



# ESG Report FY25

*A world of knowledge*  
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**WSET**

# Message from our CEO

I'm delighted to share our second ESG report and the first we're sharing publicly. As a charity, sustainability is fundamental to how we deliver our purpose, ensuring that the value we create is reinvested in widening access to drinks education.

Sustainability sits at the heart of who we are and is woven through our strategic core commitments. We're proud of the progress we have made over the last year. We reduced WSET's environmental impact through initiatives such as introducing digital certificates and switching our London offices to renewable energy. These steps helped us cut our carbon emissions by 10% over the year.

We continued to build a welcoming, empathetic and inspiring culture that empowers our people to innovate and thrive. We also more than doubled the number of people we've supported through our social impact programme, working with partners around the world to support access to drinks education.

Finally, we've worked on closing gaps in our processes and policies so that our systems and governance are strengthened and as transparent as possible.

Michelle



# Executive summary

This ESG report highlights WSET's commitment to sustainability, diversity and robust governance. Key highlights for this year include:



## Environmental

- Total carbon emissions reduced by **10%**
- Switched from paper-based to **digital certificates**
- Switched our London offices to **renewable energy**
- **60% of employees** have completed our Environmental Awareness training
- Delivered Sustainability Industry Talk series with **3,000+** people viewing sessions live or on demand globally



## Social

- Increased participation in employee engagement survey by **10%** with overall engagement rising by 1.4% to **74%**
- Reduced gender pay gap from 8% to **4%**
- Supported over **500** individuals through bursaries and partnerships with 27 organisations across 10 countries, driving accessibility and affordable education



## Governance

- Provided data literacy and AI training to all employees
- Health and Safety committee re-established
- Internal audit on purchasing processes completed



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# 1 Introduction

# Our approach to ESG

Our status as a charity underpins our approach to ESG. It ensures that our environmental, social and governance strategies support our purpose and that we reinvest in widening access to drinks education worldwide.

We support the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:



# Priority ESG issues for WSET

We undertook a comprehensive materiality assessment and identified the ESG areas most critical to our organisational development and stakeholder interests.



## Environmental

- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Educational programme design



## Social

- Social responsibility
- Quality of education
- Employee wellbeing & development
- Access to & affordability of our education
- Intellectual property protection



## Governance

- Business ethics & leadership
- Business continuity



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## **2 Environmental**

# Environmental – our vision

We empower our people, our course providers and educators, our students and our partners to shape a more sustainable drinks industry, helping us all to take care of our planet. We commit to lead by example, share knowledge, encourage hope, and inspire action.

Our focus is on four work areas:

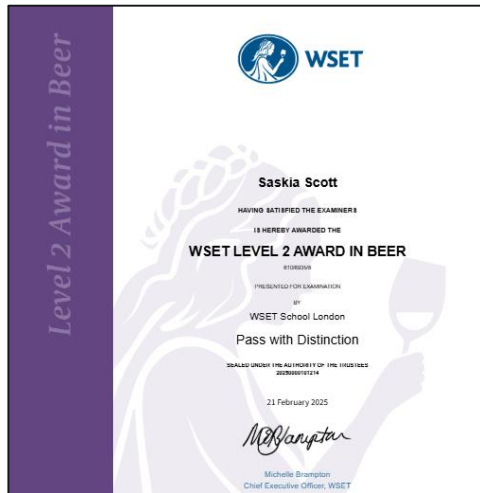
- WSET as a business
- WSET people
- WSET products
- WSET enrichment programmes



# Environmental - our progress

## Business

## Product



### Digital certificates

Switched from paper certificates to digital certificates for all Level 1 & 2 Awards to improve efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.



### Renewable energy

Conducted a comprehensive utilities usage review for our London office buildings and subsequently transitioned to a renewable-electricity supplier.



### WSET course content

Began research and development with the aim of enhancing sustainability content across our existing qualifications.

# Environmental - our progress

## People

## Enrichment programme



### Environmental Culture group

Our Environmental Culture group organised events, including a sustainable wine tasting and lunchtime nature walks in London and Hong Kong.



### Internal awareness

60% of all team members completed Environmental Awareness training module.



