



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2024-2026

Laimburg Research Centre



**Autonomous Province of Bolzano - Bozen
Laimburg Research Centre**

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

2024-2026

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Laimburg Research Centre

Laimburg Research Centre is the leading research institute for agriculture and food processing in South Tyrol. We are a public entity of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano / Bozen in Northern Italy, possessing its own legal personality.

Our goal is to support South Tyrolean agricultural businesses, family farms and food processing companies with scientifically sound experimental and research activities and so to help secure the quality of agricultural products and boost the competitiveness of commercial enterprises. On our experimental fields, in our laboratories, and in our offices, more than 220 employees work on approximately 350 research projects and activities per year, pertaining to all areas of the South Tyrolean agricultural sector, from fruit growing, viticulture, and mountain agriculture to food processing and product innovation. We thus cover the entire food production chain, from cultivation up to the finished product, and can develop quickly implementable solution for immediate and future challenges.

As an application-oriented research facility, we attach great importance to quickly and efficiently circulation our research findings to agricultural practices and local companies. This is why we disseminate new research and scientific findings to our target groups through consulting organisations, schools, lectures, practical demonstrations, and workshops, as well as through publications.



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Introduction

Laimburg Research Centre (LRC) is committed to gender equality, ensuring equal opportunities in recruitment and career progression, while also fostering an organizational culture that respects diversity. Through the implementation of the present Gender Equality Plan (GEP), LRC aims to identify both established good practices as well as areas for improvement, which are addressed by introducing mid- and long-term objectives to be achieved through targeted measures.

The LRC's GEP is based on the priorities defined by the European Commission in 2012 and the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025¹. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are sought to end the waste of talent and to diversify views and approaches to foster excellence. Gender equality benefits research and innovation (R&I) by improving the quality and relevance of R&I, attracting and retaining more talent, and ensuring that everyone can maximise their potential.

The GEP is a strategic approach aimed at achieving gender equality by identifying gender biases and inequalities and providing recommendations for leveraging them. It comprises a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through institutional and cultural change.

Laimburg Research Centre (LRC) implements the formulation of the GEP¹ based on the principles and guidelines of the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans².

As recommended, the LRC's GEP is based on three pillars:

- Conducting an impact assessment
- Identifying and implementing strategies to correct any bias
- Setting targets and monitor progress

To achieve this, an internal Gender Equality Plan - working group (GEP-WG) was established at LRC. The structure of the GEP was developed and adapted by the GEP-WG to fit the type of organization and the institutional context as recommended by EIGE. The GEP-WG collects and provides retrospective and ongoing data assessment and monitoring to shed light on the situation and development of gender-biased inequality at LRC. It furthermore interprets the results and presents them in form of an annually updated GEP to the senior management and publishes them on the institutional homepage. The GEP includes the presentation of objectives, measures, defining the target, the timeline, the people in charge and indicators for the strategic non-perpetuation and abolishment of the identified gender biases.

¹ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/democracy-and-rights/gender-equality-research-and-innovation_en#the-commissions-gender-equality-strategy

² <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-232129669>

Process-related Building Blocks

1. Publication and official endorsement of the GEP

Official organization's commitment to gender equality

A dedicated gender equality function

At LRC, an internal working group (GEP-WG) was established in June 2021 to support the development and implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP). Current members of the GEP-WG include Jennifer Berger (Leader of the GEP-WG, Head of "Science Support, Strategy and Communication," and member of the senior executive team), Evelyn Barcatta (Group Leader of Human Resources), Walter Guerra (Head of the "Institute for Fruit Growing and Viticulture" and member of the senior executive team), and Katrin Janik (Head of the Research Area "Molecular Biology and Microbiology"). Katrin Janik is also a member of the LRC workers' council and, in this role, has been involved in addressing and resolving gender-related conflicts within the organization.

The GEP-WG has met regularly since its establishment, analyzed gender-disaggregated data from the past years, and updated the GEP accordingly. It presented the updated GEP to senior management and the workers' council. The GEP-WG is responsible for setting up, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the GEP. Additionally, it will raise awareness of the benefits of gender equality at LRC across all levels, assess progress toward gender equality, and provide an annual report.

Wider staff time

For the development and implementation of the GEP and the respective measures, personnel from across LRC are engaged in various steps, such as data collection, analysis, participation in meetings, discussions etc. LRC supports the development, monitoring and implementation of the GEP by allowing the respective employees to dedicate time for this during the regular working hours.

Gender budgeting

LRC allocates a budget for specific training measures aimed at raising awareness of gender-related issues among all staff, empowering female employees, and promoting gender sensitivity at various levels. The exact budgetary commitment will be determined annually by the director of LRC.

Budget for training and courses

A budget is provided to organize courses and workshops addressing topics such as female leadership, raising awareness of gender imbalances, and female empowerment. These courses are open to all LRC employees. Participation in courses and workshops that are essential for the successful implementation of GEP goals is mandatory. All training events are conducted during working hours and are considered part of the employees' regular work time.

3. Data collection and monitoring

At LRC, the GEP-WG and the Human Resources group collected and analyzed gender-disaggregated data along with internal documents such as personnel regulations and additional data provided by the internal employee management databases on gender distribution. All applicable privacy regulations were strictly adhered to.

For the analysis of the baseline situation and as a basis for the gender equality analysis, the following parameters were analyzed:

- Long-term development of the staff gender distribution
- Gender distribution overall and across different staff categories
- Gender distribution according to contract type
- Gender distribution according to professional function
- Financial supplements to coordinating staff
- Gender proportion in applications and recruitments
- Gender distribution in committees and boards
- Gender distribution of paid leave usage

Data analysis

The data was analyzed to establish an understanding of the key differences and gaps between women and men within the organization and its activities. This analysis will guide the key priorities for the GEP and help adjust these priorities as the situation evolves over time.

Long-term development of the staff gender distribution

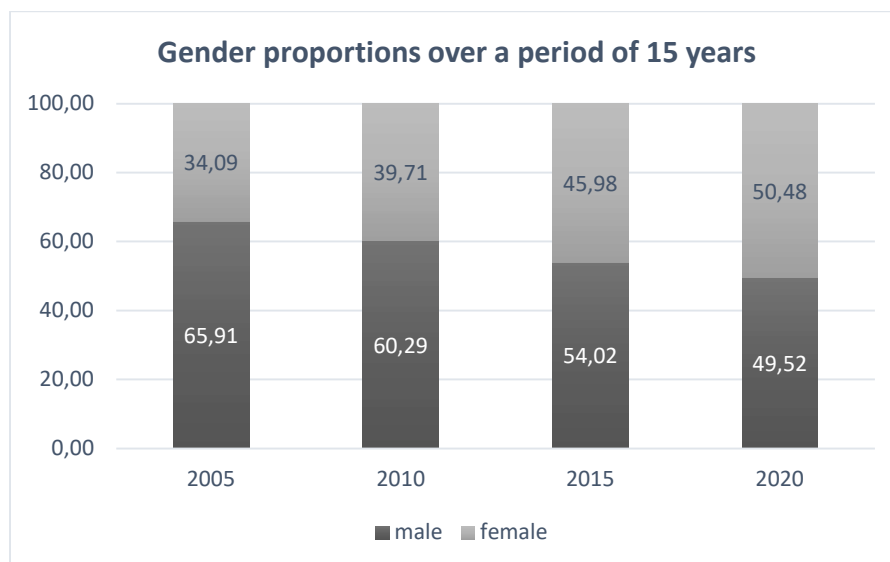
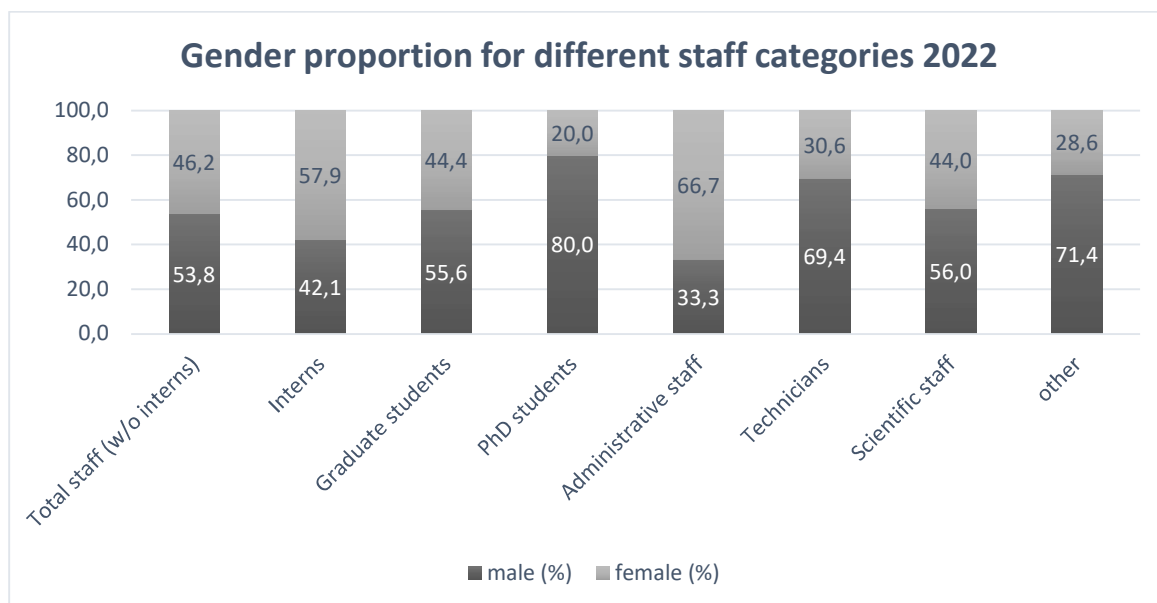
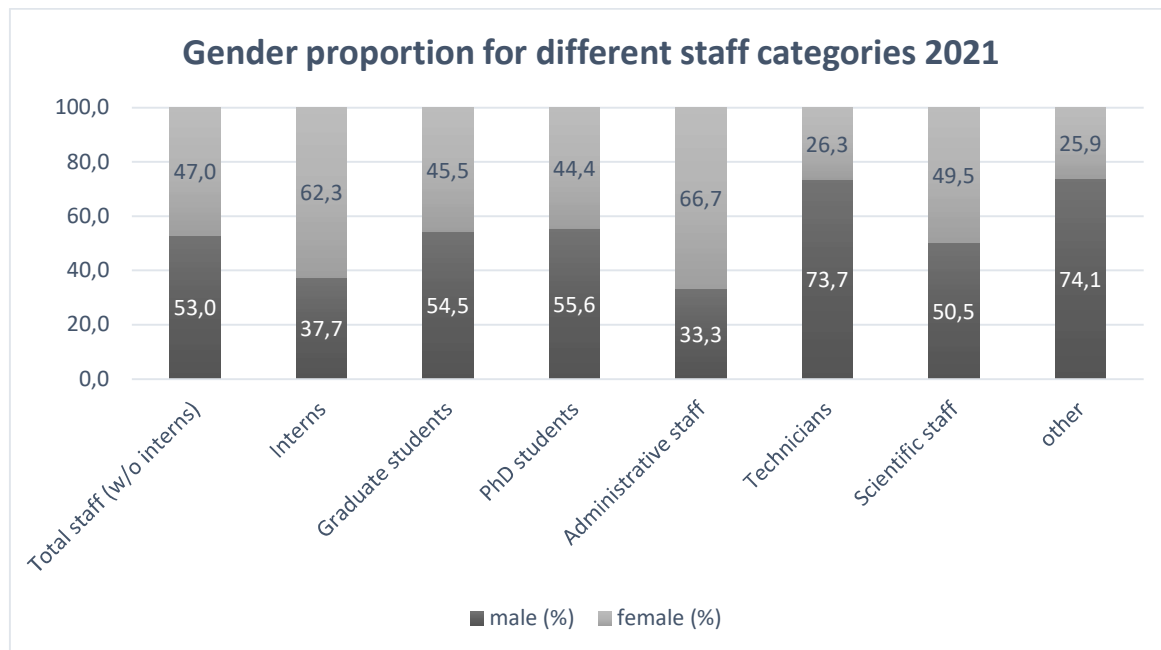


