

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the scope of the new Council for Board Diversity?

The new CBD aims to promote and achieve a sustainable increase in the number of women on boards of listed companies, statutory boards and non-profit organisations, as diversity and governance is important for all organisations achieving their objectives.

The terms of reference of CBD is to make a sustainable increase in the number of women on boards of listed companies, statutory boards and non-profit organisations by

- a) Engaging stakeholders on the appointment of women onto boards.
- b) Undertaking activities to raise public awareness of the importance of board diversity through having women directors
- c) Working with partners to develop the pipeline of board-ready women
- d) Working with Government on policies and programmes that impact women on boards.

The new CBD will serve for a two-year term from January 2019 to December 2020.

2. Why is there a need to expand the DAC into the CBD, and to include the public and people sectors?

In 2012, President Halimah Yacob initiated a study when she was then serving as Minister of State for Social and Family Development to examine the state of women on boards and in senior management for companies listed on the Singapore Exchange. The statistics showed that Singapore's business sector trailed behind other countries in terms of women on boards. This raised concerns that Singapore was risking its reputation as a leading business hub with sound and exemplary governance.

To address that, the Diversity Action Committee (DAC) was established in 2014 to increase women's representation on corporate boards. In the past four years, there has been increasing momentum among 100 largest primary-listed companies in recognising women on boards as a business imperative. Women's representation on boards of Top 100 primary-listed companies increased from 7.5% (before DAC started in August 2014) to 15.2% (as at 31 December 2018).

Given that board diversity enhances the decision-making process on boards and there is positive momentum built in the private sector, it is thus timely for the DAC to expand its scope to include more organisations in people and public sectors.

While the process of board appointments in the people and public sectors may differ from the private sector, there is scope for the CBD to address cross-cutting issues and undertake activities that will benefit all boards, such as developing the pipeline of board-ready women.

3. How was the composition of the new CBD decided upon?

The Council comprises nine males and eleven females, with a diversity of talent and experience. They are well respected individuals and leaders with strong network of influence in their respective fields. All are Chairpersons or key decision makers across the boards of private, public and people sectors, and thus have an intimate knowledge of how boards work in Singapore and the issues faced.

The Council members are appointed by the Minister for Social and Family Development, Mr Desmond Lee.