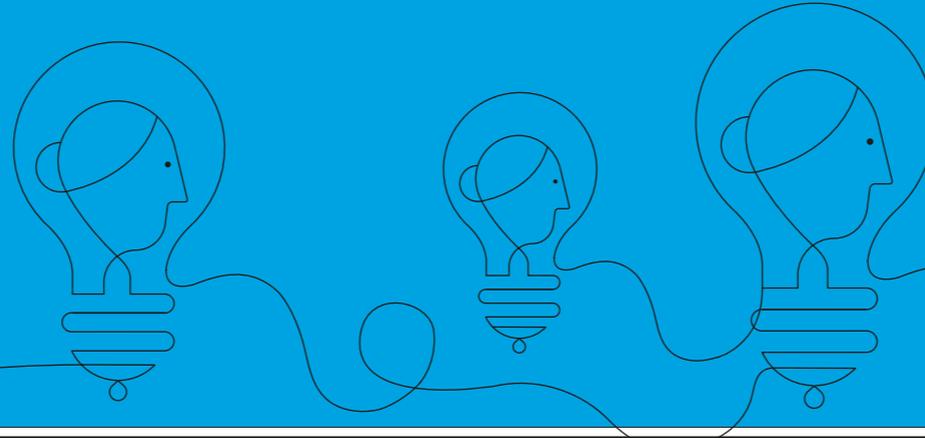


# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Established by UN Women and the  
UN Global Compact Office



## CALL TO ACTION

# Gender Equality in the Renewable Energy Industry



**Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.**



**Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.**



**Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.**



**Promote education, training and professional development for women.**



**Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.**



**Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.**



**Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.**



Principle 1



Principle 2



Principle 3



Principle 4



Principle 5



Principle 6



Principle 7

## CALL TO ACTION

### GENDER EQUALITY IN THE RENEWABLE ENERGY INDUSTRY

The energy industry has long been known for its male-dominated culture and unequal opportunities for women's career advancement. While progress has been made, more can be done to diversify the industry and ensure women's equal participation in sustainable development.

Globally, women account for 32 per cent of the renewable energy workforce, with 45 per cent working in administrative positions and 28 per cent working in STEM-related roles.<sup>1</sup> Research from Canada, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United States shows that women typically hold less than 30 per cent of jobs in the renewable energy sector.<sup>2</sup>

Key barriers to women's inclusion in the renewable energy sector are stereotypical gender roles alongside cultural and social norms that determine the jobs women and men can pursue. These norms and stereotypes translate into girls and young women choosing other sectors, and the sector offering limited job opportunities for those that try to enter. Women often face lack of access to career information and relevant networks, and biased hiring practices in the industry.<sup>3</sup>

Women also experience a glass ceiling within the industry resulting in limited opportunities for upward mobility, as well as a lack of inclusive corporate cultures that do not provide flexible work arrangements, promote equal uptake of care responsibilities, or provide equal training and mentorship opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

Meaningful inclusion of women in the energy section leads to increased benefits for companies, namely better access to talent and critical skills, enhanced innovation and competitiveness, and improved retention.<sup>5</sup> A critical step towards sustainable clean energy and global climate action initiatives is the advancement of progress on gender equality in the energy industry to ensure that women's perspectives and expertise in this field are valued.

The inclusion of women in renewable energy weaves together Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment, Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy, and 13 on climate action. Companies in the energy sector can use the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) for guidance to ensure that workplaces, marketplaces and communities are gender-equal.

This Action Note is interactive. Click the small Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) icons featured on each page to be taken directly to a particular principle.

# 1



## Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.

### Principle 1

## ESTABLISH HIGH-LEVEL CORPORATE LEADERSHIP FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Principle 1 encourages companies and organizations to focus on establishing company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and women's economic empowerment, and to measure progress through clear performance indicators. It asks them to ensure managers at all levels are accountable for the results of these goals and targets through their performance reviews, and encourages the engagement and consultation of internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans.

