



**FORWARD
FASTER**

**MOVING
GENDER EQUALITY
FORWARD FASTER
ACTION GUIDE**

INTRODUCTION

The action guides for the Forward Faster initiative provide companies that have committed – or are considering committing – with additional, target-specific details that companies can utilize as they define a strategy to meet their target(s) by 2030, including definitions of key terms, actions companies can take, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), interim targets, resources, programmes to engage in and policies companies can advocate for Governments to implement to facilitate an enabling environment.

CONTEXT

Gender equality is a fundamental human right, and the empowerment of women and girls is vital to enable progress towards not only Goal 5 on Gender Equality but all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including contributing to the eradication of poverty, climate mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity protection and sustainable economic growth. Yet women and girls around the world still do not fully experience equal rights and, at the current pace, it will take more than 150 years to achieve equality in terms of women's economic empowerment and participation. The significant potential of women as economic, social and sustainable development change-agents remains untapped, and barriers to equality must be addressed.

The private sector has a crucial role to play in accelerating progress by eliminating gender discrimination and advancing women's access to professional opportunities, as women remain drastically underrepresented in business. A mere 7 per cent of companies globally have a female CEO (according to the 2024 Equileap report). Further, women are paid about 20 per cent less than men, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO). Unfortunately, although business leaders increasingly have commitments around gender equality in place, fewer than 45 per cent of companies have established time-bound, measurable goals and targets.

Against this backdrop, now is the time for businesses to walk the talk by setting ambitious targets and taking accountable measures to achieve gender balance and equal pay. Businesses can and should create inclusive workplaces by addressing barriers to women's participation in the labour force and fostering a respectful and empowering environment for all employees. In doing so, companies will not only unlock critical advances across all of the SDGs but also new business opportunities — with research showing that companies with high female representation enjoy three percentage points of higher¹ annual returns and women's business leadership is linked to better sustainability performance (including reduced greenhouse gas emissions, stronger worker relations and reduced incidence of fraud, insider trading and other unethical practices).

TARGET ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE WORKPLACE

Equal representation, participation and leadership across all levels of management by 2030.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND ELEMENTS OF THE TARGET

ALL LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT: All levels of management: From top to middle management and the Board of Directors. The classification and the definition of the occupations are in line with the INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF OCCUPATIONS (ISCO 08) developed by the ILO.

¹ Morgan Stanley, "Why Gender Lens Investing May Lead to Better Returns," 21 Feb 2023

REPORTING

Companies committing to the target will report annually to the UN Global Compact by responding to the following questions:

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS (COP) QUESTION:

G11. Percentage of individuals disaggregated by sex within the company's board/highest governance body by: (male/female)

COMMITMENT-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1. What were the average sex ratios of your employees during the reporting period across different levels?

	Sex Ratio		
	Male %	Female %	Other %
Total			
Top management			
Middle management			
Professionals			

2. In the reporting period, what was the average sex ratio of new employee hires and employee turnover, employees who were promoted and employees who took parental leave?

	Sex Ratio		
	Male %	Female %	Other %
New hires			
Employee turnover			
Employees promoted			
Employees taking parental leave			

3. In the reporting period, what was the total number of work-related incidents of discrimination on the grounds of gender-based discrimination? Possibility to disclose the status of incidents and/or complaints and corrective actions taken.
4. Do you have an organization-wide gender equality strategy/ plan that identifies specific priority areas where further improvement can be made or are gender specific targets part of your overall human rights plan?
5. What type of action has the company taken in the reporting period with the aim of advancing equal representation, participation and leadership? (select all that apply):
 - a) Review the requirements for board membership, and other governance bodies and committees, to remove any discrimination or bias against women.
 - b) Pay equal remuneration, including benefits and bonuses, for work of equal value and ensure at a minimum a living wage for all women and men employees.
 - c) Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors.

