



**MINERALS COUNCIL**  
SOUTH AFRICA



# WOMEN IN MINING

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2025–2027

**#MININGMATTERS**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





**The South African mining industry stands at a pivotal moment for transformation. As global markets increasingly demand operational excellence, innovation, and sustainable practices, the sector possesses substantial untapped potential through advancing gender equality and inclusion. The Minerals Council South Africa's Women in Mining (WiM) Strategy 2025-2027 presents a bold framework to unlock this potential while positioning South Africa as a global leader in inclusive mining practices.**

## THE IMPERATIVE FOR SYSTEMATIC CHANGE

There has been an increased awareness of both the business and moral imperative of increasing the representation of women in the South African Mining sector, and mining companies have made a concerted effort to achieve this goal across all levels. The representation of women in the sector has increased from 12% of the workforce when the MCSA WiM programme was initiated to 19% in 2024, according to the Commission for Gender Equality's *Gender Transformation in the South African Mining Industry 2023/2024 report*.

Despite the collective efforts by the industry to foster transformation, women continue to face persistent challenges in the mining world of work, such as:

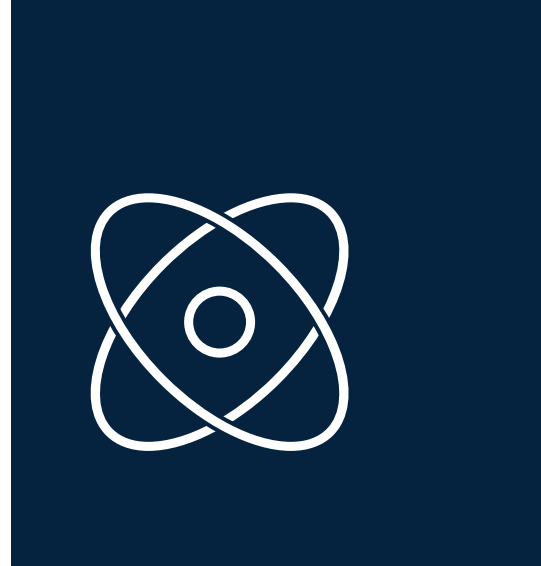
- Persistent negative gender stereotypes
- Gender Pay Gap
- Gender-based Violence, Femicide and Harassment (GBVF-H)
- Limited career growth or development opportunities
- Impeded work-life balance
- Non-inclusive infrastructure and facilities

A comprehensive review of the WiM initiative since its 2020 launch reveals substantial progress in awareness-building and policy development, yet underscores a critical need: shifting from a fragmented activity-based approach to a cohesive strategy.

## Average Annual WiM Representation

YEAR	WORKFORCE	MALE	FEMALE	% MALE	% FEMALE
2020	435 054	374 998	60 056	86%	14%
2021	448 562	384 706	63 856	86%	14%
2022	465 505	395 400	70 105	85%	15%
2023	480 427	404 685	75 742	84%	16%
2024	474 735	397 128	77 606	84%	16%

**Source:** Department of Mineral Resources



The core of the strategy is to transform the South African mining sector into a global leader in gender equality, harnessing full human potential and enabling women to thrive at all levels.



# 35%

women in  
management  
positions  
by 2030

While foundational measures have established important groundwork, the varying operational contexts and implementation complexities across the industry have highlighted opportunities for enhanced coordination and support to accelerate tangible improvements in women's daily workplace experiences.

CEO stakeholder engagement has been unequivocal: the industry demands practical, business-aligned solutions that embed gender diversity into core operations as a competitive advantage, not merely a compliance exercise.

## INTEGRATED WIM FRAMEWORK



### PILLAR 1

#### SAFE, EQUITABLE, AND DIGNIFIED WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Creating physical and psychological safety through comprehensive GBVF-H prevention, inclusive infrastructure design, and holistic health and wellbeing programs.



### PILLAR 2

#### INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES

Driving comprehensive cultural change through CEO accountability, executive mentorship programs, and systematic unconscious bias training that addresses intersectional experiences.



### PILLAR 3

#### DIVERSE TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Building robust leadership pipelines through skills enhancement, STEM partnerships, returnship programs, and structured career advancement pathways.



### PILLAR 4

#### DATA-DRIVEN ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Leveraging enhanced WiM Dashboard capabilities and intersectional data collection to ensure measurable progress and evidence-based decision-making.



### PILLAR 5

#### INDUSTRY COLLABORATION AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Extending transformation beyond workplace boundaries through supplier diversity initiatives, value chain engagement, and community empowerment programs.

## AN INTEGRATED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMATION

The WiM Strategy 2025-2027 introduces transformative gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI) as its overarching theme, built upon an Integrated Strategic WiM Framework comprising five interconnected pillars that embed diversity as a core driver of operational excellence and financial performance. Each of the 5 pillars addresses specific transformation challenges while working synergistically to create sustainable, measurable change across the entire mining value chain.

