

ACTION PLAN
FOR PROMOTING AND ENSURING
GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THE
CULTURAL-NATURAL RESERVATION 'ORHEIUL VECHI'
(2024–2025)

December 2023



INTRODUCTION

This Action Plan on promoting and ensuring gender equality aims to eliminate gender imbalances and barriers, ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals involved in the protection of cultural and natural heritage within the Public Institution Cultural-Natural Reserve "Orheiul Vechi." In line with this objective, the Reserve identifies itself as one of the institutions actively engaged in the protection of cultural and natural heritage, both nationally and internationally.

Current Context of Gender Equality Strategies at the European and National Levels

Internationally, there is a strong commitment to gender equality, as outlined in Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The EU has made significant progress toward ensuring equality between women and men. Effective measures include legislation on equal treatment, the integration of a gender perspective into all institutional policies, and specific initiatives to promote women.

The EU Gender Equality Strategy aligns with the European Commission's commitment to achieving a Union of Equality. Key objectives include: ending violence against women; combating gender stereotypes; eliminating gender disparities in the labor market; ensuring equal participation of women and men across economic sectors; closing the gender pay gap and pension disparities; addressing gender imbalances in family responsibilities; and achieving gender balance in political decision-making.

In the Republic of Moldova, women constitute 52.1% of the total population, 51.3% of the workforce, 52% of qualified specialists, 59% of voters, and 49-52% of political party members. Despite this quantitative representation, high-level political decision-making roles, party structures, and public administration institutions are not equally accessible to women and men. Women often remain confined to executive roles, with limited opportunities for advancement or leadership in politics. The policy on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men was first regulated by the Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, No. 5, adopted on February 9, 2006, by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. As a result, numerous legislative, institutional, and governmental changes have been implemented.

The Law on Ensuring Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, which specifically focuses on gender equality (the Gender Equality Law), aims to eliminate all forms of gender-based discrimination in both public and private sectors across various domains, such as work, education, health, culture, information, access to goods and services, etc. Under Article 17 of Law No. 5/2006, the Government of the Republic of Moldova developed and approved the *Strategy for Ensuring Equality Between Women and Men in the Republic of Moldova for 2017-2021* and the *Action Plan for Implementing the Strategy for Ensuring Equality Between Women and Men for 2017-2021*. These documents recommend that all public entities take necessary measures to achieve the Strategy's objectives. The Strategy has three general goals:

- (1) Ensuring a comprehensive approach to equality between women and men;
- (2) Reconciling professional life with family and private life;
- (3) Encouraging women's participation in decision-making processes;

and five intervention areas: (1) education, (2) health, (3) the labor market, (4) balanced participation in decision-making processes, and (5) the integration of a gender perspective.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTITUTION

To ensure the protection, conservation, and preservation of the cultural-natural landscape "Orheiul Vechi" for present and future generations, the Cultural-Natural Reserve "Orheiul Vechi" was established under Law No. 251/2008 and Government Decision No. 228/2009. It operates as a legal entity, subordinated to the central public administration authority responsible for heritage protection. The Cultural-Natural Reserve "Orheiul Vechi" is a public institution under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Moldova.

The Cultural-Natural Reserve "Orheiul Vechi" encompasses:

- Historical-cultural heritage assets (archaeological sites, cave complexes, vernacular architecture, ethnographic objects);
- Traditional settlements (villages of Trebujeni, Butuceni, Morovaia);
- Natural heritage assets (geological and landscape formations, flora and fauna);
- Land and aquatic areas where regulated exploitation of natural resources, agricultural, industrial, and tourism activities take place.

Core Responsibilities of the Reserve's Administration:

- a) Organizing an efficient management and protection structure for the Reserve and its cultural-natural heritage;
- b) Administering publicly owned lands and cultural-natural assets under its authority;
- c) Monitoring and researching the Reserve's cultural-natural heritage;
- d) Protecting and conserving areas with archaeological remains and cave complexes;
- e) Preserving and rehabilitating vernacular architecture and rural habitats;
- f) Protecting, conserving, and restoring biodiversity;
- g) Rehabilitating representative sectors with forest, steppe, meadow, aquatic, and marsh vegetation, as well as protective forest belts;
- h) Conserving rare or endangered plant and animal species by creating optimal living and breeding conditions;
- i) Repopulating adjacent areas with previously extinct plant and animal species;
- j) Establishing conditions for regulated tourism and recreation;
- k) Managing natural resources in a regulated manner;
- l) Promoting cultural-ecological education and awareness;
- m) Installing boundary markers, warning signs, and informational panels within and around the Reserve.

