Cultural diversity challenges and opportunities in the Irish agri-food sector

JULY 2020

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FOREWORD

The food and drink industry is one of Ireland's largest employers and has an excellent reputation all around the world. The manufacture of food and drink products is Ireland's most important indigenous industry with 250,000 employed within the agri-food sector at the start of 2020. Whilst the current business environment for the agri-food sector and wider economy is difficult, this sector and its workforce are deeply resilient and the longer-term growth opportunities largely remain for the sector.

This report comprises a significant piece of research into cultural diversity in the agri-food sector in Ireland. The high level of diversity in the sector poses unique challenges and opportunities to employers in their efforts to attract and retain international employees to meet business needs. As Ireland moves forward to address its current and future skills gaps in the labour market industry collaboration will be key especially as we recover from the Covid-19 crisis. Taste4Success Skillnet, Food Drink Ireland Skillnet, and Midland Border East Skillnet, worked in conjunction with MDR Consulting and Equality Strategies to produce the report which provides a comprehensive view of the needs of the sector.

The report summarises the most current national research on the topic and incorporates inputs from a wide range of agri-food processors representing large and small employers, in locations around the country and across the mix of sub-sectors. The fulfilling of the recommendations laid out in the report such as, the implementation of cultural diversity and training for management and supervisors at enterprise level and defining an agri-food sector diversity and inclusion strategy will go a long way to ensure a safe and productive working environment for all.

The research was strongly supported by leading employers, many of whom provided detailed feedback on their experience to date and requirements for the future. Remaining responsive to industry needs will be vital to ensuring that Ireland can promptly address skill needs. This, in a time of great transformation in the world of work, is vital.

A special thanks goes out to the Network Promoters, Steering Group members and the companies of the three Skillnet Networks, for their energy and commitment in supporting the research and trust that the findings will be of significant benefit to them in optimising their ongoing responses to cultural diversity issues.

Bridie Corrigan Matthews
Head of Learning and Development
Taste 4 Success Skillnet

Mark Skinner
Head of Learning and Development
Food Drink Ireland Skillnet

Michael Lynch
Chief Operations Manager
Midland Border East Skillnet

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research study was commissioned by the Taste 4 Success Skillnet in conjunction with its partner networks, Food Drink Industry Skillnet (Ibec) and Midland Border East Skillnet.

Recommendations were developed to address cultural diversity challenges and opportunities in the agri-food sector in Ireland. The study comprised extensive desk research as well as a programme of direct research including an online survey across the sector and nationally, as well as representative interviews and Focus Group sessions. Most major employers in the sector took part and the research is the most current national research into cultural diversity in the sector in Ireland.

> The key findings are that Ireland has become considerably more diverse in recent decades, and the agri-food sector particularly so with 29% of its workers (50% in Meat) being from outside of Ireland compared to 17% for the overall workforce.

> International workers have to date mainly come from EU accession countries with Polish workers the largest group comprising 39% of the total.

National data indicates that non-Irish nationals compare favourably with Irish nationals on employment, education and heath indicators – this is likely to apply to the agri-food sector also.

In a context of increasing challenges in sourcing labour for the sector, net inward migration from non-EU countries is forecast to be a key source of future employment growth. This has implications for the sector as language skills and educational outcomes may not match those of current international workers.

Attraction and retention of labour is difficult now with near to full employment and a mix of:

- Irish employees perceiving other sectors as being more attractive than the agri-food sector;
- Reduced European migration, and international workers going home due to economic recovery there; and
- international workers in agri-food moving to other roles in Ireland.

To retain workers companies must provide support at all stages from start up to induction / language training to ongoing cultural integration activities.

This poses challenges and opportunities for companies. Challenges faced include communications and language difficulties as well as managing complexities in team integration.

Research highlights the business benefits of diversity in financial and innovation terms. Examples of good practice include cultural competence, focus on inclusion, role of cultural brokers, and action lists for integration in the workplace and for diversity-led innovation.

Despite strong top-down support for diversity and inclusion, action on the ground in Ireland has been slow. An EY cross-sector, national study found that, while 100% of businesses saw diversity and inclusion as being vital to business performance only 48% have a strategy in place and only 16% measure the impact.

As Ireland's largest indigenous sector, agri-food is critically important with a wide regional spread, operations that span the supply chain, a high proportion of domestically sourced raw materials and a large export market. Meat and Dairy are the largest sub-sectors and collectively comprise 51% of employment.

The sector's dependence upon international workers is not matched by strategies to address this in terms of training and other supports.

Survey results indicate 'lack of resources' for diversity and inclusion (D&I) measures and 'lack of training in D&I' as the main challenges.

A low level of D&I training takes place with 62% not carrying out any training despite 46% saying this presents a challenge to progressing diversity strategies.

While the 2016 Census showed that 33% of agri-food workers spoke English 'not well or not at all' (12% for the total workforce), 54% of companies surveyed provide no language training. The onus on employers to provide English language training for new workers requiring employment permits is likely to improve the situation.

As well as addressing training gaps, companies need to foster cultural integration. Those with a high proportion of international workers need to have diversity and inclusion strategies in place, including labour attraction and retention initiatives linked to their business plans.

All of this highlights the need for support to help companies design and deliver sector-specific cultural diversity training at all levels, and particularly for supervisors and operatives who comprise the bulk of international workers.

The recommendations below summarise the actions required at all levels to work towards a comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy for the agri-food sector, i.e.:

- Action on cultural diversity at enterprise level;
- Sectoral collaboration; and
- Supportive policies at national level.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Ref.
Enterprise level	
Complete D&I diagnostics and develop D&I strategies at enterprise level, including road maps for early action and to develop longer-term strategies.	5.7
Assign responsibility for diversity and inclusion initiatives within enterprises, on a part-time or full-time basis as appropriate.	5.5
Implement cultural diversity training for management and supervisors to ensure their engagement in diversity and inclusion strategies.	2.2
Provide English language training for new international workers as a key feature of their integration.	5.4
Implement initiatives to help create a D&I culture such as recognising national holidays, learning salutations in employee languages, staff surveys, etc.	5.6
Promote the agri-food sector as a career of choice to both Irish students / workers and current or potential international workers - at enterprise level within their communities.	4.3
Sector level	
Define an agri-food sector diversity and inclusion strategy to include training and other initiatives to address agreed priorities and avail of opportunities to share resources.	5.7
Promote the agri-food sector as a career of choice to both Irish students / workers and current or potential international workers - across the sector to encourage the best talent to consider a career in the sector.	4.3
National level	
Gather survey data on international workers in repeated national labour market survey data.	1.2
Undertake research into the barriers to further training / development and career progression opportunities for international workers on employment permits, and the related effects on inclusion in the workplace.	4.3
Carry out industry / sector research to explore the beneficial impacts of inclusion practices and to determine whether these are contingent on other factors.	2.4

INTRODUCTION

This research study was commissioned by the Taste 4 Success Skillnet, in conjunction with its partnering networks, Food Drink Industry Skillnet (Ibec) and Midland Border East Skillnet.

The study developed recommendations to address 'cultural diversity, challenges and opportunities within the agri-food sector in Ireland' and highlights the potential business benefits of cultural diversity to the sector.

As Ireland's largest indigenous industry, the agri-food sector is extremely important with operations that span the supply chain, a wide regional spread, a high proportion of domestically sourced raw materials and a large export market.

> Increasing cultural diversity – from a low base, 29% of the agri-food labour force is now of non-Irish nationality - presents opportunities and challenges for all companies in the sector. This is particularly relevant given the sector's dependence on international workers[i], a critical element in the performance of which is their integration into a 'high performing multi-cultural/multi-dimensional team environment'.

There is currently a perceived lack of provision of programmes in this area, particularly considering the increasing demand for skilled and semiskilled labour in the sector. Prior to developing specific programmes, providers need a greater understanding of the issue of cultural diversity within the sector.

The study, completed by MDR Consulting and Equality Strategies, set out to provide member companies, as well as those involved in national policy, with a greater understanding at a macro level of the issue of cultural diversity in the sector. Specifically, it aims to provide:

- A greater understanding of the level of cultural diversity across the sector and the challenges and opportunities this leads to.
- A clearer picture regarding best practices that support the effective integration of international employees into the sector.
- Recommendations regarding integration supports and workforce development initiatives that can support integration (such as training, induction, events, mentoring, internal communications).

The full Research Aims and Objectives are included as Appendix 1.

The study comprised extensive desk research as well as a programme of direct research including an online survey of the sector as well as interviews and Focus Group sessions with a representative sample across the sector and nationally. Most major employers in the sector took part in the survey and the research is the most current national research into cultural diversity in the sector in Ireland.

The desk research is covered in Sections 1 to 3 of the report while the direct research is mainly covered in Sections 4 and 5, and the recommendations arising in Section 6. References cited are listed in the Bibliography.

Note: While the research was mainly completed by end 2019 before the Coronavirus pandemic, the agri-food sector will continue to depend on international workers and the recommendations for their greater integration are still valid despite the economic impact of the pandemic.

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i   Defined in this report as those who came from other countries to work in Ireland.

Effective cultural diversity policies and practices will be important both to attract new international workers and to help with integration in the workplace.

Section

1

Cultural Diversity
Trends And Impacts

This section summarises the national research relating to cultural diversity in terms of the recent trends, the outlook and coverage in national policy statements.

Ireland is more culturally diverse now with international workers being mainly from EU accession countries. The degree of Integration varies by national and ethnic group, and immigrants compare favourably with Irish nationals on employment, education and health indicators. Attitudes to immigrants follow the economic cycle and are more favourable now as the economy has recovered.

Net inward migration from non-EU countries will be a key future source of employment. This has implications for the sector as language skills and educational outcomes may not match those of current international workers. The importance of integration is highlighted in national policy and cultural diversity is recognised as being integral to Irish life.

1.1. Ireland has become more culturally diverse

Culture refers to the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a people, organisation or society. Organisations have their own distinct cultures which, explicit or not, permeate all ways of operating and doing business. The workplace culture is influenced by a range of factors including diversity which can define identity, produce meaning and set the context for an individual's experience within an organisation.

Diversity refers to the unique differences that all have and can bring to their organisations. It refers to the variety of perspectives which arise from invisible and visible differences in ethnicity, race, cultural background, religion, mental health, physical abilities, heritage, nationality, educational background, age, gender, sexual orientation, social background, etc. These can influence behaviour in the workplace such as how we greet one another, what we expect in terms of learning environments, our attitudes to authority or perceptions about concepts of gender.

In the context of this report, cultural diversity relates to the differences that exist within the workforce – the Irish agri-food sector here – relating to nationality, ethnicity and race. Cultural diversity can deliver value to businesses if managed and cultural competence – the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures - can thus be an important element of business success.

A Glossary of Terms relating to cultural diversity is provided in Appendix 2.

Traditionally a country of emigration, rapid immigration during the economic boom has meant that Ireland has become considerably more diverse in recent decades in terms of national and ethnic origin. Ireland is shifting to a more multi-cultural society with more diverse cultural influences.

An ESRI report[1] found that almost 12% of people living here have a nationality other than Irish with a large increase in those choosing to become Irish citizens (non-EEA[ii] origin nationals acquiring Irish citizenship 2015 – 2017 45%[iii] of total) and the numbers of second-generation migrants continuing to grow.

The 2016 Census[2] indicates that the 535,475 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland originate from 200 different nations. The largest group are Polish (122,515), the second largest UK (103,113) and third largest Lithuanian (36,552) with a further nine nationalities having more than 10,000 residents living in Ireland – see Appendix 3 for the full list.

As seen later, the Food and Beverages sector has a high level of cultural diversity with non-Irish nationals comprising 29% of the labour force and 50% in Meat, versus 17% for the overall labour force.

Five Irish towns had a population of more than 30% non-Irish nationals in the 2016 Census, mainly linked to the Meat sector.

Figure 1. Towns with the highest percentage of non-Irish nationals, 2016

Town	% Non-Irish	Largest Group
Ballyhaunis	39.5%	Polish
Edgeworthstown	32.3%	Polish
Ballymahon	32.1%	Polish
Ballyjamesduff	30.2%	Polish
Monaghan	30.1%	Lithuanian

Source: Census of Population 2016 – Profile 7 Migration and Diversity

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ii   European Economic Area - EU member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

iii   Assuming those naturalised did not leave, so likely to be an upper bound estimate.

1.2. Integration and labour market experience vary by national and ethnic group

Given the proportion of those living in Ireland of non-Irish origin, a key issue is the extent to which they are integrating. The national data below from an ESRI Monitoring Report compares Irish and non-Irish nationals in terms of employment, education, social inclusion and citizenship.

Non-Irish nationals compare favourably in employment, education and health indicators and these comparisons are likely to apply to workers in the agri-food sector also.

Figure 2: Summary of Key Integration Indicators

Indicator	Irish	Non-Irish	Note
Employment (working age) 2017			
Employment Rate	66.4%	69.6%	
Unemployment Rate	7.1%	7.5%	
Activity Rate	71.5%	75.2%	
Education			
Share with tertiary education	51%	56%	25-34 age group; 2016/17
Share of early leavers from education	4.9%	4.8%	20-24 age group; 2016/17
Mean English reading score (age 15, 2015)	525	523 / 500	English / Non-English speakers
Mean Maths score (age 15, 2015)	506	503 / 494	English / Non-English speakers
Social Inclusion (2016)			
Median annual net income (needs adj.)	€20,890	€17,804	
At risk of poverty rate	15.7%	22.5%	
Consistent poverty rate	7.9%	12.7%	29% for non-EU nationals
Share perceiving health as good or very good	82.1%	88.1%	Aged 16+
Proportion of households that are property owners	78.7%	34.2%	
Active Citizenship (end 2017)			
Annual citizenship acquisition rate		2.9%	Non-EEA adults acquiring citizenship in 2017 as % of those with 'live' immigration permissions
Ratio acquired citizenship since 2005		45%	Non-EEA nationals acquiring citizenship since 2005 as % of est. non-EEA population end 2017
Share holding long-term residence		1.2%	As % of non-EEA adults with live residence permissions
Share of immigrants among elected national representatives		0.6%	

Source: Monitoring Report on Integration[3], ESRI, 2018

Specific points from the table and back-up data in the report are that, relative to Irish nationals:

- Employment and labour market activity rates are higher among non-Irish nationals.
- Non-EU nationals have lower employment and higher unemployment rates.
- A higher share of non-Irish nationals aged 25 to 34 had third-level educational qualifications.
- Immigrant students from English-speaking backgrounds are similar to Irish peers in English reading and Mathematics ability with those from non-English speaking backgrounds behind.
- The median annual net income is significantly lower, and the 'at risk of poverty[iv]' and 'consistent poverty' rates higher, for non-Irish nationals and non-EU nationals in particular.
- Non-Irish nationals report better health - may be linked to a lower average age.

The high proportion of non-EEA nationals who acquired citizenship (45%) since 2005 is a positive indicator of a wish to integrate while the low proportion of property owners and under-representation in politics may indicate that this takes time.

The diverse experience based on ethnicity and race in the labour market in Ireland was assessed in a recent ESRI study[4].

It is worth noting that, relative to White Irish (country groupings defined in Appendix 4):

- Differences with White UK nationals are minimal for all outcomes;
- White EU-East and White non-EU nationals are more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace – by 1.5 and 1.6 times respectively;
- Black Irish are more likely to experience discrimination – by 2 times in seeking work and by 3.4 times in the workplace;
- Black non-Irish are much less likely to be employed or hold managerial positions, and more likely to experience discrimination - by 5 times seeking work and by 2.7 times in workplace;

- Asian Irish are advantaged being 1.9 times more likely to be in professional/managerial occupations - may relate to immigration policy which restricts employment permits for non-EU nationals to high-skilled jobs;
- Asian Irish do not differ in their experience of discrimination seeking work but are 1.9 times more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace.

