

# **Fondazione Regionale per la Ricerca Biomedica (FRRB)**

## Gender Equality Plan

## Table of Contents

1	Background .....	3
2	Main Objectives .....	5
3	Main Actions .....	7
4	Monitoring and Assessment.....	9

## 1 Background

The Lombardy Foundation for Biomedical Research (Fondazione Regionale per la Ricerca Biomedica - FRRB) is an entity governed by public law, a non-for-profit organisation established in October 2011 by Regione Lombardia, with the aim of promoting and supporting scientific research in Life Sciences in Lombardy Region (since 2011, 100 Million € have been committed in innovative R&D projects). The Foundation represents the main strategic platform for boosting progress, research, development and innovation within the health sector among the regional academic and industrial life sciences players.

Its *raison d'être* is to serve as support for the implementation of the regional healthcare research policy, in order to place Lombardy regional system in a leading position in Europe in this field. In addition, the Foundation aims to invest local and European resources in innovative basic and translational research projects to generate positive impact on the local healthcare eco-system and citizens.

### Main Activities:

- Promoting research and innovation in Lombardy by allocating regional funds to basic and translational research projects through public tenders and calls for proposals
- Creating a financially sustainable environment for adding value to biomedical projects focused on different pathological conditions, including rare diseases.
- Supporting and coordinating - through R&D infrastructures - the implementation of scientific research on disease prevention, personalised medicine, medical devices and drug manufacturing and distribution.
- Supporting local and national technological clusters in life sciences, thus enabling a better coordination of research agenda in the biomedical field, as well as a more productive use of the available funds.
- Attracting European and International research funds to Lombardy by participating in European projects, as those in the HORIZON 2020, and international partnerships.
- Disseminating scientific knowledge and culture, integrating Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) principles and promoting a gender balance among Research Funding Organisation (RFOs) and Research Performing Organisations (RPOs).

The Foundation is involved in the Target project as a Gender Equality Innovating Institution (GEII). It acknowledges the benefits of gender equality in research, specifically within the framework of scientific excellence.

FRRB is a proactive entity with the potential to set itself as an example to promote institutional changes in other Lombardy research institutions.

With this GEP, FRRB seeks to address gender inequalities and imbalances in R&I through the development and implementation of a context-specific Gender Equality Plan (GEP), formalising a set of actions aiming at long term institutional transformation.

The design and implementation of this GEP will address the main issues in the “gender & research” area as stressed by the Target Community of Practice, i.e. gender gaps in Research careers (including salaries and contracts), the concept of scientific excellence and how it is actually intended and applied; awareness raising of the evaluators, involvement of women PIs in research projects.

The GEP has been developed as part of the TARGET Project and should be understood as the 1st Gender Equality Plan of the Foundation, as it is supposed to open the way to a long-term gender equality strategy in an attempt to promote gender equality beyond the organisational context and needs of the Foundation.

The Gender Equality plan will be integrated in the key operational documents which regulate all the aspects of the FRRB functioning (Management system conform to the Quality Management System standard UNI EN ISO 9001:2015):

- *Management of the yearly planning (P01);*
- *Management of funded projects and Calls for proposals (P02);*
- *Management of European Projects (P03);*
- *Management of the communication processes (P04);*
- *Management of certified documents (P05);*
- *Management of the accountability and finance processes (P06);*
- *Management of human resources (P07);*
- *Management of supply process (P08);*
- *Management of corrective actions and improvement processes (P09);*
- *Management of internal audits (P10).*

## 2 Main Objectives

The TARGET Project indicates three main areas of interest for achieving gender equality in R&I:

1. *Human resource management (remove gender related barriers to women careers in science);*
2. *Decision-making;*
3. *Integration of gender dimensions in research content.*



It is important to note that the use of a comprehensive cyclical approach is central to the idea of gender equality, as institutional change is defined as a three-dimensional construct and all TARGET areas are interrelated, interconnected and mutually reinforcing.

For the full realisation of gender equality in R&I, both a bottom-up and a top-down approach are necessary. The former indicates the support to individual researchers to redress any gender imbalances and the latter indicates the support to structural changes towards gender equality.

All three focus areas are of equal importance for FRRB and can be viewed as priority fields.

Of particular importance is the Gender dimension in research content, which means ensuring a proper consideration of the gender aspect among the research community.

The overall objective of the Gender Equality Plan 2018-2020, nevertheless, is to build institutional capacity to facilitate cultural change that goes beyond the formal adoption of a GEP.

