



2026 Women in Ukraine's Reconstruction:
Diversity, Inclusion, and Beyond
in Supervisory Boards

March 2026

About the research

Context of the research



The second edition of this research highlights Ukraine's journey toward economic recovery amid the ongoing war and broader geopolitical challenges



Women's leadership is a **vital driver of resilience, reconstruction,** and economic **growth** in these demanding circumstances



Women's leadership faces **persistent structural and cultural barriers, amplified** by emerging digital pressures and the ongoing impact of the war

Data collection methods



We used both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods:

- ✓ Digital survey of 53 respondents
- ✓ 9 interviews with SB members, IFI representatives and regulators
- ✓ Desk-research

Research timeframe



December 2025 – March 2026

Target audience



Members of supervisory boards, representing Ukrainian private and public companies, as well as large international companies operating in Ukraine

Objectives of the research

01

Assess women's representation and influence in supervisory boards, examine stereotypes and biases that hinder women's leadership, and track progress on these issues compared with the previous edition of the research

02

Evaluate the potential for more impactful women engagement within the context of Ukraine's wartime recovery and reconstruction

03

Identify structural, cultural, and emerging barriers, including labour-market disruptions and unequal access to opportunities arising from the rapid expansion of digital and AI solutions

04

Draw lessons from historical post-conflict experiences (World War II and the Balkan wars) to inform Ukraine's future trajectory

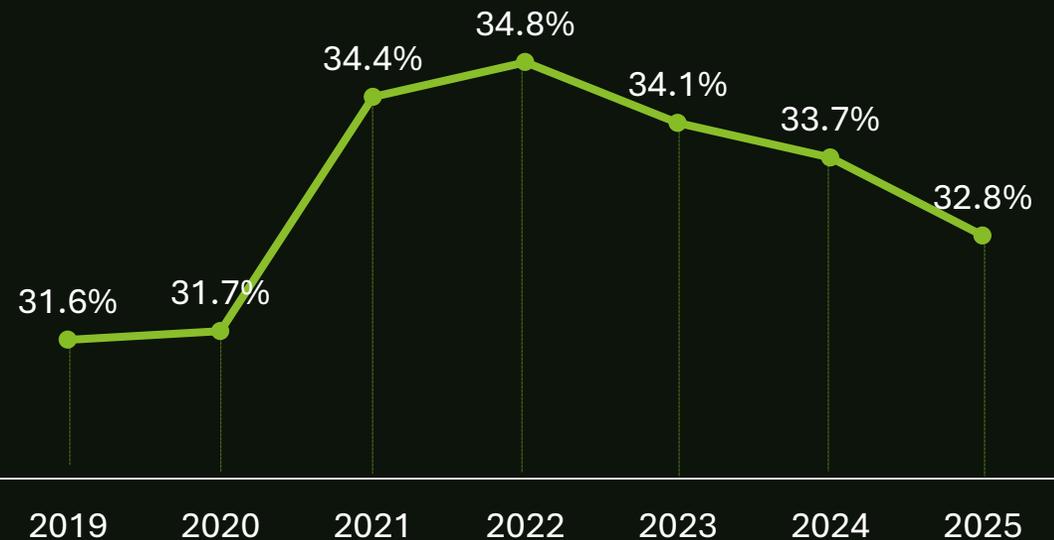
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Provide actionable insights for businesses and policymakers to strengthen gender-inclusive governance and support long-term resilience and sustainable growth

A more complex geopolitical landscape is heightening concerns, particularly as the share of women in leadership continues to decline

➔ Recent trends show a decline in leadership gender parity

Share of women among new hires to leadership roles¹:



1 in 6

companies in the US scaled back or discontinued DEI programs that promoted gender equality²

Roughly one-fifth of Deloitte Global C-Suite Sustainability survey **respondents report** that governments, investors, customers, civil society, boards, and competitors are **pushing them** to somewhat or significantly **pull back from sustainability initiatives**. Yet sustainability remains one of the Top-3 priorities for business leaders, which is reflected in **increased sustainability investments** in the last year³

Sources: 1 – World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report, 2025; 2 – McKinsey & Company, Women in the Workplace, 2025; 3 – Deloitte, C-Suite Sustainability Report, 2025

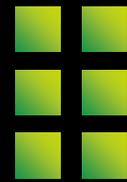
The journey toward gender equality in the workplace, beyond longstanding barriers, now faces growing pressure from AI advancements

