COMPENDIUM

Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs

2020
Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs
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FOREWORD

I am very pleased to present the WCO’s first edition of the Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs.

Gender Equality and Diversity is not only a question of human rights, but also considered a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, growth and competitiveness. The WCO Secretariat therefore incorporates these issues as an integrated part of its capacity building agenda in order to enhance the overall performance of Customs administrations.

Acknowledging that gender equality and diversity are important cross-cutting issues, the WCO recommends adopting a holistic approach and encourages its Members to consider gender and inclusiveness both in internal policies (including human resource management, leadership and career development) as well as external policies (stakeholder collaboration and at the border).

Over the past years, many members have stepped up their efforts to promote gender equality and diversity in Customs. Moreover, the WCO has expanded the scope of its work to also discuss broader diversity and inclusiveness issues.

During the WCO Council sessions, in December 2020, the WCO and its Membership unanimously adopted the Declaration of the Customs Co-Operation Council on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs. This illustrates the increased interest from Members to further advance the gender equality and diversity agenda. The Declaration calls for Customs administrations to share their experiences on strengthening gender equality and diversity in Customs as well as on monitoring and evaluating methodologies to assess and report progress in this area.

Building on the above, this Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs serves as a valuable and timely publication for Members to help guide their related efforts. Going forward, the Compendium will be part of the continuous work to collect more practices on advancing gender equality and diversity, both internally within Customs and also in relation to Customs’ engagement with stakeholders.

We hope that this first edition will inspire Members to take further action and to share their experiences and lessons learned with the WCO Secretariat to foster further learning and inspiration across the Membership.

I would like to express my appreciation to all those colleagues around the world who have contributed by sharing their practices, and to the United Kingdom’s Prosperity Fund for making this Compendium possible under the framework of the Trade Facilitation in Middle Income Countries Programme.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all Members for their ongoing support to the WCO’s global capacity building efforts.

Dr. Kunio Mikuriya
Secretary General
INTRODUCTION

The WCO Secretariat started promoting gender equality in Customs in 2013, with the organization of the international conference “Women in Customs, Trade and Leadership”, gathering 160 participants from 50 countries. As an outcome of this conference, the WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT) was launched. The GEOAT aims to assist Customs administrations in assessing their policies, practices and activities, helping them to explore how gender equality could further be incorporated into their reform and modernization agendas.

In recent years, the WCO has stepped up its efforts to launch new initiatives to promote gender equality as well as broader diversity and inclusiveness issues in Customs. In 2017, the Virtual Working Group for Gender Equality and Diversity was launched to provide a platform to Members to exchange experiences and good practices, as well as to raise awareness on the GEOAT. Further to this, a blended training package “Advancing Gender Equality in Customs” was developed that composed of a one week workshop and an e-learning module on raising awareness on gender equality within Customs. The WCO has also disseminated two surveys on gender equality and diversity, the first one in 2016 and the second one in 2019. Moreover, starting in 2020, the Secretariat has incorporated questions on gender equality and diversity in its annual survey to Members.

Aligning with the 2020 Declaration of the Customs Co-Operation Council on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs, this Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs now seeks to complement the GEOAT and the above initiatives by providing practical examples on how WCO Members are implementing gender equality and diversity in their respective administrations. It serves to provide possible inspiration across the WCO Membership to promote gender responsiveness and inclusiveness.

The 17 practices illustrate several of the key GEOAT principles and indicators, from cross-cutting policies to concrete initiatives to address particular issues such as promoting work life balance, inclusiveness in organizations, women in leadership positions or preventing sexual harassment and gender based violence.

The broad scope of examples collected illustrates the diverse Membership of the WCO and demonstrates that there is no “one model that fits all”. Policies and practices are to be adapted to the unique context of each country and Customs administration. They also show that, while implementing gender responsive and inclusive measures is often linked to the national legislative frameworks, it can also be the result of proactive initiatives from the Customs administrations to drive this agenda forward.

This is the first edition of the Compendium and regular updates will be made as Members share more practices and lessons learned on advancing gender equality and diversity.
The Department of Home Affairs and the Australian Border Force (ABF) are committed to building and valuing a diverse workforce that represents the community they serve, that fosters inclusiveness and embraces the diversity of its people, including neurodiversity, different cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, disability, age, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The Diversity and Inclusion section is responsible for driving the diversity agenda for the Department of Home Affairs and the ABF. This section is also supported by senior executives, appointed as Diversity, Disability and Indigenous Champions, who support a number of diversity cohorts and related staff networks, including:

- Gender,
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ+),
- Intergenerational,
- Indigenous,
- Disability, and
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD).

The Champions are responsible for advancing the Department’s commitment to diversity and inclusion and for supporting those staff who face challenges or barriers in realising their full potential. The objective of this commitment is to encourage all staff to recognise and embrace the full range of perspectives, experiences, knowledge and skills that diversity brings to the Department of Home Affairs and ABF.
Several action plans aiming at breaking down barriers to inclusion and driving cultural change have been developed. These include the:

- Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-22
- Intergenerational Action Plan 2020-24
- Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2016-2

Through the implementation of the GEAP 2017-20, the Department of Home Affairs - which includes the ABF - has implemented a range of initiatives that have contributed to building the inclusive culture. Some of the initiatives include:

- Developing and implementing the Breastfeeding in the Workplace Procedural Instruction, in line with recommendations from the Australian Breastfeeding Association, providing breastfeeding-friendly workplace for all employees.
- Adopting a Panel Pledge to increase female representation on public and professional forums and taking into account gender balance when appointing internal boards, committees and panels. As a result, of the 30 board positions in the Home Affairs Portfolio in December 2019, 53.3% were filled by women, exceeding the Australian Government target of 50% and which was 4.9% higher than the government average.
- Reviewing and enhancing workplace policies and practices to support gender equality, using the recommendations from a research project undertaken by the University of New South Wales.
- Developing the Staff Advancing Gender Equality (SAGE) network in 2016, at the initiative of the Diversity and Inclusion Section which helps in driving and progressing GEAP initiatives across the Department.

The vision for the SAGE network is for the equal presence, impact and influence of men, women and those who identify outside of the gender binary, at all levels within the Department. Its mission is to increase advocacy for gender equality, partner with Diversity Champions, participate in strategy and policy development, and provide leadership on how to achieve greater gender equality throughout the Department.

The network’s purpose is to strengthen gender equality through four key themes:

- Engaging in new conversations.
- Driving meaningful change.
- Stepping out to encourage others to step up, and
- Empowering through connection.

The network promotes initiatives with a motivational impact on staff. Members often have opportunities to participate in conferences, external networking meetings and events for days of significance. These are coordinated and supported by the network.

The Diversity and Inclusion Section plays a pivotal role in supporting the network and also in running activities to raise the importance of gender equality across the Department. Its activities include communications to recognise and celebrate days of significance, such as International Women’s Day, International Men’s Day, a charity drive for ‘Share the Dignity’ (donating sanitary products for persons experiencing poverty) and an annual Christmas charity drive for a nominated charity supporting part of the Australian community. Materials have also been prepared to promote more flexible working options for all genders.

The network continues to seek opportunities for further involvement in gender equality initiatives throughout the Department and for members to linked with other networks across the APS. For example, the co-chairs of the Diversity and Inclusion Section and the SAGE networks are members of the APS Cross Agency Gender Equity Network (CAGEN).
The Ethics Committee of the Receita Federal do Brazil (RFB) – Federal Revenue of Brazil - is responsible for overseeing the compliance of the administration’s Code of Conduct and for handling any complaints concerning discrimination, harassment and/or misconduct.

The Code of Conduct was established in 2013 and is based on the Brazilian national law, which covers public disrespect, harassment and discrimination. The Code is publicly available so that citizens know the standards of behavior expected of a RFB officer – making it easier to complain about misconducts while enhancing transparency and integrity.

The Ethics Committee is comprised of six members (three full-time members and three substitutes) plus 20 local representatives. Members are appointed by the RFB Director. The Committee also collaborates with other units, for example the Communication Unit when developing awareness-raising campaigns or materials.

The Ethics Committee members, as well as its local representatives, are all trained on harassment issues as well as violence of any kind, in order to be able to assess and handle cases reported to them. Depending on the details, they will take corrective actions or preventive measures with managers or employees. The local representatives are also trained to work with the Committee on preparing communication materials and raise awareness – for example,
organizing seminars on preventing harassment and discrimination among staff. It should be noted that complaints on integrity issues are not handled by the Ethics Committee, but by the Internal Audit unit.

The Ethics Committee handles cases of harassment and can issue ethical censorship. Sexual harassment is considered a crime in Brazil and, if it occurs, it therefore becomes a case for the police. In such cases, the Committee can provide support to the victims; however, the investigation process will be dealt with externally. Persons committing acts of violence or harassment will be prosecuted and this will be reported in their personnel file, which may in turn inhibit promotions and responsibilities.

Staff that are victims of harassment or violence of any kind can contact the Ethics Committee through the intranet, which provides a link to the Commission and its local representatives. The Committee Members can engage with staff either face-to-face, by phone or email or staff can opt to make an anonymous report/claim.

The Ethics Committee also monitors cases of gender-based violence on a continuous basis, and provides support and guidance to victims. In that regard, the Committee tries to identify the specific type of violence, whether physical, psychological etc., and provides recommendations as appropriate.

For confirmed cases of harassment and/or violence, and where the Committee has been involved to address the situation with the accused, the victim and local managers, there was positive feedback from managers on their work in resolving these cases. In some cases, the Committee recommended that managers invite employees to report harassment incidents via “Spaços para Falar” (Espaço da Fala). This is an initiative, led by the RFB’s Human Resources (HR) unit, aimed at providing moral support and assistance to employees. In other cases, the Committee suggested that managers promote ‘conflict mediation’, which can also call upon the assistance of the HR unit.

The RFB’s Ethics Committee has a dedicated intranet webpage where it publishes rules, material, articles, leaflets, videos with guidelines on the Code of Conduct and public ethics. In addition, the Ethics Committee has a space on the Federal Public Administrations website for information on the RFB’s Code of Conduct, the structure of the Ethics Committee and the contact details of the Committee. External stakeholders or the public may also report cases of harassment or misconduct through a reporting mechanism or directly to the Ethics Committee via email.

Given its growing importance, the Ethics Committee has made psychological violence and bullying its focus for 2020, assessing cases within the administration and raising awareness among managers. Because of the sensitivity of this issue, the Committee has engaged a specialist to further inform its deliberations, and building on work to define what constitutes harassment conducted by a dedicated working group established in 2009. The Committee has already delivered presentations throughout the country, covering general issues relating to discrimination and stress information, including conflicts of interest. Often, managers do not realize the pressure they are placing on employees or whether their methods are acceptable. This is why greater awareness among managers is important, to give them confidence in their role and define the parameters for acceptable behavior – resulting in a more conducive working environment for optimal performance and well-being.

