



TARGET GENDER EQUALITY



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CONCEPT & BAKGROUND:

Q: What is the Target Gender Equality Accelerator?

A: Target Gender Equality accelerator is focused on supporting companies participating in the United Nations Global Compact, in setting and meeting ambitious corporate targets to advance gender equality. This initiative is run in collaboration with Global Compact Local Networks.

Q: What theme does Target Gender Equality Accelerator focus on?

A: The programme calls for bold action to advance gender equality at all levels and across all areas of business. The capacity-building workshops are focused on supporting companies to set targets and develop enabling action to increase women's representation and leadership. The programme takes a holistic approach and helps companies understand the various policies, practices and interventions that are needed to advance gender equality and achieve gender parity.

Q: What are the benefits of participating for companies?

A: Companies participating in Target Gender Equality Accelerator will be equipped with the research, network of partners and experts, and knowledge to confidently set and meet ambitious corporate targets that advance gender balance, women's leadership and equal pay for work of equal value. Participants will have the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to measurable progress on gender equality to their employees, investors, and other stakeholders and profile leaders in their organization who are driving business success, sustainability, and contributions towards the SDGs. Participants will also be invited to showcase their practices at various exclusive events at the global, regional and local level.

Q: How will Target Gender Equality Accelerator help my company meet its sustainability objectives and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

A: Through this programme, companies participating in the UN Global Compact will be challenged to assess their gender equality performance, set ambitious corporate targets and take action to address barriers to gender equality, both within their organization and their broader sphere of influence. In doing so, participants will:

- Demonstrate commitment to and implement of the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, in particular Principle 1 on human rights and Principle 6 on labor.
- Demonstrate alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. In a recent report submitted to the Human Rights Council, the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises called for companies to set measurable targets, take measures to ensure equal representation of women in the workforce at all levels, and specifically recommended use of the Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool.
- Operationalize the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs). The WEPs are a joint initiative of the UN Global Compact and UN Women launched providing guidance to businesses on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. Among other things, the WEPs call for businesses to "assure sufficient participation of women — 30% or greater — in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas." Over 9,000 global business leaders have signed the CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs.
- Directly support the achievement of goal 5 and 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, Goal 5.5 calls for women's full participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making, including in economic life, by 2030, as well as SDG 8.5 which aims to achieve equal pay for work of equal value by 2030 .

- Create positive impact across the Sustainable Development Goals. Research shows that women's leadership and economic empowerment is a catalyst for progress on a range of goals, from education (Goal 4) and health (Goal 3) to poverty alleviation (Goal 1) and climate action (Goal 13).
- Strengthen their ESG performance. According to a meta analysis commissioned by the International Finance Corporation, there is a positive correlation between women's representation in leadership and ESG performance.

Q: How is Target Gender Equality Accelerator related to the Women's Empowerment Principles?

A: The Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) were launched by the UN Global Compact and UN Women in 2010 and have been signed by 9,000+ companies. They provide a holistic framework for business on how to empower women in the workplace, marketplace and community. The WEPs CEO Statement of Support provides an opportunity for business leaders to signal their support for gender equality.

Target Gender Equality builds on and supports the objectives of the WEPs by helping companies set and meet ambitious targets that advance gender balance, women's leadership and equal pay for equal value of work– key components of the WEPs. The WEPs will inform discussions and help companies navigate potential barriers and opportunities. Among other things, participants will use the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool to get a holistic understanding of their gender equality performance and to assess current policies and practices. The WEPs CEO Statement sign-on process is managed by UN Women. Learn more [here](#).

Q: What is the impact of Target Gender Equality Accelerator to date?

A: As a result of Target Gender Equality Accelerator, participating companies have committed to hundreds of interventions, policies and programmes aimed at advancing gender equality in their companies, including fostering professional development opportunities for women such as establishing mentorship networks, revising hiring practices such as ensuring gender-balanced interview panels, raising awareness for gender equality through trainings and communications campaigns, tackling stereotypes such as by ensuring gender-inclusive language, implementing flexible and family-friendly workplace practices or increasing efforts to close the gender pay gap. More than 90% of Target Gender Equality participants either have targets for gender equality in place, are adapting existing targets or drafting new targets. 99% of companies are building a new Action Plan or adapting an existing Action Plan based on learnings from Target Gender Equality. We know that meaningful and lasting progress takes time which is why we are tracking efforts of participating companies on a regular basis. More details can be found on this [webpage](#).

PRE-REQUISITES & KNOWLEDGE LEVEL:

Q: My company is not part of the UN Global Compact. Can we join Target Gender Equality Accelerator?

A: Target Gender Equality is an accelerator programme for companies of the UN Global Compact. If your company has not yet joined the UN Global Compact, please learn how to do so [here](#).

Q: Is signing the Women's Empowerment Principles mandatory in order to participate in the programme?