WOMEN ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN OCCUPATIONS MOST LIKELY TO BE AUTOMATED

1/4 OF JOBS WORLDWIDE

could be exposed to generative artificial intelligence (AI) impact¹

In high-income countries this exposure includes¹:



41%

female employment

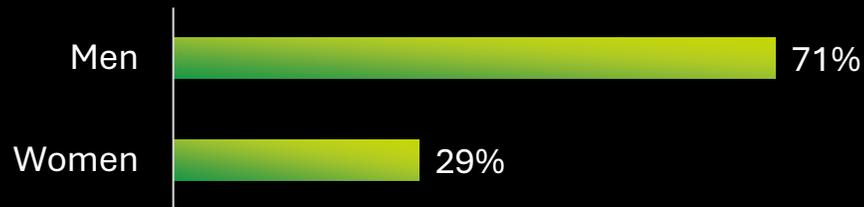


28%

male employment

WOMEN ARE SIGNIFICANTLY OVERLOOKED IN AI UPSKILLING

The vast majority of workers who say they are skilled in AI are men²:



Women are **less represented** among science, technology, engineering and mathematics (**STEM**) fields graduates



33% of women **offered AI skilling opportunities** by their employer compared with **38%** for men²

Sources: 1– ILO, *Generative AI and Jobs*, 2025; 2 – Randstad, *Understanding talent scarcity: AI & Equity*, 2024.

EU maintains historic progress in advancing gender equality with a series of impactful legislation, but Ukraine still lags behind



EU REGULATIONS

Directive on Gender Balance in Corporate Boards sets targets for increasing the number of women on corporate boards

Pay Transparency Directive addresses the gender pay gap by requiring more transparency about pay structures

Directive on Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence sets frameworks to prevent violence and support victims

Work-Life Balance Directive guarantees provisions like paid parental leave, flexible working arrangements and schedules



UKRAINIAN POLICY

Ukraine **does not have dedicated regulatory tools** such as mandatory gender pay-gap reporting requirements or legally binding gender quotas

Ukraine's comprehensive legal framework on gender equality, grounded in constitutional guarantees and supporting legislation, largely relies on policy measures and institutional practices rather than binding economic instruments

Progress in gender equality depends primarily on **voluntary corporate practices and broader governance reforms**

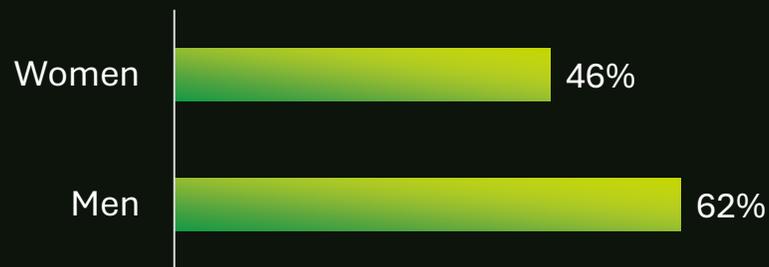
A group of five women are shown in a professional setting, laughing and interacting joyfully. They are dressed in business-casual attire. The background features a stone wall with a large circular window. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. The text is centered over the image.

Ukraine must accelerate its efforts on gender equality, considering both EU integration and to activate the workforce needed for reconstruction

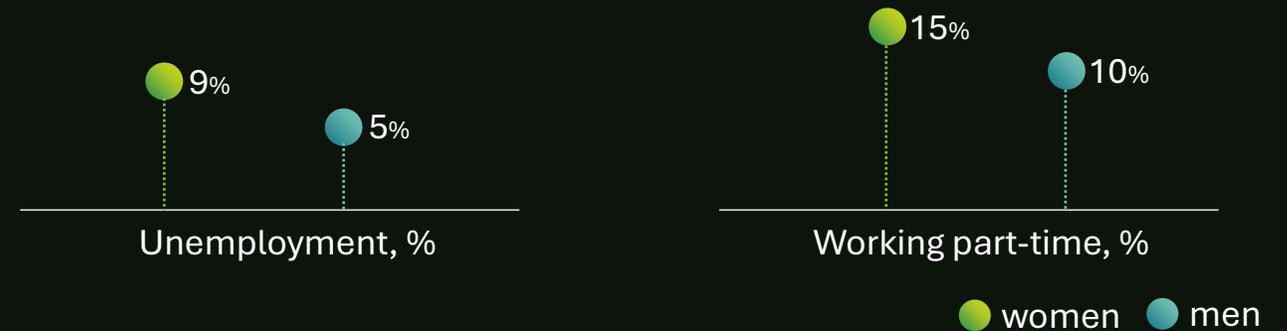
Women's engagement in Ukraine holds significant untapped potential – a critical asset for the country's reconstruction

