

Centre for the New Economy and Society



# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses 2025

INSIGHT REPORT  
JANUARY 2025



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This report builds on the work of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouse Programme, an annual effort to surface, highlight and scale impactful corporate initiatives. It is organized by the World Economic Forum's Centre for the New Economy and Society.

The Lighthouse Programme is designed to pragmatically identify proven, effective initiatives which advance diversity, equity and inclusion across industries and geographies and to share key lessons learned with business and public sector leaders around the world. The aim is to equip leaders with best practices to help focus efforts on what works best, and ultimately contribute to stronger business performance and competitiveness.

This report provides a snapshot of the current frontier and recent developments in the space, followed by detailed case studies of the 2025 cohort of Lighthouse initiatives selected by an expert panel on the basis of having achieved significant, quantifiable, sustained and scalable impact for one or multiple underrepresented groups. In addition, the report presents a set of "highlighted" initiatives, which contain promising or innovative design principles.



# Foreword



**Silja Baller**

Head, Diversity, Equity  
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As we embark on the year 2025, significant and systematic gaps in economic outcomes persist for women, people of colour, LGBTQI+ individuals and people with disabilities, as a consequence of compounding disadvantages they are facing in labour and capital markets. This continues to create the need for targeted efforts that yield a more level playing field.

Not every diversity, equity and inclusion programme implemented over the last decade has proven equally effective. Yet, where done well, efforts have emerged as increasingly mission-critical for business competitiveness in all parts of the globe. Well-calibrated diversity, equity and inclusion strategies attract and retain the best talent and improve overall employee well-being, productivity and innovation outcomes. They have also been linked to improved future financial performance and higher valuation ratios. Not having diverse perspectives around the table is a critical risk factor and makes organizations less effective in dealing with external shocks and crises. Thoughtful, well-executed strategies, on the other hand, create a culture of trust which in turn fuels business performance.

Many learnings have emerged from recent years of practice. To generate lasting impact, going beyond influencing individual behaviours to changing systems is critical. This can include broadening recruitment outreach, transparent hiring processes and succession planning, auditing performance and promotion processes to remove bias, and implementing pay equity processes and equitable care leave policies. Together with an inclusive culture where the tone is set from the top, such systems give companies a competitive edge. On the other hand, some types of training rolled out in recent years have proven ineffective. A balance further needs to be struck between creating a level playing field for groups who have historically faced barriers and creating a sense of inclusion and trust that brings together all stakeholders.

The collection of 2025 Lighthouses and Highlights in this report is presented in the hope that it can provide pragmatic insights on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts that have proven highly effective in creating a high performance environment for all employees, suppliers and other stakeholders of the corporate ecosystem.

They are testament to the transformative potential of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in shaping a resilient and inclusive global economy.

The Centre for the New Economy and Society is complementing the Lighthouse Programme with a growing portfolio of related insight products, action initiatives and leadership communities. For example, the Global Gender Parity Sprint 2030 provides a global platform, bringing together businesses, governments, international organizations and other stakeholders to accelerate economic parity. The *Global Gender Gap Report*, now in its 19th year, benchmarks global, national and industry gender gaps, while Gender Parity Accelerators are implementing public-private action plans to advance women's economic empowerment across 17 economies. The Centre also advances LGBTQI+ inclusion, racial and ethnic equity, and inclusion of people with disabilities through its work with the Community of Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officers as well as through collaborations with civil society organizations.

We are deeply grateful to the members of the Lighthouse independent expert panel – Dominic Arnall, Porter Braswell, Elizabeth Broderick, Caroline Casey and Luana Génot – for their leadership in selecting the 2025 cohort of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses. We also thank the members of the Centre for the New Economy and Society Advisory Board and the more than 190 partners of the Centre for their commitment to shaping an economic future that creates opportunities for all.

We would further like to express our gratitude to Mauricio Báez Sedeño, Yanjun Guo and Kim Piaget for their leadership of this project, as well as to our colleagues Attilio Di Battista, Sriram Gutta, Laura Natera and Eoin O'Cathasaigh for their support.

# Introduction

## Building resilient economies in 2025

In 2025, leaders in the public and private sectors will be tasked with the challenge of reviving growth in a highly volatile environment while ensuring said growth does not exacerbate existing economic inequities<sup>1</sup> as labour markets and capital markets still show multiple layers of systematic outcome gaps for women, people of colour, LGBTQI+ individuals and people with disabilities.

Where globally comparable data is available, as in the case of gender, we see persistent gaps in labour-market participation, unemployment, informal employment, representation in the jobs of the future, leadership, and pay, as well as wealth accumulation and access to finance across the world.<sup>2</sup> As the global economy is set to become more volatile, the risk is highest for those that have traditionally been excluded from economic opportunity, including the most stable and highly rewarded jobs.

While legislation and equitable economic policies are an important part of the equation, corporations can play a key role in contributing to the creation of a more level playing field.

The corporate role in advancing policy and societal outcomes is further magnified by the rapid pace of technological innovation, particularly in automation and workforce augmentation.

Simultaneously, long-term demographic transformations are reshaping the global workforce. By 2030, one in six people worldwide will be over the age of 60, a shift that will affect not only high-income economies but also increasingly impact middle- and low-income countries, presenting a new landscape for companies in their search for talent.<sup>3</sup>

In this swiftly changing environment, aligning diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts with broader business and economic objectives will not only enable companies to navigate macroeconomic shifts but also help businesses thrive in an era where adaptability and resilience are paramount.

Businesses across the world are embracing approaches that boost diversity and inclusion to lay the foundations for workforce transformation. A growing body of practices suggests that efforts are broadening across the planet, and transforming from reactive to proactive, from peripheral to central, and from single-focus to whole-of-business initiatives.<sup>4</sup> Well-designed strategies are creating an environment where all employees are able to perform at their highest potential, thereby boosting business performance. In addition, such strategies involve the creation of transparent systems and channels of communication that contribute to building trust.

In 2023, the bulk of DEI efforts for the average firm were predominantly focused on training initiatives looking to achieve attitudinal shifts within organizations.<sup>5</sup> This approach is showing mixed results<sup>5</sup>. Instead, companies at the frontier are increasingly shifting to a “fixing the system” approach, adopting measures such as pay equity reviews, caregiving benefits, and more transparent hiring and promotion processes across their organizations and supply chains.

As DEI continues to embed itself into the fabric of business operations, it is evolving into a strategy that is not just additive, but essential to sustainable success.

1

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouse Programme

In its third edition, this report showcases eight Lighthouses and seven Highlights, aiming to equip leaders with insights to contribute to faster DEI impact across the global business community and policy-making space. Given that there is no silver bullet for advancing diversity and inclusion and driving enduring impact, the intention behind the

case studies is not to provide a list of initiatives to replicate but to illustrate key elements of what contributed to each initiative's impact. The following section lays out trends and insights observed across the three cycles of the Lighthouse Program to date.

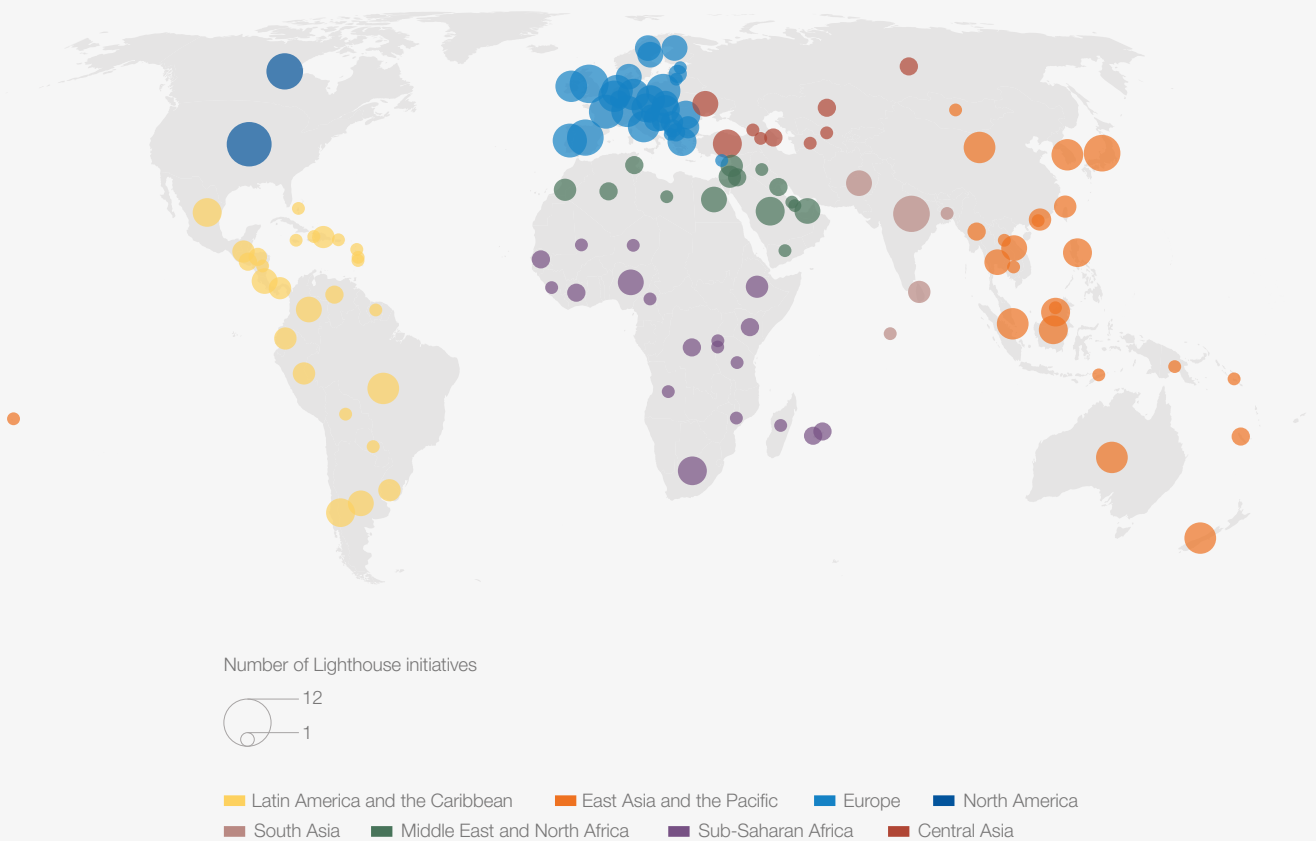
## 1.1 Trends and insights

### The corporate DEI frontier is global

A pattern observed across all three editions of the programme is the diversity of geography when it comes to DEI efforts. The growing repository of Lighthouses and Highlights from 2023 to 2025 now includes programmes with proven impact in every region of the world (Figure 1).

The 2025 edition received submissions from the broadest range of regions to date, with programmes operating in more than 20 different countries in Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, North America and Africa.

FIGURE 1 Lighthouse initiatives implementation by economy, 2023-2025 editions



Source

World Economic Forum, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses 2023, 2024, 2025*.

Note

Dot sizes correspond to the number of DEI initiatives applied in each location.

