WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

# EMERGING PRACTICES ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WATCH & JEWELRY INDUSTRY

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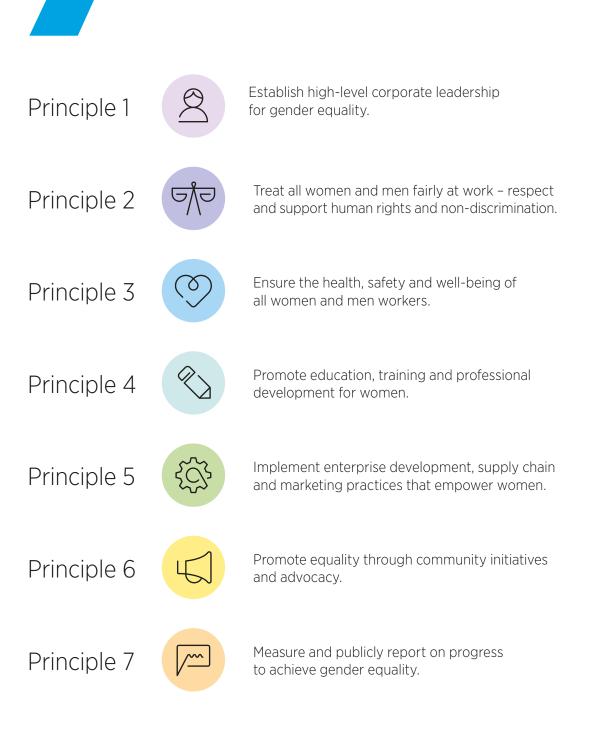






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# PRINCIPLES



## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES



# EMERGING PRACTICES ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WATCH & JEWELRY INDUSTRY





#### WATCH & JEWELLERY INITIATIVE 2030

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#### Disclaimer

The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations and their Member States. The case studies use self-reported data and information generated by participating companies. They shared their submissions and interviews. These illustrative examples aim to highlight emerging practices in the watch and jewelry industry.

#### Acknowledgement

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## Forewords

### Anna Fälth Global Head of WEPs, UN Women

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I am pleased to present this collection of case studies on emerging gender equality practices in the jewelry industry. It highlights the transformative power that companies can have in accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment within the workplace, marketplace and community.

At the core of these inspiring stories is the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), an initiative that provides a practical framework for companies committed to advancing gender equality. The WEPs



offer seven principles that guide companies in their efforts to take transformative and sustainable actions that advance women's participation and leadership, and create business environments where fair treatment and equal opportunities mean both women and men can flourish.

The case studies explore how WEPs signatories in the watch and jewelry industry are applying these principles. Each offers new insights into innovative strategies and emerging practices that are making a difference. From fostering inclusive workplace cultures to supporting gender-responsive and women-owned businesses in the supply chain, these examples demonstrate the tangible benefits of embracing gender equality and women's empowerment.

The stories presented here testify to much progress being made. However, since much more remains to be done to achieve gender equality, they also serve as an inspiration and a call to action: All companies should consider how, by adopting the WEPs framework, they can also contribute to better businesses and societies by accelerating their WEPs implementation. The jewelry industry has the potential to lead by example, showcasing how gender equality can drive business success and create a more just society for all.

We hope that the insights generously shared will galvanize and guide many more business journeys built on inclusive and empowering environments for women – within companies and beyond.

We would like to warmheartedly thank all our WJI2030 members and WEPs signatories for championing gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.

#### Emerging Practices • Advancing Gender Equality in the Watch and Jewelry Industry



## Iris Van der Veken

Executive Director and Secretary General, Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030

The Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030), co-founded by Cartier & Kering, is proud to illustrate our unwavering commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment by continuing to champion the WEPs. This step embodies our core values and dedication to fostering an inclusive and equitable industry. By aligning with the WEPs, we are not reinventing the wheel but rather leveraging a robust framework established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact to drive meaningful change.

Our journey with UN Women and the broader watch and jewelry industry is one of collaboration and collective effort. Together, we aim to move from activation to acceleration, ensuring that our initiatives not only take root but also flourish. This partnership underscores our commitment to integrating gender equality into every facet of the watch and jewelry value chain, and inspiring others in the industry to follow suit. Putting gender equality at the core of business strategies is a must-have to be fit for purpose in an ever-evolving regulatory and stakeholder landscape.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Board, co-chaired by Marie-Claire Daveu (Kering) and Cyrille Vigneron (Cartier). We thank our members and their CEOs who have adopted the WEPs, demonstrating their dedication to these critical principles. To date, we are proud to report that 90 per cent of our members have embraced this commitment, reflecting a growing momentum within our industry.

I am very hopeful that we will continue to advance this work because we operate in an industry that derives its power from human emotions, craftmanship and connection. Watches and jewelry create empowering bonds between people, and often across generations since they are carried over as intergenerational assets. People, especially women, are at the heart of our value chain. We have a shared responsibility to leave no one behind.

We call on all associations and the wider watch and jewelry industry to join us in adopting the WEPs and championing a future where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a reality.

We particularly thank those companies that contributed to the case studies: Bahrain Institute for Pearls and Gemstones (DANAT), BDL5, Cartier, Chanel, Dimexon, Gucci, International Gemological Institute, Italpreziosi, Julie Sandlau Vietnam, Mejuri, Monica Vinader, Pomellato, Rosy Blue and Taché.

## Introduction

Gender equality has become a widely endorsed aspiration, one understood as central to thriving economies and societies. It is an achievable goal. Yet it will not be reached within our lifetimes, in any country, without stepped up leadership, commitment and collaboration, all of which must translate into rapid, high-impact actions.

Each person has a role to play. And so does every company. Through a collaboration between UN Women and the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030, this publication showcases case studies on the efforts of 14 front-runners in the watch and jewelry industry. Each has taken a lead by joining the initiative, signing the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and embarking on a journey to implement them.

The companies range from globally recognized brands to new start-ups, from tens of thousands of employees to hundreds. They trade in a spectrum of precious metals and gems, and cater to customers at all levels of purchasing power. The case studies cover their operations at headguarters as well as in labs, factories and retail stores in five regions: Africa, the Arab States, Asia, Europe and North America. Each case singles out one of the WEPs, although all companies are committed to all seven principles.

Collectively, these companies are part of an industry with significant public visibility and emotional appeal, and thus the power to influence how people think about and act on gender equality and women's empowerment. They also operate in value chains where collaboration with suppliers, vendors and other business partners can take implementation of the WEPs to an industry-wide scale.



THE WATCH & JEWELRY SUPPLY CHAIN

The supply chain does not include circular/recycled material flows (e.g. stones returned for repurposing or recutting or gold returned for re-refining).

In demonstrating how businesses can contribute to more gender-inclusive societies, the watch and jewelry industry has an almost unique role to play. Its market is dominated by women, who drive over 90 per cent of demand and purchases. Women increasingly lead the industry's firms, small and large, and influence business choices, including to respond to consumer calls for more transparency and social responsibility across supply chains.

Yet discriminatory gender norms and barriers still operate at all levels of the industry. Women comprise significant shares of "downstream" retail positions, and one industry-specific study found their "roles are frequently undervalued, low-skilled, precarious and potentially exploitative".<sup>1</sup> Even companies that have reached gender parity in their workforces still fall short of gender balance in upper management and board positions, although gaps are closing in some cases. Some parts of the industry, such as factories in rural communities of developing countries, still have mostly male workforces.

Continued gender disparities are far from unique to the watch and jewelry industry. Some of the latest research on gender equality and the global Sustainable Development Goals found that over half of countries still impose at least one legal restriction on women doing the same jobs as men. Pervasive gender pay gaps come from occupational segregation, career interruptions and workplace discrimination. With artificial intelligence reshaping labour markets and employment dynamics, women face a future where they may be twice as likely as men to lose jobs to this technology.<sup>2</sup>

Even before women reach the workforce, they struggle with gender barriers in education. These feed a global education skills deficit that each year trims US\$10 trillion from the global economy. In STEM skills, vital to some parts of the jewelry business, women still account for only a third of graduates, for instance. The global digital gender divide, in access and skills, cost low- and middle-income countries an estimated US\$1 trillion over the last decade. By contrast, closing the gap in the next five years could pump US\$524 billion into the global economy.<sup>3</sup>

No individual business, no matter how large or influential, can solve these issues alone. Through innovative and pioneering solutions and practices in their own operations, across their supply chains and through collective action, the industry can make a difference, one felt by employees and seen by customers.

The companies profiled in the following case studies are at various points in the WEPs journey. The case studies share some of what has been learned and achieved so far. The following pages present some common findings. The success of the WEPs depends on strong leadership. The WEPs journey begins with a signature by corporate leadership, a level of commitment that helps to carry the principles forward into business practices. Equally important is the buy-in, involvement and accountability of employees at all levels.

**Companies find the WEPs a useful framework to strategically organize support for gender equality and women's empowerment.** The principles guide a whole-of-business vision, and help provide checks and balances. WEPs resources and opportunities to engage with other businesses, such as through the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030, encourage the cross-pollination of ideas and solutions.

**Balancing business and gender equality imperatives can be challenging but companies are making it work.** Cost is a consideration that must be navigated in WEPs implementation. Yet some companies have found novel ways to manage stepped-up investments, such as by consulting with employees to set priorities.

Listening to employees and being responsive to corporate and broader cultures deepens buy-in and helps to customize the WEPs journey. Strategies and internal communications stressing mutual benefits and rooted in the awareness of prevalent gender and social norms, both positive and negative, are more effective. Male employees need to be part of the process from the outset, and can play powerful parts as gender equality champions and role models.

