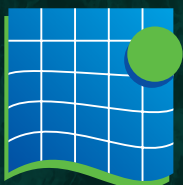


MARINE INSTITUTE EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (EDI) STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (INCLUDING GENDER EQUALITY PLAN) 2024-2027



Foras na Mara
Marine Institute



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Marine Institute Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Action Plan (including Gender Equality Plan) 2024-2027

The Marine Institute is Ireland's scientific agency responsible for supporting the sustainable development of the state's maritime area and resources. We do this through conducting applied research and providing scientific knowledge, advice and services to government, industry and other stakeholders and users.

Purpose of the EDI Strategy for the Marine Institute

Gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity, particularly within executive teams, are strongly linked to organisational performance.

The goal of this strategy is to set out a roadmap of equitable and inclusive actions allied to our remit as a public body. The proposed actions are coupled with metrics, to facilitate analyses of how the Marine Institute is achieving its objectives across a range of activities. It is work that will challenge us, will constantly evolve and will require regular review.

Marine Institute EDI Context

The Marine Institute appreciates its people and holds our values of Commitment, Integrity, Excellence, Innovation, Collaboration and Respect as central to how we work. Our Board and Senior Leadership Team are champions of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Our people are important and central to everything we do. We foster a culture of passion for our work, collaboration, inclusion, fairness, respect and transparency with clear, honest and inclusive communications. Celebrating our people and achievements and highlighting and supporting our diverse and high performing organisation is a top priority for the Marine Institute.

As a public body in Ireland, we have a responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of our employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by our policies and plans. This is a legislative obligation - the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, and it originated in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014¹. The Marine Institute EDI strategy aligns with the National Research and Innovation Strategy, Impact 2030² and the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 to Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is an organisational objective prioritised as an area for focus and positive action to ensure that all voices are heard.

¹ Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 - [ihrec_act_2014.pdf](#)

² Impact 2030 - <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/27c78-impact-2030-irelands-new-research-and-innovation-strategy/>



Marine Institute EDI journey

The Marine Institute Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group was set up and launched in February 2022. Membership of the group is entirely voluntary, but seeks to ensure representation from all staff grades, roles, backgrounds, Service Groups and Marine Institute sites. EDI members are committed to delivering the outputs and responsibilities assigned to the group in any year. Subgroups have been formed to assess and implement specific items or for dedicated EDI events. Members are encouraged to contribute openly and in any way that they bring the perspectives and ideas of their Marine Institute colleagues to meetings.

The Alliance and Allies network has been established in the Marine Institute as a mutually supportive and collaborative group with a focus on LGBTQIA+ issues. The network has established the informal 'Blend coffee morning', coordinated on Pride events and has led the initiation of LGBTQIA+ information sessions for Marine Institute staff.

In parallel, a large number of EDI-enabling activities and policies have been developed and supported by the broader organisation. We have policies and procedures in place to ensure our teams feel empowered to deliver their services in a fair and transparent manner, including a family-friendly working policy, various parental leave policies, a robust recruitment and selection policy that ensures equal access to all, and a gender balanced interviewing panel where possible.

The Marine Institute holds a Platinum Level Excellence Through People certification, a people focused National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) quality standard that we have held at various levels since 2014. In 2023, the Marine Institute worked towards 'Platinum level' accreditation with AsIAM, Ireland's national charity for autism to be recognised as an Autism Friendly Employer. Our Recruitment and Selection policy and processes were assessed, and interviewers trained to enable neurodiverse candidates to access an equal opportunities platform for all potential opportunities. Additionally, the organisation has rolled out a comprehensive training plan for all staff on Unconscious Bias, Inclusive Recruitment Practices and Dignity and Respect in the workplace.

The Marine Institute conducted an EDI survey in 2023 and actioned several points arising from the survey results. In 2024, a staff survey was issued relating to LGBTQIA+ information. The survey results were analysed, and training sessions on findings have been actioned based on feedback.

Together with our first EDI action plan, these activities, training, accreditations and feedback experiences have all informed and developed the next phase in the Marine Institute's EDI journey where we are now looking for a step change in our activities and initiatives to 2027 and beyond.

Marine Institute EDI statistics and reporting

As a public body the Marine Institute has several reporting obligations.