A: We highly encourage all Target Gender Equality companies to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles within a year of joining the Target Gender Equality initiative. Companies that are not yet signatories are asked to join an additional workshop at the outset of the programme that will guide them through the signing process. While we highly encourage companies participating in Target Gender Equality to sign the Women's Empowerment Principles, we acknowledge that sometimes this decision might take longer. That is why, all companies will still be able to receive their Target Gender Equality Certificate of Completion, even if they are not yet WEPs signatories at the end of the programme.

Q: How do I know if my company is already a signatory of the Women's Empowerment Principles?

A: Search for your organization at weps.org/companies

Q: My company has signed the CEO Statement of Support for the WEPs. Can we join the Target Gender Equality Accelerator?

A: Yes. Target Gender Equality supports you in translating your existing commitment to women's empowerment into concrete action, focusing specifically on the 'workplace' dimension of the Women's Empowerment Principles.

Q: My company is just getting started on our journey to advance gender equality. Is Target Gender Equality Accelerator an appropriate programme for us to participate in?

A: Absolutely. The Target Gender Equality programme starts by helping companies understand their current gender equality performance through facilitated use of the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Participants will also be introduced to the latest research supporting the business case for gender equality. A series of workshops will then help participating companies generate concrete action plans to set and meet corporate targets that advance gender balance, women's leadership and equal pay for work of equal value of work, unique to their company context and performance status. While participating companies are encouraged to be ambitious, the programme emphasizes continuous progress. Participating companies will also expand their network of UN partners, peers and experts that can further assist them in meeting their gender equality goals.

Q: My company is from a traditionally very male-dominated industry and we have a very low percentage of women in our overall workforce. Is Target Gender Equality Accelerator a good fit for us?

A: Absolutely. In previous years, companies participating in Target Gender Equality Accelerator have come from a variety of industries, many of which are traditionally male-dominated sectors such as technology, construction, engineering, manufacturing, transportation, agriculture or finance. You will be able to access good practices from several companies from across industries to learn about how they were able to get started and progress on their gender equality journey. During workshops the programme unpacks which internal and external factors to consider when setting an ambitious but achievable target, regardless of how low your starting point might be.

Q: I already participated in Target Gender Equality Accelerator in previous years – can I join again?

A: Yes! The programme offered in 2023 is completely revamped with new learning content and expert sessions compared to previous rounds. The programmatic focus also expanded from women's leadership to gender balance across company levels more broadly as well as covering the topic of equal pay for work of equal value. Your company is thus welcome to join Target Gender Equality again and dive into all our new material. If you already participated in the 2023 program, you are welcome to register new team members in the new round to engage in the learning journey. However, there is no obligation to re-join the programme on an annual basis, as we encourage you to get started by implementing your plans and stay engaged through further accountability, engagement and learning opportunities.

TARGET SETTING:

Q: My company does not currently have a corporate target in place to advance women's representation and leadership. Can we participate without having a target in place?

A: Yes. The purpose of Target Gender Equality is to help companies set and meet ambitious targets that advance gender balance, women's leadership and equal pay for work of equal value. Companies do not need to have targets in place in order to participate. Through Target Gender Equality, we aim to provide participating companies with the research, knowledge and network of partners needed to confidently set and meet corporate targets for gender equality at the workplace.

Q: My company already has targets in place to advance women's representation and leadership in business. Is Target Gender Equality Accelerator an appropriate programme for us to participate in?

A: Yes. Companies that already have targets in place will benefit from engaging with experts and engaging in peer-to-peer learning. In addition to uncovering strategies to fast-track progress toward existing targets, companies may be inspired to raise the ambition of their targets to better align with the Global Goals and stakeholder expectations or improve their target through additional tracking and accountability mechanisms. Participating in Target Gender Equality also provides a platform for leading companies to share their experiences and showcase progress made.

Q: Is my company obligated to announce a public target at the end of the programme?

A: No. While we encourage transparency and external reporting, your company is under no obligation to publicly communicate a specific target after the programme. We recognize that each gender equality journey depends on the company's specific context. While some are ready to announce new targets upon the completion of the programme, for others it might take longer to formulate their next steps.

Q: Where and how will programmatic outcomes including targets be featured?

A: We encourage you to share your targets and forward-looking actions with the UN Global Compact Team to track collective outcomes, as well as include them in your Communication on Progress (CoP) submitted annually as part of your participation in the UN Global Compact, as well as the voluntary reporting process for the Women's Empowerment Principles. There are further communication opportunities to showcase your actions in the Target Gender Equality newsletter and webpage as well as at UN Global Compact events. The UN Global Compact Team will also be in touch with you on an annual basis encouraging you to confidentially share your progress in a survey.

Q: How many companies that previously participated in Target Gender Equality Accelerator have set targets?

