
**WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
PRINCIPLES**

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH
**GENDER RESPONSIVE
PROCUREMENT IN THE
WATCH AND JEWELRY
INDUSTRY**

• A CASE STUDY •



7

PRINCIPLES

Principle 1



Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.

Principle 2



Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.

Principle 3



Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.

Principle 4



Promote education, training and professional development for women.

Principle 5



Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.

Principle 6



Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.

Principle 7



Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

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WATCH & JEWELLERY
INITIATIVE 2030



Disclaimer:

The content of this case study is the sole responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations and their Member States. This case study uses self-reported data generated by participating companies from using the WEPs Gender-Responsive Procurement Assessment Tool. Participating companies shared their results with UN Women on voluntarily basis. The case study presents analysis at an aggregate level and only includes the results shared with UN Women.

Acknowledgment

This case study was prepared by Anna Falth and Mihwa Park at the WEPs Secretariat at UN Women with support of Iris Van der Veken and Emilie Van Landeghem from the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030). UN Women and WJI 2030 are grateful to the active participation of nine WEPs signatories and members of WJI 2030 in making the gender-responsive procurement pilot a success.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank Marie-Claire Daveu, Kering's Chief Sustainability Officer and Head of International Institutional Affairs, and Cyrille Vigneron, Cartier's President and CEO, for their commitment and unconditional support to prioritize the gender agenda through both the WJI 2030 and the WEPs.

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Table of contents

Foreword	4
Executive Summary	6
1. Introduction	8
2. Gender-responsive procurement	10
3. The watch and jewelry industry	12
4. The GRP pilot	14
5. Results and key findings	16
6. It is time for action	20
Annex: GRP resources	22



Anna Fälth

Global Head of WEPs, UN Women

We have truly enjoyed the fruitful collaboration with the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030) and its members – also WEPs signatories – during the gender-responsive procurement (GRP) pilot. The findings of the pilot are covered by this case study as are our recommendations to pilot participants and other WEPs signatory companies.

As the first phase of the pilot project on gender-responsive procurement concludes, it is encouraging to witness pilot companies' demonstrated commitment to gender equality. Their active engagement throughout this pilot assessment phase speaks volumes about their dedication to fostering positive change for gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community. We are confident that their commitment will inspire them as well as others to pursue transformative approaches like GRP to advance gender equality.

Jointly with WJI 2030 and the pilot participants we are exploring a second pilot phase to involve their suppliers, and to co-design GRP tools and resources to continue to strengthen gender equality in global supply chains. Together, let us harness this momentum and redefine the future for women across the world.

We would like to warmly thank all our WJI2030 members and WEPs signatories for championing gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.



Iris Van der Veken

**Executive Director and Secretary General,
Watch & Jewellery 2030 Initiative**

The Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030 - founded by Cartier and Kering - is driven by a common conviction that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aspiration for a sustainable watch and jewelry industry can only be achieved through collaborative initiatives.

At the core of Pillar 3 - Fostering Inclusivity, lies the Women's Empowerment Principles, providing a foundation that propels our collective commitment towards gender equality. Recognizing the WEPs' potential holistic impact on gender equality, we - WJI 2030 and our members - extend our reach beyond our immediate operations to encompass the entirety of the watch and jewelry supply chain.

Our joint pilot with UN Women marks the initial step in constructing a robust framework of tools and resources, poised to empower companies across the jewelry sector.

Our vision is expansive, inviting all like-minded entities to join hands in this transformative journey. The urgency of our mission cannot be overstated—now, more than ever, we stand at a critical juncture to usher in change for gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.



We particularly thank those that joined us for the pilot: Cartier, Dimexon, Gucci, Itaipreziosi, Julie Sandlau Vietnam, Monica Vinader, Rosy Blue, Rubel & Menasché and Swarovski.



Executive Summary

With halfway to meet the deadline of 2030 for the Sustainable Development Goals, achieving gender equality will take more than 300 years.¹

Tackling persistent gender inequalities is a pressing and vital objective in today's world, requiring our concentrated and unified efforts. Women continue to confront labour market segregation, wage gaps and limited access to leadership roles. Many are pushed into vulnerable, poorly compensated roles devoid of legal safeguards and social security. These hardships are compounded by rising maternal mortality rates, claiming a woman's life every two minutes due to childbirth complications. The enduring repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to impact girls, who are being denied education and being forced into early marriages.

Despite these challenges, gender equality remains insufficiently prioritized in many parts of the world. The limited presence of women in leadership roles – only 31 countries have a woman Head of State or Government and globally women are only 22.8 per cent of cabinet members heading ministries, as of January 2023² – underscores the considerable journey that lies ahead. This gap extends not only to the public sector but also to the private sector, where a mere ten per cent of the largest global businesses are led by women.³

The lack of women's representation at decision-making tables threatens to sideline gender equality as a top-level concern. Paradoxically, women wield significant influence in shaping family consumer choices. In 2009, they steered around \$20 trillion⁴ in annual consumer spending, and it is estimated that by 2028, women will own 75 per cent of discretionary spend.⁵ The jewelry industry exemplifies this trend, with women driving over 90 per cent of jewelry demand.⁶ Nevertheless, the industry's leadership remains predominantly male-dominated.

Encouragingly, there is a growing recognition within the industry of the imperative to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. Key industry players are actively working to bridge the gender

gaps and create opportunities for women across their value chains, from mining to retail. By acknowledging these disparities and collectively advancing gender equality, the industry paves the way for a more just and inclusive future.

The industry is leveraging the seven Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) as a comprehensive framework and guide to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. These Principles serve as a roadmap for the private sector in the industry to drive positive outcomes for society and business. The fifth principle – the marketplace – emphasizes placing gender equality action at the core of business strategy and operations, including through gender-responsive procurement (GRP).

In 2023, UN Women introduced the WEPs Gender-Responsive Procurement Assessment Tool (the Tool) to help companies gauge their progress on GRP policies and practices. This Tool – made up of 31 questions – identifies gaps and areas for improvement.