There have been many discussions on performance measurement, and the fact that some staff consider the productivity measurements to be stressful and thus a form of harassment. The Ethics Committee reported that this has identified the need to further assess what can be defined as harassment to prevent misunderstanding. To provide further clarification, the Committee will develop a training plan to avoid impolite behavior, harassment by managers of subordinates and vice versa. Moreover, there is a specific Code of Conduct for RFB Executives covering what is expected from managers in terms of how they deal with cases of harassment and/or gender based violence.

The Ethics Committee has also developed materials, held educational events and awareness-raising campaigns among staff on different forms of harassment and how to avoid it. It seeks to clarify the definitions and perceptions of different types of harassment offence and/or discrimination of any kind. The Committee also offers virtual seminars on the topic ‘Ethics as a tool to prevent harassment’, in which they invite specialists to discuss the principles of ethics, moral harassment and harassment in the public sector, offering participants to ask questions to clarify their doubts.

Given the low level of women in senior management positions (currently, only 5% of Directors are women and 28% of managers), this has been identified as a priority for the RFB in recent years. The Committee therefore also discusses how to improve how they value and promote women in management positions.

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Balancing your professional and private life can be made easier through more flexible working hours arrangements. The Finnish Customs has promoted remote and flexible working options since 2014 as part of their general work promoting gender equality and diversity in the workplace.

At the Finnish Customs, employees follow one of two working hour schemes. People in operational positions - more than 50% of all Customs staff - undertake period-based work where the shifts are pre-planned for three weeks in advance. Here, each employee will have a total of 114 hours and 45 minutes of work. Their work is dependent on time and location. People following period-based work have the opportunity to switch shifts in some cases to accommodate private arrangements.

The other scheme sees office-based staff following regular office hours, i.e., between 08h00 and 16h15. Most people working office hours have flexible working hours, meaning that they can start between 06h30 and 09h30 and stop working between 14h30 and 19h00, with a lunch break of 30 minutes. Their weekly working hours are 36 hours and 15 minutes. The flexitime offered in the morning and afternoon is meant to make it easier for the employees to coordinate their professional and private lives. An employee can work more hours one day and fewer on another day. The supervisors have the right to intervene with the use of flexible hours if work tasks and work arrangements require it.
The flexible time-balancing period is now six months and the cut-off time for the positive working hours is 40 hours. Negative working hours must not exceed 10 hours at the end of the balancing period or 20 hours during the balancing period. As a rule, the positive balance exceeding the cut-off limit will be offset during the balancing period using flexible hours.

All staff working at Finnish Customs whose work is not dependent on location are eligible for the flexible working options - around 50 percent of the entire staff. The ICT in use, and other security issues and rules, also define which kind of work can be done remotely. Some supervisor permissions are needed before officers can do remote work. Where there is a need to be in the office on specific days, remote work isn’t permitted.

Normally, people work remotely approximately one to two days per week. The Finnish Customs sees increasing popularity for remote working options among employees and has received a great deal of positive feedback. The only negative feedback has from those working on tasks that can’t be performed remotely.

It should be noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the situation significantly changed, with around half of the workforce at Finnish Customs working 100% remotely. This ‘new normal’ situation seems likely to have an impact on the ways of working in the future.

The popularity of remote work has increased continuously every year. To assist with this, the Finnish Customs offers laptops and systems required for remote work.

The Finnish Customs uses an early intervention model, to detect possible illnesses among staff. This implies that supervisors will have a discussion with an employee who has taken more than three short sick leaves during a period of six months, or more than 20 days of sick leave in the past year. An employee may take a sick leave of three days by simply notifying the employer. However, for longer absences a medical certificate from a nurse or physician is required. The purpose of the model is to find ways to support individuals’ mental and physical health at an early stage, in co-operation with the occupational health care.

The Finnish Customs is supportive of employees taking parental leave. During parental leave, the employee can receive updates on what is happening at the workplace, if they so wish, facilitating the reintroduction after the leave. When an employee returns after leave, they will also be provided with personal guidance. Employees are allowed maternity leave of 105 working days and paternity leave of 54 working days, of which 18 days can be taken at the same time as the mother.

All the above listed commitments are stated in the Finnish Customs Equality Plan for 2017-2020. The Finnish Customs is currently finalizing its latest Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan for period 2020-22. The latest update is expected to be more ambitious than the previous edition.
The Equal Pay Standard, developed by the Icelandic Standards, was launched in December 2012 with the objective of ensuring gender-equal pay for jobs of equal value. The Standard was developed with input from Iceland’s trade unions and employers. It was developed in such a way that allows it to be used by all types of organizations, irrespective of sector (public or private) or size.

The standard started out as a voluntary instrument however, since January 2018, all private or public organizations in Iceland with 25 or more employees are legally obliged to adhere to the standard. Those that fail to obtain certification will be subject to fines.¹

The Standard describes the process that organizations can follow to ensure equal and fair pay-setting for staff. It includes methods for making decisions on salaries and mechanisms for ensuring efficient monitoring. Implementing the Standard allows organizations to improve their human resource management and salary policies as well as strengthening their image as a fair employer.

To obtain certification according to the Equal Pay Standard requires the following steps to be met:

1. An assessment of current pay policies within the organization.
2. Classification of jobs according to equal value; this step includes determining the required knowledge, competences and education level for different positions as well as evaluating the responsibilities and work environment of performing certain tasks according to a specific model (see image below).
3. Analysis of the wage setting of each employee according to specific job classifications to ensure that any discrepancies in terms of wages are non-discriminatory and based on objective criteria
4. Formalization of policies and processes related to the salary decision, and
5. Regular monitoring of the process, which needs to be validated by management.

¹ https://www.government.is/topics/human-rights-and-equality/equal-pay-certification/
Job classification is an important component of the Standard, which is also useful in general competency-based HR management, particularly for planning, recruitment, job development plans and performance measurement. This is also recommended in the WCO Framework of Principles and Practices on Customs Professionalism.

In addition, the Standard also required Iceland Customs to develop an equal pay strategy and an equal rights strategy (similar to a gender equality action plan). It also needs to produce an annual report to report on the progress. In addition, the report needs to be developed by an assigned Equal Rights Officer responsible for coordinating implementation of gender equality measures within the administration. For transparency reasons, the report needs to be available to all personnel.

Iceland Customs was part of a pilot project headed by the Ministry of Finance and the labour unions. Iceland Customs had some mentoring and assistance during the process, thus there was no need to hire consultants for the initial implementation of this project.

Iceland’s Customs first put together a project group composed of internal HR specialists. Its main task was to come up with preliminary definitions and criteria for job classifications. The next step was to convene a focus group composed of all senior and middle managers, tasked with reviewing all job definitions and criteria to ensure ensuring a common understanding of all elements. Once these were in place the actual job classifications could be set up. This provided a broad overview of all the different jobs within Customs and their estimated value. All jobs were then categorized in terms of comparability and equal value, and salaries were adjusted on that basis.

To meet the requirements of the Standard, Iceland Customs also appointed an internal Equal Rights Officer with responsibility to monitor and report on Gender Equality issues.

Iceland Customs obtained its Equal Pay Standard after a comprehensive independent audit in September 2016. To ensure compliance with the standard, audits are conducted annually. A more comprehensive audit is undertaken every second year and annually “maintenance certifications” done.

Iceland Customs is proud to have been the first employer in the country certified in accordance with the Equal Pay Standard.

Although implementation was time consuming, the positives have outweighed the challenges. Iceland Customs have identified several benefits, including greater transparency and predictability, less time required to draft institutional contracts and job descriptions, improved organizational culture built on transparency and trust, increased awareness of gender-based discrimination in the labour market and more efficient HR management.

Implementing the Standard has established a fairer system for setting wages at Iceland Customs, while also ensuring gender equality. Iceland Customs have also seen increased satisfaction among employees and an improved image as an employer.

Maintaining the Equal Pay Standard certification is an ongoing task for every institution and company legally obliged to conform to the standard. This means that Iceland Customs cannot drop its guard in terms of equal pay, gender equality or diversity issues in general. The agency is looking to re-evaluate the job classifications, using newly developed computer software developed specifically for implementing the Standard, particularly in terms of the salary evaluations and gender pay-gap analysis.

CRITERIA FOR JOB CLASSIFICATION

When the job criteria and definitions were in place, the actual job classifications could be set up - a huge, but rewarding task.

Iceland Customs

Education 65%

Work Experience 35%

Cognitive Competencies 35%

Initiative & Independence 35%

Communication Skills 30%

Staff Management 25%

Project Management 25%

Finance 25%

Customer Service 15%

Tools, Equipment and Documents 10%

Physical Strain 30%

Mental and Emotional Stress 40%

Work Conditions and Environmental Stimulus 30%

Work Environment 10%

Responsibilities 25%

Knowledge 35%

Competencies 30%
Gender equality, equal opportunities and prevention of discrimination on grounds of religion, ethnicity, caste, sex or place of birth, are fundamental rights and principles of the State Policy of India, as set out in the national constitution. State Policy also includes provisions on equal pay for equal work, ensuring humane working conditions and the right to parental leave, prevention of sexual harassment and special protection of the socioeconomically weak persons from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) of India is committed to implementing these values. The CBIC's general induction training provides an introduction to the Indian Constitution as well as the Code of Conduct and organizational values, which also includes other grounds of discrimination such as ethnicity, place of birth, sex, religion, equal pay for equal work etc., thereby addressing issues of gender equality and anti-discrimination.

The CBIC has launched several initiatives in support of these values. These include:

**Prevention of sexual harassment**

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was approved by the Indian Parliament in 2013. The Act addresses sexual harassment at the workplace and outlines how every employer - both public and private - are required to constitute an internal complaints committee at each office or branch with ten or more employees, as a mechanism for redressing complaints. It also provides protection against
false or malicious charges. The definition of a victim of sexual harassment at workplace, is set deliberately wide to cover all women, irrespective of her age or employment status, whether in organized or unorganized sector.

In line with the above-mentioned Act, the CBIC established internal committees to act on sexual harassment. These are composed of four members; one senior level woman nominated by the employees and another two nominated by the employees. In addition, there is one external representative from an NGO or similar. The members are appointed for a period of three years. External members are elected on the basis of their considerable knowledge in sexual harassment issues. There are 21 Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Zones within the CBIC, 13 Customs Zones and 22 Directorates, each with its own sexual harassment prevention committee.

The mandate of these committees is to assess all internal complaints relating to harassment raised by any woman. The committee will investigate to see if the complaint is relevant and then submit a written report to the employer, who in turn will assess whether the complaint is correct. When the internal committee has reached a correct conclusion, the case will be reported to the police. The mandate and the functioning of the committees have been clearly communicated to all managers and staff.

The complaints committees are required to offer conciliation before initiating an inquiry, if requested by the complainant. The Act requires employers, among other things, to undertake education and awareness-raising programmes and to develop policies to prevent sexual harassment.

