Gender Diversity Guideline

For the Renewable Energy Industry

Prepared by:

SAWEA
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A shared
Call to action

The renewable energy sector holds the power to transform the broader South Africa's economy but true transformation demands inclusion. Today, women remain underrepresented across technical, leadership and entrepreneurial roles in the wind and solar industries.

This Gender Diversity Guideline - developed jointly by SAWEA and SAPVIA - offers a practical roadmap to change. It moves beyond aspiration to action, giving companies clear steps, targets and tools to build workplaces where gender diversity is valued. This Guideline reflects our shared commitment to advancing gender diversity and inclusion across South Africa's renewable energy sector. By embedding these principles into policies, practices, and everyday actions, organisations can foster equitable workplaces where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. This is not only a moral imperative but a strategic advantage, strengthening innovation, leveraging on diverse perspectives, collaboration, and resilience in the industry.

As we move forward, let this Guideline serve as both a reference and an inspiration - guiding leaders, employees, and stakeholders in building a sector that values talent and potential over bias, and that actively nurtures diversity at every level. Together, we can make gender equity the standard, not the exception.

Diversity is not a "nice-to-have" , it is an imperative to include half of the population, the engine of innovation, resilience and growth. Together, let's break barriers, unlock potential and shape a renewable energy industry that reflects the talent and ambition of all South Africans.

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PART 01: Setting the Scene

1. Why Gender Diversity Matters in Renewable Energy

Policymakers and the private sector, from global to national levels, are increasingly committed to promoting gender diversity in renewable energy—particularly in utility-scale solar and wind. This support is helping to dismantle barriers for women and aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals 5 and 7, which hold stakeholders accountable for gender representation in the sector.

South Africa has constitutional commitments to human dignity, equality and non-sexism. To further support this commitment, the Department of Electricity and Energy established the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) Strategy (2021–2025). Through this strategy, the Department intended to promote women empowerment and gender equality and translate these commitments into practice.

2. Current State of Gender Representation

SAWEA, SAPVIA and the DEE conducted a Study on Gender Diversity in the Wind and Solar Energy Industries in South Africa. The study highlights the following findings:

- 32% of global oil, gas, and renewables jobs are occupied by women
- Women make up ~21% of the total workforce across wind and solar.
- Only 12% of engineering/technical positions are held by women.
- Only 14% of executive and senior management positions are female.
- Women entrepreneurs face limited investment and lack of access to capital.

3. Current State of Gender Representation

This Guideline aligns with SAWEA and SAPVIA's goal of promoting gender diversity and inclusion in renewable energy and aims to operationalise the WEGE Strategy.

Focus areas in the WEGE Strategy 2021-2025	Enabling environment	Equal opportunities	Gender mainstreaming	Barrier Free Workplaces
	Create an enabling policy environment for translating government commitment to gender equality into reality.	Work towards achievement of equality of opportunities and treatment within the DMRE, SOEs, the energy sector / broader society.	Ensure that gender considerations are integrated effectively into the DMRE, SOEs and energy sector policies, programmes, and projects.	Advocate for the promotion of new attitudes, values, behaviours, and a culture of respect for all human beings in the sector.
Objectives of the Gender Diversity Guideline	Set specific targets that pull the main levers to create an enabling environment.	Set targets to change the structures to create equal opportunities.	Identify the main focus areas and interventions that will drive gender mainstreaming.	Set specific targets to ensure a supportive and barrier free work environment.
	Establish, and monitor, gender diversity targets at all levels: industry targets, IPPs and companies.			

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4. How We Created This Guideline

This Guideline was developed through:

- Review of existing research and international best practice.

- Detailed analysis of the Gender Diversity Baseline Study.

- Consultations with SAWEA, SAPVIA and the Gender Diversity Working Group.

- Surveys of renewable energy companies.

- Expert interviews and workshops with DEE and industry representatives.

The research and consultations outlined above gave us both a clear picture of the current state of gender diversity in South Africa's renewable energy sector, and informed the roadmap for action. Drawing on these insights, SAWEA and SAPVIA distilled the findings into a practical framework - ten interconnected elements that any company, regardless of size, can adopt to drive measurable change. Part 2 introduces these elements and explains how they work together to build a more inclusive, equitable and high-performing renewable energy industry while offering actionable guidance for organisations, leaders, and employees alike. It is here that the principles we value are translated into concrete steps for meaningful change.

" **South Africa has constitutional commitments to human dignity, equality and non-sexism.**
To further support this commitment, the Department of Electricity and Energy established the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Strategy. "

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PART 02: The Guideline Framework

Ten Elements for Change

The Guideline consists of **ten (10) key elements** aligned to the WEGE Strategy and informed by the *Study on Gender Diversity in the Wind and Solar Energy Industries in South Africa*. An overview of these elements highlight the relevance to gender diversity while a more detailed implementation guideline can be found in Part 03:

