

Gender Equality Plan

ICGEB Trieste | 2022-2026



Science for Development

ICGEB Headquarters
Office of the Director-General
Email: director.general@icgeb.org



Foreword by the ICGEB Director-General

I am delighted to present the first ICGEB Gender Equality Plan. This document represents an overall framework and planning tool to continuously improve gender equality within ICGEB and its activities, including projects and research collaborations, in the coming years.

The assessment exercise carried out in Jan-Feb 2022 outlined a very positive picture in terms of gender balance at the ICGEB Trieste; nonetheless, a roadmap has been developed to promote further gender equality internally and externally, with a set of specific measures to address the gaps identified.

Gender equality is a core value of the ICGEB and it is a **cross-cutting priority** in the ICGEB Strategic Framework 2020-2030. In the context of UN Global Development Agenda, having a gender equality plan not only supports **Sustainable Development Goal 5** (SDG5 Gender equality); by streamlining gender dimension into research, education, and institutional governance, and by enhancing systemic fairness and transparency, this plan also supports the achievement of other correlated SDGs.

The integration of the gender dimension is relevant in many Research & Innovation (R&I) fields and represents a step forward in ICGEB's commitment to align to the highest international standards, for inclusive research.

ICGEB GEP TASK FORCE

Barbara ARGENTI, Marco BARALLE, Federica BENVENUTI,
Tea CARLETTI, Maria Luisa FICHERA, Franco GIACOMIN,
Margaret OTUKILE, Claire POLETTO, Simona RUSSO, Natasa SKOKO

Gender External Consultant: Pavla ARAUDO

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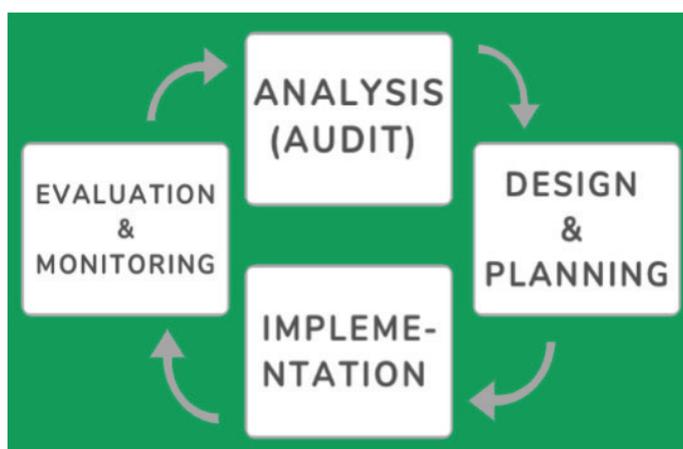
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1. The context of the first ICGEB Trieste Gender Equality Plan

The ICGEB is an inter-governmental organisation dedicated to research, training, and technology transfer in the Life Sciences and biotechnology¹. It is committed to promoting sustainable global development and the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ICGEB Gender Equality Plan is intended to align the institutional policies to international standards and to promote gender equality and integration of the gender dimension into research at all levels of activities of the Centre, as a cross-cutting priority of the ICGEB Strategic Plan for 2020-2030.

In particular, the ICGEB Trieste Gender Equality Plan 2022-2026 was designed in order to comply with new UN and the European Commission (EC) requirements and standards concerning gender equality mainstreaming in research institutions, including the UN Women Accountability Framework for Mainstreaming Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in United Nations Entities² (UN-SWAP 2.0) launched in November 2021.

FOUR-YEAR
CYCLE



Phase 1: Gender equality audit
Phase 2: Design of the Plan
Phase 3: Implementation period of 3 years
Phase 4: Evaluation

This will provide ICGEB with an opportunity to start the GEP cycle anew and define a second GEP

The plan is built upon the ICGEB Gender Equality Assessment carried out in January and February 2022 and on the work of the ICGEB Gender Task Force. Among the main conclusions of the assessment exercise, it is to note that the ICGEB's Strategic Framework focuses on gender equality as a crosscutting topic in line with UN policies and the SDGs, and the overall communication is sensitive towards different intersectional categories of staff. ICGEB Trieste in particular has a very solid representation of female research, technical, and administration personnel. Also, the Centre is developing and implementing several initiatives in support of women scientists, especially those from Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). Training opportunities in the area of gender equality and unconscious biases have been identified as areas to be further strengthened, particularly, to support higher representation of women among senior research staff/ research Group Leaders. One of the main areas to work on further is new training and information in regard to inclusion of sex and/or gender dimension³ in the research projects and work/teaching (scientific and technical staff), and also in regard to prevention of sexual and other forms of harassment in the workplace.

