GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2022-2025

CYPRUS CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a core value of the European Union (EU) and a fundamental right, which is promoted through all the activities of the Union as dictated by several of its Treaties[1]. Despite the EU being a world leader in gender equality and effectively closing the education gender gap in the Union, the most recent EU Gender Equality Index published by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) in 2019[2], indicates that progress towards gender equality is slow. Gender gaps in pay, care, power and pension persist, whilst gender-based violence and harassment as well as stereotyping are still rife. To address these, the European Commission in its Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025[3], sets out the policy objectives and key actions to be undertaken in the given period.

This broader commitment to address equality is envisioned to translate across all EU policies, including the research sector in which particularities such as gender-science stereotypes and gender-biased research exist. To overcome persisting gender gaps in the research sector, which lead to female talent waste and loss of diversified input ultimately resulting to compromises in research excellence, the European Commission aims to tackle an array of underlying barriers through its main funding instrument Horizon Europe and within the European Research Area (ERA) expansion. Horizon Europe stipulates the development of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content as eligibility and award funding criteria, whilst gender balance amongst research teams is set as a ranking criterion for proposals with the same score[4]. Meanwhile, gender equality and equal opportunities are defined as shared priority areas for joint action in support of the ERA in the recently signed Pact for Research and Innovation[5]. For funding programmes with submission dates from 2022, research organisations must have GEPs with content covering the following 5 thematic areas:

- work-life balance and organisational culture
- gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content
- measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

The CCRI developed the current GEP 2022-2025 as a tool for structural change. Herein, CCRI presents an organisation situation analysis derived from an internal assessment of existing procedures and practices to identify potential gender biases, suggests an action plan for strategies, measures and targets to correct or prevent gender biases along with a robust implementation and ongoing monitoring of progress to ensure the optimisation of all proposed arrangements.

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[1] Articles 2 and 3(3) TEU, Articles 8, 10, 19 and 157 TFEU, Articles 21 and 23 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
[2] 2019 EM2030 SDG Gender Index
[3] A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025
[4] 2021 Horizon Europe, gender equality: A strengthened commitment in Horizon Europe
[5] 2021 The new European Research Area

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The CCRI was established in 2019 by a network of leading academic (University of Cyprus), clinical (Bank of Cyprus Oncology Centre) and diagnostic (Karaiskakio Foundation) partners, and it commenced its operational activities in April 2020.

The CCRI's vision is to become a leading cancer research institute and through its stipulated values it recognises that this can be achieved by creating a great place to work by fostering an ethical ethos founded on respect, accountability, and honesty. As a forward-facing modern organisation, the CCRI recognises that diversity is key to achieving the aspired quality of the Institute through its Code of Conduct (approved 08/07/2020)[6] which was developed with consideration of International and UN standards. All CCRI employees, collaborators, and other representatives must act impartially and are expected to treat others with dignity and respect and challenge any form of harassment, discrimination, intimidation, exploitation or abuse. CCRI does not tolerate any kind of negative distinction, discrimination, psychological or physical harassment, threat, attack, or exclusion; or any kind of restriction; due to age, disability, gender identity or reassignment, race (including nationality or ethnic identity), sex, sexual orientation, religion, or belief. As such it is requested that each employee, representative or volunteer of the CCRI, expressly abides to such responsibilities including but not limited to the above by undersigning the CCRI Code of Conduct.

The CCRI believes that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. As a provider of employment, CCRI values the diversity of its staff and remains committed to creating an inclusive culture and a fair, equitable and mutually supportive working and learning environment. To support its commitment to inclusivity at a strategic level, CCRI enacted its Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy (approved 08/07/2020)[7] to deliver through this integrated framework the provisions for the coordination and implementation of all such relevant activities. The CCRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy calls for mainstreaming activities, zero tolerance of harassment (including sexual harassment), equality, diversity and inclusivity to be embed in all its policies, processes and procedures and included in all key CCRI documents.

