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United Nations Entity for Gender Equality
and the Empowerment of Women

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR ENTERPRISES

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES



Hanoi, September 2016

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports Member States in setting global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design the laws, policies, programmes and services required to implement these standards. UN Women stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on the following five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN systems works in advancing gender equality.

Women's empowerment principles: A practical guide for enterprises

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A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR ENTERPRISES

WOMEN'S

EMPOWERMENT

PRINCIPLES

Hanoi, September 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
PART 1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 General context	4
1.2 The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs)	4
1.3 The benefits of implementing the Women’s Empowerment Principles	6
1.4 About this Guide	8
1.5 Objective.....	8
1.6 Target audience	8
PART II. GUIDE TO PRACTISE THE WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES IN COMPANY POLICIES	9
2.1. Statement of Support to Women’s Empowerment Principles	9
2.2 Review of the current status on gender equality at work	11
2.3 Development of an action plan to integrate the Women’s Empowerment Principles into company policies	14
2.4 Implementation of the gender equality and women’s empowerment action plan	21
2.5 Monitoring and reporting the results of the action plan	23
2.6 Communicating progress and good practices.....	23
Reference	24

FOREWORD

Against the backdrop of globalization, Viet Nam has entered into multiple new-generation free trade agreements (FTAs) and has become a member of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Economic Community. Like most countries in the world, Viet Nam is committed to promote the 2030 Development Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for realization of gender equality, human rights and sustainable development at both the business and national level.

In Viet Nam, the Law on Gender Equality was promulgated in 2006, confirming the commitment of the Government to promote gender equality. At the business level, since 2012, the Viet Nam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC) under the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) has worked with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) to introduce the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), an initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact to encourage businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies that promote gender equality. In 2014, a manual on the implementation of WEPs was developed by the Gender Economic Development Working Group (GED), chaired by the VWEC/VCCI, with technical and financial support from UN Women and Paz y Desarrollo, a Spanish non-governmental organization (NGO), in which a set of indicators/criteria were developed for each of the WEPs.

This guide, Women's Empowerment Principles: A Practical Guide for Enterprises, was developed to serve as a toolkit for enterprises to integrate and implement the WEPs in their policies and business activities through which both men and women are equally entitled to decent jobs, career development, training and promotion.

We would like to acknowledge the major contributions of Ms Pham Nguyen Cuong and Mr Nguyen Tri Thanh, national consultants for compilation of this guide. Special thanks also go to Ms Nguyen Kim Lan, Ms Vu Phuong Ly and Ms Mariangela Linoci of UN Women; and Ms Nguyen Thi Le Phuong from VWEC. We appreciate the support of many local companies in providing their comments and feedback.

We hope that this guide will become a useful resource for business management and staff to effectively implement the WEPs, contributing to the efficient promotion of gender equality in Viet Nam. Since this guide is published for the first time in the country, limits and shortcomings are inevitable, but we expect more comments and feedback to improve it so that it may become an essential manual for business people in the globalization process.

UN Women Country Representative
in Viet Nam

Ms. Shoko Ishikawa

Chairwoman of Vietnam Women
Entrepreneurs Council

Mrs. Nguyen Thi Tuyet Minh

PART 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General context

In an increasingly globalized and integrated world, effectively utilizing all economic and social resources is crucial for success. Despite much progress made, women continue to face discrimination at work and in life. Research by McKinsey & Company and the World Economic Forum (McKinsey & Company, 2012; McKinsey & Company and World Economic Forum, 2008) revealed that companies with gender balance perform better, bringing benefits for both employees and employers.

According to Goldman Sachs' estimates (2007), closing the gap between male and female employment would improve the global economy, increasing the European gross domestic product (GDP) by 13 per cent, the Japanese GDP by 16 per cent and the US GDP, by as much as 9 per cent.

Indeed, empowering women to participate fully in economic life across all sectors and throughout all levels of economic activity is essential to build strong economies; establish more stable and just societies; achieve internationally agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights; improve the quality of life for women, men, families and communities; and drive business operations and goals (UN Global Compact and UN Women, n.d.).

In Viet Nam, women represent 50.5 per cent of the population, of whom 48.6 per cent are in the nation's workforce (General Statistics Office of Viet Nam, 2013). However, women mostly work in low-skilled jobs that lead to a much lower income than that of men (*ibid.*, item 5 on employment structure). Taking part in recent free trade agreements (FTAs), Viet Nam has great opportunities, but also faces many challenges, including the major priorities of human resources and corporate social responsibility, in order to comply with the requirements and principles of the signed FTAs. The adoption and implementation of the WEPs at the enterprise level would contribute to promoting gender equality at work and improve the quality of human resources, corporate performance and competitiveness.