## Gender-parity programmes are the most mature

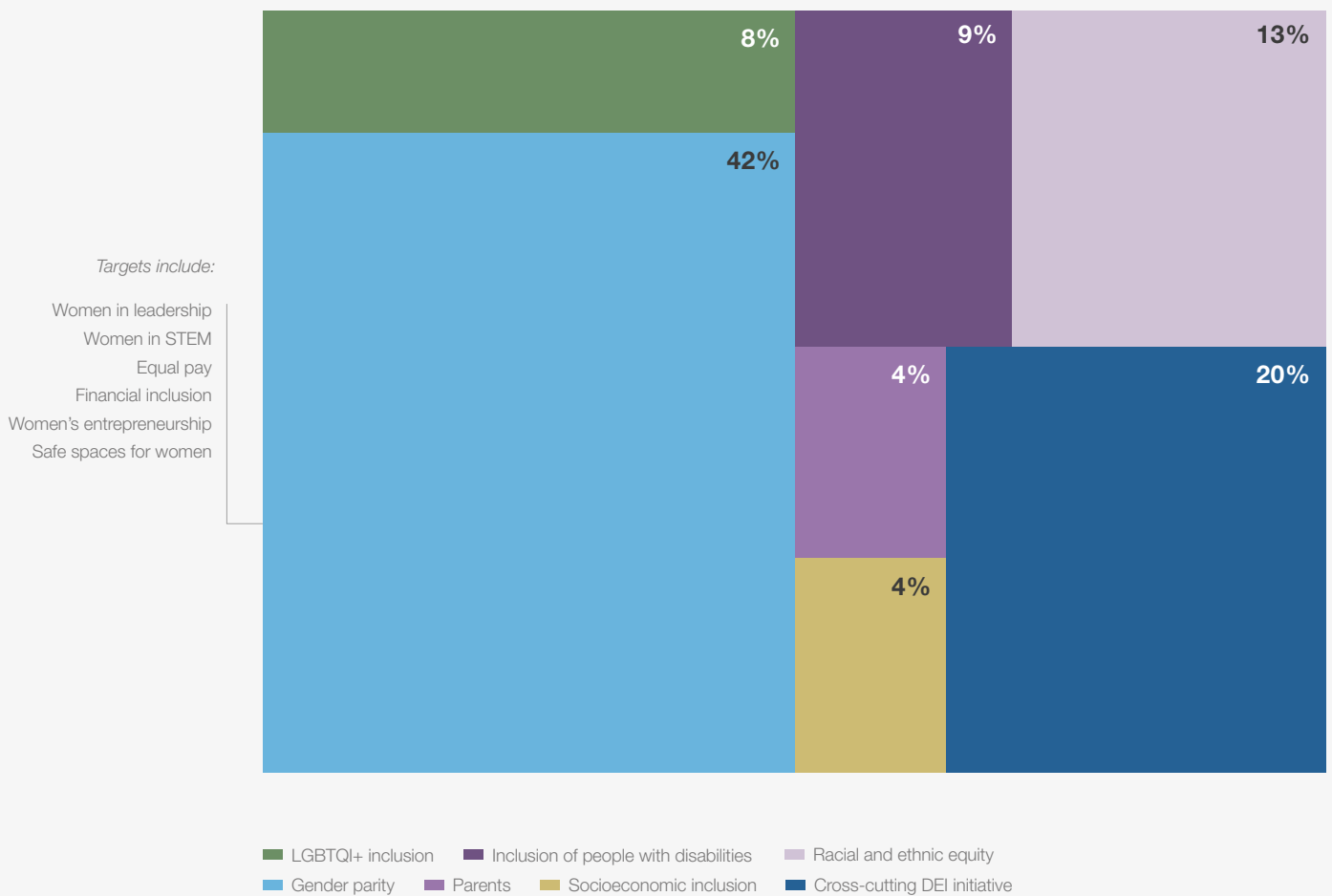
The primary focus of companies submitting to the Lighthouse Programme remains gender equity, with over one-third of all submissions across the three editions addressing this area (Figure 2). This emphasis is largely due to the accessibility of gender-related data, which is relatively straightforward to collect and analyse, making it a common entry point for many DEI initiatives. Additionally, women comprise 50% of the global population, and efforts toward gender parity have a longer history. Among the gender-focused submissions, a variety of programmes have emerged, including those centred on women in leadership, women in STEM, equal pay, financial inclusion, women’s entrepreneurship and safe spaces for women.

Racial and ethnic equity, LGBTQI+ inclusion, and inclusion for people with disabilities are more often addressed at later stages of an organization’s DEI journey, and many of these initiatives are

headquartered in Europe and North America. Due to the limited availability of data in these areas, however, it can be more challenging to measure tangible impacts. Some organizations are beginning to see results from self-ID campaigns within their workforces, enabling them to gather data across populations, including LGBTQI+, Black, Hispanic, Latino, Asian, people with disabilities, and intersections among them.

Additionally, some programmes are specifically designed to support parents. By implementing more inclusive parental leave policies, pioneering companies are challenging traditional gender roles in childcare and redefining family benefits to include and support LGBTQI+ employees.

FIGURE 2 Distribution of initiatives by target group, across all submissions, 2023-2025 editions



Source

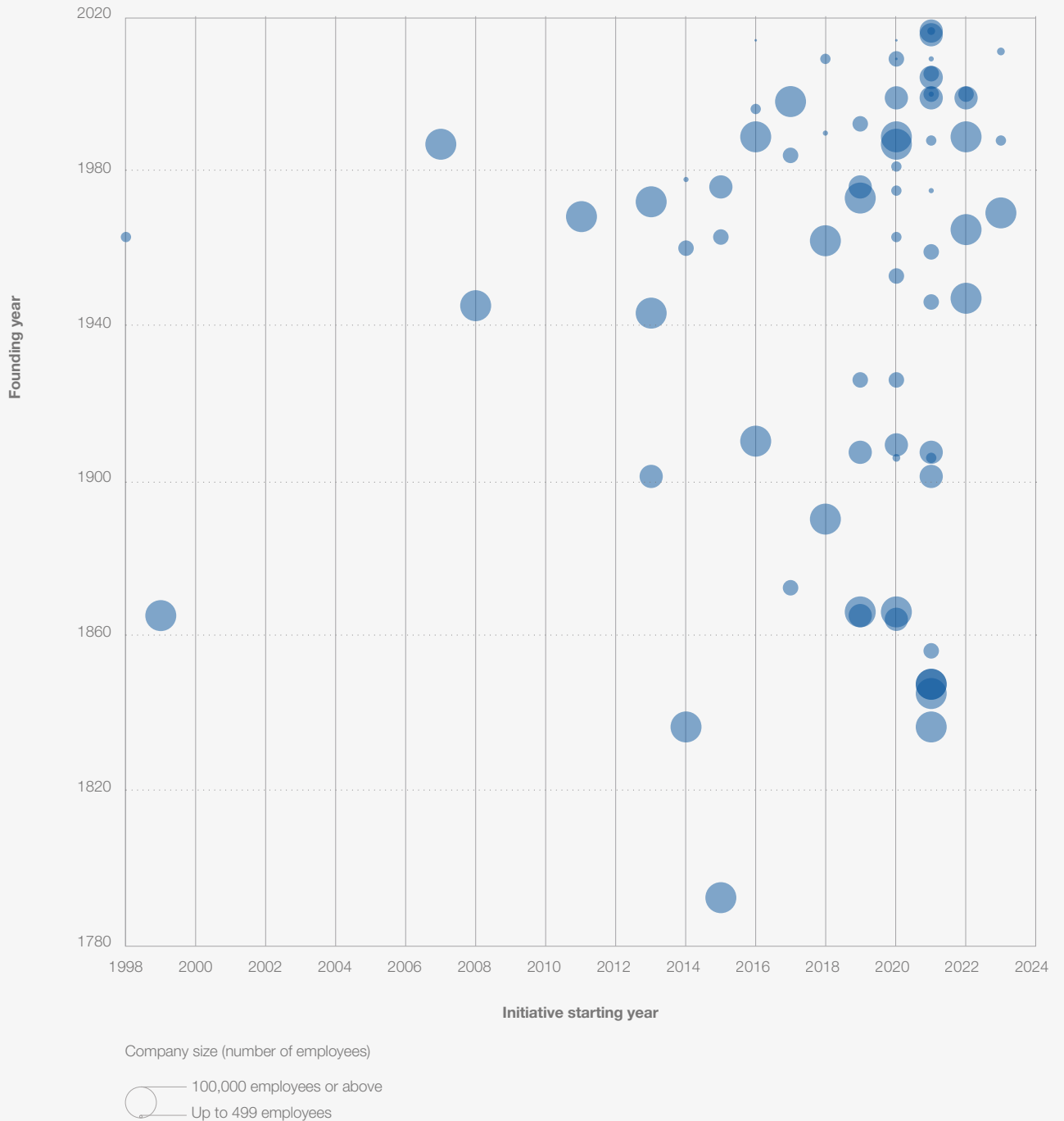
World Economic Forum, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses 2023, 2024, 2025*.

**Companies of all sizes and ages are embedding efforts to boost diversity and inclusion, with pioneers leading the way from the founding stage**

In 2025, nearly half of the submissions come from very large companies with over 100,000 employees, a notable increase from previous years. While larger and older companies are often the

ones implementing DEI programmes, this year's submissions show that companies of all ages and sizes are making DEI a priority (Figure 3).

**FIGURE 3 DEI initiatives across firm size and age, 2023-2025 editions**



**Source**

World Economic Forum, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses 2023, 2024, 2025*.

**Note**

Dot sizes correspond to the company size in terms of number of employees. DEI initiative starting year refers to the year when the initiative, which was submitted to the DEI Lighthouse Program, originally began.



## DEI is transforming into a career-spanning, company-wide effort

Approximately one-half of the submissions and selected Lighthouses in the past three years are internal and workforce-focused, showcasing the understanding of internal change preceding external impact. Some showcase a strategic approach to embedding DEI at every stage of employees' careers, from recruitment and onboarding to development, advancement and leadership, underscoring a deep integration of DEI into the employee experience.

In addition, organizations are recognizing that to drive DEI externally, they must first cultivate an

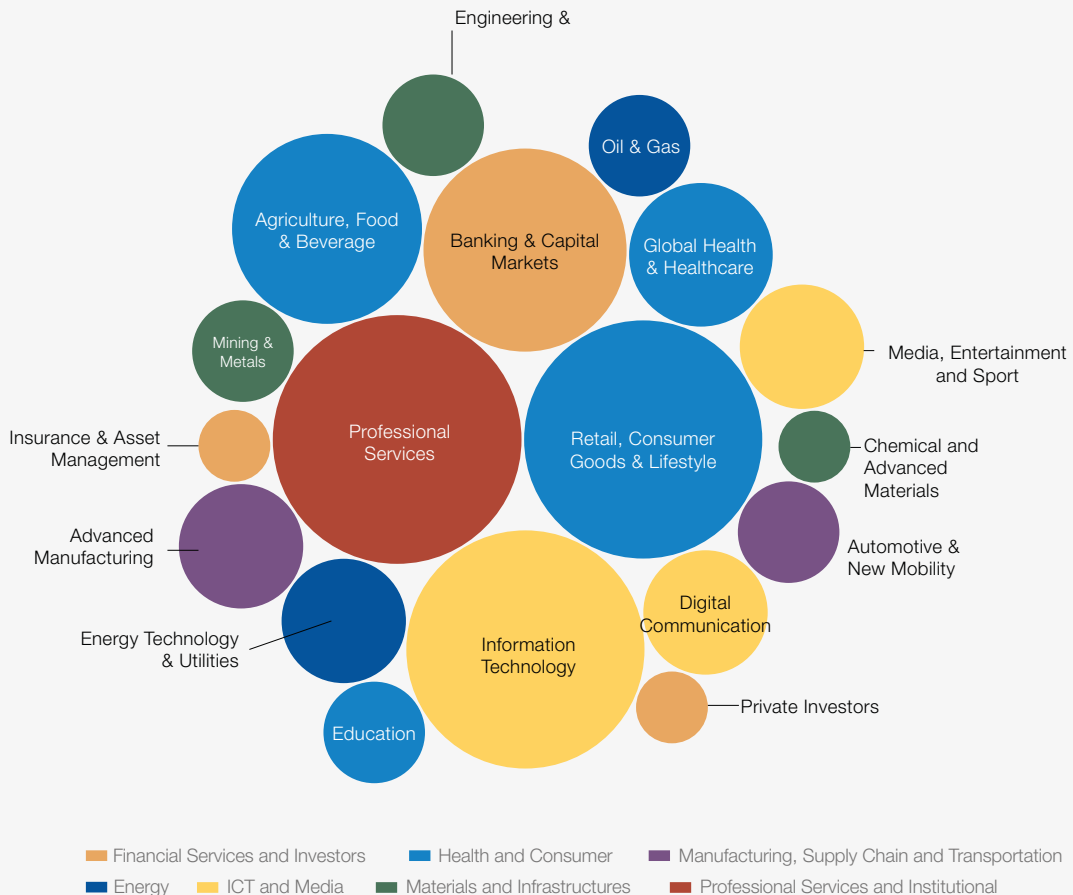
inclusive culture internally. However, initiatives at the frontier increasingly take a whole-of-business and ecosystem approach. Beyond being HR programmes, successful initiatives use different levers at their disposal to drive impact through different business functions such as marketing, R&D, supply chains, partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and policy advocacy. By leveraging these additional areas, companies can increase impact and ultimately influence their broader ecosystem, contributing to societal change.

## Sectors like financial services, ITC, consumer goods and manufacturing are catching up on DEI progress

As the Lighthouse repository continues to grow, submissions from its three editions now span 17 sectors (Figure 4). The 2025 edition demonstrates a more balanced representation across industries, with notable increases in contributions from the Financial Services, ITC, Consumer Goods, and

Manufacturing sectors – areas that have traditionally been slower in advancing their DEI efforts.<sup>6</sup> This wider distribution underscores an encouraging trend: a deeper, more inclusive commitment to DEI across industries, as sectors increasingly embrace these values with confidence and optimism.

FIGURE 4 Relative number of submissions by industry, total over 2023-2025 editions



### Source

World Economic Forum, *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses 2023, 2024, 2025*.

### Note

Dot sizes correspond to the number of DEI initiatives submitted by companies from a given industry.

