



EMBRC
EUROPEAN
MARINE
BIOLOGICAL
RESOURCE
CENTRE

EMBRC gender equality plan (GEP)

EMBRC HQ



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Introduction

Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) in the European Research Area and Commission requirements

Gender equality is a fundamental value of the European Union. Gender equality benefits research and innovation (R&I) by improving the quality and relevance of R&I, attracting and retaining more talent, and ensuring that everyone can maximise their potential.

There has been demonstrable progress towards gender equality in the European Research Area (ERA), but data shows there is still significant work to be done. Gender equality goals can only be achieved through a structural approach to change across the whole European R&I system, entailing the joint commitment of R&I organisations, their funders and national authorities, and the European Commission.

To create a modern, inclusive, and equal-opportunity work environment, it is necessary to create a framework that takes into account the issues and barriers that are actively discouraging or disadvantaging certain groups in the work environment. Such a plan should ensure that an organisation is enabling a healthy work-life balance and organisational culture, which respects individuals' needs and social circumstances. The leadership should ensure gender balanced in the organisation, as well as in its various committees, working groups, and governance structure. It should ensure that all genders are treated and considered equally in the recruitment process, and once working in the organisation, that they have equal opportunity in career progression. There also needs to be a commitment to ensure the organisation actively promotes these values beyond their own organisational structure, but also in their outward facing activities. Finally, it is the duty of an employer to ensure that their staff can work in a safe environment, putting in place measures against gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment.

The European Marine Biological Resource Centre (EMBRC) commits to create such a workplace by defining a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) that it will publish on its website, to demonstrate our support for this policy. We will dedicate resources to ensure its implementation and integrate the policy in our KPIs to track the progress and performance of the institution. To ensure that this policy leads to real change within the organisation, EMBRC will also commit to provide training to its staff to ensure that everyone understands the issues, and deal with engrained attitudes and perceptions, including those that people may not be aware of.

EMBRC's GEP

In line with the principles outlined above, the EMBRC GEP will forge a strong culture of gender equality. This GEP contains objectives from the five fields suggested by the European Commission ('EC (2021) Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans'. These recommendations have been adapted to match the current circumstances of EMBRC, taking into account French national legislation employment law (EMBRC is hosted and based in France) to ensure its legal conformity, and will be adapted as our organisation evolves.



Definitions and scope

In most countries and institutions across Europe, 'gender statistics' are collected according to biological sex at birth, usually in a binary fashion (female, male) and, more rarely introducing the intersex category. In an increasing number of countries and organisations, however, data is being collected according to gender identity, with usually at least three categories considered: woman, man, and non-binary (gender-diverse). See also: [European Commission's LGBTIQ equality strategy](#) adopted on 12 November 2020.

In order to follow the evolution of practice on this topic, EMBRC's approach to gender equality is not limited to balance a binary distribution but to advance gender identity equity and inclusion on a gender-diverse basis. As such, our goal is not simply a 50-50 split between categories defined as 'male' and 'female'. However, as these categories are helpful, we do refer to them to point out existing disparities, and to strive towards more inclusive gender representation between all identified genders (male, female, other – or non-binary).

In terms of race, however, in the context of discussions of gender equality, it may also be appropriate to raise disparities in racial representation (or under-representation). Any suggestions in this regard, as well as in regard to gender equity, will be subject to French employment law.

This document primarily concerns staff located at EMBRC headquarters (HQ) in Paris.

The proposed period of implementation is **three years: Semester 1 (S1) 2022 to Semester 2 (S2) 2024**. This document will be updated following evaluation periods (see proposed timelines below), as appropriate. Subsequent versions will be renamed accordingly.

Given that each of EMBRC's member countries ('nodes') are subject to their own national or institutional legislations, this document cannot be applied to them. However, it may serve as a guideline for those nodes wishing to develop their own GEP, as relevant/feasible.



Priority areas

1. Work-life balance

Objectives

- Promote existing measures designed to promote work-life balance including but not limited to maternity, paternity, and/or parental leave
- Offer flexible working arrangements (including flexible hours and teleworking) to meet individuals' ongoing or context-specific (ie 'punctual') work-life balance needs

Measures

- Flexible working time arrangements: Continue to implement existing measures including permanent, partial remote working; communicate about existing measures to enable the care of sick children (eg 3 days of paid leave for a sick child per year); communicate about the existing option to work less than full-time (eg 80% schedule) to accommodate work-life balance needs; explore additional measures for specific, punctual needs (eg occasional additional teleworking for staff with unforeseen personal caring responsibilities including for children, the elderly, or other sick relative).

Note: French employment law determines the modalities for sick leave and other kinds of leave; for additional measures offered by EMBRC, refer to <https://www.docdroid.net/aNi5Y27/2021-memorandum-absences-pdf>.