1.2 The Women's Empowerment Principles

The WEPs, developed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Global Compact, include seven principles:

- 1 Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
- Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination 2
- 3 Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers
- Promote education, training and professional development for women 4
- 5 Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
- Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy 6
- 7 Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

Subtitled “Equality Means Business”, these Principles emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The principles were forged through an international multi-stakeholder consultative process (involving representatives from Governments, enterprises and civil society). The WEPs provide a “gender lens” and good practices of implementing gender equality and women’s empowerment in companies. The commitment to implementing these WEPs would help companies empower women, enabling them to take part in every aspects of business in order to achieve better performance and competitiveness. Indeed, most principles have been embedded in the Labour Code, Law on Gender Equality and other related laws in Viet Nam.

Launched globally in October 2010, there are now 1,226 companies in 40 different industries from 67 countries in the world that have declared their support to the WEPs. ¹ In Viet Nam, where it was first launched in December 2012, there are now 33 companies committing their support to the WEPs and 442 enterprises trained on these principles.

¹ For complete list, see <http://weprinciples.org/Site/Companies/#search>

1.3 The benefits of implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles

As economies continue developing, the quality of the workforce becomes increasingly essential. With half of the population female, businesses that are unable to capitalize on this workforce would waste a great opportunity. Boosting women's economic participation is not just a social responsibility, but also a way to improve business performance.

A survey of 2,300 top business executives conducted by McKinsey in 2009 shows that one-third of the companies with better implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment have increased profitability (McKinsey & Company, 2010)². According to *Women's Empowerment: Best Practices in Enterprises*, jointly published by VCCI, Paz y Desarrollo (PYD) and UN Women, the implementation of the WEPs will help towards "achieving economic benefits, boosting competitiveness and assuring sustainable development of enterprises" (VCCI, PyD and UN Women, 2014).

There are several benefits to enterprises to effectively implement the WEPs, as shown below.

Recruiting and retaining talent and high-skilled labour

Once the WEPs are effectively implemented, enterprises become more attractive to employees. Thus, workers become more loyal and help employers save on the cost of new recruitment and training for new staff.

Enterprises that create fair opportunities for both men and women to work and develop build a good reputation in their human resources policy. As a result, they will attract more potential candidates and thus will be able to recruit the best people. A microfinance group in Eastern Europe conducted research and found that a policy promoting gender equality is one of the most important factors in recruiting and retaining the best performing people (United Nations Global Compact & UN Women, 2011). Schneider Electric, which started business in Viet Nam in 1994 with three offices and over 1,000 employees, has signed a commitment to implement the WEPs. The company believes that a diverse workforce not only contributes to corporate growth, but also benefits employees and society in general.

Improving labour productivity and creating an environment for creativity and innovation

A working environment where the differences between the needs of male and female employees are respected and valued will foster their motivation and engagement to increase labour productivity and high business performance. In addition, it encourages innovation and creativity in product development and operation processes, which also leads to market expansion.

Dong Xuan Knitting Company is one of the 33 companies in Viet Nam that, since 2012, has been committed to implementing the WEPs. Mrs. Truong Thi Thanh Ha, Chairwoman and CEO, commented: "Promoting gender equality is a key to create a great working environment where humanity, people capability, passion and loyalty are encouraged and maximized."

² The business of empowering women (2010): www.genderprinciples.org/resource_files/EmpWomen_USA4_Letter13-09-26-02-10-38.pdf

Diversifying products and service offer to meet more customers' needs

Research has shown that women play a major role in selecting and making decisions on most goods and services purchased. Therefore, enterprises that recruit, train and appoint women in decision-making positions such as on the Board of Directors with respect to customer care, design and marketing can create and provide products and services to better satisfy potential customers. This has a great influence on business performance.

According to a 2011 Deloitte report that encourages companies to invest more in women and to promote them in managerial positions: "already, women control roughly US\$20 trillion of total consumer spending globally, and that number is predicted to rise to US\$28 trillion by 2014" (Deloitte,2011).

Improving brand image which creates trust from partners and customers

Prestige and image are important factors that enable enterprises to become part of national, regional and global value chains. Implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment are gradually becoming requirements of international purchasing contracts and an integral part of business contracts in the value chain. Moreover, the implementation of the WEPs contributes both to increase business performance, and also to improve prestige and brand image. A company that effectively implements WEPs will increase its chances for business growth and strengthen its reliability with partners and customers.

