



Gender Equality and Diversity Plan (GEDP)

Nordland Research Institute
13.12.2021



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Change log:

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|---------------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| Original version | 29.11.2021 | Approved by the management team |
| Original version | 13.12.2021 | Approved by the board of directors |
| English translation | 22.07.2022 | |
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1 Introduction

As defined in Strategy 2021-2025, the main goal of Nordland Research Institute (NRI) is:

NORDLAND RESEARCH INSTITUTE SHALL BE AN EXCELLENT RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT AND A PREFERRED RESEARCH PARTNER IN THE HIGH NORTH, NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY.

To achieve this goal, NRI has highlighted 6 important strategic areas for the period 2021-2025 in which the expertise of the research groups will contribute to solving societal challenges and putting the High North on the agenda.

1. Sustainable social development
2. Change and innovation
3. In and for the High North
4. Co-creation of knowledge
5. Research communication
6. Attractive workplace

In the preparation of the action plan for 2021 and 2022, the European Union (EU) is a priority area with the following objectives:

1. Prepare strategic plan for EU-related activities for the period 2021-2022 (Horizon Europe - HEU)
2. Apply for PES framework funding for 2021-2022 (The Research Council of Norway)
3. Establish the network HEU Nordland for 2021-2022
4. Strengthen internal coordination of EU initiatives

For NRI, gender balance, diversity, and inclusion are important fundamental values that have been on the agenda of the organisation for many years. The Gender Equality and Diversity Plan concretizes and describes work already underway as well as plans that will be implemented in the coming years. The Plan is part of the overall quality system of NRI.

In the new EU research program (Horizon Europe), participating institutions are required to have a Gender Equality Plan. The present document satisfies the criteria for such a plan. In addition to gender equality, NRI has chosen to include the perspective of diversity in the organisation and how this is an important prerequisite for an inclusive working environment at the institute and contributes to making the institute an attractive place to work.

1.1 Goals

The quality document "Guidelines concerning conflicts and harassment" (2019) sets out the following goals:

As an employer, NRI is concerned with having a working environment that looks after all employees and feels good to be a part of.

There is zero tolerance in NRI for bullying, harassment, and discrimination. All such conditions must be reported unless this is opposed by the affected employee.

Employees must not be subjected to harassment or other inappropriate behaviour. In addition, there is special protection against sexual harassment and harassment due to gender, ethnicity, religion, outlook on life, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

It is the employer's duty to prevent this. NRI must organise, facilitate, and lead the work so that employees are not exposed to harassment or other inappropriate behaviour.

The goals are anchored in the following legislation:

- [Act relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination \(Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act\)](#)



- [Act relating to working environment, working hours and employment protection, etc. \(Working Environment Act\)](#)

The aim of preparing a separate action plan for gender equality and diversity is to ensure that all plans, processes, and practices are in accordance with the policy that has been drawn up for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of society, anchored in Norwegian legislation.

[Act relating to equality and a prohibition against discrimination \(Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act\)](#)

- aims to promote equality and prevent discrimination on the grounds of gender, pregnancy, leave at birth or adoption, caring duties, ethnicity, religion, outlook on life, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, and other significant circumstances of a person.
- Equality refers to equal standing, equal opportunities, and equal rights.
- Equality requires accessibility and facilitation.
- The Act is particularly aimed at improving the position of women and minorities.
- The Act will help to break down socially created disabling barriers and prevent new such barriers from being created.

NRI will work actively and preventively to ensure equal rights for everyone.

1.2 Requirement for a Gender Equality Plan

The European Commission is introducing a requirement for an action plan for gender equality (Gender Equality Plan - GEP) at the organisational level for applicants and partners for Horizon Europe calls. The requirement does not apply to private businesses, interest organisations, or the voluntary sector.

The requirement applies from 2022 for all calls with a deadline after 1 January. During the application phase, applicants must confirm by self-declaration that they have met the requirement. Documentation that the requirement has been met must be provided when entering into the contract (signing of the "Grant Agreement").

If several institutions are involved in a collaborative project, all organisations that receive a grant must meet the requirement. If one of the participants does not meet the requirement for a GEP, there is a risk that the entire project funding will be lost for all participants.

