



**EQUALITY  
CERTIFIED**

# **The Equality Mark Certification**

Information Document

[www.ncpe.gov.mt](http://www.ncpe.gov.mt)

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is the Equality Mark?

The **Equality Mark** is a certification awarded to companies that make gender equality one of their values and whose management is based on the recognition and promotion of the potential of all employees irrespective of their gender and caring responsibilities.



*Fig.1: Equality mark logo*

The **National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE)** awards this certificate to those organisations that demonstrate a commitment towards best practices in the area of gender equality.

The Equality Mark logo (see Fig.1) has been designed to distinguish the certified equal opportunity employers. Organisations will be able to use this logo on all outgoing correspondence including recruitment advertising and their social media. Additionally, certified organisations shall be promoted locally such that their practices are showcased as a standard for other employers to emulate and for job seekers to look out for.

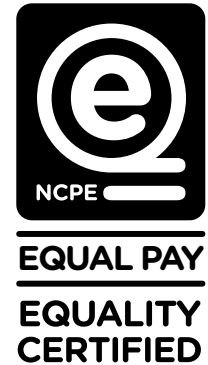
## 1.2. What is the Equal Pay Certification and the Equal Pay Tool?

The Equality Mark has been further enhanced by the development of an **Equal Pay Tool**, by which organisations applying for the Equality Mark can now opt to be **Equal Pay Certified**.

This Equal Pay Tool will enable organisations to analyse the existence of equal pay between men and women performing the same work or work of equal value within the organisation by analysing pay and staffing structures within their company. For more information on the meaning of equal pay for work of equal

value between women and men see point 2.3.

The Equal Pay Certified logo (see Fig.2) can be used by organisations on all their promotional and advertorial material. Additionally, equal pay certified organisations shall be promoted in the local context by both the NCPE and the equality-certified organisations themselves, with their practices being showcased as a standard for other employers to emulate and for job seekers to look out for.



*Fig.2: Equal Pay Certified logo*

## 1.3 What is the vision behind the Equality Mark?

The Equality Mark certification is based on the concept of gender equality where the rights, responsibilities and opportunities offered to men and women are not determined by sex. This implies equal access to opportunities by focusing on individuals' capabilities



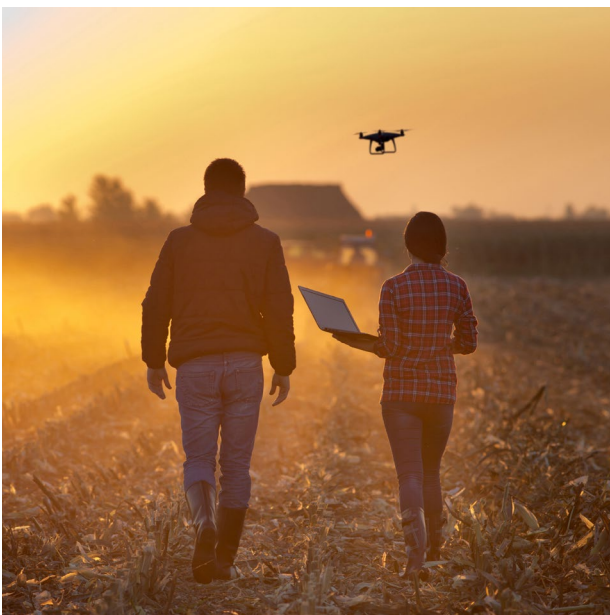
irrespective of their gender, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, or because of caring responsibilities.

Whilst gender equality should be implemented in all political, economic and social spheres, the Equality Mark certification is being targeted towards workplaces, with the aim of incentivizing and supporting employers to make the most of all the human resource potential available. The Equality Mark also extends to the goods and services offered by the organisation to ensure that the service users of that organisation may benefit from the same rights given to employees.

The Equality Mark is based on the following themes:

- Policies and Initiatives
- Recruitment and Employment
- Employee Equality Representatives and Equality Committee
- Equality in career and personal development opportunities
- Family-Friendly Measures for men and women with caring responsibilities
- Gender Equality in the access to, and supply of, goods and services

Details about each theme can be found in section two of this document.



