The CNIO Women in Science Office (WISE) was established in 2012. Our main objectives are to give visibility to women, to raise awareness regarding the importance of gender equality, to help correct imbalances in the career ladder at the CNIO community especially in the leadership positions, to try to promote and support women in their professional careers, as well as to come up with ideas and policies to improve the life/work balance at the CNIO. The WISE Office is composed of CNIO volunteers from across all the areas present in the Centre, including the Director.

In 2019, the WISE Office was involved in making the CNIO a better place to work and to reconcile work and private life. Thanks to the joint efforts of the CNIO Direction and Management, The WISE Office, and the Works Council, we have approved a very innovative Equality Plan, a remote working pilot programme, as well as measures to ensure digital disconnection.

In addition, we continued organising the WISE seminar series, in which we invite several top female leaders from different areas. Some of the talks given during 2019 include:

- Consuelo Madrigal, jurist. Title: 'La mujer profesional: el largo camino a la igualdad'. 15/01/2019.
- Rosa Montero, journalist and writer. Title: 'Pala-wr de mujer'. 12/02/2019.
- Luz Casal, singer and songwriter, was interviewed by the journalist Virginia Díaz. Title: 'Aproximaciones a una biografía'. 05/03/2019.
- Ruth Vera, President of the Spanish Society of Medical Oncology (SEOM). Title: 'Mujeres en la Oncología'. 09/04/2019.
- María Luisa de Contes, General Secretary and Board Member of the subsidiaries of the Renault Group in Spain. Title: 'Un proyecto para la igualdad de género en las Empresas'. 07/05/2019.
- María Hervás, actress. Title: 'La alquimia de un cuerpo que actúa'. 20/06/2019.
- Susana Makcorra, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Government with President Macri and Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the United Nations. Title: 'The leadership in times of change'. 15/10/2019.
- Mª Pilar Allué, General Deputy Director of Human Resources and Training of the National Police Corps. Title: '40 años de la incorporación de la mujer a la Policía Nacional'. 26/11/2019.
- Mª José San Román, Chef and Restaurateur. Title: 'Mujeres en Gastronomía'. 03/12/2019.

We also organised and hosted the 1st Gender Equality Event of the SOMMa Research Centres of Excellence (held October 29, 2019). This event aimed to share best practices in the SOMMa (the Alliance of the ‘Severo Ochoa’ Centres and Maria de Maeztu Units) in promoting a change of culture in a coordinated and institutional manner, and support female talent and gender equality in science and strategic decision-making. The event was organised in collaboration with the British Embassy and different SOMMa Directors, and with the participation of Gender officers.

We continued to hold Master classes from the STEM Talent Girl programme (as part of an agreement signed with the ASTI Foundation in 2018). The goal of this project is to promote STEM careers among 12 to 14-year-old students. Eight Master classes given by top professional women from the STEM field were held in the CNIO Auditorium. The last 6 took place in 2019 and were given by Carmen García Matea, Professor in the TSC Department at the University of Vigo (January, 2019); Pilar López Álvarez, President of Microsoft Spain (February, 2019); María Martín-Torres, Director of CENIEH (March, 2019); Helena Herrero, President and CEO of HP for Spain and Portugal (April, 2019); Verónica Pascual Boé, CEO of ASTI TechGroup (May, 2019); and Yaiza Canosa, CEO and Founder of Goi (June, 2019).

We also participated in other educational initiatives, through the 1defebrero.org platform, to promote scientific careers among student from the Comunidad de Madrid. This initiative was done in collaboration with the ‘CNIO and The City’ project, which was funded by the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT) – Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities – with the aim of creating closer links between society and the education system.

Here at the WISE Office, we share what the American writer, poet and activist Maya Angelou said: “How important it is for us to recognise and celebrate our heroes and she-roses!” Our work efforts aim to build a fair society for all where stereotypes, unconscious bias and gender barriers are gone, as we firmly believe that working together as equals, is the way to reach true excellence.