



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION OFFICE

MATERIEL GROUP, NATIONAL DEFENCE



Culture Mandate Letter

Inclusion Means Everyone

2024- 2025



Welcome Message

from our
**Assistant Deputy Minister, Nancy Tremblay and
Associate Assistant Deputy Minister, Judith Bennett**

Dear Leaders and Members of Materiel Group,

I am so pleased to be sharing with you today our updated Culture Mandate Letter. I know each of us are committed to building a positive workplace culture. The Culture Mandate letter provides us a collective roadmap on how to get there together with actionable, daily steps. We understand the importance of workplace culture as a mission enabler. At all levels of the organization, we will continue to prioritize working together to improve ourselves and to focus on the people side – which is the root of business. It's about making the conscious decision to do better today than yesterday.

A positive workplace culture built on a foundation of diversity and inclusion adds value by leveraging the organization's most valued resource - its human capital. Key benefits of diverse organizations include higher innovation, increased engagement, and more effective decisions.

How can this be done? As an organization, we can all commit to learning how to enhance our communication, understanding, and connection in a way that aims to increase empathy as we build a positive workplace culture. This is the "how" we can create a more psychologically safe and inclusive culture as we learn and grow our communication in a way that will help us express our needs on a personal and professional level.

To do our best work for Canadians, we must first feel physically and psychologically safe. One person committed to equity, fairness and psychological safety can elevate our Defence Team. We will work together to ensure deliberate inclusion by design by using the Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) lens to support our diverse workforce where we include all forms of ability, accessibility and intersectional diversity through inclusion by design.

Imagine what can happen when more people commit to the same. This Mandate Letter is our pledge to the advancement of Materiel Group, our Defence Team and the Federal Public Service. We pledge to adhere to the commitments outlined in the Letter and update it as we create and grow together.

Director Generals, Directors, Managers, Team Leads, and all Members can sign the mandate letter and execute the commitments, and be provided with the Companion Guide of ideas to enhance individual accountability and remove systemic barriers in our organizations so all individuals can thrive and contribute to the Defence Team. Inclusion means everyone, always.



Nancy Tremblay,
Assistant Deputy Minister



Judith Bennett,
Associate Assistant Deputy Minister

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Judith Benett

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Manifesto for the Materiel Group: A Call to Transformative Change

We, the Members of the Materiel Group, declare our unwavering commitment to the advancement of our Defence Team and the creation of a thriving, inclusive, and psychologically safer organization.

Our Vision: We envision a workplace where every individual feels valued, included, and empowered. This is not just a goal—it is our guiding principle, our collective mission. By adhering to the commitments outlined in this manifesto, each of us holds the power to ignite a transformative ripple effect throughout our organization.

The Power of Individual Action: One person's dedication to fostering inclusion and safety can set off a chain reaction that touches every corner of our work environment. As we each embrace our role in this journey, our collective efforts come together to shape a culture where everyone can thrive.

Why This Matters:

1 - Strengthening Relationships: When individuals feel secure and included, we lay the foundation for stronger, more resilient relationships. This emotional safety is the cornerstone of effective teamwork and collaboration.

2 - Enhancing Communication: Through the practice of non-violent communication, we equip ourselves to handle complex situations with grace and clarity. This approach reduces stress, fosters understanding, and fortifies our connections with one another.

3 - Driving Organizational Success: An inclusive environment fuels innovation, drives engagement, and leads to more informed decision-making. By cultivating this environment, we not only benefit individuals but also advance the organization.

Our Call to Action:

To all Director Generals, Directors, Managers, Team Leads, and Members of the Materiel Group: We invite you to embrace this manifesto, to read, sign, and embody its principles. Your commitment to these ideals will pave the way for meaningful change and ensure that our collective aspirations become reality.

Together, let us champion a culture where every action contributes to a larger wave of positive transformation, setting the stage for a brighter, more inclusive future.



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Backgrounder - Our Approach

Materiel Group has created 3 Vision Priorities to elevate our culture mandate letter.

The Materiel Group at National Defence is committed to continuously building and maintaining a positive workplace culture focused on diversity, inclusion, and innovation. In the Materiel Group, we want everyone to feel a sense of belonging within their teams where they can show up as their authentic selves.

Over the past few years, we have been working on building a psychologically safer workplace each day. This was achieved through the creation of the Diversity and Inclusion Office (DIO) and the implementation of the Culture Evolution Strategy (CES).