Enabling Environment		Equal Opportunities			Gender Mainstreaming		Barrier-Free Workplace		Other
Building Inclusive Policies	Leadership that Champions Diversity	Fair & Inclusive Procurement	Growing Careers for All	Closing the Pay Gap	Opening Doors for New Talent	Embedding Inclusive Norms and Values	Making Site-Based Work Safe and Welcoming	Creating Family-Friendly Workplaces	Investing in Community Impact
Amend policies that don't support women and needs. Guide: Review HR manuals, code of conduct, and benefits annually	Strengthen advocacy and ensure leadership supports gender diversity. Guide: Set diversity KPIs for leadership teams.	Prioritise procurement from women-owned companies. Guide: Add supplier diversity requirements in procurement	Ensure representation across seniority levels and roles. Guide: Establish mentorship & training programs.	Close pay gap between men, women. Guide: Conduct annual pay audits and publish results transparently	Diversify recruitment with internships and graduate programs. Guide: Partner with universities & technical colleges.	Address sexism and gender stereotypes. Guide: Run awareness campaigns and mandatory bias training.	Ensure safety & improve working conditions. Guide: Provide PPE, safe transport, and gender-sensitive site facilities	Shift workplace culture to family-friendly. Guide: Flexible hours, parental leave, and childcare support. Other Community initiatives	Develop school relationships for maths/science exposure. Guide: Create STEM outreach programs, scholarships, and mentorship

" It is important that leadership as well as all employees are in support of these policies and contribute to implement them."

1. Building Inclusive Policies 🏢

Inclusive company policies that focus on gender diversity are an essential element of gender diversity and inform all structure, efforts, and interventions within a company. It is important that leadership as well as all employees are in support of these policies and contribute to implement them. Company policies are an important element of providing required support when employees experience challenges in relation to gender diversity.

- *Companies can conduct an internal review and ensure company policies are inclusive by reviewing relevant policies and rules in line with the main themes in the Gender Diversity Guideline and update all documents.*
- *Commitment to policies throughout the company is important and can be achieved by assessing current perceptions and launching communication campaigns.*
- *To respond to specific challenges as well as discrimination, harassment and sexism, responsibilities must be clearly distributed, and procedures in place to gather and manage complaints. This can be strengthened by specific governance and monitoring system.*
- *A monitoring system can help to continuously develop policies, so they speak to employee's requirements and a changing environment.*
- *To ensure relevance and accordance with the target objectives by setting up a regular assessment process and sharing best practices and experiences with other companies.*

2. Leadership that Champions Diversity 👪

Inclusive company policies that focus on gender diversity are an essential element of gender diversity and inform all structure, efforts, and interventions within a company. It is important that leadership as well as all employees are in support of these policies and contribute to implement them. Company policies are an important element of providing required support when employees experience challenges in relation to gender diversity.

- *Specific targets for leadership are important to track and incentivise achievements in relation to gender diversity by setting SMART targets for leadership as part of their KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).*
- *Leadership commitment can be strengthened through a leadership belief audit and alignment workshops.*
- *To help leaders develop a good understanding and awareness for gender diversity, companies can equip all leadership with required knowledge in relation to gender diversity by running or organising participation in DEI workshops with focus on intersectionality.*
- *Companies can also create strong systems of advocating effectively for women.*

"Company policies are an important element of providing required support when employees experience challenges in relation to gender diversity."

3. Fair & Inclusive Procurement

Procurement and the selection of as well as collaboration with suppliers are a key lever to increase gender diversity. Companies should become aware of the procurement statistics and what percentage of contracts are awarded to companies owned by women, so that they can alter processes to create opportunities and strengthen the capacity of suppliers owned by women. In addition, companies can support female entrepreneurs in the renewable energy industry.

- *Companies can conduct an internal review and ensure company policies are inclusive by reviewing relevant policies and rules in line with the main themes in the Gender Diversity Guideline and update all documents.*

- *Commitment to policies throughout the company is important and can be achieved by assessing current perceptions and launching communication campaigns.*

- *To respond to specific challenges as well as discrimination, harassment and sexism, responsibilities must be clearly distributed, and procedures in place to gather and manage complaints. This can be strengthened by specific governance and monitoring system.*

- *A monitoring system can help to continuously develop policies, so they speak to employee's requirements and a changing environment.*

- *To ensure relevance and accordance with the target objectives by setting up a regular assessment process and sharing best practices and experiences with other companies.*

4. Growing Careers for All

Supporting women in their career development is an essential component to ensure more women are employed in all levels of seniority and all professions. Specific support programmes are an important part of career development and ideally cover the entire career process starting with programmes for talented youth prior to joining the renewable energy sector up to interventions at board level.

Companies can use specific support programmes, such as leadership and mentorship programmes, that are dedicated to women. The focus must be on all professions and roles in which women are underrepresented, especially technical roles.

- *Companies can offer support programmes for women at higher education institutes to equip them with the required skills and expertise to join the renewable energy industry.*

- *Specific company programmes can help women and non-binary individuals grow their skills and help with their career progression.*

- *Inviting and encouraging senior and experienced women to act as mentors to the junior employees can also play an important role in career development.*

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5. Closing the Pay Gap 📁

Closing the gender pay gap is an essential component of ensuring equity and inclusion within a company. Equal pay is a key element of gender diversity, especially considering the fact that women, on average, still earn less in the industry on average but also in the same positions compared to their male counterparts. Transparency, awareness, and a consciousness towards gender specific needs are critical to equal pay.