¹ More info at: www.icgeb.org

² More info at: <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/How%20We%20Work/UNSystemCoordination/UN-SWAP/UN-SWAP-2-TN-en.pdf>

³ The integration of the gender dimension is relevant in many R&I fields and is mandatory and evaluated in European projects. It can include gender consideration when defining concepts, formulating research questions, developing methodologies, gathering and analysing data. Looking at potential sex and/or gender differences brings added value in terms of research excellence, rigor, reproducibility, and contributes to in-depth understanding of all people's needs, enhancing the societal relevance of research and innovation.

The **ICGEB Gender Equality Plan 2022-2026** is built around **seven work areas**, each one including a set of measures divided into one or more **specific action(s)**. The responsible unit(s) for implementation, resources to be dedicated to the single action (workload and/or finance), and deadline and frequency of the action have been identified. Indicators for monitoring, type of data to be collected, and output and outcome indicators for the evaluation are also defined by each action. The design of the plan is based on a participatory process and is subject to revision. Other measures may be included in the next GEP versions based on the results of the M&E activity and on input collected from ICGEB personnel⁴ through relevant channels.

2. Areas of work

The general and specific objectives of the ICGEB Trieste GEP 2022-2026 are presented below. Each general objective is further described in detail in the following subchapters together with specific objectives, measures and actions to be taken in order to achieve these.

A detailed operational plan indicating resources, indicators, responsibilities, and timelines estimated for all activities described in each of the work areas, has been developed internally to guide the implementation phase.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES		SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	
1. Organisational culture & work life balance		Gender equality embedded in ICGEB culture	
		Spaces for work-life balance at ICGEB Trieste	
		Informal activities and community building at ICGEB Trieste	
2. Fair recruitment and career progression		Increasing fairness in recruitment processes	
		Increasing fairness in career progression	
		Preventing gender bias in recruitment and career progression	
3. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making		Supporting gender balance in decision-making	
		Supporting gender balance in management	
4. Gender dimension of research and innovations		Internal training opportunities on gender dimension of research	
5. Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment and other forms of harassment in the workplace		Awareness-raising campaign	
		Prevention of non-discriminatory behaviour in the workplace	
6. Gender equality at all ICGEB components		Gender equality assessment	
		Awareness raising campaign on unwelcome behaviour	
7. Monitoring and evaluation		Monitoring and evaluation of the ICGEB Trieste Gender Equality Plan	

⁴Throughout the document, “personnel” means all ICGEB staff, including admin and researchers, as well as fellows

2.1 Organisational culture and work-life balance

ICGEB Trieste is an exemplary organisation regarding the total number of female personnel, especially among scientific staff. It has an outstanding representation of women and other intersectional categories of personnel in its external communication materials (including Women in Science web page). The ICGEB's Strategic Framework accentuates gender equality and representation of women as one of its overarching principles. Use of gender neutral language as well as the focus of the Organisation (as a whole) on issues of sustainability, international cooperation, and development are apparent. Special grants and fellowships are offered to female researchers from developing countries and to other disadvantaged groups.

Besides **raising awareness** on issues of gender equality and on the ICGEB GEP, this area consists of building lasting **internal capacities, knowledge and skills** regarding gender equality and diversity in the institution through voluntary training on gender equality issues, and prevention of unconscious biases in the workplace. A **Gender Equality Focal Point** will ensure continuity of the work in this area and the increase in strategic support of gender equality for ICGEB. The GE Focal Point will be in charge of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the GEP activities in order to ensure the plan's progress and effectiveness.