The CES reinforces the need for all Defence Team members to work as a cohesive team. This Mandate Letter aligns with these strategies.

This letter outlines our vision for implementing the Culture Plan at Materiel Group, built on three Shared Vision Priorities—psychological safety, micro-behaviours, and transparency—that form the foundation of our cultural work. These priorities will remain central to the culture we are cultivating at Materiel Group and will help us achieve the goals outlined in the CES and this mandate letter.

We each have both a personal and organizational responsibility to carry out these priorities. These vision priorities are for everyone and unify the CES and all government initiatives together in support of elevating the workplace for all who work at Materiel Group.

3 Vision Priorities for Materiel Group

This work requires daily commitment and effort by all leaders and members of Materiel Group.

We apply this through our Mandate Letter Commitments and the actions provided in the following Companion Guide.

As leaders and members, your influence extends beyond your immediate team, allowing you to shape the broader organizational culture and contribute to long-term success, further solidifying your legacy as a transformational leader and member of our organization.

These vision priorities can be defined as below:

1 - Psychological Safety: Psychological safety refers to a work environment where individuals feel safe to express their thoughts, ideas, and concerns without fear of negative consequences or judgment. Team members are encouraged to take risks, share their perspectives, and admit mistakes, fostering open communication and collaboration. A psychologically safer workspace is essential for creativity, innovation, and overall team effectiveness.

a. Why: Psychological safety is the most important factor in making people feel included in an organization. It's the driver for innovation and inclusion that allows people to bring their authentic selves to the workplace.

b. How: Psychologically safe workplaces encourage courageous conversations and build a culture of mutual respect and acceptance.

c. Outcome: Success looks like openly sharing layers and feeling a deeper sense of belonging. Collaborating in the workplace. Accomplishing group goals.



1. Psychological Safety

Motivator:

Psychological safety is the most important factor in making people feel included in an organization. It's the driver for innovation and inclusion.

Support:

Encouraging courageous conversations. Creating a workplace culture of mutual respect and acceptance.

Success:

Openly sharing layers and feeling a deeper sense of belonging.
Collaborating in the workplace.
Accomplishing group goals.

2 - Self-Awareness of Our Micro-Behaviours: Micro-Behaviours are subtle, actions or gestures that can convey attitudes, emotions, or biases in interpersonal interactions. These behaviours include small gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, or body language that can significantly impact communication and relationships. In a workplace context, micro-behaviours can influence team dynamics, affect psychological safety, and contribute to the overall culture, often shaping whether individuals feel valued or included. Self-awareness of our micro-behaviours can help minimize unintended negative impacts and foster inclusive workplace relationships.

a. Why: It's important to understand how micro-behaviours, including unconscious gestures, facial expressions, postures, words and tone of voice, can influence the sense of safety and belonging.

b. How: It creates an opportunity every day for self reflection and learning to continuously create safer spaces and use peaceful communication techniques.

c. Outcome: Success means that all members of the organization embrace a growth mindset, align their personal workplace experiences with the organization's values, and foster inclusive relationships within the workplace.



2. Self-Awareness of Our Micro-Behaviours

Motivator:

It's important to understand how micro-behaviours, including unconscious gestures, facial expressions, postures, words and tone of voice, can influence the sense of safety and belonging.

Support:

It creates an opportunity every day for self reflection and learning to continuously create safer spaces and use peaceful communication techniques.

Success:

Adopting a growth mindset.
Aligning lived workplace experience with organizational values.

3 - Transparency: Transparency refers to the practice of openly sharing information, decisions, and processes within an organization. It involves clear communication and honesty about goals, actions, and outcomes, allowing everyone to understand the rationale behind decisions.

a. Why: Transparency fosters trust, accountability, and collaboration, as it encourages open dialogue and helps create a culture of inclusivity and shared purpose.

b. How: Utilizing peaceful communication techniques that encourage honesty and empathy in information exchange. Empowering managers to adopt transformative mindsets by providing resources for leading inclusive and innovative teams.

c. Outcome: Success looks like retaining high performers. Opens up career development opportunities. Builds trust at all levels of the organization.



3. Transparency

Motivator:

Transparency fosters trust, accountability, and collaboration, as it encourages open dialogue and helps create a culture of inclusivity and shared purpose.

Support:

Utilizing peaceful communication techniques that encourage honesty and empathy. Empowering managers to adopt transformative mindsets by providing resources for leading inclusive and innovative teams.

Success:

Retaining high performers. Opens up career development opportunities.
Builds trust at all levels of the organization.