Governing Bodies

The Reserve's administration consists of the following subdivisions:

- a) General Directorate;
- b) Advisory Management Council;
- c) Scientific Council;
- d) Cultural Heritage Protection, Research, and Monitoring Section;

- e) Natural Heritage Protection, Research, and Monitoring Section;
- f) Mobile Cultural Heritage Collections Section;
- g) Conservation-Restoration Laboratories Section;
- h) Tours, Public Relations, and Travel Agencies Section;
- i) Exhibitions Section;
- j) International Relations, NGO Partnerships, and Project Promotion Section;
- k) IT and Publishing Section;
- l) Services Section (architecture and territorial planning, administrative, technical, security, personnel);
- m) Archive and Library;
- n) Chancellery;
- o) Accounting.

The staffing structure and personnel limits of the Reserve are approved by the Ministry of Culture. The Reserve's employees are specialists trained in fields relevant to the institution (history, archaeology, architecture, ethnology, conservation, restoration, geography, geology-hydrology, ecology, biology, botany, zoology, etc.) and undergo periodic training in domestic and international research centers.

II. INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES FOR DEFINING AND IMPLEMENTING GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES

In the context of promoting and maintaining equal and equitable representation of women and men among both permanent and contracted staff—at both managerial/leadership and executive/consultancy levels—the Public Institution "Orheiul Vechi" Reserve has adopted the following vision and priorities:

- Equal and equitable representation of women and men within the institution is ensured through a lifecycle approach, covering all stages from preselection, recruitment, hiring, promotion, transfer, and delegation as inclusive and participatory processes.
- Challenges and risks related to gender representation will be carefully monitored and managed, particularly those concerning ethnicity, religion, race, social status, sexual orientation, and persons with disabilities.
- Balanced inclusion of women and men in all decision-making processes and at all levels within the institution, including oversight committees, working groups, competitions, consultations, evaluations, project teams, and other formats, regardless of their official designation.
- Institutional policy documents and operational procedures will consider the needs of both women and men and be adapted to evolving requirements.
- The institution promotes family-friendly and inclusive policies to help employees balance professional and personal lives.
- The Reserve equally encourages the participation of women and men in competitions and project calls.

- It supports existing leadership development programs, including awareness-raising, advocacy, empowerment, and career development initiatives (opportunities, mentoring, training).
- The institution prioritizes the creation of women's professional networks in the environmental field.
- It advocates for gender-sensitive budgeting at both institutional and project levels.

To achieve excellence in its fields, the Reserve aims to foster an inclusive environment, promoting diversity and inclusion based on the principle of gender equality.

This Gender Equality Plan serves as a tool that:

- Reaffirms the institution's core values (equality, inclusion, diversity, transparency);
- Proactively addresses challenges to ensure gender equality principles are embedded in all institutional processes and practices.

Key Institutional Objectives:

1. Creating an Equal Work Environment

- Ensuring gender-fair procedures in recruitment, promotion, and professional development.
- Implementing work-life balance measures for all employees.
- Organizing regular training sessions on preventing discrimination and harassment.

2. Promoting Equality in Local Communities

- Supporting women's entrepreneurial projects in sustainable tourism and traditional crafts.
- Ensuring balanced participation of women and men in decision-making processes regarding reserve management.
- Developing educational programs to combat gender stereotypes among youth.

3. Integrating a Gender Perspective in Conservation Activities

- Highlighting women's roles in protecting cultural and natural heritage.
- Ensuring equitable representation in scientific research activities.
- Adapting heritage interpretation programs to reflect contributions of both genders to community development.

4. Institutional Collaborations for Equality

- Partnering with organizations specialized in women's rights.
- Implementing minimum gender standards in externally funded projects.

Through these actions, the "Orheiul Vechi" Reserve aims to become a national leader in applying gender equality principles within protected areas, contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5 – Gender Equality).

By developing this Gender Equality Plan, we ensure that:

- All employees enjoy fair and equal working conditions;
- All activities adhere to equal opportunity, diversity, inclusion, and non-discrimination principles;
- Every employee (regardless of gender, religion, or ethnicity) has access to training, career development, leadership opportunities, and work-life balance.

In short, we promote merit-based equality at all career stages—from hiring to advancement—while fostering a supportive and discrimination-free workplace.

Data collection

In order to be able to follow the evolution of the state of affairs in the field and to be able to make a comparison between what was and the current situation, the following data were selected, with reference to the years 2018-2023:

- Total number of employees, by biological sex;
- Number of doctoral students, men and women;
- Number of employees, men and women, in management positions.