- *To increase transparency, companies can use standard remuneration, specific policies and guidelines and transparent salary information to close the gender pay gap*

- *Specific communication material and platforms can be helpful to increase awareness about the extent of the gender pay gap and the main reasons that explain it.*

- *To increase a sense of consciousness among decision makers and individuals negotiating remuneration packages on behalf of the company, specific training programmes can help to become more sensitive to the existing biases and specific needs of women and non-binary individuals.*

6. Opening Doors for New Talent 🎓

Increasing the representation of women and non-binary individuals at entry-level across all professions is a first important step to increase gender diversity throughout all levels within the company. There is a need to raise awareness among students and fresh graduates about renewable energy companies and the various roles that exist because the industry is still young and growing.

- *Marketing can help to attract talent to the renewable energy industry, and it is important to create inclusive marketing material, e.g. including women in marketing material to eliminate gender specific advertising and to reach out to career services or student societies that specifically focus on women.*

- *Recruiting is key in enabling access at the entry level and it can be helpful to adjust recruiting processes and materials to the needs of women and non-binary individuals and help recruiting teams to be as inclusive as possible.*

- *Work-based learning programmes play an important role and are most promising if the focus is on equipping the participants with required skills, knowledge and expertise and preparing them to take up employment in the company.*

- *In addition, there is a need to raise awareness among students and fresh graduates about renewable energy companies and the various roles that exist because the industry is still young and growing. Companies can work with colleges or universities to set up programmes or other initiatives that spark interest in the students to pursue a career in the renewable energy industry. Positive role models are very powerful and providing opportunities for the students to speak with women leaders or employees can be beneficial to explain the various opportunities that exist.*

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7. Embedding Inclusive Norms and Values

Company norms and values are incredibly important to create an inclusive and diverse environment that is welcoming to and supportive of all genders. To achieve this, companies can create a sense of awareness, clearly communicate the company values and offer guidance and training about inclusive norms and how people can live up to them.

- *To create a sense of awareness, companies can run specific communication campaigns, offer webinars, training sessions or events that highlight their progress in relation to gender diversity and celebrate positive role models by incentivising and rewarding employees who are very active in supporting these initiatives and to encourage others to become involved.*

- *To define and communicate the company's values, companies can use specific communication campaigns and consider the values when formulating the KPIs for leadership and all employees.*

- *To guide employees about the meaning of inclusive norms and how to implement them in their daily lives, companies can offer specific training programmes, workshops as well as mentorship programmes focused on gender diversity*

- *A pool of trainers, internal as well as external, who can run implementation training sessions, workshops, and can help to strengthen inclusive norms and values.*

8. Making Site-Based Work Safe and Welcoming

Increasing the representation of women on-site has a huge potential to strengthen gender diversity in the industry. By addressing health and safety concerns associated with site-based work, companies can attract more women to take on these roles. Positive role models that encourage and support women to work on-site can have a huge positive impact and managers can be trained on having open relations and building trust.
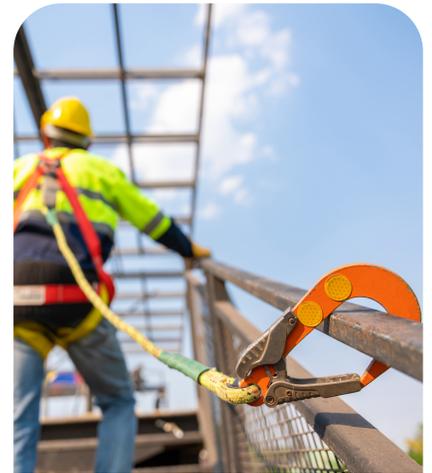
- *Health and safety are a key priority in the sector and including gender specific requirements are helpful to ensure women feel safe and are keen to work on-site. It is important to have in place strict policies that address health and safety concerns and set up systems to monitor and ensure their implementation.*

- *Positive role models that encourage and support women to work on-site can have a huge positive impact and managers can be trained to create open relations and building trust.*

- *Incentivise women doing site-based work by offering specific benefits or offer women specific work arrangements. This can also raise awareness about the ability of women to perform on-site work at the same level as their male counterparts.*

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9. Creating Family-Friendly Workplaces

Creating family friendly work environments and creating a culture that allows both parents to participate in the working environment is an important pillar of gender diversity. Providing additional support to parents through adequate company policies, parental leave and flexible working arrangements and particularly, support structures to make on-site working environments family friendly.

- *Company policies have to be adjusted to facilitate family-friendly workplace cultures and show consideration and outline the support offered to parents, e.g. parental leave agreements.*

- *Specific benefits to people with family responsibilities are helpful to attract and retain talent and can be communicated in the workplace as well as in the job postings with a particular focus on attracting parents.*

- *Flexible working arrangements that help parents to combine their family and work responsibilities can increase retention, especially after having a child.*

- *Considering the nature of the industry, it is very important to make on-site working environments family friendly. Site-based family support and specific options to facilitate and accommodate workers to be able to spend more time with their families can help to increase gender diversity, as it makes site-based work more attractive to parents.*
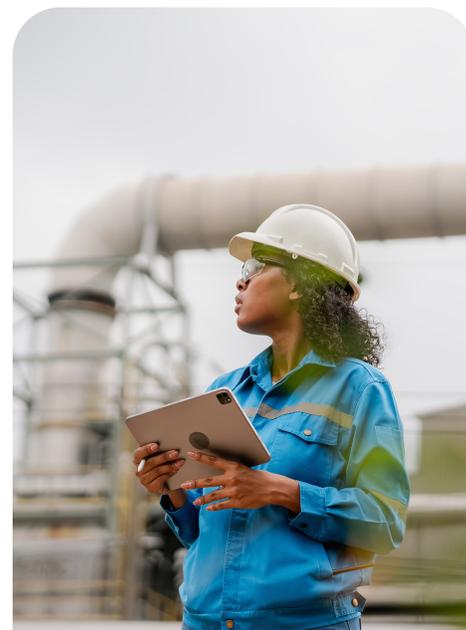
10. Investing in Community Impact

