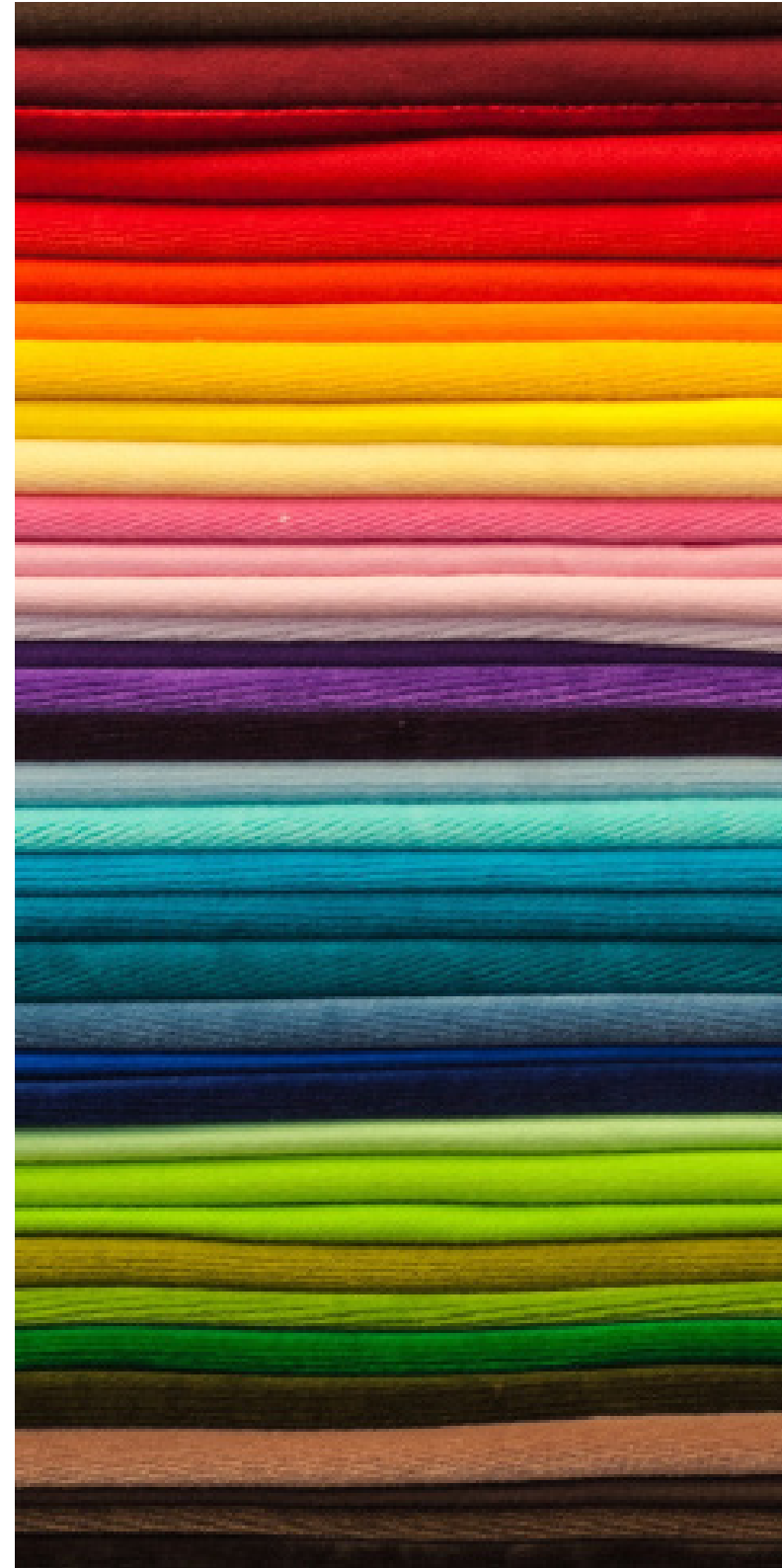




Action Plan 2021

Focus: Professionals from minority ethnic groups



About the Diverse Sustainability Initiative



The Diverse Sustainability Initiative is a new collaborative sector-wide programme of work with the vision to transform diversity within the environment and sustainability profession.

Given a rapidly changing, more urban and more mixed-race population, it is imperative that the environment sector changes and adapts. If it does not, there is a danger that it will be irrelevant, and unworthy of financial or political support, by the communities it seeks to work in partnership with on a transition to sustainability and zero-carbon.

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 in 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 Diverse Sustainability Initiative 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 breaking down barriers for different underrepresented groups.

