

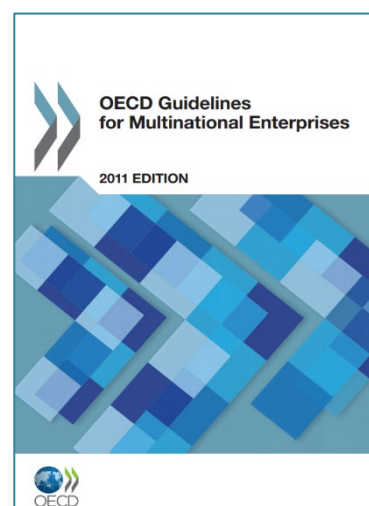
The OECD Centre for Responsible Business Conduct has developed tools and standards that aim to mitigate the negative impacts from business activities on people and the planet. The Centre also provides a gender perspective to its work through recommendations to identify and assess risks in supply chains, which affect women and ensure that access to remedy considers a gendered perspective. A detailed framework for supply chains due diligence, practical guidance for companies on how to integrate the gender perspective into due diligence as well as steps to promote fair access to remedy are part of the Centre’s approach.

This note, prepared by the Centre for Responsible Business Conduct, provides an overview on the OECD’s work on Responsible Business Conduct and issues related to gender.

1. OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

The OECD Guidelines to Multinational Enterprises (OECD Guidelines) are a key international instrument to promote responsible business conduct (RBC). They contain non-binding recommendations on responsible business conduct addressed by governments to multinational enterprises. They acknowledge and encourage the positive contributions that business can make to economic, environmental and social progress, and recognise that business activities can result in adverse impacts related to workers, human rights, the environment, bribery, consumers and corporate governance.

The Guidelines’ chapters cover all key aspects of business responsibility (see *Annex 1*). While gender issues cut across all aspects of business activity, the OECD Guidelines do not have any specific reference to gender.¹ In practice, the chapters of the Guidelines that are most closely related to gender issues, including women’s rights and gender discrimination, are the chapters on Human Rights and on Employment and Industrial Relations.

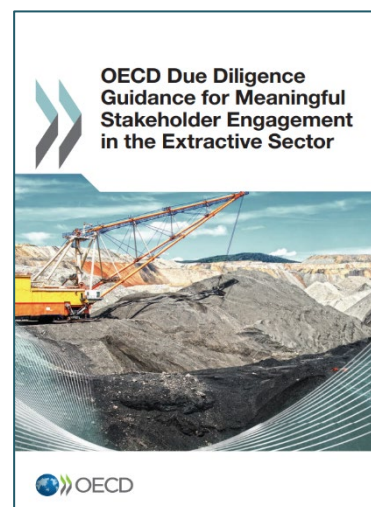


¹ The term “women” appears in the Guidelines, in paragraphs 40, 54, and 58 in the commentary under the Human Rights chapter as well as in the chapter on Employment and Industrial Relations.

that abuses are identified and addressed, including in conflict-affected and high-risk areas such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Finally, the OECD Due Diligence Guidance on Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement in the Extractive Sector contains an annex (*Annex C*) on “Engaging with Women”. This annex specifies that businesses take steps to:

- Understand the context of engagement;
- Ensure that impacted women and their interlocutors are appropriately identified and prioritised;
- Design appropriate and effective stakeholder engagement activities and processes for engagement with women;
- Monitor and evaluate inclusive engagement with men and women.



4. National Contact Points: Addressing Gender Issues through Mediation and Promotion

All governments adhering to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are required to set up a National Contact Point for Responsible Business Conduct (NCP). NCPs promote the Guidelines, and related due diligence guidance, and handle cases (referred to as “specific instances”) as non-judicial grievance mechanisms. To date over 500 cases (known as ‘specific instances’) have been handled by NCPs.²

Among these, very few cases address specifically the issue of gender violence or discrimination. In 2006, the Polish NCP handled a case relating to sexual harassment (see ‘*Sexual harassment claim in Poland*’).

A number of cases handled by NCPs deal with issues, which have gendered implications. There are for example many cases regarding labour rights in the hotel industry (*Natixis and Unite Here*³) resulted in hotel workers being allowed to unionize, women working at the hotel also formed a group to defend their particular interests⁴, or in the garment industry⁵, where a majority of workers are female.

In addition, NCPs can play an important role in raising awareness on gender issues in their promotion of the Guidelines.

² See the specific instances database at <http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/database/>.

³ See *Natixis and Unite Here* case at http://mneguidelines.oecd.org/database/instances/fr0023.htm#_blank

⁴ See e.g. Colombian NCP, ‘[Hoteles Decamerón Colombia S.A.S. \(Hodecol S.A.S\) and the National Union of the Gastronomic, Hotel and Tourism Industry Workers of Colombia \(SINTHOL\)](#)’; French NCP, ‘[Hotel industry in Benin and Canada](#)’; French NCP, ‘[Accommodation activities in Colombia, the US, Morocco and the Dominican Republic](#)’.

⁵ Several NCP cases concern health and safety in the textile sector, e.g. in relation to catastrophes such as the Rana Plaza collapse, see Brazil NCP, ‘[C&A Moda Ltda and individual](#)’; German NCP, ‘[KiK Textilien und Non-Food, C&A Mode, Karl Rieker and Uwe Kekeritz, Member of the German Bundestag](#)’; Danish NCP, ‘[PWT Group and the NGOs Clean Clothes Campaign Denmark and Active Consumers](#)’.

