

# The Rainbow Paper



Linking the United Nations' Sustainability Development Goals and LGBTI Inclusion in the Workplace

# Leaving no one behind

## DETERMINING PRIORITIES, MATURITY AND SETTING GOALS TOWARDS INCREASED LGBTI INCLUSION

### Introduction

In May 2018, Sustainalize and Alliander co-facilitated a session on the United Nations' Sustainability Development Goals, (SDGs) in relation to sustainability and the LGBTI agenda at the Workplace Pride International Conference in Amsterdam. In the course of preparing these sessions, we realised that the SDGs do not explicitly include Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) rights in its goals and targets. After a great deal of research, consultation and soul-searching, we collectively decided that more attention needed to be given to this important topic. Not just for members of the LGBTI community, but also for those organisations that strive to support the SDGs whilst simultaneously supporting LGBTI inclusion in the workplace.

Realising that a concrete awareness raising mechanism need to be put into place, and to ensure that organisations do not overlook LGBTI rights in their approach to the SDGs, we created the SDG LGBTI Manifesto. By signing the Manifesto, organisations are:

1. Acknowledging that LGBTI inclusion and diversity needs to be included in their contribution to the SDGs and linked to the "leave no one behind" principle
2. Committing to implement change and/or sign the [Workplace Pride Declaration of Amsterdam](#)
3. Committing to monitor the development and progress of implementation
4. Committing to communicate efforts in this regard

In subsequent meetings with signatories, they have highlighted the difficulties in monitoring progress and implementation outlined in the Manifesto. This white or 'Rainbow' paper was created to provide organisations with guidance on how to determine their maturity on LGBTI inclusion, how this is linked with the SDGs, and to provide them with an overview on possible next steps and goals.

The SDG LGTI Manifesto and Rainbow Paper is a joint effort of [Workplace Pride](#), [Alliander](#) and [Sustainalize](#) and with the kind support of [Shell](#).



# Background

## SDGs and LGBTI inclusion: the world was not ready

With the signing of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), all 193 UN Member States agreed on a set of goals focused on ending poverty and inequality, to be the 2030 world agenda for sustainable goals. Its central aim to 'Leave no one behind'. Equality groups pushed hard for the inclusion of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. However, with its signing in 2015, the world was not yet ready to explicitly include LGBTI in the UN Sustainable Development goals. Especially for countries in which same-sex relationships are still criminalised, the explicit inclusion of LGBTI rights in the SDGs was unnegotiable. This however does not mean that LGBTI inclusion cannot be linked to the SDGs. On the contrary, the protection of equal rights for LGBTI people can be linked to 'SDG 5: Gender equality', 'SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth' and 'SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities'.

## Missing the SDG impact boat?

The SDGs call for action to promote prosperity while protecting the planet, recognising that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth. It addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection and job opportunities while tackling climate change and environmental protection. Many companies and organisations are working on this agenda and use it as their starting point to determine their most important impact areas. With LGBTI inclusion not explicitly being a part of this agenda and buzz, it means it in many cases walks its own path.

## LGBTI Inclusion: good for society and business

We are reaching a new public consciousness where sustainability and diversity & inclusiveness and in particular LGBTI inclusion have become key pillars for the license to operate of many organisations. People are better informed and increasingly use their consumer behaviour as a voice for the good. In this light, sustainability has gained momentum and has become part of the management agenda of many organisations. Over the years, the question asked changed from 'Should we take action?' to 'How do we take action?'. Many organisations have developed a strategy or statement on how sustainability is addressed and what actions are taken to reduce its environmental impact.



A similar development can be observed with the topic of LGBTI inclusion. Conscious consumers and civil society organisations increasingly pay attention to diversity and LGBTI inclusion in products and marketing. In addition, from an organisational perspective, it also has important benefits. The more diverse a team is, the more opportunities it has to approach a problem from different angles. Whereas, homogeneous teams are more likely to approach problems from a similar viewpoint, limiting the potential outcomes. This is supported by a study by the Technical University of Munich that surveyed 171 companies across Germany, Austria and Switzerland. They found that higher rates of diversity correlated with an increase in revenue made from innovative products. Furthermore, inclusive organisations are more attractive for job seekers.

