

Gender Equity in Textile, Clothing, and Footwear Manufacturing Resource Hub

FAQs: Using the ICRW Gender Equity Self-Diagnostic Tool

1. Who should use the Gender Equity Self-Diagnostic Tool?

- The Gender Equity Self-Diagnostic Tool is an assessment intended for textile, clothing, and footwear suppliers and factories to diagnose current strengths and areas for improvement for integrating gender into policies, procedures, and operations with the ultimate goal of empowering women and creating more gender-equitable workplaces and supply chains.
- The survey can be completed by a team of senior staff members at the factory including a human resources (HR) manager and managers in strategy, health and safety, marketing, training, and other key functions.
- It is recommended that the supplier also consult representatives from a worker committee/ union to review and validate the responses before they are submitted.

2. What types of questions does the Self-Diagnostic Tool include?

- Questions are organized into two sections: *Representation* and *Factory Policies and Practices*. The *Representation* section asks questions about women's representation across various roles and management levels in the factories. *Factory Policies and Practices* questions span from policies across a range of areas such as promotion practices and trainings offered.
- Responses in the *Representation* section (questions 1-9) do not affect the score.
- There are also background questions on the business at the beginning of the tool, which do not affect the score.

3. What does filling out the Self-Diagnostic tool require?

- The Self-Diagnostic Tool asks approximately 50 questions.
- Given the comprehensive nature of the tool, users may need to draw on senior personnel involved in HR, strategy, marketing, training, and other key functions.
- ICRW recommends that users:
 1. Download the Excel form Offline Version located on the self-diagnostic tool page;
 2. Read through the questions; and
 3. Either:
 - a. ***Circulate among colleagues to provide information directly or indirectly:*** Users can send the Excel form to their relevant colleagues, who may complete certain questions or sections, then return the form for a central user to input online; or
 - b. ***Gather and input information directly into the web-based tool:*** Users can gather the necessary background data in collaboration with their colleagues, through a phone call or virtual/in-person meeting.

- Time required to complete the tool depends on the user’s knowledge of factory policies and procedures and the availability of relevant data or information. Once all background data is collected, completing the survey may take approximately 30 minutes and will immediately result in a customized scorecard.
- For any external stakeholders who are interested in verifying responses (such as brands who are customers of the factory), verifiers should obtain copies of the following:
 1. Equal Employment Opportunities Policy
 2. Gender Strategy and/or Diversity & Inclusion Strategy
 3. Anti-Harassment & Abuse and/or Whistleblower Policy
 4. Parental Leave Policy
 5. Shift Assignment and/or Overtime Policy
 6. Pay Scales and/or Promotion Procedure
 7. Health Care, Childcare, and other benefits policies

4. Is the tool confidential?

- Yes. There is no identifiable information collected through the Self-Diagnostic Tool. By submitting a completed form, users receive customized scorecards, which are anonymously and securely stored.
- Background questions at the start of the survey (e.g., headquarters, size, annual revenue) can help users recall which factory they are assessing if scoring multiple factories in the same time period. These questions are not scored, should users prefer to skip them.
- Each entry has an associated ID number- **please record this ID number if you are interested in accessing submitted data.** This ID number is included at the top left of the online Scorecard visual and is associated with the entry in the stored data. Using this ID number allows ICRW to perform analysis on a subset of entries should a brand or factory wish. If this is of interest, please reach out to advisors@icrw.org. This ID does not associate with any external information.

5. What do some of these terms within the tool actually mean?

- Specific terms relating to gender and diversity are referenced in the Self-Diagnostic Tool – many of these terms are explained in greater detail in the Annex at the end of this document.

6. What if some of the questions are not relevant to the factory?

- There are a handful of questions with a “Not Applicable” multiple choice option when the question may not be relevant to the factory’s operations or business model and will likely remain irrelevant in the future. Selecting this option will remove the weighting from the final overall score.

7. What if I do not have data for the question?

- Select the “Cannot Answer” or “Not Applicable” multiple choice option if the information is not currently collected or available, or if the question is not relevant to the factory (e.g.,

questions about an on-site childcare facility). Selecting this option removes the question from score weighting so that the factory's score is not negatively impacted.