To test this Tool, UN Women partnered with the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030) to launch a pilot programme that evaluates gender responsive procurement in the jewelry industry. Nine members of WJI 2030 took part in this pioneering global initiative, marking the first-ever endeavor to apply the tool within a specific industry context, and aiming to assess and enhance gender equality practices within the jewelry industry. Companies participating in the pilot included Cartier, Dimexon, Gucci, Italtreasures, Julie Sandlau Vietnam, Monica Vinader, Rosy Blue, Rubel & Menasché and Swarovski.



Some common gaps and challenges surfaced among pilot participants:

- Much more work is needed to put gender-responsive procurement at the core of their business strategies alongside ongoing efforts to advance gender equality in the workplace.
- While all participating companies had supplier databases, not all captured supplier data categorized by the company owner's gender or gender-responsiveness.
- Most companies had not set annual targets for procurement spend with women-owned or gender responsive companies, despite this being key for tracking of progress.

The pilot identified eight broad recommendations for pilot participants and other businesses on the journey to advance their GRP practices:

1. Develop stand-alone gender-responsive procurement policies, strategies and action plans with clear indicators and annual targets.
2. Proactively recruit women for procurement roles – increased diversity is likely to translate into more inclusive procurement practices.
3. Include GRP functions and responsibilities in job descriptions of purchasing roles, starting with the chief procurement officer.
4. Ensure effective support for the GRP implementation and monitoring process.
5. Train employees on GRP, its business case and on transformative practices. For example, prompt payments are key to facilitating engagement with SMEs and to support women-owned business' cash flows.
6. Set SMART targets for GRP, and track and report on GRP progress, including on the supplier database, using sex-disaggregated data.
7. Engage suppliers to advance on gender equality and women's empowerment by encouraging them to adopt the Women's Empowerment Principles.
8. Publish gender-responsive procurement results in the annual corporate sustainability report.



1. Introduction

According to a UN Women report⁷ tracking progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), achieving full gender equality in workplaces, politics, and legal realms might take a staggering 300 years at the current pace. This prolonged timeline is due to setbacks caused by various global challenges, including income disparities, safety concerns, limited education access, health issues, and the impact of the pandemic.⁸ The report highlights that only one in every three managers or supervisors is a woman, reflecting the persistence of the glass ceiling. Closing this gap and achieving gender parity in the workplace could take about 140 years.

The jewelry supply chain – the focus of this case study – comprises numerous individual supply chains, each characterized by differing degrees of complexity, transparency, and traceability. A large proportion of jewelry sold in global markets is crafted using precious metals, such as gold, silver and platinum, along with diamonds and coloured gemstones. These materials are mined in hundreds of countries, often in the least developed countries.⁹ They are then traded, cut, polished and manufac-

tured into jewelry sold in retail stores worldwide. Women play a substantial role, propelling over 90 per cent of the demand and purchases within the jewelry market.

However, women’s role extends beyond being mere buyers; they actively shape decisions and directions throughout the entire jewelry supply chain. A contemporary shift in consumer behavior, particularly driven by millennials, demands transparency and positive impacts across the supply chain. This puts a spotlight on product origins and their effects on people and the environment.

Despite women’s significant influence, the global jewelry industry has remained predominantly male-dominated. At the same time, women form a substantial portion of the downstream retail sector, yet barriers rooted in gender inequality limit their market entry or relegate them to specific roles, determined by social norms and stereotypes. These roles are frequently undervalued, low-skilled, precarious and potentially exploitative, especially in midstream or upstream sectors.

THE WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

The Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) offer a comprehensive guide and path for companies to make real strides in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community. WEPs signatories do not only contribute to positive societal change but also enhance their own business outcomes.

These seven Principles serve as a central tool to effectively advance gender equality dimensions of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In essence, the WEPs provide a practical way for businesses to actively participate in fulfilling these global goals. WEPs also offer a platform for its signatories to openly discuss and share insights about how gender equality directly impacts their bottom line.



In 2018, BSR highlighted women’s engagement in the jewelry supply chain, outlining a non-exhaustive list of women employees’ key barriers and challenges in mining, cutting and polishing and manufacturing (see Figure 1).

The silver lining is that change within the industry is underway. Women are stepping into roles

traditionally held by men, such as miners and gemstone cutters. Major industry players, whether in production or sales, are recognizing the need for change and action. They are initiating concrete measures to foster gender equality and women’s empowerment in the workplace, marketplace and community leveraging the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs) as their roadmap. This is marking a promising shift in the industry’s landscape.

Figure 1
Women in the jewelry supply chain

WEPs Principle	Barriers to women’s economic empowerment	Mining	Cutting and polishing	Jewelry manufacturing
2	Lack of formal employment opportunities	●	●	○
	Lack of women in leadership and female role models	●	●	●
	Low wages and poor working conditions	●	●	●
3	Exposure to health and safety hazards	●	●	●
	Lack of quality childcare and family-friendly workplaces	●	●	●
	Risk of child labour	●	●	○
	Risk of sexual harassment and gender-based violence	●	○	○
4	Low education and technical skills levels	●	●	●
5	Limited access to finance and business contracts to grow their enterprises	●	○	●
6	Exclusion from community consultation	●	○	○

Source: Modified from BSR, 2018. Women in the Jewelry Supply Chain: A Landscape Review of Barriers to Women’s Economic Empowerment.

Despite remaining challenges of gender biases and discrimination in the workplace, the UN Women-WJI 2030 pilot initiative and this case study specifically focus on examining the supply chain aspect of the industry from a gender perspective. This entails promoting sustainable and inclusive supply chains by implementing gender-responsive procurement that foster stronger business

connections with gender-responsive companies and women-owned businesses.

This is in line with the fifth WEPs principle that centers on the marketplace and guides the implementation of business practices related to enterprise development, supply chain management and marketing that advance gender equality and women’s empowerment.



2. Gender-responsive procurement

Gender-responsive procurement (GRP) refers to the sustainable selection of services, goods or civil works that considers the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment. It is founded on international standards, agreements and principles

relevant to improving gender-responsive working conditions and essential for upholding women's basic rights in the supply chain. A solid organizational code of conduct for its supply chain is the bedrock for WEPs implementation.