To this end, many organisations are currently deciding on how and to what degree LGBTI inclusion can be integrated in their management approach. Organisations however often find it difficult to get insight into where they stand and how they can improve and take their efforts even further. In this light we have developed a maturity model (figure 1), for which the SDG Compass developed by GRI, the UN Global Compass and the WBSCD forms the basis. The SDG compass provides companies with guidance on how they can align their strategies and manage as well as measure their contribution to the SDGs. It thus forms a good point of reference that many organisations will recognise. In the next paragraphs the various steps included in the model will be elaborated on.

# Sustainable Development Goals

THE UN SDG'S ARE THE STARTING POINT TO  
UNDERSTAND THE RAINBOW PAPER MATURITY MODEL





# The Rainbow Paper Maturity Model

## Step 01 Understanding the SDGs



### Understanding the SDGs and the correlation with LGBTI

With the development of the Sustainable Development goals (SDGs), a set of goals aiming to end poverty and inequality by 2030, equality groups pushed for the inclusion of the rights of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people. The SDGs were agreed to be the 2030 world agenda for sustainable development and signed onto by 193 governments with its central aim to 'Leave no one behind'. With its signing in 2015, the world was not yet ready to explicitly include LGBTI in the UN Sustainable Development goals. Especially for countries in which same-sex

relationships are still criminalized, the explicit inclusion of LGBTI rights in the SDGs was negotiable. This however does not mean that LGBTI inclusion cannot be linked to the SDGs. On the contrary, the protection of equal rights for LGBTI people can be linked to:



## Step 02 Defining Priorities



### Selection of the most relevant SDGs and defining priorities

Not all SDGs are equally relevant for all organisations. Depending on the magnitude, severity and likelihood of current and potential negative impacts, organisations can prioritise their contribution and focus on the SDGs. If an organisation chooses to include the rights of the LGBTI community in their interpretation of the SDGs and makes it a priority in their contribution to the SDGs, the next step is to determine its maturity on the topic and set an ambition.

## Step 03 Setting Goals



**Level 1** LGBTI inclusion is on the agenda and plans are made to define policies that ensure equal rights and opportunities for all. These go beyond those required by regulation. The organization will put additional measures in place to respond to any problems.

**Level 2** LGBTI inclusion is increasingly recognized as abenefit for the organization and an inclusive culture is acknowledged as key to success. Initiatives on LGBTI inclusion are deployed at a local level and monitored to support continuous improvement.

**Level 3** Management embraces the business case and benefits of diversity and can demonstrate that it is implementing LGBTI inclusion strategies designed to create an inclusive work environment.

**Level 4** LGBTI inclusion is integrated into day to day activities. Management is committed to creating an environment that supports LGBTI inclusion and encourages the right behavior. Initiatives on LGBTI inclusion reflect local needs and support the success of the organization.

<b>Policy &amp; communication</b> SDG 5.1, 5.C, & 10.3	Specifying LGBTI in the nondiscrimination policies	Attention for inclusive communication	Changing discriminatory country-based internal corporate practices	Advocacy to change discriminatory laws in country
<b>Participation &amp; leadership</b> SDG 5.5 & 8.8	Senior Executive Sponsorship of LGBTI effort	Equality of benefits for all LGBTI employees	"Out" employees at senior executive level	LGBTI Employee Leadership Development
<b>Awareness and education</b> SDG 5.B	Diversity module is part of the annual training cycle for managers	Onboarding program	Reverse mentoring / training programs for straight allies who can advocate for & support LGBTI	Required diversity training for everyone as part of the training cycle
<b>Empowerment</b> SDG 5.A, 8.5, 8.10, & 10.4	Concrete action or activity making LGBTI inclusion actionable	Promotion and support of LGBTI employee resource groups	Corporate interaction with LGBTI civil society organisations	Supplier diversity programs include LGBTI
<b>Accountability and measurement</b>	Report on activities on LGBTI inclusion	External international benchmarking	Diversity performance linked to HR bonuses	Bonus of highest management depends on results employee satisfaction survey

## Step 04 Integrating



### Embed the LGBTI approach in the organisations' SDG strategy and integrate it in management cycle



## Step 05 Reporting and Communicating



### A good communication strategy can support and underline efforts made on LGBTI inclusion



Annual report is used to report progress



Inclusive marketing campaigns can support LGBTI inclusion in society



A campaign / blogs on intranet can increase internal awareness on LGBTI inclusion