It is acknowledged that although much has been achieved in a short period, CCRI still needs to set gender equality as a priority area. Based on the situational analysis Appendix 1 the Institute must put in place actions and indicators to deepen and fully materialise parameters of its existing Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy, as well as addressing any emerging concerns regarding gender balance in decision making and senior scientific positions.

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[6] CCRI_2020_119_POL_Code of Conduct_v1.0, 08-07-2020
[7] CCRI_2020_116_POL_Equality and diversity Policy_v1.0, 08-07-2020

GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

Globally the United Nations have long now set the international standards on business and human rights and adopted a global plan that through its 17 Sustainable Development Goals[8] aspires to achieve a better future and a fairer and more sustainable world by 2030. Although CCRI is a small organisation, it is committed to doing business responsibly and to meaningfully contributing towards global challenges. As such the core principles underpinning several Sustainable Development Goals such as gender equality (5), decent work and economic growth (8), reduced inequalities (10) and peace and justice strong institutions (16) have been incorporated throughout the current GEP.

In its core the GEP primarily deals with and puts actions towards ascertaining the equal treatment of men and women. Nevertheless, it also outlines the work to be undertaken to achieve equality for all individuals irrespective of age, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, origin, nationality, marital status, language, physical ability or socioeconomic background. In doing so this will create a productive, peaceful and sustainable workplace for all, where accountability and inclusivity at all levels is valued, promoted, safeguarded and monitored.

In response to the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the laid-out plan to deepen the ERA, the CCRI's GEP is developed on the basis of the following long-term priority areas:

A) Creating an equal opportunities organisational culture
B) Strengthen the gender dimension in research
C) Equality-focussed community, governance and decision making
D) Gender balance and equality in recruitment, retention and career progression

Each priority area is further expanded into distinct shorter-term sub-goals which are linked to characterising key activities. The overarching timeline and responsible individuals/bodies are also stipulated. The EIGE Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool[9] was used to aid and direct the development of the CCRI GEP.

The current GEP was prepared by the CCRI Research Support Officer, in collaboration with the Institute's Senior Management. The final approved version of the GEP will come into force upon ratification by the Board of Directors. In accordance with common practice, every institutional policy including the current GEP is subject to the relevant international human rights and labour standards and principles and shall be read in a manner that is compliant with national (Republic of Cyprus) laws.

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[8] United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
[9] Gender Equality in Academia and Research - GEAR tool

PRIORITY AREA A: CREATING AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

SUB GOAL	KEY ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE				RESPONSIBLE
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
A-1 Enforce commitment to equality within the organisation	• Align CCRI Business Plan, CCRI Research strategy and other CCRI policies and SOPs with the actions and principles outlined herein to allow for the implementation of the GEP	✓	✓			BoD, Senior Management, PMS, Equality Officer, CPRC
	• Align policies in the GEP with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the EU Legislation	✓				
	• Promote excellence by aligning core CCRI activities with gender equality	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	• Use non-gender specific language in publications and communication (e.g., Inclusive language guide)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	• Update the CCRI website to include equality information	✓				
	• Ensure that CCRI will not knowingly collaborate with or outsource activities to companies which do not comply with the CCRI GEP standards and related policies.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	• Allocate CCRI funds for the implementation and sustainability of the GEP actions	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A-2 Creation of structures to support gender equality	• Delegation of an Equality Officer, development of their role description of responsibilities and install robust feedback mechanisms to the Equality Officer	✓				BoD, CCRI Director, Senior Management, PMS
	• Appointment of an EDIC and its mandate	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	• Collect, analyse, report and monitor gender disaggregated data to monitor gender and diversity throughout CCRI	✓				
	• Systematic monitoring of the implementation of the GEP measures and actions including setting indicators	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A-3 Enforce measures against violence	• Update the CCRI Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy and Code of Conduct	✓				BoD, CCRI Director, Equality Officer, HR, EDIC, Senior Management
	• Draft harassment and discrimination reporting/management SOP detailing how to monitor, report and take action about potential cases	✓				
	• Create a safe environment and measures to encourage reporting of harassment, discrimination and gender-based violence	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A-4 Raise awareness of gender inequalities issues	• Attain gender equality competence by offering interactive training to strengthen skills to deal with gender equality issues.	✓	✓	✓	✓	EDIC, Equality Officer, Senior Management, PMS, CPRC
	• Promote initiatives favouring widespread activity to raise awareness on gender sensitive issues		✓	✓	✓	
	• Pilot an Equality Discussion Forum where all CCRI members could participate in the discussion of equality issues			✓		