Principle 1 focuses on ensuring that existing policies are gender-sensitive and identifying factors that impact people of all genders differently. Corporate culture can advance equality and inclusion including reviewing the requirements for membership of the board and other governance bodies and committees to remove any discrimination or bias against women.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender stereotypes are prevalent in the energy sector and there is still widespread belief that men are more suited to work in the industry.<sup>6</sup> The creation of inclusive corporate cultures requires the commitment of senior executives to encourage and model respectful and welcoming environments that champion gender diversity and challenge gender biases.<sup>7</sup>

An executive diversity and inclusion policy that outlines strategies for inclusive work environments and follows a 'define, plan, act, check' methodology can be promoted by the executive team.<sup>8</sup>

## THE DEFINE, PLAN, ACT, CHECK MODEL

For effective integration of gender dimensions into energy sector policy cycles, the Define, Plan, Act, Check model can be applied.<sup>9</sup>

- **Define:** Gather data on the experiences of individuals of all genders in the workplace and conduct an analysis of existing programmes and policies. This analysis will help shape future planning and address existing gaps.
- **Plan:** Identify how budget allocations contribute to promoting gender equality within the company and assess accountability and transparency on how company funds are being spent.
- **Act:** Implement the policy or programme while ensuring objectives and targets are clearly laid out, that all those involved are aware of objectives and plans, and that all workers are included in the process.
- **Check:** A policy cycle or programme should be monitored regularly throughout its existence, and be evaluated upon completion.

All employees have a responsibility to implement the directive. Managers in particular need to be empowered to monitor daily interactions amongst employees to encourage the active and equal participation of women in the workplace.<sup>10</sup> Gender equality objectives can also be embedded in manager's annual performance plans.<sup>11</sup>

Diversity and inclusion in the workplace can enhance innovation and develop stronger customer service, higher employee engagement and higher team collaboration.<sup>12</sup> Employee training can highlight these benefits, thus providing a clear business case for diversity and inclusion and presenting a clear opportunity, and need, for companies to build it into their business strategy.

# 2



## Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.

### Principle 2

## TREAT ALL WOMEN AND MEN FAIRLY AT WORK – RESPECT AND SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Principle 2 calls on companies and organizations to make a commitment to equal remuneration, including benefits and bonuses, for work of equal value; and to ensure, at a minimum, a living wage for employees of all genders while fostering an inclusive workplace culture that eliminates gender-based discrimination from all policies and practices.

Employers are encouraged to implement gender-sensitive recruitment, retention and promotion practices to proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial, executive and board director positions. Offering gender-responsive policies and measures help attract and retain the talent, including flexible working arrangements, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status, and support to child and dependent care through services, resources and information.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

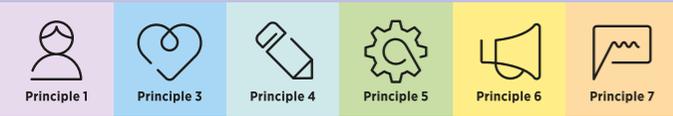
#### Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion

Ensuring that gender diversity and inclusion is embedded in the foundation of the company, including their policies, practices, and business strategy is crucial for ensuring a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Special efforts are required to recruit and retain women for science, technology and engineering roles and to promote them for senior management roles.

#### Recruitment

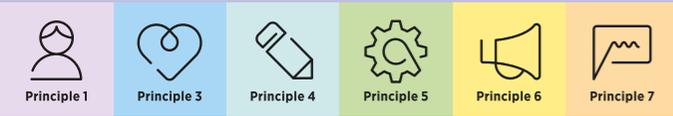
- Ensure hiring practices are free from subjectivity, use gender-neutral language in job descriptions, and remove stereotypically male-related skills and word descriptors in job requirements.<sup>13</sup>
- Broaden and diversify hiring matrices from traditional engineering criteria to include candidates from STEM-associated fields like physics, chemistry, environmental sciences, psychology (consumer behaviour), law, communication, economics and policy.<sup>14</sup>
- Develop relationships with industry networking groups to identify qualified women candidates.
- Develop diversity and inclusion goals and minimum standards or quotas for hiring women in entry-level positions.



# 2



## Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.



