



E I CHECKED

ETHICS & INTEGRITY FOR
SUSTAINABILITY

A spin-off of the National Technical University of Athens

Gender Equality Plan 2025

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1. Introduction

Our vision for a more equitable and inclusive world goes beyond any single company or project. We want to support broader changes in society that reduce inequality, strengthen fairness, and ensure that people are not left behind simply because of who they are. We also know that this kind of change only works if it starts from within. That is why it is so important to look closely at how innovation is designed and implemented, and to make sure it reflects shared values such as transparency, integrity, and responsibility.

This is where **EI Checked**, a spin-off of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), comes in. **EI Checked** supports organisations and industry in looking at technologies and services not only from a technical point of view, but also from an ethical and social perspective. In practice, this means helping ensure that ethics, integrity, and safety are considered from the very beginning of the innovation process – not as an afterthought.

By working with principles such as sustainability, ethics, integrity, inclusivity, advocacy, and collaboration, **EI Checked** helps organisations and companies reflect on the real-world impact of what they develop and how it affects people and society. It also encourages open dialogue between researchers, organisations, and policymakers, so that different perspectives are heard and taken into account. Ultimately, the goal is simple: to support innovation that people can trust, that is fairer, more inclusive, and more aligned with what society actually needs.

Building on this broader vision, **EI Checked** contributes by ensuring that such principles are not only stated as policy objectives, but are also reflected in the way technologies, services, and innovation processes are assessed and developed. As a spin-off of the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), **EI Checked** brings an ethical and Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH) perspective into the evaluation of innovation, supporting organisations and industry in translating values such as equality, integrity, and inclusivity into practice. In this context, **EI Checked** supports the implementation of frameworks like Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) by strengthening the connection between policy commitments and real-world application. Through structured assessment methodologies, it helps organisations and industry reflect on how equality principles are embedded in everyday processes and decision-making, and how these can be further improved.

More specifically, **EI Checked** contributes by:

- Supporting the integration of ethical, social, and gender-sensitive perspectives into innovation practices.
- Encouraging transparency and accountability in how equality-related measures are designed, implemented, and evaluated.
- Promoting inclusive approaches that ensure diverse voices and perspectives are considered in research and innovation processes.

- Strengthening reflection on fairness, representation, and accessibility in structures and outputs.
- Fostering dialogue between researchers, organisations, industry stakeholders, citizens and end-users to support more socially responsible and trusted outcomes.

In alignment with European Commission guidance (EC, 2021) and the broader principles promoted by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), **EI Checked** contributes to a more holistic understanding of equality, one that goes beyond compliance and moves towards continuous learning, improvement, and cultural change.

The provisions described herein are applied to both EI Checked' s internal procedures and policies, and the design of consultancy services provided by EI Checked.

2. Methodology

The plan is structured around five core areas of action, in line with European Commission guidance ([Horizon Europe gender equality plan eligibility criterion](#)), and

1. work–life balance and organisational culture;
2. gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
3. gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
4. Integration of the gender dimension in assessment and consultancy processes;
5. measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment;

Implementation is supported through **clear actions, assigned responsibilities, and defined timelines**, while monitoring is ensured via **indicators and periodic review mechanisms**. This allows for the tracking of progress and the identification of areas requiring adjustment or reinforcement. Finally, the GEP adopts a **continuous improvement approach**, ensuring that lessons learned from implementation and monitoring feed back into future revisions of the plan, thereby strengthening its long-term effectiveness and institutional impact.

3. Areas of action

3.1 Work–life balance and company culture

Our approach to action is based on the understanding that meaningful progress towards equity and inclusion must begin within our own company. For this reason, the GEP places strong emphasis on internal practices, structures, and ways of working, ensuring that principles of equality are consistently embedded across all activities and operations.

3.1.1. Flexible working and employee well-being

EI Checked promotes a healthy work–life balance and an inclusive company culture that supports well-being, flexibility, and equal opportunities for all employees. The company recognises that sustainable performance and ethical innovation depend on a supportive working environment where individuals can balance professional responsibilities with personal life. To this end, **EI Checked** fosters flexible working practices where possible, encourages open communication, and promotes a culture of respect, trust, and inclusion. Particular attention is given to preventing unconscious bias and ensuring that company’s practices support equal participation and engagement across all genders. The company also aims to create a working environment that values diversity and promotes psychological safety, enabling all team members to contribute fully and develop professionally without discrimination or structural barriers.

