

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

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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.

 Sustainable Social Impact Model	Value creation	Social impact	Sustainable commercial growth	Applies to them all
What question(s) can you ask to ensure gender-inclusive impact and digital inclusion?				
What research is needed to ensure gender-inclusive impact and digital inclusion?				
What activities/initiatives are needed to implement the above?				
How can you measure/verify the impact of the initiatives/activities?				
What monitoring tools can ensure ongoing action and continuous improvement?				
How does the emerging gender equity and digital inclusion strategy align with the UN SDGs				

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 that 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.

	VALUE CREATION	SOCIAL IMPACT	SUSTAINABLE COMMERCIAL GROWTH	APPLIES TO THEM ALL
WHAT QUESTION(S) CAN YOU ASK TO ENSURE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND DIGITAL INCLUSION?	<p>1. How is it benefiting women from various backgrounds and with various needs?</p> <p>2. In the development of a new product, how can you ensure that you have a diverse range of individuals with different gender identities to ensure that your production is accessible and user-friendly?</p> <p>3. How do you intend to ensure that you are not reinforcing gender stereotypes or promoting diversity and inclusivity?</p> <p>4. How can you ensure that your production is accessible to individuals who may have equal access to technology or the internet?</p> <p>5. How do you intend to ensure that you are not reinforcing gender stereotypes or promoting diversity and inclusivity?</p> <p>6. How can you ensure that your production is accessible to individuals who may have equal access to technology or the internet?</p>	<p>The following text is about gender and the inclusion of women on an open platform.</p> <p>1. How does the idea address gender equality and how will it positively impact the lives of women?</p> <p>2. How does the idea address the different needs and challenges of different genders who may have different access to digital technology?</p> <p>3. How will the idea address potential biases or discrimination in the digital space?</p> <p>4. How can you ensure that your production is accessible to individuals who may have equal access to technology or the internet?</p> <p>5. How do you intend to ensure that you are not reinforcing gender stereotypes or promoting diversity and inclusivity?</p> <p>6. How can you ensure that your production is accessible to individuals who may have equal access to technology or the internet?</p>	<p>1. How does the idea address gender equality and inclusivity, and what specific measures are in place to ensure that women and individuals of marginalised gender identities are not excluded or disadvantaged?</p> <p>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 these groups can benefit from the idea?</p> <p>3. What steps are being taken to actively involve women and individuals of marginalised gender identities in the development, implementation and decision-making processes related to the idea?</p> <p>4. How does the idea contribute to the overall goal of sustainable commercial growth and other objectives, while ensuring that it is environmentally and socially responsible?</p>	<p>How can having a diverse group to lead the development of the new idea and to work on the three aspects (social, economic, sustainable commercial growth and social impact), if not can we find the competence or other people to buy this service from another company or from an advisory board.</p>
WHAT RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO ENSURE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND DIGITAL INCLUSION?	<p>User interviews with different target groups to ensure that the cultural context is not creating a negative impact.</p> <p>Focus groups with representatives from the target population / user groups. Ask them what their biggest needs, pain points and what their development machine this.</p> <p>1. A user survey will be a critical first step as it allows the product development team to understand the needs and pain points of the target population. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p> <p>2. Conduct a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Make sure that you do research with the relevant target group on their needs and what their development machine this.</p> <p>1. A user survey will be a critical first step as it allows the product development team to understand the needs and pain points of the target population. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p> <p>2. Conduct a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Investigate what the current technology or research says regarding sustainable commercial growth. Also check if the current technology has any specific features that support digital inclusion (such as accessibility, etc.).</p>	<p>Look at research that specifically looks into the work on digital inclusion, moving forward and continuously learning based on the emerging research.</p> <p>A study on Systems design and social sustainability of projects and how gender inclusion plays a role in it.</p>
WHAT ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES ARE NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE ABOVE?	<p>1. Women at the heart of any innovation and technological development.</p> <p>2. Conduct a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p> <p>3. Ensure user testing is to identify any biases, blind spots and other challenges and implement them as part of a homogeneous group. As such the product needs to consider women from various backgrounds and with various needs and wants.</p> <p>4. Conduct a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>If the product or service is designed to be used by women, it is important to ensure that it is designed to be used by women. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p> <p>1. A user survey will be a critical first step as it allows the product development team to understand the needs and pain points of the target population. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p> <p>2. Conduct a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Ensure that the product or service is designed to be used by women. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Building on existing events and activities together with the user groups and different stakeholders to ensure that there is a clear idea of what the business is currently doing and can give indicators of what's been done.</p> <p>Women Resource Groups that meet weekly, monthly and quarterly to discuss challenges and solutions to digital inclusion.</p>
HOW CAN YOU MEASURE/VERIFY THE IMPACT OF THE INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES?	<p>Conduct a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p> <p>1. A user survey will be a critical first step as it allows the product development team to understand the needs and pain points of the target population. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p> <p>2. Conduct a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Ensure that the product or service is designed to be used by women. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Ensure that the product or service is designed to be used by women. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Use that all data on a range of different users that are interested in the product/service.</p>
WHAT MONITORING TOOLS CAN ENSURE ONGOING ACTION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?	<p>Introduce an impact assessment framework based on previously agreed targets and objectives, which address social, gender equity and digital inclusion outcomes that the</p>	<p>Ensure that the product or service is designed to be used by women. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Ensure that the product or service is designed to be used by women. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>First thing to evaluate any idea is to have some data about how individuals you are trying to improve it before making. Once you have some data, you can start to build a plan. The framework also could be from other projects, but also could be self-generated. The assessment questionnaire can be very useful. If data is collected in a regular way, this including gender perspective will improve the analysis. To measure how much it improves, it will be needed more evaluation during the implementation of the idea. This evaluation should be well thought in order to be comparable with the first one evaluation.</p>
HOW DOES THE EMERGING GENDER EQUITY AND DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY ALIGN WITH THE UN SDGS?	<p>Consider including the SDGs related to a range of measuring the level of gender inclusivity and overall alignment with the SDGs not least SDG5.</p>	<p>Ensure that the product or service is designed to be used by women. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Ensure that the product or service is designed to be used by women. This can be done through a series of focus groups and interviews with users. The survey should cover a range of topics, including user needs, pain points, and what their development machine this.</p>	<p>Have a positive mindset that the board or advisory can offer and have a check in other gender or equity specific reports.</p>

