

# **Energy and Water Agency Gender Equality Plan**

**2022-2026**

### **Description: The Energy and Water Agency (EWA)**

The Energy and Water Agency is a Government Agency within the Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Enterprise, established via LN 50/2014. The Agency is tasked with formulating and implementing Government's national policies in the energy and water sectors, aimed at ensuring security, sustainability and affordability of energy and water in Malta. Research is often conducted internally and/or outsourced.

As an entity in the Public Sector, the Agency and its employees are subject to the First Schedule to the Public Administration Act which contains the Code of Ethics for Public Employees, including section twenty thereof, dealing with non-discrimination.

As a public entity the EWA is furthermore compliant with all relevant legal requirements.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of male v female employees at EWA in 2021.

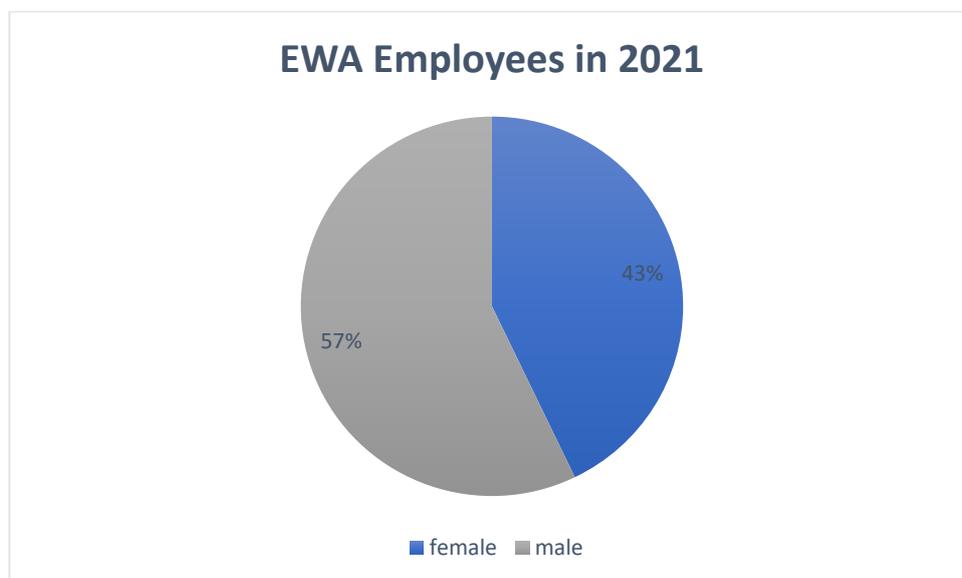


Figure 1: EWA employee gender distribution

## ***Introduction to the Gender Equality Plan (GEP)***

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was designed following a gender audit which included the analysis of policies, practices and measures adopted or created by EWA. This GEP aims to identify gaps in the current EWA policies, practices and set up.

The challenges related to gender equality and diversity were identified and discussed during multiple meetings held between EWA and Consultants Prof JosAnn Cutajar and Prof Brenda Murphy. These meetings were primarily attended by members forming part of the senior management team, namely the Agency's Legal Policy Officer and its Human Resources Policy Officer. Some of these meetings included the Chief Executive Officer. These three Officers comprise the Agency's Gender Equality Committee.

Throughout the period covering this GEP, the Gender Equality Committee shall be overseeing and following up on progress and the challenges faced by EWA during the GEP implementation - 2022 to 2026.

