## TOOL 1.3

# Gender Audit: Introduction, Process, and Tools

» **GOAL:** To help companies conduct an initial benchmarking exercise to identify institutional strengths and weaknesses with regards to gender equity

» **TARGET UNITS:** HR and Senior Management and/or designated Gender Champion

## What is a Gender Audit?

A gender audit is a broad review of how a company has integrated gender equity into policies, activities, capacity-building, organizational culture, and workplace. Gender audits can help companies better understand where they currently stand on all of these issues, as well as to identify gaps and opportunities. Depending on the company's objectives, metrics can include:

- Gender diversity among staff
- Potential for women and men to be promoted
- Retention of both male and female staff
- Suitability of the physical work environment for women and men
- Extent to which gender diversity is a demonstrated priority in recruitment
- Extent to which women and men are equitably consulted in community engagement

Gender audits are highly customizable, meaning that all companies can use this audit tool to establish a baseline, identify gaps, and suggest potential measures for improvement on gender diversity and inclusiveness. Gender audits can be conducted for a whole organization or for particular business units. They are essential for starting or improving on gender diversity efforts. For companies conducting their first gender audit and developing their baseline, or starting point, for gender performance, a gender audit of the whole company is recommended. It can be repeated periodically, with more frequent repetition in specific business units as necessary.

## Why Conduct a Gender Audit?

Gender audits are useful to gain a thorough understanding of your gender diversity challenges, develop a strategy for action, and prioritize key interventions.

Baseline audits—and follow-up monitoring (see **TOOL 1.22** for more on monitoring)—are important for a number of reasons:

1.  An initial baseline and stock-taking will help you identify areas of focus for your gender-sensitizing efforts: Where are the most noticeable gaps? Where is the most

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work required? Are there areas where gender performance is already strong? Where is there still progress to be made?

2.  Baseline and follow-up audits will help you track the impact of policies and programs. This information will help you identify areas where you should aim to set targets and invest resources, such as activities to boost recruitment and retention of women employees. In addition, this data will ultimately help companies to evaluate whether activities and initiatives are bringing them closer to their goals or if modification is needed. Data from follow-up audits can help you to see the impact of gender-equity programs on broader business metrics—for instance, does increased gender equity correlate with to any positive changes in productivity or reduction in HR issues?

3.  Follow-up audits, in particular, can help determine how employees feel about programs. Such audits offer insights on whether programs are having the desired effect of creating a more inclusive workforce. They also provide an indication of how well employees are responding to efforts to change the corporate culture.

4.  Surveys and audits can help employees feel engaged in the corporate change process, feel that their concerns and opinions are being heard, and feel invested in affecting change.[41]

## Who Conducts a Gender Audit?

Ideally, gender audits should be done by external assessors, who can provide an independent perspective on progress towards gender equity. The EDGE gender audit and certification is the leading global independent gender audit, which includes a baseline audit, benchmarking, and certification.[42] Where an independent audit is not possible, internal audits can be conducted with the understanding that assessors need to be given as much independence as needed. Internal assessors also need to be given sufficient time away from regular duties to conduct a comprehensive audit, and they should report directly to senior management on the outcomes.

## When Should a Gender Audit be Conducted?

A discussion at the board and/or senior management level to identify key gender diversity objectives and desired changes is the first step in developing a gender audit. By identifying key objectives such as "gender diversity in the workforce," "inclusive work environment," "safe and inclusive physical work environment," the audit can then identify progress, opportunities, and bottlenecks.

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41  IFC, *SheWorks: Putting Gender Smart Commitments into Practice*, 85.
42  More information on the EDGE Certification is available here.

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With these recommendations, audits can become a first step toward developing a gender diversity strategy. In addition, they can serve as a monitoring and sustainability tool by repeating them periodically and focusing on particular priority areas as identified in the gender diversity strategy.

Audits should be the first step in a larger gender diversity process, in which the corporate board and senior management commit to following through on audit recommendations. Be sure to include a budget for follow-up activities based on audit recommendations, as well as monitoring and review, to assess progress.

