



Gender Equality and Diversity Strategy 2018 to 2021

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1 Introduction

The IASS was founded on 2 February 2009 with the mission to develop, through transdisciplinary research and co-creative processes, the transformative knowledge needed to pave the way to sustainable societies. Its first funding period began in January 2010. The vision of the IASS is a world in which the Earth System, as well as social and economic systems, are understood and governed in a way that enables sustainable development for all. The promotion of equal opportunities and recognition of diversity are an integral part of this vision.¹ The IASS is committed to the latter as a normative principle and has instituted measures to ensure equal opportunities and foster an appropriate culture and communication style at the institute. This Gender Equality and Diversity Strategy describes these measures in detail.

The IASS approaches gender equality not solely in terms of gender politics, but, in accordance with the General Act on Equal Treatment (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (AGG)), also considers the following aspects: sexual identity, ethnic background, language, religion or philosophy, age, and disability or chronic illness.² Social background is also taken into account.³ Since these aspects of a person's identity can be a basis for discrimination, they need to be considered in relation to equal opportunities.

Discrimination based on the above aspects can occur at a structural/institutional, cultural and individual level, with each level reinforcing the other⁴. The structural/institutional level refers to entrenched structures in society, e.g. traditions or legal provisions. This kind of discrimination cannot be attributed to the actions or intentions of a specific individual nor can it be changed with recourse to individual behaviour or attitudes. Examples include the barriers to career advancement for women, discrimination against job applicants from third countries, and poor accessibility to workplaces and educational establishments. The cultural level refers to the norms, values, roles and worldviews that prevail in everyday language, the media, and politics (e.g. when women are the only visible protagonists in advertisements for household products, or refugees and older people are seen as a burden on the state). The individual level refers to concrete statements and behaviour directed by one person or group of people towards another.

The IASS believes that each of the different levels calls for different measures. At the structural/institutional level in particular, measures are being taken to actively help people from disadvantaged groups to achieve greater equality of opportunity. Job applicants from certain groups (e.g. women) with equal qualifications are treated favourably, and the IASS refrains from asking for certain information in the application process. To avoid succumbing to a relativisation of the concept of diversity, it is important here to agree on a few concrete categories that have been shown to have a discriminatory bias. This presupposes critical reflection on the concept of diversity.

¹ The use of the term "diversity" in this strategy follows the definition provided on the Gender Diversity Portal of the University of Lüneburg: "Diversity refers to the variety and heterogeneity of people and groups. It describes commonalities and differences between people and encompasses both acceptance of and respect for the individuality of each person."

² In addition to the Gender Equality Act (*Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz* (BGleG)) and the General Act on Equal Treatment (*Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (AGG)), this strategy is also based on the Gender Equality Act (*Landesgleichstellungsgesetz* (LGG)) of the Federal State of Brandenburg and the Federal Act on Appointment to Bodies (*Bundesgremienbesetzungsgesetz* (BGremBG)).

³ The AGG does not list social background as a factor in discrimination. However, it is important in the academic context given the close connection between social background and educational opportunities.

⁴ Liebscher, D. et al. (2010) Antidiskriminierungspädagogik. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.; Lutz, H. (2001) Differenz als Rechenaufgabe: über die Relevanz der Kategorien Race, Class und Gender. In: H. Lutz; N. Wenning (eds): Unterschiedlich verschieden. Differenz in der Erziehungswissenschaft. Opladen: Leske + Budrich, pp. 215–230; Degele, N.; Winker, G. (2007): Intersektionalität als Mehrebenenanalyse. Available online at <https://www.sozioogie.uni-freiburg.de/personen/degele/dokumente-publikationen/intersektionalitaet-mehrebenen.pdf> [16.5.2019]



Where individual discrimination is concerned, the IASS relies on internal measures to establish structures that, rather than excluding people, actively encourage them to participate in decision-making processes and contribute to the institute's development (e.g. by way of anonymised or written procedures). IASS staff members are also invited to receive training in discrimination-sensitive communication and behaviour in order to foster an institutional culture of mutual respect that does not exclude individuals with certain personality traits or markers of identity.

Such training is open to all IASS employees.

At the level of cultural discrimination, the institute can help to promote diversity through its communications activities.

Building on the elements of a gender equality policy that are already in place and practised at the IASS, this strategy is intended to structure them and help them become an integral part of the institute's operations. It also supplements existing gender equality and diversity policies at the IASS with new measures. The strategy is based on the gender equality standards of the German Research Foundation (DFG).

The IASS views its gender equality and diversity policy as a dynamic and constantly evolving process. This strategy should therefore be reviewed every six months and, where necessary, supplemented by further measures. As cross-cutting issues, gender equality and diversity are considered in all relevant strategic decisions and processes. However, the focus of the current strategy lies on gender equality.

