

**MAY 2025** 

nbe.gov.et



የኢትዮጵያ ብሔራዊ ባንክ NATIONAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), in collaboration with the World Bank's Africa Gender Innovation Lab (GIL), has developed a Women's Financial Inclusion Scorecard to support progress toward a more inclusive financial sector.

The Scorecard provides a strategic framework for financial institutions to assess and report on key indicators related to women's inclusion—such as leadership, client outreach, and product innovation. By introducing a standardized, datadriven approach, the tool promotes transparency, encourages institutional learning, and supports evidence-based decision-making across the sector.

This initiative aligns with Ethiopia's National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (2021–2025) and reflects the country's broader commitment to closing gaps in women's access to financial services and leadership opportunities in the sector.

To support this agenda, the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) is leading the development and implementation of a national scorecard to track how well financial institutions are meeting NFIS-II inclusion targets. The tool provides a transparent framework for assessing institutional progress and strengthening accountability across the sector. Importantly, the Scorecard is not designed as a compliance or enforcement tool—institutions that do not meet targets will not face penalties. Rather, the aim is to establish a shared learning framework that highlights progress, promotes transparency, and enables institutions to learn from the practices of top performers.

**Disclaimer:** The data and insights presented in this report are based on self-reported submissions from participating financial institutions. The National Bank of Ethiopia does not assume responsibility for any inaccuracies in the data provided.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:**

This report was made possible with support from the Gates Foundation, Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and BKP Economic Advisors.



# **CONTENTS**

Executive Summary	4
Foreword	5
<ol> <li>Motivation for Advancing Women's Financial Inclusion</li> </ol>	7
2. Methodology	11
3. Results and Insights	15
4. Conclusion	24
Annex: Scorecard Results	26

# **Executive Summary**

The National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE), with the support of the World Bank's Africa Gender Innovation Lab (GIL), has developed and launched Ethiopia's first Women's Financial Inclusion Scorecard to measure, monitor, and drive progress across financial institutions. Anchored in the National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (NFIS-II, 2021-2025) and the NBE-endorsed Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) guidelines, the Scorecard provides a structured approach to assess institutional performance against national gender inclusion goals.

#### **KEY FINDINGS FROM THE FIRST SCORECARD CYCLE (2025):**

- Sector-wide engagement is growing. Average and median scores (2.95 and 2.98, respectively) with the score ranging from 1 (worst) to 5 (best) place most institutions in the "Building Momentum" stage. Institutions are beginning to act on inclusion, though strategies are not yet fully embedded.
- Workforce inclusion is the strongest area. Driven by government mandates such
  as board gender quotas and targets for women in senior management set out in
  NFIS-I banks are increasingly hiring and promoting women, with many achieving
  gender-diverse boards. However, support systems like childcare, parental leave and
  mentorship remain underdeveloped.
- Women's access to financial products shows moderate progress. While credit
  outreach is improving, products are often generic and not tailored to women's specific
  needs.
- Innovation is nascent. Although some institutions are introducing digital products and alternative delivery models, sector-wide innovation tailored to women remains limited.

#### **PROGRESS LEVELS:**

- **1 bank** was placed in the Transformational category this is notably a bank founded with the mission to serve women in Ethiopia.
- **3 banks** were categorized as Intentional.
- 19 banks are Building Momentum.
- 7 banks fall into Neutral or Emerging Awareness.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Scorecard highlights encouraging progress in areas where there is strong policy guidance—underscoring that government mandates are translating into institutional action. To build on this momentum, priority areas for further progress include developing gender-intelligent financial products, fostering inclusive innovation, strengthening gender-disaggregated data systems, and embedding gender targets within broader ESG compliance frameworks. Going forward, NBE will use these insights to guide regulatory reform, promote best practices, and support institutions in accelerating inclusion.

### **Foreword**



By the Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the first Scorecard on Advancing Women's Financial Inclusion for Financial Institutions in Ethiopia—a transformative step in our national efforts to promote inclusive finance and expand economic opportunities for women across the financial sector.

Women remain significantly underrepresented in both access to financial services and leadership roles within financial institutions. Despite commendable progress in advancing financial inclusion over the past decade, systemic barriers continue to limit the full participation of women—as clients, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers. This Scorecard is a key part of our response to that challenge.

