



WISEFOUR

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)

July, 2022



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Glossary

Gender is part of a person's social and personal identity. It is typically used with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological, referring to the characteristics that a culture delineates as masculine/male or feminine/female.

Gender visibility is a term that refers to the visibility of both men and women.

Pay equity means individuals receiving equal pay for work of equal or comparable value and there is no gender bias at any point in the remuneration process (for example at commencement, base salary, out-of-cycle pay reviews, discretionary loadings and bonuses, and movement within the total remuneration range).

Gender Ratio is the number of females and males in a society/work environment



*Timeframe of the Plan

Wisefour LTD discussed and agreed upon the creation and approval of a four-year Gender Equality Action Plan, set to be implemented from July 2022 up to July 2026. Even though the plan is being established and published now, the company has always worked towards monitoring gender aspects within the organization.

I. The Company

Wisefour is a boutique consulting, research and technology company established since 2009 in Cyprus. They are exceedingly cross-functional, with in-depth knowledge across several commercial and research topics. Wisefour's team consists of interdisciplinary experts with broad knowledge across several sectors; engineers, researchers, data scientists, social scientists, financial experts, ethical and legal experts work together to bring the best results to all their partners.

II. Gender Equality Plan

Introduction

In order to align our company with the EU policies for the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of gender inequality and discrimination, sexual harassment and gender-based violence, we drafted the present Gender Equality Plan, which has taken into account the international and national regulatory framework on gender equality. It is based on the analysis of sex-disaggregated data at Wisefour, and presents the basic principles of actions to be implemented over the 2022-2026 period at Wisefour.

Action Plan

A Gender Equality Plan (GEP) incorporates organizational priorities to address the gender equality agenda of entities and organizations, whether private or public. It is a soft policy structure that ensures equality among the genders and fair access for the managerial, research, and support staff. It is a tool that urges the organizations to mainstream gender and ensure equality measures in strategy formulation and decision-making.



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The first step is to assess the gender equality state in the company, and then start setting up the Gender Equality Plan. Results of the first analysis will allow the identification of all the areas that require intervention, and those that need to be addressed in the GEP. The areas need to be prioritized as not all of them can be changed and/or addressed at the same time and depending on the available resources. It is also advised to bring members of the company together to assess the situation and participate in the creation of the GEP. Moreover, involving managerial and leading staff in the process is important and this will ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the measures that are proposed in the plan. The plan needs to address a variety of issues regarding the organization's system and community, as it will be discussed further. The main elements for one to consider when setting up the GEP are timeline, objectives, measures and indicators.

III. Regulatory Framework

International Regulatory Framework

With the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy, the European Commission has committed to incorporating and promoting gender equality actions in research, innovation, technology and culture. The European Commission bases its strategy on a well-established European regulatory framework which encourages and promotes gender equality in the labour and research sectors.

Legal Entities are encouraged to have a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) that incorporates indicators and policies regarding gender equality in the company. The GEP is monitored by specific representatives in each entity, it identifies activities and monitoring plans, and sets out organizational priorities for addressing gender equality.

According to the European Commission's guide¹, the mandatory requirements for a GEP are as follows:

- It must be a public document: The GEP should be a proper document signed by the manager and therefore the board of directors, and disseminated within the

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en



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organization. It should make sure that the entity commits to market gender equality in which it sets clear goals and detailed measures and actions to realize them.

- It must contain dedicated resources: Resources for the planning, implementation, and monitoring of GEPs may include funding for specific positions like Equality Officers or Gender Equality Teams likewise as earmarked working time for tutorial, management and administrative staff
- Data collecting and monitoring arrangements must be included: GEPs must be evidence-based and based on sex or gender-disaggregated baseline data obtained across all staff categories. This information should be used to inform the GEP's objectives, targets, indicators, and ongoing progress review.
- Moreover, appropriate parties and monitoring specialists should be designated to supervise and make sure that the plan's dissemination is implemented accordingly

National Regulatory Framework

At a level of National law, the Cypriot Constitution enforced the equal treatment and the prohibition of discrimination, direct or indirect, on the ground of gender (article 28 of the Cypriot Constitution of 1960)² and more precise and active steps towards gender equality were taken in later years. More precisely, a significant number of legislative measures regarding gender equality have been passed in the last decade. These measures focused among others on equal pay, maternity protection, prohibition of discrimination and equal treatment in the workplace. EU directives as well as other international legislative measures have influenced the gender equality measures of Cyprus. Such directives include European Directives 76/207/EEC, 2002/73/EC and 2006/54/EC. These directives focus on equal treatment regarding access to employment, vocational training and promotion as well as general working conditions.³

