



Institute for Standardization of Montenegro

Gender Action Plan 2024-2028

Development, Education and Quality Department

International Cooperation Department

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Podgorica, November 2023



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1 Introduction

The Action Plan for Gender Equality 2024-2028 of the Institute for Standardization of Montenegro (hereinafter: ISME), as key document for encouraging gender-based changes in ISME, whose implementation has the intention to set up a better framework for achieving gender equality in the business system of ISME and its environment. The process of joint recognition of the causes and consequences of gender inequality has been developed during several-month intensive consultations with various social actors and interested parties. This document is aimed to present how standards may contribute to the improvement of the conditions for the equal participation of women and men in the standardization process throughout the improvement of mutual cooperation of all actors involved in the process.

This document is intended to all participants of the process, including ISME staff, experts engaged in ISME technical bodies, i.e. Technical Committees, representatives of ISME governing bodies, stakeholders, the non-commercial/commercial sector in Montenegro.

The purpose of the Gender Equality Action Plan (GAP) is directed to raising awareness of standards usage that support gender equality and the empowerment of women in society or organization. GAP requires studiously planned actions in various areas.

In order to obtain effective ISME Gender Action Plan, it is necessary to undertake a series of measures in the short and medium term to ensure adequate preparation, staff engagement and defining concrete steps. There are a few crucial measures that should be taken:

- Analysis of the current situation in ISME and its bodies;
- Defining goals and priorities;
- Involving of all ISME staff and ISME governing bodies representatives;
- Establishing of Board for GAP development, implementation and monitoring;
- Developing strategy and measures;
- Planning a communication strategy for gender equality in ISME;
- Defining the budget for GAP implementation;
- Creating a mechanism for operating of the Board for GAP development, implementation and monitoring according to set goals;
- Evaluation and revision on a periodic and annual level.

These measures will facilitate effectively improvement of ISME staff awareness about the importance and need for the implementation of gender-responsive standards, as well as draw the attention of the managing and decision-making bodies regarding the aforementioned positive changes in ISME and its stakeholders.

In addition, the purpose of the GAP may be defined as an overview of concrete steps that ISME will undertake in order to improve gender equality within ISME. This plan is developed for identifying challenges and inequalities related to gender that exist within ISME with the aim of defining the actions that should be implemented in a given period to solve challenges and improve gender equality in ISME.

There are a few key activities in which concrete actions can be taken within a defined period in order to realize successfully GAP goals for the promotion of gender equality within ISME:

- Awareness campaigns;
- Educational events and workshops;
- Creation of informative materials such as brochures, leaflets, etc.
- Stories about the results achieved in terms of the GAP goals implementation;
- Monitoring of the implementation of GAP measures and evaluations;

Recognizing the importance of the implementation of measures and activities that will be continuously upgraded and maintained within the framework enabling further information on the ways to improve the quality of life of citizens in our communities through gender-responsive standards, we will strive to realize the defined tasks and fulfill the common goal.

2 Legal framework for gender equality in Montenegro (context)

By adopting the Constitution, the Law on Gender Equality, the Law on the Protector of Human Rights in 2007, and the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination in 2011, Montenegro established a legislative framework for gender equality and created a basis for the promotion and protection of women's human rights and human rights of persons of different gender identities. Furthermore, by ratifying many international treaties and conventions, Montenegro has committed to implementing international standards in this area and promoting equal participation of men, women, and persons of different gender identities in all aspects of life. These policies have been further strengthened by the process of accession to the European Union, and the steps taken to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The state took concrete steps to achieve a higher degree of equality by adopting and implementing strategic documents in three cycles (2013 - 2017, 2017 - 2021).

Gender equality and protection against discrimination on the basis of sex, sex change and gender identity, sexual orientation and/or intersex characteristics are regulated in Montenegro by a series of national and international acts. The international framework includes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1996), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1979), the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention - 2011), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 - "Women, Peace and Security" (2000), Charter of Fundamental Freedoms in the European Union (2007), Road Map of the European Commission for Equality between Women and Men, Strategy EU for gender equality 2021-2025, Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020, European Charter for Equality of Woman and Men in Local Life (2006), European Parliament Resolution on the Rights of Intersex People (2018), Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2191 (2017) on Promoting Human Rights and Eliminating Discrimination against Intersex People.

