

**NATURE RESEARCH CENTRE**

**GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2022–2027**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Nature Research Centre (hereinafter referred to as the "NRC") is a state scientific research institute that pursues long-term scientific research and experimental (social, cultural) development.

The NRC promotes equality and diversity by not tolerating discrimination in all its activities. The Nature Research Centre's Gender Equality Plan 2022–2027 (hereinafter referred to as the "Gender Equality Plan") is created to draw attention of the entire NRC community to the importance of gender equality and to promote changes and scientific progress in this field.

The main objective of the Gender Equality Plan is to help ensure equal opportunities for all current and future members of the NRC community regardless of their gender and to address gender issues systematically. This plan aims at creating structural and cultural changes. The plan is expected to facilitate the creation of a safe and equitable climate in the NRC, to allow reducing the prevailing stereotypes of choosing a profession, to ensure the prevention of discrimination and to help include the aspect of gender equality in the content of scientific research and innovation as widely as possible.

The Gender Equality Plan has been prepared in accordance with the directives and regulations of the European Union, the ***guidelines*** and recommendations of the "Horizon Europe" gender equality plans prepared by the European Commission, and the laws and other legal regulations of the Republic of Lithuania.

***The European Commission*** is committed to promoting gender equality in scientific research and innovation. The Gender Equality Strategy provides an outline of the European Commission's work in the field of gender equality and sets out the 2020–2025 policy objectives and the main actions. The European Commission aims at ensuring gender equality so that gender-based violence and discrimination as well as structural inequality between women and men are considered unacceptable in Europe. In implementing the goals, the aim is for women and men in Europe to be equal, regardless of their differences, to be free to live the life they choose, to have equal opportunities to achieve goals and to be able to participate in society life with equal rights, and to become leaders.

Directive 2006/54/EC ***of the European Parliament and of the Council*** on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men in matters of employment and occupation mentions that legal and organizational barriers to the recruitment and retention as well as career development of female researchers must be removed and in compliance with the EU legislation on gender equality. The purpose of the Directive is to ensure that the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men in employment and occupation is implemented.

The promotion of gender equality is considered a priority area of the "Horizon Europe" programme, and stricter provisions have been set for it. Public institutions, scientific research organizations and higher education institutions wishing to receive funding under the "Horizon Europe" programme from 2022 must have to approve a gender equality plan. These provisions are intended to ensure sustainable institutional changes and to better integrate the aspect of gender in projects aimed at improving the quality of scientific research.

The integration of the aspect of gender in scientific research and innovation content is mandatory, it is set out in the general introduction of the "Horizon Europe" work programme and in Annex D on the criteria for funding. Its importance is emphasized in all work programmes of "Horizon Europe" thematic areas.

European provisions are also incorporated into national documents. The purpose of the ***Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania*** is to ensure the implementation of the provisions of Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania establishing the equality of persons and the prohibition of restricting human rights or granting privileges to them on the basis of gender, race, nationality, language, origin, social status, belief, convictions or views.

***The Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Republic of Lithuania*** regulates and ensures that the equal rights of women and men established in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania are implemented. It seeks to prohibit any discrimination on the grounds of person's gender.

***Article 26 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania*** obliges an employer to comply with the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination on other grounds. It is important to mention that part 6 of this article stipulates the obligation for all employers with an average number of employees exceeding fifty to adopt and publish in the ways usual in the workplace the measures for the implementation of the equal opportunities policy and for the implementation of enforcement supervision principles.

***The Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson has adopted rules*** specifying particular measures to protect employees from (sexual) harassment or stalking. This document can also be used by institutions willing to ensure the dignity and equality of their employees. The document identifies what behaviour is considered inappropriate in the workplace; the rules advise respecting the private life of colleagues and avoiding behaviour unpleasant for others.

"Recommendations to ensure equal opportunities for men and women in Lithuanian research and higher education institutions" ***prepared by the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania*** provides guidelines promoting equality between women and men and eliminating manifestations of inequality in the fields of research and higher education.

**The Gender Equality Plan also considers the NRC's internal documents:**

***The Code of Academic Ethics*** contains such fundamental values of academic ethics as academic honesty, responsibility, equality, justice, non-discrimination, accountability, transparency, sustainable use of resources, trust, and respect.

**Distribution of NRC employees by gender**

In the NRC, 37.98% of all employees are men and 62.02% are women (see Fig. 1), while among students the proportions are 45.28% and 54.72%, respectively (see Fig. 2). It is important to perform a deeper analysis of gender equality. It should help monitor the gender equality situation and identify areas for improvement.

 Fig. 1. Distribution of employees by gender Fig. 2. Distribution of students by gender

The NRC ensures a fair remuneration system independent of gender or other discriminatory grounds. The NRC has its internal procedures regulating the remuneration of research staff, administration and other employees. The procedures determine the structure of remuneration, the principles of its determination and the payment procedure. They set the values of official salary coefficients, which must be observed when determining the salary.

During selection of new employees, the NRC performs evaluation of the candidates according to the same criteria. The job descriptions contain the qualification requirements for the position, which guide the selection of new employees.

**GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2022–2027**

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| **Purpose** | **Measures** | **Indicators** | **Responsible persons, divisions** | **Implementation** |
|  |  |  |  |  2022  |  2023  |  2024  |  2025  |  2026  |  2027  |
| **Strong gender equality policy** | To include gender equality provisions in strategic documentsTo update the Code of Academic Ethics, supplementing it with gender equality measures | Strategic activities plans updatedThe Code of Academic Ethics updated | AdministrationAcademic Ethics Commission | ++ |  |  | + |  |  |
| **Organizational structure ensuring the implementation of gender equality policy**  | To expand the existing position for ensuring equal opportunities, for coordinating the implementation of anti-discrimination policy To assess the situation of gender equality in the NRC | The position to coordinate the ensuring of gender equality expanded Gender equality analysis performed  | AdministrationLaw and Human Resources Department | ++ |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Gender balance in decision-making, in participation in job and study selection, and in career advancement**  | To seek to include representatives of both sexes in candidate lists, when performing the procedures of selection, election to leadership and decision-making positions and decision-making bodies (committees, councils, commissions, etc.), delegation to external organizations, etc. | Procedures for competitions and other candidate selections reviewed and, if necessary, updated  | Law and Human Resources Department  | + |  | + | + |  | + |
| **Gender-friendly academic environment** | Creating favourable conditions for combining work, studies and family | Informing employees and department heads about flexible working conditions and benefits for those raising children | Law and Human Resources Department  | + |  | + |  | + |  |
| **Equality-oriented communication** | Incorporating gender balance principles into communicationFormation of internal and external news, maintaining gender balance | Publicising the gender equality plan and principlesApplying the principles of gender equality | Internal Administration and Public Communication DepartmentInternal Administration and Public Communication Department  | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ | ++ |
| **Measures against violence, including sexual harassment**  | To prepare or update preventive measures against violence, intimidation or threats at work | Measures against violence, intimidation or threats at work prepared and updated | Law and Human Resources Department  |  | + |  | + |  |  |

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