



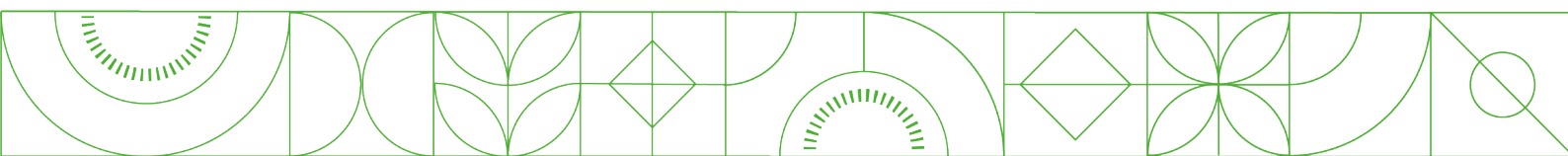
Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2026 - 2030 of the Energy agency of Savinjska, Šaleška and Koroška region (KSSENA)

April 2026

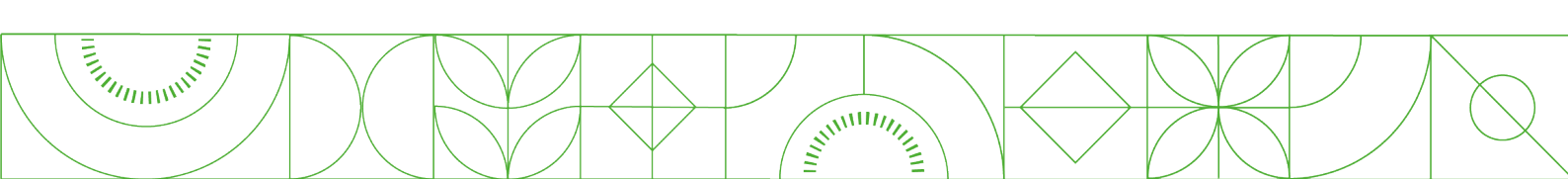
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1. Director's Commitment

KSSENA – Energy Agency of the Savinja, Šaleška and Koroška Region is committed to promoting equal opportunities, diversity, inclusion and mutual respect in all aspects of its work. As a regional development organisation operating at the interface of research, innovation, public administration and sustainable energy, KSSENA recognises that equal participation of women and men contributes to better decision-making, stronger organisational performance, greater innovation and more sustainable development outcomes. Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union and an essential principle underpinning European research, innovation and regional development policies. KSSENA fully supports these principles and is committed to ensuring that all employees are treated fairly and with dignity, regardless of gender or any other personal characteristic.

As a beneficiary and partner in numerous European programmes, including Horizon Europe, LIFE, Interreg and other European Union initiatives, KSSENA acknowledges its responsibility to establish and maintain an organisational environment that promotes equal opportunities in recruitment, career development, decision-making, professional development and work-life balance. This Gender Equality Plan reflects that commitment while supporting compliance with the requirements established by the European Commission for organisations participating in European research and innovation programmes. Although KSSENA is a relatively small organisation, we recognise that organisational size does not diminish our responsibility to foster an inclusive, respectful and supportive working environment. On the contrary, the close cooperation characteristic of a small multidisciplinary team provides an excellent foundation for promoting equality, transparency, collaboration and mutual trust in everyday work.

This Gender Equality Plan builds upon KSSENA's existing organisational culture, which values professionalism, competence, integrity and respect for every employee. Rather than introducing entirely new principles, the Plan formalises practices that are already embedded within the organisation while establishing a structured framework for continuous improvement, monitoring and accountability.

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) through the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool and reflects the process-related requirements for Gender Equality Plans established under Horizon Europe. It also aligns with relevant European and Slovenian legislation and supports the strategic objectives of the *Equal Opportunities Strategy of the City Municipality of Velenje*, recognising KSSENA's role as a regional public-interest organisation established by local public authorities.

Implementation of this Gender Equality Plan is a shared responsibility of the management and all employees. KSSENA is committed to monitoring progress, promoting awareness, encouraging open dialogue and regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the measures contained in this document to ensure that the organisation continues to provide an inclusive and equitable working environment for everyone.

By adopting this Gender Equality Plan, KSSENA reaffirms its commitment to the principles of equality, non-discrimination and equal opportunities and to contributing, through its daily work and international cooperation, to a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable European society.

Director of the agency KSSENA

Boštjan Krajnc

Place and date: Velenje, 02.04.2026



2. Introduction

KSSENA – Energy Agency of the Savinja, Šaleška and Koroška Region is a regional development organisation committed to supporting the transition towards a climate-neutral, energy-efficient and sustainable society through innovation, knowledge transfer and international cooperation. As an organisation actively participating in European research, innovation and territorial cooperation programmes, KSSENA recognises that sustainable development is closely linked with social responsibility, equal opportunities and inclusive organisational practices.