As a candidate country for EU membership, Montenegro has committed to achieving objectives of reducing gender discrimination set out in the legislative and strategic documents of the European Commission and the Council of Europe. The National Strategy for Gender Equality (NSGE) 2021-2025 is harmonized with EU policies relevant for this area, the most important of which is the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, which set the following goals: stop further dissemination of gender stereotypes, close gender gaps in the labour market, achieving equal participation of men and women across different sectors of the economy, addressing the gender pay and pension gaps, closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and politics, as well as stopping gender-based violence.

The low level of gender equality in Montenegro was recognized as a central problem in this area, and accordingly, the main strategic goal of the strategy was defined - to raise the level of gender equality in Montenegro by 2025.

The evaluation of previous strategies, and a thorough analysis of the situation in some areas, showed that gender equality remains at an unsatisfactory level. Regardless of the legal norms, in reality institutions of the system are unable to protect women and persons of different gender identities from discrimination effectively and efficiently, including the members of vulnerable social groups (persons with disabilities, Roma and Egyptian women, the elderly and persons living in remote rural areas of Montenegro). As a result, a share of the population of Montenegro stays out of social and economic perspective slowing down the country's road to democratization and EU membership, and reducing the chances for sustainable development.

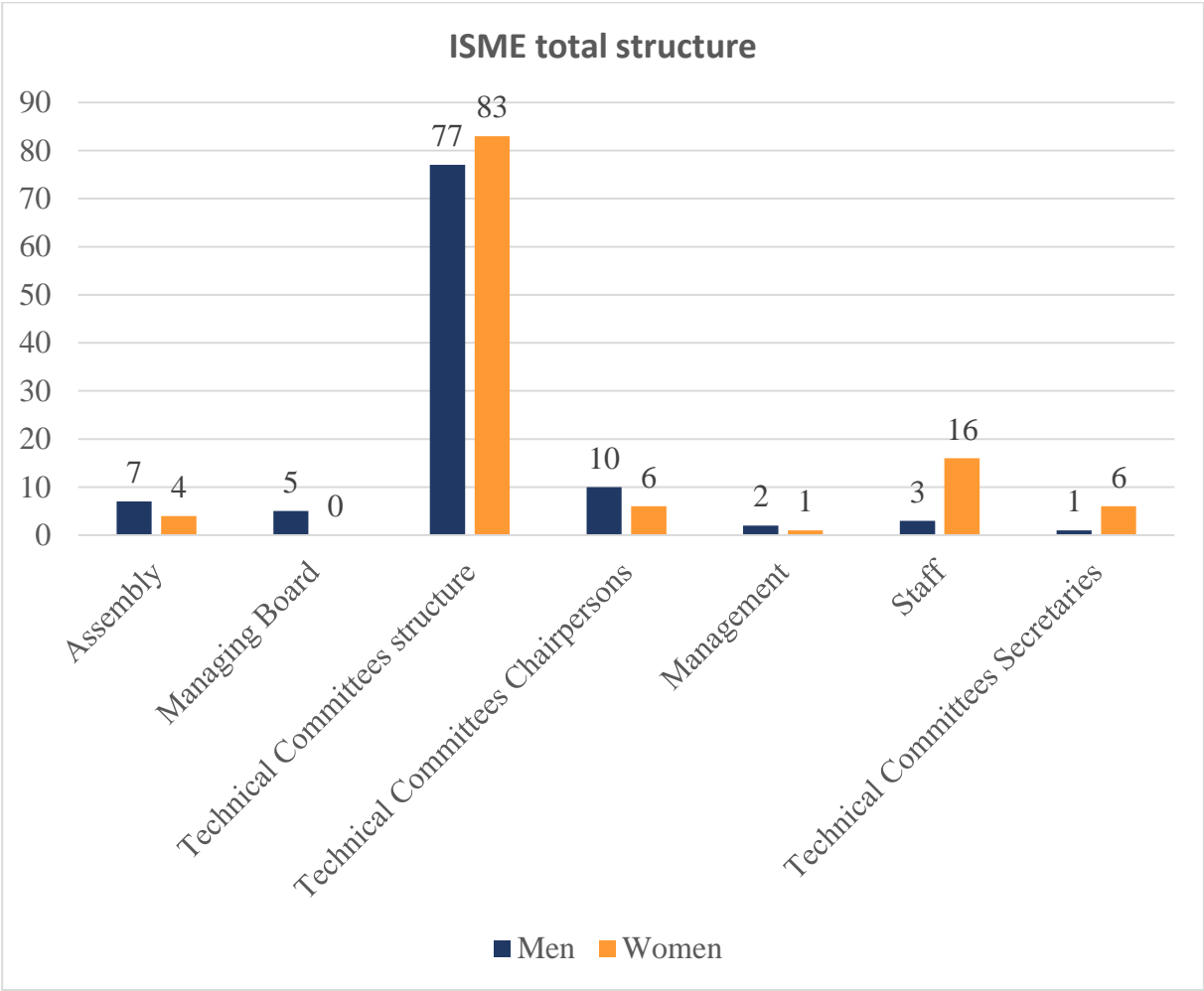
3 Institute for Standardization of Montenegro (overview)

