

# Teagasc Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

*(including 2020-2022 Action Plan)*



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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# **Teagasc Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

*(including 2020-2022 Action Plan)*



# Teagasc Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement

Policy Statement – At all levels in Teagasc, we believe in growing and keeping alive an open, diverse and inclusive workplace which is respectful to all and nurtures different perspectives, for the benefit of all in the organisation.

We, the undersigned members of the Teagasc Diversity and Inclusion Project Team, are proud to sign our names to the first Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Policy Statement for Teagasc. We are personally invested in making Diversity and Inclusion a reality in Teagasc and creating meaningful change in the organisation through the delivery of our Action Plan.



Susanne Barth



Paul Cormican



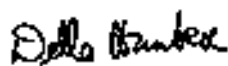
Liz Duffy



Valerie Farrell



Enda Geoghegan



Della Hunter



Ciara Johnson



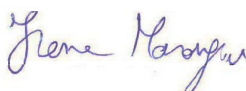
Susan Kearney



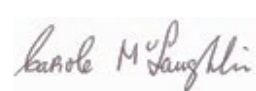
Anne Kinsella



Olive Maitha



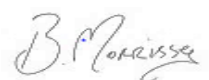
Irene Marongiu



Carole McLaughlin



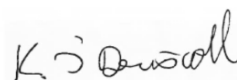
Grainne McMahon



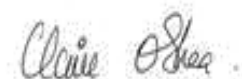
Brian Morrissey



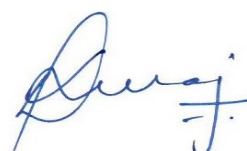
Frank Murphy



Keelin O'Driscoll



Claire O Shea



Dheeraj Rathore



Ridhhi Rathore

The Teagasc Senior Management Group strongly supports Diversity and Inclusion in the organisation and we will work together to ensure that this becomes the norm. We believe in giving a voice to all of our colleagues in Teagasc regardless of our differences and in valuing diversity for the very real benefits which it generates.

We are committed to upholding these principles as we work to champion Diversity and Inclusion in Teagasc. To reap the full benefits of a diverse workforce, it is vital to ensure an inclusive environment within the culture of Teagasc where everyone feels able to participate and achieve their potential and be valued for who they truly are.



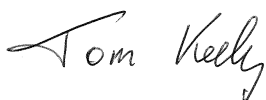
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**Gerry Boyle**



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**Tom Doherty**



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**Tom Kelly**



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**Frank O'Mara**



# Context for Diversity and Inclusion

Ireland has a strong statutory legislative framework for equality in employment and service access as outlined in Appendix 1, and Teagasc needs to ensure that it is in compliance with these legal requirements to prevent discrimination and promote equality.

However, the meaning of diversity in the workplace goes beyond what we refer to as the nine grounds covered in legislation such as the Equal Status Acts <sup>1</sup>. Diversity in the workplace encompasses cultural and individual human differences prevailing in the workplace; differences due to race, age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, dis(ability), neuro-diversity, marital status, education, socioeconomic background including membership of the travelling community, geographical location, political beliefs and ethnicity.

Organisations throughout society are broadening their understanding of diversity and moving beyond seeking a workforce exhibiting the visible aspects of diversity. They are moving towards a deeper level of inclusion to create a diversity of thinking in the organisation. This leads to a more diverse and inclusive culture where differences are recognised and celebrated and where people feel included and valued for what they bring to the organisation.

Diversity is a concept which is not entirely new to Teagasc. The Teagasc mission is “to support science-based innovation in the agri-food sector and wider bio-economy so as to underpin profitability, competitiveness and sustainability”. Teagasc has a longstanding awareness and understanding of bio-diversity to sustain an ecosystem. This same principle applies to our organisational systems which need to contain diversity to truly thrive. The next step is to build on this diversity to ensure inclusion is also a reality.

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<sup>1</sup> The Equal Status Acts 2000-2015 (‘the Acts’) prohibit discrimination in the provision of goods and services, accommodation and education. They cover the nine grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the traveller community.

