# Gender Equality Plan

## 2026 to 2029

### Institutional commitment

Karuna Biotech Solutions adopts this Gender Equality Plan to provide a fair, respectful and inclusive working environment and to integrate equality into recruitment, collaboration, innovation and public engagement. The plan is proportionate to Karuna's current structure as a founder-led micro-enterprise and will be expanded as the organisation grows.

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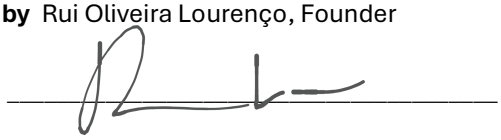
| **Legal entity** | Rui Oliveira Lourenço |
| **Trade name** | Karuna Biotech Solutions |
| **Plan period** | From the date of signature until 31 December 2029 |
| **Plan owner** | Founder |

**Approved by** Rui Oliveira Lourenço, Founder

**Signature** 

**Date** ____08-10-2026_____

This plan becomes effective when signed. The signed version will be published on the Karuna Biotech Solutions website and communicated to workers and regular collaborators.

# 1 Purpose and scope

This plan sets out Karuna Biotech Solutions' commitments and actions on gender equality for 2026 to 2029. It applies to the founder, employees, trainees, contractors and regular collaborators, and to recruitment, project delivery, research and innovation, training, communication and stakeholder engagement.

Karuna will apply the plan in line with applicable Portuguese and European law. The plan does not create preferential treatment. It requires fair access, transparent decisions, equal treatment and reasonable measures to prevent discrimination and harassment.

# 2 Governance and resources

The Founder is responsible for approving, implementing and reviewing this plan. Until Karuna appoints dedicated human resources personnel, the Founder will act as Gender Equality Plan Lead and will allocate sufficient working time to maintain records, review indicators, arrange training and implement corrective actions.

As Karuna grows, responsibility may be delegated to a staff member or external adviser with suitable competence. Any change in responsibility will be recorded in the annual review.

# 3 Baseline and data protection

Karuna will establish the organisational baseline on the date this plan is signed. Because the organisation is small, published reporting will use aggregated information and will not disclose personal data or allow individuals to be identified.

Where lawful and proportionate, Karuna will record gender-disaggregated information on:

- employees, trainees and regular collaborators;
- applicants, interviews, appointments and departures;
- project leadership and technical roles;
- participation in training, demonstrations and stakeholder activities;
- reported concerns, actions taken and their resolution, without identifying the persons involved.

Individuals may identify as woman, man or non-binary, or may choose not to disclose this information. Data will be collected only for a defined purpose, stored securely and retained only as long as necessary.

# 4 Work life balance and organisational culture

Karuna will organise work in a way that supports professional responsibilities and personal or family needs, while meeting operational and safety requirements. Flexible scheduling and remote work may be agreed where the role allows it. Meetings and training should normally take place within agreed working hours and with reasonable notice.

Communication, facilities, personal protective equipment and working arrangements will be reviewed to ensure that they do not create avoidable barriers for any gender.

# 5 Leadership and decision making

Karuna is currently founder-led. When governance, employment or advisory structures expand, the organisation will encourage balanced representation and will use competence-based, transparent selection processes. Project responsibilities will be assigned according to relevant experience and availability, without gender-based assumptions.

## 6 Recruitment and professional development

Recruitment and contracting decisions will use clear role descriptions and documented selection criteria. Vacancy notices will use inclusive language, focus on essential requirements and be distributed through channels capable of reaching diverse candidates.

Karuna will provide equal access to induction, training, mentoring, project visibility and professional development. Pay and contractual terms for comparable work will be determined using consistent criteria, including role, responsibility, competence and experience.

## 7 Research innovation and project delivery

At the design stage of each research or innovation activity, Karuna will assess whether sex or gender could affect the research question, users, workers, safety, adoption, communication or expected results. When the dimension is relevant, it will be reflected in methods, data collection, analysis and reporting. When it is not relevant, the project record will briefly state the reason.

For the BIOTECH BRIDGE pilot, the technical performance of the composting process is not expected to depend directly on sex or gender. Karuna will nevertheless consider inclusive participation, safe and suitable working conditions, access to training, and gender-disaggregated monitoring of people reached where required by the project.

## 8 Prevention of discrimination and harassment

Karuna does not tolerate discrimination, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, intimidation or retaliation. Concerns may be reported confidentially to the Founder in person or through the organisation's official contact channel. Reports will be handled promptly, fairly and with appropriate confidentiality.

If a report concerns the Founder or creates another conflict of interest, Karuna will appoint an independent external legal or human resources professional to receive and assess the matter. Immediate safety concerns will take priority, and individuals remain free to use the competent public authorities and legal remedies.

## 9 Training and awareness

From 2027, Karuna will provide or commission at least one annual awareness activity relevant to the organisation's size and work. Topics may include equal treatment, inclusive recruitment, unconscious bias, respectful conduct, prevention of harassment, or the gender dimension in research and innovation. New workers and regular collaborators will be informed of this plan during induction.

## 10 Action plan

| Action | Timing | Owner | Indicator | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sign, publish and communicate this plan | Within 10 working days of approval | Founder | Signed plan available on the website | Planned |
| Record the organisational baseline | Within 30 days of approval | Founder | Baseline register completed | Planned |
| Use inclusive role descriptions and documented selection criteria | For every recruitment or contracting process | Founder | Recruitment record completed | Ongoing |

| Action | Timing | Owner | Indicator | Status |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assess the gender dimension of research and innovation activities | At project design and review stages | Project lead | Assessment recorded for each relevant project | Ongoing |
| Monitor participation in projects and public activities where proportionate | Throughout each project | Project lead | Gender-disaggregated figures or justified non-collection | Ongoing |
| Deliver equality and respectful workplace awareness | At least annually from 2027 | GEP Lead | One activity completed and recorded each year | Planned |
| Review progress and approve corrective actions | December each year | Founder | Annual internal review completed | Planned |
| Publish a concise progress update | At least every two years | GEP Lead | Public update issued in 2028 and at plan close | Planned |

# 11 Monitoring and review

The annual internal review will consider progress against the action plan, workforce and participation data, recruitment outcomes, completed training, reported concerns and any changes in Karuna's structure. The review will identify corrective actions, owners and deadlines where an action is incomplete or an indicator shows an avoidable imbalance.

Karuna will publish a concise progress update at least every two years. This plan may be revised before 2029 if the organisation grows, legal requirements change or monitoring shows that stronger measures are needed.

# 12 Public availability and contact

The signed plan and future public progress updates will be made available through the Karuna Biotech Solutions website.

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| **Organisation** | Karuna |
| **Legal entity** | Rui Oliveira Lourenço |
| **Contact** | Rui Oliveira Lourenço, Founder |
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| **Website** | www.karuna.bio |