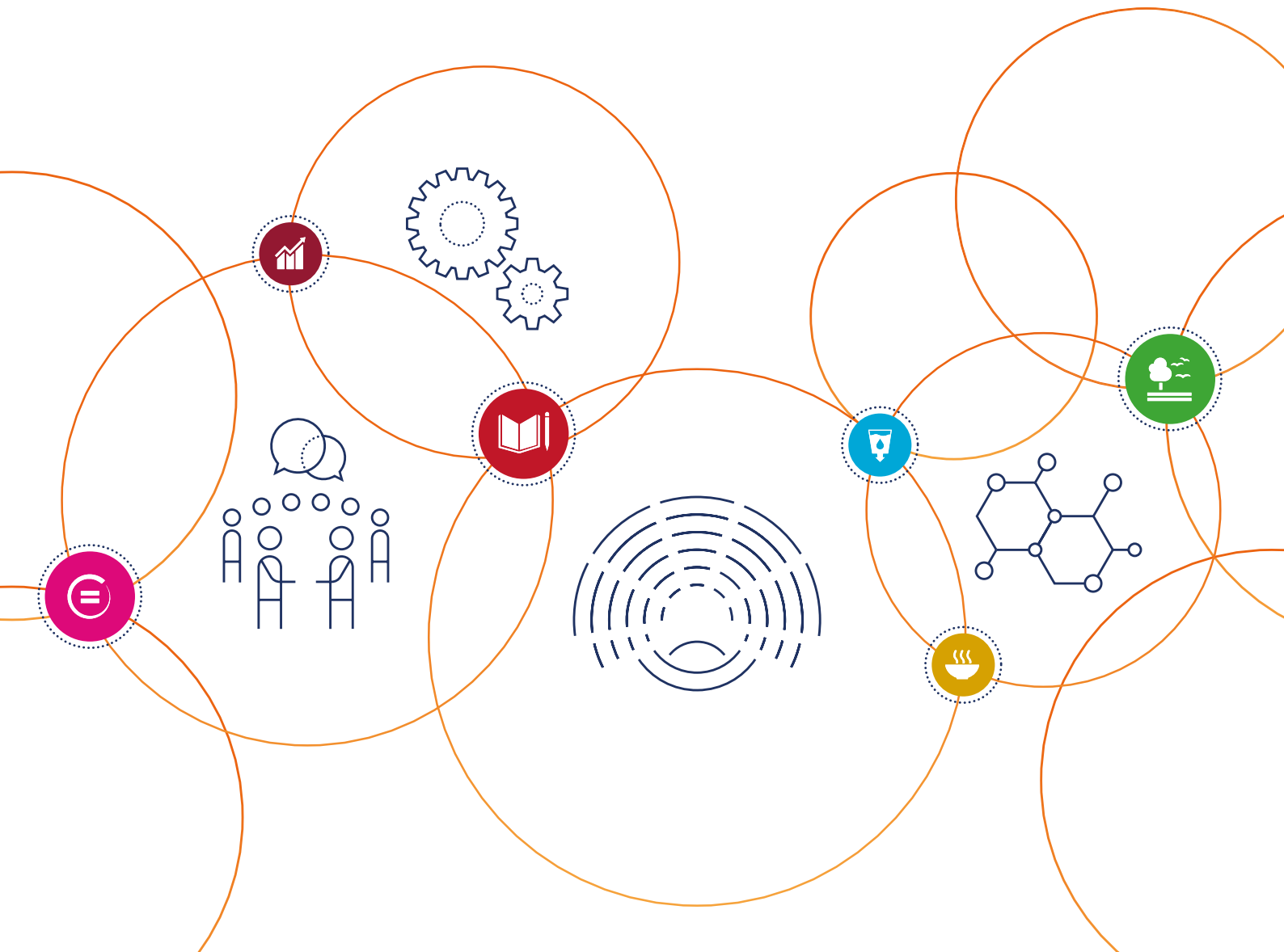


In Focus:  
Gender Equality in Multi-Stakeholder  
Partnerships (MSPs)



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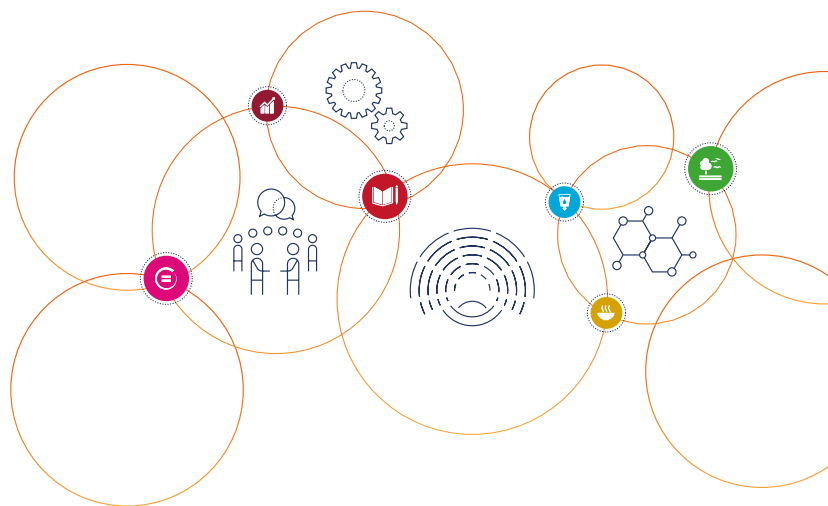


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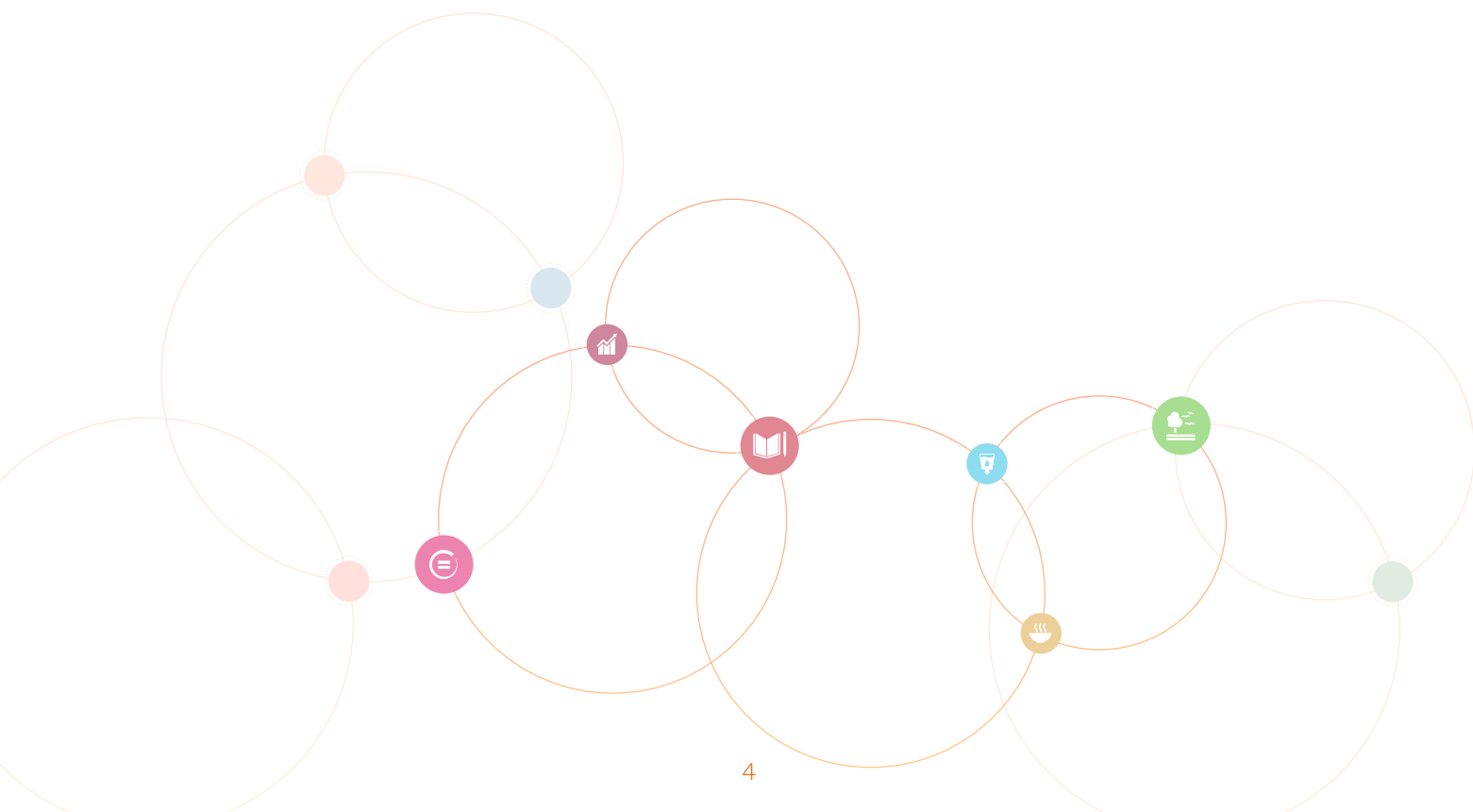
# Summary



The core principle of multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) is that **various stakeholders work together on equal footing to address challenges**. However, poor gender equality hinders the process. MSPs have huge potential to promote equal participation and cooperation for all, and feminist approaches can help to make MSPs gender equitable. **Conversely, ignoring gender equality can adversely impact MSPs and their work.** Different gender-specific experiences mean that any activity can affect people’s lives and interests in different ways.

Gender mainstreaming in MSPs involves a number of **common difficulties**: lack of interest in the topic; different understandings of gender and gender roles; difficulties in dealing with gender equality as a cross-cutting issue; lack of capacity and loss of motivation; other aspects of diversity that make gender mainstreaming (even) more complex (keyword: intersectionality); and a lack of guidance on gender equality. These challenges can be addressed within MSPs and/or overcome with the help of external support.

Integrating gender equality in MSPs is a new topic for many stakeholders, and **one with which many MSPs need support.**



In the **typical phases of MSPs**, gender mainstreaming focuses on the following areas:

### Phase 1: Initiation

The **gender analysis** is conducted to build an understanding of gender perspectives within the context of the topic addressed by the MSP. Furthermore, the gender analysis must also consider which stakeholders need to be involved in order to systematically integrate gender equality into the MSP. The analysis should also consider how dialogue and cooperation in the MSP can be designed with gender equality in mind.