In order to achieve the goals of standardization, meet the requirements of the international community and the European Union in the area of standardization, as well as to carry out activities on the adoption of Montenegrin standards, the Government of Montenegro, at its session on March 29, 2007, adopted **Decision on Establishing the Institute for Standardization of Montenegro** (*"Official Gazette of the Republic of Montenegro"*, No. 21/2007), as the National Standardization Body of Montenegro. The primary activity of the Institute for Standardization of Montenegro is the development and adoption of Montenegrin standards, in accordance with the recommendations and requirements of international and European organizations for standardization. The standardization system at national level is realized through the cooperation of the state, trade and other stakeholders via National Standardization Body.

4 The Institute for Standardization of Montenegro as the signatory of the Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development

On January 24, 2023, the Institute for Standardization of Montenegro and The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) signed the Declaration for Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development.

By its signing, the Institute for Standardization of Montenegro, as national standardization body, i.e. the organization for the standards development, committed itself to recognize Goal 5 in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls) and foster the standards and the standards development process to be gender responsive.



- Assembly; Managing Board; Technical Committees structure; Technical Committees Chairpersons; Management; Staff; Technical Committees Secretaries

4.1 Context of ISME Action plan for fostering gender equality

Gender Action Plan should include a number of priority areas which are crucial for achieving gender equality within ISME staff. These areas should reflect the specific needs, challenges and goals for improving gender equality of ISME staff. The main goals of ISME Gender Action Plan are:

- Problems identification
- Goals defining
- Measures defining
- Deadline for implementation and bearers of the process-responsibility
- Monitoring the implementation of activities and reporting

With this in mind, overall process of gender equality policies development may face a number of challenges, given the complexity of overall social norms, institutional structures and cultural prejudices. In this sense, it is very important to define the budget for ISME Gender Action Plan in order to implement successfully defined plans. Budgeting enables ISME to properly allocate the resources needed to implement measures and achieve goals related to gender equality.

