



HEALTH INSTITUTES OF TÜRKİYE (TUSEB) GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

AUGUST 2022

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1. NATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

National Context

The fundamental legal basis of gender equality in Türkiye is the Turkish Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law regardless of gender. As stipulated in Article 10 of the Constitution, “Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, and sect, or any such grounds. Women and men have equal rights. The State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. Measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality.” (1). Furthermore, the 11th Development Plan of Türkiye clearly emphasizes equality of opportunity, ease of accessibility, and citizen orientation through clear and predictable public policies (2).

Concerning academia and research, the Commission of Women Studies of the Higher Education Council of Türkiye conducts a range of studies to promote gender equality and to support women’s representation in higher education and research. According to the commission reports, there is a gender imbalance in academic positions, decision-making bodies, grant, and patent applications, and awarding in Türkiye. The Health Institutes of Türkiye (TUSEB) as the leading agency in charge of managing, funding, conducting, and coordinating scientific research within its capacity promotes gender equality in the research landscape of Türkiye.

Institutional Context

TUSEB was established with a mission to serve our country and humanity in the field of health science and technologies, to support planned and sustainable development. In accordance with the targets of serving the purpose of advanced technology and innovation in the field of health science and technologies in Türkiye, reducing the external dependence, increasing, and perpetuating the competition, the priorities designated by the Ministry of Health and The President of Türkiye are taken into consideration with the development plan targets.

TUSEB is made up of 9 (nine) research institutes established in line with requirements of health science and technology: Türkiye Maternity, Child and Adolescent Health Institute, Türkiye Biotechnology Institute, Türkiye Traditional and Complementary Medicine Institute, Türkiye Public Health and Chronic Diseases Institute, Türkiye Cancer Institute, Türkiye Health Care Quality and Accreditation Institute, Türkiye Health Policies Institute, Türkiye Vaccine Institute and Türkiye Health Data Research and Artificial Intelligence Applications Institute. In compliance with the requirements of the time and conditions, TUSEB will incorporate new institutions that could update the health research areas and cooperate with national and international health and research organizations. In addition to the research institutions, TUSEB has research center such as Aziz Sancar Research and Development Centre (ASAGEM) and Biotechnological Pharmaceuticals and Vaccine Research, Development and Training Centre (BİYAŞAM), and Clinical Research Coordination Unit.

In the 18th article of the TUSEB Human Resources Regulation, titled "Loyalty to the State and Impartiality", which is regulated under the "Homework, Responsibility, Prohibitions and Violations" section; it is stated as "While performing their duties, the personnel cannot act in a way that targets the benefit or harm of any political party, person or group; cannot discriminate against language, race, gender, political thought, philosophical belief, religion or sect; cannot make statements and actions for political or ideological purposes and cannot participate in these actions in any way." In the subparagraph (d) of the first paragraph of the article 43 titled "Suspension of the promotion" regulated under the "Disciplinary Provisions" section of the same Regulation; it is explained as 'acts and behaviors that require the stopping of getting the promotion are as follows: d) To discriminate against language, race, gender, political thought, philosophical belief, religion and sect, and to engage in behaviors targeting the benefit or harm of individuals. These provisions are aimed at preventing gender discrimination. Although there is no action regarding gender equality plans within the framework of the duties, authorities and responsibilities of our Presidency, the data collected in the "Distribution of Actual Employees by Gender" section under the Human Resources section of the TUSEB Administration Activity Report, published every year, shows that gender equality is protected.

1. Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye “Part 1 General Principles”, p.12.
2. Türkiye Presidency “11th National Development Plan (2019-2023)”, p. 139-140; Ministry of Family and Social Services “4th National Action Plan on Combating Violence against Women (2021-2025)”

2. GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY AND KEY PRIORITY AREAS

TUSEB recognizes that human resource is the asset towards achieving its vision and mission to become the international leading agency focused on R&D in the field of health science and technologies. TUSEB Gender Equality Plan (GEP) (2022 – 2025) aims to make a positive difference in people's lives. Our GEP will pave the way to establish a framework for promoting gender equality in employment, research, innovation funding, and all social interactions of TUSEB. The GEP Committee members will monitor the implementation of the GEP actions, review and improve as needed. During the summer of 2022, a situation analysis on gender equality was conducted at TUSEB to build clear input for developing a plan for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion. The analysis revealed six priority areas for the development that TUSEB will primarily pay attention to.