The organisation's action plan for gender equality must meet these four requirements:

1. The action plan must be publicly available on the institution's website
2. The action plan must refer to resources earmarked for work on gender equality
3. The action plan must include gender-disaggregated data for all job categories and indicate how annual reporting and follow-up will be carried out
4. The action plan must indicate how the work is supported with training and competence building

In addition to the mandatory requirements, the European Commission also recommends including initiatives in the following areas in the action plan:

- organisational culture and work-life balance
- gender balance in management and decision-making
- gender balance in recruitment and career development
- integration of a gender perspective in research and teaching content
- measures against gender-based violence and sexual harassment

1.3 Work process

The creation of this Gender Equality and Diversity Plan is an organisational development project partly financed by the EU project "[SeeRRI](#)" (Building Self-Sustaining Research and Innovation Ecosystems in Europe through Responsible Research and Innovation).



The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) recommends building the plan around the following processes:

1. Analysis phase
2. Planning phase
3. Implementation phase
4. Monitoring phase

Analysis phase:

The work is based on a literature review of gender equality and diversity in the teaching and research sector, but also in the labour market in general in Norway. There are national laws and guidelines for gender equality and diversity in Norway which provide a good framework for how employers should safeguard these perspectives in their own organisation.

In 2019, a working environment survey was carried out at NRI in which issues related to inclusion, bullying, and harassment were mapped. The survey is carried out every three years, and action plans are formulated on the basis of findings from the survey. The survey provides important information about the characteristics of the working environment and the extent to which employees feel that the working environment is inclusive regardless of gender, race, religion, age, functioning, and sexual orientation.

In addition, a review of practices at NRI related to gender equality and diversity has been carried out through interviews with management and mapping of relevant guidelines and procedures in quality documents at the institute. Statistics related to gender have also been obtained at NRI with the aim of identifying possible inequalities or gender biases in the organisation. This is presented in a separate chapter.

Planning phase:

Overall goals for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion have already been established in the organisation (cf. point 1.1).

In October 2021, a workshop for all employees was held focusing on measures related to gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. On the basis of discussions at the workshop, proposals for measures were prepared which have been included in an action plan. The management team and union representatives have discussed the action plan, and responsibilities and deadlines for follow-up have been outlined.

Implementation phase:

The action plan has been drawn up for the period 2022-2025, which corresponds to the strategy plan of NRI.

Monitoring phase:

It is important to assess the effect of the measures and revise the action plan accordingly.

An evaluation of the measures will therefore be carried out annually together with union representatives, safety representatives, and the management group.

Every three years, a working environment survey will be carried out in which topics related to the Gender Equality and Diversity Plan will also be reflected. The survey will be discussed in department meetings, in the management group, and in the working environment committee (AMU).

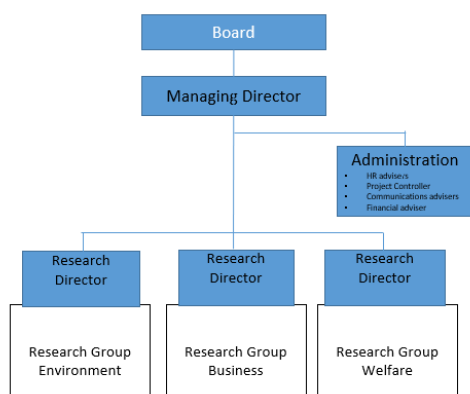


2 Status of NRI

NRI is a small institute and has a relatively high turnover in both staff and management. Thus the gender balance is continuously in flux, and because of the small size of the organisation, changes in staff composition can have a major impact on the gender balance. Nevertheless, the status in this chapter provides a snapshot of the organisation as of 1 September 2021.

2.1 Status of NRI

NRI is organised as follows:



The institute is led by the Managing Director / CEO, who is also the immediate supervisor of the administrative staff.

The management team consists of the CEO and three research directors. Each research director has personnel responsibility for the researchers in their research group in addition to professional and financial responsibility.

As of 1 September 2021, the organisation comprises 44 employees. 39 of these are researchers and 5 are administrators.

