

The Gender Equality Strategy and the Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025

for the Astronomical Institute of the Romanian Academy (AIRA)

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Abbreviations and definitions

GE	Gender equality
GEP	Gender equality plan
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
GD	Director
CD	Scientific Council (SC)
Sex	Either of the two major forms of individuals that occur in many species and that are distinguished respectively as female or male especially on the basis of their reproductive organs and structures (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)
Gender	The behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)
Sex vs Gender	A clear delineation between sex and gender is typically prescribed, with sex as the preferred term for biological forms, and gender limited to its meanings involving behavioural, cultural, and psychological traits. In this dichotomy, the terms male and female relate only to biological forms (sex), while the terms masculine/masculinity, feminine/femininity, woman/girl, and man/boy relate only to psychological and sociocultural traits (gender) (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)

Introduction

The Gender Equality (GE) strategy for 2022-2025 was developed by AIRA on the basis of input from the entire research institute and takes into account everyone who works at our research institute. The GE strategy was built on the provisions of the European Charter for researchers and of the Code of Conduct in the process of the recruitment of researchers¹, 2015-2019, the European Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025² and the Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans³.

The motivation for developing the GE strategy is to ensure that our research institute is a safe place for everyone, and all activities and processes that take place respect the principles of equality, diversity, inclusiveness and non-discrimination.

Based on the GE strategy, the research institute developed the GE Plan (GEP) for 2022-2025, with concrete actions and measures, as well as indicators for measuring progress of its implementation and revisions.

Enforcing its mission and values, the GE strategy and the GEP of AIRA ensure and promote equality and diversity to knowledge and the acquisition of skills to all. The objectives of the GE strategy are implemented through specific actions that aim at safeguarding an equal and inclusive organizational culture and promoting gender-equality at all levels. As such, the GE strategy and the GEP will pro-actively enable, gender equality awareness raising, skills and competences; gender balance in decision-making structures and processes, including recruitment; gender equality in research; and integrating the gender dimension in the entire research process.

I. Review of requirements, policies and case studies

Prior to developing the GE strategy and the GEP, the management of AIRA appointed a working group to conduct a literature review of the existing requirements, policies, recommendations, examples and case studies pertinent to discrimination, inclusiveness and gender equality, with a special focus on research performing organisations (RPOs).

The resources used in this literature review study are presented in Annex 3.

¹ https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/ttf_goal_2_results_v1.0.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1>

II. Diagnosis (data collection and analysis)

II.1. Data collection

The following indicators were selected at AIRA as relevant for the discussion on gender equality issues:

- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by domains, function (including administrative / support staff)
- Numbers of women and men in research and administrative decision-making positions (e.g., top management team, boards, committees, recruitment and promotion panels);
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave.

1. Women and men in leadership positions

Table 1. Research institute management

	Woman	Man
Director dr. Mirel Bîrlan		1
Economic Director Ec. Mirela Brai	1	
Head of Department 1 Fundamental Astronomy Head Dr. Dan Alin Nedelcu		1
Head of Department 2 Astrophysical Department Dr. Mark Rushton		1
TOTAL	1	3

Table 2. Other Heads of research institute structures / units (independent units, other than research):

	Woman	Man
Financial Department	1	

Ec. Mirela Brai		
Technical and administrative Department Petre Paraschiv		1
TOTAL	2	1

2. Women and men – research staff

Table 3. Total number of research staff, per department

	Experienced researchers (CS I, CS II, CS III)	Early -stage researchers (CS and ACS)	Total women	Total men
Research department 1	1/7 W	2/7 W	1	
Fundamental Astronomy	6/11 M	1/11 M		3
Research department 2	2/7 W	2/7 W	4	
Astrophysics	2/11 M	2/11 M		4
Total women	3	4	7	
Total men	8	3		11

3. Women and men – administrative and support services

Table 4. Total number of women and men in administrative and support services

	Women	Men
Office administration support (secretaries)	1/8	0/8
Librarians	0/8	1/8
Building administration	0/8	1/8
Other	2/8	2/8
Human Resources Department	1/8	0/8
TOTAL	4	4

As part of data collection and diagnosis, we conducted institute-wide surveys with the following indicators:

- Number of years needed for women and men to make career advancements
- Numbers of women and men candidates applying for distinct job positions
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave
- Opinions on the work-life balance in the research institute
- Integration of the gender dimension into research content
- Perception of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in the research institute
- Perception (opinion) regarding inclusiveness and discrimination at the research institute

II. 2. Data analysis

We conducted internal analyses of the data collected, and reviews of existing policies addressing gender equality and inclusiveness. The analyses took place in meeting and interviews with, with the gender equality function assigned for developing the GEP) and including the research institute management, research staff and representatives of research institute administrative and support services. Each and all working groups included even numbers of men and women.

