

WOMEN4BUSINESS Daring Circle Report

Inclusive sourcing and women's entrepreneurship: Accelerating the recovery for business, economy and society

PARIS, 24 MARCH 2021 – The Women's Forum for the Economy & Society publishes the Women4Business Report – [*Inclusive sourcing and women's entrepreneurship: Accelerating the recovery for business, economy and society.*](#)

The Covid-19 crisis has led to critical supply chain disruption, and has brought to light the importance of building supply chain resilience through the inclusion of diverse and women-led businesses. Yet government stimulus targeted at women-dominated sectors has been marginal, with only 10% of the fiscal and economic measures taken by 130 countries bringing a gender-responsive lens to help businesses through the crisis.¹ Without widespread and collective action, the pandemic clearly threatens to erode progress towards gender equality and women's economic empowerment.

Supporting women entrepreneurs and promoting gender-inclusiveness in supply chains will be key to accelerating an inclusive and sustainable recovery. The Women4Business report reveals how organisations and governments can achieve such objectives with the Women4Business **Toolkit for Action**, concrete recommendations from the **Women's Forum call to G7 leaders**, and a new pilot programme with the immediate aim of supporting women entrepreneurs during the pandemic.

The report is published within the framework of the Women4Business Daring Circle, created by the Women's Forum and led by P&G, with the objective of promoting women's entrepreneurship and fostering women's economic empowerment in supply chains.

The **Women4Business survey**, led by Knowledge Partner Kearney, highlights that belief in a strong business case for diverse supply chains is growing and that businesses are becoming increasingly conscious of gender-diversity in their supply chains. 39% of the organisations surveyed have implemented a supplier diversity or gender-responsive procurement programme, up from 23% in 2019. However, key barriers to achieving supplier diversity still exist in Europe, mainly due to the lack of information and support, with half of the Chief Procurement Officers surveyed expressing a need for more information and best practices knowledge.

To address these key barriers, the **Women4Business Toolkit to Action** provides companies with essential tools to implement diverse supplier programmes over the long term. These include the **Inclusive Sourcing Journey**, a digital diagnostic tool to assess the maturity, reach and impact of an organisation's supplier diversity and gender-inclusive sourcing, and the **legal guide for positive action**, developed in collaboration with Clifford Chance, to provide clarity on the legal framework

¹ UNDP & UN Women (2020), *Covid-19 Global Gender Response Tracker* (Accessed [here](#))

for positive discrimination and affirmative action in procurement. In the short term, to respond to the urgency of the current crisis, the Women's Forum, in collaboration with P&G and HEC Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center, is also launching **WomenEntrepreneurs4Good**, an accelerator programme, which will equip women entrepreneurs with critical resources and capabilities to innovate and grow businesses aligned with the European Green Deal strategy.

"Across the world, women face greater challenges than men in accessing business and career opportunities. If women had the same opportunities as men, we would have strong, positive GDP impacts growing over time, higher levels of employment and productivity and could respond better to global challenges like climate changes and technology disruption. Thus, the Women4Business Daring Circle now raises a clarion call for united action to help build back better and to accelerate a She-covery for all." -**Chiara Corazza, Managing Director, Women's Forum for the Economy & Society**

"Economic inclusion can only be achieved through commitment, collaboration and innovative efforts such as those initiated within the Daring Circle. The Women's Forum provides the platform to drive action for system-wide change as well as through capacity and business building for female entrepreneurs. Together with HEC Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center, we are excited to launch #WomenEntrepreneurs4Good in support to women-led enterprises who have a role to play in the transition to a green economy." -**Jamila Belabidi, Global Women's Economic Empowerment and Supplier Diversity, Procter & Gamble**

"With the pandemic already widening the gender and economic equality gap globally, there is no room for complacency. Increasing women's representation in supply chains will give businesses improved ability to meet diverse customer needs, bring better innovation and competition, and enhance their overall brand. Yet, for real change to happen, it will mean securing the highest level of commitment and buy-in from leaders, and developing gender strategies that aim to tackle the root causes of inequality in the supply chain." -**Imran Dassu, Partner, Kearney**

"Most businesses are very aware of the fact that discriminatory measures are generally not allowed – including so called 'positive discrimination'. Companies often struggle to draw the line between a permitted and often encouraged affirmative action, and a prohibited discriminatory measure, due especially to the unclear legal framework around this issue. This knowledge gap is highly damaging, as the risk of falling on the wrong side is very daunting and will often discourage companies from taking any action in support of diversity and promotion of women's representation. Against this background, with our partners and the Women's Forum, we have worked to create a practical guide, aimed at providing businesses with concrete guidance as to what can or cannot be done to support supplier diversity actions." -**Katrin Schallenberg, Partner, Clifford Chance**

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About the Women4Business Daring Circle

The Women4Business Daring Circle is committed to promoting and accelerating women's economic empowerment in business and supply chains. It highlights the critical role of women's entrepreneurship and leadership in providing the innovative solutions and crucial services needed for an inclusive economic recovery.

The Women4Business Daring Circle is led by P&G, in collaboration with BNP Paribas, Exxon Mobil, Johnson & Johnson, L'Oréal and Publicis Groupe. The Circle is supported by Knowledge Partner Kearney, Insight Partner Clifford Chance, and Institutional Partners WEConnect International and UN Women, and HEC as Academic Partner, along with a diverse network of experts and corporate champions.

About the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society

The Women's Forum is a global platform highlighting women's voices and vision to address humanity's most crucial challenges and shape a more inclusive economy and society. Through convening and working groups, it provides a unique space for business and policy makers to work together to place inclusion and gender equality at the heart of economic growth, sustainability, and wellbeing. The Women's Forum develops concrete toolkits, Charters, and recommendations to accelerate inclusive growth and reduce inequalities through the empowerment of women across society. Upcoming Meetings: Women's Forum G20 Italy 17-19 October 2021, Women's Forum Global Meeting 14-18 November 2021. More information on www.womens-forum.com

Click [here](#) for the Women4Business Daring Circle report