



## GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a democratic principle enshrined in the United Nations Charter of 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. It is also incorporated in International Labour Organization conventions and in the legislation underlying the European Union. Over time, various instruments of European policy have been added and elaborated to promote equality among all members of society regarding their rights, treatment, responsibilities, opportunities, and economic and social achievements, regardless of whether they are women, men, transgender persons, gender diverse individuals, children, or families. Gender equality exists when all genders have the same rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in all sectors of society and when the different interests, needs, and priorities of genders are equally valued.

Regarding Romania, national legislation is in line with European Union directives on gender equality. Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in employment and occupation provides the legal basis for promoting gender equality in the workplace.

Within Romanian legislation, there are several normative acts addressing gender equality, including:

- Law no. 202/2002 on equality of opportunities between women and men and measures to improve them establishes the legal framework for promoting gender equality in all areas, including the workplace. This legal framework protects employees against gender-based discrimination and ensures that companies adhere to the principle of equal opportunities;
- Decision 77/2021 concerning the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council - EU Action Plan for Gender Equality (Gap) III - An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external actions - JOIN(2020);
- Decision 49/2020 on the adoption of the opinion on the Commission Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions - A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 - COM (2020) 152;
- Decision 34/2020 concerning the Commission Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions on 'A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025' - COM (2020) 152 final and regarding the Commission Report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions on the implementation of the EU Action Plan 2017-2019 on addressing the gender pay gap - COM (2020) 101 final;
- Decision 70/2021 concerning the Commission Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the



---

Committee of the Regions - A Union of Equality: the Strategy for Equality for LGBTIQ Persons 2020-2025 - COM(2020).

In the professional sphere, gender equality entails equal, fair, and non-discriminatory treatment of all genders to ensure equal opportunities both in the hiring process and throughout their professional development. The gender equality plan represents a tool that supports equality in the professional sphere, aiming to eliminate disparities in the workplace of any nature.

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION is committed to promoting gender equality by adhering to current rules and recommendations, encouraging merit-based promotion.

The NATURA5 Association's Gender Equality Plan is part of a comprehensive set of measures developed by the NATURA5 Association that corresponds to the commitments and principles assumed regarding diversity in the workplace:

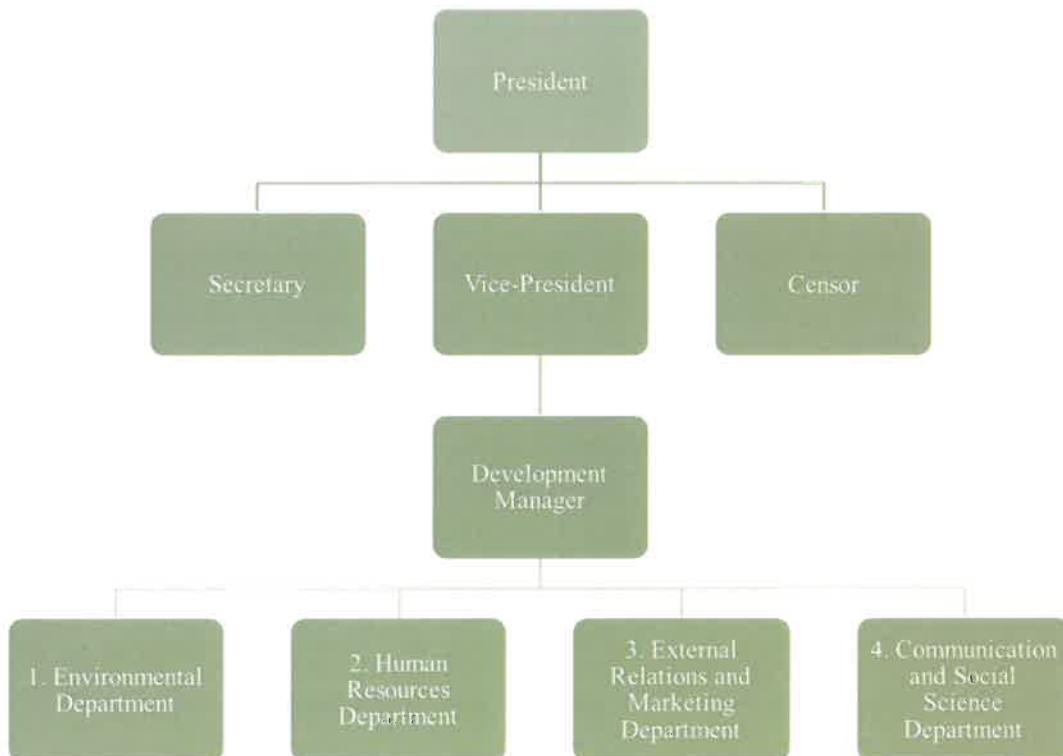
- Promoting mutual respect and ensuring equal opportunities;
- Recognizing differences as potential for strengthening human rights and leveraging diversity in the organization, at the management and business management levels;
- Adopting non-discriminatory measures and internal awareness, as well as within the community, to effectively implement the gender equality policy.