## 1.2 Process and methodology for identifying Lighthouses

Following a call for submissions by the World Economic Forum’s Centre for the New Economy and Society, an independent panel of DEI experts (See Appendix for the list of experts that formed this year’s panel) with diverse backgrounds and expertise selected the 2025 cohort of eight Lighthouses and seven Highlights using the following four predetermined criteria:

- **Significance:** assessing the magnitude of impact based on change against a baseline, number of people affected relative to the size of the target population, and/or the organization’s size, degree of transformative impact on the target group(s).
- **Quantifiability:** assessing use of metrics to measure and drive further impact, based on

a clear definition of the metrics, regularity of tracking, and the use of metrics towards accountability.

- **Scalability:** assessing future-impact potential within or beyond the organization based on the set-up of the initiative, how the initiative has been scaled to date, and the future targets and definition of a path forward.
- **Sustainability:** assessing the sustainability of the initiative and potential for long-term impact, based on the length of time that the initiative has been running, the initiative structure and governance, and the extent to which the organization is mainstreaming the initiative into its core business strategy.

## 1.3 Common success factors across Lighthouse initiatives

Five common success factors tend to mark the initiatives that yield the most significant, scalable, quantifiable and sustained impact for

underrepresented groups (Table 1). While there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution, these elements can help set up an organization’s DEI initiatives for success.

TABLE 1 Five common success factors across Lighthouse initiatives

1. Nuanced understanding of root causes	2. Meaningful definition of success	3. Accountable and invested business leaders	4. Solution designed for context	5. Rigorous tracking and course correction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Understand the problem with a deep fact base</li> <li>– Identify the root causes</li> <li>– Get input from the target population, initially and throughout</li> <li>– Prioritize and sequence problem areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Set clear and quantifiable aspirations (what and by when)</li> <li>– Articulate a clear case for change that moves employees to action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Set initiative as a core business priority</li> <li>– Hold senior leaders accountable for outcomes, not just inputs or activities</li> <li>– Model and lead desired change, starting with the CEO and senior leaders</li> <li>– Ensure resources for longevity in the budget, expertise and timeline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Develop solutions that address the root causes, with scalability in mind</li> <li>– Integrate changes into key processes and ways of working, so impact is sustained</li> <li>– Equip and encourage employees to contribute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Define key performance indicators (KPIs) and implement rigorous tracking process</li> <li>– Use data and feedback to course correct as needed</li> </ul>

2

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lighthouses and Highlights

## 2.1 Lighthouses

This section details each of the eight DEI Lighthouse initiatives selected by the independent expert panel. Given that there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution for advancing DEI and driving enduring impact, the intention of this section is not to provide a list of initiatives to replicate but to illustrate key elements of what contributed to each initiative’s impact. The Key actions portion of each case provides a real-life example of the common success factors outlined in Table 1 in the previous chapter. These cases can serve as reference points for what works when considering how to improve DEI efforts within the context of an organization.


The eight Lighthouse cases vary by aspiration, target population and other characteristics as follows:

- **Initiative geography:** global reach (3); Jordan, Brazil, Portugal, West Africa (Senegal, Mali and Niger), and USA, Canada and Chile

- **Initiative scope:** external (1), internal (4) and both (3)
- **Target population:** women (6); LGBTQI+ people (1); people with disabilities, migrants and people at social risk (1)
- **Types of solutions:** comprehensive strategies (3); upskilling programmes (3); finance for women and women entrepreneurs (1), safe spaces (1)

The expert panel that selected the Lighthouses have also highlighted “stand-out” approaches from seven other submissions. Snapshots of each of these Highlights follow the eight Lighthouse case profiles and provide additional real-life examples in the context of initiatives designed to improve DEI outcomes for underrepresented groups.

TABLE 2 DEI Lighthouses 2025

Organization	Description	Impact snapshot
	Creating an inclusive environment that fully supports LGBTQI+ employees, through allyship creation, comprehensive policies, professional development and equal access to benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 90 employee networks across 45 countries, involving more than 141,000 allies.</li> <li>– Company celebrated LGBTQI+ Pride publicly in 47 countries in FY24, a 68% increase compared to FY23.</li> <li>– Self-ID utilization increased from 6% in FY22 to 11% in FY24.</li> </ul>

Organization	Description	Impact snapshot
	<p>Promoting financial freedom and accelerating economic participation for women in Jordan through tailored financial products, non-financial services, and fostering an equitable workplace culture.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Representation of female clients increased from 26% to 36% since the launch of the initiative in 2014.</li> <li>– Female borrowers grew 16 times, and female depositors by 14 times since 2014, compared to 6 times and 9 times for male borrowers, respectively.</li> <li>– Women’s representation in the Board of Directors increased from 9% to 30% since 2014.</li> </ul>
	<p>Promoting gender equality in the Energy sector by investing in a school for electricians in Brazil, focused on developing STEM skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Female representation in the annual hiring of electricians increased from 1.7% in 2019 to 36.4% in 2024 (data until July).</li> <li>– 1,015 women trained.</li> <li>– 76% of graduates of the training programme secure a job within the company.</li> </ul>
	<p>Economic empowerment for people with disadvantaged positions, including people with disabilities and refugees, for easier access to the labour market through upskilling and job opportunity creation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 1,709 people have participated in the programme since 2015.</li> <li>– 47% of trainees were hired after completion of the programme.</li> </ul>
	<p>Supporting the professional development of women through a variety of actions, based on three pillars: Parity in Key Positions, Salary Equity, and Transmission.</p>	<p><b>Parity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Representation of women in key positions increased from 23% to 48% since 2007.</li> <li>– 65% of the company’s managers are now women.</li> <li>– Female CEOs increased from 0 to 17 since 2007.</li> </ul> <p><b>Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ensuring and monitoring salary equity globally through annual audit.</li> </ul> <p><b>Transmission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Leveraging the collective power of 14 EllesVMH networks around the world with over 10,000 members.</li> </ul>

Organization	Description	Impact snapshot
	<p>Empowering women through green skills training, investments in technical school upgrades, and support for female entrepreneurs in green ventures to drive the energy transition in Senegal, Mali and Niger.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7,204 women have received green skills training since 2021.</li> <li>- 5,155 women-led green enterprises have been generated through this programme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Teck</b></p>	<p>Inclusion Centers that provide a safe space available 24/7/365 at mine sites, offering professional counseling support and promoting awareness of gender-based violence, inclusion and wellness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Percentage of women staff in mines in Chile increased from 16% in 2021 to 27% in 2023.</li> <li>- More than 7,000 people, including employees and members of the broader community, have attended training sessions on prevention of sexual harassment, gender-based violence, sexual diversity and mental health.</li> </ul>
	<p>Increasing women representation in the workforce – especially in leadership and STEM positions – through a comprehensive strategy that supports women in a way that is targeted to every stage of their career.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18.7% of senior leadership positions are occupied by women in FY24, compared to 7.3% in FY21.</li> <li>- The proportion of women leaving the workforce as they progress in their career dropped from 18% in FY21 to 7.9% in FY24.</li> </ul>



Internal and external effort  
LGBTQI+ inclusion

**To create an inclusive environment that fully supports LGBTQI+ employees through comprehensive policies, professional development and equal access to benefits.**

### Company stats

- 774,000 employees
- \$64.1 billion in revenue
- Global, headquartered in Dublin, Ireland
- Information and Technology Services

### Initiative context and objective

Accenture has had a strategic approach to inclusion and diversity for nearly 30 years and its focus on LGBTQI+ inclusion has been a key priority for over 20 years. Two years ago, the company launched the “Pride Means More” initiative to strengthen its support for the LGBTQI+ community and accelerate positive change. For employees, support comes through expanded Pride networks, inclusive policies and leadership development programmes. For the business, the initiative promotes inclusive talent acquisition, supports supplier diversity and fosters client engagement. In the broader community, Accenture engages in extensive NGO partnerships, advocacy efforts and volunteer activities to advance LGBTQI+ rights and well-being.

### Impact highlights

- 90 employee networks across 45 countries and involving more than 141,000 allies.
- 82.4% of employees can now share their sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Self-ID utilization increased from 6% in FY22 to 11% in FY24.
- Pronoun utilization increased from 25% in FY23 to 27% in FY24.
- The workforce participated in 115 Pride-related events in FY24, a 15% increase compared to FY23.
- The company celebrated Pride publicly in 47 countries in FY24, a 68% increase compared to FY23.
- Approximately 47% of the company’s Managing Directors are allies.
- Equal access to medical plans for same-sex partners and/or recognized domestic partners is offered to 100% of employees where currently provided to spouses (where legally allowed and available in market).
- Coverage for transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits is accessible to 100% of employees through Accenture-sponsored medical plans or government-provided plans (where legally allowed and available in market).<sup>7</sup>

## Key actions

### 1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

Accenture has a longstanding commitment to supporting the LGBTQI+ community. While progress has been made in some regions, the company recognizes that LGBTQI+ individuals continue to face varying levels of stigma and discrimination, both in the workplace and beyond. A study conducted by Accenture<sup>8</sup> revealed that only 31% of LGBTQI+ employees are fully open about their gender identity, expression or sexual orientation at work, with this figure dropping to just 21% among senior leaders. Additionally, 57% of LGBTQI+ employees believe that their gender identity, expression or sexual orientation has hindered their career progression.

Accenture identified several contributing factors, including limited awareness of sexual diversity among staff and the need for a higher number of, and stronger, Pride networks to bring community members and allies together. In response, Accenture has revitalized its LGBTQI+ inclusion strategy, focusing on addressing the various forms of discrimination faced by the community. This initiative is supported by enhanced efforts in data collection through self-identification and analytics.

### 2 Meaningful definition of success

Accenture's goal is to create an inclusive environment that fully supports everyone, including LGBTQI+ employees. To articulate a clear case for change that moves employees to action, the company launched an "Allies in Action" programme that educates on how to be an ally by practicing inclusive behaviours and being a role model for others. The programme was launched in a global summit in the metaverse and has been promoted through awareness campaigns across all levels, including new-hire orientation sessions to increase engagement. To date, the programme has reached 141,000 employees.

### 3 Accountable and invested business leaders

This initiative is a business priority, as fostering an inclusive and diverse workforce is essential for diverse perspectives, which drive innovation in the company and helps attract, develop and inspire top talent. Sponsorship from Accenture's senior leadership, including the CEO and an LGBTQI+ identified Executive Sponsor from the Global Management Committee, has been crucial to the programme's success, ensuring the allocation of necessary resources and setting an example of visible allyship. Leaders actively support the community by sending messages on important dates, such as Pride Month. Additionally, 47% of Accenture's Managing Directors have also become visible allies, encouraging more people to become allies.

### 4 Solution designed for context

Accenture developed a comprehensive strategy to promote LGBTQI+ inclusion, focusing on four key areas: People, Processes, Benefits and Community.

For People, Accenture introduced specialized training on career advancement for queer employees, networking support and mentoring. The company also expanded its Pride networks globally, even in regions where support for the LGBTQI+ community is more limited.

In terms of Processes, Accenture implemented inclusive policies and ensured its language reflects evolving terminology around sexual diversity. It also revised dress codes, restroom access and other workplace guidelines to foster an inclusive environment.

Accenture extended its employment Benefits to support LGBTQI+ employees, emphasizing support for same-sex couples and gender-affirming care. The company aims to provide these benefits to all employees, wherever legally possible and available in the market.

For Community engagement, Accenture partnered with organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), Out & Equal, Stonewall, PGLE, Open for Business, MyGwork, Workplace Pride, L'autre Cercle, Parks Diversity, RED1, Pride Connection, Pride Circle and Lesbians Who Tech. These collaborations offer local insights, support talent pipelines and promote cross-market engagement.

### 5 Rigorous tracking and course correction

To achieve sustained impact across all the countries where Accenture operates, the company developed an Inclusion and Diversity (I&D) Maturity Model, which assesses the alignment of country-level I&D programmes, including Pride Means More, with Accenture's global I&D strategy. The model generates actionable insights and recommendations based on clear key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the maturity of the programme in each country. The model features a dashboard that provides an average score for each country, ranging from 1 to 100, with scores above 75% indicating a mature level that exceeds expectations.

### Advice for others and next area of focus

Accenture advises that consistent and transparent communication from leadership – both internally and externally – about the importance of LGBTQI+ inclusion is essential for building trust and commitment across the organization. Visible support from senior executives, along with their active participation in events and initiatives, further reinforces the programme's significance. A future focus area is strengthening support for employees in regions where social or legal barriers limit LGBTQI+ rights. This includes working alongside local organizations, NGOs and policy-makers to advocate for LGBTQI+ rights and protection, and providing tailored resources and targeted allyship initiatives to ensure these employees feel included, valued and supported.