Figure 1. Gender staff distribution in the years from 2005 – 2020 (Seasonal workers are not considered in this evaluation).

Conclusion: The percentage of female staff has been continuously increasing since 2005, and in 2020, the gender ratio reached about 50:50.

Gender distribution overall and across different staff categories



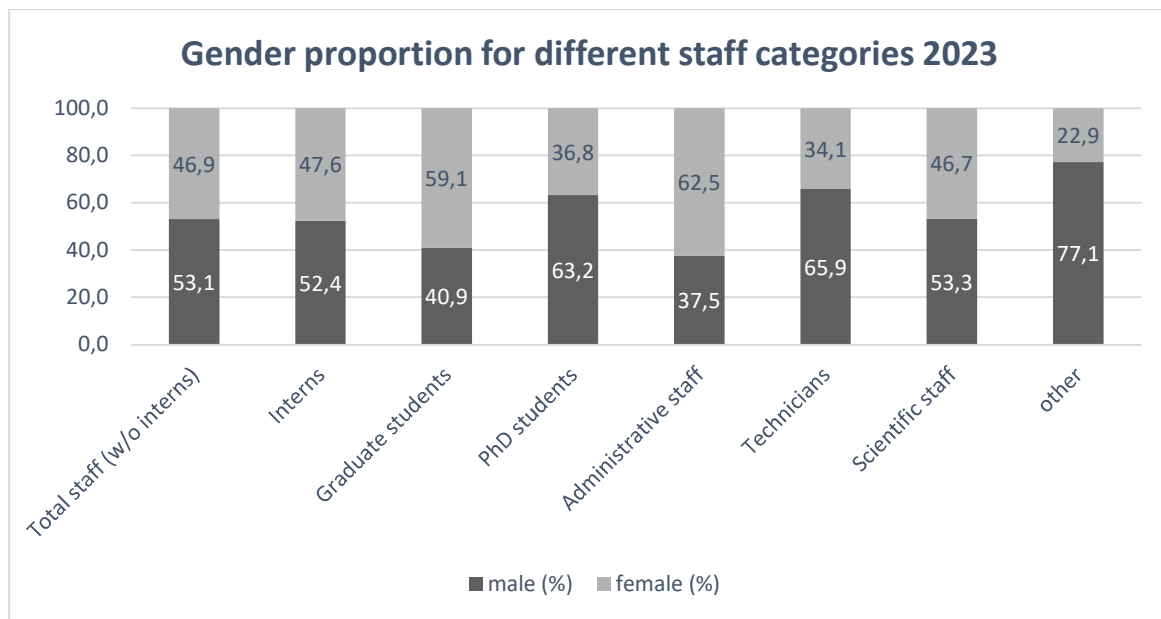
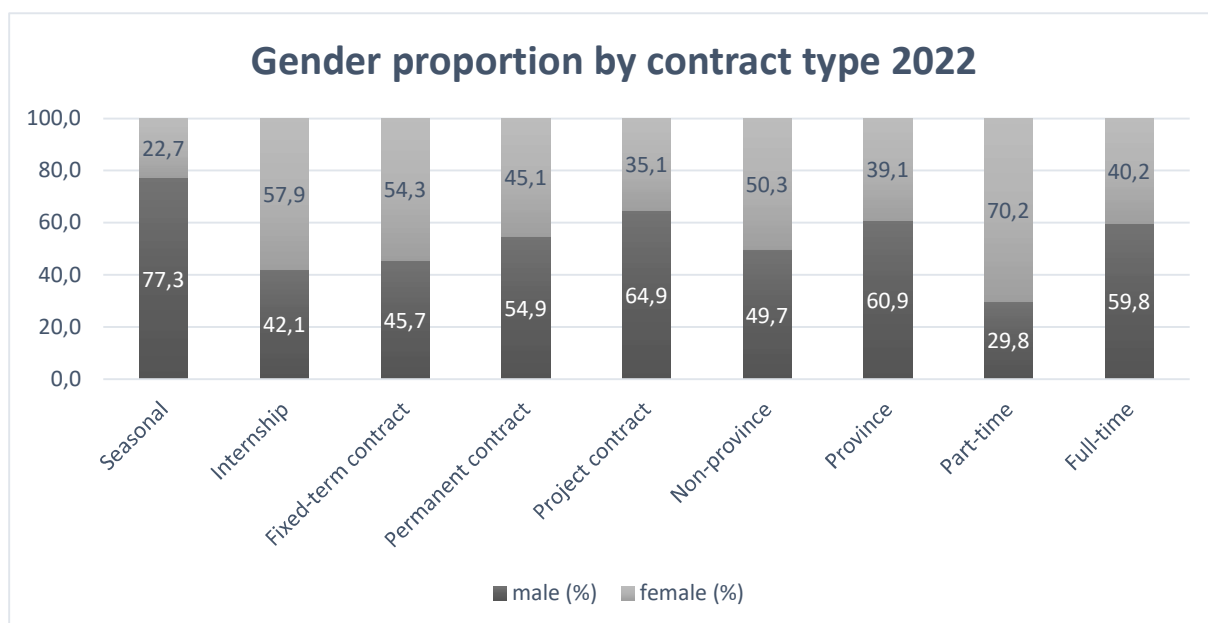
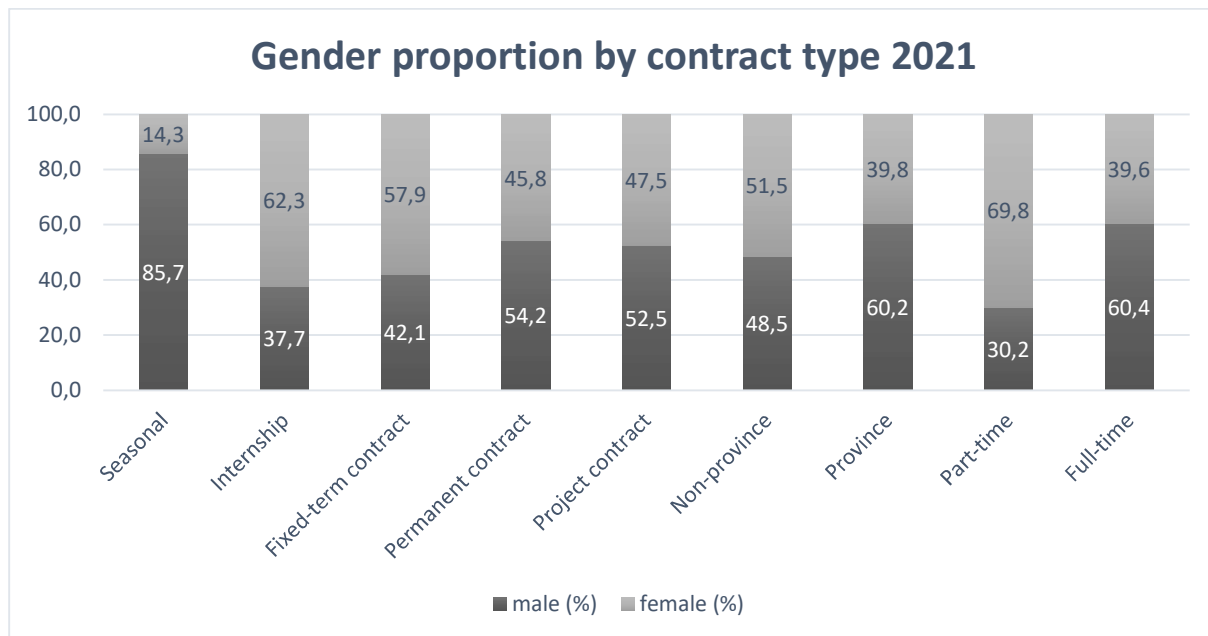


Figure 2. Gender proportion for different staff categories at LRC (years 2021 – 2023).

Conclusion: The gender proportion for total staff (excluding interns) remained relatively constant over the course of the years 2021-2023, with nearly equal representation of males and females. For most other staff categories, the gender proportion is quite balanced, but there are variations over the years. For example, in 2022, 80% of PhD students were male. However, LRC relies on the selection process for PhD students conducted by the partner universities rewarding the PhD. A relatively constant bias is observed for the category "other" with more males and for the category "administrative staff" with more females. The category „other“ comprises mainly seasonal workers. Applicants for seasonal positions are primarily male, while applicants for administration positions are mainly female. This explains the prevailing gender bias in these two categories.