As an association committed to promoting the values of inclusion and diversity, we are committed to developing a comprehensive plan to ensure gender equality in the workplace. This Gender Equality Plan will represent a comprehensive analysis of gender equality within the NATURA5 ASSOCIATION, contributing to creating a safe and accessible professional environment where all employees have equal opportunities for advancement and development, regardless of their gender.

This analysis aims to implement the approved plan starting in 2024.

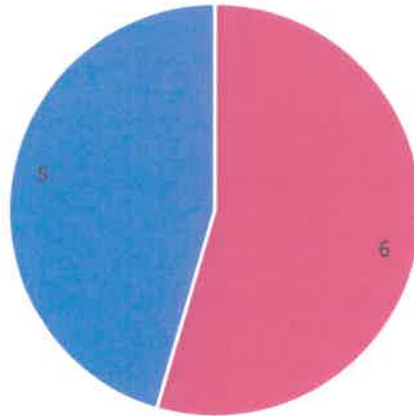
## 2. ANALYSIS: GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE ASSOCIATION - 2023

The organizational structure of the NATURA5 ASSOCIATION is as follows:



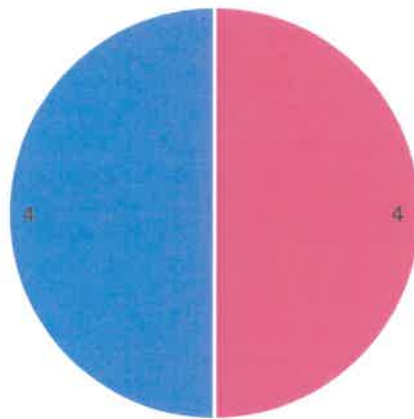
The gender distribution of members is as follows:

Members - gender distribution



■ Women ■ Men ■ Others ■ Undeclared

Top management - gender distribution



■ Women ■ Men ■ Others ■ Undeclared

## 2.1. STRATEGY, MISSION, AND VALUES

The NATURA5 ASSOCIATION has developed a robust strategy regarding gender balance and equal opportunities for its employees. The most important elements to support the Gender Equality Plan are highlighted below.

The NATURA5 Association's plan includes a set of objectives, policies, and principles developed to meet current challenges regarding best practices and legal requirements in the areas of diversity and inclusion.

Focusing on gender equality issues, NATURA5 ASSOCIATION reinforces the notion that leveraging differences in the field of activity is equivalent to recognizing that all individuals have equally important professional roles, regardless of gender, and can benefit the organization through diverse experiences and perspectives.

Therefore, NATURA5 ASSOCIATION is committed to promoting and incorporating a culture of diversity and inclusion based on respect for human beings and equal opportunities, which is present in the identity of NATURA5 ASSOCIATION and in its employee management, serving as a reference for both the internal environment and the external performance of the organization.

### **Commitment to gender equality includes:**

- Displaying NATURA5 ASSOCIATION's commitment to gender equality in internal policies and communications.
- Integrating inclusion and diversity values into NATURA5 ASSOCIATION's mission and strategy.

