



ISO 30415

Why Diversity
& Inclusion
Matter and How
the **ISO 30415**
Standard Can
Help



kiwa

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Introduction:

The growing interest on diversity & inclusion

In an ever-changing global context, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) issues have become central to the sustainability and competitiveness of organizations. ISO 30415:2021 is an international benchmark for companies wishing to integrate D&I principles into their strategies, processes and corporate culture. In this whitepaper we will deep-dive into the standard.

On our role as an independent certification body, we offer a recognized, credible, and structured pathway to assess conformity with this standard, which demonstrates a company's commitment to an inclusive, sustainable and human rights compliant work environment.



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Raffaele Berardo is a highly experienced Lead Auditor and Certification Scheme Manager at Kiwa, with over 21 years of expertise in auditing and conformity assessment.

With a solid background in systems governance and continuous improvement, Raffaele combines technical expertise with a strong commitment to integrity and quality in certification processes.

Understanding *ISO 30415:2021*



ISO 30415:2021 is an international standard developed by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) that provides detailed and structured guidelines for integrating Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) principles in a systemic way into strategic human resources management, organizational processes and corporate culture. Based on this standard, certification bodies are able to issue an attestation of human resources management following the principles of ISO 30415:2021.

The standard does not limit itself to general statements but proposes a methodical approach that enables organizations to recognize the structural and cultural factors that hinder inclusion and to promote the enhancement of individual and collective differences.

The standard concretely helps companies to:

- **Identify and reduce systemic bias and discrimination**, both conscious and unconscious, through assessment tools, internal audits, targeted training and the introduction of effective anti-discrimination policies that can be monitored over time;
- Promote **equal opportunities for all workers**, regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious beliefs or socio-economic background, to guarantee selection, development and evaluation processes based on objective and meritocratic criteria;
- **Value diversity** as a lever of growth, resilience and continuous innovation, which stimulate collaboration between people with different skills, experiences and perspectives, enriching the organization's ability to respond effectively to complex and dynamic challenges;
- Build inclusive, safe, respectful and **welcoming work environments**, where each person can freely express their potential, feel recognized and valued, actively contributing to the achievement of the company's objectives. This translates into greater internal cohesion, reduced conflict and a better overall organizational climate;
- Contribute to the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) and supports compliance with CSRD requirements.

The relevance of *biases*

Biases, or cognitive biases, are systematic distortions of thought that influence the way we perceive people and make decisions. Biases are natural (the brain uses cognitive shortcuts) but recognizing them is the first step to creating fairer environments.

Often unconscious, these mental mechanisms come from prior experiences, cultural context, widespread stereotypes, or established behavioral patterns. In the workplace, biases can seriously undermine the quality of relationships, leadership effectiveness, meritocracy in decision-making processes, and employee well-being.

Common examples include:

1. Confirmation bias: tendency to look for information that confirms our pre-existing beliefs, while ignoring contrary evidence.

Example: a team leader believes remote workers are less productive and only notices instances that confirm this view, ignoring evidence of high performance

2. Affinity bias: preference for people similar to us in background, ethnicity, gender, etc.

Example: a manager hires candidates from the same university because she perceives them as more reliable

3. Stereotypes: rigid generalizations about a specific group of people.

Example: older people are not good with technology

4. Gender bias: automatic associations related to gender

Example: women are less likely to be leaders or men are less empathetic

If not acknowledged and addressed, these biases can prevent the creation of fair and inclusive environments and undermine the organization's potential for innovation, leading to frustration, disengagement, and increased employee turnover.

ISO 30415 promotes the development of an organizational culture based on awareness, training, and the adoption of objective tools to reduce the influence of bias in daily practices.

Combating bias is not only an ethical duty; it is also a concrete lever to improve productivity, collaboration, and quality of work.