Companies can launch programmes to support local communities, particularly in the vicinity of their plants. These community initiatives can play an important role to strengthen gender diversity in the broader society but also to encourage and prepare young talent to work in the renewable energy industry in the future. Education plays an important role and companies can build relationships with local schools to offer support to increase the learners' competency in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

- *Companies can set up community projects to support communities close to on-site locations as part of the social corporate responsibility.*

- *Education plays an important role and companies can build relationships with local schools to offer support to increase the learners' competency in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).*

- *Mentorship programmes for youth help to offer guidance, support, and networking opportunities that young people need to build their careers.*

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Together, these ten elements form a comprehensive framework for action. They are not isolated initiatives but interlocking levers that, when implemented collectively, can transform organisational culture and outcomes across the renewable energy sector. Part 3 of this Guideline moves from the 'what' to the 'how' — introducing the Gender Diversity Toolkit with suggested targets that will help companies turn these principles into measurable progress.

PART 03:

Gender Diversity Toolkit: Practical Actions and Interventions

The toolkit provides practical actions and interventions for companies to transform and increase gender diversity. The table further suggests roles and responsibilities providing a high-level implementation plan for each element.

Table 1: Detailed Interventions - Building Inclusive Policies

Building Inclusive Policies		
What can be done? Specific activities or interventions	**Who can implement this?** Roles and responsibilities	**How can it be achieved?** High-level implementation plan
Conduct an internal review Ensure company policies are inclusive by reviewing relevant policies and rules in line with the main themes in the Gender Diversity Guideline and update all documents	• Company board or management (project lead) • HR team • Departments responsible for policies	• Identify company policies relevant to gender diversity • Use a guideline what needs to be incorporated into inclusive company policies in line with the main themes outlined in the Gender Diversity Guideline: • Enabling environment • Use of inclusive language • Consider and make provisions • Specific requirements and targets for leadership in relation to gender diversity • Equal opportunities • Just procurement services: Standardise the approach to search and identify vendors and service providers, incl. metrics to give preference to companies owned by women • Career development: Quotas for women across all levels • Equal pay: Targets for equal pay for all genders and specific objectives to close gender pay gap • Gender mainstreaming • Access and entry level support: Commitment to specific activities to attract all genders and if possible, guidelines for recruiting. HR team to structure all material and communication as inclusive as possible • Inclusive norms and values: Specifying which desired values the company aims to live up to in relation to gender diversity • Anti-harassment and discrimination: • Clear anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy • Specification of a process to address sexual assault, incl. consequences • Develop a clear process guiding how people can raise concerns or lay complaints in relation to harassment and sexual assault, incl. anonymous channels • Barrier Free Workplaces • Equal access to parental benefits for mothers and fathers • Workplace safety policy that considers the specific needs of women, esp. On-site • Use the guideline to review company policies in relation to the main themes outlined in the elements above. • Assess the existing gaps in relation to gender diversity compared to the targets stated in the guideline • Develop a plan how to close the gaps identified • Assess whether the policies are applicable and compatible with other regulations in place • Ensure that policies are compatible with overall company strategy, realistic, and in line with gender diversity initiatives targeted by the association guideline • Appoint an external service provider with experience in relation to gender diversity as one possible approach

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Mainstream support for company policies Ensure commitment to policies throughout the company by assessing current perceptions and launching communication campaigns	• Company management (project lead) • HR team • Managers and directors of various departments	• Assess how these policies are perceived by employees of all levels through the use of surveys or interviews • Launch a specific communication campaign to increase the commitment to company policies, e.g. use videos, flyers, posters to highlight the importance of the policies in relation to gender diversity • Include an introduction to the policies when onboarding new hires • Offer specific training about the policy • Assess the type and level of training that is required, based on the outcome
Procedures to gather and manage complaints Manage complaints in relation to sexism, harassment, and discrimination by setting up a specific governance and monitoring system	• Company management (project lead) • Company board • HR team	• Specify procedures that people can use to raise any concerns or file complaints in relation to sexism, harassment, and discrimination anonymously (these procedures should include a mailbox and phone number that can be used anonymously, similarly to a whistle-blower hotline) • Distribute information material about these procedures • Ensure complaints are properly addressed and monitored to prevent them from happening again • Encourage the reporting of non-compliance instances
Monitoring system Assess progress in relation to target objectives and share best practices and experiences with other companies	• Company management (project lead) • HR team • Managers and directors of various departments	• Perform regular check-ups, using surveys, questionnaires and KPIs to measure the improvement in reaching the targets • Set up committees or councils to perform ongoing review and assessment of gender equality • Strengthen advocacy for gender diversity across the company • Create a list of best practices that can motivate and facilitate the process for other companies

