
DiversIT Charter – FAQs for Applicants

This document acts as an operational / FAQ document which shows how Local IT Associations, companies, educational establishments (hereafter known as ‘organisations’) and others will work through the charter stages and how the CEPIS Central and CEPIS Women in IT Taskforce team will support applicants.

1. How does an organisation start on the DiversIT Charter Roadmap?

Becoming a Signatory to the DiversIT Charter shows an organisation’s willingness to start on the structured set of tasks outlined in the Bronze, Silver and Gold stages of the charter roadmap. It is not a condition of accreditation to be a signatory, however it may be useful to become a signatory if the organisation needs to gain time prior to commencing accreditation.

Some IT Associations became signatories to the Charter on 10th May 2019. For all others, opportunities to become signatories may be offered at CEPIS sponsored events, but anyone can become a signatory by email or verbal requests to the secretariat at CEPIS. Contact information to apply to be a signatory is available here: <https://cepis.org/contact/>

Within a month of signing up, the association will outline the names of the local group of volunteers which exists to work on the DiversIT Charter tasks, and will give the name of the senior executive within the association who will support and work on these activities with them. It is crucial to have a senior figure in the team to give credibility and power to the team’s work. This team will be the contact base for the application to CEPIS for any level of the DiversIT Charter.

2. Who can apply for the DiversIT Charter?

Local IT Associations, Companies (Small, Medium, Large), Academic Institutions, Academic Institution Departments (for example, an ICT Department might apply), NGOs and Government institutions. Note that any organisation may apply if they have an IT workforce. For example, a bank which has a significant workforce of technical people may want to show how they have committed to the principles within the DiversIT Charter and may want to follow the roadmaps for activities set out in the Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditations of the charter.

3. How does an organisation Apply for Bronze, Silver or Gold?

Whether they become a signatory or not, the company, organisation or association starts to apply for the Bronze level (or subsequent levels) by downloading the application forms and overview material from the CEPIS Website at; <https://cepis.org/diversit-charter/>

At this point it is crucial to check whether the local IT Association or Society is an awarding body of the DiversIT Charter. If so, it is important to use the local association to achieve the award, and

communication about the charter and submissions should be at the local level. This offers the benefit of working through the application in local language and the opportunity to share best practice and network at a local level. A list of IT Associations which have awarding status is held by CEPIS on the DiversIT Website.

Each application form consists of a series of activities to work through as documented in the Overview Document which can be found at <https://cepis.org/diversit-charter/>. Each activity will be awarded points when the application is assessed. The points are shown in each part of the application form, so the application form at each level can be used as a prompter for the work which should be done, and shows the value given to different activities. When the organisation feels that they have acquired the correct number of points to be awarded the certification at the level (as shown at the top of the application form) they can put in their application to the CEPIS secretariat. It should be titled 'DiversIT Charter Application' and should be sent to info@diversitcharter.eu. If the local IT Association is an awarding body, the request to certify will pass from the CEPIS secretariat to the local Association and communication thereafter will be with them.

4. Does an organisation have to start at Bronze if they have more activities for women in tech and could easily qualify immediately for Silver or Gold level?

No – an organisation need not go through each of the levels if they have sufficient expertise to prove that they are working at Silver or Gold level. However, because the stages of the award have been crafted to ensure that there is a progressive nature to the tasks, it is unlikely that organisations will be working at a silver or gold level if they have not done some of the basic work outlined in the Bronze application. Organisations skipping a level in this way will be judged by means of their application form, which should outline all activities that would have qualified them for the previous levels.

5. When does the application have to be in with CEPIS?

The assessment teams have two schedules of assessment annually. The spring assessment will accredit successful applicants at the start of May each year and the autumn assessment will accredit applicants at the start of November. Organisations can send in their application at any time in the year, however, to be assessed for accreditation at the start of May, the application must be in no later than the 1st March and the autumn accreditation schedules expects application forms in to the CEPIS website no later than the 1st September each year. Exceptions cannot be made as the assessment team must be assembled at this time.

6. What does the applicant need to put onto the application form?

The forms are self-explanatory and require the applicant to give evidence of the work done to support women in technical professions. Each section is awarded points for assessment. Each section is also given a maximum number of words/characters in order to provide guidelines for the amount of detail that is required. Note that if an organisation is applying for a silver or gold level award without having completed the previous award, they should ensure that they have given

evidence of their activities at all levels in the application form (including the levels which have been skipped). Applicants are encouraged to add materials such as posters, flyers, videos etc in support of their application. It is also useful to refer to any national or EU standards which are being applied, since these are a great way to show that the applicant understands the breadth of the issues around diversity and has access to support mechanisms. A document called DiversIT Themes Guidance makes suggestions for some of the activities at each level.