Penalties have also been established for employers. Non-compliance with the provisions of the Act is punishable with a fine up to Rs 50000 (around US$700). Repeated violations can lead to higher penalties and the cancellation of licences or registration to conduct business. The Government can also order an officer to inspect a workplace and any records in an organization related to sexual harassment.

The members of the committees act as ‘persons of confidence’, to whom incidents of sexual harassment can be reported. Any reported complaint is taken seriously, and the committees will act quickly on any reported complaint. The committee members also do their best to counsel the victims of violence.

Gender Sensitization Training

The National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN) is a government institute responsible for capacity building in the field of indirect taxation, particularly in areas of customs. The Academy operates under the auspices of the CBIC under the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

NACIN offers a voluntary course on gender sensitization. This is a classroom-style course that provides a general introduction to the concept of gender, gender-related issues at the workplace, sexual harassment and how this can be prevented, as well as gender mainstreaming as a tool for good governance. It is conducted as part of the administrations training curriculum, in line with the constitutional and legal framework on gender equality in India. It invites external representatives from UN Women or other representatives from relevant organizations. It may also invite women officers to talk and present on a range of topics relating to gender equality. NACIN has tailored the course agenda to include various constitutional frameworks, legal provisions and case studies. Between March 2019 and February 2020, NACIN carried out 34 trainings both at the NACIN headquarters including the regional training institutes.
The implementation of Gender Equality and Diversity (GED) in the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DGCE) of Indonesia started in 2006, with the establishment of the GED Taskforce. This came about as a direct result of a Presidential Instruction and a subsequent decree from the Ministry of Finance, which requires each Ministry or institution to integrate GED in their respective development plans. The GED Taskforce of the Indonesian Ministry of Finance is made up of high-level representatives – including the Director General of the DGCE – who are assigned as “Gender Champions”. The Taskforce is mandated to coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate the GED work of the administration.

The Indonesian National Presidential Instruction on Gender Equality and Diversity from 2000 has set guidelines to make GED a reality. The preconditions and key components consist of a high-level commitment, a clearly defined policy framework, the required resources, gender-disaggregated data, the use of a gender analysis tool and the full participation of stakeholders. The DGCE has taken all these guidelines into account to in order to fulfil the requirements of GED implementation and to enable stakeholders to become involved and to gain access and benefit from the work.

As well as using a national Gender Analysis Pathway (GAP) tool, the DGCE also applies the WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tools (GEOAT) as a way to assess the progress in the different areas of the GEOAT: employment and compensation, work-life balance and career development, health, safety and freedom of violence, governance and leadership and customs administration and stakeholder relations.
In its implementation, the DGCE is focusing on fulfilling the seven national prerequisites of the Indonesian Presidential decree on GED, as well as the five key principles of the WCO GEOAT. Some examples of the DGCE’s gender responsive policies include:

1. Writing policies and regulations for all officers on human resource procedures (placement, transfer, promotion, leave, complaints, etc.) as well as compensation and promotion mechanisms.

2. Identifying potential gender gaps in recruitment and other demographics (education, ethnicity, etc.) to determine whether women and minority groups are proportionately represented at each level.

3. Conducting periodic analyses of promotion ratios based on gender and other demographics, to identify and mitigate potential gaps.

4. Providing opportunities for flexible working options, including working from home.

5. Undertaking regular workplace audits to detect any possible cases of gender-based violence and ensure adequate protection and/or support to victims of such violence if needed.

6. Incorporating GED as part of the organization’s mission, strategy and values.

7. Ensuring that all stakeholders are treated equally in customs policies and procedures.

8. Automating procedures to reduce levels of corruption and ensure efficient use of technology.

The GED Taskforce at Headquarters cascades the administration’s policies via locally-established Taskforces, which are responsible for the day-to-day implementation in their respective districts. They draft workplans, ensure adequate facilities and infrastructure as well as organizing relevant activities. The taskforces are also responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress and reporting back to Headquarters. In addition, the human resource department plays a key role in implementing various GED policies.

The DGCE advances its agenda through a variety of policies, initiatives and programmes on gender equality and diversity. These include:

- **Gender-responsive budgeting**: The DGCE allocates the annual budget according to gender-responsive budgeting principles. It assesses and ensures that the budget corresponds with, and takes into consideration the needs, problems, aspirations, experiences of both women and men and provides equitable benefits to all. This includes assessing each activity from a GED perspective, evaluating how efforts are made to improve conditions or to narrow existing gender gaps.

- **Sex-disaggregated data**: The DGCE uses sex-disaggregated data and other relevant information, as tools to conduct gender-based analysis, before formulating programme planning and/or policies. DGCE continuously gathers sex-disaggregated data in a range of areas to allow for gender analyses and to identify adequate solutions for different challenges.

- **Gender Analysis Tool**: The DGCE uses a tool called Gender Analysis Pathway (GAP) as a way of integrating GED into the entire planning process. GAP aims to enable policy makers to plan projects and develop activities that identify gender gaps and take into account gender issues. This way, they can formulate policies to reduce or eliminate these gaps.

Enhancing participative processes by involving communities: To enhance community participation in Customs and trade activities, the DGCE has also implemented a number of measures. These include automating procedures for small and medium enterprises, developing an online, user-friendly ‘community complaint/whistleblowing’ system, improving professional communication channels through the platform “Contact Centre Bravo”, where stakeholders can receive and deliver any information with full flexibility in a range of languages. It is also disseminating stakeholder information through various channels (website, magazines, radio and TV), as well as via physical desks located at each customs office and branch.

The DGCE has also implemented a GED awareness programme, featuring coffee mornings, talk shows, seminars, “Customs goes to campus” to inform students and the wider public on its work promoting GED.
Below is an illustration of how the DGCE uses the GEOAT indicators to get a general overview of how well the Administration is performing according to the five key principles, and which areas need further attention. Green represents areas that are completed/fulfilled, brown is areas that needs improvement or innovation, red are those that are inadequate and need improvement and purple are the priority areas for the coming year.

According to a GEOAT assessment completed by the DGCE in 2018, the Administration estimate 38 indicators (47%) have been fulfilled, 35 indicators (43%) fulfilled but with innovation still required, four indicators (5%) are inadequate and where improvement is still required. The four estimated as inadequate or unmoved were chosen as priorities for improvement in the coming year.

In terms of challenges when implementing GED, the DGCE has identified the following:

- Misconception over GED policies: There is a misconception that GED policies only concern women’s rights to access the same opportunities as men. The DGCE has worked to raise awareness to change this perception, as GED policies are not only directed at gender differences but also at different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and needs. The GED is undertaking programs and activities to disseminate the concept and urgency of GED.

- Continuous Gender Gap: There is still a huge gender gap within the DGCE. 82% male officers compared to 18% female. This difference may create the perception that the DGCE prioritizes males for recruitment. In reality, it is true that most customs work – such as enforcement – is more associated with men. Nevertheless, current developments in DGCE mean that women officers are also now placed at borders and are part of patrols.
The Customs Directorate of Israel, as a part of the Israel Tax Authority, places great importance on investing in its human resources. As an organization and as a workplace, the Customs Directorate of Israel believes in the value of diversity in employment, which is why the administration is making strenuous efforts to promote gender equality and diversity within the organization, thus setting an example and properly reflecting the diversity of the Israeli population.

In recent years, the Customs Directorate of Israel has launched the following three concrete initiatives, all aimed at promoting gender equality and diversity. They also help to improve wellness in the workplace and the work-life balance of its employees. The initiatives are:

- Tuesday for me
- Coffee with the Manager
- Seminar on Diversity
Tuesday for me

Work-life balance is a key issue today; one that affects all ages, genders and positions. The Customs Directorate of Israel believes that an appropriate work-life balance assists employees in carrying out their responsibilities and their wishes to have both a career and a satisfying private and family life.

As many studies on this topic have indicated, flexible working arrangements have positive impact on labour productivity and can contribute to better health, satisfaction and effectiveness of employees in their workplace.

In light of this, a proposal was advanced to set aside a specific day each week, during which there would be no strategic / work appointments and meetings set for after 15h00. The idea behind this proposal was to allow employees to spend more time with their families and / or enjoy more leisure time. It was agreed to make this on Tuesdays. This applies to the Israeli Tax Authority Headquarter and the regional field offices.

There was a discussion within the administration if this afternoon designated “free from meetings” would be called ‘Family’s Tuesday’, or Tuesday for me’. Finally, it was agreed not to designate and to restrict it only for spending time with family, but rather to expand it to include various activities that employees could do for their own wellbeing.

The initiative was communicated to the employees via an internal email and through a WhatsApp group launched by the Customs and Taxation Department for information and updates.

As indicated from the first feedback from employees, "Tuesday for me" was well received. It also illustrates a new spirit and change of attitude within the administration.

The Customs Directorate of Israel hopes that this initiative will benefit both the organization and its employees. It will ensure a good work-life balance alongside career development. It can promote the involvement of men in raising their children and remove barriers to the advancement of women to executive positions.

Coffee with the Manager

The Israeli Tax Authority has also taken a strategic decision to emphasize the importance of the ‘bottom-up’ approach, providing employees with an opportunity to actively participate in discussions on a variety of issues relating regard to work and personal matters.

To address this, the administration launched a new project entitled ‘Coffee with the Manager’. This consists of three initiatives:

- **Coffee with the Department/Unit Manager**: Every employee is invited to a meeting with her/his department manager to discuss issues that are not necessarily related to their daily work duties.

- **Coffee with the Director General of the Tax Authority**: Every Tuesday, the Director General of the Tax Authority visits two of the field units. During these, the Director General meets one employee, by his/her direct manager, for a private discussion on personal issues as well as on special projects. It also provides an opportunity to raise suggestions and provides ideas for improving work methods and related topics.

- **Coffee with the Director General of the Tax Authority**: A meeting with a diverse group of 15 employees from different units / departments (VAT, customs, income tax, etc.). The group includes both men and women, and at least 30% representation from the various diverse backgrounds in Israeli society, such as Arab, Druze, Orthodox religious Jewish, Ethiopian and persons with disabilities. The 15 employees selected to participate in the meeting are based on the recommendation of their unit manager.

The initiatives ‘Tuesday for me’ and ‘Coffee with the manager’ are relatively new and were recently adopted by the Director General of the Israeli Tax Authority, Mr. Eran Yaakov, who was appointed to his post in March 2018.

The first meeting of the Director General with a group of 15 was held on the 14 January 2019. The employees used this opportunity to express creative ideas and share their experiences using practical examples from their daily work. This meeting was considered a success; the employees said that they felt excited and empowered by it. They stressed that it was a productive and useful way to learn about new working methods and ideas from each different department as well as to brainstorm with the Director General on how to implement and promoted these ideas further.

