

GEM Foundation Gender Equality Plan

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GEM Foundation

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Gender Equality Working Group

The Working Group drafting V1.0 of the GEM Foundation Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was composed of the following GEM Foundation staff: Chiara Pigoli, Catalina Yepes and Paul Henshaw, and was reviewed by former Secretary General John Schneider (V1.1). Version 1.2 of the GEP used also data for 2023, Version 1.3 used data for 2024, Version 1.4 adds data for 2025; these three versions were reviewed by current Secretary General Helen Crowley.

List of Abbreviations

GEM	Global Earthquake Model
GB	Governing Board
AB	Advisory Board
WG	Working Group
GEP	Gender Equality Plan

Acknowledgements

This document was inspired by and its structure based on the GEP published by the CIMA Foundation, <https://www.cimafoundation.org/en/gender-equality-plan/>

1. INTRODUCTION

GEM Foundation has introduced a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) to strengthen the Foundation's strategy and day-to-day operational processes in the fulfilment of the GEM mission. The strategy is also needed to comply with the requirements for participation in projects funded by the European Commission and other funders with similar requirements.

This initiative is an opportunity to identify areas in which improvement is necessary and to recommend the allocation of resources to do so.

The purpose of the Plan is to identify gender inequality, distortion and discrimination, and to recommend actions to correct these occurrences, including goals and performance indicators. The approach is to put in place a participatory process involving the personnel, management and stakeholders – these are the grounds to a strategic vision pivoting on GEM Foundation's most precious assets: the people who work for it. Beyond the implementation of this plan, GEM Foundation will promote a virtuous equal-opportunities relational chain with the broader network of collaborators, partners and others who come into contact with the Foundation.

The GEP Working Group was formed to focus on the topic of Gender Equality to produce:

- a) an evaluation of the current status of Foundation, with the focus on:
 - i) GEM staff and careers;
 - ii) economic divergence;
 - iii) organizational structure;
 - iv) work-life balance;
 - v) research and development activities;
- b) a draft plan pivoting on the following subject areas:
 - i) gender equality in recruitment and career progression;

- ii) gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
- iii) work-life balance and organisational culture;
- iv) combining gender mainstreaming with ecological transition;
- v) implementing lasting policies for equal opportunities.

This document represents the initial output of the Working Group and is intended to be a first step towards a stronger and more gender-balanced GEM Foundation.

2. GEP FUNDAMENTALS

The Gender Equality Plan adopted by GEM Foundation aims to set out a specific framework of goals, strategic actions and tools to be activated within the Foundation over a specific timespan in order to fully integrate the gender aspect and genuinely achieve the desired results regarding gender equality and fairness.

The main aim is to combine the gender mainstreaming objectives, the positive actions, and the specific identity of the Foundation's work – research and technology transfer – so as to remove any obstacles hindering attainment of this goal.

Thus, the Plan stands as a drive towards real change and attention to gender issues as founding and structural action for the Foundation's practices throughout its entire structure.

Equal opportunities for career progression will be pursued through tools to foster gender balance within the Foundation's evaluation boards and to promote specific training pathways for all its personnel.

Leadership and prominence by female workers will be encouraged by the actions set out in the Plan.

Knowledge of personnel dynamics is necessary to establishing gender equality measures and this will be underpinned through implementation of systematic data collection and analysis.

Well-being within the Foundation's work environment will be strengthened and fostered, while the tools useful to ensuring greater flexibility and access for both female and male workers in specific situations affecting work-life balance have been defined.

Particular attention will be placed on gender-based violence, misconduct and harassment in the workplace, through information, training and specific actions. This area of intervention includes tools to ensure adequate knowledge and information on matters related to equal opportunities and gender culture by means of constant awareness of the Italian and European laws in force.

A stronger presence and valorisation of the female members in research groups will be promoted, while the question of equal opportunities in research project activities will also receive greater attention.

Given the impact that research activities can have in fuelling 'ecological transition', the tools to increase female participation in this process have been identified.

The actions, tools, target groups, timeline with implementation timescale, and the relevant representatives within the Foundation's personnel framework have been specified for each of the above aims.