Gender distribution according to contract type



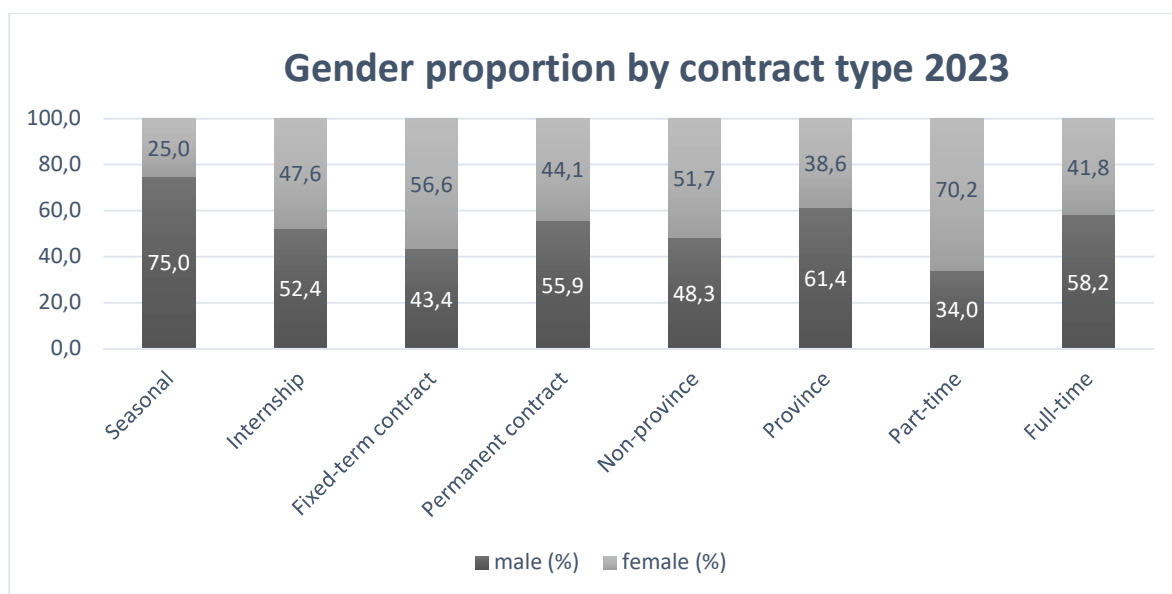
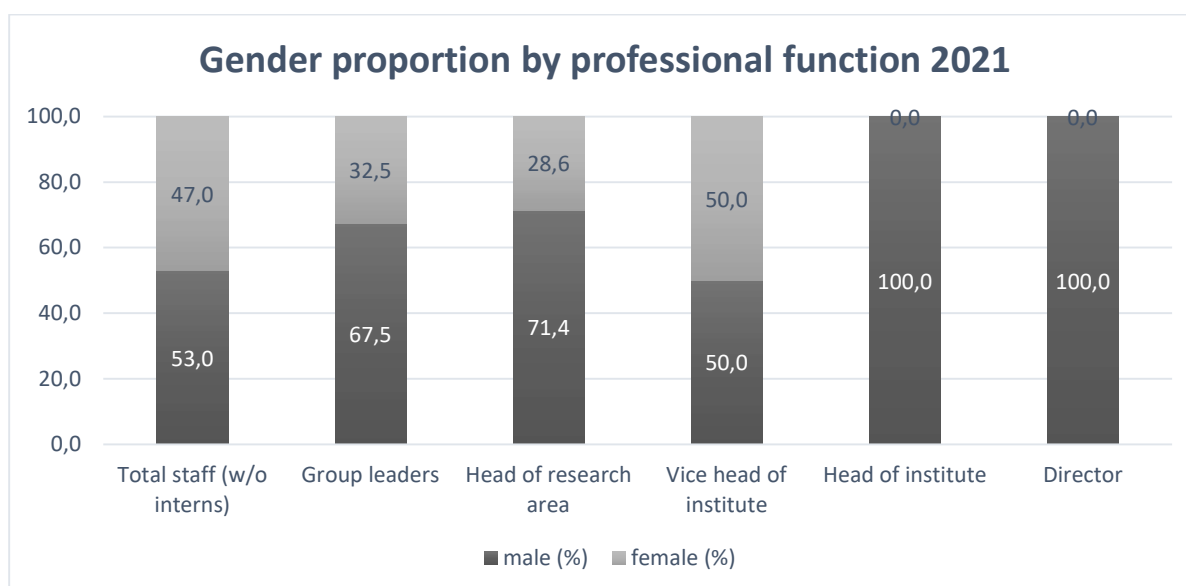


Figure 3. Gender proportions according to contract types at LRC (years 2021 – 2023).

Conclusion: Over the three years analysed, there is a very high proportion of male staff in the category “seasonal” and a slight bias towards a higher proportion of males in the “permanent contract” and “province” categories. A possible explanation for the bias in the category “seasonal” is the same as outlined previously. The male bias in “permanent contract” and “province” categories might reflect the more pronounced overall gender bias from the period before 2015 (see Figure 1), when most province and permanent contracts were concluded. There is a male bias for full-time contracts and a female bias for part-time contracts, indicating that childcare is still a predominantly female responsibility.

Gender distribution according to professional function



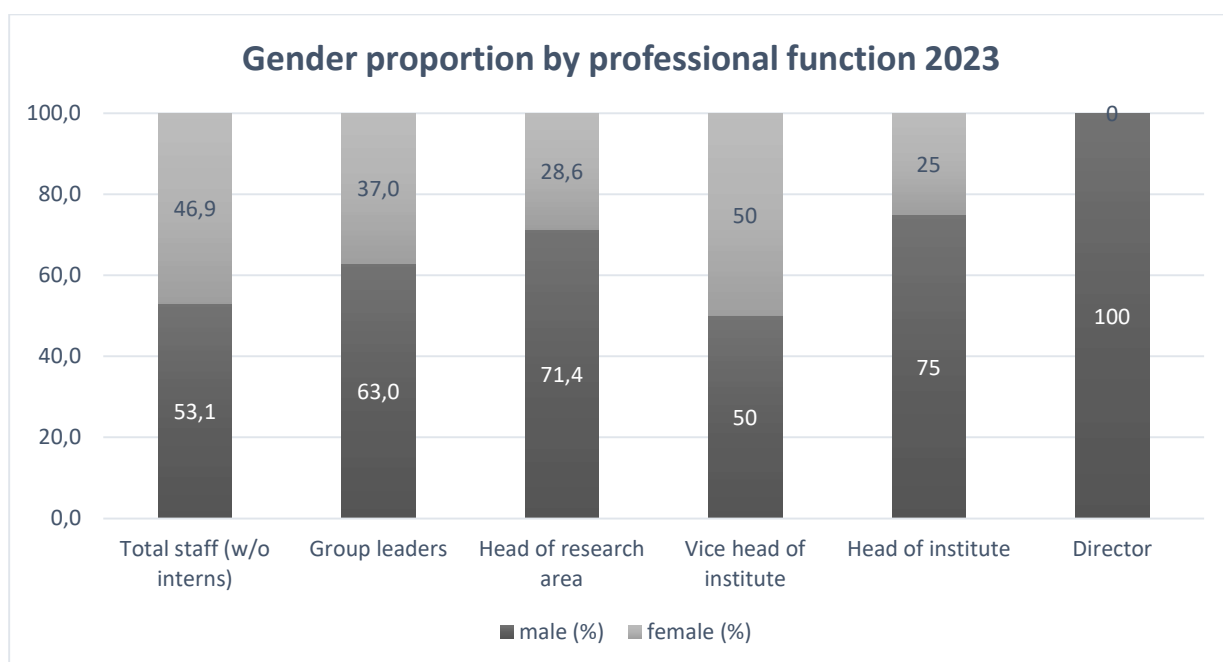
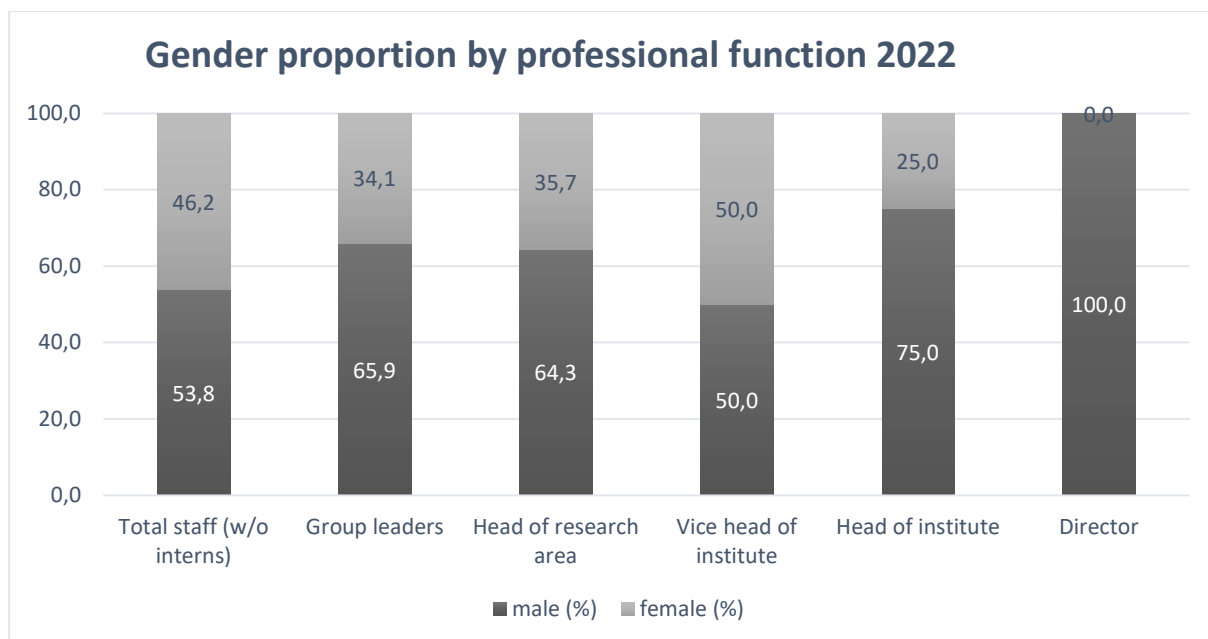


Figure 4. Gender proportion according to professional function at LRC (years 2021 – 2023).

