



Mainstreaming Women's Participation and Advancement in Aviation Toolkit

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1. Introduction

Objectives

Many organizations wish to undertake or refine efforts to mainstream women's representation, advancement, and empowerment, but do not know where to start or which considerations to assess. This Toolkit intends to provide practical guidance to increase women's participation, representation, and leadership across civil aviation as a starting point. Grounded in best practices from the transport industry and UN-system wide guidance, this Toolkit provides guidance material, such as step-by-step instructions on how to incorporate these measures into organizational targets, agendas, activities, and programmes, while also pointing to existing examples, models, tools, and resources. This document is not intended to be prescriptive; rather, it aims to encourage organizations of all sizes to adapt these resources according to their own specific contexts and needs. The adoption of its suggested guidance and principles is completely voluntary, and it does not establish new Standards or Recommended Practices (SARPs) or impose additional obligations on States.

The present toolkit draws on decades of mainstreaming policies developed in other contexts to develop this policy for the aviation sector. While there is a wide range of existing frameworks and resources addressing broader inclusion considerations across various sectors, this toolkit is intentionally focused on women in aviation.

This resource is designed to support the advancement of women's representation, leadership, and empowerment within the aviation sector from an organizational perspective. It provides practical guidance to institutions seeking to strengthen inclusive policies, practices, and workplace environments, with a focus on systemic change. The Toolkit is informed by established approaches across the United Nations system, drawing on recognized frameworks and methodologies such as the [UN Women Handbook on Mainstreaming](#), which outlines key principles for integrating equality considerations into institutional processes, and the broader repository of tools developed through the [UN Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality \(IANWGE\)](#), which emphasizes capacity development and coordinated action.¹ This Toolkit adapts these underlying principles to focus specifically on advancing women's participation and progression in aviation, offering a tailored, sector-specific approach grounded in internationally recognized good practices.

Scope

¹ For more examples, see [Gender Equality & Women's Empowerment UNDP SES Toolkit](#), [UNHCR Gender Equality Toolkit](#), [United Nations Police Gender Toolkit Handbook](#)

Target institutions for this Toolkit include public entities and industry stakeholders engaged in any aviation-related activities, including (but not limited to):

- Civil Aviation Authorities, ministries of transport/aviation or other aviation-related public organizations
- Industry such as associations, manufacturers, airlines, airports, Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs), and other private sector stakeholders
- Training centers, academia, and educational institutions
- Non-profits/non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Core Principles

Seven core principles were considered in the development of this Toolkit to help organizations frame their mainstreaming efforts. Users of this Toolkit are encouraged to keep these factors in mind throughout the mainstreaming lifecycle.

- **Focus on outcomes:** Achieve equal representation between men and women, as well as strengthen women's retention in technical and leadership roles, with measurable year-to-year progress.
- **Strengthen leadership accountability:** secure visible commitment and active sponsorship from senior management.
- **Leverage data:** systematically track recruitment, training, licensing, progression, pay, and employee experience.
- **Address the talent pipeline and workplace environment together:** combine scholarships, fair selection processes, and enabling policies.
- **Report progress regularly:** share updates through dashboards and stories linked to business and safety outcomes.
- **Foster collaboration and partnerships:** build support and strengthen stakeholder buy-in.
- **Keep it simple and scalable:** use checklists, pilot projects, and incremental improvements.

Taking into account the above, a series of measures have been proposed to guide the perimeters of this Toolkit:

- Situational Analysis
- Policy, Governance and Accountability Mechanisms
- Integrating Women into Programme design, Implementation and Monitoring
- Human and Financial Resource Allocation
- Measuring and Reporting on Progress

A section has been devoted to each measure, with corresponding guidance, models, tools, examples, and more. Users of this Toolkit should consider that mainstreaming women's

empowerment involves a number of measures and associated programmers, initiatives, plans, and activities to achieve it. Those outlined in this document are non-exhaustive, and may be re-evaluated, further developed, and supplemented as needed. Organizations are encouraged to apply the guidance, tips and tools offered in this Toolkit according to their own unique contexts, capacity, and needs.

Development

Recognizing the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives and insights from across the global aviation sector, ICAO issued a call for collaboration in November 2025 through its Global Network of Gender Focal Points, a knowledge-sharing platform comprising representatives from over 105 Member States and international organizations. Dedicated working groups were established for each of the five measures, meeting from December 2025 to March 2026. Following this phase, initial contributions were submitted to ICAO, enabling the development of the first consolidated draft of the Toolkit, which was circulated to the Network in late May 2026.

After receiving additional feedback from the Network throughout June 2026, ICAO undertook a second drafting phase and finalized preparations to launch the Toolkit at the Global Aviation Gender Summit 2026, held in Luanda, Angola, from 21 to 23 July. In parallel, ICAO's Global Aviation Training (GAT) unit developed a training course designed to support implementation by providing targeted guidance on key concepts and principles outlined in the Toolkit. Both the Toolkit and the training course were made available shortly after the Summit.

ICAO extends its sincere appreciation to the members of the Global Network of Gender Focal Points and its partners for their invaluable contributions, sustained collaboration, and commitment throughout this process. Their expertise, engagement, and shared vision have been instrumental in shaping this initiative and advancing the meaningful integration of women's empowerment across the aviation sector.

2. Context: Why We Need to Mainstream Women's Participation and Advancement in Aviation

Global Commitments

Equality is a universally agreed upon principle and encompasses all areas of peace, development, and human rights. In fact, [the United Nations \(UN\) Charter](#) unequivocally reaffirms the equal rights of men and women.

Yet, women and girls continue to face global and cross-sectoral challenges in terms of representation, opportunities, and advancement. Progress for women in the world of work

has been slow in a number of sectors, including in civil aviation, where there are clear gaps in women's participation across a range of occupations. Not only are women significantly underrepresented in many parts of aviation, they consistently face social, cultural, and economic barriers to entry into the sector while also being met with significant challenges and hindrances to success and growth within the aviation ecosystem.

ICAO's latest [global survey](#) on the status of aviation licensed personnel reveals that the participation of women holding positions as pilots, air traffic controllers, and maintenance technicians has only increased on an overall basis from 4.5% globally in 2016, to 5.1% in 2021. At the same time, the aviation sector continues to face significant workforce and skills shortages across various fields, notably in occupations such as pilots, engineering/maintenance, air navigation services,² operational support roles, and airport services.³

Equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also key to unlocking the full potential for peace, prosperity, and sustainable development worldwide. Advancing women's participation in aviation must be grounded in merit, skills, and competencies, ensuring equal access to opportunities to develop, demonstrate, and apply their expertise. By supporting and empowering women to enter and thrive in aviation through capacity-building and skills development, the sector can tap into a broader, highly qualified talent pool, strengthening resilience and operational continuity.

ICAO established a [Gender Equality Programme](#) in 2017 that aims to promote women's participation and advancement at ICAO, its Member States and industry, including through mainstreaming women and their experiences in all relevant areas of its work. Since the establishment of the Programme, the subsequent ICAO Assemblies requested that ICAO assist States and industry through the development of guidance, tools, and studies on how to advance women's empowerment and representation in the aviation sector.

The 41st Session of the ICAO Assembly in 2022 unanimously adopted Resolution A41-26 *ICAO Gender Equality Programme: Promoting the Participation of Women in the Global Aviation Sector* to mobilize the global aviation community in accelerating women's participation and advancement. The Resolution calls on States, regional and international aviation organizations, and industry to demonstrate strong, determined leadership and commitment to advancing women's empowerment, an imperative that is also enshrined in Goal 5 of the UN's [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

Alongside partners, ICAO convened Global Aviation Gender Summits in South Africa (2018), Spain (2023), and Angola (2026), providing a pivotal platform for the aviation sector to advance collective action in support of women's empowerment in aviation. These Summits brought together UN, Member States, industry, and other aviation stakeholders

² [The aviation sector is facing a skilled-workforce shortage. Here's a solution. | Kearney](#)

³ For more insights, see [2025 Airport Workforce Management Report - Store | ACI World](#)

around shared outcomes to strengthen efforts, resources, and partnerships to empower women globally.

What is Mainstreaming?

While several understandings of “mainstreaming” exist, this Toolkit considers the definition proposed during the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995 in Beijing, where mainstreaming was reaffirmed by Member States of the United Nations as the fundamental strategy to achieve women’s empowerment and designated as the process of:

“Assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.”⁴

Empowerment and mainstreaming are considered two distinct but symbiotic processes. According to [UN Women](#), the empowerment of women is the overarching and long-term development goal, while mainstreaming is a set of specific, strategic approaches as well as technical and institutional processes adopted to achieve that goal.

This Toolkit also emphasizes the importance of mainstreaming women’s participation and advancement in aviation, which in turn reinforces empowerment. For the purposes of this Toolkit, women’s participation refers to the equal and meaningful involvement of women in decision-making processes, institutions, and public, economic, or social life. Women’s advancement refers to women’s progression into positions of greater responsibility, leadership, influence, and authority. In practice, participation can create opportunities for advancement, while advancement can contribute to empowerment.

Why Mainstream Women’s Participation and Advancement?

All stakeholders in aviation industry have a part to play. The long-term sustainability, safety, security, and innovation capacity of the civil aviation sector depends on its ability to attract, retain, and promote talent without discrimination. In an increasingly interconnected, globalized, and multicultural environment, supporting the full participation of women in aviation contributes to safer aviation ecosystems, stronger institutions, broader perspectives in decision-making, and a more sustainable and resilient sector.

Strengthening recruitment, retention, leadership development, and workplace standards and practices across all levels of the organizational structure helps address systemic barriers such as a lack of visibility of aviation careers, sex-based bias and stereotypes, limited access to technical education and training, slower career progression for women,

⁴ [GMS.doc](#)

and underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in the sector. This approach not only expands opportunities for women but also strengthens the aviation sector overall by broadening talent pipelines, improving innovation, and enhancing organizational performance. Mainstreaming ensures that empowering women is not a one-time effort but a sustained, industry-wide transformation with staunch support from senior leadership and allies, creating an environment where women can enter, thrive, and lead in aviation, thereby achieving long-term resilience for the sector.

3. Mainstreaming Women's Participation and Advancement in Aviation: Core Principles, Guidance and Considerations

Section 1: Situational Analysis of Women in Aviation & Theory of Change

1.1 Why is a Situational Analysis of Women and Theory of Change Important?

Progress towards greater participation of women in aviation continues to remain slow. Simply counting *how* many women are in each role will not tell us *why* progress is not accelerating. **Situational analysis** of women is a critical examination of how differences in roles, activities, needs, opportunities, and rights/entitlements affect men, women, girls and boys in certain situations or contexts.

Situational analysis examines the relationships between women and men and their access to and control of resources and the constraints they face relative to each other.⁵ For this toolkit, situational analysis is defined as a structured, evidence-based process that examines differences in participation, access, and progression within the aviation workforce—from recruitment and training pathways to retention, progression and leadership—across all roles and levels of the sector. This is critical for the aviation sector because it uncovers the systemic patterns stalling progress and ensures that subsequent interventions are evidence-based, measurable, and aligned with real-world needs. Without it, organizations risk investing in initiatives that overlook intersectional barriers and fail to address the root causes of inequality and lack of a balanced representation.

1.2 Core Principles & Guidelines

Effectively understanding the current situation and planning for change requires adhering to core principles that emphasize thoroughness, inclusivity, and strategic foresight.

A. Core Concepts for Situational Analysis:

When conducting a Situational Analysis, organizations must consider:

⁵ [Gender Equality Glossary | Home](#)

- **The Glass Ceiling & Sticky Floor:** Recognize that women's distribution across roles (e.g., horizontal concentration in lower-paid roles or invisible barriers to senior leadership) reflects structural constraints rather than preference or capability.
- **Intersectionality:** The analysis must surface barriers faced by women at the intersection of other identities, such as race, age, disability, and socioeconomic background.
- **Data Limitations:** Acknowledge the absence of sex-disaggregated data (especially for unlicensed roles) and the voluntary nature of reporting. The evidence base may be structurally incomplete, requiring targeted data collection.
- **Organizational Culture:** Systemic barriers (bias, health, and safety challenges) are both a finding of the analysis *and* a constraint on conducting it, as they can inhibit open participation.
- **Geographic variation:** Legal frameworks, cultural norms, policy environments, and levels of economic development differ significantly across regions and countries. As a result, analysis conducted in one context may not be directly transferable to another. Organizations should supplement global benchmarking data with regional and national-level data where available.
- **The Business Case:** Leverage industry opportunities to gain buy-in. Aviation is characterized by rapid growth; increasing women's participation helps solve talent scarcity and drives greater productivity and profitability.
- **Global momentum:** Platforms such as ICAO's Gender Equality Programme are working to accelerate progress towards greater representation and empowerment of women in aviation. Undertaking a situational analysis supports these efforts and helps build collective capacity and capability at all levels.

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Understanding intersectionality in a situational analysis on women in aviation

The concept of intersectionality means that the barriers, opportunities, and experiences of individual women are shaped by the interaction of not only their identity as women, but also other dimensions such as ethnicity, age, religion, and socioeconomic background.

⁶These dimensions interact to produce distinct advantages and disadvantages that cannot be captured by examining only one dimension alone. In aviation, this means that women do not experience barriers uniformly. For instance, access to aviation education and training pathways, career entry, and advancement opportunities can differ significantly depending on economic resources, national context, and social norms. As such, a situational analysis must account for these intersecting variables to avoid treating “women in aviation” as a homogeneous group.

An intersectional approach to a situational analysis may involve the following:

⁶ [Intersectionality resource guide and toolkit | Publications | UN Women – Headquarters](#)

- *In data collection:* Wherever possible and with appropriate consent and confidentiality, collect data disaggregated not only by sex but by additional dimensions such as age band, ethnicity, or disability status.
- *In qualitative research:* Design interviews and focus groups that invite participants to speak to how multiple dimensions of identity, role and experience intersect and shape perspectives.
- *In developing actions:* Ensure that interventions do not inadvertently benefit some women while leaving the intersectional barriers faced by others unaddressed.
- Integrating intersectionality strengthens the analytical and policy relevance of situational assessments and supports the development of more effective strategies to enhance women's participation, retention, and leadership in the sector.