To further enhance the support of work on gender equality issues, so called **agents of change** (AoC) will be identified throughout ICGEB, i.e. staff members who are aware of gender equality issues and have a positive attitude toward the GEP work (current members of the ICGEB Gender equality task force and other staff members have declared their interest in being involved in the GEP). AoC will be involved in internal capacity building actions, implementation and revision of the GEP and measures to prevent non-discriminatory behaviour in the workplace.

An **annual personnel survey** on gender equality has been established within this area in order to receive regular feedback and data on:

- development and benefits of the ICGEB GEP from the personnel's perspective
- evolution in ICGEB's culture regarding gender equality, fair opportunities and inclusiveness
- collection of information and representative sources of data for future decision-making processes

Among the topics to be covered by the survey are satisfaction with flexible working arrangement; satisfaction with professional development, learning, and training opportunities; satisfaction with supervisors/management; mapping differences in needs of different groups of personnel (administration/researchers/fellows/students, and others); suggestions for improvement and for team building and informal networking.

Supporting informal activities for personnel and providing spaces to enable them to create networks and communities has been also identified as a means to enhance the wellbeing and life satisfaction of personnel, many members being expats, with limited social networks in Trieste.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	ACTION
1.1 Gender equality embedded in ICGEB culture	1.1.1 Establishing GE Focal point who will coordinate implementation of the plan and other GE related activities	Selecting and naming a GE Focal Point responsible for GEP implementation and progress according to the Work Plan / HE requirements - externally or internally
	1.1.2 Internal awareness-raising campaign on gender equality	Disseminate GEP to all personnel, publish on ICGEB website
		Collect feedback on GEP (GEP baseline) and encourage nomination of Agents of change
	1.1.3 Gender equality internal training opportunities	Online course for interested personnel on gender equality topics - disseminate free online training options among personnel
		Gender bias trainings - select the most appropriate one and disseminate free online training among personnel
1.1.4 Yearly staff survey on gender equality at ICGEB	Create set of questions relevant for the GEP and for areas 2 (Career) and 5 (Harassment)	
	Launch online (anonymous) survey on gender equality at ICGEB Trieste	
1.2 Spaces for work-life balance at ICGEB Trieste	1.2.1 Create new spaces for reconciling work and life at ICGEB Trieste facility	Create a room for mothers/parents of young children at the facility (for changing, breastfeeding, etc.)
		Prayer/quiet room
1.3 Informal activities and community building at ICGEB Trieste	1.3.1 Provide information about informal activities for personnel connected to ICGEB and/or the city of Trieste	Provide information for personnel (especially newcomers) about social gatherings, cultural and sporting activities that they can enjoy in their free time and ultimately feel more settled in the new environment
	1.3.2 Organise and support team-building activities	Ask personnel in the annual survey about preferred activities for team-building and recreation
		Organise activities for team-building and recreation suggested by the personnel

2.2 Recruitment and career progression

There is a very good representation of women in the selection and hiring committees of ICGEB Trieste employees as well as among the newly hired persons. There are more female than male researchers at the ICGEB Trieste scientific faculty, more women than men among the PhD students, research technicians, and administrative staff, and almost parity in the representation of women and men among the postdoctoral students and consultants. At the same time, women account for 11% of fellowship committee members, for 25% of CRP committee members, and for 20% of the ICGEB Council of Scientific Advisors. Among the 2021 ICGEB Trieste CRP grantees 60% were women, and of the fellows on board 50% were women. Overall, the representation and of women is strong and the number of women recruited substantial. The recruitment processes, including publication of vacancies and non-discriminatory regulations, are clearly stated in the ICGEB HR Management Framework. The processes of evaluation of work and career progression may need further attention, as may some of the rules for evaluation and salary increases, as these may not be clear or transparent enough to all employees. The GEP represents an opportunity to **raise awareness and inform employees about the existing rules and measures in the area of career progression** that are already in place at ICGEB. Also, planned training on **unconscious/gender bias** in recruitment and career progression, especially targeting top management, Principal Investigators (PIs) and Human Resources (HR), supports further internal capacity building in the area of prevention of unfair career conditions.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	ACTION
2.1 Increasing fairness in recruitment	2.1.1 Active search for candidates for managerial/senior position(s) if only candidates of same sex/gender apply	If all applicants for a new ICGEB senior/managerial vacancy are of the same gender, search actively for a candidate of the non-represented gender through the ICGEB networks
2.2 Increasing fairness in career progression	2.2.1 Increasing knowledge of ICGEB criteria for fair career progression among personnel	Disseminate information on career progression criteria at ICGEB and criteria for reclassification and/or pay rise
	2.2.2 Gender pay gap analysis	Using gender pay gap analysis tool(s) to assess fair remuneration at ICGEB Trieste
	2.2.3 Exit questionnaire regarding GE	Collect feedback on GE from personnel leaving ICGEB Trieste, reasons for leaving, comments and messages they want to leave on GE related issues
2.3 Prevention of gender bias in recruitment and career progression	2.3.1 Gender bias in recruitment, promotion and career management training for managers	Selection/creation of online training for prevention of bias (including gender bias) in recruitment and promotion
		Online bias (including gender bias) prevention training for management and hiring committees members