A few companies primarily emphasize merit-based approaches to hiring as opposed to those focused explicitly on engaging more women. The former are seen as integral to building strong teams and sending a message that women can compete on their own skills, although they assume a level playing field that may not be in place.

**One-off solutions, such as a training or employee benefit, can support individual women but are not enough to shift systemic barriers.** The WEPs call for a business-wide approach because multiple steps are required to dismantle the many structural obstacles to gender equality. An ongoing and important consideration is to avoid placing the responsibility for achieving gender equality mainly on the shoulders of women without sufficiently factoring in the broader environment of the company and the societies in which it functions.

Companies have taken interesting approaches to reduce systemic barriers, such as by working with families and communities so that women can pursue new kinds of jobs. Fostering more equitable social norms around care work can come from both providing a generous parental leave policy and regularly encouraging men and women to take it.

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#### Emerging Practices • Advancing Gender Equality in the Watch and Jewelry Industry

Achieving gender equality calls for making connections. Gender equality involves a specific set of issues requiring a deliberate focus. It is also strongly interconnected with other factors of diversity and inclusion, such as those related to age, race, ethnicity, disability and so on. Gender equality both determines and depends on progress on all such dimensions.

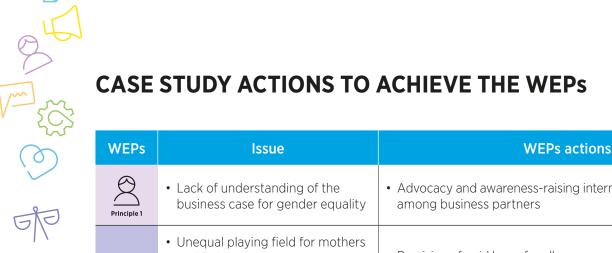
**Some companies are moving to influence broader business ecosystems.** This is evident through philanthropy and focused support for women's entrepreneurship. It also manifests in the selection of supply chain partners and business-to-business encouragement to sign the WEPs.

**Companies are demonstrating how to be courageous.** Several have taken public stands on issues that are vital to women's rights but remain contested and sensitive, such as gender-based violence and reproductive rights. Firms are responding through philanthropy, advocacy and corporate policy.

**Data are critical for progress but need more attention.** There is a common recognition among companies of the need to better measure progress on gender equality and women's empowerment as well as the benefits it delivers, including to business fundamentals such as the bottom line. A few businesses have started to develop more robust monitoring systems, including to promote transparency and social responsibility, leverage diverse skills and correct pay disparities.

Collecting and using data is a particularly important area for more action because it can steer effective investments and embed the drive for gender equality more deeply, including in a good-for-business rationale. Many companies can already point to returns from embracing gender equality, such as greater productivity and higher retention rates, but the evidence is still more anecdotal than quantifiable. The WJI 2030 will use WEPs indicators to support advances in the industry's reporting journey.

This publication is the second in a series of case studies prepared by UN Women and the WJI 2030. It follows a 2023 analysis of genderresponsive procurement in the watch and jewelry industry, which has moved into a second phase intended to dive deeper into supply chains.<sup>4</sup> Both publications are intended to support a shift in the industry as a whole and are intended to reach every level of it, from raw materials to retail stores. The case studies that follow both celebrate successes and point to challenges that need to be resolved. They are intended to offer practical guidance and inspire other businesses, within the industry and beyond, to move from activation to acceleration. Signing the WEPs is a starting point on the way to ramping up actions to achieve the principles, in lasting, meaningful and measurable ways.



WEPs	Issue	WEPs actions
Principle 1	• Lack of understanding of the business case for gender equality	<ul> <li>Advocacy and awareness-raising internally as well as externally among business partners</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Unequal playing field for mothers and fathers</li> <li>Limited paid parental leave provisions under the law</li> <li>Uneven care responsibilities between women and men</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Provision of paid leave for all new parents, regardless of gender</li> <li>On-site childcare and flexible work hours</li> <li>Stipends for childcare</li> <li>Job security after childbirth</li> </ul>
Principle 2	<ul> <li>Persistent gender stereotypes around roles and responsibilities</li> <li>Women's low labour force participation rate</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Job creation and decent work</li> <li>Education and training on human rights, non-discrimination and gender equality</li> <li>Mentorship programmes</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Disparities in opportunities between women and men</li> <li>Limited number of women in technical roles</li> <li>Insufficient work experience</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Deliberate efforts to recruit and promote women</li> <li>On-the-job training</li> </ul>
Principle 3	• High incidence of violence against women	<ul> <li>Awareness-raising and advocacy to end violence, including through women's voices and influencers</li> <li>Support to shelters</li> <li>Prevention messages and resources for assistance shared within the company</li> <li>Zero-tolerance human resources policies</li> <li>Mentorship for survivors of violence</li> </ul>
Principie 3	<ul> <li>Gaps in sexual and reproductive health and rights</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Public advocacy and awareness-raising</li> <li>Consultations with employees to define priorities</li> <li>Provision of health-care products and services and other employment benefits</li> <li>Provision of travel and lodging when needed to obtain care</li> </ul>



WEPs	Issue	WEPs actions
Principle 4	• Lack of education and training	<ul> <li>Outreach to universities</li> <li>Training of current and potential female employees</li> <li>Community advocacy to encourage opportunities for women</li> </ul>
Principle 5	<ul> <li>Insufficient understanding of supplier demographics</li> <li>Lack of tracking and traceability in the supply chain</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Know-your-counterpart surveys to capture ownership and other criteria by gender</li> <li>On-site visits</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Low number of women suppliers</li> <li>Suppliers that do not apply gender-responsive practices</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Intentional selection of women-owned businesses</li> <li>Awareness-raising about gender equality and the WEPs</li> <li>Encouragement to commit to the WEPs</li> <li>Tools to improve gender-responsiveness</li> </ul>
Principie 6	<ul> <li>Inadequate financial and non- financial support to women entrepreneurs</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Provision of grants and loans to women impact entrepreneurs</li> <li>Coaching and training on business strategies</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Limited support to women's groups</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Advocacy using corporate communications resources</li> <li>Raising and providing funds</li> <li>Outreach to women and girls in local communities to define their priorities</li> </ul>
Principle 7	<ul> <li>Poor tracking of gender equality actions and results</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Surveys in-house and of suppliers and business partners</li> <li>Diagnostic systems and dashboards</li> <li>Gender-responsive key performance indicators</li> <li>Application of new data to close gender gaps</li> <li>Certification</li> </ul>

## **ABOUT THE WEPs**

### The WEPs are a journey towards more inclusive, sustainable businesses.

Established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact in 2010, the WEPs reflect core international labour and human rights standards. They embody a call for businesses to fulfil their essential roles in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, delivering benefits for women and workplaces, and returns for businesses at large.

The WEPs journey begins with business leadership committed to using the principles to make gender equality and women's empowerment central to operations in the workplace, marketplace and community. After the head of the company signs the principles, the journey unfolds by activating employees, engaging with other actors in the value chain, gathering data based on the WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework and reporting on eight key performance indicators.

Companies that sign the WEPs take steps such as instituting equal pay for work of equal value, weaving gender-responsive practices into supply chains and establishing zero tolerance for sexual harassment in the workplace.

To date, more than 10,000 companies in more than 160 countries have signed the WEPs.

The WEPs Secretariat is based at the headquarters of UN Women in New York.



## **ABOUT THE WATCH & JEWELLERY INITIATIVE 2030**

The Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030 (WJI 2030) is a pioneering action platform that unites all players across the watch and jewelry value chain and enables them to lead progress and future-proof their businesses in an ever-changing regulatory landscape — towards 2030 and beyond.

Together we empower the change for a better path forward: harnessing multistakeholder collaboration to achieve measurable impact in the areas of climate resilience, preserving resources and fostering inclusiveness.

Co-founded by Cartier and Kering in 2022, WJI 2030 is a member of the UN Global Compact and signatory of the WEPs.

Members, as part of their commitment to WJI 2030, are required to become WEPs signatories.

In May 2023, WJI 2030 was recognized by the Swiss authorities as an Association of Public Utility.

Today, the team is headquartered at the Maison de La Paix in Geneva, Switzerland.

# Expert Perspectives



## Anino Emuwa

Founder of 100 Women @ Davos, WJI 2030 Board Member

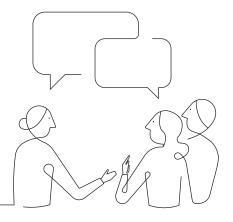
## Action on WEPs Determines Success on Diversity and Inclusion

The WEPs provide a comprehensive approach to addressing diversity and inclusion, with the power to transform the watch and jewelry industry while opening tangible business opportunities. Embracing the WEPs allows companies to significantly advance their diversity and inclusion strategies.

Board and executive leadership commitment are critical because realizing the transformative potential of the WEPs requires ambition and investment across the business, including supply chains, marketplaces and communities. Companies that practice gender-responsive recruitment and support the well-being of all workers not only create an equitable workplace but also enhance talent acquisition and retention, and access to new market niches. A diverse and inclusive environment attracts top talent and reduces turnover, fostering a more engaged and innovative workforce.

Further, increasing opportunities for leadership development and pathways to executive management for women leads to a more diverse leadership team essential for improved decision-making and business outcomes. Gender-responsive procurement opens access to broader markets, particularly with partners and clients that prioritize diversity in their supply chains. Community engagement and transparent tracking of progress further bolster a company's reputation, increasing its appeal to socially conscious consumers and investors.

Understanding and addressing intersectionality is critical in eliminating all forms of discrimination in the workplace. Factors such as race or age often intersect with gender, compounding the risks of exclusion. These links must be carefully unpacked and addressed. The WEPs recognize diverse cultural and legal contexts across companies and countries and offer guidance on integrating intersectional approaches.



