



## GENDER EQUALITY PLAN



2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

March 2025



## **GENDER EQUALITY COMMITTEE OF HCMR**

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## HELLENIC CENTRE FOR MARINE RESEARCH

### GENDER EQUALITY (GE) PLAN

#### 1. Introduction

With its Gender Equality Plan (GEP), the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research (HCMR), aims towards establishing its priorities for addressing gender equality, as well as setting guidelines for future activities in order to enhance Gender Equality (GE) and monitor application of the GEP. The cornerstone of the high-quality science that HCMR promotes, produces and applies is equality of opportunity. This is not only restricted to the scientific personnel, but fair access and equity is also ensured for the managerial, technical, administrative and support staff as well as visiting students or research staff. HCMR according to international, community and internal standards, does not limit equity to gender bias but also takes into account other inequality grounds such as disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity (Appendix 1).

#### 2. Regulatory framework

The HCMR GEP legitimates and protects every strategy aiming to achieve gender equality within the Center. The GEP is in accordance to 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 organisations etc. Articles, policies and directives can be found in detail in the following sections.

##### 2.1. European Legislation

Equality between people and non-discrimination are the founding cornerstones of the EU and are being embedded in the Treaties of the European Union, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and secondary legislation. In the development of the GEP, HCMR considers the

- a. "Recast" Directive (2006/54/EC) on equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men in employment and occupation which requires the implementation of the prohibition of direct and indirect sex discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment in pay and access to employment
- b. Directive 2010/41/EU on the prohibition of direct and indirect (sex) discrimination to self-employment,
- c. discrimination prohibition Directive on Pregnancy (92/85/EEC),
- d. Parental Leave Directive (2010/18/EU)
- e. Part- time Work Directive (97/81/EC)
- f. Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) that prohibits discrimination on the ground of racial or ethnic origin in employment
- g. Employment Equality Directive (2000/78/EC), covering the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.

## 2.2. Greek Law

Aligning with the EU principles on gender equality instructing public research bodies, Greek policy documents related to research, innovation, technology, and higher education, including the latest National Strategy for the European Research Area (2015-2020), are aiming *“to establish Gender Equality Plans and to include relevant provisions in their internal regulations and strategic plans”*.

Law 4386/2016 entitled, “Regulations on research and other provisions” recognises that research institutes need to achieve greater gender balance in the composition of scientific councils, committees and advisory bodies indicating that at least one third of the members to be from one sex, “as long as the candidates have the necessary qualifications as required by each position” (Art. 25).

In addition, the Greek Constitution guarantees equality between the sexes (Art. 2, §4) and the right to equal pay for work of equal value regardless of gender or other differences (Art. 22, §1). At the same time, Greece’s constitution recognizes substantive equality between the sexes. In the constitutional revision process in 2001, is foreseen that “positive measures for promoting equality between men and women do not constitute discrimination on grounds of sex” and that “the state shall take measures to eliminate inequalities to the detriment of women that exist in practice” (Art. 116(2)). This amendment paved the way for positive measures in different domains, such as for example, the adoption of gender quotas for local, national and European Parliament elections, and the aforementioned gender provision for advisory bodies and scientific councils. As a result, a number of new laws and provisions were devised for research and private organisations. Law 4604/2019 on “Promoting substantive equality between the sexes and combating gender-based violence” encourages and research content universities and research organizations to integrate gender in their study programs (Art. 17, Government Gazette, No. 50/1, March 2019). Private and commercial enterprises are also encouraged to adopt equal opportunity policies, also through the development of GE Plans. For those companies, an official distinction namely the “Equality Badge” (Sima Isotitas) is foreseen (Art. 21). At the same time, Law 4589/19, Art. 33 on the restructuring of universities, includes a provision on the establishment of Committees for Gender Equality (CGE) in all Greek universities that will act as consultative bodies to assist the university administration to promote gender equality. In addition, the provisions of Law 4808/2021 provide for the prevention and treatment of violence and harassment at work and the fight against workplace bullying. Based on the existing institutional framework, the aim is to consolidate a culture of equality and protection of the workplace from violence and harassment and to cultivate a healthy work environment.

