



World Customs
Organization

COMPENDIUM

Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs

2023



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Gender responsive and inclusive policies and practices are to be adapted to the unique context of each country and Customs administration.

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“We hope that this Compendium inspires Members to take further action and share their experiences to foster further learning and global knowledge exchange.”



FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the second edition of the World Customs Organization (WCO) Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs. Recognizing the essential value of gender equality and diversity (GED) as prerequisites of human rights, for achieving sustainable development and enhanced performance in organizations, in the last years the WCO has increased its efforts in this area and has kept the gender equality and diversity topic high on its agenda. 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 equality and inclusion both in their internal policies (including human resource management, leadership and career development) and their external policies (in border operations and collaboration with stakeholders). We are pleased to see increased interest from our Members, donors and international partners in promoting gender equality and diversity in Customs and trade policies and procedures. Over the past years, we have also noticed how many members have stepped up their efforts to advance the GED agenda through different initiatives, whether targeting specifically women in Customs, women traders or, more broadly, promoting diversity and inclusion.

To respond to the increasing interest, the WCO has also enhanced its work by launching new initiatives and developing new tools. In March 2022, we launched the Network for Gender Equality and Diversity to provide a high-level strategic platform for our Members to exchange experiences, provide inspirational examples and promote champions that drive change. We also launched a second e-learning module, “Implementing gender equality and inclusion in Customs”¹, available in the WCO CLiKC! Platform, which provides practical guidance to Members on how to implement gender mainstreaming through using the WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT). Furthermore, the adoption of the Declaration of the Customs Co-Operation Council on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs in December 2020 reaffirmed Members’s commitment to further advance this agenda. Among its key objectives, this Declaration encourages 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.

In this light, this second edition of the Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs serves as a valuable publication for Members to obtain insights on how to become more gender-responsive and inclusive. The examples showcased have been gathered with inputs from Members actively involved in the WCO Virtual Working Group and the Network for Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs. We hope that this Compendium inspires Members to take further action and share their experiences with the WCO Secretariat to foster further learning and global knowledge exchange. I want to express my appreciation to all those colleagues worldwide who have contributed by sharing their practices and to the United Kingdom’s HM Customs & Revenue for making this Compendium possible under the framework of the WCO Accelerate Trade Facilitation Programme.

Dr. Kunio Mikuriya
Secretary General

¹ The development of this e-learning module was financially supported by the Government of the United Kingdom under the framework of the Trade Facilitation in Middle Income Countries Programme (TFMICs).

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”. As a result of this conference, the WCO developed the [Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool \(GEOAT\)](#), which aims to assist Customs administrations in assessing their policies, practices and activities. This approach also helps them to explore how they can further incorporate gender equality 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 inclusion issues in Customs. In 2017, the [Virtual Working Group for Gender Equality and Diversity](#) was launched to provide a platform for Members to exchange experiences and good practices, as well as to raise awareness on the GEOAT.

Furthermore, a [blended training package, “Advancing Gender Equality in Customs”](#), was developed, composed of a one-week workshop and an e-learning module raising awareness on gender equality within Customs. The WCO has also disseminated two surveys on gender equality and diversity, the first in 2016 and the second in 2019. Moreover, starting in 2020, the Secretariat has incorporated questions on gender equality and diversity in its annual survey to Members. In March 2022, the WCO also launched a [high-level strategic Network for Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs](#) to further promote inspirational exchange of experience between Members, raise greater awareness, and advance this agenda.

This second edition of the Compendium on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs aligns with the 2020 [Declaration of the Customs Co-Operation Council on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs](#) and the objectives of the new Network. It seeks to complement the GEOAT as well as the first edition of the Compendium by providing practical examples on how WCO Members are implementing gender equality and diversity in their respective administrations. The 12 practices included illustrate several of the key GEOAT principles and indicators, from crosscutting policies to concrete initiatives to address particular issues such as promoting work-life balance, valuing diversity in organizations, supporting women in their career development 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.





ARGENTINA CUSTOMS

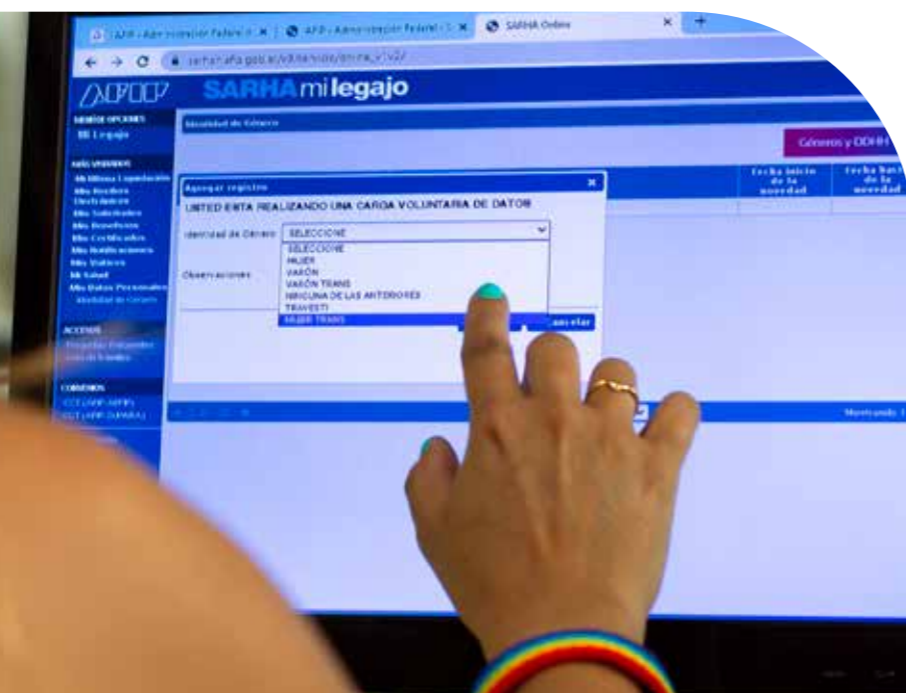
The Directorate for the Coordination of Gender and Human Rights Policies was created by Argentina's Federal Administration of Public Revenues (AFIP) in June 2020. Within the Agency's organizational structure, the Directorate reports to the Human Resources General Sub directorate.

The creation of this Directorate illustrates that the gender perspective is considered a state policy, both in regard to [the elimination of gender-based violence](#), as well as to [addressing gender inequalities](#), which are mainly reflected in the current distribution of housework and care tasks (caring for children and the elderly) in society. Argentina's Statistics and Census National Institute (INDEC) has developed and implemented a National Survey of Work Life Balance (ENUT) which confirmed that [women tend to perform unpaid care tasks to a much](#)

[larger extent than men](#). To respond to this, the national government has developed various lines of action so as to adopt a comprehensive and cross-cutting approach to tackle gender inequalities. Among these initiatives is the establishment of the Interministerial Round Table on Care Policies, comprising all ministries and State agencies, including the AFIP, and the Federal Care Map, through which the different organizations share information on infrastructure, the existing networks of caregivers and formal training, as well as awareness campaigns on the right to care and be cared for, on equal terms.

The Interministerial Round Table on Care Policies discusses and plans policies that contribute to a [fair and equitable distribution of care tasks between genders](#) and that recognize care as a need, a right and an occupation. It also





proposes that these policies include women who work in cooperatives and soup kitchens and whose tasks are not recognized as a formal job. Their contribution to the country's economy is essential through cooking, cleaning and assisting people in need such as the elderly, children, or persons with disability.

Within AFIP, the Directorate for the Coordination of Gender and Human Rights Policies is responsible for the following tasks:

- **Coordinating and following up** on the commitments taken up by the Federal Administration with other agencies also involved in gender mainstreaming and the promotion of human rights;
- **Analysing statistical data** collected on this matter with the objective of identifying practices and procedures that perpetuate inequality and hinder career progress and development;
- **Influencing institutional planning** from a gender and diversity perspective, fostering organizational dynamics aimed at ensuring greater equality in employment opportunities;
- Taking part in the **creation and administration of breastfeeding spaces** in the Agency's headquarters, and providing support and advice on this matter to regional offices;
- **Raising awareness** of gender equality rights among the teams working in AFIP throughout the country;
- Working jointly with the General Directorate of Taxation, the General Directorate of Customs and the General Directorate of Social Security Resources with a view to **preventing and addressing informal labour and human trafficking**;
- Drafting, together with the Deputy Directorate General of Planning, a Strategic Management Plan for 2022 on Customs, tax and social security policies based on the institutional policies: inter alia, training on the 'Micaela Law'¹, implementation of the **transgender job quota**, meetings with the Regional Directorates, and participating in roundtables with other public bodies;
- Implementing, together with the Deputy Directorate General of Human Resources, Law No 22431 that provides for a 4% employment **quota in government agencies for persons with disabilities**;

- Participating, together with other State agencies, in the planning and implementation of **policies that promote financial inclusion and education** from a federal, gender-based perspective.

Within the framework of the enforcement of the 'Micaela Law', the AFIP undertakes ongoing capacity building activities. This Law provides for the creation of awareness-raising spaces for gender-related issues, aimed at all public officials of the Argentine government, with a view to mainstreaming the gender perspective through all public bodies. The goal of the capacity building workshops is to call for reflection on gender-based inequality and discrimination using the national and international legal frameworks in force; as well as on the role of the AFIP and its staff in contributing to transformations that can lead to greater equality.

In addition, the first stage of implementation of the "Gender and Diversity Programme within AFIP" is currently underway. This Programme started with a training course on "Gender and Human Rights: Regulatory Introduction" delivered through the Agency's Virtual Campus, and a second training course for all staff which focused on the reflection and in-depth study of the concepts and practices that can lead to violence and discrimination. This training programme is implemented within a broader perspective of social and cultural education and so far 75% of the Agency's staff has completed this two-phase training.

¹ Law No 27499, enacted on 10 January 2019, requires the compulsory training of public officials employed in the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary in gender equality and gender-based violence matters. It is known as the "Micaela Law" after Micaela García, a 21-year-old who was a victim of femicide (<https://www.argentina.gob.ar/generos/ley-micaela>).

With regard to the prevention and treatment of situations of violence, the AFIP has a **specific Protocol for action and intervention in situations of gender-based labour violence**. The Protocol promotes a qualitative change in the approach to these problems within the Agency, ensuring the full confidentiality and interdisciplinary treatment of each particular case. This is also complemented by the provisions of Decision 16/92, which sets out the rights and obligations of Customs workers, including **leaves of absence granted to workers who are in a domestic violence situation**. Under the Decision, complainants may be granted up to 15 days of leave on full pay in order to protect themselves, and to carry out the necessary judicial and/or administrative procedures, without a need for approval by their line manager.

The Directorate for the Coordination of Gender and Human Rights Policies, together with the Deputy Directorate General of Human Resources and the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity of Argentina, are working on the implementation of National Law No 27636, according to which the national public sector must keep at least 1% of its job positions and vacancies for transgender persons.

In 2021, the AFIP updated its internal human resources administration system by expanding the choice of gender identities, leaving behind the binary logic in order to respect all gender identities. Thus, those who wish to modify their

gender entry may choose any of the available options: Female, Male, Trans, or None of the above. It should be noted that the option of uploading gender information is voluntary and confidential, as laid down at institutional level.

The AFIP has also developed a [Guide for inclusive communication](#) in order to promote the inclusion of all genders that have been made invisible by the use of the generic masculine in Spanish.

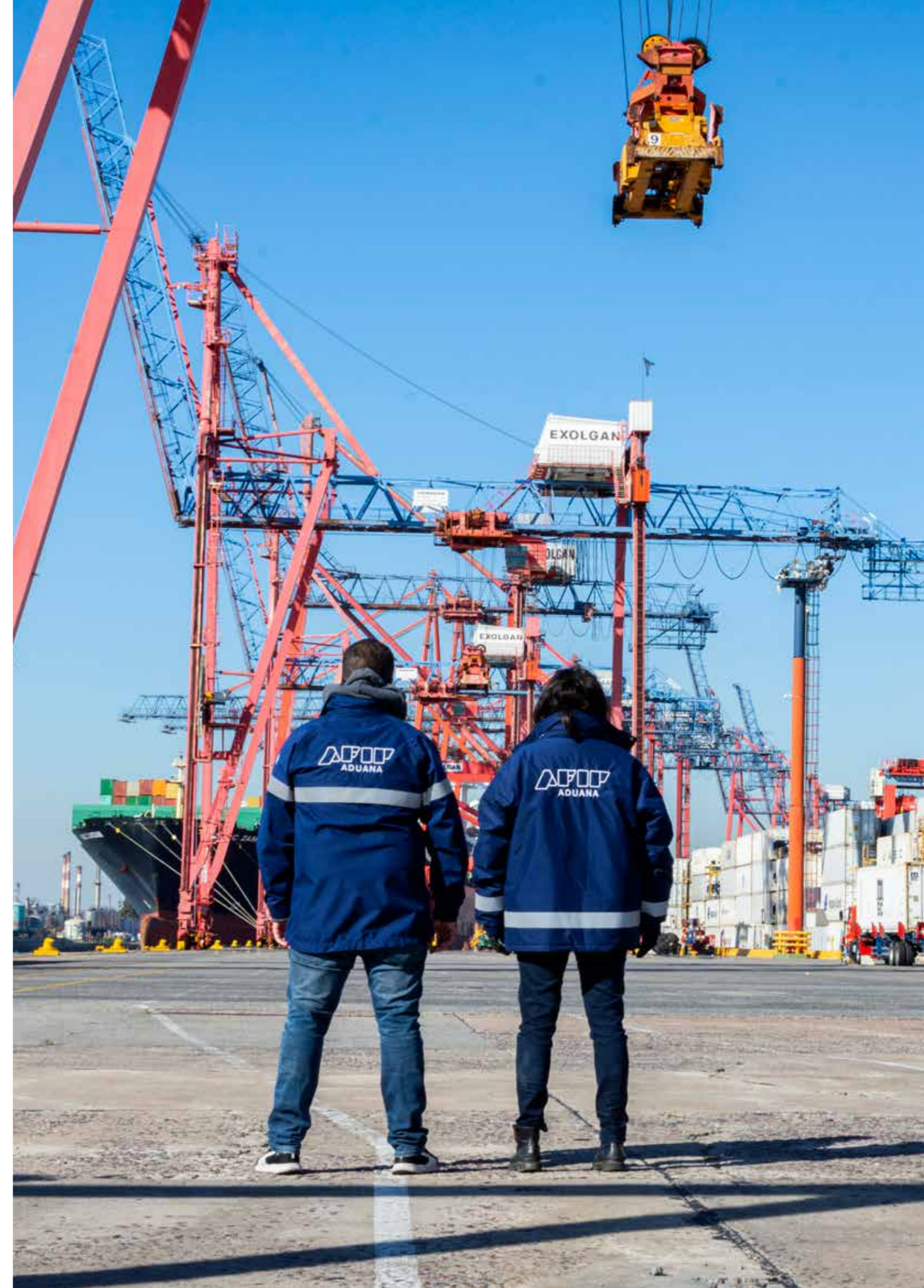
The AFIP carries out several activities that make commemorative dates visible to promote reflection and community action. These include March 8th, International Women's Day; November 25th, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; and December 10th, Human Rights Day. Senior ministers and officials attend these activities, which are streamed on the Agency's intranet for all the regional offices, counting on the contribution and commitment of the regional gender focal points. The activities carried out in the framework of the [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) were disseminated throughout Argentina, under the slogan #ArgentinaSinViolencias and #AFIPsinViolencias (#ArgentinaWithoutViolence and #AFIPwithoutViolence).

