
Abundance Gender Equality Plan

(Effective from: 24/02/26 – Review by: 24/02/29)

1. Introduction and scope

Abundance is a small research organization organized around cooperative principles, committed to promoting **gender** equality and creating an inclusive, respectful working environment for everyone involved in its activities. The cooperative values shared ownership, democratic decision-making and fairness in how work, responsibilities and benefits are distributed.

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) sets out how Abundance will promote gender equality in its internal organisation, decision-making, recruitment and research activities, in line with the Horizon Europe eligibility requirement on gender equality plans.

The GEP applies to:

- All co-directors of Abundance.
- Any employees, interns, visiting researchers or contractors engaged by Abundance.
- Any boards, committees or working groups convened by Abundance. cooperative.

The GEP:

- Is approved by the cooperative's general meeting.
- Is signed by a director authorized by the cooperative's general meeting.
- Is published on Abundance's website and made available to all partners and staff.

2. Governance, proportionality and resources

2.1 Five-member cooperative and collective governance

Abundance operates as a small, five full member cooperative where members collectively govern the organisation through general meetings and shared decision-making. Because of the cooperative structure and size, there is no dedicated HR unit or equality office.

The GEP is therefore implemented collectively, with clear but light responsibilities:

- The cooperative's general meeting:
 - Adopts and amends the GEP.
 - Reviews a short annual update on gender equality.
- All members:
 - Share responsibility for applying the GEP in daily work, recruitment, supervision and project design.
 - Commit to addressing any gender equality concerns in line with this plan.

2.2 GEP Coordinator and time allocation

To provide coordination without creating a heavy structure, Abundance appoints one member each year as GEP Coordinator. This role may rotate annually and is recognised as part of the member's cooperative duties.

The GEP Coordinator:

- Organises at least one annual agenda item on gender equality at a general meeting.
- Collects and summarises simple gender-disaggregated data once per year.
- Keeps the GEP document and the related web page up to date.
- Acts as a first point of contact for questions about this plan.

Abundance recognises that this role will require approximately 1–2 days per year.

2.3 Resources

Given its small size, Abundance will:

- Allocate reasonable time in meetings to discuss gender equality and this GEP.
- Where budget allows, cover the registration cost for at least one online training or webinar on gender equality or unconscious bias every 2–3 years.
- Integrate gender equality tasks into existing roles rather than creating new posts.

3. Data collection, monitoring and reporting

Abundance uses very light-touch monitoring, proportionate to a five-member organisation, while still fulfilling the requirements to collect sex/gender-disaggregated data and review progress.

3.1 Data collected once per year

Once per year, the GEP Coordinator prepares a simple internal note (e.g. a one-page table or short paragraph) recording, by gender (with options such as woman, man, non-binary, prefer to self-describe, prefer not to say, in line with applicable law and member preferences):

- Cooperative members:
 - Number of members by gender.
 - Any new members joining or leaving that year.
- Employees and interns (if any):
 - Number and type of contracts by gender.
 - Full-time/part-time status.
- Roles and responsibilities:
 - Who holds any designated roles (e.g. Chair, Treasurer, project leads) by gender.
- Recruitment events (if any took place that year):
 - Number of applicants, shortlisted candidates and selected candidates by gender, if this is known and lawful to record.

This information is stored securely and only in summary form, respecting confidentiality in such a small group.

3.2 Annual review

Once per year, usually at the annual general meeting:

- The GEP Coordinator presents a short verbal or written update summarising:
 - The basic gender balance in the cooperative and in any employees.
 - Any relevant recruitment, role changes or training related to gender equality.
 - Any issues or positive developments observed.
- The members discuss:
 - Whether any actions in the GEP need adjustment.

- Whether new actions are needed for the coming year.

Every three years, Abundance will review the GEP more substantially, revising objectives and actions in line with experience and the cooperative's evolving needs.

4. Training and awareness

Abundance will build awareness of gender equality in ways that are feasible for a micro-organisation:

- At least once every 2–3 years, at least two members will attend an external online webinar, short course or workshop on topics such as:
 - Gender equality and inclusive workplaces.
 - Unconscious bias in recruitment and evaluation.
 - Integrating sex and gender in research content.
- Those members share key lessons with the rest of the cooperative at a meeting, so that all benefit from the training.
- Before any recruitment or significant selection process (e.g. hiring an employee, selecting a long-term collaborator), the members involved in the selection will:
 - Review a short guidance document or online resource on fair and inclusive recruitment.
 - Briefly reflect together on potential biases and how to counter them.

Completion of training and discussions will be noted in the annual GEP update.

5. Thematic objectives and actions

5.1 Work–life balance and organisational culture

Objective 1: Maintain a supportive, flexible and inclusive culture that allows all genders to participate equally.

Key actions:

- Use cooperative meetings to discuss and agree working patterns (including remote work, flexible hours and part-time arrangements) that take into account members' and employees' caring responsibilities and personal circumstances.

- Avoid systematically scheduling meetings at times that disadvantage those with caring responsibilities (e.g. early mornings or late evenings), unless all agree and alternatives are not possible.
- Ensure induction of any new member, employee or intern includes:
 - A brief explanation of the GEP and cooperative values.
 - Information about flexible working and the cooperative's expectations around respect and inclusion.
- Promote a culture where members can raise concerns about workload, work–life balance or treatment without fear of negative consequences.