Today, women make up an estimated **51% of working age population in Ukraine**¹, however they continue to experience worse labor market outcomes than men

Women have significantly lower level of workforce participation²:



Unemployment rate and share of part-time jobs are higher among female population³:



About **ONE-THIRD OF ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE WOMEN CAN POTENTIALLY BE ENGAGED IN THE LABOR MARKET**, but have given up job searching or are unaware of existing employment opportunities²

Sources: 1 – UN World Population Prospects 2024; 2 – Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Transformation of the Ukrainian Labour Market: The Economic Empowerment of Women During the War and Post-War Recovery, 2025; 3 – The World Bank, Female Employment in Ukraine, 2025.

As history shows, while wartime may be a short-term catalyst of women's engagement, sustaining these gains requires leadership action

57%

of respondents see the war as a catalyst for rethinking women's roles at work, with the potential to expand women's participation in corporate leadership in Ukraine

Female labor market engagement often rises during wartime

Almost **7 million women** entered the US workforce during World War II¹



However, these gains are frequently followed by post-war backlash and reversals

Female employment declined in 1945, **returning female labor force participation rates to pre-war levels**¹

“

During the war, certain opportunities have expanded; however, once it ends, these may narrow as leadership and management positions are likely to be increasingly occupied by individuals with military command experience

Male member, telecommunications

Sources: 1 – Evan K. Rose, *The Rise and Fall of Female Labor Force Participation During World War II in the United States*

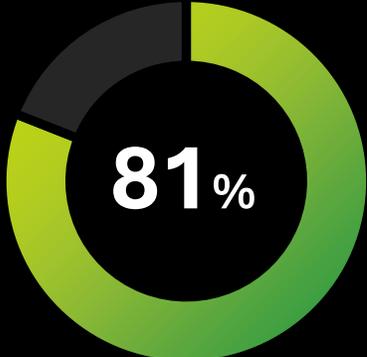


Women in the boardroom:
advancing gender parity

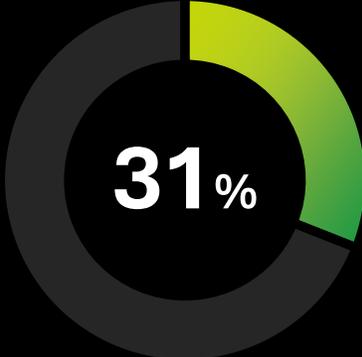
Ukrainian companies are moving closer to achieving gender parity in supervisory boards, but there is still room for improvement

19%

of respondents reported an increase in female representation on their Supervisory Boards over the past year, 72% reported no change, and 9% saw a decline



of Supervisory Boards have at least one woman among members



of Supervisory Boards' seats are occupied by women



of Supervisory Boards that are chaired by women

Women's leadership competence is largely undisputed; however, traditional perceptions remain

98%

of respondents agree that gender diversity in supervisory boards has a positive impact on their effectiveness

100%

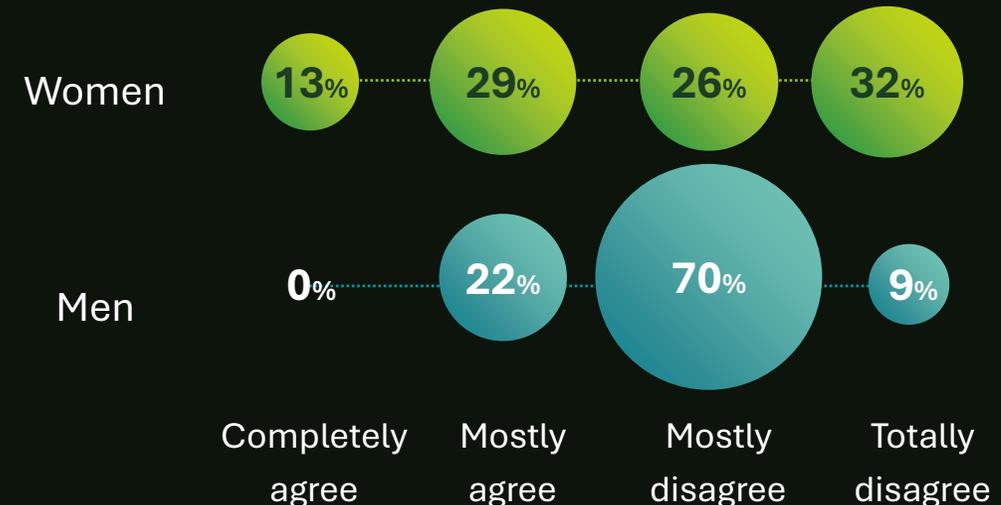
of respondents agree that women can be just effective leaders as men

