



CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL  
HUMAN RESOURCE COUNCIL

CONSEIL CANADIEN POUR LES  
RESSOURCES HUMAINES EN AGRICULTURE

CAHRC-CCRHA



**SUPPORTING THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE:  
IS YOUR ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE? – A BEST-PRACTICE GUIDE  
TO ENSURING WOMEN ARE INCLUDED**

Brought to you by:  
Canadian Agricultural HR Council



Status of Women  
Canada

Condition féminine  
Canada



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\*Photo Credits: Mary Robinson, Lydia Schouten, Amy Matheson, Alberta Milk, #womenofharvest15 via Twitter

# Is Your Organization Representative: A Best Practice Guide to Ensuring Women Are Included

## Background

Research shows that having a gender diverse leadership team has a positive impact. It not only ensures that the organization is reflective and representative of society, it also has a positive financial return. In fact, women-led companies performed three times better than the S&P 500 over a twelve year period.<sup>1</sup>

There are key components that are identified by several experts as best practices for increasing the number of women in leadership roles in business. Addressing the issue begins right at the recruitment process of new employees and continues through employment. The talent management of employees, providing training opportunities and ensuring processes and policies for internal hires and promotions encourage women to apply and to be successful in the application process are all key components.

The idea is to not set quotas and have women in roles just because they are women. This approach is not effective for many reasons. Regardless of the skills, experience and abilities of the woman her competency and fit to for the role is immediately questioned because it is felt she just “filled the quota”. Moreover, the best interest of the business must be protected and making hiring decisions based on gender quotas and not by the most qualified candidate will have a negative impact on the operations of the organization.

There are a few aspects to this issue as well. One is that there needs to be women employed within the organization to include them in the training process. The other is that a talent management system must be in place that ensures women are included in leadership training opportunities. There are best practices that have been identified to ensure women are supported in moving in to leadership roles in an effective manner.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://fortune.com/2015/03/03/women-led-companies-perform-three-times-better-than-the-sp-500/>  
*Is Your Organization Representative? A Best-Practice Guide to Ensuring Women Are Included.* CAHRC, 2016.

## About the Guide

The objective of this guide is to provide support to employers to ensure women are including in all aspects of the talent management process. This means ensuring women are identified and included in training programs so they have the same opportunity for leadership development as men in the organization.

