مجلس الإمارات للتوازن بين الجنسين
UAE GENDER BALANCE COUNCIL

United Arab Emirates



PLEDGE TO PROGRESS

Case studies from the 2026 SDG 5 Pledge awards:
Exploring their achievements, leading practices and measurable impact.

EXEMPLARY INITIATIVE ADVANCING GENDER BALANCE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AWARD

THE 2026 WINNER IS SCHNEIDER ELECTRIC

ABOUT THE AWARD

This award highlights the innovation, impact, and scalability of a company's flagship gender balance initiative. It celebrates positive societal impact through partnerships, advocacy, capacity building and knowledge sharing.

INITIATIVE

FEM in STEM mentorship program

OVERVIEW

FEM in STEM is a mentorship program initiative led by Schneider Electric in partnership with IMPACTIV to support female university students in STEM fields as they transition from academia into the workplace. Through mentorship, industry exposure, soft skills development and networking.

LAUNCH DATE

- Launched in **2024**, following COP28.

INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

- Soft skills enhancement 1-1 mentorship program
- Connects 3rd and 4th year university students with Schneider Electric's professionals for mentorship and guidance.
- Provides industry exposure as well as networking and soft skills building opportunities
- Grew from 25 mentees in Cohort 1 to 50 mentees in Cohort 2.
- Cohort 2 represented 13+ nationalities

KEY IMPACT

53 → 85 Applications	25 → 50 Mentees	24 → 40 Mentors
186 → 365 Meeting	46% Cohort 1 mentees secured a job or an internship within 6 month	





CHAMPIONS OF GENDER BALANCE IN POLICIES & PROGRAMS AWARD

THE 2026 WINNER IS STANDARD CHARTERED

ABOUT THE AWARD

This award honours companies that have embedded gender balance into the core of their organizational policies and translated those commitments into meaningful action. It celebrates organizations that lead by example: advancing equity in recruitment, promotion, compensation, and employee wellbeing.

INITIATIVE

Embedding Gender Balance Through Inclusive Leadership, Equal Pay, Family Support And Career Advancement Policies.

OVERVIEW

Standard Chartered UAE has embedded gender balance into its organisational strategy through measurable and transparent policies that support women at every stage of their careers. These include equal parental leave regardless of gender, flexible working arrangements, menopause support, pay equity reviews, transparent recruitment and promotion frameworks, leadership development programmes and sponsorship initiatives for high-potential female talent. Gender balance is not treated as a standalone initiative but as a core enabler of talent sustainability, employee wellbeing, leadership effectiveness and long-term business growth.

LAUNCH DATES

- **Flexible Working Model** (2021)
- **Enhanced Global Parental Leave (20 weeks paid regardless of gender)** (December 2023)
- **Menopause Medical Benefits Expansion** (October 2023)
- **People Leader Upskilling Series:** launched to strengthen inclusive leadership culture (March 2026)
- **SOAR Women's Leadership Programme: ongoing leadership development initiative** (from June 2021)
- **Women in Tech Programme** (March 2019)

RECOGNISED POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

- Menopause-friendly policies including medical coverage and workplace education.
- Leadership development and sponsorship programmes including SOAR and targeted initiatives for high-potential female talent.
- Transparent recruitment and promotion practices designed to eliminate bias and broaden access to opportunities.
- Women in Tech programme supporting female entrepreneurs and founders.
- Inclusive wellbeing strategy covering mental, physical, legal and financial wellbeing for employees and families.

KEY IMPACT

No adjusted gender pay gap between women and men in the UAE equivalent roles, business areas and grades.

Female promotion rate exceeded male promotion rate in 2025 (3% vs 2%).

20 weeks (140 days) fully paid parental leave available to all parents regardless of gender.

Women represent 50% of the global Management Team and 45% of the global workforce.

SOAR programme outcomes: 24% promotion rate, 36% succession placement rate and 0% attrition.

34% of women comprise mid to senior level positions in the UAE.

62% of UAE employees have adopted flexible working arrangements.



80% of colleagues rate psychological safety favourably, representing a 3% improvement since 2024.

PIONEER OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP REPRESENTATION AWARD

THE 2026 WINNER IS ADNOC

ABOUT THE AWARD

This award recognises the company that demonstrates meaningful progress in women's representation across leadership and decision-making roles through strong talent pipelines, impactful policies and sustained accountability. This award celebrates strategic commitment to lasting structural change and advancing women's leadership.

INITIATIVE

ADNOC Group Gender Balance: Advancing Women's Leadership Representation through Structured Governance and the Gender Balance Committee 2030 Strategy

OVERVIEW

Over a decade, ADNOC has built a governance-led gender balance programme, backed by the executive commitment of H.E. Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, ADNOC Group MD & CEO. The Gender Balance Committee, chaired by senior leadership, drives a five-pillar framework (Leadership Accountability; Inclusive Culture & Safety; Measurement & Transparency; Talent Lifecycle; Enablers & Policies) that embeds gender equity at every stage of the employee journey. Women now hold 25.2% of senior leadership roles, including 2 CEOs, 6 Chiefs and 21 board members, in full alignment with the UAE Gender Balance Council, UAE Economic Vision 2031 and UN SDG 5.5.