### Retention

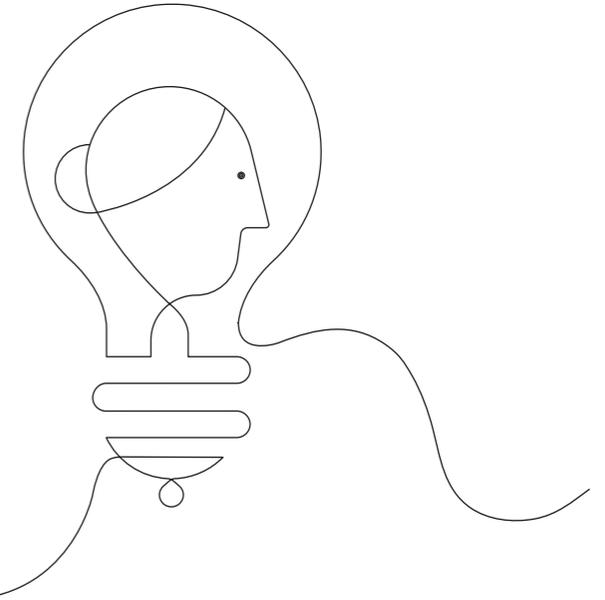
Women cite more frequently than men that their reasons for leaving careers in STEM are due to family-related issues.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, women who return to STEM jobs after a career break can face promotional barriers linked to missing out on changes in skills and knowledge that have developed while they have been out of the workforce.<sup>16</sup> To encourage the equal uptake of care responsibilities and ensure that workers with care responsibilities are supported and retained, companies can provide paid parental leave and flexible work arrangements.<sup>17</sup> Companies may also provide ‘returnships’ which are programmes that enable those returning to the workforce to update their knowledge and skills.<sup>18</sup>

### Promotion

- Increase the visibility of available career progression opportunities both internally and externally to the organization.<sup>19</sup>
- Establish objective evaluation and promotion systems.<sup>20</sup>
- Develop diversity and inclusion goals and minimum standards or quotas to promote women along the corporate pipeline and ensure they make up a significant percentage of board members and management teams.
- Implement professional development and mentorship opportunities within company programming to ensure women’s upward mobility and board readiness.
- Create an interactive community and network for women within the company (such as through an employee resource group).
- Offer visible opportunity for men to step up as allies.

### Equal Pay

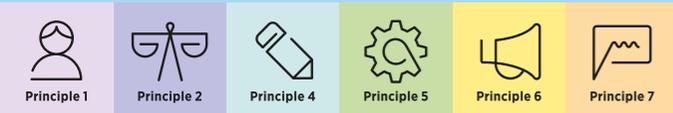
Research indicates that women continue to earn less across all occupational categories within the renewable energy sector.<sup>21</sup> Conducting and establishing regular pay equity reviews and defining objective and quantifiable compensation standards based on skills, qualifications and accomplishments are effective measures to ensure that workers of all genders who perform the same work are paid equally.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, developing anonymized salary data grouped by a range of factors such as qualifications, skills and years of experience contribute to increase transparency and set applicant and worker expectations.<sup>23</sup> Abandoning the practice of requesting job applicants’ previous pay history also prevents perpetuation of historic underpayment.<sup>24</sup>



# 3



## Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.



### Principle 3

## ENSURE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF ALL WOMEN AND MEN WORKERS

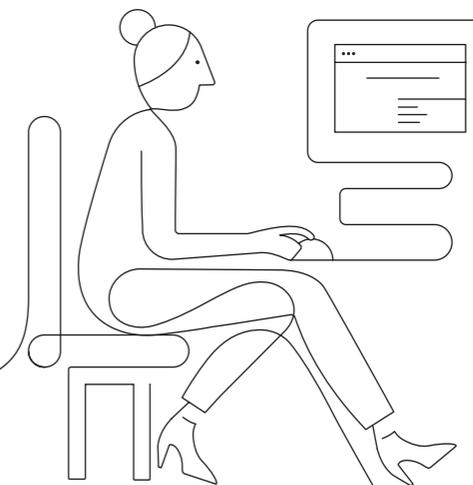
Principle 3 encourages employers to establish policies that eliminate all forms of violence and harassment at work and offer support services for survivors of violence and harassment. It calls for the training of security staff and managers to recognize signs of violence against women, human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation.

