



BULGARIAN
ASSOCIATION
OF RECYCLING



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

Introduction

The Bulgarian Association of Recycling (BAR) seeks to raise self-awareness of gender equality issues, and of unconscious biases in the organization, in line with the priority of the European Commission and national legislation to improve gender equality. BAR also encourages diversity in regards to age, culture, physical ability, sexual orientation, and multilingualism both within our team and with all stakeholders we partner with. Our **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)** represents a formal and transparent document, accessible on our institution's website, which highlights the essential goals of gender equality and intersectionality. Through the GEP, we aim to achieve the following:

- ❖ **Increasing Self-Awareness and Addressing Unconscious Biases:**

BAR endeavors to raise awareness of gender equality issues and unconscious biases within our organization. By fostering open dialogues and educational initiatives, we seek to create a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

- ❖ **Embracing Diversity and Inclusion:**

We actively promote diversity and inclusion, recognizing the value that individuals from different backgrounds and perspectives bring to our team and our partnerships with stakeholders. Embracing diversity is key to driving innovation and progress.

- ❖ **Concrete Objectives and Priorities:**

The GEP outlines clear and specific objectives related to gender equality and diversity. We prioritize actions that aim to eliminate gender-based barriers, promote equal opportunities, and ensure a fair representation of all genders across all levels of the organization.

- ❖ **Intersectionality at the Core:**

Acknowledging the complexity of human identities and experiences, our GEP incorporates an intersectional approach. We recognize that gender equality intersects with other dimensions, and we are committed to addressing overlapping forms of discrimination and inequality.

- ❖ **Implementation Plan for the Next Three Years:**

To achieve lasting change, the GEP presents a detailed implementation plan spanning the next three years. This roadmap includes timelines, responsible stakeholders, and progress evaluation mechanisms to track our advancements effectively.

Principal objectives

“Through the concerted efforts outlined in the GEP, we aim to create a workplace that champions diversity, equality, and respect. By fostering an inclusive environment, we empower all employees to thrive and contribute to our shared success.”

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is firmly rooted in one of the Association's core principles: providing equal opportunities for career development to all employees, while strictly prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination. The GEP outlines a series of specific actions based on the following five key objectives:

1. Raise awareness of gender equality

The plan seeks to enhance awareness and understanding of gender equality issues across the organization. By promoting education and open discussions, we aim to foster an inclusive and supportive work environment.

2. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Recognizing the significance of work-life balance, the GEP encourages a culture that supports employees in achieving a harmonious integration of personal and professional life. We strive to create a positive and empowering atmosphere that benefits everyone.

3. Promoting Gender Balance in Management Roles

Our commitment to gender equality extends to leadership positions. The GEP endeavors to identify and eliminate barriers, ensuring equitable representation of all genders in management roles.

4. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

To create a more diverse and well-rounded leadership team, the GEP actively promotes gender balance in higher decision-making levels. We believe diverse perspectives enrich the decision-making process and drive positive change.

5. Prevent abusive behaviour of a sexist or sexual nature and take necessary action whenever allegation of misconduct

The GEP takes a strong stance against any form of sexist or sexual misconduct within the Association. We implement comprehensive policies and procedures to address such issues promptly and impartially, ensuring a safe and respectful workplace for all.

Approach

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of BAR is closely intertwined with both national and European politics in the field of gender equality.

At the national level, the Bulgarian Association of Recycling's GEP is influenced by the "National Strategy and Action plan for Promoting the Equality of Women and Men 2021-2030." This strategy is a pivotal document that outlines the country's approach to achieving gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Building on the previous strategy from 2016-2020, the current strategy prioritizes various areas crucial for gender equality advancement. The Strategy and Action Plan's Priority Areas, which include equality in the labour market, reducing the gender pay gap, promoting gender balance in decision-making processes, combating violence against women, and challenging gender stereotypes and sexism, provide a clear framework for BAR's GEP.

Furthermore, BAR's GEP is designed to resonate with the priorities of the European Union's policies and initiatives on gender equality. As a member of the EU, Bulgaria is committed to upholding the principles of gender equality outlined by the European Commission. By aligning its GEP with the broader European agenda on gender equality, BAR demonstrates its commitment to contributing to a more inclusive and equal Europe.

