PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 18 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT



18. Performance Indicator: Stakeholder Engagement



Approaches requirements



Meets requirements



Exceeds requirements

Option 1

18ai. Entity has established consultation system/s through which organization/s or associations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls can inform relevant programming and/or inter-governmental processes

and/or

Option 2

18aii. Entity engages with organizations or associations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls for their meaningful participation in activities led or supported by UN entities

18bi. Entity regularly consults appropriate organization/s or associations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls through established consultation system/s to inform relevant programming and/or intergovernmental processes

and

18bii. Entity regularly engages with organizations or associations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls for their meaningful participation in activities led or supported by UN entities

18ci. Entity programming and/or inter-governmental processes are informed by organization/s or associations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls

and

18cii. Entity regularly engages with organizations or associations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls for their meaningful participation in activities led and/or supported by UN entities

and

Option 1

18ciii. Entity contributes to enabling economic opportunities for women and girls and/or supporting access to financing

and/or

Option 2

18civ. Entity builds and maintains strategic partnerships with the private sector and/or philanthropy for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls



What is stakeholder engagement?

For the purposes of this indicator, **stakeholder engagement** is defined as the process of communicating and collaborating with the people who have an influence, interest or have been/will be impacted by the work of an organization or institution. It involves properly identifying, analysing and prioritizing relevant stakeholders and then developing a plan for how to effectively and meaningfully engage them.³⁶

Stakeholders can *offer expertise and insights* related to programming and inter-governmental processes about *community needs, perspectives, and the practical implications* of policy or programming decisions. They can also be *active participants* in UN-led or supported activities or *strategic partners* for advancing UN entities' objectives, including providing a stronger voice for women and girls.

Which UN stakeholders are prioritized for engagement to advance GEEW?

In the context of the UN system, entities engage with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. This performance indicator focuses on engagement with three specific **non-governmental stakeholders** who have been identified as key to accelerate progress on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (GEEW) and as part of multi-stakeholder partnerships under SDG 17 to pursue acceleration across the framework.

1. Civil Society, and more specifically organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls.

These are **formal and informal** organizations, groups, networks, associations, collectives, federations or constituent groups whose main objective is to advance gender equality and protect the rights and empowerment of women and girls. Consultation and participation with these organizations are considered to have the highest potential for driving results for GEEW.

These stakeholders are often referred to as women's organizations, women-focused organizations, or gender equality organizations. They usually represent the specific voices and perspectives of women and girls within a geographic area, a thematic or sectoral area, an intersectional population (e.g., ethnic or religious, women living with disabilities, etc.), or by professional association (women lawyers, women in government, women doctors, etc.). Some examples are provided below for illustrative purposes, but please note that this list is not exhaustive:

- International, regional and national level non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, community-based organizations and faith-based organizations.
 Examples include Society for Women and AIDS in Africa (UNFPA), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (FAO), and the Malaysian Woman's Action for Tobacco Control and Health (WHO).
- Professional organizations, networks, associations and federations such as the Women in Maritime Associations (IMO), International Federation of Women and

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³⁶ Tractivity, Stakeholder Engagement: Concept and Overview

Business Professionals (ILO), and the African Gender and Development Evaluators' Network (UN Women).

UN entities engagement with organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls has been and remains a crucial aspect of the *human rights-based approach* and *gender mainstreaming strategy* both of which call for the participation and inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups. This is a core strategy for mainstreaming women and girls' voices within the work or each entity and within sector or mandate area. It is also important for accountability and transparency. Engagement works to build closer relationships and trust between UN entities and women and girls' rights organizations.

ECOSOC resolution on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations System (E/RES/2024/3)

"Recognizing the important contribution of civil society actors, including non-governmental organizations, in advancing the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and in supporting gender mainstreaming into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system,"

"Para 10 (o) Continuing to include gender equality networks in planning and programme

- 2. Private Sector stakeholders are defined as for-profit or commercial enterprises or businesses; or business associations and coalitions (cross-industry, multi-issue groups; cross industry, issue-specific initiatives; industry-focused initiative). These can include multinational companies; large domestic companies; micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Run by businesses or individuals, these entities are not under the control of the state but can play a major role in the economy, politics and social life.
- 3. **Philanthropic Organizations -** non-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with principal funds to make grants to charitable organizations. Often referred to as foundations or charities, their main goal is to improve society and the well-being of individuals through their grant-making. They may be linked to individuals or corporations.