National equality legislation aims to ensure equality of opportunity in relation to employment across nine grounds[v]. In 2017, 17% of complaints made were based on race, i.e. different race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin; race was highest and second highest in Labour Court appeals.

The higher rates of discrimination experienced by some ethnic/national groups highlights the need for government and employer-led policies to monitor, prevent and respond to this. Given the low knowledge of rights among some groups, awareness-raising efforts should be coupled with provision of information to immigrant communities on equality legislation and the supports available.

The ESRI study says that, while a key focus of disadvantage, ethnicity is rarely measured in repeated national labour market survey data in Ireland and that this should be a priority. The acquisition of Irish citizenship by non-EU nationals brings new challenges to measure and monitor their experience in Ireland which must be addressed for policy responses to disadvantage to be developed.

This applies to international workers also and we recommend that they be included in repeated national labour force surveys.

Recommendation: Gather survey data on international workers in repeated national labour market survey data.

iv The % falling below 60% of the median disposable income - official poverty threshold used by CSO and agreed at EU level. 'Consistent poverty' combines 'at risk of poverty' with enforced deprivation of two or more of a range of items.

v Age, civil status, disability, family status, gender, membership of the Traveller community, race, religion and sexual orientation.

1.3. Attitudes are more favourable now, although behind European ones

The ESRI Monitoring Report[5] found that attitudes to immigration in Ireland became more negative during the recession and are now behind the Western European average. Attitudes of Irish-born people to immigrants were found to vary significantly depending on the ethnicity of migrants, their education and financial security, and the level of contact people have with those from different ethnic backgrounds.

Attitudes to the impact of immigration on the Irish economy, cultural life and quality of life were more favourable in Ireland than the Western European average in the pre-recession period but fell behind 2008 - 2014 although the gap is narrower in 2014 than 2010.

An exaggerated view of the size of the immigrant population can be an indicator of a perceived threat from immigration. This figure for Ireland is relatively low, suggesting that feelings of threat may not be as prevalent as elsewhere in Western Europe.

Attitudes to immigration differ across social groups:
- Those with higher levels of education hold more positive attitudes to immigration and ethnic diversity.
- Those in financial difficulty have more negative attitudes.

Positive social contact with a different race/ethnic group is associated with more favourable attitudes. Contact with those from a different ethnic or racial group is similar in Ireland to other West European countries - almost 25% have daily and 58% weekly contact. Most (62%) saw the contact as positive so opportunities for positive interaction will help integration.

1.4. Net inward migration the key future source of employment growth

The improvement in the Irish labour market since late 2012 has been remarkable with unemployment forecast to fall below 5% and the number employed now above the pre-crisis peak.

The July 2019 Central Bank Bulletin[6] said that strong net inward migration will be the most important source of employment growth if the economy continues to grow at recent rates (assuming no major shock from Brexit or other sources[vi]). With the domestic labour market close to full employment and labour force participation rates similar to those of comparable European countries, decreases in unemployment and increased labour force participation will not be enough to support employment growth at current levels over the short to medium term.

The 2004 - 2007 period coincided with a substantial once-off expansion in the pool of available migrants from EU enlargement. Furthermore, until mid-2011 the number of migrants from the eight accession countries in Eastern Europe were restricted by all EU member states except Ireland, Sweden and the UK. Such an expansion from this source is unlikely over the short to medium term.

Before 2004 a significant proportion of workers came from non-EU countries as the sector then qualified for an unlimited number of employment permits.

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vi See note in Introduction re ongoing dependence of agri-food sector on international workers and that recommendations for their greater integration are still valid despite the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

As shown below EU enlargement (EU 15 – 28) accounted for approx. half of migrants 2004 - 2012 with job flows latterly increasingly originating from outside of the EU and from emerging nations in particular (country groupings defined in Appendix 4):

Figure 3: Recent Immigrant Employment Share, by Nationality: Annual Averages
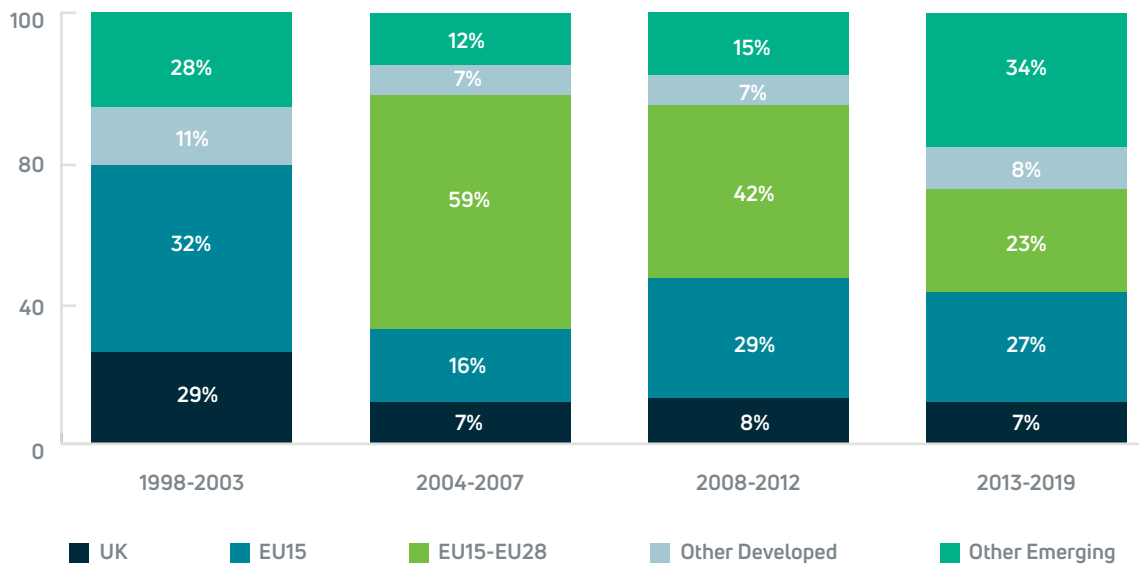
Source: Central Bank Quarterly Bulletin, July 2019

Ireland thus now must compete for migrants with other high employment countries in Europe and the OECD facing similarly tight domestic labour markets. Migrants from eastern Europe may no longer take up agri-food roles due to competition from sectors such as construction.

The likelihood of net inward migration from non-EU countries being an increasing source of future employment growth has implications for the sector as language skills and educational outcomes may not match those of the current international workers.

1.5. The importance of integration is highlighted in national policy

Effective cultural diversity policies and practices will be important both to attract new migrants and to help with integration in the workplace.

The 2017 Migrant Integration Strategy[7] represents a significant statement of policy intent and its achievement will depend on how effectively it is implemented and the monitoring of migrant outcomes. Cultural diversity is recognised as being integral to Irish life and requires "those of Irish heritage to expand their notion of Irishness to include migrants and those of migrant origin".

Integration is defined in current policy as the "ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity". The strategy contains an implementation action to "encourage businesses to focus on integration".

The recent ESRI study into cultural diversity in Ireland[8], drawing on the European Social Survey, highlighted discrimination issues faced by minorities and immigrants when job-seeking and in employment.

The more recent monitoring report[9] highlighted the need for information and supports to help remove barriers faced by international workers in Ireland's workforce, and to build a positive multicultural Ireland.

'This (monitoring) report provides essential evidence on outcomes for migrant groups in Ireland and shows how these compare with outcomes for the rest of the population. Understanding and using this evidence will help us to design and target effective interventions to support integration and remove barriers.'

Minister of State for Equality, Immigration and Integration David Stanton, TD

Diversity is a key driver of innovation
with diverse sets of experiences,
perspectives and backgrounds
being crucial to innovation and the
development of new ideas.

Section

2

Cultural Diversity
Presents Opportunities
And Challenges

This section summarises international and national research on the opportunities and challenges arising from cultural diversity, and the strategies being adopted in response to them.

The business benefits of integration are well established in the research and include diversity as a key driver of innovation and financial success. The challenges faced range from communications difficulties to complexities in team integration. While top-down support to diversity is evident, action can be slow to occur.

Examples of good practice in managing integration include cultural competence as a key skill, focus on inclusion, the role of cultural brokers, and road maps for integration and for diversity led innovation.

2.1. Business benefits of integration are well established

There are many business benefits, apart from the obvious ones of attracting the best talent, that migrant employees can bring, including but not limited to the generation of an openness to new global opportunities.

A Forbes survey of large global companies[10] saw diversity as a key driver of innovation with diverse sets of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds being crucial to innovation.

Today, D&I efforts are a given for almost all global companies who understand that they can not be successful on a global platform without a diverse and inclusive workforce. Companies no longer view D&I efforts as separate from other business practices and recognize that a diverse workforce can differentiate them from their competitors and help capture new clients.

The survey also reveals that responsibility for the success of company D&I efforts lies with senior management - 70% of companies report that the buck stops at senior management and 35% that ultimate accountability lies directly with the CEO.

The findings of a Boston Consultancy Group report[11] highlight the business benefits of multicultural management and found that the innovation boost is not limited to a single type of diversity. The presence of managers who are female or from other countries, industries or companies can cause an increase in innovation.

Of the six types of diversity analysed in this report, four positively correlate with innovation - industry background, country of origin, career path and gender - with each accounting for up to 18% of the variation in innovation. The report found that, with strong support, diversity in all of these but gender has a positive impact on innovation.

A follow-up study[12] found that relatively small changes can have a significant impact - for a hypothetical company, hiring 2% of its management team from a different industry could improve its innovation revenue by a full percentage point.

While correlation does not equal causation, research indicates that companies which commit themselves to diverse leadership tend to be more successful in financial terms. A McKinsey[13] report shows that companies in the top quartile for gender, racial and ethnic diversity are 35% more likely to have financial returns above their national industry medians. A linear relationship (US data) was found between racial/ethnic diversity and financial performance - for every 10% increase in racial and ethnic diversity on the senior team, earnings before interest and taxes rise 0.8%.

2.2. The challenges faced mainly relate to communications

Feedback from industry indicates that the challenges faced range from communications and language difficulties, to managing complexities in decision-making processes and team integration.

A key element of performance improvement is the integration of international employees into organisations and the creation of high performing, multi-cultural/multi-dimensional team environments.

The Forbes study above saw middle management failure to execute diversity programs adequately and budgetary issues as the major concerns in developing and implementing D&I strategies. Short term thinking and a failure to perceive a link to business drivers also rate highly – see Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Barriers to implementation of diversity and inclusion strategies
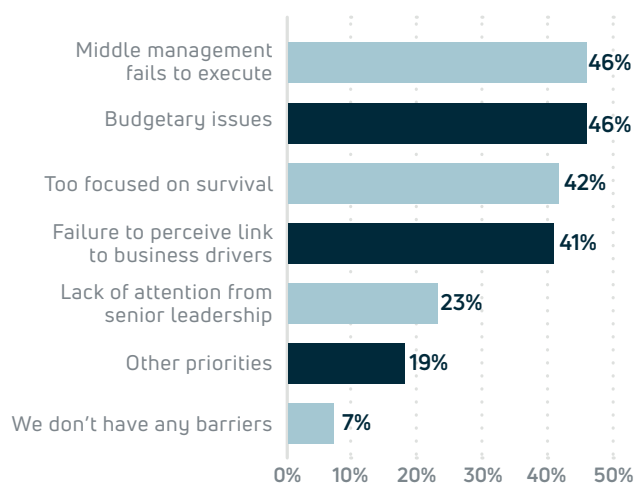
Source: Global Diversity and Inclusion - Fostering Innovation through a Diverse Workforce, Forbes Insights, 2019

Both desk research and industry feedback highlight lack of action on the ground in diversity and inclusion initiatives, despite top-level support, as a key challenge. Communication of the business logic for initiatives, and engagement of management and staff at all levels is critically important.

Given that middle management behaviours are key to effective inclusion, their support is critical to successful delivery of diversity and inclusion strategies. Cultural diversity training should thus be provided to support managers and supervisors in their induction and ongoing management of international workers. The training should address aspects of cultural competence, focus on inclusion and the role of cultural brokers.

Implement cultural diversity training for management and supervisors to ensure their engagement in diversity and inclusion strategies.

2.3. While businesses support diversity, action can be slow

In an EY survey of the Irish market[14], 100% of businesses saw a connection between D&I and greater customer and employee engagement, productivity, innovation and creativity, as well as talent acquisition and retention.

A significant challenge was identified in the gap between the 100% of businesses which said D&I was vital to business performance and what translates into action - only 48% have a strategy in place, only 41% have targets set and only 16% measure the impact on performance.

The main areas where organisations have seen a positive impact due to progress in D&I include 'strengthened cultural values' (63%), 'improved engagement and productivity of existing staff' (43%), 'increased ability to attract and retain highly talented people' (37%) and 'enhanced corporate reputation' (35%). These areas were ranked in the top 4 in the 2018 survey also.

The top two challenges remain the 'allocation of resources' and 'allocation of time' – providing the necessary time and resources for diversity and inclusion can be a challenge where labour shortages require operational and customer contract needs to be prioritised. 'Not collecting and/or effectively analysing D&I data', 'Limited drive from leadership' and 'Limited understanding of the business case' were next.

The survey indicates a high level of acceptance of people of 'non-Irish' ethnicity, at 86% but 53% believe there is a lack of ability to 'call out' non-inclusive language. The survey highlights that 21% of respondents believe that attracting and retaining diverse employees is a business challenge.

A recent Bord Bia study[15] on diversity and inclusion in the Irish food and drinks sector focused on gender. Of senior leaders, 42% had defined D&I in their organisations, 47% were planning to do so and 21% were interested in learning more about the subject. Of CEOs, 87% believe they are somewhat or significantly challenged in attracting, retaining and developing staff - 65% say there is an interest in D&I training and 53% in unconscious bias training.

2.4. Strategies to support good practice
Examples of good practice in the management of diversity and inclusion are set out below. These can be considered for potential inclusion in the diversity and inclusion strategies adopted by companies.

2.4.1 Cultural competence as a key skill in managing integration
Cultural competence, a key skill for all employees and particularly those with supervisory or management responsibilities, is the ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures. This depends on awareness of one's own cultural worldview, knowledge of other cultural practices and worldviews, tolerant attitudes towards cultural differences and cross-cultural skills.

There are seen to be seven essentials for cultural competence[16]:

1. Beliefs and Worldview - people have fundamentally different ways of seeing the world, and their role in it;
2. Communication Styles - different people have wildly different ways of communication, especially regarding context and directness;
3. Formality - cultures differ greatly in greetings, manners and etiquette;
4. Hierarchy - cultures differ in whether their societies are horizontal or vertical;
5. Perceptions of Time - people differ greatly in their perceptions of time;
6. Values and Priorities - emphasis on the individual and career, and loyalty between employer and employee; and
7. Everyone is Unique - it's important to remember that cultural guidelines are only guidelines and that every person is unique.

2.4.2 Inclusion as a driver of progress

When we think of diversity and inclusion the focus is generally on 'diversity'. While organisations need to aim for a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, assessing the benefits of inclusivity is also important.

A recent CIPD report[17] saw that a better understanding is required of the mechanisms and practices that influence inclusion. Research supports the idea that inclusion is linked to creativity and knowledge-sharing, as well as reduced absenteeism. Research into inclusion is however less established than research into diversity.