Inclusion is driven by perceptions of fairness and respect which people feel when they believe that they are valued as an individual while having a sense of belonging to a wider group. Research has shown that to achieve inclusion, organisations need to create an environment which allows people to bring their true selves to work with equal opportunity for progression. Ability to balance work-life commitments is a key driver of inclusion in the workplace and organisations which actively promote a work-life balance are seen as more supportive of Diversity and Inclusion.

This Diversity and Inclusion Strategy seeks to go beyond legal compliance and looks to harness the value of all the people in Teagasc and contribute in a meaningful way to the well-being of all our staff members, including our students.

Within this Strategy and as it evolves, Teagasc will fully embrace actions arising from new national policies and strategies such as the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021.



# Our Vision

Teagasc is committed to being an organisation that recognises the value of diversity among its staff <sup>2</sup>, and where all staff feel included and valued, irrespective and indeed, because of their uniqueness. We support and value our staff for who they are and the work they contribute to the organisation.

Teagasc has made a specific commitment to Diversity and Inclusion in aligning Goal two of the Teagasc People Strategy 2018 – 2022 with this goal. This states that Teagasc will “continue to develop a highly skilled, diverse and gender-balanced workplace”. <sup>3</sup>

Teagasc wishes to promote an understanding of diversity of thinking which embraces a broad range of ideas and reaches out to all areas in the organisation.

This understanding of diversity at all levels in Teagasc, will unlock the value derived from differing perspectives in terms of increasing innovation, promoting Teagasc as a better place to work and improving problem-solving behaviours.

To remain relevant, Teagasc must continuously reflect the diversity of society and of our stakeholders at every level in our organisation. We will continue to welcome a diverse range of staff at all levels. The organisation is working to ensure that diversity is manifested across management structures in all Directorates to guarantee that as wide a variety of views as possible are brought forward and taken into account in decision-making.

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<sup>2</sup> Staff here is meant in the broadest sense to include permanent staff, contract staff, students, and where relevant sub-contractors who have contractors located in Teagasc offices.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.teagasc.ie/publications/2018/teagasc-people-strategy.php>

# Diversity and Inclusion Principles in Teagasc

1. Ensure all staff are part of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy in Teagasc and reinforce words with solid actions for the common good of all in the organisation.
2. Maintain a work environment that respects all individuals and promotes real inclusion at every opportunity throughout the organisation.
3. Reinforce a just and honest culture with the Teagasc Authority and Senior Management Group setting the example, where staff members are treated fairly, promoting trust and drawing the line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours.

While this Strategy has an internal focus on staff, Teagasc as stated in its Code of Conduct and Statement of Strategy, will review and develop new policies and good practices to avoid discrimination and provide equal opportunity for the general public and the clients it serves. Relevant actions will also be incorporated into a plan to meet our obligations under the **Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014**.





## Diversity and Inclusion creates Value

Diversity is increasingly seen as an asset to organisations and is linked to a positive working environment and better performance. A fair, open and accommodating workplace generates an atmosphere which fosters high morale for all employees and maximises their opportunity to reach their potential and contribute to high quality service delivery.

Incorporating different perspectives into the mainstream will contribute positively to the on-going learning, growth and renewal of the organisation.

The fact based business case for Diversity and Inclusion in Teagasc recognises the different needs of clients, students, colleagues and stakeholders. The value of Diversity and Inclusion has been well-documented and research shows that diverse groups display the following positive traits;

- ✓ More balanced decision-making and less likelihood of groupthink. <sup>4</sup>
- ✓ Better business performance including the ability to innovate, responsiveness to changing customer needs and team collaboration.<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ Improved business reputation which would aid attracting and retaining top talent.
- ✓ Better place to work with high employee engagement and performance and where people can bring their authentic self to work.

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<sup>4</sup> Central Bank of Ireland (2018) *Behaviour and Culture of the Irish Retail Banks*. Ireland.