A Diversity working group comprising staff members from across the institute is an important discussion forum in this regard. Its monthly meetings, which are open to all IASS employees, are an opportunity to reflect on different gender equality and diversity issues (see section on Anti-Discrimination and Diversity at the IASS).

2 State of play

Staff developments since 2014

While all the members of the Board of Directors were male during the first five years of the institute, in 2016 two board members were female, and there is currently (July 2019) one female board member. The gender balance in the membership of the Advisory Board has improved: While just one of the eleven members of the Board was female in 2014, currently (March 2019) five of eleven positions are occupied by women, with one position not filled at present. Nine out of 25 leadership positions⁵ at the institute are currently (March 2019) held by women. The proportion of female academic advisors to the directors has also risen from 33% (2014) to 67% (2019). Furthermore, women account for half of the Area Speakers appointed in January 2019.

An overview of the current gender distribution can be found in Appendix I. In addition, an Implementation Officer (*Umsetzungsbeauftragte**) with responsibility for implementing and promoting gender equality principles was appointed in January 2019, along with three deputies. This position is initially foreseen for one year. During that time, the specific requirements of the institute in this regard will be defined, needs will be assessed, and the Gender Equality and Diversity Strategy will be further developed.

⁵ "Leadership positions" are defined as positions with supervisory responsibilities and an obligation to report directly to at least one of the Directors. This figure includes the research group leaders of both core-funded and third-party funded projects.



The recruitment process

Vacancies for positions provided for in the staffing plan and in third-party funded projects are also advertised internally. This gives IASS employees in temporary positions the opportunity to apply for those jobs when their existing contracts are coming to an end. In accordance with the provisions of the AGG, vacancies are advertised based on internal guidelines on the recruitment process.

The IASS aspires to gender equality and welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds. Furthermore, applicants with disabilities and equal qualifications are treated favourably. Job advertisements state the requirements of the position being advertised (including qualification level) and refer to the possibility of working part-time, if relevant. The IASS is also receptive to the idea of an anonymous application procedure, and the option of accepting applications without photos or information on marital status, gender, age, place of birth, or ethnicity is being considered.

Work-family balance

The IASS attaches great importance to gender equality and the compatibility of work life and family life. Thanks to more flexible working arrangements, employees are able to reconcile their professional demands with the needs of their families (see section on "Regulations on working hours and home office"). These needs are taken into account when scheduling internal meetings. The institute also has two relaxation rooms that pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers can use when they need to rest or lie down for a while.

In recent years, and especially in 2017, the IASS has introduced and implemented various regulations relevant to gender equality and the work-family balance: While the worktime regulation does specify core hours, it also provides for flexitime, so that employees can decide when they want to start and finish work (taking core hours into account). Part-time employees can also make use of the flexitime regulations, provided their supervisors agree to that.

The supplementary agreement on home office allows employees to work from home on up to three days a week⁶, which is also conducive to a work-family balance. Furthermore, the statutory provisions regarding paid leave to care for a sick child or relative apply. And employees can work part-time unless there is a compelling argument against that.

The IASS also encourages its female and male employees to take the parental leave they are entitled to. More detailed information can be found in the regulation on working part-time while on parental leave.

Human resources development

In the context of ongoing changes to its scientific and technical infrastructure, the IASS strives to ensure equal opportunities and support professional development by encouraging staff members to participate in various vocational training programmes. There is a centralised education budget to finance external and in-house training for staff members.

Language and communications at the IASS

Guidelines for gender-sensitive communication were developed in 2017 to help staff members use language and images in a way that is fair to all genders. In addition to dealing with the issue of how to represent men and women in language, the guidelines also describe strategies for visualising diversity in photos and illustrations (see Guidelines for Gender-Sensitive Communication).

⁶ This rule does not apply to employees in positions that require their physical presence at the institute (e.g. the facility management team).



In addition, an internal communications strategy was created with the aim of fostering a transparent culture of discussion based on mutual respect, openness, and honesty. The guidelines on the recruitment process also stipulate that job advertisements be written in gender-neutral language. These documents have been placed in a prominent position on the IASS intranet (see guidelines on the recruitment process).

Non-discrimination and diversity at the IASS

The institutional culture at the IASS is open and respectful. At an institute-wide future workshop in 2017, interested staff members contributed to two 'open-space' groups focused on diversity and sensitivity to discrimination at the IASS on the one hand and non-discriminatory recruitment policy on the other. At the same workshop, an internal working group on diversity was founded, which has been holding monthly meetings since 2018. A representative of the Works Council attends these meetings.