One good practice for entities to engage with these stakeholders is to develop a *gender-responsive stakeholder engagement plans* to proactively identify and create new opportunities for advancing GEEW. Such a plan would support entities to systematically identify processes and activities where these stakeholders would be most relevant to engage and plan accordingly.

What are the specific requirements for this indicator?

There are **three key requirements** for this indicator that entities are asked to **progressively achieve progress** on during the UN-SWAP 3.0 period:

- Requirement 1: Entities should regularly consult with organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls for relevant programming and/or inter-governmental processes.
- Requirement 2: Entity should engage organizations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls in meaningful participation in UN-led or supported activities.

Requirement 3: Entities should either open opportunities for women and girls to access financing/economic opportunities or build strategic partnerships on GEEW with private sector actors or philanthropic organizations.

A more in-depth explanation of each requirement is provided below, clearly indicating what is required to select each rating. These explanations are accompanied by additional sections containing *useful resources*, *examples* and a *step-by-step checklist* to support you to determine your entity's rating. The checklist includes information on the *reporting questions for each rating* you will encounter in the UN-SWAP 3.0 reporting platform, as well as suggestions of the *types of documents that can be uploaded* to support your rating. Finally, you will find the *template for the indicator action plan* following the checklist for ease of reference to complete.

Who is the business owner for this indicator?

Strategic Partnerships Units, Civil Society Units and/or Private Sector Focal Points would act as the business owner/s for this indicator. For entities that do not have such units or focal points, the UN-SWAP Focal Point should identify the most appropriate business owner.

Requirement 1: Consultation Systems

Approaches requirements	Option 1 18ai. Entity has established consultation system/s through which organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls can inform relevant programming and/or inter-governmental processes.
Meets requirements	18bi . Entity regularly consults appropriate organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls to include through established consultation system/s .
Exceeds requirements	18ci. Entity programming and/or inter-governmental processes are informed by organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls.

This requirement calls for entities to establish systems to regularly and meaningfully consult with organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls as part of programming and inter-governmental processes. Consulting is a process of engaging these groups in a more structured manner and including them within decision-making processes. The requirement provides gradual steps that entities can take over time that provides a path for meeting and/or exceeding the requirement.

Entities have *two options to approach requirements* – consultation or meaningful participation. However, entities will have to demonstrate progress on both aspects to meet requirements.

Entities that opt to focus on consultation to approach requirements should establish formal consultation mechanisms where organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls can be included. These mechanisms should enable these groups to voice their perspectives and advocate for the needs and priorities of women and girls within the programming or inter-governmental processes to be informed by stakeholders. Some things to keep in mind regarding consultation mechanisms:

• may **need to be established** where they do not already exist within an entity.

- Identify existing mechanisms where inclusion of organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls has been overlooked or not prioritized.
- formal consultation mechanisms may be time-bound, have term limits or can be continuing
 and should have clear Terms of Reference or Terms of Engagement. They can focus on one
 programming or inter-governmental process or can be established to provide consultation on
 a wide range of processes. Examples include:
 - Consultative Status which allows specific groups to participate and attend meetings
 of the entity.
 - Civil Society Advisory Groups that normally have broad and diverse representation and provide guidance and advice to UN entities on key political issues, as well as policy and programme matters at the global and regional levels.
 - Steering Committees, Working Groups and Taskforces established to develop and deliver policies, guidelines, or other products.
 - o **Reference Groups** established for evaluations, audits, or other UN processes.

Each entity is encouraged to *identify the programming and/or inter-governmental process/es* they engage with where the inclusion of organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls in consultation mechanisms is relevant or should be prioritized. Some examples of processes where consultation mechanisms have been established include:

- **strategic planning processes** at the global, regional or country level.
- development of entity policies and strategies and plans.
- global or regional inter-governmental conferences, summits or meetings, especially where an entity has a formal role as the secretariat function or equivalent (e.g., CSW and UN Women, Conference of Parties and Rio Convention Secretariats, etc.).

Finally, each entity will need to *identify the organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls* relevant to the specific programming of intergovernmental processes requiring consultation. The focus for selection is not necessarily on how the group or organization is named, but rather the intent of their work – representing women and girls voices and perspectives, empowering and promoting women and girls, protecting the rights of women and girls, and advancing gender equality, etc. UN entities are also mandated to pay particular attention to inclusion of organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls in *crisis response sector or in conflict or crisis settings*.