The Customs Directorate of Israel hopes that this initiative will benefit both the organization and its employees, and will encourage employee involvement in policy making and work processes in various issues.

Seminar on Diversity

As part of the administration strategy to better improve its performance and work methods, the Israeli Tax Authority held a seminar on Diversity at the residency of the President of Israel, Mr. Reuven Rivlin, in Jerusalem.

During this seminar, the Director General of the Israeli Tax Authority, Mr. Eran Yaccov, highlighted studies indicating that diversity and equality in a workplace leads to success and better performance of the organization.

Also, a diverse group of employees - both women and men - shared their individual stories, their challenges and their difficulties as well as their success stories.
The Israeli Tax Authority is inspired to continue with its initiatives in order to achieve representation of the diversity in the Israeli population at all levels. The goal of the Authority is to reach the following employment thresholds, as defined by the law of affirmative action:

- 10% from the Arab community
- 5% of persons with disabilities
- 5% from the Ethiopian community, and
- 7% from the orthodox religious Jewish community.

The idea is to continue with further initiatives, in order to reinforce the importance of equality among employees. This will insure continuing improvement in all employee performance and will improve the perception of the Israeli Tax authority and Customs.
As part of its general work on advancing gender equality at the workplace, the Jamaica Customs Agency (JCA) is finalizing its Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, as well as the accompanying Personal Relationships in the Workplace and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Workplace policies. These policies will be established before the end of March 2021. The aim of the policies is to inform JCA employees of what constitutes unacceptable behaviours, which will foster a safer space for both women and men to enjoy productive communication exchanges and work output.

In November 2020, the JCA launched its first round of sensitization sessions with the senior executive and management teams. These sessions, on Gender Mainstreaming and Sexual Harassment, are delivered through collaborative workshops organized by the Bureau of Gender Affairs under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, Gender, Entertainment and Sport, will run until March 2021. The sessions are designed to enhance the management team’s capacity to formulate policies and procedures that will help guide team members in maintaining a safe workspace. In December 2020, the Human Resource Management and Development Division team will take part in workshops on gender mainstreaming as well as sensitization on the three policies mentioned above.
Highlights of the Gender-Based Violence Policy:

This policy asserts that the JCA has a duty to provide a safe working environment for all employees and to provide support to any member of staff, male or female, who is a victim of GBV. Gender-based violence is recognized as any action that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary denial of freedom, whether occurring in public or in private life. Gender-based violence includes - but is not limited to - domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; it endangers the lives and safety of numerous people globally. Regardless of where it occurs, GBV infringes on its victims’ human rights.

When it encroaches on the workplace, GBV compromises the safety of both the employee (victim) and the employee’s co-workers, and can result in reduced productivity, increased health care costs, elevated employee turnover and lead to property damage. In addition, the impact of violence can undermine an employee’s motivation and commitment, their allegiance to the organization, the working environment, the organization’s public image, and even its openness to innovation and knowledge.

Furthermore, allegations of abuse and/or violence made against employees may have potential repercussions for their professional responsibility and could violate organizational codes of conduct and policies.

The GBV policy is part of the JCA’s commitment to improve the safety and welfare of all staff affected by gender-based violence and abuse. The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Ensure the confidential and considerate handling of all situations arising from gender-based violence.

2. Raise awareness of gender-based violence as a serious health and social issue, emphasizing its hidden nature and the impact on those affected.

3. Assist and support employees in requesting help to address problems arising from gender-based violence.

4. Ensure the equal application of the policy throughout the JCA to both male and female employees.

5. Send a clear signal that the actions of those employees who commit abuse, either within or outside work, are unacceptable.

6. Provide a framework for addressing the behaviour of those employees who may be perpetrators of abuse and who may pose a risk to their fellow employees or customers within the context of their work.

7. Assist managers and supervisors to understand and apply provisions within this and existing JCA policies when responding to gender-based violence.

In full compliance with all applicable laws governing GBV, the JCA is committed to providing and maintaining a workplace where employees who are victims/survivors of GBV will have the necessary support to address the violence in their lives. The JCA will promote the health and safety of all its employees within the context of this policy. The Agency takes its responsibility to address GBV in its environment seriously, providing policies, resources, education, training, support and responses. These guidelines have been established to help manage, mitigate and/or eliminate real or perceived risks and adverse effects that may arise from employees who are victims of GBV whether within or outside the Agency. They also outline the sanctions for violations of this policy.

1. This policy covers historical, recent, and ongoing gender-based violence and abuse.

2. The JCA will take a zero-tolerance stance on gender-based violence. All acts of GBV are prohibited, whether they take place within JCA premises or outside, including at social events, on business trips, training sessions or at conferences held by the Agency.

3. Employees are prohibited from using any workplace resources, including worktime, phones, email, computers, fax machines or other means to threaten, harass, intimidate, embarrass or otherwise harm another person. An employee is in the workplace while in the premises of, or using the resources of, the Agency. This includes - but is not limited to - facilities, work sites, equipment and vehicles or while on work-related travel.

4. Any employee of the JCA committing an act of GBV against another employee will be held responsible in a way that fully recognizes the dignity and needs of the survivor/victim and the health and safety of the employees of the Agency.

5. The JCA shall not retaliate or discriminate in hiring, staffing, promoting or any other terms and conditions of employment against any employee:

   a. For disclosing their status as a victim/survivor of GBV
   b. Should he/she be perceived as a victim of GBV, or
   c. In the event that he/she has presented a complaint, or revealed concerns about, GBV to the Agency.

The Jamaica Customs Agency stands ready to offer assistance to other administrations on its journey to date in managing GBV-related issues.
Mali’s Association of Women in Customs and Wives of Customs Officers (Association des Femmes Douanières et Épouses de Douaniers du Mali) was created in May 2010. It was formed at the initiative of a number of women working within Mali Customs with a view to promoting gender equality.

The Association brings together women working in customs, the wives and widows of customs officers as well as retired female customs officers. With headquarters in Bamako and an executive office of 68 members, the Association is affiliated with Mali’s Association of Women in Military Camps (Association des Femmes des Camps Militaires du Mali). It is funded through membership fees.

The four primary objectives of the association are:

1. To increase awareness of gender issues in custom services
2. To create a chain of solidarity, with a view to promoting the economic and financial independence of women
3. To promote and raise awareness of the role that women play in bringing peace and security, and
4. To build the capacity of female customs officers to fight corruption and money laundering.

Within Malian Customs, the Association is striving to change behaviour and is promoting a shift in attitudes and practices in favour of implementing gender equality. The Association uses dialogue and awareness-raising techniques to break down all kinds of discrimination against women. Moreover, the Association is committed to advocating for an enhanced legal framework to deal effectively with gender issues and to mobilizing efforts and the necessary resources to be able to conduct a gender audit within the Customs service.

The Mali Association is also looking to create a website to enable sharing of such experiences with other associations pursuing similar objectives at national and international level. It should be noted that the Customs service is still in the initial stages of its efforts of establishing gender equality; this momentum must be maintained over time to make the desired change become the reality.
The Association also seeks to work upstream on strengthening leadership among women, as well as among men. This will gradually create a professional environment with a more positive approach towards gender equality issues and consequently further enhance the performance of the structure.

In order to meet the objective of securing economic empowerment of women, and to assist the wives of Customs officers living in poverty, the Association has organized a number of events. These included solidarity (food) donations, conferences and meetings with women, after which they had the opportunity to discuss their concerns. There were also events to mark International Women’s Day (8 March) and to celebrate traditional holidays as well as those to support the empowerment of female Customs officers in retirement.

The Association also organized various conference debates, including on the following subjects:

- **8 March 2018: “Role of female Customs officers in security management in Mali”** The aim was to increase the level of representation of female Customs officers on the various platforms (Algiers Agreement, G5 Sahel and the Inclusive National Dialogue, which began in Mali on 15 December 2019) and to help women in the Customs service both to be involved in, and make an active contribution to, the ongoing pursuit of peace and national reconciliation.

- **8 March 2019: “Think fairly, build intelligently, innovate for change”** The aim was to facilitate contributions by women to the wave of innovation sweeping across the world; to make women aware of their role in securing fairness and stability on a global scale and to give women greater power in helping achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mali’s Association of Women in Customs and Wives of Customs Officers also organizes health days, including the Breast Cancer Screening and Awareness Day as well as days dedicated to the awareness of HIV, Hepatitis B and cervical cancer.

In addition to the donations made and other fundraising projects undertaken, the Association also provides ongoing support for establishing small agro-industrial businesses for those female Customs officers who have taken their retirement. In addition, it offers training in entrepreneurship and crafts tailored to the requirements of Customs officers’ wives and widows, thus providing them with opportunity to generate their own income.

It has also joined forces with other women’s associations in Mali, including the Association of Female Police Officers and Female Civil Protection Officers (Association des Femmes Policières et des Femmes de la Protection Civile).

Last, a further aim is to promote the role of women in security management, which is a key factor in the consolidation of peace and social cohesion within the G5 Sahel (Mali, Niger, Mauritania, Chad and Burkina Faso).

**Management resources for stakeholders**

The Association has been promised office accommodation by the General Directorate of Customs. To date, however, it has access to neither the equipment nor the funds to respond to the very large number of problems faced by its members.

- **Positive experiences**

  Since its creation, the Association has helped to bring economic stability to many households, through projects connected with the empowerment of women and the capacity building of its members.

- **Negative experiences**

  The Association has identified various challenges, such as the negative perception of gender issues, the strong influence of customs and traditions and the shortage of available resources.

  Positive experiences may lead other administrations and their respective governments to take encouraging steps towards change and improvement. Acknowledging the negative aspects, or the problems encountered in the past, can help such administrations to avoid the pitfalls or at least prepare for them.
The New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS) is undertaking a range of efforts to improve Gender Equality, and Inclusion and Diversity in a range of areas.

In December 2013, the People and Capability (P&C) Group presented a paper to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), which discussed the benefits of improving inclusion and diversity in the NZCS, starting with improving the gender balance within the leadership structure. The paper highlighted the business benefits associated with an inclusive and diverse workplace and identified some of the barriers that existed within the NZCS, both for women and for groups from indigenous and other ethnic backgrounds.

The SLT agreed to some best-practice recommendations that would start to realize the benefits of inclusion and diversity. This led it to establish the Inclusion and Diversity Council (I&D Council) and create a 2014-18 Strategic Plan. The first step was to create awareness of inclusion and diversity, identify initiatives/processes that would improve gender balance and for the NZCS to better reflect the Community it serves.
The 2014-2018 Strategic Plan saw several initiatives launched, including:

- Activities to support female leadership which resulted in an increase of women managers from 24% (2014) to 32% (2018)
- 60% of leaders attended Unconscious Bias Training by 2018, and
- Dissemination of a Diversity and Inclusion survey in 2018, asking staff about their perceptions of the newly launched initiatives; the results demonstrated increasing satisfaction with the progress being made.

