



Board Kit: EDI Assessment and Planning

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The EDI Board Kit and the 50 – 30 Challenge

This board kit aims to provide an accessible tool for leaders to assess the diversity and skill-sets of their board members and benchmark their board's progress on their Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) journey. This kit has been designed to support organizations committed to the [50 – 30 Challenge](#), giving meaningful guidance on both data collection and essential frameworks to achieve and sustain 50 – 30 goals and beyond.

Abundant evidence illustrates that leadership buy-in toward EDI goals is one of the most important predictors of their success. This kit has been assembled in recognition of the profound impact that boards have on broader workplace culture and the capacity of their organizations to strategize, resource, execute, and refine a comprehensive EDI strategy.

By enhancing the representation of boards and better equipping these leaders to co-own EDI programs, organizations create the conditions necessary for people of all identities, backgrounds, and lived experiences to meaningfully participate and transform workplaces and organizational systems for the better.

This kit includes a Board EDI maturity table and Board Self-Assessment Tool and Dashboard with notes and instructions for how to most effectively leverage and tailor both to an organization's unique context.

We encourage you to check out the [What Works Toolkit](#) and the [challenge website](#) for additional tactics and resources.


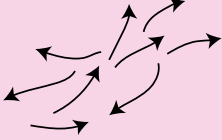
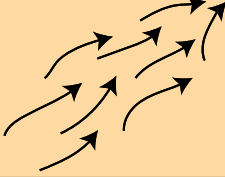
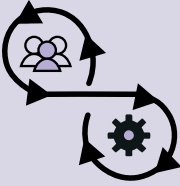
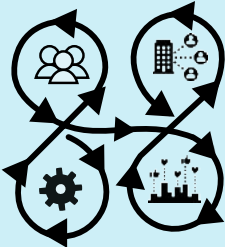
Board EDI Maturity Table

The table provides boards with a framework to assess, improve, and evolve EDI processes, capabilities, and performance in specific areas, including:

- Representation
- Recruitment
- Board Selection
- EDI Prioritization
- EDI Goal-Setting
- EDI Decision-Making

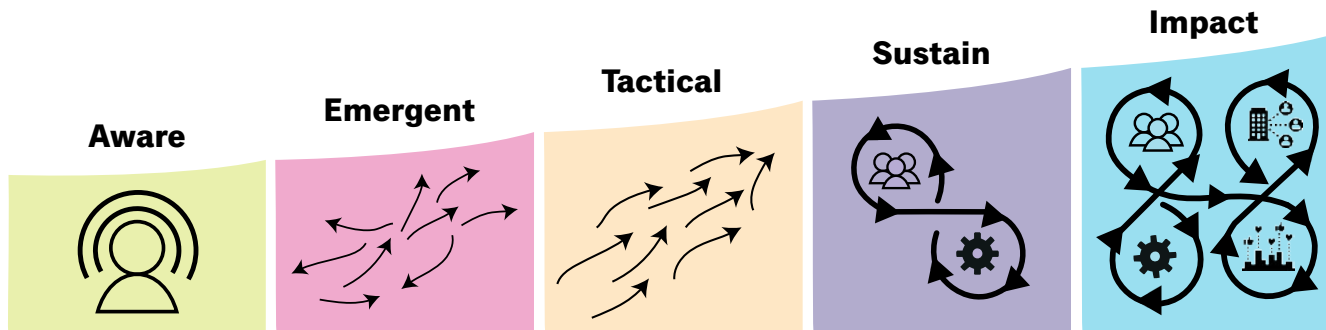
The table has several stages or levels, each representing a different level of commitment, awareness, and action regarding EDI. It's important to understand that the EDI journey isn't linear, and organizations can be considered at the "Impact" level in some respects and "Aware" in other areas.