# A guide and explanation

## A STRUCTURED APPROACH TO INTEGRATING LGBTI OUTREACH INTO AN SDG FRAMEWORK CREATES SUSTAINABLE IMPACT WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

### Step 01 Understanding the SDGs



Firstly it is important to realise that the SDGs, though being quite extensive, still are the result of a negotiation between 193 UN Member States. These for example include countries as Iran, Sudan, Kenya and Malaysia in which same-sex relationships can lead to over 10 years to life in prison or even the death penalty. For these countries the explicit inclusion of LGBTI rights was unnegotiable. With the most widely adopted international agenda failing to explicitly address the needs of the LGBTI community, it is the more important that organisations and companies step up and fill that gap by taking their responsibility through the integration of LGBTI inclusion in their approach to the SDGs. In addition, while organisations often struggle to give substance to their approach of the SDGs as they are merely formulated for governments, LGBTI inclusion in the workplace is in fact something all organisations can work on.

### Step 02 Defining Priorities



This brings us to the next step: defining priorities. The 17 SDGs with 169 sub-targets can be quite overwhelming. Organisations are however not expected to define an approach for all 17 goals, but can best select the SDGs that lie closest to their core business based on the magnitude, severity and likelihood of their potential impacts. The goals can additionally be used for inspiration to increase their impact on society. 'SDG 5: Gender equality', 'SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth' or 'SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities' can for example easily be linked to LGBTI inclusion. Though linkages can also be found with other SDGs. LGBTI inclusion and the offering of equal opportunities for all is something that every organization has a direct impact on. It is therefore something that many organisations will take on in their approach to the SDGs.

Once the focus has been determined, it is important to define the maturity and ambition of the organization on the topic. To support organisations in this process regarding LGBTI inclusion, we have developed a four level maturity model that can help determine their advancement in the field of LGBTI inclusion. When the point of reference or baseline has been defined, organisations can start to think about an ambition by answering the questions: 'What would be the ideal end-result?' and 'How are we going to get there?' Here, the intermediate targets defined in 'Step 3' of the model can be of help.

### Step 03 Setting Goals



Increased LGBTI inclusion requires effort in various areas. In our model we have categorised these in five focus areas as being: 'Policy & communication', 'Participation & leadership', 'Awareness & education', 'Empowerment', 'Accountability and measurement'. For each of these focus areas we have defined possible goals that are linked to the respective maturity levels. This way the maturity model can be used as a roadmap to increased LGBTI inclusion in the workplace, or inspire for possible next actions. It should be noted that the model is not exhaustive and variation in the order of the defined goals is possible.

The following paragraphs will expand on these goals, supported with examples of best practices. In addition these efforts will be linked to the SDGs and their respective sub-targets.

### Step 03

Setting  
Goals



# Policy & Communication

## Specifying LGBTI in non-discrimination policies

An important first step is explicitly prohibiting the discrimination on the basis of LGBTI in the workplace through a non-discrimination policy. While some organisations claim that their general non-discrimination policy includes all forms of discrimination, it is of vital importance to explicitly state this group in the policy. Why? Because in many countries LGBTI people are not explicitly protected from discrimination by law. This means that people can be fired, not hired or otherwise discriminated against just for being LGBTI. The absence of state legislation make LGBTI people vulnerable to discrimination anywhere in these countries, and therefore also at work. Specifying the LGBTI community in the non-discrimination policy is therefore of vital importance. A good example of this from Workplace Pride member RELX states:

***“We are an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to treating all employees and applicants for employment with respect and dignity, and we prohibit discrimination.***

***We recruit, hire, develop, promote, discipline, and provide conditions of employment without regard to protected characteristics like race, colour, creed, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, or any other category protected by law. Employees are required to read and accept this and they mention that not respecting it is grounds for termination”***

## Attention for inclusive communication

A next step is attention for inclusive communication. This means that not only should it be clear where information and policies can be found by employees but that it should also be integrated in the every-day language and wordings used by the organization. An internal communication campaign focused on increased inclusion LGBTI in the workplace is an often walked route to create increased internal awareness. In this process support from the highest management is crucial. Once an organization has the buy-in of their employees and structures and policies in place, it can expand its scope and start communicating externally. While the above mentioned steps seem quite straight forward, much harder is it to facilitate the use of inclusive language between employees in their day-to-day conversations. While this is perhaps harder to achieve, it is not impossible. Several organisations have developed tools such as the ‘LGBTI managers conversation guide’ that are provided to assist employees in this process.

