



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2022-2025

National Hellenic Research Foundation

Introduction

The National Hellenic Research Foundation (NHRF) is fully aligned with the European Commission's policies on the development of human resources and plays an active role in supporting and implementing these initiatives. Since 2003, in its role as a Euraxess Services Centre, the NHRF has operated a specialized helpdesk. Working in close collaboration with its internal Human Resources office, this service provides tailored information and support to all researchers—both internal and external—regarding career development opportunities.

The Foundation maintains continuous communication with its researchers to gather feedback on their needs and expectations, allowing it to implement targeted actions for their benefit. By adopting a person-centered HR policy, the NHRF aims to meet these needs as effectively as possible, offering a comprehensive range of support services on legal, administrative, and practical matters.

In June 2008, the NHRF's Board of Directors formally expressed its commitment to the European Commission's principles and guidelines by signing the Declaration of Commitment to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

Equality is a core value at the NHRF, integral to both its internal operations and its broader mission. Within research institutions, equality is not only a matter of social justice but also a driver of development and competitiveness. In particular, the Foundation recognizes the importance of gender equality. Evidence shows that eliminating gender-based barriers enables research institutions to harness the full potential of their talent, thereby enhancing innovation and knowledge transfer.

The NHRF's career policy reflects its strong commitment to equality and diversity. This inclusive approach extends to all employees, job applicants, contractors, stakeholders, partners, and visitors. While equal opportunity is offered to everyone, special emphasis is placed on supporting underrepresented groups—particularly those facing discrimination based on belief, disability, age, gender, or sexual orientation.

Development of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

In alignment with Horizon Europe's gender equality policy, the NHRF has developed a comprehensive four-year Gender Equality Plan (GEP). This plan is the result of an extensive internal audit and reflects our commitment not only to meeting the eligibility requirements of Horizon Europe, but also to using the process as an opportunity for meaningful self-assessment and institutional improvement in gender mainstreaming.

The NHRF GEP outlines clear objectives, targeted actions, and key performance indicators to be monitored—primarily on an annual basis—to track progress and ensure accountability.

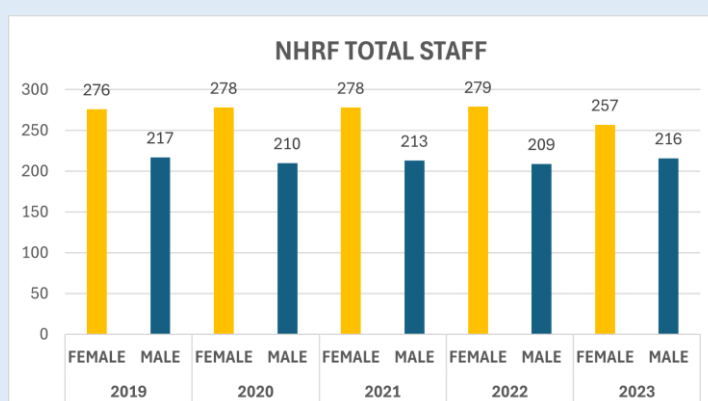
Methodology

For the development of the GEP, many factors and procedures had to be defined and taken into consideration as these are incorporated into the phases below:

- **Audit phase:** This phase included the collection of sex-disaggregated and/or gender-disaggregated data and a review of practices to identify possible gender inequalities and their causes. The audit phase included review of relevant national and regional laws, regulations, or funding requirements.
- **Planning phase:** During this phase, we set the objectives for the GEP alongside a roadmap of actions and measures. This phase also included allocating resources and responsibilities for the delivery of the GEP and agreeing on timelines for its implementation.
- **Implementation phase:** a roadmap of activities will be carried out including setting up working groups to develop and implement new policies and procedures. This phase includes awareness-raising and training efforts to achieve wide engagement regarding the GEP across the NHRF, as well as give visibility to the public.
- **Monitoring/evaluation phase:** the delivery of the GEP and its progress will be annually assessed by a specialized committee; ongoing review of findings and progress will provide space for learning and feedback to enable adjustments and improvements to interventions.