The Diverse Sustainability Initiative's approach to this work will be to engage minority groups throughout a process of:

- Listening and understanding – establishing exactly what barriers and challenges are present for different groups within society.
- Innovation and action – convening multiple areas of the sector to develop programmes of work that will break down barriers and eradicate challenges for minority groups, while being held accountable by representatives from each group.
- Communication, monitoring and reporting on targets – establish sector-wide strategies to progress action and report on changes, ensuring the work is public, accountable and making demonstrable progress towards a diverse profession.

Improving diversity will take a generation to achieve in its entirety, as it required a shift in mindset and wholesale systems changes to engage a new generation of environment and sustainability professionals. However, this approach will ensure that consistent, iterative solutions are enacted and progress made at different milestones.

Introduction



The Diverse Sustainability Initiative is well positioned to educate, connect and open the environment and sustainability profession - by increasing the diversity of environment and sustainability professionals and of staff within the sector.

We have the opportunity to educate existing professionals on how to be anti-racist and we have the ability to educate the wider sector and general public about heritage and intersectionality in the environment. We can connect current People of Colour in the profession to provide a strong, active network and we can connect People of Colour entering the sector with experienced professionals to provide support. We can interrogate our systems, set transparent targets and convene accountability groups to ensure that the profession is open and accessible to all.

The next few pages lay out ideas for the 2021 Action Plan for the Diverse Sustainability Initiative and outline plans for development of the strategy post 2021.



Educate



Connect



Open



Current profession



Educate

Championing diversity

Full education programme for professionals on how to increase and support diversity in the sustainability sector. The education programme will explore topics such as confronting unconscious bias, being an ally, and anti-racism.

Research programme

A series of research pieces that explore the challenges, barriers and solutions for all aspects of diversity within the environment and sustainability sector across the world.

Heritage and intersectionality

Communications campaigns to educate the public on the natural, built and cultural heritage within the environment sector, and intersectionality and the environment, with specific reference to minority and marginalised groups.

Connect

Professionals Network for People of Colour

Development of a sector-wide network to provide a space for professionals to network, support other, develop and progress, which hosts events, influences the strategic direction of the sector and holds organisations to account.

Professionals buddy system

One-to-one buddy system for new professionals entering the environment and sustainability sector, connecting them with senior professionals and allies to support development and progression.

Reverse mentoring

Providing senior level White professionals with an opportunity to learn about the experiences of colleagues from minority ethnic groups who are entering the profession.

Open

Transparent targets

Key performance indicators on different areas of diversity to be set in each organisation within the profession, which are reported on publicly.

CEOs accountability group

Roundtable of CEOs within the environment and sustainability sector who meet regularly to challenge progress on diversity and set strategic directions throughout the duration of this strategy.

Professionals accountability group

Roundtable of professionals from ethnic minority groups within the environment and sustainability sector who meet regularly to hold CEOs and the profession to account on the targets set.

Future profession



Educate

Careers in sustainability

Communications campaign to promote the environment and sustainability profession as a viable career choice for young People of Colour, aimed at young individuals and their families.

Schools programme

Outreach campaign to schools across the UK to embed environment and sustainability as a viable career option, and viable course choices at level 2 and above.

University programme

Outreach campaign to embed the environment and sustainability sector as a viable career option for all relevant degrees.

Connect

Website with partner sign up

Build a website for the sector on diversity and how to improve it. The website will include tools and an option for partners to sign up to a commitment to diversifying the future profession and supporting current professionals in their organisations.

Sector networks and action groups

Create space for environmental consultancies, ENGOs, professional bodies and DEFRA to collaborate on diversity actions to diversify the future profession and support People of Colour currently working in the profession.

Open

Access via apprenticeship

Promoting the new apprenticeship via networks for People of Colour, as an opportunity to access the profession without requiring a degree.

Reviewing accessibility

Engage with recruitment agencies who specialise in diversity to review recruitment and management practices in organisations across the sector, for both staff and members.

Kickstarter programme

Possible opportunity to partner with SOS-UK to promote the Kickstarter programme through sector networks and action groups, ensuring that young People of Colour have access to newly created environment and sustainability roles.

Post 2021



Strategic planning

This is just the beginning of a far-reaching piece of work, we will not stop once action has begun to address ethnic and racial inequalities, we will actively pursue opportunities to create other networks.

Throughout 2021 activity will be undertaken to understand the challenges, barriers and prejudices that people already face within the profession, and what barriers there might be for minority groups in accessing the profession or sector in future.

This research activity will lead way for a five year strategic plan that will start to increase appeal and access among minority communities.

Review of 2021 action

There will be four roundtables to hold the Diverse Sustainability Initiative and its partners to account. Professional members from ethnic minority backgrounds will be invited to meetings to assess and challenge progress, and CEOs of organisations in the sector will be invited to scrutinise the work of each other along with this programme.