Board EDI Maturity Table

	 AWARE	 EMERGENT	 TACTICAL	 SUSTAIN	 IMPACT
50 — 30 challenge Representation	Board has plans to commit to 50 — 30 challenge.	Board has committed to 50 — 30 challenge and is working toward goals.	Board has achieved part of the 50 — 30 challenge; either 50% are women or gender expansive people, OR at least 30% are from IPEDGs.	Board has met core 50 — 30 challenge goals; 50% are women or gender expansive people, and at least 30% are from IPEDGs.	Board has sustained 50 - 30 Challenge goals for at least 5 years and, for 2 of those years, has exceeded these goals by at least 10%. Board has representation from member(s) of the communities they serve. Board has created goals around dimensions of diversity outside of official 50 - 30 IPEDGs (e.g. age, immigration/migration experience, socioeconomic status, etc.) informed by geographically specific population benchmarks and has met those goals for at least two consecutive years.
Representation	At a high-level, the Board is committed to "promoting diversity" but has not had formal discussions around existing gaps in representation.	Board has discussed gaps in representation for gender and IPEDGs, but has not formally determined the gaps that exist.	Board has identified gaps in representation for gender and IPEDGs.	Board has clear and disaggregated information on gaps in representation across a broad range of identities beyond gender and official 50 – 30 IPEDGs. Board incorporates intersectionality into gap analysis.	Board regularly analyzes representation gaps in Board tenure, identifying negative turnover patterns among non-dominant groups. In addition to the overall Board, Board analyzes representation gaps in key leadership (e.g. Board Officers) and committee roles (e.g. Finance). Board regularly communicates with EDI advisory or affinity groups (from community served and/or employee groups) centered around different dimensions of diversity (e.g. ability, caregiving, gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, etc.) in recognition that no one Board member can represent the needs or experience of an entire community.
Recruitment	Board is recruited through existing board member networks and only candidates at the executive or C-Suite level are considered.	Board is recruited through existing board member networks and candidates one or two levels below the executive level are considered in recognition that this level is slow to diversify.	Board recruitment incorporates a deliberate outreach strategy to connect with candidates outside Board member networks and referrals to diversify candidate pools.	Board creates pipelines that connect them with candidates that bring new perspectives, backgrounds, and lived experiences. Board has a fulsome EDI recruitment strategy in place with tactics to connect with under- and un-represented groups.	Board employs the help of a specialized EDI recruitment firm for external support. Board opportunities are widely communicated through multiple channels. Board has made connections with leading professional organizations and local community organizations dedicated to groups experiencing marginalization to enhance recruitment pipeline. Board devotes a meaningful portion of their budget to identifying prospective Board members from non-dominant groups and conducting targeted outreach to encourage them to apply. Board hosts annual event(s) with the goal of recruiting prospective Board members from non-dominant groups.

	AWARE	EMERGENT	TACTICAL	SUSTAIN	IMPACT
Recruitment process	Recruitment process for Board members has not been reviewed for bias, but there are active discussions to do it.	A bias review of Board recruitment processes is in progress.	Recruitment process for board members has been reviewed for bias and board has prioritized key action items from the review	Recruitment process for Board members has been reviewed for bias specifically based on groups that are currently un- or under-represented on the Board.	<p>Board reviews recruitment processes annually for bias in consultation with groups that are un- or under-represented on the Board and EDI subject matter experts.</p> <p>Has surveyed current, former, and rejected Board members for feedback relating to their recruitment processes.</p> <p>Enables members and organizational team to give constructive feedback relating to recruitment processes anonymously.</p> <p>Board has instituted a formalized process for addressing key findings related to bias in recruitment with proven results.</p>
Criteria for selection	There are no formal criteria for board member selection; selections are made based on "gut" feelings, or based on personal networks. There are plans to create selection criteria that have not been executed yet.	Criteria for Board member selection has been standardized, and is based on operational needs (eg- fundraising, legal counsel, accounting, etc). Board discusses the value of diversity, but this value is not meaningfully operationalized in processes.	Criteria for Board member selection has been formalized and goes beyond operational needs to ensure that there is representation from the communities that the organization serves. Formal evaluation criterion ranks candidates more positively who bring new perspectives, backgrounds and lived experiences.	Criteria for Board member selection is formalized, goes beyond operational needs, and board has instituted "Mansfield Rule," requiring that at least 3 or 4 candidates from groups experiencing underrepresentation on the Board advance to interviews before selection decisions are made.	<p>Selection processes are standardized and go beyond operational needs.</p> <p>All Board members and personnel responsible for selection-related decisions have gone through bias training and have a toolkit they can reference to refresh and operationalize learnings.</p> <p>Board has instituted a policy where, depending on size, a certain percentage (e.g. 30%) or number of seats (e.g. 3 for Boards composed of 9 or more people) are reserved for women, gender-expansive people, and IPEDGs.</p>
EDI prioritization	Board does not yet discuss EDI issues in meetings.	Board discusses emergent EDI issues, for example, challenges at the organization, or in response to global events.	Board has dedicated agenda items relating to EDI topics for approximately 50% of meetings.	Board has dedicated time relating to EDI in every meeting, with set action items and follow-up on prior action items.	<p>Board communicates the progress on EDI in meetings to stakeholders, such as organization leadership, the broader organization, and the public.</p> <p>Board creates annual EDI report summarizing EDI progress, programming, achievements, and growth opportunities shared with organization and made public online for accountability.</p> <p>The Board has an official and active EDI committee with a consistent dedicated annual budget.</p> <p>All Board retreats have dedicated EDI activities, learning opportunities, and agenda items.</p>