The conclusions of the internal audit were then analysed in the SC, approved in the GD, and then communicated to the entire research institute staff.

With mandate from the SC, the Director committed to the development and implementation of the GEP for AIRA, for 2022-2025.

1. Quantitative analysis of data

The analysis of numerical data illustrated that:

- On average, the number of women and men in research positions, i.e., experienced researcher and early-stage researcher, is almost even, reflecting a good existing recruitment practices in the research institute

2. Qualitative analysis of data

The qualitative research showed that:

- Combining work and family life – women more often declare that they are responsible for most of family duties
- The expectation of international mobility is more difficult for women to reconcile with taking care of children and other dependants
- Women do more housework; maternal responsibilities delay research work and discourage women from taking up administrative positions
- Women with children do not take longer trips abroad, they publish less, become less involved in the social life of the department, and less frequently decide to take up administrative positions
- The research institute is perceived as a safe place, without gender-violence
- The research institute is overall perceived as inclusive
- A small number of respondents to surveys indicated inappropriate violations of personal space (%), persistent attempts at initiating contact about private matters (%), sexual advances (%). However, none of these situations may be taken lightly.

To summarize the results of the studies, it can be noted that all the situations mentioned by the respondents and situations analysed at the institute are, to some extent, factors of discrimination or manifestations based on gender.

The important conclusions of the internal analysis at AIRA are:

- We need to revisit the existing policies and procedures, to make gender relevant, and develop new ones covering all identified areas of intervention
- We need to train and educate our staff on gender-equality
- We need to communicate gender relevant actions and measures actively and efficiently
- We need to develop a gender strategy and a GEP for 2022-2025, with clear actions and targets, and responsible persons

III. GE strategy and GEP

Based on the internal review and the national and European policies and requirements, the Board of Directors and the General Director committed to developing the institute strategy for gender equality for 2022-2025, and the corresponding GEP.

AIRA decided on creating the function of GE officer at the institute plus one GE delegate in each department. The GE officer has a proactive role, and the GE delegates have a consultant role in implementing and monitoring the GE strategy.

Specifically, the GE officer and GE delegates contribute to setting up, implement, monitor and evaluate the GEP; provide practical support and tools to the actors involved in the GEP implementation; cooperate with and engage stakeholders at all levels in order to ensure the implementation of the GEP's actions; raise awareness about the benefits of gender equality in the research institute; assess the progress towards gender equality in the institute.

The institute management mandated the GE functions (officer and delegates) at the institute and a dedicated working group to develop the GE strategy and the GEP 2022-2025. The GE working group included men and women representatives of research institute leadership and researchers, representatives of research institute administration and support services, and one external advisor (*for example, from UEFISCDI, as the author of the first GEP for a public organization in Romania, or other relevant organization*).

III.1. GE Strategy 2022-2025

The GE Strategy comprises the following areas of intervention and objectives for 2022-2025:

Area of intervention <i>(These areas are those 'recommended' by Horizon Europe for GEP. They should be used in the GEP, however other areas may be considered, as needed)</i>	Objective(s) <i>(Please write your own objectives, as relevant for your own organization. Below are some examples that you may use, or replace with your own)</i>
1. Work-life balance and organisational culture	Promoting integration of work with family and personal life
2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	Promoting gender equality in the institutional culture, processes and practice
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Promoting processes to favour and support gender-sensitive recruitment, career and appointments
4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content	Promoting a gender and sex perspective in research process Promoting the integration of a sex and gender perspective in research activity
5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Raising awareness about the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity

III.2. GE Plan 2022-2025

The GE Plan at AIRA comprises areas of intervention, objectives, key measures, target audience, timeline, responsible persons, and indicators to measure progress.

Area 1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Objective: Promoting integration of work with family and personal life

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Availability of policies, procedures and structures at the research institute for promoting integration of work with family and personal life	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Policies, procedures and services for work and personal life integration	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
2. Feasibility plans for the creation of new welfare services, e.g., contract arrangements made by the research institute with service suppliers from family care duties and house chores to child-care (elderly-care) in case of conference or congress, or international mobility	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Policies, procedures, and services for work and personal life integration	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
3. Implementation of ICT-based systems for enhancing flexibility and improving a better planning of working meetings accordingly to work life balance needs (e.g., management and communications of the meeting schedule/timing)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Standard procedure for ICT-based systems promoting work and personal life integration	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
4. Availability of flexible working times arrangements, from part-time to remote working	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Policies, procedures and services for work and personal life integration	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer

Area 2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Objective: Promoting gender equality in the institutional culture, processes and practice

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Appointing delegates in departments/centres, with a proactive and/or consultant role to be responsible for monitoring and ensuring that workplace procedures and practices respect gender equality	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X			Gender equality policy and structures	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer, GE delegate
2. Routine revision of any text, communication, images, from a gender equality and diversity standing point	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Policies, procedures and services for work and personal life integration	GE officer, GE delegate
3. Promotion of initiatives to facilitate a widespread gender competence at all levels of the organization with provision of training to staff and researchers	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Awareness training on gender equality issues	GE officer, GE delegate

Area 3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Objective: Promoting processes to facilitate and support gender-sensitive recruitment, career and appointments

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Carrying out gender awareness initiatives, briefings and creating guidelines for gender-sensitive recruitment, career and appointments	Research institute management	X	X	X	X	Gender awareness initiatives and guidelines	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
2. Courses and training on gender equality	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Courses and training for recruitment	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer, GE delegate
						Courses and training for career progression	
						Courses and training for leadership	
3. Disseminate and communicate career good practices - role models for women (scientists, researchers and academics)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Initiatives for raising awareness on female role models	GE officer, GE delegate, HoDs

						Initiatives for raising awareness on gender diversity in research teams	
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Area 4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content

Objectives:

- Promoting a gender and sex perspective in research process
- Promoting the integration of a sex and gender perspective in research activity

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Internal training seminars on the use of sex and gender perspective in research, to foster the acknowledgement of its economic, social and innovation value	Researchers, scientific community	X	X	X	X	Participation in training seminars on integrating sex/gender analysis methods, by gender and field of research	GD, Researchers, GE officer
2. Development, communication and implementation of standards for the incorporation of the sex and gender variables into research	Researchers		X	X	X	Participation in training seminars on integrating sex/gender analysis methods,	GD, Researchers, GE officer

						by gender and field of research Perception of the gender/sex variables in research contents	
3. Institutional recognition within the research institute of those projects that have taken the gender dimension into account. (e.g., prizes)	Researchers, scientific community		X	X	X	Awarded projects	GD, HoDs, Researchers
4. Disseminate and communicate career good practices - role models for women (scientists, researchers and academics)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Initiatives for raising awareness on female role models Initiatives for raising awareness on gender diversity in research teams	GE officer, GE delegate, HoDs
5. Workshops on the integration of gender equality and diversity issues in research activity, as support for research staff	Researchers		X	X	X	Training seminars or guidelines on integrating sex/gender in research activity	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer

6. Courses and training tools in all departments and at all levels (experienced or early researchers) on sex and gender variables	Researchers		X	X	X	Courses on specific gender dimensions, per research activity (department)	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
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Area 5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Objective: Raising awareness about the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Training on discrimination phenomena (including discriminatory language), violence (including that based on prejudice or gender), harassment, and sexual harassment	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Participation in training, per categories Skills acquired in relation to identifying and responding to discrimination and violence phenomena	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
2. Develop internal (institute) electronic tool (website/platform) supporting information and education, as well as allowing the reporting of	Researchers, technical and administrative	X	X	X	X	Dedicated research institute website/platform,	GD, HoDs, HR, GE officer

sexual harassment and discrimination	e staff					number of visits, number of real-case situations reported and solved	
3. Reinforce de Code of Ethics of the institute with provisions against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Initiatives for raising awareness on female role models Initiatives for raising awareness on gender diversity in research teams	GD, HoDs, HR, GE officer
4. Awareness campaign highlighting diversity and inclusiveness in the scientific community and encouraging prevention of discrimination in various areas	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Awareness campaign	GE officer

IV. Monitoring and evaluation of the GEP

The implementation of the GEP at AIRA, the progress against the GE strategy aims and objectives are regularly assessed, through periodic meetings. The implementation of the GEP will be permanently monitored by the GE functions (officer and delegate) at the institute. The GE officer together with the GE delegates within each department are responsible with collecting data and input. They will perform a first analysis of the progress of the GEP (against the indicators), gather knowledge and feedback.

The GE functions at the institute will conclude findings reports (once a year), which are then presented to the research institute management (GD, HoDs) and discussed. These meetings will provide valuable conclusions on the implementation of the GEP. These meetings will also provide comments and recommendations that will enable adjustments and improvements to interventions on the GEP for the following year.

The periodic reports allow the continuous review of the impact of the GEP as well as keeping the wider community informed and engaged in the progress towards gender equality. The review of progress reports includes qualitative information as well as quantitative data, such as updates on human resource data disaggregated by sex, monitoring data to keep track of the implementation of key actions.

