
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Established by UN Women and the
UN Global Compact Office

BASELINE STUDY

on the Impact of the Women's
Empowerment Principles (WEPs)
and gender equality and women
empowerment for Businesses in Moldova

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ILO	International Labour Organization
IT	Information Technology
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
ODA	Organizația pentru Dezvoltarea Antreprenoriatului (<i>Organization for Entrepreneurship Development, former ODIMM</i>)
PSA	Public service announcement
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WEPs	Women's Empowerment Principles
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova

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CHAPTER 1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1.1

Background

The private sector is increasingly recognized as a key player not only to drive economic growth but also to promote sustainable social development, and companies are being held to account for their impact on society. With the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) as a road map, the private sector can foster multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and advance gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.

The overall goal of the project was to understand to what extent Moldovan companies are aware and willing to integrate gender equality and women empowerment in their work, what are the key activities that companies are undertaking, what are the main challenges and barriers in this process and how are WEPs impacting the businesses in Moldova. To achieve this goal, the project team was assigned to collect the baseline data, analyse information on the work undertaken by the WEPs signatory companies and non-signatories' stakeholders in Moldova on gender equality and women's empowerment, identify the information gaps and barriers in embracing WEPs by Moldovan companies and provide recommendations for future programmatic interventions of UN Women.

Following is the list of activities undertaken by the Project Team:

- **Presenting the project findings** – Providing public presentation of the results and main findings on WEPs within Annual WEE Conference and within the Working Group on WEE, Economic Council under the Prime Minister, and other events on request.
- The final outcome of the study is to summarise the project findings and recommendations as intended to be used to raise greater awareness of the tangible business benefits of diversity and inclusion within private sector companies in Moldova. At the same time, the study will help UN Women analyse the results of WEPs and gender equality work accomplished in Moldova and use it for future programming.
- A consortium led by PwC Georgia and in association with PwC Moldova (jointly referred to as "PwC") was commissioned by UN Women Moldova to conduct the baseline study to analyse the WEPs and the gender equality and women's empowerment work accomplished in Moldova. The role of PwC was to roll out the study and develop a report summarising the WEPs signatory companies' experience and outcomes of their work related to gender equality and women's empowerment. The study report will be used to raise greater awareness of the tangible business benefits of diversity and inclusion within private sector companies in Moldova.
- **Conducting a study** – Designing the study framework, conducting a study of the performance of WEPs signatories and non-signatories that are providing WEPs related support for different activities and developing a study report.
 - **Preparing the legal review** – Review of the laws and policies that promote gender equality and increase women's economic participation.
 - **Developing recommendations** – Based on the main finding of the study and legal review, developing the recommendations on the next steps to be undertaken to promote and advance WEPs implementation in Moldova, including programmatic interventions of UN Women.

CHAPTER 1.2

Implementation of the WEPs in Moldova

The engagement of the private sector in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment became a priority. Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) are a set of principles offering guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. Established by the UN Global Compact and UN Women, the WEPs are informed by international labour and human rights standards and are grounded in the recognition that businesses have a stake in, and a responsibility for, gender equality and women's empowerment. The WEPs are a primary vehicle for corporate delivery on gender equality dimensions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The WEPs encompasses seven principles:

- **Principle 1:** High-level corporate leadership
- **Principle 2:** Fair treatment of all women and men at work without discrimination
- **Principle 3:** Employee health, well-being, and safety
- **Principle 4:** Education and training for career advancement
- **Principle 5:** Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices
- **Principle 6:** Community initiatives and advocacy
- **Principle 7:** Measurement and reporting

According to UN Women, as of 1 March 2021, more than 7,000 companies in 141 countries, representing collectively over 10 million employees, have signed, and committed to implementing the WEPs.

In the Republic of Moldova this initiative started with the support of UN Women in partnership with ODA (former ODIMM2²) in 2015 through a large

information campaign involving more than 250 local companies. A series of actions followed that were integrated into the government programs intended for the economic empowerment of women, such as the National Platform for Women in Moldova, PARE 1 + 1, Women in Business, Start Up for Young People.

In 2018 a new stage in WEPs' implementation was launched – a self-assessment instrument was developed and piloted to measure the degree of process adjustment in companies to the women's empowerment principles.

Over 30 companies participated in the piloting exercise that subsequently detailed their own specific action plan. Together with the company's representatives, a set of good local practices have been identified, as well as constraints and shortcomings that slow down the implementation of the WEPs. Constraints were addressed through a set of policies and proposals for modifying the legislative framework.

UN Women, in partnership with the Government of Moldova, civil society organisations, academic environment and private sector is working to remove the barriers that are limiting women's economic empowerment, so that women could enjoy the security of income, decent work and economic autonomy.

CHAPTER 1.3

Our approach and methodology

Rationale of the baseline study

The overall goal of the baseline study is to collect baseline data and analyse information on the work undertaken by the WEPs signatory companies, gender equality and women's empowerment in general, by private sector entities in Moldova. In addition to the baseline study, through the case studies of good practices, the study report intends to assess the extent to which business outcomes were improved by inclusive company policies and culture.

1 See <https://www.weps.org/about>

2 Reorganised into ODA in 2022 based on the Government Decision no 487/2022, https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=132279&lang=ro

Objectives of the baseline study

The baseline study aims to document the performance of private sector entities in Moldova and provide recommendations for further interventions, as follows:

- Quantification of undertaken work by companies
 - Statistical data on gender diversity and women's leadership at all levels (including top management, middle management, boards, staff).
 - WEPs initiatives per principle undertaken by companies in respective years, including specific measures aiming women's economic empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community. Perception of WEPs and reasons why local companies have reservations and avoid becoming WEPs signees. The main barriers and tools to interest companies becoming WEPs signees.
 - Statistical data on the number of women supported through various initiatives under each principle.
 - Benefits the companies gained through implementing the WEPs.
- Demonstration of real cases of companies implementing the WEPs

- Case studies of good corporate practices, initiatives, and campaigns.
- Business cases for gender diversity in the workplace and the various success factors that drive company behaviour for inclusion.
- Review of the laws and policies that promote gender equality and increase women's economic participation: recommendations for an advanced regulation and implementation.
- Recommendations on the next steps to be undertaken to promote and advance WEPs implementation in Republic of Moldova, including programmatic interventions of UN Women.

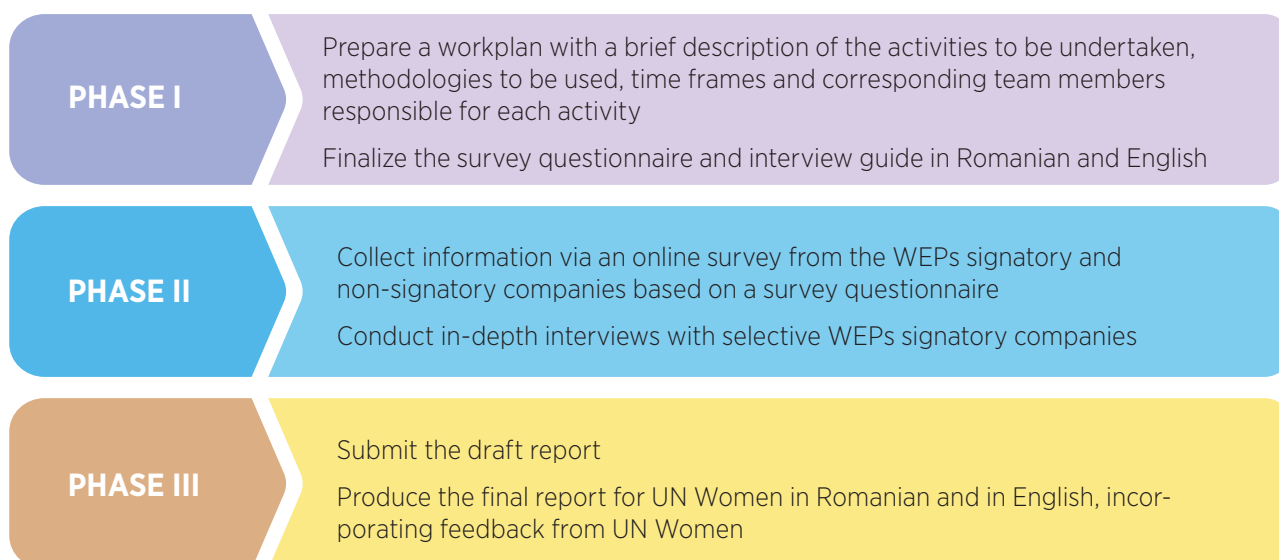
Our approach

A three-phased approach was adopted for the study implementation and is described in the diagram below.

Our methodology

Within this report, the analysis framework focused on four main dimensions. To have a better understanding and evaluation of the private sector in Moldova in terms of WEPs integration, 4 analysis dimensions were addressed: (1) commitment, (2) implementation, (3) measurement and (4) transparency. Each of these dimensions shows the maturity of the Moldovan companies in terms of gender equality mainstreaming within their activity.

Diagram 1.



For this analysis a mixed-model research method was used. It combines quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis, specifically: (1) Secondary research – review of existing reports and data sources; (2) Quantitative study – survey (combination of the online and telephone survey) and (3) Qualitative study – in-depth interviews and focus groups.

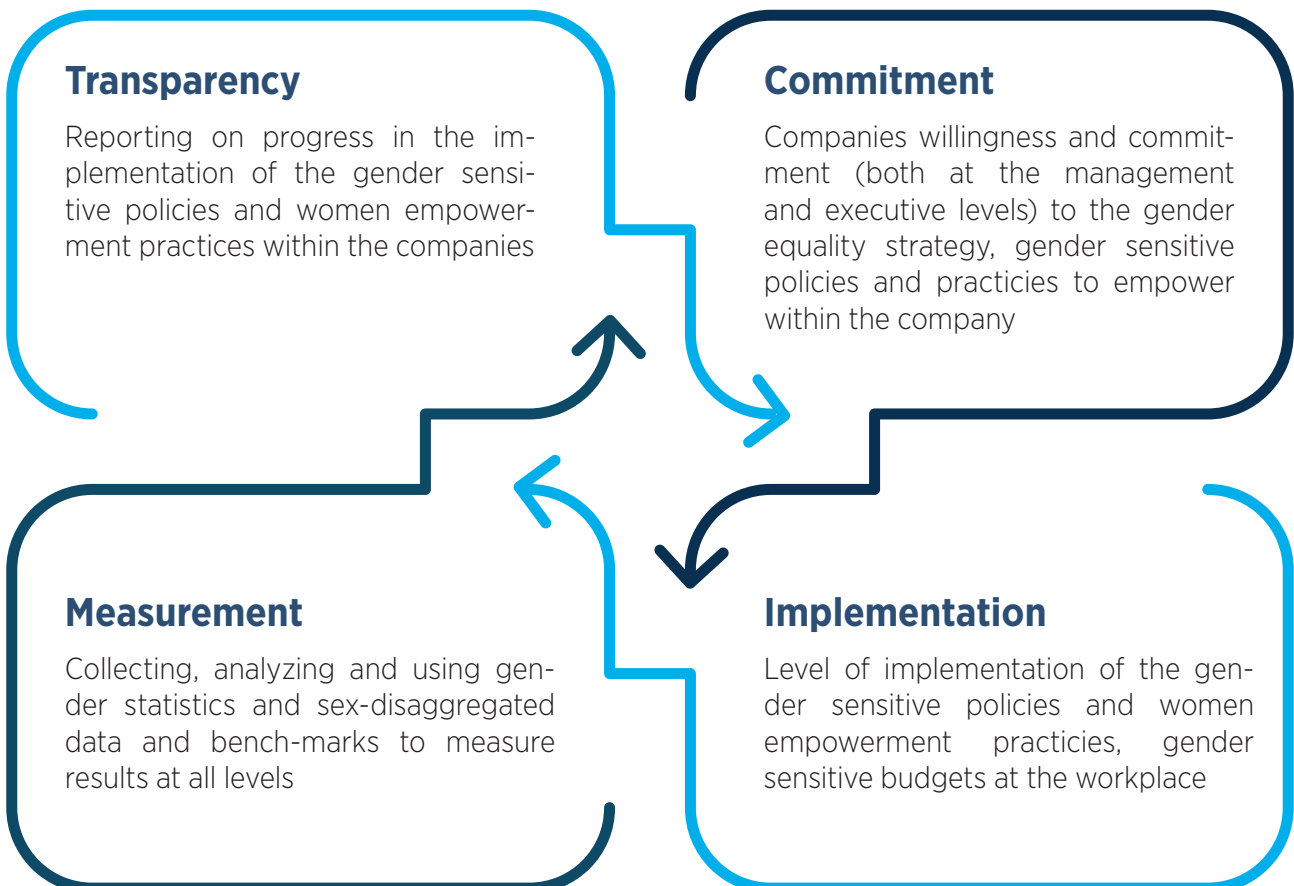
The study aimed to collect baseline data and analyse information on the work undertaken by the WEPs signatory companies and, generally, by the private sector in Moldova on gender equality and women empowerment. In addition to the baseline study, through the case studies of good practices, the study report intends to assess the extent to which business outcomes were improved by inclusive company policies and culture. The results of this study will help companies to assess current policies and programmes, will highlight areas for improvement, and identify opportunities to set future corporate goals and targets.

Secondary research: The main objective of the secondary research was to analyse the laws

and policies that promote gender equality and increase women’s economic participation and set recommendations for future interventions. The project team conducted a review of information sources related to the laws and policies, as well as legal initiatives and draft normative projects that promote gender equality and increase women’s economic participation.

Quantitative study: The PwC team developed a detailed questionnaire that covered all aspects of the WEPs and gender equality and women’s empowerment work undertaken by companies in Moldova. The questionnaire included structured questions aligned with the key purpose of the baseline study and the critical parameters to be assessed under the study.

Additionally, open-ended questions were used to understand the views and perspectives of the respondents. The questionnaire was agreed upon with UN Women Moldova’s representatives and tested with the consultant and partners for their relevance and completeness. The full questionnaire is presented as Appendix 1 of this report.



The finalised questionnaire was uploaded to the Google online platform that was used to distribute the online survey questionnaire among both existing WEPs signatory and non-signatory companies in Moldova. Additionally, Moldovan companies were contacted by phone. The Google platform, in combination with Microsoft Excel, was used for quantitative data analysis. In addition to the quantitative data, the qualitative data was analysed to identify the trends and patterns of responses to complement the research findings.

Qualitative study: In addition to the survey of the WEPs signatory companies, in-depth interviews were conducted with five WEPs signatory companies. The main purpose of these interviews was to gain insight into the following:

- Overall perspective of the need for the WEPs and the context in which the programme was initiated
- Processes, issues and challenges in initiating the WEPs in 2019 and beyond
- WEPs implementation per principle at companies over the years, including specific measures undertaken by the companies to promote women's economic empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community
- Case studies of good corporate practices, initiatives and campaigns
- Perspective on the benefits that the companies gained through implementing the WEPs
- Business cases for gender diversity in the workplace and the various success factors that drive company behaviour for inclusion
- Recommendations for future programmatic interventions of UN Women

Case studies of good corporate practices, initiatives and campaigns are presented as Appendix 2 of this report.

Timeline

The baseline study was conducted during the period from October 2022 to December 2022.

Ethical considerations

This is a baseline study commissioned by UN Women Moldova. All views captured from various stakeholders are objective and clear of any biases and have been inclusive of the key ethical considerations.

PwC ensured that the study was conducted with the standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the "do no harm" principle in the light of the utilisation of virtual platforms for research.

Researchers respected the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence. Accordingly, researchers ensured that sensitive data is protected, cannot be traced to their source and must validate statements made in relation to those who provided the relevant information. All data was obtained with informed consent for the use of private information from those who provided it.

Given that the study was conducted virtually, PwC requested that select critical respondents grant permission to have the conversation recorded for internal purposes only.

Ethical considerations were applied at the following two stages:

1. Prior to initiation of the study:

- **Including a gender adviser in the study team**
 - We understand that ethics do not concern just the procedure but are also about being reflective on possible ethical issues within the local context, taking a step back, discussing, creating mitigation strategies and adjusting plans before heading into data collection. In this regard, the gender adviser contributed by providing the perspective on the national context in order to frame a holistic and ethical study design.

2. During data collection and reporting:

- **Securing personal and sensitive information**
 - We managed personal data with utmost confidentiality and were solely used for the

purpose of the study. No phone numbers were collected.

- **Omitting personal information** – No personal information was collected during the roll-out of the survey. This ensured limited access to the respondent's personal information and provided anonymity to the responses.
- **Accounting for biases and limitations** – The study team was sensitive to the fact that surveys can be prone to biases due to the restricted sample frames or low response rates. Since accurately presenting findings is core to the integrity of the evidence generation, we have acknowledged any possible bias and potential lack of representativeness of the data and all potential limitations/caveats.
- **Making select recordings** – Given that the study was mostly virtual in nature, the study team requested permission to record the conversation for select respondents. If permission was granted, the team then recorded the conversation for internal documentation purposes only.
- **Protecting data** – The study team treated data systems as valuable organisational assets; thus, data backup was a mandatory affair. Further, the team safeguarded sensitive data to guarantee privacy and confidentiality; for example, the team's servers were accessible to limited study members only.
- **Maintaining independence** – The study team respected the independent nature of the study and refrained from influencing or applying undue pressure on those participating in it.
- **Ensuring impartiality** – The study team shared no personal relationship with any stakeholder (internally and externally), ensuring unbiased behaviour. Further, the use of data for the study was also impartial, protected and respected. The study did not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion or any other factor.
- **Upholding accountability** – The study was conducted in a rigorous, fair and balanced way, and any judgments made have been based on sound and complete evidence that can be verified.

