

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)

2026 – 2028

SYNTHESIS Center for Research & Education Ltd

Nicosia, Cyprus

Public document | Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion | Aligned with EIGE GEAR Tool

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Statement of Commitment

For more than two decades, SYNTHESIS has worked to turn new ideas into positive social change in education, business and society, “for the good of the people and the planet”. Many of the people we work with – women, migrants and refugees, young people, persons with disabilities and the long-term unemployed – face barriers that are shaped by gender and by its intersection with other forms of disadvantage. We cannot credibly promote inclusion outside our organisation unless we practise it inside.

Cyprus ranks last among the 27 EU Member States in the European Institute for Gender Equality’s Gender Equality Index 2025, with particularly large gaps in the domains of **power** (decision-making) and **time** (care and domestic work). As a research and education organisation active in more than 50 countries, SYNTHESIS has both the responsibility and the tools to contribute to closing these gaps.

This Gender Equality Plan is our formal, public commitment. It is endorsed by our Founder and Executive Director, backed by dedicated human and financial resources, and built on data, participation and accountability. It fulfils the Horizon Europe eligibility criterion on Gender Equality Plans and goes further, embedding gender equality and inclusion into the content of our research, training and innovation work.

Our commitment in one sentence

SYNTHESIS commits to being a workplace, a research and training provider and a partner in which every person – regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, origin, disability, age or caring responsibilities – is treated with dignity, has equal opportunities to contribute and progress, and is safe from discrimination, harassment and violence.

Document information

Item	Details
Title	Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2026–2028
Organisation	SYNTHESIS Center for Research & Education Ltd, Tagmatarchi Poulou 33, 1101 Nicosia, Cyprus
Scope	All staff, researchers, trainers, interns, volunteers, Founder and all activities (research, education, innovation, policy, Data & AI), including services delivered with and for beneficiaries and partners
Approved by	Founder, on the proposal of the Executive Director
Plan period	October 2026 – December 2028 (annual progress reports; mid-term review Q4 2027)
Plan owner	Executive Director, supported by the Gender Equality Officer (GEO)
Contact	info@synthesis-center.com www.synthesis-center.org
Related documents	HUB Nicosia GEP 2026–2028; Code of Conduct; Dignity at Work & Anti-Harassment Policy; Safeguarding Policy; Staff Handbook; Data Protection (GDPR) Policy

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1. About SYNTHESIS

SYNTHESIS Center for Research & Education Ltd is a research, education and social innovation organisation based in Nicosia, Cyprus, working locally and across Europe for more than 20 years. Its mission is the creation of new ideas and forms and their realisation in education, business and society, for the good of people and the planet.

SYNTHESIS works across five areas of expertise – **Research, Education, Innovation, Policy, and Data & AI** – through dedicated units for Youth Learning, School Education, VET & Adult Education and Higher Education. Its thematic priorities are:

- **Social innovation and social entrepreneurship** – SYNTHESIS is recognised as a leading organisation for social entrepreneurship in Cyprus;
- **Migrant and refugee integration and social inclusion**, including women’s empowerment and employability;
- **Sustainable development** and environmental education;
- **Health and well-being**, including prevention of violence and bullying and counselling support.

SYNTHESIS also operates community initiatives that put inclusion into practice: **HUB Nicosia**, a social innovation hub and co-working space which is established as a non-profit educational NGO, and a **Social Café** that promotes the empowerment and social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers.

Our reach at a glance	
140+	European projects completed in the last three years
250+	European partner organisations
50	countries reached through projects and networks
6	projects recognised as Erasmus+ Good Practice (2025)

Our target groups include young people, pupils and students, educators and trainers, adult learners, women, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, people with learning and emotional disabilities, long-term unemployed people, social entrepreneurs and policy makers. Because many of these groups experience gendered and intersecting disadvantages, gender equality is both an internal organisational value and a core quality standard of our external work.

1.1 Policy and legal context

European framework

- **Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion** – since 2022, public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments from EU Member States and Associated Countries must have a GEP that meets four mandatory process requirements: publication and formal endorsement, dedicated resources, sex/gender-disaggregated data collection and monitoring, and training and capacity building.
- **EU Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030** (presented by the European Commission on 5 March 2026), which builds on the 2025 Roadmap for Women’s Rights and prioritises combating gender-based violence including cyber-violence, engaging men and boys, women’s economic empowerment in STEM, research, innovation and entrepreneurship, and closing pay and financing gaps.
- **Pay Transparency Directive (EU) 2023/970** (transposition deadline 7 June 2026), **Work-Life Balance Directive (EU) 2019/1158** and **Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence**.
- **European Research Area (ERA) Policy Agenda** and the EU’s commitment to inclusive gender equality plans that address intersecting inequalities.