B. Core Principles for a Theory of Change:

To build upon the situational analysis with a robust plan, a **Theory of Change (ToC)** becomes essential. This is a comprehensive map of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. For women's empowerment, a ToC maps the causal pathways from daily activities to long-term impacts, focusing on addressing the structural barriers and workplace norms that limit women's full participation and advancement.

Developing a ToC is the process of making collective assumptions explicit by making your team's thinking visible. It ensures that everyone involved in a social change effort understands the strategic intent and agrees on the pathway to get there. A clear ToC strengthens strategies, maximizes results, and ensures that initiatives address both practical needs and strategic interests to achieve sustainable equality. ToC should be:

- **Dynamic & Reflective:** A useful ToC is not static; it is a living tool that supports ongoing reflection, learning, and adaptation based on real-world feedback.
- **Collaborative:** Its development must be a consultative and participatory process involving leadership, staff, and external stakeholders to ensure diverse perspectives and broad ownership.
- **Logic-Driven:** At its core, a ToC relies on explicit "If/Then" logic (e.g., If scenario X happens, then Y will change positively). This logic helps articulate causal pathways and identify necessary preconditions.

1.3 Steps and Guidance

The strategic process of women empowerment mainstreaming begins with a comprehensive situational analysis, followed immediately by the development of a clear Theory of Change (ToC) to guide action.

A. Conducting a Situational Analysis

Undertaking a situational analysis is a collective effort. It requires clear ownership and shared accountability to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach.

Roles & Responsibilities for a Situational Analysis: Undertaking a situational analysis on women in aviation is most effective when approached as a collective effort across an organization or institution, rather than the responsibility of a single individual. Clear ownership and shared accountability for the various stages of the process help ensure a more comprehensive and sustainable approach. The table below provides examples of possible roles and responsibilities.

Role	Responsibility
Designated lead or analysis team	Responsible for organizing the situational analysis and ensuring its integrity. This could be a Data, Research, Policy, or Quality Assurance team. Ideally this team will include individuals with specific expertise related to women's empowerment and relevant dynamics.
Senior leadership	Leadership buy-in is required. Senior management should formally sponsor the analysis, ensure adequate access to data and stakeholders, and commit to findings and recommendations being acted upon. Without this commitment, analysis merely produces reports rather than change.
Data or analytics team	Ensures the analysis is evidence-based through the quality and rigor of the data used. Responsible for the integrity of quantitative data collection, disaggregation, and analysis.
Human resources and people team	Provide access to workforce data, recruitment records, retention statistics, pay equity data and organizational policy documents.
External expertise (where needed)	Organizations that lack necessary internal analysis capability may wish to commission external specialists, particularly for qualitative research and analysis.

The 8-Step Situational Analysis Methodology

The following eight steps provide a structured methodology for conducting a situational analysis of women in aviation. They are designed to be applicable across all types of aviation organizations at any scale.

1: Define the Purpose & Scope

Clearly define what the analysis will focus on and the key questions you want to answer. A well-defined scope helps ensure that the analysis remains focused and that resources are directed to the areas where evidence is most needed.

A situational analysis can be conducted across three interconnected levels:

Level	What is examined
Individual and role level	How barriers influence access, participation, safety, and career progression for women in aviation roles such as pilots, ground operations, and security personnel.
Organizational level	How policies, culture, and practices within aviation organizations, such as airport companies or regulatory agencies, affect women in practice.
System level	How laws, national policies, regulations, and funding mechanisms reinforce or mitigate women's empowerment across the broader aviation system.

Determine the key questions you are looking to answer. For example:

1. Where are women concentrated in the organization, and what barriers prevent progression from those roles?
2. Are uniforms, equipment, and facilities suitable for both men and women?
3. How do recruitment processes, assessment criteria, and selection decisions affect balance in hiring between men and women?
4. What is the pattern of training enrollment and completion?
5. How does organizational culture including shift patterns and part-time availability affect the retention of women?

Illustrative example: A national aviation authority wants to understand why women remain underrepresented in their technical inspection roles. The scope is defined to examine recruitment pathways, hiring and retention data, and organizational culture within the technical teams.

2. Develop a Data Collection Plan

Determine what data is needed to answer your core questions. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data sources is strongly recommended as quantitative data identifies the scale and pattern or gaps, while qualitative data identifies why the gaps exist and what sustains them.

Examples of quantitative data:

- Percentage of women and men in each role.

- Recruitment application, shortlisting, and appointment rates by sex.
- Promotion and retention rates by sex and role.
- Enrolment and completion rates in training programmes by sex.
- Pay equity data by sex and role.
- Uptake of family leave, flexible working, and part-time arrangements by sex.

Examples of qualitative data:

- Organizational culture survey results.
- Outcomes of interviews with individuals across roles.
- Outcomes of exit interviews
- Focus group findings from groups of employees by role, career stage, or demographic profile.
- Workshops with networks or industry associations including unions.
- Document review of recruitment material, job descriptions, and HR policies.

Illustrative example: An airport maps all available datasets and discovers that while they track the representation of women across corporate and senior management roles, they have no sex-disaggregated data for security staff, operations, or customer experience, which prompts a targeted data-collection plan.

3. Review Existing Data

Before collecting new data, understand what data already exists. Aviation organizations can draw on a range of internal and external sources.

Examples of external data sources:

- ICAO [dashboard](#) provides sex-disaggregated data on licensed personnel (pilots, air traffic controllers, and maintenance engineers) by ICAO region.
- IATA [25by2025 Reports](#) provide benchmarking data from signatory organizations on women's representation in senior roles and in under-represented functions.
- ACI's 2025 Airport Workforce Management [Report](#) reveals how airports are reshaping their approach to attraction and retention, based on insights from 72 airports and 19 case studies from around the world, and includes key demographic data on the ratio of women and men at different organizational levels.
- National statistics or census data from the relevant State.
- Previous analyses, impact assessments, or audits conducted by your organization or comparable organizations.
- Academic research and policy papers on women's empowerment in aviation as well as forecasts and reports from industry stakeholders such as manufacturers.

Examples of internal data sources:

- HR workforce data such as role data disaggregated by sex.
- Recruitment records such as applications and appointments.
- Training records such as assessment outcomes.
- Pay and benefits data such as base pay by sex and role.
- Exit sex-disaggregated interview data such as reasons for departure.
- Employee survey results.

Illustrative example: An airline reviews global benchmarking data and realizes its female engineer representation is below the international average. This prompts deeper investigation into its engineering recruitment and selection processes as well as workplace culture within maintenance operations.

In the case of resource or capacity limitations for data collection, organizations are also recommended to begin with readily available data and progressively expand the scope and rigor of the analysis as capability develops.

4. Identify Gaps

Determine what you still need to know to answer your core questions. Gaps often include:

- A lack of sex-disaggregated data particularly for unlicensed roles such as ground operations, security, and customer-facing roles;
- An absence of tracking women in training completion rates;
- Limited or no data on harassment, bullying, discrimination, or hostile workplace experiences;
- Lack of data on the uptake and impact of flexibility policies, parental leave, and return-to-work programmes;
- Retention and attrition rates by sex;
- Empowerment beyond representation. Most data measures participation rather than empowerment. Important empowerment indicators include decision-making authority, influence over organizational policies, and access to strategic projects;
- Transition rates from education/training to employment; and
- Data on women exists but not by its intersection with ethnicity, age, disability, or other dimensions.

Illustrative example: A training provider discovers they track the enrolment of women but not completion rates which is masking a higher dropout rate among women in the first year of pilot training. Targeted data collection will help identify this gap and what factors are leading to it.

5. Collect New Data (If needed)

Where gaps in information have been identified, additional data collection may be needed. The choice of data collection method should be guided by the nature of the gap being addressed. Quantitative methods are useful for measuring the scale or extent of an

issue while qualitative methods help provide insights into the underlying causes and experiences associated with it.

To maximise participation and the quality of data collection:

- Keep surveys short and use plain, accessible language
- Offer multiple modes of response (online, paper-based, verbal)
- Explain clearly why the data is being collected and how it will be used.
- Guarantee anonymity where possible and confirm that individual responses will be presented as aggregated data and shall not be identifiable in reported findings.
- Confirm that participation is voluntary and that non-participation carries no consequences.

For specific questions and metric libraries to use in your analysis, refer to the tools in [Section 5](#).

6. Consolidate and Interpret Findings

Analyzing all data and determining the implications of findings requires examination across both quantitative and qualitative sources. The goal is to not simply describe what the data shows, but to interpret what it means for women's empowerment in the specific context of what is being analyzed.

How findings are presented will depend on the audience and the decisions they are positioned to make. This can include executive summaries with visual data and recommendations for senior leadership, full reports with structured data appendices, global reporting publications, or tailored briefings for staff.

Audience	What they need and recommended format
Senior leadership	Summary of findings and how they connect to organizational risk, operational performance and accountability commitments. Format: Two-to-four-page executive summary with visual data presentations.
Human resources and diversity teams	Full analysis of findings with disaggregated data and recommendations specific enough to translate into policy or procedural change. Format: Full report with structured data appendix.
Operational	Findings translated into their specific operational context and

managers	what they mean for how their team recruits, rosters, develops, and retains its people. Format: Contextualised briefings and team-level data summaries.
Regulatory bodies and external stakeholders	Findings that can be compared across organizations and jurisdictions and speak to systemic patterns. Format: Publications, contributions to global reporting, conference presentations.
The workforce	Accessible communication of what was found and what will change as a result. Closing this feedback loop is critical to ensure engagement in future gender analyses. Format: All-staff communications, analysis summary, team briefings.

7. Translate Findings into Action:

Develop tailored recommendations or action plans to integrate findings into organizational design, policy, and practice. Guidance on this is available in the [Annexes](#) of this Toolkit.

8. Plan for Measuring and Reporting:

Establish clear processes for monitoring progress, including how it will be tracked, who will be responsible, and how it will be reported. Guidance on this is available in the [Annexes](#) of this Toolkit. See [Section 5](#) for more details on Monitoring and Reporting.

Once your Situational Analysis is complete, providing a clear understanding of the challenges and opportunities, the next critical step is to develop a Theory of Change. This translates your findings into a strategic roadmap, outlining precisely how your initiatives will lead to the desired empowerment outcomes.

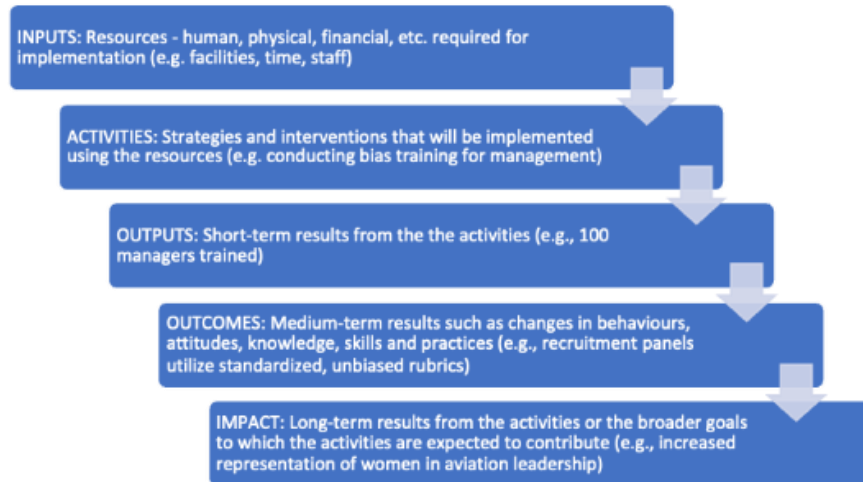
B. Developing Your Theory of Change

While a results chain provides a linear, step-by-step overview of what interventions will be implemented (from Inputs to Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact), a Theory of Change explains the deeper logic behind this sequence. It answers the critical question: why should a specific action lead to a desired result, and under what conditions?

A ToC moves beyond a simple checklist to map out the underlying assumptions, required preconditions, and real-world operational realities necessary to turn your activities into

lasting impact. It explicitly surfaces these "If/Then" causal linkages and the complex web of factors that make the intended change plausible.

Results Chain Example:⁷



Theories of Change can vary between organizations in terms of approach, specific steps, and terminology.

For example, some theories of change have explicit boxes/sections that detail the internal "critical enablers" or preconditions needed to ensure these results as well as the potential barriers and obstacles that could prevent the results.

Regardless of the format and terminology, the direction/impact of the theory of change should be clear ensuring that the "if/then" logic makes sense.

How To Build a Theory of Change

Step 1: Convene your Stakeholders: The development of a ToC must be a consultative process. Engage your steering committee, management, operational staff, and external partners. Involving stakeholders validates the logic of your pathway and ensures diverse perspectives are reflected from the outset.

Step 2: Map the Change Pathways: Work backwards from your goal. Use the following guiding questions with your team to map out each level of your results chain to ensure that your ToC outlines the "why and how" change will happen:

⁷ World Bank, [Designing a Results Framework for Achieving Results: A How to Guide](#)

Results Chain Level	Guiding Questions for your Team:
Ultimate Impact	• Why are we doing this project? What is our overall vision? • What long-term changes do we expect this project to bring about in the aviation sector? • Who are the ultimate beneficiaries?
Intermediate Outcomes	• Who do we expect to reach by the time the project ends? • Who needs to experience a change in behavior, practice, or performance for the ultimate impact to take place? • What will this organization/group be doing <i>better</i> by the end of the project that they are not doing now?
Immediate Outcomes	• Who needs to have which capacity for the intermediate outcomes to occur? (e.g., who needs to understand X, or be able to do Y?) • What are the internal "critical enablers" or preconditions needed to ensure these results? • What are the potential barriers and obstacles that could prevent the results?
Outputs	• What specific service or product needs to be produced for the immediate outcomes to occur? • Who is responsible for delivering this product or service?
Activities	• What exact activities will our implementers undertake to create these outputs? • Who is this activity aimed at?

