

Gender Equality Seal

Certification Programme for Private Sector



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

The Gender Equality Seal Certification Programme

The gender equality seal is a tool to advance the sustainable development agenda and foster business performance

Pioneered in Latin America beginning since 2009 with the support of UNDP, the Gender Equality Seal Certification Programme for Public and Private Enterprises (GES) is a collective effort that engages governments, the private sector and trade unions to establish and achieve excellency standards to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the business world.

The GES provides a tool for public and private enterprises to come together and contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (in particular, SDGs 5, 8, 10 and 17) by reducing gender gaps and promoting gender equality and competitiveness simultaneously, for an inclusive and sustainable growth.

The GES Community so far consists of fourteen countries from Latin America and the Caribbean (with eleven active programs) and more than 600 companies, with more than 1,900 branches and business units certified, impacting over 1.5 million female and male workers. Since 2016, this initiative has been undergoing a globalization reaching an additional fifteen countries which have adopted or are initiating the creation of the programme in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe & CIS and the Arab States.

Private sector plays a key role in addressing gender disparities in the business world. The programme has created a dynamic partnership between the private sector, public sector, trade unions and UNDP with a tool to develop public policy, foster constructive dialogue, invite companies to go from commitment to action and provide hard-evidence of gender mainstreaming efforts to tackle the most pressing gender inequalities.

The challenge: Gender inequalities in the world of work

- At the current pace, it will take more than 200 years to close the economic gender gap.
- 49% of women participate in the workforce compared to 76% of men.
- For each dollar earned by men, women earn 80 cents.
- Less than 5% of CEOs in big companies is female.
- One in every three women have been sexually harassed at work.
- Women perform 75% of non-paid care work.
- More than half of women in the world have informal jobs, with low salaries and no social protection.

Sources: ILO (2017), ILO (2016), Catalyst (2017)

The business case for gender equality

- Closing the gender gap in economic participation by 25% by 2025 could increase the global GDP by U\$5.3 trillion (World Economic Forum, 2017).
- Women control 65% of household spending, and their global consumer spending is estimated in U\$40 trillion (Catalyst, 2015 and HBR, 2009).
- Diverse companies get on average 38% more profits for sales of new products and services (BCG – Technical University of Munich, 2017).
- Companies with more gender-balanced boards and stronger female leadership report higher returns on equity, sales and invested capital on average (MSCI, 2015 and Catalyst, 2011).

Scaling-up phase 2019-2022

Thanks to a growing demand from governments and private sector partners, UNDP has embarked on the globalization of this initiative and a scaling-up phase for 2019-2022. This phase will be driven by an enhanced capacity to customize the programme considering national contexts; a strong partnership with other UN agencies such as UN Women and ILO integrating a One-UN offer; simultaneous work on both sides of the equation, developing institutional capacities and policy advice, not only at the public, but also at the company level; the development of a global seal; and the integration of the GES into national and regional SDG platforms, as well as other

private sector innovative tools to attract and engage private sector towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

Companies commit to achieve gender equality transforming the corporate DNA

By incorporating a gender perspective into a company's overall management system, businesses integrate comprehensive measures to change their organizational structure and culture, creating fairer and more decent conditions for workers. The aim is to develop a company strategy, where companies commit to:

- Detecting and eliminating gender-based wage gaps
- Increasing women's role in decision-making in leadership positions
- Developing and implementing policies to improve work-life balance with shared social responsibility
- Increasing women's presence in occupational areas that are traditionally male-dominated, and men's presence in female-dominated areas
- Eradicating sexual and sex-based harassment in the workplace
- Using inclusive and non-sexist communication inside and outside the company
- Promoting women in business and cross-cutting gender equality along value chains

How it works

UNDP promotes the development of two different types of seals based on transformative partnerships. First, tailored **Nationally-owned Certification Programmes** developed with governments, after assessing each country's particular context. And second, the **Gender Equality Seal for Multinational Companies (MNCs)**, designed for companies with regional operations and those located in countries without a national certification programme.

In both cases, the Gender Equality Seal is a voluntary program based on the development of an integrated Gender Equality Management System (GEMS). To implement the GEMS, companies conduct a self-assessment, develop gender-sensitive capacities, adopt a gender equality policy and execute an action plan to eliminate inequalities in the workplace. Once companies implement this set of measures and actions, upon third party verification of the results achieved and the degree of compliance with the requirements, a certification is obtained. Consequently, a Gender Equality Seal (GES) is awarded as a symbol that recognizes gender equality in the business world.

In alignment with the achievement level of the set targets, the company will be recognized with a Bronze Seal, which symbolizes that it is committed to the closure of gaps and the promotion of gender equality; a Silver Seal, which symbolizes that it is effectively implementing actions to close gender gaps; or a Gold Seal when it shows the effective and systematic closure of gender gaps in the organization.

UNDP's value added

The GES is an innovative tool that helps private companies to increase employee satisfaction, take advantage of all workers potential (regardless of sex) and having a more inclusive, healthier and equal work environment. The programme provides instruments to have more sustainable practices and hard evidence to demonstrate results to employees, shareholders and other stakeholders in line with sustainable corporate practices. Thus, it fosters companies' reputation and accountability. The proposed partnership with the UN system will ensure private sector companies have a menu of options to engage and contribute to gender equality.

UNDP's global presence and the creation of its SDG platforms provide new opportunities to expand the programme, build strong partnerships and work at different levels (national, regional, global). For instance, UNDP facilitates south-south cooperation efforts to exchange information, innovative practices and learnings, among partners across the world. UNDP also convenes national, regional and global dialogues to stimulate debate, share knowledge and build transformative partnerships. The commitment by UNDP's Administrator to engage private sector with new SDG linked instruments will facilitate the globalization of the initiative.

UNDP supports policy development, provides technical advice and tools to government institutions and the private sector for implementing the Gender Equality Seal Certification Program. One of the most innovative tools developed is an online platform (Equality@Work Online Platform) that facilitates the self-assessment process and helps to determine gender gaps in companies and organisations. The tool gathers quantitative data and collects an opinion survey, producing a set of KPIs to measure gender equality.

10 Steps to earning a Gender Equality Seal

1. Formulate the company's written commitment to gender equality
2. Establish a gender equality committee.
3. Train senior management and staff on gender equality
4. Undertake an internal organizational assessment of the company's policies and practices
5. Develop a company-wide policy and plan of action for gender equality
6. Implement the gender equality plan of action
7. Conduct an external audit and obtain the certification
8. Achieve the Gender Equality Seal
9. Monitor ongoing progress and audit for quality assurance.
10. Take actions to improve the program and maintain certification status

For more information:

<http://www.undp.org>

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