In addition, the Directorate for the Coordination of Gender and Human Rights Policies has carried out a [national survey on care infrastructure spaces](#), to gather information on the state of these spaces in each region and the improvements that need to be implemented to ensure equal access. One of the main goals of this action is to continue to expand breastfeeding-friendly environments, which allow women to attend work and therefore continue their professional careers uninterrupted.

Joint and interministerial actions:

In 2021-2022, the AFIP's Directorate for the Coordination of Gender and Human Rights Policies is participating, together with the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Women, Genders and Diversity of Argentina, in the development and implementation of the REGISTRADAS Programme. The aim of this Programme is to achieve a greater degree of registration of household workers.

The National Executive Branch has sent the Argentine National Congress a bill on "Caring in Equality", which proposes a "Comprehensive System of Care Policies" that recognizes caring tasks as a necessity, a job and a right.





CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

In its work on equity and inclusion, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) is guided by three core principles: **Demonstrating Leadership, Equipping Employees, and Building Awareness and Changing Mindsets**. These principles serve as an impetus for continuous reflection and change so that the CBSA can become a more equitable organization that is reflective of the Canadian population. With an increased focus on **intersectionality, which is “the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage”**, the CBSA is aware that an inclusive culture begins with its employees: its recruitment efforts are indicative of this culture shift, as it seeks to recruit people with the leadership and characters that it wants to see in a modern and inclusive

border management organization. The CBSA is proud that its representation of women is representative of the Canadian population, and its next focus of progress is to ensure that women are shattering glass ceilings as well as being represented across fields that are typically male-dominated such as the sciences, technology, and the frontline.

In order to understand its existing culture and to further achieve its representation objectives, the CBSA uses **rigorous data analysis** to support workforce planning. Within the Government of Canada, **identity markers such as race, gender, and information on disabilities is collected through a voluntary process called self-identification**. Currently, many employees choose not to self-identify for many reasons, and this likely skews the true results





for equity-deserving group employees. The CBSA's self-identification process is currently undergoing a modernization initiative which will be more inclusive in future and includes broader recognition and inclusion of other identity markers. The goal in future is to be able to conduct more thorough analysis based on disaggregated data, allowing for more targeted strategies to close equity gaps.

CBSA's primary data sources include, but are not limited to:

- **Annual employee surveys** that allow the CBSA to measure progress on key inclusion measures;
- **Listening tours**, sharing circles and pulse check surveys that collect both quantitative and qualitative information from equity-deserving groups and communities;
- **Consultation and engagement sessions** that are conducted by the government policy centres that help inform legislative and regulatory changes;
- **Formal reporting activities** such as the Many Voices One Mind: A Pathway to Reconciliation (MVOM) Progress Scorecard, Multiculturalism Report, Official Languages Report, etc.

In particular, the Listening Tour revealed that **81% of employees surveyed said they felt pride working for the CBSA and 72% of them enjoyed their jobs**. However, it also revealed that this source of pride stemmed from an individual's disposition towards the type of work they did, rather than the environment itself. The Tour also highlighted employees' desire for inclusion, and a sense of belonging was expressed often by people who identify as 2SLGBTQI+ (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and/

or Questioning, Intersex), a visible minority, Indigenous, or having a disability. Trust, unity and clarity, feeling valued, and belonging and safety were key themes throughout the surveys.

The Tour's engagement sessions also touched upon the CBSA's need to better tell its story to the public and the media, especially as it faces increased criticism of its Customs and immigration handlings.

The CBSA remains committed to changing this narrative, and benefits from the advice and support of its advisory committees for equity deserving groups (namely the Women's Advisory Committee, the Visible Minority Advisory Committee, the Indigenous Advisory Circle, the CBSA 2SLGBTQI+ Advisory Committee, and the Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee) and working groups, to inform the direction and support of a public-facing representation that Canadians can see and trust.

Ongoing initiatives that will help the CBSA achieve this representation include:

Women's Advisory Committee (WAC)

Mandate:

- Identify processes that either help or hinder the progress of women in the workplace.
- Advocate for women's leadership at all levels in the CBSA.
- Promote awareness regarding gender equality.
- Remove barriers surrounding the recruitment, retention and career progression of women in both frontline law-enforcement roles and administrative support.

Initiatives:

- The WAC launched an Inspiring Career Capsule Campaign, looking for inspiring women of the CBSA. The WAC receives nominations from their membership of inspiring women within the CBSA who have led impactful and dynamic careers, and who are featured in each issue of the fully accessible WAC Quarterly Newsletter.
- The National Officer Recruitment Program and the WAC successfully hosted the first virtual Young Women in Public Safety event. These types of events are significant as they exhibit the range of careers available in the public safety and security fields.

The WAC, the Vice-President of the Intelligence and Enforcement Branch (IEB), and the Culture Ambassador Network are jointly sponsoring a Women Leaders Speakers Series open to all employees in late 2022/early 2023 to celebrate and support women and leadership.

Visible Minority Advisory Committee (VMAC)

Mandate:

- Create a more respectful and inclusive work environment for visible minorities.
- Remove barriers faced by the visible minority community.
- Assist in increasing awareness and understanding of the issues that concern visible minorities in order to improve recruitment, retention, accommodation, training and development, and career progression.

Initiatives:

- The VMAC Mentoring Program connects visible minority mentees with mentors who are interested in helping them achieve their learning and development objectives.

The Anti-Racism Task Force, spearheaded by the VMAC and established on 23 July 2020, oversaw the drafting of an Anti-Racism Strategy for the CBSA. VMAC is currently supporting the CBSA in accomplishing the goals laid out in the Strategy.

Indigenous Advisory Circle (IAC)

Mandate:

- Creation of a supportive work environment for Indigenous employees with clear and available advocacy channels.
- Information sharing regarding Indigenous context and issues regarding policies and their application.
- Participation in Employment Equity initiatives as they relate to Indigenous Peoples.
- Collaboration with other advocacy groups to further diversity and inclusion within the CBSA.





Initiatives:

- Monthly Workshops, Elder Talks, Sharing/Wellness Circles, Survivor Stories, Learning Events.
- The development of the Indigenous Candidate Mentorship initiative, which is designed to connect self-declared Indigenous candidates with Indigenous mentors who can offer personalized support and guidance throughout the CBSA Officer Trainee – Developmental Program selection process.
- Supporting the Indigenous Student Employment Opportunity (ISEO) which is a federal government initiative to ensure that the CBSA's next generation of employees reflects the diversity of the country's Indigenous population.
- The development of the Indigenous Wellness, Resources and Support page on the CBSA intranet, to support Indigenous employees in their wellness, provide mental health resources, and help non-Indigenous employees gain access to additional resources, including a manager toolkit of communication methods with a cultural empathy lens.

CBSA 2SLGBTQI+ Advisory Committee

Mandate:

- Provide a safe and open forum for members to connect and discuss 2SLGBTQI+ issues.
- Promote a healthy and inclusive workplace.
- Raise awareness and serves as a consultative body on issues that impact the CBSA 2SLGBTQI+ community.
- Help the CBSA deliver on commitments to diversity and inclusion.

Initiatives:

- Creation of a Positive Space course that is delivered to all new CBSA officer recruits and to employees across the organization, and maintenance of a network of Positive Space Ambassadors.
- Creation of Supporting Transgender, Non-Binary, and Two-Spirit Employees: Guidelines for People Managers and Employees, a comprehensive document relating to the process of transitioning to an affirming gender identity as a guide to provide useful information to help our employees and managers.
- Creation and delivery of Gender Diversity and Inclusivity Workshops to increase awareness towards gender pronouns and gender-inclusive language and offering a forum to discuss and strengthen the CBSA's collective commitment towards fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment.

Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee (PDAC)

Mandate:

- Assist in the promotion of both the representation and interests of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) working at the CBSA.
- Empower management and employees to comprehend and develop skills sets that are conducive to an accessible and inclusive workforce.
- Reflect policy, programmes and initiatives to include standards that promote full participation by PwD.

- Participate in Employment Equity and Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) initiatives as they relate to PwD, using an intersectional lens.

Initiatives:

- Organize awareness sessions on issues that concern persons with disabilities.
- Support the CBSA's Accessibility Office with the identification of barriers and challenges that PwD experience.

Recruitment and Outreach Efforts

At the CBSA, recruitment is a centralized programme which allows for the development of nationalized strategies. The 2022-2025 National Officer Recruitment and Outreach Strategy and Action Plan focuses on five key groups: **women, bilingual (English and French) candidates, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, and 2SLGBTQI+ people**. It aims to address gaps across Canada, create awareness and promote self-declaration, as well as develop connections, solidify partnerships and improve recruitment efforts. It aspires to reach gender parity in all of its cohorts moving forward. Additionally, this area launched a targeted hiring process that is focused on improving diversity aimed at equity-deserving groups and bilingual candidates.

To increase its appeal to a broader audience, the CBSA applies an inclusive lens to its recruitment and retention efforts, showcasing employees through such campaigns as **People of the CBSA, or recruitment series specifically geared at women**, including the 3-part series **Women of the CBSA – We want you!** and the 4-part speaker series **Meet the Women of the CBSA**. It also supports new and current recruits in their career development through mentorship, targeted processes and management cadre programmes, while maintaining a sustained focus on its desired culture through training at all levels, and ongoing learning.

Development and Mentorship

The CBSA knows that inclusion does not stop at achieving representation targets, but also requires a concerted effort to combat systemic barriers to career mobility. **The CBSA has launched a number of pilot initiatives to test coaching, mentorship and developmental models**. As one example, the CBSA's Executive Committee endorsed the Employment Equity Executive Leadership Development Program (EEEXLDP). This programme brought together 11 high-potential employees, and provided them with an executive coach to work through a case study on Hybrid Work models, a challenge that organizations across the globe are facing today. The programme was well received by both the participants and the sponsoring leadership team. The CBSA is currently exploring expanding this programme to better serve future talent management objectives.





CENTRAL CUSTOMS AUTHORITY OF GERMANY

In Germany, gender equality and diversity are key principles that have been the focus of targeted legislation for the past two decades and more. The General Act on Equal Treatment (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz - AGG) and the current Federal Act on Gender Equality (Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz - BGleIG) form the basis on which German Customs implements these principles.

Achieving gender equality by eliminating existing gender-based discrimination, in particular, discrimination against women, and preventing such discrimination in the future, as well as improving work-life balance, have been crucial concerns for German Customs in recent years.

The administration currently employs approximately 42,000 staff; around 42% of these are women. The share of women in senior and

high-level management positions is between 37% and 54%, and the share of women in leading positions at operational level is between 36% and 41%.¹

In accordance with the national objectives, German Customs is promoting the advancement of women within its administration, both in terms of career development and to improve the work-life balance of employees. Improved work-life balance can have a big impact on the possibilities for women to advance in their careers, and the incentives for them to do so. This process starts in the recruitment phase, and continues through staff development and training.

German Customs has developed a dedicated action plan as a central organizational tool to promote gender equality. This action plan covers a period of four years, currently January 2020



¹ Status as of 30 September 2022



to December 2023, and is a central instrument outlining staff planning and development. It includes targets and guidelines for the collection and comparison of data, and this also allows progress to be measured over time.

The development of a “Gender Equality Plan” for each federal administration, as well as some of the topics this Plan must include, is a legal requirement under the German Gender Equality Act. For instance, there are specific legal targets to consider as regards the numbers of women in management positions.

The Central Customs Authority and its 41 main Customs offices and 8 Customs investigation offices each have their own Gender Equality Plan, based on a common internal framework; each office can also include additional topics that may be relevant to their local contexts. **The Gender Equality Plan helps to monitor the gender balance of employees at different levels, including by analysing the gender balance in promotions to the different grades.** The Gender Equality Plan provides for an assessment of how many female and male employees are benefitting from work-life balance opportunities and how this impacts their career advancement as compared to those who have not benefitted from

such opportunities. The Gender Equality Plan is required to set out possible ways of reducing the underrepresentation of women in different staff categories, how work-life balance can be improved, and how men in particular can be motivated to become more involved with family and caring responsibilities. The Gender Equality Plan defines specific measures for achieving each relevant target. If the targets of the preceding four-year Gender Equality Plan are not achieved, the new Plan must set out the reasons for this. Each office publishes the Gender Equality Plan on its intranet, where it is accessible to all employees. The administration revises the action plan every four years, and carries out continuous monitoring of the progress of its implementation.

In addition to the Gender Equality Plan, the administration also has an internal decree on the professional advancement of women. This includes, for instance, management guidelines on a continuous structured dialogue with female employees to address their career development needs and to motivate and encourage them to take on special duties, such as leading working groups or projects to expand their competencies, for instance. This internal decree has been developed at the initiative of the President of the Central Customs Authority of Germany, noting

that women often lack the confidence to apply for certain positions and tend to struggle, more often than men, with work-life balance. German Customs has also launched recommendations for management on how to conduct staff reviews to ensure that women who take longer periods of parental leave or opt for teleworking are not disadvantaged in relation to their male counterparts.

In addition to the Gender Equality Plan, German Customs also has an **action plan for employees with disabilities to promote wider inclusion issues.**

In terms of the collection of data, the administration has access to comprehensive data showing, for instance, that a large majority of part-time workers are women. Based on a total of 7,806 employees at the Central Customs Authority, 93% of male employees work full-time compared to only 66% of female employees. Of those working part-time (1,568 employees), 93% of women and 96% of men work more than 50% of the standard weekly working hours, while 7% of women and 4% of men work less than 50% of the standard weekly working hours.²

In Germany, every parent is entitled to take a total of up to three years of parental leave for each child. The full parental leave allowance can be taken in the first three years of a child’s life, or – as is more commonly the case – can be split into two parts. Mothers often take 12 months of the total parental leave allowance in the first year of the child’s life, and then return to work part-time. The remaining 24 months of parental leave can then be taken in the period between the third and eighth year of the child’s life (for example, to support the child when starting school and in school holidays, etc.). Although German legislation allows men and women to divide this 24 month-period equally, fathers most commonly take only two months of parental

² Status as of 30 September 2022

leave, which is the minimum mandatory share required by law to be granted paid parental allowance. German Customs advises staff on parental leave and professional re-entry after leave. It is currently looking into the possibility of an initiative to encourage fathers to take more parental leave, and is starting an awareness-raising campaign on this topic.

