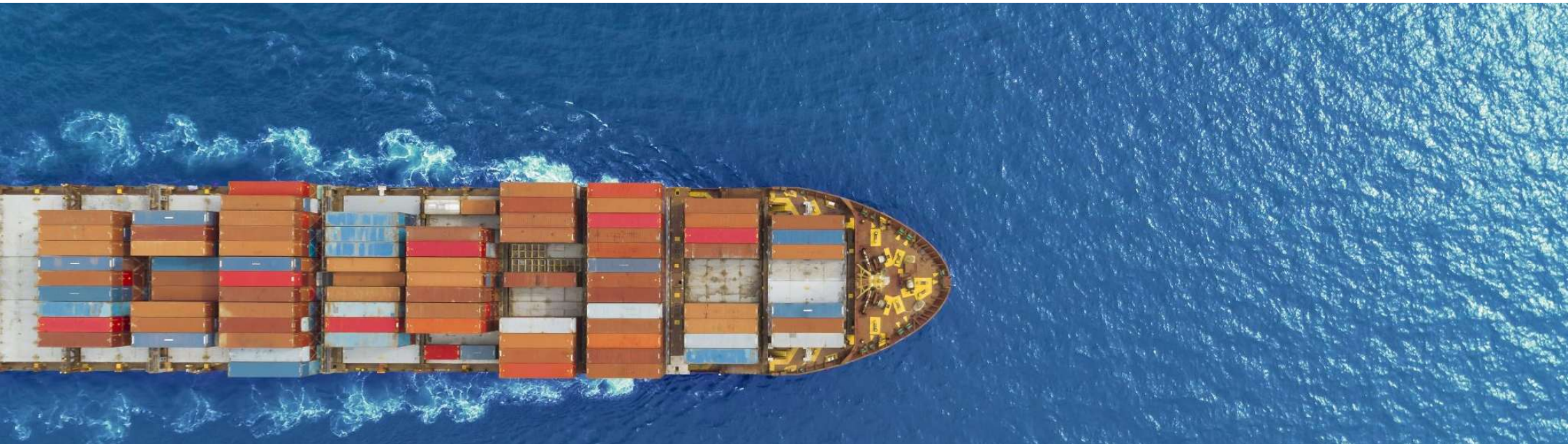




Navigating Inclusive Workplace Behavior & Leadership

Gender & Diversity Policies and Practices in the Dutch Harbor Sector

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Port of Rotterdam Industrial Complex: Workforce Challenges & Opportunities

Key Challenges

- Labor shortages; Ageing workforce
- Need for innovation to support energy transition

DEI as a Strategic Priority

- Current workforce: mostly male, middle-aged, white
- Difficulty attracting and retaining underrepresented talent

Research & Method

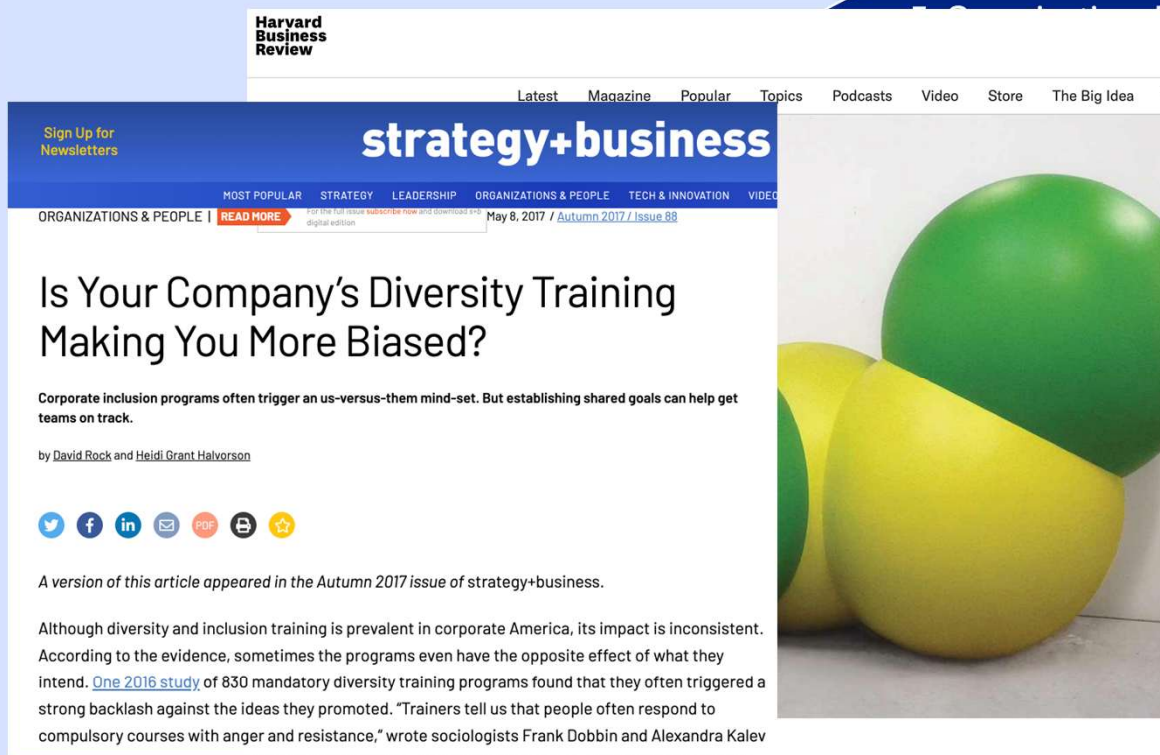
- Applied research: TNO; Deltalinqs; Human Capital Coalition Energy Transition; Port of Rotterdam
- Method: Mixed – Desk, Interviews, Questionnaire