### Phase 3: Implementation

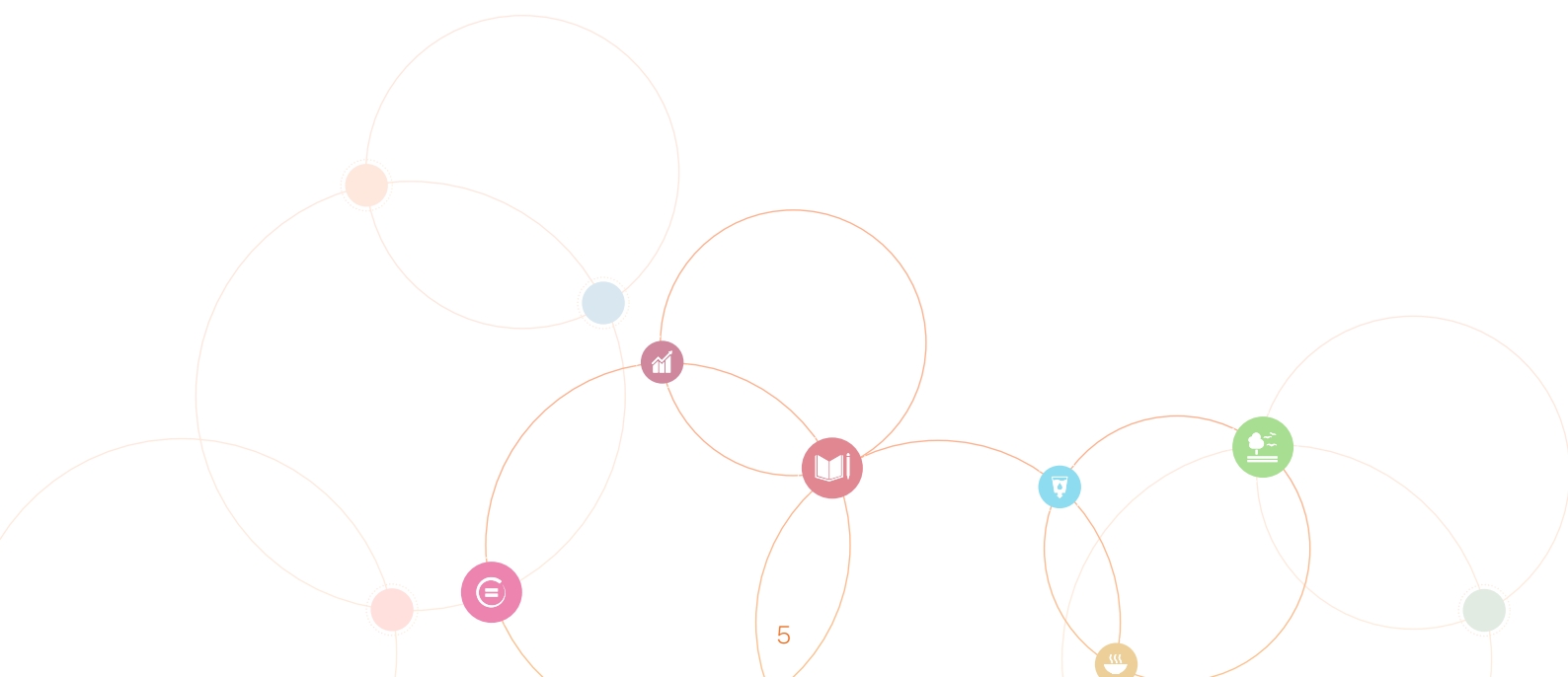
**Gender controlling** involves analysing the financial and non-financial resources for gender mainstreaming. Standardised gender indicators and/or specially developed, MSP-specific indicators can be used for gender-responsive monitoring. The MSP's work on gender equality should be considered as learning processes. Reflection and learning are therefore important elements of gender mainstreaming.

### Phase 2: Design

In this phase, the aim is to systematically organise the agreed objectives and activities in line with the understanding of gender equality developed in the MSP, and make the partnership gender-responsive or even gender-transformative (**gender work plan**) – both in the MSP's activities and in its internal work processes. It may also be useful to draw up and publish a declaration of intent on gender equality.

### Phase 4: Further development

This phase is about **improving gender mainstreaming** in the MSP. This includes consciously highlighting and celebrating positive results, improving activities and work processes based on lessons learned, and establishing a stable long-term structure for gender equality.



# Foreword: Equal participation and cooperation



Gender equality is not just a human right. It is also a necessary condition for a sustainable future.

However, the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2024 (WEF, 2024) predicts that at the current rate of development, it will take another 134 years before gender equality is achieved worldwide. Such data underlines just how urgent the issue is. After all, stable, secure and peaceful societies are only possible if all people can participate equally in political, economic and social life.

Since 2021, Germany has taken an important step towards gender equality by following a feminist foreign and development policy. It is thus actively committed to the vision of equal participation by all people in social, political and economic life – regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnic origin, religion or worldview, or other characteristics.

The guiding vision of feminist development policy is also reflected in the design of partnerships. This is because transformative change can only succeed if all stakeholders participate on equal terms. The approaches of gender equality and multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) share this principle. The two can therefore be profitably combined:

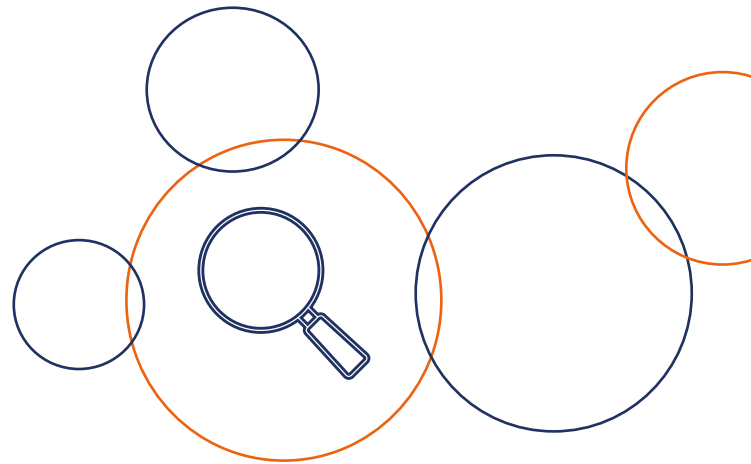
Multi-stakeholder partnerships have huge potential to promote equal participation and cooperation for all, and feminist approaches can help to make multi-stakeholder partnerships more gender equitable.

I am delighted that this publication provides practical guidance on gender mainstreaming in multi-stakeholder partnerships. By making partnerships more inclusive, we can help to create a more sustainable, peaceful and just future.

**Kristian Lempa**

Director of Division, Global Policy, Governance and Cities  
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

# Why is gender equality relevant to MSPs?



A multi-stakeholder partnership (MSP) is a type of cooperation in which stakeholders from at least **three different areas** (the state, the private sector, civil society and/or academia) **work together on an equal footing through an organised and long-term engagement**, in order to make a **contribution to the common good**.

The basic idea behind MSPs is that **various stakeholders work together on an equal footing to address challenges**. Regardless of the topic being addressed by an MSP, poor gender equality stands in the way of this. Due to differing gender-specific experiences, every activity impacts people's living situations and interests differently. Gender equality is therefore an important aspect of successful collaboration in MSPs.

Cultural and social contexts, shaped by factors such as people's age, ethnicity, socialisation, economic background and education and other characteristics influence their understanding of gender, and the gender-specific roles and identities they associate with it. Every MSP should respect and systematically include the resulting different needs, perceptions and realities of people of all genders. This will enable all stakeholders to benefit from it, and possible negative impacts will be avoided.

Gender equality is an established international goal and is a prerequisite for achieving all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The core principle of the SDGs is 'Leave no one behind'. Gender equality is formulated as a goal in its own right – SDG 5.



## Gender mainstreaming

'Mainstreaming means that a specific topic must be considered in all decisions and processes. In development policy, a mainstreaming approach is pursued in areas such as gender equality (gender mainstreaming), inclusion of persons with disabilities, and action against HIV/AIDS. Gender mainstreaming is thus the strategic approach for promoting gender equality. This means that in political and social projects and decisions, the diverse life situations and interests of women, men and people with other gender identities must be considered.' (BMZ (2023), Glossary) 'This approach, for which the term gender mainstreaming has been established internationally since the United Nations (UN) World Conference on Women in 1995, is based on the realisation that there is no gender-neutral reality, and that men and women can be affected by political and administrative decisions in very different ways.' (BMFSFJ, 2021)

A detailed **glossary** on gender equality and feminist development policy can be found in the [BMZ strategy on feminist development policy](#).

People of all genders bring their expertise and experiences to the table – including those they might have gained as a result of the gender-based division of labour, for example. Understanding and utilising this within an MSP can also help bring to light difficulties that would otherwise go unnoticed, and develop alternative solutions. The gender perspective is therefore a major opportunity for MSPs.

→ **MSPs can make a significant contribution towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. By integrating gender equality into their work, they support transformative change towards gender-equitable sustainable development.**

MSPs are designed to help generate **sustainable and innovative development results**. They will not achieve this aim if power relations and dynamics are ignored. One of the risks and potential costs of ignoring them is that the issues addressed by MSPs may then be incomplete, resulting in flawed solutions that are inadequate, unfair or even harmful. That would be inconsistent with the do-no-harm principle.

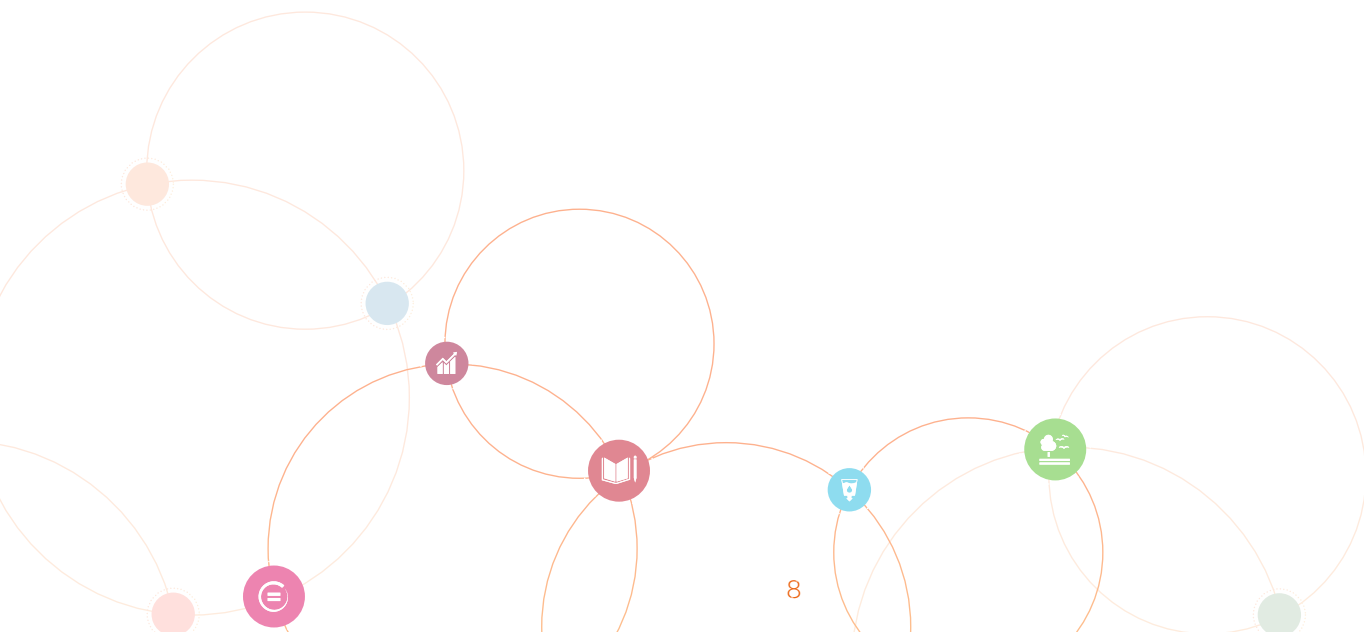
Without efforts to achieve gender equality, an MSP will in the worst case face legitimacy problems, and the impression might arise that the stakeholders involved are more concerned with reputation management than real change. Moreover, it might also lead to stakeholders not (or no longer) feeling fully committed to the joint project. Such commitment is, however, the foundation for any successful MSP.

