

The call for entries is open as Accenture and Business Engage prepare to host the 10th annual Gender Mainstreaming Awards

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The call for entries in the Accenture 10th Gender Mainstreaming Awards (GMAs) is open. Business Engage developed the GMAs to encourage private sector buy-in to achieve a more meaningful representation of women in the mainstream of business in Africa. Accenture (NYSE: ACN) has teamed up with Business Engage to host the Accenture tenth Gender Mainstreaming Awards 2022 (GMAs). The GMA entries are open for entry to East, West and Southern African organisations and individuals and close on 28 June 2022.



The banner features a collage of diverse women's faces on the left, overlaid with the text "INCLUSIVE BUSINESS Accelerating equality". On the right, it reads "The Accenture 10th Gender Mainstreaming Awards" with the Accenture and Business Engage logos. Below this, it says "We're celebrating businesses and individuals committed to taking meaningful steps towards equality." and "ENTER NOW FOR FREE www.genderawards.com". At the bottom right, it states "ENTRIES EXTENDED to 28 June 2022".

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The **Accenture 10th Gender Mainstreaming Awards 2022**, an initiative of Business Engage, is sponsored by Accenture, Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Assupol, Imperial, RCL Foods, Rand Merchant Bank, Tiger Brands, and is presented in association with the 30% Club, the Human Rights Commission, the Institute of Directors, SA Venture Capital Association and Sunday Times.

"The GMAs enable us to identify corporates, governments, NGOs and leaders who acknowledge the role women can play in society. These women and the people acknowledging their influence are true role models. We must raise the profile of all female and male leaders of organisations who are developing women because if they tell their stories, other corporates will

start to say, how did they do it? What are they doing that we are not doing, and how can we learn from them?" asks Dr Ntombi Mhangwani, Associate Director for Accenture Song and Women's Forum Lead for Accenture in Africa.

"Building on last year's successful GMAs expansion of the awards into the wider Africa region, Accenture has come on board as the naming partner to celebrate companies and individuals across Africa that is already at the forefront and advancing the business case for gender diversity," says Mhangwani.

"Prominent business leaders in the different regions constitute the esteemed panel of judges, who are an excellent representation of the awards and what the GMAs stand for. Companies can be nominated or entered in various categories, including the Women on Boards Award, Equal Representation & Participation Award, Women Empowerment in the Workplace Award, Investing in Young Women Award and Mainstreaming Gender & Disability Award, Economic Empowerment and Empowerment of Women in the Community; all celebrating the strides already made in business toward equality and encouraging more significant gender mainstreaming in the business arena. There are also three individual categories: the Inclusive Leader Award, the Positive Role Model Award, and the RMB Africa's Fearless Thinker," explains Colleen Larsen, Chief Executive of Business Engage.

Gender equality is behind schedule

According to Gender Index 2022 statistics, only one in every four countries is progressing rapidly towards gender equality. The statistics reveal that between 2015 and 2022, the [global score](#) for gender progress increased only slightly from 66 to 67.8 out of a possible 100. If these trends continue, only around 71.5% of gender targets in the SDGs will be achieved by 2030. To make real progress, organisations must implement renewed efforts to reach gender-related targets to shift the needle on gender equality over the next few years.

"We have only eight years to go until the 2030 deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, progress in gender equality and gender SDG indicators has stagnated," states Mhangwani. "Not one of the 144 countries in the SDG gender index has achieved gender equality, despite many of central tenets of the SDGs being carried over from the original Millennium Development Goals, which were due to have been met by 2015," she states.

"One of the reasons for the slack in progress is that far too many people working at the grassroots level to promote and defend gender equality are doing so as unpaid volunteers, making it a low priority activity across many organisations. This is also the case in South Africa, where many people working in shelters, for instance, do so on little or no remuneration, and positions in committees that advocate for gender mainstreaming in organisations are voluntary," states Mhangwani.

Mhangwani says that gender mainstreaming is not merely nice to have. It makes business sense. Giving opportunities to men and women, allowing everyone's representation at the decision-making table, and hearing different voices, bring in varied views from various backgrounds and socialisation. All of this will enable us to innovate, become more productive, and results in profitability for that organisation. When women are given the same opportunities as men and receive equal pay, we see that economies thrive because women take what they make and spread it to a larger community.

The gender parity data from the [Equal Measures 2030 Report](#) index supports the view that South Africa's progress on gender parity is ranked 'fair' with a score of 70.1 as of 2020, above the regional average of 52. The progress across gender indicators for each goal is hugely varied, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns will also continue to affect gender progress.

"We invite your company or other organisation to enter and nominate achieving individuals for the individual awards. There are various categories to fit in with the level of diversity that your company's achievements or progress in gender mainstreaming. The GMA entries are open for entry to East, West and Southern African organisations and individuals and close on 28 June 2022," Larsen concludes.

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