

Associação Oceano Verde

Green Ocean Technologies and Products  
Collaborative Laboratory (GreenCoLab)



# GENDER EQUALITY & EQUITY PLAN



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## 1. FRAMEWORK

Gender Equality (GE) is a necessary and an essential human right for the development of the society according to the Declaration of the Human Rights, the Treaty on European Union, the European Pact for Gender Equality, and the provisions of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic (Article 13) and the Labour Code (Articles 23 to 65).

In recent years, GE has earned a spotlight in the society, and this is being reflected in the organisational world, where now, more than ever, companies must develop policies to combat gender discrimination. When implementing measures against gender discrimination is important the acknowledgment of the person's gender identity, *i.e.*, the personal sense of the individual's own gender.

The development of public national and international policies related to gender equality issues has led to new and improved conditions for workers to balance their personal and professional life. However, there are still differences to be corrected to achieve a full gender equality.

With this in mind, and to demonstrate its commitment to the subject matter, in line with the Law 62/2017, regimented by Republic Diary No. 18/2019, Series 2 of 06/2019, and following the Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans produced by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation; GreenCoLab (hereby "GCL") presents its Gender Equality Plan (GEP).

The GEP presents a complete characterization of GCL in terms of gender equality (Section 2), followed by the analysis of the current implemented practices (Section 3) and the new and reinforcement measures and actions to warrant gender equality (Section 4), by the end, the document states how evaluating and monitoring of the plan will take place (Section 5).

## 2. CHARACTERIZATION OF GREENCOLAB

### 2.1. ABOUT

GreenCoLab – Associação Oceano Verde (GCL) is a non-profit private organisation working as a collaborative platform between research and industry. GCL was granted the title of «Collaborative Laboratory» by the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation (FCT). It is therefore formally recognized as an R&D institution and is part of the national science and technology system, in accordance with the Portuguese Science Law.



GCL has a multidisciplinary team, whose expertise covers all steps across algal production, from laboratory to industrial-level, from scale-up, production, harvesting until commercialization. In order to fulfil its goals, GCL recognizes the importance of recruiting internationally highly qualified workers, uniting their expertise with the know-how of the associated partners.

GCL provide services as: experimental tests with algae designed to fulfil companies' needs, from lab to industrial scale; analytical services of biochemical characterization of algal matrix; molecular biology services; data analysis based on experimental assays; training of students and researchers in the fields of biology and biotechnology of algae; and consulting services on algae biotechnology.

The GCL research & innovation agenda aims to promote the field of algae biotechnology, through the exploration of macro- and microalgae as an essential component for the food, feed, agriculture, nutraceutical, and cosmetic industries.

GCL acts in four main frontlines:

- **Products** - Innovative technologies and algae-based products for different markets;
- **Services** - Using frontier technology allied with years of consolidated knowledge;
- **Research** - Research & Innovation agenda based on the exploration of micro- and macroalgae for different applications;
- **Outreach** - Bringing information to consumers and the general public.

## 2.2. MISSION

GCL mission is to **bridge the transfer of knowledge and technology from academia, industry, stakeholders, and consumers by Joining the Pieces in Algal Biotechnology.**



## 2.3. VISION

GCL seeks to work as a catalyst for sustainability and good economic performance by congregating the agendas of both research and industry stakeholders and boosting innovation and economic diversification in the broad field of algal biotechnology.

## 2.4. VALUES

GCL values ethics, sustainability, integrity, transparency, professionalism and excellence between its collaborators, partners, customers, suppliers and society.

GCL considers that it is mandatory to create a working environment based on the respect between all collaborators and where everyone is felt welcome. Therefore, GCL is committed to maintain a good working environment that supports equal rights and opportunities for all collaborators, free of unlawful intimidation and harassment. GCL does not allow any kind of discrimination based on religion, race, colour, genetic information, ethnicity, national origin, ancestry, familial status, marital/partnership status, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, age, mental or physical disability or any other protected classification.