Viet Thang Garment Joint Stock Company, one of the companies committed to and implementing the WEPs, is a supplier of garment products to the US and European market. As required by its partners, it has implemented the Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP) standard with 12 criteria, which include women's empowerment such as prohibition of harassment or abuse and prohibition of discrimination. After the implementation of the WRAP and the WEPs, the company observed that the quantity, quality and delivery of its orders have always met customers' requirements, which has helped improve its reputation and brand image.

Reducing the risk of conflict at work and juridical disputes

Violations of the Gender Equality Law and gender discrimination may cause conflicts at work; therefore, the implementation of the WEPs will certainly decrease the risk of labour conflict as well as potential juridical disputes between employees and employers. A typical example is the case of TaeKwang Vina company, a 100 per cent Korean-owned leather company in Bien Hoa, Dong Nai Province. Its 8,000 workers went on strike on 13th January 2011, demanding maternity benefits, paid leave issues and bonuses (DOLISA, 2011).

The Viet Nam Labour Code (Article 8) strictly prohibits gender discrimination for which a number of enforcement measures have been promulgated. To avoid penalties, enterprises must comply with these regulations.

³ WRAP is an independent, objective, non-profit team of global social compliance experts dedicated to promoting safe, lawful, humane and ethical manufacturing around the world through certification and education.

1.4 About this Guide

In 2014, a manual for applying WEPs for enterprises was compiled by the Gender Economic Development (GED) working group chaired by the Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (VCCI) Viet Nam Women Entrepreneur Council (VWEC), with financial assistance from Paz y Desarrollo, a Spanish non-governmental organization (NGO), and technical assistance from UN Women. This material provided a set of indicators for the implementation of the WEPs and report templates on progress towards achieving gender equality, but did not include a guide on how to apply these principles to company's policies.

Therefore, this guide, Women's Empowerment Principles: A Practical Guide for Enterprises, was prepared by VWEC of VCCI with support from UN Women. Three training workshops for 74 enterprises in three regions, specifically in Ha Noi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City, were organized to validate the draft guide. Two companies that have committed to implementing the WEPs were invited to comment and provide practical inputs and comments to the Guide. The final version is based on valuable feedback from these companies and other participants of the training workshops, VWEC staff and UN Women experts.

1.5 Objective

This guide provides a set of guidelines for enterprises to take specific actions to apply WEPs to their policies in line with national laws and regulations on gender equality.

The WEPs can be embedded in company policies such as the human resources development plan, workplace regulations, the collective bargain agreement, the labour handbook, recruitment notices and business-related policies including those related to suppliers, sub-contractors and other stakeholders.

1.6 Target audience

The guide is targeted to senior management of companies, CEOs, as well as managers at different levels, human resource departments and trade unions whose role is to build, implement and monitor the policies within the enterprise.

Business associations and trade unions can also use this Guide to support and encourage their members to implement the WEPs as well as to raise awareness on the benefits of WEPs.

PART II. GUIDE TO PRACTISE THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES IN COMPANY POLICIES

The implementation of WEPs in company policies should ensure that:

- The company's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) **signs the CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs**;
- **The current status on gender equality and women's empowerment** at work is reviewed;
- **An action plan is drafted** to practise WEPs in company policies;
- **The action plan is implemented**;
- **Results of the action plan** are monitored and reported;
- **Good practices** are communicated and replicated.

2.1 Statement of Support to Women's Empowerment Principles

The first principle of WEPs is the demonstration of high-level corporate leadership for gender equality. To effectively implement WEPs in company policy, the commitment of top leaders is crucial for successful practice. By signing the Statement of Support for the WEPs, CEOs not only demonstrate leadership on gender equality and women's empowerment, but also serve as role models in pursuing and implementing the WEPs. Commitment to implementing the WEPs in company policies must be approved by the Board of Directors and released by the CEO. After signing the CEO Statement of Support, it should be publicly displayed at the workplace and communicated to all employees in the company.

The Statement of Support should:

- Use clear language and be understood by everybody;
- Be consulted with labour representatives, including both men and women;
- Show commitment to empowering women in all related policies within the company;
- Assign a senior management member to be in charge of realizing the commitment as well as monitoring the implementation;
- Be made public through all the company's communication channels such as notice boards, employee bulletins and manuals.

