



European Marine Board

**Gender and Diversity Equality Plan**

## 1. Preamble

Under the European Commission's Funding Programme Horizon Europe, all applicants must show a gender equality plan to be eligible for funding<sup>1</sup>.

The minimum requirements from the European Commission for this document are that the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is a formal public document published on the institutions website and signed by the top management (i.e. EMB Executive Director and/or EMB Chair), addressing the following issues:

- Demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, set clear goals and detailed actions and measures to achieve them;
- Dedicated resources: commitment of human resources and gender expertise to implement it;
- Data collection and monitoring: sex/gender disaggregated data on personnel and students and annual reporting based on indicators;
- Training: Awareness raising/trainings on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers;
- Minimum areas to be covered and addressed via concrete measures and targets:
  - Work-life balance and organisational culture;
  - Gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
  - Gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
  - Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
  - Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

The European Marine Board (EMB) has already addressed gender in its Internal Guidelines through:

- Considering and encouraging gender balance in the appointment of member organization delegates and alternates;
- Making both delegates and alternates eligible for election to ExCom;
- Including gender diversity as one of the factors to be considered in the election of new ExCom members;
- Including gender criteria in the selection Working Groups, including for Chair, co-Chair and Members.

However, the European Marine Board does not at present have a Gender (and Diversity) Equality Plan. This is therefore a first draft of such a plan based on examples including the Gender Equality in Academia and Research website<sup>2</sup> and including information on Diversity from the SHRM website<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-citizens-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation\\_en#gender-equality-plans-as-an-eligibility-criterion-in-horizon-europe](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-citizens-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en#gender-equality-plans-as-an-eligibility-criterion-in-horizon-europe)

<sup>2</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/step-step-guide/step-1>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/how-to-guides/pages/how-to-develop-a-diversity-and-inclusion-initiative.aspx>

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This Gender and Diversity Equality Plan will become a living EMB document, to be reviewed and updated as appropriate. The latest version will be published and made publicly available on the EMB website.

## 2. Overarching Goals

The European Marine Board holds equality for all forms of diversity as a fundamental value, and through this Gender and Diversity Plan, will outline how it will protect and promote this value. Equality means that everyone should have the same opportunities, rights, and obligations.

Diversity could include but is not limited to:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Ethnicity/national origin;
- Family status;
- Gender;
- Gender identity or expression;
- Generation;
- Language;
- Life experiences;
- Organization function and level;
- Personality type;
- Physical characteristics;
- Race;
- Religion, belief and spirituality;
- Sexual orientation;
- Thinking/learning styles;
- Veteran status.

EMB's overarching aims are to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of gender and diversity equality, and its associated issues and challenges;
- Support, and work towards the achievement of, gender and diversity equality in all of its activities and for all of its current representatives; and
- Promote an ongoing increase in diversity amongst its member organizations and the wider marine science and policy community.

EMB will seek to ensure that it reflects diversity values in all of its work and that it promotes gender and diversity equality in Europe. EMB will also aim towards equal representation and treatment of diversity through all of its activities and representatives.

Initially, EMB will outline concrete measures to ensure gender equality (see Section 4). It will engage in ongoing discussions with the EMB ExCom and Board members with the aim of also developing concrete measures for ensuring diversity equality (see Section 5).

## 3. Responsibility for the promotion of gender and diversity equality

The promotion of gender and diversity equality is the responsibility of everyone connected with EMB. Individual EMB Board members retain the responsibility for ensuring gender and diversity equality within their own organizations, however the EMB ExCom and Secretariat play a crucial role in promoting and ensuring gender and diversity equality for all of its activities and representatives.

In practice therefore, the work to promote gender and diversity equality will be initiated by the EMB ExCom (e.g. through asking the Secretariat to initiate investigation, or by raising topics of relevance at EMB plenary meetings). The EMB Secretariat will manage ensuring equality in EMB activities and representatives, as well as data collection, tracking and reporting.

The EMB Executive Director will in the first instance take on the role of Diversity Officer and report on Diversity Indicators (where practicable; indicators to be developed) to the ExCom annually at the First ExCom meeting of each year. The ExCom and/or Secretariat may decide to report further to the Board, or to raise a particular issue, at the next available EMB Plenary meeting.

Any EMB ExCom, Board or Secretariat member may propose a review and/or edit to the Gender and Diversity Equality Plan at any time. This will be tabled for discussion and eventual approval at the next available EMB Plenary meeting.

The EMB Executive and Finance Officer will keep track of all diversity data in line with GDPR requirements (see Section 6).