Step 3: Document Assumptions and Risks

A Theory of Change is inherently a hypothesis. For your "If/Then" logic to hold, certain conditions must be true, and certain challenges must be managed. This step requires you to explicitly document these underlying assumptions and potential risks.

Identify Assumptions

Ask: What are the assumptions supporting the theory that **Activity X** will lead to **Outcome Y**?

Examples of assumptions:

- Dedicated funding mechanisms (e.g., government grants, corporate budgets, international development aid) will be consistently available and prioritized for women's empowerment programs and infrastructure improvements in aviation.

- The global aviation sector will experience stable growth, creating sufficient job opportunities to absorb an expanded and diversified women talent pipeline.

Identify Risks

Ask: What are the potential risks or challenges that could prevent these outcomes from being achieved, and what is needed to overcome them?

Examples of risks:

- Economic downturns or unforeseen global crises (e.g., another pandemic) significantly curb industry growth, leading to reduced hiring and the perception that advancing women's representation is a secondary concern.
- Political priorities shift, or economic pressures lead to a rollback or de-prioritization of women-focused policies and funding at national or international levels.⁸

1.4 Wrap-Up & Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Analysis Informs Strategy:** Situational analysis provides the evidence base, and a Theory of Change translates that evidence into an actionable, logical plan for achieving women's empowerment.
- ✓ **Visualize the Path:** Use the Results Chain to clearly map the connections from inputs to long-term impact, making your strategic intent transparent to all stakeholders.
- ✓ **Test Your Logic:** Explicitly documenting assumptions and anticipating risks is crucial for building a resilient strategy and identifying potential roadblocks *before* they occur.
- ✓ **Iterative Process:** Both situational analysis and the Theory of Change are dynamic tools that should be revisited and refined as you learn and adapt.

⁸ For examples of Theories of Change related to women's empowerment see:

[ILO's Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work](#) ; [Oxfam's Theory of Change for Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming and Networking for gender justice in economic development](#); and [UN Women's Theory of Change for Training for Gender Equality](#)

Section 2: Policy, Governance and Accountability Mechanisms

2.1 Why are Policy, Governance and Accountability Mechanisms Important?

Structural and cultural barriers continue to affect how talent is identified, valued, and advanced in the aviation sector. It is therefore particularly important for organizations to establish strong policies, governance, and accountability mechanisms essential to ensure that the full range of available skills, expertise, and leadership potential is effectively recognized and utilized. Common barriers include **unconscious bias** in recruitment and promotion, **underrepresentation** in technical and leadership roles, **lack of access** to mentoring and sponsorship, **inflexible work arrangements** in a safety and security-critical as well as operationally demanding industry, and **heightened exposure to harassment or retaliation** in male-dominated environments. Without formalized frameworks, such obstacles often persist informally and unevenly across functions and regions.

Mainstreaming women's participation and advancement in aviation requires an **integrated framework** combining policy principles, governance accountability, leadership commitment, operational ownership, and measurable assessment tools. Beyond high-level commitment, effective policy and governance mechanisms translate intent into consistent practice. Clear standards, defined responsibilities, and transparent accountability ensure that empowerment efforts are embedded at every level, ultimately reinforcing competence and increasing the safety, security, and resilience of the aviation workforce.

2.2 Core Principles and Guidelines

When developing policy, governance, and accountability mechanisms to mainstream women's empowerment, organizations should anchor their approach in the following core principles:

- **Formalize and Integrate Commitments:** Women's participation and advancement cannot rely on ad-hoc initiatives, siloed efforts, or inconsistent practices. Organizations must develop stand-alone, measurable policies that are formally endorsed by senior leadership and explicitly integrated into the organization's central strategic planning and budgeting processes.
- **Decentralized Accountability:** True accountability is a shared responsibility. Effective governance requires a multi-level structure where Executive Boards provide strategic vision and sponsorship, senior and mid-level managers are held

accountable for tactical implementation, and frontline staff are empowered to own the daily cultural shifts.

- **Institutionalize Oversight and Advocacy:** Continuous progress requires resolute, active mechanisms. Organizations must establish or leverage existing formal oversight bodies, such as a dedicated Steering Committee led by the head of the organization and cultivate a visible network of champions to monitor targets, challenge biases and setbacks, and maintain momentum over time.
- **Allyship:** Advancement and empowerment are not “women-only” issues. Strong policy, governance and accountability that enable the greater participation and advancement of women also depend on the support of male allies across the organization and the sector more broadly to fully achieve progress.

2.3 Steps and Guidance

A. Developing and adopting a policy

Stand-alone policies and strategies for women’s participation and advancement are critical for driving progress. They establish clear commitments, responsibilities, timelines, and resources, serving as the strategic foundation for any aviation organization’s inclusion efforts.

Key steps for developing your policy:

- **Allocate adequate time:** Dedicate sufficient time to map and consult stakeholders, define scope and methodologies, and subsequently develop and refine the policy thoroughly.
- **Form a Steering Committee:** Create a cross-functional guiding body with representatives from all main departments. Use this team strategically to review the methodology, provide feedback on drafts, and champion the policy across the organization.
- **Conduct a baseline assessment:** Start with an analysis of current strengths and weaknesses. This could involve an inter-departmental **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)** analysis or a staff survey (see Section 1 for guidance on conducting a Situational Analysis first, if needed) to assess current organizational capacity and expertise regarding women’s empowerment.
- **Engage stakeholders early and often:** Use the development process to engage senior managers, the Executive Board (via informal briefings), employees, external experts as well as partners. An inclusive approach ensures that diverse

perspectives across functional area, expertise, and individual identities such as age, ethnicity, and ability, shape the policy from the outset.

- **Define the strategic case and priorities:** Clearly outline *why* women's empowerment matters to your specific organization and identify the priority areas for action (See Section 1 for guidance on developing a Theory of Change for your organization).
- **Align with strategic planning processes:** Policies should be fully aligned with central strategic planning processes and empowerment of women outcomes/targets reflected in the organization's strategic plan.
- **Establish measurable goals:** Set organization-wide, time-bound targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to track progress (see [Section 3](#) for guidance on developing KPIs).
- **Secure formal endorsement:** Ensure the final policy is officially adopted by the Governing Body, Executive Council, or senior leadership team to guarantee long-term institutional commitment.

B, Governance and Accountability

1. Multi-level accountability structure:

Accountability can be cascaded across three organizational levels to ensure full-scale support and compliance for the advancement and empowerment of women.

Level	Description	Key Responsibilities / Actions
Strategic Level – Leadership Governance	Senior leadership, boards, and executive management demonstrate visible commitment.	• Formalization and public endorsement of policies to enable greater participation and empowerment of women • Integration of women's empowerment targets into strategic planning: at least one empowerment of women-related indicator should be included in the main strategic planning document or equivalent • Definition of measurable, time-bound objectives • Budget allocation for implementation • Linking executive performance

		evaluation and incentives to empowerment indicators
Tactical Level – Management Implementation	Department heads and programme managers translate policy into operational practice.	• Translate strategic KPIs into unit-level action plans, including design and implement targeted empowerment initiatives, with clear milestones, responsibilities, and timelines aligned to organizational objectives • Applying bias mitigation measures in evaluation and promotion processes • Managing return-to-work programmes • Ensuring equitable scheduling practices for work hours, taking into account lived realities • Treating discrimination and harassment risks as human-factor safety concerns within Safety Management Systems • Monitoring women's representation and engagement across technical and leadership pipelines
Operational Level – Cultural Ownership	Team members, instructors, and peers influence daily organizational culture.	• Implementing unit-level actions and initiatives assigned under departmental action plans, with clear understanding of individual roles, responsibilities, contributing to the achievement of organizational KPIs • Participating in trainings and act as inclusion champions in detecting bias against women • Peer-level promotion of respectful collaboration • Bottom-up feedback mechanisms to identify unintended policy effects

2. Governance oversight mechanisms:

To drive progress, share learnings, and enhance accountability, a best practice is to establish a dedicated **Women's Participation and Advancement Steering Committee** (or equivalent body).

To be effective, this committee should:

- **Be led from the top:** Chaired by the head of the organization with active participation from other senior leaders.
- **Meet regularly:** Convene at least twice a year.
- **Track corporate performance:** Focus strictly on progress against the targets defined in the organization's women advancement and empowerment policy, strategy, strategic plan, and institutional transformation goals (e.g., financial resourcing and coordination efforts).

If establishing a dedicated, stand-alone committee is not feasible, governance can be integrated into existing decision-making bodies by mandating that current boards or steering committees review periodic women's advancement and empowerment accountability reports.

3. Leadership Champion Networks:

Sustainable change requires visible advocates operating across all organizational levels. The following proposed categories can help drive forward and support policies for women's advancement and empowerment and ensure they are effectively incorporated across the organization.

Level	Role Description	Key Actions
Strategic Champions (CEOs, Directors General, Board Members)	Senior leaders provide direction, visibility, and resource commitment for women's advancement and empowerment agendas.	• Provide public sponsorship of agendas (e.g. signing the IATA 25by25 pledge, ACI Europe Inclusion Charter or the Women in Aviation & Aerospace Charter) and other international charters/pledges • Allocate resources for capacity building and

		infrastructure • Promote women's participation and visibility in governance forums, conferences, and industry events
Tactical Advocates (Department Heads and Unit Leaders)	Mid-level leaders operationalize women's advancement and empowerment initiatives within their units and teams.	• Identify and remove unit-specific participation barriers • Promote collaborative leadership styles
Peer Champions (Team Leads, Instructors, Staff)	Frontline staff and peers embed empowerment practices into everyday workplace culture.	• Reinforce women's-engagement in daily operations • Support peer learning and mutual empowerment • Engage men as allies in normalization of women's advancement and empowerment • Identification of "Women's Empowerment Champions" trained to spot and mitigate bias against women in the workplace

4. External Advocacy:

External advocacy can enhance industry impact through:

- Educational partnerships supporting STEM scholarships and internships for women and girls
- Collaboration with industry organizations and international alliances
- Public awareness campaigns through conferences (i.e. ICAO Global Aviation Gender Summits, International Aerospace Women's Association annual conferences, Women in Aviation International WAI Conferences etc.) and digital platforms (i.e. Air

India's Women in Aviation digital film campaign, WAI Girls in Aviation Day social media challenge, etc.).

*** Text Box***

The Importance of Allyship: Engaging Men as Advocates

Achieving equality and empowerment for women (in alignment with SDG 5) requires a collective transformation of institutional cultures, policies, and power dynamics—areas where men, who often hold disproportionate leadership influence, play a decisive role. Male allies can actively dismantle structural barriers by challenging bias, sponsoring women's career progression, and advocating for inclusive workplace policies, thereby helping to create environments where women's voices are heard and valued.

In aviation specifically, this support is essential. By leveraging their positions to promote equitable opportunities, reshape norms, and support systemic change, male allies are critical partners in unlocking the full potential of the aviation workforce—advancing not only women's empowerment but also innovation, safety, and sustainable growth across the sector. This further reinforces the concept of mainstreaming, where women's advancement and empowerment are not treated as standalone issues, but as cross-organizational and cross-sectoral priorities.

Male allyship can look like:

- Reflecting on and mitigating existing power imbalances and unconscious bias
- Speaking out against violence or harassment in the workplace
- Using influence to advocate for policies that enable progress (e.g. equal pay, career flexible work arrangements, parental leave etc.) and champion opportunities for career growth
- Actively sponsoring women to represent the organization at industry events and platforms

There are a variety of tools and guidance available to foster male allyship. For example, the UN's HeForShe [Barbershop Toolkit](#) and the [Mainstreaming Male Allyship: An Action Guide for Business course](#) developed by UN Global Compact and Equimundo.

2.4 Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Policy, governance, and accountability turn commitment into consistent practice:** High-level commitment must be reinforced through clear strategies, defined responsibilities, and transparent accountability mechanisms. Embedding women's empowerment into core management, safety, and workforce systems ensures efforts are measurable, enforceable, and resilient to leadership change.
- ✓ **Sustainable impact requires shared responsibility and leadership at all levels:** Board-level commitment, management implementation, operational ownership, and collaboration with industry partners and allies are critical to mainstreaming women's empowerment across aviation.

Section 3: Integrating Women into Programme Design, Implementation and Monitoring

3.1 Why is Integrating Women into Programme Design, Implementation and Monitoring Important?

Women are often under-represented in aviation programme design and implementation due to the historically male-dominated nature of the sector, and limited representation in leadership and planning structures. As a result, programmes may miss valuable perspectives, skills, and operational insights that women bring. This can limit the effectiveness of initiatives, create operational blind spots, reduce innovation, constrain talent pipelines, and weaken the long-term sustainability of aviation programmes.

Mainstreaming women's participation and advancement throughout the programme cycle helps ensure that aviation programmes are designed and delivered in ways that fully leverage the sector's available talent and expertise. This approach involves both **integrating** women's advancement into existing strategic plans and initiatives, and developing **targeted programmes** specifically designed to support women's participation. This is not simply a matter of representation, but rather an essential step to ensure programs are relevant, effective, and credible, enhancing the safety, security, and resilience of the aviation workforce.

3.2 Core Principles and Guidelines

When engaging in and planning for programme design, implementation, or reassessment, organizations should keep in mind the following principles and considerations:

- **Evidence-Based Design:** Programme design should never rely on assumptions about women's needs or availability. Every initiative must be rooted in concrete workforce data, situational analyses, and direct stakeholder input.
- **Barrier-Free Access:** Programmes must be designed with diverse participation in mind from day one. This means proactively identifying and mitigating unintended biases in eligibility, scheduling, and delivery, rather than treating accessibility as an afterthought or an "exception."
- **Accountability through Measurement:** Good intentions do not equal good outcomes. Women's advancement and empowerment must be treated as a measurable business objective, with clear KPIs, targets, and continuous monitoring integrated into the core of the programme.
- **Set Objectives:** Targets must be specific, measurable goals that intentionally address inequalities and promote equitable outcomes for women and men. They

must go beyond counting how many women participate in a programme and focus on whether women are able to access opportunities, benefit from interventions, advance into leadership positions and exercise influence in decision making.

