



SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AFRICA

GENDER EQUITY PLAN

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1. Purpose and Scope

This Gender Equity Plan (GEP) sets out Sustainable Energy Africa's (SEA's) commitment to gender equity within its own organisation and, where relevant, across the projects it implements. It is organised around a set of thematic areas commonly used in gender equity plans internationally: work-life balance and organisational culture; gender balance in leadership and decision-making; equity in recruitment and career progression; the gender dimension in research/programme content; and measures against gender-based violence and harassment. This structure is used here purely as organising guidance; it is not a claim of certification against, or eligibility for, any specific external scheme.

The plan applies to all SEA staff, associates, consultants, interns and volunteers, and to the governance structures through which SEA operates.

2. Legal and Policy Basis

SEA's employment policies operate within South African law, with reference to:

- The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997
- The Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998
- The Immigration Act, 13 of 2002 and related regulations
- The Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 (referenced in relation to dispute referral)

SEA's Recruitment Policy explicitly states that no employee or job applicant should be unfairly treated on grounds including race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, sex, sexuality, actual or perceived HIV/AIDS status, marital status, age, social background, or disability.

3. Organisational Context

SEA was registered as a non-profit organisation (a Section 21 company) in November 2000, having previously operated since 1993 as a close corporation under the name Energy and Development Group (EDG). SEA began operations in 2001 and, following the implementation of the new Companies Act in 2011, is registered as a not-for-profit company (NPC).

SEA's mission is: "To promote just and sustainable urban societies founded on the efficient use of energy and other resources by, building capacity in and developing policy at all spheres of government, promoting sustainable strategies, planning and implementation initiatives and implementing practical examples of sustainability, in and around South Africa."

SEA recognises that gender equity goes beyond providing equal opportunities. Where systemic or historical inequalities exist, achieving equity may require deliberate interventions to address barriers and imbalances. The organisation has an established culture and practices that broadly support gender equity, including meaningful participation of women in leadership and decision-making, work-life balance and inclusive working practices. The purpose of this Gender Equity Plan is therefore not to overhaul existing practices, but **to formalise, strengthen and consistently apply those that already support gender equity**, while identifying and addressing any gaps or emerging needs over time.

Policy authority for the contents of this document, and HR policy more broadly, rests with the Organisation Meeting (OM). The Board of Directors provides strategic leadership, oversight and accountability for gender equity, ensuring that the Gender Equity Plan is adequately resourced, effectively implemented and monitored, and appropriately integrated into the Company's overall strategy, governance and organisational culture.

4. Process Requirements

The status of each process requirement is set out below.

4.1 Public, adopted plan

This GEP is published as a standalone document on SEA's website, updated and replaced accordingly with any future revised versions, so that the currently applicable plan is publicly accessible.

4.2 Data collection and monitoring

SEA collects some personal data on staff via the HR form and Employee Data Sheet including marital status and ID number, and maintains personnel files (e.g. for leave records and disciplinary matters) and a leave register spreadsheet.

SEA strives to collect and maintain sex/gender-disaggregated data on its personnel and, where applicable, associates and programme participants, reporting on this data when required for projects, while remaining compliant with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA).

4.3 Training and awareness-raising

SEA runs an induction process for new staff, during which they are onboarded and introduced to the organisation's governance structures. A basic performance evaluation is conducted on a yearly basis. These appraisals are flat and transparent: everyone is included in the process, and decisions are made collectively as a group.

SEA has provided gender equity awareness-raising and/or training for staff, covering topics including whistleblowing, child protection, and sexual harassment, and maintains evidence of delivery in the form of presentation materials.

SEA will seek to provide periodic refresher training and awareness activities relating to **gender equity, inclusion, and the prevention of harassment and other forms of inappropriate conduct**.