5 Gender Responsive Standards

Gender-responsive standards are guidelines and rules implemented to ensure gender equality and eliminate discrimination in all aspects of a society or particular organizations. These standards focus on identifying and overcoming gender-based inequalities and roles that are often stereotypically associated with men and women. The objective of gender responsive standards is to create an inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of gender, may reach full potential. Gender responsive standards are implemented in the areas such as: education, health, employment and politics to ensure fairness and equality. Gender responsive standards promote active participation and equal opportunities for women and men in political, economic and social life. It is important to ensure that these standards are not limited to formal documents, but are integrated into actual practices and policies. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of gender responsive standards are key for maintaining their effectiveness. Gender-responsive standards contribute to the creation of an inclusive society where differences are respected and supported. Therefore, gender responsive standards are key in promoting gender equality and ensuring that policies, programs and initiatives take into account the different needs and perspectives of women and men. In essence, gender responsive standards play a key role in creating a society that recognizes and respects equal values, rights and opportunities for all, regardless of gender. Here are a few key aspects noteworthy in regard to gender-responsive standards:

1. Inclusion of the gender aspect in all spheres of society
2. Identification and reduction of gender-based inequalities
3. Women empowerment and promotion of positive roles
4. Prevention and fight against violence against women
5. Equal participation in politics and all decision-making processes
6. Adaptability and flexibility
7. Integration into political processes
8. Education and raising awareness.

5.1 Gender responsive standards development

The fact that development is being analyzed indicates that there is a clear awareness of the need for gender-responsive standards. Regarding the existence of inequality between ISME staff and possible discrimination based on gender clearly indicates the need to solve this problem.

In order to carry out the institutional implementation and development of gender-responsive standards, it is necessary to define certain activities such as:

1. Involvement of a wide range of stakeholders and actors in general in one organization or society as a whole
2. Detailed analysis of existing inequalities and stereotypes in order to identify key problems.
3. Defining clear and measurable goals for achieving gender equality in different areas.

4. Implementation of gender responsive standards in all relevant policies, plans and practices.
5. Training of employees and members of managing bodies, i.e. of decision-makers for implementing gender-responsive standards and understanding their importance.
6. Regular monitoring of activities and evaluation of the quality of realized activities towards achieving the goals of gender-responsive standards.

Therefore, gender-responsive standards are extremely flexible in their purpose, due to these standards, as perhaps none of the other group of standards, cannot be successfully implemented or developed if they are not quickly adapted to changes in an organization or society as a whole. Therefore, new challenges are used to be an integral part of the new gender-responsive standards. This fact shows the essence of the most important assumption for the development of gender-responsive standards.

ISME Challenges - Participation in creating a culture on the importance of gender equality throughout the adoption and implementation of standards on gender equality - INFLUENCE ON WORK CULTURE

As one can see, the process of creating gender equality policies could face a number of challenges, given the complexity of overall social norms, institutional structures and cultural prejudices. In this sense, it is very important to define the budget for ISME Gender Action Plan, in order to implement successfully defined plans. Budgeting should enable ISME to allocate properly the resources needed to implement measures and achieve gender equality goals:

- Engaging gender experts to get the process going
- Continuous provision and improvement of know-how transfer, for the sake of economic and social value creation
- Ministries harmonization with the labor market throughout the standards implementation in order to increase the women employment
- Limited identification of a gender focal point who has sufficient resources allocated (e.g. time, budget, access to information, participation in processes...)
- Limited cooperation among line Ministries and associations
- Limited cooperation with the private sector (MSMEs), promoting gender-responsive standards and female entrepreneurship
- Limited women experts in relevant technical issue to participate in the standardization
- Limited state budget for GAP implementation
- Financing by international financial associations
- Active participation of stakeholders in GAP development
- Limited human resources

5.2 Gender Action Plan

Objective 1: Improve gender balance in standards development processes (TCs Chairpersons and Secretaries are not gender balanced, to ensure the equal participation of women and men in the work of TCs)

