

GEM Self-Assessment Guidance Document

This guidance document prepares you and your company for the Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) self-assessment. The guide describes what the GEM self-assessment is and who it is for, including the appropriate staff to complete the GEM self-assessment. A glossary of terms is included near the end of the guide to define various terms and acronyms. Please review this guide carefully before starting the GEM self-assessment. You may also find it helpful to refer to the guide as you complete the self-assessment.



GEM Self-Assessment Guidance Document

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the GEM self-assessment?

Developed by MEDA, the GEM self-assessment measures a company's performance on gender equality mainstreaming across environmental, social and governance (ESG) components. It also assists companies to identify viable opportunities that can advance women's inclusion in business operations while promoting business growth and increased opportunities for investment.

The GEM self-assessment is made up of three surveys, with each survey asking gender-specific questions about one of the ESG components. Depending on the score achieved for each component, businesses receive recommendations on ways to mainstream gender in business operations.

Please note that MEDA also offers a comprehensive and multi-faceted [GEM Framework](#) as a separate resource that serves as a practical guide and toolkit for assessing gender equality, identifying potential gender mainstreaming initiatives and implementing them within a company.

Who is the GEM self-assessment for?

The GEM self-assessment is designed for companies to complete themselves. This tool will be of particular interest to companies concerned with business growth and impact as it builds upon the commonly used ESG standard. The ESG standard is widely used to sustain a company's competitive advantage (Morgan Stanley, 2017) while contributing to impact. In this rapidly evolving investment climate, businesses that integrate ESG are well-positioned to attract investors. Those that get ahead of the game with a gender mainstreaming lens, will reap further benefits.

How do I complete the GEM self-assessment?

1. Enter your email address in the [online form here](#).
2. The GEM self-assessment is made up of three surveys. As such, you will receive three emails, each with a link to one of the three ESG component surveys. Before starting a survey, review this guidance document.
3. Complete all three surveys, starting with Part I. Each survey should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete and may be filled out by a representative from the company's executive team and/or Human Resources Manager.
4. Upon completing a survey, you will receive an email with your company's results and score for that particular ESG component.
5. Based on your company's score for the particular ESG component, review [the recommended gender strategies](#) for your company. There are different gender strategies recommended for each ESG component.

How long does the GEM self-assessment take?

Taken together, the three surveys that make up the GEM self-assessment should take about 30 minutes.

Who should complete the GEM self-assessment?

It is most beneficial if a member of the company's executive team and/or the Human Resources Manager completes the GEM self-assessment. The survey questions range from environmental policies and practices to questions about your company's employees, customers and suppliers.

Question and comments

MEDA welcomes your feedback. If you have questions or comments regarding the GEM self-assessment, please send an email to Devon and Carl at dkrainer@meda.org and casuncion@meda.org

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment Part I – Social Standards

Introduction

Welcome to the Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) self-assessment! This is one of three surveys developed by MEDA to measure a company's performance in gender mainstreaming. Each survey asks gender-specific questions about one of the three environmental, social and governance components of the ESG standard. It is designed for companies to complete themselves.

This survey assesses inclusion of gender in the social component of the ESG standard. To do so, you will be asked questions about your company's employees, customers, and suppliers. To help you prepare, please refer to this guidance document before starting the survey.

Your responses to the survey are strictly confidential. No individual or company names will be attached to any part of the results. This survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Upon completion, you will receive a copy of your results and recommended actions through the email you provide. If you have any questions or concerns, please send an email to Devon Krainer at dkrainer@meda.org and Carl Asuncion at casuncion@meda.org.

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment Part I – Social Standards

Company Profile

1. In which country is your company headquartered?

2. In what city is your company headquartered?

3. In which sector(s) is your business active?

- Accommodation and food services (hospitality industries)
- Agricultural processing
- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Construction
- Educational services
- Finance and insurance
- Health care and social assistance
- Information and cultural industries
- Management of companies and enterprises
- Manufacturing
- Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
- Other services (except public administration)
- Pharmaceuticals
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Public administration
- Retail trade
- Real estate and rental and leasing
- Transportation and warehousing
- Utilities
- Wholesale trade
- Waste management and remediation services
- Other (please specify)

4. How long has the company been in business?

- Less than 3 years
- 3-8 years
- 9-15 years
- More than 15 years

5. What is the company's annual revenue?

- Less than 1,000,000 USD
- 1,000,000 – 10,000,000 USD
- 10,000,000 – 40,000,000 USD
- More than 40,000,000 USD

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment Part I – Social Standards

Employees

The following questions ask about the number of women and men at different levels of your company. [This excel tool](#) can support you in responding to the questions by determining the exact number of men and women employees for the most precise assessment. If your time is limited, you may estimate the number of employees but please note that gender perceptions are often skewed and your estimates may affect the accuracy of your test score.