1. Installing an institutional framework for the systematic collection of gender disaggregated data, monitoring and assessment of gathered information.
2. Upgrading gender balance and increasing gender aspects among
 - a. Leadership and workers,
 - b. The members of the panels and committees,
 - c. The external reviewers.
3. Upgrading gender offset between the applicants for funding (research grants, awards, and scholarships) and recipients
4. Creating official mechanisms for the integration of gender perspective in relevant research fields
5. Forming a work-life balance policy and realization of gender-sensitive communication strategy
6. Improving current mechanisms to prohibit and prevent violence, force, discrimination, and gender-based harassment.

3. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF GENDER EQUALITY

CURRENT STATE

TUSEB has not yet established an institutional structure for gender equality however TUSEB is committed to prepare a gender balance program. Within the context of the TUSEB GEP, the following core structures will be created to develop the Institutional Policy Capacity on the issue.

Gender Equality Officer (GEO)

Based on existing research and successful examples of institutionalizing gender equality in Türkiye and other European institutions, the suggested action is to appoint a **Gender Equality Officer** with the following duties and responsibilities:

- Coordinating and facilitating the implementation of the actions in the GEP in coordination and consultation with the GEP Committee (GEC), the Gender Equality Task Force and relevant administrative units and institutes of TUSEB.
- Undertaking systematic (privacy preserving) data collection regarding gender equality at TUSEB.
- Reviewing all institutional documents, procedures and decision-making mechanisms from a gender perspective and suggesting adjustments based on the GEP.
- Publishing annual periodic reports that include benchmarking.
- Designing a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.
- In consultation with the GEC, assessing the implemented actions, achievements, and shortcomings at the end of the third year and to develop the new GEP to be put into action in year 4.
- Organizing regular meetings open to all TUSEB staff to raise awareness about the GEP and to discuss related issues to foster ownership and inclusion.
- Coordinating and implementing the training and capacity building program.

GEO will work closely with the GEC and the Gender Equality Task Force.

GEP Committee (GEC)

- is composed of minimum 5 people including the GEO and representatives from Institutes, Department of Foreign Affairs, and Human Resources.
- meets at least once in every quarter throughout the year to evaluate the progress of the GEP implementation process and to decide on the priority actions of the coming month(s)
- is coordinated by the GEO.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION PLAN	ACCOUNTABILITY	TARGET DATE			
			2022	2023	2024	2025
Creation of institutional structures supporting gender equality	Appointment of persons who will be responsible for ensuring the development and improvement of the process of gender equality in workplace procedures and practices	Board of Management of TUSEB, President of the Health Institutes of Türkiye and Senior Managements	X	X		
	Election of a GEO	President of the Health Institutes of Türkiye	X	X		
	Establishment of the GEC	President of the Health Institutes of Türkiye	X	X		

4. GENDER REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT, RECRUITMENT, CAREER PROGRESSION

CURRENT STATE

The Human Resources Department is responsible for the recruitment and hiring procedures of TUSEB. For non-academic positions, after the interviews with the short-listed candidates, the final decision on the hiring is given by the President based on the recommendations of the Director of the HR Department and director of the relevant administrative department. The academic recruitment is done according to rules set out in the Higher Education Law (No. 2547). None of the above-mentioned regulations includes principles regarding gender-sensitive recruitment and selection or support of career progression of the underrepresented gender. There are no gender sensitive recruitment protocols/policies to prevent gender bias either academic or administrative level recruitment. However, there are articles to prevent gender bias in recruitment in Turkish Labour Law (No: 8425). Additionally, “Administrative Staff Recruitment Procedures and Principles” document lists the objective promotion criteria, and it mentions (article 5, b) “equal opportunity” in “promotions and appointments”. Recruitment and hiring are carried out based on the principles set out in the document for procedures and principles of academic and administrative staff regardless of gender. During the recruitment process, competence and expertise of the candidates are considered. In terms of career progression, there are no specific procedures for the promotion of staff (non-academic) of the institution. Career planning is made by unit managers and their superior managers. There are no written and static rules for promotion. The priority is given based on merit, competence, and seniority.

Furthermore, there is no systematic analysis of the reasons behind their resignation. 80% of the 20 personnel who resigned in 2022 are female and 20% are male. Those who resigned due to economic and personal rights (100%) started to work in other public institutions and organizations. The Gender Equality Strategy of TUSEB aims to improve gender equality in the human resources area by updating recruitment and promotion procedures and establishing measures to support career progression of the underrepresented gender at the institutional level.

