

**CANADA'S OCEAN
SUPERCLUSTER**

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN
2026-2029

Driving a Digital, Sustainable and Inclusive Ocean Economy

Executive Approval

This Gender Equality Plan consolidates Canada's Ocean Supercluster's existing policies, governance practices and diversity commitments into a single framework aligned with Horizon Europe Gender Equality Plan requirements. It does not replace existing OSC policies.

Document control	Approved framework
Document title	OSC Gender Equality Plan 2026-2029
Effective date	January 1, 2026
Review cycle	Annual
Policy owner / Administrative Lead	Chief Legal & Governance Officer
Executive sponsor	Chief Executive Officer
Board oversight	Governance, Nominations and Human Resources (GNHR) Committee
Classification	Sharable for Horizon Europe eligibility purposes

Approval

The undersigned approve this Plan and support its implementation and annual review within OSC's existing governance, human resources, learning and reporting frameworks.

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chief Executive Officer	Kendra MacDonald		October 08, 2026
Chief Legal & Governance Officer	Tamzin Gillis		October 08, 2026

Executive Summary

Canada's Ocean Supercluster (OSC) is committed to fostering an inclusive workplace, diverse leadership, equitable employment practices and an innovation ecosystem that reflects the diversity of the communities and industries it serves.

This Plan brings existing OSC governance requirements, workforce practices, human resources policies, respectful workplace protections and Board diversity objectives into a single public document. It is founded on the principle that diverse teams, inclusive leadership and equitable access to opportunity strengthen decision-making, innovation and organizational performance.

- Fair, transparent and equitable recruitment and hiring.
- Inclusive workplace culture, employee well-being and remote-first flexibility.
- Learning, development and career growth opportunities.
- Gender diversity in leadership, governance and decision-making.
- Prevention of discrimination, violence, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.
- Monitoring, training, governance oversight and continuous improvement.

CURRENT LEADERSHIP BASELINE

OSC monitors senior leadership representation. At the date of this Plan, the Senior Leadership Team is 75% women and includes 25% visible minority representation.

Horizon Europe Alignment at a Glance

Mandatory process requirement	OSC approach	Status
Public document	Publication of this approved GEP on OSC's public website.	Met on publication
Dedicated resources	CEO sponsorship, Chief Legal & Governance Officer administration, and Board committee oversight.	Met
Data collection and monitoring	Annual monitoring of representation, recruitment, development, training and workplace indicators.	Met
Training and awareness	Existing DEI, respectful workplace and learning commitments, supplemented by GEP awareness.	Met

Source: Human Resources Policy (effective February 11, 2025); Respectful Workplace Policy (November 17, 2025); Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference (February 11, 2025).

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Plan is to demonstrate Horizon Europe eligibility, consolidate existing OSC commitments, promote gender equality and equitable participation, support monitoring and transparency, and reinforce inclusive innovation and leadership.

1.2 Scope

This Plan applies, as relevant, to OSC employees, senior leadership, directors, contractors, volunteers, project review committees, and OSC-supported innovation and ecosystem activities. It should be read with the policies and governance documents identified in Appendix C.

1.3 Interpretation

Where this Plan summarizes an existing approved policy, the approved policy governs. Where the Plan identifies a recommended new commitment or metric, the provision is adopted through approval of this Plan and is to be implemented within applicable privacy, employment and governance requirements.

2. Governance and Accountability

2.1 Board of Directors

The Board maintains oversight of organizational governance and human resource matters through the Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee. The Board approves this Plan and receives annual reporting on its implementation.

2.2 Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee

The Committee oversees relevant governance and HR policies and practices, Board nominations and succession, Board composition, executive succession and compensation, and compliance with applicable non-financial conditions of OSC's Contribution Agreement. It reports to the Board following each meeting.

Source: Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference (February 11, 2025), Purpose, Reporting, and Duties and Responsibilities.