## 4. Gender Equality Action Plan

### 4.1 General aims

EMB aims to promote gender equality in all of its activities, including:

- Publications: content should include information of relevance for, and reflect the perspectives of, all genders where relevant. The language used should be gender neutral and non-discriminatory;
- Webinars and Events: aim for at least equal representation of traditional binary genders (male and female) in the speakers and panellists within a given event (e.g. EurOCEAN conferences, EMB Open Fora) or across an event series (e.g. EMB Science Webinars, Brown Bag Lunch events). Ensure that a range of (gender) perspectives are presented and that any discriminatory viewpoint is challenged;
- Communication: actively engage in raising awareness of gender equality, and in activities that aim to address gender equality. Discriminatory material should never be shared.

EMB acknowledges that while equality of gender representation is an ideal outcome, it is equally important that EMB also identifies and works with the best candidates for the role in question. While EMB is taking steps to ensure there is no negative gender discrimination, it also aims to avoid positive

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discrimination. EMB believes that it is most empowering to have equal gender representation based on merit and will manage its activities in line with this value.

Notwithstanding the above, EMB aims to achieve gender equality for all of its representatives:

- Working Groups: aim for at least equal representation of traditional binary genders (male and female), selecting one male and one female for the roles of Chair and Co-Chair. Ensure that that EMB has both male and female Working Group Chairs;
- Publication reviewers: aim for at least equal representation of traditional binary genders (male and female);
- ExCom: aim for at least equal representation of traditional binary genders (male and female);
- Delegates and Alternates: aim for at least equal representation of traditional binary genders (male and female) by encouraging EMB Board member organizations to appoint one male and one female representative. Ensure that that EMB has both male and female Delegates;
- EMB Young Ambassadors: aim for at least equal representation of traditional binary genders (male and female);
- EMB Expert Panels (EMB UCP and EMBCP): aim for at least equal representation of traditional binary genders (male and female). Ensure that EMB Expert Panels have both male and female alternating Chairs, with alternation timescales in line with their respective Terms of Reference;
- EMB Secretariat: aim for at least equal representation of traditional binary genders (male and female), with equal distribution across all roles (i.e. avoiding for example male-only management and female-only administration).

For the EMB Secretariat, EMB undertakes the following, regardless of gender:

- Ensure an equal and accessible recruitment process for new staff members;
- Ensure equal pay for employees with the same role and experience;
- Ensure the same opportunities for recognition and promotion;
- Ensure the same professional opportunities (e.g. training, diversity of tasks, responsibility);
- Ensure the same right for employees in line with the Belgian employment law (e.g. choice of leave, parenthood, secondment and/or sabbatical, benefits).

## 4.2 Concrete actions

At present, EMB will aim for the following targets using the actions outlined:

	<b>Target(s)</b>	<b>Action(s)</b>
Work-life balance and organisational culture	Achieve a work-life balance and organisational culture within the EMB Secretariat which is to the satisfaction of all staff members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor EMB Secretariat staff work life balance and perspectives on organisational culture via annual performance management review process</li> <li>- Take steps as a result of performance management reviews</li> <li>- Specify the complaints and conflicts resolution procedure within the EMB Internal Guidelines</li> </ul>
Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	Achieve at least a traditional (male and female) gender-balanced ExCom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specify this target within the EMB Internal Guidelines</li> <li>- Encourage EMB members to appoint one male and one female representative</li> <li>- Enable both EMB Delegates and Alternates are eligible to stand for ExCom election</li> <li>- Use gender diversity as one of the criteria in electing new ExCom members</li> </ul>
Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Achieve at least a traditional (male and female) gender-balanced EMB Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include gender diversity is one of the criteria in selecting new EMB Secretariat members</li> <li>- Write vacancy advertisements in language that is gender-neutral</li> <li>- Offer unconscious gender bias training to EMB Secretariat staff where required in order to objectively select candidates</li> </ul>

		for various roles as EMB representatives.
Integration of the gender dimension into research (and teaching) content		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote the implementation of Gender Equality Action Plans at EMB member organizations</li> <li>- Include where relevant recommendations relating to Gender Equality in EMB publications and recommendations</li> <li>- Highlight the importance of gender balance when opening a call for WG nominations</li> <li>- Keep track of Gender balance within nominated and selected Working Group members</li> <li>- Report back on this to EMB Board during Plenary meetings</li> </ul>
Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment	Achieve a zero-violence working environment for all EMB staff and representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specify relevant measures against violence of all kinds and support mechanisms for the victims within the EMB Secretariat staff working regulations</li> <li>- Offer training to EMB Secretariat staff and ExCom where required</li> <li>- Promote a zero-tolerance culture to violence within all EMB member organizations</li> <li>- Engage in activities which raise awareness of (gender-based) violence issues, and promote measures to address these</li> </ul>

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### 4.3 Training

All EMB Secretariat members will receive appropriate training in gender equality awareness and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.

