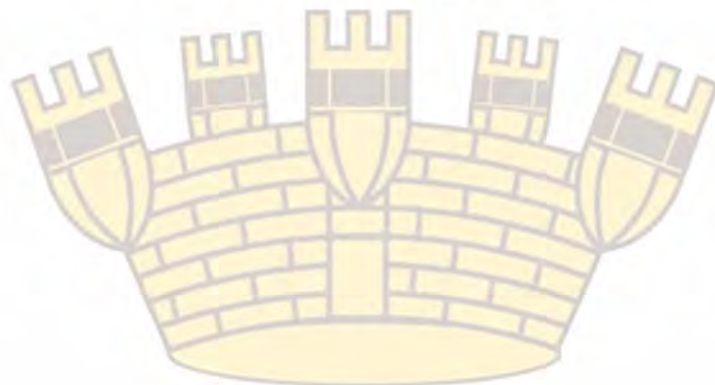


Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for Regjun Tramuntana 2023-2025



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Foreword

Welcome to our Gender Equality Plan (GEP). In today's world, achieving gender equity isn't just a moral imperative; it's a strategic advantage. Gender equality isn't just about fairness; it's about unlocking the full potential of our organization and society as a whole. By creating an environment where everyone has equal opportunities, regardless of gender, we not only foster a more inclusive workplace but also harness the diverse perspectives, talents, and experiences that drive innovation and success.

Embracing gender equity isn't just the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do. It leads to better decision-making, increased creativity, higher employee satisfaction, and improved financial performance. Gender equality isn't a zero-sum game where one gender benefits at the expense of another. Rather, it's about creating a level playing field where everyone can thrive and contribute their best.

Our Gender Equality Plan outlines our commitment to fostering a culture of inclusion and equity, where every individual, regardless of gender, can reach their full potential. It's not just a plan; it's a roadmap to a brighter, more prosperous future for our organization and the communities we serve. Together, let's build a more equitable and inclusive world, where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.



Clifford Galea
President Reġjun Tramuntana

Introduction

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was developed by the by Reġjun Tramuntana (referred to throughout this document as RT, we, us, our). The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) aims to address gender imbalances in managerial positions and promote a culture of equality and inclusivity throughout Regjun Tramuntana. It is essential to emphasise that the plan's objective is to provide equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender.

This GEP was created following an in-house gender audit analysis, meetings with employees, and a review of the policies and practices presently applied by the RT. RT already commits to the implementation of the main areas covered by this GEP and has practices in place which are aligned with the Maltese Legislation as per the following:

Work-life balance and organisational culture

Providing good working conditions for all staff, including staff members with special needs, allows both men and women to have the flexibility for a healthy work-life balance and a safe working environment to enable staff to reach optimal performance levels.

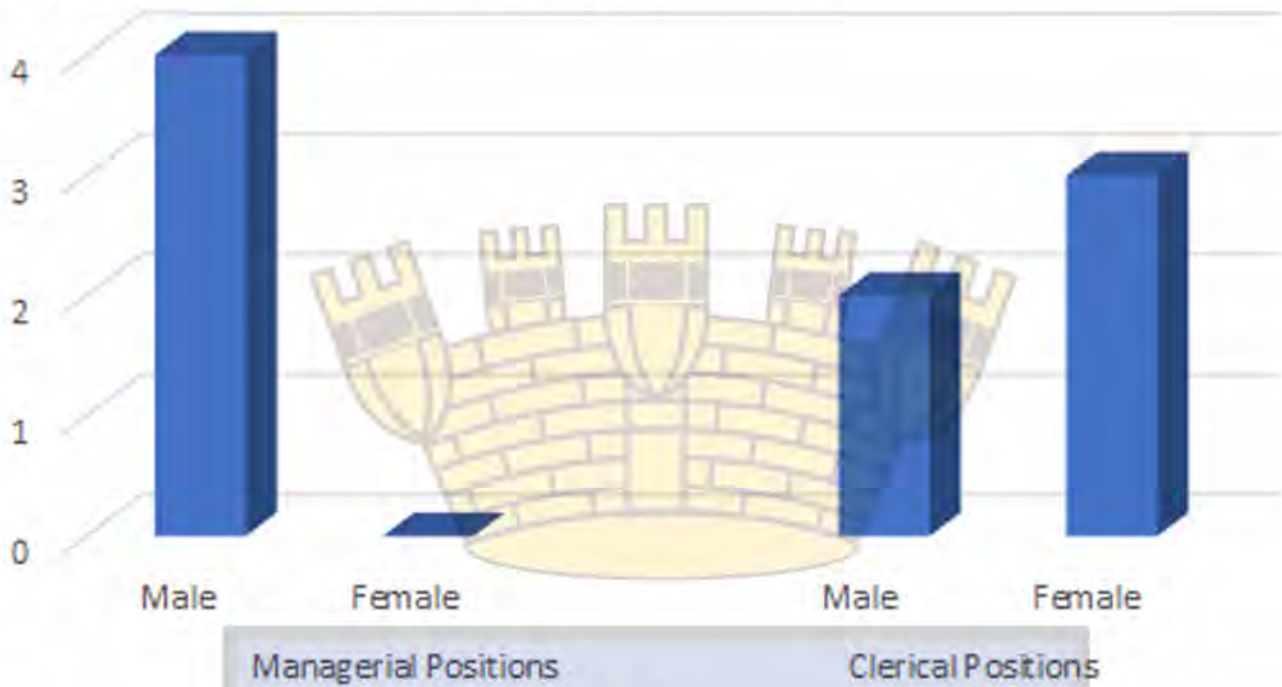
These principles are also highlighted in the:

- *Employment and Industrial Relations Act – Cap. 452 of the Laws of Malta*
- *Subsidiary Legislation Organisation of Working Time Regulations – SL 452.87*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act – Cap. 424 of the Laws of Malta*
- *Subsidiary Legislation Workplace (Minimum Health and Safety Requirements) Regulations – SL 424.15*
- *Public Service Management Code – Manual of Work-life balance measures*
- *Local Councils Act – Chapter 363 of the Laws of Malta*

Gender balance in Leadership and Decision Making

Figure 1 illustrates the collective number of males and females involved in legal representation and management positions. As shown in Figure 1, RT strives to achieve a gender balance in leadership and decision-making roles, while recognizing and respecting individual choices and preferences in career development.