WATCH & JEWELLERY INITIATIVE 2030

Driven by a common conviction that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aspiration for a sustainable watch and jewelry industry can only be achieved through collaborative initiatives, Cartier, delegated by Richemont, and Kering, came together to launch the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030).

WJI 2030 collaborates with industry leaders worldwide to embark on a united and ambitious mission towards a sustainable future no matter the starting point, market segment or position in the value chain. Welcoming all watch and jewelry companies with a national and international footprint, its primary focus revolves around cultivating climate resilience, safeguarding precious resources and nurturing inclusivity within the industry to ensure a better tomorrow for all.

WJI 2030 follows a collaborative approach, building upon and strengthening the ongoing efforts in the current ecosystem. Members pledge to work together towards common objectives and take concerted actions to drive industry transformation and innovation, aiming for sustainability and excellence.

One main objective of the WJI 2030 is fostering inclusive, gender responsive and responsible value chains. As a minimum baseline commitment, members are expected to:

- Develop a human rights policy and conduct due diligence, report salient human rights risks and existing mitigation measures.
- Become a WEPs signatory and prepare a workplan for WEPs implementation.
- Promote decent working conditions and respect for fundamental rights at work within members' own operations and supply chains via a publicly available statement of policy.

WJI 2030 aims to support all its members in reaching this baseline, while recognizing that members are at varying points in their journeys. The pilot initiative with UN Women aims to build strength through the positive power of the collective.



GRP involves companies using their purchasing strategies, policies and practices to advance gender equality and women's empowerment and to motivate their suppliers to improve their WEPs performance. An essential aspect of this approach is broadening the range of suppliers by increasing engagement with gender-responsive companies and businesses owned by women. This diversification is key to achieving the overarching goal of gender equality through procurement practices.

Organizations involved in GRP consider the impact on gender equality and seek to ensure that women workers and women's businesses benefit from their business opportunities. They also take into account the gender power relations embedded in value chains and market transactions when sustainably selecting services, goods or works.

GRP is a growing practice but far from being a universal practice. The private sector spends trillions of dollars in procurement every year, equivalent to 72 per cent of GDP in OECD countries.¹⁰ According to McKinsey Global Institute's 2021 report, 58 per cent of capital flows were spent on supplier payment in corporations with revenue exceeding US\$1 billion.¹¹ However, data on how procurement spend with gender-responsive companies and women-owned businesses is lacking. Rough estimated spend with women-owned business is less than one per cent.

According to UN Women research (see Annex), GRP can generate a range of different benefits to companies:

- **Unlocks market opportunities:** GRP opens doors to new markets, lowers risks, and encourages innovation in products and services.
- **Enhances supplier diversity:** Supplier diversity drives innovation, competition, and market access, bolstering a company's competitive edge, while mitigating the risk of reliance on a few suppliers.
- **Increases revenue and reduced spending:** GRP promotes competition for sustainable business opportunities, leading to higher revenue and cost savings.
- **Fosters a value-based culture:** Aligning with the WEPs cultivates a culture that values both business success and social impact. Even seemingly minor purchasing practices can trigger a positive domino effect throughout the value chain.
- **Strengthens brand reputation:** GRP boosts brand image, customer loyalty, and staff commitment, fostering positive community impact.
- **Improves supply chain performance:** GRP enhances innovation, resilience, and productivity within supply chains.
- **Ensures compliance:** Pursuing GRP aligns with reporting obligations, promoting regulatory adherence.



3. The watch and jewelry industry

Assessing the level of gender responsive procurement in the jewelry industry provides a unique opportunity to bring impactful changes to the industry in view of the characteristics of the industry:

