



---

# Gender Equality Plan

---

Version 1.0

18. November 2024

# 1. Our Approach to Gender Equality

At Stiftung Secure Information and Communication Technologies (SIC), we are committed to foster an inclusive and diverse workplace that champions gender equality as a fundamental principle. We believe that creating a fair, respectful, and supportive environment for all employees—regardless of gender—empowers individuals to reach their full potential and drives our collective success.

Gender equality is not just a matter of compliance or fairness; it is a core component of our values and an essential element in the ongoing growth of our organization. Research consistently shows that organizations prioritizing gender equity benefit from enhanced innovation, improved decision-making, and stronger team collaboration. When we support an equitable workplace, we create an environment where diverse perspectives thrive, where every individual feels respected, and where all employees have equal opportunities for advancement and professional growth.

Our Gender Equality Plan outlines our commitment to identify and eliminate barriers to equality within our organization. It is designed to promote transparency, ensure equitable access to resources, and build a workplace culture that respects and values the contributions of everyone. This plan includes actionable steps aimed at closing gender gaps, providing targeted support for underrepresented groups, and developing policies that encourage a balanced and equitable workplace for all.

By investing in gender equality, SIC is investing in its future. We are dedicated to foster a work environment that reflects the diversity of our communities and empowers all employees to thrive. We invite every member of our team to take part in this journey toward a more inclusive, innovative, and resilient organization.

## 2. Commitment of the Organization

Our organization's leadership is fully committed to making gender equality a cornerstone of SIC's workplace culture and practices. This commitment begins at the highest levels of management and extends throughout every department. Our leadership team recognizes that achieving true gender equality is essential for our success and sustainability, and we are dedicated to foster an environment that actively supports, respects, and values individuals of all genders. To this end, our management has pledged to prioritize gender equality initiatives, allocate resources to support these efforts, and hold ourselves accountable for creating a more balanced and inclusive workplace. This commitment is not only a guiding principle but a tangible promise that we believe will positively impact our organization, our employees, and the communities we serve.

## 3. Objectives and Desired Outcomes

To promote a truly equitable and inclusive workplace, SIC has identified key goals that will guide our approach to gender equality. These objectives are designed to address structural and cultural aspects of our organization, ensuring that all employees have equal opportunities to succeed and feel valued. By focusing on these goals, we aim to build a work environment that supports fairness, diversity, and respect at every level.

### **Achieve Gender Balance in Leadership Roles**

Increase representation of all genders in leadership and decision-making positions, setting measurable targets to ensure equal opportunity at the top levels of the organization.

### **Close Gender Pay Gaps**

Conduct regular pay audits and analyses to identify and address any gender-based wage disparities, ensuring that employees in similar roles with comparable experience receive equitable compensation.

### **Create Inclusive Recruitment and Promotion Processes**

Implement gender-neutral recruitment and promotion practices to attract diverse talent and ensure equal opportunities for career advancement, with a focus on removing unconscious biases from hiring and evaluation processes.

### **Promote Work-Life Balance and Family-Friendly Policies**

Establish flexible work policies, parental leave options, and family-friendly benefits to support employees of all genders in balancing work responsibilities with personal and family needs.

### **Encourage Gender-Sensitive Training and Development Programs**

Offer training programs focused on gender sensitivity, unconscious bias, and inclusive leadership, ensuring that employees and managers understand and actively support gender equality goals.

### **Ensure Equal Access to Professional Development Opportunities**

Provide equitable access to training, mentorship, networking, and career development programs, enabling all employees to enhance their skills and advance in their careers without gender-based barriers.

### **Foster an Inclusive Workplace Culture**

Create an environment where diversity of gender perspectives is celebrated, ensuring that all employees feel valued, respected, and heard, regardless of their gender identity.

### **Set and Publicly Communicate Gender Equality Goals**

Establish clear, measurable gender equality targets, monitor progress, and share updates transparently with all stakeholders to demonstrate the organization's commitment to achieving gender equality.

### **Monitor and Report on Gender Equality Progress**

Regularly assess the organization's gender equality efforts through data collection, employee feedback, and public reporting to ensure accountability and continuous improvement in meeting gender equality objectives.

### **Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content**

Consider the gender-equality dimension especially in activities related to research and teaching.

### **Enforce Measures Against Gender-based Violence Including Sexual Harassment**

Establish clear processes and implement concrete measures to prevent gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, and to effectively address and manage such incidents should they occur.

## **4. Relevant Baseline Data and Targets**

Our organization is dedicated to foster gender balance and inclusivity, and as part of this commitment, we focus on collecting and analyzing internal data on key gender-related indicators. This data-driven approach allows us to assess our progress, identify areas for improvement, and support informed decision-making in pursuit of a balanced and fair workplace. Key indicators in our gender balance data collection include the composition of our management team, the overall demographic breakdown of employees by gender, and salary distribution across different roles and levels. Additionally, we track metrics related to employee development, including promotions and other career advancement opportunities, to ensure equal progression pathways for all employees. Indicators related to bonuses and training opportunities are also evaluated, helping us maintain equity in access to rewards and skill development resources.