“

For teams, gender diversity is a natural and positive asset. The presence of women in the room can help foster a more constructive dynamic, particularly when their perspectives are valued and respected

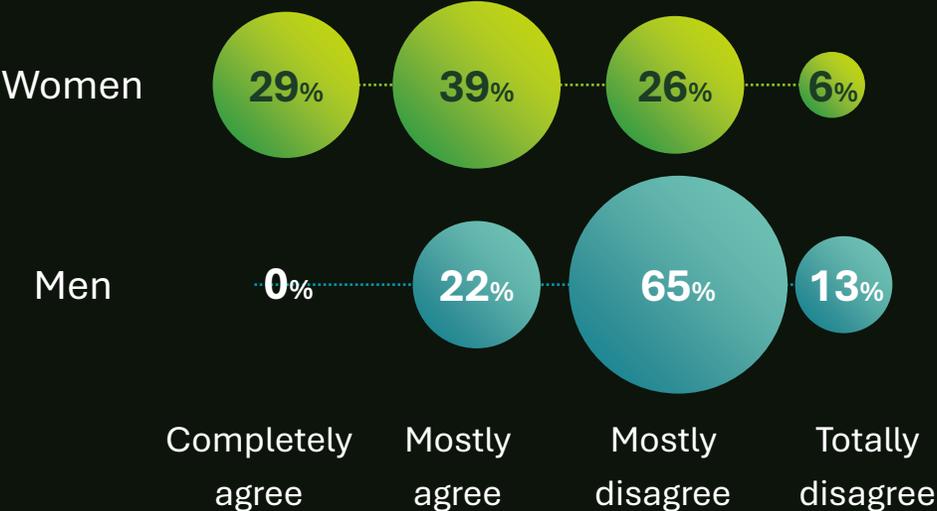
Female member, banking

→ 42% women and 22% men believe the role of Supervisory Boards' members is perceived by society as traditionally male

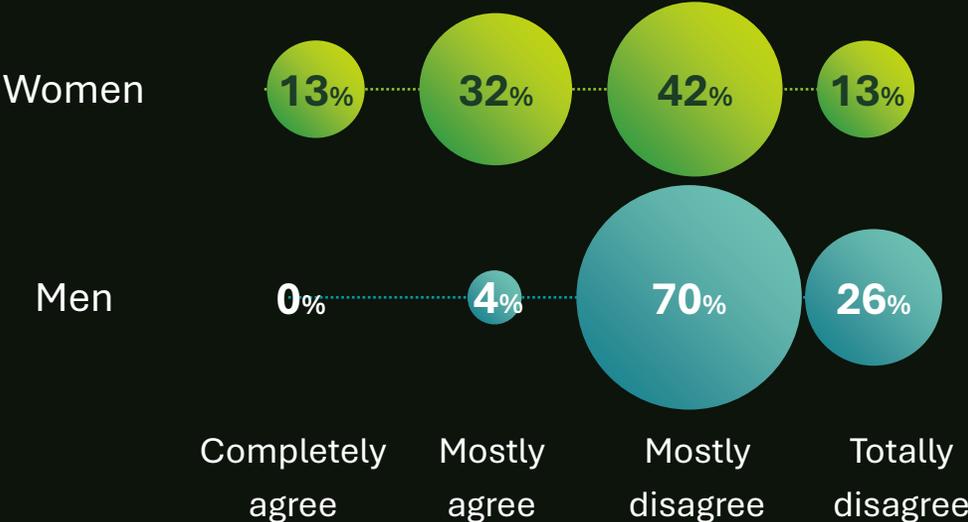


Female members of supervisory boards feel more pressure to prove their expertise and face harsher judgment for their mistakes

