Equality and DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) Policy

1. Policy statement

E Co. is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and diverse workplace where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to succeed. Our commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) is fundamental to our mission as a climate finance consultancy. It flows directly from our core value of being Diverse in skills, experience, and background—which is essential for us to remain Connected, practice Empathetic leadership, and maximize our global Impact.

This policy establishes our global operational framework to ensure that all employment practices, professional growth, compensation, and workplace interactions are free from discrimination and bias, fully compliant with international labor standards, and aligned with Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI).

2. Purpose

At E Co., we believe that cultivating a diverse and inclusive environment goes beyond legal compliance; it is vital to achieving our strategic goals, delivering excellence, and honoring our B Corp commitments.

The purpose of this Policy is to set out our dedication to creating a workplace where equity (fairness of access and opportunity) and inclusion (feeling valued and psychologically safe) are embedded across all operations. By aligning our workplace standards with our core values, we aim to:

- **Promote Fairness & Equity:** Ensure equal access to opportunities, professional development, and fair treatment for all team members, contractors, and partners across all jurisdictions.
- **Eliminate Bias & Discrimination:** Maintain a zero-tolerance policy for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimization.
- **Foster Belonging:** Cultivate an environment where individual differences are celebrated, psychological safety is protected, and diverse perspectives actively drive innovation.
- **Drive Accountability & Continuous Improvement:** Periodically review workplace metrics, recruitment, and promotion outcomes to identify and dismantle structural barriers.
- **Guide Operational Relationships:** Provide clear standards for interactions between internal staff, direct suppliers, clients, and project stakeholders globally.

Note: This policy covers equality, diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-discrimination standards. Specific procedures for reporting grievances or formal disciplinary steps are handled under separate internal policies.

Cultural Diversity Wheel

Cultural Diversity Wheel Framework Breakdown:

- **Shared Purpose & Values (Center):** Serves as the foundational anchor at the core of the wheel, connecting all internal, external, and organizational dimensions of diversity across E Co.
- **Internal Dimensions:** Encompasses core personal attributes—including Age, Gender, Ethnicity & nationality, and Native language—serving as key points of reflection to ensure equitable treatment and representation.
- **External Dimensions:** Covers individual life contexts—such as Education & training, Faith & beliefs, Lived experience, and Family—reflecting the varied perspectives team members bring to our shared mission.
- **Organizational Dimensions:** Includes workplace aspects—such as Team & function, Work location, Workforce tier (job grade level), and Seniority & career stage—guiding inclusive practices and equity across all levels of the organization.

3. Application of this policy

This policy sets the minimum global standards for E Co. and is borderless in its application. It applies to all work conducted on behalf of the company, whether from a home office, the London office, a regional hub, or while on assignment in complex field environments.

Applicability by stakeholder group: To ensure our standards drive a material positive impact, this policy applies as follows:

- **Internal Team (UK & Overseas):** Mandatory for all employed internal staff regardless of jurisdiction. This policy sets the baseline for our internal culture, hiring practices, talent development, and operational conduct.
- **External Partners (Consultants & Suppliers):** Adherence to the principles of this policy is a condition of engagement. Consultants, vendors, and suppliers are expected to mirror our DEIB standards when representing E Co. or delivering on client projects.

Jurisdictional Priority: As a global organisation, E Co. adheres to the following hierarchy:

- Where local laws offer greater protection or higher standards than this policy, local law prevails.
- Where local laws are more lenient, this policy prevails.

Operational Mapping & Implementation: To ensure this policy is integrated into our operations:

- **Contractual Integration:** This policy forms part of the Staff Handbook.

4. Related documents and forms

Related document/form/tool	Type	Description/Comments
Code of Conduct	Policy	Defines the ethical standards and expected professional behavior for all E Co. team members.
Anti-corruption policy	Policy	Detailed rules on bribery, money laundering, and terrorism financing.
E Co. Integrity Portal	Tool	Secure platform for anonymous reporting of actual or suspected violations or ethical concerns.
Human Rights and Modern Slavery Policy	Policy	Outlines our commitment to respecting human rights, preventing modern slavery and human trafficking, and implementing due diligence across our operations and supply chains.
Action plan (Equality and DEIB policy)	Tool	Outlines priority action items, operational steps, responsible leads, status, and KPIs across key DEIB focus areas.