The report saw that inclusion is increasingly seen as a driver of progress towards workplaces where all can thrive, recognising they may not be inclusive for everyone - employees in the same company can experience workplaces differently depending on their line manager and team, but also their background and circumstances.

Despite a conceptual difference between diversity and inclusion the CIPD report saw an overlap "in part because an employee view of whether their workplace is inclusive is influenced by whether their organisation has fair promotion and hiring practices, and D&I policies in place". Demonstration of value systems internally and externally feeds into the ability of all organisations to attract and retain talent.

"

'In Musgrave, in the context of inclusion and diversity, we started out thinking that the focus was all about diversity. As our education progressed, we quickly concluded that diversity is an outcome of an effective, inclusive culture, i.e. our focus has since significantly shifted to creating a culture of inclusivity, a culture of equity rather than equality, where everyone gets what they need to be their best!'

John Counihan, Head of Organisation and Talent Development, Musgrave Retail Group

A recent Harvard Business Review article[18] saw that the key to inclusion is understanding who employees really are and that the most effective ways to find this out are:

- survey assessments with the survey results segmented by minority group;
- focus groups with independent facilitators so that employees can speak freely; and
- one-on-one discussions between managers and employees within an open-door policy.

The CIPD report saw that further research is needed into the mechanisms through which inclusion can have beneficial impacts for business and employees, and whether these impacts are contingent on other factors.

Recommendation: Carry out industry / sector research to explore the beneficial impacts of inclusion practices and to determine whether these are contingent on other factors.

2.4.3 Role of cultural brokers

A recent Harvard Business Review study[19] highlights the role of cultural brokers - team members with relatively more multicultural experience who act as a bridge between their monocultural teammates. Teams were significantly more creative when they had one or more members who acted as a cultural broker.

Cultural brokerage is seen to have two dimensions:

- Cultural insiders have two or more cultural backgrounds and often propose ideas combining elements of both cultures.
- Cultural outsiders have experience in two or more cultures not represented in the team and drew on their position as neutral third parties to elicit information and ideas from the other cultures in the team.

The study found that managing cultural diversity requires resources, time and innovation. The ability to interact effectively, recognise the benefits of cultural brokerage and invest in diversity leadership can yield global cultural competence and enhance an organisation's position across global markets.

2.4.4 Action for integration in the workplace

The workplace is a critical location of integration in Irish society, and diversity and inclusion can encompass anti-discrimination policies and procedures, positive action measures, and broader communication, monitoring and reporting actions across all business operational functions.

Employment is central to thriving communities and is a critical gateway to successful migrant integration. The workplace provides potential to reach out and deliver a positive message of diversity and inclusion in Ireland.

In 2019 Diversity Charter Ireland, in partnership with the OPMI (Office for Promotion of Migrant Immigration), conducted research among Charter signatories to produce a guide on migration integration in the workplace. A booklet[20] was published providing case studies and actions to motivate companies to support the integration of migrants.

Action under the five categories below in Diversity Charter Ireland report:

1. Attracting Migrant Applicants:

Companies who advertise their commitment to diversity enhance their reputation with potential employees, consumers and stakeholders.

2. Inclusive Onboarding Practices:

Many companies provide settlement services for new employees and their families as part of their package to attract talent. Some provide a 'Welcome to Ireland' pack, covering how to set up bank accounts, tax numbers, medical coverage, insurance, driving licences, etc. as well as links to relevant websites, local news, sporting groups, etc.

3. Inclusive Talent Management:

Many companies have a mentoring program for new employees where immigrant employees are matched with someone from their own cultural background at first (where possible) and at the same time or soon afterwards paired with an Irish-born counterpart to learn how to work effectively in their company.

4. Positive Career Supports:

Investing in skill development for workers to meet business needs can help increase productivity and drive growth. High-quality career support can engender a highly motivated workforce, ensuring that employees see opportunities for a career with the company.

5. Cultural Programme:

To assist migrant workers adapt to the culture of the organisation, companies can include them in the promotion of company events, produce promotional materials in ethnic minority languages, and use forums and/or employee groups to speak to migrant workers about culture and integration within the organisation.

2.4.5 Action for diversity-led innovation

A Boston Consulting Group (BCG) report[21] set out a **five-step process** to plan diversity-led innovation:

1. Analyse the status quo to better understand innovation, diversity and enabling conditions;

2. Define the target, look at what is happening in the market and with competitors in order to get a sense of whether the company is behind, ahead or at parity in innovation;

3. Identify the gaps, identify what is missing to proceed to a target for innovation, diversity, and enabler;

4. Create a roadmap for action to close the gaps based on the priorities. The plan will be complex with multiple parts, interdependent milestones and clear timelines; and

5. Institutionalise the process. Ensure it becomes a permanent part of company operations, with target and goal setting evolving in response to new tools, insights and market realities. "Diversity-led innovation can't be just a pet project of the HR department - the whole company must play a role in making it happen and capturing the value".

Diversity is seen in the BCG report to have the greatest impact on innovation at companies that reinforce diversity through five conditions in the work environment:

1. **Participative Leadership Behaviour:**
    When managers genuinely listen to make use of employees' suggestions - Swarovski, the Austrian manufacturer of cut crystal, uses 'nudges' to remind executives that their meetings will be more productive if attendees actively participate instead of deferring to those who are more senior.

2. **Openness to Cognitive Diversity:**
    A dynamic in which employees feel free to speak their minds. The German cable company Unitymedia supports openness to cognitive diversity by encouraging opposing ideas and 'constructive conflict' in discussions both among peers and between employees and managers.

3. **Strategic Priority:**
    Diversity has considerable top team support in some companies, e.g. France's Airbus Group whose Balance for Business initiative (aimed at increasing gender diversity at the largely male company) has been endorsed by the CEO and top team.

4. **Frequent Interpersonal Communication:**
    Facilitation of dialogue between people with different backgrounds can bolster innovation. Google does this through its cafés, which allow for spontaneous conversations among people with different educational, work and national backgrounds, and vastly different levels of expertise.

5. **Equal Employment Practices:**
    The US apparel company Gap has won praise for eliminating pay differences between female and male employees. Its commitment to gender diversity is evident in the number of women on its senior team and in the majority of female store managers.

As Ireland's largest
indigenous industry,
the agri-food sector is
critically important.

Section

3

Agri-Food is
a Critically
Important Sector

This section highlights the importance of the agri-food sector to the national industrial strategy and summarises national employment and enterprise statistics for the sector.

Agri-food is Ireland's largest indigenous sector and is critically important in terms of its regional spread, high element of domestic purchases and large export market. Challenging 10-year growth projections are set in the national strategy for the sector including 23,000 extra jobs. Meat and Dairy are the largest manufacturing sub-sectors and the bulk of employment is in larger companies.

3.1. Agri-food sector is an important element of Ireland's industrial strategy

As Ireland's largest indigenous sector, agri-food is critically important with a wide regional spread, operations that span the supply chain, a high proportion of domestically sourced raw materials and a large export market.

Employment in the sector accounted, directly and indirectly, for 173,000 jobs or 7.7% of total employment in 2018[22]. "Irish food is produced by thousands of farmers, fishermen and agri-food companies around the country..... This supply chain stretches from rural and coastal areas all across Ireland to distant markets in Asia and Africa."

The sector's importance outside of Dublin is highlighted in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Agri-food employment as % of total by region, 2016
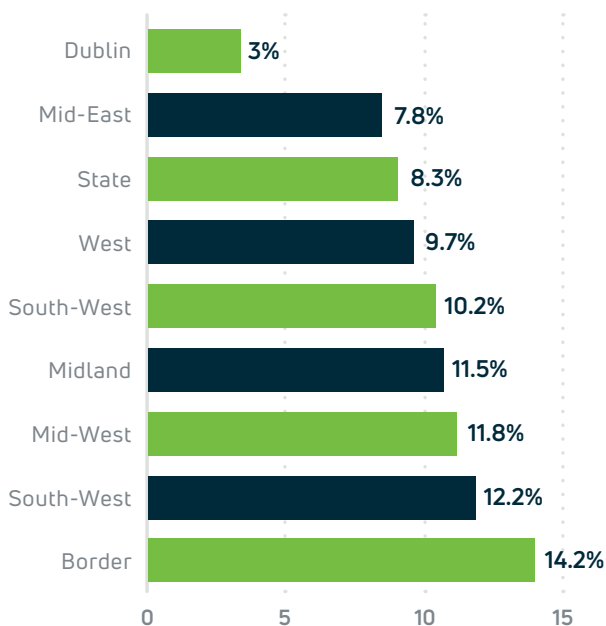
Source: CSO (Central Statistics Office), 2016 Census

The sector is central to Ireland's export-led growth strategy with Food and Drink exports of €13 billion to over 180 countries[23] in 2019, the tenth consecutive year of volume growth.

The national strategy for the agri-food industry[24] sets out challenging 10-year growth projections, including an 85% increase in exports and the creation of 23,000 additional jobs. It aims to position Ireland as a world leader in sustainable agri-food production.

3.2. Meat and Dairy are the largest manufacturing sub-sectors

As seen in Figure 6 below, Meat and Dairy are the largest agri-food manufacturing[vii] sub-sectors and they comprise 51% of employment collectively with Bakery next at 13%.

Figure 6: Food Products Employment and Enterprises by Sub-sector 2017

Agri-Food Employment 2017 by Sector

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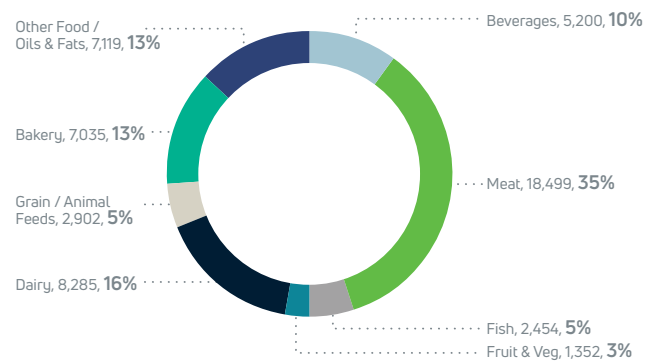
vii   Agri-food and Beverages, as defined for this study, comprises sub-sectors 10 Food Processing and 11 Beverages under the CSO NACE classification system – see Appendix 5 for a reconciliation of the descriptors used here and the detailed NACE ones.

Agri-Food Enterprises 2017 by Sector

Source: CSO Census of Industrial Production[25]; sub-sector analysis provided by CSO. Beverage employment data from DAFM (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) Review & Outlook 2018 with enterprise data estimated.
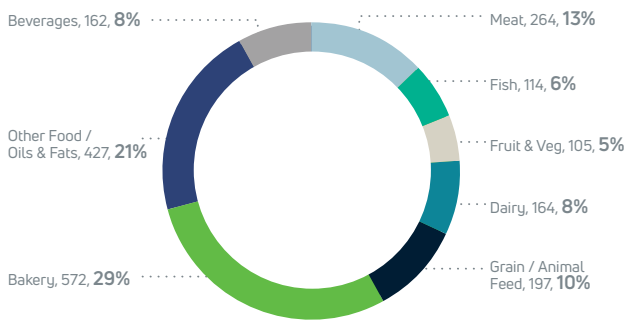
Meat and Dairy companies are by far the largest with average employment of 70.1 and 50.5 respectively versus 12 - 32 for the other sub-sectors.

Figure 7: Food Products Average Employment by Sub-Sector 2017

Meat	70.1
Dairy	50.5
Beverages	32.2
Fish	21.5
Other Food / Oils & Fats	16.7
Grain / Animal Feeds	14.7
Fruit & Veg	12.9
Bakery	12.3

Source: CSO Census of Industrial Production; sub-sector analysis provided by CSO

3.3. The bulk of employment is in larger companies

The bulk of employment is in larger companies as shown in Figure 8 below with 82% in the top two categories (50 – 249 and 250+) which comprise only 10% of enterprises. At the other extreme, enterprises with less than 10 employees account for only 4% of employment while comprising 74% of enterprises.

This has implications for the study. As the 'micro' (<10 employee) companies are less likely to employ international workers, the surveys will focus on companies employing more than 10 people (490).

Figure 8: Food, Beverages & Tobacco Employment and Enterprises by Company Size 2017

Agri-Food Employment 2017 by Company Size
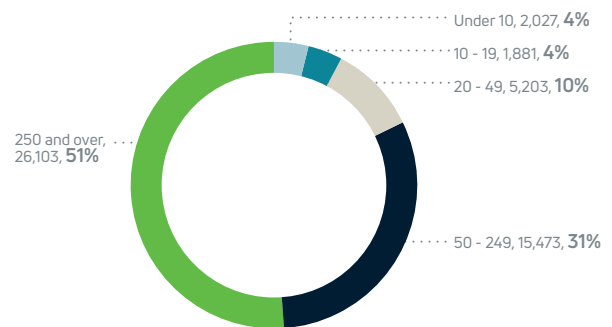
Agri-Food Enterprises 2017 by Company Size
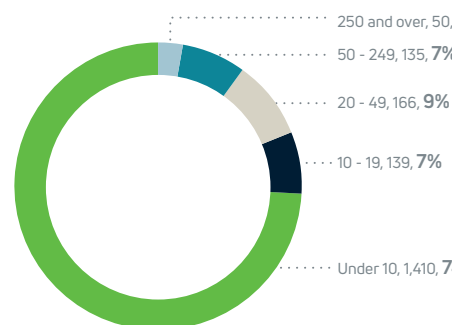
Source: CSO - Business Demography NACE Rev 2 by Activity, Employment Size, Year and Statistic[26]. Tobacco data not available due to confidentiality issues – est. < 250 so exclusion unlikely to change the above profile.

International workers comprise an average 29% of the sector's labour force.

Section

4

The Sector has a
High Level of
Cultural Diversity

This section highlights the high level of cultural diversity in Ireland's agri-food sector and the challenges faced by enterprises in attracting and retaining employees. The sections on employee attraction and retention are mainly based on interviews with industry and industry bodies with quotations used being mainly from these.

The agri-food sector has a high proportion of international workers, mainly European and white. Attracting labour is difficult with near to full employment, reduced net migration and difficulties in attracting workers. Employment permits will increasingly be required with a greater use of non-EU / EEA labour.

4.1. High proportion of international workers

International workers comprise an average 29% of the Food and Beverages sector's labour force as against 17% for the overall labour force. The proportion ranges from 10% in Beverages to 50% in Meat.

Figure 9: Food & Beverages Non-Irish Labour Force as % of Total by Sub-sector, 2016

Labour Force % Non-Irish by Sub-sector, 2016
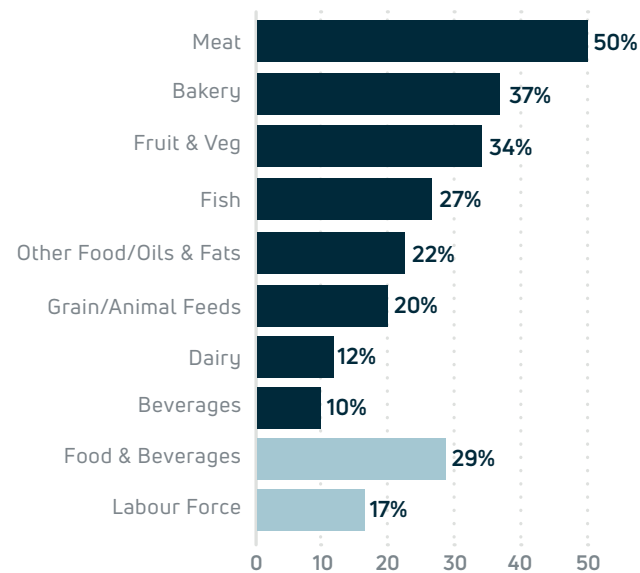
Source: CSO Census of Industrial Production, sub-sector data provided by CSO

Approx. 12% of respondents to the survey did not employ international workers. These were mainly smaller – less than 19 employee – companies but included one large company in a rural location which had mainly long serving local workers in sought after positions.

