



IFZ

Gender Equality Plan

Authors: Anita Thaler, Franziska Haller, Sandra Karner & Jurgen Suschek-Berger

Original Version: June 29th 2022

Update: October 28th 2025

Our vision of gender equality at IFZ

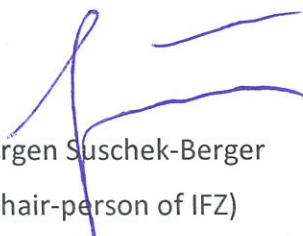
The Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture (IFZ) is a non-profit scientific association, which was founded in the year 1988 with the objective to address social issues in technology research and engineering education. Right from the founding days, gender and sustainability have been important topics of the institute's research agenda between science and policy and reflection as well as intervention, to contribute to socially and environmentally sound science and technology.

Moreover, IFZ has been aiming at gender equality since its founding, aiming on gender balanced decision-making boards and participatory decision processes. Gender-sensitive language and images have always been the default in the institute's website. Gender in research and teaching have been part of IFZ's portfolio right from the beginning. The research unit "Gender, Science and Technology" (formerly "Women*, Technology, Environment") exists almost as long as IFZ itself, and carries out gender in science and research projects funded by the European Commission since 2001.

The gained scientific gender knowledge has always been made available to the whole organisation. In workshops and seminars, gender knowledge has been taught explicitly as well as implicitly through discussions in meetings and reflections on organizational practices.

Due to organizational changes in the last years, a need for re-calibration of efforts became apparent. IFZ has high standards of gender equality compared to other research organisations, but can still advance its efforts. IFZ wants to consider various forms of care responsibilities and co-create it's own code of conduct to avoid gender-based violence in all its forms, for research projects as well as for teaching activities.

IFZ aims at social gender justice and at being a good working environment for everybody, regardless of gender, sexuality, age, care responsibilities or disciplinary background.



Jürgen Suschek-Berger
(Chair-person of IFZ)



Angelika Tisch
(Deputy Chair-person of IFZ)

Background

This original version of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) was written in 2022 by the GEP steering committee at IFZ, comprising the two ombudspersons and the chairperson of IFZ. This committee is also in charge of monitoring the GEP and reporting its status regularly to all members of IFZ at the quarterly assembly meetings.

Since 2006 two elected ombudspersons are dealing – besides employment rights and psychological evaluation of workplaces – with gender equality issues.

In 2013, IFZ implemented a gender action plan within the European Commission funded project [GenderTime](#). In this first version of a gender equality plan, an annual gender monitoring report of gendered data of career-specific and decision-making relevant data had been set up, using employment records and data and based on a cultural survey on Athena Swan indicators and items. Inequalities did not happen on a deliberate but on an implicit level, resulting from intersections of inequities like gender plus seniority (which is not automatically connected to competencies or academic achievements) or differences in handling academic and parental leaves in the salary scheme.

In consequence, between 2013 and 2016 IFZ implemented co-created career development options for administrative and research staff, measures to optimize work-life balance of all employees, guidelines for diversity-sensitive and inclusive organization of events, and a gender-fair and parent-friendly salary scheme.

For many years IFZ had a close connection with the University of Klagenfurt. Between 2017 and 2018 a re-organization process at the originally closely connected University of Klagenfurt re-shaped IFZ. The former Graz Unit of University of Klagenfurt was transferred to Graz University of Technology, and IFZ became a fully independent research organization without technical, organizational or personnel connection to those universities. Some former colleagues stayed members of the research organization IFZ, and with the Graz University of Technology a cooperation contract arranges synergies, like the annual STS conferences hosted by both organizations, and the IAS STS, an institute for international academic fellows and guest scholars, who are temporarily part of IFZ, and share working places with colleagues from Graz University of Technology.

However, the re-organization process led to a reduction of employees and different contracts for some IFZ colleagues. Furthermore, the career possibilities at University of Klagenfurt, including membership in decision making boards and working groups, ended.

This re-organization process shaped not only the identity of IFZ, and had economic consequences, but changed organizational hierarchies, decision making boards, and career opportunities.

Gender data

The current version of the GEP is referring to the year 2024. The cut-off date for data collection was December 31st 2024. In 2024, 15 persons are part of IFZ. As IFZ is a scientific association, these persons can be members¹ of the association and/or employees. IFZ is led by a management board of two persons, a chairperson, and their deputy, who is in charge of finances. Additionally, currently four research units at IFZ have heads, who are coordinating small teams – in the current constellation, two of them are at the same time in the IFZ management board. Of the 15 persons, three are in an admin position, all others have researchers' positions, one without a master's degree, four with additional (middle) management positions (heads of research units and management board at IFZ).