- **Evaluate Long-Term Impact:** Evaluation will show whether the programme creates sustainable change rather than short term outputs. Many initiatives can demonstrate immediate results—such as the number of women trained, mentored, or participating—but these achievements do not necessarily translate into lasting empowerment, career advancement, or systemic change.

3.3 Steps and Guidance

Effective integration of women into the aviation sector requires a systematic approach across the full programme cycle. This involves two main strategies: integrating women's advancement into existing strategic plans and core programs, and developing new, dedicated initiatives.

A. Mainstreaming Women's Participation and Advancement into Strategic Planning and Existing Programmes

Mainstreaming women's participation and advancement means embedding specific dimensions into an organization's highest-level strategies and results frameworks. Strategic plans dictate long-term direction, influence resource allocations, and define accountability. If women's participation and advancement are absent from these plans, related activities often remain inconsistent or dependent on individual champions.

Embed in Strategic Planning:

- Ensure women's participation and advancement objectives are reflected as "high-level results" in sector priorities, corporate plans, and aviation development plans.
- Integrate relevant KPIs and outcomes directly into strategic planning documents. Without these, organizations cannot fully demonstrate compliance or accountability.

Examples of High-Level Strategic Commitments:

- Systematic collection and analysis of sex-disaggregated data.
- Conducting impact assessments of organizational policies.
- Committing to increasing women's participation in technical and leadership roles.
- Improving retention and career advancement for women in aviation.

Integrate Women's Empowerment into Programme & Result Frameworks:

When designing or evaluating programs, ensure women's participation and advancement considerations are integral to objectives, expected results, and implementation arrangements.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for women's participation and advancement should be:

- Specific and measurable.
- Linked to institutional objectives.
- Supported by reliable data.
- Monitored regularly.
- Assigned to responsible departments or managers.
- Distinguish clearly between *activities* (e.g., conducting a training program) and *results* (e.g., increasing the percentage of women in technical aviation roles).

See [Section 5](#) on Monitoring and Reporting for more details on developing indicators for women's empowerment.

B. Designing & Implementing Core Programmes

When designing new aviation programmes (or evaluating existing ones like technical training, leadership pipelines, or safety rollouts), managers must ensure the design itself does not unintentionally restrict access for women. Follow these steps to build inclusion directly into the programme cycle:

Action Area	How to Execute
1. Base Design on Evidence & Target Groups	Use situational analysis and workforce data to clearly identify your intended participants. Assess women's specific needs, participation barriers, and workplace dynamics before finalizing programme objectives.
2. Ensure Fair & Inclusive Eligibility	Scrutinize entry requirements for unintended bias. Remove unnecessary filters and avoid "proxy" criteria (e.g., requiring a specific tenure that disproportionately excludes women who have taken career breaks). Design selection processes that actively mitigate unintended exclusion.
3. Design for Operational Realities (Flexible Modalities)	Address practical participation barriers. Evaluate whether the delivery model itself creates obstacles (e.g., shift work, fatigue,

	non-linear progression, travel). Ensure programmes are accessible to women with different schedules or caregiving commitments by offering modular formats, blended delivery, or asynchronous options.
4. Account for Workplace Culture & Norms	Identify and mitigate organizational dynamics that may discourage participation, such as stigma, fear of backlash, or a lack of visible representation. Use strategic outreach featuring visible leadership endorsement and credible role models, without framing women's participation as "remedial."
5. Supportive Participation	Establish participatory feedback mechanisms (e.g., regular beneficiary forums, user-led program reviews) that allow target women to actively shape and evaluate programs, fostering ownership and trust. Leverage partnerships and male allies to strengthen overall engagement.

C. Targeted Action: Dedicated Programming to Inspire and Empower Women and Girls

Beyond integrating women's participation and advancement into different thematic programmes, policies and strategies, organizations are encouraged to implement programmes specifically designed to inspire, uplift, and empower women across the aviation ecosystem. These initiatives are crucial for strengthening participation and retention.

Cooperation and Collaboration:

- Support industry-wide events and actively participate in state and global commitments.
- Encourage engagement of male counterparts as partners and advocates to foster dialogue on barriers and bias.
- Track progress through sex-disaggregated data to measure impact and ensure accountability.
- **Example:** Argentina's Interinstitutional Framework Agreement and Aeronautical Gender and Diversity Round Table. See more [here](#).

Multisectoral and Multidisciplinary Partnerships:

- Build collaborations across aviation and related industries (e.g., with STEM programs, universities).

- Engage women's empowerment teams to align with objectives for broad participation.
- Work with external institutions to leverage expertise and resources.

Funding, Scholarships, and Pipeline Support:

- Prioritize funding and scholarship initiatives as a critical component for expanding access to aviation careers.
- Leverage partnership support from industry actors to sustain and scale these opportunities.
- Consider establishing programmes that support training, funding, and employability such as [those](#) established by the South Africa Civil Aviation Authority.

See [Annex C](#) for a detailed blueprint for a model "Women in Aviation" programme. The blueprint provides a comprehensive, scalable framework that can be tailored by Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs), airlines, airports, Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs), and educational institutions to systematically increase women participation across the aviation ecosystem.

D. Case study

Women have traditionally been under-represented in aviation technical fields. However, encouraging progress is being observed within ICAO's environmental technical bodies. The Committee on Aviation Environmental Protection (CAEP), established in 1983 as a technical committee of the ICAO Council, supports the development of policies and Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) on aircraft noise, emissions, and broader environmental impacts. Today, women comprise around 40% of CAEP Members and Observers, representing a fourfold increase compared to two decades ago. A similar upward trend is seen in the ICAO Technical Advisory Body (TAB), established in 2019 to provide recommendations to the ICAO Council on eligible emissions units for the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), where women's representation has nearly doubled to approximately 60% since its establishment.

A tangible example of this trend was demonstrated during the ICAO Aviation Climate Week 2026, where women represented approximately 41% of session moderators and 36% of total participants. This demonstrates the increasing visibility and contribution of women in technical and policy discussions on aviation environmental protection, including cleaner energies, climate adaptation, market-based measures, and long-term decarbonization strategies.

These trends reflect the results of ICAO's sustained efforts to enhance women's empowerment and support women's career advancement within its governing and technical bodies. Increased participation of women in these technical groups and major public events also strengthens programme design, implementation, and monitoring by bringing more diverse perspectives and inclusiveness into technical assessments and decision-making

3.4 Wrap-Up & Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Integrate Early & Strategically:** Programme accessibility and effectiveness begin with early design decisions. Embed women's participation conditions, barriers, and needs from the outset, and ensure women's empowerment is central to strategic planning, not an afterthought.
- ✓ **Design Inclusively:** Review program objectives and activities with a women's empowerment lens to ensure they respond to real gaps, are measurable through sex-disaggregated data, and are accessible, not relying on assumptions of equal access or informal networks.
- ✓ **Deliver with Support:** Use participatory practices, supportive roles, and broad partnerships to strengthen engagement and improve programme delivery. Communicate clearly and use partnerships to support women in delivery roles.
- ✓ **Monitor Continuously:** Monitor women's participation and lived experience during implementation using simple indicators and qualitative feedback. Regularly review insights to make adaptive adjustments, ensure transparency, and strengthen future program design.
- ✓ **Leverage Dedicated Initiatives:** Where applicable, use targeted programs, such as outreach, mentoring, scholarship pathways, or return-to-work initiatives, to specifically strengthen the participation and retention of women and girls across the aviation ecosystem.

Section 4: Human and Financial Resource Allocation

4.1 Why is Human Resources and Financial Allocation Important?

Aviation organizations worldwide face persistent challenges: high turnover, critical skills shortages, and a significant underrepresentation of women, particularly in specialized roles. Addressing these issues is not merely a social objective but a strategic imperative. To increase women's representation and leadership across the aviation industry, women's

empowerment initiatives must be backed by the same rigorous financial planning and dedicated human-resource strategies as any other core business function.

Inclusive HR policies, from fair recruitment, retention, and career development to inclusive workplace practices and leadership programs, help dismantle systemic barriers and expand opportunities at every level. When paired with targeted financial commitments, policy is translated into tangible support that enables women to access and sustain careers in aviation.

Effective **outreach and recruitment** are vital to broaden the talent pipeline, inspiring future generations and diversifying the workforce. Once onboard, prioritizing **retention and career development** is crucial; it directly tackles turnover costs, keeps experienced talent, and ensures all employees, especially women, have clear paths for growth and advancement. This can only be achieved by **fostering a workplace** where fair treatment, predictable conditions, and support services boost engagement and productivity, ultimately enhancing the industry's reputation. Crucially, none of this is possible without **dedicated budget and intentional resourcing**, which signals genuine organizational commitment and translates policy into sustainable, impactful action.

4.2 Core Principles and Guidelines

Advancing women in aviation requires an integrated framework built on foundational principles that drive sustainable change across the entire talent cycle, from attraction and recruitment through to development and retention. Organizations must align with the following core guidelines:

- **Proactive Engagement & Inspiration:** Cultivate the future talent pipeline through early and inspiring engagement. Outreach efforts should begin well before recruitment to build awareness and confidence in aviation careers, actively inspiring the next generation of women and girls.
- **Supportive & Predictable Work Environment:** Stabilize the work environment through predictability, utilizing advance rostering and standardized family-supportive policies. Drive culture change with strong leadership commitment and robust harassment prevention protocols. Foster social dialogue to integrate employee concerns and formalize retention pathways (including mentorship and sponsorship) to prevent skill loss and ensure continuous support.
- **Strategic & Transparent Resourcing:** Embed women's participation and advancement as a core business objective through responsive budgeting. This means analyzing how financial decisions impact women, allocating and protecting

specific funds for women's empowerment initiatives, and ensuring budget transparency to hold leadership accountable and prevent efforts from being absorbed into general operational budgets.

- **Standardizing Fair Practice:** Retention and all employment strategies must be grounded in decent work, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity, extending beyond optional diversity add-ons. This includes implementing bias-aware practices to reduce bias in feedback and advancement, and ensuring policies account for the full career and life cycle, including caregiving responsibilities and career interruptions.
- **Merit-Based Practices:** Recruitment, promotion and development opportunities should remain merit-based, transparent and competency-driven, with measures focused on removing unnecessary barriers to women's participation rather than altering selection criteria.

4.3 Steps and Guidance

A. Retention and Career Development

1. Objective Setting & Personal Development Plans: Do both raters and employees understand how success is defined and are performance and promotion criteria communicated transparently at the start of the review cycle?

What/Why	How
Set clear goals and expectations based on objective job requirements. <i>The lack of goal clarity leaves room for subjectivity and bias.</i>	✓ Ensure objectives and goals are SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. See more here. ✓ Performance goals and behavioural expectations are to be clearly articulated and agreed upon between the employee and their supervisors. ✓ Performance objectives are to align with business/organization strategies and have clear measurements to track progress.
Include specific women's empowerment objectives for all leaders <i>Inclusive leadership is an essential leadership competency</i>	✓ Include women's advancement and empowerment related objectives for all employees. ✓ Include performance measures in leader and team KPIs. For example, % of team participating in women's empowerment specific training, % of positive responses in engagement surveys related to perception of leader's demonstrated commitment to inclusive behaviors.

	✓ Leaders are accountable to assess inclusive leadership capability during the promotion process for anyone eligible for promotion into a leadership position. ✓ Leaders communicate and cascade their women's empowerment objectives to their teams, to heighten accountabilities for all. Direct supervisors should discuss objectives with their team members during their performance reviews and ongoing performance conversations to ensure all employees feel responsible to display and role model inclusive behaviours in their daily interactions. ✓ Leaders encourage and facilitate team members across all functions (e.g., aviation security, environment) to identify and embed women's empowerment considerations relevant to their specific areas of work.
Develop clear career development plans that include targeted support for underrepresented groups <i>Including discussion around the development of skills and competencies can increase employee performance by 13% and may help to reduce differential opportunities to advance</i>	✓ Discuss possible career development aspirations with employees and align development opportunities to support it. ✓ Capture promotion expectations and discussions in the performance system to allow for change of managers to be up to date with employee's ambitions. ✓ Have targeted mentoring and sponsorship programs geared toward women. According to research, having someone higher up in the company advocate on behalf of women, increases their chances of earning top performance ratings. ✓ Leadership and any targeted development programs should include female participants, and the participation by demographics should be monitored.
Provide support and direction for the preparation of self-evaluations <i>Self-evaluation behavior can be shaped by cultural</i>	✓ Ensure self-evaluation bias is a topic included in unconscious bias training for employees at all levels. ✓ Provide guidance that helps employees prepare objective self-assessments. The Centre for Work

<i>norms and by how self-promotion is seen. Studies have repeatedly shown that women are more likely to under-evaluate on self-assessments while men are more likely to over-evaluate (more here and here).</i>	Life Law provides useful resources on writing effective self-reviews.
Reduce financial barriers to staying in career pathways	✓ Offer financial support programmes such as sponsorship programmes, loan underwriting etc. to reduce training costs and debt burden
Offer targeted training	✓ Implement leadership development programs and career opportunities to develop balanced emerging women leaders with both technical expertise and corporate governance appreciation. ✓ Organizations can also incorporate unconscious bias training within their training programs to promote a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

2. Performance Review: Are managers and decision makers fully equipped to recognize and disrupt bias during performance reviews? Is there consistency in approaches to providing feedback?