National framework – Cyprus

Equality is entrenched in the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus: Article 28 prohibits discrimination, including on the grounds of sex. Sectoral legislation guarantees equal treatment of men and women in employment and vocational training, equal pay for work of equal value, protection of maternity and parental leave, and protection from sexual harassment at work. Law 115(I)/2021 on preventing and combating violence against women – which incorporates the Istanbul Convention – criminalises forms of gender-based violence including sexual harassment and stalking.

The **National Strategy for Gender Equality 2024–2026**, comprising 64 measures in areas such as employment, education, decision-making and violence, is coordinated by the national gender equality machinery, with gender focal points established across ministries. A Cypriot bill to transpose the EU Pay Transparency Directive was published for consultation in late 2025; SYNTHESIS will align its pay practices with the final law and applies the Directive’s principles from the start of this Plan.

Why this matters: Cyprus in figures

Indicator (EIGE Gender Equality Index 2025)	Cyprus	EU-27
Overall Gender Equality Index score (out of 100)	47.6 – ranked last in the EU	63.4
Domain of power (decision-making)	13.6 – 26th in the EU	–
Domain of time (care and domestic work)	54.7 – last in the EU	–
Domain of knowledge (education, segregation)	44.6 – 26th in the EU	–
Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since age 15	36%	approx. 31%

Source: European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Gender Equality Index 2025 – Cyprus country factsheet.

These gaps – in leadership, in the distribution of care, in educational segregation and in exposure to violence – correspond directly to the areas where SYNTHESIS can act, as an employer and through its research, training and innovation programmes.

1.2 About this Gender Equality Plan

This GEP 2026–2028 is the formal statement of SYNTHESIS’s commitment to gender equality and inclusion. It is a **public document**, endorsed by the Founder and the Executive Director, and published on our website. It has been developed in compliance with Horizon Europe requirements, Cypriot legislation and good practice, following the six steps of the **EIGE Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool**:

- 1. Getting started** – leadership mandate and appointment of a Gender Equality Officer;
- 2. Analysing and assessing** – internal review of staff, pay, governance and project data and of existing policies;
- 3. Setting up the GEP** – defining objectives, measures, targets, responsibilities and resources;
- 4. Implementing** – rolling out measures across all units, with staff participation;
- 5. Monitoring progress** – annual data collection and reporting against KPIs;
- 6. Evaluating and renewing** – mid-term review (2027) and final evaluation informing the next Plan (2029–2031).

The Plan draws on consultation with staff, trainers and associates, and on the experience of SYNTHESIS’s projects on women’s empowerment, migrant integration and social entrepreneurship. It is closely aligned with the **HUB Nicosia GEP 2026–2028**, so that the two organisations share tools, training and data systems while each remains accountable for its own targets.

Scope

The GEP applies to all persons working for or with SYNTHESIS – employees on all contract types, researchers, trainers and facilitators, interns, volunteers and Board members – and to all our activities, including research, education and training, innovation and incubation, policy work and communication. Partners, subcontractors and service providers are expected to respect its principles, in particular the Code of Conduct and the zero-tolerance approach to harassment.

An inclusive, intersectional approach

Gender inequality does not operate in isolation. In line with the Horizon Europe guidance and EIGE good practice, this Plan takes an **intersectional** approach, paying attention to how gender interacts with migration or refugee status, ethnicity, language, disability, age, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, gender identity and caring responsibilities. Measures and data collection are designed accordingly, always respecting GDPR and voluntary self-identification.

