



# STONE SOUP DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

March 2021

## Preamble

Stone Soup Consulting is driven by its mission, vision and values.

### Our Mission:

Stone Soup Consulting is a socially-driven international company whose mission is to help optimise organisations and initiatives through collective processes of strategy creation and implementation, so that they achieve their greatest possible impact.

### Our Vision:

- At Stone Soup Consulting we believe that efficient organisations will drive more impactful societies.
- This vision goes hand in hand with our style of work. We promote teamwork, participatory decision-making processes, purpose-driven leadership and trust in our client relationship management, among others.
- We strive for a world where all organisations are impact-driven and are effective and efficient in achieving their impact goals, thus ensuring that no one is left behind, and that human society is able to live within the environmental boundaries of our planet.

### Our Values:

Our name is inspired by the stone soup legend. At its essence, this legend symbolizes our mission, vision, and especially our values: collaboration, honesty, integrity, inclusion, diversity, innovation, responsibility, accountability and transparency.

## Why a Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Since its foundation, Stone Soup has been applying **Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) principles and good practices**. For that reason, the whole Stone Soup community is committed to such principles and practices and all core documents and guidelines reflect them.

This **Policy** is now systematizing all our practices and **sets forth the commitments on diversity and inclusion to all Stone Soup stakeholders** - partners, consultants, employees, visiting professionals and interns. The **current policy has been agreed with the whole Stone Soup community and with relevant external stakeholders**.

The purpose of this policy is to formally set the diversity and inclusion principles and practice applicable to **all** in the community, irrespective of their gender, ethnic origin, disability, age, nationality, national origin, sexuality, religion or belief, marital status and social class or any other characteristics. **We commit to oppose all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination.**

**Diversity and inclusion are amongst Stone Soup's main priorities to realise our vision and mission.** To further develop its commitment, Stone Soup has created a [Code of Ethics](#) and is a certified [B Corp](#) since 2016, is part of the European Diversity Chart and is signatory of the [Portuguese Diversity Charter](#). Stone Soup is also a Secretary of the General Assembly of the [Association for the Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion](#).

## Diversity and Inclusion vision

Stone Soup Consulting believes in treating all people with respect and dignity. We strive **to create and foster a supportive and understanding environment in which all individuals realise their maximum potential within the company**, regardless of their differences. This vision is directly related to the overall vision and mission of the company.

At Stone Soup we do everything in our power to treat all community members **fairly and equally**. Selection for employment/ service provision, promotion, training or any other benefit are on the basis of aptitude and ability. **All community members are helped and encouraged to develop their full potential** and we make every effort to fully apply the talents and resources of our human capital to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.

## Diversity and Inclusion commitment

- Every community member is entitled to a working environment which promotes dignity and respect to all. No form of intimidation, bullying or harassment will be tolerated.
- The commitment to diversity and inclusion in the workplace is good management practice and makes sound business sense.
- Breaches of our diversity and inclusion policy will be regarded as misconduct and could lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- The policy will be monitored and reviewed annually.

## Diversity and Inclusion benefits

Stone Soup has a **strong ethical commitment to building a more diverse and inclusive society**, and to implementing good practices to achieve this. This commitment encompasses all Stone Soup's work, be it at organisations, with entrepreneurs or inside our own company.

Stone Soup recognises its **talented and diverse workforce as a key competitive advantage**. Our business success is a reflection of the quality and skills of our people. Stone Soup is committed to seeking out and retaining the finest human talent to ensure top business growth and performance.

Stone Soup is diverse along many dimensions. Our diversity encompasses differences in ethnicity, gender, language, age, thinking styles, experience and education. At Stone Soup, we encourage the respect and inclusion of diversity, be it sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic status, physical and mental ability. We believe that the **wide array of perspectives that results from such diversity promotes innovation and business success**. Managing diversity makes us more creative, flexible, productive and competitive. Diversity management benefits individuals, teams, our company as a whole, and our clients. We recognise that *each person brings their own unique capabilities, experiences and characteristics* to her/ his work at Stone Soup Consulting. We value the respect and appreciation for such diversity in the entire company, in all that we do.

We recognise the importance of reflecting the diversity of our clients and markets in our human capital. The **diverse capabilities that reside within our human capital allow us to anticipate and fulfil the needs of our diverse clients**, providing services at the best high quality possible and making our best contribution to increase their positive social impact.