6. How would you describe the number of women and men employees in the company?

- There are noticeably more women employees in the company
- There are about the same number of women and men employees in the company
- There are noticeably more men employees in the company

7. How would you describe the number of women and men management level employees in the company (this includes managers at all levels including those indicated in the next question)?

- There are noticeably more women managers in the company
- There are about the same number of women and men managers in the company
- There are noticeably more men managers in the company

8. How would you describe the number of women and men at the senior management level in the company? (Directors, Vice Presidents, Chief-class managers)

- There are noticeably more women senior managers in the company
- There are about the same number of women and men senior managers employees in the company
- There are noticeably more men senior managers in the company

9. How would you describe the number of women and men employees who exited the company in the last 12 months?

- There are noticeably more women who exited the company in the last 12 months
- There are about the same number of women and men employees who exited the company in the last 12 months
- There are noticeably more men who exited the company in the last 12 months

10. How would you describe the number of women and men employees who were hired by the company in the last 12 months?

- There are noticeably more women who were hired in the company in the last 12 months
- There are about the same number of women and men employees who were hired in the company in the last 12 months
- There are noticeably more men who were hired in the company in the last 12 months

11. How would you describe the number of women and men employees who were promoted in the company in the last 12 months?

- There are noticeably more women who were promoted in the company in the last 12 months
- There are about the same number of women and men employees who were promoted in the company in the last 12 months
- There are noticeably more men who were promoted in the company in the last 12 months

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment

Part I – Social Standards

12. How would you describe the salaries paid to women and men for similar job levels?

- Women are paid noticeably more than men for similar job levels
- Women and men are paid about the same for similar job levels
- Men are paid noticeably more than women for similar job levels

13. Do you offer women employees additional days for maternity leave above the minimum required by local laws?

- Yes
- No

14. Do you offer men employees additional days for paternity leave above the minimum required by local laws?

Yes

No

15. Does the company have a recruitment and hiring strategy to increase the number of women employees?

Yes

No

16. Does the company provide child care benefits/services for employees?

Yes

No

17. Does the company offer flexible work arrangements for employees (e.g. adjusting start and end times of the work day)?

Yes

No

18. Does the company offer telecommuting options for its employees (e.g. working from home)?

Yes

No

19. Are employees able to submit grievances and complaints such as sexual harassment and discrimination anonymously?

Yes

No

20. Does the company sell products and services primarily to consumers?

Yes

No

If yes, please answer questions 21 through 26

If no, please proceed to the next page

21. How would you describe the number of women and men customers the company reached in the last 12 months?

The company has reached noticeably more women customers

The company has reached about the same number of women and men customers

The company has reached noticeably more men customers

22. Does the company sell goods and services that specifically target women?

Yes

No

23. Does the company have a strategy to increase the number of women customers?

Yes

No

24. Has the company consulted women outside the company (e.g. potential customers) in the development of new products?

Yes

No

25. Does the company have a strategy to facilitate women's access to company products and services (e.g., where the product is sold, pricing of product, advertising to women, etc.)?

Yes

No

26. Are staff trained to serve the gender-specific needs of women customers?

Yes

No

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment

Part I – Social Standards

27. Does the company purchase products and services from individual or small business suppliers?

Yes

No

If yes, please answer questions 28 through 29

If no, please proceed to the next page

28. How would you describe the number of women and men suppliers the company purchased from in the last 12 months?

The company purchased products and services from noticeably more women suppliers

The company purchased about the same number products and services from women and men suppliers

The company purchased products and services from noticeably more men suppliers

29. Does the company have a strategy to increase the number of women suppliers?

Yes

No

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment Part II - Governance Standards

Introduction

Welcome to the Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) self-assessment! This is one of three surveys developed by MEDA to measure a company's performance in gender mainstreaming. Each survey asks gender-specific questions about one of the three environmental, social and governance components of the ESG standard. It is designed for companies to complete themselves.

