The Pay Transparency Playbook

A Research-Based Framework for Closing the Gender Pay Gap Across Africa





Collated by:

African Female Voices
in collaboration with
Africa Women Financial Inclusion Initiative (AWFii)

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Foreword

Last year, we launched the #ValueHerWork Equal Pay Campaign, a movement rooted in our collective commitment to ensuring that African women are recognised, respected, and rewarded fairly for their contributions. International Equal Pay Day serves as a poignant reminder of the urgency of this work. It is directly linked to the Sustainable Development Goals — SDG 5 on Gender Equality and SDG 8.5 on Decent Work and Equal Pay for Equal Value — which emphasise that pay equity is not optional, but a moral and economic imperative.

Our first Insight Pilot Report, published in 2025, was a mirror: it captured the voices, frustrations, and aspirations of professionals who continue to experience pay disparities. This Playbook is the next step — the call to action made concrete. It moves from documenting the problem to offering a structured, evidence-based pathway that organisations, policymakers, and companies can actually use.

This edition is genuinely co-created, not simply shared. The Africa Women Financial Inclusion Initiative (AWFII) and our organisation, African Female Voices, have worked with us directly on its framing, its regional grounding, and the practical detail that makes it usable — not just aspirational. Their fingerprints are throughout this document, from the sector guidance to the roadmap, and we expect that to continue as the Playbook evolves.

We have also built this document, from the outset, to be picked up and used — by a company's HR or reward team on a Monday morning and not only read by a policymaker. It is deliberately thorough, because the case for pay transparency deserves more than a slogan; but it is also deliberately practical, with templates, checklists, and a quick-start path for companies of every size, because good intentions do not close a pay gap. Implementation does.

Equal pay is not charity. It is justice. It is a necessary step toward building more prosperous, inclusive, and equitable societies.

With purpose and solidarity,
Lebogang Masega — Founder, African Female Voices
Co-created with AWFII

AFRICAN FEMALE VOICES

AWFii Africa Women Financial Inclusion Initiative

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Anchoring in UN Sustainable Development Goal 8
Economic liberation for African women is not only a matter of fairness; it is a driver of sustainable continental development. The Playbook is anchored in United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, particularly Target 8.5 on full and productive employment, decent work and equal pay for work of equal value

Methodology: Designing and Developing the Playbook
This Playbook was developed through a mixed-evidence approach combining a review of international and African legal and policy frameworks, peer-reviewed and applied research on pay transparency and pay equity, comparative analysis of regulatory and certification models, and exploratory field research conducted by African Female Voices. These evidence sources were synthesised into the Playbook's six-pillar framework, implementation roadmap, practical tools, and governance measures, with a deliberate focus on translating established principles into actionable guidance for organisations operating across diverse African contexts.

Executive Summary

Across Africa, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is firmly established in international and regional frameworks, yet a persistent gap remains between commitment and implementation. Pay disparities continue alongside limited transparency about how salaries are determined, how roles are valued, and how unexplained differences are identified and corrected.

The Pay Transparency Playbook was developed to help close this implementation gap. Anchored in SDG 8.5, and informed by African legal and policy frameworks, international standards, comparative regulatory approaches, applied research and African Female Voices' exploratory field research, it translates the principle of pay equity into a practical framework that organisations can adopt and adapt. At its core is a six-pillar Pay Transparency Framework: Visible Pay Structures; Regular Pay Audits; Structural Reform; Bias & Culture; Employee Empowerment; and Governance & Leadership Accountability. The pillars are designed to work as an interconnected system, moving organisations beyond disclosure alone toward identifying unjustified pay differences, addressing structural barriers, empowering employees and establishing sustained leadership accountability.

The Playbook also provides a 12-month implementation roadmap, practical entry points for organisations of different sizes, governance measures and measurable indicators for tracking progress. Its approach recognises that organisations begin from different levels of maturity and therefore need a framework that can be applied progressively and proportionately.

The framework is designed to complement existing commitments, including the Maputo Protocol, SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, UN Women's Women's Empowerment Principles, ILO equal-remuneration principles, SDG 5 and SDG 8.5, while drawing lessons from regulatory and certification approaches in other jurisdictions.

The Playbook makes a clear proposition: pay transparency should move from principle to institutional practice. Organisations should be able to explain how work is valued, understand where disparities exist, act on unjustified gaps, measure progress and assign clear accountability for results.

Through this framework, African Female Voices and its partners seek to support a practical, African-grounded pathway towards fairer, more transparent and equitable workplaces across the continent.

