

Regional Workshop for Mainstreaming Gender in National Implementation Plans under the Stockholm Convention

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26 August 2025, 16:00 - 18:00 CEST (Latin America and the Caribbean)

27 August 2025, 11:00 – 13:00 CEST (Europe, Asia and Africa)



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- Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate when ascribed to men or women. Gender refers to both women and men and the relations between them. Gender roles are learned or acquired during the socialization of individuals as members of a given community. Because these attributes are learned behavior, they can (and do) change over time, and vary across cultures and contexts.
- The concept of gender does not only apply to women. Gender and sex are also not the same. Unlike the sex of males and females or women, which is biologically determined, the gender roles of women and men are socially constructed (Nelson, 2015; CARE, 2012).



Photo: UNICEF/UNI689368/Ahmed Mohamdeen Elfatih

- By Gender Mainstreaming, we refer to the overall strategy to enable women, men, youth, elderly, vulnerable social groups, and other population sub-categories within the project targeted areas to equally benefit from its interventions, in order not to exacerbate the underlying drivers of gender inequalities.
- Recognizing the fact that women, children, and men can be disproportionately affected following their exposure to POPs, we emphasize the importance of equally engaging women and men as part of the solutions that NIPs are striving to implement.



- The GEF policy on gender equality which was adopted in 2017 highlights an enhanced ambition to investing in gender equality and women's empowerment to deliver the results expected from GEF-funded projects and achieve global environmental benefits.
- Out of 57 GEF-funded projects in the focal area of chemicals and waste, 29 projects were rated as gender-sensitive, 27 as gender-aware, and only one project was rated as gender mainstreamed. No projects were found to be gender blind, nor gender-transformative (GEFIEO, 2018).
- GEF projects in the chemicals and waste focal area show progress in gender awareness but **need stronger support for women's health and safety** (GEFIEO, 2024)

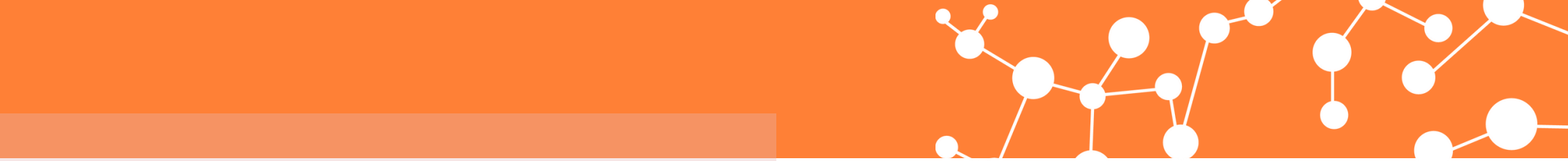
- Gender-disaggregated data highlight the heightened vulnerability of women, especially pregnant women, to chemical pollution. While women's participation in workshops and training is noted, there is a **need for stronger measures, including health check-ups, safety equipment, and stricter regulatory enforcement, particularly for informal female workers** (GEFIEO, 2024)
- A rise in gender-aware GEF projects that recognize distinct roles and address gender inequalities, but limited progress in fully gender-mainstreamed projects
- The gender-performance of chemicals and waste management projects tend to be “trapped in the middle” highlighting the need to translate good project design into transformative gender outcomes



How do we move from gender-aware to fully gender-mainstreamed projects?

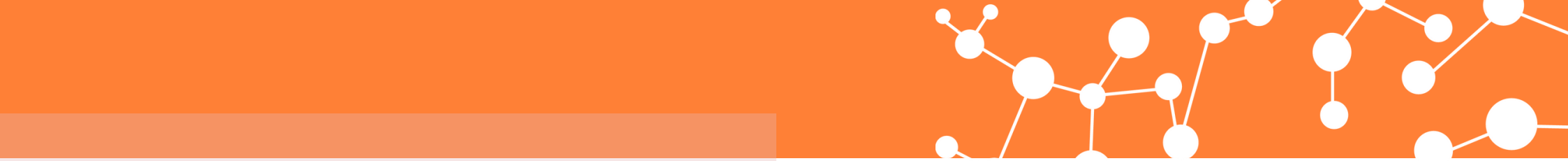


Entry points for Mainstreaming Gender in the National Implementation Plans (NIPs) under the Stockholm Convention