Current situation

As shown in the graphs below, the NHRF has consistently achieved high levels of gender equality across all staff categories (research, scientific, administrative, and auxiliary) during the period 2019–2023.



(Graph 1: NHRF total staff)

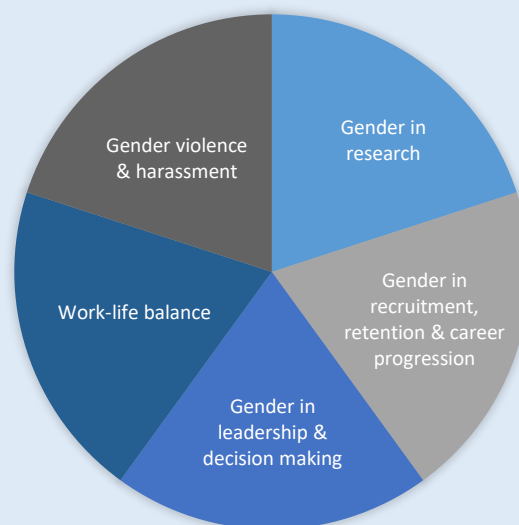
Based on the above data, the NHRF has identified the maintenance of strong gender mainstreaming performance—and its improvement in areas where imbalances remain—as a key priority. The main actions already adopted by the NHRF in this direction can be summarized as follows:

- **Focus on advancement & excellence regardless of gender.**
- **Keep work-life balance for all employees.**
- **Redefine outdated human resources policies.**
- **Close the leadership gap by encouraging women to participate in decision-making procedures.**
- **Revaluate common biases and create an open-minded environment.**
- **Provide mentorship for everyone.**

Key priority areas & objectives

The primary aim of the GEP is to establish clear priorities and targeted interventions to promote gender equality and address any existing inequalities within the NHRF. The current GEP is structured around five key priority areas, which are outlined in detail in the following sections.

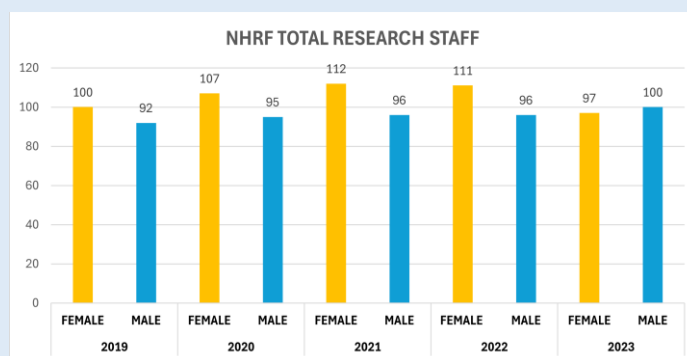
For each of these areas, the plan sets out specific objectives and actions, along with defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)—both quantitative and qualitative. These KPIs are monitored on an annual basis to ensure ongoing progress and the effective achievement of the GEP’s objectives.



Gender in research

It is well recognized that academic stereotypes disproportionately impact female researchers, particularly in fields such as STEM. Women in these disciplines often face barriers to recruitment, experience pay disparities, or are assigned a higher share of administrative duties compared to their male counterparts.

At the NHRF, we are fully aware of these challenges and actively work to counteract gender bias. We place a strong emphasis on maintaining a balanced gender ratio among both our researchers and research support staff. Notably, women currently represent the majority of NHRF’s research personnel, reflecting our commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable research environment.



(Graph 2: NHRF total research staff)

Gender in recruitment, retention & career progression

The NHRF fully adheres to Greek legislation governing recruitment processes, employment relations, and salary frameworks, as applied to all public research institutions in Greece.

However, we also recognize that systemic challenges persist, particularly for women in research. Studies consistently show that women –especially female researchers–often face barriers to recruitment, promotion, and career advancement. These challenges may include lower success rates in grant applications, fewer invitations to speak at conferences, limited access to professional

networks, and fewer opportunities to review scholarly work, despite the fact that such activities are critical for career development.

