



Gender, Equality and Diversity Plan

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1. Gender, Equality and Diversity at WIVA P&G

Founded in 2018 as a non-profit association, WIVA P&G – Wasserstoffinitiative Vorzeigeregion Austria Power & Gas (Hydrogen Initiative Flagship Region Austria Power & Gas) serves as a competence network connecting research and innovation actors in hydrogen, hydrogen derivatives and renewable gases. Its mission is to advance the “Molecule Transition made in Austria” through innovative flagship projects along the entire value chain. The Board acknowledges its responsibility to adopt and ensure the implementation of a structured, evidence-based and sustainable Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in line with European Commission requirements and the GEAR tool of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)¹. The present Gender, Equality and Diversity (GED) framework constitutes a formal strategic instrument that **embeds equality and diversity considerations** into the Secretariat’s governance structures, human resource management, research activities, decision-making processes and organizational culture. The WIVA P&G Secretariat, acting as the Board’s executive body, implements this GEP within the scope of its activities.

WIVA P&G is convinced that diversity within organizations—particularly in research and development—significantly **contributes to improving the quality, robustness and societal relevance of results while reducing structural blind spots.**² Diverse teams broaden perspectives, enhance problem-solving capacity and enable the development of products and applications that better reflect the needs and expectations of different user groups. In this way, diversity strengthens market responsiveness and fosters innovation.

As a network organisation in the Austrian hydrogen landscape, WIVA P&G contributes substantially to the national transformation of the energy system towards climate neutrality and sustainability. The conscious **integration of diversity dimensions—including gender, age, origin, disability, interculturality and other relevant characteristics**—into internal office structures, processes and research projects supports the development of responsible and socially responsive innovations in renewable energy technologies.

In addition, WIVA P&G recognizes its role model function within the Austrian and international hydrogen economy. The Secretariat therefore actively promotes gender equality

¹ (European Insitut for Gender Equality, 2002)

² Cf. (FFG, 2025)

standards not only internally but also within collaborative research consortia. **By encouraging and supporting project partners in the implementation of gender equality measures in joint research projects**, the Secretariat contributes to strengthening inclusive excellence across the sector. Furthermore, the WIVA P&G Secretariat **supports the activities of the [Women in Green Hydrogen \(WiGH\)](#) network at the national level**, thereby reinforcing the visibility, networking and professional advancement of women in the hydrogen sector.

Equality and Diversity at WIVA P&G are treated as a **cross-cutting strategic priority** aligned with the organization's mission to **support a sustainable, innovative and socially responsible Net Zero transition**.

2. Legal Basis

National and international legislation supports the implementation of equality and diversity in the workplace. The legal basis for equality is laid down in **national law** within the³...

- Article 7 (1) – (3) of the Federal Constitutional Law (Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz, B-VG),
- §§ 19 (2) item 6, 20 b and 41 - 44 of the Universities Act (Universitätsgesetz, UG),
- the Equal Treatment Act (Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, GIBG),
- the Federal Disability Equality Act (Bundes- Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz, BGStG), and
- the Disabled Persons Employment Act (Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz, BEinstG).

and **international legal framework** within the...

- UN Women's Rights Convention
- UN Disability Rights Convention
- Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU
- European Convention on Human Rights

³ Cf. p4 (Energieinstitut an der Johannes Kepler Universität Linz, 2022)

3. WIVA P&G Secretariat - GED Objectives

- Ensure **equal rights, equal opportunities and non-discrimination** across all human resources (HR) and organizational processes.
- Achieve **gender-balanced representation** in leadership and decision-making positions through transparent and inclusive procedures.
- Retain highly qualified employees across **all life phases by promoting flexible, life-phase-oriented working conditions**.
- **Build and maintain a diverse and interdisciplinary team** to strengthen innovation, performance and research quality.
- **Integrate** sustainability, social responsibility and diversity principles consistently **into all association activities and decisions**.