Each aim can also be traced to the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda, which have been drafted with "the intent to end poverty, fight inequality and promote social and economic development; thus, all institutions are called on to pursue these objectives", and particularly Goals 5, 8 and 13.

The Plan takes into account the methods and suggestions adopted by EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality), and specifically:

- Supporting decision-makers and senior management through encouragement for initiatives that foster gender equality and fight practices impairing equality;

- Ensuring the long-term sustainability of the actions set out in the Plan, through adequate resources and a permanent working group to coordinate and monitor the actions put in place;
- Involving various categories of stakeholders – both in-house and external – to ensure tasks and responsibilities are shared, to reach various organisations, to step up the commitment to and potential impact of the measures, to achieve sustainable changes throughout GEM Foundation, and to guarantee transparency in this process both within and outside the Foundation;
- Implementing in-house gender analysis enabling a gender diagnosis of the Foundation for each personnel category and contract/salary grade. This analysis will help in the design of effective evidence-based measures to tackle any issues that may have been pinpointed and will enable the monitoring and assessment of results and progress;
- Enabling the re-assessment of specific gender priorities for the institute at different contract/salary grades as well as the re-modelling of measures through teamwork with the stakeholders;
- Putting in place all measures to avoid ‘failure’ of the Plan by setting out a commitment to both gender equality and work regarding the Plan at multiple levels of the institute’s architecture, by structuring a financial budget, and through monitoring and constant assessment to detect when this sustainability begins to slacken so as to identify the actions needed before crisis levels are reached.

3. CURRENT STATUS OF GENDER DISTRIBUTION

3.1. Note on method

The data analysed refer to the GEM Foundation permanent and temporary personnel.

The analysis considers data covering the period 2018-2025 with a particular focus on the last five years 2020-2025.

The data regarding presence in the workforce refer to 31st December of each year.

The salaries recorded have been considered as the gross annual salaries and include taxes, contributions, and bonuses.

The indicators analysed are the following:

- Workforce and careers
 - o Personnel distribution by gender
 - o Gender distribution of personnel based on contract type
 - o Gender distribution of personnel within contract/salary grade
 - o Personnel distribution by gender
- Economic divergence
 - o Average all-inclusive salaries for full-time personnel, by gender and contract/salary grade
- Organisation structure
 - o Type of responsibility role by gender
- Measures to encourage work-life balance
 - o Use of measures for work-life commitment compatibility by gender
- Research and development activities
 - o Gender distribution within project management

3.2. Workforce and careers

The GEM personnel considered in the plot below includes all employees, collaborators and PhD students funded by the GEM Foundation.