Contents

Part One: The Case for Pay Transparency

Part Two: The Evidence Base

Part Three: The Policy and Legal Landscape

Part Four: Frameworks for Institutional Alignment

Part Five: The Pay Transparency Framework: Six Pillars

Part Six: Implementation Roadmap

Part Seven: Using This Playbook as a Company

Part Eight: Comparative Case Studies

Part Nine: Measurement, KPIs, and Governance

Part Ten: Roles and Partnership Governance

Part Eleven: A Note for Multilateral, Governmental, and Corporate Partners

Appendix A: Glossary

Appendix B: Sample Pay Transparency Statement

Part One

The Case for Pay Transparency

1.1 The Moral and Legal Case

Equal pay for work of equal value is not a novel principle. It has been recognised in international law since the ILO's Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), one of the eight fundamental ILO conventions and among the most widely ratified labour standards in the world. It underpins Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is embedded in the 2030 Agenda through SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8.5 (Decent Work and Equal Pay for Equal Value). The persistence of large pay gaps more than seventy years after Convention No. 100 is not evidence that the principle is contested — it is evidence that a principle without transparency and enforcement mechanisms is not self-executing.

1.2 The Business Case

Beyond fairness, a growing body of peer-reviewed and applied research supports pay transparency as sound organisational practice:

A 2025 study in the Strategic Management Journal (Gutierrez, Obloj & Zenger) tracking 20,000 US academics found pay transparency has a negligible effect on aggregate productivity - but that employees who discover they are fairly paid relative to peers increase effort, while those who discover unfair underpayment decrease it. The authors conclude that employees care more about pay fairness than pay equality per se, meaning transparency's real value lies in exposing and correcting unfair gaps, not merely publishing numbers. Related research on vertical pay transparency (Cullen & Perez-Truglia, 2022) finds that when transparency reveals legitimate, promotion-linked pay differences, it can increase motivation and reduce attrition, whereas opaque or unjustifiable horizontal gaps between peers doing similar work tend to depress effort and increase turnover intent. Applied industry research (Mercer, SHRM, and others) consistently links transparent pay communication to higher reported trust, engagement, and retention, and lower perceived pay unfairness - though, as with any employer-commissioned research, these figures should be read as directional rather than definitive. The cost of inaction is measurable: Gallup estimates that replacing a single employee costs between half and twice their annual salary, and pay-related dissatisfaction is consistently cited among the top three drivers of voluntary turnover alongside limited career growth and poor management.

1.3 The Risk of Inaction

Doing nothing is not a neutral choice. Regulatory momentum — from the EU's binding Pay Transparency Directive to South Africa's now-enacted Companies Act pay-gap disclosure requirements — means organisations that have not begun building pay transparency capability will eventually be forced to build it under compliance pressure, with less time, less internal buy-in, and higher reputational risk than those who move proactively now.

Part Two

The Evidence Base

2026 at a glance

South Africa's Companies Amendment Act pay-gap disclosure provisions came into force (22 May); the EU Pay Transparency Directive's transposition deadline passed (7 June), with only 4 of 27 member states on time; the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2026 report found no economy yet grants women fully equal legal rights; and South Africa's Fair Pay Bill — mandating pay-range disclosure and the right to discuss pay — was reintroduced in the National Assembly (April).

2.1.1 The Global Picture

Estimates of the gender pay gap vary by methodology, source, and year - which is itself part of the argument for better organisational-level data. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, covering 148 economies, and its 2024 edition before it, remain the most widely cited benchmarks. At current rates of progress, full gender parity across all dimensions the Index measures (not pay alone) is projected at roughly 123 years globally. Regional projections vary sharply: Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to reach parity in approximately 107 years, while North Africa is projected to take around 185 years (Gender Gap Africa / WEF Global Gender Gap Report 2025).

The World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2026 report provides a complementary legal and institutional perspective. Between 2023 and 2025, 68 economies enacted 113 reforms strengthening women's economic opportunities. However, women globally enjoy approximately 67% of the legal rights available to men, while only 47% of the supportive policies and institutions needed to make those rights effective are in place. The WEF separately estimates that closing the gender gap in labour-force participation and management roles alone could add $7 trillion to global GDP, with gains of $22-$28 trillion under full equality.

