

# Gender Equality Plan 2023 – 2025

Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is an institutional policy instrument designed to promote cultural, systemic and structural change within the organization in order to achieve favorable learning and working conditions for all employees.

The promotion of equality between women and men is a task for all EU members. Gender equality is a core value of the EU, a fundamental right and key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights (European Commission <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/just/redirection/document/68222>).

## Aim of the Gender Equality Plan

This Gender Equality Plan describes a framework aimed at achieving and maintaining gender equality within TFTA, the Center of Food and Fermentation Technologies. It outlines a set of objectives and actions to identify and address gender-based disparities and discrimination and results in a more positive work environment for all. This GEP sets a strategy for the period until the end of 2025 and consists of the following parts:

- ▶ Relevant regulations and policies in Estonia
- ▶ Cycle of gender equality planning
- ▶ Key roles and responsibilities
- ▶ Communication
- ▶ Organizational structure
- ▶ Gender Equality Plan until the end of 2025

## Regulations and Policies in Estonia

In Estonia, gender equality regulations are established in the Gender Equality Act, which prohibits direct and indirect gender discrimination. The Gender Equality Act regulates, among other things, the employer's obligations to ensure equal treatment of employees.

It concerns the unfavorable treatment of an employee due to his/her gender or family obligations (pregnancy, long-term absence from work due to childbirth and caregiving, parenthood).

It is also the employer's responsibility to prevent and stop any gender and sexual harassment and to provide appropriate support to the victim of harassment.

The employer's measures to promote gender equality are also described in the said law. Therefore, the actions in this GEP are primarily guided by the measures described in the law.

In Estonia, women are provided with legal and social guarantees so that their income and career are not interrupted due to family planning

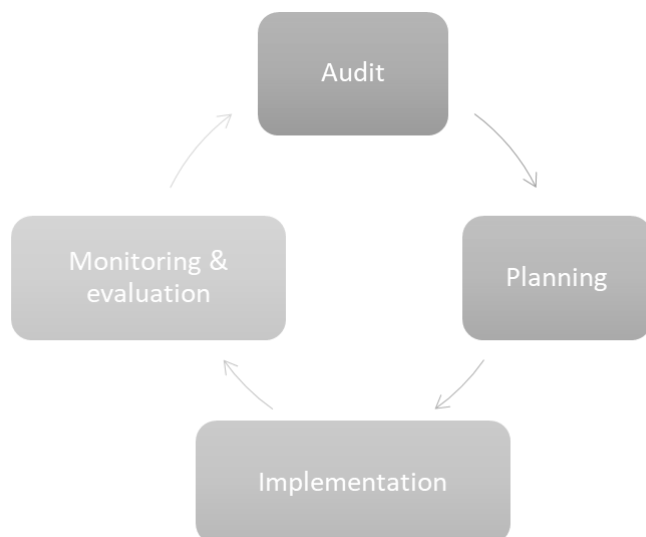
- ▶ In Estonia an employed woman is eligible for paid mother's leave - 100 days.
- ▶ For both parents paid parental leave – ca 15-16 months.
- ▶ For both parents, parental leave total length is up to child's 3rd birthday.
- ▶ For both parents 10 extra leave days per each child until the end of the calendar year when the child turns 14 (reduced compensation).

Women during pregnancy and both parents up to the child's 3rd birthday are under special protection. The employer must do everything in its power to keep their job, for example in a layoff situation or in case of an extraordinary contract termination.

The Act on Pre-School Childcare Institutions obligates the local municipals to create an opportunity for a child between the ages of one and a half and seven to attend a kindergarten at the request of the parents.

The law allows the mother to devote time to herself and the child and also adds flexibility to both parent to choose who will take care of the child and for what period.

## Gender Equality Plan Cycle



- ▶ **Audit.** Assessment of the existing gender disparities within the organization. Identifying areas where inequality is prevalent, such as hiring practices, promotion rates, pay gaps, and decision-making processes.
- ▶ **Planning.** Discussing and defining clear and time-bound goals together with key contributors. Developing metrics to measure the progress of GEP.
- ▶ **Implementation.** Communicating our commitment to gender equality both internally and externally. Supporting managers and employees to execute the plan.
- ▶ **Monitoring and evaluating** regularly the progress of the GEP. Using metrics to measure outcomes and identify any gaps or barriers that need to be addressed. Creating trend analysis for continuous improvement.