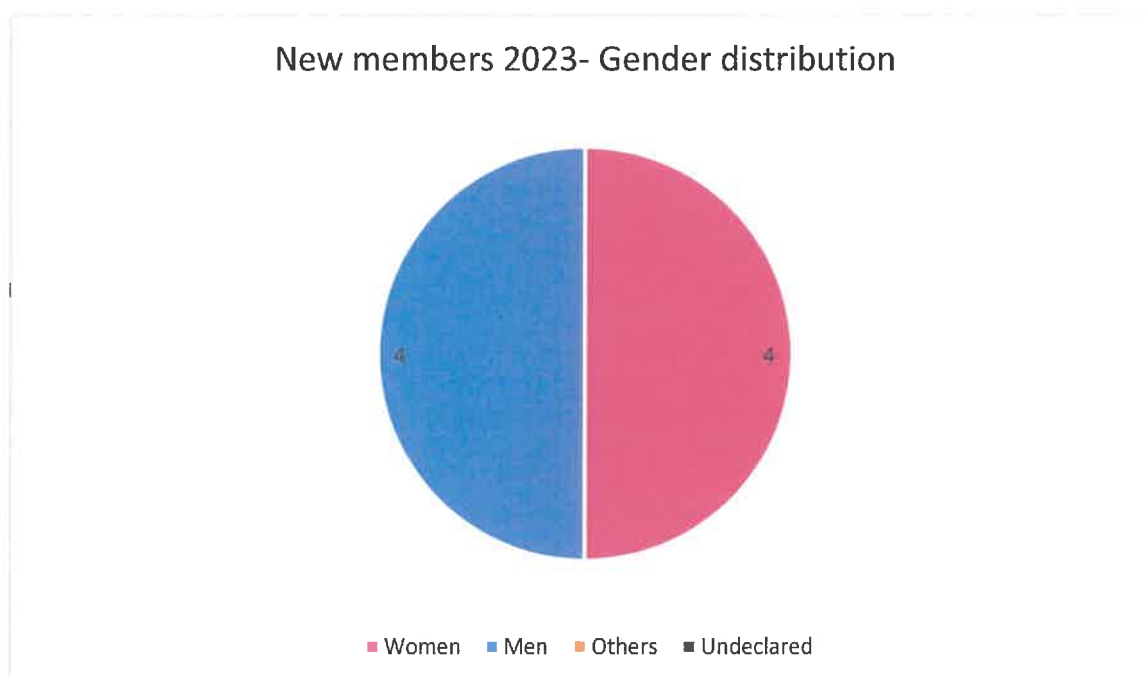
## 2.2. EQUAL ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION promotes a culture of equal access to employment to ensure the fulfilment of the following objectives:

- a) Ensuring a fair and objective selection and recruitment process for all genders, through measures such as:
  - Specifying in association policies the commitment to objectivity in the recruitment process, regardless of gender;
  - Collaborating with academic institutions to attract candidates from a diverse range of genders;
  - Participating in volunteer fairs to promote our gender equality policies.
- b) Combating structural barriers to gender equality:
  - Clearly defining the qualifications required for each position, avoiding gender biases.
  - Rigorous training of recruitment staff to apply fair selection procedures.
- c) Promoting the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination in the workplace by:

- Creating a non-discriminatory work environment by promoting a culture of respect and mutual understanding;
- Organizing training sessions to raise awareness among members/volunteers of gender equality issues and prevent discrimination.

In 2023, out of the total number of members and new employees within the NATURA5 ASSOCIATION, 50% were women, 50% were men, and 0% were of another gender or did not declare their gender.



### 2.3. INITIAL AND CONTINUOUS TRAINING

The main objective of NATURA5 ASSOCIATION is to empower its members/employees by investing in their training and implementing actions that contribute to their personal and professional development, ensuring fair access for all members/employees of the organization.

Training plans are developed with the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination in mind, aiming to ensure balanced representation in all training and development initiatives.

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION is developing a multidirectional training program dedicated to the subject, aiming to provide members/employees with knowledge, tools, and strategies to recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion in their practices beneficial to the organization, with the following objectives:

- Promoting and ensuring equal opportunities for training access, regardless of gender.
- Promoting gender desegregation within NATURA5 ASSOCIATION.

## **2.4. EQUAL WORKING CONDITIONS**

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION promotes a culture of equality in the workplace to ensure the fulfilment of the following objectives:

- a) Actively promoting meritocracy, where differences in performance and contribution of members/employees are supported by evaluation and recognition processes and tools.
- b) Ensuring a fair and objective evaluation process, regardless of gender.
- c) Promoting transparency regarding performance evaluation methods.
- d) Promoting gender equality in career advancement and professional development.
- e) Encouraging balanced participation of all genders in decision-making positions.
- f) Promoting gender equality in career development and promoting gender desegregation in the profession.
- g) Encouraging employee participation in promoting gender equality.
- h) Promoting gender balance in NATURA5 ASSOCIATION's strategic positions.
- i) Ensuring that members/employees are informed about their rights and obligations regarding equality and non-discrimination.

