



HRD Gender Equality Plan 2027-2030

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1. Introduction

The Gender Equality Plan of the Human Rights Directorate aims to be a strategic and operational instrument intended to strengthen gender equality both within the Directorate as a workplace and across the Directorate's policy, coordination, monitoring, training and implementation functions. It responds to the need to move beyond general commitment and towards a more systematic approach through which gender equality is embedded in internal management, policy design, programme implementation, stakeholder engagement, budgeting, monitoring and reporting.

This Plan is grounded in the understanding that gender equality is not achieved only through isolated initiatives, but through sustained institutional change. In line with EIGE guidance, a Gender Equality Plan should be holistic, tailored to the organisation, based on a status quo assessment, supported by clear objectives and measures, and accompanied by responsibilities, timelines, monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

For the Human Rights Directorate, this Plan is particularly relevant because the Directorate is responsible for coordinating gender mainstreaming across government, supporting the implementation of the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan (GEMSAP 2022 – 2027), contributing to the development and monitoring of national human rights and equality strategies, and promoting inclusive, evidence-based and rights-based public policy.

2. Purpose and scope

This Plan applies to the Human Rights Directorate as a whole, including its policy, legal, coordination, gender mainstreaming, SOGIGESC, anti-racism, integration and anti-human trafficking functions. It is intended to guide internal institutional practice as well as HRD's outward-facing work in policy development, strategy coordination, monitoring, reporting, training, capacity-building, stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising.

The Plan covers the period 2027–2030. This period allows HRD to align the Plan with ongoing GEMSAP implementation, the Gender Responsive Budgeting pilot and framework work, the development of gender/sex-disaggregated data systems, and the Directorate's wider strategic responsibilities under current equality and human rights strategies.



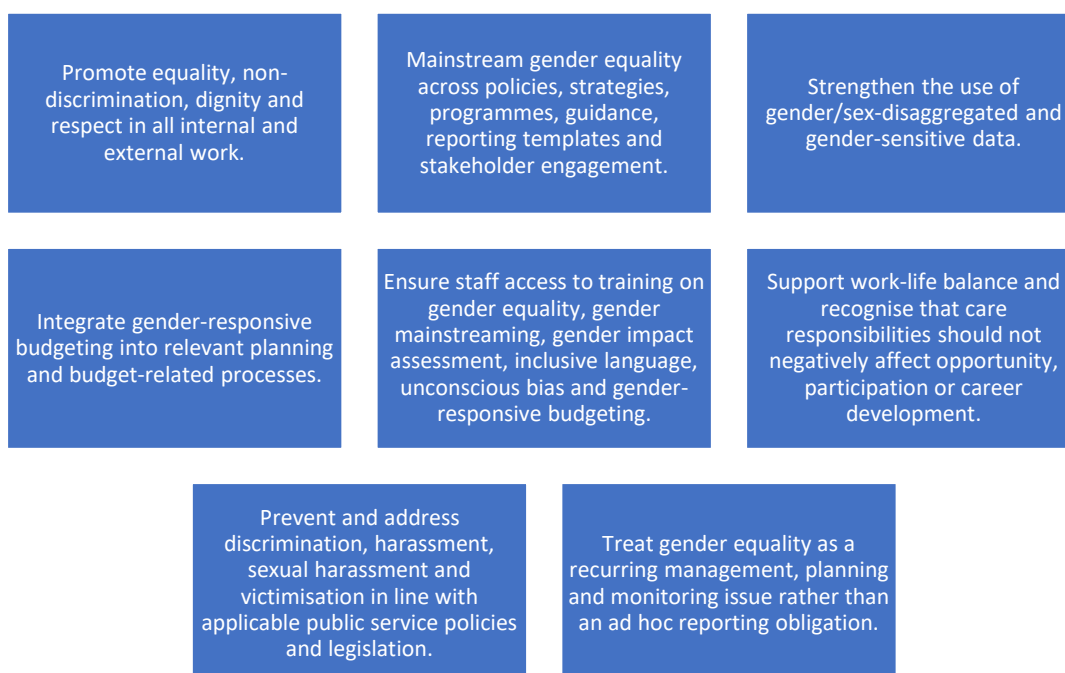
3. Vision and institutional commitment

3.1. Vision

The Human Rights Directorate will be an inclusive, evidence-based and gender-responsive public institution that promotes equality within its own structures and models good practice in gender mainstreaming across the Maltese public administration.

