



**World Customs  
Organization**

# WCO Gender Equality and Diversity

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**Knowledge Academy**

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# Why is Gender Equality and Diversity important for Customs?



- **Rights:** United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
- **International objectives:** part of the UN's Goals for Sustainable Development for 2030, objective 5 – Achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.
- **Results and sustainability:** Helps to improve general results and to secure the sustainability of activities.
- **Democracy:** Customs, as a public administration should represent the society which it serves.
- **“Smart Economics”:** Persons with different backgrounds bring different perspectives and ideas to the organization, which can increase efficiency.
- **Well-being:** Improved working conditions and work environment can enhance motivation and increase efficiency.



# Risks of not taking GED into consideration



- **Reduced effectiveness of services** – when the diverse needs of different groups of the population are not taken into consideration that will lead to poor outreach, reduced qualities of services, increased levels of harassment and corruption and reduced economic growth and lower levels of compliance
- **Reduced organizational performance** – when the skills and capacities of employees are not fully resourced, Customs may limit their own ability to attract or retain talents which may impact organizational performance
- **Negative effects on national security** – if different risks faced by different groups are not accounted for, Customs may fail to meet the needs of the whole population.

# Implementing Gender Equality and Inclusiveness in Customs



- WCO represents 184 Members all over the world, thus a **large variety** in the different levels of engagement in diversity and inclusiveness issues.
- While some countries primarily focus on gender equality, others have a broader diversity and inclusiveness perspective.
- The level of engagement in these issues is often directly linked to countries **national policy framework**.

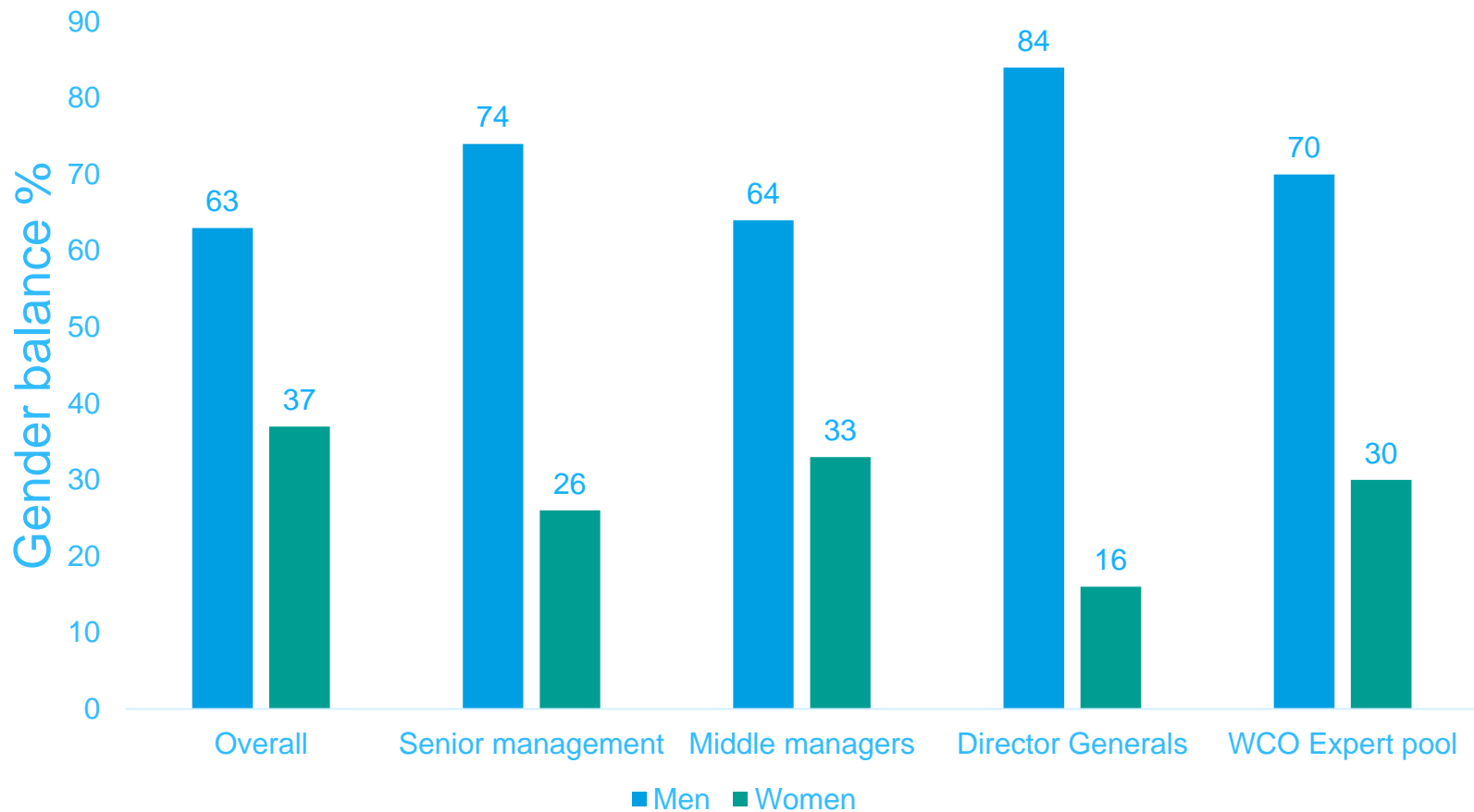
## Common challenges:

