



National Center for Development of  
Innovation and Entrepreneurial Learning

# **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

## **2022-2026**

Association National Center for Development of Innovation and  
Entrepreneurial Learning

April 2022, Skopje

President: prof. Radmil Polenakovikj, PhD



## Goals of the Gender Equality Plan

Implementing gender equality fully requires equal representation and participation of both men and women in the economy, decision-making, as well as in social, cultural and civil life. Only in this way will men and women reach their full potential in society. It implies a fair distribution of resources between men and women, the redistribution of power and caring responsibilities, and freedom from gender-based violence. Gender equality has multiple meanings, and here we mention some very basic of them:

- Gender equality is considered one of the fundamental preconditions for the fulfilment of all human rights;
- Interests, needs and priorities of women and men are taken equally into account when formulating policies and designing social conditions;
- Gender equality refers to both women and men as it is not “women’s problem”, but it equally affects men, just as much as women;
- Gender equality does not mean that women and men are the same, but that they have equal opportunities, rights and are valued equally.

The overall goal of the Gender Equality Plan of the Association National Center for Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurial Learning (hereinafter referred to as NCDIEL) is to ensure equal opportunities, treatment and rights of all employees regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, nationality, age, and other individual characteristics. NCDIEL notes the principles of gender equality in all activities, while respecting the high competence and quality standards. NCDIEL will strive for an equal distribution of the impact of women and men in research, development and other operating areas, for equal working conditions and equal distribution of participation in different professional groups and other working bodies.

NCDIEL is guided by the principle that diversity in the research sector creates added value for society, and gender equality allows to optimally use people as the single most important social capital. Gender equality in the workplace will be achieved when all our staff and community are able to access and enjoy equal rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of their gender and background. NCDIEL is committed to promoting equality and prevention of discrimination in all its activities, recognizing and eliminating all factors that contribute to inequality.

This plan contains the goals and measures to be taken in the period **2022-2026**. The Gender Equality Plan is publicly available on [NCDIEL's website](#). The responsibility for promoting gender equality and implementing the plan is shared by all the representatives of the organisation.



## Our vision and mission

The National Centre for Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurial Learning (NCDIEL) was established in 2009 as a non-governmental, non-for-profit organisation, with financial support for the period from 2009 to 2012 from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). As a non-governmental civil society organisation registered in North Macedonia, NCDIEL is a leading research partner to major universities in the region, local and central governments and international donor organisations. Its particular expertise is in the fields of development of innovations, transfer of technologies, entrepreneurial learning and training, as well as professional development of teachers, professors and educators.

The overall vision of NCDIEL is to become a key national actor in the processes of creation of a competitive knowledge-based and innovative economy. Promotion, support and development of innovation and entrepreneurial learning, with the aim to decrease unemployment through creation of new innovative businesses and strengthening the SMEs sector in the Republic of Macedonia is the main mission of the organisation. This will be achieved through increasing the skills for innovation and technology know-how in the Macedonian economy.

Nationally, NCDIEL maintains continuous collaboration with institutions of all four spheres of the quadruple helix. Some of them are the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, the three biggest chambers, the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering from the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje, the Centre for Research, Development and Continuous Education, Bureau for Development of Education.



## 1. Institutionalisation and building capacities for Gender Equality

Considering the participation in many projects supported by national and international funding, the strongly developed network and vast experience, without any doubt it could be noticed that the Association National Center for Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurial Learning already nurtures gender equality and supports individuals in their personal and professional growth, fostering inclusiveness, collaboration and success.

The trigger for developing a Gender Equality Plan now lies in its wide promotion by organisations of various types, inclusion in various projects and funding programmes. Starting from 2022, to have the opportunity to be part of the eminent programme Horizon Europe, institutions need to have a Gender Equality Plan in place, which raises awareness of the importance to identify and overcome gender gaps in research and innovation<sup>1</sup>.