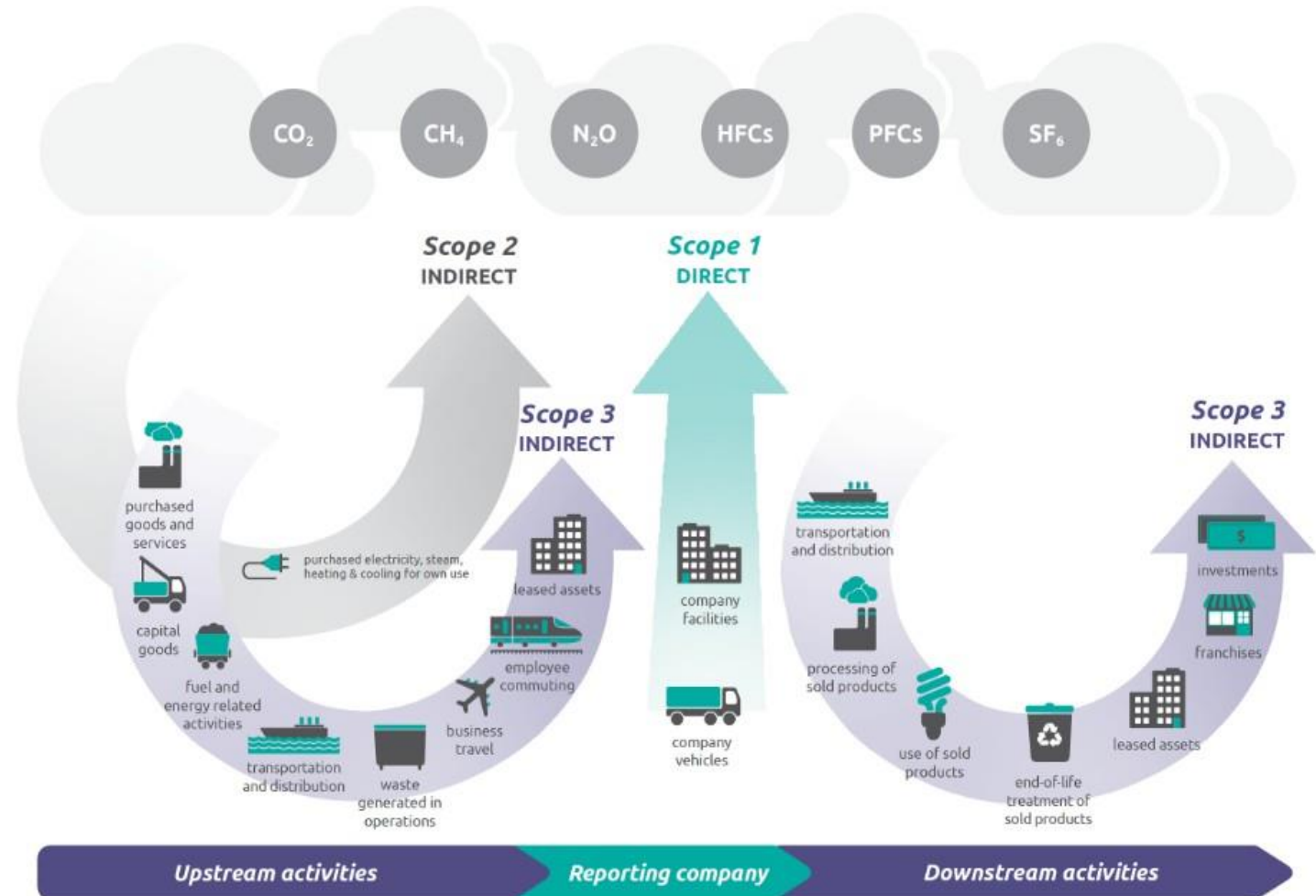
### Sustainability Industry talk series

Hosted a three-part virtual industry talk series in collaboration with Vine Strategy Group, exploring sustainability challenges and solutions across the drinks industry. The series connected experts from across the drinks community and welcomed **1100+** registrations from **70+** countries, and over **2100** on-demand views.

# Environmental - our progress

## Carbon emissions

- We based our carbon emission calculations on the **Greenhouse Gas Protocol**.
- We calculated our emissions across three scopes as shown in the diagram opposite.
- In the calculation, we included operations at our London premises (Baden Place, Bermondsey Street and Bickels Yard) and offices or co-working spaces in Australia, China, Hong Kong and the US.



Source: <https://ghgprotocol.org/>

\* A widely recognised standard for measuring and managing greenhouse gas emissions.

# Environmental - our progress

Total carbon emissions reduced by 10% in FY25 vs FY24

	FY25		FY24 (adjusted)		% change
	Tonnes of CO2e	%	Tonnes of CO2e	%	
<b>Scope 1</b>	<b>51.71</b>	6.23%	<b>83.69</b>	9.03%	↓ -38.2%
<b>Scope 2</b>	<b>48.82</b>	5.88%	<b>50.60</b>	5.46%	↓ -3.5%
<b>Total Scope 3</b>	<b>729.40</b>	87.89%	<b>792.01</b>	85.50%	↓ -7.9%
Scope 3 Cat 4 (Upstream T&D)	37.39	4.51%	41.67	4.50%	↓ -10.3%
Scope 3 Cat 5 (Waste)	7.68	0.93%	8.08	0.87%	↓ -4.9%
Scope 3 Cat 6 (Business Travel)	142.18	17.13%	170.62	18.42%	↓ -16.7%
Scope 3 Cat 7 (Employee Commuting)	58.98	7.11%	66.07	7.13%	↓ -10.7%
Scope 3 Cat 9 (Downstream T&D)	483.17	58.22%	505.56	54.58%	↓ -4.4%
<b>Total emissions</b>	<b>829.93</b>		<b>926.30</b>		↓ -10.4%

**Notes:**

- Total greenhouse gas emissions for FY24 have been revised following the inclusion of newly available data and revisions to calculation methodologies.
- Scope 3 Cat 4 is primarily shipping of exams by global course providers and markers to WSET.
- Scope 3 Cat 9 is primarily shipping by WSET of printed materials, certificates and pins, to course providers/warehouses globally, and exam papers to markers.



# 3 Social

# Social – our vision

## Internal

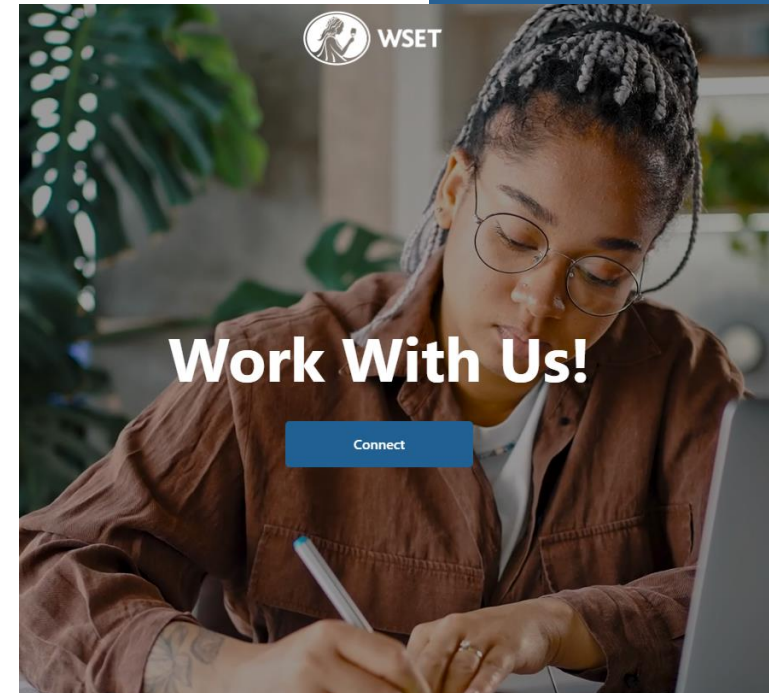
To foster a welcoming, empathetic and inspiring culture that empowers our global talent to innovate and thrive.