Study limitations

Some of the limitations of the study include the following:

- Quantitative study was conducted among a limited number of Moldovan enterprises and their responses cannot be considered for the whole private sector in Moldova.
- Not all survey participants provided detailed information, and some of them only shared partial explanatory responses.
- In-depth interviews were conducted with a limited number of Moldovan companies and their comments do not claim to cover the opinions of all Moldovan companies.

This report summarises the key findings, analysis and recommendations drawn from the survey and in-depth interview responses.

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CHAPTER 2. GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT WORK IN MOLDOVA

CHAPTER 2.1

Laws and policies in Moldova promoting gender equality and increasing women's economic participation

Women's empowerment and gender equality are one of the core objectives of the Republic of Moldova under the international commitments. Moldova has ratified or otherwise acceded to numerous international and regional treaties/agreements supporting the assurance of gender equality³. Therefore, besides the national initiatives on developing and promoting women empowerment, Moldova shall develop and adjust its legal framework in order to create the grounding for assuring that women are not only not discriminated against but entitled and benefit of equal treatments and economic growth opportunities. For example, the EU – RM Association Agreement⁴ (Ch. 4 "Employment, social policy and equal opportunities") commits Moldova to offer "equal opportunities, aiming at strengthening gender equality and ensuring equal opportunities between women and men, as well as combating discrimination in all aspects".

The strategic framework on ensuring gender equality and women empowerment in the Republic of Moldova has been made in a few stages, via legal framework (laws) and non-normative documents (policy documents)⁵. Considering the

women discrimination and inequality in social and economic life, low participation in decision-making processes, the specific obstacles in accessing the labour market and/or opening and leading a big business (i.e. larger than small or medium enterprise), the objectives of the reforms were and are still focused on reducing and/or eliminating the wage differences, unequal distribution of work and family responsibilities, limited spectrum of childcare facilities and other social and legal barriers in enhancing the women empowerment.

As regards the legal framework, the following stages were noticed as essential in reforming the women's economic empowerment in Moldova. Thus, in **2006-2007**, the Law no.5/2006 on ensuring equal opportunities between men and women⁶ and the Law no.45/2007 on preventing and combating domestic violence⁷ were approved. The Law no.45/2007 regulates the "economic" and "psychological" violence, as well as includes a set of supporting mechanisms to the affected persons. The Law no.5/2006 stipulates expressly that sex discrimination is prohibited. It also provides for opportunity for equality in the public sphere (public entities employment, participation in political life); in the non-public sector (employment opportunities, workplace discrimination, entrepreneurship, and access to goods and services); equal access to education and health.

The **2012-2016** period is marked by the adoption of the Law no.121/2012 on equality, prohibiting direct or indirect discrimination based on sex and other grounds, as regards employment, payments, education, property rights, family relations, access to goods and services (including banking and financial services) etc.; creating the Council on Preventing and Combating Discrimination and Ensuring Equality. Further, numerous amendments have been adopted (via Law no. 71/2016, Law no. 196.2016), introducing paternity leave, including 40% gender quota for list of the parties (even though in practice the women are included at the end of the list), preventing and combating violence against women (including economic harm).

3 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, , United Nations (UN) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; European Convention on Human Rights and its Five Protocols, as well as the European Social Charter; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings; ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation; ILO Maternity Protection Convention; Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), United Nations

4 https://gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/7048451_en_acord_asociere.pdf

5 Under art.24 para.(1) Law no.100/2017 on normative deeds, the Policy documents, without being normative acts, are decision instruments that address existing problems in a certain field, that define the ways to solve the respective problems and describe the expected impact on the state and society. Policy documents may provide for the elaboration of draft normative acts.

6 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133167&lang=ro#

7 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=122823&lang=ro#

In **2020-2022** there is a visible effort and improvement in regulating and promoting specifically women economic empowerment and gender equality. The significant approved reforms are aimed at increasing female labour force participation (flexible programs), offering equal pay for equal (value) work, providing dedicated laws on alternative childcare solutions⁸, review of maternity and paternity allowances, review of childcare leaves, as well as offering the possibility to work in maternity leave etc. The introduction in the Labour Code of the obligation to offer equal pay for the equal (value) work in 2022 boosted increased attention of the private entities to review the wages and the criteria these wages are offered to the employees. The details are specified under the relevant WEP described below.

Currently, the following **policy documents** are providing for the vision and further steps in enhancing the women empowerment⁹:

- **Moldova 2030 national development strategy¹⁰**, providing for the commitment on harmonisation of professional and family life, reduction of access' barriers to the labour market;
- **Strategy for ensuring equality between women and men in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2021¹¹**, providing for the: ensuring a comprehensive approach to equality between women and men; strengthening the institutional mechanism for ensuring equality between women and men; fighting stereotypes in society and promoting nonviolent communication; promoting gender equality in the security and defence sector; integration of gender-sensitive budgeting in the process of developing budget programs. Even though the term of this strategy expired, the authorities are following it until the new policy document is drafted, consulted and approved, especially

that specific actions included in the Action plan to the Strategy are still under implementation.

- **National Strategy for the prevention and combating of violence against women and family violence for 2018-2023¹²** and the Action Plan on its implementation, aiming, among others at promoting women's economic empowerment and socio-economic independence.
- **The national employment program 2022-2026¹³**, providing for raising the participation rate of women aged 25-34 from 44% in 2021 to 48% in 2026 (+4%) and the employment rate of women aged 25-34 from 43.2% in 2021 to 47.2% (+4%) in 2026, via: implementing a program to stimulate the creation of nurseries; supporting employers who cover expenses for providers of alternative care services for employees; supporting entities that create their own nurseries; expanding the offer of childcare services at affordable prices in all geographical areas of the country; legal framework regarding childcare benefits, paternity leave, job protection, facilitating the employment of parents.

An important policy document placed in the first quarter of 2023 for public consultations¹⁴ is the draft Program on accelerating gender equality in the Republic of Moldova for 2023-2027 period, and the Action Plan for its implementation. As per the policy document, it aligns with the priorities of the Council of Europe Strategy for 2018-2023 on equality between women and men, the European Union Strategy on gender equality for 2020-2025, the UN Women Strategic Plan for 2022-2025, the Association Agenda between the Republic Moldova and the European Union for the period 2021-2027, including other national relevant policy documents as the "Moldova European 2030". The Program's general objectives and actions focus on: reducing structural gender inequalities through policies and budgets sensitive

8 <https://www.parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeactelegislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/6220/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

9 Specific relevant actions, part of which are already accomplished) are also provided in the Moldovan Government Action Plan for 2021-2022: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=128407&lang=ro

10 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121920&lang=ro

11 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=99875&lang=ro

12 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=128809&lang=ro

13 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134612&lang=ro

14 <https://particip.gov.md/ro/document/stages/anunt-privind-consultarea-publica-a-proiectului-de-hotarare-cu-privire-la-aprobarea-programului-de-accelerare-a-egalitatii-de-gen-in-republica-moldova-pentru-anii-2023-2027-si-planului-de-actiuni-pentru-implementarea-acesteia/9991>

to the gender dimension; increasing social protection for more people who are involved in long-term care activities for family members; reducing the gender pay gap for equal (value) work; increasing the number of men promoting gender equality; promoting women, including women from underrepresented groups, in leadership positions and in the decision-making process at the central and local level.

The equal treatment of women and men, as well as women economic empowerment shall be properly implemented by all the stakeholders, including legal entities, irrespective whether public or private, and natural persons. The international studies¹⁵ show that the closing of economic gender gaps might be efficiently closed via the symbiosis of public policies/laws and business actions, as there is evidenced positive contribution of women's empowerment and participation in the workforce, as for the company's performance, as well as for the national economy.

CHAPTER 2.2

Survey of gender equality and women empowerment work in Moldovan companies

The **main purpose of the survey** is to **(1)** assess the commitment of the Moldovan companies to gender equality and women's empowerment and to identify whether gender equality issues are amongst their priority concerns; **(2)** assess the interest of Moldovan companies to become WEPs signatories; **(3)** to raise respondents' awareness of the WEPs and of how they can help to improve gender equality in the workplace and community.

The survey questionnaire was completed by **141 companies** in Moldova. The following chapter provides information about companies that participated in the survey.

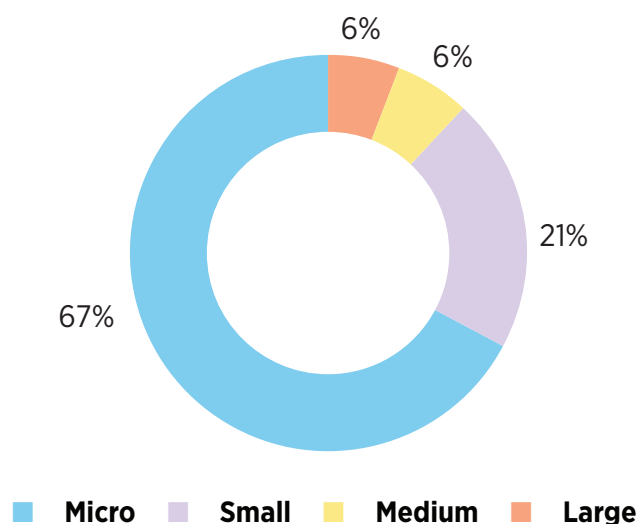
Profile of survey participants:

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the significant portion of survey participants represents micro and small-

sized companies (67 per cent and 21 per cent), while only 12 per cent of respondents are medium and large-sized companies.

More than 60 per cent of the survey participants are small-sized and Chisinau based companies. As demonstrated in Figure 2, 62 per cent of the online survey participants are mostly conducting their economic activities in Chisinau, 18 per cent are operating in the Centre, 7 per cent in the North and 6 per cent in Balti. Only 1 per cent of respondents are conducting most of their economic activities in UTA Gagauzia. The participating companies operate in different sectors¹⁶: wholesale and retail trade, finance and property, manufacture and construction, transportation and communication services and other sectors. As reflected in Figure 3, nearly 32 per cent of the respondents are represented by companies from the wholesale and retail sector, followed by the companies engaged in the financial and insurance sectors (10 per cent) and real estate and transportation storage activities (7 per cent each).

Figure 1: Companies by size¹⁷



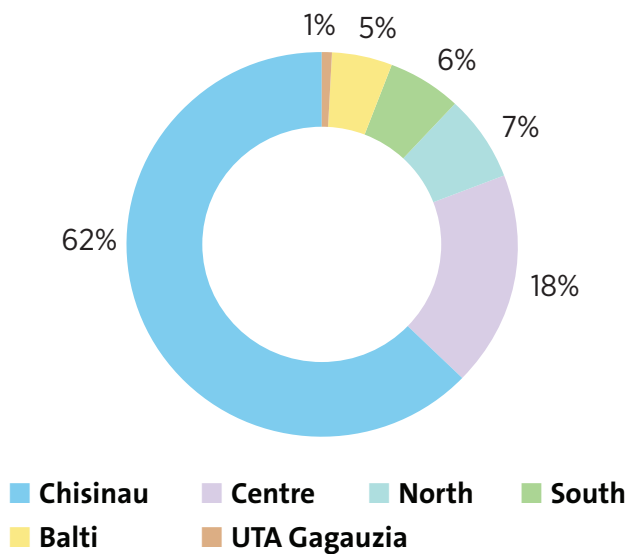
n¹⁷=141: Question 1 - What is the size of your company?

15 Sectors included in the survey are in accordance with the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community, commonly referred to as NACE.

16 Size of companies by number of employees: micro – employing up to 9 people; small – employing between 10 and 49 people; medium – employing between 50 and 249 people; large – employing more than 250 people. 17

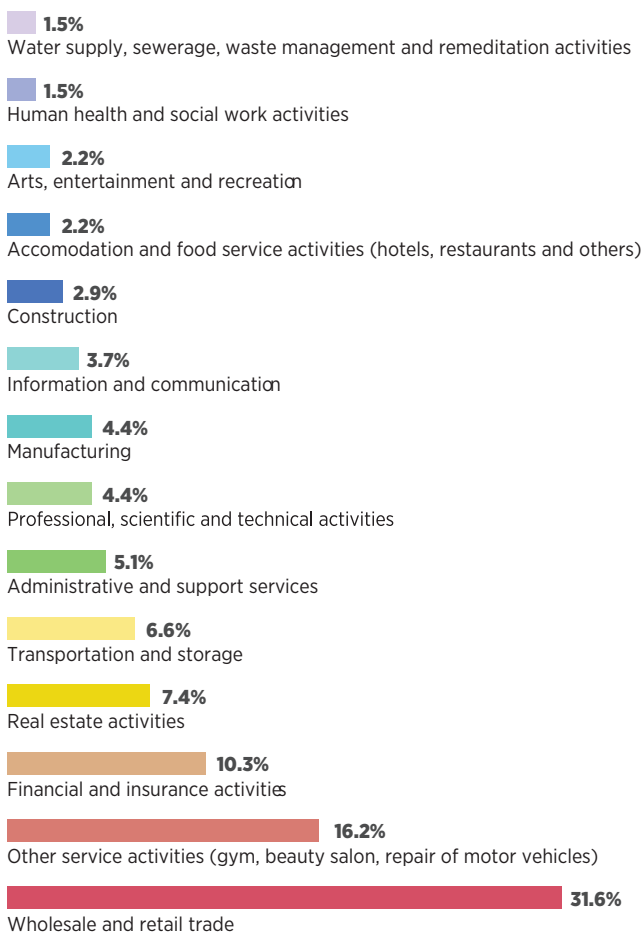
18 n equals the number of respondents that answered the question during the survey

Figure 2: Companies by location



n=141: Question 2 - Where is your company mostly conducting its economic activity (largest part of revenue generation)?

Figure 3: Companies by sector



n=141: Question 3 - Which sector does your company mainly operate in?

Gender diversity and women's leadership:

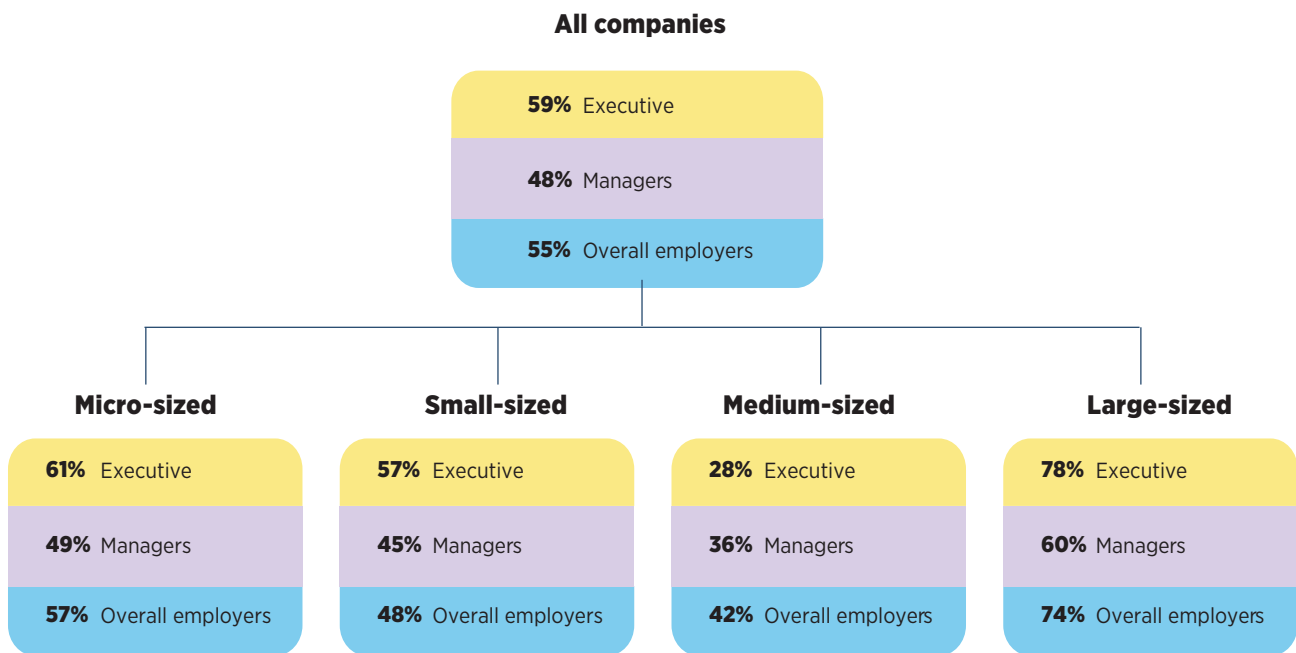
The data shows that among all participating companies there is an equal representation of women employees. According to the survey responses, the share of female employees on executive, managerial and overall level is either nearly 50 per cent, or more than 50 per cent in general (59 per cent - executive, 48 - managers, 55 - overall employees). However, when compared by the size of the company, the situation differs in medium-sized companies where the share of female employees in managerial and executive positions (36 and 28 per cent respectively) is lower compared to men (Figure 4).

Women's active participation and decision-making in the economy is crucial for long-term economic prosperity. Companies and organisations achieve success in the economy when they take action to eliminate gender stereotypes in the workplace and ensure that the talents, skills and perspectives of women are welcomed and valued in the boardroom. Building gender equality into corporate governance and board leadership translates into tangible success for companies. Therefore, one of the aspects analysed within the study was the company's share of female employees in overall employees, managerial and executive positions.

The aim was to compare the proportion of men and women across different levels in the organisations. As it can be observed from Figure 4, the share of female employees in overall employees represents 55 per cent, on managerial level female employees represent 48 per cent of total employees, while 59 per cent of total employees are represented on executive level positions.

