

PRIMA AND GENDER EQUALITY AFTER HALFWAY

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR PARTICIPATING STATES

- Appoint female decision-makers at the top-management PRIMA bodies (Board of trustees, Steering Committee), especially the SEMCs representations.
- Ensure wider participation of female national officers and contact points in future activities.
- Develop an enabling environment of policies, laws, and norms to boost women's participation in research & innovation, especially in decision-making positions.

FOR PRIMA SECRETARIATE

- In future calls/topics, emphasise the support of females' role and efforts to develop, join and coordinate successful projects.
- Create robust matchmaking and partnering platforms for female groups to cooperate and share innovative approaches, especially those serving women.
- Generate and promote further evidence on women's success stories, and added values, and address capacity gaps of gender equality as a programme-centred approach.
- Assign more females to join the Secretariate in all positions (staff, interns, evaluators), with attention to the decision-making level.
- Deliver more female-focused training and awareness campaigns to future applicants.

FOR PROJECTS, SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY COMMUNITY, PRIVATE SECTOR

- Encourage and empower female participants at all project stages (brainstorming, designing preparation, implementation, target groups).



The European Commission is committed to promoting gender equality in research and innovation (EC Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025) and a broader commitment across all EU policies. Aligning with such a high obligation, the PRIMA programme is endeavouring to enforce its regulatory framework on gender equality, at all dimensions, which applies widely across its various bodies, and operations of the funded projects, extending to the final beneficiaries and target groups.

At PRIMA, what does the gender balance look like? Gender equality exists where women and men have an equal say in decisions at all levels. After the first four years of implementation (2018-2021), it is time to analyse gender equality and women's participation at both programme and project levels with the aim to 1) emphasise the essential roles of women, and 2) actions/decisions to foster women's active engagement.

The brief purpose is to achieve better gender equality at all levels (macro-meso-micro) with the aim to:

- Empower the active participation of female decision-makers, researchers, and beneficiaries in the Mediterranean territory,
- Advance scientific quality and the base and relevance of produced knowledge, technology, and decisions that have societal values,
- Upgrade the rigor, reproducibility, and generalizability of science and innovation culture in the Mediterranean area,

GENDER EQUALITY AT PRIMA GOVERNING BODIES – MACRO LEVEL

PRIMA has been built on the concept of "**Equal Footing**" between EU and Non-EU Participating States. This pivotal rule should not only cover the geopolitical representation but extend to consider "**Gender Equality**" too. In addition to being clearly stated inside its Strategic Research and Innovation Strategy, SRIA, PRIMA is committed to aligning its structures and activities with Sustainable Development Goals, especially **SDG-5**, "Gender Equality".

PRIMA Board of Trustees (BoT) and Steering Committee (SC)

Examining the recent structure of the PRIMA **BoT** (2022) indicated that the ratio between male and female representation is **2:1**, with a negative gender balance of PRIMA Southern-Eastern Med. Countries, SEMC (**3:1**).

Consistent with the above, the PRIMA current **SC** (July 2022) presented a severe gender unbalance, with limited female participation, **17%**.

Trending:

This brief is analyzing females' participation at various levels based on the following trend:

- **>50%**: Excellent Participation,
- **40-35%**: Good, with attention,
- **<30%**: Limited – Action Needed,



It is important to encourage female policymakers from Southern-Eastern Mediterranean Countries to represent their States at PRIMA's top decision-making bodies.

PRIMA Funding Agencies – National Contact Points & Officers (FAs-NCPs)

However, there are continuous changes in the names of the NCPs from time to time; we counted, at the time of this report, **50** NCPs as follows: **27** from PRIMA-EU and **23** from SEMC. Among all analytics, the gender balance of FAs shows the most favourable environment for women, with a percentage of participation of **65%**. Comparing data between PRIMA-EU and PRIMA-SEMC proves such a positive female contribution, with **70%** and **61%**, respectively.

PRIMA Secretariate

The current structure, at the time of this study, indicated that the total number of the Secretariate permanent staff is **15**. Examining the gender balance shows that the Female percentage is **40%**. Initially, it seemed we scored a GOOD balance. However, deeper investigations of regional representation indicate a better gender balance among EU representatives, with a female percentage of **44%**, than SEMC ones, only **33%**. Furthermore, the position of females at the top-decision level showed some limitations too. It is recommended for future recruitment to give more opportunities to females from Southern-Eastern parts of the Mediterranean, especially at the decision level.

PRIMA Scientific Advisory Committee, SAC

In 2022, PRIMA reassembled its SAC. The new consists of **Eight** experts from seven countries. From a gender perspective, it is indicated that females represent **38%** of the new composition. It is accepted but attention is needed for future appointed external experts to give better chances for female specialists.

SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION COMMITTEES & GENDER EQUALITY – MESO LEVEL

Every year, PRIMA Secretariate appoints independent assessors for its scientific evaluation committees for evaluating the submitted applications as well as the periodic reports of the running projects. Essential here to highlight that evaluation assignment is also a learning process that raises the awareness and expertise of both male and female assessors. Accordingly, two phases of evaluation were examined:

- I) **Application/ Submission Phase** [Stages 1&2], and
- II) **Implementation Phase** [Mid-term & Final].

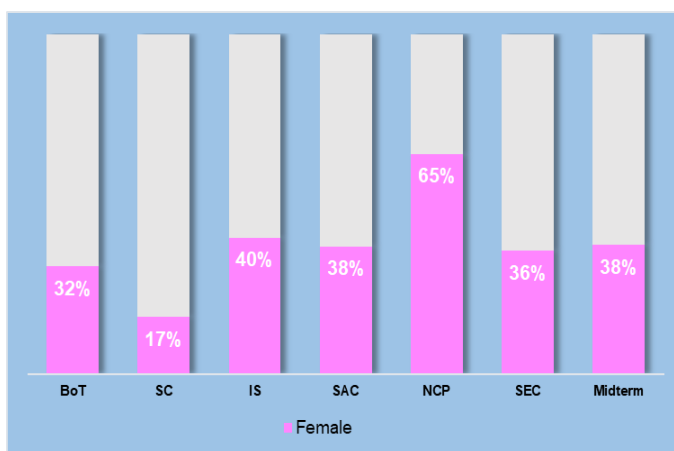
Assessors and Gender Characteristics at Application/ Submission Phase (I)

This study sampled the scientific evaluation panels of the last three years (**2019-2021**). In addition, the analysis is also considering the appointed experts for the current/running year **2022**, the **first stage**, that has been concluded for both sections, and all experts have been already contracted.

The report examined **249** participating assessors of both sections and two stages (pre-proposal, full application) over the past three years. Female assessors represent only **36%** of all appointed assessors. Checking the female participation over the current year, 2022, for the two sections during the first stage provides a better-balanced representation, of **46%**. Such a healthy indicator was preserved during the 2022-second stage, **45.5%**. Such improvement in female assessors' involvement is noticed and appreciated and should be kept in upcoming calls.

Assessors-Gender Aspect, Implementation Phase (II)

Checking data of the external experts hired for the midterm technical assessments of the funded projects, the total number of appointed assessors is **58**. Female assessors represent **38%** of the hired experts, which is an acceptable/good overall percentage but might be advanced further in the future, mainly for SEMC female experts, that show limited participation, only **23%**.



GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN PRIMA PROJECTS – MICRO LEVEL

PRIMA-Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Platform (MEL) was developed to monitor the progress of the running projects. After four years, **168** projects have been funded and are now integrated into the MEL. In total, **1,580** scientists and research team members are now using MEL regularly to manage their projects.

The report studied MEL-Consortia members intending to measure female engagement in two classifications:

- 1) **Participants**, and 2) **Project Coordinators**.

The analysis compares as well the geographic dimension and action types, and affiliation from the gender aspect.

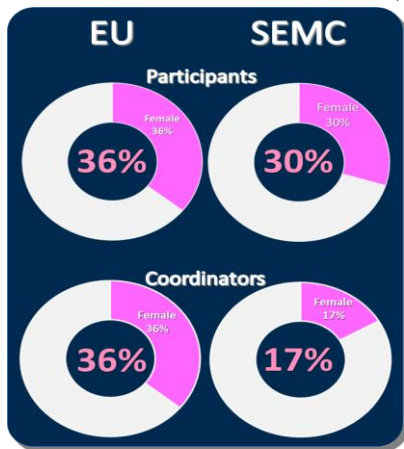


Female Participation in PRIMA Projects

Analysing data of **1,580** registered users on MEL indicated that the percentage of female participation in all PRIMA **168** funded projects is limited to **33%**. Such a percentage is not satisfactory, and a more profound analysis proves parallel percentages between the EU (**36%**) and SEMC (**30%**) of female involvement. Now, it is evidenced more than before that more targeted and tailored dissemination actions (i.e., capacity building, info sessions, awareness campaigns) are needed at the two shores of the Mediterranean.

Female Coordinators

Like participants, only **35%** of all PRIMA coordinators are females. While we can witness **56** female coordinators from EU countries, with a share of **36%**



of all EU coordinators, one can count only **two** SEMC female coordinators (*Halosheep* - *DSWAP*) from Tunisia and Israel, representing only **17%** of all SEMC coordinators. Such a big discrepancy underscores the essentiality of customised capacity-building activities to encourage and support females to apply as coordinators, with special attention to SEMCs.

