



An Australian Government Initiative

Women in STEM Ambassador

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUITY

An implementation guide

Susan Barnes and Isabelle Kingsley



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Graphic designer: Maria Mosquera

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The background features a collection of light gray icons on a darker gray background. These icons include: two gears of different sizes, two hands with fingers pointing towards concentric circles, two large eyes, a key, a profile of a person's head, a spiral notebook, and a document with horizontal lines. The word "Introduction" is centered in the lower half of the image.

Introduction

Underrepresentation of girls, women, non-binary people and other marginalised groups in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) is a broad, complex and long-standing issue. These groups face many barriers to participating in STEM education and careers—from stereotypes and bias to inequitable workplace culture.^{1, 2}

Currently, only 1 in 10 women with a STEM qualification work in a STEM-qualified industry.³ This statistic points to two key issues relating to women in their STEM careers: retention and progression. Retention relates to people staying in their careers, and progression to people advancing in their careers. Organisations that recognise these challenges put in place ways to keep and advance minoritised genders working in STEM. The end goal is a balanced STEM workforce equipped to confront important world issues.

Many organisations tackle retention and progression by implementing gender equity programs, activities and initiatives. Gender 'equity' programs are designed to ensure fairness, compensate for historical and social disadvantages, and level the playing field for minoritised genders. They are different from gender 'equality' programs, which are designed to achieve equal outcomes for women, men and gender-diverse people. There is growing evidence⁴⁻⁶ that the way programs are implemented can impact their success. This guide is designed to help with the process of implementing a gender equity program in STEM organisations.

Why is it important to implement programs well? Simply put, if you are going to invest resources into a program, you want to give it the best chance of success.

Gender is not just for women

Often when talking about equity in STEM, people use the terms 'gender' and 'women' interchangeably. But it's important to separate 'women' and 'gender', for two reasons.

Firstly, only using 'women' leaves non-binary and gender-non-conforming people out of the conversation. They experience discrimination in the workplace and feel excluded when programs are only advertised for women—or, worse, when a program is labelled as 'addressing gender equity' but in reality everyone expects only women to participate in it. Masculine-presenting non-binary people feel particularly excluded in these situations.

Secondly, men also have gender and are impacted by workplace norms. In fact, some programs that aim to increase women's participation actually focus on men. For example, men find it hard to ask for and receive flexible working hours,⁷ which can make it harder for them to share the domestic and care load with their partner.

Gender equity doesn't only benefit the minority gender. It benefits everyone.

The importance of an intersectional approach

The term 'intersectionality' describes how a person's characteristics and identities can intersect (combine and overlap) to create different types of advantage and disadvantage. These characteristics and identities include gender, race, social class, disability, parenthood, and many more. Some characteristics or identities are not visible or not shared with employers. This is okay—the key is recognising that some people face compounding disadvantage even if all sources of that disadvantage are not visible or known.

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw coined the term 'intersectionality' in 1989.⁸ Crenshaw used the term to refer to the double discrimination of racism and sexism faced by Black women (the combined effects of race and sex). The crucial part of intersectionality is that people are wholly experiencing all of their attributes all of the time. They are not, for instance, Black some of the time and a woman at other times. They are always both Black and a woman.

Programs designed to address gender inequity must account for people having different needs and wants based on their other attributes beyond gender. Not all programs will work for all people all of the time. So long as no one group is consistently left out, that is okay. This guide provides tips for going beyond gender in your gender equity program when and where you can.

The workplace gender equity journey – where does your organisation sit?

Achieving gender equity in your organisation is a journey, and every organisation is at a different place in that journey. The Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) presents [six stages of the gender equity journey](#).⁹

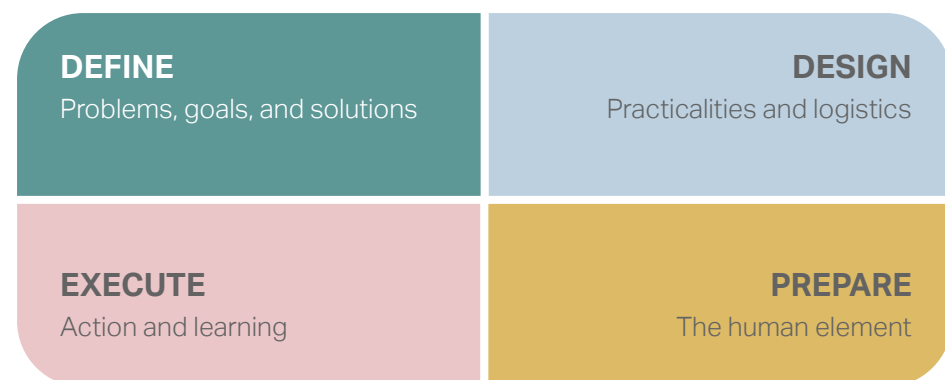
1. **Avoiding**—gender equality issues are not even recognised.
2. **Compliant**—gender equality effort is compliance-driven only.
3. **Programmatic**—gender programs are provided for ad-hoc needs.
4. **Strategic**—gender strategy and actions plans are implemented.
5. **Integrated**—gender equality is internalised in systems.
6. **Sustainable**—gender equality is a business and cultural norm.

Every stage on the journey is valid, and this guide provides something for organisations of any size no matter their stage. If you are reading this guide, it means your organisation is ready to move out of 'Avoiding' and into one of the following stages. We recommend completing the [WGEA diagnosis](#) to determine the stage of your organisation's journey.

About this guide

This guide supports you with specific, practical advice on how to implement gender equity programs within your organisation. While it does not cover how to implement every type of equity and diversity intervention, many of the concepts about program design and evaluation can be applied to non-gender-focused programs.

The guide is organised into four distinct sections, each representing one part of implementation.



Each section contains general advice and guidance for organisations of any size and at any stage in their gender equity journey. The guide is accompanied by a [downloadable and editable \(Microsoft Word\) template](#) that you can complete as you move through the sections. Use it as a working document to plan your program implementation.

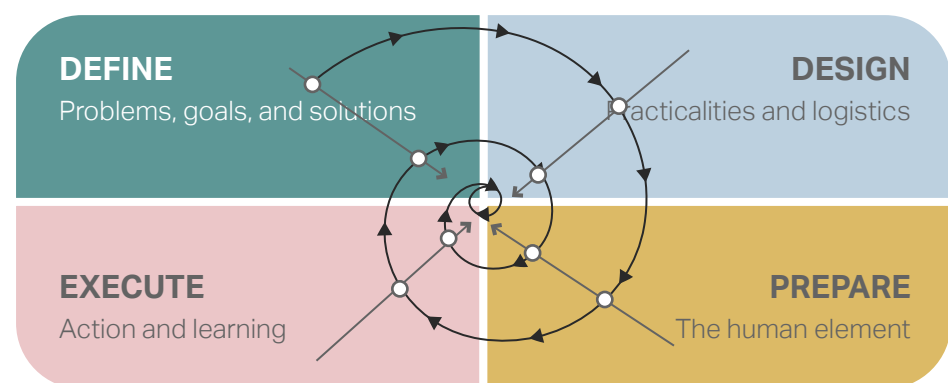
There are also references, glossary, and appendices:

- **References:** List of documents referred to in the text of this guide.
- **Glossary:** Definitions of important words used in this guide.
- **Appendix 1:** A detailed example to help illustrate the content. It's always helpful to have an example to use as a model—see one, do one.
- **Appendices 2–8:** More detail in easy-to-read lists and tables.

Implementation is a cycle, not a line

Information about planning and implementation is often presented as a path that might weave around but never doubles back. This path analogy leaves out all the times you go back and make changes based on new information.

The diagram below illustrates what the implementation process actually looks like.¹⁰ It takes the four sections of this guide and moves a giant spiral through all of them. The spiral represents the 'iterative' process of implementation—this means we go through the same cycle many times to revisit and refine different parts and improve the process each time.



The spiral pattern is deliberate—each time you revisit sections, the changes become smaller but the spiral never actually ends. In the middle is a very tight cycle of ongoing evaluation and refinement. Don't be discouraged by the spiral: it is very normal and a good sign that you are considering new information as it arises.

Icons used in this guide

Four icons appear throughout the guide. The icons let you know that a specific tip or principle applies to the paragraph next to it.



Take note. This icon highlights noteworthy points, specific advice and guidance for different stages of the gender equity journey.



Beware! This icon warns you of common traps that can divert or derail implementation.



Your turn. This icon tells you it's time to stop and apply to your program the information you just read. You can do this within the guide or in the separate [editable template](#) that you can save as a working document to plan your program implementation.



Linkage. This icon indicates sections that work well together or might need to be revisited once you have done another section.

An example

It's always helpful to have an example to use as a model—see one, do one. The example below is of a small start-up company implementing a flexible working arrangements policy. It contains key elements outlined in this guide, which are identified in square brackets.

You can find another example of a large company implementing a gender pay gap analysis and action plan in [Appendix 1](#).

I'm Game

I'm Game is a small STEM start-up company of eight staff that develops computer games. One of the programmers is returning from paternity leave in six weeks and has requested to return part-time to share caring responsibilities with his partner.

Define. I'm Game currently does not have flexible work arrangements for any staff, or a flexible working arrangements policy [the problem]. The founder and CEO calls a meeting with the eight staff to allow everyone to provide input on the idea of flexible work [consultation]. The staff say they would like part-time work, work-from-home options and flexible work hours for any staff who wish to work flexibly [the target].

The developer team manager, Frankie, is assigned to manage the project. They identify two SMART goals for the program, SMART being an acronym for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-specific [the goals].

1. The first goal is that from 1 July 2023 [time-specific ✓], the company will implement flexible working arrangements for all staff across all roles [specific ✓ and measurable ✓] to cater to various caring and domestic responsibilities [relevant ✓].
2. The second goal is that by 1 January 2024 [time-specific ✓], flexible working arrangements will have uptake by 80% of all employees [specific ✓ and measurable ✓].

The founder and CEO agrees that these are achievable goals with the time and resources available [achievable ✓].

Design. Frankie begins working on a flexible working arrangements policy [the program]. They start by specifying the program's details, or 'building blocks':

- **Building block 1:** Identify the types of flexibility options.
- **Building block 2:** Consult with employees to determine which options might work best for the company and the employees, to shortlist which options will be adopted.
- **Building block 3:** Draft the policy and implement it by 1 July 2023.
- **Building block 4:** Encourage employees to take up the available flexible working arrangements, and support them in adjusting to flexible work.
- **Building block 5:** Monitor uptake and evaluate how the policy is impacting team culture, resource planning and scheduling, employee performance and job satisfaction.
- **Building block 6:** Analyse the monitoring data collected to see if the company has reached its goal of 80% uptake, and adjust the policy based on evaluation and employee feedback.

Frankie uses the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) to plan the program evaluation [evaluation]. They produce a list of resources, or 'inputs', needed to make the program happen:

- Frankie's time: ~80 hours (~2 weeks) over 12 months to consult with staff and develop the policy, support employees adopting flexible work, and monitor and evaluate the program.
- Funding: \$3500 to engage extra help to support Frankie, allowing them to dedicate the necessary time to the program.
- Tools: The WGEA [Employee flexibility toolkit](#) for guidance on developing a flexible working arrangements policy, and the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) to plan the program evaluation [resources].

Frankie then produces a risk matrix to identify and assess the risks of flexible working arrangements [risk management]. They identify that two employees who require assistive technologies will not have access to these at home. Frankie raises the need for additional funds to provide the required assistive technologies at home for those two employees [mitigation].

Prepare. At this point, Frankie schedules a consultation with all staff to get feedback and input on the program [consultation]. One employee states, 'This won't work because people will take advantage of the flexible arrangements and lack of supervision to do other things' [pushback]. Frankie listens to the concern and provides evidence of the benefits of flexible work they have found while researching the topic. Another employee, who supports the policy, shares their positive personal experience with flexible working arrangements at a previous employer and appeases the concerned employee [buy-in].