The share of female employees across different positions varies considering the size of the company (Figure 4). According to Figure 4, the share of female employees in overall employees, on managerial and executive level in micro-sized companies are 57 per cent, 49 and 61 respectively. In small-sized companies, there is a slightly smaller share of female employees in overall employees (48 per cent) and on managerial and executive levels (45 and 57 per cent respectively).

Figure 4: Share of female employees by level



n=141: Question 10 – Can you provide the recent split of your employees by gender for overall employees, managerial and executive positions?

According to Figure 4, the share on each level in medium-sized companies is significantly lower than in micro and small-sized companies. 42, 36 and 28 per cent are represented by female employees in overall, managerial, and executive positions respectively. Among all survey respondents, respondents from the large-sized companies indicate the highest share of female employees at each level in the organisations – 74, 60 and 78 per cent in overall, managerial, and executive positions.

Overall, the lowest engagement of women in leadership roles is reported in the medium size companies and highest in the large size companies.

Share of women among all employees and women in managerial positions reported by the respondent companies varies from the national data. According to The National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova (NBS Moldova), about 53 per cent of total employees in the whole economy of Moldova are represented by women. The share of women in the ownership and management positions in the Moldovan enterprises also differs on a national level. Only 35 per cent of enterprise owners are women, 26 per cent are co-owners, and nearly 37 per cent of managers are women.

The difference of survey and national data can be explained by the fact that the responding companies have assumed certain commitments regarding gender equality, which has implications on the way the company is administered (more women are in management positions).

According to the NBS Moldova, women are paid less than men in Moldova. According to the national data, monthly gross average earnings for women in 2021 equals 8,353, while men have 16 per cent higher monthly gross average earnings (9,673 lei). There are also significant changes if respondents are compared by the sectors¹⁸ in which they are employed. As reflected in Figure 5, the top three sectors with highest share of female employees in executive positions are financial and insurance activities (83 per cent), followed by accommodation and food service activities (81 per cent) and administrative and support service activities (78 per cent). The lowest share of female employees in executive positions are present in Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (0 per cent), construction (25 per cent) and Arts, entertainment and recreation sectors (33 per cent).

The sector with the highest representation of women at all levels (all employees) is administrative and support service¹⁹ activities (72 per cent) and the lowest representation is noted in water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (17 per cent).

19 Administrative and support activities include a variety of activities that support general business operations, e.g. rental and leasing activities, employment activities, travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities, security and investigation activities, services to buildings and landscape activities, cleaning activities, office administrative, office support and other business support activities

Insight from case studies:

One of the biggest telecommunication companies from Moldova implemented a reprofiling project, pilot program for women and men from non-IT to IT. People participating in the program obtained internal positions in IT.

Orange Moldova, WEPs signatory company

Figure 4: Share of female employees by level

Sectors	Executive	Managers	All employees
Administrative and support services	78%	69%	72%
Financial and insurance activities	83%	53%	70%
Accommodation and food service activities (hotels, restaurants etc.)	81%	56%	69%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	63%	58%	66%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	33%	53%	66%
Wholesale and retail trade	65%	43%	64%
Real estate activities	61%	32%	57%
Other service activities (gym, beauty salon, repair of motor vehicles)	52%	50%	53%
Manufacturing	61%	44%	52%
Human health and social work activities	96%	50%	49%
Information and communication	53%	53%	48%
Transportation and storage	35%	54%	27%
Construction	25%	50%	19%
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	6%	75%	17%

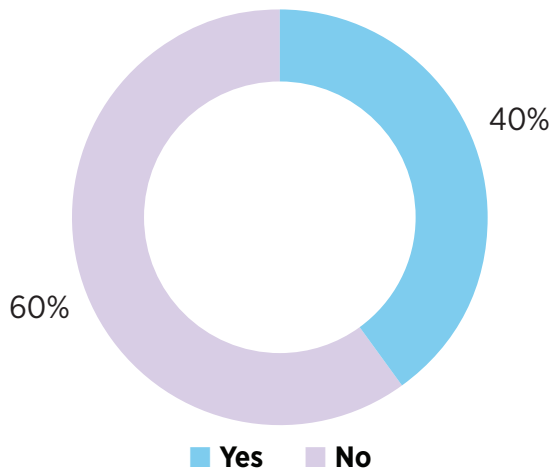
n=141: Question 3 – Which sector does your company mainly operate in?

n=141: Questions 10 – Can you provide the recent split of your employees by gender?

Readiness of Moldovan companies to become WEPs signatories and key motivation factors:

Less than 20% of the respondent companies had information about the WEPs. Most of the survey participants (96 per cent) are non-WEPs signatory companies. According to the companies' responses (Figure 6), 60 per cent of respondents work on gender equality and women empowerment initiatives.

Figure 6: Work on gender equality and women empowerment initiatives



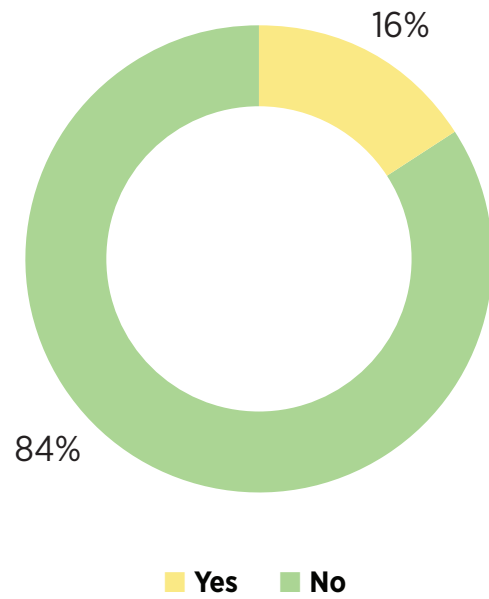
n=141: Question 4 - Does your company work on gender equality and women empowerment initiatives?

In order to understand their potential interest to become WEPs signatory, the respondents were asked whether they had information regarding the WEPs, if they were interested to become signatory and about their motivation and interest to join the WEPs.

According to the responses, only 16 per cent of respondents had information about the WEPs and 40 per cent of the respondents have indicated interest to become signatory of the WEPs²⁰.

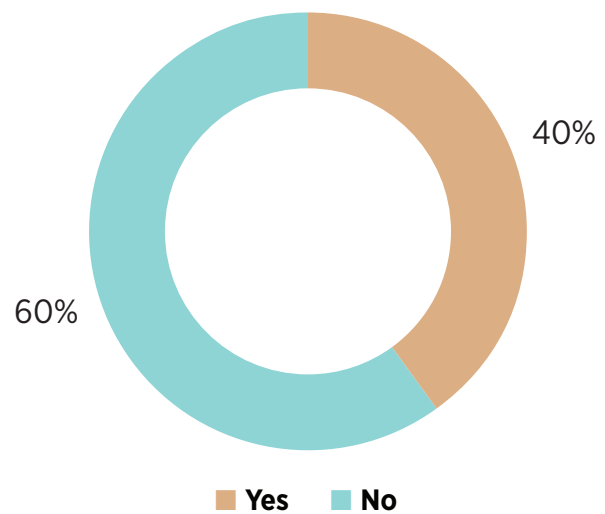
²⁰ The questionnaire provided a link to WEPs website, in order to provide survey participants information about WEPs.

Figure 7: Information regarding WEPs



n=141: Question 43 - Do you have information regarding Women Empowerment Principles (www.weps.org)?

Figure 8: Interest in becoming the signatory of the WEPs



n=141: Questions 44 - Are you interested in becoming a signatory of the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs)?

The respondent companies have certain motivation to join the WEPs. According to their responses, figure 9 provides the most and least important motivators for the respondent companies.

Figure 9: Companies by motivation to join the WEPs

Our contribution to SDGs	31%
A stronger corporate reputation	31%
An increase in the recruitment of and better retention of talented individuals	30%
Contributing to women’s empowerment will also help the economy	30%
Improved competitiveness on the market	29%
Our female employees are motivated and more productive	28%
An increase in interested investors who have substantial confidence in the company	27%
An improvement in internal communication, better commitment from colleagues and a promotion of a culture of shared values	26%
Attracting more female customers/clients	26%
Company’s increased access to capital/financing	24%
There is better retention of female staff	23%
Less violence and reducing company costs by addressing violence	23%

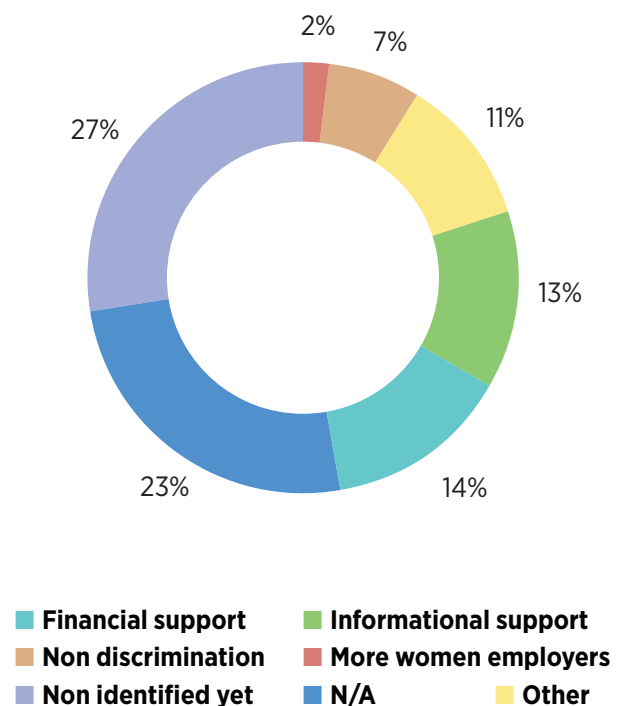
n=141: Question 45- What motivates your company to work to become WEPs signatory?

The strongest motivators for the survey respondents to join the WEPs were attributed to their contribution to SDGs (31 per cent), a stronger corporate reputation (31 per cent), an increase in the recruitment and better retention of talented individuals (30 per cent) and contributing to women’s empowerment will also help the economy (30 per cent) (see Figure 9). According to the respondents’ responses, the least significant motivator for the companies was better retention for female staff (23 per cent) and less violence and reducing company costs by addressing violence (23 per cent).

The lack of human and financial resources seems to be the main barriers for companies to implement the WEPs. The survey questionnaire also asked respondents about their reservations regarding becoming the WEPs signatory and the future support that they will require in future to continue work on gender equality and women empowerment. According to the responses, 40 per cent have indicated lack of people resources to implement WEPs, 20 per cent unavailability of funds, 6 per cent – lack of commitment from owners/shareholders/management. In terms of required future support (figure 10), 27 per cent of respondents indicated that they do not know what type of support they require, 14 per cent indicated the need of financial support, nearly the same percentage – informational support, 7

per cent – non-discrimination and 2 per cent have responded that there is a need to increase the interest of women to be employed.

Figure 10: Future support companies will require to continue work on gender equality and women empowerment



n=125: Question 47- What type of support does your company require in future to continue work on gender equality and women empowerment?

CHAPTER 2.3

Gender equality and women empowerment: WEPs implementation per principle

Businesses can contribute to gender equality and women’s empowerment in multiple ways. Beyond the basic responsibilities of respecting human rights, companies can choose from a menu of options to advance women’s empowerment within their workplaces, marketplaces, and communities. Once a company becomes a WEPs signatory, an action plan based on a gender gap analysis of the company is developed to ensure the gradual implementation of the seven principles that are the core of WEPs work. Companies have no legal obligation to implement the principles, and their work is fully voluntary. As a result, accomplishment of the WEPs is different for each organisation.

Considering the fact that a significant share of our survey respondents were non-WEPs signatory companies (96 per cent), we have developed

a survey questionnaire in line with the WEPs principles to understand what type of work Moldovan companies undertake in terms of gender equality and women’s empowerment. Understanding the level of engagement of Moldovan companies related to various types of initiatives will help UNW Moldova identify areas where companies require a higher degree of support.

Despite the fact that most of the survey respondents were non-WEPs signatory companies, they still implement some of the WEPs principles. The developed survey questionnaire that is in line with the WEPs principles, helps us to understand companies’ readiness and obstacles they face. In Figure 11, it can be clearly observed that companies’ WEPs implementation rate is the highest in Principle 2- treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination (45 per cent). Following principle 2, implementation rate of principle 3 and 4 are 35 and 25 per cent respectively. The lowest implementation rate can be observed in the principle 1, 5 and 7 (14, 12 and 12 per cent respectively).

Figure 11: Gender equality and women empowerment / WEPs implementation per principle

WEPs principles	
Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality	14%
Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work - respect and support human rights and non-discrimination	45%
Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers	35%
Principle 4: Promote education, training and professional development for women	25%
Principle 5 : Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women	12%
Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy	20%
Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality	12%

PRINCIPLE 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

Principle 1 aims to establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality and, according to UN Women, provides the basis for the successful implementation of all seven principles. As per the WEPs: “Corporate leadership is a key and integral part of making gender equality and women’s empowerment a top strategic priority. It publicly signals the CEO’s and the executive team’s goals and targets for implementing the WEPs and how the seven Principles will become part of the corporate sustainability strategy, day-to-day operations, and organisational culture.”²¹

Suggested actions according WEPs guidelines:

- Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights
- Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality, and include progress as a factor in managers’ performance reviews
- Engage internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans that advance equality
- Ensure that all policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion

Under this principle, companies are also advised to review the requirements for board membership and other governance bodies to remove any discrimination or bias against women. Managers at all levels are expected to be held accountable, through performance reviews, for the results. A strong commitment from the highest level of government and organisations can help realise gender parity in corporate leadership.²²

Legal overview:

One of the methods of encouraging women to actively participate in their professional life, is to ensure and establish as strategic priorities - the gender equality and women’s empowerment policies within the company, especially made on the behalf of the CEO and the executive team.

Even if the legislation does not expressly provide as a mandatory action for the employers to establish such policies, the law covers this aspect through the non-discrimination standards and the related rights of the employees. In this case, if a company is not fully compliant with these standards, there are enough grounds for female employees to signal the anti-discriminatory policies at their workplace, which prevent women from feeling integrated in all the business processes of their employers.

As a general and mandatory provision, the labour legislation requires the employer to establish in its internal regulation, the obligation of respecting the principle of non-discrimination, which actually includes the clauses regarding the women’s empowerment and the positive measures of women’s integration at their workplace.

As of August 2022, new regulations²³ entered into force that introduced the rules regarding the evaluation of the individual performance of employees, which shall be incorporated in the internal regulations of the company. These amendments, besides the fact that they come to correlate the labour legislation with European trends and the standards of the International Labour Organization, they also come to contribute to develop the legislative framework in order to be in line with the requirements of the labour market.

Moreover, based on the evaluation’s results of each category of personnel subject to evaluation, the employer shall measure all employees progress, despite their gender, through clear performance indicators. The performance evaluation will help employers understand the contribution of women’s work and the aspects that make it necessary at all administrative levels of a company and how important it is to start to collect gender-disaggregated data based on these results.

21 See <https://www.weps.org/principle/high-level-corporate-leadership>.

22 UN Women, The Power of Working Together: Emerging Practices that Advance Women’s Economic Empowerment (2020). Available at https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/THE_POWER_OF_WORKING_TOGETHER_FINAL_0.pdf

23 Via the Law no.243/2022, there was introduced a new Chapter III on the “Evaluation of the individual performance of the employee” in the Labour code no.154/2003: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=132978&lang=ro

In November 2022, the European Parliament²⁴ has formally adopted the new EU law on gender balance on corporate boards (“Women on Boards” Directive). By 2026, the EU companies will need to have 40% of the underrepresented sex among non-executive directors or 33% among all directors.

Under current Moldovan legislation, there are no obligations to ensure specific percentage of women representation in private companies’ boards. However, there is such a trend in the political parties and election regulations. Mainly, under art.7 of the Law no.5/2006, is provided that the Central Electoral Commission, the electoral councils and constituency offices ensure compliance with the principle of equality between women and men in the electoral field, while the political parties are obliged to contribute to ensuring equal rights and opportunities between their female and male members, respecting a minimum representation quota of 40% for both sexes in: a) ensuring representation in governing bodies; b) the representation of women and men in the lists of candidates.

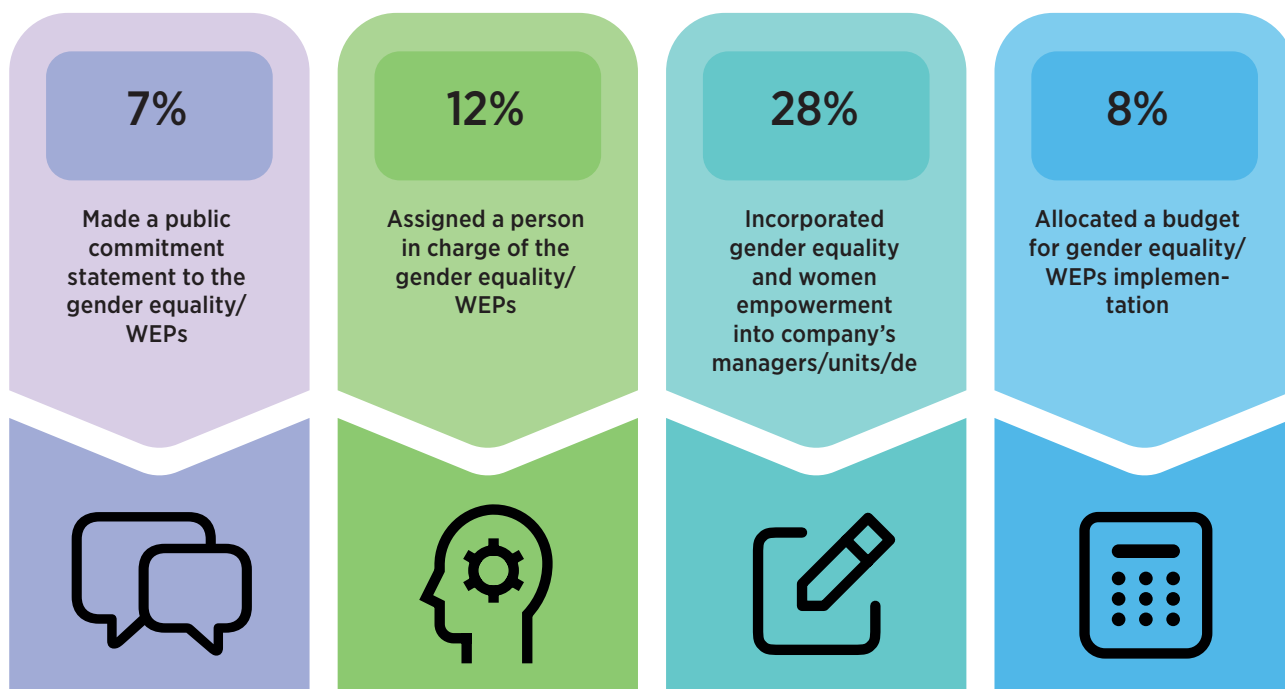
²⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_7074

Considering the EU candidate country status, it is expected that in the following years Moldovan legal framework might be approximated with the EU legislation on gender balance on corporate boards.