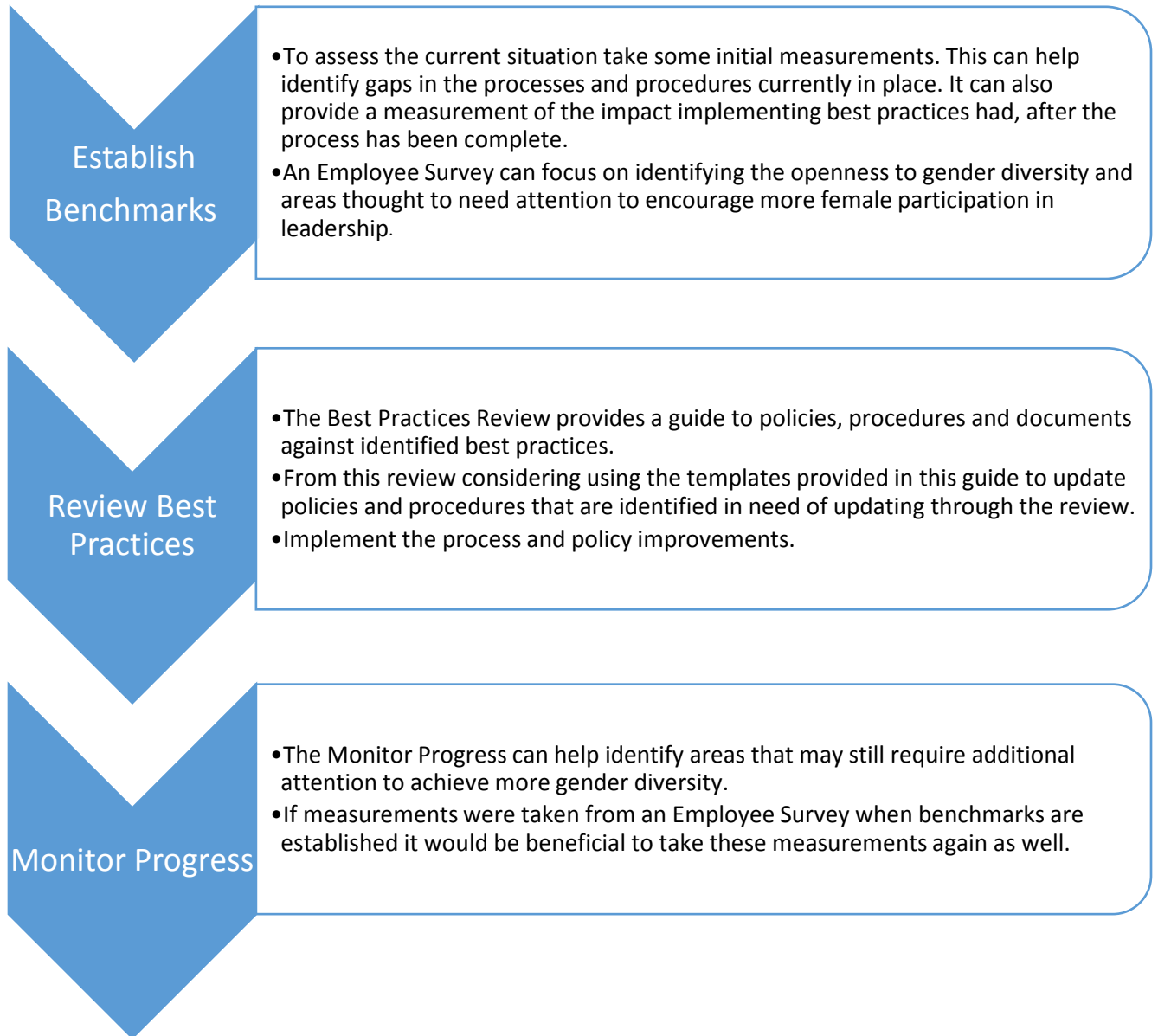
The target users for this guide are the organization's leader (owner, manager, CEO, president, executive director) and HR managers. The reports and checklists should be completed by the owner/leadership team/HR manager.

This guide will include the following documents:

- Steps to Review Process
- Establish Benchmarks
- Monitor Progress
- Develop Policies Using Templates

## Steps to Review Process

The following provides a map of the process of reviewing the human resource management (HRM) processes and procedures, identifying areas for improvement and implementing those changes to move towards having best practices in place for more gender diverse leadership team.





## Establish Benchmarks

This following questionnaire provides benchmarks to measure change in women's roles in the organization.

1. What is the gender ratio of all roles in the organization?
2. What is the gender ratio of participants in training programs and specialized leadership development programs?
3. What is the gender of the current CEO/President of the organization?
4. How many women applicants did the organization receive in the last recruitment process?
5. How many women were interviewed and/or considered in the last year of recruitment processes?
6. Is there an employee survey in place? If yes, how often is this survey conducted?
7. Is there a diversity and inclusion policy currently in place?
8. Has the issue of under-representation of women in your leadership team been brought forward before?
9. When the compensation structure is reviewed, is there any variance between what male employees and female employees are paid for the same or similar position?
10. Is there a Leave Policy in place and if so does it include "maternity leave" or is it defined as "parental leave"?
11. What are the policies or practices in the organization that support work/life balance? For example, are there policies or practices that support flexible work arrangements or working from home?



## Review Best Practices

Follow this check list to review your current practices and identify areas for improvement to move towards an organization that has best practices in place for gender diversity.

Best practices to address these areas include:

- Understand the gender ratio of the current workforce.** This includes understanding the gender ratio in all levels of roles, as well as in recruitment processes and participation in talent management and training programs. It is this data that can help identify where the gaps may be in women moving into leadership, including in networking, mentoring and training opportunities.
  - Gather and analyze gender ratio data.
  - Is there a gap in all roles or in specific areas?
  - What is the difference between women working in junior and middle management roles compared to the senior leadership team?
  - What are the participation rates of women in training opportunities?
  - Is there a difference in participation in general or technical training and that specific to leadership development?
  
