

How to identify, prioritise, and execute

impactful initiatives
to enhance DEI in
your organisation





Context

The **South African General Counsel for Diversity & Inclusion (SA GC for D&I)** initiative aims to foster greater inclusivity within the legal professional community by providing a platform for corporate entities, law firms, groups of advocates, and other legal sector players to engage on critical diversity issues.

A key aspect of the initiative is the **creation of working groups** to facilitate comprehensive and multi-stakeholder conversations around critical themes linked to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within the South African legal fraternity.

These working groups discuss topics proposed and voted on by members and partners to the initiative.

Each working group is tasked with using the discussions to create an output intended as a public good resource for those wanting to enhance DEI. This document is such an output and we encourage readers to share it with others in the South African legal fraternity who may benefit from its content.

This particular document is the fruit of the collaborative efforts of the **“How to identify, prioritise, and execute impactful initiatives to enhance DEI in your organisation” working group, which concluded its work in late 2024.**

The SA GC for D&I gratefully acknowledges the efforts of all of those who took part in these working group discussions and thanks their organisations for allowing them the time to do so.

The discussions within the working groups adhere to the “Chatham House” rule, ensuring the anonymity of individual contributors to the dialogue. For further information or to become part of the SA GC for D&I and its current or future working groups, visit www.sagcdi.co.za.

Document user guide

What are “DEI initiatives”?

DEI initiatives are proactive and deliberate actions taken by organisations to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. These initiatives include **strategies, policies, programmes, and activities** that aim to foster a diverse workforce, ensure equitable opportunities, and create an inclusive culture.

The “DEI initiative” working group

The working group members engaged in several rounds of discussion in 2024 on the importance of designing engaging initiatives to promote DEI within organisations. Key topics included generating ideas for impactful DEI activities, strategies to encourage participation, and methods for fostering an environment that supports these initiatives.

What is this document about?

This document focuses on the activity aspect of DEI initiatives, offering ready-to-use ideas for interesting, dynamic DEI activities. These ideas come either from the successful experiences of working group members or as outputs of the working group’s collaborative brainstorming sessions. In addition, we provide tips on how to create an enabling environment that encourages participation in these activities.

Who is this for?

This resource is designed for individuals and teams responsible for organising or fostering an environment conducive to DEI activities, such as Learning & Development teams, HR professionals, Heads of DEI, and Transformation Managers.

What are DEI initiatives?

DEI Initiative

DEI initiatives are proactive and deliberate actions taken by organisations to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. These initiatives include strategies, policies, programmes, and activities that aim to foster a diverse workforce, ensure equal opportunities, and create an inclusive culture.

DEI strategy

DEI policies

DEI programme

DEI activities



This document focuses on this key pillar of DEI initiatives

DEI Activity ideas (1/2)



Traditional formal workwear challenge:

Challenge your Exco/ Board/ leaders to wear traditional formal clothes to work. You could pick a particular day to do so once-off (e.g., Heritage day) - or encourage it for Town Halls or other internal meetings.



Diversity calendar:

Work with your People team/ DEI committee to build a DEI calendar covering important global and national days for DEI and use it to drive awareness, education, and celebration.



Intergenerational speed networking:

At your next office event, set up speed networking stations for different generations to engage with - and learn from - one another (be sure to include discussion prompts!).



Internal comms language challenge:

Challenge your internal comms team to find opportunities to use greetings in all languages spoken by employees in internal comms materials.



Celebrate by sharing food:

In your team, incorporate a cultural food potluck into a team building event, or to celebrate Heritage day.



Visit local sites of cultural heritage:

Organise team visits or offsites to sites of significant cultural importance to your team members to explore their history, culture, and values.

DEI Activity ideas (2/2)



Reading club:

Select books or articles that address themes of DEI in the context of South Africa and, if applicable, the legal sector and set up a reading club with regular meetings to discuss reflections on the reading.



Skills swap sessions:

Create learning sessions in your team where you encourage employees to share skills and knowledge linked to their cultural backgrounds or personal interests, such as those related to art, crafts, or cooking. This promotes cultural exchange and mutual learning.



“Diversity Shares” for team meetings:

Similar to the “Safety Shares” commonly seen in the mining industry (where people share spontaneous reflections on safety issues to promote the a safety culture), “Diversity Shares” can be integrated into recurring meetings to advance a DEI culture.



Cross-team projects:

Create mixed teams from different departments and levels to work on a pro-bono project that benefits the organisation or the local community. This encourages collaboration among diverse groups and fosters inclusivity. Scaled-down versions of this can be used in induction weeks.



Diversity bingo:

Create bingo cards with different statements that highlight diverse experiences and identities (e.g., “Speaks more than one language,” “First in family to attend university”). Employees mingle to find colleagues who fit each description, promoting interaction and discovery of diversity.

DEI Enablers: Ideas that will amplify the positive impact of DEI activities and initiatives (1/3)

Build an internal statement of support

Work with your leadership to build an internal document committing to DEI

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT



WE COMMIT TO AFFIRMING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

as the supreme law of the Republic in fostering belonging, inclusion and unity in our diversity.



WE COMMIT TO PROMOTING DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE

We value the range of perspectives, ideas and experiences that diversity provides, whether grounded in gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, cultural and social background, religion or age.



WE BELIEVE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CREATE A BROADER, RICHER ENVIRONMENT

that enhances creative thinking, innovation, collaboration and problem solving, which adds value to our organisations and to society. We believe that inclusive and equitable organisations attract, mentor and retain top talent.



WE WILL THEREFORE PRIORITISE GREATER DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

in our own businesses and co-operate to foster these same values throughout the legal profession, the broader business community and within society.

An example of internal statement of support, developed by the [SA GC for D&I](#)

DEI Enablers: Ideas that will amplify the positive impact of DEI activities and initiatives (2/3)

Provide an enabling environment for DEI

This means, amongst others:

- 1) Making budget/funds available for DEI initiatives;
- 2) Setting up a billing structure to account for time spent on DEI initiatives;
- 3) Ensuring there is physical/online space for DEI initiatives; and
- 4) Actively encouraging DEI initiatives in company-wide platforms.

Ensure DEI has a home and a purpose

Ensure there is a designated team to drive DEI activities and initiatives with appropriate resources.

In addition, this team should report into the company's leadership structures. There should be clear roles and responsibilities and the organisation should provide appropriate resources to the team. Lastly, this team should be supported by other departments in the organisation.

Senior role models and buy in

Ensure the senior level actively participates in DEI activities and initiatives and has buy in.

This includes:

1. Aligning DEI with business goals;
2. Leading by example by showcasing inclusive behaviours;
3. Creating a culture of DEI;
4. Offering DEI training opportunities to employees; and
5. Engaging with other senior leadership on DEI.

DEI Enablers: Ideas that will amplify the positive impact of DEI activities and initiatives (3/3)

Incorporate DEI into KPIs

Ensure the organisation sets KPIs for aspects of DEI that it cares about and monitors the KPIs against appropriate benchmarks and targets.



Metrics and KPIs for Diversity and Inclusion tool

This document outlines categories of metrics and KPIs that may be helpful in augmenting and refining existing approaches to measuring diversity and inclusion. It also provides access to additional resources that may be of interest.

There are existing SA GC for D&I toolkits that will help you set metrics and KPI relevant to your organisation

A photograph of two women, one older with white hair and one younger with dark hair, both smiling and looking at a tablet held by the younger woman. The background is a blurred office setting. The image is partially covered by a large yellow diagonal shape and a blue diagonal shape.

**We would like to hear
your feedback!**

Get in touch with us at
info@sagcdi.co.za