



EQUALS PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE STATUTE

1. General information

1.1 Name of the partnership - EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age

1.2 Principal reason for establishing - EQUALS was established to “create a platform for advancing women's meaningful engagement with ICTs and their role as decision-makers and producers within this sector” by recognizing organizations that worked towards increasing women and girls’ presence in digital spaces, facilitating their access to new technologies and encouraging them to consider studies and careers in ICT.

1.3 Date partnership commenced – EQUALS began in 2014 as a collaboration between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UN Women, and in 2016 the GSMA, the United Nations University (UNU) and the International Trade Centre (ITC) joined as co-founders of the partnership.

2. EQUALS Objectives

2.1 Vision and Mission

The EQUALS Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age is a committed group of corporate leaders, governments, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, academic institutions, NGOs and community groups around the world dedicated to promoting gender balance in the technology sector by championing and sharing knowledge about equality of access, skills development and career opportunities for women and men alike.

EQUALS contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Agenda through actions and evidence-based research aimed at closing the global gender digital divide. EQUALS uses a multidisciplinary approach that integrates research, policy and programming to promote gender equality in technology access, skills and leadership.

By working in collaboration, EQUALS partners aim to achieve a global impact that is greater than the sum of its parts in:

- Improving internet access for women;
- Building women’s digital skills;
- Promoting women’s leadership in tech;
- Providing practitioners and policymakers with actionable evidence, guidelines and recommendations.

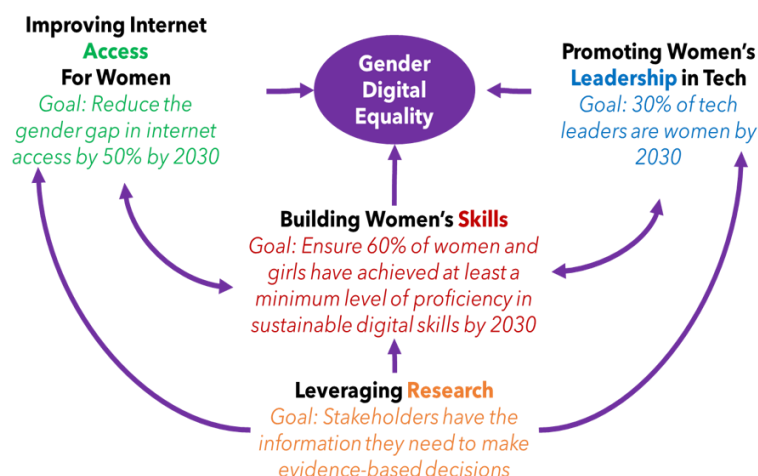
EQUALS also strives to reverse the increasing gender digital divide by:

- Providing a platform for collaboration; maximizing impact and supporting the scaling up of successful projects,
- Creating an effective network for practitioners and policymakers to leverage and strengthen current efforts to bridge the gender digital divide, and
- Measuring progress towards the goals in the Partnership vision as a vehicle to accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5, especially Target 5B.

2.2 Specific Goals

The overall goal of EQUALS is to achieve Gender Digital Equality by 2030. Four EQUALS Coalitions have been established, each of which has agreed to specific objectives to underpin that goal:

- i. Access Coalition - Reduce the gender gap in internet access by 50% by 2030.
 - a. Making it more affordable for women and girls to connect;
 - b. Making all citizens aware and comfortable with the benefits of women and girls going online;
 - c. Improving the accessibility of the internet for women and girls;
 - d. Developing content that is relevant, accessible and of interest to women and girls;
 - e. Providing women and girls with the basic know-how they need to get online.
- ii. Skills Coalition - Ensure 60% of women and girls have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in sustainable digital skills by 2030.
 - a. Ensuring girls receive a good ICT foundation at school;
 - b. Ensuring women and girls can access additional high quality ICT education and training;
 - c. Changing mindsets of men and women about the role of women in ICT;
 - d. Ensuring women and girls' safety and security in education institutions.
- iii. Leadership Coalition – Ensure 30% of tech leaders are women by 2030.
 - a. Changing mindsets of men and women about the role of women in ICT;
 - b. Ensuring work-life balance and women's safety and security in the workplace;
 - c. Ensuring tech companies implement internal policies to employ and promote women;
 - d. Ensuring that women ICT entrepreneurs receive the support they need to thrive;
 - e. Ensuring that women entrepreneurs and business owners across all sectors can use ICTs to improve their competitiveness.
- iv. Research Coalition – Practitioners and policymakers have the intelligence they need to make informed decisions.
 - a. Identifying key knowledge and evidence gaps;
 - b. Conducting research on priority topics;
 - c. Providing practitioners and policymakers with actionable information.



