

Gender audit



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A gender audit assesses the extent to which gender equality is effectively institutionalised in the policies, programmes, organisational structures and proceedings (including decision-making processes) and in the corresponding budgets.

A gender audit is essentially a “social audit”, and belongs to the category of “quality audits”, which distinguishes it from traditional “financial audits”. It considers whether internal practices and related support systems for gender mainstreaming are effective and reinforce each other and whether they are being followed. It establishes a baseline; identifies critical gaps and challenges; and recommends ways of addressing them, suggesting possible improvements and innovations. It

also documents good practices towards the achievement of gender equality.

A gender audit enhances the collective capacity of the organization to examine its activities from a gender perspective and identify strengths and weaknesses in promoting gender equality issues. It monitors and assesses the relative progress made in gender mainstreaming and helps to build organizational ownership for gender equality initiatives and sharpens organizational learning on gender. To do this, it:

- considers whether internal practices and related support systems for gender mainstreaming are effective and reinforce each other and whether they are being followed;
- monitors and assesses the relative progress made in gender mainstreaming;
- establishes a baseline;
- identifies critical gaps and challenges;
- recommends ways of addressing them and -suggests new and more effective strategies;
- documents good practices towards the achievement of gender equality.

A participatory gender audit is a tool and a process based on a participatory methodology to promote organizational learning on how to practically and effectively mainstream gender in policies, programmes and structures and assess the extent to which policies have been institutionalized at the level of the:

- Organization
- Work unit
- Individual

The participatory gender audits' objectives are to:

- Generate understanding of the extent to which gender mainstreaming has been internalized and acted upon by staff;
- Assess the extent of gender mainstreaming in terms of the development and delivery of gender-sensitive products and services;
- Identify and share information on mechanisms, practices and attitudes that have made a positive contribution to mainstreaming gender in an organization;
- Assess the level of resources allocated and spent on gender mainstreaming and gender activities;
- Examine the extent to which human resources policies are gender-sensitive;

- Examine the staff sex balance at different levels of an organization;
- Set up the initial baseline of performance on gender mainstreaming in an organization with a view to introducing an ongoing process of benchmarking to measure progress in promoting gender equality.

The ILO has developed a participatory gender audit methodology which has generated great international interest among constituents, donors agencies, training organizations and academic institutions after more than ten years of implementation.

Further reading

[A manual for gender audit facilitators: The ILO participatory gender audit methodology.](#)

