Alliance4Life

From Measures to Impact

What Makes GEDI Measures Work in Practice

Practical lessons from Alliance4Life institutions

Alliance4Life Bridging the Research and Innovation Gap in Life Sciences
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alliance4Life institutions have invested considerable effort in gender equality, diversity and inclusion (GEDI). Many institutions have introduced policies, action plans, training programmes and support measures. However, the findings of Alliance4Life show that introducing a measure does not automatically mean that it will achieve the intended impact.

This guide was developed in response to a simple observation:

Institutions often know what they have implemented, but not always whether it works in practice.

The guide builds on the findings of A4L_BRIDGE project Deliverable D1.2 *Best Practices of HR Management*[1]. The findings revealed that employee experiences do not always match institutional intentions and that similar implementation challenges occur across institutions regardless of their size, context or level of experience.

Rather than focusing on which GEDI measures institutions should implement, this guide focuses on what makes measures more likely to succeed.

[1] Available at: https://alliance4life.com/media/3920924/a4l_bridge_d11-research-culture-assessments_101136453docx.pdf (pp. 23-124)





The guide identifies **five factors** that consistently influence whether a measure achieves its intended objectives.

01 UNDERSTAND THE PROBLEM BEFORE DESIGNING THE SOLUTION

Effective measures are based on evidence rather than assumptions. Institutions are more likely to succeed when they understand the needs, experiences and barriers of the people they are trying to support.

02 TRANSLATE POLICY INTO EVERYDAY PRACTICE

Introducing a policy is only the first step. Measures need clear ownership, resources and integration into existing organisational processes if they are to create lasting change.

03 MAKE MEASURES VISIBLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE

Measures cannot be used if employees do not know they exist, do not understand them or do not know how to access them.

04 LEADERS SHAPE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

Managers and team leaders play an important role in determining whether institutional commitments are translated into everyday employee experience.

05 MEASURE IMPACT AND LEARN

Institutions need to look beyond activities and participation rates and assess whether measures are creating the intended change.

These five factors can be applied to any type of GEDI measure and are relevant regardless of institutional context.

This guide is intended for HR professionals, GEP coordinators, HRS4R coordinators, diversity officers, institutional leaders and others involved in designing and implementing GEDI measures. It can be used when planning new measures, reviewing existing initiatives, preparing action plans or evaluating progress.

The guide does not prescribe specific measures. Instead, it provides a practical framework to help institutions design, implement, communicate and evaluate measures more effectively.

The main message of this guide is simple:

Successful GEDI measures are not defined by their existence, but by their impact.

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01 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Guide

This guide focuses on the factors that influence whether Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) measures achieve their intended objectives in practice.

Rather than prescribing specific policies, programmes or initiatives, it provides a practical framework that can help institutions design, implement, communicate and evaluate GEDI measures more effectively.

The guide builds on the findings of A4L_BRIDGE Deliverable D1.2 *Best Practices of HR Management* and translates key lessons from Alliance4Life institutions into practical recommendations that can be applied across different organisational contexts.

1.2 Target Audience

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

- HR managers
- HR specialists
- GEP coordinators
- HRS4R coordinators
- Diversity officers

SECONDARY AUDIENCE

- Institutional leaders
- Heads of departments
- Group leaders

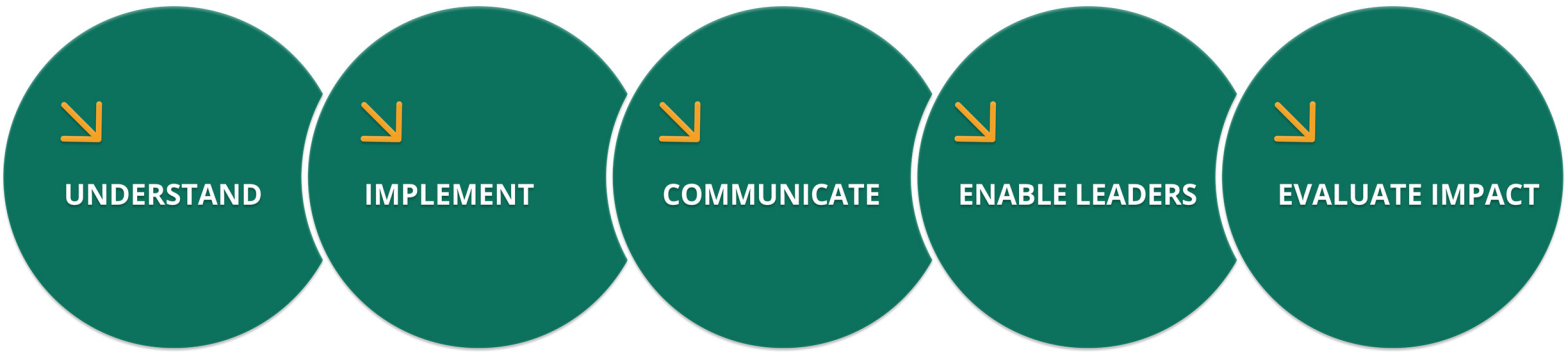
How to Use This Guide

This guide is structured around five success factors that influence whether GEDI measures are likely to create meaningful and sustainable impact.

Institutions may use the guide when:

- planning new measures,
- reviewing existing measures,
- preparing action plans,
- evaluating existing initiatives,
- discussing institutional priorities related to GEDI.

