

## - SYNABS GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP) -

<b>A word from the President &amp; CEO</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Background</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Main objectives</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1. Raising awareness of gender equality and unconscious bias</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1.1. <i>Making the GEP available to all staff</i> .....	5
2.1.2. <i>Implement shared experience and brainstorming sessions</i> .....	6
2.1.3. <i>Promote gender equality outside of SYnAbs organization</i> .....	6
<b>2.2 Improving work-life balance</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.2.1 <i>Promote work-life balance</i> .....	7
2.2.2 <i>Promoting mechanisms to facilitate parenthood</i> .....	8
2.2.3 <i>Better communicate the rules for career breaks</i> .....	8
2.2.4 <i>Integrating gender issues into procedures</i> .....	9
2.2.5 <i>Promote sports activities</i> .....	9
<b>2.3. Moving toward parity in decision-making bodies</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>2.4 Improving gender equality in recruitment and promotion</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2.4.1 <i>Monitoring Gender-Related Data and Indicators</i> .....	11
2.4.2 <i>Supporting women's career advancement</i> .....	12
<b>2.5 Fighting against gender-based and sexual violence</b> .....	<b>13</b>

## **A word from the President & CEO**

SYnAbs would like to make a public commitment to professional equality between women and men. With the support of my Board of Directors, I am making this cause a priority in our strategic plan for the coming years, and I am pleased that a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) has been established at SynAbs, which is fully in line with the European Commission's directives.

It should be noted that the formality of the gender equality plan has not prevented SynAbs and its management from always being in line with the changes in our society, voluntarily integrating and promoting women in its structure regardless of their economic origin, sexual orientation, culture, religion or membership in any ethnic group, with equal pay to men and at all levels of the organization.

Launching the GEP today will only reinforce my strong belief in equality, diversity and inclusion while engaging all of our employees in an on-going, continuous improvement process to identify and remove barriers to the career development of women scientists.

This policy is essential in order to guarantee all our employees, women and men, attractive career development while responding to the human health issues of which SYnAbs is an active stakeholder.

Diversity and inclusion are the work of everyone. We see it as an opportunity and we thrive on it, in the interest of our company, the quality of our research work, but also as human beings.

Julien Isoard



## Introduction

SYnAbs' Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2023 aims to implement strategies and actions to improve gender equality and diversity within our company.

Our company recognizes that gender inequality can be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that women may experience because of age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other attributes such as family and socioeconomic background.

SYnAbs is committed to improving gender equality within its structure and recognizes that its promotion and implementation is a shared responsibility within society. Gender equality prevents violence against women and is essential for economic prosperity. Inclusive organizations have been shown to have higher performance, more innovation, better customer service and more satisfied employees.

According to a study by Deloitte ("Diversity and Inclusion", January 2020), companies that practice an inclusive policy generate up to 30% more revenue per employee and higher profitability than their competitors.

The Boston Consulting Group study "Inclusive Cultures Have Healthier and Happier Workers," conducted with 16,000 people in 16 countries, found that an inclusive corporate culture results in a sense of inclusion and satisfaction, increased productivity and engagement, which generates 19% more innovation, and higher margins than other companies.

The GEP is intended to integrate multiple levels of action and foster a systemic approach to promoting gender equality in SYnAbs. To increase the GEP's potential, and given the importance of creating a broad consensus to support its implementation, the GEP will be accompanied by the appointment of an Equal Opportunity Officer, a detailed communication plan, a clear and transparent data collection system, and the promotion of awareness of equality and unconscious bias among staff members.

## 1. Background

SYnAbs was founded in 2015 as a Belgian spin-off from the Catholic University of Louvain la Neuve (UCL) in Belgium, based on the work of Professor Hervé Bazin, inventor of the world's first rat myeloma cell line.

SYnAbs' vision is to fill the market gap for innovative monoclonal antibodies against weakly immunogenic compounds and complex antigens that are highly conserved across species. By targeting transmembrane proteins (GPCRs, ion channels, transporters), steroids, small molecules, toxins, lipids and polysaccharides, SYnAbs has developed a strong expertise in immunology by disrupting immunotolerance in the proprietary rat-LOU species in order to generate unique monoclonal antibodies with extreme specificity and very high affinity.