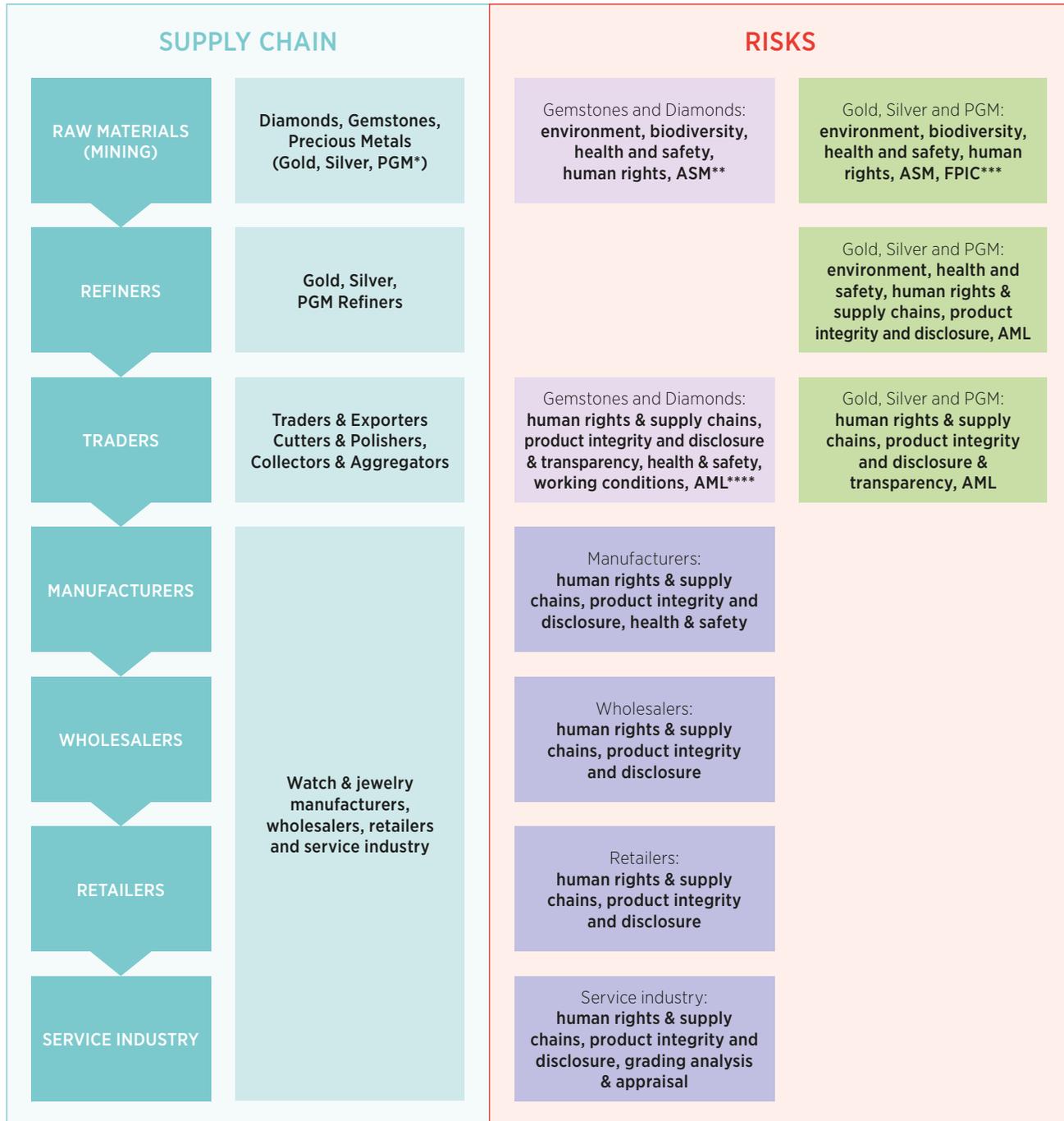
- 1. The jewelry sectors' supply chain is complex.** It consists of multiple tiers of complexity with varying levels of transparency and traceability. It involves diverse actors, each carrying distinct risks at every stage (see Figure 2). The supply chain presents an array of barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment (see Figure 1).
- 2. Raw materials are mined and manufactured in different parts of the world.** Local artisans are rarely at the top of the supply chain. The traceability of the origins of precious metals and stones – like gold, silver, platinum, diamonds and colored gemstones – is also complex as they are sourced from different countries and continents, often least developed countries. The materials are brought to other countries to be manufactured into final jewelry products.
- 3. When highly valuable materials are sourced from a small number of producers – concentrating power and resources in the hands of a few – the risk of corruption and violence related to the control to resources, land and labour increases.** Multiple studies reveal harsh conditions in precious material mining sites. In conflict zones, civilians, including women and children, suffer from abusive armed groups and criminal networks exploiting precious metals, as highlighted by Human Rights Watch's in 2018. Indigenous peoples and other local residents living near large-scale mines are often forcibly displaced.¹²
- 4. The industry is to a large extent controlled by men who represent the majority of workers, leaders and decision-makers in the supply chain, limiting women's access to livelihoods and employment.** Starting from precious metal suppliers to exporters, distributors and manufacturer, majority of the industry is dominated by male with patriarchal values. Decision-making positions are often held by men throughout the jewelry supply chain, while women do work as retailers or other customer facing jobs.

The industry holds the power of action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in these four areas through gender-responsive procurement, both internally and externally. These actions can bring about positive global impacts, ranging from developing to emerging and advanced economies.

The industry has demonstrated some progress in minimizing its carbon footprint and preserving biodiversity. Now, its focus must accelerate towards advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. Enhancing the supply chain via gender-responsive procurement presents a significant stride towards accomplishing SDG 5.



Figure 2
Risks in the watch and jewelry supply chain



Human rights, working conditions, product integrity

Climate and biodiversity

* PGM: Platinum Group Metals
** ASM: Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining

*** FPIC: Free, Prior, and Informed Consent
**** AML: Anti-Money Laundering



4. The GRP pilot

In 2023, UN Women developed the WEPs Gender-responsive Procurement Assessment Tool (the Tool) in consultation with WEPs signatories based in Asia and the Pacific and the European Union. Participating companies helped ensure that the questions reflect real-life company practice and adherence to international standards and indicators.

To further expand the testing of the tool with companies in global supply chains, UN Women teamed up with the WJI 2030 and extended an invitation to its members – also WEPs signatories – to participate in a pilot of the Tool.

The Tool enables companies to assess their progress on GRP policies and practices that advance gender equality and women's empowerment and identifies gaps and areas for improvement. It consists of 31 questions in five main areas:

1. Gender equality commitments made by the company
2. Procurement policy and strategy
3. Internal procurement and supply chain management
4. Supplier database and reporting
5. Supplier engagement and diversification.

