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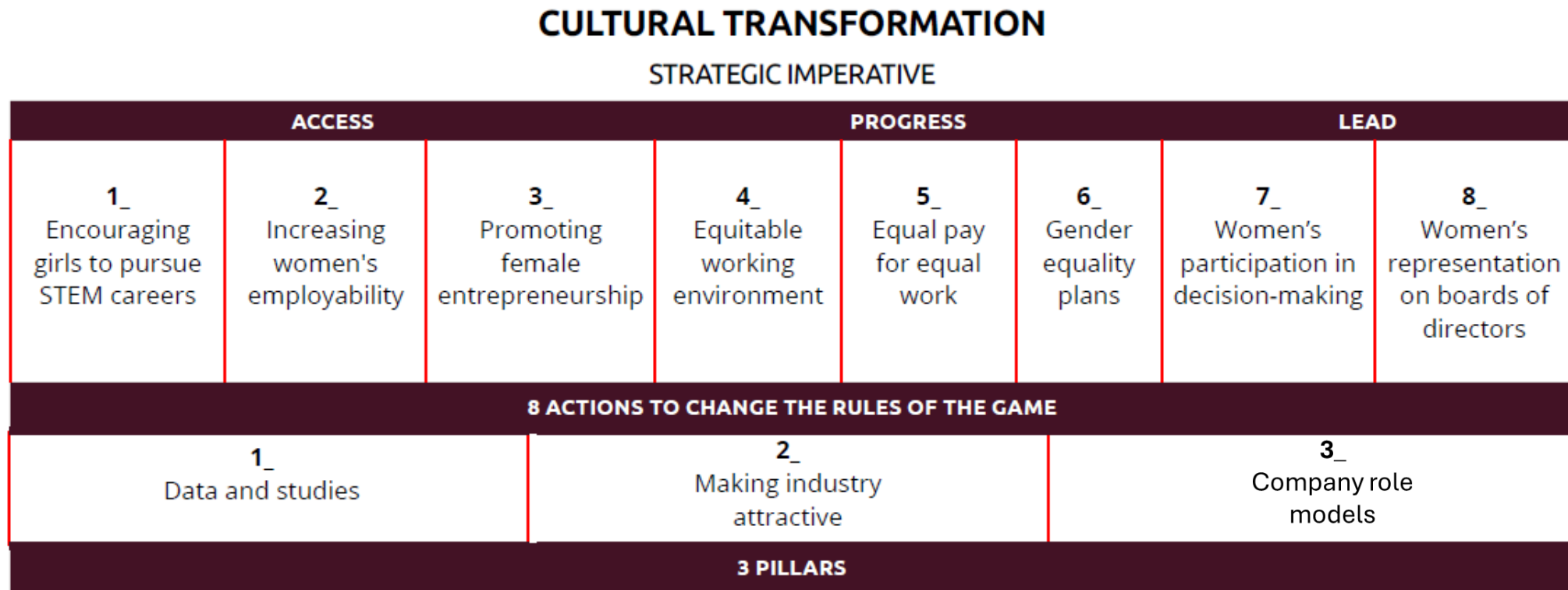
Gender Equality as a Strategic Driver of Competitiveness

Cristina Oyón

Deputy Director at SPRI Group (Basque Country)



