

Gender Equality Plan Working Group

Who worked on the GEPs or will be implementing or updating?

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Definitions

Gender refers to ‘social attributes and opportunities associated with being female and male and to the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as to the relations between women and those between men’ (EIGE, 2021a).

Sex refers to the ‘biological attribute that distinguishes male, female and intersex’ (European Commission, 2020h).

Gender Identity refers to ‘each person’s deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function, by medical, surgical, or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech, and mannerisms’ (EIGE, 2021a).

While the data collection for The Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research, and Innovation (MEYR) only considers sex-disaggregated data for men and women, it will be important to also consider non-binary gender for data collection in future publications, where possible. Non-binary is an umbrella term for gender identities that fall outside the gender binary of men or women. This includes individuals whose gender identity is neither exclusively man nor woman, a combination of man and woman or between or beyond genders.

General Introduction

Introduction

MISSION STATEMENT

The objective of the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, is to provide present and future generations with the necessary skills and talents for citizenship and employability, in the 21st century and beyond.

Our children need to develop their personal and social potential and acquire the appropriate knowledge, key skills, competences, and attitudes through a value-oriented formation including equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusivity.

The Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation is committed to continually improve on the services it offers. The Ministry works closely with the [Better Regulation Unit](#) and the [Commissioner for Simplification and Reduction of Bureaucracy](#), to ensure that Better Regulation principles and procedures are applied consistently throughout the Ministry.

Core Functions:

- To ensure equal opportunities for quality education for all;
- An education system that provides every young person with the lifelong skills, values, and self-reliance to be independent;
- To offer a wide variety of higher education and training opportunities to enable everyone to get ahead in life and develop themselves professionally;
- To continue to formulate and implement effective policies on education and employment, working closely with stakeholders in the field

This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was developed for the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation based on an internal analysis, meetings with stakeholders involved in the GEP implementation, as well as a review of the policies and practices presently applied by MEYR.

MEYR is keeping abreast with Legislation promoting equality as follows:

- (i) Chapter 4 Article 45 of the Constitution of Malta, 'Protection from discrimination on the grounds of race, etc.' (last update Act No X of 2014) passed by the House of Representatives at Sitting No 141 of the 14th April 2014;
- (ii) Article 2 (3) of CAP 456 of the Laws of Malta 'Equality for Men and Women Act';
- (iii) The Public Administration Act (CAP 595 of the Laws of Malta)
- (iv) Equality Policy for the Public Service of Malta issued by the Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary, within the Office of the Prime Minister

- (v) CAP 413 of the Laws of Malta – Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act

Presently, MEYR is already committed to following the main areas covered by GEP's and has policies and practices in place which are aligned with the Maltese Legislation.

Priority Areas

What are the Key Priority Areas for your institution? and why did you choose these areas? (100/200 words)

- Work life balance and organisational culture
- Gender Balance in leadership and decision making
- Gender dimension into research and teaching content
- Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Advancement
- Awareness and prevention of Harassment and bullying including Gender-based violence

Key Priority Area 1:

Work life balance and organisational culture.

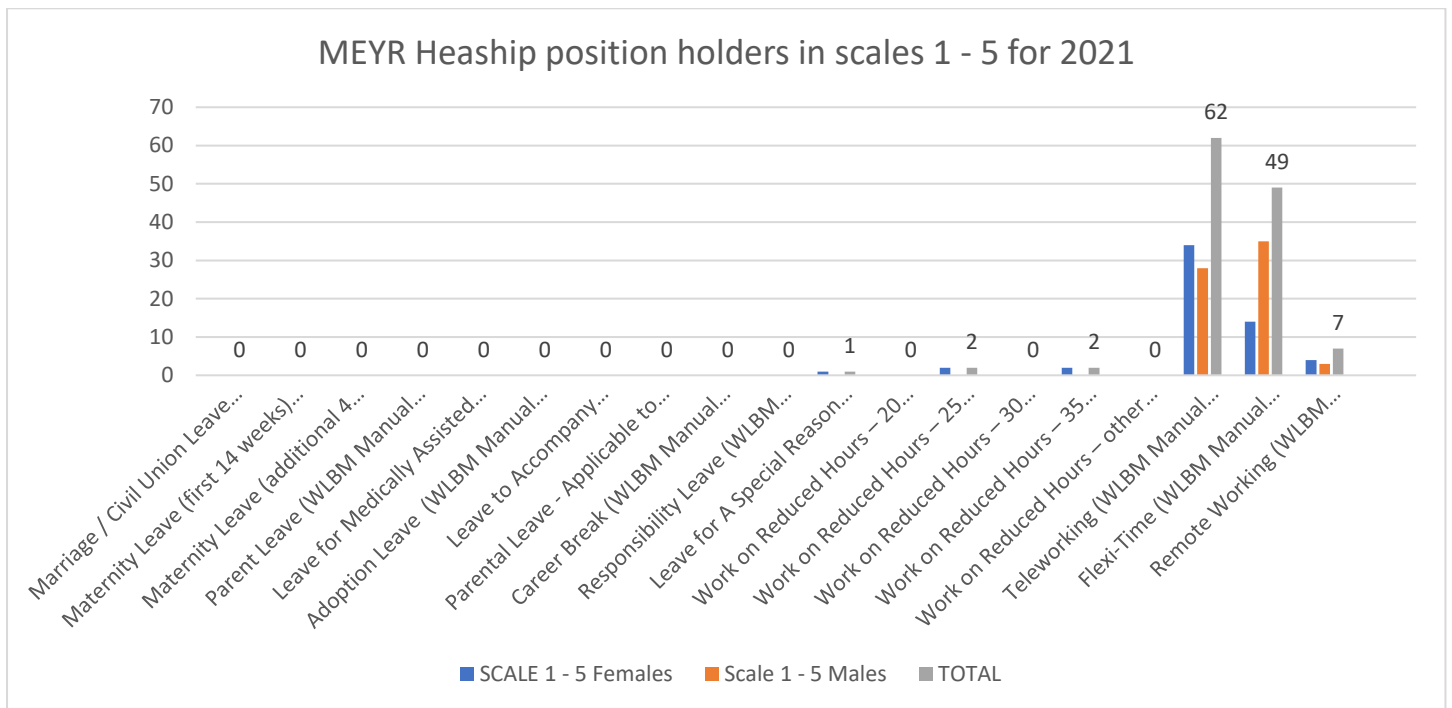
Objective	Actions	Indicators	Timeline
1.1 Assist employees with care-related responsibilities (FFMs)	To ensure that as a Ministry and all Departments falling under the Ministry continue to be pro- telework/remote working for employees with care-related responsibilities	All employees are encouraged to take on, care-related responsibilities	Q1 2022- Q4 2025
1.2 Improve our commitment to encourage long-life learning	Introduce common guidelines for flexible study-plans with the aim of promoting uptake of lifelong learning courses for all employees	Increase in the uptake of lifelong learning courses	Q3 2022 – Q3 2025

