

2025 Gender Equality Awareness Survey

Survey Overview

This report summarizes the results of the **2025 Gender Equality Awareness Survey**, conducted by the Diversity Promotion Office of the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute (FFPRI) from **21 November 2025 to 9 January 2026**.

The survey targeted all regular and non-regular employees of the **National Research and Development Agency, Forest Research and Management Organization (FRMO)**, including a total of **1,556 employees**, and was conducted anonymously through a web-based system (e-Learning GLEXA). Responses were received from **988 employees**, resulting in a **68% response rate**.

The Gender Equality Awareness Survey has been conducted approximately every four years since 2007 to evaluate the effectiveness of gender equality initiatives and identify employees' needs and expectations regarding diversity and inclusion. This was the **sixth survey overall** and the **second organization-wide survey** to include the Forest Management Center and Forest Insurance Center, following the 2021 survey.

The questionnaire consisted of **52 questions** covering the following topics:

- Respondent attributes (13 questions)
- Gender equality and diversity promotion (6 questions)
- Work-life balance (7 questions)
- Childcare (11 questions)
- Family caregiving (5 questions)
- Career development (9 questions)
- Open-ended comments and suggestions regarding diversity promotion (1 question)

Compared with the previous survey, questions regarding familiarity with diversity-related terminology and working conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic were removed.

Executive Summary

The cover page of this report features a word cloud based on nouns, adjectives, and verbs appearing in the open-ended responses. The most prominent word was **“employee”**, followed by **“manager.”** These words were frequently associated with terms such as **“work,” “duties,” “heavy,”** and **“burden,”** reflecting employees' concerns about workload and workplace responsibilities.

Attitudes Toward Management Positions

In response to the question, *“Would you like to become a manager in your current workplace?”*, **47%** of respondents indicated that they **did not wish to become managers**,

43% answered “**Neither agree nor disagree,**” and only **10%** expressed a desire to pursue a management position.

Open-ended comments revealed that the primary reasons for not aspiring to management roles were:

- Excessive workload
- Insufficient compensation relative to responsibilities
- Reduced opportunities to engage in research or specialized work
- Lack of confidence in managerial aptitude or ability
- Limited attractiveness of management positions
- Concerns about increased responsibility

Perceptions of Women in Leadership

When asked, “*What do you think about increasing the number of women in management positions and supporting their active participation?*”, **64%** of respondents answered “**Desirable,**” while **31%** selected “**Neither agree nor disagree,**” and **2%** responded “**Undesirable.**”

Among those who considered it undesirable, most comments expressed concern that women might be promoted to management positions to meet numerical targets rather than based on qualifications or suitability.

A related question asked about establishing numerical targets for women's advancement.

While many respondents recognized potential benefits, **57%** indicated that such targets **should not be considered**. Open-ended comments frequently emphasized that hiring and promotion decisions should be based on **ability and suitability**, and that any increase in female representation should occur as a natural outcome of fair evaluation.

These findings suggest that employees generally support the increased participation of women in leadership roles, but are less supportive of proactive measures perceived as prioritizing numerical targets over individual merit.

Work-Life Balance, Childcare, and Caregiving

Regarding childcare responsibilities:

- **9%** of employees had a youngest child below school age.
- **9%** had a youngest child attending elementary school.

Among employees in their 30s:

- **32%** had preschool-aged children.

Among employees in their 40s:

- **16%** had preschool-aged children.
- **43%** had elementary school-aged children.

Regarding family caregiving responsibilities:

- **34%** of all respondents had a family member requiring care.
- The proportion increased to **50%** among employees aged 61 and older and **41%** among those in their 50s.
- Even among employees aged 29 and younger, **10%** had caregiving responsibilities.

Many respondents expressed a desire for expanded support programs and more flexible work arrangements. However, a recurring concern was that staff shortages and heavy workloads often make it difficult to utilize available leave or support systems. Numerous comments also highlighted the need for greater consideration and support for colleagues covering work when employees take leave.

Diversity Promotion and Workplace Challenges

In response to the open-ended question regarding effective measures for promoting diversity, the most common suggestions were:

- Addressing staff shortages
- Reducing excessive workloads

Other frequently mentioned topics included:

- Increased opportunities for interaction across job categories
- Flexible work arrangements
- Reviewing personnel transfer practices that require relocation

Particularly notable were comments indicating that relocation-related transfers can become a significant barrier to career development and retention.

By contrast, comments concerning foreign nationals, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ individuals were relatively limited, suggesting that these issues may currently receive less attention among employees.

Implications for Future Diversity Initiatives

The survey findings indicate that future diversity initiatives should focus on:

- Reducing anxiety about management roles through training and professional development opportunities
- Creating opportunities for mutual understanding and communication across employee groups
- Improving workplace environments in which foreign nationals and employees with disabilities can fully contribute
- Supporting more flexible and sustainable work arrangements that allow employees to balance professional and personal responsibilities without excessive burden

The Diversity Promotion Office will continue its efforts with the goal that, by the next survey cycle, a broader range of diverse employees will be able to thrive and advance their careers without experiencing undue stress or exhaustion.

Comment from the Advisor to the Diversity Promotion Headquarters

The 2025 Gender Equality Awareness Survey Report has once again been published. As in previous years, it is a comprehensive and insightful report. The 52 carefully designed survey questions, together with the thoughtful responses provided by employees, reflect the seriousness with which respondents approached this survey.

I would like to share a few general observations.

First, I was impressed by the high response rate of 68%. For an internal organizational survey, this is a remarkable level of participation. It suggests that the survey is widely recognized throughout the organization and that employees appreciate its importance.

It is also worth noting that surveys concerning gender equality and diversity often reveal broader concerns about the workplace environment. Except for those with a particular interest in these topics, many employees experience gender equality and diversity issues through their daily work, workplace systems, and organizational culture. In that sense, it is natural that comments regarding workplace challenges and concerns were frequently expressed.

One finding I found particularly interesting was employees' attitudes toward promotion. While the survey indicates an overall cautious or hesitant attitude toward managerial positions, 64% of respondents stated that it is desirable for more women to serve and succeed in management roles. At the same time, 57% responded that numerical targets for the advancement of women should not be considered. Open-ended comments frequently expressed the view that hiring and promotion decisions should be based on ability and suitability, and that an increase in the proportion of women should occur as a result of fair evaluation. These findings suggest that there is a considerable degree of trust in the abilities and professional expertise of female employees throughout the organization.

Another noteworthy finding is the relatively high rate of childcare leave taken by male employees. Together, these results suggest that the organization's long-standing efforts to promote gender equality and diversity have contributed, at least to some extent, to shaping a positive and inclusive organizational culture.

On the other hand, the survey also raises important questions about why managerial

positions are not always viewed as attractive career options. Responses indicate concerns about increased workloads and reduced opportunities to devote time to research and specialized professional activities. It may be time to reexamine what kinds of organizational support are needed, including appropriate recognition and authority for managerial responsibilities, as well as measures that enable managers to balance research activities with leadership roles.

One possible approach would be to organize joint management seminars and networking opportunities with other research institutions. Such forums could provide opportunities for managers to openly discuss the benefits of leadership positions, share experiences, and exchange ideas on improving organizational practices and work processes.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the ongoing efforts of the Diversity Promotion Office. Conducting surveys and promoting diversity initiatives on a continuous basis with limited resources requires significant dedication and commitment. The achievements of these efforts are clearly reflected in this report. I look forward to the continued advancement of gender equality and diversity throughout the Forest Research and Management Organization.

****Advisor to the Diversity Promotion Headquarters****