Figure 1 - Current Gender Balance at Reġjun Tramuntana



The objective of this Plan is to promote gender equality in managerial positions and across all levels of the organization, ensuring equal opportunities for all employees.

Recruitment and Selection Process:

- Implement gender-neutral job descriptions and advertisements to attract diverse candidates.
- Encourage proactive outreach to networks and organizations to attract a more diverse pool of applicants.
- Offer unconscious bias training to hiring managers to ensure fair and impartial selection processes.

Gender balance in recruitment and career progression, ensuring equal opportunities at the stage of the 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), 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).

Talent Development and Training:

RT seeks to provide leadership and career development programs accessible to all employees, with a focus on mentoring and coaching opportunities. During the year training on gender sensitivity and diversity awareness are offered to foster an inclusive work environment.

RT's ensures equal access to training and professional development opportunities for both male and female employees.

Promotion and Advancement:

Through this Plan, RT intends to establish transparent promotion criteria and processes to mitigate bias and ensure merit-based advancements.

Flexible Work Arrangements:

RT is working through its limitations, to implement flexible work policies, including telecommuting and flexible hours, to accommodate diverse needs and promote work-life balance. It also provides support to encourage the participation of both male and female employees in caregiving responsibilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

RT will regularly review and analyze gender disaggregated data on recruitment, retention, and career progression.

Conduct staff meetings to gather feedback from employees on gender equality initiatives and identify areas for improvement.

Adjust strategies and interventions based on data insights to ensure continuous progress towards gender equality goals.

Measures against Gender-based Violence, including Sexual Harassment

- Non-discriminatory treatment based on religion or religious belief, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, political orientation and racial or ethnic origin.
- Gender matters in addressing gender-based violence empower staff, amplify their voices, offer redress opportunities, and promote acceptance of all gender identities and sexualities.

Circular 15/2012, issued by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), also highlights the importance of 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 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 seeks to identify gaps in the RT's current policies and practices and to introduce new measures that better support gender equality within the Regional Council.

Challenges and Objectives

The challenges related to gender equality and diversity were discussed in a meeting with all the RT employees. It was found that there are no existing gender inequality issues. Nonetheless, RT will monitor and maintain the current gender-neutral status.

Challenge 1: To extend the possibility of teleworking for all staff members irrespective of gender and family responsibilities, while making sure that the operational needs of the Regional Council are met, given the number of staff, including managers is less than ten (10).

RT will endeavour to implement the necessary infrastructure to enable effective teleworking, allowing office employees to work uninterrupted as needed.

Challenge 2: To ensure an equal representation of males and females on recruitment and interview boards.

Recruitment panels comprise two or more persons as part of the selection and recruitment process. All interviewers and selection committees are fully versed with equality issues and would have been given a copy of the policy. Whenever possible, such recruitment and election panels are genders balanced.

Challenge 3: Parental and Special Leave

RT employees can avail of Parental and other Special Leave as per the effective collective agreement (CA), including those roles not covered by CA. This would provide an unhindered right of parental and special leave. RT is to seek temporary replacements of the staff on long periods of leave to maintain its workflow regulated by the contractual obligations.

Challenge 4: Communication and implementation of gender-sensitive content in all formal communication.

A review of RT policy and internal documentation and communication has

shown that more attention will be given to gender-sensitive language in all formal communication.

RT as part of the portfolio of the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government already endorses the Equality Policy drafted by the Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary.

To extend the possibility of teleworking for all staff members irrespective of gender and/or family responsibilities

Key Area	Objectives	Challenges	Direct Target	Indirect Target	Timeline		
					2023	2024	2025
Work-life Balance and organisational culture	To promote and implement measures that aim at improving the balance between work and personal life.	To extend the possibility of teleworking for all staff members irrespective of gender and/or family responsibilities.	All Staff	Staff member's families	x	x	x

To ensure an equal representation of males and females on recruitment, interview and review boards

Key Area	Objectives	Challenges	Direct Target	Indirect Target	Timeline		
					2023	2024	2025
Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression	To promote processes to support gender sensitive recruitment and career progression opportunities.	To ensure an equal representation of males and females on recruitment, interviewing and review boards	All Staff	N/A	x	x	x

Staff returning to work after availing themselves of parental leave, will have their service in grade reckoned for up to 12 months therefore, their years in service will continue to accumulate in their favour when applying for career progression.

Key Area	Objectives	Challenges	Direct Target	Indirect Target	Timeline		
					2023	2024	2025
Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression	To promote processes to support gender sensitive recruitment and career progression opportunities.	Staff returning to work after availing themselves of parental leave, will have their service in grade reckoned for up to 12 months therefore their years in service will continue to accumulate in their favour.	All Staff	Families of staff	x	x	x

Communication and implementation of gender sensitive content in all formal communication

Key Area	Objectives	Challenges	Direct Target	Indirect Target	Timeline		
					2023	2024	2025
Integrating the gender dimension	To promote inclusivity and address gender issues.	Communication and implementation of gender sensitive content in all formal communication.	All Staff	N/A	x	x	x