

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (2026–2029)

Instituto de Apoio ao Jogador (IAJ)

Lisbon

2026

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Gender Equality Plan (2026-2029)

1. Introduction

Gender equality refers to the guarantee of equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for all people, promoting their recognition and full participation in public and private life. This is a fundamental issue of citizenship, human rights, particularly in areas of high vulnerability such as addictions.

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are essential for a just society and also contribute to the value and performance of organizations and institutions linked to both health and more specifically mental health, reinforcing growth, efficiency and sustainability.

This topic has gained increasing importance at an international level, with Portugal following this evolution. Equality between men and women has been recognized as a fundamental right since 1948, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and was later reinforced by several international instruments.

In the context of behavioural addictions, namely gambling disorder, internet gambling disorder, codependency, pornography and sex addiction, it is essential to integrate the gender perspective, considering different experiences, behavioural patterns and barriers to accessing support.

The promotion of gender equality has been a concern for Instituto de Apoio ao Jogador (IAJ) since 2014, the year it was inaugurated. This commitment is reflected in the institution's efforts to ensure gender balance, both at the institutional level, as well as in the intervention with those who seek help, as well as at the level of the general and scientific community.

This Plan for Gender Equality (PIGE) defines the objectives and axes of intervention of the IAJ to achieve the respective goal, in three years, in the various areas of action, which include psychoeducational and clinical intervention, treatment, technical training, research and telephone helplines.

2. Objectives

2.1 General Objective

Promote gender equality in all areas of intervention of the IAJ, ensuring equal opportunities, fair treatment and inclusive and appropriate responses to the needs of all people supported.

2.2 Specific Objectives

2.2.1. Enhancing equality in the internal structure

Ensure fair and inclusive team management practices, promoting gender balance, equal opportunities and a safe and non-discriminatory work environment.

2.2.2 Adapting services to different gender realities

Ensure that support services are provided in an inclusive, equitable and gender-sensitive manner, ensuring stereotype-free care and adapted to the different needs, experiences and vulnerabilities of men and women. This objective implies recognizing different patterns of gambling behavior, as well as developing appropriate responses that consider factors such as increased stigma and specific barriers to access to support, namely stigma, socioeconomic conditions, maternity, professional and social discrimination, among others.

2.2.3 Inclusive Communication

Ensure that all institutional communications promote gender equality, using inclusive language and avoiding stereotypes.

2.2.4. Monitoring of inclusion in the various services provided

Implement data collection and analysis mechanisms that allow the evaluation of the impact of the measures adopted and ensure the continuous improvement of practices, in the variables mentioned above.

3. Strategic Axes

3.1 INTERNAL AXES

They refer to all actions, policies and practices within the institution, which includes clinical care, supervision and training of the team, management and organizational culture.

The focus is to ensure that IAJ's services, employees and structure incorporate gender equality and inclusive practices, creating a safe and equitable environment.

It should be noted that the team consists of 9 psychologist employees focused on the treatment of behavioral dependencies, but having different responsibilities and tasks known and shared by all. We are 5 male and 4 female employees with equivalent number of hours and salaries per month.

Axis 1 – Internal supervision and training of professionals

Objective	Measure	Responsible	Indicator
Train and guide health professionals for inclusive responses to gambling disorder (pathological gambling)	Conduct training on gender equality	Tânia Ruivo	% of employees trained
	Monitor training load	Tânia Ruivo	Number of training hours per employee
	Evaluate practical integration of training	Pedro Hubert	% of professionals applying a gender-responsive approach
	Evaluating the impact of training	Pedro Hubert	Degree of post-graduation satisfaction

Axis 2 – Inclusive clinical care

Objective	Measure	Responsible	Indicator
Train and guide health professionals for inclusive responses to pathological gambling.	Monitor access to services by gender	Pedro Hubert	% of users by gender
	Evaluate response times	Tânia Ruivo	Average access time by gender
	Follow continuity	Tânia Ruivo	Continuity rate (men vs women)
	Monitor access to services by gender	Pedro Hubert	Dropout rate by gender

Axis 3 – Management and organizational culture

Objective	Measure	Responsible	Indicator
Promoting an inclusive, safe and equitable work environment	Monitor team composition	Pedro Hubert	% gender representation
	Evaluate decision-making positions	Pedro Hubert	% representation in decision-making positions
	Equal pay, for the same position and function	Pedro Hubert	No. of measures implemented

3.2 EXTERNAL AXES

They refer to all actions and interventions beyond the institution, aimed at players, families, community, partners and external networks. They include: helplines, research, community training, communication/dissemination, prevention (responsible gaming), partnerships as well as intervention and clinical treatment.

The focus is to promote gender equality, inclusion, and equitable access to services and information, ensuring that the groups served are treated fairly and tailored to their specific needs and variables.