Aim

- Data-driven method to assess and improve Inclusive Workplace Culture

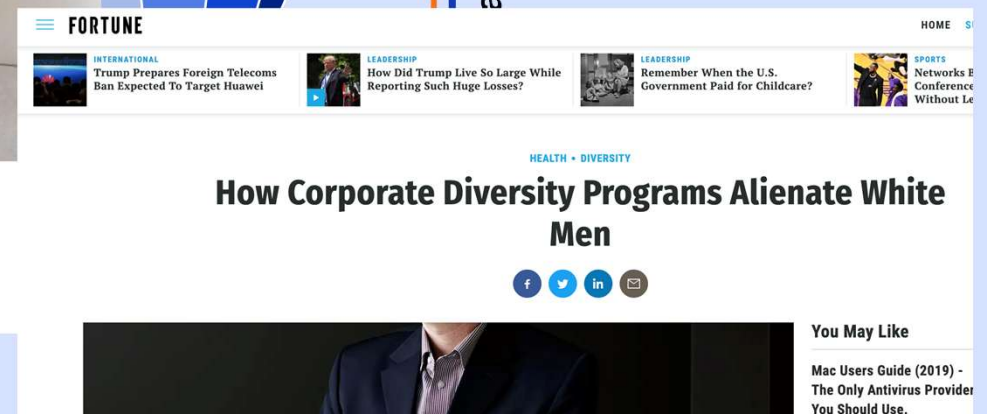
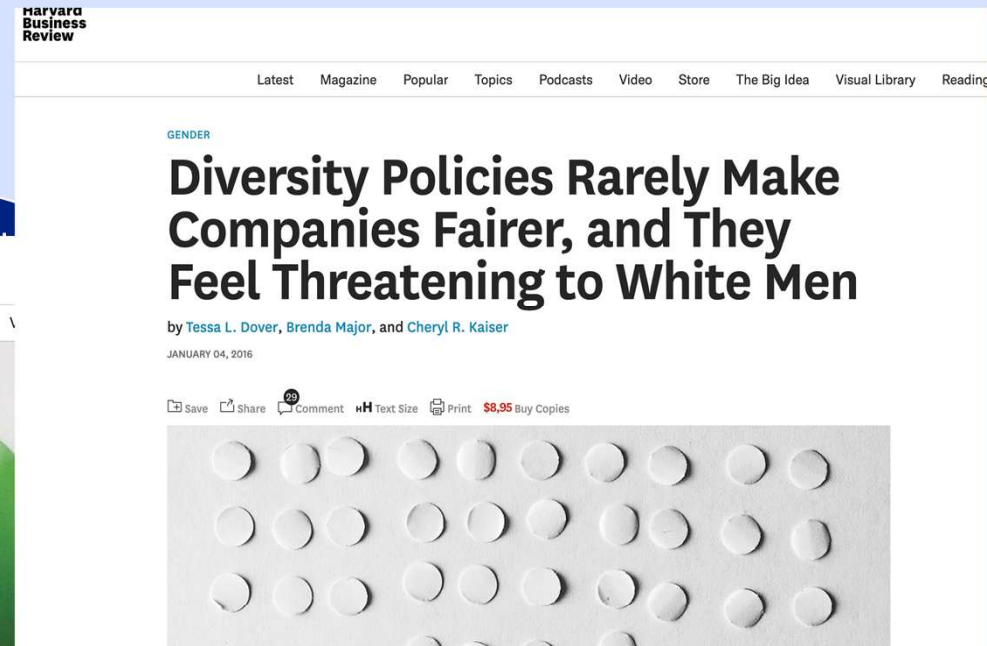


Why DE&I policies often fail



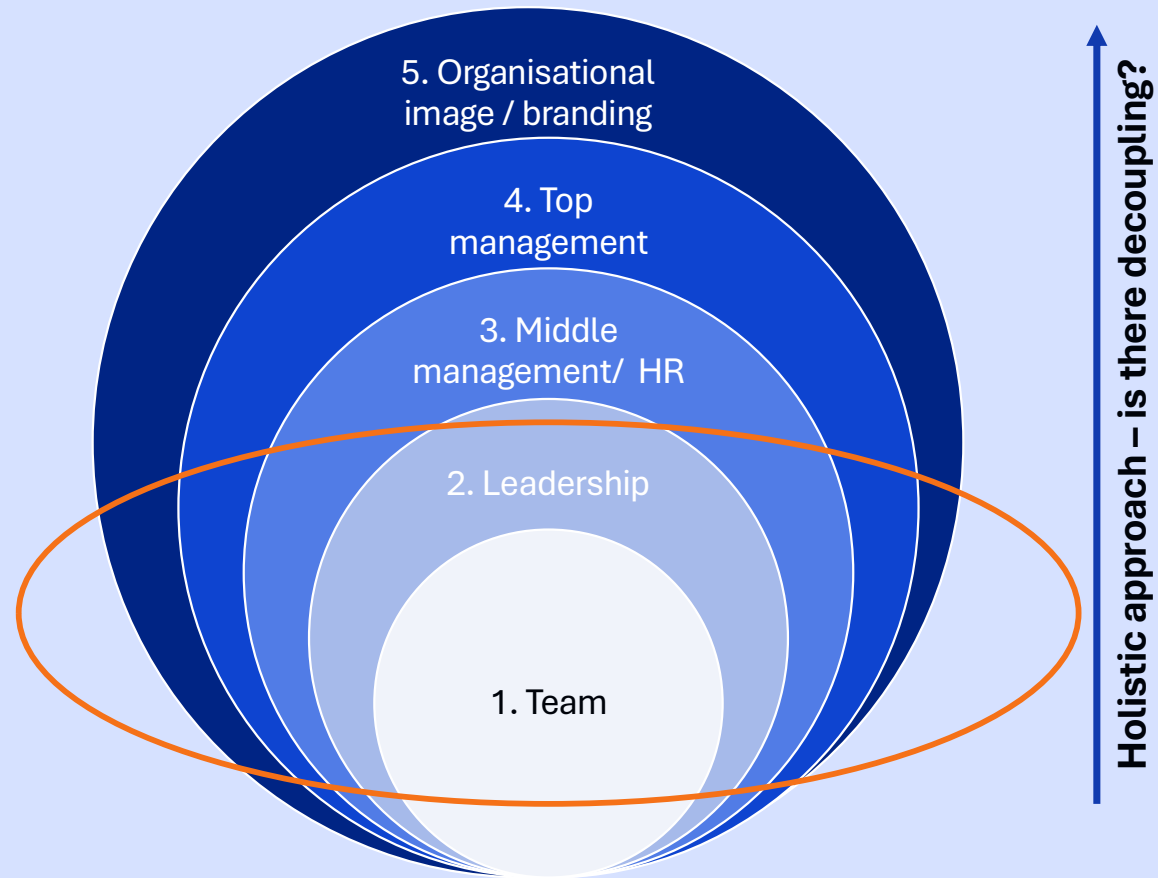
Why Diversity Programs Fail

by Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev



Shore et al. (2018). Inclusive workplaces: A review and model;
Bromley & Powell (2012). From smoke and mirrors to walking the talk: Decoupling in the contemporary world.

