



EBRAINS Gender Equality Plan

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1. Introduction

1.1 Commitments

EBRAINS AISBL (“EBRAINS”) is committed to gender balance and equal opportunities for all its employees, and values the diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds of its employees. EBRAINS’ Gender Equality Plan is essential for its correct functioning. In it, the EBRAINS Board of Directors and Management Board commit to ensure that remaining equality gaps are addressed sustainably via appropriate measures. This commitment will be achieved through the following objectives:

1. Ensuring gender equality in recruitment and career progression,
2. Reducing the gender pay, earnings, and pension gaps,
3. Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making positions,
4. Creating a system to combat any occurrence of gender-based violence and protecting and supporting victims,
5. Promoting gender equality and women's rights,
6. Promoting work-life balance and sound organisational culture.

EBRAINS will make these objectives specific, measurable and achievable by a specified date.

EBRAINS is committed to equal opportunities in the personal and professional development of its employees and to assisting them in the pursuit of their professional ambitions, including pursuit of leadership and team management roles.

Gender balance in leadership positions will be addressed proactively. The current imbalance in the composition of the Boards is being addressed and should improve shortly. The CEO undertakes to address the imbalance in the Management Board via future nominations for membership and the Board of Directors undertakes to do so with respect to its own ranks.

The Gender Equality Plan includes measures that will be continuously applied and improved, with new measures being introduced to further improve gender equality, diversity and inclusion.

EBRAINS is convinced that, under conditions of equal opportunities, women and men make equally important professional contributions, regardless of their areas of work or hierarchical level, and bring with them more diverse experiences and perspectives that can benefit EBRAINS, by helping to provide a broader perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing the organization.

For EBRAINS, gender equality is an important corollary of equal rights, freedoms, guarantees, opportunities and recognition of gender. It broadens the organisation’s skills and knowledge, promoting a more motivating work environment, higher productivity and better retention of talent.

EBRAINS is, therefore, committed to ensuring gender equality, diversity and inclusion, based on respect for human beings and equality of opportunity. This is central to EBRAINS’ identity. management practices and activities.

1.2 EU Gender Equality Requirements

The EC requires organizations seeking EU funding to develop a gender equality strategy for their activities¹.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

The EU’s goal is a Union where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are free to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to thrive, and can equally participate in and lead European society.

The key objectives are ending gender-based violence; challenging gender stereotypes; closing gender gaps in the labour market; achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy; addressing the gender pay and pension gaps; closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics.

The implementation of a Gender Equality Plan is an eligibility criterion for being a beneficiary in a Horizon Europe project. However, EBRAINS believes that implementing a Gender Equality Plan is beneficial for the organisation, regardless of any legal or regulatory obligation to have one.

2. Scope

This Gender Equality Plan (the “Plan”) defines the measures undertaken by EBRAINS to ensure the:

- promotion of mutual respect and equality of opportunities,
- recognition and valuing of diversity as a source of strength and human potential, and
- adoption of policies and encouragement of increased awareness to help achieve equality and diversity goals.

This Plan sets out policies covering the areas below and measures to implement them:

- strategy, mission and values regarding equality for women and men in access to employment,
- initial and continuous training,
- equality in working conditions and equal pay,
- protection of parenting,
- protection of care givers,
- work-life balance,
- prevention of workplace violence and harassment.

The timeline for implementation of measures to address these areas is defined in Section 8 below.

3. Gender Balance Indicators

Aspect	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (n)	Men (n)
In total	40 %	60 %	14	21
Country: Belgium	60 %	40 %	6	4
Country: Switzerland	32 %	68 %	8	17
Department: Communications & Content	71 %	29 %	5	2
Department: Operations	40 %	60 %	2	3
Department: Programme	60 %	40 %	6	4
Department: Information Infrastructure	8 %	92 %	1	12

Governance: Board of Directors	14 %	86 %	1	6
Governance: Management Board	17 %	83 %	1	5
Permanent Contracts	100 %	100 %	14	21
Fixed-Term Contracts	0 %	0 %	0	0
Full-Time Contracts	100 %	95 %	14	20
Part-Time Contracts	0 %	5 %	0	1
Average Fixed Annual Pay, Non-Management Staff			EUR 91,000	EUR 104,000
Incoming Employees (2021)	80 %	20 %	4	1
Outgoing Employees (2021)	50 %	50 %	1	1

3.1 Departments

The Communications and Content department is responsible for communication, dissemination and events. The Operations department is responsible for Human Resources (HR), Finance and Information Technology (IT) support. The Programme department is responsible for project management, coordination and reporting. The Information Infrastructure department is responsible for the development, maintenance and coordination of infrastructure and software. The higher gender gap between male and female employees in the Information Infrastructure department is part of a global trend related to the access to a technology education²³⁴⁵. Another gap in the gender proportion appears in the Communications and Content department, that is one of the most common career options followed by women.