5. Key Thematic Areas

SEA's Gender Equity Plan (GEP) is structured around the following thematic areas, which collectively address gender equity across the organisation's workplace culture, leadership, employment practices and programme activities:

- Work-life balance and organisational culture
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- Gender equity in recruitment and career progression
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and programme content
- Prevention of gender-based violence and sexual harassment

The following sections consider each thematic area and identify the relevant sub-areas, measures, targets and target status. The following classification is used to indicate the status of each target:

- **Existing** – already in place and operational.
- **Ongoing** – implemented and continuously maintained.
- **To be strengthened** – exists but requires improvement or formalisation.
- **Not yet implemented** – agreed or planned, but implementation has not yet started.
- **In progress** – implementation has commenced but is not yet complete.
- **Completed** – the target has been fully implemented or achieved.

5.1 Work-life balance and organisational culture

SEA recognises work-life balance as an integral part of its organisational culture and is committed to creating a supportive, inclusive and flexible working environment in which employees are able to meet their professional responsibilities while maintaining their personal and family commitments.

Area	Measures	Target	Target Status
Flexible working hours available “should the need arise,” subject to manager approval	Maintain flexible/hybrid working arrangements where operationally feasible, with equal access across genders and roles.	100% of eligible employees have access to flexible working arrangements; monitor uptake by gender annually.	Existing
Discretionary leave and cultural leave available (deducted from annual leave)	Maintain flexible leave arrangements, including discretionary and cultural/religious leave, that recognise employees’ diverse personal, family, cultural and religious commitments and support an inclusive organisational culture.	Ensure that all employees have equitable access to discretionary and cultural/religious leave or appropriate alternative working arrangements, with the provisions reviewed periodically to ensure they remain responsive to employees’ needs.	Existing
Family leave responsibility available for	Maintain and promote equitable access to family	100% of all employees have	Existing

Area	Measures	Target	Target Status
employees to care family .e.g. looking after a sick child, or death/serious illness of a close family member.	responsibility leave and flexible arrangements that enable employees to meet significant family and caring responsibilities without compromising their participation, development or progression within SEA.	equitable access to family responsibility leave, with no material gender disparities in access.	
Maternity and Parental Leave provisions support job security, successful return to work, career progression and employee wellbeing.	Provide maternity and parental leave provisions and return-to-work support that protect employees' rights, wellbeing and career progression, while recognising the different leave needs of employees and their partners.	Ensure equitable access to maternity and parental leave in accordance with SEA policy and applicable legislation, while working towards enhanced leave provisions, subject to financial sustainability, and provide appropriate return-to-work support without disadvantaging employees' career progression.	Ongoing
Sabbatical leave available after 5–6 years of continuous service (2 weeks–1 month paid, more unpaid by agreement)	Maintain sabbatical leave as a flexible work-life balance and professional development provision that enables employees to take extended leave for personal, wellbeing or professional purposes.	Ensure equitable access to sabbatical leave for all eligible employees, with uptake and any gender-related barriers reviewed annually.	Existing
Flexible well-being leave ('Bugger-it leave): SEA allows employees to take annual leave at short notice to support rest, recovery and personal wellbeing	Maintain flexible wellbeing leave arrangements that enable employees to take annual leave at short notice when needed to support their wellbeing and work-life balance.	Maintain access to short-notice wellbeing leave for all employees, with the arrangement reviewed periodically to ensure it continues to support employee wellbeing and work-life balance.	Existing

5.2 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

SEA operates in an inclusive leadership structure, in which decision-making is collaborative and participatory across staff levels rather than concentrated in a single tier of management. The organisation strives for gender-balanced leadership and a majority of women on its Board, which currently comprises three female Directors out of five Board members. Gender balance in governance structures will be reviewed annually during Board succession planning and recruitment processes.