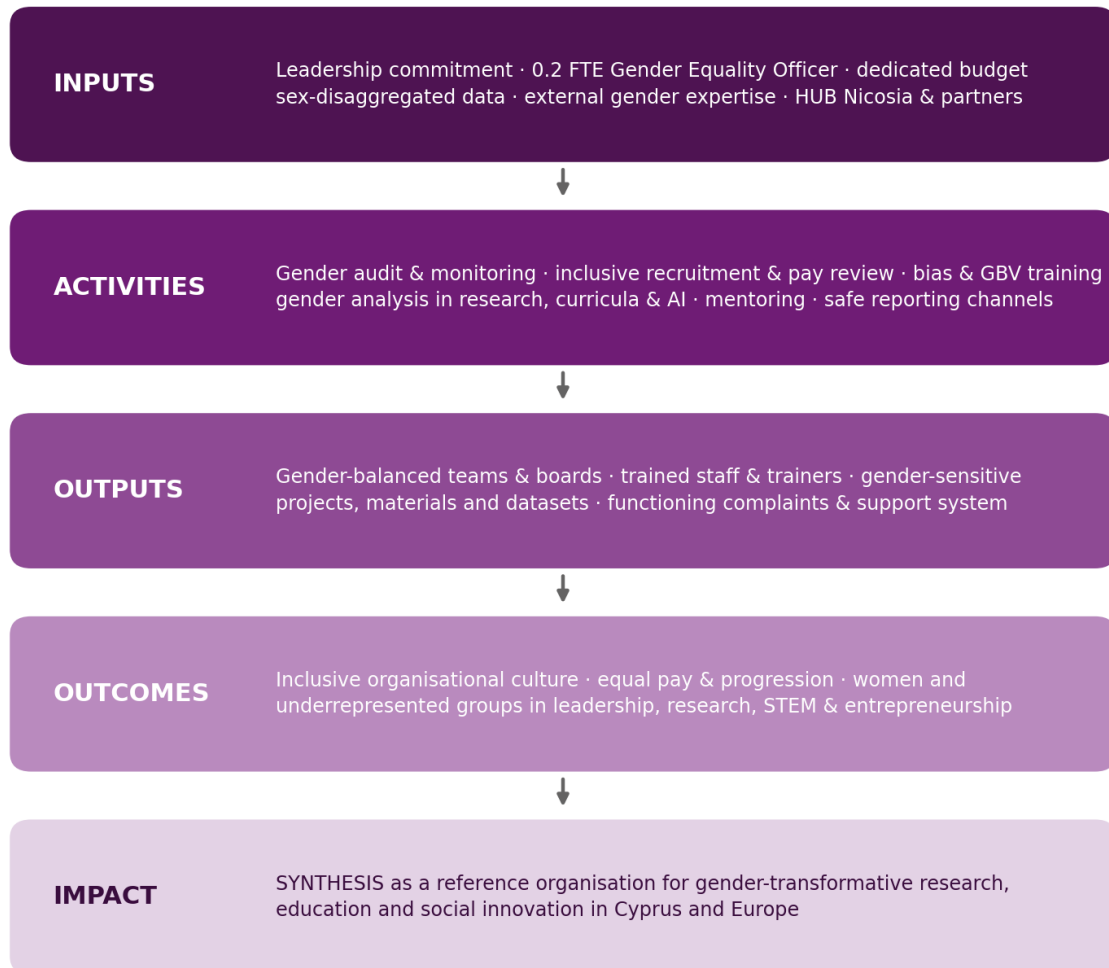
1.3 Theory of Change and its relation to the GEP

SYNTHESIS's Theory of Change describes how research, education and social innovation lead to systemic social change. It rests on three assumptions:

- Evidence-based, inclusive research and education change attitudes, capacities and systems over time;
- Equal opportunities and gender equality are preconditions for social justice, innovation and sustainable development;
- Organisations that practise equality internally deliver more relevant, credible and effective programmes externally.

The GEP is a central mechanism for implementing this Theory of Change across three levels of change:

Level of change	What the GEP does
Organisational change	Policies, procedures, governance and culture that make SYNTHESIS a safe, fair and inclusive workplace, with gender balance in decision-making and equal pay and progression.
Individual change	Training, mentoring and participatory programmes that equip staff, trainers and beneficiaries – especially women, girls and underrepresented groups – with skills and confidence to lead and innovate.
Societal change	Integration of the gender dimension into research, curricula, digital tools and AI, and policy recommendations, contributing to structural change in education, employment, entrepreneurship and civic life.



Assumptions: inclusive, evidence-based and participatory action changes structures, attitudes and practices.

Figure 1. SYNTHESIS Theory of Change for gender equality

1.4 Objectives and guiding principles

The overall goal of the GEP is to develop a culture in which everyone is treated with dignity and has equal opportunities for growth and development, and in which gender equality is systematically integrated into what we research, teach and create. The specific objectives are:

1. **Gender balance in leadership and decision-making** – at least 40% representation of each gender on the Board, the management team and project coordination roles by 2028;
2. **Fair and transparent recruitment, career progression and pay** – gender-neutral procedures, published salary ranges and an adjusted gender pay gap below 5%;

3. **Work-life balance and an inclusive culture** – flexible work, support for parents and carers, and well-being;
4. **Gender dimension in research, education and innovation** – gender analysis integrated into 100% of new project proposals and learning materials;
5. **Zero tolerance of gender-based violence and sexual harassment** – clear policies, confidential reporting and survivor-centred support for staff and beneficiaries;
6. **Inclusive communication and outreach** – gender-sensitive language, images and event representation.