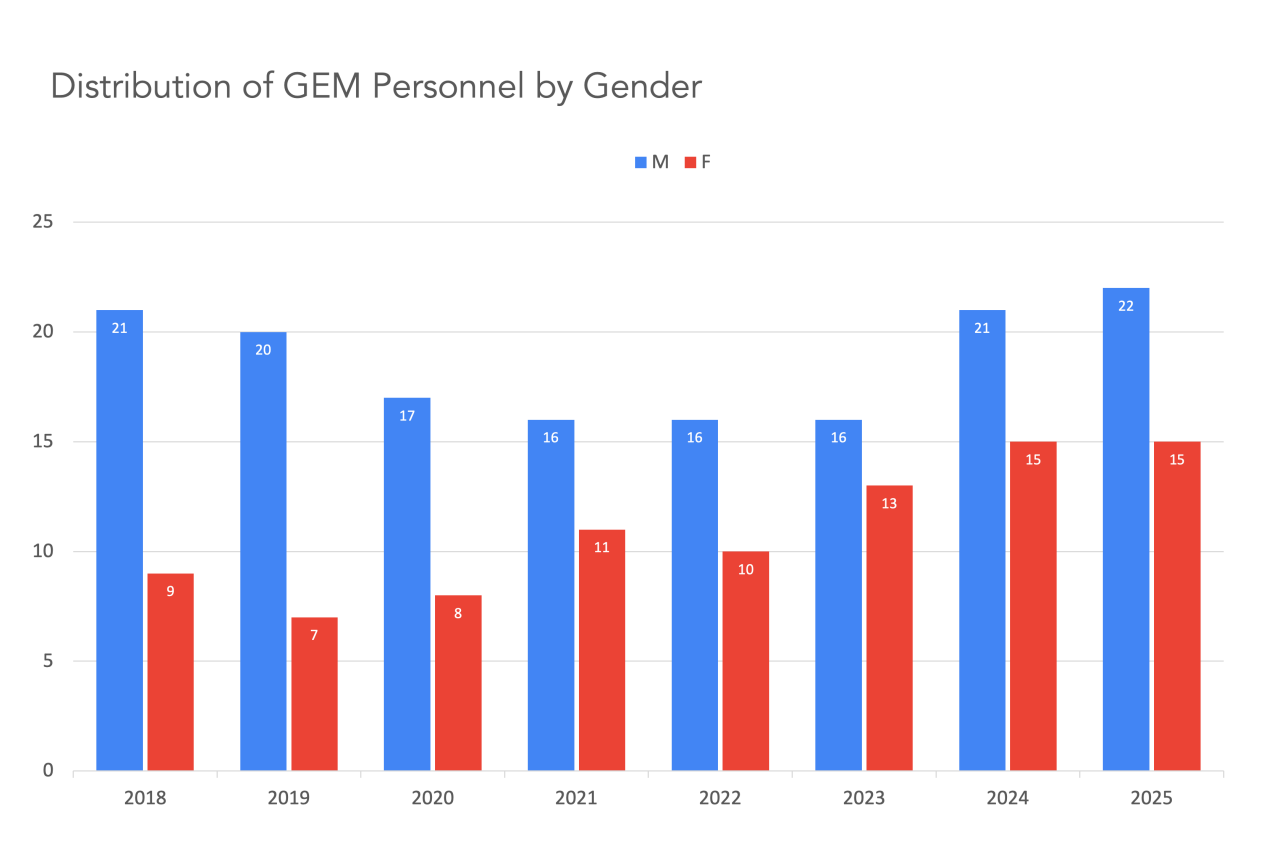


Figure 1: Distribution of GEM personnel by Gender over time

In the following graph, the “Independent” category includes independent or self-employed collaborators working either in Italy or overseas, while “Employee” indicates staff in Italy with a subordinate employment contract. Whilst the Foundation prefers to offer “Employee” contracts to all its staff, other contract types are provided to allow more flexibility for staff to work from their home country, or during an initial collaboration phase, before a permanent contract is offered.