Scope of the Plan

The plan has been meticulously developed for a comprehensive three-year period, spanning from 2023 to 2025. It encompasses all essential activities that arise from BAR's responsibilities as an organization. This careful alignment is in strict accordance with both European and national normative and strategic documents, which provide vital guidelines for ensuring gender equality between women and men.

Objectives of the Plan and priority areas of intervention

The Plan for gender equality in BAR identifies opportunities to build on the achievements to ensure balance. On this basis, the following main goal was laid out:

Improvement of the trend of the balance between women and men and implementation of good practices to achieve de facto gender equality in BAR.

The Plan highlights priority areas and objectives as follows:

1. Raise awareness of gender equality

Objective 1.1 Creating conditions for and pursuit of gender equality.

2. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Objective 2.1: Assessing Employee Requirements to Enhance Work-Life Balance;

Objective 2.2: Fostering a Work-Life Balance for Our Employees;

3. Promote and support gender balance in management roles

Objective 3.1: Advancing Organizational Gender Parity: Empowering Equal Opportunities for All;

Objective 3.2: Provision Organisational initiatives on ensuring gender equity in programmatic implementation;

4. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Objective 4.1: Building an Inclusive Environment: Fostering Gender Equality in All Aspects;

Objective 4.2: Evaluating the Gender Balance in Management: Assessing Strengths and Areas for Improvement;

Objective 4.3: Achieving and maintaining balance in the Association's structure

5. Prevent abusive behaviour of a sexist or sexual nature and take necessary action whenever allegation of misconduct

Objective 5.1: Environmental Assessment and Needs Identification: Understanding the Context for Improvement;

Objective 5.2: Optimizing Control Mechanisms for Improved Performance;

Objective 5.3: Cultivating a Thriving Institutional Culture.

Action plan per priority areas for intervention

Within this document, each priority area is carefully outlined, with specific objectives, measures for implementation, and realistic deadlines. Moreover, we have developed a robust monitoring system to track the progress of each intervention, allowing us to identify strengths, address challenges, and continually refine our strategies. Additionally, a budget allocation underscores our firm commitment to investing in gender equality initiatives.

We acknowledge that achieving gender equality requires a collective and sustained effort, and we are determined to fulfil our responsibilities as an organization. We firmly believe that by empowering and supporting all our employees, regardless of gender, we create a stronger and more resilient workforce, unlocking the full potential of our organization.

This action plan is a testament to our unwavering dedication to upholding the principles of equality and diversity. Together, we embark on this transformative journey, bound by the shared goal of building an inclusive workplace where every individual can thrive, contribute, and achieve their aspirations.

ACTION PLAN PER PRIORITY AREAS FOR INTERVENTION

1. Raise awareness of gender equality

Measure 1.1. Roll Out Gender Equality Policy (GEP) Company-wide: Introducing it to All Employees and including it in Onboarding for New Hires

Measure 1.2. Gender Equality Workshops: Organising of interactive workshops that address gender equality issues, providing employees with a safe space to discuss and learn about various aspects of gender bias, stereotypes, and the importance of inclusivity in the workplace. Participation of experts, guest speakers, or employee testimonials to share their experiences and insights, fostering empathy and understanding.

Measure 1.3. Diversity and Inclusion Campaign: Launching an organisation-wide campaign focused on promoting diversity and inclusion, with a special emphasis on gender equality. Posters, videos, emails, and social media can be used to highlight success stories of women in leadership roles and showcase the organization's commitment to gender equality. Encouraging employees to participate actively by sharing their own stories and perspectives.

| Objective | Measure | Indicator | Deadline | Monitoring | Budget | Responsible person |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------|--|--------|--------------------|
| Creating conditions for and pursuit of gender equality | Roll Out Gender Equality Policy (GEP) Company-wide: Introducing it to All Employees and Including it in Onboarding for New Hires; | -Number of staff members having received the GEP; | Ongoing | Regularly evaluation of measures effectiveness and making of necessary adjustments to continuously foster a culture of gender equality in the workplace. | BAR | Manager |
| | Gender Equality Workshops; | -Number of staff members trained; | 4 workshops organised till 2025 | | BAR | Manager |
| | Diversity and Inclusion Campaign | -Number of events organised; | Ongoing | | BAR | Manager |