Emerging Practices • Advancing Gender Equality in the Watch and Jewelry Industry

## **Georg Kell**

WJI2030 Board Member, UN Global Compact and WEPs co-founder

## The WEPs Are a Blueprint for Sustainable Business Success

Companies worldwide have begun to advance and empower women, knowing this is fundamental for societies to flourish – and businesses too. They are applying the Women's Empowerment Principles not just as an exercise in corporate responsibility but as a blueprint for sustainable business success, based on the transformative power of gender equality.

I am pleased to see the serious commitment of the watch and jewelry industry to the WEPs, and how quickly firms are generating significant changes across all dimensions of the principles. As this publication shows, companies are creating decent jobs for women in remote mining communities. They have brought women into cutting and polishing factories that once had male-only workforces. They are refashioning corporate policy based on needs expressed by their employees, including for reproductive health care. And they are giving back by supporting women's empowerment in communities where they operate. **This is truly the WEPs at work.** 

Sustaining and expanding such promising initiatives now depends on systematically measuring and monitoring change. Sound business decisions draw on data, and so must choices to integrate women's empowerment as core to operations. Data can affirm the value of applying the WEPs, such as through greater employee satisfaction and customer engagement. They can drive innovation, enhance transparency across supply chains, and elevate standards of social and environmental sustainability. In the watch and jewelry industry, data have a critical role in redressing longstanding concerns around ethical sourcing.

One practical challenge in this industry and others has been inconsistency in the collection, use and sharing of data, on a variety of environmental, social and governance standards. This limits transparency as well as opportunities for businesses to progress and learn from each other.

It is urgent to make such data, including for WEPs reporting, more widely available, comparable and transparent. Growing sustainable, socially responsible businesses has never been more important than now. The watch and jewelry industry has a tremendous opportunity to show the business world and beyond how to accelerate demonstrable progress on gender equality, and operate on terms that stakeholders, from customers to investors, increasingly expect.

# A Path to Action

The case studies have illuminated seven recommendations for companies committed to implementing the WEPs and achieving women's empowerment and gender equality. Coupled with the principles, the recommendations map a path to move forward.

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**Develop and implement a stand-alone corporate strategy to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment.** Even where diversity and inclusion policies are in place, gender equality requires a specific focus through a corporate gender equality strategy. The WEPs can serve as an organizing framework for the strategy, which should be robust, well-resourced and routinely monitored. Gender-responsive policies and action plans should elaborate it, and feature clear and measurable indicators and targets. Internal and external communications initiatives can help build buy-in among different stakeholders, including suppliers.

**Empower employees to implement the strategy through gender equality training.** Top management support is fundamental to embedding gender equality and women's empowerment into a company's core business strategy. Yet after that point, businesses may struggle to gain full engagement. The gender equality strategy should define clear roles and responsibilities for achieving results at all levels of the company. Implementation can include training for staff that emphasizes the social and business rationales of gender equality, and highlights mutual benefits, such as innovation and teamwork. Training should outline tangible and feasible steps that employees can take, individually and collectively, to build on good practices and diminish gender barriers.

Targeted training for middle management in particular can catalyse the uptake of gender equality practices, especially when paired with accountability mechanisms, such as an annual performance review and bonus incentives.

**Routinely collect data to gauge progress on gender equality measures.** Data collection should track key performance indicators of the gender equality strategy. Data should be disaggregated by gender to capture diverse experiences, and applied to decision-making to guide consistent progress. Surveying and gathering insights from employees can help to define priorities and detect both obstacles and opportunities for advancement. Encouraging suppliers and other business partners to furnish such data can help trigger important ripple effects in the broader business ecosystem.

#### Emerging Practices • Advancing Gender Equality in the Watch and Jewelry Industry



Actively seek out women for leadership roles in all areas of the business Even businesses with gender parity across staff still lag on shares of women at higher levels. A specific focus on parity at the top comprises systematically appointing women to influential managerial and executive positions, including pivotal C-suite roles. A gender review of who holds current leadership positions can define gaps to close, both in general and in specific areas of the business where women are traditionally underrepresented.

**Embed gender equality functions and responsibilities in all job descriptions.** Corporate leadership should send regular messages that achieving gender equality requires inputs from employees at all levels. Embedding key performance indicators on gender equality in performance plans and assessments deepens and backs continued progress. To support comprehensive responsibility, indicators should apply to top executives and staff at all levels.

**Engage suppliers, partners and external stakeholders on gender equality and women's empowerment.** Business-to-business dialogues and the use of the WEPs to help select suppliers and other partners are among the ways that companies can extend the reach of gender equality commitments. Regular partner surveys can help define values, expectations and needs in regard to gender equality as well as new avenues for collaboration to support it.

**Publish gender equality results in annual corporate sustainability reports.** Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment depends on transparency and accountability. Regular monitoring should feed into updates shared with staff and feature in corporate sustainability reports.

# Leadership Workplace Marketplace Community Accountability

# Leadership



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# **Principle 1**

### ESTABLISH HIGH-LEVEL CORPORATE LEADERSHIP FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Affirm high-level support and direct top-level policies for gender equality and human rights, including from an intersectional lens.

Set up a high-level taskforce to define the company's strategic case for gender equality, identify priority areas and consult internal and external stakeholders in the development of company policies, programmes and implementation plans for gender equality.

Establish company-wide goals and targets for gender equality and women's empowerment and measure progress through clear performance indicators.

Make managers at all levels accountable for results against these goals and targets by including them in job descriptions and performance reviews.

Ensure that existing policies are gender-sensitive – identifying factors that impact women and men differently – and that corporate culture advances equality and inclusion.

Review the requirements for board membership, and other governance bodies and committees, to remove any discrimination or bias against women.

PRINCIPLE 1

# **An Industry-First WEPs Journey Begins** BDL5

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All cases of WEPs signatories in this publication began with the commitment of corporate leaders. One of the newest signatories is BDL5. In endorsing the principles, it has become a standard-bearer as the first major Swiss supplier in the watchmaking industry to do so.

With long-standing dedication to gender equality, the group sees the principles as fully aligned with its core values. But it also expects the WEPs will help to formalize and reinforce the integration of gender equality practices in daily operations, bolstering an inclusive environment where all employees have equal opportunities to succeed and contribute.

Gender equality is not just the right thing to do. It is also beneficial for business.

> Ken Wenger Director, BDL5

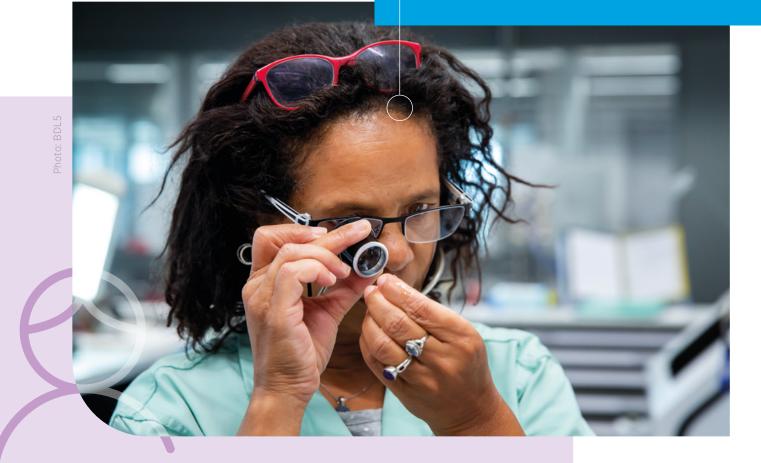
BDL5 views its public commitment to the WEPs and gender equality as fundamental to long-term business success. WEPs-related actions help to foster an innovative and creative workforce that brings together different perspectives and ideas, meets the needs of a diverse customer base and improves competitiveness. They also attract and retain top talent, and respond to growing attention to social responsibility among employees and customers.

BDL5 has several initial priorities as it begins its WEPs journey. It plans to develop key performance indicators to raise awareness and guide efforts to realize gender equality, inclusiveness and diversity in all parts of its business. Company human resources indicators already provide insights into global trends but need to be disaggregated and assessed within different business segments, given potential variations in a group of companies with a global footprint.

As a Swiss supplier, BDL5 also intends to play a crucial role in promoting the WEPs in Switzerland. Sharing best practices with all stakeholders through corporate reporting will be geared towards encouraging uptake of the WEPs and promoting gender equality in the Swiss watch industry and beyond.

## About the company

Founded in Switzerland, BDL5 is a group of nine companies active in subcontracting for high-end watch-making. Based in Geneva, it has four locations and employs over 800 employees in Switzerland. BDL5 signed the WEPs in 2023.



Leadership Workplace Marketplace Community Accountability

# Workplace

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### TREAT ALL WOMEN AND MEN FAIRLY AT WORK – RESPECT AND SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Foster an inclusive workplace culture and remove gender-based discrimination from all policies and practices.

Pay equal remuneration, including benefits and bonuses, for work of equal value and ensure at a minimum a living wage for all women and men employees.

Implement gender-sensitive recruitment and retention practices and proactively recruit and appoint women to managerial and executive positions and to the corporate board of directors.

Offer flexible working arrangements, leave and re-entry opportunities to positions of equal pay and status.

Support women and men's access to child and dependent care through services, resources and information.

Encourage men to take advantage of parental leave to level the playing field for women and men employees.

Ensure equal opportunities for women from diverse backgrounds to lead on important assignments and task forces.

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# Supporting Equality for All Parents CHANEL

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The story of Chanel started with the story of its founder, Gabrielle Chanel, who dared to challenge the status quo. Over 100 years ago, her entrepreneurial spirit and creativity led her to reinvent fashion and establish the enduring codes of the House. Her creations were designed for women to have freedom of movement, to suit their daily lives, to champion independence, and explore who they could be and become in the world. equality, to provide additional guidance on concrete steps to uphold these values across talent development, policies and leading pay practices.