2.2 The Regional Picture: East and Southern Africa

UN Women's regional analyses offer a more targeted picture for the region AFV and its partners work in most directly. The 2024 UN Women policy brief puts the East and Southern Africa hourly pay gap at 18.8%, meaning women earn roughly 81 cents for every dollar men earn. UN Women's earlier 'Why Women Earn Less?' analysis (2023) found an adjusted gap of 21% in the same region - that is, a gap that persists even after controlling for differences in education, seniority and job type, making the remaining unexplained difference an important indicator of potential bias and structural inequality that warrants further investigation.

2026 at a glance: South Africa's Companies Amendment Act pay-gap disclosure provisions came into force (22 May); the EU Pay Transparency Directive's transposition deadline passed (7 June), with only 4 of 27 member states on time; the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2026 report found no economy yet grants women fully equal legal rights; and South Africa's Fair Pay Bill - mandating pay-range disclosure and the right to discuss pay - was reintroduced in the National Assembly (April).

Part Two

II.3 A Global Comparator: Intersectionality

Pay gap data is rarely uniform even within a single country. In the United States, for example, Equal Pay Today's tracking shows women overall earn around 83 cents for every dollar men earn, but Black women earn closer to 66 cents - a reminder that any African pay transparency framework should be designed to disaggregate by more than gender alone where data allows (e.g., disability, migrant status, rural/urban divides), not simply produce a single national average.

II.4 Complementary Field Research: AFV's Pilot Study

Alongside this global and regional evidence, AFV conducted an exploratory pilot study of 53 African professionals in 2025-26, examining awareness, perceptions and organisational practices around pay transparency. Over half of respondents reported that they could not fully describe how their own pay was determined, while over 70% reported that a lack of transparency had reduced their motivation and confidence at work. Given the limited sample size, these findings are presented as exploratory evidence to complement, rather than substitute for, the wider evidence base used in this Playbook.



Part Two

Measure	Verified finding
Average hourly earnings gap	**19% less**
Women's hourly earnings for every US$1 earned by men	**US$0.81**
Women's monthly earnings for every US$1 earned by men	**US$0.68**
Adjusted hourly earnings for every US$1 earned by men	**US$0.92**
Gap among workers with university degrees	**18% less**
Gap among workers with primary education	**31% less**
Gap in domestic work	**53% less**
Gap in education	**25% less**
Gap in health and social work	**6.7% less**

What the evidence tells us

The evidence shows that gender pay inequality remains a significant labour-market challenge across East and Southern Africa. UN Women's 2023 study, Why Women Earn Less: Gender Pay Gap and Labour Market Inequalities in East and Southern Africa, drawing on data from Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and South Africa, found that women in the region earn approximately 81 cents for every US dollar earned by men on an hourly basis, equivalent to an average hourly earnings gap of about 19%. On a monthly basis, women earn approximately 68 cents for every dollar earned by men, partly reflecting fewer hours spent in paid employment. The research also identifies substantial occupational and sectoral segregation and evidence of barriers limiting access to the highest-paying jobs. These findings demonstrate why regional averages should be treated as a starting point rather than a complete explanation of pay inequality within an individual organisation. For employers, meaningful pay-equity analysis therefore requires examining internal remuneration practices, including how jobs are valued, how employees are positioned within pay structures and whether differences remain after relevant factors are considered. Greater transparency around pay structures, supported by consistent job evaluation and analysis of pay outcomes, can provide organisations with a stronger evidence base for identifying unexplained disparities and determining where further investigation or corrective action may be appropriate.(UN Women, 2023)

Part Three

The Policy and Legal Landscape

III.1 International Standards

ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) - ratified by 167 countries, establishes equal pay for work of equal value as a fundamental labour right. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 23 - the right to equal pay for equal work. SDG 5 and SDG 8.5 - gender equality and equal pay for equal value as explicit 2030 Agenda targets. The ILO's gender-neutral job evaluation method The ILO's companion step-by-step guide to Convention No. 100 sets out a practical method for valuing jobs on objective, non-gendered criteria rather than negotiation power, tenure, or informal favour. In broad terms, the method involves: (1) Job Analysis - systematically describing what a role requires, not just its title. (2) Selecting Compensable Factors -typically skill, effort, responsibility, and working conditions - chosen so they do not systematically undervalue work more commonly done by women (e.g., caregiving-adjacent skills, fine motor dexterity, emotional labour) relative to work more commonly done by men. (3) Weighting Factors consistently across all roles. (4) Scoring Roles against the weighted factors. Lastly, (5) Establishing Pay Grades converting the resulting scores into pay grades or bands. The guide stresses that job evaluation is only gender-neutral if the choice and weighting of factors is itself checked for bias - an evaluation scheme that rewards physical strength but not caregiving-related skill, for instance, is not neutral merely because it applies the same criteria to everyone.