## 1.4 What are the expected benefits for an equality-certified employer?

There are several benefits to being an equal opportunities organisation. Some of these include:

- *Accessing the full talent pool during recruitment:* When recruitment is open to more people, it is more likely for the employer to find the most skilled and adequate prospective employee.
- *Higher profitability through gender diversity:* Studies<sup>1</sup> show that encouraging both sexes at each level of the organisation and decision-making process may produce not only more equality but also substantial efficiency gains. This means more innovative approaches based on the different skills and experiences of both sexes.
- *Reducing costs through staff retention:* Equal access to family-friendly measures helps organisations retain valuable staff, thus reducing recruitment and training costs. Staff are also more likely to be motivated through increased job satisfaction and organisational loyalty, thus leading to more productivity and efficiency
- *Meeting the customers' needs and expectations:* By encouraging gender diversity into their decision-making process, organisations are more likely to meet customers' needs and expectations. In mirroring their market demographically, businesses are more likely to adapt to the changing social and consumption trends.
- *Reducing the possible risks of reputation damage:* Discrimination, in all its forms, is a factor that is taken up in risk assessments. The adoption of policies that safeguard the rights of all employees builds a notable corporate image and an overall good reputation of practising gender equality at the workplace.
- *Attracting new business opportunities:* Practices that promote and safeguard gender equality increase the potential for

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1 Profeta, 2017



an organisation to attract new business opportunities.

- *Being the 'employer of choice'*: Nowadays both women and men want challenges and opportunities for development at work but also choice and flexibility in order to accommodate their personal lives. Thus, it is imperative for organisations to have a competitive edge over other organisations to ensure that they attract the most talented workforce.

To help you reap the most of these benefits, NCPE will supply certified organisations with a logo which can be featured on all PR material and social media platforms. In addition to this, the practices of your organisation shall be promoted as being the benchmark for other organisations to achieve. This means that your organisation will be benefiting from free promotion, further raising its profile within its specific sector.

### 1.5 Are there any costs in becoming an equality-certified employer?

Employers will need to demonstrate a commitment towards gender equality. This may entail:

- assessing and reporting on the current practices within the organisation;
- planning and initiating a series of processes to implement the Equality Mark standards required for the certification (see principles below); and
- challenging the organisational culture if resistant to change and/or equality issues.

There are no application fees to apply for this certificate and all assistance is free of charge. Provision of all PR logos and promotion of your organisation is free of charge.

### 1.6 Will the employer be supported to achieve the required standards?

Yes, all organisations applying for the Equality Mark certificate will be guided to carry out the necessary assessments and identify the best way forward for their specific organisation.

More specifically, NCPE is committed to:

- provide guidance to organisations in implementing the necessary measures, such as in the drafting of relevant policies or conducting needs assessment surveys in equality;
- provide the training required within the organisation on gender equality-related issues in order to increase the knowledge base of key individuals within the organisation – training provided shall aim to motivate the participants to train other employees within the organisation;
- support the organisation in discussions with unions and other employee intermediaries/representatives over issues related to the implementation of the Equality Mark;
- process all applications in as short a time as possible;
- promote the equality-certified organisation as a best practice example in NCPE's public relations and publications (with prior consent from the organisation).

## 2. The Equality Mark Certification Principles

Organisations applying for the Equality Mark Certification need to meet the following standards. Kindly contact NCPE for guidance on each of the specified measures (see section 4.6 of this document for contact details).

### 2.1.1 Policies and Initiatives

- Implement an Equality Policy and a Sexual Harassment Policy in line with relevant legislation.
- Should the organisation not have an internal reporting procedure in place, a network of reporting mechanisms for gender equality and sexual harassment issues needs to be established either in these policies or in a separate document.

### 2.1.2 Recruitment and Employment

- Implement standard operating procedures for recruitment and employment that are based on the principles of equal opportunities. These include:
  - the short-listing of candidates for interviews;
  - the interviewing process;
  - training;
  - staff retention exercises;
  - appraisal;
  - promotion;
  - any necessary disciplinary action.
- Ensure equal pay for work of equal value between women and men (including negotiation of fringe benefits).

- Ensure that workforce profiles and job descriptions are gender-inclusive, and roles assigned are free from gender stereotypes.

### 2.1.3 Employee Equality Representatives and/or Equality Committee

- Appoint a gender equality representative within the organisation and/or establish a gender equality committee within the organisation:
  - To act as a point of reference and a voice within the organisation for gender equality and sexual harassment issues, including employees' role in gender mainstreaming and availability of employee-friendly measures;
  - To be consulted for a gender equality perspective when new policies or conditions are introduced;
  - To implement and monitor the equality policy and sexual harassment policy, including the monitoring of reporting mechanisms;
  - To ensure that policies and procedures associated with equality are part of the staff handbook and are understood by staff;



- To appraise competency/behaviours to ensure that managers and staff are aware of action plans and are capable of implementing the Equality Mark principles in all sectors and activities of the organisation.