Audits should be well publicized internally. They should be communicated as an opportunity to understand challenges and bottlenecks and create improvements towards business outcomes that will benefit the whole company. Results and planned follow-up activities and changes should be communicated to all staff.

## What Types of Data are Collected in a Gender Audit?

Gender audits rely on data sources such as staff surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews with staff; reviews of corporate policies/manuals; quantitative analysis of metrics around recruitment, retention, and promotion; stakeholder reports and other communications; performance evaluations; and available gender compliance reports (for instance, Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Agency compliance reports). Audits can and should be conducted at the corporate level as well as at the site level, although the scope can be modified depending on available resources.

Gender audits also can include a participatory design phase, such as gathering information from staff to identify an initial set of key issues which can then be more specifically explored through the audit. This enables staff to identify issues of greatest concern to them before the survey is rolled out more widely for data gathering across the entire organization.

The gender audit tool provided here features a non-exhaustive list of questions that might be included in a company gender audit. It includes yes/no questions, open-ended questions, and questions that can be ranked on a scale from 1–5. It can be deployed by way of interviews, surveys, or focus groups. And it can be customized depending on your company's unique circumstances.

This list is a good place to start, although, as noted above, you should consider a participatory pilot process to solicit issues of key importance to employees, which could then be included as part of your final gender audit.

Note that the tool's focus is on how the company prioritizes and implements gender diversity. It does not measure how well gender is integrated into supply chain policies or community engagement activities. These issues are addressed specifically in **TOOL SUITES 2** and **3**.

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## Gender Audit in Three Steps[43]

A gender audit typically requires several key steps, summarized here.

### 1. Organizational buy-in and readiness.

As the first step in developing and implementing a gender strategy, gender audits require a degree of internal political will to commit resources and communicate the priority to the company. If a gender champion has already been recruited, this is the person who should spearhead efforts and develop momentum for a gender diversification initiative. If the gender champion has not yet been recruited (see **TOOL 1.10: Terms of Reference for Gender Equity Champion** for more on gender champions), committed senior staff must bring senior management on board to recognize the importance and potential value of improving gender balance even before the initial audit has been conducted. In many companies, where a gender champion is not yet in place, HR is the organizational 'home' for a gender audit.

### 2. Conduct staff survey and organizational audit.

Once a gender audit has been initiated, the auditors will conduct various layers of staff surveys, likely including written surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Duration and scope will be determined by the company size, geographic scope, and the breadth of the audit agreed upon with the gender auditors. A phased approach is recommended, starting with a participatory process in which staff can provide input on gender equity issues and indicators of greatest importance to them, which can then be explored through broader data collection.

### 3. Follow-up with concrete action plan.

A key aspect of the gender audit is how it will be used. How will findings be translated into recommendations and action? How will actions be implemented? How will there be accountability for action? Guidance on how to interpret gender audit results and translate them into action are provided in the coming pages.

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[43] Steps adapted from Jeannie Harvey and Patricia Morris, *The Gender Audit Handbook*, Washington, DC: InterAction, 2010.

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**TABLE 1A | Sample Questions to be Included in a Gender Audit**

The majority of these questions can be posed to a company's human resources team (with the exception of section 9 on health and safety, which may need to be posed to specific health and safety teams.)

### 1. CORPORATE GENDER PRIORITIES:

These questions will help determine the extent to which the company already proactively supports gender equality. Is there a policy framework in place which needs to be supported in implementation, or are there not yet even any formal corporate statements about gender equality? While individual ad hoc gender initiatives can be helpful for specific employees, creating systemic and sustainable change requires a unified approach that demonstrates leadership commitment. Understanding where a company stands in terms of a policy framework and corporate leadership is important for determining where to start with gender interventions.

» Is there a gender equity strategy—i.e., a corporate strategy including goals for gender equity and a plan for how to achieve these goals? Such a strategy should include budget and accountability structures.

