



General Conference

Twentieth session

Vienna, 27 November–1 December 2023

Item 14 of the provisional agenda

**UNIDO, gender equality and the empowerment
of women**

UNIDO operational strategy for gender equality and the empowerment of women 2024–2027

Report by the Director General

The present document provides the General Conference with UNIDO's four-year strategy for gender equality and empowerment of women. The strategy builds on the achievement of the strategy for 2020–2023 (GC.18/15) and is aligned with UNIDO's medium-term programme framework for the period 2022–2025 (IDB.51/10).

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	3
Mandate and alignment	4
UNIDO's approach	5
Challenges ahead	6
II. Goal, Objectives and Theory of Change	6
Overarching goal	6
Strategic objectives	7
Programme and institutional management objectives	7
Theory of change	7
III. Achieving gender-transformative development results	8
IV. Achieving gender-transformative organizational performance	10
Programme management objective: Enhance the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results in UNIDO programmes and projects	10
Institutional objective: Strengthen UNIDO's organizational effectiveness in delivering gender equality and women's empowerment results	12



V. Implementation arrangement and accountability	14
Annexes	
I. Global context – Progress and challenges on gender equality and the empowerment of women	16
II. UNIDO Context – Achievements to Date and Lessons Learned.	18
III. Gender parity data at professional levels at UNIDO	19

I. Introduction

1. Advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women is not only a human rights issue¹ but also a matter of economic efficiency, effectiveness and sustainable growth (see box 1). The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prioritizes gender equality both as a stand-alone objective through Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and as a universal principle that enables and accelerates all SDGs, including SDG 9 to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and support innovation.

2. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) recognizes that gender equality and the empowerment of women lie at the heart of its mandate. UNIDO envisions a world where women and men can equally lead, participate in and benefit from inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID)². To achieve this vision, UNIDO is committed to addressing gender inequalities in industrial development, and to harnessing women's full potential as leaders and economic agents of change. Thereby, UNIDO aims to transform economies and generate ISID.

Box 1. Why is gender equality and the empowerment of women good for ISID?

- **Increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP).** If women were to participate in the economy identically to men, they could add as much as \$28 trillion, or 26 per cent, to annual global GDP in 2025.³ On average, increased gender equality in some European countries is expected to lead to an increase of about 12 per cent in GDP by 2050.⁴ If the gender employment gap was closed, the GDP per capita would increase in middle-income countries in the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia by 40 to 80 per cent.⁵
- **Better economic outcomes at the industry level.** Industries with higher female labour force relative to other industries grow relatively faster in countries with higher gender equality: 1.7 per centage points faster in terms of value-added and 1.2 per centage points faster in terms of labour productivity.⁶ This is because gender equality enables firms to make better use of available labour resources, which boosts growth.
- **Boost in innovation.** Companies with greater gender diversity are associated with higher research and development intensity, obtain more patents, and report higher levels of overall innovation, particularly when there is a critical mass of women directors.⁷ This is because gender diversity in the workplace brings different perspectives, experiences, and problem-solving approaches. Studies have shown that diverse teams tend to be more innovative and creative.⁸
- **Good for business.** Companies greatly benefit from increasing employment and leadership opportunities for women, which helps increase organizational effectiveness and growth. It is estimated that companies with three or more women in senior management functions score higher in all dimensions of organizational performance.⁹

¹ The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions on gender equality (Nos. 100, 111, 156, 183, 190 etc.).

² UNIDO Medium-term programme framework 2022–2025.

³ McKinsey Global Institute (2015). The Power of parity: How advancing women's equality can add \$12 trillion to global Growth.

⁴ Morais Maceira H. (2017). Economic Benefits of Gender Equality in the EU. Intereconomics, Volumes 52, 2017, Number 3.

⁵ Pennings S. (2022). A Gender Employment Gap Index: A Simple Measure of the Economic Gains from Closing Gender Employment Gaps, with an Application to the Pacific Islands.

⁶ International Monetary Fund (2020). Gender Inequality and Economic Growth: Evidence from Industry-Level Data.

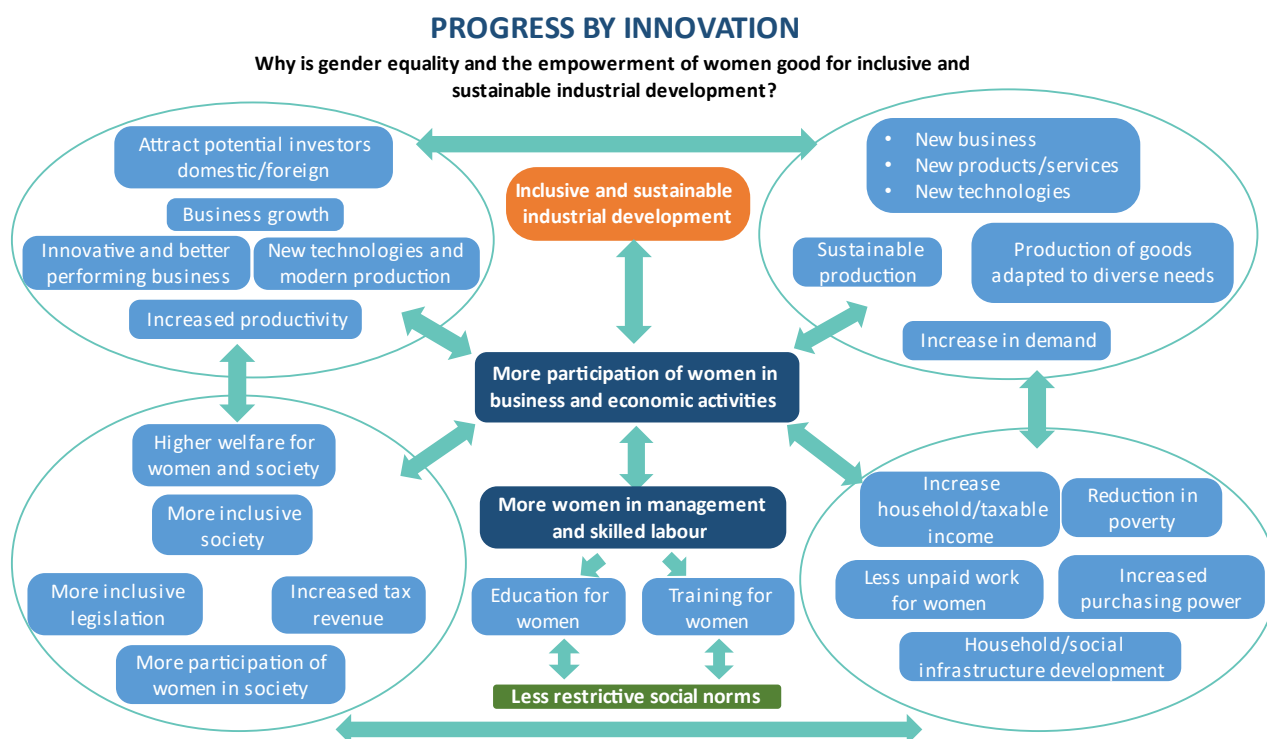
⁷ J. Yo-Jud Cheng and Boris Groysberg. Gender Diversity at the Board Level Can Mean Innovation, MIT Sloan Management Review, January 22, 2020.