The relatively small size of our organization simplifies data collection, allowing for a detailed and accurate capture of these metrics. This streamlined process ensures that our analysis is thorough and reflective of real trends within the organization. Data collection and analysis take place at least once a year as part of our commitment to ongoing assessment and transparency. This annual review is crucial not only for our internal objectives but also for fulfilling external reporting requirements. Each year, we compile our findings into a detailed report, which is communicated to the organization's supervisory board and submitted to our supervising public authority. Through this yearly reporting process, we maintain a high level of accountability and transparency regarding our gender balance efforts. It also reinforces our commitment to an equitable workplace, ensuring that gender balance remains a priority in all areas of our organizational strategy and culture

## 5. Action Plan

In this section, we revisit the objectives and desired outcomes regarding gender equality outlined above and provide an in-depth look at the specific actions our organization has taken to achieve these goals. Our commitment to gender equality is demonstrated through a series of targeted initiatives, policies, and measurable steps designed to create a balanced, inclusive environment across all levels of the organization. These actions are supported by a commitment of resources—both financial and organizational—dedicated to ensuring that our gender equality objectives are effectively met. From collecting and analyzing key gender-related data points to implementing strategic programs for development, training, and fair compensation, we continuously work to align our practices with our equality objectives. By regularly assessing our progress, identifying areas for improvement, and allocating resources to reinforce these initiatives, we ensure that our gender equality efforts are both impactful and sustainable. This section will highlight these actions, the resources behind them, and the outcomes they drive, illustrating our organization’s proactive approach to foster a gender-equitable workplace.

### **Objective: Achieve Gender Balance in Leadership Roles**

**Actions:** Given the small size of Stiftung SIC and its inherently flat hierarchy, leadership roles are limited to two directors. Currently, both directors are male, highlighting a clear gender imbalance. Although the nomination of directors falls under the supervisory board's purview and is outside the organization's direct control, Stiftung SIC actively advocates for gender balance in all leadership positions within its scope of influence.

### **Objective: Close Gender Pay Gaps**

**Actions:** Stiftung SIC employs a standardized salary scheme that ensures equality across genders. Salaries are determined solely based on quantifiable factors such as education level and experience/seniority, fostering transparency and fairness. Additionally, the organization conducts regular internal pay audits and analyses to proactively identify and rectify any unintended gender-based wage disparities.

### **Objective: Create Inclusive Recruitment and Promotion Processes**

**Actions:** Stiftung SIC ensures that recruitment and promotion decisions are based exclusively on skills, experience, and other gender-neutral criteria. Job advertisements are designed to attract candidates of all genders. When candidates with similar qualifications are considered, gender balance may serve as a deciding factor to promote equality in final hiring or promotion decisions.

### **Objective: Promote Work-Life Balance and Family-Friendly Policies**

**Actions:** Stiftung SIC fosters work-life balance and a family-friendly workplace by avoiding all-in contracts, supporting flexible part-time arrangements, and maintaining a flexible home-

office policy. The organization's small size allows it to accommodate individual employee needs effectively.

**Objective: Encourage Gender-Sensitive Training and Development Programs**

**Actions:** Stiftung SIC provides access to diverse training and development opportunities, leveraging its partnership with Graz University of Technology. These offerings include courses focused on gender sensitivity. Employees are encouraged and financially supported to participate in such programs to enhance their understanding and skills in this area.

**Objective: Foster an Inclusive Workplace Culture**

**Actions:** Stiftung SIC strives to build a workplace that celebrates diverse gender perspectives, ensuring all employees feel respected, valued, and heard regardless of their gender identity. The organization benefits from its location on the Graz University of Technology campus, which upholds a robust culture of inclusivity in line with its gender equality strategy.

**Objective: Set and Publicly Communicate Gender Equality Goals**

**Actions:** To reinforce its commitment to gender equality, Stiftung SIC outlines its objectives, goals, and actions in its gender-equality plan, as represented in this document.

**Objective: Monitor and Report on Gender Equality Progress**

**Actions:** Stiftung SIC regularly evaluates its gender equality initiatives through systematic data collection and analysis. Key performance indicators are shared with the supervisory board and the responsible public authority via annual reports.

**Objective: Integration of the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content**

**Actions:** Although Stiftung SIC is minimally involved in teaching and primarily focused on research activities, we firmly believe that gender equality should be an overarching goal that transcends specific domains. As such, no distinct measures are designated solely for the teaching and research sectors. Instead, SIC's comprehensive commitment to gender equality, along with the concrete actions outlined, applies equally to teaching and research activities as it does to all other areas of the organization.

**Objective: Enforce Measures Against Gender-based Violence Including Sexual Harassment**

**Actions:** Our organization is committed to maintaining a safe and respectful environment free from gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. We adhere to and enforce the provisions of applicable laws that govern such matters, ensuring compliance with established legal standards. While specific measures are guided by these legal frameworks, our

organization emphasizes fostering a culture of respect and equality where all individuals feel protected and valued. In the event of incidents, we are dedicated to addressing them appropriately in line with the law and organizational principles.

## 6. Resources

At Stiftung SIC, we recognize that achieving gender equality requires both financial and human resources. Although our small organizational size does not permit the establishment of a dedicated department for gender equality, we ensure that this commitment is deeply integrated into all relevant internal processes. This approach allows us to effectively prioritize gender-equality actions within the scope of our available resources.

Rather than assigning a specific individual or role exclusively for gender equality, the management team directly takes on this responsibility. By doing so, we underline the strategic importance of gender equality as a core value of the organization. Management actively oversees the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, ensuring they are seamlessly incorporated into daily operations and decision-making processes.

Financially, resources are allocated to benefit employees in meaningful ways that support gender equality. For example, we provide financial assistance for training and development opportunities related to gender sensitivity and inclusivity. This targeted investment reflects our commitment to foster an equitable and inclusive working environment, even within the constraints of a smaller organizational structure.

This integrated and resource-conscious approach ensures that gender-equality initiatives remain a priority at Stiftung SIC, aligning with our overarching goals of fairness, inclusivity, and sustainable organizational growth.

DI Harald Bratko  
(Director)

DI Dr. Thomas Zefferer  
(Director)