Area	Measures	Target	Target Status
Succession Planning	Consider gender balance when identifying and developing future leaders	Gender balance considered in 100% of formal succession or leadership development processes, where applicable.	Existing
Leadership development	Provide opportunities for women to develop leadership skills and take on greater responsibility	Equal access to leadership development opportunities.	Existing
Inclusive leadership	Maintain a collaborative leadership approach that encourages contributions from staff at different levels.	Ensure that major organisational decisions and strategic initiatives incorporate input from relevant staff across different levels and genders, with evidence of consultation documented where appropriate.	Existing
Decision-making	Ensure staff of different genders have meaningful opportunities to participate in organisational decision-making	100% of relevant decision-making forums provide opportunities for participation across genders and staff levels	Existing
Leadership representation	Promote balanced representation of women and men in formal leadership and management positions.	Maintain a minimum of 50% representation of women in management/leadership positions, where practicable.	Existing
Board Representation	Maintain strong representation of women on the Board.	Maintain at least 50% women on the Board, with a continued	Existing

Area	Measures	Target	Target Status
		aspiration for a majority of women	

5.3 Gender equity in recruitment and career progression

SEA is committed to ensuring that recruitment, development and career progression are based on merit, equal opportunity and fair treatment, while actively addressing barriers that may contribute to gender inequality.

Area	Measures	Targets	Target Status
Fair and gender-equitable recruitment: Recruitment policy prohibits unfair treatment of candidates on grounds including sex, sexuality, and marital status.	Use fair, transparent and gender-neutral recruitment processes and job descriptions.	100% of recruitment processes use standardised criteria based on skills, qualifications and experience	Existing
Equal pay and remuneration: Remuneration increases based on individual performance and organisational financial performance,	Monitor remuneration to identify unexplained gender-based disparities.	Conduct an annual gender pay review and address any unjustified gender pay gaps identified	Existing
Equal access to training and career development	Provide equitable access to training, mentoring, professional development and exposure to opportunities.	Equal access to development opportunities, with participation monitored by gender annually.	Existing
Transparent and equitable promotion and progression	Ensure promotion and advancement decisions are based on transparent and consistent criteria	100% of promotion decisions based on documented performance, skills and competency criteria; monitor progression by gender annually.	Existing
Retention and career continuity	Identify whether women and men experience different retention outcomes.	Review annual retention/turnover data by gender and investigate material disparities	Not yet implemented

5.4 Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Programme Content

SEA seeks to apply **Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI)** principles across its research and programme work. This includes considering who may be excluded, who carries project risks and costs, who benefits, and whether different groups can meaningfully participate in decision-making. GEDSI considerations are incorporated, where relevant, into areas such as energy-access research, municipal energy and climate planning, stakeholder engagement, procurement, technical support and inclusive energy projects. While these practices are already embedded in several SEA programmes, they have not yet been formalised into a single organisation-wide approach. The GEP therefore seeks to consolidate and strengthen these practices through practical guidance, consistent application and organisational learning.

Areas	Measures	Target	Status
Organisation-wide GEDSI guidance	Develop practical guidance or a checklist for applying GEDSI principles across project design, research, procurement, stakeholder engagement, technical support and monitoring. ¹	Organisation-wide GEDSI guidance developed and adopted within 12 months of adoption of the GEP.	Not yet implemented
GEDSI in project design and implementation	Apply a GEDSI lens to relevant project activities, considering accessibility, participation, risks, benefits and potential unintended impacts on different groups.	GEDSI considerations incorporated into 100% of relevant new projects and programmes, proportionate to the nature and scope of the work.	Ongoing
Inclusive stakeholder engagement	Promote inclusive stakeholder engagement and targeted participation where women or other groups are underrepresented.	GEDSI considerations incorporated into stakeholder engagement planning for 100% of relevant projects.	To be strengthened
Inclusive procurement	Consider gender and inclusion in relevant	GEDSI considerations incorporated into relevant procurement	To be strengthened

¹ Responsibility for producing, maintaining and periodically reviewing the guidance rests with a designated GEP Focal Point appointed by the Organisation Meeting (OM),