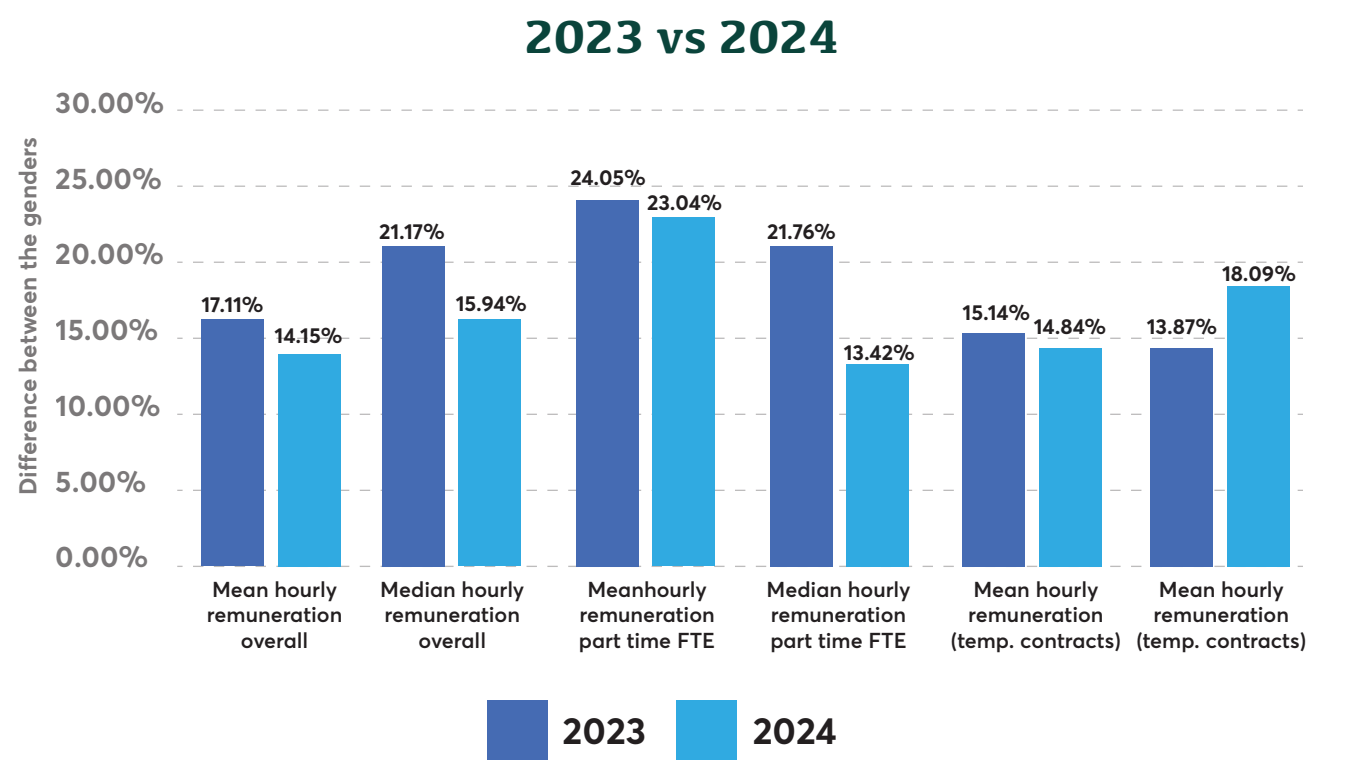
Some data findings are shared annually via our Annual Report which is published online via our website³. We are committed to continuously improving data collection and collation to identify, understand and overcome any potential barriers to becoming a more gender balanced and sustainable organisation. Our HR team collect and

³ Marine Institute Annual Reports: <https://www.marine.ie/site-area/publications/annual-reports-0>

collate data monthly on the status of our gender balance and prioritise discussion on possible barriers to more senior positions being held by females in the organisation. The Marine Institute conducts an annual survey on staff disability, in line with the Disability Act 2005⁴.

The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science annually publish the Research and Development Budget⁵ which shows the levels of government spending on research and development (R&D) in Ireland. As a Research Funding Organisation and as a Research Performing Organisation, the Marine Institute submits an annual return to this publication showing our R&D spend and the gender breakdown of R&D Personnel (FTEs) by sector and occupation. A series of Gender Equality indicator data⁶ as a Research Funding Organisation are collected annually. We collate statistics on gender balance of our evaluation panels and recipients of funding (including size of grants) under the Marine Research Programme.

