



**H.F.R.I.**  
Hellenic Foundation for  
Research & Innovation

# Gender Equality Plan



# HFRI Gender Equality Plan

## I. INTRODUCTION

The European Union considers gender equality as a core principle. In accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Gender Equality Plans by the European Council, gender equality:

- Enhances the quality and impact of research and innovation by guaranteeing its inclusivity and relevance to the entire society.
- Establishes conducive work environments that foster high-quality research and learning, thereby optimizing the potential and skills of all staff members.
- Contributes to the attraction and retention of talent by ensuring that every staff member can trust that their capabilities will be respected and fairly acknowledged.

Organizations or institutions adopt a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) to evaluate their procedures and practices, identify any gender bias, and implement corrective measures. The plan also includes setting goals and monitoring progress in achieving gender equality through defined indicators.

Hellenic Foundation for Research and Innovation (HFRI) is a public body established under the provisions of Law 4429/2016 (GG A 199) as a research and innovation funding body overseen by the Minister of Development. Its principal purpose is to support blue sky research (the systematic inquiry born of scientific curiosity) and new researchers by providing scholarships for doctoral candidates, as well as research projects for post-doctoral researchers, Faculty Members and Researchers. (art. 2).

HFRI recognizes the positive impact of gender equality on research and innovation (R&I). Consequently, HFRI places a strong emphasis on addressing gender equality as a key priority. This involves establishing guidelines for future activities with the aim of enhancing gender equality and actively monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP). Through this document, HFRI seeks to identify and address gender inequalities systematically, including understanding the root causes, defining desired outcomes and targets, implementing measures to achieve these goals, and setting up indicators to monitor progress.

Gender-related matters are a significant focus for HFRI across multiple dimensions. One aspect involves internal considerations, encompassing the organization's personnel and positions of responsibility. Another facet addresses gender equality within the Administrative Bodies and decision-making structures, which includes collective entities such as Evaluation Committees, Objections Committees, Appeals Committees, as well as individual entities such as Independent Experts, and Monitoring Experts. Additionally, the gender dimension extends to HFRI's funded research projects, encompassing considerations related to applicants, funded individuals, and scholarship recipients.

Following the HFRI gender equality plan established for Horizon Europe, HFRI will pursue the following objectives:

- i. To continue raising awareness about the HFRI gender policy among potential applicants;
- ii. To improve the gender balance among researchers submitting HFRI proposals in all research fields;

- iii. To raise awareness about the benefits of gender balance among researchers within the HFRI teams;
- iv. To continue identifying and removing any potential gender bias in the HFRI evaluation procedure;
- v. To continue monitoring possible differences in gender specific careers and academic posts, following the HFRI grants;
- vi. To embed gender awareness within all levels of the HFRI processes – from creating awareness about the HFRI to grant signing – while keeping the focus on excellence;
- vii. To strive for gender balance among the HFRI peer reviewers and other relevant decision-making bodies, aiming at a minimum participation of the underrepresented gender while taking into account the situation in the field of the action. Also, the proportional representation of genders should be at least equal to that of the applications by the underrepresented sex in the Advanced grants in the same area, aiming at the level of 40% in the future.

Furthermore, HFRI aims to actively involve its personnel in the execution of this plan, recognizing that a GEP is a continuous process that fosters self-reflection and the scrutiny of procedures and practices. The GEP has obtained the endorsement of the Scientific Council of HFRI, has been made publicly accessible on the organization's website ([www.hfri.gr](http://www.hfri.gr)), and has been disseminated internally within the organization.

HFRI's GEP focuses on the five-recommended by the EC thematic areas, adding one more (initial) step, which is essential for the implementation of an effective and substantial GEP:

- measurement, current situation in the institution
- work-life balance and organizational culture
- gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- gender equality in personnel selection and career progression
- integration of the gender dimension into research
- measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

## II. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

HFRI's GEP legitimates and protects every strategy aiming to achieve gender equality within the Institution. The GEP is in accordance with Greek and European laws and aligns with national initiatives and actions towards equality of women and men, rights, discrimination banning, equality treatment, harassment in workplace, social responsibility of organizations etc. Articles, policies and directives can be found in detail in the following sections.

