

# Women LEAD

Africa Alliance

Leadership, Economic Advancement, and Development for Women



IFC

International  
Finance Corporation  
WORLD BANK GROUP

## About IFC

IFC—a member of the World Bank Group (WBG), is the largest global development institution focused on the private sector in emerging markets. IFC advances economic development and improves the lives of people by encouraging the growth of the private sector in developing countries through investment and advisory services. We apply our financial resources, technical expertise, global experience, and innovative thinking to help our partners overcome financial, operational, and other challenges. In doing so, we create jobs and raise living standards, especially for the poor and vulnerable. In 2024, IFC invested approximately \$20 billion to promote women's economic opportunities, by working with investors to allocate capital to women entrepreneurs, support buyers and suppliers to open opportunities for women and women-led businesses to participate in supply chains and encourage employers to strengthen women's employment and leadership.

## World Bank Group Gender Strategy

The WBG launched an ambitious [Gender Strategy 2024-2030](#) to expand solutions to help women enter and stay in the labor force, by supporting women's human capital, ending violence against women and girls, expanding economic opportunities, and increasing women's leadership roles. Three ambitious targets were announced: 1) providing 80 million more women and women-led businesses with access to capital, 2) connecting 300 million more women with broadband and 3) providing 250 million women with social protection coverage by 2030.

## Africa LEAD Alliance

The Africa Leadership, Economic Advancement, and Development for Women (LEAD) Alliance, convened by IFC, is a small, select group of 8-12 influential private sector leaders and thought leaders, well recognized in Africa that will come together to work with IFC to drive meaningful progress for women's economic advancement across the continent. The Alliance is designed to run for an initial term of two years.

## Alliance's Priorities and Objectives

The Africa LEAD Alliance will focus on accelerating young African women's access to entrepreneurship opportunities in the *sectors of the future*, such as creative economy, digital technology, and social enterprises. The ambition and objectives will be co-created with the Alliance leaders at the first virtual kick-off meeting.

## Why focus on women entrepreneurship in Africa?

Africa presents a unique and compelling opportunity for investment in women's entrepreneurship. The continent leads globally in the rate of women entrepreneurs, with 26 percent of adult women in sub-Saharan Africa engaged in entrepreneurial activity. Africa is also home to the world's youngest population, with over 530 million people between the ages of 15 and 35 in 2025, half of them women. Young women are embracing entrepreneurship, using digital platforms to create and market products and services. Yet, they remain concentrated in the informal sector and face numerous barriers to growth, especially in accessing capital. Unlocking their potential could fuel job creation, boost productivity, and strengthen economies across the continent.

## Launch, branding and communications

The Africa Alliance was launched as a part of the plenary session—Africa's Growth Engine: Women, Capital, and Job Creation—during the Africa CEO Forum in Abidjan on May 13, 2025, followed by a [press release](#). During the life of the Alliance, there will be a creative dissemination and outreach campaign, as jointly agreed with the Alliance leaders.

## Will similar LEAD Alliances exist in other regions?

IFC plans to establish three additional alliances in other regions (Middle East and Central Asia; Asia and Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean) which may have a different topical focus more relevant for the specific needs of these regions.