



Gender Equality Plan

Strategies and Measures
for a diverse working environment

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PREFACE

In times of ever-increasing challenges in the world of work, multiple crises and uncertainties, motivated, skilled employees are a company's greatest asset. A successful RDI company must therefore succeed in offering its employees a working environment that shows appreciation for everyone. This requires a culture of openness and diversity.

As executives, it is our responsibility to actively and continuously pursue gender equality and diversity. This ongoing process must be anchored in our everyday business life. It is not only about implementing specific measures. Above all, it is about creating a culture that practices and encourages diversity in all its facets. We are convinced that a diverse, equal working environment not only strengthens our employees, but also promotes the innovative power and the competitiveness of OFI.

This gender equality plan is intended to support and reinforce our efforts. It is a clear expression of our commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all employees – regardless of gender, origin, sexual orientation, age, or other personal characteristics. We are determined to breaking down barriers so that OFI becomes a place where diversity is actively promoted. Together, we can create a working environment that is not only fair and equitable, but also offers the best opportunities for personal and professional development for everyone.



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1 INITIAL SITUATION

Since 2013, the Federal Ministry for Climate Protection, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation, and Technology has regularly commissioned a gender equality survey¹ to assess the current status of gender equality in non-university scientific and technical research in Austria. OFI also collects the necessary data and has been participating in this survey since 2022. The results of the gender equality survey not only provide valuable insights into the development of gender relations in Austria's non-university research landscape, but can also be used as a basis for measures to promote equality.

The Gender Equality Survey 2024 conducted by the Federal Ministry shows a continuous increase in the proportion of female scientists in the non-university scientific and technical research institutions surveyed. The percentage rose from 20 % in 2004 to 31 % in 2023.² This represents the highest figure since the survey began. At OFI the proportion of women in the FEI sector is currently significantly higher. Our latest monitoring³ shows a balanced gender ratio with over 50 % women.

Despite this progress, differences between the sexes remain, particularly with regard to management positions, part-time work and income distribution. This is clearly shown not only by the Federal Ministry's gender equality survey, but also by the internal gender monitoring of OFI. A summary of our evaluation:

- Women make up 56,3 % of RDI staff at the company. This is a high figure, considering that women make up only 41,5 % of the workforce overall.
- The high proportion of women in the RDI sector is also reflected in project responsibility. Women were in the lead of 50 % of the research projects carried out in 2024.
- When it comes to management positions, the situation is different. Only two of the seven team leadership functions in the technical competence center of OFI are staffed by women. There are currently no women in team leadership positions in the OFI sales division. In the administrative unit, the gender ratio at the team leadership level is balanced. There are three female and three male department heads.
- The proportion of women working part-time in the RDI sector is stagnating at a high level, while the proportion of men working part-time is steadily increasing. Currently 34 % of women and 13 % of men in scientific positions at OFI work part-time.
- The gender pay gap⁴ averages 15 % for Junior and Senior Researcher.

The analysis of the current situation shows that, compared to other non-university scientific and technical research institutions, OFI has a very high proportion of women in scientific positions and in active project management. However, this balanced gender ratio is not (yet) reflected in team leadership positions.

¹ The equality survey is available in German at the following link:
https://www.bmimi.gv.at/themen/innovation/publikationen/menschen_qualifikation_gender/Gleichstellungserhebung-2024.html. Last accessed on 24/10/2025

² See *ibid*.

³ Data refers to the year 2024.

⁴ Calculation is based on gross salaries in 2024.

The internal surveys conducted on gender distribution at OFI form an important basis for implementing measures to promote equality. The positive developments that have been achieved through measures already implemented should be maintained and further expanded.

At the same time, the available data reveal gaps in data collection. Counting the number of people in certain positions can only ever be the starting point for a gender mainstreaming strategy. It is important to examine the data closely and find out how different data sets relate to each other. In order to obtain a realistic picture of equality within OFI, to better classify existing data, and to close any data gaps, it is important to continuously optimize collection processes and thus gradually create a more accurate and inclusive data basis.

2 RESOURCES

The OFI management is aware that resources are needed to further promote equality within the company. Based on the measures set out in the gender equality plan, the necessary resources, such as an appropriate budget, human resources, space and material expenses, will therefore be made available. Furthermore, employees will be given the opportunity to participate in activities, training courses, and/or information events that serve to build an inclusive, gender-equitable corporate culture during working hours.