Another employee raises the issue that the 'go-live' date of the policy coincides with a scheduled 5-day in-person training session (9am–5pm) for all staff. They request to shift the policy 'go-live' date. Frankie thanks the employee for bringing this misalignment to their attention and changes the 'go-live' date to 10 July 2023 [compromise].

The founder and CEO raises concern that the policy may introduce too much flexibility at once, which may be challenging to adjust to and manage. They suggest experimenting with a few flexible work options for a short while before locking in the policy permanently [feedback]. Frankie thanks them for the feedback and suggests implementing a 3-month pilot to create opportunities to see how it can work and to review, discuss and decide what flexible working arrangements best suit the company [compromise].

Execute. From 10 July 2023, I'm Game implements a 3-month pilot to trial flexible working arrangements for all staff across all roles. During the pilot, Frankie carefully monitors employee uptake, team culture, resource planning and scheduling, employee performance and job satisfaction. At the end of the pilot, Frankie reports the monitoring and evaluation data and creates opportunities for all staff to discuss, review and refine the flexible working arrangements policy.

The final policy includes part-time work, work-from-home options and flexible hours of work for any staff, and the addition of two features: compressed working weeks and time-in-lieu.

By 1 January 2024, I'm Game surpasses its goal, with 85% of employees accessing flexible working arrangements. In addition, the evaluation shows that most employees are more effective (increased quality and speed of work), collaborate more with teammates, and have greater job satisfaction than before the policy was implemented. However, some employees find flexible working hours challenging to balance work and life. They prefer to work during traditional business hours in the office to separate the two more effectively [evaluation findings]. Frankie publishes the results of the pilot on the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) for others to learn from.

Frankie continues to monitor and evaluate the impacts of the policy. They are making slight refinements to the part-time-work arrangement and are considering adding job-sharing as an additional flexible work arrangement soon [evaluation-improvement cycle].

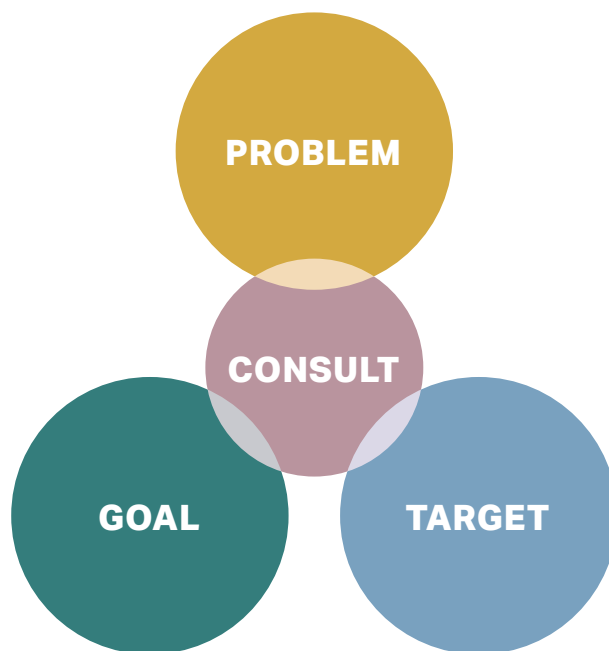


Define



This section prompts you to take a step back and ask questions to develop a working plan for your gender equity program. By the end of this section, you will know the goal of your program, who it is for, and what problem it addresses.

The goal of a program is always linked to the problem and the target. These three elements—problem–target–goal—are interconnected and must align. As you work through this section, return to the other elements to make sure they all align. Consult on what’s needed and what’s workable to inform your problem, target and goal.



Problem: What issue do you want to address?

Identifying what problem your program addresses gives your program a clear purpose and justifies **why** it is needed. It is important to get to the heart of the problem because that allows you to design a tailored solution with a greater chance of success.

The problem that your program addresses will be directly linked to which stage of the gender equity journey you are at (see page **4**). Take the I'm Game example described on page **7**. One of the company's programmers is ready to return from parental leave and has requested to come back part time. The founder and CEO is unsure, and there are no policies in place. In this case, the problem they want to address is a lack of policies for flexible work arrangements.

Sometimes you don't start with a problem but with a proposed solution. For example, the director of your organisation wants to create a mentorship program for women to increase gender equity in your organisation. In this case, it can be trickier to see what the problem is because the solution came first.

Sometimes the problem will only become obvious once you look at the data. The heart of a problem can be difficult to see if you don't have enough data. Can you say with confidence that you know the extent or nature of the issue you want to address?

Example

Take the MediCO example in Appendix 1. They want to address any gender pay gaps, but first they need to find out if and to what extent MediCO has a gender pay gap. They need to start by examining their remuneration data to define the problem.

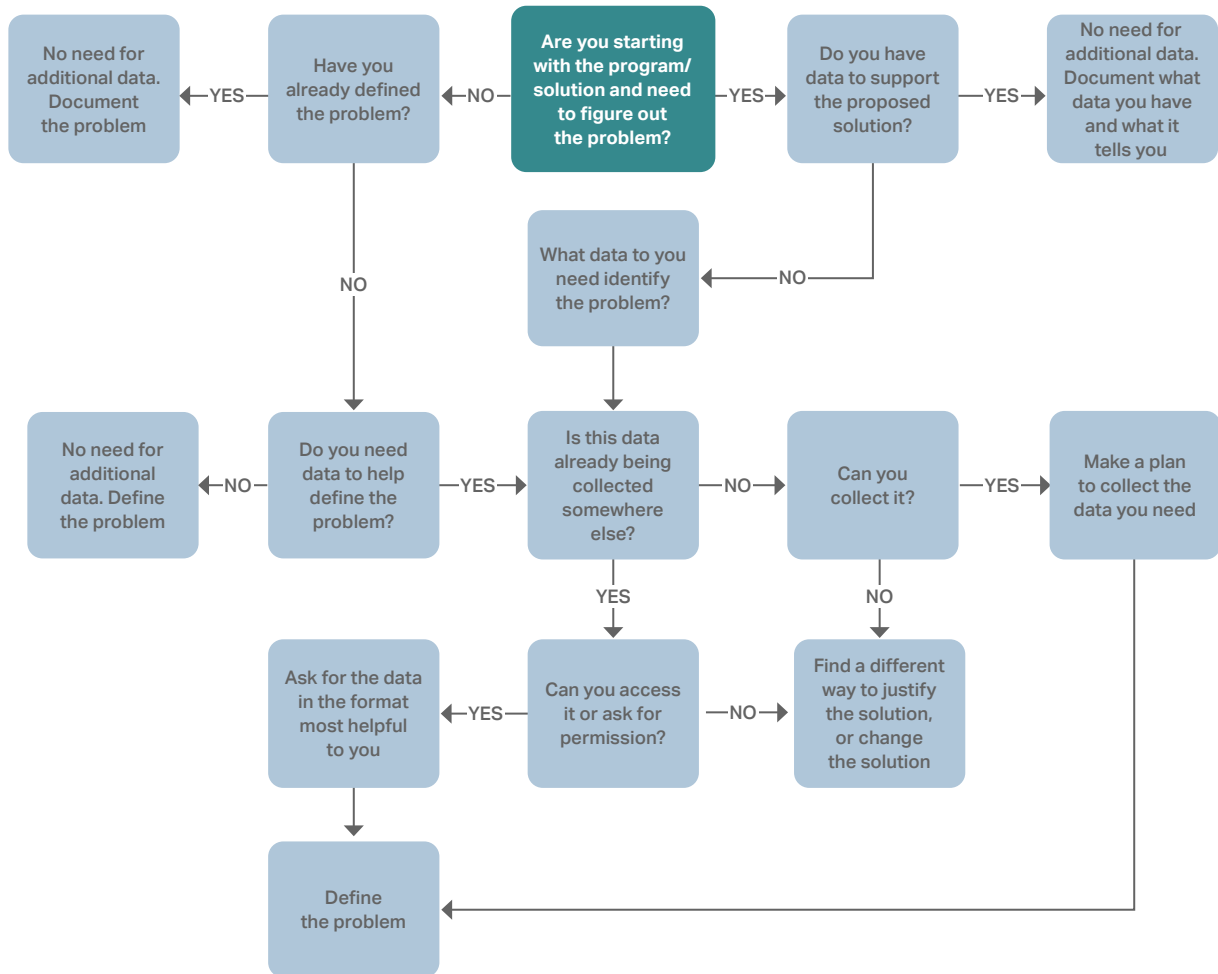


Lack of data can sometimes be used as a tactic to delay action. Think carefully about whether new data is needed, or whether individuals are trying to delay or derail progress. This is a type of 'pushback' described on page **38**;

[Pushback: What resistance are you expecting, and how can you prepare for it?](#)

Use the flow chart below to identify your starting point. Do you know what problem you want to address? Do you have the data you need, or do you need to collect some? [Appendix 2](#) describes different kinds of data that you might need or find helpful.

If you are starting with the solution and need to figure out the problem



Define the problem you want to address, and any data needs, in the table below. You can also complete this in the [editable template](#) and save it as a working document to plan your program implementation.

Aspect	Response
What is the problem?	
What data do you need?	
What data do you need to collect?	

Target: Who is the program for?

Think about the target—who is the program for? It is important to narrow down who is being disadvantaged so the program can be designed specifically for that group.

‘Women’ as a target group might be overly restrictive and leave out those who aren’t women, or it might be overly broad and need to be narrowed further. If these ideas are new for you, refer to ‘Gender is not just for women’ on page 2.

In the I’m Game example, the target group for the flexible working arrangements policy is any staff who wish to work flexibly. In the MediCO example, the target group for the gender pay gap analysis and action plan is all staff.

Use the checklist below to think about who makes up the group to be targeted by your program. Be as specific as possible. Explain why they are the targets. You can also complete this in the [editable template](#).

Group	Why are they targeted?
<input type="checkbox"/> All staff	
<input type="checkbox"/> All marginalised genders	
<input type="checkbox"/> Only women	
<input type="checkbox"/> Only men	
<input type="checkbox"/> Trans people	
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary or gender non-conforming people	
<input type="checkbox"/> People who can get pregnant	
<input type="checkbox"/> People who are lactating	
<input type="checkbox"/> People who are carers	
<input type="checkbox"/> People who wish to work flexibly	
<input type="checkbox"/> [option to input other group]	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

Think about why you decided on this group as the target. Was it the result of data collection, or staff requests? Is it a directive from management? Perhaps it is value-driven. Sorting this out can inform who the program should be designed for.



Sometimes the target group is hazy at first. The next two sections on consultation and goal-setting can help clarify the target group.

Goal: What change do you want to create?

The goal of your gender equity program is a description of the change that you want to create. Goals tend to be vague and lofty, such as 'Support women to advance into leadership'. Define SMART goals:

Specific: Use specific language to describe what you want to achieve.

Measurable: Define what will change and by how much.

Achievable: Be realistic about what you can achieve with the time and resources available.

Relevant: Align the program's goals to the problem it addresses.

Time-specific: State the timeframe for the changes to happen.

Example

Take the example of the I'm Game company used in the 'Problem' section above. The problem in that example is a lack of policies for flexible working hours.

In the I'm Game case, the first goal is that from 1 July 2023 [time-specific ✓], the company will implement flexible working arrangements for all staff across all roles [specific ✓ and measurable ✓] to cater to various caring and domestic responsibilities [relevant ✓].

The second goal is that by 1 January 2024 [time-specific ✓], flexible working arrangements will have uptake by 80% of all employees [specific ✓ and measurable ✓]. The founder and CEO agrees that these are achievable goals with the time and resources available [achievable ✓].

By defining SMART goals, you are more likely to achieve them and be able to demonstrate that achievement to others.



