

# Equal Opportunities Plan

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2/2020–2/2022



**Leibniz Institute of  
Freshwater Ecology  
and Inland Fisheries**

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## Preamble

With this Equal Opportunities Plan, IGB supports and promotes the statutory rights to equal opportunities for women and men in science in accordance with the "Agreement on the Promotion of Equal Opportunities in Implementation of the Execution Agreement on Equality (AVGlei) of 27 October 2008, amended by the decision of the Joint Science Conference of 22 April 2016 between the Forschungsverbund Berlin e.V. (FVB) and the federal state of Berlin" (2020), and implements the "DFG's Research- Oriented Equal Opportunities Standards" (2018), the "Framework Recommendation on Gender Equality in the Institutes of the Leibniz Association" (2016), and the "Guidelines of the Leibniz Association Equal Opportunities Working Group" (02/2012), as well as the "Recommendations on Standards for the Work of Equal Opportunities Officers in Leibniz Institutions" of the Leibniz Equal Opportunities Working Group (Arbeitskreis Chancengleichheit).

The IGB's Equal Opportunities Plan covers the central principles, objectives and measures to promote equal opportunities for women and men and regulates the role of the Equal Opportunities Officer. The aim of IGB's Equal Opportunities Plan is to enable women and men to participate equally in everyday working life at IGB and to achieve equal career development. To this end, five areas of action are taken:

1. Improve gender balance of researchers in all career stages at IGB through active screening and a balanced recruitment process.
2. Stimulate career development of female scientists at IGB.
3. Further enhancement of a women-friendly atmosphere and working conditions at IGB.
4. Promote family-friendly working conditions at IGB.
5. Alter societal perception of women in science.

The binding targets are set for two years (2/2020-2/2022). This corresponds to the term of office of the Equal Opportunities Officer. The director is responsible for the implementation of the measures and is supported in this by the Equal Opportunities Officer and her deputy. The Equal Opportunities Officer and her deputy are elected every two years (since 2005). In 2015, IGB has obtained and since maintained the logo "HR Excellence in Research" of the European Commission for its exemplary personnel development strategy. The Action Plan II (2017-2020) includes various measures for equal opportunities and family friendliness. Measures developed in this Equal Opportunities Plan shall be included in the next action plan.

## Position of the Equal Opportunities Officer and her deputy

The activity of the Equal Opportunities Officer is an official activity and not bound to professional instructions. The Equal Opportunities Officer is involved in matters concerning the social, personal and organisational concerns of the institute's staff. She alone decides which of these matters are relevant to equal opportunities and therefore require her involvement. In order to fulfil her duties, she is granted a general right to information, combined with the right to inspect files in compliance with data protection laws and to participate in committee meetings with the right to submit requests and to speak. The Equal Opportunities Officer is involved in job advertisements, selection and tenure procedures and appointment committees. She has the right to take part in all job interviews and to inspect all application documents.

Equal opportunities work is a demanding, cross-cutting task, for which the Equal Opportunities Officer is released from her other official duties to the extent necessary for the proper performance of this task. For this purpose, part-time employment may be increased; in the case of full-time employment, tasks shall be delegated to an appropriate extent. The necessary personnel and equipment will be provided.

The Equal Opportunities Officer is represented by her deputy in the event of absence, in case of a conflict of interest, or, by mutual agreement, also in the event of time constraints, and is advised by her on strategic matters. The deputy is also to be released from her other duties accordingly.

The Equal Opportunities Officer and her deputy are given the opportunity for training and participation in conferences, meetings and workshops. They also take part in networking activities with other Equal Opportunities Officers of Leibniz institutes or other research facilities.

## Current situation

### 1. Structure of the governing and supervisory bodies

The highest hierarchical level of IGB is gender balanced, i.e. the scientific director Luc de Meester and the managing director of the FVB Manuela Urban. The governing structure also includes the supervisory scientific advisory board, to which renowned international scientists from other institutions are appointed (<https://www.igb-berlin.de/en/structure>). The current scientific advisory board consists of 7 male and 2 female scientists. The board of trustees of the FVB is composed of equal numbers of men and women.

### 2. Employment structure 2019

All numbers refer to the reporting date 31.12.2019

Overall, the gender ratio of employees subject to social security contributions at IGB is roughly balanced (118 women, 124 men), although the figures vary greatly between the various employment groups. For example, the overall proportion of women among the non- scientific staff was over 60% on 31.12.2019, while the proportion of women among the scientific staff was just below 40% (36% of full-time equivalents).

