

Associação Oceano Verde

Green Ocean Technologies and Products
Collaborative Laboratory (GreenCoLab)



Equality, diversity and inclusion plan



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1. FRAMEWORK

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are necessary and essential human rights for the development of society according to the Declaration of 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, EDI has earned a spotlight in society, and this is being reflected in the organisational world, where companies must develop policies to combat discrimination. The development of public national and international policies related to EDI 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 full equality.

With this in mind, and to demonstrate its commitment to this subject, 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 – Associação Oceano Verde (hereby “GCL”) presents its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (EDIP).

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

2. CHARACTERISATION OF GREENCOLAB

2.1. ABOUT

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. It is therefore formally recognised as a Research and Development (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, englobing the steps from production, harvesting, processing, until product development. In order to fulfil its goals, GCL recognises the importance of recruiting international and highly qualified workers, uniting their expertise with the know-how of the associated partners.

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.

GCL provide services as: experimental tests designed to fulfil the client needs, from lab to industrial scale, with algae; analytical services of biochemical characterisation 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.

Regarding the research and innovation agenda, GCL 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.

2.2. MISSION

GCL mission is to **bridge the knowledge and technology transfer between 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

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

GreenCoLab considers that it is mandatory to create a working environment based on respect between all workers and where all people feel welcome. Therefore, GCL is committed to maintaining a working environment that supports equal rights and opportunities for all workers, free of unlawful intimidation and harassment. GreenCoLab 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.

GreenCoLab seeks 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 organisation's activities, actions and dissemination.

2.5. INDICATORS RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT PLAN

To achieve its mission and goals, GCL has 32 workers, at the moment of the review of EDIP, distributed into different functions, coordinated by 1 general manager, supported by 3 administrative, 9 researchers and 19 technicians (8 BSc, 10 MSc, 1 PhD). By actively defending equal career opportunities for all people, GCL is inclusive and treats all workers equally, without being permissive to any kind of discrimination.

The below information describes in more detail, GCL distribution by gender, sexual orientation, age, nationality, and main functions. There are currently no workers who identify themselves with other genders. Nevertheless, GCL is inclusive and treats all genders equally, without discrimination. Of Greencolab's 32 workers, 10 are males and 22 are females, representing a gender balance of 31% and 69%, respectively (Figure 1).

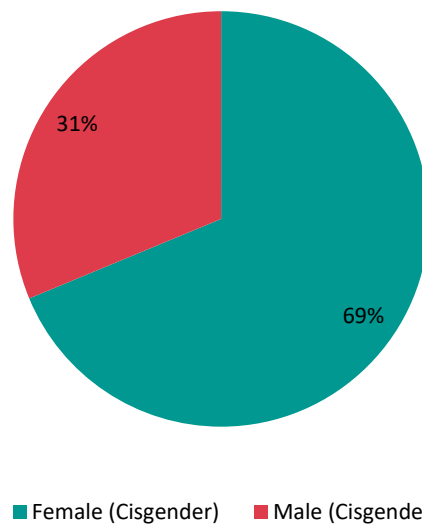


Figure 1. GCL workers distribution by gender.

There is no discrimination by sexual orientation in GCL, and, by an anonymous survey that 30 workers and students answered, it was identified that 55% identify as heterosexuals, 12% as LGBTQIA+, 8% preferred not to say and 25% of the people that received the survey did not respond it (Figure 2).

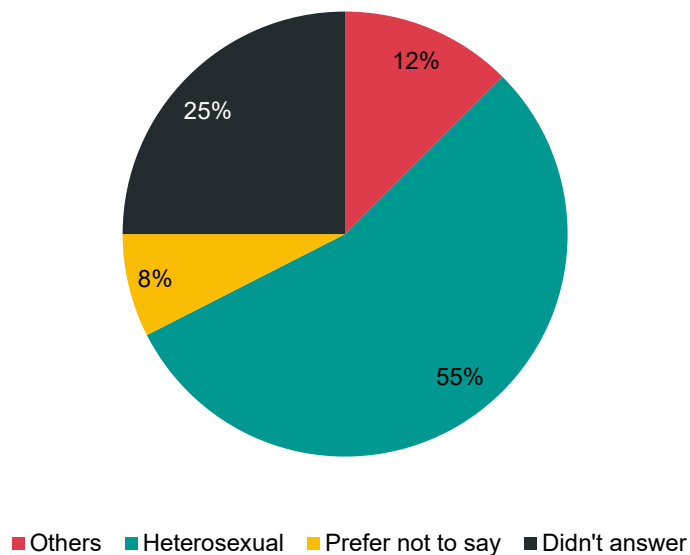


Figure 2. Distribution of workers according to sexual orientation.