<sup>5</sup> Deloitte Australia (2013)

# Framework for Change

## *(a) What you can do*

- » Change begins with ourselves in our own place of work and we need to ensure that Teagasc, through our actions and the language which we use, is an open place for staff members to be themselves.
- » Leadership at all levels within Teagasc must 'own' Diversity and Inclusion and understand that we all play a role in creating and sustaining an inclusive culture.
- » We need to foster a culture of asking questions and challenging existing assumptions.
- » Managers need to value people, recruit diverse staff based on their merit, and measure success on performance and quality of output.
- » We need to create a culture thinking consciously about inclusion as a business objective.
- » Teagasc needs to be accountable, setting measurable and achievable outcomes for Diversity and Inclusion, including resources for the delivery on the Action Plan detailed below.

## (b) Strategic Objectives

In order to bring our Vision and Principles to life, the following **five strategic objectives** have been developed and the Actions to help achieve these strategic objectives are detailed in the **Action Plan** below.

1. Develop a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that clearly sets out the vision, principles and actions that Teagasc is committed to in order to achieve an inclusive working environment.
2. Ensure that Teagasc governance structures fully reflect the organisation's diverse staff profile and that structures and policies are in place to ensure an inclusive work environment.
3. Embed Diversity and Inclusion into core business activities.
4. Inform, train and educate all of our staff members in relation to Diversity and Inclusion - building awareness of our unconscious biases and acknowledging how inclusion can be brought to bear in a real way in the organisation.
5. Put a programme of relevant Diversity and Inclusion activities in place to improve staff engagement, staff support and improve our understanding of Diversity and Inclusion.

# Teagasc Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

A comprehensive set of actions has been formulated to achieve and embed the Vision, Principles and Strategic Objectives of this strategy. This Action Plan should be read alongside the Teagasc Gender SMART Action Plan.

## A. Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

The Teagasc Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) project team, with senior management, will develop a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that sets out the vision, principles and reasons why Teagasc aspire to have a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Issue	Action	Outputs	Timeline	Department
Teagasc does not have a D&I framework for bringing about changes in the area of Diversity and Inclusion	Develop a strategy in a consultative way and ensure commitment from all relevant stakeholders	Project team representing all staff draft a D&I Strategy. Strategy shared and approved by SMG and NPC	Feb 2020	D&I project team
Teagasc does not have any clear actions around D&I	Develop an action plan with milestones and resources assigned to achieve these actions	Bring action plan to SMG and NPC for inputs, approval and endorsement	Feb 2020	D&I project team
Teagasc does not have policies around promoting gender equality	Develop a Gender Action Plan as part of the Gender SMART project	First draft of Gender Action Plan brought to SMG and Teagasc Authority in Feb 2020	Feb 2020	Gender SMART core team
Teagasc Disability and Equality Policies have not been reviewed for a number of years	Review and improve the Teagasc Disability and Equality Policy  The Teagasc equality policies need to accommodate and support our diverse staff profile and pipeline; older staff, staff who have a disability, staff with different religions and ethnicity and LGBTI+ staff	Revised policies  Better understanding of the profile of our staff and their needs  Ref: Diversity Staff Survey below	Sept 2020	HR, D&I project team and staff
D&I activities are not currently being monitored	Roll out and monitor progress on the D&I Action Plan and Gender SMART Action Plan	As per Action Plans	On-Going	HR People Strategy Steering Committee Gender SMART core team

## B. Corporate Governance

Ensure that Teagasc governance structures fully reflect the organisation's diverse staff profile and that structures and policies are in place to ensure an inclusive work environment.

Issue	Action	Outputs	Timeline	Department
No oversight committee to consider issues or measure progress	Set up a Steering Committee (for 3 year period) to review progress on Action Plans and review D&I metrics; The People Strategy Steering Group will carry out this role	Steering Group set up	April 2020	HR
Some committees and working groups are not representative of the Teagasc staff profile	Review main committees, identify membership gaps and invite new members onto committees where relevant	Report on Committee profiles produced; Committees have a more diverse profile	Dec 2020	SMG
Teagasc is not fully meeting the requirements of the Public Sector equality and Human Rights Duty legislation	Develop Project Plan and put working group in place to meet the duty under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Legislation	Three step action plan completed and plan put in place to meet human rights duty legislation	Dec 2020	SMG
No assessment mechanism in place to identify D&I gaps	Conduct Diversity and Inclusion assessments Future audits and peer reviews should have D&I integrated into the evaluation processes	D&I assessments commenced Report on assessments produced for Steering Group Peer review structure changed	Dec 2021	HR and Evaluation Unit
D&I data is not currently being collated	Develop a suite of D&I inclusion metrics and begin reporting	D&I matrix of data in place	Dec 2021	HR and Gender SMART core team

## C. Diversity and Inclusion Mainstreaming

Embed Diversity and Inclusion into core business activities.

