

WOMEN IN UAE CONSTRUCTION ARE MAKING A MOVE



GLOBAL CONSTRUCTION SECTOR OUTLOOK



INCLUSION IS INFRASTRUCTURE

Construction culture is no longer set to the one-size-fits-all. Site design, leadership pathways, and even PPE are evolving to include and elevate women at every level.

When women lead inspections, audits, and project teams — retention rises, quality improves, and the future only gets stronger.

FROM WORKFORCE TO LEADERSHIP

Women aren't just showing up — they're shaping policy, projects, and leadership.

At the highest levels, nearly 1 in 3 ministerial seats belongs to a woman, and women occupy half of the Federal National Council — a regional high.

In the UAE, inclusion isn't a gesture — it's part of national progress that trickles down to industries, sectors and cycles.

Female engineers, project managers, and cost consultants are stepping into leadership, driving better project outcomes, smarter risk management, and more collaborative delivery models.

Quite simply, women are redesigning the AEC workforce.

SMARTER WORKPLACES

Workforce strategies are evolving to reflect reality — flexible scheduling, remote project oversight, and family-friendly policies are no longer perks.

They're how firms attract and retain the talent needed to meet the UAE's ambitious development pipeline.

From giga-projects to sustainability-driven masterplans, it's diverse teams that will future-proof the industry.

EXCLUSION CAN BE COSTLY

Every barrier — from poorly fitted PPE to invisible leadership tracks — comes at a cost this industry can't afford.

The smart construction firms removing those barriers aren't just doing the right thing — they're building tighter teams, reducing turnover, and driving better project outcomes.

Because the future of construction isn't just about concrete and contracts — it's about who's at the table and who's leading the work.

At the end of the day, it's not just about what we build — it's about making sure everyone gets to build it.

THE OPTIMISTIC SIDE FOR FEMALE AEC PROFESSIONAL'S

At MEED Summits, more women took the stage than ever before. Women in Construction events connect hundreds of women to mentors, leadership tracks, & opportunities.

Late in 2024, gender-specific PPE rules from OSHA finalised all gear to fit properly to protect against occupational hazards. When sites fit every worker, the whole industry works better.

The Emirates GBC, aligns women's career growth in ESG and sustainability-linked building roles, making inclusion essential for government contracts and compliance under SDG 5.

As the UAE's Gender Balance Seal evolves, the UAE targets to be in the Top 25 globally for gender balance by 2025 requiring firms to align gender pay audits and leadership metrics.

STONEHAVEN'S BIGGEST ROLEMODELS FOR FUTURE FEMALE TALENT

960MN+ AED

In the past 12 months, Bagya led cost management operations for GCC projects totalling nearly 1 billion AED.

05 PROJECTS

Oversaw 05 large-scale projects across the Middle East in 2024 alone – from pre to post-contract management.

79MN+ AED

Her team delivered close to 79 million AED to clients in VE cost savings throughout major projects in the last 12 months.



4.8MN+ AED

Shane successfully closed bids and sub-contracts worth over 4.8 million AED in the past 12 months.

07 PROJECTS

Coordinated 06 projects across UAE and 1 in KSA, keeping every objective and milestone aligned in 2024 alone.

100+ BIDS

Managed 87 bids in 2024 and 27 bids so far in 2025, covering contracts, variations, and timely reporting.