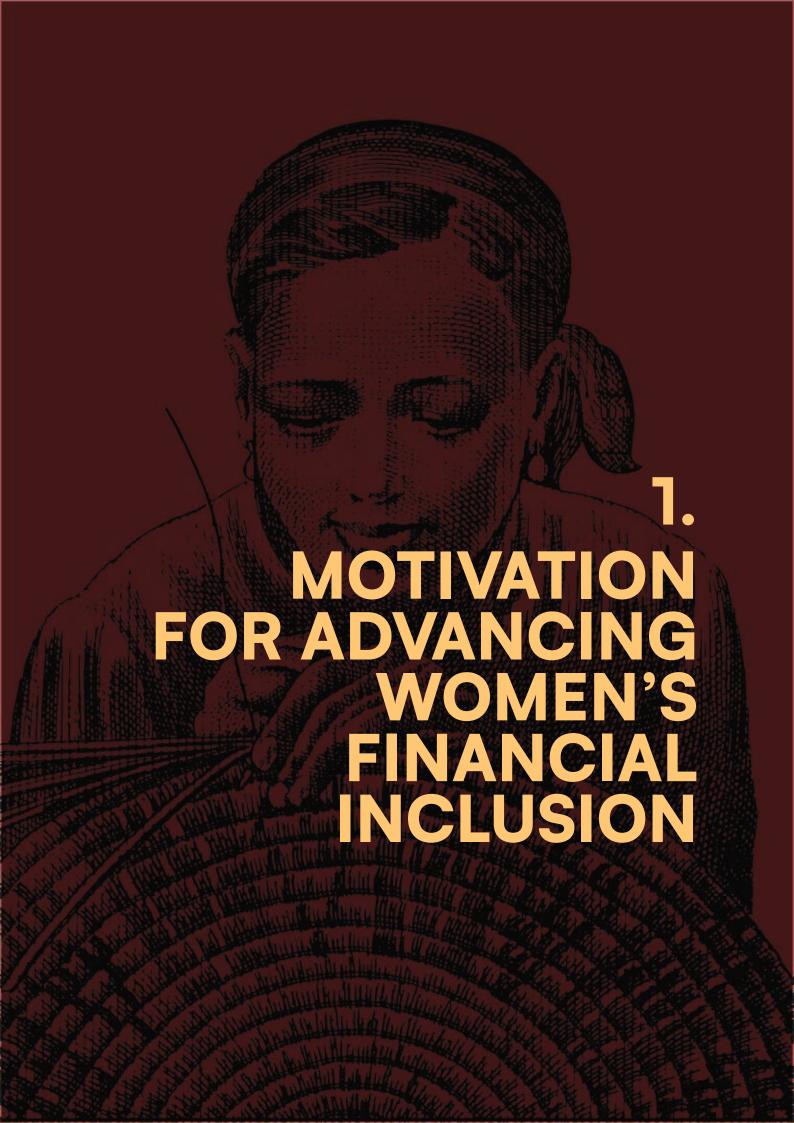
The Scorecard provides a standardized tool to measure, monitor, and motivate progress on women's financial inclusion. It encourages financial institutions to collect and report sex-disaggregated data, review internal practices, and design solutions tailored to women's needs. More than a metric, this Scorecard is a catalyst for meaningful change.

The Scorecard also complements our commitments under Ethiopia's National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (2021—2025), which prioritizes reducing the financial access gap between men and women and increasing women's representation in leadership. By assessing both internal institutional practices and outward-facing service delivery, the Scorecard helps embed inclusion as a core principle of our financial system.

I commend the 30 institutions that participated in this first reporting cycle and submitted their data transparently. Your engagement marks a critical first step toward building a sector that not only reflects—but actively empowers—the society it serves.

At the National Bank of Ethiopia, we are committed to leveraging the insights from this Scorecard to guide regulatory dialogue, inform evidence-based policy, and foster innovation that advances women's financial inclusion. Let this be the beginning of a stronger, more equitable financial future for all Ethiopians.

H.E. Mr. Mamo E. Mihretu Governor National Bank of Ethiopia



# 1. MOTIVATION FOR ADVANCING WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION

#### 1.1 WHY IT MATTERS

In Ethiopia, persistent disparities in access to financial services constrain women's ability to invest, grow businesses, build resilience, and participate fully in the economy. An inclusive financial system that serves both women and men is crucial for unlocking women's economic potential and for driving inclusive growth across the country.

The challenge is significant. Women in Ethiopia are 1.5 times less likely than men to receive a formal loan, and when they do, the amounts are often much smaller— on average, men receive more than twice the loan capital compared to women business owners<sup>1</sup>. The gap in account ownership has widened, with women's access declining relative to men—at a pace faster than both global and Sub-Saharan African averages<sup>2</sup>. In the digital space, women account for just 22% of all digital financial service accounts, and only 14% of the Ethiopia's 90 million mobile money accounts<sup>3</sup>, highlighting a growing digital divide.

These disparities are particularly pronounced among rural women, who often face additional barriers such as limited access to identification, lower financial literacy, and restricted mobility. Given that women represent a large share of the workforce in agriculture and informal trade, closing gender gaps in financial access is not only a matter of inclusion — it is essential to improving productivity, livelihoods, and resilience at scale.

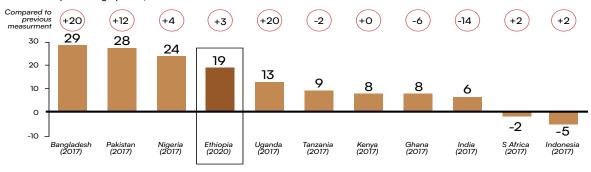
#### 1.2 POLICY CONTEXT: ETHIOPIA'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION JOURNEY

Financial inclusion is a national development priority, with the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE) leading efforts to expand equitable access. The National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (NFIS-II, 2021—2025) reflects a stronger commitment to addressing these disparities. It includes specific targets such as halving the account ownership gap — from 19 percentage points in 2020 to 10 percentage points by 2025—and promoting women's access to credit, digital financial services, and leadership roles within the sector<sup>4</sup>.

This marks a notable shift from NFIS I (2014—2020), which broadly aimed to increase access to financial services—savings, credit, insurance, and payments—across the population.

Figure 1: Account ownership gap

Gender gap in account ownership (Difference % of adult men owning accounts, % of adult woumen owning accounts, in percentage points)



Source: National Bank of Ethiopia: NFIS-II, page 9

1 World Bank. (2015). Enterprise Surveys — Ethiopia.

2

- World Bank. (2021). Global Findex Database Ethiopia.
- 3 National Bank of Ethiopia. (2023). Internal data reporting.
- 4 National Bank of Ethiopia. (2021). National Financial Inclusion Strategy II (2021–2025).

