

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

Systemic promotion of gender equality, monitoring and action plan

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1. Implementation of equal opportunities at STRIA Nonprofit Ltd.

STRIA has been committed to achieving gender equality from the outset. Since its establishment, it has sought to create and maintain an inclusive professional environment that contributes to preserving fundamental values, ensures the promotion and full implementation of equal treatment and equal opportunities, and supports their effective application in day-to-day work.

As an employer, STRIA Nonprofit Ltd. condemns all forms of discrimination and gives priority in all respects to the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment. It respects the human values, dignity and individuality of its employees and addresses, at organisational level, grievances concerning gender equality.

The purpose of this Gender Equality Plan is to define the organisation's fundamental objectives and to identify and address barriers that may adversely affect the equal participation and advancement of women and men in the workplace.

2. Gender Equality Plan

Gender equality is one of the fundamental values of the European Union and also has a prominent place among the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These efforts not only support economic development, but also contribute to improving social well-being and to creating a fairer and more inclusive Europe.

Significant progress has been made and numerous regulations have changed in recent years; however, gender inequality is still present in most EU Member States. Naturally, its extent and impact may vary from country to country.

Hungary is currently still performing poorly in this area. According to the Gender Equality Index (GEI) prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Hungary scored only 53.4%, placing it second to last among the Member States.

In order to eliminate persistent inequalities between women and men and to strengthen gender equality, the new Horizon Europe Framework Programme introduced criteria requiring participating organisations to implement a Gender Equality Plan (GEP). This measure is linked to the European Commission's 2020–2025 Gender Equality Strategy, which aims to contribute to closing gender gaps through targeted policy measures.

The Gender Equality Plan is one of the European Commission's key instruments for promoting institutional change. The Plan supports institutional development through the following areas: talent development, governance, research funding, leadership and decision-making.

The Gender Equality Plan of STRIA Nonprofit Ltd. serves as a strategic and operational instrument for the organisation and is aligned with its existing documents.

This document is based on the guidelines established by the European Commission and on the advice provided by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) for defining and implementing innovative strategies to promote equal opportunities.

3. **Organisational framework and dedicated resources**

For the successful implementation and maintenance of the GEP, STRIA provides specific and dedicated organisational resources and expertise, recognising that the organisation's management has acknowledged that theoretical objectives can only be achieved with appropriate operational conditions and clearly assigned personal responsibility.

Gender Equality Officer and responsibilities

The STRIA management officially appointed **Tímea SZILÁGYI** as Gender Equality Officer in 2024.

The responsibilities of the Gender Equality Officer include, among others:

- Developing, regularly updating and coordinating the Gender Equality Plan;
- Managing organisation-wide data collection and the biennial monitoring processes;
- Engaging employees and promoting a gender equality culture;
- Impartial and confidential investigation of any complaints and reports.

Dedicated time and resource allocation

STRIA guarantees that the working time required for the Gender Equality Officer to perform their duties (in the form of dedicated working hours on a monthly basis) is available. Management provides the necessary administrative and infrastructural support and may also allocate a separate budget within the annual budget planning process for gender equality awareness-raising training and the engagement of external experts.

4. Gender-disaggregated data collection and monitoring

In accordance with the requirements of Horizon Europe, STRIA regularly collects gender-disaggregated data on its human resources. The purpose of data collection is to monitor the development of any inequalities over time and to measure the effectiveness of interventions.

Regular monitoring indicators

Data collection covers the following specific indicators, which are consolidated annually by the Gender Equality Officer:

1. Distribution of employees by gender (by total headcount and occupational categories);
2. Distribution of management positions by gender (managing director, deputy managing directors, project managers);
3. Gender ratio of applicants and selected employees during recruitment processes;
4. Comparison of average salaries and fringe benefits by gender in equivalent positions (gender pay gap);
5. Participation in training and further training by gender;
6. Gender ratio of employees using atypical or flexible forms of employment (remote work, part-time work).

