

UNLOCKING VALUE WITH GENDER-DIVERSE INVESTMENT COMMITTEES

A guide for building gender-diverse investment committees in Private Equity and Venture Capital in Southeast Asia

July 2025



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IC diversity is a missed opportunity

Uncovers overlooked, high-potential deals that homogeneous ICs tend to miss.	Delivers higher IRR and lower loss ratios, driven by sharper decision-making and disciplined risk management.
Unlocks access to a wider set of advisors and industry networks, enhancing market intelligence.	Sets the fund apart with inclusive governance helping attract impact-focused LPs.

Roadblocks to gender diversity in ICs

Women are underrepresented in the private equity and venture capital (PE/VC) industry, including within Investment Committees (ICs). Key reasons for this are:

- › Recruitment practices for external IC roles rely on pre-established networks and are often based on narrow definitions of ‘merit’, focusing primarily on PE/VC experience as opposed to considering a wider range of criteria such as industry or regional expertise.
- › Slower career progression and lower promotion rates in PE/VC limit women’s advancement into the senior leadership roles that often serve as stepping stones to IC membership.
- › Limited Partners (LPs) may unintentionally reinforce systemic biases by demanding extensive experience—often beyond the timeframe of PE/VC’s widespread growth in Southeast Asia.

Practical solutions for building inclusive ICs:


- 1


Align IC composition with future strategy and partner with local networks to diversify the pool of candidates.
- 2


Widen the talent pool by tapping adjacent expertise and diaspora, especially in emerging sectors.
- 3


Adopt inclusive talent practices such as gender-smart recruitment, training and career progression towards future IC roles.
- 4


As an LP, drive diversity in ICs through policy, legal covenants and targeted technical assistance to fund managers.


**Resources made available in the guide**


List of ecosystem organizations that can aid IC member search.


List of recruiting firms with expertise in gender-inclusive IC searches.


Inclusive job description template for IC member recruitment.

Sample inclusive evaluation criteria for IC member selection.

**Case studies highlighted in the guide**

CLIME CAPITAL: partnered with an external recruiter to diversify the IC for its second fund.

CIRCULATE CAPITAL: intentionally leveraged its network to build a diverse IC from day one.

ADI: created a process that allows diversity to emerge based on merit instead of fixed quota.

BUILDING INCLUSIVE ICS: PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR FUND MANAGERS



IN THIS GUIDE, WE PROVIDE PRACTICAL GUIDELINES & RESOURCES FOR BUILDING A DIVERSE IC

1 /

Align IC composition with future strategy and partner with local networks to diversify the pool of candidates

For funds

2 /

Widen the talent pool by tapping adjacent expertise and diaspora, especially in emerging sectors

For funds

3 /

Adopt inclusive talent practices such as gender-smart recruitment, targeted training and career progression for IC roles

For funds

4 /

As an LP, drive diversity in ICs through policy, legal covenants and targeted technical assistance to fund managers

For LPs

1

BUILDING A DIVERSE, STRATEGY-ALIGNED IC - EVEN WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

Fund managers can utilize the following strategic yet cost-effective approaches

1

At the outset, align your IC composition with future strategy

Instead of filling IC roles based only on current gaps, assess where your fund is headed—new sectors, markets, or LP profiles—and identify the skills, networks, and perspectives needed to guide that journey. This forward-looking approach ensures your IC can support both today's decisions and tomorrow's growth.

2

Leverage local, investor-focused networks and talent databases

Use networks/platforms such as Business Angel Network of Southeast Asia, Angel Investor Network Indonesia, or Women in Investing Network Asia (WINA) to access women investors and professionals in the region. Databases such as Iterative.VC's Southeast Asia Investor Directory also include diverse talent from non-traditional backgrounds, broadening and diversifying your IC candidate pool. [A longer list is available on page 15.](#)

3

Partner with local industry bodies and ecosystem platforms

Collaborate with bodies such as local chambers of commerce, ASEAN business councils, the Diversity and Inclusion Asia Network (DIAN), or the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network (AWEN) to connect with professionals from varied industries and geographies. These partnerships can expand your reach and strengthen representation on your IC.



2

IN EMERGING SECTORS, TAPPING ADJACENT EXPERTISE AND DIASPORA TALENT HELPS BUILD STRONGER, MORE COMPLEMENTARY ICS

In climate investing and other emerging sectors such as fintech & health-tech, building gender-diverse ICs requires sourcing beyond conventional talent pools

Explore adjacent sectors to source relevant talent

- For example, in the case of climate investing, identify candidates from mainstream infrastructure, conventional energy and utilities, transportation, real estate, and manufacturing—industries undergoing or enabling climate transitions.
- Professionals in corporate strategy, project finance, or M&A roles, as well as senior executives (e.g. CEOs, CFOs, COOs) who have driven growth at companies in relevant sectors can offer deep commercial acumen and systems-level understanding.

Expand your geographic lens to strengthen regional insight

- Consider candidates from across Southeast Asia to diversify perspectives—for example, professionals from Singapore may offer experience in regional regulation and finance, while those from Indonesia or Vietnam bring critical on-the-ground market knowledge.
- Also explore Southeast Asian talent currently based abroad (e.g., in Australia, the U.S., or Europe) who combine global climate expertise with regional familiarity.

Partner with specialised recruiters

- Work with search firms experienced in Southeast Asia and the PE/VC ecosystem—particularly those focused on diversity hiring across sectors such as infrastructure, finance, and strategy. Notable firms include Kerry Consulting, N2 Growth, PER, and Sagana Talent ([full list on page 16](#)).