Guiding principles

Principle	What it means in practice
Leadership and accountability	The Executive Director is accountable for the GEP; progress is reported to the Board annually.
Evidence-based	Decisions are informed by sex/gender-disaggregated data, collected annually and analysed against baseline.
Intersectionality	Measures consider how gender intersects with other characteristics and forms of disadvantage.
Participation	Staff, trainees, beneficiaries and partners are consulted in design, monitoring and review.
Proportionality	Measures are ambitious but realistic for an organisation of SYNTHESIS's size and resources.
Transparency	The GEP and annual progress summaries are published on our website.
Do no harm and confidentiality	Personal data are protected under GDPR; reporting of harassment is confidential and survivor-centred.

1.5 Compliance with Horizon Europe requirements

The table below shows how this GEP meets the four mandatory process-related requirements and covers the five recommended content areas of the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criterion.

Horizon Europe requirement	Type	Where addressed
Public document, formally signed/endorsed by top management	Mandatory	Statement of Commitment; Sections 2 and 14; approval page
Dedicated resources and expertise in gender equality	Mandatory	Section 3
Data collection and monitoring (sex/gender-disaggregated data, annual reporting)	Mandatory	Sections 4 and 13
Training and awareness-raising, including unconscious bias	Mandatory	Section 9

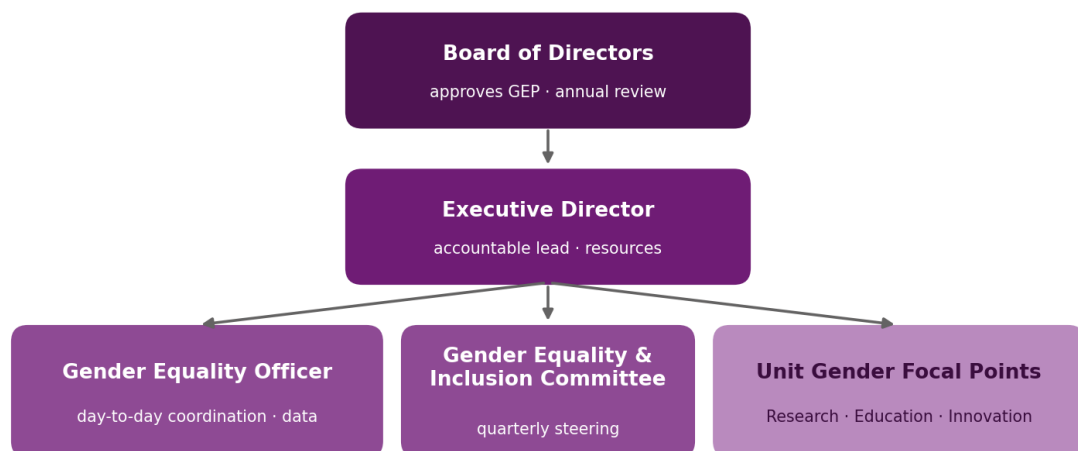
Horizon Europe requirement	Type	Where addressed
Work-life balance and organisational culture	Recommended	Section 7
Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	Recommended	Section 5
Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Recommended	Section 6
Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content	Recommended	Section 8
Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Recommended	Section 10

PART 2: KEY ACTIONS AND MEASURES

2. Institutional commitment and governance

SYNTHESIS declares its commitment to gender equality through this publicly available and formally adopted GEP, which represents our long-term vision for change. Gender equality is embedded in our strategic planning, annual work plans, risk registers and project quality procedures.

2.1 Governance structure



Liaison with HUB Nicosia Gender Equality Committee · staff, trainee & beneficiary consultation

Figure 2. GEP governance structure

Body / role	Composition	Responsibilities
Founder	Founder of the organisation	▪ Approves the GEP and its revisions ▪ Reviews the annual progress report ▪ Ensures resources are allocated
Executive Director	Top management	▪ Accountable for implementation ▪ Integrates GEP into strategy, budget and risk assessment ▪ Signs off annual report
Gender Equality Officer (GEO)	Designated staff member (0.2 FTE), trained in gender equality	▪ Coordinates day-to-day implementation ▪ Manages data collection and the annual report ▪ First point of contact for questions on the GEP
Gender Equality & Inclusion Committee (GEIC)	GEO (chair); one management representative; HR/Administration; one representative each from Research, Education and Innovation units; one staff representative; one beneficiary/youth representative (rotating); HUB Nicosia liaison	▪ Meets quarterly to monitor progress ▪ Proposes corrective actions ▪ Advises on gender-sensitive management and projects ▪ Aims for gender balance in its own composition
Unit Gender Focal Points	One per unit	▪ Ensure gender analysis in proposals, curricula and deliverables ▪ Collect project-level beneficiary data
Confidential Contact Persons	Two trained staff members (different genders)	▪ Receive harassment concerns in confidence ▪ Inform on options and support services

2.2 Executive leadership

Accountability and strategic focus are ensured by the Executive Director, who chairs an annual GEP review with the Founder. Gender equality is included as a standing item in management meetings twice a year, integrated into the organisational risk and impact assessment tools, and reflected in the objectives of managers and project coordinators.