In 2023, the Marine Institute published its first Gender Pay Gap (GPG) report which is available on our website⁷. Our second report was published on December 30th, 2024. Below outlines the comparisons we were able to make based upon having 2 data sets. Overall, Marine Institute has shown a positive shift in both our mean gender pay gap, and overall median gender pay gap, both being reduced by 2.48% and 5.06% respectively.

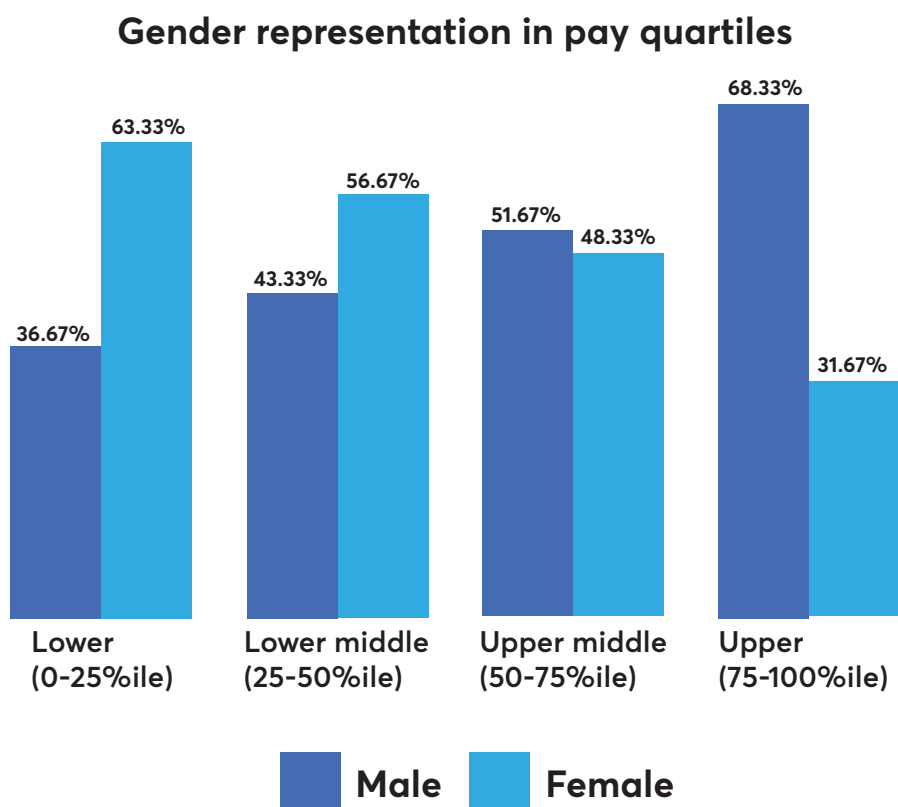


However, while the Marine Institute demonstrates a strong balance in gender in the overall workforce, there is a disparity in representation at leadership level in the organisation. We are committed to understanding and identifying any barriers or reasons as to why this disparity occurs and putting in place supports and structures to assist women reach their career goals and ambitions with specialised training and development opportunities including specific ‘Woman in Leadership’ training, further training on workplace biases and webinars of varying topics that address gender disparities in Organisations.

⁴ Irish Statue Book: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/14/enacted/en/html>
⁵ DFHERIS Research and Development Budget 2022-2023 - gov - The Research and Development Budget 2022 to 2023 (www.gov.ie)
⁶ Science Europe: Practical guide to improving gender equality in research organisations - https://www.scienceeurope.org/media/ubblodu/se_gender_practical-guide.pdf
⁷ Marine Institute Gender Pay Gap Report 2024 <https://www.marine.ie/sites/default/files/MIFiles/Docs/General/mi-gender-pay-gap-report-2024.pdf>

The profile of our staff overall is 50% male and 50% female whilst the analysis of staff numbers by quartile indicates higher numbers of females in part-time and lower / lower middle quartiles, with a higher percentage of male employees than female in the upper Quartiles.

While there has been an increase in the number of women in senior positions within Marine Institute, there are other areas where enhanced EDI actions could assist in the Marine Institute further harnessing the power and ability of its diverse and talented staff.



