



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2022-2026

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Introduction

Gender equality in research and innovations has become a commitment for many organisations and institutions and has found a priority place in their strategies for future development. This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is elaborated in accordance with the [Agenda 2030](#) by the UN and the [Sustainable Development Goal 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls”](#). Additionally, the current GEP corresponds with the [EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#) and the new [European Research Area](#) (ERA), striving for gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness in science, research and innovation. The GEP is covering the next 5 years of Zangador Research Institute’s development, setting the core values of the institute and certain objectives to follow and achieve. Thus, Zangador Research Institute (ZRI) publicly acknowledges the fundamental goals of the EU to foster gender equality in the research field and strives to enhance diversity in terms of age, culture, physical abilities, multilingualism, etc. This GEP is published on the website of ZRI at the following link:

<https://www.zangador.institute/en/gender-equality-plan/>

ZRI supports its researchers irrespective of their nationality, gender or age. ZRI’s GEP was elaborated after a multi-staged process, aiming to ensure planning process transparency and the incorporation of ZRI’s gender equality values. Going through all the stages of GEP demonstrates the efforts of ZRI to align with the EU policies and to pursue coherence with them.

The first stage explored ZRI’s macroenvironment, starting with the general EU perspective and recommendations on the gender equality goals and activities. Bulgaria, as part of the EU, strictly follows and adheres to those directions for its future development. All national policies and legislation relevant to gender equality were considered. Lastly, the examination finished with an audit of ZRI’s vision on gender equality and the current state of the institute. The outcomes of the situational analysis were transformed into specific implications that served as the basis for the future objectives of the GEP.

In the second stage, we identified relevant and achievable goals of the GEP that go in line with the ZRI’s values and ethical code of conduct. The planning process also included setting indicators, timelines and assigning responsible persons. Additionally, human and other resources were allocated to support the actual implementation of the GEP. To make the plan more concrete, a set of activities was formulated for each objective.

The implementation of the GEP will be accompanied by periodic monitoring and evaluation, to ensure the validity and transparency of the process, and keep the progress on the right track. Identification and engagement of relevant stakeholders is a major condition for the success of the plan. In addition, internal audits and reflection on the processes and practices will take place on a regular basis.

Situational analysis

Bulgaria is a member of the EU and, as such, most of its legislation is aligned with the main principles and values of European regulations. Besides, Bulgaria has a solid ground for the provision of equal opportunities to anyone, interested in research and science. The [National Strategy for scientific research development 2017-2030](#) calls for a balanced distribution of researchers in terms of age, gender, scientific fields and geographic regions (p. 25). The good news is the almost even distribution of Bulgarian researchers in terms of gender. In 2020, female researchers constituted 47% of all researchers in the country, while male researchers were 53% ([National Statistical Institute, 2020](#)). Bulgarian legislation provides a solid ground to guarantee equal opportunities for personal and career development. A network of laws enables freedom and diversity for the society, equal rights in a political, economic, social and cultural context – Bulgarian Constitution, [Law for gender equality](#), [Law for protection from discrimination](#), [National Council for Equality of Women and Men at the Council of Ministers](#), [National strategy for the promotion of equality between women and men, 2021-2030](#), [National Action Plan for the Promotion of Equality between Women and Men](#). Hence, there is an extensive legal framework regarding gender equality in the country.

Zangador Research Institute is a non-profit organisation specialising in interdisciplinary fundamental and applied research. Its mission is to stimulate and promote scientific research, knowledge development, and innovations to improve social wellbeing. ZRI aims to enable efficient partnerships between the scholarly community and practitioners to ensure the relevance and real-life applicability of scientific research. Additionally, ZRI stimulates collaboration among different academic and industry sectors, including diversity in research topics and equal opportunities for researchers. One of the current main priorities of ZRI is to establish a team of experts who can balance work and family life, raise awareness about equality, diversity and anti-discrimination, and counteract stereotypes and prejudices. Moreover, ZRI is developing a network of international researchers to participate in national, European and multinational projects – a fact that further emphasises the need for embracing the values of diversity and equality. The current GEP will serve as a tool for the implementation of those goals and will leverage the synergies deriving from them.

Objectives

The objectives of the plan are in line with the thematic building blocks recommended by the European Commission ([Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans](#)) and were developed based on their relevance to ZRI's areas for development and improvement.

	Objective	Activities	Indicators for success	Responsibility/ Human resources
1.	Increasing balanced gender representation in decision-making processes and bodies; providing support to female experts in their recognition and promotion to senior job positions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Involve female experts of ZRI in the decision-making processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of researchers in senior positions ✓ Share of women in the decision-making positions 	ZRI Director ZRI Board
2.	Encouraging more women to participate in research projects; supporting women and other more vulnerable groups to broaden their disciplinary range and research field;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inviting more women to participate in projects; ✓ Proactively asking women to participate in research projects where they can demonstrate relevant expertise and abilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of women-researchers ✓ Share of women-researchers per project 	ZRI Director ZRI Board Project managers Experts
3.	Reinforcing a shared culture of equal opportunities and the value of inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raising awareness among ZRI experts with regards to gender equality ✓ Participation in and initiation of research projects that focus on values on equality and inclusion of vulnerable groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Number of training sessions on gender equality ✓ Number of projects and research publications of ZRI staff directly or indirectly related to gender equality. 	ZRI Director ZRI Board
4.	Combatting gender stereotypes, enhancing diversity, and supporting under-represented communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Popularisation of good practices and cases, related to women's careers and successful examples of underrepresented communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inclusion of good practices on gender quality in internal emails to experts, sharing good practices on social media 	ZRI Director ZRI Board Project managers Experts

Concluding remark

Disclaimer: Current GEP is not aiming only at women's equal opportunities, but emphasises the fair participation and distribution of tasks and benefits among all genders.

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