



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

MARCH 2018

Over the last 20 years, Rwanda has a strong and proud track record of championing the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda in all sectors of its society and it is demonstrated in the article 16 of our Country's Constitution. For that we commend our leadership for their relentless commitment to delivering an open culture and an inclusive environment.

Though equality, diversity and inclusion seem to be an established fact of life in the sense that people actually are diverse regardless of what policies any organization adopts, progress around it should never be taken for granted or presumed to be embedded. This policy is deliberately ambitious and challenging; aiming to cement what is already in place and setting out how we will deliver our vision in promoting, developing and regulating engineering profession. The policy hence ensure that all of our members achieve their full potential as we continue to provide the most effective engineering services to those who need it and also be a driver forward for national development in the coming years while delivering full equality across the board.

In addition to our recognition that the engineering profession is underpinned by the practitioner's ability to problem solving, innovation and quick adaptation, we firmly believe that this can only be achieved by drawing on the different strengths, attributes and characteristics of the many individuals who make up our institution in all engineering fields and categories.

We also understand that we cannot achieve our vision on our own and we remain committed to working as a team with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure that the services that we provide are responsive and built around equality, diversity and inclusion. However, this teamwork requires that we are on the same page about how we think, relate to one another, respect one another, recognize the value of each person's contribution, are fair and inclusive, and that we work collaboratively to achieve the best results on all days and in all ways.

'Equality, Diversity and inclusion' is broader than the labels of gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, sexual orientation or religious beliefs; it is a way of thinking and an approach to delivering the best results. Through equality, diversity and inclusion' we gain the varied perspectives needed to tackle complex problems and come up with innovative solutions.

Recognizing this, IER is committed to creating an inclusive environment which values, respects and draws on the diverse backgrounds, experiences, knowledge and skills of our people.

The measure of our success will be when IER is respected for its role as a responsible organization and everybody is treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination

It is my sincere invitation to the stakeholders including members of the institutions and individuals to adopt this policy as the vehicle providing guidance and strategic direction for the institutions programs and activities.

On behalf of the Governing Council of the Institution, I express my sincere appreciation to all individuals and our collaborators who provided invaluable contributions during the preparation of this policy.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following definitions of the terms are central to understanding of the policy in IER context.

- **Equality** is the notion that everybody is of equal value and deserves equal respect, dignity and opportunity
 - A situation where all are able to participate and where everyone has the opportunity to fulfill their potential.
 - Breaking down barriers, eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunity and access for all groups, both in employment, and to goods and services; the basis of which is supported and protected by legislation
 - Is the current term for 'Equal Opportunities' and is based on the legal obligation to comply with anti-discrimination legislation that protects people from being discriminated against on the grounds of group membership i.e. sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, belief, etc

- **Diversity** is the presence of differences within a given setting; is a combination of ways in which each of us is like all others, like some others, and like no other
 - Recognizing, valuing and taking account of individuals' different backgrounds, knowledge, skills and experiences to create a more productive and effective harmonious community.
 - Each person is an individual with visible and non-visible differences and by respecting this, everyone can feel valued for their contributions which is beneficial not only for the individual but for everybody

- **Inclusion** is the extent to which all members of a diverse organization are included in important decision-making processes and social interactions
 - Is identifying, understanding and removing barriers that exist to ensure participation and belonging. It focuses on allocating resources to achieve equality of outcome for all.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are not inter-changeable but inter-dependent. There can be no equality of opportunity if differences are not valued and harnessed and taken account of.

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1 OVERVIEW

Law n° 26/2012 of 29/06/2012 governing the professions of engineering and establishing the Institute of Engineers in Rwanda (IER) gives IER the mandate to regulate the engineering profession. This includes; controlling access to the practice of the profession, setting

admission requirements to practice and deciding on applications for admission and setting codes of ethics and other bylaws.

For IER to exercise this mandate and effectively achieve efficiency, it is required to work with and often to advise the whole engineering profession spectrum. The engineering profession spectrum is interpreted to include various actors that include the members of the institution (engineers, technologists, technicians, and artisans) engineering employers, professional engineering institutions charged with upholding engineering standards, the many institutions and outlets that provide academic and vocational education and the various organizations that support and promote engineering. This indeed puts IER in a unique position to make a difference to the society while working with all the above categories and still promote the engineering profession.

This Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy highlights principal guidelines on which IER policies and programs will base to implement their respective obligations across the above mentioned different actors, decision-makers, development partners and the entire population. The policy covers all aspects of equality irrespective of ethnic origin, family or ancestry, clan, skin color or race, sex, region, economic categories, religion or faith, opinion, fortune, cultural differences, language, economic status, physical or mental disability, gender assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, disability and age as outlines in the Rwanda constitution and other bylaws.

The policy orientation also seek to ensure that anyone who works on our behalf demonstrates commitment to equality diversity and inclusion,

The policy will help IER deliver it's vision and uphold it's values, particularly focusing on the members and clients and respecting every individual.

It links closely with several dimensions of IER corporate planning, particularly those associated with customer interactions, care and support and development of the members and employees.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

IER recognizes, respects and values having members with diverse backgrounds within its workforce as an asset and key resource in enhancing and maximizing performance to effectively meet the diverse needs of its service users within its vision. IER also recognizes that passive policies and market forces when left alone do not usually provide equal and encourage diversity in the provision of services that are tailored to people's actual needs but at the same time ensuring fairness.

Consequently within this context, IER will seek create an environment and to promote a framework and measures that need to be in place to provide equality of opportunity and the

facilities that it can provide to its diverse members and job applicants and the community at large.

The main purpose and the aim of the policy will be therefore, to create an environment that shall;

1. Advance equality of opportunity between members of the institution by treating and valuing everybody with dignity and respect regardless of talents or skills, their roles, job titles or standing in the organization and ensure that advancement within IER is determined by objective criteria and personal merit
2. Developing an organizational culture that is supportive of diversity and where all members are encouraged to reach their full potential.
3. Prevent discrimination, zero tolerance for favoritism, cliques and segregated groups based on hierarchical standing, eliminate prejudice, promote inclusion and celebrate diversity within the institution
4. Be fair in our dealings with all people –members of the institution, staff, customers, and partners– with whom we have relationships taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and backgrounds.
5. Ensure that equality diversity and inclusion is embedded in everything we do where biases and prejudices are identified and addressed in an open and honest way by encouraging the exposure of pockets of fear, anxiety, and stress and addresses these before they become embedded in the institution culture.
6. The policy also aims to ensure that the institution comply with all legal and regulatory responsibilities; current requirements are set out principally in the law establishing the institution and different national legislation on discrimination and equality and the IER internal rules and regulatory framework.
7. To promote equal opportunities in areas not currently covered by legislation

As an institution wide policy, it has been formulated through a participatory process that involved various stakeholders. It draws together some of the good practices developed in a range of private and public sector organizations. It has also been the subject of wide consultation with members, the general public, clients, employees and staff and sets out to reflect their requirements and priorities.

1.3 NATIONAL CONTEXT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 and subsequent revisions recognizes human rights as a basic principle and prohibits any form of discrimination¹ of any kind or its propaganda based on, inter alia, ethnic origin, family or ancestry, clan, skin color or race, sex, region, economic categories, religion or faith, opinion, fortune, cultural differences, language,

¹ Article 16: Protection from discrimination

All Rwandans are born and remain equal in rights and freedoms. Discrimination of any kind or its propaganda based on, inter alia, ethnic origin, family or ancestry, clan, skin color or race, sex, region, economic categories, religion or faith, opinion, fortune, cultural differences, language, economic status, physical or mental disability or any other form of discrimination are prohibited and punishable by law.

economic status, physical or mental disability or any other form of discrimination. From article 10 to 44, the constitution guarantees a broad range of rights and lays down the fundamental principles essential for the realization in domestic legislation of other rights set out in the core international human rights instruments.

IER also embraces other existing and scheduled legislation including the labor law especially its article 12 as presenting opportunities for eliminating all forms of discrimination and other relevant equality legislation, codes of practice and relevant best practice guidelines

2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 VISION AND MISSION

2.1.1 VISION

We believe and recognise that the diversity of people and thought is part of our unique social fabric and is one of our greatest strengths and a key to our success.