The Foundation aims at removing any existing gender inequalities and mitigating perceived factors that limit equal participation and advancement of women by acting on the three different areas:

- Human resource management area - this area is mainly addresses internal organisation issues (internal).
- Research content area – this area is mainly involves the scientific community (external).
- Decision making area – this area involves activities that impact on both internal and external environment.

These dimensions are considered to be *achievable to implement*, as the Foundation grasps momentum with the organisational transformation already taking place, and of *high impact* as results will be visible in the institutional transformation process.

### 3 Main Actions

#### **Area 1: Promoting a gender-inclusive organisational culture and eliminating unconscious gender biases in all aspects of human resource management (internal dimension)**

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONIBILITY	TARGET	TIMEFRAME
<b>Promoting a gender-inclusive organisational culture and eliminating unconscious gender biases in all aspects of human resource management (internal dimension)</b>	Action 1: incorporating into internal procedures and Ethics Code gender-related issues	FRRB Staff (Quality Officer)	Formal approval of gender equality measures in internal regulatory documents	From December 2018
	Action 2: raising gender awareness among personnel to address unconscious bias and promote the importance of gender by targeted trainings	FRRB Staff (Management)	Attendance of specific training	From January 2019
	Action 3: create an informative document on gender issues addressed to newly recruited staff	FRRB Staff (Secretariat, Project's Office)	Explanatory document to be provided as part of the new staff induction	2019
	Action 4: develop a tool for the constant internal monitoring of gender related data and indicators ( <i>database</i> ).	FRRB Staff (Quality Officer)	Creation of an internal database	From January 2019

**Area 2: Fostering the integration of the gender dimension in research and within the scientific community (external dimension).**

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET	TIMEFRAME
<b>Fostering the integration of the gender dimension in research and within the scientific community</b>	Action 5: organisation of a Community of Practice (CoP) to facilitate exchange experiences to develop knowledge and capacity building and know-how for gender equality;	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer)	Training sessions for stakeholders and projects' applicants	Ongoing
	Action 6: include in FRRB Calls for proposals and on the Institutional website our sponsorship to women applications;	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Integration of gender equality's sponsorship in the communication strategy	Ongoing
	Action 7: include in FRRB Calls for proposals specific measures for maternity leave;	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Inclusion of the specific measures for maternity leave in the calls	Ongoing
	Action 8: create a structured database that allow to extract gender related content from the funded projects. In order to do so, we will include in FRRB Calls for proposals a questionnaire on gender policies in place in the participating institutions	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Database on gender related issues (n. of women PI, n. of women Full professors/in leading roles etc)	Ongoing
	Action 9: promote gender equality awareness among the peer reviewers (chosen according to equal gender representation) involved in the evaluation phase through the establishment of specific guidelines.	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Informative documentation to provide guidance to reviewers	From 2019

**Area 3: Addressing gender imbalances in decision-making processes, internally and externally, involving policy makers, the scientific community and the lay public: raising awareness on how the process is implemented and how to overcome gender imbalances through the decision making process.**

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET	TIMEFRAME
<b>Area 3: Addressing gender imbalances in decision-making processes, internally and externally, involving policy makers, the scientific community and the lay public: raising awareness on how the process is implemented and how to overcome gender unbalances through the decision making process</b>	Action 10: disclose an updated report on the gender balance situation of all the institutions that participate to FRRB call for proposals upon collection of data as described in Action 8;	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Report on the gender balance of all institutions applying for funding	From 2019
	Action 11: elaborate a Position Paper on gender equality state-of-the-art in Lombardy in order to raise awareness on the topic and describe FRRB measures in place to overcome existing unbalances;	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office, Management)	Position Paper on gender equality state-of-the-art in Lombardy	2019-2020

#### 4 Monitoring and Assessment

Funding excellent research is the main goal of FRRB. Achieving the GEP objectives is key to generate a gender-aware institutional culture among the research community and the Foundation.

The Foundation understands the importance of monitoring as it is indicating whether or not a transformative dynamic is taking place while it is viewed as a self-reflective process. On the one hand, monitoring works as a tool supporting effective action and commitment, which increases legitimacy and creates accountability, and on the other it provides indicators to assess actions in order to enhance knowledge of ongoing changes.

The CoP can further contribute to creating a favourable environment for the effective implementation of the GEP actions. Organisation of regular meetings with the CoP are important for discussing, reporting

and assessing the progress, main achievements and aspects that can be improved. This will allow identification of possible problems and acting proactively upon them.