## **2.5. ENSURING EQUALITY REGARDING THE FAMILY LIFE OF MEMBERS/EMPLOYEES**

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION promotes a culture of protection regarding childcare to ensure, in particular, the following equality objectives:

- a) Guaranteeing employees' right to parental leave.
- b) Guaranteeing employees' right to reduce working hours to fulfil parental duties.
- c) Ensuring employees' right to participate in a program for reintegrating into the workforce after childcare leave.
- d) Ensuring the safety and health protection of pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding individuals.
- e) Ensuring protection against dismissal for pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding individuals, or those on childcare leave.
- f) Ensuring communication regarding the renewal of a fixed-term contract with a pregnant person, recent birth, breastfeeding, or on childcare leave.

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION promotes actions that recognize the value and importance it places on its employees' families, such as:

- a) Various events for both employees and their families.
- b) Actively supporting its employees in supporting their family members through flexible work schedules, anticipating leave days, and longer periods of telecommuting.



## **2.6. BALANCE BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIFE**

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION has implemented a set of measures whose mission is to actively contribute to the balance between employees' professional and personal lives. Among these measures, the following specific actions stand out:

- Creating a platform where certain topics of general interest that involve employees are subject to the vote of each person employed in the NATURA5 Association, for expressing their viewpoint and for the clear and objective representation of employees' preferences in NATURA5 Association's decisions.
- Organizing weekly meetings, scheduled according to everyone's availability, during which all members can actively participate in the decision-making process, offering their personal perspectives on projects to contribute to the balance between professional and personal life, regardless of gender.

The culture of maintaining a balance between professional and personal life promoted by NATURA5 ASSOCIATION aims to ensure the fulfilment of the following objectives:

- a) Promoting the reconciliation of professional life with the personal and family life of all members/employees.
- b) Ensuring a working schedule that takes into account the needs of reconciling professional, personal, and family life of members/employees, especially those with family responsibilities.
- c) Ensuring an absence regime that takes into account the needs of reconciling professional, personal, and family life of members/employees, especially those with family responsibilities.
- d) Ensuring a derogation regime for certain forms of work organization and for overtime work that takes into account maintaining a balance between professional, personal, and family life of members/employees, especially those with family responsibilities.
- e) Ensuring a telecommuting regime to cover the needs of members/employees regarding the balance between professional, personal, and family life of employees, especially those with family responsibilities.

## 2.7. PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION does not accept any form of harassment or any other behaviour that endangers the dignity of its members/employees, promoting a set of principles and rules of professional conduct to guide and discipline employees, aiming to prevent and combat any practice of harassment in the workplace.

The measures to prevent workplace harassment promoted by NATURA5 ASSOCIATION aim to ensure the fulfilment of the following objectives:

- a) Preventing and combating workplace harassment (including sexual harassment).
- b) Preventing and combating other practices that threaten the physical or moral integrity of members/employees, their freedom, or dignity.

Considering all these aspects, NATURA5 ASSOCIATION aims to build a diverse organization, emphasizing the importance of inclusion, and to provide equal opportunities and freedoms, regardless of gender. Through the plan outlined below, more details will be presented regarding the measures already implemented or in progress, as well as the plan that will come into effect on January 1, 2024, to consolidate gender equality.

## 3. ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING MEASURES REGARDING GENDER EQUALITY

The main objectives of this plan are to raise awareness of and promote gender equality within NATURA5 ASSOCIATION's work teams and decision-making bodies.

NATURA5 ASSOCIATION is obligated to implement measures in this regard, monitor their compliance, and apply sanctions in case of possible deviations.

The regulations presented are to be adopted in NATURA5 ASSOCIATION's policy starting in 2024.

1. Strategy, Mission, and Values	
Objectives	Measures
Embracing both internally and externally the gender equality plan	Documenting ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5's adoption of the gender equality plan
	Providing documents regarding the gender balance status within ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5 (e.g., statistics)
	Ensuring employees' and the general public's access to the gender equality plan and

	publishing the data obtained from the annual analysis
Creating the plan itself and monitoring its implementation	Defining the objectives and measures for promoting gender equality
	Conducting statistics on gender distribution within ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5, its departments, and its leadership structure
	Monitoring compliance with the measures adopted in the gender equality plan among members/employees
Promoting the gender equality plan and its importance among partners	Publishing the gender equality plan on ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5's platforms and informing partners about ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5's adoption of this plan
	Organizing awareness sessions within ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5, promoting them on ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5's platforms, and encouraging partners' participation in these sessions
Ensuring a non-discriminatory work environment regarding decisions affecting the balance between personal and professional life	Conducting feedback sessions regarding the balance between personal and professional life, analysing the needs of members/employees, and adopting measures to encourage their development in both spheres
Ensuring a non-discriminatory work environment based on gender	Conducting feedback sessions regarding safety in the workplace, analysing the needs of members/employees, and adopting measures to maintain the best working conditions
	Combating the perpetuation of stereotypes and strengthening the culture of gender equality
Ensuring compliance with the principle of gender equality in external relations	Establishing partnerships with collaborators who promote values common to those of ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5