The following measures have been established as standard procedures within German Customs:

Recruitment

- **Job advertisements are written using gender-neutral language.** They use the same terms to address all genders. Where women are underrepresented in the advertised staff category, they are specifically encouraged to apply. In addition, each advertisement states that the position can be held on a part-time basis, unless this is not possible for specific official reasons. This also applies to supervisory or management positions, regardless of hierarchical level.
- When filling vacancies in a category in which women are underrepresented, if enough applications are received from women with the required profile and qualifications, at least as many women as men are invited to take part in the selection process.
- **In selection interviews, questions about certain issues, in particular marital status, pregnancy or a planned pregnancy, and current or future family or caring responsibilities, are prohibited.** Selection panels must comprise an equal number of men and women to ensure a fair and transparent selection procedure with regard to gender equality and diversity.
- Furthermore, **German Customs takes an active part in “Girls Day” initiatives and recruitment fairs to attract more girls and young women, in particular to its operational and IT areas.** These activities are embedded in structured recruitment campaigns for secondary school graduates.

Work-life balance

- German Customs offers employees with family or caring responsibilities the opportunity to take on part-time employment or leaves of absence. This also applies to positions with supervisory or management responsibilities, regardless of hierarchical level. Teleworking or family-friendly and caregiver-friendly employment and working hours are offered where possible. The standard work week is 41 hours, and employees can reduce their working time on an individualized basis. The only restrictions may be for specific work tasks that do not allow part-time working. Employees with part-time positions are relieved of their official duties in accordance with their reduced working hours as far as possible to prevent overload.
- German Customs basically applies flexitime between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. (there are some exceptions, for instance for shift work). Employees are free to arrange their individual working hours between this time frame, with the only obligation being to ensure the presence of at least one person in each office each day between 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To monitor staff presence, an electronic system is used to record daily working hours. If an employee works up additional hours these can be used to accrue additional holidays. The application of flexible working hours is based on the principle that employees are free to negotiate flexible daily working hours as long as team functionality is maintained.
- German Customs applies a strict teleworking model: employees have to apply for, and obtain, permission to telework; permission is granted for a period of one to three years, and the decision granting permission to telework states which days employees are to work from home and which days they must spend in the office. Employees may work a maximum of three days a week from home. This model predominantly applies to employees who need a large degree of stability in order to organize their family or other caring responsibilities.
- German Customs also applies what it calls 'mobile work' which is more flexible, and through which any employee with a laptop

can work from home on a flexible basis after first discussing this with their line manager.

This model applies to employees who have a greater degree of flexibility in their caring responsibilities or simply need some liberty to organize a personal appointment, e.g. to see a doctor during the daytime.

- German Customs also ensures that family or caregiver-related aspects such as part-time employment, teleworking, and absences due to pregnancy or maternity leave, do not prejudice personal development or advancement, e.g. in the regular staff reviews.

Staff development and training

- If female employees are underrepresented in a particular staff category, they are given preferential treatment in the career development process. The legal prerequisite for this is that the female staff must be equally as qualified as their male colleagues in that specific category, and that there are no overriding provisions relating to a specific male colleague.
- German Customs supports employee participation in professional training courses. It also assists its employees with family or caring responsibilities to take part in training. For instance, any additional costs that arise for childcare or other care responsibilities during the training period can be partially reimbursed.
- In addition to on-site training courses, German Customs also offers a wide range of online tutorials and digital training courses to reduce the organizational burden for employees with family or caring responsibilities.
- In addition to the regular training programme for managers, a special programme has been set up for employees in HR management, employees with supervisory or management duties, and individual office heads on different aspects of gender equality as well as on balancing family life, caring responsibilities and employment.
- German Customs launched a leadership programme in 2012; in 2018 it introduced a specific optional module on 'Women in Leadership'. This covers discussions of current research related to gender equality and female

leadership, and how this can be reflected and applied in the participants' own roles and work as female managers. The module intends to provide an opportunity for women to exchange experiences and to be an inspiration for others. The administration has received extremely positive feedback from participants who have completed this module so far.

Gender Equality Officers

To support HR managers and staff with supervisory or management duties, and individual office heads dealing with aspects of gender equality, each agency has to elect a Gender Equality Officer (GEO). In order to address the concerns of female employees, in relation to gender equality or discrimination and sexual harassment in particular, German law determines that only women can vote for and become the GEO, even though the scope of the GEO's work concerns men as well as women. The female employees of each office elect the GEO for a four-year term. The tasks and role of the GEO is regulated by German law. Although the function itself is not part of the regular job description, during her mandate the elected GEO is relieved from 50-100% of her regular work functions to allow her to dedicate sufficient time to the GEO role.

The GEO is tasked with advising and monitoring the administration with respect to the implementation, execution and evaluation of the above measures and the existing legal rules and regulations. The GEO can also take initiatives on certain topics or launch campaigns to set priorities in areas of further need of improvement. Each GEO has 1-3 deputies and, where appropriate, additional assistants to complete the work (depending on the size of the administration).

The initiative first started in 1994, when the first Act on the Promotion of Women (Frauenfördergesetz - FrFG) was adopted. Since then, the Act has been amended three times,

³ <https://www.berufundfamilie.de/english-info>

evolving to become the current Federal Act on Gender Equality, and the job description for the GEO has become broader.

Outlook

Although significant progress has been made in recent years, there is still work to be done. To further improve the career development of women in leadership positions as well as the general framework conditions for employees with family or caring responsibilities, German Customs has undergone consistent external auditing and has been certified since 2016 as a family-friendly employer by the "audit workandfamily" (audit berufundfamilie).³ This is a strategic management tool that companies and institutions in Germany use to align their staffing policies in a family- and work-life balance-conscious manner, and to provide tailor-made and needs-based measures. German Customs hopes that being audited will promote the identification of needs, motivation and satisfaction among its employees, increase productivity in the workforce, reduce absenteeism and sick leave and, in addition to these benefits, provide an answer to common challenges such as the shortage of skilled workers and demographic changes.





INDONESIA CUSTOMS

Indonesia introduced a national framework for implementing gender mainstreaming in the public sector in 2000 (Presidential Instruction No 9/2000). The Ministry of Finance (MoF), under which the Directorate General of Customs and Excise of Indonesia (DGCE) operates, issued guidelines for implementing gender mainstreaming within its various units. In the context of these regulations, and **to increase commitment to the sustainable implementation of gender mainstreaming, the DGCE opted to take part in the gender mainstreaming competition** which is held annually since 2015 and open to all units of the MoF.

The purpose of this competition is to raise awareness of the importance of implementing gender mainstreaming in a continuous and sustainable way within the MoF. Through the competition, the DGCE provides an opportunity

to raise awareness of gender mainstreaming and gives an incentive to all units of the administration to implement specific gender-responsive policies, programmes and activities. The competition is also intended to evaluate gender equality and diversity (GED) activities that have been carried out both at MoF headquarters and in the DGCE regional offices, in addition to other gender mainstreaming evaluation tools used by the MoF.

The objectives of this competition are to:

1. **Effectively raise awareness** of gender mainstreaming within the MoF and DGCE in a continuous and sustainable way;
2. **Collect data and information**, and identify developments and obstacles in the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the MoF units;
3. **Identify factors that influence** the implementation of gender mainstreaming;
4. **Improve the quality of implementation** of gender-responsive planning and budgeting in the MoF, including in the DGCE;
5. **Provide recommendations** on improving the implementation of gender mainstreaming in MoF units, both in policy formulation and as regards providing gender-responsive facilities and infrastructure.

The theme of the 2022 competition “Equal and Inclusive Development through collaboration under the Ministry of Finance”, highlights that, through synergy and collaboration, MoF policies can actively contribute to the advancement of gender equality and social inclusion at the national level.

The competition included a two-stage assessment. The first stage was carried out through SIPEGIKU (acronym in Bahasa language), which is the gender mainstreaming





information system in the MoF. This application is designed to assess gender mainstreaming implementation through the lens of the following seven prerequisites for implementation across all units in the MoF, including the DGCE:

- (1) Leadership commitment,
- (2) Gender-responsive policies,
- (3) Gender mainstreaming institutions (teams/working groups),
- (4) Resources (human and budget),
- (5) Sex-disaggregated data,
- (6) Gender analysis tools (gender analysis pathway/GAP), and
- (7) Community participation.

This application connects all units within the MoF and its DGCE regional offices with the Secretariat General of the MoF, acting as the managers and supervisors of gender mainstreaming implementation. **Each must submit a summary of their unit's advancement of gender mainstreaming implementation according to the above seven categories.** This report identifies information on various innovative and creative gender-responsive policies and activities.

Another point to be assessed is office infrastructure. This assessment **examines the availability of gender-responsive facilities and infrastructure which have taken into account and integrated the needs, problems and difficulties of women and men, including those with special requirements.**

After reviewing the fulfilment of the seven prerequisites, and the infrastructure, the offices which have comprehensively implemented GED based on the above points are selected for the next stage of assessment, which is based on the following components.

1. Gender mainstreaming planning and implementation

1.1 Commitment to gender mainstreaming implementation

Political commitment and leadership are the main requirements that must be met first and are the most important keys to achieving efficient gender mainstreaming goals. Political commitment demonstrates an alignment to gender issues as a priority within the organization and provides a favourable foundation and support to the implementation of gender mainstreaming.

1.2. Gender mainstreaming unit

Dedicated institutional structures and mechanisms can be created to support the implementation of gender mainstreaming, such as a gender mainstreaming task force, team or unit, and focal points, inter alia. A task force drafts a work plan or action plan and monitors its implementation, while also carrying out the related communication, information and education initiatives to be provided to all levels of employees.

1.3. Disaggregated data processing, gender analysis and quality of the preparation of the Gender Budget Statement (GBS)

- Managing gender-disaggregated data as an insight into identifying potential gender gaps;

- Improving the quality of the GBS in accordance with applicable regulations;
- Conducting gender analysis and utilizing the result in the formulation of gender-responsive policy, activity or study recommendations or innovations (which are not formalized in policy);
- Improving the quality of the GBS in accordance with the applicable regulations.

1.4. Community participation in gender mainstreaming implementation

The DGCE strongly encourages the community to get actively involved in the implementation of gender mainstreaming. Community participation can be achieved through a communication forum with stakeholders, academics and the local community.

2. Gender-responsive policy and activities

The criteria for gender-responsive policy and service innovation include:

- Accommodating the needs, problems, experiences and aspirations of men and women, and minority groups (such as the elderly, persons with disabilities and children);
- Improving equal opportunities, or reducing the gap between men and women, and minority groups;
- The existence of a gender-responsive policy oriented to a specific service/customer's perspective, which can be formulated through a Head of Unit regulation, decision, circular, memorandum or other policy document.

3. Gender-responsive service facility and infrastructure

The implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy assessed in the competition focuses on the availability of gender-responsive office buildings and infrastructure which have integrated specific requirements (including facilities and infrastructures that are utilized by several different units).

The review of the reports provided by the participating units and shared in the SIPEGIKU system resulted in the pre-selection of several units for the second stage of the assessment, of which five units were chosen for an on-site assessment of the office infrastructure by the competition selection panel:

1. **Migrant Partner Programme**, a Consultation and Service Centre targeting Indonesian Migrant Workers, provided by Juanda Customs and Excise Office. The specific stakeholders targeted in this programme are Indonesian migrant workers, many of whom are women, and less educated. The service centre aims to help them to access and complete the required Customs procedures when they return to Indonesia. It offers them easily accessible services, assisting them with services and registration via mobile phones if they are unable to come to a Customs office. The services provided include Customs formalities, the Online International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) Service, and a priority information service hotline for migrant partners.

2. The Surabaya Customs and Excise Laboratory **Gender-Responsive Budget**, which allows funds to be allocated to gender-responsive programmes and activities carried out by the Surabaya Customs and Excise Laboratory, including:

A) the provision of a mobile laboratory, which can be used to test certain types of goods, to serve importers and exporters who are constrained by physical and environmental characteristics, so that all service users have access to an optimal service;

B) job transfers for pregnant employees to avoid laboratory work, so to keep expectant mothers away from chemical contamination. The implementation of this programme provides benefits that ensure the optimal health of pregnant employees;

C) the provision of a shuttle bus for employees who work overtime to ensure travel safety, so as to open up access for both male and female employees to work overtime.

3. The Tanjung Priok Customs and Excise Office designed a **programme to prepare future leaders, particularly female employees, for promotion procedures** and other opportunities provided within the administration. The Tanjung Office provides equal opportunities to all employees, and conducts coaching and mentoring activities for employees who wish to advance in their careers.
4. The Yogyakarta Customs and Excise Office has introduced an **innovative application to streamline Customs declarations** at Yogyakarta international airport. This application can be used by arriving passengers to make online Customs declarations on their luggage, which accelerates Customs clearance times and makes clearance procedures easier for all passengers.
5. Denpasar Customs and Excise has several programmes for employees and the general public. These include gender-responsive programmes for internal and external stakeholders, namely:
 - a. **the leadership and staff forum**: This is an informal dialogue between the leadership and all employees on various topics so that all employees from the lowest level can access the management and vice versa. The participation of staff in this forum also accommodates their aspirations for, and contributions to, the organization;
 - b. **the Denpasar Customs and Excise Leaders' meeting with stakeholders, or the so-called "coffee morning"**: Denpasar Customs holds this **meeting with Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) stakeholders and prospective exporting SMEs, and provides assistance with processing Customs documents**. Denpasar Customs also cooperates with the Customs attaché to provide information on the target market

and product standards to ensure that they are suitable for export;

- c. **the Denpasar Office has also created a Community supportive programme supporting farmers and producers of traditional Balinese alcoholic beverages**. This operates as a liaison between farmers, producers and sellers to facilitate the process from production to product sales. The programme provides an opportunity for people who produce traditional Balinese alcoholic beverages, who are often marginalized and socio-economically disadvantaged, to compete with products from other countries. Denpasar Customs assists farmers and producers with various export procedures, such as the issue of the export notification. The aim of this Community programme is not only to support these groups but also to promote the overall economic development of Bali.

Based on the results of the on-site visits assessing the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the DGCE units, the Juanda Customs and Excise Office was selected as the 2022 winner to represent the DGCE.