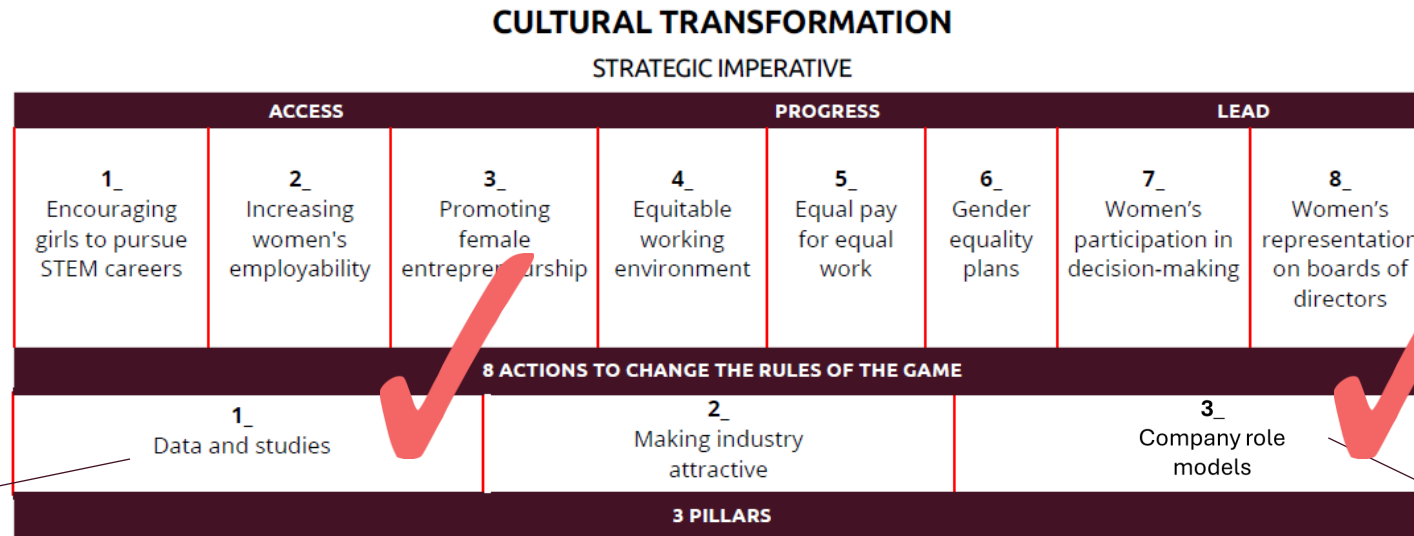
Definition of a framework for analysis of the woman's role in the industry.



8 game-changing action and **3 building blocks** were identified to foster the **cultural transformation** necessary to achieve equality for women in the industry.

Progress to date

SPRI, the Basque business development agency, is giving content to the building blocks of this framework through various exercises.



Methodology to analyze the correlation between gender equality and industrial competitiveness and 3 case studies that prove that a higher rate of gender diversity benefits business competitiveness.

Report: Impact of women in industrial competitiveness

Identification of good practices in competitive manufacturing companies that outperform in gender-equality practices

Report: Strategies to encourage women's entry into industry

We have gathered data and developed research to demonstrate that gender equality is no merely a matter of human rights, but rather an essential issue to competitiveness.

Methodology

Multidimensional comprehensive assessment of the concepts of competitiveness and gender equality in industrial businesses.

	COMPETITIVENESS INDEX	EQUALITY INDEX
Sub Indexes	1. Billing growth	1. Equality between departments
	2. Employee growth	2. Equality between positions
	3. Innovation	3. Equality in selection processes
	4. Internationalization	4. Conciliation policies
		5. Commitment to equality

Use Cases

The methodology has been proven in different ecosystems.

2022 Basque case study

(474 industrial businesses)

2023 European case study

(A sample of 76 industrial companies).



2025 Basque evolution analysis

(100 industrial businesses)

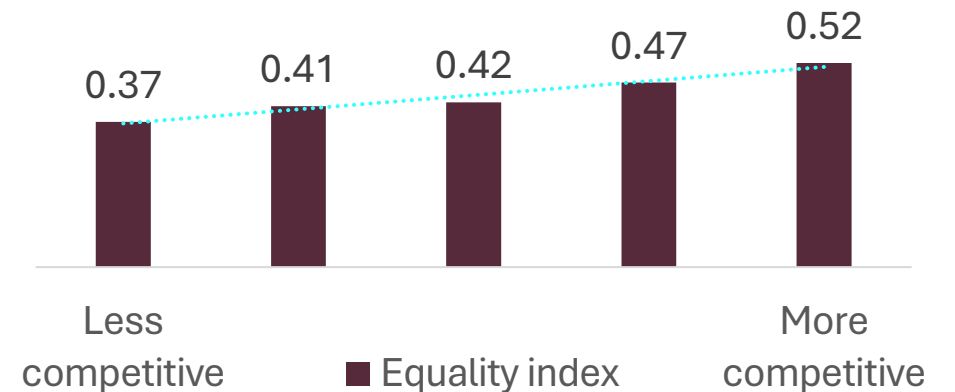
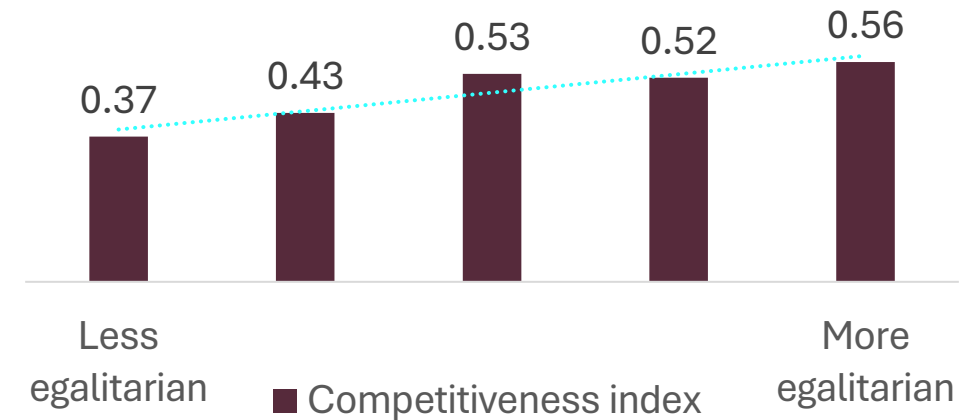
“Contribution of women is already there, but it is not yet recognized enough. Once we recognize it, we give it relevance.” FIONA ZHAO, Professor at McGill University