Researchers have different job categories:

- Researcher III – master's degree at a minimum
- Researcher II – doctoral degree (PhD) or equivalent competence at a minimum
- Researcher I – competence equivalent to a professor at a Norwegian university

| Statistics on gender and nationality (1/9-2021) |
|--|
| Number of employees: 44 |
| Gender: |
| % women in the organisation (25/44): 57% - 21 researchers and 4 administrators |
| % women in research positions (21/39): 54% |
| Researcher I (2/3): 67% |
| Researcher II (18/34): 53% |
| Researcher III (1/2): 50% |
| % women in administrative positions (4/5): 80% |
| % women in management positions / management team (1/4): 25% |
| % women in research director positions (0/3): 0% |
| Nationality: |
| % born in countries other than Norway: (15/44): 34% - 60% women (#=9), 40% men (#=6) |
| % who do not speak Norwegian (3/44): 67% women (#=2), 33% men (#=1) |



NRI has employees from 11 different countries and has become an international workplace in recent years (1/9-2021). Distribution of employees from different countries: Denmark (3), Sweden (1), France (1), Brazil (1), Ethiopia (1), Vietnam (1), India (1), Iceland (1), Scotland (2), Russia (3), Norway (29).

Employees have different backgrounds and provide a diversity that enriches the institute.

2.2 Development opportunities

The institute has set aside funds for strategic initiatives that are prioritized annually by the management team (basic funding from the Research Council of Norway).

For many years, funds have been allocated that contribute to the academic and career development of the researchers. Examples:

- Hours for dissemination activities
- Hours for reviewing the work of other researchers
- Funds for writing and revising scientific articles
- Funds for career progression from Researcher II to Researcher I
- Funds for courses and conferences

Some of the funds are announced annually, others are continuously allocated.

Funds for career development are a major investment in increasing formal competence at the institute. The offer was created in 2018. The employer encourages researchers to advance from Researcher III to Researcher II and from Researcher II to Researcher I.

- Researchers who have obtained Researcher II status from a Researcher III position: 2 (one man and one woman)
- Researchers who have achieved Researcher I status from a Researcher II position: 2 (two women). There are both women and men in the career programme. There are currently 7 people in this process (six women, one man).

All applications for career development are treated equally, but the management team takes gender balance and balance between the research groups into account and also considers how close each applicant is to a promotion in competence. During the period 2018-2021, 11 women and 3 men have participated. 2 have obtained Researcher I status and another two have applied for this. The funds allocated go to mentoring, publishing activities, and any courses necessary for promotion.

To strengthen the research groups, the institute has engaged Professor IIs in 20% positions. These positions are financed by funds from the NRI Foundation (*Stiftelsen Nordlandsforskning*), which is a minority owner of NRI. In 2021 there were two such positions, one man and one woman.

Nord University is the majority owner of NRI. Good cooperation has been developed between the institutions, and a cooperation agreement and action plan have been established between the parties. According to this agreement, shared positions between the organisations must be arranged so that researchers at NRI can take on teaching assignments and gain teaching experience, as well as supervise students.

NRI has not received applications from people with disabilities to its vacancies, so there are currently no employees with major disabilities. However, the institute upgrades its infrastructure and offices to accommodate its employees' changing needs (sometimes due to health-related problems). The most recent change the institute has made is upgrading its infrastructure to universal design (to make its offices physically accessible to all).

2.3 Working environment survey

NRI carries out a working environment survey (*arbeidsmiljøkartlegging*, or AMK) every three years under the auspices of the Occupational Health Service.



The last AMK conducted is from 2019. 94% of the employees responded to the survey. On a scale from 1-6 where 1 represents “very dissatisfied” and 6 “very satisfied”, 90% of the employees answered 4, 5, or 6 to the question of how satisfied they were with the working environment. The average was 4.57. This was an increase of 8% from AMK 2016, in which the average answer was 4.25. Employees at NRI think that the work is exciting, that the working environment is pleasant and friendly, and that they have autonomy allowing them to structure their working day independently. At the same time, their working life is somewhat stressful due to deadlines and the need to successfully apply for project funding.

Certain themes from the survey are directly relevant to the GEDP: conflicts, bullying, and discrimination. Some employees stated that conflicts and bullying occurred in the workplace, but no one reported that any form of discrimination took place. The conclusion of the investigation was that the institute should work more preventively in all areas. Consequently, institute meetings for all employees focusing on conflict and conflict management have been held, and the institute has prepared guidelines for addressing harassment. There was a desire to draw up a clear policy for inclusion and diversity, which has resulted in the present plan, as well as for more knowledge about the subject of inclusion and discrimination.

2.4 Quality system

The quality system has several overarching documents that define goals and provide direction for the work at NRI. Strategy 2021-2025, Action Plan 2021-2022, Guidelines for ethics and research ethics, Handling of conflicts, Harassment and reporting, Routines for GDPR, HSE routines, etc. have been formulated.

