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GLOBAL QUALITY
AND STANDARDS PROGRAMME



ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH GLOBAL TRADE

Table of Contents

CONTEXT	3
THE GENDER DIMENSION IN GLOBAL TRADE.....	3
WOMEN MAKING THE MOST OF GLOBAL TRADE OPPORTUNITIES.....	4
THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING, EMPOWERMENT AND EQUALITY FOR DEVELOPMENT.....	5
UNIDO’S GENDER MAINSTREAMING APPROACH.....	6
GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN TRADE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECTS.....	7
THE GLOBAL QUALITY AND STANDARDS PROGRAMME	8
THE GLOBAL QUALITY AND STANDARDS PROGRAMME’S CONTRIBUTION TO GEEW.....	8
PROMOTING GENDER RESPONSIVENESS AS PART OF THE QI SYSTEM.....	10
ADVANCING GEEW AT THE ENTERPRISE LEVEL	12
CREATING A QUALITY CULTURE IN SUPPORT OF GENDER EQUALITY.....	13
MAINSTREAMING GENDER THROUGH GLOBAL TOOLS.....	14
CONCLUSION	15

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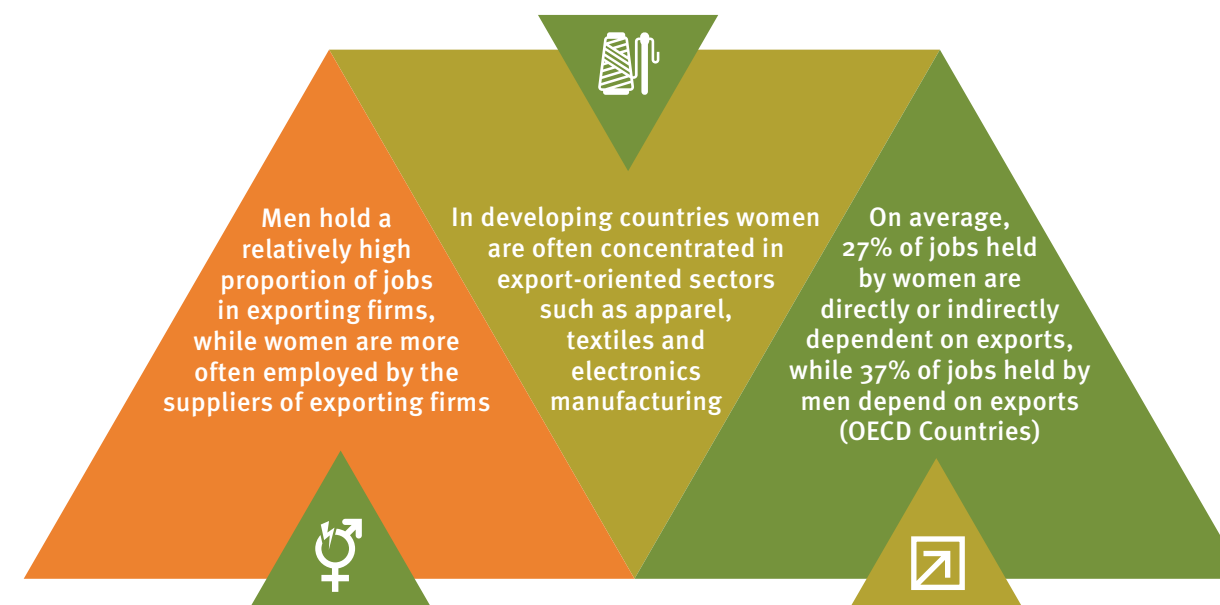


CONTEXT

THE GENDER DIMENSION IN GLOBAL TRADE

Women play a significant role in the global economy. Around 252 million of the approximately 582 million entrepreneurs worldwide are female, although the share varies considerably across regions (MDPI). Research also shows that women now account for 41% of the global workforce, illustrating women’s significant impact in business (Gartner). Women own nearly 10 million of the world’s small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (World Bank). As SMEs account for almost 80% of jobs around the world (World Bank), boosting their competitiveness through improving quality and compliance capacities increases the likelihood of creating jobs. Women also invest more than men in the education, health and nutrition of their families, thereby contributing to the well-being of future generations. Consequently, empowering women economically, especially through their involvement in trade, has a ripple effect, creating opportunities for many.