3

INVESTING FROM WITHIN: A DIVERSE IC PIPELINE CAN BE BUILT THROUGH GENDER-SMART TALENT PRACTICES

Funds can build a sustainable and inclusive talent pipeline for Investment Committee roles by implementing gender-smart recruitment and talent development practices

Create IC observer roles

- Introduce formal IC observer roles or “shadowing” opportunities at IC meetings, allowing mid-senior professionals—including women—to observe IC meetings, gain exposure, and gradually take on decision-making roles.
- Clearly define observer responsibilities to ensure active participation in discussions, not just passive observation.

Implement gender-smart IC recruitment practices

- Draft clear and concise [job descriptions](#) using gender-neutral language.
- Post the jobs across multiple platforms & networks. Use [specialized recruitment firms](#) to go beyond your existing network.
- Use a structured interview process involving a gender-balanced interviewer panel and use [inclusive evaluation criteria](#) to document feedback.



Define clear progression pathways and offer structured training and mentoring to build internal talent pipeline

- Establish clear career development pathways for mid-senior professionals from within the team to prepare for future IC roles, with defined milestones and success criteria.
- Offer personalized coaching and leadership development initiatives tailored to high-potential team members, with a focus on improving gender representation.
- Pair junior team members with senior IC members or industry experts through structured mentorship programs focused on skill-building and career progression.
- Collaborate with external mentorship initiatives such as Women’s Foundation in Hong Kong or Singapore Women in Tech (SGWIT) to connect junior professionals with external coaches and mentors.

4

ACTIVATING LP LEVERS: DIRECT SUPPORT, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LEGAL COVENANTS FOR INCLUSIVE ICS

LPs can unintentionally reinforce homogeneity in ICs by upholding conventional selection criteria or prioritising continuity over inclusion. However, they can also help shift the landscape. Below are actionable recommendations for LPs to influence IC composition

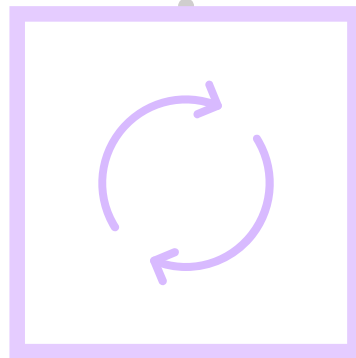


Influence adoption of good practices

- Influence the introduction of formal “observer” roles or “shadowing” opportunities at IC meetings, allowing mid-senior professionals—including women—to observe IC meetings, gain exposure, and gradually take on decision-making roles.

Provide technical assistance

- Share research linking diverse ICs to improved investment outcomes to highlight the business case for inclusion.
- Sponsor training and capacity building for mid-senior professionals within fund teams to take up IC/leadership roles.
- Provide TA for funds to engage a [specialized recruitment or search firm](#) to source and recruit diverse IC candidates.



Use hard levers such as legal covenants

- LPs can leverage hard levers—for example, using financial incentives or legal covenants—to formalize commitments to diversity or to expand the number of IC seats or establish IC member term limits as a strategy to enhance adaptability and create opportunities for diverse candidates.

PEER INSIGHTS: CASE STUDIES ON FUNDS THAT HAVE LED THE CHANGE



LESSONS FROM CLIME CAPITAL: ADDING A DIVERSE VOICE TO THE IC



Clime Capital is a Singapore-based fund manager dedicated to accelerating the low-carbon transition in Southeast Asia. The firm has successfully launched multiple funds—including its USD 175m clean energy fund.

Background

Clime Capital's initial fund, SEACEF-I, had an IC comprising five voting members, two of whom (40%) were women—reflecting the fund's early commitment to diversity. However, during the launch of its USD 175 million clean energy fund, Clime faced challenges in identifying gender-diverse IC candidates who could join before first close. With support from ADI's Technical Assistance Facility, Clime set out to appoint a new external IC member, prioritizing a gender-smart recruitment process. Via this TA support, a female IC observer also began receiving targeted coaching to potentially transition into a formal IC role in the future.

Challenges faced

Despite its commitment, Clime Capital found it difficult to build a gender-diverse candidate pool for the role

Fragmented pool of candidates in the region

Southeast Asia has a fragmented pool of senior women leaders in venture capital, many of whom are already engaged at peer organizations—making it hard to find talent and creating conflicts of interest that further shrink the talent pool.

Climate investing being an emerging sector

As a new and emerging field, climate investing has few senior professionals with 20+ years of investment decision-making experience, making it difficult to find investors with both sector expertise and leadership skills.

Strategic actions taken by Clime Capital to build a gender diverse IC



Drafted a clear business case

Crafted a clear, strategic document to justify the focus on building a diverse IC and secure support from the LPAC.



Partnered with external recruitment firms

Considering the limited pool, Clime partnered with Sagana to broaden the talent search and build a diverse candidate slate.



Adopted a structured recruitment process

Clime used quantitative selection tools (such as comparison matrices) for objective evaluations and LPAC approval.



Focused mentoring of internal team member

Provided mentoring to an IC observer from within the team to transition into a future voting role, to foster long-term diversity.

“Go beyond representation—build strong communication, training, and mentorship programs to develop female leaders. Use a data-driven recruitment process, leverage external expertise, and embed diversity into leadership development for lasting impact.”