Simple indicators:

- Informal feedback in meetings on whether work patterns feel fair and manageable.
 - Number of members/employees using flexible arrangements, noting that in a group of five this is monitored qualitatively and with respect for privacy.
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5.2 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Objective 2: Ensure that any designated roles and key decision-making groups are not dominated by a single gender over time.

In a five-member cooperative, all members participate in general decision-making. However, some roles or tasks may be allocated to individuals or small groups (e.g. Chair, Treasurer, project lead, proposal lead).

Key actions:

- Aim to avoid the same gender consistently holding all formal roles (such as Chair, Treasurer, GEP Coordinator) over many years, unless strongly justified by skills and preferences.
- When forming small working groups or appointing project leads, seek gender balance where reasonably possible, considering expertise and availability.
- Keep role allocation transparent:
 - Discuss openly in meetings.
 - Record decisions in minutes.

Simple indicators:

- Over a three-year period, record which genders have held key designated roles.
 - Qualitative discussion in the annual review on whether roles and decision-making feel balanced and fair.
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5.3 Recruitment and career progression

Objective 3: Run fair, transparent and inclusive recruitment and progression processes, even if recruitment is infrequent.

Key actions:

- Use a brief “inclusive recruitment checklist” for any hiring or new member recruitment, including:
 - Clear, gender-neutral job or role descriptions.
 - Public or network-wide circulation where appropriate, to reach diverse candidates.
 - Structured selection criteria, agreed in advance and shared with the selection group.
- Where possible, involve at least two people of different genders in selection discussions.
- For each recruitment:
 - Note how many applicants, shortlisted candidates and selected candidates there were, by gender, if this information is available and lawful to record.
 - Keep a short note on the reasons for the final decision, linked to the agreed criteria.
- In appraisal or feedback conversations with any employees or interns, explicitly consider fair treatment and development opportunities for all genders and recognise non-traditional contributions (e.g. coordination, mentoring, outreach).

Simple indicators:

- Short record for each recruitment round summarising:
 - Gender of applicants and selected person, where known.
 - Confirmation that the checklist was used.
 - Informal discussion in the annual review on whether recruitment and role allocation felt fair.
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5.4 Gender dimension in research content

Objective 4: Consider sex and gender appropriately in Abundance’s research, wherever relevant.

Key actions:

- Include a short question in Abundance’s internal project or proposal templates:
 - “Is sex and/or gender relevant to the research question, methodology, data collection, analysis or impact? If yes, how will this be addressed? If not, why not?”
- When sex or gender is relevant (e.g. research involving human participants, social impacts on different groups), project leads will:
 - Plan data collection to make sex/gender-disaggregated analysis possible, where feasible and lawful.
 - Reflect relevant sex/gender considerations in study design, analysis and reporting.
- Members share examples of good practice and external resources on integrating sex and gender into research during internal meetings, when relevant to forthcoming projects.
- For Horizon Europe and similar proposals, ensure the sections on “Excellence” and “Impact” address the gender dimension of research content, in line with call requirements.

Simple indicators:

- Number or proportion of new projects in a year where the project template notes that sex/gender has been considered.
 - Qualitative examples of projects where sex/gender analysis informed design or findings.
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5.5 Measures against gender-based violence and sexual harassment

Objective 5: Prevent gender-based violence, sexual harassment and discrimination, and provide clear, safe ways to report and address any incidents.

Key actions:

- Adopt a short anti-harassment and bullying statement, annexed to this GEP, which:
 - States that Abundance does not tolerate gender-based violence, sexual harassment, bullying or discrimination.
 - Gives simple examples of unacceptable behaviour.

- Applies to members, employees, interns, collaborators and visitors.
- Designate at least two members, preferably of different genders where possible, as confidential contact points for concerns or complaints.
- Provide a simple, two-step reporting route:
 - A person experiencing or witnessing harassment can speak confidentially to either of the designated contacts or any trusted member.
 - The cooperative will decide, together with the person affected, on appropriate next steps, which may include mediation, formal investigation, changes to working arrangements or, in serious cases, ending collaboration or employment, and/or contacting external authorities.
- Ensure that:
 - People who raise concerns are protected from retaliation.
 - The person accused of wrongdoing has an opportunity to respond, within a fair process.
- If external partners or host institutions have stronger or more detailed procedures, Abundance will follow those as well, where applicable.

Simple indicators:

- Existence and communication of the anti-harassment statement and named contacts.
 - If any cases arise, they are recorded in an anonymised, confidential way and reviewed (without identifying individuals) as part of the annual GEP discussion.
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6. Communication and review

- This GEP will be published on Abundance’s website in an accessible location and shared with staff, collaborators and funders on request.
 - New members, employees and interns will be informed about the GEP during their induction.
 - The GEP will be lightly reviewed once a year, and more substantially every three years, through the cooperative’s existing governance processes.
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7. Approval

This Gender Equality Plan was approved by the general meeting of Abundance on 24/02/2026 and signed by:

Name: _____ Keir Milburn _____

Role (e.g. Chair or authorised member): _____ Director _____

Date: _____ 24/02/2026 _____