To achieve and maintain gender equality in all priority areas it is also important to monitor the processes by collecting gender-disaggregated data. According to August 2022 data, approximately 41% of the total 111 personnel working in TUSEB administrative units, are female. When the statistical data in the institutes are examined, it is understood that the gender ratio is partially in favor of women (67%). Although the number of administrators in both administrative units and institutes is 6, gender ratios are in favor of men. The number of male and female administrators in the institutes is equal.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION PLAN	ACCOUNTABILITY	TARGET DATE			
			2022	2023	2024	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore formal and informal organizational factors affecting the career progression To reduce bias and increase management skills in recruitment and promotion processes To ensure diversity among potential future leaders at TUSEB. To monitor, evaluate and report on a regular basis the success of gender equality objectives by collecting and analyzing the gender-segregated data 	Include gender equality training in orientation program	The General Secretary, The Directorate of Human Resources (HR), GEC and GEO	X	X	X	X
	Develop a competence development program for potential managers to promote gender equality	GEC, GEO		X		
	Develop new job advertisement templates that appeal to a wider range of applicants	GEC, GEO		X	X	X
	Offer workshops to raise awareness and provide tools to deal with unconscious bias in recruitment and other processes	GEC, GEO		X		
	Discuss how to increase diversity in connection with career planning	GEO, GEO, HR and all unit and directors of the institutes	X			
	Updating the persona performance appraisal concept, considering the leave (maternity or other care leave) period in performance appraisals	GEC, GEO			X	

5. INTEGRATING THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO RESEARCH CONTENT

CURRENT STATE

An investigation of the total gender's distribution has shown 89 as (38.9%) males and 140 as (61.1%) females, in research teams of TUSEB Institutes. In committees, boards, panels, and external observation boards, the incumbent accounts were 1540(%42,9) women and 2047(%57,1) men. Moreover, there are 294 (53.9%) women and 251 (46.1%) men which participate in projects with national partners. In addition to this, an equal distribution of 3 women and 3 men has been observed in international partnership projects. Finally, 143 (53.4%) women-125 (46.6%) men participated in the training project realized by the academy-industry partnership. The number of men and women who applied for funding projects by the Project Department; the gender distribution of the members of the arbitration committee for each project; the gender distribution of the individual scholars and the gender distribution of the project consultants were totally determined: 4194 (49.5%) male and 4281 (50%) female applicants. 218 (52.66%) men and 196 (47.34%) women researchers were accounted for among project applicants and research teams. In technology-based research, the number of female and male applicants were 442 (39.4%) and 681 (60.6%) respectively. Moreover, 131 (53.5%) females and 114 (46.5%) male researchers had financial support. In the area of research, measures to integrate gender into institutional strategic plan and institutional funding mechanisms and awareness raising activities on the application of gender analysis and gender dimension into research will be implemented.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION PLAN	ACCOUNTABILITY	TARGET DATE			
			2022	2023	2024	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing guidelines • Preparing unconscious bias video • Creating gender balanced research teams • Publishing annual reports • Including relevant clauses and mandatory schemes into the commitments document and application forms 	Expand guidelines for the panel members, committees, and external reviewers about possible unconscious bias and the importance of considering the aspects of gender; implementation of trainings for applicants, reviewers, and TUSEB employees about gender balance and integration of gender dimension into research and innovation	Research funding units, Unit Representatives, and GEC		X	X	X

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Meetings with Project Support Offices of Universities and Turkish research and innovation ecosystem actors • Develop gender-neutral language • Implementation of trainings for employees, applicants and reviewers related by gender balance and integration of gender dimension into research and innovation 	<p>Upgrade gender balance among applicants and their research teams. Keep tabs on the gender data in the research projects deliverable. Establish unit-specific goals for gender balance of reviewers rely on relevant scientific communities.</p>	<p>Research funding units, Unit Representatives, and GEC</p>	X	X		
	<p>Establish unit-specific goals for gender balance of reviewers rely on relevant scientific communities Disregard the duration of career breaks (such as maternity leave, long-term illness of the applicant or a close family member, or national service) in the eligibility process and evaluations</p>	<p>The President, GEC, related unit representatives,</p>	X	X		
	<p>The duration of career breaks such as maternity or paternity leave, health or family problems of the applicant should not be considered in the eligibility process and evaluations</p>	<p>The President, GEC, related unit representatives,</p>	X	X	X	
	<p>Encourage women academics in technology-based entrepreneurship</p>	<p>The President, GEC, related unit representatives, and the head of the related unit</p>		X	X	X
	<p>Aim for gender balance in chief and associate editors of TUSEB academic journals for gender balance in all research teams.</p>	<p>The President, GEC, related unit representatives, and the head of the related unit, HR</p>		X		X

	<p>Check up the gender data in the research outputs such as research projects, publications, patents as well as gender balance in research teams. Arrange a training program on gender- neutral communication for all relative staff and managers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring gender balance between the speakers at public events, where applicable • Including successful grantees of both genders as role models in communication activities • Encouraging female leadership in research groups 	<p>GEC, related unit representatives, and the head of the related unit</p>		<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>
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6. RECONCILING WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE

CURRENT STATE

Due to the gender roles attributed to women and men by society, women were made responsible for domestic work and eventually identified with this area. The work-family conflict experienced by women since women's pregnancy and maternity qualifications are considered costly by the employer and women's domestic responsibilities are among the most important problems. Considering the physical qualities of women, necessary practices are carried out in line with the provisions of the 35th article of the TUSEB Human Resources Regulation and the 74th and 13th articles of the Labor Law No:4857. At this point, the procedures and principles applied, it is considered that women have not only the identity of an employee but also the identity of a wife, mother and housewife while participating in the working life, and that they have specific needs for women due to their fertility characteristics. In the Human Resources Regulation, it is stated as "Provisions of the Labor Law shall apply regarding maternity and breastfeeding leave." Within the scope of the provision, it provides maternity leave for sixteen weeks, eight weeks before and after birth, a part-time work permit to one of the parents until the start of primary education, and a fixed-term unpaid work permit. In accordance with the additional article 28 of the Decree Law No. 375, financial and social rights and benefits can also be provided. In article 33 of the TUSEB Human Resources Regulation under the title of "administrative leave" it is explained as under certain circumstances such as marriage, death of first-degree relatives; parents, spouse, siblings or children; birth of a child, five days of paid leave is given.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION PLAN	ACCOUNTABILITY	TARGET DATE			
			2022	2023	2024	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of at least 60% of the employees in the survey related to work-life balance Supply guidelines for remote and flexible working 	Implementation of surveys and in- depth interviews among employees to collect data on their work-life balance issues	HR and GEC	X	X		
	According to the legislative guidelines checkup and update all leave strategies (such as health problems of child and elderly care)	The President, General Secretary, HR, and GEC	X	X	X	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balanced workload between employees 	Provide transparent workload model	HR, GEC, and unit managers	X	X	X	X
	Provide remote working rules for employees immediately after maternity leave; for flexible working and publication guides	The President, General Secretary, HR, and GEO		X	X	

7. MEASURES AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

CURRENT STATE

TUSEB foster a culture where sexual violence, harassment and other forms of sexual misconduct are not tolerated and are actively challenged within the framework of the Disciplinary Provisions in the Eighth Chapter of the Human Resources Regulation. TUSEB is obliged to take the necessary measures in line with the “Service Contracts” section of the Turkish Code of Obligations Law No. 6098. In the training on “Public Ethics Regulations” in 2021, the personnel were trained on the code of conduct, considering the equality of men and women. However, the procedures and codes of conduct that they can apply in cases of assault, discrimination, violence, and harassment are not addressed in this training. In addition, there is no legal practice regarding the lack of trust. Gender Equality Strategy of TUSEB includes measures to show its commitment to prevention of gender-based discrimination, violence, and sexual harassment. To this end, an institutional policy document will be prepared, and a unit will be established to prevent gender-based discrimination, violence, and sexual harassment.

OBJECTIVES	ACTION PLAN	ACCOUNTABILITY	TARGET DATE			
			2022	2023	2024	2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the procedures and processes of the existing complaint and support mechanisms for the prevention of gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence and to make improvements where necessary Ensuring that all managers are aware of their responsibility to create team environments free from sexual harassment, as well as offering managers new guidance on addressing cases. 	Establishing or reviewing organization’s policies, investigation procedures and training protocols that stands against all forms of violence without exception, including sexual abuse, mobbing, physical and psychological violence	Board of Management of TUSEB, President Of Health Institutes of Turkey, Senior Managements, GEC, and GEO	X	X		
	Improve communication to staff on expected behaviors	HR, GEO	X	X	X	X

	Sharing the processes about TUSEB rules, support and to create complaint mechanisms in	GEC, GEO, and HR	X	X	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scaling up and broadening the scope of training and raising awareness of academic and administrative staff on gender- based violence and sexual harassment Transparently and regularly sharing information on the prevalence of sexual harassment and related sanctions inside the TUSEB. 	Informing managers and security personnel about the indicators of violence against women, institutional policies on sexual abuse and legal	GEO, GEC, and HR		X	X	X
	Step up the delivery of “Creating a Respectful and Harassment-free Workplace” facilitated conversations to leaders and teams.	HR, GEO, and GEC		X	X	
	Appoint an Anti-Harassment Coordinator for staff seeking support between informal services and the formal investigation process	Board of Management of TUSEB, President Of Health Institutes of Turkey, Senior Managements, GEC, and GEO			X	