

Updated: July 2025



GENDER AUDIT POLICY



Office 023, Ground Floor, Khudadad Heights, Margalla Road, E-11/4, Islamabad

Email: himatullah@himatconsulting.com - Phone: 051-6131366

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
HCPL'S GENDER VISION	3
PURPOSE.....	3
SCOPE.....	3
DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS	3
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	5
GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENT	6
ALIGNMENT WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)	6
TRAINING, AND CAPACITY BUILDING & AWARENESS PROGRAMS	6
COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY.....	7
INCLUSIVE HIRING AND WORK ENVIRONMENT	8
GENDER-SENSITIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION	9
GENDER PLAN & ACCOUNTABILITY	10
GENDER AUDIT POLICY STATEMENT	11
GENDER AUDIT FRAMEWORK	12
GENDER AUDIT PROCESS	12
ACTION PLAN AND ACCOUNTABILITY	14
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	14
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION.....	14

INTRODUCTION

HIMAT CONSULTING PRIVATE LIMITED (HCPL) recognizes the fundamental importance of promoting gender equality within its organizational structure and operations. This Gender Audit Policy is established to systematically assess, enhance, and institutionalize gender equality initiatives at HCPL.

At **HCPL**, We are committed to promoting gender equality and creating an inclusive work environment. To ensure that our organization upholds these principles and continually improves upon them, we have implemented a comprehensive Gender Audit Policy which aims to evaluate and analyze our workplace practices and policies through a gender lens to identify areas of improvement, eliminate gender biases, and enhance gender equality within our organization

HCPL'S GENDER VISION

The gender audit policy clearly articulates **HCPL's** vision for gender equality, emphasizing the organization's commitment to promoting gender equity and empowering all individuals regardless of gender. We vow that the gender principles we follow shall set an example of our organization as the most amicable and ideally work inclusive place for male and female.

PURPOSE

The main purpose of this policy is ensuring compliance with gender equality standards, and consequently making our work place environment ideally inclusive. This Gender Audit Policy outlines the commitment of **HCPL** towards promoting gender equality and inclusivity within the organization. The policy aims to establish a systematic framework for conducting gender audits, identifying gender-related gaps, and implementing effective strategies to create a gender-equitable workplace.

SCOPE

The policy Applies to all employees, consultants, employees, and stakeholders associated with HCPL, irrespective of gender identity. It covers all functions, levels, and locations within the organization, recognizing that a commitment to gender equality is integral to every aspect of operations.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Gender Norms: Gender Norms are the socially constructed expectations, roles, and behaviors attributed to individuals based on their perceived gender, which shape societal attitudes and interactions.

Gender Equality: Gender Equality refers to equal treatment, opportunities, and rights for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity or expression. It includes the elimination of gender-based discrimination, biases, and disparities.

Gender Audit: Gender Audit is a comprehensive assessment of an organization's policies, practices, and outcomes to identify gender-related gaps, barriers, and areas for improvement. It involves data collection, analysis, and reporting with a focus on promoting gender equality.

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender Mainstreaming is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs, in all areas and at all levels.

Gender Equality: Gender Equality is the concept that all individuals, regardless of gender, have the right to equal opportunities, rights, and responsibilities in all spheres of life, including economic, social, and political.

Gender Equity: Gender Equity is the fair treatment of women and men, ensuring that individuals have access to the same opportunities and resources, regardless of gender, and addressing any existing disparities.

Gender Analysis: Gender Analysis is the systematic examination of how gender roles, norms, and relations affect access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making processes, with the aim of promoting gender equality.

Gender Sensitization: Gender Sensitization is the process of raising awareness and understanding about gender issues, stereotypes, and inequalities, with the goal of developing positive attitudes and behaviors towards gender equality.

Gender Discrimination: Gender Discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of gender that results in unequal treatment or opportunities, often leading to disadvantage or marginalization of individuals or groups.

Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Gender-Based Violence is any harmful act directed at an individual or group based on their gender, including physical, sexual, or psychological violence, often rooted in unequal power dynamics and gender norms.

Gender-responsive Programming: Gender-responsive Programming is the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and interventions that take into account the different needs, priorities, and experiences of women, men, girls, and boys, with the aim of promoting gender equality and empowerment.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is the recognition that individuals experience multiple forms of discrimination and oppression based on intersecting factors such as gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability, which must be considered together to address systemic inequalities.

Gender Empowerment: Gender Empowerment is the process of increasing the ability of women and girls to exercise control over their lives, make choices, and participate fully in social, economic, and political spheres, often through education, economic opportunities, and leadership development.