PRIORITY AREA B: STRENGTHENING THE GENDER DIMENSION IN RESEARCH

SUB GOAL	KEY ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE				RESPONSIBLE
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
B-1 Integration of the gender dimension in the design, implementation and analysis of research	• Minimise gender-blind/ biased research design by using gender sensitive methodology	✓	✓	✓	✓	RSO, Research Group Leaders, EDIC, Audit Committee
	• Encourage researchers to consider gender as a key analytical and exploratory variable in their work and as such to collect, analyse and disseminate data in a gender sensitive way	✓	✓	✓	✓	
B-2 Achieve research team gender diversity	• Boost gender perspectives targeted to an increased number of women in senior research positions (i.e., Group Leaders)	✓	✓	✓	✓	BoD, CCRI Director, SAC, RSO
	• Promote gender diversity and balance in research teams in line with the European Charter for researchers and the codes of ethics and conduct	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	• Encourage the successful integration of the gender perspective in research according to EU Funding Agencies	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	• Consider gender balance among the personnel named in research proposals as submitted for CCRI funding calls as one of the ranking/priority order criteria in cases two or more proposals achieve the same score[10]	✓	✓	✓	✓	
B-3 Address gender-science stereotypes	• Increase media exposure of female researchers		✓	✓	✓	RSO, Equality Officer, EDIC, PMS, CPRC
	• Encourage of female researchers in participating in STEM initiatives as role models				✓	
B-4 Strive towards gender equality in research-related activities and outreach engagements	• Pursue gender equal representation in research seminars, guest speakers, lectures		✓	✓	✓	CCRI Director, Research Group Leaders, RSO, Audit Committee, CPRC
	• Create procedures to review researcher's performance in a gender unbiased manner (e.g., monitoring submissions, excellence evaluations, publications, patent applications etc).	✓	✓	✓	✓	

PRIORITY AREA C: EQUALITY-FOCUSSED GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

SUB GOAL	KEY ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE				RESPONSIBLE
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
C-1 Balance in leadership	• Promote gender balance in leadership via appropriately tailored training programmes	✓	✓	✓	✓	CCRI Director, Equality Officer, EDIC, Personnel Committee, HR
	• Seek balanced presence of women and men in leadership positions by promoting good practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	
C-2 Enhance representation of women in decision-making	• Evaluate if administrative responsibilities follow gendered patterns to ensure that there is no direct or indirect discrimination		✓	✓	✓	CCRI Director, BoD, Equality Officer, EDIC, Audit
	• Disseminate data analysis with stakeholders and decision-makers to plan further actions	✓	✓	✓	✓	

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[10] [Horizon Europe Work Programme 2021-2022 - 13. General Annexes](#)

	Promote and actively support the equal representation of women and men in governing and decision-making bodies	✓	✓	✓	✓	Committee, Senior Management, PMS
C-3 Ensure that governance bodies have a focus on equality	• Demonstrate commitment to diversity and inclusion in the workplace by applying and signing the Diversity Charter Cyprus[11] • Engage with the EC's HR Excellence in Research initiative[12]		✓	✓	✓	CCRI Director, Equality Officer, EDIC, HR, PMS

PRIORITY AREA D: GENDER BALANCE AND EQUALITY IN RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND CAREER PROGRESSION