Why DE&I policies often fail



Inclusion as everyday workplace behavior

Inclusion

Employees experience inclusion when their needs for **belongingness** and **uniqueness** are satisfied and **equity** in decision-making and fair opportunities are felt
(e.g., Shore et al., 2011)

Micro inclusions

(Muragishi et al., 2024)

Positive social interactions - especially with dominant group members - validate belonging, acceptance and psychological safety (Dutton & Ragins, 2007)

Micro exclusions

(Sue et al., 2007)

Everyday interactions that send exclusionary/denigrating messages to exclude coworkers (based on their group membership) (Smith et al., 2022)

Inclusive leadership

(Randel et al., 2018)

Leader behaviors focused on facilitating feeling part of the team (belonging) and retaining a sense of individuality (uniqueness) while contributing to common team goals

Research Questions

Culture diagnosis at nine companies in the Rotterdam Harbor.

RQ1: To what extent do employees see and practice inclusive (leadership) behaviors at the workplace?

- How does that differ from an employee-leader, gender and cultural perspective?

RQ2: What are the attitudes and resistance towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy and initiatives in the Harbor sector?

Methodological approach



STEP 1: Desk research: Review facts & figures current workforce, introductory meetings



STEP 2: Interviews: in-depth interviews at different levels of the organization

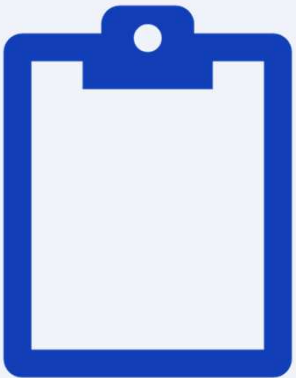


STEP 3: Survey: Collected survey data from employees and team leaders



STEP 4: Factsheet & dialogue: Together with the project team we reflected on outcomes and actions for DEI

Survey: Culture Scan Inclusion TNO



- Online survey
- Measures **behavior** on the work floor:
 - Inclusive coworker behavior
(Moelijker, Burmeister & Hewett, in prep; Muragishi et al., 2024)
 - Inclusive leadership behavior
(Carmeli et al., 2020; Randel et al., 2018)
 - Exclusive behavior (micro-exclusions, undesirable behavior)
(Sue et al., 2007; Netherlands Working Conditions Survey, 2024)
- Attitudes and behavior towards DE&I policy and practice
(Bokern et al., 2026; Jansen et al., 2024)

Constructs

Uniqueness

Belonging

Equity / fairness

Appreciating
differences

Creating unity

Stimulating equal
opportunities

Participative
decision-making

1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = regularly; 5 = very often

Method – sample characteristics in low-diversity companies

Study 1: 3 companies

N=385, average response rate: 27%



- Employees (67,8%)
Managers/team leads (32,2%)



- Men (64,7%)
Women (34,3%)
Undisclosed (1%)



- Dutch cultural background (76,9%)
Non-Dutch cultural background (14,8%)



- White collar (72,4%)
Blue collar (27,6%)



- N = 14 interviews

Study 2: 6 companies

N=501, average response rate: 30%

- Employees (64,5%)
Managers/team leads (35,5%)

- Men (78%)
Women (20,4%)
Undisclosed (1,6%)

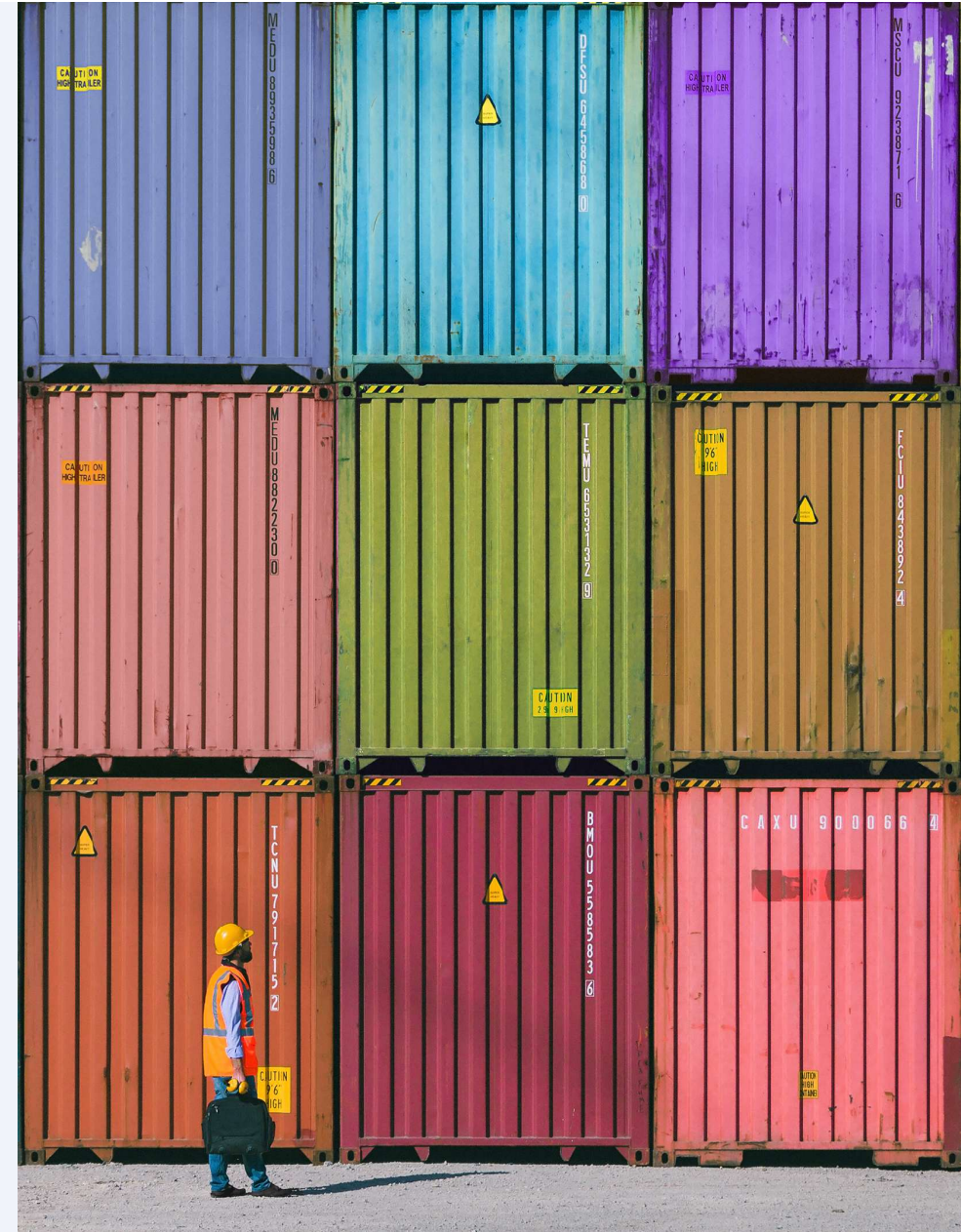
- Dutch cultural background (80%)
Non-Dutch cultural background (20%)