Internal and external effort  
Gender equity

## Promoting financial freedom for and accelerating economic participation of women in Jordan through tailored financial products, non-financial services and an equitable workplace culture.

### Company stats

- 1,215 employees
- \$445 million in revenue
- Jordan, headquartered in Amman
- Financial Services and Capital Markets

### Initiative context and objective

The Shorouq banking proposition was launched in 2014 by Bank al Etihad in response to the low participation rate of women in Jordan's labour force, which stood at just 13.6%.<sup>9</sup> Recognizing the untapped potential in Jordan's economy, the initiative aims to close economic gender gaps by promoting financial freedom through tailored financial products, providing advisory and coaching services to women-led startups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as by fostering an equitable workplace culture within the Bank through innovative reboarding programmes, gender diversity targets, flexible and remote working options, and comprehensive parental leave policies.

### Impact highlights

#### External:

- Female representation among clients grew from 26% to 36% since 2014.
- Number of female borrowers grew 16 times, and female depositors increased 14 times since 2014, compared to 6 times and 9 times, respectively, for male borrowers.

#### Internal:

- Share of women on the Board increased from 9% to 30% since 2014.
- Reached 45% of women representation in the workforce, and 57% of the learning opportunities are now catered to women.

## Key actions

### 1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

Jordan's economy operates below its full potential, hindered by several factors, including the low participation of women in the economy, which is reflected in limited access to finance for female entrepreneurs and low representation of women in leadership roles. Bank al Etihad identified various barriers contributing to these gaps, such as gender stereotypes, financial illiteracy among women, excessive legal requirements and male-centric financial products. By addressing these gaps, Bank al Etihad aimed to unlock the country's economic potential, driving innovation through a more diverse workforce.

### 2 Meaningful definition of success

The company aims to achieve a 50/50 female-male representation in its overall portfolio within the next five years. Additionally, it has made several internal commitments, including increasing female representation in the workforce and on the Board, launching a reboarding (career comeback) programme for women who left their careers due to caregiving responsibilities, and collecting gender-disaggregated data to monitor progress.

### 3 Accountable and invested business leaders

The initiative is led by a female CEO who serves as a role model for employees, demonstrating that leadership roles are achievable. She holds monthly meetings with the team overseeing the initiative to review progress and has prioritized this initiative as a key pillar of the bank's core business strategy. In addition to its genuine commitment to gender equality, Bank al Etihad has identified a market opportunity in financial products tailored for women entrepreneurs. Not only is the bank a pioneer in this field in Jordan, but it has also observed trends within this target group, such as being more risk-conscious when taking loans and more diligent in saving, which presents a significant business opportunity. Furthermore, Bank al Etihad has seen reputational benefits, attracted top talent and built stronger relationships with customers and communities.

### 4 Solution designed for context

Bank al Etihad designed solutions for the context of Jordan, tailoring their financial products for women based on their needs and desires, such as removing the requirement for collateral when applying for loans and offering extended grace periods for new mothers on loan repayments. Additionally, the bank launched advisory and training services targeting women-led startups and SMEs covering various topics, including legal matters, HR, marketing, financial literacy and taxation, to support them in their growth.

Internally, the bank introduced the Shorouq Comeback Program, a six-week career comeback programme for women who took a voluntary break of at least four years to care for children or family. The programme provides mentorship, tailored training and hands-on experience to facilitate their transition back to the corporate world. Since launch, 45% of participants have successfully re-entered the workforce, either by securing employment or starting their own businesses. Additionally, the bank revised its Anti-Bullying and Non-Discrimination framework and improved HR policies and practices to reduce biases.

### 5 Rigorous tracking and course correction

The key metrics to measure the progress of the initiative are: 1) access to financing for women, measured by the percentage of women's loan portfolio relative to the total loan portfolio; 2) financial inclusion of women, measured by the number of female clients relative to the total number of clients; 3) internal female workforce representation; and 4) female representation on the Bank al Etihad Board of Directors.

To ensure rigorous tracking and the ability to make course corrections, Bank al Etihad reports this data monthly, with quarterly reviews by the management team. Since the launch of the initiative, the bank has been collecting gender-disaggregated data, enabling a gender-focused lens in their internal metrics and dashboards to inform decision-making and make adjustments when needed.

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### Advice for others and next area of focus

Bank al Etihad targets a 50% representation of women in all areas: clients, employees and leadership. It recommends using equitable HR policies, diversity targets, merit-based recruitment and diverse hiring panels. Organizations should understand local challenges and cultural context, addressing barriers like financing access and stereotypes. Keys to success include strong leadership, data-driven tracking, tailored solutions that support women's financial inclusion and advancement, and embedding a gender lens in decision-making.

Internal effort  
Gender parity

## Promoting gender equality in the Energy sector by investing in a women-only school for electricians in Brazil focused on developing STEM skills.

### Company stats

- 42,276 employees
- \$53 billion in revenue
- Brazil, headquartered in Madrid, Spain
- Energy, Technology and Utilities

### Initiative context and objective

The initiative was driven by the operational need for a trained workforce to carry out network maintenance activities in the areas where Iberdrola's subsidiary, NEOENERGIA, operates. Electricians make up approximately 80% of the company's workforce and their role requires extensive training (~600 hours). Women's interest in this career has been low, mainly due to social stereotypes. To address this, the company launched an electrician school exclusively for women. This free training course, conducted by recognized technical education institutions and fully funded by the company, equips women with the skills they need to pursue a career as electrical distribution network electricians upon completion.

### Impact highlights

- Female representation in the annual hiring of electricians increased from 1.7% in 2019 to 36.4% in 2024 (as of July).
- 76% of graduates of the training programme have secured stable employment with a full benefits package (including health and dental insurance, childcare and school care, and life insurance).
- 1,015 women have been trained through this programme.
- Share of women graduates of the company's mixed electrician school increased from 0% in 2013 to 3.8% 2024 (as of July).



## Key actions

### 1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

To meet the company's growing demand for qualified personnel, the company recognized a challenge: despite the simple criteria for enrolment in its mixed electrician school – minimum age of 18 years old, having a high school diploma and having a driver's license – acceptance by women has remained low, largely due to persistent social stereotypes. Taking advantage of the neglected potential of the female workforce was particularly relevant in the context of Brazil, where the unemployment rate is 7.4%<sup>10</sup> (6.6% for men and 9.7% for women), with an important factor being the lack of professional qualification. Women are also more likely to work in the informal economy, which offers less stability and no access to social protection.

### 2 Meaningful definition of success

Given the low representation of women in the sector, the company has set goals of at least 12% of women working as electricians by 2030 (almost triple the representation that existed in 2021, when the goal was set), and women making up 35% of graduates of its mixed-gender electrician school (as of July 2024, the share is 3.8%).

### 3 Accountable and invested business leaders

Addressing the underrepresentation of women in the energy sector has been identified as a strategic priority for Iberdrola. The company's global CEO appointed a Global Diversity and Inclusion Committee, composed of senior management members from different countries and business areas, which sets short- and long-term gender representation goals, linking them to executive compensation. At the local level, in line with Iberdrola's commitment to this cause and the proven impact of the initiative, the programme has been incorporated into the company's budget for the next editions.

### 4 Solution designed for context

To increase the representation of women among electricians, the company has developed solutions that address the root causes of the disparities. In collaboration with technical education institutions, the company launched women-only electrician school in the states of Bahia, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, São Paulo, Mato Grosso do Sul and Brasília, areas where the acceptance of women for electricians was traditionally low.

The schools provide training to equip women with the skills they need to pursue a career as an electrician and in the electric power system, in a welcoming and safe environment for women. Before the programme, male representation in the field was so pronounced that the company had to make physical adjustments to the facilities, such as installing women's toilets and changing rooms. The company also adapted uniforms and personal protective equipment to better accommodate women students.

In addition, the company has engaged with local media, NGOs and neighbourhood associations to increase the visibility of the programme. One key strategy involved

depicting women in electricians' uniforms to help normalize the idea of women entering the field. As more women joined the company's workforce after graduating from the training programme, the company expanded its efforts to raise awareness of compliance guidelines aimed at preventing and addressing behaviours that violated its code of conduct.

### 5 Rigorous tracking and course correction

The three main indicators used to track the effectiveness of the programme are the number of women trained, the number of women hired, and the percentage of women hired.<sup>11</sup> The company has been monitoring these indicators in both women-only schools and mixed schools. They noted that co-educational school enrolment has increased as the stereotype of electricians as an exclusively male profession is slowly fading. Given this trend, it is likely that women-only schools will not be needed in the future. To ensure rigorous monitoring and continuous improvement, Iberdrola's Global Sustainability Committee monitors progress every six months and Iberdrola Group publicly discloses the results in its annual global reports, such as the *Sustainability Report* and the *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report*.

## Advice for others and next area of focus

The company's future efforts will continue to focus on reducing the gender gap in the energy sector, with the aim of meeting its targets by 2025. To achieve a sustained impact, the company advises ensuring that senior executives publicly express their support for the programme, demonstrating its importance to the company. Additionally, partnering with local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can help maximize the impact of the initiative, while aligning the programme's objectives with the company's broader goals will ensure its long-term success.

# Jerónimo Martins

Internal and external effort

Inclusion for people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, and people at social risk

**Economic empowerment for people from disadvantaged backgrounds through upskilling and opportunity creation.**

## Company stats

- More than 134,300 employees
- \$33.22 billion in revenue
- Europe and Latin America, headquartered in Lisbon, Portugal
- Retail and Wholesale of Consumer Goods

## Initiative context and objective

In 2015, Jerónimo Martins launched the Incluir Programme to enhance the employability of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds – including those with cognitive or physical disabilities, migrants and refugees, and people exposed to social risk – in terms of access to the labour market. This multifaceted initiative offers customized training: two weeks of recruitment followed by six months of on-the-job training tailored to each participant's profile to help each individual secure regular employment within the company after programme completion. Additionally, the programme includes leadership training for tutors to support the participants and makes workplace adjustments whenever needed.

## Impact highlights

- 1,709 programme participants since 2015.
- 47% of trainees hired after completion of the programme in 2023.
- Over 2,827 tutors trained on how to develop the potential of people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Over 100 partnerships built with NGOs specializing in social inclusion.
- Over 500 technical adaptations to the company's facilities to accommodate people with disabilities.
- Two state-of-the-art training centres; "school stores" in Lisbon and Porto provided tailored training to 253 people in 2023.

## Key actions

### 1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

As part of its broader objective to become the most inclusive retail chain, Jeronimo Martins identified three groups of people who are significantly disadvantaged in accessing the labour market: people with a disability or impairment, migrants and refugees, and individuals exposed to social risk. When investigating the root causes, Jeronimo Martins found that each group faced specific barriers: for people with disabilities, there are persistent misconceptions from employers about their ability to perform a job; migrants, refugees and those at social risk are often stigmatized as, for example, people recovered from alcohol or drug dependency.

To address these challenges, the company partnered with over 100 NGOs specializing in different fields of social inclusion to gain deeper insights into the unique needs of each target population. They also conducted interviews and surveys with the target groups to identify the specific support and skills needed to facilitate access to the labour market. As one of the largest employers in Portugal, with diverse skill requirements, Jeronimo Martins was well-positioned to bridge this economic gap through a targeted upskilling and recruitment programme.

### 2 Meaningful definition of success

Jeronimo Martins aims to be the most inclusive retailer in the markets where they operate. To support this vision, the company has set ambitious, company-wide objectives to increase representation of people with disabilities in the workforce, setting these goals annually. To ensure employee engagement and contribute to mindset shifts, the company has developed a tutorship model that trains leaders to appreciate individual differences, as well as the unique attributes and abilities of each person. This programme aligns with Jeronimo Martins' mission to become a benchmark employer.

### 3 Accountable and invested business leaders

Jeronimo Martin's Chairman and CEO and the General Directors of each company in Portugal form the leadership team sponsoring the programme. This programme takes a whole-of-business approach, involving various departments – such as HR, Health and Safety, Operations, and Marketing – at varying levels. Additionally, all Operations leaders are trained as programme tutors, serving as role models to inspire other employees to participate in the training.

Additionally, the company invested in a dedicated internalized team of professionals to oversee the skill development for each candidate. Team members focus on adapting each workplace and learning path to emphasize the candidate's abilities, rather than any potential limitations.

### 4 Solution designed for context

Jeronimo Martins has developed a two-stage training methodology tailored to the needs of these populations. The first stage, in the classroom, focuses on developing behavioural skills and performing operational tasks in a safe

and comfortable environment for trainees using simulated stores. The second stage involves on-the-job training, with the support of tutors and the inclusion team, made up of social reintegration technicians who specialize in preparing and integrating such people. After completing these two stages, trainees are ready to be employed. These training opportunities are advertised on the company's career portal, where a recruitment team assesses applicants based on competencies, motivation and fit with existing vacancies. If selected, candidates receive a personalized learning and onboarding plan. Upon programme completion, and if they demonstrated a strong performance, participants are encouraged to apply for a regular position within any of the group's companies. The entire training programme is paid by the company.