→ **68%** women and **22%** men believe women must prove their competence more often and to a greater extent than men



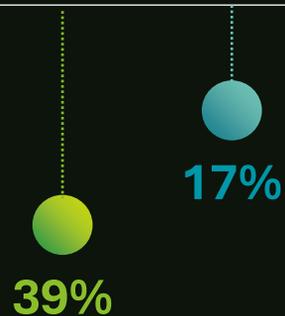
→ **45%** women and **4%** men are convinced that mistakes made by women in leadership roles are judged more harshly than those made by men



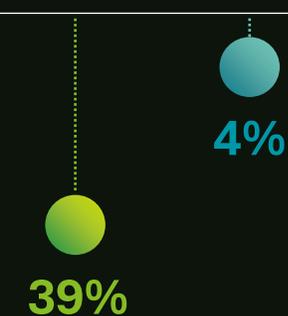
Women in leadership have to constantly adjust their behaviors to integrate with male members

RESPONDENTS AGREE THAT

When a woman shows **confidence**, it is sometimes interpreted as “**aggressiveness**”



It is harder for women to **gain authority** among male colleagues



● women ● men

“

Women can often be perceived as overly sensitive or overly assertive. Behaviors or communication styles that may be readily accepted from men are often judged differently when expressed by women, requiring them to rephrase or moderate their message

Female member, banking

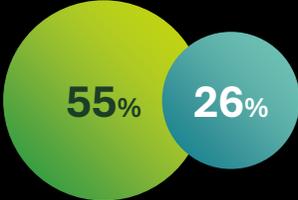
Gender bias is embedded in everyday practices, organizational processes, and workplace culture, driving unequal treatment

90%

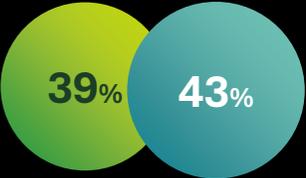
of female respondents acknowledge they have at least occasionally experienced or witnessed one or more forms of discrimination

FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION OBSERVED:

The pay gap between men and women on similar positions



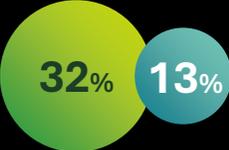
Verbal insults
(including sexist jokes, use of euphemisms, ambiguous phrases etc.)



Physical contact without consent
(hugs, patting on the back, touching the shoulder, arm, etc.)



Social segregation
(ignoring women, excluding them from team discussions)



Psychological pressure
(devaluation of achievements, unreasonable criticism, intimidation)



Sexual harassment

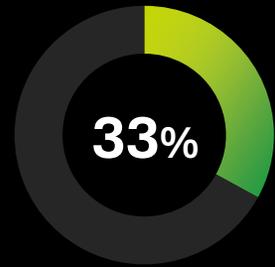


● - women (often/usually, sometimes) ● - men (often/usually, sometimes)

**Turning insight into action:
from engagement to impact**

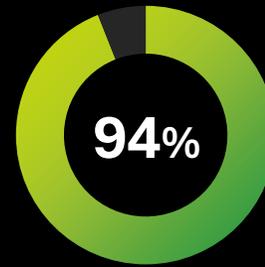


To build an inclusive environment and achieve gender parity companies need to take a systemic approach to establishing their DEI strategies



33% of respondents have a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy in their company

OF THEM



consider DEI principles as an integral part of their company's culture

HOWEVER, MOST SURVEYED COMPANIES STILL HAVEN'T ADOPTED FORMAL SYSTEMS OF DEI AND GENDER PARITY ENFORCEMENT

6%



have a requirement for a minimum percentage of women in the Supervisory Board

9%



regularly consider DEI issues in the context of strategy implementation

28%



have an officer or department responsible for DEI issues

7%



regularly measure progress in gender equality

Fostering an inclusive corporate culture and providing women with opportunities and enablers are key drivers for female participation