All routines and guidelines must be followed by all employees and are easily accessible on SharePoint.

In addition, NRI follows all national guidelines and legislation relating to the working environment, and has its own special agreement with the union representatives that deals with pay, working hours, leaves, etc. All parents can have paid leave to be at home with a sick child, and the flexible time scheme facilitates appointments related to children (e.g. doctor, nurse).

The composition of the board of directors must have a gender balance such that no gender (women/men) has less than 40% representation. Similar thinking is used in the composition of working groups, management groups, and project groups. It is important to have several genders represented in order to elicit diverse views and perspectives.

2.5 Recruitment

When recruiting, the employer prioritizes inviting all genders to interviews, and makes sure the interview panel is also balanced in terms of gender.

We believe that inclusion and diversity is a strength and want employees with different skills, expertise, life experience, and perspectives, which contributes to even better problem solving. These are important attitudes in the working environment, both for retaining employees and for recruiting new employees to the institute. The employer has good routines for making arrangements tailored to the individual needs of employees.

Recruitment of foreign staff has meant that the English language, in addition to Norwegian, is common at the institute. At the same time, it is a policy at the institute that foreign non-Norwegian-speaking employees should, as a general rule, learn Norwegian within two years of employment, at a level such that they can communicate and participate actively in all contexts that their job involves. This is important for integration into Norwegian society, is necessary for dialogue with clients, and provides the opportunity for all employees to be included in a community. The employer offers funding for Norwegian courses for employees.



3 Action plan 2021-2025

This chapter reviews measures to be implemented in the coming years to develop NRI into an even more inclusive workplace.

3.1 Measures – organisation and employees

NRI has the following guidelines in connection with the organisation of the business and the workplace:

- Attention is paid in the organisation to the importance of gender equality and equal treatment by management, the board, and union representatives.
- There is transparency in the organisation about measures, announcements, decisions, and documents in the quality system, and pay/working conditions are discussed in weekly meetings in the management group as well as in monthly meetings with union representatives.
- There is a system for employee interviews and career development interviews with all employees once a year.
- Elected representatives on the board of NRI must be balanced in terms of gender, with a minimum of 40% women/men (2 out of 5). The same applies to employee representatives on the board – minimum 33% women/men (1 in 3).
- Working groups established in the organisation must have the representation of several genders.
- All employees have the same opportunity for salary development.
- All employees have equal opportunities to apply for career development under the auspices of NRI.
- There is zero tolerance for bullying and harassment at NRI. Several overarching documents in the quality system deal with this: Guidelines for conflict management and Guidelines for ethics and research ethics.
- Good leave arrangements have been made that apply to all employees. These address different challenges in different phases of life, whether caring for young children or dying parents.
- We have expanded the Research Ethics Committee with expertise in RRI (Responsible Research and Innovation) to form the Research Ethics Forum. In this way, we have increased awareness and discussion of equality and participation, among other things.
- We carry out a working environment survey (AMK) every three years in which bullying, harassment, and discrimination are included topics.
- The annual report comments on gender equality in the organisation.

Assessment:

- NRI has many good guidelines and succeeds in an equal working environment. There have been no reports of discrimination.
- NRI carries out research in some of these areas in society in general, but we can become clearer externally about our own role and attitude.
- It is considered important to strengthen competence in areas related to discrimination and gender equality.
- It has been assessed how changes in work organisation can contribute to a better balance between work and free time.

Proposals for new measures:

- Be a visible actor in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, by displaying the rainbow flag on the premises and on the website.
- Ensure that the website is universally accessible.
- Increase competence among all employees on the various grounds of discrimination and on how language and symbols promote equality and inclusion.
- Joint discussions organised by the Research Ethics Forum where we focus on gender equality and diversity.
- Make the physical premises as universal and inclusive as possible.
- Prepare a Gender Equality and Diversity Plan and make it visible on the website in Norwegian and English.
- Consider further questions in the working environment survey (AMK) related to gender equality.
- In addition to comments on gender equality, the annual report can also address other matters related to discrimination: planned and implemented measures to highlight gender equality, functional challenges, ethnicity, and religion.



- Review quality documents to ensure that the equality perspective is a common thread.
- Ensure that equality is safeguarded in daily work - decision-making processes at all levels, and other decisions and tasks.

