

A GENDER-RESPONSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE TOOL

GIRLS
ADVOCACY
ALLIANCE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is a growing need to demonstrate to your customers and other stakeholders, that you are a socially responsible, ecologically sustainable and profitable business. You know that respecting human rights within your workplace and broader supply chain is the good thing to do. It may even be that you are personally convinced that treating people with different gender identities equally is economically smart.

You are not alone. Many businesses strive to “do the right thing” for society, the environment, and (naturally) their own bottom line. But doing the right thing can become a complex undertaking. Especially as the business environment becomes ever-more competitive, natural resources dwindle, government regulations tighten, and societal pressure grows for gender equality (triggered amongst others by #MeToo, demands to break the class ceiling for women, consumer interest in decent work environments for women, etc.).

This is what this tool is about. It enables you to reap the benefits that gender equality has on profitability, productivity, creativity, innovativeness, retention and brand reputation, while simultaneously eliminating or at least reducing gender-specific human rights risks and their negative impacts in your business operations. We refer to this as exercising ‘Gender-responsive Human Rights Due Diligence’ (GR-HRDD).

So, what does this entail in practice? Simply put, it is aiming for gender-equality by ensuring that you are consistently applying a gender “lens” as you define your policies, assess risks and gaps, develop action plans, monitor, report, and operationalise your human rights compliance. This, however, is not a simple box-ticking exercise. GR-HRDD is about much more than ensuring that you have an “equal” number of male and female employees, or have policies in place to deal with sexual harassment. It requires a deep understanding about the underlying socio-economic dynamics that contribute to unequal gender relations. It could involve, for example, identify structural barriers that may relegate women to the lowest-paid cadres of your workforce, or acknowledging the stigmas that prevent workers of all gender identities from contributing to their fullest potential, getting the promotions they deserve, and fully enjoying their rights and freedoms. Even though gender refers to more than men and women only, this GR-HRDD tool focusses on women since they constitute the majority of employees who face gender-specific risks, discrimination and inequality.

As the name implies, GR-HRDD expands on existing requirements for businesses to comply with human rights principles, which are set out in diverse national and international legal frameworks. Among these are the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), the [OECD Guidelines](#), and the various conventions of the International Labour Organization. With the adoption of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, businesses are also increasingly called upon to play a greater role in creating a more equal, inclusive and sustainable world.

Investing in gender makes business sense

Diverse (global) studies have consistently found that companies that actively pursue gender equality (including at the management level) benefit from, among others: higher profitability (between 5% and 20%); higher productivity; lower volatility in return on capital; increased ability to attract and retain talent; greater creativity, innovation and openness (19% higher innovation revenue); enhanced reputation; and the ability to better gauge consumer interest and demand.

It may sound like a complex undertaking, but as the case studies referenced across this tool attest, it pays to invest in gender equality. Perhaps even more significant, these positive examples of gender-sensitive business practice are drawn from sectors that are traditionally associated with widespread human rights abuses: ready-made garments, tourism and hospitality, and agrifood (cocoa). These experiences therefore offer reassurance that, more than simply meeting the minimum due diligence requirements, businesses can proactively contribute towards empowering women and girls, and redressing unequal gender relations in workplaces, supply chains, and within broader society, while simultaneously having a positive effect on the top and bottom line.

Beyond these direct benefits, companies that embed gender-sensitive practices across their operations, and progressively building on the lessons learnt, can become effective agents of change in achieving gender-inclusive, and sustainable development along the lines of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

What GR-HRDD entails

Organised around the six steps of Human Rights Due Diligence, this toolkit offers a conceptual framework, as well as practical guidance for planning, implementing, and monitoring your GR-HRDD processes. It guides you through the process of: (1) defining a gender equality policy; (2) identifying gender-specific human rights risks; (3) designing measures to mitigate these risks; (4) monitoring your progress and results; (5) communicating outcomes; and (6) remedying any violations that may occur.



At each of these six steps you should address 9 human rights principles (that you as a business can directly influence) with attention to the gender specific issues women face. Workers of all gender identities should face no discrimination in recruitment, career opportunities and training. They should receive and have control over fair wages with which they can make a living. Thirdly, workers should be able to work reasonable hours voluntarily. Next, they have to be allowed to freely choose their work and not be subjected to forced labour. Fifth, workers should never be harassed or abused. A sixth human right is that workers must be able to work in safe and healthy environments with adequate facilities. Male and female workers also have the right to organise themselves and bargain collectively for their labour conditions. The eighth right is for workers to have legally binding employment relationships. Finally, workers should have access to, use of and control over land and safe natural resources.