² <http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/syntagma.pdf>

³<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/resources/cyprus/ekthesi-gia-tin-efarmogi-tis-eyropaikis-odigias-76-207-ee-2002-73-ee-kai-2006-54-ek-anaforika-me-tin-isi-amoivi-andron>



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Additionally, a number of National Action Plans have been developed over the years to address gender inequality. Cyprus developed its National Action Plan on Gender Equality⁴ which was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 29.8.2007 and covered the period of 2007-2013. This plan was formulated on the basis of international conventions and recommendations from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Concluding Comments to the Cyprus Report to the CEDAW Committee in 2006, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), as well as EU policy frameworks, such as the Roadmap for Equality between Men and Women, and several EU Directives, which are mentioned above. According to this plan, there are a variety of actions in support of gender equality specifically in the workplace and in employment areas. In particular, these actions are:

1. Under the thematic unit of women and economy: promoting equal pay between men and women, which as can be seen from the laws listed below, is a principle that has been in place since 2002 (Law n° 177(I)/2002)
2. Promote equal opportunities in terms of education. This action is supported by the Law n° 205(I)/2002 "Equal Treatment Laws for Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education". A gender equality committee was established that was responsible for monitoring and implementing this law.
3. Maternity protection. The Maternity protection law was first introduced in 1997 (Law n° 100(I)/1997) and has since faced many amendments.

In a similar framework, next came the Strategic Action Plan for Equality for the period 2014-2017. In the context of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2014-2017, a committee was set up consisting of its representatives Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, Ministry of Justice and Public Affairs Order, of the Committee on Gender Equality in Employment and Occupation Education, of the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration and of the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, where after a series

⁴ <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Cyprus.pdf>



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meetings the Commission decided to proceed with the issuance of its Accession Guide Gender dimension in the public policies of the State.⁵

A new National Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women was established for the period 2019-2023. This action plan was prepared in close cooperation with all the responsible government departments, women's organizations and other NGOs, academic institutions, the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, National Mechanism for Rights as well as various human rights organizations. This was formulated on the basis of international conventions and recommendations, in particular the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Final Comments in its Report Cyprus to the CEDAW Commission in 2013 (2010-2015), the development strategy of the European Union "Europe 2020" and the European Pact for Equality Gender 2011-2015, as well as EU legislation and policies, in particular of the European Strategy for Equality between Men and Women (2010-2015) 2020.⁶

Although the active promotion and support of gender equality still remains frail, there is a variety of laws implemented in Cyprus that aim at the support of women in the work environment. These laws also focus on enhancing and maintaining equality in term of employment. In particular, such laws include:

1. Law n° 100(I)/1997 "The Maternity Protection Law". This law that has been consistently updated from 1997 until 2019, has been harmonized with Directive 92/85/EEC (European Economic Community-EEC) and deals directly and specifically with the protection of pregnant women in the work environment.⁷
2. Law n° 1(III)/2002 "Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women".⁸

⁵<http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/cyprus-nap/#:~:text=Cyprus%20adopted%20its%20first%20National,coordination%20with%20other%20relevant%20Ministries>.

⁶<http://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/cyprus-nap/#:~:text=Cyprus%20adopted%20its%20first%20National,coordination%20with%20other%20relevant%20Ministries>.

⁷ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/1997_1_100.pdf

⁸ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2002_3_001.pdf



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3. Law n° 133(I)/2002 “Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Professional Social Plans Insurance Law”.⁹

4. Law n° 177(I)/2002 “Equal Pay between Men and Women for the Same Work or for Work to which Equal Value is attributed”. This law advocates for equal pay between men and women for the same job position. A committee is established to ensure this law is reinforced.¹⁰ This law was amended in 2004 (Law n° 193(I)/2004) enabling the Commissioner of Administration (Ombudsman) to independently examine complaints regarding equal pay between men and women.¹¹

5. Law n° 205(I)/2002 “Equal Treatment Laws for Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education”.¹² Specifically, this law advocates for equality among men and women regarding:

- a. employment opportunities and marital status
- b. employment opportunities and pregnancy, lactation, maternity
- c. regulations that limit women based on their gender
- d. vocational education regardless of gender

6. Law n° 58(I)/2004 “The Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation Law”. This law falls within the competence of the Department of Labor of Cyprus and is fully harmonized with Directives 2000/78/EC (European Commission-EC) and 2000/43/EC. It provides a general framework for dealing with discrimination in order to implement the principle of equal treatment.¹³

7. Law n° 18(I)/2008 “Law providing for the application of equal treatment of men and women in access to goods and services as well as their provision”. This law aims at equal treatment of men and women in professional social security plans as well as at prohibiting direct discrimination on grounds of sex.¹⁴