This trend highlights that overall growth in the financial sector is insufficient alone to address structural inequalities. In response, NFIS-II outlines a targeted set of actions to address systemic barriers and promote more inclusive financial access:

- 1. Build a knowledge base on women's unmet financial needs and the specific barriers they face in accessing financial services.
- 2. Launch women-focused account enrollment and financial literacy campaigns, with a particular emphasis on reaching young women and aligning efforts with the National Financial Education Strategy (NFES).
- 3. Promote inclusive leadership by encouraging at least 25% of financial institution senior managers (Vice Presidents and Directors) to be women.
- 4. Ensure board-level representation by encouraging every financial institution to include at least one woman on its board of directors.
- 5. Develop policy incentives for women's financial access, such as preferential interest rates on savings products.
- 6. Establish credit guarantee scheme to increase access to finance for women entrepreneurs.
- 7. Create wholesale funding mechanisms earmarked for lending to women.

As of early 2025, notable progress has been made toward advancing NFIS-II's gender targets. The National Bank of Ethiopia has introduced a series of regulatory reforms aimed at accelerating women's inclusion in the financial sector. These include a mandatory requirement for all financial institutions to have at least one female board member by 2025, and a target for women to hold at least 25% of senior management positions (Vice Presidents and Directors). These reforms are embedded within the new Banking Corporate Governance Directive (SBB/91/2024), which also emphasizes the importance of independent directors and improved governance standards. Together, these measures are not only promoting gender equity but also strengthening corporate governance and accountability in Ethiopia's financial institutions. By linking inclusion to regulation, the NBE is laying the groundwork for a more diverse, resilient, and inclusive financial ecosystem.

# 1.3 THE BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT CASE FOR WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Expanding women's access to finance is not only an issue of fairness — it is an economic necessity. Women represent a large, underserved market segment. Financial institutions that develop products tailored to women's needs stand to broaden their client base, increase deposits, and grow loan portfolios. These efforts can also drive product innovation, more inclusive delivery models, and improved risk assessment strategies<sup>5</sup>.

Moreover, inclusive practices can strengthen relationships with international donors and impact investors, who are increasingly prioritizing women-focused investments as part of their portfolios. Institutions that demonstrate leadership in this space are better positioned to attract capital and technical assistance<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Financial Alliance for Women. (n.d.). The Business Case for Financial Institutions to Invest in the Female Economy is Simple

<sup>6</sup> Women's World Banking. (2023). Gender Lens Investing: Driving Financial Returns and Social Impact

NATIONAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA

The benefits extend beyond the financial sector. Evidence shows that when women access financial services, household income, productivity, and well-being improve—particularly in rural and informal economies. Women are also more likely to reinvest in their families and communities, amplifying the development impact.

At the macroeconomic level, the potential impact is substantial. According to the World Bank's Gender Innovation Lab (GIL), closing access gaps in Ethiopia—including those in financial inclusion—could generate an additional US\$3.7 billion in GDP each year<sup>7</sup>. Moreover, women have demonstrated strong credit performance and economic impact. Women have also proven to be reliable borrowers: under the Women Entrepreneurship Development Project (WEDP), participants achieved a 99.6% loan repayment rate—exceeding industry benchmarks. WEDP-supported firms also reported 30% higher profits and employed 50% more workers than their peers, underscoring women's role as both borrowers and job creators.

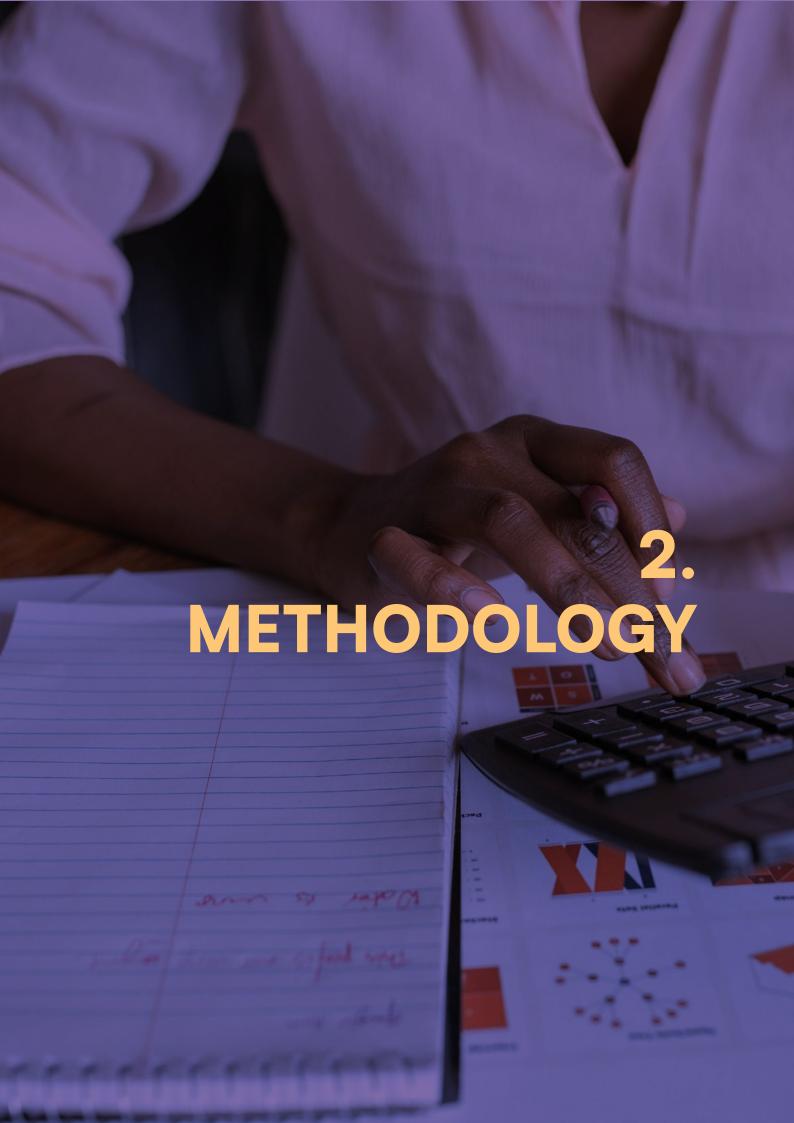
#### 1.4 WHY A SCORECARD FOR WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION?