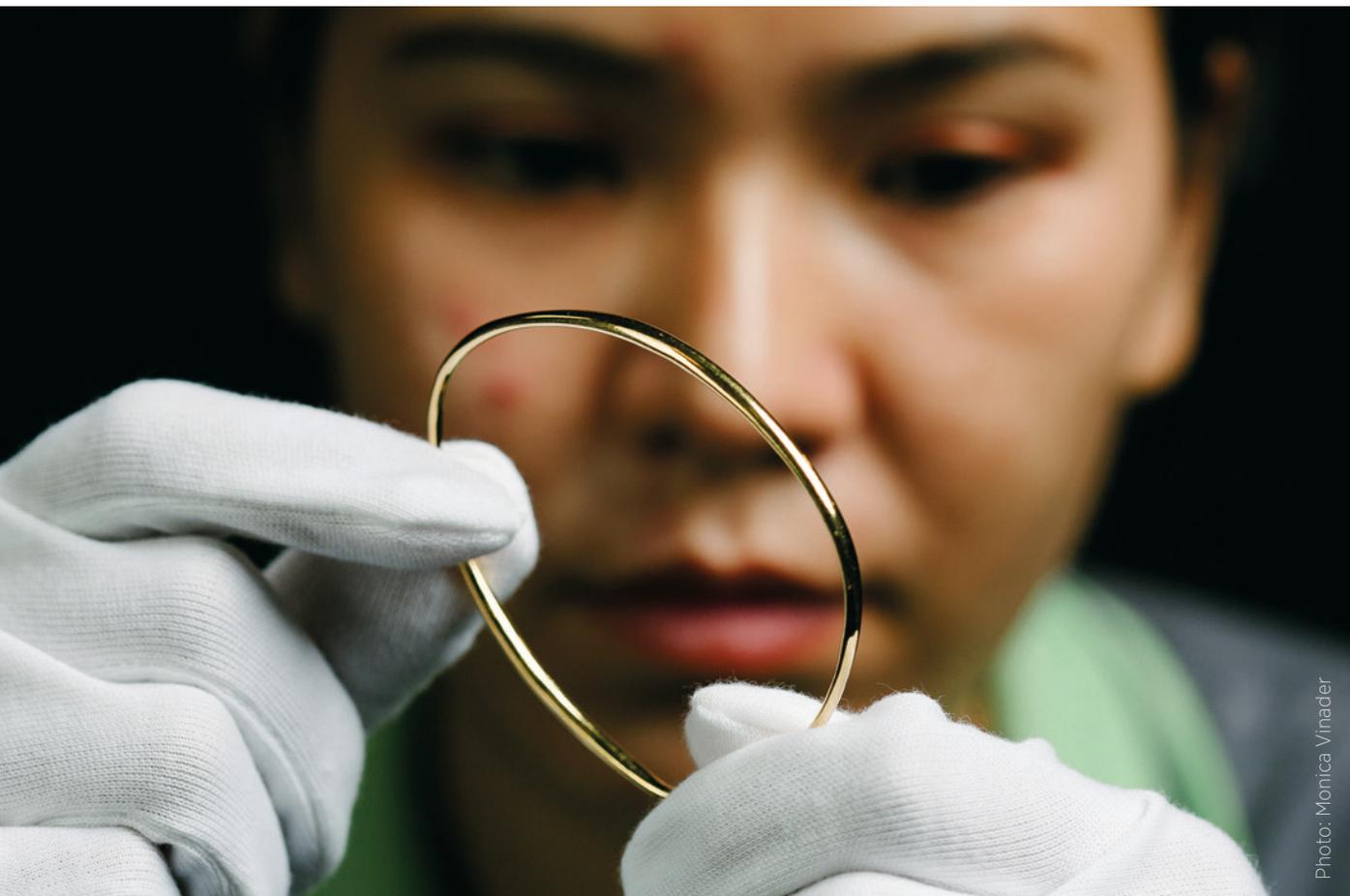


Photo: Monica Vinader



Companies received scores based on their responses to the 31 questions, with each question carrying equal weight. These scores were then totaled for each of the five themes, along with the highest achievable score for reference. Additionally, an overall score was assigned (with a maximum of 78 points), categorizing the company's GRP maturity as Beginner, Improver, Achiever, or Leader. See score ranges in Figure 3.

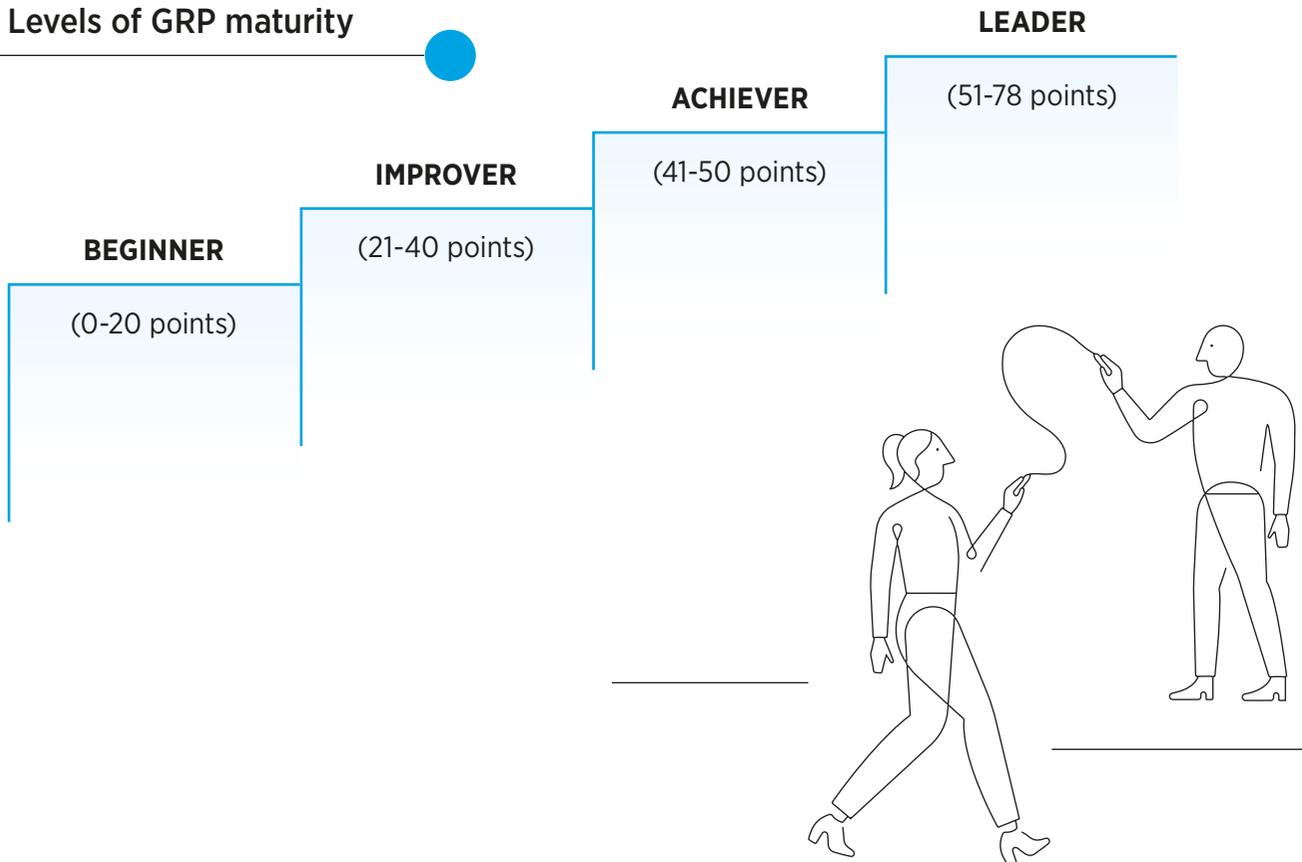
The Pilot officially kicked off in February 2023, with the aim to assess the level of GRP of the WJI 2030 participating member companies to understand their challenges and areas for improvement in the supply chain.

