



▶ **A self-assessment
method for social
dialogue institutions**

SAM-SDI

Booklet no. 3: Step 2

**A self-assessment method for
social dialogue institutions
SAM-SDI**

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First published 2021

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A self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions. SAM-SDI
International Labour Office - Geneva: ILO, 2021

ISBN: 978-92-2-034266-4 (print)
ISBN: 978-92-2-034267-1 (web PDF)

social dialogue / tripartism / governance

Also available in French: *Méthode d'autoévaluation pour les institutions de dialogue social. MA-IDS*, ISBN 978-92-2-034330-2 (print), 978-92-2-034329-6 (web PDF); in Spanish: *Método de autoevaluación para las instituciones de diálogo social. MA-IDS*, ISBN 978-92-2-034331-9 (print), 978-92-2-034332-6 (web PDF).

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Acronyms

ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers' Activities, ILO
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities, ILO
AICESIS	International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CFA	Committee on Freedom of Association
CSO	civil society organization
DIALOGUE	Social Dialogue and Tripartism Unit, ILO
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization/International Labour Office
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
LDR	labour dispute prevention and resolution
M & E	monitoring and evaluation
MGA	Mutual Gains Approach
NATLEX	ILO database of national labour, social security and related human rights legislation
NGO	non-governmental organization
NORMLEX	ILO information system on international labour standards
SAM-SDI	self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDI	social dialogue institution
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SWOT	strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations

► Icons used in the SAM-SDI

To help users navigate the SAM-SDI, icons are used as explanatory devices throughout the method.

	Guiding questions	To facilitate group discussions*
	Definitions	Definitions or explanations of concepts
	Activities	To facilitate participatory and productive work*
	Examples	To illustrate different aspects of the SAM-SDI
	Templates	To organize and record the results of the work*

* Booklet no. 7 comprises a package of interactive templates as presented in the SAM-SDI booklets. The templates allow the results of the self-assessment to be recorded electronically on a continuous basis. The templates included in the first six booklets are not interactive and cannot be used in this way.



► **Figure 6: The SAM-SDI journey**

► **Step 0: Taking the decision to carry out a self-assessment and getting ready**

1. Decide, through consensus, whether to apply the SAM-SDI
2. Select the assessment team
3. Devise a work plan and budget

► **Step 1: Building an understanding of the history and context of the SDI**

1. Review the SDI's objectives
2. Construct a timeline
3. Map the institutional environment

► **Step 2: Assessing the inclusiveness of the SDI**

1. Assess the five dimensions of inclusiveness using benchmarks
2. Identify objectives and action to enhance inclusiveness

► **Step 3: Assessing the effectiveness of the SDI**

1. Discuss the dimensions of effectiveness and adjust, if necessary, to the SDI
2. Identify examples of achievements and disappointments
3. Assess the five dimensions of effectiveness using guiding questions
4. Identify objectives and action to enhance effectiveness

► **Step 4: Formulating the action plan**

1. Develop the action plan
2. Hold a consultation to gather feedback
3. Finalize and disseminate the self-assessment report and action plan

► **Step 5: Implementing the action plan**

1. Monitor progress
2. Adjust implementation in light of progress





Step 2: Assessing the inclusiveness of the SDI

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▶ Step 2: Assessing the inclusiveness of the SDI

Step 2 of the SAM-SDI comprises an assessment of the inclusiveness of the SDI. Inclusiveness contributes to the “input legitimacy” of social dialogue.⁴⁹

The SAM-SDI proposes five dimensions of inclusiveness as the basis for the self-assessment. In broad terms, the inclusiveness of an SDI refers to the extent to which the main actors in the world of work are represented in it. An inclusive SDI should have a membership comprising representative organizations of employers and workers,⁵⁰ on an equal footing and as independent partners, alongside the government. Inclusiveness refers as well to the issues addressed by the SDI. Its agenda should be wide-ranging and reflect the interests of a broad spectrum of actors in the world of work.

▶ Objective

The objective of Step 2 is the development of an outline action plan to enhance the inclusiveness of the SDI.

▶ Outcome

The members of the assessment team have a shared understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the SDI with respect to its inclusiveness, based on a self-assessment of the five dimensions of inclusiveness, and have identified provisional objectives and actions to enhance inclusiveness.