The gender distribution of those positions at IFZ is the following:

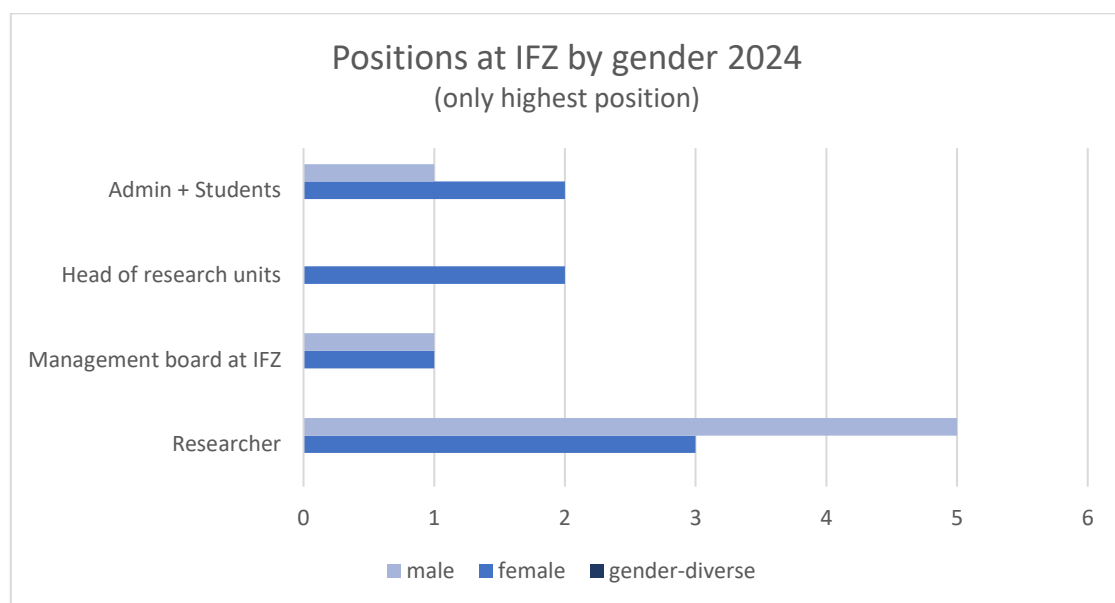


Figure 1: Positions at IFZ by gender 2024

Overall, the team of researchers consists of seven females and six males, including the persons who are head of research units, the management board and one admin, who works also as researcher (female).

As only the highest position in the organization is counted, two heads of research units (one female, one male) are not visible, as these are currently also the management board at IFZ.

At the time of this analysis (December 2024) all employees and members identified as females or males, further gender-diverse identities are optional categories, which might apply for future gender monitoring reports.

The following charts refer only to those people who are employed at the IFZ.

¹ Employees with unlimited contracts can become members of IFZ after one year of employment. The membership allows to participate regular assembly meetings and to vote for budget and organizational decisions of the organization. Former employees, who still contribute to the aims of the association, either with projects or with honorary work, can stay members of IFZ.

In 2024, nine researchers are employed in IFZ projects (as project leaders and/or as researchers). Six of them are female, three are male. Four out of those nine researchers are principal investigators (PI), from which three are female and one is male.