In an effort to bolster high-level corporate leadership for gender equality, the UN Women and UN Global Compact partnership launched online a CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs. Below is a sample Statement of Support on the WEPs, which enterprises can fill out online according to their signing requirement⁴.

CEO Statement of Support for the Women's Empowerment Principles

We, business leaders from _____ [*company name*] _____, express our support in 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 with 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 UN Women and the United Nations Global Compact. The Principles present seven steps that the 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.

Date: _____

Signed and sealed by the CEO

⁴ See <http://womens-empowerment-principles@unglobalcompact.org>; and <http://weprinciples.org/Site/HowToSign>



To be officially recognized as a WEPs signatory company and included in the global database of WEPs companies, this Statement of Support to WEPs must be signed by the CEO. The CEO should promote its implementation at each management level. Also, the company must define the personal responsibility of all management officers in implementing WEPs by setting clear performance indicators in their job description.

2.2 Review of the current status on gender equality at work

To have an overview of current status on gender equality at the workplace, all policies and internal regulations within a company must first be reviewed. This is the first step in the process of practically implementing the WEPs in companies, which makes it possible to identify important differences between and trends of male and female labour groups as well as reveal inequalities that may emerge in practising the WEPs.

Companies can use the following checklist (table 1) to identify their gender gaps by reviewing each indicator/criteria of the principles and completing the last two columns on results. Representatives from their management board, human resources department, trade union, and focal points on gender/women's activities should complete the checklist together.

Suggestions on how to use the checklist:

- Answer the questions in the checklist through discussions in a small group (3-4 persons).
- Should the answer be "Yes", provide evidence/data/documents.
- Should the answer "Yes", be provided with evidence/data/documents, the activities to achieve the indicator and/or meet the criteria of the WEP have been implemented in the company.
- Should the answer be "No", activities to achieve the indicator and/or meet the criteria of the WEP have not been implemented".

Table 1. Checklist: Review on the current implementation status of the Women's Empowerment Principles

Company:.....

Date:.....

Review period: from...../...../..... to/...../.....

Indicators/ criteria	Women's Empowerment Principles	Is there documentation? If so, what documentation?	Are there data? If so, what are they?
Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality			
1	The enterprise shows commitment on gender equality promotion and women's empowerment ⁵ .		
2	There is a person or unit in charge of women's empowerment and gender equality issues within the enterprise.		
3	There is a gender criterion for assessing the performance of the company's managerial staff.		
4	There is budget earmarked for gender initiatives in the company.		
Principle 2: Treat all woman and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination			
1	The Human Resources policies on recruitment and promotion reflect non-gender discrimination.		
2	There are policies on flexible working hours for female workers enforced during pregnancy or nursing children under 12 months.		
3	There are policies and mechanisms on flexible working hours for men during their wives' delivery and nursing of children under 12 months.		
4	Share of newly recruited female employees out of the total newly recruited staff ⁶ .		
5	Share of female members in the company's recruitment council ⁷ .		
6	Share of female employees having access to training for technically upgraded skills out of total workers with technically upgraded skills ⁸ .		
7	Share of female managers/leaders out of total managers/leaders in the company ⁹ including middle level and high level.		
8	Share of female employees promoted to leaders/managers out of total promoted posts ¹⁰ .		

⁵ Is there a CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs or other similar Statement, Declare on gender equality promotion and women's empowerment from high-level leader?

⁶ Equal share of newly recruited female employees out of the total newly recruited staff is suggested for gender equality at the workplace.

⁷ At least 30% share of female members in the company's recruitment council is suggested to ensure the sufficient representative and voice for women

⁸ Equal share of female employees having access to training for technically upgraded skills out of total workers with technically upgraded skills is suggested for gender equality at the workplace

⁹ At least 30% share of female managers/leaders out of total managers/leaders in the company is suggested to ensure the sufficient representative and voice for women

¹⁰ Equal share of female employees promoted to leaders/managers out of total promoted posts