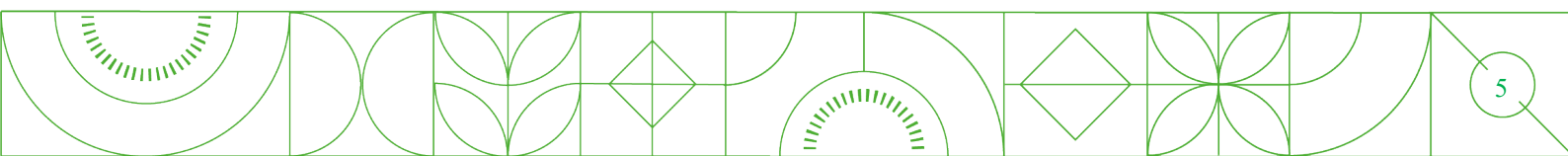
Gender equality is a fundamental principle of the European Union and an important component of responsible governance, good human resource management and organisational excellence. Promoting equal opportunities for women and men contributes to improved decision-making, greater diversity of perspectives, enhanced innovation capacity and a more attractive working environment. These principles are particularly relevant for organisations operating within research, innovation and public-interest sectors, where multidisciplinary cooperation and knowledge exchange play a central role.

The European Commission has further strengthened the importance of gender equality through the introduction of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) as an eligibility requirement for public bodies, research organisations and higher education institutions participating in Horizon Europe. Organisations falling within the scope of this requirement are expected to establish, implement and maintain a Gender Equality Plan that incorporates specific process-related requirements and addresses key thematic areas identified by the European Commission.

Although KSSENA is a relatively small organisation, it recognises that organisational size does not reduce the importance of promoting equality, preventing discrimination and ensuring fair treatment of all employees. On the contrary, a small organisation offers unique opportunities to foster an open, collaborative and respectful organisational culture in which equal opportunities are embedded in everyday management practices and professional relationships.

This Gender Equality Plan has therefore been prepared as a strategic management document that formalises KSSENA's commitment to equal opportunities and provides a structured framework for maintaining and continuously improving existing good practices.

The Plan establishes objectives, responsibilities, implementation measures and monitoring mechanisms that support transparency, accountability and continuous organisational development.



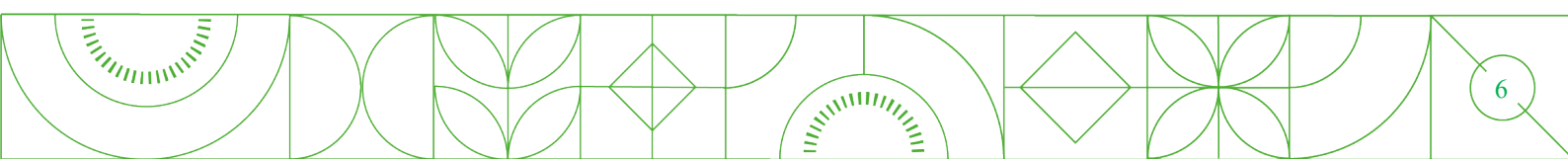
The document has been developed in accordance with the recommendations of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) through the Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool and reflects the mandatory process-related requirements for Gender Equality Plans established under Horizon Europe.

In addition, the Plan is consistent with:

- ✂ the values and objectives of the European Union concerning equality, non-discrimination and inclusion;
- ✂ the legislative framework of the Republic of Slovenia governing equal opportunities, employment and protection against discrimination;
- ✂ the strategic objectives of the Equal Opportunities Strategy of the City Municipality of Velenje, which promotes gender equality, work-life balance, equal participation in decision-making, prevention of discrimination and inclusive organisational culture within municipal institutions and organisations.

Rather than focusing solely on compliance with funding requirements, this Gender Equality Plan reflects KSSENA's broader commitment to responsible organisational governance. It aims to ensure that employment practices, career development opportunities, leadership, professional development and organisational culture continue to be based on the principles of fairness, transparency, merit and mutual respect.

The implementation of this Plan will support KSSENA in maintaining an inclusive working environment, strengthening organisational resilience, enhancing employee well-being and contributing to the successful delivery of European, national and regional projects addressing the green transition, climate neutrality and sustainable regional development.



3. About KSSENA

3.1 Organisational profile

KSSENA – Energy Agency of the Savinja, Šaleška and Koroška Region is a non-profit regional development organisation established in 2006 within the framework of the Intelligent Energy Europe (IEE) programme. The Agency was founded by the City Municipality of Velenje, the City Municipality of Celje, the City Municipality of Slovenj Gradec and the Public Utility Company Velenje with the objective of providing professional support for the sustainable development of the region through improved energy efficiency, renewable energy deployment and climate action.

Over nearly two decades of operation, KSSENA has developed into one of Slovenia's leading regional energy agencies, recognised for its expertise in the preparation and implementation of development projects financed through European and national programmes. The Agency works closely with municipalities, ministries, research organisations, educational institutions, businesses and civil society organisations to promote sustainable development and support the transition towards a climate-neutral society.

Today, KSSENA operates at regional, national and international levels, combining technical expertise with strategic planning, project development and stakeholder engagement. Through its multidisciplinary team, the Agency contributes to the development and implementation of innovative solutions addressing contemporary energy, environmental and societal challenges.