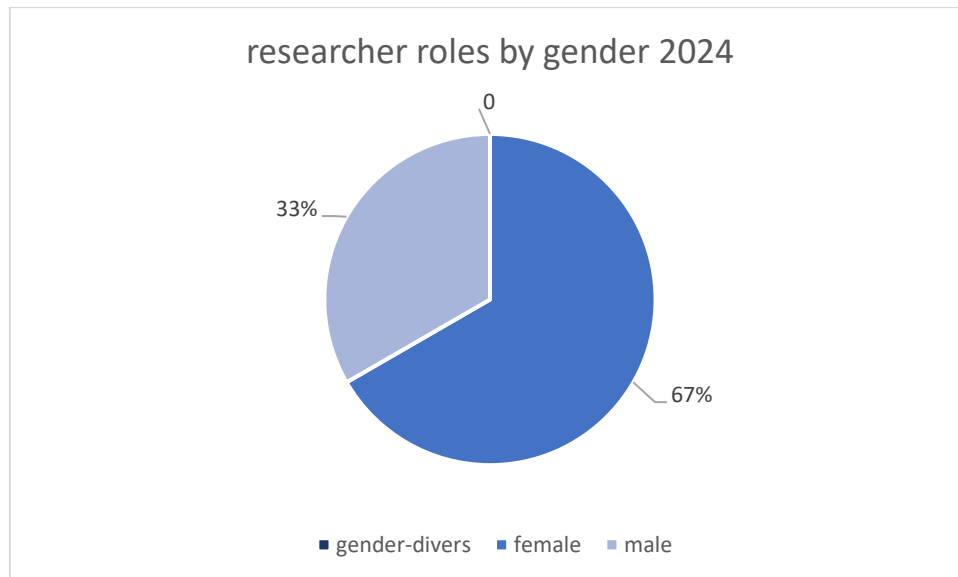


Figure 2: researcher roles by gender 2024

From the original version (2022):

In the analysis of project management – principal investigator’s (PI) –roles resulted in a gender difference, which will be further analyzed in thematic area 3 of the gender equality plan “Gender equality in recruitment and career progression”.

Update:

In 2022 there were more males than females in PI roles. Compared to this, there are in 2024 three female and one male PI roles at IFZ. The PI roles will be further analysed in the future.

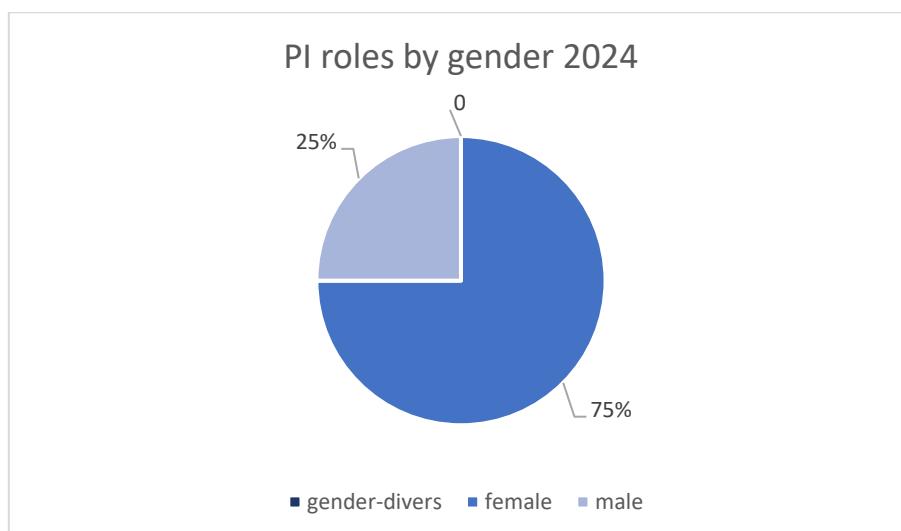


Figure 3: PI roles by gender 2024

The duration of a project and the project budget are indicators of the security and stability of a researcher's position at the IFZ. The following figure shows the distribution of projects by duration and gender. While male employees work on a total of five long term projects of up to 3 years or more, female employees work on a total of twelve projects up to 3 years and more. In 2024, female employees work on more than double the number of long-term projects as male employees at IFZ.