III.2 Comparative Regulation: What Other Regions Have Done

The European Union: Directive (EU) 2023/970

Adopted in 2023, the EU Pay Transparency Directive requires Member States to transpose its requirements into national law. The transposition deadline was 7 June 2026. Four Member States, Slovakia, Italy, Lithuania and Malta, had completed transposition by that deadline, while implementation continued across other Member States thereafter. Because national transposition remains dynamic, organisations operating in the EU should verify the current requirements in each jurisdiction. This gap between an EU-level deadline and uneven national follow-through is itself an instructive lesson for any African partners considering a similar regional standard: agreement at the top does not guarantee implementation on the ground. Its core mechanisms include:

- Salary disclosure at recruitment — employers must share the initial pay range for a role before or at the interview stage, and are banned from asking candidates about salary history.
- Employee right to pay information — workers can request data on their own pay level and on average pay levels for colleagues doing equal work or work of equal value, broken down by gender.
- Mandatory gender pay gap reporting — phased in by company size (150+ employees reporting from 2027, down to 100+ from 2031), covering all components of pay: base salary, bonuses, equity, and benefits.

Part Three

- The "5% trigger" — where an unexplained gap of 5% or more is found within a job category, employers must conduct a joint pay assessment with worker representatives and correct it within a defined period if it cannot be objectively justified.
- Shifted burden of proof — in pay discrimination cases, it falls to the employer, not the employee, to prove the pay difference is not sex-based.

Iceland: Equal Pay Certification
Since 2018, Iceland has required organisations with 25 or more employees to obtain a legally mandated Equal Pay Certification, auditing their pay system against the IST 85 Equal Wage Management Standard through an independent third-party certifier — the first country in the world to enforce equal pay through compulsory certification rather than voluntary reporting alone. Certification must be renewed every three years. Iceland's own unadjusted pay gap (around 9–10% as of 2024) shows certification has not eliminated the gap outright, but survey data from certified organisations found a majority reported the exercise improved job satisfaction, visibility, and organisational efficiency, and two-thirds found the process worthwhile relative to its cost.

Independent Certification: The EQUAL-SALARY Model
A parallel, non-governmental approach comes from the Switzerland-based EQUAL-SALARY Foundation, which since 2011 has offered a voluntary, third-party audited pay equity certification comparable in spirit to an ISO standard for salaries. PwC serves as its preferred audit partner, and its certification is recognised by the European Commission, Equileap, and the Bloomberg Gender Equality Index. Certified and recertified employers in 2026 alone include Aspen Global, Teufel Lautsprecher, and Abdi Ibrahim Pharmaceuticals, alongside longer-standing certified companies such as Cartier, DHL, Ferrari, IATA, Coca-Cola İçecek, and UBS — evidence that voluntary, employer-led certification can operate at real scale even without a legal mandate, and a plausible model for an African equivalent.

Other Jurisdictions
The United Kingdom has required gender pay gap reporting for employers with 250+ employees since 2017. Several US states and Canadian provinces (including British Columbia) now require salary ranges in job postings and prohibit salary-history questions or retaliation against pay-discussion. The direction of travel across regulatory regimes worldwide is consistently toward more disclosure, not less.

III.3 Continental and Regional African Frameworks
Africa already has its own continental legal architecture for equal pay — the starting point for this Playbook should be African instruments, not only imported European or Icelandic models.

- The Maputo Protocol (the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003) is one of the world's most progressive women's rights instruments and has been ratified or acceded to by 44 of the AU's 55 member states. Article 13 explicitly commits states to promote equal remuneration for work of equal value. A 20-year review (Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition, Equality Now, and Make Every Woman Count, 2023) found that 54% of AU states domestically mandate equal pay or fair/just pay in line with Article 13 — meaning 46% still do not, including Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and the DRC.

Part Three

- The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (revised 2016) commits member states, under Article 17, to reform laws to give women and men equal rights and access to economic resources — directly relevant to pay equity across Southern Africa's 16 member states.
- The AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade, under active development through 2026, aims to embed gender-responsive provisions — including representation, capacity-building, and simplified trade regimes — into the African Continental Free Trade Area, Africa's largest economic integration project.
- Other Regional Economic Communities — COMESA, the EAC, and ECOWAS — have each adopted their own gender-responsive legal frameworks and supplementary acts, per UNECA analysis, though implementation depth varies considerably between blocs.