The reason given for not employing international workers was primarily 'Employing local workers is easier and they are available'.

4.2. International workers are mainly European; Meat the largest employer

As shown in Figure 10 below, European nationalities comprise 90% of the non-Irish Food and Beverages labour force with Polish and Lithuanian the largest with 52% collectively. International workers employed in individual companies generally come from a number of countries. Diversity issues will apply within and between these nationalities as well as between them and Irish workers.

Figure 10: Food & Beverages Non-Irish Labour Force by Nationality, 2016 Census

International Workers by Nationality, 2016 Census
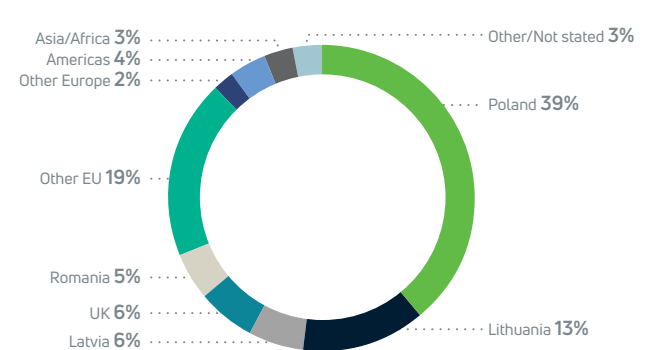
Source: CSO Census of Industrial Production, sub-sector data provided by CSO

International workers are predominantly (94.8%) white as shown below with Asian workers at 1.1% and Black workers at 0.7%. The sector has an average 3.9% Asian/Black/Other (incl. Mixed) workers compared to 4.6% for the overall labour force and 7.4% for the Meat sub-sector.

Figure 11: Food & Beverages Non-Irish Labour Force by Ethnic Group, 2016 Census

International Workers by Ethnic Group

Black **0.7%**
Asian **1.1%**
Other **2.1%**
Not stated **1.3%**
White **94.8%**
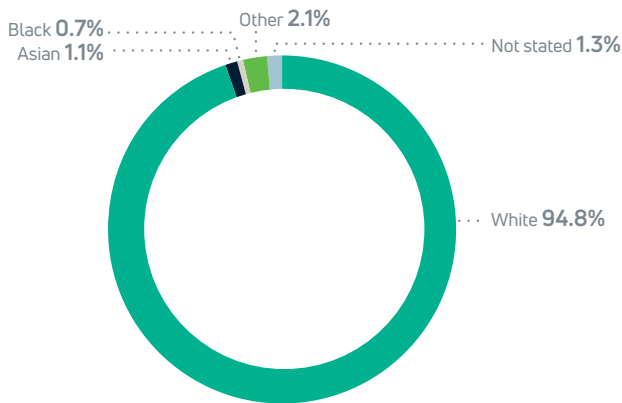
Asian/Black/Other Workers by Sub-sector

Sub-sector	%
Meat	7.4%
Bakery	4.6%
Fruit & Veg	3.1%
Animal Feeds	2.6%
Other Food	2.6%
Grain	2%
Fish	1.8%
Beverages	1.4%
Dairy/Oils & Fat	1.4%
Food & Beverages	3.9%
Labour Force	4.6%
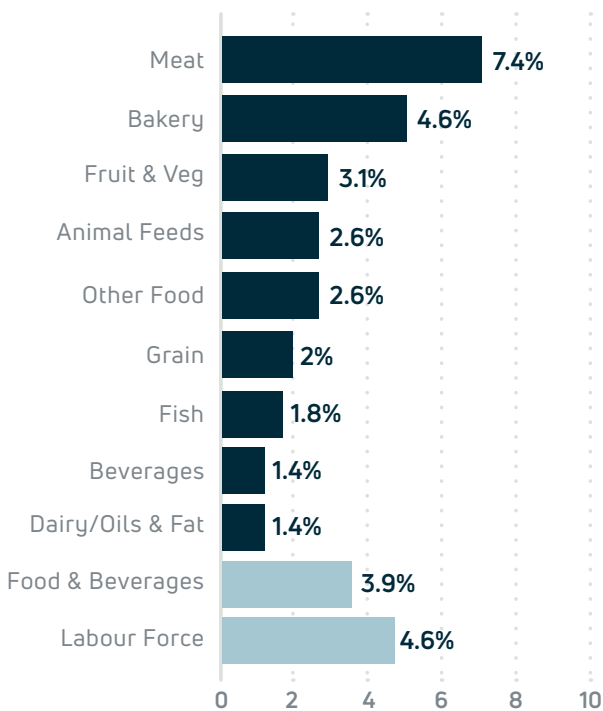
Source: CSO Census of Industrial Production, sub-sector data provided by CSO

The summary statistics in Figure 12 below compare international workers in Food and Beverages with those in the overall labour force. As well as comprising a much larger share of the total (29% vs 17%) and a slightly higher element of white workers (96.1% vs 95.4%), they:

- have a higher male element - 69% (Meat 77%) vs 54% overall;
- have inferior English language skills – 33% vs 17% speak English 'not well/not at all'; and
- perceive their health as being better – 94.4% vs 91% see health as 'good or very good'.

Their profile is similar to that of the overall labour force in age terms.

Figure 12: Food & Beverages vs Overall Labour Force Profile

	Food & Beverages		Overall Labour Force	Source
	Average	Range		
Non-Irish	29%	10% (Beverages) - 50% (Meat)	17%	Provided by CSO
Non-white	3.9%	1.4% (Dairy/Oils & Fat) - 7.4% (Meat)	4.6%	Provided by CSO
Male	69%	59% (Fruit & Veg) - 77% (Meat)	54%	2016 Census, EB031
Perceive health as good or v. good	94.4%	92.9% (Meat) - 96.3% (Dairy)	91%	2016 Census, EB039
English-speaking - Not well or not at all	33%	8% (Beverages) - 41% (Meat)	17%	2016 Census, EB047
Age (years)	41.6	39.0 (Meat) - 44.7 (Grain)	42.2	2016 Census, EB032

The Meat sub-sector accounts for 50% of international worker employment with Bakery next at 20%

Figure 13: Food & Beverages Non-Irish Labour Force by Sub-sector, 2016

International Workers by Sub-sector, 2016 Census

Dairy **7%**
Grain/Animal Feeds **3%**
Other Food **9%**
Fish **4%**
Fruit & Veg **2%**
Bakery **20%**
Beverages **5%**
Meat **50%**

Source: CSO Census of Industrial Production, sub-sector data provided by CSO

4.3. Attracting labour to the agri-food sector is difficult
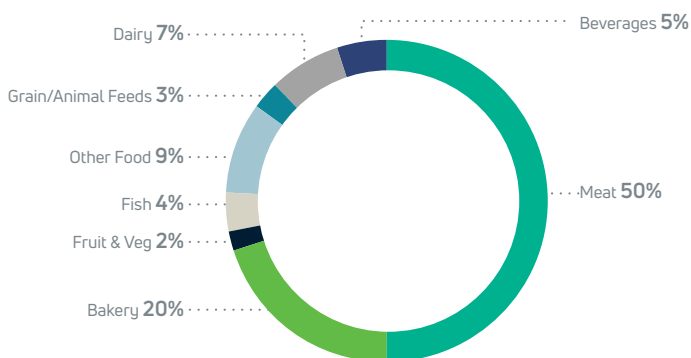
Attracting labour to the agri-food sector is difficult now with near to full employment and a mix of:

- Irish employees perceiving other sectors as being more attractive than the agri-food sector;
- reduced central and eastern European migration, and international workers going home due to economic recovery there with incentives to return and improved Social Welfare; and
- international workers in the food industry moving to construction, etc. roles in Ireland.

The EGFSN 2017 Update on Future Skills Needs in the Food and Drink Sector[27] said that "attracting employees to the sector is an issue and that short-term and unclear career paths make it difficult to attract graduates and retain existing staff......The report saw that "the food sector needs better branding to be attractive to potential employees."

The agri-food sector needs to promote itself as a career of choice to attract/retain its share of Irish workers/school leavers/graduates and of international workers based here or considering relocation. It has suffered, with manufacturing industry in general, from a poor perception in this regard. The sector has a lot to offer with a range of well-paid, high-tech jobs available in both regional and central locations, and excellent promotion opportunities within companies.

> **" "**
>
> **'The agri-food sector as a whole should promote itself as a career path of choice among school leavers and university graduates, as a modern sector with exciting opportunities in agri-food sector business expansion, innovation, marketing, consumer insights, research and technological development and nutritional product development.'**
>
> **Food Wise 2025**

Recommendation: Promote the agri-food sector as a career of choice to both Irish students / workers and current or potential international workers:

- *at enterprise level within their communities and*
- *across the sector to encourage the best talent to consider a career in the sector.*

As highlighted in Section 1.4, the bulk of international workers in Ireland now came from EU accession countries while latterly countries such as Ukraine and Brazil are important sources of new workers and this use of non-EU / EEA labour is expected to continue.

Companies attempt to recruit employees locally and internationally, including attending job fairs across Europe, and incur significant expense in these campaigns, with diminishing success[viii]. Companies use agencies for local or international recruitment.

International staff in place are used where possible as references and some companies provide incentives to encourage this. Those brought in are often relations or friends and use of references is seen to be positive as "they won't want to let their reference down".

In the longer-term, efficiencies from automation – "still in its infancy across the sector[28]" - and process improvements will help but "Ireland does not have the scale for automation as in US abattoirs working 24 x 7".

The balance of the labour requirement will need to be met by international workers from outside the EU / EEA who require employment permits to work in Ireland.

The employment permit system was set up to attract people with critical skills on good wages rather than the lower-pay general operative labour upon which the agri-food industry is very dependent.

Attraction and retention of labour will be an ongoing issue in agri-food, particularly in meat given the dependence on international workers. Labour shortages can have multiple impacts such as an inability to fulfil contracts or engage in extra value-add processing which can require product to be shipped to other jurisdictions.

Labour shortages can also prevent the release of staff for all but essential training with a negative impact on integration efforts. Progression opportunities may be further limited for those on employment permits due to permits applying only to the employment stated.

Access to development and career progression opportunities is critical to the integration of international workers. We thus recommend that further research be undertaken into the barriers faced by international workers on employment permits which may restrict their inclusion.

---

viii   Meat Industry Ireland submission to DBEI

4.4. Labour retention requires a lot of effort

Companies with a lot of international workers must provide support at all stages to retain workers.

Intensive support is required at start up - from meeting at the airport, to sourcing accommodation (and possibly payment for a period or until earning), to setting up a bank account, PPS No., driving licence, etc. to English language training. One company had HR staff working full time on sourcing accommodation for workers from Brazil and China.

Employee turnover is a big issue particularly in locations close to Dublin where construction jobs are available. The manufacturing sector, and food in particular, competes with the construction sector for workers and while construction is strong, as currently, food will be under pressure.

One company reported turnover rates of 10% - 11% while another with a high element of student/seasonal workers turned over up to 50% at Operative/Team Leader level each year. The Meat industry lost a lot of workers to other sectors during the 2019 farmer protests - approx. 700 out of 15,000 or 5% in a short period.

Promotion of international workers in one company encouraged others to stay as they saw opportunities to progress - "the best people to run the business are those that came up through it".

The extent of integration activity varied between companies depending on their proportion of international workers and scale:

- One company with more than 50% international workers put a lot of effort into D&I activities and saw that they had little option but to do so.
- Another with 25% international workers treated them like their Irish workers with few specific D&I activities and mainly informal BBQs, Sports Days, etc. for all staff; "social activities are difficult with 24x7 working"; and
- In larger sites workers tend to have a social life outside of work while those on smaller sites are more likely to get involved in the factory social club.

Meat Industry Ireland identified a range of integration activities being undertaken by member companies including:

- Training and development - a key part of retention policies;
- Career paths/progression – 50% of front-line management can be from the factory floor;
- Apprenticeship programme for butchery skills;
- Employee wellbeing days and wellbeing initiatives;
- Recognising national holidays of workforce;
- English language training;
- Subsidised transport and canteen facilities;
- Return to education programmes;
- Staff surveys and suggestions for improvement; and
- Support in sourcing accommodation.

Keelings, with a high proportion of international workers (50+ nations) and a high turnover of seasonal workers, undertakes initiatives to facilitate integration such as:

- Employee Voice Initiative – staff reps meet with HR / management to discuss improvement ideas and to test out ideas including pay & conditions;
- Making Keelings a Great Place to Work – initiatives include Wellness Day every month, two annual wellbeing weeks, training by Mental Health Ireland, Christmas party, Santa day for kids, Summer BBQ, tea & coffee van, ice cream van in Summer, breakfast twice pa, roses presented on St. Valentine's Day;

- International Women's Day – event run each year, e.g. share success stories of women in business; bunches of daffodils distributed to women at end of shift;
- Seasonal workers have a staff liaison officer who translates for them where required;
- Free bus service; assistance with securing affordable accommodation;
- Flexible work options for those living in direct provision.

They are currently rolling out a D&I strategy with a "theme of belonging" having researched options in 2019. This will cover nationality, disability, gender, etc. and will include a D&I policy.

Integration and Diversity within an organisation requires a culture change amongst the incumbent teams.

Section

5

Strategies Required To Address Diversity Issues

This section highlights how the performance of international workers is critical to competitiveness in the sector. It summarises the opportunities and challenges identified in the online survey, interviews and Focus Group sessions and outlines the strategies required to address these.

The research methodology is detailed in Appendix 6 and a copy of the online survey used is set out in Appendix 7.

As a low margin sector, the performance of international employees is critical to competitiveness and companies need to adopt active diversity and inclusion strategies to foster integration.

Productivity and talent attraction / retention are the main areas where diversity and inclusion initiatives can impact. Lack of resources, lack of D&I training and language skills are the main challenges. Despite training gaps being key priorities, relatively little training is carried out.

Companies also need to act on cultural issues to foster integration. Diversity and inclusion strategies are required at both enterprise and sector level to address priorities and share resources.

5.1. Performance is critical to competitiveness

The reliance on international workers to support the manufacturing and processing of food and drink products has increased significantly as the labour market approaches full employment (5% unemployed Q1 2019[29]) and, like all sectors, agri-food increasingly looks overseas to attract skills.
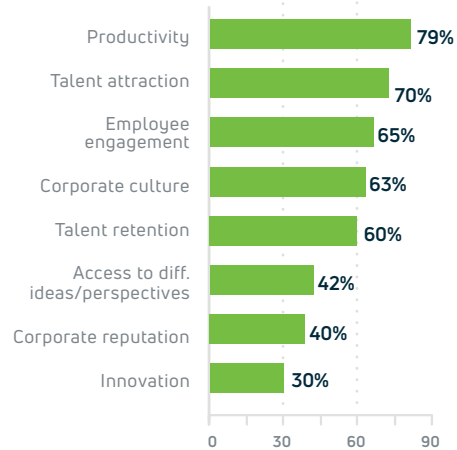
As a low margin sector, with labour costs significantly higher than other countries, the performance of international workers is critical to maintaining competitiveness in the agri-food sector. Performance to their potential will require international workers to be integrated into high performing multi-cultural team environments and companies will need to adopt active diversity and inclusion strategies.