Provide training to all supervisors on unconscious bias and the skills needed to disrupt bias during the decision-making process. <i>A biased review can falsely inflate or deflate performance metrics. Furthermore, biased reviews can result in employee disengagement and present a retention risk</i>	✓ All supervisors to receive training on how to minimize the use of bias during the promotions process. ✓ Use formal prompts that encourage objectivity on appraisal forms. ✓ Incorporate bias-disrupting prompts into appraisal materials and performance review guidance. Prompt examples: - o “Consider including a checklist, encouraging critical thinking and minimising the impact of bias”. - o “Did you consider performance throughout the entire period of the appraisal?”
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<i>if an individual feels they have been held back unfairly from a promotion.</i>	- o “Did you consider your rating in light of all the criteria listed?” - o “Give three specific examples of how the employee demonstrated a particular capability?”
Provide actionable and frequent feedback. <i>Multiple check-ins and touchpoints with employees over the course of the year increases transparency and ensures alignment in expectations.</i>	✓ Increase the frequency of feedback cycles, for example to monthly or quarterly, and encourage ongoing, timely feedback. ✓ Integrate frequent feedback conversations. If implementing more regular feedback conversations is not feasible, instruct supervisors to take regular notes and have continuous dialogue throughout the review period so they have a record to consult when completing evaluations. ✓ Replace traditional top-down performance appraisals with regular check-ins (more here).
Employ multiple evaluation resources to minimize bias. <i>Asking several people to evaluate an individual engages multiple data points and encourages a broader perspective on performance, both of which act to minimise bias.</i>	✓ Performance feedback should be provided by multiple stakeholders, including bottom-up and top-down and peer group feedback. ✓ 360 reviews – ideally are to include specific examples and not just generic statements to enable a more objective look at performance.

3. Mentoring Programmes: Why is mentoring important for women in aviation? How can organizations effectively implement and manage mentoring programmes?

Establish a formal structured mentoring programme. <i>Having a structured programme ensures there is a proper framework with clear outcomes for mentors and mentees.</i>	✓ Identify aims, objectives and scope of the programme. ✓ Define roles and responsibilities of mentors and mentees. ✓ Allocate responsibility for running the programme. ✓ Develop a mentoring programme policy and guidance including roles, expectations and confidentiality.
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Attract Participants. <i>A promotion strategy is needed to inform staff about the mentoring programme and benefits.</i>	✓ Develop a promotion strategy that may include: - o Announcements about the programme to staff, such as emails, newsletters or internal employee website - o Hold webinars or workshops to provide information about the programme - o Proactively encourage and recruit men in technical and leadership positions to serve as mentors, particularly given their current representation in these roles.
Match mentors and mentees. <i>Profile-based matching helps ensure mentoring is purposeful, inclusive, and outcome-oriented.</i>	✓ Develop standardized mentor and mentee profile templates to be completed by participants. ✓ Define clear matching criteria, such as: - o Alignment between mentee development goals and mentor experience - o Exposure to different functions or leadership levels - o Avoidance of direct reporting-line relationships - o Consideration of operational constraints (e.g. shift work, duty locations).
<i>Leverage Group Mentorship</i> <i>Structured group mentorship allows access to a network of women who share similar challenges, and professional, educational or personal development goals to further encourage advancement through shared experiences.</i>	✓ Define scope of group mentorship network and identify leads to organize and coordinate participation. ✓ Establish regular touchpoints (e.g. monthly, bi-monthly) to encourage networking and information-sharing. ✓ Activities can include guided discussion sessions, skill-building workshops, and peer coaching.
Guide Mentoring <i>Providing mentors with clear guidance and support to help ensure they are well equipped to mentor</i>	✓ Prepare and provide training for mentors on effective and inclusive mentoring practices. ✓ Provide mentors with guidelines and practical tools they can use throughout the mentoring cycle.

<i>effectively, consistently, and inclusively.</i>	✓ Establish clear checkpoints to maintain momentum and address issues early on.
Measure success <i>Evaluating the programme ensures it remains effective and identifies ways to improve</i>	✓ Collect feedback from mentors and mentees at programme completion using a questionnaire form. ✓ Analyze the results of the questionnaires to identify recommendations for improvement of the programme.

4. Equality and Safety by Design: Embedding fairness, non-discrimination, safe working conditions and equal opportunities into the core structures, policies, and daily practices of aviation organizations so that inclusive and high-quality employment is built into the system.⁹ This should include designing policies and interventions that support women in aviation throughout all stages of their careers, including caregiving periods and career breaks.

What/ Why	How?
Equal pay and conditions	✓ Conduct pay gap audits. ✓ Ensure equal pay for work of equal value. ✓ Transparent promotion and remuneration systems. ✓ Ensure there is a clear framework for closing gaps.
Eliminate violence and harassment from the workplace	Developing and implementing measures to protect workers from violence and harassment leads to better outcomes for the retention of workers and addresses an important factor that can lead to the early exit of women from the workplace. International instruments such as the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Violence & Harassment Convention and the accompanying recommendation (C.190 and R206) as well as the ICAO Montreal Protocol 2014 provide important measures on building safer workplaces. Some measures can include: ✎ Preventive Policies and Risk Assessment: Develop and implement workplace policies to prevent violence and harassment, including assessing risks specific to roles, work settings, and vulnerable groups.

⁹ See [2025 Airport Workforce Management Report - Store | ACI World](#) for examples of best practices.

	✗ Recognise sector- specific vulnerabilities and develop appropriate measures: Aviation workers especially in the provision of aviation operations and services face particular vulnerabilities from shift work and customer- facing roles. Developing policies and measures for a safe commute and preventing and mitigating third- party violence will build a safer world of work for women workers. ✗ Clear Policies and Zero-Tolerance Enforcement: Develop and communicate a comprehensive anti-violence and anti-harassment policy, explicitly stating zero tolerance, with clear consequences for violations. ✗ Safe Reporting and Response Mechanisms: Establish confidential and accessible reporting channels, ensure timely investigation of complaints, and protect complainants from retaliation. ✗ Training and Awareness Programs: Conduct mandatory training for all staff and management on recognizing, preventing, and responding to harassment, including promoting an inclusive workplace culture. ✗ Demonstrate Leadership Commitment; Publicly communicate expectations for respectful conduct, modelling appropriate behaviours, enforcing policies and allocating resources towards prevention and response efforts. ✗ Monitor Workplace Climate: Conduct regular assessments to identify risks before problems escalate. ✗ Provide Support Services: Implement services for employees who have experienced violence and harassment in the workplace (e.g. employee assistance programmes, mental health services, crisis and support lines).
Occupational safety and health considerations	✓ Integrate women's empowerment-responsive OSH policies. ✓ Adapt uniforms, equipment and facilities. ✓ Accommodate pregnancy and health needs, as well as dedicated facilities for breastfeeding. ✓ Ensure safe transportation to the workplace, particularly for overnight shifts

Isolation in male-dominated occupations	✓ Establish women's networks, peer support groups, and cross-occupational mentoring platforms (i.e. women in aerospace and women in maintenance groups, women pilot networks etc.).
Bridging skills gaps after career breaks	Structured re-entry and reskilling programmes can ensure women's careers are not disadvantaged because of career breaks which women are likely to take due to caregiving and social responsibilities. These programmes can include- ✗ Offering refresher training, ✗ Recertification support, ✗ Mentoring during reintegration ✗ Internal Mobility / Rotational Programmes
Engage in social dialogue for feedback and continuous workplace improvement	Engaging employers, workers' organizations, and regulators in collaborative decision-making ensures policies address women's needs, monitor progress, and create shared accountability for long-term career continuity in aviation.

B) Outreach and Recruitment

1. Employer Branding: An organization's public branding and imaging can strongly influence who applies for roles. Aviation is often perceived as a technical, male dominated industry.

What/Why	How
Branding should be inclusive <i>Inclusive branding helps broaden perceptions about who can work in aviation and in which roles. It can signal that women are welcomed, valued and have good career opportunity in aviation.</i>	✓ Review external communications (websites, social media, recruitment materials) for inclusive language and imagery. ✓ Highlight women in aviation as role models, including women in technical and leadership roles. ✓ Ensure branding portrays the organization's commitments and values to inclusion and women's empowerment. ✓ Feature benefits such as paid parental leave, fair and competitive compensation, flexible working arrangements, commuting support, training programmes and targeted career development opportunities for women on career sites.

2. Outreach and Talent Sourcing: How can recruiters ensure they are reaching potential women candidates?

Targeted outreach through effective channels <i>Targeted outreach expands the pipeline and increases awareness of aviation careers among women and underrepresented groups.</i>	✓ Ensure that outreach activities are delivered through channels that are accessible and relevant to the intended audience. Potential channels may include: ○ Social media platforms tailored to young people and women ○ Email campaigns ○ News articles in media outlets ○ Participation in outreach events, open days and career fairs ○ Interactive approaches such as gamification, simulations, or virtual experiences to spark interest in aviation careers.
Partnerships and networking <i>Collaboration with education providers, professional associations, and other organizations enables aviation organizations to access broader and more diverse talent pools than they could reach independently.</i>	✓ Establish partnerships with schools, universities, aviation academies, and STEM programmes. ✓ Collaborate with women's networks, professional associations, and community organizations. ✓ Engage with national aviation authorities, industry groups, and NGOs to amplify outreach efforts and share resources.
Coordinated outreach campaigns <i>Structured and coordinated outreach campaigns provide consistency in messaging and visibility over time, helping to build sustained interest in aviation careers.</i>	✓ Develop structured outreach campaigns with clear objectives, target audiences, and timelines. ✓ Ensure that any outreach programmes targeting young people are also inclusive for young women and girls. ✓ Where possible align campaigns with national, regional and global initiatives (e.g. ICAO Gender Equality and NGAP programmes).
Offer career opportunities to women in aviation through internships, apprenticeships and scholarships	✓ Ensure transparent, clear and inclusive eligibility and selection criteria for internships, apprenticeships, and scholarships. ✓ Develop re-entry programmes, which offer women structured pathways back to the workforce after career breaks.

<i>Early work and learning opportunities allow women to gain practical exposure to aviation environments, build confidence, and develop relevant skills.</i>	✓ Establish scholarships, grants, or employer-supported training funds specifically to support women in cost-intensive certification pathways (flight training, technical qualifications).
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3. Inclusive Job Descriptions and Selection Process: How can job descriptions better influence and encourage women to apply? Are the selection methods used fair and transparent?

Ensure job postings are inclusive and attractive to women. <i>Overly restrictive job descriptions can discourage qualified candidates, particularly women, from applying.</i> <i>Women are more likely to apply for a job if salary details are stated. LinkedIn found that compensation was the most important part of job descriptions to potential candidates and drove more qualified candidates to apply.</i>	✓ Use neutral, plain language and avoid unnecessary jargon. ✓ Clearly distinguish between essential and desirable criteria. ✓ Focus on skills and competencies rather than narrow career pathways. ✓ Establish salary ranges for job categories and include these ranges in all job postings. Stating that salaries are “competitive” is not transparent. ✓ Include statements on flexibility, development opportunities, and inclusive workplace culture where applicable. ✓ Review job postings regularly for unintended bias.
Fair and structured selection and interviews. <i>Structured, objective selection processes improve fairness, consistency, and confidence in recruitment decisions. They also ensure that hiring managers will not be swayed by subjective factors or unconscious</i>	✓ Use standardized and fair shortlisting and interview criteria that is aligned to the job requirements. ✓ Ensure that the interview panels are diverse and balanced. ✓ Provide guidance or training for interviewers on inclusive interviewing practices. ✓ Use structured interview questions and scoring tools. ✓ Base decisions on evidence and documented criteria rather than subjective impressions. ✓ Train hiring managers and recruiters on how to conduct a fair interview free of biases.

<i>biases (e.g., favoring a candidate who reminds them of themselves, or making assumptions based on a candidate's sex) and instead focuses on objective, relevant criteria.</i>	
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C. Fostering an inclusive workplace

1. Predictable schedules & family support:

What/Why	How
Provide predictable schedules, advance publishing of rosters, and family support benefits (childcare subsidies, backup care, lactation rooms). <i>Predictability enables caregiving planning, improves wellbeing, and makes aviation careers viable for people with family responsibilities.</i>	✓ Publish rosters at least 4–8 weeks in advance; allow limited, structured changes after publication. Consider flexible rostering to allow staff to trade shifts as needed. ✓ Partner with local childcare providers for reserved spots or subsidies; offer emergency backup care vouchers; consider on-site daycare services. ✓ Equip terminals/offices with private lactation spaces and clear policies on break entitlement. ✓ Flexible shift-swapping mechanisms, part-time pathways (where operationally feasible). ✓ Job-sharing arrangements. ✓ Ensure meetings and project assignments consider caregiving constraints. ✓ Clear guidelines for scheduling meetings across time zones. ✓ Adopt a Hybrid or Work from Home Policy for employees in a non-operational role, or who can work remotely.
Enhancing work- life balance- Supporting career breaks and re-entry	Developing measures to support paid parental leave and phased return options is crucial to mitigate against common impacts of career breaks including slowing progression, reducing earning, and weakening attachment to career pathways. Measures can include: ○ Adequately paid maternity and parental leave ○ Flexible return-to-work schedules ○ Gradual workload reintegration without career penalties ○ Consider parental leave-related absences when

	evaluating performance ○ Collect sex-disaggregated data on the impact of caregiving responsibilities for employees.
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2. Policies (parental leave, anti-discrimination, flexible work):

What/Why	How
Clear, parental leave, caregiving leave, anti-harassment, and flexible-work policies documented and widely accessible. <i>Policies set expectations, protect rights, and demonstrate organizational commitment to equality.</i>	✓ Standardize minimum leave entitlements above statutory minimums where feasible; include options for shared parental leave. ✓ Include explicit non-retaliation language for using family-friendly benefits. ✓ Publish short policy summaries and FAQs; require managers and crew schedulers to complete policy briefings annually. ✓ Review policies biennially with legal, operations and employee representatives for operational feasibility and fairness.

3. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) & ally networks

What/Why	How
Support ERGs for women, parents, and caregivers, establish ally/mentor networks. <i>ERGs build peer support, surface workplace barriers, and inform policy; allies accelerate cultural change.</i>	✓ Provide ERGs with a budget, meeting time, executive sponsor, and a reporting channel to HR. ✓ Create an ally program with simple commitments (active listening, amplifying voices, mentorship). ✓ Encourage ERGs to propose at least one policy or operational change annually and track outcomes. ✓ Recognize ERG contributions in performance or leadership reviews.

4. Protection from sexual exploitation & abuse (PSEA) / harassment prevention

What/Why	How
Comprehensive PSEA/harassment prevention program: training, confidential reporting, independent	✓ Implement mandatory, scenario-based training for all staff and contractors, refreshed annually. ✓ Provide multiple confidential reporting channels (hotline, online, safe contact persons) and clearly advertised protections.

investigations, survivor support. <i>Ensures safety and dignity, reduces legal and reputational risk, fosters trust and inclusion.</i>	✓ Establish an independent investigation protocol and timely resolution targets. ✓ Offer immediate support services (medical, counseling, legal referrals) and return-to-work accommodations for survivors.
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5. Return-to-work & re-entry programs

What/Why	How
Structured re-entry pathways for people returning from extended leave (parental, caregiving, medical), including refresher training, phased hours, mentoring. <i>Prevents skill loss, eases transition back into safety-critical roles, reduces long-term exit rates.</i>	✓ Offer voluntary “returner” programs: 2 to 12-week refresher training, simulator time for flight crews, supervised shifts. ✓ Allow phased return (reduced hours/blocked duties) with guaranteed re-escalation plan. ✓ Assign a dedicated return-to-work coordinator and a workplace mentor. Provide a re-certification checklist and timetable aligned with regulatory requirements.

6. Leadership

What/Why	How
Leadership-led visible commitments, storytelling, role models, and internal campaigns promoting inclusive norms. <i>Culture shifts require visible leadership and repeated messaging to change norms and behaviors.</i>	✓ Publish head of organization/executive commitments and showcase diverse role models in internal channels. ✓ Run short campaigns around key moments (International Women’s Day, Parents’ Day) emphasizing policy use and success stories. ✓ Celebrate concrete wins (promotions, program outcomes) and use metrics to communicate progress.

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D) Budget and Intentional Resourcing

1. Dedicated Budgeting: Does the organization treat women's empowerment as a strategic investment with its own Profit and Loss responsibility?

What/Why	How
Establish a specific, protected budget for women's empowerment initiatives. <i>Relying on ad-hoc funding or volunteer time leads to burnout and stalled progress. Dedicated budgets ensure continuity.</i>	✓ Allocate a specific annual budget for women's empowerment activities. ✓ Ensure the budget covers the "hard costs" of inclusion: changes to physical infrastructure (e.g., women's locker rooms, lactation pods), uniform redesigns, and safety equipment procurement for diverse body types. ✓ Empower Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) with their own operating budgets for events and development, rather than requiring them to request funds for every activity.

2. Staffing and Expertise: Are there dedicated human resources to drive women's empowerment commitments and strategies?

What/Why	How
Appoint dedicated focal points with decision-making power. <i>Mainstreaming women's empowerment requires technical knowledge. Expecting staff to do this on top of full-time operational roles reduces effectiveness.</i>	✓ For larger organizations, hire full-time specialists who report directly to senior leadership. ✓ For smaller organizations, include women-related responsibilities formally in job descriptions and allocate specific work hours (e.g., 20% of time) for these tasks, adjusting other workload expectations accordingly. ✓ Resource the recruitment of external experts to conduct audits and salary gap analyses to ensure objectivity.

3. Procurement: How does the organization spend its external budget?

What/Why	How
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Leverage supply chain spending to support women's empowerment. <i>Procurement is a powerful lever. Organizations can multiply their impact by favoring suppliers who also prioritize women's empowerment.</i>	✓ Include women's empowerment criteria in tender documents and vendor selection processes. ✓ Actively seek out and support women-owned businesses (WOBs) in the supply chain (supplier diversity). ✓ Audit current vendors (recruiters, suppliers, marketing agencies) to ensure their practices align with the organization's women's empowerment goals.
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****TEXT BOX: Case Study: The Impact of COVID-19 on Women Aviation Workers**

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted global aviation, leading to widespread job losses that disproportionately affected women. Due to their concentration in more precarious, frontline positions and underrepresentation in leadership, women experienced higher rates of job loss, furlough, and reduced hours. Compounding this, increased unpaid care responsibilities during lockdowns further constrained their ability to remain in or return to work, leading to an uneven recovery where women's re-entry lagged behind men's. This crisis exposed and intensified existing structural inequalities, highlighting that without targeted, women advancement and empowerment policies and investment in decent work, these disparities risk becoming further entrenched, undermining the sector's long-term sustainability and attractiveness for women.

4.4 Wrap-Up & Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Fund the Mandate:** Treat women's advancement and empowerment like safety or operational efficiency—it requires dedicated staffing, technical expertise, and protected budget lines to succeed.
- ✓ **Minimize Bias:** Unstructured interviews and subjective performance reviews penalize women. Standardize your rubrics, state salaries transparently, and train managers to recognize bias.
- ✓ **Design for the Whole Life Cycle:** A massive driver of women attrition in aviation is the clash between operational demands and caregiving. Predictable rostering, paid leave, and structured re-entry programs directly protect your talent pipeline.

Section 5: Measuring and Reporting on Progress

5.1 Why is Measuring and Reporting on Progress Important?

Measuring and reporting on progress are essential components of mainstreaming women's participation and advancement. Without **concrete goal-setting** and **consistent monitoring**, organizational policies become guesswork, evidence remains unused, and structural inequalities remain hidden. According to [studies](#) by the World Economic Forum, setting bold, quantifiable targets is one of the most effective ways to close the gap between men and women. A clear and impactful example of this is the industry-wide 25by2025 campaign by IATA, which relies on voluntary but measurable commitments to advance women.

Implementing a robust monitoring and reporting framework provides distinct strategic advantages for aviation organizations such as:

1. **Supports Evidence-Based Decision Making:** Generates real-time and periodic data that enables policymakers to move from assumptions to data-driven decisions, highlighting exactly what is working, what is not, and why.
2. **Drives Accountability and Transparency:** Provides a mechanism for holding institutions and individuals responsible for performance. It creates a documented trail that can be audited, reviewed, and acted upon.
3. **Improves Performance Management:** Helps institutions continuously assess service delivery standards, identify bottlenecks or delays, and drive a culture of continuous improvement.
4. **Builds Institutional Memory:** Consolidates knowledge over time, providing historical data for trend analysis, helping scale successful initiatives, and discontinuing ineffective ones.
5. **Optimizes Resources and Budgets:** Links performance directly with resource utilization, justifying budget allocations that are backed by results and strengthening value-for-money assessments.
6. **Ensures Regulatory Compliance:** Tracks adherence to legal timelines, procedures, and ethical standards, providing hard evidence for investigations or corrective actions.
7. **Enhances Stakeholder Communication:** Translates technical performance data into accessible information, enhancing credibility and facilitating engagement with the workforce, partners, and oversight bodies.
8. **Improved Risk Management:** Monitoring can reveal emerging risks such as decline in participation and inequitable access to opportunities, enabling proactive mitigation strategies.

5.2 Core Principles & Guidelines

Monitoring progress towards the participation and advancement of women requires a specialized, results-based management approach that goes beyond simply counting the number of men and women in a room. To achieve this, organizations should consider the following core principles¹⁰:

- **Results-Based Management:** Focus on actual outcomes (e.g., behavior change, policy adoption, shifts in power relations, and improved retention) rather than just

¹⁰ See *Virtual Knowledge Centre to End Violence Against Women and Girls* – www.endvawnow.org

outputs (e.g., tracking the number of training sessions held or brochures distributed).

- **SMART Goal Setting:** Ensure all targets are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-based, and Time-bound (SMART). Vague goals like "improve representation of women" cannot be tracked; "increase women's representation in senior technical roles by 15% within 36 months" can.
- **Sex Disaggregation & Intersectionality:** Data must be universally broken down by sex alongside other key demographic factors (age band, ethnicity, disability status). Furthermore, indicators must be adapted to the local, cultural, and political context, recognizing that not all women experience workplace inequalities in the same way. As a best-practice, organizations should collect, store and manage data in accordance with applicable privacy and data protection requirements, particularly where smaller or more identifiable workforces are involved.
- **Mixed Methods Approach:** Numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Organizations must combine *quantitative* indicators (e.g., the percentage of women in decision-making roles) with *qualitative* indicators (e.g., the perceived psychological safety and influence of women's participation) to understand the nuances behind the data.
- **Participation and Inclusiveness:** Ensure the target group, specifically women across various levels of the organization, is actively engaged in the design and selection of the indicators to ensure they measure meaningful, real-world change.

5.3 Steps & Guidance

A. Identifying Women-Related Outcomes, Indicators, and Targets

Success begins with defining what you want to achieve (outcomes), how you will measure it (indicators), and the specific numbers you aim to hit (targets).

Outcomes: These are the high-level changes you want to see. Examples include:

- An increase in women in leadership roles
- A measurable reduction in the pay gap
- Improved retention rates after maternity/parental leave

KPIs: These are the metrics used to track the outcomes. Aviation-specific indicators might include:

- Recruitment: % of women applicants for STEM roles (pilots, maintenance engineers) vs. non-technical roles.
- Retention: Voluntary turnover rates of women vs. men in operational roles.
- Advancement: Average time required for promotion for women vs. men.
- Safety & Environment: Number of reported incidents of workplace harassment or discrimination.

Targets: These are the specific, time-bound goals. Consider setting a baseline, taking into account what is achievable within the organizational context, with specific targets that can be monitored over time. Examples include:

- Increase the number of women in senior positions (e.g., by 25%).
- Increase the number of women in under-represented areas (e.g., pilots, flight operations, maintenance, engineering).

See the Australian Government's [Guidelines](#) for good practices in this area.

B. Operationalizing Accountability:

Before tracking data, organizations should operationalize accountability through four complementary management instruments (see [Section 2](#) for details on policies and strategic plans as instruments):

Mechanism	Description	Recommended Practice
1. Performance Management	Integration of advancement and empowerment of women-related indicators into performance evaluation systems.	Include empowerment of women-related metrics directly in executive and managerial performance processes and mechanisms.
2. Data Monitoring	Systematic tracking and annual reporting of sex-disaggregated workforce dynamics.	Measure representation, promotion rates, pay gaps, and attrition continuously across all career stages.
3. Corrective Action	Response protocols when empowerment of women-related targets are not achieved.	Establish defined threshold triggers that automatically require leadership to draft and implement remediation plans.

4. Transparent Reporting	Public disclosure of progress, successes, and ongoing gaps.	Publish aggregated outcomes annually (e.g., a Women's Participation and Advancement Report") to strengthen institutional trust.
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C. The 8-Step Monitoring and Reporting Cycle:

Monitoring processes, for both informal and formal reviews, audits and evaluations, must follow a logical, repeating cycle to ensure data is collected, validated, and used for continuous improvement.

Step	Phase	Actionable Steps for Managers
1	Define Objectives & Scope	Clarify the specific policy or program objectives. Identify key results and define its scope which will be the basis of review.
2	Develop Indicators	Determine what success looks like in measurable terms. Identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and ensure they align with SMART principles.
3	Design the Framework	Establish <i>how</i> monitoring will happen. Define data sources (administrative systems, surveys, HR audits), assign specific roles and responsibilities, determine the frequency of data collection (monthly vs. quarterly), and develop standardized templates.
4	Collect & Verify Data	Gather accurate, timely data using digital systems where possible. Cross-check data from multiple sources, conduct spot checks, and rigorously address inconsistencies or gaps in reporting.
5	Analyze & interpret	Convert raw data into actionable insights. Compare actual performance against the targets set in Step 2. Identify trends, patterns, anomalies, and diagnose the root causes of underperformance.
6	Report & Communicate	Present findings in a clear, actionable format. Highlight key achievements, challenges, and risks. Use visual tools (charts, dashboards) and tailor the reports for different audiences (executives vs. the general public).
7	Decision-Making & Action	Use findings to improve performance. Recommend specific corrective actions, reallocate funding or

		resources where needed, and address newly identified risks and bottlenecks.
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D. Quantitative Indicators:

To establish a comprehensive baseline, organizations should track the following relevant quantitative indicators, ensuring all data is fully disaggregated by sex:

Category	Key Quantitative Indicators to Track
Overall Workforce Demographics	• Percentage of women in the total aviation workforce. • Representation of women in technical and operational roles (%). • Proportion of women in leadership and management positions (%). • Representation of women as members on boards, committees, or other governing bodies. • Number of women in all specific project teams or distinct departments.
The Recruitment Pipeline	• Representation breakdown of total applicants, categorized per role. • Representation breakdown of shortlisted interviewees, categorized per role. • Representation breakdown of final new hires, categorized per role.
Training & Capacity Building	• Participation rates of women in aviation training programs. • Percentage of women awarded aviation scholarships or sponsorships. • Total number of women's empowerment competency or unconscious bias trainings held. • Percentage of total employees who have completed bias training.
Retention, Progression & Pay	• Representation breakdown of employees per role, separated by part-time vs. full-time. • Voluntary and involuntary retention/turnover rates of women employees compared to male employees. • Ratio of women employees being promoted compared to the total number of employees promoted. • The Pay Gap: Ratio of the average wage paid to women employees, per role, compared to the average wage paid to male employees for the exact same position.
Culture & Policy Utilization	• Percentage of usage of flexible work hours, disaggregated by sex

	• Percentage of employees accessing paid parental leave, by sex. • Incidence rate (number of reports) of discrimination or harassment complaints, by sex. • Resolution rate and average time-to-resolve for harassment complaints.
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E. Question Bank for Qualitative Feedback (Employee Experience):