⁹ http://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2002_1_133.pdf

¹⁰ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2002_1_177.pdf

¹¹ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2004_1_193.pdf

¹² http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2002_1_205.pdf

¹³ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2004_1_058.pdf

¹⁴ http://cylaw.org/nomoi/arith/2008_1_018.pdf



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Other efforts initiated by the government or actions that governmental bodies are involved in regarding the women in the labour market include:

- 1) A subsidy scheme for attracting people in the labour market through flexible forms of employment. The aim is to facilitate women to (re) enter the labour market. The relevant stakeholders involved in this scheme include: the government both central and regional, employer federations, trade unions, the chambers of commerce and industry other social partners.¹⁵
- 2) The project “Actions for reducing the gender pay gap”. The Department of Labour Relations implemented this project that started in July 2010 and was concluded in December of 2015. As the name suggests, this project aimed at reducing the gender pay gap by among other offering relevant training to the associated stakeholders and also by raising awareness regarding this issue.¹⁶
- 3) The Committee on Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Education (EIF), which was established and operates on the basis of Articles 22 and 23 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education Laws of 2002-2014 (Law n° 205(I)/2002).¹⁷
- 4) The Committee for Equal Opportunities which is responsible for monitoring the governmental policies and actions on the issue of equal opportunities.¹⁸
- 5) A Technical Committee under the Labour Advisory Board that aims to balance professional and family life, to improve of childcare facilities as well as parental leave legislation.¹⁹
- 6) Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality.²⁰ The main responsibilities of the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, among others are:

¹⁵<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/matching-skills/all-instruments/subsidy-scheme-attracting-people-labour-market-through-flexible-forms-employment>

¹⁶http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/dlr/dlr.nsf/reductionofwage_en/reductionofwage_en?OpenDocument

¹⁷ http://www.eif.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/genderequality.nsf/home_en/home_en?opendocument

¹⁸ <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Cyprus.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/Gender/documents/Beijing+15/Cyprus.pdf>

²⁰

http://www.mjpo.gov.cy/mjpo/mjpo.nsf/sectorgend02_el/sectorgend02_el?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=1



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- a) the promotion of equality between men and women
- b) the elimination of discrimination against women,
- c) the monitoring and coordination of the work carried out by the National Mechanism for Women's Rights, the monitoring
- d) the implementation of policies and measures that promote gender equality
- e) the submission of proposals / suggestions for its legislative enactment
- f) the equality and the elimination of legislative discrimination,
- g) the organization of seminars
- h) the training programs on equality between men and women,
- i) the organization of raising awareness campaigns to inform the public and women in particular in regard to their rights etc.

7) National Mechanism for Women's Rights. This mechanism, the National Mechanism for Women's Rights, was set up by the Council of Ministers as a continuation of the Permanent Central Office for Rights of Women (founded in 1988). It deals with all issues related to women's rights, focusing on the elimination of legal discrimination against women and the promotion of effective equality between men and women.²¹

As it was previously mentioned, in terms of childcare infrastructures and the impact of parenthood to women employment, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works recognised that women are often responsible for their children's transportation to and from school. Therefore, they launched a programme for the enhancement of public transport in Cyprus.

IV. Objectives

GEP focuses on a set of modules to make sure it covers all the labour sectors. More specifically, it monitors and delivers gender equality strategies for the following categories:

- gender equality in decision-making and leadership
- gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment
- work-life balance and organizational culture

²¹http://www.mjpo.gov.cy/mjpo/mjpo.nsf/sectorgend02_el/sectorgend02_el?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=1



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The Gender Equality Plan needs to be approved by and presented to all members of the company and it must be ensured that all members are aware of the methodology used in the company for gender mainstreaming, as well as the effects of gender bias behavior; regular seminars and courses need to be held for the company's members. Moreover, the action plan and its main points of focus need to be uploaded on the official website and in promotional material.

Observation of gender mainstreaming will be conducted under all circumstances and in all departments of the entity, such as management, human resources, research, administrative sectors, and gender equality must serve as a guide in the formulation of all strategies, planning and decision making.

V. Measures to avoid gender imbalance among the employees of Wisefour

*Gender ratio

As of June 2022, 86% of Wisefour's employees are female and 14 % are male. The managerial position is also filled by a woman.

Equality in opportunities is a core value to Wisefour's mission, and balance between genders is a crucial component for the company.

*Salaries

To maintain equal pay certification between both genders, an internal assessment of the equal pay certification processes will be conducted on a regular basis. Representatives are appointed to the Board of Directors to participate in the internal examination.

