

# GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Preamble

Ensuring equal opportunities for people who are of different genders or sexual orientations, have physical, mental or psychological disabilities, are of different ethnic backgrounds, hold different religious, cultural or democratic political convictions, are of different ages or have a different social status is part of FiBL Austria's self- image. Equality of opportunity through gender equality is also a basic prerequisite for FiBL Austria's successful and widely recognized work and, therefore, an integral part of FiBL Austria's development. FiBL Austria currently has a team of 31 employees, more than 51 % of them are women (Status January 2024).

FiBL Austria strives to adequately implement gender equality and diversity management in all the above-mentioned areas. The present version of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) sets out the principles, guidelines and measures for the equality of people of different genders. Where considered necessary, further chapters on gender equality in the other areas are being developed on an ongoing basis and the mission statement is being updated.

### 1.2 Political/legal Framework

The goal of achieving gender equality is an integral part of the institutional strategy of FiBL Austria. With this Gender Equality Plan, FiBL Austria supports and promotes the statutory rights to equal opportunities of all FiBL Austria employees in accordance with applicable national laws on gender equality as well as with the European Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025.

The latter is set out by the European Commission's broader commitment to equality across all EU policies to

- a) foster equality in scientific careers;
- b) ensure gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies;
- c) integrate the gender dimension in research and innovation content;
- d) implement measures against sexual misconduct, gender-based violence and sexual harassment

FiBL Austria adopts the latter as overall aims in this Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and the following specific objectives will be taken:

- AIM I: Improve work-life balance and organisational culture
- AIM II: Stimulate gender balance in leadership and decision-making
- AIM III: Enhance gender equality in recruitment and career progression
- AIM IV: Alter perceptions by integrating gender dimension into research and teaching content
- AIM V: Training and capacity-building
- AIM V: Promote measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment
- AIM VI: Raise gender awareness and engagement with stakeholders

### 1.3 Scope

The Gender Equality Plan is a public living document approved by the management of FiBL Austria. It is based on the GEP of FiBL Europe and was amended with their consent. The present version of the Gender Equality Plan of FiBL Austria is in alignment with its national legal requirements under the Gender Law of 2004.

## 2. Gender Equality Plan

### AIM I: Work-life balance and organisational culture

#### a) Work-life balance and organisational culture

Reconciling family and career is an essential component of equality. FiBL Austria offers all employees working conditions that enable them to have both a professional career and fulfil private responsibilities (e.g., teleworking, financial child aid care, parental leave, part-time employment). FiBL Austria, therefore, supports internal initiatives and strategies that help to achieve a balance between career and family.

The use of part-time employment and of leaves of absence, in particular for the fulfilment of family obligations, does not lead to any arbitrary direct or indirect discrimination against employees as part of their employment or training relationship. A delay in the professional career resulting from family-related leave must be taken into account appropriately in the event of upgrading. Part-time employment shall not have a negative effect on the assessment. All employees, especially those with supervisory and management duties, are obliged to promote equality and the compatibility of family and work in their areas of responsibility. Currently 89 % of employees are working part-time, 100 % taking advantage of flexible working hours and home office options.

## b) Gender-sensitive language

Gender-sensitive language that takes equal account of people of different genders and does not discriminate against them is to be implemented in all written and oral statements by staff. FiBL Austria follows the Gender-equitable language Guidelines of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research.

FiBL Austria is committed to gender balance in decision-making and at leadership level. The increase of the recruitment of female group leaders where an unbalanced female ratio applies, is pursued by policy strategies targeting search for suitable applicants, direct invitations to apply, and by using appropriate networks.

In all management and coordination functions of FiBL Austria as a whole equal gender representation shall be sought when new appointments are made. The visibility of FiBL Austria women employees is to be further promoted internally and externally. This applies, for example, to all kinds of printed and digital publications, media inquiries, representation on committees and events.

FiBL Austria shall seek to close the gaps in the participation of women in leadership positions by encouraging the proportion of women in advisory boards, networking initiatives and boards in research projects.

### **AIM III: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression**

Job advertisements shall be formulated in a gender-neutral manner and with a view to maintaining equal opportunities. In the pre-selection for the interview, it must be ensured that all persons belonging to the underrepresented gender and meeting the requirements of the position are invited.

In the application procedures, every effort shall be made to attract suitable applications from persons of the underrepresented sex.