Nine members – all WEPs signatories – participated in this pilot, including Cartier, Dimexon, Gucci, Itaipreziosi, Julie Sandlau Vietnam, Monica Vinader, Rosy Blue, Rubel & Menasché and Swarovski.

The representatives of these companies (the participants) were given three months to coordinate internally, complete the assessment and review their scores generated by the Tool.

During this period, the participants met regularly with the UN Women and WJI 2030 teams to better understand the Tool and to clarify definitions and concepts used to assess their GRP maturity. The Group also discussed the aggregated findings and results to better understand the collective challenges in GRP operationalization and implementation. The participants had the option to reach out to their suppliers to have them complete the GRP assessment as well. One company opted to do so. However, those results are not included in this case study.

Figure 3
Levels of GRP maturity





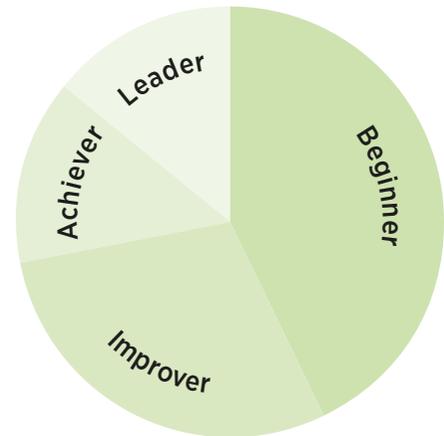
5. Results and key findings¹³

All pilot participants, who shared their results with UN Women, exhibited a good understanding of gender equality. Each respondent had a gender policy or strategy in place either being implemented or in development. All participants were signatories of the WEPs, with the majority publicly reporting their gender equality progress through platforms such as the UN Women's WEPs, EDGE, Equileap, Bloomberg or other avenues.

Though the participants had good understanding of gender equality in their business, GRP proved to be a new area of work for most of them. A large majority of participants lacked any GRP measure. Those that had GRP policies in place lacked systematic tracking of GRP spend with gender-responsive suppliers.

Most of the respondents indicated that they had taken initial steps on gender-responsive procurement or wanted to start this practice by participating in this pilot. Overall, a large majority of participating companies were beginners and improvers.

Figure 4
GRP maturity of pilot participants





From the Assessment and the discussions during the three-month period, common areas of gaps and challenges were identified:

- 1. Companies should prioritize integrating gender-responsive procurement into their core business strategy.** While participants have made strides in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in their corporate strategies and operations, a significant number lacked a dedicated GRP policy or strategy. Few respondents indicated having either a stand-alone GRP policy or embedding GRP within their broader company-wide procurement strategy and policy.
- 2. Although all respondents had a supplier database, not everyone captured sex-disaggregated data on their suppliers.** While data tracking was generally commendable, there is room for improvement by integrating a gender perspective. A large majority of respondents collected supplier data without a gender lens. Given that GRP involves sourcing from diverse companies that are either gender-responsive or women-owned, disaggregating supplier data by sex and WEPs signatory status becomes crucial for measuring and monitoring progress.
- 3. Despite the significance of establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) for monitoring progress and outcomes, none of the participating companies had defined annual objectives for procurement spend with women-owned or gender responsive companies.** Similar trends were observed for broader goals involving diverse suppliers, including SMEs, where only one respondent has set annual targets.





SUPPLIER DATA – SAMPLE KPIs FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE COMPANIES

Collecting supplier data disaggregated by sex and WEPs signatory status is a pivotal step for companies to advancing gender equality throughout their supply chains. It empowers them to make well-informed decisions, monitor progress and demonstrate their commitments to creating a more equitable and inclusive world.

GRP involves two main target groups of suppliers:

- 1. Companies that are to >50 per cent owned, controlled and managed by women.** The standard was developed by ISO in 2021.¹⁴
- 2. Gender-responsive companies.** There is no globally defined set of indicators for gender-responsive companies. However, the **WEPs signatory status could be used as a proxy indicator.** UN Women research indicates that WEPs signatories perform significantly better on gender equality than non-signatory companies.¹⁵





The WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework provides WEPs signatories with a holistic set of 69 indicators that are most likely to advance gender equality across corporate value chains.¹⁶

For the purpose of this case study, a shorter list of proposed indicators that could be used to assess the gender-responsiveness of suppliers include:

Qualitative

The Company....

- is a WEPs signatory (y/n)
- has a gender action plan (y/n)
- reports publicly on gender equality/WEPs (y/n)
- has a gender-responsive supplier code of conduct (y/n)
- has a confidential, anonymous grievance, resolution, reporting and non-retaliation mechanism and procedure to address and respond to incidents of violence and harassment (y/n)
- The company implements GRP measures (y/n)

Quantitative¹⁷

- Women and men employees (%)
- Women and men in senior management positions (%)
- Women and men on the company board (%)
- Women's salary to men's salary (%)
- Newly hired employees – women and men (%)
- Promotions and career opportunities – women and men (%)
- Retention of women and men employees taking parental leave (%)



6. It is time for action

The pilot has illuminated a path paved with eight comprehensive recommendations, not only for the pioneering participants but also for fellow businesses committed to elevating their GRP practices.

These recommendations extend a compelling invitation to all those who aspire to elevate their practices and champion gender equality and women's empowerment.

