



**CI Arb**  
evolving to resolve

# CI Arb Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy



Strategy drafted by:

Lewis Johnston ACI Arb, Head of Policy and External Affairs, CI Arb

## Context

Under the new corporate strategy (currently being finalized at Board level for implementation from 2021 onwards), a commitment to diversity and inclusion is at the heart of our mission statement:

“CI Arb’s mission is to be the inclusive global thought leader on dispute resolution, promoting and facilitating the creative and effective resolution of disputes, supporting diversity and inclusion, and ensuring practitioners are highly trained and comply with professional standards and ethical rules”.

This commitment runs across all 3 of our strategic aims and finds particular expression in Strategic Aim 3: *‘Develop and support an inclusive global community of diverse dispute resolvers’*. Under this aim we have committed to the implementation of ‘a global strategy on equality, diversity and inclusion’. In addition, EDI is an integral component of the strategy as a whole, from our ambition to be an inclusive thought leader for the profession to a commitment to make CI Arb membership available to traditionally under-represented groups.

## Why an EDI strategy is necessary

In order to formulate a truly effective strategy for EDI, it is vital to first have clarity on why this is a priority for the business.

However, the importance and value of EDI stretches far beyond the need to comply with relevant legislation and regulations. A meaningful commitment to EDI needs to be an integral part of our overall corporate strategy for the following reasons:

- Ensuring that everyone is given respect, opportunities and dignity as individuals of equal worth is a necessary manifestation of our values and ethics as an organization. Specifically, one of our values is “Dignity and Respect: treating all individuals with respect, valuing their contribution, and recognizing the importance of diversity by the inclusion of all”. To really operate in accordance with this value we need to have a credible action plan for EDI in place;
- The long-term health of the profession requires drawing on as wide a talent pool as possible and avoiding excluding anyone on the basis of arbitrary characteristics;
- Our attractiveness as a membership body depends on our commitment to EDI. If we are to grow our membership, we need to demonstrate that we are open to any individual with the desire and ability to pursue a career in dispute resolution;
- The wider business community which is served by ADR is becoming more diverse and is increasingly vocal in demanding that their service providers reflect this. For ADR to remain a credible and attractive alternative to litigation, its practitioners must reflect the clients they serve;

- The ADR profession will be stronger and more vibrant if it includes people from a range of different backgrounds and with a variety of professional and personal experiences. If it consists primarily of elite lawyers with top-flight academic backgrounds, its reputation and ability to cater to a wide range of different parties will suffer.

## Vision and Mission

To ensure our action plan for EDI is coherent and aligns with our overall corporate strategy, we need a suitable vision and mission statement that sets a clear frame of reference. To correspond with our corporate strategy, the vision and mission statement must be clear, concise, and provide a clear motivation for our action plan.

My proposals for CI Arb's vision and mission statement in relation to EDI are set out below:

### **Vision:**

“A dispute resolution profession that reflects the diversity of the global societies it serves, and in which individuals can flourish regardless of their identity, background or circumstances”.

### **Mission Statement:**

“CI Arb's mission is to be a membership body which is open to all, pro-actively works to promote social mobility by attracting and retaining people from under-represented groups, and inculcates an expansive conception of diversity and inclusion across all of its activities and projects.”

In translating the vision and mission statement into practical actions, we also need to consider a definition of our terms. EDI is a useful shorthand acronym, but the precise meaning of the principles needs to be borne fully in mind:

**Equality:** The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities.

**Diversity:** The condition of having or being composed of differing elements.

**Inclusion:** The action of including or of being included in a group or structure.

Importantly, 'equality' should not be read to mean that everyone will be dealt with in exactly the same way. Instead, it means that everyone shall be dealt with on the basis that they are of equal worth and are equally entitled to opportunities and rights as everyone else. In practice, this will mean that our approach to different people should be tailored to their specific needs and circumstances.