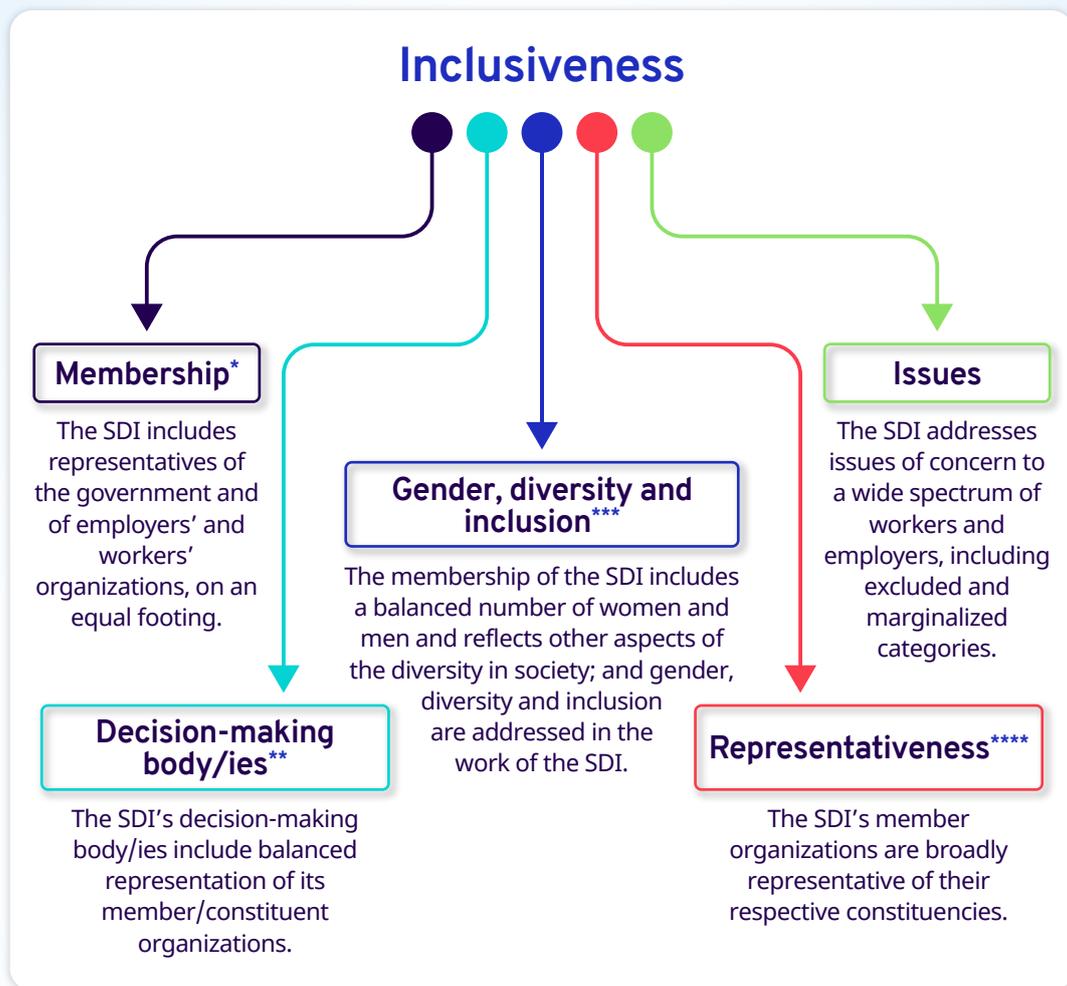
⁴⁹ See the [conceptual framework](#) in the Introduction to the SAM-SDI.

⁵⁰ The representative status of the social partners entitles them to participate in social dialogue on behalf of their members or, in some cases, of all companies (for employers' organizations) or the entire workforce (for trade unions). In many countries, formal criteria have been adopted to determine the representative organizations of employers and workers for the purposes of social dialogue, including collective bargaining. The ILO supervisory bodies (the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and the Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA)) have stated that such representativeness criteria must be *pre-established, precise and objective*. See ILO (2018). “[Compilation of decisions of the Committee on Freedom of Association](#)”, para. 530.

► Process

The assessment of inclusiveness is based on five dimensions presented below.

► **Figure 10: The dimensions of inclusiveness**



* The SAM-SDI acknowledges the existence of institutions with a broader membership, including other civil society groups or organizations; such broader dialogue goes beyond tripartite social dialogue as embodied and practised by the ILO. The SAM-SDI similarly acknowledges institutions with a narrower membership in which the government is not represented or is only indirectly represented.

