

Gender equality & empowerment benchmark

Initial Scoping Research Report, September 2018



**World
Benchmarking
Alliance**



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Executive summary



Today, gender equality and empowerment (GE/E) remain persistent issues globally. Companies, while varied in their approaches and levels of commitment to it, stand to evolve in how they promote GE/E and should be held more accountable in this regard. This report explores the need for a new GE/E benchmark that measures companies' progress against SDG 5 (Gender Equality), recognizes key overlaps with other SDGs, and builds on the robust set of GE/E work that exists today. It suggests that a new GE/E benchmark requires an approach that is: integrated, in that it captures the full breadth of the value chain; holistic, in that it considers the broader context and many dimensions affecting gender equality and empowerment; and balanced, in that it recognizes the varied ways in which companies can take action and drive change. Finally, it suggests which key themes, industries and companies a new GE/E benchmark should prioritize, with a supporting rationale for each.

Background information & context



The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) seeks to generate a movement around increasing the private sector's impact towards a sustainable future for all. In 2015, the United Nations developed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to help guide us. The WBA is now working to incentivise and accelerate companies' efforts towards achieving these goals.

The private sector has a crucial role to play in advancing the SDGs, but to boost companies' motivation, there needs to be real change in the way that their impact is measured. That's why the WBA has set out to develop transformative benchmarks that will compare companies' performance on the SDGs. The benchmarks will be backed by the best available science, while leveraging existing international norms and standards.

The benchmarks will aim to empower all stakeholders, from consumers and investors to employees and business leaders, with key data and insights to encourage sustainable business practices across all sectors. The benchmarks' methodologies

will also be free to use and continually improved through an ongoing and open multi-stakeholder dialogue.

More information about the World Benchmarking Alliance can be found [here](#).

Following an extensive series of global and regional [consultations](#) with key stakeholders, the WBA explored potential new corporate benchmarks, both industry- and SDG-centred. Among others, multiple stakeholders expressed the need for a corporate benchmark that focuses specifically on the role of companies in promoting gender equality and empowerment. This SDG-centred benchmark would focus on how a select group of industries contributes to SDG 5, a goal set to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

This research was commissioned to inform the WBA on whether to advance a potential benchmark focused on gender equality and empowerment, as well as assess the feasibility of its development. It offers a thorough overview of existing initiatives in the area of gender equality and empowerment, and identifies current gaps in the field. It also explores the potential for a new gender equality and empowerment benchmark, including how to approach it as well as potential themes and industries to include in it and their supporting rationale.



Defining Gender Equality and Empowerment (GE/E)



While progress is being made, women still face significant disadvantages globally, relative to men. In politics, women are under-represented in leadership and participation [1]. In work, women participate less in the labour force, participate more in informal and unprotected employment, are paid less, and spend more time on unpaid care and domestic work [2]. And at home or in their communities, about 1 in 3 women have experienced gender-based violence in their lives [3]. In effect, gender equality and empowerment (GE/E) were born of this pervasive gender gap that exists across the world in so many different forms.

There are many varying approaches to, and definitions of, gender equality and empowerment. Some approach gender equality and empowerment as mutually reinforcing goals: gender equality (the rights, resources, and voice enjoyed by women relative to those enjoyed by men) is a prerequisite for empowerment – their ability to exercise options, choice, control and power [4] [5]. Conversely, for others, investing in the empowerment of women and girls is a means to achieving greater gender equality as an end in itself [6]. Some define gender equality and empowerment broadly, or even refer to them interchangeably; others focus on women’s economic empowerment specifically, as “one of the most powerful routes for women to achieve their potential and advance their rights” [7]. Still others, like the Gates Foundation, have invested significant energy into creating a robust conceptual

model of women and girls’ empowerment, breaking it down into the key elements of agency, resources and institutional structures [8].

The variability in the language used in this field can introduce complexity and/or confusion, especially for those that aren’t gender experts. This report does not aim to resolve this variability, but rather, notes the importance of considering it when developing a new GE/E benchmark. With so many approaches to GE/E, a new GE/E benchmark should balance the needs for comprehensiveness, with the needs for efficiency and simplicity. Comprehensiveness can be achieved, for example, by capturing both gender equality and empowerment, and by leveraging the points of view of a variety of leading sources. This comprehensiveness can be balanced with efficiency by, for example, prioritizing (e.g., themes, industries) wherever possible, which in turn can be more manageable for companies. Furthermore, the need for simplicity, which stems from the complex and sometimes confusing nature of this space, can be addressed by articulating the differences in key terms or by using terms consistently rather than interchangeably, for example.

GE/E and the SDGs

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



Gender equality and empowerment are most directly captured in SDG 5 (gender equality), which prioritises the need to end discrimination against women and girls in all forms, and meet their right to equal opportunities in employment, health, education and decision-making. That said, SDG 5 does not stand in isolation. Gender equality and empowerment are cross-cutting themes and are both prerequisites for, as well as outcomes of, achieving the SDGs [9]. In fact, when applying a gender lens to all of the SDGs, it becomes clear that gender equality and empowerment are drivers of sustainable development in all of its dimensions, but can also pose challenges to progress against the 2030 Agenda should they not be addressed [10]. When developing a new GE/E benchmark, it is therefore important to:

- Lead with an SDG(5)-centred benchmark, but recognize its intersections with other SDGs
- Whilst focusing on gender data directly linked to SDG 5, also support the on-going capture of gender-sensitive data across all SDGs, including “gender-sensitive” indicators [10] and required / “Ready to Measure” gender disaggregated indicators [11] for governments, as well as complimentary metrics that companies can help drive

GE/E and the SDGs

- Identify key overlaps with other SDGs and actively consider ways to evolve data in this context, with a focus on those areas where gender is a significant factor (and women are at a greater disadvantage) and where companies stand to play a critical role (beyond community investment) in achieving progress against its respective (gender-sensitive) targets. When putting both a gender and business lens on the SDGs, the following examples are worthy of particular attention:



SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):

This appears to be the SDG with the most overt overlaps with gender equality and empowerment (with women, generally speaking, tending to be more significantly disadvantaged in terms of quality of jobs), particularly as companies can also have a very direct impact on progress. Its targets already include a gender-sensitive/-disaggregated view on in/formal employment, unemployment, fair wages, child labour, occupational injuries and labour rights. A pilot study recently completed by the Workforce Disclosure Initiative explores the role of companies in this context in much greater depth [12].



SDG 1 (No Poverty):

In an effort to mitigate poverty risk among women, companies can help ensure women employees are not subjected to human rights violations, as well as have access to living wages and opportunities for advancement. They can be more inclusive with women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses in their supply chains. Further, they can give women fair and affordable access to the goods/services they offer.



SDG 3 (Good Health & Well-being):

Companies can establish adequate occupational health/safety standards that create the right work environment for their female employees. They can also offer health care options for essential health services including reproductive and maternal health.



SDG 4 (Quality education):

Companies can focus on supporting children's (especially girls') quality education with zero tolerance child labour policies and employees' access to adequate early childhood childcare services. They can also offer female employees technical/vocational training.



SDG 10 (Reduce inequalities):

Companies can create and enforce non-discrimination policies and practices that support their women employees throughout their working lives. They can also ensure their women employees are paid fair wages, and/or engage more women from disadvantaged and low-income populations in their supply chains.



SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions):

Companies can actively address gender-based violence, child labour and trafficking with various mechanisms including zero-tolerance policies, grievance procedures and relevant programming.

- Determine how best to capture a gender POV in other existing/ work-in-progress benchmarks at the WBA, particularly those that are most material to gender equality and empowerment. For example, in the context of the Access to Digital Technology benchmark, the fact that women are at a significant disadvantage when it comes to internet access should be addressed. Or, the Food System Transformation benchmark could consider to what extent companies across the food value chain work to improve access to productive resources for women (e.g., provision of gender-sensitive training, financing in agricultural production).

Current GE/E landscape



Currently, the landscape of initiatives, frameworks and literature in the gender equality and empowerment space is very robust. It represents a strong foundation of information and insights that should certainly be leveraged when creating a new GE/E benchmark. For the sake of simplicity, these efforts have been presented in Table 1 below. A distinction should be made between macro- (e.g., within/across countries) and company-level (e.g., within/across corporations) initiatives, as well as those that are explicitly gender-focused versus those that were never gender-specific or that included a gender lens only retrospectively.