Our vision for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion remains clear and consistent:

"To become a motivated and a welcoming diverse community, where the members of the institution and staff all demand the highest standards from each other and work together to maximize the benefits of differences we all possess whilst retaining the ability to deliver focused actions to improve the services that we provide to specific diverse groups of the public that we serve in relation to access to services and outcomes".

Our vision for equality and diversity goes beyond documenting the actions we take and more on measuring the outcomes we achieve which includes procedures for handling issues of discrimination.

2.1.2 MISSION

We are committed to ensuring that people are treated fairly and to promoting equality of opportunity for everyone.

We will use our position of influence and work with partners to eliminate any kind of discrimination and ensure that individuals and communities within IER have a sense of shared, common belonging and understanding

As part of our interaction with our service users, and other stakeholders, we will be pro-active and monitor and evaluate our progress made towards meeting our objectives.

3. POLICY STATEMENTS/COMMITMENTS

At the heart of this policy is an approach incorporating equality and diversity into all aspects of our work. We shall do this by addressing and including equality at every stage in our decision making, and by recognizing and encouraging the positive contribution of diversity to the overall performance of IER

This requires a whole organization approach that focuses upon incorporating equality and diversity considerations into following areas:

1. Service delivery
2. Registration and Employment issues
3. Contracting and procurement
4. Managing and monitoring our effectiveness

These four key areas, supported by coherent and effective governance and monitoring arrangements, will provide a focus for embedding our vision for equality and diversity into IER work and ensure that it is proactively addressing equality and diversity issues across all levels, and that identified actions are being met.

3.1 SERVICE DELIVERY

When we deliver services we will:

1. Comply with legal requirements and other relevant codes of practice and good practice guidelines.
2. Integrate equality considerations into all mainstream IER activities, at policy and procedural level, to avoid marginalizing issues.
3. Assess the extent to which our service is accessible, including the assessment of facilities and methods of providing information.
4. Provide information about our services that is clear, accurate and accessible to all.
5. Investigate and respond seriously, confidentially and promptly to complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimization.
6. Complaints will be regularly monitored by number, type and outcome.
7. Promote opportunities for all to comment upon our services – through a robust customer feedback system.
8. Ensure that all members and employees receive appropriate equality and diversity training; such training will be incorporated into a broad range of training methods such as induction, as well as both general and specific training.

3.2 REGISTRATION AND EMPLOYMENT ISSUES

We are committed to ensuring that all those eligible to be members and employees are treated fairly and have equal access regarding membership and jobs and all opportunities to develop and progress from the registration level to all levels within the Institution.

We shall also;

- Listen to, consult with members and employees, and act on their views/aspirations and encourage their forums to take ownership of issues and contribute solutions.

3.3 CONTRACTING AND PROCUREMENT: BUYING SERVICES FROM OTHERS

We aim to ensure that contractors, agencies and suppliers who deliver services and provide goods to us or on our behalf also share our vision and values.

When we buy services, we will:

1. Ensure that anyone seeking work from IER knows about our policy and is clear about the expectations of them.
2. Encourage any company, business or individual wishing to provide goods or services to IER to contribute to our policy by implementing fair practices in employment and training.
3. Monitor the equalities performance of contracts.

3.4 MANAGING AND MONITORING OUR EFFECTIVENESS

IER shall undertake monitoring that not only meets statutory requirements but also aims for best practice and this shall be used to inform and improve our practices. If through monitoring, any discrimination is identified. IER will take corrective action to eliminate it. Such monitoring will be carried out using appropriate statistical analysis and will use the information to measure its record on meeting our equality and diversity policy aims.

The statistics and analysis will be kept by the executive secretariat and shared with all members during the General assembly and will be published as its progress and achievements on equality / diversity in annual reports.

But all that said, the measure of our success will be when IER is respected for its role as a responsible and everybody is treated fairly in an environment which is free from any form of discrimination

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS/STRATEGIES

4.1 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the IER Governing Council, Standing Committees and Members.

The Discipline and Conflict Resolution Committee shall be responsible for everyday implantation of the policy and position decisions issues.(except as otherwise delegated by the Governing Council to another committee)

The Executive Secretariat have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the policy, and to reinforce it through management competence and performance development reviews, to

ensure that it is understood and implemented by all members.