# Social – our progress

## Fostering a welcoming, empathetic and inspiring culture

- Employee engagement survey completion rates increased by **10%** to **87%** and overall engagement was up **1.4%** to **73.2%**.
- We now have a year's worth of data from the **equal opportunity surveys** from our recruitment site, enabling us to work on our employer brand to attract more people from under-represented communities to work for WSET.
- We introduced our first employee recognition scheme (Cheers!) and a programme to give employees the opportunity to meet informally with the Leadership Team (Connect+).
- We have **ten internal community groups (ERGs)** which drive their own cultural initiatives to improve our culture and enrich our understanding of diversity in all its forms.



# Social - our progress



## Health & wellbeing

- Community picnic
- Spanish dance session
- Mental Health Awareness week
- Nature walk in London, Hong Kong and Shanghai
- World Mental Health Day



## Drinks culture/ fun & social

- Summer party
- Internal sustainable wine tasting workshop in London & Hong Kong
- Cross-regional DIY Lunar New Year decoration workshop

## Neurodiversity

- Neurodiversity celebration Week
- Beer tasting at Ignition Brewery
- Interactive scavenger hunt
- Parents group collaboration: Neurodiversity family hub Q&A
- APP Summit session: Neurodiversity in the Drinks Industry



## Volunteering/ community initiatives

- Christmas gift wrapping in London office
- Visit to CLP Pulse in Hong Kong
- Volunteered with Redress in Hong Kong to pack second-hand clothes
- Fundraising event for British Heart Foundation



# Social – our progress

## Key people statistics

### Gender (vs LY)

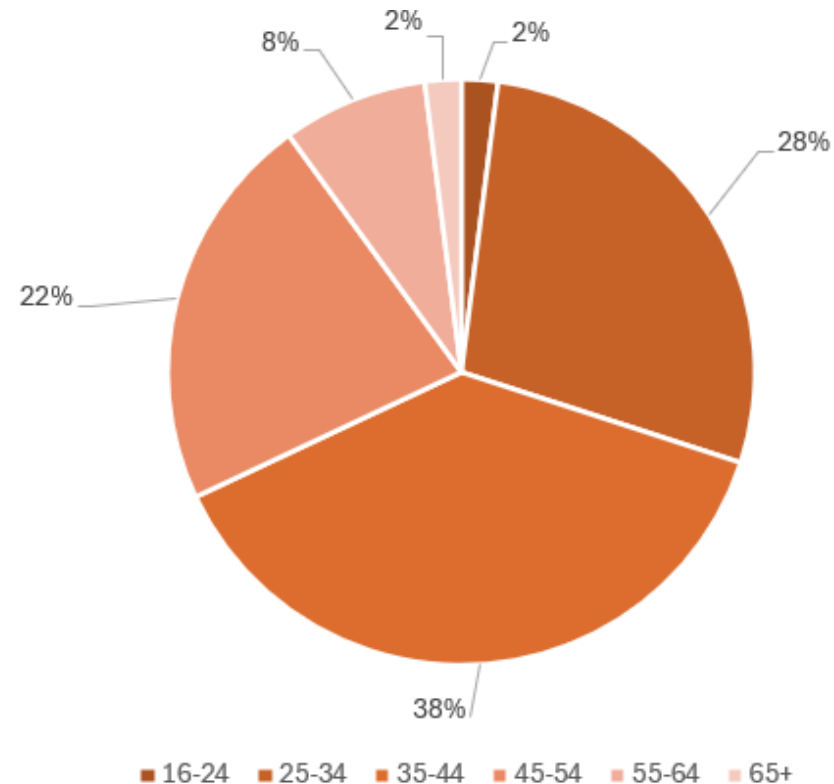
- **Employee gender:** 61% (-%) female vs 34% (-2%) male, 2% unknown
- **Leadership Team:** 67% (+7%) female vs 33% (-7%) male
- **Gender pay gap** reduced to 4% (from 8% LY)

### Full-time vs part-time (vs LY)

- **Permanent employees:** 96% (+4%)
- **Fixed-term employees:** 4%
- **Full-time employees :** 91%
- **Part-time employees:** 9%

### Age profile (vs LY)

- Key change: between 25-34 (-8%)