Below are listed both quantitative and qualitative indicators that will be used to monitor and assess the implementation progress of the present GEP:

- Number of women and men in recruitment;
- Number of people targeted and reached for awareness-raising trainings and number of training sessions planned;
- Number of female applicants as PIs and number of female/male team members in research projects;
- Number of female and male peer reviewers;
- Integration of gender perspective into the preparation and design of all operational documents (ie. Calls for proposals, Guidelines for reviewers, etc.);
- Number of internal procedures revised with gender issues, Ethics Code, etc.;
- Impact of transformation towards gender sensitivity (number of women Principal Investigators in project proposals).

**Tavola: Stato di avanzamento delle azioni aggiornata a Settembre 2019**

Table 1: Human resource management (FRRB)

<b>Objective: Promoting a gender-inclusive organisational culture and eliminating subconscious gender biases in all aspects of human resource management (internal dimension)</b>								
	<b>Action/activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>% Achievement</b>
	<b>Action 1: incorporating into internal procedures gender-related issues</b>	FRRB Staff (Quality Officer)	Formal approval of gender equality measures in internal regulatory documents	All FRRB staff	From July 2018	No. of procedures modified to include gender equality issues	Update of procedures	50%
	<b>Action 2: raising gender awareness among personnel to address subconscious bias and promote the importance of gender by targeted trainings</b>	FRRB Staff (Management)	Attendance of specific training courses	FRRB Director	From January 2019	Attendance of a tailored training by all FRRB employees	100% of staff attending subconscious bias training	%
	<b>Action 3: creating an informative document on gender issues addressed to newly recruited staff</b>	FRRB Staff (Secretariat, Project's Office)	Explanatory document to be provided as part of the new recruited staff induction	All FRRB staff	2019	Draft of informative document on gender issues	Inclusion of the informative document in an induction manual	%
	<b>Action 4: developing a tool for the internal monitoring of gender related data and indicators (database)</b>	FRRB Staff (Secretariat, Quality Officer)	Creation of an internal database	All FRRB staff	From January 2019	Creation of the monitoring tool (i.e. report or database)	Update of the monitoring tool (i.e. report or database)	%
<b>Additional actions</b>								
	<b>Action 5: establishing unbiased and transparent progression and development paths</b>	FRRB Staff (Management Secretariat)	Establishment of transparent criteria for progression and promotion	All FRRB staff	From June 2019	Draft of guidelines to be approved by the Management.	Inclusion of the guidelines in an induction manual	%

	<b>Action 6 : introducing Flexibility</b>	FRRB Staff (Management)	Establishment of criteria to regulate flexible work	All FRRB staff	From September 2019	Actual requests for flexibility from FRRB staff	Establishment of a procedure for flexible work	
<b>Output</b>	Analysis of internal procedures	FRRB Staff (Secretariat, EU Projects Office, Quality Office)		All FRRB Staff	From July 2018	Number of procedures approved that include gender equality provisions	Approval of all procedures with gender related aspects	50% (quality procedure updated, procedure for recruitment of new FRRB staff to be drafted)
<b>Outcome</b>	Quality procedure updated and published on the institutional website <a href="http://www.frrb.it">www.frrb.it</a>	FRRB Staff (Quality Officer)	n/a	All FRRB Staff	Updated 25.09.2018	Approved: Yes	n/a	50%
<b>Impact</b>	Awareness among FRRB staff raised.	European funding Officer, Management	n/a	All FRRB Staff	n/a	Attendance to training, collaboration in indicating potential needs or issues to tackle within the organisation.	-	50%

Table 2: Decision making (FRRB)

<b>Objective: Addressing gender imbalances in decision making processes, internally and externally, involving policy makers, the scientific community and the lay public: raising awareness on how to overcome gender imbalances through the decision making process</b>								
	<b>Action/activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>% Achievement</b>
	<b>Action 7 : elaborating a Position Paper on gender equality state-of-the-art in Lombardy in order to raise awareness on the topic and describe FRRB measures in place to overcome existing imbalances</b>	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, EU Projects' office, Management)	Position Paper on gender equality state-of-the-art in Lombardy	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy, Lombardy Region, lay public	2020	No. of downloads/visualisations of the paper	Publication of the position paper	%
<b>Output</b>	Disclosing the state-of-the-art of gender equality in the main hospitals and research centres that collaborate with FRRB	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' officer, European funding officer)	Awareness raising among the scientific community and the regional stakeholders	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy, Lombardy Region, lay public	Expected before the end of the project	Publication of the document online and in a printed version	Draft of the document to be approved by FRRB management	%
<b>Outcome</b>	Position paper on gender equality in the scientific community in Lombardy	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' officer, European funding officer)	Publication on FRRB website	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy, Lombardy Region, lay public	Expected 2020	No. of downloads and visualisations		%
<b>Impact</b>	Creation of a document which raises awareness among stakeholders and citizens	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' officer, European funding officer)	Awareness raising among the scientific community and the regional stakeholders	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy, Lombardy Region, lay public	From the publication onwards			%

