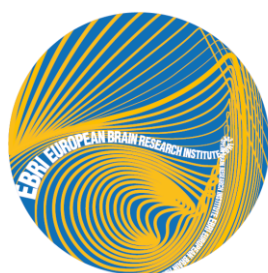


European Brain Research Institute (EBRI)
‘Rita Levi-Montalcini’



EBRI

European Brain Research Institute
Rita Levi-Montalcini

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN
2024-2026

(English version)

Summary

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1. Introduction

1.1 Gender Equality Plan

During the 2020 edition of the European Research and Innovation Days, Jean Eric Paquet, Director General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission, announced the introduction of a requirement for all research entities and higher education institutions to adopt a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) as a condition for accessing funding from the Horizon Europe research program. This measure is part of the policies activated by the European Commission to promote gender equality in research and innovation, identified as a priority in European policies for over two decades, and fits into a national context where similar processes are already present in various university settings. The action of the European Commission is part of the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, which presents strategic objectives and actions aimed at making significant progress by 2025 towards a Europe that guarantees gender equality.

The main objectives indicated by the Commission are:- Ending gender-based violence- Combating sexist stereotypes- Closing the gender gap in the labor market- Addressing the gender pay and pension gaps- Achieving gender balance in decision-making processes.

Within the funding lines provided by Horizon Europe, funds are allocated for actions that support the development of Gender Equality Plans in research and innovation. Specific funds will be reserved for gender studies and interdisciplinary research.

Premise:

- Definition: Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities between women and men. It does not imply that women and men are the same, but that they have equal value and should be treated with equal respect.
- Objectives: This plan aims to promote an inclusive and respectful environment, free from gender-based discrimination, and to ensure equal opportunities for women and men in all areas.- Scope: This plan applies to all employees, regardless of their role or hierarchical level. The Gender Equality Plan of the European Brain Research Institute (EBRI) 'Rita Levi-Montalcini' has been designed as a tool to both assess and monitor the current situation and to promote a series of actions, within a defined timeframe, to achieve the set objectives. This document will be subject to annual updates aimed at verifying the desired changes produced by the plan and formulating new objectives to be achieved.

1.2 – The institute's present state

As of 27 May 2024, data disaggregated by gender on the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) established by the guidelines PdR125:2022 for companies in Tier 2 (currently, the staff employed on fixed-term/indefinite contracts is 13) of the EBRI Rita Levi-Montalcini Foundation has been collected and analyzed:

- Workforce composition (percentage of women and men)
- Compensation (average salaries and distribution by gender)
- Promotions and career advancements
- Representation in leadership roles
- Access to training and professional development
- Maternity/paternity leave and parental leave
- Reports of harassment or discrimination

Anonymous surveys will be conducted to gather feedback and perceptions from employees regarding gender.

2. The Foundation

The EBRI Rita Levi-Montalcini Foundation is a non-profit research center dedicated to understanding higher brain functions through the study of the brain at various levels, from molecules to synapses, to nerve and glial cells, to neural circuits, and finally to behavior. From basic research on molecular and cellular mechanisms, we produce knowledge useful for developing new therapeutic strategies for neurological and neurodegenerative diseases that affect the brain. These include Alzheimer's disease and senile dementias, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, chronic pain, and neurodevelopmental disorders in pediatric age. The researchers at EBRI actively study rare genetic diseases and autism spectrum disorders. EBRI offers an international research environment that promotes collaboration, the exchange of ideas, and advanced training for young researchers. EBRI is at the center of a dense network of collaborations with national and international research and clinical centers.

2.1 History

Founded in 2002 by Nobel laureate Rita Levi-Montalcini, the European Brain Research Institute is a non-profit research center dedicated to understanding higher brain functions through the study of the brain at various levels, from molecules to synapses, to nerve and glial cells, to neural circuits, and finally to behavior. Our researchers employ a multidisciplinary approach, using cutting-edge experimental and computational techniques. EBRI's research has led to the development of an

innovative pipeline of new therapeutic molecules for Alzheimer's disease and other forms of neurodegeneration (painless NGF, antibody scFvA13, antibody mAb12A12) and new diagnostic biomarkers.

