

General Counsel for Diversity & Inclusion: The Way Forward (July 2021)

General Counsel for Diversity & Inclusion (GCD&I) is delighted to announce that our initiative is moving into a new phase with:

- The creation of a Company Limited by Guarantee: General Counsel for Diversity & Inclusion.
- The creation of four Expertise Communities to equip the initiative to broaden its focus beyond gender.
- The appointment of GCD&I Partners with the initial appointment of 12 Lead Partner firms.
- The appointment of Tom Shropshire, General Counsel & Company Secretary Designate at Diageo, as a Director of the new company, along with the existing members of the GCD&I Steering Committee.
- The appointment of Donny Ching, Legal Director at Shell as the first GCD&I Chair.

The General Counsel Statement in Support of Diversity & Inclusion was launched in early 2019, driven by General Counsel in the largest companies in Europe. There are currently 117 Signatories from a broad spectrum of companies. We are collectively committed to working collaboratively across the legal profession to achieve greater equity, diversity and inclusion in our teams and the wider legal community.

Working Groups populated by members of the signatory teams have worked to identify, develop and progress the initiatives which have brought the Statement to life including framework materials, practical guidance and opportunities for signatories to share best practice wherever they are on their D&I journey.

The GCD&I Steering Committee is keen to build on the momentum of the initiative and move forward in a sustainable way. This includes putting in place a formal governance structure and inviting law firms and others in the legal ecosystem to partner with us on the initiative. Going forward, we are also extending our attention beyond our initial focus on gender and keen to expand globally, beyond the current predominantly European signatory basis.

We are setting up Expertise Communities which will be the centre of excellence and the bodies that bring together everything relating to that area of DE&I. There will initially be four Expertise Communities focusing on the following areas:

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- LBGTQI+
- Ability

In this new phase we are delighted to announce the appointment of the initial 12 Lead Partner law firms. These firms have been identified by the Steering Group for a number of reasons including their global reach and the resource they can provide to actively support the initiative in this next phase of growth.

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Lead Partner Firms 2021 - 2022

- ✓ Allen & Overy
- ✓ Baker McKenzie
- ✓ Clifford Chance
- ✓ CMS Cameron McKenna
- ✓ DLA Piper
- ✓ Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer
- ✓ Herbert Smith Freehills
- ✓ Hogan Lovells
- ✓ Linklaters
- ✓ Norton Rose Fulbright
- ✓ Sherman & Sterling
- ✓ Slaughter and May

While the initiative will remain owned and led by the In-House community, our Lead Partners bring significant know how to our new Expertise Communities to ensure that we fully embrace and respect the different strands of diversity that we want to see flourish in our industry. Our Partners will also help us to develop the conversation about how In-House teams and Law Firms can work effectively together, enhancing not only equity, diversity, and inclusion in our respective practice areas, but also our day-to-day ways of working, adding value to our organisations.

GCD&I is now reaching out to others across the legal ecosystem who share our objectives to join us as Partners on this journey.

Donny Ching, Chair of GCD&I said: “The GCD&I initiative has always been about collaboration to bring about much needed change in the industry and the enhancements that we are announcing today build on this model. They will also ensure that we can sustain the momentum and impact that the initiative is making in our legal community. The Board and I look forward to continuing to work with our signatories and partner ecosystem on this journey.”

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ABOUT GENERAL COUNSEL FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Background

- General Counsel for Diversity and Inclusion (GCD&I) is an initiative which is owned and led by General Counsel and the In-House Community.
- The General Counsel Statement in Support of Diversity and Inclusion was launched in early 2019, driven by General Counsel in the largest companies in Europe. There are currently 117 signatories from a broad spectrum of companies.
- The Objective of GCD&I is to promote Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion across the legal sector, including through defining and sharing best practice, identifying KPIs and Metrics to measure success, and encouraging in-house legal teams to take steps which support greater DE&I within legal firms.
- GCD&I is committed to a collaborative model to drive change and is inviting law firms and others in the legal ecosystem to partner with the initiative.
- The intention is also to work with other diversity programmes in the legal sector to generate greater impact and avoid duplicating efforts.

Key Messages

- We are committed to achieving greater diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.
- This applies within our organisations and in-house legal teams, as well as our law firms.
- We recognise that we have a role to play in supporting and facilitating improved diversity within our law firms. Simple decisions we make, from who we call when we have a new matter to how we resource matters, can facilitate change, or conversely add to the problem.
- We want to work collaboratively with our law firms on this initiative – for example, sharing lessons of what has worked and what hasn't in our own organisations, and identify systemic issues hindering progress and new ways of working together that can address these.
- By partnering with our law firms, we believe we can drive a faster pace of change towards improved DE&I.

GCD&I Steering Committee and Board

- Donny Ching, Legal Director, Royal Dutch Shell (Chair)
- Caroline Cox, Chief Legal, Governance & External Affairs Officer, BHP
- Richard Price, General Counsel and Company Secretary, Anglo American
- Ritva Sotamaa, Chief Legal Officer, Unilever
- Rosemary Martin, General Counsel and Company Secretary, Vodafone
- Tom Shropshire, General Counsel and Company Secretary (Designate), Diageo

For more background to GCD&I and a list of signatories to the initiative see: www.gcdandi.com

Enquires to Mary Mullally, Secretary, GCD&I: [here](#)

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