Survey results:

On average, 14 per cent of the respondent companies implement at least one measure that shows their commitment to gender equality at the workplace. The survey results show that only 7 per cent of respondent companies made public commitment statements to gender equality/WEPs; 12 per cent of companies assigned a person in charge of the gender equality work/WEPs; 28 per cent incorporated gender equality tasks into the job descriptions of the managers as well as the units/departments goals; and 8 per cent of respondents allocated a budget for gender equality work/WEPs implementation (Figure 12). Although the implementation rate of gender mainstreaming measures is still low, the number of gender responsive companies tends to increase in recent years. This is mainly due to the national measures implemented in the last years

Figure 12: Implementation of Principle 1



n=141: Question 11 – Did your company make a public commitment statement related to gender equality and women empowerment work undertaken by your company? (e.g., via company website, social media)

n=141: Question 16 – Did your company assign a person in charge of gender equality and women empowerment work? n=141: Question 12 – Are gender equality and women empowerment tasks incorporated into the tasks of company’s managers and company units/departments?

n=141: Question 14 – Did your company allocate a budget for gender equality and women empowerment initiatives?

and external support: national programs that stimulate women participation in entrepreneurship (especially in leadership positions), national policies that provide non-discrimination and equal chances principles, externally funded programs focused on raising awareness and building the capacities of private sector to implement gender equality principles at the workplace.

PRINCIPLE 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination

Principle 2 targets the treatment of all women and men fairly at work, as well as respect and support for human rights and non-discrimination. As per the WEPs: “Treating all women and men fairly at work aligns with international human rights principles. It also translates to better talent acquisition, higher employee retention and satisfaction, increased productivity and better decision-making. Removing all forms of discrimination in corporate policies, strategies, culture, and practices is a solid step forward in a company’s WEPs journey.”²⁵

Principle 2 commits businesses to treat all employees fairly, regardless of gender, and to respect and support human rights and non-discrimination. Signatories are encouraged to stand firmly against inequality, racism and discrimination, and to ensure that the perspectives, skills and talents of women from diverse backgrounds with different abilities and identities are represented and valued in company initiatives, programmes and decision-making. When implementing the WEPs, an intersectional lens should underpin strategies for advancing gender equality and targeting racism and discrimination in the workplace.²⁶

Suggested actions according to WEPs guidelines:

- Pay equal remuneration, including benefits, for work of equal value, and strive to pay a living wage to all women and men

²⁵ See <https://www.weps.org/principle/treat-all-women-and-men-fairly-work-without-discrimination>

²⁶ UN Women, Toward Equality in Business.

- Ensure that workplace policies and practices are free from gender-based discrimination
- Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices, and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors
- Assure sufficient participation of women – 30 per cent or greater – in decision-making and governance at all levels and across all business areas
- Offer flexible work options, leave and re-entry opportunities for positions of equal pay and status
- Support access to child and dependent care by providing services, resources and information to both women and men²⁷

The principle calls on companies and organisations to implement gender-sensitive recruitments and retention practices to proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial, executive and corporate board-level positions.

Legal overview:

Ensuring equal pay for equal work/work of equal value, is among the commitments of Republic of Moldova under various international documents, EU-MD Association agreement and national plans²⁸.

As of May 2022, the Labour code was amended²⁹ with the essential notions as “remuneration,” “salary gender difference”, “equal work” and “work of equal value”. Besides the direct impact on employees that are entitled to request from the employer the information about the level of remuneration, by gender, for different categories

²⁷ UN Women, The Power of Working Together.

²⁸ Convention of World Labour Organization no.100 dated 29.06.1951 (Article 2); The National Action Plan for implementation of the Association Agreement with EU within 2014-2016; Directive 75/117 related to the approximation of the laws of the member states in terms of the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or for work of equal value between women and men (1975); Directive 2006/54 regarding the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and treatment between men and women in the field of employment (2006); Government Action Plan for the years 2021-2022 (https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=128407&lang=ro).

²⁹ Via the Law no. 107/2022, the Labour code was amended: art. 10 para. (2) let. g) and art. 128 was supplemented by paragraph (21) with the provision of equal remuneration between women and men for equal work or of equal value.

of workers that provide equal work or work of equal value, there are specific requirements towards the companies-employers. Thus, the medium and large enterprises are obliged to periodically inform employees about the salary grid, by gender; as well as to annually report to the authorities the information on the average remuneration, disaggregated by gender and function (gender audit).

Alongside, there was amended the Law on wages no.847/2002³⁰. Thus, should the gender pay gap exceeds 5%, and these differences cannot be justified by objective and gender-neutral factors, the employer must remedy the situation. The State Labour Inspectorate and the Equality Council (according to the amending Law no.343/2022³¹) have the right to request additional clarifications and details from the employer regarding the gender difference in pay, including explanations regarding any pay differences between women and men that are not justified by objective factors.

Non-compliance with the “equal pay for equal work” principle is considered a discriminatory action by the employer both under the Law no.5/2006 (art. 11) and the Law no.121/2012 (art. 7(2) let. d)), while under the recent amendments via the Law no.343/2022, the mandate of the Equality Council is extended, entitling it with the right to investigate any form of discrimination based on different protected criteria and to sanction the employers. It also applies to the employers that do not comply with the provision on equal pay.

Business environment was supporting the introduction of “equal pay for equal work”. Nevertheless, in practice, companies are facing difficulties in applying these provisions without detailed implementation mechanisms and procedures to be followed.

Respectively, further improvements are recommended to be made to the legislation, aiming to:

- underline that the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal level of difficulty (work of equal value) is applied to each

30 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=110657&lang=ro

31 <https://www.parlament.md/ProcesullLegislativ/Proiectedeacteleislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/6132/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx>. The Law 343/2022 should have entered into force on the 1st of January 2023.

component of the salary (i.e. basic salary, additional salary, other incentive and compensation payments).

- detailing the actions to be carried out by the companies in order to be compliant with general provisions. As per publicly available information, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is currently involved in this subject, as according to the final provisions of the amending law on equal pay it is mentioned that the Government will develop the regulation and clear instructions in 6 months after adoption.

Flexible work arrangements were introduced in the Labour Code, as of August 2022³². As an alternative to the eight-hour work schedule, the flexible work formulas allow employees and employers to establish by agreement the use of remote work, work from home regime, flexible working, part-time work, or compressed work week.

The legislation provides for 6 criteria that the employer might take into consideration when establishing a flexible work formula, without specifying the prioritised employees for such arrangements (ex. women who have children or pregnant women). Thus, the right to request flexible working arrangements has any employee who has such a need, regardless of the reason. Thus, should some employee categories be prioritised, in the long term there is an increased risk that these categories will be discriminated/marginalised. For example, employers could avoid hiring people from protected categories. Thus, these amendments are considered inclusive and avoid prioritisation.

Additionally, the 2021 amendments to the Labour Code³³ besides providing the remote work, also regulates the remote (via advanced electronic signature) conclusion, modification, termination, and content of the individual employment agreement, that allow telework and the particularities on the organisation and protection of remote work. This is an important step to encourage employers to apply in practice one of the work flexibility schemes, namely telework.

32 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=132553&lang=ro

33 Amending Law no. 175/2021: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=128924&lang=ro

In addition to this, there is an initiative registered in the Parliament³⁴ providing for the entitlement of women to have both salary and the allowance during the maternity leave, if the employee women decide to work during the maternity period. Currently, for the period of maternity leave that overlaps with the period in which the woman is working, only the salary is paid, not the allowance. Thus, the draft law proposal aims to preserve the woman's right to be active and connected with professional life during the maternity. This initiative is in line with the Government's objective number 11.8.2 from the Action Plan for the years 2021-2022, aimed at facilitating the employment of women on childcare leave.

Alternative childcare services. One of the biggest challenges faced by the employees during the pandemic period was identifying efficient opportunities/alternatives to take care of their children up to 3 years old (mainly) and above. Against a background of the lack of nursery services and early education, employees preferred to leave their work temporarily, which led to a massive withdrawal of women from the labour market. Considering this phenomenon, the government amended the Labour Code and, subsequently, the Education Code, by which the employer may offer to employees' childcare services up to 3 years old, bearing all the related expenses from the means of this unit³⁵.

Further on, in December 2022, there was adopted special Law on alternative childcare services (project no.389³⁶). The law will enter into force on May 17, 2023 and the responsible public institutions have the obligation to bring all related legislative acts into compliance by the end of August 2023. The law comes to solve the challenges related to the limited access to public care services for children of preschool age, namely their expansion by establishing several alternative options for services of this type for children up to 3 years old, these being organised a) by the

employer at the workplace, b) by the qualified childcare worker at his/her home/temporary residence or c) by the qualified childcare worker at the home/temporary residence of the legal representatives of the children.³⁷

This reform shall be completed in order to increase the participation rate of women in the labour market and ensure a balance between professional and personal life of the employees. The law prescribes the 6-month period for developing secondary legislation on proper enforcement of the new provisions. The Sanitary regulations for these services are currently under development by the responsible authorities.

Paternity leave. The reconciliation between family and professional life has been a challenge, especially, for the participation of fathers in raising and caring for their children. The last few years have been marked by a series of social and political developments that are changing the way policies encourage the involvement of fathers in the lives of children and families.

The paternal leave, lasting 14 (consecutive) calendar days, is granted in order to allow the father to provide support to the mother in postpartum recovery, which is crucial in sharing responsibilities related to the family and the birth of the child. In 2022, the regulation of paternity leave was revised³⁸. Thus, in 2022 the period in which a paternity leave of 14 calendar days may be requested was extended from 56 days to 12 months as of childbirth. Moreover, the Law no.289/2004³⁹ was amended, now providing for offering the paternity leave allowance.

34 https://www.parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeacteleislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/6231/language/ro-RO/Default.aspx?fbclid=IwAR3SkxID2LlBltDY8uaaaN-p_AvBt8alas6LsxtRAp3ewkJLexPkoocDKgU

35 Via amending Law no.46/2022: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130448&lang=ro

36 <https://www.parlament.md/ProcesulLegislativ/Proiectedeacteleislative/tabid/61/LegislativId/6220/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

37 The alternative child care services provided by this law are complementary and discretionary, they do not replace the institutions of pre-school education and/or preschool education provided for in the Education Code and do not represent a form of social assistance (as described under the legislation).

38 Art. 124 1 of the Labour Code was amended via the amending Law no.195/2022: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=132553&lang=ro

39 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=132951&lang=ro

Recommendations on amending the legislation⁴⁰:

- entitle fathers the right to use parental leave fragmented into parts (periods of time), within the first 12 months from the birth of the child. The employee will have the right to decide how to divide the paternity leave, but not more than two parts per month, to avoid inconsistencies at work or not to distort the professional activity. This measure comes to meet the needs of struggling fathers with time constraints and is unable to use the entire leave period paternal consecutively.
- offering to the fathers the right to request, based on an agreement between the parties (employee-employer), additional days for paternity leave, but not more than 30 calendar days, which can be used within 12 months from the child's birth.
- the current iteration of Article 1241 (4) from the Labour Code provides that the employee benefits from a paternal allowance that cannot be lower than the average monthly insured income for the respective period. In case of the extension of the number of days of the paternity leave to 30 days, it might be applied one of the 2 options:

1. Payment option no. 1:

- The first 14 days of paternity leave – 100% of the insured average monthly income;
- 15-21 days of paternity leave (week 3) – 70% of the average insured monthly income,
- 22-30/31 days of paternity leave (week 4) – 60% of the average insured monthly income.

2. Payment option no. 2:

- the entire duration of the paternity leave requested (14+ days) is paid at 100% from the insured average monthly income.

Work during (prenatal) maternity leave. As of the 1st of March 2023, new regulatory amendments⁴¹ entered into force, according to which, during the

period of being on maternity leave, the employee has the right to continue or resume the work activity based on the written request, with the presentation of the medical conclusion regarding the state of health, issued by the medical institution on whose list it is registered, and by mutual agreement with the employer. For the period of maternity leave that overlaps with the period in which the woman earned insured income, the maternity allowance is paid. The amendments are aimed at improving women's participation rate in the labour and reducing the burden of unpaid or in-pocket work of pregnant women who continue to work even during the maternity leave.

Survey results:

More than half of the respondent companies have reviewed their internal policies. We have asked survey participants regarding the internal policies that have been developed/reviewed as part of gender equality initiatives in their respective companies. According to Figure 13, staff safety was one of the most commonly developed/reviewed internal policies (67 per cent). This is largely due to the changes that occurred during the pandemic and post-pandemic period. During 2020 – 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the national authorities, especially Moldova's National Extraordinary Public

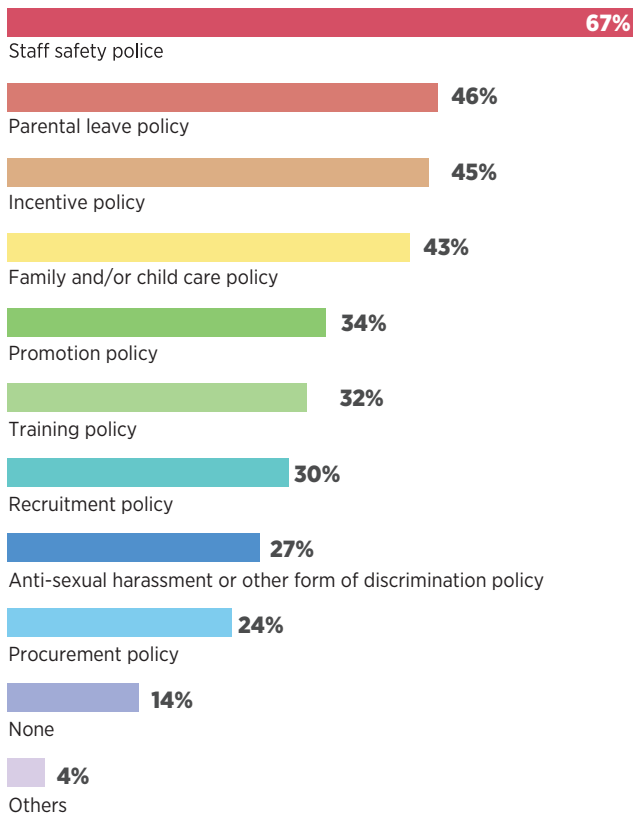
Health Commission, issued constant decisions regarding the organization of work during exceptional times, additional staff protection measures being established by law.

The employers had to adjust the staff safety policies to comply with these provisions. In 2022, in the context of the Russia's war against Ukraine, some employers have adjusted their internal policies on staff security, providing additional measures to ensure the safety of employees during conflicts. Additionally, a reform of the State Labour Inspectorate was recently carried out to align with the international standards. Alongside with the new provisions on SLI mandate, changes to internal policies are required in order to meet the principles of zero-tolerance of abuse at the workplace.

⁴⁰ https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Studiu_implicarea-tatilor_recomandari-de-politici_20.01.pdf

⁴¹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134946&lang=ro

Figure 13: Internal policies developed/reviewed as part of gender equality initiatives



n=141; Question 15 - What internal policies did your company developed/reviewed as part of gender equality initiatives?

About 40% of the respondent companies have reviewed their policies on parental leave and family and/or childcare policies. This is largely due to the recently adopted legislative changes regarding reconciliation of family and professional life (described in the previous section). The changes in the legal framework were a good premise for many employers to make internal policies more sensitive to the needs of women and men. Procurement policy was one of the least common policies developed/reviewed by the companies (24 per cent). Data suggests that the intention to revise internal policies is often determined by changes in the legal framework and external support for certain reforms. It should be highlighted that none of the policies have been reviewed/developed by 14 per cent of the survey respondents.

The survey participants were asked to indicate any of the practices that their company implements to empower and support women in the workplace. According to Figure 14, flexible work schedules for all female employees was one of the most common practices that companies are implementing (68 per cent). Professional development courses/trainings

for all female employees and remote work option for all female employees were also implemented by the majority of the survey participants (62 and 54 per cent respectively). One of the least common practices among survey respondents was the practice to empower and support women employees.