Social impact: The **UN 2030 agenda** and the role of ISO 30415

ISO 30415 standard fits into the global context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN sponsored 2030 agenda. With its focus on Diversity and Inclusion, the standard concretely supports organizations in translating the principles of social sustainability into practical actions, helps to integrate respect for human rights and the appreciation of differences in corporate governance, and becomes an essential tool for promoting positive and lasting change in society and in the workplace.

Key points:

SDG 5: Gender equality

Gender equality is a fundamental pillar for building inclusive and fair societies. ISO 30415 encourages organizations to develop effective policies against discrimination and gender stereotyping, promoting equal access to decision-making and leadership roles. In addition, it fosters work environments that acknowledge and support the different needs of professional and personal life, helping to overcome historical inequalities and enabling everyone to fully express their talents

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

ISO 30415 supports the promotion of decent, safe and inclusive working conditions in which every individual can fulfil his or her potential, encourages continuous training and skills development policies, especially for disadvantaged groups, and thus reduces inequality of opportunity. By valuing diversity as a strategic resource, it fosters innovation and sustainable growth, contributing to create a work system that supports equity, well-being and shared economic prosperity.

SDG 10: Reducing inequalities

Adopting this standard means taking an active responsibility in building a fair and inclusive society, valuing each person, tackling inequalities and promoting respect for human rights in every organizational context.

Synergies between

ISO 30415 and CSRD/ESRS

CSRD and ISO 30415 are complementary: the former prescribes transparency in corporate sustainability reporting and the latter guides concrete action. Adopting ISO 30415 promotes compliance and demonstrates a strong ethical and organizational commitment. ISO 30415 and the ESRS, in particular ESRS S1 dedicated to an organization's employees, share a common vision centered on the value of human capital and the need to ensure fair, inclusive and safe working conditions. While having different purposes - one as a management guide, the other as a mandatory reporting standard - the two instruments are mutually reinforcing.

Equal opportunities

One of the most relevant points of convergence is the focus on equal opportunities and non-discrimination. The ESRS requires companies to report on policies and actions implemented to ensure fair treatment for all workers, including inclusion measures for under-represented groups (ESRS S1-5). In this respect, ISO 30415 provides concrete support, suggesting how to integrate fairness principles into the processes of selecting, training, evaluating and developing people.



Risk analysis

Risk analysis and risk management is also a synergistic area. The ESRS includes a requirement to identify and report on actual and potential negative impacts on workers (ESRS S1-1 c), and ISO 30415, as already highlighted, encourages organizations to recognize systemic barriers, implicit biases and exclusionary dynamics as risk factors for organizational health and reputation.

Involvement of employees

Another common point is the active involvement of employees. The European standards require a description of how companies involve employees in the definition and management of policies that affect them (ESRS S1-2). Consistently, ISO promotes a participative approach, based on internal listening, open dialogue and valuing different perspectives within teams.

Social performance

At the operational level, there is also full convergence with regard to the measurement of social performance. The ESRS establishes specific indicators, such as workforce composition by gender, pay differentials, turnover rate or internal promotion (ESRS S1-7). ISO 30415 encourages the collection of disaggregated qualitative and quantitative data to assess the effectiveness of Diversity and Inclusion policies and to improve them over time.

Working conditions

Working conditions such as fair pay, benefits, flexibility, health and safety, are also addressed in a synergistic way. The ESRS requires reporting on these aspects in detail (ESRS S1-3 and S1-4), and the ISO provides principles and practices for ensuring fair, inclusive and dignified workplaces.

Governance of social issues

Finally, both instruments emphasize the governance of social issues. The ESRS implies that it is necessary to point out who in the company is responsible for overseeing social issues and respect for workers' rights (ESRS S1-1 a, b and ESRS 2 GOV-1). ISO 30415 contributes by providing an inclusive leadership model that assigns clear roles and responsibilities to top management and promotes an organizational culture consistent with the stated values.



Advantages of ISO 30415

Reputation and brand positioning

Organizations that achieve ISO 30415 attestation tangibly and verifiably demonstrate their commitment to the values of Diversity and Inclusion. This not only strengthens their public image but also builds a brand identity aligned with the expectations of a society that is increasingly aware of corporate social responsibility. Consumers, business partners, suppliers and investors are increasingly attentive to organizations that integrate ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) criteria into their business models.

