

TOOL 1.4

Terms of Reference for Gender Audit

- » **GOAL:** Assess gender equity and environment across company
- » **TARGET UNITS:** Human Resources, Senior Management

This tool is designed as a model terms of reference for an independent consultant who can conduct a gender audit. The ToR is highly customizable to your company's needs, as is the audit itself, which can be modified to include other types of potential bias or discrimination, such as against employees with disabilities.

Model Terms of Reference for a Gender Assessment

Introduction

[Outline reasons for [Company] to conduct a gender audit. Introduce what has occurred thus far, the business case for gender diversity, the key objectives for a strengthened gender diversity strategy and approach, policies and initiatives already in place. Detail the internal support for the gender audit and gender diversity program.]

Objective

The objective of the gender audit is to provide a baseline for gender equity and gender diversity in the workforce for [Company]. This includes a thorough audit of:

- All workforce policies, such as recruitment, leave, flexible work, and workplace safety, including policies on gender-based violence.
- Recruitment, wages, promotions, career development support, and benefits to identify gender-related trends and identify any potential areas of bias or discrimination.
- Assessment of the physical work environment, including transportation to and from the worksite, equipment, uniforms, work sites, and offices.
- Assessment of the organizational culture: Do women and men perceive themselves to be equally included in the workplace? Are there instances of bias, discrimination, or ways in which men or women may feel unsafe or discriminated against based on their gender? This audit also assesses the extent to which women and men feel that gender diversity and gender equity are prioritized, and the extent to which it is a corporate priority.

Scope of Work

The gender audit consultant will be responsible for:

- Developing a detailed gender audit methodology, which includes detailed sets of questions and intended approaches, such as key informant interviews, focus groups, surveys, and policy and analysis review.
- Physical audit: Review physical facilities, services, and equipment, including uniforms and workplaces, to determine safety and appropriateness of use by female staff, including pregnant staff. Review personal protective equipment, job testing facilities, and medical facilities.
- Recruitment procedure review: Are there explicit or implicit indicators of bias or discrimination? Are recruitment efforts inclusive, or do they send signals discouraging female applicants? Are selection panels gender-balanced? Have they received gender bias training? Are interview procedures standardized and transparent? Are candidate audits conducted impartially and transparently? Are managers accountable for increased gender diversity in teams? Evaluate gender bias in corporate recruitment and opportunities for improvement.
- Policy review: Does the company have a gender diversity and/or equity strategy? Does it have non-discrimination policies covering wages, promotion, flexible work, and benefits? Does the company have flexible work policies? Are staff encouraged to utilize flexible work? Does the company have a gender-based violence policy? Identify what policies exist, how they are communicated, and how staff are supported in applying policies—for instance, ways in which staff are encouraged/discouraged from taking parental leave.
- Governance and corporate culture: Is corporate culture inclusive? Do male and female staff feel equally valued, able to advance, and protected by policies? Do male and female staff feel equally comfortable holding colleagues and managers accountable for any perceived gender bias or discrimination? What services exist for holding staff accountable?
- Performance management: Have performance evaluations been reviewed to identify any gender bias—for instance, bias against staff who take parental leave or utilize flexible work? Do staff performance evaluations include gender integration in their KPIs?
- Where work is taking place in a fragile or conflict-affected situation, examine how this may impact staff and their ability to work (safety on the job site and/or coming to the job site, conditions in staff homes, etc.), and how this may differently impact women and men, to ensure these factors are understood and accounted for.

“Some leadership behaviors which are more frequently applied by women than by men in management teams prove to enhance corporate performance and will be a key factor in meeting tomorrow’s business challenges. Hence, promoting gender diversity and leadership variety is of strategic importance for companies.”

Source: McKinsey & Company, Women Matter 2.

Deliverables

- a. Gender audit methodology
- b. Gender audit draft: The draft should include the following components:
 - i. Introduction: Introduce company, business case for gender equity, context for the gender audit, initiatives and programs already underway, management support, and plans for follow-up and implementation based on the audit.
 - ii. Summary of staff interviewed and their business units, along with the methodologies used.
 - iii. Summary of findings and recommendations: Summary of key findings and recommendations for addressing main challenges and opportunities.
 - iv. Results by business unit and priority area, as outlined in the scope of work, along with additional findings.
 - v. Detailed evaluation and proposed follow-up steps
- c. Finalized gender audit: After incorporating company feedback during review process, provide a revised finalized version of the audit.

Reporting

[Identify a contact person within the company to whom the gender audit will report and who will serve as point person for questions.]

Timeline

[Identify the timeline for the entire job and for each of the specific deliverables.]