» Is there a gender equity and/or diversity policy (i.e., a policy that outlines how the gender equity strategy will be operationalized)?

» Does the gender equity policy include explicit prohibition of discrimination based on gender in hiring, salary and benefits, promotion, discipline and termination, layoffs, or retirement benefits? (Policies should prohibit discrimination based on race, religion, sex, ancestry, age, marital status, sexual orientation, and gender identity/expression)

» If there is such a policy, does it apply to HQ as well as to country/field offices?
  • Is implementation/enforcement of this policy monitored at the HQ level?
  • Is implementation/enforcement of this policy monitored at the country and site level?

» Does the company mandate that gender be a consideration in policy/project/program development and monitoring for all projects/programs? (For instance, is it mandated that gender be considered in new HR policies and in community engagement activities such as social impact assessments or consultations, supply chain development activities, and other relevant documents?

» Are staff informed about the gender strategy and/or polic(ies)? What opportunities do staff have to learn about corporate gender priorities?

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## Gender Focal Points

» Is there a gender focal point or focal point team at the corporate level? Does the focal point have a clear terms of reference (ToR) and the resources to support them to fulfill this ToR?

» Where there are multiple job sites, is there a gender focal point at each site?

## Trainings on Gender

» Have any staff ever taken an implicit bias/associations test? If not, have staff take the test and record scores (for instance, Harvard Implicit Associations Test).

## 2. DATA COLLECTION AND MONITORING:

The following questions will help determine whether the company has the necessary tools for gathering gender data: for instance, what information is currently available about men's and women's representation in applicants, new hires, and promotions? Is this sort of information collected, and if so, is it systematic? Are there targets established? This data is important for determining how well equipped a company is to implement the policies explored above.

» Is there an ombudsperson or other conflict resolution service, and is it designed in a way that is accessible and safe for both women and men?

» Does your company collect gender-disaggregated data in terms of hiring, promotion, retention, and turnover data? If not, why not? Are there technological issues that may hinder this kind of data gathering? This data would include, for instance, male/female ratios in applicants, shortlists, new hires, promotions and upgrades, and resignations/dismissals (including circumstances such as tracking retention in the years after parental leave).

» Is the data above collected systematically and routinely?

» Have targets been set and communicated for gender diversity in recruitment and staffing at all levels?

» Do HR staff feel that they have the knowledge, expertise, and resources on gender and diversity to be able to implement these targets? If not, are staff able to identify gaps and training needs?

» Is there an organization-wide monitoring and evaluation system for measuring progress against gender targets?

» Has a pay gap assessment been conducted across the organization, including all offices?

• If yes, what actions have been taken to address any identified gaps?

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» Is progress on gender equity measured in key performance indicators (KPIs):
  - At the board level?
  - In senior management?
  - Among staff with management authority?

» Is there any baseline gender training required for all staff? If so, what percentage of staff have completed it? Is it incorporated into onboarding?

» Is there a leadership development program and/or a mentorship or sponsorship program focused on developing female leaders and managers?

## 3. RECRUITMENT PRACTICES:

The following questions, directed to the human resources department, will help identify how to make hiring practices more supportive for a variety of applicants. Infrastructure sectors often struggle with lack of female applicants for a variety of reasons, which can include the fact that women may feel that traditionally male-dominated sectors are not welcoming to women applicants or employees. The questions below can help determine the extent to which recruitment processes or materials may be inadvertently discouraging women applicants and lead to suggestions to actively encourage more diverse applicants.

» In job advertisements, how often are female images and/or voices used compared to male images?

» How often do job advertisements use language that specifically encourages female applicants?

» Do job descriptions describe required skills, rather than a type of person to fill vacancies?

» Do you ask interview questions related to marriage or family status of applicants?

» Have you briefed recruitment partners on the need to provide gender balanced long-lists?

» Do you advertise roles as open to flexible work patterns?

» Do you have diverse interview panels/interviewers?

» Do you include unconscious bias in your interview training?

» Are you open to candidates from non-traditional industries/sectors?