In 2017, the Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission established a strategy for increasing diversity and inclusion. This has remained a priority, with a dedicated Chief Executive group in place - Papa Pounamu - which enables, sets strategic direction and determines priorities.

The Government of New Zealand has a clear focus on diversity and inclusion and, in particular women. Each year NZCS submits an action plan to reduce the Gender Pay Gap (GPG); see the current action plan1 for 2020. The NZCS currently has 23 GPG initiatives with five areas of focus; recruitment, promotion, career development, pay and reporting to help reduce the drivers of the GPG.

The NZCS monitors and reports both its mean and median GPG to provide a balanced overview of the situation within the service. The objective of the NZCS is to reduce its gender pay gaps by one-third (4-5%) by 2020. There are monthly fluctuations in both the mean and median GPG figures, as staff join and leave the organization. Therefore, the focus is on the trends over time, which have seen both reduce. As of 30 October 2020, the mean GPG is 12.4% and the median 9.4%.

**Gender Equity**

In the area of gender equality, the NZCS prioritizes promotion of gender balance among staff, particularly among management positions at all levels. It is also working to reduce the gender pay gap.

**Gender Diversity Goal**

The NZCS gender diversity goal is to increase recruitment of female leaders by 1.5% per year against the December 2018 baseline of 32%. The NZCS was on track for the December 2020 goal of having at least 35% of women in its NZCS leadership team, however, a combination of staff attrition and changes in how temporary acting/secondment roles were filled, as of 30 September 2020 this percentage was 31.4%.

**Ethnic diversity**

The NZCS strongly believes it is important for Customs to represent the community that it serves, both in its staff and leadership roles. The NZCS view is that increased diversity improves cultural competence, problem solving and encourages innovation. Although there has been an increase in the ethnic diversity of staff in recent years, the NZCS is committed to further improvements, particularly in leadership positions.

**Ethnic Diversity Goal**

The NZCS goal for the representation of staff of Māori heritage is 11.6% by December 2020, noting the baseline as of December 2018 was 9.6%. As of 30 September 2020, the figure was 9.9%.

For the NZCS’ ‘People Leaders’ goals on representation in its NZCS leadership team as of 30 September:

- Asian leaders’ percentage is 7.1%. This has dipped just below our December 2020 goal of 7.2%.
- Pacific Peoples leaders’ percentage is 4.6%. This is behind target for our December 2020 goal of 7.2%.

- Māori Leaders’ percentage is 10.7%. This is ahead of the December 2020 goal of 10.4%.

Below are additional examples of how the NZCS works in practice to promote gender equality and increase inclusion and diversity in particular areas.

**Inclusive work culture**

The NZCS is also committed to measuring the degree to which the administration is succeeding in maintaining an ‘inclusive work culture’. This involves measuring - via a number of surveys (engagement and integrity as well as a biennial inclusion and diversity survey) - the support for feeling valued, empowered, the sense of belonging, freedom to speak up and being treated fairly. In order to further value diversity, the NZCS will identify ways to define ‘cultural competence’ in order to ensure that this can be captured and measured.

**Recruitment**

As part of the ‘Talent in Focus’ recruitment programme (July 2018 – June 2021), the recruitment team is using the diversity goals for gender and ethnicity to measure their progress. This programme has defined specific actions to attract candidates from Māori backgrounds, which is also reinforced in the Māori strategy.

As part of the GPG action plan, the Gender Equity Shortlisting policy was created. All recruitment panels must have at least one female on the panel. In addition, all panel members must have undergone training on unconscious bias and at least 50% of the candidates shortlisted must be female. Where there is a shortage of female candidates fulfilling the shortlist criteria, a written explanation must be submitted.

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2 People leaders are those who have people reporting to them. Primarily these include managers, Chief Customs Officers (CCOs)/team leaders, Supervising Customs Officers (SupCos), some senior advisors and analysts, managers operations and counsellors.
Leadership

The NZCS provides inclusive leadership training for those participating in leadership programmes. Inclusive leadership objectives are included as part of managers’ performance review and development plans.

Unconscious Bias and Knowledge training

By December 2021 all staff, including leaders, are expected to have completed Unconscious Bias and Knowledge training.

Flexible Work

In July 2020, the NZCS updated its Flexible Working Policy. The NZCS has been part of a cross-agency working group on flexible working since 2019, and has been keen to provide the perspective of a 24/7 workforce on flexible working and contribute to the guidance under development for public services.

There was broad consultation on the policy with unions, the I&D Council, staff networks and leaders. COVID-19 has offered a fortuitous opportunity for the NZCS to trial different approaches to see what will work best for individuals, teams and the organization. The NZCS has built strong support among the organization for flexible working arrangements, and is in the process of formalizing the arrangements outlined in the policy. These arrangements are supported with training for staff and leaders. The implementation is driving a culture shift, along with practical ways to apply the policy. The NZCS has met the 2020 I&D Strategy target to implement education on flexible working by December 2020.

Staff Networks

Staff networks provide a forum for staff to connect with others with similar needs, experiences or backgrounds. They allow them to share learning opportunities, information and support and to develop collective advice for NZCS on how they can advance inclusion and diversity within the workplace.

The networks regularly meet to discuss learning, synergies and the effectiveness of initiatives. Funding for the networks is provided from within the NZCS and the P&C group has an advisory role. The networks operate on a voluntary basis.

Women’s Network

This network empowers women by breaking down barriers and by supporting diversity, wellbeing and inclusiveness.

Women’s networks have been formed in locations throughout the country. Currently, the women’s network has around 215 members (which represents 16% of the NZCS staff); Men are also welcome to join.

A successful initiative has been the introduction of speed mentoring. This is a three-hour event where mentees have four 10-minute conversations with mentors and staff in order to network with colleagues and the mentors, who are both female and male. The network organizes events and workshops on topics such as mental health, the gender pay gap, interview skills and CV writing.

Māori Network

The Māori Network promotes whanaungatanga (family relationships) and belonging for Māori staff and, in turn, for all of the NZCS.

The Māori Network encourages and supports understanding of Te Reo Māori me ōna tikanga, (Māori language, customs and practices), and the associated value systems and understanding. This includes promoting ngā taonga tuku iho (‘traditions of our ancestors’), such as Kapa Haka, which is open to everyone at the NZCS. The Network creates an annual campaign for Te Wiki o te Reo Māori language week and is actively involved in building the NZCS Māori capability programme.

Customs and Ministry for Primary Industries Asian network

The Asian Network is a group comprising staff from the NZCS and the Ministry for Primary Industries. The network provides members with cultural knowledge and insights to inform community outreach programmes and business decisions. Lunar New Year and Diwali have become established celebrations for the NZCS. The network also actively supports the development of translator skills.

Rainbow Network

The Rainbow Network brings together a diverse group from throughout the Rainbow Community. Through advocacy, collegiality and support, the network strives to raise awareness of Rainbow issues in the workplace and society, both within the NZCS and beyond. The Rainbow network made rainbow wrist bands available to staff who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Intersex (LGBTQI) and LGBTQI allies.

Pasifika Network

The Pasifika Network connects and engages staff across the Customs family; strengthening staff aspirations through support, training and advocacy and celebrating Pacific culture and diversity.

The Pasifika Network Komiti have used their platform to celebrate Pasifika language weeks with the entire NZCS organization via email. The emails include basic greetings, recipes and cultural information. This network has also co-designed an interview skills course, customized for their members.
In 2019, NZCS updated its Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2019-2021 (I&D Strategy). This reflects the maturation of inclusion and diversity within the NZCS. For the first time, it sets out diversity goals with the following focus areas:

- **Gender Equity in Leadership:** to have at least 36.5% of women of the NZCS leadership team.
- **Gender Pay Gap:** to achieve a mean 9.7% and a median 10.6% by October 2020, as per GPG Action Plan.
- **Ethnic Diversity:** to achieve specific goals of representation of different ethnic groups (including Māori, Asian and Pacific People) in the composition of staff as well as in the leadership team.

For the focus areas, the NZCS has set ambitious goals that take into account key data for the current workforce, such as staff turnover rates. In addition, four emerging areas of focus have been highlighted: sexual orientation, disability, gender identity and mental health. The emerging status reflects the work still to be done in these areas to identify relevant and useful data that will allow meaningful actions to be developed to increase inclusion and diversity among staff identifying as being within these groups.

There are specific actions and measures across all focus areas, which are monitored and analysed by the I&D Council in partnership with the P&C Group. These are reported on and shared throughout the NZCS and included in reports to the NZCS Minister.

To implement the actions and measures, the P&C Group collaborates across the public service to share and leverage best practice. The I&D Council and staff networks, (including the Māori, Pasifika, Women’s, Rainbow and Asian members) contribute to the design and support for the implementation of initiatives.

The I&D Council takes the lead on communicating the strategy to staff through multiple channels, with the communications group supporting them. The strategy has been shared with key stakeholders in the public service.

The NZCS knows that a diverse workforce leads to better decision making, leadership, problem solving and outcomes. The administration strongly believes in creating a culture of inclusion that allows people to feel safe, treated fairly and supported in their growth.

The Inclusion and Diversity Strategy vision is:

"Customs is inclusive and diverse: every voice is valued and respected."

"Kotahi te kōhao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro ma, te miro whero, me te miro mangu." ³

"Ko tātou te matapuna o te hapori whānui, kei runga i a tātou katoa te mahi ki te whakahau maru me te whakatairanga i a Aotearoa ki ngā rohe."

"We reflect the community we serve, and together we protect and promote New Zealand across borders."

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³ *This whakatauki or Māori proverb captures the essence of our vision. Its literal meaning is ‘through the eyes of the needle pass the white thread, the black thread, and the red thread.’ It originated with Potatau Te Wherowhero, the first Māori King, who, at the birth of the Kingitanga movement, spoke of strength and beauty through both unity and diversity, by alluding to the beauty and the strength of woven fabric.*
The Bureau of Customs of the Philippines (BOC) has implemented several initiatives to promote gender equality. The government of the Republic of the Philippines has required all public service administrations to develop a gender development plan and allocate at least 5% of their annual budget appropriations to gender equality initiatives. Part of the implementing rules and regulations of the Magna Carta of Women - monitored by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the primary policy-making and oversight agency for gender-responsive programmes of the Philippine government - is the creation of Gender and Development Focal Point System (GAD-FPS) within their organizations. The functions of GAD-FPS are to:

1. Lead in mainstreaming gender perspective in the agency/department policies, plans and programmes.
2. Recommend the formulation of, or revisions to, policies for advancing women’s status.
3. Lead in reviewing and updating of sex-disaggregated data for the GAD database to serve as basis in performance-based gender responsive planning.
4. Spearhead the preparation of the agency annual performance-based GAD plans, programmes and budget in response to the gender issues of their constituents and clients and in the context of their agency mandate.
5. Lead in monitoring the effective implementation of GAD-related policies and the annual GAD plans, programmes and budget.
6. Spearhead the preparation and consolidation of the annual agency GAD Accomplishment Report and other GAD Reports as required.

