

**Gender Equality Plan of the State Institution "Scientific  
Center for Aerospace Research of the Earth of the Institute  
of Geological Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences  
of Ukraine" (CASRE)**

## **Introduction**

The Law of Ukraine, "On Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men", enshrined to observe the equality of the rights of men and women. It emphasizes the need to achieve a parity position of women and men in all spheres of society through the legal provision of equal rights and opportunities for women and men elimination of discrimination based on gender. In addition, it claims the application of special temporary measures aimed at eliminating the imbalance between the opportunities of women and men to exercise equal rights granted to them by the Constitution and current legislation of Ukraine. Equal rights for women and men are defined as the absence of restrictions or privileges based on gender and equal opportunities for women and men as similar conditions for the realization of equal rights for women and men.

Gender equality plan (GEP) was created to ensure equal opportunities to realize the scientific potential of all employees of CASRE, raise employees' awareness of their rights and freedoms that may be violated by gender bias, combating gender bias and create the most convenient working conditions for employees regardless of gender.

The CASRE working group based on the institution's gender audit results created this GEP. The critical issues considered during the audit were:

- 1) research on gender equality problems in the scientific field of Ukraine;
- 2) assessment of the statistical distribution by gender among all employees, among the heads of scientific units, and the distribution of employees in scientific and engineering positions;
- 3) development of measures to ensure gender equality in CASRE;
- 4) identification of the critical problems of CASRE related to gender inequality and establishment of facts about gender discrimination.

Based on the results of the work, a formalized gender equality strategy of CASRE was developed, which includes an action plan to ensure equal opportunities to realize the professional potential of employees regardless of gender.

This GEP was created for the CASRE team, which has less than 100 employees, which makes it possible to take into account the interests of each employee personally. The development of the GEP began after its unanimous support by the working team of CASRE and the announcement of the composition of the working group whose task was to conduct a gender audit of the institution. Scientists, post-graduate students, and non-academic staff of CASRE were involved in running an internal gender audit and developing the PGR. After the internal gender audit, a group of employees was created tasked with developing the GEP.

Based on the identified problems with gender equality and related working conditions, an Action Plan was developed, which was discussed and agreed upon with all interested parties. Also, the Action Plan was presented at the meeting of the Academic Council. After discussions, the Action Plan was adopted and approved by the director. The action plan also provides for implementing the European Charter for Researchers principles.

## **1. Basics of the gender balance. Problems of the gender equality in Ukrainian science.**

According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, only 28% of scientists in the world are women, and 45% of scientists in Ukraine are women. Ukraine ranks 12th in terms of the number of women scientists in the ranking among 41 countries of the world. Ukrainian women work successfully in various fields of science. The largest number of women scientists are in the field of social (65.8%), medical (65.2%), humanitarian (60.3%) sciences. In the field of technical sciences, 34.1% are women. However, the high percentage of women among scientists in Ukraine compared to the developed countries of the world (38% in Great Britain, 34% in Sweden, 32% in Finland, 28% in Germany, 28% in France, 36% in Poland according to 2019 data. <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs55-women-in-science-2019-en.pdf>) caused by low public interest in science in Ukraine and relatively low incomes of workers in the scientific field. Thus, in Ukraine, scientific work is less often considered as the main source of income and is more often divided with additional work of employees in other institutions. As a result, due to the typical distribution of gender roles, men are less likely to find work in scientific institutions than in countries with high per capita income. At the same time, despite the high percentage of women in Ukrainian science, they face a number of typical difficulties associated with gender discrimination:

- imbalance between work, study and personal life and lack of principles and mechanisms to support this balance;

- lack of mechanisms to support mothers of minor children in the implementation of career growth, as well as lack of conditions for the maintenance of minor children within the institution where the father/mother works if it is necessary for the child to stay with one of the parents;

- discrimination related to prejudices regarding the "traditional roles" of men and women in society, which often entails a biased attitude towards women when making key decisions in the team;

- the problem of vertical segregation arising from the previous point, which is associated with the complication of women's opportunities for career growth;

- lack of mechanisms for informing the collective and society in general about the problems of gender equality, which entrenches the formed gender stereotypes and prejudices.

The development of gender equality plans and their implementation, improvement and periodic audit of institutions have proven to be an effective tool for observing human rights and improving working conditions and career growth regardless of gender.

