

In terms of process, we aligned all our performance goals to the departmental head's mission so that we are all working towards a shared goal.

## Employee diversity

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) is a force that has immense power to transform an organisation. At Safaricom, our D&I tagline is "Embrace my World" and we endeavour to leave no-one behind as we engage, grow and transform the lives of our diverse staff. This is reflected through the various dimensions of difference that we celebrate such as gender, disability, age and religion.

Throughout the year we ran different programmes and engagements to bring to life the different aspects of the D&I agenda, thus creating an inclusive environment where people feel respected, appreciated and valued, enhancing a sense of belonging.

## Gender diversity

Despite the global challenges posed by the pandemic, Safaricom maintained an overall gender-balanced organisation, closing with a ratio of females to males of 50:50 at the end of FY21. At management level, we experienced a 2% dip from 35% to 33%, slowing down our progress towards achieving the target of 40% female representation by 2025.

This calls for consistent deliberate effort to maintain the trajectory that we have had in the past and robust interventions have been put in place to accelerate this effort.

## Supporting women-owned businesses

We partner with Women in Business to help drive progress in diversifying our supplier base and promoting women in technology.

After critically analysing their procurement process and the number of business opportunities granted to women, the Safaricom procurement team realised that women-owned businesses were not well represented. To solve this, we started the Women in Business (WIB) programmes in March 2017 anchored on SDG 10 to reduce inequality within and among countries. The forum seeks to create economic empowerment by ensuring that there is a fair share of procurement opportunities allocated to women. In addition, they also provide the women with capacity-building training, mentorship and coaching among other measures with the aim of improving their economic status and that of the communities which the women impact.

Safaricom also revised its procurement policy to make provisions that ensure there is participation of women as special interest groups and the same policy makes provision for a margin of preference for female suppliers during evaluations when they have already met the minimum threshold for technical capacity to deliver.

## Challenges

While the WIB Programme has managed to provide more business opportunities, challenges for MSMEs in Kenya remain, including:

- **Lack of access to affordable financing:** MSMEs require finance for expansion, productivity and growth yet the majority self-finance their businesses. Based on analysis of the World Bank Enterprise Survey data, close to 68% of Kenyan enterprises state access to finance as a key challenge. Safaricom therefore needed a unique and cost-effective financing solution, which would enhance the WIB's cash conversion cycle and provide them with the much-needed capital to deliver their goods and services.
- **Under-representation:** Most organisations' procurement data would confirm women suppliers are less than 20%. Safaricom's data check confirmed women spend was 2.7% at the beginning of 2017.
- **Experience and skills:** Lack of capacity to undertake complex and technical projects.
- **Women suppliers (supply market):** Currently only concentrate in low spend and simple categories, which translates into low spend categories.

## Demonstration of best practice and/or innovation

It has become normal practice for companies to have programmes in place to manage the environmental, social, and governance risks in their supply chains. By implementing the WIB supply chain finance programme, Safaricom has aligned its organisational objectives to the sustainability objectives guided by the SDGs to provide a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

In line with Safaricom's sustainability goals, sustainable supply chain financing provides all of the benefits of supply chain finance, with the additional benefit of rewarding sustainable behaviours in the supply chain. The programme reinforces Safaricom's commitment to sustainability, strengthening the sustainability expectations for suppliers, and has contributed to better representation of women in Safaricom's supply chain. It also puts a value on the sustainability efforts of suppliers, providing them with an internal business case for more sustainable improvements.