7. Coordinate efforts of different divisions, offices, units of the agency and advocate for the integration of GAD perspectives in all their systems and processes.

8. Strengthen the external link with other agencies or organizations working on women’s rights and gender and development to harmonize and synchronize GAD efforts at various levels of governance.

9. Encourage and actively pursue the participation of women and gender advocates in the various stages of the development planning cycle, with special attention to the marginalized sector.

10. Ensure that all personnel of the agency are trained on GAD.

Furthermore, these gender focal systems should be composed of members of senior management and representatives from each group and collection district of the administrations, thus ensuring a wide representation. The annual GAD plan and budget serves as the guide for the administration on the programmes and activities they intend to implement to promote gender equality during the year.

The BOC has had its Gender and Development Focal Point System in place - as is required for all government agencies - since 2011. Currently, 52 official and employees are part of the BOC’s GAD-FPS. The GAD Focal Points are designated upon recommendation from the selected offices and in consultation with the collection districts. All members of the GAD-GPS receive Gender Sensitivity Trainings, trainings on GAD planning and budgeting and other capacity-building programmes to help them perform their functions.

Examples of activities that the BOC has implemented through its GAD-FPS include conducting gender sensitivity training for other employees to increase awareness of gender issues and concerns among personnel. The GAD-FPS has also organized awareness-raising events and campaigns, including celebrating the annual National Women’s Month in March and the 18-day Campaign to End Violence against Women, held annually from 25 November to 12 December. Events include films and seminars relating to women’s empowerment and development, female issues and concerns and violence against women. There is also information, education and communication materials and support for online and social media campaigns by the PCW via the BOC website and social media accounts.

According to national regulations, the BOC submits an annual report to the PCW detailing how it spent the 5% budget allocation and the activities it implemented to promote gender equality. GAD budget use is also audited by the Commission on Audit. Some of the activities programmed and implemented by the BOC GAD-FPS have gained traction among BOC employees. Those employees who have participated in gender-related trainings and seminars have developed increased awareness of the issues facing women and men in the workplace - even in their respective households. Previously, some employees believed that gender and development programmes were exclusively targeting women. Over time, however, they realized that men are also concerned by gender-related issues, which GAD aims to address. By encouraging both women and men to participate in these activities - even just the simple act of wearing advocacy shirts during National Women’s Month and the 18-day Campaign to End Violence against Women - the BOC GAD-FPS brings these gender issues to everyone in the organization. The GAD-FPS aims to continue conducting these activities to both promote gender awareness among employees and to help develop gender-responsive policies and activities throughout the organization.

There are a number of additional benefits enjoyed by Filipino employees in both government and private sectors. Expanded Maternity Leave, which was signed into law in 2019, has increased paid maternity leave period to 105 days with an option to extend for an additional 30 days unpaid. The law also grants an extension of 15 days for single mothers. A female employee experiencing a miscarriage a stillbirth can still avail of maternity leave for 60 days with full pay.

Paternity leave of seven days with full pay is also available for fathers under the Paternity Leave Act of 1996. Under the Expanded Maternity Leave, however, paternity leave may be extended to 14 days if a female worker allocates seven days of her maternity leave benefits to her child’s father.
In 2017, South African Revenue Services (SARS) adopted an Eight-Principle Action Plan Framework to promote gender mainstreaming within the administration. This framework is monitored annually to assess SARS’s progress in achieving its set objectives. To oversee this and to support implementation and monitoring of the action plan, SARS established the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Steering Committee (WEGESC), which is composed primarily of women in senior management roles.

The background for developing this framework was a study conducted by the Public Service Commission (PSC) in South Africa in 2016, which identified a general lack of understanding within public institutions on how to implement gender mainstreaming. This resulted in the development of the national Eight-Principle Action Plan. SARS adapted this to its own situation. The principles of the framework provide an indication of what SARS as an organization strives to achieve and how it tries to align the desired outcomes in accordance with each principle.
Currently, SARS is developing a new strategic vision for 2024, in which one of the strategic objectives is a diverse workforce. For the next year, (2020-21), SARS has set a specific target on ‘Diversity and employment equity’, which covers ethnicity, disability and gender, each with specific targets. This new organizational approach within SARS also needs to be aligned to the eight gender mainstreaming principles.

The Employment Equity Unit, recently renamed as the Statutory Transformation Unit, supports the practical implementation of the gender equality and diversity work within SARS. It coordinates between units and relevant stakeholders, ensures compliance and drives awareness campaigns as well as manages monitoring and evaluation efforts.

The WEGESC and the Employment Equity Units are complemented by the National Employment Equity and Skills Development Committee (NEESDC). This was established to oversee and monitor implementation of the Employment Equity and the Skills Development Plans, as well as consultative structures for employees. Under the umbrella of the NEESDC, there are ten Regional Employment Equity and Skills Development Committees, which are mandated to serve as regional consultative and information sharing platforms for management. These are composed of Employment Equity Representatives and Disability Ambassadors, who play a pivotal role as spokespersons and liaison between headquarters and staff all over the country. They are responsible for ensuring that implementation of the eight principle framework is cascaded throughout the whole organization as well as playing a key role in monitoring. Each of South Africa’s ten regions must ensure they have representation from each of the nine designated groups, representing staff with different ethnic backgrounds, employees with a disability and employees from different occupational levels. Having Employment Equity Representatives is a legislative requirement in South Africa.

SARS also collects anonymous feedback from employees through a so-called ‘Employment engagement survey’, conducted every two years. The survey categorizes different areas of work, including fairness in the workplace, fairness of policies, benefits structure, relationship with the manager, safety in the workplace, work - life balance, bullying and harassment and whether you are provided with the required resources, etc. The survey takes a holistic approach to help gather an overarching perspective of employees’ views on their situation, and provides an opportunity for employees to address potential discrimination and/or harassment issues.

Since 2007, SARS has also had a dedicated Wellness unit, responsible for promoting a healthy and safe working environment that encourages employees to be fully engaged and productive. The Wellness office is responsible for organizing awareness-raising campaigns and seminars. In addition, SARS has dedicated ‘wellness officers’, who are responsible for monitoring internal queries and assessing problems that may arise for employees on wellness in the workplace, including harassment. The wellness officers also have responsibility for mediating and supporting teams where issues arise. They are also responsible for organizing the annual employee ‘Wellness days’ in each region, dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles. The commitment to fair treatment of employees and anti-discrimination is also outlined in the SARS Code of Conduct, which covers most discrimination grounds outlined in the GEOAT, as well as in the administration’s Human Resources (HR) policies. Another key policy document is the overarching SARS Employment Equity Policy. This in turn is complemented by a wide range of HR policies covering various elements of employment equity. This policy builds on the national ‘Employment Equity Act In South Africa’, which states that all SARS employees are free from all forms of discrimination and should be treated fairly. Given South Africa’s history as a society that discriminated against certain groups of the population based on ethnicity, this act has significant weight. As a public institution, SARS is fully committed to creating equal opportunities and eliminating any discrimination - through affirmative action - against certain ‘designated groups’ to ensure equal representation of people from different ethnic backgrounds, cultures as well as of persons with disabilities.

SARS also has access to comprehensive sex-disaggregated data, which it uses in its human resource management, people and employment practices. The organization reports on this monthly. As well as gender, statistics on demographics, it also reports on ethnicity and disability. The data helps assist line managers to monitor achievements of equity and demographic targets as well as equal treatment in remuneration policies, training and career development. Statistics on persons with disability helps SARS significantly in ensuring that the administration can accommodate the needs of individual employees, for example the most suitable device or office structure required. SARS places particular emphasis on the confidentiality of such data.

SARS offers a range of trainings on the different policies relating to gender equality and diversity, including the Code of Conduct and the Employment Equity Policy. The Wellness unit also offers specific workshops on wellness and work - life balance-related topics. In addition, SARS organizes a number of awareness-raising events throughout the year, for example to celebrate “Women’s Month”, as events on disability and on gender based violence.

Other recently launched initiatives includes establishing the National Men’s forum and piloting Regional Men’s forums. These aim to offer male employees a platform for discussing and identifying solutions to the challenges they face in the workplace and in society that could lead to gender-based violence.
Gender equality is a key priority for the Swedish Government, and has topped the Swedish political agenda since as long ago as the 1970s. This commitment is also present in the public service administrations, including the Swedish Customs service, which has a long tradition of working for gender equality. The Swedish Customs administration has implemented a number of initiatives, particularly in its human resource management. For example, the administration has put in place an Action Plan for Gender Equality and has also taken part in a Gender Mainstreaming assessment in 2016, as part of an overall project for the public administrations.

The action plans on Gender Equality and Diversity have provided the main guidance in the administration’s work, with the last plan covering the period 2014-2016. This plan was based on the Swedish national law on anti-discrimination. The plan sets out objectives in six different areas and proposes concrete ideas on how these could be improved. These are:

1. working conditions,
2. work and parenthood (work-life balance),
3. harassment,
4. recruitment,
5. training and competency development, and
6. the gender pay gap.

Each objective includes a timeframe and identifies who is responsible for delivery.
Swedish Customs employs approximately 2000 staff members, divided equally between men and women. In managerial roles, 47% are women and 53% are men. One of the current objectives of gender equality policies is to employ more women in law enforcement positions, where currently there are fewer women than men. Swedish Customs has already succeeded in attracting more female applicants by introducing measures such as more-flexible working hours and using positive images of women in the job advertisements. It is also offering a network and mentorship programme for female managers on a local level.

When assessing the Administration’s internal work on Gender Equality and Diversity, the Swedish Customs identified several challenges. For example, the Administration tended to get ‘stuck’ in the first phase of gender mainstreaming - ‘the diagnostic/assessment phase’ - without managing to progress to actual implementation.

The administration therefore had to revise its working methods, focusing on the essential facts alone and on becoming more action oriented. The Administration decided to prioritise small changes and to test new working methods, rather than pursuing big projects that risk falling. The Administration has also pursued the mainstreaming gender equality and diversity as part of day-to-day working tasks for some time, including in:

- Competency-based recruitment, and in its recruitment training for managers
- Work on health and wellbeing in the workplace, in order to detect early signals of health issues and provide early rehabilitation, as well as incorporating work-life balance perspectives
- Induction training for new employees, which covers customs officers’ role as public servants representing the Swedish state. This reinforces a number of principles, in which equal treatment and gender equality are key.

Below are a few concrete examples:

- **Effectively communicate on Gender Equality and Diversity:** Previously, managers were expected to fill in long, complex forms with detailed instructions; these proved time consuming and ultimately delivered little. Such exercises have now been replaced by simplified information updates. An example of these are the 15-minute online briefings on the topic of discrimination and harassment, aimed at raising awareness and providing concrete tips and tools. Managers appreciate this new approach, as the briefings are accessible at any time and provide practical examples of simple questions to include in employee briefings.