Table 2: Detailed Interventions - Leadership that Champions Diversity

Leadership that Champions Diversity		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
Specific targets for leadership Track and incentivise achievements in relation to gender diversity by setting SMART targets for leadership as part of their KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)	• Company management (project lead) • HR team	• dentify which steps leadership must take so the company can live up to the targets in the Gender Diversity Guideline • Define realistic short-term targets for leadership to facilitate reaching the objectives and include these in the company KPIs in line with the following themes: • Support women talent throughout the pipeline • Contribute to leadership development programmes for women • Reach a specific proportion of businesses led by women as suppliers • Spearhead specific initiatives to increase the proportion of women in technical roles • Celebrate and showcase members of leadership that make a huge contribution to gender diversity
Leadership commitment Ensure leadership is supportive of gender diversity and the specific process within the company by conducting a leadership belief audit and alignment workshops	• Company management (project lead) • HR team	• Organise focus groups or individual interviews with members of leadership to understand their perception of gender diversity and what could increase commitment and support to gender diversity • Organise alignment workshops in which members of leadership develop a shared vision how gender diversity can look like • Ask members of leadership to set objectives for themselves how they want to strengthen gender diversity • Ensure awareness of the leadership team on the policies in place about gender diversity • Encourage advocacy for gender diversity throughout the company
Leadership understanding and awareness Equip all leadership with required knowledge in relation to gender diversity by running or organising participation in DEI workshops with focus on intersectionality	• SAWEA and SAPVIA (organiser of workshops) • HR team (project lead) • Managers and directors of various departments	• Create a shared sense of awareness for gender diversity and how it is important to the company • Train employees and raise awareness on existing bias, to support the initiatives on equality and diversity. • Equip workshop attendees with an understanding of the concept intersectionality • Encourage attendees that they can play an active role in relation to gender diversity and as much as possible, avoid that people feel alienated in relation to the topic

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Table 3: Detailed Interventions - Fair & Inclusive Procurement

Fair & Inclusive Procurement		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
DEI expert for procurement Ensure that procurement processes are just and in line with gender diversity targets by appointing a DEI expert responsible for procurement	• Company management (project lead) • Procurement	• Appoint a DEI expert to oversee fair and transparent procurement • DEI expert to develop a process that considers gender diversity in relation to procurement and gives preference to companies owned by women • Understand the environment and identify procurement opportunities in relation to gender and racial equality
DEI supplier register Focusing on sub-contracting to enterprises owned by women by developing a DEI supplier register that makes it easier to find respective companies	• Procurement department (project lead) • Procurement department • Finance department	• Identify which type of suppliers and enterprises the procurement department is working with • Develop a supplier register that lists companies owned by women • Set targets to increase procurement contracts with vendors and companies owned by women • Structure procurement contracts to allow SMEs to participate • Increase procurement spend on SMMEs owned by women with a focus on black women • Create an interactive directory where companies include any opportunities they have and allow enterprises owned by women to participate and take part in the tender process. This will specifically be useful for enterprises located in remote areas where these companies are operating.
Entrepreneurial support programme Launch or support entrepreneurial support programmes for women	• Procurement department (project lead) • Finance department	• Contribute to the establishment and set up of women-owned businesses and provide long term support for them to build up the required capacity • Develop and set up an entrepreneurial programme that aims to support companies owned by women with some of the following financial or other types of support: • Funding for the company • Mentorship for the owner or team members • Networking events and programmes • Training sessions • Offset agreements or purchase orders so the company can do fundraising • Develop criteria to select companies for the entrepreneurial support programme, which can include some of the following: • Existing suppliers or potential to become a supplier • Growth potential • Willingness to participate and learn • Identify female company owners and invite them to participate in the programme • Partner with financial institutions to develop funding programmes for female company owners

Table 4: Detailed Interventions - Growing Careers for All

Growing Careers for All		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
Gender Diversity Leadership Programme Guide women with the potential to take up a leadership position by offering dedicated support	• HR (project lead) • SAWEA & SAPVIA (organiser of workshops)	• Develop or organise participation in an existing leadership development programme that offers dedicated support to women which can include the following • Specific training with focus on leadership • Coaching sessions • Mentorship by other women as well as male allies • Networking events • Showcase and celebrate successes of women in the company to encourage younger employees
Gender Diversity Mentorship Programme Launch mentorship programmes focused on women (incl. Involvement of mentors in promotion discussions)	• HR (project lead) • All departments	• Offer mentorship programmes for women who are suitable and interested in technical roles • Invite more senior and experienced women as well as male allies to apply as mentors for more junior employees • Select mentors for the junior employees • Organise regular check-ins (virtual or in person) between mentor and mentees • Provide some instructions or training to the mentors how to provide guidance to the mentees • Assist in knowledge transfer between experienced employees and young women to acquire relevant skills and become independent • If possible, include higher education institutions to promote these job opportunities to women
Networking opportunities Facilitate specific networking opportunities **Student engagement** Facilitate specific networking opportunities in the wind and solar energy sectors for women	• Any department • SAWEA and SAPVIA (organisers) • Recruitment (project lead)	• Organise regular events or meet-ups for women to be able to connect, network and assist each other • Work with talent agencies to identify new graduates or those seeking new job opportunities • Plan workshops and promotions at universities and colleges to introduce technical roles available and attract talent • Partner with higher education institutes to set up support programmes to create awareness for the renewable energy sector and existing opportunities, e.g. through workshops

