



DE&I MATURITY BENCHMARK

by **LEAD** NETWORK

Information Guide



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Summary

Background



In 2018, EY was asked by LEAD Network to develop something that would support members to assess their own performance in D&I. One of the guiding principles of the design was that it had to be based on established best practice. EY runs the National Equality Standard (NES) in the UK, which is a government-backed diagnostic framework that helps organisations to understand their D&I practices, and it is also an accreditation for organisations to validate their performance in this area.

The NES was designed 7 years ago by an independent Board (made up of different organisations) that still meets every 6 months. It has been revised and ratified several times since then and the criteria used represents best practice across all organisation sizes and sectors. It offers a business focused, strategic approach to measuring D&I that didn't previously exist and has since been adapted to develop a Global Equality Standard and also a Supply Chain Equality Standard.

Of course, it has also provided a great foundation for LEAD Network's DE&I Maturity Benchmark!

How does it work?

- Within the NES framework, there are 35 indicators of best practice with a maturity model that sits beneath each one.
- Whilst there are independencies across all 35 areas, we carefully identified which we thought were the most critical elements to get right, weighted them, and used them to develop the assessment questions and subsequent recommendations.



5 maturity levels



All organisations are on a maturity journey – the tool can help organisations at Level 1 with ‘how to get started’, or at Level 5 with ‘validation’.

However, somewhere in the middle is probably where there is the most value to be derived. That’s where you can really start to understand what you’re doing well, what you should do more of, and what else you should start doing to move forwards.



Why do organisations need maturity assessments?



1 They don't embed DE&I into their corporate strategy

Organisations don't always do a very good job of articulating how DE&I can underpin corporate performance. DE&I is often seen as a fringe activity or as a bolt on to HR. An assessment helps to highlight how D&I can and should be incorporated into the strategic objectives of an organisation.

2 They implement initiatives before working out what the problem is

Businesses often spend money on fixing problems that they aren't clear on. An assessment helps to root out the causes of inequality so that they can take targeted action.

3 They use diversity of Executive Levels as the only measure of success

There is great value in measuring leadership diversity using tools such as the Gender Diversity Scorecard; however, with a growing set of stakeholders interested in this, an assessment helps you to think about those critical pipelines into leadership and how sustainable your approach is.

4 They try to fix people, not the organisation

Through this kind of assessment, organisations can also focus on getting minorities to assimilate and adhere to the culture that's set. It helps to develop a more holistic plan, that isn't about fixing individuals but is more about wholesale culture transformation.

5 They don't measure impact effectively

An assessment offers an opportunity to measure impact. It not just about giving credit for initiatives, it is also about calling into question whether those initiatives are having the desired effect, and if not, what needs to be done to adjust that. The tool can provide organisations with comfort that they are on the right path as they move through each level of maturity.

Essentially, our assessment will help your company to join the dots – it will provide a framework of understanding and a consistent language that may not currently exist within your organisation.



The DE&I Maturity Benchmark will:



- 1 Highlight how DE&I can and should be incorporated into the strategic objectives of your organisation.
- 2 Uncover where problems exist and route out the causes of inequality so that you can take targeted actions to address them.
- 3 Provoke rich and meaningful leadership discussions and satisfy the expectation of transparency from a growing range of stakeholders.
- 4 Encourage you to think about the critical pipelines into leadership and the sustainability of your approach.
- 5 Enable you to develop a holistic plan that focuses on wholesale culture transformation.
- 6 Offer an opportunity to measure impact; not just giving credit for initiatives but calling into question whether those initiatives are having the desired effect.
- 7 Help to join the dots with a framework of understanding and a consistent language that may not currently exist within your organisation.



Comparative benchmarking allows organisations to learn from one another, share best practices, recognise common challenges and identify tangible actions; moving the industry needle towards gender parity and a truly inclusive culture.

The practicalities



- There are **39 questions** in total – and remember, it's an assessment, so it's important to be honest.
- It's **user friendly** and you can save your progress as you move along.
- It's important to note that it is **confidential**. We don't have visibility of your specific answers.
- The assessment can be completed any time at **Global, European, or Country level** (although only European level data will be used for benchmarking purposes).
- You will receive an **immediate, downloadable report** which includes an action plan.
- Recommendations are **themed** to help you disseminate them back in your organisation.
- **European level benchmarking** outputs are available by sector, by theme, by question and these will continue to update throughout the year.
- To complete the assessment, you will need to contact with **education@lead-eu.net** for your organisation's unique UserID and password.

Who should complete the DE&I Maturity Benchmark?

Typically this would sit within the HR domain, although some organisations have dedicated DE&I teams or a DE&I Lead. The key to this though is that it's about collaborating with people in different functions. Just as DE&I isn't just one person's responsibility, neither is this assessment. This provides a real opportunity to collaborate cross-functionally on DE&I.

COMMUNICATIONS

- 01** Do you use a range of channels (e.g. company-wide learning, internal communications etc.) reaching all employees, to communicate the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion?
- 02** Do you have review processes in place to ensure brand standards are met in relation to DE&I within communications or marketing materials?