- If the information is not currently collected or available, but *could* be relevant or helpful for future strategic planning, while the “Cannot Answer” / “Not Applicable” options do not impact the score, the response options indicate potential opportunities to improve in this area in the future.

8. Will factory maturity affect the score?

- Compared to mature factories with more established practices, less mature factories may not have all policies and processes in place or may have rapidly changing information available at the time of completing the tool. This can lead to lower scores but is not necessarily problematic. Rather, it indicates many potential opportunities and actions to take based on interest, resources, and needs of the workforce.
- Gender scorecards are useful for comparing factories but are perhaps more useful to inform customized gender action plans. Less mature factories have more opportunity to improve, making regular assessment especially valuable.
- Get in touch with advisors@icrw.org to explore possibilities for technical assistance, such as building gender capacity, locating potential opportunities for action, or developing related monitoring and evaluation systems.

9. Will factory size affect the score?

- The number of workers or production volume will not affect score.
- Again, gender scorecards are most useful for inspiring discussion and motivating the creation of customized gender action plans. This will be applicable regardless of the factory size.

10. How did ICRW develop the scoring methodology?

- The scoring and weighting methodology is based on the available evidence of policies, practices, and procedures that are likely to enhance business outcomes and also empower women in the textile, clothing, and footwear manufacturing sector. A similar scoring methodology is used by ICRW with other sectors on the [Gender-Smart Impact Investing Resource Hub](#).
- Each response option has an associated point value, and each response option is tagged to thematic sub-score categories.
- Points for response options are weighted depending on factors such as the time and resources required to implement the practice, as well as the relative potential to enhance gender equity, economically empower women, and provide material co-benefits for the business. Practices that are more resource-intensive and/or have the potential for greater impact are worth more points.
- To calculate of the overall score, the different sub-categories – (1) *Commitments & Policies*; (2) *Recruitment & Hiring*; (3) *Professional Development & Skill-Building*; (4) *Employee Evaluation & Promotion*; (5) *Pay & Compensation*; (6) *Addressing Gender-based Violence & Harassment*; (7) *Care & Support for Working Parents*; (8) *Employee Health, Safety, & Well-Being*; (9) *Transportation & Accommodation*; and (10) *Measurement* – are weighted according to their relevancy towards enhancing gender equity.

11. How do I interpret my scorecard?

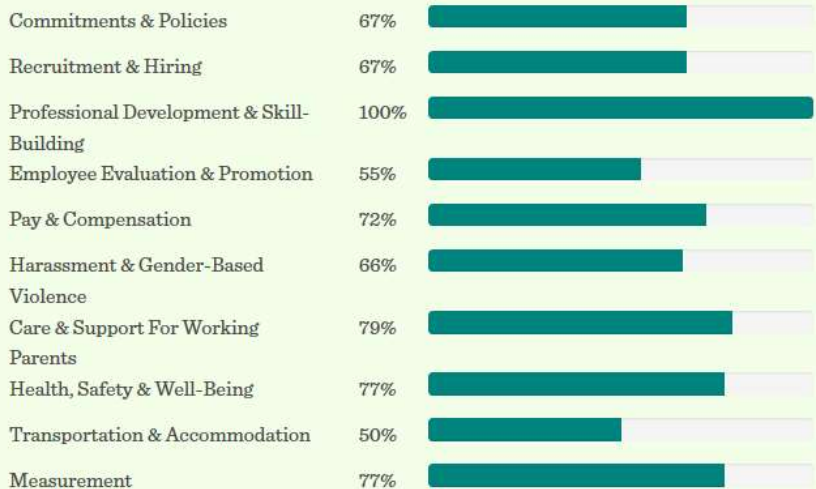
- After completing the survey, the Self-Diagnostic Tool will generate an *Overall Factory Policies and Practices* score. Users will also see sub-scores across 10 cross-cutting domains related to gender equity in a factory: (1) *Commitments & Policies*; (2) *Recruitment & Hiring*; (3) *Professional Development & Skill-Building*; (4) *Employee Evaluation & Promotion*; (5) *Pay & Compensation*; (6) *Addressing Gender-based Violence & Harassment*; (7) *Care & Support for Working Parents*; (8) *Employee Health, Safety, & Well-Being*; (9) *Transportation & Accommodation*; and (10) *Measurement*.
- The scorecard will also display responses to *Representation* questions, which reflect women's representation across various roles and management levels in a factory. Responses to these questions **do not** affect the overall score.
- It is reasonable to expect that **few factories will start off with high scores** (very few, if any, will earn a 100%).
- **For systematic use, factories may complete the tool on a regular basis** (e.g., annually or bi-annually) with scores serving as progressive "snapshots" that can reflect improvement over time. This can also be tracked against their financial performance to understand how gender equity is linked to materiality.
- It is recommended that the results of the tool be reviewed with worker representatives to help inform implementation. It may be that a factory has a policy or benefit in place, but workers are unaware or it is not well utilized. By engaging workers with these insights, factories can help further their equity journeys. This can be accomplished through 1) having a worker committee or representative; or 2) a bipartite committee engaged and consulted after completing the survey to ensure the answers reflect the experience and awareness of the workforce.

