ISO 53800

Guidelines for
the promotion
and implementation
of gender equality
and women's
empowerment

What is ISO 53800?

Gender equality means the achievement of *equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men and girls and boys*, such that no one is disadvantaged. This ISO standard focuses on the inequality resulting from the hierarchical organization of the gender-specific roles assigned to women and men, girls and boys.

ISO 53800 provides

1

Guidance on how to promote and implement gender equality and women's empowerment

2

Guidelines to help organizations develop their capabilities to achieve a culture of gender equality and women's empowerment

3

A framework, resources, policies, tools and good practices for contextualizing, promoting and implementing gender equality

ISO 53800 – Guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment

Who is this standard for?

ISO 53800 is applicable to a wide range of entities, including both public and private organizations. This encompasses companies, governmental bodies at various levels (national, regional or local), as well as any other type of organization.

No matter how advanced an organization might be in terms of gender equality, the standard advocates for continuous improvement in embedding gender equality into its operations and activities.

Recognizing the disparity in available resources, this document aims to offer practical support, catering to the distinct needs of small businesses (SMEs) and larger organizations, while respecting their specific requirements.

This standard encourages a global cultural shift towards gender equality.

Why is ISO 53800 important?

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not just women's concerns, but should involve all individuals and organizations. They are recognized as fundamental human rights and essential components – and indicators – of sustainable, people-centred development. Despite significant advancements, gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination continue to exist globally across all sectors.

Did you know?

- Only five out of ten women globally are integrated in the labour market, compared to nine out of ten men.[1]

- Women worldwide only make 77 % of every dollar earned by men for work of equal value.[2]

- Women continue to be underrepresented in governing bodies[3] and positions of power.

- Paid and unpaid labour is unequally distributed, with women and girls spending more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men and boys.[4]

- Nearly one in three women worldwide reports experiencing physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, in addition to psychological, economic and social forms of violence, according to the World Health Organization.[5]

ISO 53800 aids all organizations in advancing the United Nations 2030 Agenda, notably contributing to the achievement of its Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality (SDG 5)[6].

5 GENDER EQUALITY

As a catalyst to accelerate progress towards SDG 5, ISO 53800 aims to promote gender equality between women and men within organizations. For organizations committed to this goal, equality should be understood as a methodological framework, strategically and transversally embedded within the organizational culture. ISO 53800 supports this process by outlining an approach, methodology and practical tools.