Building an inclusive culture



Setting the tone from the top



Implementing clear DEI policies with measurable goals



Maintaining ESG reporting and monitoring DEI progress



Introducing gender quotas and pay-gap reduction policies



Expanding opportunities



Enabling flexible working conditions



Launching structured sponsorship and mentorship programs



Fostering networking and visibility



Shaping public narratives by promoting role models

Methodology:
profile of respondents



Socio-demographic profile of respondents

54

respondents



31

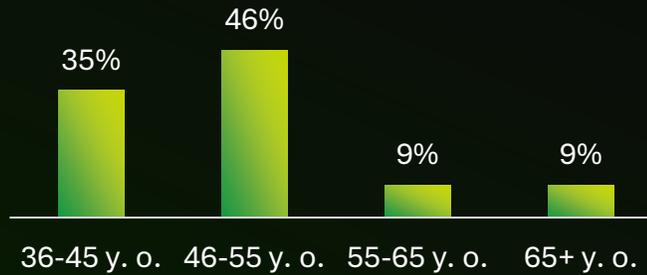
female



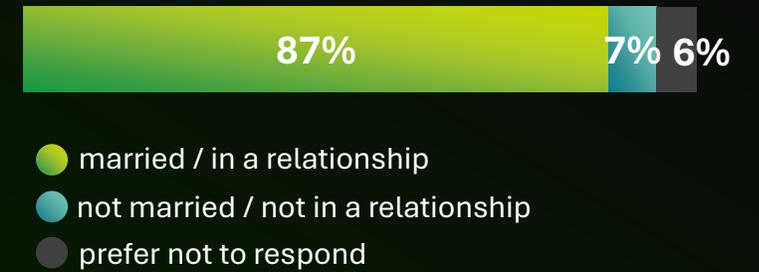
23

male

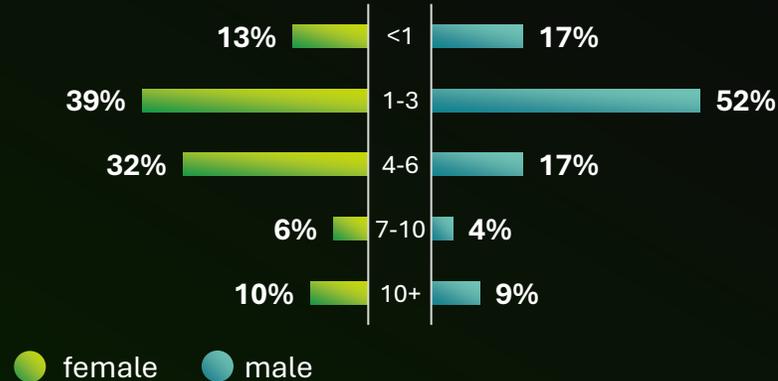
AGE



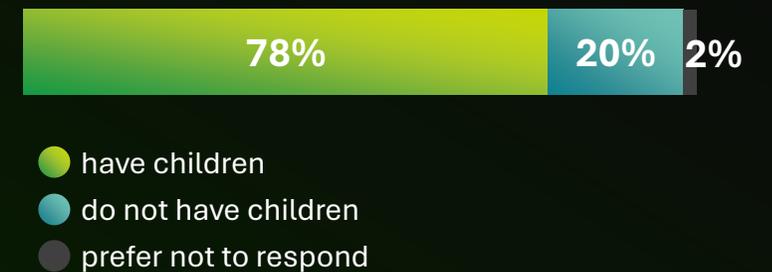
MARITAL STATUS



YEARS IN THE POSITION

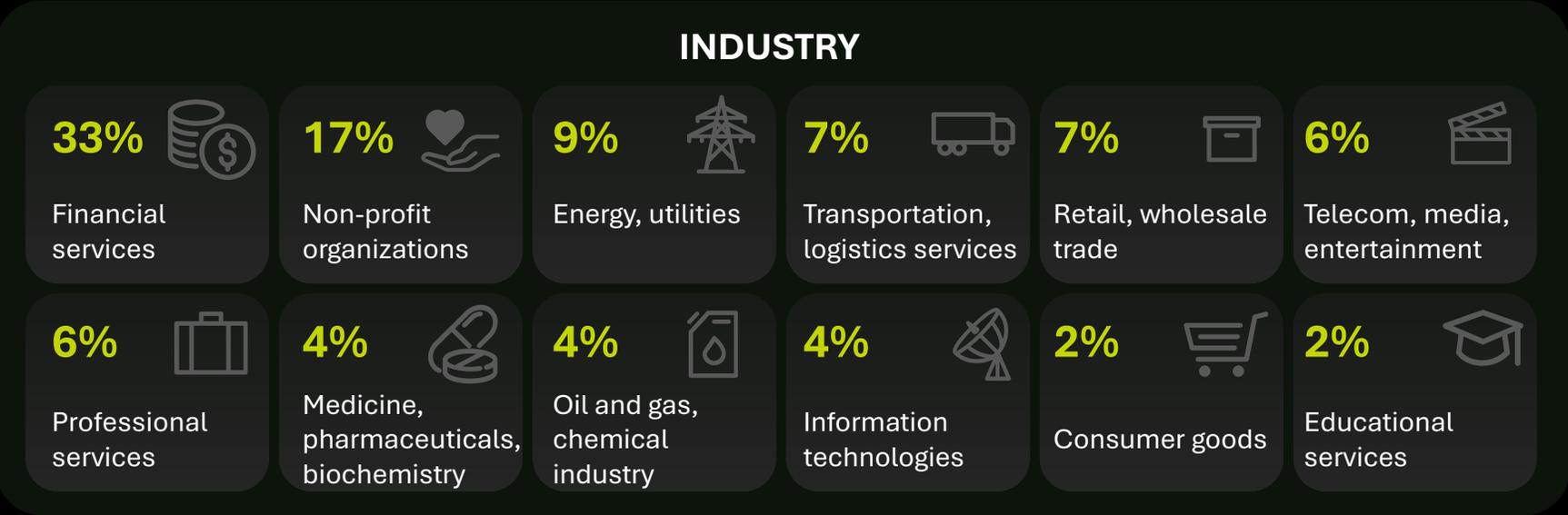
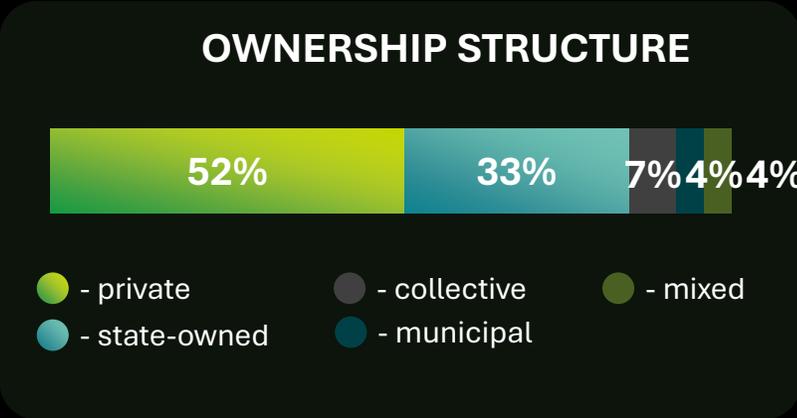
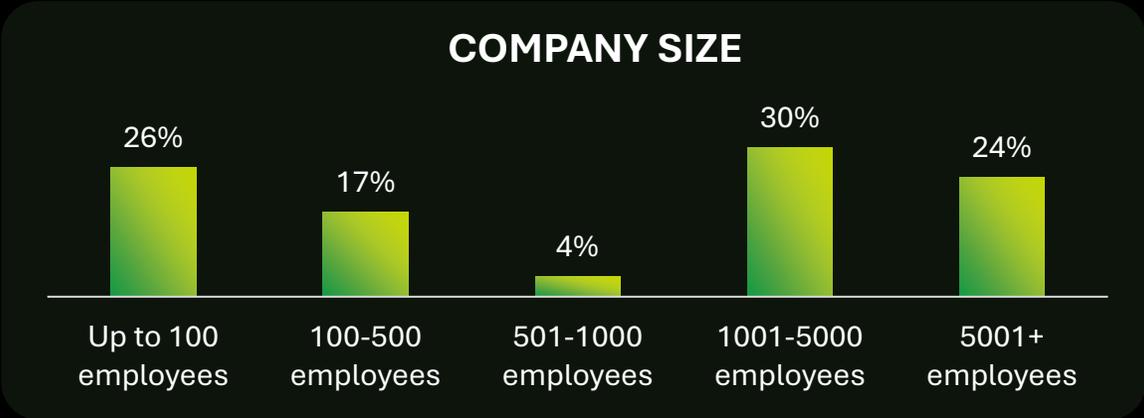


CHILDREN



Professional profile of respondents

47
organizations





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