



Belonging beyond the office

Toolkit for inclusive hybrid
and remote work



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“Remote work is no longer a temporary solution , it’s a lasting shift reshaping how we work, and who gets to belong.



The ReWork Project

The principles of **equality, inclusiveness and fairness** are part of the core values of the European Union, and the new and boundaryless HRW (Hybrid and Remote Work) environment has created increased concerns for a host of challenges, especially around inclusivity and discrimination.

The ReWork Project aims at providing organisations with the support they need to mitigate these challenges coming from HRW and to support them to future-proof their organisations for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI).

Since HRW is here to stay, it is necessary to develop new training programs and tools for professionals with HR and people management responsibilities in large organisations but also in SMEs (small and medium enterprises) that create awareness around the emergence of biases in HRW and provide them with the appropriate knowledge and tools to make HRW more inclusive, since previous organisational DEI practices might no longer be fit for the new world of work.

The primary target groups for this project include:

- HR practitioners
- D&I leaders
- Middle managers
- SME managers and leaders
- External VET providers (trainers and learning designers and academics)

The partners



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AFMD
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CEFI
(the Center For Inclusion at
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GISA
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Considering diversity and inclusion topics in HRW environments

The Covid-19 crisis exposed the flaws in our work system and led to a dramatic transformation in the way we work. According to a study conducted by McKinsey, the need for change was already being felt, long before the Covid-19 pandemic. Indeed, 'many managers feared, and the pandemic confirmed, that their companies were designed for an outdated model' (McKinsey, 2021), unsuited to the current and future expectations of workers and inappropriate to economic and technological realities. In the wake of this crisis, remote work has become a reality that no organisation can avoid or ignore, as revealed by the 2024 survey by INSEE in partnership with DARES, which indicates that remote work concerns more than one in five private sector employees, whereas in 2019 it was not very widespread in France, where only 4% of employees practised it on a regular basis.

In today's evolving work landscape, remote work has become more than a temporary solution: it is now a lasting shift that is reshaping how companies operate and how employees experience their professional lives. **As organisations adapt to this new shift, it is crucial to recognise the intertwined importance of embracing remote work and actively preventing discrimination.** These issues are not only ethical concerns but also strategic imperatives for building inclusive and resilient workplaces.

Remote work offers flexibility, autonomy, and access to talent regardless of geographic location. However, it can also create new inequalities if not carefully managed. Employees who work remotely may face reduced visibility, fewer opportunities for advancement, or exclusion from key conversations. **These risks can compound existing inequalities, particularly for women, people with disabilities, and members of underrepresented groups. Without proactive policies and inclusive practices, remote work can unintentionally reinforce discrimination rather than dismantle it.**

At the same time, prevention of discrimination, whether related to race, gender, age, disability, or other factors, must remain a top priority in any work environment, remote or in-person. In virtual settings, unconscious bias can manifest in different ways: through unequal access to technology, exclusion from informal networks, or assumptions about productivity based on who is seen online more often. Addressing these issues means developing clear anti-discrimination policies, promoting digital equity, and training leaders to manage inclusively across distance.

Why must HR managers prioritise **discrimination prevention in HRW?**

As remote work becomes a permanent fixture in many organisations, HR professionals must take an active role in shaping how this new way of working evolves. The shift to remote and hybrid models brings both opportunities and challenges, especially when it comes to inclusion and the prevention of workplace discrimination.

For HR managers, this means **rethinking policies, practices, and management approaches**. Ensuring that all employees, regardless of work location, have equal access to opportunities, recognition, and support is critical. This includes revising performance evaluation methods to avoid proximity bias, providing inclusive leadership training, and ensuring access to the right digital tools for collaboration.

By proactively addressing the intersection of remote work and discrimination prevention, HR teams can create a more inclusive and equitable workplace.



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About this toolkit

This innovative toolkit for an inclusive hybrid and remote work stems from the work of the ReWork Project. It is meant for HR practitioners, D&I leaders, middle managers and SME leaders, and its aim is to ensure that HRW does not have a negative effect on historically disadvantaged employees and to develop inclusive HR practices and management skills.

By presenting multiple tools and practices, it offers a comprehensive view of what can be done to achieve a more inclusive workplace, whether remote or in-office.

Objectives

- Mitigating the risk of exclusion of historically disadvantaged groups in HRwork settings
- Equipping managers and HR practitioners with resources and tools to foster inclusive work environments

Content

The toolkit is structured around seven parts:

- 1 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Hybrid and Remote Work: fundamental knowledge**
- 2 Preventing discrimination in HRW**
- 3 HR Tools**
- 4 Remote management**
- 5 Implementing a proper digital environment**
- 6 Communication tools**
- 7 Fostering team cohesion**

The toolkit contains **35 fact sheets** that were developed by project partners based on their expertise. They aim to provide readers with actionable information to foster inclusion in HRW.

16 case studies complete this toolkit. They were developed with partners' stakeholder and provide practical examples of inclusive initiatives.