

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)

May, 2025

Introduction

At QDNL, we are committed to fostering an inclusive, respectful, and equitable working environment for all employees, regardless of gender. This Gender Equality Plan (GEP) represents our starting point in building and/or maintaining a more gender-equal organization. It sets out our initial framework for action, aligned with the minimum requirements of the European Commission.

We view this plan not as a final product, but as the beginning of an evolving process. In the second half of 2025, we will further develop and enrich our approach to gender equality through meaningful actions and collaborations — for example, in partnership with initiatives such as Women in Quantum Development (WiQD). Our aim is to embed gender equality into our organizational culture and practices in a sustainable and measurable way. Ultimately, we want to focus not just on gender, but on fostering an inclusive culture and taking a broader approach, both within our organization and across our ecosystem.

This document outlines the structures, commitments, and first steps we are taking — and clearly communicates our intention to grow beyond these initial measures in the months to come.

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1. Organisational context & scope

QDNL (QDNL) is the national coordinating organisation for the Dutch quantum technology ecosystem. As a public foundation funded through the National Growth Fund, QDNL plays a strategic role in fostering collaboration between research institutions, industry, government, and civil society to accelerate the development and application of quantum technologies in the Netherlands and beyond.

QDNL's Culture Manifesto, co-created by over 100 community members, emphasizes the importance of an inclusive and diverse environment. This collaborative effort reflects our collective commitment to fostering a culture where every individual feels valued and empowered. The manifesto serves as a foundational guide, influencing our policies and practices, including those related to gender equality.

‘We advocate inclusivity’ - Read more about our principles in our [Manifesto](#).

QDNL is a relatively young and evolving organisation, currently consisting of a small core team with close ties to five National Quantum hubs and a wide array of stakeholders across academia, startups, and government. As such, our Gender Equality Plan initially focuses on:

- **QDNL’s internal organisation**, including staff, board members and management team, and direct contractors.
- **Governance processes**, including selection procedures, remuneration policy, and strategic decision-making.
- **Outreach and collaboration**, particularly when representing the ecosystem in national and European contexts.

While the scope of this first plan is limited to QDNL as an organisation, we are aware of the broader impact we can have. In future iterations of the plan, we will aim to expand our influence by integrating gender equality considerations into the way we support, fund, and interact with partners throughout the ecosystem.

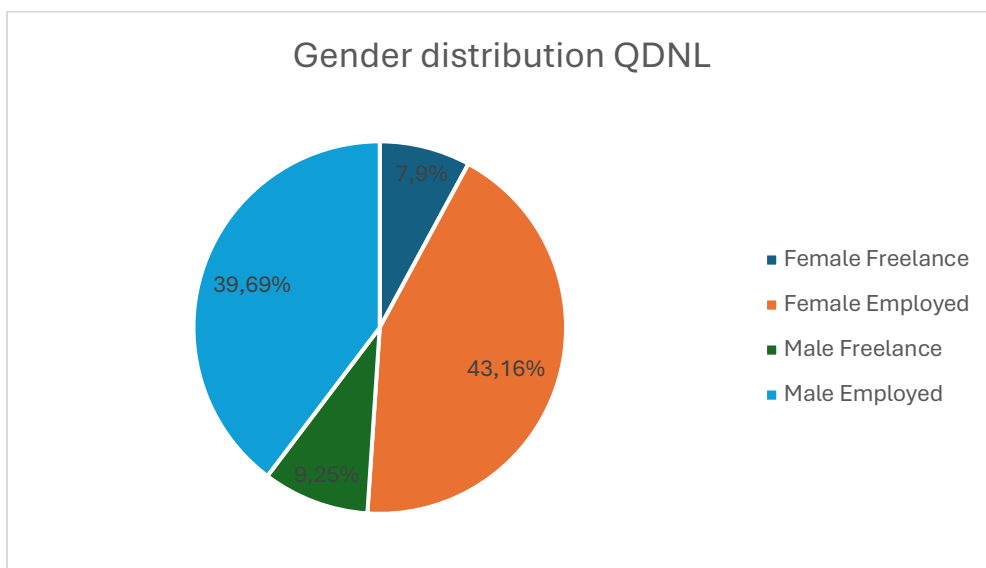
We acknowledge that meaningful gender equality work requires continuous learning and engagement. This plan marks the start of a broader effort to embed inclusive practices not only internally, but across the quantum sector as a whole, in collaboration with partners such as Women in Quantum Development (WiQD) and aligned with EU standards.