The guide is organised around the following **sequence**:



SUCCESS FACTOR 1	**Understand the Problem Before Designing the Solution**
SUCCESS FACTOR 2	**Translate Policy into Everyday Practice**
SUCCESS FACTOR 3	**Make Measures Visible and Understandable**
SUCCESS FACTOR 4	**Leaders Shape Employee Experience**
SUCCESS FACTOR 5	**Measure Impact and Learn**

SUCCESS FACTOR 1

Understand the Problem Before Designing the Solution

> ***Measures are only as effective as the understanding of the problem they are designed to address.***

Key Question

Do we really understand the problem we are trying to solve?

Challenge

Many institutions are committed to promoting gender equality, diversity and inclusion and invest considerable effort into developing policies, action plans and support measures. However, the findings of Alliance4Life show that institutional intentions and employee experiences do not always align.

Measures are often designed based on assumptions about what employees need, rather than on systematic evidence and direct engagement with the target groups. As a result, institutions may invest time and resources into initiatives that are only partially relevant, insufficiently targeted or fail to address the barriers experienced by employees.

Table 1.1 Survey evidence highlighting the importance of understanding employee needs before designing GEDI measures

Survey findings indicate that employee experiences and perceptions vary considerably across gender, job categories, career stages and institutions, suggesting that different groups may face different barriers and support needs.

Despite substantial institutional investment in diversity initiatives, nearly 58% of respondents reported that they had not personally benefited from such programmes, highlighting the importance of understanding employee needs before designing interventions.

Source: *Alliance4Life_BRIDGE HR Survey, 2024 (N=681 respondents from 12 institutions)*

Why it Matters

Without a clear understanding of employees' needs, perceptions and experiences, even well-intentioned measures may fail to address the actual barriers present in the organisation.

Measures designed without evidence often target visible or assumed issues, while less visible but more critical barriers remain unaddressed. As a result, institutions may observe low participation, limited trust in institutional initiatives and minimal impact despite significant effort and investment.

What Successful Institutions Do

Successful institutions do not assume they already know what employees need. Before designing new GEDI measures, they invest time in understanding the experiences, expectations and challenges of their target groups.

Rather than relying on anecdotal evidence or individual perceptions, they combine multiple sources of insight, such as employee surveys, qualitative feedback (e.g. interviews or focus groups) and available HR data. They recognise that different types of data provide different perspectives and actively look for inconsistencies between them. Evidence gathering is not treated as a one-off exercise. Successful institutions regularly revisit employee needs and use new insights to adapt existing measures or develop new interventions.



MATURITY MODEL

EMERGING

Institutions at this stage are beginning to move from assumptions towards evidence-informed decision-making.

Typical characteristics:

- Employee needs are explored on an ad hoc and primarily reactive basis, typically in response to specific issues.
- Feedback is collected through informal conversations or occasional surveys, with limited comparability over time.
- HR and workforce data are available but not systematically analysed.

DEVELOPING

Institutions at this stage collect and use evidence more systematically.

Typical characteristics:

- Employee surveys are conducted regularly.
- Multiple sources of information are used (surveys, interviews, focus groups, HR data).
- Different employee groups are analysed separately where relevant.
- Resources are allocated for regular data collection and analysis.
- Evidence is used to prioritise actions and allocate resources, and is increasingly used in decision-making.

ADVANCED

Institutions at this stage have established a strong evidence-informed culture.

Typical characteristics:

- Understanding employee needs is a routine part of decision-making processes.
- Dedicated human and financial resources support regular data collection, analysis and interpretation.
- Quantitative and qualitative data are combined to identify patterns, gaps and inconsistencies in employee experience.
- Employees and stakeholders are actively involved throughout the process, from identifying challenges to shaping and reviewing measures.
- Evidence is used not only to support decisions, but also to test whether initial assumptions were correct and to adjust or redesign measures when they are not.

REFLECTION CHECKLIST

Before introducing a new GEDI measure, consider the following:

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE

- ☐ What specific problem are we trying to solve?
- ☐ How do we know this problem exists – what evidence do we have?
- ☐ Are we addressing a clearly defined issue, or a broad topic (e.g. “work-life balance”)?
- ☐ Is our understanding based on evidence or assumptions?
- ☐ Do we understand who is affected and how?

LISTENING TO EMPLOYEES

- ☐ Have we asked employees directly about their experiences?
- ☐ Have we consulted those most affected by the issue?
- ☐ Are some groups missing or underrepresented in our data?
- ☐ Have we considered that different groups may experience the same issue differently?
- ☐ Have we created conditions for employees to share their views openly (e.g. anonymity, safe environment)?

WORKING WITH DATA

- ☐ What data do we already have that could help us understand the issue?
- ☐ Have we reviewed HR data, survey results or previous feedback?
- ☐ Are we combining different sources of information rather than relying on a single perspective?
- ☐ Do different data sources confirm the same conclusion, or point to different problems?
- ☐ Are data being analysed and interpreted by people with appropriate skills and methodological understanding?

DESIGNING THE MEASURE

- ☐ Is the proposed measure clearly linked to the identified problem?
- ☐ Can we explain why we believe this measure will address the problem?
- ☐ Did we involve the target group in the design phase?
- ☐ Do we understand the underlying causes of the problem, and is the proposed measure adapted to our specific context?
- ☐ What would happen if we did nothing — is the problem significant enough to require intervention?