Jeronimo Martins built two state-of-the-art training centres with school stores serving the hiring needs of the northern and southern areas of the country. These centres are designed with various impairments in mind, featuring accessibility adaptations like readable signage and fonts for individuals with low vision or dyslexia, tactile surfaces, Braille text, colour coding, and headphones for individuals with autism, among other inclusive features.

### 5 Rigorous tracking and course correction

Jeronimo Martins rigorously tracks the effectiveness of the programme (whether the participants benefited from the intended outcome) by looking at the retention rate.<sup>12</sup> The company also keeps track of turnover, absenteeism, and both participant and employer feedback, including through one-on-one check-ins and performance evaluations at two points during the traineeship (middle and end of the programme).

Additionally, the company's technical team continuously monitors each candidate's development after they transition into other roles within the group. Based on these indicators, improvements have been made to enhance the programme experience, resulting in a declining turnover rate, which reached 7% in 2024.

## Advice for others and next area of focus

Guided by the principle that “there are no people without capacities, only people without opportunities,” Jeronimo Martins Incluir Program offers comprehensive support to develop skills and create pathways for the social and professional integration of vulnerable populations.

The company advises:

- Creation of a true inclusive culture and leadership, in which leaders are committed to embrace difference as an added value and sponsor the programme, demonstrating total commitment to agreed goals
- Development of an internal on-the-job training process supported through a tutorship model
- Partnership Network: organizations supporting candidate recruitment and training processes

Internal effort  
Gender parity

**Supporting the professional development of women through a variety of actions based on three pillars: gender parity in key positions, salary equity and stronger networks for women within the company.**

#### Company stats

- 213,000 employees
- \$93.3 billion in annual revenue
- Global, headquartered in Paris, France
- Production of Consumer Goods

#### Initiative context and objective

LVMH has a long-standing commitment to promoting gender equity, having launched its EllesVMH initiative in 2007 to take concrete actions toward this goal. The initiative was conceived when the company recognized an imbalance in leadership roles, despite women comprising the majority of its workforce. Initially focused on achieving 50% representation of women in key positions, the initiative evolved in 2018 to encompass two additional pillars: 1) ensure global salary equity, and 2) support the professional development of women through the company's vast network.

To meet these goals, LVMH has implemented a combination of effective measures, including updated HR policies focused on succession planning and inclusive hiring, coaching programmes, local employee resource groups, annual gender pay-gap audits, and a state-of-the-art networking platform. The company also introduced an AI-powered mentorship platform, aiming to create the world's largest mentorship network by leveraging LVMH's professional community.

#### Impact highlights

Three main pillars that mutually reinforce each other.

#### PARITY

- Representation of women in key positions grew from 23% to 48% since 2007.
- 65% of the company's managers are women.
- Number of female CEOs increased from 0 to 17 since 2007.
- Number of women on the executive committee increased from 1 to 3 since 2007.

## **SALARY EQUITY**

- Ensuring and monitoring salary equity globally through annual audit.
- The Professional Equality Index Men - Women (France only) increased from 91.3 in 2020 to 93.3 in 2023.

## **TRANSMISSION (strengthening networks)**

- 14 local EllesVMH employee networks added: Australia/New Zealand; China; France; Hong Kong/Macau; Italy; Japan; Singapore; South Korea; Spain/Portugal; Switzerland; Taiwan, China; United Kingdom; United States/Canada; Middle East.
- Career development platform, with career stories, self-development tools and a space for networks to connect with each other and EllesVMH Collective.
- EllesVMH Collective, LVMH's digital mentoring programme supporting women's career development, now connects everyone with over 5,000 enrolled employees.
- CEO Women's Luncheon, launched with EllesVMH, continues.



## Key actions

### 1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

In 2007, LVMH conducted an initial assessment of gender balance within its workforce. The analysis revealed that while over 70% of the company's employees were women, only 23% of key positions were held by them. The main challenges identified included a lack of career development conversations and opportunities, insufficient collaboration between female senior and junior staff across different business units and regions, and unconscious bias hindering women's progression. LVMH recognized the importance of representing diverse talent at all levels within the company. Externally, it was equally crucial to demonstrate this commitment to gender parity in the markets where LVMH operates, aligning with the diverse, and predominantly female clientele across more than 80 countries.

### 2 Meaningful definition of success

LVMH set a clear ambition to reach gender parity among key positions by 2025, as well as ensuring salary equity globally and launching the largest corporate networking community in the world supporting women's careers.

### 3 Accountable and invested business leaders

This initiative has been established as a core business priority, supported by the highest levels of leadership, including the entire Executive Committee members of the Group. It is overseen by the Diversity and Inclusion team, which reports directly to the Executive Committee. The company's female CEOs actively contribute to promoting gender equity globally and take on mentoring roles across various programmes. LVMH hosts the annual Women CEO Lunch, bringing together female CEOs and senior leaders to foster community building, shared learning and mentorship. Each CEO also brings one guest to reflect a spirit of sisterhood and solidarity.

### 4 Solution designed for context

To achieve its targets, LVMH has been developing solutions that address the root causes of the imbalances since 2007 when it initially launched the EllesVMH initiative. First, LVMH reviewed its HR strategy, focusing on identifying gender gaps per level, implementing corrective measures and ensuring women's representation in succession planning. This also included embedding inclusive hiring practices and offering group-wide training programmes.

Additionally, the company launched an internal digital platform aimed at empowering women's careers with resources such as: 1) self-development courses on personal branding, entrepreneurial mindset, negotiation skills and career growth; 2) information on gender equity events taking place globally; and 3) digital spaces for the company's 14 local networks, enabling over 10,000 employees to build a supportive community. Furthermore, LVMH recently introduced a global mentoring programme, EllesVMH Collective, across all business functions, regions and brands. This AI-powered digital platform matches participants based on their expertise and interests, fostering meaningful connections that transcend the organizational silos. With over 5,000 participants

already enrolled, the programme aims to become the world's largest mentoring network, expanding access to mentorship opportunities that have a proven impact on career growth and mobility.

### 5 Rigorous tracking and course correction

To measure success and track progress, LVMH uses a key metric, percentage of women in key positions. This is closely tracked annually by the Diversity and Inclusion team, which maintains close communication with each brands' D&I representatives and local Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), which can intensify efforts if progress towards parity falls behind. Additionally, to ensure salary equity between genders, the company conducts an annual global audit to measure gender pay gaps and incorporates some market-specific metrics like spending of diverse suppliers in the United States and the Professional Equality Index in France.

## Advice for others and next area of focus

LVMH emphasizes the importance of strong leadership commitment, conducting regular audits to track progress, and pursuing both systemic change and individual talent development. The company also highlights the need to create regional networks that address local contexts and leverage digital platforms for broader engagement and support. Looking ahead, LVMH remains focused on achieving its 2025 goals, which include ensuring that 2% of its workforce consists of people with disabilities and attaining 30% representation of the Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC) community in key positions in the United States.

External effort

Gender parity in the green economy

**Empowering women through green skills training, investments in technical school upgrades, and support for female entrepreneurs in green ventures to drive the energy transition in Senegal, Mali and Niger.**

## Company stats

- 150,000 employees
- \$35.9 billion annual revenue
- Senegal, Mali and Niger; headquartered in Rueil-Malmaison, France
- Energy Technology and Utilities

## Initiative context and objective

In 2019, Schneider Electric and the Schneider Electric Foundation, in partnership with Plan International and a consortium of stakeholders, launched the Economic and Social Development of Women through Renewable Energies in the Sahel (DESFERS) initiative. This programme aims to empower women socioeconomically in rural areas across Senegal, Mali and Niger, where restrictive social norms and traditional gender roles often limit women's economic participation. This collaborative approach ensures building a strong ecosystem of support by leveraging collective expertise and specialized partnerships. DESFERS provides green skills training, investments in technical school upgrades and entrepreneurship support for women entering the region's growing renewable energy sector. The initiative is part of the Youth Education & Entrepreneurship programme and Schneider Electric's global commitment to train one million youth, especially women, to take part in the energy transition by the end of 2025.

## Impact highlights

- 7,204 women have received green skills training since 2021.
- 5,155 women-led green enterprises have been generated.
- 21,000 women gained improved access to renewable energy solutions and credit facilities.

## Key actions

### 1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

As part of its ambitious goal to train one million youth in energy management in developing countries by 2025, Schneider Electric recognizes that women bear a significant burden in securing food, water and fuel, as highlighted by UN Women. Despite this critical role, regional and global trends show that women remain underrepresented in the rapidly growing renewable energy sector. This disparity is driven by deeply-rooted gender norms and stereotypes that limit their access to the essential skills needed for employment and entrepreneurship in this transformative field.

To address this disparity, the Schneider Electric Foundation partnered with Plan International, an NGO, to identify the support and skills women need to tap into the renewable energy sector's potential in the Sahel. Schneider's expertise in renewable energy solutions and deep understanding of skills needed for the sector put them in an optimal position to promote women's economic empowerment through green skills training and the creation of green business opportunities.

### 2 Meaningful definition of success

Schneider's goal was to enhance women's role within the sustainable energy sector in Mali, Senegal and Niger, through targeted education, robust advocacy and dynamic entrepreneurship support. This initiative is part of a company-wide objective to train 1 million youths, especially girls, in energy management by 2025 in developing countries. To engage the whole organization in this ambitious mission, Schneider Electric articulated a clear case that emphasizes the connection between gender equality and climate action, showing how addressing gender imbalances through targeted training fosters innovation and builds a diverse, skilled workforce essential for a sustainable and equitable energy transition.

### 3 Accountable and invested business leaders

Training youth to meet the workforce demands of the energy transition has become a business priority for the company, closely linked to its goals of increasing women's representation in the energy sector and advancing the company's efforts towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, and 17. Schneider's senior leadership champions this initiative, designating it as part of the company's global KPIs, which are tied to variable compensation, making every employee and leader accountable for its success.

### 4 Solution designed for context

The programme partners developed solutions specific for the context of the Sahel region to promote sustainable energy access, with a strong emphasis on empowering women throughout the process. To begin, Schneider Electric launched an awareness campaign to highlight the importance of energy access, dispel myths about solar energy and emphasize women's crucial role in sustainable development. The initiative addressed the gender skills gap by training instructors at six centres to build local expertise, enabling them to pass on this

knowledge to women in rural communities. The topics included in the trainings were: renewable energy systems, functional literacy, business skills and entrepreneurship. All materials are provided in the local languages.

To boost green business creation, the initiative promotes financial inclusion and entrepreneurship by guiding women in submitting business plans to microfinance institutions, enabling them to develop income-generating activities and providing ongoing support for project development.

To ensure sustained impact, Schneider Electric invested in long-term infrastructure by upgrading training centres, equipping them with solar technology and residential electrical systems for hands-on learning. Microgrids were installed to provide reliable power to villages, fostering energy independence and resilience, with women leading installations and serving as role models.

### 5 Rigorous tracking and course correction

Schneider Electric established primary KPIs for the programme, focusing on the number of trainers, number of people trained (including the gender split of those trained) and the number of income-generating activities initiated by women supported by the programme. Data is collected quarterly and can be externally audited annually to ensure accountability and transparency. Recently, the company introduced a new methodology designed to measure the programme's long-term transformative effects on participants. This approach combines qualitative and quantitative metrics, including focus groups and beneficiary interviews, to evaluate participant progress before, during and after their involvement in the programme. The aim is to begin applying this new approach for DESFERS for the after-participation phase.

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### Advice for others and next area of focus

Schneider Electric's efforts in the future will continue to focus on education as it plays a pivotal role in supporting livelihoods and ensuring a just energy transition. The company firmly believes it is essential to prioritize training and skilling as a means of empowerment and capacity-building. Additionally, Schneider Electric underscores the importance of including women at every stage of the energy value chain, as their participation is key to fostering inclusivity and achieving a just energy transition.

# Teck Teck Resources

Internal and external effort  
Gender equality

**Creating respectful workplaces and increasing women's representation among the workforce through Inclusion Centers that provide a 24/7/365 safe space at mine sites, offering professional counseling support and promoting awareness of gender-based violence prevention, as well as overall wellness and inclusion.**

## Company stats

- 7,000+ employees
- \$10.8 billion in annual revenue
- Chile, United States (Alaska) and Canada (British Columbia), headquartered in Vancouver, Canada
- Metals and Mining

## Initiative context and objective

In 2022 and 2023, Teck Resources opened three Inclusion Centers at its operations in Chile, Alaska and British Columbia. These centres, available 24/7/365, offer professional counseling support, raise awareness to prevent, address and eradicate gender-based violence, provide a safe space for open dialogue for employees and contractors as well as well-being activities. The initiative was prompted by the recognition of the systemic barriers to a respectful workplace, and the need for a respectful and safe workplace for all in order to attract diverse talent. In Chile, this included a public commitment to achieving a goal of 30% women in the workforce at their Quebrada Blanca mine.