To support this agenda, the National Bank of Ethiopia is leading the development and implementation of a national scorecard to track how well financial institutions are meeting NFIS-II inclusion targets. The tool provides a transparent framework for assessing institutional progress and strengthening accountability across the sector.

As a key component of Ethiopia's financial inclusion infrastructure, the Scorecard is designed to:

- Standardize the collection and reporting of sex-disaggregated data to enable consistent monitoring of inclusion across the financial sector. A structured framework facilitates internal benchmarking and sector-wide comparisons.
- Enhance transparency and accountability by capturing both internal metrics (e.g., women in leadership and workforce composition) and external outcomes (e.g., share of loans and accounts held by women). This sets a baseline for the next phase of Ethiopia's financial inclusion strategy and promotes public and peer accountability.
- **Enable evidence-based policymaking** by equipping regulators, policymakers, and institutions with actionable data to identify service gaps and inform targeted reforms.
- **Promote institutional change** by encouraging the integration of inclusion principles into governance, HR, operations, and client services.

Through its design and rollout, the Scorecard aims to drive systemic progress aligned with both national priorities and international standards.



### 2. METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 DESIGNING THE WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION SCORECARD

The Scorecard design draws on international best practices and builds on globally recognized frameworks for measuring women's inclusion across financial institutions.

#### These include:

- **Regulatory Scorecards**: The State Bank of Pakistan's Banking on Equality (BOE) Scorecard.
- Investor Tools: Instruments such as SEAF's Gender Equality Scorecard© and Equilo's gender diagnostic platform, widely used by impact investors to assess alignment with inclusion objectives and 2X Challenge criteria.
- **Technical Frameworks**: Developed by organizations like *Women's World Banking*, these frameworks emphasize client-centered indicators, including access, usage, and product relevance.
- Institutional Certifications: Tools like the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Gender Scorecard and EDGE Certification that assess internal organizational practices across governance, leadership, workplace equity, and market engagement.

Alongside global benchmarking, the Scorecard design was shaped by extensive consultations with national stakeholders — including commercial banks, development partners, academics, and gender experts. These consultations ensured the Scorecard is aligned with Ethiopia's policy priorities and is practical for implementation.

Stakeholders emphasized the need for standardized, sex-disaggregated data collection, citing a gap in reporting mechanisms across banks. While there was strong interest in eventually including qualitative indicators, consensus emerged around starting with a robust set of core quantitative indicators. This phased approach allows for initial benchmarking and institutional data-readiness, while paving the way for gradual expansion. These enhancements will support a more holistic and gender-intentional evaluation of financial institutions over time.

#### 2.2 THE SCORECARD STRUCTURE

The Scorecard evaluates progress at both the institutional and client-facing levels, across three dimensions of women's financial inclusion (see Figure 2):

- 1. **Women in the workforce** assessing women's representation in employment, leadership, and institutional governance
- 2. **Women's use of financial products** assessing female client access, usage, and portfolio share across banking services
- 3. **Financial innovation** evaluating whether institutions design products and services responsive to women's needs

Figure 2: Women's Financial Inclusion Scorecard Dimensions

Women's Financial Inclusion Scorecard - High Level Structure

INCLUSIVE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	Women in the Workforce	Overall Workforce Women in Leadership Parental Support Policies	
INCLUSIVE FINANCIAL SERVICES	Women's Use of Financial Products	Leadership Development & Mentoring Transaction Accounts Digital Accounts Conventional Credit to Women	
	Financial Innovation	Women Specific Products Digital Lending to Women	

Each dimension includes standardized indicators, most of which are quantitative (e.g., percentage of women account holders or loan clients). In a few areas, qualitative scoring is used to capture emerging institutional practices.

Indicator-level targets were developed by the NBE based on NFIS-II objectives and international benchmarks, including the 2X Challenge (see Figure 3).

The composite scoring process follows a two-step methodology:

- 1. **Dimension-level scores** are calculated by averaging equally weighted indicators under each pillar
- 2. **An overall score** is derived by aggregating the three dimensions' scores using predefined weights established by the NBE

This structure enables institutions to assess their progress toward NFIS-II inclusion goals and identify areas for improvement. It also provides the NBE with a standardized framework to track sector-wide progress and guide policy and regulatory action.

NATIONAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA

Figure 3: Composite Score Calculation

Orientation	Category	Indicator	Measurement criteria	NBE Target	Actual results	% of target achieved	Score (1-5)
Inclusive Financial institution	Women in the workforce weighting 30%	Overall workforce	% of women in the total workforce	40%			
		Women in leadership	% of women in senior management # of women in board positions	25% 2			
		Parental support policies	Availability of employer supported in childcare such as on-site facilities, subsidies, partnerships with child care providers	3-Existing		1 - absent 2 - planned or 3 - exisitng	
		Leadership development & mentorship	Existence of mentorship program	3-Existing		1 - absent 2 - planned or 3 - exisitng	
			% of promotions for women (in total promotions)	50%		V	
	Women in	the workforce so	ore				
Inclusive financial services	Women's use of financial products weighting 50%	Transactional accounts	% of transaction accounts held by women (in total number of translation accounts)	50%			
		Digital accounts	% of digital accounts owned by women (in total number of digital accounts	50%			
		Conventional credit to women	% of conventional loans disbursed to women (in total number of loans)	30%			
			% of conventional credit value disbursed to women (in total credit value disbursed)	30%			
	Women in the workforce score						
	Financial innovation: Weighting 20%	Women specific products	and payments products for women	4 - Scaling up		1 - absent 2 - planned 3 - pilot 4 - scaling up 5- best practice	
		Digital credit to women	% of digital loans disbursed to women (in total number of disbursed digital loans)	30%			
			% of digital credit value disbursed to women (in total value of digital credit disbursed.	30%			

Composite score



## 3. RESULTS AND INSIGHTS

The first reporting cycle of the Women's Financial Inclusion Scorecard assessed **30** banks, offering a sector-wide snapshot of their progress toward advancing women's inclusion (See Annex). Scores were based on three weighted dimensions:

- 1. Women in the Workforce
- 2. Women's Use of Financial Products
- 3. Financial Innovation Tailored to Women's Needs

Each dimension was scored on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), with the composite score reflecting the institution's overall progress. Rather than serving as a ranking mechanism, the Scorecard identifies where institutions currently stand on their journey and encourages continuous improvement.

#### 3.1 INTERPRETING PROGRESS LEVELS

Institutions were grouped into five categories based on their composite scores,

Figure 4: Performance Thresholds for Women's Financial Inclusion Scorecard

% of Target Achieved	Score (1-5)	Women's Financial Inclusion Progress Level	Description
0%	1 - 1.80	Neutral	Limited evidence of intentional strategies or data collection related to women's inclusion.
30%	1.81 - 2.60	Emerging Awareness	Early-stage recognition of the importance of women's inclusion, but practices remain nascent.
50%	2.61 - 3.40	Building Momentum	Inclusion principles are being adopted, with partial implementation across internal and external dimensions.
70%	3.41 - 4.20	Intentional	Clear strategies and institutional commitment are in place, with measurable progress across multiple dimensions.
90%	4.21 - 5	Transformational	Sustained and organization-wide approaches to women's inclusion are evident.

#### **Sector-Wide Summary**

• Average score: 2.95

• Median score: 2.98

Both the average and median fall within the **Building Momentum** range, suggesting that most institutions are engaging with the women's financial inclusion agenda and have started implementing relevant strategies, though full institutionalization remains a work in progress.

The similarity between the average and median scores indicates relatively balanced distribution across the sector, with limited extremes. Most institutions are clustered in the emerging and building momentum stages, signaling early but promising sector-wide engagement.

#### **Institutional Progress by Category**

#### Transformational (Scores > 4.2)

• **Enat Bank:** Demonstrates sector leadership across all dimensions, with inclusive internal practices, women-focused product development, and innovation tailored to women's needs. Enat Bank's strong performance reflects its founding mission to serve women entrepreneurs—a mandate that has driven intentional strategies across workforce, product design, and service delivery.

#### Intentional (Scores 3.41 — 4.2)

- Wegagen Bank, Tsedey Bank, Goh Betoch Bank: All exhibit clear institutional commitment to inclusion, particularly through tailored products and early-stage innovation, with varying levels of internal integration.
  - Wegagen Bank performed well in innovation with multiple financial products tailored to women and exceeding the targets on digital lending to women, both in volume and value. However, there is room to strengthen internal practices such as board representation and childcare support. Its share of women-held transaction accounts was slightly below the peer average.
  - Tsedey Bank showed strong client engagement, outperforming peers in product categories. There is room to improve senior management representation and innovation.
  - o **Goh Betoch Bank** exceeded peer averages in product outreach. Progress in leadership development, childcare support, and innovation would enhance its inclusion efforts.

#### Building Momentum (Scores 2.61 — 3.4)

**19 banks** fall within this range, showing steady progress in implementing strategies and demonstrating alignment with national targets. These institutions often have strengths in one or two areas but require deeper and more consistent approaches across all dimensions. For example:

 Global Bank of Ethiopia shows strong performance in Women in the Workforce and Financial Innovation reflecting promising internal policies and efforts to develop inclusive, forward-looking products.

- Commercial Bank of Ethiopia maintains consistent scores across dimensions, indicating a balanced approach and steady engagement across internal and external priorities.
- Amhara Bank and Hijra Bank demonstrate leadership in Financial Innovation and are well-positioned to expand outreach and engagement with women clients.
- **Hibret Bank** and **Dashen Bank** stand out for their focus on internal inclusion, with strong workforce representation and leadership development initiatives.

Across this group, there is a growing interest in developing women-responsive financial products — particularly through digital channels — signaling a sector-wide shift from awareness to more targeted action.

