

## ANFAO GENERAL MEETING 2022:

### The association works toward feminine empowerment and innovation in the eyewear industry

Pieve di Cadore, 15 December 2022 – Several key projects the association is currently working on were presented at the ANFAO [Italian Optical Goods Manufacturers' Association] annual general meeting, held at the Eyewear Museum of Pieve di Cadore. These include the **Project for Leadership Empowerment of Women in Optics** on how to support women in the eyewear industry on their journey toward leadership roles in Italy and internationally, and the **Innovation and Startup Project**.

The eyewear industry has historically experienced high levels of female occupation (60%) which, however, is not sufficiently reflected in the presence of women in managerial roles (Female Managers 22%).

Gender equality is a driver of economic growth and development. Supporting women in leadership positions as part of integrating the principles of gender equality and respect for diversity is essential to bringing about an actual paradigm shift.

ANFAO has decided to make an active contribution in support of women in the eyewear industry on their **journey toward leadership** in Italy and at a global level by working alongside local and international associations to build awareness, promote an inclusive corporate culture, encourage continuing education and foster networking.

This will be achieved through the creation of an **Observatory on gender equality in leadership in the eyewear industry** that will be launched during MIDO 2023. The Observatory will lay out the guidelines for a pilot project to promote feminine empowerment through education and an inclusive corporate culture.

Thanks to the Innovation and Startup project, the association is taking steps to boost the level of innovation at industry companies. Its activities will be based on co-innovation projects designed to support organizations in creating value through convergence, collaboration and co-creation that will also mitigate the risks and costs tied to innovative experimentation. The program is designed to increase the level of innovation at industry businesses by enabling, through collaboration and contamination, a path toward development of new technologies in tandem with Startups, innovative SMEs and Spinoffs. This project is also set to kick off at the beginning of 2023.

*"In such complex times, it is crucial that the association work closely with its members to promote concrete initiatives that prepare companies to deal with market challenges as well as opportunities that arise,"* commented ANFAO President Giovanni Vitaloni. *"Feminine empowerment and innovation are pivotal to what we all refer to these days as sustainable development. This is why we really pushed for the two projects we presented at the meeting today, in which we firmly believe. They are still in the design stage but will soon become operational and all of our member companies will be able to benefit from them,"* he concluded.

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