Using this GR-HRDD toolkit will help you and the teams involved gain a better understanding on how to achieve gender equality by addressing nine human rights principles with a “gender lens” in your own business context. You will gain clear insights on how applying a gender lens benefits your workers and stakeholders, how these principles can be addressed in your policies, risk assessment, mitigation measures and remedy, and how to leverage the results of your GR-HRDD processes to enhance your business performance and your brand value as a human-rights compliant, and gender-responsive brand. Staff active in day-to-day operations such as those working in marketing, procurement, production, HR or legal affairs can benefit from the tool by incorporating the insights and good practices in their policies and daily activities. The GR-HRDD tool may also be beneficial for executives who want to showcase their company’s human rights credentials to shareholders. In a word, this tool can benefit all who are responsible for “gender responsiveness.” It will help you gain a better understanding of what this means, why and how it benefits stakeholders, how it adds value to your company, and how to exercise GR-HRDD in practice.

To maximise the effectiveness of this GR-HRDD, it is best incorporated within your overall business strategy and operations planning. It is also essential to involve a broad cross-section of your internal and external “stakeholders” – including female and male workers, representatives of employee unions and management, suppliers, community-based organisations in your area of operations, specialised NGOs, women’s rights organisations and academic institutions, and relevant government institutions. This will help you anticipate gender-related human rights risks in your business environment, proactively plan for new regulatory frameworks, and maintain good relationship with your consumers and broader society.

The critical role of executives

A strong commitment to gender equality and the tone set by corporate leadership and senior management ensures that all the stakeholders have a common understanding of the company’s standpoint on gender and human rights, are empowered to take action where needed, and know that non-compliance is unacceptable.

As executives you can guide your company to go beyond a ‘do no harm’ approach, transform gender relations across your business operations, and make a real contribution to advancing the rights of women.

Having senior management commitment helps to initiate internal conversations, signals the importance of the process, and ensures that gender policy is embedded strongly and in a complementary fashion in your company’s overall policy and management system.

Using the GR-HRDD tool to your benefit

The toolkit consists of three separate books and is organised in such a way that users can quickly navigate to the instruments they consider to be most relevant to their needs.

The first chapter of this first book discusses the overall rationale for undertaking GR-HRDD, with an overview of key instruments at international and national levels that govern such due diligence processes. The second chapter sets out the business case for undertaking GR-HRDD, with some global studies from renowned institutes and consultancies, and illustrative cases from diverse (global) businesses.

Chapter 3 introduces the six steps of the GR-HRDD tool and explains how it interfaces with the nine international human rights principles that you as a company can influence.

Starting a full-fledged GR-HRDD approach spanning your whole business without knowing your starting position might not be a good idea. Therefore, we provide you in chapter 4 (and its accompanying workbook) with a GR-HRDD Maturity Assessment to take you through a simple, but systematic process of identifying your level of GR-HRDD maturity. You can do this assessment for a few of your business units, for the company as a whole, or even together with your suppliers. This will help you choose the best entry point for launching, or expanding on, your GR-HRDD process.



The fifth chapter complemented by the two other books (“applying GR-HRDD in practice” and “workbook”), helps you take a deep dive into the actual process. We empower you with explanations, insights, good practices and practical checklists and templates to address the nine human rights principles in each of the six steps of Human Rights Due Diligence. You can apply the GR-HRDD tool in incremental steps, such as: strengthening your gender policies to inform more practical interventions; “piloting” a GR-HRDD approach within one specific product category, and its associated suppliers; and then building on the lessons learned to expand to your other product categories and supply chains. Another incremental approach could be to start in one or two production locations in a country, consider other locations within the country, and then add more countries.

The final chapter of the first book recaps the business case for GR-HRDD and some key considerations for practice. It concludes with an open call to users to share your own business cases, insights gained from applying the tool and its instruments in diverse business contexts, and policies and measures applied that have proven to be effective. This input will be invaluable in continuously updating and improving the effectiveness and usability of this tool for you and other companies across the globe.

At the end of this book, you will find a list of additional helpful resources that you can use in your GR-HRDD process and a [quiz](#) to get acquainted with gender facts in a fun way.