→ **Failure to take gender equality into account can adversely impact MSPs and their work, and have negative consequences for MSP members and other actors.**

The UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG5 – Gender Equality, and the German Government's feminist development and foreign policy, have increased the **need to integrate** gender equality into MSPs. However, some stakeholders do not know how to approach this issue. Others need effective arguments to explain the added benefit to their fellow stakeholders.

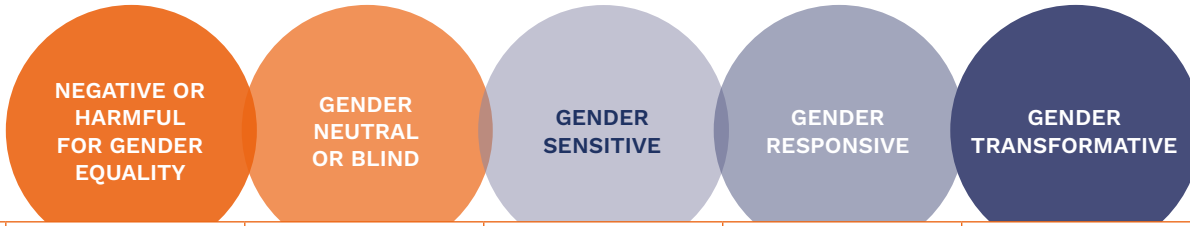
Larger MSPs and umbrella organisations such as the **ISEAL Alliance**, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (**EITI**) and the Alliance for Integrity (**Afln**) are already working more intensively on the topic, and some MSPs are conducting activities to promote gender equality (see examples from the field). So far, however, systematic gender mainstreaming in MSPs is rare, and there is only a small quantity of literature and research on gender equality and mainstreaming in MSPs.

→ **MSPs need support with gender mainstreaming.**



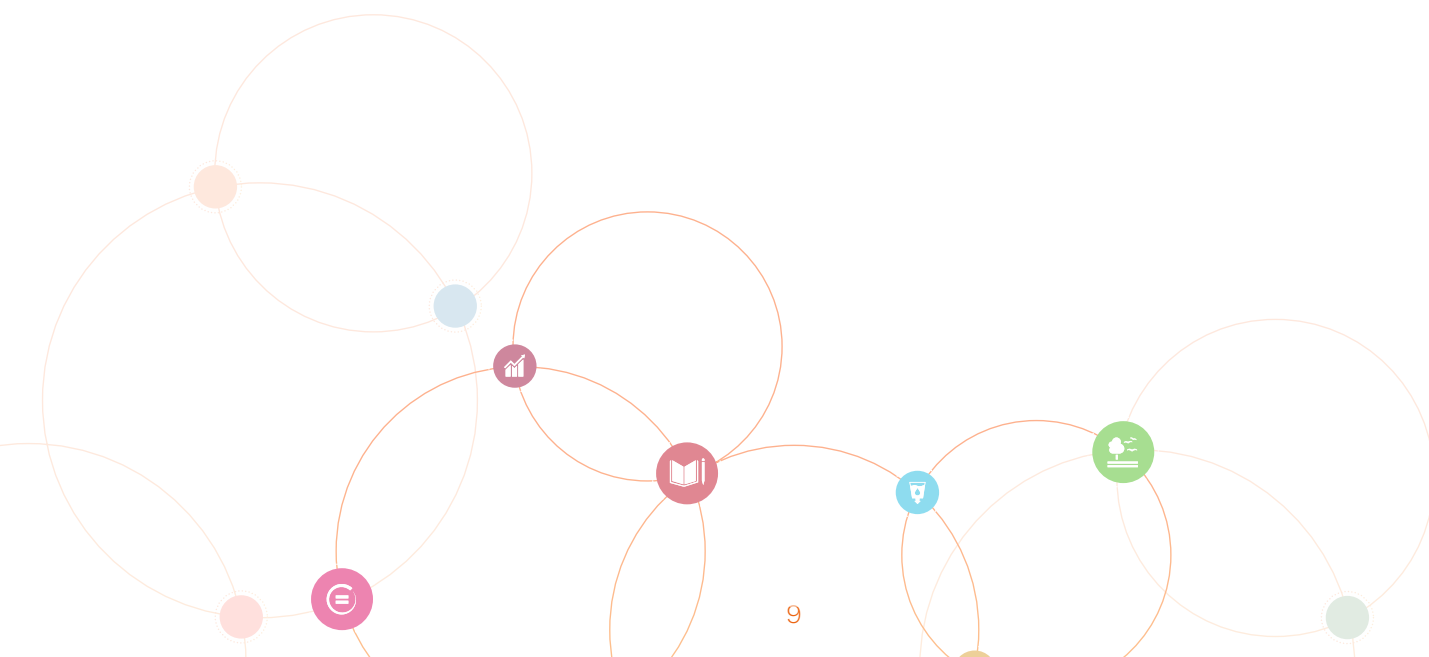


## A continuum of approaches to achieving gender equality

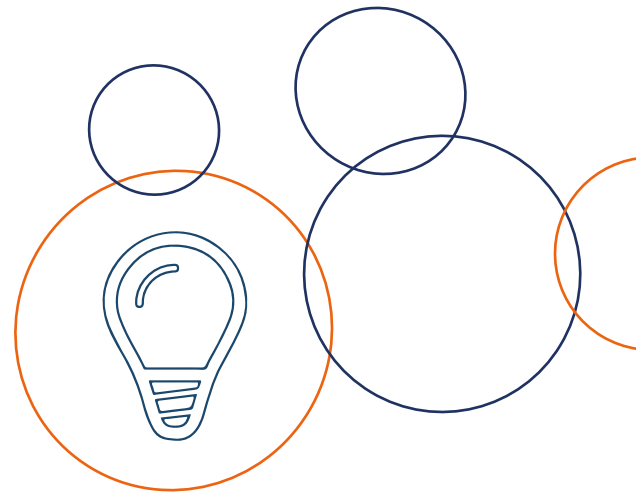


	NEGATIVE OR HARMFUL FOR GENDER EQUALITY	GENDER NEUTRAL OR BLIND	GENDER SENSITIVE	GENDER RESPONSIVE	GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE
<b>Definition</b>	Reinforces gender inequalities and stereotypes.	Operates without any consideration of gender differences.	Acknowledges gender differences.	Strengthens gender equality, by addressing gender differences and gender inequalities.	Transforms gender stereotypes and gender norms and relations for gender equality and an enabling environment.
<b>Example of projects/policies in chemicals management</b>	The requirement to use alternative chemicals, e.g. in artisanal gold mining, which requires significantly more time and know-how for the women using it, but without additional training.	The provision of personal protective equipment without the provision of safe changing rooms.	The collection of sex-disaggregated exposure data.	Regulations/guidelines that reduce the exposure of women in typically “female” occupations, e.g. textile sector, cosmetic sector.	Training for indigenous women to advocate for their rights in national chemicals policy-making.

Gender & Chemicals Partnership (G&CP), 2024: Partnership Rules – Glossary (adapted from UNICEF, 2022: UNICEF Gender Equality Marker and Gender Tag Guidance Note, in: <https://gendercoordinationandmainstreaming.unwomen.org/gender-marker-implementation-unicef>)



# Challenges and possible solutions



Gender mainstreaming in MSPs is a task that promises results, but the process is not always an easy one. Common challenges and possible solutions are described below.

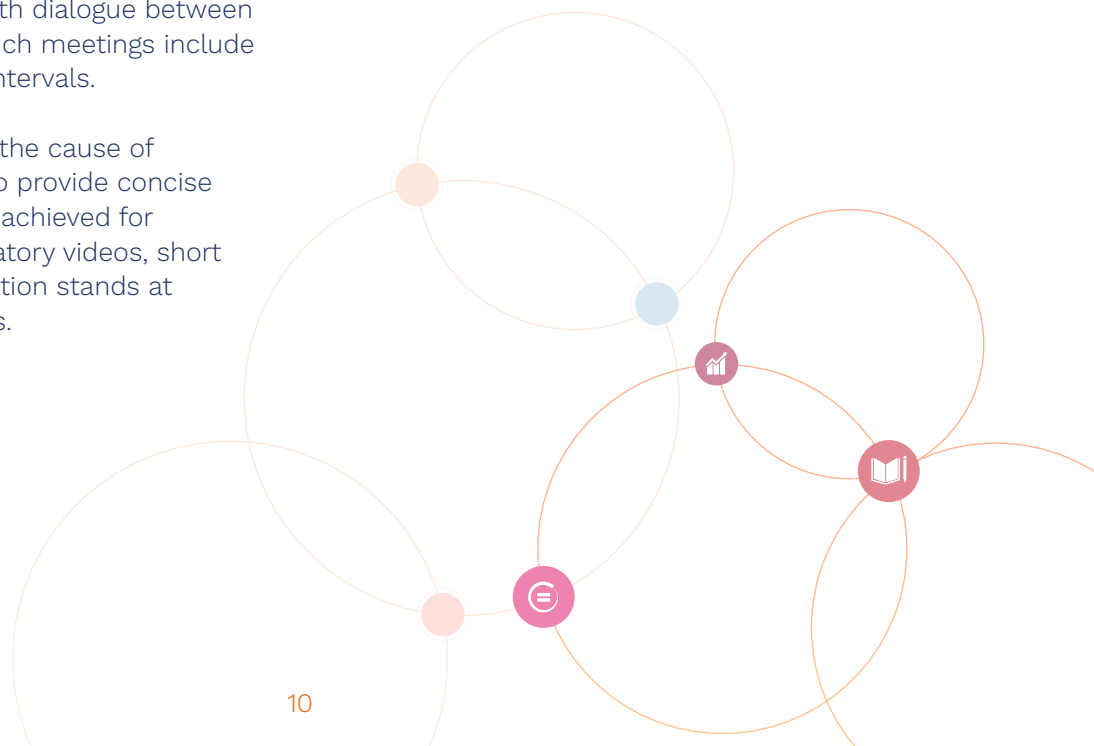
## Lack of interest

Some stakeholders in MSPs are not concerned with gender equality and may have little interest in the topic.