#### 2.1.4 Equality in Career and Personal Development Opportunities

- Ensure equal opportunities in:
  - access to training, apprenticeship and staff development activities/material, study leave and other education/career incentives (such as bursaries or permission to carry out research projects at the place of work);
  - accessing educational material, health and safety notices, news and any other material made available to all employees regardless of gender, the nature of work they carry out, the hours/shift they work, or the areas in which they work and take their break;
  - working on specific assignments and/or working abroad, especially if such work may be a factor for career advancement and/or added benefits;
  - specifying those measures that the organisation will undertake to facilitate participation from employees with caring responsibilities (including those making use of any family-friendly measures) should training or other activities need to take place outside the normal working hours/environment of some employees.

#### 2.1.5 Family-Friendly Measures for women and men with caring responsibilities

- Provide incentives for men and women with caring responsibilities to remain employed or return to work.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of these incentives.
- Ensure that employees making use of family-friendly schemes are not treated

less favourably than other employees (both directly and indirectly).

- Keep a record of persons applying for family-friendly measures.

#### 2.1.6 Gender Equality in the access to, and supply of, goods and services

- Ensure that any goods and/or services supplied and/or managed by the organisation are equally accessible to men and women as stipulated in the EU Directive 2004/113/EC and Maltese Legislation – Legal Notice 181 of 2008.

## 2.2. What is ‘Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value Between Women and Men’?

In order to eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace, one must embrace the principle of ‘Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value Between Women and Men’.

“Equal pay for work of equal value covers not only cases where men and women do the same or similar work, but also the more usual situation where they do different work. When men and women perform work that is different in content, involving different responsibilities, requiring different skills or qualifications and is performed under different conditions but is overall of equal value, they should receive equal remuneration.”

The principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value is an integral part of the employment legal framework. Chapter 452 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Act (EIRA, Article 27), enshrines the right of employees to “...the same remuneration for work of equal value”. Equal pay for equal work is also one of the European Union’s founding principles which was reinforced through Directives and the ‘Action Plan 2017-2019: Tackling the Gender Pay Gap’.

Being aware of this, NCPE has developed an Equal Pay Tool to help check equal pay for work of equal value between women and



men during Equality Mark audits, which your organisation can opt to use.

### 2.3. What assistance will be provided to my organisation if it opts to be Equal Pay Certified?<sup>2</sup>

The Equal Pay Tool was designed to be as user-friendly as possible. Once your organisation opts to go this extra step and apply for the Equal Pay Certification, then, together with the Tool, you would be provided with a **user guide** on how to use this tool. Furthermore, the NCPE will be available to **assist** your organisation with any difficulties during the inputting of the data into the Tool. See point 4.6 for NCPE's contact details.

### 2.4 Top management responsibilities

The Equality Mark is not a simple paper exercise and requires the whole organisation to be committed to the principles set forth in order to ensure that the necessary measures can be implemented and enjoyed by all. Towards this aim, it is believed that the top management of an organisation needs to demonstrate commitment to each of the standards outlined in the Equality Mark certification, including those aspects related to employment and those related to goods and services, such that it can lead

by example and set the right vision within the organisation. This commitment can be demonstrated by:

- informing all employees of the intention to apply for the Equality Mark certificate, such that the process is as transparent as possible;
- formalizing agreements and explicit endorsement of official policies;
- supporting equality representatives and/or other officers in charge of implementing the relevant policies;
- direct involvement (when possible) such as in committee work for gender issues, newsletters to staff or public addresses within the organisation promoting gender equality;
- supporting data collection for gender equality monitoring and needs assessments;
- encouraging an organisational culture that is open to maintaining the Equality Mark standards;
- making a corporate commitment to be a leading organisation in equality best practices and to maintain the standards proposed by the Equality Mark;
- earmarking specific resources for improving and promoting equality practice in every sector of the organisation to ensure that the organisation maintains its profile as an equality best practice example.

<sup>2</sup> The Equal Pay Tool may have limitations, e.g. with regards to the number of employees of the company/organisation. NCPE will guide the applicant accordingly.

# 3. The Application Process

## 3.1. What are the steps involved in applying?

Interested organisations may apply to become equal opportunity employers by following these steps:

- i. Contact the NCPE to discuss your organisation's current scenario and eligibility for the certification.
- ii. Fill in the application form (available for download on NCPE website) and set up a meeting with NCPE to audit the necessary documentation relevant for certification. Note: A checklist of all the documents required for certification can be found in Section 5 of the Application Form.
- iii. Fill in and submit the data protection form with your application (available for download on NCPE website).

Note: Details on how NCPE will use and process your information can be found in Section 4 of this information document.

## 3.2 By when can my organisation apply?

There is no closing date for applications.

## 3.3 What if my organisation does not yet have all the standards in place?

Organisations that still need to implement one or more of the Equality Mark standards may still apply and work with NCPE to ensure standards are put into place.

## 3.4 How long does it take to be certified?

NCPE shall ensure that all applications are evaluated in as short a time as possible. If deemed necessary, NCPE reserves the right to perform spot checks to double-check documents and data submitted.

