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Gender Equality Plan

1. Aim and objective

Slovenian Institute of Quality and Metrology, Ljubljana (hereinafter SIQ) is a professional, independent and impartial institution. It provides complete solutions in the fields of product testing and certification, management systems assessment, metrology and training. SIQ is committed to contributing to the sustainable development of the Slovenian economy and to creating a safer society. Its activities contribute to environmental, social and economic sustainability. Part of these activities also include efforts to promote gender equality, inclusion and diversity. SIQ recognises gender equality as a fundamental human right and, in line with the requirements set out by Horizon Europe, adopts this Gender Equality Plan.

With the Gender Equality Plan, SIQ aims to make greater and faster progress toward gender equality and to create an environment where everyone can thrive. It is based on the situation and needs analysis and identifies the problems to be addressed by proposing actions and objectives to overcome them effectively.

The Gender Equality Plan is applied to all SIQ employees, as well as to students working at SIQ based on a student referral.

2. Pillars

The Gender Equality Plan is based on 5 pillars that are specified in the Gender Action Plan III of the European Commission for the period 2021–2025 (hereinafter the Action plan):

1. equal opportunities in employment and career advancement,
2. balanced gender representation in management and decision-making positions,
3. work-life balance within the organisational culture,
4. taking account of the gender dimension in research and teaching content,
5. actions to prevent gender-based violence, including the prevention of sexual harassment.

3. Situation in Slovenia

The situation of women in Slovenia began to improve immediately after the Second World War, when legislation was issued. Women gained new rights and opportunities and became increasingly independent, as reflected in the high proportion of women in the working population. The European Institute for Gender Equality has published the latest results of its Gender Equality Index, an important tool for policy-making and an indicator of progress on gender equality in the European Union (EU) over time. Slovenia scored 67.5 points (out of a possible 100) in 2022, ranking 12th among the 27 EU countries.¹

Article 14 of the Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (the Constitution) states that in Slovenia everyone shall be guaranteed equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of national origin, race, sex, language, religion, political or other conviction, material standing, birth, education, social status, disability or any other personal circumstance.

In addition to the Constitution, which is the basis for all other laws and legal acts, the protection and realization of equality in the Republic of Slovenia is further regulated by

¹ <https://www.gov.si/novice/2022-10-24-indeks-enakosti-spolov-2022-poudarek-na-socialno-ekonomskih-posledicah-pandemije-covid-19/>

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general laws, such as the Protection against Discrimination Act² and the Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act³. The principles of equality are also included in other sectoral laws, such as the Employment Relationships Act⁴, the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act⁵ and the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act⁶.

4. Situation at SIQ Ljubljana

SIQ is aware of the importance of effective implementation and enforcement of gender equality legislation in practice and therefore consistently follows the legislation as mentioned in the previous section of this document. It also follows international documents in the field of gender equality, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the EU strategy for gender equality – A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

SIQ is committed to the principle of equality, justice and respect for all in employment for both indefinite duration and fixed-term and in career advancement, as it has done in the past.

SIQ is therefore committed to preventing discrimination in the workplace in the broadest sense, including objective conditions of employment, non-discrimination in employment, disciplinary and dismissal procedures, which are also regulated by SIQ's internal documents. These documents aim to raise awareness and educate to prevent all forms of violence and sexual harassment in the work environment.

5. Objectives to ensure gender equality at SIQ

Based on the analysis of gender balance data, SIQ has formulated general and specific objectives in the Gender Equality Plan, which are both long-term and short-term. These will be monitored and evaluated by SIQ in the future. This will take into account indicators (both qualitative and quantitative) that are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

In the future, SIQ will focus on the following key thematic areas:

- gender balance in management positions,
- gender balance in employee career advancement,
- appropriate use of gender-sensitive Slovenian language in system documents,
- creating working conditions that allow for a work-life balance,
- prevention of all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, and sexual harassment.

The support of department directors and other managers is a prerequisite for the successful integration of gender equality in the organisation or for the strategies of this plan to generate measurable and sustainable impacts within SIQ.