⁸ Boston Consulting Group (2018). "How Diverse Leadership Teams Boost Innovation".

⁹ UN-Women (2018). Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment (www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures).

- **Good for sustainable development.** Gender equality and environmental goals are mutually reinforcing. UNIDO research suggests that women entrepreneurs are more inclined to set up and expand their businesses in green industries than in conventional industries.¹⁰ In fact, the share of women in the renewable energy sector workforce is higher than that in the fossil fuel sector, notably 32 per cent compared to 22 per cent.¹¹

A graphic representation of links between Gender Equality and Women Empowerment and UNIDO's mandate is presented in the diagram below.



Source: UNIDO's own elaboration

Mandate and alignment

3. Guided by the 2019 Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (DGB/2019/16), UNIDO has prepared strategies on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women every four years. At global and United Nations levels, the Gender Strategy 2024–2027 is aligned with the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, the United Nations system-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and its Action Plan (UN-SWAP 2.0), the United Nations system-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, and other United Nations initiatives.¹² Within the Organization, this Strategy is aligned with UNIDO's medium-term programme framework (MTPF) 2022–2025 (IDB.49/8-PBC.37/8), the 2019 Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (DGB/2019/16), and the Gender Parity Action Plan 2018–2023. It builds on the achievements and lessons learned from implementing previous strategies (see annex 2) and takes contemporary challenges head on (see annex 1 and below).

¹⁰ UNIDO (2021). Policy Assessment for the Economic Empowerment of Women in Green Industry.

¹¹ IRENA (2019). Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective.

¹² They include the Chief Executive Board for Coordination's (CEB) System-wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment.

UNIDO's approach

1. Gender-transformative approach

4. A gender-transformative approach involves actively examining and seeking to transform the underlying causes of gender inequality. This means tackling harmful gender norms, roles and practices, as well as legislative and policy frameworks that create and perpetuate gender inequality, while working towards redistributing power, resources, opportunities and access to goods and services more equally.

5. Through a gender-transformative approach to our interventions, we seek to:

(a) Foster critical understanding of discriminatory gender norms, systems and structures that disadvantage women and girls vis-à-vis men and boys, specifically in the context of ISID;

(b) Strengthen positive gender norms and an enabling environment within households, firms, institutions and society in favour of behaviour and systems change that lead to gender equality;

(c) Facilitate the empowerment of all women and girls to claim their rights and act as agents of change, and enhance the capacity of government institutions as duty bearers to promote and protect gender equality for all; and

(d) Explicitly engage men and boys as partners for and beneficiaries of a more gender-equal world.

2. Intersectionality, human rights-based approach and leaving no one behind

6. Women and girls often experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. This means that their experiences, needs, priorities and capacities are not homogeneous. In fact, systems of discrimination based on factors such as socioeconomic status, age, disability, gender identities, race, ethnicity, language, religion and education can compound gender-based discrimination. Including this lens in UNIDO's gender analysis will ensure that appropriate interventions are developed to support all women, not just those subject to discrimination.

7. UNIDO's MTPF 2022–2025 commits the Organization to addressing gender inequalities in industrial development with a focus on transformative change, guided by a human rights-based approach and the principle of leaving no one behind. An intersectional approach to gender equality and women's empowerment will help advance a human-rights-based approach in policy development, project formulation and implementation, and support UNIDO's efforts to ensure that all individuals and groups of society are included in an equal and equitable manner so that, ultimately, no one is left behind.

3. Twin-track approach

8. The implementation of the Strategy will be guided by a twin-track approach of (a) targeted interventions aimed at addressing specific areas of gender inequality, and (b) mainstreaming gender considerations into all policies, directional documents, programmes and projects.

4. Gender-transformative planning and programming alongside a gender-transformative working environment

9. The Strategy recognizes that UNIDO can only improve its delivery of global results on gender equality and empowerment of women by combining gender-transformative strategic planning and programmatic activities with the promotion of gender parity and an enabling and inclusive working environment within the Organization.

Challenges ahead

10. Both internal and external assessments of UNIDO ¹³ have consistently highlighted three key challenges for the Organization to advance its gender equality and women empowerment.