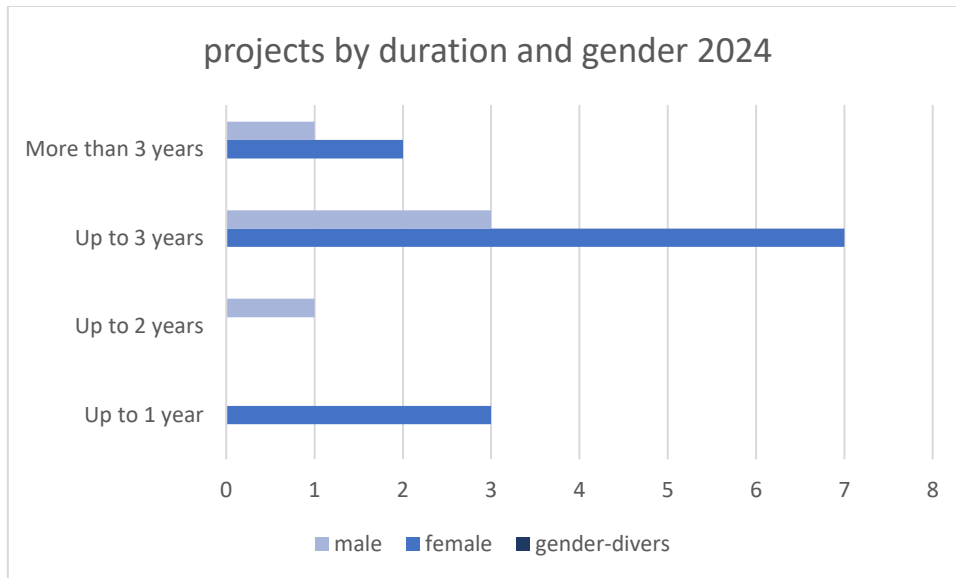


Figure 4: projects by duration and gender 2024

Where we can see a big difference between genders is in the amount of the project budget managed. Female researchers at IFZ manage in 2024 more than 150-times as much budget as male researchers.

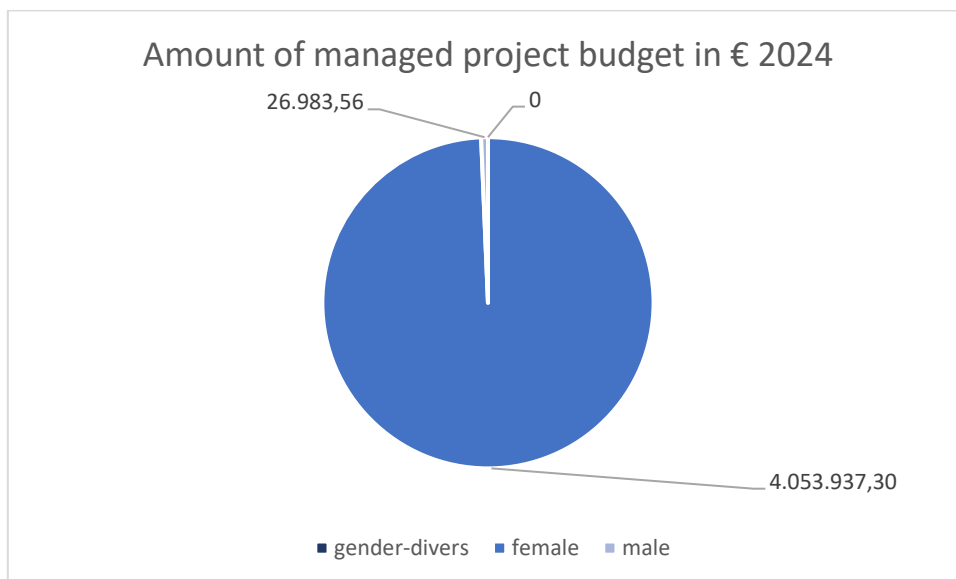


Figure 5: amount of managed project budget in € 2024

According to IFZ's greenhouse gas balance 2024 the emissions caused by business trips are also not equally distributed between the genders. Here, female researchers cause 75-times as much CO₂e emissions than male researchers. This might correlate with the amount of project budget managed and will be further analyzed.