2.3 Executive Leadership

The Chief Executive Officer is the Executive Sponsor. Senior Leadership supports implementation, maintains an inclusive culture, provides appropriate resources, supports training and monitors outcomes through existing organizational processes.

2.4 Administrative Lead

The Chief Legal & Governance Officer is the administrative lead and is responsible for coordinating annual review, maintaining the compliance mapping and source cross-reference, coordinating governance reporting, supporting policy alignment, and working with Human Resources and Executive Leadership on implementation and monitoring.

2.5 Human Resources and Managers

Human Resources supports workforce data, recruitment, learning, engagement and respectful workplace processes. Managers apply OSC policies, support equitable opportunity, address inappropriate conduct, facilitate development and ensure employees complete required training.

Source: Human Resources Policy (effective February 11, 2025); Respectful Workplace Policy (November 17, 2025), sections 3 and 6.

3. Current Policy Framework

Policy area	Existing framework	Key contribution to this Plan
Recruitment and hiring	Human Resources Policy	Fair, transparent, inclusive and equitable recruitment; candidate accommodation.
Compensation and benefits	Human Resources Policy	Consistent administration and regular review for fairness and legal compliance.
Learning and development	Professional Learning & Development Policy	Shared responsibility, annual team learning and equitable review of requests.
Work-life balance	Remote Workplace Policy; Health and Safety Policy	Remote-first flexibility, employee well-being and safe remote work.
Respectful workplace	Respectful Workplace Policy	Prevention, reporting, investigation, confidentiality, non-reprisal and training.
Ethical conduct	Code of Conduct	Legal, fair, appropriate and defensible conduct.
Whistleblowing and non-retaliation	Whistleblower Policy	Confidential reporting of suspected wrongdoing, appropriate investigation and protection from retaliation.
Board diversity	Governance Committee Terms and Nomination Guidelines	Board composition, diversity, self-identification and 50-30 commitments.
Inclusive innovation	Internal ED&I Plan; project proposal requirements	EDI in project design, review and partner commitments; GBA+ reference.

4. Baseline Metrics and Monitoring

OSC will use proportionate, privacy-respecting and, where applicable, voluntary self-identification data to establish baselines, monitor progress, identify barriers and inform action. Small-cell information will not be reported where doing so could identify an individual.

4.1 Established Baselines

Indicator	2026 baseline	Notes
Senior Leadership Team: women	75%	Management-supplied organizational data.
Senior Leadership Team: visible minority representation	25%	Management-supplied organizational data.
Board gender composition	Tracked annually	Board nomination and self-identification process.
Employee engagement	Monitored	OSC uses an employee engagement tool to track progress, concerns and morale.
Training participation	Monitored	Training records support completion reporting.

4.2 Metrics and Performance Indicators

Indicator	Measure / reporting approach	Frequency
Workforce gender representation	Percentage distribution based on available self-identification or HR records.	Annual
Senior leadership gender representation	Percentage distribution, including women and gender-diverse representation where data permits.	Annual
Senior leadership visible minority representation	Percentage based on available voluntary self-identification data.	Annual
Board gender representation	Composition measured against no-more-than-50%-men requirement and 50-30 aspiration.	Annual
New-hire representation	Gender distribution of completed hires, reported in aggregate.	Annual
Recruitment process review	Confirmation that recruitment practices and accommodations were reviewed.	Annual
Promotion / advancement	Aggregate outcomes by gender where data volume permits privacy-safe reporting.	Annual
Retention	Aggregate voluntary turnover / retention by gender where data volume permits.	Annual
Learning participation	Participation and completion by program; gender analysis where useful and privacy-safe.	Annual
Required DEI and respectful workplace training	Completion rate.	Annual
Employee engagement	Relevant inclusion, belonging and respectful workplace indicators.	Annual
Respectful workplace reports	Aggregate number and category, without personal information; trends and actions where appropriate.	Annual
Innovation activities	Number or proportion of applicable initiatives documenting consideration of gender / intersectional factors.	Annual

5. Strategic Objectives and Actions

Objective 1: Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture

OSC will maintain a respectful, inclusive and flexible remote-first culture that supports employee well-being, safe work and equitable participation.