11. **Mainstreaming gender into project implementation and more evidence to demonstrate gender results from projects and programmes.** At the programme and project level, UNIDO evidences limited results from its efforts to improve gender equality and women empowerment. Since major progress has been made in integrating gender issues into programme and project design at entry and evaluation at exit, this challenge indicates the need for UNIDO to strengthen gender mainstreaming during implementation phase and improve its capacity to capture and demonstrate gender results and impacts through its monitoring system. Although UNIDO's integrated results and performance framework (IRPF), a monitoring tool at corporate level, has been updated and improved in recent years, it is necessary to enhance the collection and reporting of gender-responsive quantitative data and qualitative information to enable UNIDO to demonstrate and tell stories of gender-related results from its interventions on the ground, backed by evidence.

12. **Adequate human and financial investment in the internal gender architecture.** Within the existing resources, UNIDO will seek to ensure to allocate sufficient and predictable human and financial resources to its internal gender architecture, to implement the Gender Strategy and fulfil the commitments stipulated in the UNIDO Policy for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (DGB/2019/16).

13. **Equal representation of women, especially at senior levels, within the Organization.** Gender parity remains a consistent challenge. There is a high risk that by 2028 UNIDO will not reach the 50/50 objective set by the United Nations Secretary-General in the United Nations system-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. Specific efforts are required to enhance the proportion of women, especially among senior level professionals (P5 and above). Additional details are provided in annex 3 of this document.

II. Goal, objectives and theory of change

Overarching goal

14. The overarching goal of UNIDO's Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2024–2027 is to **increase women's well-being, economic empowerment and equality of opportunity in ISID.**

Strategic objectives

15. **Equal lead in ISID:** All women and men equally exercise leadership, and gain an equal voice and decision-making power in the public and private industrial sector.

16. **Equal participation in ISID:** All women and men gain equal rights, access to and control over productive industrial resources, including employment, finance and technology.

17. **Equal benefit from ISID:** All women and men gain an equal share of economic, environmental and social benefits from ISID.

¹³ Up-to-date internal and external assessments include 2023 Survey of UNIDO Member States; 2022 midterm review of the 2020–2023 Gender Strategy; 2022 UN-SWAP 2.0 UNIDO performance results 2022; 2021 Independent Thematic Evaluation of UNIDO 2015 Policy and 2016–2019 Strategy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; and 2019 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network assessment of UNIDO performance and results.

Programme and institutional management objectives

18. **Programme management objective:** to enhance the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women results in UNIDO programmes and projects.

19. **Institutional management objective:** to strengthen UNIDO's organizational effectiveness in delivering gender equality and women's empowerment results.

Theory of change

20. UNIDO's theory of change for gender equality and the empowerment of women (figure 1) demonstrates how different levels of goals and objectives relate to each other within the Strategy, and how it connects to UNIDO's MTPF and the 2030 Agenda.

21. From the bottom up, the theory of change begins with UNIDO, an organization with a specific mandate, comparative advantage and proven records in delivering results in ISID. The organizational performance (Tier 2) lays the foundation for UNIDO to deliver the development results it sets out to achieve (Tier 1) together with its partners for its clients.

22. The hypothesis underlying the theory of change indicates that if an organization effectively puts in place gender-transformative systems, policies, practices and behaviours (organizational performance), it will effectively deliver gender-transformative interventions (programme management performance) that will enhance gender development results on the ground (development results). The stronger the foundation at the bottom, the better and more significant the results achieved at the top will be.

23. Tier 2 consists of two levels from the bottom up:

(a) **Institutional performance management:** This refers to how UNIDO effectively manages its internal systems and resources and puts in place policies and practices that transform gender roles, norms and power relations. It focuses on the key areas that UNIDO needs to strengthen and improve to fulfil its commitments to gender equality and the empowerment of women: leadership, gender architecture, equal representation of women, financial resources allocation and tracking, and communication and advocacy;

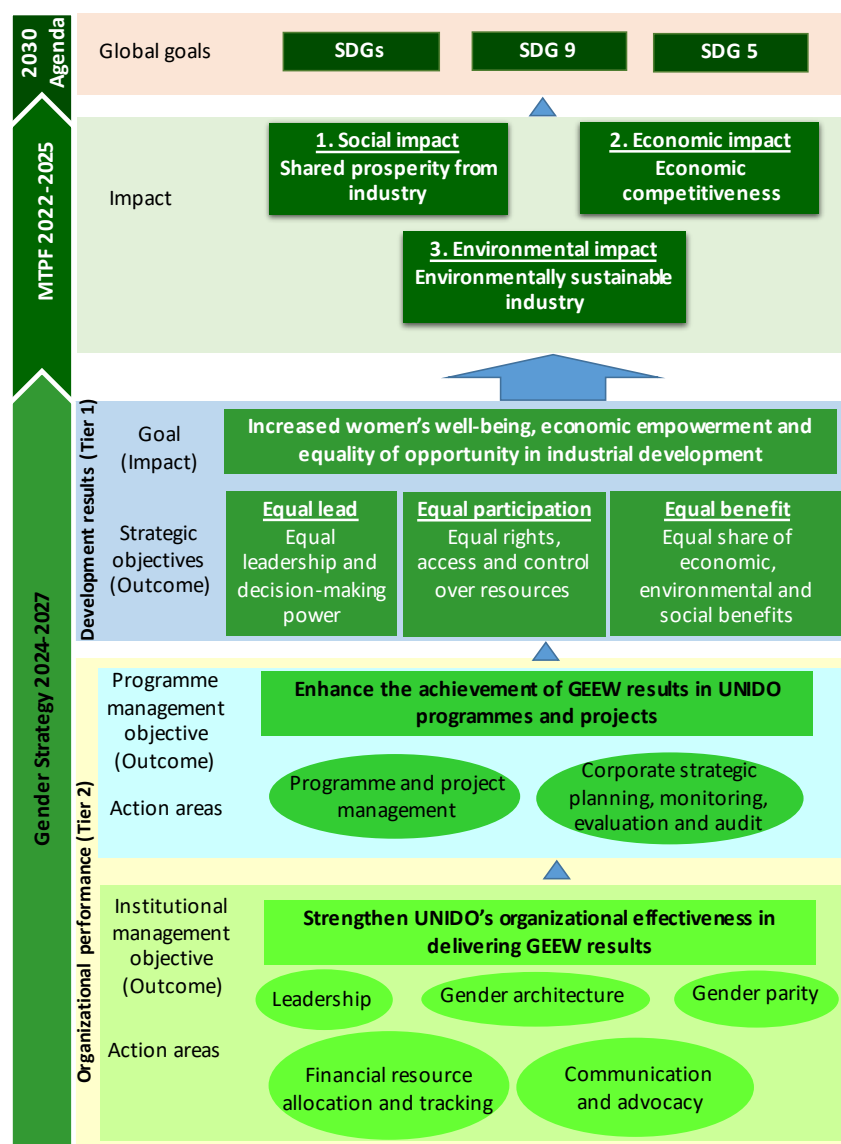
(b) **Programme performance management:** This relates to how the Organization manages its programmes and projects to ensure that they are gender-transformative at design, during implementation and at completion, and that they achieve results on the ground on gender equality and the empowerment of women (e.g. outcomes and impacts). This level also includes how UNIDO applies results-based management principles in its programme and project management cycle to feed learning into its operations. Consequently, it focuses on the areas of programme and project cycle management, as well as corporate strategic planning, monitoring, evaluation and audit.

