



Gender Equality Plan
2021 – 2024

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Contents

Introduction.....	3
Goals and principles.....	3
Situation Report.....	3
Sustainable Equality.....	5
Appendix - Legislation and Policies on equality with special focus on work and gender equality	7
United Nations.....	7
European Union.....	9
Hellenic Republic	12

Introduction

Synelixis Solutions S.A. is an SME founded in 2007, specialising in high-quality automation and system control solutions, offering services and products in the areas of precision agriculture, the Internet of Things (IoT), security and energy efficiency of information systems, cloud computing and more, with a current workforce of 29 employees.

Following national and European policies Synelixis has made the strategic decision to commit human resources who will carry the special responsibility of (a) assessing gender equality in the workplace, (b) developing proposals for improvement related to gender equality, (c) creating the first Gender Equality Plan - following the characteristics and needs of the company, (d) foreseeing its implementation and (e) evaluating the measures applied at the end of a three-year period.

For this reason, the (gender balanced) equality team has worked closely with the heads of all departments and senior management and will continue to do so in the future. The team will also assess if the company complies with national, European and international legislation and policies on equality, an extensive list of which is presented at the Appendix.

Goals and principles

An equality plan refers to the comprehensive actions for the promotion of equality within an organisation and the prevention of unlawful discrimination.

The main goals of this Gender Equality Plan are to ensure:

- that genders have equal opportunities when it comes to recruitment and terms of employment
- an equal gender distribution is realized at all levels and in different departments
- that gender does not affect employees' wages
- that all employees have the same opportunities, rights, and obligations regardless of gender
- a healthy work environment, free from gender-based violence, where everyone is treated professionally
- work organization in which employees can combine work with family life

The dedicated for equality work personnel have carried out extensive research on company data to discover possible gender imbalances across all categories, to assess if and at what extent the company policies are aligned with the afore mentioned goals, and to propose adjustments and measures in case they are not. The assessment of the data and situation report for each goal are presented next.

Situation Report

- *Genders have equal opportunities when it comes to recruitment and terms of employment*

As stated in the company's Rules of Procedure "*...Recruitment is carried out on a meritocratic basis, through a selection process, based on the respective needs of the Company, in the context of the policy and the general planning of operations and its development. Recruitment of personnel, the regulation of their relations with the Company, their professional development, as well as the termination of the employment contracts, are done in accordance with the relevant current Labour Legislation...*"

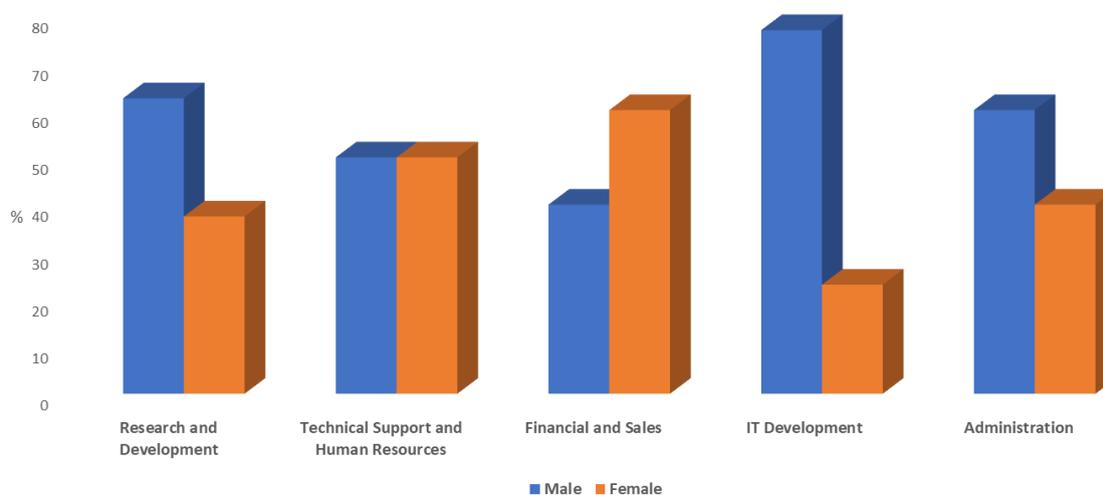
Synelixis offers fair evaluation for all candidates, focusing on the specific skills of each one, their experience and solely on what each person can bring to the position they apply for and consecutively to the company. Selections are being based on the evaluation of the candidates' CVs, experience and interviews in relation to the applied for position requirements.

The findings show that there is no gender bias in the selection of new candidates applying for distinct job positions. The same applies on the average numbers of years needed for existing personnel to advance in the company, which depends solely on their skills, experience, performance, seniority, and knowledge. The terms of employment depend on the requirements for each position and are in accordance with Labour Legislation.