[Sign the Culture Mandate Letter](#)



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Mandate Letter Commitments

Our 6 Responsibilities to Culture, Diversity and Inclusion

We understand the importance of workplace culture as a mission enabler. At all levels of the organization, we will continue to prioritize working together to improve ourselves and to focus on the people side – which is at the root of business. It's about making the conscious decision to do better today than yesterday.

A positive workplace culture built on a foundation of diversity and inclusion adds value by leveraging the organization's most valued resource - its human capital. Key benefits of diverse organizations include higher innovation, increased engagement, and more effective decisions.

We acknowledge that culture does not change simply because we desire it. Culture changes when an organization is transformed. If we wish to understand culture change, we need to understand the realities of people working together at the Material Group, every day.

We will create additional ways to hear the voices of the Material Group through the next phase of the CES which includes the development of a team of Cultural Ambassadors from across Materiel group that will come together in collaboration with the L1 Diversity & Inclusion Working Group and the Diversity & Inclusion Office to provide a pathway for input from all levels of the organization to contribute and be heard.

Culture Ambassadors (CAs) are representatives from each L2 and communities of practice within the Materiel Group who meet regularly to discuss and advance Materiel Group's cultural evolution at the Materiel Group L1 Diversity and Inclusion Office Working Group. They work together to share knowledge and GBA Plus insights across the divisions. CAs are responsible for monitoring Materiel Group culture, implementing inclusive practices, and facilitating access to resources. Their work ensures that intersectional analysis and cultural values are integrated into daily operations and reported upon as required.

The CAs will be supported by the new Senior Intersectional Advisor role, known within Materiel Group as Senior GBA Plus Culture Evolution Advisor that will support the Culture Ambassadors in their implementation of Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) actions and reviewed the Pulse Check data submitted from over 500 Materiel Group employees in 2024.

From our leaders to our members, we can all do better together. Let's walk the talk and co-create an atmosphere of lasting, sustainable change. Inclusion means everyone, always.



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Mandate Letter Commitments

Our 6 Responsibilities to Culture, Diversity and Inclusion

#1. Commitment to Working Together on the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Our commitment to working together begins with fulfilling the commitments contained in the Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan. We commit to using the Companion Guide attached to this Mandate Letter and adding relevant actions at Annual Performance Reviews. We're making daily commitments to consciously create an inclusive workplace by using resources and tools to address unconscious and conscious biases. By leaders and members working together on the Commitments, our organization will illustrate diversity and inclusion's power in decision-making and encourage Defence Team members to contribute their best efforts and ideas by building a diverse, inclusive and positive workplace culture.

#2. Building a Respectful, Accessible, Diverse, Psychologically Safer and Inclusive Workplace

We are calling on all the leaders of Materiel Group to come together to establish psychological safety in our organization. The goal is to create an environment where employees are not only included, fully engaged, and encouraged to collaborate, but also where they feel respected, confident and motivated. Leaders must engage team members and prioritize psychological safety alongside operational objectives. Creating healthy and supportive spaces that will foster intercultural competence and acceptance, and uplifting each other are fundamental to psychological safety, preventing, reducing, and recovering from cases and instances of unacceptable conduct. Preventive measures include: coaching for non-harm, hosting open discussions with our teams to inform about harassment in the workplace and advise on possible strategies to address it; participating in learning opportunities such as Ask Me Anything, Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles Program, Town Halls and Jam Sessions, and learning about the resources available to all members; raising awareness about the existence of unconscious bias; and, promoting access to centrally curated resources and processes in support of diversity and inclusion.

#3. Focus on Inclusion by Design Through a GBA+ Lens

Inclusion by design refers to the intentional and systematic integration of inclusive practices, principles and policies into all aspects of an organization or project from the outset. This proactive approach ensures that inclusivity is embedded in the structure, culture and operations rather than being an afterthought. By deliberately including these elements into the core of an organization or project at Materiel Group, inclusion by design is guided by the Treasury Board and the GBA+ process which aims to create environments where everyone feels valued, respected and able to contribute fully.

#4. Expanding Knowledge and Practicing Inclusive Leadership

We commit to practicing Non-Violent Communication (NVC) to foster inclusivity in our leadership. By mastering NVC, we will reduce stress, build trust, and enhance team performance. This approach helps us resolve conflicts constructively, make better decisions, and strengthen relationships—even in challenging times. Through NVC, we will create an inclusive and psychologically safer organization where everyone thrives.