## AMBITIOUS YET ACHIEVABLE TARGETS

The strategy aims to address the current challenges, which include low representation of women in the mining workforce (approximately 19%, with managerial positions ranging from 17% to 21%, depending on the specific company and level of management), inconsistent implementation of initiatives, and resistance to cultural change and leadership accountability. By recognising these challenges as opportunities for improvement, the strategy will build on existing policies and structures to achieve clear, measurable targets:

- 25% women's representation across the mining workforce by 2030, with a stretch target of 35% by 2040
- 35% women in management positions by 2030
- 40% women representation in leadership development programs by 2030

## EXPANDING SCOPE WHILE MAINTAINING FOCUS

This strategy aligns with the Minerals Council's mission, vision, and core values, facilitating

transformation and sustainable growth in a socially responsible way. The strategy highlights that gender diversity is not just an initiative but a fundamental driver of long-term industry success.

In alignment with the original WiM Programme vision, the strategy now broadens its scope to address the needs of LGBTQI+ employees and people with disabilities. However, it maintains strategic focus on women's advancement as the primary objective, with broader diversity considerations acknowledged where they intersect with women's experiences. A clear future expansion framework establishes conditions for full support of all marginalised groups after 2027, ensuring sustainable and effective transformation.

## A MEMBER-DRIVEN, VOLUNTARY APPROACH

Recognising the Minerals Council's role as an advocate and facilitator, the strategy emphasises voluntary adoption and collaborative implementation. Member companies can adapt frameworks, toolkits, and guidelines to their unique operational contexts while contributing to industry-wide learning and best practice sharing. This approach respects organisational autonomy while fostering collective progress toward transformation goals.

# WHAT INFORMED THE NEW WIM STRATEGY FRAMEWORK?

**THE 2025-2027 WOMEN IN MINING (WIM) STRATEGY EMERGES FROM EXTENSIVE LOCAL AND GLOBAL RESEARCH, AND A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE INITIAL FRAMEWORK. IT IS SHAPED BY BROAD-BASED STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS, PARTICULARLY FROM MINING CEOS.**

The original WiM initiative made meaningful strides in raising awareness and influencing policy, but its operational impact was limited by several key gaps:

- Fragmented, activity-based approach
- Inconsistent implementation and leadership accountability
- Gaps in data collection and monitoring
- Persistent cultural and systemic barriers
- Limited scope and intersectionality
- Insufficient support for women entrepreneurs and value chain inclusion

These gaps informed the development of the new integrated 5-pillar framework, which marks a shift toward practical implementation, stronger accountability, and broader impact across the mining ecosystem:

- Unifying fragmented efforts into a cohesive, operational strategy
- Expanding scope: GBVF-H, supply chain diversity, psychological safety
- KPI-driven leadership accountability
- Ensuring practical implementation toolkits
- Strengthening leadership commitment
- Promoting data-driven decision-making
- Expanding the scope to include all marginalised groups

## WHY GENDER DIVERSITY DELIVERS RESULTS

- +25% performance boost for gender-diverse companies  
([McKinsey & Company](#))
- +23% higher profit margins when women are on boards  
([PwC](#))
- +39% more likely to outperform peers with top-quartile gender-diverse executive teams  
([McKinsey](#))
- +36% higher return on equity with three or more women on boards  
([MSCI](#))



# 25%

performance  
boost for  
gender-diverse  
companies

## THE COMPELLING BUSINESS CASE

Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI) represent more than moral imperatives; they are essential competitive advantages. Evidence consistently demonstrates that inclusive organisations deliver superior performance across critical business metrics, including profitability, safety, innovation, talent retention, and ESG compliance. For the South African mining sector, advancing women's participation and creating inclusive workplaces represent a strategic opportunity to attract investment, meet evolving stakeholder expectations, and ensure long-term industry sustainability.

## FROM STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENTATION

Success requires three fundamental enablers:

### LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

Visible CEO championship backed by integration of GEDI metrics into executive performance evaluations and strategic business planning

### OPERATIONAL INTEGRATION

Embedding WiM principles into daily operations through practical toolkits, implementation workshops, and continuous support mechanisms

### DATA-DRIVEN ACCOUNTABILITY

Leveraging enhanced WiM Dashboard capabilities and monitoring to track progress, identify challenges, and drive continuous improvement

## A CALL TO TRANSFORMATIVE ACTION

The WiM Strategy 2025-2027 represents more than policy advancement. It's a blueprint for industry transformation and an opportunity to demonstrate global leadership in creating workplaces where women not only participate but also thrive, lead, and innovate.

This strategy provides the roadmap; success requires unwavering commitment from industry leaders to move beyond awareness to action, from policies to practice, and from compliance to competitive advantage. Through collective action guided by this transformative framework, the industry can build a mining sector that reflects South Africa's demographics while driving unprecedented levels of innovation, safety, leadership development, and sustainable growth.

## Mining And Quarrying Sectoral Employment Equity Targets

SEPTEMBER 2025 TO 31 AUGUST 2030	DESIGNATED GROUPS MALE TARGET	DESIGNATED GROUPS FEMALE TARGET	TOTAL
Top Management	33.1%	24.4%	57.5%
Senior Management	36.3%	28.2%	64.5%
Professionally Qualified & Middle Management	43.2%	34.4%	77.6%
Skilled Technical	49.8%	36.9%	86.7%
Persons with disabilities		3%	



