

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2023-2025



Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare

Gender Equality Plan 2023-2025

Recognizing the fundamental role of gender equality in driving scientific and institutional excellence, the Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare (INFN) commits to this Gender Equality Plan as a cornerstone of our strategy to foster an inclusive, diverse, and equitable research environment.

In compliance with national law, since 1999, INFN has appointed an Equal Opportunity Committee (*Comitato Pari Opportunità, CPO*) and, since 2002, has implemented Triennial Affirmative Action Plans (Piano Triennale di Azioni Positive, PTAP) developed and curated initially by the CPO and subsequently by the Single Guarantee Committee (*Comitato Unico di Garanzia, CUG*), established in 2011.

The current CUG is tasked with proposing actions to ensure gender equality, combat job harassment, and enhance well-being at work. It analyses sex-disaggregated data, produces annual reports to monitor the evolution of the gender gap over time, reviews procedures and practices to identify gender inequalities and biases, and proposes gender equality strategies and action plans. Its activities are detailed on the web site [INFN-CUG](#).

Furthermore, since 2003, INFN has adopted a specific Code of Conduct to prevent job harassment. An external figure appointed by INFN, the Confidential Counselor (*Consigliera di Fiducia*), ensures the application of the INFN Code of Conduct. Additionally, in April 2022, the first Gender Equality Plan of the Institution was approved, integrating in a single document the positive actions and gender statistics of the Institution.

The current INFN annual budget dedicated to equal opportunity actions includes initiatives such as the "Women in Theoretical Physics" INFN Milla Baldo Ceolin Award, which reached its 4th edition in 2023. This award is conferred annually to 10 outstanding new female graduates in theoretical physics to encourage the presence of young female researchers in this field. Additionally, there are 25 annual renewable fellowships under the project "More Women in Physics" ("Più donne nella Fisica"), in its 2nd edition in 2023, for female students enrolled in the Master's degree course in Experimental and Theoretical Physics of fundamental interactions and applied physics.

Budget for Gender Equality Actions (k€/yr)	
CUG	18
Confidential Counsellor	21.5
"Più donne nella Fisica" fellowships	37.5
"Women in theoretical Physics" award	10
Gender Mentoring Program	25
Gender Equality Network in Physics in the European Research area	5

Moreover, INFN was the first institution in Italy to implement mentoring among research entities, introducing the Gender Mentoring Programme in 2018. This program is based on a transformative model developed by the Gender Observatory on University and Research at the

University of Naples Federico II. This model has been recognised by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) as one of the most significant actions undertaken in Italy for the development of gender equality in research and innovation. On 2023 it reached the 3rd edition.

INFN participates in the Gender Equality Network in Physics in the European Research Area (GENERA). This network, which originated from the GENERA project in September 2015 when 11 physics institutes and two professional support organizations initiated this EU-funded project, continues to tailor and implement gender equality measures in the participating institutions.

The INFN and the National Research Council (Institute of Research on Population and Social Policies, IRPPS), partners of the GENERA Network, in collaboration with the H2020 project "MINDtheGEPs - Modifying Institutions by Developing Gender Equality Plans" (G.A.101006543) of which CNR-IRPPS is a beneficiary, annually announce a competition "Beyond gender stereotypes and towards the professions of the future: women and research in physics". This aims to raise awareness among secondary school students about gender issues and emerging professions related to physics and STEM fields. The initiative began in a pilot version in 2021, and continued in 2023 and in 2024.

In 2024, a course titled 'STEM Disciplines: Between Future Professions and Gender Gaps' has been organised in collaboration between INFN and CNR-IRPPS as part of the activities of the GENERA Network and associated with the competition. This course, recognised as a training course for the development of school staff competencies, is INFN's first course for teachers focused on gender issues.

Additional financial support is provided for training courses on gender equality at INFN. Moreover, financial assistance extends to covering maternity leave periods for post-doctoral researchers. INFN also finances insurance for post-doctoral researchers and research fellows, covering all expenses related to pregnancy and childbirth. Furthermore, contributions are made towards nursery school costs for the children of INFN staff.

Analysis and planning

An analysis of gender parity within INFN is detailed in the annual reports linked below. Since 2002, INFN has adopted Triennial Affirmative Action Plans for Positive Actions (PTAP), implementing various proactive measures that have now become standard practice to enhance their effectiveness. Some actions proposed in the previous plan have been integrated into the Institution's Performance Plan. The current [Action Plan](#) for the 2023-2025 triennium, consistent with previous ones and approved by the INFN executive board on 31/03/2023, is inspired by the European Commission's document "*Structural change in research institutions*" (2012). It aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i. Increase transparency in decision-making processes and improve the sharing of information.
- ii. Eliminate institutionally apparently-neutral practices that negatively impact women's careers.
- iii. Promote excellence by supporting parity and diversity.
- iv. Improve research by integrating gender and generational perspectives.

- v. Adjust human resource management and the work environment to meet individuals' life needs.

The current Action plan (2023-2025) is structured around various actions grouped into specific intervention areas, which align with the following general areas of intervention:

1. Adjust management to ensure the essentials for structural changes.
2. Training and Communication: strengthen gender communication.
3. Ensure equality and equal opportunities in recruitment, promotion, decision-making bodies, and across all roles and levels.
4. Adapt the work environment to meet people's needs, fostering parenthood and promoting the inclusion of all diversities.
5. Combat harassment, actions harmful to dignity, sexual and sexist violence.