## III. METHODOLOGY

For the implementation of this plan, the institution shall set up an internal Gender Equality Committee (GEC) formed by persons, with expertise on human rights or prior active involvement in gender matters, responsible to implement the organization's GEP, propose the necessary changes for promoting equal treatment of men and women within the entity and to coordinate and design the assessment and evaluation of the equality between men and women.

The Committee will examine the relevant legislation and policies related to gender equality and non-discrimination in Greece, along with those specific to the domains of research and innovation (R & I). Additionally, it will conduct an initial assessment of the current organizational situation, as analyzed below.

Moreover, the Gender Equality Committee shall:

- Develop action plans to foster and guarantee significant equality in the entity's research and administrative procedures, and compile annual reports for submission to the Board of Directors.
- Advise the relevant internal bodies on measures to enhance equality and address sexism.
- Disseminate information and conduct training within the organization on matters pertaining to gender and equality.
- Offer support to individuals reporting discriminatory treatment, providing assistance to victims of discrimination.

This action plan sets as an initial objective the systematic mapping of the gender distribution in the Foundation, in relation with HFRI's stakeholders involved.

The analysis is made according to biological sex at birth, in a binary fashion (female, male); an intersex category has not been considered in the present plan, but it is expected that the actions to be taken within the next years will set the ground for the development of a three-category based analysis: woman, man, and non-binary (or gender-diverse).

## IV. PRIORITY AREAS

Six thematic priority areas have been identified: those set by the European Commission as a prerequisite for the submission of research proposals and one additional, the systematic record of the current situation, on which rely the indicators for the future assessment.

### 1. HFRI's gender equality state and organizational culture

A presentation of statistical data collected on gender-related aspects across all issues concerning HFRI will accompany the discussion. Conducting a comprehensive diagnosis of the current situation regarding gender, including women's participation and gender considerations, represents a crucial initial step to ensure that proposed actions are realistic, practical, and directly address the identified challenges. Evident indicators of gender disparities emerge through variations in the representation of women and men across different ranks and positions within the institution.

### 1.1 Personnel

The following gender-related statistics outline the current staff composition within the organization, illustrating current employees. The Foundation is mandated to compile comprehensive statistics that encapsulate the entire personnel landscape, providing insights into the gender distribution of employees from the Foundation's inception in 2016 to the present.



Data from HFRI’s personnel indicates an overall higher representation of women employees across all departments. It's observed that women outnumber men in various positions, with the exception being the IT department. Additionally, it's noteworthy that a woman holds the Director position at HFRI.

### 1.2 Governing Bodies

The ensuing statistics illustrate the gender balance within HFRI's governing bodies.



Regarding the General Assembly, it is observed that there is a greater representation of male members. The HFRI’s General Assembly it is comprised of distinguished, internationally acclaimed scientists who are selected by the Higher Education Institutions and Research Bodies within the country. The selection process is based on criteria established by the National Council for Research, Technology and Innovation (NCRTI), with members chosen by the entities they represent through an invitation process.

We consider that, as outlined by the criteria established by NCRTI, the selection process is not biased in terms of gender, given that the criteria specifically emphasize scientific distinction and excellence. Nevertheless, the higher proportion of male members within teaching and research

staff in institutions may potentially influence the outcome, elevating the likelihood of choosing a male representative.

The Foundation's Scientific Council (SC) consists of nine (9) regular members, all of whom are internationally acclaimed scientists with backgrounds in the following areas:

- Physical Sciences
- Engineering Sciences & Technology
- Life sciences
- Agricultural Sciences – Food Science & Technology
- Mathematics & Information Sciences
- Social Sciences
- Humanities & Arts
- Environment and Energy
- Management & Economics of Innovations

SC members are elected through a process that follows an international call for expression of interest, and are individuals renowned for their international work and experience in their respective field.