LOOKING AHEAD

- ☐ How will we know whether the measure is successful?
- ☐ How will we collect feedback after implementation?
- ☐ Have we planned how to review and adapt the measure if necessary?

SUCCESS FACTOR 2

Translate Policy into Everyday Practice

Key question

How do we ensure that GEDI measures are sustained and embedded in everyday practice?

Challenge

"Introducing a measure is often easier than sustaining it. "

Many institutions have developed GEDI policies, action plans and support measures. However, introducing a measure is often easier than sustaining it.

The adoption of a policy or the launch of a new initiative does not automatically lead to lasting change. Measures may be introduced as one-off activities, remain dependent on a small number of committed individuals, or fail to become integrated into existing organisational processes.

Responsibilities for implementation are not always clearly defined, and processes for monitoring, reporting and regular review may be missing. As a result, institutions may formally have policies and measures in place, while employees experience little change in their day-to-day work.

Table 2.1 Survey evidence illustrating challenges in embedding measures into everyday practice

Survey finding	What this suggests
Employee experiences with onboarding varied across institutions, employee groups and organisational settings. For example, onboarding quality was rated positively by 54% of respondents, with substantial variation across institutions and groups.	Formal processes may exist, but employees do not always experience them consistently in practice.
Open comments highlighted the need for clearer procedures, more transparent rules, stronger standardisation and greater consistency in organisational processes.	Indicates that existing measures and policies may not yet be sufficiently embedded into everyday institutional practice.
Open comments frequently referred to unclear responsibilities, fragmented processes and inconsistent application of institutional rules.	Illustrates the risk that implementation depends on local practices rather than shared organisational processes.
Employee feedback highlighted inconsistencies in onboarding experiences and differences in how institutional processes were implemented across organisational settings.	Highlights the importance of translating policies into operational procedures and routine practice.

Source: *Alliance4Life_BRIDGE HR Survey, 2024 (N=681 respondents from 12 institutions)*

Why it Matters

Even well-designed policies and measures can fail if they are not sustained over time and embedded into everyday practice.

The success of a measure depends not only on its design, but also on the institution's ability to sustain it over time. Sustainable impact requires more than policy adoption. It requires clear ownership, regular review and continuous integration into organisational processes and practices.

What Successful Institutions Do

Successful institutions recognise that adopting a policy or launching an initiative is only the beginning. They understand that the long-term impact of a measure depends on its ability to become part of everyday institutional practice.

Rather than relying on one-off activities or individual commitment, they establish clear responsibilities, allocate appropriate resources and integrate measures into existing organisational processes. This helps ensure that measures are implemented consistently and remain sustainable over time.

They recognise that successful implementation requires ongoing attention. Measures are regularly reviewed, updated where necessary and supported through appropriate monitoring, reporting and communication mechanisms.

Importantly, successful institutions understand that those who design policies are not always those who implement them. They therefore provide practical guidance and support to those responsible for translating institutional commitments into everyday practice.



MATURITY MODEL

EMERGING

Institutions at this stage have started introducing GEDI measures, but their implementation remains largely ad hoc.

Typical characteristics:

- Policies and measures have been introduced, but their implementation remains inconsistent – there is no plan for long-term continuation.
- Responsibility for implementation is often linked to individual employees rather than formally embedded in roles or organisational structures.
- Implementation relies heavily on personal commitment and initiative.
- Measures are not yet systematically integrated into existing organisational processes.

DEVELOPING

Institutions at this stage actively manage implementation and create conditions for the longer-term delivery of GEDI measures.

Typical characteristics:

- Responsibilities for implementation are clearly defined.
- GEDI measures are increasingly integrated into existing organisational processes.
- Resources are allocated to support the ongoing delivery of measures
- Activities and support measures are reviewed and repeated on a regular basis where relevant.
- Progress is monitored and implementation challenges are identified and addressed.

ADVANCED

Institutions at this stage have embedded GEDI measures into organisational structures and routine institutional practice.

Typical characteristics:

- Responsibility for GEDI-related agendas is formally embedded within organisational structures and does not depend on specific individuals.
- It is clearly defined which roles, departments or units are responsible for implementing, monitoring and developing individual measures.
- GEDI measures are integrated into everyday institutional processes and decision-making.
- Established monitoring, reporting and review mechanisms support the long-term sustainability of measures.
- Policies and measures are regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness.

REFLECTION CHECKLIST

To assess whether a GEDI measure is likely to become a sustainable part of institutional practice, consider the following:

PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- ☐ If the measure needs to continue over time, have we defined how it will be maintained, how often it will take place and who will be responsible for its delivery?
- ☐ Which barriers could prevent the measure from being implemented consistently over time?
- ☐ Do we have the resources needed to support the measure over time?

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ☐ Is it clear who is responsible for implementing the measure?
- ☐ Is responsibility embedded in organisational roles or structures rather than dependent on specific individuals?
- ☐ Do those responsible for implementation understand what is expected of them?
- ☐ Have we provided practical guidance and support to those responsible for implementation?