Marine Institute EDI Strategic Objectives

To fortify and strengthen our commitment to EDI in Marine Institute, we have established EDI strategic objectives to guide and assist us in providing a roadmap to continuous improvement and evolution of our EDI strategic planning and implementation. These strategic objectives have been informed by engagement with the EDI and Alliance groups in the Marine Institute, staff in the wider organisation were consulted and input and feedback from the Senior Leadership Team was sought and included.

- **EDI Objective 1** – To ensure that an EDI culture is fostered in the Marine Institute
- **EDI Objective 2** – To promote Marine Institute access to a diversity of talent and skills
- **EDI Objective 3** – To advance career support and leadership development opportunities to all staff working in the Marine Institute
- **EDI Objective 4** – To monitor and promote the gender considerations in the Marine Institute as a Research Funding Organisation and as a Research Performing Organisation
- **EDI Objective 5** – To facilitate the integration of EDI Governance and best practices into Marine Institute initiatives

Marine Institute EDI Action plan (2024-2027)

Action	Target	Owner	Timeline
EDI Objective 1 – EDI Culture			
Continuation of support and resourcing for the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group to monitor, implement and oversee the EDI strategy	Publish EDI strategy including Gender Equity Plan (GEP) in January 2025	EDI committee /Senior Leadership Team /Human Resources Team	Quarterly meetings of the EDI group Publish the EDI strategy in March 2025
Promote and support all sub-groups of our EDI group to ensure there is an inclusive and welcoming space for all staff	Publish our schedule of events to celebrate our various groups celebrating all diversities	EDI committee	Monthly dissemination of events
Develop our internal SharePoint pages to communicate events, supports and resources and share knowledge of activities that run across our Organisation	Publish events as and when arise	EDI committee / IT Ops	Monthly dissemination of resources on Sharepoint
Promote our engagement with LGBTQIA initiatives and networks	Engagement with the 3 Park Place LGBTQ+ Networking Group (IDA, Research Ireland, SEAI) Attend National Pride Parades annually and Pride Month promotion to be shared and engagement efforts to continue with DAFM & Civil and Public Service colleagues	EDI committee / Human Resources	Annual report to EDI group and SLT
Promote training initiatives through our EDI SharePoint pages inclusive of topics on Transgender issues, Training supporting Zero tolerance of Bullying and Harassment, Disability Awareness, Bias trainings, Active by-stander training and unconscious gender issue training. Support these broad training initiatives at a policy and resource allocation level.	Publish our training programme to communicate further initiatives Communicate workshops/ roadshows and staff events as and when appropriate	Human Resources / EDI committee / Senior Leadership Team	Publish/ disseminate training opportunities through Sharepoint and email on a monthly basis

Action	Target	Owner	Timeline
Communicate the work and initiatives supported by the EDI group to MI staff (e.g. Quarterly Staff Update Meetings).	Establish a communications framework for our EDI initiatives	EDI committee / Human Resources / Senior Leadership Team	Quarterly update to staff
Arrange, host and support annual social initiatives specific to EDI	Continue to promote and develop our social initiatives across the Organisation for all EDI groups	EDI committee / Human Resources / All Hands	Minimum of 4 events supported per year
EDI Objective 2 – Diversity of talent and skills			
Develop internal and external consultations to better understand perspectives of people with lived experience of discrimination, inequality and marginalised communities and ensure our policies and procedures fairly reflect processes that they can easily access and follow to create a more inclusive environment.	Publish and promote data collection available through Access system Ensure policies and frameworks such as Recruitment & Selection, Learning and Development etc. remain accessible and ensure equality of opportunity and a level playing field for all.	Human Resources / EDI committee / Senior Leadership Team	Annual data collection and reporting plan implemented for EDI Data (some monthly).
Foster and communicate the principles of the 'Irish Human Rights and Equality duty' and develop our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion screening methods and screening tools to ensure continuous improvement in knowledge and understanding of barriers to a more diverse workforce.	Ensuring compliance that everyone who works for our Organisation completes this training Complete IHREC and other courses that we use to incentivise further learnings in relation to EDI initiatives annually	Human Resources / EDI committee / Senior Leadership Team	Annually all staff new to working with the Marine Institute will complete the IHREC training via the public sector portal.
Explore opportunities to engage marginalised backgrounds to join Marine Institute and attract people from all demographics and backgrounds to increase diversity in our workforce	Become involved in community engagement initiatives with employer representatives and targeted representative groups.	Human Resources / Senior Leadership Team / EDI Committee	Annually work with IBEC, 2nd and 3rd level academic institutions and relevant community groups to promote access to opportunities at 2nd, 3rd level and for employment for individuals from marginalised backgrounds.

