

**Gender Equality Plan of the
KWB Kompetenzzentrum
Wasser Berlin gGmbH**

2026 - 2029

KWB

This document was approved by KWB's Management in March 2026 and will be continuously evaluated and updated together with the work council.

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1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

KWB stands for applied research, consultancy, innovation and gender equality in all aspects. We address key future issues related to climate change, water management, digitalisation and sector coupling. KWB is also committed to implementing the EU's initiative to strengthen gender equality in all our teams.

We are dedicated to have a workplace where diversity is celebrated, and inclusion is a fundamental value. Our gender equality plan is a testament to our belief that every individual, regardless of gender, deserves equal opportunities to be, grow, succeed, and lead. By fostering a culture of respect, understanding, and support, we aim to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes especially in the context of science, and create a more equitable environment for all. Through this plan, we commit to implement policies and practices in our two work categories (administration and research) that further promote diversity, gender balance, ensure fair and equal treatment, and empower every member of our team to thrive. Together, let us live and work for diversity and equality, and be part of a brighter open-minded future for everyone.

The GEP of KWB aims for gender balance in leadership and decision-making; the gender equality in recruitment and career progression; the integration of the gender dimension into research and measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment. The GEP defines our equality strategy and goals with adequate monitoring of our progress.

Gender equality and the promotion of diversity is a continuous process that requires continuous follow-up measures.

2. GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES

The following KWB gender equality principles have guided the preparation of the GEP:

1. All employees should live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources and opportunities and be treated with dignity, respect and fairness.
2. Gender equality benefits all employees regardless of gender.
3. Gender equality is a human right and precondition to social justice.
4. Advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility across the organisation's community.
5. All human beings, regardless of gender, should be free to develop their personal abilities, pursue their professional careers and make choices about their lives without being limited by gender stereotypes, gender roles or prejudices.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND RESOURCES

The KWB is committed to adopting the GEP and devoting resources to implement, monitor, evaluate and report on the Plan.

The implementation of KWB's GEP will fall under the responsibility of the Management Director (GF) and Group Leaders (GLs). They will jointly establish targets and actions to achieve the KWB GEP's objectives. The focus will be on gender balance in leadership and decision-making, gender equality in recruitment and career progression and in the integration of the gender dimension into research and education.

KWB's management are responsible for the gender equality in recruitment, career progression and for the improvement of the organisational culture. The Business Administration Manager will monitor salary-related data with the aim of not allowing gender-specific salary differences between men, women and people who identify as non-binary.

GF and GLs provide information, guidance and help to

- publicise and promote the principles and objectives of the plan to all KWB employees,
- collect gender-specific data on the recruitment and employment structure and monitor and report on the development of gender equality in the company,
- disseminate information on gender equality issues through workshops or communication activities,
- be the point of contact for employees who need advice and assistance or who wish to complain about an offence or harassment,
- document and manage the complaint so that further action can be taken,
- to sensitise managers to equal opportunities issues,
- to sensitise managers to the use of gender-neutral language.

KWB's work council will improve the organisational culture (see actions in chapter 5) and together with the contact person for gender equality/ compliance officer take care of the measures against gender-based violence including sexual harassment.

However, the overarching aim is that all KWB employees are developing ownership of the GEP principles and objectives. Awareness plays a prominent role in the processes of definition and implementation of a public GEP. As a community of all organisation members, each member has the responsibility to educate on the topics of gender equality and unconscious bias, as the lack of knowledge in these fields, still rather common, could result in unequal treatment and discrimination.

Ultimately, all staff will practice the culture and values of the GEP in their day-to-day work.

We have zero tolerance for any kind of bullying, gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Incidents of bullying and sexual harassment or other matters worthy of criticism are recorded by at least one of the two persons of trust to the management. In co-operation with the work council, each individual case must be investigated. The persons concerned receive appropriate support to cope with and process the incident as facilitator and moderator when appropriate. The incident is dealt with and, if necessary, measures are taken to prevent a repetition of the inappropriate behaviour by the management of KWB in close cooperation with the work council.

4. INVENTORY OF THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE KWB

KWB has been working actively to recruit equal women, men and persons who identify as non-binary. We aim to demonstrate gender equality at the management level and among all grades of scientific and administrative employees.

The number of employees is determined annually as at 30 June. The number of interns is totalled at the end of the year.

