

## WEPs IN ACTION



PRINCIPLE 2

**Treat all women and men fairly at work:  
Respect and support human rights and  
non-discrimination.**

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## CASE STUDY: Dow Chemical (China) Investment Limited

### CREATING AN EQUAL WORKPLACE IN THE STEM INDUSTRY

#### LESSONS LEARNED

- Building a culture of inclusion is critical to foster diversity in the workplace, otherwise diversity just becomes a numbers game.
- Resourcing and incentivizing a diverse range of employee resource groups can help build an inclusive workplace.
- Creating a strategic executive committee on gender equality can secure commitment from the very top of a company.

#### CONTEXT

The Dow Chemical Company is an American chemical and plastics manufacturer and supplier of chemicals, plastics, synthetic fibers, and agricultural products. Founded in 1897 in Midland, Michigan, Dow operates 106 manufacturing sites in 31 countries and employs approximately 35,700 people. In 1998, Dow Chemical (China) Investment Limited was established to manage all Dow investment projects in China.

As part of Dow's dedication to the diversity of its workforce, the company is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and has committed to providing opportunities without regard for race, color, national origin, ethnicity, gender, protected veteran status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religion. To put its principles into practice, Dow China initiated a program in 2020 that advances equality in recruitment and hiring.

## ACTIONS

In mid-2020, Dow implemented a new Inclusive Hiring Standard throughout its global operations that sets requirements for posting jobs, the diversity of candidate slates and the diversity of interview panels. On top of this, Dow China launched a Neutral Interviewer Initiative. This ensures that a neutral person – selected and trained in inclusive interviewing and fair process – is present in all panels. This is usually the leader or a core member of an Employee Resource Group (ERG), which are voluntary, employee-led groups whose aim is to foster a diverse and inclusive workplace aligned with the organizations they serve. This person gives objective feedback and reports to the Hiring Manager on any bias that they observed during the interview process. A neutral interviewer must not have any direct affiliation or conflicts

of interest with the person who assumes the role; they must also complete an online training if they do not have interview experience and review the Neutral Interviewer Guide if they do not have any previous experience in the role.

Dow also includes relevant gender metrics in its annual Performance Award design for all its people leads. Every year, Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) index targets, including global female representation in both employees and people leadership and ERG participation rate, are published at the global level. These ESG index targets are taken into account in determining the year-end performance-based bonuses of managers.

## TIMELINE

Mar  
2020

Dow China  
signs the  
WEPs

July  
2020

Dow China  
launches a Neutral  
Interviewer  
Initiative

Mar  
2021

**Engaging men as allies** – The company runs a series of events to promote Heforshe initiatives and encourages male employees to sign up Heforshe online, which is the United Nations Global Solidarity Movement and an invitation for men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a united force for gender equality

## CHALLENGES

Challenge	How it is addressed
<p><b>A gender imbalance among those with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) qualifications</b>, particularly in STEM-related majors in universities. This can make it challenging to achieve gender-balanced interview panels when hiring.</p>	<p>Dow makes sure that there is at least one female candidate in consideration for all externally posted roles. If no female candidate applies, the job posting is extended for another two weeks.</p>
<p><b>It takes time to raise the gender awareness among employees, especially men.</b></p>	<p>Making D&amp;I a part of the company strategy helps raise awareness. Dow also invites senior-level male colleagues to speak out in favour of gender strategies, become core members of D&amp;I events, and be panel speakers.</p>
<p><b>Instituting gender into the hiring process was new to many Dow people leaders and required substantial change management efforts.</b></p>	<p>Substantial effort was made to advocate for the value of the neutral interviewer initiative and the benefits it would bring to the company. The initiative was launched with the strong support of the corporate D&amp;I strategy and senior leaders. Awareness raising among all hiring managers continues, which will include utilizing quantitative and qualitative data to convince them.</p>

## RESULTS

As a result of its new Inclusive Hiring Standards and Neutral Interviewer Initiative, women make up 44 per cent of mid-level manager roles at Dow China and 59 per cent of top-level leadership roles. The latest figures for new hires show that women constitute 53 per cent.










## RECOMMENDATIONS


- Actively recruit and support female talent, particularly for senior roles.
- Ensure that men in the workplace are allied and involved in steps towards gender equality. Increase the gender awareness of male employees to help build an inclusive workplace.
- Cultivate storytelling skills internally and externally. Learning from each other's stories can bring people closer and build allies among people of different genders, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds.


## THE ROLE OF WEPs


As a comprehensive guiding framework, the WEPs help to set the company's inclusion, diversity and equity strategic pillar.




- Principle 1  Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- Principle 2  Treat all women and men fairly at work– respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination.
- Principle 3  Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- Principle 4  Promote education, training and professional development for women.
- Principle 5  Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- Principle 6  Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- Principle 7  Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

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