Action	Target	Owner	Timeline
Foster and support relationships held with local educational institutions through programmes such as our annual Transition Year programme, Bursary opportunities, and Scholarship programmes to ensure accessibility of Public Sector training opportunities and careers for all. Promote and disseminate Early Career Ocean Professional national, EU and international opportunities to MI staff Promote and disseminate Intergenerational Dialogue opportunities to MI staff	Continue to support education institutions by planning programmes to suit the demographic engaged and broaden our outreach programmes. Advertise opportunities through the European Marine Board Young Ambassador programme, the Oyster Network in EuroMarine, Emerging Leaders Programme for Arctic Frontiers, Bridges Network in the All-Atlantic Ocean Research and Innovation Alliance.	Human Resources / All Hands/Communications Team PIRS	Annually offer and support Transition Year, Undergraduate Bursary, and Postgraduate Scholarship Programmes which offer training, and access to education and career support and work experience. Disseminate minimum of four opportunities annually for early career and senior career staff annually
EDI Objective 3 – Career support and Leadership development			
Agree a framework to communicate data and statistics relating to the collection and reporting of an identified range of statistics that will enable benchmarking and show progress with EDI targets. This will include recruitment and selection statistics, promotional statistics, Learning and Development opportunities availed of and cultural and other EDI statistics of our workforce	Create a space on our Intranet to publish EDI and R&S statistics annually. Meet our statutory and reporting requirements for gender/disability/diversity annually	Human Resources EDI Committee	Agree with Service Groups in Q1 2025 the information to be published and format. Modify the Human Resources SharePoint / Intranet pages and publish data in Q2 of 2025
Review and evolve our suite of family friendly policies inclusive of but not limited to our 'Family friendly policy', Carer's leave policy, Maternity policy, parents and Parental leave policies, blended working policy and job-sharing policy	Meet all legislative requirements as mandated ensuring policies in place are current and accessible. Review and report on all policies sharing statistics on the profile of staff accessing these policies as part of our annual EDI reporting.	Human Resources	Review at least five relevant policies across the timeframe of this plan

Action	Target	Owner	Timeline
Ascertain if there are perceived barriers that affect women applying for senior positions. Consider the best way to engage and assess this.	Review survey feedback and implement alternate data collection in this area in line with our cyclical survey timeframes. Implementing a stand-alone review of this.	Senior Leadership Team / EDI Committee / Human Resources: 1. EDI Group supported by H.R. team to review last survey output and agree the fora and or additional surveys to best collect data and recommend approach to SLT. 2. E.D.I. Group supported by H.R. to perform data gathering and conduct initial evaluation of same so as to establish recommended actions, for consideration by SLT. 3. Actions to be delivered	1. By end Q3 2025 2. By end Q2 2026 3. By end 2027
Provide support for participation in (for example) the Aurora Senior Women's Development Programme and technical CPD training for staff (including coaching and mentoring programmes) Ensure equal access to all groups to developmental programmes	For delivery by Q4 2024 Promote a wide range of leadership developmental programmes on offer to all employees	EDI committee / Human Resources	Review participation in 2024 intake Aurora pilot programme by Q2 of 2025. Annually commencing in Q2 of 2025 promote current Leadership Development Programmes. In 2026 publish the Learning & Development Strategy - Leadership Development and Future Readiness frameworks to ensure equal access to training and opportunities.