	AWARE	EMERGENT	TACTICAL	SUSTAIN	IMPACT
EDI goals	Board has not yet set EDI goals.	Board has collective goals for EDI.	Board has set broad timelines for collective EDI goals.	Collective EDI goals have specific timelines and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Board consistently achieves EDI goals and sustains them year-over-year. Progress on collective EDI goals, their timelines, and KPIs are shared internally and externally. EDI goals go beyond representation and are woven into every part of operations including inclusive leadership, psychological safety, programming, marketing, and more.
EDI consultation-external partners in EDI	Board has not yet made formal EDI-related strategies.	Board has drafted EDI strategy, but does not consult with EDI specialists when designing EDI-related strategies.	Board consults with EDI specialists when designing some aspects of their EDI-related strategies, but mostly makes decisions internally as a board.	Board consults with EDI specialists for all EDI-related strategies.	Board consults with EDI specialists for strategies and decisions beyond EDI to ensure EDI is baked into board actions and organization product, service, and/or experience.
EDI engagement-IPEDGs (employees, communities served)	Board does not yet make formal EDI-related decisions.	Board does not consult with IPEDGs for feedback on EDI-related decisions.	Board consults with some IPEDGs when making EDI-related decisions, but is limited to 1 or 2 types of identities.	Board consults with some IPEDGs when making all EDI-related decisions, but is limited to 1 or 2 types of identities.	Boards centers consultations with IPEDGs when making EDI-related decisions and strategies, and strives to include as many identities as possible. Surveys and engagement with IPEDGs find that Board members are EDI champions. Board has created specific advisory circles or affinity groups organized around different dimensions of diversity to streamline this feedback process.
Term limits	Board does not have a term limit. There have been multiple discussions around implementing one, but no action yet.	A term limit has been set for Board members. It is greater than 7 consecutive years.	A term limit has been set for Board members. It is smaller than 6 consecutive years.	Term limits are set for Board members that are smaller than 6 consecutive years. Board members who have met their term limit are allowed to serve as advisors to the Board. Board has added at least one temporary Board seat specifically to promote diversity without waiting for turnover.	Term limits are set for Board members that are smaller than 6 consecutive years. Board members who have met their term limit are allowed to serve as advisors. Board has added at least one permanent Board seat specifically to promote diversity without waiting for turnover.



How this EDI Maturity Table supports EDI growth

Assessment/Benchmarking

By placing themselves on the maturity table, boards can assess where they currently are in specific key indexes for advancing EDI work. The table helps to identify areas for improvement and benchmark performance.

Board Strategy

The table identifies five stages of maturity, ranging from initial practices to well-defined, optimized, and leading practices with impact. Boards can use the stages to set realistic and achievable goals for improvement and create plans to move from one stage to the next. This allows boards to create a clear and defined path for development and growth.