3. Terms of Reference

3.1 Scope of the partnership

The EQUALS partnership brings together a range of organisations with a common goal – to close the digital divide and achieve gender digital equality so that all can benefit from the Internet. This contributes directly to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDGs 5, 4, 9 and 17.

EQUALS partners recognise that the scale and breadth of the challenge can only be addressed by a broad alliance working together, each bringing a different set of skills and capabilities.

3.2 Ethics Charter

EQUALS partners are expected to sign up to and abide by the principles of the EQUALS Ethics Charter (see Annex B). Where partners are bound by their own organization's code of conduct, this should be stated and a link to that code provided for clarity.

3.3 Membership

3.3.1 Admission

- i. Full membership as an EQUALS partner shall be granted to any organisation and/or entity working to promote and advance digital gender equality.
- ii. Any application to become an EQUALS partner shall include a letter of intent as signed by the applicant's principal representative alongside a letter of recommendation from an existing EQUALS partner.
- iii. All prospective partners shall adopt and comply with EQUALS' Policy on Conflict of Interest, as referenced in the EQUALS Ethics Charter (see Annex B).

3.3.2 Partner Commitments

All partners are expected to guarantee a minimum level of engagement which builds on three elements:

- Participation in Coalition meetings
- Participation in Coalition work
- Active contribution to the Partnership

All partners are expected to:

- Make at least one public commitment annually to undertake action that supports achievement of EQUALS' goals: www.equals.org/commitments
- Make a contribution (financial and/or in kind) to EQUALS
- Promote EQUALS (including the EQUALS in Tech awards) through traditional and digital communications channels; (e.g. on websites, in speeches, at media appearances), re-posting, sharing and retweeting our content
- Abide by the EQUALS Ethics Charter.

3.3.3 Frequency of Membership Review

Membership will be reviewed on a yearly basis, using the following criteria to assess engagement levels: attendance of partners during EQUALS-wide partnership calls and Coalition calls; feedback from the Coalition Leads; and levels of project participation.

3.3.4 Termination of Membership

- Any organization may withdraw from their Coalition or the overall partnership by giving notice in writing to the EQUALS Hub. The Steering Committee shall be informed accordingly.
- Any organization failing to attend Coalition meetings for a period of 12 months, or to contribute to an EQUALS project and/or provide for operational functioning of the EQUALS Hub will have its membership as a partner suspended unless they communicate in writing their desire to continue as a Coalition member.
- Continuous failure to attend Coalition meetings or contribute to an EQUALS project or provide support for operational functioning of the EQUALS Hub for a period of 24 months will result in membership cancellation.

4. EQUALS Governance

4.1 EQUALS Annual Partners Assembly

The EQUALS Partners' Assembly consists of the principal representatives from all EQUALS partners. As the highest executive body of the partnership it takes note of the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee and the Terms of Reference/Constitution and strategic plans of the EQUALS Partnership.

4.2 EQUALS Steering Committee

4.2.1 Composition

The EQUALS Steering Committee shall consist of:

- 1) One permanent representative seat from each of the EQUALS co-founding organisations. These seats confer voting rights.
- 2) The Coalition leads of each of the EQUALS Coalitions (Access, Skills, Leadership and Research). These seats confer voting rights. When a coalition has two co-leaders they will represent only one vote for all effects.
- 3) Representatives of organizations making financial contributions towards the EQUALS Hub.