1   ILOSTAT, Statistics on women, 2020, available at: https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/women/.
2   UN WOMEN, Equal pay for work of equal value, available at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/equal-pay.
3   ConvictionsRH, Ranking of the feminization of executive bodies in SBF120 companies, Secretary of State for Gender Equality and the Fight against Discrimination, 2019.
4   Charmes, J. The unpaid care work and the labour market. An analysis of time use data based on the latest World Compilation of Time-use Surveys, ILO, 2019.
5   WHO, Violence against women, available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women.
6   UN 2030 Agenda, SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, available at: https://www.unwomen.org/en/node/36060.
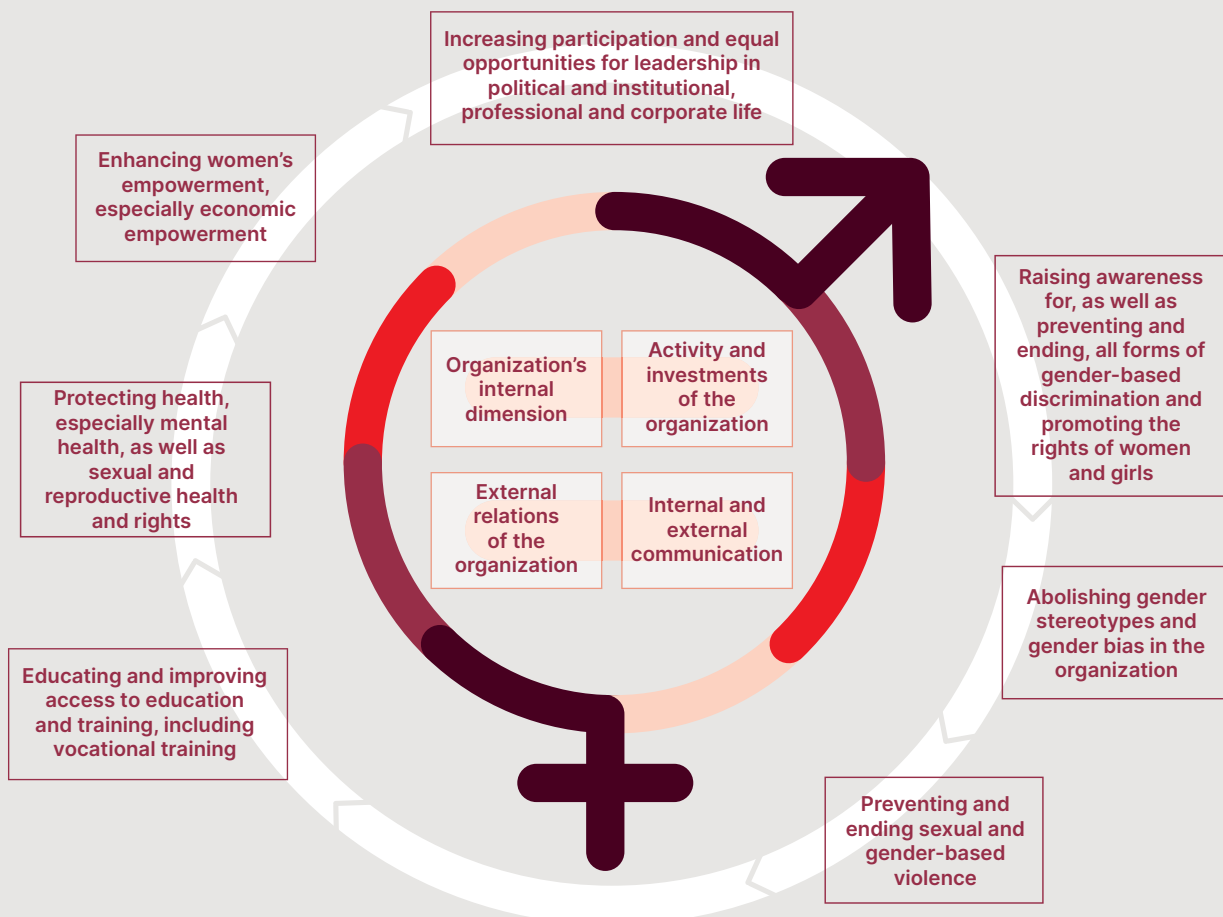
What are the benefits of ISO 53800?

Organizations that incorporate gender equality into their operations and advocate for it both internally and externally will soon experience its positive impacts.

These include:

1. Contributing to economic and social development, an important component of corporate social responsibility; this can subsequently be highlighted in the organization's sustainability reports.

2. Reduced employee turnover, high-quality recruitment, a stronger, more productive and innovative work environment, effective collaboration, all ultimately resulting in improved performance and better results.

3. Enhanced decision making through equitable leadership; in for-profit organizations, this can lead to increased profitability by expanding the customer base, identifying new markets and reducing retention costs.