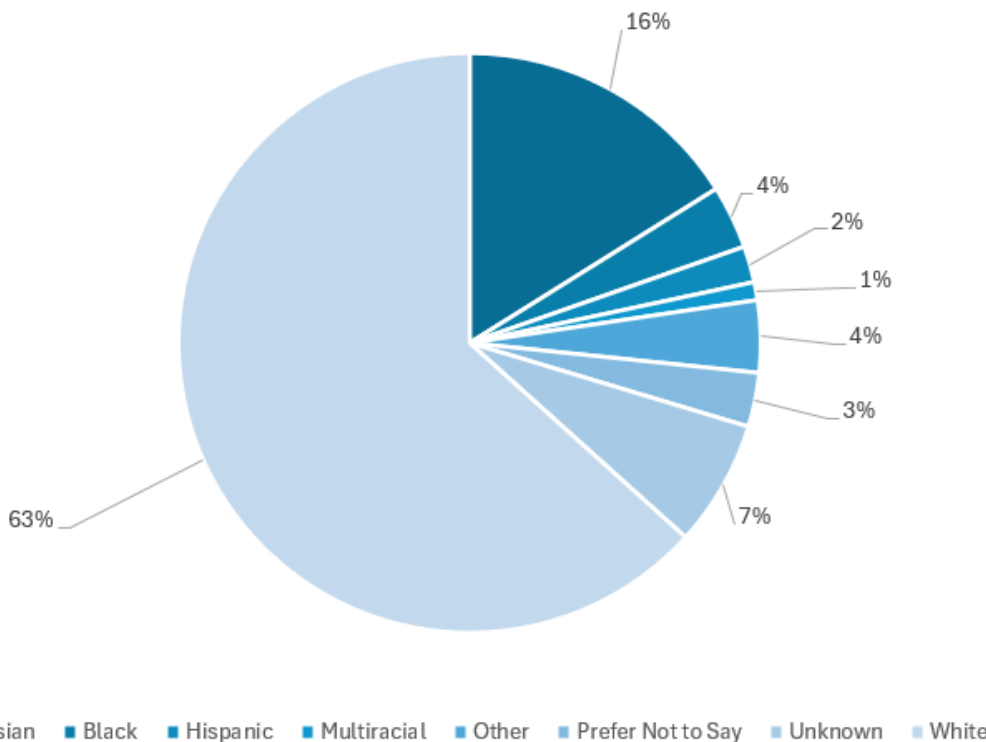


# Social – our progress

## Key people statistics

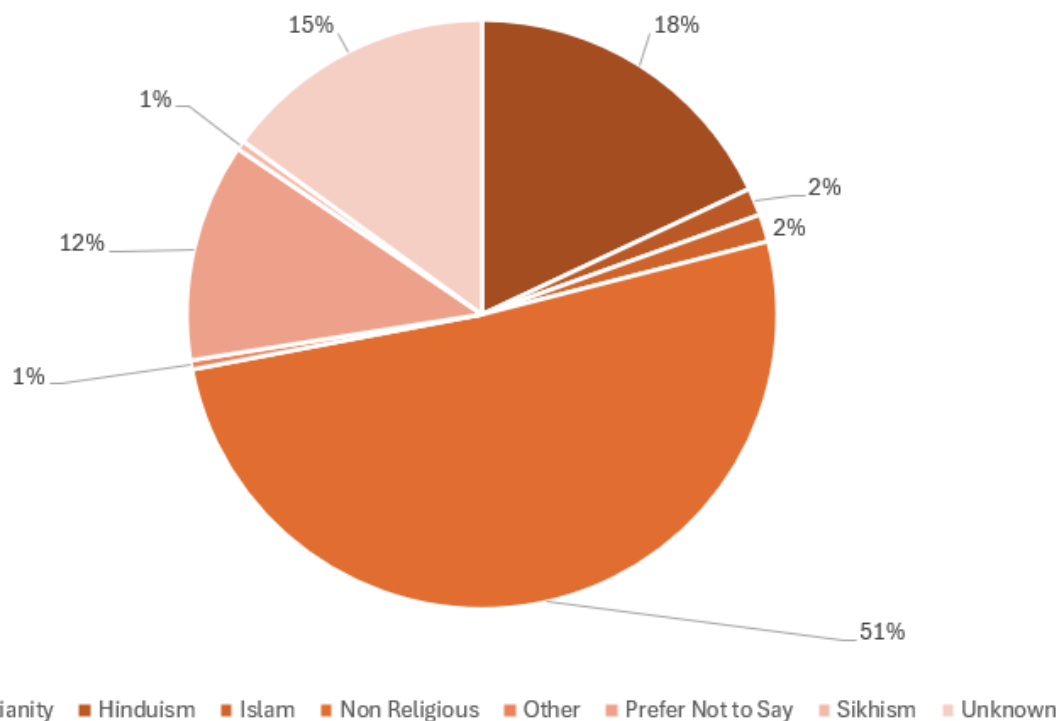
### Ethnicity

- 63% White
- 16% Asian, 4% Black, 2% Hispanic, 1% multiracial, 4% other
- 3% prefer not to say
- 7% unknown



### Faith and religion

- 51% of our employees are not religious
- 18% are Christian, 2% Hindu, 2% Muslim, 1% Sikh, 1% other
- 12% prefer not to say
- 15% unknown



# Accessibility

- Every year, over 100,000 people around the world choose to advance their beer, sake, spirits, or wine knowledge through WSET courses.
- As of 31 July 2025, WSET has granted more than **1,100 reasonable adjustment** accommodations, ensuring equitable access to qualifications.



# Social – our vision

## External

To create positive social impact through purposeful activity around the world.



# Building a more inclusive drinks industry

- We want everyone to have the chance to learn and succeed in the drinks industry by making it more inclusive. That means removing barriers that hold people back - whether it's financial challenges or being part of an underrepresented or marginalised community.
- Through scholarships and funded programmes, and by collaborating with charities and partners, we're helping more people access drinks education and gain the skills and qualifications they need to enter and progress within the industry.
- The next slides show the progress we've made so far and share some of the initiatives behind that impact.

