

Gender equality plan (GEP) for Sigma2 AS

1. Introduction

This document constitutes the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for Sigma2. The plan has been approved by the management group and employee representatives and is made available openly on our webpage.

Sigma2 AS is a government owned company and holds the strategic responsibility for and manages the national e-infrastructure for large-scale data- and computational science in Norway.

Our company values are: Customer Focus, Openness and Corporate Social Responsibility and where the latter is of particular importance for the gender equality work. Sigma2 wants to promote non-discrimination, equality and diversity in our work community and this document draws up our objectives and plan for supporting this. The Norwegian work and business life is highly regulated, including requirements on Gender and Diversity Equality and Discrimination, as based on the “Norwegian Gender Equality and Discrimination Act”, the “ Limited Liability Companies Act” and associated regulations both nationally and internationally (EU Charters obligations, Norwegian Research Council requirements). We are required to monitor and report on potential markers of discrimination in several areas, and this has allowed us over many years to monitor and strive for diversity and equality.

2. Our commitment and ambitions

In Sigma2 we believe in diversity as a strength to our organization and community we are part of. We want to promote it not only on a basis of non-discrimination, but also as a mechanism for a better business success. As a “high competence company” we rely on our people bringing in all their creativity and skills set to be able to succeed. Whereas different background brings variety in mindset, values, focus, and skills, we think this is key in achieving success and keep on growing as a company and being a strong contributor to our environment.

We believe that everyone in Sigma2 should have equal opportunities for task completion, development and good working conditions, regardless of their ethnicity, gender or gender identity, disability, religion, sexual orientation, age and life experience. We adapt and make arrangements so that everyone can add their unique value to our social mission!

We actively work towards diversity when facilitating all phases of the employment relationship:

- attract and recruit
- retain and develop (task completion, career development)
- facilitation of life span needs (work-life balance)
- phasing out and termination of employment

Sigma2 does not accept any kind of discrimination in our company and community. We are aware of our obligation to always keep these topics on our agenda and to continuously work to fulfill and keep the purposes, not at least to fulfill the requirements to work **actively** and **systematically** to promote equality and prevent discrimination in our company. We have a non-tolerance perspective of harassment and violence, and we have procedures, management skills and HR resources available to handle if such cases should emerge.

However; As we have operated in an area with traditionally majority of males it has been important for us to ensure enough HR activities over the years to attract and recruit females, to facilitate enough to ensure they stay in the company, and stimulate the same growth and career opportunities as their male colleagues. Even if we see the same challenges as many other in the natural science and engineering areas we dare say that Sigma2 and parent company has regardless throughout our history been able to attract and retain people with diverse backgrounds and has been characterized by diversity in both gender, age composition, nationalities and other backgrounds, and we as a corporation have had a good variation in different type of leading roles.

3. Responsibilities and resources

Sigma2s board and management team has the overall responsibility for preparing and following up on gender equality plans and for stimulating the needed activities on this field to enable us to reach our goal. As we are too small to have our own HR department the management team is responsible for coordinating and ensuring that procedures and support structures are in place and carried out as intended. And responsible for ensuring we have enough HR support from mother company or external resources to stay alert on this topic, enough training is provided and ensuring the right actions are taken. In their role as line managers they are responsible for monitoring and following up the action plan within their respective areas and for their employees. As Sigma2 is also relying on a shared responsibility from all employees this plan is also relying on contribution from all employees to achieve this plans ambitions.

4. Markers to be monitored and annually reported – objectives and measures (data collection)

1. General gender, nationality and age distribution in staff
2. Recruitment process diversity
3. Distribution of workload and coping at work
4. Distribution of development opportunities and career progression
5. Distribution in senior / management / decision making roles
6. Awareness trainings on all staff, supervisors and decision-makers
7. Worklife balance and organisational culture (life span facilitation..)
8. Inappropriate treatment and harassment
9. Fair pay

4.1 General gender, nationality and age distribution

Goal: Annually reporting on distribution of diversity to board, government, stakeholders and open audience.

Monitored and measured: Continuously registered in company ERP system. Formally annually reported.

