ICR
INVESTMENT CLIMATE REFORM FACILITY

Co-funded by the European Union

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN BUSINESS: THE ROLE OF BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP ORGANISATIONS AND CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCIs) and Business Membership Organisation (BMOs) are well-positioned to drive gender equality in businesses and industries. By bridging businesses, governments, and civil society, they can influence policies and drive practices that create a more inclusive business environment. Strategic actions could include:

1. ENSURING INTERNAL COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY

- **Foster an inclusive culture:** Ensure gender diversity, particularly in leadership, through gender-sensitive recruitment and HR policies.
- **Develop gender-responsive policies:** Implement policies that ensure equal pay, unbiased hiring practices, and equal opportunities for both men and women.
- **Build organisational capacity:** Train staff on gender-related issues and use data to measure progress towards gender equality.

2. SUPPORTING MEMBERS IN ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

- **Provide training and awareness programs:** Organise workshops on gender equality and women's empowerment and the business benefits of diversity.
- **Facilitate knowledge sharing:** Encourage members to exchange best practices on gender equality.
- **Support women entrepreneurs:** Offer targeted services like financial support, mentorship, and networking opportunities tailored to women business owners.

3. ADVOCATING FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICIES

- **Advocating for women's financial inclusion:** Push for financial products suited to women entrepreneurs, such as specialised loans and insurance.
- **Promoting gender-responsive data:** Encourage the collection of gender-disaggregated data to identify barriers and inform better policymaking.
- **Engaging in public-private dialogues:** Facilitate discussions between government and businesses to address gender-related challenges and drive solutions.

4. RECOGNISING GENDER CHAMPIONS

- **Awards & recognition:** Acknowledge women entrepreneurs and businesses championing gender diversity.
- **Sharing success stories:** Highlight successful gender equality initiatives to encourage others to adopt similar practices.

5. IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

- **Limited awareness and resources:** Some organisations lack knowledge or funding for gender-focused initiatives.
- **Weak leadership support:** Without buy-in from decision-makers, gender initiatives may struggle to gain traction.
- **Gender-insensitive business practices:** Many organisations lack formal gender policies or inclusive services.
- **Low female representation:** A lack of women in leadership positions can hinder advocacy efforts.

TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES, BMOs AND CCIs SHOULD:

- **Raise awareness and build capacity:** Provide training and resources to help organisations develop and implement gender equality strategies.
- **Advocate for structural change:** Work towards policy and regulatory reforms that promote long-term gender equality.
- **Strengthen leadership engagement:** Encourage decision-makers to support and invest in gender diversity initiatives.
- **Track gender progress:** Implement systems that monitor gender equality, using data to strengthen the business case for diversity.

By embedding gender equality within their structures and supporting businesses in adopting inclusive practices, BMOs and CCIs can drive meaningful and lasting change.

Implemented by

HOW TO PROMOTE GENDER DIVERSITY IN MALE-DOMINATED INDUSTRIES: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

1. ASSESS & PLAN

To begin promoting gender equality in male dominated industries, assess where your organisation currently stands and where you want to go. This includes:

- **Define gender equality:** Review existing policies, processes, and systems through a gender lens.
- **Evaluate awareness & attitudes:** Understand how employees (both men and women) perceive gender equality.
- **Access to resources:** Ensure fair access to opportunities like pay, training, and flexible working hours for all employees
- **Identify biases & barriers:** Recognise gender biases, stereotypes, and imbalances in leadership roles.
- **Strengthen policies:** Ensure your organisation's has gender responsive policies, accountability structures, and sufficient resources to support gender diversity.

2. ESTABLISH THE BUSINESS CASE

Explain why gender diversity is good for business—link it to improved performance, innovation, and productivity. This is key to gaining support from leadership and aligning gender equality with business goals.

3. CREATE A GENDER STRATEGY

Conduct a gender assessment to identify gaps. Based on the findings, develop a clear roadmap with measurable goals and timelines for improvement.

4. IMPLEMENT KEY ACTIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- **Promote an inclusive culture:** Raise awareness, promote gender-inclusive policies, and encourage open discussions about gender equality.
- **Address bias & discrimination:** Provide training to help employees recognise unconscious biases and enforce policies to prevent harassment and discrimination.
- **Support work-life balance:** Offer flexible working hours, parental leave and other initiatives to improve employee well-being, productivity, and retention.
- **Ensure fair recruitment:** Use unbiased hiring practices with gender-balanced interview panels to promote equal opportunities.
- **Encourage gender-inclusive leadership:** Support women in leadership roles through mentorship, career development programs, and clear advancement opportunities.