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Commitment status
Maintain and annually review the Respectful Workplace, Human Resources, Health and Safety, and Remote Workplace policies.	Management; Chief Legal & Governance Officer; applicable Board oversight	Annual	Existing
Continue employee engagement monitoring and consider inclusion and belonging indicators.	Human Resources; Executive Leadership; applicable Board oversight	Annual	Existing
Provide reasonable accommodation in recruitment and employment in accordance with applicable requirements.	Human Resources; Managers; applicable Board oversight	Ongoing	Existing
Review GEP progress and identify barriers that may affect participation, well-being or advancement.	Chief Legal & Governance Officer; Executive Leadership; applicable Board oversight	Annual	Recommended new commitment

Source: Human Resources Policy; Remote Workplace Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Respectful Workplace Policy.

Objective 2: Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

OSC will continue to monitor gender representation in senior leadership and Board composition and will apply diversity objectives within succession and nomination processes.

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Commitment status
Monitor senior leadership gender representation.	Chief Legal & Governance Officer; Human Resources	Annual	Existing
Use best efforts to maintain a Board with no more than 50% individuals identifying as men.	Governance, Nominations and HR Committee; Nomination Committee; Board	Annual nomination cycle	Existing
Support progress toward the 50-30 Challenge aspiration of gender parity on the Board and in senior management.	Board; Governance Committee; Executive Leadership	Ongoing	Existing
Consider diversity, skills, independence and succession needs together in Board and executive succession planning.	Governance Committee; Board	Annual	Existing

Source: Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference, Schedule A; Human Resources Policy.

Objective 3: Recruitment and Career Progression

OSC will maintain fair, transparent and inclusive recruitment and provide access to learning and development that supports performance, professional growth and succession.

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Commitment status
Maintain clear job descriptions, inclusive selection processes and reasonable candidate accommodation.	Human Resources; Hiring managers	Each competition	Existing
Review recruitment practices and aggregate hiring outcomes for potential barriers.	Human Resources; Executive Leadership	Annual	Existing

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Commitment status
Apply learning and development approvals fairly and consistently.	Managers; Executive Leadership	Ongoing	Existing
Review aggregate advancement and retention outcomes where data volume permits.	Human Resources; Chief Legal & Governance Officer	Annual	Recommended new commitment

Source: Human Resources Policy, Recruitment, Hiring and Onboarding; Professional Learning & Development Policy.

Objective 4: Gender Dimension in Research and Innovation

Where relevant to the nature and objectives of an activity, OSC will encourage consideration of sex, gender, diversity and intersecting identity factors in innovation programming, project design, project evaluation and ecosystem activities.

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Commitment status
Maintain diversity and inclusion expectations in applicable project proposal materials.	Program Leadership	Ongoing	Existing
Use GBA+ or another suitable inclusive-analysis lens where proportionate and relevant.	Program Leadership; trained reviewers or advisors	As applicable	Existing
Monitor the use of gender and intersectional considerations in applicable initiatives.	Program Leadership; Chief Legal & Governance Officer	Annual	Existing
Provide awareness guidance to relevant employees and reviewers.	Executive Leadership; Learning lead	During Plan period	Existing

Source: OSC Internal ED&I Draft Plan; OSC CORE project proposal materials and diversity and inclusion requirements.

Objective 5: Prevention of Gender-Based Violence and Sexual Harassment

OSC will maintain a workplace free from violence, discrimination, bullying, harassment and sexual harassment, supported by reporting, investigation, confidentiality, non-reprisal and training measures.