2.2 Mission

The goal of the EBRI is to contribute, through its research, to the understanding of the molecular and cellular mechanisms underlying higher brain functions such as learning, memory, emotions, and social behavior. This research is necessary for the development of new treatments for neurodegenerative and neurological diseases of great social relevance. The researchers at EBRI have generated an innovative series of new therapeutic molecules, aiming to bring these candidate drugs into clinical trial phases in humans. A priority is also represented by the study of the mechanisms of various rare diseases that involve the development or function of the nervous system. These objectives are pursued in our laboratories and facilities. EBRI promotes the training of young researchers by offering them a collaborative, rich, and stimulating international scientific environment, encourages the return of young researchers to Italy, and attracts foreign researchers. EBRI has hosted numerous foreign students as part of the ERASMUS program. EBRI is also actively engaged in the dissemination and promotion of scientific culture.

2.3 Organization

Located on the campus of the University of Rome Sapienza, the EBRI Rita Levi-Montalcini Foundation hosts research laboratories and facilities dedicated to the study and understanding of important biological processes in the field of neuroscience. The organization of the EBRI Foundation is structured as follows:

- Board of Directors
- President
- General Director
- Scientific Director
- International Scientific Council
- Research Groups
- Secretariat

Research at the EBRI Foundation is conducted by 10 research groups focused on specific aspects of basic and translational neuroscience research, using cutting-edge methodologies and multidisciplinary approaches, such as molecular and cellular biology, neurophysiology, advanced

imaging, optogenetics, computational and bioinformatics analysis, and behavior. The institute includes researchers, technicians, and administrative staff, as well as graduate students.

2.4 Statutory bodies

Through its statutes, the EBRI sets out the values and guidelines that define the conduct of scientific research activities, particularly in the field of neurodegenerative diseases.

The Foundation aims to promote scientific research through the creation of an interdisciplinary research institute entirely devoted to studies on the brain, and whose objective is to integrate the various disciplines by fostering neurobiological and neurophysiological research and identifying the possible clinical applications

According to the provisions of its Statutes, the structure of the EBRI is organized into the following bodies:

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is entrusted with the extraordinary administrative powers of the Foundation. In particular, the Board:

- a) oversees the administration of the Foundation's assets;
- b) appoints the General Director (DG);
- c) approves the budget;
- d) approves the annual and multi-year development programs of the Foundation and its activities, based on proposals from the DG and the Scientific Director, within their respective areas of responsibility;
- e) decides on the acceptance of bequests;
- f) deliberates on amendments to the statute.

President

The President represents the Foundation both at national and international levels, particularly in relation to events connected with the initiation or implementation of research projects. The President convenes the Board of Directors and the International Scientific Council.

International Scientific Council

The International Scientific Council is composed of renowned experts in the field of neuroscience from various European and non-European countries.

The Council evaluates the scientific activities carried out by the Foundation on an annual basis and may propose modifications to the ongoing initiatives and development programme. The International Scientific Council also provides its opinion on the appointment of Group Leaders.

Board of Auditors

The Board of Auditors, consisting of 3 members, oversees the Foundation's financial reporting and related internal controls. The term of office of the members is three years.

3. Our Resources

The analysis of the staff distribution by gender was carried out considering contract type and job roles for the years 2022 and 2023, as well as the scientific production for the most recent year available (2023). This analysis specifically focused on the distribution of researchers who are authors of publications.

3.1 Personnel Overview 2022/2023

a. Personnel in 2022

In 2022, the EBRI had a total of 37 staff members (11 men, 29% and 26 women, 61%), distributed as follows:

- 12 permanent and temporary employees (4 men and 8 women)
- 25 non-permanent staff members, including 20 collaborators and 5 employees from other institutions (CNR); 7 men and 18 women.

In detail, considering the various positions the distribution is as follows:

- Men:
82% (9/11) belong to the category of researchers and technicians, while the remaining 18% (2/11) are in administrative roles.
- Women:
85% (22/26) belong to the research and technical-scientific personnel, while 15% (4/26) are in administrative roles.

The snapshot of staff for the year 2022, as shown in Fig. 1 and 2, highlights a predominance of female staff across all categories.

