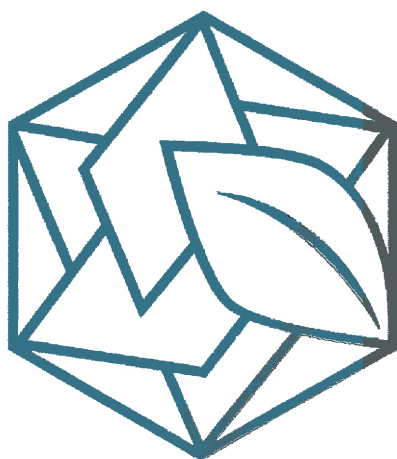


# **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2022-2026**



**ITC**

**INOVACIJSKO TEHNOLOŠKI GROZD  
INNOVATION TECHNOLOGY CLUSTER**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The ITC – Innovation Technology Cluster Murska Sobota (hereinafter: ITC) is a non-profit Business Support Organisation established in 2011 as the Institute of Advanced Technologies and Communications, with its vision to foster cross-sectoral innovation and implementation of novel technologies and ICT in rural-based sectors. ITC's main focus is to bring together target groups (such as SMEs, food system actors, farmers and other rural actors) and turn them into being "Smart", thus creating a unique Europe-wide innovation-based ecosystem, supporting the shift towards a more resilient, healthy and environmentally, socially, economically sustainable rural areas. ITC acts as a regional technology transfer intermediate, innovation centre and business support cluster, with interdisciplinary experts having strong international references, a network of institutions and extensive experience in conducting EU funded projects and other projects focused on rural development.

From its establishment, the ITC has been growing not only at the business level but also maturing on fundamental issues such as the organisational culture of all employees. The European Commission's initiative that requires each research organisation to provide a gender equality plan for applications for the new Horizon Europe Framework Programme has provided the opportunity for an in-depth analysis of the situation within ITC.

This document, which focuses on gender equality, was produced from March to May 2022 in an internal interaction of the Director of ITC, responsible for the Gender Equality Plan and all employees. A broad debate and consensus on the substance guarantee that our equality plan will not remain just a written letter but a living document that will be systematically implemented in all aspects of ITC's functioning and for the benefit of the ITC community as such. In its midst, ITC builds and promotes interpersonal relationships based on the integration of diversity since understanding and coexistence with the otherwise-minded are fundamental pillars of a critical community that respects human rights and has zero tolerance for discrimination and intolerance.

ITC collected gender-segregated data to be monitored and included in the annual implementation reviews and in annual plans and reports of the Board of the ITC Murska Sobota.

The Gender Equality Plan contains five fundamental pillars, which are concretised in the Action Plan

- gender equality in recruitment and career progression,
- gender balance in leadership and decision-making,
- work and private life balance within the organisational culture,
- measures to prevent gender-based violence, including sexual harassment,
- communication of equality.

This plan is an official ITC document adopted by the Council of the ITC Murska Sobota. Training on the content will be organised for staff and leadership, and concrete actions will follow. Discussions on equality, equal treatment and protection against discrimination will be encouraged.

## 2 CURRENT SITUATION

### 2.1 Environment: a review of legislation and policies

Slovenia ranks very high in international comparisons of gender equality. According to the SDG Gender Index scale<sup>1</sup> published by the international organisation Equal Measures 2030, Slovenia ranked sixth in 2019 among the 129 countries for best gender equality achievers globally. Slovenia is also ranked high, in 10th place among 189 countries, according to the United Nations Gender Inequality Index<sup>2</sup> (2020).

The good position of women in society in Slovenia stems from the regulations that favour women and were largely systemically established after the Second World War. Women have acquired new rights and opportunities and become increasingly independent, resulting in a high proportion of working women. In 2020, according to the Women's Employment Index<sup>3</sup>, Slovenia ranked third among OECD member states. Despite the appropriate legal regulation, society is still marked by the traditional division of gender roles, which is reflected in the unequal representation of genders in occupations, positions, social impact, etc.