3.2 Leadership

There is a clear gap in the representation of women in EBRAINS management positions, which is recognized by EBRAINS leadership. This reflects that men tend to be overrepresented in the field of digital infrastructure, the main field of activity of EBRAINS, and is partly the result of decisions made earlier within the Human Brain Project, from which EBRAINS emerged. Nevertheless, the EBRAINS leadership is committed to achieve a greater level of equality in the medium term. The proportion of women in the Board of Directors is projected to increase from the current level of 14% to 43% in 2022 and the CEO of the EBRAINS AISBL will strive to improve gender equality in the Management Board via his nominations for future hires.

² https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/european-innovation-ecosystems/women-techeu_en

³ <https://isemag.com/2020/10/telecom-the-latest-stats-on-women-in-tech/#:~:text=WOMEN%20HOLD%20ONLY%20A%20QUARTER%20OF%20ALL%20TECH%20JOBS&text=According%20to%20Adeva%20IT%2C%20as,women%20back%20in%20the%201980s>

⁴ <https://builtin.com/women-tech/women-in-tech-workplace-statistics>

⁵ <https://www.cio.com/article/201905/women-in-tech-statistics-the-hard-truths-of-an-uphill-battle.html>

4. Principles

To achieve effective equality of treatment and opportunity between genders, promote elimination of discrimination based on sex and foster reconciliation between personal, family and professional life, EBRAINS will approve and implement rules, policies, procedures and internal mechanisms that will ensure the principle of equality of women and men in the following areas:

- **Recruitment and selection:** EBRAINS is committed to recruiting and selecting through valuing the skills, aspirations, needs and responsibilities of women and men equally.
- **Training and knowledge sharing:** EBRAINS is committed to encouraging women and men, equally, to learn throughout their employment at EBRAINS and to make full use of their skills and knowledge.
- **Personal and professional development:** EBRAINS is committed to developing internal tools for skills development, promoting participation in cross-cutting projects and internal mobility, and encouraging women and men to invest equally in their personal and professional development.
- **Pay and social benefits:** EBRAINS is committed to ensuring compliance with the principle of “equal pay for equal work” among employees of both genders, based on merit.
- **Career management:** In promotion and career advancement processes, EBRAINS is committed to equal recognition of the skills of all employees (qualifications, training and professional experience), regardless of gender.

5. Monitoring of Policies

The policies and measures in the Gender Equality Plan are evaluated by EBRAINS at least once a year, to ensure continued compliance and to identify opportunities for improvement. This evaluation is done by the Human Resources department, which is responsible for:

- Monitoring initiatives, continuous improvement plans and measures regarding equality and diversity and ensuring their implementation.
- Setting up work teams to implement measures and establish deadlines for doing so, or assigning such measures to the appropriate organizational structures for implementation.
- Ensuring the internal communication of all initiatives, continuous improvement plans and measures regarding equality and diversity to all employees and internal stakeholders.
- Monitoring the impact of the Plan by recording and analysing specific indicators.

Measures and indicators will be disclosed in the EBRAINS Annual Report on Gender Equality.

6. Resources for Implementation of the Plan

The resources for drafting, circulating, approval and implementation of equality measures are:

- 1 COO/HR (c. 30% of monthly working time)
- 1 Administrative Officer (c. 30% of monthly working time)
- 1 Legal Advisor (c. 25% of monthly working time)



- Management Board (c. 2 hours per month)
- All EBRAINS employees, via the voluntary consultation process (“Consultation”)
 - surveys for policy consultation (c. 2 hours per month)
 - surveys for awareness (c. 2 hours per month)
 - surveys for employee satisfaction (c. 2 hours per month)

Responsibility for implementation of the above policies is as follows:

Implementation action	Action by
Consultation of employees	HR
Publication on Sharepoint	HR
Communication to employees	HR
Training and awareness	Legal to provide content; HR to organize and promote training

The timeline for implementation of policies and related measures is given in Section 8 below.

