

A high-angle photograph of a diverse group of six people sitting around a dark wooden conference table in a modern office setting. The group includes a man in a blue patterned shirt, a woman with long brown hair in a denim jacket, a man in a grey sweater, a woman in a yellow top, a man in a red and blue plaid shirt, and a woman in a striped shirt. They are engaged in a collaborative meeting, with some looking at tablets, others at notebooks, and one person pointing at a document. On the table are several white coffee cups, a smartphone, sticky notes, and a tablet. A potted plant is visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is professional and inclusive.

**Belmont Forum Diversity,
Equity, Inclusion, and
Accessibility Statement (DEIA)**

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Different Ways of Knowing and Knowledge Generation	4
Broadening Participation	4
Creating a Safe and Fair Space	5
Objectives	6
Objective I: Promote DEIA in science.	6
Objective II: Mainstream DEIA in Belmont Forum activities.	6
Objective III: Reduce imbalances and biases in project selection and develop science and capacity-building programs.	7
Objective IV: Increase capacities to improve DEIA in the global change research community.	7
Implementation	8
Annexes	9
Annex 1 : Definitions	9
References	10



Introduction

The main goal of this statement is to establish an institutional commitment to the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) in research, ensuring an environment that supports plurality of perspectives, eliminates barriers, promotes equitable access for all, and increases research relevance, rigour, reproducibility and impact.

This DEIA statement reflects the Belmont core values, aimed at providing guidelines for its members and partners. It is not designed to supersede any of the existing policies already implemented by its members and partners.

Our efforts are in line with many leading professional societies, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and funders within the global change research community (e.g., UNESCO's Policy on Engaging with Indigenous People, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, US National Climate Assessment). Further, these efforts also bring us in line with our host institution, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), and the IAI's Gender Equity Diversity & Inclusion Statement, adopted at its 30th Conference of the Parties in June 2022.

The Belmont Forum facilitates multilateral transdisciplinary research, providing *knowledge for understanding, mitigating and adapting to global environmental change*. At the core of Belmont Forum programming is the idea of co-production across disciplines and sectors, where natural scientists, social scientists, and humanists work with societal partners and stakeholders across national borders to address complex problems. This requires participants in Belmont Forum activities to **respect different ways of knowing and knowledge generation, collectively contribute to broadening participation in research and create a safe and fair space for anyone involved in Belmont Forum activities**.

Different Ways of Knowing and Knowledge Generation

Transdisciplinary research requires scientists and non-academic role players to collaborate as a collective from the outset. This entails the co-production of research questions, approaches, and methods of inquiry. For co-production of knowledge to achieve results that are relevant to the communities involved, more reliable, rigorous, and equitably inclusive, and impactful, DEIA considerations need to be recognized and addressed at each stage of the research process. This will mitigate the influence of biases, power imbalances, dominating knowledge systems, excluded ways of knowing, and so forth.

Modes of assessment should also explicitly acknowledge the importance of multiple ways of knowing. This focus necessitates challenging systems within the scientific enterprise and systems built within oppressive and marginalizing structures. Importantly we want our community to avoid extractive research practices, i.e. using stakeholders' and/or participants' knowledge with minimal participation and little decision-making authority from said communities.

Broadening Participation

The Belmont Forum aims for equitable participation from the research community. It acknowledges that globally researchers do not have access to equitable resources or leadership opportunities through either their funding or governance structures. Furthermore, it recognizes that ubiquitous biases within society and the scientific enterprise create environments hostile to many groups historically underprivileged and underrepresented within the research community (e.g., women and gender minorities, LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, agender), persons who face discrimination based on their skin color, racial, ethnic and religious communities, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities, persons who face discrimination based on political opinions, non-English speakers, and non-academic social actors).

Promoting DEIA in the research environment boosts SDG 4, which seeks inclusive and equitable quality education for all. By including researchers from diverse backgrounds and promoting access to education and research resources, we ensure that people with a range of backgrounds have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the advancement of knowledge. This creates an environment in which a diversity of ideas are valued, which enriches the educational experience and fosters a broader and more inclusive learning culture.