- White collar (57,1%)
Blue collar (42,9%)

- N = 17 interviews

RQ1: To what extent do employees see and practice inclusive (leadership) behaviors at the workplace?

How does that differ from a leader-follower, gender and cultural perspective?



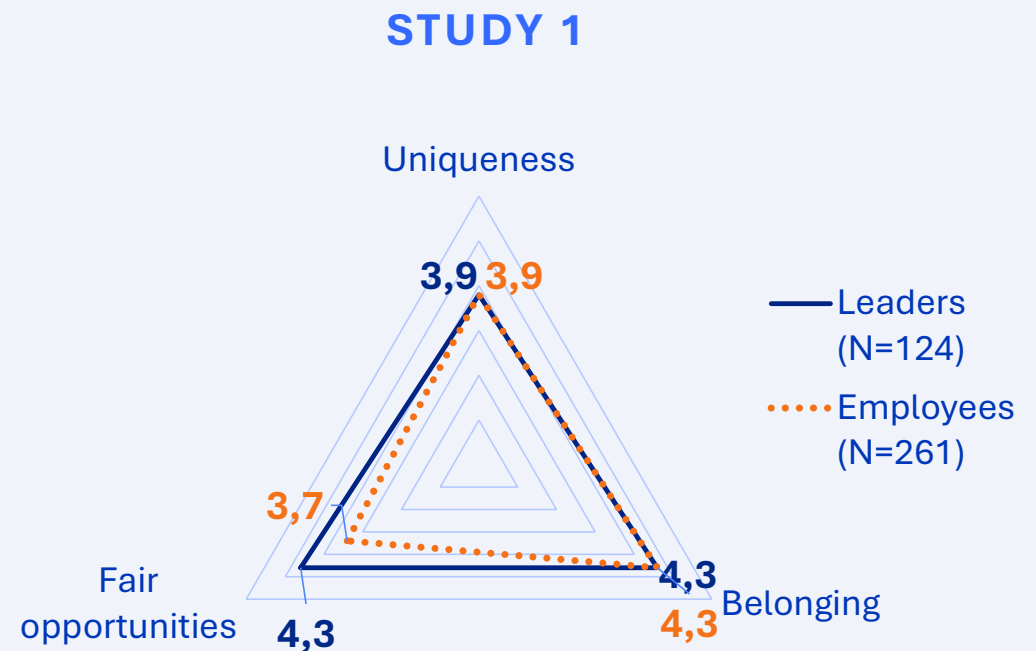
Results

How often do you see inclusive co-worker behavior?

- Inclusive behavior is reportedly happening **regularly**
- High **belonging** scores suggest cohesive workplaces



Leader-employee gap for **fair opportunities**



→ Similar patterns in Study 2

1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = regularly; 5 = very often

Results

Employees – subgroup analyses

Inclusive for whom?

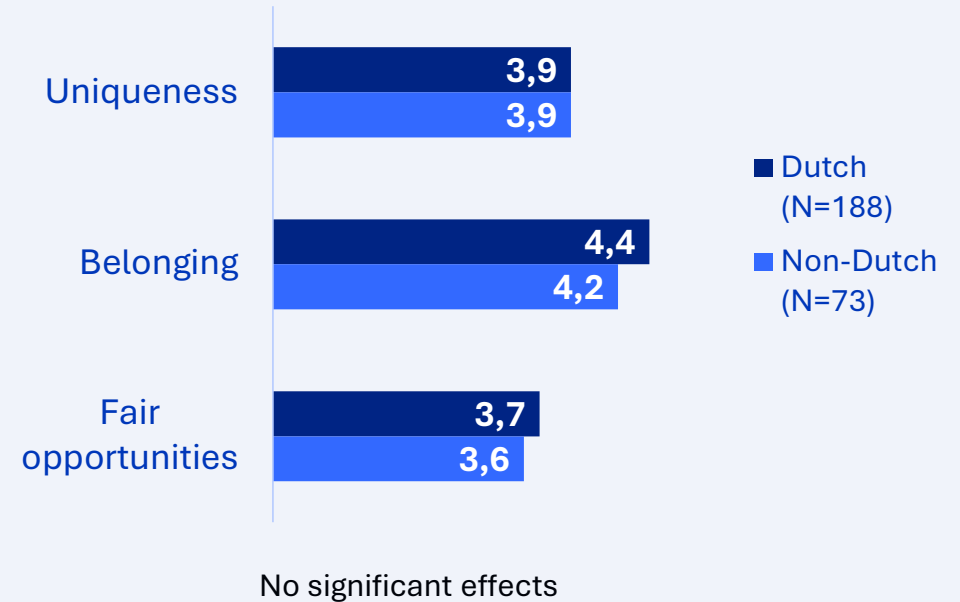
NB: No significant differences between gender cultural background groups



Gender



Cultural background



→ Similar patterns in Study 2

1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = regularly; 5 = very often

Results

Employees – subgroup analyses

Inclusive for whom? Deep-dive

- Office locations often more diverse than operations
 - White collar: 53% women; 28% non-Dutch
 - Blue collar: 9% women; 27% non-Dutch



