



**Organizational
Inclusion
Assessment Tool**
Facilitation Guide

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Introduction

Democracy is more likely to develop and endure when all segments of a society are free to participate and influence political outcomes, without suffering discrimination or fear of threat or reprisal. The inclusion of marginalized communities including women, young people, persons with disabilities, ethnic and religious minorities, Indigenous Peoples, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) communities, is essential to build legitimacy and secure broad buy-in for representative democratic processes. However, for meaningful inclusion and transformative change to take place, it must be anchored and operationalized at the institutional level, including within formal and informal institutions and organizations. According to CIVICUS, “beyond merely bringing diverse people together, persistent initiatives, specific behaviors and intentional practices are needed for tapping and invigorating the potential of diversity to lead to diverse outcomes and inclusive organizational cultures.”¹ Research shows that organizations that are able to institutionalize inclusion create work environments where staff feel more valued and connected to the organization’s mission and values and therefore are more motivated to support the organization in achieving its overall goals and contribute to overarching democratic standards. With this in mind, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) developed the Organizational Inclusion Assessment Tool to assist civil society organizations (CSOs) to effectively institutionalize diversity and inclusion throughout their programs or initiatives and internal processes.

The facilitated assessment process is designed to be interactive, enable learning, and foster team sharing and exploration. The institutionalizing of inclusion, like the practice of inclusion itself, is a process. Ultimately, results from the assessment should inform priority setting and action planning, so that there is an organizational change road map. The assessment can be a one-time process or regularly repeated to monitor progress against the action plan and identify new areas in need of strengthening. The assessment offers organizations a chance to reflect on their current status and prompt discussion that will enable staff to learn about recognized best practices and from each other.

Seven organizational domains are assessed, including:

1. Governance and Leadership
2. Strategic Planning and Policymaking
3. Communications
4. Accessibility, Safety, and Security
5. People, Culture, and Learning
6. Design, Management, and Evaluation of Organizational Initiatives
7. External Partnerships and Collective Action

The sections below include considerations and techniques to help prepare for and facilitate the assessment, including step-by-step instructions, sample questions to help facilitators probe further into the domain areas, and key terms and definitions. Facilitators and participants will use the rating under each domain to help define the gaps and inform decisions about the need for change and plans for action. In collaboration with the organization, the facilitator should review and adjust suggested actions to further define and come to an agreement on action steps, responsibilities, timeframe, and resources needed to achieve the actions, and how the actions will be monitored and measured.

It is recommended that the facilitator read this guide in its entirety before beginning the assessment process.

¹For more information, refer to Civicus’ [Top 10 Diversity and Inclusion \(D&I\) Practices](#).

Understanding Organizational Assessments

The main purpose of conducting an organizational assessment is to gain a rigorous understanding of an organization's strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge enables organizations to identify areas that require improvement and develop strategies to enhance their organizational performance and sustainability.

Organizational assessments can take a variety of forms depending on the specific needs and goals of the organization. Common types of organizational assessments include, but are not limited to:

- 1) performance assessments which analyze an organization's ability to meet its objectives and goals;
- 2) cultural assessments which evaluate the organizational culture and climate;
- 3) leadership assessments which analyze the effectiveness of leadership within the organization; and
- 4) structural assessments which assess the effectiveness of the organizational structure.

These assessments are not mutually exclusive; in many cases, it may make sense for organizations to use a combination of these methodologies. By evaluating the various aspects of an organization, such as its structure, processes, and culture, leadership and staff gain valuable insights into what the organization does well and what areas can be improved. This understanding provides a foundation for organizations to develop strategies to build upon their strengths and address areas where improvement might be beneficial, ultimately leading to improved performance and outcomes.

Methodology

Given the diversity of CSOs across the world, this tool will require adaptation as it relates to the organization, their priorities, and the context in which they operate. This guide provides a menu of options which organizations can use to customize the assessment to meet their needs and priorities. However, the core emphasis on intersectional inclusion, consideration of multiple intersecting identities, and access to power should remain constant regardless of the type or size of organization. CSOs can use this assessment process and its findings as an opportunity to provide both support for and build understanding and buy-in for the principles of inclusion. This tool utilizes a combination of information gathering techniques to match the size and capacity of the organization and ensure the most relevant and useful data is collected. The assessment tool lays out areas for analysis and the types of information to collect, however data collection can take various forms.