Table 5: Detailed Interventions - Closing the Pay Gap

Closing the Pay Gap		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
Standardised remuneration Aim to set up standard payment structures to ensure equal remuneration for the same contribution to the company	• Company management (project lead) • HR team	• Align policies to determine salaries based on qualifications and experience, not gender • Include standard remuneration and performance measurements in company policies or specific guidelines • Introduce payment structures by developing specific job profiles and categories of employees (based on specific skill set and experience) to specify a fix salary for each • Document specific reasons if any salary deviates from the payment structures • Set up a remuneration committee that monitors the implementation of the payment structures and will define remuneration policies and monitors performance against the targets for race and gender equality
Transparency Establish transparent salary information and salary policies	• Company management (project lead) • HR team	• Publish information about the gender pay gap (generally and for the same roles) • Develop a specific plan how to close the gender pay gap and share information transparently
Sensitivity of team members Sensitise team members responsible for recruitment and salary negotiations by organising DEI workshops with focus on intersectionality	• Company management (project lead) • HR team	• Offer training or organise participation in external training programmes for all individuals that work in recruitment and are responsible for salary negotiations • Ensure awareness of the policies in place about gender diversity across the entire company

Table 6: Detailed Interventions - Opening Doors for New Talent

Opening Doors for New Talent		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
Gender Diversity Work Placement Programme Run or participate in workplace-based learning programmes for women and non-binary people to prepare them for full-time employment	Company management (project lead) SAWEA and SAPVIA (organisers) HR team	• Structure workplace-based learning programmes for candidates who are new to the workplace or fresh graduates (or participate in such programmes that are organised by industry associations) • Give preference to women and non-binary individuals as part of the workplace-based learning programmes • Create and structure work placement development programmes where job placements within the company are ensured if candidates complete the programme satisfyingly • Assist in knowledge transfer between experienced employees and young candidates to acquire relevant skills and become independent
Gender diversity recruitment training Ensure all individuals working in recruitment are aware of and sensitive towards gender diversity	HR team	• Implement trainings or organise participation in external trainings for HR teams in gender diversity recruiting • Create a sense of awareness for one's own stereotypes and prejudices and guide individuals how to limit the effect they will have on their decision making • Ensure recruitment team is aligned with the gender diversity targets in place and the metrics set for the number of women and non-binary people required for different roles and departments
Diverse recruitment process Ensure diversity in the job openings and role descriptions, for women to have higher chances of qualifying and applying	HR team	• Ensure gender diversity is considered throughout the entire recruitment process by sensitising all individuals involved • Increase the number of women and non-binary people in the recruitment process decision making • Organise a workshop for the HR team to discuss and identify how gender diversity can be considered as part of recruitment • Ensure recruitment material is gender diverse • Review the language in all draft job adverts to ensure it is not rigid and that the used language encourages gender diverse response • Adjust job descriptions and adverts to target non-STEM-related graduates • Emphasise on the importance of diversity to attract women and non-binary individuals to apply for these jobs • Source candidates from a variety of higher education institutions, different courses and places to diversify the talent pool • Create referral programmes where women and non-binary people can introduce their network of people • Make the recruitment process as inclusive as possible • Use a hiring matrix that only looks at the role requirements and the candidate scores for each requirement to ensure a fair and equal hiring decision
Gender diverse branding and publicity material Remove biased perceptions and attract women and non-binary individuals to the industry by eliminating gender-based advertising	Marketing team (project lead) HR team SAWEA and SAPVIA (for industry wide material)	• Design marketing material that is appealing to women and non-binary individuals, e.g. by including photos of successful women in the industry • Eliminate gender-based advertising in all marketing material about the company and the industry

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Table 7: Detailed Interventions - Ebbedding Inclusive Norms and Values

Embedding Inclusive Norms and Values		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
DEI workshops with focus on intersectionality Raise awareness among employees and train them on gender diversity and existing bias, for all to be aligned with the company targets in reaching gender diversity	• SAWEA and SAPVIA (organiser of workshops) • HR team (project lead)	• Create a shared sense of awareness for gender diversity and how it is important to the company • Train employees and raise awareness on existing bias, to support the initiatives on equality and diversity. • Equip workshop attendees with an understanding of the concept intersectionality • Encourage attendees that they can play an active role in relation to gender diversity and as much as possible, avoid that people feel alienated in relation to the topic
Signs of appreciation for role models Incentivise and award the employees who take action and support the initiatives, as a way to encourage everyone	• HR team • Direct management	• Gather stories of individuals within the company who make a particularly important contribution to gender diversity - one option is to ask employees to vote on who they would like to thank particularly for their contribution to gender diversity • Organise regular events that include a focus on gender diversity and acknowledge all positive role models • nclude stories about these individuals in internal and external communication material • Add innovative ways to show appreciation for positive role models
Pool of trainers to offer training sessions Create a list of internal and external trainers who can support staff to realise the guidelines for branding, publicity, and community engagement	• SAWEA and SAPVIA • HR team	• Identify a list of experts who can run training sessions for employees in understanding the guidelines for branding, publicity and community engagement • Present the list where companies can easily access it, such as association websites, etc. • Run training on a regular basis to ensure alignment of all staff on the gender diversity principles and its application in all internal and external communications