3. Resources and capacity

SYNTHESIS allocates the following dedicated resources to implement the GEP:

Resource type	Allocation 2026–2028
Human resources	0.2 FTE Gender Equality Officer; time of GEIC members (approx. 2 hours/month each); Unit Gender Focal Points; two Confidential Contact Persons
Financial resources	Dedicated annual budget of €5,000–€7,000 for training, external expertise, surveys, awareness activities and facilities, complemented by gender-related budget lines in EU-funded projects
External expertise	Gender equality trainers and consultants, psychologists and counsellors, legal professionals, specialised NGOs and support services, academic partners and EU peer networks
Digital resources	HR data dashboard, anonymous survey tools, e-learning modules, secure online reporting channel, shared resource library with HUB Nicosia

4. Data collection and monitoring

Sex/gender-disaggregated data are collected at least annually to inform action and evaluation. A **baseline gender audit** is carried out in Q4 2026. Data are collected on a voluntary and confidential basis, stored securely in line with GDPR and reported only in aggregated form so that no individual can be identified. Where numbers are small, results are reported as ranges or combined over years.

Data area	Indicators collected annually
Staff composition	Headcount and FTE by gender, contract type (permanent/fixed-term/freelance), working time, role and unit, age band
Leadership and decision-making	Gender composition of the management team, project coordinators, GEIC and evaluation panels
Recruitment and progression	Applicants, shortlisted candidates and appointments by gender; promotions and contract renewals; exits and reasons
Pay	Average and median pay by gender and job category; unadjusted and adjusted gender pay gap; allowances and bonuses
Work-life balance	Uptake of flexible work, parental, carer and other leave by gender; return-to-work rates
Training	Participation in gender equality and unconscious bias training by gender and role
Research and projects	Share of proposals and projects with gender analysis; gender of project leads and principal investigators; beneficiaries by gender (and other characteristics where relevant)
Culture and safety	Staff survey results on inclusion and well-being; number and type of harassment reports and outcomes (anonymised)

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI	Target by end-2028
Representation of each gender in Board, management team and project coordination roles	at least 40%
Adjusted gender pay gap (like-for-like roles)	below 5%, with any gap explained and addressed
Job advertisements with gender-neutral wording and published salary range	100%
Staff and managers completing gender equality and unconscious bias training	100% of staff; 100% of managers in advanced module
New project proposals and learning materials with a documented gender analysis	100%
Gender balance among participants in SYNTHESIS programmes (where not gender-targeted)	each gender between 40% and 60%
Gender balance of speakers, trainers and experts at SYNTHESIS events	at least 40% of each gender
Staff reporting that they feel safe, respected and included (annual survey)	at least 90%
Staff who know how to report harassment and where to get support	100%

5. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Women are strongly represented in the education and social sectors, yet in Cyprus the “power” domain remains the weakest area of gender equality. SYNTHESIS aims to ensure balanced representation at all decision-making levels and to strengthen pathways into leadership for underrepresented groups.

- At least 40% representation of each gender on the Board, the management team and project coordination roles by 2028;
- Transparent, criteria-based procedures for appointing unit heads, project coordinators and Board members, with gender-balanced selection panels;
- Gender balance in internal committees, evaluation panels and external expert pools;
- Leadership development and mentoring programme for staff, including women researchers and staff from migrant backgrounds, linked to HUB Nicosia’s mentoring pilot;
- Equal distribution of visible roles (coordinating EU projects, representing SYNTHESIS in networks, speaking at conferences);
- Biannual leadership development days open to all staff.

6. Recruitment, career progression and equal pay

SYNTHESIS fosters equality across the entire employee, associate and volunteer life cycle, from attraction to exit.

Recruitment and selection

- Gender-neutral and inclusive language in all job advertisements, with an explicit equal opportunities statement encouraging applications from underrepresented groups;
- Publication of salary ranges in vacancy notices, in line with the Pay Transparency Directive;
- Standardised, competence-based interviews with pre-defined criteria and scoring;
- Gender-balanced interview panels wherever possible, with at least one panel member trained in unconscious bias;
- Monitoring of applicant, shortlist and appointment data by gender;
- Gender-sensitive onboarding toolkit, including the GEP, Code of Conduct and reporting channels.