Developing SMART goals can show you where you might need some more information or make some key decisions. What is your timeline? Does it apply to all departments, or only one? Go back to the start of the 'Define' section and clarify the details.



Define your SMART goals. You can complete this in the table below or in the [editable template](#).

Write your goal here:	
Explain how the goal is:	
Specific	
Measurable	
Achievable	
Relevant	
Time-specific	

Consult: What's needed, what's workable?

It is vital that companies and management do not decide what is best for people without the people's input. That's where consultation comes in. Consultation simply means asking the people who will be affected what they want, asking what they think of a proposed idea, and listening to their answers.

Before you start consulting, it's a good idea to figure out what information you really want to know. You might want to consult on:

1. whether the problem has been defined completely or accurately
2. who should be eligible or invited to participate
3. the program goals
4. the logistics of the program
5. suggested solutions to address the problem.



Consultation can help reduce resistance to the program. Resistance is covered in the 'Pushback' section of this guide on page **38**.



Consultation is an exercise in trust. You can damage trust by consulting people and then ignoring their feedback—this sends the message that the company is only interested in the *appearance* of gender equity, and not in improving the lives of its staff.



Identify who you want to consult and what information you want from them. You can complete this in the table below or in the [editable template](#). Use [Appendix 3](#) to help you identify who to consult and what type of information they can provide.

Group	What do you want to consult on?
People who will benefit from the gender equity program	
Management who need to approve the program	
Management who need to integrate the program into daily operations	
Technical staff who need to be involved in implementing the program	

What information do you need and who will you ask?

Aspect	Response
What information do you need?	
What group can provide it?	
Who specifically will you ask?	
What special considerations should you keep in mind for this group?	
What tools will you need in order to ask them?	
Do you need approval to ask them?	
How will you use the information they give you?	

CO-DESIGN

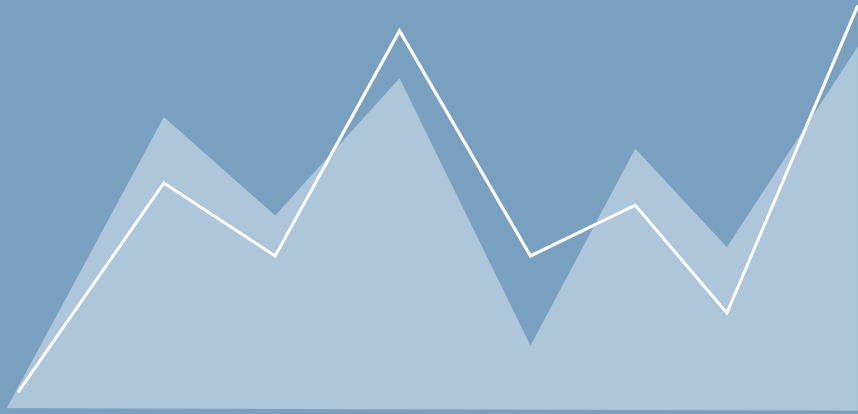
Co-design is a process that involves the target group in the design of the program by working with them to explore the problem and develop a solution. It goes beyond consultation. It starts with aspirations and shared values and has three clear phases that occur in a cycle:

- Understanding and developing the issue
- Developing solutions
- Testing those ideas

Also known as creative design, co-creation, participatory design and cooperative design, co-design has five underlying principles:

- Inclusivity
- Respect
- Participation
- Iteration
- Focus on outcomes

People involved in co-design should be compensated for their time and expertise, and should be able to opt out at any time.



Design



This section helps you design the solution, practicalities and logistics to achieve the goal you set in the 'Define' section. By the end of this section, you will have a working plan for what your program will involve and what you need to make it happen.

Choose: Select a program type

Programs can generally be divided into two types:

1. **Support solutions** are programs that help the target group so they can have the same outcomes as their peers. For example, reducing or eliminating like-for-like gender pay gaps by allocating a budget to adjust salaries during the pay review process is a support solution.
2. **Structural solutions** are programs that change the system to reduce or remove the barriers to the target group naturally having the same outcomes as their peers. For example, reducing and eliminating bias from your performance ratings and management system is a structural solution to address an organisation-wide gender pay gap.

Both types of programs are valid. The type you choose will depend on the problem you are trying to solve, and what stage of the gender equity journey your organisation is at (as described on page 4).

You don't have to come up with a program from scratch. [Appendix 2](#) has program suggestions (and links to resources) for nine common gender equity problems that organisations face. Use Appendix 2 to help you choose a program for your problem.



Sometimes programs appear to be effective because they are common. It's a mistake to assume that a program must be effective because it has been running for a long time or is being used by many organisations. Do some research and see if there is evidence that the approach works before choosing it for your organisation. You can find gender equity program evaluations on the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) by searching the evaluation repository.



The program you choose is an important decision and can be a key discussion point in consultation. Make sure this section is linked with your consultation plan.



The type of solution you choose may depend on what stage of the gender equity journey your organisation is at (described on page 4). Organisations in the early stages are more likely to choose support solutions, while those in the later stages are more likely to choose structural solutions. Shifting from a support solution to a structural solution is an important part of progressing to a new stage of the gender equity journey.



Your turn. Identify the program you are choosing to address the problem. You can complete this in the table below or in the [editable template](#). Use [Appendix 2](#) to help you select a program.

Aspect	Response
What type of solution have you decided on?	
Is this a support solution or a structural solution?	
Is this appropriate for the stage of the gender equity journey your organisation is on?	

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

When selecting a program type, it is important to manage expectations: expectations of what can be done, how quickly, with what results. This includes managing your own expectations, those of your team, those of your management, and those of other stakeholders.

Part of managing expectations is being realistic. Defining SMART goals and consultation will help.

Specify: The building blocks of the program

Once you have selected your program, it needs to be tailored to your organisation by specifying the details. What will change? Who will be involved in making the program happen? Who will be affected? What is the timeline? What resources do you need?

Specifying the details in a task list helps you create the building blocks of your program. It should list all the pieces you need to put in place to make the program happen.

EXAMPLE

Take the MediCO example in [Appendix 1](#). The company wants to do a gender pay gap analysis and formulate an action plan [solution]. They specify the program details, or 'building blocks', as:

- **Building block 1:** Present to the CEO and board to get a leadership commitment to examining and addressing the gender pay gap.
- **Building block 2:** Access the remuneration database from the past five years via the IT department.
- **Building block 3:** Conduct a gender pay gap analysis to identify any gaps and the extent of any gaps (dollar value).
- **Building block 4:** Conduct an in-depth analysis of the causes of any gaps, using relevant HR documentation.
- **Building block 5:** Present the analysis findings to CEO, board and departmental managers and consult on solutions to address the causes of any gaps.
- **Building block 6:** Create and implement an action plan to address the causes of the gender pay gap.
- **Building block 7:** Monitor and evaluate the impacts of the action plan on addressing the gender pay gap by 1 September 2024.



Identify the building blocks of your program in a task list. Be specific about the tasks and any conditions, such as timelines. You can complete this in the table below or in the [editable template](#).

Building block	Conditions?

Evaluation: Designing for continual improvement

Understanding whether your gender equity program has been successful is really important in order to:

- measure project outcomes
- use resources efficiently
- attract and keep funding and partners
- improve and scale up
- generate useful data
- promote best practice and collaboration.

Measuring the outcomes of a program is called evaluation. Evaluation is not something that happens at the end of the program—it is an integral part and is embedded within the program from the very beginning.

Use the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) to plan and evaluate your program concurrently; it is a user-friendly, how-to resource that breaks evaluation down into a simple 5-step process and embeds it into the planning of a program. You can click and select from the options to build your program and its evaluation easily and quickly. This will save you time and effort in the long run.



Evaluation can seem like a lot of effort, especially when you are busy designing the program itself. It can be tempting to think that evaluation is not needed or can be done after the fact. You may think it's more important to get the program set up first. This thinking is a trick. Evaluation is not something that happens at the end of the program—it is an integral part and is embedded within the program from the very beginning. Your evaluation is directly tied to your program solution, target and goals because its purpose is to measure what works or does not work, how, for whom and why.



Identify how you have addressed evaluation. You can complete this below or in the [editable template](#).

Use the Australian Government's Women in STEM Ambassador suite of free, easy-to-use evaluation resources to help you evaluate your program using a quick and simple 5-step process:

- Read the evaluation guide: [Evaluating STEM equity programs: A guide to effective program evaluation](#).
- Use the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) to plan and publish your evaluation.
- Search the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) database of evaluated programs to learn from others' evaluations.
- Check out [examples of evaluated programs](#) that use the 5-step process.
- Describe how you have planned your program's evaluation.

Intersectionality: Have you considered intersecting identities?

As mentioned in 'The importance of an intersectional approach' on page 3, intersectionality is the idea that every person has a mixture of characteristics, including gender, race, class, age, disability, parenthood and other characteristics, that can combine, or intersect, to create an identity that is disadvantaged on multiple fronts.

There are resources to help you bring an intersectional approach to your gender equity program. Take a look at the resources by [UN Women Australia](#), [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) and [Science in Australia Gender Equity Ltd](#).



Complete the 3-step process to help you consider intersecting disadvantage that people in your program's target group face. You can complete this below or in the [editable template](#).

STEP 1

Return to thinking about your *Target: who is the program for?* from the Design stage. What other characteristics might some of your target group have? Remember that not all characteristics are visible or disclosed (not all characteristics are or should be disclosed to an employer). Some common marginalised characteristics are:

- Parents or carers responsibilities, including single-parent families
- Disability
- Neurodiversity
- Race, including being an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or having another Indigenous identity
- Religion, including the way a person prays or the clothes they wear
- Sexuality
- Age
- Mobility
- Socio-economic status, or class
- Regional, rural or remote living
- Body size and shape
- English as a second or other language or dialect
- Access to technology, including high-speed internet
- Access to financial services, such as credit cards, bank accounts and loans

STEP 2

Think about what needs and interests your group may have other than gender, and how you might cater for those needs.

Characteristic	Need

STEP 3

Think about what needs people experiencing compounding disadvantage might have, recognising that some people face disadvantage even if all sources of that are not visible.

Compounding disadvantage	Need

ACCOUNT FOR DIFFERENT NEEDS AND WANTS

Programs that are designed to help marginalised groups must account for different needs and wants based on their other characteristics, remembering that these may not be visible or disclosed. Not all programs will work for all people all of the time. So long as no one group is consistently left out, that is okay.



For small organisations, taking an intersectional approach can differentiate you from larger organisations and help you attract talented people.



Sometimes other marginalisation can be difficult to ascertain. If you are finding it difficult to identify the intersecting characteristics of your program's target group, you can return to the 'Consult: What does the target audience want?' section (in 'Define') on page **16**. Remember to be respectful and check you are using the most [up-to-date terms and phrase](#).

Aligning: Integrate the program with a larger strategy or accreditation body

Organisations that are further along the gender equity journey (see page 4) may have developed a gender equity strategy or sought accreditation from an official body. If your organisation has a gender equity strategy or is working towards or holds accreditation, this is a reminder to link up with the relevant people and share your ideas.



Workplace gender equity strategies are for every organisation of any size. They don't have to be complicated, or expensive, to adopt.



To help you align your program to your organisation's existing strategy or accreditation, complete the checklist below or in the [editable template](#).

A. Does your organisation:

- have a gender equity strategy?
 - Yes → Go to section B
 - No → Encourage your organisation to develop one using the WGEA [Gender Equality Strategy Guide](#).
- hold or is it working towards gender equity accreditation?
 - Yes → Go to section B
 - No → If appropriate, encourage your organisation to consider accreditation from [Science in Australia Gender Equity \(SAGE\) \(Athena Swan Award\)](#) or [Workplace Gender Equality Agency \(WGEA\) \(Employer of Choice for Gender Equality\)](#).