5.2. Productivity and talent attraction / retention the main areas of impact

Feedback from the online survey into the agri-food sector indicates that productivity, talent attraction / retention, corporate culture and employee engagement are the main areas where D&I initiatives can have a positive impact.

Figure 14: Areas where diversity and inclusion measures can impact

Areas D&I initiatives can have a positive impact on

Area	%
Productivity	79%
Talent attraction	70%
Employee engagement	65%
Corporate culture	63%
Talent retention	60%
Access to diff. ideas/perspectives	42%
Corporate reputation	40%
Innovation	30%

Source: Online survey of agri-food sector - % of firms with international workers

These findings are similar to those in the EY cross-sector study in Section 2.3 where 'strengthened cultural values', 'improved engagement and productivity', 'ability to attract and retain staff' and 'corporate reputation' are the main areas of impact.

> "
> 'One of the areas for the industry to achieve its potential is "the attraction, retention, and development of talent right along the supply chain, supported by training that will foster the necessary technical and entrepreneurial skill sets.'
>
> **Food Wise 2025 national strategy**

5.3. Lack of resources and lack of D&I training the main challenges

Results from the online survey highlight 'allocation of resources' and 'lack of D&I training' as key challenges to progressing diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Figure 15: Challenges to progressing diversity and inclusion measures

Challenges to progressing D&I
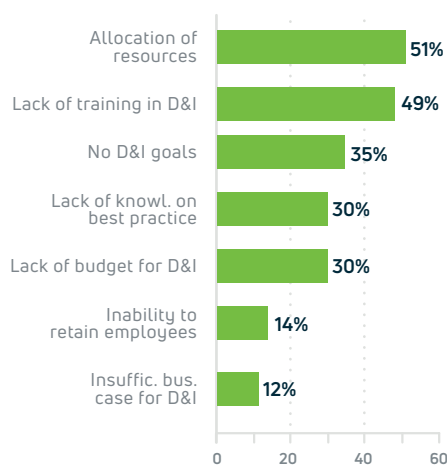
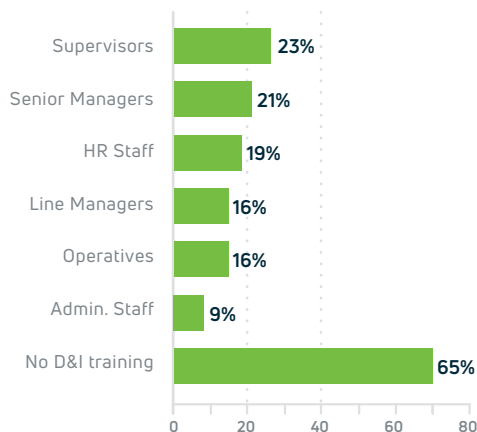Source: Online survey of agri-food sector - % of firms with international workers

The EY cross-sector national study outlined in Section 2.3 saw the top challenges as 'allocation of resources' and 'allocation of time' with 'not collecting and/or effectively analysing D&I data', 'limited drive from leadership' and 'limited understanding of the business case' next.

The challenges identified in the online survey and in interviews do not have strategies in place to address them. Despite 'lack of D&I training' being a key challenge, as shown below the survey found a low level of diversity and inclusion training, with none being carried out by 65% of respondents. This lack of action bias was evident in the EY survey also.

The training provided was mainly at supervisory level as well as for senior management and HR staff.

Figure 16: Diversity and Inclusion training by role

D&I training provided for:

Source: Online survey of agri-food sector - % of firms with international workers

Pressure on numbers can cause difficulties in releasing workers for training. Several companies stated that compliance training takes up the available time with insufficient time, particularly where turnover is high, for value add / upskilling training. One company could not release workers over the past year for a strong ongoing Team Leader programme as they were too busy.

In most companies, international workers start with one-day common induction training and proceed to English language training (see model used by Rosderra Irish Meats below). While the approach varies, training is mainly delivered on site (own time after work) as this is easier to attend.

The fact that training is required at different levels of ability and in different languages can result in individual companies not having sufficient numbers to make training sessions viable.

Companies also find it difficult to identify training providers prepared to deliver at locations around the country and at times to suit factories. The quality of training is important - "if bad on Day 1, they won't come back".

This may indicate the need for certain types of training to be shared between medium to smaller firms, possibly using the resources of ETBs (Education and Training Boards), Skillnet networks, Teagasc, etc. Maintenance of training standards is critically important and may be easier where content is standardised and repeated. This can be addressed within an agri-food sector diversity and inclusion strategy to include training and other initiatives availing of opportunities to share resources as outlined later in Section 5.7.

Case Study - Addressing Language Skills Gaps at Rosderra

Background: Rosderra Irish Meats identified a requirement to support English language skills training and to address the increasing cultural diversity and integration of its new international and growing workforce.

The Challenge: They designed and introduced a blended learning approach to help address the integration of diverse cultures. It took several months to locate a training provider prepared to travel to isolated regions to train foreign workers in English speaking skills in 'the context of their work environment'.

Retention strategies strengthen the company's ability to attract and retain workers and can be achieved through effective talent management, also important to the company's growth. English as a second language is only part of the solution. Language skills and inter-cultural diversity need to be combined in a programme to better address 'cultural diversity' and the integration of foreign language speaking employees into the workplace.

Approach

Programmes 1 & 2: English Language Training: Delivered part-time over 12 weeks 2017 – 19.
Programme 3: Online Induction translated into 4 languages: 2018 / 2019.

Company Induction Programme converted to multi-language online content in three phases:
Phase 1: Pilot - Food Safety & Quality Induction for Boning Hall;
Phase 2: H&S and Manual Handling;
Phase 3: HR
The Pilot addressed the key aspects of the induction process with training content converted online including motion graphics, interactive learning, and knowledge checks at end of modules and on completion.

It became evident that, with low levels of English on commencement, learners don't have the basic competency to understand what is being taught. The interactive online training programmes will now be translated into the key primary language groups - Moldovan, Hungarian, Polish and Portuguese.

The online part of the induction programme will allow new employees carry out crucial elements of their role safely. The admin and management elements will enable management to track and manage training, and to measure and manage Food Safety & Quality requirements.

Programme 4: English Language Training, 2019. Beginners require a social context to practice their language skills or much of the learning can be lost. Several English Language classes were thus held off-site in an informal, relaxed environment providing a platform for learners to engage one on one using their new-found knowledge.

Outcomes: The fact that learners moved towards classes of fellow nationals, particularly where English language skills were poor, highlights that the classroom environment provides the only real exposure to sustained social interaction through the English language.

Next Steps: Rosderra see the next step is to build on the success of the current 12-week programme in a different approach with a combination of technical and soft skills focusing on the work environment. This will enable employees to continue their English-speaking skills development and to understand and be aware of different cultures and diversity, to enable their teams develop in the workplace and to train the next group of new, culturally diverse employees. A longer-term structured integration plan is required to strategically embrace all cultures within the workforce.

5.4. Language skills are a key issue

Companies interviewed saw language training as a key requirement in that:

- Consistency in understanding across different languages is essential given the emphasis on compliance in the sector;
- Operatives with poor language skills are difficult to promote and this reduces the internal hiring pool for Team Leaders, etc. whose promotion can be a key incentive for international workers to remain with the company;
- International workers are found to mix more with Irish workers as their English language skills improve.

The issue of language skills, among those whose first language is not English, is highlighted in the CSO Census data below with 33% on average (41% in Meat) indicating that they speak English 'not well or not at all' compared to 12% for the overall labour force.

Figure 17: English language gaps by sub-sector

*% Speaking English Not Well / Not at All*
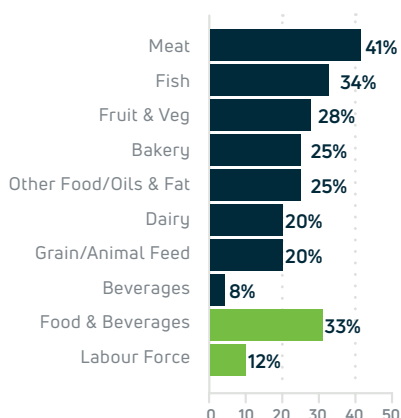
Source: 2016 Census, CSO, StatBank Ireland / Profile 11 - Employment Occupations and Industry

The gap in language skills is not backed up by training with over half of companies in the online survey providing no language training.

Figure 18: Approaches to provision of English language training

Approaches to provision of language training
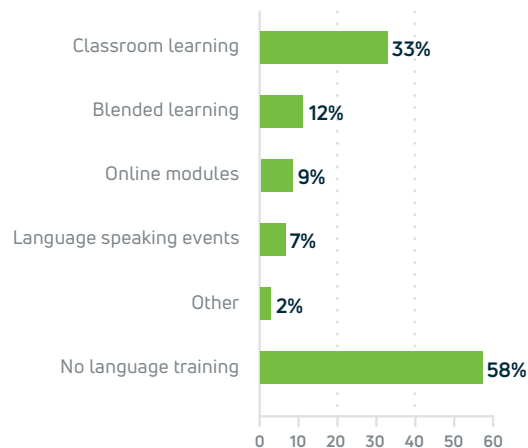
Source: Online survey of agri-food sector - % of firms with international workers

Language training is a requirement for those from non-EU / EEA countries on employment permits and the need will increase as these comprise a greater proportion of the next tranche of international workers (see Section 1.4). Some companies stated that, to maintain numbers, they have had no option but to reduce the standard of language skills required from new workers.

> *Recommendation: Provide English language training for new international workers as a key feature of their integration.*

Translation will be an increasing requirement also, from Quality, H&S, etc. handbooks to documentation of incident reports or personal injury claims, in all of which consistency in meaning across different languages is essential. Support from an interpreter is likely to be required where English is not the first language, and this becomes difficult with a range of nationalities employed.

With too many languages to translate into (including different scripts), some companies interviewed used pictures in induction and training material rather than translating the content.

Workplace signage and induction training handouts are the items most frequently translated in the online survey below with the bulk of companies (73%) providing some degree of translation support.

Figure 19: Translation support provided for international workers

Translated for international workers

Workplace signage	44%
Handouts in induction trg.	40%
Staff info. leaflets	35%
Staff handbook	30%
Handouts in upskilling trg.	21%
Online content	21%
Support from other workers	3%
No translation support	27%
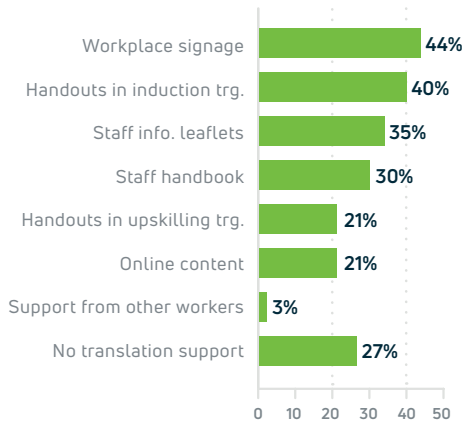
Source: Online survey of agri-food sector - % of firms with international workers

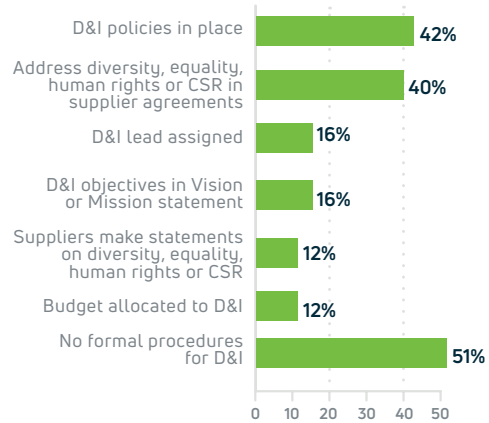### 5.5. Specific processes adapted for D&I despite lack of formal D&I procedures

Approx. 40% of those responding to the online survey have D&I policies or are required to address D&I or related principles in the external supplier agreements they undertake. Half have no formal procedures for D&I with only 16% having a D&I lead and only 12% a budget allocated.

Assigning a D&I lead is an important early step in the process to mobilise and provide a focus for diversity and inclusion initiatives. The role can be a full-time or part-time one depending on the size of the company and its proportion of international workers.

Recommendation: Assign responsibility for diversity and inclusion initiatives within enterprises, on a part-time or full-time basis as appropriate.

Figure 20: Formal diversity and inclusion procedures

Indicate whether the following relate to your business:

D&I policies in place	42%
Address diversity, equality, human rights or CSR in supplier agreements	40%
D&I lead assigned	16%
D&I objectives in Vision or Mission statement	16%
Suppliers make statements on diversity, equality, human rights or CSR	12%
Budget allocated to D&I	12%
No formal procedures for D&I	51%

Source: Online survey of agri-food sector - % of firms with international workers

While half have no formal D&I procedures, a high proportion - 81% - had adapted specific processes for diversity and inclusion, mainly their training, recruitment and induction processes, as seen in Figure 21 below.

Figure 21: Processes adapted for diversity and inclusion

Processes adapted for D&I

Training	63%
Recruitment	56%
Induction	53%
Comms.	35%
Mentoring	30%
Perf. Mgt.	26%
Talent mgt.	21%
Networking groups	12%
No processes adapted	19%
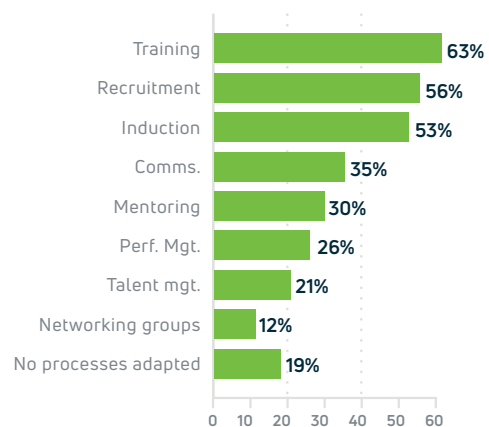
Source: Online survey of agri-food sector - % of firms with international workers

5.6. Action is required on cultural issues to foster integration

While addressing training gaps related to language, compliance and developmental skills is very important, companies also need to act on cultural issues to foster integration.

"

'Integration and Diversity within an organisation requires a culture change amongst the incumbent teams and there is much more to be considered than the potential language barriers.'

Eugene McNamara, Learning & Development, Rosderra Irish Meats

The initiatives adopted will vary depending on the company size and the proportion of international workers, i.e.:

- Those companies with a small proportion of international workers, say 25% or less, may just include these workers in activities for the entire workforce such as BBQs, Christmas parties, staff engagement surveys, etc.
- Companies with a higher proportion of international workers require targeted activities (see Section 4.4) in addition to the language and induction training, and start up support; one saw a need to supplement training with follow on social interaction through H&S talks, quizzes, etc.
- One Focus Group suggested that managers and supervisors should be able to say Hello and Goodbye to international workers in the language of their countries – see below.

Recommendation: Implement initiatives to support the creation of a D&I culture such as recognition of national holidays, learning salutations in employee languages, staff surveys, etc.