Beyond the House, Chanel extends its commitment to supporting communities around the world. This includes the global You, Me & Us social commitment programme, encouraging everyone to volunteer their time and expertise to help local charities. In 2023, teams completed

Promoting a global, equal parental leave standard benefits all our people who wish to start or grow their families, helping them continue to design their path and impact for a long-term career.

> Claire Isnard Global Chief People & Organization Officer, Chanel

Since then, Chanel has continued to take steps to drive inclusion, gender equality and the creation of a culture where everyone is supported for individual and collective success. This includes initiatives for internal teams, and partners across its value chain and beyond. Following its signature of the WEPs in 2015, the company engaged EDGE, the leading global assessment methodology and certification standard for gender 32,500 volunteering hours, helping over 20,000 beneficiaries, including 7,600 women and girls. Chanel has also furthered its commitment to Fondation CHANEL, contributing over \$110 million to the independent charity, with a mission for all women and girls to be free to shape their own destiny. To date, Chanel's focus has been on promoting a culture that fosters respect, empathy, openness and creativity — keeping people at the heart of everything it does. Its global workforce is over 75 per cent women, with more than 60 per cent of leadership and management positions at the company held by women as well — including its Global Chief Executive Officer. Inclusive hiring practices, bespoke development programmes, embedding trust for everyone to speak and feel heard, transparency on new opportunities and continued high standards of pay equity are some further examples of how these commitments come to life.

This approach extends to inclusive policies as well. In 2018, Chanel was one of the first luxury companies to offer a minimum of 14 weeks at full pay for all new parents worldwide. Part of the benefits package for all employees, the provision applies even in countries where the legal requirement for paid parental leave may be less than 14 weeks. The policy adopts a broad and inclusive definition, applying to all new parents, regardless of gender, who grow their families by birth, adoption or surrogacy.

Globally, in many businesses, concerns about career interruption remain a major reason for people to either not take or use only part of parental leave benefits. Claire Isnard, Global Chief People & Organisation Officer at Chanel, explains how policies like this are essential to take care of people in their full lives, helping them to navigate pivotal moments such as growing their family.

"Promoting a global, equal parental leave standard benefits all our people who wish to start or grow their families, helping them continue to design their path and impact for a long-term career. Through initiatives like this, our people can cherish these important milestones in their lives, knowing they will be supported throughout. This is just one example of how driving inclusive policies, programmes and cultures make a lasting difference, transforming peoples' experiences at work through concrete action."

Providing women and men with equal flexibility to focus on their career and family also helps to shift stereotypes that women carry more responsibility for meeting family demands. This policy, amongst others, is just one way to reflect Chanel's longstanding support for empowerment and freedom of choice, and its commitment to gender equality as an essential path to a more prosperous world.

### About the company

Founded by Gabrielle Chanel at the beginning of the last century, Chanel offers a broad range of high-end creations, including ready-to-wear, leather goods, fashion accessories, eyewear, fragrances, makeup, skincare, jewelry and watches. At the end of 2023, it employed over 36,500 people worldwide. Chanel signed the WEPs in 2015.

# **Start with Women, Build a Business** DIMEXON

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Dimexon has built a business on gender equality. When founder Pankaj Mehta decided to open a diamond cutting and polishing factory in Coimbatore, India, in the 1980s, he made a choice: Start with women. It was an unusual business strategy, particularly since the labour participation rate for women in India, around 33 per cent, has long lagged far below the global average. Only about 5 per cent of Indian women are salaried employees with a steady job.<sup>5</sup> Dimexon specializes in small melee diamonds. Craftspeople need to be meticulous and precise, and the company soon found that women brought a sharper eye for detail. Mehta describes how "they stood out considerably, even when benchmarked against globally renowned (male) Belgian workers, and their output was better too."

From the start, Dimexon committed to gender equality in pay and career progression, including

We owe our success to some brilliant women. Being part of the WEPs will enable us to continue sharing our passion and ethos on women's empowerment with a like-minded community.

> Rajiv Mehta Director, Dimexon

Mehta wanted to do something different, to give back to society by empowering women. "I believed that if natural diamonds are cut by women for women, there is nothing better than that," Mehta recalls. He started with a small workshop of 10 women cutting and polishing stones. Today, Dimexon employs over 2,100 people on three continents; 76 per cent are women. opportunities for education and training. Salaries have been above average in Coimbatore. Over the years, a number of specific steps have helped to overcome obstacles that commonly deter women from the workforce, such as the provision of meals and transport to mitigate safety concerns among women who want to work at night. On-site childcare and flexible work hours have resulted in 96 per cent of women returning to work after maternity leave. Women at Dimexon testify that it has transformed their lives. Anitha R., who has been with the company for 23 years, working as a diamond cutter and polisher, says, "I came in as a rough diamond, that is true, and I have been polished. Our living standards have improved, and I have also grown." Her colleague Kaplana Anandakumar worked as a diamond polisher for 15 years before taking newfound leadership skills and confidence into a position outside the company — as the first female mayor of Coimbatore, elected in 2022.

The company acknowledges it needs to go further in its managerial ranks, where women hold only 15 per cent of positions. This reflects an imbalance in the wider industry but Dimexon expects a shift over the next five years. It has implemented a policy of hiring and promoting women where candidates have equal qualifications, and is grooming more women who start in entry-level jobs but show potential to develop managerial skills.

Based on its long experience with a genderresponsive workplace, Dimexon stresses acting collaboratively with staff to recognize gender differences and ensure that business systems work equally for women and men. It conducts active listening exercises and regular surveys, and encourages open communications. That is how it discovered, for example, in the 1980s that large shares of female staff took sick leave to manage menstruation. To meet their needs and maintain productivity it hired an on-site nurse to provide sanitary products and support. This practice that has grown into broader assistance for women's health issues, such as screening for breast cancer.

One benefit of being an early adopter of gender equality practices is that Dimexon is well positioned to respond to today's mounting expectations related to social accountability. It is also a source of inspiration, showing how a global company can emerge by successfully pursuing profit and principle.

### About the company

Founded in Mumbai, India in 1966, Dimexon is a family-run diamond manufacturing business. It has 2,100 employees at locations across Belgium, France, Hong Kong (SAR China), India and the United Arab Emirates. Dimexon signed the WEPs in 2022.

ioto: Dimex

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# **Principle 3**

### ENSURE THE HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF ALL WOMEN AND MEN WORKERS

Establish internal policies and procedures, including a confidential grievance system, to prevent and address all forms of violence and sexual harassment at work.

Train security staff and managers to recognize signs of violence against women, human trafficking, labour and sexual exploitation, and immediately address cases of domestic violence, particularly for employees working remotely and during global pandemics and crisis where support services maybe less readily available.

Ensure employees', including part-time workers, equal access to health insurance and tailor support to employees with special needs, including people with disabilities, and survivors of violence and harassment.

Respect women and men workers' rights to time off for medical care and counseling for themselves and their dependents.

Provide safe working conditions and protection from exposure to hazardous materials and disclose potential risks, including to reproductive health.

Address safety and security issues, including traveling to/from work and business trips, in consultation with employees.

# The Right to Design Your Life MEJURI

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Reproductive rights remain a politically fraught issue around the world. When a 2022 Supreme Court decision shut down options for women to realize these rights in the United States, Mejuri knew that with its longstanding corporate commitment to women's empowerment, it had to take a stand. The reproductive rights travel policy is one of a number of innovative measures that Mejuri has developed for a workforce that is 77 per cent female. Other examples include a graduated return from parental leave so that parents can design a schedule based on their own needs

It's about equal access to services that help you take care of your health, whatever choices you make. You have the right to design your life.

> Noura Sakkijha CEO, Mejuri

Reproductive health advocates warned that the court decision would impact reproductive health care in some states, a prediction that soon came to pass. Mejuri had employees at stores in states that enacted bans, including Florida and Texas. All full-time workers already had comprehensive health benefits, but the company committed to an extra step: travel and lodging compensation for those needing to travel elsewhere to seek reproductive health care.

"It's about equal access to services that help you take care of your health, whatever choices you make," says CEO Noura Sakkijha. "You have the right to design your life."  it has seen a 100 per cent utilization rate over the past three years. Bereavement days are allowed for miscarriages and stillbirths. And in 2022, Mejuri began offering coverage of fertility care for full-time employees in Canada and the United States of America.

The company takes a "crawl, walk, run" approach to developing policies, aiming to balance its values, employee priorities and financial fundamentals. It tests and iterates over time, investing in regular employee surveys and other feedback mechanisms that generate data to guide business decisions. This helps to understand and respond to trends quickly, and to begin building out benefits based on employee preferences. An emphasis on tailoring policies based on workplace demographics and locations is evident in the travel policy.

Mejuri is a young company but has grown fast by embracing a culture of empowerment, equity and choice. Staff surveys routinely affirm that the company's values are a leading reason people want to work there, and are a particular draw for the younger workforce staffing its retail stores. External evidence reinforces its approach. Catalyst, a women's business association in the United States, surveyed employees aged 18 to 34 and found that 57 per cent of women and 48 per cent of men expected companies to do more to guarantee access to reproductive rights.<sup>6</sup>

Living its values has led Mejuri to take a highly visible public role as an advocate for reproductive rights. In 2022, it partnered with Don't Ban Equality, a coalition of over 1,000 businesses, to create the "Year of Action" campaign. This called on like-minded brands to speak out and fundraise for advocates such as the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. The campaign drew attention in major media outlets from *Bazaar* to *Vogue*, and earned recognition in the best brand collaboration category of the 2023 Modern Retail Awards.