Action	Responsibility	Timing	Commitment status
Maintain accessible complaint and reporting procedures, including escalation where the usual recipient is implicated.	Human Resources; Management; CEO; Board where necessary	Ongoing	Existing
Investigate and address complaints in a timely manner and protect confidentiality to the extent possible.	OSC; internal or external investigator	As required	Existing
Prohibit reprisal and retaliation for good-faith participation in a process.	OSC Leadership	Ongoing	Existing
Track and review aggregate incident information and prevention actions.	Human Resources; Chief Legal & Governance Officer	Annual	Existing

Source: Respectful Workplace Policy (November 17, 2025), sections 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8.

6. Training and Awareness

OSC will use its existing learning and development framework to provide proportionate training and awareness. Training may be delivered organization-wide or to employees with specific responsibilities.

Audience	Core topics	Frequency / trigger
All employees	Respectful workplace; discrimination and harassment prevention; DEI and inclusion; GEP awareness.	Onboarding, refresher cycles and policy updates
Managers and senior leaders	Inclusive leadership; responding to concerns; accommodation; bias awareness; accountability for culture.	Periodic and role-based
Hiring participants	Inclusive recruitment; bias mitigation; consistent assessment and accommodation.	Before or during participation in hiring
Directors / committee members	Board diversity obligations; nomination and succession considerations; GEP oversight.	Orientation and periodic refreshers
Relevant program staff / reviewers	Gender and intersectional dimensions in innovation; GBA+ or suitable inclusive analysis.	As applicable

Source: Human Resources Policy; Respectful Workplace Policy; Professional Learning & Development Policy; OSC Internal ED&I Draft Plan.

7. Resources and Responsibilities

The Plan will be implemented through OSC's existing governance, legal, human resources, program, communications, training and employee-engagement structures. The Board committee has authority to access management and retain external advisors, with appropriate OSC funding, to assist in fulfilling its responsibilities.

Role	Primary responsibilities under the Plan
Board of Directors	Approve the Plan; oversee organizational commitment; receive annual reporting.
Governance, Nominations and HR Committee	Oversee relevant governance and HR matters; monitor Board composition and succession; review annual GEP reporting and recommend action.
Chief Executive Officer	Executive sponsorship; organizational accountability; support appropriate resources.
Chief Legal & Governance Officer	Administrative lead; annual review; compliance mapping; governance reporting; policy coordination; public-document stewardship.
Human Resources	Workforce metrics; recruitment and accommodation; learning records; engagement; respectful workplace processes.
Senior Leadership Team	Implementation within functions; inclusive culture; resource support; review of results and actions.
Managers	Apply policies; support equitable opportunity and development; address inappropriate conduct; enable training.
Program Leadership	Apply relevant inclusion commitments to innovation programming and project processes.
Employees and personnel	Comply with policies; participate in training; contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment; report concerns.

Source: Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference; Human Resources Policy; Respectful Workplace Policy; Professional Learning & Development Policy.

8. Reporting, Review and Publication

8.1 Annual Review

The Chief Legal & Governance Officer will coordinate an annual review of the Plan. The review will assess progress, data quality, training, policy changes, emerging Horizon Europe expectations and any identified barriers or corrective actions.

8.2 Governance Reporting

An annual summary will be provided to the Chief Executive Officer, the Governance, Nominations and Human Resources Committee and the Board. Reporting will be aggregate and privacy-respecting.

8.3 Publication

Following approval, the Plan will be signed by senior leadership and published on OSC's public website. Material updates will be approved through the appropriate governance process and the published version will be updated accordingly.

8.4 Plan Period

This Plan applies for 2026-2029. It may be renewed, replaced or extended following the 2029 review.