Action	Target	Owner	Timeline
Support the development of Early Career Ocean Professionals by defining clear guidelines for their engagement and integration with senior scientists. Promote broadly via SharePoint and other media mentoring and training opportunities so that they can feel part and be entirely engaged in the MI community.	Engage with Early Career Ocean Professionals in the organisation to define their needs and write guidelines for engagement and integration with senior scientists. This can be done by taking as an example the existing material and work from Early Career Scientists Networks already existing as SIIECS, the ICES Strategic Initiative on the Integration of Early Career Scientists.	EDI committee / Human Resources	Disseminate minimum of four opportunities annually for early career and senior career staff
EDI Objective 4 – Gender dimension in Research Performance and Research Funding			
Monitor and review all aspects of external funding calls and collect Research Funding Organisation indicator data	Report annually to EDI committee	Research Funding Office	Annual report to EDI committee
Monitor and assess gender balance on evaluation panels for proposals	Proactively assess gender balance as panels are appointed	Research Funding Office	Report annually to EDI committee
Provide training on including the gender dimension aspect within research proposals and projects	Provide access to Horizon Europe guidelines through MI researcher forum and provide guidance and training on a case-by-case basis for proposals	Research Coordination and Support	Twice per year, Research Coordination and Support to provide specific guidance on gender dimension in research to MI staff
Develop and rollout guidelines for ensuring gender balance, inclusion and nominations/ participation on external steering committees, scientific working groups and project teams	Proactively assess gender balance as nominations are proposed	EDI Committee/Senior Leadership Team / All Hands	Agenda item annually at EDI committee for discussion

Action	Target	Owner	Timeline
Continue to promote and encourage gender inclusion and participation in conferences, events and meetings e.g. equal balance of male and female speakers/representation	Proactively assess gender balance and representation at conferences and meetings as programmes are developed	Senior Leadership Team / All Hands	Agenda item annually at EDI committee for discussion Ongoing action for event design by event owners
EDI Objective 5 – EDI Governance and best practice			
Publish Annual Reports on statistics in relation to Gender balance and pay- 'Gender Pay Gap', 'Marine Institute Annual report' capturing data analysis on Recruitment and Selection statistics, Learning and Development statistics per gender	Report on all legislative requirements annually.	Human Resources Team/ EDI committee / Senior Leadership Team	Gender Pay Gap report published in December annually
Prepare a human rights and equality assessment, and establish the policies, plans and actions which will be put in place to address the issues raised in that assessment and report on progress and achievements on an annual basis, in a manner that is accessible to the public. Include the assessment in the next strategic plan.	Comply with the publication requirements under Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty)	Human Resources Team/ EDI committee / Senior Leadership Team	Publish 2025 plans and update annually thereafter
Benchmark Marine Institute progress in relation to various accreditations (Irish Centre for Diversity/AsIAM/ Excellence through People) and / or statistics to share learnings/ideologies and methods	Attain Bronze Level Irish Centre for Diversity Accreditation by Q4 2024 Explore Silver level Irish Centre for Diversity Accreditation by Q4 2025. Compare Gender Pay Gap reports with other semi state bodies.	Human Resources Team / EDI committee / Senior Leadership Team	Bronze accreditation by Dec 2024. Review outcomes at Q1 EDI meeting 2025 Assess and summarise for circulation by Q4 2025, the Gender Pay Gap reports from semi state bodies agreed with EDI Group and SLT.

Action	Target	Owner	Timeline
Participation in the Research Ireland EDI Research Body Working Group	Attend meetings and report to EDI Committee as and when conducted.	PIRS – Research Coordination and Support	Annual update at EDI meeting Feedback to MI Funding Office annually
Networking and engagement with national Higher Education Institutes, e.g. Atlantic Technological University EDI initiatives and staff	Be an active participant at hosted events to further develop relationships externally to our organisation.	EDI Committee	Report to EDI meetings post event e.g. Mna na Mara event Feb 2025, IBEC EDI Group events, International Groups and Professional Networks

2024 Marine Institute Flagship EDI Actions

- Obtain Accreditation with The Irish Centre for Diversity (ICFD): In 2024 we begin to work with ICFD to become accredited with ICFD to bronze level. Partnering with ICFD ensures that our policies and procedures are aligned to the EDI quality mark for businesses, includes current training for our Senior Leadership Team in ‘Inclusive Leadership Training’ to ensure we stay current with Industry goals and standards and benchmarking ourselves with peer organisations to ensure we are operating in a fair and inclusive manner.
- Train all staff on ‘Inclusive language.’ We have engaged LGBT Ireland to train all team members in ‘LGBT+ terminology and common issues’, Exploration of gender and sexuality norms and stereotypes’ and ‘creating a positive and inclusive work environment’. All trainings are on track to be completed by Q2 2025.
- Dissemination of the EDI Style Guide to All Hands which highlights when creating written content, it is important to keep accessibility in mind. This includes ensuring that content uses inclusive language. It considers non-native speakers, neurodiverse individuals, and people with disabilities. The document provides key points to help create accessible content across all of our products and publications.
- Participate in the Aurora Programme- Advance Higher Education’s leadership development initiative for women. Ran as a unique partnership bringing together leadership experts, higher education providers and research institutes to take positive action to address the under-representation of women in leadership positions in the sector. We have committed to supporting 5 mentees in 2024 and plan to assess and evaluate the impact of this for our Team members with a view to entering other females who are interested in future years programmes.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (and Gender Equality Plan) statement