- The shared vision of an MSP is the foundation for cooperation between the stakeholders, which is interest-led but also value-based. Equality, the common good, and the creation of stable, peaceful and sustainable societies are among the values that underpin the work of MSPs. Remembering these values collectively and building on them can generate and strengthen the interest of stakeholders. However, it is not as easy to achieve this in the 'day-to-day business' of projects in comparison to meetings designed for reflection and in-depth dialogue between partners. Examples of such meetings include retreats held at regular intervals.
- If a lack of knowledge is the cause of disinterest, it is helpful to provide concise information. This can be achieved for instance through explanatory videos, short presentations or information stands at annual meetings of MSPs.

- Pointing out strong arguments and tangible, preferably quantifiable benefits of integrating gender equality can motivate stakeholders. This should be based on their respective interests, such as health and safety at work, profit generation, cost containment or risk management.

One example is provided by an analysis conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2023, 162): Closing gender-specific gaps in agricultural productivity and wages in agrifood systems could reduce the number of food-insecure people by 45 million. Figures like this can be used to calculate the potential costs or cost savings of greater equality. This provides key arguments for governments and other stakeholders.



### Differences in understanding

Ideas about gender and gender roles are shaped by cultural social norms and can vary widely. It is often difficult to agree on common terms and a common understanding.

- An introductory event on gender equality and its importance in the MSP's area of work, plus training sessions with gender experts, can help build a shared understanding, especially when an MSP is launched. Lengthy discussions about terms and definitions should be avoided by pursuing a pragmatic approach and employing appropriate moderation techniques. These activities should always focus on dismantling discriminatory structures and enabling everyone to participate equally.

### Cross-cutting task

Many MSPs address gender equality through additional activities or small-scale projects. Some appoint a gender focal person<sup>1</sup> or set up working groups on the topic. These persons or groups can use the present guide as a starting point for their work, or to find suggestions for specific challenges as well as references for further reading.

However, gender is a cross-cutting task that should be systematically integrated into all areas and work processes. In SDG 5 – Gender Equality, and through the core principle of 'leaving no one behind', the 2030 Agenda makes clear that this integration is necessary in order to achieve sustainable development.

- If at all possible, gender equality should be explored and addressed jointly in MSPs. Gender mainstreaming in MSPs also means that all the stakeholders involved are either already aware of the importance of gender equality, or become so. It should not be a niche task for specialists. Those involved should instead be working continuously towards a dedicated and/or inclusive engagement with gender in all activities.

- In MSPs, links between gender equality and those SDGs that are particularly relevant to the respective MSP can be considered (or worked out). This is also suitable as an initial task for a working group on gender or for discussion following a presentation by a gender expert.<sup>2</sup>

### Lack of capacity and loss of motivation

Especially during the initial phase of an MSP, stakeholders are usually highly committed and motivated. Over time, however, this can decrease because MSPs are usually complex and time-consuming, or because positive results do not materialise as quickly as hoped for. Working on a topic as complex as gender equality can then easily fall by the wayside. Furthermore, many stakeholders might have capacity problems, as this work was not included in their job descriptions and key performance indicators (KPIs) but is added to their existing workload.

- Work in MSPs should be officially integrated into the work plans of everyone involved. Helpful suggestions often arise when the stakeholders in the MSP discuss how they organise their cooperation. Furthermore, stakeholders can be relieved of time-consuming activities by at least partially institutionalising gender equality activities. This can be achieved, for instance, by introducing a full-time or honorary position (for a gender focal person), engaging external consultants or setting up a gender competence centre (e.g. the [Centre of Excellence on Gender-smart Solutions](#)). It is important to consider whether and how a balance can be struck between the objectives of the cross-cutting task, and the avoidance of excessive workloads.
- Capacity gaps caused by private caregiving responsibilities should be thoroughly addressed. One example is providing childcare services during MSP events.

<sup>1</sup> See also the comments on gender focal persons as a useful tool (Phase 2, p. 19).

<sup>2</sup> The [fact sheets on all SDGs and MSPs prepared by Partnerships2030](#) may also serve as a convenient starting point.

## Diversity

To ensure the effectiveness and legitimacy of an MSP, it is also very important to consider other aspects of diversity alongside gender. These include age, ethnicity, nationality, disability, affiliation with ethnic, religious or ideological groups, and many more characteristics. Many organisations today address these in a diversity strategy. The need to integrate these aspects or social groups into the work of an MSP is often even more obvious than the need to address gender equality. People may feel overwhelmed when asked to pursue gender mainstreaming on top of a diversity strategy.

- Integrating gender equality and other dimensions of diversity is highly desirable, but can be a long and sometimes challenging process. It is important to allocate the time and space needed to develop stable, robust, human rights-based solutions.
- It is advisable to start with those aspects of diversity which stakeholders in the MSP consider most relevant. However, keep in mind the fact that different characteristics are interconnected (see box on intersectionality). This can lead to overlaps between different forms of discrimination, and may reinforce them. A jointly developed Memorandum of Understanding on gender equality and diversity can provide a solid foundation for future activities.

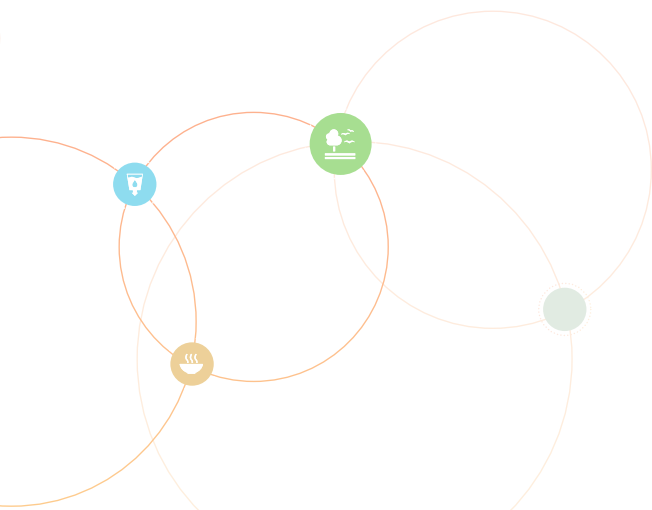


## Intersectionality

The term ‘intersectionality’, was coined in the late 1980s by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a professor of law in the US. It describes how different characteristics that give rise to discrimination are combined and become mutually reinforcing. The concept emphasises the fact that specific characteristics of discrimination cannot be viewed in isolation, as new types of discrimination arise where others intersect. An intersectional approach focuses on the perspective of marginalised groups, and considers the interaction between different forms of inequality in order to understand and address social inequalities holistically. For example, a *Black woman* experiences discrimination not only as a woman due to society’s patriarchal structures, but also as a *Black person* due to its racist structures. The interaction between the power systems of patriarchy and racism produces a new form of discrimination: discrimination against *Black women* (see BMZ, 2023, p. 16).

## Lack of formal requirements for equality

Since MSPs are essentially voluntary projects, it is not easy to set mandatory requirements for creating equitable internal structures within an MSP. Moreover, the legal situation varies from country to country: in some places there are binding rules on gender equality<sup>3</sup>, while in others there are laws that place women and girls at a disadvantage.



<sup>3</sup> Adopted in 2024, ISO standard 53800 contains guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality and women’s empowerment. It focuses on overcoming the inequality arising from gender-specific roles and is applicable to all organisations, regardless of their size, location or field of activity. The German Institute for Standardization is coordinating the [process for adopting ISO 53800 in Germany](#).

- Equality is a universal human rights principle that should be upheld in any case, and cooperation on equal terms is a central foundation of MSPs (see definition). Gender equality should therefore be addressed with due caution, but also with the needed clarity which the vision of an equal society provides.
- Jointly developed governance structures and processes, plus criteria for funding and contract awards etc. can be based on established rules and mechanisms, and at the same time set standards for specific MSPs that are supported by all participants.



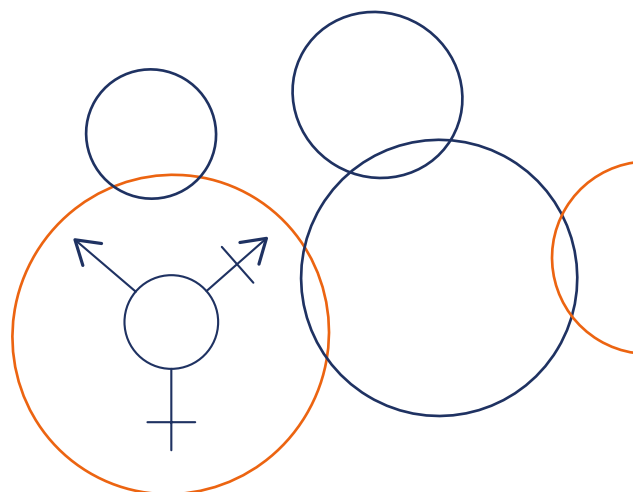
### Feminist development policy and multi-stakeholder partnerships

‘The aim of the BMZ’s feminist development policy is to eliminate discriminatory structures in order to build a society which enables equal participation by all people. It is thus centred around people who are marginalised and who consequently face barriers to this equal participation. (...) As women and girls are the largest group facing discrimination worldwide, they are the main focus of the BMZ’s feminist development policy. The phrase ‘in all their diversity’ is added to express the existence of multiple identities and lived realities. Feminist development policy is based on an inclusive, non-binary understanding of gender’ (see BMZ, 2023).