Results of the 2022 Basque case study

The study from Basque companies confirmed that...

...the most egalitarian companies are more competitive...

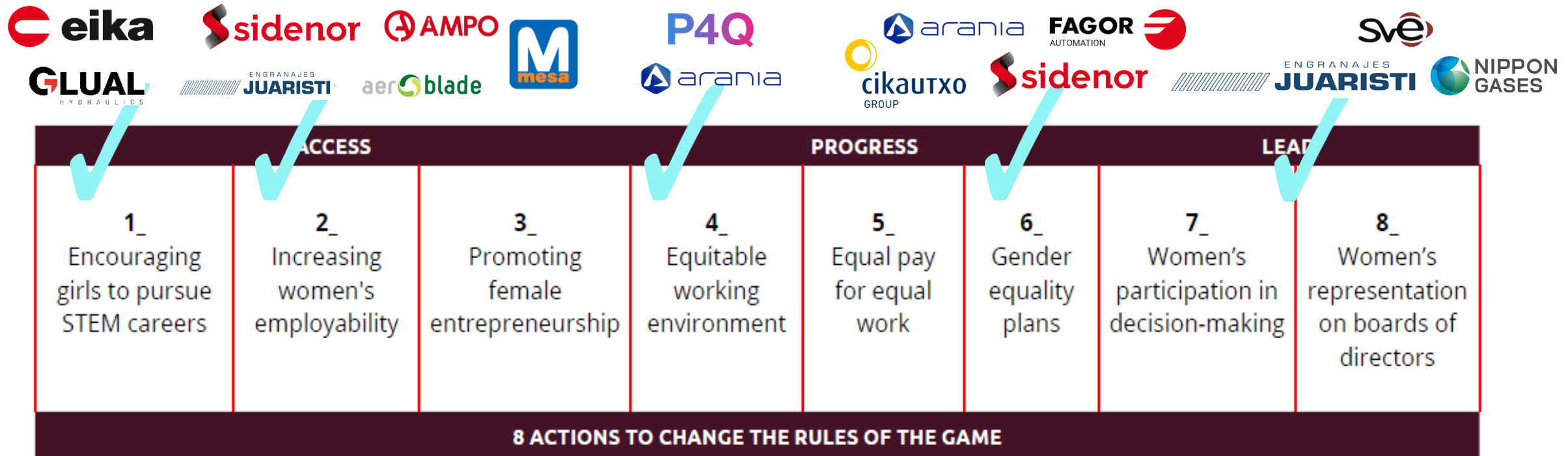
...and the most competitive companies are more egalitarian.



“Gender equality is no longer merely a matter of human rights, but rather an essential issue to guarantee competitiveness and economic recovery.” UNIDO

Company role models

We have identified good practices from companies that are making impact in some of the game changing actions.