Salutations for the Top 10 countries international workers come from (Appendix 3), plus Ireland

Country	Hello	Goodbye	Thank you
Poland	Witaj	Do widzenia	Dziekuje ci
UK	Hello	Goodbye	Thank you
Lithuania	Sveki	Atsisveikna	Aciu
Romania	Buna	La revedere	Multumesc
Latvia	Sveki	Ardievas	Paldies
Brazil (Portuguese)	Ola	Tchau	Obrigado
Spain	Hola	Adios	Gracias
Italy	Ciao	Addio	Grazie
France	Bonjour	Au revoir	Merci
Germany	Hallo	Auf weidersehen	Danke
Ireland	Dia dhuit	Slán	Go raibh maith agat

'Managers and supervisors should be able to say Hello and Goodbye to international employees in the language of their countries.'

Taste 4 Success Skillnet, UCC Diploma in Food Manufacturing Management, Dec 2019

5.7. D&I strategies required at enterprise and sector level

Companies with a high proportion of international workers need to incorporate their integration activities within diversity and inclusion strategies linked to their business plans. A number of those interviewed were putting such strategies in place.

This highlights the need for initiatives to help companies design and deliver sector-specific D&I strategies to include cultural diversity training and other supports, particularly for supervisors and operatives who comprise the bulk of international workers in this sector.

Such an intervention would be highly relevant and strategically important to the sector.

The EY survey referred to in Section 2.3 found that just over a quarter of organisations have completed a D&I diagnostic. The positive impact of their completion is highlighted in Figure 22 below by organisations who have completed a diagnostic being more likely to report 'improved employee engagement', 'measure D&I progress and success', 'completed Inclusive Leadership training' and 'enhanced corporate reputation'.

'We found that agri-food companies have a strong interest in developing a D&I strategy.........
The data suggests that there is a need to assist companies to define, develop and implement their D&I strategies'.

Tara McCarthy, CEO, Bord Bia

Figure 22: Impact of having completed a diversity and inclusion diagnostic

Impact of completing a Diversity & Inclusion diagnostic
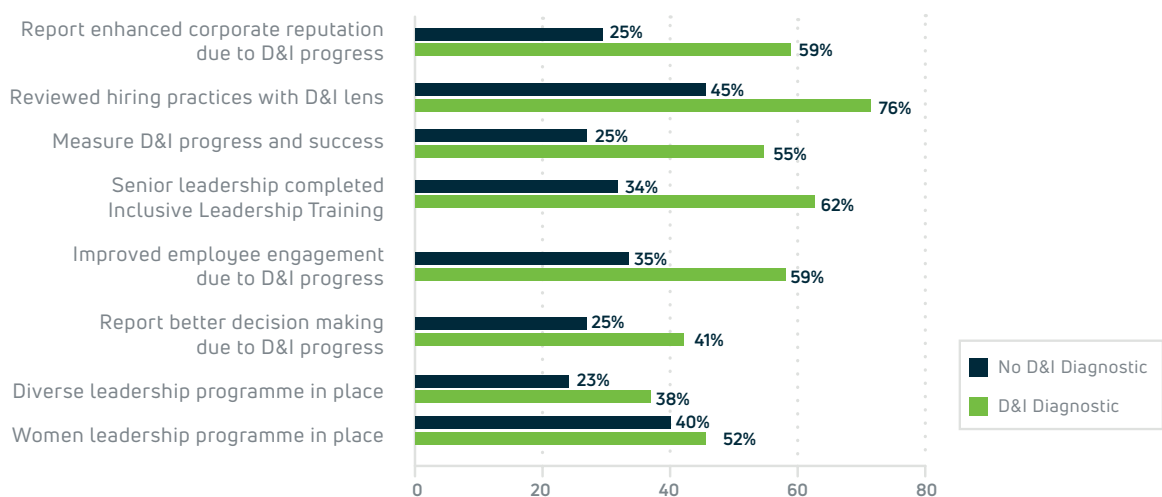
Source: Everybody in? EY Ireland 2019 Diversity & Inclusion Survey Report

A D&I diagnostic tool setting out guidelines for the preparation of a D&I strategy at enterprise level is included as Appendix 7, 'Getting Started – A Framework for Action'. This sets out the key steps required to devise the strategy and to use the information gathered to devise a project to deliver it.

A national agri-food diversity and inclusion strategy is also required, starting with an analysis to identify specific and common needs, and going on to develop cultural diversity training and other initiatives to respond to these needs in an efficient and timely manner. The analysis will explore the potential for companies to cooperate in the provision of English language training, translation services and in securing accreditations if required.

Recommendation:

- *Complete D&I diagnostics and develop D&I strategies at enterprise level, including road maps for early action and to develop longer-term strategies;*

- *Define an agri-food sector diversity and inclusion strategy to include training and other initiatives to address agreed priorities and avail of opportunities to share resources.*

The sector is ripe for collaborative action to respond to the impact of cultural diversity and leverage the opportunities created by diverse workplaces.

Section

6

Recommendations to Address Opportunities and Challenges

This section summarises the recommendations identified in the earlier sections to work towards a comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy for the agri-food sector.

The sector relies heavily on international workers and their performance is critical to competitiveness. Inclusion is key to performance and the creation of high performing teams. Organisations need to create an environment where all can meaningfully contribute, interact effectively and perform to the best of their ability.

Action is required to address the challenges and opportunities at all levels, i.e.:

- Action on cultural diversity at enterprise level;
- Sectoral collaboration and
- Supportive policies at national level.

6.1. Action on cultural diversity at enterprise level

Cultural diversity will be an ongoing feature of the agri-food sector workforce and success in dealing with it requires that enterprises implement effective inclusion practices.

Managing cultural diversity can help enterprises develop their capability to attract and retain talent, build employee engagement, increase innovation and improve overall business performance.

The analysis indicates that, despite strong top down support, action on diversity and inclusion can be slow. This may indicate uncertainty in where to start and road maps for both early action and to develop longer-term D&I strategies would help, particularly for companies with a high proportion of international workers.

> *Complete D&I diagnostics and develop D&I strategies at enterprise level, including road maps for early action and to develop longer-term strategies.*

Each company should analyse their situation, understand all the dimensions of cultural diversity, assess enabling conditions and identify priorities for action. Consultation with staff is key to understanding the range of perspectives and to gathering the information to support a D&I strategy that will have beneficial impacts for the business and employees.

A D&I diagnostic tool setting out guidelines for the preparation of a D&I strategy at enterprise level is included as Appendix 7, 'Getting Started – A Framework for Action'.

This sets out the key steps required to devise a D&I strategy and to use the information gathered to devise a project to deliver the strategy with a roadmap and timelines that support a whole company approach so that each business unit can play a part in delivering outcomes, reaching the milestones, and reporting and reviewing on progress.

The strategy must support the institutionalisation of the processes that are shown to be successful, ensuring that they become an ongoing part of company operations rather than one-off activities.

> *Assign responsibility for diversity and inclusion initiatives, on a part-time or full-time basis as appropriate.*

Only 16% of companies responding to the online survey had assigned a D&I lead (Section 5.5). This is an important early step in the process to mobilise and provide a focus for diversity and inclusion initiatives. It can be a full-time or part-time role depending on the size of the company and its proportion of international workers.

> *Implement cultural diversity training for management and supervisors to ensure their engagement in diversity and inclusion strategies.*

Given that line management behaviours are key to effective inclusion, appropriate cultural diversity training should be provided to support managers and supervisors in the induction and ongoing management of international workers. The training should address aspects of cultural competence, focus on inclusion and the role of cultural brokers.

> *Provide English language training for new international workers as a key feature of their integration.*

Good communication is essential to successful inclusion and language skills must be addressed given the emphasis on compliance in the sector and the need to foster the integration of new international workers. English language training is a requirement of employment permits for new workers from non-EU / EEA countries.

Implement initiatives to support the creation of a D&I culture such as recognition of national holidays, learning salutations in employee languages, staff surveys, etc.

The range of initiatives trialled will vary in terms of the company size, proportion of international workers, fit with other initiatives, etc. and successful initiatives will need to be institutionalised.

Promote the agri-food sector as a career of choice to both Irish students / workers and current or potential international workers - at enterprise level within their communities.

The sector level promotion discussed below can be complemented by promotion at enterprise level within their communities.

6.2. Support for collaborative action in the sector

The sector is ripe for collaborative action to respond to the impact of cultural diversity and to leverage the opportunities created by diverse workplaces. Effective diversity strategies require investment, and that cannot often be delivered solely at enterprise level.

Define an agri-food sector diversity and inclusion strategy to include training and other initiatives to address agreed priorities and avail of opportunities to share resources.

Companies with a high proportion of international workers need to have diversity and inclusion strategies in place linked to their business plans.

They will need support to enhance their cultural competence and help their managers and supervisors to develop diversity management and diversity leadership skills and give them the tools to act as 'D&I champions'. The flexible approach of the Skillnet model could be very effective in developing the relevant programmes for the sector and in securing accreditation if required.

A national agri-food sector diversity and inclusion strategy is required, starting with an analysis to identify specific and common needs, and going on to develop cultural diversity training and other initiatives to respond to these needs in an efficient and timely manner.

Promote the agri-food sector as a career of choice to both Irish students / workers and current or potential international workers - across the sector to encourage the best talent to consider a career in the sector.

The agri-food sector needs to promote itself as a career of choice to attract / retain its share of Irish workers / school leavers / graduates as well as of international workers based here or considering relocation. The sector has a lot to offer with a range of well-paid, high-tech positions available in central and regional locations and offering excellent promotion opportunities. Collaboration between industry and government bodies can be used to promote this message at sector level.

6.3. Supportive policies at national level

Policies and initiatives at national level can support those being taken within the agri-food sector.

Gather survey data on international workers in repeated national labour market survey data.

While a key focus of disadvantage, ethnicity is rarely measured in repeated national labour market survey data in Ireland and the ESRI report[30] recommends that this should be a priority and ongoing research should be supported.

The acquisition of Irish citizenship by non-EU nationals brings new challenges to measure and monitor their experience in Ireland which must be addressed for policy responses to disadvantage to be developed.

This applies to international workers also and we recommend that they be included in repeated national labour force surveys.

Undertake research into the barriers to further training / development and career progression opportunities for international workers on employment permits, and the related effects on inclusion in the workplace.

Access to development and career progression opportunities is critical to the integration of international workers. We thus recommend that further research be undertaken into the barriers faced by them on employment permits which may restrict their inclusion.

> *Carry out industry / sector research to explore the beneficial impacts of inclusion practices and to determine whether these are contingent on other factors.*

The CIPD report[31] quoted earlier saw that further industry / sector research is required to explore the mechanisms through which inclusion can have beneficial impacts for business and employees, and whether these impacts are contingent on other factors.

6.4. Summary of recommendations
The recommendations below summarise the actions required at enterprise, sector and national level to work towards a comprehensive diversity and inclusion strategy for the agri-food sector.

Figure 23: Summary of recommendations

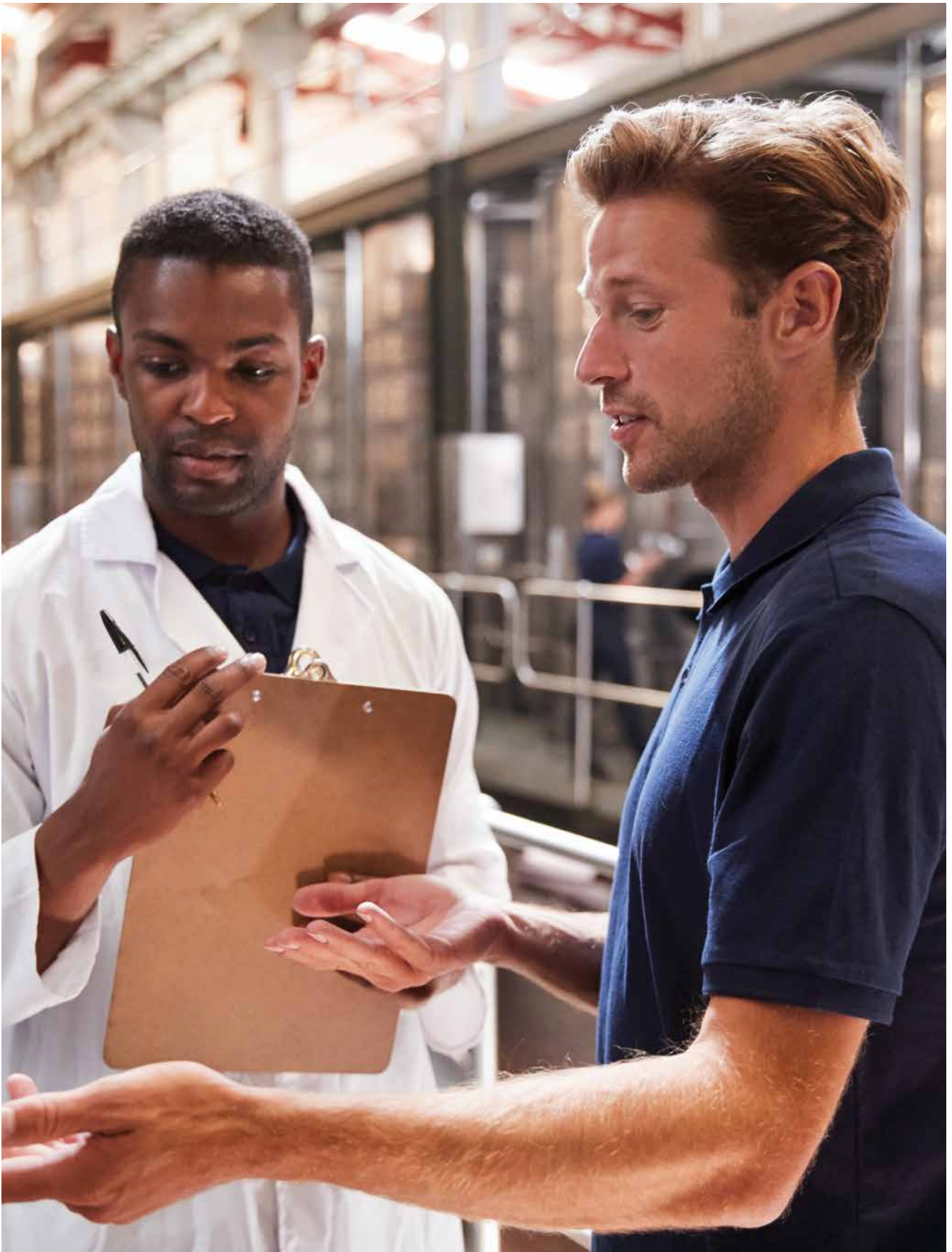| Recommendation	Ref.
Enterprise level	
Complete D&I diagnostics and develop D&I strategies at enterprise level, including road maps for early action and to develop longer-term strategies.	5.7
Assign responsibility for diversity and inclusion initiatives within enterprises, on a part-time or full-time basis as appropriate.	5.5
Implement cultural diversity training for management and supervisors to ensure their engagement in diversity and inclusion strategies.	2.2
Provide English language training for new international workers as a key feature of their integration.	5.4
Implement initiatives to help create a D&I culture such as recognising national holidays, learning salutations in employee languages, staff surveys, etc.	5.6
Promote the agri-food sector as a career of choice to both Irish students / workers and current or potential international workers - at enterprise level within their communities.	4.3
Sector level	
Define an agri-food sector diversity and inclusion strategy to include training and other initiatives to address agreed priorities and avail of opportunities to share resources.	5.7
Promote the agri-food sector as a career of choice to both Irish students / workers and current or potential international workers - across the sector to encourage the best talent to consider a career in the sector.	4.3
National level	
Gather survey data on international workers in repeated national labour market survey data.	1.2
Undertake research into the barriers to further training / development and career progression opportunities for international workers on employment permits, and the related effects on inclusion in the workplace.	4.3
Carry out industry / sector research to explore the beneficial impacts of inclusion practices and to determine whether these are contingent on other factors.	2.4

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Appendices

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Research Aims and Objectives

Appendix 2 - Glossary of Terms – Cultural Diversity

Appendix 3 – Non-Irish nationals living in Ireland 2016 by country

Appendix 4 – Definitions of EU and other country groupings

Appendix 5 - Reconciliation between report and NACE sub-sector descriptors

Appendix 6 - Research Methodology

Appendix 7 – Online Survey Questionnaire

Appendix 8 – Getting Started on Cultural Diversity – A Framework for Action

The research project aims to provide member companies (i.e. those organisations operating in the agri-food and beverage sectors - production, manufacturing, processing, etc), as well as those involved in national policy, with a greater understanding at a macro level of the issue of cultural diversity in the sector. Specifically, it will lead to:

- A greater understanding of the level of cultural diversity across the sector and the challenges and opportunities this leads to.
- A clearer picture regarding best practices that support the effective integration of international employees into the sector.
- Recommendations regarding integration supports and workforce development initiatives that can support integration. (such as training, induction, events, mentoring, internal communications).