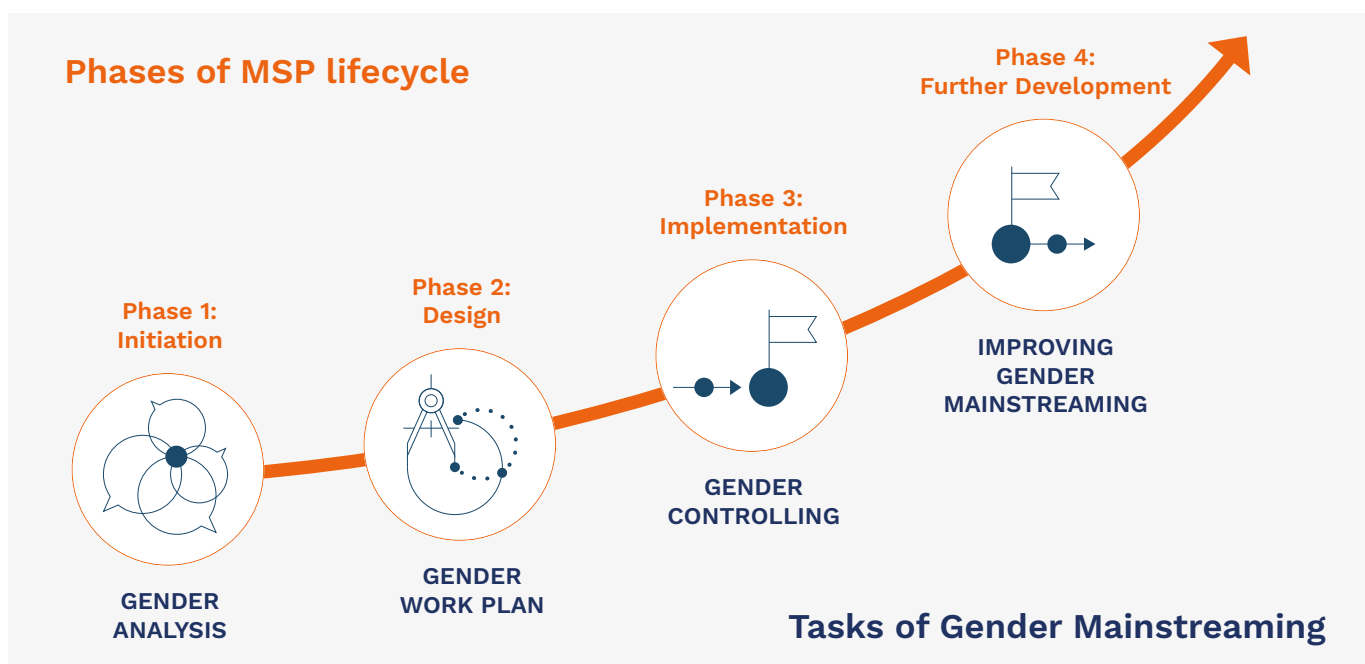
‘The **MSP approach** provides the foundation for positions and perspectives of diverse stakeholders from different areas and calls for the active and equal design of partnerships. At best, this aspiration should be reflected in joint decision-making processes, equal representation on committees and unanimously agreed implementation projects. However, MSPs also open the possibility to reflect and examine conflicts and power asymmetries. In fact, this is crucial for a respectful and appreciative cooperation based on trust, communication and shared understanding. Resources such as financial contributions and political power are considered just as valuable as time, knowledge and commitment dedicated to the partnership and are ideally not associated with more influence. (...)’

**MSPs promote values and attitudes that favour equal participation.** The approach is promising as a format for working primarily on gender equality, but also for equal design and gender mainstreaming in partnerships on the diverse topics of the 2030 Agenda. (...) One thing is certain: transformative change and sustainable societies are created when everyone can participate on an equal footing. To achieve this, it is important to reflect how discrimination arises and to counteract socialised patterns with courage.’ (J. Borkenhagen / Partnerships2030, 2024)

# Gender mainstreaming in MSPs



This section shows how gender equality can be systematically integrated into the typical phases of MSPs



## Phase 1: Initiation – GENDER ANALYSIS

MSPs are usually initiated by small groups of interested stakeholders. The stakeholders in this core group should discuss their ideas on gender equality in the MSP and clarify their goals: should the MSP be gender-sensitive, gender-responsive or even gender-transformative? (See overview on p. X). This process of clarification can lead to

specific goals and activities for gender equality. However, it is even more important to develop the goals and activities of the MSP in such a way that gender is mainstreamed from the outset. The gender analysis is therefore the most important part of the first phase of an MSP. The analysis should cover the following three areas.

**Understanding the issues:** The purpose of the gender analysis is to develop an understanding of the issues at stake in the MSP from a gender perspective: How relevant is gender equality to our MSP?<sup>4</sup> Does gender-based discrimination exist, and how can we avoid it as far as possible when implementing the MSP?

The gender analysis basically involves researching the literature and data on gender equality and the topic of your MSP. It may also be useful to hold discussions with experts from the field of feminist research, and analyse the relevant positions of feminist organisations.

Practical lessons learned should also be compiled so that the observations and recommendations of local stakeholders and rights holders can be included. Sometimes it also makes sense to conduct smaller-scale model research studies in partner countries – especially when this can be combined with approaching stakeholders in-country and exploring possible collaboration.

The analysis itself includes gaining a clear picture of how gender equality will help make the partnership a success, and what tangible benefits will arise from gender equality activities in the MSP. This will provide important arguments for stakeholders who may have reservations about gender mainstreaming in MSPs.

**Stakeholders:** The gender analysis must also consider which stakeholders need to be involved in order to systematically integrate gender equality in MSPs. First of all, gender experts, researchers, feminist organisations and civil society networks working in the field of MSPs should be included. These actors possess expertise on MSPs and gender equality in this area and can make valuable contributions to gender mainstreaming in MSPs. Secondly, those involved should jointly consider which other (local) rights holders and other groups that may experience discrimination should be systematically included because they are affected by, or can contribute to the problems addressed by the MSP or possible solutions (senior citizens, people with disabilities, indigenous groups, members of religious or ethnic minorities, etc.).

The core group should also focus on intersectional effects of multiple discrimination.

When inviting organisations or stakeholder groups to get involved, MSPs should make sure that they include representatives of all genders. Where appropriate, they should also ask partner organisations to consider the gender balance among their own representatives. Managers of all genders should be included in the core group that drives the initiation process. Furthermore, during the initiation phase, this group should focus on whether and which capacities for gender equality are lacking. Corresponding capacity development support, e.g. in the form of training, should also be kept in mind during financial planning.

*„It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.“*

**Audre Lorde**

**Building gender-sensitive cooperation:** During the initiation phase, thought should also be given to how dialogue and cooperation in the MSP can be made gender-sensitive, gender-responsive or even gender-transformative. This includes facilitating open communication, building trust and always ensuring that all genders work together on equal terms. Stakeholders should reflect on the power relations within the MSP together – not only in terms of gender, but also against the backdrop of colonial history, global inequalities and other dimensions of power imbalances. Separate spaces can also be created for women and/or other groups who (initially) wish to exchange ideas among themselves as they prepare for working together in the MSP. The ‘integrity coffees’ of the Alliance for Integrity are one example of special training courses and safe spaces for dialogue between women (see the example from the field of the Alliance for Integrity on p. 20).

<sup>4</sup> A gender analysis may be performed as part of the GIZ Safeguards+Gender Management System, followed by allocation of the GG marker. However, this usually only happens later on, for example when the secretariat of an MSP is set up as a module commissioned by BMZ.

Capacity building may also be required. Training on gender equality could be integrated into training on analysing and overcoming inequalities as a whole (keyword *diversity and inclusion*), or into training on group work and facilitation (keyword *working together as equals*).

## Useful methods, formats and tools

The gender perspective can be incorporated directly into the stakeholder analysis, and is then present in the MSP from the outset. Useful steps in the stakeholder analysis include the simple listing or mind mapping of all stakeholders relevant for gender equality within the context/ topic of the MSP; brainstorming within the core group of the MSP; and talking to experts on the topic of the MSP who can recommend other relevant stakeholders. The list can be supplemented with comments on the interests and resources of the respective stakeholders in order to compile short descriptions. The [wheel of multiple perspectives](#), for example, can be used to identify the different perspectives of various stakeholders.

The [importance/influence matrix](#) can be used to categorise stakeholders and develop appropriate engagement strategies. Thought should also be given to the possible roles of the respective stakeholders in the MSP: ranging from champions to experts, donors and implementation partners – including, in particular, in relation to gender equality.

Events should be managed in a gender-responsive way so that everyone feels equally safe, welcome and included. The [Gender-Responsive Event Management \(GREM\)](#) approach of the International Climate Initiative (IKI) offers a helpful guide in this respect, with checklists for various phases of event management.



### What does feminist development policy mean in the extractive sector?

In line with feminist development policy, GIZ is working internationally to ensure that gender equality is more firmly anchored in mining and in raw materials supply chains. The aim is to dismantle discriminatory gender roles and integrate an intersectional perspective in order to break down power structures in the long term.<sup>5</sup> Inequalities in relation to the ‘3Rs’ – rights, resources and representation – need to be addressed. For development cooperation in the extractive sector, this means

- strengthening the **rights** of women and girls and other marginalised groups in raw materials supply chains
- promoting the **resources** of women and girls through improved market access and income opportunities in the extractive sector
- and supporting the **representation** of women and girls in decision-making and consultation processes in the mining sector in partner countries.

<sup>5</sup> See the fact sheet of the Extractives and Development Sector Programme on [Feminist development policy in the raw materials sector](#) (2024).



## Example from the field: Women’s Rights and Mining

Women’s Rights and Mining (WRM) is an MSP comprising governments, non-governmental organisations and researchers. The initiative aims to encourage the key stakeholders in the mining sector to take a closer look at gender equality and thus promote the rights of women and girls in the extractive sector. This is a major challenge, however, as the manifold impacts of mining on women and girls rarely receive any attention, or are at best a “tick-in-the-box” issue, especially when the organisation of the extractive sector is being negotiated.

Besides organising events on gender equality in the extractive sector at international conferences and performing gender monitoring of these conferences, WRM develops knowledge products on the topic. The [Guide to Gender and Mining – Actors, Issues and Initiatives](#), for example, provides an impression of the stakeholder landscape and highlights current problems in the sector. Further information is available at <https://womenandmining.org/>.



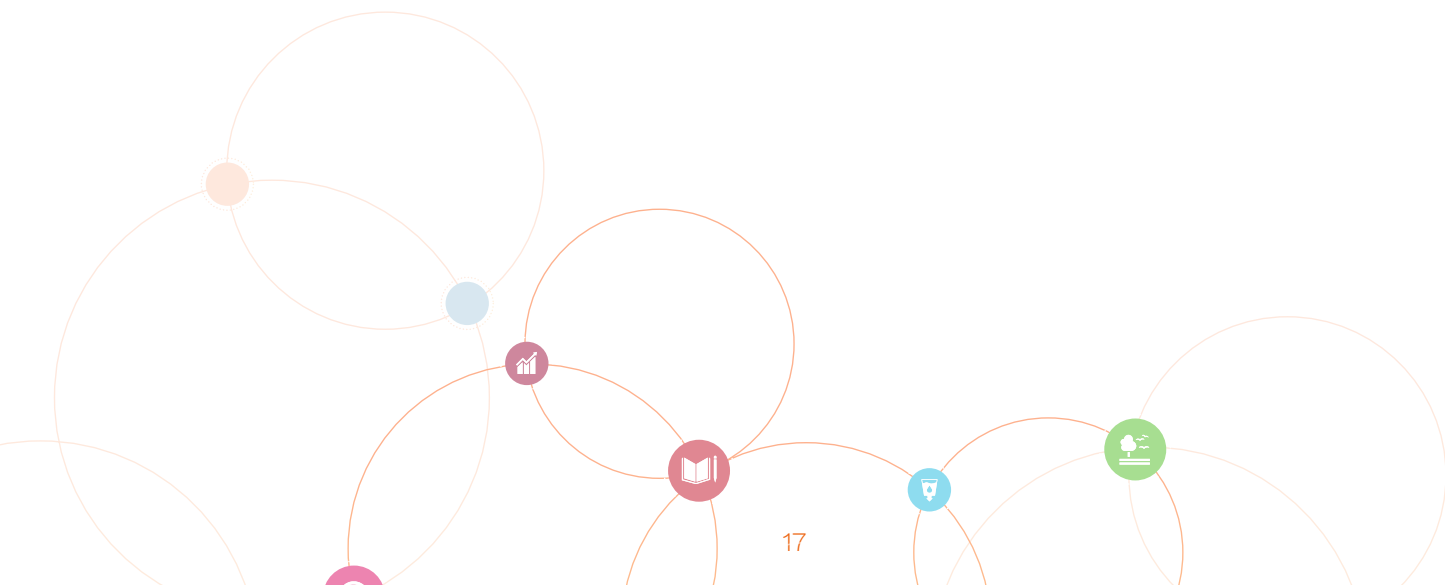
### Success Factors for Cooperation

- 

**Finding and utilising synergies together:** Alongside Germany, both Canada and the Netherlands are WRM members with a feminist development and foreign policy. This creates space for mutual learning and for further developing ideas.
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**Setting and achieving goals at a concrete level:** WRM is an MSP whose members have limited capacities. Setting fewer, but high-quality and achievable goals has brought great success..
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**Weaving and activating networks:** Although WRM is an MSP that already has many stakeholders, linking up with local partner organisations of the members and other stakeholders such as the IGF – an intergovernmental forum for innovative gender activities – was particularly beneficial.