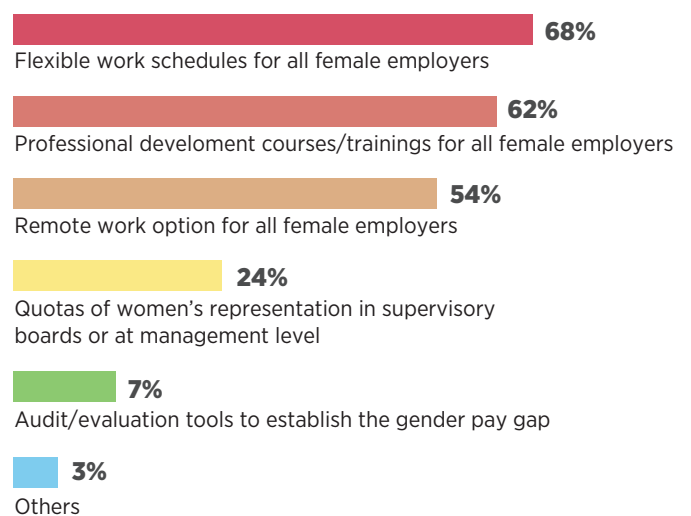
Insight from case studies:

“Since the implementation of WEPs, the main priority of Sandic Honey Group is to ensure the balance between professional and personal life for women, by providing flexible work arrangements when women with small children need it, paid sick leaves and days off on weekends, fully respecting the national legislation in force. One of the most successful policy implementations at Sandic Honey Group is equal pay for equal work”

Sandic Honey Group, WEPs signatory company

The new legal requirements regarding pay gap reporting make employers pay more attention to this issue. According to the survey responses, 27 per cent of survey participants analyse the wages in their companies by gender. The data shows that only 7 per cent of the companies have implemented audit/evaluation tools to establish the gender pay gap. These figures demonstrate the need for further action in regard to the equal pay issue. Companies play an important role in addressing gender pay gaps and are increasingly taking action to remove discrimination in the workplace.

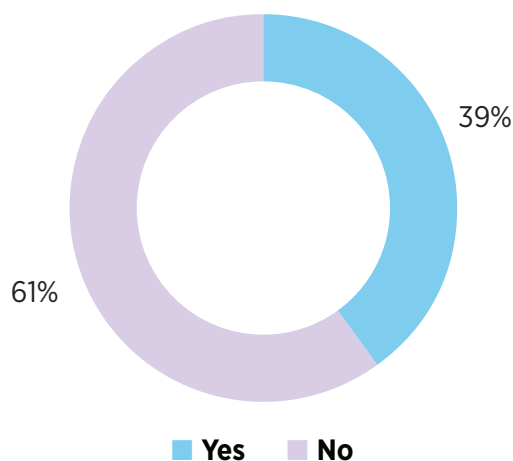
Figure 14: Implemented practices/conditions to empower and support women in workplace



n=141; Question 16 - Does your company implement any of the following workplace practices/conditions to empower and support women?

Still, many organisations do not yet uphold the principle of “equal pay for work of equal value”. Although legal provisions regarding equal pay have been introduced, currently there are no clear instructions or guidance for employers on how to implement them. That is why, most of the employers encounter certain difficulties in analysing and reporting the pay gap. Therefore, it is crucial to provide the employers with clear regulations, instructions, and criteria for evaluation of equal work and work of equal value. Applying the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is critical to address the conscious and unconscious biases in determining the value of work and eliminating gender-based discrimination towards the achievement of gender equality.

Figure 15: Companies monitoring recruitment practices to avoid discrimination



n=141: Question 19 – Did your company improve recruitment practices to avoid discrimination?

Figure 15 demonstrates that 61 per cent of respondents worked on improving their recruitment practices to avoid discrimination.

WEPs signatory companies were further asked to provide details regarding the ways the management monitors recruitment practices to avoid discrimination in the workplace. The majority of companies responded that they are modifying vacancy announcement templates and promoting transparent hiring processes. Nearly half of companies are prohibiting discriminatory questions at interviews, as well as encouraging female candidates to apply for non-traditional jobs in recruitment advertisements.

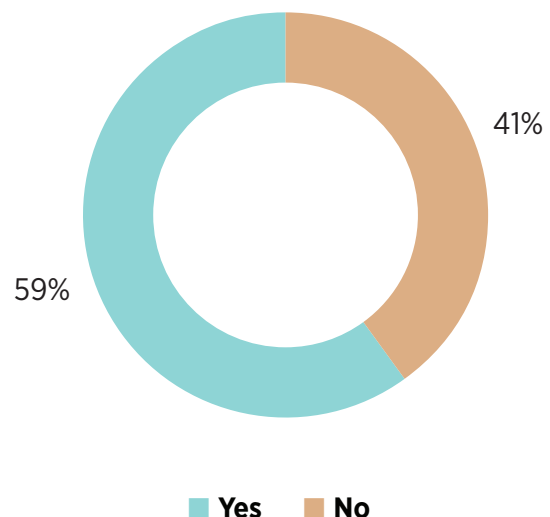
Insight from case studies:

“Due to the fact that Fresh and Joy SRL has more female employees in the workplace, the company has implemented flexible working arrangements for women who are retired – a paid day off in the event of a doctor’s appointment and paid hospital treatment. For women who are on their maternity leave or childcare leave, it is granted the possibility to work from home, also with flexible working arrangements.”

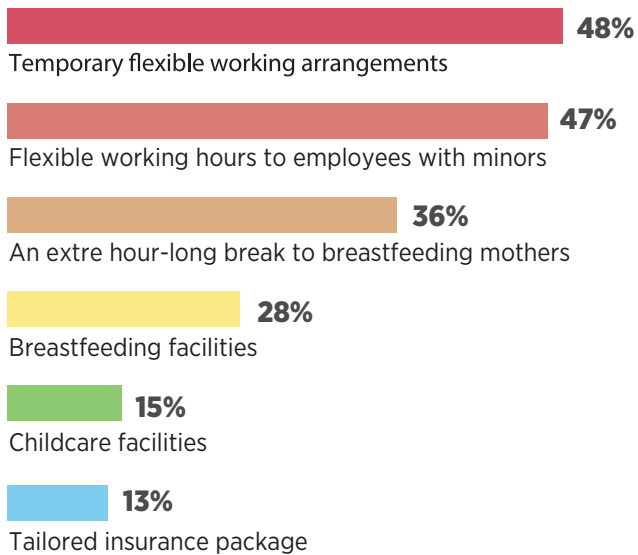
Fresh and Joy SRL, WEPs signatory company

More than half of respondents provide favourable working conditions for parents, including fathers. Supporting parents in the workplace by establishing inclusive and comprehensive leave policies, encouraging the equal uptake of childcare, and providing flexible working arrangements are measures that contribute to gender equality, resulting in increased employee retention, reduced absenteeism and lowered overall recruitment costs.

Figure 16: Companies that provided favourable working conditions for employees who are pregnant or who have children



n=141: Question 17 – Does your company provide favourable working conditions for female employees who are pregnant or employees who have children?

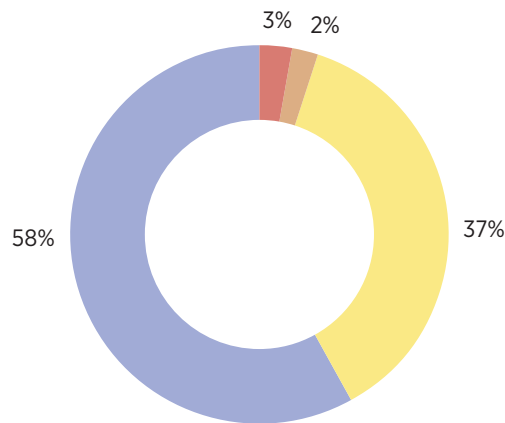


n=141: Question 18 - Please provide details regarding provision of more favourable working conditions for female employees who are pregnant or employees who have children

As reflected in Figure 16, nearly half of survey respondents (48 and 47 per cent respectively) have provided temporary flexible working arrangements and flexible working hours to employees with minors. An extra hour-long break to breastfeeding mothers and breastfeeding facilities have been provided by 36 and 28 per cent of the companies respectively. Childcare facilities (15 per cent) and tailored insurance (13 per cent) were the least common practices according to the survey participants' responses. The right of employers to create childcare services/ facilities at the workplace was recently introduced in the Moldovan legal framework and now all the regulations regarding the conditions, criteria and mechanisms are under development. Without these regulations, employers are unable to put these provisions into practice.

Family friendly practices vary among companies. The survey respondents were asked whether their companies offer employees the opportunity to benefit from paid days off for maternity and/or paternity leave, in addition to the number of days provided by the legislation in force. According to Figure 17, more than half of companies (58 per cent) offer additional paid days for both maternity and paternity leave. 37 percent of companies offer additional paid days for paternity leave, while only 2 per cent of companies offer additional days for maternity leave.

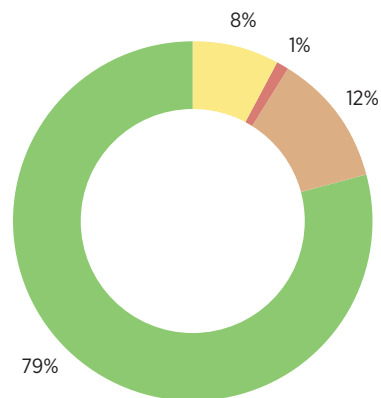
Figure 17: Maternity/paternity leave in companies



- Yes, additional paid days for maternity leave
- Yes, additional paid days for paternity leave
- Yes, additional paid days for both maternity and paternity leave
- None of above

n=141: Question 26 - Does your company offer employees the opportunity to benefit from paid days off for maternity and/or paternity leave, in addition to the number of days provided by the legislation in force? (according to the law, maternity leave - 126 paid days, paternity leave - 14 paid days).

Figure 18: Incentives/additional payments to employees for early return from childcare leave up to 3 years of age



- Yes, additional paid days for female employers
- Yes, additional paid days for male employers
- Yes, additional paid days for both parents (issued separately)
- None of above

n=141: Question 27 - Does your company offer incentives/additional payments (in the form of increments, bonuses, etc.) to employees for early return from childcare leave up to 3 years of age?

According to Figure 18, the majority of the survey participants do not provide incentives or additional payments to employees for early return from childcare leave up to 3 years of age (79 per cent).

Only 8 per cent of companies offer additional paid days for female employees and 12 per cent offer additional paid days for both parents. Only 1 per cent of respondents offer additional paid days for male employees. The data shows, on the one hand, the flexibility of the private sector, and on the other hand, the change in the work approach which became more centred on the needs of employees. Currently, employers in Moldova face an acute shortage of qualified labour force, mostly because of the migration (“brain drain” phenomenon). In this context, implementation of internal policies centred on the needs of employees, would increase the retention of qualified personnel.

PRINCIPLE 3: Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers

Principle 3 aims to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers. As per the WEPs: “Employers play a key role in preserving and promoting the physical and emotional health, safety and wellbeing of their women and men employees. Sexual harassment and violence signify high costs to women in terms of lost earnings, missed promotions and overall wellbeing. Companies are impacted in [the] form of employee absenteeism and productivity losses.”⁴²

Suggested actions according WEPs guidelines:

- Provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to reproductive health
- Establish a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of violence at work – including verbal and/or physical abuse – and prevent sexual harassment
- Strive to offer health insurance or other needed services – including for survivors of domestic violence – and ensure equal access for all employees
- Respect women and men workers’ rights to time off for medical care and counselling for themselves and their dependants

- In consultation with employees, identify and address security issues, including the safety of women travelling to and from work and on company-related business
- Train security staff and managers to recognize signs of violence against women and understand laws and company policies on human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation⁴³

Legal overview:

Moldovan legislation prohibits any form of discrimination based on gender in terms of women’s and men’s access to all levels of health care and disease prevention and health promotion programs.

The Labour Code of the Republic of Moldova provides the general guarantees for both women and men employees regarding the safety and health requirements. The specific conditions on this matter are described by the Law no.186/2008 on the safety and health at work⁴⁴. So, the employer is obliged to take the necessary measures to protect the safety and health of the employees, including the prevention of professional risks, the provision of information and training, as well as the provision of organisation and the necessary means. Also, the employer is obliged to supervise the change of the circumstances, with the aim of improving the existing situation.

In terms of preventing all forms of violence and sexual harassment at work, Labour Code and the Law no.5/2006 (on equal opportunities between women and men), provides the definition of sexual harassment, which means any form of physical, verbal, or non-verbal behaviour of a sexual nature that damages the dignity of the person or creates an unpleasant, hostile, degrading, humiliating or insulting atmosphere. The dignity at work represents a comfortable psycho-emotional climate in work relationships that excludes any form of verbal or non-verbal behaviour of the employer or other employees that may harm the moral and psychological integrity of the employee.

Among the other obligations of the employer, he/she shall take measures to prevent sexual harassment at work, one of them being to introduce

⁴² See <https://www.weps.org/principle/employee-health-well-being-and-safety>

⁴³ UN Women, Toward Equality in Business.

⁴⁴ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133270&lang=ro

into the internal regulations specific provisions related to the prohibition of sexual harassment. Also, even if it happens, the employee is entitled to submit any claims without being persecuted or intimidated by the employer.

Both moral and sexual harassment are sanctioned by the contraventional and criminal legislation. Moreover, subjects to these sanctions can be both the individual who committed actions or inactions that fall within the term of harassment, as well as the employer, the legal person, who did not fulfil all his obligations related to ensuring a suitable and favourable environment for such actions not to take place or did not constitute a procedure of grievance at the company level.

Legislation related to the access to health insurance is gender neutral. Pursuant to Article 49(1) let. r) of the Labour Code, the labour agreement shall provide the conditions of health insurance and the employer is obliged to pay it on behalf of the employee. In connection with the right of the employee to time off for medical care, the Labour Code provides specific guarantees if it happens. So, in case of granting the employee a medical leave, the employer is obliged to pay him an allowance.

An important topic which shall not be neglected to ensure the health and well-being of the employees is their emotional state. Although in 2019 the WHO declared the burnout as a “phenomenon of the occupational sphere that affects the state of health”, in the International Classification of the Diseases, burnout is classified as a syndrome⁴⁵. In Moldova, till now, this syndrome is not included in the nomenclature of the diseases, nor specific recommendations for the employers to manage this in order to ensure the emotional heal of the employees were proposed.

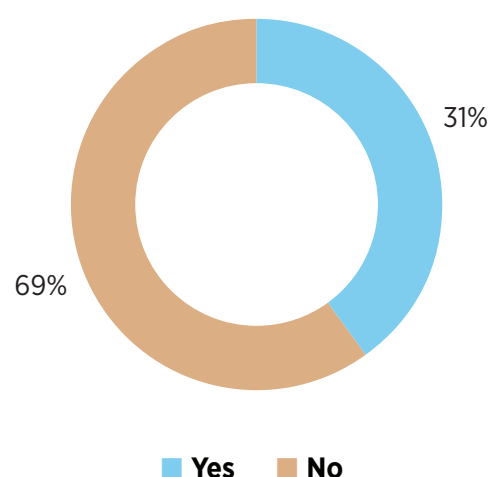
Survey results:

One third of respondent companies have established policies at the workplace to combat sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The costs of sexual harassment in the world of work are extremely high – for the individuals affected and for the companies where it occurs.

The private sector plays a key role in tackling gender-based violence in the workplace. Workplace health and safety management processes must consider all the risks associated with violence and harassment, including identifying hazards or risk factors, and must ensure that adequate information and training is in place.

Companies that invest in building inclusive culture based on safety, respect and dignity, are better positioned to attract and retain talent and increase customer satisfaction. In the last years, in Moldova more and more attention has been paid to the elimination of gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace. The pressure on the employers came both from the national authorities (which are in a continuous process of amending the legislation in the field), and from the civil society organizations (which managed to bring this topic on the public agenda and offered support to employers in both the private and public sectors to develop and implement anti-harassment policies at the workplace). Considering that a draft law is currently being developed that specifically regulates sexual harassment issues at the workplace, it is anticipated that the number of employers implementing such policies will increase significantly.

Figure 19: Companies that implemented sexual harassment and gender-based violence policy

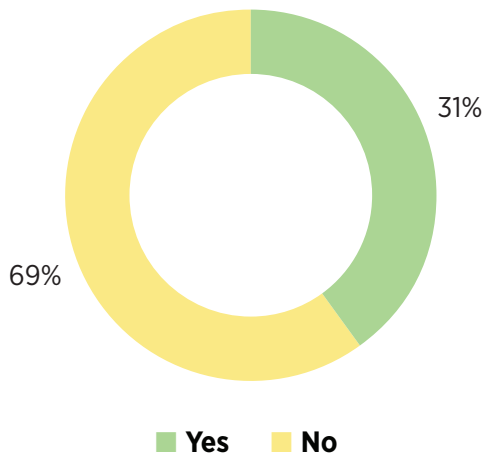


n=141: Question 21 – Does your company have sexual harassment and combating gender-based violence policy?

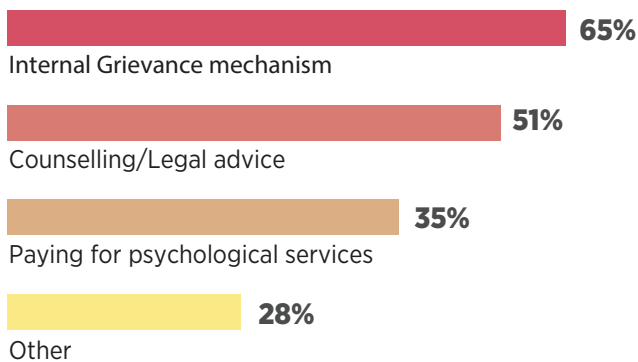
45 <https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases>

The survey participants were asked whether their companies support female victims of sexual harassment or abuse. Those companies that supported in any form were asked to provide details regarding the form how did they support female survivors of sexual harassment or abuse.

