EQUALS EU

Europe's Regional Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age

D2.3 ROADMAP FOR GENDER EQUITY TOOLS & TWO GENDER EQUITY TOOLS FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report describes the outcomes of Tasks 2.4 and 3.2 undertaken to complete deliverable 2.3 within Work packages 2 (WP2) and 3 (WP3) of the EQUALS-EU project.

In 2021 and 2022, the EQUALS-EU consortium partners collaborated to co-design the format, agenda, recruitment strategy, and communication campaign for 19 hackathons and innovation camps. The result being the successful engagement of 399 young participants (216 being young women) who produced19 promising solutions or products to increase gender equity and inclusiveness in STEM or policymaking. This report is the final deliverable of Work Package 2 and translates and contextualises the key outputs from the hackathons, innovation camps and their winning solutions within the broader framework of the EQUALS Global Partnership and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It presents some of the key values and principles that drove the development of the 19 winning solutions and assesses their potential for commercialisation and social impact. In total, 10 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals underpin the EQUALS-EU winning solutions, most notably Gender Equality (SDG5), good health and wellbeing (SDG3), quality education (SDG4), Decent Work and Economic Work (SDG8), and Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG11). In addition, we found that all of the winning solutions were underpinned by the three key themes of EQUALS-EU: intersectionality, inclusive design, and social entrepreneurship. Few of the winning teams considered the landing phase of their product development, however, they all show very promising commercial potential, and for most of them, beyond their original target groups. This strengthens the relevance of the WP3 Incubator Programme and WP4 Summer Schools, and more broadly of the EQUALS-EU project, concluding WP2 activities on a positive and promising note.

In 2023, the EQUALS-EU consortium partners, with the support from the Young People Reference Group (YPRG), created two Gender Equity Tools for Digital Inclusion in the course of six co-innovation sessions. The outcome is a Sustainable Social Impact Model and a Value Creation Model Canvas. The purpose of both tools is to provide innovators and entrepreneurs, at the early-stage business development, two models they can use to ensure their product(s) or service(s) will have a positive impact on gender equity, intersectionality, inclusive design, and social innovation and entrepreneurship. The tools are designed to be easy to incorporate into a range of existing industry business start-up contexts. A workshop model for implementation is suggested to leverage the perspectives of diverse team members and stakeholders. The tools represent the cumulative knowledge of the EQUALS-EU project and are presented as prototypes for uptake and further development by interested parties.

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the outcomes of Tasks 2.4 and 3.2 undertaken to complete deliverable 2.3 within Work packages 2 (WP2) and 3 (WP3) of the EQUALS-EU project. Funded by the EU Commission Horizon 2020 programme, the EQUALS-EU project works towards promoting gender equity in social and digital innovations. It seeks to break gender stereotypes and to build locally, within and beyond EU Member States, women and girls' capacity in STEM. The EQUALS-EU project builds on the EQUALS Global partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, established in 2016 by the International Telecommunication Union along with the International Trade Centre, GSMA, UN Women, and the United Nations University.

EQUALS-EU seeks to promote women and girls as role models and successful social innovators and entrepreneurs in the ICT industry by establishing new methods, ICT solutions and services (WP2), and generating advocacy tools for gender equity and digital inclusion (WP3). To do so, EQUALS-EU sees co-innovation as a powerful means for capacity building and institutional change.

Accordingly, throughout 2022, EQUALS-EU's W2 designed and hosted a series of 19 interdisciplinary, inter-sectoral, innovation camps and hackathons focused on digital inclusion across 19 countries. D2.3 is the final deliverable of W 2 and seeks to translate and contextualise the key outputs from WP2 activities within the broader framework of the EQUALS Global Partnership, ensuring that EQUALS-EU results and learnings are relevant beyond the EU, and suited for broader promotion and advocacy in non-European countries, for strategically reforming policy and practice in both the Global North and Global South.

The Description of Action (DoA) describes the deliverable D2.3 Roadmap for Gender Equity Tools and Gender Equality Tools as follows:

The roadmap will "synthesize, discuss, and elaborate on
1. the sustainability and social impact strategies documented by the event winners including relevance for and connection to the UN SDGs;
2. the key concepts and value drivers and general approaches for commercialization and scaling that the teams from each country presented in the description and presentation of their solutions";

(...) The results and roadmap "will be used to inform the development of the two Gender Equity Tools for Digital Inclusion, including a Sustainable Social Impact Model and a Value Creation Model Canvas. These Tools will differ from existing models, frameworks, and other toolkits by focusing specifically on the key themes of EQUALS-EU – gender equity, intersectionality, inclusive design, and social innovation and entrepreneurship.".

Thus, this report is a joint effort from EQUALS-EU WP2 and WP3, relating to both T2.4 and T3.2, and comprises two parts:

1. A Roadmap for Gender Equity Tools (WP 2)
2. Two Gender Equity Tools for Digital Inclusion (WP3) - *upcoming*

Over 2 years, the EQUALS-EU consortium partners have collaborated closely to co-design the format, agenda, recruitment strategy, and communication campaign for the hackathons and innovation camps, and to share best practices and experiences. At the same time as building new partnerships with local public, private, civil society, and academic organisations, around discussions of what it means to be inclusive, and how to manage and leverage the concept of intersectionality across their different national and local contexts. Without excluding the participation of majority populations and non-marginalised communities, one key objective was to ensure the meaningful engagement and safe and equal spaces for participation in WP2 events for all. The result was the successful engagement of 399 young participants, 216 being young women, who produced 19 winning solutions, with 32 participants subsequently taking part actively and fully in EQUALS-EU incubator programme.

During the spring of 2023, the consortium collaborated with the Young People Reference Group (YPRG) to develop the two gender equity tools for digital inclusion. The process started in January and continued throughout May. The tools were co-innovated through six workshops held over zoom, while using Canva to share thoughts and ideas on how the tools could support start-ups beginning their business development journey through the key themes of EQUALS-EU. Following the development of the tools, both models have been reviewed by external advisors.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The first part of this report presents some of the key results from WP2 activities' evaluations and the Roadmap for the Gender Equity Tools for Digital Inclusion. The roadmap builds directly on the raw data collected by EQUALS-EU partners responsible for the organisation of WP2 activities and includes reports on each winning team's specific problem and their proposed solution, compositions and presentation slides and juries evaluations.

The roadmap supports the development of future-oriented and sustainable policy action plans and practical business models in the form of two Gender Equity Tools for Digital Inclusion, which are presented and detailed in this report's second part. The Gender Equity Tools include a Sustainable Social Impact Model and a Value Creation Model Canvas and differ from existing models, frameworks, and other toolkits by focusing specifically on the key themes of EQUALS-EU: gender equity, intersectionality, inclusive design, and social innovation and entrepreneurship. The Sustainable Social Impact Model provides a framework for creating gender inclusive social innovation ecosystems by promoting value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth in innovation through a gender equity lens, linked to EU and Member States policies and programmes for promoting gender equity in STEM. In contrast, the Value Creation Model Canvas provides a template for creating new or developing existing business plans in a way that integrates gender equity as

a key element of commercialization and value creation. Together, the two tools will serve as a foundation for developing the business model for the EQUALS-EU network (T3.3).

The choice of holding innovation camps as well as hackathons in WP2 was purposeful in order to create new policies, products or services, and process solutions as well as tangible prototypes to feed into both the Sustainable Social Impact Model and a Value Creation Model Canvas of WP3 Gender Equity Tools. A hackathon focuses on designing and developing new technological solutions, while an innovation camp focuses on creating new policies, business processes and practices, or products and services that solve complex challenges.

The roadmap builds inductively on the results of the hackathons and innovation camps, and consequently does not equally cover all of the key themes of EQUALS-EU and components of the Tools – gender equity, intersectionality, inclusive design, and social innovation and entrepreneurship – as originally foreseen by EQUALS-EU DoA. However, the Roadmap encourages us to enrich the EQUALS-EU conceptual framework, stressing the social relevance of themes such as health and well-being at work for young female entrepreneurs, and demonstrates the added-value of co-creation and bottom-up approaches for enriching research and social innovation agendas in STEM.

PART 1: ROADMAP TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY TOOLS

1.1. LOOKING BACK: LESSONS FROM THE HACKATHONS AND INNOVATIONS CAMPS

METHODOLOGY

The information used in the elaboration of this report is based on the 19 National Reports submitted by the local organisers of EQUALS-EU events, and a comprehensive overview of all events held is accessible on EQUALS-EU website.

Each report was reviewed individually, extracting and analysing relevant data, looking at events' participants (recruited profiles, winning teams' composition, relationships between team members) as well as events' outcomes (winning solutions, key values, and concepts upholding the solution, the problems or needs the solution seeks to address, the suggested solution's scale, and its commercialisation potential).

An inductive approach was implemented, first conducting a thematic analysis of key issues and foci of winning solutions, before considering this in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals referential framework.

It proved challenging to assess the scale and commercialization potential of the winning solutions, since most of WP2 winning solutions and teams did not then possess a long-term business strategy when taking part in WP2 activities. Participants used WP2 as a stepping- stone to develop, test and consolidate the commercialisation and entrepreneurial potential of their solutions within the subsequent WP3 incubator programme and WP4 summer school. Furthermore, only EQUALS-EU hackathons focused on designing and developing new ICT to leverage digital inclusion. Instead, an innovation camp is an event with interdisciplinary teams working on an effective solution. In EQUALS-EU, this typically resulted in proposals for new policies, business processes and practices, or services to overcome existing barriers to digital inclusion. In other words, innovation camps are not focused on creating technical solutions but rather on developing innovative ideas.