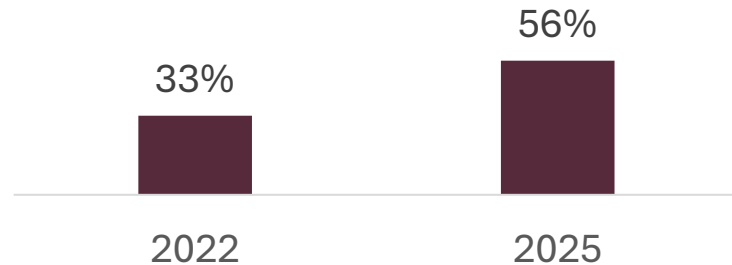


“Manufacturing industry has been designed by men, for men and to keep women out at the beginning. Nobody wants to keep it this way, and it is the system we are fighting against. We have cultural, domestic and business barriers to break.” *RHONDA BARNET, Founder & Principal at Rhonda Barnet Advisory*

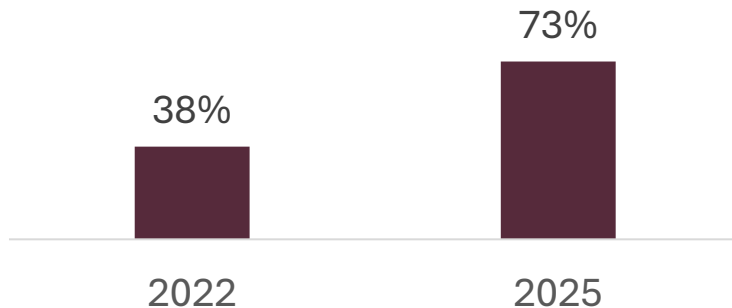
2022 - 2025 Evolution Analysis

ACCESS TO INDUSTRY – Women recruitment. In three years, the share of industrial companies ensuring gender-balanced recruitment rose from 33% to 56% (+70%), and those training recruiters on equality nearly doubled, showing greater professionalism and awareness of bias.

COMPANIES TAKING ACTION TO ENSURE GENDER BALANCE IN HIRING PROCESSES



COMPANIES WITH HR STAFF TRAINED IN GENDER EQUALITY.



Even though they represent 47% of total employment, women only account for around 20% of jobs in industry worldwide. The most competitive companies, however, have more equitable teams than less competitive businesses...

“Due to low female representation among applicants, we decided to ensure balanced representation in final hires.” **AEROBLADE**



“We realized strict academic and experience requirements were excluding candidates. By relaxing them, we received more female CVs, and now, to balance teams, we prioritize valid female applications.” **MESA**



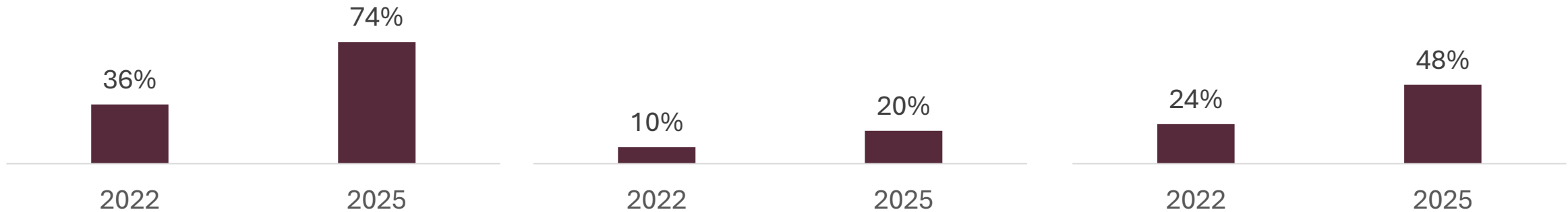
2022 - 2025 Evolution Analysis

PROMOTION - company gender policies. Over the past three years, we've seen an increase in companies' commitment to implementing internal equality policies. Moreover, the most competitive companies are more likely to adopt these policies than less competitive ones.