- d) Offer flexible working arrangements, family-supportive practices, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status.
- e) Support access to child and dependent care through services, resources and information.
- f) Establish internal policies, trainings and procedures preventing all forms of violence and sexual harassment at work.
- g) Invest in professional development opportunities, networking and mentoring and programmes that open avenues for women's advancement at all levels and across all business areas.
- h) Conduct unconscious bias training and awareness raising on the corporate gender equality policies and action plan.
- i) Collect, analyze and use gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data and benchmarks to measure and report results at all levels.
- j) The company has not taken any actions in the reporting period with the aim of advancing equal representation, participation and leadership.

ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN TAKE TO ADVANCE PROGRESS

(Note: these actions are not comprehensive and only function as suggested actions or ideas for more opportunities to achieve "equal representation, participation and leadership — across all levels of management by 2030")

To advance gender equality, companies can:

- 1. SECURE TOP LEVEL SUPPORT:** Sign the [WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES](#) and commit to the seven principles across the workplace, marketplace and community.
- 2. UNDERTAKE A PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS:** Use the [WEPS GENDER GAP ANALYSIS TOOL](#) to identify gaps and areas of improvement within your organization.
- 3. COMMIT** to the [TARGET GENDER EQUALITY ACCELERATOR](#), where you will map out an action plan for achieving more gender balance across all levels of your organization.

AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING:

- Understand foundational concepts around gender equality and the benefits of diversity and inclusion.
- Undertake a holistic assessment to understand specific priority areas where further improvement can be made.
- Develop an organization-wide gender equality strategy that includes a business case or rationale for investment in gender equality linked to the broader business strategy. The strategy should be developed in consultation with employees and external stakeholders.
- Offer staff regular unconscious bias training to be aware of blindspots.

APPROACH:

- Establish a committee, council or similar mechanism with clear responsibilities to track progress on the gender equality strategy and targets. These roles should not be in a volunteer capacity but clearly acknowledged in job profiles and work plans.
- Establish a Working Group, Employee Resource Group or similar mechanism to ensure a regular feedback loop and 'reality check' on whether efforts translate to behaviour change and an inclusive workplace culture.

TALENT MANAGEMENT CYCLE:

- Establish a non-discrimination and equal opportunity policy that specifically addresses gender diversity in recruitment.
- Take proactive steps to recruit women in traditionally underrepresented roles.
- Ensure gender-balanced interview panels during hiring processes, ensure a gender-balanced shortlist for interviews and ensure job descriptions use gender-neutral language and visuals.
- Offer leadership coaching, mentoring programmes, access to professional networks, development trainings, rotational programmes and educational opportunities with specific support for women. Put measures in place to ensure professional development programmes are scheduled at times that accommodate the scheduling needs of all genders (for example, taking into consideration care responsibilities).

ADDRESS ADDITIONAL BARRIERS:

- Offer flexible working arrangements, family-supportive practices, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status. Make sure to track in a sex-disaggregated manner who is making use of benefits offered, and conduct regular surveys to determine if benefits meet employee needs.
- Support access to child and dependent care through services, resources and information and establish breastfeeding facilities in the workplace.
- Establish internal policies, training and procedures preventing all forms of violence and sexual harassment at work.
- Establish inclusive workplace practices with attention to intersectional barriers, taking into account that not all women share the same experiences and some groups tend to face additional barriers based on their backgrounds, race, age, sexual orientation, indigenous or disability status.

SETTING TARGETS AND MONITORING PROGRESS:

- Consider external and internal factors when setting targets for gender balance. Internal factors might include demographics, hiring/retention/promotion rates by gender, existing policies and practices, openness to change and broader business goals. External factors might include diversity of the market or community, overall industry labour force composition, graduation rates in the region or industry and changing demographics over time.
- Establish targets that strike a balance between being both ambitious and achievable/realistic, breaking down steps for 2030 goals into annual targets and making them coincide with other milestones in the business cycle.
- Establish time-bound and measurable goals and targets to build a pipeline of qualified women for management level positions with sub-targets for different aspects of the talent management cycle.