#### Neutral and Emerging Awareness (Scores 1-2.6)

**7 banks** fall within this category, reflecting institutions that are in the early stages of engaging with women's financial inclusion. Most are beginning to develop strategies or pilot efforts, but progress remains limited across one or more dimensions. Common areas for strengthening include leadership commitment, data systems, and the development of tailored products and services. For example:

- Gadaa Bank and Rammis Bank are in the foundational phase, with low scores across all three dimensions, pointing to opportunities for growth in workforce inclusion, client outreach, and innovation.
- Tsehay Bank and Abay Bank show early signs of engagement in Women's Use of Financial Products, though internal inclusion and innovation practices are still under development.
- **Awash Bank**, despite its scale, has room to deepen efforts across workforce and client engagement dimensions. It exceeds targets for board diversity.
- **Development Bank of Ethiopia** illustrates strong internal progress but limited external reach, with lower scores in client engagement and innovation, indicating untapped potential to extend services to women clients.
- Several newer or smaller institutions—face structural and capacity constraints that
  may limit progress, including gaps in sex-disaggregated data systems and formalized
  strategies.

# 3.2 PROGRESS ACROSS THE DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN'S FINANCIAL INCLUSION

This section summarizes how financial institutions performed across each of the three core Scorecard dimensions:

- 1. Women in the Workforce
- 2. Women's Use of Financial Products
- 3. Financial Innovation Tailored to Women's Needs

Each dimension is scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with banks grouped by level of implementation:

- Advanced Implementation (≥ 3.5)
- Mid-Level (3.0—3.49)
- Early-Stage (< 3.0)

#### I. Women in the Workforce

Average score: 3.02 Median score: 3.00

Most institutions are building momentum in internal inclusion — particularly in board representation and workforce composition, following NBEs new corporate governance directive mandating the inclusion of at least two women in board leaderships. However, structural support (e.g., mentorship, promotion pathways, parental leave) remains limited.

#### Advanced Institutions (Scores ≥ 3.50)

These institutions demonstrate strong internal inclusion practices, meeting or exceeding targets in areas such as board representation, hiring, promotions, and structural support. They reflect organization-wide commitment to workforce equity and are helping to set a benchmark for the sector.

- **Enat Bank** leads the sector with consistently high performance across all workforce indicators. It exceeds peer averages in representation and leadership, though minor gaps remain in promotion rates and the implementation of parental support policies.
- **Global Bank Ethiopia** performs well across sub-indices, including mentorship programs and board representation. Further gains could be made by strengthening parental support and senior leadership diversity.
- Zemen Bank and Dashen Bank are the only two banks with implemented parental
  support policies. Zemen excels in workforce diversity and promotion rates but scores
  slightly lower in senior management representation. Dashen shows strong results in
  governance and mentorship but could further invest in promotion tracking and leadership
  diversity.
- Hibret Bank, Amhara Bank, Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, and Goh Betoch Bank show consistent investment in workforce diversity. Hibret meets or exceeds targets in workforce and board representation. Amhara excels in senior management, board diversity, and mentorship programs but needs improvement in overall female representation, promotion rates, and parental support. Commercial Bank surpasses board diversity targets but female leadership and promotion rates lag. Goh Betoch meets senior, and board targets, outperforms peers in workforce composition and promotion, but lacks mentorship and parental policies—an area needing improvement across all banks.

#### Mid-Level Institutions (Scores 3.00—3.49)

These banks show promising and emerging practices across the workforce of inclusion indicators. Many meets select targets—particularly in board representation and workforce composition—but often lack consistency across leadership pipelines or institutional support structures.

• Bunna Bank meets or nears targets in workforce representation and board diversity

NATIONAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA

and has introduced mentorship programs. However, senior management inclusion and promotion pathways remain areas for growth.

- Tsedey Bank meets targets in workforce composition and promotions, with lower representation in senior leadership.
- Zam Zam Bank performs well across workforce indicators, though still falls short of formal targets in several areas, including board representation.
- Siket Bank, Bank of Abyssinia, Hijra Bank, Lion International Bank, and Nib Bank generally perform well in board diversity but display mixed results in other areas. Some banks—like Hijra and Siket —exceed in senior leadership representation, while others like Bank of Abyssinia and Nib stand out in promotion rates. Most lack formal structures like parental leave or mentorship programs, limiting sustained advancement for women.

#### Early-Stage Institutions (Scores < 3.00)

These banks are in the early phases of advancing workforce inclusion. Some show initial strengths in specific sub-indices, such as board representation, but broader institutional strategies for leadership development, retention, and structural support are still limited or under development.

- Institutions such as Ahadu Bank, Oromia Bank, and Awash Bank meet targets in board representation but have low scores in promotion rates and senior leadership diversity.
- Shabelle Bank stands out with a high leadership score, and Addis International Bank shows strong female workforce representation.
- However, most banks in this group—face constraints related to capacity, data systems, and internal policy development. Common gaps include the absence of mentorship programs, leadership pipelines, and family-friendly policies.

#### II. Women's Use of Financial Products

Median score: 2.88 Average score: 2.98

This dimension assesses how effectively banks are engaging women as clients across credit, savings, and digital channels. Scores suggest increasing interest in expanding outreach to women, but many institutions still offer generalized services that are not tailored to women's financial needs, behaviors, or preferences. The use of data to guide product design and delivery remains limited in many cases.

#### Advanced Institutions (Scores ≥ 3.50)

These institutions have made clear strides in expanding women's access to financial products. They have exceeded peer benchmarks in areas such as lending volumes to women, account ownership, and segmentation, setting an example for targeted and inclusive product design. Banks that graduated from MFIs demonstrate good performance in this indicator.