PARTICIPANTS AND WINNING TEAMS

The EQUALS-EU events had a common minimum participation requirement of 50% women. In addition, each team participating in the hackathons or innovation camps were required to comprise 50% women members. As a result, **participants identified overwhelmingly as women (316), with fewer men (82) and 1 non-binary person**. Despite numerous partners contacting organisations from the LGBT+ community, gender minorities proved difficult to mobilise. Understanding the cause of this circumstance requires further research.
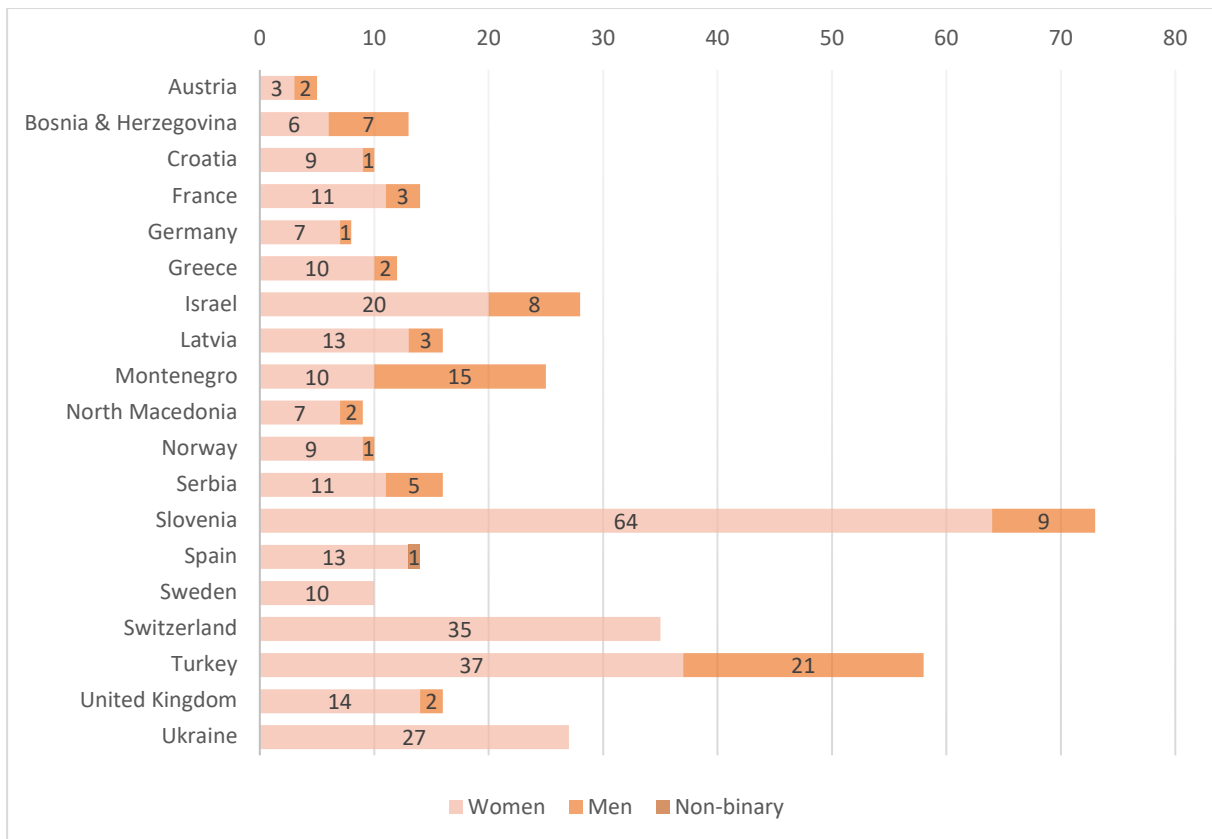
Figure 1: Participants to EQUALS-EU hackathons and innovation camps by gender

In most cases, the organisers' approach to participants' recruitment targeted individuals from diverse educational and professional backgrounds. Some targeted more specific groups (such as people involved in the biotech sector in Slovenia or students of specific fields in Norway), while most approached the general public.

However, events' reports show that most participants had above average educational backgrounds. This is mostly explained by the channels of communication chosen and the partnerships established with local universities and schools to recruit participants. As a result, most of WP2 events participants were tertiary students.

Despite strong efforts by partners' using broad communication strategies across social media, people with more diverse educational and professional profiles, and intersectional identities proved more difficult to engage. In addition to the recruitment methods – random selection (also sometimes referred to as 'sortition'), community engagement and door to door are most effective but require long-term trust building and are very time and resources consuming - semantics matter.

Many EQUALS-EU partners found it easier to recruit female participants when organising "innovation camps", suggesting that the description of the event as a "hackathon" could be a deterrent to young female students and is considered by many as too rooted in a 'male-dominated' tech and social innovation culture. This was notably the case with the Swedish event, with SPIDER rebranding the event as an innovation camp when it was restaged following poor attendance at the first

hackathon. The last section in the report D2.2. provides a compilation of presentations and results, develops in more detail the three key learnings from recruiting and running WP2 events, while D1.4 Policy Brief details the importance of vocabulary and gender-associated terminologies.

In the case of most events, teams were formed onsite, during the first session. Creating the teams onsite sought to ensure intersectional and diverse teams, in terms of social and gender identities and professional backgrounds. The innovation camp organised in Switzerland adopted a novel method to ensure well-balanced and diverse teams: to register, future participants had to answer a value-based questions aiming at identifying the respective "key qualities" they saw in themselves and their soft skills amongst qualities that have been identified by researchers as most common in successful innovation teams (for example "I have big ideas, "powerful imagination", "detail-oriented character")

Cases where established teams took part in the events were rare (Turkey, Israel, Spain, Greece). In hindsight, the cohesion of pre-existing teams taking part in the events has been identified as delivering stronger long-term scaling and commercialisation of the proposed solutions, which is important notably in the case of the winning ICT solutions from the hackathons. It is therefore not surprising that it is the Greek team went the furthest in the development of their solutions' commercialization.

All participating teams, both in the hackathons and in the innovation camps, were evaluated by jury members based on a predefined set of evaluation criteria. Each team was required to have a woman as team captain and 'pitcher'. Among all winning teams, only four were mixed gender teams.

Country of origin of the winning team	Women	Men
Austria	2	
Bosnia	2	2
Croatia	1	
France	3	
Germany	3	
Greece	3	
Israel	4	
Latvia	4	
Montenegro	1	1
North Macedonia	2	1
Norway	4	
Serbia	4	

Slovenia	2	
Spain	4	
Switzerland	3	
Turkey	1	1
UK	4	
Ukraine	1	
TOTAL	44	5

Table 1: Gender Composition of EQUALS-EU winning teams

Among winning teams, only one comprised both young professionals and students. This is notably the case of the winning team from the UK hackathon, one of the few events organised in partnership with professional networks: Ernest & Young the Bloomsbury Institute London and the Commonwealth Businesswomen Network. With the exception of the Swedish innovation camp, whose winning team included a stay-at-home parent, all other winning teams consisted of tertiary students.

The skills, expertise, and disciplinary background of winning teams' members are diverse: indeed, many winning teams are interdisciplinary and winning solutions build on participants expertise and experiences in art, science, social welfare, product design, political sciences, to name a few.

1.2. TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL IMPACT

Gender equity, sustainability, and social impact are policy priorities for EQUALS-EU, and of EQUALS-EU Gender Equality Tools. Behind WP2 hackathons and innovation camps is the conviction that engaging in a co-innovation process will empower future women entrepreneurs, help them to become role models, and expand their knowledge horizons. In the long term, EQUALS-EU hopes to contribute to enabling the participation of more women and girls by expanding the scope and impact of its Gender Equality Tools' beyond political institutions and the EU, to include future practices of innovation and entrepreneurship.

In practice, references to sustainability and social impact vary from one winning team to the next. In WP2, participants worked in teams to develop their solutions for gender equity and digital inclusion, and the ideas developed during these events were strongly linked to the type of event, as EQUALS-EU distinguishes hackathons and innovation camps in terms of their outcomes. Both are interdisciplinary and solutions-driven events that encourage digital inclusion in which participants develop new solutions and ICT for promoting gender equity. However, there are important differences.

Given the difference between the structure and intent of hackathons and innovation camps, the development of the social impact and sustainability strategies documented by the event winners vary. However, sustainable social impact remains at the core of the narratives underpinning all winning solutions and ideas.

CONNECTION TO UNITED NATIONS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations were adopted in 2015 and constitute a powerful "call to action" for sustainable social impact against poverty, gender inequalities, and for environmentally sustainable and peaceful lifestyles across the globe.

The EQUALS Global Partnership was founded in 2016 as an actionable programme to support the UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 'Gender Equality' by empowering women through their use of information and communication technologies to "reverse the increasing digital gender divide". EQUALS-EU shares a similar objective, and all winning solutions or ideas work towards the accomplishment of that goal. Yet, many go beyond Goal 5 and seek to have sustainable social impact through a multiplicity of channels. In total, 10 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, underpin the EQUALS-EU winning solutions, as illustrated in Table 2 below:

	Goal 1: No Poverty	Goal 3: Good Health & Well-Being	Goal 4: Quality Education	Goal 5: Gender Equality	Goal 8: Decent Work & Economic Growth	Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities	Goal 11: Sustainable Cities & Communities	Goal 12: Responsible Consumption & Production	Goal 13: Climate Action	Goal 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions
Austria	X			X	X	X				
Bosnia and Herzegovina		X		X						
Croatia			X	X	X					
France				X	X					
Germany		X		X						
Greece			X	X	X				X	X
Israel		X		X						
Latvia		X	X	X						
Montenegro		X		X	X					
North Macedonia			X	X						
Norway				X	X	X				
Serbia				X				X		
Slovenia				X						
Spain				X				X		
Sweden				X				X		
Switzerland				X						
Turkey				X	X					
United Kingdom	X		X	X	X					
Ukraine				X						X

Table 2: UN Sustainable Development Goals addressed by EQUALS-EU winning teams

KEY VALUES UNDERPINNING WINNING SOLUTIONS

From a quantitative perspective, Table 2 presents a strong drive from the participants towards addressing four SDGs in particular: **Goal 3: Good health and wellbeing, Goal 4: Quality education, Goal 5: Gender equality,** and **Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth.** In addition, there are, further values are evident in their work which is discussed at the end of this section.