➤ *Equal gender distribution at all levels and in different departments*

The work to promote gender equality includes surveying the distribution between women and men across all levels and different departments in the company. The data showed that Synelixis has 62% male and 38% female of the total 29 employees. This percentage may seem slightly gender biased but, since the main workforce consists of engineers, it reflects the unfortunate reality of the underrepresentation of women in the ICT sector deriving from the low percentage of female students that choose computer studies, accounting for only 30% of all ICT students in Greece¹. Therefore, the departments of IT Development and Research and Development are underrepresented by women. In the case of the Financial and Sales department it is the men that are underrepresented and in the Technical Support and Human Resources the genders are represented equally. Given the small size of the company it should be noted that a difference of, for example, only 2 employees can have significant effect in the distribution percentages.

Gender Distribution across departments



➤ *Gender does not affect employees' wages*

The research focused on the criteria applied on the employees' wages for work of equal value and salary development and has found no gender bias. Remuneration is based on the position requirements and level of the employee in accordance with Labour Legislation.

➤ *All employees have the same opportunities, rights, and obligations regardless of gender*

All employees, regardless of level or gender, are encouraged to pursue competence development, receiving equal number of training hours for equal skill development.

The distribution of genders in the total number of employees presented in the previous section is reflected in the numbers of women and men in the teams of submitted and selected projects with 67% male and 33% female of the total participants. However, the leading roles of the selected

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/edn-20200423-1>

projects are covered 57% by men and 43% by women. There is no gender bias in the distribution of tasks and roles among each project team, this depending solely on the skills and seniority required for each task.

Similarly, due the company composition, the gender distribution percentages for employees holding higher administrative and managerial positions are 70% male and 30% female of the total number of these positions. Again, the small size of the company should be taken into account when considering these numbers.

As mentioned earlier, the terms of employment for all employees depend on the requirements for each position and are in accordance with Labour Legislation; equal terms apply for positions of equal requirements. Furthermore, the company has established Rules of Procedure which clearly state the obligations and rights of the employees within the company and are equally binding for all parties involved.

- *A healthy work environment, free from gender-based violence, where everyone is treated professionally*

The company's Rules of Procedure clearly state that *"The Company must ensure to each employee their rights, which are regulated and derive from laws, ministerial decisions, arbitration decisions and business practice... The Company must ensure conditions of respect for the personality and dignity of employees, in the performance of their duties and to apply the principle of equal treatment...The freedom of political and philosophical beliefs is respected and guaranteed by the Company, within the framework defined by the Constitution and the current legislation."*

Furthermore, it is stated that all employees are *"...obligated to respect their colleagues. Actions that constitute an insult to the personality, such as sexual, moral, or other harassment, intimidation or persecution, or actions that constitute unequal treatment because of nationality, racial origin, gender, marital status, religious or political beliefs, constitute substantial transgressions of the employee..."* and result in the appropriate disciplinary sanction.

Thus far in the history of Synelixis there has been no issue of harassment or discrimination reported. Nonetheless, a clear procedure to be followed in the case of such an issue does not seem to have been explicitly communicated.

- *A work environment where employees can combine work with family life*

The research has suggested that Synelixis, especially in the recent years of the Covid pandemic, has exercised reasonable flexibility in its work-time arrangements. No gender bias when employees apply for leave of absence has been detected; the days provided to the employees are defined by the national Labour Legislation with reasonable understanding in case of a family emergency.

The research, focusing on the issue for parental leave in the cases of employees with small children, found no bias in this area as well. Nonetheless, female employees have taken significantly more time off than their male counterparts, this applying solely on the case of maternity leave. On the other hand, there have been male employees who have applied for and received paternity leave in the case of childbirth in the family. Employees on parental leave are given the opportunity to stay in contact with their workplace during their absence with due respect towards their family obligations.

Sustainable Equality

This equality assessment has showed that the company is compliant with all legislation and instinctively applies equality policies in its procedures. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement, therefore steps can be taken to ensure Synelixis will continue this path.

This plan and its proposals will be brought to the attention of the board of directors to ensure that all employees have access to the plan for the measures presented to be implemented and effective. The creation of a separate web page for equality issues on the company's web site, which will include a downloadable version of this document, will be proposed.

Steps need to be taken to ensure that all existing company staff are aware of gender equality issues and possible unconscious gender biases. Information about any form of discrimination (sexual, racist, social class, age, disability, homophobia, and transphobia) will be made available and measures will be taken to inhibit any possible such behaviour, e.g., use of non-sexist and non-discriminatory language in all forms and means of communication will be promoted. All new employees will receive related training in their orientation, with a special focus on hidden discrimination and marginalising behaviour. A proper procedure needs to be established and communicated to all employees for the case an employee has been subjected to harassment based on gender/gender identity/sexuality.