SECTION 1: BEFORE THE ASSESSMENT

Considerations and Techniques

- This tool is not designed to be a “one size fits all” tool. Each organization conducting this assessment will have different needs, contexts, and understandings of inclusion. The guidance below seeks to build a process that can be adapted to different organizational contexts; facilitators should collaborate with the organization to determine what process will work best for them.
- Objectivity is essential to the preparation for and implementation of this tool. In order to secure honest feedback, open dialogue, and institutional buy-in, participants must understand the process to be objective. The assessment process and objectives should be transparent and clearly communicated with participants before the assessment.
- Effective implementation of this assessment requires careful consideration of organizational needs and contextual analysis before beginning. Steps 1-3 outline the preparation that should be completed prior to planning implementation. Steps 4-5 detail how to carry out the assessment and steps 6-7 cover what to do after the assessment.
- The selection of participants for this assessment should be done with care and with the goal of establishing a productive, power balanced, and judgment free environment for dialogue. The assessment seeks to be an interactive self-assessment process bringing together staff from all levels, therefore participants should be representative of the organization’s departments and internal diversity.²

Step 1: Discussions with the Organization and Tool Adaptation

Before any adaptation of the tool takes place, the facilitator should conduct initial conversations with the organization’s leadership to understand their priorities. These conversations should aim to understand how the organization defines diversity and inclusion and to what extent, if at all, the organization is thinking about and prioritizing diversity and inclusion within their operations and programs or initiatives. During the conversation, the facilitator should also assess the organization’s interest in deepening organizational practices to strengthen diversity and inclusion, recognizing that buy-in is essential to the process, and gauge potential barriers to change. The assessment should be administered in a way that recognizes the organization is willing to engage in these discussions and acknowledges their openness to changing.

The tool aims to be responsive to the needs and interests of a diverse set of CSOs and is structured so that organizations can conduct the assessment with limited support from the facilitator. The tool is also designed to enable organizations to use the assessment to regularly reassess to monitor the effectiveness of previous actions, evaluate progress made against action plans, and identify new areas in need of strengthening.

Administration of this assessment should also consider the time and attention required for implementation. Organizations should plan the period of assessment to avoid conflicts (e.g., critical campaign activities or active fundraising) and ensure participants have sufficient time, attention, and resources to dedicate to the assessment process.

Once the tool has been adapted to the needs and context of the organization, the tool should also be translated, ideally by someone with subject matter expertise in inclusion, into the native language of the facilitator and participants. Copies of the translated tool should also be distributed to the participants at least a week before the assessment is scheduled to take place to allow time for participants to review, raise any questions or concerns, and receive any necessary clarifications or explanations.

² Organizations may also consider including board members, volunteers or other relevant network members. This is recommended for smaller organizations or those with significant numbers of volunteers.

Step 2: Context Analysis and Desk Review

Facilitators should begin by reviewing the key terms and definitions which can be found in **Appendix A**. It is also essential for facilitators to understand the context in which the organization operates and how the context impacts their initiatives, priorities, and organizational structures. This may require a context analysis to better understand existing legal frameworks that relate to specific communities, local labor laws, and laws related to civil society registration and reporting as well as international treaties or conventions the country may have signed and/or ratified. It may also be beneficial for the facilitator to collaborate with the organization to map similar organizations for possible comparison examples when conducting the context analysis.

In addition to contextual knowledge, the facilitator should review existing organizational documents (to the extent that they exist) such as statutes, strategic plans, annual work plans, human resources policies, mission, vision, and values statements, and communications strategies with an inclusion lens as a way to identify initial gaps. For some organizations, the context analysis and desk review may provide sufficient data to begin identifying priorities and developing action steps. However in other cases, additional data gathering may be needed. Supplementary data collection methods and techniques can be found in **Appendix B**.

Step 3. Determine Facilitation Style and Logistics

Once the context analysis and desk review are complete, it is time to determine the facilitation style and assessment logistics. This tool was designed to be conducted with an experienced facilitator who is familiar with inclusion approaches and, ideally, has experience supporting CSOs with their organizational development. It is also important to consider group and power dynamics and how this may impact levels of participation and bias among answers. In order to determine the best format and facilitation style for each organization, the facilitator should review the options below. Please note that the suggestions below are only an estimate, each organization should collaborate with the facilitator to determine what format and structure will best serve their organization.

Option 1: Full Plenary Sessions	Option 2: Small Group Sessions
<p>Who it's best for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations that are less familiar with diversity and inclusion topics • Organizations that are smaller in size and in which staff know each other well • Number of available facilitators is limited 	<p>Who it's best for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations that have more experience with inclusion • Organizations that are larger and in which staff do not know each other well • Organizations that have some existing challenges related to power dynamics or inclusion
<p>What you need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one facilitator and one note-taker • No more than 25 participants • If time allows, dedicate three full days to complete the full plenary sessions and action planning 	<p>What you need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one facilitator and note-taker per group • Each group should have no more than 10 participants • Assign small groups 1-2 domains to discuss • If time allows, dedicate two full days to complete the small group discussions and action planning
<p>Note: Whether the organization chooses to employ option 1, 2 or a combination, the suggested agenda can be broken into sessions over multiple days.</p>	

Sample agendas for both options above can be found in **Appendix C**. Organizations should feel free to adapt the agendas to their organization's unique needs, including creating space for more breaks. For organizations interested in conducting a pre-assessment inclusion training consider [USAID's Inclusive Development E-Learning Course](#) or [FIELD's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) available through Kaya Connect.