Table 1 – Current leading GE/E initiatives

	Macro-Level	Company-level
Non-gender-specific OR with retrospective gender lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UDHR • Big data (WHO, OECD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General business conduct guidance (UNGP, UNGC, OECD, ISO, ILO, SASB, GRI, IFC) • Social Audit (Fair Wear Foundation, Ethical Trading Initiative) • Social Index (Dow Jones Sustainability Index, Workforce Disclosure Initiative, Corporate Human Rights Benchmark)
Gender-focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEDAW • Big gender data (EIGE, Equal Measures 2030 SDG Gender Index, Africa Gender Equality Index, GDI, GII, GEM, GPI, WEAI) • Large-scale campaign (Deliver For Good) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GE/E guidance (WEPs, Oxfam, GRI/IFC) • GE/E assessment (WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool, Gender Strategy Toolkit, EDGE, Helix, BBI, UN Women) • GE/E index (Behind the Brands, Get Led Better, In Her Sight, Blendscore, Equileap, Bloomberg) • Gender lens investing (PAX, Veris, gender lens investing supported by Equileap data)

Current GE/E landscape

The most relevant among these for the purposes of developing a new GE/E benchmark are the initiatives that are both company- and gender-focused, which are briefly summarized in [Annex 1 - Current company-/gender-focused GE/E initiatives](#). A review of these initiatives reveals that there is, indeed, a rich set of information and insight available to leverage when developing a new GE/E benchmark. It also reveals that there are gaps that persist that should be addressed were a corporate benchmark to be developed that focuses specifically on the role of companies in promoting gender equality and empowerment. These gaps include:

- **Inconsistent approaches to GE/E** – There is variability in the language used to address GE/E, the framing/choice of issues to focus on, the detailed metrics used to capture a particular type of data, and the comprehensiveness of GE/E dimensions addressed.
- **Gender data challenges** – There are many gender data gaps, beginning with limited access to gender disaggregated data. Indicators, and the respective data collected for them, are used inconsistently. There is limited transparency into gender data that is collected, often blinding company-specific data, and there is limited gender data from publicly available sources.
 - **Limited quality of gender data** – Data capturing the existence of company policies is much more readily available,

compared to data capturing actions being taken and/or outcomes/results being achieved to address the issues behind them.

- **Limited depth into full value chain** – There is much more focus on the workplace rather than on marketplace, supply chain, and community.
- **Lack of full transparency** – Comparative company lists are limited and are typically proprietary and/or available only for a fee.
- **Lack of comprehensive ranking of companies** – There is no single, comprehensive, detailed and free-of-charge ranking of companies that exists today. In Her Sight [13] and Get Led Better [14] rank based on very limited metrics. Bloomberg's Gender-Equality Index [15] does not rank companies, nor reveal company-specific performance. Equileap [16] is the most advanced, offering a Global Report and Top 200 ranking as well as other research reports for free, with more detailed information available for a fee.
- **Exclusion of non-listed companies** – Existing initiatives focus primarily on listed companies, where public scrutiny, and therefore data access, is greater.

Current GE/E landscape

- **Exclusion of SMEs** – Existing initiatives focus on large multinational companies, e.g., with a market capitalisation of \$1 or 2 billion+.
- **Underrepresentation of emerging markets** – Existing initiatives focus on large multinational companies that are primarily based in developed economies.

The learnings and gaps from current GE/E initiatives were taken into account when developing the proposed framework that follows.

Benchmarking GE/E

Framework for approaching a new GE/E benchmark



Developing a new GE/E benchmark requires an approach that is: integrated, in that it captures the full breadth of the value chain; holistic, in that it considers the broader context and many dimensions affecting gender equality and empowerment; and balanced, in that it recognizes the varied ways in which companies can take action and drive change.

An integrated approach

Often, the dialogue surrounding gender equality and empowerment at companies is focused on the workplace, a company's direct operations which are also within its most immediate control. For example, companies' GE/E performance may be measured by the number of women on its Board of Directors or in its leadership, like at Get Led Better [14]. This makes sense, as a company's direct operations are easiest to measure and less likely to be confounded by other factors. Further, research shows that there is a positive correlation between women in corporate leadership and corporate performance [17] [18].

In parallel, however, there is a growing amount of research that proves that this is only a starting point. This research reinforces the importance of looking beyond the workplace and into all elements of the full value chain, including the marketplace, supply chain and community. With an integrated approach, a gender lens is applied everywhere - not just within leadership or HR, but also

*"An **integrated approach** requires embedding gender considerations throughout company functions, processes, policies, values, and relationships across the company value chain. It also means that opportunities for women's empowerment are not housed in isolated silos of different departments. Rather, they are considered in different decisions along the value chain, prioritized by company leadership, and reiterated in company values and mission statements."* [4]

Business for Social Responsibility (BSR)

Benchmarking GE/E

Framework for approaching a new GE/E benchmark



across a company's broader employee base, among the 3rd party actors it engages with, in the products/services it offers, and in the communities it is a part of. Here, a company applies the same values, policies and standards to all actors along its value chain as it does to itself internally [19]. Beyond women in the workplace, this integrated approach considers the:

- **Marketplace** – where women create and control an increasing share of wealth in many parts of the world and often tend to acquire goods and services on behalf of the entire household [20]. As such, developing products and services with women in mind can ensure companies meet the needs of women consumers. This can be relevant particularly when women face poor access to goods and services, for example in the case of financial products and services, agricultural inputs, technology, health care, information, energy, etc. It can also contribute to shifting gender stereotypes that influence how we think and act, as in the media industry which reflects but also amplifies and entrenches inequalities between men and women.
- **Supply chain** – where women serve as producers, entrepreneurs, workers and distributors, among others; and, in export-oriented industries such as apparel and agriculture, where they play a key role but are often

the lowest paid and in the most vulnerable jobs [4]. The recognition that companies have a responsibility to improve gender equality within their supply chains has grown significantly in the past ten years [21].

- **Community** – where women act as existing or potential employees, suppliers or customers, as well as family/community members and/or civil society representatives of them. Companies can promote gender equality and empowerment by effectively engaging with key community stakeholders in the form of risk management, community investment/outreach, philanthropy or active influence/engagement with local officials [19].

With this in mind, and whilst addressing a current gap in GE/E efforts (i.e., limited depth into full value chain), a new GE/E benchmark should consider an *integrated* approach that captures the full breadth of the value chain, and its respective stakeholders, as indicated in Table 2 below.

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Framework for approaching a new GE/E benchmark



Value chain element	Key stakeholders
Workplace	Leaders/Employers
	Employees
Marketplace	Consumers
Supply chain	Workers
	Suppliers/contractors
	Manufacturers
	Distributors
	Retailers
Community	Family
	Community members
	Governments

It is worth noting that stakeholders vary by industry. Therefore, when developing a new GE/E benchmark, industry-specific stakeholder lists should be developed to more accurately capture the realities of a given sector. For example, the Apparel sector might include textile companies (spinning, weaving, dyeing, printing) and garment manufacturers; the Food/Beverage sector, bottlers/packagers and drivers; and the Tech industry, Customer Support.

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A holistic approach

Most research supports the fact that gender equality and empowerment are complex, multi-dimensional issues. At the same time, the current landscape focused on gender equality and empowerment is vast. In the end, we are left with many points of view on an inherently complex topic. As previously mentioned, this report does not aim to resolve this inconsistency or complexity; but rather, it suggests the need for a simple, yet comprehensive, approach.

This holistic approach considers the broader context of GE/E as

well as its many dimensions, including personal, economic, access to resources, health/safety, socio-cultural and legal/political. It draws from the unique points of view of current leading GE/E initiatives and frameworks ([see Annex 2 – Current leading GE/E initiatives taking a holistic approach](#)) and attempts to strike a balance between comprehensiveness and simplicity.

As a starting point and in Table 3 below, the details of a holistic approach are summarized, though they are indeed subject to change with future consultation with experts.

Table 3 – Key dimensions of a holistic GE/E benchmark

Personal	Economic	Access to Resources	Health/Safety	Socio-cultural	Legal/Political
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency/ Decision making/ leadership • Self-confidence/ -esteem/ -efficacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation/ job segregation • Recruitment/ retention • Compensation • Contract types • Promotion • Education/ training • Professional networks/ mentors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land rights • Financial inclusion • Digital inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to (mental) health services • Health insurance • SRHR (contraception, abortion, pre/post natal care) • Workplace (safety, equipment, facilities) • Freedom of movement • Freedom from gender-based violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination • Social norms • Social networks • Role of men/ boys • Unpaid care (maternity/ paternity leave, child/ dependent care support, flexible work) • Marriage/ family planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal protection (existence, awareness, use) • Freedom of association (trade union representation) • Political voice (knowledge, use, voice) • Paid parental leave

NOTE: Indicators specifically related to 'empowerment' appear most overtly in the "Personal" dimension; however, it is important to capture both the gender equality ('access to') and empowerment ('control over') aspects across all dimensions – e.g., the extent to which companies provide women with leadership training, as well as the extent to which women exercise their power and actually attend such trainings.

