

ABBL DEI GUIDE: A PRACTICAL ROADMAP TO HELP BANKS BUILD AND IMPLEMENT A DEI POLICY

Company name : ABBL

Activity sector : Activités financières et d'assurance

Company category : Fondation, Association, ONG

Description of the action

The ABBL developed a practical Guide on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) for banks, designed as a roadmap to help financial institutions move from intention to implementation. The guide supports ABBL members in embedding DEI as part of business strategy by offering a structured approach, practical templates, governance guidance, and a clear five-step process to build or refresh a DEI policy.

The guide was created collaboratively, through cross-functional input and iterative drafting, to reflect both the reality of the banking sector and the European regulatory and cultural context.

Context

The ABBL believes inclusive banks are stronger banks. In the Luxembourg banking sector, DEI is increasingly shifting from a “nice-to-have” to a strategic priority, where diverse talent supports competitiveness, innovation and resilient organisational cultures.

At the same time, institutions can face uncertainty and fragmentation when trying to implement DEI in practice: questions about data, legal constraints, governance, KPIs, communication tone, and how to translate ambition into tangible actions.

The ABBL therefore set out to develop a guide that would offer members a practical and credible reference point — turning DEI from a conceptual topic into an operational journey, and supporting the sector’s ambition to remain a forward-thinking and inclusive financial centre.

Objectives

Our guide aims to:

- Provide a shared foundation of DEI concepts and definitions for banks.
- Clarify the regulatory and legal landscape applicable to DEI in Luxembourg.
- Support implementation through an operational roadmap and practical tools.
- Enable accountability by identifying roles, deliverables, validation steps and KPIs.
- Encourage continuous improvement through evaluation and transparent communication.
- Position DEI as an opportunity and a driver of culture, innovation and sector reputation.

Approach

The guide was developed in three progressive building blocks:

(1) Foundations – Key DEI concepts

A first factsheet introduces core DEI concepts and workplace terminology to create a common language (diversity beyond gender, inclusion, equity, intersectionality, allyship, etc.).

(2) Regulatory landscape – Understanding the regulatory framework

A second factsheet consolidates the key legal references, regulatory expectations and practical considerations relevant to the Luxembourg context and anticipates upcoming requirements.

(3) Roadmap – From theory to practice (operational chapter)

The third factsheet presents a step-by-step roadmap structured in five key stages:

- 1. Initial analysis
- 2. Commitment
- 3. Action plan
- 4. Actions and policies
- 5. Transparency and communication

For each stage, the guide specifies:

- What the step is about
- Who should be involved (roles and responsibilities)
- How to implement (tools, documents, templates)
- Validation steps and governance
- Attention points (common challenges and risks)
- Key success factors

Cross-functional drafting and validation

Drafting was carried out iteratively and collaboratively, engaging expertise across domains (DEI, HR, communications, legal, data protection) via a dedicated ABBL working group.

The guide was designed as a practical tool for diverse organisational realities — including smaller institutions that may lack HR information systems and automation capacity.

Impact

Immediate impact : The guide provides ABBL members with a structured reference point and toolkit to support DEI policy design and implementation. It creates a shared narrative that positions inclusion as both strategic and achievable.

Expected medium-term impacts:

- Greater consistency and maturity of DEI approaches across member institutions.
- Improved capacity to define relevant KPIs and governance mechanisms.
- Stronger engagement of leadership and employees through clearer communication and transparent reporting.

The guide is designed as a living reference that can be updated as regulations evolve and as member practices mature. It can also serve as a basis for future workshops, peer exchanges, and training sessions.

« To do »

We prioritised practicality, translating DEI principles into a step-by-step roadmap with concrete deliverables.

We also designed the guide around real member constraints, ensuring it works for different sizes and maturity levels.

We involved experts from key functions early (HR, Legal/Data Protection, Communications) to strengthen credibility and usability.

We emphasised leadership ownership, reinforcing the importance of tone from the top and executive validation.

We embedded compliance and privacy safeguards, particularly around surveys, data collection, and reporting.

« Not to do »

We wanted to avoid producing guidance that stays purely conceptual—without tools, templates or operational steps, or without clear links to banks' regulatory obligations. However, we also took care not to frame DEI only as a compliance requirement; we wanted to connect it to strategy, culture and performance.

We were also careful not to assume a one-size-fits-all in international contexts; as our members' legal constraints may differ across jurisdictions (e.g., quotas, demographic data).