

Gender Equality Plan of the KWB Kompetenzzentrum Wasser Berlin gGmbH

2022 - 2025

KWB

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1. INTRODUCTION

This document contains KWB's Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025 (GEP). The plan was approved by KWB's Management in July 2022 and will be reviewed together with the newly formed work council in the second half of 2022. The document sets out KWB's ambitions and targets linked to its work to promote gender equality within the organisation. The plan is based on KWB's current situation and circumstances as a non-profit applied water research centre.

KWB appreciates the EU's initiative to strengthen gender equality and diversity. KWB fosters diversity among its employees' experiences, attitudes, characters and perspectives and needs to continue to attract women to the organisation and make use of the skills and expertise that women represent. KWB is also working to address other key diversity issues in addition to gender and addressed this in KWB's Code of Conduct established in 2021. This work and process requires continuous follow-up activities and will be integrated as part of our further work and process management.

The GEP formulates the key principles, objectives, actions and long-term goals to promote equal opportunities for all genders. The aim is to achieve equal participation of all genders at KWB. This includes the reduction of the underrepresentation of women, the avoidance of gender-specific disadvantages, the filling of job openings on equal terms oriented on the quality of the applicants at all qualification and employment levels, and the optimisation of the reconciliation of work and family for the employees of KWB. The GEP also defines a set of actions aiming at identifying biases, implementing innovative strategies to correct them, setting targets and monitoring indicators.

KWB has zero tolerance for any type of bullying, gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Incidents or matters worthy of criticism will be reported according to our internal routines formulated in KWB's Code of Conduct. In addition, we monitor and map incidents regarding bullying and sexual harassment annually. All reported cases are followed up in accordance with KWB's Management System to resolve each specific case, take care of the individual, and prevent improper conduct from happening again.

2. GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES

The following KWB gender equality principles have guided the preparation of the GEP:

1. All employees should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
2. Gender equality benefits all employees regardless of gender.
3. Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
4. Gender equality brings significant economic, social and health benefits for employees.
5. Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the organisation's community.
6. All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE KWB

KWB is a non-profit water research centre based in Berlin, founded in 2001. The first decade of KWB was reflecting the overarching male-biased situation in the water sector. During the last years the situation has changed. The number of women educated in the relevant research fields of the water sector has increased and so has the gender equality at KWB.

The KWB has been working actively to recruit women and persons who identify as non-binary and aims to demonstrate gender equality at the management level and among all grades of scientific and administrative employees. KWB tries to improve the gender equality status continuously. The overarching goal is to ensure that people of all genders can participate equitably in science, research, education, and administration at our organisation.

In order to track gender equality, KWB is currently reporting annually on gender equality including:

- Gender equality for KWB and for each department
- Gender equality sorted by career level
- Gender equality in remuneration

These updates will provide the basis for the adjustment of the targets and the adaptation of actions in support of ensuring progress in the required direction.

Currently, women make up to 36 % of our scientific employees. The current proportion of women working for KWB as a whole is 40 %.

The following table shows the gender distribution at KWB for 2021 (December 2021):

Table 1: Gender Distribution per Work Category

2021

	Women (%)	Men (%)	Total (%)
Administrators	5 (55)	4 (45)	9 (100)
Researchers	10 (36)	18 (64)	28 (100)
Total	15 (40)	22 (60)	37 (100)

Table 2: Gender Distribution per Work Category fulltime/parttime

2021

	Women (%)		Men (%)		Men (%)	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Administrators	2 (40)	3 (60)	3 (75)	1 (25)	5 (55)	4 (45)
Researchers	5 (50)	5 (50)	8 (45)	10 (55)	13 (46)	15 (54)
Total	7 (47)	8 (53)	11 (50)	11 (50)	18 (49)	19 (51)

Table 3: Gender Distribution per career stage

2021

	Women (%)	Men (%)	Total (%)
Administrators	5 (100)	0 (0)	5 (100)
Administrators Department Leader	0 (0)	3 (100)	3 (100)
Administrators Managing Director	0 (0)	1 (100)	1 (100)
Researchers	4 (33)	8 (67)	12 (100)
Project Leader	4 (40)	6 (60)	10 (100)
Researchers Department Leader	2 (33)	4 (67)	6 (100)
Total	15 (40)	22 (60)	37 (100)

Gender equality at KWB is benefiting from an increasing rate of female graduates in relevant courses such as Environmental Engineering and Urban Water Management. Over the last years, we indeed observe a higher ratio of female applicants at graduate or junior level and hence an increasing proportion of graduates and interns among KWB's employees are women. Throughout 2021, KWB employed, supported and trained 16 male and 9 female students as interns and student employees for varying periods of time.

At project leader level KWB has a ratio of 40% female colleagues. As part of the systematic KWB succession planning we also actively pursue the aim to enhance the share of female colleagues in the management team.

KWB currently faces a challenge to increase the ratio of women in the leadership team. KWB is a small organisation (~40 employees) with five groups and accordingly has few positions in the management team. Whenever changes in the leadership team are occurring we do consider this issue alongside the overall qualification of the candidate and welcome and actively encourage female applications.