24. Going further up, Tier 1 development results reflect the outcomes and impacts related to gender in UNIDO's projects and programmes. It builds on the organizational performance of Tier 2.

25. Successful achievement of tiers 1 and 2 will support UNIDO to achieve its three impact dimensions, as laid down in its MTPF: (1) Social impact: shared prosperity from industry; (2) Economic impact: economic competitiveness; and (3) Environmental impact: environmentally sustainable industry.

26. At the global level, UNIDO's gender mainstreaming and transformative efforts contribute to the 2030 Agenda through SDG 9, of which UNIDO is the custodian of six industry-related indicators, and through all other SDGs, as gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is crucial for progress across all the Goals and targets.

Figure 1
**Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
 2024–2027 – theory of change¹⁴**



III. Achieving gender-transformative development results

Equal lead in ISID: All women and men equally exercise leadership, and gain equal voice and decision-making power in the public and private industrial sector

27. UNIDO has a critical role to play in ensuring that all women exercise equal leadership, voice and decision-making power in relation to their male counterparts in the industrial sector, both in the public and private sector, including firms and representation mechanisms, such as unions and business associations.

28. This work will specifically contribute to SDG 5 (target 5.5) by increasing the proportion of women in managerial positions.

¹⁴ The theory of change has been simplified to present a clear structure of results chain and the logical causality among the results, in alignment with the UNIDO MTPF and performance areas of UN-SWAP 2.0. It must be noted that many intermediate results will need to materialize and the necessary conditions for the achievement of results at different levels, assumptions, must exist before the results of the next level can occur.

Equal participation in ISID: All women and men gain equal rights, access to and control over productive industrial resources, including employment, finance and technology.

29. UNIDO has a critical role to play in supporting women's equal rights, access to and control over productive resources. These include rights and access to:

- (a) Secure and decent jobs in manufacturing industries, food production and related service sectors;
- (b) Finance and affordable credit, technology, skills and entrepreneurial capacity;
- (c) Professional and social networks;
- (d) Physical and social infrastructure such as energy, transport and markets, as well as health and childcare services;
- (e) Innovation, research and development, and knowledge creation; and
- (f) Balance between paid work and other demands on their time, such as unpaid care work.

30. This work will specifically contribute to SDG 2 (target 2.3), SDG 8 (targets 8.2, 8.3, 8.5 and 8.6), SDG 9 (targets 9.2 and 9.3) and SDG 13 (target 13.1) for women and girls.

Equal benefit from ISID: All women and men gain an equal share of economic, environmental and social benefits from industrial development

31. UNIDO has a critical role to play in ensuring that women and girls, as well as men and boys, equally benefit from the economic, environmental and social gains from ISID. Gender-equal benefits can be experienced through:

- (a) Reduced gender gaps in employment and wages, better working conditions and job security;
- (b) Enhanced access to improved services, such as social infrastructure including education, health and care services; physical infrastructure including roads, electricity or transport; and technologies, that result from industrial development;
- (c) Improved livelihoods and sources of income, profits and capital gains;
- (d) Better opportunities for skills upgrading, on-the-job training and social mobility;
- (e) Enhanced access to healthy environment, clean water and natural resources; and
- (f) Reduced unpaid workload and increased freedom on women's time thanks to the development and consumption of labour-saving devices and environmental management practices that can reduce the unpaid care burden that women face.¹⁵

32. This work will specifically contribute to achieving to SDG 7 (target 7.1), SDG 9 (target 9.1.) and SDG 13 (target 13.1) for women and girls.

¹⁵ UNIDO (2019). Inclusive and sustainable industrial development: the gender dimension.

33. Three key performance indicators from the IRPF will enable UNIDO to measure progress on some of the gender-transformative development results:¹⁶

Key performance indicator	Baseline (2022) ¹⁷	Target (2027)
Percentage of newly established start-up firms led by women annually (UNIDO IRPF indicator BUS.3)	58	70
Percentage of additional jobs created or retained for women annually (UNIDO IRPF indicator SOC.1)	43	60
Percentage of women gaining skills or capacity annually (UNIDO IRPF indicator KASA.2)	34	55

IV. Achieving gender-transformative organizational performance

Programme management objective: Enhance the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results in UNIDO programmes and projects.