### **AIM III: Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation content**

#### ***a. Addressing gender dimension in research projects and data collection***

While the percentage of women working in the agricultural sector has slowly increased over the last years, EU wide data (EUROSTAT 2016) shows that on average only 29% of farms in the EU are managed by women (EC 2021<sup>1</sup>). FiBL Austria is committed to ensure an integrated and inclusive approach to research and innovation and to contribute to gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Within FiBL Austria's ongoing activities and projects gender equality will be addressed at both managerial and operational aspects:

- **Managerial:** FiBL Austria project management structures will ensure equal participation of men and women, including decision-making roles, project coordination and financial management. FiBL Austria aims at having project Advisory Boards with a balanced participation of men and women.
- **Operational:** FiBL Austria promotes equal opportunities and a balanced participation of women and men at all levels in the working teams. In line with the Horizon Europe agenda to promote gender equality, FiBL Austria will implement a gender-neutral policy, proactively seeking diverse human resources and implementing fair compensation practices.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/females-field-more-women-managing-farms-across-europe-2021-mar-08\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/females-field-more-women-managing-farms-across-europe-2021-mar-08_en)

FiBL Austria is aware of the above-mentioned gender imbalance in the agricultural sector. It will ensure adequate participation and equality of men and women in undertaking project tasks and by explicitly addressing and monitoring gender in the participatory data collection. To reach this objective, where applicable, the relevance of gender will be considered in research questions and methods. Efforts will be made to integrate gender balance in FiBL Austria's research activities.

***b. Invitation of female colloquium speakers***

In order to make the voices of women in the agricultural sector more heard, FiBL Austria commits to support female speakers.

#### **AIM IV: Training and capacity-building**

In order to address unconscious gender bias among staff, leaders and decision-makers, FiBL Austria shall encourage targeted training and capacity building offers at the suggestion of the Gender Equality Officer and the management of FiBL Austria.

The teaching of gender and diversity competence is thus also an integral part of personnel development offers.

Dedicated trainings for the advancement of women in the development of their careers shall be as well promoted. Yet, activities will not be limited to this but will address all staff members. This will create an inclusive environment for the benefit of all staff members.

#### **AIM V: Measures against sexual misconduct, gender-based violence and sexual harassment**

Appropriate policy guidelines shall be taken to inform on protocol for preventing and monitor, report and take action about potential cases of sexual misconduct.

Concrete measures aim at building an atmosphere based on mutual respect, prevention measures, and protection of the potential victims of harassment, ensuring the privacy of the reporters.

Persons affected by sexual harassment and violence have the right to demand that the FiBL Austria management takes measures against harassers. Persons affected and/or witnesses of sexual harassment and violence can inform the Gender Equality Officer about assaults. The Gender Equality Officer is obliged to treat this information confidentially and to initiate appropriate measures to support those affected, to clarify the facts of the case and to prevent further assaults.

#### **AIM VI: Inclusiveness and diversity**

FiBL Austria considers diversity and inclusiveness not only in terms of gender, but also in terms of internationality and other diversity factors, such as cultural and social background, physical, mental or psychological disabilities etc.

### **3. Monitoring**

FiBL Austria commits itself to periodical monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the Gender Equality Plan, according to national requirements. It may draft reports indicating the relevant key figures, the implementation carried out in the previous year and the gender equality measures planned for the current year. Focus will be given to both quantitative (e.g., number of female candidates, horizontal gender segregation, gender pay gap) and qualitative (e.g., work conditions, gender sensitivity) indicators.

### **4. Gender Equality Officer**

The Gender Equality Plan will be collaboratively implemented by a Gender Equality Officer as well as the management of FiBL Austria. The current Gender Equality Officer is DI Christine Hörlezeder (Status January 2024).

While the management will guide on strategic questions of equality, the Equality Officer will be concerned with the development of the concrete activities and tasks.

### **5. Resources**

The design, implementation and monitoring of the Gender Equality Plan requires dedicated resources. FiBL Austria is aware of the necessary resources and committed to provide the to an adequate level. The actual extends needed will be continuously monitored by the Management and Gender Equality Officer and adapted when necessary.

The dedicated resources include:

- Working Time of the Gender Equality Officer
- Costs for trainings of the Gender Equality Officer
- Trainings for staff and awareness. All staff members are entitled to follow the internal trainings, workshops and gender awareness activities
- Other additional costs: external trainers, materials, etc.

Version: January 2024

Draft: FiBL Austria, April 2023 - based on the GEP of FiBL Europe

Approved: FiBL Austria Management approved on 10.01.2024

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