The research will pay specific attention to the following elements:

- The challenges faced and capability (knowledge, skills and competencies) required of owner mangers (senior executives, HRD) to facilitate an international workforce in their organisation.
- The challenges faced and capability (knowledge, skills, and competencies required of supervisors / team leaders to supervise and manage international workers.
- The challenges faced and capability (knowledge, skills and competencies) required of international workers to integrate, learn, develop and advance within the organisation, from initial operative/production roles.

Outline Current Culture

Research objectives to include:

- Identifying which countries employees are coming from and their cultural requirements.
- How international workers are being attracted to the industry / sector.
- The level of workforce development supports they receive – induction and on-going.
- The challenges they face when entering the workforce.

Determine Challenges Faced

- The extent to which they interact with employees of other nationalities.
- The challenges experienced by employers / managers in recruiting and supporting international workers.
- The impact on business.

Research Conclusions and Recommendations

- A key element of the research will be the inclusion of recommendations which identify best practices within and outside the sector, in Ireland as well as internationally. This is will ultimately facilitate the development of interventions to support both employees, owners and management to address both a commercial challenge for industry but also a social challenge for Ireland.

A Glossary of Terms relating to cultural diversity is provided below as a context to discussions within the report. It focuses on the definitions and legislative background relevant to cultural diversity.

Culture
Culture refers to the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a people, organisation or society. Organisations have their own distinct cultures which, explicit or not, permeate all ways of operating and doing business.

Cultural Diversity
In the context of this report cultural diversity primarily relates to the differences that exist within the workforce – the Irish agri-food sector here – which relate to nationality, ethnicity and race.

Cultural Competence
The ability to interact effectively with people from different cultures.

Diversity
Diversity refers to the unique differences that all have and can bring to their organisation. It refers to the variety of experiences and perspectives which arise from invisible and visible differences in ethnicity, race, cultural background, religion, mental health, physical abilities, heritage, nationality, educational background, age, gender, sexual orientation, social background and other characteristics.

Accommodating diversity encompasses acceptance and respect for each individual. All are responsible for promoting the appreciation of differences and accommodating diversity so that they are better at decision making, problem solving and improve creativity and innovation.

Dignity and Respect
Treating other people with dignity and showing respect means treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves. Respect means that you accept somebody for who they are, even when they are different from you or you do not agree with them. Respect is vital because it helps us to feel safe and to express ourselves.

Discrimination
This is defined as being less favourable treatment. A person is discriminated against if he/she is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation, on any of the nine protected grounds. This can include bullying or harassment, unfair treatment in working conditions, promotion, pay and other forms of discrimination.

Discrimination - Indirect
This happens where an individual or a group of people are placed at a disadvantage as a result of conditions or rules which they might find hard to satisfy and which cannot be reasonably justified.

Discrimination by Association
This happens when a person is treated less favourably simply because they are associated with or connected to another person.

Discrimination by Imputation
This happens where a person is treated less favourably because it is thought that they belong to one of the categories covered by the nine grounds, whether or not that is the case.

Employment Equality Acts

Discrimination at work is covered by the Employment Equality Acts. They cover employees and people trying to get a job. The legislation covers all aspects of work including recruitment and promotion, the right to equal pay, conditions of employment, training or experience. Complaints of discrimination in relation to employment must normally be referred to the Workplace Relations Commission within 6 months.

The Equality Acts 1998 and 2015 aim to promote equality, prohibit discrimination (with some exemptions) across nine grounds, prohibit sexual harassment and harassment, prohibit victimisation, require appropriate measures for people with disabilities and allow positive action measures to ensure full equality in practice across the nine grounds.

The 'Protected Grounds' of the Equality Acts 1998-2015:

- Age; applies to all ages above 18 years of age and under 18 if you hold a drivers' licence and are buying car insurance;
- Civil Status; single, married, separated, divorced, widowed, in a civil partnership or previously in a civil partnership;
- Disability; a person with physical, intellectual or learning disability. Mental health issues and medical conditions that are potentially chronic, debilitating or that get worse over time may also be a form of disability;
- Family Status; being pregnant, a parent or a person responsible for a person under 18 years or, the main carer or a parent of a person with a disability who is 18 years or over where their disability requires care on an ongoing basis;
- Gender; a woman, a man or a transgender person;
- Race; race, skin colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin;
- Religion; religious beliefs or having no religious beliefs;
- Sexual Orientation; gay, lesbian, bisexual or heterosexual;
- Traveller Community (member of); People who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified by Travellers and others as people with a shared history, culture and traditions, including historically a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland.

For more information on the Equality Acts 1998 – 2015 go to **https://www.ihrec.ie**

Employment Permit

Required of non-EEA nationals to work in the State. Where the sourcing of labour and skills needs from within the State and other EEA states proves difficult, an employment permit may be sought to hire a non-EEA national.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organisation's success. We demonstrate inclusion by using inclusive language, letting each other speak and listening to different views and opinions.

Inclusive Language

People can choose words and expressions that include or exclude. Inclusive language is the use of words that do not deliberately or inadvertently exclude people. It is language that avoids words, phrases or tones that reflect prejudiced, stereotyped or discriminatory views of particular people or groups.

Integration

Defined in national policy as the "ability to participate to the extent that a person needs and wishes in all of the major components of society without having to relinquish his or her own cultural identity."

International Workers
Defined in this report as those who came from other countries to work in Ireland.

Labour Force Activity Rate
The proportion of working age adults in the population who are in the labour force, which consists of the number of people employed and unemployed.

Positive Action
Means doing something to promote equality of opportunity for disadvantaged categories under the nine grounds and to meet the special needs of people who may need extra help.

Poverty - at risk of poverty
The % falling below 60% of the median disposable income - official poverty threshold used by CSO and agreed at EU level.

Poverty - consistent poverty
Combines 'at risk of poverty' with enforced deprivation of two or more of a range of items.

Racism
Racism is the belief in the superiority of one race over another and actions that can happen from those beliefs. It may also mean prejudice, discrimination or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different race or ethnicity[1]. It includes the inability or refusal to recognise the rights, needs, dignity or value of people of particular races or geographical origins and the devaluation of various traits of character or intelligence as 'typical' of particular peoples. Xenophobia is a fear of foreigners and fear of the unfamiliar.

We are all responsible for preventing racism and xenophobia in all our work and ensuring that we support each other to prevent unconscious association, belief or attitude toward any social group negatively impacting on our organisation. The following points should be borne in mind:

- You do not have to intend to offend or upset somebody for your actions to cause offence. If someone tells you your words or behaviour is offensive, intimidating etc, then stop. When someone says no, accept it. This also applies to social events and other events associated with work.
- Saying "I was just messing" is not acceptable, and if a joke has the potential to offend, do not tell it.
- The way a person looks, acts or dresses is never an excuse. Jokes about a person's appearance, physical or mental characteristics, body shape, or any other personal matter that may cause annoyance, embarrassment or offence to another person is unacceptable.
- Remember that because somebody does not react in a negative fashion to a joke or comment does not mean that they find it acceptable.

Stereotyping

A stereotype is an over-generalised or mistaken idea or belief, about a particular category of people based on assumptions and expectation, for example, an expectation about the group's personality, preferences, or ability. Stereotyping people is a type of prejudice, which is an attitude, usually negative, toward a person or a group of people because of their group membership.

Unconscious Bias

Bias means that a person prefers an idea and possibly does not give equal chance to a different idea or shows favouritism towards something or someone. Bias can be influenced by a number of factors, such as popularity or groupthink. An implicit or unconscious bias is an unconscious association, belief, or attitude toward any social group. Due to implicit biases, people may often attribute certain qualities or characteristics to all members of a particular group, a phenomenon known as stereotyping.

Vicarious Liability

Employers are vicariously liable for their employees' acts (or omissions) that occur during the course of employment. The principle of vicarious liability is enshrined in the Equality Acts, 1998 – 2015.

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1   People with a shared history, culture and traditions.

Appendix 3 – Non-Irish nationals living in Ireland 2016 by country

Country	Residents
Poland	122,515
UK	103,313
Lithuania	36,552
Romania	29,186
Latvia	19,933
Brazil	13,640
Spain	12,112
Italy	11,732
France	11,661
Germany	11,531
India	11,465
America (US)	10,519
Total	393,959

The Top 12 countries above, with more than **10,000 residents** each, comprise **73.5%** of the total **535,457 non-national residents.**

Source: Census of Population 2016 – Profile 7 Migration and Diversity

Appendix 4 – Definitions of EU and other country groupings

EU28: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and UK***.**

*Brexit process commenced 31 January 2020.

EEA: European Economic Area comprises EU Member States plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

EU-West: 'Old' EU15 Member States excluding Ireland and the UK: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. (13)

EU-East or EU 15 - 28: EU Member States that joined the EU in 2004 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania) and 2013 (Croatia). (13)
(also referred to as EU Accession Countries)

Other Developed: Includes Other European; Australia & Oceania and North America.

Other Emerging: Includes North Africa & Other Africa; South & South-East Asia & East Asia; Central America & Caribbean, South America and Near & Middle East.

Appendix 5 - Reconciliation between report and NACE sub-sector descriptors

Code	NACE Descriptor	Report Descriptor
101	Processing and preserving of meat and production of meat products	Meat
102	Processing and preserving of fish, crustaceans and molluscs	Fish
103	Processing and preserving of fruit and vegetables	Fruit & Veg
104	Manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats	Other Food / Oils & Fats
105	Manufacture of dairy products	Dairy
106	Manufacture of grain mill products, starches and starch products	Grain / Animal Feeds
107	Manufacture of bakery and farinaceous products	Bakery
108	Manufacture of other food products	Other Food / Oils & Fats
109	Manufacture of prepared animal feeds	Grain / Animal Feeds
11	Manufacture of beverages	Beverages

The research study set out to develop an action plan to address 'cultural diversity, challenges and opportunities within the agri-food sector in Ireland' and to highlight the potential business benefits of cultural diversity to the sector.
The study methodology below entailed five main stages:

- Mobilisation
- Desk Research
- Surveys/Consultations
- Best Practice Review
- Final Report

The study was carried out up to Draft Final Report stage over the period July to December 2019.
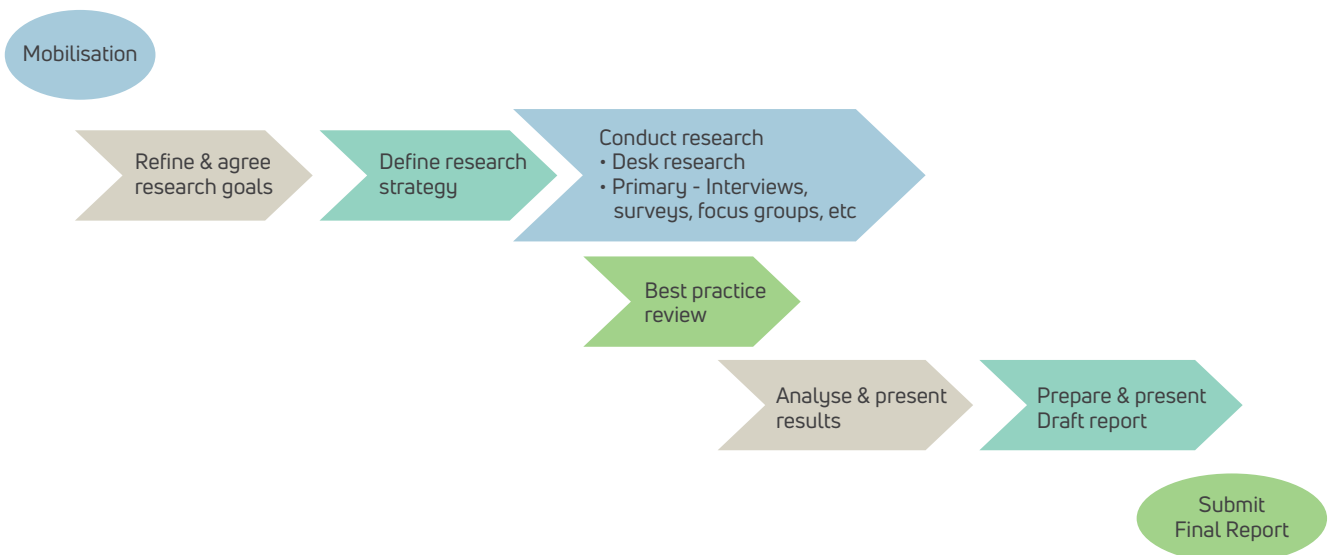
Mobilisation

An initial meeting was held on July 3rd, 2019 to mobilise the study and:

- Understand the background to and goals of the study;
- Finalise the scope, identifying any potential constraints;
- Discuss the proposed methodology and reporting format;
- Agree the consultation timetable including key dates and reporting arrangements;

The outputs and actions from this meeting were documented in a follow up note.

The research tasks were addressed through a mix of desk research, surveys/consultations and a review of best practice.

Desk Research

The Desk Research phase summarised, from available reports, the key cultural diversity issues and data and mainly comprises Sections 1 to 3 of the report. The findings of the desk research were circulated to the Working Group in advance and used to provide a robust base of information for the surveys and consultations. References cited in the Desk Research are listed in the report Bibliography.

Appendix 6 – Research Methodology (cont.)

Surveys/Consultations
A mix of online survey, interviews and focus group meetings was used to provide insights into the issues and opportunities, and the barriers to be addressed in action planning. This feedback is mainly used in Sections 4 and 5 of the report.

The various interactions are summarised below.

Survey Schedule

	Online Survey Responses	Interviews	Focus Group Attendees
Companies	51	19	46
Development agencies / Industry bodies		6	
Government Departments		3	
Project sponsors		3	
Total	51	31	46

Online Survey

An online questionnaire (App. 7) was drafted initially and piloted by the project sponsors. The final version was issued to Food & Drink sector members of the three Skillnet learning networks seeking information on their international workers, opportunities and challenges, inclusion of diversity in company policies/processes and support in training and other areas.

Responses are summarised below by sub-sector and by company size. A total of 192 surveys was issued of which 51 responses were received (27%).

The response rate was higher among Fish companies (42%) and Meat companies (39%), and among larger companies – those employing 250+ (45%) and 50 to 249 (32%).