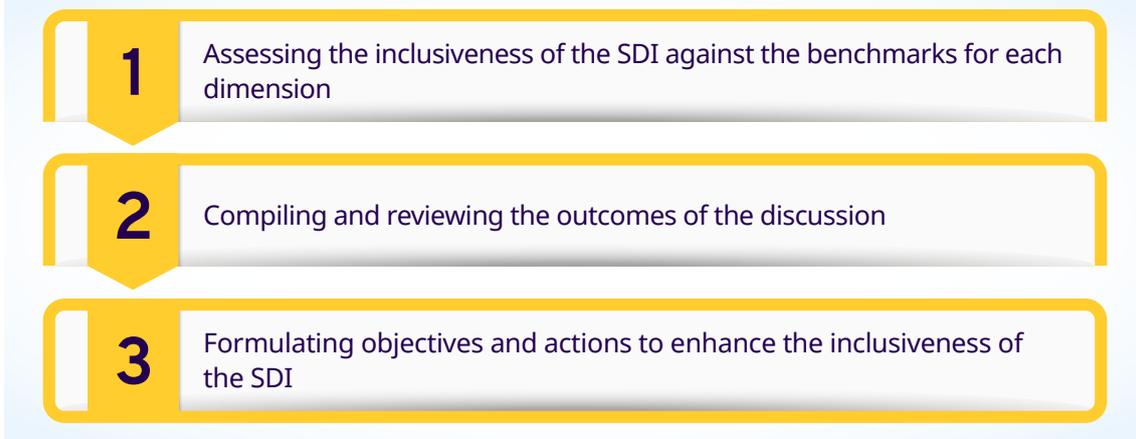
** For SDIs which have a decision-making body or bodies distinct from the plenary body.

*** Diversity refers to a commitment to recognize and appreciate the variety of characteristics that make individuals unique, such as their sex, age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, physical and intellectual abilities, and religious beliefs. Promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace provides a basis for eliminating discrimination and enhancing business performance.

**** The SAM-SDI does not include an assessment of the representativeness of the social partner organizations which are members of the SDI. "Broadly representative", in the context of the SAM-SDI, means that the social partner organizations represent the voices of a wide spectrum of categories of employers and workers, including those in the informal economy. For trade unions, these may include not only standard (regular) employees but also, for example, workers engaged in non-standard forms of employment, domestic workers, rural workers, own-account workers, migrant workers, ethnic minorities, youth, the unemployed and workers with a disability. For employers' organizations, these may include the owners of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and the self-employed, along with large companies and business associations. For both social partners, representation of actors from different economic sectors and regions of the country should be taken into account, as well as the diversity of their membership with respect to gender and other aspects of diversity such as those listed above.

Step 2 comprises three sub-steps. The first involves assessing the SDI against a series of statements or “benchmarks” related to each dimension of inclusiveness, which should allow the team to identify, through discussion, the key strengths and weaknesses of the SDI. In the second sub-step, the results are compiled to produce a comprehensive overview of the SDI’s strengths and weaknesses with respect to its inclusiveness. In the third sub-step, based on this analysis, the team will identify priority objectives and actions to enhance the SDI’s inclusiveness.

► **Figure 11: Sub-steps of Step 2**



► 1. Assessing the inclusiveness of the SDI

The exercise aims to stimulate discussion within the team about the strengths and weaknesses of the SDI with respect to the different dimensions of inclusiveness. The series of tables below provide a number of statements or “benchmarks” which seek to capture key aspects of each dimension. Each benchmark is framed in a positive way - i.e. what an inclusive SDI might be expected to look like in an ideal world. It is important to be aware that there is no expectation that an SDI should perform well against each and every benchmark; the exercise is simply a means of generating discussion.

Taking each benchmark in turn, discuss how well you think your SDI performs against it. Try to reach consensus within the team on your response or, if this is not possible, note down any differences of opinion. You may wish to apply the scoring method proposed below to quantify the response of the group. At the end of the discussion of each dimension of inclusiveness, record the outcomes of your conversation noting, in particular, what you consider to be the main strengths and weaknesses of the SDI.

► Assessing inclusiveness: How to use the benchmarks

Take, for example, the first benchmark (a.) under the assessment of the “membership” dimension: “The founding document of the SDI clearly specifies its composition.”

