

ECONORTH LTD.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Policy

John Thompson

Next Review Date: 12.02.25



This policy applies to all EcoNorth Staff / Internships / Consultants / Placements who work on behalf of the company and is reviewed annually to ensure its continuing suitability.

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

1. Purpose, Scope and Users

EcoNorth is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and to ensuring that all employees, job applicants, customers and other people with whom we deal are treated fairly and respectfully and are not subjected to unfair or unlawful discrimination or exclusion.

This policy sets out the way in which EcoNorth aims to manage equality, diversity and inclusion. It is designed to ensure all current employees, potential employees and interns are offered the same opportunities regardless of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, political beliefs, dietary choices, membership or non-membership of a trade union, or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job. Our aim is to provide a working environment free from harassment, intimidation or discrimination in any form and have effective systems and control measures in place to prevent modern slavery in our business and supply chain, as well as positively promoting diversity and the inclusion of all employees in all our business and social activities.

EcoNorth recognises that an effective Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy will help all staff to develop to our full potential, which is clearly in the best interests of both our staff and our business. We aim to ensure that we not only observe the relevant legislation but exceed it wherever possible.

We further recognise the benefits of employing individuals from a range of backgrounds with different personalities, ages, life experiences, beliefs and skillsets as this creates a workforce where creativity, innovation, problem solving and valuing differences in others thrive. We value the wealth of experience within the community in which we operate and aspire to have a workforce that reflects this.

Additionally, EcoNorth understands the importance of creating a work environment where employees feel valued, respected and accepted, and they feel welcome to be themselves and share their ideas in a friendly space. This in turn creates greater job satisfaction and employee morale, lower staff turnover and higher productivity.

This policy must be adhered to by all current employees, potential employees and interns. Everyone who works for EcoNorth is expected to be treated, and to treat others, fairly and with respect.

2. Definitions

“EcoNorth” or “we” or “us” or “our” means EcoNorth Ltd.

“Equal opportunities” means giving everyone the same opportunities for employment, pay and promotion, without discriminating against particular groups or individuals.

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“Diversity” means the practice of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and different genders and sexual orientation, and with a range of personalities, ages, life experiences and beliefs in activities, while recognising their differences and how these differences contribute to a company’s culture and business outcomes.

“Inclusion” means the practice of including and integrating all people and groups in activities so that everyone feels valued, respected and supported.

“Discrimination” may be direct or indirect, and can take different forms, eg:

- treating any individual less favourably than others on the grounds of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, political beliefs, dietary choices, membership or non-membership of a trade union, or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job;
- expecting a person, solely on the grounds stated above, to comply with requirements that are different to the requirements for others, for any reason whatsoever;
- imposing on an individual requirements that are in effect more onerous than they are on others. For example, this would include applying a condition (which is not warranted by the requirements of the position) which makes it more difficult for members of a particular group to comply than others not of that group;
- victimisation;
- harassment; or
- any other act or omission of an act, which has the effect of disadvantaging one person against another, purely on the above grounds.

3. Responsibility for this Policy

The overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this policy rests with EcoNorth’s Executive Director. Senior Managers also have a crucial role to play in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in their own areas of responsibility.

On all occasions where Line Managers are required to make judgements about other employees eg disciplinary matters, selection for training, promotion, pay increases, awards and so on, it is essential that merit, experience, skills and temperament are considered as objectively as possible.

All staff, irrespective of their job or seniority, will be given guidance and instruction, through our induction process and other training, as to their responsibilities and role in promoting equality, diversity and inclusion and not discriminating unfairly or harassing colleagues, job applicants, interns or subcontractors, nor encouraging others to do so or tolerating such behaviour.

Disciplinary action, including dismissal, may be taken against any employee found guilty of unfair discrimination or harassment.

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4. Recruitment and Selection

EcoNorth aims, through written instruction, appropriate training and supervision, to ensure that all staff who are responsible for recruitment and selection are familiar with this policy and apply it in full.

Job advertisements should encourage applications from all suitably qualified and experienced candidates and should avoid any stereotyping of roles. A variety of advertising methods should be used. All adverts will state that EcoNorth is an equal opportunities employer and values diversity and inclusivity. Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements which are necessary for the effective performance of the role. Job applicants will be offered the opportunity to confidentially disclose any prior mental health illness or disability. Any disclosure will be kept separate from their application so the recruitment panel will not see it and appropriate work adjustments will be offered to them for their interview and/or the job itself.

Shortlisting will be undertaken on a name, address, age and gender-blind basis and conducted by at least two members of the Senior Management Team, including one male and one female where practicable. Selection will be conducted on an objective basis and will focus only on the applicants' suitability for the job and their ability to fulfil the job requirements. Our interest is in the skills, abilities, qualifications, aptitude and potential of individuals to do the job being applied for effectively.