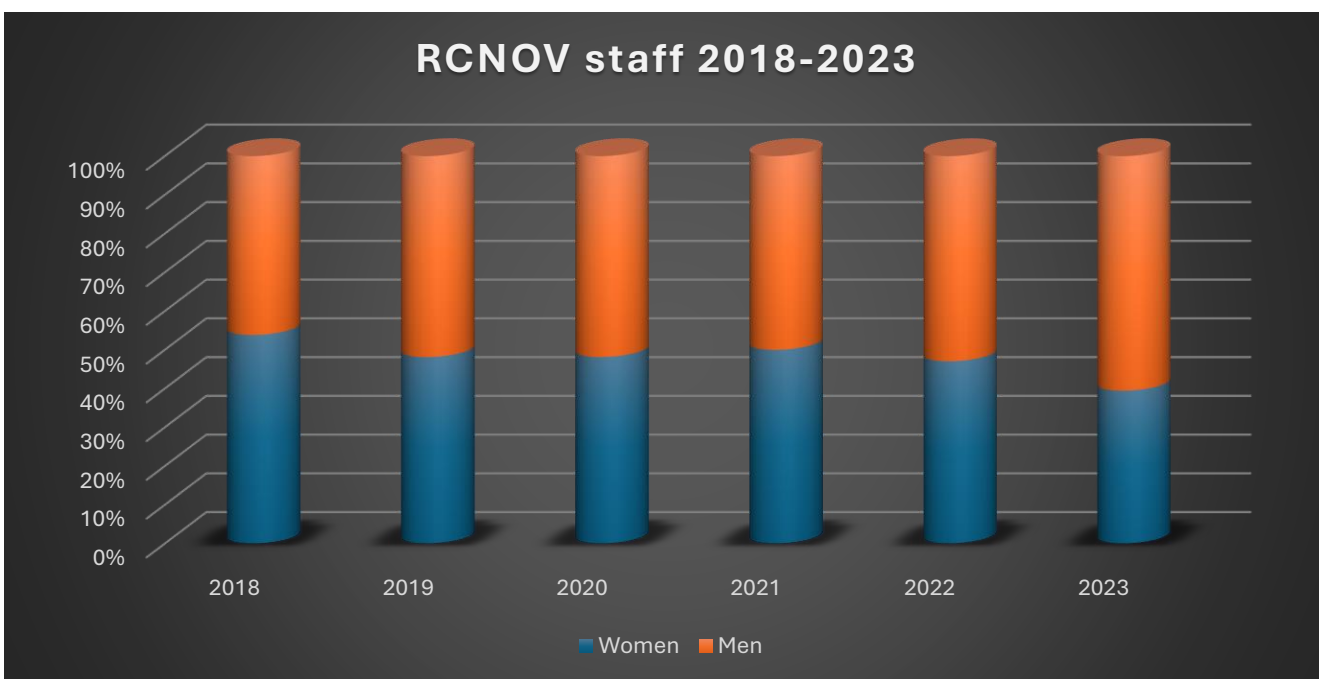


Chart 1. Employed personnel of the "Old Orhei" Cultural and Natural Reserve in the period 2018 - 2023.