RESOURCES TO INFORM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- [WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES](#)
- [THE WEPS GENDER GAP ANALYSIS TOOL](#)
- [WOMEN IN BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT: THE BUSINESS CASE FOR CHANGE](#)
- [COUNTDOWN TO INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: A GENDER EQUALITY LEARNING JOURNEY](#)
- [BUSINESS CASE TRACKER FOR DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE](#)
- [INTERRUPTING BIAS IN YOUR TALENT PROCESSES](#)
- [WEPs TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK — REFERENCE GUIDE](#)
- [SDG AMBITION BENCHMARK ON GENDER BALANCE ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF MANAGEMENT](#)

UN GLOBAL COMPACT PROGRAMMING TO GUIDE IMPLEMENTATION

- UN GLOBAL COMPACT ACADEMY:** The Academy is the main learning platform of the UN Global Compact that provides business leaders and practitioners with the skills and knowledge to fast track their sustainability strategy. The self-paced learning helps companies get acquainted with the topic of women's leadership and get ready to take action at their own pace.
 - **GENDER EQUALITY: HOW BUSINESS CAN ACCELERATE THE PACE OF CHANGE**
- TARGET GENDER EQUALITY ACCELERATOR:** The UN Global Compact offers six- to nine-month Accelerator programmes aimed at generating behaviour change across a large number of companies at the local level. The Target Gender Equality Accelerator supports companies in setting and reaching ambitious corporate targets for women's representation and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value. You can find out if your Country Network is running the Accelerator [HERE](#).
- PEER LEARNING GROUP: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP:** The UN Global Compact offers Peer Learning Groups to create a safe space for companies to share their best practices and challenges on critical sustainability issues with like-minded professionals. Run in collaboration with Global Compact Country Networks, the groups provide participants the opportunity to learn about the latest best practices through facilitated sessions, curated resources and group discussions. You can find out if your Country Network is running a Peer Learning Group [here](#).

TARGET ON EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

Equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND ELEMENTS OF THE TARGET

- EQUAL REMUNERATION FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE:** The ILO defines equal remuneration for work of equal value as "remuneration for work which is of equal value, whether performed by a man or a woman, shall be paid without discrimination on the grounds of sex". The concept of equal value refers to work that requires comparable skills, effort and responsibility and is performed under similar working conditions.
- REMUNERATION:** Remuneration refers to the ordinary, basic or minimum wage or salary and any additional earnings payable directly or indirectly, whether in cash or in kind, by the employer to the worker and arising from the worker's employment.
- GENDER PAY GAP:** For each job level or category, companies are to calculate the gap of gross hourly earnings paid to female and male employees and report the average gap of earnings across job categories as a percentage.

$$\frac{\text{(Average gross hourly earnings of male employees - average gross hourly earnings of female employees)}}{\text{Average gross hourly earnings of male employees}} = 100 \%$$

REPORTING

Companies committing to the target will report annually to the UN Global Compact by responding to the following questions:

COMMUNICATION ON PROGRESS (COP) QUESTION:

L8. What was the average gender ratio of the basic salary and remuneration (comparing jobs of equal value) during the reporting period?

COMMITMENT-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1. What type of action has your company taken with the aim of achieving equal pay for work of equal value? (select all that apply)
 - a) Established a policy or a commitment embedded in a broader corporate policy that addresses equal pay for work of equal value, aligned with national regulatory requirements and/or the ILO Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration, 1951.
 - b) Established a pay committee that includes significant employee presence. This committee received training and acquired comprehensive knowledge of the jobs across the business. The committee reviews promotional and recruitment decisions and addresses employee concerns and complaints alongside developing in-house expertise in areas of equality and job evaluation.
 - c) Established gender-neutral job evaluation to help set up a fair pay structure, including identifying jobs where men and women are doing work of equal value and comparing their remuneration.
 - d) Estimated wage gaps for jobs of equal value and making pay adjustments where needed.
 - e) Undertook an objective gender pay gap audit or evaluation by internal or external parties in the past five years to ensure jobs of equal value are remunerated equally.
 - f) Having put procedures in place to remediate pay inequalities (including working with unions or staff representatives).
 - g) Publicly disclosed to company stakeholders the overall ratio and ratio by employee level of basic salary and remuneration by gender.
 - h) The company has not taken any action to guarantee equal pay for work of equal value during the reporting period.