Significantly, HFRI's Scientific Council demonstrates a notable gender disparity, with eight (8) male members and only one female member. It is important to highlight that this lone female member also holds the position of the President of the Scientific Council. Despite her leadership role, it appears insufficient to address the imbalance, considering the collective decision-making and actions of the Council. Additionally, the fact that the female member belongs to the field of social sciences adds a distinctive characteristic to this observation.

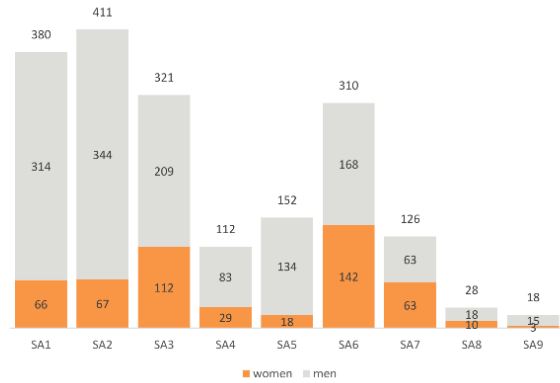
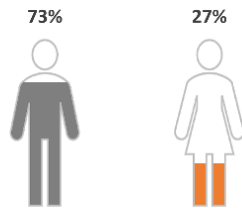
### ***1.3 HFRI Registry of Certified Evaluators & Experts***

In the following chart, we observe gender-related statistics about HFRI's Registry of Certified Evaluators & Experts.

In the registry, there is a notable imbalance, with a greater number of men serving as experts compared to women. However, it's worth noting that the experts for the financial monitoring of projects exhibit a more balanced representation in terms of gender. The certification of Evaluators & Experts occurs after evaluation, and the criteria for certification are established by the Registry Committee. Importantly, these criteria are impartial and do not exhibit bias with regard to gender.

Another aspect is that individuals voluntarily submit their applications through the online portal of HFRI.

**1863**  
registered evaluators



registered for scientific evaluation

SCIENTIFIC AREA	♀	♂	SUM	♀ %	♂ %
SA1	66	314	380	16%	84%
SA2	67	344	411	15%	85%
SA3	112	209	321	34%	66%
SA4	29	83	112	26%	74%
SA5	18	134	152	13%	87%
SA6	142	168	310	47%	53%
SA7	63	63	126	49%	51%
SA8	10	18	28	28%	72%
SA9	3	15	18	20%	80%
SUM	510	1348	1858	27%	73%

**90** FINANCIAL AUDITORS



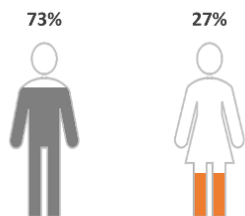
**1.4 Applicants to HFRI's Calls**

In the following statistics, we observe the gender percentages of submissions categorized by the type of action (Calls to Support Faculty Members and Researchers, Calls for HFRI Research Projects to support Postdoctoral Researchers, Calls for Scholarships to PhD Candidates).

