



Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025

Introduction

Since its foundation, gender equality has been one of the missions of Conoscenza e Innovazione (Knowledge & Innovation - K&I) and one of its primary research areas. This also entailed special attention to gender-related dynamics within the organisation and the adoption of a set of measures to support gender equality. They were based on established principles but, also considering the size of the organisation, had not been translated into a coherent set of explicit regulations.

In 2021, the European Commission established the existence of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) as an eligibility criterion for all public bodies, higher education institutions and research organisations to participate in the Horizon Europe Framework Programme.

Seizing this opportunity, the K&I members decided to make more explicit and enhance internal gender equality practices by putting in place a unitary four-year GEP covering the period 2022-2025, tailored to the features of K&I.

The GEP is presented in this document, which is organised into three sections:

- Section One provides a short profile of K&I
- Section Two presents K&I's status as concerns the four mandatory process-related building blocks established by the European Commission
- Section Three presents K&I's actions with respect to the five thematic areas recommended by the European Commission to address through a GEP.

Section One

K&I: a profile

Conoscenza e Innovazione is an independent research-performing organisation established in 2016 and based in Rome (Italy). The mission of K&I is to contribute to the advancement of social sciences through the generation of new knowledge on contemporary societies. To this aim, K&I is engaged in an internal Research Programme focused on social change and the governance of social processes.

Since its establishment, K&I has been engaged in gender equality through its research activities and the provision of technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation services to support

research organisations in designing and implementing a Gender Equality Plan (GEP). Moreover, gender equality is one of the principles K&I is based on to regulate its internal life, also leveraging the experience matured through theoretical and applied research on gender equality and feminist and intersectional analysis.

As of December 2021, the staff consisted of 18 people, 9 men and 9 women. Two of them (both women) had been hired in the period 2020-2021. Overall, 15 out of 18 people (9 men and 6 women) were K&I members.

The organisation of K&I is articulated in four “responsibility poles” i.e.:

- **Management Pole**, responsible for the management of the activities of the organisation, including administrative aspects, budget, and human resources
- **Development Pole** (Project design and funding activities Department), responsible for identifying and designing new project proposals, establishing partnerships and cooperation agreements, and developing the organisation’s public and institutional relations
- **Project Implementation Pole** (Projects’ Advanced Monitoring Department), responsible for the implementation of research projects and the quality of the scientific outputs
- **Fundamental Research Pole**, responsible for the K&I Research Programme.

These units act in close coordination and in concert with the Sole Director of K&I.

As of December 2021, the Sole Director and two heads of the poles were women (Management and Fundamental Research poles), while the remaining two heads were men (Development and Project Implementation poles).

Section Two

Process-related building blocks

To comply with the eligibility criteria established by the EC, four process-related requirements (building blocks) must be complied with (public document, dedicated resources, data collection and monitoring, and training)¹.

A set of measures that matches these requirements is in place.

Public document

The present document is the formal statement in which the engagement of K&I for gender equality is made explicit, formalised, and developed into a GEP. The document has been approved by the members of K&I and signed by the Sole Director. It has been uploaded on the organisation's website and circulated among the staff members.

See the [Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans](#)

Dedicated resources

The Management Pole is responsible for the GEP and is supported by a gender expert internal to the organisation. Specific responsibilities are assigned to the heads of the poles. Overall, 1 person/month per year is allocated to lead and monitor the process. Some activities are performed by K&I members on a voluntary basis. A lump sum of € 4,000 is allocated for the implementation of the entire GEP.

Data collection and monitoring

Disaggregated data on staff composition and any relevant aspects of the life of K&I (e.g., pay gap, the leadership of research teams, and the assignment of tasks) are regularly collected. Starting from 2022, a short report will be developed annually and presented to the Assembly of members of the organisation. The data collection and monitoring process will be also used to oversee the implementation of the GEP and to analyse its impact.

Training activities

Training activities addressed to staff members are carried out on gender-related issues annually in the context of the institutional activities of the organisation (see Section Three). Training will also be included in the induction process of new staff members who will be recruited at K&I. Training is delivered by internal and external gender experts.

Section Three

Thematic areas

The GEP is organised into the five thematic areas recommended by the European Commission. The following subsections describe the main actions K&I is engaged in to develop each thematic area.

Work-life balance and organisational culture

Present situation

Many work-life balance-related measures are already in place, based on general principles established by the Assembly of members and applied by the Management Pole. These measures concern, e.g., flexitime, remote working, and workload.

Measures

In this thematic area, the main objective is to regulate and better organise the measures on work-life balance and reinforce the engagement of K&I to promote a gender equality culture.

For this thematic area, the following measures are planned.

Topic	Description	Timeline
Flexible working time	Flexible working time arrangements are already in place. They allow staff to work part-time for a period, for personal reasons or care responsibilities. Based on the experience matured so far, these arrangements will be made explicit and, if necessary, improved.	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Remote working	Remote working is regularly applied, with an increase during the COVID-19 pandemic, to allow staff members to work from home for personal reasons or care responsibilities. To ensure higher coordination, enhanced arrangements will be developed and tested.	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Online meetings	Presently, internal meetings are organised online, in person or adopting a hybrid format according to the specific needs of participants. New equipment for organising hybrid meetings will be put in place.	2022 New equipment in place 2023 Additional equipment in place
Time slots for meetings	The time slots to organise internal meetings are usually compatible with care commitments (from 9:30 to 17:00). However, no specific regulations are in place and exceptions also occur. Under the GEP, a set of regulations will be defined and tested.	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Workload management	The workload of K&I's staff is evaluated annually, and measures are taken to support those with heavy workload periods. The current arrangements will be made more explicit and assessed for introducing possible improvements.	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Gender-sensitive language	There are no specific regulations about the use of gender-sensitive language in both internal and external communication. Specific rules will be developed and tested.	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Organisational culture	To favour an increased involvement of all the staff members on gender issues, internal meetings with the staff will be organised annually to assess the measures adopted and identify new possible issues to address	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Return after career breaks and leaves	Measures (e.g., remote working, part-time working) are already adopted to support staff members returning to work after leaves for personal reasons or care commitments as well as after a career break. However, these measures have never been organised in a formalised scheme. A formal support scheme will be, therefore, defined and tested.	2023 Testing period 2024 Formalisation and monitoring
Direct support	Provision of direct support and advice to staff members on work-life balance will be provided under the GEP.	2024 Testing period 2025 Full application