SUB GOAL	KEY ACTIVITIES	TIMELINE				RESPONSIBLE
		2022	2023	2024	2025	
D-1 Implement procedures to ensure equality in recruitment and promotion	• Promote transparency and gender sensitivity throughout all phases of the recruitment and appointment procedures and of promotion, advancement and career development	✓	✓	✓	✓	CCRI Director, Personnel Committee, EDIC, Equality Officer, HR,
	• Update recruitment/promotion policies to ensure selection panels are appropriately mixed and where possible balanced (i.e., at least 40% of the underrepresented gender of recruitment panels).	✓				
	• Ensure inclusive language is use in all job advertisement and that the selection criteria are explicit and transparent, whilst the posts are widely advertised	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	• Offer Unconscious Bias Training and/or recommend taking the Implicit Association Test (IAT) for senior staff, recruitment and selection panels responsible for staff recruitment and promotion	✓	✓	✓	✓	
D-2 Foster gender equality in career advancement and development	• Explore piloting a mentoring programme with women role models (researchers, academics scientists) to share career best practices, empowerment and networking opportunities			✓		CCRI Director, EDIC, Equality Officer, HR, Research Group Leaders, Senior Management, PMS
	• Foster Continuing Professional Education (CPE)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
D-3 Promotion of work-life balance	• Develop regulations and policies to facilitate work, personal and family life balance	✓				CCRI Director, BoD, Personnel Committee, EDIC, Equality Officer, HR, Senior Management, Research Group Leaders
	• Explore availability and accommodation of atypical career patterns (e.g., part-time employment, remote working, flexible working hours models etc.) for all employees		✓			
	• Produce guidelines on better planning of meetings and mobility (i.e., schedule, timing, use of ICT-based systems) to enhance flexibility	✓				
	• Encourage sharing of parental leave and equitable family friendly policies	✓				
	• Introduce structured support for staff with child-care duties and other carer responsibilities (i.e., parent-child office for emergencies, breast-feeding retreating room, child or family members with disabilities or elderly family members-care, etc.)		✓			

* BoD = Board of Directors, CPRC = Communication and Public Relations Committee, EDIC = Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee, , HR = Human Resources, PMS = Professional Management Support, RSO = Research Support Office, SAC = Scientific Advisory Committee, SOP = Standard Operating Procedures

[11] Diversity Charter Cyprus (DCC)
[12] Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R)

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The GEP will receive authorisation to be enacted by the CCRI Board of Directors. In the first instance its implementation will be coordinated by the Research Support Officer and under the guidance of the Acting Managing Director (and the CCRI Director after his/her appointment) and in consultation with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee (EDIC, to be appointed). The Research Support Officer will act as the Equality Officer of the Institute until the need to recruit additional staff arises. All CCRI staff and collaborators, where applicable, have a responsibility to publicly support the GEP, actively participate in the initiatives organised within the GEP framework and ensure the practical implementation of the measures, procedures and activities as required by the GEP.

Actors involved in the piloting of actions should help identify any potential sources of resistance to change and bring this to the attention of the EDIC to explore methods of addressing these. The proposed action plan may be revised before its expiry date to reflect changes in national and EU guidelines, to allow accounting for changes in timelines due to internal or external factors and to take into consideration any lessons learnt, or shortcomings identified through the initial piloting and implementation of the GEP.

To ensure the visibility and measurability of the gender mainstreaming activities proposed in the CCRI GEP, monitoring mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that the evaluation of the actual progress made is effective, transparent and appropriately documented and communicated. For this purpose, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee will be tasked with performing continuous monitoring of the progress of the implementation of the GEP by setting indicators which will be used as the measures to evaluate the implementation performance and will compile an annual Gender Equality Report with the participation of the CCRI Audit committee. The annual Gender Equality Report will include the following and will be publicly available (including on the CCRI website):

- A summary of the progress and any deviations against the predefined indicators and timelines in the GEP.
- Qualitative and quantitative analysis of how the CCRI's situation analysis (including but not limited to gender representation in governing bodies and decision making, gender distribution per work category, changes in wages between genders and distribution of funding) has shifted compared to the baseline assessment presented herein.
- Suggestions and recommendations for revising the proposed GEP action plan.