To meet the challenge of producing innovative monoclonals against haptens and membrane proteins, SYnAbs has developed a set of technologies, combining:

- an unique antigen design via assets such as the SYnDNA plasmid, SYnCell syngeneic cell lines, or an innovative KLH conjugation technique,
- a proprietary high efficiency adjuvant,
- multi-species immunization in the proprietary rat-LOU species, but also Knock-out, NZB, and several transgenic species, including the ATX-Gx mouse platform from Alloy Therapeutics
- immunization pathways and schemes to break immune tolerance and reveal specific epitopes
- selection and isolation of rare B-cell populations.

These technologies ensure the generation of antibodies benefiting from natural in-vivo maturation and targeting antigens that are difficult to express in their native and functionally active conformation.

The unique expertise of SYnAbs team has enabled us to generate unique monoclonal antibodies on the market, bringing added value in the fields of cancer immunotherapy, endocrinology and autoimmune diseases such as:

- ✓ LO-CD2, rat anti-human CD2 antibody, licensed to BioTransplant, MedImmune, AstraZeneca and then ITBMed now known as Siplizumab
- ✓ LO-VP, a rat anti-valproic acid antibody with the highest affinity for this target in the world,
- ✓ SYnCCR8, a mouse antibody that antagonizes the GPCR CCR8
- ✓ SYnC3aR, a first-in-class mouse antibody blocking the GPCR C3aR.

SYnAbs is currently certified for Research Tax Credit and ISO9001/2015.

## 2. Main objectives

In accordance with the requirements of the European Horizon program "Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans", SYnAbs wishes to act on six specific objectives in the areas recommended by Europe\*:

- 1) Raise awareness of gender equality and unconscious bias
- 2) Improve work-life balance
- 3) Improving gender balance in decision-making positions
- 4) Move towards gender equality in recruitment and career advancement
- 5) Promote and support gender mainstreaming in research and innovation
- 6) Fighting against gender-based and sexual violence

In order to implement a gender equality policy in research and innovation, two levels of approach are needed: on the one hand, to help management and researchers to address any difficulties regarding parity and individual progression, and on the other hand, to support structural changes in favour of equity, diversity and inclusion.

*\*European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans, Publications Office of the European Union, 2021  
<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/876509>*

### 2.1. Raising awareness of gender equality and unconscious bias

#### 2.1.1. Making the GEP available to the entire staff

- ❖ Goal: To make all SYnAbs staff, both new and existing, aware that gender equality, diversity and inclusion are a priority for our company.
- ❖ Means implemented: communication about the GEP to all staff, and provision of a copy of the GEP to newly hired staff upon their arrival at the same time as the handover of the work rules. Provide a dedicated person (referent) to answer any questions new employees may have once the document is handed out.
- ❖ Key indicators: number of staff members who received a copy of the PMG and number of inconsistencies found in the GEP (e.g., questions about clarity, misunderstanding of wording, missing information).

	<b>Total number of employees</b>	<b>Number of people who received the GEP</b>	<b>Number of inconsistencies identified in GEP</b>
<b>2021</b>	7	0	0
<b>2022</b>	7	7	0

- ❖ Expected results: awareness of gender equality and unconscious bias from the outset and continuous improvement of good practices

### **2.1.2. Implement shared experience and brainstorming sessions**

- ❖ Goal: to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion into SYnAbs' culture, while bridging the gap in knowledge and practice among employees
- ❖ Means: follow-up webinars and organization of annual discussion sessions and debates on selected themes of gender equality and unconscious bias, possibly involving external speakers (associations, coaches, trainers) who can bring a fresh perspective on the theme, challenge and train employees.
- ❖ Indicators: number of events organized and participants in these events, qualitative feedback on these sessions