Figure 3 shows the distribution of GCL's workers by age, within each gender. Overall GCL is composed of young people, since around 69% of the workers are under 40 years old. Nevertheless, there is no discrimination by age, with the employers well divided in the age groups.

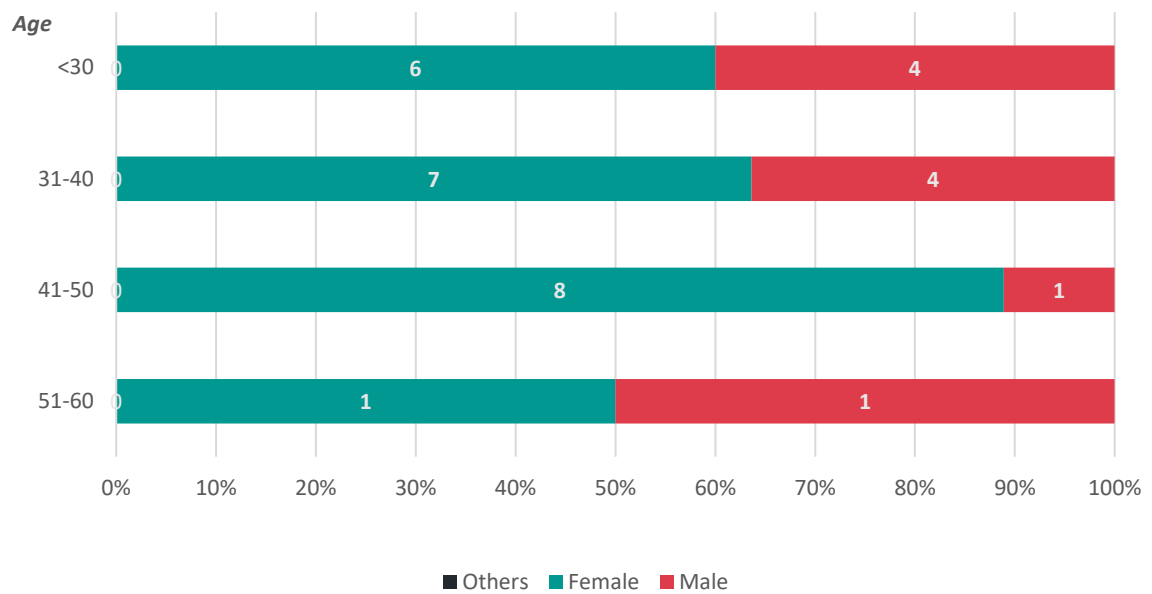


Figure 3. Distribution of workers according to age.

At this moment, GCL’s workers are from four nationalities (Figure 4), showing that the association does not discriminate by nationality. Although most workers are Portuguese, which is understandable since GCL facilities are located in Portugal, 22% of workers are foreigners (6% and 16% of the total of men and women, respectively). New researchers' candidate selection is performed by a call written in English and published in Portuguese and European platforms.