## Specific Practices

- **Recruitment and selection**

As a global player, Stone Soup recruits people from all around the globe. **We believe that our community members from many different cultural, linguistic and national backgrounds provide us with valuable knowledge for understanding complex international markets.**

We have established outreach programmes, namely through partnering with different organisations, to identify individuals from under-represented groups for recruitment. Our selection processes state clearly our commitment to D&I and non-discrimination:

*"Stone Soup is part of the [Portuguese Diversity Chart](#) and has a strong ethical stance. It is also a [certified B Corp](#). For all these reasons we will not discriminate candidates based on any diversity characteristics and we encourage everyone to apply freely".*

All candidates are reviewed by a **selection panel** (made up of Stone Soup partners and other interviewers depending on the specific issue). To assure the **process is equal for all**, Stone Soup asks candidates to fill in a specific [form](#). In this form we do not request any information on diversity characteristics. The panel takes into account several items to take a decision on the candidate: specific Terms of Reference/ or internal needs identified and the candidate's match to them, work experience/ technical skills, relevant experiences (namely in volunteering and work in the Third Sector), evidence of connection to Stone Soup principles and values and commitment in contributing to positive social impact. The selection panel composition is adapted according to potential direct /close relationships, to mitigate potential conflicts of interest, cultural interferences and misconceptions. Stone Soup is working to make its website more accessible to all and to expand its presence in more diverse ecosystems so the company can attract an even more diversified pool of human talent.

Those that fulfil the criteria, advance to a stage of interview, in which they are interviewed by at least two different partners (or any person if considered relevant), to assure the difference in perspective. No personal information is asked during the interview. After the interview, the results are debated in the team of the four partners. Those that progress are invited to take part of the community and receive adequate information and documentation to understand the company and their role in it. **All candidates receive information about the results of their application.**

## ● Working at Stone Soup

New members of the community receive a **welcome email** and all the relevant information, namely **Memo of Integration, Confidentiality Agreement, Employee and Consultant Handbook, [Stone Soup Code of Ethics](#), Stone Soup Environmental Policy and Best Practices for Virtual Work, Best Practices Handbook** and the **Diversity and Inclusion Policy**.

Upon entry in the Stone Soup community, new members have an **induction meeting** with the Managing Partner and **access to the Stone Soup library** with all relevant information and documentation. They are also integrated in the **internal communication mechanisms** and have access to everyone in the company through them.

Selection of team members for each work assignment, is based solely on experience and the client's needs and follow a set of criteria that has been agreed and disseminated to the whole community.

All community members work in **remote work settings**. However, Stone Soup assures that those involved in active projects have all relevant access to working documentation and expenses paid for travel, accommodation, insurance or other relevant items.

Stone Soup strives at assuring that there is a **good work-life balance** among all members of our community and is **flexible to make adjustments** to particular individual situations, including maternity and paternity leaves, absences in case of illness, support to family, grief, training or education commitments, volunteer work during work hours, amongst others.

## ● Career development and promotion

Community members are reviewed monthly at the Board meeting (by team of partners), based on evaluation criteria related to community engagement and performance, and feedback is provided when considered important. There is also a **formal review of all community members once a year**, by the team of partners. The criteria are part of the community members' handbook and specific meetings are set up to discuss the results of the evaluation. All evaluation processes are discussed.

Stone Soup rewards excellence and **all community members are promoted on the basis of their performance and compliance to ethical principles**. There are three categories of consultants at Stone Soup: Associate Consultant, Consultant and Principal Consultant. Stone Soup staff works on the administrative/ financial and managerial levels of the company. Promotions are decided after the annual review. All community members are paid fairly for the work undertaken. No volunteer or pro bono work is imposed upon community members as a condition to have access to more paid work. However, all community members may perform volunteer or pro bono work, if they so choose too. Staff can also undertake volunteer work during their work schedule. *Pro bono work at Stone Soup refers to exceptional and formally agreed professional services provided at no charge on behalf of Stone Soup to non-profit organisations (or individual clients who cannot afford to pay) "for the public good"*.

Coordinators of consultancy teams and functional areas, in particular, receive support and training in the fulfilment of their responsibility to apply and promote our D&I principles and practices to ensure that community members are **treated fairly and performance is evaluated objectively**. D&I principles are reflected in our **human resources goals and key performance indicators**. Good practices on D&I are periodically share within the community.

## ● Community best practices

Stone Soup recognises that there are distinct demographic groups that have long been disadvantaged. **We recognise that racism, ageism, sexism and other forms of discrimination are problems** both for our organisation and society as a whole.