Career progression and pay

- Transparent, published criteria for pay setting, contract renewal and promotion;
- Annual gender pay review by the GEO and management, with an action plan for any unexplained gap of 5% or more;
- No pay secrecy clauses; staff can request information on average pay levels by gender for their category of work;
- Parental and long-term leave not to disadvantage performance review, contract renewal or promotion;
- Career development conversations for all staff at least once a year, and career workshops for underrepresented genders;
- Fair allocation of training, conference and mobility opportunities, monitored by gender.

7. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Cyprus has the EU's lowest score for the domain of time, reflecting an unequal distribution of care and domestic work. SYNTHESIS promotes a culture in which caring responsibilities are shared and respected, and in which everyone can thrive.

- Work-life balance policies integrated into all employment contracts and the Staff Handbook;
- Flexible working hours, hybrid and remote-work options, and part-time arrangements, available to all genders;
- Meeting culture that respects caring responsibilities (core hours, no routine meetings after 16:30, online participation options);
- Active encouragement of fathers and all parents to take their full parental and paternity leave entitlements;
- Keep-in-touch and phased return-to-work arrangements after parental or long-term leave;
- Emergency and carer leave in line with national law and the Work-Life Balance Directive;
- Monthly peer support and well-being sessions; access to counselling support;
- Breastfeeding/quiet room and gender-neutral toilet facilities, in cooperation with HUB Nicosia;

- Annual anonymous staff survey on inclusion, workload and well-being, with results discussed openly.

8. Gender dimension in research, education and innovation

As a research and education organisation, SYNTHESIS's greatest contribution to gender equality lies in the **content** of its work. Integrating sex, gender and intersectional analysis improves the quality, relevance and impact of research and training, and is expected in Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ proposals.

Research and policy

- Documented gender analysis in 100% of new project proposals (research questions, methods, target groups, expected impacts);
- Collection and analysis of sex/gender-disaggregated data in all research activities, and gender-balanced samples wherever relevant;
- Gender-sensitive and inclusive methodologies (e.g. participatory research with women migrants and refugees, safe data collection practices);
- Gender and intersectional perspective in policy briefs and recommendations;
- Use of recognised tools such as the Gendered Innovations methods and the Horizon Europe gender dimension guidance.

Education and training

- Gender-sensitive curricula and learning materials, free of stereotypes, with diverse role models;
- Programmes that address gender segregation, e.g. encouraging girls and women into STEM, digital skills, urban mobility and entrepreneurship, and boys and men into care and education roles;
- Training of educators and trainers in gender-responsive pedagogy;
- Gender-balanced trainer and facilitator teams, and accessible, family-friendly training formats (childcare support or flexible timing where feasible).

Innovation, Data & AI

- Assessment of gender and other biases in datasets, algorithms and digital tools developed or used by SYNTHESIS;
- Inclusive design and user testing with diverse groups;
- Support for women-led and gender-transformative social enterprises through incubation, mentoring and HUB Nicosia services.

9. Training and awareness

Training is a key mechanism for change and a mandatory Horizon Europe building block. SYNTHESIS will implement a structured training programme:

Training	Target group	Frequency
Introduction to the GEP, Code of Conduct and reporting channels	All new staff, interns and volunteers	At onboarding
Gender equality and unconscious bias (e-learning + workshop)	All staff	Annually
Inclusive leadership and bias-free recruitment and evaluation	Management, project coordinators, interview panels	Every two years
Integrating the gender dimension in research and project design	Researchers, proposal writers, Unit Gender Focal Points	Annually
Gender-responsive pedagogy and inclusive facilitation	Trainers, educators, youth workers	Annually
Preventing and responding to harassment and GBV; safeguarding vulnerable beneficiaries	All staff; in-depth for Confidential Contact Persons	Annually
Inclusive language, LGBTIQ+ inclusion and intersectionality	All staff and volunteers	Every two years

Training materials, videos and toolkits are made available through a shared digital resource library with HUB Nicosia. Awareness is further raised through campaigns around 8 March (International Women’s Day), 11 February (Women and Girls in Science) and 25 November (Elimination of Violence against Women).

10. Preventing gender-based violence and sexual harassment

SYNTHESIS applies a **zero-tolerance** approach to all forms of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, sexist behaviour, bullying and online harassment, whether committed by or against staff, associates, beneficiaries or partners, on our premises, at events, during mobility or online.

