

# Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan

Version: 7 | 14 May 2024



## European Marine Board **Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan**

Version 7

Signed:

Date:

# Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan

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## 1. Preamble

Gender and Diversity is important in Marine Science because it reflects the diversity of society, helps attract and retain the best talent, and ensures innovation. As a European science policy think-tank, we need to reflect the diversity of society, both in the European Marine Board (EMB) Secretariat and in the Board itself. Studies on Gender balance have shown that entities with gender-balanced management lead to better decision making, scored higher on operating margins, employee retention, client retention, safety, and employee engagement.

The European Commission has also understood the importance of Gender and Diversity, and as such, in its new Funding Programme Horizon Europe, all applicants must show a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) to be eligible for funding<sup>1</sup>. The minimum requirements from the European Commission are that the 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.

This document is therefore a Gender and Diversity Plan that complies with the requirements of the European Commission, but more, it will ensure the best decision making in the Board and employee satisfaction.

The first EMB Gender and Diversity Plan was created by EMB Secretariat in Autumn 2021, 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>. This initial and all subsequent plans note that EMB already addresses gender issues in its Internal Guidelines through:

- Considering and encouraging gender balance in the appointment of Member organisation delegates and alternates;

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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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- 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; and
- Including gender criteria in the selection of Working Groups, including for Chair, co-Chair and Members.

This Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan is a living EMB document, to be reviewed and updated as appropriate. The latest version is published and made publicly available on the EMB website<sup>4</sup>.

The table below tracks the main updates to this Plan.

| Date        | Version             | Comments  |
|-------------|---------------------|---|
| Autumn 2021 | 1                   | First EMB Gender and Diversity Plan created by EMB Secretariat  |
| Spring 2022 | 2 & 3               | Updates to plan based on comments received from Delegates at EMB Autumn 2021 Plenary meeting  |
| Autumn 2022 | 4 & 5               | Updates to plan based on Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion training led by Belgian-based social enterprise: JUMP <sup>5</sup> which EMB Secretariat undertook |
| Spring 2023 | 6                   | Additional clarification on terminology included and title changed to EMB Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan  |
| Spring 2024 | 7 (current version) | Plan updated following 2023 EMB Spring Plenary Meeting Open session discussion with Delegates   |

## 2. Overarching Goals

The EMB will only be able to *advance seas and Ocean science* if the organisation and its Members (we) reflect the diversity of society, we ensure diverse engagement in all activities through inclusion, we

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.marineboard.eu/gender-diversity>

<sup>5</sup> <http://jump.eu.com>

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understand the diversity of needs linked to Ocean science, and we are exemplary and serve as role models to our community.

The EMB holds equity for all forms of diversity as a fundamental value, and this Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan outlines how we will protect and promote this value.

EMB understands diversity to include but not be limited to:

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

EMB understands equality to mean that everyone should have the same opportunities, rights, and obligations.

EMB understands equity to mean the state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair.

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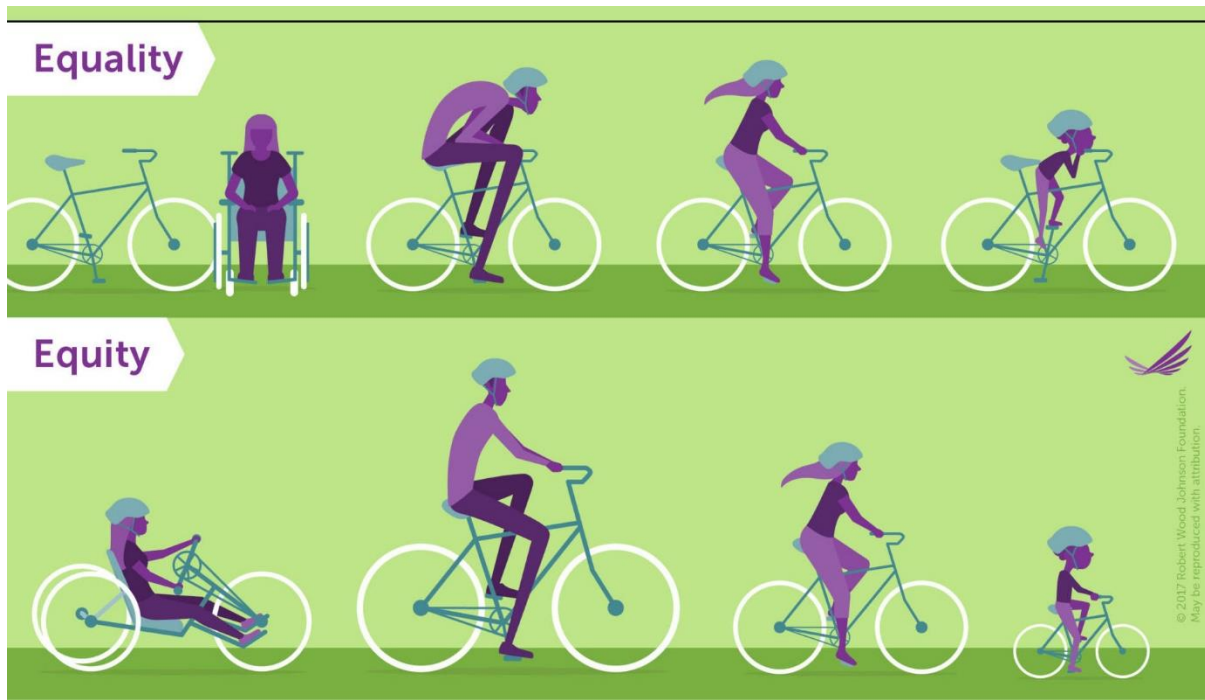