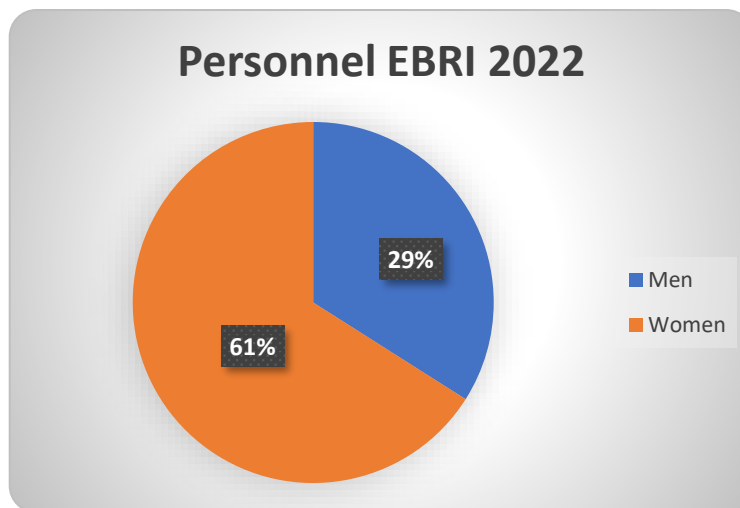


Figure 1: EBRI Staff in 2022: percentages (%) of women and men.

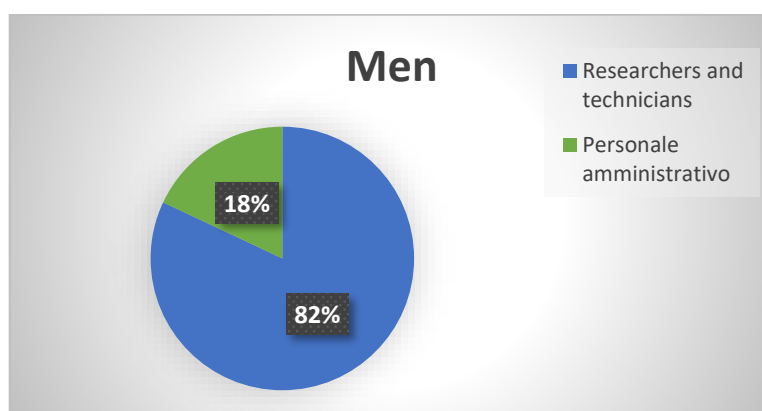
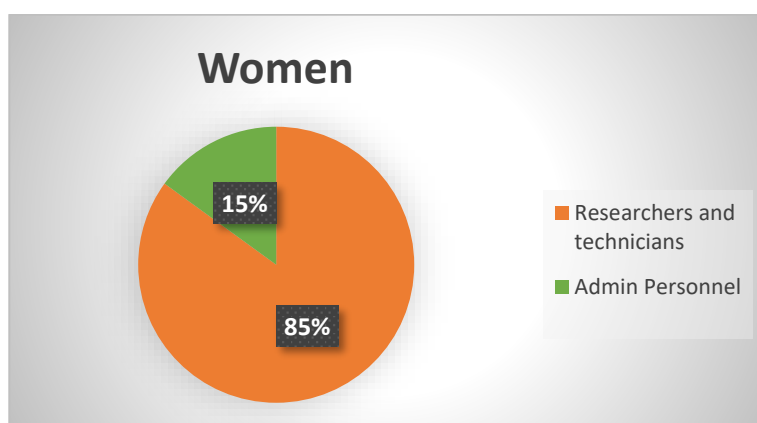


Figure 2: EBRI Staff in 2022: percentages (%) of men and women in each category.

Considering the distribution of roles and positions within the statutory bodies, the following observations can be made:

- **Scientific Committee:** The members of the Committee are predominantly male, 70% (7/10), with a male-to-female ratio of 2.3:1.
- **Research Group Leaders:** The group leaders of the research laboratories (Principal Investigators) are 58% female (7/12), with a male-to-female ratio of 1.4:1.
- **Management:** 100% (2/2) of the Directors are male, with a male-to-female ratio of 1:0.
- **Board of Auditors:** 100% (3/3) of the members of the Board are male, with a male-to-female ratio of 1:0.
- **Board of Directors:** The Board is composed of 7 men and 1 woman (7/8), with a male-to-female ratio of 7:1.