- **Gender Equality or Gender Equity?**

All winning solutions developed in the framework of EQUALS-EU contribute to achieving "**Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**". Being a systemic issue, it is often addressed simultaneously with other societal challenges that deepen the gender gap.

One of the solutions that addressed inequality in a direct way was the winning submission from the Ukrainian innovation camp. This solution proposed a series of policy recommendations that aim to tackle gender gaps by addressing its causes

"rather than spending resources on addressing the negative consequences". ALL solutions stressed the importance of the concept of gender equality, by focusing on the need to eliminate discriminatory policies and practices (e.g. street harassment, gender profiling, gendered designs, unequal access to infrastructures and services). Interestingly, and despite the explicit focus of EQUALS-EU on gender equity, no winning solution explicitly conceptualized a distinction between gender equality and gender equity.

Nevertheless, gender equity was clearly identifiable as a key value underpinning those solutions and ideas aiming at reforming power structures through a focus on education (in relation to "Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all") and through access to employment (in relation to "Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all".

Concerning education, one example is the winning solution Bias Hack from Bosnia and Herzegovina, which seeks to address the roots of gender inequalities in traditional family roles through a gamified ICT solution. An excellent example is also provided by the United Kingdom's winning team, which developed "Amwali", a mobile app that educates women on income, emergency funds, and community rebuilding to support their financial independence, and integrate intersectional identities in post conflict areas. Other groups worked towards overcoming structural barriers by building the capacities of women. This was the case of the Croatian winning team, who presented a solution to support young parents, and notably women, in pursuing academic careers alongside motherhood.

In relation to employment and equitable access to the labour market, the winning solution from Norway, the platform MAD – Making A Difference, offers courses to improve technical skills or job opportunities, as well as information on employee rights. The Austrian's Khwela Womxn program, takes a similar approach, by focusing on unemployed women. A further example comes from the French winning team, which put forward a solution that operates against the gender bias in online search engines, which leads to unequal access to the labour market for gender minority backgrounds and limits their agency. As one of their team members stated:

> » "Algorithms are not to be condemned, the only ones responsible are those who design them. We are fighting for fair and inclusive Artificial Intelligence"

- **Women's Health and Well-Being**

Interestingly, winning teams stressed the importance of health and well-being as a key value and objective underpinning their solutions, as demonstrated by the strong connection between 5 of 19 EQUALS-EU solutions and the UN Sustainable Development "Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages". EQUALS-EU winning teams and solutions understood well-being and health beyond the physical with mental health being a strong concern. For example, the winning team from Israel developed the concept of a virtual exercise platform to break gender and body stereotypes that shame girls and women and damage their self-confidence. In the words of the Israeli winning team:

> » "Gender stereotypes contribute to young women dropping out of sport participation because women in sport are often seen as being non-feminine"

The focus on mental health was also shared by the winning team from Montenegro, whose app "Be heard" offers women a safe space to break the silence, share their stories of gender discrimination and get the **peer support** they need. The idea of peer support, and **building supporting and safe communities** was present in many solutions developed across diverse topics (education, health, jobs, safety). The winning teams from Germany and Latvia both focused on pregnant women and young mothers, the German Hypnose app integrates AI with exclusive wireless health trackers for pregnant women with insomnia, while the Latvian 365 Mother's Day app for pregnant women and young mothers offers an online community to break the fear, solitude, post-partum depression, and low self-esteem that sometimes comes with maternity.

- Safety

Three solutions focused on improving the safety and security of girls and women, notably in cities, in relation to **"Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable"** and in the digital environment. Regarding the former, the Swedish winning team, stated:

> » "Women feel insecure in city environments: harassment, unpredictable behavior of others. Their everyday lives are restricted"

In response, they developed the concept of "Get home safely", an app that would consolidate all public safety solutions available in one single platform to facilitate their ease of use and their impact.

It is interesting to note that safety was understood by the two other teams as **online and digital safety**, online-gender violence, and the protection of civil rights in digital environments. The winning solution from Serbia, for example, proposed I.GENDER, a software to detect and fight cyber violence content against women. The Swiss winning team addressed the issue of "revenge porn". Their "Break the Chain" solution was inspired by wanting to break the chain of non-consensually sharing sensitive content online, which both leads to stigmatisation of the victim and intensifies gender inequality. Indeed, young women and gender non-conforming (YWGNC) people are disproportionally affected by revenge porn, and often are not helped or empowered to solve this problem.

- **Circular Economy and Climate Action**

It is perhaps surprising to note that **"Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts"** was not more widely referenced by the different winning teams, considering the important gender dimension of climate change, and the disproportionate impact it has on girls and women, especially in the Global South. The only winning team that explicitly integrated the climate dimension into its solution was the winning team from Greece. This team proposed a series of sewing seminars to encourage circular economy, where they would repair, reuse, and recycle clothes, fabrics, and materials in a new life cycle, thus making a clear link with **Goal 12 "Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns"**.

KEY THEMES OF EQUALS-EU UNDERPINNING THE WINNING SOLUTIONS

In addition to these key values and concepts underpinning the development of EQUALS-EU solutions and ideas as highlighted above, it is worth noting that three key themes of EQUALS-EU – intersectionality, inclusive design and entrepreneurship – also guided the work of some winning teams.

- **Intersectionality**

An **intersectional** approach and focus on overcoming overlapping forms of marginalisation was adopted by a few groups. For example, Norway targeted the administrative and linguistic obstacles faced by Thai women when looking for a job in Norway. while the Greek team directed their actions towards "helping single-parent families and their members, people who have experienced or are experiencing social exclusion and abuse". The UK solution focused on women in post-conflict areas, and the Swiss solution examined the online risks faced by gender non-conforming (YWGNC) people.

- **Inclusive design**

Embedded within the subject of the digital divide, **inclusive design** is transversal to all winning projects developed during the hackathons. Participants put the needs of people at the heart of their proposals, recognizing exclusion and the biases that function subconsciously in everybody. A good example of the incarnation of these principles is the project developed by the French winning team, who proposed developing an ethical and gender-inclusive Artificial Intelligence, and the Making A Difference platform from Norway, which prioritised developing a platform that is appealing and user-friendly for diverse users. In the words of the winning Norwegian team:

> » "Inclusive design is about finding better solutions, and not about restrictions, and is embedded within the topic of the digital divide."

- **Entrepreneurship**

A few solutions from the hackathons and innovation camps aimed directly at fostering women entrepreneurship, not only for the participants themselves, but for others. This is notably the case of the winning solution coming from Turkey. The platform DevWomen connects its users to start-ups that are led by female managers only. Through this platform, "women entrepreneurs don't need to prove themselves but to prove their projects and their projects only". Similarly, "Amwali", the mobile app developed by the UK winning team, references entrepreneurial projects led by women to facilitate direct investment.

1.3. DRIVERS FOR COMMERCIALISATION AND SCALING

POTENTIAL FOR COMMERCIALISATION

As discussed above, partners of EQUALS-EU decided whether to host an innovation camp or a hackathon at their location. While innovation camps sought to develop policy recommendations, hackathons presented the opportunity to develop solutions with commercialization potential. It is notably the case of Greek team, who proposed launching a series of sewing seminars and education programs to develop fabric products. Their project considered implementing online shopping infrastructures and digital marketing solutions, and the development of business products able to support women from vulnerable groups and local communities.

Such a detailed and long-term commercialisation strategy, with direct contact with the groups targeted, was an exception, even among hackathon winners, and we lack data and evidence to assess the exact potential for commercialisation of the proposed products and solutions.

Two of the key reasons for this were **time limitations** and the **young age of participants.**

Most teams were composed of individuals who met for the first time at the event, working within a limited timeframe (1-2 days) to develop their concept and produce results. Understandably, this limited their capacity to develop the potential for commercialisation of their solutions.

As noted in a previous section, participants of the EQUALS-EU hackathons and innovation camps were young women, many of them students, and while the winning teams had a broad spectrum of profiles and shared a strong interest in entrepreneurship, only a few of them (4 out of 19) had commercialisation and/or marketing experience prior to joining WP3 incubator programme.

That said, most winning projects showed remarkable commercial potential. Many addressed unexplored market areas, and alongside the WP3 incubator programme and WP4 Summer School will benefit from the support and gain the knowledge their need to explore their solution's commercialisation potential.

SCALING OF WINNING SOLUTIONS AND PRODUCTS

Are solutions and products developed suitable for replication and generalisation beyond the original target groups, socio-economic and cultural contexts, or socio-political issues they address? Beyond commercialisation, EQUALS-EU solutions and products' scalability is important to assess their potential for social impact.

Most winning projects addressed challenges that are faced by societies around the globe. While some of them built their solution on a national diagnostic, the learnings and solutions proposed can easily be exploited elsewhere. For example, the outcomes of "Preya" from North Macedonia, which looked at traditional gender roles in north Macedonian households has relevance for other parts of the Western Balkans because the solution is framed as a solution to the "dominant patriarchal upbringing in the Balkan countries." Further, it has the potential to be implemented beyond that region of Europe, as gendered stereotypes within family dynamics exist across the Global North and South.

It is the same for solutions that target women only: most projects address a female public, but they could be developed towards gender nonconforming persons. The Turkish winning team pitched "DevWomen", a platform that connects its users to start-ups that are led by female managers only. In their words:

> » "Through this platform, women entrepreneurs don't need to prove themselves but to prove their projects and their projects only"

The same logic could embrace trans or non-binary entrepreneurs, and successfully work in their favour. It is worth noting that some of the winning teams developed solutions that address a male audience. For example, Bosnia and Herzegovina's winning team, developed the "eParent" app to encourage young parents to take part equally in raising their children.

OBSTACLES TO COMMERCIALISATION AND SCALING

Among the hackathons held, certain winning projects had less potential for scaling than others. When the **connection to national or local traditions** was at the heart of the project, large scale commercialisation would require more thinking and weighting of trade-offs. In the case of the winning project from Greece the cultural heritage of local Greek communities at its heart suggests that any attempt to scale up the project would lead to losing those qualities that make it unique and valuable.