— Clime Capital's advice for fund managers

LESSONS FROM CIRCULATE CAPITAL: EMBEDDING DIVERSITY FROM THE GET-GO



CIRCULATE CAPITAL

Circulate Capital is a Singapore-based fund manager investing in circular economy solutions across high growth markets. Its South and Southeast Asia focused Ocean Fund I (USD 112m AUM, launched 2019), Fund I-B (USD 76m AUM, launched 2021), and Ocean Fund LAC (USD 75m AUM, launched 2023) invest in plastic recycling and circular innovations, blending regional focus with global exposure.

Background

From the outset, the firm committed to forming a diverse Investment Committee (IC) as both a reflection of its values and a strategic lever for long-term success. It had the following goals:

- Strengthen investment decision-making through varied backgrounds and expertise
- Ensure inclusive evaluation processes, especially for underrepresented entrepreneurs
- Combine global operational know-how with local market insight in key Asian geographies

Challenges faced

In 2019, ahead of launching its first Ocean Fund, the team faced the following challenges in IC formation:

Limited time and resources

With only 4–6 months to form the IC before finalizing fund agreements, the firm operated under tight timelines and without the budgets to engage external recruiters. Each IC candidate also needed time to build mutual trust with the team.

Emerging sector in the region

The PE sector esp. with a focus on the circular economy was still nascent in South and Southeast Asia. Few candidates and fewer women had local experience in waste management or recycling—particularly through the lens of PE investing.

Strategy for building a diverse IC from Day 1

Circulate Capital adopted a focused three-part strategy to build a high-performing, diverse Investment Committee:

Activated networks early:



Tapped trusted internal and professional networks to find candidates with deep sector expertise, shared values and proven impact.

Expanded the talent pool intentionally:



Extended outreach to alumni groups, industry peers and local associations to widen the pool and include underrepresented voices.

Aimed at complementarity, not perfection:



Prioritized complementary strengths over perfect profiles—balancing technical depth, regional insight & experience across the committee.

Embedding diversity early unlocked long-term value

Sharper investment decisions

With diverse voices in the room, the IC flags risks sooner, asks sharper questions and brings more depth and nuance to due diligence.

Championing diverse entrepreneurs

A more inclusive committee leads to fairer evaluations and stronger support for founders from underrepresented backgrounds.

Investor trust, earned and amplified

Inclusive leadership earns the trust of values-aligned investors. The IC signals credibility and supports fundraising for follow-on funds.

LESSONS FROM ADI: EXPANDING A DIVERSE IC TO EMBED REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES



Australian Development Investments (ADI) is Australia's blended-finance fund of funds launched by the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and managed by Sarona Asset Management. Launched in 2021 as the AUD 40m Emerging Markets Impact Investment Fund (EMIIF), it was expanded to AUD 250m in 2023 to deepen private-sector financing into climate, gender-lens, and SME-focused funds in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific.

Background

ADI's inaugural five-member IC (2 women, 3 men) demonstrated its commitment to gender equity, SME growth, and climate resilience by combining sector expertise and lived experience. However, the committee drew predominantly on Australian-based impact investors with DFI backgrounds, leaving ADI's target regions under-represented.

As deal volumes rose and the mandate broadened to include climate investments, ADI grew the IC to seven members—intentionally adding local experts from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific to secure on-the-ground market knowledge.



Challenges faced

As ADI expanded its mandate, it needed additional IC members who could immediately navigate complex investment decisions and who understood on-ground realities in ADI's target markets. ADI shared the job description across LinkedIn, DFI networks and DFAT channels—garnering 60+ applicants from 26 countries. Two challenges emerged:

Limited pool of experienced candidates

Only 17% of applicants had prior IC experience—and just 6% were women—making it tough to scale decision-making capacity without undermining diversity.

Limited pool of regional candidates

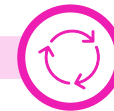
Only 26% of candidates hailed from South Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Pacific, resulting in gaps in the regional insights critical to achieving ADI's impact objectives.

Strategy adopted by ADI: Encouraging diversity without quotas



Defined clear, balanced criteria

Using a points-based scorecard, ADI balanced hard skills (formal IC or investment experience) with lived experience (regional market insights), ensuring women and local experts could compete on merit.



Implemented multi-stage selection

The process included two Sarona-led interviews, one DFAT interview, and reference checks—using anonymized scorecards to limit bias. Narrowed 69 applicants down to 6 finalists, finally appointing 3 new IC members.



Built cohesion & continuity

The new IC retained two founding members for institutional memory and mentoring, convened norm-setting workshops and adopted a rotating-chair model to align values, flatten hierarchy, and share leadership.