INTEGRATION INTO ORGANISATIONAL PROCESSES

- ☐ Which existing policies, processes or decision-making mechanisms need to be adapted to incorporate this measure?
- ☐ Could the measure continue functioning if the individuals who initiated it left the organisation?
- ☐ Is the measure connected to existing organisational processes, or does it operate as a standalone activity?
- ☐ Have we considered how different departments or units will contribute to its implementation?

MONITORING AND SUSTAINABILITY

- ☐ How will we know whether the measure is being implemented as intended?
- ☐ Have we established mechanisms for monitoring, reporting and regular review?
- ☐ How often will the measure be reviewed and updated?
- ☐ Have we planned how implementation challenges will be identified and addressed?

LOOKING AHEAD

- ☐ Will this measure still be functioning in two or three-years' time?
- ☐ What resources, responsibilities or processes are necessary to ensure its long-term sustainability?
- ☐ Have we defined when and under what circumstances the measure should be reviewed, adapted or discontinued?

SUCCESS FACTOR 3

Make Measures Visible and Understandable

> ***The value of a measure depends not only on its existence, but also on employees knowing about it, understanding it and being able to use it.***

Key Question

Do employees know that this measure exists and understand how to use it?

Challenge

Many institutions invest considerable effort in developing GEDI policies, initiatives and support measures. However, the existence of measures does not automatically mean that employees are aware of them, understand their purpose or know how to access them.

Communication is often treated as a one-off announcement rather than an ongoing process. Measures may be communicated when they are launched, but information is not always revisited, updated or adapted for new employees and different target groups. As a result, valuable opportunities and support mechanisms may remain underutilised.

Institutions also face increasing competition for employees' attention. Information is often distributed through multiple channels, while employees are exposed to a high volume of messages and may struggle to identify what is relevant to them. Even when information is available, employees may not know where to find it when they need it.

Ensuring that GEDI measures are visible and understandable requires more than sharing information. It requires continuous, targeted and accessible communication that helps employees understand how available measures relate to their needs and how they can benefit from them.

Table 3.1 Survey evidence illustrating challenges in making measures visible and understandable

Survey finding	What this suggests
Only 28.8% of respondents felt that gender and diversity initiatives fully addressed their needs.	Employees may not always understand how existing measures relate to their own situation, needs or opportunities.
Only around one third of respondents reported a positive career impact of gender and diversity initiatives.	Employees may not clearly see how available measures can support their professional development and career progression.
Employee feedback repeatedly called for clearer communication, better access to information, stronger awareness-raising and clearer guidance on available opportunities and support measures.	Employees may struggle to identify relevant opportunities and understand how available measures relate to their needs.
Staff highlighted fragmented information, inconsistent communication and insufficient guidance.	Information may not always reach employees in a clear, accessible and timely manner.

Source: *Alliance4Life_BRIDGE HR Survey, 2024 (N=681 respondents from 12 institutions)*

Why it Matters

Measures cannot create impact if employees do not know they exist, do not understand their purpose or do not know how to access them.

Limited awareness and understanding can result in low participation, underuse of available support measures and missed opportunities for both employees and institutions. Employees may perceive that no relevant support is available, even when appropriate measures already exist.

What Successful Institutions Do

Successful institutions recognise that communication is not a one-off activity that follows the introduction of a measure. Instead, they treat communication as an integral part of implementation and ensure that information remains visible and accessible over time.

Rather than relying solely on institution-wide announcements, they consider the needs of different employee groups and adapt communication accordingly. They recognise that employees have different roles, responsibilities and information needs, and that not every message is equally relevant to every audience.

Successful institutions also make it easy for employees to find information when they need it. Information about available measures, opportunities and support mechanisms is organised, accessible and communicated through channels that employees know and use.

Importantly, they do not assume that sharing information guarantees awareness or understanding. They regularly assess whether key messages are reaching their intended audiences and whether employees understand how available measures relate to their needs and how they can access them.



MATURITY MODEL

EMERGING

Institutions at this stage have started communicating GEDI measures, but communication remains largely ad hoc.

Typical characteristics:

- Information about GEDI measures is communicated mainly when a measure is introduced.
- Communication is primarily institution-wide and not adapted to different target groups.
- Information about available measures is dispersed across different channels and may be difficult to find.
- Responsibility for communication is not always clearly defined.
- Institutions have limited information about whether employees are aware of available measures or understand how to use them.

DEVELOPING

Institutions at this stage communicate GEDI measures more systematically and actively support employee awareness.

Typical characteristics:

- Communication activities are planned and repeated over time.
- Different employee groups are considered when designing communication activities.
- Information about available measures is organised and accessible through clearly identified channels.
- New employees receive information about relevant GEDI measures through onboarding or similar processes.
- Employee feedback and participation data are used to improve communication efforts.

ADVANCED

Institutions at this stage treat communication as an integral part of implementing and sustaining GEDI measures.

Typical characteristics:

- Communication responsibilities and processes are embedded within organisational structures.
- Communication is tailored to different target groups based on their roles, needs and interests.
- Employees know where to find information about available measures and support mechanisms when they need it.
- Leaders actively reinforce key messages and promote relevant measures within their teams.
- Institutions regularly assess whether key messages reach their intended audiences and are understood as intended.