B. Link up with the relevant team. Do they have:

- resources—flyers, mailing lists?
- data they have already collected?
- templates or other resources to help ease the workload?
- experience in navigating management?
- experience in handling pushback?
- funding?

Resources: What skills, tools, equipment, personnel will you need?

By this stage you should have specified many of the program details. Now, think about all the resources, or inputs, you will need to put the plan into action. The things required depend entirely on your program and the type and size of your organisation. Typically, resources include:

- skills and knowledge
- equipment, space and/or software
- people
- funding.

Any gender equity program will need resources to execute. Financial resources are important. Organisations spend money on things that are important to them, and when a program does not get funding support, it sends the message that the program is not important. Human resources are also essential to execute: people's existing priorities and responsibilities must be considered when they are assigned to support the program.

Of course, there are business realities to consider and no budget is infinite. Two important things result when you secure the appropriate funds and dedicate resources to complete the program:

- It helps reduce resentment by giving staff dedicated time instead of forcing them to fit the work around their usual tasks.
- It communicates that this is a matter the organisation takes seriously and is committed to, and that it is leading from the front.

EXAMPLE

In the I'm Game example, where the company is implementing a flexible working arrangements policy, the resources include:

- team manager's time: ~80 hours (~2 weeks) over 12 months to consult with staff and develop the policy, support employees adopting flexible work, and monitor and evaluate the program
- funding: \$3500 to engage extra help to support the manager, allowing them to dedicate the necessary time to the program
- tools: The WGEA's [Employee flexibility toolkit](#) for guidance on developing the flexible working arrangements policy, and the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) to plan the program evaluation.



Secure the necessary financial resources for your program. Create a budget to show your leaders what financial resources the program needs to succeed.



List the resources you will need in the table below or in the [editable template](#). Use [Appendix 4](#) to help you. Keep adding to this list as the program implementation progresses.

Skills	Equipment	Personnel	Funding



You might discover new people whom you need to consult at this stage. Return to 'Consult: What's needed, what's workable?' on page **16** for a reminder of consultation and using information in program design.

What could go wrong: Thinking about risk

Workplace gender equity programs carry risk in the same way that change of any kind in an organisation carries risk. For example, there is the risk of the program not working, the organisation being too disrupted, or staff objection derailing the program. Now that you have a detailed design in place, think about and prepare for what might not go according to the plan.

EXAMPLE

In the I'm Game example, thinking about the risks of implementing a flexible working arrangements policy identified that two employees who require assistive technologies would not have access to these at home. To mitigate (reduce) this risk, additional funds are requested to provide the required assistive technologies at home for these two employees.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Despite the best intentions, sometimes programs have consequences that you do not see coming. Unintended consequences are outcomes that you did not plan or expect. Although uncomfortable, they are a normal part of program implementation. However, it's a good idea to think ahead to try to avoid them and to plan for how you will handle them.

Expect the unexpected by thinking about unintended consequences. There are two main types:

Design-related. Some unintended consequences are related to the design of the program, such as risks related to equity, inclusion and intersectionality. For example, the design of a gender pay gap analysis at an organisation-wide level might miss important 'like-for-like' gender pay gaps, result in incorrect conclusions and lead to an ineffective action plan.

Logistics-related. Other unintended consequences relate to logistics, such as risks related to the program 'bumping up against' the everyday work of the organisation—for example, your organisation has flexible working hours but your key clients work traditional hours between 9am and 6pm.

The key to managing unintended consequences lies in (1) identifying potential risks, (2) identifying what you can do to reduce those risks, and (3) planning what you will do if one of the risks happens (solution).



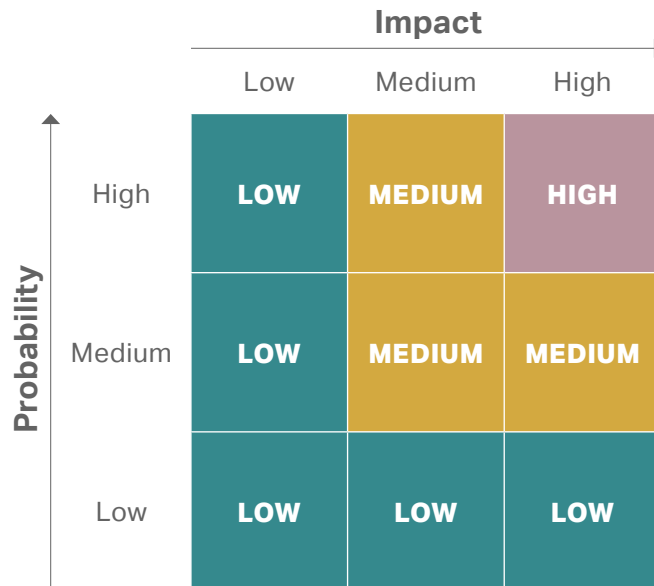
Be careful of getting bogged down in identifying risks rather than solutions. Rather than being overtaken by negativity doing this step, focus on what can be done to reduce the risk and what you will do if the risk happens.



Sometimes risks are not known until much later in the process. You will need to keep returning to this section and adding risks as you work through the next sections.

A common way to think about risk in organisations is by using a risk matrix. This ranks risks by how likely they are to happen, and what the consequence will be if they do happen. Not all risks need to be accounted for, and a risk matrix can help you make the choice on where to spend your time and resources.

The figure below is a risk matrix that will help you work out if a risk is acceptable or not.

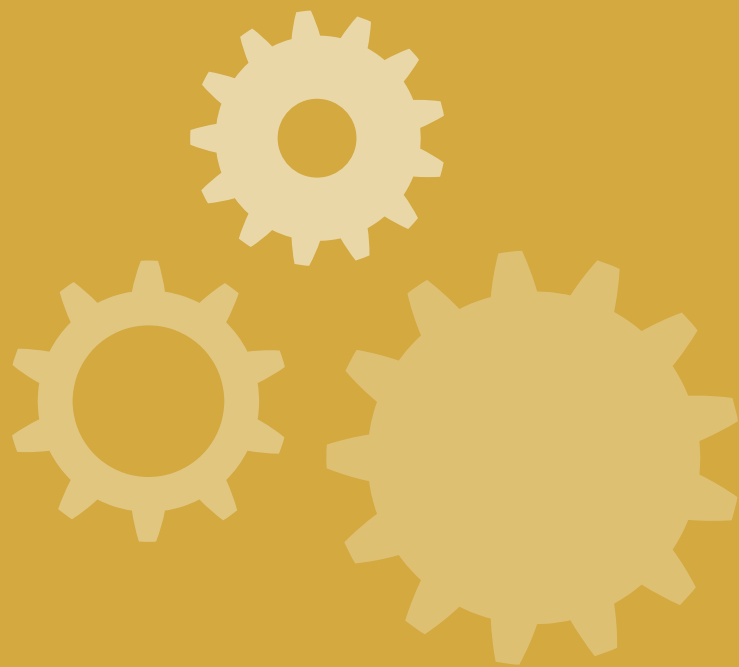


Use the risk matrix above to fill out the table below, or in the [editable template](#). An action that is done to reduce a risk to an acceptable level is called a 'mitigation'. Assess the risk before and after the mitigation is applied. If the mitigation has a high cost in time or resources, you can use the table to prioritise it.

Risk description	Risk before mitigation	Mitigation	Risk after mitigation	Solution if risk happens



Sometimes you can be so afraid of making a mistake that you think it's better to do nothing than do something and get it wrong. But nothing will change if you keep thinking this way. It's better to dive in, do some research and prepare yourself with good responses when you do make the inevitable mistake. Remember: it's not the mistake that matters—it's how you respond to it that really counts. See [Appendix 5](#) for more information.



Prepare



The previous sections focused on the what ('Define') and the how ('Design') of your program implementation. This section focuses on who will be involved in the program implementation and how. By the end of this section, you will have worked out who needs to be involved, what roles they will play, what pushback you might get, and how to get people on board with the program implementation.

Buy-in: What support does the program need, and from whom?

Program implementation often requires support from many different people across a range of roles. Getting this buy-in requires patience, persistence and knowledge of your audience.

Some great ways to get buy-in are:

- making sure that people understand **why** the program is needed (the problem–target–goal from the [Define section](#))
- crafting different messages for different audiences
- reframing the potential benefits of the program for the organisation and/or target group
- addressing the 'What's in it for me?' question—how the program will affect/benefit people
- making sure that people understand their role in the program implementation and feel supported in that role
- having one-on-one conversations.

Integrate: How will this program interact with existing business processes?

Your gender equity program will likely change the way some things are done in your organisation. Make sure that other parts of the organisation know about and have an opportunity to manage those changes. Clear communication about how the program interacts with existing business will help your program have a smooth implementation.

One way to understand how the program will interact with existing business is to map out the changes that will happen, step by step. Each of these changes will touch another part of the organisation in some way.

EXAMPLE

In the MediCO example, the gender pay gap action plan focuses on reducing or eliminating like-for-like gender pay gaps by allocating a budget to adjust salaries during the pay review process; this support solution interacts with existing processes in the Human Resources and Finance departments, but only for a while until the salaries are adjusted. The action plan also focuses on reducing and eliminating bias from the performance ratings and management system; this structural solution interacts with existing processes of people managers who conduct employee performance ratings and Human Resources people who manage the system.



Some gender equity programs are more disruptive than others, often by design. Structural solutions—those that work to change the system—are normally deliberately trying to disrupt existing business processes. These changes can have a big effect and need to be managed carefully. Support solutions—those that help the target group achieve the same outcomes as their peers—may be less disruptive. They are more likely to ‘add on’ to existing ways of working and may require less adjustment, but they still involve change that needs to be managed.



Identify how your program interacts with other parts of the organisation and how to manage the changes. You can complete this in the table below or in the [editable template](#).

What will change?	Who is affected?	What is affected and how?	What is needed to manage the change?

This section links closely to pushback. Sometimes people will be resistant to the gender equity program even though you know they believe in the goal. It could be that they feel the amount or speed of change is too much, or that they feel they will be negatively affected by the change—for example, by having to do extra work. See the 'Pushback' section on page **38** for tips on how to manage this.

Managing up: Getting the boss on board

In some cases, you may need to convince management of the merits of the program. Management is different for every organisation. In larger organisations it might be someone from the C-suite or the board; in smaller organisations it might be the director, the small business owner or your co-owner. In some cases, it might be you.

Managing up normally takes time and many conversations. You might find yourself answering one set of questions only to be faced with a new, entirely different set of questions from another leader. Allow plenty of time for this in your planning, and be patient.

Management are likely to want certain types of information and reassurance. [Appendix 6](#) provides tips on getting the boss on board. It contains questions managers might ask, along with the different places you might find information to respond.

EXAMPLE

In the MediCO example, the CEO insists that the company does not have a gender pay gap. They believe that the program would be a waste of time and resources and would raise suspicion among employees. The leader of the program implementation explains how pay equity aligns with board and stakeholder expectations and ensures MediCO meets legal obligations. One of the board members who support the idea emphasises the value of pay equity to the organisation’s reputation and to its ability to attract high-quality employees. The CEO is convinced and agrees to commit the necessary resources to investigate the gender pay gap and address any gaps.



Identify who you need to manage up to and how you will answer questions from management. You can complete this below or in the [editable template](#).

Who do you need to manage up to?

- My boss
- Someone else’s boss
- CEO
- Board
- Other _____

How will you answer these questions from management? Use [Appendix 6](#) to help you.

Question	Your response
Why should we do this?	
Is this the 'right' solution?	
Is this a good use of our resources?	
What could go wrong?	
What will people think (internal)?	
What will people think (external)?	

Pushback: What resistance are you expecting, and how can you prepare for it?

Workplace gender equity programs are, by definition, a change to the status quo. Some people will be eager for the change and welcome the program that helps it along. Other people will resist, and engage in what is sometimes called 'pushback' (or 'resistance' or 'backlash'). The aim of pushback is to reduce or change the program or stop it from going ahead.