² Uradni list RS, št. 33/16 in 21/18 – ZNOrg

³ Uradni list RS, št. 59/02, 61/07 – ZUNEO-A, 33/16 – ZVarD in 59/19

⁴ Uradni list RS, št. 21/13, 78/13 – popr., 47/15 – ZZSDT, 33/16 – PZ-F, 52/16, 15/17 – odl. US, 22/19 – ZPosS, 81/19, 203/20 – ZIUPOPDVE, 119/21 – ZČmIS-A, 202/21 – odl. US, 15/22 in 54/22 – ZUPŠ-1

⁵ Uradni list RS, št. 16/07 – uradno prečiščeno besedilo, 87/11, 96/12 – ZPIZ-2, 98/14 in 18/21

⁶ Uradni list RS, št. 94/10, 50/14 in 32/17

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The implementation of this Gender Equality Plan will be handled by the Legal and Human Resources Service. For this purpose, the Managing Director of SIQ will appoint representatives to the Gender Equality Working Group, whose tasks will be as follows:

- to monitor and evaluate the Gender Equality Plan, and to provide practical support and tools for staff involved in implementing the plan,
- to work with and involve staff at all levels to ensure that the actions of the Gender Equality Plan are implemented,
- to raise awareness of the benefits of gender equality,
- to assess progress on gender equality at SIQ.

In the continuation of the document, concrete actions to improve gender equality at SIQ will also be identified within the objectives and thematic areas described above. These actions are designed to address all the key issues related to the general and specific objectives and the findings of the analysis of indicators, and to be implementable at SIQ. The actions are divided into those related to the performance of activities, those related to institutional culture and those related to the prevention of sexism and sexual harassment at SIQ.

6. SIQ gender equality strategies

Based on the analysis of the gender balance indicators at SIQ, the following activities are foreseen to improve gender equality at SIQ:

6.1. Promoting gender equality

SIQ is committed to gender equality and gender-fair treatment and therefore adopts the present Gender Equality Plan. The Gender Equality Plan is supported, adopted and signed by the Managing Director of SIQ and will be published on the official SIQ website and among the system acts, so that it will be accessible to employees at all times. The implementation of the Gender Equality Plan is carried out in all SIQ organisational units.

SIQ strives to maintain gender representation in all positions, while objective criteria are taken into account when deciding on the career advancement of employees.

6.2. Systematic data collection and monitoring

SIQ undertakes to monitor data on the gender balance of its workforce at the SIQ level on an annual basis within the Legal and Human Resources Service and to report on this to the SIQ management.

6.3. Equal gender opportunities in career advancement and management positions

SIQ undertakes to systematically monitor, on an annual basis, gender-disaggregated indicators related to the occupation of management positions, participation in decision-making bodies and awards and recognitions at SIQ. SIQ strives to balance management structures as much as possible, taking into account objective criteria and employee performance when deciding who should fill a management position. In no case should the level of remuneration, bonuses and other allowances be based on gender.

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6.4. Work-life balance

Career advancement, job performance and, ultimately, promotion to management positions are also linked to the successful work-life balance of an individual employee. Therefore, SIQ plans to organise team-building events for employees with themes related to health, psychological stability, solving conflicts and encouraging good communication. Work-life balance is also facilitated through the consistent registration of working time, reminding managers of over-hours worked by subordinate workers and the establishment of occasional homeworking.

6.5. Use of Slovenian language in system documents

SIQ is committed to integrating a gender perspective into the way it organises its work and communicates. In this context, the Legal and Human Resources Service will review SIQ's system documents on the use of the masculine and feminine forms of gender and propose amendments. Employees will be encouraged to use gender-sensitive language in their daily communication.

6.6. Measures to prevent all types of violence

Among SIQ system documents, there is a document Rules concerning actions to protect dignity and prevent and remedy harassment or ill-treatment in the workplace, which defines terms such as sexual harassment, harassment and ill-treatment. Actions to prevent sexual and other harassment include raising awareness and informing all employees of the provisions of the Rules and establishing a protocol for reporting through the Assistance and Information Officer, as well as defining the action to be taken in the event of reasonable suspicion that sexual or other harassment or ill-treatment has occurred.

7. Time aspect

Within the contextual framework as outlined above, SIQ aims to monitor the objectives regularly, to meet them and to amend them as necessary. This plan is prepared for the period from 2023 onwards.

8. Distribution list

- Department Managers,
- Quality Manager,
- HR Officer,
- employees.

9. Final provision

This plan enters into force on 1 January 2023.

This plan shall be published on the SIQ website.

Gregor Schoss, Managing Director
SIQ Ljubljana