Benchmarking GE/E

Framework for approaching a new GE/E benchmark



A balanced approach

Finally, a new GE/E benchmark requires an approach that is balanced. This means that it recognizes that factors contributing to GE/E go beyond the control of companies, but that companies can also modulate their actions and the ways that they drive change. This approach captures both how strategic a company's position is on GE/E (e.g., how they commit at the highest level), as well as how actionable it is (e.g., how they act/engage in their

workplace and supply chain; how they enable or influence those areas beyond their direct control). This approach is adapted from compelling research that recognizes the different roles that companies can play in promoting GE/E, from how they “act, enable and influence” [22], to how they “engage, enable and advocate” [4]. The key elements of a balanced approach are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4 - Key elements of a balanced GE/E benchmark

Ways to drive change	Within/ beyond company's direct control	Key stakeholders	Example(s)
Commit	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders/Employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance/organizational structure • Goals/targets • Strategy • Stakeholder engagement
Act/ engage	Within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees • (Owned) Workers / Suppliers / Manufacturers / Distributors / Retailers • Consumers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company policies • Company practices • Company investments • Products & services
Enable	Within AND beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third party) Workers / Suppliers/ contractors / Manufacturers / Distributors / Retailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply chain mapping • Contract types/terms • Procurement policies • Company practices
Influence/ advocate	Beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • Community members • Governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate research / communications • Community investment • Philanthropy • Partnerships (e.g., women's funds, NGOs) • Advocacy on policy platforms

Benchmarking GE/E

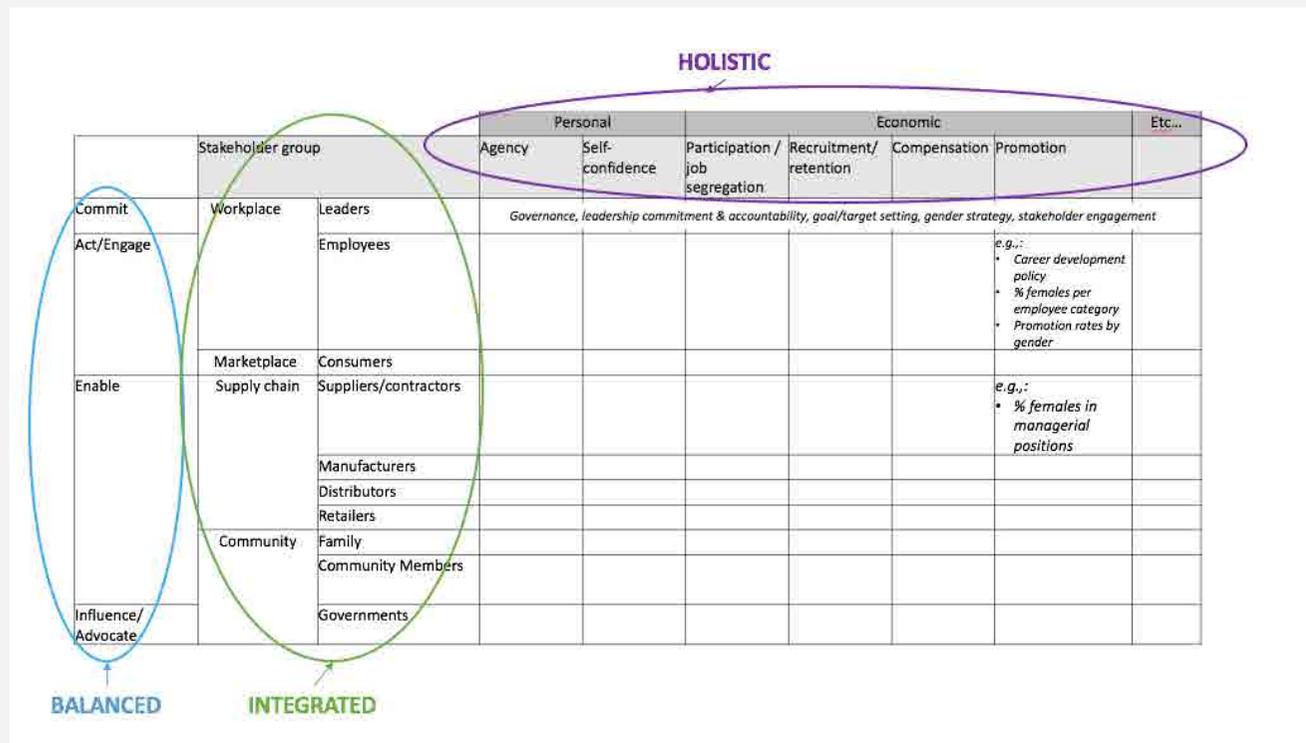
Framework for approaching a new GE/E benchmark

Bringing it all together

Developing a new GE/E benchmark that is integrated, holistic and balanced offers a comprehensive approach to assessing the extent to which companies promote gender equality and empowerment. It addresses some key gaps in the current GE/E landscape, while respecting the very real challenges that exist

today. It also remains flexible, allowing industry-specific and other nuances to be addressed as needed. This framework is summarized in Figure 1 below where, for each intersection point, specific metrics/indicators can be considered for inclusion in a GE/E benchmark.

Figure 1 - An integrated, holistic & balanced approach to a new GE/E benchmark



Benchmarking GE/E

Framework for approaching a new GE/E benchmark



In the development of this proposed framework, a variety of additional insights were collected that should be kept in mind when developing a new GE/E benchmark and defining its respective data metrics/indicators. These include:

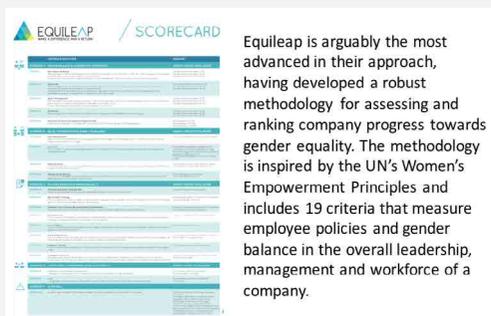
- **Commitment:** In order to maximize their GE/E impact, companies should take both a strategic and actionable approach: strategic, in that it demonstrates overarching, high-level commitment; and actionable, in that it invites specific action on specific issues. “Commitment” in and of itself may not be an explicit theme as compared to other ‘dimensions’ of a holistic approach. Instead, it captures a company’s overall commitment to GE/E at the highest level – including governance, leadership commitment and accountability, goal/target setting, gender strategy definition, and stakeholder engagement. The importance of capturing commitment separately is also captured in the Seafood Stewardship Index (inspired by the Access to Seeds Index and the Access to Medicine Index), where it is one of three indicator categories: commitment, transparency and performance. Commitment can also be captured toward a specific theme, as Equileap currently does regarding gender pay gaps [16], for example.
- **Building on existing work:** There is an extensive set of existing GE/E work that should be leveraged here, in particular those that have already identified different types of detailed metrics and indicators that can be used to measure specific dimensions. For example, taking the “Promotion” theme within the “Economic” dimension:
 - GRI & UNGC translate SDG 5 and its first target (5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere) into relevant business reporting metrics including: whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex; and % females per employee category. [23]
 - WEPs, in its “Equal Opportunity, Inclusion & Non-discrimination” principle includes: implementation of gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactive recruitment and appointment of women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors; assuring sufficient participation of women – 30% or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas. [24]

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- Equileap [16] in its measurement of:
 - “Gender Balance in Leadership and Workforce” captures promotion and career development opportunities in a ratio of each gender in management compared to a ratio of each gender in total employees.
 - “Equal compensation and Work-Life Balance” captures companies’ commitment to provide comparable wages, hours, and benefits for comparable work.



- Further, a variety of other sources consider a company’s:
 - Career development policy
 - Re-entry rates
 - Gender composition of talent and promotion pools or leadership development participant groups
 - Outcomes from potential / succession readiness assessments by gender
 - Rates of promotion by gender
 - Performance ratings by gender

Ultimately, when defining each detailed metric, it will be helpful to take stock of existing approaches, and pair these with relevant data realities (e.g., relative importance of data, ease of data collection, etc.) to determine the best way forward.

- **Data challenges:**
 - **Data availability/disclosure:** In general, gender data availability is a challenge, particularly in developing economies. Data often becomes more opaque the further beyond a company’s direct control you go. For example, third party (supply chain) actors are challenging to extract data from, due to limited data availability and/or unwillingness to disclose information. These challenges should not serve as a deterrent, but rather, will require exploring:
 - the extent to which a company gender disaggregates company data;
 - prioritizing ‘easy to capture’ data;
 - pushing the boundaries of ‘more difficult’ data collection;
 - leveraging the role of investors in their scrutiny of companies to drive improvements in disclosure [12];
 - or leveraging the role of the WBA in achieving disclosure under specific terms.

It can also be helpful to begin by focusing on data linked to specific legal regulations or requirements, as companies

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may be more equipped/interested in sharing data of this sort. For example, when considering compensation, companies are expected to commit to paying living wages that meet or exceed statutory requirements for all (including temporary and sub-contracted) workers, as reflected in ILO conventions and UDHR articles; these living wage data are a good starting point, particularly if they are/can be gender disaggregated. That said, as GE/E is often addressed in very limited ways, if at all, in codes of conduct, it would also be helpful to reference BSR's work that offers a gender-sensitive analysis of codes of conduct principles [25].