In order to track gender equality, KWB is currently reporting annually on gender equality including:

- Gender Distribution per Work Category
- Gender Distribution per Work Category fulltime/part-time
- Gender equality sorted by career stage
- Gender equality in remuneration

These updates will provide the basis for the adjustment of the targets and the adaptation of actions in support of ensuring progress in the required direction.

Figure 1: Gender Distribution per Work Category

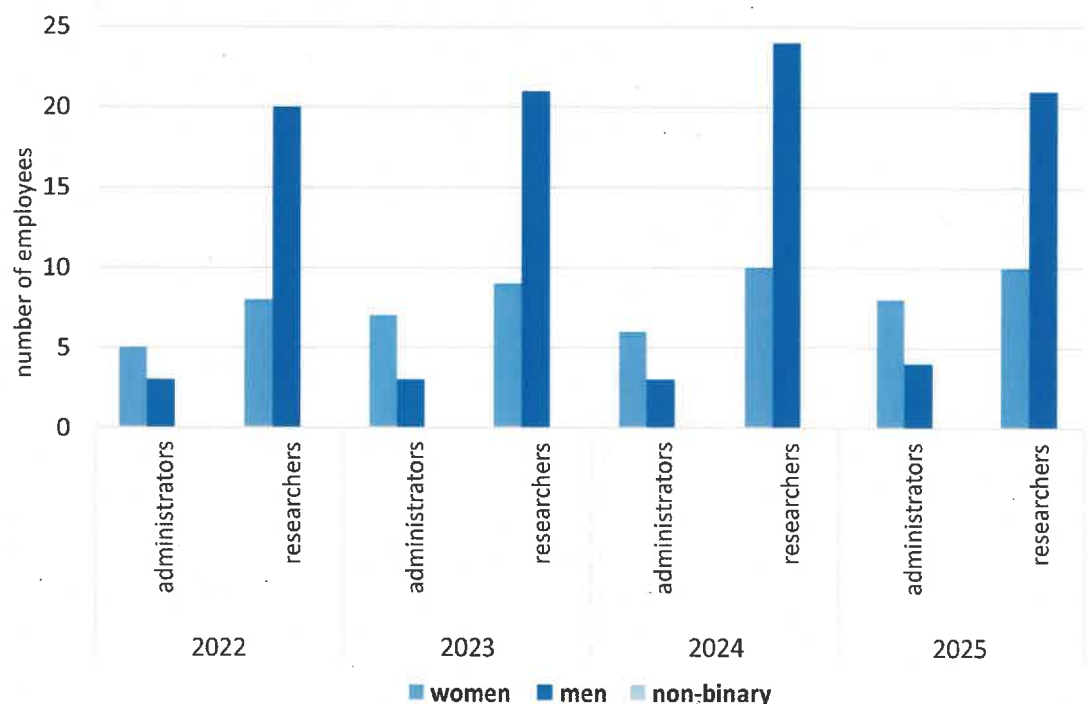


Figure 2: Gender Distribution per Work Category fulltime/part-time

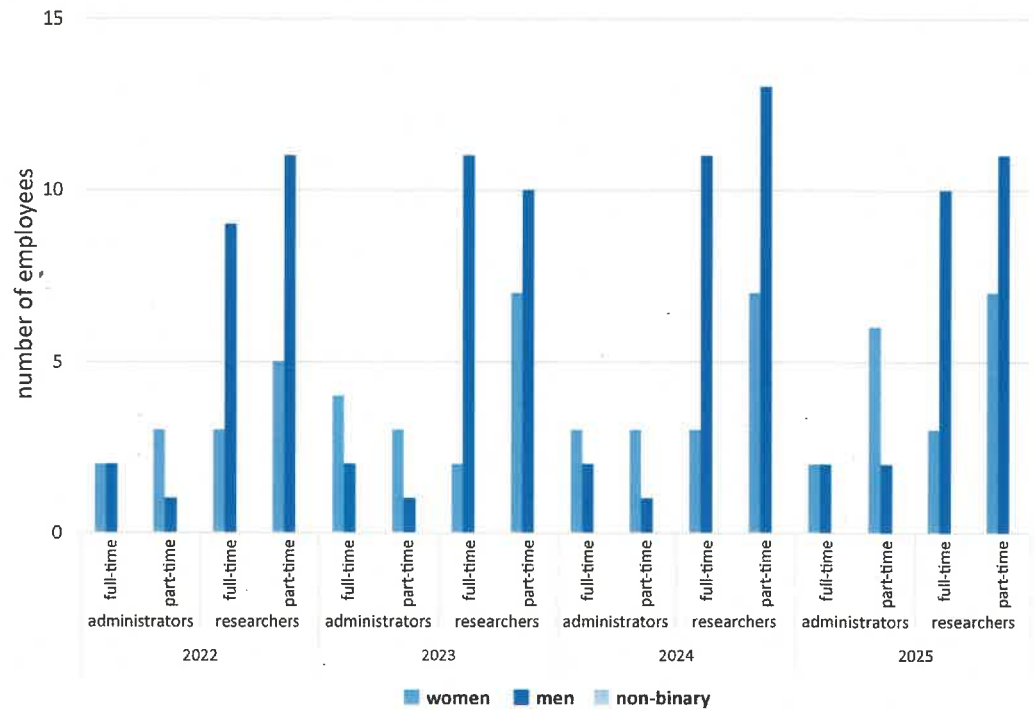


Figure 3: Gender Distribution per career stage

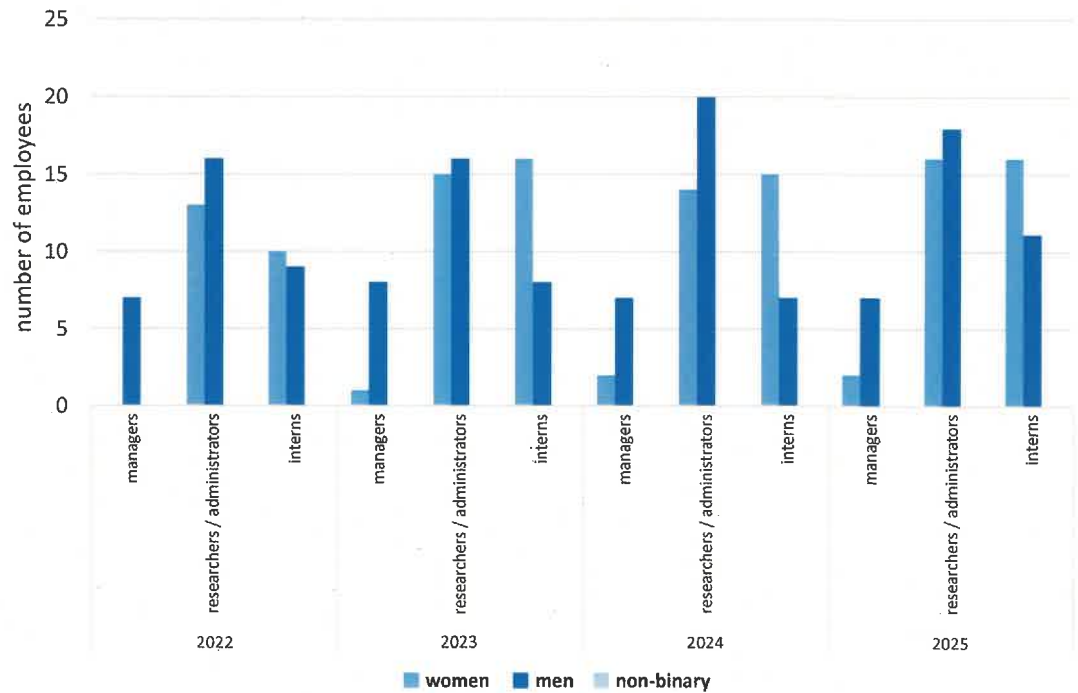
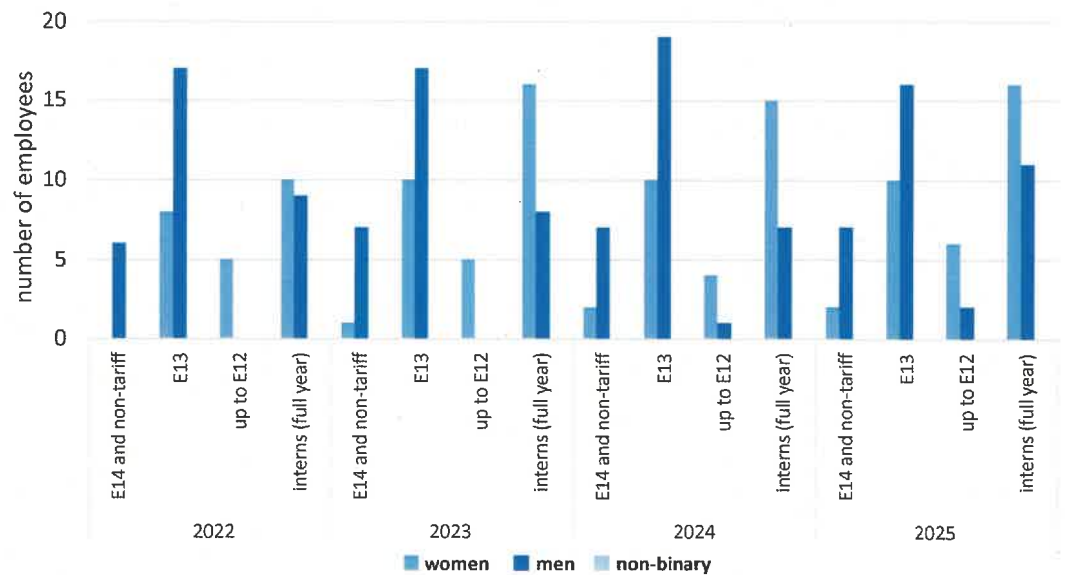