DATA ANALYTICS

- 03** Do you conduct a regular employee survey that includes questions about equity and inclusion within your organisation?
- 04** If yes, do you analyse the survey results by demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, generation etc)?
- 05** Have you benchmarked your comprehensive benefits package, including maternity and caregiving, against the market to ensure that it is competitive?
- 06** Do you regularly conduct an audit of job classifications, compensation policies, and total benefits packages to avoid both bias and adverse impacts on all genders?
- 07** Have you analysed demographic data related to your recruitment pipeline to identify disproportionate outcomes based on an applicant's gender identity within the last year?
- 08** Have you analysed demographic data from your performance management or appraisal process to identify disproportionate outcomes based on an employee's gender within the last year?
- 09** Have you analysed demographic data from your promotion or progression process to identify disproportionate outcomes based on an employee's gender within the last year?

LEADERSHIP

- 10** Have you set clear performance criteria that line managers and leaders use to assess individual employee performance and readiness for promotion/progression?
- 11** Do you provide dedicated access to learning and development opportunities for high-potential women (e.g. reserving slots for women on a leadership development programme that is open to all, dedicated mentoring programmes etc)?
- 12** Do you communicate support from leadership for flexible work options (e.g. by role-modelling balancing caring responsibilities or hybrid working)?
- 13** Is there a named Board-level champion accountable for progress on the DE&I agenda?
- 14** Are senior leaders visibly involved in your DE&I initiatives (e.g. attending events, championing network groups, role modelling flexible working)?
- 15** Are your leaders actively encouraged to role-model inclusive behaviours in the workplace (e.g. through a leadership competency or behavioural framework)?
- 16** Has your CEO signed the LEAD Network Pledge "Embracing Change: Transformation Through Diversity"?
- 17** Do you actively find ways to include ally support from men in championing gender diversity, equity and inclusion?

STRATEGY

- 18** Is your diversity, equity and inclusion strategy integrated with your broader organisational strategy including the vision, mission and strategic goals?
- 19** Do you make diversity a key criterion for selecting suppliers (e.g. diversely owned businesses, diverse representation in the exec team etc.)?

- 20** Do you have diversity, equity and inclusion embedded as a key part of your Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategy and community development initiatives?
- 21** Are you regularly measuring the impact of your diversity and inclusion initiatives to understand whether they are helping you to attract, recruit, engage and retain talented women?

TALENT

- 22** Do you deliver training and guidance to people managers on how to conduct recruitment, appraisals and line management in an equitable and inclusive manner?
- 23** Do you use 'blind' screening (i.e. removing personal details such as name and gender from applications) when shortlisting job candidates?
- 24** Do you have a standard process for reviewing and correcting non-inclusive language used in job advertisements (e.g. by using an inclusive writing tool)?
- 25** Do you use job advertising channels and external partnerships which are aimed at attracting applications from women (e.g. gender-based professional networks, academic institutions, social media networks, influencers)?
- 26** Have you tailored your employee value proposition to attract candidates from historically underrepresented groups (e.g. women, ethnic minorities etc.)?
- 27** Do you analyse key talent outcomes (e.g. new hires, promotions, leavers) by gender and, where data permits, cross-reference this with other diversity data (e.g. age, ethnicity etc.)?
- 28** Do you have a succession planning process in place that identifies opportunities for building diversity in senior leadership to develop underrepresented groups?
- 29** Does your exit interview include questions to determine whether the reasons for departure of the employee from the organisation were related to DE&I issues?
- 30** Do you provide stretch assignments for high-potential women as part of a development programme to support career progression?
- 31** Do you offer a range of career paths, including those that support women's progression into senior positions (e.g. senior roles well suited to part-time working and recruitment from adjacent industries)?
- 32** Do you have specific mentoring and coaching programmes for women that focus on broadening networks, increasing visibility, and further developing leadership skills?
- 33** Are flexible working options available for employees (e.g. part-time working, compressed hours, remote working etc)?
- 34** Have you looked to equalise the paid leave provisions for care givers (e.g. equalised paternity leave pay, equalised caregiver leave pay and benefits)?
- 35** Do you have programmes in place that support women's transition back to work after taking maternity or adoption leave (e.g. career return programmes, coaching, buddying, line manager 'toolkits')?
- 36** Have you reviewed pay by gender to check for equal outcomes?
- 37** If yes, have you taken action to address any discrepancies identified by this review?
- 38** Do you measure the impact of mentoring, sponsorship, and networking programmes on the success of women employees?
- 39** Do you actively encourage allyship behaviours in your workforce (e.g. through allyship programmes)?

END OF QUESTIONS

Top tips for success



Leadership buy-in is important. Ensure leaders are supportive of the process!



Partner with key stakeholders across the business as early as possible – this may involve initial briefings and spending time with individuals from different functions so that they can explain what they're doing on DE&I in their area.



Use the assessment as a tool for continuous improvement. Hopefully the results will be received in the spirit in which they're intended i.e. to drive progress!



SUMMARY



DE&I
MATURITY
BENCHMARK

by **LEAD** NETWORK

- Exclusively available to LEAD Network Partners!
- A free, confidential assessment based on the National Equality Standard (NES) – a government-backed diagnostic framework developed by EY.
- 39 questions applicable at Global, European, or Country level.
- An immediate, downloadable report which includes: your organisation's position on the maturity curve; a breakdown of strengths, maturing factors and opportunities to develop; and an action plan with themed recommendations.
- European level benchmarking outputs by sector, by theme, and by question.
- A free, 1-hour follow-up session with EY to review and discuss your organisation's assessment results.
- Signposting to further LEAD Network resources.

For further information or to obtain your organisation's unique UserID and password, please email: education@lead-eu.net

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