A questionnaire can be created and handed to all employees to pinpoint specific issues related to the equality plan's main goals and reveal possible flaws in the handling of equality issues so far gone undetected. This questionnaire will specifically investigate how employees perceive: a. their salary level, b. received training and upgrading of their skills, c. support and opportunities for promotion, d. the opportunity to combine parenthood and work, e. discrimination and harassment in the workplace, f. equality practices as a whole and within the company. The questionnaire can be distributed twice, once at the beginning to record the current views of the employees and one more time near the end of the three-year period to assess any changes induced by the undertaken measures.

The evaluation of the implementation of the measures included in this plan will be reported in the Second Gender Equality Plan after the end of the first three-year period. The processing of the results will aid to identify areas in which interventions are needed in terms of taking measures to promote equality practices, to prioritize, and plan for specific future actions thenceforth.

Steps for the 1st three-year period

- 1 Receive approval for the 1st Gender Equality Plan
- 2 Create dedicated page on the company's website for equality issues
- 3 Publish the 1st Gender Equality Plan
- 4 Create and distribute a questionnaire on employees' views on equality issues within the company
- 5 Share related educational material with all employees
- 6 Integrate training on equality issues in the orientation of new employees
- 7 Establish and communicate a procedure for employees to follow in case of harassment
- 8 Promote use of non-sexist and non-discriminatory language in all forms and means of communication
- 9 Second distribution of questionnaire on employees' views on equality issues at the end of the three-year period
- 10 Evaluation of the implemented measures

Appendix - Legislation and Policies on equality with special focus on work and gender equality

United Nations

- ❖ Declaration concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organisation, Philadelphia, 10 May 1944
 - II - (a) all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity
- ❖ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations General Assembly, 10 December 1948
 - Article 1 - All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
 - Article 2 - Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.
 - Article 23 - 1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. 2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
 - Article 24 - Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.
- ❖ Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), International Labour Organisation, 6 June 1951, on the application to all workers of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value.
- ❖ International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, United Nations General Assembly, 21 December 1965
 - Article 5 - In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights: ... (i) The rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favourable remuneration...
- ❖ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, United Nations General Assembly, 16 December 1966
 - Article 2 - 2. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
 - Article 7 - The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:
 - (a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:
 - (i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;

- (ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;
 - (b) Safe and healthy working conditions;
 - (c) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;
 - (d) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays
- ❖ Declaration on Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers, International Labour Organisation, 1975
- ❖ United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, United Nations General Assembly, 18 December 1979
- ❖ Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), International Labour Organisation, 3 June 1981
 - Article 3 - 1. With a view to creating effective equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women workers, each Member shall make it an aim of national policy to enable persons with family responsibilities who are engaged or wish to engage in employment to exercise their right to do so without being subject to discrimination and, to the extent possible, without conflict between their employment and family responsibilities.
- ❖ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action on advancing the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity, UN Fourth World Conference on Women, 4-15 September 1995
- ❖ Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, Adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Eighty-sixth Session, Geneva, 18 June 1998 (Annex revised 15 June 2010)
 - 2. Declares that all Members, even if they have not ratified the Conventions in question, have an obligation arising from the very fact of membership in the Organization to respect, to promote and to realize, in good faith and in accordance with the Constitution, the principles concerning the fundamental rights which are the subject of those Conventions, namely:
 - (a) freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
 - (b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;
 - (c) the effective abolition of child labour; and
 - (d) the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
- ❖ Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, United Nations General Assembly, 6 October 1999
- ❖ Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 5 - Gender Equality and women's empowerment, United Nations General Assembly, 2015
- ❖ Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), International Labour Organisation, 10 June 2019, on Violence and Harassment eradication at work