## Changing discriminatory country-based internal corporate practices

Expanding the scope of the non-discrimination policy, so it applies to all locations of the organization worldwide, is next on the maturity ladder. This is something a lot of organisations struggle with as compliance with local laws is a priority and part of their license to operate. What organisations often do not realise is that in most of these countries a non-discrimination policy is not violating any laws. It is recommended to do some research on the exact nature and scope of local legislation. This is something that the world map of Human Dignity Trust, Outright Now or local human-rights NGOs can assist with.

**Advocacy  
to change  
discriminatory laws  
in country**

The last level, in contrast to the other maturity levels, goes beyond internal LGBTI non-discrimination policies. Organisations strive to influence the local climate by engaging in activities such as lobbying, participating in Pride events and the supporting of activists. Though not many organisations have taken this route yet it is increasingly seen in LGBTI moderate-to-friendly places like the USA. Here a group of companies like Apple, Facebook, and Google have voiced opposition to the passing of a controversial North Carolina law that dissolves anti-discrimination protections for the LGBTI community. This has resulted in the adjustment of the newly implemented law.

## How does this connect to the SDGs?

**Targets 5.1 and 5.C** emphasize the need to end all forms of discrimination and adopt and strengthen sound policies for the promotion of equality and empowerment. These are focused on women and girls. However, we argue that the scope here should be expanded for it to also include other groups that face structural discrimination.

**Target 10.3** in addition emphasises the need for equal opportunities by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices. This is something that can also easily be applied to the LGBTI community and also stresses the importance of efforts on advocacy to change discriminatory laws.

**Target 16.b** Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development. By emphasising the need for inclusion of equal rights for LGBTI people in the HR policies and sustainability strategy.

### Linked SDGs





### Step 03

Setting  
Goals



# Participation & Leadership

## Senior Executive Sponsorship of LGBTI effort

As mentioned earlier, the involvement of a CEO or other board members with the topic of LGBTI inclusion is extremely important. Internally visible, active senior support can give LGBTI colleagues the confidence to be themselves at work and encourages non-LGBTI colleagues to take inclusion seriously. Sponsorship of LGBTI networks by a senior executive can lead to increased understanding and awareness and helps to ensure that the interests of LGBTI employees are represented at board level. A good example of this is Tim Cook of Apple who has publicly taken a stance on for LGBTI inclusion in society as well as **Ginni Rometty, Chairman, President and CEO of IBM.**

## Equality of benefits for all LGBTI employees

Once a non-discrimination policy is in place and senior management has endorsed the importance of an LGBTI inclusive culture, it is up to HR to ensure equal rights and benefits. Often identified barriers in relation to LGBTI family inclusivity are health insurance, pension, family leave, mobility and tax-related issues. An organization that is currently streamlining their policies in these areas through their Rainbow families project is ING.

A step that is easily overlooked in this process is the informing of employees to familiarise them with their newly acquired benefits. This can for example be done by making it part of the HR guideline and the orientation program that new employees receive. Other known practices are, for example, the adding of a sentence as 'Did you know: that as a same-sex couple you also have the right to take days of when you get married?' to the pay slips of employees.

## "Out" employees at senior executive level

'Out employees at senior level' is not something that should explicitly be strived towards, but is something that happens organically. It is a result and sign of success of the efforts of becoming a more LGBTI inclusive organization. This works two ways as employees are more probable to be 'out' in an organization with a more LGBTI inclusive culture. Second, the organization is also more likely to attract employees that belong to this community, when it is publicly known for being LGBTI inclusive.

## LGBTI Employee Leadership Development

LGBTI employee leadership development is something not many organisations offer. Reasons for this are, that as an organization, you need to be very involved with the issue for employees to feel comfortable enough to be part of it. Employees first of all want to be valued because of their work, not because of their sexuality. Though being 'out' at work can also be viewed as a sign of strength, a positive quality that can further be developed. It requires courage to be 'out' in the workplace, as it often also implies the risk of getting rejected or left out. Leadership development programs can help to establish role models and strengthen their leadership skills. Examples of organisations with an LGBTI leadership development program are IBM, Accenture and SAP.