The Directorate will ensure that women, men and persons of diverse gender identities, including non-binary persons where relevant and where data can be collected lawfully, safely and appropriately, are recognised in policy design, service planning, communication, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

3.2. Commitments





4. Baseline and rationale

HRD has a strong mandate and several existing strengths. It coordinates gender mainstreaming across government, implements GEMSAP-related measures, works with the National Statistics Office on gender/sex-disaggregated data, engages with ministries and focal points, leads equality and human rights strategies, and delivers training and awareness-raising.

At the same time, HRD's own reporting identifies areas requiring improvement. These include the absence of a written internal action plan ensuring gender mainstreaming in work processes beyond GEMSAP-related responsibilities, the lack of systematic quantitative data collection across all units, training needs in data collection, gender impact assessment and dissemination of information, and the need for practical templates that link gender gaps, evidence, objectives, indicators, responsible entities and budget implications.

5. Governance, responsibilities and resources

5.1. Gender Equality Plan Working Group

HRD shall establish an internal Gender Equality Plan Working Group composed of representatives¹ from the Directorate's units with the aim of:

- Supporting implementation of the Plan.
- Identifying gender equality concerns emerging from unit-level work.
- Reviewing internal practices, templates and communications.
- Promoting staff awareness.
- Supporting data collection and monitoring.
- Contributing to annual progress reporting.
- Identifying training needs and recommending follow-up actions

¹ Admin/HR and GMU will be considered as key representatives in this group whereas others can be nominated/selected via an EOI whilst ensuring a cross-representation of all units.



5.2. Responsibility of all units

Each HRD unit shall be responsible for applying gender mainstreaming within its own work. This includes considering gender equality and intersectionality in strategies, legal reviews, stakeholder consultations, training, data collection, guidance notes, reports, awareness campaigns and project implementation.

5.3. Resources

Implementation shall be supported through existing HRD human resources, the Gender Mainstreaming Unit, and relevant project-based support linked to gender mainstreaming, gender-responsive budgeting and data work. Where necessary, additional resources may be requested for training, guidance development, expert support, data mapping, inclusive communication materials, stakeholder consultation, monitoring and evaluation.

6. Priority areas and action plan

6.1. Priority Area 1: Institutional governance, leadership and accountability

Objective: To embed gender equality as a recurring institutional governance and management priority within HRD.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicators
Establish an HRD Gender Equality Plan Working Group with representatives from the various units.	Head HRD / GMU	Q4 2026	Working Group established; terms of reference approved; meetings held at least twice yearly.
Include gender equality and gender mainstreaming as a recurring agenda item in senior management or unit coordination meetings.	Head of HRD / Assistant Directors	Q4 2026 onward	Gender equality discussed at management level at least twice yearly.



Develop a short internal guidance note explaining how staff should apply gender mainstreaming in HRD work.	GMU	Q1 2027	Guidance note developed and circulated.
Ensure that major HRD policies, strategies, action plans and reports include a section on gender equality and intersectionality where relevant.	All Units / GMU	2027 onward	Number of reviewed documents including gender analysis.
Integrate gender equality progress into HRD's annual internal reporting.	All Units	Annually	Annual GEP progress update prepared.+ Annual Report

6.2. Priority Area 2: Internal workplace equality, organisational culture and work-life balance

Objective: To maintain and strengthen an inclusive workplace culture that supports equality, dignity, respect, work-life balance and non-discrimination.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicators
Review internal working arrangements, including flexible work, meeting practices and task distribution, from a gender and care-responsibility perspective.	Finance & Admin / Head HRD	Q2 2027	Review completed; recommendations identified.
Promote work-life balance measures equally to staff of all genders, including men, women and persons of diverse gender identities.	HRD Management	Ongoing	Information circulated; uptake monitored where lawful and available.
Ensure meetings are scheduled, where possible, in ways that respect caring responsibilities and work-life balance.	All Managers	Ongoing	Internal meeting guidance applied.
Maintain and promote gender-neutral and inclusive workplace facilities where available.	HRD Management	Ongoing	Inclusive facilities maintained.
Include respect, dignity, inclusion and non-discrimination as part of staff induction or internal awareness sessions.	GMU / HRD Management	Q2 2027 onward	Induction or awareness content updated.