Outcome

The IC grew from 5 members in 2021 (2 women, 0 regional representatives) to 7 members in 2023 (3 women, 2 regional representatives)

GET STARTED: ESSENTIAL RESOURCES FOR BUILDING A DIVERSE IC

1. A list of ecosystem organizations that can aid gender-inclusive IC member search
2. A list of recruiting firms that specialize in gender-inclusive IC searches
3. Inclusive job description for IC member recruitment
4. Sample inclusive evaluation criteria for IC member selection

A LIST OF ECOSYSTEM ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN AID GENDER-INCLUSIVE IC MEMBER SEARCH

Organization	Type	Geographies	Theme	Focus	Website
100 Women in Finance	Network	Global	Gender-Lens Investing	Global network of women in finance with a focus on peer engagement and professional development.	100women.org
2X Global	Initiative/Network	Global	Gender-Lens Investing	2X Global is a global membership and field-building organization that mobilizes capital through gender-lens investing across public and private markets globally	2xglobal.org
Angels of Impact	Network	Southeast Asia	Gender-Lens Investing	Invests in women-led social enterprises in Southeast Asia.	angelsofimpact.com
Asian Venture Philanthropy Network (AVPN)	Network	Asia	Impact Investing	Social investment network in Asia, including impact investing and gender equality.	avpn.asia
Business Women Australia	Network	Australia	Professional Network	Collective of women, supporting business success and personal growth through networking and insights missions	businesswomenaustralia.com.au
Epic Angels	Network	Asia Pacific	Angel Investing	Female-only angel investor network in Asia Pacific, democratizing angel investing.	epicangelnetwork.com
Global Private Capital Association (GPCA)	Association	Emerging Markets	Impact Investing	Represents private capital in emerging markets, including Southeast Asia. GPCA also published the Southeast Asia Women Investors Directory in partnership with Investing in Women	globalprivatecapital.org
Singapore Business Federation	Business Association	Singapore	PE/VC	Represents Singaporean businesses and promotes economic development, including private equity investment. The focus is on creating future-ready business.	sbf.org.sg
Women Corporate Directors (WCD)	Network	Global	Professional Network	Global network of women corporate directors with chapters in Southeast Asia.	wcdglobal.org
Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi)	Initiative	Emerging Markets	Gender-Lens Investing	Supports women entrepreneurs in developing countries, including Southeast Asia.	we-fi.org
Women in Investing Network Asia (WINA)	Network	Asia	Professional Network	Empowers women in the investment community across Asia.	winaasia.org

RECRUITING FIRMS THAT SPECIALIZE IN GENDER-INCLUSIVE IC SEARCHES

These firms bring expertise in identifying gender-diverse candidates for senior roles, helping funds move beyond traditional networks to build high-performing, inclusive ICs.

Organization	Geographies	Focus	Brief description	Website
AP Executive	Asia, North America and Europe	Wealth Management, Family Offices, Trusts, Funds, Fiduciary Firms	A boutique executive search firm specializing in recruiting senior-level positions in private equity and investment management sectors, with a presence in Singapore.	ap-executive.com
CPI	North America, Latin America, Asia and Europe	Multiple	Provides global investment professional recruiting for private and public investment firms, primarily operating in the United States	cpiny.com
Dynamics Search Partners	Global with focus on United States	Private Equity, Growth/Venture,, Hedge Funds, Family Offices, and & Endowments	A premier search firm committed to sourcing top talent for the hedge fund and private equity industries, operating across all levels and geographies, with a significant presence in the United States.	dspny.com
Keller Executive Search	Global	Private Equity	Specializes in sourcing top talent for private equity roles, including financial analysts, risk managers, and portfolio managers, operating in Singapore.	kellerexecutivesearch.com
Kerry Consulting	APAC with focus on Singapore	Multiple	One of the largest executive recruitment firms in Singapore, experienced in placing senior roles within major private equity firms.	kerryconsulting.com
N2Growth	North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Australia, Asia	Multiple	A global executive search and leadership advisory firm, operating across various regions including North America, Europe, and Asia.	n2growth.com
PER (Private Equity Recruitment)	Asia with a focus on Singapore	Private Markets	Retained search and recruitment specialists for private markets investment and investor relations professionals across Asia, with a presence in Singapore.	per-people.com
Sagana Talent	United States, Europe, Southeast Asia	Multiple (sustainability and impact focused)	Provides executive search services with a focus on impact investing and social enterprises, operating globally with a presence in the United States, Europe, and Southeast Asia.	sagana.com
TC Consulting Asia	Asia with focus on Singapore	Alternative Investments, Investment Banks and Private Equity	A leading agency specializing in financial executive recruitment, including CEO roles, with a strong focus on private equity, based in Singapore.	tcconsultingasia.com

CRAFTING THE RIGHT ASK: SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR A GENDER-INCLUSIVE IC JOB DESCRIPTION

What to include in the Job Description:

- ✓ Clear, concise role description that aligns with the fund's values and mission.
- ✓ No more than 5-6 key responsibilities and 5-6 essential skills/experiences.
- ✓ Inclusive language with no bias, subjective terms, or corporate jargon.
- ✓ Accurate company details, benefits, and application process information.

What to avoid in the Job Description:

- ✗ Lengthy descriptions exceeding two pages.
- ✗ Overly complex language or unnecessary corporate terminology.
- ✗ Vague or subjective requirements (e.g., "must be dynamic and passionate").
- ✗ Missing inclusion statements, company mission, or unclear application steps.

Sample Job Description

Job Overview

The role is a part-time position focused on reviewing investment proposals and providing an expert assessment. This role plays a key part in investment decision-making, requiring timely and constructive feedback, as well as participation in all scheduled committee meetings.

Role Responsibilities

- Serve as an unbiased Investment Committee member with voting rights.
- Conduct a preliminary review of Investment Committee deal memos in collaboration with the Investment Officer(s) to ensure completeness, professional rigor, and clarity.
- Provide Investment and Sectorial/Geographic Expertise: Offer specialized knowledge in investment management and provide insights aligned with the fund's strategic focus areas, ensuring that investment decisions are informed by both financial performance and broader sustainability considerations.

