

Project Green

Gender Equality Plan

2023-2026

Gender Equality Plan Working Group

1. Luke Cassar – Equal Opportunity Officer
2. Joanne Falzon – Gender Equality Officer

Definitions

Gender refers to ‘social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men’ (EIGE, 2021a).

Sex refers to the ‘biological attribute that distinguish male, female and intersex’ (European Commission, 2020h).

Gender Identity refers to ‘each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function, by medical, surgical, or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms’ (EIGE, 2021a).

While the data collection for Project Green only considers sex-disaggregated data for men and women, it will be important to also consider non-binary gender for data collection in future publications, where possible. Non-binary is an umbrella term for gender identities that fall outside the gender binary of men or women. This includes individuals whose gender identity is neither exclusively man nor woman, a combination of man and woman or between or beyond genders.

Gender Equality Plan – Project Green

1.0 Introduction

Project Green (the Agency) is a government agency established in the first quarter of 2023. During strategic meetings regarding the setting up of the Agency, it was clear from the start that gender equality will be incorporated in Project Green's strategy. Indeed, all Agency policies and procedures are compiled with this intention; furthermore, one of the initial policies to be issued by Project Green was the Equality Policy.

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was developed for Project Green (the Agency) following internal strategic meetings, reviewing also the Agency's current policies and procedures.

Presently, the Agency already has a commitment to follow the main areas covered by GEP's and has policies and practices in place which are aligned with the Maltese Legislation. Such principles covering the recommended areas of the GEP include:

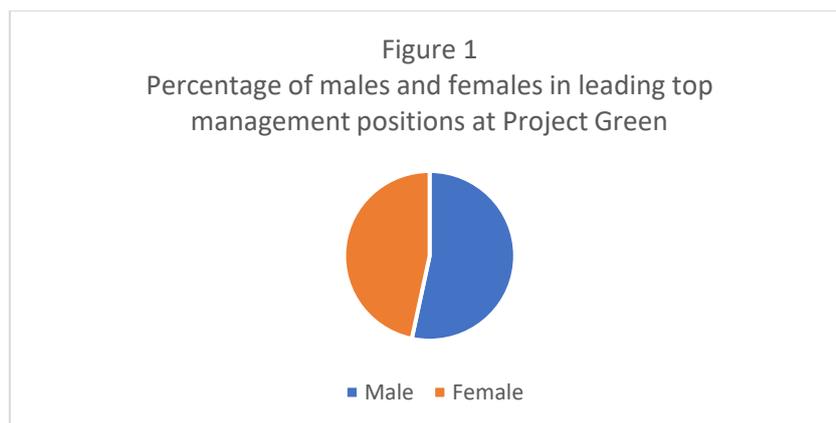
1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

a. The provision of good working conditions for all staff, including staff members with special needs, which will allow both men and women to have the flexibility for a healthy work-life balance and a safe working environment which enables staff to reach optimal performance levels.

- These principles are also highlighted in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452 of the Laws of Malta) and subsidiary legislation (Organisation of Working Time Regulations – SL 452.87), the Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act (Cap. 424 of the Laws of Malta) and subsidiary legislation (Work Place (Minimum Health and Safety Requirements) Regulations – SL 424.15), the Government of Malta Policy Manual (Manual of Work-life balance measures), as well as the Agency's policies.

2. Gender balance in Leadership and Decision Making

a. Figure 1 illustrates the number of males and females in leading top management positions. As shown in the Figure 1, Project Green has already achieved a gender balance in leadership and decision-making roles.



3. Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

a. Gender balance in recruitment and career progression ensuring equal opportunities at the stage of recruitment and subsequent career progression for all levels of staff, including top management grades.

- These principles are highlighted in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452 of the Laws of Malta) and subsidiary legislation (Equal Treatment in Employment Regulations - SL 452.95), Clause 3 of the Agency's Equality Policy and Article 2.5 of the Government of Malta Policy Manual (Manual on Industrial Relations and the Selection and Appointment Process under Delegated Authority in the Malta Public Service [Version 4.17])

4. Measures against Gender-based Violence including Sexual Harassment

a. Non-discriminatory treatment based on the grounds of religion or religious belief, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, political orientation and racial or ethnic origin.

- These principles are also highlighted in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452 of the Laws of Malta) and subsidiary legislation (Equal Treatment in Employment Regulations - SL 452.95), the Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap. 456 of the Laws of Malta), the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (Cap. 540 of the Laws of Malta) as well as the Agency's Equality Policy and Bullying and Harassment Policy.

b. Gender matters in addressing gender-based violence that empower staff, amplify their voices, offer opportunities of redress, and promote acceptance of all gender identities and sexualities.