This survey assesses inclusion of gender in the governance component of the ESG standard. To do so, you will be asked questions about your company's leadership, policies, and internal committees. To help you prepare, please refer to this guidance document before starting the survey.

Your responses to the survey are strictly confidential. No individual or company names will be attached to any part of the results. This survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Upon completion, you will receive a copy of your results and recommended actions through the email you provide. If you have any questions or concerns, please send an email to Devon Krainer at dkrainer@meda.org and Carl Asuncion at casuncion@meda.org.

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment Part II - Governance Standards

Governance Practices

1. How would you describe the number of women and men board members the company has?

- The company has noticeably more women board members
- The company has about the same number of women and men board members
- The company has noticeably more men board members

2. In the last five years, has the chairperson of the Board been a woman for more than a year?

- Yes
- No

3. In the last six years, has the CEO (or equivalent) been a woman for more than two years?

- Yes
- No

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment

Part II - Governance Standards

Company Policies

4. Does the company have an Anti-Discrimination Policy?

Yes

No

5. Does the company have a Fair Compensation Policy?

Yes

No

6. Does the company have a Fair Hiring Policy?

Yes

No

7. Does the company have a Sexual Harassment Policy?

Yes

No

8. Does the company have a Health and Safety Policy?

Yes

No

9. Does the company have a Staff Professional Development Policy?

Yes

No

10. Does the company have a Company Code of Ethics?

Yes

No

11. Does the company have a Conflict of Interest Policy?

- Yes
- No

12. Does the company have a Procurement Policy?

- Yes
- No

13. Does the company have a Forced/Child Labor Policy?

- Yes
- No

14. Does the company have a Community Engagement Policy?

- Yes
- No

15. To what extent have women managers contributed to the development of company policies?

- Women managers did not contribute to the development of company policies
- Women managers contributed some input to the development of company policies
- Women managers contributed strong input to the development of all company policies

16. To what extent have women non-management staff contributed to the development of company policies?

- Women non-management staff did not contribute to the development of company policies
- Women non-management staff contributed some input to the development of company policies
- Women non-management staff contributed strong input to the development of all company policies

17. To what extent have women outside the company contributed to the development of relevant company policies (e.g., community engagement policy, procurement policy)?

- Women outside the company did not contribute to the development of relevant company policies
- Women outside the company contributed some input to the development of relevant company policies
- Women outside the company contributed strong input to the development of all relevant company policies

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment

Part II - Governance Standards

Internal Committees

18. Does the company have internal committees?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please answer questions 19 through 21

If no, please proceed to the next page

19. How would you describe membership on these committees?

- There are noticeably more women on internal committees
- There are about the same number of women and men on internal committees
- There are noticeably more men on internal committees

20. To what extent do women participate during committee meetings?

- There is little or no participation of women during committee meetings
- There is some participation of women during committee meetings
- There is a lot of participation by women during committee meetings

21. How would you describe leadership roles on the committees?

- There are noticeably more women in leadership roles on committees
- There are about the same number of women and men in leadership roles on committees
- There are noticeably more men in leadership roles on committees

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment Part III - Environment Standards

Introduction

Welcome to the Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) self-assessment! This is one of three surveys developed by MEDA to measure a company's performance in gender mainstreaming. Each survey asks gender-specific questions about one of the three environmental, social and governance components of the ESG standard. It is designed for companies to complete themselves.

This survey assesses inclusion of gender in the environmental component of the ESG standard. To do so, you will be asked questions about your company's environmental practices and policies. To help you prepare, please refer to this guidance document before starting the survey.

Your responses to the survey are strictly confidential. No individual or company names will be attached to any part of the results. This survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete. Upon completion, you will receive a copy of your results and recommended actions through the email you provide. If you have any questions or concerns, please send an email to Devon Krainer at dkrainer@meda.org and Carl Asuncion at casuncion@meda.org.