Status group	number	proportion of females (%)
<b>doctoral candidates</b>		
<b>total</b>	53	54,7
<b>employed at IGB</b>	37	51,4
<b>employed externally</b>	11	63,6
<b>with scholarship</b>	5	60,0
<b>Postdocs</b>		
<b>total</b>	80	36,3
<b>employed at IGB</b>	53	35,8
<b>employed externally</b>	9	33,3
<b>with scholarship</b>	18	38,9
<b>Group leaders (w/o departm. heads)</b>		
<b>total</b>	32	21,9
<b>permanent, base funded</b>	29	24,1
<b>temporary, third-party funded</b>	3	0,0
<b>department heads</b>		
<b>total</b>	6	33,3

**Table 1:** Number and proportion of women in selected scientific employment groups at IGB; status as of 31.12.2019

Among the scientific staff (including scholarship holders and externally employed, see Table 1), the gender ratio in the group of doctoral candidates is balanced: of the 53 doctoral candidates mainly

supervised at IGB, 29 (55%) are female. However, the proportion of female scientists continues to decline as their careers progress. The proportion of women in post-doctoral positions is 36%, and only 22% in base-financed group leaders with permanent positions. Currently, one third (2 out of 6) of the departments are headed by women.

Since 2014, one female department head was hired and seven group leaders have been recruited. One group leader position was filled jointly by a married couple, and 4 female and 2 male scientists were hired. This positive development is the result of the strategy of giving preference to female scientists with equal qualifications and, when filling management positions, identifying qualified female scientists and encouraging them to apply. However, it also reflects the growing number of highly competitive female scientists.

The staff numbers in the various employment groups and the respective proportions of women are presented annually in both the programme budget and the annual report. The cascade model's quotas, which are to be updated annually, are used as the basis for human resource planning. These are made available to the institute management and the Equal Opportunities Officer by the personnel department.

## Objectives and measures

Within the framework of the personnel development plan to be determined by the institute management, the Equal Opportunities Officer will be involved in the planning with the aim to increase the proportion of women in recruitment, qualification, upgrading and participation in decision-making. In order to realise equal opportunities at IGB, IGB sets itself the following goals and implements the measures described below to achieve them.

### 1. Improve gender balance of researchers in all career stages at IGB

#### 1.1. Increasing the proportion of women on IGB's Scientific Advisory Board

In order to place greater emphasis on equal opportunities and to make greater use of and honour the expertise of excellent female scientists, we will strive for a balanced gender ratio in our Scientific Advisory Board. To this end, at least two thirds of the seats on the Advisory Board that become vacant are to be filled by female scientists in the next two years. As the mandate of five members of the SAB come to an end in 2020, IGB has proposed four new members: three women and one man. These suggestions have been approved by the SAB and the Committee of the Board of Trustees, and will therefore probably be confirmed by the Board of Trustees. If this is the case, the SAB will from 2021 on consist of 4 men and 4 women.

#### 1.2. Increasing the proportion of female scientists at IGB, especially in leading positions

Together with the institute's management and the works council, guidelines for the recruitment of all staff were drawn up, taking into account the "European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers" and complying with the principles of the "Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment of Researchers" (OTM-R). Furthermore, a guideline for tenure track procedures was drawn up. Both processes include measures for gender-equitable recruitment, explicit consideration of family-related breaks and obligations in the performance evaluation of candidates, and representation of both genders on the recruitment and mentoring committees. The recruitment guidelines state that in employment groups where women are underrepresented, women with equivalent qualifications and aptitude will be preferentially employed. A respective note encouraging female scientists to apply is included in every job advertisement. This will be further optimized so that it actually encourages women to apply. This must be coordinated with the FVB.

In addition, binding rules must be developed for IGB on how family-related interruptions and obligations are taken into account in performance evaluations. It is suggested that for care-taking the corresponding time period is taken into consideration, whereas for pregnancy and care of new-borns 2 years are granted per child. This is applied both when recruiting new people and in evaluating people for tenure tracks and competitive calls.

According to the cascade model, advertised positions at each career level should be filled with female scientists at least to the percentage of females at the career level directly below. We view this as our minimum target. If this percentage cannot be realized due to external circumstances (e.g. no suitable female candidates who applied, even though screening was broad and intense), the aim is to at least maintain the proportion of women (see Table 2). IGB will strive, however, to hire at all levels lacking gender balance at least 50% of women so that we enhance our development towards gender balance at

all levels. Together with the responsible persons, the institute management develops suitable measures for the active recruitment of excellent female scientists at each career level

Career level	% recruitment of women (minimum, cascade)
Department heads	33 %
Group leaders	36 %
Postdoctoral researchers	50 %
Doctoral students	50%

**Table 2:** Minimum aim of the proportion of women in newly filled positions to be achieved according to the cascade model. These are minimum targets; in practice IGB will aim to recruit >50% women for all positions until gender balance is reached.