Top executive positions are held by men, with 100% of senior management and 99% at the top levels (Board of Directors). In this context, 100% of the roles are held by men, a situation that contrasts with the trend observed among contractual staff.

b. Personnel in 2023

In 2023, the EBRI had a total of 38 staff members (12 men, 31% and 26 women, 69%), distributed as follows:

- 13 permanent and temporary employees (5 men and 8 women)
- 25 non-permanent staff members, including 20 collaborators and 5 employees from other institutions (CNR); 2 men and 18 women.

In detail, considering job roles, the distribution is as follows:

- Men:
83% (10/12) hold the position of researchers and technicians, while the remaining 17% (2/12) are in administrative staff.
- Women:
15% (4/26) hold positions in administration;
85% (22/26) are researchers and technical staff.

The snapshot of staff for the year 2023, as shown in Fig. 3 continues to show a predominance of female staff across all categories.

Regarding the distribution of roles and positions within the statutory bodies, the situation remains consistent with that observed in 2022. Top executive positions are still held entirely by men (100%) in senior management roles and 99% at the top levels (Board of Directors).

In this context, 100% of the roles are held by men, which contrasts with the trend seen among contractual staff, as illustrated in Fig.4.

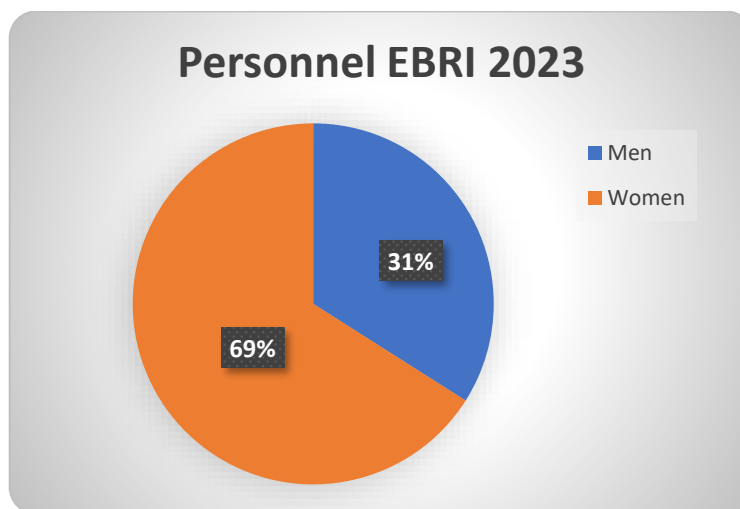


Figure 3: EBRI Staff in 2023: percentages of women and men present.