Interviews will be conducted by at least two senior employees, including one male and one female where practicable. All candidates will be asked the same set of prepared questions and these will all relate to information that will help assess their ability to do the job being applied for. Questions which may give rise to suspicions of unlawful discrimination will not be asked. For example, no questions will be asked or assumptions made about candidates' personal and domestic circumstances or plans, unless the requirements of the job will affect their personal life eg unsocial hours, in which case this should be discussed objectively. Candidates will not be asked about their health or disability, with the following limited exceptions:

- Questions necessary to establish if a candidate can perform an intrinsic part of the role, subject to any reasonable adjustments.
- Questions to establish if a candidate is fit to attend an interview or assessment or to establish if any reasonable adjustments are needed at an interview or assessment.

No candidate will be rejected on the basis of trade union membership or non-membership or a spent conviction.

Person specifications will be used to score each candidate against set criteria of qualifications and skills which are essential to the role; they will be reviewed to ensure that the criteria are not discriminatory, either directly or indirectly, and that they do not impose any condition or requirement which cannot be justified by the demands of the post.

Selection tests will be specifically related to the job and measure an individual's actual, or inherent, ability to do or train for the job.

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Each interviewer's notes from the interview process will be retained for future reference.

5. Pay

EcoNorth is committed to the principle of equal pay for all employees and maintaining pay systems which are transparent, based on objective criteria and free from gender bias.

All those employed by EcoNorth are entitled to equal pay if they are undertaking work which is substantially similar or is of equal value to the organisation unless there are specific and clear reasons unconnected with their gender which explain and justify any differential in pay. In some cases, individuals carrying out similar work may receive different salaries because of seniority, incremental points, qualifications and other such factors.

Staff are able to raise any query or grievance concerning their pay and its evaluation with their Line Manager.

Our pay policies and practices will be reviewed periodically and particular attention will be paid to employees who may be in non-standard employment, in jobs where one or other gender predominates or who are absent on pregnancy and maternity leave.

6. Training and Development

EcoNorth recognises that equal opportunity responsibilities do not end at selection and is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, all staff receive the widest possible range of development opportunities to enable them to perform at the highest level in their current role and for future advancement.

All employees will be provided with a specified training budget per annum. All employees will be encouraged to discuss their career prospects and training needs with their Line Manager during their quarterly one to one meetings. Opportunities for promotion and training will be communicated and made available to all staff on a fair and equal basis.

The provision of training will be reviewed to ensure that this is made where necessary to enable part-time workers, shift or remote workers or those returning to work following a break to benefit from training. No age limits apply for entry to training or development schemes which are open to all employees.

7. Terms and Conditions of Employment

EcoNorth will ensure that all of our policies including compensation, benefits and any other relevant issues associated with Terms and Conditions of Employment, are formulated and applied without regard to age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, political beliefs, disability, dietary choices, membership or non-membership of a trade union, or any other characteristic unrelated to the performance of the job.

EcoNorth is open to flexible working and demonstrates equal pay for all employees at each level.

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8. Grievances, Disputes and Disciplinary Procedure

Staff who believe they have been discriminated against, directly or indirectly, and have not been able to resolve this informally, are advised to use EcoNorth's internal grievance procedure (as set out in the Staff Handbook). An employee who brings a complaint of discrimination must not be less favourably treated. When dealing with general disciplinary matters, care is to be taken that members of one group are not dismissed or disciplined for performance or behaviour which could be overlooked or condoned in other groups.

9. Communication of this Policy

All new staff will be made aware of this policy and provided with a copy of the policy during the induction process. Updates to the policy will be shared with the team at the time of revision. This policy is also freely available to our clients (and potential clients) via our company website. In addition, staff will be reminded of the policy through such means as advertisements, job descriptions, equal opportunity monitoring forms, training courses and other internal documents.

10. Policies and Procedures

EcoNorth's policies and procedures will be reviewed regularly to improve, amend or adapt current practices to promote equality, diversity and inclusion within our business. All employees will be consulted about the company's policies and procedures and have the opportunity to discuss such matters with their Line Manager at any time.

11. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

EcoNorth's Executive Director has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis and may be updated from time to time.

The composition of EcoNorth's team, Board members and job applicants will be periodically monitored on an anonymous basis. Relevant data will be collected to enable this. Personal details provided by employees, Board members, job applicants or interns for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring are confidential and will be kept apart from all other records and not used for any other purpose.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to EcoNorth's Executive Director.



John Thompson
Executive Director
16.02.24