The commitment to follow the main areas covered by the GEP are aligned with Maltese Legislation, and with Institutional policies:

### *Legislation*

1. Act No. XXIV of 2016 - Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) (Amendment) Act
2. Act No XIX 1991 Chap 2 Section 45
3. Act No XXI 1993 Civil Code Cap 16
4. MPO Circular 13 1/6/94
5. MPO Circular 28/96 Act No XXI 1997 Art 14. Chapter 325
6. Legal Notice 427 2002 Part – Time Employees Regulations
7. Legal Notice 181 2008 Access to Goods and Services and their Supply (Equal Treatment) Regulations
8. Act No I 2003 Chap 456 Legal
9. Act No 85 2007 Equal Treatments of Persons Order
10. Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Circular No. 24/2000 'Gender Mainstreaming'
11. Chapter 595 Public Administration Act
12. Constitution of Malta Chap 452.
13. Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452 of the Laws of Malta)
14. Subsidiary legislation (Organisation of Working Time Regulations – SL 452.87),
15. Subsidiary legislation (Equal Treatment in Employment Regulations - SL 452.95)

16. Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act (Cap. 424 of the Laws of Malta)
17. Subsidiary legislation (Work Place (Minimum Health and Safety Requirements) Regulations – SL 424.15)
18. Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap. 456 of the Laws of Malta),
19. Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (Cap. 540 of the Laws of Malta)
20. Subsidiary Legislations (Energy and Water Agency (Establishment as an Agency) Order) SL 595.08

#### *Policies*

1. EWA Terms of Employment Handbook
2. [Public Service Management Code](#)
3. 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]).

#### **Key areas covered by this Gender Equality Plan**

1. **Work-life balance:** The provision of good working conditions for all staff to have the flexibility for a healthy work-life balance and a safe working environment to enable them to reach optimal performance levels. This tends to enable the retention of workers.
2. **Gender balance in Leadership and Decision Making:** Improving gender balance in leadership positions is not only considered good organisational practice, but also supports diversity in thoughts, experiences, knowledge, ideas and perspectives which adds value to service provision and research.
3. **Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression:** Ensuring equal opportunities at the stage of recruitment and subsequent career progression for all levels of staff.
4. **Organisational culture:** An organisation's culture defines the 'proper' way to behave within the organisation. This culture consists of shared beliefs and values established by leaders and then communicated and reinforced through various methods, ultimately shaping employee perceptions, behaviours and understanding.



Figure 2: Organizational Culture

Source: <https://swhelper.org/2014/06/16/organizational-culture/>

5. **Integration of Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content:** Taking gender into consideration in research design means that gender is systematically controlled for, throughout the research process, without necessarily being the main focus of analysis. Teaching about gender, especially in areas considered as neutral is crucial in order to delineate the differential access the gendered population has to energy/water, and the gendered impact this has on different genders' lives.

6. **Measures against Gender-based Violence including Sexual Harassment and interpersonal violence:** Non-discriminatory treatment based on the grounds of religion or religious belief, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, political orientation and racial or ethnic origin. Gender matters in addressing gender-based and interpersonal violence.

## Action Plan 2022-2026

### Key Action 1 - Work/life balance

At EWA, employees can benefit from:

- a. Telework - Teleworking is embedded in the Public Service Management Code. All staff are eligible to apply, but the final decision and approval is dependent on the discretion of the Head of Unit. Telework is subject to the completion of the probationary period. Employees applying for telework will be able to perform their tasks and duties remotely and are permitted to apply for a maximum of ninety percent (90%) of their contracted hours to be worked away from the office. Arrangements under the current telework policy will terminate in 2023, these having been phased out by the Public Service Remote Working Policy published in September 2021.
- b. Flexi-time - covered by *Circular E002\_2020 Office Hours and Flexitime*. Core hours and flexible hours consist of:
  - The standard time window for office hours throughout the calendar year, is as follows:
    - Start time (flexible) - 07:00 to 09:00
    - Core time (fixed) - 09:00 to 14:00
    - Finish time (flexible)- 14:00 to 18:00
  - (including 15 minute lunch break for those working 6 hours or more in a day).
  - All workers can make use of flexible hours. Everyone can make use of flexi-time; it is not grade dependent, and it is available to all.
- c. Breastfeeding: Employees who are breastfeeding can use dedicated breastfeeding facilities/rooms. Within an 8-hour day, breastfeeding employees are afforded an extra hour daily for breastfeeding responsibilities.
- d. EWA currently has an informal policy for flexible working arrangements in place which emerged as a continued practice following the policy for working from home drawn up during the COVID 19 pandemic. Everyone can request flexibility. The granting of such a request requires the assent of the Head of Unit and the CEO.
- e. Other Work/Life balance measures are regulated by the Public Service Management Code.