## 3. The Digital Gender Divide

The above regulatory framework serves the pressing national and European need for a digital future that will be based on the equal involvement of both men and women. Women’s participation is crucial for the development of a sustainable, fair and equitable digital economy and society. Unfortunately, in the European digital economy women are under-represented<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/topics/digital-agenda>

In Greece the Ministry of Digital Governance has designed the Digital Transformation Strategy for 2020-2025 as an attempt to address such inequalities. The Strategy was devised in close cooperation with stakeholders from the public and private sector, the academic community and civil society, sets priorities for the digital transformation of the country, and goals for the development of the digital skills of the Greek society regardless gender, at all levels and ages. HCMR's vision is aligned with this strategy's objectives and by actions of research and training envisages to contribute to national and European needs and goals.

HCMR is a governmental research organisation operating under the supervision of the General Secretariat for Research and Innovation (GSRI) of the Ministry for Development and Investment. Its main objectives are to conduct multidisciplinary applied and basic research in the following areas:

- Structure and functioning of inland, coastal and marine ecosystems, including ecosystem modelling
- Aquatic biodiversity (at all levels)
- Integrated Marine Observing and Forecasting Systems in the Greek seas
- The role of climatic change in the evolution of aquatic ecosystems (marine and terrestrial)
- Effects of natural and human-induced pressures and hazards on the marine environment (e.g. oil spills, pollution, tsunamis, floods, aquatic invasions, HABs, slumps)
- Life history of fish, fisheries dynamics, fisheries ecology, modelling, and management
- Aquaculture
- Population genetics and genomics of marine organisms
- Biotechnological applications
- Integrated river basin and coastal zone management

HCMR premises span in different locations in Greece, with the headquarters being based in Attica. Within its premises, personnel are being offered an environment that supports innovative research, dissemination of scientific results to various stakeholders and the public, as well as meeting the demands and policies set at national and European levels. This action plan further sets the frame and enhances already existing rules and practices that contribute to the reduction of the Digital Gender Divide observed, providing equal opportunities and necessary resources to all personnel in order for them to advance their careers.

HCMR:

- § Offers innovative research environment and an inclusive work-place.
- § Ensures that all employees, regardless of gender, age or social background have equal rights to participate in research.
- § Promotes women to leadership roles (key leading positions).
- § Makes women more active in decision making by including them into boards and processes thus changing power dynamics.
- § Assists researchers affected by career breaks and leaves in regaining research momentum as quickly as possible on return.
- § Protects them through anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies.

HCMR recognises that its community may include people who do not identify with the binary construct of being either male or female, and who may be gender diverse, including those who affirm their gender as being different to the sex assigned at birth; who were born intersex or whose sex is indeterminate; or who identify as transgender or no gender.

## 4. Operational regime

The GEP applies to all Units of [HCMR](#) and its Institutes, namely the:

- Institute of Oceanography ([IO](#))
- Institute of Marine Biological Resources and Inland Waters ([IMBRIW](#))
- Institute of Marine Biology, Biotechnology and Aquaculture ([IMBBC](#))

The Plan will be monitored by the Gender Equality Board (GEB) with support by a) the Board of Directors, and b) the HCMR's administration services. The GE Plan will be appointed and approved by the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Centre. The work suggested under the GE Plan will be complemented and operate in parallel with other related departments, policies, and plans of HCMR (e.g. Committee on Ethics, Department of Personnel, etc). As it is essential for GEP to be implemented, monitored and updated in a continuous and smooth manner, adequate economic and human resources should be ensured by HCMR. Thus, a dedicated fund within the Centre's Regular Annual Budget should be allocated for this purpose.

## 5. Objectives

HCMR expects from all staff members and collaborators to act with "responsibility, integrity and respect":

- Responsibility: all member of HCMR should behave in an inclusive and supportive manner without undermining, intimidating, or discriminating colleagues and/or visitors;
- Integrity: demonstration of professional and appropriate behaviour whilst at work is expected;
- Respect: consideration and thoughtfulness in relation to staff, clients and visitors regardless of their background, culture and belief is required.

The HCMR's GE Plan is built upon the three-pillar objectives, as set by the European Commission's strategy on gender equality in research and innovation policy:

1. Fostering equality in scientific careers, by
  - practising equity and excellence at all levels through career development and training of researchers, managers and support staff
  - contributing to the national and European needs for female experts in aquatic sciences
2. Ensuring gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies, by
  - inclusivity in decision-making by encouraging women in participating in the process
3. Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation content by
  - further enhancing the research quality of the Centre by continuing the formation of heterogeneous research groups
  - creating linkages between science and industry through collaboration with the private sector.