- **Lack of knowledge:** especially how these issues relates to and are important for the work of Customs and that successfully implementing gender responsive and inclusive measures requires proactive efforts both internally and externally.
- **Lack of written policies and documents:** Although practices are sometimes in place, they are not necessarily formalized or documented which prevents consistency and sustainability.
- **Lack of data and monitoring frameworks:** Which prevents Members from identifying gaps and measuring progress over time.
- **Lack of coordination:** For successful implementation of gender responsive and inclusive measures it is recommended to have an action plan/framework, and a structure that coordinates, supports the implementation and monitoring of initiatives.

# Gender ratio



## WCO Annual survey 2021 – WCO Expert pool



## WCO initiatives promoting Gender Equality & Diversity

2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Equality introduced for the 1<sup>st</sup> time during the 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Capacity Building Committee</li> <li>• Organization of the Women in Customs, Trade and Leadership Conference</li> <li>• Development and launch of the <b>Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT)</b> which includes a <b>Chapter on Multiple Discrimination / intersectionality</b></li> <li>• Leadership Management Development module on Gender Equality and Diversity</li> </ul>
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Equality and Diversity survey with replies from around 60 countries</li> </ul>
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the <b>Virtual Working Group on Gender Equality and Diversity</b>, currently with nominated members from around 40 countries</li> </ul>
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a <b>Blended Training Package</b> 'Advancing Gender Equality in Customs' including an <b>e-learning</b> available free of use in the WCO Academy platform</li> </ul>
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second survey on Gender Equality and Diversity with replies from 95 countries</li> <li>• Updates made of the GEOAT to align it to international standards</li> </ul>

## WCO initiatives promoting Gender Equality & Diversity

2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote gender equality and diversity assessments based on the GEOAT have been carried out with various WCO Members (Brazil, India, South Africa and the Philippines)</li> <li>• <b>WCO Declaration on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs</b> (adopted by the WCO Council December 2020)</li> </ul>
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Compendium of Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs</b> launched March 2021</li> <li>• Gender equality and diversity assessment of the WCO Secretariat based on the GEOAT</li> <li>• Update of the Blended Training Package on Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs including development and launch of a <b>second e-learning module</b></li> </ul>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global launch of the <b>Network for Gender Equality and Diversity in Customs</b> (with the aim to provide inspirational examples and to promote champions for gender equality and diversity driving change).</li> <li>• Development of <b>regional chapters</b> of the Virtual Working Group for GED and Network for GED</li> </ul>

# WCO Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT)



- A self-assessment tool that assists Customs Administrations to assess their current policies, practices and activities to address gender equality issues internally (within the organization) and externally (towards the public).
- Launched in 2013
- **Includes 5 principles:**
  - Employment & Compensation,
  - Work-life balance & Career Development,
  - Health, Safety & Freedom of violence,
  - Governance & Leadership,
  - Customs Administrations & Stakeholder Relations
- **Updates from 2019:** Definitions of gender related concepts, a chapter on how to implement gender mainstreaming through project management, new cross-cutting indicators which must be considered on transversal basis, revisions of the language.