#### *1.2.1. Female early career researchers*

In order to actively promote the recruitment of highly qualified (early career) female scientists, all scientists with leadership responsibilities will participate in a training course on adequate recruitment processes, focusing on gender equality, unconscious gender bias and active promotion of women. The institute management will ensure full participation. Such training should help to avoid (unconscious) discrimination against women and thus contribute to increasing the proportion of women. Third party funded temporary positions are allocated by a selection committee chaired by the project leaders. Thus, participation in dedicated training programs can contribute to increasing the proportion of women at the level of post-doctoral students and help maintaining gender parity at the level of doctoral students.

#### *1.2.2. Group leaders and department heads*

The director is responsible for recruiting group leaders and department heads, through a procedure that involves a search and selection committee. Among group leaders and department heads, there currently is a serious under-representation of women. Therefore, all persons involved will make considerable efforts to actively recruit women, e.g. by a targeted search for suitable applicants, direct invitations to apply, and by using appropriate networks. Most group leaders are appointed through tenure track procedures. The female group leaders will be advised and supported with regard to their career development particularly intensively by their mentoring and evaluation committee during the tenure track period. Furthermore, it is the task of all department heads and colleagues to provide special support to female group leaders in departments with an unbalanced gender ratio, to involve them in all relevant processes and decisions and to ensure a constructive and tolerant atmosphere. This should help to ensure that female scientists can work successfully, become involved and that senior female scientists are prevented from moving to other institutes.



## 2. Stimulate career development of females at IGB

### 2.1 Mentoring for female scientists

Since 2012, the Leibniz Association has been running a mentoring programme for highly qualified young female researchers from Leibniz institutions. For one year, they receive support in shaping their career path through a comprehensive range of seminars and a mentoring partnership. Every year, IGB advises and supports at least one female scientist in her application and participation in the Leibniz Mentoring Programme. In addition, the Berlin universities offer the ProFiL programme for women on their way to professorship.

Since the start of 2020, there has been an internal IGB mentoring series for young female scientists, the so-called *Women's mentoring lunch*, at which female group leaders and department heads give lectures on topics relevant to female scientists, share personal experiences and provide the opportunity for discussion. This lowers the inhibition threshold for young female scientists to ask more experienced female colleagues for advice.

Furthermore, IGB recommends and finances the participation of group leaders in mentoring or coaching programmes specifically designed for women. The group leaders individually select offers suitable to them. On request, internal coaching for all group leaders can be organised at IGB.

### 2.2 Training opportunities for female scientists

In order to achieve the goal of equal opportunities in scientific and leadership positions, female scientists at all career stages are specifically given the opportunity for further training.

Special attention is paid to female group leaders when participating in the FVB's executive training programme, by enabling as many women as men to participate. In each round, two scientists from each institute of FVB can participate.

In 2011, IGB has set up an Equal Opportunities Fund to support women in the critical career phase during and after their doctorate. Since 2020, this fund is equipped with 50,000 € per year. In addition to re-entry measures (see below), very good young female researchers can receive further training, financial support for visiting fellowships, as well as employment to develop their own application. In the long term, this contributes to increasing the proportion of women in science. A gender balanced IGB commission, chaired by the Equal Opportunities Officer, decides on the approval of applications. The commission reports annually to IGB Council (LGI). The criteria and deadlines for the submission of applications are set out in writing and are regularly adapted to the actual needs (Intranet: [Organisation> Commissions> Equal Opportunities Commission> Files](#)).

Since 2010, the FVB has annually held a special workshop for female doctoral candidates to promote leadership skills. We actively encourage our female doctoral candidates to participate.

### 2.3 Scientific Awards

Receiving scientific awards is very beneficial for the career development of scientists. We therefore provide information on relevant calls for proposals and actively identify suitable (young) scientists and support them and their superiors in their applications. Every year, the institute management suggests a

candidate for the Marthe-Vogt Award for excellent female junior researchers of the FVB. In the case of proposals for other renowned awards, for which only one proposal per institute is permitted, gender is an important selection criterion subsequent to scientific excellence.

#### 2.4 Gender-sensitive allocation of IGB fellowships

Since 2009, IGB has been awarding its own "Frontiers in Freshwater Science" fellowships to outstanding scientists in different career stages for a guest stay at IGB of up to 24 months. These fellowships enable excellent researchers to develop and implement new research ideas in cooperation with scientists at IGB and contribute to the creation of sustainable global networks.