Figure 20: Companies that supported female survivors of sexual harassment or abuse



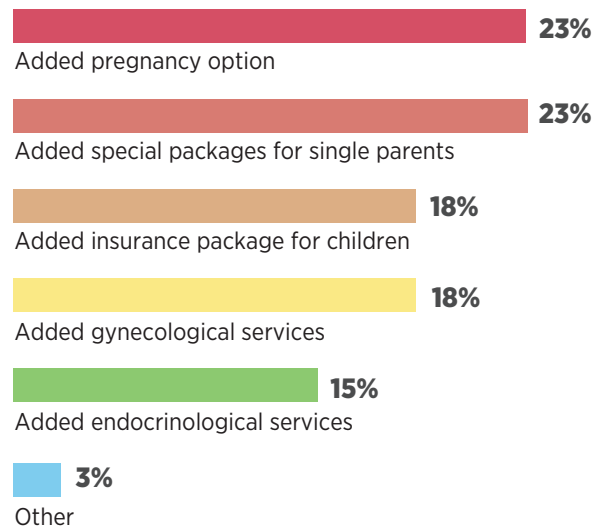
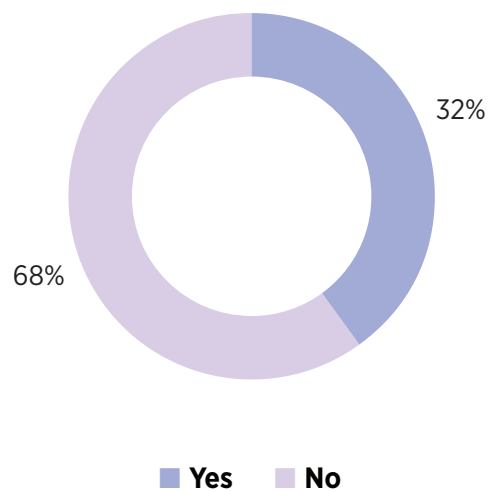
*n=141: Question 22 – Does your company support female victims of sexual harassment or abuse?
n=51: Question 23 – Please provide details regarding supporting female victims of sexual harassment or abuse.*



As reflected in Figure 20, 39 per cent of the surveyed companies provided some sort of support to female survivors and nearly 65 per cent of that group chose to do so by introducing an internal grievance mechanism in the company, while 51 per cent - by counselling/legal advice and 35 per cent provided support to female survivors by paying for their psychological services.

Nearly one third of companies provide health insurance packages to better address women's needs. More specifically, the same proportion (23 per cent) of companies have added pregnancy option and special packages for single parents, a slightly smaller share of companies (18 per cent) have introduced insurance packages for children and gynaecological services, while 15 per cent have added endocrinological services (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Companies that have health insurance packages to better address women's needs



n=141: Question 24 – Does your company's health insurance packages address women's needs?

n=41: Question 25 – Please provide details regarding the revision of health insurance packages to better address women's needs.

PRINCIPLE 4: Promote education, training, and professional development for women

Providing education, training and professional development opportunities is not only important for the personal development of employees but also critical in empowering companies. Principle 4 calls on companies and organisations to invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for women's advancement at all levels and across all business areas. WEPs signatories are also encouraged to conduct training about the company's gender equality policy and action plan, as well as awareness-raising on sexual harassment, unconscious bias and other training that could help foster an inclusive workplace. Companies and organisations are urged to ensure women's equal access to all company-supported education and training programmes, formal and informal networking and mentoring programmes. Businesses that offer better learning and skills development opportunities can enhance their competitiveness and attract talent.

Suggested actions according to WEPs guidelines:

- Invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for the advancement of women at all levels and across all business areas, and encourage women to enter non-traditional job fields
- Ensure equal access to all company-supported education and training programmes, including literacy classes and vocational and IT training
- Provide equal opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring
- Articulate the company's business case for women's empowerment and the positive impact of inclusion for men as well as women⁴⁶

Legal overview:

One of the basic principles of the Labour Code is ensuring the equality of employees, without any discrimination, to professional training, recycling

and improvement. This obligation also covers the professional training of the part-time employees. The continuous professional training means any training process in which an employee, already having a qualification or a profession, completes his professional knowledge by deepening his knowledge in a certain field of the basic specialty or by learning new methods or procedures applied within the respective specialty.

The employer is obliged to create the necessary conditions and promote the professional training of the employees who follow the training in production, perfect themselves or study in educational institutions, without removing them from the activity. If the participation of the employees in the professional training courses or internships is initiated by the employer, all related expenses are borne by him. Moreover, the employees who follow, at the employer's initiative, the professional training course with removal from activity, their job (position) and average salary are maintained, as well as they are granted other guarantees and compensations provided by the law. The employees who follow, at the employer's initiative, the professional training course with removal from activity, in another locality, are compensated for their travel expenses in the manner and under the conditions provided for employees sent on business trips.

As per Law no.05/2006, the Republic of Moldova, committed itself that, through education and training institutions, it will undertake affirmative actions to promote the balanced participation of women and men in the exercise of specific professions where the overrepresentation of persons of a certain sex is attested.

As per official data, the share of unemployment rate is higher among young women in Moldova, mainly because of their involvement in care responsibilities (unpaid work)⁴⁷. Art. 23 of the Law

⁴⁷ As per GD 785/2022, the employment rate is particularly low among young people aged between 15 and 24 (in 2021: 16.4% compared to 33.4% in European Union countries). In 2019, men (15+) recorded an employment rate of 44.2%, and women – 36.5%, with a gender difference in employment of 7.7 percentage points. The gender gap widened in 2019-2020, as the employment rate fell much faster among women compared to men (by 8.1 percentage points and 1.1 percentage points, respectively), and in 2021 the employment rate among women (35.4%) was lower by 9.3% compared to that of men (44.7%).

⁴⁶ UN Women, Toward Equality in Business.

no. 105/2018⁴⁸ on the employment promotion and the unemployment insurance provides that young people and victims of domestic violence (mainly women) may benefit from additional support on the accessing the labour market (including professional training)⁴⁹. The legislation also provides for the facilities for employers that provide on-the-job training⁵⁰.

As for the period of 2022-2026, the Government approved the National Employment Program⁵¹, aiming to address both the short-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market and the structural challenges affecting the quantity and quality of jobs. This program has as a general and priority objective, achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, by recognizing and appreciating the unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and promoting shared responsibility in the household and family.

Starting from January 14, 2023, people registered as unemployed will be able to benefit from vocational training vouchers. Specific amendments were approved in 2022 to the Law no.105/2018⁵². There is already the draft Government Decision for the approval of the voucher implementation procedure to be adopted in 2023⁵³. The unemployed person will independently select a professional training service provider from the publicly available list (offered by the Employment National Agency).

Starting with 2015, UN Women in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, the

Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, together with international organizations, economic agents and civil society, supports the promotion of digital literacy of women and girls, especially of those from disadvantaged groups by empowering Moldovan girls with skills and tools in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) and encouraging them to opt for a career in these fields in the future. Programs such as “Girls Go IT”, “Aleg Carieră în IT”, “Women in Science” have contributed to a 15% increase in the enrolment of girls in the Faculty of Computer Science⁵⁴. In order to improve the access of the young girls in STEM fields, it shall be adopted a Strategy regarding the employment of the workforce, which shall cover provisions like promoting gender equality in the non-traditional professions, guiding young people in professional career considering the gender aspect, promoting the benefits of the professional career in the fields designed for men and women.

Survey results:

One quarter of the survey respondents promote women’s participation in non-traditional fields.

Specifically, 21 per cent of companies promoted women’s participation in the Transport/Automotive sector which is considered to be a more male-dominated field in Moldova, 14 per cent in the agriculture sector, while only 7 per cent of respondents indicated the IT sector. Mentoring is an effective way for businesses to drive positive organisational culture change because mentoring tends to lead to a greater number of promotions and more career success – and can also improve a company’s performance, productivity, organisational effectiveness, consumer satisfaction and return on investment. Companies used various approaches to motivate their women colleagues to join non-traditional fields; these approaches included the following:

- Provision of support (legal, technical, psychological)
- Hiring more women
- Provision of trainings and workshops

48 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133685&lang=ro

49 According to the procedures prescribed by the Government decision no. 1276/2018 for the approval of procedures regarding access to employment measures: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134201&lang=ro

50 Art.33(6) of the Law no.105/2018 stipulates that the employer who provides on-the-job training for the unemployed trainee, upon written request to the Employment National Agency, benefits throughout the duration of the training from a monthly subsidy equal to 30% of the average monthly salary in the economy for the previous year.

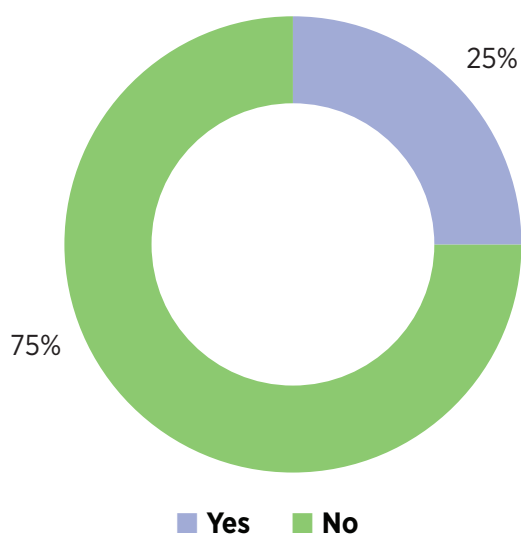
51 Government Decision no.785/2022: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134612&lang=ro

52 Amending Law no.274/2022: https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=133678&lang=ro

53 https://cancelaria.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/attachments/895_mmmps.pdf

54 As per data offered in the WEP Roadmap of the Economic council to the Prime Minister of Republic of Moldova: <https://consecon.gov.md/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/RoadMapEEW.pdf>

Figure 22: Companies that promoted women's participation in non-traditional fields and in certain sectors



n=141: Question 28 - Does your company promote women's participation in non-traditional fields?

PRINCIPLE 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women

Companies have a great opportunity to promote gender equality through their relationships with their suppliers, as well as through the values they promote in their marketing campaigns.⁵⁵

Principle 5 calls on companies and organisations to require business partners, contractors, and suppliers to adopt the WEPs and to establish supplier diversity programmes that actively seek to expand business relationships with women-owned enterprises. Signatories implementing Principle 5 should seek gender-sensitive solutions to women's barriers to access financial products and services and systematically source their goods and services from other enterprises that align with the WEPs. Doing so does not mean that quality, efficiency, cost savings or value for money would be compromised.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ UN Women, Toward Equality in Business.

⁵⁶ UN Women, The Power of Working Together. ⁵⁷UN Women, Toward Equality in Business.

Suggested actions according WEPs guidelines:

- Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women
- Expand business relationships with women entrepreneurs and women-owned enterprises, including small businesses
- Support gender-sensitive solutions to credit and lending barriers
- Respect the dignity of women in all marketing and other company materials⁵⁷

Legal overview:

The Law no.179/206 on small and medium-sized enterprises⁵⁸ provides for the creation and putting into operation state programs regarding the development of female entrepreneurship.

For example, the Programme “Women in Business”⁵⁹ designed to reduce gender inequality by helping women gain management skills through business development, mainly in rural areas, and can increase their access to modern resources, services and technologies. This national program was established in accordance with the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Association Agreement for the years 2014-2016.

According to The Missing Entrepreneurs 2021 report⁶⁰, about half of EU Member States have taken steps towards building a policy framework to underpin entrepreneurship programmes for women, which can be described as following, but not limited to:

- establishing a separate entity/department responsible for developing policy to support women entrepreneurs,

⁵⁷ UN Women, Toward Equality in Business.

⁵⁸ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=134354&lang=ro#

⁵⁹ <https://www.odimm.md/en/projects/transnational-danube-program/women-in-business>

⁶⁰ The report provides an overview of the scope of inclusive entrepreneurship policy, which seeks to give everyone an equal opportunity of creating a successful and sustainable business, regardless of their gender, age, place of birth, work status or other personal characteristics, available at <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/70eb8ecc-57dc-11ec-91ac-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

- establishing a clear women’s entrepreneurship strategy, either as a standalone strategy or
- embedded within a broader entrepreneurship or labour market strategy,
- improving access to start-up finance with grants, microcredit and loan guarantee programmes,
- improving the regulatory framework for new start-ups.
- increasing support for women entrepreneurs with care responsibilities.

All of these actions have a great impact on promoting programmes that aim to facilitate women access to networking platforms across a community, coaching and mentoring projects and better overall support activities.

Regarding the screening and promotion of gender stereotypes through media and advertising, the Law no.121/2012 on ensuring equality⁶¹ regulates as a serious form of discrimination - the support of discrimination through mass media, which is used as a form of individualization of the sanction applied for the committed actions.

Moreover, the Law no.62/2022 on advertising⁶², which will enter into force on 8th of January 2023, regulates discriminatory advertising, which is a general concept regarding discrimination based on different criteria, and sexist advertising, which expressly prohibits the promotion of sexist stereotypes for discriminatory purposes, maintaining the traditional perception of women as a weak, vulnerable, and dependent being, having a lower social position. In this case, several public institutions are responsible for sanctioning this type of advertising. Thus, companies shall ensure advertising in accordance with the rules regarding gender equality and avoiding sexism.

Unfortunately, the penalty for this type of discrimination is disproportionately small compared to the effective prejudice, the highest being of only 10,500 MDL. In this regard, it is recommended to revise the legislative framework related to the applied sanctions for all forms of discrimination.

Additionally, in relation to this principle, which

61 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=106454&lang=ro

62 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130742&lang=ro

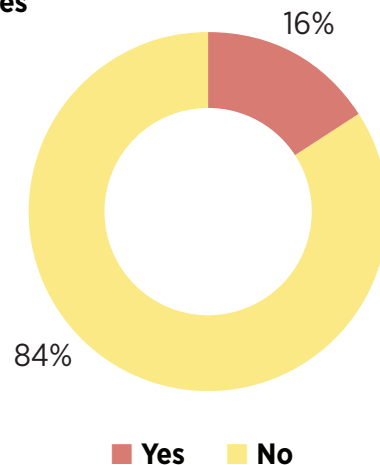
ensures that the company’s products and services are not used for human trafficking and/or labour exploitation or sexual exploitation, Moldovan legislative framework provides criminal penalties for any actions related to these activities, meaning that both fines and custodial sentences can be applied.

Survey results:

Only 16 per cent of the surveyed companies established business contacts with women-owned businesses. Although in recent years several programs to stimulate female entrepreneurship have been implemented in Moldova, they still face various barriers. Stereotypes regarding the leadership and management capacities of women, lack of confidence in the potential of female entrepreneurship, limited access to finance determine the smaller number of women-owned businesses and weak business relationships with women-owned enterprises. Diversifying the supplier base by increasing sourcing from gender-responsive companies and women-owned businesses is crucial to enhance women suppliers’ opportunities to grow and gain exposure to business networks and sustainable revenue streams. There are various approaches that companies use to work with women-owned businesses, including the following measures:

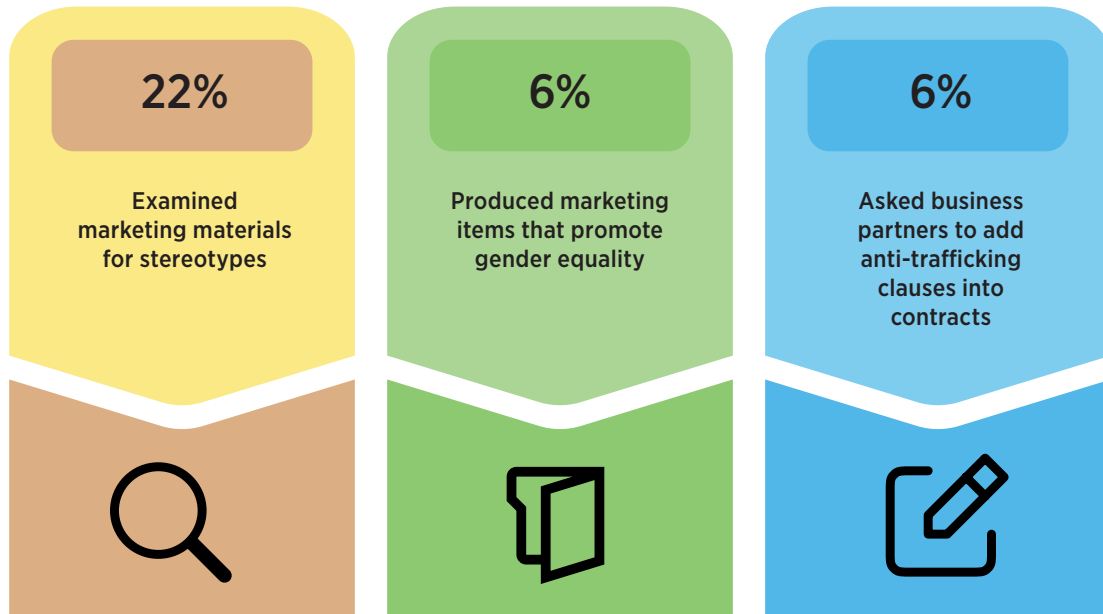
- Partnership with companies owned by women
- Collaboration on different projects
- Provision of financial assistance

Figure 23: Companies that established business contacts with women-owned businesses



n=141: Question 35 – Did your company establish business contacts with women-owned businesses as part of the WEPPs?

Figure 24: Implementation of Principle 5



n=141: Question 32 – Does your company examine marketing and advertising materials for gender stereotypes?

n=141: Question 33 – Does your company produce marketing or advertising items that promote gender equality and non- traditional gender roles?

n=141: Question 34 – Does your company ask its business partners/suppliers to include anti-trafficking and anti-exploitation clauses in their contracts?