Within the team, you should consider together the response to the question: “Does the Constitution or other founding document of our SDI clearly specify its composition?”

If you conclude from your discussion that there is no lack of clarity regarding the composition of the SDI as established in its Constitution, then the SDI performs well against this benchmark; you could select a score of 3 and note this as a strength. If, on the contrary, you consider that the founding document of the SDI is vague regarding its composition, you could select a score of 1.

However, even if the composition of the SDI is clearly stated, you may believe that it is no longer adequate or appropriate in today’s world of work. This issue is captured under benchmark (g.), and you may select a score of 1 against this benchmark, noting it as a weakness of the SDI.



Scale for scoring the SDI against the benchmarks

Score	Meaning
n/a	This benchmark is not applicable or relevant to the SDI ⁵¹
1	The SDI performs poorly against this benchmark
2	The SDI performs moderately well against this benchmark
3	The SDI performs very well against this benchmark

⁵¹ “Not applicable” (n/a) would apply, for example, to the benchmark relating to the government representatives in the case of a bipartite SDI of which the government is not a member.

1.1 Assessment of the ‘membership’ dimension



The SDI includes representatives of the government and of employers’ and workers’ organizations, on an equal footing	n/a or score 1 to 3
a. The founding document of the SDI clearly specifies its composition. ⁵²	
b. Representative employers’ and workers’ organizations participate on an equal footing with each other and with the government. ⁵³	
c. Pre-established, precise and objective criteria exist for the selection of the organizations represented in the SDI, which are applied transparently in practice.	
d. Government representation in the SDI is drawn from the most relevant ministries or agencies concerned with labour, social and economic policy.	
e. The employers’ and workers’ organizations in the SDI are free to nominate their representatives to the SDI without interference from the government or from each other.	
f. The role of any other actors in the SDI complements the role of the social partners and does not undermine the latter in any way.	
g. The composition of the SDI is fully relevant in today’s world of work; transparent and appropriate procedures exist to review its composition at defined intervals.	
<p>What are the SDI’s main strengths regarding the inclusiveness of its membership? <i>Record the main outcomes of your discussion</i></p>	
<p>What are the SDI’s main weaknesses regarding the inclusiveness of its membership? <i>Record the main outcomes of your discussion</i></p>	

⁵² “Composition” means who are the constituent groups or members of the SDI and how many representatives each member has in the SDI.

⁵³ The expression “on an equal footing” means that the voices of all three parties carry equal weight in the discussions and the views of any one party do not dominate those of the others.

1.2 Assessment of the ‘decision-making structure’ dimension

Before reviewing the benchmarks below, compile a list of the various decision-making bodies/structures of the SDI, such as the plenary, executive committee, governing council or board.



The decision-making body/ies of the SDI include balanced representation of its member/constituent organizations	n/a or score 1 to 3
a. The composition and role(s) of the SDI’s decision-making body/ies are clearly specified in its founding document(s).	
b. The government, employers’ and workers’ organizations have an equal voice in the decision-making body/ies and processes.	
c. The role of any other member organizations in decision-making in the SDI is clearly specified.	
d. The chairing arrangements for the SDI’s decision-making body/ies are transparent, equitable and respected in practice.	

What are the SDI’s main strengths regarding the inclusiveness of its decision-making structures?

Record the main outcomes of your discussion

What are the SDI’s main weaknesses regarding the inclusiveness of its decision-making structures?

Record the main outcomes of your discussion

1.3 Assessment of the ‘gender, diversity and inclusion’ dimension



<p>The membership of the SDI includes a balanced number of women and men and reflects other aspects of the diversity in society; and gender, diversity and inclusion are addressed in the SDI’s work</p>	<p>n/a or score 1 to 3</p>
<p>a. The SDI strives to represent and reflect the diversity of society in its membership and in all aspects of its work.</p>	
<p>b. There is a balanced number of women and men in the plenary and other operational structures of the SDI (such as committees and working groups).</p>	
<p>c. There is a balanced number of women and men in the SDI’s decision-making body/ies.</p>	
<p>d. Both women and men have acted as chairperson of the SDI and of its committees in recent years.</p>	
<p>e. The SDI takes proactive measures to achieve a balanced number of women and men members, to facilitate equal participation in its work and to prevent or eliminate gender-based discrimination.</p>	
<p>f. The agenda of the SDI regularly includes gender, diversity and inclusion issues, and its outputs are consistently responsive to gender, diversity and inclusion concerns.</p>	
<p>g. The SDI provides support to facilitate the equal participation in its work of members having diverse personal characteristics, including persons with a disability.</p>	
<p>What are the SDI’s main strengths regarding gender, diversity and inclusion? <i>Record the main outcomes of your discussion</i></p>	
<p>What are the SDI’s main weaknesses regarding gender, diversity and inclusion? <i>Record the main outcomes of your discussion</i></p>	