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- Carry out extensive consultations with representatives of the social groups most at risk from exposure to POPs including women and children
 - Reach out to women and men from all relevant stakeholders' categories and vulnerable social groups to have a good representation of all targeted sectors
 - Create an enabling space for women groups and representatives among other stakeholders to be empowered to bring in their perspectives
 - Ensure that women are equally represented in the decision-making processes related to the phase-out and sound management of POPs
 - Engage women representatives not only in the formal sector but also the informal sectors or subsectors of the economy exposed to POPs
 - Establish cross-sectoral and gender-sensitive communication channels using local languages, social media, and other dissemination platforms such as workers' unions, family health centers, and consumer protection associations.

Stakeholders' engagement:
Gender mainstreaming cannot be squeezed into the simplified practice of bringing women and men in equal numbers to attend meetings and workshops

Potential entry points for gender mainstreaming into the implementation of National Implementation Plans (NIPs)

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- Seek gender balance while preparing the Terms of References of various technical and managerial positions such as consultants, experts, and negotiators.
 - Upgrade POPs monitoring mechanisms by collecting sex-disaggregated and gender-differentiated data
 - Conduct gender-sensitive POPs inventories to the extent possible, by describing, documenting, and breaking down their differentiated impacts by sex and gender

Inventories and monitoring:
Gender balance yet to be
addressed with regards to
scientific and policy expertise
related to POPs management

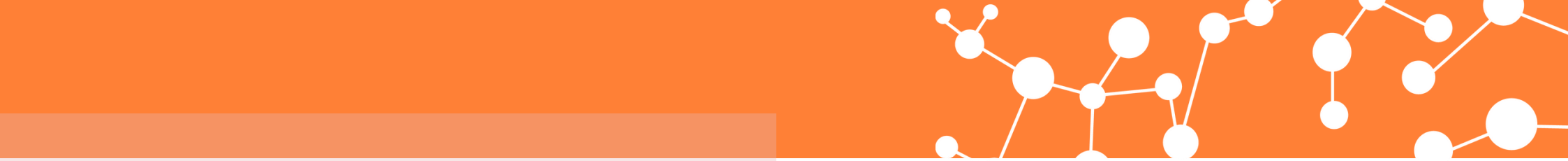
**Potential entry points for gender mainstreaming into the
implementation of National Implementation Plans (NIPs)**



- Ensure women and other vulnerable social groups are empowered to access productive assets and financial services while providing financial and economic incentives to switch to safer POPs-alternatives
- Provide market signals to enable women to be equally represented in leadership positions and break the glass ceilings, especially in sectors benefiting from a mix of policy and economic tools as part of the stimulus packages to boost domestic R&D capabilities through public-private partnerships.
- Provide sex-disaggregated costs-estimates of exposure to POPs to build a stronger case for action and prioritize those most at risk including women
- Enable women and men despite the social roles assigned to them as caregivers and breadwinners, to fully benefit from capacity building interventions meant to strengthen institutional and human capacities needed to accelerate the adoption of safer alternatives to POPs
- Use context-specific approaches to raise awareness about safer POPs alternatives among women and other vulnerable groups such as fields-schools and locally-recruited volunteer teachers.

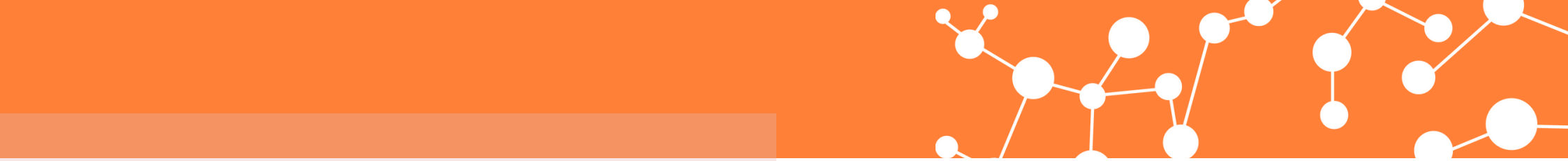
Alternatives to POPs :
countries still facing numerous
obstacles (switching costs,
R&D infrastructure, HRs,
lengthy reforms, behavioral
resistance to change, etc.)