The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia (URS) states in its fourteenth Article that in the Republic of Slovenia, everyone is 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.

The field of protection and implementation of equality in the Republic of Slovenia is further governed by the general laws:

- Protection Against Discrimination Act (ZVarD)
- Implementation of the Principle of Equal Treatment Act (ZUNEO)
- Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act (ZEMM)

The principles of equality are also included in other specific laws:

- Employment Relationships Act (ZDR-1)
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities Act (ZRZI)
- The equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act (ZIMI)

<sup>1</sup> <https://data.em2030.org/2019-sdg-gender-index/explore-the-2019-index-data/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pwc.com/si/sl/pwc-jev-indeks-zaposlenosti-ensk-2020--slovenija-na-tretjem-mest.html>

## 2.2 Equality in ITC

The area of equality is largely governed by national legislation and regulations, which the ITC, being a formal organisation, is obliged to respect and implement. The principles of equality, which are set out in the legal order at the national level, are reflected in the basic acts of the ITC, namely the ITC Statute and ITC internal regulation for Safety at work.

ITC regulates specific issues in more detail by the following internal acts and guidelines:

- Internal act on Ensuring the protection of women who have recently given birth and are breastfeeding and protecting the development of their children
- Internal act on Prevention of Mobbing, Sexual and Other Harassment
- Internal guidelines on Procedures in cases of violence from third persons

ITC also supports allowing employees to extend their maternity and parental leave rights and other rights in the employment relationship linked to parenthood (e.g. allowing part-time work, extending the period for taking leave, allowing reduction of working hours due to breastfeeding, etc.). Exercising these rights is ensured upon request of employees.

ITC collected the currently available sexually segregated data and prepared an overview of the current situation, presented at the end of this document. An analysis of data on the representation of women and men at ITC showed that:

- ITC has a semi gender balanced government structure, with two men and one woman representing the ITC Board,
- there are more men employed at ITC than women (30% of employees are women on average in the last five years), with women falling in representation at higher educational levels (level VII and above), which is more evident in - and because of – areas and fields of ICT,
- the proportion of women employees has not been systematically increasing in the course of the last five years,
- women contribute a higher number of hours of sick leave and absence from work (and consequently in lower income in combination with education level), as a result of parenthood, childcare and caring for the family.

## 3 GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

### 3.1 Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

#### Objectives:

- Gender balance of employees in ITC
- Equal career progression opportunities
- Successful integration of sub-represented groups into the professional environment

Area	Measure	Action Code	Indicator	Responsible person	Resources
Gender	Promoting the recruitment of the under-represented gender in ITC, whereby a decision in favour of the under-represented gender is only possible if the competencies of candidates are comparable or if the under-represented gender has better competencies.	1.1	Number of employees by sex	Human resources	No additional resources required
Gender	Establishment of a systemic process for identifying barriers to career progression by gender and addressing these barriers.	1.2	Number of initiatives under consideration / initiated  Number of individual meetings with under-represented gender	Director	No additional resources
Age, gender, disabilities, illnesses or disorders, cultural or ethnic origin	Incorporating the equality aspect into the support system for the integration of new employees.	1.3	Number of activities to facilitate the integration of new employees, with an emphasis on the equality aspect	Director, Business development manager, Human resources	500 EUR per year

### 3.2 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

#### Objectives:

- Rejuvenation of staff in leadership positions with emphasis on gender equality

Area	Measure	Action Code	Indicator	Responsible person	Resources
Age, gender	Inclusion of the gender dimension into yearly/succession planning to identify employees who show potential and ability to develop successful careers	2.1	Structure of employees in leadership and separable positions by gender	Director	No additional resources required
Gender	Implementation of additional training by including content in the field of gender equality and developing the skills of employees needed to move to more responsible functions	2.2	Number of participants in training	Director, Business development manager	250 EUR per year

### 3.3 Work and private life balance within the organisational culture

#### Objectives:

- Working conditions tailored to the individual's needs that enable a successful work and private life balance
- Reduction of disproportion in absence from work by gender