Time to act

Many businesses are overwhelmed with the consequences of the current pandemic and resulting economic crisis. But looked at it in a different way, they offer a window of opportunity for companies in many sectors to assess (gender-specific) human rights risks in their supply chains, as they seek to build a more resilient, and sustainable business. Build back better in this context means build back fairer and bringing gender equality to the core of employment recovery. It is critical now to ensure that women lead and participate fully in decision-making on recovery.

The task of confronting gender inequality is immense, and is further exacerbated by COVID-19 and other complex crises that are unfolding before our eyes. But that should not stop us. History has shown that private sector actors are capable of addressing complex societal problems. They may not develop all-encompassing plans and blueprints, but they can unleash tremendous entrepreneurial spirit, perseverance, and a “learning by doing” mentality. It also helps to know that you are not alone in this endeavour. Many other companies are already experimenting with different ways of becoming more gender responsive in their day-to-day business practices. And an array of other actors – who include government agencies, NGOs, labour unions, and universities – not only wish you well, but have a real stake in your success. Together, they have assembled a rich body of resources to help you get started, or to sustain your progress.

Designed to tap into this collaborative spirit, we hope that this toolkit will help galvanise even more momentum and support for companies who have embarked on the journey to becoming truly gender responsive, and hence maximise their positive impact on girls and women.

To get a concrete grasp of what GR-HRDD entails we provide you with a one-page summary of each of the six steps of GR-HRDD. These summaries include good practices to apply per step, examples of gender-equality policy statements, gender-specific human rights risks you will face, practical risk mitigating measures, insights on monitoring and learning, communication goals per target audience, and insights on how to set-up grievance and remediation mechanisms.



STEP 1: EMBED GENDER EQUALITY INTO YOUR POLICIES & MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS



Your first step is to establish a corporate ambition & policy aimed at achieving gender-equality (GE) which is embedded in your corporate governance, and understood, embraced and supported by all stakeholders.

8 GOOD PRACTICES TO APPLY IN DEFINING & EMBEDDING YOUR GENDER-EQUALITY POLICY

1. Executive are committed to achieve GE & respecting human rights in appropriate balance with other business priorities & resources.
2. Relevant stakeholders agree on the importance of GE and help to define an inspiring yet achievable gender-equality policy.
3. GE policy refers to (inter)national law to ensure legal compliance from the outset.
4. GE policy is an integral part of and builds on your corporate (HR) policies, including departmental policies & external covenants.
5. GE policy statements are defined for all 9 human rights principles and formulated in a gender-sensitive manner.
6. GE policy is translated into (Supplier) Codes of Conduct that give employees & suppliers practical guidelines they have to adhere to.
7. The governance model defines roles, responsibilities & accountabilities regarding gender-sensitive human rights & gender equality.
8. GE policy is shared with all rights holders and all internal & external stakeholders who have a role to play in its implementation.

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICAL GENDER-EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENTS FOR THE 9 HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES

Workers face no discrimination in recruitment, employment and training

- We equally, fairly & transparently recruit, promote, and reward men & women.
- We recruit women & men equally across functions and levels & prevent career set-backs due to pregnancy or parental leave
- We provide for equal training opportunities during business hours for men & women to empower and school themselves.

Workers receive fair wages & benefits at a living wage level

- Our wages and benefits always meet the living wage standard and embrace a price strategy that incorporates 'true costs & living wages'
- We ensure equal income for men & women for similar tasks, & do not allow wage deductions for gender-related disciplinary measures.
- We ensure that all employees have full and unlimited access to their own bank account into which salaries and benefits are deposited.

Employees work reasonable hours at decent conditions

- We place timely & stable production orders that meet production capacity of suppliers without need for (involuntary) overtime.
- We explicitly forbid our staff and suppliers to punish, retaliate against, or penalise women & men who refuse to work overtime.
- Overtime in our company & suppliers is always voluntary, recorded, paid-out at 150% of regular wages, & never exceeds 12 hrs / week.

Workers freely choose their work, and are not forced, bonded, or obligated to work

- We explicitly forbid any kind of modern slavery and human trafficking and never require employees to make a payment to secure a job
- We forbid confiscation of ID's, withholding of wages or obligatory deposits by employees to ensure their return to work after time-off.
- We forbid confinement of and physical force against men & women, and they are free to choose their own housing accommodations.