- **Quality of data:** There is a need to move beyond a company's GE/E policies (e.g., whether/not they're in place) and further into its practices (e.g., how these policies are enforced and measured). This can be difficult, as evidenced in the work of the Workforce Disclosure Initiative, which found a disconnect between disclosure of workforce policies and workforce practices, where few companies disclosed the actions taken to implement their policies or how these outcomes were then monitored. [12]
- **Relative importance of data:** Not all GE/E data metrics should be equal. While potentially challenging to define, the relative weighting of each factor against an overall performance score should be considered. For example, some may argue that "act/engage" elements should be prioritized

over "influence/advocate" elements for companies hesitant to partake in advocacy work due to the potential conflict of interest it could expose. Or, some may argue that a company addressing a gender wage gap is more important than whether/not it provides mentoring support.

- **Prioritization of data elements:** With such an extensive set of factors to consider comes an even more extensive set of possible indicators to help measure them. To this end, it will be important to distinguish between the 'must-have' and 'nice-to-have' elements where possible.
- **Phasing:** A phased approach to capturing these dimensions should be considered, where 'must-have', more easily accessible and/or more heavily weighted data points could be collected first, with an eventual goal of becoming more comprehensive with time.
- **Industry-specific considerations:** Industries will vary in their key value chain stakeholders, both in the the type of stakeholders as well as in the balance of owned versus third-party actors (which also impacts the balance of acting/engaging vs. influencing a company does). Therefore, when developing a new GE/E benchmark, industry-specific stakeholder lists should be developed to more accurately capture the realities of a given sector. For example, the Apparel sector might include textile companies (spinning, weaving, dyeing, printing) and

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garment manufacturers; the Food/Beverage sector, bottlers/packagers and drivers; and the Tech industry, Customer Support. Additionally, the list of key GE/E themes will also vary by industry, depending on how material a given theme is within a specific industry. For example, when considering “Access to Resources”, land rights are much more relevant in the Food/Beverage sector, while digital inclusion is much more relevant in the Finance, Tech and Telecomm sectors. Or, informal employment of women in low-income countries is a more significant issue in the supply chain of Food/Beverage companies while the promotion of women leaders in the workplace is a bigger issue in Tech.

Benchmarking GE/E

Priorities for a new GE/E framework



As noted above, taking an integrated, holistic and balanced approach to a new GE/E benchmark implies covering an extensive set of factors – from all stakeholders along the value chain, to all dimensions of gender equality and empowerment, to the balance of high-level commitment, action and enablement, and influence or advocacy. To this end, it will be helpful to prioritize among these wherever possible.

Priority themes

Gender equality and empowerment are indeed complex, with a host of potential dimensions and themes to consider (as indicated in Table 3 above) as well as their respective detailed metrics. While they are all important, to varying degrees depending on the specific context, it is helpful to prioritize among them where possible. A good starting point for doing so is SDG 5 itself, where its targets focus on a subset of the themes indicated in this report. Further, McKinsey’s research identified 10 “impact zones” which could move more than 75% of women affected by gender inequality globally closer to parity. [26] Finally, when reviewing the full list of possible GE/E themes, it is helpful to consider the areas where companies are hypothesized to have the most potential impact. When taken together, these filters helped identify a set of priority themes for a new GE/E benchmark, but they do not imply that other themes are unimportant or should be avoided. While this list may evolve during the detailed development phase

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Priorities for a new GE/E framework



of a new GE/E benchmark, the suggested priority themes (by dimension) include:

- **Personal**
 - Agency - which helps overtly capture empowerment-focused metrics
- **Economic**
 - Labour participation - which addresses the pervasive labour force participation gap among women [2] [27], with a particular focus on quality/leadership roles
 - Gender wage gap - which reflects the pervasive gender wage gap globally [2] [28]
 - Professional development/education - which reflects unequal education levels broadly [26] as well as those specific to certain sectors (e.g., STEM in Tech) [29]
- **Access to Resources**
 - Land/Financial/Digital inclusion - where, mostly in developing countries, women are less likely to have access to ownership/control over land, own a bank account [30], own a mobile device and/or access the internet [31], and where gender-sensitive products/services don't always exist
- **Health & Safety**
 - Freedom from gender-based violence - which reflects the startling research that 1 in 3 women will experience gender-based violence in her lifetime [32]
 - Access to SRHR - which considers a range of issues, from pregnancy-/childbirth-related deaths [33] to limited access to contraception or appropriate healthcare services
 - Workplace safety - which echoes the overlap with SDG 8 that, for example, directly references the challenges that migrant women face in precarious employment
- **Socio-cultural**
 - Culture of non-discrimination - which covers the full value chain, from a toxic masculinity culture in the workplace, to women's unmet needs in product design, to a broader culture of discrimination at home and in the community, all of which are exacerbated among low-income women [27]
 - Unpaid care - a common theme in the research, which shows how women spend 2.5x more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men [2] and therefore confront many more limitations in their work

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- **Legal/political**
 - (Advocacy for) Legal protection & political representation – which, while further removed from the direct control of companies, is a significant challenge as women are vastly underrepresented in government [34] and are legally restricted from participating in the economy in many countries [35]

Most of the themes listed above are particularly relevant for a company's actions centred in the workplace and supply chain. The main exceptions include “culture of non-discrimination”, which is very relevant across the full value chain, and “land/financial/digital inclusion”, which are particularly focused in the marketplace and community. Further, in the spirit of comprehensiveness, these themes should indeed be considered a good starting point, with the ultimate ambition of capturing most/all themes over time.

Priority industries

While GE/E is relevant for all industries, a new GE/E benchmark can begin by focusing on a subset of industries and broaden its scope over time. This will help focus energy and resources, as well as allow for enough depth into a specific industry.

Through research and consultation with a select group of experts, a set of key criteria was identified to help prioritize industries. To begin with, specific industries were assessed on the extent of their **potential impact on gender equality and empowerment**. This was assessed, first, at a general level, leveraging an online survey conducted by WBA which asks the general public to select which industries they believe could make the most material impact on SDG 5 [36]. Second, it assesses industry impact at a more detailed level, particularly as relates to the number of women a given industry employs as well as the number of female consumers it reaches. Unfortunately, an extensive literature review did not identify a single (and cost-neutral) cross-industry research source on these data points; rather, this assessment leveraged a mix of varied, relevant, sometimes industry-specific sources. This research captures, for example, how women are over-represented in the Services (vs. Industry and Agriculture) sector [37], more represented as CEOs and Board members in the Consumer discretionary/staples and Financials industries [38] and more represented in staff roles in the Media/Entertainment/Information, Professional Services, Financial Services and Healthcare industries [39]. Women also represent a larger consumer base in the Healthcare, Professional Services and Media/Entertainment/Information industries [39].

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In addition to assessing industries' potential impact on GE/E, their current over-/under-**performance on GE/E** was also assessed, both generally as well as specific to certain themes. Here, two sources were used: (1) Equileap [16] and (2) industry-specific research that was conducted across a variety of sources noted below. The former leveraged Equileap's assessment and ranking of companies' progress towards gender equality to compile average industry-level gender equality scores. This data revealed that, in general, all industries were underperforming regarding gender equality, with an average score of 27% (out of a possible 100%). Better performers included: Basic Materials; select Consumer industries including Cosmetics, Lodging and Airlines; Food/Beverage/Agriculture; and Media & Telecomm. Lower performers included: Energy; select Communications industries including Internet and Entertainment; Industrial (except Engineering, Aerospace and Packaging); and Technology (except Computers). Some sectors showed very mixed scores, including of particular note: Financial sector, with much higher scores among Banks and Insurance and much lower scores with investment-related sub-industries; Technology, with much lower scores in software and semiconductors.

Finally, in addition to these more quantitative measures, a qualitative assessment was conducted to ensure that the set of priority industries that was selected offers appropriate coverage of all key elements of the full value chain as well as all prioritized GE/E

themes that have been identified. Having appropriate coverage of the full value chain means both that the full value chain is addressed for each industry as well as that, for a specific industry, a specific element of the value chain is explored more deeply because it is particularly relevant to that industry and/or because there is a robust research base to build on and learn from. For example, going deeper into supply chain focused factors is particularly critical in the Apparel and Food/Beverage industries. A similar approach was taken to ensure appropriate coverage of the prioritized GE/E themes. For example, access to digital resources is an important theme to address in the Telecommunications industry, where women are less likely to own a mobile phone and access/use the internet [31]

Based on these criteria, following are the suggested industries to prioritize, including a detailed rationale for each. This list leverages industry naming conventions from the Global Industry Classification Standard [40].