Encouraged by the close cooperation with representatives from academia, industry, public institutions and other civil and non-governmental organisations, we understand the necessity for development of Gender Equality Plan, not only to lead NCDIEL in the right direction, but also to make an impact on the whole society by promoting gender equality through the various projects NCDIEL is part of.

In regard to existing capacities and identified opportunities, the NCDIEL team has set the following objectives for fostering equal opportunities for all, regardless of the gender:

- Implement short-term and long-term activities to integrate gender dimension in innovation and entrepreneurship
- Integrate gender dimension while performing project tasks and activities and make an impact where applicable
- Raise awareness among staff on gender equality
- Raise awareness among wider society on gender equality (educational institutions, business community, public institutions, citizens)
- Ensure synergy and good working environment on decision-making processes
- Strengthen the collaboration with organisations dealing with gender equality
- Improve the visibility and provide role models
- Promote hybrid working and flexible worktime arrangements as good practice to close gender gaps (birth leave, parental leave, maternity leave)

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en)



NCDIEL aims to provide equal opportunities and support all in personal and professional development.

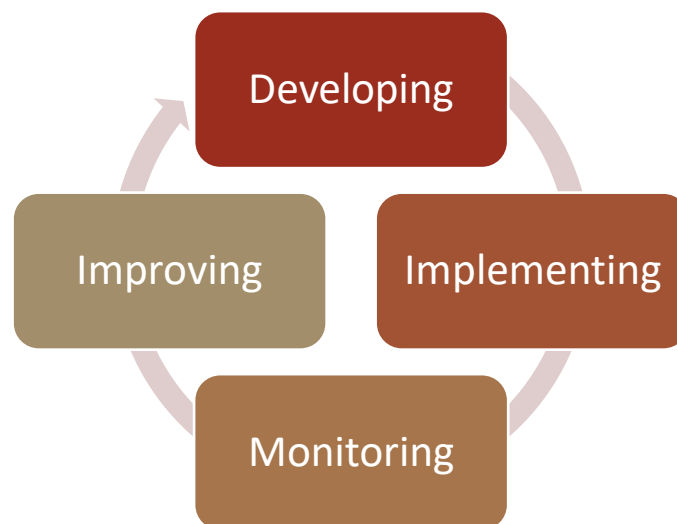
## 2. Developing, Implementing, Monitoring and Improving Gender Equality Plan

NCDIEL has started to develop and implement the Gender Equality Plan by inviting all employees and external experts to contribute to identifying the status quo and setting objectives for further actions.

Taking into consideration the size of the organisation, all staff at all levels are appointed responsible for implementation of the NCDIEL's Gender Equality Plan. The proposed activities will be managed in line with each project's distribution of responsibilities. The NCDIEL team jointly agreed to put great emphasis on continuous improvement, i.e. generating fresh ideas and identifying new ways to make an influence on gender balance.

Accordingly, it is evident that what is not monitored cannot be improved. The President is responsible for monitoring the functionality of the GEP. Further suggestions for improvement will be discussed at Coordination meetings.

This four-year plan will be reviewed once a year and updated with gender data on personnel. All other proposed activities will be integrated as needed.