Figure 4: Gender equality in remuneration



5. ACTIONS TO IMPROVE KWB'S GENDER EQUALITY

In line with the EU recommendations, KWB has identified five key areas of focus for improving gender equality across the company:

Work-life-balance and organisational culture

Current status, existing measures	Goals	Planned measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work-time-flexibility (mobile work and flexible working hours) ● Gender-neutral language in communication (internal/external) as introduced in 2020 ● Ensuring the use of non-stereotypical and non-sexist images in internal/external communication ● Supporting and including employees on parental leave or who are returning from parental leave ● Opportunity to discuss the psychosocial work environment, as well as potential discrimination or violations related to gender or other forms of harassment at the yearly employee/employer reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reconciliation of private and professional life for all genders ● Family-friendly organisational structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain the status quo of existing measures ● Gender-equal arrangements for unpaid leave

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Current status, existing measures	Goals	Planned measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KWB is currently facing the challenge of increasing the ratio of women and non-binary in the leadership team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Equal number of female and male colleagues in the KWBs management team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the event of changes to the leadership team, this issue is always considered alongside the candidate's overall qualifications. Female and non-binary applicants are actively encouraged to apply.

Gender equality in recruitment and career advancement

Current status, existing measures	Goals	Planned measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gender equality in education activities ● Gender equality in volunteers and students ● Gender equality in remuneration ● Use of a set of criteria and reference to the collective agreement for the federal states as an indicator of equal pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strive for gender equality at all levels of the workforce, including in recruitment and promotion ● Improve all job advertisements to promote women, men and non-binary people equally ● Determination of equal pay indicator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain the status quo of existing measures ● Check the text for job advertisements for gender-neutral vocabulary and adapt it on a regular basis ● Promoting the leadership skills of women and non-binary people, e.g. in the yearly employee review ● Promoting women and non-binary people for internships, student assistant positions and final theses

Integration of the gender dimension in research content

Current status, existing measures	Goals	Planned measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gender-neutral language ● Ensuring the use of non-stereotypical and non-sexist images in internal/external communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider the gender dimension in future project applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organise information event at KWB

Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Current status, existing measures	Goals	Planned measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion and survey at the yearly employee/ employer reviews regarding psychosocial work environment and any potential discrimination or violations related to gender ● Compliance manager and code of conduct ● Information about whom to contact and how to handle any potential cases of discrimination or harassment (from the outset: integration in the onboarding document and process description) ● Appointment of two representatives (male and female) as additional contact persons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appointment of male and female confidants ● Zero gender-based violence ● Zero complains about gender discrimination during the yearly employee review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extend the number of contact person and implement 2 persons of trust (from both genders) ● Maintaining the status quo of the existing measures

6. TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

To enhance employee proficiency, the GEP be accessible to all personnel and made available on our website. An information event will be held to ensure all employees are aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a relevant incident.

Furthermore, an event on 'Integrating the gender dimension in the water sector' will be held by the designated contact person for gender equality/compliance officer.

7. EVALUATION OF MEASURES AND SUCCESS

KWB will develop an evaluation framework to ensure that we maintain a culture of continuous reflection and learning from the work undertaken for the GEP. The evaluation will be based on the following questions:

- Has KWB fulfilled the commitments it made?
- Has KWB met the objectives set out for it?
- Has the plan achieved the desired influence?
- What elements were effective, and which require further development?

In accordance with the three-year timeframe outlined in the GEP, KWB is responsible for ensuring that the objectives set out in this plan have been met. An assessment will be conducted at the end of each year, with the results communicated by the management team.

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