Apparel - Also referred to as the garment sector, the apparel industry has inspired much attention and energy around gender equality and empowerment. Initiatives like the Clean Clothes Campaign or the Fair Wear Foundation address, among others, the need to consider women's rights and needs within apparel companies. This is both

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because about three quarters of garment workers worldwide are female [41], and because the female consumer base is so robust in the apparel industry. Research [42] [43] [44] reveals that the more common GE/E-related themes faced in the apparel industry include: labour participation, ranging from occupational segregation to limited supervisory roles; gender wage gap, particularly as linked to the pervasive informal economy, discriminatory contract practices and long working hours; gender-based violence; workplace safety, including poor labour conditions and poor hygiene; and legal protection, specifically the lack of sufficient trade union representation. Facing many issues related to gender equality and empowerment in their factories, the apparel industry offers an opportunity to dive deeper into the supply chain in particular.



Food & Beverage – Globally, women play a significant role in the Agriculture sector, which is directly linked to the Food & Beverage industry. Agriculture is the most important source of employment for women in low-income and lower-middle income countries [45]. Women represent an average of 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, ranging from 20% or less in Latin America to 50% or more in parts of Asia and Africa [46] [47]. Key GE/E themes to address in the context of the Food & Beverage industry include: access to (land) resources, where women farmers control less land and have more limited access to inputs, seeds,

credits and extension services [46] [47]; unpaid care, as women often carry the burden of domestic care including, for example, household food preparation or daily biomass (for fuel) collection [46]; gender-based violence, particularly as sexual harassment by male supervisors is common and often goes unreported [42]; access to SRHR where in banana plantations in Latin America and West Africa, for example, women have no ante- or post-natal maternity rights or face pregnancy/nursing risks at work [42]; and promotion, where only 1 in 5 food industry executives are women [48]. With gender equality and empowerment remaining important on farms and other food/beverage production sites in particular, the Food & Beverage industry also offers an opportunity to dive deeper into the supply chain.



Information Technology – The Information Technology industry is also no stranger to gender equality and empowerment discourse. It is indeed still a man's world, with fewer women employees and only 5% of leadership positions being held by women [20]. Furthermore, the industry's potential to change business models and address unconscious biases could significantly impact gender equality and empowerment on a broader scale. Key GE/E themes to explore more deeply include: discrimination, including an embedded gender bias in the funding of start-ups [20], a hostile macho culture [49], and a self-selection bias where girls don't consider a tech

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career [50]; labour participation and promotion, as noted in the overwhelmingly male workforce [51] [52] [49]; gender wage gap, where for example women in top US STEM jobs are paid an average of 89 cents for every dollar a man makes [53]; and professional development/training, where girls are less likely to study STEM subjects at school and this continues through university and into their careers [54] [50], where digital skills/literacy are one of the key factors keeping women and girls from using digital technologies, and despite the fact that digital fluency is helping to level the playing field between men and women at work [55]. The Information Technology industry presents a great opportunity to more thoroughly explore workplace-related GE/E themes.



Financials – Broadly, the finance sector appears to be a leader in gender equality and empowerment in terms of high female employment; however, women are also less likely to progress beyond junior levels [56]. Further, while a 7% gender gap in terms of account ownership exists globally, this can be nearly 30% in select countries and translates to about 980 million unbanked women around the world [30]. Key GE/E themes in the Financials industry include: discrimination, particularly as relates to the design of, and access to, gender-sensitive financial products and services; access to (financial) resources, where about 90% of 173 countries researched had at least one law impeding women’s economic op-

portunities including opening a bank account, accessing property titles or having sufficient identification [57] [35] and access to (digital financial) resources like mobile money, as linked to digital access challenges addressed in the Telecommunications industry details below. While there are important themes to be addressed in the workplace, there is also a lucrative opportunity to deep-dive into the marketplace when developing a new GE/E benchmark for the Financials industry, in order to help to address the discrimination that female consumers face.

Communication Services – This refers to the new version of GICS effective from September 2018, which broadens the Telecommunication Services sector and includes companies that facilitate communication as well as offer related content through various media [40]. When developing a new GE/E benchmark for this sector, a greater focus will be placed on the community element of the value chain, addressing the broader and often discriminatory social norms and networks women face regularly.



Telecommunication Services – In the Telecommunication Services sector, which focuses on access to communication (especially mobile/digital), there is significant potential to impact gender equality and empowerment, given the 41% global labour force participation rate of women in this sector [58] and the pervasive gender gap

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in mobile phone ownership and internet access [31]. Key GE/E themes to address here include: access to (digital) resources, where women are less likely to own a mobile phone and access/use the internet [31]; and professional development/training, as women face lower digital literacy.



Media & Entertainment - The Media & Entertainment industry, which focuses on the content and information that is communicated to the public, can also greatly impact gender equality and empowerment.

It can both provide a platform that amplifies women's voices as well as challenges discriminatory social norms [59] and stereotypes [60]. Here, only 1 in 4 people heard, read about, or seen in newspapers, television and radio news is female, which also translates to digital news delivery platforms [60], paired with only 4% of stories clearly challenging gender stereotypes [60]. Key GE/E themes in this industry include: discrimination, where women are portrayed across different types of media in traditional, sexualised, or auxiliary roles far more than men [61] and are the focus of only 10% of news stories [59]; gender-based violence, as reflected in the recent #MeToo and #TimesUp movements as well as in the online abuse women disproportionately face [60]; promotion, where women occupy only 27% of top management jobs [60] [62]; and social networks, an area of more limited research but with enormous potential impact.

It is worth noting that two other industries were also strongly considered as priorities for a new GE/E benchmark. First, in the Healthcare industry, women are particularly disadvantaged in *positions in global health [63] [64]. That said, this sector was excluded at this stage given the challenges in navigating such a heavily regulated landscape. Second, the "Industry" sector (which comprises both the Energy and Materials industries) are lagging furthest behind in terms of women employees and leaders [20], also putting women at risk for being marginalized and even bypassed when it comes to green employment expansion [65]. This sector's heterogeneity is also so pronounced that making meaningful comparisons is much more challenging (e.g., comparing a chemicals company to an airline is challenging). Given this complex structure as well as the much more gender unequal landscape, this sector was also excluded at this stage. However, with time and experience in other sectors, these should remain high priorities for a later phase.

Priority companies

Within each prioritized industry, a list of target companies should be developed. The WBA intends to target companies within specific industries which will be selected based on their impact and potential contribution to GE/E. These 'keystone actors' are those seen as crucial to shifting norms and driving sustainable change within a given industry. They are often large companies

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at the forefront of developments and investments within their sector, providing a model for other firms to follow. Most of these keystone actors work with thousands of business partners throughout their value chains.

With this in mind, the most logical starting point is to prioritize companies based on their size, as this helps maximize their overall impact to gender equality and empowerment globally. Other gender equality indices (e.g., Bloomberg; Equileap) typically do this by focusing on total revenues/sales or market capitalization. It is therefore likely that listed companies and companies based in developed countries will be prioritized. Stakeholder dialogue throughout the consultation phase for this benchmark will help to identify other priority criteria for company inclusion. Additionally, this list can be informed by existing benchmarks developed by WBA, Index Initiative and its partners, so that existing relationships can be leveraged wherever possible. Ultimately, the methodology used for this GE/E benchmark can be used by other companies beyond those originally targeted, including SMEs and companies based in emerging markets. To help inform this process, a list of relevant sources to leverage per industry is included in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – Potential sources to determine priority companies for GE/E benchmark

Industry	Possible source(s)
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equileap database [16]
Apparel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fashion Transparency Index 2018 (Fashion Revolution) [66]• Combined Top 200 Fashion Companies (Fashion United) [67]
Food & Beverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• World's top 100 food and beverage processors based on annual sales (Food Engineering annual report) [68]• Access to Nutrition Index [69]
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top 100 Global Tech Leaders (Reuter's) [70]
Financials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List of largest financial services companies by revenue (Forbes Global 2000) [71]
Communication Services (Telecomm + Media)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• World's Biggest Media Companies (Forbes Global 2000) [71]• GSMA/GSMA Intelligence [72]

Conclusion

It is clear that there is a need for a new benchmark focused on gender equality and empowerment. This is both because GE/E is a persistent issue as well as because there is room for companies to evolve in how they help drive GE/E globally. A new GE/E benchmark should focus on measuring companies' progress against SDG 5 specifically, but should also address the overlaps with other relevant SDGs. While there is a lot of work that exists today to build on, this also introduces the challenges of developing a new GE/E benchmark that simplifies a complex space, captures a comprehensive set of factors while also remains manageable in length, and addresses persistent gaps in the current landscape.

When approaching a new GE/E benchmark, it is best to utilize an approach that is integrated, holistic and balanced. An integrated approach ensures the full breadth of the value chain is considered, beyond the workplace and deeper into the marketplace, supply chain, and community, all of which are less deeply understood and therefore likely to pose more challenges to understand better. A holistic approach considers the many dimensions affecting gender equality and empowerment; it builds on the many approaches that exist today and establishes an approach that collates them all simply. Finally, a balanced approach recognizes the varied ways in which companies can take action and drive change based on that which is both within and beyond their direct control. This approach should also leverage the learnings from existing work



in the GE/E space, working through data challenges rather than circumventing them, considering a phased approach and respecting industry-specific differences.