The same applies to projects which are **strongly linked to local law establishment or have a very strong intersectional focus.** The Norwegian project "MAD – Making a Difference", tackles a problem specific to the job market in Norway, and would demand a special effort to be applied in other contexts. While it focuses on the issues faced by Thai female migrants, some of the learnings could benefit other migrant communities in Norway. Similarly, the UK solution, which focuses on women's financial independence in post-conflict societies, offers solutions and guidance for

specific issues and situations that are not directly comparable to those of financially dependent women in democratic societies.

Overall, commercialisation was a hard step to develop for WP2 participants. Getting participants to design an innovative solution in response to a certain groups' needs is one thing, but going further in the marketing, communication, and commercialisation of their finalised product in only a couple of days was far-reaching for many of them: marketing and business were not the expertise of many participants, as researchers, PHD students, social science students, and teachers. In that respect, WP3 Incubator programme was offering a strong-added value encouraging winning team to take into account the landing phase of the product or solution, and not only its development phase.

1.4. CONCLUSION TO PART 1

The outcomes of the hackathons and innovation camps held by EQUALS-EU local partners demonstrate the great potential of these kind of activities.

Additionally, participants' feedback allows us to see that beyond the political or technical solutions that were proposed, participation in the EQUALS-EU project had the benefit of impacting participant's perception of their own capacity to generate and share innovative ideas. This was frequently mentioned in feedback questionnaires. The same applies to the enjoyment generally expressed for the possibility of sharing time and space dedicated to think with others and being able to develop solutions through collective intelligence. These outcomes go beyond geographical circumstances. The perception of the experience being both productive as well as enjoyable was shared by participants coming from diverse countries in the Global North.

Although all countries analysed belong to the Global North, it is worth noting that some of the solutions developed were in support of foreign populations. For example, the UK's project addressed the financial literacy of women in post conflict-areas, starting in Iraq, before expanding to the Middle East.

The analysis of the hackathon and innovation camps hosted as part of the EQUALS-EU project provides much food for thought and possibilities for future action. Questions raised include: What synergies could we create between the Global South and the Global North from the learnings gained so far? What if we imagined hackathons and innovation camps that aimed at finding solutions in a dynamic of "cross fertilisation" between the Global South and the Global North? What if we put participants into work teams that were diverse from a multicultural point of view? Undoubtedly there is much to explore departing from the rich experiences of these accomplished 19 EQUALS-EU events.

PART 2: TWO GENDER EQUITY TOOLS FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

2.1 DESCRIPTION OF TASK 3.2

To reiterate, the description of action describes:

(…) The results and roadmap "will be used to inform the development of the two Gender Equity Tools for Digital Inclusion, including a Sustainable Social Impact Model and a Value Creation Model Canvas. These Tools will differ from existing models, frameworks, and other toolkits by focusing specifically on the key themes of EQUALS-EU – gender equity, intersectionality, inclusive design, and social innovation and entrepreneurship.".

A note on the Value Creation Model Canvas: during development of this tool, it became evident that the most appropriate model for improved gender equality and digital inclusion within the start-up phase of business planning was a gender lens, for overlay on an existing Business Model Canvas, rather than the creation of an entirely new tool.

A note on the Sustainable Social Impact Model: The DoA states this model will provide a broader policy framework for promoting gender inclusive social innovation ecosystems. However, as testing the model developed is beyond the scope of the project, this claim cannot be made. Instead, the model produced is intended to *inform* rather than *provide* a broader policy framework for promoting gender inclusive social innovation ecosystems.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The development of the Gender Equity Tools ("the Tools") draws on 1) analysis of prior research and 2) a series of co-creation workshops.

The Tools have been made drawing experience from three projects funded under Horizon 2020 and FP7; MINDtheGEPs (Horizon 2020), SI-DRIVE (FP7), and GENOVATE (FP7), as discussed below. As demonstrated through the GENOVATE project, it is important to continuously monitor and evaluate how the work is progressing to ensure that the models are not just used once but have a continuous impact. Therefore, the recommendation on how to use the Tools has been informed by their work on evaluating and reflecting on actions. When working through the Tools we encourage businesses to invite an extended list of stakeholders, such as industry experts, government representatives, academic experts, users of the product or service, and NGO representatives. A key finding of SI-DRIVE is that "a social innovation friendly environment still has to be developed", with co-creation and user involvement acknowledged as a promising method to do so, providing businesses

with a deeper understanding of how their activities are impacting other stakeholders and society. Co-working with external stakeholder groups can provide organisations with new knowledge and ideas on how to improve digital inclusion and gender equity. Similar to the ongoing Horizon 2020 project, MINDtheGEPs, the Tools aim to provide businesses and organisations with models that are easy to understand and adapt, so that a steady progress towards digital-inclusion and gender equity can continue after the EQUALS-EU project has ended.

The Tools draw on the roadmap discussed in part 1 specifically the following topics inclusive design, women's health and well-being, intersectionality, and the sustainable development goals.

A co-creation methodology was used to develop the tools between January and May, 2023. This comprised six co-innovation sessions (Table 3) held with members from the consortium and the Young People Reference Group (YPRG) that advises the project. In addition, an extended General Assembly meeting ensured that everyone from the consortium could contribute to the development of the tools. Facilitated by work package three leaders, the co-innovation sessions were held over Zoom and facilitated by the collaborative online software platform Canva, to which participants could add their ideas and suggestions regarding the tools. The workshops were promoted to the consortium by sharing a link to the two Canva boards on Basecamp, the internal communication platform of the consortium, encouraging contributions from all.

The sessions were scheduled around the availability of each group, as shown in the table below (Table 3). Because of availability challenges consortium members and the YPRG were not able to meet during the same co-creation sessions.

Date	Co-innovation sessions focus	Participants
January 25th	Both tools	IE LAS,
February 1st	Both tools	GSMA, KMOP, IE LAS, OsloMet
February 6th	Both tools	OsloMet, UH, IHEID, INTERSECTION
April 25th	Sustainable Social Impact Model	OsloMet, AllDig, UH, IHEID, INTERSECTION, IE LAS, GSMA, KMOP, KhNUIA, UNU-IIST, UVEG, MP, HS
May 9th	Sustainable Social Impact Model	YPRG
May 24th	Value Creation Model Canvas	YPRG, KhNUIA, KMOP, UNU-IIST, UHC

Table 3: Overview of the co-innovation development sessions for the GE tools.

In each workshop the Tools and the focus of each session were introduced to the participants, a link to the Canva boards were shared with the participants both during and prior to the workshops. The Canva boards served as documentation of the ideas shared and discussed by the different groups during the sessions. Those that were unable to attend were also invited to add in their ideas and suggestions.

After the boards were closed, the data were analysed for synergies between the suggestions from the consortium members and those of the YPRG. These were prioritized for inclusion in the Sustainable Social Impact Model.

Not all suggestions that were made for the Value Creation Model Canvas could be included as some of the proposed ideas were too narrow in focus and targeted specific sub-sectors like health, tech industry and similar. While other ideas were too encompassing. The ideas provided from the participants for the Value Creation Model Canvas were reviewed in full and comments were integrated, similar topics were combined and rewritten. Suggestions that were outside the scope but still relevant were reframed. Both Tools have been created to support innovators and entrepreneurs within different industries. Ideas from both the consortium members and the YPRG were sorted and compiled into the two Tools that can be found in attachment one.

After the Tools had been developed and compiled, members of the IAC, AAC and YPRG reviewed them. The returned suggestions were implemented, and the finalized document is attached to this report (Appendix 1).

It is beyond the scope of the project to validate the Tools through pilot testing, but this is recommended as a worthwhile avenue of further research.

2.3 THE TOOLS

The Tools are a Sustainable Social Impact Model and a Value Model Canvas. These are outlined below and described in detail in Appendix 1. The purpose of the Sustainable Social Impact Model produced, is to inform a broader policy framework for promoting gender inclusive social innovation ecosystems. In contrast, the Value Creation Model Canvas, provides innovators and entrepreneurs with a new framework for developing gender inclusive marketing, management, and financial development of new businesses. It works by providing a template for creating new or developing existing business plans in a way that integrates gender equity as a key element of commercialization and value creation.

USING THE TOOLS

The tools have been developed to be accessible and simple to use in the start-up phase of a business innovating a product or service. The intention is that the tools are used by a diverse team, in a workshop setting. Diversity amongst the workshop participants is essential for ensuring successful application of the Tools. Where there is a lack of diversity within the organisation, it is possible to invite stakeholders such as industry experts, government representatives, academic experts, users of the product/service, and NGO representatives to provide external insights to the session. However, this has not been tested.

After the work sessions or workshops are finalized ensure that some of the initiatives and measures that are decided upon has specific deadlines and are assigned to

specific people in the organisation so that the efforts are followed up, implemented, monitored, and reviewed regularly. The initiatives that are settled on should be put in a time frame with an estimated time needed to implement the initiatives, and measure the impact, followed by enough time to be improved upon or pivoted. What timeframe works for each initiative must be decided upon a case-to-case basis and may vary due to the different organisations' resources and size.

To support the use of these new Tools, an instruction manual has been developed and is attached to this report (Appendix 1). This manual contains examples of how the Tools are used in practice. It is recommended that the manual be read alongside this deliverable report.

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL IMPACT MODEL

The Sustainable Social Impact Model (SSIM) provides a broader policy framework for creating gender-inclusive social innovation ecosystems by promoting value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth in innovation through a gender equity lens. Its overarching goal is digital inclusion. The tool supports decision-makers in a start-up to ensure that their efforts lead to digital inclusion and have a positive gender-inclusive impact. This is an original concept developed by the co-creators of the model.

