Customs to avoid harassment, including sexual harassment and intimidation of Customs officers, and/or by Customs officials.

Indicator 5

> We actively engage and cooperate with other government institutions working at the border to foster a harmonization of gender equality and diversity related policies within border operations.

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[48] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/trade/informal-cross-border-trade-and-trade-facilitation-reform-in-sub-saharan-africa_225770164564