

**INSTITUTO  
iKigai**



# **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In today's world, there is a growing recognition of the importance of equality in the workplace, and Instituto Ikigai wants to be a part of this conversation. The company understands the significance of promoting equal opportunity, fair treatment, and diversity among its workers. Instituto Ikigai's social responsibility policy emphasizes the need for unity and effective management of human resources at every level. Equality is considered essential for the success of the company, talent retention, and driving innovation.

The company takes into account several factors, such as gender equality being recognized as a fundamental human right by both the European Union and Turkey; gender equality being one of the five guiding principles of the European Union and other countries and the Declaration of Human Rights that promotes equality and prohibits any form of sexual discrimination.

Instituto Ikigai reaffirms its commitment to these fundamental principles, including ensuring long-term equal opportunity and condemning all forms of discrimination. As part of this commitment, the company pledges to introduce and encourage initiatives that foster Instituto Ikigai's social responsibility.

Instituto Ikigai recognizes that commitments made by other organizations on this matter -including the prohibition of sexual discrimination, promotion of equal treatment and equal pay- have contributed to increase the number of women in the labor market and improve job quality.

However, Instituto Ikigai recognizes that the gender pay gap exists in various economic sectors, and women in the labor market of the EU and other countries may sometimes be overrepresented in low-paying occupations and underrepresented in leadership roles. Through Instituto Ikigai's extensive experience managing and participating in employment promotion, adult education, social inequality elimination, refugee integration, and other projects, the company has gained additional knowledge and a broader understanding of employment and professional opportunities in the EU and other countries.

Instituto Ikigai's executive board members consider it crucial to take further actions to promote gender equality, as outlined in the plan, especially concerning equal pay and women's access to decision-making positions, as well as combating gender-based violence. Instituto Ikigai's workplace equality policy is based on three main principles: preventing discrimination and promoting equal opportunity and treatment, encouraging diversity as a driver of business prosperity, and reducing and eliminating cases of sexual harassment and violence against women.

Instituto Ikigai's current policy is established on the aforementioned principles and reflects the prevailing viewpoint of the company's executive board members that workplace equality not only enhances unity and fosters positive societal attitudes but also boosts the economic and social performance of the company.

## II. EQUALITY POLICY

Instituto Ikigai recognizes that promoting inclusion and diversity are essential for the success of our organization. We believe that having a diverse workforce fosters creativity and innovation. Our executive board member is dedicated to promoting diversity and inclusion and is committed to preventing discrimination within our company.

Instituto Ikigai aims to foster an inclusive and diverse working environment where every employee feels valued and has the opportunity to perform to their fullest potential. Our policy is based on the foundation of fairness and equality, and we are committed to preventing discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marital status, race, ethnic origin, skin color, nationality, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. We believe that diversity fuels creativity and innovation, and therefore, we strive to ensure that our staff and partners represent the diversity of society. This policy applies to all members, whether working internally or externally with Instituto Ikigai.

In addition, we acknowledge that there are certain groups who may face more barriers in the modern workplace, such as those with limited opportunities, socially excluded individuals, and people with special needs. That is why this equality policy applies to these groups, with gender being a crucial reference point. Our aim is to ensure that all individuals who are involved with Instituto Ikigai, whether internally or externally, are treated with fairness and equality in accordance with this policy and to create a work environment in which every employee feels respected and has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

The purpose of this policy is to establish the necessary guidelines to achieve the following goals:

- Provide equal opportunities for men and women, including access to leadership roles, decision-making processes, training, and networking, as well as career growth.
- Ensure equal pay for both male and female employees, considering all aspects of their working conditions.
- Promote a healthier work-life balance for both male and female employees.
- Enhance constructive communication and behavior in the workplace.
- Encourage women to participate in R&D

Instituto Ikigai executive board members are committed to fostering a consistent and fair approach towards diversity and equality in the workplace. As a result, Instituto Ikigai encourages all its departments and employees to embrace diversity and promote a more diverse work environment. This includes addressing the underrepresentation of women in managerial positions. Instituto Ikigai, over its 10 years of existence, has significantly contributed to increasing the number of women in managerial positions, setting it apart from the average in the service sector.

Instituto Ikigai's main strategy, both internally and in partnership, is the continuous improvement through the implementation of action plans to combat stereotypes and promote equality between all individuals, including men and women and people belonging to special groups. Instituto Ikigai ensures that all partners, volunteers, and employees, regardless of their employment status or qualifications, are treated fairly and with respect. Recruitment choices, access to promotion opportunities, training, and other benefits are based solely on the individual's competencies and skills in maximizing innovation and the success of the company.

