



Albanian Center for  
Environmental Protection and  
Sustainable Development

**Document Title:** Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

**Organization:** Albanian Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development (ACEPSD)

**Country:** Albania

**Effective Date:** 10 February 2026

**Validity Period:** 2026–2029

**Approved by:** Executive Director / Board of ACEPSD

**Version:** 1.0

**Public Availability:** Available upon request

## 1. Introduction

The Albanian Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development (ACEPSD) is committed to promoting equality, inclusion, and diversity across all its activities and internal structures. As an organization working in the fields of environmental protection, sustainable development, marine conservation, climate change adaptation, and research, ACEPSD recognizes that gender equality is essential for achieving fair and sustainable outcomes.

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) establishes ACEPSD's institutional framework and measures to ensure equal opportunities, prevent discrimination, and integrate gender perspectives in organizational governance, staffing, research, training, and project implementation.

## 2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this Gender Equality Plan is to ensure that ACEPSD provides a working and professional environment where all individuals—regardless of gender identity—have equal access to opportunities, fair treatment, and representation.

The key objectives of this plan are:

- To promote gender equality in recruitment, employment, and career development.
- To support balanced representation in leadership and decision-making roles.
- To prevent gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence.
- To improve work-life balance and fair working conditions.
- To integrate gender perspectives into research, project design, and field activities.



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- To establish mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

### **3. Scope of the Plan**

This plan applies to:

- All ACEPSD staff members (full-time, part-time, contractual).
- Consultants, interns, volunteers, and visiting researchers.
- Governing and decision-making bodies of ACEPSD.
- Project implementation teams and fieldwork activities.
- Collaborating stakeholders involved in ACEPSD activities when applicable.

### **4. Legal and Policy Framework**

ACEPSD commits to compliance with:

- Albanian labor legislation and national equality laws.
- European Union principles of non-discrimination and equal opportunity.
- Horizon Europe requirements for Gender Equality Plans.
- International frameworks such as:
  - United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality)
  - CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)

### **5. Core Requirements of Horizon Europe Compliance**

ACEPSD ensures that this Gender Equality Plan meets the minimum Horizon Europe requirements:

#### **5.1 Public Document**

This plan is formally adopted by ACEPSD leadership and is publicly available through ACEPSD's official communication channels.

#### **5.2 Dedicated Resources**



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ACEPSD allocates adequate human resources to implement this plan. A Gender Equality Focal Point (GEFP) will coordinate the actions described in this plan.

### **5.3 Data Collection and Monitoring**

ACEPSD commits to collecting gender-disaggregated data related to staffing, recruitment, training, decision-making, and project participation.

### **5.4 Training and Awareness**

ACEPSD will provide periodic training and awareness activities on gender equality, unconscious bias, prevention of harassment, and gender-sensitive project implementation.

## **6. Governance and Responsibilities**

To ensure implementation, ACEPSD establishes the following responsibilities:

### **6.1 Executive Leadership**

The Executive Director and ACEPSD Board:

- Approve and endorse the GEP.
- Ensure institutional support for its implementation.
- Review annual progress reports.

### **6.2 Gender Equality Focal Point (GEFP)**

ACEPSD appoints a Gender Equality Focal Point responsible for:

- Coordinating implementation of the GEP.
- Collecting and analyzing gender-disaggregated data.
- Preparing annual monitoring reports.
- Supporting staff and management in gender mainstreaming.

### **6.3 Staff Responsibilities**

All staff members are responsible for:

- Respecting the principles of equality and non-discrimination.
- Contributing to an inclusive and respectful work environment.



- Reporting incidents of discrimination or harassment.

## **7. Key Strategic Areas and Measures**

ACEPSD adopts actions in the following thematic areas, as recommended by the European Commission.

### **7.1 Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture**

ACEPSD recognizes that work-life balance contributes to productivity, motivation, and staff well-being.

#### **Measures**

- Promote flexible working arrangements when possible (remote work, flexible hours).
- Ensure that staff are not penalized for parental responsibilities.
- Promote equal distribution of responsibilities in fieldwork assignments.
- Encourage family-friendly scheduling of meetings and trainings.
- Provide support for staff returning from maternity/paternity leave.

#### **Target**

By 2027, ACEPSD will ensure that flexible working arrangements are available to all staff, where compatible with operational needs.

### **7.2 Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making**

ACEPSD commits to ensuring fair representation of women and men in leadership roles and decision-making processes.

#### **Measures**

- Ensure that selection processes for leadership positions are transparent and based on merit.
- Encourage balanced representation in project management and coordination roles.
- Promote equal participation in committees, boards, and working groups.
- Include gender balance considerations in nominations for conferences and external representation.



## **Target**

By 2029, ACEPSD aims to reach at least **40% representation of each gender** in leadership roles and project coordination teams (where possible).

### **7.3 Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression**

ACEPSD ensures equal access to employment opportunities, promotions, and professional development.

