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PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR CCIs AND BMOs

PRACTICAL GENDER STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

As a Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) or Business Membership Organisation (BMO), integrating gender equality into your policies, programs, and services strengthens your role as a business enabler. A gender-responsive approach can expand economic opportunities, enhance service delivery, and ensure your organisation remains relevant to a diverse business community.

To successfully integrate gender considerations into every aspect of your work, it's important to assess your current gender mainstreaming efforts, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and develop a clear, actionable strategy. If you haven't conducted a gender assessment yet, you can refer to the dedicated practical tool.

This guide provides a structured approach to help you identify guiding principles according to your organisation's strategy, define key actions to move forward, and monitor progress along the way. Whether you are initiating gender mainstreaming or enhancing existing efforts, this tool will help you design a sustainable and impactful gender strategy, aligned with your organisational priorities and values, that fosters inclusivity, benefits your members and improves business outcomes.

1. CONDUCT A GENDER ASSESSMENT

- **Purpose:** Evaluate how gender is integrated into your organisation's governance, operations, policies, and services. Identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement.

Tip: Refer to the Gender Assessment Checklist for a structured framework to evaluate your organisation's current status on gender mainstreaming.

2. ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS

- **Key stakeholders:**

  - **Gender Committee:** Establish an internal working group with representatives from various departments, including management, to oversee gender integration efforts. This committee ensures a consultative and participatory process.

  - **Gender Focal Point:** Assign a staff member with gender knowledge, excellent communication skills, and authority to coordinate gender-related initiatives and act as the main contact for gender mainstreaming efforts.

  - **Executive Leadership:** Secure commitment from board members and senior executives to ensure gender equality is prioritised in decision-making. Senior leaders must show commitment by allocating resources.

  - **Departments (HR, Communications, Membership Services, Policy & Advocacy):** Each team has a role to play in integrating gender considerations within the organisation : hiring, service delivery, advocacy, and external engagement.

- **Challenges & incentives:**

  - **Challenges:** Limited internal capacity and expertise, lack of resources, time constraints, resistance to change, and institutional inertia.

  - **Practical Incentives:** Provide leadership training on the business case for gender equality, seek external partnerships for technical assistance, and integrate gender considerations into ongoing initiatives rather than creating separate projects.

3. BUILD COMMITMENT AND BUY-IN

- **Raise awareness:** Demonstrate how gender inclusion benefits the organisation by fostering business growth, market expansion, and service delivery for members.
- **Link to business priorities:** Show how addressing gender gaps aligns with the organisation's core mission—whether through increasing member engagement, influencing policy, or strengthening competitiveness.
- **Create synergies:** Connect gender efforts with other strategic objectives and initiatives like social inclusion, SME support and sustainability.

4. STRENGTHEN INTERNAL CAPACITY

- **Identify knowledge gaps:** Conduct staff assessments to determine training needs on gender-sensitive business practices.
- **Provide training & tools:** Offer gender equality training, workshops, practical toolkits, and expert support for staff.
- **Promote continuous learning:** Foster ongoing awareness by establishing peer learning groups or partnerships with gender experts to support long-term capacity building and improve gender mainstreaming across departments.

Tip: Consider hosting roundtables with member businesses to share experiences and best practices in gender-responsive business strategies.

5. DEVELOP A GENDER STRATEGY

- **Core components:**

  - Assessment Findings: Use gender assessment results and recommendations to inform strategy development.

  - Vision & Principles: Align gender mainstreaming with your organisation's strategy, mission and values

  - Key Priorities: Identify focus areas—such as leadership representation, equal access to services, and advocacy for gender-inclusive policies.

  - Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E): Set measurable goals, KPIs, data collection methods, and accountability mechanisms to track progress.

  - Resources Allocation: Secure funding and human resources to implement the strategy effectively.

6. IMPLEMENT THE GENDER STRATEGY

- **Develop an action plan:** Develop clear actions with assigned responsibilities, resources, and realistic timelines.
- **Monitor & adjust:** Establish a system to track progress and use data-driven insights to refine actions and demonstrate impact to stakeholders.

7. SUCCESS FACTORS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- **Start with quick wins:** Begin with manageable steps to build internal capacity and create momentum.
- **Cross-department collaboration:** Encourage collaboration across departments and leverage partnerships with the private sector, government, and civil society to amplify impact.
- **Sustain momentum:** Continuously build the case for gender equality, share success stories, and recognise internal and external gender champions.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Gender Auditing: Creating a gender-sensitive workplace, Investment Climate Reform (ICR) Facility

ANY QUESTIONS? Contact us

Rue du Trône 108
1050 Brussels
Belgium

Get in touch
info@icr-facility.eu
in /icr-facility

Access our knowledge hub
www.icr-facility.eu/knowledge-hub

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