Participant Selection

The facilitator should take into consideration the size of the organization and prioritize a facilitation style that ensures the voices of all individuals within the organization – from the executive directors, to logistics and administrative staff – are included. Facilitators will also need to create and enforce norms around not duplicating ideas or sentiments that have already been expressed and keeping remarks concise in full plenary sessions to ensure unique voices, thoughts, and perspectives are heard.

Larger organizations may consider some combination of self-nomination or colleague/manager nomination of participants. This approach can be useful for finding interested participants but may also lead to selection bias and limit buy-in within the organization. If the organization is too large to encourage full participation in the assessment, then at a minimum representatives should be engaged from each department, and the remaining participants could be chosen via random selection. Large organizations may also want to consider a pre-assessment staff survey or other means by which to gather data from the full organization before setting priorities.

Identifying participants with diverse lived experiences may be challenging, especially for organizations less familiar with diversity and inclusion concepts. Organizations conducting the assessment for the first time should work closely with the facilitator to develop a participant selection strategy that will ensure the assessment is accurate and representative.

SECTION 2: DURING THE ASSESSMENT

Considerations and Techniques

- This is a **self-guided** and **interactive** assessment. The facilitator and participants meet and discuss the statements under each domain to determine where the organization sits along a spectrum.
- Facilitators should reserve some time at the start of each session to discuss and clarify the domain's content, ensuring all participants are fully informed about the topics to be covered. At the beginning of each session, facilitators should also read the discussion statements out loud, review the rating methodology with participants and respond to any questions.
- It may be helpful for the facilitator to use a projector to display the discussion statements at the front of the meeting room to ensure participants can follow the discussion more easily.
- Some statements may provoke a straightforward response of yes or no. Some statements may prompt a conversation among those who agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree entirely.
- Facilitators should ask open-ended, probing questions to encourage discussion. There are no right or wrong answers; the goal should be an open dialogue and charting a path forward. Additional probing statements for each assessment domain can be found in **Appendix D**.
- Facilitator notes and participant responses will be used during action planning; for best results, facilitators should either obtain permission to record the session or employ one or two note-takers during the session(s) to ensure discussion details are well captured.
- For additional guidance on how to deal with difficult questions or overcome disagreement refer to **Appendix E**.

Step 4: Informed Consent and Ground Rules

All engagements must be conducted in line with ethical principles including informed consent. The facilitator should provide clear information (preferably written via an information sheet and consent form) on the following:

- Who the facilitator is and why they are collecting data
- How the data will be used and securely stored
- How the data will be anonymized and any quotes with attributing information kept confidential

A sample informed consent template can be found in **Appendix F**.

After obtaining informed consent from participants, the facilitator should conduct a **ground rules exercise**. Depending on participants' experience with establishing ground rules for open dialogue, facilitators may come with ground rules already developed or co-develop them with participants. Some suggestions include the following:³

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views.
- Commit to learning, not debating. Comment in order to share information, not to persuade.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak.
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group and focus on speaking from personal experience.

Step 5: Conducting and Scoring the Assessment

The assessment tool should be utilized to discuss and document organizational successes and opportunities across the various domains. Following the facilitated discussion, the participants will analyze and reflect on the appropriate “rating” for the individual category. Each section of the assessment tool includes a scoring rubric on a scale of 0-4.

It’s important to note that the results derived from the assessment are to set priorities for action and are not used to judge or assess the organization’s performance. Ideally results will present the organization with both strengths and opportunities for organizational growth as it relates to improving inclusion. The facilitator and note-taker should document the rating and justification as well as any short or long term priorities identified during the discussion on the Assessment Grid. If preferred, organizations can score after each statement rather than after each domain, which will take more time but produces more data to guide action planning. Individuals can also independently submit their scores to be averaged, rather than agreeing upon a score as a group.

³ For more information on establishing ground rules or guidelines for discussion, refer to this [resource](#).