*Actions*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
To promote and implement measures that aim at improving the balance between work and personal life	To formalise a Flexible Working Arrangements Policy	All staff	HR Gender Equality Committee with input from Heads of Units	2023
To promote and implement measures that aim at improving the balance between work and personal life	Evaluate Flexible Working Arrangements Policy via qualitative and quantitative research	All staff	Internal or external evaluator	2023

**Key Action 2. Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision making**

*Actions*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Support all genders in leadership positions	Design and promote training and mentoring to enable employees to be appropriately prepared take up leadership positions	All employees within the Agency	Corporate Gender Equality Committee with input from Heads of Units	2024-2026
Evaluate training and mentoring	Qualitative and quantitative research	All employees within the Agency	Corporate Gender Equality Committee with input from Heads of Units	2024-2026
Gender inclusivity in leadership role design	Ensure that the flexibility is built into leadership roles to avoid exclusion of any gender	All staff	Corporate Gender Equality Committee with input from Heads of Units	2022-2026
Make informed decisions	Collate and use gender segregated data in all reporting and decision-making to enable EWA to monitor progress	Heads of Units and CEO	Corporate Gender Equality Committee with input from Heads of Units	2022-2026

**Key Action 3. Gender Equality in recruitment and career progression**

The Agency is subject to the provisions of the Manual for Public Sector Entities for its recruitment processes and adheres to these. Nevertheless, a number of actions have been identified to supplement these requirements.

*Actions*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Awareness raising	EWA to facilitate contact between staff who avail themselves of family friendly measures and public service units available to give professional advice regarding the implications this can have on pensions	Staff who avail of unpaid family friendly measures	Senior staff, HR, Gender Equality Committee	2023-2026
Balanced gender representation on recruitment and career progression boards	Formalise policy to ensure equitable gender representation on recruitment and career progression boards.	Potential Recruits, staff seeking promotion	Gender Equality Committee, HR	2023-2026
Gender sensitive recruitment	Design guidelines and train recruitment personnel on gender sensitive recruitment including training in respect of gender mainstreaming and unconscious bias	Recruitment Boards and Unit Heads	Gender Equality Committee, HR	2024-2026
Mentoring	Offer of mentoring and empowerment courses to	Interested Staff	Gender Equality Committee, HR	2023-2026

	improve self-confidence, negotiating and leadership skills, for individuals interested in leadership roles			
Raise awareness about women's contribution in STEM	Design an online exhibition of EWA female researchers to raise awareness about women's contribution in STEM with regards to energy and water.	Students and General Public	Corporate Communications	2023-2026

#### **Key Action 4. Organisational culture**

Organisational culture involves norms, values, how employees work, and habits that will ultimately have an impact on organisational performance. Organisations that want to promote equality across all genders need to design and implement an inclusive and diversity strategy. Creating a culture of equality in the work environment must come from the top, the leader. Leaders must establish base principles and philosophies in human resource management, that ensure that diversity, including gender, is catered for, and not punished. These basic principles and philosophies need to be incorporated in workplace policies, practices, and programmes that must be created and supported to boost progress for all. The design of the GEP is a positive step in the right direction.