REFLECTION CHECKLIST

To assess whether a GEDI measure is likely to become a sustainable part of institutional practice, consider the following:

REACHING THE RIGHT AUDIENCES

- ☐ Which groups of employees need to be informed about this measure?
- ☐ Will the same communication approach be effective for all relevant audiences?
- ☐ How will communication be adapted to the needs of different employee groups?
- ☐ Are we communicating the information at the moment when it is most relevant to each audience?

COMMUNICATION OVER TIME

- ☐ Is communication planned as an ongoing process rather than a one-off announcement?
- ☐ How will new employees learn about this measure after it has been introduced?
- ☐ Who will be responsible for communicating and promoting the measure over time?
- ☐ How often will information about the measure be communicated or revisited?
- ☐ Have we identified key moments when communication should be repeated or reinforced?

VISIBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

- ☐ Would employees know where to find information about this measure when they need it?
- ☐ Is information about the measure accessible through channels that employees regularly use?

MONITORING COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

- ☐ How will we know whether employees are aware of the measure?
- ☐ What feedback mechanisms will help us identify communication gaps or misunderstandings?

SUCCESS FACTOR 4

Leaders Shape Employee Experience

> ***Institutional commitments do not automatically translate into employee experience. Managers and team leaders often determine whether measures are applied, supported and accessible in practice.***

Key Question

Are leaders helping this measure succeed?

Challenge

Many GEDI measures depend on managers and team leaders to translate institutional commitments into everyday practice. While institutions may adopt policies, establish support measures and communicate available opportunities, leaders often determine whether employees can actually benefit from them.

Table 4.1 Survey evidence illustrating the influence of leadership on employee experience

Survey finding	What this suggests
53.5% of respondents rated their supervisor's leadership abilities positively.	Employees' experience of leadership is not uniform, suggesting that the quality of leadership may influence how institutional policies and support measures are experienced in practice.
57.2% of respondents reported feeling supported by their supervisor in their professional development.	Access to development opportunities and support may depend, at least in part, on the actions and engagement of immediate supervisors.
48.8% of respondents expressed interest in evaluating their supervisor, with particularly high interest among PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers.	Employees view leadership behaviour as an important aspect of their working environment and may value opportunities to provide feedback on leadership practices.
Employee feedback frequently highlighted the importance of communication, constructive feedback, transparency, empathy and leadership development. Respondents also called for more opportunities to provide feedback to supervisors.	Leadership capabilities are not limited to administrative responsibilities but also shape day-to-day employee experience and engagement.

Source: *Alliance4Life_BRIDGE HR Survey, 2024 (N=681 respondents from 12 institutions)*

Managers and team leaders are responsible for many of the day-to-day decisions that shape employee experience. They influence whether employees participate in training and development opportunities, discuss career aspirations, benefit from flexible working arrangements or experience fair and supportive management practices.

However, leaders are not always involved in the design of GEDI measures and may have limited awareness of their purpose or implementation requirements. As a result, institutional commitments may be applied inconsistently across teams or may fail to reach employees altogether.

Why it Matters

GEDI measures are most effective when they are applied consistently across the institution. However, employees' experiences are often shaped more by local management practices than by institutional policies themselves.

As a result, the same policy or measure may be experienced very differently across teams. While some employees may fully benefit from available opportunities and support, others may face barriers that limit access to the same measures.

Such inconsistencies can reduce the overall effectiveness of institutional initiatives, create unequal employee experiences and weaken trust in institutional commitments. Employees may perceive organisational practices as unfair or inconsistent, even when formal policies apply equally across the institution.

What Successful Institutions Do

Successful institutions recognise that managers and team leaders play a critical role in determining whether GEDI measures translate into everyday employee experience.

Rather than assuming that leaders will automatically understand and support new measures, they actively involve them in the implementation process. Leaders receive clear information about the purpose of measures, their expected role and how specific initiatives relate to their day-to-day management responsibilities.

Successful institutions also recognise that many GEDI measures require active support from leaders to be successful. They therefore provide practical guidance, tools and opportunities for leaders to discuss implementation challenges and share experiences.

Importantly, successful institutions understand that employees often experience institutional commitments through the behaviour and decisions of their managers. They therefore encourage leaders to reinforce key messages, model expected behaviours and create conditions that allow employees to benefit from available measures and opportunities.

MATURITY MODEL

EMERGING

Institutions at this stage recognise that leaders influence employee experience, but their involvement in GEDI measures remains largely informal and inconsistent.

Typical characteristics:

- Managers and team leaders are informed about GEDI measures, but are not systematically involved in their implementation.
- Support for GEDI measures varies considerably between teams and depends largely on individual attitudes and commitment.
- Leaders receive limited guidance on how to apply institutional policies and measures in their day-to-day management practice.
- Institutions have limited information about how leadership behaviours affect the implementation and uptake of GEDI measures.

DEVELOPING

Institutions at this stage actively engage leaders in the implementation of GEDI measures and support them in their role.

Typical characteristics:

- Leaders are informed about the purpose of GEDI measures and their role in supporting implementation.
- Practical guidance and resources are provided to help leaders apply institutional measures within their teams.
- Leaders are encouraged to support employee participation in relevant GEDI initiatives and opportunities.
- Leadership-related barriers to implementation are identified and addressed.
- Leaders are given opportunities to discuss implementation challenges and share experience.

ADVANCED

Institutions at this stage have embedded support for GEDI measures into leadership practice and expectations.