GEM Personnel by Contract Type and Gender

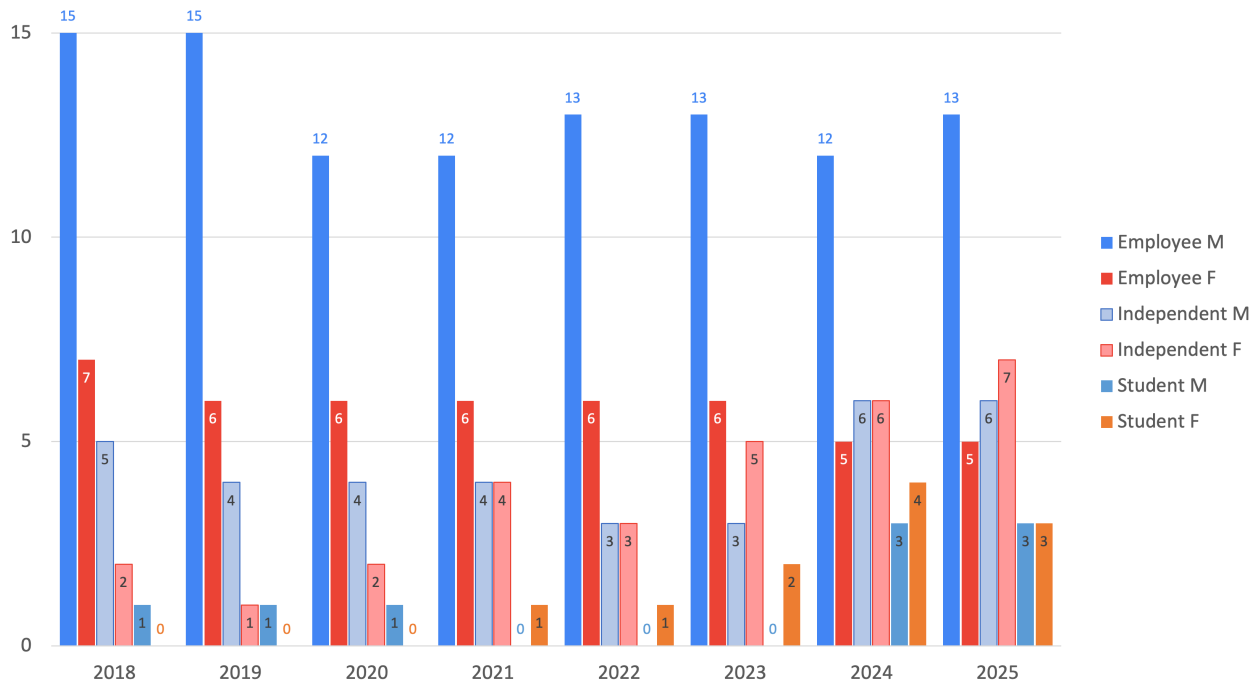


Figure 2: Distribution of GEM Personnel and Students by Contract type and Gender over time

3.3. Gender distribution of personnel within the CCNL Research contract/salary grades (CCNL: national collective labour agreement)

It is important to note that unlike many other Italian organizations, the formal salary grade (or *livello*) of GEM staff has largely been unrelated to seniority within the organization or indeed the actual salary. The collective contract (CCNL) used by GEM was intended for use within private schools and the grades associated typically do not map well to the positions and responsibilities of GEM staff. However, during 2025 some of the staff had their formal salary grades increased in order to better reflect the actual positions and responsibilities of those GEM staff.

3.4. The gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is calculated as:

$$\frac{R_{men} - R_{women}}{R_{men}}$$

The ‘rough’ salary differences per work hour are usually considered. Namely, the average hourly pay is established for both men (R_{men}) and women (R_{women}), and the difference is calculated and then expressed as a percentage of the men’s hourly pay. This is the descriptive statistic used by the European Commission to compare the gender pay gap in European Union countries.

Given the calculation method, positive values refer to cases in which the men’s average salary is greater than the women’s average salary.