Skills and Experience

- Existing track record in investment decision-making, with proficiency in equity or impact investing, early-stage investments, and scaling capital in Southeast Asia.
- Deep understanding of Southeast Asian markets, including local cultures, regulatory landscapes, and economic and political risks in emerging markets.
- Ability to evaluate country risk, conduct thorough financial and non-financial due diligence, and assess credit risk.
- Focus on investments that drive substantial financial returns while supporting sustainable and inclusive development.
- Experience making investment decisions, with a strategic and unbiased approach to risk and opportunity
- Proficient written and spoken English, with availability during the fund's working hours to ensure seamless coordination

Important points to consider: Hiring for a gender-diverse IC shouldn't be a box-ticking exercise—it's about intentionally inviting in strong, qualified candidates who may not come from traditional paths but bring the right skills, experience, and perspective. Be mindful that overly rigid criteria can unintentionally exclude high-potential candidates. Focus on what you actually need—such as a track record of sound investment judgment or sector expertise—rather than defaulting to proxies such as "20 years of IC experience." Clarity, flexibility, and inclusion go hand in hand when building a truly effective IC.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR: SAMPLE INCLUSIVE CRITERIA FOR IC RECRUITMENT

Using a standard evaluation criteria with at least two independent assessors (ideally gender diverse), helps ensure that the IC member selection process is objective, minimizes bias, and promotes diverse, merit-based hiring. It strengthens decision-making, aligns IC composition with fund goals, and enhances credibility with investors and stakeholders.

SKILLS/EXPERIENCE <i>To what extent does the candidate have these skills?</i>	SCORE	COMMENTS <i>What impressed you or concerned you?</i>
Investment management and financial skills <i>Skilled in asset allocation, constructing portfolios, creating financial models, and assessing risk for better returns.</i>		
Sector and market knowledge <i>Deep knowledge of southeast asian markets and fund's sector of focus.</i>		
Risk and due diligence: <i>Ability to assess country risk, conduct financial analysis, and evaluate credit risk.</i>		
Strategic and analytical thinking: <i>Evaluates complex information and applies a structured approach to make well-informed decisions</i>		
Communication <i>Proficiency in English with clear and effective communication skills.</i>		
Integrity and governance <i>Upholding ethical standards, regulatory compliance, and governance while promoting transparency and accountability.</i>		
CULTURE FIT <i>To what extent does the candidate exhibit these behaviours?</i>	SCORE	COMMENTS <i>What impressed you or concerned you?</i>
Mission and vision fit <i>Look for general interest in the fund's mission and sectoral focus.</i>		
<Value 1>		
<Value 2>		
Overall, would you be excited to hire this candidate?		

Sample scoring rubric

N/A	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Did not discuss this</i>	<i>Little/no evidence of skills</i>	<i>Inconsistent evidence</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Best you've seen</i>

FUNDS ARE LEAVING VALUE ON THE TABLE: THE CASE FOR GENDER-DIVERSE ICS



WOMEN REMAIN UNDERREPRESENTED IN PE/VC INVESTMENT COMMITTEES

Women are missing from the table—both on investment committees and within PE/VC leadership ranks, which often serve as the candidate pipeline for IC members.

Representation of
women in PE/VC
investment
committees

12%

*...for every 100 IC
members, only 12 of them
are women (globally)^{1,*}*

Representation of
women in PE/VC
senior leadership
teams

26%

*...professionals working at
the Managing Director
level or equivalent in PE
firms within the APAC
region are women¹*

Significant drop-offs
at the principal level

-15%

*...drop in the share of
women at Principal level,
down from 27% at VP level
(APAC region) – indicating
a ceiling in career
progression¹*

A combination of traditional IC recruitment practices, limited career development pathways, LP norms and pervasive unconscious biases continues to limit the representation of women. We explore these in the following slides.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE NUMBERS: CONVENTIONAL IC RECRUITMENT PRACTICES FAVOUR TRADITIONAL NETWORKS AND RISK PROFILES WHICH SIDE-LINE DIVERSE CANDIDATES

01

Internal IC appointments mirror gender gaps in senior leadership roles



Internally appointed IC members typically comprise a subset of senior investing partners from the fund team. In APAC region, women hold 26% of MD-level investing roles² and thereby, internal IC appointments tend to mirror this underrepresentation.

02

External IC members tend to be nominated through homogenous networks



Most Investment Committee members are recruited from within existing members' personal and professional networks, rather than these positions being externally advertised^{3,4}. The lack of open and transparent recruitment processes favours those from known networks and with similar backgrounds.

03

Experience requirements tend to favour traditional profiles



Funds tend to prioritise members with prior IC or Investment Partner-level experience, which is challenging when historically there is limited representation of women in these roles⁴. The belief that "successful leaders look like X" leads to selecting candidates who resemble previous hires, rather than evaluating for new perspectives and experiences to complement existing areas of expertise. These factors tend to exclude non-traditional candidates.

04

Narrow definition of 'merit'



Decision-making processes frequently emphasise specific professional backgrounds, such as private equity deal-making or CFO roles. This focus can overlook candidates with valuable experience in areas like deep industry expertise, sales, operations or development finance. Additionally, unconscious biases may lead to perceptions that diverse candidates are less qualified, even when they meet or exceed established criteria.