2. Please specify the gender-neutral job evaluation methodology that you have used to measure remuneration, including salary or ordinary wage and other basic fees and benefits, directly or indirectly paid, in money or in kind.

ACTIONS COMPANIES CAN TAKE TO ADVANCE PROGRESS

(Note: these actions are not comprehensive and only function as suggested actions or ideas for more opportunities to achieve "Equal pay for work of equal value")

To advance gender equality, companies can:

1. **SECURE TOP LEVEL SUPPORT:** Sign the [WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES](#) and commit to the seven principles across the workplace, marketplace, and community.
2. **UNDERTAKE A PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS:** Take the [WEPS GENDER GAP ANALYSIS TOOL](#) to identify gaps and areas of improvement within your organization.
3. **COMMIT** to the [TARGET GENDER EQUALITY ACCELERATOR](#), where you will map out an action plan for achieving more gender balance across all levels of your organization.

AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING:

- Get familiar with the key concepts and issues surrounding pay equity and equal pay. What is the **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN "EQUAL REMUNERATION FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE" and "pay equity"**? It is important to understand the 'what' and 'why' before getting to the 'how'. A good starting place is the [EPIC COALITION WEBSITE](#) and the UN Global Compact [SDG AMBITION BENCHMARK](#) on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value.
- Develop a stand-alone policy or a commitment embedded in a broader corporate policy that addresses equal pay for work of equal value, aligned with national regulatory requirements and/or the ILO Convention 100 on Equal Remuneration, 1951.

APPROACH:

- Establish a pay committee: It is recommended that this pay committee includes significant employee presence including worker representatives from different hierarchical levels and 50 per cent female presence. The committee should receive training and should acquire comprehensive knowledge of the jobs across the business. Its role will involve reviewing promotional and recruitment decisions and addressing employee concerns and complaints alongside developing in-house expertise in areas of equality and job evaluation.
- Conduct a gender-neutral job evaluation: A gender-neutral job evaluation accurately and deliberately captures and values the content of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions of the work as they relate to both male and female job classes. The job evaluation consists of several steps:
 1. Select which jobs to compare: Drawing up a list of the jobs in the enterprise, followed by determining whether these jobs are male- or female-dominated to identify which jobs within the enterprise are female-dominated, since these jobs are likely to be subject to wage discrimination.
 2. Select a gender-neutral job evaluation method to assess, based on common criteria, the characteristics of the jobs within an enterprise in order to establish their relative value.
 3. Collect information on the content of each job based on the factors selected. This can be through a questionnaire circulated among all employees to collect information on task descriptions and responsibilities.
 4. Determine the value of jobs: Construct a weighting grid and assign points to the jobs. The weighting of evaluation factors involves determining their relative importance and assigning a numerical value to each of them.

IDENTIFY AND CLOSE PAY GAPS:

- Estimate wage gaps for jobs of equal value.
- Develop a strategy and action plan to close the pay gap.
- Have procedures in place to remediate pay inequalities (including working with unions or staff representatives).
- Assess other financial benefits including insurance benefits, bonuses and retirement contributions when reviewing compensation.
- Undertake an objective gender pay gap audit or evaluation by internal or external parties at least every five years to ensure jobs of equal value are remunerated equally.

ADDRESS ADDITIONAL BARRIERS:

- Establish the relevant human resources-led initiatives and governance mechanisms to tackle gender bias across the talent lifecycle. This can include:
 - Reassess recruitment procedures for bias — opting for structured interviews, skill- and experience-based assessments and salary decisions.
 - Review promotion policies (i.e., including multiple women in promotional shortlists and holding talent decisions via a diversity task force).
- Regularly disclose progress on equal pay to the broader ecosystem and foster a culture of transparency.

- Publish pay gap metrics in your annual report to communicate progress and positive impact on your company and culture.
- Publish salary ranges with external job postings.
- Engage partners and stakeholders by becoming involved in one or more partnerships — globally or in your home country.
- Drive calls for strong legislation on wage transparency along with workers associations and Government agencies.