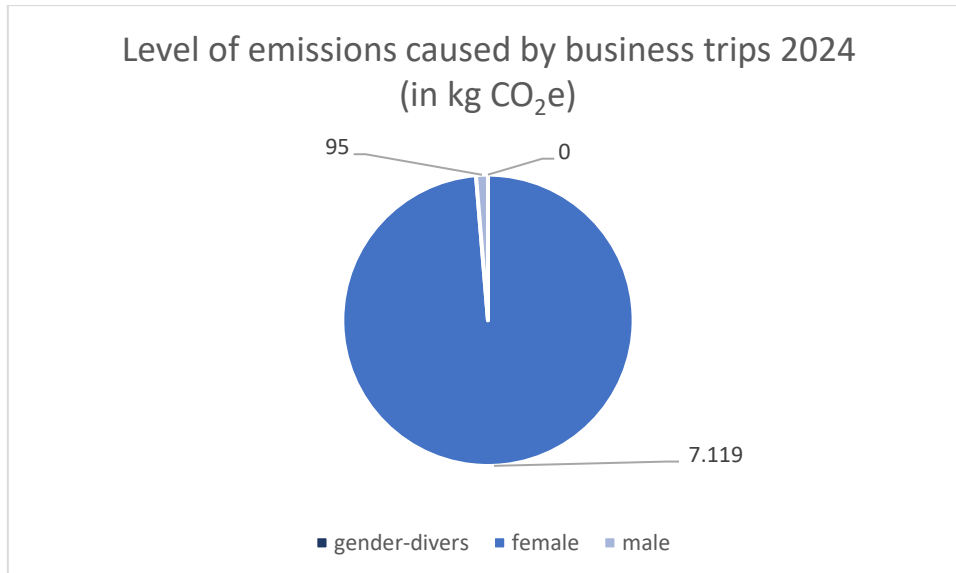


Figure 6: level of emissions caused by business trips 2024

From the original version (2022):

Another topic, which will be further discussed are the fewer working hours of females at IFZ. Working part-time is the standard model of employment at IFZ, not only due to care responsibilities and other jobs (teaching, etc.), but also because of the dependence of IFZ from third-party funds. However, it has to be analyzed whether PI roles and working hours are structurally gendered at IFZ.

Update 2024:

In 2024, women at the IFZ work around twice as many hours as men. This suggests that the distribution of working hours at the IFZ is not structurally gendered. However, the distribution of working hours will be further analyzed together with the PI roles.

Co-creating gender equality knowledge at IFZ

When the European Commission funded project [CHANGE](#) began in 2018 at IFZ (which was the coordination institution), IFZ was already experienced, with an implemented gender equality plan, accounting decades of experience with [gender sensitive teaching](#) and [gender research projects](#). However, it became clear that the re-organization of the institute made a re-thinking process necessary. How can careers in a research organization apart from a well-known higher education tenure track or industrial expert careers look like? How can the uncertainties of third-party funded research be handled in a non-profit research organization so employees' well-being and work-life balance are in focus? This specific situation of IFZ made a new customized GEP necessary, which considered the needs and also the experiences of its employees and members.

Furthermore, as IFZ has also longstanding scientific gender knowledge, the research organisation wanted to address two topics systematically, which had been only marginally introduced in the original gender action plan in 2013. First, a critical diverse understanding of gender, which would not only need a closer look at gender-sensitive language and include gender-diverse persons better in communication and publications of the institute, but also offers an intersectional understanding of social categories and identity markers. Second, gender-based violence and sexual harassment were part of the first employees' survey in 2013, however rather superficial. IFZ plans to co-create a code of conduct to communicate clear rules for the working environment, research and teaching, with special regards to power relations with early career researchers, students and various stakeholders of IFZ research activities.

[Co-creating gender equality knowledge](#) is also at the heart of this GEP because IFZ has a long tradition of transdisciplinary, participatory research, with expertise in responsible research and innovation ([RRI](#)). This is why the IFZ GEP steering committee included members and employees of IFZ in all implementation steps, which started on June 29th 2022 by formally agreeing on the original IFZ GEP in the assembly meeting (other workshops, coaching sessions, and meetings are explained in the GEP details on the next pages).

Since the formal agreement of the IFZ members and employees, several GEP activities have been implemented, and others will follow in the upcoming years.

Besides knowledge co-creation the integration of existing knowledge and gaining of synergy effects became more and more important. Thus, the annual gender monitoring report, which delivers the updated data on gender relations at IFZ, has been further developed as a tool, which uses existing financial data and controlling instruments already in place at IFZ. Those financial and controlling tools have been complemented with gender and other relevant social categories, a first and important step towards gender budgeting.

Finally, the institute's research focus on climate change and sustainability led not only to a greenhouse gas balance at IFZ, but this knowledge was used to take a closer look at potential intersectionality perspectives of sustainable behaviors at IFZ, with a focus on mobility.

The IFZ GEP

This is the 2024 updated version of the IFZ GEP from 2022, based on

- the gender action plan implemented between 2013 and 2016 (incl. a gender-fair salary scheme, guidelines for inclusive events, peer mentoring, and several work-life balance measures, etc.), and
- several long-standing gender equality measures in research, teaching and communication (gender-sensitive language etc.) since IFZ's founding in 1988.

The monitoring of the measures is part of the tasks of the GEP steering committee at IFZ, which reports on the current status of measures in the quarterly member assemblies of IFZ, using the concrete performance indicators of each activity as well as the gender monitoring report² of IFZ.

The thematic areas of the GEP are organised along the [recommended areas of the European Commission](#).