4. Gender, Equality and Diversity Process

In line with the EIGE recommendations⁴, WIVA P&G has defined an internal, iterative GED process applicable to its Secretariat, that is based on annually evaluation and regular adaptation. Defined GED measures are continuously monitored and adjusted so that the measures are adapted to the needs of employees and contribute to improving equality within WIVA P&G. Selected indicators for measuring the process of development are defined in chapter 5 and presented in an annual internal GED report.

The WIVA P&G Secretariat **reports annually to the Board on the implementation status** of Gender, Equality and Diversity (GED) measures, including a structured evaluation of progress and concrete proposals for further actions aimed at strengthening organizational excellence and impact.

Upon mandate of the Board, the **defined measures are implemented within the WIVA P&G Secretariat and integrated into operational processes**. The results, developments and planned next steps are **presented once per year at the General Assembly** to all member organizations and companies, ensuring transparency, accountability and continuous improvement within the association.

⁴ (European Insitut for Gender Equality, 2002)



Figure 1 Annual GED Process at WIVA P&G office

5. Equality and Diversity Measures

The **systematic integration of diversity dimensions into human resource management and organizational processes** ensures the structured promotion of equal opportunities and non-discrimination within the WIVA P&G Secretariat. By embedding gender and diversity considerations into recruitment, career development, remuneration, decision-making and daily workplace practices, diversity is not treated as an abstract value but as an **operational management principle**.

WIVA P&G will **strengthen the build-up of a clean hydrogen economy through inclusive excellence**. Diversity enhances analytical capacity, broadens perspectives in project development and increases the quality and societal relevance of hydrogen innovation.

Furthermore, a diverse and inclusive work environment **positively influences organizational culture** by fostering respectful collaboration, transparent communication and constructive conflict resolution. This contributes to higher employee engagement, improved team performance and institutional resilience.⁵

Against this background, the following measures define the implementation framework of the Gender, Equality and Diversity (GED) process within the WIVA P&G Secretariat:

5.1. Gender, Equality and Diversity (GED) Resources

Office Resources and Governance Structure

The WIVA P&G Secretariat ensures the structured implementation of gender equality measures by allocating defined responsibilities and a GED process. A designated GED Officer coordinates the process. This role is held by Eva Maria Rechberger. The officer is supported by a formally established

⁵ Cf. (Brendler, et al., 2015)

GED process framework (including annual reporting, monitoring and evaluation). The GED activities are anchored at management level and mandated by the WIVA P&G Board to ensure accountability and strategic alignment with organizational objectives.

Support of the Women in Green Hydrogen (WiGH) Network

The WIVA P&G Secretariat actively supports the national activities of the Women in Green Hydrogen (WiGH) network in order to strengthen visibility, professional exchange and leadership opportunities for Austrian women in the hydrogen sector, with particular focus on women from WIVA P&G member organisations. Support may include communication activities, dissemination of events, strategic cooperation, and contribution to joint initiatives.

Participation of Employees in the WiGH Network

Female employees of the WIVA P&G Secretariat are actively encouraged to participate in national and international online WiGH meetings and networking formats. Participation supports peer exchange, leadership development and increased visibility of women in the clean hydrogen ecosystem.

[KPIs: Annual GED Monitoring and evaluation, Presentation at the Board Meeting, Presentation at the General Assembly, Number of WiGH-related communication activities per year, Number of jointly supported WiGH initiatives or events per year, Number of WIVA P&G employees participating in WiGH events per year]

This structured approach ensures that both internal governance mechanisms and external networking activities contribute measurably to strengthening gender equality and inclusive excellence within the hydrogen sector.

5.2. Vacancies

All job advertisements of the WIVA P&G Secretariat are drafted using gender-equitable, non-discriminatory and inclusive language. Vacancy texts are formulated in a competence-based manner, avoiding gender-coded wording and unnecessary formal barriers, and explicitly encouraging applications from underrepresented groups. Selection criteria are defined transparently and focus on qualifications, skills and experience relevant to the respective position.