Hybrid & Remote Work Policy	Policy	Defines the framework and expectations for employees working in flexible, non-office-based environments.
Whistleblowing Policy	Policy	Framework for raising concerns about danger or illegality in the workplace, providing a secure, confidential channel for reporting wrongdoing without fear of retaliation.
Wellbeing & Sustainable Productivity Policy	Policy	The primary framework for balancing employee health with high-performance output across global operations.
Grievance mechanisms policy	Policy	Defines the operational framework for managing and resolving internal and external workplace concerns and grievances to ensure transparency, compliance, and procedural fairness.
Grievance Register	Tool	Centralised tracking log used to record, monitor, and manage the status and resolution of formal grievances.
Disciplinary policy	Policy	Outlines the standards of conduct and procedures for addressing performance or behavioral issues fairly and consistently.
Appeals policy	Policy	Framework for reviewing and appealing formal decisions to ensure procedural fairness and transparency.

5. Principles

Our approach to Equality and DEIB is governed by the following core principles:

- **Equity of Access:** Recognizing that diverse individuals may require different types of support to thrive. We commit to providing tailored scaffolding and resources so everyone can reach their full potential.
- **Values as the Compass:** Inclusive behaviors are explicitly linked to our core values: delivering excellence, empathetic, driven, impactful, connected, and diverse.
- **Zero Tolerance for Unacceptable Conduct:** Bullying, harassment, discrimination, or victimization of any kind will not be tolerated and will be met with immediate corrective action.
- **Psychological Safety & Dignity:** We treat every team member with dignity, ensuring safe spaces to raise concerns, express identity, and contribute ideas without fear of adverse consequences.
- **Transparency & Confidentiality:** DEIB monitoring and investigation processes are handled with procedural fairness, transparency, and strict confidentiality to protect individual privacy.

6. Policy provisions

6.1 Equal opportunity and protected characteristics

E Co. provides equal opportunities in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, compensation, training, promotion, professional development, and general terms of employment.

In compliance with the UK Equality Act 2010 and global standards, no job applicant, employee, or contractor shall receive less favorable treatment or be disadvantaged on the grounds of any protected characteristic, including:

- Age
- Disability (physical or neurodivergent)
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins)
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

6.2 Proactive equity and inclusion measures

To move beyond basic compliance and actively promote Equity and Inclusion, E Co. implements the following measures:

Reasonable Adjustments: Where an employee or candidate has a disability, health condition, or neurodivergent requirement, E Co. will make reasonable adjustments to working arrangements, physical equipment, or remote setups to remove barriers to performance and access.

Inclusive Recruitment: Job descriptions and recruitment channels are audited to eliminate biased language, ensuring candidates are evaluated solely on merit, potential, and values alignment.

Flexible Working: Recognising diverse life circumstances, E Co. supports flexible working models where operational requirements allow, facilitating work-life harmony across our global workforce.

6.3 Unacceptable conduct

E Co. strictly prohibits all forms of unacceptable conduct. Any individual found to have engaged in unacceptable behavior will be subject to formal disciplinary proceedings. Unacceptable conduct includes:

Direct Discrimination: Treating someone less favorably directly because of a protected characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination: Applying a neutral rule or requirement that puts individuals sharing a protected characteristic at a disadvantage without objective justification.

Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic that violates an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.

Bullying: Offensive, intimidating, malicious, or insulting behavior, or an abuse of power that undermines, humiliates, or denigrates an individual.

Victimisation: Subjecting an individual to detrimental treatment because they have brought a discrimination claim, raised a grievance, or supported an investigation in good faith.

7. Required actions to address risks

To ensure policy compliance and effective risk mitigation, responsibilities are assigned as follows.

Stakeholder Group	Responsibility
Employees	Responsible for upholding policy principles in daily interactions, treating colleagues with respect, participating in mandatory DEIB training, and reporting unacceptable behavior.
Line Managers & O3 Managers	Responsible for fostering inclusive team environments, applying fair standards, identifying and mitigating bias in performance or task assignments, and responding promptly to concerns.
HR	Responsible for setting an empathetic tone at the top, allocating resources for DEIB initiatives, driving pay equity, and reviewing systemic organizational trends.
Management team	Responsible for setting an empathetic tone at the top, allocating resources for DEIB initiatives, driving pay equity, and reviewing systemic organizational trends.
ESG & Governance Experts	Responsible for ensuring internal practices align with international JEDI benchmarks, WEPs, UNGC principles, and B Corp commitments.