- Communication about options for career breaks: Communicate clearly to staff members the options available to them for maternity, paternity, and/or family leave (indicate CAF resources explaining the options available to new parents, including links to find out more information, apply for CAF subsidies, and so on. Explore and implement measures to facilitate the re-integration of staff members after a break (eg parental leave, or other).

Monitoring and evaluation indicators

In order to monitor progress on work-life balance, we will compare baseline data on existing work-life measures with targets.

In addition to data analysis, we may conduct a survey and/or hold a focus group with HQ employees to determine if they are (un)satisfied with current work-life balance measures and to rate their level of satisfaction: low, medium, high, very high. This survey and/or focus group could also serve to get their input on the additional measures that they would like to see implemented.



Measure/action	Baseline (S1 2022)	Targets (End 2022) (End 2023) (End 2024)
Staff satisfaction with work-life balance measures	Very low; Low, Fair, High, Very high (TBD)	High to very high
Right to disconnect: awareness training on reasonable use of digital tools for managers	0%	End 2022

Timeline

- **S2 2022:** survey/focus group, analysis of outcomes, and suggestions for new measures
- **S2 2022:** review of existing measures and suggestions for new measures, taking into account outcome of survey/focus group
- **S2 2023, S2 2024:** annual review of existing measures

Roles and responsibilities

- Chief Financial & Administrative Officer: development of policies, in collaboration with French lawyer (for compliance check with French employment law); evaluation
- Executive Director: validation of proposed policies, input on evaluation
- External gender consultant: organisation, implementation of survey and/or focus group to determine staff expectations and satisfaction with current measures
- HQ staff: participation in survey/focus group; TBD – participation in evaluation process.



2.1. Gender balance in committees

Objective

Promote a greater gender balance in EMBRC Advisory Boards, Committees, and working groups, as relevant and feasible

Measures

Recommendations: Encourage greater gender balance in EMBRC advisory/decision-making bodies/committees and working groups, by highlighting current imbalances, and encouraging countries to consider gender when nominating future members, taking into account national laws/quotas.

Monitoring and evaluation indicators

In order to observe the gender balance in the committees, we will compare the baseline data with the target data. In particular, we will examine: the percentage of female, male and gender diverse staff on EMBRC advisory/decision-making bodies/committees; the aim is to encourage a steady increase in the number of women and non-binary people, including people of colour and other minorities, where appropriate/feasible, and in accordance with national legislations.

	Baseline (S1 2022) % F/M/non-binary	Targets (End 2022) (End 2023) (End 2024)
General Assembly (GA)	25%/75%/0%	40-60% End 2023
Committee of Nodes (CoN)	4 female, 8 male	40-60% End 2023
Science and Innovation Advisory Board	%	40-60% End 2023

Timeline

- **S1 2022:** identification of the numbers/percentages of male vs female members; identification of targets for each identified period (S2 2022, 2023, 2024), taking into consideration mandate periods
- **S2 2022:** dissemination of the EMBRC GEP to its advisory/decision-making bodies/committees; ongoing dissemination to new members (ie when a new member joins, they receive the EMBRC GEP)
- **2023/24 (TBD):** possible implementation of training to advisory/decision-making bodies/committees (initial and potentially refresher training, as well as additional, punctual training for new members)



Roles and responsibilities

- Chief Financial & Administrative Officer: identification of current gender distribution and identification of targets (with support from the General Assembly Secretary and others for confirmation of member identity)
- Chief Financial & Administrative Officer, Executive Director: presentation of GEP and recommendations for greater gender equality
- External gender consultant: training, as relevant/appropriate
- Communications Officer:
 - Dissemination of GEP to existing/new members (ongoing, as needed)
 - Support for the creation of a 'gender resource library' (EMBRC Dropbox folder): information on gender, related resources/articles, and the EMBRC GEP (recommendations on relevant reading to be requested of the external gender consultant)
 - Possible support role in development of phrasing/wording to explain to EMBRC advisory/decision-making bodies/committees why gender equality is important, what it is, and how we can foster our commitment to gender equality by having greater equality in our governance and decision-making bodies.



2.2. Gender equality in recruitment

Objectives

Continue to promote gender equality in EMBRC's recruitment policy / practices, and, where appropriate, strengthen gender equality.

Measures

- **Develop our existing recruitment policy** to indicate that EMBRC does not discriminate against individuals with a 'gap' in their CV (eg due to raising children or taking care of sick relatives); for researcher positions, this policy could potentially indicate that we do not evaluate individuals' scientific capability based on the number of publications (as studies show that maternity leave has a negative effect on womens' publication output)
- **Provide gender equality training** for all staff and during the onboarding process for all new hires.