Area	Measure	Action Code	Indicator	Responsible person	Resources
Gender	Forms of working time adjustments, spatial flexibility and work organisation	3.1	Number of employed parents and employees caring for the elderly in the immediate family by adjusting working time, the possibility of working remotely and substituting (by employee sex)	Human resources, Director	No additional resources required
Gender	Implementing additional training and active promotion of equal representation of both genders in family related obligations that result in the absence of work.	3.2	Number of participants in training	Director, Human resources	250 EUR per year

### 3.4 Measures to prevent gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

#### Objectives:

- Safe working environment
- Better transparency and easier access to violence prevention instruments and assistance to victims at the organisation level

Area	Measure	Action Code	Indicator	Responsible person	Resources
Gender, gender identity	Update of internal acts, guidelines and recommendations to prevent gender-based violence	4.1	Number of updated and new internal acts, guidelines or recommendations	Human resources, Director	No additional resources required
Gender	Establishment of a support group for victims of violence and covert sexual bias, able to identify and properly address any form of violence	4.2	Number of support staff with an expressed interest in identifying and addressing violence	Director	No additional resources required
Gender, age, cultural, ethnic origins and religious beliefs, disabilities, illnesses or disorders, gender identity, sexual orientation	Establishment of channels for anonymous reporting of disrespectful behaviour, abuse of position and harassment in the workplace and establishment of procedures for investigation and consequent action	4.3	Number of initiatives / applications	Director	No additional resources required



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### 3.5 Communication of equality

#### Objectives:

- Communication reflecting an inclusive organisational climate
- Socially responsible engagement by spreading positive values into the wider society

Area	Measure	Action Code	Indicator	Responsible person	Resources
Gender	Promoting professional and scientific excellence of women employees through social media and other channels	5.1	Number of posts and publications	Communication manager	250 EUR per year
Gender, cultural, ethnic origins and religious beliefs, disabilities, illnesses or disorders, gender identity, sexual orientation	Actively participating in some of the public awareness-raising, de-stereotyping and destigmatisation activities/events, such as: International Day of Women and Girls in Science (February 11th), Women's Day (March 8th), International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (May 17th), International Day for the Promotion of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development (May 21st), World Father's Day (June 18th), World Mental Health Day (October 10th), International Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3rd)	5.2	A number of awareness-raising activities carried out (events, informational material, statements...)	Communication manager	500 EUR per year



## 4 OVERVIEW OF GENDER STRUCTURE IN ITC

### 4.1 Governing structure (Board members)

The ITC is a non-profit organisation governed by the Board of the Institute, which has three appointed members. The Board of the Institute is composed of a representative of the founders, a representative of the employees and a representative of the users or interested public.

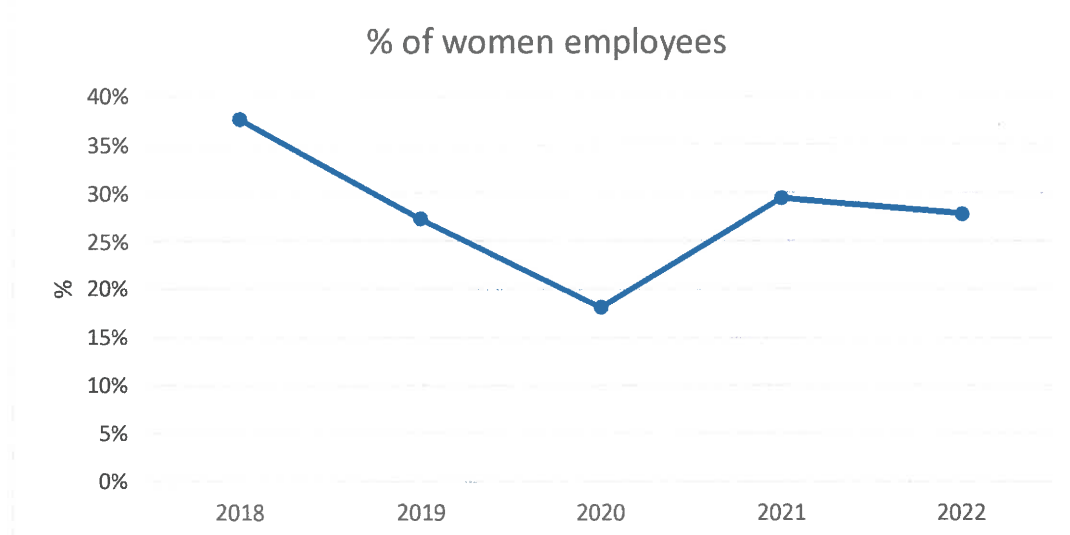
The appointment of the Board members shall be four years, while the Members may be reappointed or elected at the end of their term. The governing structure has been semi-balanced and stable since 2018, with 2 Board members (the representative of the founders and the representative of the users and interested public) being men, while the representative of the employees is a woman.