- These principles are highlighted in Article 29 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452 of the Laws of Malta), the Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap. 456 of the Laws of Malta), Article 251A of the Criminal Code (Chapter 9 of the Laws of Malta), as well as the Agency’s Equality Policy, Bullying and Harassment Policy and Discipline Procedure.

Circular 15/2012 issued by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) also highlights the importance on gender mainstreaming asserting that gender mainstreaming “will enhance the ability of employers to make the best use of human resources and improve productivity and competitiveness whilst giving employees the benefit equally in society. In practice it requires a pro-active approach, the need to identify those areas where any degree of inequality could potentially arise, assess the underlying causes of such inequalities and take necessary steps to bring about change.”

In response to the guidelines of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), which aim to “identify and implement innovative strategies to promote cultural change and equal opportunities in Universities and Research Centres”, this GEP aims to identify gaps in the Agency’s current policies and practices and to introduce new measures that better support gender equality within the Council. Although the Agency already adopts numerous measures that promote gender equality, the challenges identified are presented in Section 1.1 along with a plan of action presented in Section 1.2.

1.1 Challenges and Objectives

The challenges related to gender equality and diversity were identified and discussed during various meetings held between Project Green's Chief Operations Officer and members of the HR Department. The Agency has also appointed two gender equality officers who throughout the period covering this GEP, shall be overseeing and following up on progress on the challenges which the Agency shall be implementing between 2023 to 2026. The Agency's gender equality officers are listed in Section 1.3.

The challenges and actions identified are outlined in Section 1.2 and are followed by the actions that the Agency will be taking to collect and monitor data.

1.2 Challenges and Action Plan

Challenge 1: To introduce gender-neutral restrooms

Key-Area	Objectives	Challenges	Direct Target	Indirect Target	Timeline			
					2023	2024	2025	2026
Gender neutral restrooms	To promote inclusion and create a safe space for all genders	To turn all Agency restrooms into gender neutral spaces and affix the proper signage	All Project Green employees	Clients and third parties		x	x	x

Project Green currently has segregated restrooms for males and females.

Goals: To turn all Agency restrooms into gender neutral spaces, installing single stall restrooms ensuring non-restrictive facilities which are adequate for all genders.

Action Plan: The Agency will update proper signage to be fixed with all restrooms. Subsequently, the HR Department will issue a memo informing employees of this update.

Challenge 2: Communication and implementation of gender sensitive content in all formal communication

Key-Area	Objectives	Challenges	Direct Target	Indirect Target	Timeline			
					2023	2024	2025	2026
Integrating the gender dimension	To promote inclusivity and address gender issues	Communication and implementation of gender sensitive content in all formal communication	All employees	NA		x	x	x

A review of Project Green policies as well as internal documentation and communication has uncovered the need to pro-actively address matters relating to the effective use of gender sensitive language in all formal communication. Although the Agency already makes use of gendered pronouns

such as 'he/she' in its official documents, such pronouns are generally drafted in the traditional order of 'he' before 'she', therefore placing more importance on the male gender rather than the female gender. Furthermore, the Agency recognises that such language might not be gender inclusive, as it conforms to the binary gender system. In view of this, the Agency recognises that the additional use of inclusive pronouns such as 'they/them', will ensure that non-binary persons are not excluded and that all its staff members are addressed through language as persons of equal value, dignity, integrity, and respect.

Goals: To be more inclusive on the basis of gender through the use of gender sensitive communication.

Action Plan: The Gender Equality Working Group will be providing tailored made training on the use and application of gender sensitive communication to its present staff members which shall focus on the importance, applicability and use of gender-sensitive communication. Newly recruited staff from 2024 onwards, shall also start receiving this training as part of their induction programme. Furthermore, all official HR documentation and correspondence shall be communicated in a gender-neutral language.

1.3 Data Collection and Monitoring

For the purpose of this GEP, the data in relation to each challenge shall be collected as follows:

- *Challenge 1: To introduce gender-neutral restrooms*

Compile a list of all Agency restrooms, identify the changes that are required to transform these restrooms into non-restrictive genders facilities, procure the necessary resources followed by implementation and installation. The Gender Equality Officers shall monitor the progress of this project, which should be completed by end of 2024. Upon completion, all Project Green employees will be notified accordingly.

- *Challenge 2: Communication and implementation of gender sensitive content in all formal communication*

Existing and new employees shall receive training in relation to inclusivity on the basis of gender. A training session for existing staff members will be held in the first quarter of 2024 and all new existing staff will also receive this training as part of their induction process. A record of training delivery shall be kept at the HR Department and on a bi-annual basis, the Gender Equality Officers shall monitor that all staff have received this training.

Gender-neutral official documentation and correspondence issued by the HR Department shall be vetted by the Head of HR and a sample of such documents shall be taken on a bi-annual basis so as to monitor that the use of gender-sensitive communication is being applied.

Gender Equality Plan Working Group Members:

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