2.3 Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

The GEP sets targets for promoting gender balance in leadership and decision-making as well as steps to take and units responsible for those steps. Achieving gender balance in decision-making requires more than just increased representation of women, which, in the case of ICGEB Trieste, is on average very high. Women are under-represented at ICGEB Trieste in some of the committees (CRP, Fellowships) and among research Group Leaders. Although there is in general a high share of female researchers, they stay (or are?) at lower levels in the scientific career ladder. The reasons for this could be work-life balance conditions and career promotion processes (Areas 2.1 and 2.2 of this Plan), biased systems of evaluation of science on a societal and global level, cultural and social conditioning, and the fact that new research groups at ICGEB are not often established. Therefore, one of the most important steps towards attaining a balance in leadership will be a new **mentoring scheme(s) to support development of leadership skills** among female personnel - both research and administrative - and setting a target of at least 40% representation of new female members in ICGEB recruitment and evaluation committees, ensuring that this does not negatively impact **female Group Leaders' workload, for instance, by including senior female staff in the committees** but not necessarily the women PIs. It is recommended to not limit access to the mentoring scheme to women only - any member of personnel who is interested in the development of managerial and leadership skills should be able to join a mentoring programme, however, women might be especially encouraged to do so.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	ACTION
3.1 Supporting gender balance in decision-making	3.1.1 Promote/encourage nominations of female candidates for Board of Governors and the Council of Scientific Advisors of ICGEB	Communication that nominations of women are encouraged to apply for the Board of Governors and the Council of Scientific Advisors to improve diversity
	3.1.2 Increase to 40% gender-balanced composition on internal committees	Setting a threshold for recruitment and internal evaluation committees: At least 40% of committee members shall be women (while ensuring this does not negatively impact current women Group Leaders' workload, e.g. including senior female researchers/ technicians when women group leaders are not available). Define which committees need to fulfill this requirement
3.2 Supporting gender balance in management	3.2.1 Set a mentoring programme for future managers/leadership and other interested staff members	New mentoring programme for staff - both scientists and administrative: identify interested mentors amongst ICGEB/ICGEB Alumni or other relevant institutions/agencies (possibly worldwide) and mentees and put them in contact, if an external mentoring programme is found to be more suitable, provide information to interested staff members