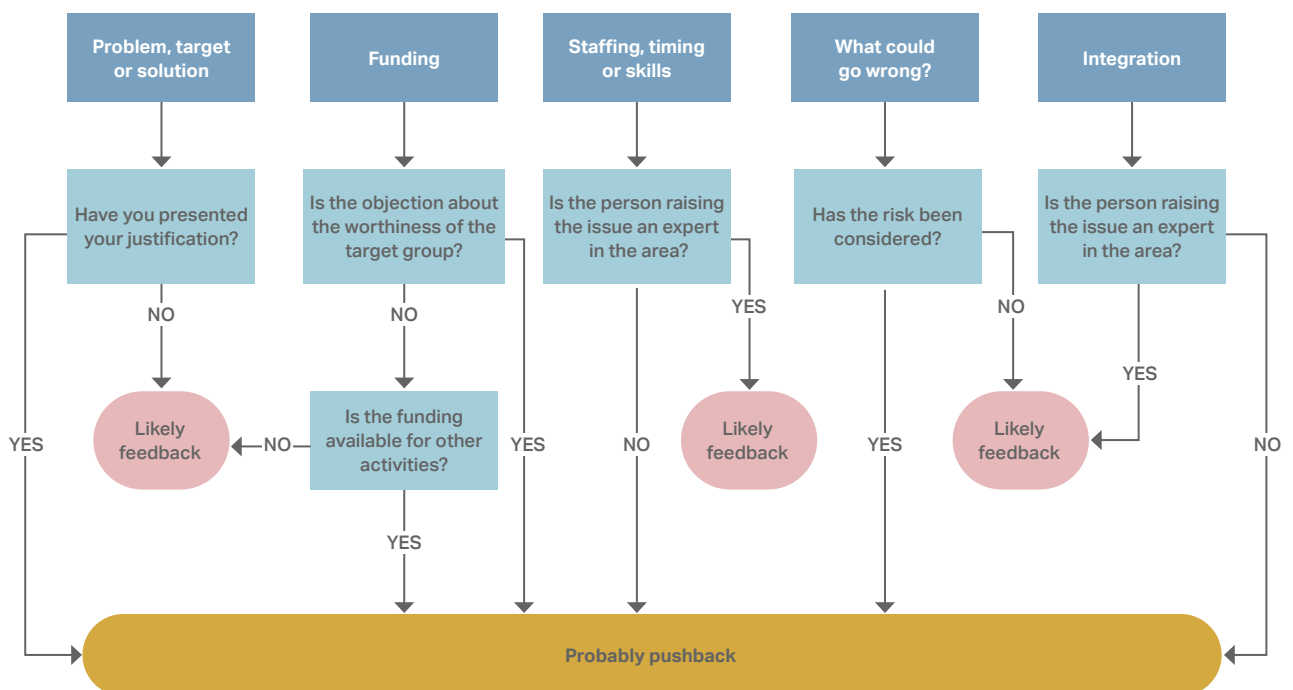
It's important to note that feedback is different from pushback. Feedback is a good thing as it helps us refine and improve programs and take a wide range of perspectives into account. Pushback, on the other hand, is done to resist change.

EXAMPLE

Pushback. 'We don't have a gender pay gap.' 'This won't work because people will take advantage of the flexible arrangements and lack of supervision to do other things.'

Feedback. 'We should extend the timeframe to close the gender pay gap to account for budgetary constraints.' 'We should experiment with a few flexible working arrangements to avoid introducing too much flexibility at once, which may be challenging to adjust to and manage.'

Is it pushback or feedback? The decision tree below will help you see if you are experiencing pushback or genuine feedback.





You can complete this below or in the [editable template](#).

Write the questions or statements that you are hearing, or that you think you will hear. Decide if they are pushback or feedback using the decision tree above, then formulate a response. [Appendix 7](#) has examples of the statements or questions you might hear, how to identify each type of pushback, what it means, and some suggested talking points to respond.

Question / statement	From whom?	Pushback or feedback?	Possible response

Think about other programs your organisation has introduced that were not about gender equity. Did they have the same level of pushback? If not, this may be a sign that the pushback on this program is about objections to *gender equity* specifically.



The fact that a gender equity program exists acknowledges that the current system is unfair or biased. The system is set up so that some people have an advantage and find it easier than others to enter and advance in a STEM career. Gender equity programs try to shift this imbalance. To shift the imbalance, the program must disrupt the status quo. That disruption means that some people will no longer enjoy the advantages they had under the biased system. People who have benefited from the biased system may be upset at losing their advantages and claim that loss as discrimination. However, removing an advantage granted by a biased system is not the same as creating a disadvantage, and is not discrimination.



You will never be able to convince everyone. It's important to know that you can move forward with your program without everyone on board. You need buy-in from the people who play key roles in implementing the program, but remember that you do not have to convince everyone to keep going.



Look after yourself—seek allyship in the face of pushback. In some cases, people will say unkind and hurtful things to those trying to implement gender equity programs. Recruit early adopters and supporters of the change to support you through the process.

Compromise: Navigating conflicting demands

Most programs need input and design advice from different people or parts of the business. These people may have conflicting demands. In the face of such conflicts, you will have to compromise by changing some building blocks of the program design.

Compromise can be good: it can reduce or remove resistance and barriers to help move the program forward. However, compromise is never value neutral. What gets prioritised in compromise reflects the company's values.



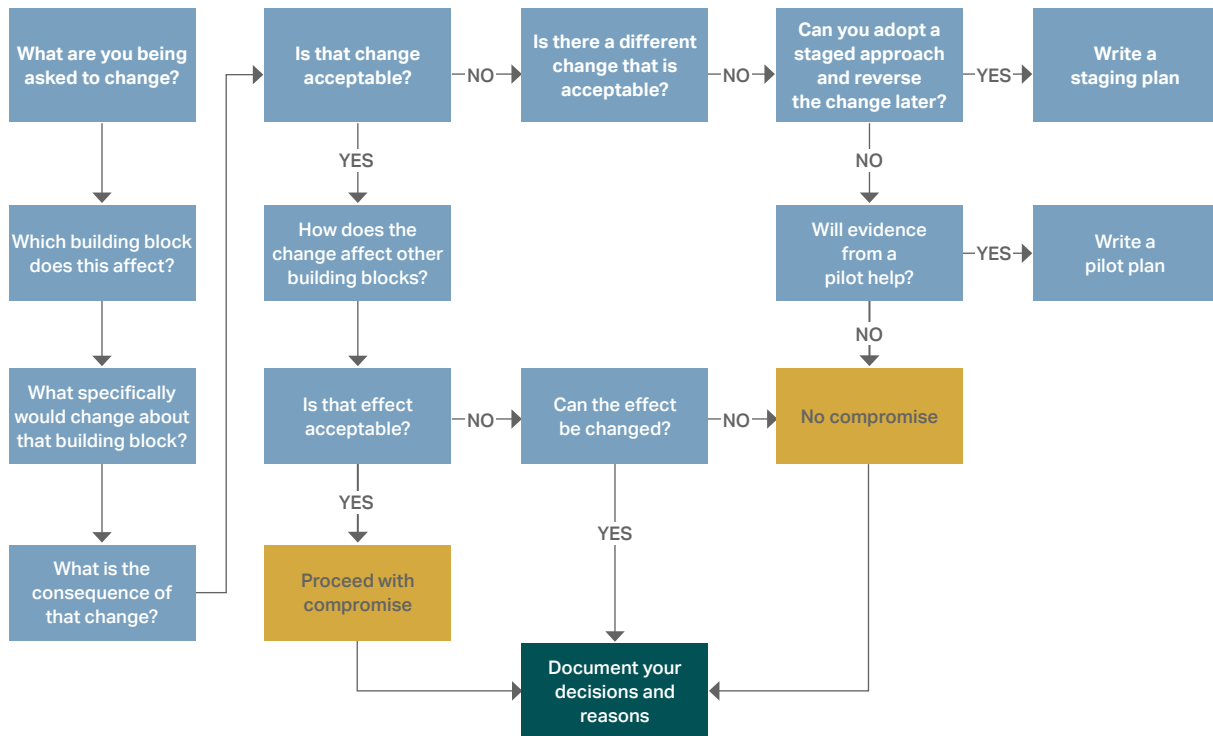
To be clear about what you can and cannot compromise on, you need to have set good building blocks and decided what is fundamental. Return to the 'Specify' section on page 22 if you need to work more on that stage.

EXAMPLE

At MediCO there is concern about the funding needed to address any gender pay gap. Extending the timeframe to close the gender pay gap from 16 months to a staged 3-year approach is an acceptable compromise.

However, the head of IT states that access to archived remuneration data is impossible because the employee with the relevant expertise is on indeterminate extended medical leave. This aspect *cannot* be compromised because the pay gap analysis relies on access to the remuneration data. In this case, allocating additional funds to engage someone to provide access to the database is an acceptable compromise.

Use the flow chart below to decide if compromise is the right choice.



Use the table below or the [editable template](#) to document the elements you are compromising on, what the compromise is, and what the reasons are. Refer back to the 'Specify' section for your list of building blocks.

Aspect	Response
What are you being asked to change?	
Which building block does this affect?	
What specifically will change about the building block?	
What is the consequence of that change?	
Is that change acceptable?	
How does the change affect other building blocks?	
Is that change acceptable?	
Will you need a staging plan?	
Will you need a pilot plan?	
Will you proceed with the compromise?	



During this step it might become obvious that you don't have all the information you need, particularly from other people or parts of the organisation. Return to the 'Define' stage if you need to.

HARMFUL OR BABY STEPS?

There are two schools of thought on compromise:

1. Programs severely affected by compromise do more harm than good and should be avoided. By this thinking, it's better to stop doing a program than to do it badly.
2. Any progress is good progress, and baby steps are important. By this thinking, it's better to do any program than no program.

There is no easy answer to which of these approaches is right. Both have good and bad elements.



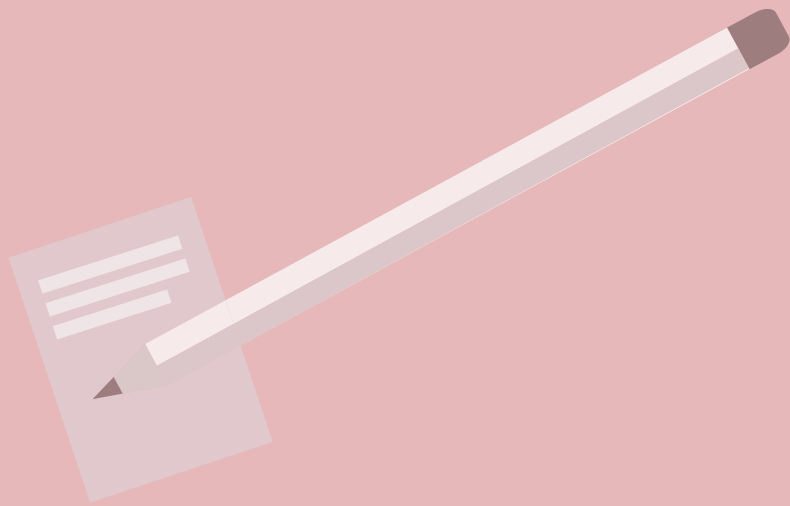
There are times when compromise can seem like a good way to address pushback and get someone to agree to the program. Sometimes this is the case, but often it is not. Go back to the section on 'Pushback' on page **38** and review the plan you prepared to manage pushback. Consider whether you can manage pushback and avoid or limit compromise.



