Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

Organisation: QBIO Nexus
Country: Romania
Implementation period: 2026–2029
Date of adoption: 9.02.2026
Status: Public document

1. Institutional commitment and public endorsement

QBIO Nexus, as a **non-governmental organisation (NGO) active in research, innovation, and European cooperation**, formally commits to promoting **gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI)** as fundamental principles guiding all its activities.
This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is a **formal and public document**, adopted and signed by the **President of QBIO Nexus**, reflecting the organisation's highest level of commitment. The GEP is published on QBIO's website and applies to all staff, collaborators, and external experts involved in QBIO activities, including participation in **Horizon Europe and other EU-funded programmes**.
The GEP is designed in line with:

- Horizon Europe eligibility requirements;
- European Commission and REA guidance for NGOs and small research organisations;
- applicable national legislation and ethical standards.

2. Governance, responsibilities, and proportional approach

2.1 Governance adapted to an NGO structure

Given QBIO Nexus's **lean NGO governance structure**, responsibility for gender equality is embedded within its existing management and coordination framework.
The **President of QBIO Nexus** holds overall accountability for the implementation of this GEP.
A **Gender Equality Responsible (GER)** is formally designated from among QBIO's senior staff or management team. This role is integrated into existing responsibilities, ensuring proportionality and operational feasibility.

2.2 Responsibilities of the Gender Equality Responsible (GER)

The GER is responsible for:

- coordinating the implementation of the GEP across QBIO activities;
- advising the President, management, and project leaders on gender equality matters;
- monitoring agreed indicators;
- preparing concise annual internal monitoring notes;
- proposing improvement or corrective measures when needed;
- facilitating access to **external gender equality expertise**, where relevant.

2.3 Dedicated resources and expertise

In line with its size and NGO profile, QBIO commits **appropriate and realistic resources** to GEP implementation through:

- allocation of staff time for the GER role;
- integration of gender expertise at project and activity level;
- engagement of **external gender equality experts or training providers**, when necessary;
- coverage of GEP-related activities through organisational operational resources and/or project budgets.

3. Gender-disaggregated data collection and monitoring

QBIO Nexus collects and reviews **sex- and gender-disaggregated data**, proportionate to its scale and legal form as an NGO, covering:

- staff, collaborators, and experts involved in R&I activities;
- project coordination and management roles;

- leadership and decision-making responsibilities;
- participation in training and capacity-building activities.

Data collection:

- serves **internal monitoring and organisational improvement purposes only**;
- fully complies with **GDPR and data protection regulations**;
- supports an **annual internal review** of GEP implementation.

4. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

QBIO Nexus actively promotes **balanced gender representation** in leadership and decision-making, including:

- NGO governance and management roles;
- coordination and leadership of European projects;
- internal working groups and expert teams.

Where several equally qualified options are available, QBIO encourages **gender-balanced representation** and avoids persistent structural imbalances.

5. Gender equality in recruitment, role allocation, and career development

All recruitment, evaluation, and allocation of roles within QBIO Nexus are based exclusively on **competence, experience, and performance**, ensuring equal opportunities regardless of gender.

Measures include:

- use of **gender-neutral and inclusive language** in calls, contracts, and communications;
- transparent and merit-based selection criteria;
- equitable access to training, project leadership roles, and professional development.

6. Work–life balance and organisational culture

QBIO Nexus supports a healthy work–life balance, consistent with its NGO and project-based activities, through:

- flexible working arrangements;
- digital collaboration and remote working tools;
- reasonable adaptations linked to family or care responsibilities;
- respectful planning of workloads and deadlines.

7. Prevention of gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination

QBIO Nexus applies a **zero-tolerance policy** towards:

- gender-based discrimination;
- sexual, moral, or psychological harassment;
- any form of inappropriate or abusive behaviour.

All reported cases are:

- handled confidentially and impartially;
- addressed in accordance with national legislation;
- documented anonymously for preventive and awareness purposes.

8. Training and awareness-raising on gender equality and unconscious bias

QBIO Nexus ensures **regular awareness-raising and training activities** on gender equality, explicitly covering:

Target groups:

- staff and collaborators;
- decision-makers, managers, and project leaders.

Topics include:

- gender equality principles in EU research and innovation;
- **unconscious gender biases** and their impact on recruitment, evaluation, and leadership;
- relevance of gender in research and innovation activities.

Training may be delivered internally or by **external qualified experts**, depending on organisational needs.

9. Integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation
QBIO Nexus promotes the integration of the **gender dimension in research and innovation**, where relevant, through:

- systematic reflection on potential gender-differentiated impacts of research outcomes;
- encouragement of diverse and interdisciplinary teams;
- critical assessment of gender relevance in project objectives, methodologies, and dissemination.

10. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
The following **key performance indicators** are monitored on an annual basis:

Area	Indicator
Leadership	Gender distribution in project coordination roles
R&I	Projects assessing gender relevance
Human resources	Gender balance in training participation
Governance	Gender representation in decision-making roles
Ethics	Reported discrimination or harassment cases (target: 0)

10. Action plan (2026 - 2029)

Area	Action	Responsible	Frequency
Leadership	Monitor gender balance	GER	annually
Recruitment	Apply neutral language & transparent criteria	Management	Continuous
R&I	Assess gender relevance	Project leaders	Per project
Training	Deliver GE & bias awareness	GER / Management	Annually
Ethics	Awareness on harassment prevention	Management	Annually
Monitoring	Internal GEP review note	GER	Annually

11. Monitoring and review
The implementation of the GEP is subject to an internal annual self-assessment and is reviewed:

- every three years; or
- whenever required due to organisational changes or updated European requirements.

12. Transparency and accessibility
This Gender Equality Plan:

- is a **public document**, published on the QBIO Nexus website;
- is **signed by the President of QBIO Nexus**;
- is formally declared in the **Funding & Tenders Portal** by the LEAR;
- applies to all QBIO activities, including Horizon Europe projects.

Approved by:
QBIO Management
9.02.2026