



INTERNISA CODE OF CONDUCT

PP.6 Chamber of Commerce industry &
Agriculture
Of Beirut & Mount Lebanon



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Introduction

Women's rights and workplace-specific challenges are often addressed in very limited ways, if at all, in codes of conduct. While recognizing the limited role that codes can play in eliminating deeply-rooted aspects of gender inequality in the workplace, it is important to recognize that they remain the most widespread approach used by companies to frame the directing principles that drive sustainability and human rights expectations throughout the supply chain.

With the dramatic rise in unemployment and heightened job insecurity, it is more critical than ever for countries to demonstrate effective linkages between the supply and demand sides of the labour market. The Small and Medium enterprises sector has no choice but to embrace the standards that employers should meet to ensure a safe, decent and attractive workplace that respects human and labor rights particularly for female workers. This Code of Conduct has been conceived by the EU funded project INTERNISA¹, within ENI CBC MED Program², and aims to bridge the digital gender gap and provide marketable digital skills to underprivileged women in ENI territories. The articles of this Code relies on International and European code of conduct frameworks namely the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labor Organization's Core Convention, the UN Guiding Principles

¹ INTERNISA "Developing the INTERNISA network of synergies to increase the number of digitally skilled women employed in the ENI CBC MED territories via matching demand and supply in the labor market"

² The Programme brings together the coastal territories of 14 countries in view of fostering fair, equitable development on both sides of the Mediterranean



on Business and Human Rights, and UN Sustainable Development Goal number 5 (gender equality). The articles count as well on the collected data generated by the conducted women and SMEs managers' surveys throughout the partner countries which helped identifying the mostly expected Ethics and Gender sensitive policies in workplace. Employers are thus encouraged to adopt the articles of this code which reflect the norms, standards and best practices not solely put in place but also looked-for in INTERNISA 7 partner countries³.

In this context, this Code of Conduct provides a framework and guidance for businesses in order to integrate gender parity considerations into their standards to set supply chain ethical requirements and promoting safe and healthy workplace environment, where all workers, irrespective of sex or status, are equally treated with fairness, dignity and respect. It is highly recommended for SMEs to adopt this Code of Conduct in order to create and reflect an environment of trust, image enhancement, and ethical reputation prominence towards correspondent stakeholders.

³ *Greece, Spain, Italy, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Tunisia*



SIX PILLARS

PILAR 1 Gender Balance in workplace

PILAR 2 Employment
Conditions and

PILAR 3 Digitalization in the
Workplace

PILAR 4 Wages, benefits and
Extra

PILAR 5 Safe and Healthy
Working

PILAR 6 Abuse and



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PILLAR 1: Gender Balance in workplace



- ✓ *Provide women and men with equal opportunities in all aspects of recruitment, training, and professional development.*
- ✓ *Protect female employees against threats of dismissal or any other negative employment decision that affects their employment status due to marriage or*

Businesses are encouraged to achieve gender equality and empower female employees through promoting equal rights and opportunities for both women and men employees and enabling them to thrive in the workplace to reach their full potential.



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1.1. **Recruitment**

- Consider Individual merit and qualifications basically when taking hiring decision: no preferences for either male or women for specific jobs.
- The key hiring criteria consist typically of professional competences and matching skills in employment decisions regardless the gender of applicants.
- Prohibit any discriminatory practices for continued employment, such as imposing pregnancy tests before recruitment.
- Acknowledge and take into consideration gender-related risks and opportunities in mid and long-term recruitment plans.
- Develop gender hiring policies and strategies in line with the key principles of gender parity.

1.2. **Dismissal**

- Protect female employees against threats of dismissal or any other negative employment decisions pertaining to their social status: marriage, divorce, etc. that might affect their employment status such as: getting married or becoming pregnant.
- Protect female employees with familial responsibilities against discrimination in dismissal decisions due to familial obligations or conditions.

1.3. **Equality in career path**

- Treat every employee with respect and dignity regardless of gender.



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- Do not allow discrimination between men and women at any employment stage including hiring, access to training, promotion, termination, and retirement.
- Recognize female employees' right to obtain equal opportunities in all aspects of training, skills upscale and professional development.
- Ensure parity in career progress of women and men over time and set clear targets for their career path: promotion to a higher position and avoid glass ceiling that prevent achieving women from progress.



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PILLAR 2: Employment Conditions and Working Hours



- Female employees are entitled to a written contract that outlines the terms and conditions of the employment in an understandable language.*
- Employer internal policies shall comply with employment obligations towards female employees under national labor or social security regulations.*
- Working hours shall comply with national laws and collective agreements.*
- Overtime work cannot be imposed on women or men workers.*



2.1. **Written Contract**

- Provide the female employees with a written contract that outlines the job description, terms, conditions, salary, and benefits of the employment.
- The contract should make reference to recognized employment law established through national labor law and regulations in place.
- Ensure that employees understand and sign on their current employment terms concerning wages, working hours and other employment conditions.
- Fixed-term contract should embed clearly the start and end date based on local legislation and within the set in place limits for such contracts.