Workers are not harassed or abused

- We forbid abuse, harassment, unwanted sexual advances, and use of offensive and sexually-explicit language that physically, psychologically and/or sexually embarrasses, humiliates, intimidates, annoys and/or alarms women & men.
- In working situations with a predominantly female workforce, we use female rather than male overseers and managers.
- We take preventive measures such as safe transportation, safe facilities and safe surroundings for female & male employees.

The work environment is safe and healthy, and workers have access to basic needs and services

- We provide a safe & hygienic working environment that meet all gender-specific needs of women & men.
- We apply and ensure female- and male-friendly practices and facilities in the workplace
- We provide for mandatory safety trainings for women and men during regular working hours.

Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining are respected

- We inform & train managers, suppliers & workers about the right of employees to organise themselves in workers' councils and unions.
- We stimulate & facilitate unions and workers' councils to admit women in leadership roles to represent gender issues.
- Threatening or bullying of or committing violent actions against those who join a trade union or workers' council is forbidden.

Workers have a legally binding employment relationship with clear contracts and conditions

- We offer protection and job security for workers in both permanent and flexible employment arrangement.
- We only use certified & registered recruitment agencies who themselves apply gender-responsive policies.
- We limit outsourcing to small (informal) suppliers, unless these are female owned & strengthens female economic empowerment.

Workers can own land and have access to safe natural resources

- We don't destruct or pollute living environments, restore damages & support women & men in their sustainable economic activities.
- We don't monopolise or excessively use natural resources & involve men & women equally in decisions affecting access to resources.
- We only use land that is not claimed, or owned by locals, and apply the right to free, prior & informed consent of female & male locals.



STEP 2: IDENTIFY & ASSESS GENDER RISKS & ADVERSE IMPACTS



In this step you comprehensively assess the likelihood of gender-specific human rights risks occurring, their impact on rights holders, and the urgency these risks must be mitigated. You also analyse their root causes to determine how to effectively mitigate them and structurally address the underlying causes.

5 GOOD PRACTICES TO IDENTIFY & ASSESS GENDER-SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS & THEIR ADVERSE IMPACT

1. Relevant stakeholders (incl. suppliers) help to identify & assess gender-specific human rights risks and their impacts on women & men.
2. All possible internal & external risks as well as the data / risk indicators needed to identify actual risks, are known upfront.
3. For all potential risks the likelihood of occurrence & the specific impact on women & men are identified to prioritise mitigation efforts.
4. For internal risks, root causes are analysed to identify effective mitigating measures that tackle negative impacts & underlying causes.
5. External risks (e.g. political, economical, technological, legal, environmental, social & health-related) are assessed through a gender-lens to understand if they may have a disproportionately higher likelihood of occurring and/or a higher impact on women versus men.

EXAMPLES OF GENDER-SPECIFIC INTERNAL RISKS RELATED TO THE 9 HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES

Workers face no discrimination in recruitment, employment and training

- Discrimination of women in recruitment and recruiting women mostly for lower-level roles.
- Limited career opportunities for women, or even termination following marriage or pregnancy.
- Less training opportunities for women.

Workers receive fair wages and benefits at a living wage level

- Wages, overtime pay, benefits, and paid leave for women are below a living wage.
- Lower wages, overtime pay, benefits, and paid leave for women is less than for men.
- No personal bank account and/or wage payments in cash, and no financial support to female (agriculture) producers in their own right.

Employees work reasonable hours at decent conditions

- Unrealistic daily targets, and overtime too frequently needed, which women find hard to refuse.
- Punishment, retaliation, or penalties for workers who refuse to work overtime.
- Overtime not always recorded, and/or not paid out for full.

Workers freely choose their work, and are not forced, bonded, or obligated to work

- Exploitative practices such as modern slavery, human trafficking, and unknown or last-minute changes to employment contracts.
- Confiscation of personal ID's (so women & men cannot leave the country or apply for social security) and withholding wages.
- Confinement and threats of physical force.

Workers are not harassed or abused

- Unwanted & offensive sexually-explicit language, sexual advances, abuses, threats, intimidation and/or assaults of women while at work, resulting in physical, psychological, and/or sexual embarrassment, humiliation, intimidation, annoyance and/or alarm for women.

The work environment is safe and healthy, and workers have access to basic needs and services

- Unsafe working environment, lack of PPE, unsafe commuting to work & poor safety measures that expose staff to gender-specific risks.
- Unhygienic working environment with inadequate, or no facilities for women (e.g. breast-feeding locations, storage for milk).
- Poor safety training for women & men.

Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining are respected

- A lack of awareness about women's human right to associate and engage in collective bargaining.
- Poor representation of women in unions (including at leadership levels) & obstruction of women to participate in unions.
- Being disproportionately subjected to threats, bullying, physical assault, or even murder for joining or working for a trade union.

Workers have a legally binding employment relationship with clear contracts and conditions

- Poor job security and no protection for women in flexible employment arrangements.
- Use of unscrupulous recruitment agencies.
- Outsourcing to smaller (informal) suppliers and female contract workers, with accompanying low incomes & benefits.

Workers can own land and have access to safe natural resources

- Lack of, or low recognition of property rights for women, and their marginalisation as important stakeholders in natural resource usage.
- Lack of women's participation in decision-making processes that affect ownership of & access to land, property and natural resources.
- Displacement of locals from their land to make way for economic activities without free, prior & informed consent of women.



STEP 3: CEASE, PREVENT OR MITIGATE GENDER-SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHT RISKS



This step is about proactively & reactively adapting policies, decisions, processes & operations to cease, prevent or reduce gender-specific human rights risks and prevent negative impacts on rights holders.

6 GOOD PRACTICES TO CEASE, PREVENT OR MITIGATE GENDER-SPECIFIC HUMAN RIGHTS RISKS

1. Cease activities, or find alternatives to eliminate the risks, and hence remove the negative impact on rights holders.
2. Create a roadmap to cease activities that require difficult & time-consuming responses due to operational, contractual or legal issues.
3. Use your leverage & provide incentives to suppliers to cease business activities that cause gender-related risks.
4. Guide & train managers & staff on gender-specific risks, mitigating measures & necessary changes in their own behaviour.
5. Defer decisions that “lock in” a risk & take time to understand the risk, find ways to eliminate or reduce it, or even cancel the action.
6. Identify, design & test responsive strategies & empower women to enhance resilience to deal with external risks.

EXAMPLES OF MEASURES TO MITIGATE RISKS

Workers face no discrimination in recruitment, employment and training

- Publish gender-neutral vacancies, allow candidates to withhold gender information, train staff in non-discriminatory recruitment methods, involve women in career progress decisions, & set minimum targets for men & women across all functions & hierarchies.
- Link executives' pay & bonuses to GE targets.
- Prohibit negative career-related decisions by managers based on gender-specific situations like pregnancy or maternity leave.
- Make education & training mandatory for women & men and set corresponding management targets to enable attendance to trainings.

Workers receive fair wages and benefits at a living wage level

- Company & suppliers bear the costs of recruitment fees, advances, etc., & pay a substantially higher wage for involuntary overtime.
- Flag sudden deductions from wages to check if these don't result from disciplinary measures.
- Support female employees to open a bank account to safely receive their salary and other payments (wage digitisation).

Employees work reasonable hours at decent conditions

- Prohibit managers & suppliers from setting targets so high that (female) employees must work overtime to earn a living wage.
- Ensure sales targets & procurement orders don't fluctuate beyond pre-specified boundaries & require overtime to meet the targets.
- Provide training to managers to ensure they do not punish, retaliate against, or penalise employees that choose not to work overtime.

Workers freely choose their work, and are not forced, bonded, or obligated to work

- Inform all workers that they cannot be charged (recruitment) fees or be required to leave a deposit and don't have to hand-over ID's.
- Pay all wages, including for overtime, within the legally defined time limits or at least once a month.
- Facilitate employees to look for comparable accommodation alternatives if they do not want to be housed in company-owned facilities.

Workers are not harassed or abused

- Work with mixed-gender teams of overseers & security guard, provide safe transportation for employees & limit use of informal labour.
- Promote gender-responsible behaviour by showcasing & rewarding good practices.
- Train all staff in the impacts of (gender-based) abuse, threats, intimidation, or assault, and the consequences perpetrators will face.

The work environment is safe and healthy, and workers have access to basic needs and services

- Provide adequate OHS, safe food & water, hygienic sanitary facilities & protection against dangerous chemicals for male & female staff.
- Staff your on-site clinics with female doctors & nurses to provide adequate support for sexual, reproductive and mental health.
- Train all managers & workers (in the gender-specific safety & hygiene measures).

Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining are respected

- Inform & train all staff & suppliers about the right of employees to organise themselves in workers' councils and unions.
- Encourage unions & workers councils to recruit female leaders & ensure women's equal participation in consultations & negotiations.
- Protect female employees who have organised themselves and/or have joined a union or workers' council.