At the headquarters level, the competition offered an opportunity to highlight some very innovative gender-responsive programmes, including:

1. **the Export Clinic Programme**
A programme supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through a system provided by the DGCE, specifically targeting women, by providing contact, education and assistance on export procedures and the introduction of various Customs facilities;
2. **the development of the National Logistic Ecosystem (NLE)**
DGCE developed the NLE to realize logistics efficiency through data exchange, simplification of procedures, elimination of repetition and duplication, and use of technology to cover all logistics processes and connect existing logistics systems.



To avoid difficulties in accessing logistic services, especially for minority groups, the NLE has been further improved;

3. **Smart Post Clearance Control (PCC) Programme**

In response to the lack of women auditors, the DGCE audit unit is promoting the development of data analytics capacities and decision-making processes in an attempt to expand the female workforce. The implementation of the smart PCC programme is increasing the number of female auditors in the following ways:

1. SMART PCC provides equal and easy access to data and information for auditors, and can help them to work more effectively and efficiently.
2. This assists auditors to gain more confidence, increase their skill levels, and also encourages them to broaden their competencies.
3. The skills and competencies of auditors are further enhanced through several training courses using the SMART PCC programme, including the adoption of critical thinking patterns.

Together, these developments are providing opportunities for female employees in particular

to make greater contributions by occupying strategic positions, i.e. auditor positions.

4. **Covid-19 prevention and care centre**

This is an inclusive Customs and excise programme which aims to facilitate access to COVID-19 testing, tracing and treatment facilities for DGCE employees and their families. The DGCE COVID-19 Task Force also provides education on COVID-19 prevention, PCR and rapid antigen test services, as well as vaccinations, in collaboration with various health facility providers in Indonesia.

The above activities were assessed to fulfil the criteria of a gender-responsive activity.

The way forward

DGCE is committed to promoting the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the administration, making sure this is done on a continuous and sustainable basis even after the end of the competition. In this regard, the DGCE is systematically developing ways of implementing GED, such as:

1. **Ensuring that GED becomes a permanent strategy in the implementation of DGCE's duties and functions** to respond to the

needs and aspirations of employees and stakeholders, inter alia by:

- a. **identifying gender issues through surveys of employees and external parties (stakeholders and other counterparts).** The gender issues identified are then discussed and solutions formulated in leadership meetings;
 - b. utilizing the **WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT) to make improvements, as well as monitoring** the policies, programmes and activities carried out to obtain data on gender issues for later analysis, and reviewing the budget needed for the implementation of subsequent policies, programmes or activities;
 - c. **continuously informing employees about GED implementation** through input from experts and academics, advocating for leaders, publishing guides on the implementation of GED, training of trainers, providing contacts, publishing information through social media in the form of podcasts, distributing infographics and various other activities to continuously improve the understanding of GED by DGCE employees.
2. **Including the policies, programmes and activities identified as solutions to gender issues in the work programme.** This usually takes the shape of innovations that aim to address the issues identified, for example:
- a. **media to build communication and provide education**, and efforts to provide the best Customs and excise services to the community, such as the one-on-one meeting programme for SMEs and at the export clinic providing consultation and assistance services for SMEs, so that the products they produce can enter the export market;
 - b. **providing services to internal and external stakeholders, such as the consulting services.**

3. **Creating a system that regulates budget allocations properly by carrying out budgetary planning related to the implementation of gender mainstreaming,** as outlined in the budgeting document for the next financial year.

The system is designed to maintain GED implementation continuity. The GEOAT evaluation identifies any gender issues, then the budget is reviewed to determine which activities are needed to promote gender mainstreaming.

DGCE also continuously monitors and evaluates gender issues that arise through the monthly organizational performance dialogue. Through this monthly monitoring and evaluation, it is hoped that gender issues, both internal and external, can be mitigated and a solution then found so that they can be resolved straightaway.

4. **Ensuring that the facilities and infrastructure that support gender-responsive policies,** programmes and activities are met, so that good programmes are supported by the right enablers and adequate infrastructure.

In summary, as seen from the initiatives mentioned above, the DGCE remains committed to continuously work to identify gender equality gaps and address these through concrete programmes and activities.

Key actions in this regard are to conduct surveys to gain a better understanding of the specific needs of employees and stakeholders, analyse the responses and to present solutions. Moreover, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives is important in order to gather inputs for future improvements to be made. Finally, to succeed with any initiative, ensuring an adequate allocation of budget to gender-responsive programmes is essential.





IRISH TAX AND CUSTOMS

At Revenue – the name of the Irish Tax and Customs Administration – we are committed to being an [inclusive organisation that reflects the diversity of the community that we serve, acknowledges and values diversity, and places equality at the centre of everything we do.](#)

This policy supports Revenue in its objective of being a leading tax and Customs administration, trusted by the community and seen as an employer of choice in a competitive employment market.

This commitment is embedded within a wider programme of civil and public sector reform in Ireland. Since the adoption of Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014, all public bodies are required to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone

affected by their policies and plans. This legal requirement, known as the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, also requires public bodies to assess, address and report on progress in relation to equality and human rights, in a manner accessible to the public.

This has taken place against a backdrop of significant change to the country's demographic profile over the past 20 years. Allied to this new policy has been a modernisation of societal attitudes that is exemplified by the fact that Ireland was the first country to legalise same-sex marriage by way of a popular vote, in a referendum to amend its Constitution which was held in 2015.

We are currently updating our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) to build upon our inclusive workplace culture where diversity





- Gender, including gender identity
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnicity
- Citizenship

This was the first time that such insights had been obtained from our staff, and this has allowed us to compare our staff demographics to those of the community that we serve using national census data. One of the findings was that there was a gap in terms of the representation of minority groups, albeit not as significant as may have been imagined.

is celebrated, and everyone is treated fairly. [Our process has been informed by the WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool \(GEOAT\)](#). We are also updating our three-year Action Plan for the period 2022-2025 based on guidance provided by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, which assists public bodies in developing policies and good practice in relation to human rights and equality. The Draft Action Plan addresses a series of recommendations related to data gathering and publication, training, customer and staff engagement, the creation of networks and the review of policies and procedures to identify and address equality issues. Some of these points are developed below.

Data gathering

One area where we focused some attention in 2021 was in relation to the diversity of our staff. [As part of our staff engagement survey programme, for the first time we asked our staff, on an anonymised basis, for details of how they identify themselves](#) under a number of headings, including:

In 2019, we conducted and published an analysis of gender and pay in Revenue. The analysis identified a gender pay gap of 16%. Gender imbalance in staff grades was identified as the leading cause of the gap, accounting for approximately three-quarters of it, while one quarter was due to different working patterns for men and women. It is expected that an update of our pay gap analysis, to be published shortly, will show further positive progress on this issue.

Dialogue and communication

Another initiative in terms of framing our policy has been the [establishment of a management/union partnership group where staff can share their views regardless of their positions and hierarchical levels](#). We have also increased communication activities, with webinars and celebrations around the concepts of equality, diversity and inclusion. Other initiatives include an annual Diversity and Inclusion Week, “inclusive internships” tailored to people with specific requirements, accommodation for people with special needs, the establishment of the Revenue’s National Wellbeing Network, and Revenue’s LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, queer/questioning, intersex plus) Staff Network.

The inaugural Annual Diversity and Inclusion Week was launched in November 2021 by Revenue’s Chairman, Mr. Niall Cody. An internal newsletter was produced which featured details of support available to staff, information on our LGBTQI+ Network, Access Officers and Disability Liaison Officers, and role profiles from colleagues from various diverse backgrounds. It also provided customer service tips for dealing with Revenue’s diverse customer base. Several events were organised to celebrate the week, including an introduction to Irish Sign Language, a fireside discussion on diversity in the workplace, a presentation on Human Rights and Equality in the Public Sector, a quiz on unconscious bias, and wellbeing activities including desk pilates and a demonstration on healthy nutrition.

[The Revenue’s National Wellbeing Network was established in July 2019 to support positive workplace wellbeing](#). The Network is made up of representatives at all levels across the organisation, with central support being provided by our Corporate Services Division. Workplace wellbeing can impact an individual’s feeling of inclusiveness. The role of the Network is to build a workplace environment that is supportive of living a healthy lifestyle. The Network formally launched “RevWell”, Revenue’s wellbeing programme, in 2020. RevWell has adopted the “5 Ways to Wellbeing”, an internationally-accepted, evidence-based model that is used around the world to support people in improving their wellbeing. RevWell has hosted a range of live webinars on wellbeing matters and important life milestones, with a particular focus, during 2021, on Covid-19 related wellbeing issues. In addition, we publish the RevWell newsletter on a quarterly basis, with tips on how to stay well in the mind and body with a focus on workplace wellbeing.

The [Revenue’s LGBTQI+ Staff Network](#) was set up in 2020 to help create a networking space for

staff with minority sexual orientations and/or gender identities, and their allies. The Network works with other Civil Service Departments through the Civil and Public Service wide LGBTQI+ Employee and Ally Network, a key component of the National LGBTQI+ Inclusion Strategy. In 2020, Revenue took part in the Digital Dublin Pride Festival’s virtual parade alongside other civil and public service LGBTQI+ Staff Networks, under the banner ‘Proud to work for Ireland’. The Revenue offices in O’Connell Street, Dublin, flew the Pride flag for the event and the Revenue Twitter account tweeted support for Pride 2020 alongside our LGBTQI+ Staff Network logo. We have established a dedicated intranet page and contact hub that enables our LGBTQI+ Staff Network to provide information and resources.

In 2021, the Network held an ‘Out at Work’ webinar with an LGBTQI+ activist and fellow civil servant who spoke about their experience as a transgender woman and the support received at work from the Property Registration Authority. The Pride Festival was celebrated again, by proudly flying the flag from a number of our offices, including our headquarters at Dublin Castle. The festival was celebrated virtually by hosting a number of webinar events, including a “lunch & learn” style ‘History of Pride’ talk.

Human Rights and Equality Training

To ensure that [staff are trained and knowledgeable in respect of human rights and equality, in 2017 we developed specialised training in consultation with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#). We concentrated on building the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights.

Gender issues in society are in part visible and in part tacit. The training allows staff to

develop an appreciation and understanding of the ways in which inequality can arise, the risks of prejudice, assumptions and stereotypes, and the potential for discrimination. It explores the potential for positive change and focusses on the roles of both the organisation and the individual in achieving this.

Revenue holds strong core values, including those of respect and integrity, which are key to challenging assumptions and to acquiring

an equality and human rights perspective. The training is rooted in these values and in the strength of their meaning and inspiration in everyday public service. It does not stand alone, but sits alongside our cultural values (set out in Graphic 1 below), our Customer and Employee Engagement Charters, and our equality, diversity and inclusion policy. Graphic 2 illustrates the key aspects of our training, focussing on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are necessary to achieve competence, supported

by Revenue's values. Staff initially participate in a brief human rights and equality module which forms part of the induction training for all new Revenue staff members. Specialised human rights and equality training is then provided to individual cohorts of staff, depending on the nature of their assignment within the organisation.

This training is managed by a qualified in-house trainer who has a background of working with groups that have experienced exclusion. It covers:

- equality and human rights principles,
- the domestic and international legal framework,
- discrimination,
- harassment,
- sexual harassment,
- victimisation.

A blended learning model is used to deliver training. Trainees engage and learn using a range of activities including theory, discussion, scenarios, case-studies and reflection. Trainees complete content-based material and knowledge checks online, and then attend a tutor-led, virtual-classroom session. The virtual session is discussion-based and interactive in nature, focussing on real-life experiences and scenarios. Participants contribute perspectives from their own experience and learning. They **learn through dialogue and self-reflection, covering issues that affect both staff and external customers; they consider their own identity and explore the rich complexity of diversity.** A key part of training involves challenging assumptions and stereotypes and exploring the benefits derived from diversity and inclusion.

Trained staff can

- Recognise human rights and equality issues and address these in their everyday work.
- Recognise situations in which inequalities or discrimination could arise and identify ways to mitigate these issues.
- Identify the potential role of stereotyping and assumptions in decision-making and ensure that decision-making is neutral and impartial in accordance with the ethical requirements of civil servants.
- Recognise how discrimination arises and what tools can be used to address potential discrimination.
- Communicate on the benefits of working in a diverse, inclusive organisation.
- Understand the benefits of gender mainstreaming and inclusion plus the requirements of the Irish Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
- Deliver excellent customer service.

Towards the future

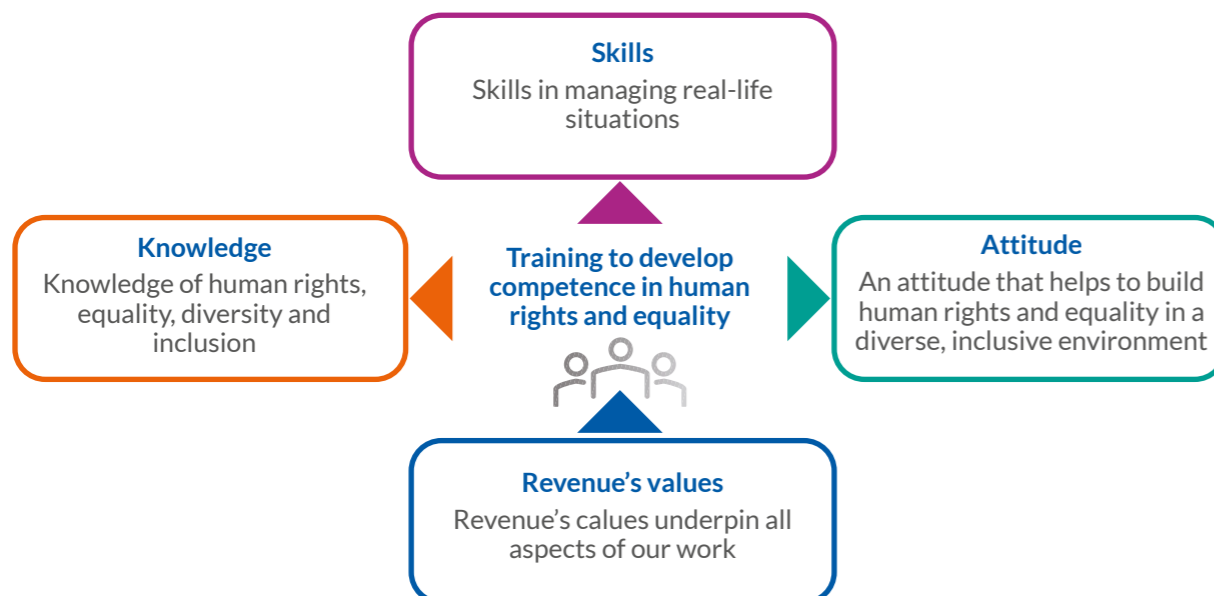
Almost 3,000 (44%) of our serving staff have received this training. Human rights and equality training are now firmly embedded in Revenue. Revenue is committed to contributing to the work done in the WCO in this area, and will continue sharing its experience. Customs administrations interested in knowing more about our training are warmly invited to contact us.