The pattern across these instruments is consistent: strong continental and regional commitment on paper, uneven domestication and enforcement in practice. That gap between ratification and implementation is exactly where a practical, employer-facing framework like this Playbook can add the most value.

III.4 National Examples Across the Continent

Labour law affecting pay transparency is moving at very different speeds across African jurisdictions. A few illustrative examples:

South Africa: proposal to enact law in 2026
Sections 30A and 30B of the Companies Amendment Act 16 of 2024 commenced on 22 May 2026, introducing enhanced remuneration governance and disclosure requirements for public and state-owned companies. These include shareholder approval processes for remuneration policies and annual remuneration reports, as well as prescribed remuneration disclosures, including information relating to highest, lowest, average and median remuneration and the remuneration gap between employees in the top 5% and bottom 5% of the remuneration distribution.
A separate Fair Pay Bill, reintroduced in the National Assembly in April 2026, would go further: mandatory pay-range disclosure and a statutory right for employees to discuss their pay. Independent survey data (Remchannel, April 2026) found that while 85.7% of South African organisations conduct some form of annual fair pay analysis, only 26.2% have a formal, documented pay transparency policy, and 51.3% of employees report no visibility into how their pay is set.

- Across much of the rest of the continent, labour codes are being rewritten or substantially amended — including recent or pending reforms in Angola, Mozambique, and Uganda — but few African jurisdictions yet have EU- or Iceland-style mandatory pay transparency or certification requirements specifically written into law.
- This gap between strong continental commitments (Maputo Protocol, SADC Protocol) and thin national implementation, outside a small number of frontrunners like South Africa, is precisely the space this Playbook is designed to fill: a voluntary, partner-driven standard that African organisations can adopt ahead of, and to help shape, future regulation.

This Playbook does not constitute legal advice. Partners should confirm specific disclosure obligations with local counsel in each country of operation before publishing pay data.

Part Four

Frameworks for Institutional Alignment

This Playbook is designed to slot into existing commitments rather than compete with them — continental, regional, and global. For AFV, AWFII, UWONET, and any organisation seeking to align this work with a wider mandate, the following frameworks are directly relevant.

IV.1 African Union and Regional Economic Communities

- As set out in Part III.3, the Maputo Protocol's Article 13 and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development's Article 17 already commit the large majority of African states to equal pay and equal economic opportunity in principle. This Playbook's six pillars give African Union bodies, the AU Women, Gender and Youth Directorate, and Regional Economic Communities (SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA) a ready-made, practical mechanism for translating those continental commitments into organisation-level practice — and a monitoring framework (Part IX) that could feed into existing AU or REC reporting on Maputo Protocol domestication.

IV.2 UN Women's Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)

- Established jointly by UN Women and the UN Global Compact, the WEPs are the primary vehicle for corporate delivery on the gender-equality dimensions of the 2030 Agenda. This Playbook's six pillars (Part V) map directly onto them:
- Principle 1 — Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality → Pillar 6 (Governance & Leadership Accountability).
- Principle 2 — Treat all women and men fairly at work, including equal pay for work of equal value → Pillars 1 and 2 (Visible Pay Structures; Regular Pay Audits).
- Principle 3 — Ensure health, safety, and wellbeing of all workers → adjacent to Pillar 4 (Bias & Culture).
- Principle 4 — Promote education, training, and professional development for women → Pillar 3 (Structural Reform).
- Principle 5 — Implement enterprise development, supply chain, and marketing practices that empower women → a natural extension for corporate partners applying this Playbook beyond their own workforce.
- Principle 6 — Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy → the #KnowYourWorth and #ValueHerWork campaigns themselves.
- Principle 7 — Measure and publicly report on progress → Pillar 2 and Part IX (Measurement, KPIs, and Governance).
- Any partner organisation that signs the WEPs — a CEO-level commitment — can use this Playbook as a direct, ready-made implementation pathway for the equal-pay-relevant principles.

Part Four

IV.3 The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)

- EPIC is led by the ILO, UN Women, and the OECD, and describes itself as currently the only multi-stakeholder partnership working specifically to reduce the gender pay gap at global, regional, and national levels. It brings together governments, employers, and worker organisations around the shared goal of achieving equal pay in line with SDG 8.5. Formal alignment with EPIC's approach — potentially including AWFII or UWONET as African civil-society members — would strengthen this Playbook's credibility as a serious implementation tool rather than a standalone campaign asset.