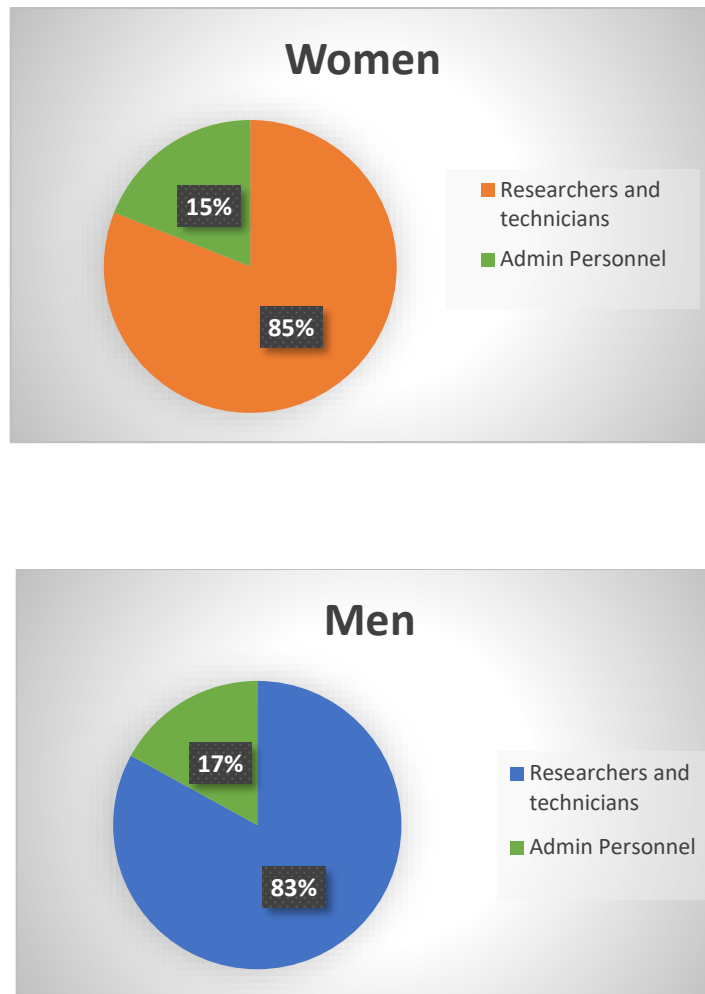


Figure 4: Percentages (%) of men and women in each category.

3.2 Scientific Activity: Publications

The scientific output of the EBRI for 2023 includes a total of 33 publications in international journals, with the participation of 38 men and 40 women (Fig. 5).

Analyzing the frequency of citations, women were cited 16 times, while men were cited 28 times.

Specifically, the researchers appear in key positions (first author, last author, or corresponding author) a total of 25 times, with 16 instances (64%) for male researchers and 9 instances (36%) for female researchers (Fig. 6).

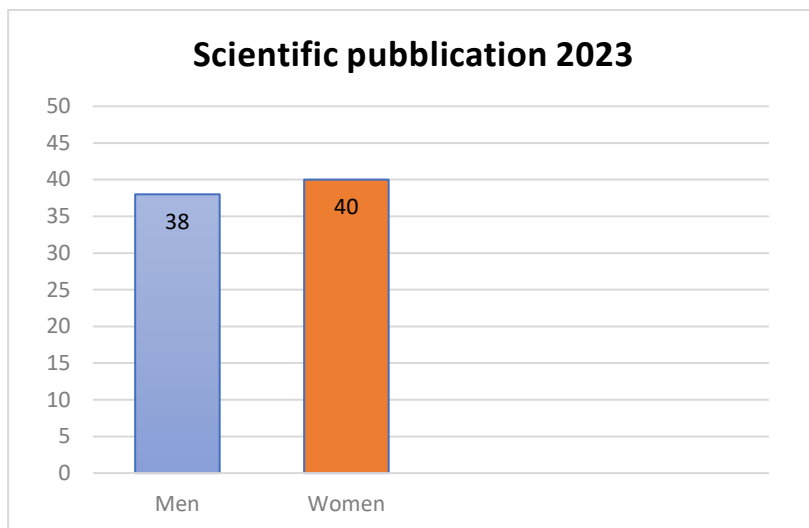


Figure 5: *number of women and men in scientific publications 2023.*



Figure 6: *Distribution of EBRI researchers, broken down by gender, in relation to key roles (first name, last name, corresponding) in scientific publications of 2023.*

4. Area of Action and Objectives

According to the National Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2026, as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan "Work, Income, Skills, Time, and Leadership," are the "five priorities to be achieved" by 2026. The EBRI supports this mission ~~aims to achieve these~~ through the actions outlined in this Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for 2024-2026:

- a. Work-life balance;
- b. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making processes;
- c. Measures against gender-based violence and discrimination;
- d. Promotion of gender equality;
- e. Gender pay equity.

a. Work-life Balance

The overall objective of this area of action is to implement flexible work policies and equitable parental leave for both parents, analyzing the compatibility between professional and personal spheres. It aims to balance individual needs related to family management, personal growth, and professional satisfaction with the organizational needs of the Foundation.

The expected outcome is to improve the overall quality of life for employees.

