

TARGET } Taking a Reflexive approach
to Gender Equality for
institutional Transformation

Research Promotion Foundation Gender Equality Plan

2018 - 2020

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1 Introduction

The Research Promotion Foundation (RPF) as the national research and innovation funding agency of Cyprus, was established with a view to promote scientific and technological research across the island. The Foundation has the responsibility to ensure that the research community of Cyprus is actively working to maximize collective knowledge, creativity and innovation, by funding projects that promote excellence and deliver results with maximum impact and social benefit, thus ensuring the quality of the Cypriot research system.

As a Research Funding Organization (RFO), RPF acknowledges the gender-related challenges researchers face, as well as the gains of concrete actions in respect to the importance of gender equality in R&I and fully adopts the priorities set by the European Research Area, and in particular ERA Priority 4 on *Gender Equality and Gender Mainstreaming in Research*,¹ as well as the HORIZON 2020 regulations, and in particular Article 16² which explicitly mentions the importance of gender equality in R&I.

Within the framework of the above, the Foundation as a Gender Equality Innovating Institution (GEII) in the TARGET Project,³ understands the benefits of gender equality in research and is committed to work towards scientific excellence and supports the positive correlation between gender equality and research quality. With the present document, RPF seeks to address gender inequalities and imbalances in R&I through the development and implementation of a context-specific Gender Equality Plan (GEP), formalizing a set of actions aiming at long term institutional transformation. The actions to be taken concern the period between 2018-2020 and have been prioritized to reflect RPF's institutional context, based on the Gender Equality Audit conducted by its personnel. Recognizing the gaps identified by the Audit, the results were used to design a self-adaptive self-tailored GEP.

The GEP has been developed as part of the TARGET Project and should be understood as the 1st Gender Equality Plan of the Foundation, as the agency is committed to start a long-term gender equality strategy in an attempt to promote gender equality beyond the organizational context and needs of the Foundation.

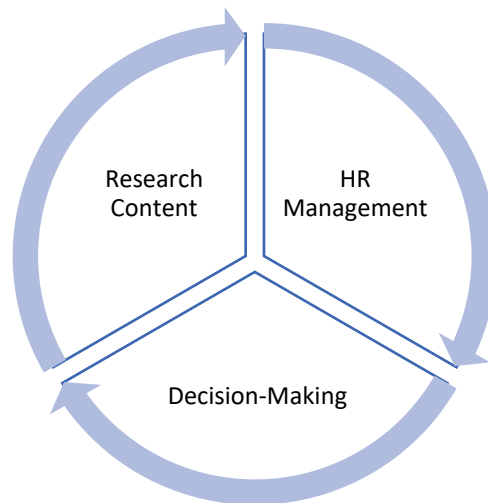
¹ http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/gender-equality-and-gender-mainstreaming_en.htm

² Article 16 states: "Horizon 2020 shall ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation content. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring gender balance, subject to the situation in the field of research and innovation concerned, in evaluation panels and in bodies such as advisory groups and expert groups. The gender dimension shall be adequately integrated in research and innovation content in strategies, programmes and projects and followed through at all stages of the research cycle." In: *Regulation (EU) no 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Establishing Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)*.

³ <http://www.gendertarget.eu/>

2 Priority Fields

The TARGET Project indicates three main areas of interest for achieving gender equality in R&I: *human resource management; decision-making and integration of gender dimensions in research content*. It is important to note that the use of a comprehensive cyclical approach is central to the idea of gender equality, as institutional change is defined as a three-dimensional construct and all TARGET areas are interrelated, interconnected and mutually reinforcing.



For the full realization of gender equality in R&I, both a bottom-up and a top-down approach are necessary. The former indicates the support individual researches receive to redress any gender imbalances and the latter indicates the support of structural change towards gender equality.

2.1 Main Objectives

All three focus areas are of equal importance to the RPF and can be viewed as priority fields, even though it is impossible to deal with all three areas comprehensively. The overall objective of the Gender Equality Plan 2018-2020 is to build institutional capacity to facilitate cultural change that goes beyond the formal adoption of a GEP.

The Foundation further aims at removing any existing gender inequalities and mitigating perceived factors that limit equal participation and advancement of women by setting the following interim objectives:

- Promoting a gender–inclusive organizational culture and eliminating unconscious gender biases in all aspects of **human resource management**: recruitment, retention, career progression, work-life balance, care and family life;
- Creating awareness among the **decision–making** body to influence and ensure gender–sensitive internal processes and procedures;
- Instigating the integration of sex and/or gender dimension into **R&I content** to increase excellence in research;
- Working systematically to address gender challenges within the scope of the Foundation by taking **transversal measures**.

The above objectives are considered to be relatively *achievable to implement*, as the Foundation grasps momentum with the organizational transformation already taking place, and of *high impact* as results will be concrete and visible early on in the institutional transformation process.

The present Gender Equality Plan addresses all Programmes, activities and functions that fall under the remit of the Foundation.