- 1. Develop stand-alone gender-responsive procurement policies, strategies and action plans with clear annual indicators and targets.** Having a procurement policy that addresses sourcing from diverse suppliers and SMEs is a good starting point. However, companies that take a step further, dedicating their efforts to sourcing from gender-responsive companies, and women-owned enterprises while enacting GRP practices will emerge as powerful agents of change, making a profound impact on gender equality. While there is no globally defined indicator for gender-responsive companies, being a WEPs signatory can be a good proxy indicator.¹⁸
- 2. Ensure effective support in the GRP implementation and monitoring process. This entails establishing a robust, well-resources organizational strategy.** A clear roadmap should delineate key steps essential for achieving objectives and targets along with defining roles, responsibilities and accountable parties for achieving results. An effective communication strategy for internal and external stakeholders is paramount, shedding light on their respective roles and responsibilities.
- 3. Empower employees through GRP training, enlightening them about its business rationale and guiding them towards tangible and concrete steps in reshaping current practices.** While top management support is fundamental to embedding gender equality and women's empowerment into the company's core business strategy, the main challenge lies with the middle management and procurement specialists responsible for the company's purchasing of goods and services. Many businesses struggle to get a full understanding or buy in from middle management on gender equality. Thus, tailoring specialized training for this group could be a catalyst for advancing GRP practices across the entire company. Pairing such training with an accountability mechanism, such as the annual performance review and bonus incentives, could serve to bolster commitment and drive transformative change.
- 4. Collect sex-disaggregated data and report regularly on progress made. Transparency could serve as a linchpin to propel advancement on gender equality and women's empowerment.** Companies that engage both internal and external stakeholders to gather data can better evaluate the status of GRP implementation. Updating the existing supplier database by adding a gender lens and disaggregation marks an impactful initial step. Encouraging and incentivizing suppliers to furnish such data inputs can trigger important ripple effects throughout the supply chain, ultimately fueling the momentum for gender equality and women's empowerment.



- 5. Actively seek out women for procurement roles.** Fostering diversity is poised to cultivate more inclusive procurement practices. This includes appointing women to influential managerial and executive procurement positions, including pivotal roles like the Chief Procurement Officer (CPO).¹⁹
- 6. Embed GRP functions and responsibilities within job descriptions of purchasing roles, starting with the CPO.**²⁰ This entails establishing accountability for GRP results across all managerial levels. For example, embedding key performance indicators on gender equality in performance plans and assessments, from top executives and staff as well as suppliers, contractors and vendors, ensures comprehensive responsibility for GRP success.
- 7. Engage suppliers on gender equality and women's empowerment:**
 - **Identify suppliers:** Implement regular supplier questionnaires to enhance the understanding of their offerings, needs, and values, including gender equality.
 - **Encourage progress:** Motivate suppliers to advance on gender equality standards and uphold accountability to demonstrate your company's genuine values and commitment to GRP.
 - **Establish a code of conduct:** Create a gender-responsive supplier code of conduct and train suppliers for adherence and compliance with its requirements.
 - **Adopt the WEPs:** Encourage suppliers to sign on and embrace the WEPs, publicly pledging to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in their workplace, marketplace and community.
 - **Facilitate business opportunities:** Foster improved transparency and communication to facilitate access for women-owned businesses to valuable business prospects.
 - **Support smaller businesses:** Bolster women-owned businesses' cash flow by implementing payment terms of less than 30 days, along with prompt payments.
- 8. Publish gender-responsive procurement results in annual corporate sustainability reports.** Transparency and accountability are key to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. This entails adding a section on gender equality in the company's annual corporate sustainability report, including the yearly GRP results.

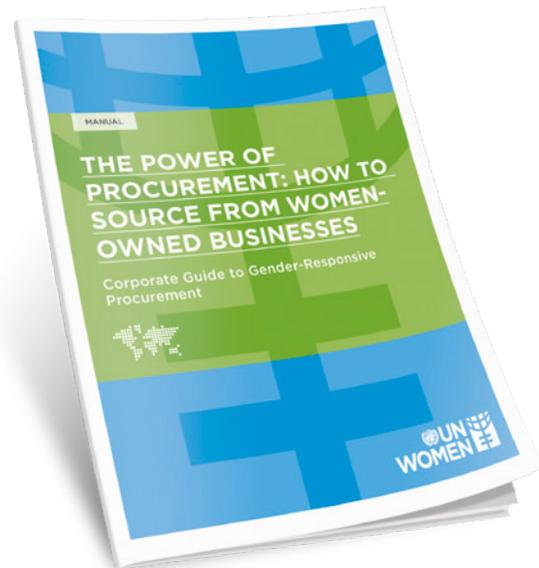


Annex: GRP resources

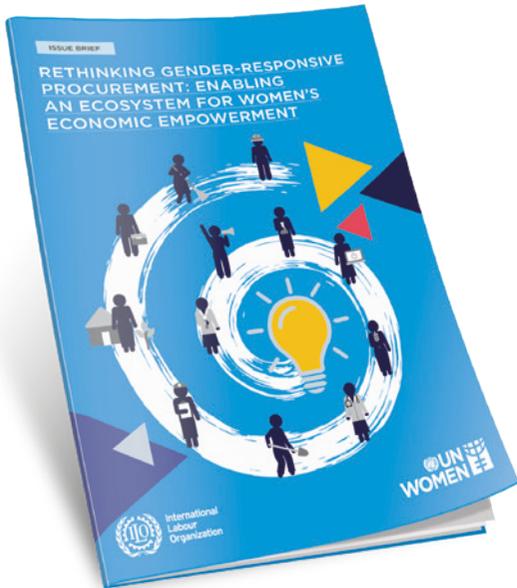
www.weeps.org/resource/weeps-gender-responsive-procurement-assessment-tool



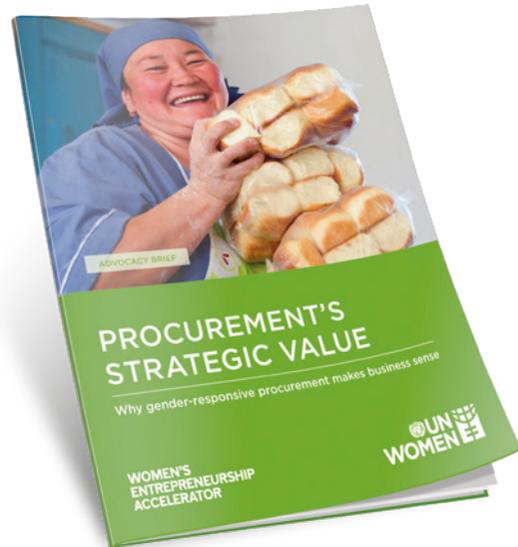
www.weeps.org/resource/gender-responsive-procurement