9	Average wage of female employees compared to male employees ¹¹ .		
10	Share of female employees out of total workforce with flexible working hours.		
11	Share of female employees leaving the company out of total turnover ¹² .		
12	Share of female employees who are paid social insurance by the company.		
13	Share of female workers leaving the company during their pregnancy, maternity leave or while nursing a child under 12 months ¹³ .		
Principle 3: Ensure the occupational health, safety and well-being of all female and male workers			
1	Current occupational health and safety policies reflect non-discrimination of gender.		
2	Share of female employees annually trained on occupational and health safety.		
3	There are separate toilets and facilities for women and men to change their personal protective clothes.		
4	Rate of female employees undertaking annual health checks.		
5	There is a prevention mechanism against gender-based violence at the workplace, including sexual harassment that is stipulated in the company's internal rules, regulations or in a collective bargain agreement.		
6	There is a mechanism for handling gender-based violence at the workplace, including sexual harassment.		
Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women			
1	There is a policy on training support and professional development that does not discriminate on the basis of gender.		
2	Share of female employees who are provided with training support out of the total number of trained staff.		
3	There is a number of female employees nursing a child under 36 months provided with training (company [partially] subsidizes the training fee, childcare support and sets flexible training times and venues, etc.).		
Principle 5: Implement company development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women			
1	Marketing and advertising materials have no gender-discriminatory contents or pictures nor reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes.		
2	There is a mechanism for preferentially selecting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as suppliers, especially women-led and/or -owned companies or enterprises that employ more female employees.		

¹¹ Equal wage for work of equal value is suggested for gender equality at the workplace

¹² Disproportionately larger share of women in employee turnover will indicate that the working conditions and arrangements are not favourable for women.

¹³ If a large number of women are leaving the company during pregnancy and maternity

Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy			
1	The company supports charity and community development activities that promote women's leadership, empowerment and new opportunities in the community.		
2	There are information channels for recruitment and training programmes to target both men and women in the community.		
Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality			
1	In the company's annual reports, there is a section on the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.		
2	Sex-disaggregated data are used in measuring and reporting on progress achieved in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment at the workplace, including the monitoring of the implementation of the WEPs and gender equality.		
3	Communication activities are organized concerning the achievement of women's empowerment at the workplace.		

Upon completion of the checklist, the results will show which indicators/criteria of some principles are already well-implemented in the company, and which still have gaps that need to be addressed.

Companies can use this checklist annually to examine the updated results and progress in gender equality and women's empowerment.

2.3 Development of an action plan to integrate the women's empowerment principles into company policies

The WEPs implementation action plan should include activities to carry out in order to integrate principles that have not yet been implemented (as found in the reviewing step of their indicators/criteria). Indicators/criteria of the principles that have been already well done should be kept and maintained.

The action plan should consist of the following elements:

- Indicators/criteria set for each principle
- Activities that must be carried out to meet indicators/criteria
- Accountability to implement activities to meet the principles' indicators/criteria
- A timeline set for each activity
- Budget and financial sources to implement each activity
- Responsibility assigned for monitoring, evaluation and reporting work.

The following are suggestions for companies' action plans to implement the WEPs, which focus on activities that could to be carried out for each indicator/criterion of each principle. These are only suggestions, and companies are encouraged to adapt them to best suit their situation. Other elements of a plan such as responsibilities, timelines, budgets, monitoring and reporting would be identified and determined according to each specific company context.



Photo: Hoang Hiep

Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

Indicator 1: The Commitment Statement is signed and issued by CEO promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft and finalize the commitment statement. - Discuss and obtain approval from the Board of Directors and senior management. - Sign and issue the Statement - Disseminate and train all employees in the company and notify related stakeholders. |
|------------|---|

Indicator 2: Assignment of a person or unit in charge in gender equality and women's empowerment issues within the company

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plan, prepare and assign a person or unit in charge of women's empowerment and gender equality issues. - Build a job description for this position. |
|------------|--|

Indicator 3: Performance indicators on women's empowerment and gender equality for the management team

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create job descriptions for managerial posts including tasks in women's empowerment and gender equality. - Carry out an annual performance appraisal of managerial posts including women's empowerment and gender equality implementation tasks as specified in the job description and draft detailed instructions on sex-disaggregated data collection for managerial positions. |
|------------|---|

Indicator 4: Budget allocated for gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommend initiatives: based on gaps identified through applying the check-list, identify actions that will address areas that require improvement. - Recommend an annual budget allocation for these actions that will improve WEPs implementation and gender equality and women's empowerment in the company. |
|------------|--|

Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination

Indicator 1: Human Resources policies reflecting non-gender discrimination

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review all recruitment policies and procedures (job descriptions, application forms, recruitment advertisements, etc.) to ensure that there is no gender discrimination. - Provide training on non-gender discrimination for staff that involve in the recruitment process. - Set up recruitment councils that include at least 30% women. - Design job descriptions and all Human Resources-related documents with fair requirements in term of competencies for all positions, with no gender bias.
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Indicator 2: Policies on flexible working schedules for female employees during pregnancy and nursing children under 12 months