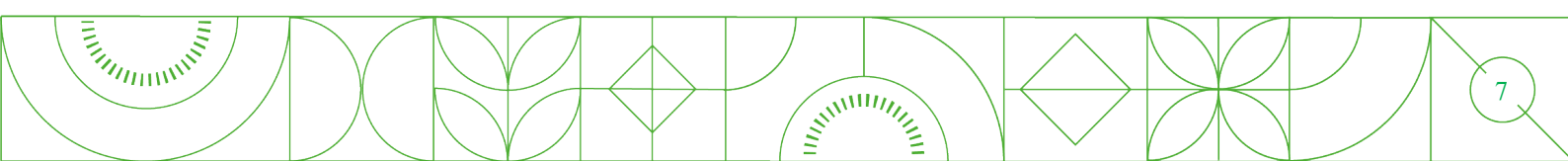
3.2 Mission and areas of activity

KSSENA's mission is to promote sustainable regional development by supporting energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable mobility, climate resilience and innovation through professional expertise, project management and international cooperation.

The Agency's activities encompass a broad range of technical, strategic and advisory services, including:

- ✕ sustainable energy planning and energy management;
- ✕ energy renovation of public and private buildings;
- ✕ development of renewable energy projects and energy communities;
- ✕ sustainable mobility planning and implementation;
- ✕ hydrogen technologies and alternative fuel infrastructure;
- ✕ preparation of strategic development documents and public policies;
- ✕ preparation and management of European and national development projects;
- ✕ technical assistance for investment planning and implementation;
- ✕ education, capacity building and public awareness raising;
- ✕ stakeholder engagement supporting the green transition and regional development.

By integrating technical, environmental, economic and social perspectives, KSSENA contributes to the implementation of sustainable solutions that generate long-term benefits for local communities, public authorities and citizens.



3.3 European Cooperation

International cooperation forms an integral part of KSSENA's activities.

The Agency has successfully participated in more than forty European cooperation projects funded through programmes including Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, Interreg, LIFE, ESPON, EUKI, the Cohesion Fund and other European initiatives. These projects have strengthened the Agency's technical expertise, project management capacity and international partnerships while enabling the transfer of knowledge and good practices across Europe.

Participation in European projects also places responsibilities on beneficiary organizations to uphold high standards of organizational governance, transparency, ethical conduct and equal opportunities. KSSENA recognizes that promoting gender equality and inclusive organizational practices contributes to stronger partnerships, improved project implementation and higher-quality research and innovation outcomes.

3.4 Organizational values

KSSENA's work is guided by a set of core organizational values that underpin both its external activities and its internal organizational culture.

These values include:

- ✕ professionalism and technical excellence;
- ✕ integrity, transparency and accountability;
- ✕ equal opportunities and respect for diversity;
- ✕ cooperation and partnership;
- ✕ innovation and continuous learning;
- ✕ environmental responsibility and sustainable development;
- ✕ respect for human dignity and ethical conduct.

These principles shape the Agency's relationships with employees, partners, clients and stakeholders and provide the foundation for responsible organizational governance.

3.5 Commitment to equal opportunities

As a public-interest organization operating within the European research, innovation and regional development environment, KSSENA recognizes that equal opportunities are essential for attracting and retaining talented professionals, encouraging innovation and ensuring high-quality organizational performance.

The Agency is committed to providing a working environment in which recruitment, career development, remuneration, training and participation in decision-making are based on competence, professional merit and objective criteria. KSSENA does not tolerate discrimination, harassment or unequal treatment on the grounds of gender or any other protected characteristic.

The Agency also recognizes the importance of maintaining an organizational culture that supports work-life balance, flexible working arrangements where operationally feasible, mutual respect and equal participation. These principles contribute to employee well-being, organizational resilience and long-term institutional sustainability.

This Gender Equality Plan builds upon these existing values by establishing a structured framework for monitoring progress, promoting continuous improvement and ensuring that gender equality remains an integral part of KSSENA's organizational development.

4. Legal and policy Framework

4.1 European Union framework

Gender equality is one of the founding values of the European Union and is embedded in the Union's legal order, public policies and strategic objectives. The principles of equal treatment, non-discrimination and equal opportunities are established in the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

These principles are further promoted through the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025, which aims to create a Union where women and men can participate equally in economic, political and social life, free from discrimination, stereotypes and gender-based violence. The strategy emphasizes equal economic participation, work-life balance, balanced decision-making and gender mainstreaming across all policy areas.

Within the European Research Area (ERA), gender equality is recognized as an essential component of research excellence, innovation capacity and institutional quality. The European Commission therefore requires certain categories of organizations participating in Horizon Europe to establish and maintain a Gender Equality Plan as an eligibility criterion. Such plans must be public, supported by dedicated resources, include the collection of sex-disaggregated data with regular monitoring, and provide measures to promote awareness and capacity building.