Companies and organizations are encouraged to ensure all workers, including part-time, short-term and contract workers, have equal access to health insurance. Workers' right to time off for medical care and counselling for themselves and their dependents should be respected. Employers should provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to reproductive health, and address safety and security issues, including traveling to/from work and business trips.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

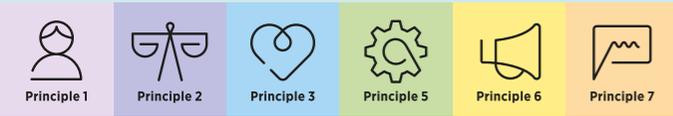
The health and safety of women workers in the energy sector can be protected by companies and organizations in the following ways:

- Develop separate and sufficient facilities and accommodations for women working in field roles to address their safety and security needs including providing adequate lighting, uniforms and on-site-health facilities.
- Consult both all employees on the design of their workspace to address their specific needs.
- Provide tools, equipment, safety devices and required clothing fitted and sized appropriately for women.
- Design and implement health and safety policies that adequately address the needs of parents, including health and safety workplace examinations for expecting mothers and parents.
- Provide accessible and confidential channels to report cases of sexual harassment.



# 4

## Promote education, training and professional development for women.



### Principle 4

## PROMOTE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN

Principle 4 calls on companies and organizations to invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for women’s advancement at all levels and across all business areas. This includes ensuring women can enter perceived non-traditional job fields and revenue generating roles, and have access to all company-supported education, training programmes, and networking opportunities. Providing dedicated training and professional development that empowers women ensures they have the tools and skills necessary for advancement in the workplace.

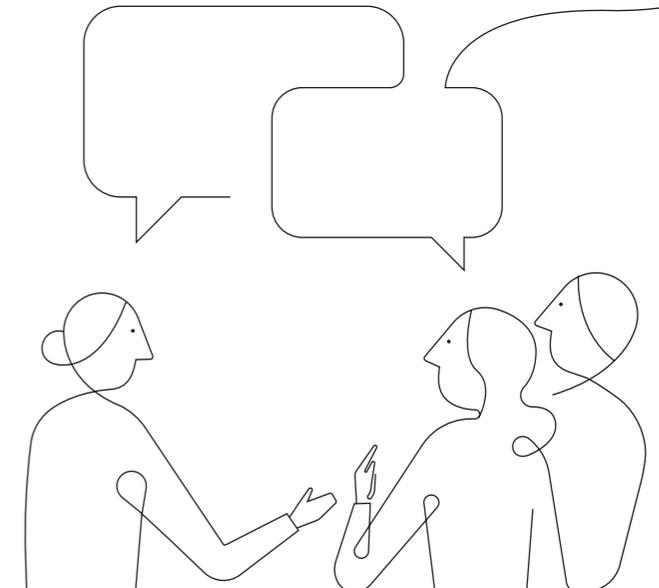
The Principle further emphasizes the importance of holding sexual harassment and unconscious bias training and raising awareness on corporate gender equality policies and action plans.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Companies can organize company-wide training on gender bias<sup>25</sup> and workshops to engage men as allies and champions for gender equality.<sup>26</sup> Trainings can help raise awareness and present tangible strategies to advance gender equality, tackling both conscious and unconscious bias, and stereotyping in the workplace.

Motivating girls and young women to choose STEM education and women to pursue their careers in the energy sector needs to be a key strategy. Effective actions include:

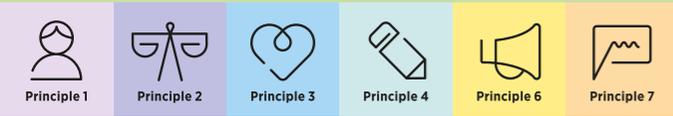
- Sponsor girls and young women’s internship opportunities.
- Ensure women and girls’ equal access to professional industry-specific networks.
- Offer mentorship, skill building and training opportunities and for women throughout their careers.<sup>27</sup>



# 5



## Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.



