

A gender audit, which is conducted during a two-week period by a team of four trained facilitators, encourages dialogue and reflection among members of the organization, department or office that has volunteered to undertake this highly participatory exercise. Audits use a self-assessment approach and take into account both objective data – gathered through a review of the unit's internal and public documents – as well as perceptions including those of staff, management and clients. Workshops and interviews are held with members of the unit, and constituents are also consulted.

At the end of the audit, a report is submitted to management and staff in order to share good practices identified in promoting equality between women and men, as well as challenges and recommendations. The report addresses, among other areas that are key to effectively mainstreaming gender, the following:

- Mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting concern within the unit's objectives, programme and budget

- Existing gender expertise and competence

- Information and knowledge management on gender issues

- Systems and instruments in use for accountability, evaluating and monitoring on gender equality

- Choice of partner organizations

- Advocacy products and public image

- Staffing and human resources concerning balance between women and men, as well as gender-friendly policies

- Organizational culture and its effects on gender equality

Follow-up to the report and implementation of its recommendations are the responsibility of the audited unit.

A 2nd Edition of the Manual for gender audit facilitators was released in August 2012.