Output 1: Improved gender balance in standards development processes

Number	Activity/ Output Activities and outputs	Measures and Actions Measures and actions	GAP indicator	Baseline (data collection might be needed) Baseline (may be required)	Target	Timeline (years or months)	Owner and Responsibilities	Budget (Currency)	Comments
1.1	Review criteria on participation to improve gender balance such as removing references to sex and be based on capability and merit based on ability and merit	Measures Aim for ...% male and ...% female participation Action - collect information on the current male and female ratio - remove terms specific to male or female and replace gender-based term with gender neutral term, eg worker to worker	Number of men and women in whole organization	Determine with HR (gather information, data analysis, take measures) 17 w / 4 m (including ISME CEO)	Improved gender balance in standards development processes (on the occasion of new recruitments, aim to engage at least 5 more men)	36 months	Institute for Standardization of Montenegro and TCs
1.2	TC Chairpersons Review the method of selection to ensure equal gender representation among TC Chairpersons	To collect data on current gender balance To develop actions to redefine gender staff policy To collect data on	Number of TC Chairpersons (men & women)	6 out of 16 TC Chairs are women, equal to 37.5%	50% women as TC Chairpersons	36 months	Institute for Standardization of Montenegro and TCs

		the current gender gap To develop actions to redefine staff policy (emphasis on gender balance)							
1.3	TC Secretaries Review the method of selection (staff policy) to ensure equal gender representation among TC Secretaries		Number of TC Secretaries (men & women)	1 out of 7 TC secretaries are men, equal to 14%	25%??? Men as TC secretaries	36 months	Institute for Standardization of Montenegro	Junior male positions

Objective 2: To strive for gender balance in ISME governing bodies (including competencies and merits at balanced level, to ensure the equal participation of women in ISME managing structure)

Output 2: Ensured gender balance and competencies of ISME managing bodies

Number	Activity/ Output Activities and outputs	Measures and Actions Measures and actions	GAP indicator	Baseline (data collection might be needed) Baseline (may be required)	Target	Timeline (years or months)	Owner and Responsibilities	Budget (Currency)	Comments
2.1	To provide suggestion to the competent institutions regarding the importance of this topic (Ministry of Economic Development and Tourism of Montenegro)	60% men and 40% women	The number of men and women in ISME managing bodies with the same competencies	To collect information, analyse data, take measures	To ensure equal participation of women in ISME managing structure	24 months	ISME Management, HR		
2.2	To ensure equal participation of women in ISME Managing Board	70% men and 30% women	The number of men and women in ISME Managing Board	To collect information, data analysis, download	To ensure equal participation of women in ISME Managing Board (70% men and 30% women)	24 months	ISME Management, HR		
2.3	To ensure equal participation of women in ISME Assembly	50% men and 50% women	The number of men and women in ISME Assembly	To collect information, data analysis, download	To collect equal participation of women in ISME Assembly (50% men and 50% women)	24 months	ISME Management, HR		

Objective 3: To adopt and raise awareness of the UNECE Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards (GRS) among ISME staff and stakeholders

Output 3: Adopted gender-sensitive measures for the development of standards and raised awareness of the UNECE Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards (GRS)

Number	Activity/ Output Activities and outputs	Measures and Actions Measures and actions	GAP indicator	Baseline (data collection might be needed) Baseline (may be required)	Target	Timeline (years or months)	Owner and Responsibilities	Budget (Currency)	Comments
3.1	To establish ISME Team for implementing gender equality within ISME To establish ISME Commission for monitoring and evaluating GAP implementation	To inform ISME staff on ISME GAP implementation	Number of planned staff and number of included staff	Start from the goals set within ISME GAP	ISME staff	12 months	ISME staff		
3.2	To inform ISME staff on gender-responsive standards	Presentation of standards ISO 53800, IWA 34, ISO 30415, ISO 26000	The number of informative and educational meetings held on this topic	Start from the ground	ISME team for gender equality	24 months	ISME HR	500.00 EUR	
3.3	To implement aspects of gender equality in ISME's internal procedures (QMS)	Participation in the preparation, development and harmonization of ISME procedures with standards related to gender equality	Implemented aspects of gender equality in ISME's internal procedures	Start from the ground	ISME staff	24 months	Owners of procedures in ISME and ISME gender equality team	500.00 EUR	
3.4	To improve information for the public and competent authorities on gender-sensitive standards as well as standards that	Cooperation with appropriate institutions and working bodies in this area	Number of informative and educational workshops titled gender equality	Collected information on the number of informed institutions about gender equality standards	Economic and social institutions in Montenegro	48 months	ISME staff	5,000.00 EUR	