- Enat Bank: A consistent leader across all product-related sub-indices, with high performance in lending to women and clear segmentation strategies; in line with his establishment mandate of promoting women's access to finance.
- Siket Bank: Demonstrates strong performance across both credit and savings dimensions, offering a well-rounded and responsive product suite.

- **Tsedey Bank:** Matches peer leaders in conventional loan disbursement to women, signaling an intentional focus on serving female clients.
- **Goh Betoch Bank:** Also exceeds targets in lending, with a strong orientation toward women's economic participation.
- **Wegagen Bank** and **Omo Bank:** Both outperform in credit outreach to women, demonstrating early adoption of inclusion principles in product delivery.

#### Mid-Level Institutions (Scores 3.00—3.49)

These institutions are actively working to reach women clients and have shown meaningful progress—particularly in increasing access to credit. However, gaps remain in the depth of financial relationships and in ensuring that products support women's long-term financial resilience and business growth.

- Commercial Bank of Ethiopia, Hibret Bank, Siinqee Bank, and Bank of Oromia: Have
  exceeded targets in lending volume to women, though the size and value of loans remain
  modest in some cases.
- Ahadu Bank and Addis International Bank: Show progress in outreach but fall below peer averages in the value of credit extended to women.
- **Tsehay Bank:** Performs well in digital account ownership among women, outpacing the peer average, and aligns with sector norms in other indicators.
- Bank of Abyssinia and Zemen Bank: Show balanced performance with alignment across
  most sub-indices, though additional efforts are needed to differentiate their approach and
  deepen client relationships.

#### Early-Stage Institutions (Scores < 3.00)

These institutions are at the beginning of their journey to improve financial product access for women. While some have made progress in isolated indicators (e.g., digital accounts or small loan volumes), they typically lack comprehensive strategies to reach and retain women clients.

- Institutions in this category include Global Bank of Ethiopia, Nib International Bank,
   Bunna Bank, Oromia Bank, Shabelle Bank, and Abay Bank—each showing early efforts in outreach, but without differentiated products or clear targeting of women as a segment.
- Dashen Bank, Amhara Bank, Hijra Bank—reflect a need for more intentional design and delivery mechanisms.
- Other Institutions including Awash Bank, Lion International Bank, Rammis Bank, ZamZam Bank, Development Bank of Ethiopia, and Gadaa Bank are at early stages of engagement or have limited visibility into women's product usage due to weak data systems or capacity constraints.

#### III. Financial Innovation Tailored to Women's Needs

Average score: 2.81 Median score: 2.33

The average score of 2.81 and median of 2.33 place the sector in the "Emerging Awareness" to low "Building Momentum" range for financial innovation targeting women. This suggests that a few high-performing banks are pulling up the average, while more than half of the institutions

A SCORECARD FOR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN ETHIOPIA

NATIONAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA

remain below that level, as evidenced by the lower median. In practical terms, most banks are still at the early stages of integrating gender into their innovation agendas—relying on conventional product designs and delivery models that do not fully address the unique needs of women clients.

#### Advanced Institutions (Scores ≥ 3.50)

These banks are at the forefront of developing innovative financial solutions that advance women's inclusion:

- Enat Bank, Cooperative Bank of Oromia and Wegagen Bank: Demonstrate sector leadership by offering diverse women-focused products—particularly in data driven lending facilities—and exceeding both volume and value targets for digital loans to women. Their approaches offer valuable lessons for institutions looking to strengthen gender-intentional innovation. Amhara Bank and Hijra Bank offer women-focused savings products and surpass digital loan targets, though there is room to expand their product offerings.
- ZamZam Bank and Lion International Bank exhibit promising performance. ZamZam offers two women-specific savings products and meets the number—but not volume—targets for digital loans. Lion exceeds loan benchmarks but lacks dedicated womenfocused products. Bank of Abyssinia offers a women-specific savings product, while Global Bank Ethiopia and Bunna Bank currently do not. Still, all three meet or exceed digital loan targets, with Bunna outperforming in both volume and number.

#### Mid-Level Institutions (Scores 3.00—3.49)

These banks are in the early stages of advancing financial innovation for women, with promising initiatives that are not yet fully institutionalized or scaled.

- **Dashen Bank** is piloting a tailored loan product for women and performing above the peer average on digital credit to women.
- Commercial Bank of Ethiopia offers a widely adopted women's saving product and provides digital credit to women, but lags behind both peers and targets.

#### Early-Stage Institutions (Scores < 3.00)

- These **18** institutions are in the initial phases of developing financial innovations that address women's needs. Most efforts are nascent, with significant gaps in product differentiation, digital delivery, and inclusion strategy.
- Tsedey Bank, Ahadu Bank, Oromia Bank, Nib International Bank: Have introduced women-focused savings products, signaling intent, but lack complementary lending or innovation strategies to support scale. Awash Bank is the only bank in this group with a digital credit/loan offering.
- Zemen Bank, Tsehay Bank, Rammis Bank, Gadaa Bank, and Addis International Bank currently do not offer women-specific financial products, highlighting an area of potential growth. Exceptions are **Goh Betoch Bank** who provides a women's saving account, and **Siket Bank** who is piloting a targeted lending initiative.