3.1.2. Support for Parents

EI Checked recognises the importance of supporting employees who are parents or caregivers as part of its commitment to an inclusive and balanced working environment. Care responsibilities are acknowledged as an important factor influencing equal opportunities, well-being, and professional development. The company promotes working arrangements that support employees in managing both professional and family responsibilities, ensuring that caregiving duties do not become a barrier to participation in daily work, access to opportunities, or career progression.

EI Checked applies a non-discriminatory approach to parental leave, supporting all parents regardless of gender, family structure, or pathway to parenthood, including adoption and diverse family forms. Parental leave provisions are designed to encourage shared caregiving responsibilities and equal participation in family life. Attention is also given to the transition periods before and after parental leave. Where possible, flexible return-to-work arrangements are encouraged to support continuity, re-engagement, and long-term career development, while maintaining fairness and equal treatment for all employees.

3.2 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

EI Checked demonstrates strong female representation in leadership from its establishment phase, as two out of its three co-founders are women. This early balance at the highest level of governance reflects the company’s commitment to gender equality not only as a strategic objective, but as a principle embedded in its organisational design from the very beginning. This leadership structure supports a decision-making environment where diverse perspectives are naturally integrated into strategic planning, company development, and the design of services and methodologies. It also contributes to shaping an inclusive company culture, where gender balance is reflected in visibility, responsibility, and influence across key areas of activity.

Beyond representation at founding level, **EI Checked** aims to maintain and further strengthen gender-balanced leadership by promoting equal opportunities for participation in coordination, management, and external representation roles as the company grows. This includes ensuring that leadership responsibilities are shared in a fair and transparent way, and that professional development opportunities are accessible to all team members regardless of gender.

Overall, the company views gender-balanced leadership as a key driver of ethical governance, better decision-making, and more socially responsive innovation practices.

3.3 Gender balance in recruitment and career progression

3.3.1 Recruitment

The main objective of this subarea is to examine whether gender balance is reflected in recruitment and staffing practices within **EI Checked**, to ensure that women and men, in all their diversity, have equal access to career development pathways, including opportunities for increased responsibility and leadership. The company is committed to identifying and addressing barriers that may arise from the intersection of gender with other characteristics, such as age, disability, ethnic or cultural background, nationality, socioeconomic circumstances, caring responsibilities, and other relevant factors, thereby promoting an inclusive and equitable working environment for all employees. On this basis, the GEP seeks to define clear and realistic objectives for promoting gender-balanced recruitment and advancement, as well as the corresponding measures to support their implementation.

In the context of a private company, recruitment and employment practices are designed and implemented internally, allowing **EI Checked** to actively promote fair and transparent hiring procedures, based on merit, competence, and equal opportunity principles.

3.3.2 Equal pay for equal work

In addition, equal pay is a core component of this approach. **EI Checked** is committed to ensuring equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender, by promoting transparent and non-discriminatory compensation practices. Salary structures are designed to reflect roles, responsibilities, skills, and performance in a fair and consistent manner, while also supporting periodic internal review to identify and prevent any unjustified pay gaps.

3.4 Integration of the gender dimension in assessment and consultancy processes

3.4.1. Assessment and consultancy

As a company specialising in the ethical and social evaluation of technologies and innovation, **EI Checked** recognises that gender is an important factor influencing how technologies are designed, implemented, adopted, and experienced by different groups in society. For this reason, the integration of the gender dimension forms a key component of its assessment and consultancy activities. **EI Checked** seeks to ensure that gender-related considerations are systematically incorporated into its methodologies, evaluation frameworks, and advisory services wherever relevant. This includes examining whether technological solutions, research practices, or innovation processes may have differentiated impacts on individuals based on gender, as well as identifying potential barriers to participation, accessibility, and inclusion.

Particular attention is given to the identification of biases that may be embedded in technologies, datasets, decision-making processes, or organisational practices. By incorporating gender-sensitive perspectives into assessments, **EI Checked** aims to support the development of solutions that are fairer, more transparent, and more responsive to the needs of diverse users and communities. The company also promotes awareness among clients, partners, and stakeholders of the value of considering gender and inclusion throughout the innovation lifecycle. Through consultancy services, training activities, and stakeholder engagement processes, **EI Checked** encourages organisations to move beyond compliance-based approaches and adopt more inclusive and socially responsible innovation practices.