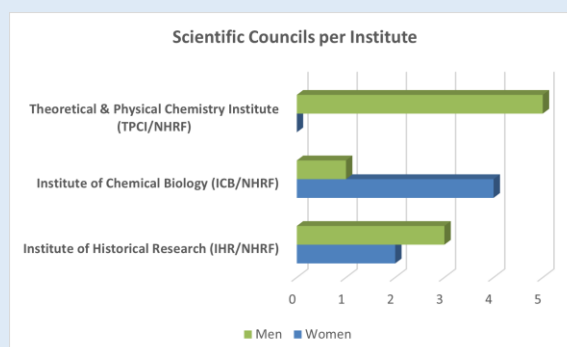
In response, the NHRF has implemented a series of good practices aimed at ensuring that recruitment, retention, and career progression are conducted on equal terms for all genders. These measures are part of our broader commitment to equality, transparency, and merit-based advancement across all levels of the organization.

Gender in leadership & decision making

The importance of increasing female representation in leadership and decision-making roles remains a critical topic in global discourse. In several countries, legislative measures have been implemented to mandate the participation of women on management boards. A growing body of research consistently demonstrates that the inclusion of women in senior leadership positions yields direct and measurable benefits -enhancing institutional knowledge, reinforcing governance structures, and improving public trust and perception.

Although the election of NHRF Board Members is overseen by a selection committee appointed by the Ministry of Development and Investment in Greece, the NHRF actively encourages qualified female senior staff to stand as candidates. The Foundation firmly believes that a stronger female presence in leadership roles contributes to more effective governance and elevates the visibility of women at the highest levels, serving both as a catalyst for institutional progress and a source of inspiration for individuals at all stages of their professional journey.

Currently, only one member of the Board of Directors is female, reflecting the persistent underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions -particularly within the Scientific Councils of the NHRF's Institutes. As depicted in Graph 3, this ongoing disparity underscores the imperative for sustained, strategic efforts to enhance gender diversity across all governance and decision-making bodies.



(Graph 3: Institutes' Scientific Councils - gender ratio)

Work-life balance

As part of its good-employer policy, the NHRF offers a range of measures to help employees effectively balance their professional and personal or family responsibilities. These include options such as flexible working hours and remote work, where operationally feasible or based on individual needs.

Informed by the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly regarding the transition back to on-site work, NHRF has developed a flexible return-to-work policy. This approach is designed to support a smooth and adaptive transition, prioritizing employee well-being while maintaining productivity and collaboration.

Gender violence & harassment

Institutional policies on sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence should codify: a) the expected behavior of employees, b) how staff can report incidents of gender-based violence, c) how any such incidents will be investigated and sanctions applied and d) the information and support provided to victims or witnesses.

By virtue of the law 4808/2021, the NHRF is currently developing a holistic policy to tackle harassment and violence related to gender at the workplace, so the whole organization can be mobilized to establish a culture of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment and violence.

A five-member Committee for Gender Equality and the Prevention of Violence was appointed in 2022 to oversee the implementation of the institution's gender equality policy and to ensure the prevention and proper handling of incidents of violence and harassment in the workplace. Additionally, the NHRF has designated a "Reference Person" responsible for receiving and managing reports related to such incidents.

In 2024, the Regulation for the Establishment of the Committee on Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination was drafted, in accordance with the provisions of Article 58 of Law 5019/2023 (Government Gazette 27/T.A'/14-12-2023). The Committee was formally established in 2025 and is composed of the following members:

- One (1) researcher or faculty member or affiliated researcher from each Institute,
- One (1) specialized technical scientist (permanent staff),
- One (1) person from the permanent or temporary administrative, technical, or support staff,
- One (1) person from the temporary scientific staff, and
- One (1) PhD candidate.