## Key Roles and Responsibilities

- ▶ HR Manager as primary responsible designs, implements, and monitors the GEP
- ▶ Senior management establishes a specific action plan
- ▶ Top management ratifies the GEP, oversees the implementation of the GE strategy and ensures that company policies maximize the potential of all employees regardless their gender.

## Communication

The Gender Equality Plan will be presented to employees at the company's quarterly general meeting. During this event, the reasons for striving gender equality will be explained, along with the specific goals the company hopes to achieve. Employees will receive a detailed explanation of the plan's specifics and the strategies that will be used to promote gender equality within the organization. The progress of GEP, the review of the results, and any potential modifications will be also announced during the general meeting.

The Gender Equality Plan will be published on the company's website.

## Organizational structure\*

\* As of 1.09.2023

	Women	Men	Total	Percentage of women
Management	4	5	9	44%
Academic personnel	52	18	70	74%
Support functions	7	3	10	70%
Total	63	26	89	71%

According to the final report of the Estonian Research Council, in 2020, the representation of men and women in the Estonian academic world was almost equal, with women accounting for 51% and men for 49%. In comparison, in 2010, women accounted for 48.7% of academics, while men accounted for 51.3% (Estonian Research Council [The current state of gender equality and ways of improvement in Estonian science](#)).

## Gender Equality Plan 2023-2025

Following initiatives demonstrate the company's commitment to promoting gender equality and creating an inclusive and supportive work environment for all employees.

Aim of activity	Measures completed by the end of 2025
<p>Employees are guaranteed equal opportunities and a supportive environment</p>	<p>The Gender Equality Plan is an integral part of the company's quality management system. This strategy is closely monitored through quarterly management reviews, giving the management team clear visibility over the implementation of the GEP and any potential violations.</p> <p>Additionally, an annual development plan for employees will be put into practice to both nurture their professional growth aspirations and ensure that their expertise is valued and supported.</p> <p>A clear compensation review procedure will be implemented. This includes regular monitoring of pay gaps within different positions and expertise levels, as well as promotion rates, to identify and address any disparities that may arise.</p> <p>A secure and confidential channel for employees is in creation to openly discuss and report any gender-related concerns or incidents. This ensures that all employees have a safe space to address and resolve any issues they may encounter.</p>
<p>Employees are aware of the company's policies and procedures regarding gender equality. There are no biases against either gender</p>	<p>The plan's initial presentation, subsequent modifications, progress, and outcomes are openly shared with employees during the quarterly meetings.</p> <p>Leaders are strongly encouraged to exemplify their commitment to gender equality through inclusive behavior and leading by example.</p> <p>To raise awareness about unconscious biases and help employees mitigate their impact on behavior, bias trainings are organized for employees at all levels. These trainings particularly emphasize how individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds perceive equality and identify unfair treatment.</p>
<p>There is a good balance between employee's career and family commitments</p>	<p>The company is dedicated to promoting work-life balance and provides a range of flexible arrangements to meet the diverse needs of its employees. These include part-time work, flexible working hours, and the option to work remotely depending on the nature of the tasks.</p>

	<p>To ensure maximum flexibility, individual risk assessments are conducted to assess the feasibility of achieving work goals while prioritizing employee well-being and family commitments.</p> <p>The management actively encourages open and transparent communication between employees and their supervisors. It is important for employees to feel comfortable discussing any challenges or conflicts that may arise in balancing their work and family responsibilities.</p>
<p>Recruitment and promotion are based on the person's skills and not their gender</p>	<p>The company prioritizes equal access to opportunities, promotions, and projects for all employees, regardless of gender. When selecting successors, we ensure that the principles of equality are upheld, without excluding any employee based on family obligations or family planning.</p> <p>The recruitment process is designed to minimize bias in decision making. Every hiring process involves a collaborative team of hiring managers and HR representative, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives and reducing the possibility of biased decisions.</p> <p>In the pre-selection and recruitment decision-making processes, our primary and sole focus is on assessing the candidates' skills and determining their suitability based on the position's requirements. We prioritize objective evaluations, considering the candidates' abilities to contribute effectively in their respective roles.</p>
<p>The company's marketing and communication activities are fostering an inclusive and diverse environment</p>	<p>The communication and marketing strategies have been guided by the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promoting diverse gender role models through company communications.</li> <li>- Incorporating gender-sensitive language in all forms of communication.</li> <li>- Ensuring diverse gender representation in visuals and imagery.</li> <li>- Encouraging the inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives in storytelling.</li> <li>- Creating a safe and open environment for discussions about gender-related issues.</li> </ul>

KINNITATUD/ Confirmed  
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Martin Lall