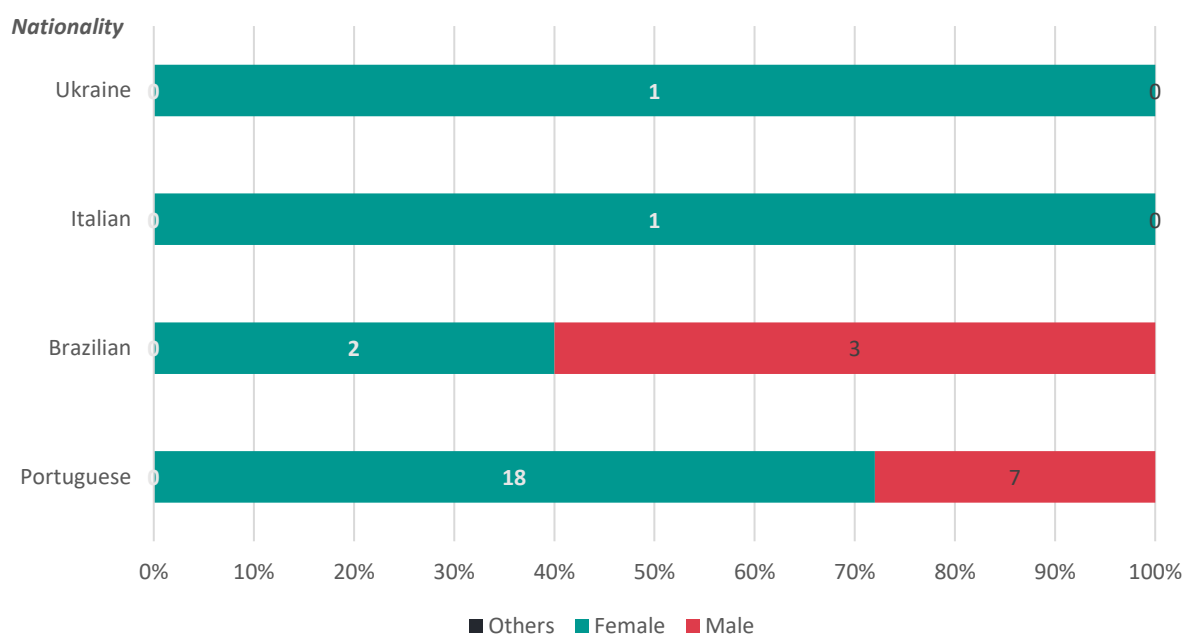


Figure 4. Distribution of workers according to their nationality and gender

By the function attribution, it is possible to see that GCL does not discriminate against workers by gender (Figure 5). Candidates are exclusively selected according to their curriculum, experience and qualifications for the position. In fact, there is an even distribution of functions by gender. Moreover, there's a balanced distribution of gender in higher positions, such as coordination, group leaders and facility managers, as well as in administrative positions. Figure 5 also reports an even distribution in technical positions. Only women are at this moment contracted as researchers or specialists.