SECTION 3: AFTER THE ASSESSMENT

Considerations and Techniques

- If there is time in the schedule, it is recommended for organizations to take a break after completing the assessment and before action planning. This pause can help to give participants time to reflect on the assessment results, rest and recharge before initiating action planning. This also re-energizes the facilitator and participants, enabling them to maintain their focus and dedication to the assessment process. This is accounted for in both sample agendas included in **Appendix C**.
- To initiate action planning after the assessment, engage the group in a basic discussion of the next steps. The facilitator should review with participants how to set goals and what constitutes a “SMART” goal. For an overview of SMART goals, refer to **Appendix G**.
- The tool is intended to start a facilitated, open discussion and create buy-in for inclusion. This goal should be carried into action planning. Therefore, facilitators should ensure there is enough time for the action planning discussion. Creating institutional buy-in takes time and people must feel that their ideas were heard.
- Facilitators can start the action planning discussion by asking participants to share their vision or big picture goals for the organization.
- The Assessment Grid is a repository for the organization’s scores and can help to identify preliminary short and long term priorities gathered during the discussion. Revisit these priorities and begin integrating them into the action plan.
- Review each overarching goal in the action plan and add the relevant details (e.g., timeframe, responsible parties, resources needed, etc.). Use the SMART goals guide in **Appendix G** to ensure the plan is clear and actionable.
- Facilitators should use action planning as an opportunity to reinforce for participants the link between strengthening inclusion practices and organizational success.

Step 6: Results Analysis and Debrief

Before beginning Action Planning, debrief with the group on some major takeaways from the facilitated discussion. Below are sample questions to start the discussion:

- Based on the discussion so far, what stands out? What is most surprising?
- What successes or opportunities did the organization notice in the discussion? What is something the organization is excelling at?
- Does anything stand out as an immediate priority?
- Was there any category or domain that was more difficult to discuss or understand?
- Are there any priority areas for improvement (short or long term) that immediately stand out?

Step 7: Priority Setting and Action Planning

After results are shared and staff have sufficient time to review and reflect, the facilitator should support the organization in prioritizing and developing an action plan. Organizations should prioritize areas where there are clear gaps related to diversity and inclusion that could impact the effectiveness of their initiatives and their organizational performance. Organizations should also consider areas of existing success and discuss potential ways these successes could be replicated. Priorities should be realistic and achievable, as well as ambitious enough to lead to change without exceeding the organization’s capacity. Priorities should also consider the operating context, recognizing that there may be external factors that can help or hinder organizational progress.

Once priorities have been identified and agreed upon, the facilitator can support the organization to develop an action plan with clear and actionable steps to begin addressing priorities. Action plans help to outline concrete steps for achieving a goal and should aim to address identified needs or gaps. These organizational action plans may include internal mechanisms and cultural changes, focusing on rules, processes, and policies that regulate the internal

workings of the organization. Changes in these rules, mission and vision, mechanisms or codes are essential to create meaningful space for women in all their diversity and other marginalized groups to participate on an equal basis as others; strategies that guide organizations to make these changes are a critical entry point for positive transformation. **The action plan should also include a timeline and indicators for measuring progress.**

Organizations can also regularly use and revisit this tool in order to monitor the effectiveness of previous actions, evaluate progress made against action plans and priorities, and identify new areas in need of strengthening. During reassessment, the organization may find unexpected progress was made in areas where priorities or action had not been identified. A similar framework and methodology should be used in the case of reassessment to compare against the baseline.

Illustrative Examples for Action Planning and a sample template can be found in Appendix H.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Key Terms⁴

- **Accessible:** A site, facility, work environment, service or program that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in and/or use safely, independently and with dignity by persons with disabilities.
- **Constituents:** The stakeholders or participants that an organization serves; a voter in a certain district.
- **Diversity:** The variety of similarities and differences that exist among all individuals in which complex perspectives, differences and intersectionality are celebrated as strengths and opportunities for innovation, acceptance and collaboration. This may include variations in age, socioeconomic status, gender, disability status, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other factors.
- **Do No Harm:** An approach which aims to ensure that external interventions do not create or exacerbate conflicts, pose undue risk for participants, or deepen discriminatory power imbalances within the local context.
- **Equity:** Process of ensuring consistent, systematic, fair, and just treatment of all individuals, including those from marginalized groups.
- **Gender Analysis:** Methodology used to understand the relationships and power dynamics between men, women, and non-binary people, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other.
- **Inclusion:** Persons from all groups and backgrounds are involved in all activities on an equal basis with other citizens, including in leadership positions. Inclusion moves beyond practices that might seek to bring different voices to the table, but ultimately still segregate different groups/voices, to ensure that persons from diverse groups and backgrounds are intentionally and meaningfully involved in all activities. Inclusion is a continuous process that works on multiple political, economic and social levels, and leaves no one behind.
- **Inclusion Analysis:** Methodology that helps to identify and address barriers to inclusion for marginalized groups in policies and programs.
- **Mainstream:** Process whereby people from historically marginalized or underrepresented groups are integrated as equal participants and leaders in programs or initiatives and society more broadly.
- **Nothing Without Us:** The idea that no policy should be decided without the full and direct participation of members of the group(s) affected by that policy.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** Any appropriate or necessary adjustment that gives persons with disabilities and other individuals experiencing exclusion on the basis of their identity an opportunity to participate and contribute on an equal basis with others. This might entail hiring a sign language interpreter for meetings with Deaf participants, moving an activity to a location that is accessible, ensuring materials are available in accessible formats, or providing spaces for sensory breaks.
- **Tokenism:** The practice of making only a symbolic effort to be inclusive to members of marginalized groups, especially by recruiting people from marginalized groups in order to give the appearance of equity based on race, gender, or other identity factors within an organization.