*TIPS:*
- *For any given position, monitor progress of female candidates at each stage of selection process.*
- *Conduct focus groups with women on the recruitment process: What made them apply to the company? Did they perceive gender bias in the recruitment process? What would have made the process more attractive for female candidates?*

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## 4. LEADERSHIP AND STAFF COMPOSITION:

These questions aim to identify the extent to which there is gender diversity and equity in the board, management, and general staff of the company to identify bottlenecks and opportunities to create targeted gender equity strategies.

### Board Composition

» What is the ratio of women to men on the board?

» What is the ratio of women to men in executive positions on the board?

» How long have current board members been in their positions?
*TIP: Map board tenures in relation to gender.*

» Is there a policy for gender diversity on the board?

### Management

» What is the ratio of female to male managers?

» How are managers held accountable for attention to gender diversity in:
  • Recruitment?
  • Promotions?

» Do incentives exist for managers to support gender diversity?
  • What type of incentives?

» Have senior staff received gender diversity training?

### General Staff

» For each job family, what is the ratio of male and female employees?
*TIP: Disaggregate between HQ, country, field offices.*

» For each job family, what is the ratio of pay between women and men in equivalent positions?
*TIP: Disaggregate between HQ, country, field offices.*

» What is the percentage of female managers compared to male managers?
*TIP: Disaggregate between HQ, country, field offices.*

» What is the percentage of profit and loss-related positions held by women compared to men?
*TIP: Disaggregate between HQ, country, field offices.*

» Have promotions been analyzed for gender trends, compared to candidates potentially up for promotion?

» How do you use succession planning to improve gender diversity in more senior roles—for example, ensuring a gender-diverse talent pipeline is being developed?

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» Within the company, is the ratio of women to men in job families above or below industry averages?

» What is the number and rate of turnover of employees by gender and age per year? *TIP: Disaggregate by HQ, country, and field offices.*

## 5. FAMILY-FRIENDLY WORKPLACE ACCOMODATIONS:

These questions identify the extent to which the company supports employees who are parents—of both sexes—in balancing the demands of work and family. They also explore whether lack of support may create specific challenges, especially for mothers.

» Is there a parental leave policy? Does it apply to both parents?

» What percentage of male and female employees return from parental leave?

» What support is available to assist women and men who are re-integrating into the workplace after parental leave?

» What percentage of male employees and female employees receive promotions after parental leave?

» Are there flex-work options, and are they equally available to men and to women?

» Have flex-work options been communicated to all staff?

» What percentage of male employees make use of flex-work compared to female employees?

» Does health insurance include coverage for pre- and perinatal care, fertility treatment, and contraception (including emergency contraception)?

» Are policies in place to ensure the safety of pregnant employees?

» Do these policies consider how to ensure appropriate work (i.e., of an equivalent grade, with equivalent career prospects) for pregnant employees during pregnancy?

## 6. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE POLICIES:

To what extent does the company proactively try to prevent and address sexual harassment and gender-based violence? Does the company have a clearly communicated behavioral expectation that all employees are accountable for knowing and upholding? How are survivors of sexual harassment or violence supported, and how are perpetrators sanctioned?

» Is there a specific gender-based violence policy, including a clear set of steps for employers to take when notified of gender-based violence issues?

» Is there a Respectful Workplace (or similar) Code of Conduct, in which employees sign and pledge to follow certain behaviors in the workplace?

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» Is there a confidential complaints mechanism for sexual harassment and gender-based violence? Does this require reporting to one's manager or to an alternate focal point? (Many sexual harassment complaints mechanisms require reporting to a manager, but when the manager is the cause of the complaint, such mechanisms can make it harder for staff to report.)

*TIP: Conduct focus group discussions to determine employees' level of comfort with using sexual harassment/gender-based violence complaints mechanisms and their degree of satisfaction with how these issues are resolved.*

» Are HR staff and anyone else receiving harassment and/or gender-based violence complaints and concerns specifically trained in responding to sexual assault allegations, and are they able to provide referrals to locally available support services?