8. Exceptions and waivers

None. The commitments to non-discrimination, human rights, and equal opportunity outlined in this policy apply universally across all operations and cannot be waived.

9. Training and support

E Co. is committed to providing ongoing education to build DEIB capability across the organisation:

- **Staff Induction & Refresher Training:** All internal personnel should receive DEIB and anti-discrimination awareness training upon joining and during annual cycles.
- **Managerial Development:** All line managers should be assigned to dedicated training for managers to mitigate unconscious bias in hiring, performance evaluations, promotion decisions, and team leadership.
- **Toolkit Support:** Managers need to be equipped with tools covering Active Listening, Non-Violent Communication (NVC), and cultural competence.

10. Monitoring and compliance

We conduct regular assessments, audits, and reviews to verify compliance with this policy. All monitoring activities, including the collection and analysis of data, will be conducted in accordance with E Co.'s Data Protection Policy and relevant Privacy Notices. Employees are encouraged to proactively raise concerns or ask questions regarding compliance by contacting HR team or reporting issues on the E Co. Integrity Portal. We are committed to open communication and continuous improvement.

Reporting obligations

Data gathered through these monitoring activities will be used to assess policy effectiveness. Where applicable, data will be disaggregated by gender and other relevant diversity metrics to ensure equitable outcomes in alignment with the Women's Empowerment Principles UNGC and B Corp. Such data will be pseudonymised where possible to protect individual privacy and used strictly for the purpose of assessing policy impact.

11. Grievance mechanism & remediation

We foster a culture of psychological safety where all stakeholders — including employees, contractors, suppliers, and community members - are encouraged to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. Actual or suspected violations should be reported through our established channels. To ensure accessibility and overcome systemic barriers to reporting:

- **Internal:** Concerns can be raised with the Head of HR or via Vedrana Božić in the first instance
- **External/Anonymous:** Stakeholders may use the E Co. Portal, which allows for anonymous reporting and is also accessible to external partners.
- **Gender-Sensitive Approach:** In alignment with the **Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs)**, our reporting channels are designed to be gender-responsive. We recognise that power imbalances can discourage reporting; therefore, victims may request a point of contact of a specific gender to ensure comfort and safety.

Impartial Investigation: All reports will undergo a prompt, impartial, and thorough investigation by the HR Department.

Remediation & Redress: If a breach is substantiated, E Co. is committed to providing timely and appropriate remediation. This may include corrective actions, policy changes, or restitution to affected parties. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy toward retaliation against any individual who reports a concern in good faith.

Non-Retaliation: We maintain a zero-tolerance policy toward retaliation. Any individual who reports a concern in good faith will be protected from any form of reprisal, harassment, or negative employment consequence.
No employee will be penalised or be subject to other adverse consequences for refusing to pay bribes even if it may result in E Co. losing business.

12. Glossary

- **DEIB:** Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.
- **Equity:** The fair treatment, access, and opportunity for all people, while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have historically prevented full participation.
- **Inclusion:** The practice of ensuring that people feel a sense of belonging, respect, and value in the workplace.
- **JEDI:** Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.
- **Protected Characteristics:** Specific demographic categories protected against discrimination by law (e.g., Equality Act 2010).
- **Reasonable Adjustments:** Changes made to a workplace or job role to enable a person with a disability or health condition to perform their duties safely and effectively.
- **Unconscious Bias:** Social stereotypes or implicit associations about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness.

13. Oversight and governance

Policy owner: Head of HR

The Policy owner is responsible for the daily implementation, governance, and maintenance of the policy. Their duties include authorising exceptions, overseeing training programmes, and updating compliance tools.

Contact: For guidance, approval, or interpretations regarding this policy, please contact: Vedrana Božić

This policy is a living document and will be reviewed periodically to adapt to evolving performance management systems and legal requirements.

14. Distribution record

Distribution group	Method of distribution	Date of record/announcement
Internal team	Staff Handbook update	28/09/2026
Externally: Clients, Partners, Collaborators	Company Website	30/09/2026
Public disclosure	Company Website	30/09/2026

15. Document control & review

Policy owner	Head of HR
Approved by:	Managing director
Original approval date:	03/10/2017
Date of last revision and approval:	24/09/2026
Revision number:	3.0 (Third Revision)
Date of next revision:	01/10/2027

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