This policy should be considered in conjunction with our codes of practice and all IER members have responsibility its implementation.

All IER members have a duty to:

1. Comply with and promote the Policy.
2. Co-operate with other procedures and practices that complement the Policy.
3. Report any suspected discriminatory actions.
4. Report any suspicion of harassment taking place.
5. Not victimize people because they have made a complaint or have been involved in a complaint of harassment or discrimination.
6. Seek guidance on matters of equality and best practice when unsure of the appropriate course of action.
7. Work within the Code of Ethics as applicable.

4.2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

IER is committed to using the development of performance management to further its equality and diversity objectives as we believe that a key measure of the effectiveness of a service is its impact.

In managing our performance we will:

1. Use impact assessments to further equality and diversity objectives and targets by involving key partners and community representatives in the process.
2. Develop performance indicators which measure both service user's perceptions and service performance.
3. Report performance on equality and diversity indicators as a key part of our Performance Management Reporting Framework
4. Publicize our performance using IER website and other alternative formats

4.3 MAINSTREAMING EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Mainstreaming equality and diversity will mean addressing and including it at every stage in planning, service delivery and review processes.

In practice, this will mean that all of our core activities will take equality and diversity into account and when we develop plans and policies, we will:

1. Ensure that our approach to delivering and monitoring equality and diversity is coordinated and effective.
2. Ensure that our proposals for services, plans, procedures and policies are impact assessed.

3. Design our services to meet the diverse needs of all our communities and ensure that plans and policies do not negatively discriminate against particular groups, either directly or indirectly.
4. Make sure all members, customers, contractors and community groups are aware of our equality policies.
5. Develop specific resources for improving equality practice.
6. Incorporate equality matters into our service including areas such as governance, performance measuring and monitoring and continuous improvement.
7. Set equality targets within service areas as part of the business planning process.
8. Report all equal opportunities information within our performance reporting mechanisms.
9. Review our Equality and Diversity Policy on a regular basis to assess how effectively we are meeting our objectives.
10. Ensure that all IER communications promote images that reflect the full diversity of cultural need and aspirations of the institution
11. Promote both members and public awareness of equality and diversity issues through the establishment of publicity campaigns and the production of a range of publicity materials.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND POLICY ENFORCEMENT

5.1 POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and will be formally reviewed after three years. The review will assess how effectively the objectives of policy are being implemented into practice

This will be done at the following levels:

1. At the Institution level, the policy shall be monitored for its achievements and recommendations for amendments will be considered, together with the monitoring and review report, through a regular review of other policies.
2. At a service level, IER will monitor and review Equality and Diversity achievements through equality indicators set in the performance management system.
3. At the individual level, IER will monitor and review achievements as an integral part of work reviews and personal member's performance management.
4. The executive secretariat and Standing Committees are expected to inform the Governing Council of all formal complaints made. The information provided will remain anonymous and recorded detailing the type of complaint, resolution, any follow up action taken.
5. The impact of the Equality and Diversity Policy will be monitored through the

- collection and analysis of these anonymous statistics.
6. Publish the results of monitoring on the IER website.

5.2 ENFORCEMENT

1. All incidents of direct or indirect discrimination by a member or staff are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.
2. All incidents of direct discrimination by Service Users will be dealt with in the first instance by the member providing the services, and in the event of a failure to agree satisfactory remedies, the matter will be dealt with under the terms of the Service User agreement/contract with the institution.
3. IER will not treat lightly or ignore grievances from members of disadvantaged groups on the assumption that they are over-sensitive about discrimination. All complaints / grievances will be dealt with consistently.

5.2.1 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

1. Any member of the institution or staff found to be in breach of this policy will be will be counselled on their actions and may, where necessary, be removed from the members register subject to and in line with the Standard disciplinary procedures in the internal rules and regulations and the Code of ethics for the case of members and the Terms of Employment for the case of staff members.
2. Any Service User found in breach of this policy will, where appropriate, be counselled on their actions and may, where necessary, be refused future services from IER

6. RESOURCES

The implementation of the policy will require financial, physical, human and technological resources.

Based on policy objectives and available resource, the budget for the policy and the rules for its use shall be jointly decided by the Discipline and Conflict Resolution Committee in corroboration with the Finance and resources mobilization Committee.