Figure 1: Diagram showing the definitions of equality and equity. Credit: 2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

EMB understands inclusion to refer to actions, practices, policies and behaviours that enable the full diversity of people to have equity.

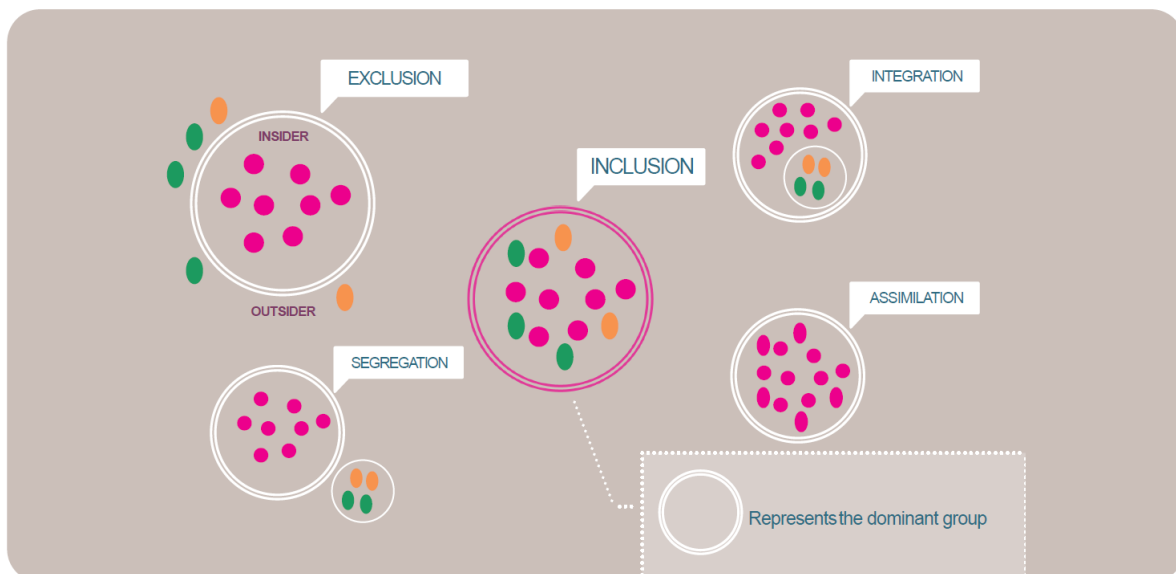


Figure 2: Diagram showing definitions for exclusion, segregation, integration, assimilation, and inclusion. Credit: JUMP

In support of EMB's overarching goal, the main objectives are to:

- Raise awareness about gender and diversity equality and inclusion issues and influence EMB's Members;
- Increase diversity in representation within EMB bodies and activities;
- Promote a culture of inclusion within EMB bodies and activities;
- Champion Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion; and
- Understand the diversity of needs for Ocean equity to achieve equity beyond Ocean science.

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## 3. Responsibility for the promotion of Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion

The promotion of Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion is the responsibility of everyone connected with the EMB. Individual EMB Board Members retain the responsibility for ensuring Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion within their own organisations. In addition, the EMB ExCom and Secretariat play a crucial role in promoting and ensuring Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion in all its activities and representatives.

In practice therefore, the work to promote Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion will be initiated by the EMB Secretariat and/or 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 awareness raising activities;
- Monitor and, where possible, ensure equality in EMB activities and representatives;
- Track progress and report on this to ExCom and the EMB Board;
- Lead on promoting a culture of inclusion; and
- Champion gender and diversity equality and inclusion internally and externally.