4.2.2 Appointment of Chair, Vice-Chair and Coalition Leaders

- 1) The Steering Committee shall appoint by majority vote on an annual basis a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among the EQUALS Co-founders and Coalition Chairs. The Vice-Chair shall be eligible for progression by rotation into the Chair role provided there are no objections on the part of the Steering Committee.
- 2) Any member from among the EQUALS Co-founders and Coalition Chairs can be considered for Chair and Vice-Chair. The candidate names will be distributed to Steering Committee members at least one week prior to the election meeting.
- 3) Those appointments shall be endorsed by the annual EQUALS Partners Assembly.
- 4) The Coalition Lead(s) of each EQUALS Coalition shall be appointed by vote of the Steering Committee. Each Coalition shall have no more than two Co-Chairs who will be selected from among the EQUALS partnership following a nomination call. When a coalition has two co-leaders, they will represent only one vote for all effects in the Steering Committee. Only EQUALS partners who have participated actively in the work of the partnership for at least 12 months preceding the nomination call shall have the right to nominate a candidate.

4.2.3 Serving Terms

- 1) The Chair, and Vice Chair of the Steering Committee shall serve for a period of one year with a renewal mandate of a maximum of another year.
- 2) The serving mandate of the Chairs of each EQUALS Coalition shall be subject to approval by the Steering Committee and shall be reviewed by the Steering Committee every two years.

4.3 Working Methods

- **EQUALS Annual Partners Assembly** – EQUALS partners shall meet on an annual basis, typically on the the fringes of the UN General Assembly in New York, NY. The meeting shall be opened and closed by representatives of the EQUALS co-founders and chaired by the Chair of the EQUALS Steering Committee.
- **EQUALS Steering Committee** - The Steering Committee shall meet every 4 to 6 weeks. The Committee shall strive to meet in person at least twice a year with the remainder of the meetings taking place remotely. Every member of the Steering Committee has the right to appoint a focal point to assist and represent them where relevant. Decision-making shall be primarily by consensus with voting as a last resort option.
- **EQUALS Coalitions** - EQUALS Coalitions shall meet approximately once per month or per quarter, depending on the Coalition work plan and the availability of Coalition members. The meetings shall mainly take place remotely. Coalitions shall strive to hold a minimum of one face-to-face meeting per year either on the fringes of the EQUALS Annual Partners Assembly, on the fringes of the annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women or any other annual platform where Coalition members are in attendance.

Participation in the work of the coalitions is limited to EQUALS partners. Each partner should designate one focal point and an alternate to represent the organization at Coalition meetings. Partners should make every effort to ensure continuity of attendance at meetings by the same staff member(s). In the case that the focal point cannot attend the call, a substitute may be appointed, but should be briefed by the focal point prior to their participation. When unable to attend Coalition meetings, partners may make their views known to the coalitions via email, which will form part of that Coalition’s meeting minutes.

The EQUALS Research Coalition shall contribute a faculty/researcher to all EQUALS research activities where possible and appropriate. It shall also appoint focal points to each of the other three EQUALS Coalitions (Access, Skills and Leadership) so as to ensure efficient coordination.

EQUALS Hub - The EQUALS Hub shall be housed by the ITU Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. It shall appoint a minimum of two representatives to drive the operational aspect of its work, subject to a specific budgetary allocation.

4.4 Leadership roles and responsibilities

	Partnership Strategy/Goals	Coalition Action Plans/Projects	Governance Structure and Principles	Deliverables	Finances/ Resource Allocation
Annual Partners Assembly	Approves	Endorses	Takes Note of	Endorses	Takes Note of
Steering Committee	Defines	Approves	Reviews Refines Approves	Reviews Approves	Approves
Chair	Defines Recommends	Reviews Inputs	Reviews Recommends	Reviews	Recommends
Vice-Chair	Defines Recommends	Reviews Inputs	Reviews Recommends	Reviews	Recommends
Coalitions	Implement	Define Review Adopt Implement Monitor	Conform	Monitor Evaluate Report	Implement
Partners	Conform	Input Support	Conform	Disseminate	Support
Hub	Supports the Implementation Monitors	Supports Monitors	Reviews Recommends Monitors	Monitors Evaluates	Implements Recommends Supports

Please refer to Annex A for detailed description of EQUALS bodies roles and responsibilities.

4.5 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

- Every two years, the Steering Committee will review the governance structure and partnership objectives.
- All EQUALS partners shall inform the EQUALS Hub through an online tool set up by the Hub, by 31 July of each calendar year of their respective contributions to the partnership. Such contributions can include but are not limited to actions undertaken to support and contribute to EQUALS Coalitions' projects and meetings and/or EQUALS overarching objectives and mission.
- The EQUALS Hub shall prepare and circulate an impact report reflecting on EQUALS's overall yearly achievements and progress in close alignment with the Chairs of each Coalition based on the input as described above.