#5. Partnering to Build Inclusive Workplace Communities

We will create and maintain workplaces, events, and workgroups that support work on diversity and inclusion. Based on values of open-mindedness, compassion, equity, and fairness, these spaces will encourage members to contribute their best efforts and ideas and share their diverse backgrounds, authentic selves, and talents. These spaces will inspire colleagues to take meaningful actions toward evolving our workplaces and our communities to be connected, adaptable, and sustainable.

#6. Share Best Practices and Lessons Learned

We will share best practices and lessons learned through ongoing dialogue within teams using a library of resources, including the #AMACHallenge, Cascade conversations, Jam Sessions, the Book Club and monthly L1 Working Group Meetings on Diversity and Inclusion. We will welcome feedback from colleagues to update and improve the library of resources. We will share what has worked and what has not, which will help attain equity and fairness, and evolve our organization's future. Sharing our best and previously ineffective practices is vital for future updates to the Mandate Letter and to continue honest and transparent communication.

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Companion Guide

9 Meaningful Actions We Can All Take

The Companion Guide outlines actions all members of our organization can take to improve themselves and their teams. The Guide serves as a starting point for systemic change through meaningful actions that will uphold the commitments defined in the Mandate Letter and is in alignment with Materiel Group's Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. Action matters at all levels, we can each contribute in the following ways:

#1 - Participate in regular discussions about IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity and anti-racism). This includes regular participation in learning activities offered by Materiel Group such as the Ask Me Anything Series and Respectful Workplace Conversations. Dedicate time at regular section/team meetings to discuss what you are learning at these activities with your teams. Participate in the Lifting as you Lead Mentoring Circles Program.

#2 - Invest time and energy to sponsor and support racialized and under-represented employees on their journeys to leadership roles. Nominate and support their participation in the Materiel Group Executive Development Program and provide career development services (i.e. official language training).

#3 - Create opportunities to build relationships with systemically marginalized members of the organization, either as individuals or as groups, in ways that are meaningful to those individuals so they can see how they contribute to the success of the team.

#4 - Establish, maintain and promote effective mechanisms within your teams for members to feel psychologically safe to speak up about bias and discrimination without fear of reprisal, and reassure that these courageous employees are heard and their concerns acted upon. The effect of these mechanisms will be assessed at annual performance reviews.

#5 - Identify individual learning needs within your teams, which can span a spectrum of anti-racism, culture and inclusion issues to cultivate tailored learning and self-reflection.

#6 - Apply a diversity, inclusion and equity lens to all actions (i.e. staffing, creation of products and services etc.) through a Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) and inclusion by design lens.



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Companion Guide

9 Meaningful Actions We Can All Take

#7 - Encourage and support colleagues to get involved and share their expertise to advance the people/culture side of business in our organization. This may include taking a Micro-Assignment at the L1 level and joining the Diversity & Inclusion Working Groups being formed at the L1 and L2 levels or volunteering to be a Culture Ambassador.

#8 - Apply Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) to your work. GBA Plus helps us recognize and move beyond our assumptions, uncover the realities of people's lives, and find ways to address their needs with an inclusion-by-design approach.

#9 - Commit to advancing our inclusive leadership and communication skills which will help to reduce stress, foster trust, and improve team performance. This approach enables us to handle conflict with ease, make thoughtful decisions, and build stronger relationships. The outcome of this approach will create an inclusive, psychologically safer, supportive and productive environment where everyone can thrive.

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. When did the Mandate Letter for the Diversity & Inclusion initiative launch?

The Mandate Letter originally launched on February 25, 2022 at the Town Hall - Inclusion Means Everyone: Consciously Creating a Diverse & Inclusive Workplace at Materiel Group. This new Cultural Mandate Letter for 2024/2025 builds upon the 2022 letter by including a broader culture focus based on the Culture Evolution Strategy (CES) and was finalized in September 2024.

2. What is the Culture Mandate Letter?

Previously titled the Diversity and Inclusion Mandate Letter, the new Culture Mandate Letter for 2024-2025 introduces additional culture, inclusion by design and GBA Plus language to the original Mandate Letter. The letter aims to bring together all the leaders and members of the Materiel Group to advance diversity, inclusion and equity within the workplace. This Mandate Letter is created to bring us all together to take action and co-create an atmosphere of a positive workplace culture. Inclusion means everyone, always.