Understanding and Analyzing Barriers to Change

Organizational change is not possible without ownership over the process. In order for meaningful change to occur, organizations must express a commitment to strengthening inclusion within their organizations and a willingness to engage colleagues in honest discussions. Before implementing this assessment organizations must consider whether they have the appropriate time and resources to invest in organizational change.

There may be many reasons, however, why an organization may not be open to change or be willing to engage on topics of inclusion:

- Staff think that members of marginalized communities do not face barriers or challenges when engaging in their initiatives or with their organization.
- Staff working for organizations that have missions and/or objectives of inclusion for one group, such as

disabled persons organizations or LGBTQI+ organizations, assume they are inherently inclusive of other marginalized communities (e.g., women, youth, ethnic and religious minorities, etc.)

- Staff fear the reactions of others, such as peer organizations, if they choose to be more inclusive of specific communities.
- Staff assume that members from marginalized groups have no interest in their work or being engaged in their work.
- Staff may support the idea of a more inclusive organization, but believe that it is not the right time for the organization to focus on deepening inclusion.
- Staff may be operating in an environment with limited funding or may have limited capacity to advocate for and implement inclusion changes.
- An organization may face donor-related challenges or pressures that hinder organizational change.
- An organization may believe they are already highly competent in making diversity and inclusion an integral part of their organization and thus are less likely to make changes.

These potential challenges to organizational change should be considered as part of the assessment process and will require tailored solutions to address the challenges that arise. Ultimately, it is important to **meet the partner where they are**, acknowledging their willingness to engage in these discussions and openness to change.

Appendix B: Supplementary Data Collection Methods and Techniques

In cases where additional data is needed, organizations can use one or several of the different data collection methods below.

Method	Description
Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	Utilized to gather a broad spectrum of views. In-depth interviews can be conducted one-on-one, or with a small group of key stakeholders.
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Brings together subsets of staff to discuss perceptions and clarify data collected during the desk review. During these discussions, various tools can be utilized to facilitate discussions in addition to interview questions such as surveys, scorecards, or self-assessments.
Scorecards	Provides participants a way to rate their organizations based on a set of criteria and provides a quantitative score on which to measure the organization's levels of inclusion.
Self-Assessments or Surveys	Uses a set of questions to support participants to reflect on their own perceptions about the organization and their vision for the organization. Results from the self-assessments can be used by the facilitator to probe further and identify where staff agree and disagree.

The data collection tools used should take into consideration the size of the organization as well as prioritize tools that ensure the voices of all staff – from the executive directors, to logistics and administrative staff – are included. It is also important to consider group and power dynamics and how this may impact levels of participation and bias among answers. These dynamics should guide the types of tools used and how to structure group discussions. Depending on the size and scope of the partner organization, gender-specific focus groups may be necessary to provide a safe space for people with diverse gender identities (including men, women, and non-binary people) to present more detailed and nuanced testimonies of their experiences that would not otherwise emerge if raised in public or mixed-gender forums. Facilitators and organizational leadership should take care to ensure a do no harm approach is applied in all forms of data collection including discussion sessions and that women (or other participants) being encouraged to speak about their experiences will not face retaliation. In addition, questions should be grounded in context and use local terminology when possible.

⁴Adapted from [Equal Access](#), [CIVICUS D&I](#), and [USAID Inclusive Development](#) Key Terms.

Appendix C: Sample Agendas for Assessment Implementation

Sample Agenda 1: The sample agenda below is intended for use by smaller organizations in which it is more feasible to conduct the assessment in full plenary format, rather than dividing into smaller groups for the discussion.