Graphic 1 - Revenue Core Cultural Values



Graphic 2 - Key aspects of the training





MAURITIUS REVENUE AUTHORITY

The Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) is a government agency which was founded on 1 July 2006. At its opening ceremony, MRA presented its Code of Conduct and Ethics (CoCE), demonstrating from the word go the importance that it attaches to building a culture of integrity within the organizational framework, work systems and processes.

The CoCE helps staff identify the boundaries within which everybody is expected to behave, thereby promoting public confidence and trust in the organization. Its purpose is to establish the expected standards of conduct and ethics for employees, and to provide guidance on the fulfilment of employees' professional and ethical obligations.

One of the guiding principles of the CoCE is 'Respect for People': employees are expected to

uphold strong ethical and professional values in dealing with other people, and to be respectful of their dignity and rights, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius.

In line with its core value of 'fairness', after consultation with the MRA Staff Association (MRASA) the MRA drafted an Equal Opportunities Policy which was approved by the MRA Board in August 2018. This aims to minimize the risk of discrimination against employees on grounds of colour, religion, caste, ethnic origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status or political opinion.

Another core aim of this policy is to promote recruitment, training, selection and employment on the basis of merit. The Equal Opportunities Policy has been circulated to all staff in the organization and uploaded on





the MRA's intranets. To further demonstrate its commitment towards gender, **the MRA has also drafted a 'Gender Statement' which forms part of its annual reports.** The intention of this statement is to promote a diverse and inclusive culture within the MRA in which its people are valued, motivated, and empowered to contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

As an equal opportunities employer, the MRA is committed to providing a supportive environment for all its employees to achieve the standard they are capable of. **The MRA aims to have a work culture that is free from any degree of harassment, intimidation, bias or discrimination.** With the goal of attracting the best talents the MRA has, in recent years, recruited an increasing number of female candidates, especially in its Support Department and in Customs, which was previously a male-dominated arena. In its most recent Trainee Customs Officers recruitment drive, 53% of successful applicants were female. MRA firmly believes that male and female employees can contribute equally to achieving the aims of the organization.

To ensure that this policy is monitored and all staff are being treated on equal footing, the MRA

has adopted a multi-pronged strategy through its Human Resources and Training Department (HRTD). Firstly, in the recruitment and selection exercise, processes are followed to ensure that male and female candidates are given equal opportunities to apply for any post, even in male-dominated fields such as the Customs Department or the Building Services Unit in the Finance and Administration Department. In addition, all selection committees include at least one female member of the management team. **A committee comprising members of MRASA and of the Health and Safety Committee has also been set up to develop a Gender Cell at the MRA.** Meetings have been held with private sector entities which already have a gender policy so that the MRA can make use of their experience to tailor its own policy document. Furthermore, as well as conducting regular health and safety visits and checks, regular public relations events are being organised, with focus group discussions held with employees to investigate any potential problems, including harassment, they may be facing in the workplace. Staff are also encouraged to call the HRTD directly if they want an issue to be dealt with discretely. Regular circulars inform staff about the relevant rules and regulations and remind them, for instance,

that MRA has a specific grievance procedure which must be followed if they wish to lodge a complaint.

In addition to the above initiatives, in January 2018 the MRA employed a part-time psychologist two full days per week. The psychologist has been assisting the organization in the implementation of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) by providing counselling/support services to MRA staff. The psychologist has contributed to the EAP in a number of ways, including presentations informing different staff categories of the importance of the EAP and the availability of counselling services, and also introducing psychometric tests as an innovative tool in the selection process for various posts, to give selection committee members a better insight into interviewees' personality traits. The psychologist has also provided counselling sessions to staff who self-refer, and has accompanied staff who need psychological support to medical board meetings. As the part-time psychologist resigned recently, and the MRA has now advertised the post on a full-time basis.

By providing equal opportunities to all staff, the MRA also ensures that there are no wage differentials in the organization. All staff within a particular grade have the same starting salary and pay increases over successive years. **Equal pay means there is no gender pay gap in the MRA. The MRA believes that it is important to reward all employees fairly, as pay is one of the key factors affecting motivation, employee morale and relationships at work.** Moreover, equal pay has a direct impact on the professional and personal lives of female employees, since it places high value on their worth, leading to cooperation and mutual respect between men and women. This provides a powerful message about gender equality.

Similarly, since the inception of the MRA in July 2006, it has had a proper grievance procedure for staff. Employees must first discuss their grievance with their immediate supervisor. If they are not satisfied with the decision that ensues from this discussion, they may report their grievance to the Director General by completing a 'Notification of Appeal concerning a Grievance Matter'. The grievance procedure is detailed in the Human Resource Management (HRM) Manual, which has been uploaded on the MRA's intranets. The MRA strongly believes that every employee has the right to file a grievance, in line with its CoCE. This procedure has been designed to provide staff with a fair and objective system through which to raise issues and complaints without bias. Moreover, having a grievance procedure leads to the satisfactory resolution of any issues raised by an employee. An online Complaint Management System is also available on the MRA's website; staff can use this





to lodge their complaint anonymously, if they so wish. Since the overwhelming majority of staff are members of the MRASA, most grievances are channelled through the MRASA for resolution. As the MRA maintains good industrial relations, the MRASA very often contacts the HRTD to find possible solutions. Grievances are also raised through regular public relations events.

Time off from work is essential to employees' productivity, happiness and general long-term well-being, creating an environment that breeds more positivity. It is therefore imperative that employees have a proper work-life balance. Staff are entitled to a maximum of thirty (30) days of annual leave and twenty-one (21) days of sick leave per year. The annual leave may be accumulated up to a total of ninety (90) days. Sick leave may be accumulated up to a maximum of one hundred and ten (110) days, after which a maximum of sixteen (16) days may be encashed each year.

Additionally, **staff up to a certain grade are entitled to flexitime, which allows them to decide the start and end times of their working day, as long as they comply with the core working hours.** Staff may also accumulate any hours they work in excess of the prescribed working hours and then take time off in lieu. Flexible working provides a better work-life balance and improves workplace equality. Greater flexibility benefits staff who have family obligations and other personal responsibilities.

The MRA also provides a total of fourteen (14) weeks of maternity leave at full pay. Maternity leave can be taken from six weeks before the due date. Due consideration is given to expectant mothers to ensure they do not work in excess of normal working hours, or on night shifts or a night roster, for the two months before the due date. Moreover, pregnant employees are not required to perform duties that involve them standing continuously or that may be detrimental to their health and that of their baby. Staff covered by the maternity leave provisions are also entitled to:

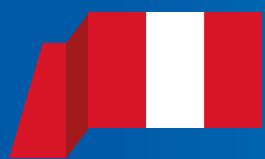
- a) Time-off for prenatal treatment, which may be taken under either the sick leave or annual leave provisions;
- b) Up to six months of unpaid leave, which may be taken in the twelve months following the birth;
- c) A maternity allowance for the birth of a newborn child;
- d) Seven weeks' special leave on full pay in addition to the normal maternity leave entitlement for multiple births;
- e) Maternity leave on production of a medical certificate if an employee's baby is stillborn;
- f) Nursing breaks every day at a time convenient to them for at least one hour, for a period of 6 months from the date of birth, or for a longer period if recommended by a medical practitioner; these breaks are counted as part of their working hours; and
- g) Two weeks' leave on full pay in the event of a miscarriage.

Male staff in the MRA who have been in employment for 12 months prior to the date of birth of their child are entitled to ten (10) consecutive working days of paternity leave on full pay. This paternity leave can be taken either before or after the birth of the child. MRA employees may also take adoption leave on full pay, on the production of documentary evidence. Adoption leave ranges from one (1) to twelve (12) weeks, depending on the age of the adopted child.

The MRA is fully aware that 'gender' permeates through all functions at the work place. For this reason, it has recently been decided to introduce gender as an item on the agenda of the Health and Safety Committee, to ensure that all staff are treated fairly and equally as regards health and safety issues. In the same vein, an additional female employee who represents the MRA on several gender-related committees has been brought onto the Health and Safety Committee, to follow up on any matter pertaining to gender.

Awareness sessions are also organized regularly on gender-specific health issues, such as cervical and prostate cancer. All members of the Health and Safety Committee have been tasked to work on the formulation and implementation of a Gender Cell at the MRA with a view to ensuring that all staff, irrespective of their gender, are treated equally and fairly. MRA has faith and trust in its talent pool, and believes it will be at risk unless its organizational development takes account of gender equality.





PERU REVENUE AUTHORITY

As part of the Peruvian Revenue Authority, SUNAT (the National Superintendency of Customs and Tax Administration) is committed to developing a comprehensive strategy to guarantee the right to [a workplace without violence and has launched concrete initiatives to promote gender equality](#). This strategy goes beyond acting in response to a complaint or report, and puts the emphasis on preventing such violence by addressing the factors that generate it, limiting the repetition or exacerbation of violence once it has occurred, and responding to the needs of the victims.

SUNAT's Commission for Gender Equality (CIG), in coordination with its Human Resources National Intendency, promoted the drafting of the Directive for the Prevention and Punishment of Sexual Harassment at Work in SUNAT. This determines the precise roles and responsibilities

of managerial staff and workers. It also offers training modalities and guarantees a confidential, impartial and effective investigation, following an approach that is not limited to punishment but also lays down internal provisions on prevention. A communication campaign, with the motto "[All for a SUNAT without harassment!](#)", accompanied the Directive to raise awareness of the new Directive and of this topic in general.

[In Peru, there is still a lack of sufficient data and studies on sexual harassment](#). It was therefore considered necessary to obtain a better understanding of the level of knowledge of SUNAT employees on this issue. A virtual survey was consequently developed and disseminated among staff. The results of the survey showed that [a large number of employees did not know what behaviours could be considered to be sexual harassment at work, or how to report](#)





such behaviours. Based on the results, the administration took the decision to develop a preventive strategy to counter disinformation.

In addition, to raise awareness among staff and contribute to preventing sexual harassment in the workplace, SUNAT developed an e-learning course for the administration that is part of a set of initiatives aimed at fostering an egalitarian organizational culture and counteracting violence in all its forms, in accordance with SUNAT's Institutional Policy on Gender Equality.

This e-learning course is in line with the national guidelines from the Peruvian government, which has rules and regulations on how to deal with violence in its various forms, including sexual harassment. The first step was to raise awareness of when people are perpetrating violence, or are themselves victims of violence. In most cases, the victims usually avoid reporting violence, because of the lack of information available on this process, the difficulty of identifying themselves as victims, a lack of evidence, a fear of retaliation, or distrust in their administration, among others. Even so, more than 50 Peruvian public agencies have

reported that they received complaints of sexual harassment at work during 2021.

In developing the e-learning course SUNAT collaborated with several ministries, including the National Civil Service Authority, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion, which have established guidelines to promote safe, dignified and violence-free work environments. Likewise, Article 62 of Law No 27942, which focuses on the prevention and punishment of sexual harassment, specifies that government agencies, such as SUNAT, must maintain an internal policy that prevents and punishes sexual harassment.

The e-learning course was designed to be virtual and built on a theoretical, normative and jurisprudential approach geared towards the employees of SUNAT. It responded to the need to increase awareness, clarify concepts, identify gender stereotypes, demolish myths, identify the causes of the issue, involve all actors, promote an empathetic attitude towards victims, highlight the negative consequences generated

within entities and society in general, and avoid situations of risk.

In the design and development stages, some fictitious but plausible stories were included, to match the defined objectives and scope, complemented by scripts that were adapted to face-to-face and virtual work, also covering evaluation questions. To this end, a schedule of activities was drawn up and a multidisciplinary team set up, composed of communication and training professionals. The e-learning course was first developed on the virtual platform, then test sessions were held.

Given the cultural and structural background in Peruvian society, and the existing internal regulations, it was decided that the e-learning course would be mandatory for all SUNAT staff (i.e. more than 11,000 workers). In 2022, a training calendar was drawn up and disseminated through the various internal media. Training commenced in March 2022.

The e-learning course, entitled "Sexual harassment at work: from prevention to punishment", focuses on autonomous learning through a series of interactive activities and cases that exemplify situations. It is also based on theoretical content from the fields of gender rights and human rights, aligned with national and international standards such as the International Labour Organization Convention No 190. It consists of four modules and takes on average a total of 48 minutes to complete.

Module 1: Introduction and context: General context in the public sphere. Why is SUNAT working on this issue?

Module 2: How to identify acts of sexual harassment at work. Legal definition: What is sexual harassment? How is it carried out? Who might be committing sexual harassment? Learn to detect sexual harassment: manifestations and when they can occur.

Module 3: Know how to act in the face of sexual harassment at work. What to do if you are a witness to sexual harassment at work. What to do if you are a victim of sexual harassment at work.

Module 4: Learn the procedures laid down in the Directive for the prevention and punishment of sexual harassment at SUNAT. What principles govern these procedures? Attention, investigation, and sanctions at SUNAT.

After completing each module, participants are required to go through an evaluation.

The value of prevention cannot be underestimated; it is indispensable in fighting the causes of sexual harassment and generating cultural change, by showing and adopting a firm and unequivocal policy of zero tolerance for sexual harassment at work. A person who is more likely to perpetrate workplace sexual harassment is significantly less likely to do so in an environment that does not permit harassing behaviours and/or has strong, clear and transparent consequences for such conduct.

The course "Sexual harassment at work: from prevention to punishment" has given considerable visibility to a phenomenon that is often silenced in Peruvian society. In SUNAT, it is regarded not just as a training course, but as a central instrument in the prevention work that strengthens both the organizational culture and staff capacities. Sexual harassment in the workplace must be seen for what it is a form of gender violence, which is a public problem that must be addressed as a priority for SUNAT. In this regard, SUNAT employees are now informed about where and how to seek support for cases of gender-based violence. The established procedure within SUNAT increases the options for reporting cases, reduces any misplaced feelings of responsibility/guilt by the victims, and generates collective responsibility.