- **Policy:** a Dignity at Work and Anti-Harassment Policy, integrated into the Code of Conduct, defining unacceptable behaviour, rights and responsibilities, and procedures;
- **Reporting:** several confidential channels – two trained Confidential Contact Persons, a direct line to the Executive Director or a Board member, and an anonymous online form;
- **Procedure:** timely, fair and confidential investigation; protection against retaliation; proportionate disciplinary measures; follow-up with the person who reported;
- **Support:** survivor-centred support and referral to specialised services such as psychological counselling, legal advice and national victim support organisations;

- **Safeguarding:** specific safeguarding procedures for work with children, young people, refugees and other vulnerable beneficiaries, including codes of conduct for trainers and safe venues;
- **Events and mobility:** clear conduct rules communicated at all events, trainings and international mobilities, with a named contact person;
- **Prevention:** annual awareness sessions, bystander intervention training and regular review of workplace and event safety;
- **Monitoring:** anonymised annual reporting of the number and type of cases and outcomes to the Board.

11. Inclusive communication and outreach

Gender awareness is integrated into all our content and communications:

- Inclusive communication guidelines on gender-sensitive language (English and Greek) and diverse, non-stereotypical imagery;
- Gender balance of speakers, moderators, trainers and experts at SYNTHESIS events (no all-male panels);
- Gender-sensitive outreach and recruitment of participants, ensuring accessibility for women with caring responsibilities, migrant women and persons with disabilities;
- Showcasing the achievements of women researchers, educators and social entrepreneurs;
- Gender-sensitive evaluation of all Erasmus+, ESC, Horizon Europe, EIT and national projects;
- Joint awareness campaigns with HUB Nicosia and project partners.

12. Action plan and timeline 2026–2028

The action plan sets out concrete measures, responsibilities, timelines and indicators. It is reviewed annually by the GEIC and updated as needed.

#	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator / target
GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES				
1	Formal adoption and publication of the GEP; staff briefing	Executive Director, Founder	Q4 2026	GEP online; 100% of staff informed
2	Appoint GEO, GEIC, Unit Focal Points and Confidential Contact Persons	Executive Director	Q4 2026	Roles appointed; ToR adopted
3	Integrate gender equality into strategy, budget and risk register	Executive Director, GEO	Q1 2027	Dedicated budget line; risks logged
DATA & MONITORING				
4	Baseline gender audit (staff, pay, governance, projects, policies)	GEO, HR	Q4 2026	Baseline report delivered

#	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator / target
5	Set up GDPR-compliant HR gender data dashboard	GEO, HR, Data & AI unit	Q1 2027	Dashboard in use
6	Annual staff survey on inclusion, well-being and safety	GEIC	Annually from Q2 2027	Response rate $\geq$ 70%
7	Annual GEP progress report to Founder; public summary	GEO, Executive Director	Every December	Report approved and published
LEADERSHIP & CAREERS				
8	Transparent, criteria-based appointment procedure for leadership roles	Executive Director, HR	Q2 2027	Procedure adopted
9	Leadership and mentoring programme (joint with HUB Nicosia)	GEIC	Pilot Q3 2027; 2028	$\geq$ 8 mentees; satisfaction $\geq$ 80%
10	Inclusive recruitment guide, salary ranges in job ads, trained panels	HR	Q1 2027	100% of vacancies compliant
11	Annual gender pay review and action plan	HR, GEO, Executive Director	Q1 annually	Adjusted pay gap < 5%
WORK-LIFE BALANCE & CULTURE				
12	Update Staff Handbook: flexible work, parental and carer leave, return-to-work	HR	Q1 2027	Handbook updated; uptake by gender
13	Meeting-culture charter and well-being sessions	GEIC	Q2 2027, ongoing	Charter adopted; sessions held monthly
RESEARCH, EDUCATION & INNOVATION				
14	Gender analysis checklist for proposals, curricula and deliverables	Unit Focal Points, GEO	Q1 2027	100% of new proposals use checklist
15	Bias assessment protocol for datasets and AI tools	Data & AI unit	Q3 2027	Protocol applied to all new tools
16	Programmes promoting women and girls in STEM, digital and entrepreneurship	Education & Innovation units	2026–2028	Number of participants and outcomes
TRAINING & AWARENESS				
17	Annual gender equality and unconscious bias training	GEO, external expert	Q1 2027, annually	100% completion
18	Gender dimension in research training for proposal writers	GEO, external expert	Q2 2027, annually	All proposal writers trained
19	Awareness campaigns (8 March, 11 February, 25 November)	GEIC, Communications	Annually	Reach and engagement
GBV & HARASSMENT				
20	Adopt Dignity at Work and Anti-Harassment Policy; anonymous reporting channel	Executive Director, GEO	Q4 2026	Policy adopted; channel live