The SSIM is essentially a worksheet, comprising a blank table and a series of questions to prompt its completion (see Figure 1). Through considering the questions to fill in the worksheet the start-up addresses a number of themes that together result in improved digital inclusion and a focus on how gender equity can be implemented. The prompts given are intentionally general, and do not relate to any specific industry, meaning that any start-up can use the model.

Successful implementation of the SSIM relies on a basic understanding of Sustainable Social Impact, and the related concepts: value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth. These concepts are defined in the attached instruction manual (see Appendix 1).

When developing a new idea:	Value creation	Social impact	Sustainable commercial growth	Applies to them all
What question(s) can you ask yourself to ensure the idea has a positive gender-inclusive impact and leads to digital inclusion through the value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth?				
What research can you conduct to ensure the idea has a positive gender-inclusive impact and leads to digital inclusion through the value creation, social impact, sustainable?				
What activities/initiatives can you implement to ensure that the idea has a gender-inclusive impact and works towards digital inclusion through the value creation, social impact, sustainable?				
How can you measure/verify that the activities/initiatives suggested above have a positive gender-inclusive impact and increases digital-inclusion?				
How can you monitor that the work towards gender equity and digital inclusion is ongoing, and continuously improved through the value creation, social impact, sustainable?				
How can you ensure that the work towards gender equity and digital-inclusion are in-line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals?				

Figure 1: A Sustainable Social Impact Model Worksheet

The Sustainable Social Impact Model is a tool for anyone in the early stages of developing a new idea, product, or service to check that they are creating gender-inclusive social innovation ecosystems by promoting value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth in innovation through a gender equity lens. The development of the tool has been informed by the following policies: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 - EU Commission, The European Parliament and the Council EU Gender Action Plan, Gender Equality - Regjeringen/Government (Norway), Gender Equality Policy in Sweden, and Gender Equality in Switzerland - Federal Office for Gender Equality.

After a start-up has worked through the SSIM the team should develop an action plan in addition to assigned tasks with a clear time frame to ensure that the work is progressing. Assigned tasks are important to know who to hold accountable if the work plan should fail. Working through the model once and never utilizing the outcomes of the workshop will not ensure future positive impacts.

VALUE CREATION MODEL CANVAS

The Value Creation Model Canvas is an iteration on the established Business Model Environment, developed by Strategyzer in 2015 for reuse under the Creative Commons attribution license. This tool has been widely adopted internationally as a business planning mechanism. The Strategyzer model looks at four areas: Market Forces, Key Trends, Industry Forces and Macro-Economic Trends. Using the Business Model Environment supports businesses in continuing to improve their business development while discovering new ideas that can be added to the business model, as external factors like rules, technology, markets and so on change over time.

The Value Creation Model Canvas extends on the Business Model Canvas by overlaying a gender lens on the Business Model Canvas. A set of trigger questions have been created for a start-up to work through to ensure their business plan incorporates gender equity, sustainable development, digital inclusion, and inclusive design. The model aims to support innovators and entrepreneurs in their process of developing existing or new business plans in a way that integrates these priorities as key elements of commercialization and value creation. The four areas are visualized in **Figure 2,** and each area provides the start-up of equally important paths to investigate and work towards.

The VCMC provides businesses with a model to use when creating new or developing existing business plans in a way that integrates gender equity as a key element of commercialization and value creation. It also enables innovators and entrepreneurs to create new businesses that use gender equity as a driver of social responsibility as well as commercial sustainability.
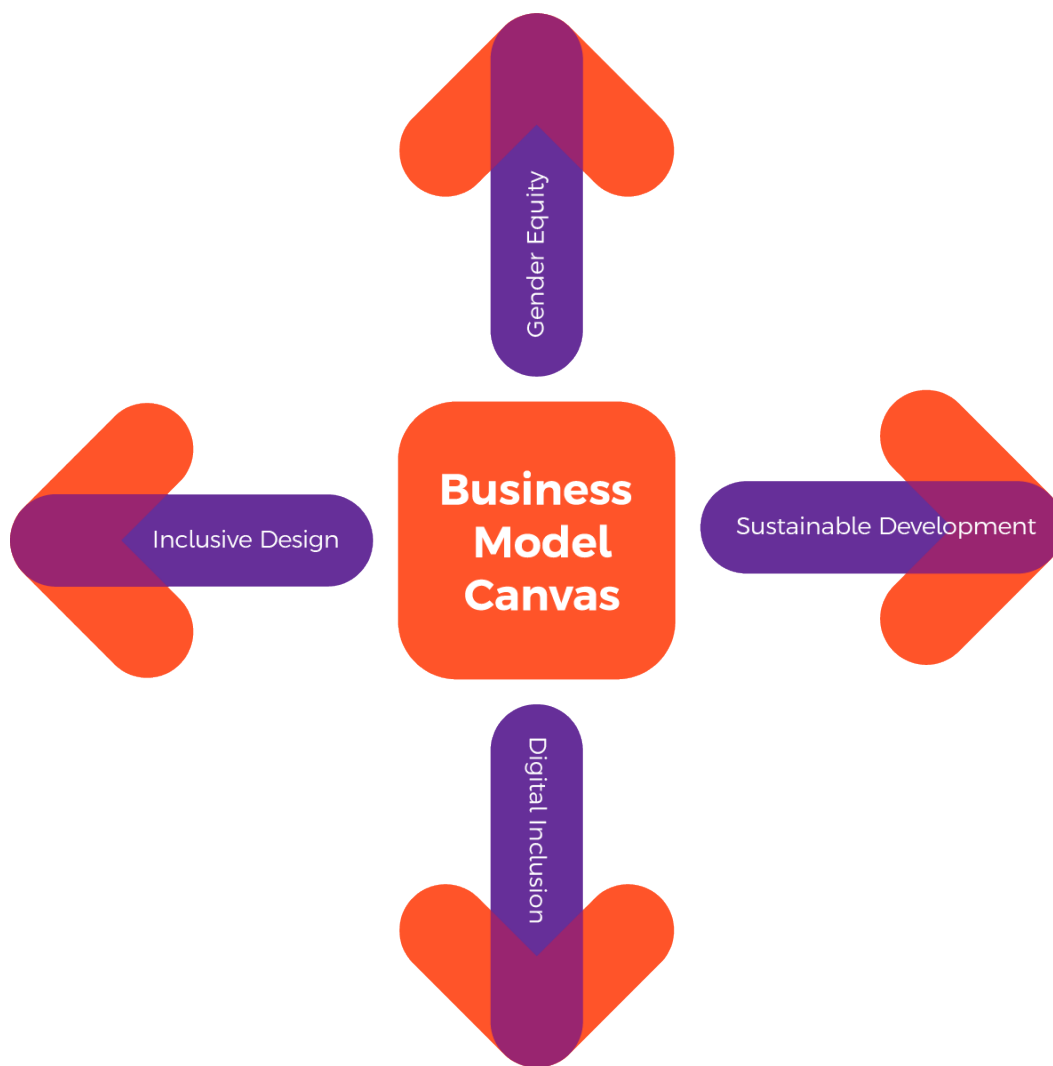
Figure 2: The Value Creation Model Canvas

USING THE VALUE CREATION MODEL CANVAS

Similar to the Sustainable Social Impact Model the start-ups are encouraged to work through the set of trigger questions for the VCMC in a workshop setting with a diverse team, repeating the workshop as necessary with other stakeholder groups. Following the workshop(s) an action plan is recommended on how the organization will work towards the implementation of the findings.

2.4 ANTICIPATED IMPACT OF THE GENDER EQUITY TOOLS

The Sustainable Social Impact Model provides a framework for creating gender inclusive social innovation ecosystems by promoting value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth in innovation through a gender equity lens. The Model is linked to policies and programmes for promoting gender equity in

socially responsible and sustainable research, innovation and entrepreneurship, including Horizon Europe. The SSIM frames gender equity in social innovation and entrepreneurship as a key component of social policy and sustainable development.

The Value Creation Model Canvas acts to remediate entrepreneurial practices that devalue and exclude women and girls. It is based on the traditional Business Model Canvas, and, as such, it provides a template for creating new and developing existing business plans in a way that integrates gender equity as a key element of commercialization and value creation. As a result, the VCMC enables innovators and entrepreneurs to create new businesses that use gender equity as a driver of social responsibility as well as commercial sustainability. Since the VCMC is anchored in gender equity, it provides a tool for creating and implementing gender equality plans with the potential to further institutionalize the substantive participation of women in business leadership and decision-making. This has the potential corollary effect of eliminating gender bias in ICT product and service design and promoting the digital inclusion of women and girls.

2.5 FURTHER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Tools are the outcome of the knowledge created through the EQUALS-EU project, they are presented as prototypes, and are untested. The intention is that interested parties can trial and develop them further.

APPENDIX 1

EQUALS-EU – Europe's Regional Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL IMPACT MODEL AND VALUE CREATION MODEL CANVAS – v1.0

INSTRUCTION MANUAL

Anne Igeltjørn, Regont Arnori

2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This document explains two Gender Equity Tools for Digital Inclusion ("the Tools"): a **Sustainable Social Impact Model** and a **Value Creation Model Canvas**. These Tools are the outcome of a series of co-innovation workshops conducted within the Equals-EU project and funded through the European Commission's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme. The development of the Tools was led by Inclusive Creation and implemented by Work Package 3 partners Latvijas Zinātņu akadēmijas Ekonomikas institūts, Kentro merimnas oikogeneias kai paidiou, Intersection Centre for Science and Innovation, Havelsan Hava Elektronik Sanayi ve Ticaret, and United Nations University. With the support from the project's advisory group: Young People's Reference Group (YPRG).

The Gender Equity Tools for Digital Inclusion differ from existing models, frameworks, and other toolkits by focusing specifically on the key themes of EQUALS-EU: gender equity, intersectionality, inclusive design, social innovation and entrepreneurship.

About EQUALS-EU

EQUALS-EU is a regional partnership that originated from the EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age.

EQUALS Global partnership is dedicated to promoting gender balance in the technology sector by championing equality of access, skills development and career opportunities for women and men alike.