Quantitative data must be complemented by qualitative feedback mechanisms (e.g., surveys, focus groups, interviews) to understand the *lived experience* of women in the aviation sector. Organizations can utilize the following question bank for pulse surveys and exit interviews:

- **On Recruitment:** *To what extent do you feel that each part of the recruitment process was accessible and inclusive? (Break down by advertisement, application, interview, and selection).*
- **On Inclusion:** *To what extent do you feel that you are part of an inclusive team? Why?*
- **On Psychological Safety:** *To what extent do you feel your voice is equally heard in decision-making compared to your colleagues from the opposite sex?*
- **On Leadership:** *To what extent do you feel you are able to lead your team members, regardless of their sex?*
- **On Equity:** *To what extent do you believe that the company is protecting you on the job and treating you fairly? To what extent do you feel that men and women are treated equally at your workplace?*
- **On Work-Life Balance:** *To what extent does your work structure support your work-life balance? (e.g., flexibility of hours, balancing work and family responsibilities)?*
- **On Career Progression:** *To what extent do you feel utilizing flexible work hours impacts your ability to advance your career (e.g., being assigned to high-visibility projects, getting promoted)? Or, to what extent do you feel caregiving responsibilities (e.g. maternity leave) impacts overall career progression?*
- **On Mentorship and Personal Development:** *To what extent do you feel you have the same level of access to training, mentoring, and promotion opportunities compared to colleagues of the opposite sex with similar experience?*

- **On Job Security:** *To what extent do you feel secure in your contract? Do you expect to remain in your role for the following year? (If not, why?)*

F. Evaluating Institutional Maturity (Strategic Assessment Models):

Beyond tracking individual employees, organizations should evaluate their own structural maturity. The following three strategic indicators, aligned with United Nations best practices, can be used to assess organizational governance regarding women's participation and advancement:

Strategic Indicator	Operational Definition	How to Measure (Maturity Levels- Basic, Intermediate, Advanced)
1. Women Cohesion & Support	Evaluates the degree of collaborative support among women, including the presence of mentoring, networking, and professional solidarity mechanisms. <i>(Representation alone is insufficient without supportive networks).</i>	- Basic: Absence of structured initiatives. Intermediate: Informal or voluntary peer-support networks exist. -Advanced: Institutionalized, funded mentoring and collaborative frameworks are embedded in the organization.
2. Regulatory Protection & Enforcement	Evaluates the effectiveness of institutional safeguards against discrimination, supported by formal rules, structural reporting, and grievance analysis systems.	-Absent: No protection framework. -Partial: Principles exist, but without operational tools. -Structured: Formal reporting systems and complaint registers are active. -Advanced: Integrated monitoring, mandatory staff training, and public aggregated reporting on grievance outcomes.
3. Women's Empowerment Focal Point Function or equivalent	Measures the institutionalization of the empowerment of women through the formal designation of a GFP responsible for coordinating governance, data monitoring, and policy integration.	-Absent: No dedicated function. -Emerging: Designation exists without operational capacity or budget. -Operational: Active coordination, bias training, and reporting. -Strategic: GFP is a funded, senior role fully integrated into

		institutional decision-making and development planning.
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G. Evaluation Timelines and Accountability Mechanisms:

To ensure consistent progress tracking, periodic evaluations must be conducted at defined intervals across different levels of the aviation ecosystem:

1. Short-Term (Annual): Organizations should undertake an annual assessment of their women's empowerment-related indicators (using the metrics library above). Performance against targets should be evaluated via an annual report by senior management, who can reallocate human and financial resources where gaps are identified. Progress should also be published via internal dashboards and made public via a "Women's Participation and Advancement Progress Report."

2. Mid-Term (Every 3 Years): Organizations should undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of existing policies, comparing them against international best practices.

For example, CAAs should gather structured feedback from organizations across their state's sector to identify the need for regulatory interventions.

The ICAO APAC Region Gap Analysis Questionnaire for CAAs, as outlined below, can be utilized to conduct mid-term evaluations:

	Key Indicator	Evaluation Question for State / Regulators	Ideal Value
1	Policy	Is there a formal policy in the State/Administration to advance the attraction and retention of women professionals, especially in technical and leadership positions? Or are such principles integrated into broader organizational policies?	Yes
2	Data Collection	Does your State gather data on women's representation in the aviation sector, including the private industry, at regular intervals?	Yes
3	Global Collaboration	Does your State collaborate with ICAO by providing data on women in response to relevant questionnaires and State Letters?	Yes
4	Quantitative Targets	Has your State set out quantitative targets to promote women's empowerment, or put in	Yes

		place obligations relating to Assembly Resolution A41-26 (e.g. the aspirational goal of 50-50 by 2030)?	
5	Skills Access	Do you have national policies in place to promote access for young women and girls to highly technical skills that facilitate their entry into the aviation sector?	Yes
6	Leadership Position	Are the high-level decision-makers of the State's civil aviation organization comprised of a balanced number of men and women?	Yes

3. Comprehensive Evaluations (Every 5 Years): A comprehensive, long-term review should be conducted at the global level at least every five years. Using structured feedback and data gathered from global macro-trends, emerging challenges, and international best practices can be identified. See the United Nations Evaluation Group's [guidance](#) for supplementary design resources and potential methods and tools that could be adapted in any evaluation.

5.4 Wrap-Up & Key Takeaways

- ✓ **Track Outcomes, Not Just Outputs:** Focus your organizational metrics on structural, systemic changes (e.g., closing the pay gap, improving cultural cohesion, increasing senior representation) rather than merely checking administrative boxes.
- ✓ **Data Without Action is Wasted Effort:** The monitoring cycle does not end at the publication of a report. A monitoring framework is only successful if the data triggers immediate corrective actions, policy adjustments, and the reallocation of resources.
- ✓ **Standardize and Disaggregate Your Data:** Ensure all human resources data is universally disaggregated by sex. This is the only way to maintain a reliable, factual baseline for recruitment trends, training participation, and exit interview analysis.
- ✓ **Utilize Mixed Methods for a True Picture:** Do not rely on headcounts alone. Pair your quantitative demographic data with qualitative pulse surveys to understand the lived experiences, psychological safety, and actual retention barriers faced by women in your organization.
- ✓ **Close the Feedback Loop Constantly:** Share your findings, both good and bad, transparently with stakeholders, industry partners, and the workforce. Honest, transparent reporting enhances institutional credibility, builds legitimacy, and sustains long-term engagement in women's empowerment initiatives.

Annexes

ANNEX A: Assessment Tools & Gap Analysis Matrices

Note: The following self-assessment tools use different scoring conventions to present practical examples of various matrices that may be applied. Some are better suited for quantitative/scoreable analysis, while others are more qualitative/diagnostic in nature. Organizations are encouraged to use these proposed tools as inspiration, while adapting them to suit the needs of the analysis at hand.

1. Civil Aviation Women's Empowerment & Governance Gap Analysis Toolkit

This self-assessment tool is designed for States, Civil Aviation Authorities, and aviation organizations to assess women's empowerment and governance maturity across internal and external aviation systems.

Maturity Scoring Scale (0–5):

- 0 = No recognition
- 1 = Informal/practical approach
- 2 = Policy exists but weak implementation
- 3 = Structured implementation
- 4 = Institutionalized and monitored
- 5 = Transformative / international leading practice

(Acceptable evidence includes official policy documents, board minutes, annual reports, HR data, budget allocations, audit findings, regulatory provisions).

No.	Assessment Question	0-5 Score	Evidence / Notes
1.	GOVERNANCE & LEADERSHIP		
1.1	Is women's empowerment integrated into the Civil Aviation or Organization's Strategic Plan?		
1.2	Is there a formally adopted Women's Empowerment Policy?		
1.3	Is there Executive oversight of women's empowerment?		
1.4	Are sex-disaggregated workforce data collected regularly?		

1.5	Are leadership KPIs linked to diversity performance?		
2.	WORKFORCE (<i>Consider recruitment, promotion, retention</i>)		
2.1	Is workforce data disaggregated across all technical directorates/business functions?		
2.2	Are women represented in safety/inspector/technical roles?		
2.3	Are recruitment panels balanced between men and women?		
2.4	Are promotion processes transparent?		
2.5	Is a pay gap analysis conducted?		
2.6	Are leadership pipeline programs available for women?		
3.	INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE & SAFETY CLIMATE		
3.1	Is there a formal anti-harassment mechanism?		
3.2	Are anonymous reporting systems equitably used?		
3.3	Are flexible work arrangements available in operational roles?		
4.	HR POLICIES & INTERNAL SYSTEMS		

4.1	Are recruitment materials women-inclusive?		
4.2	Are parental leave policies equitable?		
4.3	Is women's empowerment training mandatory for leadership?		
5.	EXTERNAL & REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT		
5.1	Are aviation operators required to report on data?		
5.2	Is women's empowerment integrated into aviation regulations?		
5.3	Are scholarships available for women in aviation training?		
5.4	Is the State/Organization aligned with international aviation initiatives for women?		

HEAT MAP DASHBOARD: Women's Empowerment Maturity Assessment

This dashboard provides a visual overview of your organization's women's empowerment maturity across key domains, allowing for quick identification of strengths and areas requiring attention.

Maturity Scoring & Risk Conversion Scale (Based on Individual Domain Averages):

- 0 – 1.9: High Risk (Structural governance weakness)
- 2 – 2.9: Significant Gaps (Fragile compliance / limited institutionalization)
- 3 – 3.9: Moderate Maturity (Functional but requires strengthening)
- 4 – 5: Institutionalized (Stable governance system / international leading practice)

Your Organization's Women's Participation and Advancement Heat Map:

Domain	Calculated Average Score (0-5)
Governance & Leadership	
Workforce & Pipeline	
Institutional Culture & Safety Climate	
HR Policies & Systems	
External & Regulatory Environment	
OVERALL INSTITUTIONAL MATURITY SCORE	

Calculation Instructions:

1. For Each Domain:

- Domain Average = Sum of scores for all questions within that domain / Number of questions in that domain.
- Example: If the "HR Policies & Systems" domain has 3 questions and scores are 3, 4, 5, then the Average Score = $(3+4+5) / 3 = 4.0$.
- Once the Domain Average is calculated, use the "Maturity Scoring & Risk Conversion Scale" above to determine the "Corresponding Risk Level" for that domain.

2. Overall Institutional Maturity Score:

- Overall Score = Sum of the Average Scores from all five domains / 5.
- This final score provides a holistic view of your organization's women's empowerment maturity.

2. Women-Men distribution matrix by hierarchical level Tool

Hierarchical level	Total employees	% Women	% Men	Gap %
Senior Management				
Middle Management				
Supervisory Level				
Specialized Technical				
Administrative				

Key Indicator:

Vertical Concentration Index (VCI) = % Women in Senior Management / % Women in Total Workforce

- VCI < 1 → Glass Ceiling present.
- VCI > 1.5 → Possible horizontal segregation (concentration in specific areas).

3. Education Level vs. Position Analysis Tool

Education Level	% Men	% Women	% Women in Positions Matching Qualifications
Doctorate			
Master's			
Bachelor's			
Technical Degree			

No Degree			
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Critical Question:

Are women with equivalent qualifications occupying positions comparable to men with similar educational backgrounds?

Salary Gap Analysis by Quintiles

Methodology:

- 1. Rank all employees by salary (ascending order).
- 2. Divide into five equal groups (quintiles).
- 3. Analyze distribution within each quintile.

Salary Quintile (Lowest to Highest)	Salary Range	Men %	Women %
Quintile 1 (Lowest)			
Quintile 2			
Quintile 3			
Quintile 4			
Quintile 5 (Highest)			

Analysis criteria:

- “Sticky Floor”: >60% women in Quintile 1.
- “Glass Ceiling”: <30% women in Quintile 5.

4. Mobility and Promotion Analysis (Last 3 Years) Tool

Indicator	Men	Women	Gap
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Number of promotions			
Average Time Between Promotions (Months)			
% Promoted to Higher Level			
Voluntary Turnover %			

5. Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders	Expectations
International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)	- Implementation of the Assembly Resolution A41-26 as well as the ICAO Strategic Plan 2026-2050 including the ICAO Empowerment of Women in Aviation Implementation Plan and Activity Matrix - Data and statistics
Member States (Aeronautical Authorities)	- Reports and policy recommendations - Data and statistics - Ensuring positive safety culture to encourage reporting
Aviation Industry (Airlines, ANSPs, Airports, Manufacturers, Training Organizations, Service Providers)	-Integrate inclusive workforce policies into core business and operational practices -Apply transparent, merit-based recruitment, development, and promotion processes -Contribute workforce data to support analysis and benchmarking -Provide enabling environments that support career development and progression -Align organizational culture with safety, professionalism, and trust

	-Engage in partnerships to strengthen talent pipelines and workforce sustainability
Women in aviation groups / Professional aviation associations	- Talent development and capacity building - Mentorship and peer programmes - Leadership development programmes targeted at women - A conducive organizational culture - Inclusive organizational policies which create room and encourage growth
High schools	- Educational outreach initiatives - Awareness of career paths in aviation - Integration into STEM - Mentorship by aviation professionals
University collaborations	- Integration of aviation courses into graduate/postgraduate curricula

ANNEX B: Audit Frameworks & Checklists

1. Policy Checklist: The Structural Foundation (using Air Navigation Service Providers as an example)

Focus: Transitioning from social "ideals" to operational "mandates."

- ✓ **Neutral Recruitment & Promotion:** Are job descriptions and interview panels structured to mitigate unconscious bias?
- ✓ **Return-to-Service (RTS) Protocols:** Is there a documented, non-punitive training path for ATCOs returning from maternity or extended family leave?
- ✓ **Inclusive Human Factors:** Does the Safety Management System (SMS) account for sex-disaggregated data in fatigue, ergonomics (console/headset fit), and stress management?
- ✓ **Safe-Space Policy:** Is there a clear, confidential policy protecting personnel who report domestic instability or depression from immediate, permanent loss of medical certification?