Typical characteristics:

- Supporting the implementation of GEDI measures is recognised as part of leadership responsibilities and is reflected in everyday management practices.
- Leaders consistently reinforce institutional commitments through their decisions, behaviours and management practices.
- Employees experience institutional policies and support measures consistently across teams and organisational units.
- Leaders have the knowledge, confidence and support needed to apply institutional policies and measures within their teams.

REFLECTION CHECKLIST

To assess whether a GEDI measure is likely to become a sustainable part of institutional practice, consider the following:

REACHING THE RIGHT AUDIENCES

- ☐ Are expectations regarding leaders' role in supporting GEDI measures clearly defined?
- ☐ Do leaders understand how GEDI measures relate to their day-to-day management responsibilities?
- ☐ Which GEDI measures require active support from leaders in order to succeed?

ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING LEADERS

- ☐ Have leaders been involved in the design, discussion or preparation of the measure where relevant?
- ☐ Do leaders understand the purpose and expected benefits of the measure?
- ☐ Do leaders have the knowledge, guidance and resources needed to support implementation?
- ☐ Have we considered what challenges leaders may face when implementing the measure?

SUPPORTING CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION

- ☐ What steps are we taking to ensure that the measure is implemented consistently across teams?
- ☐ Are leaders encouraged to support employee participation in relevant opportunities and activities?

MONITORING LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

- ☐ How will we know whether leaders are supporting implementation as intended?
- ☐ Have we considered how leadership-related barriers will be identified and addressed?

SUCCESS FACTOR 5

Measure Impact and Learn

> ***The success of a measure is determined by its impact, not by its existence or activity levels.***

Key Question

How do we know whether this measure works?

Challenge

„Institutions often know what they did, but not what difference it made."

Many institutions monitor the implementation of GEDI measures, collect participation data and report completed activities. However, information about activities and outputs does not necessarily reveal whether a measure is achieving its intended objectives.

Measures are often evaluated based on what was delivered rather than on the changes they were expected to create. For example, institutions may track the number of participants in a training programme, the publication of a policy or the implementation of a new initiative, without assessing whether these activities have influenced employee behaviour, experiences or institutional outcomes.

In some cases, success indicators are not defined from the outset, making it difficult to determine whether a measure has been successful. Evaluation may focus on data that are easy to collect rather than on evidence that captures meaningful change.

Why it Matters

Measures that are not evaluated in terms of their impact cannot be improved effectively.

Without evidence on outcomes and impact, institutions may continue investing time and resources in activities that produce limited results, while overlooking measures that are more effective. This makes it difficult to prioritise actions, allocate resources strategically and demonstrate the value of GEDI initiatives.

Impact measurement also helps institutions understand why a measure succeeded or failed and whether it addressed the problem it was designed to solve. Such insights are essential for adapting existing measures and designing more effective interventions in the future.

Measuring impact therefore transforms implementation from a series of activities into a process of organisational learning, continuous improvement and evidence-informed decision-making.

Table 5.1 Survey evidence illustrating the importance of measuring outcomes and impact

Survey finding	What this suggests
Around 55% of respondents reported feeling supported in relation to diversity and equality, while only around one third reported a positive career impact of related initiatives.	Different indicators may provide different perspectives on the effectiveness of a measure.
52.5% of respondents reported that gender and diversity are respected within their teams, while 28.8% felt that gender and diversity initiatives fully addressed their needs.	Different indicators may lead to different conclusions. A positive organisational climate does not necessarily mean that specific measures are perceived as relevant or effective.
Survey results varied considerably across gender, job categories, institutions and career stages.	Aggregate results may hide important differences in outcomes across employee groups.

Source: *Alliance4Life_BRIDGE HR Survey, 2024 (N=681 respondents from 12 institutions)*

What Successful Institutions Do

Successful institutions define what success looks like before implementation begins and identify how progress and impact will be measured.

Rather than focusing solely on activities and outputs, they collect evidence on whether measures are creating the intended changes for employees and the institution. Evaluation is designed to assess not only what was delivered, but also what difference it made.

Successful institutions combine quantitative and qualitative evidence to gain a deeper understanding of results. They recognise that numerical indicators can show whether change has occurred, while qualitative feedback helps explain why measures succeeded, failed or produced unexpected outcomes.

Importantly, evaluation is not treated as a reporting exercise. Findings are used to review, adapt and improve existing measures, inform future decisions and ensure that resources are directed towards activities that create meaningful impact.

MATURITY MODEL

EMERGING

Institutions at this stage have started monitoring GEDI measures, but evaluation focuses typically on implementation and activity reporting.

Typical characteristics:

- Basic monitoring mechanisms are in place.
- Evaluation focuses primarily on whether activities were delivered rather than whether they achieved their intended impact.
- Data collection focuses mainly on activities, outputs and participation rates.
- Success criteria are not always clearly defined before implementation.
- Evaluation is conducted irregularly or primarily for reporting purposes.

DEVELOPING

Institutions at this stage are increasingly using evaluation to assess whether GEDI measures are achieving their intended objectives.

Typical characteristics:

- Success indicators are defined for key initiatives and measures.
- Evaluation includes implementation data as well as selected indicators related to expected outcomes.
- Employee feedback is collected systematically and incorporated into evaluation processes.
- Evaluation findings are discussed and used to improve existing measures.
- Resources are allocated to support regular monitoring and evaluation activities.