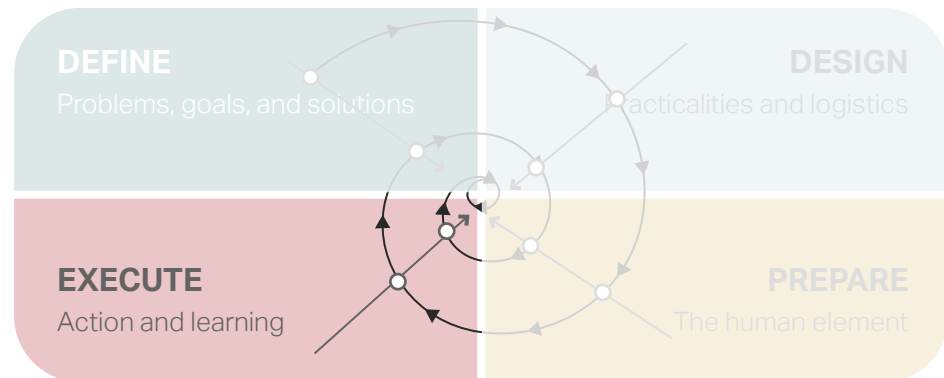
Keep a good record of the building blocks you compromise on. You may be able to reintroduce some of them further down the track.



Sometimes it is not possible to implement the whole program to the whole organisation all at once. Stages and pilots are a great way to introduce big changes gradually or to convince people of the program's merits. Skip ahead and read 'Easing into it: The benefits of pilots and staging' on page **45** for more detail.



Execute



In the previous sections you made a plan, gathered resources, assembled the team and navigated any pushback. This section brings your plan into action. By the end of it, you will have decided how you will put your plan into action and thought about what happens once the program is running.

Support: For yourself and for the implementation team

Any gender equity program represents a change for your organisation. Periods of change are hard, no matter the size of your organisation. The people implementing the program are doing things they have never done before and may be working with people they have never worked with before (especially in large organisations). You and your team will need support.

To get the best from everyone involved:

- **Establish clear lines of communication.** Make sure that there is someone for people to talk to about problems they are having, and that they know who that person is.
- **Bring people together so they can meet each other at the start.** This relationship building will help when people need to ask for things to be done or hold someone accountable. It also helps build trust and camaraderie. Feeling part of a team can be motivating.
- **Treat people like experts at their job.** People are experts at their own job. Trust their concerns, solutions and contributions.
- **Beware of overwork.** It's an age-old management strategy to give people more work with no time release. Overworked staff are more likely to make mistakes or to become resentful of the program. If more financial support is not available, try to renegotiate the timeline to spread the work over a longer period.



Many of the reasons for pushback are linked to lack of resources or support. For tips on how to address pushback, refer back to the section '[Pushback: What resistance are you expecting, and how can you prepare for it?](#)'



Consider how you will support yourself and your implementation team. You can complete this below or in the [editable template](#).

For yourself:

- Do you have support for yourself?
- Can you reach out to peers in other organisations, or through an industry body
- Can you talk to a colleague or boss about it?

For your team:

- Is there a person that people can talk to about their logistics issues?
- Does everyone know how to contact this person?
- Have people met each other?
- Are you sending regular updates on progress, or changes to the timeline?
- Is there a way people can provide feedback on how things are going?
- Are people being treated like experts?
- Are people being overworked, or working without pay?

Easing into it: The benefits of pilots and staging

Sometimes it is not possible to implement everything, everywhere, all at once. In those cases, you can ease into it and start with a pilot or staging.

Pilot. A pilot is when the entire program is implemented in only one portion of the organisation. A pilot lets you test the program to iron out any wrinkles before it is rolled out across the whole organisation.

Staging. Staging is when the program is rolled out to the whole organisation but the features of the program are added little by little over time. Staging lets you build up gradually.

[Appendix 8](#) has more information on when staging or pilots can be useful.

EXAMPLES

The I'm Game example describes a 3-month pilot of a few options for flexible working arrangements. During the pilot, the team carefully monitors employee uptake, team culture, resource planning and scheduling, employee performance and job satisfaction. At the end of the pilot, they examine the monitoring and evaluation data and then discuss, review and refine the flexible working arrangements policy based on the monitoring and evaluation findings.

The MediCO example describes a 3-year staging approach to address gender pay gaps. In the first year, the focus is on reducing or eliminating like-for-like gender pay gaps by allocating a budget to adjust salaries during the pay review process. In the second year, the focus is on reducing and eliminating bias from the performance ratings and management system. In the final year, the focus is on promotion and achieving gender equity at senior levels across the organisation, which includes targeting training, development and promotion practices.



Use the checklists below or the [editable template](#) to determine whether you want to do a pilot or staging.

Pilot checklist. Do you want to:

- demonstrate the benefits to convince someone?
- gather evidence of the outcomes?
- limit or manage the disruption?
- show management how the program will intersect with business-as-usual?
- know more about implementation before you go organisation-wide?

Staging checklist. Do you want to:

- compromise a key feature to get buy in?
- understand the program outcomes further by building them in over time?
- break the program into affordable stages?
- split up big changes into several smaller changes?

Based on the boxes you ticked above, is a pilot or staging right for your program?

MIND THE GAP: NAVIGATING THE SPACE BETWEEN THE PLAN AND REALITY

There is often a big gap between a plan on paper and what happens in real life. Sometimes this gap is not important and sometimes it is very important.

To tell if the gap is important:

- return to the list of program elements you generated during the 'Refine' section. If the gap relates to a building block that you consider fundamental, then it's important to address.
- return to the evaluation phase and think about what the evaluation might find. Would you find significant room for improvement? Would you even be able to conduct the planned evaluation?

Gaps themselves can also provide useful information about how the implementation is going. Maybe you underestimated the resources or time needed or overestimated the team's availability, or program uptake is lower than expected. Notice the gaps and refine your plan—add more time, ask for more resources, reduce the scope or negotiate a compromise.

A pilot can be a great way to understand these gaps to help the implementation go smoother elsewhere.



Pilots

A key part of running a pilot is to see if the program is right for the organisation. Evaluation for a pilot is slightly different from evaluation for the program. You want information about whether the program achieved the goal, but you also want to answer questions about the logistics of implementing the program.

Preparing the pilot evaluation is an important job. Be prepared to collect a lot of data. It is better to collect more than you need in a pilot—you never know what will be useful down the line.



Be prepared for the pilot to find that you should stop the program. Sometimes, the pilot shows that the program doesn't work or can't be implemented in a way that makes it work. That is okay! A pilot that shows a program should not go ahead is a successful pilot. Those resources can now be put into a program that will have a meaningful impact.

The fluid and changeable nature of pilots can be hard to navigate. It's best to involve people who are committed to change and will not use early setbacks as a reason to abandon the program.



If you have chosen a pilot, use the following table or the [editable template](#) to prepare a pilot evaluation.

Aspect	Response
Where are you going to pilot the program?	
What's the main reason for your pilot?	
Do you have an evaluation planned specifically for the pilot?	
What will happen if the evaluation shows the program is not effective?	
What will happen when the pilot has finished?	
What did we learn? (what worked well, what didn't, what was unexpected, what resources were needed/helpful, what pushback did we get)	
What would we do differently?	

Staging

If you are introducing your program in stages, write a staging plan that lays out the details of how the staging will take place. This can be done when you are first planning the program or can be used to introduce new features to an existing program.



Small organisations, particularly start-ups, often experiment with different ways of working and organising. A pilot or staging can be a great way to integrate a gender equity program.



It can be hard to evaluate the impact of one program when there are many changes or programs happening at once. Take the time to assess your program carefully to avoid giving the green or red light to a program based on incorrect conclusions.



If you have chosen staging, use the following table or the [editable template](#) to prepare a staging plan.

Aspect	Response
What elements of the program will go into each of the stages?	
Why have these elements been chosen? Is there any flexibility?	
How will the transition from one stage to the next be managed? Who will be told, and when, and how?	
How will you decide if the organisation is ready for the next stage, or if the next stage is required?	
How long will each stage run for?	

Up and running: Entering the evaluation-improvement cycle

Evaluation and feedback should be happening all the time. However, the period when your program first gets up and running will be rich with feedback on how it is faring. Feedback can be both formal and informal. Formal feedback will happen through evaluation of the program or pilot; informal feedback will happen more casually as people approach you with their thoughts, or you seek them out.

Depending on your program, it might take a while to see any impact. Early disruption can make it harder to see if the program is working. Strike a balance between fixing obvious problems and 'tinkering'. Advocate for long-term buy-in—if possible and where relevant—to avoid big decisions being made about the program before evaluation data is available. Refer to your evaluation plan for ways to record the changes you do decide to make.



Make sure you have a way to record informal feedback. You can't rely on people repeating the feedback through formal evaluation channels, and you might need to act on it quickly. Capture the information in the moment.



The best time to start thinking about evaluation was during the design process, but it's never too late to begin. Use the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) to get started, and share your evaluation with others through the portal.



It is important to share what you learn as the program gets up and running—this builds trust and transparency. Publish your evaluation findings publicly on the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) for others to learn what worked, what didn't work and how to improve future programs. Sharing your findings openly makes you accountable and is also a way to celebrate your achievements.

Some programs have a natural end point; others don't. For programs that don't have a natural end point, you will need to plan when you are going to integrate the lessons from evaluation and feedback back into the design of the program.



Remember to return to the compromises you made during the planning phase. If possible and helpful, integrate those features into the program during a review-and-reassess period.



Consider your approach to the evaluation-improvement cycle. You can complete this below or in the [editable template](#).

Are you:

- recording feedback? How? (formally/informally) _____
- evaluating your program using the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#)?
- sharing the feedback? How and with whom?
- integrating the findings of your evaluation into a continuous improvement cycle? How?
- integrating new or compromised features into the next improvement cycle? If yes, which ones?

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Glossary

See [‘References’](#) for the sources noted in these definitions.

Term	Definition
Gender	The socially constructed roles, behaviours, expressions and identities of girls, women, boys, men and gender-diverse people. Gender influences how people perceive themselves and each other, how they act and interact, and the distribution of power and resources in society. Gender identity is not confined to a binary (girl/woman, boy/man), nor is it static: it exists along a continuum and can change over time. There is considerable diversity in how individuals and groups understand, experience and express gender through the roles they take on, the expectations placed on them, relations with others, and the complex ways that gender is institutionalised in society. ¹¹
Gender diverse	This term is used in two different ways: ‘as an umbrella term to describe the spectrum of genders and gender identities’, ¹² and to describe ‘equitable or fair representation of people of different genders. It most commonly refers to an equitable ratio of men and women but may also include people of non-binary genders’ ¹³ (e.g. having gender diversity on a board).
Gender equity	‘the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women’s historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field.’ ¹⁴ This is different from gender equality , which occurs when there are equal outcomes for women, men and gender-diverse people. ¹⁵
Man	A person who identifies as a man.
Non-binary	A person whose gender identity is not exclusively male/man or female/women. ¹⁶
STEM	Acronym for the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
Trans	A person whose gender identity is different from the sex that was recorded for them at birth. ¹⁶ Note that some non-binary people consider themselves trans and some don’t. It’s a personal decision with no right answer.
Woman	A person who identifies as a woman.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Examples

It's always helpful to have an example to use as a model—see one, do one. The example below is of a large company implementing a gender pay gap analysis and action plan. It contains key elements outlined in this guide. These elements are identified in square brackets.

You can find another example of a small start-up company implementing a flexible working arrangements policy in the introduction on page 7.

MEDICO

MediCO is a large STEM company of 1500 employees that develops and manufactures medical devices. The head of Human Resources, Jamie, has heard about a new bill introduced into federal parliament in February 2023—the [Workplace Gender Equality Amendment \(Closing the Gender Pay Gap\) Bill 2023](#)—that requires the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) to publish employer-level gender pay gap information from relevant employers. Jamie wants to address any gender pay gap at MediCO to maintain its reputation as an equitable and fair workplace.