	<b>Total number of employees</b>	<b>Number of arranged events</b>	<b>Number of attendees to the events</b>	<b>% satisfaction of attendees</b>
<b>2021</b>	7	0	0	0
<b>2022</b>	7	0	0	0

- ❖ Results: Increased discussion and awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and development of more empathetic management of a diverse group of individuals

### **2.1.3. Promote gender equality outside of SYnAbs organization**

- ❖ Goal: to educate companies and actors in our ecosystem (suppliers, clients, partners) on practices that promote responsible and chosen inclusion
- ❖ Means implemented: publication of our Gender Equality Plan and the actions established by our organization on our website in English and French

- ❖ Indicators: number of interactions with the dedicated page

	<b>Number of views of the page</b>	<b>Number of downloads of GEP</b>
<b>2021</b>	0	0
<b>2022</b>	0	0

- ❖ Results: Mutual reinforcement through sharing and synergies of good practices for gender equality within the SynAbs network

## **2.2 Improving work-life balance**

### **2.2.1 Promoting work-life balance**

- ❖ Goal: To significantly improve the productivity of our employees, limit the risk of burnout and increase the sense of well-being at work
- ❖ Means: communicate and promote the possibility of a weekly teleworking day to all employees, raise awareness of the right to disconnect during vacations and non-working days and limit overtime beyond working hours
- ❖ Indicators: number of staff members actually taking their telework day and number of overtime hours worked

	<b>Total number of employees</b>	<b>Number of employees experiencing their weekly remote day</b>	<b>Number of employees who worked overtime</b>
<b>2021</b>	7	0	0
<b>2022</b>	7	7	0

- ❖ Results: Improved work organization and increased awareness among all staff of the benefits of a better work-life balance.

### 2.2.2 Promoting mechanisms to facilitate parenthood

- ❖ Goal: to encourage a better distribution of career breaks between mothers and fathers.
- ❖ Means implemented: communication actions with staff on the possibility and implementation of parental leave and provision of a room for mothers to breastfeed/ pump milk.
- ❖ Indicators: number of fathers taking paternity leave and number of new mothers with access to a dedicated space.

	Number of new fathers	Number of fathers taking paternity leave	Number of new mothers	Number of mothers with access to dedicated space
<b>2021</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>2022</b>	0	0	0	0

- ❖ Results: paternity leave schemes better known and supported, increased sense of inclusion and well-being of young mothers in their workspace

### 2.2.3 Better communicating the rules for career breaks

- ❖ Goal: to affirm SYnAbs' support for staff members who wish to benefit from contract extensions in the event of a career break (maternity leave, paternity leave, etc.).
- ❖ Means implemented: communication actions with staff on the possibility and implementation of contract extension in case of career break.
- ❖ Indicators: number of communications on the subject.

	Number of communications
<b>2021</b>	0
<b>2022</b>	0

- ❖ Results: Reduction of the impact of the interruption and possible extension of contracts allowing finalizing initiated research works.

## 2.2.4 Integrating gender issues into procedures

- ❖ Aim: to provide institutional recognition of the principle of non-discrimination.
- ❖ Means: thorough analysis of all internal procedures.
- ❖ Indicators: number of procedures reviewed to include gender issues.

	<b>Number of operational procedures</b>	<b>Number of procedures that take gender equality into account</b>
<b>2021</b>	394	0
<b>2022</b>	410	0

- ❖ Results: improvement in the daily lives of employees, inclusion of gender equality in the company's operations and increased awareness among employees of the importance of fairness in the workplace

## 2.2.5 Promoting sports activities

- ❖ Goal: to significantly improve the productivity of our employees, limit the risk of burnout and increase the feeling of well-being at work
- ❖ Means implemented: communication actions with employees, participation in company sports events, provision of areas for changing and showering for sports practice during break times
- ❖ Indicators: number of sports events proposed by the employer, number of employees who have increased their sports practice

	<b>Total number of employees</b>	<b>Number of sports events offered by SYnAbs</b>	<b>Number of employees who have increased their sport practice</b>
<b>2021</b>	7	2	7
<b>2022</b>	7	1	7

- ❖ Results: decreased stress, increased morale, improved employee sleep and increased productivity

### **2.3. Moving toward parity in decision-making bodies**

- ❖ Goal: to close the gender gap in governance bodies and decision-making committees
- ❖ Means: Ensure nearly equal or parity representation of each gender in SYnAbs' decision-making bodies. Create a strategic committee alongside the Board of Directors that can incorporate more parity while proactively seeking women candidates to join.
- ❖ Indicators: number of women in decision-making bodies (executive meeting, board of directors, strategic committee).