### Principle 5

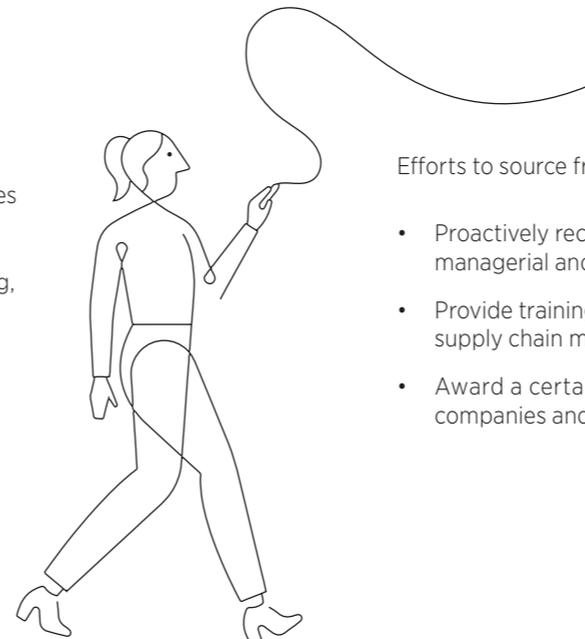
## IMPLEMENT ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT, SUPPLY CHAIN AND MARKETING PRACTICES THAT EMPOWER WOMEN

Principle 5 encourages companies and organizations to require business partners, contractors and suppliers to adopt the WEPs. It also advocates for signatories to establish supplier diversity programmes that actively seek to expand business relationships with women-owned and women-led enterprises and support their access, while also supporting gender-sensitive solutions to advance women's access to financial products and services. It is important for companies and organizations to remain accountable for gender equality in supply chains by ensuring that products, services and facilities are not used for human trafficking and/or labour or sexual exploitation.

Companies can further reduce harmful gender-based stereotypes in all media and advertising by depicting all people as empowered individuals with progressive, intelligent and multi-dimensional personalities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Companies can collect sex-disaggregated data with strong attention to intersectionality that highlights trends or changes in women's participation in the global supply chain. Such data can include, for instance, domestic and international transportation, import/export facilitation, materials handling, testing and logistics to help assess gaps and identify opportunities.



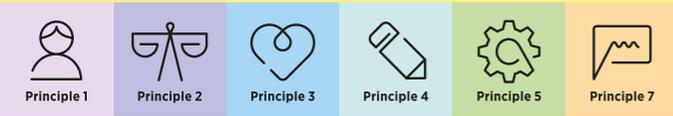
Efforts to source from women-led businesses can include:

- Proactively recruit women for procurement roles, including by appointing them to managerial and executive procurement positions.<sup>28</sup>
- Provide training to strengthen the female talent pool and women's leadership in supply chain management and procurement.<sup>29</sup>
- Award a certain share of contracts to 'preferred firms' – gender-responsive companies and women-owned businesses – and communicate openly about it.<sup>30</sup>

# 6



## Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.



### Principle 6

## PROMOTE EQUALITY THROUGH COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND ADVOCACY

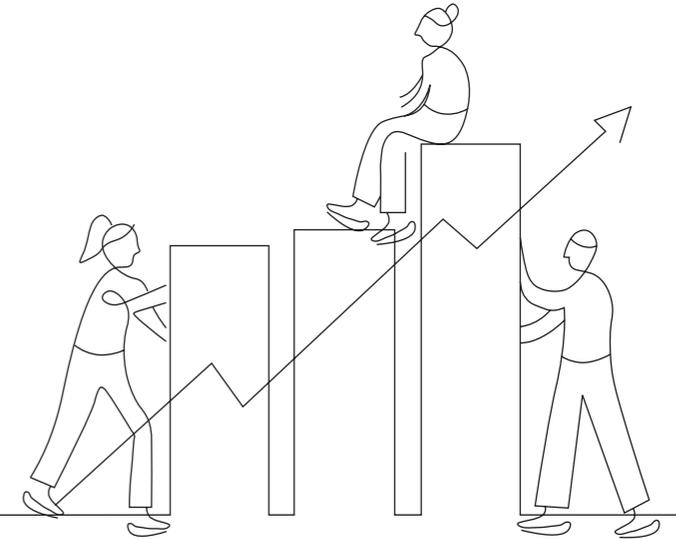
Principle 6 calls on companies and organizations to lead by example by showcasing concrete actions to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment. It asks them to leverage influence, alone or in partnership, to advance gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders.