## Impact highlights

- More than 7,000 people, including employees and members of the broader community, have attended training sessions on prevention of sexual harassment, gender-based violence, sexual diversity and mental health.
- Women-identifying staff in mines in Chile increased from 16% in 2021 to 27% in 2023. In Alaska, the proportion increased from 20.7% in 2022 to 23.8% in 2024. The Centers are one of many interventions in the efforts to increase gender representation in the workforce.
- Over 150 people have approached the safe spaces to seek professional counselling support.

## Key actions

### 1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

As part of Teck's ongoing efforts to increase gender diverse representation in its workforce, the company identified a need to create an inclusive and safe workplace for all employees, while building awareness and preventing gender-based violence. Teck acknowledges the systemic barriers to employment in mining, including gender-based violence and mental health challenges, which often stem from harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal cultural norms. While addressing gender-based and all violence requires action beyond corporate initiatives alone, Teck is committed to creating a safe and welcoming workplace for all. This commitment includes fostering a culture of prevention, encouraging reporting and speaking up, and providing support for those affected.

### 2 Meaningful definition of success

The company committed to building a safe space at each of its mining sites and currently has three Inclusion Centers. A strong case was articulated for building these centers – considering that advancing health and safety, inclusion and respect are some of Teck's core values – that of emphasizing psychological safety and mental well-being. Additionally, to foster employee and community engagement as well as a sense of belonging, Teck integrated local culture into each centre. For example, the centre in Alaska is named "Qargi," an Iñupiat word for a traditional gathering place where community members learn survival skills from each other and from elders.

### 3 Accountable and invested business leaders

The executive leadership team at Teck has made workplace safety a core strategic objective, recognizing it as essential to operational success. The company has an Inclusive and Respectful Workplace Committee, chaired by the President and CEO, with members including the Chief Inclusion Officer, Chief Legal and Sustainability Officer, Chief Project Development Officer, Chief Sustainability Officer, and the Chief People Officer, to oversee the Respectful Workplace Policy and Standard, as well as the DEI Policy and Strategy. The Committee regularly reviews DEI performance and employees' respectful workplace perceptions. Teck's leadership team sponsors the Inclusion Centers initiative, recognizing it as key component of Teck's DEI strategy to enhance workplace safety and well-being at mine sites.

### 4 Solution designed for context

The company designed the Inclusion Centers with a focus on raising awareness to prevent, address and eliminate gender-based violence and advance employee wellness. While each centre has unique programming, all offer counseling support and awareness talks to educate the workforce. Employees on site can contact the centres for advice on workplace challenges, and each centre is equipped to handle crises. They also encourage employees to contribute by organizing events, proposing wellness activities, and suggesting safety and well-being topics for awareness talks. The awareness talks and training offered at the centres focus on building behaviours for a respectful workplace, and topics evolve as the centres gain employee feedback.

### 5 Rigorous tracking and course correction

Teck tracks the number of employees and community members who use each centre and seeks regular feedback from participants in activities. All staff are encouraged to provide input during the planning stages for programming activities and services. The centres also monitor the number of employee-led activities and the ideas that emerge to ensure engagement and a sense of belonging. Additionally, Teck assesses how the centres impact workplace safety and respect by monitoring the number of reported cases. So far, the company has seen an increase in reported cases, suggesting a stronger culture of speaking up against disrespect and greater trust in the process of addressing these issues. Furthermore, Teck conducts a biannual survey that measures related metrics, such as the safety of speaking up and perceptions of overall workplace respect.

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### Advice for others and next area of focus

Teck's advice for success includes leveraging and integrating local culture into the initiative, resourcing appropriately, and listening, learning, and adapting along the way to promote continuous improvement. As with all initiatives, leadership support and openness to having difficult conversations has been key.

What's next: Teck is working towards establishing more centres at other sites, while expanding the offerings at existing centres. This includes more employee-driven programming, bringing in community elders to share their knowledge and experience, and new topics for awareness talks around different aspects of mental health and wellness. Teck will continue to evolve and strengthen training and learning opportunities to empower everyone to foster a respectful workplace.





# Wipro

Internal effort  
Gender parity

**Increasing women representation in the workforce – especially in leadership and STEM positions – through a comprehensive strategy that supports women in a targeted way at every stage of their career.**

## Company stats

- 230,000 employees
- \$10.8 billion annual revenue in FY24
- Global, headquartered in Bengaluru, India
- Information and Technology Services

## Initiative context and objective

In 2008, Wipro launched the Women of Wipro initiative to advance gender equality within the company. This initiative adopts a life-stage-based approach, featuring a range of tailored programmes that address the unique needs of women at various career stages. For early careers, the initiative focuses on enhancing exposure; in the early-mid career stage, it emphasizes flexibility; and at the mid-senior management level, it prioritizes empowerment and confidence in leadership. By addressing the needs and expectations of women at each stage of their careers, Wipro aims to increase women representation, particularly in leadership and STEM roles.

## Impact highlights

- 18.7% of senior leadership positions are occupied by women in FY24, compared to 7.3% in FY21.
- Proportion of women leaving the workforce as they progress in their career dropped from 18% in FY21 to 7.9% in FY24.
- 23.9% of management positions are occupied by women in FY24, compared to 17.3% in FY21.
- Return-to-work rate of new mothers has been at 100% for FY21 and FY24.
- 93% of returning mothers mention having a positive experience during pre-maternity and after return to work.
- 80% of associates who joined Wipro through the programme for women seeking to relaunch their careers after a hiatus still work at the company.

## Key actions

### 1 Nuanced understanding of root causes

Wipro first publicly disclosed data on gender representation within its workforce in FY2011. This key milestone enabled the company to assess its current standing and identify gaps and areas for improvement. The initial report on gender representation showed that more than 70% of the workforce was men, a common trend in the Information and Technology sector. Wipro identified that this imbalance was further pronounced in specific areas within the company, such as STEM positions, client-facing roles and leadership positions.

In response, the company conducted consultations with its women employees to gather feedback. Some factors behind the imbalances were perceived biases in hiring and promotions processes, lack of exposure and support in the early stages of women's careers, lack of flexibility for women employees when they take motherhood responsibilities, and the limited availability of leadership development programmes for women uncertain about advancing to leadership roles.

Guided by the feedback from its women employees, Wipro launched the Women of Wipro programme, addressing the needs and aspirations of women professionals at each stage of their life and career.

### 2 Meaningful definition of success

Wipro has a clear objective of achieving gender parity. While it has not set a specific target year, Wipro describes its DEI journey as a continuous, step-by-step process, that focuses on fostering inclusion. To ensure employee engagement and contribute to mindset shifts, Wipro focused on raising awareness and deepening understanding of unconscious biases among its employees. Managers were also encouraged to engage in discussions on topics like allyship and inclusive leadership.

### 3 Accountable and invested business leaders

Wipro's executive leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to embedding DEI as a core business priority, recognizing the importance of fostering an inclusive and equitable culture where all employees are empowered to express themselves, grow and learn. Quarterly review of DEI and sustainability practices is a dedicated agenda for the Wipro Board of Directors. To drive this initiative, the company has established a governance structure with a Global DEI Council, led by the CEO. The CEO and the Wipro Executive Board also have quarterly discussions with mid-to-senior women professionals to hear their needs and concerns.

### 4 Solution designed for context

Recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution in DEI, Wipro designed a comprehensive strategy to support women during the three main stages of their careers, based on their unique needs.

## Stage 1: Early Career

Focuses on women in the early stages of their careers, aiming to fuel aspirations and provide exposure. In 2014, Wipro launched an Early Career Program for Women to increase career intentionality. Simultaneously, the company introduced career-mapping initiatives to help young women make informed choices about their career paths. Additionally, the HerCode programme, launched in 2020, equips women in tech with resources to learn new skills, connect with peers and gain experiences that will advance their careers.

## Stage 2: Early-Mid Career

Targets women in early to mid-career, focusing on flexibility and professional growth, especially for those navigating motherhood. For employees going on or returning from maternity leave, Wipro offers information resources, an employee resource group for returning mothers, and an e-learning module for mothers that covers the steps from pregnancy announcement to the return-to-work transition. This module also includes guidance for managers on facilitating a smooth transition for returning mothers. Furthermore, Wipro launched the Begin Again programme, which supports women seeking to relaunch their careers after a hiatus, whether for motherhood, caregiving, travel or personal reasons. The programme includes structured learning and a buddy system for a smooth transition.

## Stage 3: Mid-Senior Management

Targets mid-senior women professionals, focusing on empowering experienced employees to lead with confidence through mentorship and sponsorship programmes that strengthen the pipeline of women leaders.

With their success, these initiatives will be extended to support other underrepresented communities.

### 5 Rigorous tracking and course correction

The company developed an internal DEI dashboard to provide an overview of DEI trends across the organization, reviewed quarterly by the Global DEI Council, led by the CEO. Since the initiative's inception in 2008, it has continuously evolved, adding new programmes and refining existing ones. This data-driven approach is further strengthened by ongoing feedback from women employees.

## Advice for others and next area of focus






Wipro's guidance for achieving sustained impact is grounded in leadership commitment and accountability. Regular discussions with leadership teams on gender bias, unconscious stereotypes and the importance of gender inclusion are essential to breaking down barriers and fostering a more inclusive workplace culture.

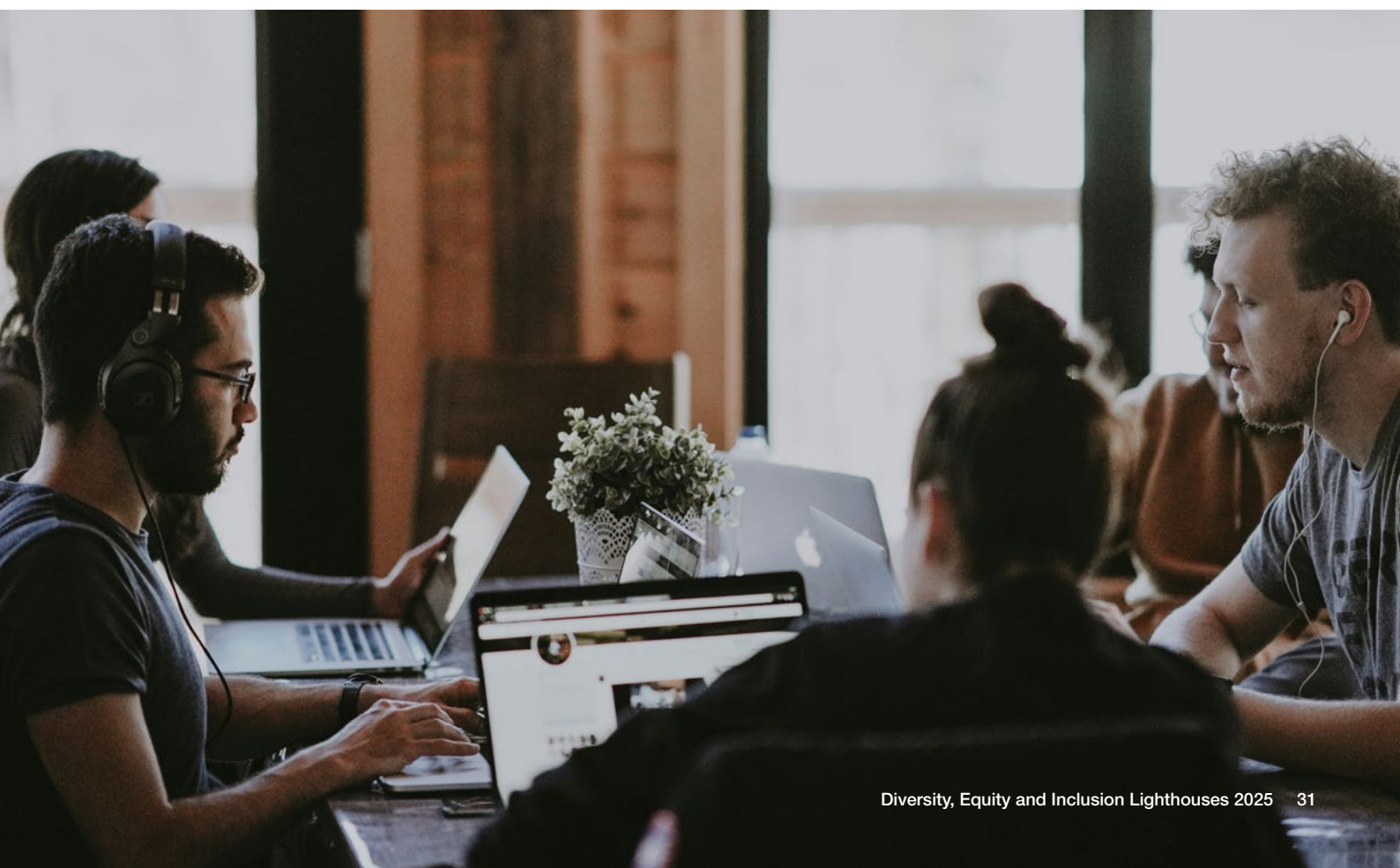
## 2.2 | Highlights

The expert panel further highlighted seven “stand-out” design and execution approaches from seven other submissions. Initiative context, objective

and a snapshot of the approach in practice are synthesized in the following section.

