

Leadership Commitment: Setting Up a Governance Group

What is a governance group?

A governance group in the context of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is a formal committee within an organisation responsible for overseeing, guiding, and implementing the D&I strategy. This group is responsible for ensuring that the organisation's D&I efforts are aligned with its overall goals, values, and vision. Here are some characteristics and activities of such a group:

What are some characteristics and activities of a governance group?

- **Leadership and Accountability:** Led by influential leaders who are well-respected within the organisation. These leaders are accountable for the progress and outcomes of D&I initiatives which are crucial for effective D&I implementation.
- **Strategic Oversight:** Develops clear D&I goals and strategies, ensuring they are communicated throughout the organisation.
- **Regular Review and Adaptation:** Ensures that D&I is a regular feature on the agenda of executive committees, boards, and team meetings at every level, facilitating ongoing review, honest discussions about progress, and adjustments to strategies as needed.
- **Policy Integration:** Oversees the integration of D&I principles into every corporate policy, ensuring that these policies support D&I objectives and do not conflict with them.
- **Role Modelling and Engagement:** Acts as role models to encourage engagement with D&I initiatives both internally and externally. This involves mentoring programs and engagement with communities.
- **Performance Measurement:** Sets D&I objectives for all employees and teams and measures these objectives to ensure accountability and progress toward D&I goals.

- **Financial Incentives:** Implements financial incentives related to D&I, linking elements of company bonuses or executive compensation to the achievement of D&I goals to underline the importance of D&I as a core business priority.

Who should be included in the governance group?

- **D&I Officer or Lead:** The primary individual responsible for D&I within the organisation, ensuring strategic alignment and execution of D&I initiatives.
- **Executive Sponsor:** A high-ranking executive, such as a CEO or another C-suite member, who can provide leadership support, visibility, and necessary resources.
- **HR Representative:** A senior HR professional who can align D&I initiatives with broader HR policies, practices, and talent management strategies.
- **ERG Representatives:** Leaders or active members from various Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to ensure diverse perspectives and grassroots insights are considered.
- **Departmental Representatives:** Key stakeholders from different departments (e.g., Finance, Operations, Marketing) to ensure D&I efforts are integrated across all business areas.
- **External Advisor:** An external D&I expert or consultant can offer unbiased insights, best practices, and help benchmark against industry standards.

How often should the governance group meet?

- **Quarterly Meetings:** The governance group should meet at least quarterly to review progress, discuss strategic directions, and make decisions. This frequency ensures that D&I remains a priority and allows the group to adapt to new challenges or opportunities.
- **Subcommittee Meetings:** For larger organisations, subcommittees focusing on specific D&I areas (e.g. recruitment, training, community engagement) may need to meet more frequently, such as monthly or bi-monthly, to manage detailed aspects of the initiatives.

What is the scope of the governance group?

- **Strategy and Vision:** Define and periodically review the organisation's D&I strategy and vision, ensuring alignment with overall business objectives.
- **Policy Development and Integration:** Oversee the development and integration of D&I principles into corporate policies, ensuring that these policies support inclusive practices.
- **Program Oversight:** Approve, monitor, and evaluate D&I programs and initiatives, including training, recruitment, retention, and ERG activities.
- **Budget Management:** Oversee the allocation and utilisation of the D&I budget, ensuring resources are used effectively to achieve strategic goals.
- **Measurement and Reporting:** Develop and implement mechanisms for tracking and reporting on D&I metrics and progress towards goals, both internally and externally.
- **Communication Strategy:** Guide the internal and external communication of D&I efforts, ensuring consistent and impactful messaging.
- **Feedback and Continuous Improvement:** Establish channels for receiving feedback on D&I initiatives and use this feedback for continuous improvement.

What other considerations should be made?

- **Diversity of the Group:** Ensure the governance group itself is diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, seniority, departmental representation, and other dimensions of diversity to reflect the organisation's commitment to inclusivity.
- **Adaptability:** The governance group should remain flexible, ready to adjust its focus and priorities based on evolving organisational needs and external conditions.