## Our commitment areas

### **Access**

to drinks education  
and the industry

### **Affordability**

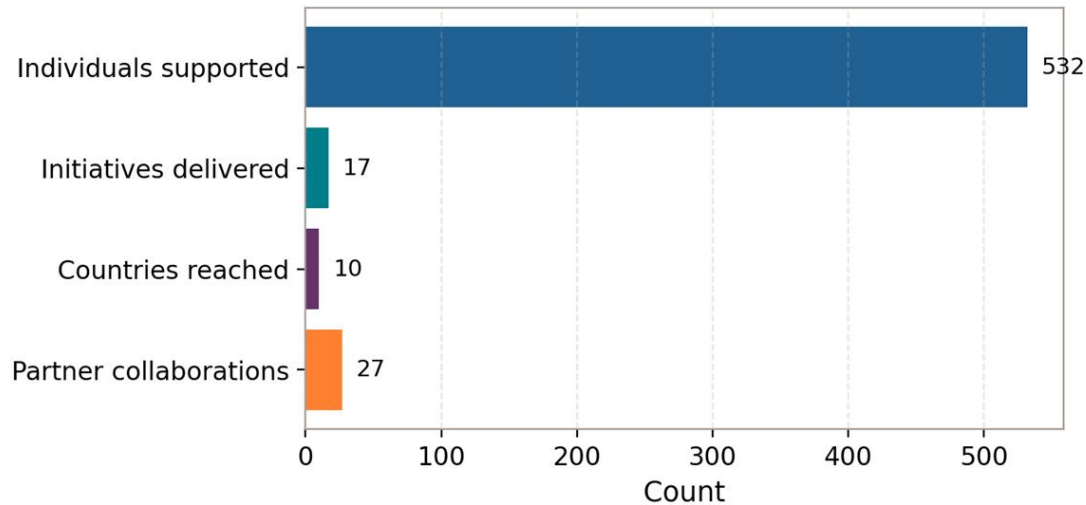
and removing  
financial barriers

### **Inclusion**

building a more  
inclusive industry

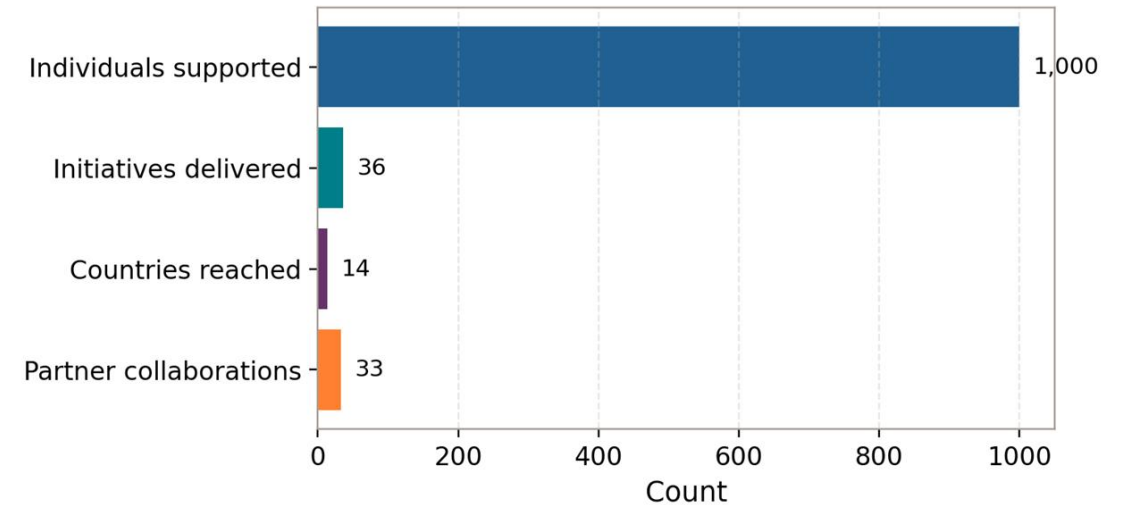
# Impact at a glance

## Impact in numbers FY25



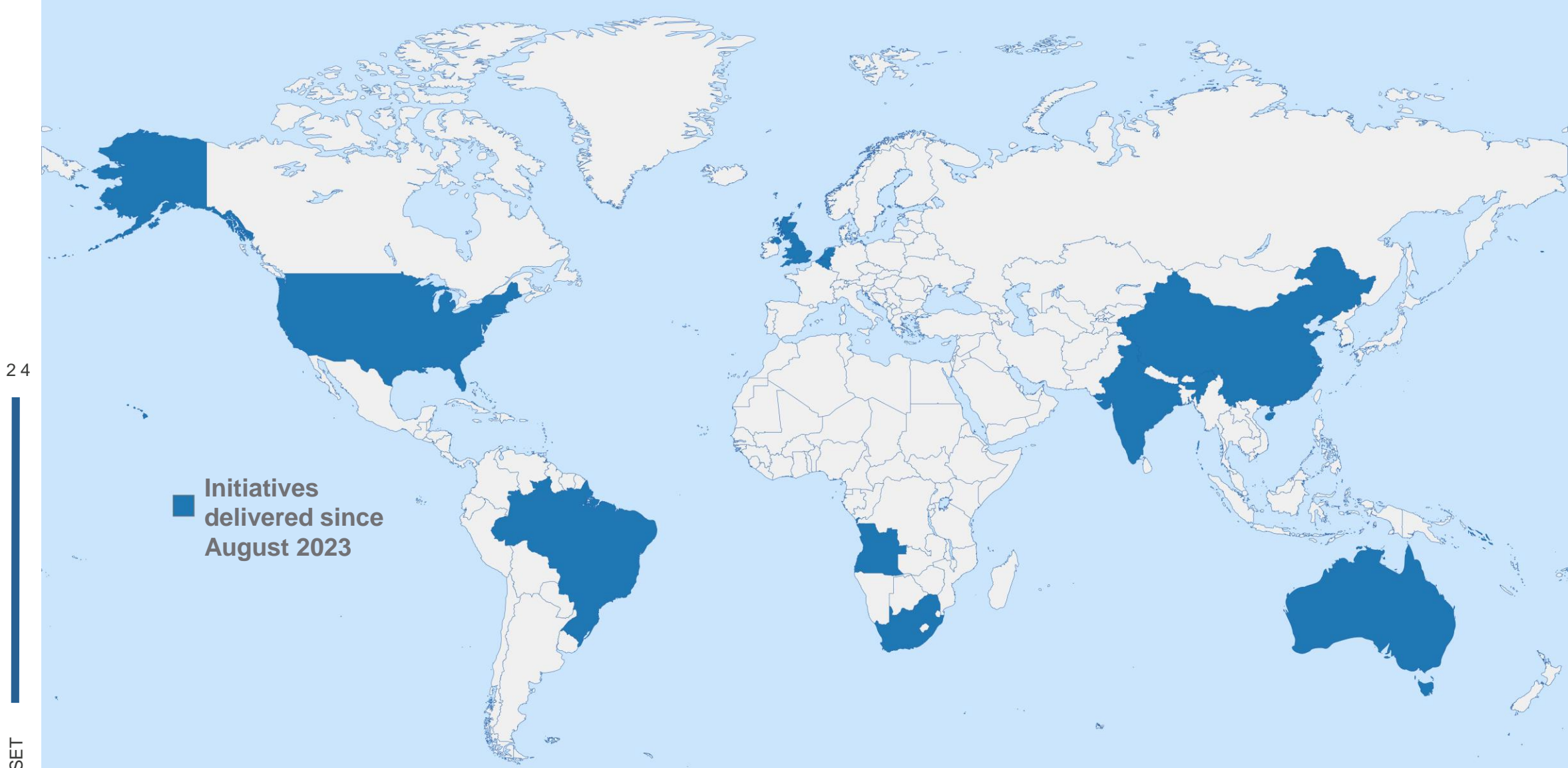
This year we delivered scholarships and funded programmes across **10 countries** through **17 initiatives**, supporting **532 individuals** in collaboration with **27 organisations**.