ITC Board members					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Men</b>	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Women</b>	1	1	1	1	1
<b>%W/M</b>	33%	33%	33%	33%	33%

### 4.2 Employees

The number of ITC employees has been constantly from 2008 (8 employees) to 2022 (18 employees), with the proportion of women among all employees falling between 2018 (38%) and 2020 (18%) and the rising again from 2020 (18%) to 2022 (28%). On average, approximately 30% of women were employed at ITC, which is linked to the specific challenge associated with the lack of women in technical science (ICT, engineering) in Slovenia and especially in our region. More than half of employees in ITC have a technical type of education due to a specific area of ITC business, focused predominantly in the digital transformation of agrifood sector and other rural based sectors.

Nr. of employees					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Men</b>	5	8	9	12	13
<b>Women</b>	3	3	2	5	5
<b>Total</b>	8	11	11	17	18
<b>%W/total</b>	38%	27%	18%	29%	28%



Another aspect of slight inequality among employees is the level of education. In ITC, women are less represented at the highest education levels (above level VII.), with only one woman having PhD level of education (in fact, this is the only PhD in ITC organisation), while the rest of women are holding much lower education levels (1 x VI./2, 1 x VI./1 and 2 x V.). On the other hand, women are also less represented at the lowest education levels (below level V.). Women are, on average, paid more or less equally throughout the whole organisation, while the salaries at the same positions and at similar levels of education are very similar, irrespectively of the gender.

Education level of women			Education level of men	
level	2022		level	2022
IV.			IV.	2
V.	2		V.	5
VI./1			VI./1	2
VI./2	2		VI./2	1
VII.			VII.	
VIII/1.			VIII/1.	3
VIII/2.	1		VIII/2.	

#### 4.3 Professional and private life balance

According to data between 2018 and 2021, women and men are almost equally absent from work due to illness, parenthood, childcare and absence due to COVID. The average days of absence per men/women employees for 2019 and 2020 show almost the same proportion (50/50) of men and

women being absent, while in 2011, the number of days per women employees showed that women (32,4 days) are more than three times more absent than men (9,3 days). Although this result can be largely affected by the COVID situation, with the number of days absent from work rising from 2 (2018) and 13 (2019) to 27 (2020) and 16 (2021), we can still conclude that the workload of women in the work environment, on the one hand, and caring for the family on the other results in a higher number of hours of sick leave and absence from work (and consequently in lower income in combination with education level as presented above). The data, as expected, reflect the division of gender roles in our society, where family care is still the primary role of women.

Absence from work				
	2018	2019	2020	2021
Men	1	104	244	111
Days/M empl.	0,2	13,0	27,1	9,3
Women	12	43	57	162
Days/W empl.	4,0	14,3	28,5	32,4
total	13	147	301	273
Days/All empl.	2	13	27	16

All presented data from the analysis of the current situation in ITC will be used to adjust activities and plan further measures to achieve better gender equality in ITC.

Done in Murska Sobota on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Denis Topolnik

Director, ITC Murska Sobota

ITC Murska Sobota