	Parental Leave
Action	Parental leave is a type of leave available for the care of each child up to the age of 12, with a maximum duration of six months (proportioned for part-time employees). The leave can also be taken on an hourly basis. To achieve this objective, flexible work policies and equitable parental leave for both parents will be implemented.
Responsible	Human Resources/Management
Direct beneficiaries	Full-time and part-time employees with permanent or fixed-term contracts
Indirect beneficiaries	Families/Communities
Indicators and Objectives	Number of parental leaves taken by full-time and part-time employees

Timing	Annual monitoring
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	Smart working
Action	Smart working is a work model that leverages existing technologies to enable the performance of work tasks outside of the traditional corporate work environment, facilitating it within family and/or community contexts. The goal is to improve the effectiveness, security, and sustainability of work in not only economic terms, but also relational, social, and environmental aspects. This model was initially adopted experimentally by the Foundation in response to the epidemiological emergency from SARS-CoV2. Subsequently, the option to engage in this type of work was permanently implemented through a communication issued by the Management to regulate smart working. A system was created to evaluate and approve requests from eligible employees. The objective of this activity will be to monitor and implement this model wherever possible.
Responsible	Human Resources
Direct beneficiaries	Workers
Indirect beneficiaries	Family/Community
Indicators and Objectives	Number of hours in smart-working for permanent staff
Timing	Annual monitoring

b. Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making Process

Equal participation of women and men in leadership and decision-making activities brings many positive effects, such as greater objectivity and efficiency, which can help improve the lives of employees who feel part of fairer societies with inclusive governance.

The expected outcome is an inclusive system that ensures equal representation of women in top positions and decision-making processes.

	Training and development on gender equality
Action	Offer training and mentoring programs to promote the development of women's skills and prepare them for leadership roles. This action aims to establish a range of residential and online courses on gender equality in the workplace.
Responsible	Scientific Direction
Direct beneficiaries	workers
Indirect beneficiaries	Foundation EBRI
Indicators and Objectives	Number of workers who have participated in training programs
Timing	Course list definition by June 2025; annual monitoring and review.

	Presentation of the Gender Equality Plan
Action	Dissemination of the Gender Equality Plan To all staff of the Foundation. Review of the plan, monitoring, and reformulation of the proposed objectives.
Responsible	Management Secretariat
Direct beneficiaries	Workers
Indirect beneficiaries	Community

Indicators and Objectives	Annual Approval of the GEP. Publication online on the company website; Annual monitoring of the indicators.
Timing	Review of the data and new version of the GEP by the end of 2024.

	Scientific Committee
Action	The Scientific Committee in 2024 consists of 7 men and 3 women, with a male to female ratio of 2.3:1, which remains the same as 2023. The objective of this action is to raise awareness within the Scientific Committee on the issue of gender equality, involving its members in the definition of new goals for the coming years.
Responsible	Members of the Scientific Committee
Direct beneficiaries	Scientific Committee
Indirect beneficiaries	Workers
Indicators and Objectives	Gender ratio
Timing	Annual monitoring

	Board of Directors
Action	Raising awareness on the issue of leadership, sharing the Gender Equality Plan as a useful tool to create an inclusive decision-making organizational system.
Responsible	General Manager and President
Direct beneficiaries	Foundation
Indirect beneficiaries	Workers
Indicators and Objectives	Gender ratio
Timing	Annual monitoring

c. Promotion of Gender Equality

The general objective of this area of action is to provide the means to encourage collaboration and synergy between men and women within research groups. The expected outcome is a balanced representation in authorship, project activities, and teaching roles.

Although women currently outnumber men within the EBRI Foundation, this is true only at certain levels. To increase female representation, particularly in leadership roles, measurable objectives will be established to increase the percentage of women.

To ensure equal career opportunities, the goal is to implement transparent, merit-based recruitment and promotion processes, ensuring equal opportunities for professional development for both women and men.

	Recruitment and selection
Action	Use gender-neutral job advertisements, involve both women and men in selection processes, and evaluate candidates based on their skills and

	experience.
Responsible	Scientific Management, Human Resources Management
Direct beneficiaries	Workers
Indirect beneficiaries	Foundation
Indicators and Objectives	Number of employees participating in recruitment and selection processes
Timing	Annual monitoring and review.