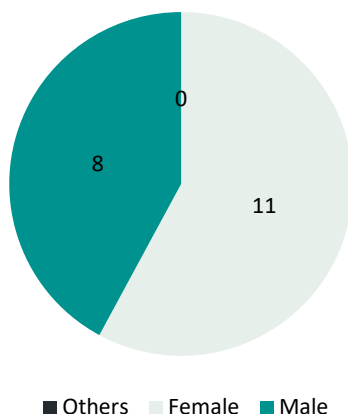
GCL seeks for social, environmental, and economic sustainability of its facilities, products and services by investing in continuous development and improvement with transparency, passion and excellence in all the organization activities, actions and dissemination.

## 2.5. INDICATORS RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT PLAN

To achieve its mission and goals, GCL currently has nineteen collaborators, distributed into different functions, supported by 3 administrative and coordinated by 1 innovation manager (principal researcher) and 4 researchers.

Below the GCL distribution by gender, age, nationality and main functions.

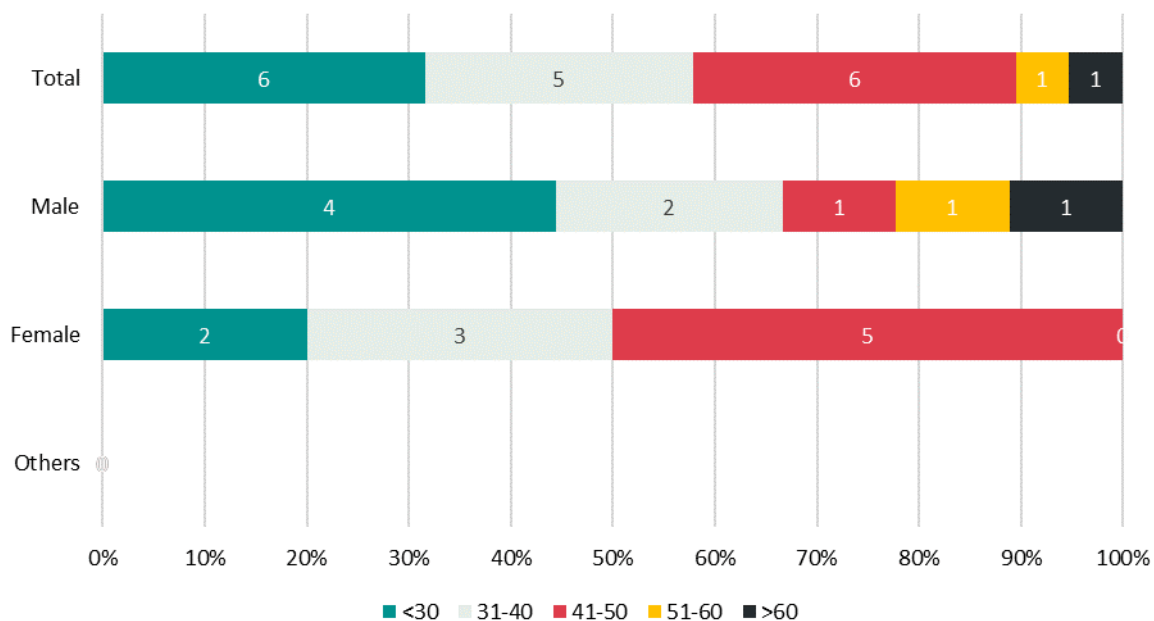
### Relative distribution



**Figure 1.** Collaborators distribution by gender

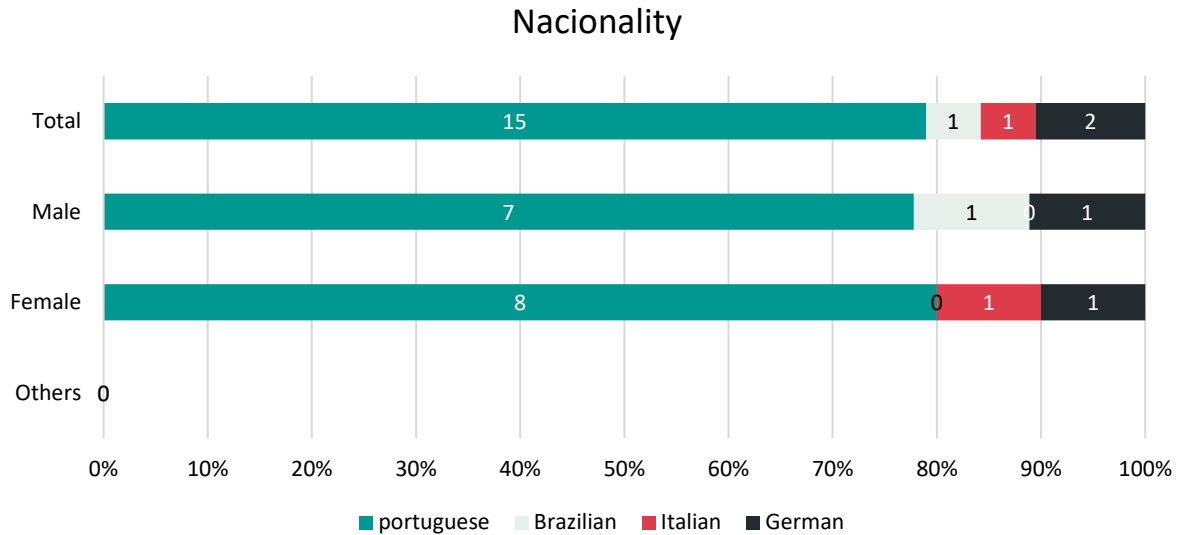
GCL is composed of eight male and eleven female collaborators, representing a gender balance of 42% and 58% respectively (Figure 1).

