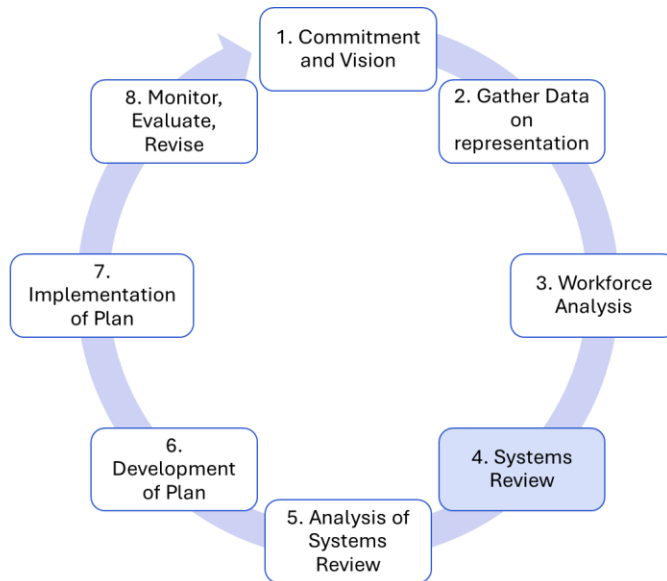




Employment and Human Resources Toolkit

Tool 7: HR Cycle – Systems Review



A systems review is a comprehensive examination of an organization's informal and formal systems, policies, procedures, and practices to understand the reasons for the under-representation of equity groups in the workplace by identifying barriers to those equity groups. Barriers can be physical, systemic, or attitudinal as well as subtle and unintentional. It is preferable if the systems review is done by an objective and impartially, often an external consultant. It can be difficult for the people who are responsible for implementing initiative to also then assess their own work.

This step requires the gathering of the organization's informal and formal systems, policies, practices, and processes such as those listed below.



Informal/formal Human Resources and staffing related policies, practices & processes	Other informal/formal Human Rights related policies, practices & processes	Other workplace informal/formal policies, practices and processes	Collective Agreement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•recruitment•job advertisements•screening applications•interview process•job offers•selection boards•training and development•promotion•retention and termination•etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•anti-discrimination•anti-harassment•anti-racism•sexual harassment•accomodation•etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•classification•remote work•attendance•health and safety•website•communications•contractors•etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•barriers such as seniority•hours of work•etc.

It is also important to examine not only what the policies, procedures and practices say but also how they are implemented and applied. Many policies do not have obvious barriers and appear fair and neutral; however, the barrier arises when individuals must interpret or apply the policy without any accountability. For example, during an interview process, the interview process may appear neutral but when applied the questions, prompts and grading process may not be same for all candidates. As well, unconscious bias or negative stereotypes and prejudices may be factors in the interview process. These will not be captured in written formal policies, procedures, or practices.

Consequently, a comprehensive review involves conducting surveys, interviews, meetings, focus groups, and discussions with various staff, since informal processes, practices and procedures are often not written down. Often, informal practices may not follow formal written practices or policies. These practices can have barriers that may not be recognized by the organization and will go undetected. For example, it is important to examine if the recruitment process involves informal networks or places to recruit new hires.

Voluntary employee engagement and satisfaction surveys can also be a very useful tool during an employment systems review to get a picture of how staff perceive their workplace on issues such as discrimination, harassment, and accommodation; diversity and inclusion; workplace wellbeing; compensation; career progression, workplace culture, leadership, training opportunities; employee engagement; performance management; and physical environment. When possible, voluntary identity questions for equity groups should be included, then responses can be compared between equity groups and other staff. If equity groups perceive their workplace experiences more



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adversely than their non-equity counterparts, then the reasons why will need to be explored.

The same considerations for identity surveys discussed earlier apply to employee engagement surveys. However, the key difference between the two surveys is their purpose. An employee engagement and satisfaction survey can review barriers or issues that equity groups encounter at a higher rate than their non-equity counterparts. It also helps to understand whether perception of employees is aligned with actual representation rates and other employees.