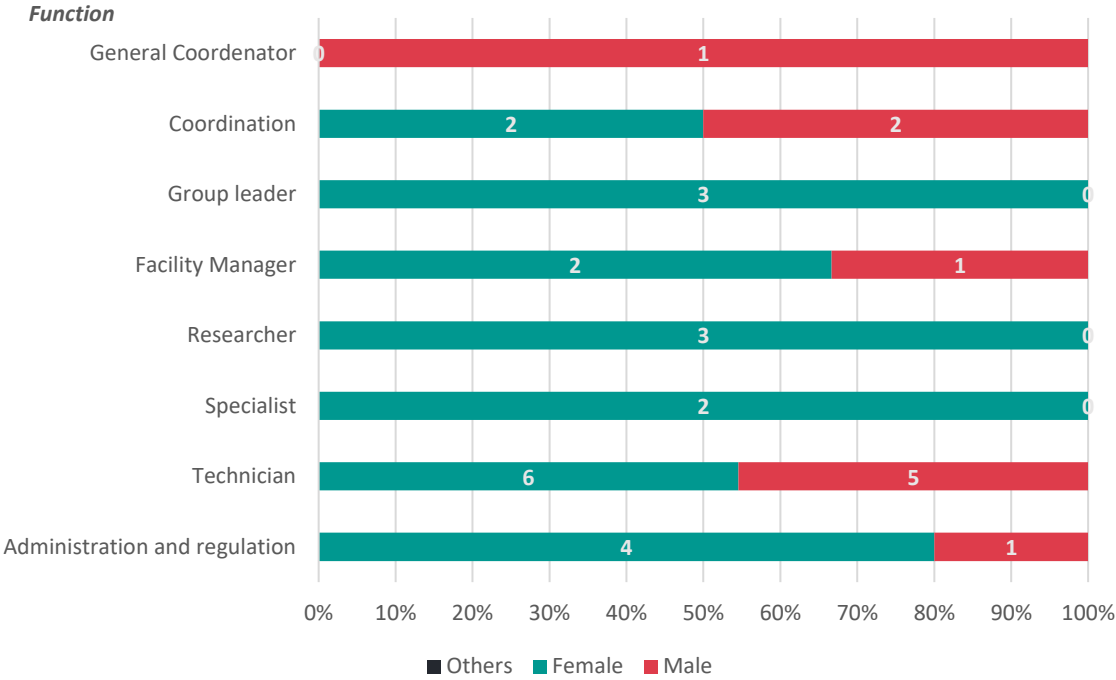


Figure 5. Distribution of workers according to the function

Greencolab fulfils the law, ensuring that all the workers have access to training to improve their professional skills with a positive impact on their curriculum. From the anonymous survey, 93% of GCL workers feel that GCL offers equal access to training opportunities and 97% of the workers have not felt discriminated against in career opportunities or felt discriminated against or harassed in their working environment.

A balance between life and work is demanded to increase the degree of motivation, productivity and proactiveness of workers. The survey showed that 87% considered that GCL stimulates the balance between work and personal life. The same number of employees felt comfortable contributing with their ideas to raise subjects, GCL concerns and projects in development. At the same time, 100% of the employees felt comfortable sharing their thoughts, concerns, and ideas without fear of negative consequences or retribution. These results go in line with the GCL's policy of transparency where the contributions of all the workers are considered equally important for the evolution, growth, strength and development of the association.

3. IMPLEMENTED PRACTICES TO PROMOTE EQUALITY

GCL incorporates diverse actions to contribute to equality, diversity and inclusion 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)¹. The practices were analysed by each dimension as follow:

3.1. STRATEGY, MISSION, AND VALUES

GCL's policy contemplates the principle of equality, diversity and inclusion in its mission and strategic values. Therefore, it considers EDI to be essential conditions for the organisation's development and promotes these principles 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 work value skills, aspirations, needs, and responsibilities follow the principle of EDI 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 the same information about the job position, its function, salary, and contract time. Selection and employment decisions are exclusively based on candidates' merit, considering their curriculum, experience, and qualifications for the position—without any kind of discrimination. 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 EDI 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 at GCL. Therefore, professional development is promoted to increase the skills and experience of the workers without any gender differentiation.

3.4. SALARIES AND CAREER

In contracts, the salaries and working conditions are offered solely based on the skills and training of the contracted people. The career development of each employee is based on individual performance, experience, and merit, in accordance with the GCL contracts and guidelines, which aim to promote the principle of equality and equity, without any form of discrimination. Skills and performance are recognised equally by any worker (independent of gender, sexual orientation and identity). Therefore, GCL activities aim for no discrimination based on gender and/or any penalty arising from the exercise of family responsibilities.

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

¹ CITE Guidelines for Equality Plans. Available at (last check August 5th, 2024): https://cite.gov.pt/documents/14333/193238/guia_de_autoavaliacao.pdf/9f49a2ec-17ea-48c0-a2b1-77bc6a0fac3b

3.6. WORKING CONDITIONS

The principle of equality is applied in the provided working conditions and work environment. GCL's organisational culture is based on values and rules of ethics and conduct of equity and non-discrimination. Respect for the dignity of the people in their workplace is a priority and there is no tolerance towards any kind of harassment or intimidation. GCL policy predicts actions to combat all forms of discrimination. Workers are protected regardless of their gender, sexual orientation and identity.

3.7. INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, AND IMAGE

GCL's information, communication, and image are made considering the principle of EDI. GCL communication, internal and external, including the dissemination done through the official website, social media (such 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 is fundamental to its workers to reconcile work 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 and training activities 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 left/absent from work when required, the possibility of working from home when duties allow, the flexibility of schedules, and the possibility of performing continuous working hours for workers with children up to 12 years, whatever their gender, and by free choice according to the right to parenting regulation.