2.2. **Temporary employment**

- The company shall respect its obligations towards female employees based on labor or social security laws and regulations arising from the regular long term employment. Excessive use of short term contracts of employment is not allowed, particularly where there is no real intent to provide regular employment.
- Female temporary employment for performing production work such as agriculture, shall be solely used to a certain possible extent to meet seasonal work needs or peak season production or to fill short-term vacancies of less than one year if legally permitted.



2.3. Work schedule and Working Hours

- Comply with national laws and collective agreements on the maximum allowed weekly/monthly working hours. Any extra working hours shall be considered as an overtime to be paid.
- The reference for female employees work schedule is the national applicable law on female and men equally regarding regular working hours.

2.4. Overtime Imposition

- Prevent the imposition of overtime, where female employees are unable to leave their work premises or forced to accept overtime work. Workers are free to leave the work premises and not in any way forced to accept working beyond work schedule unless voluntary and against fair payment. Thus, abuse, threats of dismissal or other are not acceptable.
- Repartition of overtime slots shall be voluntary and fair between all employees regardless of gender.

2.5. Maternity Protection

- Entitle female employees to maternity protection (leave and benefits, as well as protection against discrimination) in accordance with the requirements of national laws or ILO Conventions.
- Apply- whenever available- childcare benefits and special leave or working hour arrangements for female employees with family responsibilities: nursing, ensuring childcare facilities', etc.



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PILLAR 3: Digitalization in the Workplace



- ✓ ***Employers shall facilitate women's digital and remote work mode especially in particular cases.***
- ✓ ***Employers shall adopt appropriate policies that ensure women digital training and professional development.***
- ✓ ***Women employees shall have the right to disconnect***

3.1. Remote work:

- Enable remote work access for digitally skilled female employees, particularly in case of crisis like pandemic, sickness, natural disasters, etc.
- Provide digital facilities, equipment and tools, technical training and assistance for remote working, such as computes, laptops and necessary software programs.



- Women are entitled to full wages for the remote working if all assigned tasks and deliverables are executed.
- Put in place a scheme for the right to disconnect when remote work accedes regular working hours.

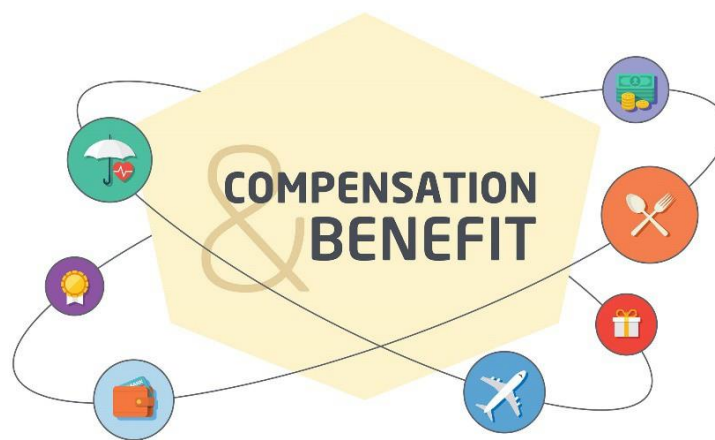
3.2. Digital Training and Professional Development:

- Promote female employers' theoretical and practical exploitation and use of digital applications, programs, and databases and enhance their skills in workplace.
- Offer women employees' rightful opportunities for continuous digital training and digital skill development.
- Offer certain incentives for engaged women employees who show commitment to continuous digital training programs: extra vacation days, bonus, promotion, etc.



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PILLAR 4: Wages, benefits and Extra payments



- ✓ *Employers shall guarantee equal pay and benefits for comparable work to employees regardless of their gender.*
- ✓ *Policies for the calculation of basic wages, overtime, bonuses, and payroll deductions apply the same grid for both men and women employees.*

4.1. Wages:

- Guarantee equal pay and comparable wages and benefits for equivalent work of same value disregard discrimination between male and female employees.



- Set the same payment calculation policies for both male and female employees in similar occupational jobs.
- Enlist clearly the key payment information in understandable written contracts signed by the female employee.
- Female Wages calculation shall meet national legal standards, or collective bargaining agreements.
- Wages grid shall reflect the female employee's skills and education and refer to regular working hours in place as per the national labor law.

4.2. Extra payments

- Consider an equal overtime rate and calculation for both genders.
- Consider transportation fees equal for both genders.
- Compensated at a premium rate recommended to be no less than 125% of normal pay for both genders.