- **Strengthening of the regulatory framework:** In 2015, a new regulation was introduced by the Swedish Work Environment Authority, strengthening the requirements for employers to work with the psychosocial, social and organizational environment at the workplace. In 2018, in the light of the global “#MeToo” debate on sexual harassment against women, Swedish Customs worked hard to raise awareness and provide clarifications on these issues. Managers were also supported by the human resource department, which supplied materials and information that could be used in dialogues with employees.

- **Increasing the number of female managers:** There is still a gap in the ratio between the percentage of female managers versus the overall number of female employees. Rather than making this an overarching priority for the Administration, the HR department is now targeting those departments where the gap is most pronounced. It is working with local managers to find targeted solutions.

The focus has been threefold: (i) nurturing an organizational culture with strong values, (ii) ensuring that management positions also offer an appropriate work-life balance and (iii) attracting and recruiting new managers using a competency-based management approach. This new working method has proved successful in those parts of the administration where it has been implemented, with the ratio of female managers increasing.

- **New methods for monitoring and evaluating progress:** The HR department at Swedish Customs, which is in charge of implementing the organization’s gender equality and diversity initiatives, has also adopted new monitoring and evaluation approaches in order to have more effective control and accurate follow-up. For example, rather than comprehensive reports on results based on data collection, progress can also be monitored through dialogue and discussion. Data and statistics are only collected and presented if they bring additional insights into an issue that is not already well-understood.

By way of illustration, when addressing the proportion of female managers, the HR department would now simply contact the concerned departments and ask for the relevant information, rather than spending time drafting a report and producing additional statistics. This new approach has made it easier for the HR department to access the required analyses, accelerating progress. Where further follow-up or documentation is needed, the HR department will pursue this on basis of more accurate parameters based on the specific needs of the organization.
The Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) is implementing the ‘Women in Trade Facilitation’ programme to support women traders.

In 2017, the URA conducted a study on cross border women traders to identify and understand the specific challenges faced by these traders. The objective was to enable the URA to improve its services to the needs defined.

The survey showed that women traders face many more additional challenges than their male counterparts. For example, women traders:

- more frequently report cases of being defrauded in the trade logistics chain than men,
- are often the breadwinners, with responsibility for caring for the whole family,
- experience a significant knowledge gap due to lower levels of education,
- are often not formally organized,
- are more frequently the subject of seizures for smuggling by customs enforcement, and
- have to walk long distances to sell their goods.
Moreover, the study showed that women were underrepresented in the trade value chain, for example:

- Only 5% of Accredited Economic Operators (AEO) were female owned,
- Only 5% of the clearing firms were fully owned by women, and
- Only 26% of customs declarants were women.

Based on the findings of the survey, and following its participation in the WCO-led pilot workshop on “Advancing Gender Equality in Customs”, held in Pretoria in May 2018, the URA decided to develop the ‘Women in Trade Facilitation Framework’. The Framework was launched in August 2018 with the goal of contributing to women’s economic empowerment through innovative and gender responsive trade facilitative initiatives.

The objectives of the framework were to:

- build the capacity of women in trade and in particular to increase the participation of women in formal trade,
- simplify customs clearance processes and procedures;
- advocate for gender responsiveness among partners and stakeholders;
- improve access to trade information, and
- enhance communication with women traders.

In order to improve the environment at the border posts and make them more gender responsive, the URA has undertaken the following initiatives:

- Provided fully furnished and equipped office spaces at the OSBPs to allow women cross border traders to become organized;
- Provided free warehouses at the OSBPs to store goods at zero cost,
- Conducted 38 sensitizations and trainings for women traders, reaching approximately 400 participants in 2018;
- Appointed Customs gender-focal persons at each station, who are responsible for the practical implementation of the Women in Trade Facilitation framework and reporting back to headquarters,
- Developed specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for those officers working at the border posts with responsibility for implementing gender-responsive measures; these included mapping and engaging with local women’s trade associations,
- Established trade information centres at each OSBP to facilitate information-sharing with women traders,
- Developed simplified information material on trade procedures and translated it into several local languages,
- Organized stakeholder meetings with other border agency representatives - including the border police, security agencies and immigration authorities - to advocate for support in implementing gender-responsive measures;
- Introduced simplified payment mechanisms for taxes, with apps and mobile payments, and
- Simplified temporary export and re-importation for cross-border traders.

Many different stakeholders have been involved in this programme. Different segments of women traders (from small- scale, cross-border traders to larger firms, both unorganized and organized), local community leaders providing political support, members of parliament, border police, security agents and many different customs officers working at both the borders and at headquarters in Kampala.

All initiatives taken have received highly positive feedback from women traders. The trainings increased knowledge among women traders, the office spaces with computers have provided the opportunity to become organized and the storage facilities at the OSBPs have reduced the costs of transport and storage of goods and improved security.

Through implementing the Women in Trade Facilitation Programme, the URA has developed many ideas on how to further improve and expand the offerings.

Ideas for future action include:

- Partnering with other agencies to promote gender equality
- Financially empowering women’s associations to further grow their businesses;
- Conduct ‘Train the trainers’ workshops for women, empowering them to manage their associations.
- Encourage cross-border women traders to grow from individual operations to associations.
- Provide accessible data centres (such as internet cafes), and
- Conduct more trainings in local languages that information traders can understand.

The URA is also looking forward to partnering with both international donors and other stakeholders to further enhance gender equality in trade facilitation. To this end, the URA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with TradeMark East Africa in March 2019.
HMRC (Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs), the United Kingdom’s tax, payments and customs authority, is committed to advancing gender equality and diversity. HMRC has a number of diversity networks and consultation groups that allow staff to influence decision-making and business strategies. These networks provide a forum to discuss serious concerns and to help eliminate the barriers that exist for staff and customers from underrepresented groups.

Networks have been set up for ethnic diversity, disability, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender, carers and European Union (EU) nationals. There are also consultation groups for age and religion or belief.

In 2018, HMRC made The Times newspaper’s ‘Top 50 Employers for Women’ ranking, thanks to its work on Gender & Carers’ Networks, its recruitment efforts targeting women, its mentoring schemes for women and the events it organized to celebrate International Women’s Day. These efforts have seen a significant increase in the numbers of women in senior management positions.
HMRC Gender Network

The HMRC Gender Network is a staff-led network, and it was passionate advocates for gender equality who made the case for such a network. HMRC has made a public commitment to reducing/eliminating gender wage gaps and the network is helping to achieve this. The network’s role is essentially to provide advice, information and support to anyone within HMRC on gender-related issues. Each geographical area has its own regional lead, and their aim is to improve customer service and job satisfaction as well as to raise awareness of the barriers people face, both in society and within the workplace. Regional leads are chosen on a voluntary basis, through submission of expressions of interest (EOI). EOIs are the forwarded to the Gender Network Steering Group and then the wider membership; however, a more consistent process is being drafted.

Its Mission is to:

- Support all colleagues and provide a voice for those who have an interest in gender issues
- Create support networks for members by encouraging physical and virtual networking
- Provide confidential support where and when appropriate
- Consult members, in order to help improve our understanding of their concerns and inform our actions towards them
- Work to understand and remove gender-related barriers to individual development and progression
- Review new policies and guidance, giving consideration to the impact of these on colleagues of all genders and consulting network members as appropriate, and
- Work in partnership with other HMRC and other Government departmental diversity networks and reach out to the broader HMRC community, identifying linked concerns and sharing best practice.

Currently, around 85% of the HMRC Gender Network members are women. However, the network is seeking to achieve gender balance in order to be more representative of the make-up of the employee base. For International Men’s Day this year, the network highlighted the role of men with caring responsibilities. Male carers are often forgotten, but they are a group that are rapidly growing. Male carers were given the opportunity to voice their concerns and share their stories. Open conversations have also been held with men in the department, facilitated by a Gender Champion, giving an insight into some of the issues that impact men in particular.

How HMRC Staff Networks are Set Up

- Each network is led by a Chair or Co-Chair, and has a Steering Group made up of Representatives (Reps) or Co-Reps from each of the 13 Regional Centres.
- The Reps work both on central network activities and on local activities within their region.
- The Reps work - and are funded by - one of HMRC’s businesses, but have their line manager’s agreement to spend up to 20% of their working time on network activities (for Chairs, this rises to 25%).
- HMRC also has a number of Diversity Champions who are responsible for supporting and encouraging progress on particular aspects of our diversity agenda. Diversity Champions are passionate about equality and diversity and who - given in their very senior positions in HMRC - are well-placed to drive and accelerate behavioural and cultural change.
- The Chair meets quarterly with the Diversity Champion, monthly with the central HMRC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Team, and quarterly with the other Network Chairs.
- Each network agrees an annual business plan, in line with HMRC Equality, Diversity & Inclusion priorities. For example, The Gender Network has three main priorities (others may emerge from the work the network does):
  - Raising awareness of job sharing and the increasing numbers of HMRC staff who job share (where two part-time staff share one full-time role).
  - Raising awareness of domestic abuse and supporting those colleagues who may experience it.
  - Raising awareness of gender-specific health conditions (eg the menopause, prostate cancer)
Staff Feedback

One of the advantages of the staff network is that it lets people provide feedback, both positive and negative. For example, the Gender Network has an email inbox and a Yammer group (an organizational social networking tool), allowing everyone with the opportunity to have their voice heard.

Staff may just wish to say thank you after they have attended an event or received information, for example:

- Following a job-share presentation: “Excellent session at lunchtime today about job sharing; thank you to all who attended and to the presenters”

- A message about how staff are now able to obtain additional security passes if they are gender fluid and use different identities at work: “Fantastic news. Well done to everyone who made this happen.”

Others may be asking questions, seeking contacts or information:

- On job share: “Does HMRC have a process where part-time staff can be matched with other part-time staff doing a similar role?”

Some may also be seeking an explanation, or offering suggestions on how the network can be improved. The feedback allows the network to judge whether they are prioritizing those issues that are important to HMRC colleagues, thus allowing for continuous improvement.
The United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and diversity. This is why the CBP has developed a Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and is also engaged in various proactive initiatives to hire and retain a diverse workforce. The CBP’s objectives on gender equality and diversity are strongly linked to the national objectives and laws.

The introduction to this policy makes the following statement:

“The CBP’s workforce interacts with diverse customers each day, therefore it is imperative that we develop and implement strategies to attract, recruit, hire and retain a flexible and diverse workforce that is capable of accomplishing the mission.”
The CBP Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2016–20 was developed in 2015 and pursues the same goals as the US Government-wide Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan from 2015, which identified the following main objectives:

1. **Leaders Lead:** Agency leaders shall intensify and innovate their inclusive diversity efforts through the active participation of leadership to accomplish the agencies' missions.