### Age



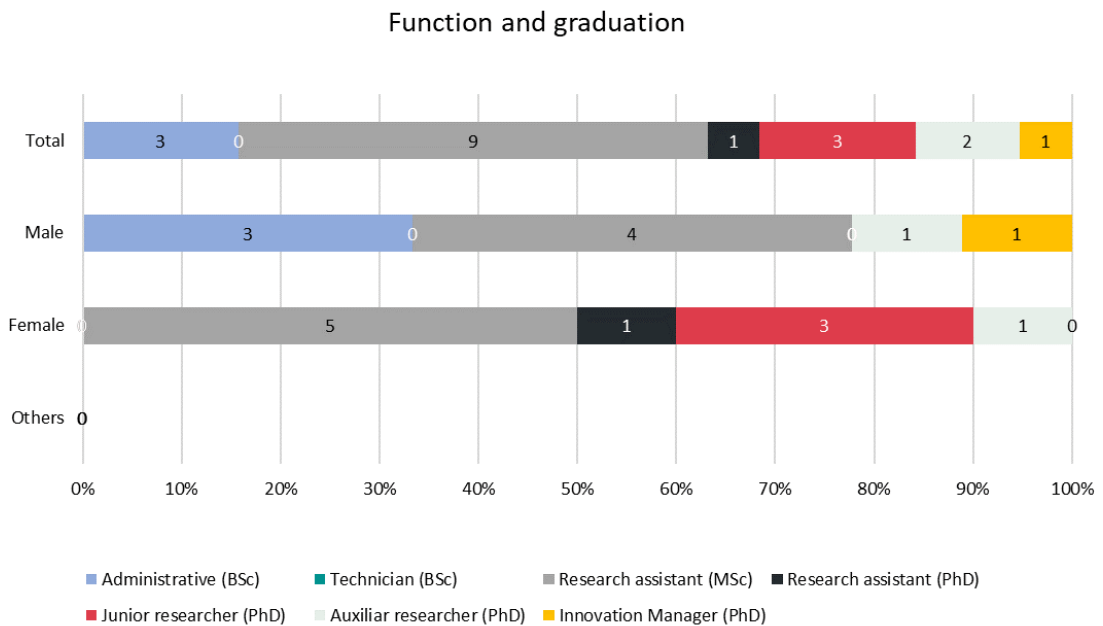
**Figure 2.** Distribution of collaborators according to age and gender

Figure 2 shows the distribution of GCL’s collaborators by age and gender. Overall GCL is composed by young people, since about 90% of collaborators are under 50 years old and about 58% under 40 years old. GCL does not discriminate by age with collaborators covering a large age spectrum.



**Figure 3.** Distribution of collaborators according to their nationality and gender

GCL collaborators are from four nationalities (Figure 3). GCL facilities are located in Portugal and most collaborators are Portuguese, but 21% of collaborators are of other nationalities (15.5% and 5% of the total of men and women, respectively). Selection of collaborators is performed through international calls written in English and published in Portuguese and European platforms.