1.4 Assessment of the ‘representativeness’ dimension



The SDI’s member organizations are representative of their respective constituencies	n/a or score 1 to 3
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a. The representative status of the employers’ and workers’ organizations which are members of the SDI was established on the basis of pre-established, precise and objective criteria; the participation of these organizations is not contested by others which are not members of the SDI; and procedures are in place to review, at appropriate intervals, the representative status of these organizations.

b. The membership of the employers’ and workers’ organizations in the SDI (including their affiliates) is broadly representative of the national labour market as a whole.⁵⁴

c. The employers’ and workers’ organizations in the SDI represent economic units and workers in both the informal and the formal economy, including new and emerging categories of employers and workers.

d. The participation of other actors in the SDI serves to bring a wider perspective on the issues it addresses.

e. The SDI’s member organizations consult proactively with other organizations or groups which are not represented in the SDI to seek their views and inputs regarding issues that directly concern them.

What are the SDI’s main strengths regarding its representativeness?

Record the main outcomes of your discussion

What are the SDI’s main weaknesses regarding its representativeness?

Record the main outcomes of your discussion

⁵⁴ Characteristics of the social partners’ membership to consider here may include, for example, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, national origin/migration status, status in employment, size of enterprise, economic sector, private and public sector etc.

1.5 Assessment of the ‘issues’ dimension



<p>The SDI addresses issues of concern to a wide spectrum of employers and workers, including marginalized and excluded categories</p>	<p>n/a or score 1 to 3</p>
<p>a. The agenda of the SDI includes issues of concern to diverse categories of employers and workers.</p>	
<p>b. The SDI has set up working groups or committees to address the concerns of specific categories of employers and workers, including those who may be excluded from policy deliberations or considered to be of low priority in policy-making circles.⁵⁵</p>	
<p>c. The SDI takes other proactive measures to enable marginalized and excluded categories of employers and workers to bring their issues and concerns to the attention of the SDI.</p>	
<p>d. The SDI undertakes, commissions or accesses research on issues of concern to a wide spectrum of employers and workers, including marginalized and excluded categories.</p>	

What are the SDI’s main strengths regarding its issues-inclusiveness?

Record the main outcomes of your discussion

What are the SDI’s main weaknesses regarding its issues-inclusiveness?

Record the main outcomes of your discussion

⁵⁵ Refer to the explanation of representativeness given in figure 10 for some examples of the categories of employers and workers who may be excluded from policy deliberations or considered as low priority in policy-making.

► 2. Compiling and reviewing the outcomes of the discussion

Compile and review your notes and scores for each dimension of inclusiveness, referring to the template and guidance below, in order to produce an overview of the outcomes of your discussions. You can use post-its, flipcharts, paper or an electronic format. At this stage, you may choose to set aside the strengths and weaknesses considered to be of low priority, retaining only the most important or significant ones.



Template 2: Compilation of the results of the assessment of inclusiveness

Dimension	Scores (if used)	Main strengths	Main weaknesses
► Membership			
► Decision-making body/ies			
► Gender, diversity and inclusion			
► Representativeness			
► Issues			



Interpreting the results to derive recommendations for action

Score	Meaning
Mostly 1s	This score implies that this dimension of inclusiveness represents an aspect of the SDI which may require some attention and remedial action. Consider the factors underlying this result and how they impact the SDI's performance. Think about what action should be taken to address these aspects.
Mostly 2s and 3s	Your institution has scored reasonably or very well against this dimension. Discuss whether the strengths you identified may be leveraged in order to improve on any weaknesses under the same or other inclusiveness dimensions.
Very mixed scores	Some aspects of this dimension are strong while others may require attention.

