

Tool 1.1: Gender gap assessment for devising an informed strategy

To start with, you need to assess the challenges and gaps in integrating women into your business value chains. This would require evaluating the gaps to identify barriers to women's participation, reviewing the existing policies, and identifying challenges in hiring and retaining women.

Tool objectives

- To assess the current status of gender inclusion within your organisation, identify areas of improvement, and devise tailored solutions for the inclusion of women within organisation as employees, value chain partners and customers.

Action plan

Step 1: Gender gap assessment

- ☐ Design a targeted questionnaire to assess the existing policies and current status of women's participation within your organisation.

Note: Refer to '[Annexure 1](#)' for the sample questionnaire to conduct the gender gap assessment.

- ☐ Conduct interviews/surveys with relevant stakeholders, such as senior-level management, existing women employees, and other interested parties to fill in the questionnaire. Refer to the existing human resource (HR) datasheet to gather employee-level data.
- ☐ Assess the collected data and identify critical areas across the business value chain (programme team, partners, potential customer segments) to identify the existing gaps.

Step 2: Gender-responsive hiring policies

Based on the gap assessment, make your programme team and policies gender-inclusive, for example by designing gender-inclusive job descriptions (JDs). Following are a few features you can consider while designing gender-responsive JDs:

- ☐ Emphasise the applicant's skills and qualifications rather than traits typically associated with a specific gender.
- ☐ Promote exclusive services, such as remote work, flexible working hours, or part-time opportunities, to address women applicant's needs and responsibilities.
- ☐ Place special emphasis on using gender-neutral language across all communications and promotional materials, which must include clear statements about your commitment to equal pay for equal work.

Note: Refer to '[Annexure 2](#)' for a sample gender-inclusive JD checklist.

Indicative: Required resources and cost and time implications

Resources: Salaries to HR for gap assessment, software to collect/analyse data, travelling allowance (TA) and dearness allowance (DA) for field visits, and senior management time for key informant interviews (KIIs).



Indicative cost heads*	Cost implications Low: 0–2,500 USD Medium: USD 2,500–5,000 High: USD >5,000	Time implications Low: 1–3 hours/week Medium: 4–5 hours/week High: >5 hours/week	Frequency of expense
Salaries to HR	Low	High	Monthly
Software for data collection	Low	-	-
TA/DA for field visits	Medium	High	Quarterly

**Note: This calculation provides an overview of the primary cost categories associated with the implementation of this tool. Minor expenses may also be incurred.*

Source: Authors' analysis

Potential indicators to measure success

- Number of business strategies introduced to promote women's participation after the gap assessment.
- Number of job applications received from women candidates and number of women candidates hired due to gender-inclusive JDs.

Success story

[Reshamsutra](#), a social startup that manufactures solar-powered silk-reeling and weaving machines, faced challenges in hiring women employees. [Powering Livelihoods](#) (PL) programme supported the entrepreneur in designing gender-responsive Job Descriptions (JDs) and modifying their workplace policies. To recruit women exclusively to their operations, the startup exclusively posted job openings on [HerKey](#) (formerly Jobsforher), an online recruitment platform for women. Mr Kunal Vaid, the founder mentioned that shifting to gender-inclusive JDs helped in hiring a woman chief of staff and also doubling the number of women employees within the enterprise.



Image: CEEW/Emotive Lens

Women users of solar silk reeling machines in a remote tribal village from Odisha.