**Stone Soup is committed to tackling cultural stereotypes both within and outside our organisation**. We have clear **reporting procedures for any type of discrimination** or harassment combined with follow-up procedures to prevent future incidents. These procedures are set up on our Best Practices Handbook, and also in the terms of reference of the Ethics Commission that oversees internal management of eventualities and supervises our Code of Ethics in collaboration with other community members.

## Diversity and Inclusion and the Stone Soup Community

Our **commitment to diversity and inclusion is shared by all community members**, who collaborate to apply and promote D&I inside and outside the company. This means that all community members are invested in actively collaborating in the promotion of D&I best practices, leadership included.

A **Diversity and Inclusion Commission acts as a promoter and facilitator** of a learning process to improve our D&I practice and to **ensure that our diversity and inclusion policy** is fully integrated in our strategic and operation management of the company. The Diversity and Inclusion Commission oversees the internal management of eventualities and supports the application of the Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the policy's update and improvement.

The Commission members are **appointed based on Terms of Reference (ToR)** and are made up of 4 community members, representing the diversity of the company.

The Diversity and Inclusion Commission assists with support and advice by replying to any inquiry made by any member of the Community or anyone who contacts the D&I Commission through the email address [diversity@stone-soup.net](mailto:diversity@stone-soup.net)

## Diversity and Inclusion monitoring

Stone Soup monitors its progress towards diversity and inclusion by monitoring: :

- The diversity profile of our community members to enable us to understand the composition of our human capital and identify any areas of inequality and improvement.
- Good application of diversity and inclusion practices in applications for consultancy and job positions, for public training initiatives and external service provision.
- Inquiries on eventualities, ethical audits, dismissals and other reasons for leaving related to diversity and inclusion.
- If all employees/ consultants/ community members feel treated in a fair way and were not subjected to any kind of discrimination.

Information collected on these topics (through surveys and forms) is reviewed by partners and appointed staff coordinators (Administrative and Financial Coordinator and Communications Coordinator) in **accordance with national and international law and data protection/ privacy policies and integrated into our KPI system**. Partners are also responsible for assessing overall data, promoting improvement actions and coordinating the

management of eventualities, in collaboration of other community members or by requesting the support of the Diversity and Inclusion Commission or the Ethics Commission (especially in issues of workplace harassment, bullying or discrimination). Information on D&I collected in all surveys is shared and discussed among community members. **Issues of discrimination are assessed by the Ethics Commission and/ or the team of partners**, following the procedure detailed in the Ethics Code and the Best Practices Handbook, which is in line with Stone Soup principles and values.

Based on the gravity of the situation, the following measures can be taken:

- Meeting to discuss the issue at hand;
- Conflict mediation procedures;
- Training on D&I;
- Commissioning of an external audit;
- Suspension of the membership in the community.

## The law and international standards

This policy is implemented within the framework of the relevant national and international legislation, which includes international human rights instruments and diversity and inclusion standards and good practices.

In order to ensure the application of this D&I Policy, our community members must know, understand and become familiar with it, as well as with other applicable standards and organisations of which they and Stone Soup are members. Lack of knowledge or misunderstanding of a D&I commitment is not an acceptable argument to defend a behaviour that is not in line with this policy. Our community members make their commitment to the D&I Policy. In case of conflict with national and international law that set less strict standards than the ones set by Stone Soup, this Policy shall prevail.

## Partnerships and Suppliers

Stone Soup partners and suppliers also need to comply with our D&I policy. For that reason it is stated in partnership agreements and included in our **Supplier Code**. Partners and suppliers that do not comply with this policy, may see their partnership agreement or service provision contracts cancelled.



## Individual commitment

By signing this **Diversity and Inclusion Policy**, I hereby certify that:

I am aware of it and understand its content.

I commit to conduct myself in accordance with Stone Soup values and comply with the D&I provisions thereof.

I collaborate with the Stone Soup group of partners and community members in applying the **Diversity and Inclusion Policy**.

I am aware that Stone Soup has a procedure in place for reporting non-compliance and that it is my obligation to report through this procedure any instances of non-compliance that come to my attention.

I understand and accept that there is a consequence for misconduct, up to and including revocation of my membership in the Stone Soup community.

And I understand that those who have been or are sanctioned by a government agency or convicted in a court of law of an action that violates the Stone Soup Code of Ethics and **Diversity and Inclusion Policy** may be barred from membership or expelled from the Stone Soup community.

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Name






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Signature

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Date



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