ADVANCED

Institutions at this stage use impact measurement as a tool for organisational learning and continuous improvement.

Typical characteristics:

- Impact measurement is integrated into the design, implementation and review of GEDI measures.
- Indicators are selected based on the intended impact of the measure rather than the availability of data.
- Quantitative and qualitative evidence are combined to understand both outcomes and the factors influencing them.
- Evaluation findings are used to adapt measures, inform decision-making and guide resource allocation.
- Institutions regularly assess whether measures are creating meaningful change for employees and the organisation.

REFLECTION CHECKLIST

To assess whether a GEDI measure is likely to become a sustainable part of institutional practice, consider the following:

DEFINING SUCCESS

- ☐ Have we defined what success looks like before implementing the measure?
- ☐ What changes do we expect this measure to create for employees and/or the institution?
- ☐ How will we know whether the intended change has occurred?

COLLECTING MEANINGFUL EVIDENCE

- ☐ Are we collecting data that help us understand outcomes as well as activities?
- ☐ Are we combining different sources of evidence where appropriate (e.g. quantitative and qualitative data)?

UNDERSTANDING RESULTS

- ☐ Does the evidence help us understand not only what happened, but also why?
- ☐ Are there differences in outcomes between employee groups that require further attention?
- ☐ Have we considered whether the measure produced any unintended effects, either positive or negative?

USING EVIDENCE FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ☐ How will evaluation findings be used to improve the measure?
- ☐ How will we respond if the measure does not achieve the intended results?
- ☐ Are evaluation findings used to inform future decisions and resource allocation?

02 CONCLUSIONS

KEY LESSONS FROM ALLIANCE4LIFE

The findings of Alliance4Life demonstrate that the success of GEDI measures depends not only on what institutions do, but also on how measures are:

↘designed ↘implemented ↘communicated ↘ supported and ↘evaluated.

Across participating institutions, many challenges were linked not to the absence of policies or initiatives, but to difficulties in translating institutional commitments into meaningful and sustainable change for employees.

The evidence collected through institutional analysis and the Alliance4Life employee survey suggests that institutional intentions and employee experiences do not always align. Employee perceptions often varied across gender, job categories, career stages and institutions, highlighting the importance of understanding the needs, experiences and expectations of different groups before designing interventions.

The findings also show that the existence of a policy, service or programme does not automatically guarantee its successful implementation. Measures need to be embedded into organisational processes, supported by clear responsibilities and sustained over time if they are to create lasting impact.

Similarly, institutions cannot assume that employees will automatically become aware of available measures or understand how they can benefit from them. Effective communication requires continuous effort, clear messaging and accessible information that helps employees navigate available opportunities and support mechanisms.

The experiences of Alliance4Life institutions further demonstrate the critical role of managers and team leaders. Employees often experience institutional commitments through the decisions, behaviours and support provided by their immediate supervisors. As a result, the success of many GEDI measures depends on leaders' ability to translate institutional intentions into everyday practice.

Finally, the findings highlight the importance of moving beyond activity reporting towards impact-oriented evaluation. Institutions may know what activities were delivered, but without appropriate indicators and evaluation processes they may struggle to determine whether those activities produced the intended outcomes.

Measuring impact enables institutions to:

↘learn ↘adapt and continuously ↘improve their approaches.

Together, these findings point to five factors that consistently influence whether GEDI measures are likely to succeed:

- understanding the problem before designing the solution,
- translating policy into everyday practice,
- making measures visible and understandable,
- recognising that leaders shape employee experience,
- measuring impact and learning from results.

These factors are relevant regardless of the specific type of GEDI measure being implemented and can help institutions strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of their efforts.

FINAL REFLECTION

Institutions often focus on identifying new policies, programmes and initiatives. However, the findings of Alliance4Life suggest that **achieving meaningful impact requires equal attention** to how these measures are introduced, implemented, communicated, supported and evaluated.

Successful GEDI measures are not defined by the number of activities delivered, policies adopted or initiatives launched. Their value lies in their ability to improve employee experience, address identified barriers and contribute to long-term organisational change.

The five success factors presented in this guide provide a practical framework for moving from intention to impact. By helping institutions make evidence-informed decisions, embed measures into everyday practice, engage employees and leaders, and learn from outcomes, they support a more strategic and sustainable approach to gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

Ultimately, effective GEDI implementation is not a one-time achievement but a **continuous process of learning, adaptation and improvement.** Institutions that view GEDI measures as part of an ongoing cycle of evidence, implementation, communication, leadership and evaluation are more likely to create meaningful and lasting change for both employees and the organisation as a whole.

ANNEX 1: INSTITUTIONAL SELF-REFLECTION TOOL

How to use this tool

This self-reflection tool is intended to support institutional discussion and reflection. It is not an audit tool and does not provide a formal assessment of institutional performance.

For each statement, indicate whether it is generally true for your institution.

- **Yes** = this is established practice
- **Partly** = this exists to some extent, but not consistently
- **No** = this is not yet in place or occurs only rarely

The tool is intended to stimulate discussion and help identify strengths, gaps and priorities for future development.