Instituto Ikigai is dedicated to promoting a safe and respectful work environment that values and respects all employees. The organization encourages employees to develop their potential and skills to achieve maximum success.

We, as Instituto Ikigai executive board members, are committed to achieving the following through our policy:

- Increasing the representation of underrepresented groups in entrepreneurship, education, and certain career sectors in our field, with a focus on recruiting staff belonging to these groups, particularly women and individuals with disabilities.
- Ensuring gender equality in wage and benefit structures, as well as career growth opportunities free from the "glass ceiling" effect, while addressing all forms of discrimination.
- Regularly assessing and reviewing our employment and recruitment procedures to promote a diverse and inclusive workplace.
- Expanding the range of people who contribute to management and decision-making, while making necessary adjustments to accommodate employees with special skills and needs.
- Broadening the diversity of our networks and candidate pools.
- Acknowledging and recognizing the individual differences and contributions of all employees and external partners, with periodic assessments of work organization and flexibility.

- Providing a work environment that promotes dignity and respect for all, with zero tolerance for harassment, intimidation, or bullying.
- Offering training, advancement, and growth opportunities for all employees, with a focus on promoting the careers of underrepresented groups, particularly women.
- Implementing family-friendly solutions to enhance work-life balance, such as parental, maternity, and childcare leave, as well as flexible working arrangements and childcare options.

### III. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION

#### a. Communication

Instituto Ikigai's executive team will be responsible for successfully executing this policy, and each employee (including general management, managers, assistants, and representatives) will be required to adhere to positive attitudes, behaviors, and communication styles that promote gender equality in the workplace. Instituto Ikigai will strive to foster change across all departments, levels, and activities internally and externally, including project planning and implementation at the regional, national, European, and global levels. This approach will ensure that gender equality objectives are fully integrated into collective agreements at the Instituto Ikigai level, as well as into all areas of operation involving partnerships, collaborations, and institutions.

Instituto Ikigai endorses innovative measures and policies aimed at enhancing the professional experiences of women and ensuring their equitable integration into the workforce through comprehensive learning and training programs at all levels. Instituto Ikigai's executive team closely scrutinizes any gender disparities that may exist in areas such as compensation, career growth, training opportunities, job satisfaction, conflict reduction, productivity enhancement, relationship building, and resource utilization to support competencies. Instituto Ikigai actively dismantles any implicit barriers stemming from prejudices,

stereotypes, and organizational structures that may impede the career advancement of women, as well as people from all other groups (based on factors such as race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, and beliefs) without exception.

Instituto Ikigai supports innovative measures and policies that enhance the professional experiences of women and facilitate their equitable integration into the workforce through comprehensive learning and teaching programs at all levels. Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members closely examine any gender disparities in areas such as compensation, career development, training, job satisfaction, conflict resolution, productivity improvement, relationship building, and resource use to support competencies. Instituto Ikigai proactively eliminates any invisible barriers resulting from prejudices, stereotypes, and organizational practices that may hinder the career advancement of women and all other groups of people (including but not limited to race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, and beliefs). Instituto Ikigai is committed to promoting a work culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion, where everyone has equal opportunities for growth and development.

Instituto Ikigai executive team is dedicated to disseminating this policy to all employees, managers, project partners, and institutional representatives to promote awareness of gender equality and prevent gender-based violence and harassment.

## **b. Leadership and decision-making**

Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members endorse the expansion of internal and external decision-making networks for women and aim to implement a mentoring system that facilitates women's access to high levels of responsibility and leadership positions, thus breaking the "glass ceiling" that often limits men's career advancement beyond a certain point in the organizational hierarchy. This approach ensures that women have equal opportunities for career growth and professional development, leading to a more diverse and inclusive workforce.



To achieve its goals, Instituto Ikigai works in partnership with specialized organizations and NGOs. It also draws upon research, training models, and EU projects that have been developed and implemented by these entities. The Instituto Ikigai Board of Directors is composed of highly experienced individuals in the field of sustainable development and related areas, who act as trusted advisors and mentors in the implementation of policies.

As Instituto Ikigai executive Board Members, our responsibility is to share the work experience and skills gained by mentored employees and encourage them to apply effective behaviors in their equal roles. We strive to promote gender equality in the workplace for all individuals by taking the following steps in leadership and decision-making :

- Create a strategy to acknowledge the advantages of gender diversity and enhance female representation in all managerial and decision-making roles.
- Establish achievable targets and track advancement towards equal gender representation in top leadership positions.
- Strive for gender balance within all departments responsible for decision-making within Instituto Ikigai.
- Arrange training programs focused on gender bias, gender equality, and leadership for all members of Instituto Ikigai.