A: 93% of Target Gender Equality participants either have targets for gender equality in place, are adapting existing targets or drafting new targets. 99% of companies are building new Action Plan or adapting existing Action Plan based on learnings from Target Gender Equality. In addition, as a result of Target Gender Equality, participating companies have committed to hundreds of interventions, policies and programmes aimed at advancing gender equality in their companies, including fostering professional development opportunities for women such as establishing mentorship networks, revising hiring practices such as ensuring gender-balanced interview panels or increasing efforts to close the gender pay gap. More details can be found on this [webpage](#).

REGISTRATION & PARTICIPATION CRITERIA:

Q: Is any company participating in the UN Global Compact eligible to take part in the programme?

A: All companies participating in the UN Global Compact are eligible to take part in the programme as long as they are based in a country where the Global Compact Local Network is participating. Please see the current list [here](#). If your country is not listed but you are interested in participating and meet all other requirements, please email targetgenderequality@unglobalcompact.org.

Q: Is there a restriction on the number of companies that can participate in Target Gender Equality?

A: While there is no restriction on the total number of Target Gender Equality participants, Global Compact Local Networks may limit the programme size at the country-level in order to maximize the learning experience for participating companies. Interested companies are encouraged to register early.

Q: Where does the programme take place?

A: For the list of Global Compact Local Networks offering the in-country track of the programme in 2024, please visit the [Target Gender Equality Accelerator website](#). While most program related engagements take place online, certain Global Compact Local Networks may decide to host in-person workshops as well.

Q: What is the global track of the Accelerator?

A: The global track is available for companies where no in-country track is offered (see the Accelerator website for Local Networks offering the in-country track in 2024). The global track is facilitated in English and offers the same curriculum content as the local track, delivered through a series of global live and on-demand sessions. Space for the global track is limited and early applications are encouraged.

Q: My company has offices and operations in several countries – does it make sense to join the programme in various countries at the same time?

A: Yes. To maximize their learning experience and ensure that target setting practices reflect local context, companies are encouraged to join the programme in several countries of operations, where Target Gender Equality is offered. The WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool which is used at the beginning of the programme to assess performance can aggregate results for multinational companies. In order to join in each country you need to currently be engaged with the relevant Global Compact Local Network or willing to join if required by the Network.

Q: My company has fewer than 100 employees. Can we join Target Gender Equality Accelerator?

A: Absolutely. In previous rounds, around 25% of participating companies were SMEs (Small- or medium-sized enterprises). You will be able to access case studies and good practices from companies in varying sizes. Additional voluntary deep dive opportunities will be offered specifically for SMEs.

Q: Can large multinational companies join the programme?

A: Yes. In previous rounds, around 30% of participating companies were from multinational companies. You will be able to access case studies and good practices from companies in varying sizes. Additional voluntary deep dive opportunities will be offered specifically for MNCs to unpack how to combine global, regional and local target setting efforts.

Q: Can non-business Global Compact participants join Target Gender Equality Accelerator?

A: While the programme is designed for business, non-business participants with expertise and knowledge relevant to Target Gender Equality are encouraged to discuss opportunities to support Target Gender Equality Accelerator with their Global Compact Local Network representative.

Q: How can I find out which other companies in my country or industry are participating?

A: While we will not be publicly sharing the list of participating companies before the end of the sign up period, you can browse this [webpage](#) to see who participated in Target Gender Equality in previous years. In total, over 2000 companies participated across sizes, sectors and industries.

Q: My company is not based in a country where there is a participating Global Compact Local Network. How can we take part in the programme?

A: Please email targetgenderequality@unglobalcompact.org.

Q: How do I register to participate?

A: Companies interested in joining the programme can fill out the registration form on the global webpage [here](#).

Q: I have technical difficulties or require clarifications when completing the form. Who should I contact?

A: Please contact your relevant Global Compact Local Network or email targetgenderequality@unglobalcompact.org.

REPRESENTATIVES, TIME COMMITMENT & COSTS:

Q: What is the time commitment to participate?

A: The mandatory part of the programme includes joining an onboarding webinar for around two hours, completing the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool which is estimated to take maximum one working day and will take place between July-September. Companies that are not yet signatories of the Women's Empowerment Principles will be asked to join an additional WEPs 101 workshop at the beginning of the programme which will be an hour long. From October to March three capacity-building workshops will take place requiring around half a day each including e-learning tools and other preparatory material. In between workshops, representatives are asked to reflect on the information shared and apply learnings to their company context using an Action Planning Guide. Additional voluntary engagement opportunities such as expert sessions and a Policy Development workshop will be organized for representatives that would like to dive deeper into thematic areas and connect with their Target Gender Equality peers. Exact dates for each commitment will vary from country to country. Participating companies from the past year have reported that they spent around 1-2 hours a week on average to participate in Target Gender Equality. 97% of past Target Gender Equality participants have gone beyond the mandatory requirements of the programme and engaged in additional opportunities and recommendations for actions.