KSSENA supports these European objectives and recognizes that promoting gender equality contributes to stronger governance, improved organizational performance and more effective implementation of European projects.

4.2 National legislative framework

This Gender Equality Plan is implemented in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Slovenia governing equality, employment and protection against discrimination.

The principal legal framework includes:

- ✧ **The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia**, which guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on any personal circumstance.
- ✧ **The Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (ZEMŽM)**, establishing measures to promote equal opportunities and gender equality in public life, employment and decision-making (OG RS, n. 59/02, 61/07 – ZUNEO-A, 33/16 – ZVarD in 59/19).
- ✧ **The Protection Against Discrimination Act (ZVarD)**, prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimization on protected grounds, including sex and gender (OG RS, n. 33/16 in 21/18 – ZNOrg).
- ✧ **The Employment Relationships Act**, regulating equal treatment in employment, remuneration, recruitment, promotion, vocational training and working conditions.
- ✧ Other relevant legislation concerning occupational health and safety, personal data protection and labour relations.

KSSENA is committed to ensuring that its internal policies, employment practices and organizational procedures remain fully consistent with these legislative requirements.

4.3 Local strategic framework

As a regional organization established by local public authorities, KSSENA also contributes to the implementation of local strategic objectives promoting equality and inclusive development.

The **Equal Opportunities Strategy of the City Municipality of Velenje** identifies gender equality as an important element of sustainable local development and encourages public institutions to promote:

- ✕ equal participation of women and men in decision-making;
- ✕ equal opportunities in employment and career development;
- ✕ reconciliation of professional, family and private life;
- ✕ prevention of discrimination and gender-based violence;
- ✕ gender-sensitive communication and awareness raising;
- ✕ continuous monitoring of equality indicators.

The Strategy also highlights that representation below **40%** of either gender may indicate an imbalance requiring attention. This benchmark provides a useful reference point for monitoring gender representation within public organizations while recognizing that proportionality should always be interpreted in the context of organizational size and recruitment opportunities.

KSSENA supports these strategic objectives through its organizational culture, employment practices and cooperation with municipalities and regional stakeholders.

4.4 Institutional commitment

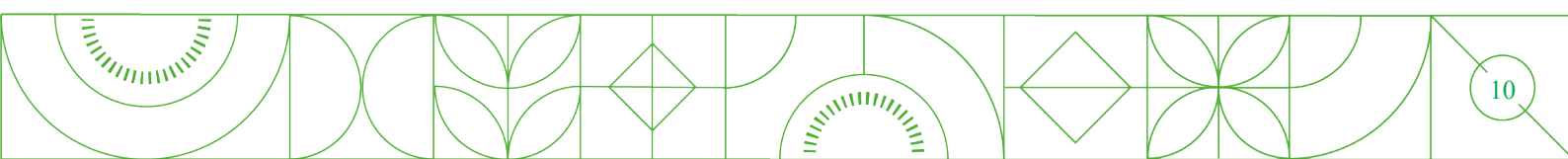
This Gender Equality Plan translates European, national and local policy objectives into measures that are appropriate for KSSENA's size, organizational structure and field of activity.

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and reflects the thematic priorities recommended for organizations participating in European research and innovation programmes.

In implementing this Plan, KSSENA is committed to:

- ✕ promoting equal opportunities in all aspects of employment;
- ✕ ensuring transparent and merit-based recruitment and career development;
- ✕ supporting balanced participation in decision-making;
- ✕ fostering an organizational culture based on dignity, respect and inclusion;
- ✕ promoting work-life balance through flexible and supportive working practices where operationally feasible;
- ✕ preventing discrimination, harassment and unequal treatment;
- ✕ monitoring progress through measurable indicators and periodic review.

The implementation of these commitments forms an integral part of KSSENA's organizational governance and contributes to the Agency's long-term strategic development.



5. Purpose and Objectives

5.1 Purpose of the Gender Equality Plan

This Gender Equality Plan establishes the strategic framework through which KSSENA promotes equal opportunities, prevents discrimination and supports an inclusive organizational culture. The Plan has been developed to ensure that gender equality is systematically integrated into the Agency's governance, human resource management and organizational development. It provides a structured approach for maintaining existing good practices while identifying opportunities for continuous improvement in accordance with European, national and local policy objectives. As a small multidisciplinary organization, KSSENA recognizes that equality is achieved not only through formal policies but also through transparent decision-making, mutual respect, professional integrity and a supportive working environment. This Gender Equality Plan therefore seeks to formalize principles and practices that are already embedded within the organization while strengthening accountability through clearly defined objectives, responsibilities and monitoring mechanisms. The Plan also supports KSSENA's participation in European research, innovation and territorial cooperation programmes by fulfilling the process-related requirements established under Horizon Europe for organizations required to maintain a Gender Equality Plan.

5.2 Strategic objectives

The overarching objective of this Gender Equality Plan is to ensure that all employees have equal opportunities to contribute to and benefit from KSSENA's work, irrespective of gender. To achieve this, KSSENA has established the following strategic objectives:

Objective 1 – Promote equal opportunities throughout the employment cycle

Ensure that recruitment, selection, career development, promotion, remuneration and access to professional development are based exclusively on competence, qualifications, experience and objective criteria.