According to the guidelines of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE<sup>2</sup>) HCMR focuses on six key areas, in order to “*identify and implement innovative strategies to promote cultural change and equal opportunities in Universities and Research Centres*”.

- Key Area 1: Recruitment, Selection procedures, career progression, governance and decision making**
- Key Area 2: Flexible and Agile Working**
- Key Area 3: Gender Strategy in Research and Innovation**
- Key Area 4: Gender in events, courses and activities**
- Key Area 5: Prevention and actions against violence, sexual and moral harassment and discriminations**
- Key Area 6: Gender in Organisation Culture**

## **6. Methodology**

This second working draft edition of HCMR’s GEP, includes a corrected set of internal procedures and measures, that will be further refined in further editions of the GEP to adapt to potential feedback or difficulties encountered in practice. These procedures and measures were based on the methodology included in EIGE’s GEAR toolkit (Gender Equality in Academia and Research)<sup>3</sup>. Thus, HCMR’s GEP is developed on three axes: 1. *Understanding*, 2. *Implementing* and 3. *Monitoring*.

### **6.1. Understanding and Planning**

With respect to the list of initial Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), existing toolkits, methodologies and available GE Plans from several universities and institutes in Europe were surveyed. In addition, data was collected in order to estimate the current situation at HCMR regarding gender balance (Appendix 2). To this end, data on the number of male/female employees according to their employment status was collected (for 2021 in the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the GEP), and specifically numbers regarding: permanent researchers; permanent staff; permanent scientists and technicians; scientists and technicians on contract; administrative staff (permanent and on contract); and PhD Students. The figures will be updated regularly to follow the evolution of the numbers over time.

In order to ensure the refinement, monitoring and implementation of GEP, HCMR has established the Gender Equality Board (GEB). The GE Board members will decide on the types of data that need to be collected, the KPIs to be defined, the data gathering procedures, and arrange a series of online meetings and online anonymous questionnaires addressed to all the personnel to obtain their feedback as was done in March 2024. See appendix 4 for analysis of the responses.

The Plan constitutes a living document that the GEB will be committed to update regularly. A regular assessment of the status regarding gender balance should be performed, in order to evaluate the progress and mitigation measures to be taken. From the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative research results a set of evidence-based policy proposals will be

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<sup>2</sup> <http://eige.europa.eu>

<sup>3</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/step-step-guide#step-2>

constructed, ensuring gender equality and balanced representation.

## **6.2. Implementing**

In order to successfully implement the proposed GEP, HCMR is aiming to realise as many actions proposed as possible. Towards that goal, it is essential that the Gender Equality Board (GEB) convenes regularly. The main purpose of these meetings is the planning of activities in a participatory way, discussing the overall progress and achievements, identifying traits that can be improved, and developing mitigation measures with respect to deviations from the original planned actions.

So as to increase to the highest possible level the impact of GEP actions, a series of trainings and meetings between the researchers and staff of the management, human resources, and administration office will be also organised.

## **6.3. Monitoring**

It is the GEB duty to report on the progress of GEP implementation and success, in order to share information and achievements with the Center. Monitoring will be based on indicators, both qualitative and quantitative. In order to upscale and improve the measures proposed by the GEP, an external Advisor may be appointed. Amongst others, the Advisor could be responsible for (a) constructively reviewing the measures, (b) co-designing and evaluating the monitoring instruments and channels, (c) supervising in the implementation of the actions proposed and assisting in cases needed; and (d) providing input for an effective and uniform application of the GEP across all sites of HCMR's premises.

## **7. Key areas of study**

The following tables present needs-based objectives for HCMR, track the development in the gender distribution of personnel at different stages of their careers within the organisation, monitor HCMR's progress in relation to equal representation through KPIs and targets, create actions to remedy any shortcomings, provide the respective timeline, assign responsibility to the personnel for each action, and present their relevance to SDGs.

**Key Area 1: Recruitment, Selection procedures, career progression, governance and decision making**

**Objectives:**

Proportional gender representation in key leading positions, decision making committees and governance bodies

**Who:**

1. GEB
2. Researchers, administrators and technical staff
3. Personnel department

**Actions:**

1. Monitor gender balance across staff categories including key leading positions, governance bodies and decision-making committees, as well as retention rate, career progression and remuneration
2. Encourage balanced gender representation in job applications & candidatures for governance and decision making positions through gender-neutral vacancy descriptions, information campaigns and incentives as well as pro-active nominations (within the flexibility provided by national and EU legislation)
3. Organise events that establish direct contact with corresponding female role models in scientific jobs to motivate wider candidatures
4. Develop internal and/or external training module on gender bias
5. Make it easier to declare career breaks due to maternity leave in applications for competitions and promotion (within the flexibility provided by national and EU legislation).

