

TOOL 1.15

Creation of a Gender Task Force and Terms of Reference for a Gender Task Force

- » **GOAL:** To create a consultative committee on gender, which can serve as a liaison between staff and management on gender issues
- » **TARGET UNIT:** Human Resources

For larger companies, a gender champion alone may be insufficient to lead gender equity initiatives. The creation of a gender task force (GTF), made up of representatives from all staff grades and teams, can provide input, reviews, and a staff voice, as well as support communication to staff. A gender task force can provide staff with easily identifiable focal points within their teams, who they can approach with ideas and concerns, and can generally improve communication around gender issues throughout an organization.

Where companies are operating in multiple sites, consider having one task force per site, or convene sessions virtually to aggregate between sites.

Draft Terms of Reference for a Gender Task Force

A. Introduction

Evidence increasingly demonstrates that companies that invest in gender equity within the workforce and community improve productivity, reduce costs, and strengthen operations. [Company] has expressed its commitment to improving the enabling environment for women in the workforce and the interaction of its workforce with communities, including with regards to gender. These terms of reference define the objectives, scope of work, and reporting for a multi-stakeholder working group or gender task force (GTF), and outlines its objectives for a [period], at which time the GTF process will be evaluated and adapted as necessary.

B. Objective

The goal of the gender task force will be to represent staff perspectives, in consultation with human resources (HR) and senior management, on all activities aimed at creating a more gender-inclusive work environment. The GTF, which will include representatives from across [Company], will act as a sounding board for human resources and senior management for consultation on any proposed gender-related initiatives, provide HR with input on gender initiatives, and help HR and management to better understand staff perspectives and concerns. The overall goal will be to ensure that there is a staff voice, input, and review for gender-focused activities, as well as staff representatives that can participate and support activities around creating a gender-equitable workplace.

C. Composition of the Gender Task Force

Membership in the task force will be voluntary and alongside regular job responsibilities. Members will be selected as representatives across all staff categories (i.e., general staff, senior staff, management, and leadership). [*Where possible, representatives can be elected.*] The task force will include two men and two women representatives from general staff and senior staff, and one man and one woman between management and leadership. The task force will also include a representative from HR, the gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) focal point, and any other representatives deemed necessary.

D. Scope of Work

Responsibilities of the gender task force:

The task force itself will:

- Help to evaluate, validate, assess, and improve key outputs such as the gender related policies, strategic documents, procedures, and future assessments;
- Support the development of information campaigns on gender topics (i.e., available trainings, opportunities such as mentorships, scholarships, etc.) and grievance mechanisms, and processes for reporting sexual harassment and other gender-related misconduct and policies (including GBVH);
- Participate in public communication of results.
- The task force will not replace the official company procedures for reporting instances of sexual harassment or other gender-related misconduct.
- The task force will act to complement and support HR and internal communications functions.

Responsibilities of members of the gender task force:

- Participation in monthly gender task force meetings;
- Serve as a liaison for their peers on issues related to gender by receiving recommendations/concerns about gender in the workforce and transmitting information to management through the gender task force meetings, as well as ensuring that other staff members are aware of who they are and making themselves available for staff concerns, questions, and ideas with regards to improving gender equality;
- Evaluate, provide comment on, and validate [*Company*] activities related to gender;
- Contribute to awareness raising activities to share what gender-related activities are happening (i.e., trainings, information campaigns, new policies and grievance mechanisms);
- Monitor progress on future gender actions agreed by [*Company*].

E. Reporting

The gender task force will be managed by the gender focal point within the human resources department, who will report directly to the human resources manager and the CEO.