

**PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
07**

LEADERSHIP



07. Performance Indicator: Leadership

Approaches requirements	Meets requirements	Exceeds requirements
7ai. Gender equality and the empowerment of women is proactively promoted and pushed forward by senior leadership both internally and publicly	7bi. Gender equality and the empowerment of women is proactively promoted and pushed forward by senior leadership both internally and publicly	7ci. Gender equality and the empowerment of women is proactively promoted and pushed forward by senior leadership both internally and publicly
and	and	and
7aii. Entity's progress, learning and accountability for achieving results in the gender equality policies is enhanced through a senior level Gender Steering and Implementation Committee or equivalent	7bii. Entity's progress, learning and accountability for achieving results in the gender equality policies is enhanced through a senior level Gender Steering and Implementation Committee or equivalent	7cii. Entity's progress, learning and accountability for achieving results in the gender equality policies is enhanced through a senior level Gender Steering and Implementation Committee or equivalent
	and	and
	Option 1	7ciii. Head of Gender Unit or equivalent participates in senior management team meetings, as relevant
	7biii. Head of the Gender Unit or equivalent participates in senior management team meetings, as relevant	and
	or	7civ. The Head of the Gender Unit or equivalent has a direct reporting line to senior leadership
	Option 2	
	7biii. Head of the Gender Unit or equivalent has a direct reporting line to senior leadership	

What is the Leadership indicator?

While the entire UN-SWAP Framework emphasizes accountability, this Performance Indicator specifically highlights how senior leadership, particularly the head of the entity and managers, can proactively promote gender equality and empower women.



Leadership

Almost all UN entity gender-related evaluations and reviews over the last decade agree on the importance of senior manager leadership for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as the leadership gap that exists.

The [Gender Equality Acceleration Plan \(GEAP\)](#), launched in March 2023, serves as a system-wide call to action that outlines the UN's commitment to essential internal transformation. Once fully implemented, the GEAP will empower all UN entities—regardless of their mandate—to assist all 193

Member States and other stakeholders in achieving equitable outcomes for women and girls. Specifically, the GEAP urges the UN to lead the world toward gender equality, recognizing it as both a human rights issue and a fundamental prerequisite for development, peace, and security.

This call to action, initiated at the highest levels of the UN system, advocates for a significant transformation of power dynamics, leadership approaches, strategies, priorities, structures, and accountability mechanisms to effectively mainstream gender equality. In this way, the UN will become an organization where achieving gender equality is a strategic priority across all entities, driven by top leadership.

United Nations Senior Leadership

Within the United Nations entities, senior leadership is typically defined as the highest-level officials who are responsible for strategic decision-making and the overall management of the organization. This includes:

- Under-Secretaries-General (USGs)
- Assistant Secretaries-General (ASGs)
- Executive Heads of UN Agencies, Funds, and Programs
- Senior Directors or Heads of Divisions within the Secretariat
- Special Representatives or Coordinators at the Senior Leadership Level

In accordance with the [United Nations Leadership Framework](#) (2017) UN senior management must lead in a manner that is:

Norm-based, “in that it is grounded in UN norms and standards, beginning with the Charter itself,” which specifies gender equality; UN leaders are bound to promote gender equality.

Principled, “defending its norms and standards and their application without discrimination, fear, or favour even – especially – in the face of pressure and push-back from powerful actors;” this is of particular importance in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women, which can be controversial.

Accountable, “mutually within the system, to beneficiaries and to the public beyond,” including specific accountability to women and girls as those often left furthest behind.

Multi-Dimensional, “integrated, intersectional and engaged across pillars and functions.”

Transformational, “of ourselves and those we serve,” The UN system needs to invest in strong transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is heavily reinforced by attitudinal and behavioural adjustments, by development of leadership capabilities, and by strong vision and leadership for change.”

Collaborative, “within and beyond the UN system.” Today’s UN leaders actively create safe and meaningful opportunities to hear the voices of people themselves, civil society, local communities, the marginalized and excluded within them, and those most at risk of being left behind.” Again this is key to gender equality and the empowerment of women, which seeks to ensure effective participation of and decision-making by women and girls.

Self-applied, “A UN leader is expected not just to preach UN principles and norms to other, but to live them. This means that in interactions within offices, teams, agencies, and across the system the UN leader is fully respectful of all colleagues at all levels, is gender-sensitive, promotes and celebrates

diversity as a strength, fosters teamwork, empowers staff, recognizes and rewards merit, and operates with integrity, transparency and fairness.”

In addition, the leadership framework notes that a commitment to continuous learning and professional/ leadership development are key attributes of the UN leader.