SAMPLE SCORECARD

Apparel and Footwear Factory Ltd.

RESULTS ID: 331

OVERALL FACTORY POLICIES & PRACTICES SCORE



72%

CURRENT PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN REPRESENTED



12. Will higher scores result in better financial performance?

- Not necessarily. However, they do demonstrate that a factory has policies and operations in place that align with good practice and have been shown to improve business outcomes, and positively impact women's empowerment and gender equity.
- **Scorecard disclaimer:** Confidence level increases with the number of questions answered. ICRW recommends answering at least 90% of questions to ensure a valid and accurate score. Work with your colleagues to ensure accountability in collecting and inputting a high number of accurate responses. Results are contingent on accuracy of data entered, and do not guarantee social or financial impact including on business revenue or profit. Neither ICRW Advisors nor its affiliates will be liable for any consequential, indirect, or direct damages or loss arising from use or misuse of tools including inaccuracy or incompleteness of information supplied.

13. How can my factory go deeper with integrating a gender lens into our policies and operations?

- a. See the [Gender Opportunities Explorer](#) for recommended actions that a factory can take to enhance gender equity across the sub-categories scored in the Self-Diagnostic Tool.
- b. To leverage scorecard results for deeper analysis and action planning, **contact advisors@icrw.org**. ICRW Advisors works with brands and suppliers to identify priority areas for implementing high impact gender opportunities and supports the development of gender action plans along with tailored technical assistance. The best time to start is now.

14. We're serious about addressing harassment and abuse. What exactly does the gender-based violence and harassment category indicate?

- a. The *Gender-based Violence and Harassment* category reflects the factory's readiness to address workplace harassment from a mitigation standpoint. A high score results from having good policies and practices in place to address instances of sexual harassment.
- b. The score should *not* be interpreted in relation to actual prevalence rates of sexual harassment or other forms gender-based violence at work, as these are related to other organizational factors including workplace culture and mindsets, as well as the larger social environment in the country of operation.
- c. To assess risk for gender-based violence and harassment more deeply, ICRW has developed a separate **Self-Diagnostic Tool for Harassment and Abuse**. This tool digs deeper to understand what structures and resources are in place for factories to effectively prevent, detect, respond, and monitor instances of harassment and abuse. For access to this tool and deeper consultation on this topic, please contact advisors@icrw.org.
- d. For **follow-up diagnostic and capacity building services** related to calculating risk of sexual harassment, developing gender equitable leadership skills, and building a women-friendly (humane) organizational environment, please contact advisors@icrw.org.
 - i. **Gender Equity Leadership Lab:** ICRW Advisors offers tailored sessions designed to support organizational leaders and managers in creating a culture of equity and inclusion to prevent harassment.

- ii. **Gender Diagnostic Assessment:** ICRW Advisors has developed a deeper diagnostic methodology to locate barriers to gender equity and identify how they manifest in factories, paying special attention to risk for gender-based violence and harassment. This more comprehensive assessment methodology involves examination of HR data, policy review, key informant interviews (KIs) with company leadership, and surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs) with workers. The assessment aims to explore existing strengths and identify potential improvements across workplace culture, policy, and practice related to gender, context, and workers' experience.

