

# **Plan for Equality between Women and Men**

## **in the Association “Black Sea NGO Network” 2021–2027**

### **Introduction**

The Plan for Equality between Women and Men or Gender Equality Plan of the Association Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) is a strategic document that systematizes, substantiates and plans the objectives and concrete measures that BSNN will implement to continue promoting gender equality.

The Plan is a natural extension of the gender equality measures identified in the Internal Rules for the Performance of Public Service Activities of BSNN and the drive to institutionalise equal treatment of women and men, building on this through measures to promote equality in four priority areas aimed at ensuring:

- Institutional changes to ensure gender equality;
- equality between men and women in the recruitment of human resources, providing career development opportunities for employees and developing leadership potential;
- work-life balance as part of organisational culture; and
- integrating gender into activities, research and international projects.

With this Plan, BSNN declares its commitment and determination to strictly observe the principle of gender equality and gender non-discrimination in its activities. The Plan is in direct line with European Union (EU) directives and initiatives on promoting institutional change through the implementation of a number of instruments, including the development of Plans for the Promotion of Gender Equality in Research Organisations, with the aim of achieving long-term positive effects in line with the principles of gender balance and respect for the principle of equality between women and men in the European Research Area:

- European Commission Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025.
- European Charter for Researchers.
- Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.
- Guidelines from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation on the development of gender equality plans in relation to the Horizon Europe programme.
- European Parliament resolution of 9 June 2021 on the gender dimension of cohesion policy (2020/2040 INI).

### **Objectives**

Aware of its role in the processes described above, the Association declares its commitment and sets as its main objective the achievement of gender equality, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, within its organisation, by creating the appropriate conditions and providing the necessary resources to promote a coherent policy in this direction.

In doing so, the Association and its members are committed to the principles of providing equal opportunities for equal treatment of men and women, equal access to all resources within the organisation and overcoming gender stereotypes.

In line with the key objectives for gender equality outlined by the European Commission, the plan sets out its objectives in particular:

- Institutionalisation of the drive to promote equality between women and men.
- Assessing the environment and identifying imbalances between men and women.
- Incorporating gender equality principles into all stages of recruitment and career development.
- Support the development of women's and men's leadership potential.
- Integrate institutional actions to ensure work-life balance.
- Provide opportunities to improve staff capacity to ensure work-life balance.
- Achieving quality in research/project design and implementation by integrating the gender theme.
- Integrate gender analysis into all phases of project development and implementation.

### **Activities**

The activities to meet the objectives are set out in the Action Plan under priority areas of intervention corresponding to the objectives set.

The plan is developed with a four-year perspective, subject to updating at the end of every two years, in compliance with statutory requirements and procedures.

Planning and performance monitoring is evidence-based, including baseline data on the distribution of PMSC staff and by gender collected, analysed and reported annually. Data is used to identify gender equality risks and challenges, including gender discrimination, and to set targets and develop and implement innovative improvement strategies. The information shall be considered in the context of the interrelationships of inequalities between men and women with other vulnerabilities and risks of discrimination regulated by the Law on Protection against Discrimination such as ethnicity, disability, property status, age, sexual orientation, marital status or any other characteristics established by law or by an international treaty to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party. This data feeds into the ongoing assessment of progress in implementing the plan.

The data and information for the purposes of the plan are collected and managed in full compliance with the requirements of the Personal Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation – “Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)”.

This plan covers four main areas of monitoring and impact, each of which includes specific activities to ensure gender equality in the PMSC and indicators to measure progress. These are presented in the following tables.

## ACTION PLAN BY PRIORITY AREAS OF INTERVENTION

### Priority area of intervention 1. Institutional changes to ensure gender equality

Objective	Measure/Activity	Timeframe/Indicators	Responsible party
Institutionalisation of the drive to promote equality between women and men	Preparation and adoption of annual reports on the implementation of this Plan	Deadline: annually  Indicators: Preparation and adoption of annual reports on the implementation of this Plan	Board/Member of the BSNN Board from the country of registration/commission/expert group
	Delegation of authority and responsibility to specific officer(s), in relation to the necessary organisation for data collection and implementation of the activities set out in this Plan	Deadline: annually  Indicators: Preparation and adoption of annual reports on the implementation of this Plan	
Assessing the environment and identifying gender imbalances	Encourage the under-represented gender to stand for board and executive positions whenever possible	Deadline: annually  Indicative indicators include: Number of motivational activities/campaigns conducted	Board/Member of the BSNN Board from the country of registration/commission/expert group
	Review all draft documents for the presence of terms, expressions or language contrary to the principle of equality between women and men	Deadline: annually  Indicators: Preparation and adoption of annual reports on the implementation of this Plan	