Further information about Equals-EU is available online: https://equals-eu.org, including the deliverable report on the development of the Tools, which provides insight into the methodology used in their creation.

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL IMPACT MODEL

The **Sustainable Social Impact Model (SSIM)** provides a framework for creating gender inclusive social innovation ecosystems by promoting value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth in innovation through a gender equity lens. Its overarching goal is **digital inclusion, defined by the United Nations** as "….equitable, meaningful, and safe access to use, lead, and design of digital technologies, services, and associated opportunities for everyone, everywhere." The SSIM supports decision-makers in a start-up enterprise to address digital inclusion and ensure a positive gender-inclusive impact through their business.

It is strongly recommended that a start-up utilizes the SSIM as early in their development processes as possible. The SSIM is designed to be a living document. Therefore, revisited and updated throughout the life span of the organisation.

This document first defines sustainable social impact, describes how the SSIM works and provides a blank model worksheet. The second part presents a set of examples, demonstrating how the model can be used. These examples are drawn from one of the co-innovation sessions in which the SSIM was developed.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL IMPACT?

Successful implementation of the tools relies on a basic understanding of Sustainable Social Impact, and the related concepts: value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth. These terms concepts are explained below, and links to further reading included.

[Sustainable Social Impact](#) can be understood as actively managing and identifying the effects businesses have on employees, workers throughout the value chain, customers, and local communities. Companies that focus on sustainable social impact acknowledge the importance of their relationships with individuals, communities, and society. A business can actively ensure that they have a positive sustainable social impact, by ensuring that its value creation is not the only metric used to measure the company's success. By incorporating social impact and sustainable commercial growth, a business does not solely focus on value creation, but considers in addition how its operations impact several areas of society.

Value Creation: [UN's definition of value creation is the following](#): "The performance of actions that increase the worth of goods, services or even a business. Many business operators now focus on value creation both in the context of creating better value for customers purchasing its products and services, as well as for shareholders in the business who want to see their stake appreciate in value."

Social Impact is an emerging term to describe the notable or beneficial transformations that tackle or, at the very least, acknowledge issues of social injustice and difficulties. Companies or institutions accomplish these objectives by consciously and intentionally incorporating efforts and actions into their operations and management.

Sustainable Commercial Growth [Rick Miller wrote in Forbes](#) that sustainable (commercial) growth refers to a type of growth that is both replicable and encompasses ethical and responsible practices towards current and future communities. This approach is essential for ensuring the long-term prosperity of any business.

The benefit of the sustainable social impact model is that it provides businesses with a framework that they can utilize to develop gender-inclusive social innovation ecosystems through the business's value creation, social impact, and commercial sustainable growth.

[Further resources can be found at the CORDIS portal, Deliverable 2.3 provides a more detailed description of the development process for the SSIM.](#)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

The SSIM tool is for anyone developing a new idea, product, or service, to check that they are creating gender-inclusive social innovation ecosystems by promoting value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth in innovation through a gender equity lens.

It's important to remember that the overarching goal is digital inclusion, and how the business can have a positive gender-inclusive impact.

In the blank SSIM (**Figure 1**), the header row introduces a column of question prompts (left), 3 columns representing the areas of value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth, with a fourth column on the right to capture ideas applicable to all areas. By answering the prompts in the column on the left, the columns on the right can be filled out. This is explained in more detail in the next section, and examples are provided.

The worksheet should be completed by a group of staff/stakeholders in your organisation. We encourage the organisation to have at least one diverse team that can work through the prompts and their areas to capture as many viewpoints as possible. If the organisation can have several stakeholders join a workshop, the list below presents a number of suggestions on how to break down the work:

- Split a big group into smaller teams:
  - Each team run through all the prompts and the three areas, and all the teams discuss their findings afterwards to compile a joint plan on how to move forward.
  - Each team can tackle one prompt, with all the three areas, and present their ideas to the other teams to get feedback and the possibility to improve on each prompt.
  - Each team can work through all the prompts, but only focus on one of the areas (value creation, social impact, sustainable commercial growth). Which team that tackles what area needs to be decided upon before the work begins. This option might be useful in organisations where personnel are specialized within the specific areas.

- Without teams but with plenary discussions after each prompt has been worked through:
  - Alternatively, each stakeholder can work through each prompt and the three areas and write down their thoughts. A facilitator can run through each individual response, and the other participants can join the discussion. This will require a facilitator, and this will only be efficient if the participant number doesn't exceed 10. A note-taker or recorder might be needed to summarize and gather the data at the end of the session. Alternatively, a co-working program (Figma, Canva, etc.) can be used to gather all the data during the workshop to lessen the need for post-production processing.

When developing a new idea:	Value creation	Social impact	Sustainable commercial growth	Applies to them all
What question(s) can you ask yourself to ensure the idea has a positive gender-inclusive impact and leads to digital inclusion through the value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth?				
What research can you conduct to ensure the idea has a positive gender-inclusive impact and leads to digital inclusion through the value creation, social impact, sustainable?				
What activities/initiatives can you implement to ensure that the idea has a gender-inclusive impact and works towards digital inclusion through the value creation, social impact, sustainable?				
How can you measure/verify that the activities/initiatives suggested above have a positive gender-inclusive impact and increases digital-inclusion?				
How can you monitor that the work towards gender equity and digital inclusion is ongoing, and continuously improved through the value creation, social impact, sustainable?				
How can you ensure that the work towards gender equity and digital-inclusion are in-line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals?				

Figure 1: The Sustainable Social Impact Model Worksheet

THE SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL IMPACT MODEL IN PRACTICE

This section provides guidance and examples on how to use the SSIM. Figure 2 shows a completed worksheet. In this example, specific ideas were added separately to value creation, social impact, and sustainable commercial growth, while many others were added to the final column, being relevant to all the sections. In the following pages further suggestions are provided for each area, in response to the six prompts on the SSIM.

If you were to develop a new idea:	VALUE CREATION	SOCIAL IMPACT	SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL GROWTH	APPLIES TO THEM ALL
WHAT QUESTION(S) CAN YOU ASK YOURSELF TO ENSURE THE IDEA HAS A POSITIVE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND LEADS TO DIGITAL INCLUSION THROUGH THE VALUE CREATION, SOCIAL IMPACT, AND SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL GROWTH	1. How is it benefiting women from various backgrounds and with various needs? 2. Is the idea scalable so it can truly have a positive social impact? 3. How do you intend to measure to what extend the deployment of the product/innovation idea has been a success? How has it changed the status quo (if at all)? 4. How is users feedback being implemented? — 1. Who is my target audience, and have I ensured that my product/service includes diverse gender identities and provides equal opportunities to all genders? 2. Have I conducted user testing and gathering feedback from a diverse range of individuals with different gender identities to ensure that my product/service is accessible and user-friendly to everyone? 3. How can I incorporate gender-inclusive language in my product/service to ensure that it does not reinforce gender stereotypes and promotes diversity and inclusivity? 4. How can I use technology to bridge the digital divide and ensure that my product/service is accessible to individuals who may not have equal access to technology or the internet?	The dedicating team is diverse and the audience as well. The interaction always welcome an open feedback. 1. Who are the target beneficiaries of this idea, and how will it positively impact their lives? 2. Does this idea promote gender equality, and if so, how? 3. Have I considered the different needs and challenges different genders may face when accessing and using digital technologies? 4. How will this idea address potential biases or discrimination in the digital space? 5. Have I consulted with and involved diverse stakeholders, including individuals from different gender identities, in designing and implementing this idea? 6. Will this idea provide equal opportunities for individuals of all genders to access and benefit from digital technologies? 7. How will I measure and track the impact of this idea on gender inclusion and digital inclusion?	1. How does the idea promote gender equality and inclusivity, and what specific measures are in place to ensure that women and individuals of marginalized gender identities are not excluded or disadvantaged? 2. How does the idea address the unique challenges and barriers faced by underrepresented groups in accessing digital resources and technologies and what measures are in place to ensure that theses groups can benefit from the idea? 3. What steps are being taken to actively involve women and individuals of marginalized gender identities in the development, implementation and decision making processes related to the idea? 4. How does the idea contribute to the overall goal od sustainable commercial growth and what measures are in place to ensure that it is environmentally and socially responsibility?	Are we having a diverse group to lead the development of the new idea and to work on the three aspects (value creation, sustainable commercial growth and social impact). If not can we find the competencies other places or buy this service from another company or have an advisory board
WHAT RESEARCH CAN YOU CONDUCT TO ENSURE THE IDEA HAS A POSITIVE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND LEADS TO DIGITAL INCLUSION THROUGH THE [THREE AREAS]	User interviews with different user groups to ensure that the value creation is not creating a negative impact. — conduct literature research and review article to improve the publicity of the topic. Focus groups with representatives from the target population / user groups. Ask them what value they would benefit from, and whether the idea/product matches this.	Make sure that you do interviews with the intended target group - no leading questions - that are open for reflection — A research also taking into account different local/regional/national conditions including culture, language, legislation, as well as different levels of digital skills and gender equality, which will have a direct influence on the targeted outcome for gender inclusive impact.	Investigate what the newest technology or research says regarding sustainable commercial growth. Also check if the newest technologies have any barriers that may hinder digital inclusion. (Lack of compatibility, etc-)	Looked at research that specifically looks into how the work on digital-inclusion is moving forward, and continuously keeping updated with the emerging research. — A study on Systemic design and social sustainability of projects and how gender inclusion plays a role in it
WHAT ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES CAN YOU IMPLEMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE IDEA HAS A GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND WORKS TOWARDS DIGITAL INCLUSION THROUGH THE [THREE AREAS]	1. Women at the heart of any innovation and/or technological development; 2. Consider the specific needs of female users as opposed to male 3. Ensure user testing as to identify any hidden biases and other challenges and remember: women are not a homogeneous group. As such the product needs to consider women from various backgrounds and with various needs and wants — 1. A user survey will be a critical first step as to ensure the productactivity targets the intended audience group 2. Seek best practices and lessons learnt from similar innovation ideas 3. Consult existing research particularly where it concerns addressing key barriers to digital inclusion	If the product or service is targeting one specific area or user group invite the users or stakeholder to dialogues to get a better understanding of the social impact the idea can have, both positive impacts and negative ones. I.E photo-sharing app might lead to situations where privacy is impacted, but can also be a good thing to create a better community.	Hosting co-creation events and workshops together with the user groups and different stakeholders to tap into the different ideas and thoughts that these groups have. It may give a clearer idea of what the business is currently lacking and can give indications of what's already working. — User-test all ideas on a range of different users that are relevant to the product/service	There should be an open feedback channel for the end users to communicate any concerns or issues they might be having due to the idea. — Regular brainstorming sessions with team members and stakeholders to think of ways to constantly improve the impact of the idea. — Comprehensive trainings on various tech fields — Women Resource Groups - that meet weekly, monthly and annually to discuss challenges and solutions to digital inclusion.
HOW CAN YOU MEASURE/VERIFY THAT THE ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES SUGGESTED ABOVE HAVE A POSITIVE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND INCREASES DIGITAL-INCLUSION?	Consider a pilot testing phase whereby the activity/initiative is deployed in a focus group as to determine if it meets the gender inclusive objectives — Conduct a survey as well as FGD to collect/measure and verify the action layout	An inclusive data collection system should be set in place to measure the impact of activities — Share good and best practices to support the uptake of positive examples and encourage learning from failures.	Create Networking platforms that link user groups to private and public companies.	First thing to evaluate any idea is to have some data about how whatever you are trying to improve is before starting it. Data about gender gap in the field is basic. The necessary data could be from other projects, but also could be own generated. For example questionnaires can be very useful. If there is detected a gender gap, any idea including gender perspective will improve the situation. To measure how much it improves it will be needed more evaluation during the implementation of the idea. This evaluation should be well though in order to be comparable with the first one evaluation.
HOW CAN YOU MONITOR THAT THE WORK TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY AND DIGITAL INCLUSION IS ONGOING, AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVED THROUGH THE [THREE AREAS]	Introduce an impact assessment framework based on previously agreed targets and objectives which determine what gender equity and digital inclusion outcomes look like	Ensure that the language used is inclusive and also up to date for the intended user group of the product/ideas		
HOW CAN YOU ENSURE THAT THE WORK TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY AND DIGITAL-INCLUSION ARE IN-LINE WITH THE UN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?	Consider including the SDGs indicators as a way of measuring the level of gender inclusivity and overall alignment with the SDGs not least SDG9		From the beginning of the critical towards how the business can achieve a sustainable commercial growth without having a negative impact on the society and the planet. Being mindful of resource usage and find sustainable solutions.	Have a process template that the board or admins can utilize and have a check-in either yearly or every sixth month