Gender Budgeting: Gender Budgeting is the allocation of financial resources in a way that addresses gender disparities and promotes gender equality, typically by analyzing government or organizational budgets to ensure that they prioritize the needs and interests of women and men equitably.

Gender-Responsive Governance: Gender-Responsive Governance is the adoption of policies, practices, and decision-making processes that actively involve women and men in governance structures, promote gender equality, and address the needs and priorities of all members of society.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

HCPL's Gender Audit policy is guided by the following principles;

Equality: To ensure fairness and equal treatment of all genders throughout the audit process.

Inclusivity: To Include diverse perspectives and experiences of women, men, and gender minorities in the audit framework.

Non-Discrimination: To avoid bias or discrimination based on gender identity, expression, or other characteristics.

Transparency: To conduct the audit process openly, with clear communication of objectives, methods, and findings.

Accountability: To hold auditors responsible for upholding gender equality standards and addressing any shortcomings identified.

Empowerment: To empower individuals to participate actively in the audit process and advocate for gender equality.

Sensitivity: To approach gender issues with sensitivity and respect for cultural differences and individual experiences.

Data Confidentiality: To protect the confidentiality of gender-related data and information collected during the audit.

Continuous Improvement: To commit to ongoing learning and improvement based on feedback and evaluation of audit outcomes.

Social Responsibility: To recognize the broader social impact of gender audit findings and strive to effect positive change beyond the organization.

GENDER EQUALITY COMMITMENT

At **HCPL**, we are committed to promoting gender equality and an inclusive work environment. To ensure that our organization upholds these principles and continually improves upon them, we have implemented a comprehensive Gender Audit Policy. This policy aims to evaluate and analyze our workplace practices, policies, and procedures through a gender lens to identify areas of improvement, eliminate gender biases, and enhance gender equality within our organization.

HCPL reaffirms its commitment to gender equality, outlining specific measures and actions aimed at achieving this goal within the organization.

- Committed to creating a workplace where every individual, regardless of gender, feels valued, supported, and empowered.
- Acknowledges that gender equality is not just a goal but an ongoing commitment to developing a diverse and inclusive workplace.

ALIGNMENT WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

HCPL's Gender Audit Policy stands as one of its main commitment of aligning strategic policies with the Sustainable Development Goals. The gender audit policy aligns with **SDG 5 - Gender Equality**.

HCPL's Contribution: HCPL's policies, programs, and initiatives are strategically aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on gender equality, thereby contributing to global efforts to advance gender equity and empowerment.

Global Efforts: In the broader context of global efforts to promote gender equality, HCPL's alignment with SDG 5 reflects its commitment to being an active participant in collective endeavors toward gender equity. By embracing the principles and targets set forth by the United Nations under SDG 5, HCPL demonstrates its dedication to contributing to global initiatives aimed at developing gender parity and women's empowerment on a worldwide scale.

TRAINING, AND CAPACITY BUILDING & AWARENESS PROGRAMS

HCPL invests in training and capacity-building initiatives to enhance gender awareness and promote gender-sensitive practices among its workforce.

Training programs: HCPL will provide training programs on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion for all employees. The training will raise awareness about unconscious biases, gender-sensitive language, respectful behavior, and the benefits of a gender-equitable workplace.

Gender Sensitization: Specialized training sessions will be conducted to sensitize managers and supervisors on gender-related issues, leadership, and develop an inclusive work environment. This

training will equip them with the necessary skills to address gender biases and support gender equality initiatives.

Improved Service Delivery: Training programs will equip HCPL staff with the tools and techniques to integrate gender considerations into their work effectively. Whether it's designing development projects or delivering services to communities, employees who undergo gender-awareness training are better equipped to tailor their interventions to meet the specific needs of women, men, and marginalized groups, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of HCPL's programs.

Empowerment of Staff: Training and capacity-building initiatives will empower HCPL staff to become champions of gender equality within their respective roles. By investing in their professional development and promoting gender-sensitive practices, HCPL not only strengthens its workforce but also cultivates a cadre of leaders who can drive positive change both within the organization and in the communities they serve.

Compliance with Best Practices: Through training and capacity-building, HCPL ensures that its workforce is abreast of the latest research, trends, and best practices in gender mainstreaming. By staying informed and up-to-date, HCPL can align its policies and programs with international standards and benchmarks, demonstrating its commitment to excellence and continuous improvement in gender equality initiatives.