Finally, we need to develop clarity about what we mean by diversity and inclusion in particular. EDI is not a tick-box exercise based on a particular limited and arbitrary set of categories. It is about ensuring that everyone is treated with dignity and respect and actively working to ensure that disadvantaged groups in particular have the opportunities they are entitled to. Categories of gender,

ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation and age are vital starting points for recognizing inequalities of opportunity and representation in the profession and for taking steps to ameliorate them. However, it is important to be conscious of the fact that disadvantage can take many other forms, and we must also be alert to broader manifestations of inequality to which our sector may be prone (for example on the basis of social class or educational background).

To this end, I propose that social mobility and 'holistic EDI' should be fundamental to our approach. Ultimately, our aim should be to help provide opportunities to those who would otherwise be denied them because of some aspect of their identity or background, whether that relates to their socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender or any other characteristic.

## Strategic Aims

I have proposed 3 strategic priorities which aim to cover different aspects of our EDI commitment.

### **I. Ensure we attract the best candidates into the profession as CIArb members, regardless of their background**

#### **Action Plan:**

- Analyse the data to understand which groups may be under-represented within CIArb;
- Look beyond the headline figures to identify specific areas of concern (for example, women seem to be particularly underrepresented within Adjudication);
- Build targeted actions into our annual strategic plans to address such specific issues;
- Develop a comprehensive outreach programme to promote CIArb membership that extends beyond the typical fields from which our members are drawn. This could focus on students and young people in particular but should also consider engaging people from more deprived backgrounds, or with diverse educational backgrounds beyond the usual profile for an ADR professional;
- Develop an awareness campaign to promote our courses and membership, and ensure that our messaging reaches potentially under-represented groups;
- Ensure that our approach is applicable in all countries where CIArb has a presence, by working through our branch network to tailor our activities to the specific needs of that area.

## **2. Actively work to provide opportunities for under-privileged and under-represented groups to progress and thrive as CI Arb members, on the basis of an accurate and expansive assessment of who those groups are**

### **Action Plan:**

- Review our existing database and carry out a thorough assessment of membership, so that we can better understand who our members are, what they experience on the membership journey, and where particular groups are under-represented and/or face particular challenges or obstacles;
- Establish within our membership a cohort of 'Diversity and Inclusion' champions; individuals with unconventional backgrounds who can highlight where any issues exist and work with the executive to develop effective solutions;
- Establish a Mentoring scheme under which younger members from less advantaged and under-represented groups can benefit from structured professional development led by a more senior mentor;
- Work with our Branches around the world to identify the specific issues they may face in their region and develop and implement targeted solutions;
- Establish a bursary fund for members who are prevented from taking advantage of key development opportunities due to being from a deprived background or facing financial hardship;
- Establish partnerships with other organisations (particularly in the business community) and develop collaborative projects to improve EDI.

## **3. Inculcate a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion across all CI Arb activities, projects and initiatives so that our commitment to EDI underpins everything we do**

### **Action Plan:**

- Make an 'inclusivity assessment' a formal part of the planning process for all CI Arb events and courses;
- Take action to address any issues raised in the inclusivity assessment (for example, by providing sign language interpreters during conferences or
- Implement a definitive pledge that speaking panels at all CI Arb events and conferences will be gender-balanced, and that we will not accept speaking invitations where the entire panel is of a single gender;
- Devise a broader 'panel diversity pledge' which takes into account other characteristics beyond gender;

- Make EDI a constituent part of our training courses so that our members can be equipped with the knowledge and understanding they need to implement EDI principles in their own practices;
- Identify clear metrics against which success will be measured (across areas from membership applications, member retention, member engagement and event/course engagement);
- Initiate regular reporting mechanisms so that we are held accountable for our EDI performance by the Board of Trustees.





**CI Arb**  
*evolving to resolve*

The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators  
12 Bloomsbury Square  
London  
WC1A 2LP

[www.ciarb.org](http://www.ciarb.org)