## How does this connect to the SDGs?

**Target 5.5** focuses on full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making. This is generally focussed on women. However, we argue that the scope here should be expanded for it to also include other groups as the LGBTI community.

**Target 8.8** in addition emphasises to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, which are specified to include migrant workers, in particular women migrants and those in precarious employment. People in the LGBTI community.

**Target 16.7** Ensures responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels and makes sure that all programmes and benefits actively address or do not marginalise LGBTI people.

### Linked SDGs



### Step 03

Setting  
Goals



# Awareness and Education

## **Diversity module is part of the annual training cycle for managers**

Apart from having an equal opportunities and benefits or non-discrimination statement that is specified for LGBTI employees, employers need to communicate these policies to their employees. But, in doing so, many employees will require guidance. Being responsible for overseeing a department or group of employees, managers have an important role to play in raising awareness. Training of managers on LGBTI inclusion is therefore critical. By featuring workplace scenarios and providing them with examples of how to respond, managers can become important bearers and facilitators for a more inclusive organisational culture.

## **Onboarding of employees**

Onboarding is the process where new hires get to learn more about the organization. This is the perfect opportunity to make them familiar with the tools and mechanisms in place to make people feel welcome and safe and that everyone, including LGBTI employees, can be themselves at work. It also implies the display of being an inclusive organization for job seekers. Here, it is important that information is easy to find and prominently displayed on the website of an organization. This is a major sign of support for both old and new employees.

## **Reverse mentoring or training programs for straight allies who can advocate for & support LGBTI**

Reverse mentoring promotes visibility and discussion at all levels, creating an open atmosphere where everybody can feel comfortable. It helps non-LGBTI colleagues realise that they have an important role to play. Allies might be at the very top of an organisation or a colleague in a team. They can call anti-LGBTI behaviour, correct destructive myths and take a stand against jokes in a way that LGBTI themselves people cannot. It is a different voice taking a stand, one that will be privy to a lot of the comments that LGBTI people may not be. Accenture is one of the companies that has used reverse mentoring to improve LGBTI inclusion. Here, managing directors have been mentored by members of their LGBTI network which provided them with a more intimate insight into the challenges LGBTI employees come across.

## **Required diversity training for everyone as part of the training cycle**

Having allies in place is going to make the diversity training for everyone more effective. For training to be successful, the message must be reinforced regularly. Only then it has the potential to positively address biases and prejudice in the long term. Training should not only be mandatory for lower-level workers but all employees, regardless of their status in the company, can and should benefit from the training sessions.

## How does this connect to the SDGs?

**Target 5.c** Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels. Currently, in most cases this is focused on women. However, we argue that the scope here should be expanded to also include minority groups such as the LGBTI community.

**Target 4.7** Emphasises the need to acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of diversity. For example, through unconscious bias related training and other diversity related development and mentoring programmes.

### Linked SDGs





### Step 03

Setting  
Goals



# Empowerment

## Concrete action or activity making LGBTI inclusion actionable

The instalment of policies, support from senior level and the offering of training are an important first step for increased empowerment of LGBTI employees. It provides a feeling of acknowledgement and outlines a framework for increased LGBTI inclusion. An important next step is to put your words into practice and show your employees these are not just empty promises. This can for example, be in the form of a launching event for an LGBTI initiative, such as the creation of an LGBTI employee resource group, or by supporting a Pride event provided that it is part of an ongoing, visible program of support and not just a one-off event.

## Promotion and support of LGBTI employee resource groups

The promotion and support of an LGBTI employee resource group further increases a sense of empowerment. It helps LGBTI employees obtain a voice as these groups often become platforms of support, information and resource sharing. An important prerequisite is for them to be truly inclusive, meaning that membership is not limited to employees that belong to the LGBTI community but also allies are welcome to join. Philips is an example of an organization that takes a structural approach in their support of all employee resource groups. They recognise the added value for the organization with regards to recruitment and employee engagement.