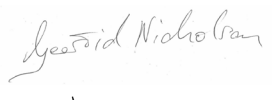
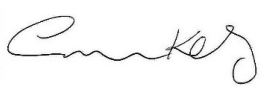
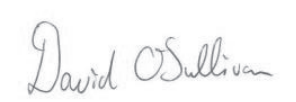
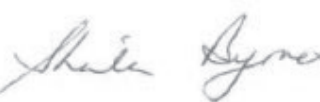
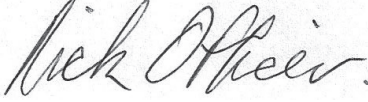
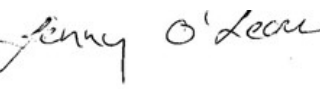
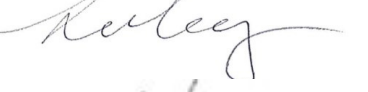
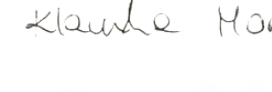
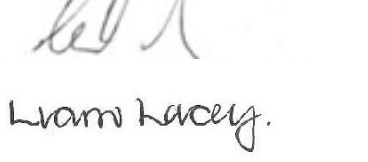
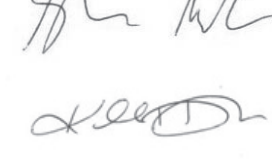
We will work collectively on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at all levels in the Marine Institute to ensure a voice for those who may not be heard, those feeling marginalised or those facing barriers both seen and unseen.

Throughout the Marine Institute, we believe in being welcoming, diverse and inclusive in our workplace. This includes our behaviours in the services that we deliver, ensuring we are respectful in our communications and actions, and in valuing differing experiences and perspectives. We are committed to the continuous improvement of our awareness of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, ensuring all who work with and for the Marine Institute feel welcome, included and respected.

The Marine Institute Senior Leadership Team and the EDI Group emphatically endorses the Marine Institute EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) strategy. We are dedicated to advancing the goals of this action plan and will actively support the broader organisation and the EDI Committee in its implementation. Collectively, we are committed to the principles outlined in this strategy and will consistently demonstrate and vocalise our support. Recognising the critical importance of a diverse and inclusive workforce, the Marine Institute values the significant benefits that diversity brings to our marine research and operational excellence. We also recognise the role that the Marine Institute can play in ensuring equal access to research funding, to training, to employment for the communities in which we operate.

We, as members of the Senior Leadership Team and the EDI committee, are personally invested in delivering our EDI strategy to ensure the objectives and action points are met and collective benefits realised.

Senior Leadership Team & EDI group:

			
Claire Hoare	Rosemary Kane	Jane Jordan	Michael Gilbody
			
David O'Sullivan	Shelia Byrne	Nick O'Sheir	M. Madhug
			
Fintan Egan	Jenny O'Leary	Marta Ferraro	Joe Ellis
			
Fiona Grant	John White	Kealey	Kieran Moran
			
John White	John White	Liam Harey	John White



Foras na Mara
Marine Institute

Marine Institute Rinville

Oranmore
Co. Galway,
H91 R673

Tel: +353 91 387 200

Email: institute.mail@marine.ie

Marine Institute Dublin

Three Park Place,
Upper Hatch Street,
Dublin 2. D02 FX65

Tel: +353 (0)91 387200

Email: institute.mail@marine.ie

Marine Institute Newport

Furnace, Newport, Co. Mayo.
(Long Term Ecological
Research Centre)

Tel: +353 (0)98 42300

Email: institute.mail@marine.ie