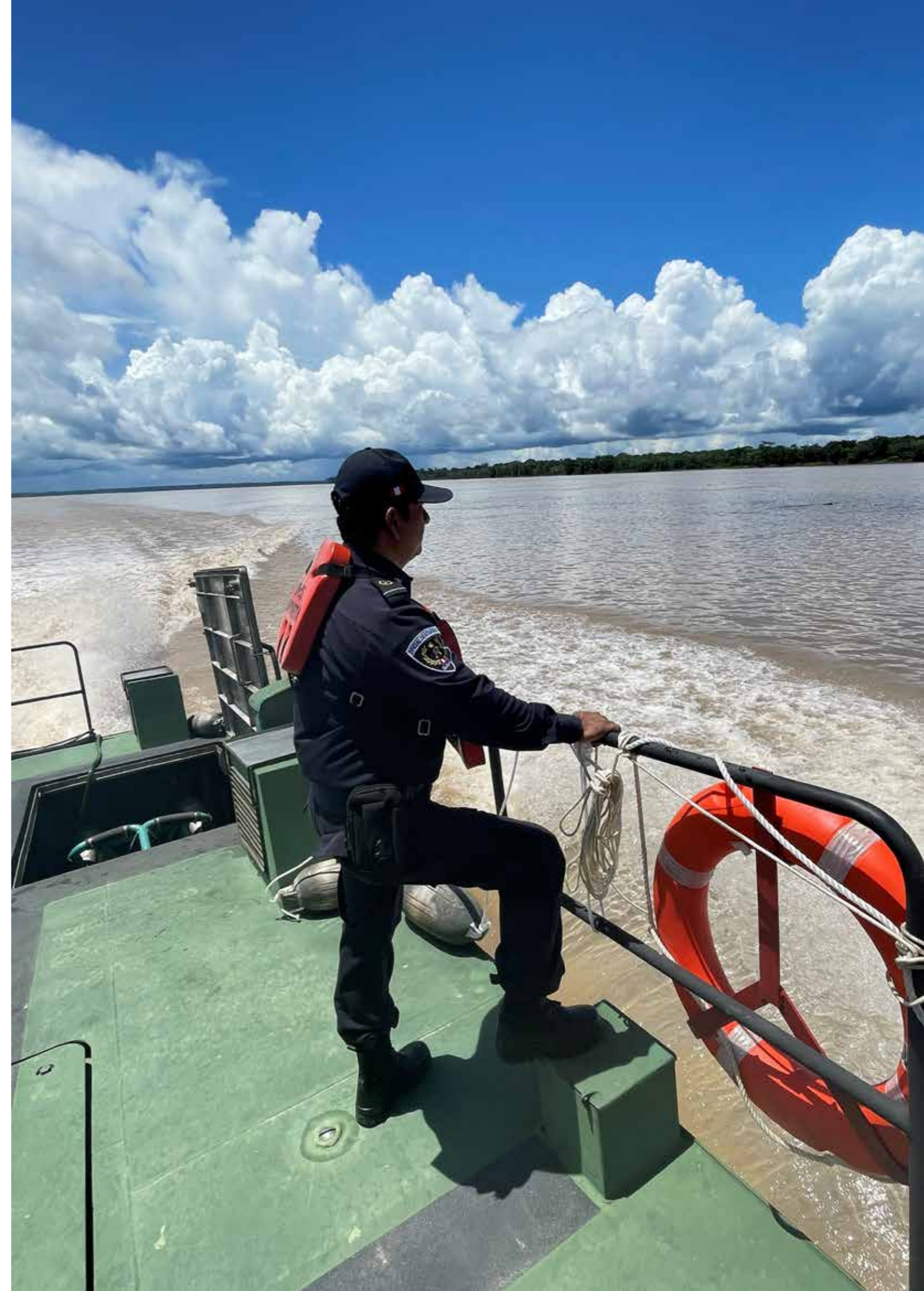


The motto: "All for a SUNAT without harassment!" is now part of SUNAT's culture, since it is continuously present in all communication campaigns against sexual harassment at work.

As of June 2022, more than 2,500 members of staff had completed the e-learning course and 97.67% of them expressed their satisfaction with the six dimensions of the course: the content, resources and materials, instructional design, organization and coordination, application and value. Providing staff with information and training them on the prevention of sexual harassment at work, this initiative promotes a safe, dignified, and violence-free work environment.

The next phase is to promote a communication strategy that encourages the involvement of men as allies and agents of rupture and change; recognizing them as part of the solution is strongly encouraged. A new survey is therefore foreseen to identify possible sexual harassment situations or risks of these occurring.

SUNAT is not focused on the symptoms of the problem, but on anticipating potential risks and preventing them by generating and promoting cultural change towards gender equality and establishing work environments that are free from violence.



EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

The World Customs Organization East and Southern Africa Regional Office for Capacity Building (WCO ESA ROCB) is based in Nairobi, Kenya, hosted by the Kenya Revenue Authority. The ROCB is responsible for running the various capacity building initiatives among the 24 Member countries in the ESA Region, and aims at **supporting the development of gender-equitable, professional and modernized Customs administrations that are fair, efficient and effective in terms of revenue collection and border management services.**

Over the years, the ROCB has been collecting trade and revenue collection statistics in the ESA Region through periodic surveys. The surveys are in response to the ESA Region

Governing Council's decision calling on the ROCB to provide data and statistics aimed at providing Members with the information to help them make informed decisions in supporting national and regional development. These exercises are aimed at collecting information on, among others, the revenue collected by Customs over the years, intra-regional trade volumes, trading trends among Members, Single Window implementation, Coordinated Border Management implementation, One Stop Border Posts, donor support, human capital development, and Gender Equality and Diversity (GED), among other pertinent issues. Recent surveys carried out by the ROCB reveal that the ESA Region continues to struggle to meet an equal gender balance – particularly in top





leadership positions - with women and people with disabilities remaining under-represented here. Nevertheless, as the ESA Region continues to develop in this regard, some Member countries are more advanced, with more female representation in top and middle-level management in Rwanda, Seychelles, Eswatini and Kenya, for instance. More information, results and analysis of these surveys can be accessed on the WCO ESA ROCB website.

To address this need, the ESA Region's Governing Council adopted **the ESA Regional Strategy (2022-2025) that seeks, inter alia, to uphold GED by bringing together a platform for gender and inclusion matters as well as developing and implementing the respective policies.** The ESA Region had already embarked on the GED journey in 2018, with the WCO ESA Strategy 2018-2021 also focusing on promoting GED under its fourth objective. This objective focused on enhancing integrity, professionalism and human capital development in Member Customs administrations through the development of subject matter experts, promotion of GED, and development of research initiatives. In line with this strategy, in 2020 the ROCB was tasked by the Governing Council to develop a GED Module

that provided a reference to review existing GED policies, strategies and procedures with the following four (4) deliverables: equip ESA Member administrations with an adapted set of tools to effectively complement the WCO Toolbox on GED; develop a Regional Module on GED; encourage Members to draft and publish GED Policies taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and conduct annual GED Conferences. The Regional Module on GED has since been developed by the GED Working Group, composed of representatives nominated by the various Member administrations (currently comprising representatives of Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Malawi, Uganda (Chair) and Zambia) and the ROCB. It was adopted officially by the 28th ESA Governing Council for implementation at both national and regional levels. This policy will guide Customs administrations in the ESA Region to advance GED within their administrations.

While it is not yet possible to determine the impact of this ongoing initiative, it is important to note that the Customs administrations of the ESA Region recognize the importance of GED and are committed to implementing it.

Customs officers deal with real-time issues that require them to adopt gender-sensitive judgments. **Encouraging diversity and gender equality in the workplace has been shown to promote innovation and improve individual and organizational performance.** To take full advantage of everybody's skills and competencies, the ESA Regional Module on GED provides clear guidance to Customs administrations on how to offer equal opportunities and put in place internal policies that will prevent discrimination and unfair advantages to anyone in the organization. Customs administrations also have a direct impact on the trading community and, as such, the module provides for operational policies and procedures that consider their impact on women traders and minorities. Customs administrations will therefore examine how their general policies could unfairly disadvantage not only their employees, but also women traders, and rectify any imbalance.

In 2021, the WCO ESA ROCB, through its annual trade statistics surveys, identified various challenges experienced by informal cross-border traders. Informal cross-border trade is defined as trade between neighbouring countries mainly conducted by small, unregistered traders. The informal aspect of such trade resides in the traders not being registered legally in their respective countries, and is not necessarily due to the traders not adhering to Customs rules and regulations. The survey was carried out among the Member administrations of the ESA Region and addressed the following two questions, among others: what are the challenges experienced by small-scale/women cross-border traders at border posts? What is the importance of gender-awareness training for Customs and other border officials? **It should be noted that the majority of informal cross-border traders are women, with up to 80% of informal cross-border traders being women traders in some countries.** Special consideration needs

to be paid to women's empowerment so as to address these specific challenges. Informal cross-border trade operations are characterized by a number of challenges including high transaction costs and border delays. Due to the precarious situation of these traders, it is more likely that they will be exposed to incidents of corruption and sexual harassment. Moreover, lack of basic infrastructure and facilities makes it more difficult, and less safe, to conduct trade. Also, due to the informal character of most of cross-border trade, there is a lack of data, which makes it difficult to identify the specific needs of these traders. It was also found that the associations representing the needs of these traders are often weak, which makes it difficult to defend their interests.

To improve the situation, by supporting Customs in implementing policies to facilitate the work of these traders, thus making their trade safer and more compliant, **the ROCB has continued to contribute to and support Members in building Customs administrations that will enhance women's economic empowerment and encourage the active participation of women.** The ROCB, in collaboration with the WCO ESA GED Working Group, is in the process of putting in place strategies to ensure the successful implementation of the recently developed regional gender policies that have been adopted by all 24 countries in the ESA Region, while also taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to achieve gender equality. Gender equality is a global priority and inextricably linked to the ESA Region's efforts to promote the right to education and support the achievement of the SDGs. Through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, SDG 4 aims to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and SDG 5 to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'.

The ultimate goals for gender mainstreaming in ESA are to: achieve gender equality and implement a performance management system that establishes equitable promotion criteria, training needs and rewards, and equal pay for equal work etc; promote a better, more equitable, working environment within the organization and among the employees; increase the effectiveness and sustainability of gender mainstreaming initiatives in the workplace; and equip staff with the capacity to identify and respond to gender concerns and with opportunities to promote inclusive and sustainable development.

Going forward, the ESA Region sees more opportunities for promoting GED through the successful implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. For instance, the AfCFTA Agreement's provisions for tariff measures to facilitate small-scale trade are expected to address challenges of women informal cross-border traders with respect to corruption. Customs continues to play an important role within the African partner states, with their cooperation critical in providing strategic leadership and support for the AfCFTA Agreement's successful implementation, especially of the "Protocol on Trade in Goods" and its Annexes. The African Union and the other development partners critical in the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement are encouraged to support the development of such gender-sensitive guides that will be referenced during the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement, and also to hold various capacity building activities for Customs officers.

The ROCB remains instrumental in supporting the implementation of gender responsive reform and modernization initiatives in the ESA Region and is working closely with Member administrations and other development partners in this field.



References: <http://www.wcoomd.org/>
<https://www.wcoesarocb.org>
<https://au.int/commission>



SOUTH AFRICAN REVENUE SERVICE

The South African Revenue Service (SARS) Strategic Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25 presents an inspirational vision to build “a smart and modern SARS, with unquestionable integrity, that is trusted and admired”. SARS’ higher purpose is to enable the government to build a capable state, and to foster sustainable economic growth and social development that serves the well-being of all South Africans. The SARS Strategic Plan sets out a clear Strategic Intent “to follow the internationally recognized approach of Voluntary Compliance”, and further translates this intent into nine (9) clear interrelated strategic objectives. Strategic objective four (4) is “to develop a high performing, diverse, agile, engaged and evolved workforce”. SARS employees consider the organization to be an employer of choice and are committed to delivering an optimum taxpayer and trader experience characterized by professionalism

and actions that are beyond reproach (carried out without bias, fear, or favour). Over the years, the tasks have become less administrative and more analytical and service oriented. SARS employees easily collaborate as teams to leverage their combined strengths, co-create solutions, and support and uplift each other’s development. SARS as an organization invests in its employees appropriately to provide them with the right tools for the job so that they are equipped to respond to the future demands of the work environment and the changing needs of taxpayers and traders with ease.

Against this background the SARS Commissioner has established several forums, each with a specific mandate, including the [Women in Leadership \(WiL\) programme](#) and the [SARS Junior Board](#).





Women in Leadership (WiL)

The development of an appropriate leadership system is integral to rebuilding the organization. The SARS Leadership Competency and Brand must not only give effect to the legal mandate of SARS, but also build public confidence and trust. Led by the Commissioner, SARS Leadership embarked on a participative and inclusive process that followed a scholarly, yet action-oriented approach, with reference to recognized resources and personalized studies, as set out in the SARS Leadership Model.

The overarching mandate of the WiL programme is to serve as a catalyst to develop and empower leadership competence as it pertains to female leaders, specifically, and within the context of the SARS Leadership Model, which mandates that every leader is to display personal proficiency, constructively manage people and work, and impact others positively. The WiL programme serves as a catalyst to develop and empower women to better handle the specific challenges they face, as aligned with the Leadership Model. It serves to inspire women to step into their power, believe in their stature and embody a firm conviction to overcome the challenges and barriers they may face. These strides are being made to ensure delivery of the organizational vision and strategies to represent the constitutional ethos of gender equality, disability equality and human rights.

The mandate of the WiL programme is intensified with the establishment of Regional Development Forums which work alongside existing committees to ensure sustainability and longevity for the cause of female empowerment.

Members extend their contributions through community outreach projects.

Important principles are considered to ensure that the critical activities, roles and responsibilities contribute to the overarching purpose of WiL. Nurturing interdependencies and working in close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders are essential to ensure the implementation and sustainability of a unified service, ensuring stewardship of resources and emerging global trends.

SARS Junior Board

The SARS Junior Board serves a multi-generational approach that balances the leadership experience with the boldness and fresh perspectives of young leaders. The Junior Board contributes to enhancing the organizational employee value proposition, addressing diversity and inclusion, capability, growth, sustainability, and empowered leadership as an advocate for the SARS leadership brand.

In mid-2021 SARS embarked on an intensive process of candidate nominations, integrity checks, panel shortlisting, video presentations, peer ratings, manager validations and team action learning proposals, leading to the selection of semi-finalists and then the final announcement of 15 Members appointed to the Junior Board. The talent of those who reached the semi-finalist stage could not be passed over, and the remaining 10 semi-finalists were therefore appointed as Additional Members.

The SARS Junior Board, under the leadership of the Commissioner, is mandated to: form an integral component of the broader leadership

platform led by the Commissioner; to deliberate on the SARS Vision 2024, and its Strategic Intent, and contribute to its insights and inputs so as to enrich the broader strategic conversations and accelerate positive and meaningful change; engage in productive dialogue with the respective leadership forums to challenge conventional thinking and be the provocateurs of a different way of leading; form a core group to catalyse a broader organizational conversation eliciting active participation from others under the age of 35; add value in other creative and innovative ways; and embark on a developmental orientation under the philosophy of “leading to learn and learning to lead”.

