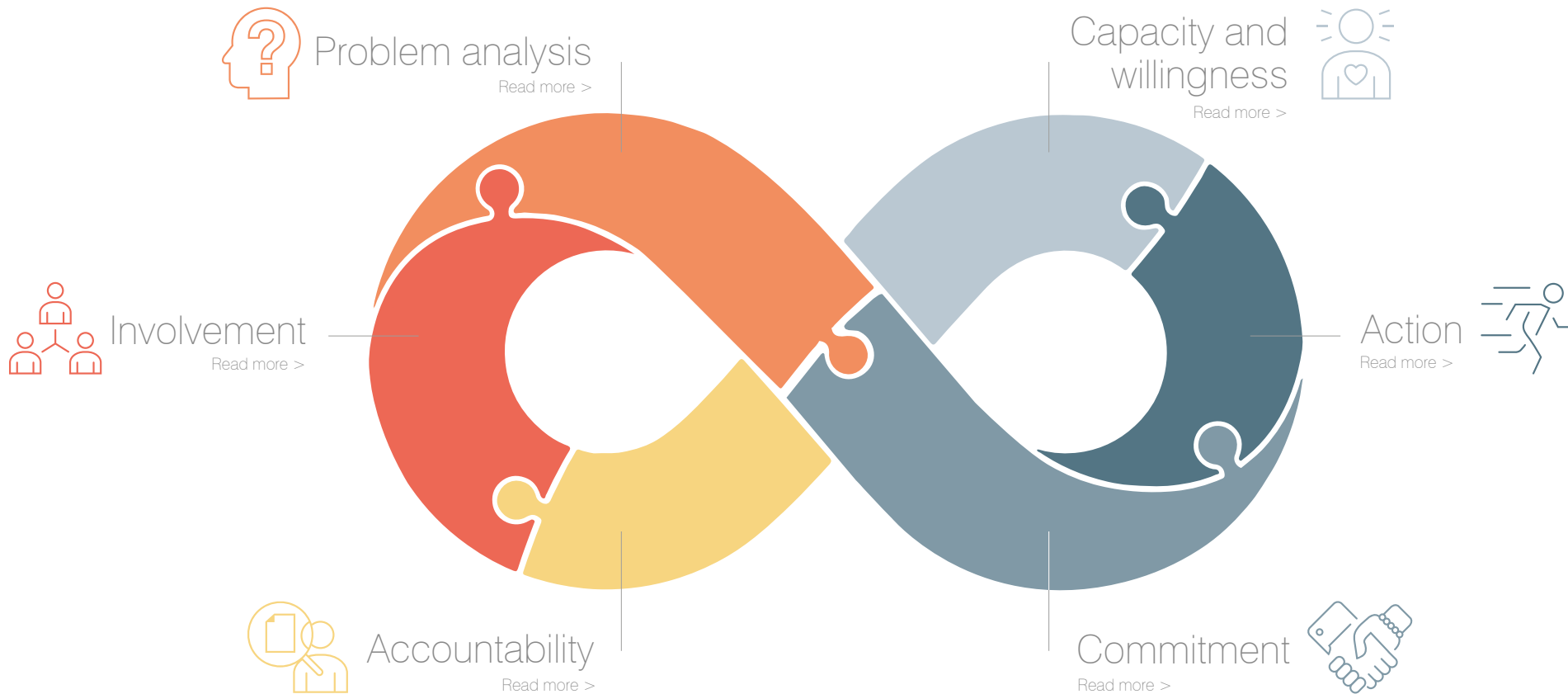# Roadmap to inclusive democracies.

Political parties play a key role in facilitating the equal participation of women and men. This roadmap shows how parties can work towards inclusive democracies.

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Involvement

Building trust and helping women to access political parties and leadership positions is essential. Parties must come together and recognise the importance of tackling the barriers to participation that women face.

Parties need to understand that when they put up internal barriers for female aspirants they become part of the problem. But they can also be part of the solution if they address these barriers effectively.

In the involvement phase, it is important to ensure the engagement of parties by building on existing platforms and interparty cooperation mechanisms. This enables a quick entry point using trusted networks.

The documents in this step comprise of baselines and internationally available information and datasets to engage and inform parties on this issue.

Problem analysis

During the problem analysis, an assessment takes place on the country specific barriers that women face when participating in political life. National and international rankings and benchmarks help to identify these issues and barriers. This process also ensures increased ownership within parties so that they recognize gender inequality in their countries.

The materials in this step focus on research and analytical reports on themes including barriers to women's access to finance, political violence against women and biased media representation.

Commitment

Based on the problem analysis, each party goes through a rigorous self-assessment process resulting in tailor-made action plans which identify the key barriers the party will address. These action plans are validated by senior leadership to ensure commitment at all levels.

This phase takes place within parties. A form of self-assessment (Gender Assessment Reports) allows a dedicated team of party representatives to make an inventory of key challenges for women inside the party. This process focuses on internal regulations and procedures, but also on cultural practice. This internal analysis combined with the information gathered in the problem analysis phase, results in a party-specific Gender Action Plan.

Throughout this process, it is essential to obtain the commitment of party leadership to both the analysis and contents of the Gender Action Plan. External pressure and public opinion campaigns can help achieve this.

The materials in this step of the roadmap include formats for Gender Policies, as well as public pressure documents.

Action

This is the central phase where the key reforms each party has identified are implemented. Practitioners should remain available to provide direct technical assistance and dedicated support to each party.

In the action phase, each party implements their own action plan. The plans aim for structural reform by targeting specific internal barriers in a party, ranging from financial barriers (nomination fees), to practical (time when meetings are held), political (zipper lists) and cultural (image of women) issues.

The materials in this step include reports on results by parties. These are party-owned and not public.
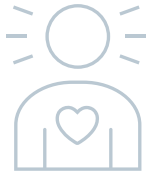
Capacity and willingness

Specific support targeting female and male party members enhances understanding and capacity. Mentoring potential women candidates is an important way to increase willingness and resolve to participate in political life.

Support for party members in the form of skills training, sensitization and mentoring schemes is crucial to personal development. This targets potential women candidates, but also male party members, to help them champion gender equality inside the party.

You can find information on trainings and approaches in this step.

Accountability

In order to guarantee a high standard of ongoing implementation, progress must be monitored and experiences must be shared. Monitoring reports and analysis also help keep pressure on parties and make sure that positive results feedback into the process. Facilitating peer learning and exchange can also encourage positive dialogue.

Monitoring reports and frameworks are included in this step of the roadmap.