15. How was the Self-Diagnostic Tool developed?

- a. ICRW created the **Gender Equity Self-Diagnostic Tool** to allow users to input factory data and generate a customized Gender Equity Scorecard. The questions in the Self-Diagnostic Tool were shaped by ICRW's research on what is proven to empower women and create more gender-equitable workplaces and supply chains. The tools were also informed by various sources including: [ICRW's Gender-Smart Investing Resource Hub](#), the [Women's Empowerment Principles](#) (UN Women and UN Global Compact), the [Gender Equality Mainstreaming Framework](#) (MEDA), [BSR's Gender Data Impact Framework](#), and the [Social & Labor Convergence Program](#), as well as the approaches of [Equileap](#) and [SEAF's Gender Equality Scorecard](#). Extensive review and input were also provided by staff and leadership within textile, clothing and footwear manufacturers across Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Americas.

16. Can I provide feedback on the tool or suggestions to improve it?

Yes, we will periodically review the tool to ensure it reflects best practices and to make improvements based on an established governance process. If you have any suggestions, please send an email to advisors@icrw.org with the subject line "Suggestions for Gender Equity Self-Diagnostic Tool".

ICRW will gather and incorporate insights from a range of key stakeholders (brands and suppliers, as well as other key stakeholders such as the Better Work, UNF, CARE, BSR, etc.) to ensure that the tool is meeting the needs of these various stakeholders and reflects the most up-to-date thinking on the topic. However, we also want to ensure the consistency of the tool so that brands and suppliers can use the tool year over year to compare across facilities and to track progress within facilities. To accomplish this, we will gather and synthesize this feedback in 2021 and then every three years after that.

Appendix: Self-Diagnostic Tool Definitions

Below are definitions to common terms referenced throughout the Self-Diagnostic Tool and the Hub:

- **Gender equality:** providing the same treatment of all people regardless of gender identity. Equality in provision of support/services to all people fails to recognize the ways that gender identity informs one’s aspirations, and access to resources and opportunities. Rather, gender equality should be considered as an end goal.
- **Gender equity:** taking into consideration the diversity of all people across all genders and identities—providing support and services not despite their gender, but in response to their gender. Due to social norms, patriarchal power structures, and historic practices, women and girls often start from a position of disempowerment and societal constraint. Therefore, gender equitable policies, practices, and operations may be needed in order to balance the playing field and give them equal access to opportunities and benefits – ultimately resulting in gender equality.
- **Gender norms:** Unwritten and often subconscious roles for how women and men “should” behave within a group to “fit in” and be accepted. They dictate what people see as acceptable, appropriate, and obligatory behavior for women and men in a given group or society.
- **Stereotypes:** The expression of norms. They are generalized characteristics of groups of people, often based on gender, ethnicity, national origin, economic status, race, religion, or sexual orientation. Gender stereotypes are demeaning to both women and men.
- **Supplier group:** the overarching or parent company that oversees multiple or just one factory or production facility.
- **Facility:** an individual factory or production facility.
- **Gender neutral images and language:** used by companies prioritizing equitable recruitment practices. Women and men are encouraged to apply explicitly as well as implicitly with inclusive language in job descriptions, photos of women and men conducting different types of work (not just work that is stereotypically masculine or feminine in the particular context), balanced use of pronouns, and attention to phrasing that could intimidate applicants.
- **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy:** a policy that provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment and prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by national, state or local laws.
- **Diversity and inclusion plan:** The plan may outline strategies to promote diversity and inclusion in the factory workforce and/or in its supply chain. Strategies to enhance gender diversity may be a part of this plan, alongside strategies to enhance diversity among other identities. This plan could be established by the supplier group, perhaps with targets and responsibilities for factories, or it may be established by factory/at the factory-level only.
- **Formal leadership commitment to gender equity:** A formal leadership commitment signals the supplier group and/or factory’s awareness for the importance of gender equity and the role it plays in their business. The commitment can take the form of any action or statement that addresses the importance of treating all genders fairly, tailoring support and services to their respective needs, and empowering women. Examples can include: a public statement or

press release from leadership addressing the topic; communicating the commitment on the supplier group's website or annual report; participating in panels or events on the topic; joining industry or NGO working group groups on the topic; signing on to international commitments or principles to promote gender equity in business (e.g., the UN Women's Empowerment Principles); engaging in local or international advocacy on the topic; a standalone female labor policy (a policy detailing specific benefits and support for female employees); etc. The commitment(s) are largely communicated externally but may also be communicated internally. A formal commitment sets the stage for an overarching work culture and tone that supports gender equity and women's empowerment across all areas of the organization.