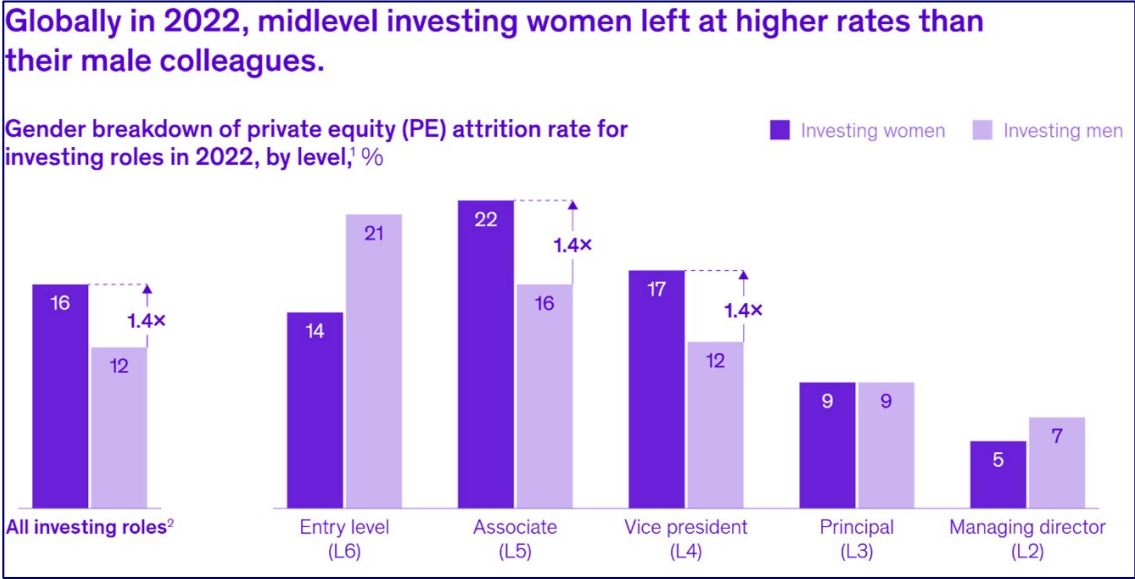
05

Limited pool of professionals overall as PE/VC is new to the Southeast Asia region

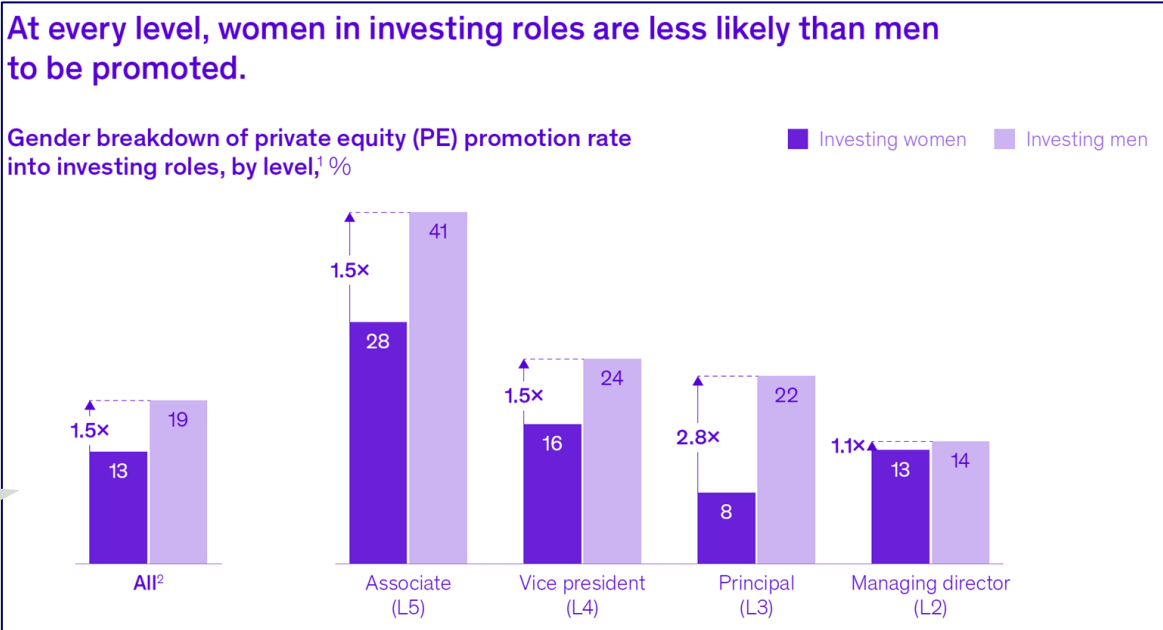


PE/VC in Southeast Asia began gaining significant momentum around 2012. In contrast, the U.S. PE/VC sectors have been established since the 1940s. Owing to this, there is an overall limited pool of professionals with extensive experience in investment decision-making in the region. This nascent stage of the industry presents challenges in finding seasoned investors with both sector expertise and leadership skills.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE NUMBERS: WHILE WOMEN DO ENTER PE/VC CAREERS, THEY LACK ACCESS TO INTENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS TO REACH SENIOR POSITIONS



Women in private equity investing roles face significant barriers to advancement, with lower promotion rates compared to men at every career stage. The most pronounced gap is at the Associate level, where only 29% of women^{8*} are promoted compared to 41% of men^{5*}. This limits the pipeline of women advancing into leadership and IC-ready roles, creating a long-term talent pipeline issue.