Working with community stakeholders and officials to target discrimination and exploitation is a key way to open opportunities for women and girls, promote and recognize women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities, ensure their active participation in community consultation, and use philanthropy and grants programmes to support community initiatives.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

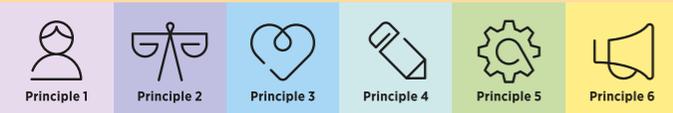
It is important that girls and young women are exposed to STEM subjects and insights into possible career opportunities in the energy sector from a very young age, starting in primary school, and complemented by extracurricular programmes and school clubs (like Girls Who Code) developed in partnership with private sector leaders.<sup>31</sup> Creating marketing campaigns encouraging girls to enter STEM (like the #LikeAGirl campaign) boosts the visibility of these sectors among young girls.<sup>32</sup>

Companies can further lead and invest in community development programmes that make valuable, effective and responsible contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment. They are encouraged to actively engage and consult with women and girls on their views, needs and aspirations, and to ensure that their voices are heard.



# 7

## Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.



### Principle 7

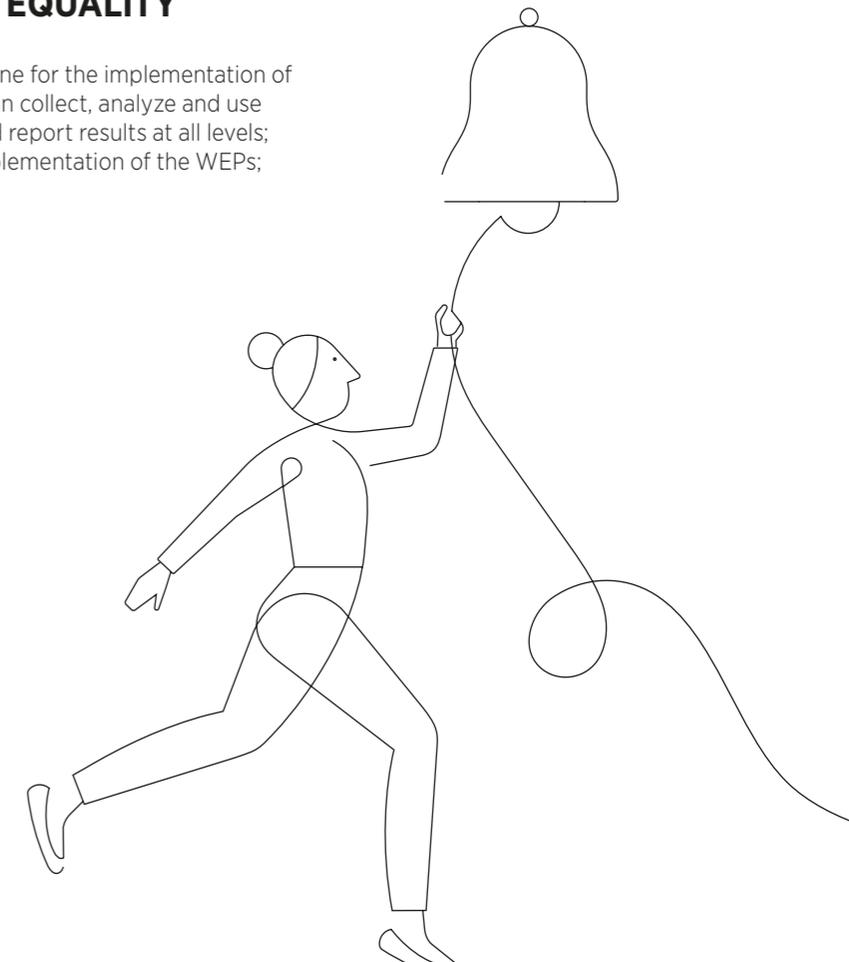
## MEASURE AND PUBLICLY REPORT ON PROGRESS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

