



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2022–2025

Human Resources Division, July 2022





Introduction

The objective is to focus on what aligns with our values, will have meaningful impact for staff and line managers, and will help the Department to further develop our systems, policies and practices to embed diversity and inclusion.

In September 2021, upon taking up my role as Secretary General, I made a commitment to continue our Department's positive work on issues relating to Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI); to build on the significant progress already achieved, while recognising that more actions are required on our journey towards an increasingly diverse and inclusive Department.

This Action Plan builds on the commitments contained in the GEDI Policy published in February 2022 and reflects extensive engagement over a number of months, including through a survey by the Irish Centre for Diversity, focus groups and engagement on other critical issues, including blended working. It also builds on previous Action Plans; most notably the 2018 Equality and Diversity Action Plan, 2021 Diversity through Recruitment Action Plan and 2021 Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, all of which have contributed significantly to achieving progress in this area.

Targets, outcomes, and actions have been developed by Human Resources Division in consultation with key stakeholders across the Department, including the Management Board Sub-Committee on Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI Sub-Committee), Strategy Governance and Change Unit (SGCU), and members of the Management Board, as well as engagement with external organisations.

In identifying the desired targets, outcomes and actions, we have sought to be ambitious, but realistic. The objective is to focus on alignment with our values; to deliver meaningful impact for staff and line managers; and to further develop systems, policies and practices to embed diversity and inclusion. The next version of the HR Strategy, to be launched at the end of 2022, will integrate this Action Plan while also allowing for other perspectives on these important issues, taking into account the complexity of an organisation spread over more than 100 locations. The Action Plan also provides an opportunity to review our compliance with key equality and human rights obligations. Building on the foundations in place, and with the ultimate goal of delivering better services for government and citizens, we are aiming for a considerable leap forward in:

- i. Staff experience of fairness and belonging.
- ii. Enhanced gender equality.
- iii. Effective talent management at all grades and in all locations.
- iv. Becoming a Department that better reflects the diversity of modern Ireland and that provides opportunities for all.

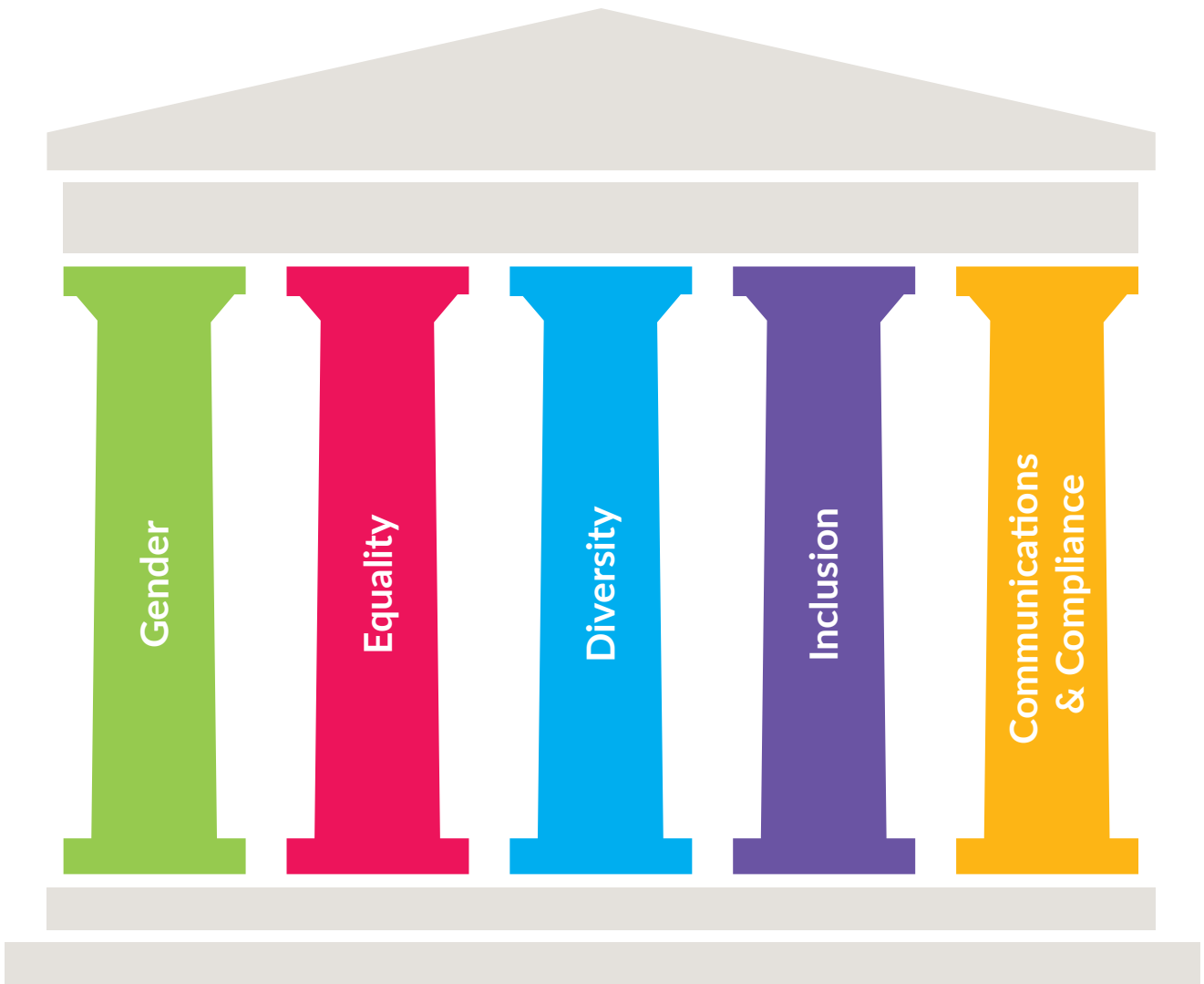
Every one of us has a role to play in achieving these goals. HR will take a leadership role in the implementation of this Action Plan, working with SGCU and the GEDI Sub-Committee, and with Corporate Services on the accessibility of our properties. However, real progress will be achieved through the collective participation of all staff. You might participate by joining one of our voluntary staff-led Working Groups on GEDI, contributing to your teams in new and more inclusive ways or highlighting examples of how our diversity contributes to better outcomes for our citizens and government via the recently launched GEDI newsletter.