Figure 2: Example Model with Prompt Answer Examples

PROMPT 1 – WHAT QUESTION(S) CAN YOU ASK YOURSELF TO ENSURE THE IDEA HAS A POSITIVE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND LEADS TO DIGITAL INCLUSION THROUGH THE VALUE CREATION, SOCIAL IMPACT, AND SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL GROWTH.

Value Creation example

» "Is there a way the idea can affect the potential users positively taking into consideration the different circumstances they might be facing?"

Social Impact example:

» "Have we consulted with and involved diverse stakeholders, including individuals from different gender identities, in designing and implementing this idea?"

Sustainable commercial growth example:

» "How does the idea contribute to the overall goal of sustainable commercial growth and what measures are in place to ensure that it is environmentally and socially responsibility?"

Applies to them all (areas) example:

» "Ask users if they are open to Co-design the idea and provide feedback in the early stages."

PROMPT 2 – WHAT RESEARCH CAN YOU CONDUCT TO ENSURE THE IDEA HAS A POSITIVE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND LEADS TO DIGITAL INCLUSION THROUGH THE VALUE CREATION, SOCIAL IMPACT, AND SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL GROWTH.

Value Creation example:

» "A user survey will be a critical first step as to ensure the product/activity targets the intended audience group. Seek best practices and lessons learnt from similar innovation ideas. Consult existing research particularly where it concerns addressing key barriers to digital inclusion."

Social Impact example:

» "Example one – Research to ensure that the idea takes into consideration the unique challenges faced by people of different genders. Example two – Research considering different local/regional/national conditions including culture, language, legislation, as well as different levels

of digital skills and gender equality, which will have a direct influence on the targeted outcome for gender inclusive impact."

Sustainable commercial growth example:

"Investigate what the latest relevant technology or research says regarding sustainable commercial growth. Also check if new technologies have any barriers that may hinder digital inclusion. (Lack of compatibility, etc.)"

Applies to them all (areas) example:

"A study on Systemic design and social sustainability of projects and how gender inclusion plays a role in it."

PROMPT 3 – WHAT ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES CAN YOU IMPLEMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE IDEA HAS A GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND WORKS TOWARDS DIGITAL INCLUSION THROUGH THE VALUE CREATION, SOCIAL IMPACT, AND SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL GROWTH

Value Creation example:

"Women at the heart of any innovation and/or technological development, 2. Consider the specific needs of female users in addition to male, 3. Ensure user testing to identify any hidden biases and other challenges and remember: women are not a homogeneous group. As such the product needs to consider women from various backgrounds and with various needs and wants."

Social Impact example:

"Create a mitigation plan based on the results received from the research done in the previous steps on how to reduce negative social impacts. Also develop an internal action plan for how to create a positive social impact."

Sustainable commercial growth example:

"Hire an external expert that can audit if your organisation's sustainable commercial growth is sustainable, and working towards digital inclusion, while having a positive gender impact."

Applies to them all (areas) example:

>> "Women Resource Groups - that meet weekly, monthly, and annually to discuss challenges and solutions to digital inclusion."

PROMPT 4 – HOW CAN YOU MEASURE/VERIFY THAT THE ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES SUGGESTED ABOVE HAS A POSITIVE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND INCREASES DIGITAL-INCLUSION?

Value Creation example:

>> "Conduct a survey as well as focus group discussion to collect/measure and verify the action layout."

Social Impact example:

>> "An inclusive data collection system should be set in place to measure the impact of activities. Share good and best practices to support the uptake of positive examples and encourage learning from failures."

Sustainable commercial growth example:

>> "Create networking platforms that link user groups to private and public companies."

Applies to them all (areas) example:

>> "First thing to evaluate any idea is to have some data about how whatever you are trying to improve is before starting it. Data about the gender gap in the field is basic. The necessary data could be from other projects, but also could be self generated. For example, questionaries can be very useful. If there is detected a gender gap, any idea including gender perspective will improve the situation. To measure how much it improves it will be needed more evaluation during the implementation of the idea. This evaluation should be well thought through in order to be comparable with the first one evaluation."

PROMPT 5 – HOW CAN YOU ENSURE THAT THE WORK TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY AND DIGITAL-INCLUSION IS ONGOING, AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVED THROUGH VALUE CREATION, SOCIAL IMPACT, AND SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL GROWTH

Value Creation example:

>> "Introduce an impact assessment framework based on previously agreed targets and objectives which determine what gender equity and digital inclusion outcomes look like."

Social Impact example:

⟫ "Ensure that the language used is inclusive and up to date for the intended user group of the product/ideas."

Sustainable commercial growth example:

⟫ "Run thorough user and technical tests of the products and services that are developed so that they are not crreating new digital barriers but opportunities for people with less access to digital devices and connectivity. In addition, a digital introduction program can be established by reinveseting a little portion of the profit into digital-inclusion inititve(s) or business owned gender equity programs."

Applies to them all (areas) example:

⟫ "To improve the work done, a diverse group with some of the end users can be created to periodically assess the impact of the tool. And the feedback can be used to improve it."

PROMPT 6 – HOW CAN YOU ENSURE THAT THE WORK TOWARD GENDER EQUITY AND DIGITAL-INCLUSION ARE IN-LINE WITH THE UN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS?

Value Creation example:

⟫ "Consider including the SDGs indicators as a way of measuring the level of gender inclusivity and overall alignment with the SDGs not least SDG5."

Social Impact example:

⟫ "Run a yearly co-creation workshop and survey with different stakeholder groups that are familiar with your business or organisation. Ask them to identify what active measures that your business have in place and what Sustainable Developmen Goals they align with. Ask for critical feedback on how you can improve. A data analysis of the answers can indicate how you are progressing,"

Sustainable commercial growth example:

⟫ "From the beginning of be critical towards how the business can achieve a sustainable commercial growth without having a negative impact on the society and the planet. Being mindful of resource usage and find sustainable solutions."

Applies to them all (areas) example:

>> "Have a process template that the board or administrators can utilize and have a check-in either yearly or every sixth month."

VALUE CREATION MODEL CANVAS

The Value Creation Model Canvas is an iteration on the established Business Model Environment, developed by Strategyzer in 2015 for reuse under the Creative Commons attribution license. This tool has been widely adopted internationally as a business planning mechanism. The Strategyzer model looks at four areas: Market Forces, Key Trends, Industry Forces and Macro-Economic Trends. Using the Business Model Environment supports businesses in continuing to improve their business development while discovering new ideas that can be added to the business model, as external factors like rules, technology, markets and so on change over time.

The Value Creation Model Canvas extends on the Business Model Canvas by overlaying a gender lens on the Business Model Canvas. The gender lens comprises a set of trigger questions for a start-up to work through to ensure their business plan incorporates gender equity, sustainable development, digital inclusion, and inclusive design. The model aims to support innovators and entrepreneurs in their process of developing existing or new business plans to integrate these priorities as key elements of commercialization and value creation.

The benefit of the VCMC is that it provides businesses with a model that they can utilize when creating new or developing existing business plans in a way that integrates gender equity as a key element of commercialization and value creation. It also enables innovators and entrepreneurs to create new businesses that use gender equity as a driver of social responsibility as well as commercial sustainability.