FULL PLENARY SESSIONS	
DAY ONE	
9:30 - 10:00 am	Introduction of participants and ground rules
10:00 - 10:15 am	Welcome remarks
10:15 - 10:30 am	Overview of agenda and objectives
10:30 - 11:30 am	Domain 1: Governance and Leadership
11:30 - 12:30 pm	Domain 2: Strategic Planning and Decision-Making
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 - 2:30 pm	Domain 3: Communications
2:30 - 3:30 pm	Domain 4: Accessibility, Safety, and Security
3:30 - 4:30 pm	Concluding insights and debrief
DAY TWO	
9:30 - 10:00 am	Icebreaker or other welcome activity
10:00 - 10:30 am	Reflection and review of day 1
10:30 - 11:30 am	Domain 5: People, Culture, and Learning
11:30 - 12:30 pm	Domain 6: Design, Management, and Evaluation
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 - 2:30 pm	Domain 7: External Partnerships and Collective Action
2:30 - 3:30 pm	Final scoring and identification of priority issues for the action plan
3:30 - 4:30 pm	Concluding insights and debrief
DAY THREE	
9:30 - 10:00 am	Icebreaker or other welcome activity
10:00 - 10:30 am	Reflection and review of day 2
10:30 - 12:30 pm	Action planning
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 - 2:00 pm	Concluding insights and debrief

Sample Agenda 2: The sample agenda below is intended for use by larger organizations in which it is more feasible to divide into small groups for the discussion, rather than conducting the assessment in plenary format with all participants.

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS	
DAY ONE	
9:30 - 10:00 am	Introduction of participants and ground rules
10:00 - 10:15 am	Welcome remarks
10:15 - 10:30 am	Overview of agenda and objectives
10:30 - 12:30 pm	Small group discussions of assigned domains
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 - 2:00 pm	Small group presentation preparation
2:00 - 3:30 pm	Small group presentations
3:30 - 4:30 pm	Concluding insights and debrief
DAY TWO	
9:30 - 10:00 am	Icebreaker or other welcome activity
10:00 - 10:30 am	Reflection and review of day 1
10:30 - 12:30 pm	Action planning
12:30 - 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 - 2:00 pm	Concluding insights and debrief

Appendix D: Digging Deeper: Additional Probing Statements for Each Domain

Governance and Leadership

- Organizational leadership consistently requests, assesses, and where possible implements inclusion-related feedback from staff and stakeholders.
- The organization's mission, values, and code of conduct reflect a commitment to inclusion. If so, share how.
- The staff of the organization are regularly trained on and know where to access institutional codes of conduct, policies and procedures.

Strategic Planning and Policymaking

- Diverse staff were involved in the most recent strategic planning process and feedback gathered about the process for future iterations.
- Staff can provide examples of times an inclusion lens has been applied when considering the direction, partners, or programs of the organization.
- Feedback from participants about programs are used to inform strategies and activities, make changes and revisit risk mitigation and safety plans.

Communications

- The organization provides regular opportunities for staff, stakeholders, and participants to give feedback on communications, events, etc. to ensure continuous learning and growth.
- Staff at various levels know where to access information and guidance on accessible communications.
- Resources for translation, interpretation, and accessibility-related services are readily available (and built into program budgets).
- If relevant, the organization utilizes social media analytics to understand its audience and adapt its approach to effectively reach their target audience, taking into consideration diverse segments within.

Accessibility, Safety, and Security

- The organization offers parental leave and flexible working hours or locations for pregnant people and new parents.
- In the past year, the organization has provided an opportunity for staff, partners, and participants to provide anonymous feedback related to accessibility, safety, and security.
- If gaps in policies or procedures or concerns related to safety and security are identified, staff are comfortable accessing information on how they are being addressed.
- Staff know where to access information and resources about accessibility, safety, and security policies, procedures, and previous trainings conducted on these topics.
- If possible, the office is close to public transportation.
- The organization and its staff has systems in place to support staff who have faced targeted attacks or surveillance due to work on gender and/or inclusion issues.

People, Culture, and Learning

- Staff feel supported and that there are resources available to them if they are feeling overwhelmed, overworked, or burnt out. Staff can easily access these resources and feel comfortable raising concerns about workload.
- Staff are able to access professional development opportunities or take time off for training with proper coverage of their work responsibilities.
- Human Resources / recruitment has recently recommended, interviewed, or hired a candidate with a non-traditional work or education background.
- Efforts to mainstream inclusion, improve systems, or provide constructive feedback are recognized and considered positively when evaluating performance.

Design, Management, and Evaluation of Organizational Initiatives

- Staff represent diverse constituents and lived experiences of the populations they serve. They are encouraged and actively integrate this diversity into their work responsibilities and tasks.
- There are standardized ways for collecting and storing personal and/or confidential data. Staff are regularly trained on these standards.
- Monitoring and evaluation processes and activities include indicators and outcomes that focus on gender and inclusion.
- For organizations that solicit proposals for grants, the organization ensures the solicitation is shared via a variety of mediums and is available in simple language and other accessible formats. The organization also identifies multiple ways to respond to the funding opportunity.