## Phase 2: Design – GENDER WORK PLAN

This phase should aim to systematically design the agreed objectives and activities in line with the understanding of gender equality developed in the MSP, and make the partnership gender-responsive or even gender-transformative. Here too, three areas are relevant:

**Designing the MSP's activities:** When designing all aspects of the MSP, its work should be organised accordingly: (pilot) projects, working groups and other activities should be based on the acquired understanding of the issues and involve the identified stakeholders.

Since some stakeholders in MSPs might be unfamiliar with gender mainstreaming, gender analyses, gender impact assessments and gender indicators, it helps to develop recommendations and support for integrating gender equality for all stakeholders. This can be done for instance by a gender focal person, or by a working group for empowering women and girls in all their diversity and/or for strengthening gender equality.

Initial information materials containing recommendations for stakeholder activities can be useful for projects in partner countries or for thematic working groups, for instance. Pilot phases with some stakeholders or in selected partner countries or companies can also provide initial experience that can then be shared with all MSP members.

**Designing work processes:** When designing MSPs, it is also important to consider how internal work processes and collaboration with external cooperation partners can be designed along gender-sensitive, gender-responsive or even gender-transformative lines.

Throughout the governance structure, the partnership should focus on achieving gender parity in managerial and decision-making positions. These decisions should be made consciously and jointly: do we want gender parity? What percentages do we think are desirable and realistic?

Gender equality should also be borne in mind when distributing roles and dividing labour in working groups and in the secretariat. Moreover, MSPs should make appropriate provision for the constraints resulting from caregiving responsibilities of stakeholders and employees (consider childcare services, limited/ specific working hours). Courses and training on gender and diversity can provide important information on how to design work processes appropriately. Small groups can be formed for informal dialogue, and the MSP can facilitate or fund such meetings. Formal structures can also be helpful, e.g. a working group. Wherever possible, this should include representatives of all stakeholder groups involved in the MSP.

It may be possible to fund feminist organisations in order to support the gender mainstreaming of MSPs and focus on the demands of local rights holders. This funding should not prescribe specific activities, but leave this up to the funding recipients.

### **Draw up a Memorandum of Understanding:**

Some MSPs draw up a public declaration on gender equality that contains substantive, organisational and structural goals and voluntary commitments. The partnership needs to answer the following questions: What do we want to put on record as regards gender equality? Which aspects are especially important to us, what collaboration arrangements are available? What do we want to pass on to the stakeholders involved? What do we want to communicate publicly?

A joint declaration sends a clear signal in favour of human rights-based values and gender equality, and demonstrates an acknowledgement of the fact that social justice and equal participation by all are prerequisites for resilience, stability and peace. Partnerships that are committed to this meet their aspiration to make a contribution to society that is aligned with the common good.

Jointly developing a declaration of this kind offers plenty of opportunity for dialogue, clarification and shared learning within the MSP. Publishing it strengthens the voluntary commitment, and provides other stakeholders with recommendations for integrating gender equality in the MSP's sector.

The [United Nations Global Compact](#), an MSP for an inclusive, sustainable global economy, has launched the [Forward Faster Initiative](#) which includes gender equality on its agenda. This allows companies to commit explicitly to gender equality at all levels, as well as to equal pay for equal work.

## Useful methods, formats and tools

**Gender Impact Assessment:** Before implementing planned activities, a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)<sup>6</sup> should be carried out to assess in each case whether and what impact the activities will or might have on people of all genders and on gender relations.

**Gender focal person:** This person within an MSP or an MSP secretariat is primarily responsible for gender mainstreaming, monitors the MSP structures and activities from a gender equality perspective, and develops proposals on how gender equality can be integrated even more effectively so that the MSP can have a gender-sensitive, gender-responsive or even gender-transformative effect. However, a gender focal person should not work on these issues alone. They should work with a coordination team or a working group that is closely affiliated with the board or steering committee, meets regularly and is jointly responsible for the coordination, monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in the MSP organisational structure. Here is an [example of a job description for a Gender Focal Point](#).

**Capacity building:** Courses and training on gender and diversity can be found on the digital learning platform [atingi](#), for example. Applying the 'Gender & Inclusion' filter in the [atingi | Content Library](#) takes you to numerous online training courses on this subject.

- These include for instance a training course on [LGBTQI+ Perspectives in WPS | atingi](#). This self-study course, which focuses on LGBTQI+ perspectives and organisations, shows what their meaningful inclusion in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda could look like.
- The [Digital Enquirer Kit – All | atingi](#) is an online training programme for civil society, journalists and human rights defenders. The module titled 'Tackling Online Gender-Based Violence' provides victims and women's rights activists with the skills and knowledge to protect themselves from online hate speech and online gender-based violence (OGBV).
- A training course on [multi-stakeholder partnerships with an excursus on gender equality](#) in module 4.

Courses on gender and diversity provided by the German Academy for International Cooperation for GIZ staff members:

- [Gender for gender focal persons](#): enhances participants' knowledge of the GIZ approach and practical tools for gender mainstreaming
- [Gender in practice](#): understanding approaches to gender equality and mainstreaming, elaborating concrete steps to strengthen gender equality in the project
- [Let's network: empowering women for leadership](#): dialogue and networking with other women in leadership positions
- [Unmasking power: understanding and acting against sexual harassment and sexism](#): background knowledge on the topic of sexualised violence to protect yourself and others in critical situations
- The GIZ Gender Network also contains an initial [collection of training courses](#) for orientation purposes.

<sup>6</sup> See the [5-step Gender Impact Assessment](#) of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

## Example from the field: The Alliance for Integrity

The **Alliance for Integrity (Afln)** is a multi-stakeholder partnership that promotes transparency and integrity in the economic system and fosters sustainable development by fighting corruption. Afln also helps to reduce inequalities, strengthen the rule of law, promote investment and create a favourable business environment.

Since 2018, Afln has been systematically addressing the complex relationship between gender and corruption. Besides guidelines, infographics, communication and campaign materials, web-based information, networking opportunities and concepts for capacity development, Afln has also created internal structures that anchor gender sustainably within its own organisational structure. In 2021, Afln launched the Global Sounding Board on Gender and Business Integrity, which developed a Theory of Change for gender-specific strategies at Afln. The Global Sounding Board was later transferred to the Steering Committee, which is now responsible for gender and diversity. This avoids parallel structures and connects strategic decisions more effectively. There is also a gender focal person at Afln.

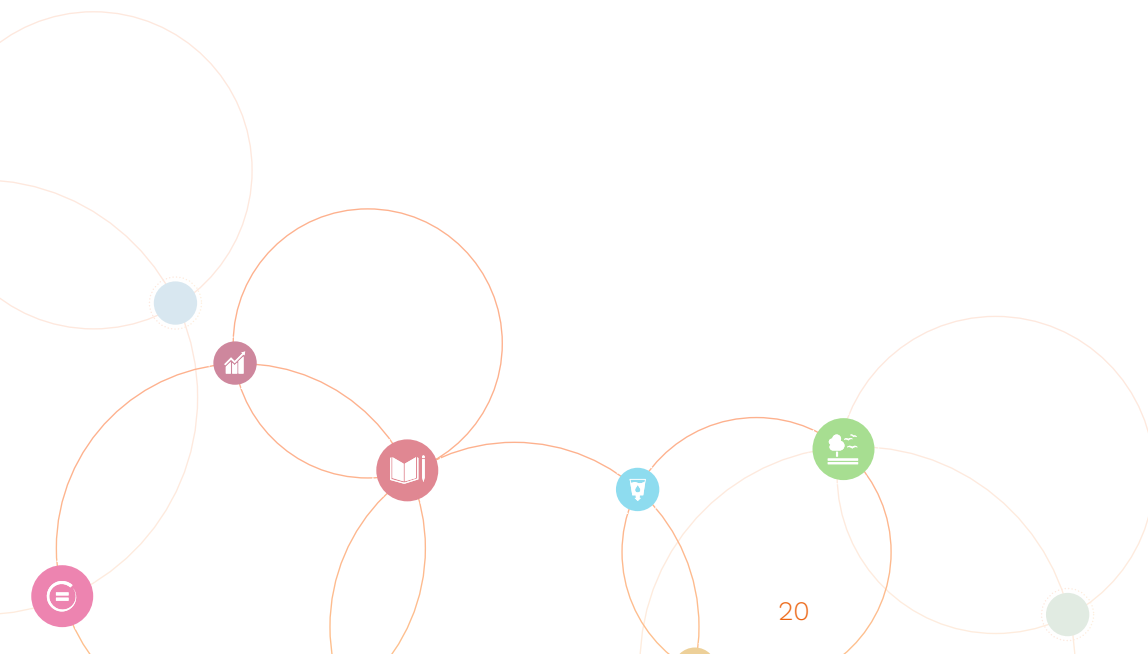
Regional activities include training courses and safe spaces for women to exchange ideas, known

as 'integrity coffees'. This format was developed in Mexico and Colombia, and is now being adapted and implemented in other countries. Examples include Integri-Tea in India, the Women in Integrity Series (WISE) in Ghana, the Women in Integrity (WIN) platform in Indonesia and Integri-Tereré in Paraguay. These programs aim to strengthen the network of women leaders from SMEs (small and medium enterprises) dedicated to fostering business integrity, highlighting the essential role of women in preventing corruption.

Afln also analysed the role of gender and diversity in compliance programmes in two publications in Brazil and Argentina. In 2023, it held a training course in Argentina on ethical leadership with a focus on gender, diversity and inclusion in an effort to familiarise participants with the topic of intersectionality.