2.4 Gender dimension of research and innovation

The integration of the gender dimension addresses the incorporation of sex and/or gender analysis through the entire research cycle. This includes defining concepts, formulating research questions, developing methodologies, gathering and analysing sex/gender disaggregated data, evaluating and reporting results and transferring them to products and innovations. Looking at potential sex and/or gender differences and at gender equality related issues brings added value in terms of research excellence, rigour, reproducibility and creativity, in-depth understanding of all people's needs, behaviours and attitudes, and enhances the societal relevance of research and innovation. ICGEB as an Organisation funding many researchers through fellowships and grants plays an important role in shaping the research activities and outputs of its fellows and staff, including designing programmes that support excellent research with broader impact, such as socially responsible research through consideration of a gender/sex dimension. There is no systematic support or training on the integration of the gender dimension into research projects and research cycles as yet at ICGEB. On the other hand, the diversity of research teams and representation of female scientists on the teams at ICGEB Trieste is very good. Support for new projects and programmes focusing on female researchers and researchers of different backgrounds worldwide is also very well established at ICGEB, and the operations of the Centre reflect awareness of diversity and equality issues, and regularly initiates new actions in this regard. Therefore, the main work identified in this area is to provide **training on the inclusion of the gender dimension into research to ICGEB scientific staff**. This will in turn be reflected and incorporated into new research proposals and development projects designed by the Centre, especially in response to European calls and international partnerships.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	ACTION
4.1 Internal training on gender dimension of research	4.1.1 Set of informative package for technical and scientific staff on the integration of gender dimension into research on ICGEB intranet	Search of relevant information/resources/online training
		Setting an informative package providing information on inclusion of gender dimension on intranet
	4.1.2 ICGEB Training events on integration of gender into research	Search for trainers and training offers in this area (e.g. at APRE, or through EU opportunities)
		Organise lectures/conferences on the gender dimension in research with experts at ICGEB according to the areas of ICGEB's research focus

2.5 Prevention of gender-based violence and workplace harassment, including sexual harassment

The development of an ICGEB harassment policy is currently in progress. Any measures under this area (5.5) will be aligned to this policy once it is finalised and disseminated internally. Based on the Gender Equality Assessment, gender-based violence and/or sexual harassment appear to be absent at ICGEB Trieste. Therefore, in addition to this also other forms of harassment - especially those connected to power structures and relations (mobbing, bossing) - could become the focus of future actions by the ICGEB and/or in next GEP revisions.

In this work package, the work on **raising awareness** will be accompanied by **building internal capacities**. In this case, the GEP counts on two training sessions. First, all ICGEB personnel will be invited to attend BSAFE training⁵, an online security awareness training, including sexual harassment, provided by the UN. Subsequently, a small group composed of the Agents of Change at ICGEB Trieste will be trained. This group will consist of up to five ICGEB staff members from different units/research labs who are interested in issues of gender equality and harassment in the workplace and who would volunteer to be trained further in this area of expertise. The AoC should also be comprised of individuals who have a good reputation among staff members, who are trustworthy and can maintain confidentiality, however - as explained above - this position is voluntary and will be assigned to interested staff members identified through open procedures to be developed in future. The AoC will be trained in recognising forms of harassment and gender-based violence and will be there as an informal support for colleagues and staff members. They will be the first contact point with whom staff members can discuss and consult cases of encountered unwanted/problematic behaviour and they will provide advice whether, and/or how, to report the case(s) through informal procedures set at ICGEB. An opportunity to process problematic situations in the workplace in such a preliminary way could alleviate stress for some staff members and could also mitigate escalation of conflicts in the workplace. The AoC will also share the responsibility of regular internal training of new employees and fellows on this topic.

⁵ <https://training.dss.un.org/course/detail/19948>

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	ACTION
5.1 Awareness raising campaign	5.1.1 Raise awareness of ICGEB policies and procedures (including investigation processes)	Disseminate information on unwelcome types of behaviour, how to recognise it, and understand the ICGEB internal mechanisms for reporting and providing practical advice on dealing with different situations related to harassment in the workplace (gender-based violence and sexual harassment)
		Providing professional support via the occupational medical doctor in charge at the ICGEB premises
5.2 Prevention of non-discriminatory behaviour in the workplace	5.2.1 ICGEB Agents of Change	Identify interested staff members who would volunteer to become agents of change
	5.2.2 Training and processes focused on prevention of harassment in the workplace	Provide ICGEB personnel with training on safety, including sexual harassment issues (BSAFE)
		Provide agents of change with training on how to recognise sexual and other forms of harassment in the workplace and how to give advice/feedback to the staff members reporting such behavior
		Agents of change train all personnel to recognise sexual and other forms of harassment in the workplace
	Create a report on the internal discussion as a guideline for future work in this area (2 nd round of GEP)	