By addressing a broader and more diverse talent pool, the Secretariat aims to increase both the number and diversity of qualified applicants. This structured and bias-aware recruitment approach

enhances the probability of selecting the most suitable candidate based on merit, while simultaneously contributing to balanced representation and long-term organizational performance.

[KPIs: Gender-neutral wording check implemented for 100% of job advertisements (yes/no), Number of applicants per vacancy (total and disaggregated by gender)]

5.3. Life-Phase-Orientation / Work Life Balance

The WIVA P&G Secretariat promotes flexible working time and workplace models as a core element of its life-phase-oriented human resource policy. In general, employees have the opportunity to reduce working hours through individually agreed **part-time arrangements**, provided that operational requirements are met. In addition, the Secretariat enables **home office and mobile working options**, allowing employees to perform their tasks remotely on a regular or needs-based basis in alignment with organizational requirements. These flexible arrangements support work-life balance, increase autonomy and productivity, and facilitate the reconciliation of professional, family and personal responsibilities.

Beyond general flexibility measures, the Secretariat supports specific statutory arrangements under Austrian labour law. This includes **parental part-time work** (“Elternteilzeit”), enabling parents to temporarily reduce working hours following parental leave in order to reconcile professional and family responsibilities. Furthermore, it provides access to **partial retirement schemes** (“Altersteilzeit”), allowing older employees to gradually reduce their working hours prior to retirement while maintaining social security coverage in accordance with Austrian regulations.

By combining general part-time models, home and mobile working options, and legally defined special arrangements such as parental part-time and partial retirement, the Secretariat ensures family-friendly, age-sensitive and flexible working conditions that contribute to long-term employee retention, equal opportunities and sustainable workforce planning.

[KPIs: Share of employees working part-time (% of total staff), Gender distribution of part-time employees (%), Number of home office/mobile office days per employee per year (average), Share of employees using home office/mobile office arrangements (%), Number of employees using parental part-time per year (disaggregated by gender), Share of eligible employees making use of parental part-time (%), Number of employees using partial retirement schemes per year]

5.4. Equal Pay and Salary Transparency

The WIVA P&G Secretariat applies the principle of equal pay for equal work and work of equal value, irrespective of gender or other protected characteristics. Remuneration is based on the Austrian collective agreement for non-university research institutions, ensuring a structured and non-discriminatory salary framework in line with Section 2 of the agreement.

Salary allocation follows objective criteria such as role, responsibility, qualification and professional experience. WIVA P&G ensures internal salary transparency by making the salary structure and classification system accessible to all employees, thereby supporting comparability and preventing structural pay gaps. Regular reviews of gender-disaggregated income data are conducted within the annual GED reporting process.

[KPIs: Average income per Role and Gender (full-time equivalent)]

5.5. Integration of the gender dimension into research and other activities

As a research and innovation association, the WIVA P&G Secretariat systematically integrates gender and diversity perspectives into its research coordination, project development and stakeholder activities. The objective is to enhance scientific quality, societal relevance and user-oriented innovation by considering diversity-related factors at an early stage of project design and implementation.

In its role as consortium coordinator and networking platform, the Secretariates promotes the inclusion of relevant diversity dimensions—such as gender, age, origin, disability and intercultural background—within research proposals, project structures and dissemination activities. Where applicable, gender-sensitive research questions, stakeholder analyses and user needs assessments are encouraged in order to avoid bias and strengthen the transferability of results.

Beyond research content, the Secretariat applies diversity standards to its own events and communication formats. Panels and expert discussions are composed with attention to gender-balanced representation, and accessibility requirements (e.g. barrier-free access) are considered in the planning and implementation of events⁶.

⁶ By barrier-free events, we understand the participation of all people, including irrespective of physical disability. Inclusive planning involves identifying needs and organising the event accordingly and using available resources responsibly.