Workers have a legally binding employment relationship with clear contracts and conditions

- Work with suppliers, NGOs & government to expand formal jobs & ensure equal access to employment opportunities for women & men.
- Set targets for sourcing from women-owned businesses and collaborate with them to continuously improve their operations.
- Work with suppliers to improve operations & flexibility (to absorb fluctuations in demand) to reduce outsourcing to informal contractors.

Workers can own land and have access to safe natural resources

- Facilitate your business units & suppliers to produce sustainable products, recycle waste & limit the use of pollutants & scarce resources.
- Work with (female-owned) start-ups or create your own spin-offs to use your waste in new products.
- Ensure that women participate in decision-making processes that affect the use of community & private property and natural resources.



STEP 4: TRACK PROGRESS ON GENDER EQUALITY



Achieving GE, empowering women & reaping the benefits, is a long-term effort that requires stamina, learning from past mistakes, leveraging proven good practices, constant fine-tuning, and keeping internal and external stakeholders well informed and actively engaged. This requires you to monitor your GR-HRDD implementation efforts, your actual progress, as well as unexpected hurdles you may have faced. These insights provide the ingredients for learning and continuous improvements.

8 GOOD PRACTICES TO TRACK PROGRESS & MAKE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS IN YOUR GR-HRDD EFFORTS

1. Ensure that key staff is committed to tracking & improving your GR-HRDD efforts, since this improves the effectiveness of your policies, investment decisions, resource allocation, and improves transparency towards & relationships with shareholders, customers, NGOs, etc
2. To effectively & efficiently monitor & improve your GR-HRDD efforts & outcomes, work with a few KPIs with clear targets for which data & measurement tools are available and which will provide you with credible results.
3. Avoid the pitfall to monitor only what can be easily measured, rather than what is truly important to monitor & undertake supplementary field-studies to gather anecdotal evidence from those affected by gender-related human rights abuses.
4. Monitor GR-HRDD progress & outcomes in your own operations and those of suppliers with periodic (un)announced (social) audits, including useful & rigorous audits that are a part of third-party certification schemes that pay attention to human rights risks.
5. Stimulate managers & suppliers to conduct self-assessments to comply with GE policy without pressure from head office or customer.
6. Ensure that the monitoring approach is gender inclusive, addresses gender-specific norms & values, is conducted by gender-balanced, independent & experienced audit teams, uses proven monitoring methods, and is fed with data disaggregated by gender.
7. Experiment with rapidly emerging M&E instruments that sprout from the digital revolution. Artificial intelligence, block chain, drones, crowd-auditing & satellite tech offer more efficient, augmented or even new insights in the human rights issues at play in supply chains.
8. To maximise your learning & stimulate truly transformative improvements that involve changes in values, norms and beliefs, ensure that your learning approach includes single-, double- & triple-loop learning within your own company and its suppliers.

EXAMPLES OF KPIs TO MONITOR & IMPROVE YOUR GR-HRDD EFFORTS & OUTCOME

GR-HRDD performance areas	KPIs
I Policies and processes (as part of the six steps of your GR-HRDD) that promote GE and address prominent gender-specific human rights issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. % coverage of the GR-HRDD approach by well-documented and by management endorsed policies, risk management processes, grievance mechanisms, etc 2. % of gender-specific risks for which root causes are identified & accepted by key stakeholders. 3. # of interventions to reduce the likelihood of gender-related risks occurring and/or their impact 4. # of gender-specific indicators defined, included in audits and analysed. 5. # of stakeholders informed on GE policies, activities and results achieved. 6. # of incidents reported and resolved satisfactorily for affected parties.
II Awareness, competencies & beliefs of managers & workers across your supply chain of GE policy & GR-HRDD efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Rating of staff of their knowledge & acceptance of GE policies & GR-HRDD efforts o % of management & workers (identified as playing a key role in the process) trained in all aspects of GR-HRDD and good practices to achieve GE o % women & men who are convinced that GE must be achieved & is beneficial for all.
III Outcomes of your GR-HRDD efforts to drive positive impact for workers of all gender identities (related to the nine human rights principles)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A Ratio of women / men in management positions B % women who get paid at least the living wage level C % women who work overtime voluntarily D # of women with paid wages within legally defined time limits E # women who experience less or no harassment & abuse F % women who feel that health & well-being needs are adequately addressed G # female members & leaders of producer associations, unions, and workers' councils H % women with employment contracts that safeguard wages, benefits, hours & working conditions I % women who can own land, and have access to safe natural resources
IV Grievances received & remedies provided related to the nine human rights principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o # of actual grievances regarding violations of the nine human rights principles & your GE policy that happen despite your GR-HRDD efforts o # of actual cases remedied to the full satisfaction of the complainant(s) and with appropriate sanctioning of the perpetrators