Finally, given how broad and complex gender equality and empowerment are, a new GE/E benchmark should prioritize where possible. It should aim to focus on key themes that maximize impact and/or leverage on-going momentum. It should also focus on industries (Apparel, Food/Beverage, Information Technology, Financials, Telecommunication Services, and Media/Entertainment) that stand to drive the most impact and that allow for good coverage of the various topics identified, to build a solid foundation for benchmarking GE/E.

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Annex 1 - Current company-/gender-focused GE/E initiatives

	Name	Description
GE/E guidance	Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) (UN Women + UNGC)	A partnership initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact (UNGC) that provides a set of considerations to help the private sector focus on key elements integral to promoting gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. [24]
	Gender Equality: It's your business (Oxfam)	This 'briefing for business' concentrates on gender equality and the responsibilities of business to uphold and promote it. It presents a compelling rationale for why companies should pay attention to gender equality as well as how they can better address it in their business, including recommended actions and case studies. It covers 4 key areas: 1, Business as a large, direct employer; 2, Business as a key player in value chains; 3, Business as a purchaser of food commodities; 4, Business as a provider of products and services in developing countries. [21]
	Embedding Gender in Sustainability Reporting (GRI + IFC)	An educational resource that considers current gender equality measurements (starting with GRI). This report highlights some of the existing and emerging business drivers for improving practices and reporting on material gender issues. It includes: trends; suggestions for implementation/practice; current GRI /other measurements related to gender; and examples of gender equality policies & legislation, as well as practices & reporting. [19]
GE/E assessment	WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool (UN Women + UNGC)	<p>The Women's Empowerment Principles Gender Gap Analysis Tool (WEPs Tool) [73] is a business-driven tool designed to help companies from around the world assess gender equality performance across the workplace, marketplace, and community. Topics covered by this (private self) assessment include: commitment to a gender equality strategy, equal pay, recruitment, supporting parents and caregivers, women's health, inclusive sourcing, and advocacy for gender equality in communities of operation. Companies can use the tool to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the company's strategic approach to gender equality • Identify gaps and opportunities for continuous improvement • Learn about best practices on gender equality globally • Set concrete goals and targets, and measure progress over time • Benchmark against peers and industry standards • Leverage global gender equality resources to guide future actions • Contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals by investing in women and girls and Making Global Goals, Local Business

	<p>Gender Strategy Toolkit (Australian government & Workplace Equality Agency/WGEA)</p>	<p>A key starting point for many Australian organisations is through annual reporting to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 requires all non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees to report to the Agency in a standardised format on gender outcomes, including in areas such as workforce composition, pay and flexible work. In return, the WGEA provides feedback to each of these employers in the form of confidential, customised benchmark reports on their gender performance.</p> <p>The Gender Strategy Toolkit has been developed to help organisations leverage the value of the benchmark data in a strategic, structured and sustainable way. The toolkit also provides guidance for those organisations aiming to adopt best practice or become WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality¹ (EOCGE).</p> <p>There are 12 key focus areas that make up essential components of a comprehensive gender equality strategy: stakeholder engagement; leadership accountability; strategy and business case; measurement and reporting; policies and processes; supply chain; gender composition; gender pay equity; flexibility; talent pipeline; leader and manager capability; gender inclusive culture. [74]</p>
	<p>EDGE certification (EDGE Certified Foundation)</p>	<p>EDGE Certification [75] is a global assessment methodology and business certification standard for gender equality. The methodology uses a business, rather than theoretical approach that incorporates benchmarking, metrics and accountability into the process. It assesses policies, practices and numbers across five different areas of analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal pay for equivalent work • Recruitment and promotion • Leadership development, training and mentoring • Flexible working conditions • Organizational culture

	<p>The Helix - Gender Led Due Diligence (League of Allies)</p>	<p>League of Allies is a professional services firm that "in-powers equity" by providing a comprehensive set of offerings addressing key activities that materially impact Enterprise Value and returns. These include, among others, a Gender lens due diligence [76] for both Alternative Investor transactions and internal dynamics for GPs and Asset Managers for platform and LP review. Their diagnostic/ due diligence work is rooted in a process called The Helix, named for the structure that mirrors the gender balance and interactions required for optimal organic growth. The Helix typically combines a proprietary algorithm the League has developed, interviews with key executives, surveys of segmented employees, and an up-front presentation to executives to set context for what is to come. Collecting data from Leadership to the Human Capital Pipeline to mitigating Controversy Risks, Helixes can be configured for specific applications that range from the needs of Alternative Investors, to reviews of GPs/Asset Managers for platforms and LPs, to operating companies of all sizes.</p> <p>Helixes deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An overall numerical value that can be used for internal and external benchmarking, due diligence, and can make the firm eligible for a League Seal of Approval • Values and commentary on all relevant functions for internal tracking and due diligence/ post-transaction implementation work • Gender-specific/diverse community perceptions and insights regarding key policies, processes, and protocols • Insights into executives--individually and as a team--with topical observations • A roadmap of suggested improvements prioritized by industry research and personal experiences
	<p>Blendoor Bias Index (BBI)</p>	<p>BBI is a proprietary, real-time bias analytics technology that helps identify where bias is happening within specific orgs, teams, and even individual hiring managers. By integrating with a company's existing human resource management and applicant tracking systems, its algorithms do all the heavy lifting to produce a BBI. Think of it like an 'unconscious bias credit score' that allows a company to track, manage, and compare performance to that of similar companies. [77]</p>

	<p>Gender Equality Capacity Assessment Tool (UN Women)</p>	<p>Focused on driving gender equality within the UN, this tool is a way to assess the understanding, knowledge and skills that a given organization and their staff have on gender equality and women’s empowerment, and on the organization’s gender architecture and gender policy. Capacity assessment refers to the process through which the information is gathered and analysed and also to the results of this analysis. The information gathered with this tool can be complemented with more qualitative assessment methods such as interviews, focus group discussions and systematic observation.</p> <p>The tool includes an easy-to-implement questionnaire and guidelines. It is divided into the following sections: the understanding, knowledge and skills that staff have on gender equality, women’s empowerment, gender policy and architecture of their organization, and guidelines on how to consolidate the outcomes of the questionnaire. [78]</p>
<p>GE/E index</p>	<p>Behind the Brands (Oxfam)</p>	<p>Behind the Brands is part of Oxfam’s GROW campaign to help create a world where everyone has enough to eat. It aims to provide people who buy and enjoy food products with the information they need to hold the Big 10 to account for what happens in their supply chains. In putting together a scorecard based entirely on publicly available information on company policies, they posed the question “what are they doing to clean up their supply chains”? [79]</p>
	<p>Get Led Better</p>	<p>LedBetter is a research group that runs a database and application showcasing the number of women in leadership at the world’s top consumer brands and companies. Its mission is to empower and educate consumers, policymakers, leaders, journalists and others about the companies they support and cover, and improve the public’s understanding of which companies promote gender equality in leadership — and which do not. It ranks favorite brands by equality in leadership (board + general). [14]</p>
	<p>In Her Sight</p>	<p>InHerSight believes that the best way to improve the workplace is by measuring it, so they built a safe and completely anonymous platform to measure company support for women. InHerSight focuses on 14 key metrics (both formal policies and “soft” policies) that matter most to working women, including flexible work hours, maternity and adoptive leave, family growth support (e.g. child care and lactation rooms), salary satisfaction, mentoring, management opportunities for women, and female representation in leadership positions. [13]</p>

	Blendscore (Blendoor)	Blendscore is a dynamic scoring system that rates corporate equity, diversity and inclusion for top tech companies (in the US) based on 4 focus areas: (1) leadership; (2) retention; (3) recruiting; and (4) impact. It pulls from publicly available, open source data. Though the term diversity can be interpreted in several ways, Blendoor has focused specifically on diversity of gender, race, ability, and sexual orientation. [80]
	Equileap Gender Equality Global Report & Ranking (Equileap)	Equileap is the leading data provider on gender equality in the corporate sector. It has developed a robust methodology for assessing and ranking company progress towards gender equality [16]. The methodology is inspired by the UN's Women's Empowerment Principles and includes 19 criteria in 4 categories: A, Gender Balance in Leadership and Workforce; B, Equal Compensation and Work/Life Balance; C, Policies Promoting Gender Equality; D, Commitment to Women's Empowerment. Equileap's products & services are tailored for companies, governments and investors.
	Gender Equality Index (GEI) (Bloomberg Financial Services)	In May 2016, the Bloomberg Financial Services Gender-Equality Index (BFGEI) was launched, a first-of-its-kind reference index measuring the gender equality performance of global financial services companies. The index recognizes member firms' commitment to disclosure and best-in-class policies and practices, providing investors with valuable data on internal company statistics, employee policies, gender-conscious product offerings and external community engagement. The Bloomberg GEI recognizes firms from communications, consumer staples, energy, financials, materials and technology, among other sectors, and brings a new level of clarity and awareness to social and governance information in the gender equality space. Membership includes more than 100 firms headquartered in 24 countries and regions. The index considers internal company statistics, employee policies, external community support and engagement, and gender-conscious product offerings. [15]