Lower inclusion for blue collar (operation) workers compared to white collar (office) workers



No gender differences among white collar workers

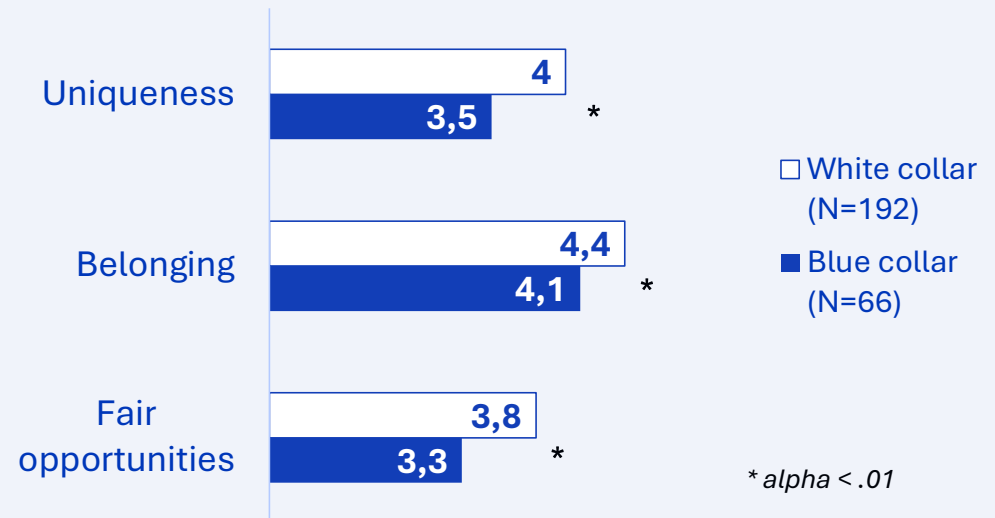
➤ NB: Gender difference testing not possible among blue collar workers, due to low N (n = 6 women)



No effects for cultural background

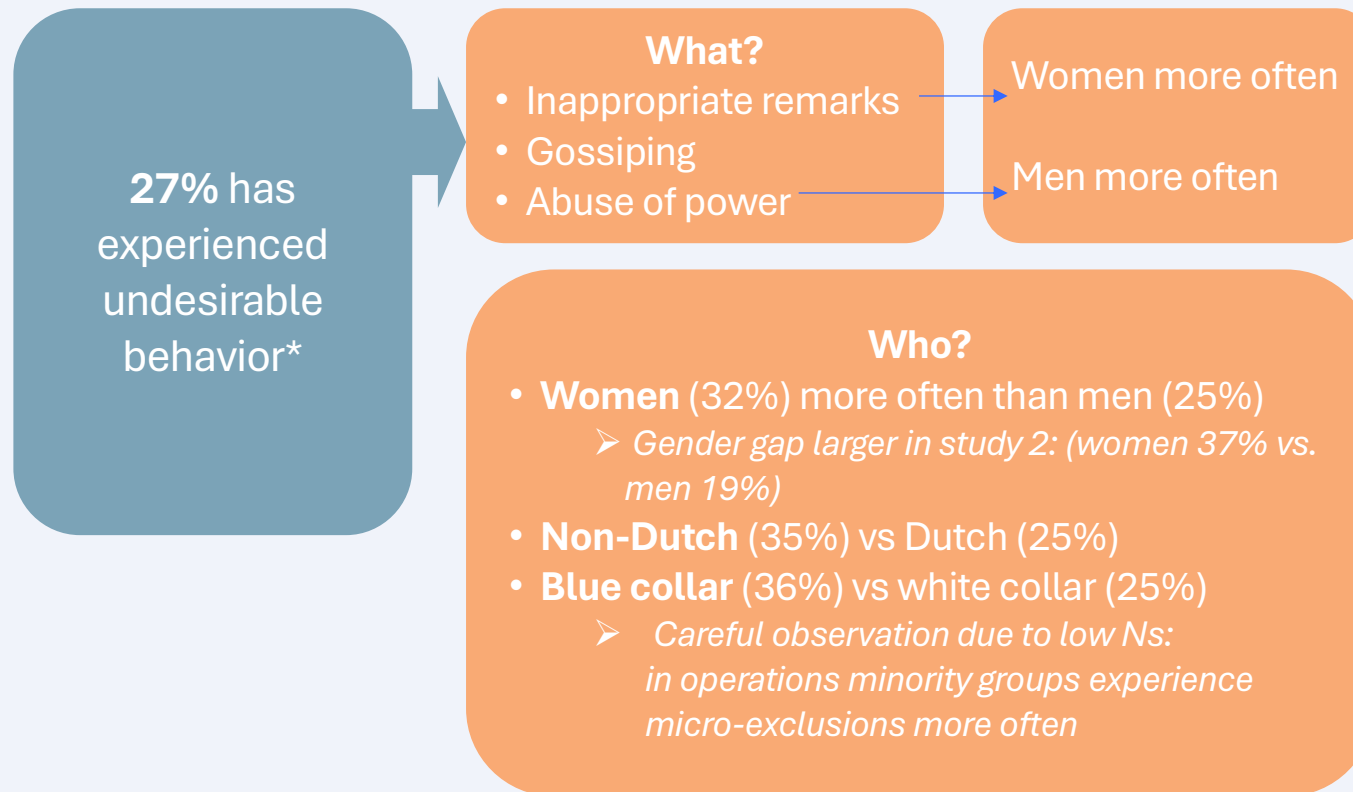
→ Similar patterns in Study 2

Work environment



1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = regularly; 5 = very often

Paradox: high inclusion co-exists with regular micro-exclusions



*compared to 17% Dutch average (Netherlands Working Conditions Survey, 2024)