IV.4 Adjacent Certification and Index Frameworks

- Beyond EPIC's coalition-building role, several operational frameworks already certify or index organisations on pay equity specifically, and are referenced throughout this Playbook as models rather than as competitors to it:
- EQUAL-SALARY Certification — a third-party audited standard (PwC as preferred audit partner) recognised by the European Commission, Equileap, and the Bloomberg Gender Equality Index (Part III.2).
- The Pay Transparency Alliance — a newer industry network EQUAL-SALARY is a founding member of, focused specifically on advancing pay transparency practices among employers.
- Bloomberg Gender Equality Index and Equileap — investor-facing gender-equality benchmarks that increasingly factor in pay-gap disclosure as a scoring criterion, giving publicly listed African companies an additional, investor-relevant reason to engage with this agenda.

IV.5 SDG 5 and SDG 8.5

- Every commitment in this Playbook is explicitly traceable to SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8.5 (Decent Work and Equal Pay for Equal Value) — giving partner organisations a straightforward way to report this work within their existing SDG or ESG disclosures.

Part Five

The Pay Transparency Framework: Six Pillars

The original five-pillar framework has been expanded to six, adding explicit governance and leadership accountability — the mechanism that determines whether the other five pillars are sustained or quietly abandoned.

How the pillars interact

Pillar 1 (visible structures) without Pillar 2 (audits) produces transparency without accountability. Pillar 2 without Pillar 6 (governance) produces findings that quietly sit in a drawer — as our own pilot study found, with audits perceived as ineffective almost as often as effective. Partners should not treat these as a menu to select from, but as a system: each pillar is weakened without the others, even if organisations reasonably start with just one or two and build over time (see Part VI).



Part Five

Pillar	What it means in practice	Owner
1. Visible Pay Structures	Document your pay bands and the criteria used to determine them, and communicate these clearly to staff. Adapt the statement in Appendix B to reflect the practices your organisation has actually implemented or formally committed to implement.	HR / People lead
2. Regular Pay Audits	Run an annual gender pay gap audit, controlling where appropriate for factors such as role, qualifications and experience. Share appropriate headline findings with staff. For organisations subject to South Africa's Companies Act remuneration-reporting provisions, this recommended practice can complement the statutory remuneration-governance and disclosure requirements that came into operation in 2026	HR + Finance
3. Structural Reform	Mentorship and sponsorship pathways into senior roles; equitable access to training and stretch assignments.	Leadership / L&D
4. Bias & Culture	Unconscious bias training, confidential channels to report pay discrimination, inclusive promotion panels.	HR / DEI lead
5. Employee Empowerment	Negotiation skills training, peer salary-benchmarking networks (e.g. the AFV Ally Collective), and the free Gender Gap Africa calculator.	People lead + AFV
6. Governance & Leadership Accountability	Named executive sponsor; pay equity outcomes built into leadership performance reviews; board-level reporting at least annually.	CEO / Board

Part Six

Implementation Roadmap

A phased, 12-month pathway from first conversation to institutionalised practice. Partners with existing infrastructure (audit tools, HRIS systems) can compress this; partners starting from zero should expect the full year.

Quarter 1 — Assess

1. Nominate an executive sponsor and a pay transparency working lead.

2. Gather existing pay data by role, gender, and level — even if incomplete or informally held.

3. Run a light-touch internal pulse survey (AFV's 2025–26 instrument, Appendix D, can be adapted as a starting template).

4. Benchmark against sector and country data (WEF, UN Women, Gender Gap Africa).

Quarter 2 — Design

5. Conduct a first-pass pay audit using an objective job-evaluation method (see Part III.1, ILO guide).

6. Draft a public pay transparency statement (template in Appendix B) — what will be disclosed, to whom, and by when.

7. Identify one "quick win" pillar to pilot first (commonly Pillar 1 or Pillar 5).

Quarter 3 — Pilot & Launch

8. Communicate the pay transparency statement to all staff.

9. Publish a summary of audit findings internally, with a named commitment and timeline to close identified gaps.

10. Launch the chosen pilot pillar; begin structured mentorship/sponsorship intake if Pillar 3 is prioritised.

Quarter 4 — Scale & Institutionalise

11. Extend the pilot pillar organisation-wide; begin planning for a second pillar.

12. Report progress to the AFV partner network and, where applicable, align disclosure with WEPs Principle 7 reporting.

13. Board or senior leadership formally reviews year-one outcomes and commits to year-two targets (Pillar 6).



Part Seven

Using This Playbook as a Company

This Playbook is written to be picked up directly by a company's HR, reward, or DEI function — not only read by policymakers. This part gives companies a fast route in, sized to their scale, plus the specific business case a CFO or board will ask for.