**KPIs and Targets:**

1. Annual increase in gender representation in job applications of new recruits and candidatures for leading governance and decision-making positions towards a balanced male-female ratio
2. Presenting the gender-neutral career profile of HCMR yearly, informing/updating staff about the profiling of job or decision-making positions by written materials and when possible by hosting talks by role models. Annual update of the staff retention and progression study.

## Key Area 2: Flexible and Agile Working

### Objectives:

1. Raised awareness of rights, opportunities and practices for flexible and agile working
2. Enhancement of flexible and agile working practices and infrastructure
3. Facilitation of achieving work-life balance

### Who:

1. GEB
2. Personnel department
3. IT department

### Actions:

1. Publish/post information for raising awareness of leaves entitlement according to national law, available flexible working models (part-time/teleworking/ parental leave for both mothers and fathers etc.), agile working infrastructure and suggested best practices.
2. Design guideline for achieving work-life balance incorporating international best-practices (a) tuned to the Greek reality & the idiosyncrasies of working in a research centre and (b) enhanced by staff input
3. Digital tools for remote working to improve staff member connectivity and provide training and support of staff
4. Warrant the right to disconnection (good practices guidelines)
5. Information/updates of staff about the benefits and employment packages (within the flexibility provided by national and EU legislation)
6. Organise events to nurture the humane profile of HCMR including social life events with or without family members and children
7. Provide breastfeeding-friendly facilities within HCMR infrastructure and communicate with neighbouring municipalities to encourage the provision of day-care for young children.
8. Monitor the uptake of the above and feedback

### KPIs and Targets:

1. Information of staff about the diversity of type/duration of leaves per gender
2. Promotion and/or organisation of events to raise awareness on work-life balance issues and provide related training
3. Work-life balance guidelines according to EU/national standards and legislation
4. Qualitative survey for capturing staff perceptions on gender equality including feedback on the implementation of flexible and agile working practices (done in 2024 & to be repeated regularly).

### Key Area 3: Gender Strategy in Research and Innovation

#### Objectives:

Facilitation of balanced gender representation in research and entrepreneurship (publishing, acquiring grants, teaching, supervision, patenting, technology transfer activities, spin-offs)

#### Who:

1. GEB
2. Department of financial administration of programmes
3. Personnel department
4. IT department
5. HCMR staff representatives (employees & researchers)

#### Actions:

1. Promote and/or organise events for raising awareness of the benefits of balanced gender representation in research and development, tuned to the needs of the research topics/disciplines of HCMR
2. Establish a mentoring scheme for formal personal development planning, especially directed to technicians, students and post-docs
3. Encourage the creation of peer groups and get-together events for informal consultation on research productivity and work-life balance
4. Promote gender representation in entrepreneurship through dedicated and proactive consultation and support issues
5. Monitor gender representation in research and innovation
6. Quantifying and remedying gender gaps in responses to calls for research projects

#### KPIs and Targets:

1. Organisation of events raising awareness on gender representation in R&D
2. Mentoring scheme
3. Creation of peer-groups and social get-together events for supporting gender representation in research and innovation per year
4. Monitor and feedback - perform qualitative survey(s) for capturing staff perceptions and feedback on gender equality aspects and problematic issues and behaviours (done in 2024 & to be repeated regularly)

#### Key Area 4: Gender in events, courses and activities

Objectives:	Who:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Balanced gender participation of staff in events organised by the centre</li><li>2. Equal exposure of the research results/activities, expertise and achievements of staff.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. GEB</li><li>2. IT department</li></ol>
Actions:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Enhance the equal promotion of research contribution/results/success stories in HCMR's social media accounts, website and science communication networks</li><li>2. Continue to promote and strengthen the presence of women experts in the media</li><li>3. Implement a equal gender strategy in recruiting staff for HCMR events/campaigns/info days</li><li>4. Monitor gender active and passive participation in HCMR events, courses, activities.</li></ol>	
KPIs and Targets:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Gender balanced in online presence of HCMR material (towards the aim of equity to the research staff gender rate).</li><li>2. Design and adoption of a process and strategy for equality in staffing HCMR events</li></ol>	