SAME SKILLS WITH STANDARDS TO BE SET

Respecting the Balance

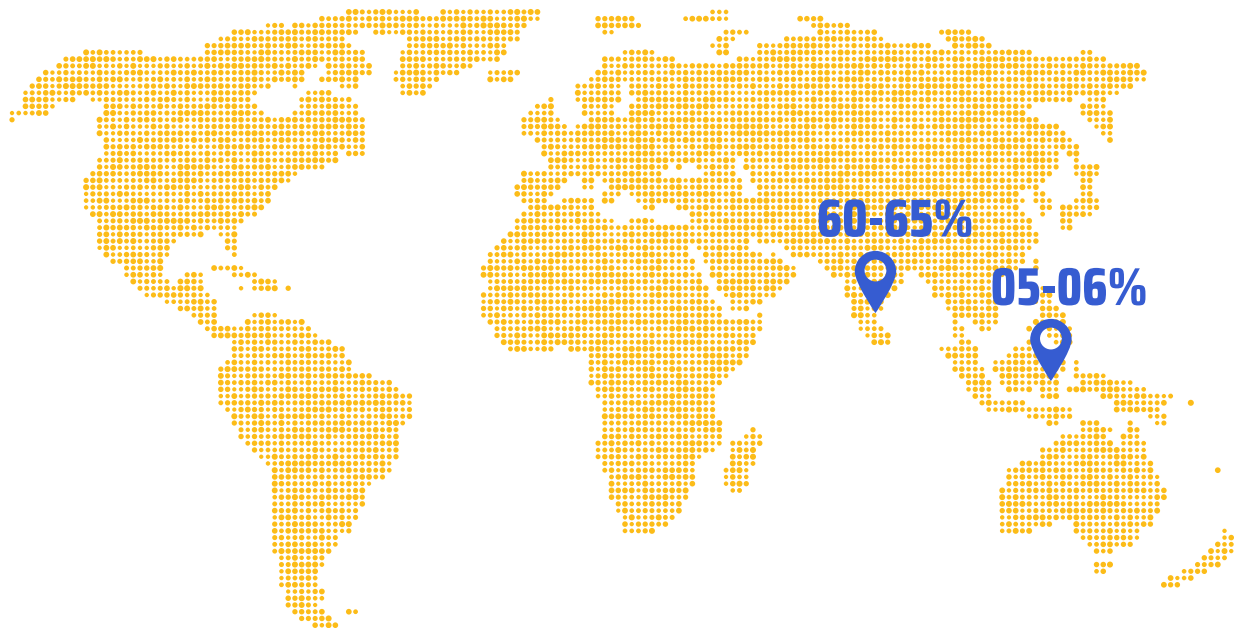
The UAE ranked as the most gender-equal country in MENA in 2024, placing 10th globally for 'wage equality for similar work'.

What's Changing?

- The pay gap is real — but so is the momentum to close it.
- As ESG standards evolve, more firms link pay equity to performance metrics, making it a big part of how success should be measured.
- The smartest construction firms already know that talent deserves equal value.



THE UAE HAS ALWAYS BEEN BUILT BY MANY AND LED BY MUCH MORE



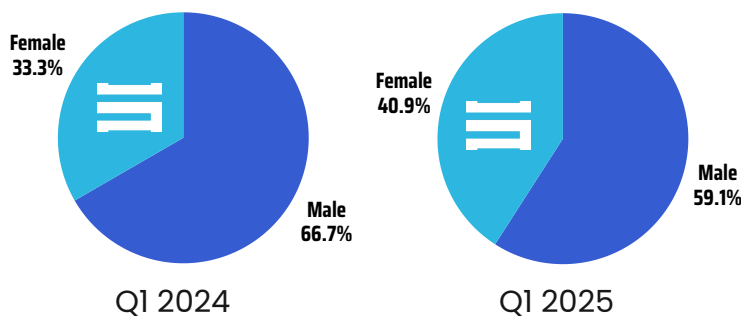
Over **80%** of the UAE's workforce is expatriate. And this distills down to lesser women in leadership roles. It's a matter of changing the ladders to be more inclusive, because if she can't picture herself there at the leadership role, how can we ensure she gets there?

INCLUSION HAPPENS NOW

Between Q1 2024 and Q1 2025, our female representation at STONEHAVEN doubled by **50%** along with our workforce.

Not by accident — but with intention.

Women represent just **6%** of UAE's construction workforce, but they are 100% a part of our future. It's time we realise it.



MALE ALLYSHIP — BE THE GUY WHO GETS IT

A topic of discussion left out a lot is ‘male allyship’.

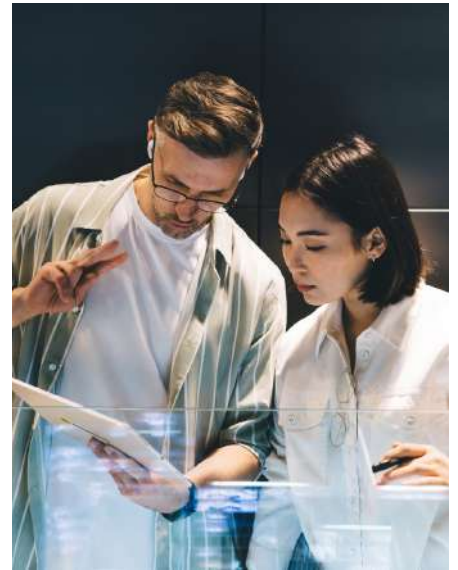
Allyship opens doors when senior male project directors help:

- Sponsor female talent
- Call out bias
- Build truly mixed-gender teams

It’s a Shared Responsibility

Construction firms making allyship part of leadership KPIs aren’t just supporting women —

They are actively shaping leadership cultures that can better reflect the world we are all designing together.