The current state of MEYR - Measures implemented to date and beneficiaries

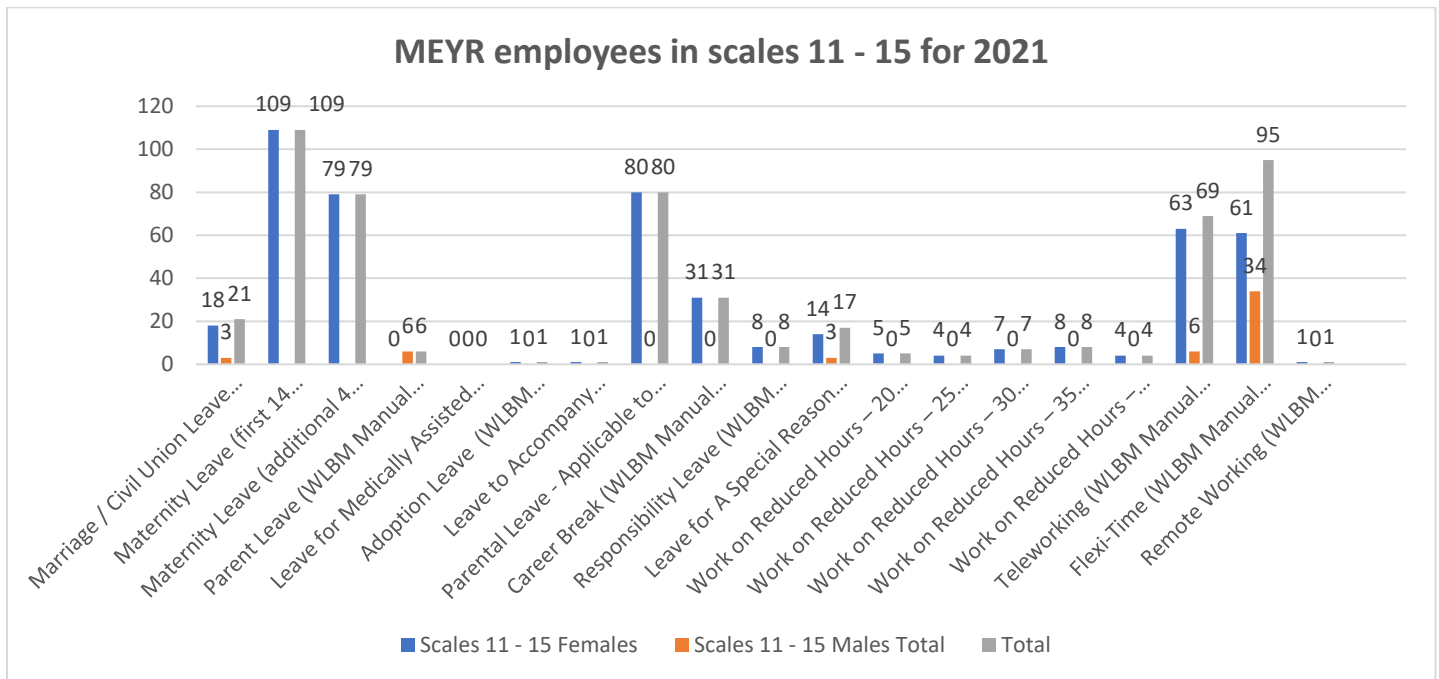
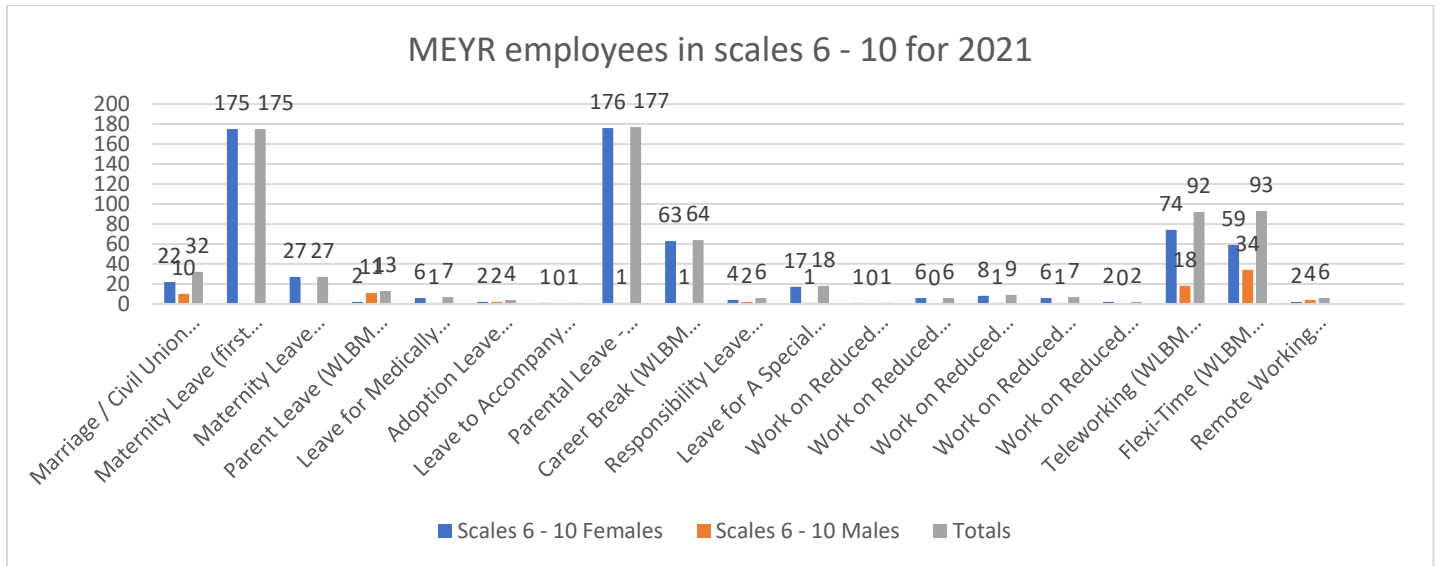
MEYR is committed to Work-life balance measures to promote a healthy lifestyle to all of its employees. At the fulcrum, the guiding document is the PSMC – Manual on work/life-balance measures.