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment Part III - Environment Standards

Environment Practices

1. Has the company conducted training on environmentally sustainable practices for women and men employees?

Yes

No

2. Has the company conducted an environmental assessment or audit?

Yes

No

If yes, please answer questions 3 through 4

If no, please proceed to the next page

3. Did the assessment/audit involve women staff in the process?

Yes

No

4. Did the assessment/audit measure the company's impact on women community members?

Yes

No

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment Part III - Environment Standards

Environment Policies

5. Does the company have an environment policy?

Yes

No

If yes, please answer questions 6 through 8

If no, please proceed to the next page

6. Does the policy consider the different needs of or impacts on women and men?

Yes

No

7. To what extent have women staff contributed to the development of the policy?

Women staff did not contribute to the development of the policy

Women staff contributed some input to the development of the policy

Women staff contributed strong input to the development of the policy

8. To what extent have women community members been consulted in the development of the policy?

Women community members were not consulted in the development of the policy

Women community members provided some consultation in the development of the policy

Women community members provided strong consultation in the development of the policy

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment
Part III - Environment Standards

Environmental Management System

9. Does the company have an environmental management system?

- Yes
 No

If yes, please answer questions 10 through 12

If no, please proceed to the next page

10. Does the system consider the different needs of or impacts on women and men?

- Yes
 No

11. To what extent have women staff contributed to the development of the system?

- Women staff did not contribute to the development of the system
 Women staff contributed some input to the development of the system
 Women staff contributed strong input to the development of the system

12. To what extent have women community members been consulted in the development of the system?

- Women community members were not consulted in the development of the system
 Women community members provided some consultation in the development of the system
 Women community members provided strong consultation in the development of the system

Gender Equality Mainstreaming Self-Assessment
Part III - Environment Standards

Supplemental Information

13. What is the name of the company?

14. Please identify your gender

- Female
- Male
- Other

15. What is your position in the company?

- CEO (or equivalent)
- Senior manager
- Manager
- Technical specialist
- Associate/Officer/Analyst
- Student

16. How long have you been working at the company?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-4 years
- 5-15 years
- More than 15 years

Glossary of Terms

Anti-discrimination policy

A policy that prevents biases or prejudice against women and men employees. Discrimination is practiced on the grounds of sex, age, disability, ethnicity, origin, political belief, race, religion, etc. factors which are irrelevant to a person's competence or suitability (Business Dictionary). Examples of discrimination include denial of opportunity or unfair employee treatment regarding hiring, promotion, or transfer. It may include a system for monitoring policy compliance (GIIN, 2018).

Code of ethics

A set of guidelines issued by a company to its employees and management to help them conduct their actions in accordance with its primary values and ethical standards (Business Dictionary).

Community engagement policy

A policy that outlines the process of working collaboratively with community groups to address issues that impact the well-being of those groups. Activities that help firms engage the community include credible and transparent reporting, town hall meetings, and collaborative decision making (Financial Times). It may include a system for monitoring policy compliance (GIIN, 2018).

Conflict of interest policy

A policy that explains the mitigation strategy against a situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and professional or public interest (Business Dictionary).

Employees

Persons employed for wages or salary by the company.

Environment policy

A policy outlining a company's philosophy, objectives, strategy, compliance, human resources and the perspective of women and men stakeholders regarding the environment. It may include a system for monitoring policy compliance (GIIN, 2018).

Environmental assessment or audit

The process of estimating and evaluating significant short-term and long-term effects of a company's operations on the quality of its location's environment as well as women and men stakeholders. It also includes identifying ways to minimize, mitigate or eliminate these effects and/or compensate for their impact (Business Dictionary).

Environmental management system

A set of processes and practices that enable a company to reduce its environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency (EPA, 2017), considering the different needs of and impacts on women and men. For example, training women farmers in conservation agriculture techniques specific to weeding, a role typically performed by women farmers.

ESG

ESG is a widely used approach in the investment industry that allows for the upgrading and measurement of a company or portfolio's performance across environmental, social and governance (ESG) areas. There is not just one standard for ESG and many large investors and industry associations (e.g. Global Impact Investing Network) have developed their own approaches, processes and tools for applying and measuring ESG. The intent of the self-assessment is to provide a resource for gender equality mainstreaming across different approaches to and criteria of ESG, with a focus on business growth and impact.