**Figure 4.** Distribution of collaborators according to the function and qualifications.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of collaborators according to the function and qualifications highlighting no discrimination by gender when it comes to functional positions. Candidates are exclusively selected according to their curriculum, experience and qualifications for the position. For instance, from a total of five researchers (three junior researcher and two auxiliar researchers), one is male and four are female. Likewise, 60% of the research assistants are female.

### **3. IMPLEMENTED PRACTICES TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY**

GCL incorporates diverse actions to contribute to gender equality in its management practices. Hence, before the preparation of this plan and to demonstrate the GCL commitment to this subject, an evaluation of the current practices in the organisation was carried out using the Guidelines for Equality Plans of the Committee on Equality at Work and Employment (CITE – Comissão para a Igualdade no Trabalho e no Emprego)<sup>1</sup>. The practices were analysed by each dimension as follow:

#### **3.1. STRATEGY, MISSION, AND VALUES**

GCL's policy contemplates the principle of gender equality in its mission and strategic values. Therefore, it considers gender equality to be an essential condition for the organisation development and promotes this principle by using inclusive language in all its communications and official documents. The language used in these communications and documents does not contain any gender-based restriction, specification, or preference.

#### **3.2. RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND EQUAL ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT**

All the GCL recruitment and selection of works value skills, aspirations, needs, and responsibilities following the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination in access to employment. This process complies with legal and regulatory requirements in the design of recruitment and selection. All candidates subjected to recruitment processes obtained information about the job position, its function, salary, and contract time. Selection and employment decisions are exclusively based on candidates' merit, taking into account their curriculum, experience and qualifications for the position without any gender discrimination. Gender information data from the recruitment and selection processes are saved for a period in order to evaluate the application of this plan.

#### **3.3. TRAINING (INITIAL AND CONTINUOUS)**

The principle of equality is considered for education and training opportunities. GCL motivates its workers to knowledge and skill development by drawing training plans and providing internal workshops that are available to all workers. Researchers and technicians are also encouraged to seek higher post-graduate degrees while working in GCL. Therefore, professional development is promoted to increase skills and experience of the workers without doing any gender differentiation.

#### **3.4. SALARIES AND CAREER PLANS**

In contracts, salaries and working conditions are offered solely based on the skills and training of the contracted people, and gender is not considered in any way. Career Plans are based on the principles of meritocracy as a basis for evaluation and career development, which aims to promote the principle of equality and equity, without any form of discrimination. The career development of each employee is based on individual performance, experience, and merit, in accordance with the GCL contracts and guidelines. Performance evaluations are carried out based on objective criteria and do not contain any discrimination based on gender and/or any penalty arising from the exercise of family responsibilities, skills and performance are recognised equally by any worker (independent of gender).

#### **3.5. WORKERS PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION**

GCL promotes the participation of all workers in the organisation's daily activities and decisions to improve the work environment and daily dynamics. There are regular meetings to address any

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<sup>1</sup> CITE Guidelines for Equality Plans. Available at:  
[https://cite.gov.pt/documents/14333/193238/guia\\_de\\_autoavaliacao.pdf/9f49a2ec-17ea-48c0-a2b1-77bc6a0fac3b](https://cite.gov.pt/documents/14333/193238/guia_de_autoavaliacao.pdf/9f49a2ec-17ea-48c0-a2b1-77bc6a0fac3b)

suggestions and concerns from the workers where all people are allowed to talk, and all input are considered without any kind of discrimination.

### **3.6. WORKING CONDITIONS**

The principle of equality is applied in the provided working conditions and work environment. GCL organizational culture based on values and rules of ethics and conduct of equity and non-discrimination. Respect for the dignity of people in the workplace is a priority and there is no tolerance towards any kind of harassment or intimidation. Its policy predicts actions to combat all forms of discrimination, including relating to gender, sexual orientation and identity, and to avoid unconscious or implicit bias unintentionally influences judgements and opinions about others based on stereotypes and can result in discrimination.

### **3.7. INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, AND IMAGE**

GCL's information, communication, and image were considered the principle of gender equality. GCL communication, internal and external, including the dissemination done through the official website, social media (as LinkedIn) and other materials, uses an inclusive language without any gender-based restriction, specification, or preference.