7. What language should be used in the application?

Please check on the CEPIS website to see whether the IT Association local to your organisation is an 'awarding' body. If so, organisations can apply direct to the local association and can do so in their national language. If an organisation is applying direct to the CEPIS Assessment team then it is virtually certain that the assessment will be conducted in English.

8. How does CEPIS / or Local IT Association with Awarding status assess applications?

When the application is received by the CEPIS team or Local IT Association with Awarding status they will notify the assessment panel.

Assessment panels can exist in one of two places;

- If the local IT Association or Society has Gold Status, they will also be given 'Awarding status' and will display a list of assessors on their website. Three members of the local assessment team will assess the applicant.
- If the local IT Association does not have awarding status, or, if the local IT Association is the applicant, then the assessment team will be three members selected from the CEPIS assessment team as shown on the CEPIS website: <https://cepis.org/diversit-charter-team/>
- In either case, the minimum assessment team will consist of three members and will not include people from the applying organisation. The assessment teams will come together in September and April each year to assess applications. Meetings will be convened with the assessment team (either face to face or online) and they will read through entries and agree the results.

Organisations will be judged to have attained a level when they meet the minimum points required for the level as shown on the application form. If there are any points which need clarification, the CEPIS assessment team will email the lead applicant to ask for clarification. For this reason, it is important that you have included an email address and name on your application for this purpose.

9. How does an applicant find out whether they have succeeded or failed with their application?

Applicants will be notified by email from the CEPIS office during April or October following their application so long as the application was received by the correct date. The Assessment team will notify the CEPIS office of those applicants succeeding or failing in their applications, and emails will be sent out. Where an application is a failure, the assessors will offer positive suggestions of

activities which will enhance the work in the organisation, with a view to receiving a successful application from the organisation in the next round.

10. What does the organisation get to show that they have been awarded a level of the DiversIT Charter?

Applicants are entitled to show the appropriate level badge (Bronze, Silver or Gold) on their website. They might also want to use it on materials which they disseminate related to their work on women in IT. This will be made available to them by the CEPIS secretariat team at the point at which they are awarded the charter status. They will also receive a certificate which can be displayed at their location. Any press release about the award, prepared and published by awarded organization, should be approved by CEPIS team.

11. What is the process for awarding the charter and is there a ceremony?

Countries who have been awarded a status during the year will be invited to attend the award ceremony, either online or in person, in November each year. Award ceremonies will be arranged to work alongside the CEPIS meeting in November and may be in different countries across Europe. There are two assessment dates in any one year, but only one award ceremony. This will enable an organization to apply for two awards in one year if the standard of the work they are doing on Women in IT progression is good enough.

12. How will data about applicants be used and how long is it held?

CEPIS and the Assessment teams (either centrally or locally based) all work to the GDPR standards and will hold an organisation's data no longer than it is required. CEPIS holds a small database of applicants and certified organisations. This will be used to warn organisations that their certification status is coming-up to renewal.

When an organisation has been awarded certified status at any level, the application form will be checked to understand whether the organisation is happy for their name and logo to be shown with their certified status on the CEPIS DiversIT Charter Website. If an organisation does not want to have their name and logo displayed in this way, it is important to indicate this by ticking the box provided on the application form.

13. How long will charter status apply and does an organisation need to recertify?

Holding the DiversIT Charter status at any level identifies the organisation as one which is supporting its female technical workforce or student cohort. For this reason, it is important that organisations re-certify to ensure that women seeking work in the organisation can trust that they will be supported equally and fairly during their tenure with the organisation. As the DiversIT Charter status becomes trusted across Europe, women will seek it out when looking for employers or looking to do

business with organisations. For this reason, it is important to CEPIS that we ensure the quality mark that the DiversIT Charter accreditations confer.

Country IT Associations who have Gold Status (aka Awarding Status) will be required to recertify every three years.

Other 'non-awarding' organisations are required to recertify every 3 years.

14. How does an organisation recertify for charter status?

The organisation should use their original application and submit it along with additional work that has been done in each subsequent year. The organisation should verify their submission on the application form and submit in the normal way. In this way the awarding organisation can see growth, progress against KPIs and targets and momentum for women in tech.

15. Can the DiversIT Charter status be rescinded from an accredited holder?

Yes. Holders are required to re-certify every three years, after which time, their accreditation is no longer valid.

16. How does a Local IT Association gain 'awarding status'?

If you are a Local IT Association, there is a separate FAQ just for you which can be found on the Members' area of CEPIS website.