## Corporate interaction with LGBTI civil society organisations

A next step is connecting with LGBTI civil society organisations. This shows employees that the organization sees the bigger picture and understands that their role in society goes beyond shareholder value. This does not mean that the organization is expected to solve all local problems, but by bringing local LGBTI civil society organisations into the conversation, organisations are able to have a more profound and authentic conversation. A good example of this is IBM which, among other things, supports and co-hosts conferences with local LGBTI civil society organisations on LGBTI inclusion in countries around the world.

## Supplier diversity programs include LGBTI

The implementation of supplier LGBTI diversity programs is a possible next step that can only be done once an organization has its own house in order. Through such a program, an organization can demand their suppliers to take steps towards increased LGBTI inclusion. It takes a lot of convincing and requires a sound organisational structure that can perform checks on compliance. Though, by putting a supplier diversity program in place, an organization can truly contribute to a more inclusive economy. One in which no one is left behind.

## How does this connect to the SDGs?

**Targets 5.1 and 5.C** emphasize the need to end all forms of discrimination and adopt and strengthen sound policies for the promotion of equality and empowerment. These are focussed on women and girls. However, we argue that the scope here should be expanded for it to also include other minority or marginalised groups that face structural discrimination.

**Target 10.3** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action within the organisation.

**Target 17.17** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnership. We do stress that internal or local LGBTI groups need to be included in both the design and implementation of new programmes.

### Linked SDGs



## Step 03

Setting  
Goals



# Accountability and Measurement

### Report on activities on LGBTI inclusion

The reporting of efforts on LGBTI inclusion in CSR or annual reports, increases visibility on the topic for anyone dealing with the organization. It ensures that these efforts are evaluated on an annual basis which often leads to increased accountability and the integration of efforts in the management cycle.

An example of an organization that reports on its efforts on an annual basis is IBM. They report on the structures in place to facilitate LGBTI inclusion and the progress made.

### External international benchmarking

External international benchmarking helps organisations gaining insight in where they stand compared to peers and be inspired by best practices. There are various ways of benchmarking. One way is by participating in international benchmarks as the **Workplace Pride Global Benchmark** or the **Global Workplace Equality Index of Stonewall**. Another, more informal benchmarking approach, is through direct exchange of best practices between organisations. **Open for Business** is an international organization that provides a platform for this and connects organisations that would like to exchange practices on LGBTI workplace inclusion.

### Diversity performance linked to HR bonuses

A next step is to link diversity performance to HR bonuses. This goal implies that some form of measuring takes place. Measuring diversity in a way that it also includes LGBTI diversity is something a lot of organisations struggle with, not in the last place because by law they are not allowed to request this type of information. However, a common seen solution for this is the inclusion of self-ID questions in the annual employee satisfaction survey. An organization that is implementing such an approach is Accenture. In all countries they ask the same five questions which are listed below:

1. **What is your gender identity? (select one)**  
Female/Woman, Male/Man, Non-binary, Other (please specify), Prefer not to say
2. **To whom have you disclosed your gender identity at work? (select one)**  
No one (don't want to disclose), No one (others correctly assume my identity), One person, Some people, Most people, Everyone, Prefer not to say.
3. **Do you identify as: (multi select)**  
Cisgender, Gender nonconforming, Other (please specify), Prefer not to say.
4. **What is your sexual orientation? (select one)**  
Bisexual, Gay, Heterosexual, Straight, Lesbian, Other (please specify), Prefer not to say.
5. **To whom have you disclosed your sexual orientation at work? (select one)**  
No one (don't want to disclose), No one (others correctly assume my orientation), One person, Some people, Most people, Everyone, Prefer not to say.

The answers to these questions provide insight in the LGBTI diversity of their employee base and help to get a sense of the inclusiveness of the organization. The results of a set of questions like the above can then be linked to HR bonuses.

Bonus  
of highest  
management  
depends on results  
employee  
satisfaction  
survey

Making the bonus of the highest management dependent on the results of the employee satisfaction survey could take the accountability for LGBTI inclusion even further. A survey that includes questions on LGBTI diversity and inclusiveness as well as employee engagement and satisfaction helps to ensure that board members keeping engaged with the topic and keep a close eye on the progress made.

## How does this connect to the SDGs?

**Target 10.3** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard. We argue that the scope here should be expanded for it to also include other groups such as the LGBTI community.