Key priority area 1: Gender in Research

Objective(s)	Actions	Timetable				KPIs
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
Maintain gender balance among NHRF research staff	Incorporate gender dimension into every research activity (applications for funding, consortium composition etc.	√	√	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender balance within each Institute <input type="checkbox"/> The average size of grants for male or female Principal Investigators.
	Conduct a qualitative survey of the reasons affecting researchers' productivity and implement the mechanisms resulting from this survey		√	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender balance in leading roles within the context of funded projects <input type="checkbox"/> Gender balance in peer-reviewed publications (by the two Institutes of Natural Sciences) and other publications (by the Institute of Historical Research)*
	Raise awareness through events regarding the benefits of a balanced gender representation in R&D	√	√	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender balance of the speakers at events and conferences** <input type="checkbox"/> Gender balance in spin-offs' founders
	Boost gender representation in entrepreneurship (i.e. female founders of spin-offs)	√	√	√	√	<i>* Gender balance in peer-reviewed publications and historic publications will be monitored/evaluated every three years.</i> <i>** Gender balance in events and conferences will be monitored/evaluated every three years.</i>

Key priority area 2: Gender in recruitment, retention and career progression

Objective(s)	Actions	Timetable				KPIs
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
I. Make all phases of recruitment gender sensitive	Reflect diversity in the job descriptions and interview panels	√	√	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/> Balanced gender representation while in interview process (at least one woman and one man)* <input type="checkbox"/> Gender balance across all staff categories and retention rate per gender.
	Support balanced gender representation in job applications through attractive employment packages		√	√	√	
II. Further support of equal retention and career progression	Develop career progression paths in all staff levels		√	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender balance of researchers who progress to a higher level <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating any possible complaints regarding biased role appointments or poor career progression
	Evaluate performance fairly within Institutes	√	√	√	√	
	Assist female researchers in their network building at both national and international level	√	√	√	√	
	Unbiased appointment of senior roles within the departments	√	√	√	√	
	In-depth study of gender-related parameters affecting staff retention and career progression and design of improving measures			√	√	
						<i>*whenever it is possible given that the first and foremost condition for participating in the interview panels is the relevant scientific expertise</i>

Key priority area 3: Gender in leadership and decision making

Objective(s)	Actions	Timetable				KPIs
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
Enhance female participation in the Scientific Councils, the Board of Directors, advisory boards, committees as well as high managerial roles	Support women to put up for nomination for such governance bodies	√	√	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender balance among the candidacies for councils, committees etc.
	Consult with the Directors of the NHRF's Institutes about encouraging women to participate in the Institutes' scientific councils & committees	√	√	√	√	
	Monitor gender balance in key leading and decision-making positions	√	√	√	√	
	Organize events for raising awareness about diversity and inclusion in such roles.	√	√	√		

Key priority area 4: Work-life balance

Objective(s)	Actions	Timetable				KPIs
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
I. Strengthen balance between work and family for caregivers	Deconstruct gendered notions of family care through gender-neutral language	√	√	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/> Balanced number of parental leaves (or other benefits) between the two genders.
	Adjust the parental leave schemes to employees' needs	√	√	√	√	
	Encourage male employees to take parental leaves as well	√	√	√	√	
	Ensure that the legislation of parental leaves is well-communicated and applied	√	√	√	√	
	Provide mothers who get back to work shortly after childbirth with flexible work schedules for a three-month period		√	√	√	
II. Restore productivity after a long absence.	Provide staff with an induction phase after a long absence due to parental or other reasons (i.e. health recovery)	√	√	√	√	
	Upgrade digital tools for remote working and connectivity.	√	√	√	√	

Key priority area 5: Gender violence and harassment

Objective(s)	Actions	Timetable				KPIs
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
Eliminate incidents of gender violence or sexual harassment	Designation of a contact point for: accepting complaints in-person, raising awareness and handling any complaints (both anonymous and eponymous) recorded by a centralized system.	√	√	√	√	<input type="checkbox"/> Frequency of reporting cases of gender-based harassment or violence. <input type="checkbox"/> Consult with the committee assigned if such cases arise.
	Establishment of a specialized and independent committee for undertaking the investigation of harassment cases.	√	√	√	√	
	Information about the rights and the obligations of both the NHRF staff and NHRF as employer at the extent of their responsibility.	√	√	√	√	
	Estimate of potential dangers (risk factors) of violence and harassment at workplace.	√	√	√	√	
	Protection of the occupation and support of employees that are victims of domestic violence	√	√	√	√	