**Potential entry points for gender mainstreaming into the
implementation of National Implementation Plans (NIPs)**

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- Involve gender specialists together with policymakers and POPs experts in domestic and global knowledge management platforms to bridge the knowledge gaps in gender mainstreaming and POPs management
 - Build institutional capacities to walk the talk of gender mainstreaming strategies and translate action plans into concrete interventions
 - Invest in gender focal teams instead of gender focal points at institutional levels to ensure continuity and maintain an institutional memory despite turnovers

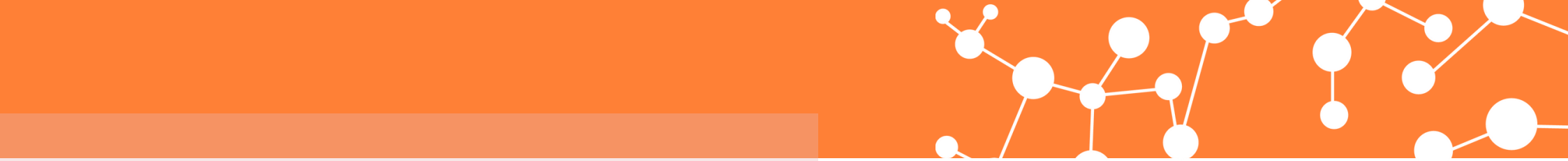
Knowledge management: pieces of gender-responsive knowledge remain scattered, limited to a few circles of expertise, and the full picture is yet to be drawn

Potential entry points for gender mainstreaming into the implementation of National Implementation Plans (NIPs)

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- Establish multidisciplinary task forces to mainstream gender considerations into environmental health research frameworks and protocols
 - Invest in gender-sensitive and sex-disaggregated data to unpack the complex interplay between, sex, gender, exposure, and impacts applicable to environmental health research.
 - Assess the cumulative costs of exposure to POPs including on maternal health and the health of future generations
 - Increase awareness about the true scope of exposure to POPs among the general public with a specific emphasis on women of reproductive age among other vulnerable groups

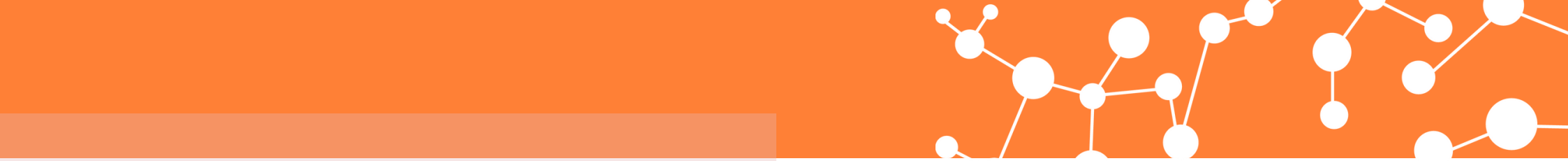
Health aspects: It is crucial to use gender lenses while exploring the cumulative health impact and the real cost of exposure to POPs

Potential entry points for gender mainstreaming into the implementation of National Implementation Plans (NIPs)

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- Ensure awareness-raising activities are adapted to local contexts and are inclusive of those most at-risk not only those at the frontlines including women of reproductive age, children, youth, and elderly working in the informal sector.
 - Assign low-risk tasks to women of reproductive age in sectors and industries where workers are exposed to POPs to mitigate the health burden passed on to future generations
 - Develop tailored gender-sensitive content for advocacy and awareness-raising instead of one-size-fits-all campaigns, including through the use of ICTs and cognitive sciences to reach those usually inaccessible and nudge those resistant to change
 - De-risk investments in childcare facilities to foster children's education and tackle child labor issues in sectors such as along the e-waste value chain
 - Promote safer and greener alternatives to energy sources used in households
 - Generalize access to social security services including for those in the informal sector
 - Support women to have equal access to training, productive assets, and financial services to reduce exposure and improve their livelihoods