3.2 Measures - recruitment

NRI has the following guidelines related to recruitment and employment:

- Job advertisements are prepared in collaboration with employees and union representatives. Norwegian or Scandinavian language skills are required in some positions where this is critical for the content of the position.
- Both women and men who are qualified for the position are invited to interviews.
- The team that will interview applicants must include both women and men. The team comprises the CEO, the relevant research director, and a union representative.
- There is no difference in the salary level offered when hiring.

Assessment:

- It can be difficult to put together an interview team with different genders and different ethnic backgrounds, as this depends on who is selected for the various positions.
- Currently, only ethnic Norwegians hold leadership positions.
- The two union representatives currently have different nationalities.
- The institute employs roughly 50/50 men and women, but traditionally women are in the majority.
- The institute has many different nationalities among its researchers.
- The institute has not employed people with any significant disabilities.

Proposals for new measures:

- Job advertisements must highlight the aspiration for diversity in recruitment and employment.
- The website, which is a portal for recruitment, must highlight the aspiration for diversity in the organisation.



3.3 Progress plan 2021-2022

Cf. chapter 1.2.

| MEASURES - EU REQUIREMENTS | RESPONSIBILITY | DEADLINE |
|--|--|--------------|
| <p>REQUIREMENT: The action plan must be publicly available on the institution's website</p> <p>The website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be universally designed • Must highlight equality and diversity • Must highlight the inclusion of all groups (rainbow flag?) • Must highlight non-discriminatory recruitment • The Gender Equality and Diversity Plan must be published in Norwegian and English • All job advertisements must be inviting to everyone | Communications advisor | 2022 |
| <p>REQUIREMENT: The action plan must refer to resources earmarked for work on gender equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint gender equality representative at NRI | CEO | 2022 |
| <p>REQUIREMENT: The action plan must include gender-disaggregated data for all job categories and indicate how annual reporting and follow-up will be carried out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update statistics annually by 1 February of the following year • Have a separate point in the annual report related to equality and diversity, detailing which measures have been implemented to prevent discrimination against various groups | HR CEO | 2022 |
| <p>REQUIREMENT: The action plan must indicate how the work is supported with training and competence building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase competence among all employees on the various grounds of discrimination and on how language and symbols promote equality and inclusion | CEO Research directors | 2022-2025 |
| MEASURES – EU WISHES | RESPONSIBILITY | DEADLINE |
| <p>WISH: Organisational culture and balance between work and private life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint discussions organized by the Research Ethics Forum where we focus on equality and diversity | Research ethics committee | 2022 |
| <p>WISH: Gender balance in management and decision-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that gender equality is safeguarded in daily work • Ensure that gender equality is safeguarded in decision-making processes at all levels • Ensure that gender equality is safeguarded in work tasks and work groups | Management team | 2022-2025 |
| <p>WISH: Gender balance in recruitment and career development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job advertisements must highlight the aspiration for diversity in recruitment and employment • All internal advertisements must ensure equality and equal treatment | Management team Union representatives | 2022-2025 |
| <p>WISH: Integration of a gender perspective in research and teaching content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure gender equality in the establishment of project groups • Mention gender equality in all offers of research funding | All employees | 2022-2025 |
| <p>WISH: Measures against gender-based violence and sexual harassment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the Working Environment Survey with questions related to gender equality and discuss the need for actions | Working environment committee | 2022 2025 |
| OTHER MEASURES | RESPONSIBILITY | DEADLINE |
| <p>Physical premises (Bodø, Svolvær, Mo)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be universally designed • Should be inclusive and non-discriminatory (rainbow flag) | HR | 2023 |



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| Revise all documents in the quality system to ensure that the equality perspective is addressed | HR CEO | 2022 |
| The "annual wheel" for communication must include important national and international commemorations related to racism and discrimination: flag days, pride days, etc. | Communications advisor | 2022 |
| Take responsibility for sharing knowledge and information in the High North in both Norwegian and Sami | | |
| Pay extra attention to the inclusion of employees from abroad: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Norwegian course • "Starter package" with guidance and support for settling down in Norway: social security number, bank account, housing, leisure facilities, etc. | Management team HR | 2022-2025 |
| Participate in various networks to promote equality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BALANSE project (the Research Council of Norway) • ELSA network (ethnicity, equality, and social responsibility) • Participation in the meetings of the Committee for Gender Balance and Diversity in Research (KIF) | Management team | 2022-2025 |