## Impact in numbers – FY24 and FY25



Progress to date: we have supported **1,000 individuals** across **14 countries** through **36 initiatives**, delivered in collaboration with **33 organisations**.

# Global initiatives by region



24

■ Initiatives delivered since August 2023

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# WSET UK Bursary X Develop programme

Collaborators: [The Drinks Trust](#) Area: UK

## Purpose

- [Develop](#), delivered by The Drinks Trust, is a vocational hardship initiative addressing the severe shortage of skilled staff in the UK drinks and hospitality sectors caused by lockdowns, Brexit and declining new entrants. The program aims to lift individuals out of long-term hardship and strengthen the industry workforce by providing access to targeted, industry-relevant training courses.

## Programme

- Through the Develop initiative, those facing financial hardship can study WSET Level 1–3 Awards in Wines, Spirits, Sake or Beer via UK course providers. Each year, the WSET Develop Prize recognises a beneficiary for exceptional commitment to their drinks education.

## Impact

- Since the bursary was launched in 2022, over 550 students have benefitted.
- Many of the graduates from the programme have developed their careers running venues, starting businesses, working in production or sales, and teaching about drinks categories.



“WSET courses have been incredibly valuable to me in building my knowledge and interest in wine and spirits and have later helped me to secure important career roles.”

**James, WSET Develop Prize winner 2025**

# Angola scholarship programme

**Collaborators:** [Sogrape Wine Academy](#) (WSET Gold Partner) and [Gerard Basset Foundation](#)

**Area:** Luanda, Africa.

## Purpose

- Angola's economic crisis led many skilled workers to leave. As tourism grows, demand for trained hospitality and wine professionals is rising, yet low wages mean that access to education is challenging. These scholarships support the Angolan community to gain essential skills and build sustainable careers.

## Programme

A three-day training programme including:

- Two days of preparatory courses by the Sogrape Wine Academy
- One day dedicated to the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines course, conducted in Portuguese

## Impact

- This initiative marked the first WSET wine course delivered in Angola
- 14 participants achieved their certification, with two achieving a score of 97%

Learn more about the project [here](#).



SOGRAPE  
WINE  
ACADEMY



Click [here](#) to watch the video:

# Women in Wine: Innovation & leadership scholarships

Collaborators: [Sonal Holland Wine Academy](#) Area: India

## Purpose

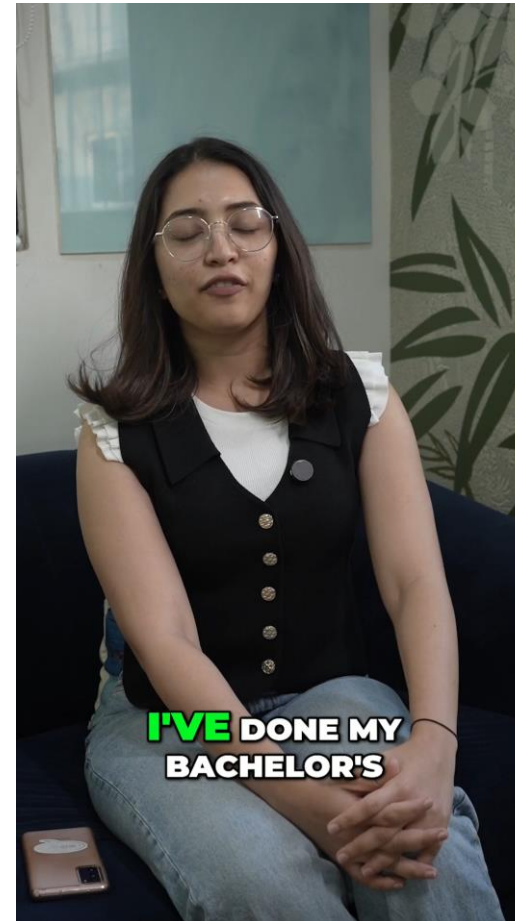
- The scholarship programme provides educational opportunities and support to women who work in the Indian wine industry, or who aspire to do so, to help increase industry diversity.

## Programme

- The programme combined WSET wine qualifications with mentorship opportunities to support women's professional development in the industry.

## Impact

- 15 women successfully completed WSET Level 2 Award in Wines
- 5 top performers progressed to WSET Level 3 Award in Wines
- The programme helped raise awareness of gender disparity in the Indian wine industry and created a platform for women to grow professionally and personally



Click [here](#) to watch the video

Learn more about the project [here](#).

# The Solomon Islands Hospitality & Tourism

**Collaborators:** Sullivans wholesalers, Wine Education Co.

## Purpose

- This project aims to enhance skills in the Solomon Islands' tourism and hospitality sectors by offering courses in Honiara. It supports the growing workforce, helping participants enter or advance in the industry through access to wine education.

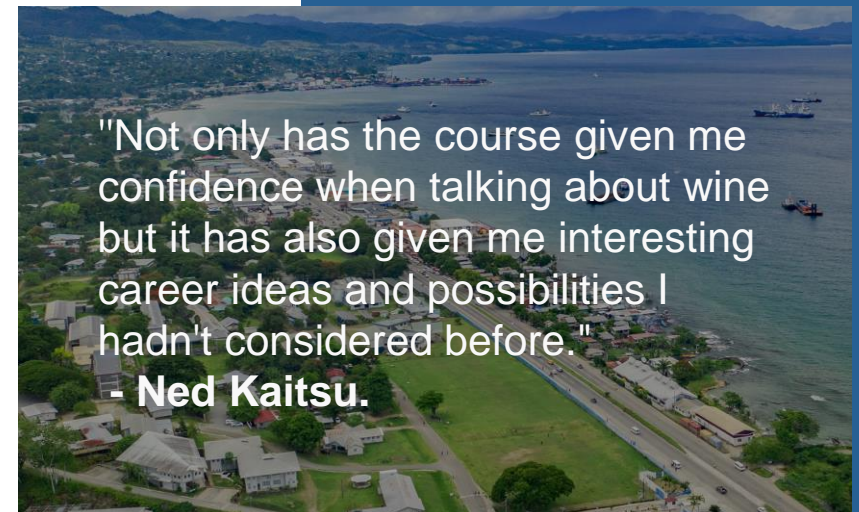
## Programme

- The course followed a hybrid format, with two days of live virtual teaching and in-person guided tastings and additional study support.