The EMB Executive Director will in the first instance take on the role of Diversity Officer and report to the ExCom annually at the first ExCom meeting of each year. The ExCom and/or Secretariat will report further to the Board annually at the EMB Spring Plenary meeting, under a dedicated agenda item.

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

The EMB Executive and Finance Officer will keep track of all data in line with GDPR requirements (see Section 5).

## 4. Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan

### 4.1 General aims

EMB aims to promote gender and diversity equity and inclusion in all its activities.

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

EMB also acknowledges that diversity covers a wide scope of parameters (see Section 2) and it is hence very complex to ensure equity 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 to monitor

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progress towards a specific target. This is especially complex for EMB as an organisation. While it may be possible to gather some relevant data for EMB Secretariat members and ExCom members, it would be ethically and legally difficult to 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).

Notwithstanding the above, EMB strives for gender and diversity equity within its Working Groups, publications, publication reviewers, ExCom, delegates and alternates, EMB Young Ambassadors, EMB Expert Panels, EMB Secretariat, webinars and events, and communications. Actions to achieve this are presented in the table in Section 4.2.

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 rights for employees in line with the Belgian employment law (e.g. choice of leave, parenthood, secondment and/or sabbatical, benefits).

## 4.1.1 EMB Office Facilities

The offices of the EMB Secretariat are located at the InnovOcean Campus in Ostend, Belgium. This campus was designed to comply to the rules of the A++ ‘accessible office building’ label<sup>6</sup>, which is a quality label that was developed on behalf of the Flemish government’s Agency for Facility Management. This implies that the InnovOcean campus is a building that is accessible, suitable, and usable for a large diversity of users and takes into account a wide range of differing safety requirements.

## 4.2 Priority actions

At present, EMB will aim to address its main objectives by undertaking the following priority actions:

| Objective   | Target(s)   | Action(s)   | Action owner(s) |
|---|---|---|-----------------|
| Raise awareness about gender and diversity quality and inclusion issues and influence EMB’s Members | Raise awareness about Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Make the EMB Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan and related activities visible on the EMB website on a dedicated page</li><li>- Share examples of best practices and concrete actions with Member organisations</li><li>- Share regular social media posts and newsletter posts about the importance of Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion, and highlight Best Practices</li></ul> | EMB Secretariat |

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.vlaanderen.be/inter/toolbox-toegankelijke-steden-en-gemeenten/ondernemen-en-werken/label-toegankelijk-gebouw>

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| Objective   | Target(s)  | Action(s)   | Action owner(s)                   |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|
|   |  | <p>for Ocean science and in general, for the wider EMB network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate regularly about gender and diversity, including linking to relevant news items</li> <li>- Host webinars for the EMB ECOP network and general stakeholders on Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion</li> <li>- Screen and share useful resources</li> </ul>  |                                   |
|   | Raise awareness about Gender and Diversity Equality in EMB Working Groups                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Highlight the importance of Gender balance when opening a call for Working Group nominations</li> <li>- Keep track of Gender balance within nominated and selected Working Group members and report back on this to EMB Board during Plenary meetings and Annual Reports</li> </ul>  | EMB Secretariat                   |
|   | Influence EMB Members to consider Gender and Diversity Equity  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote the development and implementation of Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plans at EMB Member organisations</li> <li>- Hosted an Open Session on Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion at the Spring 2023 EMB Plenary Meeting</li> <li>- Explore whether further discussions are required with Members, and also Ambassadors and ECOP Network</li> <li>- Support and enable links between Members to share experiences, including between staff outside the Delegates and Alternates</li> </ul> | EMB Secretariat                   |
| Increase diversity in representation within EMB bodies and activities | Achieve Gender balance in EMB leadership and decision-making with at least a traditional (male and female) | <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 (Delegate and Alternate)</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>  | EMB Secretariat and Board Members |



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| Objective                                 | Target(s)  | Action(s)   | Action owner(s)  |
|---|--|---|--|
|   | gender-balanced ExCom  |   |  |
|   | Achieve Gender balance in the EMB operations with at least a traditional (male and female) gender-balanced Secretariat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include gender diversity as 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 for various roles as EMB representatives</li> </ul>  | EMB Executive Director and Executive and Finance Officer |
|   | Achieve traditional Gender (male and female) balance in EMB working groups and at events                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include gender as one of the selection criteria for Working Group Chairs and Co-Chairs, and where possible, aim to have different a Chair and Co-Chair with different genders</li> <li>- Encourage Working Group Chairs to select a balanced team within the possibilities offered by the nominations</li> <li>- Ensure that EMB events have overall Gender balance in terms of speakers / Chairs / panellists, with equivalent roles, within the possibilities offered by the topic and availability</li> </ul> | EMB Secretariat  |
|   | Understand EMB Member organisation Gender balance and Diversity representation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Send a survey to EMB Member organisation HR departments to gather data on institutional Gender balance and Diversity data</li> <li>- Collect data from Member organisations to understand gaps, challenge perceptions, and communicate about the actual Gender and Diversity status</li> </ul>   | EMB Secretariat  |
| Promote a culture of inclusion within EMB | Achieve a work-life balance and a culture of inclusion   | <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> </ul>   | EMB Executive Director and Executive and Finance Officer |