Appendix A: Horizon Europe Compliance Mapping

Requirement / thematic area	OSC evidence and Plan provision	Assessment
Public document	Executive approval, signature and public publication commitment.	Met on publication
Dedicated resources	CEO sponsor; Chief Legal & Governance Officer administrative lead; HR and Board committee roles.	Met
Data collection and monitoring	Baseline and annual metrics in section 4; annual reporting in section 8.	Met through Plan
Training and awareness	Existing required training plus role-based GEP and innovation awareness in section 6.	Met
Work-life balance and culture	Remote-first framework, well-being, health and safety, respectful workplace and engagement.	Strong coverage
Leadership and decision-making	Board composition requirements, 50-30 aspiration and monitored SLT representation.	Strong coverage
Recruitment and career progression	Equitable recruitment, accommodation, development and recommended annual outcome monitoring.	Strong coverage
Gender dimension in R&I	Project diversity foundation plus explicit commitment in Objective 4.	Enhanced by Plan
Gender-based violence and sexual harassment	Definitions, reporting, investigation, confidentiality, non-reprisal and training.	Strong coverage

Appendix B: Gap Analysis and Actions

Identified gap before this Plan	Plan response	Classification
No single public GEP	Approve, sign and publish this Plan.	Required documentation action
Gender metrics not consolidated	Annual metrics table and reporting cycle established.	Recommended new reporting commitment
No express Horizon-style statement on gender in innovation	Objective 4 adds a relevance-based gender and intersectionality commitment.	Recommended new substantive commitment
GEP-specific awareness not expressly identified	Section 6 integrates GEP awareness into existing learning structures.	Recommended new implementation action

Appendix C: Source Document Cross-Reference

Plan topic / provision	Primary OSC source document	Relevant source provision
HR governance and Board oversight	Human Resources Policy - Effective February 11, 2025	Purpose, Scope, Organizational Boundaries, Board Involvement
Fair and equitable recruitment	Human Resources Policy - Effective February 11, 2025	Recruitment, Hiring and Onboarding
Compensation and benefits fairness	Human Resources Policy - Effective February 11, 2025	Compensation and Benefits
Performance and engagement monitoring	Human Resources Policy - Effective February 11, 2025	Performance Management and Employee Engagement
Learning and development	Human Resources Policy; Professional Learning & Development Policy - April 2023	Training and Development; Principles; Identifying Learning and Development Needs
Health, safety and remote work	Health and Safety Policy - February 13, 2023; Remote Workplace Policy - August 23, 2026	Health and Safety Commitment; Remote Environment; purpose and objectives
Respect, discrimination and harassment	Respectful Workplace Policy - November 17, 2025	Statement, Definitions, Expectations, Incidents and Reporting, Training
Ethical conduct	Code of Conduct - March 22, 2024	Objective, Scope and Responsibility
Whistleblowing, reporting and non-retaliation	Whistleblower Policy	Reporting, investigation, confidentiality and protection from retaliation
Board diversity and gender balance	Governance, Nominations and HR Committee Terms of Reference - February 11, 2025	Schedule A, Background and Purpose
Board self-identification and privacy	Governance, Nominations and HR Committee Terms of Reference - February 11, 2025	Schedule A, Self-Identification and Privacy
Governance roles and reporting	Governance, Nominations and HR Committee Terms of Reference - February 11, 2025	Purpose, Reporting, Duties and Responsibilities
EDI goals, roles, training and tracking	OSC Internal ED&I Draft Plan V3	Goals, Roles, Recruitment, Training, Tracking
Innovation and GBA+ considerations	OSC Internal ED&I Draft Plan V3; OSC CORE proposal materials	Selection and Review Committees; project diversity requirements
Values and inclusive workforce	OSC Employee Handbook 2024	Vision, Mission, Core Values and Organizational Goals
Inclusive and sustainable growth	Sustainability Strategy 2025	Executive Summary, Introduction and inclusive growth references

Appendix D: Document Control and Review Record

Version	Approval / review date	Summary of change	Approved by
1.0	October 08, 2026	Initial OSC Gender Equality Plan 2026-2029	

END OF DOCUMENT