- ✓ **Maternity/Paternity Protections:** Are there provisions for "light duties" or administrative roles for pregnant controllers who can no longer work in high-intensity positions (like Approach Radar)

2. Governance Checklist: Leadership & Influence

Focus: Who is in the room when the budget and safety standards are decided?

- ✓ **The "30% Milestone":** Do women hold at least 30% of seats on the Board, Safety Committees, and Technical Panels?
- ✓ **Succession Planning:** Does the ANSP have a formal mentorship/shadowing program specifically for women ATCOs aimed at Management and Executive roles?
- ✓ **Women's Empowerment Focal Points:** Is there an appointed official with a direct line to the Director General/CEO who oversees women and men parity targets?
- ✓ **Global Representation:** Does the State/Association actively nominate women experts to ICAO Technical Panels and international work groups?
- ✓ **Equity in Advanced Ratings:** Are training opportunities for high-level ratings (Area/Radar) monitored to ensure women controllers are not "plateauing" at Tower level?

3. Accountability Checklist: Tracking & Transparency

Focus: Moving from "Commitment" to "Compliance."

- ✓ **Disaggregated Data Collection:** Does the organization track the ratio of men vs. women at every seniority level and salary grade?
- ✓ **The Safety Audit:** Is a "Human Capital Audit" conducted every 24 months to identify gaps in retention and professional development?
- ✓ **Transparency Reporting:** Does the ANSP publish an annual "Women's Empowerment" report available to all staff and stakeholders?
- ✓ **Just Culture for Wellbeing:** Is the Peer Support Program (PSP) independently audited to ensure it remains a "Safe Harbor" for those experiencing domestic or mental health crises?
- ✓ **Budgetary Allocation:** Is there a dedicated budget for Women's Support Groups, sensitivity training, and inclusive initiatives?

4. Integrating Women's Empowerment in Aviation Using the ICAO Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Audits as an Example

Note: This proposal is conceptual and represents a possible long-term direction subject to future ICAO policy decisions. It is meant to serve as an example of integrating women's empowerment into an audit programme more broadly and is not explicitly calling for an adjustment of the USOAP Audits.

To achieve this, relevant metrics must be embedded into the **8 Critical Elements (CEs)** of a state's safety oversight system.

1. The Strategy: Mainstreaming Women into the 8 Critical Elements

The USOAP evaluates how a State oversees aviation safety. By adding "Impact Indicators" to specific CEs, ICAO can drive structural changes.

CE-1: Primary Aviation Legislation

Integration: Audit whether the State's Civil Aviation Act includes specific protections against sex-based discrimination and mandates equal opportunity in licensing and recruitment.

Driver: Laws that protect maternity/paternity rights for licensed personnel ensure that the State does not lose "safety-critical expertise" due to outdated labor laws.

CE-3: State Civil Aviation System and Safety Oversight Functions

Integration: Evaluate the **human resource capital** of the CAA. Is there a documented plan to ensure women's empowerment in the inspectorate and management?

Driver: A diverse regulator is more likely to identify diverse risks.

CE-4: Technical Personnel Qualification and Training

Integration: Audit the "Training Records" for bias. Are women ATCOs and Engineers receiving the same access to advanced ratings (e.g., Approach Radar, Area Control) and leadership training?

Driver: Ensures the "Five Ratings" for Air traffic Controllers (as an example) are a standard expectation for all women, not an exception.

2. Proposed "Safety Indicators" for the Audit Protocol

PROPOSED (PQ) AREA	AUDIT QUESTION	EVIDENCE REQUIRED
Workforce Stability	Does the State have a policy to retain women licensed personnel post-maternity?	Documented "Return to Service" (Ready to Service) procedures for ATCOs and Pilots.
Human Factors	Does the State's fatigue management and ergonomic standards account for sex-disaggregated data?	SMS manuals showing women specific human factors considerations.
Governance	Are women represented in the State's Accident Investigation Board (AIB) and Safety Review Boards?	Organizational charts and meeting minutes showing diverse participation.

3. Implementation Roadmap

Phase 1: Introduce "Women's Empowerment Sensitivity" as a non-binding *Observation* in current USOAP audits.

Phase 2: Update the **ICAO Doc 9735** (USOAP Operations Manual) to include sex-disaggregated data collection.

Phase 3: Make specific inclusive human resource policies a required **Protocol Question (PQ)**.

ANNEX C: Blueprint for a Model "Women in Aviation" Programme

This blueprint provides a comprehensive, scalable framework that can be tailored by Civil Aviation Authorities (CAAs), airlines, airports, Air Navigation Service Providers (ANSPs), and educational institutions to systematically increase women's participation across the aviation ecosystem.

A. Programme Vision and Outcomes

Vision: To increase the participation, retention, and leadership of women and girls across the aviation ecosystem safely, sustainably, and measurably.

3 to 5-Year Outcomes:

1. **Pipeline growth:** Increased number of girls and students entering aviation roles.
2. **Higher retention:** Improved retention in underrepresented aviation roles (e.g., Pilots, air traffic controllers, Maintenance, Safety/Inspection, Airport Operations, Data/AI).
3. **Leadership progression:** Accelerated movement from supervisors to managers, executives, and boards.
4. **Culture:** A culture of dignity, safety, and professionalism (harassment-free, inclusive, and just).

B. Core Policy Package

Applies to CAAs, Airlines, Airports, ANSPs, Schools, and ATOs.

- **Programme Policy Statement (Core Commitments):** Equal opportunity and merit-based selection with barrier removal; zero tolerance for harassment/retaliation; Just Culture and psychological safety; transparent recruitment and promotion; data-driven targets.
- **Safeguarding & Respect Policy:** Anonymous and named reporting channels, strict investigation timelines, protections, sanctions, student safeguarding rules for minors, and event conduct codes for sponsors/mentors.
- **Workforce & Training Access Policy:** Transparent scholarship criteria, internship minimum standards (pay, supervision, safety), structured return-to-work pathways, and flexible rostering principles.
- **Procurement & Sponsorship Ethics Policy:** Strict sponsor eligibility, conflict-of-interest controls, branding rules, anti-exploitation safeguards, and a strict "no pay-to-play" rule for hiring or licensing outcomes.

C. Governance Model

A simple, strong, and auditable governance structure is required to drive the programme.

Body	Composition & Responsibilities
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1. Steering Council	Meets: Quarterly Members: CAA (Chair/Co-chair), Airlines, Airport Operators, ANSPs, ATOs/Universities, Ministry of Education, Youth Representatives, Women-in-Aviation Associations.
2. Programme Management Office (PMO)	Meets: Continuous (1-2 dedicated staff + secondees) Responsibilities: Manage the calendar, partnerships, procurement, communications, measurement, annual reporting, and safeguarding compliance.
3. Technical Working Groups	Meets: Monthly Focus Areas: 1) Schools & Outreach, 2) Training & Scholarships, 3) Workplace & Retention, 4) Data, KPIs & Research.

D. The 5 Programme Pillars & Activities

Pillar 1: Inspire (Schools and Community)

- **Signature Activities:** Girls in Aviation Discovery Days (airport open days, ATC/Maintenance tours); Mobile Aviation Lab ("airport in a box" STEM kits, drones, portable flight sims); Career Storytelling Tours (women pilots/engineers visiting schools); Parent Nights (addressing myths, costs, safety, and career stability).
- **School Add-ons:** Teacher toolkits (aviation STEM lesson plans), Aviation Badge programmes (for ages 8–14 and 15–18), and an Annual Girls Aviation Challenge (team competition).

Pillar 2: Access (Scholarships, Internships, and Entry Pathways)

- **Scholarships (Core Tracks):** Pilot (PPL Foundation / hour-building), ATC, AME/Maintenance (incl. tooling support), Airport Operations, **Aviation Cybersecurity/Data, and CAA Inspectorate exposure.**

- **Paid Internships/Apprenticeships:** 3 to 12-month duration with structured learning objectives, assigned supervisors, HR protections, and end-of-placement competency evidence.
- **"Bridge" Programmes:** Exam prep boot camps (Math/Physics/English/ATC aptitude), interview/assessment-center prep, and "First 90 days" onboarding support.

Pillar 3: Retain (Workplace Culture and Progression)

- **Airline:** Mentoring circles (cabin, flight deck, dispatch, OCC, maintenance), leadership accelerators for supervisors, and bias-safe rostering reviews.
- **Airport/ANSP:** Rotations across operations, safety, and security; resilience support and peer networks for ATC/Engineering.
- **CAA:** Women in oversight tracks (inspector shadowing, audit participation) and transparent career ladders (Junior Inspector to Senior Manager).
- **Across all partners:** 6-to-12-month mentorship cycles, peer support/well-being resources for high-stress roles, and an annual "Women of Aviation" recognition awards.

Pillar 4: Leadership & Governance

- **Women in Aviation Leadership Academy:** 6-month part-time programme focusing on decision-making under pressure, negotiation, executive presence, and crisis communications.
- **Board-Readiness:** Specific pathways for senior women to attain board seats.
- **Sponsorship:** Funded participation in ICAO/Regional women's empowerment initiatives.

Pillar 5: Measure (Data, Targets, Continuous Improvement)

- *Participation:* number of girls reached, schools engaged, events held.
- *Conversion:* number of applicants accepted, number started training.
- *Completion:* Training completion rates by track.
- *Hiring:* percentage of women in entry roles by job family.
- *Retention:* 12, 24, and 36-month retention rates.

- *Leadership*: percentage of women supervisors, managers, and executives.
- *Culture*: Incident reports, resolution times, climate survey scores.

E. 3-Year Rollout Plan

Year 1: Build & Launch	Year 2: Scale	Year 3: Institutionalize
• Establish governance, policies, and safeguarding rules. • Host 2 Discovery Days (1 mobile lab tour, 1 national challenge). • Launch first small scholarship cohort & internships. • Collect baseline data.	• Expand school coverage to additional regions/islands. • Double the number of internships/apprenticeships. • Launch the Leadership Academy. • Publish first annual report and host sponsor summit.	• Embed programme fully into HR and training budgets. • Secure multi-year sponsor agreements. • Conduct independent evaluation and refresh targets for the next 3 years.

F. Stakeholder Ownership Matrix ("What They Own")

Stakeholder	Key Responsibilities & Ownership Areas
Civil Aviation Authorities (CAA)	Policy leadership, safeguarding standards, data governance, inspectorate exposure/internships, national alignment narrative, and publishing the annual report.
Airlines	Cadet/entry pathways, mentoring circles, leadership academy seats, providing funding for scholarships/internships, and ensuring operational flexibility (return-to-work pathways).
Airports & ANSPs	Hosting discovery days, providing facility rotations and operational mentors, funding mobile lab logistics, and involving safety/emergency services for high-impact learning.

Schools, Universities & ATOs	Identifying talent, running aviation STEM modules, hosting clubs/competitions, bridging programmes for entry tests, and engaging parents.
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ANNEX D: Bibliography and External Resources

1. Global Aviation Guidelines and Sector Reports

- [Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Aviation \(Assembly Resolution A41-26\)](#) – ICAO (2022)
- [Compilation of Best Practices and Experiences to Enhance Gender Equality in Aviation](#) – ICAO (2023)
- [Women in Aviation: A Global Perspective](#) – International Labour Organization (2024)
- [A Comparative Study of Female and Male Air Traffic Controller Trainees](#) – FAA (1972)
- [Irish Aviation: A Focus on Gender Diversity](#) – Dublin City University Business School
- [Closing Gender and Ethnic Pay Gaps Action Plan 2025 – 2028](#) – Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand
- [Workforce Management at Airports: Analytical Report](#) - ACI World (2025)

2. Organizational Assessment & Budgeting Tools

- [Gender-Responsive Evaluation](#) – European Institute for Gender Equality
- [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Toolkit](#) – EUROCONTROL
- [Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\) Gender Gap Analysis Tool](#) – UN Global Compact and UN Women
- [Empowering Women at Work: Capacity Development Platform and Self-Assessment Tool](#) – ILO & UN Women
- [Gender Equality Organizational Assessment Tool](#) – World Customs Organization
- [Gender Analysis Toolkit for Transport Policies](#) – International Transport Forum
- [Gender-Responsive Budgeting in Practice: A Training Manual](#) – UNFPA

3. Inclusive HR Practices (Recruitment, Retention & Bias Mitigation)

- [Women in Aviation: Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matter](#) – IFALPA (2021)
- [Recruitment, Retention and Advancement of Women Pilots](#) – IFALPA (2026)
- [Empowering Women in Aviation: IATA 25by2025 Initiative](#) – PwC (2022)
- [25by2025: Best Practice Guide](#) – IATA (2023)
- [How to Prepare and Run an Effective Mentoring Programme](#) – EUROCONTROL and ICAO
- [Flexible Working: A Talent Imperative](#) – Timewise
- [Return-to-Work Programs Come of Age](#) – Harvard Business Review
- [Women in the Workplace 2025](#) – McKinsey
- [Guidelines for Gender-Inclusive Language](#) – United Nations

4. Workplace Safety, Harassment Prevention & Well-being

- [Convention 190: Violence and Harassment Convention](#) – International Labour Organization
- [R206: Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019](#) – International Labour Organization
- [Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace](#) – EEOC

5. Aviation Professional Networks, Campaigns & Training Programs

- [Empowering Women Through Career and Leadership Development Course](#) – McGill and ICAO
- [Women in Aerospace \(WIA\)](#)
- [WEConnect International: Global Network for Women-Owned Businesses](#)
- [International Aerospace Women's Association \(IAWA\)](#)
- **Outreach Campaign Examples:**
 - [ICAO Global Ambassadors Programme](#)
 - [Your Wings Start Here – Portugal](#)

- [Inspiring Aviation – United Kingdom](#)
- [ICAO NGAP Programme](#)
- [Amy Johnson Flying Initiative](#)