Conclusion: A male gender bias exists in higher professional functions. There is a relatively strong male bias among Heads of Research Area that prevails of the three-year period. However, in 2022, the first female Head of Institute was appointed, and the percentage of female Group Leaders has been increasing continually over the three years. Furthermore, 50% of vice heads of institutes are female, indicating that higher professional functions are now held by more women – an objective outlined in the first GEP.

Financial supplements

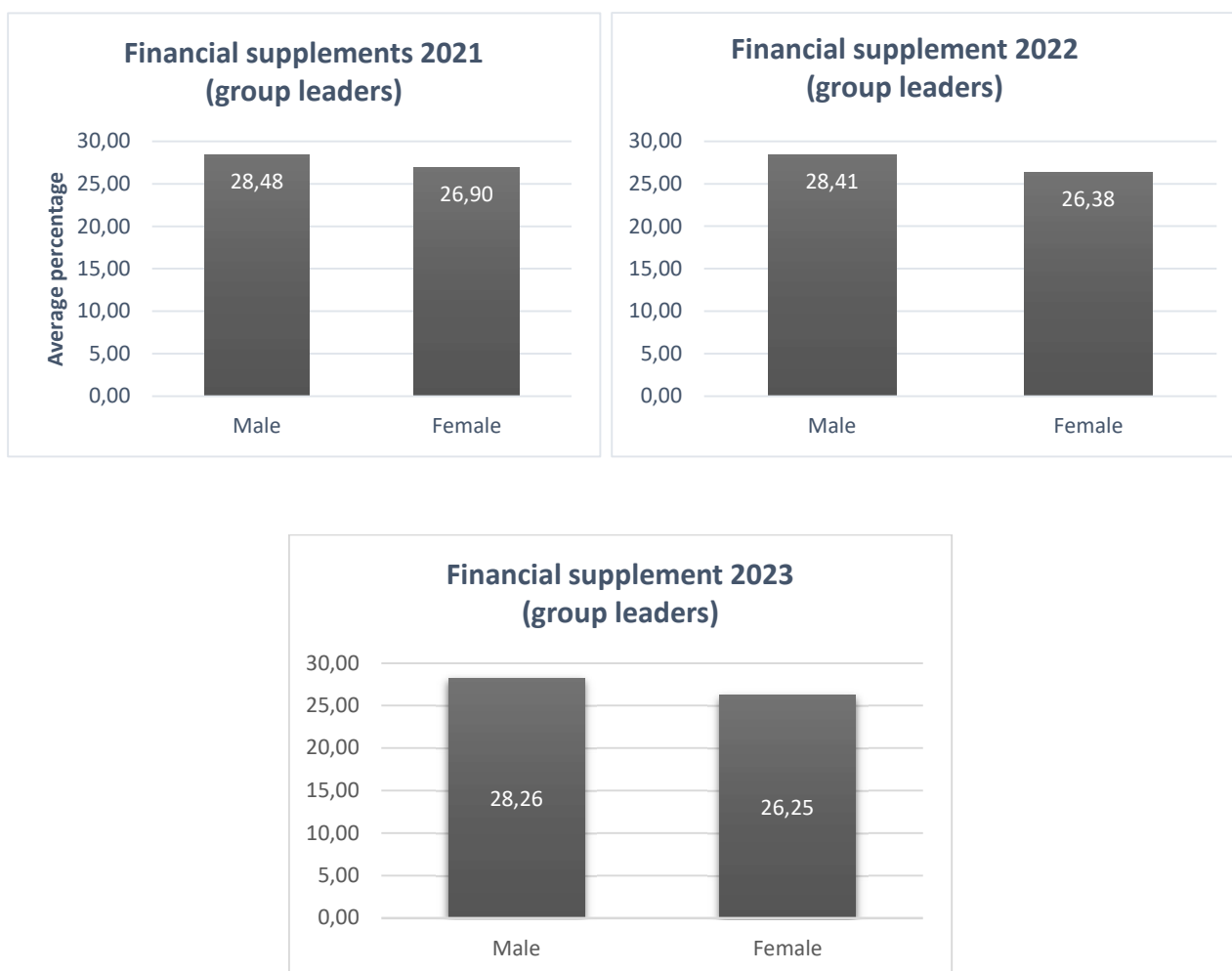
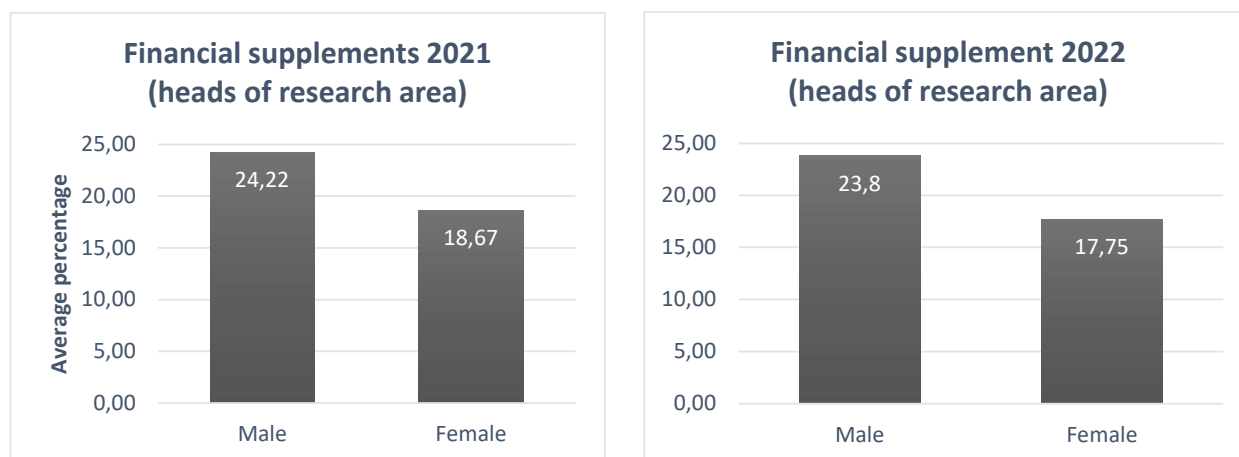


Figure 5. Financial supplements for Group Leaders (years 2021 – 2023).



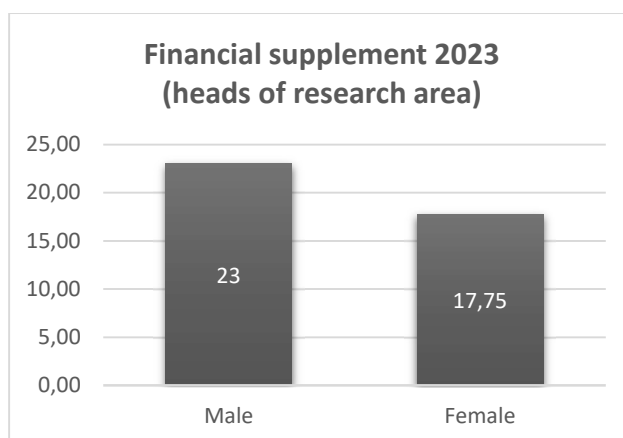
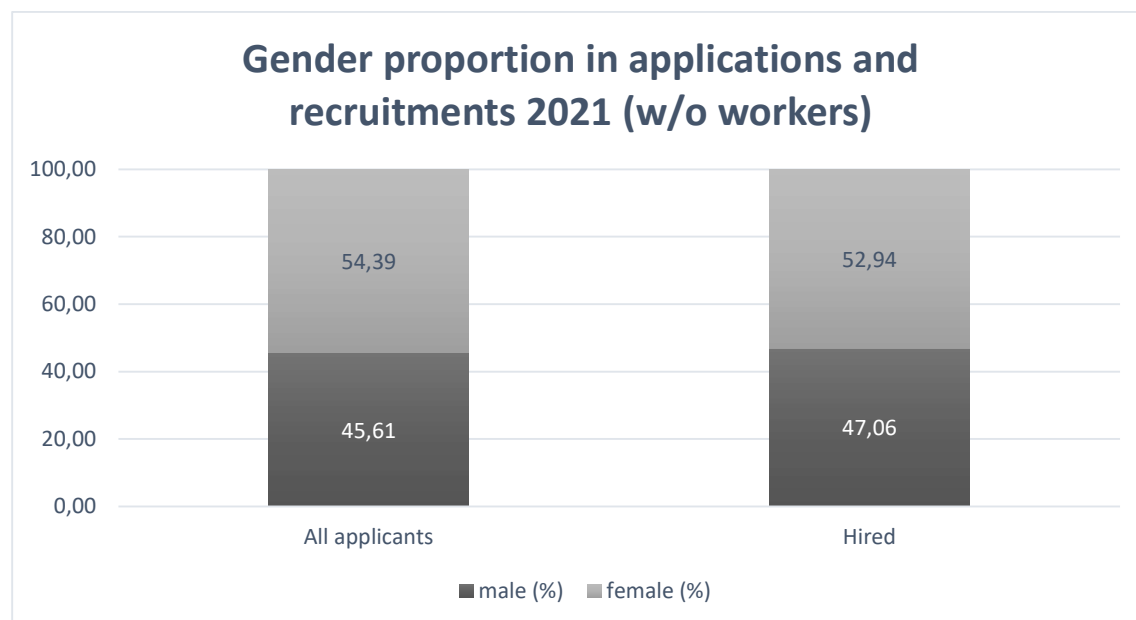


Figure 6. Financial supplement for Heads of Research Area (years 2021 – 2023).

Conclusion: The average financial supplement for a Group Leader position is quite similar for female and male staff. On average, women in the role of Head of Research Area receive about 25 % less in supplements than their male colleagues in the same position. However, supplements for Head of Research Area depend on several factors such as number of supervised staff, number of years in this professional function, and others.