## 3.5 For how long is the certification valid?

The Equality Mark certificate is valid for two years, at which point organisations may apply for renewal.

For Equality Mark Certified companies, an Equal Pay Tool result attesting equal pay within the entity will be taken into consideration during the entity's re-certification process, if they so wish. After completion of the re-certification process, such organisations will be awarded a higher standard of the Equality Mark Certification, showing that they are Equal Pay Certified. The re-certification period for the Equality Mark shall be extended from 3 years to 4 years.

## 3.6 Are there any regulations linked to the Equality Mark logo?

The logo shown on page one of this document (see Fig.1) is the only official logo of Equality Mark, and only through this logo is an organisation recognised as an equal opportunities employer by NCPE. The Equality Mark logo, as well as the Equality Pay Certified logo (see Fig.2), may not be used before all necessary documentation has been received and vetted. Use of this logo is subject to the commitments being honoured by the organisation and in accordance with the brand manual that accompanies it. In the event that a certified organisation is not abiding by the Equality Mark principles, use of the logo will be terminated and/or will not be renewed.

## 4. Data Protection

### 4.1 Our commitment to Data Protection

The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is committed to ensuring that your information is used responsibly and in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation (GDPR EU 2016/679 and CAP. 586 of the Laws of Malta). The collection, use and processing of data from business organisations that includes personal data shall comply with the following principles. Namely, that data is:

- i. processed fairly and lawfully;
- ii. always processed in accordance with good practice;
- iii. only collected for specific, explicitly stated and legitimate purposes;
- iv. not processed for any purpose that is incompatible with that for which the information is collected;
- v. processed adequately and relevant to the purposes of the processing, and that no more data is processed than is necessary;
- vi. processed correctly and, if necessary, updated;



- vii. subject to reasonable measures to complete, correct, block or erase data to the extent that such data is incomplete or incorrect;
- viii. not kept for a period longer than is necessary, having regard to the purposes for which they are processed;
- ix. if your organisation opts to become Equal Pay Certified, it will be required to input data about its human resources into the Equal Pay Tool. This data will be treated with strict confidentiality by the NCPE, and data relating to employees will be coded in such a manner that employees will remain anonymous.

### 4.2 How your information will be used

The data you provide NCPE about your organisation, including policy documents, incentives and records pertaining to recruitment and employment practices, shall be used for the following purposes:

- i. to assess your organisation's eligibility for the Equality Mark certificate, based on the principles and practices set forth;
- ii. for research purposes, such that NCPE can assess current practices in Malta and be able to tailor its services to the needs of both employers and employees;
- iii. in case your organisation is opting to be Equal Pay Certified, then the data provided will be used for the sole purpose of measuring whether, and to what extent, your organisation's pay practices are in line with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value between women and men.

We will not use the information you voluntarily provide to us for purposes other than those for which you were



informed without first providing you with an opportunity to agree or otherwise limit any use for other purposes to which you have consented. No reference shall be made to your organisation when referring to or quoting the data you supply unless explicit written consent is obtained beforehand.

#### 4.3 The way we secure your information

NCPE employs reasonable precautions to prevent your information from loss, misuse, unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration or destruction. Data will be stored electronically in a password-protected database and only accessed by the NCPE officers directly working on the project and NCPE research officers who may access the data for research purposes. A hard copy of your data shall also be filed in a secure cabinet within NCPE. Any employee who intentionally misuses or improperly discloses your information will be subject to disciplinary action which could include termination of employment.

#### 4.4 Disclosing your information to a third party

Your company name and a contact person's details will be uploaded onto NCPE's website in the below format. Should you not wish this to happen, kindly inform NCPE before certification.

#### 4.5 How you can access or correct your information

You can contact NCPE (see contact details in point 4.6 below) for a copy of the information you submitted, and/or ask us to revise, block or delete parts of the information submitted, should this be necessary.

#### 4.6 Contact us

For further details about the Equality Mark campaign and issues related to certification, you may contact the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) on:

Address: **NCPE**  
**Gattard House, National Road,**  
**Blata I-Bajda HMR 9010**  
**Malta**  
 Tel: **2276 8200**  
 Email: **equality@gov.mt**  
**www.ncpe.gov.mt**

For further information on the processing of Personal Data please contact the DPO at:  
 Email: **dpo.ncpe@gov.mt**

Organisation Name	Award Date	Equality Mark Representative/s	Email address/es
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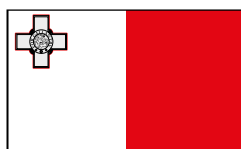


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PREPARE THE GROUND FOR  
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**Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020**  
Project part-financed by the European Union  
Co-financing rate: 80% EU funds; 20% National Funds