GEM Personnel Pay Gap

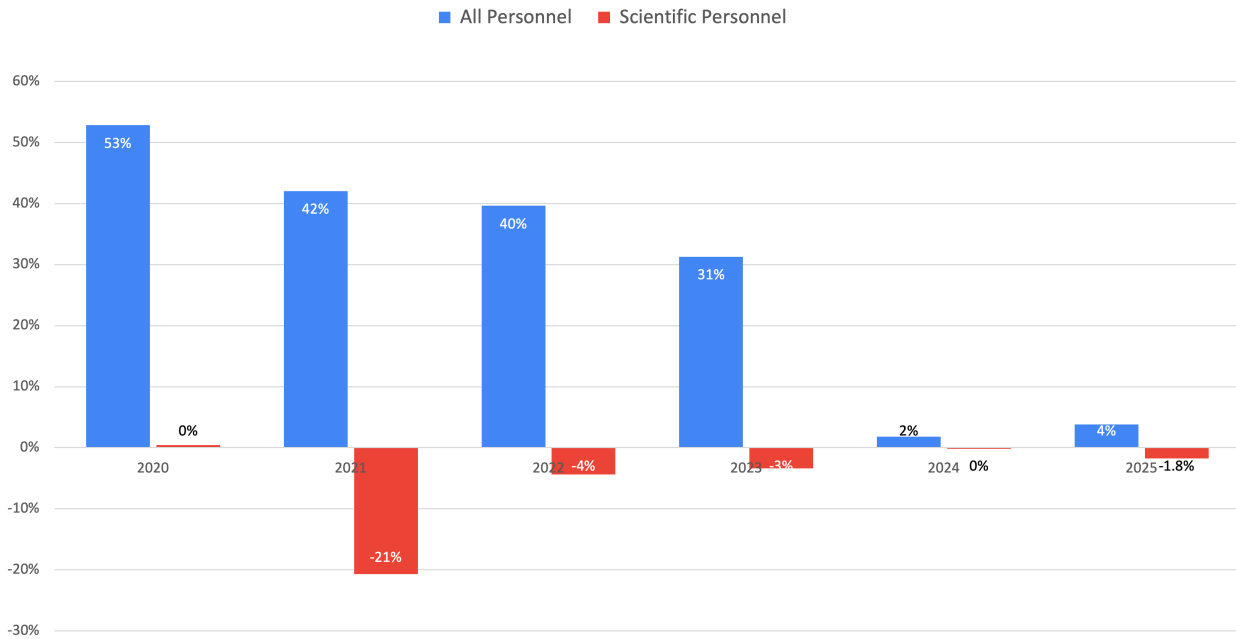


Figure 3: GEM Personnel Pay Gap overall and for scientific personnel

Up until 2024 there was a significant skew towards a positive pay gap when considering all personnel. One of the main reasons for this was that the GEM management team was formed exclusively of men until mid 2023. In fact, this pay gap has now reduced significantly (it went down from 53% to just 2%) due to the arrival of the new female Secretary General in August 2023, and has just increased slightly to 4% last year. Instead, when considering only scientific staff (which make up around 50% of the organisation), we can see that the pay gap has always been either zero or negative, and now sits at just -1.8%.

3.5. Organisation structure

The GEM management team is composed of the Secretary General and the coordinators of the Hazard, Risk, and IT teams, and was formed exclusively of men until mid 2023. These positions were occupied by the same people for several years and are generally speaking not subject to frequent changes. As mandated by the GEM Statute, the Secretary General is selected by the GEM Governing Board, formed of voting representatives of the GEM Sponsors; the GEM Secretariat does not have any means to influence the choice of Secretary General. In August 2023 the GEM Governing Board appointed a female Secretary General. The Secretary General is ultimately responsible for the selection of all other GEM Secretariat staff.

Using personnel age as a crude proxy for years of study + years of work experience, we note that the average age of female personnel is lower than that of the male staff. This suggests that the aggregate gender split makes it difficult to compare salaries for people with similar levels of experience. However, when looking just at the scientific staff (that make up around 50% of the organisation) we note that the average age of both male and female staff in 2025 was 34,33 and 33,11 years, respectively, and thus there is a correlation between level of experience and salary levels, which is not influenced by gender (as seen by the close to zero pay gap).

The GEM IT team is currently formed of five male staff members, is managed by a male team leader, and has been formed exclusively of male staff ever since its creation. According to an EU Eurostat article¹, in 2021 only 19.1% of the ICT workforce in the EU were female, this figure drops to 16.1% when we consider the GEM host country, Italy.

Since the number of persons in each gender/age-group is rather small, we cannot present the results in this document for reasons of privacy. The reduced size of the sample set also makes statistical analysis and comparison rather weak: a minimal change in the age-group boundaries causes significant changes in the corresponding gender-gap results.

3.6. Measures to encourage work-life balance

The small size of the GEM Secretariat staff makes it very difficult to perform meaningful comparisons of e.g., parental leave: over the past five years, only three staff members (2 male, 1 female) have made use of parental leave.

In October 2022, the GEM Foundation signed an agreement with each staff member to formalise a flexible smart working modality, partially transferring the job activities execution outside the GEM offices, with the intention of supporting a better work-life balance. All staff members agreed the terms of their Smart Working agreement with their supervisors, to ensure that both job and life requirements are taken into account. The Smart Working Agreement is proposed to all new GEM Secretariat staff. The current Smart Working Agreements are valid until the end of 2026.

Another measure adopted by GEM to ensure the work-life balance for its employees is the performance review, carried out twice a year. By performing this review, the supervisor and the employee can compare their expectations and results, thus to promote job satisfaction and identify where an unequal workload is present.