- Build awareness of conscious and unconscious biases of current workforce and leadership.** Everyone has conscious and unconscious biases. Providing support and training to employees and the leadership team to build awareness of this as well as tools to manage these biases will help ensure they do not have a negative impact on recruitment and selection, talent management and the overall workplace culture. See the “Bias Awareness Tool” provided in this document for more information on how to achieve this best practice.
  
- Review the existing employment recruitment and selection policies and practices** to identify and address any content or activities that may deter women from applying to more senior positions than the one they currently have.
  - Review the internal and external recruitment process.
  - Is there a formal process in place?
  - Is there a recruitment policy in place?
  - Does this policy address a need for there to be female candidates considered in the process?
  - What does the marketing collateral look like for the company?
  - Is it presented in a way that is gender neutral or that women could see themselves building a career there?
  
- Review the compensation structure to ensure gender parity.** In many cases women are still paid 67% of what men are paid for the same job.
  - Collect the compensation data by job and gender.
  - How are men and women paid for the same or similar position?

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- When salary increases or raises are implemented are they implemented at the same percentage across the board?
- **Review turnover rates by gender and by level in the organization.** Research indicates that women often will not bring issues forward to an organization but will leave for another organization in which opportunities are more open.
  - Collect turnover data for the past three to five years.
  - Is there a trend in the number of women that leave compared to men?
  - Were exit interviews conducted of those that left? If so, compare results by women to men.
  - Look at the women that left the organization. Is there a trend to the reasons they left? For example, did they go on maternity leave and not return? Did they reach a level in the organization and leave without moving up into a leadership role?
- **Identify opportunities to increase the number of women in the application process** for management and senior leadership roles. Research shows that many times women do not apply for roles because they do not feel they meet all the requirements or have the confidence that they could do the role. Sometimes it requires a champion (male or female) to be assigned to identifying potential female candidates, contacting them to share information about the opportunity and encouraging them to apply.
  - Is there a process or initiative in place either in talent management or in the general recruitment process to identify potential female candidates for positions and to actively encourage them to apply for the open position?
  - Does your organization have any initiatives in place that encourage women to network with or be mentored by other women or with senior leadership?
- **Implement a requirement that qualified women must represent fifty percent of all candidates** considered in the recruitment for all positions. Ensuring female applicants are in the recruitment process ultimately increases the chance that a woman will be selected for the role.
- **Implement a talent management program focused on women.** This includes identifying training and development opportunities that meet the needs of the participants. It provides a road map to their career and formally identifies them as future candidates for leadership roles.
  - Review talent management and training plans.
  - Are there any things that could deter women from participating in training opportunities or being identified in the leadership stream of the talent management plan?
  - What happens if someone identified in the leadership stream for talent management takes maternity leave/parental leave from work?
- **Implement training programs and materials that are gender neutral.** This means materials are presented using gender neutral language. Gender neutral examples are used when talking about





experience and opportunities and there is a mix of gender represented in images related to the material.

- Review training data and materials.
  - Are there trends evident in the training data with regards to participation by gender?
  - Are there trends evident in the training data with regards to gender and career progress once training is complete?
  - Is the training material presented in gender neutral language?
- **Implement metrics to measure the success of updated policies and practices.** This should include indicators such as the number of women identified for training, the number of women that completed the training and the number of women in leadership roles that came from this training program. If the initiative is working the impact will be evident in the metrics over time.



## Monitor Progress

This questionnaire is met to gather the same data that was gathered prior to the organizational review. Comparing the results from this questionnaire to the benchmark data will show what progress has been made. This questionnaire can also be conducted on a regular basis as an on-going measurement of progress.

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6. Is there an employee survey in place? If yes, how often is this survey conducted?
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8. Has the issue of under-representation of women in your leadership team been brought forward before?
9. When the compensation structure is reviewed, is there any variance between what male employees and female employees are paid for the same or similar position?
10. Is there a Leave Policy in place and if so does it include “maternity leave” or is it defined as “parental leave”?
11. What are the policies or practices in the organization that support work/life balance? For example, are there policies or practices that support flexible work arrangements or working from home?