# Virtual Working Group on Gender Equality & Diversity



- Launched in December 2017
- Currently nominated members from **around 50 countries**

## Objectives:

- Raise awareness of the Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool (GEOAT)
- Exchange experiences
- Gather good practices

## Long term objective:

- Gather practices to develop a compendiums that can be used by Members as inspiration and a complement to the GEOAT.
- First edition launched March 2021.

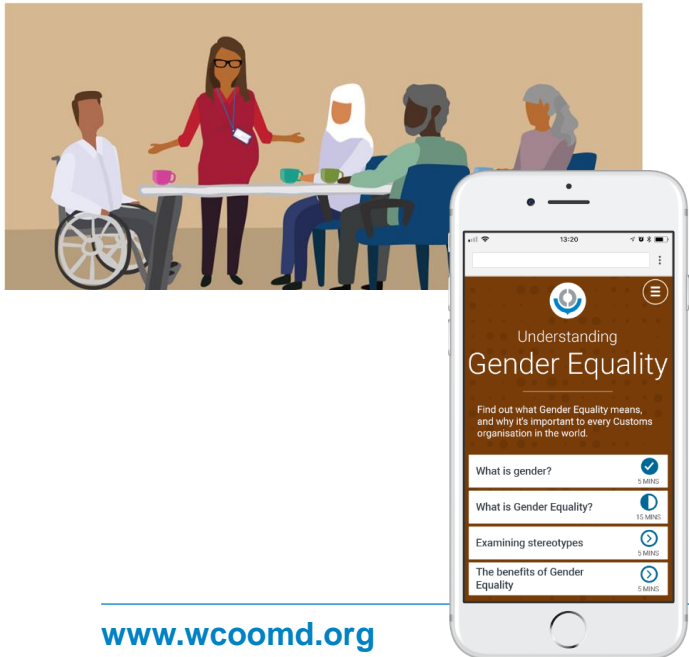


# Blended Training Package

## *“Advancing Gender Equality in Customs”*



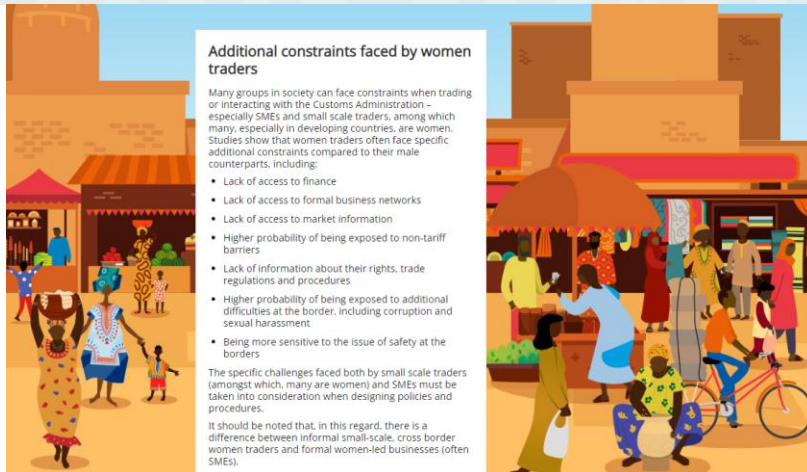
- Funded by the Government of Finland through the **Finland East and Southern Africa (ESA) Capacity Building Programme II**
- Focus on links between Gender Equality – Customs reform and modernization
- **One week workshop** for middle- and senior managers focusing on human resource management and gender mainstreaming, piloted through a regional pilot workshop in Pretoria, South Africa in May 2018 with the participation of 8 countries in the region
- **First e-learning module**, raising general awareness on Gender Equality targeting all Customs officers (available in the WCO Academy platform)