Objective 2 – Foster balanced participation in decision-making

Maintain balanced representation and equal opportunities for women and men in management, project leadership and organizational decision-making processes.

Objective 3 – Support an inclusive and respectful organizational culture

Promote an organizational environment characterized by dignity, mutual respect, collaboration, transparency and zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment or unequal treatment.

Objective 4 – Promote work-life balance and employee well-being

Maintain working arrangements that enable employees to balance professional responsibilities with family and personal life, recognizing that employee well-being contributes to organizational resilience, motivation and long-term performance.

Objective 5 – Strengthen awareness and organizational capacity

Promote awareness of gender equality principles through communication, learning opportunities and regular discussion, ensuring that equality remains an integral part of organizational governance and everyday practice.

Objective 6 – Ensure continuous monitoring and improvement

Establish appropriate indicators and periodic review mechanisms to monitor progress, evaluate implementation and identify opportunities for further improvement throughout the implementation period of this Plan.

5.3 Guiding principles

Implementation of this Gender Equality Plan is guided by the following principles:

Equal Opportunities

Employment decisions shall be based on professional competence, qualifications and objective assessment, ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants and employees.

Merit and Transparency

Recruitment, promotion, allocation of responsibilities and access to professional development shall be transparent, fair and based on clearly defined criteria.

Respect and Inclusion

KSSENA promotes a working environment where every employee is treated with respect and where diversity of experience and perspectives is recognized as an organizational strength.

Work-Life Balance

KSSENA recognizes that employees fulfil professional, family and personal responsibilities throughout different stages of their lives. Where feasible, flexible working arrangements contribute to employee well-being, equal participation and organizational sustainability.

Continuous Improvement

Gender equality is understood as an ongoing organizational process. Regular monitoring, evaluation and review enable KSSENA to maintain existing good practice while responding to future organizational needs and developments.

Accountability

Successful implementation of this Plan requires commitment from management and active participation by all employees. Responsibility for promoting equal opportunities is shared across the organization.

5.4 Scope of the plan

This GEP applies to **all** employees of KSSENA, irrespective of employment status or position. The principles and measures contained in this document shall be considered in relation to:

- ✕ recruitment and selection;
- ✕ working conditions;
- ✕ remuneration and career development;
- ✕ professional training and lifelong learning;
- ✕ leadership and decision-making;
- ✕ work-life balance;
- ✕ prevention of discrimination and harassment;
- ✕ organizational communication;
- ✕ monitoring and continuous improvement.

Where appropriate, the principles of this GEP shall also inform cooperation with and herewith extend to external experts, project partners, contractors and other stakeholders engaged in KSSENA's activities.

5.5 Expected outcomes

Through implementation of this GEP, KSSENA aims to:

- ✕ maintain balanced gender representation across the organization;
- ✕ preserve transparent and merit-based employment practices;
- ✕ strengthen employee satisfaction and organizational well-being;
- ✕ support equal access to professional development opportunities;
- ✕ maintain an inclusive organizational culture based on mutual respect;
- ✕ ensure compliance with relevant European and Slovenian policy requirements;
- ✕ reinforce KSSENA's reputation as a responsible and trustworthy partner in European cooperation projects.

The successful implementation of these objectives will contribute to KSSENA's long-term organizational resilience, institutional credibility and ability to deliver high-quality services for municipalities, citizens and project partners.

6. Current situation analysis

6.1 Purpose of the baseline assessment

A baseline assessment provides the foundation for an effective Gender Equality Plan by identifying the current status of gender equality within the organization and informing future monitoring and evaluation. As recommended by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), organizations should establish a factual understanding of their organizational context before defining objectives and measures. The purpose of this assessment is therefore not to identify deficiencies, but to provide an evidence-based overview of KSSENA's current organizational profile and to establish reference indicators against which future progress can be monitored. Due to the Agency's relatively small workforce, the assessment is based primarily on aggregated organizational data and qualitative observations. No personal data are included in this document, ensuring compliance with applicable data protection legislation while maintaining transparency regarding the implementation of the GEP.

6.2 Workforce composition

At the time of preparing this GEP, KSSENA fully employs **12 staff members**. The overall workforce demonstrates a balanced gender distribution:

Indicator (gender balance)

Total employees (Male): 6

Total employees (Female): 6

Total employees (Other): 0

Ratio (OTM): 50%

Indicator (position and roles)