		<b>Number of men</b>	<b>Number of women</b>
<b>2021</b>	Executive meeting	2	3
	Board meeting	7	0
<b>2022</b>	Executive meeting	2	3
	Board meeting	3	0

- ❖ Results: ultimately, more women in leadership positions

## 2.4 Improving gender equality in recruitment and promotion

### 2.4.1 Monitoring Gender-Related Data and Indicators

- ❖ Goal: to monitor the gender distribution for different actions (recruitment, career advancement) in the different categories of staff and adopt corrective measures if necessary.
- ❖ Means of implementation: by setting up a database that synthesizes data on all categories of staff.
- ❖ Indicators: number of employees by hierarchical level (coordination function, technician function, personnel security function, worker/administrative function) by function sorted by gender. Salary gaps by gender and position. Number of women and men in the recruiting structure. Number of women and men in the promotion committee.

	Position	Number of men	Number of women	Wage gap (%)
<b>2021</b>	Executive	1	2	0
	Technician	1	2	0
	Worker	0	1	N.A.
<b>2022</b>	Executive	1	2	0
	Technician	1	2	0
	Worker	0	1	N.A.

	Committee	Number of men	Number of women
<b>2021</b>	Staff safety	0	2
	Recruitment	2	1
	Promotion	1	0
<b>2022</b>	Staff safety	0	2
	Recruitment	2	1
	Promotion	1	0

- ❖ Results: support for proposing corrective actions and strengthening gender parity in the various functions and committees

## 2.4.2 Supporting women's career advancement

- ❖ Goals: to provide women with the means to progress in their careers as favourably as men
- ❖ Means of implementation: by ensuring a minimum number of female candidates in applications for promotion, in particular for scientific managers, and by setting non-biased and transparent evaluation/promotion criteria. By appointing "equality" advisors in the evaluation bodies.
- ❖ Indicators: number of female applications for promotion. Number of women and men applying for a job opening. Number of women and men who have left the organization per year and number of years spent in the company. Number of hours of training completed by gender.

		<b>Number of men</b>	<b>Number of women</b>
<b>2021</b>	Applicants for a new position - Molecular Biologist - DSP expert	26 6	28 4
	Having left the structure and number of years spent in the company	1(1y)	0
	Applicants for promotion	0	1
	Number of hours of training	46	348
<b>2022</b>	Applicants for a new position - Business Developer Manager - DSP technician	12 11	112
	Having left the structure and number of years spent in the company	0	1 (1,5y)
	Applicants for promotion	0	2
	Number of hours of training	16	24

- ❖ Results: increase in the number of women applying for promotion, including women with dependent children.

## **2.5 Fighting against gender-based and sexual violence**

- ❖ **Goals:** to explain and disseminate the principles defined by Belgian law and applied within SYnAbs to combat sexist behaviour and sexual harassment.
- ❖ **Means of implementation:** by offering mandatory awareness training to all staff on ordinary sexism that can sometimes lead to sexual harassment. By communicating the law, the sanctions and disciplinary measures that can be taken in the event of misconduct, as well as the tools currently in place and the contact persons who can be reached if necessary.
- ❖ **Indicators:** Number of reports and actions taken. Number of people who have received training on the subject.

	<b>Number of reports</b>	<b>Number of actions taken</b>	<b>Number of people trained</b>
<b>2021</b>	0	0	0
<b>2022</b>	0	0	0

- ❖ **Results:** Eradicate gender-based and sexual violence within SYnAbs company