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft and implement human resources policies to enable favourable working conditions for female employees who are pregnant or nursing children under 12 months old. - Disseminate this policy at all levels within the company.
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Indicator 3: Policies on flexible working schedules and leave for male employees to take care of their families during their wives' delivery and nursing of their children under 12 months

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft and implement Human Resources policies for favourable working conditions for men to share family tasks and take care of their wives and children. - Disseminate this policy at all levels within the company.
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Indicator 4: Increased share of recruited female employees in total new recruitment from....to.....%

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include this policy in all Human Resources policies. - Ensure that all recruitment policies are implemented in a non-discriminatory manner. - Encourage female candidates to apply for non-traditional jobs in recruitment notices. - Disseminate recruitment notices through channels that are easily accessible to both men and women. - Work closely in sites frequented by women such as women's clubs, meeting places, local markets and places of local culture. - Provide training on non-gender discrimination for staff involved in the recruitment process.
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Indicator 5: Increased rate of female members in the recruitment council to ...% (depending on the specific characteristics of the company)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appoint at least 30% of women in recruitment council. - Provide training on gender equality for members of the recruitment council.
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Indicator 6: Increased rate of female employees that are professionally promoted and technically upgraded to ...% (depending on the specific characteristics of the company and creating fair opportunity for women)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publicly announce all opportunities in training and career development for all employees. - Design policies and measures to support female employees (training and career development advice, etc.). - Provide training and outreach on gender equality to staff engaged in these policies.
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Indicator 7: Increased share of female leaders out of the total number of middle and senior managerial posts from.....% to.....% (depending on the specific characteristics of the company)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include this policy in all Human Resources policies. - Publicly announce opportunities in training, promoting and encouraging female participation. - Organize appropriate training courses (timing, location) to create conditions conducive to female workers' participation. - Provide training and coaching on career development for women with potential in leadership and managerial posts.
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Indicator 8: Reduced gender wage gap between females and males from ...%to ...% (depending on the specific characteristics of the company and creating a fair pay system for men and women)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect wage data on both men and women to identify the gender wage gap, if any, and reasons for it. - Adjust job descriptions to help women assume non-traditional positions with higher pay. - Design policies and measures to support female employees (training and career development advice, etc.); - Provide training and outreach on gender equality to staff engaged in these policies.
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Indicator 9: Increased rate of female employees entitled to flexible working hours from...% to ...% (depending on the specific characteristics of the company)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and adjust job descriptions and workplace regulations to allow women and men to have flexible working hours. - Design suitable job descriptions and support mechanisms for female employees. - Provide training and outreach on gender equality to staff engaged in these policies.
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Indicator 10: Increased share of female employees who are covered social insurance from% to..... % (depending on the specific characteristics of the company)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the current social insurance system to determine if there is any barrier to female employees and, if so, the reasons. Is it necessary to have support policies for women? - Provide training and outreach
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Indicator 11: Decreased rate of female employees leaving the company from...% to ...% (depending on the specific characteristics of the company)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the general causes for female employees leaving the company and conduct a more in-depth analysis of the female retention rate. Are there other reasons for leaving, such as gender discrimination and harassment? - Consider supporting policies for women to decrease the turnover rate. - Provide training and outreach on gender equality to all staff engaged in these policies.
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Indicator 12: Decreased rate of female employees leaving the company during pregnancy, maternity leave or nursing of children under 12 months from...% to ...%
(depending on the specific characteristics of the company)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the reasons for which female employees leave in this period (e.g. health issues, working conditions/environment). - Design supporting policies for female employees during pregnancy, maternity leave or nursing children under 12 months (such as flexible working hours, [partially] subsidizing kindergarten fees, setting up places for breastfeeding stations, etc.). - Provide training and outreach on gender equality to all staff engaged in these policies.
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Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all female and male workers

Indicator 1: Occupational health and safety policies reflect non-discrimination of gender

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review all occupational health and safety policies, and remove all gender discrimination items. - Provide training on occupational health and safety to all people, emphasizing measures to involve women, such as determining suitable times and setting a female participation rate for each training programme. - Provide training and outreach on gender equality (or embedded gender issues) for all staff involved in occupational health and safety jobs. - Include both men and women in the Occupational Health and Safety Committee. - Identify needs in occupational health and safety such as personal protection equipment adapted to the biological differences between men and women (e.g. - Provide separate restrooms and changing rooms for women.
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Indicator 2: An increased rate of female employees annually trained on occupational health and safety from% to ...% *(depending on the specific characteristics of the company)*