Issue	Action	Outputs	Timeline	Department
Diversity and inclusion is not currently considered a factor in policy formation and event planning and there is no agreed methodology to diversity proof policies or events	Sign up for Diversity Charter of Ireland <a href="https://www.equalitystrategies.com/">https://www.equalitystrategies.com/</a>	Member of Diversity Charter of Ireland	2021	D&I Project team
	Evaluate HR processes using a Diversity and Inclusion lens	Revise processes where relevant	Dec 2020	HR
	Develop and embed a gender proofing methodology into our main corporate business processes and corporate documents	D&I methodology developed and rolled out	2020/2021	HR/Business Planning and Evaluation
	Develop guidelines for authors and editors of documents that ensures diversity is being embraced in our press releases, corporate documents, website and events etc	Guidelines developed and rolled out to key stakeholders	2020	Public Relations
	Develop a process to review job specs to ensure they are inclusive to staff to apply to the greatest extent. The tasks and qualifications required in specific jobs should be continually reviewed	Job specs changed to be more inclusive	Dec 2020	HR with Hiring Managers
	Simplification and re-launch of flexible working policies so that the diverse needs of staff are being met	Revised and new flexible working programmes in place	Dec 2020	Partnership working group

Issue	Action	Outputs	Timeline	Department
Diversity and inclusion is not currently considered a factor in policy formation and event planning and there is no agreed methodology to diversity proof policies or events	Introduce user friendly guides for long term leave	New guides in place and shared with staff and line managers	June 2020	Diversity project team (sub-group)
	Improve the process and length of time it takes for staff returning from leave of absence to get reinstated on the Teagasc network and systems	Reinstatement of Teagasc staff on the ICT network treated as a priority 1 ticket	Sept 2020	ICT
	Review arrangements for replacing staff members going on leave (maternity, career break) so that a temporary replacement can be in the role within a reasonable timeframe of the permanent staff member going on leave	Backfill policy revised (budget dependent)	Sept 2020	HR
	Develop new guidelines for start time and end time for meetings	New protocol developed	Sept 2020	Partnership working group
	Review Leave Policies to ensure that they apply to same-sex couples	Policies updated	2021	HR
	Simplification and re-launch of flexible working policies so that the diverse needs of staff are being met	Revised and new flexible working programmes in place	Dec 2020	Partnership working group

## D. Diversity and Inclusion Training

Inform and educate all of our staff members in relation to Diversity and Inclusion. Build awareness of our unconscious biases and acknowledge how inclusion can be brought to bear in a real way in the organisation.

Issue	Action	Outputs	Timeline	Department
Staff may be discriminated against or be impacted by certain biases therefore greater awareness and skills are required around Diversity and Inclusion and related topics	Design, procure, and roll out inclusive leadership training to all middle/senior managers	Middle/senior managers trained	2021	D&I Project team
	Procure, and roll out Diversity and Inclusion on-line training for all staff	Training rolled out and 40% complete in year 1; 70% by year 2	Dec 2020	D&I project team
	Develop and embed a gender proofing methodology into our main corporate business processes and corporate documents	D&I methodology developed and rolled out	2020/2021	HR/Business Planning and Evaluation
	Roll out Diversity and Inclusion training for interview board members	Training rolled out. Interview board members should be able to access this e-learning remotely	2020/21 (after recruitment processes are updated)	D&I project team & HR Recruitment Manager
	Relevant staff complete on-line NDA disability training	Training completed by HR, PR, and relevant managers	Dec 2020	ST&D
	Integrate Diversity and Inclusion training into management training, PMDS, Induction, customer service and other relevant internal training programmes	Training programmes updated where relevant	Q1 2021	ST&D Owners of training programmes
	Train the new Dignity at Work Contact Persons (CP's) and Designated Contact Persons (DCP's)	Staff with designated roles trained	Dec 2019	HR



## E. Diversity and Inclusion Communications, Support and Staff Engagement

Develop a programme of relevant Diversity and Inclusion activities to improve staff engagement and understanding of Diversity and Inclusion.