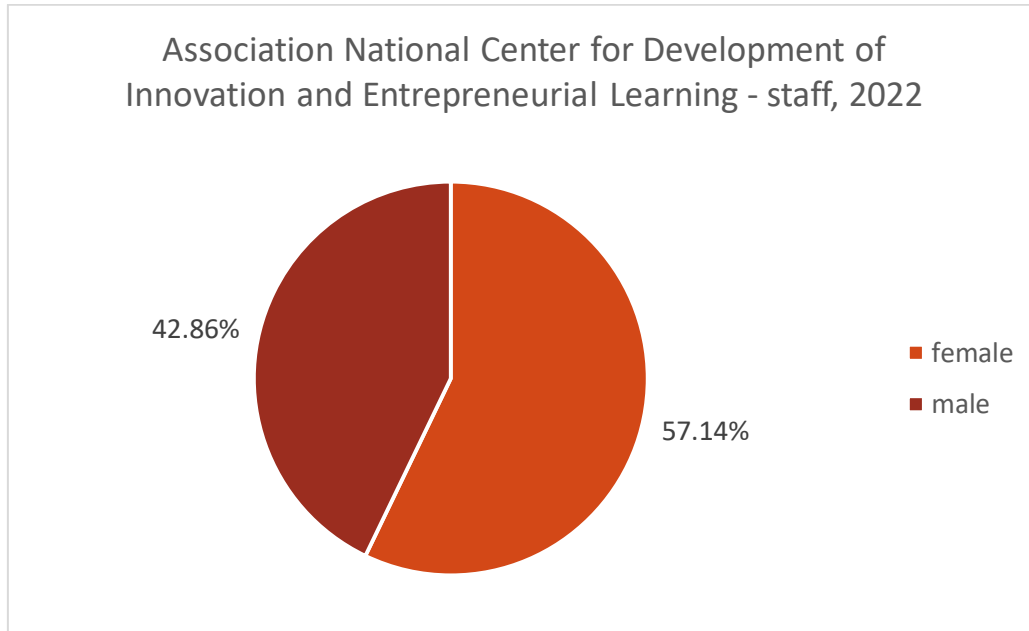


*Figure 1 Integrating Gender Equality Plan at Association National Center for Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurial Learning*



### 3. Mapping of the existing conditions

In order to demonstrate the current state on gender balance, NCDIEL made internal mapping of its personnel. Figure 2 shows the current proportion of female and male employees which shows slightly higher proportion of women than men. 57.14% of the personnel are women and 42.86% are men.



*Figure 2 Proportion of female and male employees - NCDIEL, 2022*

The analysis shows positive gender balance in the recruitment process. NCDIEL believes in equal employment opportunities for all individuals, regardless of race, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national origin or any other professional irrelevant condition.

However, internal mapping and analysis show higher number of men representation on leadership and decision-making processes, which is an opportunity for improvement by focusing on the leadership skills of employees at all levels.

