

**GENDER EQUALITY PLAN
(GEP) 2025-2030
PUBLIC SUMMARY**

REACTOR – RESEARCH IN ACTION



WHO WE ARE AND WHY GENDER EQUALITY MATTERS

Reactor – Research in Action is a feminist, policy-oriented research organisation working in North Macedonia and across the Western Balkans. Our work focuses on advancing **gender equality, social justice, youth participation, and inclusive urban development**, with a strong emphasis on evidence-based advocacy, participatory research, and civic engagement. A central part of our mission is to **engender and diversify EU accession processes**, ensuring that gender equality and intersectional inclusion are treated as core elements of democratic reform and policy alignment, rather than as add-ons.

Gender equality is not only a thematic area of our research and advocacy; it is a **core institutional value** that shapes how we govern the organisation, how we work with partners and communities, and how we understand responsibility, power, and accountability. Our Gender Equality Plan (GEP) sets out how we translate these values into everyday organisational practice.

WHAT OUR GENDER EQUALITY PLAN INCORPORATES

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) 2025–2030 formalises Reactor’s long-standing commitments and practices related to gender equality. It defines **clear objectives, responsibilities, and monitoring mechanisms** to ensure that gender equality is embedded across all areas of our work.

The GEP is developed **in line with international and European Union standards**, including requirements for research organisations to have a Gender Equality Plan in place. It is designed as a living and proportionate instrument, adapted to the realities of a feminist research organisation operating in a project-based funding environment.

The Plan applies to all staff members, associates, consultants, governing bodies, and partners engaged in Reactor’s activities.

GOVERNANCE, RESPONSIBILITY AND RESOURCES

Responsibility for the implementation of the GEP lies with Reactor’s **management structures**, including the highest executive role - the President, and the strategic oversight bodies - the Assembly and the Advisory and Executive Board. Day-to-day coordination is ensured through senior management and a designated **Gender Equality Focal Point**.

Gender equality is not treated as a standalone task, but is mainstreamed across governance, project management, human resources, and financial and operational procedures. The organisation commits to allocating appropriate human, financial, and time resources to support implementation, including staff time for monitoring and learning, capacity-building activities, and gender-sensitive organisational development. These commitments are pursued in a way that is realistic and sustainable within a project-based funding context.

DATA COLLECTION, ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

As a **feminist research think tank**, Reactor places strong emphasis on ethical and responsible data practices. Internally, the organisation reviews relevant sex- and gender-disaggregated data related to staffing, recruitment, contracts, leadership roles, participation in decision-making, and access to flexible working arrangements. This data is used for **organisational learning and reflection**, not for surveillance.

Externally, all research activities involving personal or sensitive data are conducted in line with **GDPR, national legislation, and Reactor's internal policies on research ethics, data protection, privacy, and confidentiality**. Particular attention is paid to informed consent, anonymisation, data security, and the protection of participants from marginalised or vulnerable groups.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Reactor recognises that **care responsibilities, precarity, and emotional labour are gendered**, especially in civil society and research work. The organisation therefore promotes a **care-aware organisational culture**, including flexible working arrangements, transparent leave policies, and respect for personal boundaries and wellbeing.

Regular internal discussions on workload, stress, and burnout support collective reflection and mutual accountability. Flexible arrangements are normalised for all genders, without stigma or negative impact on professional development.

LEADERSHIP, RECRUITMENT AND FAIR EMPLOYMENT

Reactor's governance reflects **strong women's leadership**, consistent with its feminist mission and with wider trends in the research and civil society sectors, where women are over-represented. Recruitment processes often attract more applications from women, while applications from men are fewer in some thematic areas.

At the same time, all recruitment and promotion decisions are based on **transparent, merit-based criteria**. Reactor applies strict equal-opportunities principles, gender-neutral job descriptions, and fair remuneration practices. The organisation is attentive to the gendered impacts of **short-term contracts and funding volatility**, and makes additional efforts to ensure fairness, transparency, and clear communication under constrained conditions.

PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT AND ABUSE

Reactor maintains **zero tolerance** for sexual harassment, gender-based violence, abuse of power, and sexual exploitation and abuse. This commitment is grounded in the understanding that such harms are linked to **structural power imbalances** and can occur in organisational, research, and partnership contexts.

The GEP builds on Reactor’s internal policies on harassment and sexual harassment, as well as its **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy**, assessed under UNICEF standards. Clear reporting mechanisms, confidentiality, protection against retaliation, and survivor-centred, trauma-informed approaches apply across all organisational activities.

GENDER IN RESEARCH, ADVOCACY AND EU PROCESSES

Gender equality is integrated across **all stages of Reactor’s research and programmatic work**—from research design and data collection to policy recommendations, advocacy, and communication. Intersectional feminist approaches guide analysis, ensuring that overlapping forms of inequality are recognised and addressed.

A defining element of Reactor’s work is its commitment to **mainstreaming gender equality across EU accession processes and sectoral reforms**. Through sustained engagement with public institutions, civil society, and regional and European platforms, Reactor works to embed gender perspectives across policy domains and civic dialogue.

LEARNING, MONITORING AND REVIEW

Reactor understands gender equality as a **continuous learning process**. Regular reflection, targeted training, and peer learning through regional and international networks support institutional learning and adaptation.

Implementation of the GEP is reviewed **annually** by management and governing bodies. Monitoring combines quantitative information with qualitative assessment of fairness, transparency, and proportionality, particularly in the context of funding constraints. This public summary of Reactor’s GEP is made available to ensure transparency, while respecting confidentiality and data protection.

VALIDITY

The current Gender Equality Plan was formally adopted by Reactor’s governing bodies and is valid for the period **2025–2030**. It will be reviewed and updated as needed to remain responsive to organisational development, contextual change, and EU requirements.

GENDER EQUALITY IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY. OUR GEP REFLECTS REACTOR’S COMMITMENT TO PRACTISING THE VALUES IT PROMOTES – INTERNALLY, ETHICALLY, AND WITH ACCOUNTABILITY.