

## Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

08/16/2022

(valid until 03/31/2026)

### Introduction

A Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is a set of commitments and actions that aim to promote gender equality in an organisation through a process of structural change. GEPs aim to promote gender equality through the sustainable transformation of organisational processes, cultures and structures that produce and sustain gender imbalances and inequalities.

The GEP of 4ward Energy Research GmbH supports an ongoing process for improving gender equality to the benefit of the entire organisation. It encourages self-reflection by staff and leadership and an ongoing review of processes and practices.

By publishing the GEP on its website, 4ward Energy Research GmbH publicly signals its commitment to gender equality and enables appropriate accountability to the plan's goals by the organisation's staff, partners, stakeholders, and the broader public.

To signal leadership support for the plan, it is actively disseminated and communicated throughout the organisation.

Regular reports allow ongoing organisational review of the impact of the plan as well as keeping the wider community informed and engaged in the organisation's progress towards gender equality.

### Commitment of 4ward Energy Research GmbH

Within the scope of its activities and within the scope of its possibilities, 4ward Energy Research GmbH is actively committed to offering equal opportunities to (potential) employees from different social groups, irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, religion, ideology, disability and/or chronic illness, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and biological sex.

### Resources

Resources will be needed throughout the whole GEP cycle, including audit, planning, implementation, monitoring and review.

Due to the size as well as the flat hierarchy of 4ward Energy Research GmbH, a dedicated gender equality function is not appropriate. The human resources required to implement the gender equality strategy are mainly provided by the management of 4ward Energy Research GmbH, who also ensure that sufficient financial resources are available.

The managers of 4ward Energy Research GmbH are also its founders and therefore endeavour to promote organisational changes. They know the specifics and functioning of their own institution and are experienced in dealing with resistance, building support networks, self-assessment, monitoring and data collection and analysis.

However, the GEP also involves the entire organisation in its development and implementation. Individuals within the organisation are called upon as needed to support the implementation of the plan. The necessary staff time is allocated for this purpose.

## Data collection and monitoring

4ward Energy Research GmbH collects data on personnel broken down by gender, which is updated and published annually.

This survey serves several purposes:

- Establish a baseline of gender equality in the organisation against which progress can be regularly monitored.
- To conduct a gender equality analysis, which will allow for better targeting of actions and priorities within the gender equality plan.
- Communicate with the employees, other key stakeholders, and the general public about the organisation's commitment to gender equality and the progress made.

The following aspects are considered in the collection, analysis, publication as well as monitoring of the data:

- The indicators for data collection were adapted to the profile of 4ward Energy Research GmbH as well as its activities.
- Most of the suitable data are available from existing administrative sources. If there is a lack of data availability, it will be specifically collected and/or calculated. If data on potential problems or issues of concern are not contained in existing administrative data collections or are incomplete (e.g., related to sexual harassment), efforts will be made to collect it during quarterly employee interviews. These interviews are conducted in a bilateral setting to ensure privacy and provide a safe space for discussion.
- Data will be analysed to develop an understanding of key differences and gaps between women and men within the organization and its activities. This analysis will help adjust key GEP priorities as the situation evolves over time.
- The data collected on gender equality is published in the GEP.
- The management of 4ward Energy Research GmbH ensures that published data is clear, unambiguous, accessible, and up to date.
- Annual reporting feeds into a review of progress towards GEP goals and enables 4wardEnergy Research GmbH to understand progress and identify where activities are having an impact and where barriers remain.

Data from 4wardEnergy Research GmbH on gender equality:

Numbers of...	female	male
...staff by gender at all levels *	6	6
...staff by gender at management level *	0	2
...staff by gender among employed researchers *	6	4
...staff by gender having left the organisation in past years *	1	1
...staff by gender in full employment *	3	5
...staff by gender in part-time employment *	3	1
...applicants to research positions by gender **	10	19
...persons recruited by gender **	2	1
...staff by gender applying for/taking parental leave **	0	1
...staff by gender returned after taking parental leave **	1	1

\*as of 08/15/2022

\*\* from 04/01/2021 (start of the 2020/2021 financial year) to 08/15/2022

## **Other content-related (thematic) areas**

### Inclusive work-life balance policies and practices

Work–life balance is relevant for all members of staff and involves ensuring that everybody is properly supported to advance their career alongside personal responsibilities that they may hold outside the workplace, including caring responsibilities. Improving organisational cultures also contributes to becoming an attractive employer, and therefore to attracting and retaining the best talent.

4ward Energy Research GmbH offers employees the following aspects, each of which allows for solutions adapted to the specific needs of employees.

- Gender-independent parental leave regulations.
- Flexible working time arrangements including home office options.
- Reintegration of employees after career breaks, including active mentoring and support.

### Gender equality in recruitment and career advancement

Recruitment, selection, and career progression support measures aim to ensure that women and men get equal chances to develop and advance their scientific careers.

In job advertisements and in selection procedures, the decision-makers of the 4ward Energy Research GmbH take special care to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities by always critically reviewing existing selection processes and procedures at all stages.

In addition, the issue of gender neutrality is actively addressed or discussed in management decisions regarding the career development of individual employees.

Salaries are determined exclusively based on know-how, experience, and responsibility. There is no gender-specific distinction. Furthermore, salaries are transparent within 4ward Energy Research GmbH.

### Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

The expected behaviour of employees is addressed on an ongoing basis in regular employee reviews. Likewise, these discussions address how members of the organisation can report cases of gender-based violence including sexual harassment and how such cases are investigated, and sanctions imposed. These discussions address barriers to reporting, including concerns that reports may not be taken seriously, and make clear what can be done to investigate anonymous reports. This is intended to create a culture of zero tolerance for sexual harassment and violence.

## **Awareness raising and training actions on gender equality**

Subsequent activities related to gender equality, awareness raising and training on gender equality involve the whole organization and represent an evidence-based, continuous, and long-term process.

The activities that are carried out by 4ward Energy Research GmbH within the period of validity of the present GEP are listed below.

Activity	Responsibility	Period / Point in time	Aim
Short training courses for new and existing employees regarding gender-equality at 4ward Energy	Management	as part of the annual strategy meeting	awareness raising
Active questioning of employees and discussion regarding gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Management & employees	as part of the quarterly employee appraisals	create a culture of zero tolerance for sexual harassment and violence
Collection and analysis of data	Management	at the end of each fiscal year	establish a baseline of gender equality
Gender equality analysis	Management	at the end of each fiscal year	better targeting of actions and priorities
Communicate analysis results to employees including discussion	Management & employees	as part of the annual strategy meeting	communication of progress
Communicate analysis results to the public (publishing on website)	Management	at the end of each fiscal year	communication of progress
Review and, if necessary, adjustment of the home office regulations	Management	at the beginning of each fiscal year	keep regulations up to date
Review and, if necessary, adjustment of working time regulations	Management	at the beginning of each fiscal year	keep regulations up to date

Graz, 08/16/2022



Martin Schloffer, managing director



Alois Kraußler, managing director