Once the consultation mechanisms are established, the programming or inter-governmental process/es to be consulted are determined and the organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls to be included are identified and invited, to *meet requirements* asks entities to demonstrate that they are in fact *regularly consulting* with these groups. Regularly implies that the group is consulted at *set intervals* on a *recurring* basis per the Terms of Reference. It implies a commitment to *sustained and consistent consultation* rather than ad-hoc or occasional engagement.

Finally, to exceed requirements, entities are asked to demonstrate **how programming and inter- governmental processes have been informed** by the regular consultation with organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls. This implies that the needs, priorities and perspectives of said group/s are duly considered and reflected within processes.

When reporting against this requirement, it is noted that some entities have had minimal if any consultation experience with such groups, while others have robust mechanisms that have been in

place for some time. For the latter, reporting can highlight some key examples that showcase effective consultation processes.

Requirement 2: Meaningful Participation

Approaches requirements	Option 2 18aii. Entity engages with organizations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls for their meaningful participation in UN-led or supported activities.	
Meets and exceeds requirements	18bii. Entity regularly engages with organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls for their meaningful participation in UN-led or supported activities.	

In this context, *meaningful participation* refers to the right of organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls to have the opportunity to *express* their views, influence and/or have an impact on decisions on UN-led or supported activities. It implies the active and substantial involvement of women's organizations in United Nations initiatives, where they are not just consulted but have real influence on decision-making processes, shaping agendas, and contributing their expertise across various UN activities, particularly in areas like peacebuilding, humanitarian response, and policy development, with a focus on gender equality issues.

By including the perspectives of organizations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls, UN activities actively *mainstream gender* by better reflecting the needs and priorities of all members of society. The insights and expertise that these groups bring to the table *improves the relevance and effectiveness* of activities and builds legitimacy and credibility for UN-led and supported activities.

To strengthen their *right to participate*, engagement should be carefully planned to avoid tokenism. While participation can be ad hoc or systematic, it should focus both on *gathering substantive inputs* and *communicating outcomes and decisions*. UN entities should aim to engage with a *diversity of women and girls' organizations* including those representing marginalized and excluded populations.

Reminder: Entities have *two options to approach requirements* – consultation or meaningful participation. However, entities will have to demonstrate progress on both aspects to meet requirements.

To approach requirements, an entity can opt to demonstrate meaningful participation of organizations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls through one or more entity-led or supported activity. To meet and exceed requirements, all entities are required to demonstrate that they regularly engage in meaningful participation with these groups in one or more UN-led or supported activity. This can be demonstrated through the development of stakeholder engagement policies and strategies and evidence of how this is implemented. Or entities can show how they are systematically making participation accessible to groups. The requirement is possible to meet within a wide range of UN-led or supported activities, including:

 development of policies and strategies that consistently prioritize, remove barriers to and incentivize women and girls' organizations and their representatives to participate fully and meaningfully in entity activities, including building skills to effectively engage with UN processes.

- Adopting a gender-responsive participatory approach for programme design implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensuring *meetings and events* organized provide a space for the lived experiences of women and girls to be heard on all topics.
- Support organizations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls to hold *leadership positions* in UN-led activities (e.g., negotiation teams, mediation processes, and expert advisory groups, etc.).
- Allow for organizations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls to actively contribute to *policy development and agenda setting* for UN-led or supported activities.

You will find examples of meaningful participation of organizations that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of women and girls in the *Examples* section.

Requirement 3: Opening Opportunities and/or Strategic Partnerships

Exceeds requirements	Option 1 18ciii. Entity contributes to opening opportunities for women and girls to access financing or providing economic opportunities.
Exceeds requirements	Option 2 18civ. Entity builds strategic partnerships with the private sector and/or philanthropy for advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

In addition to further strengthening and/or expanding actions towards consultation and meaningful participation, to <u>exceed requirements</u> for this indicator, entities are called on to open new opportunities for women and girls to access financing or economic opportunities and/or to enter into new strategic partnerships for advancing GEEW with the private sector and/or philanthropic organizations. Entities have a choice of pursuing one of these two additional requirements in addition to the meeting the exceeds standard for consultation and meaningful participation.

Note: It is possible to pursue a strategic partnership with a private sector actor or philanthropic organization that opens new financing or economic opportunities for women and girls – meeting both requirements 18ciii and 18civ.