STEP 5: COMMUNICATE HOW IMPACTS ARE ADDRESSED



To inform your stakeholders, engage & commit them to achieve gender-equality and mitigate & remedy gender-specific human rights risks, you should communicate with them from the moment you start thinking about the relevance of gender-equality use it as an essential means to reinforce all your GR-HRDD efforts. Your company's communications and branding offer a crucial platform for showcasing your commitment to GE & breaking gender stereotypes. This helps to create a culture & atmosphere of trust, commitment & joint ambition

10 GOOD PRACTICES TO COMMUNICATE HOW IMPACTS ARE ADDRESSED

1. Be as clear as possible on who you would like to communicate with, and what you want your stakeholders to know, believe and do. "Touch their heart."
2. Communicate with employees & unions to help them understand why GE is worth striving for, what you are doing, what results are achieved & what they themselves can & must do to achieve it & comply with your policies. Your efforts should instil sustainable change amongst staff by challenging their own ideas about gender & norms about what behaviour is acceptable.
3. Your company proudly serves a broad range of customers with different expectations about responsible business conduct in general, and GE in particular. Through communication you can strengthen your brand perception, what you are doing for the benefit of women, men & nature, gain customers' trust & raise their willingness to buy from you.
4. Your communication with suppliers should focus on what your GE policies, and the resulting supplier codes of conduct, mean for your them. You can highlight how living up to them not only safeguards their position as your supplier, but also strengthens their competitive power amongst peers. Another possible angle in your communications is to expose suppliers to a different view, and hence create a counter-narrative on typical negative gender norms and values.
5. Your entry point in talking to shareholders & lenders is to provide them with a solid case to support your investments in GR-HRDD and/or inform them that you actively comply with their conditions. In particular, you will want to highlight how investing in GE helps improve your company's top- & bottom-lines, as well as its competitiveness & innovativeness.
6. Communication with governments should focus on both compliance with their laws & regulations as well as the positive changes society wants to achieve with help of governments. As a private enterprise you can also engage in a "transformative push" to challenge governments' ambitions or overturning gender stereotypes and biases.
7. Your communication activities with NGOs focus on informing them about your GE ambition, GR-HRDD plans, progress, results & challenges with which they might be able to help you. It also helps to instil a level of trust in your company that will result in a more positive portrayal of your company amongst NGOs & their rank & file.
8. Not only the content, but the tone of your visual, verbal & written communication expresses what your company really thinks about gender-based human rights and how important achieving gender-equality truly is. In practice, gender-sensitive communication boils down to, among others: ensuring an inclusive approach in all kinds of communications; equally representing different gender identities in your audio-visual materials; not defining women and men through their gender roles alone; and preventing depictions of women and men as objects of violence and sexuality.
9. Irrespective of your company's communication goals, all your stakeholders want your communication to be clear, honest, relevant, timely, representative & easily accessible.
10. In addition to the corporate company's story itself, authentic stories of the actors in the value chain are of value. Let the small farmers in Ethiopia, the young women in the sweatshops in Bangladesh, the factory owner in China, the cashier in Germany, and the warehouse workers in The Netherlands tell real time about the changes they may or may not be experiencing in the way they operate, their working conditions, their lives or in their community: stories about the true impact achieved. Ultimately, no KPI can beat such stories!



STEP 6: PROVIDE FOR OR COOPERATE IN REMEDIATION WHEN APPROPRIATE



Despite substantial efforts to mitigate gender related risks, a company may still encounter violations of its GE policy, resulting in (severe) impacts. These incidents may occur within the company itself or be reported among its suppliers and subcontractors. It is for this reason that companies have to provide workers & other rights holders with a mechanism through which they can report grievances. Once reported, the company must also investigate these grievances and provide remedies to restore individuals or groups that have been harmed by a business's activities to the situation they would have been in had the impact not occurred. It goes without saying that the company must also firmly deal with the perpetrator in a manner that fits the seriousness of the harm caused.

Good grievance & remediation mechanisms have a positive impact on trust, labour-management relations, retention, productivity, production quality & profitability.