Few companies have marketing practices targeting women and even less assess the differential impacts of their business on women and men when developing their product and/or marketing practices. As per the WEPs: “Negative and diminished conceptions of women and girls are one of the greatest barriers for gender equality. Advertising is a powerful driver to change perceptions and impact social norms – portraying women and men in modern, authentic and multidimensional roles.”⁶³ According to our analysis, in order to empower women, 22 per cent of the survey respondents examined marketing materials for stereotypes, 6 per cent produced marketing items that promote gender equality and 6 per cent asked business partners to add anti-trafficking clauses into contracts.

PRINCIPLE 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

Principle 6 encourages the promotion of equality through community initiatives and advocacy. As per the WEPs: “Companies are increasingly

investing in community development programmes to make valuable, effective, and responsible contributions to gender equality and women’s empowerment. They are encouraged to actively engage and consult with women and girls on their views, needs and aspirations, and to ensure that their voices are heard.”⁶⁴ Companies have several opportunities to lead by example and contribute to women’s empowerment within the wider community.

Suggested actions according to WEPs guidelines:

- Leverage influence, alone or in partnership, to advocate for gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to promote inclusion
- Work with community stakeholders, officials and others to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and open opportunities for women and girls
- Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support company commitment to inclusion, equality and human rights⁶⁵

⁶³ See <https://www.weps.org/principle/enterprise-development-supply-chain-and-marketing-practices>

⁶⁴ See <https://www.weps.org/principle/community-initiatives-and-advocacy>

⁶⁵ UN Women, Toward Equality in Business.

Legal overview:

Although the Law on advertising and the Audio-visual code were amended in order to prohibit the use of sexist language in mass-media, the presence of patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory stereotypes regarding women versus men's roles in the family and society is still felt.

The lack of a current strategy for the development of parent skills and competences shall be covered as soon as possible, including to be adopted an action plan to implement the strategy. The purpose of this Strategy shall be ensuring the conditions for the achievement of the maximum potential development of each child between 0-18 years by reflecting the role of each parent in the family and their skills and competencies.

Although the contravention law provides sanctions for people who mistreat women based on gender criteria (Article 78 of the Contravention Code), the sanctions are to be amended in the way of their aggravation.

Frequently, supporting different community initiatives means using philanthropy and donations in order to help engage visibility and communication among companies, NGOs and of course the involved women. In this regard, the legislation,

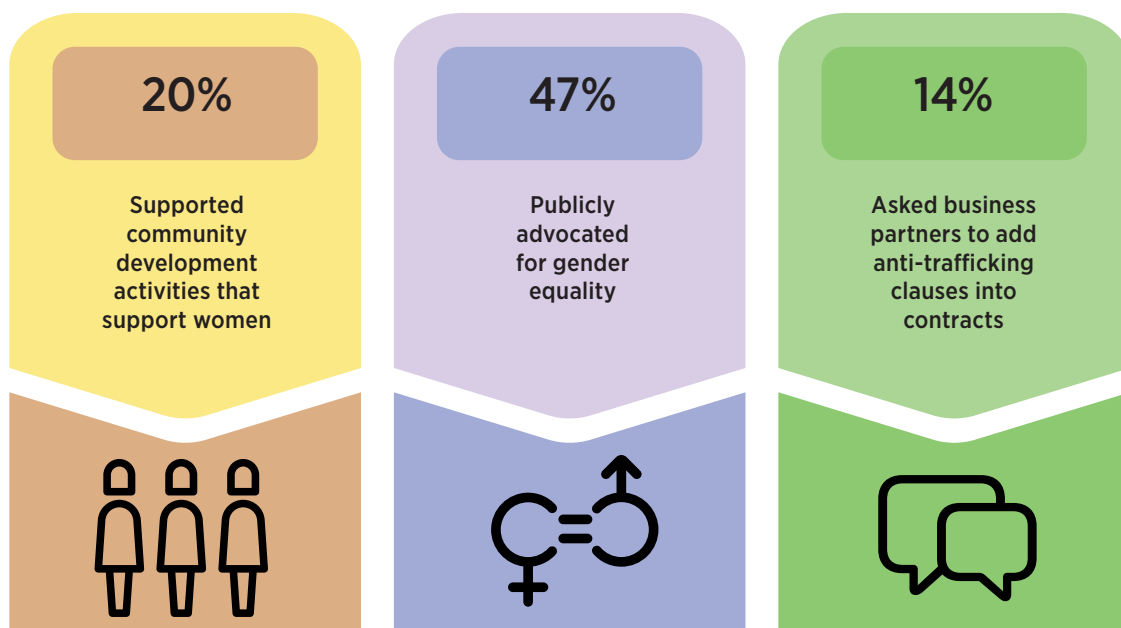
more specifically the Law no.1420/2002 on philanthropy and sponsorship⁶⁶ states that natural and legal persons have the right to carry out philanthropic activities on voluntary principles without obstacles, individually or in association, and no one has the right to limit the freedom to choose the goals of their philanthropic activities. However, one important thing is that the civil law prohibits donations between profit-making legal entities, meaning that the legal form of organisations of the involved actors in such activities is essential.

Survey results:

A small number of companies participating in the study have considered gender when developing community engagement programmes. Based on the results from the conducted survey, only 20 per cent of the respondents participated in community development activities that support women and 14 per cent organised consultations with women outside the workplace. On the other hand, nearly half of the companies publicly advocated for gender equality. In terms of public advocacy, commonly companies have been engaged in public campaigns and social media announcements for gender equality.

66 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=132488&lang=ro#

Figure 25: Implementation of Principle 6



n=141: Question 37 - Does your company organize/support community development activities that support women? n=30: Question 39 - Does your company publicly advocate for gender equality?

n=141: Question 41 - Did your company organize consultations/other meetings with women outside the workplace?

PRINCIPLE 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

Women's Empowerment Principle 7 calls on companies to measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality. Principle 7 requests the companies to publish company policies, practices and progress for promoting gender equality, and to plan, measure and report annually on progress, both internally and externally, using gender disaggregated data. WEPs signatories are also encouraged to take the WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool to assess their company's strategic approach to gender equality, identify gaps and opportunities for continuous improvement, benchmark against peers and industry standards, and set goals and targets.⁶⁷

As per the WEPs, "Transparency and accountability are required for companies to uphold their commitments to gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community."⁶⁸ Principle 7 calls on companies to measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality. It requests the companies to publish company policies, practices, and progress for promoting gender equality, as well as to plan, measure and report annually on progress, both internally and externally, using gender- disaggregated data.⁶⁹

Suggested actions according to WEPs guidelines:

- Take the WEPs Gap Analysis Tool to establish a baseline for WEPs implementation
- Develop incentives and accountability mechanisms to accelerate WEPs implementation
- Collect, analyse and use gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data and benchmarks to measure and report results at all levels
- Report annually on progress in the implementation of the Women's Empowerment Principles
- Share lessons learned and good practices in the implementation of the WEPs and publish them on the WEPs website

67 See [https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/ THE_POWER_OF_WORKING_TOGETHER_FINAL_0.pdf](https://www.weps.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/THE_POWER_OF_WORKING_TOGETHER_FINAL_0.pdf).

68 See <https://www.weps.org/principle/measurement-and-reporting>

69 UN Women, The Power of Working Together.

Measuring and reporting the goals and identifying the shortcomings in existing policies and processes will provide opportunities to define road maps and popularise effective initiatives. By using standardised parameters to appraise progress, companies can more clearly compare their performance to others and provide indications of progress to stakeholders. Annual reports on a company's gender equality policies, plans and activities, as well as the inclusion of gender equality in performance indicators, fall within the scope of this principle.

Legal overview:

The non-financial reporting represents an increased interest to the companies, along with the state through its public institutions, emphasising the importance of the human capital which includes the labour management, health and safety, supply chain, social benefits and of course the equal pay. All the above mentioned are a part of the existing European non-financial reporting legal framework - the Directive on disclosure of non-financial and diversity information by certain large undertakings and groups⁷⁰, and the non-financial audit regulations that are now in development.

In accordance with national legislation, in particular with the Law no.287/2017 regarding accounting and financial reporting⁷¹, which states that medium-sized entities, large entities and entities of public interest draw up and present annually, together with the financial statements, the Management Report, which requires the presentation of information related to the professional opportunities of the employees (Principle 4), as well as non-financial performance indicators, relevant for the entity's activity, which will include compliance with the principle of ensuring equality of equal remuneration (Principle 2).

Moreover, in accordance with the law mentioned above, the Management Report of the public interest entity whose securities are admitted to trading on a regulated market includes a chapter on corporate governance, which shall include specific information including the corporate governance code applied by the entity, the entity's internal

70 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014L0095>

71 https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=125231&lang=ro

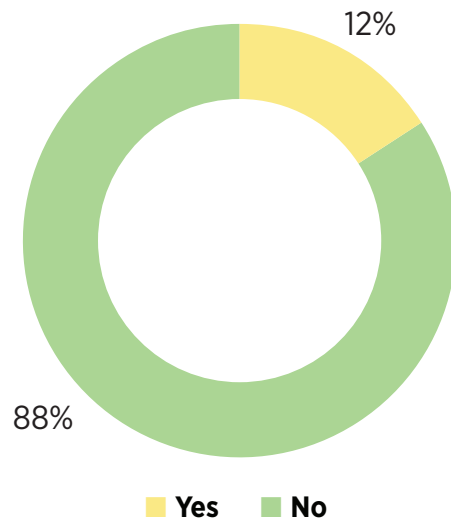
control and risk management systems or the appointment and replacement of board members, of the executive body, which all shall be compliant with the gender based principles and women empowerment standards and requirements stated above. Therefore, it is recommended to revise the legislation regarding the non-financial reporting, in order to be compliant with the European reporting mechanisms, which are getting as important as the financial ones, and which go from optional to mandatory requirements for specific categories of companies.

Survey results:

There is a low level of companies' awareness of the need for transparency, measuring and reporting on gender equality. Principle 7 is the one of the most challenging principles to implement since reporting and monitoring requires additional human capital, which companies are often lacking.

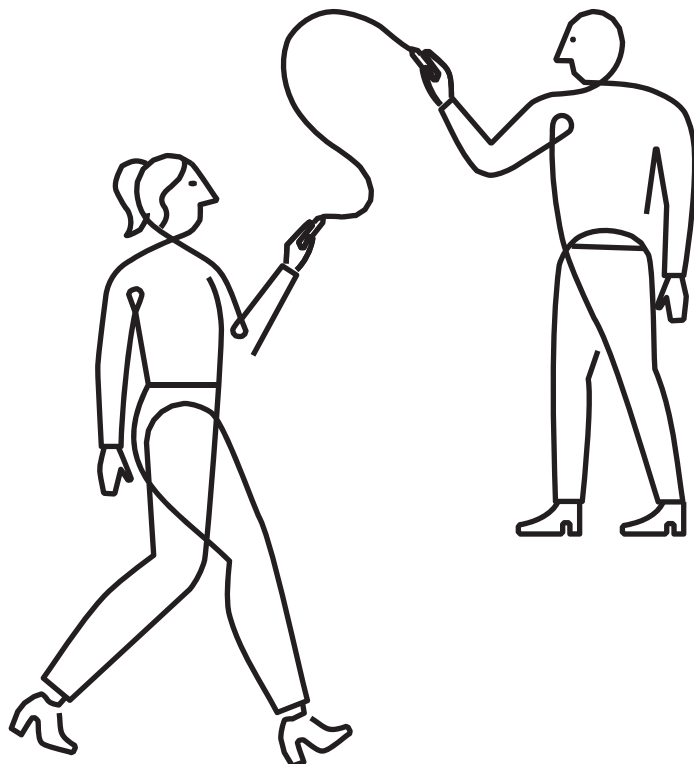
The collection of sex-disaggregated data allows for the measurement of differences between women and men on various social and economic dimensions and is one of the requirements in obtaining gender statistics.⁷² Figure 26 highlights that only 12 per cent of survey participant companies started collecting sex-disaggregated data.

Figure 26: Companies that started to collect sex-disaggregated data on some area



n=141: Question 13 - Did your company start to collect sex-disaggregated data on some area?

72 See <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/methods-tools/sex-disaggregated-data>.



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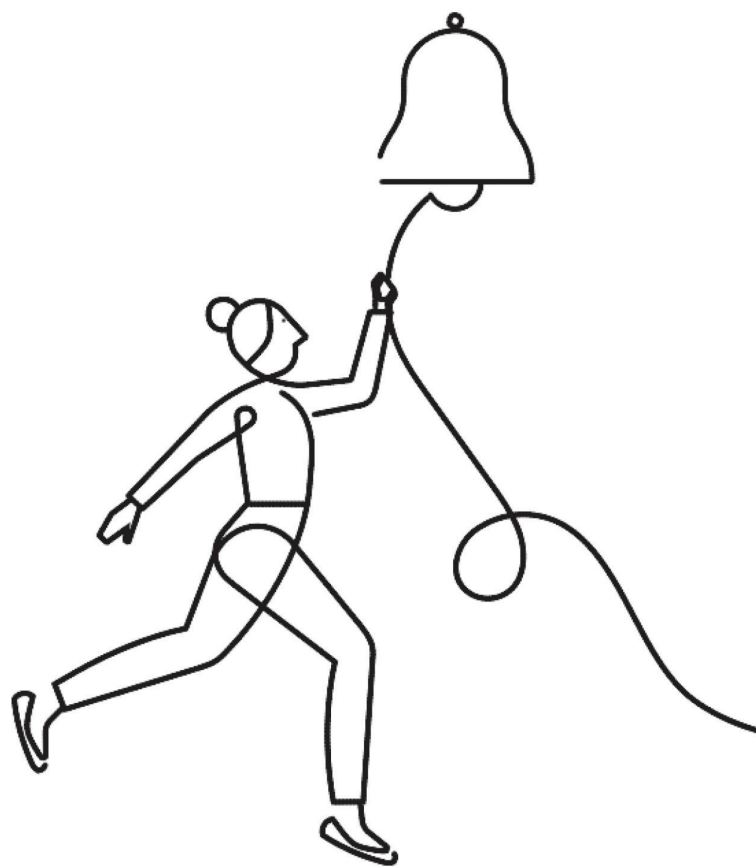
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CHAPTER 3. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This chapter summarises the analysis derived from the various data sources, including the survey, in-depth interviews and case study materials.

- **Despite the fact that companies are engaged in certain works related to gender equality and women empowerment, awareness among respondent Moldovan companies about WEPs is quite low.** However, a considerable share is interested to become signatory (more information needs to be provided with proper emphasis on benefits that they will receive).
- **The strongest motivators for the survey respondents to join the WEPs were attributed to their contribution to SDGs, a stronger corporate reputation, an increase in the recruitment and better retention of talented individuals, and contributing to women's empowerment that will also help the economy.** The least significant motivator for the companies was better retention for female staff, less violence and reducing company costs by addressing violence.
- **The highest implementation rate among WEPs signatory and non-signatory companies were principle 2 and 3.** Principle 2 targets the treatment of all women and men fairly at work, while principle 3 aims to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers. The progress achieved by the companies in these fields is mainly driven by the government's regulations and policies that promote gender equality and non-discrimination in all aspects of working life. The lowest implementation rate was observed in principle 1, 5 and 7, that refer to high-level corporate leadership; enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices; and measurement and reporting on implementation of gender equality principles. Data shows that high-level corporate leadership for gender equality is introduced only in a limited number of respondents, which means that there is still a lot of work to be done by companies to promote women's empowerment in the workplace.
- **Participation of women on managerial and executive levels among respondent Moldovan companies is high in micro and small-sized companies, however, lower share of women are represented in medium and large-sized companies on the same positions.** High participation of women is explained by the fact that the responding companies have assumed certain commitments regarding gender equality, which has implications on the way the company is administered (more women are in management positions). Most of the surveyed companies implement some measures to promote women's empowerment at the workplace, including more gender sensitive promotion policies. However, at the national level, the women's representation in managerial positions is still low – about 37% of women working in enterprises are managers. According to the survey respondents, medium and large-sized companies still lack high participation of women on managerial and executive levels. Although women's participation in entrepreneurship has improved over the last years, with an increase in their participation of about 6 percentage points, women are still underrepresented in the business community, holding and managing about one-third of the companies in Moldova.
- **Certain sectors have significant under-representation of women.** Despite enshrining equal rights in national legislation, many challenges remain in ensuring gender equality. The greatest disparities relate to horizontal and vertical gender segregation: a high share of Moldovan women is employed in so-called “feminine” sectors and low-paying jobs and occupy lower positions in the job hierarchy. Women traditionally prevail in social sectors, like education, healthcare and social assistance, administrative services etc, which usually are less paid. On the other hand, men tend to work in more technical sectors like construction, transportation, informational technologies, where the average salary is much higher. Few women are employed in traditionally male occupations like manufacturing, construction, transport etc.