**10630**

Submissions

10 calls

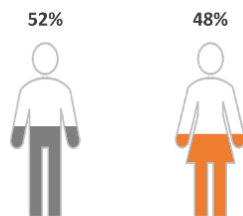


Faculty members/  
Researchers

**3719**

Submissions

3 calls

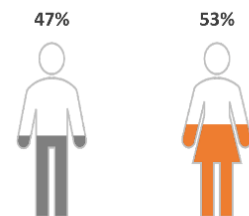


PostDoc Researchers

**6895**

Submissions

5 calls



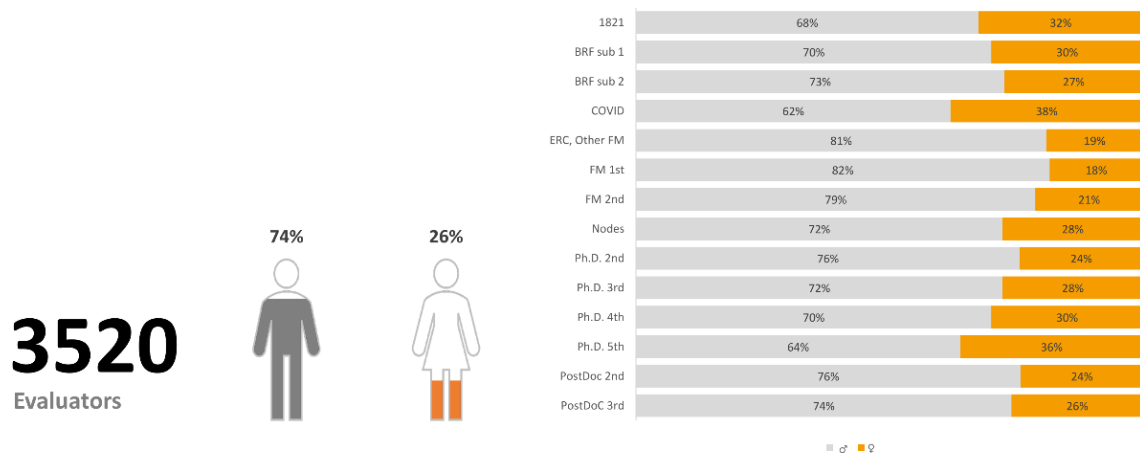
Ph.D. Candidates

Upon reviewing the statistics, it is evident that in initiatives related to lower-level research positions, specifically scholarships for PhD candidates, we observe nearly equal representation of both genders, with women even surpassing men. However, as we progress up the academic

hierarchy, there is an increasing disparity between the genders in submissions, indicating the presence of the “glass ceiling” phenomenon. The "glass ceiling" is a term used to identify the invisible barrier of gender stereotypes, prejudices and double burdens that impede women's career progression to senior positions.

### 1.5 HFRI Panel Members and Experts

The HFRI peer reviewers are panel members (including panel chairs) and external evaluators. In a first step, the HFRI will aim at a better gender proportionality in each HFRI evaluation panel as compared to that panel's relevant scientific communities.



### 1.6 Funded Research Projects and Scholarships

In the following chart, we observe the gender percentages in funded projects and scholarships awarded by the Foundation.

The percentages presented in these statistics are based on the earlier chart related to submissions. It's emphasized that the evaluation criteria are not gender-specific; the assessment is carried out on the foundational criterion of excellence. Consequently, a gender-neutral evaluation process is crucial for HFRI, ensuring that funding is awarded to the most qualified researchers, regardless of their gender. Any potential sources of gender bias in the evaluation process is challenged together with and at the level of the review panels.



**831**

Projects

**371**

Projects

**1436**

Scholarships



## Objectives

- Carry out a gender analysis based on the collected data. Once gathered, the data should be analyzed to establish an understanding of the key differences and the gap between women and men within the organization and their activities;
- Pinpoint the critical areas necessitating intervention;
- Identify the existing measures promoting gender equality and assess if and how they are implemented;
- Measure gender distribution in the HFRI's personnel and governing bodies;
- Measure gender distribution at different academic levels of applicants in HFRI's Calls;
- Heightening awareness regarding gender underrepresentation in HFRI's funded projects and scholarships;
- Enhance the submission rate of the gender currently underrepresented through strategic initiatives and targeted efforts;
- Achieve gender balance in each HFRI evaluation panel as well as among the panel chairs;
- Raise gender awareness during briefings of the HFRI panel chairs and at the beginning of the evaluation panel meetings;
- Raise awareness about implicit bias in the evaluation process;
- Sensitize HFRI staff, HFRI panel members and external experts to gender issues;
- Create a broad awareness about its gender equality work and strategy.

