

ICTP GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

The ICTP Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP), besides being based on the UNESCO gender strategy and action plan, has been prepared with a view to also be compliant with the policies of the European Commission (EC) for the promotion of gender equality in research and innovation as part of the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

The GEAP is a programmatic and strategic document on gender equality that formally acknowledges gender equality and intersectionality as key objectives and fundamental values of ICTP as a UNESCO research and educational institution. The GEAP defines the Centre's strategy to detect gender bias, and introduces innovative actions to correct it and reduce gender asymmetries. It identifies the Centre's objectives and progress-monitoring processes by means of performance indicators. Specific actions for gender equality have been outlined in the GEAP, seeking to give continuity to initiatives already undertaken by the Centre.

The document has a four-year time frame (2024-2027) and is in line with ICTP's Strategic Plan, which acknowledges action for gender equality as one of the Centre's key strategic pillars. The GEAP has been drawn up bearing in mind the context and specific features of ICTP.

The ICTP's GEAP can be summarized into five objectives covering the following thematic areas:

- Gender equality in recruitment and career progression;
- Gender balance in leadership positions and decision-making bodies;
- Work-life balance and organizational culture;
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content;
- Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase gender parity at all staff levels				
Expected Results	Initiatives	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Progress Update
1. Improved gender balance at all levels.	1.1 Establish gender targets at each grade level (with special focus on P4 and P5 level posts) by organizational unit based on an assessment of the situation, and monitor on a regular basis (at least once every six months).	Gender Parity Increase (%).	2024-2027	
	1.1.1 Greater proportion of staff of under-represented gender participating in decision-making processes and appointed to positions at P4 level and above.	Trend assessment and gender statistics per grade level.		
	1.1.2 Fix as a target 1/3 proportion of under-represented gender in all internal committees (e.g. academic, program, activity, ...).	Trend assessment and gender statistics.		
	1.1.3 Gender equality in recruitment.	Trend assessment and gender statistics.		
	1.1.4 Reduction of the gender gap along career path by supporting career progression to ameliorate the decline in the percentage of under-represented gender at higher grade levels.	Trend assessment and gender statistics per grade level.		

	<p>1.2 Set up outreach activities to increase the number of candidates applying to ICTP vacancies from under-represented gender.</p> <p>1.2.1 Introduce the use of specialized software to ensure the use of gender-neutral/gender-friendly language in the vacancy notices.</p> <p>1.2.2 Ensure clear distinction between the required and desirable qualification in the vacancy notice in order to reduce barriers for candidates.</p> <p>1.2.3 Review the “inclusion” statement on the vacancy notices and update/adjust it as required to maximize the pool of candidates.</p> <p>1.2.4 Conduct targeted outreach for each vacancy in a technical/specialized field, consulting with hiring managers on the best platforms/networks to advertise it and involving executive search services as required. Promote vacancies through various channels including professional associations, ICTP-sponsored events and partnerships, and ICTP social media channels.</p> <p>1.2.5 Consider collaboration with other technical/scientific UN Agencies to promote the vacancies in the fields potentially associated with the mandate of these organizations.</p> <p>1.2.6 For organizational units where gender parity has not been achieved, automatically extend vacancy announcements that attract less than 20% of candidates from the underrepresented gender by 2 weeks and ensure additional outreach measures are taken by the hiring manager and HR.</p> <p>1.2.7 Advertise talent pipelines and maintain rosters of candidates recommended, but not selected for the posts, for short-term opportunities.</p> <p>1.2.8 Highlight information on existing family friendly benefits and initiatives on ICTP website.</p>	<p>Statistical analysis of the trend of number of applicants from underrepresented gender increased (overall and per organizational unit).</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	
	<p>1.3 Take measures at selection stage to increase the number of the under-represented gender.</p> <p>1.3.1 Implement requirement that shortlists include at least one qualified candidate from the under-</p>	<p>Statistical analysis of the trend.</p>	<p>2024-2027</p>	

	<p>represented gender. Aim at having gender-balanced shortlists when possible.</p> <p>1.3.2 Strive to have a gender-balanced interview panel with regard to subject matter experts.</p> <p>1.3.3 Stimulate the use of “blind” assessment tools during the selection process when possible.</p> <p>1.3.4 To the greatest extent possible, aim at submitting a list of recommended candidates that is gender-balanced to the selecting authority. However, it is essential to prioritize securing candidates with the highest standards of integrity, efficiency, and technical competence.</p>			
	<p>1.4 Reducing gender asymmetries in ICTP programmes (students, research fellows, scientific visitors).</p> <p>1.4.1 Aim at having at least ⅓ of under-represented gender.</p>	<p>Number of students, research fellows, scientific visitors positions occupied by women.</p> <p>Trend evaluation.</p>	2024-2027	
	<p>1.5 Reducing gender asymmetries in scientific events and training activities.</p> <p>1.5.1 Aim at having at least ⅓ under-represented gender.</p>	<p>Number of places (%) occupied by women in scientific events and training activities.</p> <p>Trend evaluation.</p>	2024-2027	

OBJECTIVE 2: Enhance professional development through dedicated training initiatives

Expected Results	Initiatives	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Progress Update
2. Increased number of staff from underrepresented gender ready to take on new roles including leadership roles, and equipped with the required competencies and skills.	2.1 Encourage staff to participate in training workshops including those focused on networking and interview success.	<p>% of individuals from underrepresented gender participating in development activities.</p> <p>% of candidates from underrepresented gender appointed to new roles.</p>	2024-2027	
	<p>2.2 Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content.</p> <p>2.2.1 Biennial Workshop on Career Development for Women in Science.</p> <p>2.2.2 Gender balancing topics at scientific events.</p> <p>2.2.3 Encouraging the integration of gender variables in the research and teaching process.</p>	<p>Number of seminars to promote awareness of the social value of the introduction of gender variables in research and teaching.</p>	2024-2027	