3.7. Project Management

GEM relies on its staff to develop different institutional and commercial projects. The value of projects (funded by Entities other than Sponsors) over time that have been led by male and female scientific staff is roughly equal, despite the Management Team being predominantly male. This number naturally fluctuates each year as a function of the type of projects that arrive, their value and the expertise required.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=ICT_specialists_in_employment

Project Managers (Male/Female) vs % of Total Project Income

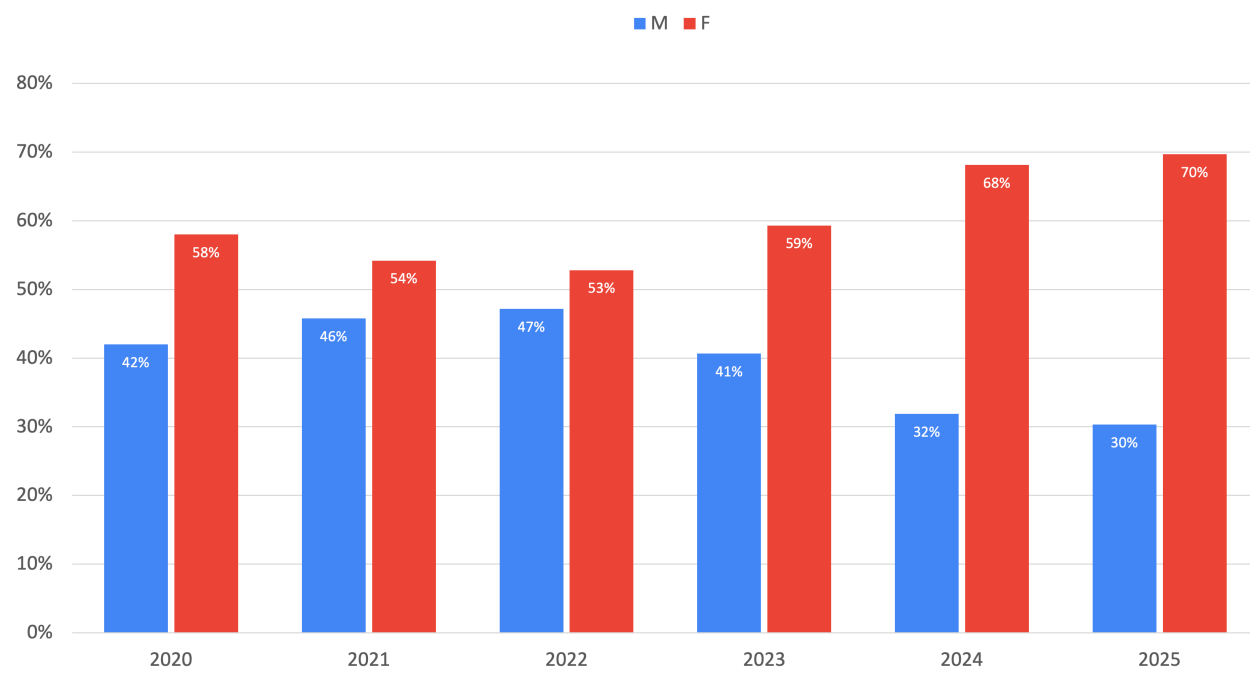


Figure 4: Project Managers (Male/Female) vs % of total Project Income

3.8. Final considerations

Gender Balance

- Since 2018, the proportion of male and female employees of the Foundation had become more and more balanced, though this trend reversely slightly in 2024 due to staff leaving and the addition of new collaborators and PhD students. Between 2024 and 2025 there is one new male employee which has slightly unbalanced further the distribution (Figure 1).

Gender Pay Gap

- The gender pay gap for all personnel has improved dramatically in recent years (and is at a negligible 4%) due mainly to the arrival of a female Secretary General. The gender pay gap for scientific staff (which comprise around 50% of the staff of the Foundation) is still very close to zero, and currently stands in 2025 at -1.8% (meaning that the average of the female salaries is slightly higher than the male salaries).

Workforce, careers and Organisation structure

- In terms of number of employees and contract type, gender parity has generally been reached for non-management scientific staff but not for the management team or the IT teams, with the management team predominantly male and the latter composed entirely of men.

