



Diverse Sustainability Initiative (DSI) Strategy

June 2023

Background

This document outlines the processes that the DSI has decided to embed. This will give you a clearer understanding of the DSI and the ongoing work over the next few years.

The overall goal of the Diverse Sustainability Initiative is to build a profession and sector that, over time, is reflective of modern Britain. It will result in a diverse group of people working in and engaging with the environment and sustainability profession and wider NGO movement. This is a long-term goal, which could take a generation to resolve as it is a deep-seated problem with a lot of complexity.

The purpose of the DSI is to improve diversity through education, connection, and transparency to support current professionals and increase appeal and access for future and potential professionals. This journey starts with breaking down barriers for minority ethnic groups before expanding into other minority or disadvantaged groups.

What the DSI has achieved so far

- Created a new mission & vision
- Built a website with a large, free, resource section, which includes over 15 blogs
- DSI governance structure introduced in Autumn 2022
- Launched a pilot webinar series to support partners on their EDI journey
- 38+ partners have signed up to the initiative
- PoC Network established, with 40+ members
- LGBTQIA+ Network launched
- A process in place for commitment accountability, through the annual partner survey

Governance model

Chosen model: Social movement and backbone approach

Created to harness the collective energy of people working on this agenda across the profession. Bringing together different skills and energies of people wanting to bring about change through a more informal network that enables a wide range of perspectives.

2023 for the DSI

Objectives

To educate and collaborate. By providing our DSI partners with the tools, best practice and support to change our thinking as well as our recruitment processes to promote a diverse workplace.

Where can we drive change?

The below table highlights the challenges that we have identified, based on the research found, and some proposed solutions to drive change.



Challenges

Lack of understanding from young people about what an environment/ sustainability job involves or an understanding of the progression pathways.

Proposed Action

- Careers guidance and engagement in schools, targeting both young people and their advisors. This can be done by partnering with a charity.
- Working collaboratively with IEMA's Green Careers Hub.
- Supporting young people build confidence and overcome imposter syndrome via mentoring and workshops in schools.
- Making connections between young people and employers, paid/voluntary opportunities in the local area.

Challenges

Lack of support for those entering the profession from underrepresented backgrounds.

Proposed Action

- Targeted mentorship programmes, offering DSI partners to mentor people of colour in the profession on soft skills.
- Hosting a series of workshops for young people of colour entering the profession.

Challenges

Lack of knowledge and understanding from leaders on how to implement change, and support underrepresented groups.

Proposed Action

- Workshops for senior leadership to develop and implement organisational change plans for greater inclusion.
- Sharing resources on our website.
- Using the full colour roadmap as a reference document to help direct partners.



Challenges

Addressing biases from middle managers.

Proposed Action

- Ensuring that middle managers are also invited to the webinar and best practice series that the DSI hold. Including a session specifically tailored for middle managers.
- Encourage CEOs to explain the reasoning for their commitments to their own staff & involving them in the process, where possible.
- Offering middle managers to join as a DSI volunteer.

Challenges

Lack of support for people of colour in their current roles.

Proposed Action

- Ensuring that the PoC networks feedback is addressed and fed through the CEO meetings.
- Offering people of colour in the network the chance to complete an inclusion survey at the end of the year to ensure that we are addressing current barriers.
- Ensuring that our partners are given support to address antiracism in the workplace and inclusive practices.

Challenges

Keeping all partner organisations engaged with the DSI.

Proposed Action

- Hosting an annual face-to-face meeting for partners and networks.
- Keeping a process in place whereby the partners updating their commitments remain on the website.
- Engaging with the DSI partners 1:1, on a 6-month basis to track progress and offer support where possible.

Challenges

No unified understanding amongst partners on what good practice looks like and how to get there.

Proposed Action

- Webinars from our DSI partners showcasing good practice case studies across different areas

of organisations (e.g. recruitment, HR, etc) and converting these into blogs after the session to showcase on our website for any external leaders.

- A communication channel for partners to share best and bad practices with one another, to prevent the same mistakes being repeated.

Challenges

Attracting people of colour to pursue a role in the profession.

Proposed Action

- Increasing diverse representation across the GCH and showcasing varied journeys into the profession.
- Encouraging best practice series from people

from underrepresented backgrounds.

- Encouraging blogs from people from underrepresented backgrounds.
- Outreach to schools to engage students from diverse areas. This might begin on a smaller scale by beginning talks at schools.

Challenges

Lack of collaboration with other initiatives or individuals working on a similar project.

Proposed Action

- Regular engagement with other initiatives doing similar work, to ensure that we aren't working in silos.
- Transparency around the work we are doing, by sharing this on our website.

Challenges

Smaller organisations wanting to make a change but struggling with little resource.

Proposed Action

- A channel for smaller partners to support one another with challenges.
- Consider supporting smaller organisations by funding

their ticket for future DSI webinars. This might be something that larger partners can support with.

- Ensure that webinars, workshops and the best practice series also consider smaller organisations and how they can create change on a smaller scale.
- Build up our DSI volunteer network to enable support for smaller organisations.



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for more information.**

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