OBJECTIVE 3: Create a gender-equality-conscious workplace

Expected Results	Initiatives	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Progress Update
3.1 Enhanced awareness of gender equality and gender unconscious bias.	3.1.1 Monitor the implementation of the mandatory gender equality training for all staff. 3.1.2 Ensure gender equality is included in the interview process. Add interview questions on gender equality to assess candidates' competencies on gender equality matters; ensure that awareness of gender unconscious bias is included in competency-based interview training for hiring managers. 3.1.3 Develop and implement actions to raise awareness of and reduce gender unconscious bias. Encourage staff to attend unconscious bias training. 3.1.4 Implement gender-neutral language in internal and external communications. 3.1.5 Implement a gender-conscious performance appraisal. 3.1.5.1 Include gender equality indicators in the performance appraisal of managers and all P and G levels when applicable.	% of staff attending the gender equality training. % interview panels that included questions related to gender equality. % of staff attending the unconscious bias training. Trend assessment Number of indicators included in the performance appraisal.	2024-2027	
3.2. Enhanced role of Gender Focal Points.	3.2.1 Establish ICTP gender parity working group (WG). 3.2.2 Include Gender Focal Points (GFT) / WG member duties and responsibilities in the workplans and performance appraisal of the respective staff. 3.2.3 Ensure ICTP staff are well-informed about the roles and activities of GFP and the WG.	Number of periodic presentations to ICTP staff on the activities of the WG. Number of indicators reflecting GFP / WG member responsibilities in performance appraisal workplans and reports. Number of information sessions organized. % of staff aware about the activities of the WG.	2024-2025	
3.3. Setting up informal gender networks.	3.3.1 Support the set-up of informal networks of HR staff/managers working on gender. Explore the possibility of networking with other international organizations.	Output/outcome of the meetings within the gender networks.	2024-2027	

OBJECTIVE 4: A gender-friendly workplace contributing to professional growth				
Expected Results	Initiatives	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Progress Update
4.1 Effective Childcare support.	4.1.1 Provide logistic support for visitors with childcare needs.	Number of established agreements and committed funds per year.	2024-2027	
	4.1.2 Provide childcare service dedicated to the Centre.	Number of activated services.		
	4.1.3 Provide childcare areas (breastfeeding areas, changing tables, etc.).	Number of activated areas.		
4.2 Improved work-life balance.	4.2.1 Implement welfare actions.	Number of welfare actions organized.	2024-2027	
	4.2.2. Facilitate transition for incoming staff and sensitizing managers accordingly.	Number of information sessions for managers.		
4.3. Identification of gender equality related factors affecting staff retention through staff feedback.	4.3.1 Conduct exit interviews with all staff who leave ICTP.	Number of exit interviews conducted and reports on gender equality related factors identified following the interviews	2024-2027	
OBJECTIVE 5: Establish measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment				
Expected Results	Initiatives	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Progress Update
5. Promotion of gender-inclusive culture and greater awareness of sexual harassment.	5.1 Raising awareness on sexual harassment and violence.	Number of training activities that include this topic.	2024-2027	
	5.2 Preventing, detecting and tackling sexual harassment within the Centre.	Number of reported cases actioned upon.		

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Officials responsible for implementation of the GEAP - ICTP Director, Section/Unit Heads in consultation with the HR Unit and Gender Focal Points.

Context Analysis

At the Abdus Salam International Center of Theoretical Physics (ICTP), located in Trieste, Italy, the composition of the workforce has made progress towards gender equality in the last few years: while in 2020 the total number of female staff under P category was of 8 (16%) out of 49 staff members, in 2023 this figure increased to 17 (27%) of 62 staff members. The composition of the [ICTP Scientific Council](#) also reflects ICTP's aim to advance gender equality: while in 2020 2 (13%) of its 15 members were female, in 2023 the renewed Scientific Council was made up of 13 members of which 6 are female (46%). Additionally, since the COVID-19 pandemic, when most ICTP activities turned on-line or hybrid, the participation of female scientists

has increased notably. While the historic average of female participation in ICTP' scientific activities is of 23%, in 2023, 32% of the 6,300 participants were female and 65% of them were from developing and least developed countries.

In collaboration with UNESCO HQ, during 2022-2023 ICTP has worked on the elaboration of a Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP). This process took place participatively and involved staff and scientists who worked in small groups.

Since 2013 and every two years, ICTP organizes a 'Career Development Workshop for Women in Physics', which was originally devised by physicists Shobhana Narasimhan (Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research - Bangalore) and Elizabeth Simmons (Department of Physics and Astronomy, Michigan State University) and run as official ICTP activity by involving the local ICTP scientist Erika Coppola. This workshop brings together women physicists from all over the world to learn from one another's experiences and form a sense of community. In addition to talks and panel discussions, the workshop offers training sessions on crucial non-technical skills that women physicists may otherwise have less opportunity to acquire than their male peers. After the [remote edition](#) that took place in 2021, ICTP organized the workshop at ICTP in November, 2023.

In October 2023, ICTP organized the first Women Security Awareness Training (WSAT) in Trieste, conducted by security professionals of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The training is adapted to Italian context and is planned to be repeated on annual basis. Two sessions of WSAT are scheduled for March 2024.