## Develop Policies Using Templates

The policies and practices need to reflect the objective to support more gender diversity in its membership.

The Ontario Securities Commission has done a great deal of work in this area and has provided recommendations to policy statements that achieve this goal.

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC) also provides templates in the HR Toolkit that supports a gender diverse organization.



## Diversity and Inclusion Policy<sup>2</sup>

### **Policy Statement:**

Having an employee base, including the leadership team, that represents the diverse backgrounds of our industry is important. (Company/Association) is committed to having a leadership team that is comprised of these diverse backgrounds, skills and experiences including the representation of women.

*The Diversity and Inclusion Policy, developed and approved by the board, does not include a target number or percentage of women in leadership because employees are selected based solely on merit. (THE COMPANY) is, however, committed to an identification and nomination process that will identify qualified female candidates and has therefore provided targets for the number of qualified female candidates to be included in the recruitment and selection process.*

### **Procedures:**

To ensure the principles of diversity are integrated into recruitment and retention, the following activities will take place:

- An audit of the adherence to the policies will be conducted regularly.
- An annual review of the training program participation and talent management activity will be conducted.
- Recruitment plans will be cross-referenced with talent management plans.
- The application process for open positions will require fifty percent of qualified applicants to be women.
- The interview process will require that a minimum of one qualified woman is included in the interview process.

### **Accountability:**

The CEO/President will take responsibility for implementing the policy requirements.

The Human Resource (HR) Lead and/or CEO/President are responsible for following the steps outlined in the policy and ensuring the objectives of the policy are incorporated in recruitment and retention activities.

The CEO/President (HR LEAD?) *is required to report the results of its review and assessment of the Diversity Policy to senior leadership and the board on an annual basis.*

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.osc.gov.on.ca/documents/en/Securities-Category5/csa\\_20150928\\_58-307\\_staff-review-women-boards.pdf](http://www.osc.gov.on.ca/documents/en/Securities-Category5/csa_20150928_58-307_staff-review-women-boards.pdf)

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## Checklist for Recruitment

The following elements should be considered when building a recruitment campaign:

- Is the job posting written with gender neutral language?
- What is the strategy for advertising the job posting and does it include ensuring it is posted in places where women will see it? For example, has the posting been shared with internal and/or external women's networks and mentoring groups?
- Has the talent management plan been reviewed to identify potential qualified candidates, including women who are in the pipeline?
- Have the candidates identified through the talent management process been notified of the open position and how to apply.
- Is there a champion assigned to help identify and encourage qualified women to apply?
- Once applications have been received, is there an adequate number of qualified female candidates?
- Once the list is made for interviews, is there a 50/50 split of women and men on the list to be interviewed?



## Bias Awareness Checklist

Gender Bias Awareness Checklist <sup>3</sup>	Yes / No*
I have tried to educate myself about discrimination by discussing the topic with others or reading about it.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I have thought about how my own attitudes and behaviors may contribute towards gender discrimination at work and in social situations.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I try not to use words or phrases that may be perceived by others as degrading or hurtful, even when I'm making a joke in casual conversation.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I try not to rely on gender stereotypes to explain or predict the behaviours of people I interact with.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I have openly disagreed with a comment, action, or joke that insulted someone's gender.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am comfortable giving constructive feedback to someone of a different gender.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I am open to hearing input from anyone in the workplace, even if their experience or opinions are different than mine.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I try to ensure that events, meetings, or training program are planned and/or conducted in a gender neutral way.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
When a worker is quiet or keeps to her - or himself, I make an effort to talk to them and make them feel as though they're part of the group.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
*For questions where you answer "no," consider making an effort to incorporate the activity into your workplace behaviour.	

<sup>3</sup> Checklist based on diversity checklists from these sources: <http://www.adl.org/assets/pdf/education-outreach/Personal-Self-Assessment-of-Anti-Bias-Behavior.pdf>, <https://extension.usu.edu/diversity/files/uploads/checklist704.pdf>