#### 3.3 FROM DATA TO ACTION

#### **Turning Insights into Institutional Progress**

The Scorecard reveals promising signs of progress in advancing women's financial inclusion in Ethiopia, with most institutions falling within the "Building Momentum" stage. Importantly, government-mandated targets—such as the minimum of 2 positions requirement for women on boards and 25% for women in senior management—have proven to be powerful levers for institutional behavior change, signaling clear expectations and incentivizing financial institutions to take concrete steps toward gender equity in leadership, in line with NFIS-II and ESG guidelines. However, none of the three core dimensions—workforce, product use, or innovation—have been fully institutionalized across the sector. The data highlights where banks are beginning to make strides, as well as where there is considerable opportunity to deepen impact. The table below outlines priority areas for improvement relative to NFIS-II targets, along with recommended actions to support continued progress.

Area	Key Gaps Identified	Recommended Actions
Product Design & Outreach	Few banks offer financial products tailored to women's specific needs, limiting relevance, uptake, and longterm engagement.	Conduct user research to design segmented products (e.g., flexible microloans, savings for informal workers); expand outreach via community-based delivery channels.
Inclusive generic, with limited gender-		Invest in inclusive digital solutions (e.g., low-data apps, mobile onboarding); partner with fintechs to test gender-responsive delivery models.
Workforce Support Systems	While board representation is improving, structural enablers like mentorship, career pathways, and parental support remain weak or absent.	Launch mentorship and leadership development programs; adopt HR policies that support career progression (e.g., childcare, flexible work arrangements).
Data Systems	Many institutions lack robust systems to collect and analyze sex-disaggregated data, limiting evidence-based decisions.	Strengthen MIS to track sex- disaggregated indicators; use insights to inform product development, client engagement, and internal strategy.
Accountability	Inclusion targets are not consistently used to drive internal action or institutional learning.	Align internal goals with NFIS-II targets; integrate Scorecard results into strategic planning, board reviews, and institutional performance assessments.



### 4. CONCLUSION

The Women's Financial Inclusion Scorecard marks an important milestone in Ethiopia's journey toward equitable finance. The results from this first reporting cycle show that progress is underway, but more focused efforts are needed to embed inclusion into core banking systems, culture, and client strategies.

The National Bank of Ethiopia will continue to champion this agenda by using the Scorecard to:

- Guide regulatory reform
- Facilitate peer learning and dialogue
- Support technical assistance to banks
- Monitor progress toward national inclusion goals

The Scorecard reinforces the critical role of public policy in driving sector-wide transformation. Government-led benchmarks—such as targets on women's leadership representation—have already demonstrated their power to shift institutional practices. Continued regulatory leadership, paired with active engagement from financial institutions, will be essential to ensure that inclusion not only progresses—but becomes an enduring pillar of Ethiopia's financial system.

With sustained commitment and collaboration, Ethiopia's financial institutions can become powerful engines of opportunity—delivering inclusive growth for women, families, and the broader economy.



# **Annex: Scorecard Results**

Figure 5: Women's Financial Inclusion Scorecard — Ethiopia (2024 Baseline Performance)

	SUB-INDICES			
PROGRESS LEVEL	INCLUSION PROGRESS LEVEL	WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE	WOMEN'S USE OF FINANCIAL PRODUCTS	FINANCIAL INNOVATION
TRANS- FORMATIONAL	Enat Bank	Enat Bank	Enat Bank Goh Betoch Bank Siket Bank Tsedey Bank	Amhara Bank Cooperative Bank of Oromia Enat Bank Hijra Bank Lion International Bank Wegagen Bank Zam Zam Bank
INTENTIONAL	Goh Betoch Bank Tsedey Bank Wegagen Bank	Amhara Bank Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Dashen Bank Development Bank of Ethiopia Global Bank Ethiopia Goh Betoch Bank Hibret Bank Zemen Bank	Omo Bank Wegagen Bank	Bank of Abyssinia Bunna Bank Global Bank Ethiopia
BUILDING MOMENTUM	Ahadu Bank Amhara Bank Bank of Abyssinia Bunna Bank Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Cooperative Bank of Oromia Dashen Bank Global Bank Ethiopia Hibret Bank Hijra Bank Lion International Bank Nib International Bank Oromia Bank Shabelle Bank Siinqee Bank Siket Bank Zemen Bank	Ahadu Bank Bank of Abyssinia Bunna Bank Cooperative Bank of Oromia Hijra Bank Lion International Bank Nib International Bank Oromia Bank Shabelle Bank Siket Bank Tsedey Bank Wegagen Bank Zam Zam Bank	Abay Bank Addis International Bank Ahadu Bank Bank of Abyssinia Bunna Bank Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Cooperative Bank of Oromia Global Bank Ethiopia Hibret Bank Nib International Bank Oromia Bank Shabelle Bank Siinqee Bank Tsehay Bank Zemen Bank	Commercial Bank of Ethiopia Dashen Bank
EMERGING AWARENESS	Abay Bank Addis International Bank Awash Bank Development Bank of Ethiopia Rammis Bank Tsehay Bank	Abay Bank Addis International Bank Awash Bank Gadaa Bank Omo Bank Rammis Bank Siinqee Bank Tsehay Bank	Amhara Bank Awash Bank Dashen Bank Hijra Bank Lion International Bank Rammis Bank Zam Zam Bank	Abay Bank Ahadu Bank Awash Bank Development Bank of Ethiopia Hibret Bank Nib International Bank Omo Bank Oromia Bank Shabelle Bank Siinqee Bank Tsedey Bank
NEUTRAL	Gadaa Bank		Development Bank of Ethiopia Gadaa Bank	Addis International Bank Gadaa Bank Goh Betoch Bank Rammis Bank Siket Bank Tsehay Bank Zemen Bank





የኢትዮጵያ ብሔራዊ ባንክ NATIONAL BANK OF ETHIOPIA