Responses as % Issued by Sub-sector

Meat	Fish	Fruit & Veg	Dairy	Grain / Animal Feed	Bakery	Other Food / Oils & Fats	Beverages	Total
39%	42%	30%	23%	25%	40%	30%	15%	**27%**

Responses as % Issued by Company Size (Employees)

250+	50 - 249	10 - 49	< 10	Total
45%	32%	10%	25%	**27%**

The survey is not a statistical one but rather a qualitative assessment of the practices and policies employed. The fact that responses were received from the largest companies in the key sectors increases the survey's significance, e.g. Meat – ABP, Kepak & Dawn Meats; Dairy – Glanbia & Kerry Group; Beverages – Diageo & Britvic; Bakery – Aryzta, Brennans and JMO'B; and Fruit & Veg (in Other Food) - Keelings.

Interviews

A total of 31 interviews was held, in person or by telephone, to clarify the key issues with stakeholders in industry, industry bodies, development agencies, Government bodies, etc - see list attached. All of the industry interviews were with companies who responded to the online survey.

Focus Groups

Four Focus Group sessions were also held to validate the findings and proposed actions – see list of Focus Group attendees attached with a total of 46 attendees across 23 different organisations.

Best Practice Review

National charters in 23 European countries where organisations have signed national diversity charters were contacted to identify work being promoted in signatory agri-food and beverage organisations. The feedback from this was incorporated in the findings.

Analysis and Results

The key findings and proposed actions were summarised and presented to the project sponsors in a workshop to review the analysis and discuss the proposed actions.

Final Report

A Draft Final Report was submitted in December 2019 and finalised based on feedback from the project sponsors. The key deliverables of the Final Report are a summary of the cultural diversity challenges and opportunities facing the agri-food sector in Ireland and recommendations (Section 6 of report) to address these.

Appendix 6 - Research Methodology (cont.)

Interviewees

Organisation	Title	Name
Agri-food		
Carbery Group	HR Advisor	Pauline Digan
Irish Dog Foods, Naas	Factory Manager	Andrew Flynn
Key Ingredients Europe, Limerick	Quality Manager	Patricia Lane Doyle
Silver Pail Dairy, Cork		Chloe O'Flynn
Prestige Foods, Listowel	Accounts	Danielle Prenderville
Rosderra Irish Meats	Group HR	Rebecca Cornally
Diageo	Capability & Engagement Manager	Fearghal O'Connor
Diageo - Open Doors Initiative	Coordinator	Jeanne McDonagh
Keelings	Learning & Development Manager	Sylvia Caldwell
Porter House / Dingle Distillery	Group HR Manager	Sinead Moore
C&D Foods	Assistant Production Manager	Catherine Monaghan
Team Obair	Chairman	Richard Hendrick
Brennans Bread	Operations Director	Jim Sheerin
Doran's Fish Shop	Payroll & General HR	Chloe Greene
Green Isle Foods, Gurteen	Plant Manager	Joe Hannon
Kepak Group	HR Operations Manager, Ireland	Rachel O'Leary
Oakpark Foods, Cahir	Food Safety & Quality Manager	Regina McGuirk
Green Isle Pastry, Portumna	Health & Safety Environment Manager	Elish O'Shea
Other Industry		
Bord Na Mona Energy	L&D Specialist	Ciaran Butler
Agencies / Industry bodies		
Enterprise Ireland	Divisional Manager - Food	Oria Battersby
Enterprise Ireland	Dept. Mgr. Dairy, Funct. Food/Ingreds., Bevs	Alexa Toomey
Enterprise Ireland	Dept. Mgr. Primary Meats & Food Techn.	Gerard O'Flynn
Ibec	Director, Meat Industry Ireland	Joe Ryan
Ibec	Director, Prepared Consumer Foods	Linda Stuart-Trainor
Ibec	Head of Social Policy	Kara McGann
Government Departments		
DAFM	Research Division	James Conway
DAFM	Economics and Planning Division	Karl Walsh
DBEI	Principal Officer	Fiona Ward
Sponsors		
Taste4Success Skillnet	Network Manager	Bridie Corrigan Matthews
Food Drink Ireland Skillnet (Ibec)	Network Manager	Mark Skinner
Midland Border East Skillnet	Network Manager	Michael Lynch

Appendix 6 - Research Methodology (cont.)

Focus Group Attendees

FDI, Citywest Hotel, November 5th, 2019

Attendees (7):	O'Brien Fine Foods (3), McCarren/Kepak (2) and Donnelly Fruit & Veg. (2) Supervisors (all); over 50% international
Facilitators:	Tom Moriarty and Maria Hegarty

Taste4Success, Rosderra offices, Roscrea, December 11th, 2019

Attendees (8):	Rosderra Irish Meats (8) Operators (3), Supervisors (2), Managers (2) and Language Tutor (1). China (3), Poland (1), Hungary (1) and Ireland (3).
Facilitator:	Maria Hegarty

Taste4Success, Radisson Blu Hotel, Little Island, UCC Diploma in Food Manufacturing Management, January 6th, 2020

Attendees(19):	BIM (3), Drummond Mills (2), Liffey Mills (2), Bulmers (2), Rosderra Meats (2), Drover Foods (2), Natures Best (2), Kerry Foods (1), Glanbia (1), Glenillen Yoghurts (1), North Cork Creameries (1)
Facilitator:	Tom Moriarty

Taste4Success, UCC Diploma in Food Science & Technology, January 10th, 2020

Attendees(12):	Pepsico (2), Kerry Group (1), Moorepark Technology (1) Templetouhy Foods (1), Dairygold (1), Department of Agriculture (1), Defence Forces (1), Folláin Teoranta (1) Con Traas Ltd. (1), UCC School of Food and Nutritional Sciences (1), between jobs (1)
Facilitator:	Maria Hegarty

Survey into Cultural Diversity in the Agri-Food Sector in Ireland

Thank you for participating.

Putting in place relevant policies and procedures is a key challenge in delivering best practice training and development to support the recruitment, retention, up-skilling, talent management and integration of international workers in the agri-food and beverages sector in Ireland.

This study, being carried out jointly by the Taste4Success Skillnet, Food Drink Ireland Skillnet and Midland Border East Skillnet, focuses on cultural diversity issues among international workers in the sector. It aims to provide member companies and those involved in national policy with greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities arising, as a basis for recommendations on integration support and workforce development initiatives.

We seek your co-operation by completing this brief online survey which should take no more than 5 minutes.

All responses will be held in confidence, with the information collected reported in aggregate only. We may contact you to clarify any specific issues or initiatives.

1. **Company Name**

2. **Industry Sector**

3. **No. of employees**

4. **Does your company employ international workers?**   ◯ Yes   ◯ No

   If Yes Complete Q5-Q15; If No Q16 only

   Note: For the purpose of this survey, inernational workers are defined as those who came from other countries to work in Ireland.

5. **Please estimate the % of your workforce who are international workers?**

6. **Please indicate which of the countries/continents below your international workers mainly (more than 10%) come from.**

   ◯ Poland   ◯ Spain   ◯ Hungary   ◯ Ukraine

   ◯ Lithuania   ◯ Italy   ◯ Croatia   ◯ Africa

   ◯ Romania   ◯ France   ◯ Czech Republic   ◯ Asia

   ◯ Latvia   ◯ Germany   ◯ Portugal

   ◯ Brazil   ◯ Slovakia   ◯ Bulgaria

   Other (please specify)

7. **Please indicate which roles your international workers maily (more than 10%) hold.**

○ Operative ○ Management ○ Technical

○ Supervisory ○ Admin ○ Other Professional

Other (please specify)

[   ]

8. **In your opinion, can diversity & inclusion initiatives implemented have a positive impact on (tick all that apply)?**

○ Talent attraction ○ Productivity ○ Innovation

○ Talent retention ○ Change initiatives ○ Corporate culture

○ Employee engagement ○ Access to different ideas/ perspectives ○ Corporate reputation

Other (please specify)

[   ]

9. **Please identify whether the following challenges apply to progressing diversity and inclusion in your business (tick all that apply).**

○ Insufficient business case to support the diversity and inclusion agenda

○ Allocation of resources/time

○ Lack of knowledge on best practice initiatives

○ Inability to retain international employees

○ No diversity and inclusion goals in place

○ Lack of budget for diversity and inclusion initiatives

○ Lack of training in diversity and inclusion

Other (please specify)

[   ]

10. Please indicate whether the following statements relate to your business (tick all that apply).

- ○ We have a diversity and inclusion lead assigned to manage initiatives

- ○ We have diversity and inclusion policies in place

- ○ We have a budget allocated to diversity and inclusion measures

- ○ Diversity and inclusion objectives are included in our Vision or Mission statement

- ○ We are required to address diversity, equality, human rights or corporate social responsibility in supplier agreements we undertake

- ○ We require our suppliers to make statements on diversity, equality, human rights or corporate social responsibility in the agreements we negotiate with them

- ○ No formal procedures in place for diversity and inclusion

11. Does your business provide diversity and inclusion training for (tick all that apply)?

○ Senior Managers	○ Operatives	○ HR Staff
○ Line Managers	○ Administrative Staff	○ No diversity and inclusion training provided
○ Supervisors		

Other (please specify)

[   ]

12. Please indicate whether your business adapts any of the following processes to accommodate diversity (tick all that apply).

○ Recruitment	○ Talent management
○ Induction	○ Networking groups
○ Mentoring	○ Communications
○ Training	○ No processes adapted for diversity and inclusion
○ Performance Management	

Other (please specify)

[   ]

13. **Please indicate whether the following statements relate to your business (tick all that apply).**

○ Online modules   ○ Language speaking events

○ Classroom learning   ○ No language training provided

○ Blended learning

Other (please specify)

[   ]

14. **Please indicate whether your business translates any of the following for international workers (tick all that apply)?**

○ Workplace signage   ○ Online content   ○ No translation support provided

○ Staff information leaflets ○ Handouts provided in   ○ Handouts in staff induction
                              staff upskilling training   training

○ Staff Handbook

Other (please specify)

[   ]

Business Case for Agri-Food Sector Companies

Ireland has become considerably more diverse in recent decades, and the agri-food sector particularly. Yet, action on diversity and inclusion on the ground has been slow.

People are fundamental to business success, so organisations need to create an environment where everyone can meaningfully contribute, interact effectively and perform to the best of their ability.

Managing cultural diversity can help companies in the sector to address the challenges they face with regard to labour attraction and retention, language skills and building culturally competent organisations. This Framework for Action focuses on turning the diverse workforce into a resource that helps companies attract and retain the best talent, build employee engagement, harness innovation and improve business performance.

The steps here will get you started, help to build understanding and engagement so that you can set aims that will deliver the best actions for YOUR business, in your efforts to attract and retain good employees.

Devising Your Strategy

The first step is to make the decision to analyse your situation to better understand all dimensions of cultural diversity in your organisation. Organisational culture is fluid, it changes as we interact, and in the workplace there can be a range of different views, values, approaches and behaviours that impact on the culture.

Consultation with staff is key to understanding the range of perspectives that exist in the organisation. Consultation is critical to getting the information you need to support the delivery of a meaningful strategy that will have beneficial impacts for the business and employees.

External support can help you to devise the best way to go about analysing the situation in your organisation. It can help you to devise a programme of actions to identify enabling conditions in your organisation, to assess the best way to consult with staff about the culture and to devise a diversity and inclusion strategy that supports your business needs and objectives.

Delivering the Business Benefits of Diversity is a Continuous Process.

Devising Your Strategy (cont.)

The Aim: To put in place a clear diversity and inclusion strategy that states your aim to promote equality and diversity, outlines the business case for YOUR business and provides the details of planned activities.

The Approach: To involve employees at all levels so they can inform you of their experiences and perspectives on diversity and culture in the organisation and are informed of their role in implementing your strategy.

The Strategy: To consult with all staff, assess information provided and write a plan of action that meets your business needs. Your diversity and inclusion strategy should be reviewed at appropriate intervals so you should plan to collect and monitor information about what you do, what works and what can be improved.

Create a space and allocate time for managers to discuss:

- How do we define our organisational culture and values and how are our values communicated?
- How do we celebrate cultural diversity?
- How comfortable and skilled are managers with managing in a multi-cultural environment?
- Do managers know the law, and consequent responsibility to employees and customers? Are all stakeholders aware of the measures to prevent harassment and discrimination?
- Do we have policies that promote respect and dignity amongst employees and with customers? Are suppliers and possible business partners informed of your policies?

Involve departments in reviewing practices, starting with key questions for each of the following processes:

Recruitment:

1. How are staff recruited?, Do you plan to recruit from a broader labour pool?, Are job descriptions / person specifications and job advertisements bias free?
2. Is your application process and documentation easy to understand and in plain English? Likewise, for contracts?

Selection:

1. Do you provide diversity training for all those involved in the selection process and particularly those conducting interviews?
2. Do you collate and assess information about applicants from across the nine grounds?

Promotion:

1. How are staff promoted? Is cultural competence included as a selection criterion? How are teams formed?
2. Is diversity training delivered for those with supervisory or management responsibilities? Are managers informed and accountable for implementing your diversity strategy?
3. Are there opportunities for staff to improve their English language skills?

Retention:

1. Is induction training reviewed to ensure that all presentations, and documentation such as product specifications/standards, are provided in plain English? Is translation needed? Is clear guidance provided on company values, dignity / respect / equality policies and road maps for advancement?
2. Are opportunities (e.g. training, promotion, etc.) open to all and how do we know if there are barriers experienced by any groups in the organisation? Are sponsorship programmes explored to boost representation for under-represented groups at senior level?

Marketing:

1. How do you promote your diversity activities? Are they important in securing contracts?
2. How do you leverage diversity for your brand more broadly?

Use the Information to Devise a Project that will Deliver YOUR Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Aim: States your aim to promote equality and diversity, outlines the business case for YOUR business and provides the details of your planned diversity and inclusion activities.

Implementation: Provides the detail of your diversity and inclusion activities and sets out the roles, responsibilities and timelines for delivery.

Communication: Design effective communication activities to inform all stakeholders about the strategy, report on progress in your annual reports and communicate the results of your review of the strategy.

Get Started

Analyse all the factors that influence the culture in your organisation and that will help you to devise a programme of actions that will deliver the best results.

Set out in plain English all documentation that you provide for staff, including induction training handouts, standards manuals, job specifications, job vacancy notices, etc.

Join diversity networks, such as Diversity Charter Ireland and the Open Doors Initiative, so that you can learn about successful approaches to delivering diversity and inclusion in the agri-food and other sectors.

Consider use of external support in the above to ensure an objective appraisal, taking account of best practice in the agri-food sector and generally.

Cultural competence is arguably the most important skill for effective work performance in the 21st Century.

NOTES

About Taste 4 Success Skillnet

The Taste 4 Success Skillnet works with its members to identify and drive training and upskilling in the food, seafood and drink sectors, to meet business, people and performance needs.

Its members include multinationals, large, medium, small indigenous Irish companies, and a growing number of micro and artisan producers involved in food, seafood and drink (micro brewing) production.

taste4success.ie

About Food Drink Ireland Skillnet

Food Drink Ireland Skillnet are a network of companies in the Food & Drink sector that work together to develop training programmes supported by government funding to address skills gaps within the industry.

Food Drink Ireland Skillnet is promoted by Food Drink Ireland, an Ibec business association. Membership of the network is open to private enterprises in the food and drink sectors based in Ireland.

fooddrinkirelandskillnet.ie

About Midland Border East Skillnet

Midland Border East Skillnet is a regional, multi-sectoral network comprising of large multinational and SME companies and micro enterprises.

MBE Skillnet works with its members to respond locally to skills needs within businesses. Membership is open to private sector companies based in Ireland.

mbeskillnet.ie