Action area 1: Programme and project management

34. **Consistently apply a gender-transformative approach throughout the project cycle.** From project design, implementation and monitoring, to reporting and evaluation, UNIDO will ensure that its interventions on the ground equally benefit all women and men, girls and boys, by:

(a) Actively examining and seeking to transform the underlying causes of gender inequality, tackling harmful gender norms, roles and practices as well as legislative and policy frameworks that create gender inequality throughout the project life cycle;

(b) Integrating specific gender-transformative interventions into project design and addressing and mainstreaming gender issues throughout the entire project cycle;

(c) Allocating specific and adequate budget (both financial and human resources) for gender-transformative interventions and;

(d) Assigning gender-specific tasks to knowledgeable personnel.

35. **Enhance focus on implementing gender-transformative interventions planned at project design.** Project managers and teams will ensure that:

(a) Gender-related interventions planned for are implemented and their budget are used for the purpose;

(b) Gender-related targets, results, sex-disaggregated data and qualitative information are systematically monitored, reported and analysed for adaptive management to enhance gender results and replication;

(c) Gender-responsive procurement practice is enhanced during project implementation.

36. **Strengthen UNIDO personnel's capacities for gender-transformative programme cycle management.** UNIDO will strengthen the capacities of its project personnel to apply gender-transformative project cycle management. This

¹⁶ It is acknowledged that these indicators only capture some dimensions of gender equality and the empowerment of women. However, as these indicators are from UNIDO's IRPF monitoring system and data have been collected and improved, they represent a good use of resources. As the IRPF and its data quality and input have been continuously enhanced, the improvement may influence the indicator targets. The midterm review of this Strategy will therefore assess and determine whether the targets will need adjustment at midterm.

¹⁷ Data source: IRPF-generic query as of July 2023. The data are annual, not cumulative.

includes mandatory training for all personnel, together with targeted and tailored capacity-building activities. UNIDO will further develop and update practical tools and knowledge products to facilitate gender-transformative programming and implementation.

37. Strengthen norms, policies and institutional capacity of key industry stakeholders. UNIDO will ensure that gender equality principles are reflected in the industrial strategies, policies and standards and institutions that it supports.

38. Increase targeted technical assistance to women in industry, including women entrepreneurs. Learning from lessons of the last four years, additional emphasis will be put on initiatives targeting women and women entrepreneurs as direct beneficiaries. This includes specific support to women entrepreneurs in access to finance, networks and skills. This work will be carried out in cooperation with UNIDO public and private sector partners.

39. Strengthen sectoral policies and capacity-building of key industrial stakeholders to enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women, taking into account regional differences. This includes initiatives such as national and regional training programmes on the intersection of gender and industrial development, and strengthening the capacity of countries to collect, compile and analyse sex-disaggregated data on SDG indicators 9.2.2, 9.3.1 and 9.3.2.¹⁸

Action area 2: Corporate strategic planning, monitoring, evaluation and audit

40. Strengthen the inclusion of and reporting on a gender-transformative objective in key strategic planning documents. The Organization will continue to include gender-specific and sex-disaggregated indicators and targets in the MTPF and its programmes and budgets, and collect, monitor and analyse corporate sex-disaggregated data against its commitment.

41. Continue strengthening the integration of gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches into evaluation and audit (processes, findings, lessons learned and recommendations), where applicable. UNIDO will continue strengthening gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches into evaluation and audit at corporate level, in line with the risk/evidence gap assessments of the UNIDO Office of Evaluation and Internal Oversight, and conduct and complete an independent evaluation of this strategy and its implementation by June 2027.¹⁹

42. Three key performance indicators will enable UNIDO to measure progress on this programme management objective to enhance the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment results in UNIDO programmes and projects:

Key performance indicator	Baseline (2022)²⁰	Target (2027)
Percentage of newly approved projects per year that significantly contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women or have gender equality and the empowerment of women as the main objective (Gender Marker 2A or 2B)	41	60
Percentage of projects/programmes whose gender mainstreaming was rated in satisfactory range at completion annually ²¹	70	85

¹⁸ Indicator 9.2.2 – Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment;
Indicator 9.3.1. – Percentage share of small-scale industries in total industry value added;
Indicator 9.3.2 – Percentage of small-scale industries with a loan or line of credit.

¹⁹ The midterm review of this Strategy will assess the feasibility of extending the current Strategy by two years to realign the cycle of UNIDO's gender strategies with that of the MTPF. In case the Strategy is extended, the independent evaluation of this strategy will be conducted and completed by June of its final year, so that the evaluation findings and recommendations could be fed into the development of the next Strategy.

²⁰ Most recent available data at the time of development of the UNIDO Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2024–2027.

Key performance indicator	Baseline (2022) ²⁰	Target (2027)
Percentage of projects/programmes reporting sex-disaggregated indicators of results at all levels (output, outcome and impact) through the IRPF annually ²²	52	80

Institutional objective: Strengthen UNIDO's organizational effectiveness in delivering gender equality and women's empowerment results

Action area 3: Gender-transformative leadership

43. UNIDO senior leadership and managers will publicly and internally champion gender equality and the empowerment of women. Managers, including the Director General, Managing Directors, Directors and Chiefs, will use external and internal engagement opportunities to proactively promote gender equality and women's empowerment. They will also enforce the compliance with UNIDO's 2020 Administrative Instruction on Equal representation of women at UNIDO's events and related photos. The Director General will recognize the outstanding services of personnel and Gender Focal Points through the biennial Gender Equality Mobilization Award.

44. UNIDO senior leadership and managers will promote gender equality and the empowerment of women within their teams and areas of responsibility. Senior Management, including the Director General, Managing Directors, Directors and Chiefs, will show strong leadership and ensure that all personnel work to promote diversity and inclusion by fostering a safe, discrimination-free and supportive workplace in which all personnel are provided equal opportunities to advance their careers and balance their personal and professional commitments. They will set themselves at least one specific gender-transformative performance objective, and ensure that all staff reporting to them does the same.