- **Unconscious bias training:** Unconscious bias training includes training on how people have biases that they are often unaware of that can impact their behaviors and attitudes towards others. Biases can be based from gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, etc.
- **Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)** are employee identity or experience-based groups which are voluntary to join. ERGs offer employees the opportunity to meet, share experiences, and learn in formal and informal settings. Examples include: Working Parents Group, Women in Engineering and Technology.
- A **"zero tolerance" policy** provides the definition, prohibition, and prevention of all forms of harassment and abuse in the workplace, including sexual harassment and the automatic punishment of sexual harassment.
- **Bystander training:** training to instill skills in men and women to intervene when they become aware of potential harassment taking place at work.
- **Individual piece-rate:** Individual piece rate means employees are paid **solely** based on their individual production output. They do not receive any hourly or base pay.
- **Prevailing wage:** Prevailing wage is the level of wage generally paid in the relevant country or region of the country for work in the same sector and for comparable levels of responsibility and experience.
- **Fair wage:** A fair wage system guarantees that every employee has a right to compensation for a regular workweek that is sufficient to meet their basic needs (such as food, water, housing, healthcare, education, and transport) and includes some discretionary income.
- **Forced arbitration clause:** A clause found in anti-harassment and abuse policies that takes away an employee's right to sue, take legal action against, or appeal a decision made by their employer should their rights be violated. This clause should **not** be included in any policies, as an employee should have the right to seek external, legal remedy – especially in instances of harassment or abuse.
- **Onsite childcare:** These are childcare facilities located on the factory premises, including but not limited to certified kindergartens, day cares, or babysitting services. They may be owned and operated by the factory or they may be operated by a third-party service.
- **Offsite childcare:** These are childcare services provided by a third party, including but not limited to certified kindergartens, day cares, or babysitting services that take place at an off-site location (likely either in the employee's home or in another location).

The Hub also uses the below leadership levels and job classifications for factories:

- **Full-time production workforce:** Full-time employees typically work at least 35 hours per week. Production employees' primary professional responsibility is to manufacture or directly support the manufacture of product. This includes employees in the following scenarios: line workers, packing, quality, sample room, warehouse, maintenance, and mechanics. This includes apprentices involved in production work and production employees employed through a third party or some other employment/contractual relationship.
- **Full-time non-production workforce:** Full-time employees typically work at least 35 hours per week. Non-production employees are those whose professional responsibility is not involved in direct manufacturing of product. This includes administrative office staff, food service, custodial, in-house sales staff, apprentices not involved in production roles, and security guards.
- **Temporary or short-term employee:** A temporary employee is an employee who works on the factory premises, but who is provided and paid by a third-party, such as a temporary employment agency. An indicator of this work status could be the lack of employee benefits. They may work seasonally or have a temporary/short-term contract. In the absence of country law definition, short-term contracts are those of 1-year duration or less.
- **Team leaders:** Team leaders are the first level of leadership on production lines above the main production workforce. They execute the activity plan for lean production and management. They may also be called line leaders.
- **Junior managers:** Junior managers supervise production and/or administrative activities of the team to ensure work meets production and quality requirements. They may also be called line leaders.
- **Middle managers:** Middle managers manage production and/or administrative processes/timelines, achievement of key performance indicators (KPIs), and adherence to quality standards. They typically have cross-functional engagement.
- **Upper/senior management:** Upper/senior leaders manage an entire department, or multiple departments. They set and strive to achieve production and performance goals and adhering to production, quality, and administrative standards. They carry out the supplier group's overall strategic objectives and targets within their department(s) of focus. For some, this will be the highest level at the factory or may sit within the supplier group. Job titles may include Senior Manager, Department Head, or Plant Manager.
- **Top management:** Top management oversee multifaceted operations with the highest level of responsibility in terms of production performance, reporting, management, and quality adherence. They set the supplier group's overarching strategic vision, goals, objectives, and targets (for example: President). Not all factories will have top management roles in the factory and, instead, this role may sit within the supplier group.
- **Technical roles:** Technical roles are roles that require specialized skills and/or knowledge to perform specific tasks. They can relate to mechanical, technical, or IT tasks. Roles may include engineers, technicians, or those who operate specific equipment/machinery.