

Gender Equality and Diversity Plan

BBMRI-ERIC

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1. COMMITMENT

As the Director General of BBMRI-ERIC, I wholeheartedly commit to advancing our Gender Equality and Diversity Plan throughout every facet of our organisation. By prioritising diversity alongside gender equality, we will strengthen our capabilities and serve as a leading example for others in the field.

Diversity is not just a goal; it is a fundamental value that enriches our organisation. By embracing a wide range of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences, we can foster innovation and creativity. Our commitment to diversity ensures that all voices are heard and valued, creating a more inclusive environment where everyone can thrive.

I firmly believe that through the collective dedication and efforts of our team, we will make substantial progress towards achieving genuine gender parity and fostering a workplace that authentically reflects the rich diversity of the communities we serve.

Prof. Jens K. Habermann, M.D., Ph.D.

2. INTRODUCTION

BBMRI-ERIC's Gender Equality and Diversity Plan has been updated to place greater emphasis on diversity within the institution. Gender equality and attention to diversity benefit research and innovation (R&I) by improving the quality and relevance of the R&I process, attracting and retaining diverse talent, and ensuring that everyone can maximise their potential. As a result, BBMRI-ERIC aims to embed gender equality principles and a commitment to diversity in its organisational culture.

BBMRI-ERIC is a European research infrastructure for biobanking and biomolecular resources. We bring together all the main players from the biobanking field – researchers, biobankers, industry, and patients – to boost biomedical research. Following its 10-year Roadmap, with the motto “Biobanking for a healthier world”, BBMRI's mission is to facilitate responsible access to high-quality biobanking and biomolecular resources through innovative technology, multidisciplinary expertise and partnerships, ultimately driving impactful and socially responsible research for the benefit of patients, the public and the planet. This document outlines a set of commitments and actions aimed at promoting gender equality and fostering an inclusive environment through institutional and cultural change. The updated Gender Equality and Diversity Plan incorporates objectives from the five fields suggested by the European Commission in their Guidance on Gender Equality Plans. These recommendations have been tailored to align with the current circumstances of BBMRI-ERIC and will continue to evolve alongside the institution. Our goal is to advance gender identity equality, diversity, and inclusion on a gender-diverse basis, ensuring that all identities are recognised and valued.

3. METHODOLOGY

In its commitment to Gender Equality (GE), BBMRI-ERIC appointed Mónica Cano Abadía as the lead of the GEP in July 2021. To identify the challenges that BBMRI-ERIC faces regarding gender mainstreaming, a gender equality audit was conducted by nowa, a non-profit company based in Graz (Austria). An awareness-raising workshop with nowa kick-started the process towards GE at BBMRI at the beginning of November 2021. During this process, a series of individual and group interviews were conducted, as well as a final workshop at the beginning of February 2022. nowa sent their final report with the results of the audit to BBMRI-ERIC on February 16, 2022. In their final report, nowa shared their results, recommended future actions, and highlighted that BBMRI is on the right track in terms of GE, as both leadership and staff are interested in the topic and ready to contribute their expertise and experience to develop a GEP.

With the guidance of nowa, this GEP is thus evidence-based and data-informed the GEP's objectives and targets, indicators, and ongoing evaluation of progress.

In 2025, the Gender Equality Plan has been updated to include also diversity, becoming the Gender Equality and Diversity Plan. The update of the Gender Equality Plan is essential to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. The updating process allows the organisation to reflect on the findings from the ongoing monitoring, enabling the identification of areas that require further attention or adjustment. Additionally, the update provides an opportunity to incorporate new strategies and initiatives that address emerging GE issues within the organisation. As the landscape of GE evolves, the GEP must adapt accordingly to maintain its alignment with the organisation's goals and the changing needs of its employees and the broader community. Regular updates demonstrate the organisation's commitment to continuous improvement and responsiveness to evolving gender equality challenges.

4. Action Plan

[The European Commission recommends](#) the following 5 thematic areas are to organise the content of the GEP:

- work-life balance and organisational culture (Goal 1)
- gender balance in leadership and decision-making (Goal 2)
- gender equality in recruitment and career progression (Goal 3)
- integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content (Goal 4)
- measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment (Goal 5)

The Action Plan towards GE and Diversity outlined below will follow these recommendations. Additionally, we include a section with measures to integrate diversity at BBMRI-ERIC.