It is recognized that global value chains play a major role in trade, with 60–80% of all trade passing through them (UNCTAD). Global value chains link producers to processing, value addition and end markets across countries and trade boundaries, but sourcing is often in low- or middle-income economies, using low-wage female labor to produce low-price quality goods. Gendered patterns of work in global value chains provide incomes that can support women’s economic empowerment, but they can also relegate women workers to poorly paid and under-recognized labor.





WOMEN MAKING THE MOST OF GLOBAL TRADE OPPORTUNITIES

The expansion of global value chains, rise in services, and the growing digital economy are global trade trends that are opening up economic opportunities for women. Trade can enlarge women's roles in the economy by creating new jobs in sectors traditionally dominated by men, enhancing consumer choice, increasing their bargaining power and expanding their access to skills and education. Evidence shows that women's wages also benefit from trade. For example, developing countries that double their manufacturing exports would see women increase their share of total manufacturing wages from 24% to 30% through a combination of increased employment and higher salaries, according to the World Bank, thereby contributing to closing the gender pay gap. Moreover, trade creates better jobs for women in that women employed in sectors with high levels of exports are more likely to be formally employed in jobs with better benefits, training as well as security.

However, the positive economic outcomes of trade for women can only be realized if those barriers holding them back are lifted so they can engage under fair terms, and if countries implement appropriate policies to achieve this. Women entrepreneurs still face structural discrimination, with significant gender differences in firm size, growth rates and access to finance. Gender data reveals the participation of women in the bodies tasked with developing both national and international standards averages between 10% and 30% (with large variations), which often leads to women's views and needs being inadequately reflected. This has profound implications in a world increasingly governed by standards and particularly in industrial sectors with high female labor force participation rates. Shifting from a soft to a mandatory approach, new due diligence laws being enacted by several European countries and by the European Union present the opportunity to help protect the rights of the nearly 190 million women working in global supply chains.



THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING, EMPOWERMENT AND EQUALITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

While gender equality is a goal in its own right, it is also essential to the achievement of other development goals such as poverty reduction, economic growth and environmental sustainability. To ensure that women and men can access, participate, and benefit from development projects on equal footing and that gender inequalities in activities and outcomes are not perpetuated, gender issues need to be recognized and addressed throughout an entire project cycle—from design and implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

In a similar vein, the lack of gender-sensitive statistics has far-reaching consequences. Without reliable sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics, decisions taken by policymakers, scientists and researchers, whether about health, education or the economy, risk leaving women behind. If gender data gaps are not filled in, policy action towards inclusive and sustainable industrial development risks exacerbating inequalities rather than reducing them.

Moreover, implementing programmes that challenge the discrimination faced by women and girls facilitates the transformation of social norms and power relations, prioritizing women's increased participation and leadership in formal economic sectors and in environmental conservation and climate action. Increasing the access of women to productive resources; creating enabling conditions for women's entrepreneurship and job creation, education and vocational training and women's leadership; mainstreaming gender in clusters and local economic development policies; promoting women's agency in climate change adaptation and mitigation; boosting gender lens investing; and building the knowledge and capacity for gender-responsive industrial development helps to create a world where both men and women can thrive.



UNIDO'S GENDER MAINSTREAMING APPROACH

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is committed to addressing gender inequalities in industry and to harnessing women's full potential as leaders and economic agents of change, thereby transforming economies and generating inclusive growth.

The Organization fully recognizes that gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW) lie at the heart of its mandate of inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID). By systematically mainstreaming gender into its own interventions, UNIDO aims to create equal opportunities for women and men, thus furthering its ISID agenda and contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and related SDGs.

Based on targeted actions and gender mainstreaming, UNIDO promotes GEEW in all of its organizational practices, projects and programmes. Issued in 2019, its [Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women](#) sets out the Organization's gender equality commitments as well as its gender architecture and accountability. To further guide its advancement in this important area of work, the [UNIDO Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2020–2023](#) provides a framework for UNIDO's

programmatic work and organizational practices that will accelerate progress in delivering on its gender equality commitments. The Strategy fully recognizes that only by combining the promotion of gender parity and an enabling, inclusive working environment with gender-responsive strategic planning and programmatic activities can UNIDO improve its delivery of global results on gender equality.