ISO 53800: areas and goals

Increasing participation and equal opportunities for leadership in political and institutional, professional and corporate life

Enhancing women's empowerment, especially economic empowerment

Raising awareness for, as well as preventing and ending, all forms of gender-based discrimination and promoting the rights of women and girls

Protecting health, especially mental health, as well as sexual and reproductive health and rights

Organization's internal dimension

Activity and investments of the organization

External relations of the organization

Internal and external communication

Abolishing gender stereotypes and gender bias in the organization

Educating and improving access to education and training, including vocational training

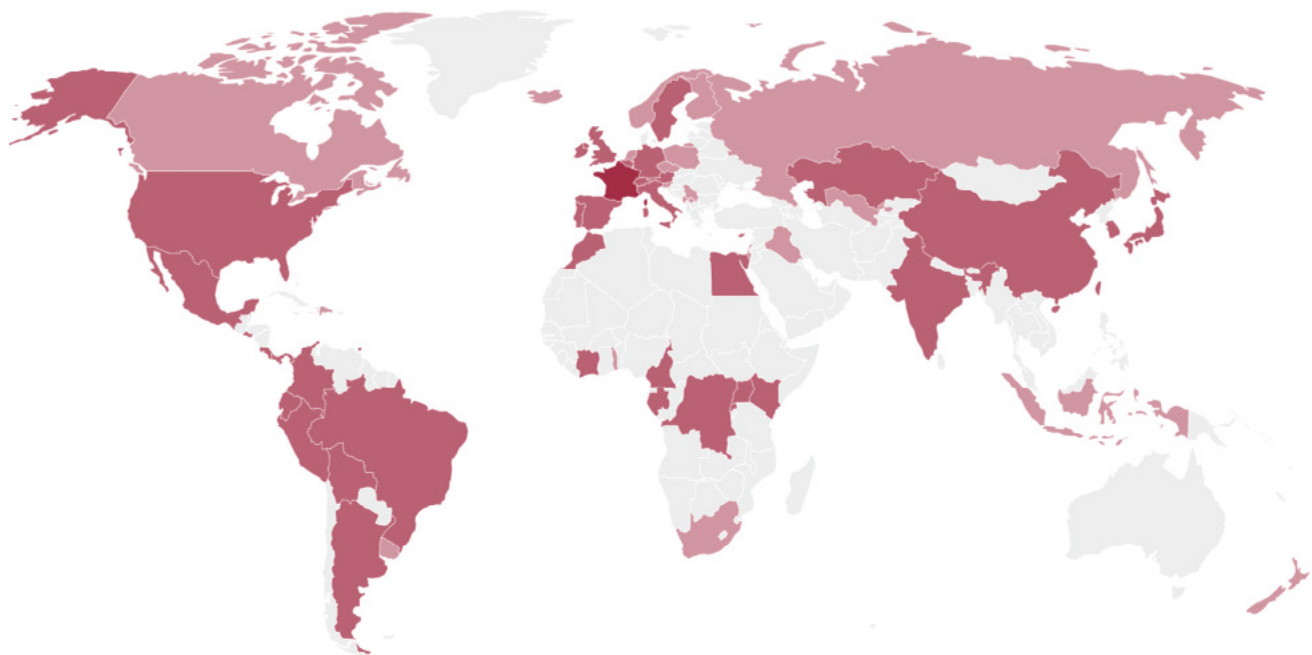Preventing and ending sexual and gender-based violence

Who developed ISO 53800?