LAUNCH DATES

- **2016–2018:** ADNOC Gender Balance Committee established, focused on increasing the number of women in leadership roles.
- **2018–2023:** Showcasing women's contributions, driving a culture of inclusivity and integrating women on site.
- **November 2023:** The Challenger Program, a UAE industrial gender balance network founded by EGA and major UAE industrial companies.
- **Beyond 2026:** Gender Balance Committee 2030 Strategy, with a 30% women-in-leadership target under Vision **2028.**

INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Governance:** Senior-led Gender Balance Committee with targets, resource allocation, KPI monitoring, and transparent reporting.
- **Talent Development:** Targeted attraction, development, promotion, and succession pathways for high-potential women.
- **Inclusive Culture:** Unconscious Bias training, psychological safety, and zero-tolerance policies.
- **Family Support:** Enhanced parental leave, flexible working, return-to-work support, and childcare facilities.
- **Empowerment Programmes:** #IAmRemarkable workshops, leadership engagement, and networking opportunities.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborations with Aurora50, Challenger Program, WiSER, and UN Women's Empowerment Principles.
- **Recognition:** Annual ADNOC Gender Balance Awards celebrating leadership and impact.

KEY IMPACT

25.2% women in senior leadership, 2 women CEOs, and 6 women Chiefs.

Parent-Friendly Label awarded by the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority.

Every ADNOC Group company board now includes women.

Forward targets: 30% representation in middle and senior management appointments by 2028.

14.4% women in the workforce, with consistent year-on-year growth and ~900 females working in operational sites.



620+ women trained on different workshops (unconscious bias and #IAmRemarkable) with a 95% confidence boost.

FAMILY-FOCUSED EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD
THE 2026 WINNER IS DELOITTE

Deloitte.
Together makes progress

ABOUT THE AWARD

The award recognises companies that place families at the heart of their workplace culture by implementing inclusive, supportive, and flexible policies and practices that empower employees to succeed both at work and at home, while advancing wellbeing, gender balance, and long-term organisational excellence.

INITIATIVE

Advancing Inclusion through Family-Friendly Policies and Practices at Deloitte Middle East

OVERVIEW

Deloitte Middle East (DME) empowers and supports working parents and their families across the UAE by creating inclusive workplaces where everyone feels they can thrive at work and home. Aligned with UAE Vision 2031 and commitment to the SDG 5 Pledge, DME recognizes that family support and gender inclusion are mutually reinforcing priorities. This commitment is reflected in leadership sponsorship, flexible working practices and support for career development. Leaders are encouraged to model inclusive behaviors and foster supportive environments where people feel valued and family commitments are acknowledged and respected.

INITIATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hybrid working:** The HybridWorks model offers flexibility in where and how people work, in line with the firm, clients and team needs. This supports working parents in managing their professional and family commitments.
- **Agile working policies:** Flexible policies and working arrangements support people in managing professional and personal responsibilities. These include bereavement leave, personal emergency leave, sick leave, purchase of additional annual leave, part-time work arrangements, flexible work arrangements and sabbatical leave.
- **Parental leave and policies:** Parental leave provisions include 120 days of maternity and 15 days of paternity leave, alongside options for unpaid leave extensions. Additional provisions include leaves related to miscarriage, ectopic or molar pregnancy leave for parents, adoption leave, and nursing support, in accordance with applicable policies.
- **Family-centred benefits:** Depending on policy and eligibility, employees can access fertility support, children's medical insurance, boarder healthcare and behavioral support, housing allowance, childcare and education support, and family-related discounts to help manage family responsibilities.
- **Nursing rooms:** Dedicated nursing rooms are available across the UAE and wider region, providing privacy and practical support for nursing mothers.
- **Wellbeing and mental health support:** The Deloitte Employee Assistance Program provides employees and their families with free, 24/7/365 counselling and resources on psychological, legal, and financial matters. Parenting resources, wellbeing webinars, and the Wellbeing Hub provide additional support.
- **Career continuity and return-to-work support:** Women's growth and leadership are supported at critical career moments, including parenthood. This includes Returnity, a 16-week return-to-work program offering tailored support across the parental leave journey. Flexible working options, wellbeing resources, structured reintegration, and personalized return plans help parents transition back to work.
- **Mentoring, sponsorship, and leadership development:** Structured development opportunities support women, including working mothers and national talent in progressing their careers. These are complemented by boarder programs such as FRAME leadership journey for senior managers to build advanced leadership capabilities to lead at the next level, alongside continuous learning opportunities that build confidence, increase visibility and leadership readiness.
- **Inclusive culture and awareness:** The inclusion strategy promotes fairness, respect, and accountability through inclusive leadership and unconscious bias learning, allyship initiatives, speak-up and ethics channels, mental health champions, and awareness campaigns. This helps create supportive environments where family commitments are respected and people feel comfortable seeking support.
- **Community and belonging:** Family-inclusive events, wellbeing activities, and volunteering opportunities help strengthen connecting and belonging. Examples include Ramadan gatherings, Bring Your Kids to Work, sports and social events. Networking opportunities are also provided through DIWAN (Deloitte Inclusion Woman & Wellbeing Advocacy Networks) providing support groups and shared learning for people, and also for working mothers to by share experience and build community across the region.

KEY IMPACT

Women representation: Supporting Women representation and advancement remains a priority, with initiatives focused on engagement, development and career progression across different life stages.

Support for working parents: Family-focused policies and flexible working practices are designed to support working parents; career continuity and long-term engagement with the firm, reinforcing its broader commitment to inclusion and wellbeing.

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info@gbc.gov.ae @UAEGBC UAE Gender Balance Council or scan the QR code