» What are the most common sanctions for employees who have committed sexual harassment or gender-based violence?

» Are staff given training on expected behaviors and the definitions of sexual harassment and gender-based violence?

» What support is offered for survivors of sexual harassment/gender-based violence?

## 7. WORKPLACE/ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE:

To what extent does the workplace culture support and foster gender diversity and equitable advancement for women and men?

» Have surveys on male and female employee perceptions of organizational culture ever been conducted?

» Do women and men feel that they have equal opportunities for advancement?

» Do women and men feel that they are equally supported in taking/returning from parental leave?

» Do women and men feel that they are supported in utilizing flex-work?

» Is there an employee voice/grievance mechanism? If so, are both women and men involved?

» Do women and men feel that they have equal voice in employee voice/grievance mechanisms and that men's and women's concerns are given equal weight?

## 8. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

To what extent is the company doing all that it can to support and foster gender equitable leadership?

» Where there are mentorship programs, are these programs specifically targeting women to connect junior women with more senior staff?

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» Are there leadership development programs that specifically target both women and men?

» Is there a women's network within the company?

» Does the company participate in any industry mentorship or networking programs to promote women's professional development in the sector?

## 9. HEALTH AND SAFETY:

These questions identify the extent to which health and safety measures recognize men's and women's different needs and vulnerabilities.

» Has a gender-sensitive health risk assessment been conducted for all employees, including in all positions (for instance, including offices as well as vehicles/trains/boats and any field operations)?

» Have results of health assessments been analyzed and used to modify facilities and operations?

» Are there on-site health facilities and if so, is there at least one female staff member?

» For any safety audits regularly conducted, are women and men given equal opportunity to define and identify health and safety concerns?

» Does the department responsible for health and safety employ both women and men?

» If there are committees that deal with health and safety, are women and men represented on all of them?

» When women's health or safety issues are raised by the safety committee, are they heard respectfully and taken seriously?

» Do you feel that senior management understands men's and women's different health and safety concerns?

» If you have received health and safety training, did it include a discussion of the different issues facing women and men?

» Do the following policies/assessments include recognition of gender differences?
  • Health and safety assessment?
  • Health and safety policy?
  • Health and safety implementation plan?
  • Health and safety training plan?
  • Sexual harassment policy?
  • Bullying policy?
  • Diversity policy?
  • Equal opportunity policy?

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## *Physical Gender Audit*

Companies can conduct an additional physical inspection to complement their gender assessment. This inspection assesses the extent to which infrastructure is appropriate, safe, and adapted for both male and female employees. Such considerations are important for the comfort of both women and men on staff. In addition, they are part of addressing operational health and safety for a changing workforce. Safety is a key consideration on all work sites, and ensuring that safety applies equally for all staff is critical. These assessments should be conducted across all operational sites, as well as headquarters.

As with the rest of the gender assessment, companies are advised to include a participatory design phase before the assessment to allow employees to raise their own concerns and metrics for a gender-inclusive workplace. With physical risks, this is equally important: employees may raise aspects of risk that assessors or employers might not have identified previously. They also might have innovative ideas on ways to mitigate these risks.

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**TABLE 1B |  Sample Questions to be Included in a Physical Gender Audit**

### OPERATIONAL FACILITIES[44]

» In locations where uniforms are required, are there options for two-piece uniforms for women, or other accommodations that might be required to make women's uniforms appropriate but still similar to men's?

» Are maternity uniforms available?

» Where required, are single sex changing and shower facilities available?
  • If gender-segregated facilities are available, do they comply with international standards (for instance, one shower per six women)?
  • Do facilities include shower barricades?
  • Do toilets, changing rooms, and shower facilities include locks on the doors?
  • Do they include sanitary bins for women?[45]

» Are separate toilets available and accessible for women and men? If there are gender-neutral restrooms, do they provide sufficient privacy for the comfort of all users, including locks on the doors?
  • Do women's toilets or gender-neutral restrooms have facilities for the disposal of sanitary waste?