7. Reporting and Communication

The Plan will be published/updated on the EBRAINS website: <https://ebrains.eu/gender-and-equality/>.

The public shall be able to consult on the EBRAINS’s website the following documentation:

- Gender Equality Plan
- Updates and revisions to the Gender Equality Plan
- Annual Report on Gender Equality

The EBRAINS Annual Report on Gender Equality shall be published before 31 December of each year.

8. Plan

The EBRAINS Gender Equality Plan is broken down into the following areas, which reflect EBRAINS' priorities and the nature of its organisation and work

- 1) Strategy, Vision and Values
- 2) Equality in Access to Employment
- 3) Training
- 4) Equal Pay and Working Conditions
- 5) Protection of Parenting and Caring
- 6) Work-Life Balance
- 7) Prevention of Violence and Harassment at Work
- 8) Women in Decision Making

Preparation and Implementation of Measures: All measures are prepared by HR and Legal in consultation with employees, approved by the Management Board and then by the Board of Directors. Responsibility for implementation lies with HR and the Management Board.

8.1 Strategy, vision and values

Objectives	Measures	Status	Deadline
Publicly state (internally and externally) the commitment to the promotion of equality between genders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration and documentation of the organization's commitments to ethical conduct, development of skills, merit, and balance between personal and professional life for its employees. This includes drawing up policies, practices and procedures and the implementation thereof. Publication of the organization's commitment to equality between genders, internally and externally, on the website, intranet, through electronic mail and internal newsletters. Dissemination of the Gender Equality Plan, its respective measures and objectives, through awareness-raising sessions, dissemination on the website, intranet and internal e-mailing. 	Ongoing	Q4 2022
	Implementation of the Gender Equality Policy and related policies in this Plan which reflects the application of the vision, commitments and strategy of the organization within the scope of equality, diversity and including, enabling the communication, throughout the organization, of the organization's positioning and action in this area.	Ongoing	Q4 2022
Ensure the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan, its monitoring, tracking and reporting about progress and status	Allocation of resources (legal, administrative, human resources) annual funds for the implementation of measures and actions in the area of equality between genders.	Completed	Q4 2022
Data collection, analysis and reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection of all data by gender. Analysis of all data by gender. Reporting on all indicators per gender. 	Completed	yearly
	Promotion of awareness raising action regarding diversity, equality and inclusion.	Ongoing	Q1 2023
	Creation of an email account for suggestions regarding equality and personal and professional balancing measures	Ongoing	Q1 2023
Ensure a work environment free of discrimination	Formal procedure to submit complaints regarding infringements of policies or unlawful behavior, which ensures the protection of the identity of the complainant and adequate management of the process, both from the perspective of correcting situations identified, and from the prevention of a re-occurrence.	Ongoing	Q1 2022

	Drawing up a Non-Retaliation Policy and implement it via communication and training of employees.	Ongoing	Q1 2022
	Carry out surveys amongst employees to evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the level of knowledge and awareness about gender equality, diversity and inclusion the employee's satisfaction regarding current measures about gender equality, diversity and inclusion Development of action plans based on the results of the internal surveys	Ongoing	Q1 2023

8.2 Equality in access to employment

Objectives	Measures	Status	Deadline
Contribute to a fair and objective selection and recruitment process for men and women.	Drawing up a Recruitment Policy that guarantees gender equality for recruitment process.		Q3 2022
Ensure the principle of equality between women and men and non-discrimination in access to employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define clearly requirements and qualifications necessary for each position to be filled, including requirements for performing the job and the remuneration to be provided. Use inclusive language in job advertisements and include equal employment opportunity statements. Set formal job-related criteria for hiring, promoting and rewarding team members. Offer compensation and benefits according to position, seniority, qualifications and performance, not protected characteristics. Accommodate people with disabilities. Require managers to keep detailed records of their decisions concerning their team members and job candidates. Using hiring processes that reduce bias like structured interviews and blind hiring programs. Organise training on diversity and inclusion, communication and conflict management to improve collaboration among employees of different gender and backgrounds. 		continuous
Counter structural barriers to equality between women and men and contribute to a	Conceptualisation and implementation of initiatives to promote the employability of persons of all genders in technical and IT positions, with and without disabilities, through their training and development of skills.		Q2 2023

better balance between women and men in the organization, especially in technical and IT functions.			
Promote the internal sexual desegregation and greater balance between women and men in the organization, especially in technical and IT functions.	Launch of a campaign to encourage the recruitment of women and men to technical and IT professions and other functions where they are underrepresented, during the selection and recruitment process.		Q2 2023
	Disseminate and promote the open job postings to diverse audiences, ensuring a communication strategy in more and more diverse channels as well as an inclusive recruitment process for men and women, with different profiles, with and without disabilities, academic backgrounds and diverse nationalities.		Q 2 2022