Table 8: Detailed Interventions - Making Site-Based Work Safe and Welcoming

Making Site-Based Work Safe and Welcoming		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
Incentives for women doing site-based work Offer attractive solutions and options to women and raise awareness about their ability to perform on-site work at the same level as male workers	• Company management (project lead) • Technical team	• Leverage new technologies that make processes more efficient, reduce physical strain and have a positive impact on people's safety • Provide accommodations and facilities to make women and non-binary individuals feel safe and enabled on-site • Train male employees on ways to support women and non-binary individuals at on-site roles • Identify women and non-binary individuals who are successfully working on-site and connect them with other employees so they can share their experiences
Gender sensitive health and safety at site-based work Review and update health and safety guidelines based on the specific needs of women	• Health and safety department • HR team	• Ensure site conditions are a healthy and safe for women • Leverage new technologies that make processes more efficient, reduce physical strain and have a positive impact on people's safety • Ensure access to health insurance and paid leave in case of accidents at work • Ensure managers on-site are aware of the needs of women and non-binary individuals and can establish a culture open communication and trust

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Table 9: Detailed Interventions - Creating Family-Friendly Workspaces

Creating Family-Friendly Workplaces		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
Family-friendly workplace cultures Offer support structures and benefits to make the company more attractive to parents	• HR team • Direct management	• Have flexible policies that allow employees to work remotely and flexibly if required and possible • Provide parental transitional support • Provide financial support for additional childcare expenses when travelling for work • Allow parental leave for all employees • Provide support to women when they return from maternity leave • Set up support structures on-site, e.g. creches for children, childcare support
Benefits to people with family responsibilities Include the family-friendly benefits in the job postings to attract more parents	• HR team • Marketing team	• When advertising for job openings, include information about family-friendly policies and initiatives in the company to attract more parents to apply for these positions
Site-based family support Offer support structures and benefits to make site-based work more attractive to parents	• HR team	• Offer housing options for on-site workers and their families to relocate to an area close to site • Have specific childcare facilities on-site • Offer additional expenses to cover costs incurred to commute to and from home • Offer flexible hours to account for workers commute and allow them to spend more time with family

Table 10: Detailed Interventions - Opening Doors for New Talent

Investing in Community Impact		
What can be done?	**Who can implement this?**	**How can it be achieved?**
Relationships with local schools Develop relationships with local schools to improve the quality of STEM- subject teaching	• HR department • Technical teams • SAWEA • SAPVIA	• Identify existing gaps in delivery of STEM-subjects in schools • Partner and develop relations with schools to improve the quality of existing ones and identify possibilities for new courses • Provide consultancy to schools in offering and improving technical courses as well as technical skill sets • Plan specific interventions to increase the proportion of women participating in these courses and programmes and if possible, set a quota
Community projects Set up community projects to support communities close to on-site locations	• HR department/ SAWEA/ SAPVIA	• Identify community projects in the relevant areas • Select and support existing community projects or launch independent projects • Provide financial and enterprise development support to women-owned enterprises in the local community and prioritise their services as much as possible for procurement needs
Mentorship programmes Organise community programmes to create nourishing learning environments	• HR department • SAWEA • SAPVIA	• Run mentorship programmes or join local organisations in mentoring and providing support to women who are suitable and interested in technical roles • Build mentorship relations with higher education institutions to promote these job opportunities to women

Setting and Tracking Targets

Targets include; Absolute Targets which are ambitious standards for gender diversity and Relative Targets which are more realistic improvements based on each company's baseline. Companies can adjust targets to their context but should aim for continuous progress.

Absolute Targets	Relative Targets
Absolute targets are ambitious targets and set the ideal standards for gender diversity.	Relative targets are realistic targets and set expectations in relation to the actual improvement companies can achieve.
These targets are set knowing that many companies may never achieve them considering external structures of gender inequality as well as internal limitations or restrictions.	Relative targets are formulated in relation to the status quo of the company, and they specify an expected change or improvement for the companies in relation to each element.
The purpose of the absolute targets is to set a clear standard on what gender diversity in the renewable energy industry will look like so companies can use them as an orientation.	Each company can adjust these targets for itself based on their business model, company structure and available resources.

Absolute Targets

Enabling Environment		Equal Opportunities			Gender Mainstreaming		Barrier-Free Workplace		Other
Building Inclusive Policies	Leadership that Champions Diversity	Fair & Inclusive Procurement	Growing Careers for All	Closing the Pay Gap	Opening Doors for New Talent	Embedding Inclusive Norms and Values	Making Site-Based Work Safe and Welcoming	Creating Family-Friendly Workplaces	Investing in Community Impact
Company policies are rated as inclusive by external evaluation and include specific processes to respond to discrimination, harassment or sexism.	Leadership is supportive of gender diversity initiatives and advocacy system is in place to enable women to voice their concern and receive support.	Procurement from businesses owned by women and non-binary individuals make up 50% of total procurement spend.	Women make up 50% across all levels of seniority as well as in technical roles.	Equal pay for all individuals of all genders working in the same roles and levels of seniority.	Women make up 70% of entry-level positions and 70% of candidates in work placement programmes.	Employees report that they consider norms and values as inclusive in an employee survey.	Women make up 50% of all employees working on-site.	100% of employees are retained after child birth or starting a family.	5% of profits are invested in local community support initiatives.