6.3. Priority Area 3: Recruitment, career development, training and participation

Objective: To ensure that recruitment, career development, professional participation and training opportunities are fair, transparent and free from gender bias.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicators
Monitor available staff data by sex, grade, role, seniority and training participation, where lawful and proportionate.	HRD Management / HR	Q2 2027 onward	Annual internal staff equality snapshot prepared.
Review access to training and professional development opportunities by gender where data is available.	HRD Management / GMU	Annually	Training participation reviewed.
Encourage gender-balanced representation in internal working groups, public panels, delegations and stakeholder meetings, while respecting expertise and availability.	All Units	Ongoing	Representation considered in event and meeting planning.
Provide training on unconscious bias, gender-sensitive communication, harassment prevention, inclusive policy design and gender impact assessment.	GMU / IPS / NCPE where relevant	2027	At least one internal training cycle delivered.
Ensure staff on family-friendly or care-related arrangements continue to receive information about vacancies, training, consultations and opportunities.	HRD Management	Ongoing	Internal communications include all eligible staff.



6.4. Priority Area 4: Prevention of discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation

Objective: To maintain a workplace culture of zero tolerance towards discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicators
Circulate applicable public service and equality policies on harassment, discrimination and respectful conduct to all staff.	HR	Q4 2026	Policies circulated.
Provide awareness sessions on discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation and reporting routes.	GMU / NCPE where relevant	Q2 2027	Session delivered; attendance recorded.
Ensure staff know where to seek advice or report concerns, including available internal and external mechanisms.	HR	Q2 2027	Information note circulated.
Include harassment prevention and respectful communication in internal training and induction.	HR	2027 onward	Training content updated.
Review whether internal events, meetings and communications promote dignity, inclusion and non-discrimination.	GEP Working Group	Annually	Annual review completed.

6.5. Priority Area 5: Gender mainstreaming in policy, strategy, budgeting and programme work

Objective: To ensure that gender analysis is systematically integrated into HRD's policy, strategy, project, legal, research, budgeting and reporting work.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicators
Develop an HRD gender mainstreaming checklist for policies, strategies, action plans, consultations, project proposals and reports.	GMU	Q1 2027	Checklist developed and used.
Require relevant HRD strategies and action plans to identify the gender gap, evidence base, target groups, expected gender outcome, responsible entity and indicators.	All Units	Q3 2027 onward	Number of documents applying the template.



Integrate gender-responsive budgeting questions into HRD planning and budget-related submissions where feasible.	GMU / HRD Management	2027 onward	GRB questions included in templates or guidance.
Use the GRB pilot outputs to develop worked examples for HRD units.	GMU	Q4 2026	Worked examples prepared.
Strengthen cooperation between HRD, Focal Points, PDPIs, planning, finance and data/statistics providers.	Head of HRD / GMU	Ongoing	Coordination meetings and documented follow-up.
Ensure policy consultation and stakeholder engagement include women's rights organisations, LGBTIQ+ organisations, civil society organisations and groups affected by intersecting inequalities where relevant.	All Units	Ongoing	Stakeholder mapping and consultation records.

6.6. Priority Area 6: Gender/sex-disaggregated data, evidence and monitoring

Objective: To strengthen HRD's use of gender/sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data for policy design, monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicators
Map what data is currently collected by each HRD unit and whether it is gender/sex-disaggregated or gender-sensitive.	GMU / All Units	Q1 2027	Data mapping completed.
Identify priority data gaps linked to HRD strategies, training, awareness campaigns, stakeholder engagement and service-related activities.	GMU / All Units	Q2 2027	Priority data gaps identified.
Develop proportionate internal standards for collecting gender/sex-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data where lawful, safe and appropriate.	RCU / GMU / Legal Unit	Q3 2027	Internal data guidance developed.



Ensure training attendance, awareness activities and stakeholder engagement records collect gender/sex-disaggregated data where feasible and appropriate.	All Units	2027 onward	Improved data collection in relevant activities.
Use data and qualitative evidence to inform GEP annual monitoring.	GMU	Annually	Annual monitoring note prepared.

6.7. Priority Area 7: Inclusive communication and awareness

Objective: To ensure that HRD communications, publications, training materials and public-facing content use inclusive, gender-sensitive and rights-based language.