PILLAR 5: Safe and Healthy Working Conditions



- ✓ *Employers shall ensure access to basic healthcare services to all employees in accordance with national law and international norms.*
- ✓ *Businesses are encouraged to offer flexible working arrangements and on-site facilities to women who are pregnant or nursing.*
- ✓ *Employers shall provide an acceptable number of toilets within reasonable distance of the workplace as required under applicable laws.*
- ✓ *Reasonable actions are to be taken by employers to ensure employees' access to health services and insurance.*
- ✓ *Businesses are encouraged to inform female employees engaged in working with hazardous materials of the potential risks to their reproductive health.*
- ✓ *Employers are encouraged to establish workplace policies and practices to take rest and water breaks when needed.*
- ✓ *Businesses are encouraged to protect female employees' personal information.*



5.1. **Healthcare services:**

- The employer will ensure female workers will benefit from a safe working environment and put in place all mandatory measures to prevent injuries and illness, according to the national labor code and occupational health and safety regulations.
- Offer basic health facilities based on gender recognition.
- Design the workplace in such a way as to prevent accidents and injuries arising out of or occurring during the course of work.
- Comply buildings with local legal requirements to reduce or eliminate the health and safety risks of operating these non-manufacturing facilities.
- Provide a suitable number of near toilets in the workplace without any imposition of restrictions on the time and frequency of toilet use, especially for female employees.
- Ensure access to all legally mandated services and benefits, especially healthcare and insurance that serve the distinctive needs and concerns of male and female employees.
- Ensure that all other types of legally mandated benefits, such as insurance and health benefits, are covered.
- Adopt health and safety policies that consider the biological and gender-based differences between men and women, including sexual and reproductive health.
- Inform female employees engaged in working with hazardous materials of the potential risks to their reproductive health.



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- Comply with applicable national laws regarding healthcare professionals and external health providers.
- Ensure appropriate procedures that facilitate transportation to local medical facilities in case of emergency.

5.2. Working arrangements:

- Offer flexible working arrangements to women with familial conditions, such as pregnancy and nursing.
- Ensure work policies enabling to all employees to take leave for non-emergency services from on-site and off-site health service providers.
- Adopt policies and practices that enable all employees to have recess time.
- Provide adequate facilities for female employees regarding pregnancy, childbirth and nursing to comply with applicable national laws.
- Ensure the protection and privacy of female employees' personal information.



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PILLAR 6: Abuse and Harassment



- Employers shall prohibit all forms of violence and abuse in the workplace.*
- Sexual harassment in any form is not acceptable in the workplace*
- Employers are encouraged to protect female employees from retaliation concerning filing harassment complaints.*
- Managers are regularly trained to recognize signs of gender based violence and understand laws and*



6.1. Abuse & Violence:

- The employer shall not force female workers outside the framework of the job to accomplish a task against their will, and will not use threats of penalties for them to implement these tasks.
- Adopt policies that prevent violence and abuse in the workplace including corporal punishment, verbal, physical, sexual or psychological abuse.
- Recognize signs of gender-based violence and take necessary measures
- Understand laws and organization policies on human trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Provide clear encouraging guidelines on how to deal with such cases with confidence and no fear.

6.2. Harassment:

- Ensure female employees' right to file complaints against harassment.
- Protect females from retaliation regarding complaints about any kind of harassment.
- Prohibit sexual harassment in the work place and all related facilities and areas.
- Consider the right of privacy in case of sexual harassment to comply with applicable laws and regulations governing privacy.



Conclusion

This Code of Conduct proposes to companies the key gender parity guidelines to ensure a core corporate culture and to better empower skilled vulnerable women in the labor market. The articles comply with sustainable and mature core management systems appropriate to ensure gender parity and women-friendly policies and professional development in the work place. It relies as well on international codes on gender sensitivity principles as set by international labor organizations and UN SDGs.

Moreover, this Code of Conduct paves the way to promote women skills digitalization and right to work remotely. It calls to ensure the right of female employees to work in flexible mode when necessary and to enroll digital training to ensure optimization of her digital-skills use particularly to meet with the accelerating numeric needs and advanced era on all fields.

Thus, INTERNISA project extremely encourages companies to integrate the principles of this code of conduct within their internal policies and regulations. It should be continuously updated in order to keep up with the evolving changes locally and internationally. This code would help companies reflecting a positive and motivating environment for both women and men as well as ensuring sustainability, social responsibility, governance and transparent business practices. Indeed, companies use such codes of conduct to communicate internally and externally about both their specific company values and the minimum requirements they expect their stakeholders to uphold.



Glossary

Terms	Definition
Fixed-term contract	A fixed-term contract is a contractual relationship between an employee and an employer that lasts for a specified period. These contracts are usually regulated by countries' labor laws, to ensure that employers still fulfill basic labour rights regardless of a contract's form, particularly unjust dismissal.
ILO Conventions	The ILO Conventions cover a wide area of social and labour issues including basic human rights, minimum wages, industrial relations, employment policy, social dialogue, social security and other issues. ILO Conventions concerning gender-specific issues have a long history.
UN SDGs United Nations – Sustainable Development Goals	<u>The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</u> adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015: provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.
Ceiling Glass	An invisible barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities.



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Developing the INTERNISA network of synergies to increase the number of digitally skilled women employed in the ENI CBC MED territories via matching demand and supply in the labour market

<http://www.enicbmed.eu/projects/internisa>

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