Results

Inclusive leadership: leader-employee gap



Leaders overestimate their inclusive leadership behavior compared to employees

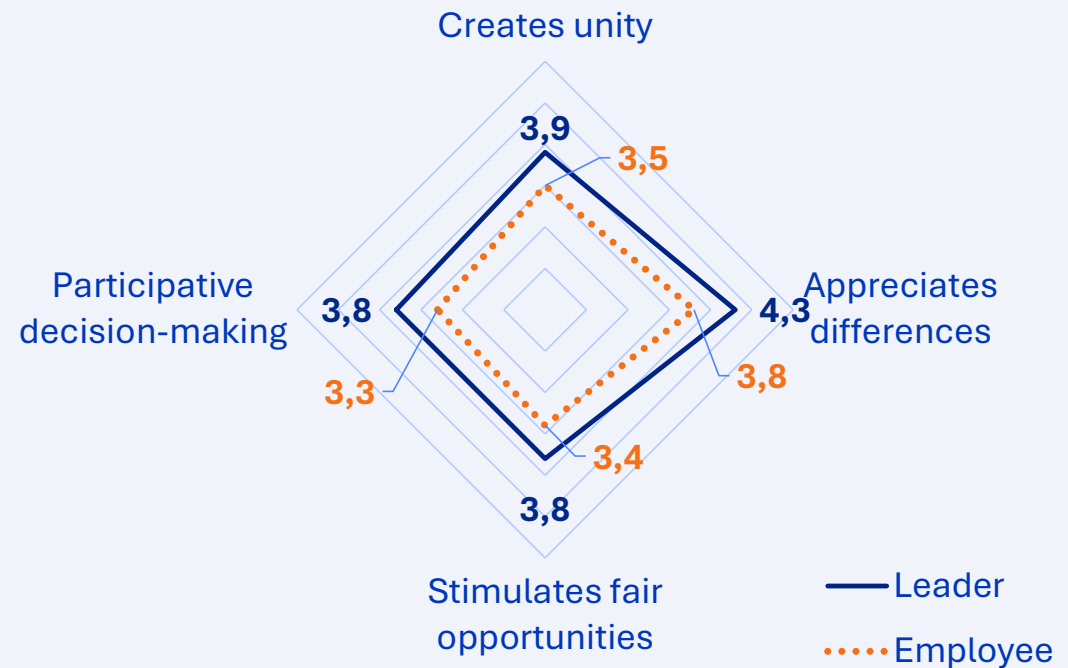


No effects for gender



No effects for cultural background

STUDY 1



1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = regularly; 5 = very often

Results

Employees – subgroup analyses

Inclusive leadership for whom: deep-dive



Inclusive leadership significantly lower among blue compared to white collar workers



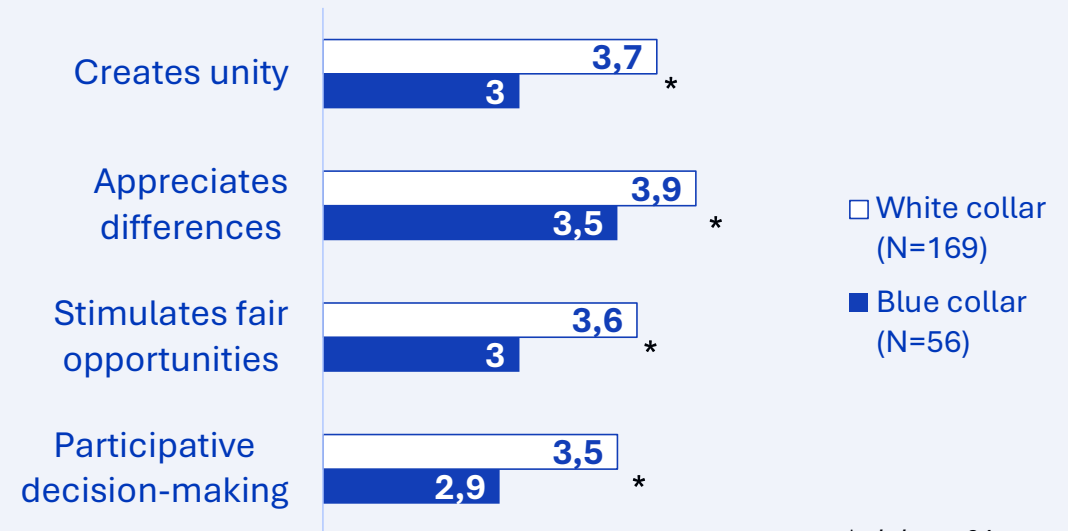
Among white collar (office) workers no significant gender differences

➤ NB: Gender difference testing not possible among blue collar (operations) workers, due to low N (n = 6 women)



No significant differences for cultural background for white nor blue collar workers