Measure	Responsibility	Timeline	Indicators
Develop or adopt internal guidance on inclusive and gender-sensitive language in English and Maltese.	GMU	Q2 2027	Guidance developed or adopted.
Review key HRD templates, reports, letters, circulars and training materials for inclusive language.	GMU /	Q3 2027 onward	Number of templates reviewed.
Include inclusive language in staff induction and training.	GMU / HRD Management	2027 onward	Training content updated.
Ensure awareness campaigns reflect diversity among women, men and persons of diverse gender identities, and consider intersectionality.	All Units	Ongoing	Campaign review includes inclusion check.
Promote gender equality messages during relevant national and international days, including International Women's Day, IDAHOT+, 16 Days of Activism and Human Rights Day.	HRD Units	Annually	Campaigns implemented.



6.8. Action plan summary

Priority area	Objective	Key outputs by 2028
Governance and accountability	Embed gender equality into HRD leadership and management.	GEP Working Group; management agenda item; annual progress update.
Workplace equality and culture	Strengthen inclusive culture and work-life balance.	Review of flexible practices; inclusion in induction; respectful workplace guidance.
Recruitment and development	Ensure fair access to training, participation and career development.	Staff equality snapshot; training participation review; bias training.
Harassment and discrimination prevention	Promote zero tolerance and clear awareness of reporting routes.	Awareness session; information note; updated induction content.
Gender mainstreaming and GRB	Integrate gender analysis into HRD policies, strategies, budgets and reports.	Checklist; templates; GRB worked examples; coordination mechanism.
Data and evidence	Improve gender/sex-disaggregated data and monitoring.	Data mapping; internal data guidance; annual evidence review.
Inclusive communication	Use inclusive, gender-sensitive language in internal and public outputs.	Language guidance; reviewed templates; staff awareness.



7. Monitoring, evaluation and data collection

Implementation shall be monitored annually by the Gender Equality Plan Working Group, coordinated by the Gender Mainstreaming Unit. Monitoring shall focus on implementation of planned measures, progress against indicators, data collected by units, challenges encountered, resource and capacity needs, staff training and participation, integration of gender mainstreaming into HRD outputs, lessons learned and proposed adjustments.

An annual internal progress update shall be prepared and submitted to HRD senior management. This update may also inform HRD's annual reporting under the OPM gender mainstreaming reporting framework and GEMSAP-related reporting, where relevant. A mid-term review shall be carried out by mid-2028 and a final review in the beginning of 2030 to inform the next Plan.

7.1. Data to be collected

Area	Data to be collected
Staff composition	Gender/sex-disaggregated data by grade, role and seniority where available and lawful.
Training	Participation in training by gender, unit and training topic.
Work-life balance	Uptake of flexible or family-friendly measures where available and lawful.
Recruitment and participation	Composition of panels, internal working groups, public panels and delegations where feasible.
Policy outputs	Number of policies, strategies, reports or action plans applying gender mainstreaming tools.
Data practices	Number of units collecting gender/sex-disaggregated or gender-sensitive data.
Communication	Number of templates or materials reviewed for inclusive language.



Harassment prevention	Number of awareness sessions delivered and staff reached.
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8. Risk management and sustainability

Risk	Mitigation
Limited staff capacity affects implementation.	Prioritise realistic actions, integrate measures into existing work and use the Working Group to distribute responsibilities.
Gender mainstreaming is perceived as an additional reporting burden.	Embed tools into existing templates, reports, strategies and planning processes.
Data is unavailable or difficult to collect.	Apply proportionate data standards and use mixed evidence, including qualitative feedback.
Uneven ownership across units.	Assign unit-level responsibilities and include gender equality in management meetings.
Lack of confidence in applying GRB and gender analysis.	Provide practical training, templates and worked examples.
Staff turnover affects continuity.	Maintain documentation, shared templates and handover notes.
Monitoring becomes descriptive rather than results-based.	Use indicators, annual reviews and mid-term adjustment.

To ensure lasting change, HRD shall integrate GEP actions into annual planning and reporting, align the Plan with GEMSAP, the GRB pilot outputs and gender mainstreaming reporting obligations, maintain practical templates and checklists for staff use, include gender mainstreaming in induction and training, strengthen cooperation with relevant institutions and civil society, and renew the Plan after 2028 based on monitoring findings and institutional learning.



Annex I: Definitions

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, expectations, activities, behaviours and attributes that society at any given time associates with a person of any sex, assuming any form of gender identity or gender expression” (CAP 581 of the Laws of Malta). It has deep historical, social and cultural dimensions and may or may not be aligned with the sex assigned at birth.