Define. Jamie decides to lead the gender pay gap project. They identify that before addressing the potential gender pay gap [the problem] across the organisation [the target], they need to understand if and to what extent MediCO has a gender pay gap. Jamie needs to examine the remuneration data to define the problem MediCO is trying to address.

Jamie identifies two SMART goals for the program, SMART being an acronym for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-specific [the goals].

1. The first goal is to conduct a gender pay gap analysis by 1 September 2023 [time-specific ✓] to identify any gender pay gaps within the organisation and identify the causes of any gaps [specific ✓ and measurable ✓].
2. The second goal is to use the findings of the gender pay gap analysis to inform appropriate action [relevant ✓] to address the causes of any gaps [specific ✓ and measurable ✓ but TBD by the first goal] by 1 September 2024 [time-specific ✓].

The 16-month timeframe for this project seems to be enough time to achieve the two goals with the needed resources [achievable ✓].

Design. Jamie gets to work on the gender pay gap project [the program]. They start by specifying

the program details, or 'building blocks'.

- **Building block 1:** Present to the CEO and board to get a leadership commitment to examining and addressing the gender pay gap.
- **Building block 2:** Access the remuneration database for this financial year and archival remuneration data from the past five years via the IT department.
- **Building block 3:** Conduct a gender pay gap analysis to identify any gaps and the extent of any gaps (dollar value).
- **Building block 4:** Conduct an in-depth analysis of the causes of any gaps using relevant HR documentation (e.g. performance ratings by gender).
- **Building block 5:** Present the analysis findings to CEO, board and departmental managers and consult on solutions to address the causes of any gaps.
- **Building block 6:** Create and implement an action plan to address the causes of the gender pay gap.
- **Building block 7:** Monitor and evaluate the impacts of the action plan on addressing the gender pay gap by 1 September 2024.

Jamie produces a list of resources, or 'inputs', needed to make the program happen:

- **Jamie's time:** ~4 months over 16 months. Another project that Jamie is leading will need to be delegated to another staff member to allow Jamie to dedicate the necessary time to this project.
- **Funding:** The amount of funding required to close the gender pay gap. The analysis will reveal this amount.
- **Tools:** The WGEA [Guide to Gender Pay Equity](#) for guidance on how to do a gender pay gap analysis and develop an action plan [resources], and the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) to plan the program evaluation [evaluation].

Jamie then produces a risk matrix to identify and assess risks by doing a gender pay gap analysis [risk management]. They identify that looking at gender pay gaps only at an organisation-wide level could miss important detail, result in incorrect conclusions and lead to an ineffective action plan. The risk matrix raises the need to do a more detailed analysis, such as (a) 'like-for-like' to look at differences between women and men undertaking the same or similar work, (b) 'by level' to look at differences between women and men at the same organisational level, and (c) 'organisation-wide' to look at differences between the average remuneration of women and that of men across the whole organisation [risk mitigation].

Prepare. At this point, Jamie schedules a meeting with the CEO, board and departmental managers to get a commitment from leadership to investigate the gender pay gap and address any gaps [consultation]. The CEO insists that there is no gender pay gap at MediCO; they believe that the exercise will be a waste of time and resources and will raise suspicions among employees [pushback]. Jamie listens to the CEO's concerns and then explains how pay equity aligns with board and stakeholder expectations and ensures MediCO meets legal obligations [manage up].

One of the board members who support the idea emphasises the value of pay equity to the organisation's reputation and ability to attract high-quality employees. The CEO agrees and commits the necessary resources to investigate the gender pay gap and address any gaps [buy-in].

One board member is concerned about the funding needed to address any gender pay gap. Although the company is highly profitable, it is accountable to its investors and shareholders and may not be able to close the gap within the suggested timeframe. They suggest closing any gender pay gap over a few years rather than 16 months [feedback]. Jamie thanks them for the feedback and suggests implementing a 3-year staged approach to the pay equity action plan [compromise].

The head of IT raises an issue with providing access to archived remuneration data: the employee with the relevant expertise is on indeterminate extended medical leave. They suggest that access is impossible until the employee returns [pushback]. Jamie emphasises that access to the remuneration database is essential and a gender pay gap analysis cannot be conducted without it. They cannot wait for the employee to return; this aspect cannot be compromised. Jamie requests additional funds to engage someone with the relevant expertise to provide access to the database, which the CEO approves [compromise].

Execute. Jamie assembles the necessary resources, and gains access to the archival remuneration database. They conduct a gender pay gap analysis by 1 September 2023. The analysis reveals:

- pay gaps between women and men doing the same or comparable work (like-for-like). The causes are unequal starting salaries, bias in performance ratings and the impact of part-time work.
- pay gaps in the organisation's overall annualised average full-time equivalent remuneration between women and men. The causes are more men in senior roles than women, inequality in promotion rates (skewed towards men) and limitations on career progression due to a lack of flexible work options.

The findings of the gender pay gap analysis inform a 3-year staged action plan to address the causes of the gaps. In the first year, the focus is on reducing or eliminating like-for-like gender pay gaps by allocating a budget to adjust salaries during the pay review process. In the second year, the focus is on reducing and eliminating bias from the performance ratings and management system. In the final year, the focus is on promotion and achieving gender equity at senior levels across the organisation, which includes targeting training, development and promotion practices.

By 1 September 2026, MediCO has closed its gender pay gap and achieves a WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation. In addition, the evaluation shows that in the past three years MediCO has seen a reduction in staff turnover, an increase in employee morale and an improvement in the quality of its recruitment pools [evaluation findings]. Jamie publishes the results of the pilot on the [STEM Equity Evaluation Portal](#) for others to learn from.

Jamie continues to monitor and evaluate the gender pay gap. The company is changing job advertisements to use gender-neutral language and exploring options to increase opportunities for part-time and casual staff [evaluation-improvement cycle].

Appendix 2: Choose a solution

Often, problems can be linked to (1) attracting, (2) retaining and/or (3) progressing staff.

Some good questions to think about are:

- **Attraction:** Are there common reasons women and other minorities won't join your organisation? Do you know how you stack up against your competitors on attracting diverse staff?
- **Retention:** Are there common reasons why people are leaving? If you don't know why people leave, perhaps the first step is to conduct exit interviews or add a question to the existing exit interview.
- **Progression:** What is the gender representation in the senior leadership of your organisation? How about the middle levels? Are your staff—particularly women and other minorities—leaving or stagnating at a particular career stage?

The table below gives examples of common problems that organisations at each stage of the gender equity maturity roadmap might be addressing. The [Women in STEM Decadal Plan](#) contains an extensive list of common barriers to full participation in STEM in Australia.

Problem	Goal	Data	Solution	Solution Type (support/structural)
Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment	Change (harshen) employer policies and strategies around bullying, harassment and sexual harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of employer policies and strategies related to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment • Type of employer policies and strategies related to bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment • Types of policies in place for bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment • Changes to policies for bullying, harassment and sexual harassment • Reported cases of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment (qualitative data on the nature of the reported cases) 	<p>Use the Australian Human Rights Commission's Workplace discrimination and harassment policy template to create your own workplace discrimination and harassment policy.</p> <p>Understand workplace bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. Read the Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report by the Australian Human Rights Commission.</p> <p>Use the Workplace Equality and Respect: Readiness assessment tool to answer five questions and determine whether you can undertake a program to prevent sexual harassment and gender-based violence.</p> <p>Use Workplace Equality and Respect: A how-to guide to prepare an action plan to create a gender-equitable and inclusive workplace for people of all genders.</p>	Structural or support (depending on the program you choose to undertake)
Gender pay gap	Eliminate the gender pay gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee base and total remuneration data by gender, by role, by employment status • Performance ratings by gender, by role, by employment status • Documentation on hiring practices, performance management, promotion practices, career development and training, etc. (qualitative data on the nature of practices, processes and systems that may contribute to gender pay gap) 	<p>Do a gender pay gap analysis and create an action plan. Use the WGEA Guide to gender pay equity.</p>	Structural or support (depending on your action plan)

Problem	Goal	Data	Solution	Solution Type (support/structural)
Lack of access to, and uptake of, childcare (cost, location, hours of operation))	Increase access to, and uptake of, childcare (cost, location, hours of operation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childcare cost (hourly/daily) % of employees accessing employer-subsidised childcare by gender, by role, by employment status, by socio-economic status and by other diversity metrics (uptake of employer-subsidised childcare) # of childcare facilities (in an area) Location of childcare facilities (in an area) Hours of operation of childcare facilities % of employees accessing childcare facilities by gender, by role, by employment status, by socio-economic status and by other diversity metrics (uptake of childcare facilities) Interview or focus group data on the nature of childcare-related barriers by gender, by role, by employment status, by socio-economic status and by other diversity metrics 	<p>Develop and implement a childcare support strategy. Use the International Finance Corporation's Tackling Childcare: The business case for employer-supported childcare to help you develop and implement your strategy.</p> <p>Note: Your strategy may include reducing the need for childcare through flexible working arrangements, making existing care more visible through a referral service, providing on-site childcare, subsidising the cost of childcare, or supplementing childcare provisions during hours when normal centres are closed.</p>	Structural or support (depending on your strategy)
Lack of access to, and uptake of, parental and carer entitlements for all genders	Increase in access to parental and carer entitlements for all genders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of weeks available for parental and carer entitlements by gender, by role, by employment status, by type of entitlement/leave Type of parental and carer entitlements/leave available by gender, by role, by employment status (e.g. primary carer, secondary carer, adoption, surrogacy, stillbirth, etc.) # of employees taking parental and carer entitlements by gender, by role, by employment status, by type of entitlement/leave Interview or focus-group data on the nature of leave-related barriers by gender, by role, by employment status, by socio-economic status and by other diversity metrics 	<p>Develop or change your parental leave policy. Use the WGEA Developing a Leading Practice Parental Leave Policy: A guide for employers.</p> <p>Read about the benefits of parental leave for men in Designing and supporting gender equitable parental leave by WGEA.</p>	Structural

Problem	Goal	Data	Solution	Solution Type (support/structural)
<p>Lack of access to, and uptake of, career development/ advancement opportunities for women</p>	<p>Increase in access to, and uptake of, career development/ advancement opportunities for women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of career development/ advancement opportunities by gender, by role, by employment status • Type of career development/ advancement opportunities available by gender, by role, by employment status • % of employees accessing career development opportunities by gender, by role, by employment status • Interview or focus-group data on the nature of development and advancement-related barriers by gender, by role, employment status, by socio-economic status and by other diversity metrics • Documentation on career development and advancement opportunities (qualitative data on the nature of practices, processes and systems that may contribute to the barriers) 	<p>Use the WGEA Gender equitable recruitment and promotion: A guide for organisations to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities for career development.</p>	<p>Structural or support (depending on the approach you choose)</p>
<p>Lack of access to, and uptake of, flexible work arrangements for all genders</p>	<p>Increase in access to, and uptake of, flexible work arrangements for all genders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type of flexible work arrangements available by gender, by role, by employment status • % of employees accessing flexible work arrangements by gender, by role, by employment status, by type of arrangement (uptake of flexible work arrangements) • # of employees in flexible work arrangements by gender, by role, by employment status, by type of arrangement • Interview or focus group data on the nature of flexibility-related barriers by gender, by role, employment status, by socio-economic status and by other diversity metrics 	<p>Use the WGEA Employee flexibility toolkit to develop a flexible working arrangements policy. Take a look at the Good practice resources on flexible work from Science in Australia Gender Equity.</p>	<p>Structural</p>