2. **Connected Culture:** Federal agencies shall create and foster cultures that encourage employees to feel uniquely valued and experience a sense of belonging, engagement and connection to the agencies' missions.

3. **Data driven diversity:** Federal agencies shall create and foster diverse, high-performing workforces, utilizing data-driven approaches and optimizing policies, processes and programmes to drive inclusive diversity efforts and accomplish the agencies’ missions.

In the CBP Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, you will find the following objectives:

- To promote diversity and inclusion in leadership development programmes.
- To develop a culture of inclusion.
- To increase employment for individuals with disabilities.
- To develop a communication strategy to engage all stakeholders, and integrate diversity management and inclusion as a key strategic priority.
- To engage employees as responsible agents of diversity and inclusion, and
- To enhance student programmes and expand strategic relationships with institutions for higher education.

In addition, the CBP has created its own vision and mission statements related to diversity and inclusion:

**CBP Diversity and Inclusion Mission Statement:**
The CBP will recruit, retrain, develop and advance a diverse, high-performing workforce that draws from all segments of society and values fairness, diversity, and inclusion.

**CBP Diversity and Inclusion Vision Statement:**
The CBP strives to be the nation’s premier law enforcement agency and a model employer by leveraging diversity and fostering inclusion to deliver the best public service.

Under the CBP's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan, all of the CBP's program offices have a vital role in promoting diversity and inclusion. The CBP’s Privacy and Diversity Office (PDO) is responsible for developing, establishing, and administering CBP policies, implementation guidelines, standards and programmes necessary to ensure compliance with Federal civil rights and civil liberties laws, executive orders, and relevant Federal policies. In this role, the PDO coordinates with the CBP's programme offices to develop and implement the policies, procedures, and internal controls needed to successfully implement this plan. The PDO also provides equal employment opportunities, diversity and inclusion as well as civil rights and civil liberties services to the more than 60,000 employees within the CBP.

The CBP's Office of Human Resource Management is also engaged in the objectives of employing a diverse workforce and executing the Agency’s mission. As America’s largest law enforcement agency, operating nationwide and with a complex mission that relies on a broad range of skills, perspectives and experience, it is imperative that the CBP’s workforce mirrors the diverse communities that it serves. The Special Emphasis Recruitment Programme was established to focus exclusively on attracting underrepresented groups to the CBP mission, including women, African Americans and other minorities as well as individuals with disabilities. In addition, the CBP is proactively emphasizing its diversity in several recruitment initiatives, including the design of the CBP outreach materials (e.g. brochures, flyers, videos, etc.) that are helping brand the agency as an inclusive organization that welcomes diverse applicants.

In addition, the CBP has held focus groups, workforce surveys and extensive research to identify the biggest gaps and barriers to retaining a diverse workforce. The data showed that remote locations and forced overtime exert pressure on the workforce; those who lacked sufficient support in caring for children or other family members were incentivized to leave the organization. The CBP extended the Child Care Subsidy Programme to include expanded employee eligibility and to add a Backup Care Programme directed at employee and family support. The HRM expects these services to positively impact retention.
As well as its established policies and practices, the CBP also sponsors many programmes promoting diversity. This includes Women’s History Month, highlighting the numerous accomplishments by women and recognizing their huge impact in the workplace. During Women’s History Month, the CBP regularly features women in its senior leadership roles, such as the current Chief of the US Border Patrol. Such programmes are designed to educate, engage, and inspire others to pursue senior management positions.

Each year, the CBP publishes - along with all other federal agencies - its “Anti-Harassment Policy”. On 5 June 2019, CBP’s updated Policy Statement was signed, serving as a reminder that all CBP employees deserve to be treated with respect and dignity and that they have a responsibility to build and maintain a workplace free of discrimination and harassment.

To ensure the objectives on gender equality and diversity are implemented, and to raise staff awareness on their rights and obligations, CBP employees must complete annual trainings on “preventing workplace harassment”.

Based on data gathered by PDO in conjunction with HRM, using employee survey results, workforce data, and studies, the CBP has increased its focus on promoting workforce resilience and employee engagement.

The following list highlights just a few of the CBP’s accomplishments since initiating the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan:

- Issuing a Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement.
- Developing an updated diversity awareness training module that focuses on building an inclusive culture.
- Sponsoring more than 5,000 diversity programme observances, and
- Increasing the overall number of - and the proportion of - women in the CBP’s workforce.
The General Department of Vietnam Customs (GDVC) adopted its most recent Action Plan for the Advancement of Women in 2016, which covers the period 2016-20. This Plan, as with previous editions, were developed in accordance with the National Strategy on Gender Equality of Vietnam. They are considered as integral to the Vietnam Customs Reform and Modernization Strategy.

The general objective of the GDVC action plan is to reduce gender gaps, enhance the role of women in various of its working areas and to contribute to the successful implementation of the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2016-2020.
The following six specific objectives have been identified:

1. To intensify women’s participation in managerial and leading positions in order to gradually narrow the gender gap in decision making positions.
2. To exercise equal rights for women in labour and employment.
3. To raise the quality of female human resources and to gradually ensure equal participation in education and training for men and women.
4. To ensure gender equality in access to, and and employment.
5. To ensure gender equality in family life and gradually eliminating gender-based violence.
6. To enhance the capacity for personnel to manage gender equality.

For each objective, has GDVC established detailed measures for implementation and evaluation.

For Objective 1, the administration has set the following targets:

- To strive for the percentage of 38% or higher of women participating in steering committees in the 2016-20 tenure: 38% of the trade union executive committee to consist of female officers and 30% of the youth union executive committee.
- For a female officer as GDVC General Director or Deputy General Director by 2020.
- By 2020, 50% of those customs branches and divisions under GDVC with over 30% female employees will have women holding key leading positions.
- By 2020, women will make up 8% of the department’s directors or equivalent positions within senior ranks, including 10% of the deputy directors or equivalent positions. Among middle managers, women will account for 35% of the Heads of Division, Deputy Heads of Division and similar positions.

The priorities for implementing the Action Plan are as follows:

- Enhancing the leadership and supervision of gender equality work by steering committees and customs authorities at all levels.
- Improving the legal frameworks for gender equality and promoting gender mainstreaming.
- Enhancing the managerial capacity for gender equality with different education programs.
- Accelerating dissemination and communication activities for raising awareness of gender equality.
- Mobilizing – and using efficiently - financial resources for gender equality work and to allocate budget for gender equality programmes according to State budget decentralization.
- Strengthening inspection and evaluation of the implementation of the gender equality legal framework and the action plan for advancing women in the GDVC and in local customs houses.

In addition, the GDVC and its Board for Advancement of Women have proposed specific solutions for each of the defined objectives. These solutions are robust steps to ensure that the set of targets designed for each objective are met.

For example, the proposed solutions for achieving Objective 1 are as follow:

- To increase the engagement of customs leaders and managers at all levels in implementing the Action Plan through regulations. For example, Boards for the Advancement of Women at all levels must include the directors and heads of relevant departments.
- To establish long-term planning for female managers and leaders with specific proportions of women expected for each leadership title.
- To ensure transparency in the nomination process, with clear requirements for each position, giving women and men equal opportunity to be promoted.
- To deliver capacity building programmes and projects, including training and retraining courses, to enhance managerial knowledge and skills, the use of foreign languages and information technology. The eligibility and expected rates of female colleagues’ participation in these programmes are clearly and transparently stated.
- To disseminate and communicate in order to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality and women’s role in developing the organization via publications, seminars, workshops, meetings dialogues, celebrations and awards.
- To exercise periodical monitoring, and set up reporting systems for the relevant departments and local customs administrations to ensure they are effective in implementing the action plan.

Implementation of the Strategy

Currently, there are 18 departments / divisions within the GDVC and 35 customs houses at a provincial level. Although all are involved in implementing the GDVC’s action plan, the principal agencies are as follow:

- GDVC’s Board of General Directors
- GDVC’s Board for the Advancement of Women
- Heads of the steering committees, trade unions, and youth unions, and
- GDVC’s Department of Personnel and Organization and the Department of Finance – Administration.

Among these, the GDVC’s Board for the Advancement of Women, with representatives from all the above agencies, has a key role to play in implementing the strategy, by:

- Developing working regulations with the Board, drafting the action plan and related measures for achieving the targets, directing its implementation throughout the GDVC and its provincial customs houses.
- Providing guidance for, and following up on, implementation of the regulations and plans for the advancement of women.
- Coordinating with the Department of Administration and Finance to ensure appropriate funding for the Committee’s activities, according to the allocation and guidance of the Ministry of Finance and the National Committee for the Advancement of Women in Vietnam.
- Collaborating with relevant agencies inside and outside the system to carry out activities and programs effectively for the advancement of women in customs, and
- Conducting preliminary and final reviews of the Board’s activities and the action plan implementation throughout Vietnamese customs system.
Results

There have been significant improvements since the adoption of the GDVC’s action plan (2016-20). These improvements build on the advances achieved by previous action plans.

- There has been an increased level of attention and participation of leaders and managers at all levels.
- Boards for the advancement of women have been established at every customs house in the country, with managerial-level representatives at all levels.
- The Action “For the advancement of women” has become viewed as an integral part of the ongoing Customs Reform and Modernization strategy at the GDVC.
- All provincial customs houses have joined the GDVC’s action plan. Furthermore, they have developed their own local action plans - in accordance with the GDVC’s overarching approach for the respective period - and periodically report to headquarters on their implementation.
- These action plans have seen the level of women working in customs increasing significantly. In the 2000s, Vietnam Customs was male dominated, something that has changed dramatically. Women made up 47% of new recruits in 2001, increasing to 82% in 2010 and in subsequent years. As a result, the proportion of female staff reached 34% in 2018, rising to 39% in April 2020, significantly narrowing the gender gap in Vietnam Customs.
- The educational levels of women working in Vietnam Customs have increased substantially, from 80% of female staff holding a vocational or bachelor’s degree in 2010 to 95% in 2020.
- Among senior ranks, the rate of women holding a Department Director or a Deputy Director role has increased from none in 2000 to around 9% in April 2020. While women made up only 13.9% of middle managers (Head of Division, Deputy Head of Division and similar positions) in 2009, this had increased significantly to 30% by April 2020.

Outlook

While Vietnam Customs has made important progress in advancing gender equality in recent years, the administration acknowledges there is still progress to be made. The administration is currently analysing the results of the GDVC’s action plan 2016-20, and is currently developing a new plan for the coming years in order to sustain the positive outcomes and bridge remaining gaps.

Vietnam Customs has recognized that, in future, the administration may need to focus more on gender mainstreaming and on enhancing monitoring and evaluation, including collecting data for evidence-based decision making. The administration further acknowledged that it will be essential to develop further training modules on gender equality and diversity for managers and staff. To accelerate this progress, it is also keen to increase international cooperation and exchange of experiences to stay abreast of international standards and best practices.