Members of the Junior Board have made appreciable progress in terms of their mandate and contribution to the strategic objectives. Their developmental journey has been enriched with guidance from and conversations with the SARS Commissioner, and coaching and mentoring from the leadership teams. The tangible result of this development is evident in the career progression of many of the Junior Board members.

The “Amazing Journey to the SARS Junior Board” is available for viewing on the SARS TV YouTube Channel.



SARS actions against gender-based violence and sexual harassment

SARS has also developed a plan on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) to provide a cohesive strategic framework to guide the institution's response to GBVF.

Recognizing the significance of preventing GBVF, SARS draws from the Employment Equity Act (EEA), the Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the Workplace, the SARS Code of Conduct, SARS Values, as well as the Harassment Policy, as the overarching policy framework for safety, crime and violence prevention in the organization. This policy also builds onto the six themes identified by the National Strategic Plan on GBVF that SARS has adopted.

SARS aspires to create a safe, diverse, equal, inclusive, conducive GBVF-free environment for all in which everyone can realize their full potential.

In 2019 SARS developed a pledge, "SARS says no to GBV", to demonstrate the administration's commitment to preventing gender-based violence. The pledge urges employees to speak up against any incidents of violence, harassment, or intimidation, to advocate a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of gender-based violence, and to adhere to SARS' values and its leadership ethos to ensure the eradication of all forms of GBVF. So far, the pledge has been signed by 95% of SARS employees.

Moreover, in 2020 SARS established Men's Forums in several regions to provide male employees (supported by their female counterparts) with a platform to discuss and find solutions to the challenges faced by men in the workplace and in society as a whole that can lead to gender inequality and gender-based violence. The key objectives of the Men's Forum are to encourage men to become positive partners in

efforts to eliminate gender-based violence and to provide a platform for men working in SARS and for different stakeholders (internal support units) to collaborate through information sharing and capacity building so as to determine a mutual understanding of physical health and of psychosocial, economic, and cultural aspects relating specifically to men. The Men's Forums also include preventative programmes addressing the root causes of GBVF.

To further raise awareness of the issue of gender-based violence (GBV), SARS has communicated widely on its stance on GBVF, through various means, e.g. internal communications, survivor testimonies, and speeches by the leadership and experts on specific areas, and has distributed "SARS says NO to GBV" posters which are displayed at all SARS offices and premises, including border posts. These posters are displayed for internal and external stakeholders to see.

Ongoing support is provided to all complainants and victims of GBV through the Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities Unit, the Wellness Unit and the SARS Employee Assistance programme. Where necessary, recommendations are made for the reasonable accommodation of these employees.

To ensure that the necessary policy framework is updated to include these issues, the [Code of Behavioural Standards for SARS Employees](#) has been revised and now includes the following provisions:

- Promote a workplace climate which is free of any harassment, bullying or discrimination;
- Provide support to any employees who may be harassed, intimidated, or victimized;
- Take individual and collective accountability for each other's behaviour;
- Refrain from any romantic relationships within the workplace involving a direct reporting relationship.

Sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation, and harassment in any form constitute serious misconduct. To demonstrate SARS' commitment to eradicating these, any allegations of such behaviour are to be investigated by the Anti-corruption Unit, which investigates serious misconduct such as fraud and corruption.

SARS has also initiated engagement with Customs and business stakeholders to explore joint initiatives to eradicate GBVF in South African Customs, prioritizing the borders.

Diversity and inclusion

SARS prioritizes work on diversity and inclusion, aligning this with the spirit of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals:

Leave no-one behind, starting with those who are left furthest behind.

In the context of SARS, the group this applies to is persons with disabilities.

[Persons with disabilities continue to experience unacceptable levels of exclusion, marginalization and discrimination in South Africa.](#) This is attributed to entrenched negative beliefs and attitudes about the causes of disability, the capabilities of persons with disabilities, and the need to protect persons with disabilities through segregated programmes.

Often, persons with disabilities in South Africa have limited access to affirmative action employment opportunities and experience difficulties in accessing public services provided for the general population. Amongst many contributing factors is the lack of ownership by public service programme managers and accounting officers. As SARS aspires to create a safe, diverse, equal, inclusive, conducive and GBVF-free environment in which everyone can realize their full potential, the administration has established a dedicated Unit for persons with

disabilities to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities. The main strategic objectives of this Unit are to:

- work towards diversity, inclusion and belonging;
- be a key contributor to a transforming SARS that recognizes and celebrates the richness of the rainbow nation. The aim is for the marginalized to rise from the bottom of the pyramid to an inclusive sphere in which all can live up to their full potential;
- promote and establish a diverse and inclusive organization, which remains a key priority in achieving strategic objective 4 in the SARS Strategic Plan: Develop a high-performing, diverse, agile, engage and involved workforce;
- facilitate and anchor mainstreaming and equality interventions and initiatives for persons with disabilities.

Among the highlights of the work carried out by SARS this financial year are technology and delivery solutions that include the integration of systems to improve access for all persons with disabilities (SARS staff, taxpayers and traders). SARS has sourced the different licences and software needed to enable them to work and be serviced by SARS. An IT Helpdesk, which is





a dedicated, internal line for SARS staff with disabilities, is now operational, too.

In a quest to ensure an equal public service, SARS has launched an initiative to improve engagement with deaf taxpayers by sourcing a software tool to assist frontline staff to interpret South African Sign Language conversations.

This software is currently being tested for accessibility and compatibility, and will be rolled out once final approval has been given and training carried out.

Furthermore, engagement with the disability sector has led to SARS developing a survey to reach out to a greater number of persons with disabilities with respect to the challenges they face in interacting with SARS. The survey has been split into two, one for taxpayers with disabilities who are already interacting with SARS, and the other for those who struggle to interact with SARS or have not been able to interact with it at all. This is to gather more data in order to inform the solution by SARS.

SARS has also launched the Disability Champions Structure with a view to strengthening the representative voice of persons with disabilities, which is Strategic Pillar 6 of South Africa's 2016 White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It has prioritized the top 4 categories of Disability Champions based on the prevalence of declared individuals per category, the top 4 categories being physical, hearing, visual and mental (including emotional) disabilities.

Each category has elected Disability Champion leads and deputies. The Disability Champions and the category teams have elected to develop documentation detailing the reasonable accommodation required in each category in a quest to assist line managers in understanding the different disabilities better.

SARS is continuing to raise awareness and communicate with the SARS community to educate people about the different types of disability, so as to ensure understanding, tolerance and acceptance, and reasonable accommodation. The aim is also to encourage more employees to declare their disabilities - it is an accepted fact that not all employees declare their disabilities, particularly mental disabilities.

SARS also ensures that new and refurbished built environments comply with prescribed accessibility standards at a minimum and incorporate best practice where possible. Existing built environments are modified for compliance where possible as part of planned maintenance works. Adequate parking and signage are in place to assist persons with disabilities to navigate with ease. Monthly collaborative meetings take place with internal stakeholders to report on the progress made in these areas.

Sign language interpreters were available this year at selected SARS branches during the filing season to assist deaf taxpayers. The rollout of the basic South African Sign Language training has been procured and 120 frontline staff were trained in November 2022 as part of the rollout plan.

Additionally, a pilot project has been launched in one of the SARS regions on mainstreaming the diversity, inclusion and belonging transformation agenda. Persons with disabilities have been prioritized in this project so as to gather information on issues that require urgent resolution. The Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities Unit has had virtual meetings with the region, as well as site visits, and has met with the constituency and line managers to determine specific barriers to diversity, inclusion and belonging within the region.

Ongoing engagement with the SARS recruitment team and leadership ensures that women and persons with disabilities are identified for senior roles and for jobs that are not proportionally representative of the demographics of South Africa.

Finally, **SARS is committed to commemorating Disability Rights Awareness Month, with initiatives led by the Disability Champions** and other strategic partners in collaboration with the Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities Unit to raise awareness on diversity and inclusion issues.





STATE CUSTOMS SERVICE OF UKRAINE

The State Customs Service of Ukraine (SCS) is actively involved in implementing an integrated gender approach in institutional policies, practices and procedures, by strengthening its organizational capacity in terms of developing gender equality policies and programmes using gender-sensitive communication. *SCS considers gender equality to be an increasingly crucial and cross-cutting issue in reforming Customs.* The work is guided by both national law and the Declaration of the Customs Co-operation Council on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs adopted in 2020.

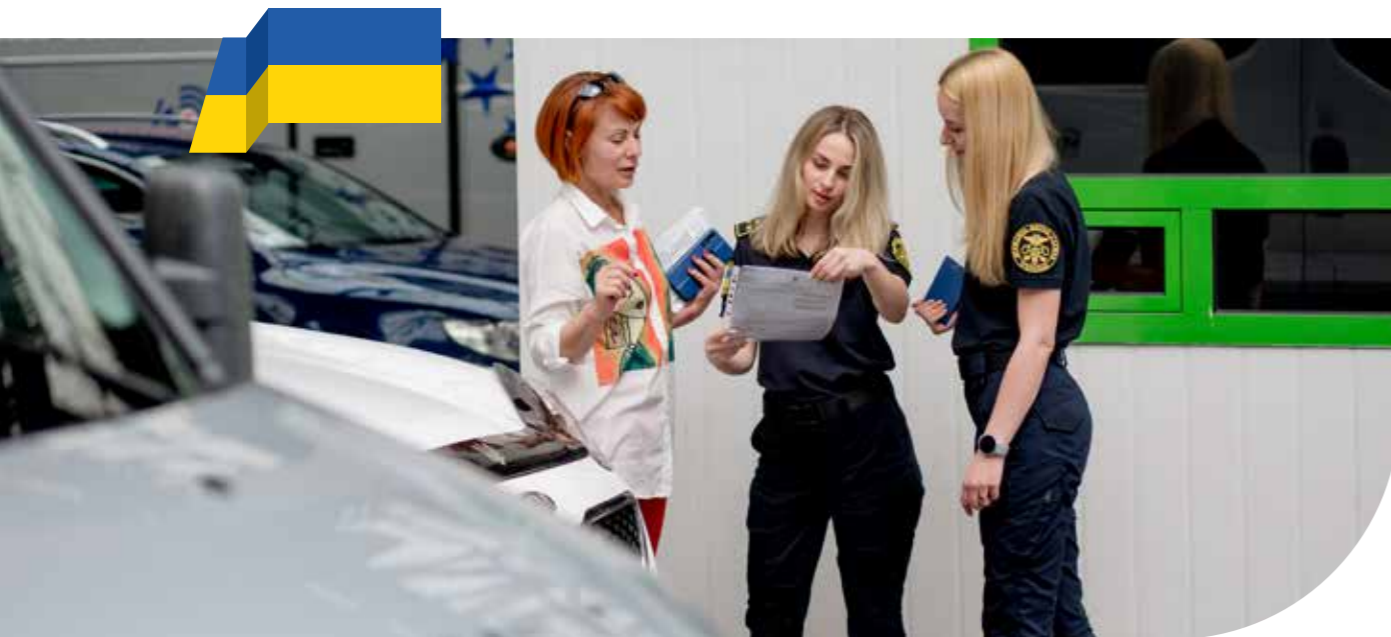
In Ukraine, the first law on “Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men” was adopted in 2005, following which

the Euromaidan¹ civil unrest from 2013-2014 ultimately defined the vector of Ukraine’s European integration. This became the key impetus for intensifying the gender equality and diversity (GED) policy in Ukraine. Under the 2014 European Union–Ukraine Association Agreement, gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men must be guaranteed in the fields of employment, education and training, and economic and social activities.

Subsequently, Ukraine adopted programme documents to advance GED, improving the quality of gender policy to bring it up to European and world standards. These included the State Strategy for Equal Rights



¹ Euromaidan, or the Maidan Uprising, was a wave of demonstrations and civil unrest in Ukraine, which began on 21 November 2013 with large protests in Maidan Nezalezhnosti (Independence Square) in Kyiv. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Maidan-protest-movement>



and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2030² (approved by the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on 12 August 2022), the State Social Programme for Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for the period up to 2021,³ and the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Security Council’s Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” for the period up to 2025,⁴ inter alia.

As a first step in implementing GED, the SCS top management sent a request to the SCS Reform Support Office⁵ for expert support in this area. This resulted in the development of draft Conceptual Recommendations on Gender Policy Implementation for 2021-2022, and a draft questionnaire for employees on gender equality principles targeting the SCS. These draft

documents were submitted to the SCS Personnel Management Department for processing and further discussion on how the actual implementation could be coordinated.

Among the areas where gender equality was considered, was **the newly developed SCS communication strategy, which includes provisions relating to publishing information on equal rights and opportunities for women and men on the SCS website.** The communication strategy also covers the preparation and dissemination of information materials to raise awareness on gender equality among employees, aims at ensuring that a gender perspective is taken into account in management decisions, and that training courses on gender equality and communication are held within different units.

² For details of the approval of the State Strategy for Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men until 2030, see <https://bit.ly/3DV4bbc> (in Ukrainian)

³ Resolution No 273 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 11 April 2018 on the approval of the State social programme to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men for the period up to 2021 <https://bit.ly/3y8UmTF> (in Ukrainian)

⁴ Order No 1544-p of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 28 October 2020 on the approval of the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, Security” for the period up to 2025 <https://bit.ly/2RQAYbo> (in Ukrainian)

⁵ The State Customs Service Reform Support Office is a team of Ukrainian professionals (not civil servants) that provides targeted technical support to the State Customs Service in the development and implementation of priority reforms. The activities of the experts are funded by grants from the Multi-Donor Account for the Stabilization and Sustainable Development of Ukraine (MDA) of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), which includes the European Union, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States as donors.

The Communication Strategy for SCS is currently being reviewed and is expected to be approved at the end of 2022.

Moreover, the basic principles of the Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs have been incorporated into the SCS Strategy on Human Resource Management (HRM).

This includes fair treatment of all Customs staff based on their work and abilities, and equal employment opportunities in terms of promotion, salary and benefits, as well as disciplinary measures, redundancies, and dismissals. It also covers prevention of any type of harassment and/or gender-based violence in all areas of Customs among staff or by Customs officers against the population and vice versa.

Gender Policy Implementation Working Group

To coordinate the numerous initiatives launched in 2021 on the implementation of gender policy in the SCS, a Working Group on Gender Policy Implementation⁶ (WGGPI) was established. The WGGPI is headed by one of the Deputy Heads of the SCS who, by Order of the SCS,⁷ is responsible for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and preventing and combating gender-based violence. The main tasks of the WGGPI are outlined as follows:

- planning the SCS activities to implement state policy on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men;
- implementing the strategic/programme documents on gender policy within the SCS and developing the necessary administrative acts of the SCS;
- coordinating the structural subdivisions of the staff of the SCS and its territorial bodies in

order to ensure implementation of the gender policy within the organization as a whole.