Continuous Improvement

Evolving practices, procedures, and strategies are key to furthering EDI work. The table helps create and promote a culture of continuous improvement by encouraging boards to continue this work. By identifying areas that are less developed, boards can create tangible strategies for targeted improvements and track their progress.

Resource Allocation

The table assists boards in allocating resources efficiently and effectively by identifying and prioritizing areas at lower stages. In this way, boards can focus efforts and resources where they're most needed.

Board Matrix and Dashboard

The Board Matrix and Dashboard have been developed so that boards can easily track key areas of representation across diversity dimensions (e.g. ability, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.) and relevant board-specific information (e.g. tenure, expertise, committees, etc.). The tool provides a quick overview and one-stop reference for board representation, gaps analysis, and progress related to the 50 – 30 Challenge.

You can access the Board Matrix and Dashboard template here: [Board Matrix and Dashboard](#)

Using the Board Matrix and Dashboard

To customize the tool for your organization, you can download or make a copy of the sheet. The file has three tabs. The first one has instructions. You'll enter your data only in the 'Board Information' tab, where each column represents a board member, and there are a range of assessment areas for board members to answer to the best of their ability and comfort levels.

Once each member has inputted their information, the board will have a more holistic understanding of their representation across demographics, expertise, sectors, tenure, and more. The board will also get a sense of their most pressing gaps and growth opportunities relating to representation to address as they refine their EDI strategy and tactics.

All the data inputted into the 'Board Information' tab will automatically be filtered and aggregated into the 'Organizational Dashboard,' which will summarize how your data translates to 50 – 30 Challenge goals. Be careful to avoid making any substantial edits to the sheets to preserve the functionality of your copy of the template.

Privacy/Confidentiality

The relatively small size of many boards presents some challenges in preserving anonymity while assessing representation. For this reason and others, performing an assessment like this requires a high level of trust among board members both in the group as a collective as well as in the process itself. Transparent and sound protocols for storing, communicating, and sharing data will need to be in place.

Here are some leading practices the board should collectively consider before conducting the self-assessment:

- Limit access to raw data to one person, such as the EDI committee chair, organizational Human Resources lead, or a trusted third-party vendor
- Only report data in aggregate
- Use data for internal purposes only
- Do not share data externally without consent
- Ensure everyone knows that any data shared must be treated as strictly confidential
- Use strong encryption methods to ensure there is no unauthorized access to data
- Utilize secure communication channels for any submission and/or transmission of data
- Limit data retention periods and regularly dispose of data that is no longer needed for legitimate purposes

Customizing Your Tool

There are a number of sections in the self-assessment tool that will vary based on your organization's mission, scale, scope, and operations. Before using the Self-Assessment tool, we encourage you to review and customize certain assessment areas outlined below or even add new ones based on your organization's unique context:

Committees

Each board will create a range of committees suited to their scope of work and strategic vision. Please customize this section to the current committees on your board. If your board does not have a committee dedicated to EDI, we recommend starting discussions to assemble one.

Skill-Sets and Expertise

Every organizational board will require a different and evolving set of skills and expertise to achieve their goals and set their organization up for success. We encourage you to add or remove skills from this section depending on which expertise is most important to your board's responsibilities, and the organization's operations and overall objectives. For example, depending on the key functions of your organization, the skills "Advocacy and Public Affairs," "International Development," "Volunteer Mobilization," and more, may or may not be relevant.

Connection to Community

It is leading practice for boards to have specific representation from the communities they serve to minimize bias and have direct community knowledge shape board strategy and decision-making. This will vary depending on the board's mission, but could include:

- Board member who is formerly incarcerated if serving this population.
- Board member who is from low-income background if serving lower income communities.
- Board member who is a young person if serving youth.

Geographic Representation

Depending on where your organization operates and future goals, different geographic areas may be relevant depending on local (e.g. Toronto), provincial (e.g. Quebec), regional (e.g. Northern Canada), national (e.g. Canada), multinational (e.g. North America), or global scales. For example, if you are an organization that serves the Greater Toronto Area, you may evaluate board representation by examining representation in Toronto, Peel, or Halton.