	specifically regulate gender equality								
3.5	Establishment of Technical Committees for GAP or expanding the area of operation of the existing TC with related scope	<p>Measures</p> <p>1. Technical Committee for GAP with relevant members and experts</p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To develop Terms of Reference (ToR) for TC on GAP - To send request to concerned ministries and associations for nominating the experts to the TC - To develop a work plan for the TC for GAP 	<p>1. Work Plan for Technical Committee established</p> <p>2. Number of male and female members</p> <p>3. Number of Technical Committee Meetings on GAP</p>	No baseline data as the establishment of the Technical Committee for GAP is new	<p>1. Ensuring the Development of 6 Stages procedure for National Standards</p> <p>Aim for a balance of 60% male and 40% female participation</p>	48 months	<p>1. Institute for Standardization of Montenegro</p> <p>2. Relevant authorities (e.g. NSB, Women affairs, relevant ministries and faculties)</p> <p>3. ISO GAP Committee</p>	1,000.00 EUR	

Objective 4: Monitoring mechanism for the GENDER ACTION PLAN - Form a Board for the development, implementation and monitoring of the GAP (dealing with revising the GAP when necessary; monitor activities and report to the management team)

Output 4: Established professional technical body that supervises GAP implementation; if necessary, revise the GAP; monitoring activities and reporting to the management team)

Number	Activity/ Output Activities and outputs	Measures and Actions Measures and actions	GAP indicator	Baseline (data collection might be needed) Baseline (may be required)	Target	Timeline (years or months)	Owner and Responsibilities	Budget (Currency)	Comments
4.1	To establish ISME Team for implementing gender equality into the Institute To establish ISME Commission for monitoring and evaluating GAP implementation	Regular monitoring of specific activities implementation	Reporting and monitoring the implementation of the plan (number of documents)	No gender team at ISME	A mechanism was created for monitoring and reporting according to the set goals	48 months	ISME HR, members of the Board, responsible state authorities		

Objective 5:									
Output 5:									
Number	Activity/ Output Activities and outputs	Measures and Actions Measures and actions	GAP indicator	Baseline (data collection might be needed) Baseline (may be required)	Target	Timeline (years or months)	Owner and Responsibilities	Budget (Currency)	Comments
5.1	Partnerships and cooperation with national UNDP office	Provide them the information on gender standards, gender standards promotion	Number of realized activities (training, seminars and other educative events)	Disseminating collected information on gender equality standards	Economic and social community	48 months	ISME staff	
5.2	Enhancing networking with Women Entrepreneurship organisations	Provide them the information on gender standards, gender standards promotion	Number of realized activities (training, seminars and other educative events)	Disseminating collected information on gender equality standards	Economic and social community	48 months	ISME staff		

At this stage, it is only a cost estimate. The definitive budget will be established after the adoption of the Budget for 2024.

6 Monitoring and evaluation

In order to monitor the achievement of the goals set in the Action Plan, it is necessary to monitor regularly specific activities implementation as well as the fulfillment of deadlines and indicators. The reports on the implementation of the plan will be prepared by the gender equality team. The gender equality team will prepare a report, following year of implementation. The reports will present the realization of the activities as well as the values according to the result indicators (output indicators). After completing the plan, an evaluation of the plan will be carried out, which will also include indicators at the level of results i.e. outcomes (in addition to summarizing the report on the implementation of activities and results).

7 The most important barriers and potentials for improving gender equality policies in Montenegro through the standards implementation

Barrier 1: As the most important barrier, we are bound to highlight even so insufficiently developed awareness among decision-makers, both on the state and local level, regarding the issue of gender equality, the abundance of prejudices and stereotypes, which contribute to the impression of very folded systems, not willing to change, even and when these changes are parameters of democratic progress and general prosperity.