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| Objective  | Target(s)   | Action(s)   | Action owner(s)  |
|--|---|---|--|
| bodies and activities                                | within the EMB Secretariat  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> <li>- Consider where relevant appropriate measures (e.g. flexible working, working space adjustments) to accommodate and be inclusive regarding personal factors that can impact working (e.g. health, family situation)</li> </ul>  |  |
|  | Achieve a zero sexualised violence and zero-discrimination working environments 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 and discrimination within all EMB Member organisations</li> <li>- Engage in activities which raise awareness of (gender-based) violence issues, and promote measures to address these</li> </ul> | EMB Executive Director and Executive and Finance Officer |
|  | Support a culture of inclusion within EMB activities  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Give new Working Groups a Best Practice introduction to inclusive interactions at kick-off meetings</li> <li>- Make sure to have diverse reviewer options for EMB publications</li> </ul>  | EMB Secretariat  |
| Champion Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion | Increase visibility of EMB actions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Actively share the EMB plan with the Board, with Working Groups, and with partners organisations to inform and inspire</li> <li>- Consider using an existing EMB tool (e.g. Working Group or Panel) projects to have longer-term engagement and collaboration on gender and diversity</li> </ul>   | EMB Secretariat  |
|  | Champion Gender and Diversity   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigate if all EU Projects that EMB participates in have a Gender and Diversity Board, and possibly encourage this</li> </ul>  | EMB Secretariat  |

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| Objective  | Target(s)                               | Action(s)   | Action owner(s) |
|--|---|---|-----------------|
|  | Equality in External Projects           | - Advocate for wider European regulation and requirements for Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion, including in projects  |                 |
| Understand the diversity of needs for Ocean equity at societal level | Include Gender dimension in EMB outputs | - Include where relevant recommendations relating to Gender Equality in EMB publications and recommendations<br>- Ensure that Gender and Diversity Equality and Inclusion are reflected as appropriate in EMB publications<br>- Be transparent about Working Group composition and potential biases in recommendations, acknowledging their limitations | EMB Secretariat |

### 4.3 Training

All EMB Secretariat members received training in gender and diversity equality awareness and unconscious bias in Autumn 2022. Additional training will be offered as required for follow up or for new Secretariat members. Training for other groups, e.g. ExCom, can also be considered if funding allows.

### 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 where feasible (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 at the EMB Spring Plenary meeting, and additional reporting can be requested by ExCom and/or EMB Board Members or proposed by the EMB Secretariat.

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

## 4.5 Dedicated resources

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

## 4.6 Developing the Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion 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 achieved, it will be retained in the Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan to ensure that this is maintained.

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

The EMB Secretariat, ExCom and/or Board Members can also ask for the Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Action Plan to be approved by the Board or adapted at any time.

## 5. Data privacy and GDPR

EMB protects and maintains all personal data in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)<sup>7</sup>. In the context of this Gender and Diversity Equity and Inclusion Plan, this means that all data collected and reported on is fully anonymised. No personal data will be stored in relation to this plan.

## 6. Useful links and resources

European Commission's Gender equality in research and innovation: [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)

Gender Equality in Academia and Research website: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/step-step-guide/step-1>

JUMP resources for equality at work, with studies, toolboxes and corporate practices for equality: <http://jump.eu.com/resources/>

Video on Respect at Sea, for use in training on Research Vessels: <https://www.marineboard.eu/launching-new-training-video-promote-respect-sea>

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<sup>7</sup> <https://gdpr.eu/>

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Accenture video on Inclusion starts with I: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynH4HSGcY6I>

Athena Swan Charter for gender equality: <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan-charter>

EDGE Certification for commercial enterprises: <https://edge-cert.org/>

Harvard Implicit Association Tests: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

iHasco Unconscious Bias document: [https://website-assets.ihasco.co.uk/uploads/resources/Common\\_Unconscious\\_Biases.pdf](https://website-assets.ihasco.co.uk/uploads/resources/Common_Unconscious_Biases.pdf)

acas resources on direct and indirect discrimination: <https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law/direct-discrimination> / <https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law/indirect-discrimination>

UK government guidance on terminology and ethnicity: <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/writing-about-ethnicity/>