## Impact

- 23 students undertook the course and sat the WSET Level 1 Award in Wines exam.
- The project provided structured, professional wine education for the first time, building participants' confidence, communication and service skills.
- Graduates reported a greater understanding of wine styles and production and increased confidence when serving or selling wine to customers.

Learn more about the project [here](#).





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# **4 Governance**

# Governance – our vision

Our corporate governance structure is designed to ensure transparency, accountability, and integrity in all our operations. We're committed to robust risk management and internal controls to safeguard our stakeholders' interests and maintain the highest standards of WSET qualifications.

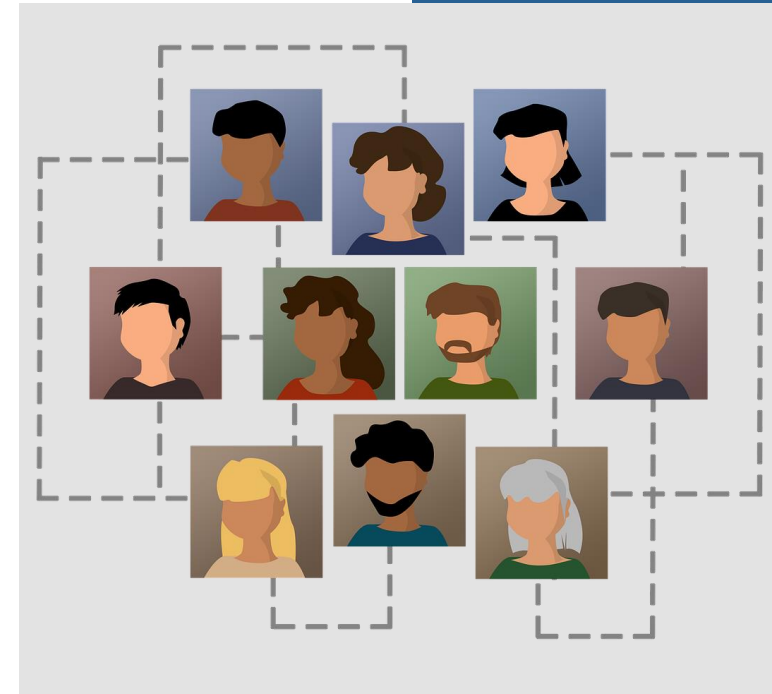
We aim to mitigate risks, enhance decision-making processes, and foster a culture of ethical behaviour and compliance throughout the organisation.



# WSET governance structure

## Board independence & diversity

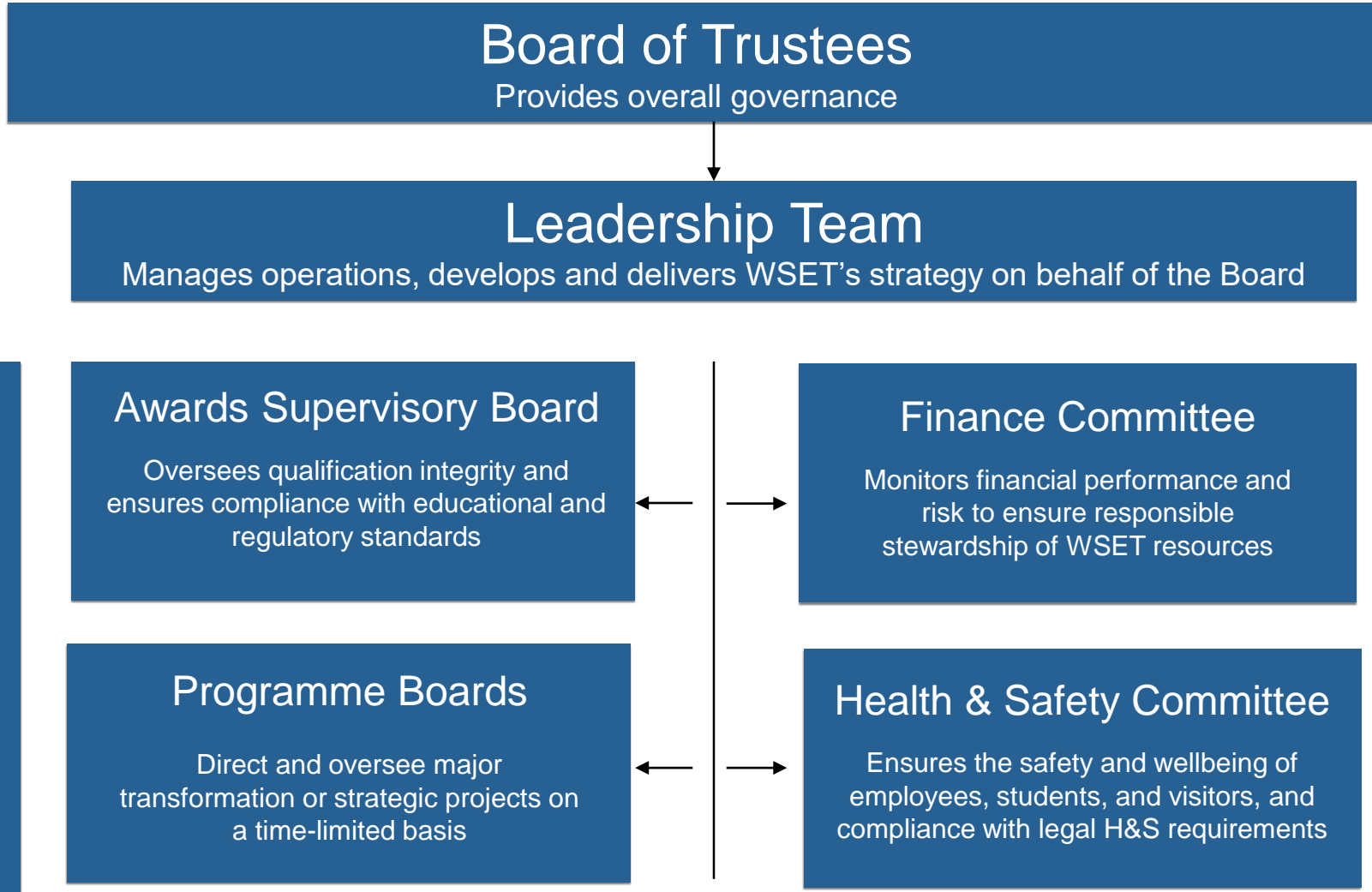
- The composition of the Board of Trustees is bound by the Articles of Association. Trustees are appointed as representatives of four industry bodies:
  - Vintners' Company
  - WSTA (Wine and Spirits Trade Association)
  - Worshipful Company of Distillers
  - Institute of Masters of Wine
- All Trustees are independent from daily operations, maintaining the independence of the Board. There is a diverse composition in terms of gender (four female: four male), experience, and skills.