**Target 8.5** By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and those with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

**Target 12.6** Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate diversity and sustainability information into their reporting cycle. Emphasising the fact that diversity related information can't always be utilized due to cultural or legal circumstances.

### Linked SDGs





#### Step 04 Integrating



Once the starting point is clear and goals are set, it is important to zoom out and make sure that the LGBTI approach is embedded in the organisations' overall SDG strategy which then should be integrated in the management cycle. In this way, you ensure progress on LGBTI inclusion is closely monitored and when targets are reached, new ambitions are formulated. The integration in many cases will require a close cooperation between different organisational departments as diversity often falls under the responsibility of HR whereas the CSR manager is overseeing the SDG strategy and impact. Experience learns that there is often little cooperation between these departments. A missed opportunity, as good collaboration between these departments can be beneficial in other areas as well. Increased corporate sustainability has a positive influence on employee engagement and an organisations' ability to attract and retain employees. On the other hand can HR facilitate increased awareness of employees on CSR issues through increased internal communication, the offering of training and by organising internal competitions around CSR.

#### Step 05 Reporting and Communicating



Over the last decade, the disclosure of non-financial information has increased significantly. Organisations started to use the SDGs as a framework to determine their most important impact areas and communicate their progress on these goals on an annual basis. With this being said, many organisations struggle to make the SDGs practical as many of the sub targets are focused on government action. LGBTI inclusion in the workplace however is something all organisations can work on and carry a responsibility for. Reporting and communicating on these efforts not only facilitate increased LGBTI inclusion within the organization but also ensures job seekers and investors are informed on this as well. For this, various communication channels can be utilised. The inclusion of progress made in an annual report or CSR report, facilitates that efforts are evaluated on an annual basis. It safeguards an organisations' continuous attention to ensure that no one is left behind.

## Rainbow Paper: In conclusion

It is important to take a comprehensive approach to the inclusion of LGBTI topics into your SDG strategy as this will create the best results. Concretely, this means that linking specific SDGs to targeted LGBTI topics and initiatives creates a logical bridge to the rest of your strategy. The most obvious are SDGs 5, 8 and 10 however, elements of LGBT inclusion topics can be found in several others as well. Ultimately, such an approach will make things more understandable for your entire organisation, create greater buy in and demonstrate that it is really not that hard to do.

Any strategy will not work without proper leadership support. This is absolutely crucial to the ultimate success of your efforts. Just as it is important to remember that these efforts do not operate in a vacuum. Only if you incorporate them into your internal and external communications, and then live them authentically within your organisation, can you hope to make significant impact.

Finally, do not forget to measure your progress through verifiable means such as the **Workplace Pride Global Benchmark**. This, along with the rest of a structured approach that embeds LGBTI inclusion within your overall SDG planning, will ensure greater success for all stakeholders.

# Acknowledgements

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“Sustainalize is a management consultancy specialized in sustainability, of which LGBTI inclusion is an integral part. We are a new generation of sustainability consultants; a bunch of passionate professionals who want to do things better. Since 2010 we’ve helped countless organizations find the right answers to today’s many sustainability challenges.

We believe that successful focus on shared value creation today extends beyond tomorrow’s immediate financial returns for shareholders and employees. Value that benefits society and planet too. We help organizations understand their impact, develop the right strategy, manage results on the basis of reliable information and communicate to their stakeholders about progress and achievements in an honest and authentic way. Always with a clear vision, and a hands-on and flexible approach.”

For more information write to: [info@sustainalize.nl](mailto:info@sustainalize.nl)



Workplace Pride is a not for profit foundation dedicated to improving the lives of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transgenders and Intersex (LGBTI) people in workplaces all over the world. We strive for a world of inclusive workplaces where LGBTI people can truly be themselves, are valued and, through their contribution, help to lead the way for others.

For more information write to: [info@workplacepride.org](mailto:info@workplacepride.org)



As a network company, Alliander is responsible for the distribution of energy such as electricity, (bio)gas and heat. We stand for an energy system where everyone has equal access to reliable, affordable and renewable energy.

For more information write to: [info@alliander.nl](mailto:info@alliander.nl)



Shell is an international energy company with expertise in the exploration, production, refining and marketing of oil and natural gas, and the manufacturing and marketing of chemicals. Find out how we are working to power progress together.

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