DEIA initiatives that endeavor to ensure equal opportunities for historically marginalized groups in research reduce barriers that limit previously silenced voices from contributing to scientific development. This process not only enriches research with a multiplicity of perspectives, lived experiences, knowledges and expertise but also promotes equity of access to resources, research networks and professional development, reducing the existing social and economic disparities. Further,



by working to make the research space more welcoming to all, we know a diversity of identities within research teams will lead to greater innovation and societally relevant solutions.

Creating a Safe and Fair Space

As creating a more welcoming and inclusive space is required when doing transdisciplinary research, leadership in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) space is in the spirit of the Belmont Forum Challenge.

By promoting a research environment based on fairness, inclusion and transparency, DEIA initiatives contribute to the achievement of SDGs. When research is accessible and representative of a wide diversity of perspectives and contexts, an environment of trust is created, in which social justice and respect for differences are core values. Institutions that adopt DEIA become stronger and more resilient, promoting peace and justice by ensuring that all researchers have a voice and are treated with dignity and respect, which contributes to a more ethical and trustworthy research system.

To this end, the following objectives outline the commitment the Belmont Forum community makes to strengthen and uphold DEIA in all our activities.

Objectives

Objective I: Promote DEIA in science.

The Belmont Forum will:

- strive to exercise leadership in the global funding community by promoting DEIA mainstreaming in scientific research, capacity building, and science-policy initiatives;
- promote the integration of DEIA in each stage of research design to enhance precision, deliver robust results, increase reproducibility, and produce innovative, fair, and inclusive results
- partner with relevant international governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and research institutions, among others, to promote DEIA mainstreaming in transdisciplinary global environmental change and sustainability research and related activities;
- seek to increase the leadership (and membership) of people (and institutions) from lower- and middle-income countries (LMICs), as well as access to research funds and conditions comparable to their peers in higher-income countries.
- Intensify collaboration across nations and address funding imbalance. This will foster the development of robust networks of shared communities of practice and research.
- Foster an open innovation approach through international cooperation, open science platforms, and publicly accessible resources, in relation with the Belmont Forum Open Data Policy and Principles.
- Create opportunities to explore different ways of understanding the world, respect and include various forms of knowledge, and allow these diverse knowledge systems to grow and thrive. This will help us broaden our shared understanding and encourage a richer variety of perspectives.

Objective II: Mainstream DEIA in Belmont Forum activities.

- The Belmont Forum Secretariat will work with the Steering Committee and the larger Belmont Forum community to address DEIA considerations when submitting nominees for leadership positions, new members, and new partner organizations.
- Belmont Forum contracts supporting scientific and capacity-building activities will include DEIA guidelines on the need to achieve DEIA of participants, to include analyses of DEIA dimensions, and to create subsequent reports, as appropriate.
- The Belmont Forum will encourage research proposals to develop DEIA monitoring and evaluation tools throughout the research process, from design to project development, implementation, and impact.
- Training and professional development programs supported by the Belmont Forum, will request that organizers include, as appropriate, DEIA considerations in selecting fellows and mentors.
- Intergenerational and multilateral networks and relationships will be promoted, when appropriate, to enhance age diversity and diplomatic relations.

Objective III: Reduce imbalances and biases in project selection and develop science and capacity-building programs.

- The Belmont Forum Secretariat and Thematic Program Offices for individual CRAs will address DEIA throughout the planning and delivery of the CRA specific activities, including but not limited to:
- disseminating scoping opportunities to co-design and co-develop CRAs to a broad audience via diverse channels to ensure awareness by underprivileged and/or underrepresented groups;
- encouraging individuals from underprivileged and/or underrepresented groups to apply for Collaborative Research Actions (CRAs) and other opportunities (e.g., grants, fellowships);
- working collaboratively to make application and review processes as equitable, inclusive and accessible as possible, recognizing these can always be improved; and
- seeking resources to provide funding to individuals from underprivileged and underrepresented groups.
- creating equal opportunities while preserving culture and identity (especially regarding indigenous and local communities).

Objective IV: Increase capacities to improve DEIA in the global change research community.