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Present situation

The internal life of K&I, including leadership dynamics, is characterised by consensus-based peer-to-peer relations. As for the new appointments, they are decided and approved by the Assembly of members. Gender balance is one of the explicit criteria adopted for appointments and task allocation.

Measures

In this thematic area, the GEP will be aimed at, on the one side, increasing the visibility of women in leadership positions and, on the other side, setting up clearer selection and appointment procedures, especially in the event of a future expansion of the staff.

For this thematic area, the following measures are planned.

Topic	Description	Timeline
Visibility of women in leadership positions	Actions will be taken to increase the visibility of women in leadership positions in institutional communication (website, social media)	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Selection and appointment procedures	Clearer selection and appointment procedures will be defined ensuring that at least 40% of the personnel in leadership positions belong to the less-represented gender	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Support women to access leadership positions	Training and support schemes will be developed to help women access leadership positions	2024 Testing period 2025 Full application

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Present situation

The recruitment process is currently not formalised in specific procedures also because the number of new hires is very low (only two people were hired for temporary positions between 2020 and 2021). As for the career scheme adopted at K&I, it includes only two steps (junior and senior researchers).

Measures

In this thematic area, the main objectives are to better define the recruitment and appointment procedures, make the contribution of women researchers more visible and establish a support scheme for women's career development, in the event of an enlargement of the staff.

For this thematic area, the following measures are planned.

Topic	Description	Timeline
Recruitment procedures	More formalised and gender-sensitive recruitment procedures will be defined, based on past experiences, to increase transparency and avoid unconscious biases	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Recruitment and promotion committees	There is no permanent committee in charge of recruitment and promotion. The temporary committees that will be established will be gender balanced.	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Candidate pooling	Gender-balanced candidate pools will be established, and procedures will be defined to proactively search women candidates for open positions.	2023 Testing period 2024 Full application
Visibility of women researchers	Internal procedures are already in place to ensure the presence of women researchers in e.g., scientific publications, scientific conferences and meetings, and institutional communication. Monitoring procedures will be defined and put in place.	2023 Testing period 2024 Full application
Support in career development	A support scheme including training and mentoring activities will be adopted to help junior female researchers advance in their career	2023 Testing period 2024 Full application

Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

Present situation

K&I has already been and still is involved in EC-funded and international projects focused on or including components on gender and intersectionality. In particular, K&I has implemented different projects aimed at promoting GEPs in research organisations or projects focusing on Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) where a component related to the gender dimension in research content was included. The gender and sex dimensions are, therefore, broadly considered in the organisation's research activities.

Measures

In this thematic area, an effort will be done to capitalise on the research experience of K&I to establish more explicit procedures to systematically embed gender and intersectional perspectives in the implementation of research projects. With a view to expanding the staff, stronger measures (training activities, internal workshops, and the appointment of an internal gender expert to support research teams) will be also envisaged to ensure that the gender and sex dimensions will be duly considered in any research activity.

For this thematic area, the following measures are planned.

Topic	Description	Timeline
Research design	Gender-related issues and intersectionality are already considered in any project proposal and research design activity. To enhance this process, guidance will be provided to help researchers to include the gender and sex dimension and the intersectional perspective in research proposals	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Internal revision	Gender-related criteria will be introduced in the existing internal revision process of the conception, design, and implementation of scientific outputs	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Gender expert	A researcher will be appointed to serve as a gender expert for supporting researchers in including gender and intersectionality in their research projects	2022 Testing period 2023 Full application
Training	Basic training modules will be defined and tested to help newly-hired researchers properly consider gender issues and intersectionality in research	2023 Testing period 2024 Full application
Internal workshops	Internal workshops will be organised about including gender and intersectional perspectives in research projects	2024 Testing period 2025 Full application

Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

Present situation

No specific measures are in place to prevent and manage gender-based violence. This is mainly due to the horizontal nature of the organization and its size.

Measures

In this thematic area, new measures should be introduced, especially in a view of the enlargement of the staff.

Topic	Description	Timeline
Code of conduct	A code of conduct tailored to the features of the organisation will be adopted to codify staff members' expected behaviours	2023 Testing period 2024 Full application
Responsibility pole	A person responsible for the prevention and management of sexual harassment and gender-based violence will be appointed	2023 Testing period 2024 Full application
Reporting procedures	Reporting procedures about instances of sexual harassment and gender-based violence will be defined	2024 Testing period 2025 Full application
Support measures	Measures to support victims of sexual harassment and gender-based violence will be defined	2024 Testing period 2025 Full application

This Gender Equality Plan has been approved by the Assembly of members of K&I in December 2021 and signed by the Sole Director.

The Sole Director


Giovanna Murari