IGB is currently redesigning the remuneration of postdoctoral fellows to avoid problems associated with the low salaries of the fellowships we could offer so far. Senior fellows receive compensation for additional costs during their stay, on top of the salaries they receive from their regular positions elsewhere.

IGB fellowships foster networking and the joint development of innovative research approaches. As these are two very important drivers for a successful scientific career and fellows can serve as role models, more attention should be paid in future to giving greater consideration to female scientists both as guests and as hosts. Since scientific excellence, complementarity of expertise and added value are the most important criteria, no target quota is defined here, but this aspect will be explicitly taken into account when selecting financially supported guest scientists. Solutions to family-related obstacles faced by excellent female applicants will be actively sought on a case-by-case basis. The Equal Opportunities Officer will be involved in the discussions on potential actions.

### 3. Further enhancement of a women-friendly atmosphere and working conditions at IGB

#### 3.1 Gender equal participation and involvement

In some commissions and functions at IGB, participation of both sexes or even a gender-balanced composition is explicitly required (e.g. equal opportunities commission, recruitment commission, HRS committee). It is important to ensure that gender-specific perspectives are taken into account and women can also gain the respective experiences. Yet, female group leaders and department heads should not be over-proportionally burdened with these activities. This would lead to a systematic reduction of their scientific achievements compared to their male colleagues. For this reason, it will be carefully examined in which committees / commissions / boards gender-specific perspectives are particularly relevant and whether either gender parity or merely the participation of both sexes makes sense. If necessary, the guidelines must be amended accordingly.

In addition, the discussion style and decision making processes will be evaluated for inclusiveness and participation and improved if needed.

#### 3.2 Invitation of female colloquium speakers

The scientists suggested to be invited to IGB research colloquia financed by central IGB funds will be screened by the IGB management. Next to excellence of the research done and the uniqueness of the speaker's expertise or approach, also the potential as a role model will be considered in the final selection. The latter criterion will stimulate female scientists of different career stages being invited. In

2019 only 29% of the invited external colloquium speakers were female. While this reflects the lower proportion of females in science, it underperforms in terms of offering female role models. Thus IGB aims to increase the proportion of female colloquium speakers.

### 3.3 Gender awareness day

Every 1-2 years, the Equal Opportunities Officer will organise an Equality Awareness Day together with the members of the diversity group. Here, lectures by external speakers and workshops will focus attention on unconscious stereotypes and behavioural patterns and their effects on our research, our interaction and our career development, and discuss how we can eliminate them in our everyday work. Participation in this event counts as working time for all IGB employees. The department heads explicitly encourage participation. All IGB members in leading positions make a severe effort to attend the event to act as role models and highlight the importance of this topic.

### 3.4 Gender-sensitive language

The way we speak and write reflects not only our reality, but also our views. By now it is unacceptable to use male terms with the statement "this refers to everyone ", as this shapes male images and appeals less to women. This also does not represent people who do not adhere to the binary gender order. Nevertheless, gender-neutral language is often unfamiliar to use and seems less readable. Our communications unit will thus develop a guide with recommendations for gender-sensitive language at IGB. We strive for an inclusive language at IGB, thus, internal and public communication and documents will be revised accordingly and continuously adjusted.

### 3.5 Measures against gender or gender-specific discrimination and harassment

Discrimination of any kind, explicitly including gender or gender-specific discrimination, is not tolerated at IGB. To ensure that inclusiveness is practised at all levels and in all IGB activities and actions, continuous alertness is necessary. Where necessary, a change in culture needs to be achieved. This begins with an exchange of views on behaviour that is perceived as discriminatory or degrading, and ultimately leads to behavioural changes. If necessary this cultural change can be enforced by sanctions. In order to initiate this important process, the director is advised by the diversity group and the Equal Opportunities Officer. The aim is to establish a clear statement and binding actions against any discrimination and harassment. All employees, but especially group leaders, must be sensitised to gender-specific discrimination in order to be able to act preventively. A further aim is to inform affected people about the complaint office under the AGG (General Equal Treatment Act) and to provide contact persons, procedures and structures for conflict solution. Discriminating persons should be made aware of their actions and possible sanctions. This transparency lowers the inhibition threshold for complaints and facilitates a quick, fair and comprehensible solution of the problem in each individual case. This topic will also be addressed at the welcome day, held twice a year for new employees.

