

## **ABSTRACT**

*Promoting gender diversity at the board level has become an integral part of strengthening corporate governance in many companies. Equally, the expertise of the audit committee plays a critical role in enhancing the quality of oversight and corporate transparency. This study aims to examine the influence of board gender diversity (BGD) and audit committee expertise (ACEX) on profitability, as measured by return on assets (ROA), with ESG disclosure acting as a mediating variable. The sample consists of 117 manufacturing and energy firms across ASEAN-5 countries from 2021 to 2023, selected using purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using a quantitative approach with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. The findings reveal that BGD has a positive and significant effect on both ESG disclosure and ROA. In contrast, ACEX negatively affects ESG disclosure and has no significant direct effect on ROA. ESG disclosure positively influences ROA and mediates the relationships between BGD and ACEX on profitability, with a positive direction for BGD and a negative one for ACEX. These results emphasize the strategic importance of gender-diverse boards in promoting ESG transparency and improving financial performance in the ASEAN-5..*

*Keywords: board gender diversity, audit committee expertise, ESG, return on assets, ASEAN-5*