

# The Nuclear Education, Skills and Technology (NEST) Framework

## *Strategy for Gender Balance*



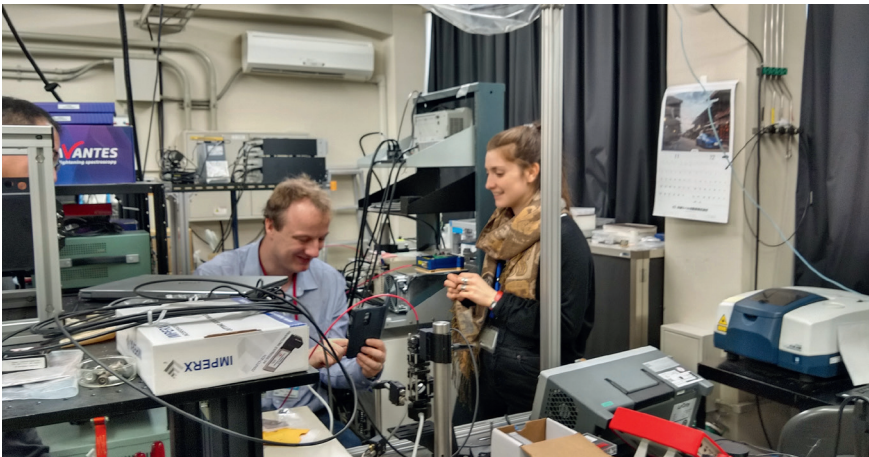
## Introduction

The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) Nuclear Education, Skills and Technology (NEST) Management Board wishes to increase participation of women in NEST Projects and to integrate gender equality further into the programmatic efforts of NEST.

The purpose of this NEST strategy is to improve gender balance through targeted organisational actions. These include steps to increase gender awareness, enhance monitoring and accountability, and improve the work environment through appropriate human resource policies. NEST will utilise the three pillars of the current NEA gender balance approach (i.e. data collection, policy recommendation, mentoring) to guide gender equality undertakings.

This document provides general recommendations to encourage gender balance within the activities and at all levels of the NEST Framework: the NEST Management Board, NEST Projects, NEST Mentors and NEST Fellows.

Additional measures to ensure gender balance such as training programmes for women, and numerical targets could be added to this NEST strategy in future phases.



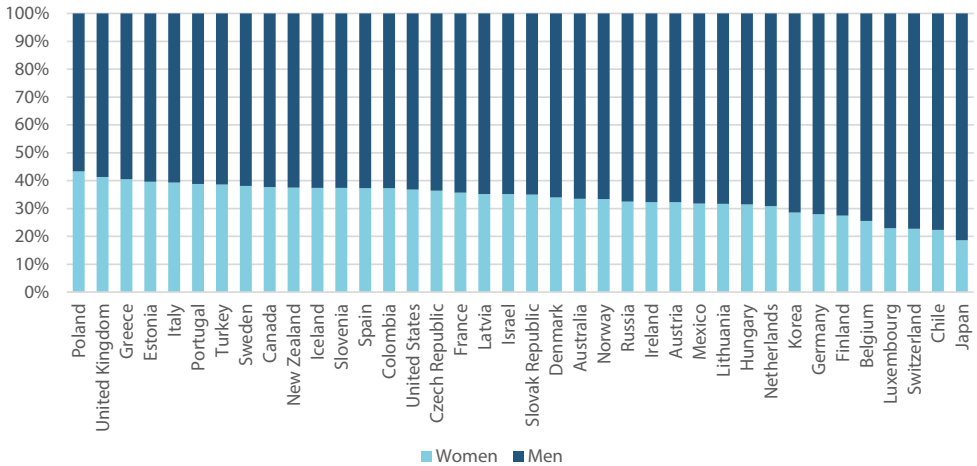
Hands-on Training on Remote Spectroscopic Analysis at Collaborative Laboratories for Advanced Decommissioning Science (CLADS), JAEA.

## Challenges to gender balance

- There is a low proportion of women studying science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

On average across OECD countries, women account for only 20% of all entrants into tertiary-level science programmes and 18% of entrants into engineering, manufacturing and construction programmes (OECD, 2019). Fewer girls studying STEM results in fewer women in the workforce. This is a loss in qualitative and quantitative terms when innovation and productivity is fueled through unlocking the diverse talent of society.

Share of STEM graduates by gender in OECD member countries, 2018



Note: Sum of graduates from the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 6 to 8.

Source: OECD (2021).

- Women are under-represented in leadership positions across all sectors (OECD, 2017). Results from a survey on Women in Nuclear (Women in Nuclear Canada, 2020) shows STEM women are about 24% of those employed at the non-supervisory level but under 16% of those employed in senior management.

- Women in the nuclear industry face barriers in navigating their careers. Women view getting rewarded for their work as a challenge. This is particularly the case for those that aspire to be promoted (WiN Canada, 2020).
- There is a lack of female representation in the nuclear disciplines for both academic enrolment and graduates in the workforce (NEA, 2019).