**Key Area 5: Prevention and actions against violence, sexual and moral harassment and discriminations**

**Objectives:**

Establishment of policies, actions and instruments to support and monitor sexual or gender-based violence, moral harassment at the work place in any form as well as discrimination against minorities

**Who:**

1. GEB
2. Researchers, administrators and technical staff

**Actions:**

1. Implement tools to train people to recognise and respond to sexual and gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination (racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, etc.).
2. Strengthen and facilitate the reporting of sexual or gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination against minorities
3. Define and organise standard plans of action against reported sexual or gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination against minorities. Ensure discretion to minimise risks of retaliation.
4. Offer legal advice through HCMR collaborating solicitors or link to external associations with expertise on violence, harassment and discrimination issues
5. Incorporate a section on sexist and sexual violence and sexual harassment into internal regulations
6. Organise awareness events to prevent violence, harassment or discrimination in the workplace.
7. Study the possibilities of psychological or social support for victims or witnesses.

**KPIs and Targets:**

Guidelines on procedures and tools regarding discrimination harassment and violence available on HCMR website.

Use and promote Code of conduct guidelines for every meeting/work event, adhering to the principles of **equality, inclusion, diversity, respect, safety, mental health and well-being and ensuring:**

- Inclusive and supportive behaviour without undermining, intimidating, or discriminating colleagues and/or visitors;
- Integrity and professional and appropriate behaviour at all times at the workplace (including sampling and trips);
- Respect and thoughtfulness in relation to staff, clients and visitors regardless of their background, culture and beliefs

Monitor and feedback - perform qualitative survey(s) for capturing staff perceptions and feedback on gender equality aspects and problematic issues and behaviours (done in 2024 & to be repeated regularly)

## Key Area 6: Gender in Organisation Culture

### Objectives:

1. Publication, dissemination and diffusion of GEP
2. Establishment of policies, actions and instruments to support and monitor the implementation of the GEP
3. Raise awareness.
4. Develop GE support services and infrastructure.
5. Acquisition of GE know-how and best practices.

### Who:

1. GEB
2. IT department
3. Researchers, administrators and technical staff

### Actions:

1. Publish the updated version GEP on the website
2. Embed GE principles into organisation regulations and policies
3. Monitor indicators, identify obstacles and solutions and make recommendations to the Executive Board
4. Include the active use and encouragement of inclusive, gender neutral language around the organisation.
5. Give all staff and new recruits a charter of good conduct
6. Dedicate resources and funds for GE activities.
7. Establish dedicated spaces facilitating activities beyond working needs (e.g. child friendly areas).
8. Participate in EU and national events and instruments on GE.
9. Disseminate such external events to all staff when participation is open to the public
10. Communicate on international days against discriminations or violence to increase awareness
11. Creation of a web portal with information on courses, seminars, project calls, networking etc to group and facilitate access to all relevant information.

### KPIs and Targets:

1. Annual organisation of an umbrella-event presenting issues tackled in all Key-Areas.
2. Regular updates of HCMR regulations and policies in accordance to GEP needs.
3. Establishment of gender neutral language in all activities
4. Allocation of resources for GEP activities.
5. Inclusion of dedicated areas supporting the work: life balance of staff within HCMR facilities (e.g. child friendly spaces).
6. In conjunction with other Key-Areas, a web portal with information on courses, seminars, project calls, networking etc will be created at HCMR's website.



## Appendix 1: Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Description
Age	The Plan protects people regardless of age. However, different treatment because of age is not unlawful direct or indirect discrimination if it can be justified, i.e. if you can demonstrate that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.
Disability	Under the Plan, a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The Plan encourages an employer to make reasonable adjustments to enable access to work-place.
Gender Reassignment	The Plan provides protection for transsexual people, i.e. anyone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his/her gender.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	The Plan protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination.
Pregnancy and Maternity	A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled.
Race	In the Plan 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.
Religion or Belief	In the Plan, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion. Additionally, a religion must have a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious philosophical belief or a lack of such belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour. Denominations or sects within a religion can be considered a protected religion or religious belief. Discrimination because of religion or belief can occur even where both the discriminator and recipient are of the same religion or belief.
Sex	Both men and women are protected under the Plan. This may also include people who do not identify with the binary construct of being either male or female, and who may be gender diverse, including those who affirm their gender as being different to the sex assigned at birth; who were born intersex or whose sex is indeterminate; or who identify as transgender or no gender.
Sexual Orientation	The Plan protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups, also known as LGBT

