

Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of VDEh-Betriebsforschungsinstitut GmbH

1. Preamble

The following Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is an updated version and has a duration of four years from 2023 to 2026. The BFI commits to regularly updating the Gender Equality Plan, with its implementation evaluated annually by the management and the works council.

The management aims to promote diversity within the company, believing that employees with different professional and cultural backgrounds - regardless of gender - contribute to a corporate culture that fosters collaboration and improves work results. This includes not treating employees differently based on their gender.

This Gender Equality Plan consolidates all procedures and regulations aimed at achieving this goal.

2. Baseline Data

As of August 30, 2023, BFI employs 85 staff, including student workers and one apprentice. The number of female employees is 18, and male employees are 67. This means that 21% of all BFI employees are female, 79% are male, and 0% have identified their gender as diverse.

3. Legal Basis and Implementation

The management is committed to complying with all legal foundations explicitly targeting gender equality, such as Article 3 of the Basic Law, the General Equal Treatment Act, and all laws promoting family protection and the compatibility of family and work, in their current versions.

Measures taken to implement these include:

- a) All guidelines, the collective bargaining agreement applicable to parts of the workforce, and works agreements contain the same rights for all employees, with differences based on understandable objective criteria, such as education, specific tasks, etc.
- b) Works agreements concluded until 2019 state that, for better readability, the grammatically masculine form (employee) is used. However, this refers to individuals of any gender. Since 2020, the term "employees" is used in works agreements and other communications to address individuals of any gender.
- c) All employment contracts refer to the works agreements.

Specific Measures

- a) Open positions, regardless of hierarchy, are advertised in a gender-neutral manner using the notation "d/m/w," gender-neutral job titles, or both.
- b) When evaluating applications, attention is given to objective facts determining potential suitability, aiming to prevent unconscious gender stereotypes from influencing selection decisions.
- c) In hiring or promoting employee groups where one gender is more represented, applications from the underrepresented gender are favored, provided they meet the professional or personal requirements.

Salary classification is based on job characteristics. Since May 25, 2019, salaries are determined according to the collective agreement on remuneration principles based on job characteristics, including factors such as professional experience, external value of the function, and training needs. Salary classification is subject to works council approval.

- d) Various instruments to balance family and professional responsibilities are covered by works agreements, including:
- Flexible working hours (annual flexitime with traffic light system)
 - Time off from work for special occasions (birth of own children, wedding, wedding anniversary, death in the family)
 - The option to work remotely two days a week (for new hires since 2019)
 - Subsidy payments during prolonged illness for employees with at least 5 years of tenure.

All employees can claim benefits from these works agreements.

- e) Part-time opportunities are open to individuals of any gender, and beyond statutory part-time options.

- f) If necessary, gender-specific statistics can be retrieved from the ERP system.

4. Responsibility

The management and leadership are responsible for ensuring equal treatment of employees and adherence to applicable regulations.

5. Occupational safety

The occupational safety specialist advises leaders on the safety of pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. Risk assessment forms for workplaces where pregnant or breastfeeding mothers may work include the necessary inspection points as required by § 10 (1) of the Maternity Protection Act.

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