

IISD-ELA Gender Equality and Diversity Policy

Purpose

This policy provides a framework to which all other procedures and policies should conform. It gives direction to IISD Experimental Lakes Area (IISD-ELA) staff, consultants, interns, and the board to create a work environment that values the differences between staff and fosters fairness, dignity, and respect for all people. IISD-ELA wants to attract, retain, and accommodate the most talented people, regardless of their backgrounds and identities. IISD-ELA intends to provide an environment where employees are empowered and supported to share their talents and where they feel valued and included.

IISD-ELA has specific action plans to achieve these goals through IISD's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) framework.

Scope

This policy applies to all IISD-ELA representatives, including the board of directors, employees, volunteers, associates, and consultants.

Definitions

Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities, experiences, and characteristics we all possess.

Inclusion is about the collective. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, accepts, and values difference.

Diversity and inclusion are about capturing the uniqueness of the individual and creating an environment that values and respects individuals for their talents, backgrounds, skills, and experiences to the benefit of the collective.

The DE&I committee for IISD and IISD-ELA defines **equity** as a principle and process that promotes fair conditions for all people to fully participate in society. It recognizes that while all people have the right to be treated equally, not all people experience equal access to resources, opportunities, or benefits. Achieving equality does not necessarily mean treating individuals or groups in the same way but may require the use of specific measures to ensure fairness.

Systemic barriers are policies, practices, or procedures that result in some people receiving unequal access or being excluded. For example, eligibility criteria can effectively exclude people based on a disability, such as requiring a job applicant to have a driver's licence, even though there are ways to reorganize the job to use other forms of transportation (source: [The Accessibility for Manitobans Act](#)).

Gender equality means that people's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities do not depend on their gender. At IISD-ELA, the aspirations and needs of women, men, and non-binary, non-conforming, genderfluid, genderqueer, and transgender people are considered, valued, and treated equally.

The types of diversity that IISD-ELA wishes to foster are stated in IISD's DE&I framework.

Policy

Responsibility

All IISD-ELA staff, consultants, and the board will uphold the principles of gender equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion in carrying out their various roles within IISD-ELA and in their interactions with the public. Please refer to the Roles and Responsibilities section in the IISD DE&I framework.

IISD-ELA adheres to all labour and employment legislation in the jurisdictions where we work to ensure human rights are protected and best practices are followed.

Commitment

In its operations, IISD-ELA will do the following:

- Eliminate discrimination and abuse in the workplace and in our national and international field operations on the basis of gender and other protected characteristics, such as race, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, disability, and other forms of diversity as identified in IISD's DE&I framework.
- Aim for gender balance and representation of people with other protected characteristics in our workforce across all levels of the organization, including senior management, through our recruitment and selection efforts.
- Prohibit and prevent all forms of violence and harassment in the workplace, as described in the Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Policies.
- Create a working environment where all employees feel enabled/supported to balance their personal and professional lives without negative impacts on career advancement.
- Provide equitable access for all employees to professional development opportunities.
- Implement training programs to ensure it is understood that discriminatory behaviour, including matters such as biased and bullying behaviour, is not tolerated.
- Promote accountability for supervisors and leaders so that the DE&I framework can be everyone's responsibility in the organization.
- Raise staff awareness on diversity and gender equality principles and practices across all levels, including senior management, and enhance gender expertise within the organization.

- Be committed to gender equality, diversity, and equity within the IISD-ELA community and to fostering a welcoming and inclusive workplace.
- Adopt gender and sexually inclusive language (such as pronouns) in our work, workplace, and everyday communication
- Additionally, Human Resources will regularly review and update policies, procedures, and practices with respect to staff recruitment, administration, physical structures, communications, operations, and activities to assist in the elimination of systemic barriers and any discrimination.

In its programs, IISD-ELA will do the following:

- Access and allocate resources for work on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI), including targeted GESI initiatives and the integration of GESI into ongoing and planned programs.
- Collaborate with organizations with a proven track record on GESI for sustainable development. Women-led, feminist, and 2SLGBTQI+ organizations are important stakeholders in these endeavours.
- Analyze and address gender and social issues related to the sustainable development outcomes we aim to achieve.
- Influence sustainable development policies and legislation to support GESI.
- Track and report on GESI activities and outcomes in relevant initiatives to provide thought leadership on issues related to GESI and sustainable development.

How to Safely Report Cases of Non-Compliance by IISD-ELA Staff

As IISD-ELA representatives, employees are usually the first to be aware of non-compliance with this policy, and they must be able to raise legitimate issues openly and honestly without fear of negative consequences.

Any questions or concerns regarding behaviours that conflict with this policy should be reported to Human Resources.

People can make confidential complaints by email to Pauline Gerrad, executive director (pgerrard@iisd-ela.org), without any fear of reprisals.

In situations where you prefer to place an anonymous report, you are encouraged to use the ethics hotline, EthicsPoint, hosted by a third-party hotline provider, NavEx Global.

The affected person may use any of the following methods to submit a report:

1. Select the **“Make a Report”** link on the [EthicsPoint web page](#). The web page is hosted on a third-party server and therefore is completely confidential.
2. Dial the toll-free hotline number within the United States and Canada: 1-844-955-1643
3. Use the [NavEx mobile app](#)

What Happens Once Misconduct Is Reported

If a complaint is made, IISD's human resources team will immediately commence their investigation work.

Related Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

- IISD-ELA Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest

Policy Review and Revision

Review cycle: This policy will be reviewed regularly, and at least every 5 years by the policy owner to ensure its relevance and accuracy.

Revision history:

Date	Version	Description of Changes	Approved By
June 16, 2026	1.0	Initial policy release, in the IISD-ELA template	Pauline Gerrard, Executive Director, IISD-ELA