EQUALITY PLANS

WOMEN PROMOTION POLICIES

EQUALITY TRAINING



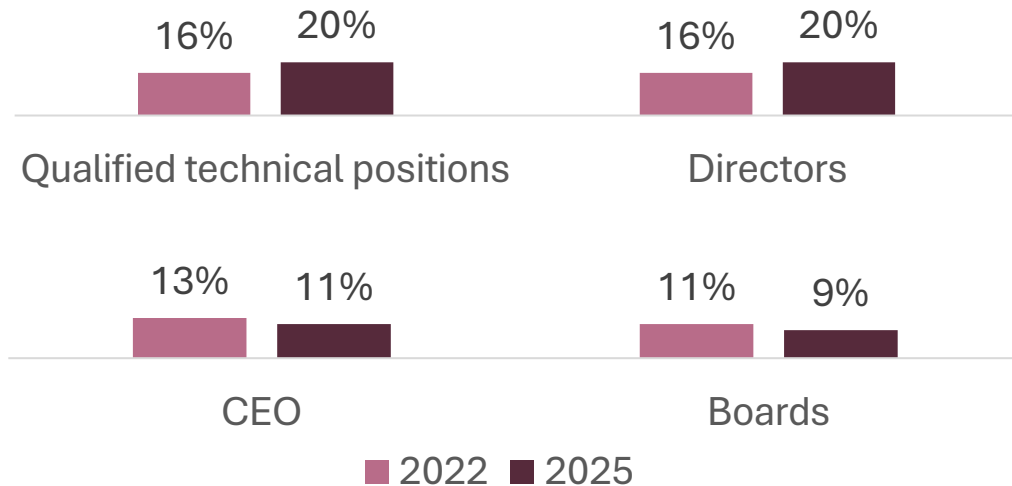
Making gender issues part of business strategies furnishes data, targets and resources to guarantee committed progress in terms of equality...

“Equality training sessions have been essential—benefiting all employees but especially raising awareness among men and making them drivers of change.” *CIKAUTXO*

“The Equality Committee sparked company-wide awareness and led to initiatives like gender-adapted PPE and ergonomic projects to ensure production tasks are suitable for women.” *ARANIA*

2022 - 2025 Evolution Analysis

LEAD - company gender policies. Slight increase in the percentage of companies with gender-balanced teams in highly skilled technical positions and executive roles.. However, no progress has been made in the highest representative bodies of companies (CEOs and Boards).



The introduction of measures to break through the glass ceiling which restricts so many women's plans for professional development is an opportunity to boost companies' sustainable competitiveness.

“For a future where leadership is not associated with any gender, education, training and professional opportunities must equally empower girls and boys, women and men.”
CECILIA UGAZ, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director UNIDO

“It is essential to reflect on potential biases to avoid excluding women from leadership positions. Corporate culture plays a key role, and from the HR leadership team, we actively promote these reflections and encourage the organization to question its own biases.” *NIPPON GASES*

Thank you!

Cristina Oyón
Deputy Director at SPRI Group

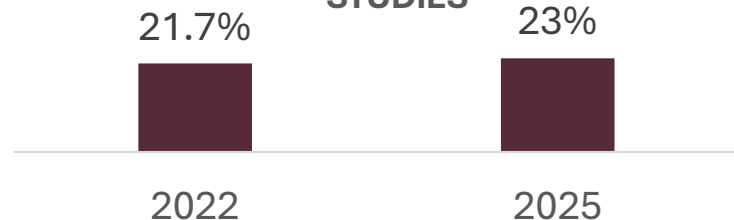
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2022 - 2025 Evolution Analysis

ACCESS TO INDUSTRY – Women participation. The samples analyzed indicate a slight increase in women's participation, which is in line with the increases recorded in the region's official statistics on women in Basque industry.

EVOLUTION OF PERCENTAJE OF WOMEN IN INDUSTRY IN THE CASE STUDIES



EVOLUTION OF PERCENTAJE OF WOMEN IN THE BASQUE INDUSTRY



The small proportion of women with training in technological disciplines puts females at a clear disadvantage to gain access to a job market where technology specialists' profiles are the most sought after in the economy of the future...

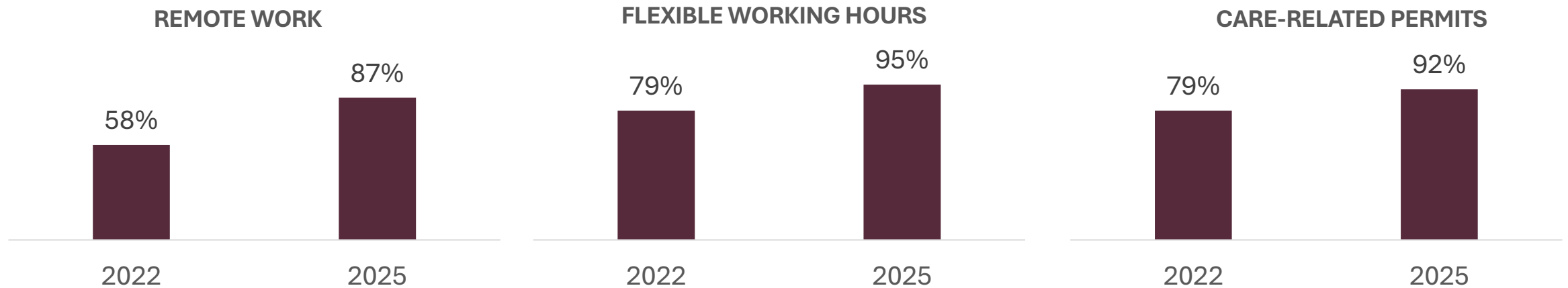
“...by designing workplaces that work for women we have more opportunities to attract them.”