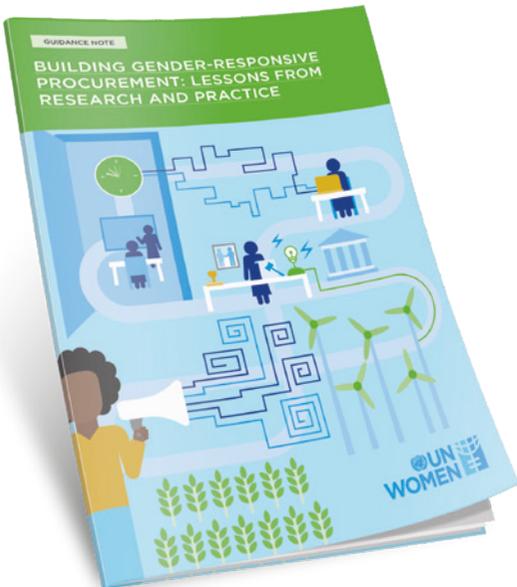
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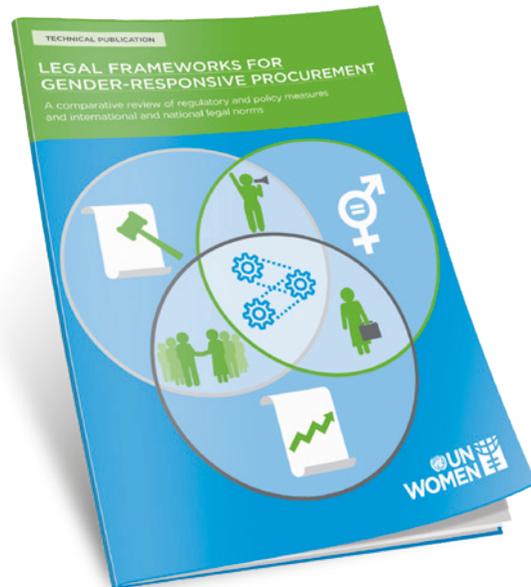
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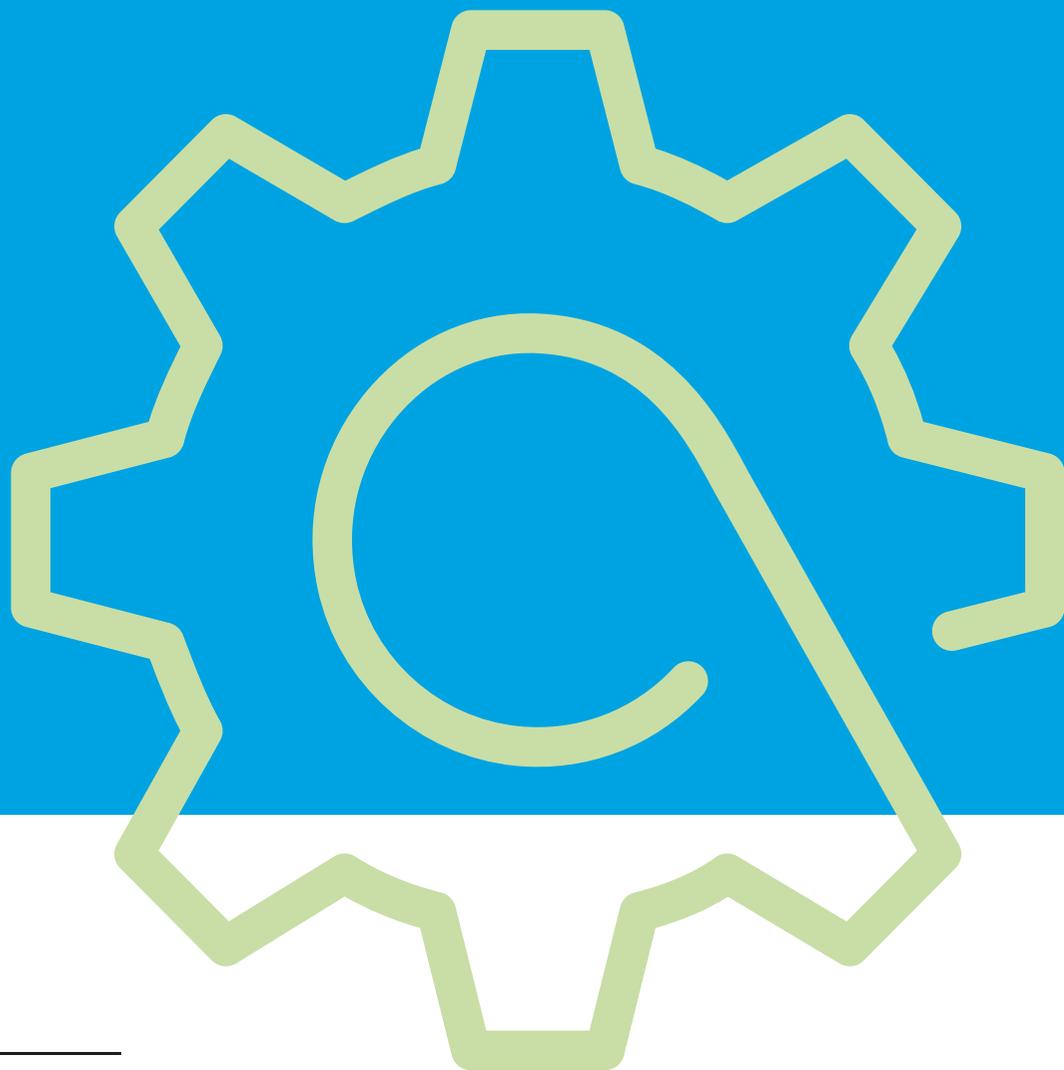
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