Fair compensation policy

A policy to compensate women and men employees fairly and equitably and a system to monitor compliance with this policy (GIIN, 2018). Compensation includes direct benefits (such as salary, allowances, bonus, commission) and indirect benefits (such as insurance, pension plans, vacations) that an employee receives from an employer.

Fair hiring policy

A policy to recruit women and men employees equally and fairly through ensuring the hiring process is accessible, consistent, transparent, and based on the principles of merit and equity (Statistics Canada, 2016). It may include a system for monitoring policy compliance (GIIN, 2018).

Flexible work arrangements

Work practices that allow women and men employees a certain degree of freedom in deciding how the work will be done and how they'll coordinate their schedules with those of other employees (Business Dictionary). For example, working from home, ability to choose work shifts and flexible working hours.

Forced/child labor policy

A policy that ensures a company does not employ girls or boys as workers. It may include a system for monitoring policy compliance (GIIN, 2018).

Gender

Whereas biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures (EIGE, 2018). Gender refers to a range of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society assigns to women and men on a differential basis. (UN, 2011). In this self-assessment, whereas we aim to be inclusive of gender, our focus has been largely inspired by the inequalities faced by women.

Gender equality

Gender equality implies a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life. Equality between men and women exists when both sexes are able to share equally in the distribution of power and influence; have equal opportunities for financial independence through work or through setting up businesses; enjoy equal access to education and the opportunity to develop personal ambitions (UNFPA, 2017). The majority, but not all, gender inequalities faced in today's business world favour men over women and this is the implication of many questions set out in this self-assessment.

Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a strategy and an approach, as a means to achieve the goal of gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all company activities – policy development, strategy, operations, research and development, finance, planning, implementation and monitoring of projects (UN Women, 2017).

Grievances and complaints

Specific complaint or formal notice of employee dissatisfaction related to work conditions, workload, pay and benefit, job requirements, management and union relations and other aspects of employment. For instance, a grievance may include an incident of sexual harassment (GIIN, 2018).

Health and safety policy

A policy that identifies, manages and monitors workplace hazards to reduce accidents and exposure to harmful situations and substances. Health and safety policies discuss training of women and men employees in accident prevention, accident response, emergency preparedness, and use of protective clothing and equipment (Business Dictionary). Policies also addresses concerns relevant to women and/or men employees such as issues related to pregnancy and lactation.

Management

All directors and managers who have the power and responsibility to make decisions and oversee a company (Business Dictionary). Managers typically have staff reporting directly to them. This includes senior management (C-suite or executive) staff.

Maternity/paternity/parental leave

A period of approved absence for a woman or man employee granted for giving birth and/or taking care of infant children. Parental leave may be paid or unpaid and may last anywhere from several weeks to an extended period of months, depending on local laws and company policy (Business Dictionary).

Noticeably

The GEM self-assessment frequently uses the word ‘noticeably.’ If there are ‘noticeably more women’, that means it is quite clear that there are more women than men. For example, 60% women to 40% men, or greater.

Procurement policy

A policy that outlines how the company obtains or buys goods and services. It can include gender guidelines or requirements, such as sourcing from both women and men suppliers.

Senior management

The company’s high-level executive team. For example, Directors, Vice Presidents, C-suite managers.

Sexual harassment policy

A policy to combat sexual harassment of women and men employees. It may include a system for monitoring compliance with this policy (GIIN, 2018). Sexual harassment consists of unwelcome and repeated sexual advances, comments, looks, physical contact, stereotyping, or request for sexual favors (Business Dictionary).

Staff professional development policy

A policy to improve and increase capabilities of women and men employees through access to external and internal education and training opportunities in the workplace (Business Dictionary). It may include a system for monitoring policy compliance.

Staff trained to serve the gender-specific needs of female customers

Examples include:

- A company who provides maintenance of automated teller machines (ATMs) train their staff to prioritize fixing malfunctions of lights that illuminate ATMs to ensure women customers feel safe around the ATMs.
 - A healthcare company ensures staff are trained and understand the specific needs of a mother recovering from childbirth.
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Supplier

An individual or business that sells goods or services to a company. They might also be called a vendor.

Telecommuting options

Options that allow decentralized work arrangements for women and men employees to work at home or elsewhere instead of having to be at the company office.

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