Mitigation of Gender-Based Challenges: Training initiatives will help HCPL staff recognize and address gender-based challenges that may arise in the course of their work. Whether it's tackling unconscious bias in decision-making processes or addressing gender disparities in access to resources, training programs provide employees with the knowledge and strategies to navigate such issues effectively, thereby reducing the risk of gender-related conflicts or inequalities within HCPL's operations.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Internal communication: HCPL will establish effective communication channels to regularly update employees on gender equality initiatives, progress, and outcomes. Open communication will be encouraged to create a safe space for discussing gender related matters and gathering feedback.

External communication: HCPL will communicate its commitment to gender equality and the outcomes of gender audits to external stakeholders. Transparent reporting will demonstrate the organization's dedication to promoting gender equality within its sphere of influence.

INCLUSIVE HIRING AND WORK ENVIRONMENT

HCPL adopts inclusive hiring and promotion practices to ensure equal opportunities for individuals of all genders and backgrounds.

Promoting Diversity: By adopting inclusive hiring and promotion practices, HCPL ensures that its workforce reflects the diversity of the communities it serves. By actively seeking candidates from diverse backgrounds, including women, men, minorities, and marginalized groups, HCPL can tap into a wider talent pool and benefit from a range of perspectives, skills, and experiences.

Ensuring Equal Opportunities: Inclusive hiring and promotion practices will help HCPL create a level playing field where all individuals, regardless of their gender or background, have an equal opportunity to compete for employment and advancement within the organization. By implementing transparent and merit-based selection processes, HCPL ensures that decisions regarding recruitment, hiring, and promotion are based on qualifications, skills, and performance, rather than biases or discriminatory practices. This commitment to fairness and equality strengthens HCPL's reputation as an employer of choice and promotes trust and confidence among its staff and stakeholders.

Building a Culture of Inclusion: Inclusive hiring and promotion practices contribute to the cultivation of a culture of inclusion and belonging within HCPL. By valuing diversity and promoting equity at all levels of the organization, HCPL creates an environment where employees feel respected, supported, and empowered to contribute their best work. This inclusive culture develops collaboration, cooperation, and mutual respect among team members, enhancing employee morale, satisfaction, and retention. It also enables HCPL to attract and retain top talent, positioning the organization as a leader in the field of gender equality and social inclusion. The policy promotes a positive work environment and culture that values diversity, develops inclusivity, and prohibits discrimination and harassment based on gender.

Creating a Supportive Environment: HCPL recognizes that a positive work environment is essential for the well-being, productivity, and satisfaction of its employees. By promoting a culture of respect, collaboration, and inclusivity, HCPL ensures that all staff members feel valued, supported, and empowered to contribute their best work. This supportive environment develops trust, camaraderie, and teamwork among colleagues, enhancing morale and job satisfaction within the organization.

Preventing Discrimination and Harassment: HCPL's policy prohibits discrimination and harassment based on gender or any other characteristic protected by law. By establishing clear guidelines and procedures for addressing instances of discrimination or harassment, HCPL ensures that its work environment remains safe, respectful, and free from any form of mistreatment or bias. This commitment to upholding the rights and dignity of all employees strengthens HCPL's reputation as a

responsible employer and develop a culture of accountability and transparency within the organization.

GENDER-SENSITIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

HCPL implements gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress and assess the effectiveness of gender equality interventions. Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation are integral components of HCPL's approach to promoting gender equality and empowerment.

Tracking Progress and Performance: HCPL recognizes the importance of monitoring and evaluating its gender equality interventions to track progress, assess performance, and measure outcomes. By implementing gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, HCPL collects data and evidence on the implementation of its gender equality initiatives, including their reach, coverage, and impact. This helps HCPL to monitor progress towards its gender equality goals, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions about resource allocation and programmatic adjustments.

Ensuring Accountability and Learning: Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation contribute to accountability and learning within HCPL by providing stakeholders with transparent and reliable information about the results and impact of its gender equality interventions. By systematically collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data, HCPL ensures that its interventions are responsive to the needs and priorities of women, men, girls, and boys, and that they contribute to positive changes in gender relations and outcomes.

Enhancing Gender Mainstreaming: Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation help mainstream gender considerations into all aspects of HCPL's work, including program design, implementation, and evaluation. By integrating gender analysis into monitoring and evaluation frameworks, HCPL ensures that its interventions are gender-responsive, meaning they address the specific needs, interests, and priorities of women, men, girls, and boys, and that they contribute to advancing gender equality and empowerment.

Promoting Evidence-based Decision-making: Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation provide HCPL with evidence-based insights and lessons learned that inform decision-making, resource allocation, and strategic planning. By analyzing gender-disaggregated data and performance indicators, HCPL identifies what works, what doesn't, and why, enabling it to make informed decisions about scaling up successful interventions, replicating best practices, and discontinuing or modifying ineffective ones.