Socio-economic aspects: not only that POPs are harmful but the full story of their cumulative economic costs most of which goes invisible, as well as their health impacts including the share passed on to the future generations

Potential entry points for gender mainstreaming into the implementation of National Implementation Plans (NIPs)

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- Empower women to equally benefit from traditional financing mechanisms as well as innovative financing schemes such as the use of mobile money and digital wallets
 - Promote gender-responsive microfinancing schemes to benefit women groups that are usually underserved by traditional financing systems
 - Use gender-sensitive budgeting in development projects to ensure women groups and other vulnerable social categories fully benefit from development interventions


Financing alternatives to POPs: mismatch between the funding needed and financing available at domestic and global levels, countries need to do more with less

Potential entry points for gender mainstreaming into the implementation of National Implementation Plans (NIPs)

Case Study: Mainstreaming Gender Considerations In The Sound Management Of Hazardous Waste Including DDT And Other POPs




Photo: UN Women/Jerónimo Villarreal

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- Women are more likely to control the production and output of the subsistence.
 - When living alone women are the main applicators of pesticides.
 - Women transporting pesticides are more likely to carry pesticides on their heads in baskets.
 - Women fetch the water to be used for mixing the pesticides.
 - Women clean men's pesticides contaminated clothes after application.
 - Women sometimes clean and reuse the mixing of buckets and drums for fetching and storing water.
 - Women are equally responsible for daily activities in the land after pesticide use.
 - Mothers and children tend to spend relatively more time in the households sprayed, often more than once over time, with DDT for malaria control

- Men have more decision-making power over the production and output of the household's cash crops
- Men are considered the main applicator of pesticides
- Men are more likely to transfer pesticides using some type of vehicle (truck, car, motorcycle, bicycles, etc.).
- Men tend to reuse the mixing of buckets and drums for other activities around the land, maintaining and storing spare equipment.
- Men are equally responsible for daily activities in the land after pesticide use.

- Pesticide application is not considered a women's job
- Women are not taught to operate vehicles, are not encouraged to get driving licenses besides the stigma related to the use of certain transportation (e.g., in some contexts there is a belief that a girl can lose her virginity by riding a bike)
- Washing clothes is perceived as women's work.
- Securing water for the household is considered a woman's job

- Pesticide spraying is considered a man's job
- Perceived invulnerable masculinity puts men in charge of riskier activities

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- Not considered a primary user of pesticides, women could have limited access to pesticide training.
 - Women are exposed to higher risk during the transportation of pesticides.
 - Women are exposed to the negative effects of pesticides because they frequently do not know about the toxicity levels of the different chemicals being used and their impacts on health as well as the environment.
 - If women were more aware of the hazards, they could influence their husbands to adopt safer practices around pesticide application.

- Men are more likely to receive training about the safe use of pesticides.
- Men are more likely to have access/ wear protective gear during spraying.
- Men are more likely to wash their hands and take a bath after spraying pesticides.
- Men are more likely to change their clothes after spraying pesticides

Women and men are not affected the same way

- By applying gender lenses to unpack the multifaceted impacts of hazardous waste including DDT and other POPs on human health and the environment, it becomes clear that women and men are not affected the same way.
- The socio-economic and health burden associated with such exposure can shift based on gendered norms, stereotypes, perceptions and the social roles assigned to both women and men within specific social contexts.
- It is thus crucial for the project teams and delivery partners to understand the different pathways for occupational and domestic exposure within the project's target intervention areas.