The CEB Leadership Framework has guided the components of this UN-SWAP Performance Indicator, which focus on internal and public championing of gender equality and the empowerment of women, with attention to **the need for transformational leadership, personal commitment of senior managers, attitudinal change, engagement with gender issues during engagements, and the importance of actively advocating externally and internally for gender equality and the empowerment of women**, as a central mandate of the UN, and in spite of external or internal push back or opposition. Each requirement for this indicator is designed to be comprehensive, measuring the effectiveness of senior leadership in promoting gender equality within the organization.

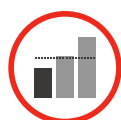
Who is the Business Owner for this indicator?

Ensuring that leadership is accountable for promoting and achieving gender equality is primarily the responsibility of the head of the entity and the entity's senior management team, with the support of the head of the Gender Department/Unit, as applicable.

Elements derived from the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP)

- ✓ **Leaders will be held accountable**, and the Clarion Call included as a performance measure in senior management compacts with the Secretary General and made publicly available.
- ✓ Ensure at minimum compliance with the UN SWAP 3.0 standard on a **resourced gender unit, with senior level staff**, and ensuring it has direct access to senior leadership.
- ✓ Each Entity establishes **Gender Equality Steering and Implementation Committee** which meets twice a year with a focus on corporate performance on Gender Equality. Chaired by the entity head and all senior leaders participate.
- ✓ **Gender Equality Steering and Implementation Committee** – or similar mechanism - to drive progress, learn, and enhance accountability for results.

What are the specific requirements for this indicator?



How to approach requirements

To **approach requirements for this Performance Indicator senior managers and in particular the Head of entity** should at a minimum do the following:

1. Senior leadership actively advocates for gender equality and the empowerment of women through public statements and strategic initiatives, ensuring that gender issues are prioritized internally and externally.
2. Articulate a vision of the ways in which the entity will support the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and ensure that organizational goals reflect this vision.

3. A senior-level Gender Steering and Implementation Committee is established to hold the entity accountable for gender equality outcomes, with clear mandates and regular reporting.

In **assessing how to approach requirements for this indicator**, entities could consider the following:

- ✓ Tracking the number of public speeches or communications made by senior managers and in particular the head of entity addressing gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as concrete actions to push-forward for gender equality. This should go beyond references to women and men to specific reference to how the entity will address gender inequalities.
- ✓ Documenting specific actions taken in response to these communications to address gender inequalities includes, but is not limited to, the development of targeted policies, implementation of training programs, establishment of support and mentoring networks, allocation of resources for gender-related initiatives, and collaboration with relevant stakeholders to enhance awareness and advocacy efforts.
- ✓ Collecting and documenting responses from UN partners and stakeholders that reflect the impact of entity advocacy efforts on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- ✓ Senior managers act as champions for gender equality by publicly advocating for women's rights and integrating gender considerations into their leadership practices.
- ✓ Developing and disseminating clear policies and guidelines that emphasize the importance of gender equality, ensuring that senior managers are aware of their responsibilities in promoting these principles.
- ✓ Monitoring the frequency of Gender Steering and Implementation Committee meetings and documenting outcomes, including action plans and decisions made.
- ✓ Providing evidence of measures implemented to improve UN-SWAP performance based on Gender Steering and Implementation Committee deliberations and recommendations.



How to meet requirements

To **meet requirements senior managers and in particular the Head of entity** should, in addition to the actions outlined for approaching requirements, demonstrate the following:

1. The Head of the Gender Unit participates in senior management team meetings and ensures that gender equality considerations are integral to all relevant discussions and decisions.

In **assessing how to meet requirements for this indicator**, entities could consider the following:

- ✓ Tracking the participation of the Head of the Gender Department/ Unit at senior management meetings.
- ✓ Ensuring the inclusion of gender equality as a standing agenda item in senior management meeting agendas and decision-making processes, at least quarterly.
- ✓ Establishing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the integration of gender equality in senior management engagements, including regular assessments and feedback loops to track progress and make adjustments as needed.

- ✓ Monitoring the frequency of updates provided by the Head of the Gender/ Department Unit to senior leadership regarding progress and challenges in the implementation of the gender policy and action plan, or its equivalent.



How to exceed requirements

To **exceed requirements senior managers and in particular the Head of entity** should, in addition to the actions outlined for meeting requirements, demonstrate the following:

1. Ensure that the Head of the Gender Unit has a direct or indirect reporting line to senior leadership, facilitating regular updates and discussions on gender equality initiatives and outcomes.