For effective progress, the European Commission [Annex1-H2020] suggests that research institutions set quantitative goals for change. Italian national regulations (*Code of equal opportunities between men and women, Legislative Decree 198/2006*) require that women constitute at least one-third of all roles and levels. Over the next three years, INFN aims to increase the proportion of women in researcher and technologist roles by at least 2% across all levels. For technical staff, INFN also aims to increase the percentage of the underrepresented gender, currently at 6%.

Regarding appointments, the goals set by the European Commission for research bodies include 50% women in appointive bodies (committees, commissions, national competition commissions) and 40% in decision-making bodies such as the executive board and directorate [H2020]. INFN aims to ensure that no fewer than 33% of positions in appointive bodies are held by women over the next triennium.

Realised actions [2020-2024]

This section evaluates the progress and challenges at INFN in achieving a balanced, inclusive, and supportive workplace, gender equality in scientific careers, ensuring gender balance in decision making, and integrating the gender dimension into the content of research and innovation, considering the latest data and initiatives (cfr. [2024-CUG-report](#)):

- Panel discussion to prevent violence against women, open to all personnel (November 2020).
- Inclusion of babysitting expenses as benefits partially covered by INFN (2021).
- Updating of the brochure “Handbook on parenthood” (“Guida alla genitorialità”) (2021).
- Training courses to prevent discrimination and harassment (2021).
- Training courses on equal opportunity and parity in research (2020-2022-2023).
- Review of the brochure “Unconscious Bias and Discrimination”, with compliance mandatory for all members of recruitment and selection panels (2021).

- Videos and posters to commemorate the struggles for women’s rights (2021).
- Selection and distribution of films focusing on violence against women as the main subject (2021).
- Smartlab programmes promoted by the Confidential Counsellor, financially supported by the Institution and coordinated by a Steering Committee composed of the counsellor, an external consultant, and three INFN members including the president of the CUG, also addressing issues related to equal opportunities and gender parity (2022).
- Preparation and analysis of results of an online questionnaire open to all personnel to survey work-related stress and the organizational well-being, also addressing issues related to equal opportunities and gender parity (2020-2022).
- Recruitment of a new Confidential Counselor “Consigliera di Fiducia” (2022).
- An increase in the presence of women in scientific bodies of managerial appointment, reaching 36.8% (2023).
- Increase in the proportion of female technologists (2023).
- Young women’s awards instituted in theoretical physics (2021-2022-2023-2024).
- Fellowships under the project "More Women in Physics" (2022-2023-2024).
- Gender Mentoring Programme (2022-2024).
- Since 2021, a summary table of gender presence in various competitive phases has been included in the INFN official minutes and resolutions. The data are analysed annually to monitor the neutrality in recruitment and career progression procedures at INFN (2021-2022-2023-2024).
- Annual monitoring of the gender composition in scientific decision-making bodies appointed by INFN President (2023-2024).
- Outreach activities by the Third Mission Coordination Committee (CC3M) for dissemination in schools and to the public aimed at including the gender dimension in various initiatives (2023-2024).

Monitoring Steps

The process and progress are regularly monitored and assessed through:

- Annual reports on gender gap and equal opportunity actions, prepared by the CUG:

[CUG-Report-2024](#)

[CUG-Report-2023](#)

[CUG-Report-2022](#)

[CUG-Report-2021](#)

- Annual INFN reports on the status of Performance Achievements.

Proposed actions in 2025

- Prepare a CUG annual report on gender gap and equal opportunity actions (2025).
- Progress the adjustment of databases and definition of suitable procedures as foundational steps towards drafting a document on gender budgeting (bilancio di genere). These efforts are included in the Institution's Performance Plan for 2025-2026.
- Update the brochure "Handbook on parenthood" in accordance with updated regulations (2025).
- Strive to ensure equal success rates for women and men in all recruitment and selection procedures (2025).
- Progress to increase ($\geq 30\%$) the representation of the under-represented gender in scientific committees, acknowledging that actual outcomes will depend on available opportunities (2025).
- Plan to increase the budget to support professional training awards for young women students and researchers, subject to financial feasibility and prioritisation within the Institution's overall budget (2025).
- Progress to focus on providing gender-sensitive training and professional development opportunities, which have been positively received across the organisation (2025).
- Enhance the culture and dissemination of Equal Opportunities within the Institution through the network of CUG contact persons at the INFN sites, and through collaboration with the national network of CUGs from academic institutions and research bodies. This network meets periodically and organises events dedicated to gender equality and combating gender violence. Further enhance visibility and awareness by establishing dedicated CUG informational points or displays at each INFN site and ensuring that each site's webpage includes accessible links to CUG resources and initiatives (2025).
- Collaborate with the Confidential Counsellor and the National Representatives of INFN Personnel, within INFN's Ethical Committee to support the Institution in monitoring and ensuring gender equality at INFN (2025).
- Efforts will be made to explore the possibility of gradually increasing funding for CUG activities, with the intent to ensure sustained and enhanced support for gender equality initiatives across the Institution. This exploration will be subject to financial feasibility and the prioritisation of available resources within the Institution's overall budget (2025 onwards).

With the adoption of this Gender Equality Plan, INFN reaffirms its dedication to advancing gender equality and commits to continuous evaluation and adaptation of our strategies, ensuring that our pursuit of scientific excellence is inclusive and equitable for all members of our community.

22nd November 2024