Responsible: Accounting, HR, Communication, General Manager, Board

4.2 Recruitment process diversity

Goal: Ensuring diverse background included in interview pool. Attention to potential biases in handling applicants and judging candidacy. Treat all candidates with respect, open mindset, - treat all in a non-discriminatory and equal manner

Monitored and measured: Encourage people with diversity background to apply for job via including text in announcement. Ensure that single criteriums used to judge candidates are only about competence and experience of the person, and let it be judged equivalently for all candidates. Distribution statistical registered and monitored by HR and management

Responsible: HR, managers

4.3 Distribution of workload and coping at work

Goal: Ensure that all employees are assigned to suitable challenging and appropriate scale work assignment adjusted to their skills, coping level and individual wanted level of challenge. All to have a sense of control over their own work.

Monitored and measured: Supervisors and leaders continuously monitor work load of every employee and monitor employee well-being. Questions around workload, facilitation, coping possibilities and balance of challenges as part of employee engagement surveys and other internal surveys, the annual employee review and development talks. Positive encouragement of everyone to picking up challenges and adjustments in their tasks. Encourage all staff to give praise and constructive feedback to all colleagues.

Responsible: HR, Health Safety and Environmental rep (HSE), Managers, all staff

4.4. Distribution of development opportunities and career progression

Goal: Ensure that all employees are given the same opportunities to career advancement and distribution of work assignments. All employees with same opportunity to seek training, conference participation, and challenging tasks and development of skills. Same opportunity for all employees to be selected for positions, responsibility and tasks.

Monitored and measured: Leaders to conduct development and employee reviews with all employees. Assess training needs for all employees regularly. Ensure equality in distribution of training budgets. Encourage everyone to seek vacant tasks and positions, and to contribute to life-long learning

Responsible: Managers, HR, all staff

4.5 Gender distribution in management and decision-making roles

Goal: Ensure that selection of people for board, management and decision-making roles focuses on diversity of backgrounds.

Monitored and measured: Diversity included in succession management and in leadership training

Responsible: Board, Managing Director, managers, HR

4.6 Awareness training

Goal: Let all employees and managers be trained in key legislative elements related to equality and non-discrimination. Everyone to be able to identify short-comings and intervene when necessary. Strengthening the non-discrimination and equality competence. Decrease unconscious gender and diversity biases

Monitored and measured: Regular training for all staff. Include in onboarding procedures for new staff.

Responsible: Managers, HR, HSE-rep.

4.7 Work life balance and organisational culture

Goal: Employees should be able to achieve work-life balance with support from their managers and peers. Management to support flexible work arrangement by offering part-time work, remote work, support multiple locations, flexible working hours arrangements. Company to have life span policy and opportunities offered equal to all employees regardless of if they are caring for young children, aged parents, or experiencing some other challenges in life.

Monitored and measured: In employee surveys and annual employee reviews. Monthly monitoring of flex hour usage in ERP-system.

Responsible: Managers, HR, Accounting, all staff

4.8 Inappropriate treatment and harassment

Goal: No inappropriate behaviour or harassment should happen in Sigma2. Ensure a trustful environment amongst colleagues and managers, dialogue and conversation skills to lower threshold for notify each other if incident occurs and to ensure it is handled in a proper and professional manner both by managers and by staff when observing situations.

Monitored and measured: In employee surveys and annual employee reviews. Available special designated notification channel and procedures to handle reprehensible situations. Managers trained to handling situations and with necessary communication skills to take proper actions. Staff with completed awareness training. Access to external support, enabling swift handling of cases.

Responsible: Managers, HR, all staff

4.9 Fair pay

Goal: Salary and compensation is an important element of fair treatment of all employees. We will make sure there are no differences based on solely gender or any of the other protected categories. This also required in by Norwegian law in the "Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act Section 34. Equal pay for work of equal value"

We do admit however that career progression and differences in tasks, competence requirements, responsibilities, performance/effort and contribution to results and company values, can impact the salary development. We strive for fairness in our pay mechanisms by ensuring:

- that no salary determinations are made on the solely basis of any of the protected statuses
- that our pay mechanisms and processes are transparent and predictable (available information to all employees about annual adjustment routines, available salary conditions and benefits, salary criteria, career development opportunities, assessment/evaluation of benefits, etc.)
- that employees who perform the same or equivalent work regardless of the diversity markers are compensated at a fair level
- that career development is compensated by individual assessment of development, competence and performance when we set or adjust salaries

Monitored and measured:

Important element during annual salary negotiation and salary adjustment processes. Report points in company's annual report.

Responsible: Managers, HR, Accounting

Trondheim, 27.09.2023