Table 1 - Strategy, Mission, and Values

2. Equal Access to Association	
Objectives	Measures
Establishing a fair and objective selection and recruitment process regardless of gender	Specifying in ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5's policy its objectivity regarding recruitments regardless of gender
	Partnerships with universities to attract candidates without gender segregation
	Promoting candidate attraction activities (e.g., participating in volunteer fairs), emphasizing ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5's gender equality policy
	Clearly defining the requirements and qualifications necessary for the position to be filled, including the requirements for performing the function
	Conducting training actions aimed at persons responsible for the hiring process regarding gender-neutral selection and recruitment procedures
Ensuring gender non-discrimination in the selection process of new members and employees	Formulating announcements regarding the opportunities for affiliation within ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5 that do not contain gender-based restrictions
	Creating and implementing an internal procedure to ensure that ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5 maintains a record of recruitment processes conducted over a period of five years, with appropriate breakdown by genders
	Organizing an inclusive recruitment strategy, eliminating discriminatory factors

Table 2 - Equal Access to Employment

3. Initial and Continuous Training	
Objectives	Measures
	Implementing a transversal training policy for all members/employees

Promoting a culture of gender equality within ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5 management	Training leaders to manage gender-mixed teams effectively
	Creating a staff development program that establishes efficient collaboration strategies in mixed teams and prepares members/employees for leadership roles regardless of gender
Addressing issues that may hinder the association's activities in accordance with the gender equality plan	Developing and integrating into the training plan modules related to gender equality
Ensuring and promoting equal opportunities	Conducting mandatory training only during working hours
	Establishing an internal procedure to ensure the use of inclusive and non-discriminatory terms in formulating documents of any kind
	Providing access to staff training activities without gender-based restrictions
	Monitoring the participation of all members/employees in training activities, regardless of gender

Table 3 - Initial and Continuous Training

4. Equal Working Conditions	
Objectives	Measures
Ensuring a fair and objective evaluation process, regardless of gender	The performance evaluation model will be structured objectively, based on KPIs (Annex 1), so members/employees will be evaluated based on principles that do not consider gender, age, etc.
	Within performance evaluation, eligibility criteria will be communicated to all members/employees through specific sessions
Promoting gender equality in progress and professional development	Promoting a meritocratic system
Encouraging balanced participation of all genders in decision-making positions	Creating a framework to support the involvement of members/employees in strategic decision-making processes, regardless of gender
Promoting gender equality and gender desegregation	Ensuring mobility within ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5 regardless of gender, according to

	the association's needs, thus contributing to the comprehensive development of members/employees and promoting equal access to information
	Excluding criteria associated with worker availability or family responsibilities for career progression, offering equal opportunities for all members/employees regardless of personal situations, thus promoting a culture of respect, integrity, and responsibility.
Encouraging member/employee participation in gender equality-promoting activities	Holding clarification sessions aimed at addressing issues related to performance evaluation and career development policies.
Promoting gender balance	Ensuring balanced representation regardless of gender in leadership positions.

Table 4 – Equal Working Conditions

5. Protection of Employees' Parental Rights	
Objectives	Measures
Ensuring childcare leave and guaranteeing a framework that allows flexibility regarding employees' childcare needs	Informing employees about parental rights legislation
	Annual verification of childcare leaves to ensure this right for all employees who need it
	Ensuring an internal procedure that allows, in a clinically risky situation, the interruption of service duties, and the person concerned can benefit from leave during pregnancy
	Ensuring an internal procedure guaranteeing leave for pregnancy interruption
	Ensuring an internal procedure guaranteeing the right to childcare leave for all employees
	Ensuring an internal procedure to guarantee employees' rights to absences, leaves, or dismissals when necessary
Guaranteeing the exercise of the right to benefit from a reduced work schedule for childcare	Ensuring an internal procedure to guarantee compliance with employees' rights regarding reducing work schedules
Guaranteeing the right to training for professional reintegration	Ensuring an internal procedure that ensures the employee's right to training for professional