45. UNIDO will further enhance the gender-transformative skills of its leaders. Senior Management will take part in a gender-transformative leadership training to support them as they continue to guide UNIDO's efforts to strengthen gender equality and women empowerment by example.

Action area 4: Supportive and effective gender architecture

46. UNIDO will ensure a supportive, effective gender architecture that is adequately resourced. The Director General will ensure that the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Unit is adequately resourced (see action area 6), in line with organizational needs and in accordance with UN-SWAP criteria and according to UNIDO's 2019 Gender Policy. UNIDO will further build on existing good practices with its Gender Focal Point network and ensure that 20 per cent of their working time is dedicated to gender focal point functions. All staff shall set at least one gender-transformative goal or learning objective on gender equality in the staff performance appraisal system.

²¹ The rating was assigned by independent terminal evaluation teams, with a rating scale from 1 to 6, with 1 = highly unsatisfactory; 6 = highly satisfactory. Satisfactory range is from 4 (moderately satisfactory), 5 (satisfactory) to 6 (highly satisfactory).

²² Referred to as "Results reporting completeness", the data are as of 2023 and come from the Division of Quality, Impact and Accountability (IET/QUA) which is the UNIDO focal point to monitor the quality and consistency of the results of all services, projects and programmes at UNIDO, in line with the principles of UNIDO's IRPF.

Action area 5: Equal representation of women at UNIDO

47. Accelerate the achievement of equal representation of women at all levels by strengthening human resources policies and practices related to gender equality:

(a) **Proactive approach to enforce gender-transformative human resources policies, procedures and practices:** Human Resources Services, in collaboration with the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Unit, will critically and proactively review UNIDO's human resource policies and processes related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and will incorporate good practices from the United Nations system and private sector companies;

(b) **Temporary special measures:** To advance the representation of women professionals, especially at senior levels (P5 and above), and to achieve the objective of gender parity at all the international staff levels by 2028 set by the United Nations system-wide Strategy on Gender Parity, UNIDO will develop and apply temporary special measures in recruitment, retention, career progression and talent management. Managers responsible for making appointments to Field Offices will ensure parity for national staff (Nos) on fixed-term appointments;

(c) **Monitoring and reporting on progress:** Human Resources Services, supported by the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Unit, will monitor and report on UNIDO's gender parity status to the Leadership Board every six months. Human Resources Services will also identify and remove inherent biases in recruitment and other human resource policies and processes;

(d) **Accountability for equality:** The ultimate authority and responsibility for achieving results on gender equality and the empowerment of women at UNIDO rests with the Director General. The Director General will hold Managing Directors accountable for improving gender parity within their Directorates, including by implementing specific supportive measures and taking corrective action when required.

48. **Fostering and maintaining an enabling organizational environment.** UNIDO will continue to ensure United Nations ethics-related legal arrangements, including mandatory personnel training on the UNIDO Code of Ethical Conduct, and the implementation of the corporate policy on the prohibition, prevention and resolution of harassment, including sexual harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority. UNIDO will ensure continued implementation and accessibility of measures taken to promote an enabling environment, including flexible working arrangements, parental leave and nursing policies, and monitor its implementation through gender-disaggregated assessments, including personnel surveys and exit interviews.

Action area 6: Gender-responsive financial resource allocation and tracking

49. **Continue to allocate and track financial resources for gender equality activities and results.** UNIDO will ensure that gender equality is incorporated into budgetary decisions through a gender marker system, and will continue tracking expenditures of gender-related interventions and activities. Funding the institutional improvements envisaged in this Strategy requires a combination of three modalities: (1) dedicated, adequate and predictable resources from the regular budget for key staff positions and core functions of the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Unit; (2) resources to cover core functions of Gender Focal Points from their respective entities; and (3) additional extrabudgetary resources, to be mobilized for specific activities and projects to implement this Strategy. Moreover, Senior Management will allocate resources for the implementation of this Strategy and the UNIDO Gender Parity Action Plan.

Action area 7: Communication, knowledge and advocacy for gender equality and the empowerment of women

50. **Further strengthen UNIDO's thought leadership** on gender equality and women's empowerment in industry by developing and disseminating knowledge products on the gender dimensions of relevant industrial topics, such as digital transformation, climate-neutral industry and circular economy.

51. **Ensure that knowledge related to gender equality and women's empowerment is systematically developed and documented.** UNIDO will develop targeted communication on issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment, and mainstream gender equality considerations into communication on other topics.

52. **Be proactive in communicating knowledge developed and advocating for its application.** This commitment will be institutionalized in corporate communication strategies and monitored.

53. The following key performance indicators will enable UNIDO to measure progress on this institutional objective to strengthen UNIDO's organizational effectiveness in delivering gender equality and women's empowerment results:

Key performance indicator	Baseline (2022) ²³	Target (2027)
UNIDO being on track to achieve the objective of the UN-SWAP on Gender Parity at all international staff levels by 2028	Not on track	Yes, on track
Budget ratio (percentage) of newly approved projects per year that significantly contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of women or have gender equality and the empowerment of women as a main objective (Gender Marker 2A or 2B)	47	60

V. Implementation arrangement and accountability

54. **Operationalization of the Strategy:** This Strategy will be further operationalized through annual workplans that contain specific activities and targets for each UNIDO Division and Office.

55. **Partnerships:** UNIDO will pursue new partnerships and consolidate existing partnerships to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and ISID with Member States and a wide range of stakeholders. This includes coordination, joint initiatives and programmes with other United Nations entities at Headquarters and at country level within the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and the United Nations Country Teams. It also includes the private sector, academia and think tanks, as well as networks and interest groups advocating for gender equality and the empowerment of women in industry, such as women's business associations. Partnerships can promote innovation and sustainable practices that address gender-based challenges by leveraging diverse perspectives and expertise.