- **The application of women’s empowerment practices and policies in the workplace by the participating companies is still limited to following government regulations.** Even though some participating companies have made good progress on implementing innovative measures, the practices are still minimal when looked at in conjunction with the WEPs. Most of the policies implemented by the companies are in line with the latest legal reforms that were carried out by the Moldovan Government. However, data suggests that there is a great interest and motivation within the private sector to introduce more measures that go beyond the existing legal provisions.
- **Still limited share of companies (about one third) implements anti-sexual harassment and gender-based violence policies or provide support to female survivors of sexual harassment or abuse.** Although this topic has been on the public agenda for at least two years, there are no provisions that oblige employers to implement policies and procedures for reporting and addressing sexual harassment at the workplace.
- **A big majority of respondent companies do not establish business contacts with women-owned businesses.** Stereotypes regarding the leadership and management capacities of women, lack of confidence in the potential of female entrepreneurship determine the weak business relationships with women-owned enterprises. Revision of procurement policies is among least implemented policies among companies.
- **The number of participating companies with business practices promoting women’s empowerment in the marketplace and in the community are far lower than those with practices promoting gender equality in the workplace.** The respondents have the least awareness of community leadership and engagement. This means that most of the participating companies do not consider gender when developing community engagement programmes and assessing their social impacts on local communities.
- **Collection of sex-disaggregated data remains a considerable challenge among survey participants, which can be one of the key reasons for limited focus on understanding the pay gap among respondents.** Data collection requires both human resources and guidance on the type of data to be collected and ways to process the data.
- **Most of the legal provisions relevant to WEPs implementation are gender – neutral,** which makes them applicable irrespective of social context.
- **Latest reforms need further support** in developing the secondary legislation and awareness campaigns for the proper implementation by the stakeholders (specifically what refers to the equal pay for equal work, alternative childcare services, women representation share in political life etc.).



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CHAPTER 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS

This chapter offers the recommendations for future programmatic interventions, based on the results of the analysis presented in this report.

1. Improve strategic targeting and outreach

2. Showcase benefits more specifically in commercial terms

- Provide real examples and success cases of Moldovan companies
- Use digital media to campaign and encourage new companies to join the WEPs by showcasing industry-specific benefits, results and/or impacts

3. Increase interactions among WEPs signatory companies and their visibility

- Organise quarterly/annual events
- Engage companies in visibility events
- Promote peer-to-peer learning opportunities

4. Provide tools and mechanisms to companies (policies, pay gap tool, etc) to increase pace of change, including mechanisms for sex-disaggregated data collection and analysis

- Provide technical assistance and guidance
- Sample policies and implementation support
- Data collection tools and analysis guidance
- Encourage companies to take specific actions to implement their sexual harassment policies

5. Support companies in implementation of specific policies

- Provide support for companies to take specific actions to implement sexual harassment policies: development of the strong grievance, resolution, and non-retaliation mechanisms, frequent training and communications campaigns, information for employees about safe workplace policies, support for employees affected by domestic violence.

- Provide support for the development and implementation of more robust parental leave policies for both parents that meet or exceed international standards for the flexibility and rate of pay.

- Provide support for improving the flexible working policies covering both hours and location. A specific guide/regulation on flexible schemes, criteria, mechanism is required to help companies to implement flexible working policies.

6. Further strengthen the capacity development opportunities for women

- Provide support for companies to develop trainings, rotational programmes, and educational opportunities with specific support for women.

- Provide support for the implementation of more training programmes and soft quotas specifically aimed at improving career chances of women, especially in terms of leadership and increasing the number of women in male-dominated roles.

7. Promote women vendors and suppliers by the services offered, and make information about women vendors more accessible

- Provide support for the implementation of the supplier diversity programs that include women-owned businesses. These programs should increase market opportunities for women-owned suppliers through procurement contracts and build the capacity of women-owned business suppliers through training and mentoring.

8. Amend the legislation in order to ensure that:

- Details on equal pay for equal work principle implementation by the employers are developed, approved and properly implemented;
- Self-employed women do benefit of maternity and childcare allowances under the terms of third party employed women.
- The paternity leave is more flexible.
- It is approximated with the "Women on Boards" Directive;

9. The burnout syndrome or the professional exhaustion syndrome is included in the nomenclature of diseases and developing recommendations/measures for its prevention.

- There is a policy document on the development of parent skills and competences developed, approved and implemented.
- Qualitative companies/public entities reporting on gender disaggregated data.
- Alternative opportunities for early childhood care and preschool education are increased.
- Gender equality is considered in all public procurement opportunities, decision-making processes, service development, finance etc.



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APPENDIX 1. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 0		
1	What is the size of your company?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro - employing up to 9 people • Small - employing between 10 and 49 people • Medium - employing between 50 and 249 people • Large - employing more than 250 people 	
2	Where is your company mostly conducting its economic activity (largest part of revenue generation)?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chişinău • Balti • North • South • Centre • UTA Gagauzia 	
3	Which sector does your company mainly operate in?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholesale and retail trade • Construction • Agriculture, forestry and fishing • Accommodation and food service activities (hotels, restaurants and others) • Information and communication • Transportation and storage • Manufacturing • Financial and insurance activities • Real estate activities • Professional, scientific and technical activities • Administrative and support service activities • Education • Human health and social work activities • Arts, entertainment and recreation • Mining and quarrying • Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply • Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities • Other service activities (gym, beauty salon, repair of motor vehicles, etc.) • Other (please, specify) 	

Section 1: General Questions								
1	Does your company work on gender equality and women empowerment initiatives?	Single						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 							
2	Can you provide the recent split of your employees by gender for overall employees (if cannot estimate write N/A)?	Female Male						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall employees • Executive positions • Manager 	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>text</td> <td>text</td> </tr> <tr> <td>text</td> <td>text</td> </tr> <tr> <td>text</td> <td>text</td> </tr> </table>	text	text	text	text	text	text
text	text							
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3	Did your company make a public commitment statement related to gender equality and women empowerment work undertaken by your company? (e.g. via company website, social media)	Single						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 							

Section 2: Quantitative Questions		
1	Are gender equality and women empowerment tasks incorporated into the tasks of company's managers and company units/departments?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
2	Did your company start to collect sex-disaggregated data on some area?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
3	Did your company allocate budget for gender equality and women empowerment initiatives?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
4	What internal policies did your company developed/reviewed as part of gender equality initiatives?	Multiple
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment policy • Promotion policy • Training policy • Incentive policy • Family and/or child care policy • Parental leave policy • Procurement policy • Anti-sexual harassment or other form of discrimination policy • Staff safety policy • None • Other (please, specify) 	
5	Does your company implement any of the following workplace practices/conditions to empower and support women?	Multiple
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible work schedules for all female employees • Remote work option for all female employees • Professional development courses/trainings for all female employees • Audit/evaluation tools to establish the gender pay gap • Quotas of women's representation in supervisory boards or at management level • Others 	
6	Does your company provide favorable working conditions for female employees who are pregnant or employees who have children?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
7	Please provide details regarding provision of more favorable working conditions for female employees who are pregnant or employees who have children:	Multiple
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible working hours to employees with minors • An extra hour-long break to breastfeeding mothers • Breastfeeding facilities • Tailored insurance package • Temporary flexible working arrangements (e.g. to visit a doctor)? • Childcare facilities 	
8	Does your company monitor recruitment practices to avoid discrimination?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	

Section 2: Quantitative Questions		
1	Does your company analyze wages in the company by gender of the employee?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
2	Does your company have sexual harassment and combating gender-based violence policy?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
3	Does your company support female victims of sexual harassment or abuse?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
4	Does your company support female victims of sexual harassment or abuse?	Multiple
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Grievance mechanism • Counselling/Legal advice • Paying for psychological services • Other (please, specify) 	
5	Does your company's health insurance packages address women's needs?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
6	Please provide details regarding revision of health insurance packages to better address women's needs:	Multiple
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added pregnancy option • Added insurance package for children • Added endocrinological services • Added special packages for single parents • Added gynecological services • Other (please, specify) 	
7	Does your company offer employees the opportunity to benefit from paid days off for maternity and/or paternity leave, in addition to the number of days provided by the legislation in force? (according to the law, maternity leave - 126 paid days, paternity leave - 14 paid days).	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, additional paid days for maternity leave • Yes, additional paid days for paternity leave • Yes, additional paid days for both maternity and paternity leave • None of the above 	
8	Does your company promote women's participation in non-traditional fields?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
9	How did your company promote women's participation in non-traditional fields?	Text
10	In which sectors did you company promote women's participation in male dominated fields:	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Sector • Construction sector • Transport/Automotive sector • Other (please, specify) 	

Section 2: Quantitative Questions		
11	Does your company examine marketing and advertising materials against gender stereotypes?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
12	Did your company produce marketing or advertising items that promote gender equality and non-traditional gender roles?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
13	Does your company ask its business partners/suppliers to include anti-trafficking and anti-exploitation clauses in their contracts?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
14	Did your company establish business contacts with women-owned businesses as part of WEPs?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
15	Does your company's health insurance packages address women's needs?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
16	Please provide details regarding establishing business contacts with women-owned businesses as part of WEPs:	Text
17	Does your company organize/support community development activities that support women?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
18	Please describe the type of the community activities.	Single
19	Does your company publicly advocate for gender equality?	Text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
20	Please provide details regarding advocating publicly for gender equality.	Text
21	Does your company organize consultations/other meetings with women outside the workplace?	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
22	What is the total amount (Moldovan Leu) spent on the gender equality and women empowerment work internally in your company in 2021?	Text

Section 3: Joining WEPs		
1	Do you have information regarding Women Empowerment Principles (www.weps.org)?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
2	Are you interested to become signatory of the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs)?	Single
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	
3	What motivates your company to work become WEPs signatory?	Multiple
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our contribution to SDGs • Company's increased access to capital/financing • An increase in interested investors who have substantial confidence in the company • Our female employees are motivated and more productive • There is better retention of female staff • An increase in the recruitment of and better retention of talented individuals • An improvement in internal communication, better commitment from colleagues and a promotion of a culture of shared values • A stronger corporate reputation • An increase in loyal customers • Less violence and reducing company costs by addressing violence • Improved competitiveness on the market • Contributing to women's empowerment will also help the economy • Attracting more female customers/clients • Other (please, specify) 	
4	What type of reservations do you have regarding becoming WEPs signatory?	Multiple
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unavailability of funds • Lack of commitment from owners/shareholders/management • Lack of people resources to implement WEPs actions • Other (please, specify) 	
5	What type of support does your company require in future to continue work on gender equality and women empowerment?	Text

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APPENDIX 2. CASE STUDIES

Case studies

1. Orange Moldova

Orange Moldova, one of the biggest telecommunication companies from Moldova, became a WEPs signatory company on 24th of January 2022.

Being a company with more than 1000 employees, Orange continuously tries to improve its internal policies to satisfy all employees' needs. Therefore, Orange implements a strategy focused on organising consultations, surveys and other actions directed towards employees, which aim to identify their demands and establish the most suitable solutions.

Overall, the company has a representation of 51% male employees and 49% female employees. According to the information provided via the interview, there are departments where female representation is very high – financial or mass market departments, or a very low representation – 4% in technical departments and 14% in IT. Therefore, Orange implements different projects inside and outside the company, which aim to grow these representations, some of the biggest and successful projects being the following:

- **MoveIT** – a reprofiling project for women and men from non-IT to IT. The pilot program was completed by 5 people, three of whom (2 women and 1 man) obtained internal positions in IT. The first edition of the MoveIT program is now underway, with 10 employees participating. The company plans for it to be a repeated program, with recurrence 2 times a year.
- **The IT learning marathon** – where the mentors are the company's employees who teach and try to retrain the other employees, because the company focuses on teaching their own specialists, rather than finding external ones, which is often difficult in IT areas.

Additionally, Orange Moldova is certified by the European International Standard in Gender Equality (GEEIS), which is, along with WEPs, a tool that guides companies in implementation of the

right policies and standards to achieve a gender balanced workplace with equal opportunities both for men and women.

Under GEEIS, the main scope is non-discrimination and equal possibilities for men and women. Therefore, both WEPs and GEEIS aim to focus on the balanced representation of women and men in all fields of activity, especially in technical positions, where women are still poorly represented.

Unfortunately, due to group regulations and GEEIS standards, at the company level, there is no gender-differentiated approach to consumers, products, and services. Also, it does not involve evaluating the differential impact on women and men in the development of products and/or services.

The market research carried out by the company for certain services and products does not specifically target the needs of women and is intended for all consumers, regardless of gender. That is why, the 5th principle from all WEPs (Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices) is the most difficult one to implement for Orange Moldova.

On the other hand, the company has specific rules regarding choosing the suppliers and adding certain clauses in their agreements, which even if they are not gender focused, they still make Orange a unique company in Moldova.

Moreover, Orange works on their marketing and promotion strategies, which also includes women empowerment and successful stories along with their female employees. In this regard, Orange

launched different podcasts for women interested in IT (Hello Women), community activities among women in IT (IT Ladies), which encourage other women, as well as popularise the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) within other companies and promote the work on gender balance.

2. Sandic Honey Group

Sandic Honey Group is WEPs signatory company since 20 May 2022. Being a small, agricultural company, Sandic Honey Group makes great efforts for women empowerment and gender equality.

Their main motivation of becoming a WEPEs signatory is to show that women can also become successful, even in the management teams of the company, and that women can share the same positions as men. In this regard, Sandic Honey Group has shared the responsibilities of both women and men equally, on every level of positions.

Since the implementation of WEPEs, the main priority of Sandic Honey Group is to ensure the balance between professional and personal life for women, by providing flexible work arrangements when women with small children need it, paid sick leaves and days off on weekends, fully respecting the national legislation in force.

One of the most successful policy implementations at Sandic Honey Group is equal pay for equal work.

3. Fresh and Joy SRL

Fresh and Joy SRL became a WEPEs signatory company in August 2022. The main activity of the company is production, packaging and sale of household products. Also, the company participates in various charity events and believes that gender equality must be a goal for creating more equal economies, fairer societies, and happier men, women, and children.

The company is present at most social and charity events. Their CEO is a member of two women's clubs, where donation and charity activities are organised. Fresh and Joy participates in such events at least once a year, where it can promote its work on women's empowerment and gender equality. The company participates as a vendor, and the income goes to donations. That is why, the company focuses on favouring and empowering women especially through these charity campaigns for which Fresh and Joy team spends overall at least 5 days a month.

Even if the company is relatively small in terms of number of employees and has no HR or gender specialist, the founder and CEO is responsible for all matters related to the employees' needs and wellbeing.

Because the company has more female employees, it is in a continuous work process to favour and empower them, especially in terms of staff retention. That is why, there are implemented such policies as:

- Flexible working arrangements for women who are retired – a paid day off in the event of a doctor's appointment and paid hospital treatment.
- For women who are on their maternity leave or childcare leave, it is granted the possibility to work from home, also with flexible working arrangements.

Since joining the WEPEs, the company changed its code of ethics, employment agreements, systems for awarding bonuses and incentive payments. More considerable changes were noticed in the women promotion strategies and in the procurement policy.

Besides more support on WEPEs work and activities, where Fresh and Joy participates actively, the company is still in need of more workshops and seminars, especially in the digitalization area.

4. Starnet Digital City

Starnet Digital City, an IT consulting company, became a WEPEs signatory company on 13 September 2022.

For Starnet, it is extremely valuable to support such initiatives as WEPEs implementation in Moldova, as they contribute to social development, especially since Starnet is also responsible for the companies that are Tracom's residents (which is an industrial park that provides infrastructure development capabilities), Starnet having the status of a platform for the resident companies.

The most important benefit of being a WEPEs signatory company, is that Starnet is connected directly to the main source (UN Women), who can always help and support the company and always inform with everything that is related to UN Women activities and projects. Moreover, the company has UN Women support in the organisation of their training, meetings and other women empowerment related activities.

For Starnet, out of all WEPs, the easiest to implement was principle number 6 (Community initiatives and advocacy), because a specific feature for the company is to support other companies, especially those who are residents of Tracom, by organising trainings, meetings, where Starnet also involves and invites employees to express themselves regarding their needs, ideas and demands.

Additionally, the second principle (Treat all Women and Men Fairly at Work without Discrimination) was also easy to implement because, from Starnet experience, many internal policies regarding gender equality came naturally, automatically, at the level of awareness, intuition and responsibility (for example ensuring the presence of women in the executive team).

The most difficult principle to implement is the last one (Measurement and Reporting), because there is no legislative framework or specific measurement elements and/or explicit methods to apply in order to measure and report women's empowerment work.

Some of the best practices that Starnet applies, are the following:

- The usage of a vacation scheduling software, where additional paid days (3) are automatically generated for mothers' employees, in addition to the 28 offered days according to the law.
- At the level of internal policies and according to the internal regulations of the company, they encourage and appreciate the seniority at work for people employed as housekeepers, therefore granting certain additional payments for this category of employees, who are mostly women.
- Organising a nursery, which will be available for Tracom's residents.

One of the main concerns of Starnet is the lack of implementation strategies for all principles and the legislative gaps that do not cover the specific methods of implementation of such principles and policies within the private companies.

5. Crunchyroll

Crunchyroll SRL is not a WEPs signatory company but is one of the companies that implements most of the gender equality policies and women's empowerment work.

Being an ICT company and applying group rules regarding their internal policies, Crunchyroll is constantly working on women's equal rights and opportunities at their workplace.

The most attractive policies that Crunchyroll applies, are the following:

- Equal pay for the same position.
- Trainings twice a year on sexual harassment, with the main focus for 2023 on organising trainings on many different topics for the wellbeing of their employees.
- Organising minimum 5 job interviews with women to achieve an equal participation.
- Competitive bonuses when mothers return to work and the social and medical insurance payments are covered by the company at a rate of 60% per year.
- All employees benefit of 3 months of maternal/paternal holidays.
- All employees who have children up to 18 years old, benefit from additional medical assurance for their children.

Crunchyroll makes efforts to identify employees' needs by regular feedback sessions, anonymous chat groups, separate groups for girls and annual reviews. The company also works on women's empowerment by emphasising self-confidence and inclusion.

Moreover, the company identified one of the biggest obstacles in women's empowerment – the stereotype that women cannot ask for a higher salary and cannot negotiate their own preferences at their workplace.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

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UN Global Compact Office



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