5. MANAGE CHANGE & BUILD ALLIES

Engage all employees, including male leaders, to drive gender equality. Raise awareness about its benefits and encourage male allies to advocate for change.

6. MONITOR & EVALUATE

Track gender-related data such as turnover rates and leadership representation. Use these insights to refine strategies, celebrate successes, and address challenges. Regular monitoring ensures continuous progress towards gender equality.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Delivering Gender Equality: A Best Practices Framework for Male-Dominated Industries, USAID
- The Canopy Lab: Gender & leadership in market systems development programs: an analysis of inclusivity in job descriptions - Victoria Carter, Holly Krueger, Michelle LeMeur & Tim Sparkman
- How to Avoid Gender Bias in Job Postings
- Measuring the invisible: Development and multi-industry validation of the Gender Bias Scale for Women Leaders, Amy B. Diehl, Amber L. Stephenson, Leanne M. Dzubinski, David C. Wang
- Gender Diversity Journey: Company Good Practices, International Labour Organisation

Co-funded by the European Union

Implemented by

ICR
INVESTMENT CLIMATE REFORM FACILITY

Co-funded by the European Union

german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

BRITISH COUNCIL

STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE MEN IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

WHY ENGAGE MEN IN GENDER EQUALITY?

Traditionally, women have led efforts to promote gender equality, but men have a critical role to play too. As leaders, advocates and decision-makers, men can help drive meaningful change by acting as allies and supporters.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ENGAGING MEN IN GENDER EQUALITY?

Engaging men in gender equality creates positive change across all aspects of society. When men actively support gender equality, the positive effects are widespread:

- **For women:** Increased leadership opportunities, resources, and political participation.
- **For businesses:** Enhanced business performance, a more inclusive organisational culture, and a stronger employer brand.
- **For men:** Improved social relations, enhanced mental well-being, and increased economic and financial stability within households.

Gender equality works when both men and women are engaged. It's important to involve men while ensuring it doesn't compromise women's safety and their ability to participate in decision-making and to access services.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL CHALLENGES IN ENGAGING MEN IN GENDER EQUALITY?

Some men may hesitate to become advocates for gender equality because they:

- Don't know how to get involved or fear being perceived as less masculine.
- Might feel uncomfortable in gender equality discussions or women's networks, where they may be in the minority.
- Don't see personal or professional benefit in supporting gender equality efforts.
- May not recognise gender inequality and unconscious gender biases because they don't experience those personally.
- Have the misconception that gender equality is a threat to men or leads to men losing power or status.

HOW TO ENGAGE EFFECTIVELY MEN IN GENDER EQUALITY?

- **Raise awareness:** Sensitise men and boys about harmful gender norms and the importance of positive masculinity.
- **Highlight the benefits:** Emphasise how gender equality benefits everyone, including men, for example by demonstrating how it contributes to achieving key business objectives
- **Celebrate progress:** Draw attention to successes by showcasing concrete outcomes.
- **Train and support male leaders** as visible allies and create spaces for open dialogue to discuss ideas and ask questions.
- **Avoid negative assumptions about men**, but address behaviours when necessary.

5 WAYS MEN CAN ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND BEYOND

1. **Reflect on systemic gender inequalities** and acknowledge your own biases.
2. **Actively support women** by promoting equality policies and speaking out against injustice.
3. **Encourage inclusivity** by using respectful language and considering everyone's needs.
4. **Mentor and sponsor emerging women leaders** to help them advance in their career
5. **Use and advocate for paternity leave** and other benefits that support work-life balance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 7 Ways to Practice Active Allyship, Harvard Business Review
- Delivering Gender Equality: A Best Practices Framework for Male-Dominated Industries, USAID
- Better Together: Increasing Male Engagement in Gender Equality Efforts in Australia
- Actions Men Can Take to Create an Inclusive Workplace, Men Advocating Real Change (MARC) by Catalyst
- Do's and Don'ts for Engaging Men and Boys, USAID Interagency Gender Working Group
- Men as Allies: Engaging Men to Advance Women in the Workplace, Center for Women and Business, Bentley University
- USAID Engendering Industries, Engaging Men for Gender Equality, USAID

Implemented by

giz BRITISH COUNCIL EXPERTISE FRANCE GROUPE AFD SNV