



GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

FOR DARKWAVE PROJECT

2020-2023



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INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in Research and Innovation

Equality and diversity are values incredibly important to the advancement of science. Barriers in the form of gender discrimination and difficulties in reconciling work and family life can significantly slow down the careers of researchers and hinder the progress of their scientific disciplines. Barriers to work-life balance can prevent both men and women from fully participating in professional or family life. That is why it is so necessary from the very beginning of the scientific project implementation to ensure equal opportunities for all participants.

Gender equality in research and innovation is part of the European Commission [Gender Equality Strategy](#) for 2020-2025, which sets out the Commission's broader commitment to equality across all EU policies.

A feature of the research sector is the presence of numerous structural barriers to gender equality. Therefore, concrete actions are needed to bridge the persistent gender gap. The European Commission addresses these barriers through:

- the main funding instrument Horizon 2020 (Horizon Europe – the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027)),
- the European Research Area in collaboration with member countries and research organisations.

The European Commission has identified the following objectives for gender equality strategies in research and innovation (2012):

- fostering gender equality in scientific careers;
- ensuring gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies;
- integrating the gender dimension in R&I content, that is, taking the biological characteristics and the social features of women and men.

Thus, the aim of the European Commission is to improve the European research and innovation system by creating a gender-equal working environment, to increase the quality of research and to enable all talented researchers to develop and achieve their goals.

Gender Equality Plan for DarkWave project

This document is a Gender Equality Plan (hereinafter GEP) for the DarkWave (hereinafter DW) project, implemented from October 2020 to October 2023 in the DarkWave Consortium consisting of five scientific and research units:

1. AstroCeNT (Nicolaus Copernicus Astronomical Centre of the Polish Academy of Sciences (NCAC PAS)),
2. Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique (CNRS),
3. Gran Sasso Science Institute (GSSI),
4. Technische Universitaet Muenchen (TUM),
5. Istituto Nazionale Di Fisica Nucleare (INFN).

Article 33 of the DW Grant Agreement on the commitment to strive for gender equality states:

“The beneficiaries must take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action. They must aim, to the extent possible, for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including at supervisory and managerial level.”

Based on this obligation, which the consortants assumed when signing the Grant Agreement, the main goal of the GEP is to create a guide to action that will help to ensure that the DW project operates in a manner that respects equality and diversity, that its social environment is free from discrimination, and that it ensures unhindered academic progress for all.

This GEP was created taking into account the structure and the overall timetable of the DW project implementation. The achievement of the goals set by the project and the

organization of the planned activities will be carried out considering the objectives of the GEP.

The GEP was thought out and developed by AstroCeNT/NCAC administration staff.

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Our analysis, using data from the EU and drawing on GEP's successful practices, has identified five key areas for the DarkWave project to focus on, considering its scope, action volume, and team size.

1. Awareness about the equality issues.
2. Gender composition of the project.
3. Professional development.
4. Gender representation on decision-making positions.
5. Dissemination, communication and outreach.

For each of the five areas, we identified the main objective and compiled a list of possible steps to achieve it.

In the process of implementing the GEP, the achievement of the set objectives will be assessed. After the completion of the project, a final evaluation will be carried out.

Area 1: Awareness about the equality issues

OBJECTIVE: to raise awareness about the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity.

Research and Innovation is a special sector where a significant gender gap persists. The first step to change the current situation is to increase the awareness of the participants of the DW project about this problem, as well as about the strategies to achieve a balance that are currently being implemented in Europe and the scientific community.

To achieve this goal, the following activities can be implemented:

- creation of the GEP and its publication in the public domain on the project page;
- paying attention to gender equality at regular meetings of the project consortium;

- distribution of official materials on the strategy of gender equality among the project participants;
- using the official page and social media to disseminate information about gender equality and GEP implementation.

Area 2: Gender composition of the project

OBJECTIVE: to increase balanced gender representation among project participants and to ensure gender equality in the process of recruitment and hiring

The gender structure of DW participants is strongly influenced by the gender structure of the scientific units that make up the consortium. Fundamental and experimental physics has traditionally been one of the fields where the number of female employees is significantly lower than that of male. In this regard, the gender composition of the project participants is obviously not balanced.

At the time of the project launch (October 2020), the key participants (both scientific and administrative) of the project were presented in the Description of Activities. The gender composition of key roles is shown in the following table:

	Number of female members	Number of male members
NCAC	1	7
CNRS	0	1
INFN	1	4
TUM	1	0
GSSI	0	2
Total	3	14

During the project, it is planned to engage in the implementation of tasks much more personnel than is reflected in the table. The task will be to level out as much as possible the gender imbalance that is observed at the beginning of the implementation of the DW.

Possible steps to improve the balance include the following:

- actively scouting female candidates with competencies appropriate for certain positions;
- encouraging traditionally under-represented groups such as women, minorities and people with disabilities to apply;
- guaranteed unbiased approach in the process of scouting and recruitment;
- engaging female specialists (researchers and administrative staff) in the implementation of project tasks;
- ensuring equal access for men and women to financial support for the project;
- ensuring that administrative responsibilities, student supervision and marking workloads are transparent and valued alongside research outputs;
- promoting work-life balance and a good organisational culture to highlight opportunities for women to combine work and family life.