Part-time employees are represented in nearly all salary groups. The Managing Director works full-time, and 2 out of 7 members of the management team are working part-time.

The following actions are current KWB gender equality policies:

- Strive for gender equality at all levels of the workforce,
- gender equality in recruitment and promotion,
- gender equality in remuneration,
- gender equality in parental leave and work-time-flexibility,
- strive for gender equality in all departments,
- gender equality in all further education activities,
- maintain gender-neutral language in internal and external communication as introduced in 2020,
- ensuring the use of non-stereotypical and non-sexist images in internal and external communication,
- supporting and including employees on parental leave or long-term sickness to ease reintegration.

4. OBJECTIVES

KWB wishes to strengthen the efforts to strive for organisation-wide gender equality by means of systematic and long-term work. As a foundation of this work, KWB has defined a number of development targets that are ambitious and achievable over time. As part of our further work to implement and achieve the objectives of the plan, targets will be nuanced and adjusted in line with the organisation's current status and strategic development.

KWB believes that an overall ratio of 40 % women and 60 % men is an appropriate target for the organisation as a whole. The option of a 50/50 ratio is currently considered to be difficult to achieve due to the inherent imbalance in the KWB recruitment base (water and research sector). Our target ratio is significantly above the current ratio in the German water sector (ca. 27% according to DWA).

5. PROPOSED ACTIONS TO IMPROVE KWB'S GENDER EQUALITY

A first step to fostering gender equality is to raise awareness about associated principles and aspects in the work environment. Also, the opportunity should be given to discuss the psychosocial work environment and possible discrimination and violations related to gender or other possible forms of harassment at the yearly employee/employer reviews. The management encourages reporting of such cases and KWB's Code of Conduct also introduced a compliance officer.

It also may occur that employees and students don't know whom to contact and how to handle possible cases of discrimination and harassment. In addition to the Code of Conduct and the onboarding documents and information the HR representative provides information, guidance and help to

- promote the principles and goals of the Plan among all employees at KWB,
- collect gender-aggregated data on recruitment and employment structure, monitor the development of equality at the organisation and report on it,
- spreading information on equality matters,
- be the contact person for employees needing advice, help or wanting to file a complaint on a violation or harassment,
- document the complaint and forward it to the managing director to take further action,
- raising awareness of executives for high priority on topics of equality of opportunity,
- raise awareness and further support for the use of gender-neutral language.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES

The implementation of KWB's GEP will fall under the responsibility of the Management Director, Department and Group Leaders. They will jointly establish targets and actions to achieve the KWB GEP's objectives. However, the overarching aim is that all KWB employees are developing ownership of the GEP principles and objectives.

KWB HR will act to ensure the development and facilitation for managers and other employees of systems that support the work to achieve gender equality. The office will also assume responsibility for carrying out annual assessments of target achievement status within KWB as a whole.

KWB will use the established system to monitor and document the progress of the gender balance over time. KWB will also be monitoring salary-related data with the aim of enduring no gender-related salary differentials between men, women and people who identify as non-binary.

7. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Training and awareness play a prominent role in the processes of definition and implementation of a public GEP. As a community of all organisation members, each member bears the responsibility to educate on the topics of gender equality and unconscious bias, as the lack of knowledge in these fields, still rather common, could result in unequal treatment and discrimination.

Raising awareness on the importance of equality issues and, furthermore, strengthening a positive attitude towards diversity inside the KWB is, therefore, a crucial matter. This action is a necessary step to be implemented before and during the definition of new strategies for equal opportunities.

8. LONG-TERM GOALS

KWB should work towards an equal gender division within all employment categories. A good working environment free from violations and sexual harassment is important in order to reach equality in the workplace.

The organisation is committed to adopting the GEP and devoting resources to implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Plan. Ultimately, all staff will implement the GEP in everyday culture, values and practices. Appropriate systems will be put in place to collect and report on the level of data required to measure progress. This will ensure reliable reporting of statistics and commentary on workforce participation and experience.

Our vision is an organisation actively pursuing and embedding gender equality principles and intersectional factors in the KWB culture and across all business practices.

KWB will focus on the Senior Research Scientists level because this is the key level in relation to sustaining and further developing the KWB.

KWB is aiming to achieve the following ratios by 2025:

2025

	Women (%)	Men (%)	Total (%)
Administrators	40	60	100
Administrators Department Leader	40	60	100
Administrators Managing Director	0	100	100
Researchers	40	60	100
Project Leader	40	60	100
Researchers Department Leader	40	60	100
Total	40	60	100

9. FOLLOWING UP ON GOALS

KWB will develop an evaluation framework designed to ensure we continuously reflect on and learn from the work undertaken for the GEP. Evaluation will be based on the following questions:

- Has KWB achieved the desired goals?
- Is this plan having the influence KWB expected?
- Has KWB done what it said it would do?
- What worked well and what needs improvement?
- How effective is the planning?

During the three-year time period stipulated in the GEP, KWB should check that the goals in this plan have been implemented. The assessment will be done every end of the year and the results reported by the management.