	reintegration after childcare leave or caring for a person with a disability or chronic illness
Guaranteeing the health and safety at work of pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding individuals	Providing an internal procedure that respects the rights of pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding employees to flexible work schedules
	Ensuring an internal procedure that respects the rights of pregnant, postpartum, or breastfeeding individuals to optimal working conditions to avoid exposure to health and safety risks
Guaranteeing protection in the event of dismissal of a pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding person, or someone on childcare leave	Creating and implementing an internal procedure to ensure compliance with legal provisions for dismissing a pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding person, or someone on childcare leave
Ensuring communication in case of the need to renew a fixed-term contract for pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding individuals, or those on childcare leave	Creating and implementing an internal procedure to ensure communication between NATURA5 ASSOCIATION and the employee for contract renewal.

Table 5 - Protection of Parental Rights

6. Balancing Personal, Family, and Professional Life	
Objectives	Measures
Promoting a balance between personal, family, and professional life for all members/employees	Organizing awareness campaigns on psychosocial well-being to raise awareness and prevent behavioural problems and mental health degradation
	Availability of physical spaces that favor well-being in ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5, such as leisure and socialization areas
	Adopting telecommuting in situations that require it

Establishing a work schedule that allows balancing personal life with family and professional life	Creating and implementing internal procedures to ensure that members/employees with family responsibilities have the right to work part-time or with changes to the standard work schedule tailored to their family needs and obligations
	Creating and implementing internal procedures to guarantee compliance with all rights regarding parental protection
	Creating and implementing internal procedures to ensure that employees completing specialized studies have the right to work part-time or with changes to the standard work schedule adapted to their academic needs and obligations

*Table 6 - Balancing Personal, Family, and Professional Life*

7. Preventing Workplace Harassment	
Objectives	Measures
Preventing and combating workplace harassment (including sexual harassment), as well as preventing and combating other attacks on the physical or moral integrity, freedom, and dignity of members/employees	Adapting and disseminating a "Code of Conduct" to prevent and combat workplace harassment
	Adopting measures to ensure compliance with the "Code of Conduct" as well as applicable legislation
	Creating an internal procedure to ensure not only communication but also sanctions regarding actions that constitute workplace harassment
	Ensuring an investigation procedure that ensures the dignity and confidentiality of the persons involved is not affected

*Table 7 - Preventing Workplace Harassment*



#### 4. MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

The implementation of the Gender Equality Plan of ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5 will be subject to a systematic monitoring process to assess the effectiveness of actions and the achievement of objectives, identifying potential improvements or new measures to implement.

This monitoring is ensured by the President of the Association and delegated responsible persons, as well as the Human Resources department, together with other cross-functional departments, aiming to:

- Ensure and monitor the implementation of initiatives, improvements, and measures to respect diversity
- Ensure the dissemination of various initiatives, plans, and continuous improvement measures regarding diversity
- Monitor the impact of diversity policies through the analysis of specific indicators
- Ensure the fulfilment of the needs of members/employees, regardless of gender

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The main objectives of ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5 are to contribute to improving the quality of life of its members/employees, to remove career barriers, to promote a better balance between personal and professional life, and to always promote gender equality.

By adopting the Gender Equality Plan, ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5 guarantees compliance with commitments regarding diversity consolidation and promoting a workplace culture. Thus, the personal and professional development of members/employees is encouraged, collaboration and involvement of all members/employees are supported, merits are recognized and rewarded, teamwork is encouraged, and an environment offering respect, productivity, and equal opportunities for all is created.

**ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5**

**PRESIDENT**

**PETRU NICOLAE**



Annex 1 - Performance Indicators

Productivity of members/employees - results obtained in a certain period of time
Efficiency of members/employees - time required to complete a task
Involvement level of members/employees in the organization
Performance evaluation of members/employees - comparing results obtained in different periods
Achievement of objectives by members/employees - percentage of objectives achieved by members/employees
Development of skills of members/employees - number of training programs attended by members/employees
Collaboration among members/employees - level of collaboration and teamwork within a department
Innovation of members/employees - number of innovative ideas and solutions contributed by members/employees

**ASOCIAȚIA NATURA5**

**PRESIDENT**

**PETRU NICOLAE**