2. Status quo: Gender balance and organizational culture

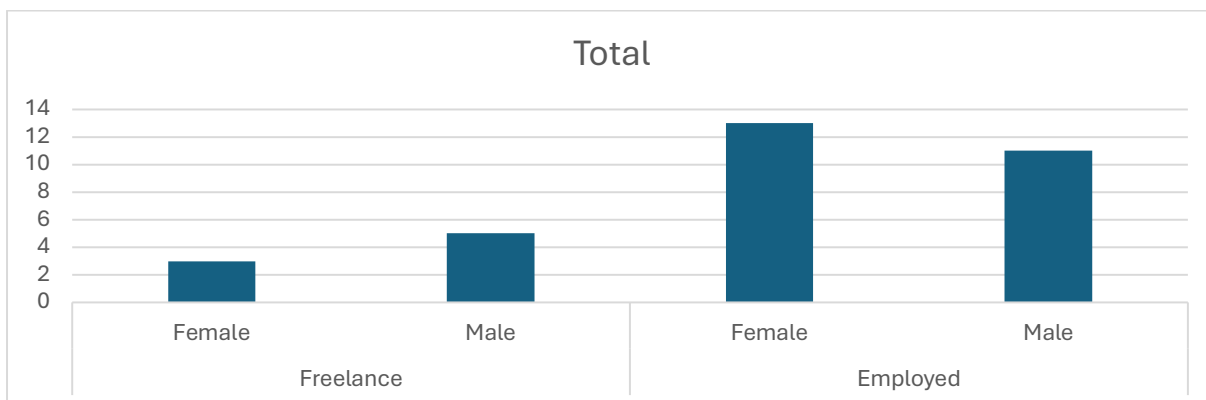
As a first step towards improving gender equality, it is essential to establish a clear picture of the current situation at QDNL (QDNL). This chapter presents available data on the gender distribution within the organisation and offers initial reflections on organisational culture, decision-making, and inclusivity.

2.1 Gender distribution

The charts below illustrate the current gender distribution among QDNL's core team:



May, 2025



Explanation: At present, the team consists of 50% men and 50% women.

Within leadership and decision-making roles, the gender breakdown is as follows: 2 women vs. 3 men.

2.2 Observations on culture and processes

The Culture Manifesto outlines our guiding principles, one of which is to "advocate inclusivity." This principle underscores our dedication to creating a network that values diverse backgrounds and experiences. By acknowledging and addressing both overt and subtle forms of inequality, we aim to ensure equal access and opportunities for all. This commitment is integral to our organizational culture and directly informs our approach to gender equality.

In addition to numerical data, qualitative insights into the organisational culture, communication styles, and inclusivity are also key indicators of the current state. Initial observations include:

- Recruitment and selection at QDNL is based purely on qualifications, without distinction between men and women. The same principle applies to remuneration: we follow standardised policies that are applied equally, regardless of gender. Our job advertisements often include a statement encouraging people with a bicultural background to apply.
- Decision-making could happen informally, which might result in unequal access to influence or visibility. Recently, we revised our organizational governance and way of working, with specific attention given to addressing this in our new approach.
- Topics such as talent management, parenthood, leave policies, and flexibility are important to explore further in the context of gender equality.

3. Objectives and priorities for action

Building on our initial assessment, QDNL is now taking concrete steps to establish objectives, set targets, and define measures that will guide the implementation of our Gender Equality Plan (GEP). These objectives are designed to address the challenges identified in the status quo analysis, while also proactively fostering and maintaining an inclusive and gender-balanced organisation, and aiming to increase our impact on this topic within our ecosystem.

3.1 Strategic objectives

The following overarching objectives form the foundation of our GEP:

- **Strengthen and maintain gender balance within the QDNL team**, particularly in decision-making and leadership roles.
- **Ensure inclusive, transparent, and gender-sensitive organisational processes**, including hiring, remuneration, communication, and strategic decision-making.