2. Work-life balance and organizational culture

Measure 2.1. Employee Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms: Regularly conducting of anonymous employee surveys to gather feedback on work-life balance and the organizational culture. Using of insights obtained to make data-driven improvements and address any areas of concern. Demonstrating a commitment to actively listening to employees' needs and acting on feedback fosters a culture of trust and openness.

Measure 2.2. Flexible Work Arrangements: Implementing flexible work arrangements that empower employees to balance their personal and professional responsibilities effectively. Options such as remote work, flexible hours, compressed workweeks, or job-sharing are available. Encouraging managers to support these arrangements and ensure that employees feel comfortable utilizing them without fear of negative consequences.

Measure 2.3. Team Building Activities: Organizing team-building activities that encourage camaraderie and foster a supportive work environment. Engaging in team outings, recreational events, or even virtual social gatherings to build stronger connections among employees. When teams feel connected and supported, they are more likely to collaborate effectively and understand the importance of accommodating each other's work-life needs.

Measure 2.4. Employee Wellness Programs: Development of comprehensive wellness programs that address various aspects of well-being, including physical, mental, and emotional health. Organizing workshops, webinars, and sessions on stress management, mindfulness, and work-life balance techniques. Providing access to resources like fitness classes, counseling services, and mental health support to help employees maintain a healthy work-life equilibrium.

| Objective | Measure | Indicator | Deadline | Monitoring | Resources | Responsible person |
|--|--|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------|--------------------|
| Assessing Employee Requirements to Enhance Work-Life Balance | Employee Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms | -Conducted survey research; -Feedbacks received; | 3 surveys organised till 2025; | Continuously assessing and refine the measures based on feedback and changing needs to create a workplace that values employee well-being and organizational success. | BAR | Manager |
| Fostering a Work-Life Balance for Our Employees; | Flexible Work Arrangements | -Number of participants in team buildings, workshops, webinars, and sessions on stress management | Ongoing | | BAR | Manager |
| | Team Building Activities | | | | | |
| | Employee Wellness Programs | | | | | |

3. Promote and support gender balance in management roles

Measure 3.1. Gender-Blind Hiring and Promotion Practices: Implementing gender-blind hiring and promotion practices to ensure that candidates are evaluated solely based on their qualifications, skills, and experiences, rather than their gender. This can help eliminate unconscious biases and increase the likelihood of women being selected for management roles based on merit.

Measure 3.2. Leadership Development Programs: Establishment leadership development programs that specifically target and encourage the advancement of women into management roles. Providing tailored training, mentorship, and coaching opportunities to help women enhance their leadership skills and build the necessary confidence to pursue higher positions within the organization.

Measure 3.3. Leadership Training on Unconscious Bias: Conducting training sessions for current managers and leaders on unconscious bias and its impact on decision-making. Implementation of strategies to recognize and address these biases in their managerial practices to ensure a fair and equitable process for identifying and promoting talent.

| Objective | Measure | Indicator | Deadline | Monitoring | Resources | Responsible person |
|---|---|---|----------|---|-----------|--------------------|
| Advancing Organizational Gender Parity: Empowering Equal Opportunities for All | Gender-Blind Hiring and Promotion Practices | -The number of women holding posts in managerial positions; | Ongoing | Regularly review the dashboard's effectiveness and relevance. Feedback from employees to identify areas for improvement and to ensure that the monitoring process remains aligned with the association's goals. | BAR | Manager |
| | Leadership Development Programs | -Number of staff members trained; | Ongoing | | BAR | Manager |
| Provision Organisational initiatives on ensuring gender equity in programmatic implementation; | Leadership Training on Unconscious Bias | | Ongoing | | BAR | Manager |

4. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Measure 4.1. Support Networks and Employee Resource Group: Encouraging the formation of employee resource groups or support networks that foster gender balance and inclusivity in leadership. These groups can provide a platform for employees to share experiences, exchange ideas, and collaborate on initiatives that promote gender equality at all levels.