Gender proportion in applications and recruitments



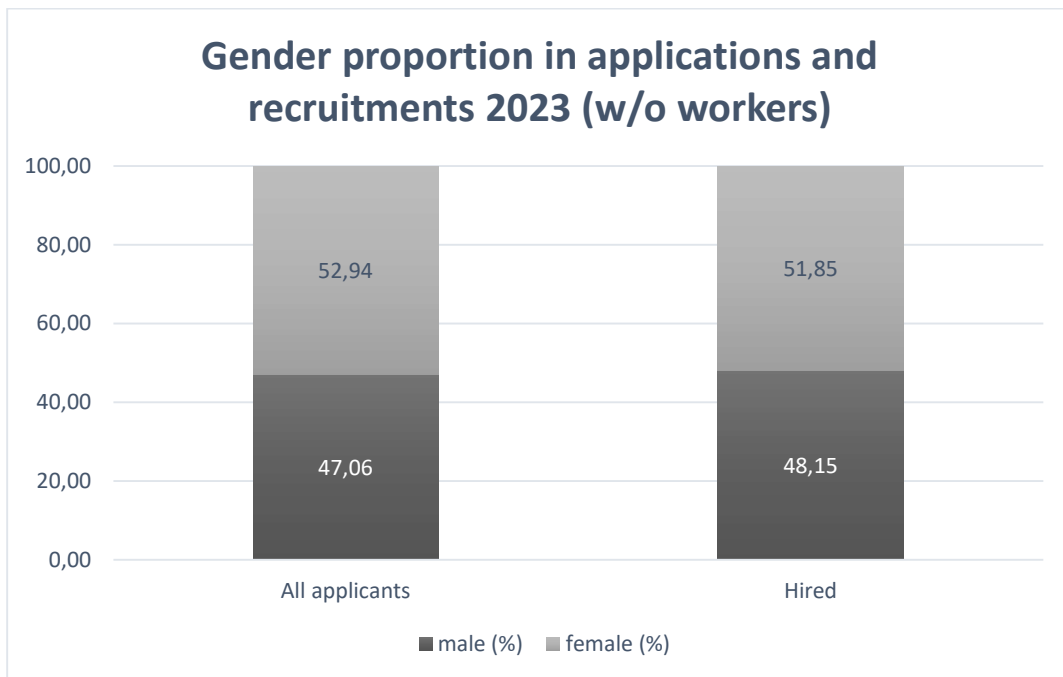
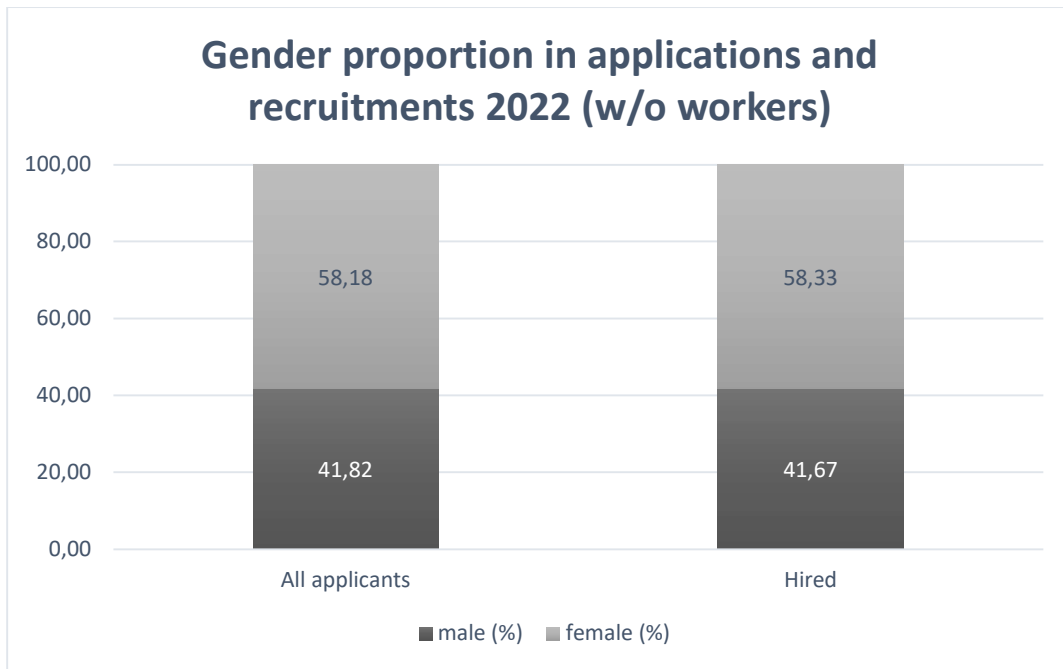


Figure 7. Gender proportions: applications vs actual recruitment (years 2021 – 2023).

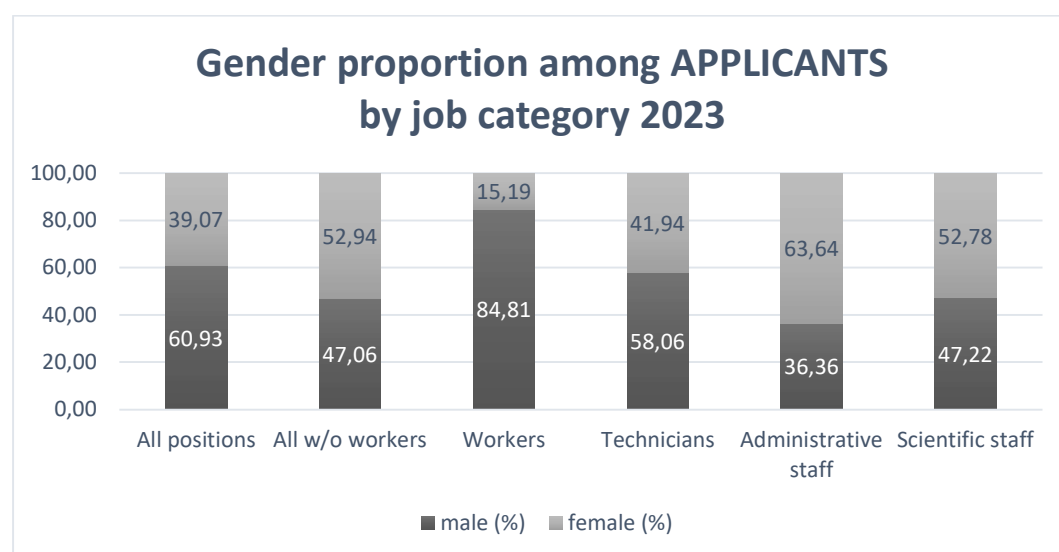
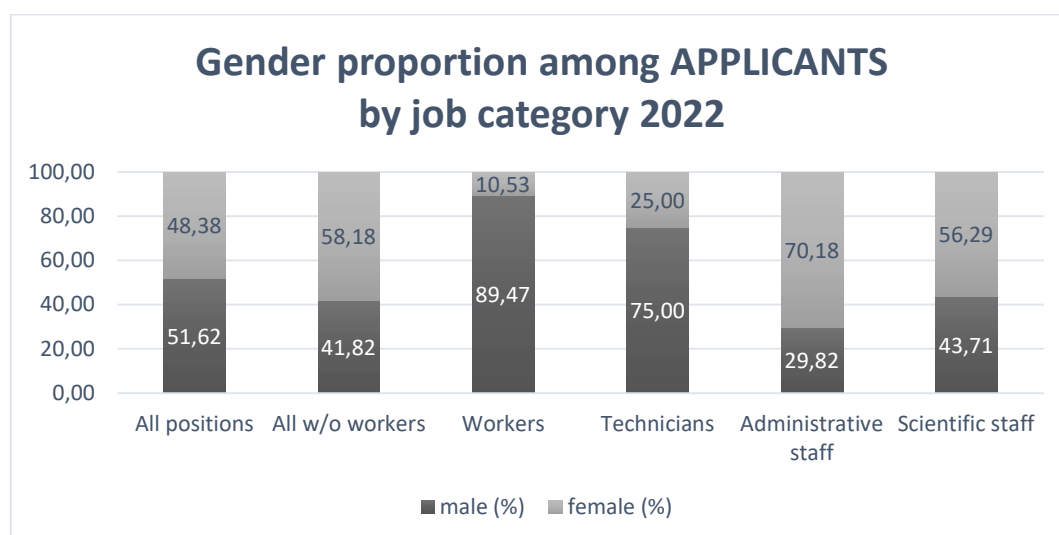
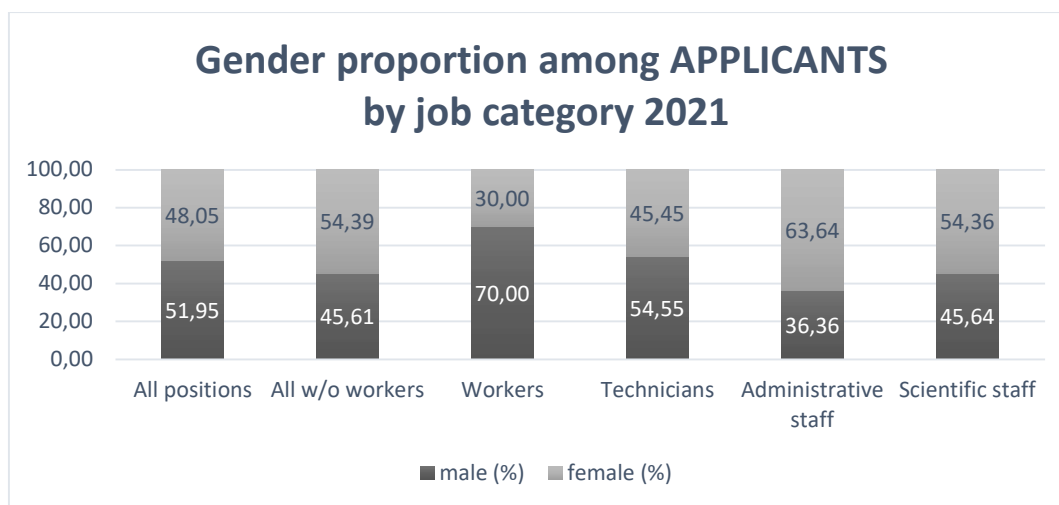


Figure 8. Gender proportions among applicants by job-category (years 2021 – 2023).