Grey marked activities (in the table on the following pages) have already been carried out, the resources indicated are used working hours of IFZ employees for each respective measure.

² Since 2013 IFZ had a gender monitoring report comprising gender segregated data of positions, salaries, etc. connected to other relevant categories like age, disciplinary background, care responsibilities, disability status etc. These data are confidential, and only available for IFZ employees and members. From 2023 on, at the general assembly an annual gender monitoring report is presented including gender budgeting data.

Thematic area 1: Work-life balance and organizational culture				
<i>Identified problems</i>	Research jobs at IFZ are more self-dependent than in other research organisations. Job insecurities and a high-level autonomy lead to high pressure of individuals to acquire new research funds while working on several on-going projects. Covid and the increase in home-office-hours has amplified this effect, by reducing team communication in the office and blur the boundaries of work and private lives.			
<i>Envisioned goals</i>	<p><i>Co-creation of an IFZ work culture (and in case corresponding formal rules), which prevents individuals from exhausting work practices, and strongly varying scope of employment. This implies the following goals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>staff working during fixed work times (deviations only in exceptional cases); flexibility of max. XX% of the scope of employment</i> • <i>to reduce times of heavy workload (e.g. by fostering team work)</i> • <i>measures to ensure basic scope of employment (e.g. backbone projects)</i> • <i>balance efforts in acquisition (coordinated acquisition, know- how & knowledge exchange/transfer to the younger generation)</i> • <i>compensation for work currently performed on a voluntary basis</i> • <i>distribute knowledge in regard to areas of responsibility in key positions (knowledge transfer)</i> • <i>create a shared commitment for basic values, such as gender equality, the institute's work is based on, within all IFZ members</i> 			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Indicator(s)</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Work-life-balance workshop	May 24 th , 2022	Ombudspersons	Workshop documentation	12,5 hours
Systematic evaluation of psychological stress	Feb. 7 th 2024, April 18 th 2024, May 19 th 2024	Ombudspersons + management	Results from two workshops with all employees (evaluation tool) + analysis and planning of needed activities + meeting with IFZ management	31 hours
Implement measures based on systematic evaluation	2024-2026	Ombudspersons + management	Concrete stress management measures (panning and monitoring)	20 hours

Gender-diversity workshop	1.part: Coaching with gender expert Andrea Widmann, April 13 th 2023 2. part: Gender workshop with gender expert Jenny Schlager, March 21 st 2024	Gender research unit	Workshop documentation	48 hours
Gender-diverse sensitive language and images (website, reports, ...)	2023-2024	Gender research unit + management	All documents and contributions at the Website are gender-sensitive (recommendation to use " Geschlechtersensible Sprache – Dialog auf Augenhöhe: Leitfaden " by Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft, 2021)	12 hours

Thematic area 2: Gender balance in leadership and decision-making				
<i>Identified problems</i>	IFZ went through a major organisational transformation process in the last 10 years. IFZ was the Graz Unit of an institute at the Faculty for Interdisciplinary Research and Further Education at University of Klagenfurt. After a re-organization of the university, all Graz based university employees went to Graz University of Technology, while all IFZ employees stayed at IFZ, but without the (organisational, technical, financial) support of the university. The remaining team members took responsibility for tasks, without considering gender balance consequently.			
<i>Envisioned goals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>all boards and committees at IFZ are gender balanced resp. representing the diversity of employees</i> • <i>raising awareness and commitment of all board members to gender equality & diversity issues</i> • <i>transparency in decision making processes and related criteria</i> • <i>clear rules in regard to gender budgeting & proper/transparent documentation and evaluation of the use of resources</i> • <i>distribute knowledge/know-how about tasks in key positions (temporary tandems?)</i> 			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Indicator(s)</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Evaluation of gender balance in all boards and committees at IFZ	2024-2025	Ombudspersons	Results discussed in the members' assembly (5 th March 2025)	10 hours
Update of decision matrix IFZ	2024-2025	Ombudspersons	Updated document	25 hours
Gender budgeting (time and money spent from and for IFZ)	2024	Admin personnel + ombudsperson + management	Updated controlling tools and links to gender monitoring report Results discussed in the members' assembly (5 th March 2025)	40 hours
Succession management IFZ	2024-2026	Management	Succession of the management board has been clarified	80 hours