VII.1 Quick-Start by Company Size

Company profile	Fastest path in	Typical owner
Small business (under 50 staff)	Start with Pillar 1 only: write down your pay bands and the criteria for them, even informally, and share them with staff. Skip a full audit initially — use Appendix B's statement template as-is.	Founder / office manager
Mid-size company (50–250 staff)	Run a first-pass audit (Appendix C) using free tools like Gender Gap Africa for external benchmarking. Pilot one pillar beyond Pillar 1 — typically Pillar 5 (negotiation training) is the fastest to stand up.	HR lead
Large / listed company (250+ staff)	Treat this as a governance issue from day one (Pillar 6): name an executive sponsor, and if operating in South Africa, align your existing Companies Act remuneration report with the audit methodology in Part III.1.	CHRO / Reward + Board
Multinational operating across Africa	Run country-by-country legal checks (Part III.3–III.4) before publishing anything; a single continent-wide statement is efficient but must not overclaim compliance in jurisdictions with different rules. Consider EQUAL-SALARY or a similar external certification for credibility across markets.	Group HR + Legal

Part Eight

Comparative Case Studies

Iceland — National mandatory certification
Discussed in full in Part III.2. The key transferable lesson for African policymakers and institutional partners is that shifting the burden of proof to the employer — rather than relying on individual employees to detect and litigate pay discrimination — is what made Iceland's model distinctive, not the existence of a pay gap law per se (Iceland has had one since 1961).

The European Union — Regionally binding disclosure
The EU's approach shows that pay transparency regulation can be phased by company size, giving smaller employers a longer runway — a design feature likely to be relevant if African regulators eventually pursue similar legislation, given the continent's large share of small and medium enterprises.

Independent Certification at Scale: EQUAL-SALARY
Where Iceland and the EU illustrate government-mandated approaches, the EQUAL-SALARY Foundation shows a voluntary, employer-led alternative can also reach real scale: certified and recertified organisations include luxury and consumer brands (Cartier, Ferrari, Richemont), logistics and aviation (DHL, IATA), beverages (Coca-Cola İçecek), banking (UBS in the UK), and pharmaceuticals (Abdi Ibrahim), with CEOs of certified companies publicly citing the certification as both a diversity milestone and a competitive differentiator for talent attraction. No African-headquartered organisation currently appears on EQUAL-SALARY's certified list — a gap this Playbook's partner network is well placed to close.



Part Nine

Measurement, KPIs, and Governance

We recommend tracking a small, honest set of indicators rather than a large vanity dashboard:

- Percentage (%) of staff who report knowing how their pay is determined (target: year-on-year increase).
- Whether a gender pay audit has been run in the last 12 months (yes/no).
- Raw and, where possible, adjusted gender pay gap by role level.
- Percentage (%) of leadership and board roles held by women.
- Staff-reported confidence in raising pay concerns without fear of reprisal.
- Time-to-close for any identified unexplained pay gap above an agreed threshold (the EU Directive uses 5% as its trigger point — a reasonable reference threshold).

Governance structure

Each partner organisation should name a single accountable executive sponsor for pay equity (Pillar 6), with outcomes reviewed at board or senior leadership level at least annually, and progress reported back to the AFV partner network to sustain collective momentum and shared learning.



Part Ten

Roles and Partnership Governance

African Female Voices and AWFII co-created this Playbook. African Female Voices retains the copyright and ownership described in the Legal Protection & Ownership Notice. At the same time, AWFII is acknowledged as a co-creating partner for its substantive contribution to the Playbook's framing, priorities, and sector perspectives.

African Female Voices co-creates by:

- Coordinating research, survey tools, and benchmarking data from the #ValueHerWork and #KnowYourWorth campaigns.
- Conceptualising this Playbook end-to-end.
- Hosting joint working sessions and co-hosted webinars on pay transparency.
- Maintaining this Playbook as a living, shared document and incorporating co-creator input on an ongoing basis, not just at launch.
- Recognising and profiling organisations — partner and company alike — who publish pay transparency commitments.