## **2. Current provision of the gender equality in CASRE.**

During the implementation of the gender equality plan, the primary task was to assess the distribution of CASRE employees by position and the availability of a scientific degree depending on gender. This distribution was obtained based on the results of a gender audit (as of August 1, 2022) and is shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Distribution of CASRE employees by position and availability of a scientific degree depending on gender as of August 1, 2022.*

|                                       | Men | Women | Male employees (%) | Female employees (%) |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Leadership                            | 3   | 2     | 60                 | 40                   |
| Overall sciences                      | 28  | 27    | 51                 | 49                   |
| Employees in scientific positions     | 26  | 19    | 55                 | 45                   |
| Employees in engineering positions    | 2   | 8     | 20                 | 80                   |
| Department heads                      | 5   | 2     | 71                 | 29                   |
| Postgraduate students                 | 2   | 1     | 67                 | 33                   |
| Employees with a scientific degree    | 21  | 9     | 70                 | 30                   |
| Employees without a scientific degree | 7   | 18    | 28                 | 72                   |

According to the obtained results of the quantitative distribution of employees, an equal distribution of employees in terms of the total number and in the top management was established. The greatest quantitative imbalance is observed among employees in engineering positions and, accordingly, with a scientific degree.

An analysis of the current provision of gender equality in CASRE was also performed. Gender equality is ensured in accordance with the current legislation of Ukraine: laws of Ukraine "On the principles of preventing and counteraction discrimination in Ukraine" (2012) and "On ensuring equal rights and opportunities for women and men" (2005), as well as a number of legislative acts of Ukraine: the Labor Code, Laws of Ukraine "On Population Employment", "On Pension Security", "On Labor Protection", etc.

CASRE implements measures to ensure support for the family, as well as a harmonious distribution of time between work and family:

- equality of opportunities in the field of employment;
- equal remuneration for work of equal value;
- equal access to safe and healthy working conditions and social security;
- equal opportunities for professional development and career growth;
- equal participation in decision-making processes.

There are no gender restrictions regarding the appointment of employees to positions, including managerial ones. There were no cases of participation in the competition for the position of a man and a woman with the same qualification characteristics, but under such conditions, preference will be given to persons of the gender in relation to which there is a gender imbalance.

A labor union committee operates in CASRE to represent and protect the labor, socio-economic rights and interests of the workforce. The trade union committee supervises the distribution of work volumes to the heads of topics, projects, and economic contracts and their timely and high-quality execution, as a result of which employees receive their basic salary and paid regular vacations in a timely manner and in full.

The labor union committee of CASRE conducts work on the organization of mass cultural events, celebrations, rehabilitation, rest and treatment for employees and their family members. Every year, employees' children receive New Year's gifts and invitations to New Year's performances. Material assistance is provided for celebrating anniversaries, the birth of a child, and the burial of close relatives.

### **3. Current issues**

Today, the problem of gender equality is not sufficiently perceived in the educational and scientific spheres and in society in general, and it is also quite new for Ukraine. This causes a number of problems, including the lack of interest of scientists and researchers, low motivation of employees to participate in thematic seminars, destructive and discriminatory comments during public discussions on the topic of gender equality, and even during scientific seminars and personnel decision discussions. This is caused by one's own experiences and insufficiently deeply analyzed professional and personal experience, the lack of the possibility of allocating working time for relevant thematic events to discuss gender equality issues.

Generally, the CASRE team positively accepted the initiative to make a decision on the development of a gender equality plan and provoked an active discussion. However, individual and group resistance to the idea of gender equality and misunderstanding of the essence and necessity of implementing this initiative, which is one of the key problems, was also noticed on the part of the team which it follows the need to implement a plan for gender equality.