The IASS strives to avoid discrimination and take the diversity of men and women into account in all decisions. The *Principles of Cooperation*, which can be accessed on the intranet, contain guidelines that are intended to serve as an inspiration for employees' individual approach to their work as well as their day-to-day dealings with colleagues. These guidelines also touch on the issues of empowerment and equal opportunities (see Principles of Cooperation).

The IASS website was overhauled and relaunched in 2017 in accordance with the current provisions of the Barrier-Free Information Technology Regulation (BITV), a supplement to the Act on Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities.

3 Goals

The IASS strives to create a transparent working environment, where all employees are integrated, listened to, and respected. As cross-cutting issues, equal opportunities and diversity inform all organisational processes and staff meetings.

The institute has set itself the following concrete goals:

- A. **Gender balance:** The IASS aims to achieve a gender balance at all hierarchical levels (especially at management level), on IASS governing bodies, and in the selection process for fellows. This is to be taken into account in the recruitment process, where care will be taken to recruit women (or men) to positions where they have previously been underrepresented at the IASS. While we are aware that there are more than two genders, we continue to concentrate our efforts on ensuring equal opportunities for women and men, given the structural discrimination that still exists in this area and the fact that people may not want to disclose their gender.
- B. **Human resources and professional development:** The IASS human resources development strategy is informed by equal opportunities and diversity. Competence in these areas is integral to a good leadership style, which is a cornerstone of that strategy. The principle of gender equality will inform the entire human resources development strategy, including vocational training measures. At the same time, the IASS aims to give due consideration to the specific needs of women with regard to professional development.
- C. **Family:** The IASS stresses the importance of a work-family balance and has already instituted measures to support that. Yet far from viewing the work-family balance as a given, the institute constantly strives to react to the particular needs of parents and further enhance its family-friendly culture. These needs are taken into account when scheduling internal



meetings. Transparent and reliable procedures for planning such meetings, together with goal-oriented moderation, ensure that they do not run over the allotted time.

- D. **Communications:** Language and images should show men and women in all their diversity. In internal and external communications, references to people should be formulated in such a way as to include all genders. Relevant guidelines serve as a reference for employees when writing texts and selecting images (see Guidelines for Gender-Sensitive Communication).
- E. **Structural integration (see 4.6):** The ongoing process of integrating gender equality and diversity considerations into the operations of the IASS is subject to continuous reflection. This makes it easier to react to new developments and needs in this area.

4 Measures

4.1 Monitoring and stocktaking

To ensure a balance on the IASS staff in terms of gender and cultural and social background, a decision was taken to gather data on a regular basis on the proportion of males and females in all pay grades and on the Board of Directors from March 2019 on.

As part of this monitoring process, data on age, working hours and languages is also gathered. The Equal Opportunities Officer is responsible for managing the process. She asks human resources for this information and briefs the Board of Directors on the state of play every six months. This data is also made available to all IASS staff on the intranet.

Since the foundation of the IASS, a whole host of strategy papers, concepts and guidelines have been issued. All of these documents should be examined from a gender equality and diversity perspective and updated as necessary.

4.2 Human resources and professional development

To increase overall competence in the areas of gender equality and diversity, all staff members in leadership positions are encouraged to undergo training in diversity and gender awareness. The Head of Personnel and Organisational Development can organise such training in cooperation with external service providers.

Training opportunities geared specifically to women are also foreseen in the human resources development strategy. Female employees are invited to avail of the professional development courses run by the Potsdam Graduate School (PoGS), including the Mentoring Plus Programme geared specifically to postdocs. They can also participate in an individual training or coaching session focused on the specific conflicts that women encounter in the workplace. To support the professional development of junior researchers in particular, the IASS has introduced an internal structured mentoring programme.

At internal and external events and conferences, the institute strives to increase the visibility of women and ensure that women and men are equally represented in discussions.

4.3 Work-family balance

In addition to flexible working hours and the possibility of working from home on certain days, parents on the IASS staff can also arrange to work part-time. Together with the Gender Equality Implementation Officer, the Diversity working group is developing a proposal to allow staff members in leadership positions to make greater use of the existing regulations on flexible working hours in



future. Employees with children can bring them to the office for a short time when there is a disruption to their usual childcare arrangements.

A box of toys in each of the existing relaxation rooms will ensure that employees will still be able to work in peace and attend scheduled meetings. In addition to drawing materials, the boxes contain toys and games that are appropriate for different age groups. A mailing list has been set up to connect employees who have returned to work after parental leave.