TABLE 3 Highlights: initiative design and execution

Organization	Highlighted principle
 BCG	Driving community development through entrepreneurship and ecosystem building.
 ifood	Increasing safety and respect for delivery workers, combatting systemic racism.
 Movistar Colombia	Tracking and socializing positive productivity impact of female hires in the Telecommunications sector.
 REGENERON	Building trust with people of African ancestry to participate in genomics research and to become researchers; both efforts will build more diversity in the genetic databases being studied today and increase the scientific talent pipeline for equitable medical research.
 SIEMENS	Using a holistic business approach to accelerate gender equity.
 standard chartered	Redefining the concept of family in employee benefits to be inclusive of the LGBTQI+ community.
 Suade	Embedding DEI into business models, from start-up stage, despite disproportionate up-front investment in early life of the company.





# Boston Consulting Group

External effort

Pro-bono entrepreneurship and supplier diversity consulting

Minority- and women-owned businesses (MWBs)

## Highlighted principle

Driving community development through entrepreneurship and ecosystem building.

## Initiative context and objective

In 2016, Boston Consulting Group (BCG) launched BCG Spark to address structural inequities, scale small and minority- and women-owned business enterprises (MWBs) and accelerate economic development through entrepreneurship. BCG Spark provides pro-bono consulting on business challenges and connects small to mid-sized businesses with market leaders looking to diversify their supply chains. Additionally, it partners with corporate, government, nonprofit and educational institutions to enable collaboration with underrepresented entrepreneurs on their key business issues.

To date, BCG Spark has worked with over 175 entrepreneurs across industries including retail, sustainable housing, entertainment, healthcare, agriculture and financial technology. Collectively, these businesses have raised more than \$600 million in funding and generated over \$100 million in additional revenue. Notably, over 90% of participating businesses remain active and continue to grow. Additionally, many alumni entrepreneurs return to network, mentor, and share their experiences, enriching the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## Highlight in practice

BCG empowers small, minority, and women-owned businesses through its Spark programme, while assisting established companies to increase resilience and broaden their supplier bases. The initiative provides tailored engagement models, mentorship and life cycle support that enable entrepreneurs to scale their businesses efficiently. Simultaneously, BCG helps market leaders allocate resources effectively to maximize impact while increasing their spend with a diverse range of suppliers.

Beyond fostering investment in entrepreneurship, BCG nurtures long-term partnerships between these businesses and established suppliers, creating economic opportunities while promoting inclusion and equity. This approach not only uplifts underrepresented communities but also drives sustainable growth and contributes to a more inclusive and resilient economy. BCG's commitment to this mission is underscored by its considerable impact, having facilitated the creation of more than one thousand new jobs and contributing to more robust economic systems.

Looking ahead, BCG plans to expand the Spark programme both domestically and internationally, utilizing a multi-faceted strategy centred on partnerships, education and technology. This expansion aims to further enhance its inclusive ecosystem and deepen impact in underrepresented communities and the broader economy.







## iFood

### Internal and external effort Anti-discrimination programme Racial and ethnic equity

#### Highlighted principle

Campaign to increase safety and respect for delivery workers, combatting systemic racism.

#### Initiative context and objective

iFood, Brazil's leading food delivery platform, has launched a series of anti-discrimination initiatives to address the high levels of discrimination and violence experienced by its delivery drivers, many of whom come from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. The initiative is built around three pillars to systematically address the discriminations and violence faced by food delivery drivers on both sides: preventing conflicts by raising customers' awareness, offering racial literacy training for food delivery workers to help them recognize aggressions suffered, and offering legal and psychological support to drivers when incidents occur.

#### Highlight in practice

A key component of iFood's anti-discrimination initiatives is the #BoraDescer campaign, which encourages customers to meet their delivery drivers at the entrance as an act of kindness and respect for the professionals handling daily

deliveries. The campaign was first launched in Rio de Janeiro, where disputes over delivery locations had been a major source of conflict between customers and drivers. To maximize visibility, iFood introduced the initiative during the city's largest cultural event, Carnival, drawing attention from the broader public. iFood also enlisted celebrities and influencers to promote the campaign on social media, emphasizing that when customers meet drivers at the entrance, it shows respect and appreciation for their role without placing extra demands on them.

Between November 2023 and September 2024, iFood participated in 30 events to support this campaign with building managers to make them aware of the idea and the importance of changing the condominium rules. The company estimates that the campaign has reached over 17 million people, resulting in a 64% reduction in conflicts within only six months.

In June 2023, iFood also opened a centre dedicated to providing legal and psychological support for delivery workers, further diversifying its strategy and reinforcing its commitment to building a more respectful and inclusive community.





# Movistar Colombia

Internal effort

Women in Network programme

Gender equity, women empowerment

## Highlighted principle

Tracking and socializing positive productivity impact of female hires in the telecommunications sector.

## Initiative context and objective

Movistar Colombia launched its Mujeres en Red (Women in Network) programme with the goal of increasing female participation in technical roles within the Telecommunication sector. This includes positions in network deployment and technical customer service, including fixed network installation and maintenance. The programme not only provides specialized technical training for women who are interested in technical fields but also focuses on enhancing their soft skills and interpersonal abilities, equipping them for future career growth. These women have the potential to serve as role models and catalysts for change, inspiring progress within their communities and across generations.

Originally launched in Peru in 2020, the programme expanded to Colombia in 2021. Since then, Movistar Colombia, along with its 10 contracting companies, have actively promoted female employability. In just three years, the number of women in technical roles has tripled, growing from 240 to over 600, now representing around 12% of the total technical workforce.

## Highlight in practice

Movistar Colombia is actively encouraging more women to join its Women in Network programme, which requires

applicants to have completed secondary school and demonstrate an interest in technical roles. The programme offers employability opportunities to succeed in a traditionally male-dominated field.

The company has been closely tracking the programme's outcomes, and the results indicate that hiring women for technical roles has a positive impact on social equity, productivity and team performance. A more gender-balanced technical workforce has also increased customer satisfaction, as reflected in the Net Satisfaction Index, which has averaged 90.2% for women so far in 2024 – exceeding both the global average (88.1%) and the score for men (88%) – while promoting a more collaborative and positive work environment.

Movistar Colombia believes that female technicians performing on-site interventions challenge stereotypes about women's capacity to succeed in technical roles, reshaping industry perceptions. The programme is complemented by comprehensive training across three areas: technical, practical and emotional. The technical area includes training on digital tools, purchasing and maintenance processes, and workplace safety. The practical area includes field visits to learn about equipment installation and configuration. The emotional area emphasizes gender equality, offering workshops on "Female Empowerment" for women, and "New Masculinities" and "Unconscious Bias" for male technicians to foster inclusivity. Over 4,000 people have benefited from this comprehensive training programme.





**Highlighted principle**

Building trust with people of African ancestry to participate in genomics research and to become researchers. This will build more diversity in the genetic databases being studied today and increase the scientific talent pipeline for equitable medical research.

**Initiative context and objective**

In 2023, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. lead the launch of Together for CHANGE, a 10-year initiative driven by the Diaspora Human Genomics Institute (DHGI), in partnership with Meharry Medical College, AstraZeneca, Novo Nordisk and Roche/Genentech. The initiative aims to address long-standing disparities in health education and genomics research for individuals of African ancestry.

Its two main objectives are to create the world’s largest genotype-phenotype database of people of African ancestry, sequencing the genomes of 500,000 participants across the United States, Africa and the Caribbean to support future medical advancements, and to increase the representation of Black researchers in life sciences through newly funded empowerment programmes at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and at institutions across Africa.

**Highlight in practice**

Cultural differences and historical mistreatment in U.S. research and clinical trials have long been thought to be significant barriers to participation in health research for people of African ancestry. To address these challenges, the Together for CHANGE initiative is being spearheaded by

Meharry Medical College, an HBCU with nearly 150 years of dedication to health sciences, to demonstrate a commitment to the benefits of Black communities. Together, they launched a new non-profit to oversee governance of the initiative: the Diaspora Human Genomics Institute, chartered by Meharry. The DHGI and its newly formed Board of Directors manages the initiative and all associated funded activities.

To bring Together for CHANGE to life, the four corporate partners contribute \$20 million each to fund two parts of the initiative: 1) grants to support STEM education and training programmes, and 2) a genomics study of 500,000 participants of African ancestry. The DHGI oversees genomic and health record data collection and retains ownership of all data; corporate partners can only access the database for internal R&D. Notably, Regeneron will also support by providing in-kind genomic sequencing of all participants via the Regeneron Genetics Center®. With the DHGI having data ownership, the initiative can empower other scientists – including scientists at HBCUs as well as scientists in academic institutions in Africa and the Caribbean – to leverage this unique genomic database to advance their research careers and to directly impact the health of their communities. Building trust and partnerships with Black communities is thus critical for both participation and for communicating the benefits of genomics research to these communities to ensure they are not left behind.

In June 2024, Regeneron partnered with MoreThanNow, a behavioural science organization based in the United Kingdom, to launch an innovative life sciences study aimed at understanding African Americans’ levels of trust in genomics research. This experiment, which includes 3,500 African American participants, is designed to provide insights into messages that may influence African American participation in genomic research.



**Highlighted principle**

Using a holistic business approach to accelerate gender equity.

**Initiative context and objective**

In 2022, Siemens launched its global Gender Equity Program to advance gender equity systematically across its entire organization. Spanning more than 160 countries, this programme encompasses all Siemens’ businesses and functions, with a concentrated focus on 17 countries that account for 90% of Siemens’ total workforce. Ownership lies with the top 35 CEOs in these countries and businesses who are accountable for business-led action, progress and longevity.

Supporting these efforts, Siemens has established regular communication channels across organizational levels to ensure continuous collaboration and keep all employees informed about the gender equity progress, fostering a culture of inclusivity and global awareness. Through targeted actions in equitable hiring for business functions, equitable promotions to management, and increasing representation of women in top management, Siemens is seeing steady progress at all levels. At the top management level, for example, representation is now very pronounced, with women comprising one-third of Siemens’ top leadership globally.

Looking ahead, Siemens’ vision extends far beyond numbers, as the company aims to build an environment where every individual, regardless of gender, can thrive.

**Highlight in practice**

Siemens’ global Gender Equity Program is endorsed by the Siemens Managing Board and spearheaded by its Global DEI Office, with direct support from an interdisciplinary team – covering data analytics, talent acquisition, employer branding and succession planning. Given the company’s extensive global presence and diversity of operations, local leaders play a crucial role in contextualizing gender equity initiatives to reflect regional nuances, with accountability for achieving respective gender equity ambitions in their local markets and industries.

The programme takes a data-driven approach to monitoring KPIs, using a global dashboard with quarterly updates accessible to all CEOs, business leaders, the HR community and the Siemens Managing Board. Using common metrics to measure global progress, a fact-based dialogue throughout the organization is facilitated, enabling Siemens to make informed adjustments.

Transparency and visibility are essential to Siemens’ success in advancing gender equity. A broad array of communication initiatives – including roadshows, Q&A sessions and town hall meetings – take place around the world. Siemens also maintains a SharePoint resource with gender equity data, stories and videos accessible to all employees.



### Highlighted principle

Redefining the concept of family in employee benefits to be inclusive of the LGBTQI+ community.

### Initiative context and objective

In September 2023, Standard Chartered launched a global parental leave policy as part of its commitment to fostering an inclusive culture that enables employees to balance personal responsibilities with career growth. This policy, introduced across more than 50 countries, primarily in Africa, Asia and the Middle East – regions where gender-neutral parental leave benefits are often uncommon – establishes a minimum of 20 weeks of paid leave for all new parents.

Regardless of gender, relationship status or the way a child joins an employee's family, the policy is designed to challenge social norms around traditional childcare expectations (which places primary caregiving responsibilities mainly on women) and also advocates for all parents to be extended the same rights. By implementing this policy, Standard Chartered directly provides benefits to approximately 5.5% of its global workforce in any given year and aspires to set a notable example that encourages broader industry progress toward a more inclusive society.