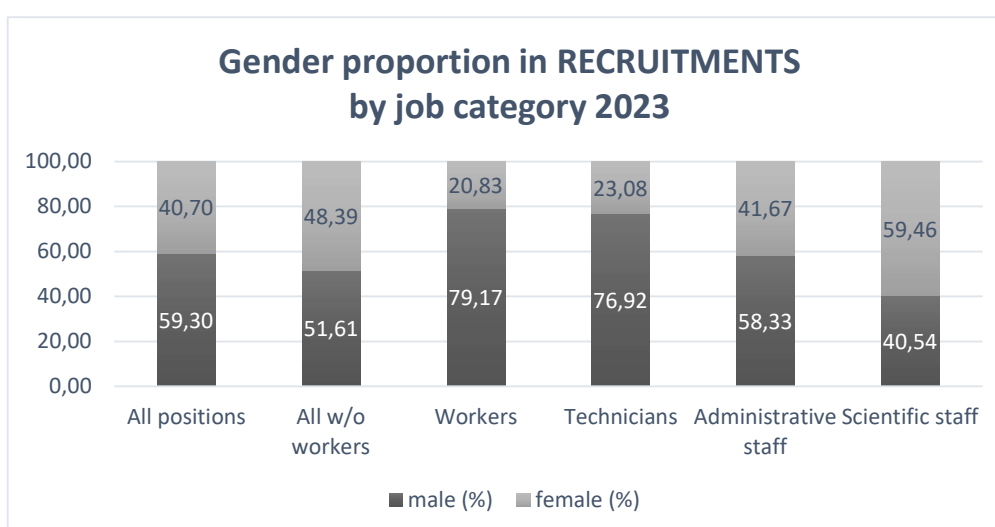
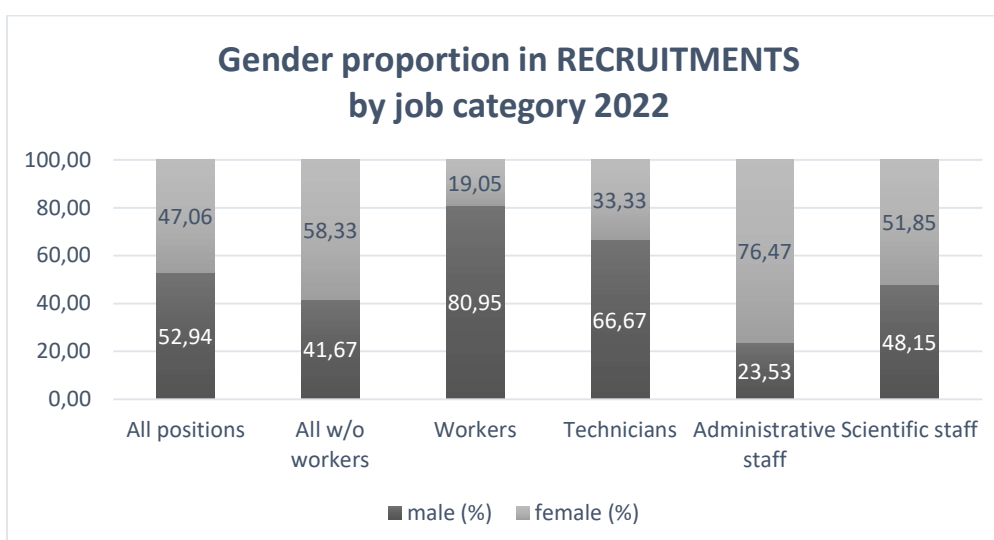
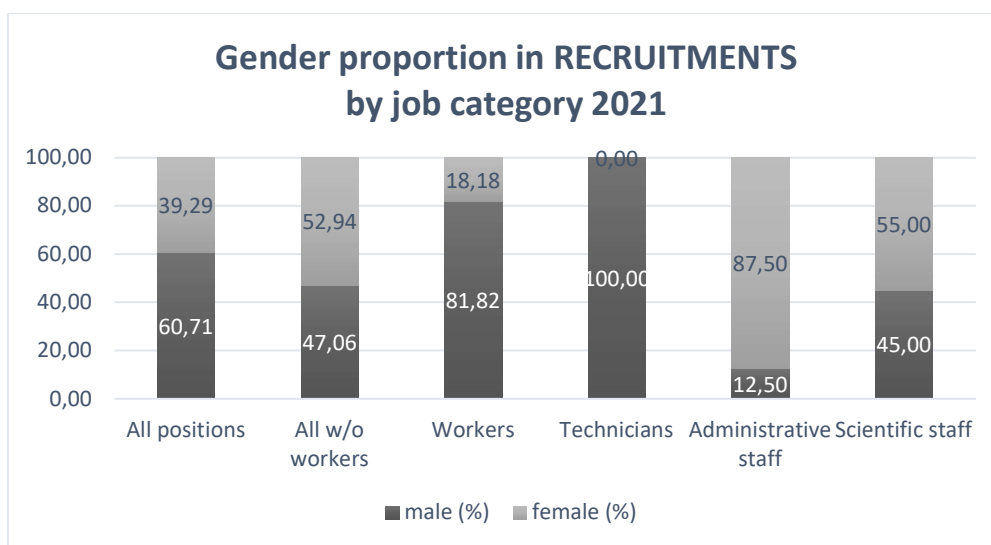
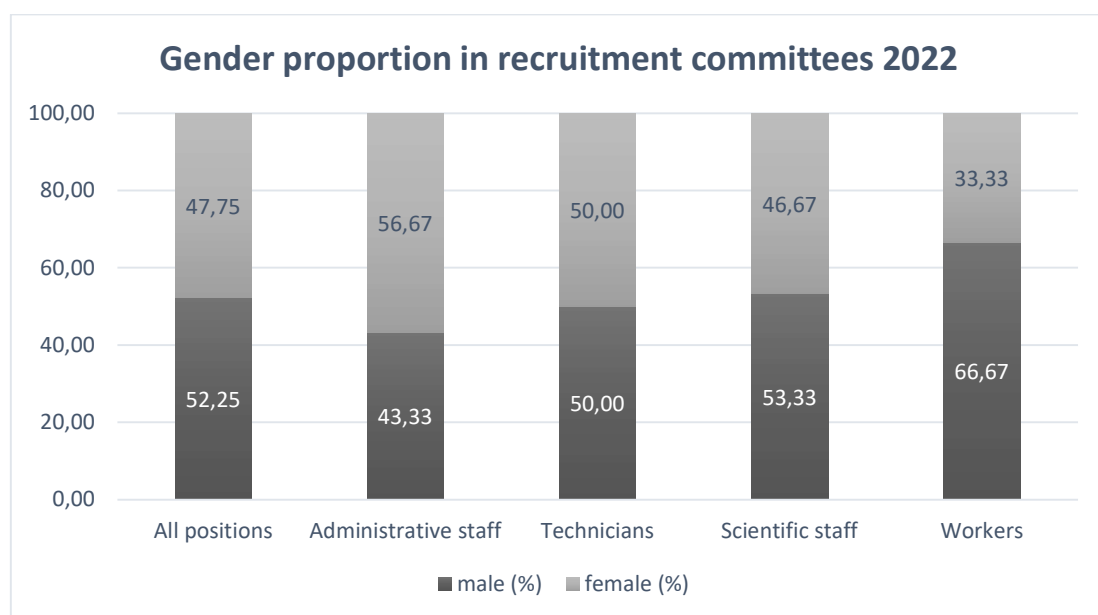
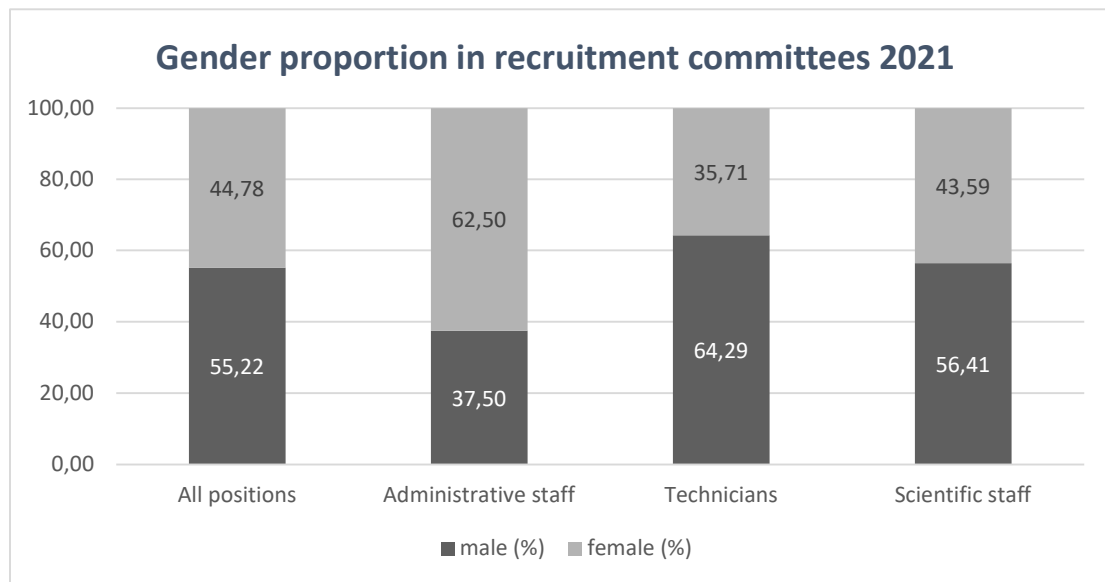


Figure 9. Gender proportions – actually hired applicants divided by job category (years 2021 – 2023).

Conclusion: The overall hiring rate of males and females perfectly reflects the applicant rate over the course of three years (Fig. 7). However, when examining applications and recruitments by job category (Fig. 8 and Fig. 9), variations can be observed over the years. For example, in 2021, only males were recruited for the category “technicians”, whereas in 2022 a higher percentage of female technicians were hired compared to the percentage of female applicants. In both 2021 and 2022, more females were hired for the category “administrative staff” relative to the gender proportion of applicants. This is to be expected as the absolute recruitment numbers are quite low for some categories and can vary year by year.

