

## Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

At IDEA Consult, gender equality is not a standalone policy or a future ambition, it is a lived reality embedded in how we organise our work, lead our teams and deliver impact. Rather than relying on statements or targets alone, we translate our commitment into concrete structures, consistent leadership practices and everyday choices.

By aligning governance, people processes and organisational culture, we ensure that equality is experienced in practice: in recruitment, development opportunities, pay transparency, work-life balance and respect in daily collaboration. This approach reflects our conviction that gender equality strengthens both organisational quality and societal relevance.

IDEA Consult therefore does not merely commit to gender equality; we consistently put it into action. In doing so, we aim to remain a credible partner, an inclusive employer and a workplace where people can contribute fully and equitably to creating lasting societal impact.

### 1. Institutional commitment

For 28 years, IDEA Consult has been an influential player in the field of policy support advice. Our insights are evidence-based and shaped by in-depth knowledge of our experts.

Societal issues are the touchstone for all our work, and our teams are committed to supporting the ongoing transition to a green, resilient, sustainable, and inclusive society. However, we remain firmly attentive to the human dimension and ensure that every recommendation is clearly substantiated.

Our manifesto summarizes our philosophy and explains who we are, what makes us unique, and how we work:

- **We are IDEA Consult:** Independent and professional partner for evidence-based policy decisions.
- **We think ahead:** We turn the latest findings in research into new insights, inspiring strategies, and effective solutions.
- **We connect minds:** Societal challenges are interconnected. IDEA Consult co-creates integrated solutions with clients and partner organisations.
- **We empower:** We take care of our employees and clients. Change starts with committed people.
- **Sustainable impact, that's our goal:** We inspire clients to help shape a new and sustainable future.

Our mission is captured in our baseline: *Moving Society*. Together with our clients, we work towards a new and sustainable tomorrow. Our purpose is to inspire and empower clients to future-proof local and regional economies and labor markets, increase the vitality of cities and regions, and introduce more effective governance.

#### Organisational culture

We communicate our commitment to diversity and inclusion implicitly through our actions and storytelling, rather than through explicit statements. By embedding these values consistently in the way we present our projects, share our successes, and engage with stakeholders, we ensure that diversity and inclusion become a natural part of our organisational narrative.

The key is consistency: when these principles are reflected reliably across all communication channels and activities, they gain credibility and are experienced as a genuine, integral part of who we are, rather than a token message.

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) formalises our approach and sets out the principles, actions and monitoring mechanisms through which IDEA Consult safeguards and strengthens gender equality across the organisation. It applies to all staff and all organisational activities and is publicly available.

## 2. Organisational context & Gender equality baseline

IDEA Consult employs around 75 professionals (2026) working in research, policy advice and strategic consultancy.

Key characteristics of gender equality at IDEA Consult:

- We strive for equal representation between male and female employees. In 2025, women represented 60.6% of staff and men 39.4%.
- Women are present across all functions and levels, including senior leadership and expert positions.
- Differences in tenure between men and women reflect cohort dynamics rather than differential retention: recent recruitment waves include a higher share of women, while longer-tenured cohorts currently include more men. Meaning, the difference in how long men and women have been at IDEA Consult is mainly due to when they were hired, not because women leave more often than men
- The organisation actively supports work-life balance through flexible working hours, remote work options, and leave arrangements.
- Reintegration after long-term absence is supported through adapted work arrangements and gradual return-to-work practices.

Gender equality at IDEA Consult is not limited to representation alone, but reflected in how careers develop, how decisions are taken and how work is organised.

## 3. Governance, resources & responsibilities

Responsibility for gender equality is embedded at the highest organisational level.

The Board of Directors and Managing Director formally endorse this GEP, where the HR Manager is responsible for coordination, implementation, data monitoring and reporting.

Team leaders share responsibility for translating gender equality principles into daily management practice.

All employees are informed of the GEP and its principles. The GEP is reviewed annually and updated where necessary.

## 4. Worklife balance & Organisational culture

IDEA Consult is committed to creating working conditions that allow all employees, regardless of gender, to combine professional engagement with personal responsibilities.

Key measures include:

- Flexible and gliding working hours;
- Part-time options;



- Remote and hybrid working arrangements;
- Support for parental leave and care-related leave.

These arrangements are reviewed regularly and adapted to organisational and individual needs.

## 5. Recruitment & career development

### Inclusive Recruitment

All recruitment processes are designed to be inclusive and fair:

- Vacancy texts are gender-neutral and accessible;
- Vacancies are disseminated through diverse channels;
- No questions are asked about family situation, pregnancy or care responsibilities.

## 6. Career development

Career development processes are transparent and structured:

- Performance and development cycles are applied consistently across the organisation;
- A structured talent review supports succession planning and career progression;
- Access to training and development is ensured for all staff.

## 7. Pay equity

IDEA Consult conducts an annual gender pay gap analysis using gross hourly pay per job category, aligned with European methodology.

Results are monitored over time, with the objective of maintaining pay differences within acceptable thresholds and addressing anomalies where they appear.

This approach ensures transparency, fairness and continuous oversight.

## 8. Training, awareness & HR transparency

Gender equality and integrity are embedded into broader learning and development practices rather than addressed through isolated training.

Gender and inclusion themes are integrated into onboarding, leadership development and team learning moments.

Training participation is monitored to ensure equal access.

An internal AI-based HR information tool provides all employees with equal access to HR policies, procedures and rights, reinforcing transparency and consistency.

## 9. Measures against discrimination & harassment

IDEA Consult maintains a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

- A confidential advisor is available to all employees;
- Issues are handled confidentially and, when required, with external expert support;



- Aggregated, anonymised insights are used to strengthen preventive measures.

## 10. Gender dimension in research & content

As a research and policy organisation, IDEA Consult is committed to integrating gender considerations into its work where relevant.

- Research proposals address sex and gender dimensions when required;
- Data is disaggregated by sex and/or gender where appropriate;
- Researchers receive guidance on inclusive language and gender-sensitive methodologies.

This reinforces coherence between our internal practices and external advisory work.

## 11. Monitoring & evaluation

The implementation of the GEP is monitored annually through:

- Workforce composition data;
- Pay gap analysis;
- Training participation statistics.

Findings are discussed at team management level and adjustments are made where necessary. IDEA Consult prioritises lived equality and practical impact over formal metrics alone.

## 12. Public availability

This Gender Equality Plan is publicly available on our website and may be shared with partners, funders and stakeholders as part of IDEA Consult’s commitment to transparency and responsible governance.

## 13. Horizon Europe GEP Eligibility – Compliance mapping

Horizon Europe GEP Requirement	IDEA Consult Implementation
Public document	This GEP is publicly available
Signed by top management	Endorsed by Board of Directors & Managing Director
Dedicated resources	Coordinated by HR Manager; owned by leadership
Data collection & monitoring	Annual workforce, pay, training and satisfaction data
Training on gender equality	Embedded in onboarding, leadership & L&D practices
Key areas covered	Work-life balance, recruitment, career progression, pay equity, governance, anti-harassment, research integration