In **assessing how to exceed requirements for this indicator**, entities could consider the following:

- ✓ Define and document the reporting lines for the Head of the Gender Unit, ensuring clear communication pathways to senior leadership.
- ✓ Record and document discussions and decisions made during meetings between the Head of the Gender Department/ Unit and senior leadership to ensure accountability and track progress over time.
- ✓ Senior leadership should seek diverse perspectives and feedback from other functional units during discussions with the Head of the Gender Department/Unit to strengthen cross-functional collaboration on gender equality initiatives.
- ✓ Establish a monitoring system to evaluate the effectiveness of the reporting line and communication between the Head of the Gender Unit and senior leadership, making adjustments as necessary to improve engagement.
- ✓ Documenting examples of how feedback from senior leadership has influenced the implementation of gender equality policies and actions within the entity, as well as improvements in the performance of UN-SWAP indicators that require enhanced focus.



Evidence base

Examples of documents to attach to substantiate reporting:

- Minutes of CEB, HLCM, HLCP, UNSDG
- Gender Equality Steering and Implementation Committee - Agenda and meeting minutes
- Governing body minutes
- Senior Management Team meeting agenda/ minutes
- Entity organizational chart
- Townhall recaps
- All-staff emails from senior management
- Speeches

Note: Please identify a self-explanatory title for the documents uploaded onto the platform, particularly for those shared to the UN-SWAP Knowledge Hub.



Current practice and examples

Senior level Gender Steering and Implementation Committee

For **UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)** leadership and accountability for the Gender Action Plan 2022-25 and gender equality is a core part of UNICEF's senior leadership team at all levels: country, regional and global representatives. UNICEF monitors progress and reports regularly to its Executive Board on progress and challenges – this is the highest level of leadership accountability on gender equality for UNICEF and represents the significance of gender equality as a principle, value and organization-wide strategy for programming and policy. Furthermore, a governance body – the Gender Equality Steering Committee – chaired by the Deputy Executive Director of Programmes, meets at least once a year to discuss areas of priority and where common challenges require additional investments.

Gender equality and the empowerment of women is proactively promoted and pushed forward by senior leadership both internally and publicly

The Under Secretary-General (USG) for the **Department of Global Communication (DGC)** is an international gender champion and regularly champions gender equality and the empowerment of women internally and publicly, including through her contributions to communications around the Secretary-General's priorities on the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse and on sexual harassment. In 2023, the USG focused the Department's efforts on tackling gender-based violence online and undertook several events to raise awareness on violence against female journalists online and offline.

The Director General of the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** made gender equality a priority, setting as a clear and well-defined goal the achievement of gender parity in professional and higher positions by 2025 and launching the [Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme \(MSCFP\)](#) and the [Lise Meitner Programme \(LMP\)](#). Launched in 2020, the MSCFP aims to help increase the number of women in the nuclear field, supporting an inclusive workforce of both men and women who contribute to and drive global scientific and technological innovation. Launched on International Women's Day in 2023, the LMP provides early- and mid-career women professionals with opportunities to participate in a multiweek visiting professional programme and advance their technical and soft skills.

The **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**'s senior management actively promotes improvements in UN-SWAP Performance Indicators where requirements have not yet been met or exceeded and have allocated additional resources to the Gender and Safeguards Unit. Commitments include that all projects need to have a transformative gender result and show the measures to achieve this result; and all finance management officers to receive training on tracking financial resources spent on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Executive Director is an International Gender Champion and has committed to support the conduct of a gender audit of UNEP and the administered Secretariats of Multilateral Environment Agreements to discover the gaps in numbers and perceptions, set targets and evaluate progress on advancing gender equality in programmes and operations.

Head of Gender Unit or equivalent participates in senior management team meetings

The **United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV)** and **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)** Gender Equality Strategy, Executives Committee (ExCom) has been appointed as the highest decision-making body on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, with responsibility for planning, monitoring and overseeing progress in implementing the Strategy. The Committee is chaired by the Director-General/ Executive Director (DG/ED) and comprises all senior

directors of the UNOV/UNODC Divisions (Operations, Treaty Affairs, Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, and Management). The Gender Team Coordinator is included as necessary in meetings of ExCom when gender issues are being considered and reports on the progress of implementing the UNOV/UNODC Gender Strategy. This is complemented with regular information to ExCom members and the DG/ED by Gender Team and Human Resources Management Service (HRMS).



Additional points

The [International Gender Champions](#) and UN Women have published [guidance for gender-responsive assemblies: Shaping the International Agenda: Raising Women's Voices in Intergovernmental Forums](#). The publication aims to build knowledge on women's participation in national delegations to meetings of international organizations' governing bodies and their leadership roles in these meetings.