## Appendix 2: HCMR employee status 31/12/2024

**TABLE 1: HCMR Personnel (31/12/2024). Numbers and Percentages**

Type of employment	2024			2024 (%)		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Researchers (permanent)	50	38	88	56,8	43,2	100
Staff Scientists and Technicians permanent	72	41	113	63,7	36,3	100
Staff Scientists and Technicians on contract	72	97	169	42,6	57,4	100
Administrative staff (permanent and on contract)	27	68	95	28,4	71,6	100
PhD Students	1	5	6	16,7	83,3	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>47,4</b>	<b>52,6</b>	<b>100</b>

Type of employment - Positions of responsibility -2024	male	female	total	% Female
Principal members of board of directors	6	1	7	14,3
Deputy members of board of directors	0	0	0	0,0
President/ vice-president	2	0	2	0,0
Representatives of researchers	1	0	1	0,0
Representatives of employees	1	0	1	0,0
Administrative managers	6	6	12	50,0
Directors of the 3 HCMR institutes	2	1	3	33,3
Members of Scientific Councils of Institutes	11	6	17	35,3

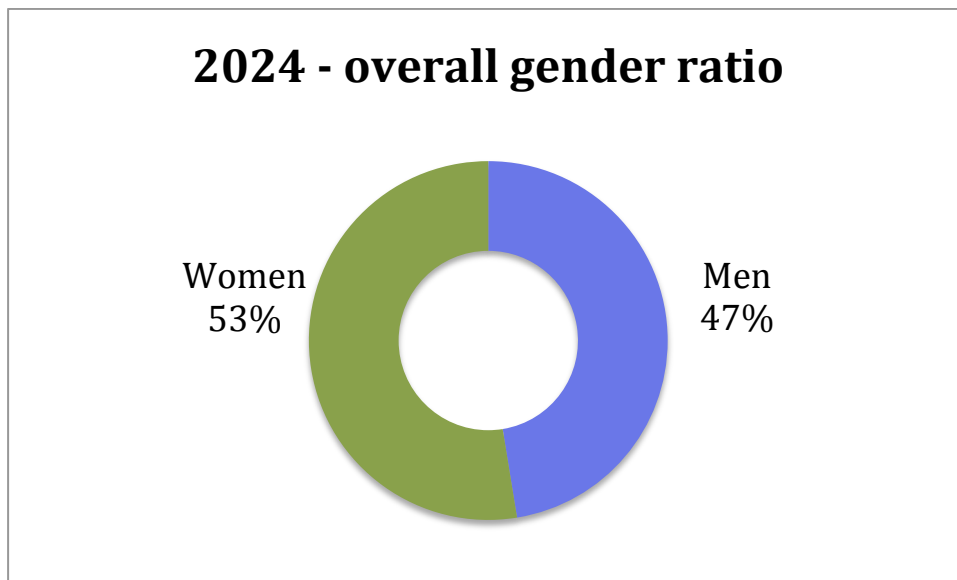


Figure A1. HCMR overall gender distribution

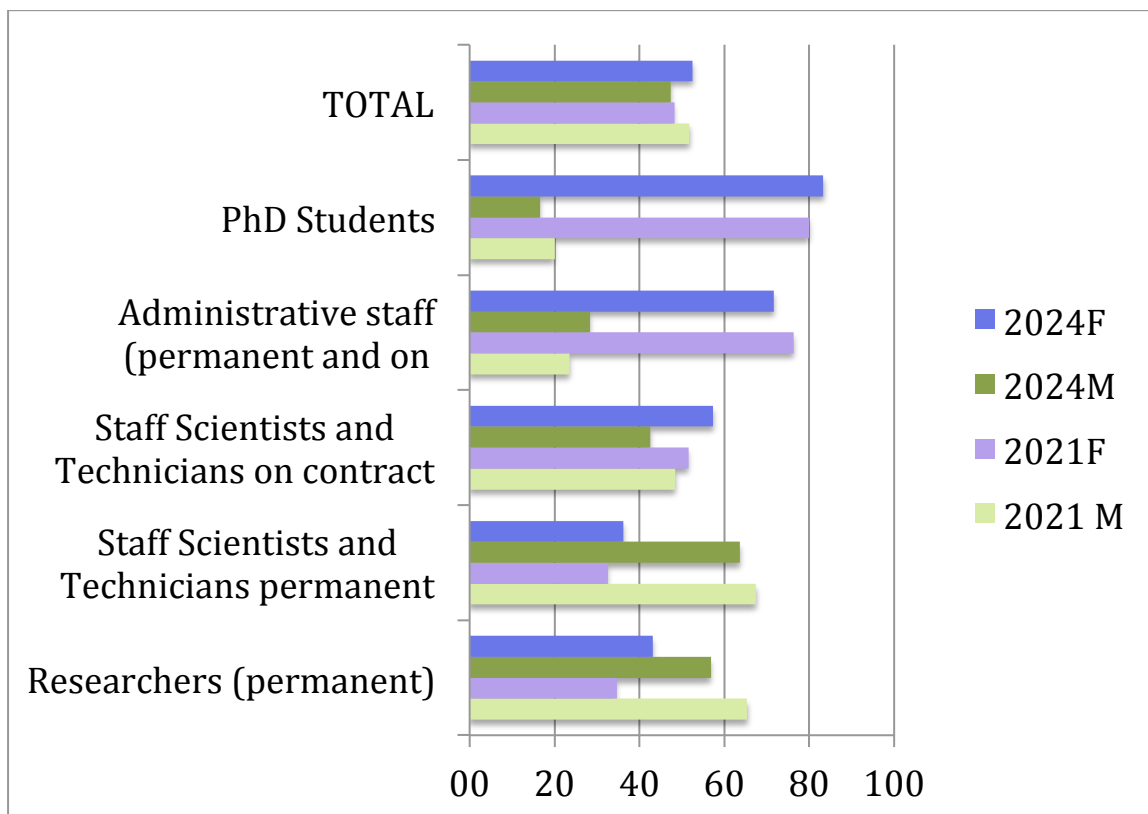


Figure A2. HCMR gender distribution comparison 2021 vs 2024 (%)

### Appendix 3: Support available

Staff and collaborators could find support regarding issues on equality from the following departments/people. Contact details will be available at the corresponding GEP webpage, within HCMR's general website.

Gender Equality Board (GEB) and Human Resources	You can talk to the HR Manager or GEB in confidence about any concerns in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. This includes issues directly related to you, or where you may have witnessed any unacceptable behaviour. GEB can offer advice and guidance in relation to reaching a resolution on either an informal or formal process as needed and appropriate.
Scientific Coordinators	Projects' scientific co-ordinators are encouraged to discuss concerns with the GEP, and seek advice on how to incorporate GEP into their research. Additionally, employees are strongly encouraged to discuss issues of related to in-equality with the co-ordinators of the project they are employed. They will provide confidential support, advice and signposting.