External Partnerships and Collective Action

- Describe any partnership and networking opportunities the organization may have missed in the past.
- The organization conducts regular research and outreach to look for opportunities to diversify partnerships and networks of engagement.

Appendix E: Facilitating Difficult Conversations

Facilitated discussions can be difficult to manage, especially when the topic deals with inclusion, culture, identity, or other potentially sensitive topics. Many best practices for facilitating difficult conversations are dependent on group size, participants' level of comfort with the topic and their relationships with the other participants, and in this case the overall context of the organization completing the assessment. Regardless of the context, there are likely to be various power dynamics at play. For example, junior staff may be uncomfortable sharing feedback around more senior staff⁵. Each facilitation style and group of participants will feature different dynamics, but the facilitator can always use **ground rules** to keep the group on task or manage any inappropriate behavior. This requires an experienced facilitator who is comfortable interrupting and is able to redirect conversations as needed. A few other agreements that can be added to ground rules depending on the needs of the group include:

- Utilizing speaking time limits: If many people in the group have thoughts on a particular topic this can be a way to keep the discussion balanced and on topic.
- Take the lesson, leave the story: No matter the story being told, make sure to highlight or summarize the lesson.

Overcoming Detractors or Difficult Personalities

Each group of participants will include different personalities – this discussion must bring together diverse voices in order to be productive – however this may lead to some challenges. In addition to the ground rules, facilitators can leverage a few tools to keep the discussion moving. Use a **parking lot** to keep track of any sidetracks that arise, **ensure there is space** for everyone to talk (this doesn't mean everyone will want to talk but ask more than once and encourage talkative participants to leave space for their colleagues as well). This [resource](#) provides additional details on how facilitators can effectively engage participants with different personality types.

Organizations implementing this assessment are likely to encounter disagreements. There may be disagreement about the best approach for mainstreaming inclusion at the organization, or about the various root causes limiting inclusion, or about how to prioritize different aspects of the assessment. The following steps may be a useful starting point for resolving disputes or disagreements during the session:

Listen: Ensure objections raised or disagreements between participants are heard (and documented as needed). The key to overcoming and resolving objections is to ensure they are clearly understood.

Ask: Keep the discussion conversational and ask additional questions to determine the objective, if needed.

Reframe: Focus on values-based approaches to disagreements. Finding common ground between the parties by discussing similar or shared values is the best way to build a collaborative solution. Give the objector(s) and other participants space and to look for and present solutions or compromises.

Closure: Confirm participants are satisfied with solutions offered. If a collaborative solution cannot be found at the time, create a specific plan of when and how to revisit the topic.

⁵If this is a concern for the organization, consider a small group session or breakout discussions by job level (e.g., junior, middle, or senior level staff) for some topics. Just note this may require extra facilitators or discussion leaders.

Appendix F: Informed Consent Template

Organizational Inclusion Assessment Informed Consent

Purpose of the Research

Hello, my name is [facilitator]. I am working with the [name of organization] to conduct an organizational inclusion assessment. This assessment seeks to help [name of organization] achieve performance improvements by making diversity and inclusion an integral part of their programs or and initiatives, policies and procedures, and partnerships and outcomes.

Explanation of Procedures

This session will take the form of a facilitated group discussion and may take up to [estimated time for session] to finish. During the session, the facilitator(s) will read out statements from various domains included in the assessment and you and your colleagues will respond to the statement, share relevant experiences, and discuss how the organization may be able to improve inclusive practices. If there is a question or topic that makes you uncomfortable, you do not have to answer. You can also leave the session at any time. If you decide not to participate in this survey you will not be punished in any way. Choosing to participate will not do anything to impact your employment with [name of organization]. We will protect your privacy and make sure what you say will not be shared with others in your community.

Risks and Discomforts

We believe that there is little risk to you in participating in this assessment and sharing your experiences. Your responses will help [name of organization] to better understand how to strengthen inclusion and diversity throughout the organization.

Confidentiality

If you agree to participate, the information will be recorded and used to understand how people at [name of organization] experience inclusion and diversity at the organization. Some of the information you provide will be used to build the organization's action plan, but all personal or identifying information, will be kept confidential and not made public.

If there are no objections, the facilitator(s) will create an audio recording of this session to ensure that we are accurately collecting data. All the information we collect about you and your experiences will be stored and protected. [Describe: How the data will be used and securely stored; How the data will be anonymized and any quotes with attributing information kept confidential]

Questions

Do you have any questions about the survey or what I have said? If in the future you have any questions or concerns about the discussion, please contact me [point of contact's information].

Do you agree to participate in the assessment?