APPENDIX 1 – CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

The CCRI is governed by its 11-member Board of Directors responsible for strategic, budgeting and policy matters and the Interim Governing Board, composed by delegates from partner organisations which is responsible for current affairs and the operational management of the Institute. The members of the Board of Directors are assigned by the partner organisations (4 by University of Cyprus, 3 by Bank of Cyprus Oncology Centre 3 by Karaiskakio Foundation and 1 by the CCRI benefactor), as such CCRI has no direct input on the gender balance of its governing body. The gender representation in the Board of Directors is summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Table 1: Gender representation in CCRI Board of Directors.

Body Name	Member Number	Voting members	Decision Making Ratio	Female % in Decision Making
Board of Directors	11	11	2 F : 9 M	18%
Interim Governing Board	4	4	2 F : 2 M	50%

Members of the Board of Directors are further assigned to various committees, in which participation of additional CCRI employees and representatives from the partner organisations may participate. The Scientific Advisory Committee is responsible for developing the research strategy, forge its research directions and define the scope of work of the Institute. Seven additional committees have a supporting role regarding different activities and focus areas of CCRI. Only members of the CCRI Board of Directors have voting rights on any given committee unless otherwise specifies by CCRI policies. Gender representation in the CCRI support committees and in decision making are summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Table 2: Gender representation in CCRI support committees.

Body Name	Member Number	Voting members	Decision Making Ratio	Female % in Decision Making
Audit Committee	5	4	1 F : 3 M	25%
Building and Facilities Development Committee	8	4	0 F : 4 M	0%
Communication and Public Relations Committee	6	3	2 F : 1 M	67%
Disciplinary Committee	4	3	2 F : 1 M	67%
Executive Committee	8	5	0 F : 5 M	0%
Financial Management Committee	5	4	0 F : 4 M	0%
Personnel and Employment Affairs Committee	6	3	2 F : 1 M	67%
Purchases and Tenders Committee	5	5	3 F : 2 M +	60%
Scientific Advisory Committee	5	5	1 F : 4 M	20%

+ It should be noted that the project owner (i.e., the individual requesting the purchase) has voting rights. The gender of the individual varies accordingly. In the data presented in current report the project owner was always female.

As previously stated, CCRI is a young Institute. Since January 2020 an Acting Managing Director and an Acting Research Director have been in post as senior management members and since April 2020 the institutes Administration and Research Support Officers were recruited as professional management support personnel. The CCRI currently has four

research teams which are actively recruiting their first staff members. The gender distribution per work category for CCRI is shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**.

Table 3: Gender distribution per work category for CCRI.

Work Category	Total	Female	Male	Female %
Acting Management	2	2	0	100%
Management Support Administrators	2	2	0	100%
Research Team Group Leader	4	1	3	25%
Post-doctoral Researchers	2	1	1	50%
Research Assistant	2	2	0	100%
Technical staff	0	0	0	-

In March 2021 CCRI announced the results of its first funding call "Bridges in Cancer Research Excellence". As a pre-requite proposals had to be the result of a partnership of at least two or the three founding institutions. In total four projects were awarded €200.000 each as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.**, with 25% of the principal investigators (PI) being female and 75% male.

Table 4: Gender distribution for CCRI funded research projects.

Project Information	Lead Organisation	PI Gender
ChemoresistNAT (2020_FUN_001-103)	University of Cyprus	Male
ACT-Costimulation (2020_FUN_001-107)	Karaiskakio Foundation	Male
PROTEAS (2020_FUN_001-109)	University of Cyprus	Male
CARE (2020_FUN_001-110)	University of Cyprus	Female