## Implemented Policies and Measures

- Compile statistics on the comprehensive gender distribution of personnel;
- Generate statistics on gender distribution within positions of responsibility;
- Develop statistics on gender distribution in governing bodies;
- Compile statistics on the overall gender distribution among H.F.R.I. Registry of Certified Evaluators & Experts;
- Compile statistics on the overall gender distribution among H.F.R.I. Panels & Experts;
- Prepare statistics on the overall gender distribution of applicants categorized by academic level (faculty members, postdoctoral researchers, and doctoral candidates);

- Execute a gender analysis based on the collected data. Upon gathering the data, analyze it to ascertain the key differences and the gap between women and men within the organization and their activities;
- Eligibility and evaluation criteria are designed to encompass the situation of both women and men in research;
- Use of graphics, visuals, and emoji in communication, such as brochures, posters, videos, websites, and social media, ensuring effective representation of both genders;
- Creating content addressing the gender dimension in research and science, including discussions on breaking the glass ceiling, and sharing it on social media.

### **Upcoming Achievements**

- Prepare statistics on gender distribution by category of personnel (permanent employees, posted employees, on contract employees);
- Continue collecting data broken down by sex about personnel to detect gender differences;
- Continue monitoring submission rates of women and men by Greek region, research domain and panel;
- Continue monitoring success rates and granted amounts for women and men and publish gender statistics from HFRI evaluations in long term time series and by HFRI domain;
- Continue collecting and analyzing gender data on PhD students, post docs and any other researchers funded through HFRI grants;
- Monitor the data on an annual basis: monitoring and reporting of the data collected will be carried out on an annual basis to enable the organization to understand progress, identify where activities are having an impact, and where obstacles persist throughout the life of the HFRI;
- Submission patterns of women and men will be continuously monitored. Measures will be taken to increase the awareness about HFRI among top-researchers of underrepresented gender and encourage them to apply for HFRI grants;
- Publication of data gathered on gender equality on HFRI's website;
- Publish the HFRI gender equality plan on the web: [www.hfri.gr](http://www.hfri.gr);
- Pursuing a more balanced gender representation in each HFRI evaluation panel compared to the relevant scientific communities of that panel;
- Monitor the gender balance of each HFRI panel. If the panel specific goal has not been reached this should be reported, together with an analysis on how the situation can be improved. Publish the corresponding data per year and per call;
- Include reference to the HFRI Gender Equality Plan in the HFRI Guide for Panel Members and Experts;
- Participate in gender equality networks and workshops;
- Continue including gender statistics and HFRI's work to achieve gender balance in all general presentations on the HFRI.

## **2. Work-life balance and organizational culture**

HFRI considers important to include in the present GEP policies and measures related to a) the transformation of organizational culture to ensure gender equality and b) work-life balance such

as parental leave policies, flexible working time arrangements and support for caring responsibilities.

### **A. Work-life balance**

#### **Objectives**

- Introduce flexible working time arrangements;
- Support for caring responsibilities, including childcare and care for other dependents (e.g. people with disabilities, elderly relatives);
- Ensure reintegration after career breaks;
- Offer advice and support on work-life balance.

#### **Implemented Policies & Measures**

- Flexible working hours for all employees, allowing them to choose a schedule starting from 7 am to 9 pm and ending after 8 working hours (including breaks). This may involve extending flexibility, establishing reasonable working hours, promoting teleworking, and offering flexible schedules, particularly those responsible for the care of dependent family members (e.g. children, elderly individuals);
- Enable remote working for employees by implementing the recent regulations on teleworking in the public sector.

#### **Upcoming Achievements**

- Set measures leading to renegotiation of workload if needed;
- Guidance on effective time management.

### **B. Organizational culture**

#### **Objectives**

- Use actively and encourage the use of neutral language in the communication within the Foundation;
- Use of neutral language on the Foundation's texts.

#### **Implemented Policies & Measures**

- Collect quantitative and qualitative data based on gender by academic and administrative unit, analysis and evaluation on an annual basis;
- Enforce the use of neutral, non-sexist language in all administrative documents and all forms of communication of the institution, including websites;
- Adopt a Guide for the use of neutral, non-sexist speech.