Besides co-leading the "Year of Action", Mejuri adopted the reproductive rights travel policy as its own contribution. The company both upheld its commitment to employees as the "designers" of their own lives — and modelled changes it seeks in the broader world.

#### About the company

Since its founding in 2015, Mejuri has grown from an online-only business to 36 brick-and-mortar retail jewelry stores globally. The Canadian company has over 600 employees and operates in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. Mejuri signed the WEPs in 2023.

### Building Resilience on the Vanguard of Social Change ROSY BLUE

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In factories in India that cut and polish most of the diamonds circulating in world markets, it is still not unusual to see a mostly male workforce. Especially in more conservative areas, factory work is often considered men's work. in contrast to India, is female. At the corporate level, human resources and other policies underpin an ongoing global commitment to gender equality, non-discrimination, and a culture of respect, safety and inclusion.

Our factory has given women opportunities and financial means but also taught them to feel empowered and resilient in a still more male-dominated culture.

> Raj Mehta Director, Rosy Blue

As a pioneering WEPs signatory in the diamond industry, Rosy Blue has begun to model a shift at its factory in Kandivali, outside Mumbai, where it is breaking patterns of gender exclusion in recruitment. Women now make up around 14 per cent of factory floor staff as well as managers. It is still a small share, one that Rosy Blue intends to continue to expand. It is also a powerful signal of a company's potential to trigger shifts away from gender discriminatory norms.

Globally Rosy Blue has a 33 per cent female workforce. As a multinational company, it straddles vastly diverse country situations that reflect different stages in the journey to gender equality. The majority of its workforce in China, In the Indian state of Gujarat, however, the starting point is an environment where simply hiring women can be a challenge. Even women who do work outside the home tend to have lower levels of education and cluster in low-skilled jobs. Retaining those who join the factory is another concern. Passing through the factory gates each day puts them on the vanguard of social change. It is not easy being a minority of 58 women among 347 men, more so in a society with a long insistence on strict separation between female and male roles.

As part of maintaining a safe and healthy inclusive environment, the company offers annual training for all employees on human rights, non-discrimination and gender awareness. Following input from local factory managers, a tailored approach to help women navigate and thrive in the workplace was introduced, including a resilience training course. Designed to build confidence and encourage women to step forward with their ideas and grow in their careers, it was launched on International Women's Day in 2023.

Sessions delved into how to cultivate personal resilience and navigate workplace dynamics, and provided training on digital safety to break barriers to technology. Overall, the course was a chance for women to come together in a supportive space all their own, to share experiences and forge bonds with each other. Follow-up roundtables are being organized to ensure continued implementation, taking into consideration the voices of local workers.

Suchitra Dasmapatra, the factory's Deputy General Manager of IT, considers regular training, including the resilience course, as integral to cultivating inclusivity. Some women have come to the factory without any other work experience outside their homes. "The company has given women opportunities and financial means but also taught them skills and helped them to feel empowered," she says. "I joined in 2007 and never thought I would spend so many years in this company. I have stayed because it offers a culture of group work, freedom and respect."

Rosy Blue plans follow-up resilience training sessions and the development of digital learning resources, along with a mentorship programme on applying resilience strategies at work, backed by measurement to assess results and guide progress. It offers an example of how a company can support women marginalized by society in claiming new roles as valued members of the workforce.

#### About the company

Founded in 1960, Rosy Blue is a Belgian-Indian diamond alliance headquartered in Mumbai and Antwerp. With 2,643 employees, it has a presence in 10 countries, including China, India and Botswana. Rosy Blue signed the WEPs in 2011.



Photo: Rosy Blue







# **Principle 4**

### PROMOTE EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN

Invest in workplace policies and programmes that open avenues for women's advancement at all levels and across all business areas.

Encourage women to enter nontraditional job fields and revenue generating roles.

Ensure equal access to and participation in all company-supported education and training programmes.

Provide equal opportunities for formal and informal networking and mentoring programmes, considering employees' family responsibilities when scheduling activities.

Conduct training and awareness raising about the corporate gender equality policy and action plan, including on sexual harassment and unconscious bias.

### Bringing Women Into the Mix of an Inclusive Culture DANAT

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Women in general still hold only about a quarter of jobs in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).<sup>7</sup> Gemology has been no exception, which proved a challenge for DANAT when it first opened its doors as a gemological laboratory in 2017. It sought to support and implement recommendations to hire more female talent as advocated by Bahrain's Supreme Council for Women.

### A diverse environment in DANAT has allowed me to flourish.

Zainab Ali Senior Gemologist, DANAT

DANAT found a solution by reaching out to the University of Bahrain. It asked about the top-performing students in the sciences, calculating that their existing knowledge of physics, chemistry or biology would provide a sound basis for learning gemology. In the process, DANAT discovered that while women may still be rare in STEM employment, the majority of top science graduates at the university were women, which may in part be attributed to the encouragement of the Supreme Council for Women to bring more women students into higher education. While fully committed to meritocratic hiring, DANAT soon learned that encouraging highly qualified university students to apply for training at the Institute automatically resulted in a larger share of women. Further, women were top performers in the Institute's rigorous curriculum to become a certified gemologist. "They were academically strong candidates able to pick up a new science," says CEO Noora Jamsheer, "but they also quickly demonstrated a strong commitment and the flexibility to improve and grow."

DANAT has deliberately avoided applying gender quotas for recruitment or promotion. It wants to unify all employees, women and men, so they know they are part of the DANAT family based on their own merits, viewing this perspective as inherent to a culture of inclusion and mutual respect. Given the strong selection process, women join DANAT equipped to compete based on technical, academic and personal skills. The Institute also prioritizes nurturing internal talent and providing equal opportunities to support staff to rise up its ranks.

The success of DANAT's approach is evident in its high staff retention rate in STEM roles. Among the six women gemologists trained to date (out of eight in total), all have remained at DANAT. Since its inception, on average 60 per cent of STEM positions have been held by women. Currently, 56 per cent of senior and managerial positions are held by women throughout the Institute. Women employees have earned the most in-house promotions to the level of senior gemologist, with Zainab Ali being one example.

"A diverse environment in DANAT has allowed me to flourish," Ali says. "The different perspectives and skills of my male and female colleagues has provided a great depth of knowledge, developed a sense of teamwork and created numerous opportunities for growth."

Deliberate steps to sustain equal opportunities include using both women and men members in interview panels as a hedge against gender bias. To regularly update technical skills, external experts are brought to Bahrain, improving participation rates for women juggling family responsibilities.

An ongoing emphasis on creating a workplace that feels safe for everyone comprises regular training sessions for all staff on ensuring the workplace is free from intimidation and harassment, backed by rigorous complaint and grievance protocols. Engagement with a local women's rights organization has provided training based on real-life scenarios, and has proven important in further educating women staff about their rights and the workforce as a whole about acceptable behaviours.

DANAT intends to bring its experience in cultivating an inclusive workplace culture to other businesses in the Gulf region, and open conversations around the competitive advantages of having a workforce with diverse skills and ideas. Its early emphasis on developing women's skills has broken down STEM barriers and allowed women and men to experience the many benefits of working together.

#### About the company

Founded in 2017, the Bahrain Institute for Pearls and Gemstones (DANAT), is a gemological laboratory, education and research centre focused on testing and studying pearls, diamonds and coloured gemstones. Based in Bahrain, it has 55 employees. DANAT signed the WEPs in 2024.



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### Women's Work Is (Now) in the Lab INTERNATIONAL GEMOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

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Patriarchal ideas continue to influence people across Gujarat, India. Traditional beliefs often confine women to roles as homemakers or limit their careers to a pre-marriage phase. The gem industry, particularly in the city of Surat, has long mirrored these gender norms. As a leading hub for the global diamond industry, Surat is responsible for 90 per cent of the world's diamond cutting and polishing. For years, diamond testing and grading labs were predominantly staffed by men. Mr. Printer and Lab Director Karenna Shahani collaborated to launch the company's first recruitment drive for women trainees. An initial step was to distribute pamphlets in rural communities on the outskirts of Surat. The pamphlets urged families to allow their daughters to apply to work at the lab, emphasizing that the training would lead to permanent employment in a safe environment. In tandem, the company developed a women's apprenticeship course to help

From my experience, I can say that a diversity of perspectives can inspire creativity and innovation, and increase the overall productivity of the organization.

Tehmasp Printer

CEO, International Gemological Institute

A turning point came in 2021. During a recruitment drive for new gemologists, Tehmasp Printer, then the managing director of the International Gemological Institute (IGI) and now the company's CEO, observed a stark gender imbalance in the applicant pool. Recognizing the need for change, he resolved to address the gap and create more opportunities for women in the workforce. His vision was clear: to bring more women into the company and help them thrive within it. them acquire technical skills and overcome social and related obstacles to joining the workforce.

During interviews to screen candidates, many women were accompanied by their families, providing a chance to ask questions and gain further assurances. While 15 women were selected, 5 still opted out at the last minute for reasons including social and family pressures. From the first course, which graduated just 10 women, the programme has now expanded significantly, with over 170 women having completed it to date. The impact has been profound. Women have secured positions across the company, including in lab work, training and administration. Some have even become the primary breadwinners for their families, a transformative effect.

Varsha More remembers feeling anxious when she arrived for the training in 2022 but was soon comforted by a welcoming environment and greatly inspired by the many women she saw in company leadership positions. Today, she is a trainer in the programme, a testament to her own ambition and "good learning and opportunities".

Janki joined the first course in 2021 and has achieved a level of financial security that persuaded her fiancé to move to Surat so that she could keep her job. "I never expected this growth and position that IGI has given me," she says.