Sex is assigned at birth and written on the birth certificate, usually based on the appearance of a person’s external anatomy and a binary view of sex that excludes people who are intersex. to the ‘biological attribute that distinguishes male, female and intersex’

Gender Identity refers to each person’s internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance and/ or functions by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including name, dress, speech and mannerisms” (CAP 540/567 of the Laws of Malta).

Gender Mainstreaming is an approach to policy-making that takes into account the interests and concerns of women and men. Furthermore, HRD shall endeavour to also take into account the interests and concerns of individuals of diverse genders.



Annex II: Human Resources and applying policies

Staff Breakdown by Gender at HRD (as at 16.09.2026)

At present, within the Directorate, there are 18 male and 23 female staff members.
The current staff breakdown for each unit is as follows:

Staff category	Male (M)	Female (F)	Other (O)	Level
Director	2	1		Management level
Advisory	1			
Assistant Directors	1	2		
Senior Managers	3	1		
Senior Principal	1			
Manager II	1	5		
Manager I		1		
Legal staff	1	1		
ICT Officer	1			
Project Coordinators and Project Officers	3	3		
Other grades	1	3		
Student Workers	3	6		
Total	18	23		

Work-Life Balance and Organisational Culture

The Directorate follows established policies that create a welcoming and all-encompassing work environment. This includes recognizing and acknowledging the contributions of women both within and outside the organization and implementing inclusive work-life balance policies such as flexible working hours, parental leave policies, and support for caring responsibilities.

These principles are highlighted in the Government of Malta's Public Service Management Code (Manual of Work-life Balance) and in the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (Cap. 452 of the Laws of Malta) and subsidiary legislation



(Organisation of Working Time Regulations – SL 452.87), the Occupational Health and Safety Authority Act (Cap. 424 of the Laws of Malta) and subsidiary legislation (Workplace (Minimum Health and Safety Requirements) Regulations – SL 424.15)

Gender Equality In Recruitment and Career Progression

The Directorate is committed to providing equal opportunities to all staff members, including those at top management levels, during the recruitment process and throughout their career advancement. In terms of Article 26 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act and Article 4 of the Equality for Men and Women Act (Cap. 456), it is unlawful for any person to discriminate, either directly or indirectly:

- in the arrangements made to determine who should be offered employment;
- in determining who should be offered employment;
- in the terms and conditions on which the employment is offered, including pay, conditions of work and other benefits; and
- in determining who should be dismissed from employment.

In this respect, the Public Service ensures non-discriminatory practices in vacancies and vacancy advertisements, job descriptions and selection procedures. Moreover, any job vacancies/nomenclatures/job-descriptions are generally gender-neutral.

To ensure gender balance, the selection board is always gender balanced and policies outlined in Article 2.5 (Equality of Opportunity) of the Government of Malta Policy Manual (Manual on Industrial Relations and the Selection and Appointment Process under Delegated Authority In the Malta Public Service) are closely followed.

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.



Gender Pay Gap

The Public Service is an equal opportunity employer and pays all employees equally based on their respective pay scale, regardless of gender.

Integration Of Gender Dimension into Research And Teaching Content

The Directorate is committed to the integration of sex and gender considerations in both internal and external research. To further this commitment, the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Strategy and Action Plan (GEMSAP) has facilitated the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Malta. The primary goal of this MoU is to promote increased research collaboration in the area of gender and sexualities between academics and students. In fact, an annual research symposium is organised focusing on various gender dynamics to enhance the current research areas within our institutions. Further collaboration with other research institutes is envisaged to ensure that the gender dimension is considered in research.

Measures Against Gender-Based Violence, Including Sexual Harassment

The Directorate is committed to promoting a safe and respectful workplace for all employees. To ensure this, HRD follows policies established in the Government of Malta's Public Service Management Code, specifically the Manual on Employee Wellbeing. This comprehensive manual outlines the procedures to be taken in case of harassment and bullying. Additionally, employees are provided with training on gender-based violence and sexual harassment, conducted by experts in the field.

As a proactive member of the Commission for Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Inter-Ministerial Committee, the GMU actively participates in the Commission's efforts to address the pressing issue of gender-based and domestic violence. The Commission's Strategy is a comprehensive approach that aims to promote awareness, prevention, and timely response to cases of violence against women and children. The GMU's involvement in the Committee allows it to contribute its expertise and resources towards the development and implementation of effective



policies and programs that address the root causes of such violence and promote gender equality.