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44 IFC and Lonmin, Women in Mining: A Guide to Integrating Women into the Workforce, Washington, DC: IFC, 2009, 21.
45 IFC and Lonmin, Women in Mining: A Guide to Integrating Women into the Workforce, 21.

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» Are there lactation rooms and refrigerators?
  *TIP: Disaggregate by HQ, country, and field offices.*

» Has an ergonomic assessment been conducted to ensure that equipment is appropriate and safe for female staff?
  *TIP: If no surveys have been done, conduct a survey and focus groups with female staff by job family to identify safety and comfort issues with equipment or facilities and adjustments to ensure safe, appropriate, and comfortable workplaces and operations.*

## OPERATIONAL RISKS

» Do health and safety risk assessments include the following considerations?

  • Exposure to radiation, certain chemicals, and hazardous gases can impact health outcomes for women and cause miscarriage or severe developmental conditions in fetuses.

  • Exposure to high noise levels has been associated with pre-term labor, low birth weight, and some congenital anomalies in some studies.[46]

  • Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can be associated with developmental abnormalities in babies, miscarriage, or fetal distress.

  • Exposure to heavy equipment vibrations can damage a women's ability to conceive and may be associated with miscarriage and preterm delivery.[47]

  • Work environments that are designed for the male body may be ergonomically unfit for many women.

  • Ill-fitting uniforms can create an unsafe work environment for women, leading to health and safety risks.

  • Unsafe travel to and from the worksite might be an even greater concern for women. Of particular concern is the potential for sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

» Are there programs to enable transition to equivalent-grade positions for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers so they can avoid hazards such as those listed above?

## WORKSITE ACCOMODATION (as necessary)

» Are accommodations segregated by gender?

» Is there sufficient lighting to ensure staff feel safe going to and from accommodation?

» Are there locks on all bedrooms/personal rooms?

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46 Committee on Environmental Health, "Noise: A Hazard for the Fetus and Newborn," Pediatrics, Volume 100 Issue 4, October 1997.

47 Sandra C. Dorman and Céline Boudreau-Larivière, Guide to Healthy Pregnancies in the Mining Workplace, Sudbury: Laurentian University, 2012, 6.

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## FEMALE PERSONNEL

» Are there women security personnel?

## TRANSPORTATION

» Does the company sponsor secure transport for community-based employees?

## How to Use the Results of a Gender Audit

The gender assessment should return a wealth of information that can be used to identify potential areas for strengthening and improvement, in turn enhancing performance and profit. Table 1C outlines some of the ways to use the results of the gender assessment in designing potential interventions.

Results from the gender assessment should be cross-referenced against other corporate metrics to understand the impact of gender equity initiatives on other corporate goals. For instance, does an increase in gender equity in the workforce lead to changes in productivity? Do increased family-friendly work policies lead to decreased turnover? Does ensuring that physical work environments are appropriate for women reduce injuries in the workplace?

**TABLE 1C | Turning Gender Audit Results into Action**

| AUDIT AREA | POTENTIAL FINDING | POTENTIAL INTERVENTION |
|---|---|---|
| Corporate gender priorities | » Lack of coordinated action/ understanding on gender across the organization, which may lead to ad hoc gender mainstreaming, inability to maximize benefits of gender mainstreaming and diversity<br><br>» Lack of uniformity in action/ understanding on gender between HQ and field offices, which may create unequal treatment of women and men across the organization, resulting in lack of benefits from gender diversity and creation of different employment classes | • Develop business case for gender equity and diversity to highlight importance of comprehensive, cohesive strategy and target interventions accordingly (**TOOL 1.2**)<br>• Develop a gender strategy (**TOOL 1.9**)<br>• Appoint gender equity champion (**TOOL 1.10**)<br>• Establish a gender task force (**TOOL 1.15**) |