GENDER PLAN & ACCOUNTABILITY

HCPL develops a gender plan with specific goals, targets, and actions, accompanied by mechanisms for accountability to ensure adherence to the plan. The "Gender Plan & Accountability" aspect of HCPL's policy is crucial for translating gender equality commitments into actionable strategies and ensuring accountability for their implementation. Here's how this part relates to the policy and contributes to HCPL's objectives.

Strategic Planning for Gender Equality: HCPL recognizes the importance of strategic planning for gender equality and empowerment. By developing a gender plan with specific goals, targets, and actions, HCPL sets clear objectives and priorities for advancing gender equality across its operations. The gender plan outlines the key areas of focus, such as promoting women's leadership, addressing gender-based violence, mainstreaming gender in programming, and enhancing gender-responsive policies and practices. By aligning its gender plan with broader organizational goals and objectives, HCPL ensures that gender equality becomes an integral part of its overall strategy and vision.

Setting Measurable Targets and Indicators: The gender plan includes measurable targets and indicators to track progress and assess the impact of gender equality interventions. These targets and indicators are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound), allowing HCPL to monitor performance, measure outcomes, and evaluate the effectiveness of its gender equality efforts. By setting clear benchmarks for success, HCPL ensures accountability and transparency in its gender equality programming, enabling stakeholders to assess progress and hold the organization accountable for results.

Allocating Resources and Responsibilities: The gender plan identifies resource requirements and allocates responsibilities for implementing gender equality initiatives. It specifies the financial, human, and technical resources needed to achieve the plan's objectives and outlines the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, including staff, managers, partners, and external consultants. By allocating resources effectively and mobilizing support from all levels of the organization, HCPL ensures that gender equality remains a priority and receives the necessary support for successful implementation.

Establishing Mechanisms for Accountability: HCPL's gender plan includes mechanisms for accountability to ensure adherence to the plan and monitor progress towards its goals. These mechanisms may include regular monitoring and reporting, performance reviews, audits, and evaluations. By establishing clear lines of accountability and oversight, HCPL ensures that gender equality remains a top priority and that progress is monitored and evaluated effectively.

GENDER AUDIT POLICY STATEMENT

1. This policy aims to maintain a conducive and inclusive environment within HCPL. It emphasizes the importance of providing equal opportunities for both males and females in employment. By developing such an environment, the organization strives to create a level playing field where individuals can thrive based on their skills and abilities, rather than their gender.
2. HCPL has appointed a designated gender focal person whose role is to address any emerging gender-related issues or concerns raised by employees during their work. The Focal Person serves as a point of contact for employees who may encounter or observe gender-related challenges within the organization.
3. Employees who feel targeted, biased, or discriminated against based on gender have the option to directly approach the gender focal person for resolution. This highlights the organization's commitment to addressing and resolving gender-based grievances in a timely and effective manner.
4. In cases where gender-related issues arise, employees are encouraged to approach the gender focal person for assistance. These issues may pertain to various aspects of employment such as role responsibilities, behavior, job descriptions, performance management, appraisals, or rewards.
5. At a senior level, the Gender Grievance Committee, comprising at least three members with a minimum of fifty percent female representation, including the Gender Focal Person, is established to handle complaints and recommend corrective actions.
6. The CEO serves as the chairperson, ensuring senior leadership involvement in resolving such matters.
7. The Gender Grievance Committee is tasked with timely investigating any gender-related complaints brought before it and provide recommendations within seven days of receiving the complaint, demonstrating the organization's commitment to swift resolution of gender-based issues.
8. If an aggrieved employee remains dissatisfied with the decision of the Gender Grievance Committee, they have the option to request a review by the gender focal person. This additional step ensures that employees have avenues for recourse if they feel their grievances have not been adequately addressed.
9. HCPL firmly believes in merit-based evaluations and performance assessments, regardless of gender. This policy underscores the organization's commitment to evaluating employees solely based on their merits and performance, rather than their gender.

GENDER AUDIT FRAMEWORK

Establishment

HCPL will establish a comprehensive Gender Audit Framework to provide a clear direction for conducting gender audits. This framework will serve as a roadmap, outlining the essential components such as areas of evaluation, data collection methods, analysis procedures, reporting formats, and follow-up actions.