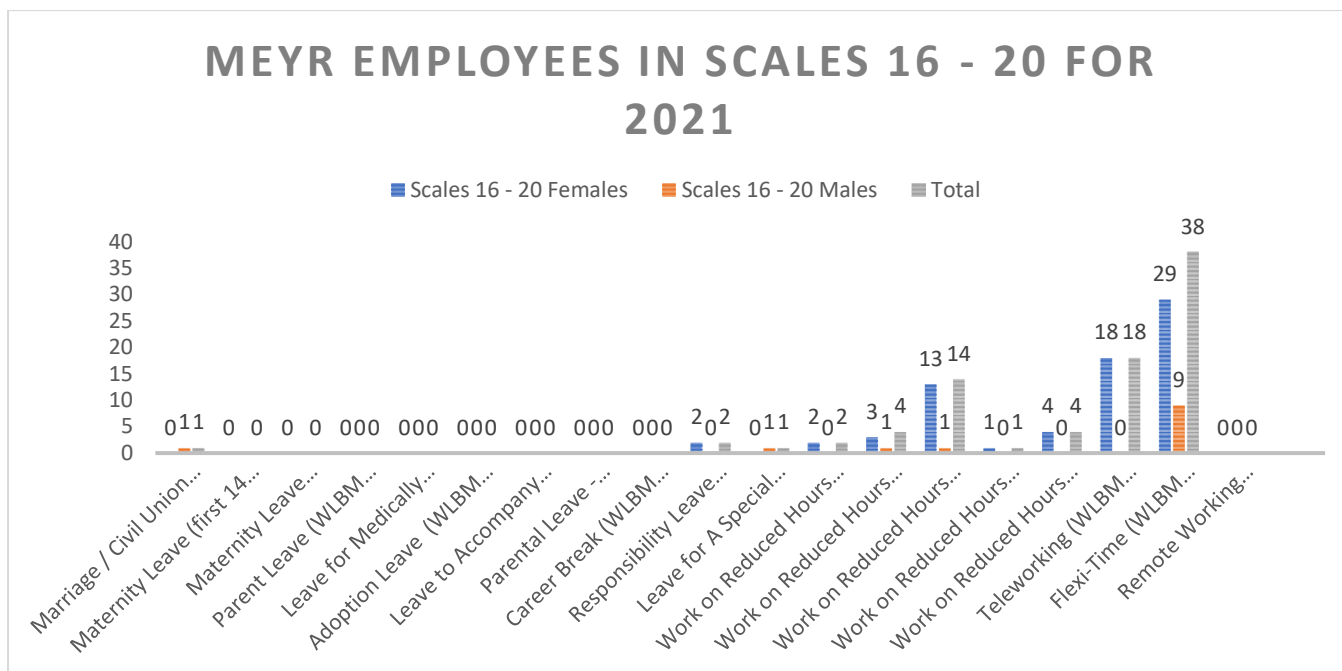
To date MEYR employees can benefit from Telework; reduced hours and flexi-time, the former will be totally replaced by Remote working as of April 2023. Currently, data in these spheres has been collated under males and females and onward looking, the Ministry is adopting the inclusion of the non-binary gender option for data collection.

Work-life balance data for 2021 MEYR (calendar year)



Gender Equality Plan for 2022 – 2025





As for Definite Contract Employees at MEYR for 2021, there was a NIL return.

Gender Equality Plan for 2022 – 2025

Work-Life Balance Survey 2022

Ministry:

MEYR

1st January 2022 - 31st December 2022

Notes:

Please indicate all employees who benefited from any of the below measures from 1st January till 31st December. Any employees who have also availed of any of these measures for just a short period of time must also be included. Please note that Study Leave should not be included.