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set a female participation rate for each training programme on occupational health and safety. - Organize training programmes adapted to women's needs in terms of times and venues. - Ensure that the training contents include gender issues. - Ensure that all trainers/facilitators are knowledgeable about gender equality.
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Indicator 3: Separate restrooms and changing rooms for women and men

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide separate restrooms and changing rooms for women in compliance with the law. - Provide adequate equipment as well as separate change areas for men and women and men. - Assign staff to check and ensure hygiene and clean water for employees.
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Indicator 4: 100% women employees have had annual health checks

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a health check plan and disseminate it to all employees, both men and women. For women, there should be a special focus on gynaecological examinations and incurable diseases. - Require all employees and management to arrange appropriate times for health checks (preferably during working hours).
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Indicator 5: Regulations on prevention of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in place and widely known by employees

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include provisions on prohibiting gender-based violence including sexual harassment in labour regulations, a collective bargain agreement and other related policies. - Provide training and outreach for staff at all levels including knowledge on sexual harassment and company policy on where and how claims can be submitted and will be handled, consequences including sanctions and penalties against sexual harassment, through communications such as leaflets and notice boards.
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Indicator 6: Mechanism and procedures to handle gender-based violence including sexual harassment at the workplace

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up mechanisms and procedures to receive feedback/complaints from employees. - Providing training and outreach on gender equality to all staff engaged in these policies.
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Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women**Indicator 1: Policies on training and professional development without discrimination on the basis of gender**

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review all policies on training support and professional development to remove all gender discrimination items. - Provide training on gender equality for all training staff. - Design and organize suitable training programmes for both men and women. Encourage female participation. - Collect all sex-disaggregated data on training.
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Indicator 2: An increased rate of female employees trained and professionally developed to ...% (depending on the review results)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop policies and supporting measures on training and career development for women, including policies to support female workers with children under 36 months to attend training programmes. - Organize consultative activities to encourage women to take part in training and a career development programme. - Provide award and motivational schemes for female employees who have successfully participated in training and career development programmes.
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Indicator 3: Supporting women with children under 36 months to attend training programmes

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design a supporting policy for women with children under 36 months to attend training programmes, such as by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [partially] funding training and kindergarten fees; • arranging suitable times and venues for women to attend; - Disseminate this policy to all people within the company.
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Principle 5: Implement company development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

Indicator 1: Advertisement and marketing materials that reinforce gender discrimination and negative gender roles and stereotypes are removed.

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove all items from all marketing and advertising materials as well as sales policies that are discriminatory and reinforce gender stereotypes. - Provide training to sales and marketing staff on non-gender discrimination and gender equality. - Design and produce marketing and advertising items (e.g. goods, gifts) that promote non-traditional gender roles..
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Indicator 2: Increasing the rate of women-led and/or -owned business partners to ...% (depending on the review results)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set standards and measures to select suitable women-led business partners. - Provide training on gender equality for staff engaged in selecting and managing supply chain and business partners. - Collect sex-disaggregated data on business partners.
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Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

Indicator 1: The company is involved in charity and community development activities that target women with a focus on access to essential services

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review all charity and community development programmes and activities to remove any gender discrimination; - Provide training on non-gender discrimination and gender equality for staff concerned. - Design charity and community development activities that support female beneficiaries. - Collect sex-disaggregated data on charity and community development activities.
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Indicator 2: Information channels for recruitment and training programmes for the local community targeting both men and women

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and design information channels for recruitment and training programmes for the local community that are non-gender discriminatory, attracting both men and women equally. - Design communication products that are suitable for women in terms of language and venues such as women's clubs and markets. - Provide training on non-gender discrimination and gender equality for staff concerned.
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Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress in gender equality and women's empowerment

Indicator 1: Gender equality data included in company annual reports (both human resources and business performance indicators)

Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review all previous annual reports to verify whether or not gender equality data were incorporated or not. - Provide training and outreach on non-gender discrimination and gender equality for all people within the company.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the requirements of and contents on gender equality and women's empowerment to be included in regular and irregular reports from various departments within the company. - Perform statistics on sex-disaggregated data in all Human Resources and management activities and annual reports. - Develop an evaluation report on the implementation of the WEPs.
Indicator2: Statistics tools with sex-disaggregated data to promote gender equality in the company	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjust and add tables and forms to include all data and indicators regarding gender in the company's data analysis system, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sex-disaggregated data on the workforce; • sex-disaggregated data on management activities. - Provide training on non-gender discrimination and gender equality for staff concerned.
Indicator 3: Results on efforts to promote gender equality and women's empowerment are disseminated	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design communication programmes and products (e.g. leaflets, bulletins) to disseminate achievements on gender equality and women's empowerment. - Conduct communication activities among company staff as well as stakeholders. - Display user-friendly communication products (e.g. leaflets, bulletins) concerning the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