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| AUDIT AREA | POTENTIAL FINDING | POTENTIAL INTERVENTION |
|---|---|---|
| Human resources | » Lack of gender training, meaning an inability to identify implicit gender bias in HR policies, recruitment, and other areas. This may lead to biased working conditions and failure to maximize benefits of gender diversity and equity in the workforce<br><br>» Lack of gender-trained ombudsperson, meaning that the company could be unaware of gender-related issues in the workplace<br><br>» Lack of gender-disaggregated data or pay gap analysis, making it more difficult to address and improve retention, promotion, productivity, and job satisfaction | • Develop HR policies and programs to support gender-diverse workforce (**TOOL 1.11**)<br><br>• Conduct a pay gap analysis (**TOOL 1.6**)<br><br>• Conduct training on how to reduce implicit bias in the workplace. (**TOOL 1.17**)<br><br>• Develop human resources policies and programs to support gender equality (**TOOL 1.11**)<br><br>• Set gender recruitment targets (**TOOL 1.12**)<br><br>• Support gender equity in virtual work (**TOOL 1.16**) |
| Recruitment practices | » Implicit bias in outreach may reduce diversity of candidates who apply<br><br>» Lack of awareness that gender bias may be woven into recruitment materials and could deter female candidates from applying<br><br>» Lack of gender diversity on interview panels may create obstacles for diverse hiring<br><br>» Implicit bias in hiring criteria (for instance, requiring a certain number of years of experience) may inadvertently disadvantage women | • Review and revise recruitment materials and procedures to attract a more gender-diverse candidate pool through human resources policies and programs (**TOOL 1.11**) and guidelines for building a gender-diverse talent pipeline and workforce (**TOOL 1.18**) |

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| AUDIT AREA | POTENTIAL FINDING | POTENTIAL INTERVENTION |
|---|---|---|
| Gender-sensitive HR policies and practices | » Lack of family-friendly policies such as maternal health coverage, parental leave, and on-site childcare or a perception that taking advantage of such policies is discouraged, leading some employees to conclude that the workplace might not be conducive to parental leave. In turn, this could increase turnover, reduce retention, or put parents at a disadvantage in professional development. | • Review and revise HR policies (**TOOLS 1.11, 1.12**)<br>• Conduct cost/benefit analysis for family-friendly workplace policies<br>• Conduct training with managers on flex work and benefits of family-friendly workplace policies |
| Sexual harassment and gender-based violence | » Lack of written policy on sexual harassment and gender-based violence, meaning a lack of established expectations, consequences, and accountability for upholding behavioral standards<br><br>» Non-existent or unviable processes and/or lack of ombudsperson for reporting on sexual harassment and gender-based violence, meaning lack of information on incidence and costs of gender-based violence and sexual harassment | • Develop written gender-based violence and sexual harassment policy (**TOOL 4.12**)<br>• Identify and assess available data and potential legal obligations involving sexual harassment and gender-based violence to develop a business case for additional interventions and services (**TOOLS 4.2, 4.3, 4.4**) |
| Board composition | » Lack of awareness about the dimensions of board composition, which may lead to inability to maximize benefits of gender diversity and equity | • Conduct a gender assessment of board composition and how board members are selected/appointed, and update operating procedures (**TOOL 1.7**) |
| Senior management | » Lack of accountability for gender diversity in the workforce<br><br>» Perceived/real barriers for women to enter senior management | • Provide gender diversity and equity training for senior management |