WHAT'S BEHIND THE NUMBERS: LP NORMS REINFORCE THE STATUS QUO

Standard evaluation of 'track record'

LPs often favour the recruitment of IC members who have already held IC roles or have decades of investment track record. Since these roles have historically been non-diverse, this narrows the pool and discourages those with fewer years or less traditional experience.^{6,7}

Lack of diversity mandates or expectations

When LPs don't ask about IC diversity or set expectations, GPs feel no urgency to build inclusive ICs. What isn't measured or requested, isn't prioritized.⁸ LPs setting such expectations earlier on in the DD process makes it easier for GPs to find diverse candidates, while doing so at the end of the DD period makes it challenging.

Overweighting "chemistry" or "cultural fit"

LPs often look for alignment in values and communication styles with fund leadership—criteria that are subjective and may reinforce unconscious bias while also resulting in group think, which is a risk to effective investment decision-making.

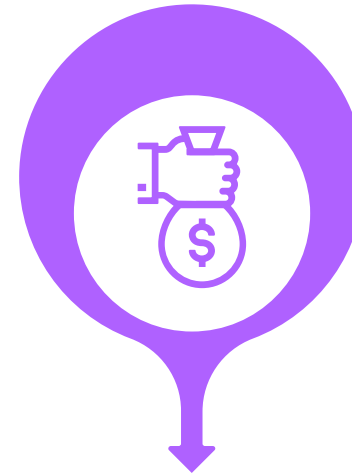
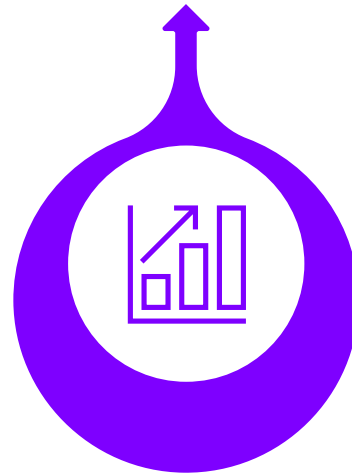


AS IS WELL DOCUMENTED, ENSURING GENDER DIVERSITY IN ICs DELIVERS MULTI-FACETED BUSINESS BENEFITS



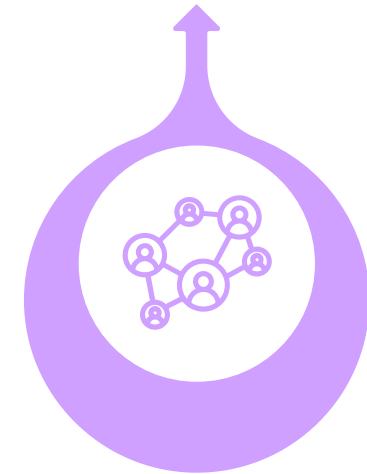
1. Diverse perspectives and robust risk assessment

2. Improved fund performance



3. Attracting capital from gender-smart investors

4. Diversified fund advisory networks



IT IS WELL UNDERSTOOD THAT GENDER DIVERSITY IN DECISION MAKING IS LINKED TO IMPROVED RISK ASSESSMENT, GOVERNANCE AND INVESTMENT ALLOCATION...

Unbiased access to opportunities

Diverse IC teams are more likely than their non-diverse peers to invest in early-stage deals as well as in overlooked companies.⁹

Despite the inherent higher risks of deals evaluated by diverse teams, these teams perform on par with their non-diverse peers in early-stage investments, showcasing their ability to identify and nurture potential high-growth opportunities.

Improved risk assessment

Diverse IC teams are better equipped to identify and mitigate risks because they are more likely to consider a wider range of potential scenarios and outcomes.^{10,11}

They are also less likely to engage in excessive, unfavourable risk-taking.^{10,11}

Improved decision making

A global study found that increasing board gender diversity reduced inefficient investments by 6.5%.¹²

By incorporating varied perspectives, diverse ICs identify overlooked opportunities, mitigate biases, and enhance long-term value creation—leading to more resilient and high-performing portfolios.

Improved fund governance

Diversity fosters adaptability and robust governance, strengthening funds against market fluctuations.

More diverse leadership teams self-police better¹³, with research showing that gender-diverse boards adopt more stable and less risky financial policies.¹⁴

...AND THAT DIVERSE ICs HAVE DEMONSTRATED OUTPERFORMANCE

There is data to show that diversity in fund decision making has resulted in improved returns and lower loss ratios



Higher gross IRR

- ICs with at least one female member outperform all-male committees by an average 12%¹⁵ IRR and a remarkable 52 cents per dollar invested.¹⁵
- A study by IFC found that funds with gender-balanced senior investment teams generated 10% to 20%¹⁶ higher returns compared with funds that have a majority of male or female leaders.