4.6 Accountability

- All EQUALS Project Funding shall be managed on behalf of EQUALS by the relevant EQUALS project lead(s) due to the absence of an EQUALS legal entity.
- Project leads and coalition leads should support fundraising for the projects that they are leading and assist other project leads in fundraising
- Project leads should coordinate with project partners as well as coalition leaders;
- Project leads should report at agreed intervals to the Coalition Leader about the progress of the project.

4.7 Fundraising

- EQUALS Co-founders and partners shall leverage and share their fundraising expertise and recommend potential donors/investors. Each co-founder and coalition lead shall be responsible for supporting pitches to potential donor/investors as part of the formal pitching process where needed and as relevant.
- The EQUALS Steering Committee shall be informed of and support and all EQUALS fundraising efforts.

4.8 Assets

- It is the intention of the Partnership that EQUALS Intellectual Property Assets are to follow the principles of openness, for instance, when and as possible intellectual property are to be held under CC non-commercial attribution.
- If a partner terminates its relationship with the Partnership, all the research publications and data collected for relevant projects will be available on the open-data platform. However, the EQUALS branding and associated communications would be retained by EQUALS Hub, with ITU as the host.

5. Communications and data

- All EQUALS funded projects shall carry approved EQUALS branding and reflect EQUALS messaging.
- All EQUALS partners shall disseminate EQUALS products and deliverables in line with established EQUALS communications principles and branding management requirements.
- EQUALS will maintain an open data platform and intends that all data used in EQUALS project (as allowed for) will be deposited in this open access data sharing platform and available to all comers.

ANNEX A: Detailed Description of EQUALS Bodies' Roles and Responsibilities

EQUALS Body	Roles/Responsibilities
Annual Partners Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves Mid-Term Strategy, Principles, Objectives and Goals for the partnership • Adopts the Coalitions' Annual Action Plans • Approves EQUALS products and deliverables • Endorses outreach campaigns and fundraising initiatives to achieve coalitions' targets
Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines the strategy, principles, objectives, and goals for the Partnership in collaboration with the Coalition Leads • Reviews and revises the Governance Structure of EQUALS when and as appropriate • Approves the finances of the partnership • Issues nomination calls for Chairs of each Coalition to the entire EQUALS partnership • Recommends the appointment of the Chairs for Each Coalition • Allocates resources, if any, to specific activities in agreement with the Coalition and Project leads • Approves Action Plans and Work Procedures for the Coalitions, ensuring that the work of the coalitions is aligned and supports the achievement of the overall goals for EQUALS • Supports and approves the Resource Mobilization strategy • Identifies events and platforms to advocate for EQUALS • Approves communication plans and messaging for each event • Approves invitations to new partners • Represents EQUALS in events, panel discussions, and advocacy platforms. • Approves requests of partners to represent EQUALS in events, panel discussions, and advocacy platforms.
Chair of Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairs the meetings or calls of the Steering Committee • Represents EQUALS in events, panel discussions, and advocacy platforms. • Issues recommendations to the Steering Committee in regards to EQUALS strategy, principles, objectives, goals and annual working plan
Vice-Chair of Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputizes on behalf of the Chair where relevant • Represents EQUALS in events, panel discussions, and advocacy platforms • Assists the Chair in the implementation of EQUALS vision and mission
Coalition Chairs (Access, Skills and Leadership)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages with Coalition partners on the development of substantial outputs to be created within the partnership (e.g. studies, guidelines, etc.); Captures key lessons learned and expresses challenges at the Annual Partners Assembly to disseminate knowledge to a wider audience • Develops work plans and submits them for approval every year