[KPIs: Share of coordinated projects integrating gender or diversity aspects in proposal or implementation phase (%), Number of project proposals including a gender or diversity dimension per year, Gender distribution of speakers at WIVA P&G events (%), Share of events meeting defined accessibility criteria (%)]

5.6. Gender and Equality Training

The WIVA P&G Secretariat systematically promotes awareness-raising and capacity-building measures on gender equality and diversity. Training activities focus on legal foundations of non-discrimination, gender mainstreaming in organizational practice, and the identification and mitigation of unconscious bias in recruitment, evaluation and decision-making processes.

[KPI: Number of gender and diversity training sessions attended per year and employee]

5.7. Measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment

In accordance with Austrian labour law, employers are legally required to take appropriate and immediate action in cases of (sexual) harassment or discriminatory behaviour in the workplace⁷. The WIVA P&G Secretariat fully complies with these obligations and applies a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, gender-based discrimination, racist remarks, LGBTQIA+-hostile behaviour and any form of degrading treatment based on age or other protected characteristics.

The designated GED Officer serves as the confidential first point of contact for all related complaints or concerns. To ensure accessibility and transparency, a dedicated reporting channel has been established (GED@wiva.at). Reports are handled confidentially and in accordance with applicable data protection regulations.

In the event of a reported incident, a structured internal three-step procedure is initiated:

1. **Immediate assessment and protective measures**, defined in coordination with management to ensure the safety and well-being of the affected person.
2. **Clarification of facts**, conducted in a neutral and objective manner, where appropriate with the involvement of an independent external body.

⁷ (Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft, 2023)

3. **Implementation and review of corrective measures**, including disciplinary actions, mediation or structural adjustments, where necessary.

The objective of this procedure is to ensure swift intervention, legal compliance, protection of affected individuals and prevention of recurrence.

[KPI: Number of reported cases per year (anonymized)]

5.8. Health Promotion

The WIVA P&G Secretariat actively promotes the physical and mental well-being of its employees as part of its sustainable human resource strategy. Health promotion is understood as a preventive and structural measure to maintain long-term work ability, reduce absenteeism and strengthen overall organizational resilience.

For employees on long-term sick leave, WIVA P&G supports a structured and gradual return-to-work process through the Austrian **Fit2Work programme**. Within the framework of partial reintegration, working hours may be temporarily reduced for a defined period (typically 6–9 months), combined with financial compensation mechanisms in accordance with statutory provisions. This approach enables a health-oriented and sustainable reintegration into professional life.

In addition, the Secretariat is committed to implementing workplace **health promotion measures** (Betriebliche Gesundheitsförderung). This includes the systematic identification of health-related needs, implementation of preventive measures, and continuous improvement of working conditions.

Complementary health-promoting initiatives include low-threshold measures such as the provision of fresh fruit at the workplace and support for environmentally friendly mobility options (e.g. work bike schemes).

[KPIs: Number of employees participating in partial reintegration programmes per year, Average duration of reintegration phase (months), Return-to-work rate after long-term sick leave (%), Number of implemented workplace health promotion measures per year]

6. Glossary

B-VG	Federal Constitutional Law (<i>German: Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz</i>)
BEinstG	<i>Disability Employment Act (German: Behinderteneinstellungsgesetz)</i>
BGStG	<i>Disability Equality Act (German: Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz)</i>
GED	Gender, Equality and Diversity
GEDP	Gender, Equality and Diversity Plan
GIBG	Equal Treatment Act (<i>German: Gleichbehandlungsgesetz</i>)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
HR	Human Resources
WiGH	Women in Green Hydrogen
WIVA P&G	Hydrogen Initiative Flagship Region Austria Power & Gas (<i>German: Wasserstoffinitiative Vorzeigeregion Austria Power & Gas</i>)

7. Literature

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