RESOURCES TO INFORM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- [SDG AMBITION BENCHMARK: EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE](#)
- [WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES: CLOSING GENDER PAY GAP TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AT WORK](#)
- [EPIC COALITION WEBSITE](#)
- [ILO: UNDERSTANDING THE GENDER PAY GAP](#)
- [ILO: EW@W: EMPOWERING WOMEN @ WORK PLATFORM](#)

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- [UN GLOBAL COMPACT ACADEMY](#): The Academy is the main learning platform of the UN Global Compact that provides business leaders and practitioners with the skills and knowledge to fast track their sustainability strategy. The self-paced learning helps companies get acquainted with the topic of equal pay and get ready to take action at their own pace.
- [TARGET GENDER EQUALITY ACCELERATOR](#): The UN Global Compact offers six to nine-month Accelerator programs aimed at generating behaviour change across a large number of companies at the local level. The Target Gender Equality Accelerator supports companies in setting and reaching ambitious corporate targets for women's representation and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value. You can find out if your Country Network is running the Accelerator [HERE](#).
- [PEER LEARNING GROUP ON GENDER EQUALITY](#): The UN Global Compact offers Peer Learning Groups to create a safe space for companies to share their best practices and challenges on critical sustainability issues with like-minded professionals. Run in collaboration with Global Compact Country Networks, the groups provide participants the opportunity to learn about the latest best practices through facilitated sessions, curated resources and group discussions. You can find out if your Country Network is running a Peer Learning Group [HERE](#).

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

To scale action towards the SDGs, companies can advocate for their Governments to implement enabling policies that support their efforts to meet ambitious targets under the Forward Faster initiative and provide the clarity and confidence they need to catalyse further investments.

Closing the gender gap necessitates collaborative efforts from all sectors within a community. To achieve meaningful legal reform that benefits society, a multisectoral approach is the most effective strategy. Businesses, along with civil society organizations such as workers associations and trade unions, can actively lobby and work with Governments to introduce legislation and a supportive ecosystem to drive adherence and results across the private sector. Unlike reforming societal norms and values, legal reforms can be more readily achieved in the short term. That is why companies should call on Governments to:

- Establish quotas or targets for female representation on corporate boards and executive positions. These measures incentivize companies to actively recruit and promote women.
- Establish affirmative action policies that prioritize women in recruitment, promotion and training programmes to address gender disparities.
- Support flexible work arrangements, parental leave and childcare assistance to support women in balancing work and family responsibilities.

Significant progress has been made regarding gender equality legislation worldwide, although challenges persist. Currently, 119 countries have implemented labour laws that embrace the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value. This global recognition highlights the importance of addressing the gender pay gap and pay transparency and promoting gender equality in the workplace. Enhancing these legal frameworks and promoting gender equality in the workplace are crucial steps towards achieving fair and equitable remuneration for all individuals, irrespective of their gender.

Note: At the UN Global Compact, we recognize that individuals have diverse gender identities, and we strive to use gender-inclusive language in our work. Throughout this guide, the Global Compact uses the word "woman" and "women" to describe individuals whose sex assigned at birth was female, whether they identify as female, male or other. For more information, please consult the [UN GUIDELINES FOR GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE](#).

THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT



HUMAN RIGHTS

- 1 Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
- 2 make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.



LABOUR

- 3 Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
- 4 the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
- 5 the effective abolition of child labour; and
- 6 the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



ENVIRONMENT

- 7 Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
- 8 undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
- 9 encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.



ANTI-CORRUPTION

- 10 Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

The Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact are derived from: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.

ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

As a special initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General, the **UN Global Compact** is a call to companies worldwide to align their operations and strategies with Ten Principles in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Our ambition is to accelerate and scale the global collective impact of business by upholding the Ten Principles and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals through accountable companies and ecosystems that enable change. With more than 20,000 companies based in over 160 countries, and more than 60 Global Compact Country Networks, it is the largest corporate sustainability initiative in the world.

For more information, follow [@globalcompact](https://twitter.com/globalcompact) on social media and visit our website at [UNGLOBALCOMPACT.ORG](https://unglobalcompact.org).



United Nations
Global Compact

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