NON-WESTERN WOMEN & CAREER MOBILITY

For non-Western women — career progression often means pushing past a double bias: one tied to gender, the other to nationality.



In 2025, Filipina engineers and architects emerged as sought-after professionals in the UAE, challenging stereotypes that confined them to administrative roles.



Events like the EDI Summit held in Dubai in 2024, spotlight how the industry is actively rethinking what equity looks like.

This isn’t just about optics — it’s strategy. Firms that unlock the full talent spectrum don’t just perform better; they innovate faster and build more resilient, inclusive project teams.



LEADERSHIP VISIBILITY FOR ‘HER’

In 2024, 10.8% of board seats in publicly listed UAE companies were held by women — the highest in the GCC, but still a long way to go.

However, the higher you go in GCC construction leadership, the fewer women you see.

Making Motion in the UAE

Without visible female leaders, younger women often struggle to picture themselves at the top.

From January 2025, all privately owned UAE companies were mandated to have at least one woman on their boards.



EMPOWERING WORKING MOTHERS IN UAE'S CONSTRUCTION SECTOR



Part-time, flexible hours & remote work — all part of the 2025 UAE Labour Law, giving working mothers more ways to balance careers & families.



Drones, live dashboards & digital inspection tools enable remote project oversight — giving female leaders visibility without 24/7 site presence.



Since 2024, the UAE has extended maternity policies, offering up to 90-day fully-paid maternity leave in the private sector.

IN CONTINUITY FOR INCLUSION

The story of women in UAE construction isn't new — and that's exactly the problem.

For decades, the industry quietly assumed leadership, safety gear, and talent all looked the same. In 2025, that assumption is finally breaking.

At Stonehaven, this shift is real — with doubled female representation driven by conscious hiring, flexible policies, and leadership pathways that stay open at every level.

It's proof that when inclusion isn't treated like a side project, everyone benefits — from the quality of work on-site to the decisions happening in the boardroom.

But no single company can rewrite its story on its own. It's a collective effort.

In continuity for inclusion, in order to build something that lasts, the work has to be put in by both male and female construction professionals for the industry to be balanced and performance-driven at the scales.



REFERENCE MATERIAL

- <https://www.fixr.com/articles/women-in-construction-week>
- <https://www.gulftoday.ae/news/2024/12/23/emirati-women-play-key-role-in-uaes-2024-achievements>
- <https://aurora50.com/gender-equality-equal-pay-uae-2024-stats/>
- <https://events.meed.com/event/menaconstructions Summit/>
- <https://ofwjobs.org/2025/01/charting-the-rise-of-filipino-engineers-in-global-construction-leadership/>
- <https://www.uaemoments.com/top-expat-nationalities-in-the-uae-2024-709736.html>
- <https://www.osha.gov/news/newsreleases/osha-national-news-release/20241211>
- <https://emiratesgbc.org/emiratesgbc-womens-network/>
- <https://gbc.gov.ae/>
- <https://gulfbusiness.com/women-hold-10-8-pc-of-board-seats-in-uae-firms/>
- <https://thefinancestory.com/uae-mandates-that-private-companies-appoint-woman-to-boards>
- <https://economymiddleeast.com/news/wgs-2025-uae-gender-balance-council-progress-gender-equity/>
- <https://ensaantech.com/blog/uae-labour-laws-and-regulations/>
- <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/jobs/working-in-uae-government-sector/maternity-and-paternity-leave>
- <https://www.constructionequipmentguide.com/osha-puts-ppe-for-women-hard-hats-on-its-radar/66606>

Suite 505G+505H
Ibn Battuta Gate Offices
Jebel Ali Village
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
PO Box 41780

+971 (0) 4 570 2994
gordon@stonehaven.ae

Stonehaven provides world-class cost management, project management, and advisory services across public and private sectors. We deliver value and certainty, helping clients create sustainable built environments. Our expertise spans the entire lifecycle of physical assets, from concept and construction to operation and deconstruction.

Stonehaven.ae