Where appropriate, the gender dimension is considered alongside broader diversity and inclusion perspectives, recognising that individuals may experience multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage or exclusion. This helps ensure that assessment outcomes and recommendations reflect the complexity of real-world social contexts and contribute to innovation that benefits a wider range of people and communities.

3.4.2. Collaboration at the core of our services

EI Checked places collaboration at the core of its approach to ethical evaluation and responsible innovation. Working closely with partners, research actors, and organisations across different sectors, the company seeks to ensure that gender equality and inclusion are meaningfully integrated into innovation processes and decision-making practices.

Through these collaborations, **EI Checked** aims to create opportunities for women and other under-represented or marginalised groups to be more actively involved in research, innovation, and the development of technological solutions. This includes supporting more inclusive approaches to participation, visibility, and contribution within innovation ecosystems.

At the same time, collaboration is seen as a key mechanism for generating broader societal impact. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, **EI Checked** fosters collective reflection on ethical, social, and gender-related dimensions of innovation, and helps translate these insights into more responsible and inclusive practices.

In this way, partnerships are not only a means of delivering projects, but also a way to strengthen shared learning, amplify impact, and contribute to more equitable and socially responsive innovation systems.

3.4.3. Inclusive communication and representation

EI Checked recognises the opportunity to use its communication activities, tools, and evaluation services to promote gender equality and broader inclusion. Through its work, the company seeks to challenge stereotypes, support more equitable representations, and contribute to a better understanding of how innovation and technology can either reinforce or reduce existing social inequalities. A key focus is placed on ensuring that communication and dissemination activities are inclusive, respectful, and free from bias, with attention to how different genders and marginalised groups are represented. This includes promoting language and narratives that reflect diversity in a fair and balanced way, and avoiding the reproduction of stereotypes in external-facing materials and messages.

At the same time, **EI Checked**'s assessment methodologies and consultancy services provide an opportunity to support organisations and the industry in identifying barriers faced by under-represented and marginalised groups in the context of innovation and technology development. This includes reflecting on how access to opportunities, participation in research and innovation processes, and visibility in decision-making can be made more equitable.

Through this dual role—both in communication and in service delivery—**EI Checked** aims to contribute to a more inclusive innovation ecosystem, where diversity is recognised not only in principle but also actively considered in practice, design, and evaluation processes.

3.5 Measures against Gender-Based violence, including sexual harassment

EI Checked is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive working environment in which all employees, collaborators, and partners are treated with dignity and respect. The company adopts a zero-tolerance approach towards any form of gender-based violence, harassment, discrimination, bullying, or inappropriate behavior.

As part of this commitment, **EI Checked** seeks to foster a workplace culture where individuals feel safe to express concerns, report incidents, and seek support without fear of retaliation or negative consequences. Respect, professionalism, and equal treatment are expected in all internal and external interactions, including collaborations with clients, partners, and stakeholders. The company is committed to preventing gender-based violence and sexual harassment through awareness-raising, clear behavioral expectations, and the promotion of respectful workplace practices. Employees and collaborators are encouraged to contribute to a culture of mutual respect and accountability.

Where necessary, confidential and appropriate procedures will be in place to address complaints or concerns related to harassment, discrimination, or gender-based misconduct. Any reported incidents will be treated seriously, fairly, and with due regard for confidentiality and the well-being of those involved. **EI Checked** also recognises that preventing gender-based violence requires continuous attention and awareness. As the company grows, it will regularly review its policies and practices to ensure that they remain effective, aligned with relevant legal frameworks, and supportive of an inclusive and respectful working environment for all.

4. Continuous Improvement

The GEP is a living document. **EI Checked** commits to:

- Periodic review based on monitoring data
- Alignment with updated EU policies and ERA objectives
- Integration of stakeholder feedback (staff, partners, evaluators)

5. References

1. European Commission (2021). *Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (GEPs)*. Publications Office of the European Union.
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6. European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2006). *Directive 2006/54/EC on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation*.
7. European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2023). *Directive (EU) 2023/970 on strengthening the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value between men and women through pay transparency and enforcement mechanisms*.
8. International Labour Organization. *Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)*.