Gender lens investing	PAX Global Women’s Leadership Index (PAX)	The Pax Global Women’s Leadership Index* is a customized index of the highest-rated companies in the world in advancing women, as rated by Pax World Gender Analytics, and that meet key environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards, as rated by MSCI ESG Research. Companies are rated by Pax World Gender Analytics based on multiple criteria of gender leadership, including: Representation by women on the board of directors; Representation of women in executive management; Woman CFOs; Woman CEOs; Whether they are signatories to the Women’s Empowerment Principles, a joint initiative of the UN Global Compact and UN Women. The 400 plus companies that emerge from this research and selection process are, in their view, the best companies in the world when it comes to advancing gender diversity and empowering women in the workplace. [81]
	Gender Lens Investing (Veris Wealth Partners)	To meet the specific needs of individuals, families and private foundations, Veris Wealth Partners invests in 5 key themes, one of which is “Gender Lens investing” which considers companies’ performance related to gender equality. [82]
	Gender lens investing supported by Equileap data	To date, over USD 630 million is invested in financial products powered by Equileap data [16]. Equileap have designed six indices with two leading index providers: Solactive and Morningstar. It covers US, North America, Europe, Global and Top 100 indices [83].

Annexes

Annex 2 - Current leading GE/E initiatives taking a holistic approach

Below is a compilation of key visual summaries of leading holistic approaches to GE/E that were used to inform the key themes for consideration in a new GE/E benchmark.

Women's Empowerment Principles (UN Women + UNGC) [73]



WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES
EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS

- 1 Leadership: Promote Gender Equality**
 - Actively engage and support women in leadership roles
 - Set and track targets for gender equality and inclusion
 - Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of corporate policies, programs and implementation plans that promote gender equality
 - Ensure that all policies are gender sensitive - identifying and addressing gender inequality and non-compliance - and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion
- 2 Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Non-Discrimination**
 - Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value and ensure equal pay for equal work
 - Eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination and promote an free from gender-based discrimination
 - Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and selection processes and practices
 - Recognize and eliminate gender inequality in the workplace
 - Ensure equal participation of women - both in general and in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas
 - Other health, safety, and security opportunities to women in all business areas
 - Support access to credit and financial services, including micro, small and medium enterprises and women-owned businesses
- 3 Health, Safety and Freedom from Violence**
 - Take the most robust measures to ensure the health, safety and freedom from violence of all women and men
 - Establish a zero-tolerance policy on all forms of violence at work, including verbal and/or physical harassment and sexual harassment
 - Provide a safe and secure workplace for women and men
 - Ensure that all policies are gender sensitive - identifying and addressing gender inequality and non-compliance - and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion
- 4 Education and Training**
 - Invest in employee education and professional development for women and men
 - Expand business education and training opportunities for women and men
 - Ensure equal access to all company-supported education and training programs, including digital and technology training
 - Invest in health, safety, and security opportunities for women and men
 - Ensure that all policies are gender sensitive - identifying and addressing gender inequality and non-compliance - and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion
- 5 Enterprise Development, Supply Chain and Marketing Practices**
 - Support gender-sensitive initiatives to small and medium-sized enterprises
 - Ask business partners and suppliers to respect the company's commitment to advancing equality and inclusion
 - Request the right of action for formal and informal reporting and remediation
 - Ensure the company's business case for women's empowerment and the positive impact of inclusion for men as well as women
- 6 Community Leadership and Engagement**
 - Lead by example to increase transparency and accountability for gender equality and women's empowerment
 - Engage external stakeholders, including civil society, academia, and other stakeholders
 - Engage external stakeholders, including civil society, academia, and other stakeholders
- 7 Transparency, Measuring and Reporting**
 - Establish benchmarks that specify inclusion of women in all areas
 - Measure and report on progress with clarity and integrity, using data disaggregated by sex
 - Incorporate gender matters into ongoing reporting programs

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES EQUALITY MEANS BUSINESS 1

The Power of Parity (McKinsey) [26]

Exhibit E3

MGI uses a holistic framework of 15 outcome-based indicators to assess global gender equality

		Gender equality indicators	
Gender equality in work	Gender equality in work: Women and men are equal players in the labor markets	Labor-force participation rate	Female-to-male ratio of labor-force participation rate
		Professional and technical jobs	Female-to-male ratio of representation in professional and technical jobs
		Perceived wage gap for similar work	Female-to-male ratio of wages for similar work
		Leadership positions	Female-to-male ratio of representation in leadership positions
		Unpaid care work	Male-to-female ratio of time spent on unpaid care work
		Unmet need for family planning	Percent of married or in-union women aged 15-49 who want to stop or delay childbearing but are not using contraception
		Maternal mortality	Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births
Gender equality in society	Essential services and enablers of economic opportunity: Women and men have equal opportunity to build human capital and progress	Education level	Female-to-male composite ratio of adult literacy rate, secondary education enrollment rate, and tertiary education enrollment rate ¹
		Financial inclusion	Female-to-male composite ratio of the rate of account holders at a financial institution, rate of borrowing, and mobile banking rates ¹
		Digital inclusion	Female-to-male composite ratio of the rate of Internet and mobile users ²
		Legal protection and political voice	Composite index of the extent of protection to women by different legal provisions (e.g., right to inherit, access to jobs) ³
	Women and men have equal right to self-determination	Political representation	Female-to-male composite ratio of representation in parliamentary and ministerial positions ²
		Sex ratio at birth	Male-to-female ratio of births
	Physical security and autonomy: Women have a right to be safe from bodily harm	Child marriage	Percent of girls and young women aged 15-19 who are married
		Violence against women	Percent of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at some time in their lives

SDG 5 (United Nations) [84]

SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Targets:

- 5.1: End all forms of **discrimination** against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2.: Eliminate all forms of **violence** against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3: Eliminate all **harmful practices**, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- 5.4: Recognize and value **unpaid care and domestic work** through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective **participation and equal opportunities for leadership** at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.6: Ensure universal access to **sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights** as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a: Undertake reforms to give women **equal rights to economic resources**, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- 5.B: Enhance the use of enabling **technology**, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.C. Adopt and strengthen sound **policies and enforceable legislation** for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

Building Blocks for an Integrated Approach (ICRW) [85]

Eight Building Blocks for an Integrated Approach*



* These building blocks are based in a human-rights framework developed from interviews with various rights experts and review of relevant literature including: "A Rights-based Approach to Development" (AWID, 1999), "Introduction to a Rights-based Approach" (ReproCare Campaign), "Outing Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework" (UN OHCHR, 2011).

Table 1. Commonly used dimensions of empowerment and potential operationalization in the household, community, and broader arenas.

Dimension	Household	Community	Broader Arenas
Economic	Women's control over income; relative contribution to family support; access to and control of family resources	Women's access to employment; ownership of assets and land; access to credit; involvement and/or representation in local trade associations; access to markets	Women's representation in high paying jobs; women CEO's; representation of women's economic interests in macro-economic policies, state and federal budgets
Socio-Cultural	Women's freedom of movement; lack of discrimination against daughters; commitment to educating daughters	Women's visibility in and access to social space; access to markets; transportation; participation in extra-familial groups and social networks; shift in patriarchal norms (such as son preference); symbolic representation of the female in myths and ritual	Women's literacy and access to a broad range of educational options; Positive media images of women, their roles and contributions
Familial/ Interpersonal	Participation in domestic decision-making; control over sexual relations; ability to make childbearing decisions; use contraception; access abortion; control over spouse selection and marriage timing; freedom from domestic violence	Shifts in marriage and kinship systems indicating greater value and autonomy for women (e.g. later marriages, self-selection of spouses, reduction in the practice of dowry; acceptability of divorce); local campaigns against domestic violence	Regional/national trends in timing of marriage, options for divorce; political, legal, religious support for (or lack of) active opposition to such shifts; systems providing easy access to contraception, safe abortion, reproductive health services
Legal	Knowledge of legal rights; domestic support for exercising rights	Community mobilization for rights; campaigns for rights awareness; effective local enforcement of legal rights	Laws supporting women's rights; access to resources and options; Advocacy for rights and legislation; use of judicial systems to redress rights violations
Political	Knowledge of political system and means of access to it; domestic support for political engagement; exercising the right to vote	Women's involvement or mobilization in the local political system; support for specific candidates or legislation; representation in local bodies of government	Women's representation in regional and national bodies of government; strength as a voting bloc; representation of women's interests in local bodies and interest groups
Psychological	Self-esteem; self-efficacy; psychological well-being	Collective awareness of injustice; potential of mobilization	Women's sense of inclusion and entitlement; systemic acceptance of women's entitlement and inclusion