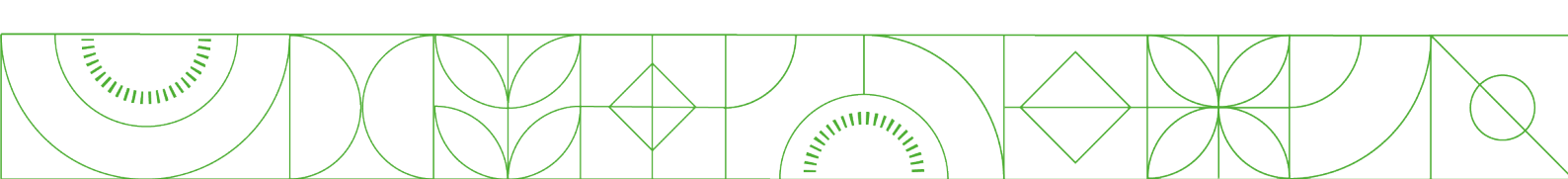
Employees in senior roles (Male): 4

Employees in senior roles (Female): 3

Employees in senior roles (Other): 0

Ratio (OTM): 42,9%

This balanced representation indicates that both women and men are equally represented, both in terms of total employees as well as in the context of roles and positions within the organization. Moreover, the deviation in salary between Male and OTM employees is less than 5% despite the higher share of senior roles and responsibilities allocated to male employees. Given the Agency's small size, individual recruitment or staff changes may temporarily influence these proportions. Consequently, gender representation will continue to be monitored over time, with emphasis placed on maintaining equal opportunities rather than achieving fixed numerical targets.



6.3 Representation in leadership and decision-making

Balanced participation in leadership contributes to diverse perspectives, sound decision-making and organizational resilience. The current composition of management and senior professional positions demonstrates balanced representation of women and men across leadership responsibilities. Although organizational structures within a small agency differ from those of larger institutions, the available data indicate that neither gender is systematically underrepresented in positions involving responsibility, project management or organizational decision-making.

This observation is consistent with the benchmark referenced in the *Equal Opportunities Strategy of the City Municipality of Velenje*, which considers representation below 40% of either gender as a potential indication of imbalance requiring attention. Current representation within KSSENA exceeds this indicative threshold.

6.4 Recruitment, career development and remuneration

KSSENA applies recruitment and employment practices based on professional competence, qualifications and organizational needs.

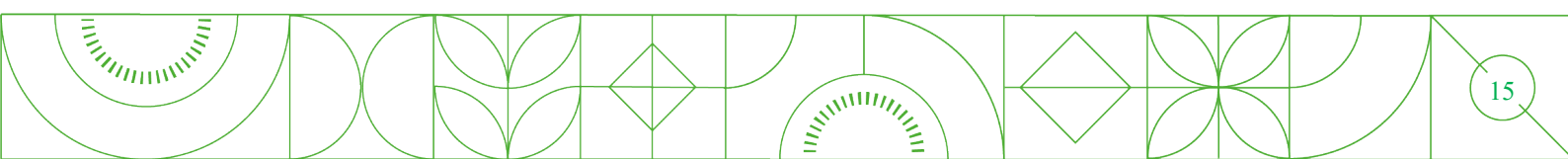
The available organizational data do not indicate structural barriers affecting recruitment, access to professional responsibilities or career development on the basis of gender. Similarly, the baseline assessment does not identify evidence of systematic gender-based differences in remuneration. Any variations in salary levels are consistent with differences in job responsibilities, managerial functions, professional experience and individual roles rather than gender. Given the Agency's limited number of employees, statistical interpretation of remuneration data requires caution. KSSENA will therefore continue to monitor aggregated remuneration indicators periodically to ensure continued transparency and equal treatment.

6.5 Work-life balance and organizational culture

KSSENA recognizes that employee well-being and work-life balance contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness, staff retention and long-term sustainability.

The Agency has developed a collaborative organizational culture characterized by flexibility, mutual trust and professional responsibility. Where operationally feasible, employees are supported through flexible working arrangements that facilitate the reconciliation of professional responsibilities with family and personal life.

The baseline assessment indicates that these practices contribute positively to employee well-being and organizational stability. Maintaining this supportive working environment will remain an important objective throughout the implementation of this GEP.



6.6 Training, awareness and professional development

Professional development is an integral component of KSSENA's organizational culture. Employees are encouraged to participate in training, conferences, project meetings and other learning opportunities that support both individual career development and organizational capacity building. As part of this GEP, KSSENA will further strengthen awareness of equality, inclusion and respectful workplace practices through appropriate communication and capacity-building activities proportionate to the size and needs of the organization.

6.7 Overall Assessment

The baseline assessment indicates that KSSENA already demonstrates a high level of gender balance across its workforce, leadership structure and organizational culture.

The available evidence does not indicate systemic gender inequality in recruitment, participation in decision-making or access to professional opportunities. Furthermore, the Agency has established organizational practices that support flexibility, collaboration and work-life balance. Accordingly, the principal objective of this Gender Equality Plan is **not to address identified structural inequalities**, but to:

- ✦ maintain existing good practice;
- ✦ formalize organizational commitments;
- ✦ strengthen monitoring and accountability;
- ✦ promote continuous improvement;
- ✦ ensure long-term compliance with European and national policy requirements.

This evidence-based approach provides a strong foundation for the implementation of the strategic objectives and measures presented in the following chapters.