Thematic area 3: Gender equality in recruitment and career progression				
<i>Identified problems</i>	As stated before, IFZ went through a major organisational transformation process in the last 10 years. This re-organization led to personal changes, cuts in finances, and increased efforts to recruit new team members and fields of expertise. In this course previously established rules and procedures have been softened up.			
<i>Envisioned goals</i>	<i>Co-creation of rules & measures for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>equal recruitment procedures including the salary scheme (“Vordienstzeit-Anrechnung”)</i> • <i>a just & gender-fair salary scheme</i> • <i>individual career development – considering also specific private circumstances (e.g. care work)</i> • <i>(transparency on) equal career development possibilities at IFZ considering also specific private circumstances (e.g. care work) and alternative career models</i> 			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Indicator(s)</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Recruitment strategies and transparent processes	2023-2026	Ombudspersons	Co-created recruitment rules set up (document accessible to all staff) and approved by members’ assembly	50 hours
Info document for (new) employees	Presented at institute’s meeting (“IB”) June 28 th , 2023	Ombudspersons + management	Updated document published on IFZ server (“ Institutsinfo ”)	40 hours
Re-introduction of buddy-system for new employees	2022	Ombudspersons	Each new employee has a buddy, with whom s_he regularly exchanges – running system	10 hours
Regular feedback system (“appraisal interviews”)	2024	Management	Guidelines for RFS; proof of regularly implemented feedback activities (initiated 30 th of April 2024)	12 hours
Development possibilities at IFZ	1.Part: Workshop with all IFZ employees to co-create a common vision for IFZ – April 9-10 th 2024	Ombudspersons + management	Workshop documentation (“ IFZ-Klausur 2024 ”) and interviews analysed; possible career paths at IFZ outlined/depicted	95 hours

Thematic area 4: Gender in research and teaching				
<i>Identified problems</i>	IFZ has gender as a research focus and teaching topic since its founding. However, gender knowledge has not been equally distributed. While some research units might not realise the full potential of gender topics in research and teaching, others' gender expertise and efforts might not be visible.			
<i>Envisioned goals</i>	<i>Evaluation of gender as a topic in existing research and teaching activities. Knowledge transfer of gender equality expertise to colleagues with less experience, co-creation of future teaching and research activities implementing gender as cross-cutting issue.</i>			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Indicator(s)</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Gender in research training	1.Part: Invitation to all IFZ researchers " Breaking the Bias " Summer School , July 5-7 th 2023 2. Part: IFZ Internal workshop (Anti Bias Training) planned for 3.2.2026	Gender research unit	Workshop documentation	20 hours
Overview of projects with gender-sensitive research approach and/or gender as research content	2022-2024	Ombudspersons + management	All research projects with gender dimension are published in a document .	24 hours
Overview of courses with gender as teaching content and/or gender-sensitive teaching approach	2023-2024	Ombudspersons + management	All courses with gender dimension are published in a document .	17 hours

IFZ Jour Fixe as a regular networking activity for joined project acquisition (incl. gender as cross-cutting issue)	Since April 2022	Ombudspersons	Regular Meetings and e-mail updates	30 hours
---	------------------	---------------	-------------------------------------	----------

Thematic area 5: Measures against gender-based violence				
<i>Identified problems</i>	The last evaluation of discrimination and gender-based violence (GBV) happened during the first GEP implementation (2013-2017), in the meantime a re-organization process led to personal changes. New team members have never been introduced to the concept of GBV. IFZ lacks current data and a code of conduct.			
<i>Envisioned goals</i>	Co-creation of a code of conduct (IFZ as working environment, our research and our teaching; power relations – students etc.)			
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Indicator(s)</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Basic Training in gender-based violence	2024-2025	Gender research unit	Shared document about Austrian situation (" Gender Based Violence ... Bente Knoll"); Workshop documentation	30 hours
Survey on discrimination and gender-based violence	2025	Gender research unit	Survey (UniSAFE survey) results presented in gender report	80 hours
Further training based on survey results	2025-2026	Gender research unit + external expert	Workshop documentation	Ca. 800 Euro
Co-creation of code of conduct	2025-2026	Ombudspersons + management	Published document on website	80 hours

List of Figures

Figure 1: Positions at IFZ by gender 2024	4
Figure 2: researcher roles by gender 2024	5
Figure 3: PI roles by gender 2024	5
Figure 4: projects by duration and gender 2024.....	6
Figure 5: amount of managed project budget in € 2024	6
Figure 6: level of emissions caused by business trips 2024	7