4. MEASURES TO WARRANT EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Considering the practices already implemented by GCL (described in section 3 of this document), this plan proposes some actions to reinforce the current practices in order to warrant EDI (Table 1). All the actions are currently valid and will be yearly reviewed by the EDIT.

GCL also follows some legal instruments regarding equality, namely: Constitution of the Portuguese Republic; Law no.134/1999, of August 28th; Law no. 40/2004, of August 18th, as currently wording (Fellowship Holder By-Laws); Law no. 61/2008 of October 31st; Portuguese Labour Code in its current reading; Law no. 3/2011, of February 15th; Resolution no. 19/2012 of the Council of Ministers, of March 8th; Resolution no. 13/2013 of the Council of Ministers, of March 8th; Ordinance no. 84/2015, of March 20th; Law no. 133/2015, of September 7th; Law no. 73/2017, of August 16th; Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union; 2030 Agenda of the United Nations; Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29th June 2000; Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27th November 2000; European Parliament Resolution on harassment at the workplace no. 8200/2339 (INI) of September 20th 2001; Council Directive 2004/113/EC, of 13th December; Directive 2006/54/EC, of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5th July 2006; Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8th March; Decision of the European Council, 21st October; Council of Europe (2016) Gender Equality Glossary (<https://edoc.coe.int/en/gender-equality/6947-gender-equality-glossary.html>).

Table 1. EDI measure activities plan

Dimension	Objective	Action/ Measure	Indicators	Type* (U, R)	Responsible** (HR, EDIT, D)	Deadline
Strategy, mission, and values	Informing workers on rights and duties in the field of equality and non-discrimination	Dissemination of the EDIP	Material available to workers and EDIP public on the GCL's website signed by the top manager	R	HR, EDIT	Yearly review 07/2025
	Ensuring the implementation of the EDIP	Evaluation and update of EDIP once a year or when needed	Updated EDIP	R	EDIT	Ongoing (Yearly)
	Making workers and outsiders aware of the importance and promotion of EDIP	Disseminate EDIP internally and externally	EDIP available on the website	R	D	Yearly review 07/2025
	Applying the principle of EDI in GCL's mission and strategic values	Use inclusive language in all communications and official documents and dissemination of EDIP	Review of EDIP, documents and GCL's materials	R	HR, D	Ongoing (Yearly)
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	HR	Ongoing (Yearly)
Training (initial and continuous)	Promoting EDI themes in GCL	Include EDI themes in the training plans	Evidence of the training module and material	R	HR, EDIT	Ongoing (Yearly)
	Encouraging trainings of all workers without gender discrimination (by EDIP)	Training plans and internal workshops	Data from trainings and their attendees saved for a period	R	HR, EDIT	Ongoing (Yearly)

Salaries and career plans	Ensuring career development considering EDIP	No discrimination in the career development	Evaluation documents under development	U	HR	Ongoing 06/2025
Worker's participation and representation	Promoting the participation of all workers in the organisation's daily activities and decisions	Regular meetings with the participation of all workers	Meeting evidence saved for a period	R	HR	Ongoing
Working conditions	Providing good working conditions and environment according to EDIP	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	HR, EDIT	Ongoing
Information, Communication, and image	Incorporating EDI's principles in all communication and dissemination materials	Internal and external communications and materials with inclusive language	Evidence of inclusive language in documents, social media and website	R	HR, D	Ongoing
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	HR	Ongoing
Protection in parenting	Ensuring parenting rights	Leave/absence and hybrid work according to parenting regulations, ensuring their reintegration into the team	Tracking records and evidence of these decisions	R	HR	Ongoing

*Type – U: Under implementation, R: Reinforced.

**Responsible – HR: Human Resources, EDIT: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team, D: Dissemination Team

5. EVALUATION AND MONITORING OF THE PLAN

The continuous evaluation and monitoring of the EDIP are essential for its implementation. The plan will be reviewed and updated once a year by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team (EDIT). The first EDIT was defined in a GCL general meeting with the approval of all the workers in the first semester of 2022 and any modification to it will also be discussed and approved following the same procedure. This team is 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 EDIT will also produce a report or presentation to disseminate the implementation and any deviation from the Plan at the EDIP review date.