#### *Actions*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Inclusive communication	Design inclusive language guidelines for internal and external communication. Adopt and adapt UM Good Practice in Inclusive Language to be used in internal and external communication as well as publications <a href="https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/425229/goodpracticeinclusivelanguage.pdf">https://www.um.edu.mt/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/425229/goodpracticeinclusivelanguage.pdf</a>	All staff and researchers	Gender Equality Committee, HR	Guidelines 2022-2023  Training 2023-2026
Monitor and evaluate policies and measures from a gendered perspective	Collate and use gender-segregated data in all reporting and decision-making. Turn this into a gender audit. Evaluate data. Assign an entity to compile the Gender Audit on an annual basis. Would help if this entity can communicate which data will be collected by a given date.	CEO and Heads of Units	Gender Equality Committee	2022-2026

**Key Action 5. Integration of Gender Dimension into Research and Training Content**

Research: It is essential to recognise, understand and retain a gender lens going forward. Embedding ‘gender’ into research, at its broadest, and into EU proposals specifically, is mandated. Indeed, when applying for EU funding the proposal process carries a mandate that all research proposals and projects contain a gender component and demonstrate competency – to fail to do so will result in a rejection of the proposal, and failure to secure funds.

Gender balance around procurement: EWA provides a training grant to those employees interested in accessing additional skills such as technical expertise in research leads.

*Actions*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Include gender in research	Incorporate a gender dimension in internal research (when possible) and require beneficiaries of research funded by EWA to submit a Gender Equality Plan with their proposals (or indicate where this is published)	Technical and Scientific Staff	Gender Equality Committee	2024-2026

**Key Action 6. Measures against Gender-based Violence including Sexual and Inter-Personal Harassment**

There is no formal policy in place that addresses, informs and provides guidelines for recognition and reporting of gender-based violence including sexual and interpersonal harassment. Additionally, there is no training in place to ensure that employees understand, recognise and know how to report gender-based violence including sexual and interpersonal harassment. To date, EWA refers to and is guided by the [Employee Wellbeing: A Harassment and Bullying Free Workplace](#)

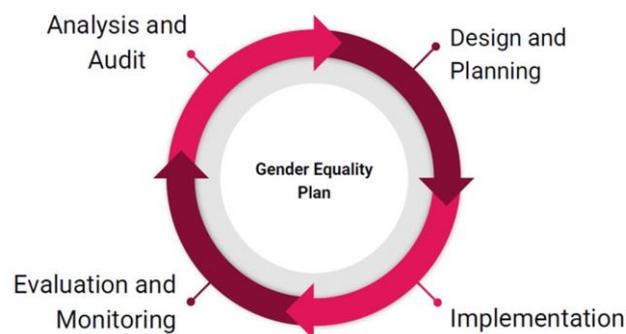
Employees need to be aware of what constitutes bullying, what sexual harassment looks like, and have clear reporting lines and procedures in place which they can resort to if they experience bullying/sexual harassment; Employees also need to be aware of the repercussions of being perpetrators of bullying and sexual harassment.

EWA needs to have a clear reporting procedure, and a dedicated member of staff who has been trained to respond to reports. We advise that the EWA make this Action a priority.

*Actions*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Group</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Design policy on gender based and inter-personal violence	Draft, consult and formalise a sexual harassment policy and another for inter-personal violence	All Employees	Gender Equality Committee and HR	2024-2026
Raise Awareness	Raise awareness about gender based and inter-personal violence, where to report when this occurs, and what the repercussions are for those found in breach the policies.	All Employees	Gender Equality Committee and HR	2024-2026

## Going Forward



1. Data to be collected on an annual basis by HR and compiled into a Gender Audit by the GEP team.
2. The GEP team will analyse the data and evaluate how successfully GEP actions have been implemented
3. The GEP team will promote examples of good practice.
4. Evaluation of policies, measures, and programmes should be evaluated in 2025 via qualitative and quantitative research.
5. The GEP will be supported by constant training and capacity building:
  - a. developing gender competence and gender analysis
  - b. gender mainstreaming of policies, measures, programmes
  - c. tackling unconscious gender bias among staff, leaders, and decisionmakers,
  - d. establishing working groups dedicated to specific topics,
  - e. raising awareness through workshops and communication activities.



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