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- **Promote a culture of awareness, reflection, and shared responsibility** around gender equality, aligned with QDNL’s Culture Manifesto, and ensure it is embedded in our Code of Conduct.
- **Investigate opportunities to establish a data-driven and sustainable approach** to tracking gender equality and integrating it into our broader ecosystem role.

3.2 Focus areas and measures

The following priority areas and corresponding actions have been identified:

Focus Area	Action/Measure	Target Timeline	Responsible
Recruitment & selection	Develop inclusive recruitment guidelines and review job descriptions for bias	Q4 2025	HR
Leadership diversity	Identify and support internal leadership development opportunities for underrepresented genders	2026	Board & HR
Organisational processes	Formalise key decision-making procedures to improve transparency and inclusiveness	Q2 2025	Management & Board
Culture & awareness	Organise an internal gender equality training or reflection session	Q1 2026	GEP Lead & HR
Data & monitoring	Investigate a gender-disaggregated baseline for future tracking ecosystem (e.g. recruitment, attrition, promotions)	Q1 2026	GEP Lead & HR
External alignment	Collaborate with WiQD and similar partners to co-create ecosystem-wide good practices	Continuous	GEP Lead, HR & Ecosystem

3.3 Resource allocation

While QDNL operates with a small team, we are committed to dedicating the necessary time and resources to ensure that the GEP is properly implemented and monitored. This includes assigning a GEP Lead, making use of external expertise where relevant, and embedding gender equality tasks into regular organisational planning cycles.

3.4 Integration into strategy

Where possible, actions within the GEP will be integrated into QDNL's existing strategic and operational frameworks to ensure ownership, follow-through, and impact. The GEP is not a standalone document but part of a broader effort to build a more inclusive quantum technology ecosystem.

4. Implementation plan

To bring the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) to life, QDNL will begin by integrating gender equality actions into existing work structures and policies. Given our compact team and collaborative ecosystem model, implementation will rely on pragmatic, yet intentional steps.

4.1 Governance and coordination

The implementation of the GEP will be overseen by a **designated GEP Lead**, who will coordinate activities, facilitate internal alignment, and act as a contact point for external collaboration (e.g. with WiQD and EU networks). The GEP Lead will work closely with management and relevant staff to ensure progress and accountability.

Key responsibilities will include:

- Coordinating planned actions and securing stakeholder engagement.
- Integrating gender equality tasks into team and project planning.
- Identifying resource needs and reporting on implementation progress.

4.2 Stakeholder engagement

We recognise that successful implementation depends on a shared sense of ownership. As such, we will actively engage colleagues and partners in the roll-out of specific actions. Examples include:

- Co-designing recruitment improvements with HR and hiring managers.
- Including these objectives in decision-making reforms.
- Partnering with organisations such as WiQD for events and shared learning.

4.3 Timeline

While some measures are already underway, others will begin in late 2025 or early 2026. A more detailed timeline will be developed in Q3 2025 as part of the internal planning cycle.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring is essential to ensure that our GEP leads to meaningful and lasting change. As an agile and learning organisation, QDNL will prioritise reflective evaluation and continuous improvement.

5.1 Indicators and progress tracking

We aim to develop a basic set of gender-disaggregated indicators, covering:

- Distribution in the team and in leadership.
- Recruitment outcomes.
- Participation in decision-making processes.
- Uptake of flexibility and care-related policies, tools and training.

These indicators will be updated annually and discussed during internal review moments.

5.2 Evaluation Approach

In 2026, a first internal evaluation of the GEP will be conducted to assess implementation, identify barriers, and adjust actions. Where possible, we will include both quantitative and qualitative insights.

Findings will:

- Feed into strategic decision-making.
- Inform the development of the next iteration of the GEP.
- Be shared with relevant partners to foster shared learning.

6. Future Outlook

This Gender Equality Plan is not a static document but a starting point for continuous development. The learnings from the first year of implementation will inform a new and expanded GEP in 2026, which will:

- Cover a broader range of topics, such as intersectionality.
- Explore gender equality practices within the wider quantum ecosystem.
- Deepen integration into governance, policy, and funding mechanisms including to our ecosystem.

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By embedding inclusivity into our culture and operations, QDNL aims not only to improve and maintain internal gender equality, but to set an example for the quantum technology sector in the Netherlands and Europe.

We welcome collaboration, feedback, and shared efforts as we take these next steps.