How-to guide for measuring Women’s Empowerment (Oxfam) [86]

10 Priorities for Public Action (UN Women) [2]

Figure 1: Women’s Empowerment Index framework



The advantage of this approach is the flexibility it permits in adapting the framework in relation to different definitions of gender and empowerment, making it easily understood by different development practitioners. Appendix 1 shows how this approach can easily be combined, for example, with Rowlands’ power cube (Rowlands, 1997) and the Gender at Work framework.²

APPENDIX 3 LIST OF EMPOWERMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Table A3.1: Empowerment characteristics identified in Oxfam’s 2014/15 and 2015/16 Effectiveness Reviews

LEVEL	Dimension	CHARACTERISTIC
PERSONAL	Power from within	Self-esteem
		Self-confidence
		Self-efficacy
		Individual knowledge (e.g., agricultural practices or milk production)
		Individual knowledge (justice system)
		Knowledge on where to go and what to do in case of violence
		Opinions (attitude and beliefs) on women’s economic role
		Opinions (attitude and beliefs) on gender rights
		(Non-)acceptability of gender-based violence (GBV)
	Power to	Opinions (attitude and beliefs) on power within the household
		Opinions (attitude and beliefs) on property rights
		Opinions (attitude and beliefs) on freedom of movement
		Recognition of care
		Individual capability (apply knowledge)
		Personal autonomy
		Personal autonomy around violence against women (VAW)
		Access to savings
		Access to credit



Global Gender Gap Index (WEF) [87]

Table 1: Structure of the Global Gender Gap Index

Subindex	Variable	Source
Economic Participation and Opportunity	Ratio: female labour force participation over male value	International Labour Organization, <i>IL OSTAT</i> database, 2016 or latest available data
	Wage equality between women and men for similar work (survey data, normalized on a 0-to-1 scale)	World Economic Forum, <i>Executive Opinion Survey (EOS)</i> , 2016-17
	Ratio: female estimated earned income over male value	World Economic Forum calculations based on the United Nations Development Programme methodology (refer to <i>Human Development Report 2007/2008</i>)
	Ratio: female legislators, senior officials and managers over male value	International Labour Organization, <i>IL OSTAT</i> database, 2016 or latest available data
Educational Attainment	Ratio: female professional and technical workers over male value	International Labour Organization, <i>IL OSTAT</i> database, 2016 or latest available data
	Ratio: female literacy rate over male value	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics, <i>Education indicators</i> database, 2016 or latest available data
	Ratio: female net primary enrolment rate over male value	UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <i>Education indicators</i> database, 2016 or latest available data
	Ratio: female net secondary enrolment rate over male value	UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <i>Education indicators</i> database, 2016 or latest available data
Health and Survival	Ratio: female gross tertiary enrolment ratio over male value	UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <i>Education indicators</i> database, 2016 or latest available data
	Sex ratio at birth (converted to female-over-male ratio)	United Nations Population Division, <i>World Population Prospects</i> , 2016 or latest available data
Political Empowerment	Ratio: female healthy life expectancy over male value	World Health Organization, <i>Global Health Observatory</i> database, 2015 or latest available data
	Ratio: females with seats in parliament over male value	Inter-Parliamentary Union, <i>Women in Politics: 2017</i> , reflecting elections/appointments up to 1 June 2017
	Ratio: females at ministerial level over male value	Inter-Parliamentary Union, <i>Women in Politics: 2017</i> , reflecting appointments up to 1 January 2017
	Ratio: number of years with a female head of state (last 50 years) over male value	World Economic Forum calculations, reflecting situation as of 30 June 2017.

A Path to Empowerment

(Harvard Kennedy School + US CoC Foundation) [22]

FIGURE 2: MAIN OBSTACLES TO WOMEN IN ADVANCING THEIR CAREERS

Individual	Cultural	Workplace	Structure
Educational choices	Perception of female commitment	Face time and flexibility	Lack of shared parental leave
Sector choices	Double standards	Staff rather than line role promotions	Lack of childcare assistance
Pipeline availability	Spousal role and support	Mentoring for women rather than sponsorship	Differentiated taxation
Risk aversion disparity	Work-life balance priorities	Promotion rates	Organizations were designed for men and manufacturing

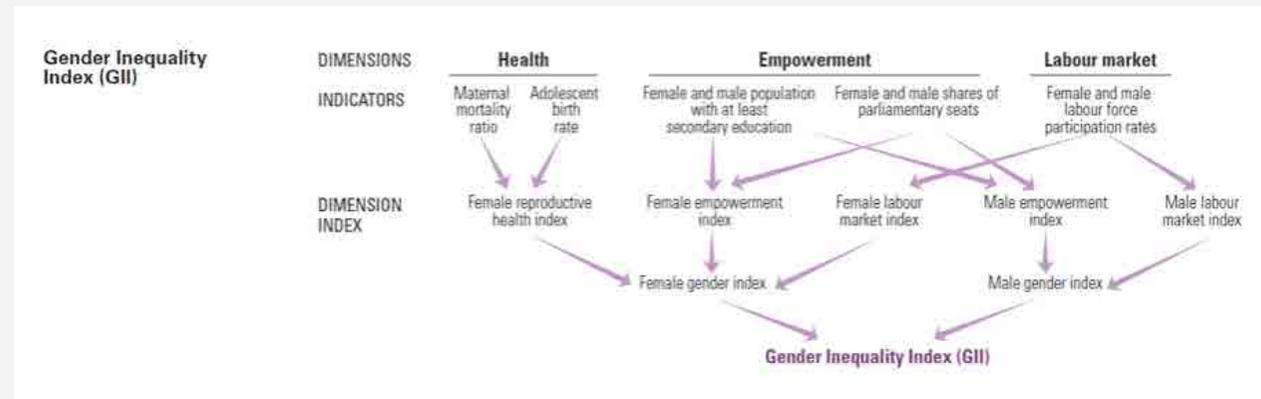
Source: *The CS Gender 3000: Women in Senior Management*, Credit Suisse, September 2014

Gender Strategy Toolkit (WGEA) [74]

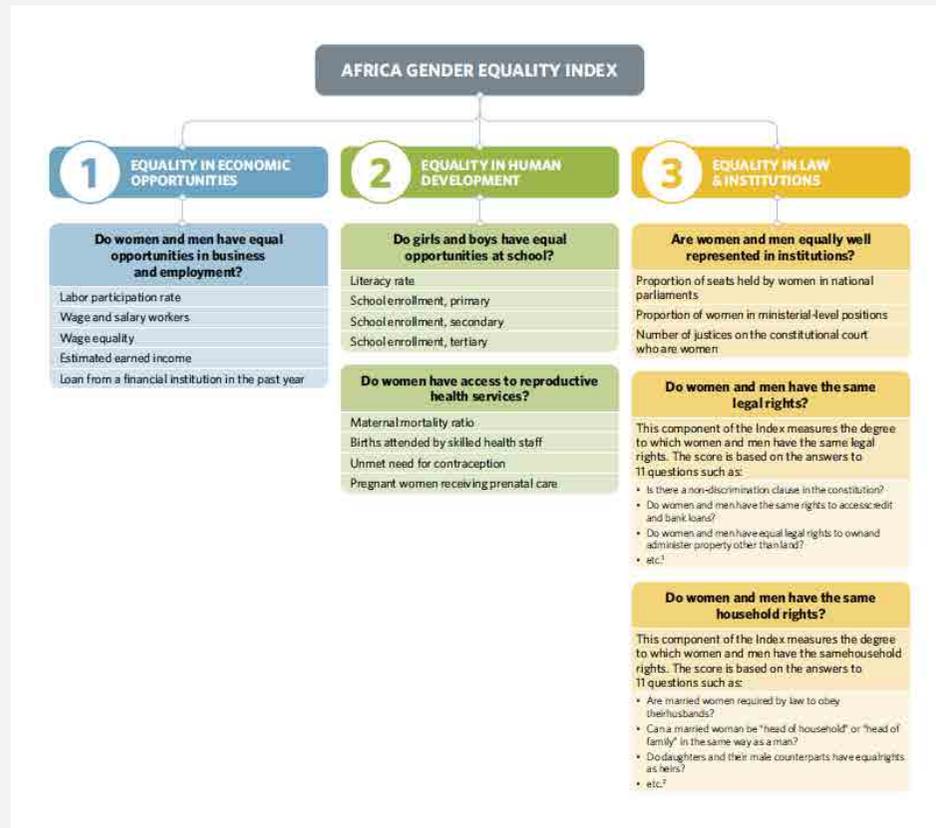
Figure 3: Key focus areas



Gender Inequality Index (UNDP) [88]



African Gender Equality Index
(African Development Bank Group) [89]



Strategic Framework 2018-21: Pathway to gender equality and women’s economic empowerment (UNCDF) [90]