### 3.6 Measures against sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is not tolerated at IGB. For this reason, the Equal Opportunities Officers and the director of IGB are developing guidelines against sexual harassment. In addition to the provisions of the AGG, this guideline is intended to help prevent and/or specifically identify and pursue cases of sexual harassment at work. Those affected should be encouraged to complain and should know who to

contact. Offenders should be shown clear limits and the possible consequences of their behaviour should be made clear.

The aim of this guideline is to sensitise all employees and especially those in leading positions to the issues of sexual harassment in order to enable them to take preventive action. A further aim is to establish procedures and structures for conflict management that allow for a quick, fair, comprehensible and effective response to each individual harassment case.

### 3.7 Diversity Group

The diversity group of IGB, which emerged from a grassroots movement, meets monthly. It considers diversity not only in terms of gender, but also in terms of internationality and other diversity factors. It can develop suggestions for improvement and implement them in consultation with the Equal Opportunities Officer or the institute's management. The diversity group is given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the personnel development strategy and to diversity initiatives of the Leibniz Association.

## 4. Promote family-friendly working conditions at IGB

### 4.1 Family-related changes to core working hours and flexitime

In the flexitime regulation of 01.05.2006, the institute's management established the principle of granting flexible working hours to women and men with family responsibilities. This also applies to workplaces with managerial duties: "For employees with underage children and/or relatives in need of care, core working hours and flexitime can be determined individually by a written agreement with the department head" (Intranet: [Organisation>Representation and Representatives>Works Council>Works agreements](#)).

### 4.2 Remedy for care shortages

There is also a general works agreement on working from home, which allows employees with temporary obligations for childcare or care of close relatives to apply for temporary homeworking (Intranet: [Organization> Representation and appointees> Works Council> Works agreements](#)). An IGB-laptop can be borrowed for this purpose.

The institute's management enables staff members to bring their children to the institute in case of shortages in child care (e.g. closing day of the day care centre or similar). For this purpose, a parent-child room is available in the Müggelseedamm 310 garden house, which also serves as a room for breastfeeding/milk pumping or as a resting room for pregnant women. It is also the consultation room for the Equal Opportunities Officer and the company doctor. It is not possible to occupy this room with a permanent workplace. The rules for the stay of external persons in the institute building MSD310, including children, are laid down in the user regulations (Intranet: [Service and Administration> Workplace Safety> Files: house rules MSD310 EN](#)).

IGB enables the settlement of childcare costs for periods of business and training trips. It must be proven that no relative can take care of the child free of charge and what actual additional costs have been incurred. As a rule, these costs are to be covered by the funds of the respective project, working group or department, but it is being discussed that IGB should contribute 50% from the core

budget. An information sheet and application form can be found on the intranet (German only, ask for assistance! Intranet: [Service and Administration> Human Resources> Family Friendly> Childcare](#)).

In certain exceptional situations, even greater work restrictions apply to employees with care or childcare obligations. Since these obligations are assumed more by women than by men, such situations increase the inequality of opportunities. The director takes appropriate measures (contract extensions, student helper funding) to support the most affected employees. In one example, in 2020 IGB extended contracts for researchers with care obligations during the COVID-19 pandemic. 50% of these extensions came from core funds; the other 50% was contributed by the research group or department.

#### 4.3 Re-entry and part-time work

The equal opportunities fund (see above), which was created in 2011 and currently has an annual endowment of 50,000 €, supports young female researchers in their return to work after parental leave and compensates for family-related absences. If female doctoral or post-doctoral researchers lose project time due to maternal leave that is not covered by the project, the funding of these periods is carried out by the equal opportunities fund after evaluation of the project as successful.

The institute's management promotes part-time employment for women and men with family responsibilities and preserves their right to the same career opportunities as full-time employees by adjusting the IGB performance criteria to working hours. A corresponding notice will be prepared and included in every job advertisement.

#### 4.4 Family friendly events

Colloquia and other meetings and events are held in a family-friendly manner, i.e. during core working hours and, if possible, outside holiday periods. In the future, participation via video will be increasingly made possible, so that employees working from home or on parental leave can also take part without complications if they are interested. Full-day or multi-day events will be announced well in advance so that care of family members can be organised.

All members of the institute are asked about difficulties in reconciling work and family life and about corresponding suggestions for improvement. The results of this survey will be used to develop improving actions.

### 5. Alter societal perception of women in science

Stereotypes depict researchers as white (old) man. In order to show society and especially pupils and students that scientific research is an interesting and promising profession for women and people of all ethnics the colleagues of PR and knowledge transfer as well as IGB scientists actively support the Girls' Day and soapbox science. These actions are oriented towards society and students and are less directly linked to the position of women at IGB.