In order to take diverse perspectives into consideration when developing the gender equality plan, the Gender Working Group was established. It acts as a forum for exchange and discussion about challenges, ideas and visions for the future.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

Gender equality requires that the interests, needs and priorities of all genders be considered, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women, men and diverse individuals. The aim is to reduce gender-related inequalities, including in connection with other possible dimensions of discrimination, such as age, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or belief. Accordingly, an intersectional understanding of gender is assumed.

At OFI, we pursue the goal of implementing a targeted diversity strategy to achieve sustainable improvements in recruiting, workplace design and employee satisfaction. As part of the gender equality plan, measures are to be developed and implemented that focus on an appreciative corporate culture.

Key Topics

Based on an analysis of the initial situation at OFI and a constructive exchange on this topic within the Gender Working Group, key topics were identified to guide the measures outlined in the equality plan.

The following areas of action were identified and specific objectives formulated:

1. Corporate Culture and Communication

The aim is to integrate equality agendas into corporate culture in a sustainable manner in order to promote equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion in all areas of the company. This should create a fair, innovative and productive working environment.

2. Key Figures Monitoring

The aim is to create transparency regarding progress in gender equality through systematic monitoring of gender ratio indicators and to enable data-based decisions to promote equal opportunities.

3. Development and Career

The aim is to systematically take gender and diversity aspects into account in all measures for professional development and career advancement in order to ensure fair career opportunities and balanced representation at all hierarchical levels. The goal is to break down structural barriers and strengthen employee diversity as a factor for innovation and quality.

4. Work-Life Balance

The aim is to create structures and measures that enable a healthy work-life balance in order to increase employee motivation, performance, and long-term employment while also creating an inclusive, family-friendly working environment.

4 MEASURES OF THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

The measures in the OFI Gender Equality Plan were defined by the Gender Working Group in consultation with the OFI management in line with the identified areas for action. These include both ongoing measures already implemented in the company in previous years and planned measures that still need to be implemented.

4.1 Corporate Culture and Communication

Responsibility for gender equality should be placed on a solid and sustainable base at OFI. This will ensure that gender equality issues are addressed and promoted in a continuous and targeted manner and that diversity becomes firmly established in the corporate culture.

Measures already implemented and ongoing:

- Development and implementation of a Gender Equality Plan
This gender equality plan has created a basis for continuously promoting gender equality and diversity at OFI and embedding it in the corporate culture. The gender equality plan clearly demonstrates the commitment of the OFI management and serves as an internal guidance tool. It is not only available to employees on the intranet, but can also be downloaded from the OFI website by anyone who is interested.

- Participation in the ACR Quality Circle Gender & Diversity
Since 2017, an OFI employee and member of the Gender Working Group has been regularly participating in the Gender and Diversity Quality Circle of the Austrian Cooperative Research (ACR). The Quality Circle not only provides information on current developments and best practice examples in the field of gender equality and diversity, but also actively encourages exchange. Participation in this forum deepens OFI's expertise in the field of equality and diversity.

Measures scheduled for 2026-2027:

- Annual update of the Gender Equality Plan
- Designation of an Equal Opportunities Officer as the central point of contact and coordination for gender equality issues
- Integration of the initiated process into the OFI quality management system
- Creation of guidelines for the use of inclusive language
- Gender competence training for OFI managers with a focus on unconscious gender bias

4.2 Key Figures Monitoring

Key figures create transparency about the actual gender distribution, enable data-based analyses and comparative considerations between departments or periods. They reveal imbalances, identify areas where action is needed, and form the basis for measurable equality goals, monitoring, and credible internal and external communication.

Measures already implemented and ongoing:

- Key figure monitoring of the ACR
The annual ACR key figure monitoring systematically collects a large number of data, which also takes gender distribution into account. The data collected as part of this monitoring forms the starting point for the status report of OFI.
- Participation in the gender equality survey for non-university scientific and technical research in Austria
As part of voluntary participation in the Federal Ministry's gender equality survey, additional data on gender distribution is collected. This enables even more precise evaluation.
- Survey on perceptions of gender equality as part of the employee satisfaction survey
Transparency and participatory involvement are key elements of a sustainable gender equality policy. In order to obtain a realistic picture of the internal perception of gender equality, gender-sensitive questions were integrated into the existing employee satisfaction survey.