Area 3: Professional development

OBJECTIVE: to ensure equal opportunities for professional development and participation in specialized trainings in the country and abroad.

Project DW is being implemented within the framework of the Twinning topic that promotes research excellence through networking and training activities. According to the spirit of the Twinning, most of the DW budget is planned for scientific travels and training. Participation in international conferences and workshops, visits of experts, exchange of knowledge and information during meetings of collaborations, internships in the best scientific institutions in Europe and other countries – all this is an integral part of the professional development of scientists.

Some part of the DW budget is intended for trainings for the project administration.

Equal access to these funds for male and female employees is one of the most effective means to achieve gender equality in the project and in the institute as a whole. In particular, special attention should be paid to young scientists (postdocs and graduate students), who find themselves at the initial and most important stage in building their scientific career.

To achieve the goal, the following actions can be taken:

- stimulating the participation of scientists (regardless of gender) in scientific travels, in particular providing administrative and financial support;
- ensuring an unbiased approach when considering applications for participation in trips, internships, conferences;
- equal access to the information about professional development opportunities;
- providing the opportunity to combine scientific and private travels and thus maintain a work-life balance.

Area 4: Gender representation on decision-making positions

OBJECTIVE. To increase balanced gender representation among project participants, including in decision-making positions.

Gender equality concerns not only the number, but also the presence of women in leadership positions. The image of science as a whole remains masculine, in particular, most of the leadership positions are occupied by men.

However, in the DarkWave project, initially some key positions were occupied by women:

- team leader positions in TUM and INFN;
- key administrative positions in NCAC (coordination);
- L1 manager position in DarkSide-20k collaboration.

In the process of implementing the GEP, the following steps can be taken to achieve the goal of increasing gender equality in leadership positions:

- ensuring transparency in governance and decision-making processes;

- providing support to women employees to enable them to achieve leadership and decision-making goals;
- providing decision-makers and leaders with gender equality training, particularly committee members and chairs;
- providing female employees with access to project management trainings;
- ensuring that important meetings and workshops are gender balanced or, if this is not possible, include at least a minimum number of women;
- promoting work-life balance to encourage women who have families to apply for decision-making positions.

Area 5: Dissemination and communication and outreach

OBJECTIVE: to achieve equality in dissemination, communication and outreach

Dissemination and communication with the scientific community and with the general public is one of the objectives of the DW project (WP1: Management and coordination).

Respecting the principle of gender equality in the mentioned areas of work means broadcasting equal opportunities for men and women, reflecting the contribution of all participants to the achievement of common goals, demonstrating awareness of the existence of a gender dimension and readiness to move towards a balance for the common good.

Communication: official page and social media

The main source of information about the project and the means of communication is the official page and social media (Twitter). Their creation and regular updating are an integral part of the project plan.

To ensure gender equality in the information space, the following steps can be taken:

- to reflect the contribution of both male and female team members to the success of the project;

- to draw the attention of all genders (especially in the case of positions where women are underrepresented) to the published vacancies and opportunities;
- due to the dominance of men in the scientific community, to make additional efforts to create “female” content giving women the opportunity to speak out about their achievements and issues;
- to motivate women to be more active in the information environment (share and create content, participate in communication and discussions);
- to show the image of a female scientist as a possible career path emphasize gender balance and a culture of equal opportunity;
- to review the language used in communication and eliminate gender biases.

Dissemination: LIDINE 2022 conference

One of the key events planned in DW schedule is the organization of the international scientific conference¹. LIDINE conference series is an annual event that in 2022 will be organized in Poland.

Conferences are one of the most effective tools for disseminating the results of scientific work.

As for the LIDINE conference as a tool for dissemination, the following principles should be followed when organizing it:

- to provide equal opportunities for representatives of all genders to take part in the event (make a presentation or attend the event as a listener);
- to provide equal opportunities for students of all genders to receive financial support for a trip to Poland.

Such a large-scale event as LIDINE conference will bring together scientists from all over the world and will allow to collect a large number of video and photo materials that will become an excellent archive for further communication and attract traffic to the project page and social media. The conference will also be used for information and

¹ WP1 – Management and coordination, task 1.2.1 – Conference/workshop organization.

communication purposes, in particular for advertising the event itself, the host organization (AstroCeNT/NCAC), as well as the EU-funded DW project.

When preparing photo and video materials, as well as content for the official page and social media, it will be necessary to reflect:

- equal contribution of male and female staff to the organization of the conference;
- gender balance among the participants of the event, moderators of the sessions, presenters and conference participants interviewed in the promotional video.

Outreach

The project plans to organize a number of educational events for scientists and a wide audience. When implementing these measures, it is necessary to ensure: equal access for all genders to participation (active and passive) involve representatives of different genders in the organization of these events.

SOURCES

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