Goal 1: Improve work-life balance and organisational culture at BBMRI-ERIC

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators	Responsibilities/Resources
1.1	Review of job descriptions in terms of gender equality	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and when vacancies are available</i>	<i>Revised descriptions drafted by staff, revised by department heads, and implemented by HR</i>	<i>Internal dissemination of the descriptions</i>	<i>HR + GEDS are involved in the process</i>
1.2	Consideration of gender and care obligations in the hiring process	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and when</i>	<i>Advertising positions offering the possibility of</i>	<i>Number of vacancy advertisements considering gender and care obligations</i>	<i>HR</i>

		<i>vacancies are available</i>	<i>working part-time</i>		
1.3	Guidelines for equality-oriented language and communication	<i>Q2 2026</i>	<i>Guidelines for internal and external communication</i>	<i>Internal dissemination of the guidelines</i>	<i>Head of Outreach, Education, and Communications + GEDS (provides best practices)</i>

Goal 2: Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators	Responsibilities/Resources
2.1	Promote and maintain gender balance in all BBMRI-ERIC's internal governance bodies, working- and expert groups	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and when committees are created</i>	<i>Equal and fair representation of different genders</i>	<i>Committees' gender profile</i>	<i>DG & Department Heads</i>
2.2	Gender Equality training	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption</i>	<i>Provide all decision-makers and leaders with gender equality training</i>	<i>Internal dissemination of training</i>	<i>GEDS</i>

Goal 3: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators	Responsibilities/Resources
3.1	Disseminate vacancies across at least 3 platforms and websites to reach equally qualified people from all genders	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and when vacancies are available</i>	<i>Vacancies systematically disseminated in 3 platforms</i>	<i>Number of vacancies disseminated</i>	<i>HR</i>
3.2	Use gender-neutral language in vacancy advertisements	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and when vacancies are available</i>	<i>Usage of non-binary pronouns and gender-neutral language in all vacancy advertisements</i>	<i>Number of vacancy advertisements using non-binary pronouns and gender-neutral language</i>	<i>HR + GEDS</i>
3.3	Integration of gender equality in regular staff appraisals	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and at least once a year</i>	<i>Staff appraisals per year concerning career planning, continuous education</i>	<i>Number of staff appraisals per year</i>	<i>DG and/or Department Heads</i>

Goal 4: Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators	Responsibilities/Resources
4.1	Awareness of / commitment to gender equality and diversity in workshops and events	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and each time an event is organised</i>	<i>Attention to speakers invited and time flexibility for participants</i>	<i>Number of events that consider gender equality as a factor in its organisation</i>	<i>GEDS & Department Heads</i>
4.2	Promotion of gender bias awareness and related activities in research projects	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and each time an event is organised</i>	<i>Awareness-raising on the importance of sex- and gender-sensitive research</i>	<i>Number of projects with a gender perspective</i>	<i>ELSI Department</i>

Goal 5: Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators	Responsibilities/Resources
5.1	Policy to prevent discrimination, harassment, violence, and mobbing	<i>Q2 2026</i>	<i>Measures to prevent discrimination, violence, and mobbing and to act appropriately</i>	<i>Internal dissemination of the policy</i>	<i>GEDS</i>

			<i>in corresponding incidents</i>		
5.2	Information of external and neutral contact points for the topics of discrimination or harassment	<i>Q2 2026</i>	<i>Appointment of a contact point</i>	<i>Communication of the contact points to staff</i>	<i>HR + GEDS</i>

Goal 6: Integrate diversity at BBMRI-ERIC

Measure No.	Measure	Timelines	Targets	Indicators	Responsibilities/Resources
6.1	Review of job descriptions in terms of diversity	<i>Continuous from GEP adoption and when vacancies are available</i>	<i>Revised descriptions drafted by staff, revised by department heads, and implemented by HR</i>	<i>Internal dissemination of the descriptions</i>	<i>HR + GEDS is involved in the process</i>
6.2	Diversity training	<i>Q4 2026</i>	<i>Tools to integrate diversity in the organisation</i>	<i>Internal dissemination of training materials</i>	<i>GEDS</i>

5. MONITORING AND REPORTING

The monitoring and reporting of a Gender Equality and Diversity Plan is an essential component to ensure its successful implementation and continuous improvement. Monitoring is a continuous process that involves regularly collecting and analysing data to track the progress of its objectives and actions. This allows for the identification of any challenges or barriers that may arise, and the implementation of corrective measures as needed.

This plan will be updated every two years to reflect the findings from the monitoring process, as well as to incorporate new strategies and initiatives that address evolving gender equality and diversity issues within the organisation. Regular reporting on its implementation and outcomes helps to ensure transparency, accountability, and the buy-in of all stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the sustained advancement of gender equality within the organisation.

6. TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DG – Director General

ELSI – Ethical, Legal, and Societal Issues

GE – Gender Equality

GEDS – Gender, Equality, and Diversity Specialist

GEP – Gender Equality Plan

HR – Human Resources

R&I – Research and Innovation