7. Gender Equality Action Plan

7.1 Introduction

The Gender Equality Action Plan translates the strategic objectives presented in this document into concrete measures to be implemented during the period 2026–2030. The measures have been designed in accordance with the size, organizational structure and operational needs of KSSENA. They build upon existing organizational practices while introducing a structured framework for continuous monitoring, periodic review and ongoing improvement.

Implementation of the Plan is based on the following principles:

- ✕ proportionality to organizational size;
- ✕ shared responsibility between management and employees;
- ✕ transparency and accountability;
- ✕ continuous improvement;
- ✕ regular monitoring and evaluation.

The measures are organized around six strategic objectives:

Strategic Objective 1 - **Promote balanced participation in decision-making**

Strategic Objective 2 - **Ensure equal opportunities through employment**

Strategic Objective 3 - **Foster an inclusive and respectful working environment**

Strategic Objective 4 - **Support work-life balance and employee well-being**

Strategic Objective 5 - **Strengthen awareness and organizational capacity**

Strategic Objective 6 - **Monitor progress and ensure continuous improvement**

SO 1: Promote balanced participation in decision-making

Objective

To maintain balanced opportunities for women and men to participate in leadership, project coordination and organizational decision-making.

Measure

Responsibility Timeline Indicator

Consider balanced representation when assigning project leadership roles, where competencies and operational needs allow	Director	Ongoing	Gender distribution reviewed annually
Encourage equal participation in internal decision-making processes	Management	Ongoing	Employee feedback
Monitor gender representation in leadership positions	Director	Annually	Annual monitoring report

SO 2: Ensure equal opportunities through employment

Objective

To ensure that recruitment, selection, remuneration, career development and access to professional opportunities are based exclusively on competence, qualifications and objective criteria.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator
Review recruitment procedures to ensure transparency and equal opportunities	Director	Ongoing	Recruitment procedures reviewed periodically
Ensure vacancy notices use gender-neutral and inclusive language	Director / Administrative staff	Ongoing	All vacancy notices reviewed
Monitor workforce composition by gender	Director	Annually	Annual workforce statistics prepared
Review aggregated remuneration indicators	Director	Annually	Annual review completed

SO 3: Foster an inclusive and respectful working environment

Objective

To maintain a workplace characterized by dignity, respect, professionalism and zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator
Communicate organizational expectations regarding respectful behavior	Director	Annual reminder	Communication completed
Maintain confidential procedures for reporting inappropriate behavior	Director	Ongoing	Procedure available
Promote respectful communication in everyday work	All employees	Continuous	No substantiated incidents of discrimination or harassment

SO 4: Support work-life balance and employee well-being

Objective

To maintain working practices that enable employees to balance professional responsibilities with family and personal life while ensuring effective organisational performance.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator
Continue flexible working arrangements where operationally feasible	Director	Ongoing	Flexible arrangements maintained
Encourage planning of meetings within normal working hours whenever possible	All managers	Ongoing	Meeting practices reviewed
Promote employee well-being through supportive management practices	Management	Continuous	Employee feedback considered during annual review

SO 5: Strengthen awareness and organizational capacity

Objective

To increase awareness of gender equality, equal opportunities and inclusive organizational practices.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator
Provide periodic information on gender equality principles	Director	At least annually	Information session or communication completed
Encourage participation in relevant external training where appropriate	Director	Ongoing	Participation recorded
Include gender equality in staff induction for new employees	Administrative staff	As required	Induction checklist updated

SO 6: Monitor progress and ensure continuous improvement

Objective

To evaluate implementation of the Gender Equality Plan through regular monitoring, reporting and review.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicator
Collect sex-disaggregated workforce data	Director	Annually	Dataset updated
Prepare an annual implementation review	Director	Annually	Report completed
Review the Gender Equality Plan and update measures where necessary	Management	Every two years	Review documented
Prepare a revised Gender Equality Plan before the expiry of the current Plan	Director	2030	New GEP adopted

7.2 Implementation Principles

Successful implementation of this Action Plan depends upon the active commitment of management and all employees. Given KSSENA's organizational size, implementation will not require the establishment of additional organizational structures or specialized committees. Instead, responsibility for promoting gender equality will be integrated into existing management processes, project management practices and human resource procedures.

Where appropriate, implementation measures may be adjusted during the implementation period to reflect organizational development, legislative changes or new European policy requirements, provided that the overall objectives of this Gender Equality Plan remain unchanged.

8. Governance and monitoring

8.1 Governance

Implementation of the GEP is integrated into KSSENA's existing governance and management framework. Given the Agency's size and organizational structure, no additional organizational bodies or dedicated committees are required for the implementation of this Plan. Responsibility for promoting gender equality forms part of the Agency's overall management responsibilities and is embedded within existing organizational processes. The Director is responsible for ensuring that the principles and measures set out in this Plan are implemented, monitored and periodically reviewed. All employees share responsibility for contributing to a respectful, inclusive and non-discriminatory working environment through their everyday professional conduct. This governance approach reflects the principle of proportionality and ensures that the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan remains practical, efficient and fully integrated into KSSENA's normal operations.