Q: Who from our company should participate in the programme? Are there eligibility criteria that we should be aware of?

A: All participating companies are asked to nominate two representatives to actively participate in the programme on behalf of the company. This includes attending Target Gender Equality meetings/events and coordinating with colleagues across the organization to advance Target Gender Equality objectives. Participating companies are strongly encouraged to consider diversity of perspective in terms of personal profiles, gender, corporate function and level within the organization when nominating Target Gender Equality representatives. In previous years, many representatives were part of sustainability, diversity & inclusion, human resources or communications teams.

In addition to the Target Gender Equality representatives, all participating companies are requested to nominate a top-level "Ambassador" to follow Target Gender Equality developments, provide support to the company representatives as needed, and represent the company at high-level events that are part of or related to Target Gender Equality. The Target Gender Equality Ambassador should have a direct line of communication to the CEO (e.g. Member of the C-Suite or Board). The company's CEO may also decide to take on the role of Target Gender Equality Ambassador.

23% of companies that participated in Target Gender Equality reported that they have created a dedicated Council or Working Group with members from across departments to take plans for gender equality forward. In the majority of other companies the Human Resources or Sustainability Teams hold this responsibility.

Q: Is there an extra cost for my company to participate?

A: Beyond existing fees to participate in the UN Global Compact and Global Compact Local Networks, there is no additional fee to participate in Target Gender Equality. Select Global Compact Local Networks may charge a nominal fee for local Target Gender Equality participation. Please contact your Global Compact Local Network to learn more.

Q: Will the whole programme take place virtually?

A: Yes. All global and regional offerings of the Target Gender Equality programme will be taking place online and e-learning tools and other interactive online communities and applications will be leveraged. Select Global Compact Local Networks may opt to offer in-person engagement opportunities.

Q: Which language will the programme be facilitated in?

A: To enable you to share your experiences and engage actively and openly with peers, experts and partners, the majority of the Target Gender Equality programme is facilitated in local languages by Global Compact Local Networks. To allow for contributions by global experts, some pieces and additional engagement opportunities might be offered in English only. Please consult your relevant Global Compact Local Network to confirm the language the programme is run in your country of interest.

PROGRAMME DURATION & CONTENT:

Q: What is the duration of the programme?

A: The company registration period begins in March 2024 and concludes in May 2024. Some Global Compact Local Networks might close the registration period earlier, so we encourage you to apply as soon as possible. Programmatic activities and engagement opportunities will start in June 2024 and conclude in March 2025. Please consult your Global Compact Local Network for a detailed schedule of activities in your country.

Q: What themes does Target Gender Equality Accelerator focus on?

A: While the programme calls for bold action to advance gender equality at all levels and across all areas of business, learning opportunities zoom in primarily on gender equality related action at the workplace. The capacity building workshops focus on supporting companies to set targets and develop enabling action in the areas of gender balance, women's leadership and equal pay for work of equal value. Related themes that are discussed throughout the programme include inclusive hiring practices, the tackling of unconscious bias, the establishment of family-supportive workplaces, and action to combat sexual harassment. The programme takes a holistic approach and helps companies understand the various policies, practices and interventions that are needed to advance gender equality and achieve gender parity.

Q: What is the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool?

A: The Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool is a free, user-friendly, and strictly confidential online platform that helps companies to assess current policies and programmes, highlight areas for improvement, and identify opportunities to set future corporate goals and targets. The Tool is managed by the UN Global Compact and was developed in collaboration with UN Women, the Multilateral Investment Fund of the IDB, and IDB invest. During the Target Gender Equality programme aggregate in-country results will be discussed but individual company results are strictly confidential and will never be disclosed. The Tool can be accessed [here](#).

Q: Who will be facilitating the workshops?

A: Target Gender Equality is facilitated at the country level by Global Compact Local Network staff and external facilitation support, varying in each country. Target Gender Equality also counts on the support of a Global Coalition comprised of more than 30 organizations with gender equality expertise. These experts are regularly supporting global, regional and local Target Gender Equality offerings.

Q: What happens once the programme is over?

A: We recognize that to successfully build and implement a holistic gender equality strategy, long-term opportunities for exchange and continuous learning are necessary. You will receive a survey to ask about your progress around nine months after programme completion. Furthermore, you will receive the regular Target Gender Equality Newsletter. You will also receive invitations to additional engagement opportunities to foster accountability and support implementation. We also encourage you to connect with your relevant Global Compact Local Network to identify country-specific opportunities for continued learning and engagement. Lastly, all Target Gender Equality participating companies are encouraged to take the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool on an annual basis enabling you to track your performance. 82% of past participants report that they are planning to take the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool to analyze performance over time, for example on an annual basis.