Gender distribution in recruitment committees



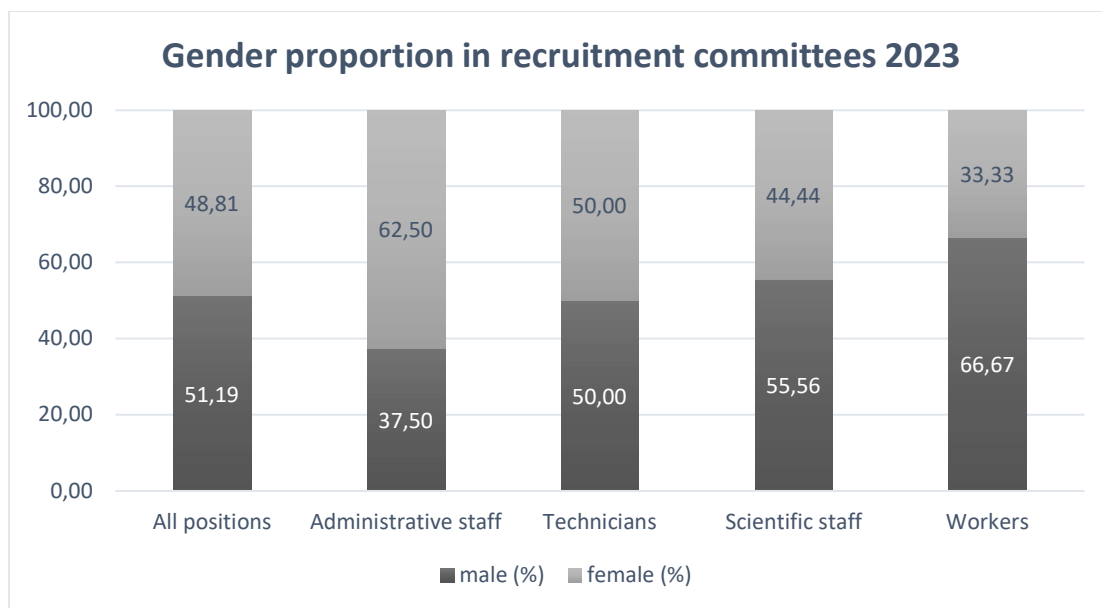
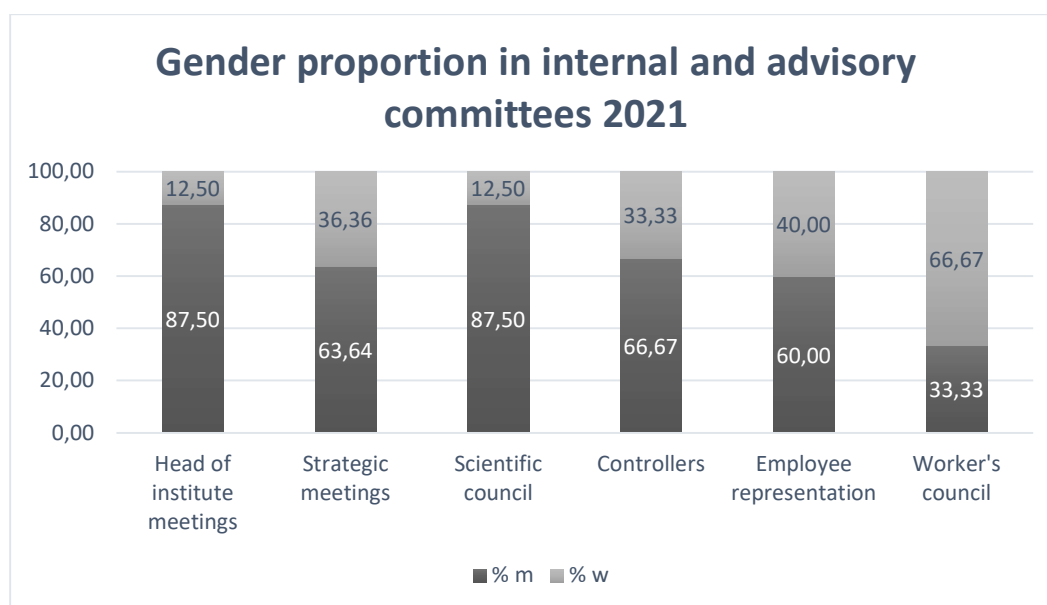


Figure 10. Gender proportion in recruitment committees (years 2021 – 2023).

Conclusion: The gender proportion in the recruitment committees is quite balanced, reflecting the legal specifications defined by the recruitment regulations of the provincial authorities (recruitment committees consist of three persons, and each gender must be represented).

Gender distribution in internal committees and advisory boards



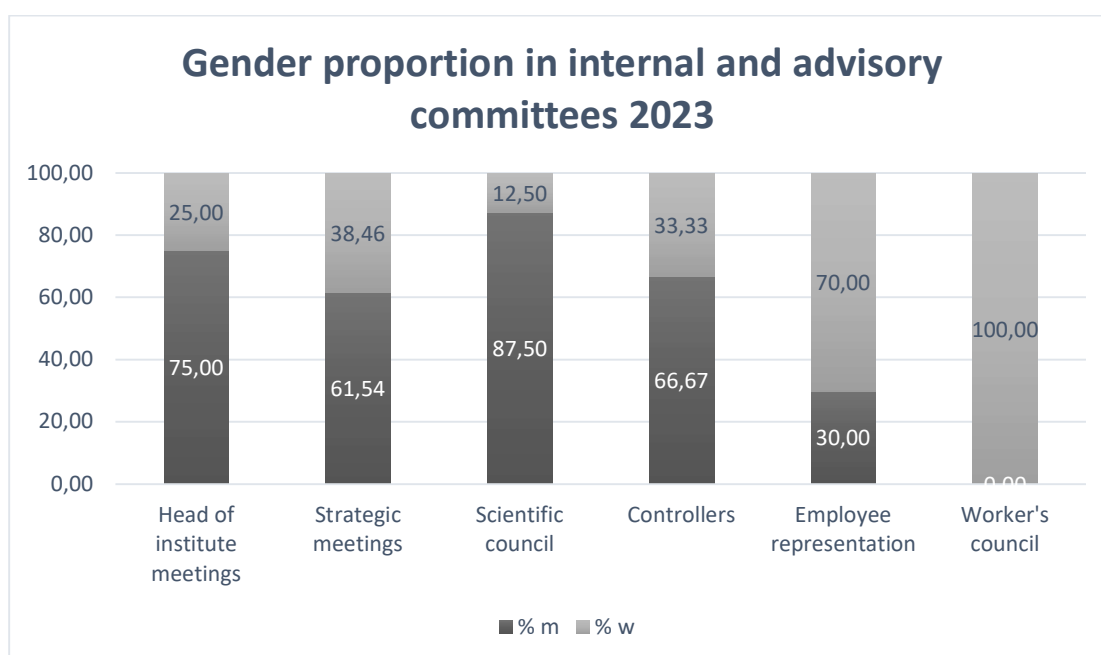
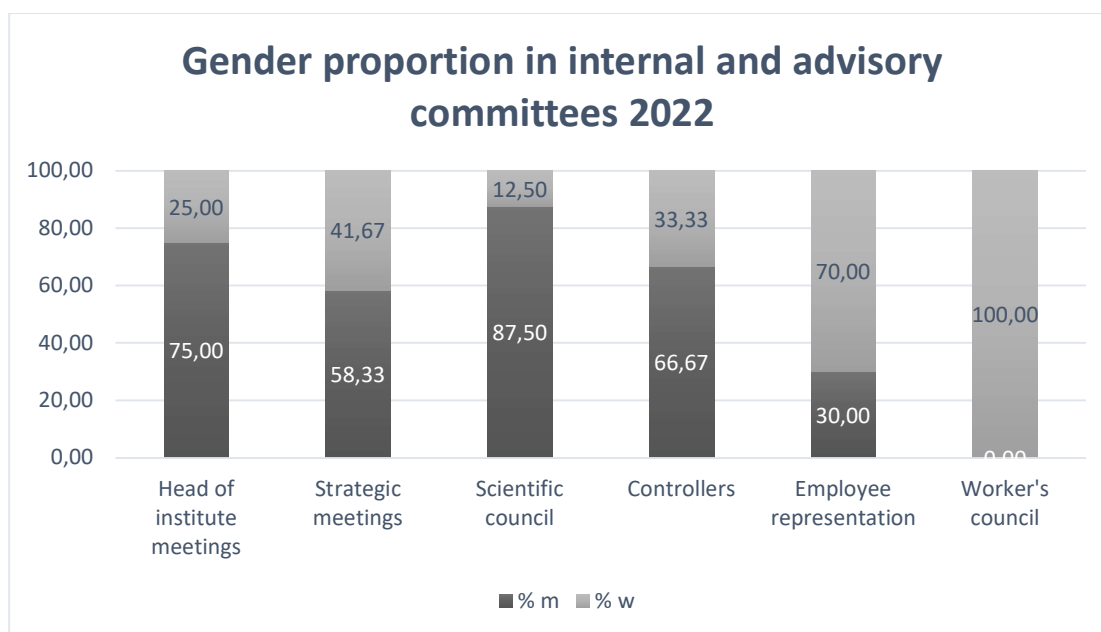


Figure 11. Gender proportion in internal and advisory committees (years 2021 – 2023).

Conclusion: The internal committees mainly consist of males, which reflects the gender bias present in higher functions, as these committees are constituted by representatives of the senior management. For the scientific council and for the controllers, there is a bias towards males. The gender distribution in the worker's council and employee representation was quite balanced in 2021. However, after the elections in 2022, there is a bias towards females in these committees.

Gender distribution of paid leave usage



Figure 12. Gender distribution in relation to paid leave – number of employees (years 2021 – 2022).