5 GOOD PRACTICES RELATED TO GRIEVANCE MECHANISMS

1. In the context of GR-HRDD four grievance mechanisms should be considered:
 - Internal grievance mechanism for company's own staff (or their representatives or witnesses) to report violations of the company's GE policy that occur within the 'boundaries' of this company;
 - External grievance mechanisms for employees of a supplying company to file formal complaints with the buying company, which can push for remediation by the supplier since it may constitute a violation of Supplier Codes of Conduct & procurement contracts;
 - Multi-stakeholder grievance mechanisms in which companies participate for employees of members of this multi-stakeholder initiative to file formal complaints, which will then be addressed by the lead agency with the member firm(s) involved;
 - Community grievance mechanisms developed for community complaints related to a high-impact project that can have potentially significant consequences for local communities around the project (e.g. developing a resort, a golf courses or a mine, etc.).
2. Use your grievance mechanisms to (a) address problems before they escalate & actually do harm, or if harm has already been done, (b) understand the impact of (gender-specific) human rights violations, (c) determine (beyond doubt) the perpetrators & root causes, (d) remedy the wrongs done, compensate those who have been harmed, and (e) feed directly into long-term GR-HRDD improvements.
3. Ensure trust in the grievance mechanism by

collaborating with relevant stakeholders in the design, training of managers & staff in the workings of the mechanism, safeguarding privacy & anonymity of complainant & alleged wrongdoer, and guaranteeing transparency.

4. Establish a clear grievance process with predictable timelines for due process of each step of the process as well as types of inputs, output and outcomes per step. Put in place equitable procedures to conduct unbiased and independent investigations to find out both what happened, who is involved, who is accountable, and what the underlying root causes are of the violation.
5. Staff the grievance mechanism with skilled & experienced people and take full accountability for the fair conduct of grievance processes.

5 GOOD PRACTICES REGARDING REMEDIATION MECHANISMS

- A. Engage the workers' union (including its female members), women's organisations & gender experts, to develop victim-centred & contextually relevant remediation approaches and to identify appropriate deterrents, punishments & corrective remedies.
- B. Inform all rights holders about available company-issued & judicial remedies and ensure that they may freely access these.
- C. Provide for recovery such as medical & psychological care and legal & social services such as shelter & counselling.
- D. Adequately compensate victims or dependants for the harm & loss suffered, by reimbursing them, acknowledging the violation of the victim's rights, ensuring the violation stops, and providing programmes for women & men to improve career prospects.
- E. Impose punitive sanctions (e.g. fines, demotion, or dismissal) on the wrongdoer to match the scale of the human rights infringement. And bring perpetrators and evidence of their wrongdoing, to the attention of authorities to initiate & facilitate prosecution.

3 GOOD PRACTICES TO UPDATE YOUR GE POLICY & GR-HRDD APPROACH

- I Based on insights gathered through your grievance & remediation mechanisms you can & should revisit & improve your GE policy, (supplier) code of conduct, mitigating measures & sourcing practices, to limit risks & prevent adverse impacts.
- II Evaluate the effectiveness of the grievance & remediation mechanisms themselves to improve them.
- III Communicate the updated GE policy, operational guidance, (supplier) code of conduct & sourcing practices with all staff & suppliers.

This is a publication of Plan International Netherlands
& the Girls Advocacy Alliance

Authors: [Machteld Ooijens, Partnering for Social Impact](#)
and [Plan International Netherlands](#)

Editor: Wangu Mwangi, Independent Communications
Consultant

Graphic design & identity: [Janneke Laarakkers, planpuur.](#)

Photo credits: Plan International or credited.

December, 2020

GIRLS ADVOCACY ALLIANCE



Girls first

Plan Nederland
Stadhouderskade 60
1072 AC Amsterdam

Tel: +31 (0)20-5495555
www.planinternational.nl

**DEFENCE for
CHILDREN** 



Defence for Children – ECPAT
Hooglandse Kerkgracht 17G
2312 HS Leiden

Tel: +31 (0)71-516 09 80
www.defenceforchildren.nl

terre des hommes 
stopt kindermisbruik

Terre des Hommes
Zoutmanstraat 42 -44
2518 GS Den Haag

Tel: +31 (0)70-310 5000
www.terredeshommes.nl



Development Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

The Girls Advocacy Alliance is one of the strategic partners of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Dialogue and Dissent framework.