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| AUDIT AREA | POTENTIAL FINDING | POTENTIAL INTERVENTION |
|---|---|---|
| Staffing | » Lack of information on gender diversity in various job families and/or levels | • Institute gender disaggregation of workforce data, including recruitment, retention, and promotion, further divided by HQ, country, and site offices (**TOOL 1.22**) |
| Workplace/organizational culture | » Perception that women and men have unequal access to opportunities and less support (including lack of support for flex-work, parental leave, return from parental leave)<br><br>» Perception that men's and women's voices are not heard equally in corporate decision-making processes | • Conduct cost-benefit analysis on specific aspects of non-supportive corporate culture; enable men's and women's voices to be heard in decision making and accountability mechanisms |
| Leadership development | » Inequitable mentorship, leadership development opportunities for women and men or a perception of inequality negatively impacting career development | • Cost-benefit analysis on benefits of gender-inclusive leadership development programs<br>• Improve/develop leadership development programs for women and men (**TOOL 1.21**) |
| Health and physical safety | » Inadequate attention to gender-specific employee health and safety needs, creating hazards and increasing potential liability while reducing employee' effectiveness and negatively impacting safety and job desirability | • Work with male and female employees to better identify perceived health and safety risks (**TOOL 1.3**). |

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## Additional Considerations when Conducting a Gender Audit

### Gender-Sensitive Health and Safety Risk Audits

Included in the gender audit are questions about physical safety and the health risks associated with certain jobs, job families, and the work environment. Questions also explore how health and safety risks are identified and addressed. Assessing and understanding the differences in male and female physical capabilities and vulnerabilities also helps ensure a safe and productive work environment for all.

Such audits also contribute to a better understanding of the ways in which women and men identify, define, and perceive risks. They can improve risk reporting and help distinguish between presumed and genuine health and safety risks. Physical risk audits can help to combat bias in hiring by ensuring that job descriptions and evaluation criteria focus on the specific physical skills required for a job rather than relying on traditional assumptions and biases.

In addition, the use of health and safety risk audits can give employees greater comfort in reporting health concerns. For instance, women of reproductive age, pregnant women, and breastfeeding women may have certain acute health and safety risks about which they would be more forthcoming in reporting if such an audit was part of the workplace culture. Health and safety risk audits also serve as a tool to clarify actual risk factors to avoid overly stigmatizing pregnant women or discouraging them from reporting pregnancies.

Women and men may have very different perceptions of risk, for instance with regards to sexual harassment or the potential for gender-based violence. Women may feel vulnerable in different situations than men (or vice versa), and in different cultural contexts women and men may feel differently able to report misconduct to managers. In instances of sexual harassment or assault, for example, it could be more challenging for men to report misconduct, particularly in environments that stigmatize homosexuality. At a male-dominated worksite, it might be assumed that women are more frequently the victims, and there may be clearer avenues for women to report misconduct. For this reason, it is important that both women and men are involved in identifying areas of concern or risk, as well as in evaluating these risks and developing recommendations for solutions.

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In addition, it is important to note that in a male-dominated workforce, women may be underrepresented in health and safety departments and therefore have fewer opportunities to identify female health and safety risks—including preventative measures to mitigate potential risks. Women also may believe that their jobs are less secure than those of male coworkers, so they may feel less empowered to report health and safety issues. In some cultural contexts, reporting issues to male colleagues could represent another problem. Finally, in some situations reporting arrangements might not be conducive to disclosing highly sensitive information. For instance, inappropriately designed sexual harassment reporting mechanisms that require employees to report issues in person to a male manager who may or may not be trained in appropriate response mechanisms may make women less likely to use those mechanisms.

Gender-sensitive health risk and safety audits should be participatory to allow women and men to identify health and safety risks, which can then be assessed for prevalence and degree of risk.

What follows are the steps in a gender audit, a sample gender audit terms of reference, and a guidance note to help companies consider how to translate audit findings into recommendations and action.

## Conducting a Gender Audit in a Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations (FCS) Context

Risks posed to women and men will not be the same from industry to industry, or context to context. This will be particularly true where companies are operating in environments impacted by conflict and fragility. In these environments, the audit should be particularly mindful of how fragility and conflict risk may impact worker safety at work and in the community—including transport to and from work, safety on the worksite, and interactions with the community. Risk of conflict may impact the workforce demographic—and while this should never be an excuse for low gender equity in the workforce, security concerns may differently impact how, at what, and where women and men feel safe working. If an audit reveals this to be the case, companies can take this opportunity to make a clear and demonstrated response to safety concerns, as well as to inform communication around recruitment.

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