## Upcoming Achievements

- Train for the use of the Non-Sexist Speech Guide;
- Introduce gender equality support structures and creation of contact point;
- Provide training on issues of gender equality and non-discrimination [seminars, printed/digital and audio-visual materials].

### **3. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making**

This part of the GEP sets specific voluntary targets to ensure a proportional gender representation in key leading positions and in decision making committees as these are appointed by the administration of the institution.

Regarding evaluation issues, these were addressed in the first chapter, where the Foundation's state was analyzed, and the relevant statistics were presented. Challenges related to the Panels and Experts were outlined, along with the measures implemented and those planned to achieve the set objectives.

## Objectives

- Ensure a proportionate representation and equitable share of women in leadership and decision-making positions to achieve gender balance;
- Investigate potential barriers, encompassing structural, institutional, and individual factors, to ensure the representation of women in decision-making and leadership roles;
- Modify selection and appointment processes for committee collaborators to foster inclusivity;
- Prioritize gender balance in applications for leadership and decision-making roles;
- Emphasize the critical role of support from management/leadership for the successful attainment of this objective.

## Implemented Policies & Measure

- Identify the different locations for formal and informal decision-making;
- Measurement through collection of quantitative and qualitative data in positions of responsibility;
- Examine processes and procedures for the selection and appointment on committees and other bodies – ensure decisions consider gender issues and women are empowered to take an equal role.

## Upcoming Achievements

- Adapt processes and procedures for the selection and appointment on committees and other bodies if needed;
- Encourage equal gender candidatures in positions of responsibility and decision-making positions, through gender-neutral vacancy descriptions;
- Strengthen equal participation of genders in positions in leadership and decision-making positions;

- Create a process to monitor gender balance and ensure the participation of women in committees, positions of responsibility and decision-making bodies;
- Showcase the significant contributions of women within the institution;
- If considered necessary, introduce gender quotas to ensure gender balance.

#### **4. Gender equality in selection and career progression**

Since its establishment, HFRI has demonstrated a specific focus on the inclusion of women. The institution is dedicated to maintaining and strengthening this commitment by actively supporting the career progression of women. Consequently, it is crucial to evaluate selection procedures, rectifying any biases to ensure equal opportunities for career development and advancement for both women and men. In terms of the equality of payment rates for men and women, there is no issue, as the personnel of the organization is compensated according to the unified salary scale applied to public institutions.

#### **Objectives**

- Ensure gender balance in selection of personnel;
- Ensure gender balance in career progression;
- Consider establishing personnel selection codes of conduct.

#### **Implemented Policies & Measures**

- Personnel selection principles that increase transparency and help avoid unconscious biases;
- Ensure gender-neutral vacancy descriptions and presentation;
- Providing attractive employment packages (with emphasis on flexibility at the workplace);
- Monitor gender balance in career retention and career development.

#### **Upcoming Achievements**

- Review existing selection processes and procedures at all stages and remedying any biases;
- Consider using standardized curriculum vitae forms (CV) and undertaking blind assessment of CVs.

#### **5. Integration of the gender dimension into research**

This section of the GEP seeks to articulate the Foundation's dedication to integrating gender into its research priorities, ensuring the incorporation of the gender dimension in research endeavors. As emphasized by the European Institute for Gender Equality, recognizing that knowledge forms the foundation upon which future generations will shape their societies, it becomes imperative that the knowledge generated through research and disseminated via education is devoid of gender bias.

The Institution's support for high-quality and excellent research, driven by scientific curiosity without thematic or geographic constraints, is noteworthy. The broad scope permits candidates to explore any topic of their choice. Within this framework, a substantial number of applications are received for funding research projects addressing gender-related issues. This results in the funding of several projects related to gender issues through HFRI's initiatives.

### Objectives

- Eliminate gender bias in knowledge that is created through research and transferred through education;
- Balanced gender participation in research activities;
- Highlight the outcomes and enhance the impact of funded projects that address gender-related issues.