Participating States and Women's Contribution

At a national level, it is possible to classify the Participating States-regarding the gender equality - into:

Green Group (>35%): countries with an acceptable/good level of national female participation.

Yellow Group (>25%): states have fair participation of females in their projects. Attention is needed.

Red Group (<25%): female involvement as beneficiaries of these countries shows a severe limitation. Corrective actions are highly demanded.

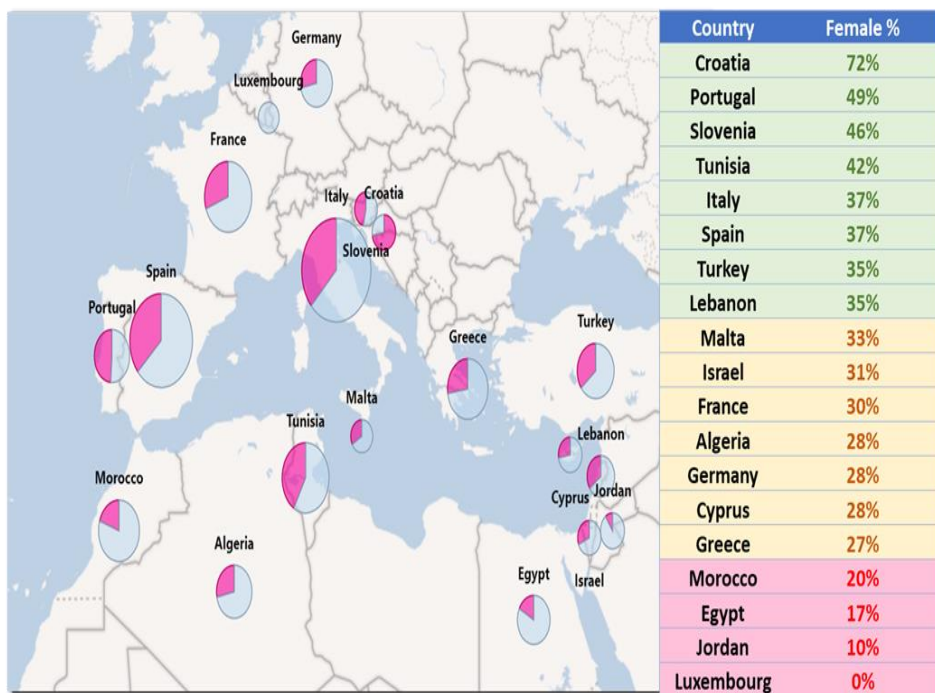
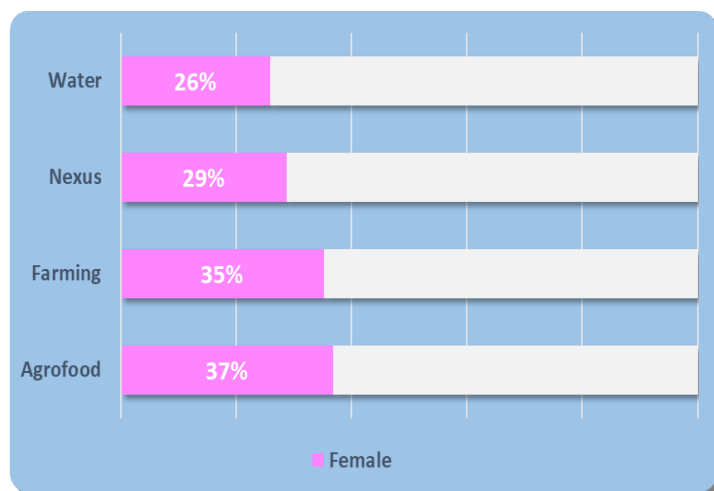
From a country perspective, **Croatia** scored the highest female participation with an overall percentage of **72%**, while **Tunisia** has the SEMC healthiest female involvement, with **42%**.

In the Red group, we can underline **three** SEMCs (**Morocco, Egypt, and Jordan**) with good overall numbers of participants but a severe unbalanced female contribution. In addition to other states, focused actions are needed in these countries to advance the submission of their female national applicants and partners in PRIMA future calls and projects.

Gender Dimension at various Thematic Areas, Guess What!

PRIMA has four thematic areas (Water, Farming, Agrofood, and Nexus). Before going further, it might be predicted that female researchers and scientists are more participating in the Farming and Agrofood sectors. Our estimation was achieved!