Potential 1: The key role of ISME mechanisms should be the initiation of educational programs, increasing the level of knowledge of staff in statutory authorities and companies about the importance of gender equality and concrete usage through the standards implementation. It is the only way to overcome prejudices and stereotypes and the method that will encourage and foster the relevant actors to implement actively the standards as part of the promotion of equal opportunities and the capacities and potential of women and men for the development of the community they live and work in.

Barrier 2: There is no institutional cooperation among ISME, government institutions, the local community and non-governmental organizations that advocates the improvement of the position of women at the state and local level.

Potential 2: Cooperation among ISME and government institutions, local communities and associations, e.g. throughout the network of coordinators for gender equality at local level; organization of educational meetings on gender-sensitive standards (ISO 53800, IWA 34, ISO 30415, ISO 26000). Their coordinated activity would provide well-founded support at local level and possibly formal network for achieving common goals.

8 Proposal of measures (The way forward)

ISME plays a significant role in the education process of strengthening gender equality in government institutions (primarily because they are the policymakers who should improve the lives of citizens and provide them predominately equal opportunities), local communities and associations, through the gender-responsible standards implementation.

It is of high importance that Montenegro is a signatory of numerous international documents having a binding dimension in terms of applying the principle of gender equality, both at national and local level. In this regard, let us conclude that in Montenegro there is a huge room for improving the position of women and strengthening efforts towards gender equality.

For this purpose, ISME makes the following recommendations:

- Continuous awareness increase of the importance of equivalence in the process of adopting standards as well as standards in the field of gender equality
- Capacity building of ISME staff and stakeholders
- Creation of additional tools (documents) of gender equality
- Development of a procedure that will consider the aspect of gender equality

The most important recommendation is continuous strengthening of the capacity and responsibility of state and local mechanisms for gender equality. An essential basis for the improvement of gender equality within state institutions and local communities is the integration of gender equality in local communities and government institutions. This means that women, just like men, should occupy planning, decision-making or managing positions.

With this in mind, if we start from the fact that "Standards gain authority by developing through a rigorous consultation process that builds a consensus of experts" (BSI) for a specific scope, then it should be more than clear to everyone why the standards implementation is important in each society and public institution, MSME and public policies such as gender equality and women's rights. If we adopt the above as one of the initial theses for the implementation of gender equality standards in Montenegro, it is clear to conclude in the spirit of the old proverb concerning reinventing the wheel, it presents further interest of general value of experts for this area on global level to be accepted and implemented in the public and overall social system in Montenegro.

The above statement does not refer only to this standard, and we emphasize that because this statement is based on the basic mission of ISME to promote the benefits of the standards implementation.

When we specifically talk about the position of women in Montenegro, we emphasize the historical dimension of the role of women in Montenegrin society and the family through centuries recalling turbulent historical periods of constant conflicts and wars. Therefore, it sounds so naturally the complete care of the elderly members of the household and children as well as the household itself has always been a woman's obligation and consequently the piety

of Montenegrin society towards mothers, wives, daughters is indisputable; in this sense we note that the National Anthem, as one of the most beautiful of the kind in the world, is dedicated to "the mother of our Montenegro".

However, we emphasize that today in the 21st century, it is necessary to institutionalize this social value in the context of gender-responsible standards implementation, so that the position and rights of women in Montenegro are institutionally protected and obtained on a quality and concrete level, rather than being a mere assumption. Therefore the equality of women will be represented to the necessary extent and in accordance with the standard "from case to case, from institution to institution".

It has to be the standard. Applicable and acceptable for every society, for all institutions in society, for every MSME, and most importantly for every woman.

The above represents the basic goal of this plan and ISME's mission for the policy of gender equality in terms of encouraging Montenegrin society to make the rights and position of women standardized and institutionally inclusive and mandatory.

Although we are convinced that awareness of this issue is obvious in Montenegro, it is now a common task to raise the value system of Montenegrin society concernin gender equality to a higher level in a standardized and institutionally comprehensive manner.

In Podgorica, November 01, 2023

9 Literature

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