Photo: UN Women/Janarbek Amankulov

Direct and indirect exposure pathways

- There are different socio-economic profiles of women exposed to harmful chemicals in hazardous waste and pesticides.
- Women are very likely to be directly impacted by waste mining activities, including women living in the vicinity of burial and storage sites, those involved in the trade of mined pesticides, and those using pesticides in agriculture or working in farms where pesticides are sprayed.
- Women are also indirectly impacted through their role as primary care providers to family members including men, children, and the elderly who may be exposed to hazardous waste.



Photo: UN Women/Janarbek Amankulov

Awareness levels remain relatively low

- Overall, and except in areas where poisoning cases were witnessed, awareness levels remain relatively low, especially for women on how POPs from hazardous waste build up in breastmilk and food, with insufficient training on the handling of hazardous wastes and use of pesticides, as well as the limited use of personal protective equipment.
- Even in cases of relative awareness, women living in economic hardship and poverty including those migrating from rural areas, are exposed to hazardous wastes to secure their livelihoods and provide for their households, especially in cases when men are unemployed or absent due to migration.



Men tend to be considered the most at risk

- Overall men tend to be considered the most at risk from exposure to hazardous waste and pesticides because pesticide spraying is considered a man's job, thus are the most exposed, and consequently the more likely to receive training about the safe use of pesticides.
- In contrast, because pesticide application is not considered a woman's responsibility while washing clothes and fetching water are perceived as women's work, women's exposure overall remains under-recognized.




Photo: UN Women/Janarbek Amankulov

Identifying blind spots


- Women tend to be the main applicators of pesticides in women-headed households, clean men's contaminated clothes after application on the farm or work in contaminated soils, clean spraying equipment while reusing buckets and drums in the household for fetching water and/or storing food, spend more time in the land after pesticide use and live and cook in households where pesticides and used containers are stored.
- Such blind spots could lead to projects overlooking the crucial importance of women's access to training and awareness raising about the toxicity levels of the different chemicals being used and their impacts on health as well as the environment.




Photo: UN Women/Janarbek Amankulov

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- Use gender-neutral language in the ToRs and tender specifications (such as He/ She);
 - Clearly define gender-related responsibilities in the ToRs to make each project personnel and consultant accountable for incorporating gender aspects into the tasks assigned to them.
 - Encourage candidates with relevant gender experience to apply by incorporating statements in the ToRs such as “Experience working on gender mainstreaming, women empowerment and/or youth development desirable and will be an asset”;
 - Specify in the tender documents that the workforce to be hired should be composed of women and men, including from vulnerable population sub-categories, whenever applicable
 - Translate the ToRs and bidding specifications into local languages (in cases where active knowledge of English and or other languages is no requirement).


Step 1 - When drafting ToRs and tender specifications

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- Ensure all project positions are widely advertised including by the dissemination of job announcements through national and local networks of partner organizations and women's advocacy groups.
 - Include statements while advertising for job descriptions related to the project such as "Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply for this position", "women-owned businesses are encouraged to apply", and "all genders, minorities, and persons with special needs are encouraged to apply".
 - Advertise bidding opportunities on non-traditional procurement platforms such as through social media, and use emailing lists to reach out to women-owned businesses (ex. startups and SMEs)
 - Collaborate with women's organizations and networks to identify women-owned businesses and women vendors


Step 2 - When advertising jobs, consultancies, and bidding opportunities

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- During the selection of experts and suppliers, ensure evaluations are conducted by gender-balanced selection committees and interview panels (ex. at least one woman represented in any evaluation committee, and include one question on gender in all interviews).
 - When hiring project consultants and experts, encourage the participation of the under-represented gender through positive discrimination in cases of equal rankings between female and male candidates.
 - Consider introducing positive discrimination measures such as women's ownership as a tie-breaker between suppliers and vendors having equal scores (in case of two proposals with the same score/price).


Step 3 – When organizing selection committees and interview panels

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- Include a Code of Conduct Policy in contractual arrangements with project personnel and consultants to prevent Sexual Harassment.
 - Include a key result on gender in the contractual performance assessment of project staff and collaborators, such as “The project’s gender mainstreaming strategy and Gender Guidance are effectively supported beyond parity to ensure women’s empowerment and enhance women’s participation in decision making”.