Consultation and planning is important, but now is the time to move to sustained, collective action. Thank you to everyone for your work to date, and I ask for your continued efforts into the future.

Joe Hackett
Secretary General



Action Plan





1: Gender



Why is this important?

Improved gender equality:

- » Ensures a diversity of perspectives and improved decision-making.
- » Ensures women have optimum opportunities to contribute their skills and talents.
- » Reflects the promotion of gender equality as a core value of Ireland's Foreign Policy and should underpin internal policies.



What do we want to achieve?

- » DFA to be recognised as a leader and model for good practice on gender equality across the Civil and Public Service.
- » Improved gender balance across all levels of the Department.
- » DFA ensures that equal opportunities are open to all genders.
- » Identify and remove barriers to women's full and equal career progression.
- » Enhanced experience for women in the workplace, including on social, health and wellbeing issues.
- » Continued support for transgender colleagues.



Targets

- » Reduction of Gender Pay Gap from 16% to below 10% by 2025.
- » A gender balanced Management Board by 2025.
- » At least 45% women at Assistant Secretary and above by 2025.
- » Gender balance at Counsellor & equivalent by 2025.
- » Gender balance at First Secretary & equivalent by 2025.
- » At least 45% women serving as Heads of Mission, at all levels including Assistant Secretary and above, by 2025.
- » Regular reviews of new policies to measure potential impacts from a gender perspective.

Actions	Timeline	Owner
Work with other Departments, Public Service and Private Sector organisations in identifying best practice in the promotion of gender equality. Communicate reviews of best practice via GEDI newsletter.	Ongoing	HR Workforce Planning
Monitor gender targets for assignments at HQ & abroad.	Ongoing and report annually	HR Workforce Planning
Ensure supports for transgender colleagues, including regular review of Guide to Supports for Transgender Colleagues.	Ongoing and report annually	HR Workforce Relations
Review and report on impact of Blended Working Policy from a gender perspective.	Annual Reports	HR Workforce Relations
Targeted actions & research to reduce Gender Pay Gap undertaken and published in line with reporting under Gender Pay Gap legislation.	Annual Reports	HR Strategy/ HR Workforce Planning
Promote Gender Equality through a regular series of visible events and encourage more male Gender Equality champions.	Q3, 2022	Strategy, Governance & Change/ GEDI SGCU
Encourage greater gender balance in uptake of leave/ flexible work arrangements. Identify male colleagues who have availed of this leave to speak about their experiences.	Q4, 2022	HR Operations
Reports on gender breakdown published on intranet every six months.	Q4, 2022	HR Workforce Planning/ HR Operations
Study on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. childcare and education supports. ii. barriers to career opportunities for women. 	Mid 2023	HR Workforce Planning / HR Abroad
Monitor gender balance in decision making for locally employed staff in missions.	End 2023	HR Abroad
Ensure events organised at HQ and abroad consider gender and diversity in establishment of panels and topics discussed.	Ongoing	SGCU/ GEDI Sub-Committee



2: Equality



Why is this important?

