INVESTMENT CLIMATE REFORM FACILITY

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INSIGHTS FOR CCIs AND BMOs

WHERE TO START? - PRACTICAL EARLY STEPS TO INTEGRATE GENDER EQUALITY

As a Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) or a Business Membership Organisation (BMO), integrating gender equality into your operations and advocacy efforts is not just about fairness—it's a strategy for economic growth, business success, and stronger member engagement.

Are you looking to integrate gender equality into your CCI/BMO but unsure where to begin? This factsheet will give you insights about what your gender equality journey could look like, giving you an overview of the key steps to start promoting gender equality with and within your organisation and one day, become a gender champion!

Laying the Foundation for Gender Equality in Your Organisation

Promoting gender equality requires a tailored approach based on your institution's context and resources. Start by analysing your institution's strengths, weaknesses, and internal capacities. With this analysis, you can design a gender pathway that aligns with your strategic priorities and fosters gender equality both institutionally and operationally.

General Steps for Your Gender Journey:

1. **Conduct a gender assessment**
2. **Develop a gender strategy and action plan**
3. **Implement the gender strategy and action plan**
4. **Monitor, evaluate,learn, adjust, and communicate progress**

STEP 1. CONDUCT A GENDER ASSESSMENT

A gender assessment evaluates your institution's gender efforts, identifying strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and opportunities. Key steps include:

- **Review your institutional framework:** Assess internal policies, membership criteria, services, and decision-making structures to identify gender gaps.
- **Assess awareness:** Understand how gender equality is perceived within your organisation and among your members.
- **Examine access to resources:** Identify disparities in leadership opportunities, pay equity, training access, and business support for women entrepreneurs.
- **Analyse socio-cultural norms:** Consider how gender norms affect participation, leadership, and business engagement.
- **Engage stakeholders:** Identify key stakeholders, gain leadership buy-in, and involve staff at all levels.

Tip: Use a gender assessment checklist to make this process structured and comprehensive.

STEP 2. DEVELOP A GENDER STRATEGY

A gender strategy provides direction and sets priorities for integrating gender equality into your operations and services. This strategy should align with your organisation's mission and business objectives.

Key Elements:

- **Assessment findings:** Summarise key insights from your gender assessment.
- **Clear vision:** Define how gender equality aligns with your organisation's goals
- **Strategic priorities:** Identify focus areas such as internal policies, member services, and advocacy and define strategic priorities.
- **Action plan:** Outline concrete steps, responsibilities, and timelines.
- **Resources and accountability:** Ensure financial and human resources are allocated and assign responsibility for implementation.

Tip: Keep your strategy realistic and phased to ensure steady progress.

STEP 3. IMPLEMENT THE GENDER STRATEGY

Once you have a strategy, start translating it into action. Even small changes can create momentum.

Key Actions:

- **Create an implementation plan:** Set clear tasks and deadlines and allocate resources: human, financial, and time resources to gender initiatives. Make sure to assign specific individuals to lead and oversee tasks.
- **Internal changes:** Introduce gender-responsive HR policies, inclusive leadership programs, and flexible work arrangements.
- **Member services:** Offer training, networking opportunities, and business support tailored to the needs of women entrepreneurs and professionals.
- **Advocacy & public-private engagement:** Represent women's interests in business policy discussions and decision-making platforms.
- **Capacity building:** Train staff and members on gender equality and inclusive business practices.

Tip: Leverage partnerships with women's business networks and gender-focused organisations for expertise and support.

STEP 4. MONITOR, EVALUATE, LEARN, ADJUST, AND COMMUNICATE

To ensure long-term impact, regularly track your progress and make necessary adjustments. Transparency and communication are key to keeping stakeholders engaged.

Key actions:

- **Collect gender data:** Track progress with sex-disaggregated data and measure results.
- **Document successes and challenges:** Reflect regularly on achievements and obstacles.
- **Adjust efforts:** Use insights to refine your gender initiatives over time and be ensure continuous improvement.
- **Communicate achievements:** Share progress with members, partners, and stakeholders to build support and inspire others

Tip: Celebrate milestones and recognize champions of gender equality within your organisation.

FINAL THOUGHTS: START SMALL, STAY COMMITTED

Gender equality is a journey, not a one-time project. Even if you are just starting, small but consistent steps will create meaningful change over time. By integrating gender equality into your internal operations and member services, your organisation will become a stronger advocate for inclusive economic growth and a trusted partner for businesses of all sizes.

Next steps:

- **Conduct your first gender assessment**
- **Engage leadership and key stakeholders**
- **Identify priority actions and develop a gender strategy**
- **Take small, tangible steps and build momentum**

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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

ANY QUESTIONS? Contact us

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