8.3 Training

Objectives	Measures	Status	Deadline
Promote a culture of equality between men and women in the workplace, by encouraging management and working practices in line with this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Policies include relevant training provisions for all employees of the organisation. This must include training related to gender equality for the staff members who will deal with the portfolio. 		Q1 2023
Promote and ensure equal opportunities for women and men in access to training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying out compulsory training during working hours only. Internal procedure to ensure that women and men have equal opportunity to access the employee training number of certified training hours established hours by law. 		continuous
Promote internal gender desegregation and a greater balance between women and men in the organisation.	For professions carried out mainly by employees of one sex, preference should be granted to hiring new employees of the lesser represented sex in that profession. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to hiring disadvantaged persons, such those with lower levels of formal education, those who lack professional qualifications, those who are single parents with young children, etc., providing they are otherwise capable of doing the job.		Q3 2022
	Where possible, technical and IT courses dedicated exclusively to women employees should be provided, as these remain areas dominated by men.		Q1 2023

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8.4 Equal pay and working conditions

Objectives	Measures	Status	Deadline
Ensure a fair and objective evaluation process for women and men.	Performance assessment with criteria, weightings and goals applied to all employees, irrespective of gender, age and/or function, based on merit.	Ongoing	Q 2 2022
Ensure information for all employees concerning rights and responsibilities in equality and non-discrimination. Transparent salary policy.	Periodic disclosure of the organisation's progress and financial results to all employees, enabling transparency and internal monitoring of the performance assessment model.	Ongoing	Q3 2022
Encourage equality between men and women in professional progression and development.	Progression of employees based on merit, taking effect after the employee has obtained the necessary skills established for this purpose.	Ongoing	Q3 2022
	Information distribution allowing employees to be aware of the various job opportunities available within the organization.	Ongoing	Q3 2022
Equal Pay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing up an Equal Pay Policy with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ clear and transparent job descriptions and titles ○ job evaluation scheme ○ grading structures and systems • Conduct an equal pay assessment • Communicate towards employees about their rights to Equal Pay and inform them of the Equal Pay Policy • Apply Equal Pay when engaging and promoting employees: men and women in the same employment performing equal work must receive equal pay, unless any difference in pay can be justified. 	Ongoing	Q3 2022
	Fair pay practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking starting salaries • Ensuring equal pay for a given level or type of competence • Ensuring equality in performance related pay 	Ongoing	continuous

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring equality in bonus payments • Eliminating gender bias from “working time” payments • Limiting managerial discretion over all elements of the pay package • Taking into consideration market forces • Carrying out an equality impact assessment 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal pay applied to all working arrangements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ employees with a verbal or written contract of employment ○ apprentices ○ temporary employees/interim employees ○ personal and public officeholders 	Ongoing	continuous
	<p>Equal pay principles applied to all aspects of employment contracts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic pay • non-discretionary bonuses • overtime rates and allowances • performance-related benefits • severance and redundancy pay • access to pension schemes • benefits under pension schemes • hours of work • company cars • sick pay • fringe benefits such as travel allowances • benefits in kind 	Ongoing	continuous
	<p>Justify differences in pay based on objective material factors. A material factor must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be a genuine reason for the difference in pay • cause the difference in pay • be significant and relevant 	Ongoing	continuous

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> explain the pay difference with “particularity” - this means the employer must be able to show how each factor was assessed and how it applied in a specific case (for example, a particular woman employee in a particular role) not be tainted by direct or indirect sex discrimination 		
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8.5 Protection of parenting/caring

Objectives	Measures	Status	Deadline
Ensuring that all employees with children have the right to take parental leave. Encouraging male employees with children to exercise their right to a share of initial parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform and create awareness towards all personnel regarding parental and care leaves available. Inform and create awareness towards the male employees to take up such parental and care leaves Annual control of parenting leave to ensure that all employees enjoy the leave provided for in in the law 	Ongoing	Q2 2022
	Internal procedure which ensures that respects the right of the pregnant, postpartum or lactating employee to be exempted from working or to work to a schedule organised to accommodate the needs of both parent and child.	Ongoing	Q2 2022