Opening Opportunities

The GEAP strongly identifies the persistent under-resourcing for gender equality initiatives as a key barrier to progress. A key aspect of empowering women and girls and the organizations that represent them is by facilitating their access to available financing and/or economic opportunities that may often be out of reach due to inequality and discrimination. A special emphasis is given to raising *financing for women's organizations in conflict and crisis settings.*

GEAP

- ✓ Open multiple opportunities for local women girls and their representatives to access financing....
- "Strengthen financing that seeks to address systemic gender inequalities. Women have historically been marginalized in economic and financial systems, resulting in unequal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power."
- ✓ Pillar 4.3. Commit to raise \$300 million for women's organizations in conflict and crisis settings over the next three years through existing financing mechanisms, such as the WPHF.
- ✓ "Women organizations are at the forefront of crisis response and gender equality work."

✓ Strengthening financing for all organizations promoting women's and girls' rights will address systemic gender inequalities. Women have historically been marginalized in economic and financial systems, resulting in unequal access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power."

UN entities have several different ways in which they can pursue this requirement within the context of their individual mandates. The list below is not exhaustive, and UN entities are encouraged to consider creative and new ways to meet this requirement (e.g., through in-kind donations, etc.):

Support access to economic opportunities

- Adopting *gender-responsive procurement policies* to provide new opportunities to women and women-led businesses and service providers.
- Aligning implementation partner selection guidelines to pursue and systematically
 consider organization/s that promote gender equality and/or the rights and empowerment of
 women and girls for selection especially in non-GEEW related work areas.
- Hosting industry roundtables with relevant professional women's networks/associations.

Support access to financing opportunities

- Establishing *new grant of funding mechanisms* or expand existing mechanisms targeting women, girls and the organizations who represent them.
- Establish *more flexible criteria for funding* in settings where CSO activism is under threat or where civic space is limited especially for women and girls.
- Adapting and simplifying reporting and proposal requirements to make financing more
 accessible to women and girls, including organization/s that promote gender equality and/or
 the rights and empowerment of women and girls
- Advocate to make UN managed funds more accessible to women and girls through streamlined and simplified procedures.
- Holding donor roundtables or otherwise working to connect women's and girls' directly with donors and other financing opportunities and make space for women-led discussions on financing.

Mobilize new resources for financing women and girls' rights organizations, especially in conflict and crisis settings, and contexts where gender equality and women's rights are contested.

Strategic Partnerships

A **strategic partnership** for GEEW is defined as a long-term and mutually beneficial collaboration that involves two or more actors to grow together and achieve common GEEW goals. Partnering with the **private sector** is not new to the United Nations system. Some organizations have cooperated with the private sector for decades and these partnerships have taken many different forms and has been established at all levels with an array of activities undertaken from advocacy, fundraising, policy dialogue, development cooperation and initiatives to pursue innovations in products and services.

Excerpts from 2030 Agenda

Paragraph 67

"Private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation. We acknowledge the diversity of the private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals. We call upon all businesses to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges. We will foster a dynamic and well-functioning business sector, while protecting labour rights and environmental and health standards in Ce with relevant international standards and agreements and other ongoing initiatives in this regard." **Goal 17** "Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships."

UN entities are also encouraged by the GEAP to specifically pursue strategic partnerships with private sector actors (e.g., corporations, academic institutions, etc.) and philanthropies (public and private foundations) relevant to their mandate and work areas.

Excerpts from the GEAP

- ✓ Pillar 5.3 Build strategic partnerships with private sector and philanthropy in support of our transformation.
- ✓ SDG Goal 17 supports revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development, including gender equality. The 2030 Agenda is universal and calls for action by all countries developed and developing to ensure no one is left behind. It requires partnerships between governments, the private sector, and civil society.

Some examples of strategic partnerships for GEEW with private sector and philanthropies is included under the Examples section.

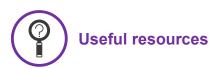


Evidence base

Examples of documents to attach to substantiate reporting:

- Gender-responsive stakeholder engagement plans
- Documents that demonstrate regular consultation with organizations promoting GEEWG
- Documents that demonstrate regular engagement with organizations promoting GEEWG
- Documents that demonstrate contribution to financial accesses
- Partnership documents with private section
- Partnership documents with philanthropy

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



Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement

- The Routledge Handbook on Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement
- Framework for meaningful engagement
- Stakeholder engagement and the 2030 Agenda: A practical guide (UN DESA)
- What is good practice: A framework for analysing the quality of stakeholder engagement in implementation and follow-up for the 2030 Agenda (UNDP and UNESA)

Private Sector Engagement

• The UN Global Compact Office

The Global Compact works with offices across the United Nations system to ensure that the organization is ready and able to partner strategically with the private sector. It chairs and coordinates the UN System Private Sector Focal Points (PSFP) network, a community of practice designed to encourage more coherent, principle-based and impactful UN-business partnerships and coordinates the development of policy and guidelines emphasizing the importance of due diligence and accountability in partner selection and engagement.