2.4 Implementation of the gender equality and women's empowerment action plan

For effective implementation of the WEPs at the company level, the management board and all employees must be aware of the importance of the linkages between business and gender equality and women's empowerment policies. The objectives of these policies must be consistent with each other.

The following actions are encouraged:

Disseminating the implementation action plan on gender equality and women's empowerment, including:

The commitment of senior management should be communicated to staff at all levels and stated in employee's manuals and instructions, human resources policies and other materials. All of these materials should emphasize that gender equality and women's empowerment are an integral part of corporate values and culture, focusing on successful business cases using audio bulletins and on staff performance in company events and meetings.

Management should ensure and create the environment and the conditions conducive for employees to widely exchange their ideas/concerns regarding women's empowerment and gender equality issues. The two-way feedback mechanism could use official channels (e.g. mail boxes, telephones) or unofficial channels (informal talking/chatting).

Assigning a person in charge of coordinating women's empowerment and gender equality issues



Photo: Hoang Hiep

Companies should assign a person in charge of coordinating women's empowerment and gender equality issues and the action plan. Ideally, the coordinator should be from the Human Resources Department. The coordination mechanism should be identified so that he/she can report directly to senior management, which is responsible for these areas. The main tasks of the coordinator are to coordinate and monitor all steps to implement the activities to achieve the indicator and/or meet the criteria of the WEPs in the policies and the action plan. He or she will also be the first person to meet and talk to employees to guarantee that they feel safe and reassured that they will not be harassed or discriminated against at the workplace on the basis of their gender.

Setting up a mechanism to handle gender equality complaints

Currently, gender stereotypes are still popular, which explains the persisting gender discrimination in a number of companies. It is therefore necessary to set up a mechanism for employees to handle complaints on gender inequality and discrimination. A process of receiving feedback (e.g. via mail boxes, hotlines, emails) and handling such feedback would help to quickly handle conflicts, contributing towards building and fostering good relations within the company.

Regulations on gender inequality complaints should be in the form of written documentation, either separate or as part of a policy on gender equality or of corporate company policy. The document must be approved by senior management to guarantee that all complaints are handled fairly, effectively, comprehensively and confidentially. It is necessary to assign people in charge to implement these regulations so that employees can know how to complain and trust that their complaints will be handled.

This mechanism should be introduced and explained in detail to all employees and management at different levels so that they all may know how to handle complaints. The gender equality coordinator must monitor the handling process and take notes of all results regarding the complaints or violation of the women's empowerment and gender equality regulations in the company.

2.5 Monitoring and reporting the results of the action plan

Data collection

The data collection process on gender equality is essentially based on indicator/criteria set in the action plan to implement women's empowerment and gender equality in company policies. It is based on the company's statistics system with standard forms and methodology but also focusing on sex-disaggregated data and gender-related issues. The data format should be consistent with the one taken from the review step before setting up the action plan.

Companies should keep all documents, records and sex-disaggregated data on employees and human resources-related profiles. The data are very helpful for monitoring and implementing women's empowerment and gender equality activities.

Data analysis and results

The data analysis process should focus on the impact of the women's empowerment and gender equality activities. It should also focus on measures on corporate performance with regard to the changes in the ratio of female and male employees in the human resources structure at different levels and should indicate the reasons for these changes.

Reporting on implementation results

Annual reports reflecting results on indicators/criteria included in the implementation plan on women's empowerment and gender equality reveal a positive link between company performance and women's empowerment and gender equality efforts. This would therefore and would create the motivation for next year's plan. Although it is positive to produce a separate report on women's empowerment and gender equality implementation, it would be preferable if these data and information are incorporated in the corporate business performance report.

2.6 Communicating progress and good practices

Progress on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment should be communicated to all stakeholders. The communication could reveal evidence of the effectiveness of the implementation of good practice and could yield more effective activities and measures. Thus, it is necessary to communicate and sustain all results achieved through all possible channels such as meetings, workshops and dialogues, as well as documents, notice boards and marketing materials.

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