The value of the training has spread by word of mouth, and the company no longer has to persuade families to allow women to attend. IGI is closing in on gender parity among its employees in India, having reached it at managerial levels there and globally. It has found that gender balance comes with improved employee retention, greater productivity and a more inclusive corporate culture.

Mr. Printer emphasizes that the women recruited have developed a remarkable eye and attention to detail, a critical asset for gemologists. He plans to expand the training, providing more opportunities for women — and meeting surging market demands for gemologists.

IGI offers a study in how a commitment to transforming gender inequality can start in individual lives, and end up influencing business practices and society at large.

#### About the company

Founded in Belgium in 1975, the International Gemological Institute (IGI) is the world's largest independent lab for testing and grading diamonds, gemstones and jewelry. It has 31 labs and 19 schools in 10 countries in Europe, Northern Asia, Northern America and South Asia. IGI signed the WEPs in 2023.

Photo: IG

Leadership Workplace Marketplace Community Accountability

# Marketplace

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# **Principle 5**

### IMPLEMENT ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT, SUPPLY CHAIN AND MARKETING PRACTICES THAT EMPOWER WOMEN

Require business partners, contractors and suppliers to adopt the WEPs and to provide information on their gender equality policies and practices.

Establish supplier diversity programmes that actively seeks to expand business relationships with women-owned enterprises and support them in access.

Invest in women-led businesses and support gender-sensitive solutions to their barriers to accessing capital and financial products and services that meet their needs.

Remove harmful gender-based stereotypes in all media and company materials and advertising, by systematically respect women and men's dignity and depict them as empowered actors with progressive, intelligent and multi-dimensional personalities.

Ensure that company products, services and facilities are not used for human trafficking and/or labour or sexual exploitation.

**PRINCIPLE 5** 

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### Making the Case for Gender Data ITALPREZIOSI

From the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to major industry trade fairs such as the VincenzaOro, Italpreziosi has become a corporate ambassador for gender equality, speaking out about its value for society and business. Having brought the WEPs into its own operations, it encourages other businesses to do the same — and to measure the results. were women, their shares fell below 18 per cent in blue-collar jobs and senior management. Italian companies fared better on shares of women in white-collar jobs, at nearly 47 per cent, compared to 32 per cent at firms outside Italy. But the former was considerably below the latter in terms of shares in senior management, at 14 compared to 20 per cent.

We support a gender empowerment culture within our company and stakeholders. Culture is one of the most important means to make a positive change in our society.

> Ivana Ciabatti CEO, Italpreziosi

After it signed the WEPs in 2020 and adopted new corporate gender equality policies and measurable goals, Italpreziosi began considering practices at other firms it deals with — from banks to mine operators. Traditional know-yourcustomer onboarding requires aggregated data on women's representation. Italpreziosi decided to move a step further by asking business counterparts to complete an optional empoweryour-counterpart (EYC) questionnaire with more detailed information.

Based on 133 companies that completed the form in 2023, Italpreziosi found that while around 30 per cent of a total of over 7,300 employees

Italpreziosi has begun using figures like these to engage with counterparts on how to improve their gender equality track records, working through one-on-one meetings as well as events such as industry conferences. It prioritizes reaching companies with the highest social and environmental impacts and those with the lowest scores, providing tools to help rectify shortfalls and identify areas for potential improvement, given the counterpart's interest and willingness to collaborate. A personalized business-to-business approach has been particularly effective in helping counterparts to move beyond just rote data collection and fully grasp the value of such exercises to promote transparency and social responsibility, and leverage diverse skills for business benefits.

Such exchanges have already led some firms to sign the WEPs. Aris Mining Corp. is one example, noting a corporate "commitment to gender equality that allows us to eliminate social gaps and have more women in the different positions of the organization".

Italpreziosi plans to continually expand the types of data it collects and to enhance accuracy and relevance, including through regular feedback from counterparts to make the EYC questionnaires easier to complete. Recent additions comprise questions on signing the WEPs, tracking gender in counterparts' own supply chains and using Italpreziosi's Chain of Information website, which provides a compilation of tools to improve gender equality practices.

The company remains sensitive to issues that can arise in sharing data, such as corporate confidentiality. And it has seen questions come up about how counterparts can make progress on women's representation where jobs are still heavily dominated by men. To address such concerns, Italpreziosi has stressed that tracking gender equality can be a gradual process building on existing experiences. Many companies are already strongly compliant on anti-money laundering and environmental regulations. They also recognize that gender equality reporting is a next wave, given increasing global attention to it. Sooner or later, it will be an area where they will have to improve.

Italpreziosi's innovative business-to-business approach is an important support to move in that direction, combining evidence and ongoing education so that gender equality advances occur not just at one company but across supply chains.

#### About the company

Established in 1984, Italpreziosi S.p.A is a womanfounded, women-led producer, refiner and trader of precious metals, including investment gold. Headquartered in Arezzo, Italy, the company has 90 employees. It signed the WEPs in 2020.

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**PRINCIPLE 5** 

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### **Transformation Starts with a Question** JULIE SANDLAU VIETNAM

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Sometimes, change starts with a question. At Julie Sandlau Vietnam, the question was a relatively simple but important one. How many of our suppliers are owned by women and how many by men? A survey found that men owned nearly 90 per cent of local suppliers and 100 per cent of international ones. It was a revealing finding but not a surprising one. Globally, women may make up 90 per cent of jewelry purchasers. But supply chains that ferry rings and bracelets and necklaces into their hands are marked by gender inequalities. six months, and all employees who are pregnant, on maternity leave or with an infant have guaranteed employment until the child reaches at least 12 months. Not surprisingly, the company has garnered multiple awards as the best workplace in Hanoi.

As a WEPs signatory, Julie Sandlau Vietnam has pursued a strategy of paying particular attention to one principle every year. In 2022, it choose Principle 5, applying a know-your-counterpart process to look at gender issues in its supply

Our jewelry is designed to help women feel empowered and confident, so it is only right that it is made by empowered women, with equal rights and great opportunities.

> **Soren Roed Pedersen** *General Director, Julie Sandlau Vietnam*

Since Julie Sandlau Vietnam began operations in 2006, it has been known for its genderresponsive work environment. It made an early commitment to training and hiring women with little experience in the industry; today women make up three quarters of its employees. A benefits package includes provisions such as extra paid breaks during menstruation and stipends for childcare. Maternity leave is set at chain. A mapping with questions for suppliers, including about ownership, revealed extensive gender gaps. Fixing them came with a caveat, however: Some suppliers are determined by customers and could not be changed. But the company still had wide latitude to make choices about the rest. It began revising its selection by assessing suppliers of food, chemicals, equipment and travel services, among others, for similar levels of quality. Wherever possible, it selected those owned by women. Finding women-owned enterprises proved to be more difficult in some areas specific to the industry. Diamond, gold and silver products, for instance, are heavily dominated by male-owned firms. Some service providers balked at full transparency around ownership, which automatically disqualified them for contracts.

By the end of 2022, a transformation had taken place among 28 of the company's most significant and regular suppliers. The share of domestic suppliers owned by women had soared from 12 to 65 per cent. The share internationally, where customer preference plays a larger role, was still low but had improved from 0 to 27 per cent. Combining the two categories, the company is now at a supplier mix of 50 per cent women-owned.

Across its suppliers, even those that it cannot change, the company regularly raises awareness about gender equality and encourages application of the WEPs gender gap analysis tool. It shares ideas on aspects such as establishing a gender equality policy, holding gender stereotype awareness training, designing an inclusive physical workspace and providing equal opportunities. For many smaller Vietnamese companies, the WEPs are a relatively new concept. As a champion and pioneer, Julie Sandlau Vietnam demonstrates the benefits by pointing to its own workforce, where a positive, inclusive culture attracts and keeps the most gualified employees, and sustains high levels of innovation and productivity.

Julie Sandlau Vietnam is a relatively small company. But by embracing a big commitment, pushed by dedicated leadership and staff, it shows how quickly change can happen.

#### About the company

A jewelry manufacturer, Julie Sandlau Vietnam Co. Ltd. was established in 2006 and has 400 employees. It signed the WEPs in 2020 and has won multiple Asia-Pacific Regional WEPs awards, including in 2022, where it took first place in the "gender-responsive marketplace" category. **PRINCIPLE 5** 

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### From Empowering Mine to Responsible Market MONICA VINADER

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Rutendo Chigwajara likes to joke that the Zimbaqua mine is the father of her children. Before she began working there in 2019, she struggled to eke out a living in a remote rural area of Zimbabwe, a place with little to offer outside subsistence agriculture. The community treated her with scorn as an unmarried woman with three children. Zimbaqua employs 23 local women from the community surrounding the mine. Working in open surface pits, using the right safety equipment and with structured hours for work and rest, they extract aquamarine in stunning shades of blue. It is exactly the kind of mining operation that Monica Vinader wants to work with as a WEPs signatory committed to empowering

Meaningful change only happens when you dare to do things differently. We are proud to be challenging industry norms, enforcing greater transparency and caring for all those met along the way. I want to prove that luxury and sustainability can co-exist.

> Monica Vinader Chief Executive and Founder

But a decently paid job at Zimbaqua changed everything. She began in an entry level position as a pit worker, rose to become the mine's production manager, and is on her way through training to become a mechanic and excavator operator — all opportunities provided by Zimbaqua. "I am incredibly grateful for the improvements in our lives," she says. "My children can attend school without difficulty, to the extent that it appears they have both parents supporting them." women in its supply chain. The company's first jewelry collection with the mine's aquamarine debuted in August 2024, with an extension of the collection launching in early 2025.