European Union

- ❖ European Convention on Human Rights, Council of Europe, 4 November 1950
 - Article 4 - Prohibition of slavery and forced labour
 - Article 9 - Freedom of thought, conscience and religion
 - Article 10 - Freedom of expression
 - Article 14 - Prohibition of discrimination
- ❖ European Social Charter, Council of Europe, 18 October 1961 – As Revised on 3 May 1996:
 - Article 1 – The right to work
 - Article 2 – The right to just conditions of work
 - Article 4 – The right to a fair remuneration
 - Article 8 – The right of employed women to protection of maternity
 - Article 20 – The right to equal opportunities and equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation without discrimination on the grounds of sex
 - Article 26 – The right to dignity at work
 - Article 27 – The right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment
- ❖ Council Directive 75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women
- ❖ Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions
- ❖ Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978 on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security
- ❖ Council Directive 86/378/EEC of 24 July 1986 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes
- ❖ Council Directive 86/613/EEC of 11 December 1986 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood
- ❖ Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers, 9 December 1989
 - 5 - All employment shall be fairly remunerated.
 - 16 - Equal treatment for men and women must be assured. Equal opportunities for men and women must be developed. To this end, action should be intensified to ensure the implementation of the principle of equality between men and women as regards in particular access to employment, remuneration, working conditions, social protection, education, vocational training and career development. Measures should also be developed enabling men and women to reconcile their occupational and family obligations.
- ❖ Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding
- ❖ Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC
- ❖ Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, 2 October 1997
 - Article 2 - The Community shall have as its task, ..., to promote throughout the Community a harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of economic activities, a high level of employment and of social protection, equality between men and women...

- Article 3 - 2. In all the activities referred to in this Article, the Community shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women.
- Article 117 - The Community and the Member States, ..., shall have as their objectives the promotion of employment, improved living and working conditions, so as to make possible their harmonisation while the improvement is being maintained, proper social protection, dialogue between management and labour, the development of human resources with a view to lasting high employment and the combating of exclusion
- Article 118 - 1. With a view to achieving the objectives of Article 117, the Community shall support and complement the activities of the Member States in the following fields:
 - improvement in particular of the working environment to protect workers' health and safety;
 - working conditions;
 - the information and consultation of workers;
 - the integration of persons excluded from the labour market, without prejudice to Article 127;
 - equality between men and women with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work.
- ❖ Council Directive 96/97/EC of 20 December 1996 amending Directive 86/378/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes
- ❖ Council Directive 97/75/EC of 15 December 1997 amending and extending, to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Directive 96/34/EC on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC
- ❖ Council Directive 97/80/EC of 15 December 1997 on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex
- ❖ Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin
- ❖ Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation
- ❖ Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions
- ❖ The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, CEMR general assembly, May 2006
- ❖ 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 matters of employment and occupation
- ❖ Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC
- ❖ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Istanbul, 11 May 2011
 - Article 4 – Fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination
 - 1-Parties shall take the necessary legislative and other measures to promote and protect the right for everyone, particularly women, to live free from violence in both the public and the private sphere.

2-Parties condemn all forms of discrimination against women and take, without delay, the necessary legislative and other measures to prevent it, in particular by:

- embodying in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation the principle of equality between women and men and ensuring the practical realisation of this principle;
- prohibiting discrimination against women, including through the use of sanctions, where appropriate;
- abolishing laws and practices which discriminate against women.

3-The implementation of the provisions of this Convention by the Parties, in particular measures to protect the rights of victims, shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status.

- ❖ Directive 2014/54/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on measures facilitating the exercise of rights conferred on workers in the context of freedom of movement for workers
- ❖ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU

Hellenic Republic

- ❖ Law 46/1975 on the Ratification of the voted in Geneva in 1951 no. 100 International Labour Convention on Equal Remuneration between Male and Female Workers for Work of Equal Value
- ❖ Law 1342/1983 on the Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- ❖ Law 1576/1985 on the Ratification of the International Labour Agreement no. 156, on equal opportunities and treatment of workers of both sexes: Employees with family responsibilities
- ❖ Law 2952/2001 on the Ratification of the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- ❖ Constitution of the Hellenic Republic 2001 (Government Gazette 85/A/18-4-2001)
 - Article 4 par.2 "Greek men and women have equal rights and obligations."
 - Article 116 par.2 "It is not gender discrimination to take positive measures to promote equality between men and women. The State ensures that inequalities that exist in practice are removed, especially to the detriment of women. "
- ❖ Law 3655/2008 on the Administrative and organizational reform of the Social Security System: Article 142 - Special maternity protection benefit
- ❖ Law 3896/2010 on the Implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation
- ❖ Law 4097/2012 on the Application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity
- ❖ Law 4359/2016 on the Ratification of the European Social Charter
- ❖ Law 4443/2016 on the Integration of Directives 2000/43/EC, 2000/78/EC and 2014/54/EU
- ❖ Law 4491/2017 on the Legal recognition of gender identity
- ❖ Law 4604/2019 on Promoting gender equality
- ❖ Law 4808/2021 on Labour protection
 - Ratification of the Convention 190 of the International Labour Organisation on Violence and Harassment eradication at work
 - Ratification of the Convention 187 of the International Labour Organisation on the Framework for the Promotion of Safety and Health at work
 - Integration of Directive (EU) 2019/1158