8.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Director

The Director has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan and shall:

- ✕ ensure implementation of the measures contained in this Plan;
- ✕ promote equal opportunities in organizational decision-making;
- ✕ monitor implementation and review progress annually;
- ✕ ensure the collection of aggregated sex-disaggregated organizational data;
- ✕ support awareness-raising and capacity-building activities;
- ✕ initiate revisions of the Plan where necessary.

Management (other)

Members of the management team shall:

- ✕ apply the principles of equal opportunities in their daily work;
- ✕ promote transparent and objective decision-making;
- ✕ support work-life balance where operationally feasible;
- ✕ encourage equal access to professional development;
- ✕ contribute to monitoring and continuous improvement.

Employees

All employees are expected to:

- treat colleagues, partners and stakeholders with dignity and respect;
- contribute to an inclusive organizational culture;
- comply with policies relating to equal opportunities and non-discrimination;
- participate in awareness-raising and training activities where appropriate;
- report inappropriate behaviour through established organizational procedures.

8.3 Monitoring Framework

Monitoring enables KSSENA to evaluate the effectiveness of this Gender Equality Plan and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. Given the Agency's size, monitoring will focus on a limited number of meaningful indicators that can be collected without creating unnecessary administrative burden.

The following categories will be monitored annually:

N.	Monitoring Area	Indicator
KPI 1	Workforce composition	Number and proportion of women and men
KPI 2	Leadership	Gender representation in management and senior professional roles
KPI 3	Recruitment	Gender distribution of newly recruited employees (where applicable)
KPI 4	Professional development	Participation in training and professional development activities
KPI 5	Work-life balance	Availability and use of flexible working arrangements (aggregated where appropriate)
KPI 6	Awareness	Equality-related communication and training activities completed
KPI 7	Organizational culture	Reported incidents of discrimination or harassment (aggregated and anonymized)

The indicators presented above establish the baseline monitoring framework for the implementation period 2026–2030.

9. Communication and awareness

9.1 Purpose

Effective implementation of the GEP depends on ensuring that its principles, objectives and measures are understood and supported throughout the organisation. KSSENA is committed to fostering an organisational culture in which equal opportunities, mutual respect and inclusive practices are integrated into everyday work. Communication and awareness-raising activities will therefore support the implementation of this Plan by promoting understanding, encouraging dialogue and reinforcing organisational values.

9.2 Internal communication

The GEP shall be made available to all employees and introduced as part of the Agency's internal governance framework.

Internal communication activities may include:

- ✦ informing employees about the adoption and objectives of the Plan;
- ✦ providing access to the current version of the document through internal communication channels;
- ✦ introducing new employees to the principles of the Plan during onboarding;
- ✦ communicating updates arising from annual reviews or revisions;
- ✦ encouraging open discussion of equality-related issues where appropriate.

Communication should remain proportionate to the size of the organisation and integrated into existing internal communication practices.

9.3 Awareness and capacity building

KSSENA recognises that awareness contributes to maintaining an inclusive organisational culture and preventing discrimination.

To support implementation of this Plan, the Agency will:

- ✦ promote awareness of equal opportunities and respectful workplace behaviour;
- ✦ encourage participation in relevant seminars, workshops and professional events where appropriate;
- ✦ disseminate relevant guidance and information produced by European and national institutions;
- ✦ consider equality aspects, where relevant, in organisational discussions concerning human resource management and workplace practices.

Training and awareness activities will be proportionate to organisational needs and available resources.

9.4 External communication

In accordance with the requirements of the European Commission, this GEP shall be adopted as a public document and made publicly available through appropriate organisational channels. By publishing the Plan, KSSENA demonstrates its commitment to transparency, equal opportunities and responsible organisational governance.

The Agency may also communicate relevant achievements, good practices and updates related to implementation through its website, annual reports or other appropriate communication channels.

10. Final Provisions

10.1 Adoption

This GEP is adopted by the Director of KSSENA and enters into force upon its approval. The Plan represents KSSENA's official strategic framework for promoting gender equality and equal opportunities during the implementation period.

10.2 Implementation Period

This Gender Equality Plan covers the period **2026–2030**.

Implementation measures shall be carried out in accordance with the Action Plan, while monitoring and reporting activities shall be undertaken annually.

10.3 Review

The implementation of the Plan shall be reviewed annually.

Where organisational, legislative or policy developments require amendments, the Director may initiate revisions during the implementation period. A comprehensive evaluation shall be undertaken before the expiry of the Plan to support the preparation of the subsequent Gender Equality Plan.

10.4 Publication

In accordance with Horizon Europe requirements, this Gender Equality Plan shall be published on KSSENA's official website and made accessible to employees and other interested stakeholders.

Personal data shall not be included in the published version. Monitoring and reporting shall rely exclusively on aggregated organisational indicators in accordance with applicable data protection legislation.

10.5 Entry into Force

This Gender Equality Plan enters into force on the date of its adoption and shall remain valid until 31 December 2030 unless replaced or amended by a subsequent decision of the Director.