Biennial monitoring reporting

Based on the annual data, the Gender Equality Officer prepares a formal monitoring report for STRIA management at least every two years. The report presents changes in the indicators, assesses the implementation of GEP measures, and proposes necessary corrective actions or the formulation of new objectives. A summary of the monitoring reports will also be made available to employees.

5. Training, awareness-raising and sensitisation

Achieving gender equality requires active awareness-raising and the continuous development of organisational culture. STRIA is committed to ensuring that its employees and decision-makers have adequate knowledge of equal opportunities.

Training for employees and decision-makers

STRIA implements the following structured training and information programmes:

- **Addressing hidden gender biases:** Targeted sensitisation training for managers and employees responsible for recruitment, aimed at identifying hidden biases.
- **General equal opportunities training:** A workshop organised at least once a year for all employees on equal treatment, inclusive language and a harassment-free workplace.
- **Information for new employees:** Upon joining, every new employee receives personal information about the GEP and learns about the organisation's core equal opportunities values and complaint-handling channels.

6. **Work-life balance and organisational culture**

STRIA places particular emphasis on maintaining an organisational culture based on respect and cooperation while providing flexible arrangements that support employees in meeting their family and private-life obligations.

Atypical and flexible forms of employment

As the nature of the work performed at STRIA is not necessarily strictly tied to a specific physical location or city, the organisation provides its employees with a high degree of flexibility:

- **Remote work and home office:** Employees may perform their tasks partly or entirely from home, reducing travel time and supporting the management of responsibilities at home.
- **Flexible working hours:** By applying core and flexible hours, employees can adjust their daily start and finish times to their individual needs.
- **Part-time work:** An option offered particularly to employees with young children or those caring for elderly or ill family members, helping them maintain an active connection with the workplace.

To prevent isolation, management organises regular online meetings, hybrid meetings and in-person team-building events, while also maintaining offices in Pécs and Budapest for employees in order to strengthen social connections.

Health promotion and mental well-being

The company actively encourages employees to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to maintain their health and mental well-being. To this end, every employee receives a monthly fringe benefit which may be used within the cafeteria framework for health promotion, recreational and leisure activities. In addition, every employee is entitled to a further annual fringe benefit which may be used for cultural purposes. In this way, the company contributes to employees' quality leisure time and the preservation of their mental well-being.

Training opportunities

The company provides training opportunities to all employees in line with their training needs and requirements, regardless of gender, age or marital status.

7. **Gender balance in leadership and decision-making**

STRIA places particular emphasis on ensuring balanced representation of genders in decision-making bodies and management positions. The organisation has a clear objective of increasing the proportion of women in management and project leadership.

Current situation and objectives

In order to improve managerial decision-making and reduce gender inequality, a female leadership position has been established and filled within STRIA management (2 female deputy managing directors), ensuring that women's perspectives are directly reflected in strategic decisions at the highest level.

To further strengthen gender balance, STRIA undertakes the following measures:

- During internal promotions, we ensure that female employees have equal opportunities to compete for management positions;
- During external recruitment, we strive to ensure that candidates of both genders are represented among applicants invited to interview for management positions;

8. Gender equality in recruitment and career development

Objective and gender-neutral processes applied throughout recruitment and professional career development are the cornerstone of a discrimination-free workplace. STRIA ensures equal opportunities from recruitment through promotion.

Recruitment and selection guidelines

STRIA strictly observes the requirements of equal treatment in recruitment:

- **Gender-neutral job advertisements:** All job advertisements are worded so that they contain no explicit or implicit reference to the gender expected of applicants, expressing the organisation's openness to both genders..
- **Objective assessment criteria:** Candidates are assessed solely on professional competences, experience and qualifications, excluding considerations relating to personal circumstances, marital status or private life.
- **Diverse selection committees:** We strive to ensure that both genders are represented on committees conducting job interviews, reducing the impact of individual unconscious biases.