**Priority area of intervention 2. Equality between men and women in recruiting human resources, providing career development opportunities for employees and developing leadership potential**

The total number of employees in the BSNN team varies between 6 and 3, with temporary employment depending on the specificities of the projects, with women predominating. Project managers are both women and men. Management positions in the Association are held by women. The Board of Directors consists of 3 women and 3 men, the Association is represented by 1 man and 1 woman, respectively Chairperson and Board member from the country of registration. The General Assembly is composed of 7 women and 5 men. In the case of services, those employed with a civil contract are distributed in equal percentage.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Measure/Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe/Indicators</b>	<b>Responsible party</b>
Incorporating gender equality principles in all stages of recruitment and career development	Systematic monitoring of the recruitment and career development process by analysing gender disaggregated data and taking action to eliminate gender inequality.	Term: permanent  Indicative indicators include: Monitoring and analysis based on data collected	Management Board, Member of the BSNN Board from the country of registration
	Developing a career development monitoring system and identifying career development measures for women and men.	Term: annual  Sample indicators include: Monitoring and discussion of career development and advancement plans; identification of barriers to women's career development and advancement	Member of the BSNN Board from the country of registration
Supporting the leadership potential of men and women	Empowering women leaders	Term: permanent  Indicative indicators include: educational programmes/trainings/workshops to enhance leadership skills; improve negotiation and management skills	Member of the BSNN Board from the country of registration / BSNN Team
	Empowering women leaders	Term: permanent  Sample indicators include: mentoring for newly recruited women	Member of the BSNN Board from the country of registration / BSNN Team

### Priority area of intervention 3. Work-life balance as part of organisational culture

It is the aspiration of the BSNN that the association is seen as a workplace that cares for staff and supports work-life balance. The following support schemes are already established good practices that apply to staff regardless of their gender: part-time, teleworking, home office, flexible working patterns according to individual needs.

Objective	Measure/Activity	Timeframe/Indicators	Responsible party
Integrating institutional action to ensure work-life balance	Improving conditions for flexible working, teleworking and part-time work	Deadline: 2024.  Indicative indicators include: development of guidelines on flexible working patterns, teleworking and part-time work.	Management Board/Member of the BSNN Management Board from the country of registration
	Identify employees' work-life balance weaknesses and needs	Deadline: annually Indicative indicators include: Annual surveys conducted; inclusion of proposals in the next Plan. Deadline: ongoing	
	Reducing overtime	Term: permanent  Indicative indicators include: Ongoing monitoring of overtime, holding meetings according to employee needs in relation to work-life balance	
Provide opportunities to improve staff capacity to ensure work-life balance	Identify problems and solutions for better work-life balance	Term: permanent Indicative indicators include: organisation of meetings and the possibility of counselling, if necessary, in relation to work-life balance.	Management Board/Member of the BSNN Management Board from the country of registration
	Providing support to improve work-life balance	Term: permanent.  Indicative indicators include: organisation of meetings and the possibility of counselling where necessary in relation to work-life balance.	Management Board/Member of the BSNN Management Board from the country of registration

#### Priority area of intervention 4. Mainstreaming gender in developments, research and international projects

Objective	Measure/Activity	Timeframe/Indicators	Responsible party
Achieving quality in research/project design and implementation through gender mainstreaming	Gender mainstreaming in research/projects	Deadline: annually  Indicative indicators include: number of international studies/projects addressing gender, monitoring of implementation, targets set for gender-related studies/projects/publications.	Member of the BSNN Management Board from the country of registration/BSNN team
Integrate gender analysis into all phases of project development and implementation	Improving knowledge on gender equality when developing project ideas	Term: permanent  Indicative indicators include: mainstreaming gender in project design	Member of the BSNN Management Board from the country of registration/BSNN team
	Incorporating gender analysis in project implementation	Term: permanent  Indicative indicators include: gender mainstreaming in project implementation, gender balance in project consortia and teams, gender balance in project activities and teams	
Create conditions for equal participation of men and women to participate in research/projects	Promoting equal participation of men and women in research/projects	Term: permanent  Indicative indicators include: monitoring of equal opportunities for women and men in research/project teams/events at all levels	Management Board/ Member of the BSNN Management Board from the country of registration/BSNN team

The overall coordination and follow-up of the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan is entrusted to the Member of the BSNN Board from the country of registration.

The member of the BSNN Board from the country of registration will prepare and submit to the BSNN Management Board an annual report on the implementation of the Plan by 31 December of the current year, which shall be included in the BSNN annual activity report.

This Plan was updated and adopted by the Management Board of the Black Sea NGO Network on December 18, 2023.