Measure 4.2. Transparency and Accountability: Establishing clear goals and targets for gender balance in leadership roles, and communicate them transparently to all employees.

Measure 4.3. Gender-Inclusive Leadership Training: Creating decision-making forums or committees that include a balanced representation of genders. This ensures that diverse viewpoints are considered when making important organizational decisions. Having a gender-balanced decision-making team can lead to more comprehensive and well-rounded outcomes.

Measure 4.4. Leadership Development Programs for Women: Implementing specialized leadership development programs targeted at women employees. These programs should focus on equipping women with the necessary skills, confidence, and knowledge to excel in leadership roles. Providing mentorship and coaching opportunities within these programs can also be beneficial in supporting women's career progression.

| Objective | Measure | Indicator | Deadline | Monitoring | Resources | Responsible person |
|--|--|---|---------------------|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Building an Inclusive Environment: Fostering Gender Equality in All Aspects | Support Networks and Employee Resource Group | - Employee Resource Group Formed - Annual reports prepared | 2 Annual Reports | Communicate the results of the Gender Balance and Inclusivity Scorecard with employees, management, and other stakeholders. Transparency in reporting fosters accountability | BAR | Manager |
| Evaluating the Gender Balance in Management: Assessing Strengths and Areas for Improvement | Transparency and Accountability | - Database prepared; - Monitoring and analysis performed | 2025 | | BAR | Manager |
| Achieving and maintaining balance in the Association's structure | Gender-Inclusive Leadership Training | -Number of Leadership Training organized and conducted (minimum 1 training per year); -Number of participants; | 1 Training per year | | BAR | Manager |

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|--|---|---|-------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Leadership Development Programs for Women | -Number of Leadership Development Programs organized and conducted (minimum 1 training per year); -Number of participants; | 1 leadership program per year | and demonstrates the organization's commitment to gender equality. | | |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------|--|--|--|

5. Prevent abusive behavior of a sexist or sexual nature and take necessary action whenever allegation of misconduct

Measure 5.1. Climate Survey: Conducting climate survey to gauge the overall health of the work environment and assess whether employees feel safe and supported. Using the survey results to identify trends and areas of concern that may require further attention.

Measure 5.2. Reporting System: Establishment of a confidential and anonymous reporting system where employees can safely report incidents of abusive behavior or misconduct. Encouraging employees to come forward without fear of retaliation, and ensure that the reporting process is accessible and easy to use.

Measure 5.3. Supportive Resources: Offering support resources for individuals who report abusive behavior or are victims of misconduct. This can include access to counseling, employee assistance programs, and legal advice, ensuring that they are not left feeling isolated or vulnerable.

Measure 5.4. Cultural Awareness and Training: Conducting ongoing training and awareness programs to promote a culture of respect and equality in the workplace. This can include workshops on diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias, which can help prevent abusive behaviors from arising in the first place.

| Objective | Measure | Indicator | Deadline | Monitoring | Resources | Responsible person |
|---|----------------|------------------------------|----------|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Environmental Assessment and Needs Identification: Understanding the Context for Improvement; | Climate Survey | -Conducted 1 survey/research | Ongoing | Conducting periodic assessments of employees' awareness of the organization's policies and procedures related to preventing abusive behavior. This can be done through surveys or quizzes to ensure that employees are | BAR | Manager |

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|--|---------------------------------|---|---------|---|-----|---------|
| Optimizing Control Mechanisms for Improved Performance | Reporting System | -Number of informed employees; -Number of reporting protocols | Ongoing | knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities | BAR | Manager |
| | Supportive Resources | -Number of informed employees. | Ongoing | | | |
| Cultivating a Thriving Institutional Culture | Cultural Awareness and Training | -Conducted 4 trainings and/or workshops on diversity, inclusion, and unconscious bias; -Number of participants | Ongoing | | | BAR |