These challenges have a direct effect on the ability of countries to maintain a highly qualified STEM labour pool, which could have serious implications for the future of the nuclear sector.

With this Strategy, the NEST Framework aims to address those challenges and propose some recommendations which will contribute to achieve better gender balance, which is key to maintaining a sustainable, vibrant, skilled workforce in every STEM sector, in particular nuclear.

## General recommendations

Some general recommendations to achieve gender balance have been laid out, including (OECD, 2013):

- Promote equal access to resources, personal and professional development opportunities and utilisation of services.
- Women and men should be equally involved in decision-making and leadership positions.
- Equal treatment should be integrated into all processes.
- Use gender-sensitive language in communications referring to or addressing both women and men must make both genders equally visible.
- Ensure the collection, production and development of timely gender-sensitive data and indicators.
- Mainstream the gender equality perspective in the development and evaluation of policies as well as comparing best practices.

These recommendations should also be applied to the NEST Framework in striving to achieve gender balance.



Hands-on Training on Remote Spectroscopic Analysis at Collaborative Laboratories for Advanced Decommissioning Science (CLADS), JAEA.

## NEST strategic objectives

With this strategy, the NEST Management Board states its commitment to the following objectives:

- Raise awareness and promote knowledge within the NEST Framework on the importance of gender balance and its issues.
- Include a gender focus in all working areas, activities and NEST Projects.
- Improve gender balance in project participation for NEST Mentors.
- Guarantee equal access to the selection process for NEST Fellows.
- Include the perspective of gender sensitivity in NEST communications.
- Encourage and promote within the NEST Alumni Network female role models.
- Ensure consistency of NEST objectives with the OECD recommendations on promoting gender equality across all sectors of society.
- Collaborate with other NEA initiatives on gender balance to ensure a holistic, full Agency approach.

## Key actions to monitor and reach the NEST strategic objectives

In order to achieve the above objectives and report on the achievements and impacts of these recommendations on the overall NEST Framework, both a qualitative and quantitative assessment are necessary.

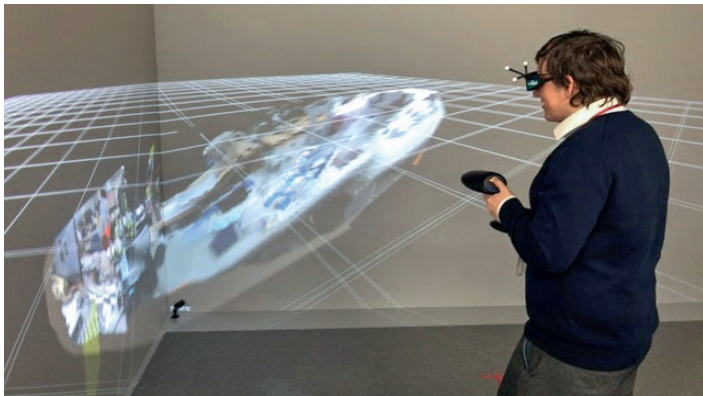
The NEST Management Board has established a Monitoring and Evaluation Process, which includes data collection across projects to monitor the involvement of women participating in them, both as fellows and as mentors. Interviews and questionnaires could be serving as tools to gather qualitative information to monitor the progresses achieved.

Female role models as NEST Mentors could play an important role in promoting and sharing awareness about gender equality.

The Management Board will evaluate existing efforts and design appropriate initiatives to help progressing towards the objectives and highlight where improvements are still needed.

This NEST strategy will contribute to improve the process and will develop best practices and share awareness on the topic of gender balance.

The NEST Management Board will decide on more specific actions and strategies to be carried out in future.



Hands-on training on Robotics and Remote System at the Naraha Center for Remote Control Technology Development (NARREC), JAEA.

## Outlook and perspectives

Developing the involvement of women and achieving gender balance in the nuclear sector (and more broadly in STEM) is essential to maintain capacity and expertise for the future. Therefore it should be at the core of NEST's strategic vision.

This strategy will aim to contribute to the general NEA efforts to encourage gender balance in all activities and at all levels.

It is expected that the multi-national initiatives conducted under the NEST Framework will strive to raise awareness and apply solutions to the issue of gender inequality in nuclear energy. The NEST Framework could advocate to ensure the nuclear energy sector is actively attracting, hiring and retaining women, as well as sharing best practices and developing inclusive strategies.

Looking towards the future, the NEST strategy could be enlarged to include the impact of the NEST Framework on the career development of women participants.

## References

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# NEA member countries

(as of 1 January 2021)



Argentina



Australia



Austria



Belgium



Bulgaria



Canada



Czech Republic



Denmark



Finland



France



Germany



Greece



Hungary



Iceland



Ireland



Italy



Japan



Korea



Luxembourg



Mexico



Netherlands



Norway



Poland



Portugal



Romania



Russia



Slovak Republic



Slovenia



Spain



Sweden



Switzerland



Turkey



United Kingdom



United States

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