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1) The elements of the separation of gender roles in relation to holding managerial positions are expressed in a stereotypical and prejudiced attitude towards the opportunities of men and women to work in managerial positions; although in fact equal rights and opportunities for men and women to participate in the management of divisions and scientific works are fully ensured at CASRE, discriminatory opinions are sometimes expressed in individual discussions, which give rise to bias when making important decisions;

2) Provision of the necessary conditions for remote work for employees; Many years of experience have demonstrated the need to implement distance work norms for employees, which is due to the following factors:

- preservation of the opportunity to participate in active scientific work during women's pregnancy or in parallel with raising minor children;
  - the fundamental irregularity of the time of scientific work, which does not require the physical presence of the employee in a certain place in a certain period of time;
  - scientific business trips and parallel implementation of scientific and educational work in other institutions;
  - the risk of acute epidemiological situations with the introduction of a nationwide quarantine (for example, the COVID-19 pandemic);
  - introduction of martial law or occurrence of extreme weather conditions and natural disasters;
  - the occurrence of emergency situations in the building where the working premises are located.
- 3) Low level of awareness of the scientific community in the issues of ensuring gender equality and lack of resources to increase it and, accordingly, lack of relevant knowledge to ensure the protection of relevant rights;
- 4) Facts of verbal discrimination, including at official events (scientific seminars, academic councils).
- 5) Absence of conditions for temporary custody of children within the institution (children's room) in the event that they need to stay with their parents.
- 6) Strict adherence to time limits for being at the workplace, which is not consistent with measures related to parental responsibilities (dropping off or picking up children from kindergartens/schools, etc.).

#### **4. Gender equality strategy in CASRE**

The gender equality strategy presented in this document covers two areas of implementation:

- management processes and personnel management;
- communications.

The development of the gender equality plan was initiated in order to support the possibility of fully realizing the scientific potential of each employee, balancing working hours.

In order to achieve a balance between work and family responsibilities, it is necessary to allow academic staff to carry out part of the work remotely. This type of work includes methodical and scientific activities, for example, preparation of publications, methodical and educational materials, textbooks, lecture presentations, etc. In order to ensure this possibility, it is necessary to make changes to the regulatory documents of CASRE and develop a mechanism to ensure the possibility of working remotely. In addition, such measures require amendments to the Collective Agreement between the administration of CASRE and the labor collective, which is a legal act regulating social and labor relations in CASRE.

The conditions for performing work remotely are established by clause 2.1.3 of the Branch agreement between the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and the labor union of employees of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine for 2021-2022:

"For employees of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, distance home work can be introduced and a flexible working time regime is established. When concluding an employment contract for remote work, compliance with the written form of the contract is mandatory.

At the time of the threat of the spread of the epidemic, the condition of distance (home) work and flexible working hours may be established by the administration by a relevant order, agreed with the trade union committee, without the mandatory conclusion of a written employment contract.

The performance of distance home work does not entail any restrictions on the scope of the labor rights of employees and provides for payment of labor in full and within the terms determined by the collective or labor agreement.

The implementation of the strategy of gender equality requires the expansion of workers' rights, since the Sectoral Agreement foresees only the condition of the threat of the spread of epidemics. Other conditions that require the establishment of a remote working mode are described in point 3 of this gender equality plan.

In order to avoid and counteract discriminatory actions (verbal, written or in relation to personnel and management decisions), it is planned to:

- create a Commission on gender issues in CASRE;
- to define the functions and develop the functioning mechanisms of the Commission on Gender Issues;
- develop a form for appeals to the Commission on Gender Issues for male and female employees (the possibility of an anonymous appeal will be taken into account).

In order to create the most favorable and comfortable working atmosphere, employees should not remain indifferent to existing problems and should call on the management to observe the principles of gender equality. For this, it is necessary to plan and organize a series of informational and educational events with the aim of clarifying that gender equality, which is enshrined in human rights, is an important factor in the development of both an individual and society as a whole. Activities within the scope of informational and educational work can include trainings, round tables, seminars on issues of gender equality at scientific conferences. A clear cycle of gender mainstreaming will help staff understand the steps to develop a gender culture in the university. Such informational and educational activities will contribute to the achievement of equality in scientific careers and the strengthening of the gender aspect in scientific programs. The main goal of these events is to increase the awareness of male and female employees in matters of gender equality and the possibilities of protecting their rights.

A separate discussion between the labor team and the administration requires the problem of temporary custody of children within the institution in case they need to stay with their parents, which at the same time allows to increase the amount of time that the child's parents will be able to devote to work.

The main issues to be discussed are:

- the opinion of employees about the need to create conditions for the stay of children within CASRE;

- wishes regarding the organization of children's activities: hobbies and creative activities, etc.

After the discussion, a plan will be developed to create established conditions for the stay of employees' children within CASRE, which is entrusted to the collective of developers of the gender equality plan and the CASRE labor union committee.

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