Further resources can be found here at the CORDIS portal, Deliverable 2.3 provides a more detailed description of the development process.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

The Value Creation Model Canvas uses the organisation or the business's already existing Business Model Canvas as the baseline for the discussion and the work to be done.

Similar to the Sustainable Social Impact Model, the start-ups are encouraged to work through the set of trigger questions in a workshop setting with a diverse team, repeating the workshop as necessary with other stakeholder groups. Following the

workshop(s), an action plan is recommended to map how the organisation will work towards the implementation of the findings.

The trigger questions focus on four areas: gender equity, sustainable development, digital inclusion, and inclusive design. Using these lenses, a start-up or existing business, can take a critical look at their business model to investigate if the areas have been adequately addressed to accommodate the needs of a diverse population.

The VCMC is designed to be a living document. Therefore, it should be revisited and updated throughout the lifespan of the development of the business, and measures to ensure continuous progress, monitoring, and accountability need to be established either internally or externally to ensure a steady progress to integrate gender equity as a key element of commercialization and value creation.

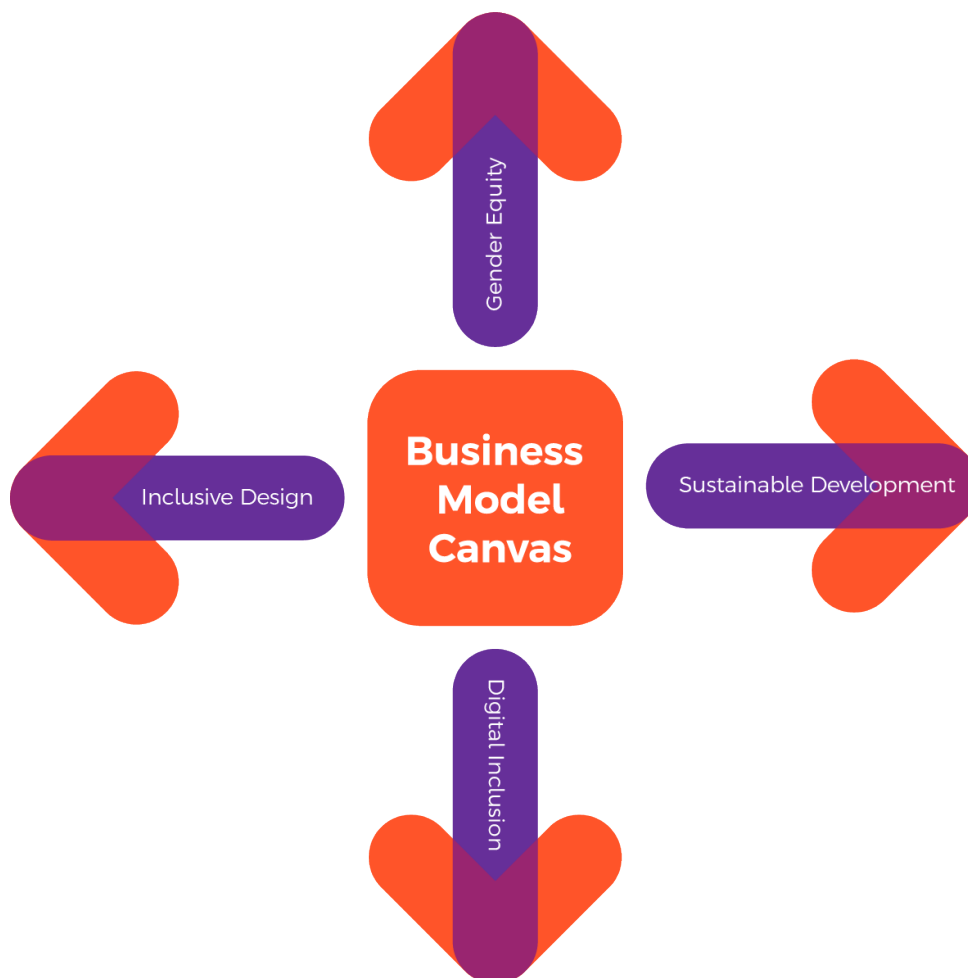## THE VALUE CREATION MODEL CANVAS IN PRACTICE

Figure 3: The Value Creation Model Canvas Gender Lenses

Attribution: **The Value Creation Model Canvas** is built on the Business Model Canvas created by Strategyzer. It is available for use under Creative Commons license,

By working through the sets of trigger questions below with a diverse team or several teams, the organisation will gain new insights into where the pain points are, how they can handle them, what works well, and what needs improving. The trigger questions begin with the topic gender equity, and move into sustainable development, followed by digital inclusion, and end with inclusive design. Similar to a Business Model Canvas, it looks both at internal and external factors.

THE TRIGGER QUESTIONS

GENDER EQUITY

How do you define gender equity?

What is the gender balance?

     a) At the bottom of the supply chain / supply web (external)
     b) In the leadership of the supply chain / supply web (external)
     c) In your organisation's leadership positions - (internal)
     d) At the bottom of your organisation's hierarchy - (internal)

What policies and procedures should be adopted to promote gender equity?

How do you consider a team member's unique perspectives (good add) in addition to their qualifications (good fit)?

How can you implement and ensure accountability for those policies and procedures?

How can you monitor current trends in gender equity and ensure your organisation's public profile is inclusive?

Have you considered the role of gender equity in occupational health and well-being?

How do you encourage or promote the use of inclusive language in your organisation (e.g., leadership communications, marketing materials, or mission statements)

How does your organisation define gender equity and how does it connect to other social programs at your organisations (e.g., ESG, CSR, DEI)?

Does the language used in your recruiting materials "leave anyone out"? How can you use recruiting tools to make your company more inclusive?

Are there opportunities for young people of different genders and backgrounds to join the business? If there are, how will you make them feel included? Would their opinions count? Would they be given incentives? Would there be career progression? How would you ensure that?

What actions have you taken towards hiring candidates from underrepresented groups?

How safe do your employees feel communicating their opinions and concerns at work?

How does your organisation celebrate diverse ideas and people?

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

How can you contribute to the well-being of local communities and support social and economic development while maintaining environmental sustainability?

Are there any aspects of the business that have a negative impact on the environment and is there a way to reduce the impact? Or alternative ways of achieving the same result without the negative impact?

What do you perceive as the main challenges or barriers for your organisation to promote sustainable development?

How can you minimize your environmental impact and promote sustainable practices throughout your business operations, including sourcing, production, and distribution?

- How do you know whether your supply chain uses ethical labour practices and sustainable sourcing, including fair wages, banning child labour, and ensuring safe working conditions, Fair Trade, cruelty-free, etc.? Are there any other providers that can deliver the same without affecting the end result in a bad way?
- What evidence or indicators do you look for to ensure that sourcing practices are sustainable? Are there any certifications or labels related to sustainable sourcing that you trust or look for when making purchasing decisions? Can you trace your resources back to their source?

DIGITAL INCLUSION

» Digital inclusion is about product (outcomes)

If the idea is tech-based: will the idea work in areas with low/unstable connectivity? Is there a way of ensuring that it works both online and offline?

Does your organisation have any policies, or initiatives (i.e., no access to internet) preventing people in a particular area from having access to this product? And how can that be worked around?

How does your organisation go beyond compliance with national and international law for inclusive design?

What are the main barriers women face when accessing or using your product or service?

Are there alternative communication channels or methods incorporated within the tech-based solution to reach users in areas with limited internet connectivity?

How does the product promote and ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all users? Are there features or moderation systems in place to prevent harassment, discrimination, or other forms of harmful behaviour?

If external providers of technology are used: Are the contracts highlighting accessibility features needed to make it work for the greatest number of users? Is Universal Design catered for?

How are you ensuring that the final product is usable i.e., effective, efficient, and satisfying?

How does your company add value to the lives of underrepresented or marginalised communities?

INCLUSIVE DESIGN

>> Inclusive Design is about the process of the design.

How are you fostering diversity and representation within your development team or stakeholders to ensure that diverse perspectives are considered during the product's creation and evolution? And how can you involve users from diverse backgrounds, gender identities and abilities in the design and development process to ensure inclusivity?

What are you doing to ensure that your customer engagements are accessible for people with disabilities (e.g., TTY calling for support)

What types of channels will you need to engage in order to communicate and meet the needs of hard-to-reach populations?

How will you ensure members of your team feel like their opinions are valid?

What structural, informational, or socio-cultural factors might prevent people from working for you/using your product/service?

How do you address complaints from your clients if they don't feel included when using your product?

Would you be open to putting out strategic parts of the work you do on social media channels to get feedback and ideas on how to be more gender inclusive from a larger audience?

Do you have avatars, personas that have a range of design options? Gender is not just binary in forms/surveys), etc.

How can you incorporate inclusive design principles to ensure your products/services are accessible and usable by a diverse range of users, including people with disabilities?

IMPLEMENTING THE GENDER EQUITY TOOLS

The tools presented in this manual will only be effective if adopted are core business development tools. If working towards better digital inclusion and have a positive gender-inclusive impact is new to your organisation it is recommended to begin with the Sustainable Social Impact Model. The SSIM works through the different processes in an organisation from top to bottom, and it doesn't require an established Business Model Canvas.

If the organisation has a Business Model Canvas already developed, the trigger questions in the Value Creation Model Canvas can help the stakeholders to look at the organisation with new insights and ideas on how to improve the current model. Alternatively, if the organisation does not yet have a Business Model Canvas, the trigger questions can support the development of the VCMC, embedding the four areas gender equity, sustainable development, digital inclusion, and inclusive design from the beginning.

As stated in the previous sections, it is important that different stakeholders are invited to the sessions where the tools are worked through, and the best results are achieved when there's a diverse group that works together. After the work sessions or workshops are finalised, prioritise the initiatives and measures decided upon, assign deadlines and responsibilities to ensure that actions are implemented, monitored, and reviewed on a regular basis. The timeframe for action for each initiative must be decided upon a case-to-case basis and may vary due to the different organisations' resources and size.

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