Or, if you were an organization with a more global scope, you may include:

- Americas (e.g. North America, South America, Central America, Caribbean)
- Asia-Pacific (e.g. Central Asia, East Asia, South Asia, Southeastern Asia, Australia and Oceania)
- Europe (Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Eastern Europe, Western Europe)
- Middle East/Africa (Middle East, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa)

Getting Started

- 1. Define Diversity:** Determine what dimensions of diversity are relevant and meaningful to your organization.
 - a. The [50 – 30 Challenge](#) encourages organizations to examine representation relating to gender, ability, Indigenous community membership, race/ethnicity, and sexuality.
 - b. Organizations may also consider monitoring representation relating to age, caregiving responsibilities, geographic background, faith/spirituality, immigration/migration experiences, language, and more.
- 2. Build Skills Inventory:** Determine what skills and expertise are most relevant and needed for the board.
- 3. Customize Assessment:** Download and customize the Board Self-Assessment Tool and Dashboard in accordance with what demographics and skills are relevant for your board and organization.
- 4. Conduct Assessment:** Conduct the Board-Self Assessment following leading practices to preserve confidentiality.
- 5. Benchmark:** Review total aggregated results and the Dashboard to benchmark the current state relating to the 50 – 30 Challenge and specific organizational priorities.
- 6. Gaps Analysis:** Perform gaps analysis by comparing current performance to 50 – 30 Challenge metrics and available demographic data relevant to your geographic context.
- 7. Board Matrix:** Download the Board Matrix and determine what stage your organization is at for each dimension.
- 8. Goal-Setting:** Based on the Self-Assessment analysis and Board Matrix results, set realistic and achievable recruitment goals for the board.
 - a. These goals should align with your organization’s priorities, leading practice, and where resources are most needed.
 - b. Goals should be created that help the board improve along each dimension of the Board Matrix.
- 9. Action Plan Development:** Create a plan to meet goals over time with specific tactics and strategies to drive progress.
- 10. Action Plan Implementation:** Put the action plan into practice and monitor progress regularly.
- 11. Review and Iterate:** Regularly update the Board Self-Assessment Tool and Board Matrix to track changes in board composition and assess the effectiveness of your EDI action plan. Reevaluate the plan as needed and adapt it to address persistent gaps and new growth opportunities.
- 12. Promote Transparency:** With consent, consider sharing relevant information from analyses and progress toward goals with those impacted by the organization to demonstrate your commitment and promote accountability.

Remember, integrating EDI principles into the purpose and composition of your board is an ongoing process that requires consistent dedication, resourcing, and effort. By leveraging this kit, your organization can take meaningful action toward a more representative and effective leadership team.

Key Terms

50 – 30 Challenge: An initiative to encourage Canadian organizations to increase their representation of women and/or gender-expansive people, Indigenous Peoples and other members of equity-deserving groups in boards and senior leadership.

Diversity: A relational concept, examining the composition of teams and organizations and measured on a collective whole. An important distinction is that an individual person is not “diverse”, but teams and organizations must be.

EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion): A framework of principles and practices that aims at creating a work environment wherein all people are treated fairly and respectfully and have access to advancements and opportunities.

Equity: A principle that ensures that people have access to the same opportunities, resources, and treatments, irrespective of their background, lived experiences, and characteristics. Equity-focused initiatives understand that individuals come from unique places and thus may require different levels of support to achieve similar outcomes.

Inclusion: A term that relates to the quality of the experience designed for people, whether in their teams or organizations, as well as the services provided.

Indigenous Peoples: We use Indigenous Peoples as an umbrella term for groups with a special constitutional relationship with Canada, including treaty rights. The Government of Canada recognizes Indigenous self-government and has committed to a nation-to-nation relationship with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

IPEDG (Indigenous Peoples and Equity-Deserving Groups): A term to capture groups often underrepresented in organizations, particularly on boards and senior leadership. Includes Indigenous Peoples, Racialized people, Black people, and/or people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ people, and more.

You can learn more about inclusive language and community terminology by checking out our [Inclusive Language Guides](#).