ISO 53800 was developed by an international multi-stakeholder group comprising experts from more than 60 countries and 6 international organizations working under project committee ISO/PC 337, *Guidelines for the promotion and implementation of gender equality*.
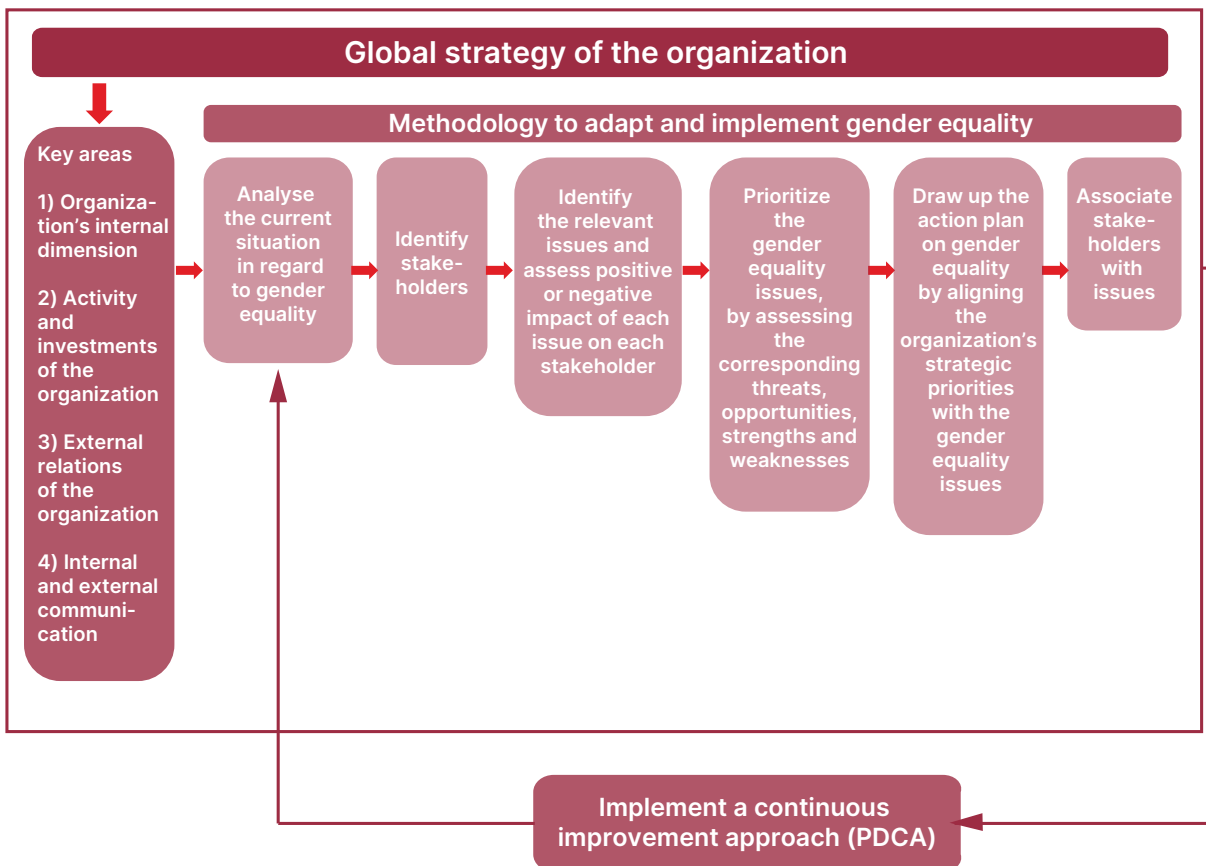
PC 337 will transition into a permanent technical committee to continue developing standards and other ISO deliverables in the field of gender equality.

For more information, visit: https://www.iso.org/committee/8760315.html

- Proposer
- 38 participating countries
- 23 observing countries

What are the steps for implementing the methodology?

Global strategy of the organization

Methodology to adapt and implement gender equality

Key areas

1) Organization's internal dimension

2) Activity and investments of the organization

3) External relations of the organization

4) Internal and external communication

- Analyse the current situation in regard to gender equality
- Identify stakeholders
- Identify the relevant issues and assess positive or negative impact of each issue on each stakeholder
- Prioritize the gender equality issues, by assessing the corresponding threats, opportunities, strengths and weaknesses
- Draw up the action plan on gender equality by aligning the organization's strategic priorities with the gender equality issues
- Associate stakeholders with issues

Implement a continuous improvement approach (PDCA)

⊿ Where can I find ISO 53800?

ISO 53800 was published in May 2024 and is available in English, French and Spanish.

You can purchase the standard from:

- International Organization for Standardization: iso.org
- ISO national member bodies: iso.org/members