The Belmont Forum will:

- collaboratively develop and implement practices to address systemic inequities experienced by scientists from underprivileged and/or underrepresented groups and co-create spaces for inclusive participation. This includes but is not limited to increasing visibility of different career stages and recognizing non-academic knowledge;
- strive to develop equitable, inclusive and accessible mentoring programs for scientists and interested actors (stakeholders) seeking to build their capacities;
- include DEIA principles in the development and delivery of capacity-building activities to increase participants' awareness and understanding of existing disparities and the need for equity, diversity and inclusion in science; and
- work with partners to develop education and training materials, including online materials, with diverse voices and perspectives to introduce the challenges and best practices in DEIA, as they pertain to transdisciplinary global environmental change research.
- facilitate the dissemination of science in multiple languages, and ensure as much as possible that researchers from a diversity of linguistic backgrounds can fully participate in global scientific discourse and enjoy the same opportunities, both in terms of access, resources and representation.

Resource implications Financial support for activities to implement this policy is contingent on the availability of external financial and/or in-kind resources.

Violation of this Policy Any form of aggression, including bullying based on protected characteristics, racism, or sexual harassment, will not be tolerated in any Belmont Forum activity. Violations will be reported to the appropriate funding body, which will work within its institutional mechanisms and policy structures to resolve the situation. This may result in the termination of activities under the contract and/or financial support for the project. Whistle-blowers are encouraged to report alleged non-compliance with this policy to the Belmont Forum's Executive Director during the development or implementation of the scientific project or capacity-building activity.

Implementation

The Belmont Forum Secretariat will work with the larger Belmont Forum community to co-produce guidance and resources within one year of the adoption of this Policy by the Belmont Forum Membership. This Implementation Plan will be revisited as necessary as possible, acknowledging that the DEIA landscape and thus institutional policies are ever evolving.

Annexes

Annex 1 : Definitions

Anti-racism: Anti-racism is a proactive action or strategy against racism. It recognizes systemic racism and acknowledges privilege and systemic or structural barriers based on race.

Accessibility: Accessibility is the practice of proactively and consistently designing, constructing, developing, and maintaining facilities, technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA): Ensuring and protecting DEIA involves giving fair treatment and opportunity to all individuals in the same conditions. The aim is to eradicate prejudice and discrimination based on personal characteristics such as age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation, nationality, among others. Achieving DEIA requires embracing and valuing diversity and seeking to create an environment where all individuals are treated respectfully.

Equity: Equity in science and research refers to removing systemic barriers and biases, giving all individuals equal opportunity to access and benefit. To achieve this, all individuals who participate in the research ecosystem must develop a strong understanding of the systemic barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups (e.g., women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, racialized minorities, individuals from low- and middle- income countries) and put in place impactful measures to address these barriers.

Diversity: Diversity indicates differences in income, age, sex, sexual orientation, ability, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, place of origin, religion, immigrant and newcomer status, and country of origin.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the practice of ensuring that all individuals are equitably valued and respected for their contributions and are supported and integrated into all phases of the science and research process in the same conditions of resources as their peers.

Gender: Gender refers to the roles, characteristics, and behaviors a given society associates with our identities as women, girls, men, boys, or non-binary people. Gender is socially and culturally constructed and changes over time. Gender influences an individual's expectations, how they relate to others, and the norms they are expected to conform to. While the dominant view of gender is binary, many cultures around the world recognize non-binary identities or more than two genders. This recognition does not erase or cancel the traditional view on gender; it simply opens the conversation to include more perspectives on this matter.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality refers to structural marginalization and disadvantage at the intersection of gender with other social identities and stratifies such as age, socioeconomic status,

race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, academic background and ability, supported or exacerbated by/embedded systems of power.

Intergenerationality: Intergenerationality relates to age diversity in any given environment and fostering interactions among members of different generations.

Mainstreaming of DEIA: The mainstreaming of DEIA includes increasing equitable and inclusive participation of individuals from underrepresented groups in the sciences, including women and individuals of diverse genders. This effort requires special attention and efforts, including all research actors, to develop a strong understanding of the systemic barriers faced by individuals from underrepresented groups and to assess and address the implications for participants in all planned research activities or projects, according to each national and local context. Mainstreaming DEIA provides a mechanism for highlighting everyone's concerns and experiences as a vital element in all Belmont Forum activities. As we design policies and programs for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation we must be cognisant of the heterogeneity of privacy laws and policies across the Belmont Forum community.