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages with partners on the implementation of projects • Ensures collaboration within coalition members • Reviews projects' progress in coordination with project leads on a monthly basis • Identifies events and platforms to promote EQUALS and support outreach • Sends quarterly updates to the Steering Committee via the Hub • Contributes resources to the partnership (i.e. data, human, financial resources); • Reports annually to the Annual Partners Assembly • Allocates a communications focal point • Mobilizes resources for projects in coordination with the EQUALS Hub
Research Coalition Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops the broad research agenda for EQUALS • Reviews the goals and knowledge needs for the three coalitions and advises on the appropriate indicators to collect data • Supports efforts to source relevant primary and secondary data • Coordinates with statistics departments from partners • Provides analytical expertise to ensure high quality research and appropriate interpretation of the data • Analyses the data provided to produce a flagship report tracking progress towards EQUALS targets • Develops articles, case study reports, white papers, and other research and policy outputs in close consultation with the founding and coalition members • Facilitates knowledge sharing and dissemination of information • Mobilizes resources for research projects in coordination with the EQUALS Hub
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the work of the coalitions by sharing resources, staff time, materials, and data • Make a measurable commitment and/or financial contribution to EQUALS related to the coalition(s) they have joined and report on progress of that commitment to the Coalition chair and Hub Secretariat • Initiate new relevant programme activities/projects or align / promote relevant existing activities/projects in support of EQUALS and EQUALS Coalitions' objectives • Contribute to general products of the partnership (e.g. digital inclusion map, social media campaigns, etc.) • Advocate for the cause and share success stories on social media by using the EQUALS hashtag • Promote EQUALS activities and deliverables (i.e. EQUALS in Tech Awards) • Represent EQUALS in events, panel discussions and advocacy platforms, if approved. • Host or co-host events, provide a venue, or provide in kind support to EQUALS events, such as meetings, award ceremonies, and conferences. • Adopt relevant recommendations of the EQUALS Partnership

Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides support and strategic advice during the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the different workplans and projects.• Onboards and manages new partners;• Provides periodic check ins and updates to all partners;• Develops EQUALS Resource Mobilization Strategy• Manages the periodical partner reporting process. Sends it to the Steering Committee• Organizes the Annual Partners Assembly and identifies the platform in close consultation with the co-founders• Organizes the virtual and physical meetings of the Steering Committee and the wider Partnership.• Participates in all coalitions and leads regular coordination calls among the coalition and project leads• Leads EQUALS communications activity, including the website, social media and sharing of relevant content and assets for partner use• Tracks the progress of EQUALS projects' implementation in coordination with the Coalition Leads• Monitors partners' commitments and fulfilment of obligations and reports accordingly to the Steering Committee• Co-organizes the EQUALS in Tech Awards• Produces a mini report once a year, in time for the Annual Partners Assembly in September, to capture the impact that EQUALS has achieved in the year
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Annex B: EQUALS Ethics Charter

Introduction

The Steering Committee of EQUALS is committed to high standards of ethical conduct and requires disclosure of any existing or potential conflict of interest.

Partner Pledge

As a member of the EQUALS global partnership for digital gender equality [insert organisation name] pledges to:

- Promote awareness, build political commitment, leverage our own resources and knowledge and harness the capacities of partners in order to help the EQUALS partnership achieve its objectives
- Undertake a minimum of one specific and measurable action and/or financial contribution in this regard every 12 months
- Adhere to the EQUALS Mission and Vision
- Respect and act in accordance with the EQUALS Constitution
- Execute EQUALS projects in a collaborative, fair and transparent manner
- Share resources for the purpose of advancing the partnership's goals
- Conduct all business activities in accordance with national and international legislation

Purpose of the Ethics Charter

These Guidelines provide direction to EQUALS Members to assist them in:

- Avoiding any involvement in situations that could lead to a conflict of interest;
- Understanding their responsibilities to disclose a conflict of interest that exists or potentially might exist.

Definition

A conflict of interest is defined as any situation in which an individual uses information, influence, and/or resources of an organization primarily for personal benefit, or insurance against personal loss, or for that of related individuals, or to benefit organizations to which they belong without prior disclosure of affiliation.

Responsibilities

All Members have a responsibility to identify and report a potential or actual conflict of interest to the EQUALS Hub.

Procedure

1. Members shall declare conflicts of interest to the Coalition Chair or EQUALS Hub.
2. Where a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest is identified, the Steering Committee will be notified and will decide on what action shall be taken.

Examples of conflict of interest could be (but are not limited to):

- When a partner or his/her organization or business interests stands to gain financially from any business dealings, programmes or services of EQUALS;
- When a member offers a professional service to EQUALS;
- When a member stands to gain personally or professionally from using insider knowledge to their personal advantage.

Signed on behalf of [Organisation Name] by [Name, Job Title]

Date: [Date]