3. How does the Mandate Letter align with other key policy directives?

This Culture Mandate Letter accompanies the existing Call to Action on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion, the 2020-21 Deputy Minister Commitments on Diversity and Inclusion, the 2021 Minister of National Defence Mandate Letter, and the Diversity and Inclusion Areas of Focus for the Public Service, published by the President of the Treasury Board to align with the Government's Speech from the Throne and government mandate letters.

4. Do signatories have to agree to execute against all Mandate Letter commitments?

Yes, by signing the Mandate Letter, signatories pledge to uphold the commitments. From our leaders to our members, we can all do better together. We strive to be a leading example in the Federal Public Service for taking action on diversity, inclusion and belonging. When we are dedicated to diversity, inclusion and belonging it empowers us to make better decisions for our organizations and for Canadians.

5. Who created the commitments?

The Mandate Letter Commitments were co-created by the Materiel Group Diversity & Inclusion office with the support of the L1 Working Group, Department of National Defence HR-CIV and Anti-Racism Secretariat. It also aligns with key Federal reports such as Clerks Call to Action, 2021 Minister of National Defence Mandate Letter, 2020-21 Deputy Minister Commitments on Diversity and Inclusion, and Diversity and Inclusion Areas of Focus for the Public Service.

6. What are the Mandate Letter for Diversity & Inclusion commitments?

There are six commitments which include:

1. Commitment to Working Together on the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan
2. Building a Respectful, Accessible, Diverse, Psychologically Safer and Inclusive Workplace
3. Focus on Inclusion by Design Through a GBA+ Lens
4. Expanding Knowledge and Practicing Inclusive Leadership
5. Partnering to Build Inclusive Workplace Communities
6. Share Best Practices and Lessons Learned

7. How is the Culture Mandate Letter different?

The Culture Mandate Letter is synchronously tied to the Materiel Group's Civilian Diversity and Inclusion Plan but is written in a "Mandate letter" format to bring the action plan to life in a pledge/commitment letter format. Bringing the Action Plan to life through the Mandate Letter that all leaders – from our ADM to all members of our organization – helps secure the importance of this work to create transformational change. It lays out clear and concise objectives to improve psychological safety, diversity, inclusion, and equity that resonate with all leaders and members of our organization. Accompanying this Letter is a unique Companion Guide, which is a tool to help bring actions to life that focuses on action and holding leaders and members accountable.

8. Is this commitment aimed at benefiting one group?

Inclusion means everyone, always. It's impossible to be inclusive, diverse and equitable if this Mandate Letter benefits only one group. We must work together to co-create an atmosphere of belonging and equity where everyone is safe to conduct their best work internally and externally for Canadians. Uplifting and educating each other on diversity, inclusion and equity, not isolating any group or individual. We all have unconscious and conscious biases to overcome. We could all use a psychologically and physically safer workplace, where our layers are celebrated and each member of our organization can bring their authentic selves to work.

9. Are there financial contributions in the Mandate Letter for Diversity & Inclusion?

We have committed to providing the human resources required to lead this work at the L1 Level but it will take all leaders and members working together on a daily basis to strengthen psychological safety, diversity and inclusion in our organization. We request that each member take the time to read this Mandate Letter and Companion Guide and consider signing it. Measure your commitments and actions in your performance agreements. When we build this work into our daily operations, over time it bridges seamlessly into our business operations. Together, let's commit to putting the personnel resources, intellectual capital and time to the people's side of the business.

10. What does success look like and how do you measure it?

We commit to making diversity and inclusion a practice. We will measure and track its success every business quarter through our reporting to HR-Civ via our Materiel Group's Civilian Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

11. How often are new commitments added to the Mandate Letter?

This Mandate Letter was created as a result of ten months of active consultation in 2021, with the L1 Diversity and Inclusion Working Group and our partnerships with HR-Civ, Anti-Racism Secretariat at National Defence and the RCMP HR Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Unit. We are committed to active consultations with our members to continually improve the Mandate Letter. Every February, we commit to reviewing the Mandate Letter for updates in synchronicity with the Materiel Group's Civilian Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. The Culture Plan was updated on June 10, 2024, and is in alignment with the Chief Professional Conduct and Culture - Culture Evolution Strategy.

[Sign the Culture Mandate Letter](#)

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Acknowledgments

There's power in people coming together. Thank you to all of our collaborators who helped in the creation of this initiative:

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For more information about the Diversity and Inclusion Mandate Letter, contact the Materiel Group's Diversity and Inclusion Office at National Defence: DiversityandInclusion-Diversiteetinclusion@forces.gc.ca

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