56. **Responsibilities and accountability:** This Strategy reaffirms commitments to the accountability framework laid down in the 2019 UNIDO Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (DGB/2019/16) and further specified in the action areas (see section 4 of this document). All UNIDO personnel, including senior and middle managers, have specific responsibilities and accountability for implementing this Strategy and for the promotion and advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

²³ Most recent available data at the time of development of the UNIDO Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2024–2027. See annex 3 for more details on the gender ratio at UNIDO by July 2023.

57. The Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Unit will serve as the institutional coordination point for the implementation of this Strategy by providing strategic and technical guidance to all staff, particularly the Gender Focal Point network. It will also monitor and report the annual progress of the implementation of this Strategy to the UNIDO Leadership Board.

58. **Assessment of progress and the way forward:** A midterm review of the Strategy will be conducted by the Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Unit to measure the progress of the implementation of the Strategy. The midterm review will also assess the feasibility of extending the current Strategy by two years to realign the cycle of UNIDO's gender strategies with that of the MTPF. The Independent Evaluation Unit of UNIDO will conduct a comprehensive and independent evaluation of the implementation and achievement of the Strategy, to be published by June of the final year of its implementation period.

Annex 1

Global context – Progress and challenges on gender equality and the empowerment of women

1. Persisting inequalities between women and men are a major obstacle to ISID. In recent years, women's well-being, economic empowerment and equality of opportunity have been disproportionately affected by the social, economic and environmental crises that this planet is currently facing. For example, during the pandemic and specifically from the end of 2019 to the end of 2020, the average participation of women in the labour force in emerging and developing economies fell by 6.1 per cent, a decline that was 50 per cent higher than for men.²⁴

2. Nonetheless, and as box 1 demonstrates, it is important to note the progress that has been made in terms of improving gender equality and women's access to ISID. UNIDO, its partners and stakeholders have made important contributions to gender equality at global, regional and country levels. However, as highlighted in box 2, critical challenges persist. These will need to be addressed if we are to achieve internationally agreed targets for gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Box 1: Progress in gender equality and ISID

1. **Women's growing and significant role in the global economy.** UNIDO's Advancing Gender Equality through Trade report notes that: around 252 million of the approximately 582 million entrepreneurs worldwide are female; women now account for 41 per cent of the global labour force, and; women own nearly 10 million of the world's small and medium-sized enterprises.²⁵

2. **Increasing equality in education levels** between boys and girls, young women, and men. Globally, the gender parity index in primary and secondary education increased from about 90 girls enrolled for every 100 boys in 1995 to parity in 2018.²⁶

3. **Increasing understanding** of the value and constraints that result from women's reproductive labour and care work.

4. **Sustained international commitment to gender equality.** This is demonstrated through international agreements to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Generation Equality Forum, and commitments to "building forward better" post pandemic and to addressing the risk of reversing progress made on social and inclusiveness indicators, such as SDG 5.

5. **Gender equality and women's empowerment continue to be a United Nations System-wide priority.** The UN-SWAP, Our Common Agenda and the United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity ensure ongoing attention to and commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment.

6. **Better understanding of methodologies for sustainable change for gender equality.** It is recognized that approaches to empowering individual women will not lead to the long-term structural and normative changes required for sustainable gender equality. Instead, there is an increasing adoption of transformational programming involving men and recognition of the importance of highlighting local, women-led organizations as ways to challenge and transform gender-based stereotypes. The industrial development sector can build on good practice and learning in this area.

Box 2: Challenges to gender equality in inclusive and sustainable industrial development

1. **Gender stereotypes, harmful gender norms and gender-based discrimination persist.** As a result, women often lack access to key elements that would enable them to contribute to and benefit fully from ISID.

²⁴ Data from the International Labour Office, cited in "Towards gender-inclusive industrialization in a post-pandemic world" (2023). *Industrial Analytics Platform*. Retrieved July 11, 2023, from <https://iap.unido.org/articles/towards-gender-inclusive-industrialization-post-pandemic-world>.

²⁵ UNIDO (2022). Advancing Gender Equality through Trade.

²⁶ UNESCO (2020). Progress towards gender parity in education is undeniable. 2020 Gender Report.

These include access to finance, professional networks, mentorships, procurement opportunities, technologies, infrastructure and job training. For example, in high-income industrialized countries, women continue to face biases in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, often due to gender stereotypes and limited access to professional networks.²⁷

2. **Women continue to be underrepresented in senior leadership positions across all industries**, especially so in fields like manufacturing (25 per cent women); agriculture (23 per cent); supply chain and transportation (23 per cent); oil, gas and mining (19 per cent); and infrastructure (16 per cent).²⁸

3. **Women continue to be underrepresented as entrepreneurs and face gender-specific challenges regarding access to finance.** On average, women represent one quarter of new business owners and directors. Also, women entrepreneurs face specific challenges in accessing finance and affordable credit, due to gender biases of creditors and investors, and unequal access to land and other productive resources that can be used as collateral.²⁹ Where women entrepreneurs do access finance, this is often on less favourable terms than for men.³⁰

4. **The gender gap in labour force participation has stagnated.** The gender gap in labour force participation among adults aged 25 to 54 has stagnated over the past 20 years. As of 2022, less than two thirds of women (61 per cent) are in the labour force, compared to 91 per cent of men.³¹

5. **Persistent gender pay gap.** The gender wage gap stands on average at 23 per cent, meaning that women earn 77 cents on every dollar earned by men for each hour worked. While individual characteristics such as education, working time, occupational segregation, skills and experience, explain part of the gender pay gap, a large part is due to discrimination based on gender roles, norms and stereotypes.³²

6. **Digital gender divide.** Women have lower access to and usage of digital technologies than men. This is particularly pronounced in less developed countries. Women also appear to be particularly vulnerable to destructive digitalization of their occupations, as well as to losing their jobs due to a lack of relevant information and communications technology skills.³³

7. **Women are still assuming greater responsibility for unpaid care work**, which can exclude them from the formal workforce and push them into informal work in attempts to reconcile care needs and the imperative to earn. Studies show that, worldwide, women undertake 75 per cent of all unpaid care work and spend 2.5 times more time on these care tasks than men.³⁴

8. **Crises are disproportionately impacting on women.** Food insecurity, soaring energy and food prices, supply chain disruptions and natural disasters caused by climate change are all having a disproportionate effect on women. These latest crises are compounding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing climate change. Women are more likely to be affected by food insecurity and the lack of reliable energy for ensuring household needs are met.³⁵

²⁷ UNIDO (2019). Inclusive and sustainable industrial development: The gender dimension.