Attestation acts as an official award of the organization's alignment with these values, fostering a distinctive and competitive market positioning. In sectors particularly exposed to public opinion, such as fashion, technology, finance or public services, the reputational advantage can translate into trust, loyalty, and brand attractiveness.

Attracting and retaining talents

In a competitive job market, organizations that invest in building inclusive work environments are more attractive to talent. Professionals, particularly within the younger generation, value corporate cultures that ensure fairness, listening and opportunities for growth for all.

According to the “2022 Deloitte Global Gen Z and Millennial Survey”, young workers consider Diversity and Inclusion as determining factors when choosing an employer.

Increased productivity and innovation

Numerous academic and industry studies have shown that diversity in teams fosters creativity, problem-solving and innovation. Quoting a study conducted by McKinsey & Company (“Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters”, 2020) found that companies with greater ethnic and gender diversity in leadership teams are 36% more likely to achieve above-average financial performance. Similarly, research by the Boston Consulting Group (“How Diverse Leadership Teams Boost Innovation”, 2018) found that companies with diverse leadership have a 19% higher innovation rate than average.

Paola Profeta, pro-rector of the Bocconi University of Milan and delegate for diversity, inclusion and sustainability, in addressing the impact of inclusive culture on efficiency and innovation (“All the value of inclusion”, Andrea Celauro, 2025), stresses how promoting an inclusive corporate culture not only ensures representation and gender equality, but also has a positive impact on efficiency, innovation and productivity.

Research conducted at the University of Padua analyzed the presence of Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) policies in Italian companies, showing a positive correlation between such policies, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The study suggests that the adoption of DE&I strategies can positively influence company productivity and innovation.

These studies highlight how diversity and inclusion are not only ethical values but represent strategic levers to improve productivity and stimulate innovation within companies.

Access to business opportunities and funding

More and more public tenders, contracts and funding initiatives, at national, European and international level, require organizations to demonstrate the integration of ESG principles. In particular, the social pillars of ESG criteria include managing diversity, pay equity, employee welfare and promoting inclusive environments.

ISO 30415 attestation provides tangible and objective evidence of commitment on these fronts, and can facilitate access to structural funds, responsible investment instruments and partnerships with organizations that set high standards in sustainability. Furthermore, in some sectors (such as non-profit, education, healthcare, pharmaceutical industry and public administration), possession of a D&I attestation can be a prerequisite for participation in tenders or contracting. Being ISO 30415 compliant therefore offers a strategic advantage that translates into new business opportunities and increased competitiveness in the long run.



Conclusion



The role of Kiwa

As a certification body, our task is to accompany organizations on a serious, qualified, and continuous improvement-oriented path. We offer:

- Training and awareness-raising on D&I principles, targeted at different organizational levels;
- Preliminary assessments and organizational diagnostics to identify strengths and areas for improvement;
- Independent and impartial audits conducted by Kiwa Italy experienced professionals;

The ISO 30415 attestation issued by our body guarantees consistency between declared values and adopted practices, thanks to a transparent, rigorous, and internationally recognized process. Each attestation is based on verifiable evidence gathered through an open and constructive dialogue with the certified organization.

Summary

In an increasingly complex, interconnected and multicultural world, inclusion is no longer an optional choice, but a strategic necessity. ISO 30415 attestation offers a concrete, structured and measurable tool to realize this vision, generating tangible benefits for people, organizations, and society as a whole.

We invite all organizations, public and private, to embark on this journey with courage, awareness and a spirit of social responsibility, thus contributing to building a fairer, more sustainable and humane future.

Get in touch!

Whether you're at the start of your D&I journey or ready for certification, our experts are here to guide you.

For more information or to discuss how ISO 30415 can benefit your organization, feel free to contact us at **certificazione.sistemi@kiwacermet.it**

creating
trust
*driving
progress*

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