Measures to encourage work-life balance

- Smart-working agreements are in place for all GEM staff members regardless of gender, age or position. The exact terms of the agreement are decided by the employee and their supervisor to ensure that both work and personal requirements are considered.

- Parental leave and family responsibility leave are little used by the GEM personnel but requested by both men and women.

Project Management

- Gender equality has generally been achieved in the assignment of projects to both male and female project managers, though this changes frequently as a function of the type of projects that arrive, their value and the expertise required.

GEM Retreat

- The GEM Secretariat organised a weekend retreat in September 2025. This is now an annual activity of the Foundation, with the aim of improving working relations of members within and across all teams. Such occasions also offer an opportunity for open exchange of ideas of how to improve the Foundation, including feedback on initiatives that can foster gender equality.

4. ACTION PLAN

4.1. Continuous Monitoring

The Gender Equality Working Group continue to collect data each year for each of the indicators described in section 3 and monitor the progress towards meeting the goals set out in this section.

4.2. Gender Equality Training Courses

GEM Secretariat Support and Management teams have investigated Gender Equality training courses, but have not yet identified an appropriate course. Instead the issues and data discussed within this document will be regularly presented and discussed in plenary meetings with all staff.

4.3. Share GEP with GEM Governing Board and invite feedback

The Gender Equality Plan will be periodically shared with the GEM Governing Board, and the GB members will be invited to provide feedback and suggestions to improve the plan.

4.4. Review Hiring Procedures for new staff

The GEM Management team in collaboration with the Support team, the Gender Equality Working Group and where appropriate, external employment consultants, will review the existing selection procedures for all new GEM staff with a view to identifying and removing any inconsistencies and obstacles to gender parity whilst still continuing to adopt a primarily meritocratic approach.

4.5. Improve monitoring of Hiring Process

We also propose to collect and retain statistical information such as the number of male/female candidates applying for and the number of male/female candidates interviewed for GEM positions, so as to allow us to better monitor the hiring process. Ideally we would be able to include statistics in future versions of this document, however we must be conscious of privacy issues given the limited number of positions an organization the size of GEM can expect to open.

4.6. Establish and communicate a mechanism for Anonymous Reporting

We have now established a mechanism for anonymized reporting of sexual harassment, gender related violence or other gender related misconduct that only members of the GEM Foundation can access [here](#).

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND WEB REFERENCES

- Italian Directive n° 2/19: “*Misure per promuovere le pari opportunità e rafforzare il ruolo dei Comitati Unici di Garanzia nelle amministrazioni pubbliche*” (Measures to promote equal opportunities and strengthen the role of CUGs – Single Guarantee Committees – in public administration)
- Italian Law n° 162 of 5 November 2021: “*Modifiche al codice di cui al decreto legislativo 11 aprile 2006, n. 198, e altre disposizioni in materia di pari opportunità tra uomo e donna in ambito lavorativo*” (Amendments to the Code referred to in Legislative Decree n° 198 of 11 April 2006, and other provisions on equal opportunities between men and women in the work environment)
- Vademecum on gender equality in Horizon 2020, a widely circulated publication to guide potential applicants through implementation of the gender provisions of Horizon 2020, http://ec.europa.eu/research/swafs/pdf/pub_gender_equality/2016-03-21-Vademecum_Gender%20in%20H2020-clean-rev.pdf
- Horizon 2020 Participant Portal: Horizon 2020 Online Manual – chapter on gender, http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-fundingguide/crosscuttingissues/gender_en.htm
- Horizon 2020 Participant Portal: dedicated webpage for experts on “How should gender be addressed and evaluated in Horizon 2020 proposals?”
- <http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/faqs/faq-977.html>
- CIMA Foundation GEP, 2022-2024, <https://www.cimafoundation.org/en/gender-equality-plan/>
- Chapter “Guide to Structural Changes in Academia and Research Organisations” (Italian version), European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), ISBN 978-92-9493-646-2 © European Union, 2017, <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming>

6. Formal Approval

GEM Foundation Gender Equality Plan v1.4 approved by Helen Crowley, GEM Secretary General,