Principle 7 encourages companies and organizations to use the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool to establish a baseline for the implementation of the principles, as well as develop incentives and accountability mechanisms to accelerate the process. Companies can collect, analyze and use gender statistics, benchmarks, and sex-disaggregated data with strong attention to intersectionality to measure and report results at all levels; report annually on progress in the implementation of the WEPs; share lessons learned and good practices in the implementation of the WEPs; and publish them on the WEPs website.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Incorporating reporting frameworks into the internal Environmental Social and Governance (ESG) and diversity policies that many in the energy industry use to assess their progress towards ESG standards and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) goals is a crucial step to ensuring diversity and inclusion in the energy sector. The reporting frameworks can also monitor progress towards Sustainable Development Goals.

Currently, a lack of gender-disaggregated data is masking women's underrepresentation in the renewable energy sector. Companies are encouraged to collect sex-disaggregated data with a strong focus on intersectionality to better understand where the gaps are in women's participation. Alongside employee experience surveys, such data can help monitor a range of indicators such as promotion rates, women's participation at various organizational levels, and harassment complaints<sup>33</sup> Goals and targets for increasing the number of women from diverse backgrounds, identities and abilities along the corporate pipeline and on boards of directors or among executive leadership can be made public to employees, customers and vendors and local communities.

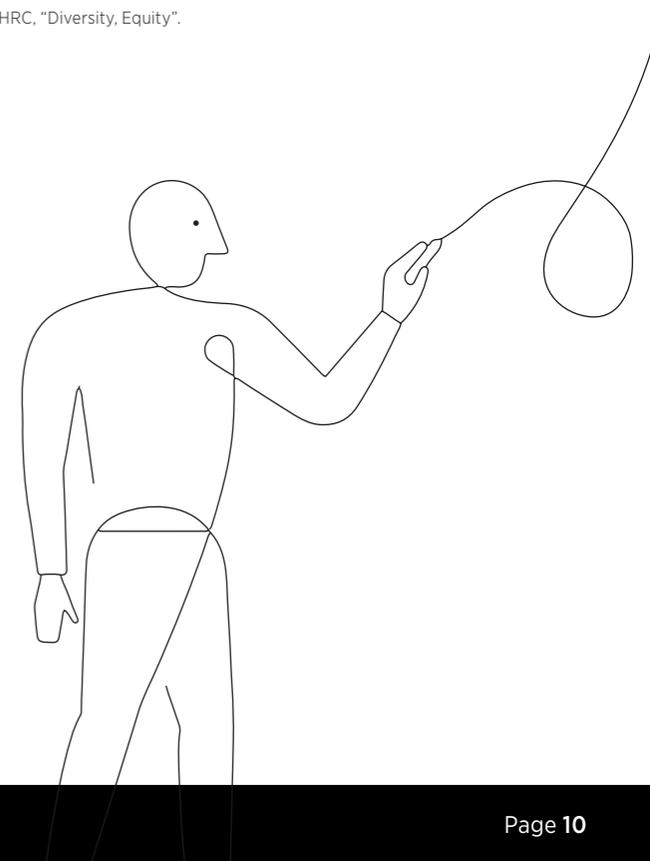


## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Equality Means Business

Sign the Women's Empowerment Principles and say **#WeCommit** to advancing gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. Make today your signature moment at [weps.org](https://weps.org)



## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

- Principle 1  Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Principle 2  Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
- Principle 3  Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- Principle 4  Promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Principle 5  Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Principle 6  Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Principle 7  Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

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