Career development and equal pay principle

STRIA guarantees the strict application of the **equal pay for equal work** principle. Salary bands for positions and cafeteria benefits are determined transparently and independently of gender. The same criteria are applied in performance appraisal and promotion processes, ensuring that absences due to childcare or other family reasons (e.g. maternity leave) do not adversely affect employees' long-term career paths.

9. Integrating the gender dimension into research and project activities

As a regional innovation agency, STRIA does not conduct direct educational or university-level research activities (it has no students); however, it plays an active role in the planning, analysis and implementation of regional innovation, economic development and social projects. This area of the GEP requires the organisation to incorporate the gender dimension into the substantive content of its projects as well.

Gender-sensitive analyses in projects

STRIA integrates the gender dimension into its professional work through the following methodological steps:

- **Social and innovation impact assessments:** When preparing regional analyses, research and policy proposals, we systematically examine how planned innovations or economic interventions may have different impacts on women and men.
- **Project planning:** When developing Horizon Europe and other international/national proposals, we explicitly demonstrate as part of the methodology how gender equality is addressed in the project objectives and activities.
- **Collection of gender-relevant data:** In surveys, interviews and focus group studies conducted within projects, we collect and analyse data disaggregated by gender.

10. Action against gender-based violence and sexual harassment

STRIA has a zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of harassment, intimidation, gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Every employee has the right to a safe, respectful and dignified working environment.

Reporting and complaint-handling procedure

If an employee is subjected to any form of gender-based discrimination, verbal or physical harassment, or sexual abuse, a report may be submitted according to the following procedure:

1. **Report to the Gender Equality Officer:** A complaint may be submitted directly and confidentially to the Gender Equality Officer (Szilágyi Tímea), either verbally or in writing (szilagytimea@ddriu.hu).
2. **Initiation of an investigation:** Within 3 working days of the report, the Gender Equality Officer launches an independent investigation with the involvement of the Managing Director. If the complaint concerns the Managing Director, the investigation must be conducted with the involvement of an external legal expert.
3. **Decision-making and sanctions:** The investigation must be completed within 15 working days at the latest. In the event of substantiated harassment or discrimination, the employer applies immediate employment-law sanctions (warning, disciplinary proceedings, and, in serious cases, termination with immediate effect) and takes legal action where necessary.

Protection and support for reporting persons

STRIA guarantees full protection for reporting persons. No adverse consequence, retaliation or professional/career setback may affect a person who makes a report in good faith or participates in an investigation as a witness. Throughout the process, the identities of both the complainant and the reporting person, as well as the details of the investigation, are treated as strictly confidential.

11. Summary of monitoring indicators

The table below summarises the key indicators used to measure the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP), the frequency of data collection and the persons responsible.

Area / Indicator	Measurement method / Target	Frequency	Responsible person
Gender ratio of personnel	Headcount and distribution by gender across positions	Annually	Gender Equality Officer / HR
Gender balance in management	Ratio of women and men in management and project leadership	Annually	Managing Director / Officer
Gender pay gap	Comparison of average salary and benefits in equivalent positions	Annually	Finance Manager / Officer
Sensitisation training	Number and proportion of employees participating in training	Annually	Gender Equality Officer
Atypical employment	Number of employees working flexibly/remotely, by gender	Annually	HR / Gender Equality Officer
Equal opportunities incidents	Number and status of reported and investigated complaints	Continuous	Gender Equality Officer
Gender dimension in projects	Number of projects containing gender-sensitive analysis	Annually	Project Managers / Officer

12. Final provisions

This Gender Equality Plan enters into force on the date of its approval and shall remain in force for an indefinite period. The Plan shall be reviewed, the results achieved shall be evaluated, and the Plan shall be updated every two years in cooperation between the Gender Equality Officer and the Managing Director. The rules and provisions of the GEP are binding on all employees and partners of STRIA.

Date: Pécs, 28 August 2026

Zoltán Haász

Managing Director
STRIA Nonprofit Ltd.