Monitoring and evaluation indicators

- % gender equality expertise involved in recruitment process

	Baseline (S1 2022) % F/M/non-binary	Targets (End 2022) (End 2023) (End 2024)
% Female, male, non-binary new recruits	1 female new recruit, S1 2022	

Timeline

- **S1 2022:** identification of baseline data and targets
- **S2 2022:** developments to EMBRC recruitment policy,
- **S2 2023/24:** evaluation and additional changes to recruitment policy, as needed.

Roles and responsibilities

- Chief Financial & Administrative Officer: identification of baseline data and targets; development of EMBRC recruitment policy (in collaboraiton with lawyer, see below), communication of changes to the policy (and internal dissemination)
- Executive Director: input/validation as needed
- French lawyer: for insight/recommendations on how to make EMBRC recruitment policy more inclusive, based on French employment law (input desired as well on wording and gender



categories – not just for the recruitment policy, but in general; suggestions to be incorporated into this GEP as relevant/feasible).



2.3. Integration of the gender dimension into EMBRC organisational culture

Objective

Create a 'gender equality culture' at EMBRC (HQ) where individuals are aware of gender concepts, understand the scope and importance of gender equality (regardless of their identified gender), and adopt and support the implementation of the EMBRC GEP.

Measures

- **Develop and implement gender training** for the entire HQ team (including remote positions) including an initial comprehensive training event, followed by refresher/complementary training; develop customised training schedule/content for new recruits (who were unable to participate in initial training and/or follow-up training)
- **Promote regular open discussion on gender topics** so that staff feel comfortable to make suggestions and point out issues on an ongoing basis, and in a 'safe environment' : these discussions and suggestions could take place in specific meetings and/or in suggestion boxes; allow staff the opportunity to make suggestions for the gender resource library
- **Communicate regularly about the gender resource library**, informing staff when new resources are added, and sending them links as needed
- Integrate the gender dimension in the research projects where EMBRC participates.

Monitoring and evaluation indicators

- Number of training sessions provided (dates, number of participants)
- Number of resources in the gender resource library

Qualitative data: shift in staff behaviour, adherence to gender equality, etc. (a survey could be used for this purpose).

Measure/action	Baseline (S1 2022)	Targets (End 2022) (End 2023) (End 2024)
Training	0	1 by year
Gender library	0	End 2022

Timeline

- **S2 2022:** internal training (kick-off session), followed by annual refresher training (TBD once per year)
- **S2 2022, then ongoing:** creation and updating of gender resource library.



Roles and responsibilities

- All: support for the development of the gender resource library; participation in training, suggestions for content of the training, and feedback on the sessions (for the purpose of optimising future sessions)
-
- Chief Financial & Administrative Officer, Administrative Assistant: support for the organisation and implementation of training sessions (led by external consultant).

2.4. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Objective

- Increase the measures against gender-based violence in EMBRC's HR policies
- Establish a culture of zero tolerance

Measures

Following French employment law, guarantee a comprehensive policy against sexual harassment, which includes behavior, reporting, investigation, support for victims and disciplinary measures and prosecution

Monitoring and evaluation indicators

- Integration of sexual harassment-related wording in EMBRC's relevant HR policy(ies)
- Creation of a policy, procedures and reporting mechanism
- Evaluation by the number of complaints and resolution of cases

Measure/action	Baseline (S1 2022)	Targets (End 2022) (End 2023) (End 2024)
% of comprehensive measures of sexual harassment integrated into EMBRC HR policy(ies)	0%	100%

Timeline

- **S2 2022:** exploration of policy development possibilities
- **S1 2023:** development of a quality process to report sexual harassment and gender-based violence



- **Ongoing:** reporting of sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

Roles and responsibilities

- Chief Financial & Administrative Officer, in collaboration with French lawyer: policy development; development and implementation of a policy for employees to report sexual harassment and gender-based violence.



Reporting and publication

Reporting

Reporting to monitor progress towards gender equality in connection with all the above-mentioned objectives will take place on an annual basis, focusing particularly on the changes required to promote future developments involving equality and non-discrimination principles.

The annual evaluation review conducted by line managers at EMBRC-ERIC does not exclude more frequent monitoring of individual measures/actions.

Additional objectives and targets on gender equality (or other types of inclusiveness) will be proposed based on availability of data.

Publication

The GEP will be published on EMBRC's website and disseminated as appropriate (internally and externally). In the event of changes/updates, the latest version will be added to the website, and previous versions archived appropriately.

Annual reporting may also be added to the website, and/or incorporated in EMBRC annual reports, which will be made available on the website.

Paris, 23/06/2022

Executive Director

Nicolas PADE