KEY AREAS

The Gender Audit Framework developed by HCPL will encompass the following critical areas for evaluation:

- a. Recruitment and Hiring: This area will assess the fairness, inclusivity, and gender balance in the recruitment and hiring processes, aiming to identify and address any potential biases or barriers.
- b. Training and Development: The area will focus on evaluating the availability and accessibility of training and development opportunities for employees, with an emphasis on promoting gender equality and addressing gender-specific needs.
- c. Promotion and Career Advancement: This area will analyze the promotion and career advancement processes to ensure equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender, and to identify any disparities or obstacles that may exist.
- d. Compensation and Benefits: This area will evaluate the fairness and equity of the compensation and benefits structure, aiming to address any gender-based disparities and ensure equal remuneration for equal work.
- e. Work Environment and Culture: This area will examine the organizational climate, policies, and practices to identify any gender-related issues, including discrimination, harassment, or lack of inclusivity, and recommend strategies for improvement.
- f. Leadership and Decision-making Processes: This area will assess the representation of women in leadership positions and decision-making roles, aiming to promote gender balance and diversity at higher levels within the organization.

GENDER AUDIT PROCESS

The "Gender Audit Framework" outlined by HCPL provides a structured approach for assessing and evaluating the organization's performance in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. Here's how this part relates to the policy and contributes to HCPL's objectives:

Planning: HCPL will plan and schedule gender audits at annual intervals to ensure a systematic review of gender-related practices. The audit plan will identify objectives, timelines, responsibilities, and resources required for the process.

Data Collection: Data will be collected through various methods, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. Gender-disaggregated data will be collected to identify patterns, trends, and disparities within each key area.

Data Analysis: The collected data will be analyzed using appropriate statistical tools and qualitative techniques. The analysis will identify gender gaps, biases, and barriers, and provide insights for developing targeted interventions.

Reporting: The findings of the gender audit will be documented in a comprehensive report. The report will highlight key areas of concern, strengths, opportunities, and recommendations for promoting gender equality. It will be shared with the management team, stakeholders, and employees.

HCPL has established mechanisms to monitor progress in achieving gender equity. Human Resources are tasked with collecting gender-disaggregated data on recruitment, promotions, salaries, and attrition rates. Based on these, an annual Gender Equity Report is prepared and presented to the Board of Directors. Key performance indicators included the percentage of women in leadership positions, the gender pay gap ratio, the number of harassment complaints received and resolved, and the percentage of staff trained in gender sensitivity. These indicators guide corrective measures where necessary.

Ensuring Accountability and Transparency: The Gender Audit Framework establishes clear guidelines and procedures for conducting gender audits, ensuring accountability and transparency in the assessment process. By outlining methodologies, data collection procedures, and analysis techniques, HCPL ensures that gender audits are conducted systematically and objectively, allowing for a comprehensive review of the organization's gender equality practices and policies.

Identifying Strengths and Areas for Improvement: Through the Gender Audit Framework, HCPL aims to identify both strengths and areas for improvement in its approach to gender equality. By systematically collecting and analyzing data on gender-related policies, practices, and outcomes, HCPL can assess its performance against established benchmarks and identify areas where it is excelling as well as areas where there is room for enhancement.

ACTION PLAN AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Action plan development: Based on the findings of the gender audit, HCPL will develop an action plan to address the identified gaps and promote gender equality. The action plan will outline specific goals, strategies, timelines, responsible parties, and resource allocation for implementation.

Implementation and monitoring: The management team will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the action plan. Regular monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to assess progress, address challenges, and make necessary adjustments to achieve the desired outcomes.

Accountability: Clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability will be assigned to individuals and teams involved in implementing the action plan. Regular progress reports will be shared with the management team and relevant stakeholders.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

HCPL is committed to continuous improvement in its gender equality efforts, regularly reviewing policies, procedures, and practices to identify areas for enhancement and innovation.

Mandatory gender-sensitivity training is provided to all new employees, with refresher sessions for all staff. The organization's HR manuals, codes of conduct, and employee guidelines are updated to reflect this policy.

All employees of HCPL are expected to comply with this policy, and violations will result in disciplinary action. This may range from formal warnings to termination, depending on the severity of the offense. Managers and supervisors are particularly accountable for ensuring the enforcement of gender equity practices within their teams, and failure to do so will also attract consequences.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier, if necessary, to ensure that it remains consistent with national legislation, international best practices, and HCPL's organizational priorities. The review incorporates feedback from employees and adapts to emerging challenges in promoting gender equity.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

HCPL will stay informed about emerging research, best practices, and innovations in promoting gender equality. The organization will actively seek opportunities to collaborate and contribute to research projects or initiatives in this field. By implementing this Gender Audit Policy, HCPL aims to create an inclusive and gender-equitable workplace, where all individuals have equal opportunities, rights, and support to succeed. The policy sets the foundation for regular audits, strategic

interventions, and continuous improvement towards achieving gender equality and a supportive work environment.