2.6 Gender equality at all ICGEB components

Based on the Gender Equality Assessment Report, this Gender Equality Plan focuses on ICGEB Trieste, Italy. However, one of the steps of this Plan is to perform gender equality assessment of the other ICGEB components, in New Delhi and Cape Town, along the same lines adapted to the local environment, in order to **mainstream gender equality throughout the whole institution**. The following step would be to design new gender equality plans for the ICGEB components in South Africa and India, using the measures and activities which are part of the Trieste GEP, as a base, if found appropriate to the specific context of each Component.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	ACTION
6.1 Gender equality assessment at ICGEB ND/CT	6.1.1 Gender equality assessment at ICGEB South Africa	Discuss possibility to extend the GEP to the Cape Town Component
		If agreed, conduct a GE assessment and prepare a GEP
	6.1.2 Gender equality assessment at ICGEB India	Discuss possibility to extend the GEP to the New Delhi Component
		If agreed, conduct a GE assessment and prepare a GEP

2.7 Monitoring and evaluation of the plan

Evaluation and regular monitoring are vital for any successful GEP. Therefore, these activities are being integrated in the Plan from the outset, and monitoring, as well as output and outcome indicators, are defined by each action. Monitoring will be carried out twice a year in order to check whether the planned activities have been started, implemented and completed on time. The midterm evaluation of the plan is scheduled two years from implementation. Based on the midterm evaluation, as well as on the feedback from ICGEB Trieste employees, a revision of the plan is also scheduled. This step mitigates the risks of an unsuccessful and unimpactful Plan

as the revision looks at which activities meet resistance within ICGEB Trieste or are evaluated negatively by the employees. Such activities are to be reduced or changed in the revised Plan in order to effectively and efficiently use human and financial resources dedicated to the Plan. The final evaluation at the end of the Plan's cycle (2026) will be used as a learning activity: it will map changes in attitudes and process regarding gender equality at ICGEB, it will sum up data and information gathered throughout the Plan's cycle and evaluate impact and success of the plan as well as new opportunities for the next ICGEB Trieste Gender Equality Plan. Therefore, the final evaluation report is to be used as a benchmark document for future gender equality plans in ICGEB New Delhi and Cape Town. At the same time, the final evaluation will be the first step of the ICGEB Trieste Gender Equality Plan 2026-2030.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	ACTION
7.1 Monitoring and evaluation of ICGEB GEP	7.1.1 Monitoring plan	According to the timeline and monitoring indicators by each activity check, whether the activities have been started and/or finished as planned
	7.1.2 Midterm evaluation	Collect data for both outcome and output indicators and other data to be collected and revise the outcome/impact of the implemented activities of the plan (outcome indicators) - see if some of the activities and measures are unpopular/negatively evaluated by the participants, have no evident impact on the positive change and measure which activities seem to be popular/welcomed by the employees, have a positive impact on the change in GE attitudes and in providing a welcoming working environment
	7.1.3 GEP Revision	Based on midterm evaluation, revise the plan - change, revise, delete, or add activities/measures
	7.1.4 Final evaluation	Collect data for both outcome and output indicators and other data to be collected and revise the impact of the GEP on ICGEB staff and processes, evaluate shortcomings and success. and based on the evaluation and collected data. suggest areas of work for the next GEP

3. Communication and dissemination of the Plan

This Plan will be communicated to all ICGEB Trieste personnel and their feedback collected through the GE annual survey, interaction with the Agents of Change and a dedicated email address. On the symbolic level of institutional culture this is a very important step: the Organisation demonstrates that systematic work on supporting and developing fairness and equality is in place. The **awareness raising campaign** on topics of gender equality, including dissemination and communication of the Plan are part of the Organisational culture and work-life balance. This area also contains an activity to providing information on informal activities for personnel to the staff of ICGEB Trieste. Among other dissemination and communication activities, information on career progression criteria at ICGEB Trieste and criteria for reclassification and/or pay increases (area Recruitment and career progression), are planned, as well as running an awareness raising campaign for the area of Prevention of gender-based violence and workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, to ensure transparency, efficient communication and to empower all ICGEB personnel.