Due to its outstanding approach to promoting gender equality, Afln won first place in the GIZ Gender Competition 2022.

You can find out more about the link between gender and corruption prevention and the activities of Afln at [Gender and Corruption – Alliance for Integrity](#).



## Example from the field: Goals and activities in a transparency initiative

Founded in London in 2003, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) is an MSP that contributes to financial flow transparency in the extractive sector using its own standard, in order to improve the responsible management of oil, gas and mineral resources. The standard is implemented in over 50 countries by corresponding national multi-stakeholder groups.

EITI has been actively involved in gender equality for years. Among other things, it identified gender equality as a policy priority and in 2023 included it in a broader version of the standard, which will be implemented and continuously revised from 2025 onwards. The publication of gender-disaggregated data on the employment rate of women is one of the obligations imposed by the standard on companies.

The EITI working groups were provided with guidelines on how to implement corresponding requirements. The initiative communicates these activities to the public.

- EITI: **Policy Priority: Gender and extractives governance – Promoting more equal participation in the extractive sector:** ‘The EITI Standard includes provisions that aim to improve the participation of women in extractives sector management and encourage the publication of data by gender.’
- EITI 2024: **Pressing for progress on gender inclusivity in the extractive sector:** ‘A recent partner event explored tools and strategies for advancing gender inclusivity in the extractive sector.’
- EITI 2023: **On equal terms: Supporting an inclusive extractive sector in the energy transition:** ‘This policy brief aims to help EITI stakeholders understand how the EITI Standard can support efforts to promote a gender-diverse industry in the context of the energy transition by using data disclosed through the EITI.’
- EITI 2019: **Gender-responsive EITI implementation** ‘This note provides guidance to multi-stakeholder groups (MSGs) on key requirements related to gender.’

### Phase 3: Implementation – GENDER CONTROLLING IN MSPS

As part of gender controlling or equality controlling, key figures on gender equality in MSPs and their activities are collected and systematically documented. This data is then used as a basis for the further optimisation and/or redesign of gender mainstreaming activities. In line with the motto ‘You can only manage what you measure’, for example, the proportion of people of all genders in decision-making positions in MSPs or as heads of projects under implementation is recorded over time. If, for example, the MSP has set itself the goal of always ensuring gender parity in decision-making bodies, the actual achievement of this goal can be measured in regular controlling reports. If the observed data show that parity is not being consistently achieved, further or new measures can be adopted to change this.

In phase 3 of MSPs, gender controlling should be deployed in order to ensure that the achievement of gender equality objectives and activities is systematically monitored. There are three areas to cover.

**Resources:** What resources are being made available for gender equality activities? In order to implement the agreed objectives and activities, the MSP must agree on an appropriate budget; a long-term financial plan is required. Gender-related work processes and capacity building within the MSP can also incur costs, and additional resources may need to be mobilised for gender equality activities.

**Gender-responsive monitoring:** Monitoring is required in order to track the impact of gender equality activities and whether the agreed objectives are being achieved. First of all, standardised gender indicators can be used (see below). Secondly, MSPs should develop their own specific indicators that they can use to track the achievement of their gender equality objectives.<sup>7</sup>

These can be of a quantitative or qualitative nature. Examples of possible monitoring questions include the following.

- Do difficulties or obstacles arise during implementation that point to underlying problems?
- Can changes in gender-related objectives be identified?
- Do the activities reach all relevant groups, regardless of ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation or other characteristics? Is information about the MSP activities accessible to all (including in local languages, plain language)?
- Do the auditors use the agreed gender indicators when reviewing standards and certification activities?
- Do all stakeholders feel comfortable and equally included in the MSP?

The internal provision of data on gender equality can contribute to a deepened awareness of gender-specific issues within the MSP itself, capture changes and facilitate the further development of the MSP accordingly.

**Reflection and learning:** Just as every MSP is unique, so too is every gender mainstreaming strategy. It is therefore advisable to view all processes and activities for gender equality as learning processes, and to regularly ask: What have we learned in the MSP as a result of our activities for gender equality? Raising awareness of lessons learned in the MSP and recording them together will strengthen the cohesion and commitment of the stakeholders. At the same time, you can check whether and what further training and/or gender expertise is required.

<sup>7</sup> See also: (1) Introduction to gender indicators, e.g. here [EIGE: Gender statistics and indicators](#);

(2) Practical examples of **feminist monitoring**, e.g. here [Wyatt et al 2021](#), p. 12 et seq.;

(3) For **GIZ colleagues**, further helpful information on gender monitoring can be found in the [IDA TOPIC on results-based management \(RBM\)](#). This includes e.g. working aids on RBM process steps, formulating gender indicators and measuring results.

## Useful methods, formats and tools

**Gender budgeting:** The purpose of gender budgeting is to achieve a fair distribution of financial resources between the genders and the pursuit of their interests. In MSPs, it is possible to analyse which resources benefit whose interests, and how the prioritisation of expenditure influences gender equality. If necessary, expenditure should be restructured in order to promote gender equality (see also [EIGE 2024](#)).

**Methods for learning and reflection:** MSPs should always use communication and dialogue among the stakeholders to strengthen mutual understanding and cohesion. This also applies to learning and reflection processes during the implementation phase. It is particularly important to celebrate successful activities and milestones, and to learn from mistakes or failures (see e.g. tools in [Fail Forward](#)). Basic methods for capturing the experience of inclusion and equality include simple mood barometers or questionnaires.

**Gender indicators for MSPs:** The standardised indicators shown below can help to assess the status of gender mainstreaming in an MSP and identify any further needs.

Level	Indicators	Assessment
<b>Level of organisational structures:</b> steering committee; board; working group; gender focal person	The gender ratio is balanced/the participation of women is increasing.	Yes/no
	People of all genders hold management positions.	Yes/no
	Feminist civil society organisations, women’s networks and/or gender experts are involved in the MSP.	Yes/no
	Gender equality is set out in a Code of Conduct or Memorandum of Understanding.	Yes/no
<b>Technical level</b>	A gender analysis/gender impact assessment has been carried out.	Yes/no
	<i>If a gender analysis/gender impact assessment has confirmed the relevance of gender equality to the MSP:</i>	<i>If not relevant, do not add any further assessments</i>
	There is a public commitment to gender equality.	Yes/no
	Activities to promote gender equality are implemented.	Yes/no
	A work plan for gender equality has been drawn up.	Yes/no
	Gender-sensitive to gender-transformative monitoring is carried out using indicators developed specially for this purpose.	Yes/no
	Gender-specific data is collected.	Yes/no
An appropriate budget is planned to fund gender equality activities.	Yes/no	

## Rating

**Mostly yes:** Gender equality is integrated in the MSP. The partnership can therefore make a contribution to gender equality and demonstrate corresponding results and measures at the end of the initiative.

**Similar number of yes and no answers:** The MSP has partially integrated the topic of gender equality. It is therefore likely to contribute to the promotion of gender equality to a limited extent.

**Mostly no:** The MSP has so far been gender insensitive. Its activities are unlikely to contribute to gender equality. It may even maintain unequal power relations between the genders or exclude certain groups of people from participating.

## Example from the field: The Ethical Trading Initiative

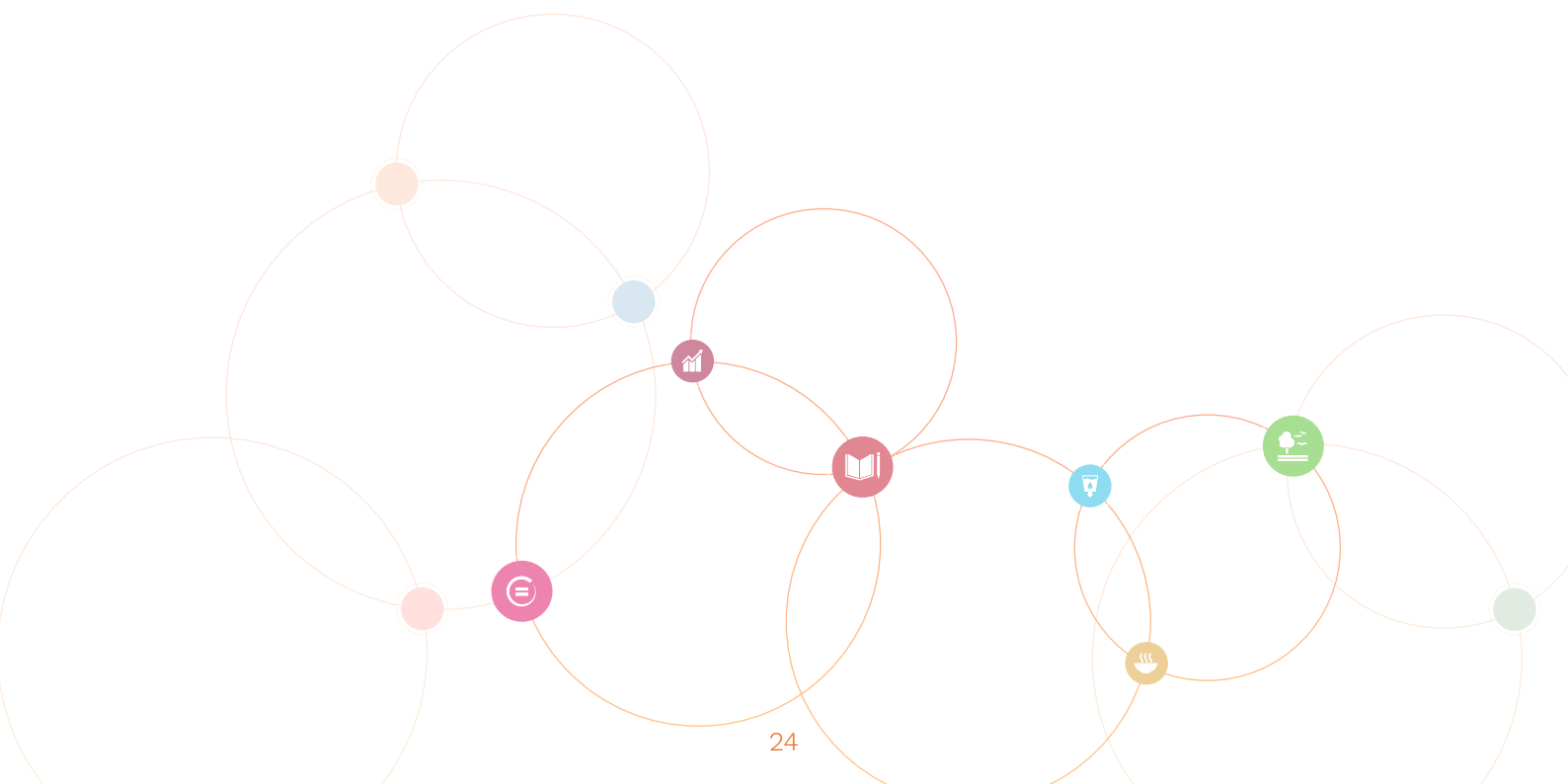
The **Ethical Trading Initiative** (ETI) is a multi-stakeholder partnership that promotes decent working conditions worldwide. In light of the structural disadvantage faced by women and gender-specific risks in global supply chains, such as discrimination, gender-based violence and wage discrepancies, the ETI launched the Gender Data Initiative. This initiative aims to address the long-standing lack of gender-specific data in order to increase the visibility of these issues and enable targeted action.