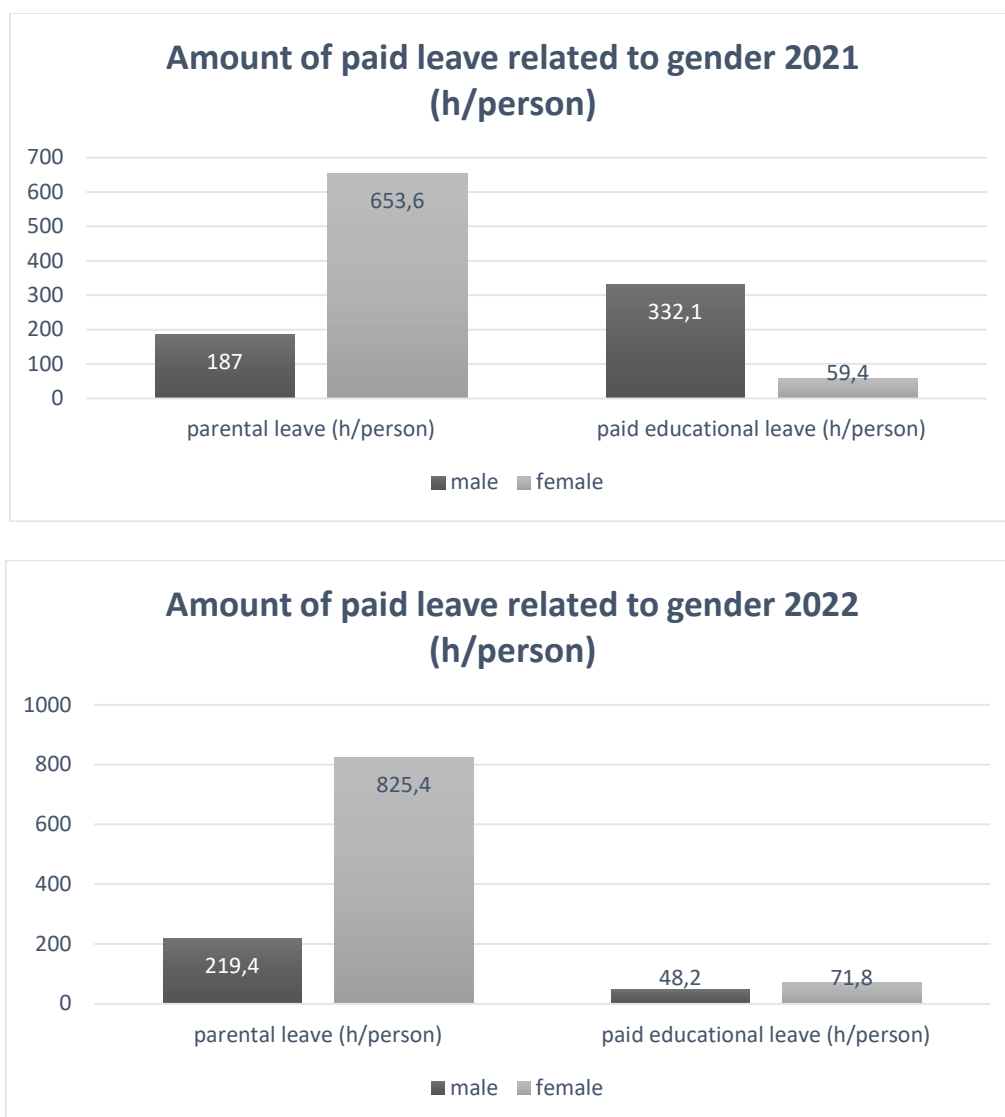


Figure 13. Gender proportion: absences divided by motivation - hours (years 2021 – 2022).

Conclusion: Women take more parental leave than men. During the two-year period analysed, nursing hours were exclusively taken by mothers, even though they are also available to fathers. The hours of paid educational leave and the gender proportion of those taking it vary from year to year, with no evident gender bias.

Publication of the data

The data gathered on gender equality are published on LRC's website as part of the annually updated GEP.

4. Definition of objectives, measures and indicators

The results of the data analyses led to the definition of a series of objectives, and to the identification of measures to achieve them. Furthermore, the persons responsible for the implementation of these measures were determined and indicators were defined to ensure a review of their effectiveness.

The defined indicators are measurable signs of performance or achievement. They are factors or variables that provide a way of measuring and validating achievement or reflecting changes. They are used to assess whether activities and processes were implemented as planned and whether a change was achieved, or progress was made toward initiating a change. The defined indicators reflect the goals, objectives, and expected results of the LRC GEP policy.

Area	Objectives	Measures	Responsible for implementation	Indicators	Measures planned for 2023*	Measures planned for years 2024-2026
1. Organisational structures and procedures to support gender equality in the institutional culture	• Combat gender stereotypes • Ensure that workplace procedures and practices respect gender equality • Use of gender-inclusive language • Promote gender awareness and competence	Appointment of a Gender Equality Plan Working Group (GEP-WG) meeting regularly	Senior management, GEP-WG	Regular GEP-WG meetings	At least three GEP WG meetings held	At least two GEP WG meetings held each year
		Regular meetings of the GEP-WG with senior management to strengthen the potential of the GEP and maximize its impact	Senior management, GEP-WG	Regular meetings of the GEP-WG with senior management	At least one meeting of the GEP-WG with the senior management held	At least one meeting of the GEP-WG with the senior management held each year
		Routine gathering of gender-disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data; monitoring of the achievement of the objectives set by the GEP	Human resources group, GEP-WG	Current gender-disaggregated data collected; monitoring results available	Current gender-disaggregated data collected; monitoring results for 2023 available	Current gender-disaggregated data collected and monitoring results available for each year
		Revision and adaptation of the GEP based on analysis of current gender-disaggregated data and monitoring results	GEP-WG	Preparation and publication of an updated GEP based on current gender-disaggregated data and monitoring results	Publication of an updated GEP based on current gender-disaggregated data and monitoring results	Publication of an updated GEP based on current gender-disaggregated data and monitoring results by the end of the three-year period
		Routine revision of communications and images from a gender equality point of view, based mainly on the	Science Communication group	Use of gender-sensitive language and images in documents and communications	One more member of the communication group will attend courses on the use of gender-sensitive language in communications	Relevant courses attended by members of the communication group

		guidelines of the provincial administration (Guidelines)				Information on gender-inclusive language for existing and new staff
		Initiatives to favor gender awareness and competence at all levels of the organization and provide respective trainings	Senior management, Human Resources group	Organization of awareness trainings on gender sensitive issues	Two trainings on unconscious bias and gender awareness	Trainings on unconscious bias and gender awareness in German and Italian organized
2. Gender balance in leadership and decision making	• Provide mentoring and empowerment programmes	Increase female leadership: Preparing women to carry out leadership positions by appointing preferentially female deputies at the level of "group leader" up to "head of institute"	Senior and junior management	More than 50% of the deputy positions are held by women	More than 50% of deputy positions are held by women	More than 50% of the deputy positions are held by women
	• Increase female leadership	Providing mentoring and empowerment courses to improve visibility, self-confidence, negotiating and leadership skills	Senior management, Human Resources group	Organization of trainings for leadership and empowerment, mentoring program	Female leadership training for all staff with managerial functions.	Female leadership training for all staff with managerial functions organized
3. Gender balance in recruitment, career progression, leadership and decision making	• Promote gender balance in recruitment	Recruitment processes are carried out in full agreement with gender-relevant aspects	Senior management, Human Resources group	Recruitment commissions composed of both genders, based on guidelines of the provincial administration (guidelines)	All recruitment commissions are composed of both genders	All recruitment commissions composed of both genders
	• Make female researchers more visible	Promoting campaigns within and outside the institution to make women's	Science communication group	Balanced representation of both genders at recruitment events	At least 40 % female researchers presented in communications; participation of both	At least 40 % of researchers presented in communications are female; participation of

		contribution to research more visible		and in science communication measures	genders at recruitment events.	both genders at recruitment events
4. Integration of work with family and personal life	- Flexible working hours and family-friendly meeting times - Financial support for childcare - Support equal distribution of care activities	Flexible working hours, part-time work, and smart working	Senior management, Human resources	Availability of flexible working times, part-time work and smart working	Female staff will not be disadvantaged when granting part-time work and smart working.	Female staff not disadvantaged when granting part-time work and smart working
		Better planning of work meetings in line with work-life-balance needs and part-time work	Senior management	Important meetings preferentially in the mornings and/or online	All important meetings including those for senior management held in the morning and/or online.	Important meetings including those for senior management held in the morning and/or online
		Availability of financial support for early childcare	Human resources group	Provision of financial support for early childcare	100% of requests for financial support for early childcare granted.	Requests for financial support for early childcare granted.
		Providing information to and encouragement of male staff to take parental leave	Senior management, Human resources	Organization of communication and awareness raising measures	New staff will be informed on availability of work-life balance measures.	New staff will be informed on availability of work-life balance measures
5. Integration of gender dimension into research and teaching content	- Create gender awareness in research design and practice - Promote gender balance in internships	Aim for equal participation and representation of women in panels (i.e. tasting panels)	Senior management	Percentage of women in tasting panels	At least 30% of persons in tasting panels are female.	At least 30% of persons in tasting panels are female
		Promote gender balance in internships	Human resources group	Percentage of female interns	At least 40% of interns and graduate students conducting master/bachelor theses are female	At least 40% of interns and graduate students conducting master/bachelor theses are female

6. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	• Raise awareness for gender-related issues	Establish training and awareness-raising programs on gender-based violence	Human resources group	Training and awareness-raising programs on gender-based violence	Two trainings held to raise awareness on gender-based issues and violence	Further trainings to raise awareness on gender-based issues and violence, including one specific for senior management
	• Prevent violence, harassment and discrimination	Provide information and support in case of violence, harassment or discrimination	Human resources group, senior management	Provide information and support in case of violence, harassment or discrimination	Confidential Councillor appointed also for non-province staff. Documents adopted for measures to protect the dignity of staff.	Confidential Councillor appointed also for non-province staff. Documents adopted for measures to protect the dignity of staff.

* Green: measures fully implemented

Orange: measures partially implemented or in planning

Explanations for not fully implementing some of the planned measures of 2023:

In 2022, a German-speaking member of communication group attended a course on the use of gender-sensitive language. In order to promote gender-sensitive language also in Italian communications, it was decided that an Italian-speaking member of the same group should attend a course. No such classes were available in 2023, therefore, this measure was postponed to 2024.

The Confidential Councillor appointed for province staff was asked in 2023 to assume this role for non-province staff as well, but declined. Therefore, the process was delayed and will be completed in 2024.

5. Training

All staff members, leaders, and decision-makers of LRC perform courses and workshops for identifying practices, cultures and unconscious gender biases that cause disadvantage to women. In a subsequent step, inclusive approaches are implemented to abandon these disadvantages. Trainings and workshops are performed on different levels. These trainings are an ongoing and long-term process and will be evaluated by an evidence-based assessment. Courses and workshops covering the following categories are organized: 1) unconscious bias and gender awareness training, 2) communication and engagement activities, and 3) leadership training with a special focus on female leadership for researchers and academics.

Pfatten / Vadena, 06.09.2024

THE DIRECTOR

Dr. Michael Oberhuber
(digitally signed)

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