UNIDO collaborates with partners across the UN system, the private sector and at the country level to engage both women and men at all levels to help shift power relations, social norms and gender stereotypes that limit the prosperity and economic contributions of women as well as men. Through these partnerships, UNIDO provides technical cooperation activities within its thematic areas.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN TRADE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECTS

Gender mainstreaming in UNIDO's technical cooperation projects begins with a thorough gender analysis at the design stage, aimed at identifying the strategic needs of both women and men. The ["UNIDO Guide to Gender Analysis and Gender Mainstreaming the Project Cycle"](#) provides guidance, entry points and practical recommendations for technical personnel working on UNIDO projects and programmes as well as for implementing partners and stakeholders. It aims to facilitate the effective and efficient integration of gender considerations throughout the entire project/programme cycle, with a particular focus on gender analysis tools to support the important stage of project design. The more area-specific UNIDO ["Guide on Gender Mainstreaming: Trade Capacity-Building Projects"](#) showcases the Organization's work in the area of trade-related technical assistance and gender mainstreaming, and serves as a tool for the integration of gender equality within Quality Infrastructure (QI) building.

UNIDO's gender mainstreaming activities go beyond its trade capacity-building work. For example, as part of its convening role, UNIDO organized a virtual conference in 2020 with UN Women and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations covering topics of women economic empowerment in agribusiness, information communications technology and the circular economy. The report on ["Policy Assessment for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry"](#) and the publication on ["Standards and Digital Transformation: Good Governance in a Digital Age"](#) are good examples of UNIDO's efforts to integrate gender considerations into its normative activities as well. The promotion of GEEW also extends to its knowledge-sharing and dissemination activities. In the ["Impact Gender Lens Investing Training Programme"](#), UNIDO introduces the tools needed to integrate gender analysis into investment projects to harness women's full potential and to create products that respond to the needs of both men and women. UNIDO's ["Mainstreaming Gender in Cluster Development"](#) guide focuses on the critical factors to be considered in the efforts to mainstream gender into a cluster development project, with the overall purpose of guiding cluster development practitioners to carry out gender-responsive interventions.



THE GLOBAL QUALITY AND STANDARDS PROGRAMME

THE GLOBAL QUALITY AND STANDARDS PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO GEEW

The benefits of this holistic approach to interventions, with gender mainstreaming commencing at the project design phase, are clearly demonstrated in the Global Quality and Standards Programme (GQSP), which assists more than 12 countries worldwide to boost their competitiveness in 16 value chains. Developed by UNIDO and the Government of Switzerland, through its State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the GQSP identifies quality-related challenges and makes targeted interventions at every single stage of the value chain. This thereby increases compliance with international market requirements and ultimately helps countries to engage in global trade. The programme covers countries that span over four continents and include Albania, Colombia, Costa Rica, Georgia, Ghana, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Ukraine and Vietnam.

Recognizing gender equality as a universal right and a prerequisite to effectively fight poverty and promote sustainable inclusive growth, SECO sets gender equality high on its agenda. Every one of its projects is systemically analyzed for its potential to advance gender equality. In order to guide its programme managers and implementing partners, SECO has developed comprehensive gender guidelines to help identify gender gaps, risks, innovation potential and opportunities within its priority themes and business lines. Awareness raising within the institution and among partners is crucial. Through systematic gender analysis, and devising and monitoring sex-disaggregated indicators, and more gender-sensitive reporting overall, SECO aims at making the relevance of the gender dimension more comprehensive and visible. It is simultaneously improving its accountability for GEEW-related results.



FRANZISKA SPÖRRI

Head of SECO in South Africa

Women's empowerment is one of SECO's key objectives. GQSP plays an important role in contributing to GEEW through supporting the development of sustainable value chains (VCs).

SECO's sustainable VC work in South Africa focuses on the biotrade sector, showcasing the importance of South African women as breadwinners and drivers of economic development. SECO supports various stages of the VC, and the synergies between its sustainable VC projects highlight many GEEW benefits.

South Africa has unique biodiversity, and the South African women working in the biotrade sector are proud members of their communities and promote products that are globally appreciated.

Women need support in overcoming obstacles and enhancing their knowledge and capacity, which has multiple benefits for local communities and the country. SECO is proud to support women in their growth path, improve their capabilities and provide them with a platform and opportunities to explore their full potential.

In order to effectively address the challenges of GEEW when providing technical assistance in the trade capacity-building area, the gender mainstreaming strategy and GEEW objectives to which the GQSP adheres—promulgated in the “Guide on Gender Mainstreaming: Trade Capacity-Building Projects”—were developed based on the following three dimensions:

- » The Resources objective of promoting equal access to resources and training opportunities is achieved by ensuring that women are given opportunities for skills development.
- » The Rights objective is one of ensuring that QI-related policy and legislative environments are not conducive to discrimination against women. Where the project works on the legislative environment, systematic reviewing and mitigation of the impact of the QI-related policy and technical regulations are performed. In addition, the safe and non-discriminatory delivery of national QI-related services favourable to trade is promoted.