Political views: It is discrimination when a person is treated unfairly, or is denied the same opportunities as others, because of their political beliefs, affiliation, or activity.

'Political belief' refers to a belief or view that has some bearing on issues dealt with by a government.

'Political affiliation' includes belonging to or identifying with a particular political party or ideology, supporting a particular candidate or in some way identifying with a political cause.

'Political activity' includes behavior such as attending a political rally, voting for a particular candidate or distributing leaflets on behalf of a political party. It also includes refusing to engage in political activity or not holding a particular political view or belief.

References

Amano, T.; Ramírez-Castañeda, V.; Berdejo-Espinola, V.; Borokini, I.; Chowdhury, S.; Golivets, M.; González-Trujillo, J. D.; Montaña-Centellas, F.; Paudel K.; White, R. L. & Veríssimo, D. (2023). The manifold costs of being a non-native English speaker in science. *PLoS Biol*, 21(7). Available at doi: 10.1371/journal.pbio.3002184.

Cederrotha, C. R.; Earp, B. D.; Prada, H. C. G.; Jarach, C. M.; Lirg, A. S.; Norris, C. M.; Pilote, L.; Raparelli, V.; Rochon, P.; Sahraoui, N.; Simmons, C.; Vissandjee, B.; Mour, C.; Arbogast, M.; Armengol, J. M. & Mason, R. (2024). Integrating gender analysis into research: reflections from the Gender-Net Plus workshop. *eClinicalMedicine*, 74. Available at [Integrating gender analysis into research: reflections from the Gender-Net Plus workshop - eClinicalMedicine](#)

David-Chavez, D. & Gavin, M.C. (2018). A global assessment of Indigenous community engagement in climate research. *Environmental Research Letters*, 13(12). Available at doi: 10.1088/1748-9326/aaf300

European Commission. (2024). Zero-Tolerance Code of Conduct. Available at Zero-tolerance code of conduct - Publications Office of the EU. Directorate-General for Research and Innovation. Available at <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/044501>

Global Research Council. (2022). Statement of Principles and Actions Promoting the Equality and Status of Women in Research. Available at [Statement of Principles: Promoting the Equality and Status of Women in Research - Gender STI](#)

Hofstra, B.; Kulkarni, V. V.; Galvez, S. M.; He, B.; Jurafsky, D. & McFarland, D. A. (2020). The Diversity-Innovation Paradox in Science. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*, 28;117(17):9284-9291. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1915378117

Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research. (2022). Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy for IAI Scientific Projects and Capacity Building Activities. Available at [EDI-IAI-CoP-30-9-en.pdf](#)

Marin-Spiotta, E.; Diaz-Vallejo, E.J.; Barnes, R. T.; Mattheis, A.; Schneider, B.; Berhe, A. A.; Hastings, M. G.; Williams, B. M. & Magley, V. (2023). Exclusionary behaviors reinforce historical biases and contribute to loss of talent in the earth sciences. *Earth's Future*, 11(3), 1-14. Available at doi.org/10.1029/2022EF002912

Tannenbaum, C., Ellis, R.P., Eysse, F. et al. Sex and gender analysis improves science and engineering. *Nature* 575, 137–146 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-019-1657-6>

UNESCO. (2023). Policy on engaging with indigenous peoples. Available at [Policy on engaging with indigenous peoples](#) | UNESCO

University of Toronto. (2024). G20 Research and Innovation Ministerial Meeting Manaus Declaration—September 19, 2024. Available at [DeclaracaodeManaus.pdf](#)

University of Toronto. (2024). The G20 Strategy to promote open innovation cooperation. Available at G20: [The G20 Strategy to Promote Open Innovation Cooperation](#)

University of Toronto. (2024). G20 Research and Innovation Working Group Deliverable 5.1 - G20 Recommendations on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in Science, Technology, and Innovation. Available at [G20: The G20 Strategy to Promote Open Innovation Cooperation](#)

Wynn-Grant R. (2019). On reporting scientific and racial history. *Science*, 365(6459), 1256-1257. Available at DOI: [10.1126/science.aay2459](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aay2459)

Xu, X. (2021). Epistemic diversity and cross-cultural comparative research: ontology, challenges, and outcomes. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 20(1), 36–48. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2021.1932438>



BELMONT F O R U M

www.belmontforum.org