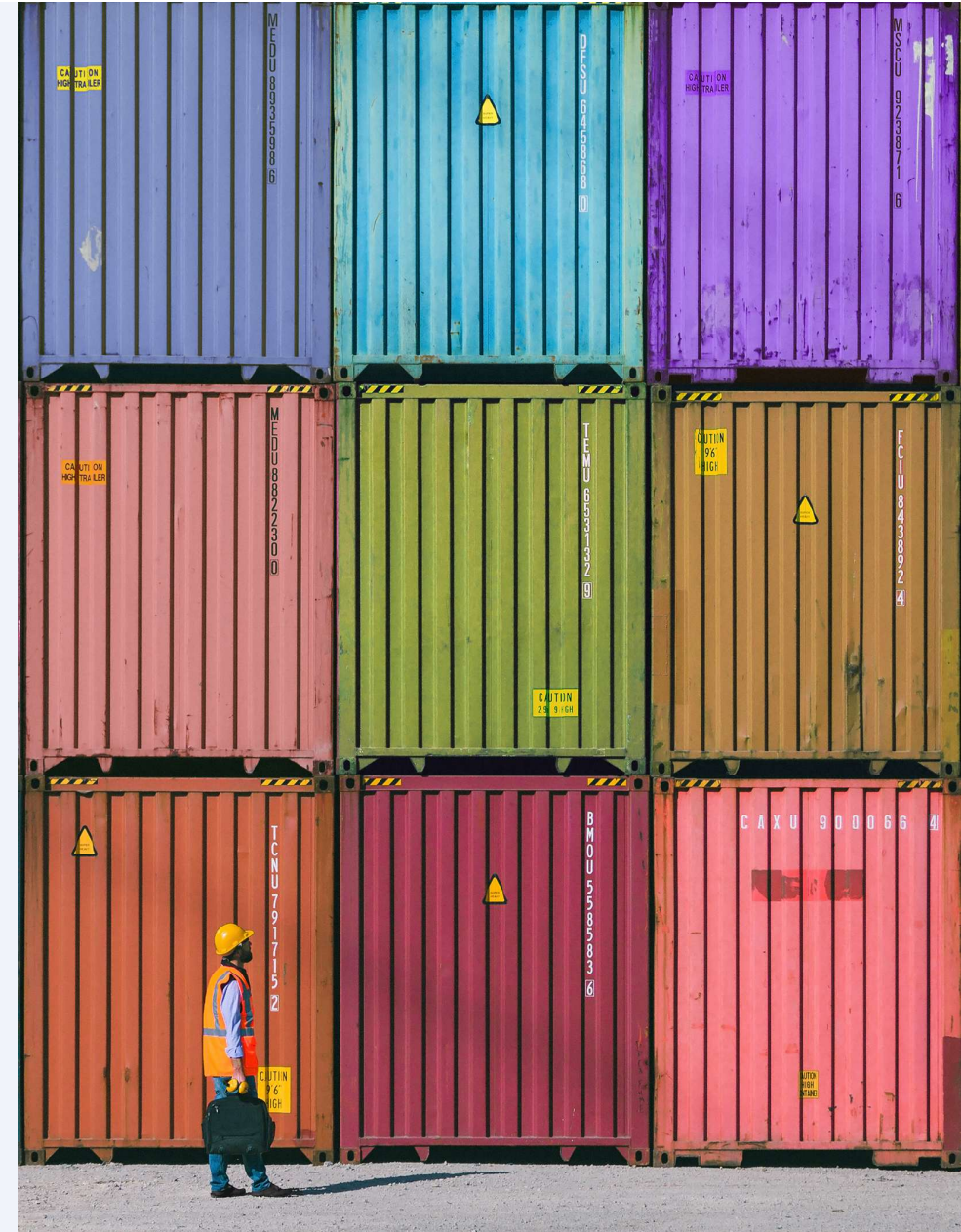
Work environment



* $\alpha < .01$

1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = regularly; 5 = very often

RQ2: What are the attitudes and resistance towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy and initiatives in the Harbor sector?



Decoupling? Shades of support for DE&I actions

Journal of Applied Social Psychology

ORIGINAL ARTICLE | Open Access |

Shades of support: An empirical assessment of D&I policy support in organizations

[Wiebren S. Jansen](#) [Jojanneke van der Toorn](#), [Yonn N. A. Bokern](#), [Naomi Ellemers](#)

First published: 15 February 2024 |

advances.in/psychology | January 13, 2026
Doi: 10.56296/aip00050
ISSN: 2976-937X

RESEARCH ARTICLE | SPECIAL ISSUE: PSYCHOLOGY OF PUSHBACK

Voices behind walking the talk: Quantified qualitative insights on D&I policy support reasoning

Yonn N. A. Bokern^{*}, Jojanneke van der Toorn^{1,2}, & Naomi Ellemers¹

	I <u>support</u> DEI actions	I <u>know</u> about DEI actions	I <u>participate</u> in DEI actions
	Attitude	Knowledge	Behaviour
1. Ambivalents	Moderately positive	Average	Passive (-/+)
2. Reluctants	Negative	High	Moderately active (+)
3 Champions	Positive	High	Pro-active (++)
4. Bystanders	Positive	Low	Inactive (-)
5. Opponents	Negative	Low	Inactive (- -)

Most employees support DEI, but active engagement remains limited

Champions:

Non-Dutch (23%) > Dutch (9%)

Women (16%) > Men (11%)

White collars (15%) > Blue collars (13%)

Bystanders:

Dutch (25%) > Non-Dutch (14%)

Reluctants:

Leaders (27%) > Employees (16%)

Men (24%) > Women (12%)

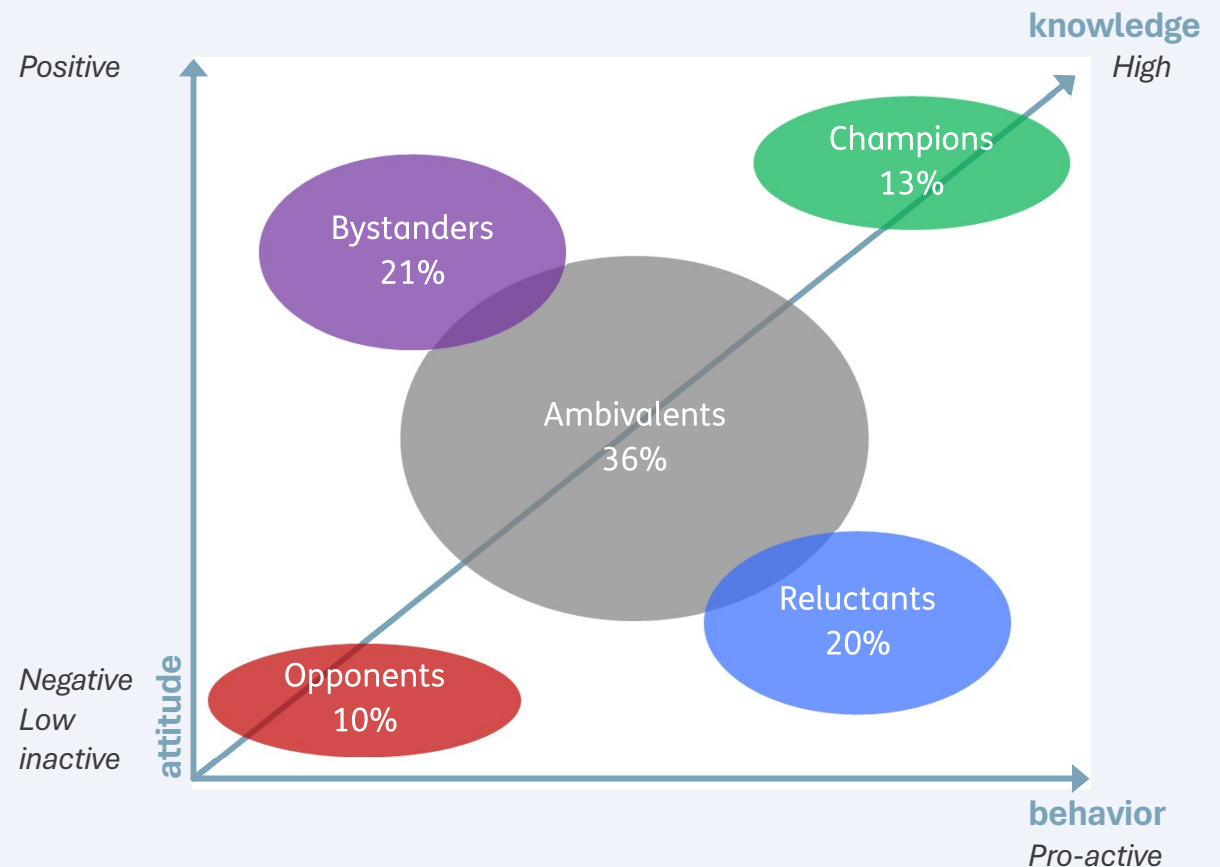
Blue collars (20%) > White collars (15%)