### 4.4 Data collection, monitoring and reporting

The EMB Finance and Executive Officer will collect and maintain data on gender representation amongst the following, and will monitor progress towards balance in at least the traditional genders (male and female) for:

- EMB Secretariat members;
- EMB ExCom members;
- EMB Delegates and Alternates;
- EMB Working Groups, Chairs and Co-Chairs;
- EMB Young Ambassadors;
- EMB Expert Panels;
- Speakers at recent EMB webinars and events (i.e. the past calendar year);
- Attendees at recent EMB webinar and events (i.e. the past calendar year).

The categories recorded will be “male/female/other/prefer not to say/information not provided”.

The EMB Executive Director will report annually on these data at the first ExCom meeting of every year, and additional reporting can be requested by ExCom and/or EMB Board Members, or proposed by the EMB Secretariat.

### 4.5 Dedicated resources

EMB ensures that appropriate staff time and other resources are dedicated to developing, monitoring and implementing this Gender Equality Action Plan.

### 4.6 Developing the Gender Equality Action Plan

Based on the data reported by the EMB Executive Director, the ExCom and/or EMB Secretariat may decide to propose a revision to the current concrete targets and actions (see Section 4.2) where it becomes clear that the current actions do not allow sufficient progress towards the specified current target. They may also propose new targets and actions where additional areas of concern are identified.

Where a target is deemed to have been achieved, it will be retained in the Gender Equality Action Plan to ensure that this is maintained.



## 5. Diversity Equality Action Plan

### 5.1 General aims

EMB acknowledges that diversity covers a wide scope of parameters (see Section 2) and it is hence very complex to ensure equality for all diversity. In addition, given the personal and often sensitive nature of many of the parameters in question, it is difficult to gather appropriate data in order to monitor progress towards a specific target.

This is especially complex for EMB as an organization. While it may be possible to gather some of the relevant data for EMB Secretariat members and ExCom members, it would be difficult to legally justify a need to gather such data for other representatives who are not contracted employees of EMB (e.g. Delegates and Alternates, Working Group and Panel members, EMB Young Ambassadors).

However, while at present it is not realistic for EMB to outline concrete diversity targets or gather relevant data to monitor progress, it is still possible and relevant for EMB to: actively ensure it has no discriminatory practices, that it appropriately represents the diversity within its network, that it takes steps to promote and address diversity equality, and that it promotes an increase in diversity representation.

EMB therefore aims to promote diversity equality in all of its activities, including:

- Publications: content should consider and reflect diverse perspectives where relevant. The language used should be diversity neutral and non-discriminatory, and take steps where possible to make its outputs accessible (e.g. translating into other languages where appropriate, using colour combinations that are suitable for colour-blind people, including both text and audio in video outputs);
- Webinars and Events: aim to have a range of diversities represented and a range of perspectives presented and that any discriminatory viewpoint is challenged, and take steps where appropriate to ensure that the events are accessible for speakers and attendees (e.g. ensuring venues are accessible for people with disabilities, providing text summaries, live translation and/or subtitles, making all events available online);
- Communication: actively engage in raising awareness of diversity equality, and in activities that aim to address increasing diversity and diversity equality. Respecting the choices of others (e.g. using people's preferred pronouns). Discriminatory material should never be shared.

### 5.2 Training

All EMB Secretariat members will receive appropriate training in diversity equality awareness and unconscious biases for staff and decision-makers.

This training will also be offered to all members of the EMB ExCom.

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### 5.3 Data collection, monitoring and reporting

At present, EMB will not undertake to collect, monitor or report on any specific diversity parameters, however the EMB Secretariat and ExCom may revise this position at any time.

### 5.4 Dedicated resources

EMB ensures that appropriate staff time and other resources are dedicated to developing, monitoring and implementing this Diversity Equality Action Plan.

### 5.5 Developing the Diversity Equality Action Plan

The EMB ExCom can consider if it would be possible and/or appropriate to collect diversity data and if yes, will ask the EMB Secretariat to collect, maintain and report on this information.

The EMB ExCom can also ask for the Diversity Equality Action Plan to be approved or adapted at any time.

## 6. Data privacy and GDPR

EMB protects and maintains all personal data in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)<sup>4</sup>. In the context of this Gender and Diversity Equality Plan, this means that all data collected and reported on is fully anonymised. No personal data will be stored in relation to this plan.



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<sup>4</sup> <https://gdpr.eu/>