[add signature block or record participant consent]

Appendix G: SMART Goals Quick Reference Guide

What are SMART goals?

Using SMART goals can be a great way to get started with goal setting. The acronym “SMART” (described in more detail below) can be leveraged to ensure goals are clear, trackable, and achievable.

S	Specific	What will be accomplished? What actions will be taken? (E.g., Who will take the action?)
M	Measurable	What data will be used to measure the goal? How will we know if we are successful?
A	Achievable	Is the goal reasonable? Are the necessary resources available? (E.g., Should this goal be divided into short and long-term steps?)
R	Relevant	How does this goal align with broader organizational goals or priorities? Why is the specific result important?
T	Time-Bound	What is the time frame for accomplishing this goal? (E.g., Three months, six months, one year, two years, etc.)

Considerations and Techniques:

- Goal setting should be a fluid and iterative process. A discussion about the aspects of SMART goals is a way to build a road map from mission and vision to practical steps.
- Goals stemming from this assessment may be larger and more mission driven than traditional SMART goals. Consider breaking these loftier goals into smaller steps and revisit periodically to ensure the goals are still relevant.

Goal	SMART Goal
More staff will complete inclusion training.	By the end of 2024, all staff will have completed training on inclusion basics.
Improve accessibility of social media.	Step 1: In the next quarter, staff will identify accessibility gaps relating to their social media. Step 2: In the next six months, staff will create an action plan to improve social media accessibility.

For additional information, resources and templates on SMART goals refer to [Asana](#).

Appendix H: Action Planning Resources and Template

Additional Resources for Action Planning

Useful guidance questions and examples of action steps can be adapted from NDI’s resources on creating [Global Action Plans](#) with political parties and other tools from [Win With Women: Building Inclusive 21st Century Parties](#).

Illustrative Examples

Below are illustrative examples of the types of support an organization may need once the assessment is complete. The list below is not exhaustive, but rather is intended to provide a starting point.

Organization Status	Identified Gaps	Potential Action Steps
Needs significant support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal buy-in or understanding of inclusion • Has no written human resource policy or human resources department • Has no partnerships or connections with groups representing or led by marginalized groups • Has no communications strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training on inclusion basics and use practical examples to demonstrate the benefits of inclusion to create buy-in • Begin to draft inclusive human resource policies and other foundational documents • Support staff to build relationships with other like-minded organizations • Begin to develop an approach to communications that is inclusive
Needs some support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizes need for improved practices and policies related to diversity and inclusion • Has some women and members of other marginalized groups among its ranks and in leadership • Has a human resources department and some policies and procedures in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify inclusion gaps and update policies • Identify potential internal and external allies for inclusion and organizational change • Enshrine principles of human rights, gender equality and inclusion in all foundational documents, guidelines and processes that direct how the organization is run and operated • Introduce an obligatory code of conduct or ethical charter that all staff must sign and be accountable to following • Examine implementation and sustainability plans for new and existing documents and practices
Needs minimal support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buy-in for intersectional inclusive practices exists at all levels of the organization • Leadership is comprised of women and members of other marginalized groups • Has a human resources department and strong policies • Has a concrete strategic communications plan • Has an overarching annual budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce regular inclusion assessments/ audits to evaluate continued progress and enshrine sustainability of inclusive practices and procedures • Engage with partners representing or led by marginalized groups to identify new board members • Ensure the communications plan prioritizes accessibility and proper representation and language • Ensure staff know how to budget for reasonable accommodation

Action Planning Template

Task / Goal	Priority Level	Action Steps	Specific Steps (Time Frame) ⁶	Responsible Party(ies)	Measurement	Resources Needed
Color code by domain, be specific about the problem or issue to be remedied.						
<p>E.g. Minimal buy-in or understanding of inclusion</p> <p>SMART Goal: By the end of 1 year, all staff will have received inclusion training and [organization] will have added inclusion topics to annual training requirements.</p>	<p>Assign a priority level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High • Medium • Low 	<p>Provide training on inclusion basics and use practical examples to demonstrate the benefits of inclusion to create buy-in.</p>	<p>Short-term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify training that meets staff needs 2. Conduct Training of Trainers or intro training within 6 months <p>Long-term:</p> <p>Include inclusion training basics as part of onboarding & annual/bi-annual certification process</p>	<p>Training team in conjunction with HR and Inclusion experts</p>	<p>Training materials identified and adapted to organization needs</p> <p>Number of staff/trainers trained</p> <p>Number of staff trained / certified</p>	<p>Training materials, short-term consultant to develop training, labor hours for training review and conducting training, leadership support of implementation</p>

⁶ As a general guide, short-term goals can be within 6-12 months and long-term 12-24 months (or can be aligned with the organization's regular strategic planning processes).