*Job postings and hiring

When posting about job openings and hiring staff, attention should be taken to ensure that the working group is gender balanced. When advertising positions, it is not merely presumed that people are male or female. Each advertised opportunity must be open to both men and women.

*Research



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It must be ensured that people of all genders have equal access to research and the acquisition of research points, as well as the ability to apply for grants from research sources.

*Retraining

Irrespective of gender, necessary measures will be taken to ensure that all genders have equal opportunities for retraining, continuing education, and vocational training, as well as to attend courses held to enhance vocational skills or prepare for other assignment occupations.

*Positions in management

When it comes to hiring for executive roles at Wisefour, there should be as much balance as possible between men and women.

*Gender visibility in the company

Every effort will be taken to ensure that the ratio of men to women among workers who represent Wisefour in public is as equal as practicable. This is true for media, websites, gatherings, and events. If members of the media desire to interview someone with specific specialist knowledge, Wisefour will have a list of staff speciality areas available. In addition, employees will keep track of the gender ratio of people who publicly represent Wisefour and report the findings to the manager once a year. If a gender gap is identified, particular measures, such as a seminar on media appearances, can be employed to close the gap.



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*Working conditions

Goals: At Wisefour, every effort will be made to provide equal opportunities for employees and employees, as well as to establish a welcoming environment for people of all genders. Bullying, aggression, and gender-based and sexual harassment, as well as gender-based and sexual assault, will never be permitted.

*Balance of personal life and work

Wherever possible, flexibility should be maintained, for example, in terms of work facilities and work hours, so that employees may balance their professional and personal lives. This is especially important to remember when people return to work following maternity and parental leave, illness leave, or leave due to a family emergency.

*Status

In all work and studies of employees at Wisefour, the status of women and men will be as equal as possible, as well as their position in administrative activities. It is permissible to deviate from that condition when, in consequence of objective circumstances, this is not possible.

*Promotion material

Wisefour will ensure that all promotional material from the company depicts both women and men, thereby counteracting gender stereotypes.

For each aim, a number of indicators can be configured to track the implementation and success of the linked actions halfway through (in 2 years) and at the end of the four years (July 2026 - before updating the GEP). Table 1 shows the monitoring indicators that were chosen.

*Participation in social activities on an equal footing

Purposeful work will be done to encourage employees to participate in social activities and to ensure that both women and men are nominated for trust commissions and



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administrative positions within Wisefour, as well as for Wisefour committees and councils.

Results, leadership, programming, development cooperation, resource tracking and allocation, and gender architecture and parity are all tracked in the Action Plan. Organizational culture, capacity assessment, capacity development, knowledge generation and communication, monitoring and reporting, evaluation, auditing, and coherence are all monitored and reported on.

Wisefour places a premium on employee ability, but only if women and men have equal access to the same educational and professional possibilities. Because a number of biases still exist in our society that prevent all people from having equal opportunities regardless of gender, Wisefour has set a number of goals to strengthen and maintain the already positive aspects (for example, in the areas of sexual harassment and work-life balance) and improve the weak ones in the Company, as well as contribute to the development of gender equality in society.

To suggest aims and initiatives for Wisefour, five important areas can be highlighted;

- Recruitment and career development
- Leadership and decision – making
- Gender perspective
- Reconciliation of professional and personal and family time
- Sexual harassment



VI. Monitoring indicators include the following:

Promoting gender balance in administration positions	Applying gender sensitive recruitment procedures	Promoting gender balance in the company	Promoting equal development competence in the company	Promoting women in leading position	Incorporating gender perspective in decision-making	Work environment Free of sexual harassment
Number of women in the administration department	Ensure that all positions are open to any gender	Gender ratio in the company	Presence of a mentoring programme when a new employee is hired	Share of women in senior positions	Number of projects where gender-perspective is included in the sustainability assessment.	Number of sexual harassment cases
Number of interns in the administration department	Shortlist job applicants regardless of any gender		Share of employees moving from junior to higher positions	Share of parent – employees leading projects		
	Conduct job interviews by applying an inclusive and non-discriminating language (gender, marital status, sexual orientation, nationality etc.)					

Table 1. Indicators



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The above indicators will be used to measure the extent of applications of the GEP in the Company and will function as references for the smooth development of the plan.

VII. Conclusive Remarks

In Wisefour LTD we strive to:

- Promote the use of inclusive language in the workplace
- Highlight the importance of gender equality in company meetings
- Condemn the use of stereotypes in the workplace based on gender, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, and any other personal characteristics
- Ensure that employees have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

Moreover:

- We appoint two people to monitor gender biases
- We appoint two people to collect employee feedback

For any clarifications please do not hesitate to contact us:

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VIII. References

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