8.6 Work-Life Balance

Objectives	Measures	Status	Deadline
Promote the reconciliation of professional working life with personal life for all employees	Draw up a Work-Life Balance policy	Ongoing	Q2 2022
	Draw up a Teleworking Policy	Ongoing	Q1 2022
	Inform the personnel of its rights	Ongoing	Q3 2022
	Training on the various policies for all personnel	Ongoing	Q1 2023
	Stimulate both men and women to exercise their legal rights to leave and flexible working arrangements		Q2 2022
Ensure that working time is organised so men and women employees	Flexible working hours - flexible arrival and lunch times	Ongoing	Q2 2022

(especially parents) can reconcile professional, family and personal life.			
Ensure that absences scheme is organised so men and women employees (especially parents) can reconcile professional, family and personal life.	Ensure effective take up of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maternity leave • paternity leave/equivalent second parents • flexible take-up of the leave (part-time or in a piecemeal way) • carers' leave for employees providing personal care to a relative or person living in the same household 	Ongoing	continuous
	Ensure effective take up of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flexible working arrangements for all working parents of children, and all carers. • reduced working hours • flexible working hours, and • -flexibility in place of work (teleworking) 	Ongoing	continuous

8.7 Prevention of violence and harassment at work

Objectives	Measures	Status	Deadline
Preventing and combating harassment in the workplace. Preventing and combating the practice of other offences against the physical or moral integrity, freedom, honour or dignity of its employees.	Drawing up an anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy	Ongoing	Q1 2022
	Training on the various policies for all personnel	Ongoing	Q1 2023
Ensuring the prevention and combat of harassment at work.	Drawing up internal complaints procedure	Ongoing	Q1 2022
	Drawing up a non-retaliation/whistleblower policy	Ongoing	Q1 2022
	Appoint an external person of trust (Mediwet)	Completed	2021
	Inform the personnel of its rights	Ongoing	Q3 2022
	Training on the various policies for all personnel	Ongoing	Q1 2023

8.8 Women in decision-making

Objectives	Measures	Status	Deadline
Encourage the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making positions.	EBRAINS is committed to improve the advancement of women in higher management positions and boards. It will take measures to achieve equal representation for women and men in the General Assembly, Board of Directors and Management Board, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-Life Balance Policy: to support a more equal distribution of caring and domestic responsibilities, to improve the reconciliation of work and family life for both women and men and to overcome gender stereotypes, the policy contains measures to eliminate individual, organisational and social obstacles to women's representation in leadership positions. • Transparent selection procedures: these should support appointment of women and men, from diverse backgrounds and life experiences. • Providing access to training opportunities and promoting business-tailored training plans to broaden the range of women who are suitably equipped for appointment to the Management Board. • Ensuring that selection to be a board member takes into consideration formal and substantive qualifications and that no indirect discrimination against women occurs by manipulating or misrepresenting the qualifications, experience and/or knowledge required to fulfil the post. 	Ongoing	Q3 2022
	Exclusion of criteria associated with the availability of employees or their family responsibilities for career advancement, promoting a culture of respect, integrity and responsibility	Ongoing	Q3 2022



9. Monitoring

EBRAINS aims to reinforce the clear importance of promoting a diversified organisation, work environment and culture, and a more inclusive working environment, as critical and differentiating factors that fuel creativity, innovation and attainment of excellent results.

As a socially responsible organisation, EBRAINS incorporates the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in its values, practices and policies. EBRAINS aims to attract, develop and retain varied talents, believing that diversity is a driver of innovation within the organisation and enables us to acquire a more complete view of society, which includes ourselves.

EBRAINS' GEP is intended to help improve the quality of life of its employees, bring down career barriers and provide a better balance between personal and professional life, while promoting gender equality.

EBRAINS promotes a culture which attracts and enhances talent, which stimulates personal and professional development, which focuses on flexibility, which recognises and rewards excellence and merit, which values individuality, and which can establish an environment of well-being, respect, equality of opportunities and productivity for all employees.

Approved by EBRAINS Board of Directors on	26 Jan 2022
Version number	v 0.2
Last updated	26 Jan 2022

Paweł Świeboda
Chief Executive Officer
(e-signed)