Axis 4 – Telephone answering and inclusive helplines

Objective	Measure	Responsible	Indicator
Ensure that the various aid lines available to the IAJ are met in an inclusive manner and adapted to the specific needs of each gender.	Train operators for empathetic and inclusive communication.	Sarha Menezes	Average training hours per operator
	Gender-sensitive scripts, considering stigma and differentiated vulnerability (age, socioeconomic status, etc.	Sarha Menezes	% of scripts revised with a gender and vulnerability perspective
	Monitor contact data and feedback by gender.	Pedro Hubert	% of registered contacts with gender identification Average satisfaction by gender

Axis 5 – Research with a gender perspective

Objective	Measure	Responsible	Indicator
Integrating the gender perspective into research on abusive and problem gambling (Self-exclusion, access to treatment, drop out, financial capacity, etc.)	Include gender variables in data collection and analysis	Tânia Ruivo	% gender studies
	Develop studies on differentiated patterns of behavior and social impact	Tânia Ruivo	% inclusive studies
	Apply the results	Pedro Hubert	Recommendations implemented
	Disseminate results with gender-tailored recommendations	Pedro Hubert	Publications/events/trainings

Axis 6 – Training and capacity building of the community

Objective	Measure	Responsible	Indicator
Ensure that technicians, family members and other stakeholders receive inclusive training that is sensitive to gender needs.	Training content adapted to different genres (roles, functions, patterns...)	Tânia Ruivo	Number of training courses with this type of adapted content
	Workshops and awareness-raising sessions on stereotypes and barriers (NGOs, associations linked to these areas, universities, companies, etc.)	Tânia Ruivo	No. of workshops developed to raise awareness
	Evaluation of the impact of training on the quality of the intervention	Pedro Hubert	Degree of satisfaction and feedback

Axis 7 – Dissemination and inclusive communication

Objective	Measure	Responsible	Indicator
Promote campaigns and dissemination actions that represent all genders in an equitable way and without stereotypes.	Inclusive language and gender representation in materials and campaigns both internally and externally in the pursuit of the different forms of treatment and intervention.	Tânia Ruivo	Number of training courses with this type of adapted content
	Information tailored to specific audiences (schools, universities, businesses, community)	Sarha Menezes	No. of workshops developed to raise awareness
	Community awareness of gender equality in the context of pathological gambling	Pedro Hubert	No. of communication materials (leaflets, digital campaigns) with inclusive and non-stereotyped gender language distributed

Axis 8 – Partnerships and external cooperation

Objective	Measure	Responsible	Indicator
Integrate gender equality in partnerships with public or private institutions.	Joint protocols with partners that consider inclusion and gender sensitivity.	Pedro Hubert	Number of contacts established for this purpose
	Participation in cooperation projects and networks that promote equality.	Sarha Menezes	No. of cooperation projects promoted
	Sharing of good practices with partners such as ICAD, SCM, SAS, APAJO, FPF, COI, etc.	Pedro Hubert	Number of documents, reports, or articles shared by team or department.

Note on the abbreviations of the table corresponding to axis 8:

ICAD: Institute for Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies
 SCM: Santa Casa da Misericórdia
 SAS: Social Betting, Gaming and Online Betting, S.A
 APAJO: Portuguese Association of Online Betting and Gaming
 FPF: Federação Portuguesa de Futebol
 IOC: International Olympic Committee

4. Implementation and Evaluation

The implementation of the IAJ's PIGE will be the subject of a systematic monitoring process, with the aim of monitoring the effectiveness of the actions and the fulfillment of the objectives established in each intervention axis. This monitoring will allow us to identify improvements, correct deviations and implement new measures, always based on evidence and the needs of those who come to us and the team.

It is important to note that the IAJ, as a reference institution in supporting players with gambling disorder, video game disorder, sex/pornography addiction and codependency, takes an active role in intervening in society. The ambition expressed in this plan aims to go beyond the internal borders of the institution, seeking to positively influence partners, families, technicians and the community, contributing to a sustained change in the paradigm of prevention, support and inclusion in the context of gambling and addictions.

This plan thus reflects the IAJ's commitment to gender equality, inclusion and the promotion of good practices, ensuring that all beneficiaries have access to services that are fair, sensitive to their needs and adapted to individual differences.

Over time, the YAI also intends to diversify the measures applied, as well as the indicators for evaluating their impact.

5. Conclusion

The IAJ, in its mission to support players with gambling and video game disorders, and based on its values of inclusion, responsibility and excellence, implements this PIGE to ensure that everyone involved receives fair and gender-sensitive care.

The internal axes ensure that the internal team and services operate in an inclusive and equitable manner, while the external axes allow the IAJ's intervention to extend to the community, families, partners and external networks, promoting awareness, training and good practices.

This plan will be continuously monitored, allowing actions to be adjusted and results improved, reinforcing IAJ's commitment to equality, inclusion and positive impact on society.