WLBM Manual refers to the Manual on Work-Life Balance Measures	Scales 1-5		Scales 6-10		Scales 11-15		Scales 16-20		Definite Contracts **		TOTALS		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Grand Total
Marriage / Civil Union Leave (WLBM Manual Section 1.1)	0	0	33	12	22	1	1	0	0	0	56	13	69
Maternity Leave (first 14 weeks) (WLBM Manual Section 1.3)	0		204		103		0		0		307		307
Maternity Leave (additional 4 weeks) (WLBM Manual Section 1.3)	0		118		63		0		0		181		181
Parent Leave (WLBM Manual Section 1.4)	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5	5
Leave for Medically Assisted Procreation (I.V.F. Leave) (WLBM Manual Section 1.5)	0	0	6	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	10	2	12
Adoption Leave (WLBM Manual Section 1.6)	0	0	11	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	14	2	16

Gender Equality Plan for 2022 – 2025

Leave to Accompany Spouse/Partner in a Civil Union on Government-sponsored Courses or Assignments (WLBM Manual Section 2.1)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Parental Leave - Applicable to Parents, Legal Guardians and Foster Carers (WLBM Manual Section 2.2)	0	0	169	1	57	1	0	0	0	0	226	2	228
Carers' Leave (WLBM Manual Section 2.3)	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Career Break (WLBM Manual Section 2.4)	0	0	58	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	89	0	89
Responsibility Leave (WLBM Manual Section 2.5)	0	0	7	2	6	0	2	0	0	0	15	2	17
Leave for A Special Reason (WLBM Manual Section 2.6)	1	0	29	5	25	5	0	0	0	0	55	10	65
Work on Reduced Hours – 20 hours/week (WLBM Manual Section 3.1)	1	0	3	0	3	0	5	0	0	0	12	0	12
Work on Reduced Hours – 25 hours/week (WLBM Manual Section 3.1)	2	0	6	0	2	1	4	0	0	0	14	1	15

Gender Equality Plan for 2022 – 2025

Work on Reduced Hours – 30 hours/week (WLBM Manual Section 3.1)	0	0	7	3	7	0	2	1	0	0	16	4	20
Work on Reduced Hours – 35 hours/week (WLBM Manual Section 3.1)	2	0	6	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	12	2	14
Work on Reduced Hours – other amounts (WLBM Manual Section 3.1)	0	0	4	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	7	1	8
Teleworking (WLBM Manual Section 3.2)	10	10	20	2	17	1	4	0	0	0	51	13	64
Flexi-Time (WLBM Manual Section 3.3)	17	39	62	40	62	33	30	9	0	0	171	121	292
Remote Working (WLBM Manual Section 4)	29	18	62	22	40	5	9	0	0	0	140	45	185

Notes:

** Definite Contracts - irrespective of Salary Scale.

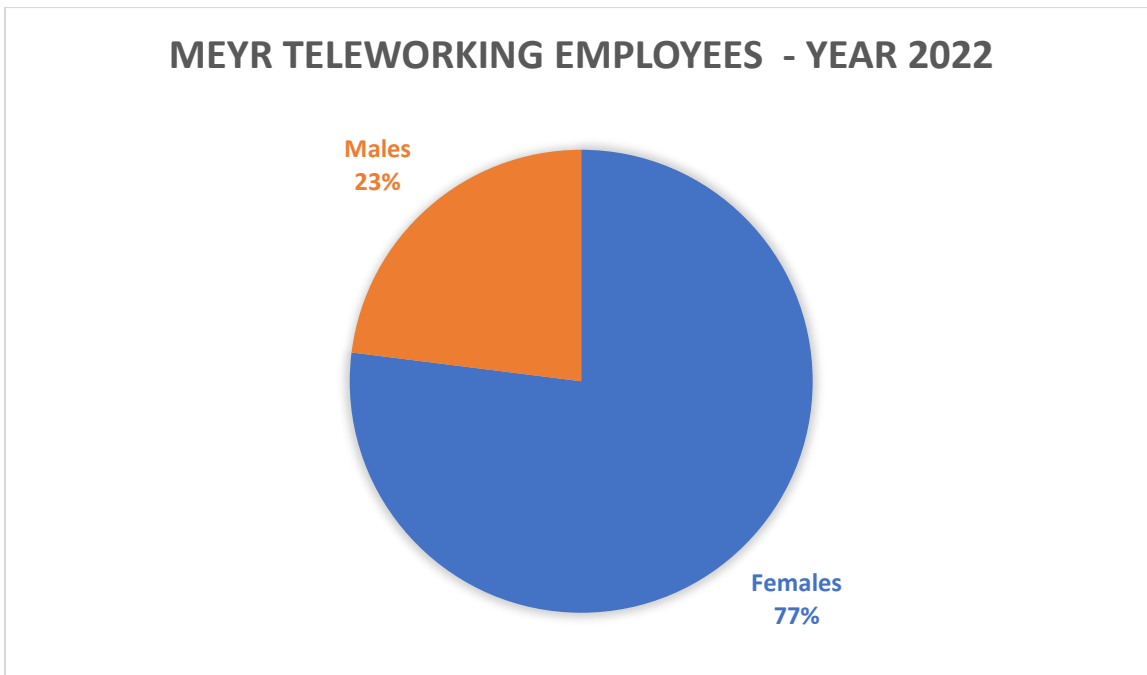


Figure 1: The percentages shown on the chart represent 97 Females and 29 Males

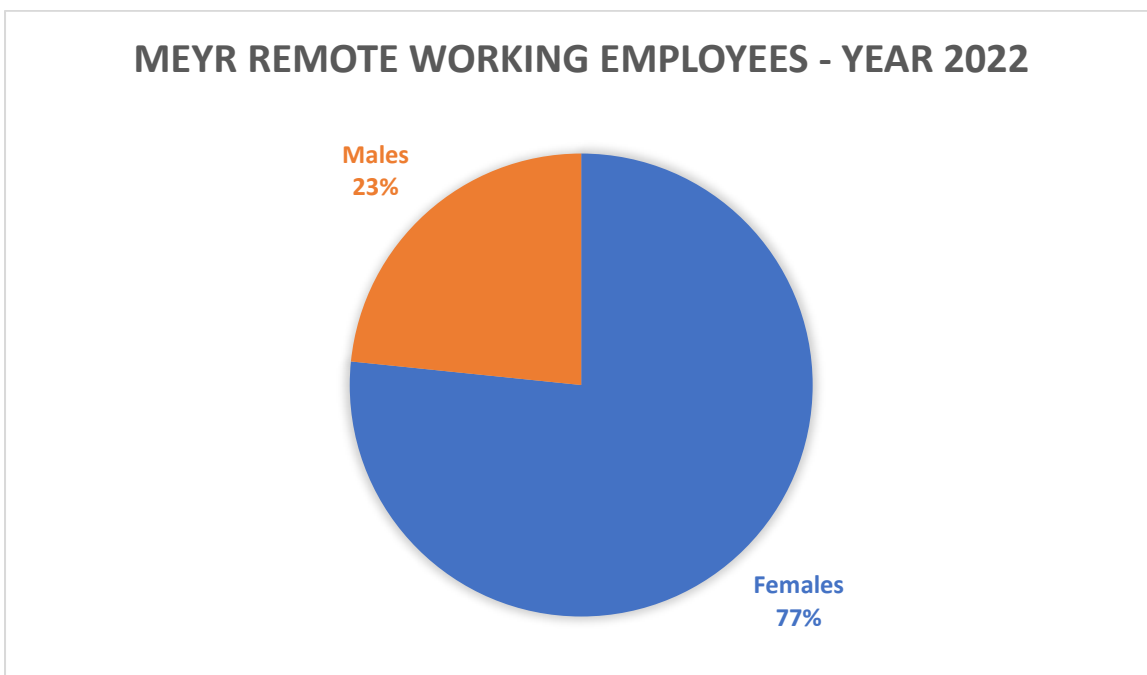


Figure 2: The percentages shown on the chart represent 118 Females and 36 Males

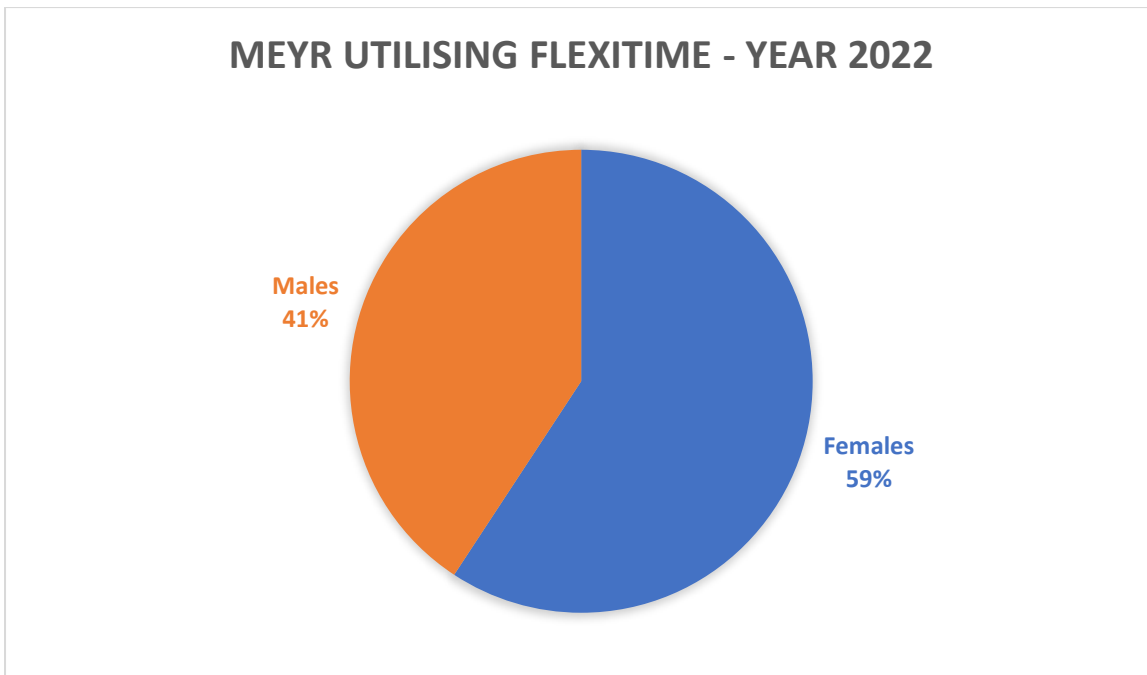


Figure 3: The percentages shown on the chart represent 173 Females and 119 Males

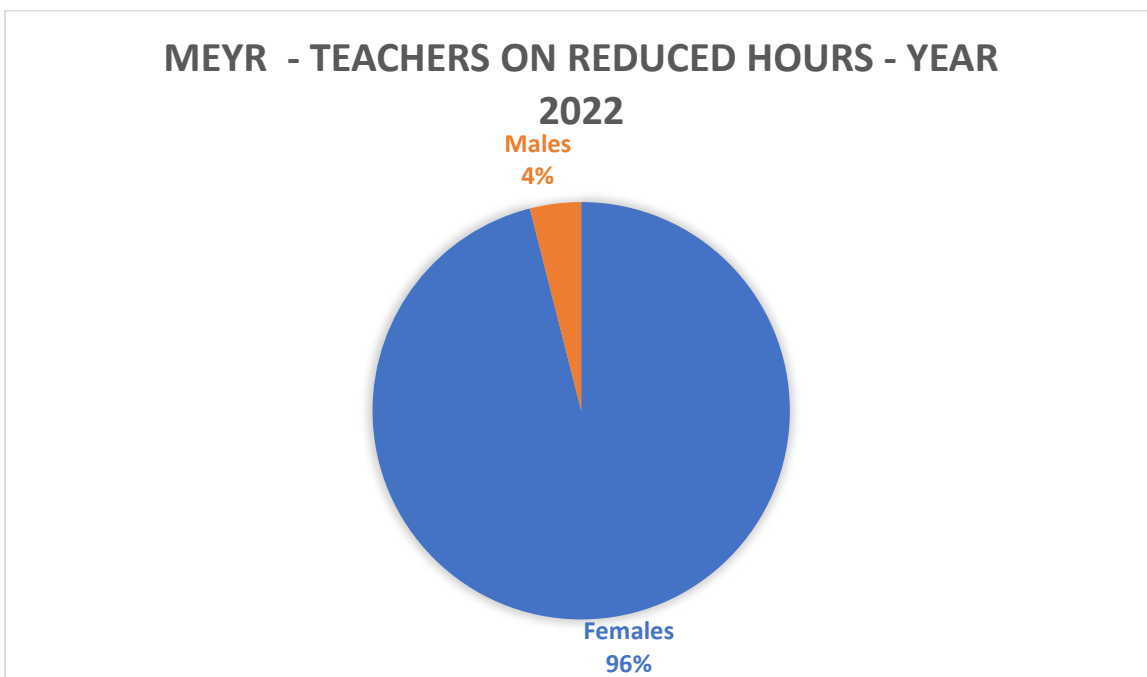


Figure 4: The percentages shown on the chart represent 97 Females and 4 Males

Former Part-timers (General Hands II Assimilated/Senior Operative IV/Cleaners/Officers in Scale 16 on reduced hours - MEYR in 2022

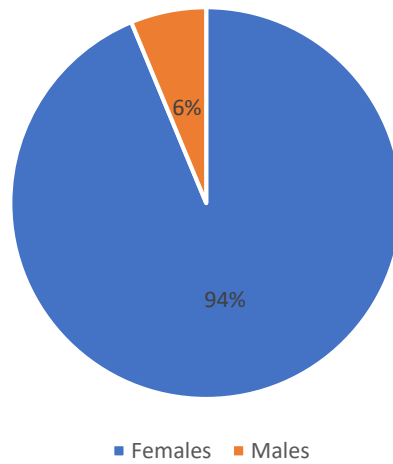


Figure 5: The percentages shown on the chart represent 15 Females and 1 Male

General Service Grades employees on reduced hours - MEYR in 2022

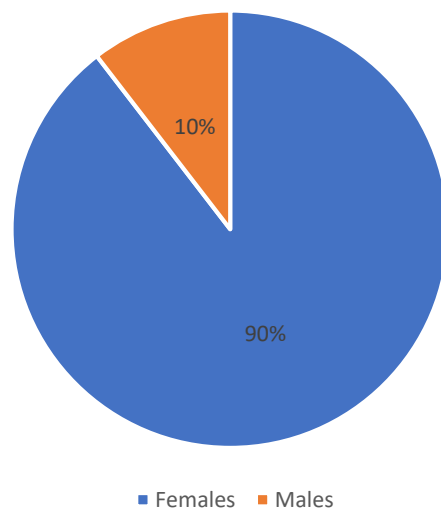


Figure 6: The percentages shown on the chart represent 60 Females and 7 Males

Key Priority Area 2:

Gender balance in leadership and decision making

Objective	Actions	Timeline
2.1 To promote processes to support gender sensitive recruitment and career progression opportunities	To ensure a mixed representation of genders on recruitment and interviewing boards in line with PSMC 3.2.7 of the Manual of Resourcing Policies and Procedures and the Equality Policy issued by the Principal Permanent Secretary's Office.	2022 onwards

Presently, recruitment panels are made up of three persons as part of the selection and recruitment process. All interviewers and selection committees are fully conversant with equality issues. They are furnished with a copy of the manual on Industrial Relations and the Selection and Appointment Process under Delegated Authority in the Malta Public Service

The below table and graph, describe the current distribution of the Senior Management Team at MEYR according to gender. This reflects a balance in gender in Leadership and Decision-Making positions.

	Total	Females	Males
Directors General	2	0	2
CIO	1	0	1
Directors	12	8	4
Head of College Network	11	5	6
Head of School	109	60	49