Figure 2: Example Model with Prompt Answer Examples



PROMPT 1 – WHAT QUESTION(S) CAN YOU ASK TO ENSURE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND DIGITAL INCLUSION?

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 IS NEEDED TO ENSURE GENDER-INCLUSIVE IMPACT AND DIGITAL INCLUSION?

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 ARE NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THE ABOVE?**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 THE IMPACT OF THE INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES?

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, 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 thought through in order to be comparable with the first one evaluation.”

PROMPT 5 – WHAT MONITORING TOOLS CAN ENSURE ONGOING ACTION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT?

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 creating 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 reinvesting a little portion of the profit into digital-inclusion initiative(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 DOES THE EMERGING GENDER EQUITY AND DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY ALIGN WITH THE UN SDGS

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 Development 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

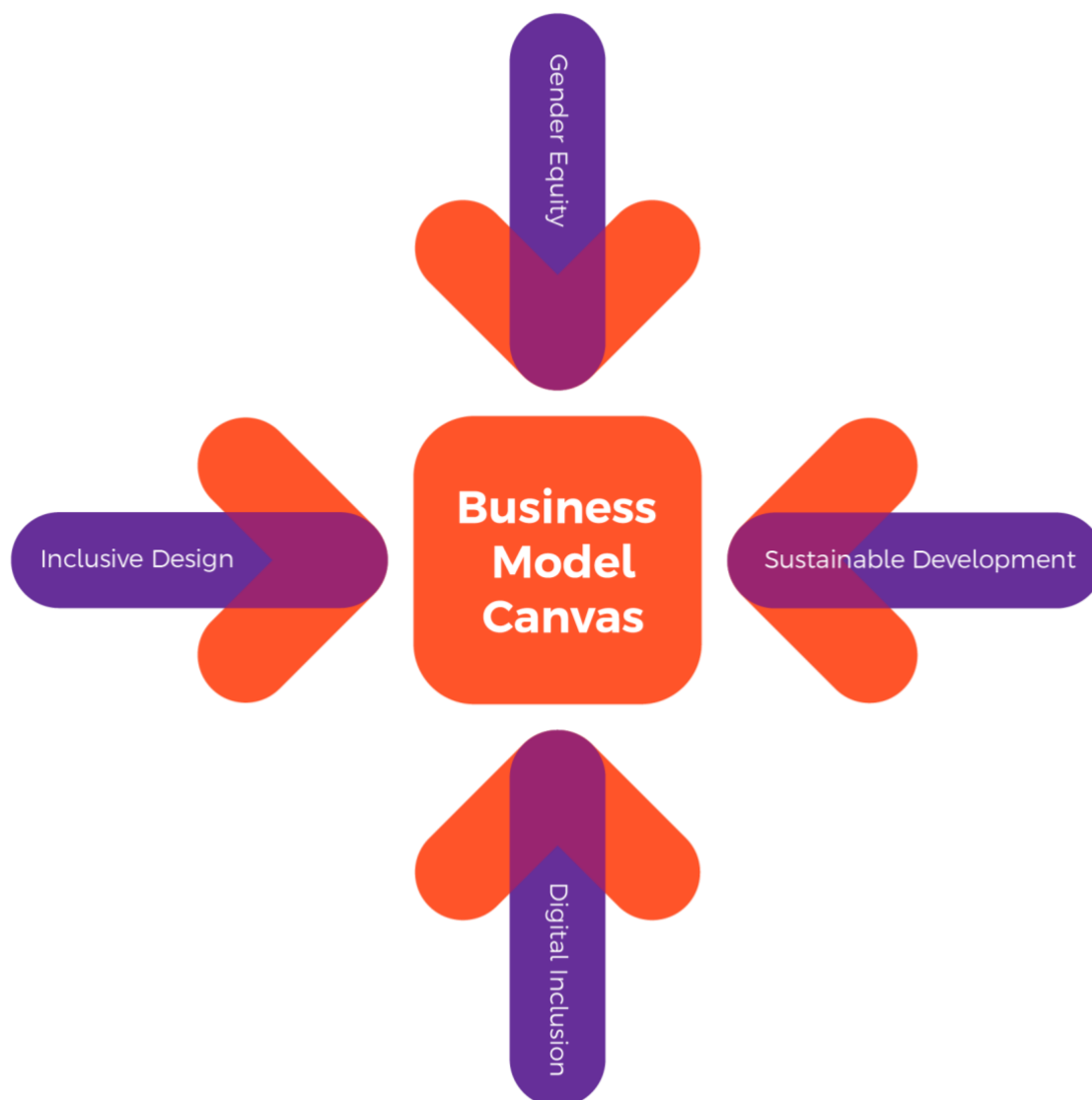


Figure 3: The Value Creation Model Canvas Gender Lenses

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 as 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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