### **3.8. WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE BALANCE**

GCL considers it fundamental to its workers to reconcile work, family, and personal life. Periods of absence to assist children and members of the household are granted under the terms provided by law, regardless of the worker's gender. GCL also grants, on its own initiative, the possibility of flexible working hours to all its workers, and hybrid work (at home) to workers who request it. Work activities and training are organised during normal working hours so that all workers can have free time outside that period.

### **3.9. PROTECTION IN PARENTING**

The exercise of maternity and paternity rights is considered and treated equally. GCL applies several practices to do it in the various situations defined by the works law. They are leave/absence from work when required, possibility of working from home when duties allow, flexibility of schedules, and possibility of performing continuous working hours to workers with children up to 12 years, whatever their gender, and by free choice according to the right to parenting regulation.

## **4. MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO WARRANT GENDER EQUALITY**

Considering the practices already implemented by GCL (described in section 3 of this document), this plan proposes some actions, news and for reinforcements to current practices, that should be implemented to warrant gender equality.



**Table 1.** GE measure activities plan

Dimension	Objective	Action/ Measure	Indicators	Type* (N, R)	Responsible** (M, GET, D)	Deadline
Strategy, mission, and values	Informing workers on rights and duties in the field of equality and non-discrimination	Dissemination of the GEP and available material with information	Material available to workers and GEP public on the GCL's website signed by the top manager	N	M, GET	12/2022
	Ensuring the implementation of the GEP	Evaluation and update of GEP once a year or when needed	Updated GEP	N	GET	Ongoing (Yearly)
	Making workers and outsiders aware of the importance and promotion of GE	Disseminate GEP internally and externally	GEP available on the website	N	D	08/2022
	Applying the principle of GE in GCL's mission and strategic values	Use inclusive language in all communications and official documents and dissemination of GEP	Review of GEP, documents and GCL's materials	R	M, D	12/2022
Recruitment process and equal access to employment	Ensuring non-discrimination and equality in access to employment	Recruitment process following elements identified in the Portuguese/ European Labour Code.	Data from the recruitment and selection processes saved for a period	R	M	Ongoing (Yearly)
Training (initial and continuous)	Promoting GE themes in GCL	Include GE themes in the training plans	Evidence of the training module and material	N	M, GET	12/2022
	Encouraging trainings of all workers without gender discrimination (by GEP)	Training plans and internal workshops	Data from trainings and their attendees saved for a period	N	M, GET	12/2022
Salaries and career plans	Ensuring the career development considering GEP	Performance evaluations based on the principles of meritocracy	Data from evaluations saved for a period	R	M	12/2022

Workers' participation and representation	Promoting the participation of all workers in the organisation daily activities and decisions	Regular meetings with the participation of all workers	Meeting minutes saved for a period	R	M	12/2022
Working conditions	Providing good working conditions and environment according to GEP	Promote culture and practices to combat harassment, discrimination, or intimidation and create a channel to expose any of these actions in the work environment	Evidence of the available channel and workers' awareness	R	M, GET	12/2022
Information, Communication, and image	Incorporating GE's principles in all communication and dissemination materials	Internal and external communications and materials with inclusive language	Evidence of inclusive language in documents, social medias and website	R	M, D	12/2022
Work and personal life balance	Ensuring work, family, and personal life balance	Possibility of flexible working hours, hybrid work and periods of absence granted under the terms provided by law	Evidence of these decisions	R	M	12/2022
Protection in parenting	Ensuring parenting rights	Leave/absence and hybrid work according to parenting regulation, ensuring their reintegration into the team	Tracking records and evidence of these decisions	R	M	12/2022

\*Type – N: New, R: Reinforced.

\*\*Responsible – M: Manager, GET: Gender Equality Team, D: Dissemination Team

## 5. EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF THE PLAN

The continuous evaluation and monitoring of the GEP are essential for its implementation. The plan will be reviewed and updated once a year by the gender equality team (GET). The first GET was defined in a GCL general meeting by the approval of all the workers in the first semester of 2022 and any modification on it will also be discussed and approved following the same procedure. This team will be responsible for the data collection and analysis of the indicators to monitor the progress of the actions defined in Section 4 of this plan. The GET will also produce a report or presentation to disseminate the implementation and any deviation of the Plan at the GEP review date.