# Implementing Gender Equality and Inclusion in Customs



- Funded by the Government of the United Kingdom through the **Trade Facilitation in Middle Income Countries (TFMICs)** Programme.
- **Updated in 2021** to enhance the training material and **allow for blended online delivery**
- Focusing on implementing gender equality and inclusive policies in Customs.
- **A second e-learning module launched in CLiKC! in December 2022**



# Meet the Customs officers



Sara



Kalem



Mateo



Afia

"I struggle with work-life balance and wish my employer would consider more flexible working hours"

☐☐☐☐

"I feel confident to apply for a promotion as long as I meet the expected performance"

☐☐☐☐

"I see people who are like me at every level in the organization"

☐☐☐☐

"My chances of being selected to work at a remote border post are as good as everyone else's"

☐☐☐☐

# Meet the traders



Ali



Chihiro



Diwata



Tomas

"I can easily get access to finance to expand my business"

☐☐☐☐

"I am informed of my rights and obligations as a citizen when engaging in trade"

☐☐☐☐

"The infrastructure at the border is adapted to my situation and needs"

☐☐☐☐

"I feel fairly treated and that my needs are considered by Customs and border authorities"

☐☐☐☐

# WCO Declaration on GED in Customs



1. Calls on Customs administrations to **adopt a policy of non-discrimination** on the basis of gender, ethnicity and/or any other grounds as stated in anti-discrimination laws in Member's respective countries;
2. Encourages Customs administrations to **share their experiences** regarding the implementation of gender equality and diversity in Customs;
3. Encourages Customs administrations to **share best practices related to monitoring and evaluation** methodologies for assessing the progress on gender equality and diversity in Customs, including the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and to engage in voluntary reporting on the progress of this work;
4. Advocates for enhanced **cooperation with relevant stakeholders** on the topic of gender equality and diversity, including with other government agencies (OGAs), the private sector stakeholders (including associations representing women traders) and border associations, to foster a harmonized and coordinated approach in implementing a gender equal and inclusive Customs environment throughout the whole trade process;



## WCO Declaration on GED in Customs

5. Supports the **promotion of work-life balance** for Customs employees, offering flexible work arrangements whenever possible, to promote a healthy work environment for staff;
6. Underlines the importance of **preventing any type of harassment and/or gender-based violence** in all areas of Customs, among staff or committed by staff towards the public and vice versa;
7. Encourages Customs administrations to continue **promoting leadership development opportunities** for women and other under-represented groups through targeted initiatives such as mentor programmes; and
8. Encourages the **WCO Secretariat**, as a representative of the diverse WCO Membership, to commit **to and share its policies on gender equality and diversity**, as an encouragement to Customs administrations. |

# South Africa Revenue Service (SARS): *Gender Mainstreaming and Inclusiveness*



- Started implementing a **Gender Mainstreaming programme in 2016**
- SARS has also established several **policy documents** including its Employment Equity Plan, Code of Conduct, Recruitment Policy, Conditions of Service Policy, Sexual Harassment Prevention plan.
- A dedicated **Wellness office** that organizes several events on work life balance.
- A dedicated officer in charge of **Gender Based Violence** and has drafted a pledge to make the administration a Gender Based Violence free zone.
- Has appointed **Equity and Disability Ambassadors** among staff who act as spokespersons and a liaison between staff and management and can raise issues of concern or to be improved.
- Has developed a “**Women in Leadership**” programme to support women in their career development.
- **Organizes trainings and events**, for instance on disability, gender based violence or “Women’s Month”.

# Uganda example: Women in Trade Facilitation



- 2017: Survey identified **unique challenges** faced by women cross border traders’;
- 2018: Conducted 38 sensitization trainings on customs procedures for women traders reaching approximately 400 women;
- Provide **free storage of goods (warehouses)** at OSBPs.
- Developed **simplified information material** on trade procedures and translated it into several **local languages**.
- Provide **fully furnished facilities** at the OSBPs equipped with computers to allow women traders to get organized.
- Appointed **Gender Focal Points** at each border station.
- Developed specific **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** for officers working at border posts with responsibility to implement gender responsive measures.
- **Organized stakeholder meetings** with representatives from other border agencies, including **police, security agencies and immigration authorities** to advocate for support to implement gender responsive measures.



# Thank you!

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Gender Equality VWG