Measures scheduled for 2026-2027:

- Creating a fact sheet about the OFI Gender Monitoring for internal communication, including publication on the intranet
- Ongoing participation in ACR key figure monitoring
- Continued participation in the gender equality survey for non-university research in Austria
- Repeating the survey on employees' perception of gender equality as part of the next satisfaction survey

4.3 Development and Career

Promoting equality encompasses not only the application process and access to certain positions, but also equal opportunities for development within the company. All employees, regardless of gender, family situation, or working time model, should have the same opportunities for professional development and career advancement.

Measures already implemented and ongoing:

- Focus on gender-sensitive recruiting
A gender-sensitive recruiting process contributes to non-discriminatory access to open positions and reduces unconscious bias. After all, equal opportunities begin with the application process. The consistent use of gender-neutral language in job advertisements ensures that applicants feel equally addressed, regardless of their gender.
- Utilization of the FEMtech internship program
As part of the FEMtech internship program run by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), OFI regularly offers internships to female students in the fields of chemistry, materials science, and technical research. This initiative enables young women to gain practical experience and often marks the start of a career in the RDI sector.
- Targeted promotion of women in project management
With the implementation of FEMtech projects and the targeted promotion of women in project management, 50 % of the research projects carried out at OFI are now led by women. The female project managers also serve as role models, encouraging young colleagues to take on their own areas of responsibility.

Measures scheduled for 2026-2027:

- Development of an internal communication campaign featuring role models, that highlights the diversity of career opportunities at the institute
- Individual support for employees through the establishment of a mentoring program
- Analysis of job advertisements for implicit stereotypical phrasing to ensure gender-sensitive and inclusive language

- Optimization of the recruiting process for management positions with the aim of achieving a female representation of at least 50 % in new appointments
- Integration of the goals and measures of the Gender Equality Plan into the next OFI management seminar

4.4 Work-Life-Balance

Creating fair working conditions requires flexible structures that take different life circumstances into consideration. Modern working time models such as flexitime and working from home support employees in shaping their individual lifestyles. These measures not only promote equality, but also enhance the attractiveness of OFI as an employer.

Measures already implemented and ongoing:

- Flexible working hours
OFI has a defined flexitime framework that allows employees to organize their working hours individually and according to their needs in order to better balance professional requirements and private commitments.
- Establishment of hybrid forms of work
OFI has established guidelines for working from home. Depending on their job profile, employees can work flexibly from home or remotely if they have an appropriate agreement.
- Health promotion measures
In order to prevent overload and promote the physical and mental health of employees, OFI offers a range of voluntary health promotion services in consultation with the works council.
- Provision of period products
By providing free period products in women's restrooms, menstruating employees are given equal opportunities to participate in everyday working life. The measure helps to break down structural barriers and create an inclusive and gender-equitable corporate culture.

Measures scheduled for 2026-2027:

- Raising awareness among managers about the importance of work-life balance
- Integrating the topic of work-life balance into target agreements and employee appraisals
- Modern parental leave management: creating guidelines for handling employees returning from parental leave
- Evaluating the psychological stress experienced by employees

5 CONCLUSION AND OUTLOOK

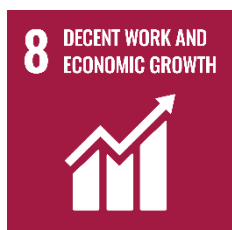
The systematic integration of equality, gender and diversity aspects into the corporate strategy of OFI is a decisive step toward a modern, innovative and fair work culture. This equality plan forms the basis for these aims. Each measure defined in it serves the long-term goal of creating an inclusive working environment in which all employees – regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, or other personal characteristics – feel accepted and valued. This is intended not only to strengthen equal opportunities, but also to sustainably increase the quality, creativity, and attractiveness of the entire institute.

An iterative process will be established to implement the diversity strategy and equality measures. Continuous evaluation, monitoring of relevant key figures and regular adjustment of measures are of central importance. This dynamic approach ensures that progress is visible, structures remain effective, and new challenges are identified at an early stage.

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With the process initiated by this Gender Equality Plan, OFI is contributing to the achievement of the following UN Sustainable Development Goals:



Cover illustration: The subject was generated with the support of AI. It symbolizes a strong, creative and innovative team, that is characterized by diversity and variety.