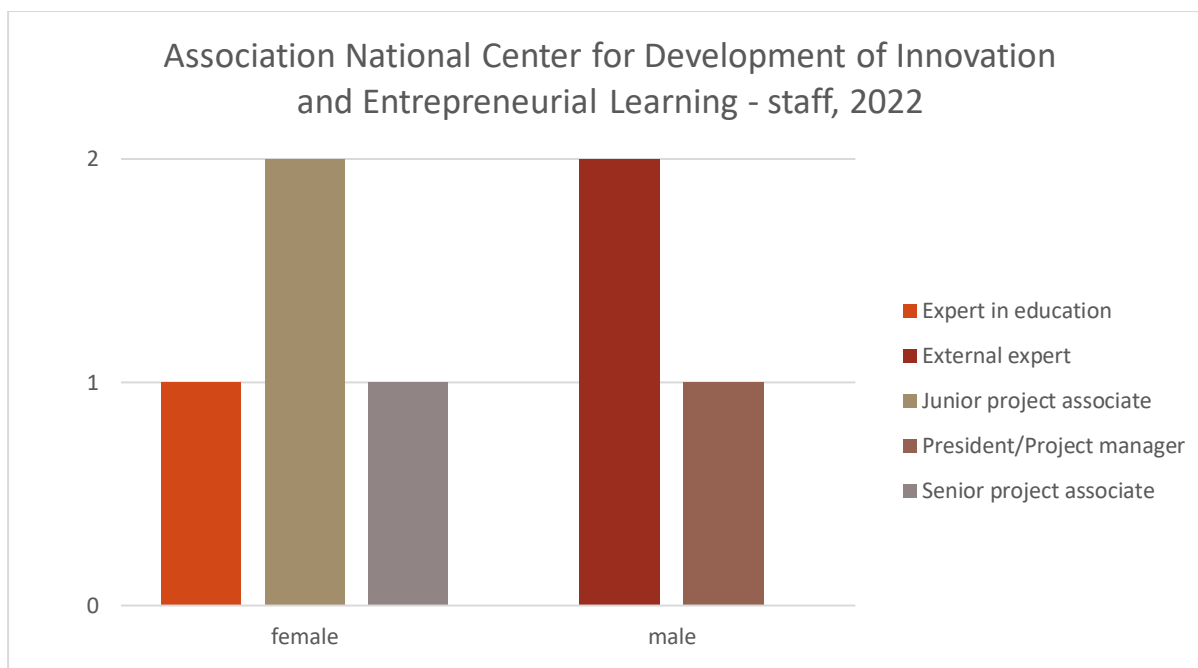


Figure 3 Gender distribution of employees by role - NCDIEL, 2022

#### 4. Areas to be covered with specific measures

Based on the activities and opportunities of the Organisation for Improving the Gender Equality, the main areas that will be targeted by concrete measures for the period 2022-2026 are the following:

##### 1) Work-life balance and organisational culture

NCDIEL is committed to promoting a **healthy work-life balance** as well as integration of **gender dimension into the organizations culture**. For this purpose, the following measures are planned to improve work-life balance and organisational culture:

- Implement measures that facilitate the balance between working hours and private life in order to successfully fulfil the role of parenting and the needs of employees in relation to their families or other private matters;
- Establish rules and opportunities for working from home using ICT tools;
- Providing opportunities for flexible working hours taking into account that all deadlines have been met;
- Emphasis on gender equality as an organizational value in all types of communication as well as strategic documents of the organization;
- Staff training to promote gender equality and work-life balance.



## 2) Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

NCDIEL is committed to promoting **gender equality in decision-making and leadership** by developing policies and support mechanisms for recognizing the benefits of gender diversity at all levels of leadership and decision-making bodies. To achieve this, the following measures are envisaged:

- Ensuring that all decision-making bodies have a gender balance;
- Involvement in awareness-raising activities and the use of gender-sensitive language in the communications of leadership;
- Providing leadership training programs and other support mechanisms, such as training for women in leadership positions.

## 3) Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

NCDIEL aims to ensure that women and men get equal chances to develop and advance their careers in the process of **recruitment, selection and progression**. The measures are planned to avoid and undo the systematic and structural discrimination of women along their career paths. For this purpose, the following measures are envisaged:

- Transparent recruitment and selection procedures with equal employment opportunities for every individual, regardless of race, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, disability, marital status, or any other professionally irrelevant condition;
- Requirement of the usage of standardized curriculum vitae (CVs) when applying to a position and undertaking blind assessment of CVs received;
- Promoting gender balance in all recruitment committees.

## 4) Integration of the gender dimension into research and program activities

NCDIEL is promoting the **gender dimension through the entire research cycle as well as implementation of program activities**. This includes setting research priorities through defining concepts, formulating research questions, developing methodologies and evaluating and reporting results. For the improvement of the gender dimension into research and program activities the following measures will be observed:

- Commitment to incorporating gender equality as a research priority;





- Establishment of processes for ensuring that sex and gender analysis is considered in the design and outputs of research and program activities;
- Establishment of clear guidelines for ensuring gender equality at all project activities related events;
- Implementation of research project that include gender perspective.

#### 5) **Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment**

NCDIEL is committed to creating an organizational environment based on respect and integrity for all who work or collaborate with the organization. The organization ensures that the challenges related to **sexual harassment** are properly addressed and that any discrimination in this regard is avoided.

Measures to prevent sexual harassment include:

- Establishment of reporting channels to which all members of the organization can report incidents of sexual harassment, including when they are the victim of harassment or witness harassment;
- Providing measures, procedures and activities to prevent sexual abuse, discrimination or harassment.
- Monitoring the use of gender-sensitive language and preventing the creation of gender stereotypes.
- Establishing principles of gender diversity in social media releases, news, articles, etc.
- Gender balance between speakers at project events, whenever possible.