#### **Measures**

- Use gender-neutral language in vacancy announcements.
- Apply transparent evaluation criteria in recruitment.
- Ensure at least one female and one male member (where possible) in selection panels.
- Monitor recruitment results by gender.
- Encourage equal access to training and capacity-building opportunities.

## **Target**

ACEPSD will ensure that all recruitment processes include documented evaluation criteria and gender-balanced consideration.

### **7.4 Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Project Activities**

ACEPSD integrates gender perspectives into research, environmental monitoring, fisheries studies, community engagement, and climate adaptation initiatives.

#### **Measures**

- Ensure that project design includes gender-sensitive stakeholder analysis.
- Encourage gender-balanced participation in consultations, training sessions, and workshops.
- Consider gender-specific vulnerabilities and socio-economic impacts in climate adaptation projects.
- Include gender-disaggregated data collection in relevant project monitoring activities.



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- Promote participation of women in fisheries-related and coastal community engagement activities.

### **Target**

By 2027, ACEPSD will include gender-sensitive analysis in at least **70% of new projects** where relevant.

## **7.5 Measures Against Gender-Based Violence, Harassment and Discrimination**

ACEPSD maintains a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, bullying, discrimination, or violence.

### **Measures**

- Adopt a Code of Conduct that includes provisions on non-discrimination and respectful workplace behavior.
- Establish a confidential reporting mechanism for harassment and discrimination.
- Ensure that complaints are handled professionally, confidentially, and without retaliation.
- Provide awareness sessions on preventing harassment and gender-based violence.
- Ensure safe fieldwork protocols, including gender-sensitive risk management.

### **Target**

By 2026, ACEPSD will ensure that all staff are informed about reporting mechanisms and workplace conduct rules.

## **8. Data Collection and Monitoring**

ACEPSD commits to collecting gender-disaggregated data annually on:

- Staff composition by gender (employees, consultants, interns).
- Recruitment applications and hiring results.
- Participation in training activities.
- Representation in leadership and project management.
- Participation in conferences, workshops, and external events.
- Reports of discrimination or harassment (anonymized).



All data collection will respect confidentiality and Albanian data protection principles.

## 9. Capacity Building and Training

ACEPSD will organize gender equality capacity-building activities including:

- Gender equality awareness training (at least once every 2 years).
- Training on gender mainstreaming in project design and implementation.
- Training on preventing sexual harassment and workplace discrimination.
- Training on inclusive communication and unconscious bias.

Training may be delivered through internal sessions or external experts.

## 10. Communication and Dissemination

ACEPSD will ensure internal and external communication of the GEP by:

- Publishing this plan on ACEPSD’s website.
- Sharing key principles during onboarding of new staff and consultants.
- Including gender equality measures in internal guidelines and project manuals.
- Reporting progress in annual organizational reports where applicable.

## 11. Implementation Timeline (2026–2029)

Action	Responsible	Timeline
<b>Appointment of Gender Equality Focal Point</b>	Executive Director	2026 Q1
<b>Adoption and publication of GEP</b>	Board / Director	2026 Q1
<b>Establish gender-disaggregated data system</b>	GEFP	2026 Q2
<b>Develop Code of Conduct and reporting mechanism</b>	GEFP + Management	2026 Q2
<b>Organize first awareness training session</b>	GEFP	2026 Q3
<b>Annual gender monitoring report</b>	GEFP	Every year (Q4)
<b>Review and update GEP</b>	Board + GEFP	2028 Q4



<b>Final evaluation of GEP</b>	Board + GEFP	2029 Q4
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## 12. Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

ACEPSD will monitor implementation through:

- Annual internal review meetings.
- A yearly Gender Equality Monitoring Report prepared by the Gender Equality Focal Point.
- Integration of GEP progress into project reporting when relevant.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) include:

- Gender balance in staffing and leadership.
- Gender balance in training participation.
- Inclusion of gender aspects in project proposals.
- Number of gender equality trainings delivered.
- Use and effectiveness of reporting mechanisms.

## 13. Review and Updating of the Plan

This plan will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if:

- Major organizational changes occur,
- EU or national regulations are updated,
- Monitoring results indicate the need for stronger measures.

A revised version will be formally approved and published.

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## 14. Adoption and Commitment

ACEPSD formally adopts this Gender Equality Plan and commits to its implementation as part of its institutional development, organizational culture, and project delivery standards.

ACEPSD confirms its commitment to:



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- Equal opportunities,
- Non-discrimination,
- Transparent and fair recruitment,
- Safe working environment,
- Gender mainstreaming in environmental and marine sustainability activities.

### Signed and Approved

#### Executive Director

Name: Silvia Durmishaj Bakiu

Signature:

SILVIA DURMISHAJ BAKIU

Date: \_\_10\_\_ / \_\_02\_\_ / 2026



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#### Chair of the Board / Authorized Representative

Name: Denis Konomi

Signature:

Date: \_\_10\_\_ / \_\_02\_\_ / 2026

#### Gender Equality Focal Point

Name: Silvia Durmishaj Bakiu

Signature:

SILVIA DURMISHAJ BAKIU



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