Step 4 – When finalizing contractual arrangements with project personnel and consultants

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- Consult both men and women participants to convene training and awareness-raising activities at times and venues suitable for women and which do not conflict with their domestic, productive, and community workload (to the extent possible, consider providing childcare facilities or recreational corners for children during workshops and meetings to enable both parents to attend).
 - Provide the possibility for consultations and training to be organized in women-only cohorts (when relevant and deemed effective) to enable women to express their perspectives without the fear of being confronted, develop their leadership and actively participate in decision-making
 - To the extent possible, enable women to attend meetings closer to their homes, including by planning such meetings for several days for a few hours a day.

Step 5 – When planning for meetings and organizing workshops

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- Deliver training on gender to all the project team staff, key national delivery partners, and other partner organizations during early implementation stages to understand the gender considerations applicable to the project.
 - Train the project team and national delivery partners and national and international experts on how to mainstream gender into their procurement processes.
 - Incorporate gender-specific modules, taking into account the gendered needs of participants, in the training curricula and other capacity-building materials used by the project
 - Ensure women trainers are encouraged to apply to provide gender-responsive guidance to communities and social groups exposed or at risk of exposure to hazardous waste

Step 6 - When conducting capacity building activities

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- Use gender-sensitive wording, sex and gender-disaggregated data while developing site-specific and risk management plans to provide an actionable basis for anchoring gender-responsive risk mitigation measures related to the management of hazardous waste.
 - Explicitly encourage both men and women candidates to apply and join the technical teams deploying technological solutions for the disposal of DDT stocks and treatment of highly contaminated soils, as well as bioremediation solutions for low contamination soils.
 - The project may consider to 1/Providing the necessary technical and managerial training to women on the safe handling of obsolete pesticides and contaminated soils; and 2/ To the extent possible, enable women to be employed closer to their homes, including via part-time tasks for a few hours a day.
 - Due consideration should be given to women of reproductive age to be assigned low-risk roles to mitigate the health burden on future generations.


Step 7 - When conducting site activities

Mapping of sex and gender-disaggregated data needs to mainstream gender consideration into the implementation of NIPs



UN Women/Ryan Brown

Closing the gender data gap

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- Mapping of human rights-based obligations to gender equality, and regulations at national and subnational levels recognizing the interplay between sex, gender and the impacts associated with exposure to chemicals
 - Assessment of gender-related Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice among legislators, regulators, and policymakers in charge of POPs management
 - Mapping of gender roles assigned to women, men, youth, elderly, and vulnerable social groups (such as single mothers, refugees, minorities, displaced persons...) in key economic sectors most exposed to POPs including agriculture, waste recycling, textiles, cosmetics, toys, and other industries
 - Benchmarks assessing the proportion of seats held by women and men in POPs-related governance bodies at sub-national, national and global levels
 - Risk-profiling of women and men from occupations, social groups, and population sub-categories most exposed to POPs
 - Gender-sensitive mapping of health impact assessment studies explaining ways in which sex and gender could differentiate the toxicological footprint of POPs on human health

- Assessment of plausible relationships between gender-specific disease and occupational exposures to POPs
- Gender-sensitive assessment of the costs (health, environmental, economic, and social costs) associated with exposure to POPs
- Gender-sensitive assessment of exposure patterns among women, men, youth, elderly, and vulnerable social groups exposed to both primary and secondary sources of POPs including through food residues, imported clothes, and climate change-driven exposure due to long-range transport of POPs
- Gender-sensitive mapping of stakeholder groups at national and local levels representing women, children, occupational workers, and vulnerable social categories across economic sectors
- Assessment of the capacity of women and children groups' representatives to participate in consultations, decision making, and leadership roles
- Gender-sensitive assessment of technical and scientific capacities at subnational and national levels to implement tailored technology-based solutions
- Benchmarks about the proportion of women and men in R&D sectors offering safer alternatives to POPs

Overlooked,

Gender can jeopardize the effective implementation of the National Implementation Plans (NIPs)



Photo: Oceania Rugby