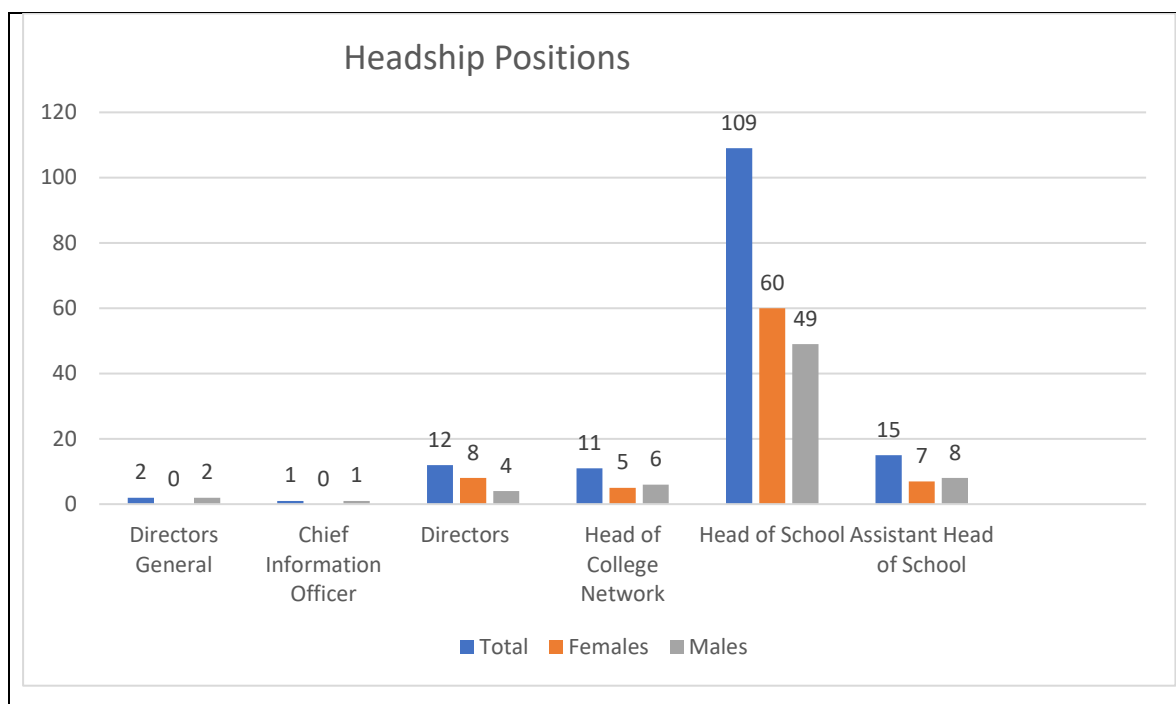


Figure 7: Number of Females and Males for MEYR officers in scales 1 – 5

Key Priority Area 3:

Gender dimension into research and teaching content

Objective	Actions	Indicators	Timeline
3.1 Research on projects taken up by MEYR	To ensure gender equality in projects as far as possible	To include a fair representation of genders mirroring the population	2022 onwards
3.2 Educational Material is gender and culture sensitive	Whilst the educational material is reviewed to ensure it is both gender and culture sensitive, there is no set of criteria or guidelines in place as yet. This is	To encompass all diversities, emerging cultures and sexualities representing as far	2022 onwards 2023 to draw up a set of criteria/guidelines to

	<i>to be discussed with the Education Officer (Curriculum) for up-take in 2023</i>	<i>as possible the whole communities in Malta and Gozo</i>	<i>aid the choice of educational material</i>
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The research taken up by MEYR does not always include gender segregation.

With online questionnaires no distinction by gender is made. Example, the Lifelong Learning Survey which was sent to all students.

Eurydice send questionnaires from the Commission and any filtering like desegregation by gender is only done when asked to do so. In studies taken up by the Lifelong Learning Department, the Male, Female and Other are included, but generally the X gender is very minimal – down to one/two applications but in the end the X response being so minimal, does not have an effect on data captured and is usually ignored.

In the case of the BMI study amongst school children, the distinction was made between Male and Female categories, since the calculation tools that exist are for Male and Female. In this case the X gender could not be included and instead the category was based on sex at birth rather than gender.

The Research Unit is not involved to date in the choice of Educational Material, which is left in its entirety in the discretion of the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes (DLAP)

Choice of Educational Material

Educational material selected, is reviewed to ensure that it is gender and culture sensitive in various mainstream subjects in the areas of PSCD, STEM and other curricular areas such as Social Studies and PE in mainstream education.

There is no set of criteria available in printed form and this will be noted in the next meeting with curriculum Education Officers for such criteria to be developed in 2023.

On another note, the Option Choices are provided to ALL students regardless of gender. The area of equality and gender stereotyping is a key area in compulsory curricula in PSCD and Social Studies.

The local curriculum development experts are all coming from different backgrounds; they have a baggage, they have their own experiences. The experts hold their own conceptions about learning. Such varied conceptions within and beyond the individual are also the result of previous educational experiences.

The Curriculum cannot be static

The curriculum must also meet the needs and current demands of the culture, the society, and the expectations of the population being served. To this end, the educational reform process will continue to undergo review, revision, and constant change.

Key Priority Area 4:

Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Advancement

Objective	Actions	Timeline
<p><i>4.1 (i) To ensure an equal representation of all genders on the whole of the recruitment process</i></p> <p><i>4.1 (ii) to ensure equality of opportunity during the selection and recruitment process</i></p>	<p>i. in the Selection Board, the composition should include both genders;</p> <p>ii. Descriptions in Vacancy advertisements are gender-neutral</p> <p>iii. during interviews no discriminatory questions should be asked and should be related to the requirements of the job</p> <p>iv. Selection and placement on the order of merit is based on one's qualifications and abilities</p>	<i>2022 onwards</i>
<p><i>4.2 recruitment is based on the applicant's ability</i></p>	<i>Recruitment is always carried out according to the order of merit</i>	<i>2022 onwards</i>
<p><i>4.3 Advertisements and all publications are issued as gender-neutral up till now reference to Males and Females</i></p>	<p><i>(i) Gender-neutral is now to be extended to non-binary gender to be more inclusive</i></p> <p><i>(ii) any visual content will not target a specific gender in all publications, media, etc.</i></p>	<i>2022 onwards</i>

1 Recruitment:

MEYR does not make any distinction on gender as from the start of the recruitment process with the issue of the respective calls for application in all sectors being academic; management; administrative; general service grades; technical and industrial grades; and others.

Gender Sensitive Appointment Procedures In line with the provisions of the Manual on Resourcing Policies and Procedures, Public Service employees who qualify for appointment while availing themselves of maternity or parental leave, will be granted their due appointment even if they are unable to resume duties within the validity period of the appointment. This concession applies also to pregnant external recruits who qualify for Maternity Leave at the same time that they qualify for an appointment with the Public Service. These employees will be required to perform their period of probation when they resume duties and will only be confirmed in their appointment on satisfactory completion of the period of probation.