LUCÍA VELASCO, Head AI Policy at United Nations & Co-Chair Future Workd at OECD

“We partner with local universities and schools to promote industry-focused training and encourage more women to join engineering through dual programs and inclusive communication.” *EIKA*

2022 - 2025 Evolution Analysis

PROMOTION - work-life balance measures. A general increase in the use of work-life balance measures in an equitable manner between men and women in Basque companies. It has been confirmed that the most competitive companies are those that use these measures in a more equal manner between genders.



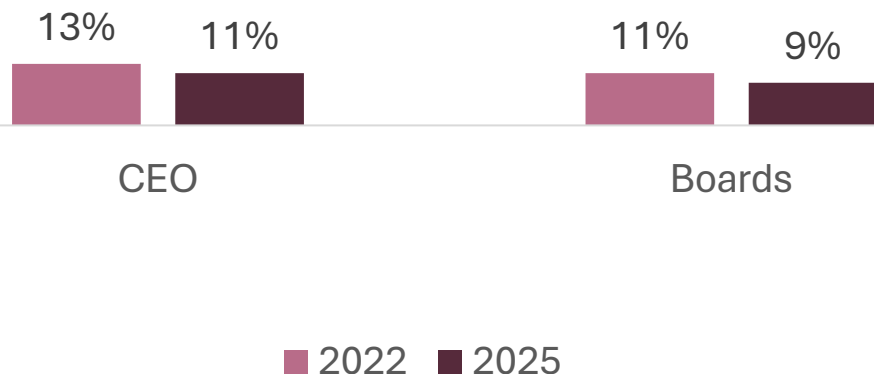
Flexible working conditions and equitable employment environments encourage women to stay in the industry, making the best possible use of their talent...

“...however, they are not free of risks: detachment from the workplace could weaken connections with peers and leaders, which could reduce opportunities for career advancement.” *ALINA SORGNER, Associate Professor at John Cabot University*

2022 - 2025 Evolution Analysis

LEAD - company gender policies. However, no progress has been made in the highest representative bodies of companies (CEOs and Boards).

The most equitable businesses believe that gender equality affords balance for decision-making units, contributing different visions and approaches which provide a broader perspective and facilitate more stable decision-making...



“As women we are not asking for our share, we are asking for our job’s value recognition, whatever it is.”
LUCIANA CICERI, Presidente A.P.I. - Associazione Piccole e Medie Industrie

“Gender equality in leadership brings balance, leading to better outcomes through diverse perspectives and more confident, stable decisions.” *JUARISTI*

Conclusions

- **New study shows again the positive impact of women on industrial competitiveness** (increase in revenue and employment, innovation activity, internationalization).
 - **The situation of women in the industry has remained largely stable over the past three years.**
 - **Women’s participation** in the analyzed companies **has not significantly increased**, mainly due to a lack of female candidates.
 - However, notable **progress has been made in the implementation of work-life balance measures and equality policies** in Basque companies.
 - **Mid-term evaluation will** confirm if these measures successfully position industrial companies as attractive, inclusive workplaces offering equal opportunities and career growth.
- **Best practices that make a company equal and attractive to women can inspire others** to adopt stronger gender equality policies—facilitating women’s entry into industry and boosting competitiveness.
- The findings of this report highlight the **need to continue gathering data and conducting research** to understand the impact of gender equality policies on business competitiveness and **advance towards “making the industry appealing,”** committed to equality as a driver of industrial competitiveness.

Aim: Strengthen gender mainstreaming and promote GE across regional development policies, ecosystems and RDAs, with an intersectional lens throughout. How? → Supporting EURADA members in developing knowledge, capacity and concrete tools.



Members: 12 members

- 1st task of the group: **“LEAD BY EXAMPLE” Analyze participants GEPs and develop a GEP toolkit and template for RDAs (WiP)**