Issue	Action	Outputs	Timeline	Department
<p>Lack of awareness of what Diversity and Inclusion in the workplace actually means and the value it can bring</p> <p>Unaware if staff are being supported to bring their true selves to work</p>	Launch D&I Strategy and generate awareness	Launch Strategy	July 2020	D&I Project team
	Celebrate National Diversity Days	Carry out an initiative on relevant celebratory days	On-going	Local centres
	Carry out a Diversity and Inclusion survey in order to understand the profile of staff and the supports they require	Survey commissioned with over 40% response rate	Q1 2021	D&I Project team
	Create resource groups for specific areas such as parents & carers, ability, transitioning and LGBTI+ supporters, religion in order to build a network for staff members	Resource groups set up, including utilise new communication platform	2020/2022	D&I Project team
	Bring all of the new Diversity and Inclusion policies, schemes and initiatives together in one Diversity and Inclusion framework	Framework in place that helps show a coordinated and integrated approach to D&I	2021	D&I Project team
	Promote existing staff support schemes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee Assistance Programme</li> <li>Access Officers</li> <li>Health and well-being programmes</li> </ul>	Awareness campaigns  EAP provider has specialist expertise to provide support for staff	2020	HR

Issue	Action	Outputs	Timeline	Department
International staff not fully supported	Develop a new on-boarding programme for International staff to include welcome pack, support in obtaining work permit, access to english tuition, joining sports and social club and other initiatives that will help to integrate staff better into the Teagasc centre and Irish society  A similar booklet is being developed for Walsh Scholars	On-boarding programme piloted	2020	HR and Local centres  Research Operations
Mid-Career Staff	Mid-Career retirement course	Course Piloted	2020	Staff Training/ Pensions Unit
Late-Career Staff	Option of phased retirement put in place for staff allowing them to reduce their working hours on approaching retirement	New policy	2020	WLB Partnership Working Group

This strategy and the actions identified in this plan will evolve and grow as Teagasc commences on the journey towards improving Diversity and Inclusion. The Strategy is to be viewed as a flexible living document and will be reviewed and amended every two years and reported on to the People Strategy Steering Group, Senior Management Group, National Partnership Committee and the Teagasc Authority on a regular basis.

# Appendix 1 – Equality Framework

- » The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission present a useful guide to the Equal Status Acts at <https://www.ihrec.ie/guides-and-tools/human-rights-and-equality-in-the-provision-of-good-and-services/what-does-the-law-say/equal-status-acts/>.
- » The principle of equality is enshrined in the Irish Constitution and in many international and EU treaties and declarations.
- » The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sees equality as a fundamental principle in terms of a person's human rights – 'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights', Art. 1.
- » Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 places a positive duty on public sector bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality and protect human rights, in their daily work.
- » Key pieces of equality legislation in Ireland are the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015 and Equal Status Acts 2000-2012.
- » The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (August 2016) is the central document from Government directing Teagasc activities. The Code advocates for Diversity, specifically gender in relation to Board structure. The Code operates on a Comply or Explain model where organisations not complying must provide an explanation.
- » Inter-departmental Review of Gender in State Boards (2019) recommends that each State Board adopt a Diversity and Inclusion Policy by 2020. It recommends that Boards should explain how they are using the Policy to comply with gender balance.
- » Increasing regulatory requirements for state organisations to employ people with a disability (increase from 3% to 5.5% by 2022). Teagasc Disability Policy 2007.
- » People Strategy for the Civil Service 2017 – 2020
- » Gender Pay Gap Information Bill 2019
- » The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty (the Duty) places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to who they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work.
- » National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy 2019-2021



# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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