ALEJANDRA RODRÍGUEZ

Director of Accreditation, National Quality Institute (INACAL), Peru

My responsibility is to promote the offer of conformity assessment services that allow sectors to demonstrate the conformity of their processes, products, and services. In Peru, the GQSP is helping us to comprehensively strengthen the coffee and cocoa value chains and to increase the supply of accredited organizations that can provide evaluation services in a reliable way. I have been working on quality and management issues for more than 20 years.

In my line of work, I have had the privilege of working with outstanding men and women from different backgrounds and with different thoughts, with one thing in common: excellent professionals. Their gender or any other condition never crossed my mind as a criterion to value their work. On the contrary, diversity, valuable in all contexts, is especially recognized in this field of work, for the complete and detailed vision that provides the necessary input for accurate and positive decision making.

- » *The Voice* objective of enhancing the leverage of women in gaining power and control over their own lives is achieved through the promotion of gender-balance within the work environment.



PROMOTING GENDER RESPONSIVENESS AS PART OF THE QI SYSTEM

The QOSP contributes to the women's empowerment cross-cutting theme of economic governance by promoting participatory governance structures for national quality frameworks. Establishing an appropriate Quality Policy to guide the Quality Infrastructure system can lead to increased prosperity, providing more opportunities for men and women across social groups. To this end, the QOSP adheres to the [UNIDO Quality Policy Guiding Principles](#). The programme promotes the development of well-balanced and rounded Quality Policies by involving civil society organizations, including gender institutions and women's organizations, in policy initiation and implementation processes.

Following the recommendations in UNIDO's "[Laboratory Policy: a Guide to Development and Implementation](#)", QOSP promotes the development of gender-responsive laboratory policy, by encouraging gender mainstreaming and gender parity, and by inviting female subject matter experts to participate in the development process. The gender equality skills of policymakers, QI institutions and service providers are also boosted through targeted training. Furthermore, QOSP actively supports and encourages laboratories owned and operated by women, which is significant because of the role of women in consumer purchasing decisions in the wider economy. Moreover, the views of women must be considered in the safety and quality of products.



GEORGIAN LABORATORY ASSOCIATION (GELAB)

The Georgian national legal framework reflects the basic principles of gender equality and is in line with international commitments. Sadly, the reality is different, with women still experiencing discrimination and inequality.

Despite the average number of female employees being significantly higher than that of men in various types of Georgian laboratories, mostly men remain in charge and women perform routine laboratory work.

In recent years, women with good laboratory knowledge and experience have successfully set up and managed their own private laboratories.

With this in mind, the GeLab focuses on supporting laboratory staff, mostly women, to gain deeper knowledge and experience in laboratory work to more easily obtain leadership positions, including numerous trainings within the framework of the QOSP.

As part of the QOSP, it is planned to establish a training center at GeLab and conduct a related Training of Trainers course for potential trainers in metrology in chemistry. Many female lab workers hope to participate and become professional/authorized trainers.



The QOSP also benefits support institutions and other actors along the value chain in which both men and women staff have the chance to improve their skills and knowledge of modern technologies and industrial information. The inclusion of gender indicators ensures that gender considerations are an integral part of all QOSP



SAMILA

Director Kospemindo (Seaweed Cooperative in Makassar South Sulawesi Indonesia), QOSP Indonesia Partner

In the seaweed value chain in Indonesia, both men and women play equally important roles within both upstream (farming) and downstream (post-harvest processing) activities. Since seaweed farming is mainly a coastal family-based operation, husbands and wives are involved in the farming process. Women are involved in preparing seaweed seeds (seedling), including tying the seeds onto rope, caring for the seaweed farm, maintenance, the drying process and trading.

Samila has years of experience working closely with both men and women. She said: "Traditionally, in Indonesian culture, women have been associated with work at home and men with work outside of the house. However, the norm and people's mindsets are changing in many parts of Indonesia, where the role of men and women is equal.

It is important to assign and manage the right jobs just based on each person's abilities, not gender."



activities.

ADVANCING GEEW AT THE ENTERPRISE LEVEL

Women represent a large share of the workforce in many of the value chains in which the GQSP operates, such as cocoa, coffee, fruits, and medicinal and aromatic plants. Therefore, supporting women's networks and role models is crucial to create the conditions for social change towards greater fairness. The GQSP considers gender when setting up the criteria for selecting the SMEs to receive technical assistance and for training, and the criteria are applied in an "objective" manner, avoiding discrimination.