Tracing gemstones is notoriously difficult. Suppliers want to protect their sources, and only a small share of shoppers purchases stones based on social or sustainability criteria. The lack of transparency has shielded gemstone mining from detailed questions about its generally poor track record on ethical and environmental practices. Monica Vinader sees greater traceability as a foundation for overhauling this system and building trust and integrity, for both shoppers and the industry. It is committed to full traceability within its supply chain as integral to strong ethical and environmental standards, even where costs are higher. In 2022, the company launched the pioneering Product Passport programme, a platform using blockchain technology to trace the origins of its jewelry from raw materials to design and crafting. Initially, 50 of its bestselling styles were included in the programme, extending to over 457 styles as of July 2024.

The relationship with Zimbaqua has gone a step further. A direct "mine-to-market" engagement makes breaches in standards hard to hide. Monica Vinader began the collaboration by visiting the mine, a first for the company, and bringing a human rights specialist on board to develop a bespoke mining audit. This scrutinized the mine's labour standards, health and safety, environmental responsibility and financial records, among other issues. The company also sees the impact of setting an example. All its Tier 1 jewelry and leather manufactures have signed the WEPs, and manufacturers increasingly express appreciation for a nudge towards complying with standards they know will attract other brands. Monica Vinader began a new three-year environmental, social and governance roadmap in 2024, with a strong focus on gender equality and women's empowerment in the supply chain.

As an industry pioneer, the company hopes the traceability and transparency of precious gemstones and metals will one day be the norm, not the exception. For now, it knows firsthand the difference an ethical mining operation can make in women's lives.

#### About the company

Founded in 2008 in London, Monica Vinader is a British jewelry producer and retailer with nearly 390 employees in the United Kingdom as well as, in order of market size, the United States, Hong Kong (SAR China) and Singapore. Monica Vinader signed the WEPs in 2022.

Photo: Monica Vinader

Leadership Workplace Marketplace Community Accountability

# Community

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# Principle 6

### PROMOTE EQUALITY THROUGH COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND ADVOCACY

Undertake community consultations with local leaders – women and men – to establish strong ties and programmes that benefit all community members.

Lead by example by showcasing concrete actions to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in local communities.

Leverage the organization's influence, alone or in partnership, to advance gender equality and collaborate with business partners, suppliers and community leaders to achieve results.

Work with community stakeholders and officials to eliminate discrimination and exploitation and to open opportunities for women and girls.

Promote and recognize women's leadership in, and contributions to, their communities and ensure their full and active participation in community consultation.

Use philanthropy and grants programmes to support community initiatives.

### Business as a Catalyst for Social Change CARTIER

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Business can be a catalyst for social change. That is the premise behind the Cartier Women's Initiative (CWI), an international entrepreneurship programme aimed at achieving a double return — women's empowerment and public goods benefiting societies at large — by investing in women impact entrepreneurs. up to US\$100,000 can be complemented with low-cost loans for an additional US\$200,000 to meet critical business needs.

Participants also gain business skills to adjust their strategy and/or operations and receive executive leadership coaching. They take part

### Women are powerful agents of change. Empowering women is vital to building fair, inclusive and peaceful societies.

Cyrille Vigneron

Chair of Cartier Culture and Philanthropy

Globally, one in two social impact entrepreneurs is a woman.<sup>8</sup> Yet women's start-ups receive half the funding of those created by men, even though they earn 10 per cent more revenue in their first five years.<sup>9</sup> More concerted action is needed to better support women entrepreneurs facing specific gender barriers, such as disproportionate care responsibilities, less developed networks and challenges in accessing finance.

To help address the gaps, each year, the Cartier Women's Initiative selects around three dozen women impact entrepreneurs with promising business ideas and models, based on a competitive selection process. Each receives a package of support to ignite business growth. Grants of in peer-to-peer and networking opportunities, and gain media visibility during an annual awards week and through social platforms throughout the year.

Since 2006, 330 impact entrepreneurs from 66 different countries have participated in the initiative, coming from fields as diverse as health, environmental services, apparel and fashion, information technology and biotechnology. Their businesses together contribute to all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Jackie Stenson offers an example. A 2014 participant, she joined Diana Jue to start a business, Essmart, in India. Their idea: Create a last-mile distribution network for efficient agricultural technologies and devices that save time and money for smallholder farmers. Since 2012, Essmart has impacted over 1.4 million people, providing over 330,000 products to improve livelihoods. Shop owners selling the products have boosted incomes by 16 to 24 per cent on average.

"CWI believed in us early in Essmart's journey and fostered a community of collaboration and support," Stenson says. "They continued to accompany us as we scaled up, providing working capital, and introducing us to partners and funders. I am incredibly grateful for their support and the lifelong community that has come with it!"

Among participants in the initiative, 77 per cent have maintained their businesses over time, with average revenues of US\$1 million in 2022. Some 88 per cent say they have improved their business skills and two thirds have entered new markets. The supportive community of over 800 participants, comprising grantees, past jury members and supporters, offers solidarity and a rich source of ideas, connections and advice. The initiative has also drawn on learning from the women it supports. In light of the significant obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs in science and deep technology, in 2021, it launched an annual award recognizing pioneers in these fields. It has also taken steps to address the lack of gender-disaggregated data on impact entrepreneurship, joining the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor research consortium to support the Women's Entrepreneurship Report.<sup>10</sup> Each year, the report offers comprehensive data on trends in countries across five regions. This deepens collective evidence on measures to support women entrepreneurs, such as by covering digitalization costs given a digital gender divide.

The Cartier Women's Initiative demonstrates how corporate philanthropy, beyond the provision of funding, can build lasting changes into business practices and societies by encouraging a new generation of women impact entrepreneurs.

#### About the company

Founded in 1847 in Paris, Cartier produces jewelry, watches, fragrances, leather goods and accessories. Part of the Richemont group, Cartier counts approximately 10,000 employees, and has over 200 stores in 60 countries. As a fully committed Maison, Cartier signed the WEPs in 2019.

Photo: Cartier

### Standing Up for Freedom from Violence POMELLATO

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They came from the worlds of fashion and justice, science and the media, academia and activism, all drawn by one cause: asking why violence against women continues — and what can be done to stop it.

At the helm of the packed 1,800-person event, held at the world-famous Teatro Manzoni in Milan to mark the 2023 International Day to End Violence against Women, was Sabina Belli. As a CEO, she is known for her skilled leadership of Pomellato and her championship of ending violence against women. It is a sensitive, somber topic that rarely features in celebrity or corporate events, even as one in three women experiences violence at some point in her life. men? It is a historical moment with a different awareness, knowing that this question of why must be answered."<sup>11</sup>

As part of the Kering Group, Pomellato has been active across the WEPs but with a visible focus on advocacy to end the chronic crisis of violence against women. It has committed to using its corporate voice to create platforms to amplify women's voices and shift gender biases that perpetuate violence.

Blending emotional appeals and personal stories in its advocacy, the company involves a wide range of people, including men, to press for social transformation on many fronts. Audiences

Pomellato stands up for women's rights to live free from violence and discrimination. To speak-up and to be believed. To say no and be respected. Women's rights are human rights.

> Sabina Belli CEO, Pomellato Group

Belli fearlessly pushed the audience to reflect on what is at stake: "Every day we hear about unacceptable cases of violence. Why is this issue universal? Why are women more victims of psychological, economic and sexual violence than include its affluent and largely female customers, who could have influential roles as advocates and allies but are rarely targeted by anti-violence campaigns. Besides the annual Teatro Manzoni event, Pomellato launches a campaign every year on 8 March, International Women's Day, to mobilize influential personalities. In 2024, a mix of men and women, from award-winning actress Jane Fonda to the President of the Court of Milan, Fabio Roia, urged everyone to become "social sentinels" who are alert to violence and ready to stop it. The company has seen growing momentum around the campaigns since they began in 2017. Social media engagement jumped by 117 per cent in 2024 over the previous year, while a collaboration with ELLE magazine resulted in nearly 11.3 million impressions.

Pomellato's support for ending violence against women started at home in Milan, where it is headquartered. Since 2015, it has supported CADMI, a local women's shelter assisting survivors of domestic violence. The two collaborate on the Teatro Manzoni event to raise both awareness and funds for the shelter. Pomellato staff mentor shelter residents; CADMI supports company employees in learning to detect signs of violence and assist survivors. The company's comprehensive package of assistance for

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CADMI

affected employees ranges from counselling to flexibility in working locations aimed at safety and well-being.

In advocating for change on a sensitive topic, Pomellato has learned to tailor communications to different regions of the world. It assiduously avoids victim-blaming stereotypes. And even as its campaigns have gained influence, it has come to see that making a difference is a longterm commitment that must be balanced with commercial prerogatives.

But Pomellato also views women's empowerment as the foundation for its brand, with its success and values inextricably linked. It offers an example of a company taking a courageous stand in fighting for women's rights and freedoms as fundamental to both a better business and a better world.

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#### About the company

Established in Milan in 1967, Pomellato is an Italian jewelry maison that became part of Kering in 2013. It has over 1,000 employees worldwide. Kering signed the WEPs in 2010.

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### Making a Case for Women's Safety TACHÉ

The pandemic brought the severity of genderbased violence home to Taché. In Botswana, the site of one of its major manufacturing operations, rates of violence began to soar across the country as lockdowns ground on. The number of women seeking help at shelters quadrupled. Twice as many requested counselling.

I now know where victims can be assisted, and that my job is to share this information.

> Gaone Magetse Employee, Taché

Even as need escalated, shelters came up short on resources and had to shut down in some cases. Taché, through the Taché Foundation, began assisting BGBVC, the largest non-governmental organization responding to gender-based violence in Botswana. The foundation covered rent, furniture, maintenance and even groceries and toiletries for a BGBVC shelter in the capital, Gaborone, which provides a haven for over 70 women and children a year. The company also purchased a vehicle for BGBVC to ferry women and children to safety. A year later, it extended support to a second BGBVC shelter in another city, Francistown. Today, Taché supports half the shelters operated by BGBVC, which assist 68 per cent of victims seeking refuge.

