



## Gender Equality Plan

### June 2025

This plan pulls together the existing elements within the constitution, policies, procedures and actions of Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative to form one clear document that illustrates the commitment to equality and social justice in everything we do, internally and externally.

This plan is a work of collaboration between our board members, community members, staff and other stakeholders, both directly and through the various sub committees who address governance and practical issues.

As a small but effective organisation we aim to address equality issues on an ongoing basis through the recognition of practical steps that can be taken in the context of the resources that are available.

We acknowledge the use of the guidelines provided by the SUPERA project, which received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 787829.

#### **Introduction**

Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative now known as EcoVision has since its inception been fully committed to equality and social justice.

At EcoVision we offer equality of opportunity to all members, employees and external stakeholders in every aspect of our engagements and community services provision, regardless of race, religion, age, gender, ethnic origin, marital or civil status, disability, sexual orientation or membership of the travelling community.

Equality is part of the fabric of our organisation and will be into the future!

#### **Board policy on diversity.**

There is clear recognition that there is a need for positive action to address diversity, as a result of this at the July 10th 2024 board meeting, it was agreed that in order to achieve a better gender balance on the board of directors, that at each of the next three AGMs, when

three directors are resigning on rotation, that one of them will remain permanently resigned, so as to create a vacancy that can only be filled by a female, ideally from one of our Community Members or with community or voluntary sector experience.

Our board and staff are fully committed to

- Conducting impact assessment / audits of procedures and practices to identify gender bias ( through the work of the sub committees and with input from staff)  
This will be done yearly in advance of the annual general meeting.
- Identifying and implementing innovative strategies to correct any bias ( through the work of the sub committees and with input from staff).
- Setting targets and monitoring progress via indicators ( through the work of the sub committees and with input from staff).

Equality Planning has been a discussion point at our Annual General Meeting, but will now be added as an agenda item for the future.

### **Equality in employment.**

The extract below is from our staff handbook and illustrates our clear commitment to universal equality for all staff members. This commitment is also to those who are employed via contracts for service or who work with us under various types of agreements.

“At ECTC we offer equality of opportunity to all employees in every aspect of employment. Regardless of your race, religion, age, gender, ethnic origin, marital and civil status, disability, sexual orientation or membership to the travelling community, no employee will be discriminated against in terms of interview, recruitment, rostering, training and promotion. We consider only the individual’s aptitude and ability and the requirements of the job in our company.

If any employee feels they have been discriminated against on any of the above grounds they should follow the ECTC grievance procedure laid out in this document.

Any proven allegation of discrimination is treated seriously; such behaviour is considered a disciplinary offence and all reasonably practicable steps taken to prevent the behaviour continuing.”

Equality Data - Over the last decade fourteen people have been employed in various roles, through direct employment and by way of contracts. Eight of these were females and 6 were males.

The ongoing implementation of our equality in employment policy is planned.

### **Work Life balance in EcoVision**

Our commitment to work life balance for our employees is illustrated by the additional measures we have introduced to provide for our employees welfare. These include additional annual leave days on an incremental growth basis over the first few years of employment, and the special additional family leave that can be used by employees where exceptional circumstances arise.

All working conditions for employees are regularly discussed by the HR Sub Committee with a view to identifying any measures that might be taken to implement improvements.

The regular review process between employees and senior management affords an equal opportunity for open and honest discussion around all aspects of the work environment. The template used for this process facilitates equal input to any decision making around roles and responsibilities. Happiness at work and wellbeing are discussed as part of this process and actions to make necessary changes to bring about improvements where needed are agreed. EcoVision is also a union friendly workplace, and staff are welcome to join a union of their choosing.

### **Decision making in EcoVision.**

The Constitution of Energy Communities Tipperary Cooperative CLG includes the following:


“Consensus decision making is a feature of communications within the company and is the preferred and desired approach to policy formulation and management. Any differences or conflicts which arise between contributors are resolved in a spirit of fairness, respect and trust.”

and

“The development of the company is through a process of education and a structure of interdependence. ‘Open discussion’, ‘everyone is contributing’, ‘all opinions are helpful’ are key features of meetings and communications. Principles of ‘constantly reflecting’, ‘learning’, ‘changing’ or doing things differently as a result, are a basis of growth; as is the interdependence emerging from open interaction with supporting agencies, stakeholders and partners.”

and also

“The company believes that the community development approach with the ethos, philosophy and core values of the cooperative movement, can transform communities, empowering members to collectively change energy supply and use. This can be a basis for a new movement enabling multiple benefits to flow to local contexts.”

 Code of Conduct\_v1.1 - adopted 06-09-2023

### **Open nights for all stakeholders**

To afford all of our members, staff and other stakeholders an opportunity to bring their aspirations for the organisation to an equal forum we have developed “Open Nights” .

These open nights started in Autumn 2024 and will continue into the future. There will be at least three per year.

There are slots for presentations and opportunities for open discussion in relation to all aspects of the organisation, its work and future plans. There are no restrictions on subject matter and all participants are free to introduce topics for discussion or debate.

### **Equality in our work with citizens and communities**

In our work within the community we engage with citizens from all walks of life and from a diverse range of backgrounds. In our work on energy poverty we are engaged with vulnerable households and communities including some marginalised groups.

To ensure that we are treating everyone in a fair and equal manner, and without creating any stigma we have engaged with various agencies to develop our work methodology, including the terminology we use in questionnaires and surveys.

A university ethics committee has worked with us to validate our processes. We utilise an anonymisation system for data gathering to provide equality of dignity and respect to those we work with and we will continue to do so.