### **c. Recruitment and Career Progression**

At Instituto Ikigai, the number of administrative staff is already balanced in terms of gender. Instituto Ikigai recognizes the significance of gender equality in recruitment procedures, and thus takes a conscious approach towards eliminating unconscious gender bias in the selection process. Additionally, Instituto Ikigai ensures equal involvement of its employees in decision-making processes. The association strives for gender equality in both administrative and research positions by narrowing the gap between the current number of male and female employees. The promotion of gender equality is a top priority for Instituto Ikigai, particularly in supporting the advancement of female employees and providing assistance in confronting bias in any context.

The Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members are dedicated to upholding the following principles:

- Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members will pay close attention to the wording of job titles, ensuring that they always emphasize that the position is open to both women and men. Additionally, they will work to ensure that the language used by Instituto Ikigai departments does not reinforce stereotypes about particular occupations or their associated characteristics, such as availability and mobility.
- Instituto Ikigai implements standardized procedures to ensure recruitment impartiality, taking corrective action if necessary. Thus, the Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members emphasize that recruitment criteria should be based on qualifications, skills, level of education, and professional experience. No individual can be dismissed or treated differently based on their gender, social or cultural background, name, city of birth, age, disability, political or religious beliefs, sexual preference, or involvement in a union.
- Pregnancy, whether actual, probable, or future, cannot be used as a basis for discrimination or refusal to recruit. The Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members believe in promoting a workplace that is inclusive and supportive of all individuals.

Instituto Ikigai is dedicated to supporting the progression of women's careers and achieving gender parity across all levels of corporate responsibility. The Instituto Ikigai Executive Board is committed to the following principles:

- Encouraging voluntary internal mobility to enhance employment diversity and support enterprise activities. During any reorganization, whether internal or involving outsourcing of company activities, Instituto Ikigai is committed to ensuring non-discriminatory treatment of employees.
- Actively promoting women's access to senior management positions and decision-making bodies, such as the board of directors and managerial roles in general.

- Conducting systematic monitoring and career assessments during and after maternity leave for women, and before taking maternity or paternity leave for both men and women in cases of adoption leave. The responsible manager or department head should prepare for the employee's departure and temporary relocation. Upon returning, the manager should meet with the employee to provide an overview of significant events that occurred during their absence and discuss their return to work. Depending on the length of absence, a job evaluation may be conducted if necessary. Additionally, any training provided during maternity or parental leave required for the employee's continued effectiveness will be provided upon their return to work. These principles also apply in cases of parental leave.

#### **d. Training and Network Development**

Instituto Ikigai is committed to promoting equal opportunity and professional development for all its employees, with a focus on underrepresented groups in the workforce. The Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members understand the importance of ensuring access to top management positions for women and other marginalized groups. To achieve this, Instituto Ikigai is taking steps to improve equitable access to conferences, professional workshops, seminars, and programs for professional skills certification. The company invests continually in policies that promote non-discriminatory personal and professional growth for all staff members.

Instituto Ikigai upholds the principles of gender equality in all of its activities, without exception. The company recognizes that mentoring and support can only be effective when the entire talent pool is utilized, without discrimination based on gender, nationality, or age. Instituto Ikigai is committed to providing equal opportunities to all its employees in all its works, projects, training, and scholarship programs, while also promoting social solidarity and mobility.

Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members will take the following steps to promote gender equality and provide equitable access to training and network growth for all employees:

- Ensure that training and networking opportunities are equally accessible to all employees regardless of gender, and promote the inclusion of gender dimensions in networking and training programs.
- Implement special training and networking programs to support the professional development of women employees.
- Develop guidelines and training for all employees to address unconscious bias and promote gender sensitivity in the workplace.
- Ensure that career breaks, such as maternity or paternity leave, long-term illness, or national service, do not affect an employee's access to training and networking opportunities.

#### **e. Integration in R&D**

Instituto Ikigai recognizes that understanding the importance of gender diversity in research and innovation is crucial for success and meeting the diverse demands of employees. We believe that promoting gender equality in the workplace enhances the social impact of knowledge, technology, and innovation, leading to the production of more goods and services.

Despite the low percentage of female staff in various sectors of research and development, we understand that diverse teams consisting of individuals from different backgrounds, both men and women, are more open to new ideas, procedures, and experiments. This, in turn, fosters innovation and creativity.

Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members are committed to promoting gender equality and fostering a creative working environment for all employees, regardless of gender. We recognize the importance of boosting research and development, promoting equal participation, and encouraging cooperation between men and women. To achieve this goal, we will take the following actions:

- Monitor the representation of both men and women in illustrative works and make adjustments where necessary to ensure gender balance.

- Encourage and support female leadership within research teams, as well as enhance the visibility of female project leaders.
- Highlight research areas where there is a gender imbalance and promote role models from underrepresented genders in these fields.

#### **f. Work-life balance**

Instituto Ikigai recognizes the importance of creating a positive relationship between the private and professional lives of its employees, taking into consideration the complex and diverse nature of family situations in modern society. To achieve this goal, we aim to improve the quality of life at work by implementing innovative policies that enable a better work-life balance for all employees, not just women.

We understand that finding a balance between work and personal life is a concern for both men and women. Male employees who wish to participate more in their family life may encounter resistance from their employer or colleagues.

We will tailor our policies to meet the needs of our employees, recognizing that these needs evolve over time. We understand that extended, irregular working hours do not promote a healthy work-life balance. Therefore, we will strive to implement policies that enable employees to appropriately fulfill their responsibilities to their families, communities, and other personal commitments.

We believe in equal access to parental leave for both men and women to create a supportive work environment that fosters a positive work-life balance for all.

Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members are committed to ensuring that there are no management practices or contractual clauses that reinforce the idea that family obligations are primarily shouldered by women. We will consult with our social partners and partners in European initiatives to review and support the implementation of this policy. We firmly believe that raising children is a shared responsibility between men and women.

To achieve a work-life balance that supports this principle, we will take the following steps:

- Conduct staff surveys and in-depth interviews to identify and address needs and problems related to work-life balance.
- Establish rules for remote working for employees immediately after their maternity or paternity leave and publish guidelines for flexible work arrangements.
- Create standards and guidelines for flexible work arrangements that accommodate employees' family obligations.
- Review and revise all leave policies, including those related to sick child care and elder care, to comply with legislative regulations.
- Implement ICT-based systems that enhance flexibility, such as telecommuting and flexible work hours.
- By implementing these policies and procedures, we aim to promote equal participation and support a positive work-life balance for all employees.

### **g. Prevent Violence and Harassment in the Workplace**

Instituto Ikigai Executive Board Members have implemented strict policies to prevent and eliminate violence and harassment in the workplace. This includes prohibiting any verbal or physical actions that may insult, threaten, or negatively affect the values of Instituto Ikigai workers and partners. To combat violence against women, sexual harassment, and discrimination, the Instituto Ikigai Board of Directors will take the following measures:

- Establish viable and confidential mechanisms for reporting complaints and supporting victims, which will be communicated to all Instituto Ikigai staff.
- Conduct yearly educational and awareness-raising programs for Instituto Ikigai staff and partners.

- Protect the employment and support of workers who are victims of domestic violence, with the help of psychologists, social workers, and competent social services.
- Integrate a gender perspective into policies and update anti-harassment, anti-bullying, and anti-mobbing clauses in the regulation.
- Provide online training for all employees and management on harassment, violence, and discrimination.

#### IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Each member of the Instituto Ikigai executive board has contributed to the creation of this policy. Before being ratified by the Instituto Ikigai President, the policy is shared with all staff members for review and comments.

We have implemented programs and best practice standards to promote equality and protect diversity at Instituto Ikigai, and we aim to achieve specific, quantifiable targets and objectives outlined in this policy. We will periodically review these goals to assess progress and ensure timely completion.

As long as there is proportional representation, i.e., two of the three members are women, a Instituto Ikigai committee consisting of a member of the board of directors, an employee representative, and executive board members has been established. The committee's responsibilities include:

- Overseeing the implementation, effectiveness assessment, review, and amendment of this policy, as well as creating action plans.
- Ensuring that group-wide agreements on gender equality align with the values and commitments outlined in this policy.

- Monitoring indicators for the company's gender equality policy and recommending improvement activities and training programs as needed.

The Instituto Ikigai executive team conducts yearly reviews of our work and holds meetings every three months or when necessary in response to complaints. The committee may establish working groups to create action plans to assist us in implementing this policy and achieving specific goals that promote equality and diversity, and eliminate all forms of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The Instituto Ikigai executive board members are responsible for ensuring the implementation of the action plans.

The senior management of Instituto Ikigai fully endorses and stands behind this policy. Any violation of this policy will be considered as misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary action in compliance with the Internal Working Rules of Instituto Ikigai.