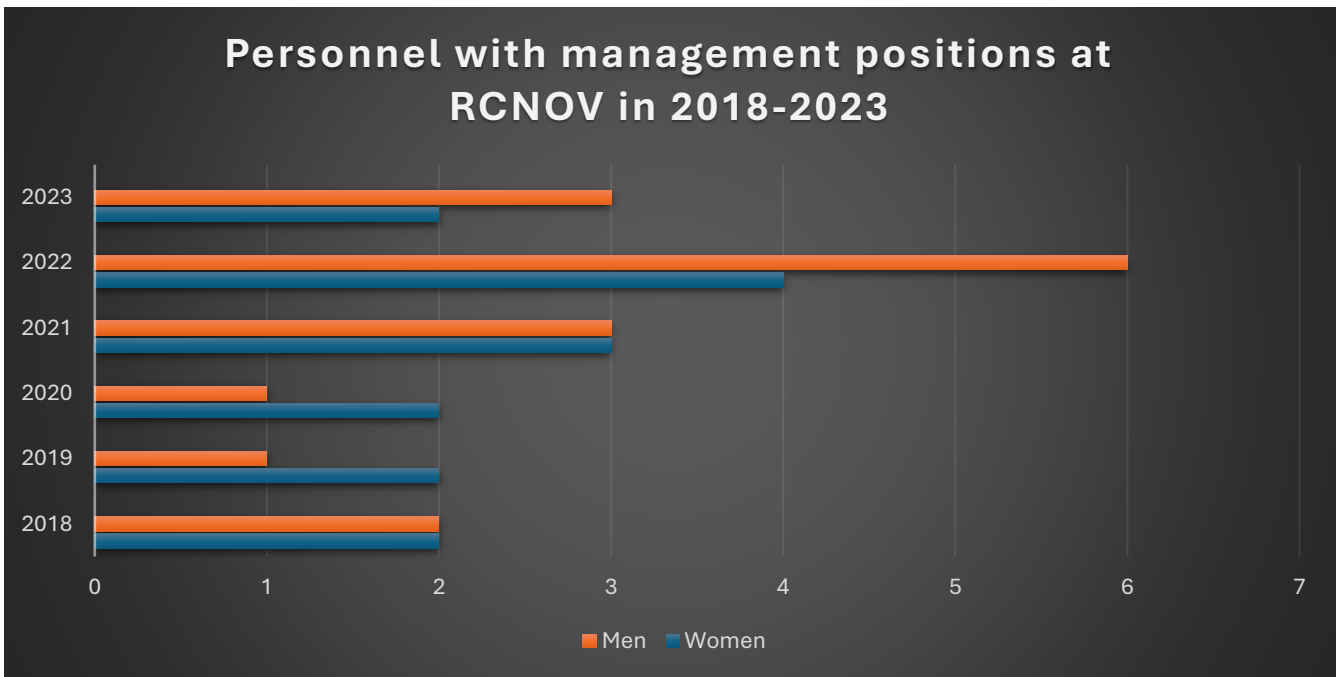


Chart 2. Representation of the number of personnel with management positions in the institution 2018 – 2023.

Table 1. Doctoral students, men and women, registered in 2023 RCNOV.

No. of PhD	Women	Men
3	1	2

III. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED DATA

Within the Public Institution "Orheiul Vechi" Cultural-Natural Reserve, there is a visible balance between male and female employees:

- In leadership positions, the number of men compared to women varies yearly but maintains an overall equilibrium on average.
- Currently, only one employee (a woman) is on childcare leave.
- The Reserve provides a safe workplace for its staff, with no reported cases of gender-based violence or harassment of any kind.
- Employees (both men and women) are not required to work overtime or during rest periods (weekends, holidays, or annual leave).
- Women are more actively involved in organizational and support activities, including leadership roles. However, they should be further encouraged to take on greater responsibilities and leadership positions.

Based on an internal institutional analysis, as well as national and European policy requirements, the management of the "Orheiul Vechi" Cultural-Natural Reserve has committed to developing and implementing this Gender Equality Plan for 2024-2025.

Key Findings from Data Analysis (2018–2023)

- Gender distribution among employees remained balanced.
- Leadership roles showed fluctuations but no systemic gender disparities.
- Workplace culture was assessed as inclusive and respectful.
- Areas for improvement:
 - Increasing women's representation in top-level decision-making roles.
 - Expanding flexible work policies to support caregivers.
 - Strengthening gender-sensitive monitoring to ensure long-term equality.

This analysis confirms that while progress has been made, proactive measures (outlined in Section IV) are necessary to sustain and advance gender equality in the Reserve’s operations.

IV. ACTION PLAN FOR PROMOTING AND ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY (2024-2025)

The Gender Equality Action Plan outlines intervention areas, specific actions to be implemented, target groups, timelines, and responsible parties.

Domain 1: Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

Actions	Target Group	Timeline	Responsible Party
1. Conduct updated gender equality diagnostics based on relevant data - semi-annually or as needed	All employees	2024-2025	Administration Council members, with invited female employees
2. Review institutional documents for better gender mainstreaming	All employees	2024	Director and management staff
3. Ensure gender-balanced composition of committees and commissions	All employees	2024-2025	Director and management staff

Domain 2: Promoting Gender Balance in Recruitment and Selection Processes

Actions	Target Group	Timeline	Responsible Party
1. Analyze hiring and promotion procedures to identify potential gender biases	All employees	2024 – 2025	Administration Council (based on HR specialist data)
2. Promote career opportunities through diverse channels	Women and men from all socio-professional categories	2024 – 2025	Human Resources Department

Domain 3: Work-Life Balance

Actions	Target Group	Timeline	Responsible Party
1. Implement flexible work arrangements	Reserve employees	2024 – 2025	Human Resources Department
2. Organize team-building and recreational activities	Reserve employees	2024 – 2025	Director and management staff

Domain 4: Measures Against Gender-Based Violence, Including Sexual Harassment

Actions	Target Group	Timeline	Responsible Party
1. Develop and implement clear policies against gender-based violence and sexual harassment	Reserve employees	2024 – 2025	Human Resources Department

Implementation Framework:

- The plan operates within existing national and international legal frameworks
- Actions are designed to be measurable and time-bound
- Responsibility is distributed across management levels
- Progress will be monitored through the established data collection system

This structured approach ensures systematic implementation of gender equality measures across all institutional operations. The plan will be reviewed annually for necessary adjustments.

V. FINAL PROVISIONS

The Gender Equality Policy of the Public Institution "Orheiul Vechi" Cultural-Natural Reserve supports the development of gender-sensitive actions at both institutional and project levels. This document serves as a guiding framework, without replacing existing legislation or international commitments assumed before or after its adoption.

This policy may be amended or supplemented as needed and shall enter into force upon approval. The Cultural-Natural Reserve "Orheiul Vechi" will implement this document during the 2024-2025 period.

Approved by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a series of loops and a final vertical stroke.

Ion Ceban
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