In addition to representatives of key departments and divisions, the WGGPI engaged a project manager from the national Reform Support Office. WGGPI members are represented by both men and women.

The first meeting of the WGGPI took place in December 2021. The WGGPI began to work on an analysis of the degree to which the principles of gender equality were being ensured by the Customs authorities. In particular, in January 2022, an anonymous survey was conducted among employees of the SCS headquarters and the Lviv Customs Office.

The main aim of this survey was to **assess the organizational culture - norms, customs, beliefs and rules of conduct in the organization that support or undermine gender equality,** as well as the attitudes of Customs officials in addressing issues of equality between women and men.

A report is to be drafted on the basis of the results of the survey and an analysis of strategic documents, programmes and SCS policies. The report is to include recommendations for the development of an action plan for further implementation of gender policy in the SCS (as of June 2022).

In addition, in June and September 2022 SCS employees (staff in headquarters and regional Customs) took part in nationwide surveys prepared by the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service.⁸ These surveys aimed to determine the level of satisfaction with how the civil service addressed the principle of equal rights and opportunities for women and men in

⁶ Order No. 874 of the State Customs Service of Ukraine of 29 October 2021 on the establishment of a working group on the implementation of gender policy.

⁷ Order No. 51 of the State Customs Service of Ukraine of 26 January 2022 as amended by Order No. 273 of the State Customs Service of June 16, 2022

⁸ The National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service is the central body of executive power that ensures the formation and implementation of state policy in the field of civil service, and provides functional management of the civil service in public bodies. <https://bit.ly/3Tz5jVo>



its HR policy. The surveys addressed issues in the following areas: working conditions, human resources, corporate and organizational culture, and policies and procedures for ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men.

The results of the second survey, in September 2022, on ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men, are to be incorporated into the gender audit report.

To benefit from global knowledge sharing within the WCO, the SCS joined the WCO Virtual Group on Gender Equality and Diversity in January 2022. As a result of this engagement with the WCO, the SCS is currently considering using the WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT). The GEOAT has been translated into Ukrainian and submitted to all SCS WGGPI members. The template proposed by the WCO Virtual Working Group has also been adapted in Ukrainian for further use in the gender audit, which is scheduled for the end of 2022. Furthermore, during June and July 2022, members of the working group underwent training on the gender audit; this training was organized by the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service.

The SCS constantly conducts statistical analysis of its staff composition, with the collection of data disaggregated by sex, age, and type of position. Thus, as of February 2022, the highest

number of women employed by the SCS of Ukraine were in the Department of Accounting, Reporting, and Planning and Finance, the Organizational and Administrative Department, and the Department of Press Service and Public Relations. Similarly, a regular analysis is carried out of the number of women/men working in category “A,” “B” and “C” positions⁹ within the SCS headquarters and regional Customs.

Competitions for vacant civil service positions in categories “B” and “C” are held in accordance with the government’s approved procedure¹⁰, in compliance with certain principles, including ensuring equal access, political impartiality, legality, non-discrimination, transparency, integrity, and an efficient and fair selection process.

In addition, the mechanism for filing complaints with respect to gender-based bullying and unfair treatment of women is prescribed by law for public authorities, local governments, associations of citizens, organizations, and officials. The Rules of Ethical Conduct of Employees of the SCS¹¹ prohibit humiliating or insulting verbal conduct (intimidation, obscene remarks) or physical conduct (physical touch) against persons who are in an employment, service or material relationship or other relationship of subordination.

Professional training of Customs officers

A great deal of attention has been paid to the professional training of Customs officers on the promotion of gender policy in the SCS. The Department for Specialized Training and Canine

Services of the SCS (hereinafter referred to as the Training Department), under which the WCO Regional Training Centre, Ukraine (RTC) and the WCO Regional Canine Training Centre, Ukraine (RCTC) operate, has been particularly active in this work.

The Training Department developed an online course on “Gender Equality in the SCS” to raise awareness and to introduce gender approaches into their day-to-day work. In 2021, 118 officials employed by the SCS headquarters and regional Customs offices underwent a specialized training course, and this process continues to gain momentum. The course consists of four lectures on the following topics:

1. Gender and gender equality: Basic concepts. International obligations of Ukraine in the field of protection of women’s rights;
2. Ensuring gender equality in Ukraine: Legislative consolidation of the principle of gender equality in Ukraine. Gender issues in the country’s labour market through the lens of the COVID-19 pandemic;
3. Gender policy in the SCS: The concept of gender policy. Gender policy in the SCS;
4. Concept of gender discrimination and its identification: The concept of gender discrimination. Judicial practice in the case of gender discrimination.

For the Training Department, the implementation of gender equality norms and the achievement of gender equality and diversity in the Ukrainian Customs administration are particularly relevant. Gender stereotypes in the form of so-called gender asymmetry still exist in Customs canine programmes: detector dog handling is purportedly a pre-dominantly male profession. Women dog handlers in Customs refute these historical stereotypes. Dog training requires a great deal of physical effort, endurance and willingness to respond to the challenges that arise during the performance of official duties which is applicable equally to

women and men. Four of the SCS’ canine teams now include women canine Customs officers.

Prospects for implementation of gender policy in the SCS of Ukraine:

- By the end of 2022, the SCS plans to conduct a gender audit in the SCS headquarters and regional Customs offices. Based on the results of the gender audit, a report will be drafted with recommendations to eliminate identified shortcomings and gaps. These recommendations will form the basis for a future action plan for the implementation of gender equality policy in the SCS.
- Further work is to be carried out to determine the requirements for appointing gender advisor(s) from among the SCS staff, including preparation and approval of the Standard Regulations on the advisor, to ensure equal rights and opportunities and to prevent and counteract gender-based violence.



⁹ Civil service positions are divided into categories “A” (senior civil servants, i.e. executive managers), “B” (deputies of heads of state bodies, heads of structural subdivisions, territorial bodies), and “C” (other positions not classified in categories “A” and “B”) pursuant to Article 6 of the Law of Ukraine on Civil Service <https://bit.ly/3xJwep1> (in Ukrainian)

¹⁰ The procedure for conducting a competition for civil service positions, approved by Resolution No. 246 of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 25 March 2016 <https://bit.ly/3ycW8mQ> (in Ukrainian)

¹¹ Rules of ethical conduct of employees of the State Customs Service of Ukraine approved by Order No. 668 of the State Customs Service of 2 September 2021



- Gender competence among employees of the SCS headquarters and regional Customs offices is to be strengthened by involving them in remote e-learning courses on the WCO CLiKC! platform and other international and national learning platforms.
- There are plans for greater cooperation on gender equality at the international and national levels with various stakeholders, namely the National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service, international technical assistance projects, experts and scientists.
- Information materials are to be developed and disseminated to increase the gender sensitivity of SCS employees and take gender aspects into account in decision-making processes. Training is to be carried out on the concept of communication in the field of gender equality among the communications departments of the SCS headquarters and regional Customs offices.





ZAMBIA REVENUE AUTHORITY

Even when they are genuinely interested in empowering women to develop their careers, the organizations and individuals who celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March usually forget all about it as soon as the commemoration is over. The subsequent 12 months see very few – or no – conversations and actions on gender equality. The story is different, however, at the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), which has been taking a pragmatic approach to gender equality for a couple of years.

In 2019, out of the 24 individuals holding top and middle management positions, only two were female (about 8%). Members of the ZRA Board and management decided to change the narrative by actively looking for women capable of holding leadership and decision-making positions within the organization and by

promoting them. Soon there were three more women holding top management positions.

This was obviously not enough to eradicate the gender gaps, but only a start. In March 2020, they therefore appointed 11 officers to form a Women Leadership and Development Forum (WLDF). The overall goal of the WLDF is “to ensure that 50% of leadership positions at Director level and beyond are held by women by the year 2025”. This objective is aligned to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol to which Zambia is a signatory and which promotes 50% of women in decision-making positions.

Forum members meet on a monthly basis to decide on ways to develop the leadership capability of female staff and to raise awareness





among all employees on the crucial role gender equality and diversity plays in an organization. One of its first tasks was to develop a questionnaire to understand how female officers perceive the workplace and the challenges they face, as well as which measures are needed to support the development of their careers.

WLDF members realized that the ZRA can only achieve the envisaged levels of inclusion through deliberate measures that address the low numbers of female employees at all levels. Another issue is the lack of interest among female staff in being part of the programmes aimed at benefiting them. Doubtless, one of the challenges here is to make women realize their value and the career opportunities offered to them. Finding ways to change this situation is critical. Women represent a dynamic and capable pool of talent which remains under-utilized, thereby depriving the ZRA and the country of a very much needed resource.

Among the measures taken are a mentoring and education programme, and communication-

related activities, such as the celebration of International Women's Day. The WLDF has also been working with internal and external stakeholders to ensure ZRA policies and procedures facilitate the career progression of women towards leadership roles. The ZRA has shown commitment to the cause of the WLDF by providing financial support, dedicated resource persons and allocating time to ensure that the leadership drive for female employees becomes a reality.

Since its start, the WLDF has embarked on a number of activities with both internal and external stakeholders. Notwithstanding the constraints which the COVID-19 Pandemic presented, the WLDF have organized leadership workshops covering topics of mentorship, personal branding, transformational communication skills and effective leadership strategies.

The WLDF has also organized conferences targeting female led Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to better understand their

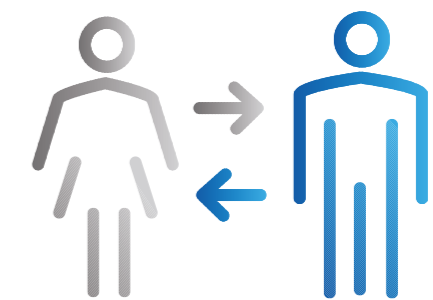
specific needs and making sure that the ZRA addresses these in a comprehensive way. These conferences, which were open to both female ZRA officers and women-led SME owners, enabled a safe and open space to engage with female experts in Domestic Tax administration including Customs services, in a more user-friendly environment. Furthermore, these gatherings allowed to explore innovative ways to address and strengthen women's economic empowerment as well as to discuss work-life balance, which is often a challenge for women. The ZRA noted, from its engagement with traders (especially small and medium businesses, many of which are owned by women) that they still find it hard to find information on Customs policies and procedures, and that there is a fear of Customs. Hopefully, the dialogue initiated will lead not only to more facilitation for women, but also to better compliance and, maybe, trust.

In July 2021, the ZRA worked with the WCO Secretariat to identify how the Administration could further leverage the work already started using the WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT). One of the strengths identified during the assessment is that the ZRA has collected comprehensive sex-disaggregated data, including data on employees' grades, enrolment in career development opportunities and training. The Administration is therefore able to identify potential gaps in terms of gender balance in several areas, as well as to monitor progress over time.

The ZRA also worked with the Secretariat to upskill its staff through training on implementing gender equality and inclusion in December 2021. It is now drafting a Gender Equality and Diversity (GED) Policy and a GED action plan to outline its commitments for the coming years.

The ZRA has some written policies and guidelines which relate to the prevention of harassment and to anti-discrimination. In addition, the WLDF has started working with Internal and External Audit divisions to follow up and monitor potential cases of harassment, gender-based violence and/or discrimination.

The WLDF plans to scale up its activities of increased engagement to unlock leadership potential for women in tax administration while also facilitating engagements where female business owners can be assisted to achieve tax compliance.





ZIMBABWE REVENUE AUTHORITY

The Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) launched the Women in Taxation (WiT) forum in March 2022 at an event during Women's Month, a global initiative that celebrates women. **WiT is the first forum of its kind since the formation of ZIMRA in 2001, with the aim being to provide a platform for women employees to discuss issues that affect women in the workplace.**

According to surveys, Customs and revenue authorities have been and still are a male-dominated sector, with a significant gender gap in senior management positions especially.

ZIMRA's strategy for 2019-2023 includes a component to promote gender equality within the Authority. This objective was first introduced

in 2010, and outlines that gender equality should be incorporated in all ZIMRA processes and procedures including recruitment, selection, promotions and transfers. For instance, one of the most recent initiatives was to formulate a 50/50 recruitment policy targeting graduate trainees, who are normally recruited in large numbers. All of the executive management, including senior managers, are evaluated each quarter with respect to the achievement of these initiatives.

In ZIMRA, most women working in the administration occupy lower-level positions, while the number of women in senior management positions remains low. Currently, 25% of ZIMRA's executives are female. ZIMRA





is privileged to have a female Commissioner General, Ms. Regina Chinamasa, who has positively influenced internal policies in favour of female staff and stakeholders. The establishment of the WiT forum and the work-life balance policy are some of the initiatives taken under the leadership of the Commissioner General.

The WiT forum was set up against the background of acknowledging the challenges that women still face in Zimbabwe in terms of marginalization and exclusion from making critical decisions in society. **The WiT forum was launched to raise awareness around issues that affect women in the workplace, including challenges related to work-life balance, whilst enabling them to contribute in the Customs and taxation field by supporting women in business.** The launch of WiT is also part of ZIMRA's wider strategy to empower women and close gender disparities within the administration. This Programme is receiving a great deal of support from the ZIMRA Board as well as the Executive Management since the Commissioner General herself always delivers the keynote address during these gatherings. The WiT also has a dedicated budget which shows the

administration's commitment to supporting its cause.

Through the WiT forum, women receive mentoring and leadership training to enable them to take up future leadership roles and in turn guide other women. The forum also coordinates discussions on practical challenges that women face in their careers in Customs and taxation. For instance, the effects of working at border posts that are usually far away from family, staff transfers, maternity issues and other societal gender-related roles were discussed during the launch. As a result of these discussions, the administration is hoping to conduct some policy reviews to further implement gender-responsive measures. The policies that are under discussion include the development of a 'transfer of nursing women' policy and a policy to prevent sexual harassment.

Through sharing ideas and creating networks and linkages whilst addressing matters that affect women in the Customs and taxation field, the WiT forum also helps women in the Customs and taxation administration to participate actively and meaningfully in policy making as

well as in the administration processes. The group is composed of 100 women from all ZIMRA border and inland stations. The plan is to organize two physical meetings per year. So far, the feedback among female employees of ZIMRA has been very positive.

WiT is expected to organize outreach programmes that empower businesspersons and SMEs by raising awareness of Customs and taxation policies and processes.

Speaking during the launch, ZIMRA Commissioner General, Ms Regina Chinamasa said that she expected the platform to conduct research on areas of special concern to women at different levels. She indicated that solutions would be advocated for whilst offering new policy adjustments to tackle issues of mental health and other social issues that affect women as they handle different responsibilities in society in general. Training and mentorship programmes for women were also highlighted as areas to be given priority and ultimately to help improve the welfare of women in ZIMRA at different levels.





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