#	Action	Responsible	Timeline	Indicator / target
21	Train Confidential Contact Persons; referral partnerships with support services	GEO	Q1 2027	CCPs trained; ≥ 2 partnerships
22	Safeguarding protocol for work with youth and vulnerable beneficiaries	Education units, GEO	Q2 2027	Protocol applied in all projects
EVALUATION & RENEWAL				
23	Mid-term review of the GEP with staff consultation	GEIC, Executive Director	Q4 2027	Review report; updated action plan
24	Final evaluation and drafting of GEP 2029–2031	Executive Director, Founder, GEIC	Q4 2028	Evaluation report; new GEP approved

13. Monitoring, evaluation and accountability

Progress is monitored continuously by the GEO and GEIC and reviewed formally once a year. Every December, an internal progress report compares current data with the baseline and the KPI targets, identifies shortfalls and proposes corrective actions, which are assigned to the responsible persons. The report is presented to the Founder, and a public summary is published on the SYNTHESIS website.

Evaluation milestone	Timing	Output
Baseline gender audit	Q4 2026	Baseline report and confirmed KPI targets
Annual progress reports	December 2026, 2027, 2028	Internal report to Founder; public summary
Mid-term review	Q4 2027	Evaluation report and revised action plan
Final impact evaluation	Q4 2028	Final report informing GEP 2029–2031

Feedback mechanisms include the annual anonymous staff survey, feedback from project participants, beneficiaries and partners, exit interviews, and optional advisory support from external gender experts. SYNTHESIS also participates in EU peer-learning networks and communities of practice on gender equality, and shares lessons learned with HUB Nicosia and project partners.

14. Dissemination and transparency

- Publication of the GEP (English and Greek) on the SYNTHESIS website, with an easy-to-read summary;
- Publication of annual progress summaries and key gender statistics;
- Inclusion of the GEP in the Staff Handbook, onboarding pack and partner/subcontractor briefings;
- Presentation at staff meetings, executive management, partner meetings, and to funders on request;

- Social media series on SYNTHESIS equality initiatives and women's achievements;
- Posters and information on reporting channels displayed at SYNTHESIS premises and HUB Nicosia.

15. Risks and mitigation measures

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Resistance to change or perception that gender equality is "already achieved"	Medium	Leadership messaging, evidence from data, participatory workshops, safe spaces for dialogue, engagement of men as allies
Limited resources and competing priorities	Medium	Dedicated budget line; integration of gender actions into funded projects; shared tools and training with HUB Nicosia
Small numbers limit data analysis and confidentiality	High	Aggregate reporting, multi-year trends, qualitative data from surveys and interviews, strict GDPR procedures
Project-based funding and staff turnover	High	Back-up for key roles, continuity manual, onboarding training, documentation of procedures
Under-reporting of harassment	Medium	Multiple and anonymous channels, trained contact persons, clear protection from retaliation, regular awareness
Measures not reaching staff on freelance or short contracts	Medium	Extend training, Code of Conduct and reporting channels to all associates and volunteers

16. Conclusion

This Gender Equality Plan is a living document. Through it, SYNTHESIS commits to embedding rights-based, intersectional and gender-transformative approaches into every aspect of its work – how we govern and manage ourselves, how we recruit, pay and support our people, and what we research, teach and create. By 2028, we aim to be recognised as a reference organisation for gender equality in research, education and social innovation in Cyprus and in Europe.

SYNTHESIS
Center for Research and Education Ltd

Approved by:



Executive Director

SYNTHESIS Center for Research & Education Ltd

Date: ____1/1/2026____



Founder

SYNTHESIS Center for Research & Education Ltd

Date: ____1/1/2026____

ANNEXES

Annex A. Glossary of key terms

Term	Definition
Gender	The socially constructed roles, behaviours, attributes and opportunities that a society considers appropriate for women, men and gender-diverse people.
Gender equality	Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of all genders; the interests, needs and priorities of all are taken into consideration.
Gender Equality Plan (GEP)	A set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through institutional and cultural change (European Commission).
Gender dimension	Integration of sex and gender analysis into the content of research, innovation and education, from design to dissemination.
Sex/gender-disaggregated data	Data collected and presented separately by sex or gender to reveal differences and inequalities.
Intersectionality	Analytical approach recognising that gender interacts with other characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, migration status, disability, age, sexual orientation) to produce specific experiences of discrimination.
Unconscious bias	Automatic, unintentional associations and stereotypes that influence judgements and decisions.
Gender pay gap	The difference between the average gross earnings of women and men, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings; "adjusted" compares like-for-like roles.
Gender-based violence (GBV)	Violence directed against a person because of their gender or affecting persons of a particular gender disproportionately, including physical, sexual, psychological, economic and online violence.
Sexual harassment	Any unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Annex B. Key references

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