Areas	Measures	Target	Status
	procurement processes and encourage participation of diverse suppliers and service providers where appropriate.	processes, where appropriate and feasible.	
Disaggregated data	Collect sex-, gender- or other relevant disaggregated data where appropriate, including through surveys, workshop registration and attendance records.	Relevant projects ² collect and use disaggregated data where feasible and appropriate to inform programme design and monitoring.	Ongoing
GEDSI in monitoring and reporting	Include relevant GEDSI findings, actions and indicators in project reports, workplans and monitoring frameworks.	GEDSI considerations reflected in 100% of relevant project reporting and monitoring frameworks.	To be strengthened
Staff capacity and organisational learning	Strengthen staff capacity and drive organisational learning by providing opportunities to learn from GEDSI-focused projects and by capturing and sharing lessons to improve future practise.	At least one GEDSI learning or knowledge-sharing activity annually, with lessons incorporated into organisational practice where relevant. GEDSI lessons from relevant projects are documented and shared periodically to inform future project design and implementation.	To be strengthened

5.5 Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment

SEA is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive working environment in which gender-based violence, sexual harassment and other forms of harassment are not tolerated. SEA's existing policies provide mechanisms for prevention, reporting, protection and accountability, and the GEP seeks to strengthen awareness, accessibility of reporting mechanisms and organisational capacity to prevent and respond to such conduct. SEA will periodically review the effectiveness of

² Relevant Projects: where SEA has influence over project design, stakeholder engagement, data collection, procurement activities or programme delivery.

reporting mechanisms and seek anonymous feedback from staff regarding awareness, accessibility and confidence in reporting processes

Areas	Measures	Target	Status
Prevention and awareness	Maintain clear policies prohibiting gender-based violence, sexual harassment and other forms of harassment, and regularly communicate that such conduct is unacceptable.	100% of employees are aware of SEA's policies and standards relating to sexual harassment and gender-based violence.	Existing
Reporting and complaints mechanisms	Maintain accessible and confidential channels for reporting concerns, including the reporting mechanisms provided for in the Whistleblowing Policy.	Employees have access to at least two confidential reporting channels, with reporting options clearly communicated.	Existing
Protection and non-retaliation	Ensure confidentiality and protection from retaliation for employees who raise concerns or make good-faith disclosures.	100% of reported cases are managed in accordance with SEA's confidentiality and non-retaliation provisions.	Existing
Prompt and fair response	Address complaints of sexual harassment and gender-based violence fairly, promptly and in accordance with SEA policies and applicable legislation.	100% of complaints are managed in accordance with established procedures and applicable requirements.	Existing
Accountability and capacity	Apply appropriate disciplinary measures where harassment or other prohibited conduct is substantiated, and provide periodic staff and leadership awareness or training on prevention and response.	All substantiated cases are subject to appropriate action, and at least one awareness or training activity is conducted annually.	Existing

6. Governance, Monitoring and Reporting

SEA recognises that effective governance, monitoring and reporting are essential to ensuring that the Gender Equity Plan (GEP) is implemented effectively and that progress towards its objectives can be measured. The GEP is owned by the Organisation Meeting, with responsibility for coordinating, implementation and monitoring progress assigned to a designated GEP Focal Point appointed by the OM. Progress against the GEP will be reported by the GEP Focal on an annual basis to the Organisational Meeting and the Board of Directors. The GEP Focal Point is responsible for maintaining the monitoring data underpinning this reporting, while the OM reviews the Plan's measures, targets and target statuses at least annually and refers any material revisions to the Board for approval.

SEA will build on its existing record-keeping and management practices, including personnel files, leave records and employee information, to support consistent monitoring, gender-disaggregated analysis where appropriate, and reporting on progress against the GEP.

7. Adoption and Signature

Per the Handbook, policy authority over organisational policies rests with the Organisation Management (OM); adoption of this plan should follow the same route unless SEA specifies otherwise.

Name : Tanaka Shumba-Mukudu

Role: Executive Director

Date: 1 September 2026

Signature:  _____