An analytical study of participants/ gender against the PRIMA thematic areas proved that Agrofood scored the highest female participation (**37%**), followed by Farming projects, both with good shares. Water showed the lowest female involvement.

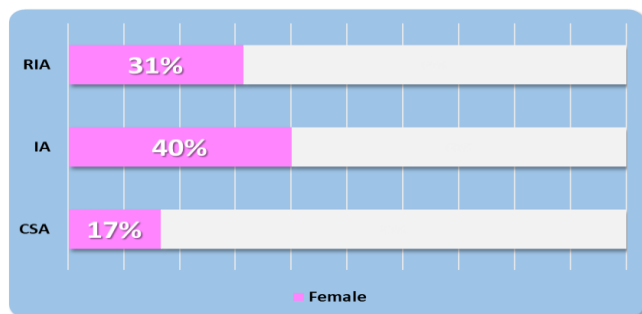


Does the Type of Action Show Any Gender Preference?

Good News! Female participation in Innovation Action (IA) projects that address a high Technology Readiness Level showed a Healthier score (40%) than the Research and Innovation Actions (31%).

For project coordination, both Types of Action (RIA & IA) showed precisely the exact accepted female percentages, 35%.

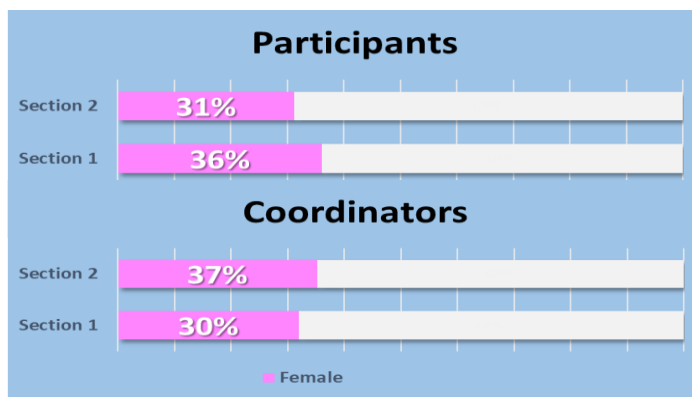
NB. While PRIMA has funded a single CSA project, PHEMAC, in the first four cycles, reference data of CSA may not be highly-representative.



Female and PRIMA Sections, Any Divergence?

As Section 1 is applying the EU-H2020 rules of participation, Section 2 utilises the States' national regulations. There are NO discriminating rules against female participation in any of the PRIMA Participating States. Therefore, it is predictable that both sections should provide the same shares of female contribution.

Examining the available data over years pointed out an accepted female involvement in Section 1 (36%), while Section 2's percentage is relatively low (31%). Unexpectedly, % of female coordinators of Section 2 (37%) scored higher than their relatives of Section 1 (30%). Several success stories of PRIMA projects have been counted and are coordinated by females, mainly from PRIMA EU countries. However, it is advised to declare clearly inside the national regulations of the funding agencies that 'female participation is a plus'. At PRIMA Secretariate, more focused training is needed for females to nurture them to apply as Coordinators, with a special focus on SEMC participants.



Women's Participants and Affiliations, Public OR Private?

Only 17% of all PRIMA-MEL female participants are from Private Sector! Females from SEMC-Private are more under-represented, less than 4%. This indicates a highly limited involvement. It is vital to engage women representatives from the private sector, with attention to SMEs, in all PRIMA future actions at all three levels.

CONCLUSION

The PRIMA Gender Equality brief synthesizes research findings and policy recommendations on key areas around gender equality and women's participation at both programme and project levels. The policy brief aims to ensure the effectiveness of EU-Mediterranean women in all processes and activities, especially decision-making. This concise policy-oriented document is a useful resource for programme management, gender equality advocates, the scientific community, civil society, and other policy actors working to achieve gender equality and women's rights in all PRIMA Participating States. The study stresses that all relevant stakeholders (BoT, Secretariate, funding agencies, research communities...) need to do more to recognize and build upon the added value that female scientists and entrepreneurs bring to the region. Examining female participation show acceptable equality at various levels, but some exceptions that need corrective actions. The deep analysis draws attention to two common weaknesses in regard to gender equality: **1) Women's roles in top-management and decision-making structures, and 2) Female participation from SEMC.** Whilst being trusted and valued by mainstream actors, exploring the current situation, and recognizing gaps and difficulties that harness females' inputs are critical for better gender equality and equity. Creative and effective female empowerment and endorsing actions need to be piloted, focusing on Southern-Eastern Mediterranean and the private/business representatives. Likewise, women's success stories and gender equality best practices need to be stocktaken, promoted, and replicated.



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