Long involved in giving back to a variety of community organizations, Taché found that its support in Botswana offered a chance to move a step further. Taking a page from industry practices largely built on lasting relationships, it cultivated close ties with BGBVC. This included regular meetings and detailed reporting on progress to guide continued support. Forging strong collaboration took time but was essential to understand challenges and tailor assistance that has met both immediate and longer-term needs.

Close engagement also led the company to reflect on its own workforce, which in Botswana is largely female. High rates of gender-based violence in the population at large suggested that at least some employees likely experienced it or knew people at risk. Taché began openly sharing information on where to find help and linked human resources mechanisms to report harassment or refer cases of gender-based violence to shelter experts and resources. Wellness days have brought in external experts to talk about issues including gender-based violence. Men's health days have opened opportunities to reflect on changes in cultural norms that support more peaceful relationships. The company has also encouraged its staff to become advocates, such as by taking part in annual walks against gender-based violence. Gaone Magetse, a Taché employee, describes becoming more sensitive to the issue and "more pro women's empowerment than before." She adds, "I now know where victims can be assisted, and that my job is to share this information."

Taché has come to see that supporting the shelters, while helping hundreds of women and children over the last few years, does not address the root causes of gender-based violence and everything that is required to curb it. Since acting on all fronts will surpass what any one organization can do, it plans to use its influence

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to bring more donors on board. Applying an approach called Track2Impact, it has begun sharing measurable results from the shelter work among its own business partners, with a view to raising awareness of the urgent need to stop gender-based violence and scale up commitments to change.

Taché shows how a global company can make a local difference. It is encouraging steps toward a safer and more equitable society in Botswana through its community engagement and its own workforce.

#### About the company

The Taché group, established in 1957, delivers highend products, services and solutions to international luxury jewelry brands. Taché signed the WEPs in 2023. Leadership Workplace Marketplace Community Accountability

# Accountability

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Measurement and Reporting • PRINCIPLE 7

# **Principle 7**

### MEASURE AND PUBLICLY REPORT ON PROGRESS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

Comple<mark>te yo</mark>ur company profile page to showcase your baseline for WE<mark>Ps im</mark>plementation.

Develop incentives and accountability mechanisms to accelerate WEPs implementation.

Collect, analyze and use gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data and benchmarks to measure and report results at all levels.

Regularly survey internal and external stakeholders to understand their perceptions and needs regarding gender equality.

Complete additional WEPs indicators to showcase continuous progress.

Report annually on progress in the implementation of the Women's Empowerment Principles, including on other platforms such as the company website.

Take the WEPs Gap Analysis Tool to establish a baseline for WEPs implementation.

Share lessons learned and good practices in the implementation of the WEPs and have UN Women publish them on the WEPs website in the form of case studies or WEPs Leaders interviews.

### **Backing Commitment** with Measurement GUCCI

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Gucci has a majority female workforce and progressive corporate policies supporting gender equality, including a 14-week gender-neutral parental leave. But having seen how reporting on sustainability could shift business practices, and in anticipation of legislative changes, in 2020, it took its first steps to track its own progress, introducing detailed monitoring of gender equality results. National Recovery and Resilience Plan prioritized measures to restore and accelerate progress. Legislation subsequently stipulated that private and public firms with more than 50 employees had to submit a biannual report on working conditions for women and men and provided tax incentives for achieving a gender equality certification.<sup>12</sup>

Gucci monitors both qualitative and quantitative performance indicators on culture and strategy, governance, human resources, opportunities for women's growth and inclusion, gender pay equity, support for parenting and work-life balance.

Since Gucci operates across diverse countries and contexts, it views a uniform diagnostic system as important to detect common gaps and guide corrective actions. Setting this up has begun in Italy, its home country, which has traditionally lagged on gender equality. The country ranks 104 out of 146 nations on the economic component of the World Economic Forum's gender parity index.

With gender equality indicators in general declining even further under the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Italian Government's

Even before the new laws came into effect, Gucci performed an in-depth analysis of its 7,000-member workforce in Italy, summarizing the findings in a comprehensive report probing obstacles to gender equality. Findings helped shape a real-time monitoring system to assess and steer progress across corporate offices, retail stores and factories in Italy on quantitative performance indicators. Today Gucci monitors both qualitative and quantitative performance indicators on culture and strategy, governance, human resources, opportunities for women's growth and inclusion, gender pay equity, support for parenting and work-life balance. Starting in 2022, annual corporate reporting began chronicling issues such as turnover by sex, the prevention of harassment and the uptake of parental leave by men. Detailed indicators measure career trajectories, tracking the shares of women who are responsible for one organizational unit, are promoted to senior leadership positions, are present in the first line of reporting to top management and have budget authority.

Based on the monitoring system, a third-party provider conducted a gender audit that in 2023 made Gucci the first major Italian luxury house to attain the gender equality certification outlined in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

As importantly, regular monitoring has triggered new advances within the company. While Gucci has had a Global Equity Board since 2019, comprising senior company leaders and external advisers to foster diversity, equity and inclusion, it recently created a specific Gender Equality Steering Committee. A three-year organizational culture plan includes internal communications and training on unconscious bias. Furthermore, in alignment with the Kering Group's target of achieving gender parity at all levels and ensuring salary equity in all functions by 2025, Gucci has analysed 45 countries where it has operations. This led to the first global pay equity plan, which narrowed detected pay differences. A second plan is in place to close remaining disparities.

The certification earned in Italy applies only to the workforce there but Gucci plans to introduce more systematic measurement globally. It offers an example of a company that has made tangible commitments to gender equality and then gone a step further by collecting hard evidence to keep progress on course.

#### About the company

Gucci was founded in Florence, Italy, in 1921 as a luggage atelier. Today, it is a global brand in luxury fashion owned by the Global Luxury Group Kering. It has over 21,000 employees and directly operates over 500 stores on six continents. Kering signed the WEPs in 2010. **PRINCIPLE 7** 

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### SAMPLE KPIS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE COMPANIES

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The WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework provides WEPs signatories with a holistic set of 69 indicators that are most likely to advance gender equality across corporate value chains.<sup>13</sup>

For the purpose of this publication, a shorter list of proposed indicators that could be used to assess the gender-responsiveness of companies include:

### Qualitative

The company

Is a WEPs signatory (y/n)



Has a gender action plan (y/n)



Reports publicly on gender equality/WEPs (y/n)

Has a gender-responsive supplier code of conduct and/or gender-responsive contractual provisions for suppliers. (y/n)

Has a confidential, anonymous grievance, resolution, reporting and non-retaliation mechanism and procedure to address and respond to incidents of violence and harassment (y/n)

Implements gender-responsive hiring and promotion practices (y/n)

Offers family-friendly workplace benefits, facilities and services (y/n)



### **Quantitative**<sup>14</sup>



Women and men employees (%)

Women and men in senior management positions (%)

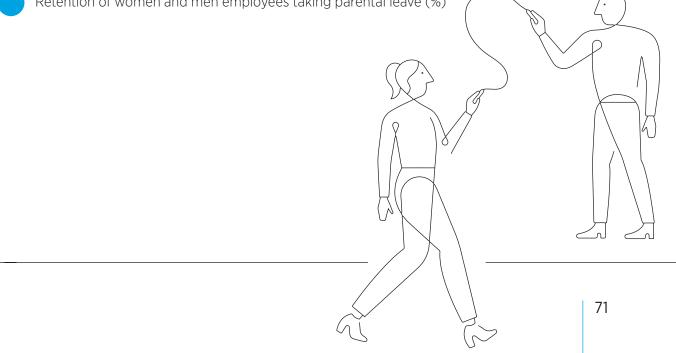
Women and men on the company board (%)



Newly hired employees – women and men (%)

Promotions and career opportunities – women and men (%)

Retention of women and men employees taking parental leave (%)



### Annex: WEPs Resources



## Equality Means Business

Handbook: Equality Means Business: WEPs Brochure | WEPs



**STARTING THE WEPs JOURNEY** 

Assessment: The WEPs Gender Gap Analysis Tool | WEPs

**LEADERSHIP** 



Toolkit: WEPs Toolkit | WEPs



Guidance: Building Inclusive Boards to Achieve Gender Equality



Tracking: WEPs Transparency and Accountability Framework - A Reference Guide | WEPs

ACCOUNTAB



Resource: Call to Action for Gender Parity on Boards



Guidance: Gender-Responsive Procurement

### MARKETPLACE



Assessment: <u>WEPs Gender-Responsive</u> Procurement Assessment Tool



Case study: <u>Advancing Gender Equality</u> <u>through Gender Responsive</u> <u>Procurement in the Watch and</u> <u>Jewelry Industry | WEPs</u>

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#### Emerging Practices • Advancing Gender Equality in the Watch and Jewelry Industry



Guidance: Understanding Intersectionality: Targeting all Forms of Discrimination in the World of Work

### WORKPLACE



Guidance: <u>Deep Dive into Diversity,</u> <u>Equality and Inclusion | WEPs</u>



Guidance: Mentoring in the Workplace



Guidance: <u>Attracting and Retaining Talent</u> <u>Through Inclusive Family</u> <u>Friendly Policies</u>



Guidance: <u>Company-Supported Early</u> <u>Childhood Education</u> <u>and Care | WEPs</u>



Checklist: Checklist for Gender-Responsive Recruitment



Template: Gender-Based Violence and Harassment at Work Policy



Template: Domestic Violence Policy Template



COMMUNITY

Case study: <u>The Power of Working Together:</u> <u>Emerging Practices that Advance</u> Women's Economic Empowerment

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