• Guidelines on a principle-based approach to cooperation between the United Nations and the business sector

Women's Empowerment Principles



Meeting Requirements

Consultation Mechanisms

UNDRR Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism

In 2018, UNDRR set up the "UNDRR Stakeholder Engagement Mechanism" (UNDRR-SEM) to leverage the convening and advocacy powers of the MGoS and other stakeholder groups for the integration of disaster risk reduction into the broader 2030 Agenda. The UNDRR-SEM creates an open and structured avenue for close engagement of stakeholders in the implementation of the Sendai Framework through key global, regional and national policy processes.

Meaningful Participation (forthcoming)

Exceeding Requirements (forthcoming)

Opening opportunities for financing/ economic opportunities.

International Trade Centre

The <u>Women Exporters in the Digital Economy (WEIDE) Fund</u>, launched by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and ITC in February 2024, aims to empower women entrepreneurs by helping them grow their businesses through international trade and digitalization.

The \$50-million WEIDE Fund is expected to unlock opportunities in international trade and digital trade for women entrepreneurs through grants and support from financial institutions to reduce the finance gap; technical assistance and training related to digital skills and improving export competitiveness; export markets, by connecting more women to digital market platforms; networks and support services, by creating more inclusive and effective business ecosystems including leveraging partnerships with the private and public sectors. The fund specifically targets women-led micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the formal sector which are already exporting, or which are ready to start exporting or women-led, micro and small enterprises in the formal sector with export potential.

UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons (UNODC)

Our mission at the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons (UNVTF) is to provide direct humanitarian, legal and economic assistance to victims of human trafficking through experienced NGOs around the world. The Trust Fund supports interventions that facilitate early identification of human trafficking victims, including the use or innovative strategies and technologies to support appropriate victim assistance, and promote engagement with persons with lived experience of trafficking, taking into account trauma-informed responses for victims' reintegration into society.

Strategic Partnerships with Private Sector/Philanthropies

UNFPA and Essity

In 2024, Essity (a Swedish hygiene and health company committed to mainstreaming menstrual health metrics in the workplace, and advocating for gender equity in the private sector_became UNFPA's first global partner to pilot and endorse sexual and reproductive health and rights metrics developed by the Coalition for Reproductive Justice in Business. It marks a significant step towards the global promotion of menstrual health metrics and gender equality across workplaces worldwide. This partnership underscores the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration to close the gap in menstrual health. By leveraging joint networks, UNFPA and Essity aim to amplify joint advocacy messages and engage new audiences, reinforcing the importance of menstrual health in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. UNFPA and Essity will present initiatives related to the partnership at key global forums, including the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the World Economic Forum (WEF), to raise awareness and drive systemic change.

UNDP and UN OCHA: Connecting Business Initiative's Gender and Disaster Management Workstream

As the world continues to see more severe and frequent disasters, the crucial role the private sector plays in disaster management has become more apparent. A joint initiative by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), CBi supports both crisis response and development efforts by integrating and engaging the private sector strategically before, during and after emergencies, increasing the scale and effectiveness of the response and recovery in a coordinated manner. CBi Member Networks work with over 9,000 members that together represent 1,336,475 businesses of all sizes and in a wide range of industries. The initiative aims to become the go-to hub for business networks involved in disaster management, both by strengthening collaboration with governments, development partners and humanitarian actors and by contributing to the efforts to save the lives and livelihoods of people affected by crisis in vulnerable countries. CBi's workstream on Gender and Disaster Management develops materials to assist the private sector in these efforts such as the publication <u>Gender, Disaster Management and the Private Sector</u>.

UN - Nippon Foundation Capacity Building Programmes (UN OLA)

The United Nations – Nippon Foundation Capacity-building Programmes include a series of fellowships and training activities, as well as a vibrant Alumni Network. In partnership with, and funded by the Nippon Foundation, these programmes are implemented by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, in collaboration with the Nippon Foundation and host institutions. The Fellowship Programmes are committed to achieving 50/50 gender balance and geographical diversity in its participants with female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.