Table 3: Research content (FRRB)

<b>Objective: Fostering the integration of the gender dimension in research and within the scientific community</b>								
	<b>Action/activity</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Indicator(s)</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>% Achievement</b>
	<b>Action 8: organisation of a Community of Practice (CoP) to facilitate exchange of experiences to develop knowledge, capacity building and know-how for gender equality</b>	FRRB Staff (Projects' Office, Scientific Office)	Training and informative sessions for stakeholders and projects' applicants	CoP, FRRB staff	Ongoing	No. of events organised	3 events per year with more than 20 attendees	2018: 100% 2019: 33%
	<b>Action 9: including in FRRB Calls for Proposals and on its institutional website our sponsorship to women applications (compulsory minimum No. of women PIs)</b>	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Integration of gender equality's sponsorship in the communication strategy	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy	from 2018 / ongoing	No. of women PI	40% of applications by women PIs	100%
	<b>Action 10: including in FRRB Calls for Proposals specific measures for maternity leave</b>	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Inclusion of the specific measures for maternity leave in the Call for Proposals	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy	Ongoing	N/A	Inclusion of the specific measures for maternity leave in the Call for Proposals	
	<b>Action 11: Drafting a report with data on gender representation in research and healthcare institutions. We</b>	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Report on gender related data (no. of women PIs, no. of women Full professors/in leading roles etc.)	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy	Ongoing	No. of surveys completed	Elaboration of a new more detailed survey structure	

	<b>will include in FRRB Calls for Proposals a survey on gender policies in place in the participating institutions</b>							
	<b>Action 12: promoting gender equality awareness among the peer reviewers (chosen according to equal gender representation) involved in the evaluation phase through the establishment of specific guidelines</b>	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Informative documentation to provide guidance to reviewers	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy	From 2019	Creation of informative documentation to provide guidance to reviewers	Adoption of new guidelines for reviewers	100%
<i>Additional actions</i>								
	<b>Action 13: Creation of a database to keep track of gender representation among PI in funded projects</b>	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office)	Report on gender related data (no. of women PIs per funded project)	FRRB CoP	From 2019	% of women PIs	Complete report for 2015-2019	%
	<b>Action 14: to include in the call text a focus on gender in the content of the research</b>	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer)	Inclusion of a paragraph on "gender in research activities" in the application form	Hospitals and research institutions in Lombardy	From October 2019	No. of applications properly responding to the question on gender dimension in research	Creation of an instrument to evaluate how gender issues are included in research activities	%

<b>Output 1</b>	In 2018: 2 meetings of the CoP + 1 meeting with an external guest, Prof Londa Schiebinger. In 2019: 1 meeting with the CoP	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' officer, European funding officer)	Active participation of the CoP	The scientific community	CoP meetings: 15.02.18 13.06.18 24.10.18 (Londa Schiebinger) 06.03.19	An average of 30 people participating at each CoP meeting	-	100%
<b>Output 2</b>	Following the 2018 Call for proposals, 46 surveys were received, which represent 100% of all applicants.	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' officer)	Awareness raising among the scientific community	The scientific community	October 2018-May 2019	There has been a total of 55 PI women among the 103 total PI that equates to 53,4%	Surveys completed	100%
<b>Output 3</b>	Guidelines for reviewers have been developed and distributed	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer)	Awareness raising among the reviewers	The scientific community	October 2018-May 2019	The gender dimension has been included into guidelines	Guidelines officially approved by FRRB management	100%
<b>Outcome</b>	A renovated interest in gender policies among FRRB stakeholders	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer, Projects' office, European projects office)	Awareness raising among the scientific community	The scientific community	Ongoing	Active participation of the CoP and FRRB activities	Establishment of a CoP	100%
<b>Impact</b>	The activities carried on by FRRB within the TARGET project have an impact on members of the scientific community	FRRB Staff (Scientific Officer), Management	Awareness raising among the scientific community	The scientific community	ongoing	No. of institutions that demonstrate a new interest in gender equality issues	At least 1 Institute which demonstrates new interest in gender equality issues	100%