### Implemented Policies & Measures

- Record of funded projects related to gender equality;
- Crafting an event that aspires to become an institutional landmark, dedicated to spotlighting funded projects addressing gender equality or other gender-related issues.

### Upcoming Achievements

- Organize raising awareness activities outlining the importance of gender equality in research.

## **6. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment**

HFRI maintains a policy of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment and gender-based violence. The institution adheres to the stipulations of Law 4808/2021 (A 101) and all pertinent national laws and regulations. Recognizing the imperative need for explicit institutional guidelines on sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence, HFRI has already developed a policy for the prevention and combatting of incidents involving violence and harassment in the workplace, which encompasses gender-based violence and sexual harassment issues. HFRI unequivocally states that it does not condone any form of abuse, including actions that violate an individual's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. In the same vein, HFRI acknowledges the significance of communication initiatives to identify the issue, implementing intervention measures when necessary to foster an inclusive and secure culture for its personnel.

### Objectives

- Establish clear institutional policies on sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence;
- Establish a culture of zero tolerance toward sexual harassment and violence, including behavior that violates any individual's dignity or that creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment;

- Take measures to outline how personnel can report instances of gender-based violence;
- Introduce specific contact point for reporting the event;
- Ensure that potential victims or witnesses of harassment are not deterred from reporting incidents;
- Provide information and support to victims or witnesses;
- Communicate to the personnel the established policies.

### **Implemented Policies & Measures**

- Development of a policy for the prevention and mitigation of incidents involving violence and harassment in the workplace;
- Designate the representatives of the Institution as contact point and reference persons; those representatives should provide for consulting and support services;
- Introduce a reporting policy and complaint management procedures that outlines how personnel can report incidents of sexual harassment, including when they are the victim of harassment or witness harassment, ensuring that there are no barriers to reporting and that all reports are taken seriously;
- Communicate the policy for the prevention and mitigation of incidents involving violence and harassment in the workplace to the personnel of the institution and publishing it on the internal website of the Foundation;
- Host an Awareness Day to educate staff on preventing and responding to workplace incidents of violence and harassment.

### **Upcoming Achievements**

- Conduct regular and systematic evaluation of the implementation and efficiency of the measures taken (monitoring);
- Take action to protect the victim from being secondarily victimized.

## **V. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

HFRI recognizes that the Genomic Ethics Policy is dynamic and subject to change. Various factors, including alterations in organizational operations, the implementation of new legislation or policies affecting research organizations, and shifts in organizational priorities, may necessitate adaptations to the GEP. A dedicated Gender Equality Committee will be formed to oversee the implementation and evaluation of the GEP. The Gender Equality Committee will monitor these developments closely and determine the requirement for updating the Action Plan accordingly.

Additionally, HFRI recognizes the significance of promoting awareness and enhancing capacity-building efforts to maximize the success of the GEP. As part of this commitment, HFRI commits to organizing activities aimed at raising awareness and building capacity within the organization.

To foster continuous involvement of both middle and top management levels in the execution and follow-up of GEP, HFRI's internal strategy revolves around creating a collaborative and inclusive approach. Regular communication channels will be established to facilitate open dialogue between the management tiers, ensuring that insights and perspectives are shared seamlessly. Workshops and training sessions focused on gender equality awareness are conducted to engage

both levels, fostering a shared understanding of the importance of inclusivity. This integrated strategy aims to promote a culture of continuous engagement and accountability at all organizational levels.

## **VI. MONITORING & EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

In any case, monitoring shall take place annually by the competent Gender Equality Committee to meet the National and/or European Commission requirements. Same indicators will lead the assessment, evaluation of the actions or policies in the longer term.

In the monitoring sessions the organization may decide to involve, apart from the Gender Equality Committee, additional personnel of the Foundation. The Committee will issue and submit to HFRI's Governing Bodies annual monitoring reports.