Legal Advisors	HCMR's legal advisors could provide assistance and legal guidelines in any GE emerging issues.
Union of Researchers and Union of Employees	The existing Unions within HCMR are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. You can access support and advice from these unions in confidence.

#### Appendix 4: Questionnaire March 2024 – Presentation of results of the Questionnaire of the “Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Committee (GEADC) of the HCMR”

The GEADC questionnaire of HCMR, which was sent to all HCMR staff via e-mail on 08/03/2024, included 18 sections/questions and was completed completely anonymously by 130 people. The large participation (numerically and substantively with examples and suggestions) is proof of the importance of the issues it raises and highlights.

As we hoped, there is zero objection and almost absolute agreement (94% of responses) with the statement “The implementation of the principle of gender equality, and the absence of discrimination and harassment is crucial for a healthy and fair working environment”.

93% are aware of the existence of GEADC of HCMR but only 33% have read the Gender Equality Plan.

Regarding the section “**I have seen/perceived** cases of gender discrimination at the HCMR (e.g. exclusion from participation in scientific work, sampling, conference, position of representation or responsibility), moral harassment (e.g. verbal and psychological violence) and/or related inappropriate behavior (e.g. derogatory, intimidating, sexist, abusive)”:

- Unfortunately, 49% say YES while 34% say the opposite.
- Furthermore, 18% express disappointment, agreeing with the statement “this also happens at HCMR but nothing is done about it” (finding A\*)

At the same time, 12% optimistically state “that this happens very rarely at the HCMR” while 2% believe that “this does not happen at the HCMR” which is inconsistent with the other answers and the many examples provided.