### Highlight in practice

Implementing this global parental leave policy at Standard Chartered involved considerable effort, given the diverse

social and cultural landscapes and legal environments across its footprint. The Group gathered feedback through various channels, including surveys, focus groups and one-on-one discussions with several market CEOs, to shape and co-create the policy. Local champions were also enlisted to advocate for the policy's benefits. These conversations addressed both practical concerns, such as maintaining productivity and ensuring operational continuity, and deeper philosophical considerations, such as whether the policy would have the intended effect of promoting women's participation in the workplace. In cases where competing priorities or constraints arose, senior leaders were encouraged to prioritize the global parental leave enhancement, where the Group was committed to be consistently visible in its advocacy and action. It is a testament to the Standard Chartered's brand promise, "here for good", that, despite the varied perspectives, all stakeholders came together to successfully implement the policy simultaneously across all locations.

The Group now tracks several indicators, including birth rates, parental leave utilization and employee retention to monitor the effectiveness of the policy. As of the policy's one-year milestone, early data suggests positive impacts, showing an average parental leave usage of approximately 10 weeks<sup>14</sup> among fathers (~50%), up from two weeks prior to the policy's launch. Equally, it also reinforces that policy changes are a stepping stone to effecting cultural change. Further strides still need to be made to close the gender gap; compared with the ~50% utilization by fathers, mothers are utilizing close to their full entitlement (at an average of 21 weeks<sup>15</sup>).





#### Highlighted principle

Building DEI into business models from the start-up stage, despite disproportionate up-front investment in early life of the company.

#### Initiative context and objective

Suade Labs, a regulatory technology provider for financial institutions, introduced comprehensive parental leave policies within two years of its incorporation, as part of its commitment to gender equity and work-life balance. The company offers up to 12 months of maternity leave, with the first four months fully paid, and provides flexibility for employees to split their leave into multiple periods if they choose. For paternity leave, Suade Labs offers up to six months, with the first two months fully paid.

Implementing these enhanced parental leave policies presents significant financial challenges for a technology company in its early stages, as was the case for Suade Labs. However, the company believes the long-term benefits – such as improved employee satisfaction, increased productivity and stronger talent retention and attraction – make it a worthwhile investment.

#### Highlight in practice

Suade Labs launched its parental leave policies after benchmarking best practices and gathering employee feedback through surveys and focus groups – pioneering implementation for the start-up/ scale-up stage. To keep employees informed, the company communicates these policies via the handbook, intranet and informational sessions, and provides manager training to foster a supportive culture. The parental leave policies are also accompanied by programmes supporting smooth transitions back to work, such as flexible hours and remote options.

The CEO, Chief of Staff and Head of HR oversee the policies, with quarterly progress updates provided to the board. Since the 2016 launch, utilization rates of parental leave among eligible employees have grown from 30% to 85%, with job satisfaction rising 30%. Women now comprise 40% of senior leadership, double the industry average. Suade Labs also advocates for government-supported parental leave and childcare, working with the UK government to promote these initiatives.



# Appendix

## The DEI Lighthouse Programme

The Centre for the New Economy and Society (CNES) created the DEI Lighthouse Programme to identify and showcase proven methodologies and practical insights from peer organizations that can help others accelerate their DEI efforts. Lighthouses come from around the world, across industries and span a wide range of diversity, equity and/or inclusion goals. The focus of Lighthouse cases spans employees, suppliers, customers and/or the broader community, and can address any underrepresented group (e.g. gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQI+, people with disabilities or intersectional identities).

### Submission and selection process

To become a Lighthouse, companies progress through three stages:

1. **Written submission:** organizations submit a written description of their initiative, sharing information on their overall DEI context and initiative-specific actions, impact and findings.
2. **Follow-up call:** organizations whose submissions fulfil the minimum requirements join a call with the Forum's DEI team for a consultation on their case. As minimum requirements, the World Economic Forum asks submissions to be complete and address the four dimensions of impact laid out in the selection criteria.
3. **Expert panel selection:** the Forum DEI team synthesizes and anonymizes all cases, which are reviewed by an independent expert panel. Each panellist individually scores submissions against criteria in a pre-established evaluation rubric and then jointly determines which cases become a Lighthouse.

#### Independent expert panel

The independent panel of DEI experts was appointed by CNES. The five DEI experts were unaffiliated with participating organizations and brought a diverse range of expertise and perspectives.

The members of the 2025 DEI Lighthouse Programme panel were as follows:

- **Caroline Casey** is the co-founder, creator and activist behind the Valuable 500, the world's largest CEO collective and business movement for disability inclusion. As well as her title of President of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, Caroline also sits on several diversity and inclusion boards and is a highly requested speaker around the world.
- **Liz Broderick** is a former independent expert at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UN special rapporteur) focused on issues related to discrimination against women and girls. She is the founder and principal of an Australia-based specialist consultancy that works to improve gender equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as cultural renewal. Elizabeth is also founder of the Champions of Change Coalition, a not-for-profit enterprise working with 270 CEOs and their organizations to embed everyday respect and inclusion.
- **Porter Braswell** is the Founder and CEO of 2045 Studio, an inclusive leadership development company. Additionally, he is a Managing Director at True Search, a global executive search firm.
- **Dominic Arnall** is the Chief Executive Officer of Open for Business, a coalition of leading global companies dedicated to LGBTQI+ inclusion. With extensive experience in the civil society sector, he was previously CEO of Just Like Us, a LGBTQI+ charity for young people and also Chair for Mind Out, an LGBTQI+ mental health organization
- **Luana Génot** is an award-winning leader and social entrepreneur passionate about inclusion. She is a board member, writer and the CEO of Identities Institute of Brazil, an organization working throughout Brazil and Latin America to support companies, government agencies and third-sector organizations with anti-racist education, affirmative action and AI for diversity, equity and inclusion.

#### Initiative evaluation rubric

The initiative evaluation rubric included four equally weighted criteria and guiding scores. Each criterion was individually scored on a scale of zero to three. All Lighthouses had to have at least two scores of three, no scores of zero and no more than one score of one. The four criteria were:

1. **Significance:** magnitude of impact, including: change against a baseline; number of people affected relative to the size of the target population and/or the organization's size; and degree of transformative impact on the

target group(s).

2. **Quantifiability:** use of metrics to assess impact, including: a clear definition of the metrics; regularity of tracking; and use of metrics towards driving accountability.
3. **Scalability:** future impact potential within or beyond the organization, including: the set-up of the initiative; future targets; definition of the path forward; and whether the initiative has already reached its full scale in terms of its impact.
4. **Sustainability:** potential for the initiative to drive long-term impact in the organization, including the length of time the initiative has been running and the structure and governance of the initiative.

## Common success factors across DEI Lighthouse initiatives

The DEI Lighthouse Programme identified five common success factors across the initiatives that yielded the most significant, scalable, quantifiable and sustained impact for underrepresented groups. While these is no “one-size-fits-all” solution, these elements can help set up an organization’s DEI initiatives for success.

### Five common success factors across DEI Lighthouse initiatives

#### 1. Nuanced understanding of root causes

It is important to start by identifying the company’s DEI-related challenges and the associated root causes, to inform opportunity prioritization, goal-setting and solution design.

- Understand the problem with a deep fact base: Start with a broad assessment of the organization to identify potential problem areas and any geographic- or segment-specific nuances. For example, an organization may begin with a company-wide survey on employee experience and inclusion and an analysis of its talent pipeline.
- Identify the root causes: Assess potential problem areas through deeper data analysis and employee focus groups to identify what causes the issue and what changes are required. Root causes likely include a combination of internal barriers (such as organizational policies) and external barriers (such as cultural beliefs).
- Get input from the target population, initially and throughout: It is critical that DEI initiatives are shaped by the voices of the target population without burdening those individuals with the work. At the start of the process, solicit input through surveys, user interviews and focus groups. During the design and piloting processes, continue to seek input from the

target population to test and refine the solution.

- Prioritize and sequence problem areas: Many areas for improvement may be identified, but not everything can be effectively addressed at once. Prioritize and sequence opportunity areas – for example, by considering impact versus feasibility and urgency versus importance. Maximize potential impact by considering your organization’s core competencies and unique positioning.

#### 2. Meaningful definition of success

Setting clear, measurable goals and effectively communicating the rationale behind the DEI effort will guide the initiative and help galvanize support for change.

- Set clear and quantifiable aspirations (what and by when): After prioritizing an opportunity area, define success by setting measurable near- and long-term goals. To understand what is feasible, engage a cross-functional, diverse team well-versed in the strengths and needs of the organization. This process should be informed by the fact base developed through root-cause analysis as described under the first success factor (i.e. nuanced understanding of root causes).
- Articulate a clear case for change that moves employees to action: The case for change sets out why the organization is focusing on the effort and connects the rationale to the company’s values, mission, business outcomes and “what’s in it for me” at each level of the organization. This helps employees understand what to expect and serves as a call to action.

#### 3. Accountable and invested business leaders

Deep commitment from executive management sets initiatives up for success by signalling importance and facilitating adequate resourcing.

- Set initiative as a core business priority: Formally incorporating DEI goals into quarterly and annual planning allows for securing the resources, time and attention needed to drive change.
- Hold senior leaders accountable for outcomes, not just inputs or activities: Holding senior business leaders accountable by tying outcomes to performance incentives facilitates continued focus on the initiative’s effectiveness, starting from the top of the organization.
- Model and lead desired change, starting with the CEO and senior leaders: Senior leadership can, for example, serve as the public face of the DEI initiative, lead the operation, advocate for the initiative’s needs and/or adopt desired behaviours and ways of working. This signals importance to the rest of the organization and



encourages other employees to follow suit. Leaders tend to hold the most social capital in an organization and can use that to advance DEI initiatives.

- Ensure resources for longevity in the budget, expertise and timeline: Like any other core business activity, DEI initiatives need to be resourced based on the capabilities required to effectively execute on the plan. This may require a cross-functional team (not limited to the HR function) and access to experts, possibly through external partnerships.

#### 4. Solution designed for context

Driving effective, sustainable impact requires solutions that address the root causes of the problem and are integrated into day-to-day work.

- Develop solutions that address the root causes, with scalability in mind: To effectively address the most critical root causes, the initiative's solutions will likely need to be multifaceted. As an illustrative example, a coaching programme alone will not solve a gender parity problem. The solution set will also need to address systemic bias in hiring, performance management and other policies that disadvantage the target population. Each solution should be designed with scalability in mind to ensure that potential impact will not be hindered by barriers such as cost or operational complexity.
- Integrate changes into key processes and ways of working, so impact is sustained: To drive enduring change, the solution needs to address relevant elements of the organization's systems, processes and ways of working. Sustained change also requires a shift in mindset and behaviour for all employees (e.g. addressing unconscious bias).
- Equip and encourage employees to contribute:

As part of the process of designing a solution, companies not only need to equip employees to make the desired change (e.g. through upskilling) but also to encourage them to do so by setting new expectations, measuring progress and holding them accountable through performance management.

#### 5. Rigorous tracking and course correction

Measuring progress against initiative goals allows leaders to evaluate the solution's effectiveness and supports the most impactful use of company resources. Insights from tracking may surface opportunities to adjust or course-correct the initiative to increase impact.

- Define KPIs and implement rigorous tracking process: Designing a measurement strategy involves picking the right metrics and milestones to track at regular intervals (e.g. before, during and after a programme phase). Scorecards should track progress towards a high-level aspiration (e.g. the percentage of women in leadership roles), the resolution of root causes (e.g. reducing gender bias seen through an increase in the promotion rate of women) and granular initiative actions (e.g. the percentage of women with an assigned mentor and the frequency and quality of those interactions). Data collected should include qualitative feedback from target populations.
- Use data and feedback to course-correct as needed: With the right metrics and milestones in place, adjustments to the solution can be implemented sooner rather than later to ensure the solution is effectively addressing the root causes.

# Contributors

The World Economic Forum would like to thank the members of the broader core community of the Centre for the New Economy and Society for their ongoing commitment and contributions to addressing the issues presented in this report.

We would like to thank in particular all community members who submitted DEI initiatives for consideration in the Lighthouse selection process and contributed through community discussions.

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# Endnotes

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13. The ratio of people hired after the programme to the total number of people trained in the programme.
14. CHANGE refers to Changing Healthcare for people of African ancestry through an InterNational Genomics and Equity.
15. This is trending towards a utilization of 12–13 weeks (60-65%), considering that new parents have up to one year to use their full entitlement.
16. Takes into account some markets having statutory maternity provisions that are higher than the 20-week parental leave minimum.



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