²⁸ World Economic Forum (2023). Global Gender Gap Report 2023.

www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf.

²⁹ www.unsdglearn.org/blog/women-smes-and-sustainable-development-lessons-learnt-for-the-road-ahead/#_ftnref14. IFC (2017). MSME Finance Gap: Assessment of the Shortfalls and Opportunities in Financing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Emerging Markets; Carranza, Eliana; Dhakal, Chandra; Love, Inessa. (2018). Female Entrepreneurs: How and Why Are They Different? World Bank, Jobs Working Paper No. 20; IFC. (2019) Moving toward Gender Balance in Private Equity and Venture Capital.

³⁰ www.unsdglearn.org/blog/women-smes-and-sustainable-development-lessons-learnt-for-the-road-ahead/#_ftnref14. IFC (2017). MSME Finance Gap: Assessment of the Shortfalls and Opportunities in Financing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Emerging Markets; Carranza, Eliana; Dhakal, Chandra; Love, Inessa. (2018). Female Entrepreneurs: How and Why Are They Different? World Bank, Jobs Working Paper No. 20; IFC. (2019) Moving toward Gender Balance in Private Equity and Venture Capital.

³¹ ILO (2023). New data shine light on gender gaps in the labour market, Spotlight on Work Statistics No.12.

³² ILO (2019). Understanding the gender pay gap.

³³ Sorgner, A. (2020). The impacts of new digital technologies on gender equality in developing countries. Background paper for UNIDO IDR 2020.

³⁴ United Nations (2017). Leave No One Behind: Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, New York.

³⁵ See UNCTAD reports from the United Nations Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance <https://news.un.org/pages/global-crisis-response-group/>. Also UNIDO 2023. Gender equality in the sustainable energy transition.

Annex 2

UNIDO Context – Achievements to date and lessons learned

1. UNIDO's Gender Strategy 2024–2027 builds on the Organization's achievements on gender equality and the empowerment of women to date. It draws on organizational learning, including the findings and recommendations, from the: 2022 midterm review of the 2020–2023 Gender Strategy; the UNIDO performance results in the 2022 UN-SWAP 2.0; the 2021 independent thematic evaluation of UNIDO 2015 Policy and 2016–2019 Strategy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; and the 2019 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network assessment of UNIDO's performance and results.

Box 3: Achievements to date

1. Continuous and significant improvement of gender results from projects/programmes

(a) More new projects significantly or exclusively contribute to gender equality and the empowerment of: 19 per cent in 2019 and 41 per cent in 2022.

(b) At completion, more projects rated in satisfactory range in mainstreaming gender: 40 per cent in 2017 and 70 per cent in 2022.

2. Continuously increased performance against UN-SWAP indicators

(a) In 2022, UNIDO met or exceeded all but one applicable UN-SWAP indicator, which represents 94 per cent, up from 76 per cent in 2019.

(b) UNIDO's performance is above the United Nations system average, and significantly better than other technical entities.

3. Good progress on implementing commitments of the Strategy for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2020–2023

(a) The 2022 Midterm Review Report found that 83 per cent of the actions indicated in the Strategy were completed or on track.

Box 4: Lessons learned

1. At project/programme management level

(a) Gender mainstreaming actions accelerate and widen project results: women have been shown to be powerful drivers of inclusive and sustainable development and economic growth in projects evaluated.

(b) Gender mainstreaming requires dedicated efforts and resources: gender mainstreaming outcomes are better in projects where budgets are specifically made available, training on gender issues is conducted and gender-specific tasks are adequately assigned to knowledgeable personnel.

(c) Projects where gender issues are addressed and mainstreamed throughout the entire project cycle lead to better gender equality results at completion. Including gender-related activities only on an ad hoc basis during project implementation does not yield the same results as when they are intentionally planned for at the project design stage and mainstreamed during implementation.

2. At institutional level

(a) In an entity such as UNIDO operating in male-dominated fields, achieving gender parity within professional staff, especially at management and senior management levels, requires continued, concerted and intentional efforts at all levels and by all stakeholders.

Annex 3

Gender parity at the international staff levels at UNIDO

1. The United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity sets the objective for all United Nations entities to reach gender parity at all the international staff levels by 2026. For entities such as UNIDO with a steeper slope of change due to low starting points, the goal for parity is 2028. The United Nations System-wide Strategy considers parity to be within the 47 to 53 per cent margin and focuses targets for this objective on international staff on fixed-term, continuous or permanent/indefinite appointments.

Table 1

Percentage of women among UNIDO international staff

Grade	31 December 2022 (percentage)	4 July 2023 (percentage)
DG	0.0	0.0
D2	25.0	25.0
D1/L6	13.6	18.2
P/L5	29.9	27.3
P/L4	40.9	39.3
P/L3	35.3	38.4
P/L2	46.4	57.6
P/L1	66.7	66.7
Total	35.2	36.7

Source: UNIDO Annual Report 2022 and UNIDO Human Resources Services data as of 4 July 2023.