Opponents :

Men (15%) > Women (4%)

Dutch (13%) > Non-Dutch (5%)

Blue collars (11%) > White collars (9%)



Summary

Q1: Inclusive coworker & leadership behaviors

- Inclusive coworker behavior high, particularly belonging
 - White vs blue collar gap: Inclusive behaviors more prevalent at office compared to operation
- High micro-inclusions coincide with high micro-exclusions
 - Remarks / jokes / and gossip as social glue for majority, but not minority members (e.g., Martinescu et al., 2021)
- Leader-employee gap on all inclusive leadership behaviors;
 - Largest gaps on fair opportunities and participative decision-making

Q2: Attitudes & behaviors towards DEI actions

- Positive but passive; large group '*ambivalents*' who are moderately positive but don't know how...
- High-status group members (leaders, men) more often '*reluctant*'
- Group '*opponents*' is small but vocal (interview data)
- Inclusive leadership is key to resolve decoupling in DEI policy-practice or attitude-behavior gaps (e.g., Nishii et al., 2022)

Take-aways

- Mixed-method action research is intervention in itself
- Data is diagnosis: descriptive insights matter to set the stage
- One size does not fit all: context matters
 - Sub-cultures within companies (blue vs white) & group differences can surface after deep dive
 - Advised to do multi-level analysis on organizational level
- Social safety standards should become "golden" standard just as physical safety in raw industry

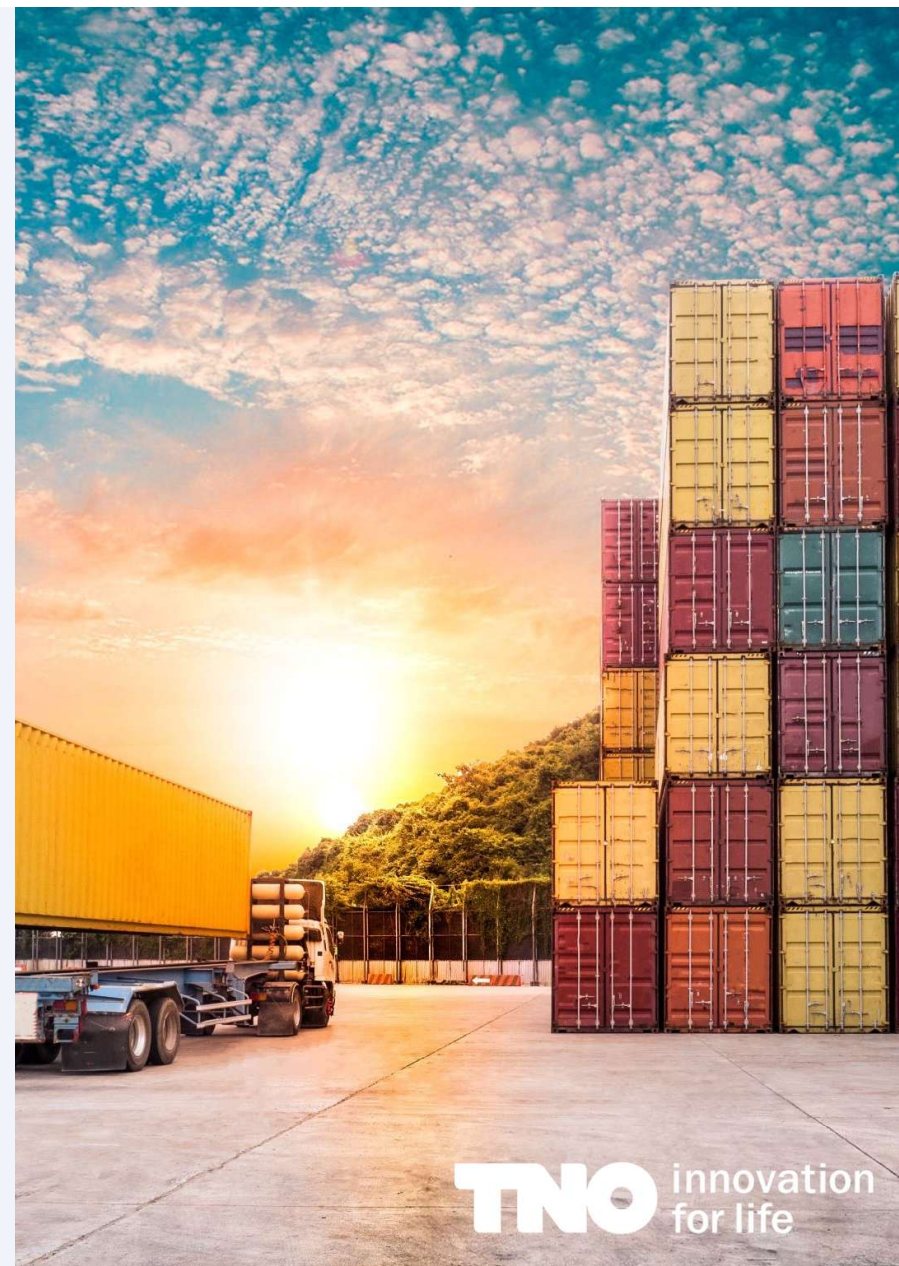
Next steps..

- Feedback sessions with companies
- Advise them on (micro-)interventions

**Additional idea's for RQ's and analyses to do?
Collaborate with us!**



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TNO innovation
for life

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