## CEO and Chair of the Board

- WSET maintains separate roles for the CEO and Chair of the Board to enhance accountability, prevent conflicts of interest, maintain balance of power, and improve corporate governance.

# WSET governance structure

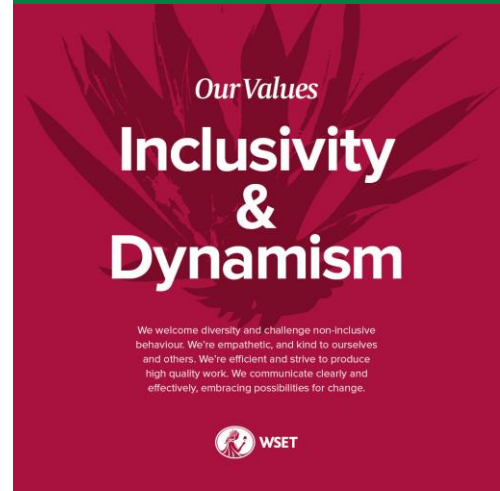


# Ethical Conduct & Integrity

Our **Employee Handbook** contains comprehensive policies and procedures, available for all team members to view and download on our MyWSET platform. These policies align with WSET values and behaviours.

Key policies include:

- **Code of Conduct:** outlines ethical standards and expectations for behaviour.
- **Conflict of Interest Policy:** ensures that all potential conflicts are disclosed and managed appropriately.
- **Anti-bribery Policy:** sets out measures to prevent corruption and bribery, ensuring ethical business practices.
- **Whistleblowing Policy:** provides a safe channel for reporting unethical behavior or violations.
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy:** promotes a diverse and inclusive workplace, ensuring equal opportunities for all employees.



# Quality Assurance and Compliance

## WSET Governance Team

The WSET Governance team is responsible for overseeing quality assurance and compliance. This includes tracking and monitoring compliance issues to ensure that course providers deliver our qualifications in line with WSET standards. We also ensure compliance with Ofqual regulations and GDPR requirements.

To achieve this, WSET has implemented an effective governance and compliance monitoring system. This system includes:

- Regular visits, audits and reviews of course provider operations
- Tracking and monitoring of compliance issues
- Quality assurance processes to uphold the integrity of our qualifications
- Complaints and Appeals Policy designed to address concerns promptly and fairly and provide a transparent process for resolving disputes.



# Governance – our progress

## Actions & outcomes FY25

Action	Description	Outcome
<b>1. Data &amp; technology</b>	Provide data literacy/training to employees.	Ongoing training provided to employees
<b>2. Governance &amp; integrity</b>	Develop and implement guidelines for use of AI.	Formal guidelines were introduced, along with AI training
<b>3. Governance &amp; integrity</b>	Develop our internal audit capability, with one internal audit carried out by the governance team	Internal audit on purchasing processes was carried out, identifying improvements to be implemented in FY26
<b>4. Fairness in compensation</b>	Carry out a review of benefits provided to international employees	Review was completed and adjustments implemented
<b>5. Financial oversight</b>	Develop finance, including use of external co-opted members with appropriate skill set.	Andrew Paynter, a former PwC partner, was recruited as a trustee (joining in Nov 25) and will lead finance sub-committee going forward
<b>6. Risk management</b>	Review our approach to risk rating our course providers to ensure appropriate compliance activity	Initial work has been carried out, but due to resource constraints this action will be completed in FY26
<b>7. Health &amp; safety</b>	Develop health & safety committee to embed a health and safety mindset throughout the organisation	The health & safety committee was re-established with representatives from most relevant teams



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# **5 What's next?**

# Our goals for FY26



## Environmental

- **Continue to reduce our carbon footprint** with a 5% YoY target
- **Reduce scope 1-3 emissions:** set target for reduction by 2030 (overall goal of net zero status by 2050)
- **Grow environmental awareness** internally and externally via workshops, webinars and activities
- **Explore new educational options** to further support sustainability education in the drinks industry.



## Social

- **Continue to strengthen employee engagement,** internal communications and inclusion of international teams
- **Expand access to drinks education** by increasing the number of individuals we support
- **Grow regional collaborations** that target community needs
- **Strengthen and scale existing social impact initiatives** using feedback and learning



## Governance

- **Strengthen governance oversight,** inc. reviewing Awards Supervisory Board
- **Enhance assurance and risk management** inc. internal audits and risk register review
- **Advance organisational safety and compliance**
- **Enhance data governance and responsible AI use** including consolidating data into a single storage environment



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