Promoting Equality ensures:

- » Staff are treated fairly.
- » A fair and equal chance for all staff to achieve their career ambitions.
- » The building of trust and confidence.
- » Staff feel valued and respected.
- » Obligations under Equality Acts are addressed.



What do we want to achieve?

- » DFA is an organisation that supports all staff in achieving career ambitions and addresses barriers to progression.
- » DFA's leadership demonstrates commitment to equality in visible and practical ways.
- » DFA's culture supports equality across the nine grounds of the Equality Acts.
- » DFA's leadership ensures equality of treatment across grades, career streams and locations.



Targets

- » 100% awareness and understanding of how to report inappropriate behaviour/bullying/discrimination.
- » By 2025, 75% of staff agree that DFA's infrastructure is accessible.
- » Double the number of staff who feel there is fairness for all in DFA (currently 33%).
- » Accessibility audits for all DFA HQ buildings completed by end 2023 and implementation plan to be developed.
- » DFA's internet & intranet compliant with European Union (Accessibility of Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies) Regulations 2020.
- » Enhanced on-boarding for staff with disability.

Actions	Timeline	Owner
Disability Liaison Officer to review workplace accommodation process and develop guide for line managers.	Q2, 2023	DLO
Develop guidance document signposting how to address inappropriate behaviour of any type.	Q4, 2022	HR Workforce Relations
HR to lead stakeholders in a comprehensive review of physical and online accessibility. Access Officers to be appointed in relevant Business Units.	Q2, 2023	HR Strategy/ DLO
Introduce a HR Equality Impact Assessment to review current and new Departmental HR policies.	Q2, 2023	HR Strategy
HR to work with MB Sub-Committee on GEDI to explore guides for staff returning and going on posting and while on posting, including on LGBTI+ issues.	Q2, 2023	HR Abroad/ GEDI Sub-Committee
Annual report on compliance with disability legislation and on addressing issues for colleagues with a disability to be brought to Executive Management Group/MB.	Q4, 2023	DLO
Explore possibility of appointment of Equality Liaison Officers at HQ and regionally abroad.	Q2, 2023	HR Strategy



3: Diversity



Why is this important?

Enhanced diversity leads to:

- » Better decision-making and outcomes.
- » A wider diversity of perspectives and lived-experiences in our workforce will enhance policies and services for the public.
- » Attracting and retaining talent in all locations.
- » A Department that better reflects Irish society.



What do we want to achieve?

- » Increase diversity of candidates applying for roles in DFA, including ethnic diversity.
- » DFA has a system and processes in place to collect diversity data.
- » Diversity Data collection follows international best practice.
- » DFA has identified all groups that are under-represented in its workforce, and addressed barriers to their access, retention and promotion.



Targets

- » Increase to 10% staff with a disability by 2025 (Current statutory obligations is 3%; current DFA % is 6.65%).
- » Increase by 5% diverse applicants applying for DFA competitions by 2025.
- » Two participants from the Willing Able Mentoring (WAM) work placement programme from 2023.
- » DFA participates in a Traveller Community internship programme by 2023.
- » Introduce a bespoke diversity internship programme by summer 2023.
- » Representative data monitored and tracked on more of the 9 grounds of discrimination (in addition to age and gender) by 2025.

Actions	Timeline	Owner
Organise events that champion diversity and the associated positive impact.	Two events annually	SGCU/ GEDI Sub-Committee
Mitigate risk of unconscious bias in assignment decisions at HQ by introducing challenge function at DG level.	Q3, 2022	HR Workforce Planning
Reform the intern recruitment process to enhance diversity amongst applicants.	Q4, 2022	HR Workforce Planning/ HR Abroad
<p>Work with stakeholders to support the introduction of recording and monitoring data linked to the 9 grounds of discrimination, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A review of potential sources of data and good practice. » Engagement with D/PER and NSSO in support of the development of a system to capture data. 	<p>Q3, 2022</p> <p>Q4, 2022</p>	<p>HR Workforce Planning</p> <p>HR Workforce Planning</p>
<p>Review DFA's recruitment processes to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » bias detection tools. » plain language. » unconscious bias training. » Working with PAS on building diversity, including increased diversity among applicants. » Communicating results of competitions review and associated action plan. 	Initiated in Q4, 2022	HR Workforce Planning/ HR Abroad



4: Inclusion



Why is this important?