3 Main Actions

Objective: Promoting a gender-inclusive organizational culture and eliminating unconscious gender biases in all aspects of human resource management: recruitment, retention, career progression, work-life balance, care and family life.

MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulation of an inclusive non-discriminatory HR Policy covering recruitment, retention, career progression, work-life balance and care and family life: <i>in recruitment, retention career progression</i> -> ensure transparency and gender sensitivity in selection processes especially when considering senior/leadership positions; gender mainstreaming of all written documents of the Foundation; <i>in work-life balance</i> -> concrete measures, for example, flexible schedules, to be further discussed; <i>in care and family life</i> -> support parenthood and in particular motherhood, by offering a parent-friendly workplace. Concrete measures to be decided upon consultation with the CoP. 	<p>Unit 4 (assistance of HR Consultant)</p>	<p>Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2019</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure effective implementation of the existing Sexual Harassment Policy. 	<p>Unit 4</p>	<p>May 2018</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising gender awareness among personnel to address unconscious bias and promote the importance of gender equality by targeted trainings and workshops. 	<p>Unit 4</p>	<p>Oct. 2018 – Jan. 2019</p>

Objective: Creating awareness among the decision-making body to influence and ensure gender-sensitive internal processes and procedures.

MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generate effective management practices; raising awareness and building gender competence of key decision-makers by targeted briefing that will create the conditions to align core activities of RPF to gender equality when promoting R&I excellence – link equality with quality. 	Unit 1	Oct. 2018 – Jan. 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include all measures that support and promote gender equality, both within the organizational context and as a funding agency, in a relevant new strategic action of the Foundation, as an indication of acknowledgment that gender is a factor that contributes to scientific excellence and research quality. 	BoD Unit 1	Oct. 2018

Objective: Instigating the integration of sex and / or gender dimension into R&I content to increase excellence in research.

MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organization of a Network of Scientists to exchange experiences, develop knowledge and capacity building and know-how for gender equality when designing new Programmes. 	Unit 1	Jan. 2019 – Dec. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include a gender-sensitive statement in all Calls and Programmes, to encourage more women to apply as Coordinators. i.e. “The Foundation encourages women to submit proposals as Coordinators”. 	Unit 1	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure gender-balanced formation of research teams by explicitly mentioning in all Calls that “Research teams should be as far as possible gender-balanced”. 	Unit 1	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Raise awareness and competence for applicants to identify whether or not a gender analysis is necessary by providing specific guidance and training sessions on sex/gender in research content. 	Unit 1	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduce a special section in order for applicants to indicate if and how sex/gender analysis was integrated in the research proposal and if not, to outline why it was not relevant to the proposed research. 	Unit 1	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage personnel to select evaluators from both sexes (e.g. utilize databases like Academia.Net). 	Unit 2	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make available to evaluators informative videos uploaded on RPF’s website on how to assess sex and gender integration in proposals. 	Unit 2	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add a statement in the Guide for Evaluators on the importance of Integrating Gender Analysis into Research (IGAR) when evaluating proposals. 	Unit 2	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020

Objective: Working systematically to address gender challenges within the scope of the Foundation by taking transversal measures.

MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE BODY	TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve data collection processes by establishing an electronic database with ‘sex’ and ‘age’ disaggregated information for all HR management aspects and research proposal/ project applicants and produce annual statistics. 	Unit 4 (+ IRIS team)	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of a monitoring system for HR management activities and research projects, with specific indicators monitoring the key actions of the GEP. 	Unit 4	Oct. 2018 – Jan. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a comprehensive annual reporting system that will allow continuous monitoring of the operational objectives set to achieve gender equality and include a section on RPF’s Annual Report. An evaluation analysis of gender equality measures to be conducted at the end of each GEP period by the CoP and to be discussed by the BoD and if necessary decide on changes to the strategy. 	Unit 1	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of gender-sensitive language in all official documents of the Foundation and in all channels of external communication (Website etc.) 	Unit 3	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of knowledge gained through TARGET project and awareness-raising actions regarding the importance of gender equality in R&I at events / info days organized by the Foundation – Give visibility to the Gender Equality Plan. 	Unit 3	Oct. 2018 – Oct. 2020

4 Monitoring and Assessment

Funding excellent research is the main concern of RPF. In order to continue to do so, achieving the GEP objectives is key to generate a gender competent institutional culture among the research community and the Foundation.

The Foundation understands the importance of the monitoring and assessment stage as it will indicate whether or not a transformative dynamic is taking place while it is viewed as a self-reflective process. On the one hand, monitoring works as a tool supporting effective action and commitment, which increases legitimacy and creates accountability, and on the other it provides indicators to assess actions in order to enhance knowledge of ongoing changes. RPF will develop tailored process and outcome indicators in the next phase of the GEP (implementation phase), using both quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure efficiency, effectiveness and impact.

In addition, the Community of Practice (CoP) will further contribute in creating a favorable environment for the effective implementation of the GEP actions. Organization of regular meetings with the CoP will be an important component for discussing, reporting and assessing the progress, main achievements and aspects that can be improved. This will allow the identification of possible problems while acting proactively upon them.