All efforts are made by the project to prioritize the enrolment of women entrepreneurs and professionals (e.g. SMEs and other actors along the value chain led or owned by women) to give equal opportunity in its planned training activities, both at management and technical levels, and to encourage them to participate in all relevant



ELENA NOVIKOVA

Director of "EcoFloris" LLC, Kyrgyz Republic

There are very few enterprises in Kyrgyzstan that are headed by women for various reasons: women have lower "social capital", less experience in doing business, family responsibilities, etc. In EcoFloris LLC, 60% of employees are women and we continue to maintain uninterrupted production and constant release of new products, and even diversification of production. Thus, by our example, we contribute to breaking the bias, demonstrating that women can be engaged in production despite the abundance of complex technological equipment, the need to carry out routine repairs of equipment, and the requirement to master new types of equipment. All these tasks that we successfully cope with contribute to gender equality and the elimination of prejudices regarding the competencies of women in production.

project and decision-making activities.

CREATING A QUALITY CULTURE IN SUPPORT OF GENDER EQUALITY

In order to create a quality culture that effectively supports gender equality, communication and awareness raising activities should be inclusive and designed to leave no one behind. GQSP training sessions and quality promotion activities systematically include female entrepreneurs, employees and students, and actively seek to include women as beneficiaries, in order to stimulate new opportunities and ultimately a change of mindset. In this sense, GQSP contributes to creating awareness among consumers in general, and women in particular, to ensure



REBECCA AGYIRI-MIREKU

Food Safety Officer, Ghana

The GQSP offered equal opportunities to the experts and consultants who participated in the Food Safety Training organized by the GQSP Ghana. The training gave me a very good understanding of HACCP and other food safety requirements.

The GQSP provided a fair opportunity for everyone to explore their potential to its fullest. That is gender equality. In my case, this opportunity landed me my first real job as a Food Safety Officer at a company that is responsible for offshore and onshore catering in the oil and gas industry.

The opportunity has changed my life. I'm very grateful to GQSP and SECO for this opportunity.



Consumer rights are properly understood.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER THROUGH GLOBAL TOOLS

At the global level, the main objective of the GQSP is to generate and disseminate knowledge from research and past endeavors that can be used to tackle quality and standards related challenges worldwide. This knowledge is globally disseminated through the [UNIDO Knowledge Hub](#), an interactive online platform that provides news, information, training and tools to a broad range of stakeholders. More specifically, the UNIDO Training Academy allows users to explore self-paced online trainings in multiple languages in the areas of trade, investment and innovation. The benefits of this global component of the GQSP initiative will exceed the GQSP framework and serve as a useful global public good for future quality and standards related technical assistance, which ultimately contributes to inclusive, gender-responsive and sustainable development.

Of the overall trainees enrolled in UNIDO Knowledge Hub online trainings, 35% are women and 62% are men (and 3% are unknown). Honing in on trainings in the area of standards and quality, women constitute 41% of participants and men, 57% (with 2% unknown). In one example of such a training—the Spanish language version of the Quality Infrastructure and Trade training—52% of participants are women and 48% are men.

In addition to this, UNIDO offers gender-responsive tools to assist countries in developing their QI. This is best exemplified by the [Quality Infrastructure for Sustainable Development \(QI4SD\) Index](#), which measures the contribution of QI to the SDGs. Indicators are aggregated into the “3Ps” of the SDGs—Prosperity (economic dimension), People (social dimension) and Planet (environmental dimension). During the development of the index, a survey was launched in collaboration with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) that asked 92 countries a series of questions relating to the adoption of ISO standards and the existence and types of policies in place at the national level that relate to QI. Only 19% of those countries responded as having considered gender balance in their Quality Policy. This data suggests that SDG 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls must be prioritized in the



future within QI systems around the world.


CONCLUSION

Looking to the future in a post-COVID-19 world, it is important to ensure that women increasingly benefit from trade. The Global Quality and Standards Programme will continue to strive to make this a reality by gender mainstreaming its project implementation, monitoring and evaluation, aligned to the UNIDO Strategy for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women and SECO's gender guidelines, and assisted by UNIDO gender mainstreaming guides. By supporting the specific needs of women and men in its capacity building, UNIDO helps to boost the well-being of all, ultimately contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes international trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction and as an important means to achieve the SDGs.



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