AWFII co-creates by:

- Shaping this Playbook's framing, priorities and sector perspectives directly, drawing on AWFII's own programme design and expertise.
- Nominating a pay transparency lead and co-hosting joint working sessions.
- Extending the Playbook's reach and credibility through their own networks, events, and platforms — including potential presentation opportunities at AWFII's summit *Inclusion, Leadership and Advocacy, and Entrepreneurship and Wealth Creation — pay transparency sits squarely within "Advocacy for Policy Change" and "Leadership Development and Board Readiness," and could plug into their Policy Advocacy Hub as a knowledge asset.*

Companies adopting this Playbook will:

- Follow the quick-start path for their size and profile (Part VII.1), starting with whichever pillar is fastest to startup.
- Publish a pay transparency statement (Appendix B) and run at least a first-pass audit (Appendix C) within the first two quarters of adoption.
- Name an internal executive sponsor (Pillar 6) so the work outlives any one HR or DEI hire.
- Report headline, non-sensitive progress back to the AFV partner network annually, to strengthen the collective evidence base this Playbook is built on.

Part Eleven

A Note for Multilateral, Governmental, and Corporate Partners

This Playbook is offered to African Union bodies, Regional Economic Communities, national governments, UN Women and other multilateral agencies, and companies operating across the continent, as a pan-African implementation tool that complements — not duplicates — existing frameworks. It does not ask any institution to build a new standard from scratch: it maps directly onto the Maputo Protocol and SADC Protocol commitments already made at continental and regional level, onto UN Women's Women's Empowerment Principles, and tracks the direction of comparative regulation (EU, Iceland) — while being built on African evidence and African legal instruments as its foundation, not imported assumptions.
We would welcome the opportunity to discuss: formal alignment with the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC); how this framework could support AU or REC monitoring of Maputo Protocol and SADC Protocol domestication; potential inclusion as a resource within UN Women's Africa regional programming; and joint measurement of outcomes across the AFV partner network as an evidence base for continental-scale advocacy.



Appendices

Appendix A — Glossary

- Pay transparency — the deliberate accessibility of salary and pay-structure information within an organisation (Recalde & Vesterlund, 2020).
- Equal pay for work of equal value — the principle that pay should reflect the value of the work performed (skill, effort, responsibility, conditions), not just identical job titles (ILO Convention No. 100).
- Unadjusted (raw) pay gap — the difference between average male and average female pay, without controlling for role, seniority, or experience.
- Adjusted pay gap — the remaining difference after controlling for role, seniority, experience, and qualifications — a stronger indicator of potential discrimination.
- Gender-neutral job evaluation — a method of assessing job value using objective, non-gendered criteria (ILO step-by-step guide).
- Pay equity audit — a systematic review of an organisation's pay data to detect and address unexplained gaps.



Appendices

Appendix B — Sample Pay Transparency Statement

Adapt this statement to reflect practices your organisation has actually implemented or formally committed to implement. Organisations should not state that salary bands, annual audits, employee information rights or disclosure practices exist unless those measures are in place and appropriate in the relevant jurisdiction.

Sample statement
[Organisation name] is committed to equal pay for work of equal value. We publish our salary bands and the criteria used to place employees within them. We conduct an annual gender pay audit and report headline findings to staff. Where unexplained gaps are identified, we commit to a documented plan and timeline to close them. Employees may request information on their own pay and on average pay for comparable roles without fear of reprisal.



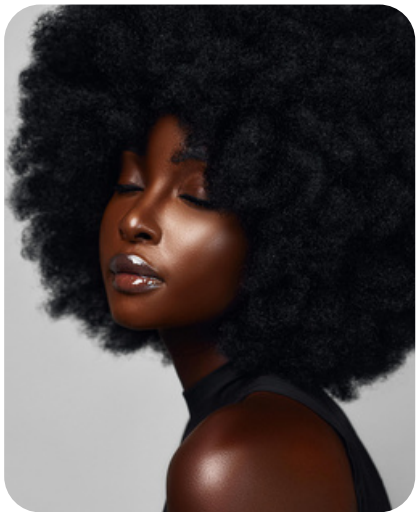
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Thank You

Thank you for reading the AFV Pay Transparency Playbook. We hope this Playbook equips organisations, leaders and practitioners with the evidence, practical tools and confidence needed to move from commitment to action. Pay transparency is not simply about making salaries visible; it is about building fairer, more consistent and more accountable systems for how pay decisions are made. By taking deliberate steps to understand pay outcomes, strengthen transparency and address unexplained disparities, organisations can contribute to workplaces in which people understand how their contribution is valued and have greater confidence in the fairness of pay practices. The journey towards pay equity will look different in every organisation, but meaningful progress begins with asking the right questions, examining the evidence and taking measurable action.





Need Help or Have Questions?

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