Annexure 1: Sample questionnaire to conduct a gender gap assessment

I	TEAM	RESPONSE
Gender balance in team		
1	Do you have women co-founders?	Yes/No
2	Do you have women board members?	Yes/No
3	What is the proportion of women on the board of directors?	%
4	What is the proportion of women in senior management?	%
5	What is the total number of employees on payroll?	Number
6	What is the total number of women employees on payroll?	Number
7	What is the proportion of women in contractual employment?	%
8	Do you have any ongoing efforts/strategies/targets for hiring more women in your team?	Yes/No
9	Which department in your business has the maximum number of women?	HR/Accounting & Finance/ Operations/Product Design/ Marketing/Sales/Purchase/ IT/Production/Research & Development/Others (Specify)
10	What is the proportion of women in the department with the maximum number of women?	%
11	Which department(s) in your business does not have women employees? (mention all departments without women)	HR/Accounting & Finance/ Operations/ Product Design/ Marketing/Sales/ Purchase/ IT/Production/ Research & Development/Others (Specify)
12	Have you ever conducted training on gender sensitisation for the team?	Yes/No
Equal compensation and work-life balance		
13	Do you have a fair remuneration policy or equivalent?	Yes/No
14	Do you have a strategy or have you acted to close any gender pay gap identified?	Yes/No
15	Do you offer your employees paid maternal/parental leave?	Yes/No
Policies promoting gender equality		
16	Do you have an equal-opportunity policy/clause to ensure non-discrimination based on gender?	Yes/No
17	Do you have a policy for preventing sexual harassment in the workplace?	Yes/No

II	PRODUCT/TECHNOLOGY	RESPONSE
1	Do you deal with products/technology that cater to women?	Yes/No
2	Have you included women's needs in your product/technology design?	Yes/No
3	If yes, in what way is the product design women-friendly? Mention in brief	Brief
4	Have you included women's feedback in your technical product pilots?	Yes/No
III	BUSINESS MODEL	RESPONSE
1	Do you have women in any part of your business value chain?	Yes/No
2	Which part of your business value chain has a maximum number of women?	HR/Operations/Logistics/Marketing/ Sales/Service/Procurement/ Technological Development/ HR/ Infrastructure/ Others (Specify)
3	Which part of your business value chain does not have women? (Mention all processes without women)	HR/Operations/Logistics/Marketing/ Sales/Service/Procurement/ Technological Development/HR/ Infrastructure/ Others (Specify)
4	Do you have any ongoing efforts, strategies, or targets to increase the number of women in your business value chain?	Yes/No
IV	CUSTOMER	RESPONSE
1	Does your product/service have women customers?	Yes/No
2	What is the proportion of women customers in your business?	%
3	Do you have ongoing efforts/strategies/ targets to reach women customers/ consumers?	Yes/No
V	SALES	RESPONSE
1	Do you have women in your sales team?	Yes/No
2	What is the proportion of women in your sales team?	%
3	Do you have a separate sales strategy for selling to women customers/consumers?	Yes/No
4	Do you have a separate sales target for selling to women customers/ consumers?	Yes/No
5	Do you train your sales team on how to approach and sell to women customers/consumers specifically?	Yes/No
VI	KEY PARTNERSHIPS	RESPONSE
1	Do any of your existing partners include women-led organisations or those who work with women (self-help groups (SHGs) or farmer-producer organisations (FPOs))?	Yes/No
2	Do you have any ongoing efforts, strategies, or targets to work with women SHGs/FPOs as partners?	Yes/No
3	Do any of the co-founders have a female mentor?	Yes/No

Annexure 2: Sample gender-inclusive JD

The ideal candidate comes with:

- Proven work experience in XYZ management
- Proven track record of managing all aspects of a successful product throughout its lifecycle.
- Ability to develop product strategies and effectively communicate recommendations.
- Sufficient technical background and hands-on experience in software development and app technologies.
- Strong problem-solving skills and willingness to roll up one's sleeves to get the job done.
- Able to work effectively in a fast-changing startup environment.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- An MS/BS degree in computer science or engineering or equivalent is preferred.
- Excited by the opportunity of being in a social impact space.

What can you expect?

- The opportunity to work on the development of a path-breaking mobile app product that will impact thousands of lives.
- Work closely on the product from strategy to execution.
- Autonomy and flexibility to work from home.
- The opportunity to be at the forefront of the change that is revolutionising India's economy and rural livelihoods as a sector.
- Flexibility to accommodate requirements of women returning to work.
- Cost to the company (CTC) of INR XYZ to INR ABCYYY Pvt Ltd is an equal-opportunity employer. We strive to bring inclusivity to our staff composition across levels, so women candidates are especially encouraged to apply.

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