After their conclusion and adoption by the research institute management (SC, GD, HoDs), the periodic (annual) GE progress report is published on the research institute website and communicated to the entire scientific community.

Annex 1. Horizon Europe recommended methodology and areas of intervention for the gender equality plan

Box 1: Gender equality plans and gender mainstreaming: Horizon Europe Eligibility Criterion

To be eligible, legal entities from Member States and Associated Countries that are public bodies, research organisations or higher education establishments (including private research organisations and higher education establishments) must have a gender equality plan, covering the following minimum process-related requirements:

- publication: a formal document published on the institution's website and signed by the top management;
- dedicated resources: commitment of resources and expertise in gender equality to implement the plan;
- data collection and monitoring: sex and/or gender disaggregated data on personnel (and students, for the establishments concerned) and annual reporting based on indicators;
- training: awareness-raising/training on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.

Content-wise, it is recommended that the gender equality plan addresses the following areas, using concrete measures and targets:

- 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.

A self-declaration will be requested at proposal stage. It will take the form of an online questionnaire listing the four mandatory process-related GEP requirements (building blocks) as well as the five recommended thematic areas. The questionnaire should be completed by the legal entity's authorised representative (LEAR), only once, in principle, for the duration of the Framework Programme, unless the status of the legal entity changes. Legal entities are not asked to submit/upload their GEP, only to fill in the questionnaire. If all the above-mentioned

mandatory requirements are met through another strategic document, such as a development plan or an inclusion or diversity strategy, it can be considered as equivalent to a GEP. This eligibility criterion does not apply to other categories of legal entities, such as private for-profit organisations, including SMEs, non-governmental or civil society organisations.

A transition/grace period will be implemented before full enforcement of this eligibility criterion for calls with deadlines in 2022. Beneficiaries must also take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in implementing the action and, where applicable, in line with their gender equality plan. They must aim to achieve, to the extent possible, a gender

balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including at supervisory and managerial level5.

Source: Horizon Europe - Work Programme 2021-2022 General Annexes Part 13 -, p.13

Annex 2. Horizon Europe recommended indicators for data collection and analysis

(Source: Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffc06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1>)

Relevant data on gender equality for all organisations can include:

- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by disciplines, function (including administrative / support staff) and by contractual relation to the organisation;
- Average numbers of years needed for women and men to make career advancements (per grade and by discipline);
- Wage gaps by sex/gender and job;
- Numbers of women and men in academic and administrative decision-making positions (e.g. top management team, boards, committees, recruitment and promotion panels);
- Numbers of female and male candidates applying for distinct job positions;
- Numbers of women and men having left the organisation in past years, specifying the numbers of years spent in the organisation;
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave;
- Number of absence days taken by women and men and according to absence motive;
- Number of training hours/credits attended by women and men;

Specific data on gender equality relevant to research performing organisations (RPOs) may include:

- Number of female and male students at all levels and for all disciplines, and academic and employment outcomes;
- Share of women and men among employed researchers;
- Share of women and men among applicants to research positions, among persons recruited and success rate, including by scientific field, academic position, and contract status;
- Share of women and men in recruitment or promotion boards, heads of recruitment or promotion boards and share of decision-making bodies, including by scientific field.

Annex 3. List of sources used for the literature review

(in alphabetical order)

Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission,

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-equality-commission>

EU FESTA - Gender Issues in Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Processes – Recommendations for a Gender Sensitive Application of Excellence Criteria,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/festa_gender_issues_recruitment_appointment_promotion.pdf

EU Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

EUA - Universities' Strategies and Approaches towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion,

<https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/universities-39-strategies-and-approaches-towards-diversity-equity-and-inclusion.pdf>

EUCEN - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in European Higher Education Institutions,

https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/web_diversity%20equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20european%20higher%20education%20institutions.pdf

European charter & code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers,

https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/ttf_goal_2_results_v1.0.pdf

European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu>

GARCIA – Mapping organizational work-life policies and practices,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/garcia_report_mapping_org_work-life_policies_practices.pdf

Guidelines for using gender-sensitive language in communication, research and administration,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/reutlingen_university_guidelines_for_using_gender-sensitive_language.pdf

Horizon Europe General Annexes,

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf

Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans,

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffc06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1>

LERU - Equality, diversity and inclusion at universities: the power of a systemic approach,

<https://www.leru.org/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-universities>

Science Europe - Practical Guide TO Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/se_gender_practical-guide.pdf

Student evaluations of teaching (mostly) do not measure teaching effectiveness,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/science_open_research_student_eval_teaching_effectiveness.pdf

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for AIRA

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