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Relative Targets

Enabling Environment		Equal Opportunities			Gender Mainstreaming		Barrier-Free Workplace		Other
Building Inclusive Policies	Leadership that Champions Diversity	Fair & Inclusive Procurement	Growing Careers for All	Closing the Pay Gap	Opening Doors for New Talent	Embedding Inclusive Norms and Values	Making Site-Based Work Safe and Welcoming	Creating Family-Friendly Workplaces	Investing in Community Impact
Conduct an internal review of all policies and update them to speak to the needs of women.	Host or enable participation in workshops, trainings or webinars to inform and train leadership about the support they have to offer in relation to gender diversity (including a clear guideline on how to provide support in moments of discrimination).	Increase procurement spend on women owned businesses by 10 percentage points over 3 years. Increase investment on enterprise and supplier development of companies owned by women by 5 percentage points over 3 years.	Increase the proportion of women and non-binary individuals in management and leadership roles by 10 percentage points in the lowest level of 3 years and 5 points in one level above after another 3 years.	Reduce the pay gap by 10 percentage points over 3 years.	Have or set up a work placement programme. Reach 50% women in the yearly intake. Increase women in entry-level positions by 20 percentage points over 3 years.	Host or offer participation in workshops, trainings, webinars to promote inclusive norms and values for all employees.	Increase the proportion of women on-site by 20 percentage points over three years.	Amend policies to include benefits and support to women in providing a work-life balance and family-friendly culture.	Launch a social corporate responsibility initiative in a local community.

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Notes

Annexure C: Nomenclature and Definitions

- **DEE:** Department of Electricity and Energy

- **DEI:** Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

- **DMRE:** Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (officially succeeded by Department of Electricity and Energy (DEE) and, Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources (DMPR) in 2025)

- **EE:** Employment Equity

- **GBV:** Gender Based Violence

- **GEI:** Gender Equity Index

- **KPI:** Key Performance Indicator

- **PIT:** Professional in Training

- **REI4P:** Renewable Energy Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme

- **SAPVIA:** South African Photovoltaic Industry Association

- **SAWEA:** South African Wind Energy Association

- **SETCO:** Social, Ethics and Transformation Committee

- **SMART:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and anchored within a timeframe

- **STEM:** Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

- **WEGE:** Women Empowerment and Gender Equality

- **WIM:** Women in Mining

- **YES:** Youth Employment Services

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Board Members: "Members of the Board who are executive directors as defined in the King Report."

Senior Management: "An employee of the company who is a member of the occupational category of "Senior Management" as determined using the Employment Equity regulations."

Middle Management: "An employee of the company who is a member of the occupational category of "Middle Management" as determined using the Employment Equity regulations."

Junior management: "An employee of the company who is a member of the occupational category of "Junior Management" as determined using the Employment Equity regulations" or those who supervise other employees."

Entry-level: "Entry-level jobs are roles that do not require previous experience. These roles are usually targeted at recent graduates and those taking their first step onto the career ladder. They often offer some training to help employees grow within the role."

Internship: "An opportunity to integrate career related experience into an undergraduate education by participating in planned, supervised work."

Learnership: "A work-based route to a qualification. It is a workplace education and training programme comprising both structured practical workplace (on-the-job) experience and structured theoretical training."

Technical roles: Technical roles require you to hold specific technical skills, knowledge, and expertise to perform functions. These could be junior or senior level roles where you serve as an expert in your domain.

After-sales service support: "After-sales support is a service that is provided after merchandise or services have been sold. Most after-sales support involves a guarantee, warranty, upgrade or repair service."

Other roles (supportive, sale, administrative): Other roles refer to those that do not require specific technical skills, knowledge and expertise to perform a function.

On-Site: Working at a remote plant or construction site.

Off-site: Working at a workplace close to home.

Remote: Working from home.

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Conclusion

The renewable energy industry has the opportunity to not only shape the future of energy but also the future of equity and inclusion in the sector. By embracing gender diversity as a strategic imperative rather than a peripheral concern, the sector can unlock untapped potential, foster innovation, and build resilient, high-performing organizations.

Following the launch of the Gender Diversity in the Wind and Solar Energy Industries in South Africa Study by the Department of Electricity and Energy, SAWEA and SAPVIA, created a robust process to move gender mainstreaming ahead. This was informed by industry consultation through review of existing research and best practice, expert interviews, workshops and surveys of industry representatives, culminating in a set on interventions packaged in these guidelines.

The Gender Diversity Guidelines offer a clear, actionable roadmap to drive meaningful change, informed by robust research and industry collaboration. It has been prepared by the Wind and PV Industry Associations to provide a structured, practical set of interventions under 10 key elements to improve gender representation in a realistic manner with achievable outcomes.

Through deliberate interventions - ranging from inclusive policy development to equitable workplace practices - this framework aims to dismantle systemic barriers and cultivate a culture where all talent can thrive. The journey toward gender equity is ongoing, but with commitment and collective effort, the renewable energy industry can lead by example, setting a new standard for sustainability that includes social progress at its core.

Acknowledgements

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