Gender Data Indicators were developed in collaboration with various textile initiatives, including the Partnership for Sustainable Textiles. The corresponding guidance comprises three levels:

1. fundamental gender-disaggregated data (e.g. workforce composition disaggregated by gender)
2. indicators to identify gender-specific risks (e.g. inequalities in access to resources)
3. in-depth analysis to promote long-term change.

By systematically collecting and analysing this data, companies and other stakeholders can better understand gender-specific challenges and take action to empower women and fight discrimination. In the textile sector in particular, where women make up a large part of the workforce, these measures are crucial to creating sustainable and fair working conditions.

Further information can be found at <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/issues/gender-equity/gender-data-initiative>.





## Phase 4: Further development – IMPROVING GENDER MAINSTREAMING

This phase is all about improving gender mainstreaming in the MSP. Here too, there are three areas of work:

**Demonstrating success:** Activities that have achieved gender equality goals should be recognised and disseminated within the MSP, and also communicated publicly. As a general rule, it is important to celebrate successful activities in MSPs as this strengthens motivation and cohesion and improves collaboration. This is also true of successes in the area of gender equality.

It is therefore important to reflect on and analyse what the MSP has achieved in terms of gender equality, and which strategies, methods and instruments have proven to be particularly effective and efficient. These can be presented in information materials and shared as recommendations.

**Improving activities:** Not all strategies prove to be successful, so it is worth asking which activities can be improved on, and how. It is often advisable to further expand partnerships and networks in the area of gender equality, e.g. to invite more feminist organisations, women's networks and gender experts to join the MSP. Whether the activities can perhaps be strengthened so that they have not just a gender-sensitive or gender-responsive effect, but also a gender-transformative one, should also be clarified. Finally, where appropriate, opportunities can be created to empower women and girls in all their diversity even further within the MSP and its activities, e.g. through specific training courses and participation formats.

**Creating stability:** The stakeholders in the MSP should jointly consider how they can strengthen their working structures for gender equality in the long term. Formal structures can be created for this purpose, e.g. an equal opportunities commissioner, a gender focal person or a formal working group on gender – without relegating the topic to a niche. That would be the opposite of mainstreaming. Regular training on gender equality can help to further build the necessary capacities of the stakeholders in the MSP.



### MSP self-assessment tool

Partnerships2030 has created a **self-assessment tool** to assess the development status of an MSP. The results provide a solid foundation for planning further steps and activities. The tool essentially consists of a checklist that can be completed by individuals or within a group. It contains statements for each of the four typical phases of MSPs that reflect criteria of their success. Differences in how the results achieved to date are perceived and assessed are also likely to become apparent within a group setting. Recognising and discussing these can strengthen the shared understanding and support further collaboration.

Here are some examples of statements in phase 1 / initiation.

- **Context analysis:** The environmental, economic and social challenges that the MSP is tackling/expected to tackle and their context have been analysed and described.
- **Instrument check:** The MSP has been identified as the most suitable instrument for addressing the challenges, based on the context and stakeholder analyses.
- **Core group:** There is a functioning core group of relevant and committed stakeholders that is driving and coordinating the establishment of the partnership and creating a space for dialogue and cooperation.

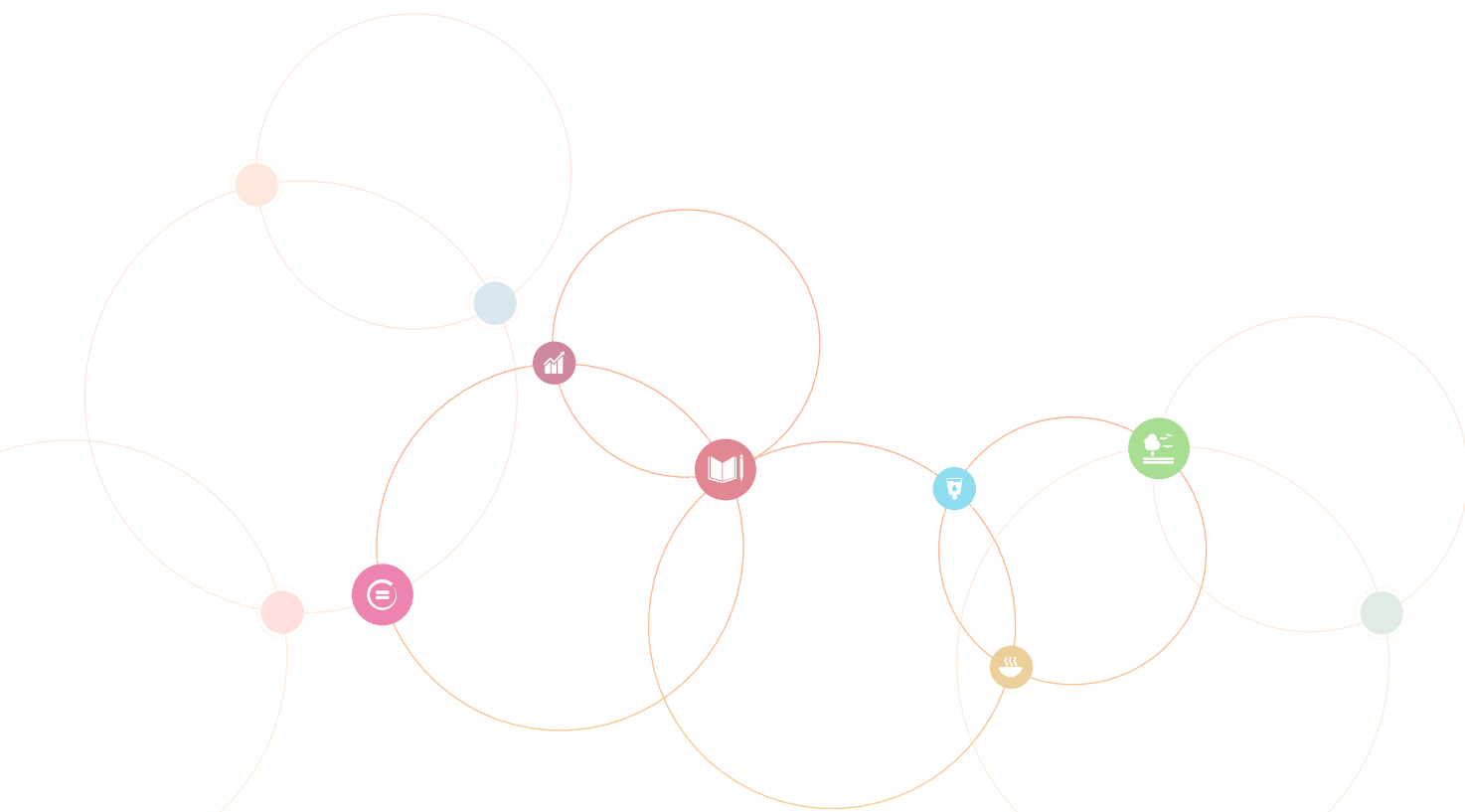
## Useful methods, formats and tools

**Collect and publish gender-specific data:** Many MSPs already collect extensive data in their field of activity, which can often be easily disaggregated by gender.<sup>8</sup> By processing and providing gender-specific data, MSPs can promote gender equality across society as a whole as well as in their specific project, and thus have a gender-transformative effect.

Moreover, the publication of gender-specific data by MSPs can help to offset the dramatic lack of such data in many areas of development and sustainability research. According to [UN Women \(2022\)](#), only 42 per cent of the data needed to monitor the gender-specific dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was available in June 2022. None of the 193 countries that have committed to the 2030 Agenda have the data available for all gender-specific SDG indicators. Yet

only by using this data will it be possible to achieve gender-equitable sustainable development.

**Gender audit:** A gender audit is a tool to assess and check the institutionalisation of gender equality into organisations, including in their policies, programmes, projects and/or the provision of services, structures, proceeding and budgets. The gender audit can analyse gender-specific patterns in the governance structure, processes and organisational culture, as well as in the design and implementation of activities and their development over time. It is a suitable tool for joint review of the MSP partners, and as a basis for further developments and improvements. Given its scope, a gender audit is best performed from time to time – for example, when drawing up a new strategic plan for the MSP (see also [EIGE 2024: Gender audit](#)).



<sup>8</sup> Gender-disaggregated data is often collected using binary categories, even though gender is now considered a dimension. Nonetheless, such data is helpful in providing fact-based arguments. Qualitative data collection and storytelling can complement this in helpful ways.

## Example from the field: The Partnership for Sustainable Textiles

Gender equality is one of the focus topics in the [Partnership for Sustainable Textiles](#), as defined by the steering committee as part of the realignment of the MSP in 2022. These topics will guide the MSP's activities in the coming years.

The partnership has two initiatives that focus on gender equality:

- In India, companies and the NGO FEMNET e.V. are participating in a programme on gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace. Here the [Dindigul Agreement](#) to End Gender-based Violence and Harassment is used as a model to implement this approach in the supply chain of Textiles Partnership companies. To achieve this, contracts are negotiated between the workers' representatives, the factory operators and the participating fashion companies in order to legally secure implementation of the activities, their monitoring and the assumption of responsibility by all parties involved.
- In Tunisia, an initiative on gender data is working to close information gaps, incorporate workers' perspectives into the data collection process and develop measures to improve working conditions based on the data. The toolbox was developed partly on the basis of the Gender Data Guidance (see the example of the Ethical Trading Initiative).

Other activities relating to the focus topic of gender equality include

- The development of an e-learning programme on the inclusion of people with disabilities and gender equality in the private sector.
- The development of business cases for the high-quality and systematic collection of gender-specific data by suppliers. This includes, for example, evidence of increasing productivity and satisfaction for certain activities, and the strengthening of suppliers' capacities in this area to incorporate high-quality data into human rights due diligence (HRDD) reporting.

There is a strategy committee for the focus topic of gender equality, on which the Partnership's stakeholder groups are each represented by 1–2 members. The strategy committee has developed key performance indicators on which the Partnership members will report for the first time from 2025 onwards. Many members are involved in activities relating to the focus topics at various points, particularly in the so-called Partnership Initiatives.

The aforementioned [Dindigul Agreement](#) is one example of how legally binding agreements can be concluded between stakeholders, for example to promote the implementation of due diligence obligations in supply chains. MSPs thus serve as platforms for mediating and promoting legally binding agreements where other regulations do not exist or are not possible.

Further information can be found at <https://www.textilbuendnis.com/en/fokusthema-geschlechtergerechtigkeit/>.

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