In the case of Selection Boards, MEYR abides by the provisions outlined in the Equality Policy - This policy is correct as on 18 June 2021, particularly, section 3.3 quoted below:

<https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/people/Documents/People-Support-Wellbeing/Policies%20and%20Guidelines/Equality%20Policy.pdf>

'3.3. Good Practices Adopted by Selection Boards

As far as possible, the Selection Board composition should include members of both genders. In determining eligibility and assessing candidates, the selection board should avoid any form of direct or indirect discriminatory treatment, as defined 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), as applicable from time to time, as well as the Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap. 456 of the Laws of Malta) and the Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sex Characteristics Act (Cap. 540 of the Laws of Malta). The selection board shall ensure that every person is assessed according to his or her ability to carry out a given job. It is discriminatory to assess a person's ability on the grounds of the person's gender and/or family responsibilities. In order to avoid gender bias and to promote equality of opportunity:

- I. All applications should be processed in exactly the same way.
- II. Persons should be assessed according to their personal capability and competence to carry out a given job.
- III. Questions asked during interviews should relate to the requirements of the job.
- IV. Questions regarding gender, family responsibilities, marital status and pregnancy/potential pregnancy, or any other discriminatory questions, are not to be asked.
- V. No account should be taken of sex/sexual orientation, racial/ethnic origin, disability, age, religion/religious belief, political opinion or membership in a trade union/employers' association.
- VI. In the case of promotion, care should be taken to consider favourably the non-formal qualifications arising from general experience and differing career patterns of candidates.'

Key Priority Area 5:

Awareness and prevention of Harassment and bullying including Gender-based violence

The policies applied by the discipline section within MEYR in respect of public employees are adopted from the general policies and procedures of the Public Service; such policies in their generality do not distinguish between genders. Employees should be aware of these policies, which are publicly available on the P&SD website. These policies are regularly updated.

Information compiled by the Discipline Section within MEYR is gender neutral.

Objective	Actions	Timeline
<p><i>5.1 Harassment and bullying Policy in Place (sexual, cyber, mobbing, bullying etc.) (MEYR utilises the document under Employee Wellbeing: a Harassment & Bullying Free Workplace (dated 2nd November 2022) - link* below:</i></p>	<p>(i) All employees and stakeholders are to be aware of the policy</p> <p>(ii) Reporting mechanism which does not intimidate staff members, and ensuring that all employees feel safe. Currently, the reporting can be made by the alleged 'victim' personally, informally and formally to the Head of Department/Director/P&SD.</p> <p>(iii) as a way forward, the onus of reporting any abuse should not remain solely for the alleged victim to initiate action, but that any third party who is aware/witness the abuse/harassment/bullying incidents can put forward a report.</p>	<p>2022 onwards</p>
<p><i>5.2 Awareness of harassment and bullying</i></p>	<p>(i) Anti-harassment programs were introduced targeting all sectors including schools and respective staff, within the Ministry to bring on the understanding and the ability to handle such situations amongst its employees **</p> <p>(ii) Ideally D(HR) could delegate to Senior HR Staff in conjunction with Heads College Network to possibly broaden the</p>	<p>2022 onwards</p>

	<i>catchment area and identify at the earliest possible, cases that may be referred to professionals including ESP Unit at P&SD, or the National Student Services, amongst others, depending on the matter at hand. The identified responsible teams may tackle issues regarding harassment and other forms of gender-based violence offering support as necessary in a confidential manner.</i>	
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*Link:

<https://publicservice.gov.mt/en/people/Documents/People-Support-Wellbeing/Policies%20and%20Guidelines/EmployeeWellbeingAHarassmentandBullyingFreeWorkplace.pdf>

** In collaboration with NCPE, since 2022, MEYR held a number of training sessions to increase awareness of on the below:

- NCPE's remit and what we do (different grounds of discrimination)
- Equality- meaning of equality vis a' vis different social groups
- Stereotypes & roles
- Discrimination- Direct & Indirect discrimination
- Harassment & sexual harassment
- Ways to prevent and address sexual harassment

MEYR is committed to address gender-based violence and to promote the inclusion and acceptance of all gender identities and sexualities in conformity with article 29 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap 452 of the Laws of Malta), the Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap 456 of the Laws of Malta and Criminal Code (Chapter 9 of the Laws of Malta)

Data Collection and Monitoring

For the purpose of this GEP, the data in relation to each challenge shall be collected as follows:

- **Priority area 1: Work life balance and organisational culture**

Applications for Family Friendly Measures, such as teleworking/remote working, reduced hours, flexi-time, special leaves etc... are available to all MEYR employees irrespective of gender/or family responsibilities. Furthermore, study leave to promote lifelong learning is encouraged to all MEYR employees disregarding of gender or organisational level. Segregated data is collected upon application and a report is issued on an annual basis.

- **Priority area 2: Gender Balance in leadership and decision making**

In conjunction with the availability of Family Friendly Measures for all as well as continuous professional development programmes for MEYR employees, even during the core office hours are offered training sessions even through institutions which offer flexibility whilst accumulating ECTSs to enhance the educational level of the Ministry's employees in an effort to ensure equality in decision-making/leadership positions.

- **Priority area 3: Gender dimension into research and teaching content**

Research via questionnaires, unless specifically required is not segregated by gender. Given limitations as to calculator tools where only male and female are listed, the X gender is not included and the data is collected by sex at birth rather than gender.

The choice of educational material is closely monitored and updated to reflect the current demographics for the Maltese Islands with particular attention to the inclusion of minority groups.

- **Priority area 4: Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Advancement**

Working towards extending the pool of experts and the Standing Selection Panel members with the to aim to ensure that the interviewing panels are all gender balanced.

As per the selection policies the selection criteria is based on the candidates' abilities, experience and qualifications and recruitment is based on the order of merit.

- **Priority area 5: Awareness and prevention of Harassment and bullying including Gender-based violence**

Ongoing training sessions should be planned and carried out to encompass all organisational levels the employees with the Ministry to instil awareness and understanding of the different facets of harassment, bullying and gender-based violence.

Records of attendees should be kept ensuring that all employees within MEYR are made aware through training sessions of such realities.

All staff are to be made aware of policies in place and new recruits are furnished with a list of links to such documents along with the respective letters of appointment/contract agreements. In all induction training these matters are highlighted emphasising that MEYR, is always zero-tolerant towards violence in general.