Promoting inclusion will:

- » Enhance a culture that respects and values all staff.
- » Ensure greater psychological safety thereby leading to better well-being, morale and motivation within teams.
- » Allow staff to bring their authentic self to the workplace and increase a sense of belonging.
- » Allow all staff to feel they belong, are listened to, and are valued, irrespective of grade and location.



What do we want to achieve?

- » GEDI champions in place across entire Department.
- » Training in inclusive work practices that build a diverse and inclusive workplace.
- » Decisions on assignments ensure equal opportunities for all, irrespective of background.
- » Mentoring and coaching programmes in place to include under-represented groups.
- » DFA is a workplace where all parents and those with caring responsibilities can fulfil their potential and develop their careers, whilst also being able to work in ways that support their family and personal circumstances.



Targets

- » All new staff who join to have completed Diversity and Inclusion online training during their probationary period.
- » 100% of staff to complete Diversity and Inclusion training and workshop by end of Action Plan.
- » Increase from 76% to 90% the percentage of staff who feel valued by line managers by 2025.
- » Increase from 55% to 70% as the percentage of staff who feel valued by senior managers by 2025.

Actions	Timeline	Owner
Rollout mandatory training for all staff on 'GEDI Essentials' encompassing aspects of Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.	Q3, 2022/ongoing throughout Action Plan	HR Strategy/ HR Training Unit
Develop induction programme for newly promoted managers, which will include a focus on GEDI.	Q4, 2022	HR Training Unit/ HR Workplace Relations
Identify GEDI champions across all grades and locations.	Q4, 2022	HR Strategy/ SGCU
Introduction of a pilot Talent Management Programme that builds diversity.	Q2, 2023	HR Training/ Workforce Planning
Exit interviews to include questions on Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.	Q3, 2023	HR Workforce Planning/ HR Abroad/ HR Workplace Relations
Support Parents/Carers/Family GEDI Working Group to become an active Peer Support Network.	Q3, 2023	SGCU/ GEDI Sub-Committee
Review assignments to pivotal roles, with a view to supporting diversity in key roles across the Department.	Q1, 2024	HR Workforce Planning
Introduce targeted mentoring and coaching programmes with a view to promoting inclusion.	Q3, 2023	HR Training Unit



5: Communications and Compliance



Why is this important?

- » Ensuring that staff have the opportunities to learn about GEDI principles and to put these into practice is crucial to embedding a culture of dignity and respect within DFA.
- » As a public sector organisation, DFA must comply with its obligations under all aspects of GEDI.
- » By actively communicating on GEDI, DFA will demonstrate that it takes this issue seriously and wants its staff to do likewise.



What do we want to achieve?

- » Monitoring and tracking implementation of this Action Plan.
- » DFA understands and communicates internally and externally how our diversity contributes to the realisation of DFA's High Level Goals and the services we deliver to government and citizens.
- » Staff have a greater awareness and understanding of DFA's GEDI policies and practices.
- » DFA's communications and activities on GEDI inform, involve and engages staff and other external stakeholders.
- » DFA is fully compliant with legislative requirements.
- » Enhanced involvement of staff in the development of policies/practices, building on current engagement through the GEDI Sub-Committee.



Targets

- » By 2023, DFA has completed and published its Public Sector Duty Assessment.
- » 4 GEDI newsletters each year.
- » 2 GEDI-themed town-halls each year.
- » 1 HR Roadshow every six months.
- » Ensure GEDI is a core element of new internal comms strategy.

Actions	Timeline	Owner
Communicate GEDI survey and focus group results and follow up Action Plan to all staff, through video and intranet message, and town hall presentation.	Q3, 2022	HR Strategy
<p>Introduce new internal communications tools to help embed GEDI policy and process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » A quarterly GEDI newsletter. » Introduce 'You said... We did' style process and town hall events providing for participation of all staff. 	Q2, 2022/ongoing throughout Action Plan	HR Strategy
Targeted HR messaging to all staff to highlight a supportive environment for work life balance, caring responsibilities and discouraging both physical and virtual presenteeism for all colleagues.	Q4, 2022	HR Workplace Relations
Implement Safeguarding Policy.	Q3, 2022	Development Cooperation and Africa Division
<p>Improve External Outreach in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » DFA website. » Presentations to schools/colleges. » Social Media campaigns. » Consult with Foreign Ministries and other stakeholders to identify good practice. 	Q3, 2022/ongoing throughout Action Plan	HR Workplace Planning
Monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.	Quarterly from Q4, 2022	HR Strategy GEDI Sub-Committee Management Board
Ensure compliance with EU Accessibility legislation.	End 2023	HR Strategy Communications Corporate Services Division
Publish Public Sector Duty report.	End 2023	Corporate Services Division



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