Problem	Goal	Data	Solution	Solution Type (support/structural)
Lack of access to, and uptake of, parental and carer entitlements for men	Increase in uptake of parental and carer entitlements by men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of weeks taken by men for parental and carer entitlements, by role, by employment status, by type of entitlement/leave Type of parental and carer entitlements/leave taken by men, by role, by employment status (e.g. primary carer, secondary carer, adoption, surrogacy, stillbirth, etc.) # of men employees taking parental and carer entitlements, by role, by employment status, by type of entitlement/leave Interview or focus-group data on the nature of leave-related barriers by gender, by role, by employment status, by socio-economic status and by other diversity metrics 	<p>Develop or change your parental leave policy. Use WGEA's Developing a Leading Practice Parental Leave Policy: A guide for employers.</p> <p>Read about the benefits of parental leave for men in Designing and supporting gender equitable parental leave by WGEA.</p>	Structural
Low proportion of women in senior/ leadership roles	Increase the proportion of women in senior/ leadership roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of employees in senior/leadership roles by gender, by employment status Interview or focus-group data on the nature of advancement-related barriers by gender, by role, by employment status, by socio-economic status and by other diversity metrics Documentation on career development opportunities and promotion practices (qualitative data on the nature of practices, processes and systems that may contribute to the barriers) 	<p>Learn the key lessons about women's participation at senior levels from leading Australian companies. Read Women in Leadership: Lessons from Australian companies leading the way by the Business Council of Australia, McKinsey & Company and WGEA.</p> <p>Use WGEA's Gender equitable recruitment and promotion: A guide for organisations to create more equitable recruitment and promotion systems.</p> <p>Use the WGEA Guide to Setting Gender Targets to help you achieve, monitor and maintain a desired gender target in senior/ leadership roles.</p>	Support or structural (depending on the approach you take)
Low proportion of women on boards and committees of influence	Increase the proportion of women on boards and committees of influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of members on boards and committees of influence by gender, by role 	<p>Use the Guide to Setting Gender Targets by WGEA to help you achieve, monitor and maintain a desired gender target on boards and committees of influence.</p>	Structural

Appendix 3: Consult

Consultation does not need to be time-consuming or complicated. What is important is going in with a plan of what you'd like to know, and thoughtfulness in who you talk to.

Some general tips for preparing for consultation:

- Only undertake consultation if you intend to listen respectfully and respond to feedback. Remember that 'responding' does not mean 'adopting'—suggestions can be unfeasible for multiple reasons. Responding does mean engaging in good faith and communicating honestly. If you can't adopt a popular suggestion, tell staff why not, or make a plan to integrate it later.
- Be specific about what type of feedback is workable at this stage. Are you open to broad design ideas, or do you want to know if the specific terms you are using are appropriate? This manages everyone's expectations about what feedback can be adopted and what cannot.
- Have a system for recording feedback and taking notes. You will need to refer to these notes often during the remaining planning stages.

It is not only the people who will benefit from a proposal who need to be consulted. The type of information you are looking for will influence who you should consult. Groups who can be consulted include:

- targets of the gender equity program
- managers who will approve the program
- managers who will be integrating the program into daily operations
- staff who will be involved in the logistics of implementing the program.



Small organisations are often seeking to create a more diverse team. This means you need to look outside of your organisation to find the people who will benefit from the gender equity program. Some places to start are industry associations, TAFE and vocational education providers, and universities.

Group	Example	Type of information they can provide
People who will benefit from the gender equity program	Minoritised-gender people; parents and carers	Uptake estimates, popularity, design suggestions,
Management who need to approve the program	CEO or CFO who approves the funds or time release	Cost limits, timelines, strategic business links
Management who need to integrate the program into daily operations	Line managers who need to work out the logistics of backfilling staff when parental leave is extended to all genders	Logistical limitations, potential pushback, links to technical staff
Technical staff who need to be involved in implementing the program	IT staff in charge of online applications who have to reprogram software to accept anonymous applications for grants	Technical limitations, cost estimates, timelines, resourcing

Appendix 4: Resources

This table lists some common skills, equipment and personnel that may be needed to implement your program.

Skills	Equipment	Personnel
Software programming	Specialist software	Responsible person - Every program needs someone who is responsible for making sure things get done. This person is likely you!
Graphic design	IT hardware – dedicated computers, or phones, or printers, etc	Participants – the people who will benefit from the program
Recruitment	A dedicated space – such as a prayer room or a chest feeding room	HR staff
Diversity and inclusion	A sometimes space – a space you can use but can also be used by others	Operations staff
Occupational therapy, or interior design	Transport	Team leaders
Policy writing	Website	Finance staff

Appendix 5: Getting it wrong

How you respond to making a mistake is important. Very often, marginalised people don't mind that you have made a mistake—they just want it corrected. Here is a good set of steps to follow when you have made a mistake:

- Apologise properly.
- Thank the person for bringing it to your attention.
- Do your own research to find out what you can do differently.
- Fix the mistake, if possible.
- Try not to make the same mistake again.

If the mistake is an individual behaviour, such as the language you are using to describe a group of people, you can work on changing that behaviour immediately. If the mistake is something to do with the program design or implementation logistics, such as a mentoring session that is scheduled at school pick-up time and cannot be moved, there might be nothing you can do about it.

There are a few things you should *not* do when a mistake is pointed out to you:

- Do not argue about whether the person is right.
- Do not ask the person for personal details about themselves to help you understand the mistake.
- Do not ask the person to help you know what to do instead.
- Do not over-apologise. Say it once and sincerely, then move on.
- Do not keep bringing up the mistake in future conversations and apologising again.
- Do not turn the conversation around to how you feel about making the mistake.

Appendix 6: Managing up

The table below shows some questions managers might ask, along with the different places you might find information to respond.

Question	Place to find the answers
Why should we do this?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints or requests or suggestions from existing staff • Statistics to show the nature of the problem(s). The STEM Equity Monitor is a good place to start • Reports or advice from organisations such as WGEA pointing out this is a problem in your industry • Results of consultation—either your own or published elsewhere • Industry norms or standards • An existing business case, or one you compile • Gender equity strategic plan
Is this the 'right' solution?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose programs from reliable, reputable sources • Share with the person, or have them join in, parts of the 'design' stage to give them confidence the solution has been chosen thoughtfully • Acknowledge that whether the solution will work can't really be known ahead of time • Return to your evaluation plan for how you will know if it's working once you start • Use case studies or examples from other businesses, such as those at the STEM Equity Evaluation Portal and the Women in STEM Ambassador website
Is this a good use of our resources?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to or compile a business case • Remind the person that there are business costs to not solving the problem too—there are costs on both sides of the equation • Go back to the problem and remind the person that solving problems takes resources • Remind the person that resources telegraph what is important. If they really think this is important, they need to resource it adequately. Making people work for their own equality for free is not okay.
What could go wrong?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share with the person, or have them join in, the 'What could go wrong' section in 'Design' on page 28 • Work together to get ahead of problems and have solutions ready early
What will people think (both internally and externally)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to the consultation you did • Refer to industry bodies' reports • Refer to where you found the design • Acknowledge that not everyone will be supportive, and that's okay—progress is hard • Share your work from the 'Pushback' section to help the person understand the challenges

Appendix 7: Pushback

Common types of pushback you might experience are:

- disagreement about the problem
- questioning the worthiness of the target
- disagreement about the goal
- disagreement with the design
- objection to the implementation plan
- concern at the way the program integrates with the organisation’s operations
- fear of others’ pushback
- fear of losing privilege.

Recall ‘The workplace gender equity journey—where does your organisation sit?’ on page 4. It is not only organisations that sit on this journey, but individuals too. Often the type of pushback you get indicates where on the journey the person is sitting, which can in turn help decide what response might work best. The table below gives examples of the characteristics of the different journey stages.

Journey Stage	Description
Avoidant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally very resistant to any change • May actively stand in the way of the program • May encourage others to also stand in the way of the program
Compliant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is happy with the broad outline of the program but complains about details • May complain about changes to their workflow or the ‘usual’ way of doing things • May complain about losing the advantages of a biased system • Won’t actively stand in the way of the program, but won’t help either
Programmatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in programs, often enthusiastically, but does not think about gender beyond these special projects • Questions the importance of thinking about the concept ‘Gender is for everyone’
Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively and independently thinking about how gender equity can be achieved • Recognises that gender equity programs benefit everyone • Is committed to change
Integrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has put effort into making gender part of everyday thinking • Actively encourages others to think about gender in their daily work • Is committed to change
Sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to make gender part of the culture so it is passed on to new staff members naturally • Is committed to change

As with any journey, people are usually most agreeable to stepping to the next stage rather than jumping many stages ahead. So, where a person is currently on their journey can help decide what approach might work best. The majority of pushback will occur in the first three stages, so the table below includes only pushback and example responses for those stages.

Journey stage	Type of pushback	Example response
Avoidant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no problem • The target group is not worthy • There are more important problems • I've never seen or experienced that, so it can't be a problem • Why are we wasting money on this? • We don't have enough data • We don't have the money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to move the person from 'avoidant' to 'compliant'—they don't have to like the program, they just need to not stand in the way • Show them the numbers—statistics or feedback, particularly compared to industry norms • Explain about any program benefits that are unrelated to gender—usually the business case • Find examples where a similar program has worked elsewhere—do some research or search the equity program evaluation repository on the STEM Equity Evaluation Portal • Appeal to management authority—the boss said you have to, so please do it • Be alert for bad-faith arguments (see below)
Compliant	People who will comply if they are catered to, but complain about details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That's never going to work • I can't integrate that with my current workflow • We don't have the money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to move the person from 'compliant' to 'programmatic' (i.e. they are enthusiastic in implementing this program) • Active and compassionate listening can help in talking through and alleviating concerns • Easing into the changes can help—think about whether a pilot might be appropriate • Be alert for genuine feedback rather than pushback—refer to the flow chart in the 'Pushback' section on page 38
Programmatic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm all for gender equity, but... • That's a really big change, are you sure we have to go that far? • Why can't we keep running the old program? • A whole plan is a bit much, let's just stick to programs as they come up. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The goal is to move the person from 'programmatic' to 'strategic' and beyond (i.e. they are actively and independently thinking about how to achieve gender equity) • Being involved in creating strategic plans may level up their thinking • Explain about any program benefits that are unrelated to gender—usually the business case • Supply some key documents that talk about gender equity as a strategy



BAD-FAITH ARGUMENT!

The overall goal of some pushback is simply to bog a matter down in argument, or to make it seem as if established facts are up for debate. These are bad-faith arguments, with the explicit goal of wasting your time and delaying the program. You cannot change the mind of someone with a bad-faith argument—it's better not to even try. Instead, point out the bad-faith argument and move on. It can be difficult to know at the outset if pushback is done in bad faith, but it normally becomes obvious as time goes on. You can spot it when the person:

- has a history of bad-faith arguments
- insists on ever-greater mountains of evidence, and no amount of evidence or reasoning will shift their opinion
- does not provide evidence for their claims, but insists you do so for yours
- insists that nothing can go ahead until the matter is resolved
- refuses to compromise or try out new things.

Appendix 8: Easing into it

Use the table to help you decide if a pilot or staging is right for your organisation.

Scenario	Could a pilot be right?	Could staging help?
There is lots of pushback	A pilot allows you to demonstrate the outcomes of the program before committing to full implementation	Staging allows you to compromise heavily in the beginning and use the success of each round to add back in the features you compromised on
The impact of the program is a bit unknown	You can run a pilot to gather evidence of the program outcomes	You can start with the basics and keep adding features until you get the outcome you want or the benefits start to diminish
The budget is less than it needs to be	It is often less costly to implement a program as a pilot than across an entire organisation	You can break the program into affordable stages and spread the cost over several years
The program is likely to be very disruptive to the organisation	A pilot limits the extent of the disruption to one area	Staging lets you introduce the changes gradually and manage the disruption
Management is worried about the impact on the organisation	A pilot can help show management that the organisation can continue to operate with the program in place	Staging can help ease everyone, including management, into the program by making sure there are not too many changes happening at once
There are lots of unknowns in the implementation	A pilot gives space for learning-as-you-go and for a dedicated period of reflection and learning	Staging separates out sections of the program so the impact of each step is more obvious



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