▶ 3. Formulating objectives and actions to enhance the inclusiveness of the SDI

On the basis of the discussions, it is now time to formulate key objectives and priorities for action to enhance the inclusiveness of the SDI. These ideas will feed into the action plan, which will be further developed in [Step 4](#).

In the context of action planning, an *objective* refers to the end result that you are aiming to achieve i.e. the change that you wish to bring about in the SDI. *Actions* broadly refer to the interventions or activities to be accomplished i.e. what must be done in order to achieve the objective.⁵⁶ Generally, a combination of complementary actions or activities is required to reach a single objective.

At this stage in the SAM-SDI, the aim is to identify some key areas of intervention to enhance the inclusiveness of the SDI in the light of your assessment of its strengths and weaknesses.

You may find it helpful to use the template below to develop objectives and corresponding actions to be taken in the short term (over the next 12 months) and longer-term (the coming one to five years). It is recommended that you formulate a manageable number of objectives that the SDI will realistically be able to address in practice (for example, three or four objectives).

You may also consider whether there any risks associated with your proposed actions which might jeopardize their success, and which the SDI would need to bear in mind when planning and implementing the action.

Template 3 includes an illustrative example. The example assumes that the self-assessment of inclusiveness revealed the very low number of women in the membership and decision-making bodies to be an important weakness of the SDI. Based on this finding, an objective on “improved representation of women” is formulated along with a set of possible actions to bring this change about. A number of possible risks are also identified, that might hamper progress if measures are not put in place to monitor and address them if the need arises.

As you start to formulate your action plan, remember that the perfect should not be the enemy of the good! The most important point is to identify some key areas or objectives for strengthening the inclusiveness SDI. You will be able to further develop and refine your preliminary ideas in [Step 4](#) of the SAM-SDI, when you will develop the full action plan.

⁵⁶ For further explanation of the terms used in action or project planning, refer to p.8 in booklet 5: Step 4 and Step 5.


Template 3: Outline of an action plan to improve inclusiveness (with illustrative example)

	Short-term action (over the next 12 months)	Medium- & long- term action (from 1 to 5 years)	Risks
Objective 1: <i>Improved representation of women in the SDI</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>letter from the chairperson to the member organizations to encourage the nomination of female candidates for the next round of appointments to the SDI.</i> ▶ <i>establish a working group on measures to promote gender equality in the SDI.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>develop and implement a “family-friendly” policy in the SDI.</i> ▶ <i>institute a rotating chair system to facilitate women becoming the chair of the SDI or its committees.</i> ▶ <i>implement a gender equality awareness campaign.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>reluctance or opposition of the existing members of the SDI.</i> ▶ <i>unwillingness of women to propose themselves as candidates for chairperson.</i> ▶ <i>lack of resources to hire gender equality specialists/trainers.</i>
Objective 2: <i>Write the objective here</i>	<i>Write the proposed actions to meet Objective 2</i>		<i>Write possible risks here</i>
Objective 3: <i>Write the objective here</i>			

► Further reading and resources

ILO (2019c). “Women in business and management: The business case for change”, Geneva.

This report by the ILO Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP) shows how gender diversity at the top improves organizational performance. It demonstrates how the many dimensions of an organization’s policies, a gender-balanced workforce and a gender-inclusive culture, among other factors, enable more women to hold decision-making power.

Global Deal (2019). “The contribution of social dialogue to gender equality”, Global Deal Thematic Brief.

Sound industrial relations and effective social dialogue contribute to good governance in the workplace, decent work, inclusive economic growth and democracy. They can also be important means of advancing gender equality and fair labour markets, and vice versa.

Rubery, J. and Johnson, M. (2019). “Closing the gender pay gap: What role for trade unions?”, ILO, Geneva.

Research commissioned by the ILO Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV) shows that, by targeting overall gender discrimination, promoting inclusive wage setting, pursuing specific gender pay equality measures and enhancing women’s representation in decision-making, trade unions can contribute effectively to addressing the gender pay gap.

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The self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions

The self-assessment method for social dialogue institutions (SAM-SDI) has been developed by the International Labour Organization to help constituents analyse and strengthen the inclusiveness and effectiveness of their social dialogue institutions.

Booklet number 3 covers Step 2 of the SAM-SDI. In Step 2, the self-assessment team undertakes an in-depth examination of the inclusiveness of the institution by exploring five dimensions of inclusiveness. Based on this analysis, the team draws up initial objectives and proposals for action to enhance the SDI's inclusiveness.

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