Regarding the section “**Opinions** on gender discrimination at the HCMR (e.g. exclusion from participation in scientific work, sampling, conference, position of representation or responsibility), moral harassment (e.g. verbal and psychological violence) and/or inappropriate behaviour (e.g. derogatory, intimidating, sexist, abusive)”:

- 80% agree that “we must have zero tolerance for phenomena of discrimination, harassment and abusive behaviour”
- 49% believe that “unfortunately there is tolerance for inappropriate behaviour” and at the same time “there are no penalties” or “minimal recommendations and interest in change” (finding B\*)
- 17% believe that there is a bigger problem with inappropriate harassing behaviour than with discrimination, and 9% the opposite.
- It is not a matter of the work sector (32% agreement) or education, it can happen anywhere, it can be a matter of power but it can also happen between colleagues of the same rank (41% agreement)

Regarding the section “**I have suffered** gender discrimination at the HCMR (e.g. in participating in a scientific paper, in a sampling mission, in a conference, in a position of representation or responsibility), moral harassment (e.g. verbal and psychological violence) and/or inappropriate behavior (e.g. derogatory, intimidating, sexist, abusive)”:

- unfortunately 40% (approximately) state YES and 60% (approximately) NO
- in addition 13% state that “there is no code of conduct and supportive framework” (see also finding A\* & B\*) or “I did not do anything”, “I did not receive the support I needed”, and to a lesser extent “I received the support I needed”.

Regarding reporting and dealing with incidents, 51% state that they know where to turn “In the event of an incident of gender discrimination, harassment and inappropriate behaviour” and 33% that they do not know.

Only 6% choose “I know what measures and penalties may exist and be implemented” which is in agreement with the above.

In the questionnaire we had 130 responses and 80 comments with specific (anonymous) reports of incidents and suggestions that demonstrate the great importance of the issue and the need to address it in multiple ways.

Especially with

- frequent information of staff (of all categories) with examples of what constitutes discrimination, harassment and inappropriate behavior (e.g. through speeches, informational material and GEB/GEADC network seminars) as well as the importance of the values of equality, inclusion, diversity, respect, safety, mental health and well-being at work. Reminder that toxic behaviors and practices undermine work performance and team atmosphere. Encouraging and maintaining a healthy work climate with respect for human dignity, cooperation and mutual assistance are core values.
- the posting, notification and delivery of the Code of Conduct of HCMR, the HCMR's Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Plan and the relevant legislation "ΔΙΔΑΔ/Φ.64/946/ΟΙΚ.858/19-01-2023 Prevention and treatment of violence and harassment at work in public bodies" which provides:
  - clear definitions for "harassment" (meaning forms of behaviour that have as their purpose or effect the violation of the dignity of the person and the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or aggressive environment, regardless of whether they constitute a form of discrimination, and include harassment based on gender or other grounds of discrimination), "violence and harassment", and "harassment based on gender"
  - the framework for implementation of the law that includes every area of the workplace, whether during working hours or breaks, in commuting to and from work, other travel, travel, training, work-related events and activities and during work-related communications, including those carried out through information and communication technologies.
  - instructions for reporting incidents of violence and harassment at work, possible protection measures, prohibition of retaliation, etc.

- establishing rules and creating a manual - code of conduct that provides clear instructions for proper behaviour based on the principles of **equality, inclusion, diversity, respect, safety, mental health and well-being** at work as well as ways to deal with harassment of any form so that the employee can respond immediately/manage the incident
- publishing instructions from the GE committee for procedures for reporting incidents of harassment/discrimination
- zero tolerance and actions to prevent and deal with these phenomena - adopting a policy for the prevention and fight against violence and harassment at work, within the meaning of articles 3 and 4 of the law. 4808/2021, which states zero tolerance for these forms of behavior, specifies the rights and obligations of employees and the employer to prevent and address such incidents or forms of behavior
- combating the culture of tolerance of discrimination and abusive behaviours – 49% of staff believe that there is tolerance while 80% of staff strongly support zero tolerance
- combating the culture of impunity
- reversing the culture that nothing is done, nothing changes
- abusive and toxic behaviours and health issues, for example smoking, which is a harmful and illegal activity for which there is tolerance but no protection for those who are forced to experience others' smoking in workshops and work meetings. How can we avoid the forced exposure of colleagues/peers to harmful behavior as a consequence of smokers' addiction and tolerance? how/where is the report made, the investigation of the incident, what sanctions are there and what protection is given. Abusive and toxic behaviors and mental health issues as a result of sexist behavior and speech or the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or aggressive environment – how/where is the report made, the investigation of the incident, what sanctions are there and what protection is given
- adoption of measures and publication of the penalties that each case of gender discrimination, moral harassment or inappropriate behavior entails.