	Workplace training on gender equality
Action	The purpose is to identify courses to be held in the workplace and online (remotely) on gender equality in the workplace. The selection of courses will be guided by research to determine the best optiond that align with the characteristics of the Foundation's staff. For the research the following organizations will be taken into consideration: Association for Women in Science (AWIS), the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), the Women and Science Association, Women&Tech® ETS, and the Women’s Brain Foundation.
Responsible	Management
Direct beneficiaries	Workers

Indirect beneficiaries	Foundation
Indicators and Objectives	Number of employees who participate in the courses
Timing	Define the list of courses to be offered by January 2025; Annual monitoring and review.
	Award for Best Publication, based on the journal's Impact Factor (IF)
Action	Establishment of two awards for best publication by male or female author. The Prize, in the amount of €1000, will be awarded based on the author's position in the publication (first, last, or corresponding author) and the Journal's impact factor. The award will be given to the male and female researchers who have published in key authorship positions with an Impact Factor (IF) >10 for the reference year.
Responsible	Grant Office, Management
Direct beneficiaries	Researchers
Indirect beneficiaries	Scientific Community
Indicators and Objectives	Number of male and female authors from the Foundation in international journals; Number of male and female authors in key positions; Impact Factor (IF) of the journals.
Timing	List of winners by December 2025; Award presentation in March 2026.

	Gender Balance in Training Activities
Action	For the courses/conferences organized by EBRI, gender balance will be taken into consideration in the selection of speakers and chairs.
Responsible	Management; Secretariat
Direct beneficiaries	Speakers
Indirect beneficiaries	Workers
Indicators and Objectives	Gender ratio, Scientific course leaders, and speakers
Timing	Annual monitoring

d. Measures Against Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination

The objective is to promote an inclusive and respectful culture by raising awareness and training employees on topics such as gender stereotypes, inclusive language, harassment prevention, and the creation of an inclusive work environment. This approach aims to improve the use of human resources by ensuring employee training, professional development, and equal opportunities for both female and male workers, and preventing any form of discrimination or moral/psychological violence.

This includes discrimination based on gender or other risk factors such as age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability, religion or language, access to employment, treatment and working conditions, vocational training, promotions, and workplace safety.

	Workplace well-being assessment surveys
Action	Monitoring of perceived well-being in the workplace through the administration of anonymous surveys. The first survey will be administered in 2024, with analysis following appropriate training and improvement interventions in the subsequent years, comparing the results with those obtained in previous years.
Responsible	Human Resources
Direct beneficiaries	Workers
Indirect beneficiaries	Users of the Foundation's services
Indicators and Objectives	Number of completed surveys and average score achieved
Timing	Review of the surveys by December 2025; Administration and collection by June 2026.

	Prevention and combating of harassment and reporting of discrimination in the workplace
Action	Clear procedures are established for reporting and managing harassment, ensuring confidentiality and support for victims. In particular, the Organizational, Management, and Control Model pursuant to Legislative Decree 231/2001 is adopted, specifically in Annex 1 - "Code of Ethics," which identifies dedicated communication channels for reporting various forms of discrimination. These channels ensure the confidentiality of the whistleblower's identity

	during the communication management process. Currently, a dedicated email address is active: odv@ebri.it, which can also be used for anonymous reports, along with the option to submit written reports, including anonymous ones, addressed to the Supervisory Body at the EBRI Foundation, at the Foundation's legal office address.
Responsible	Supervisory Body (Legislative Decree 231/2001)
Direct beneficiaries	Workers
Indirect beneficiaries	Community
Indicators and Objectives	Number of reports received and subsequent actions taken.
Timing	Annual monitoring

e. Reducing the Gender Pay Gap

Eliminating the Gender Pay Gap: The EBRI Rita Levi-Montalcini ensures that no wage disparities exist, as its compensation policies are structured according to professional role levels. Nevertheless, EBRI remains committed to regularly reviewing pay practices to identify and address any unjustified differences in compensation between women and men performing the same or equivalent work.

	Fair compensation policies
Action	Regularly conduct compensation analyses to identify and correct any gender pay disparities.

Responsible	Administrative Management / Human Resources Management
Direct beneficiaries	Workers
Indirect beneficiaries	Community
Indicators and Objectives	Analyze any potential presence of and correct, if found, unjustified salary disparities between women and men performing the same job or jobs of equal value
Timing	Annual monitoring

Final Considerations

The EBRI 'Rita Levi-Montalcini' is committed to ensuring transparency by sharing the results of the GEP and the progress made with all employees. It also plans to involve employees in its implementation through surveys, focus groups, and awareness-raising initiatives.