SUCCESS FACTOR 1

Understand the Problem Before Designing the Solution

Statement	Yes	Partly	No	Do Not Know
We regularly collect evidence on employee needs and experiences.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Different employee groups are consulted when identifying challenges and priorities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Multiple sources of information are used (e.g. surveys, interviews, HR data).	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evidence is used to prioritise actions and allocate resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employee feedback is used to review and improve existing measures.	☐	☐	☐	☐

SUCCESS FACTOR 2

Translate Policy into Everyday Practice

Statement	Yes	Partly	No	Do Not Know
Responsibilities for implementing GEDI measures are clearly defined and supported by appropriate institutional authority.	☐	☐	☐	☐
GEDI measures are integrated into existing organisational processes and practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Resources are allocated to support the ongoing implementation of measures.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Measures are regularly reviewed and updated where necessary.	☐	☐	☐	☐
The sustainability of measures does not depend on individual employees.	☐	☐	☐	☐

SUCCESS FACTOR 3

Make Measures Visible and Understandable

Statement	Yes	Partly	No	Do Not Know
Employees are informed about GEDI measures through planned and ongoing communication.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication is adapted to different employee groups where relevant.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employees know where to find information about available measures and support.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Information about GEDI measures is easily accessible when needed.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We regularly assess whether employees are aware of and understand available measures.	☐	☐	☐	☐

SUCCESS FACTOR 4

Leaders Shape Employee Experience

Statement	Yes	Partly	No	Do Not Know
Expectations regarding leaders' role in supporting GEDI measures are clearly defined.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leaders understand how GEDI measures relate to their day-to-day management responsibilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leaders receive guidance and support to help them implement relevant measures.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leaders actively support employee participation in relevant opportunities and activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employees experience institutional commitments consistently across teams and organisational units.	☐	☐	☐	☐

SUCCESS FACTOR 5

Measure Impact and Learn

Statement	Yes	Partly	No	Do Not Know
We define what success looks like before implementing a measure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
We collect evidence on outcomes and impact, not only activities and participation.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indicators are selected based on the intended objectives of the measure.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evaluation findings are used to improve existing measures.	☐	☐	☐	☐
Evidence is used to inform future decisions and resource allocation.	☐	☐	☐	☐

INTERPRETATION

Predominantly **"No"** responses: **Likely Emerging**

Predominantly **"Partly"** responses: **Likely Developing**

Predominantly **"Yes"** responses: **Likely Advanced**

Methodological note: A high number of **"Do not know"** responses may indicate limited information about current practices and could suggest a need for further reflection, communication or evidence gathering.

Possible Next Steps:

The purpose of this tool is not to produce a formal assessment or score, but to support institutional reflection and discussion.

Areas with a high number of **"No" responses** may help identify potential gaps for further exploration and improvement. However, institutions differ in their context, objectives and available resources. Priorities should therefore be determined through discussion and consideration of institutional needs rather than on the basis of the self-reflection results alone.

ANNEX 2: FROM MEASURES TO IMPACT

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES, OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Institutions often invest significant effort in developing and implementing GEDI measures. However, introducing a measure does not automatically create impact.

Many institutions monitor activities and participation, but these data alone cannot demonstrate whether a measure achieved its intended objectives. To understand whether a measure is working, it is important to distinguish between activities, outputs, outcomes and impact.

The examples below illustrate how different types of evidence can be used to assess progress and effectiveness.



The examples and indicators presented below are illustrative only. Different measures may require different indicators depending on institutional objectives, context and available data. Institutions should select indicators that are appropriate for their specific measures and intended outcomes.

Example 1: Leadership Development Programme

Level	Example	Possible Indicator
Activity	A leadership development programme is organised for managers and team leaders.	Number of training sessions delivered
Output	40 managers complete the training programme.	Number or percentage of managers completing the programme
Outcome	Managers apply new communication, feedback and people-management practices within their teams.	Employees reporting regular feedback from their managers
Impact	Employees report improved leadership support, communication and team climate.	Employee perceptions of leadership quality or managerial support

Example 2: Work-Life Balance Policy

Level	Example	Possible Indicator
Activity	The institution introduces a new work-life balance policy.	Policy approved and communicated
Output	Employees are informed about available arrangements.	Percentage of employees reached through communication activities
Outcome	Employees begin using flexible working arrangements.	Percentage of employees using available arrangements
Impact	Employees report improved work-life balance and wellbeing.	Employee perceptions of work-life balance and wellbeing

Example 3: Employee Information Portal

Level	Example	Possible Indicator
Activity	A new employee information portal is launched.	Portal created and made available.
Output	Employees receive information about the portal.	Number of employees informed.
Outcome	Employees actively use the portal.	Portal usage statistic.
Impact	Employees demonstrate greater awareness of available support and opportunities.	Employee awareness of available measures.

Example 4: Sexual Harassment Prevention Measures

Level	Example	Possible Indicator
Activity	The institution establishes a new policy, reporting procedure and awareness campaign addressing sexual harassment.	Policy adopted; awareness activities delivered
Output	Policies are published, reporting channels are established and employees participate in awareness activities.	Number of employees participating in awareness activities
Outcome	Employees understand available reporting mechanisms and feel more confident using them when necessary.	Employee awareness of reporting procedures
Impact	Employees report a safer working environment and greater confidence in institutional procedures.	Employee perceptions of psychological safety and trust in reporting mechanisms