Lower loss ratio

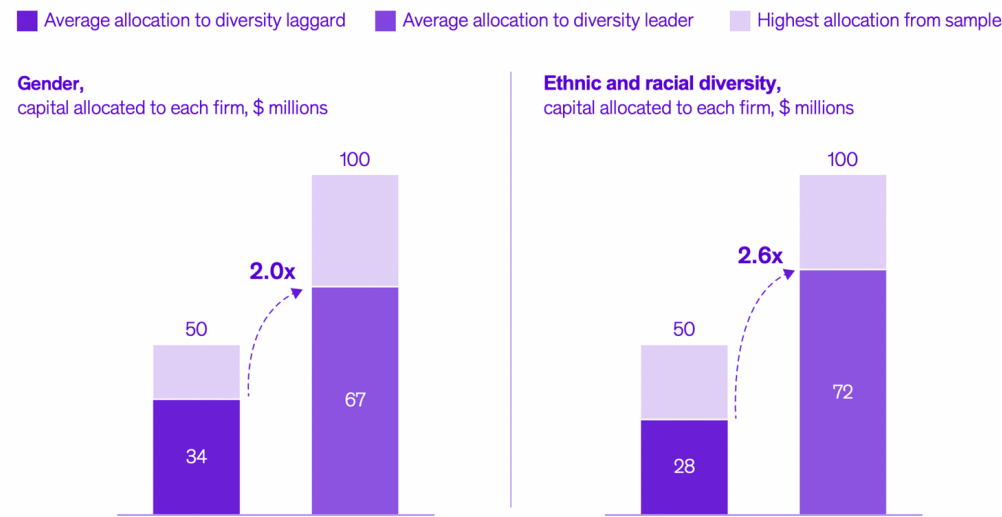
- Only 12% of deals led by gender-diverse ICs do not return capital, versus 20% implemented by male-only ICs.¹⁷
- Gender-diverse ICs tend to be better at managing risk & have a meaningfully lower loss ratio.^{17,18}



LPs ALSO INCREASINGLY VALUE INVESTING IN GENDER-SMART FUNDS THEREFORE DIVERSITY IN ICs CAN HELP DIFFERENTIATE FUNDS IN THE MARKET

Institutional investors are demonstrating a growing preference to allocate capital to diverse private equity firms, regardless of historic returns

This increase in interest of LPs is reflected in the increasing AUM of gender-smart funds and commitments to the 2X challenge



About the graph: A 2022 McKinsey report on Diversity in Private Equity asked Institutional Investors with AUM ranging from USD 20b to USD 460b, to allocate USD 100m between two hypothetical PE funds. When the funds had identical metrics except for the investing team’s diversity, LPs would allocate, on average, twice as much capital to the deal team with more gender diversity and 2.6 times¹⁹ as much to the team with more ethnic and racial diversity.

- **Increase in capital invested by LPs in gender-smart funds:** As of 2024, the 2X Challenge has mobilized over **USD 33.6b** in gender lens investments since its inception in 2018²⁰ **showing increasing commitment by LPs** especially institutional investors such as pension funds, government agencies and endowments.
- **Increase in total AUM of gender-smart funds:** Project Catalyst shows that the AUM of gender lens funds in 2023 has reached at least **USD 7.9b²¹**, up from around **USD 2.2b²¹** in 2018. This shows a steady increase in capital allocated to funds with gender diversity in their firm and/or investment thesis.
- **Gender diversity is an investing priority for LPs:** A study by IFC found that about **65% of limited partners²²** interviewed and surveyed **view gender diversity of a firm’s investment team as important** when committing capital to funds. Similarly, a McKinsey study (2023) found that DEI metrics rank among the top ten factors in Institutional Investors’ investment decision criteria, with 33% respondents putting it in the top 5.¹⁹

DIVERSE ICs ALSO HAVE ACCESS TO WIDER NETWORKS OF ADVISORS AND FOUNDERS, ENABLING STRATEGIC DIFFERENTIATION

These diverse advisor networks allow funds to access unique opportunities by leveraging a broad range of insights, industry connections, and unconventional deal sources, fostering innovation and strategic differentiation.

Access to non-traditional founder networks

Traditional ICs often rely on existing networks, which can be homogenous and lack diverse perspectives. A diverse IC, with members from different backgrounds and experiences, can tap into a wider range of networks, including those of women, minorities, and individuals with different cultural backgrounds.

Access to diverse advisor networks/groups

A commitment to diversity within the IC can attract diverse advisors who may have been overlooked by traditional firms. This creates a virtuous cycle, where a diverse IC attracts a diverse advisor network, further strengthening the fund's ability to access a wider range of expertise and insights.

How it helps

Deal sourcing and origination

Diverse advisors bring unique advantages by accessing non-traditional networks and sourcing exclusive deals, including those not actively marketed, leading to favourable terms and less competition. Their varied cultural backgrounds help identify overlooked opportunities in underserved or niche markets, enhancing financial strategies with inclusivity and innovation.

Market intelligence and validation

Diverse advisors contribute objective assessments, challenge biases, and ensure robust due diligence, leading to better-informed decisions. Their varied perspectives help identify emerging trends and disruptive technologies, enabling the fund to explore new sectors/categories and stay ahead of the curve.

Enhance credibility and investor networks

A strong & diverse advisor network boosts a fund's credibility and attracts investors by showcasing expertise and connections. Advisors can leverage their relationships to expand the fund's reach, introducing potential investors and supporting fundraising efforts. Those with community ties help build relationships with key stakeholders, including local governments, organizations, and nonprofits.

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DISCLAIMER

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About Australian Development Investments (ADI):

ADI is Australia's AUD 250 million impact investment fund of funds. It makes early-stage and concessional investments into promising impact investment funds across the Indo-Pacific. These funds then provide financing to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that deliver climate and gender equality outcomes in the region. In addition to addressing capital gaps, ADI provides technical assistance (TA) to both the funds it supports and their underlying SMEs to strengthen impact and operational capacity.



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About Sagana:

Sagana is a global impact investment and advisory firm that channels capital into early-stage and growth enterprises advancing climate resilience, gender equality, and inclusive growth. Alongside investment, Sagana provides technical assistance and strategic support to strengthen impact and sustainability across emerging markets.



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