As part of the family-friendly human resources policy of the IASS, the employment situation of other family members is sometimes taken into account in the recruitment of qualified scientists. To provide the greatest possible support to families in this regard, the IASS is a member of the Brandenburg Dual Career Network. In this informal network, the participating organisations support each other in finding vacancies for dual career couples.

The possibility of cooperating with a day-care facility is currently being considered.

4.4 Accessibility

The IASS is currently assessing what measures are needed to ensure better accessibility to the institute buildings and website.

4.5 Communication

The guidelines on gender-sensitive communication have been translated into English and distributed among all staff members in January 2019.

The internal communications strategy on the IASS discussion culture and interactions between colleagues has also been distributed via IASS communication channels (e.g. Newsletter, staff meetings) and uploaded onto the intranet. In addition, the issues of gender equality and diversity are openly addressed in internal and external communications channels.

To sensitise IASS employees to the issues of gender equality and diversity, regular staff workshops with external experts are planned from spring 2020.

The link between the Gender Equality Implementation Officer and the Board of Directors is visualised in the organigram published on the IASS website.

4.6 Structural integration

a) Gender Equality Implementation Officer and the election of an Equal Opportunities Officer

The Gender Equality Implementation Officer is responsible for implementing this strategy. She is currently supported by three deputies from different areas of the IASS. In addition to measures that must be implemented in the short term, the Gender Equality Implementation Officer needs to keep more long-term goals in mind (auditing process). They are also the point of contact for the Diversity working group⁷ and keep the Board of Directors informed about the state of play and areas where action is required.

The election of an Equal Opportunities Officer to replace the Gender Equality Implementation Officer is due to be held in the second half of the year. She will have a budget for events and training and be supported by a student assistant where necessary.

⁷ The tasks of the Gender Equality Implementation Officer are listed in Appendix II.



b) Diversity working group

The Diversity working group is open to all staff members. In monthly meetings, this group mainly discusses issues relevant to gender equality and diversity and reflects on how both principles can be put into practice at the IASS. The working group will contribute to the further development of this strategy as well as formulating an approach to diversity, together with concrete measures, that complements it.

It is the job of working group members to detect the gender- and diversity-related issues that arise among the IASS staff and discuss them within the group. Issues that come to the fore in working group meetings are brought to the attention of the Board of Directors and the Works Council.

c) Biannual events

Based on the experiences and observations of the Diversity working group, themes are to be defined for biannual events on gender equality and diversity. These events can take different forms, and may include workshops and talks by experts. External experts should try to highlight the institute's "blind spots" in this regard. All staff members should make an effort to attend these events.

To stress the importance of staff participation, the invitations should come from the directors. The purpose of such events is also to raise awareness among IASS staff members of existing IASS strategy documents and guidelines on gender equality and diversity (e.g. Gender Equality and Diversity Strategy; Guidelines for Gender-Sensitive Communication; and Principles of Cooperation).

d) Auditing process

The IASS intends to undergo a *berufundfamilie* audit and participate in the Total E-Quality award process. The fields of action envisaged for this have already been identified in the Plan of Action. The auditing process is due to take place in the course of institutionalisation.

The Gender Equality and Diversity Strategy is initially valid for a period of two years. Following the 2020 evaluation and an analysis of its outcome in the second half of 2020, a review of the progress made in the implementation of gender equality and diversity measures will take place in spring 2021. The implementation of the various measures is overseen and advanced by the Gender Equality Implementation Officer, the Diversity working group, and the Head of Personnel and Organisational Development.

5 Review

The contents of this strategy and the progress made with regard to the implementation of the measures it describes will be monitored in biannual reviews.

Appendix I

Overview of the current gender distribution at the IASS

The table below shows the proportion of women at the different hierarchical levels (June 2019)

	Staff (total)	Women	
Scientific Staff	121	60	50%
Scientific Directors (non-tariff)	3	1	33%
Research Group Leaders with supervisory responsibilities (E13-E15)	26	9	35%
Research Associates without supervisory responsibilities (E13-E14)	92	50	54%
Scientific support⁸, Communications and Fellow Unit	35	26	74%
Staff member (E13 or above)	18	10	56%
Staff member (E9-E12)	17	16	94%
Administration	37	27	73%
Administrative Director (non-tariff)	1	0	0%
Administrative Staff (E13 or above)	6	4	67%
Administrative Staff (E9-E12)	15	10	67%
Administrative Staff (E5-E8)	6	2	33%
Fellows	20	10	50%
Junior Fellows	1	1	100%
Fellows	7	5	71%
Senior Fellows	12	4	33%
Students	46	26	57%
Research Integration Committee: Area Speakers	6	3	50%

⁸ Scientific support staff include project assistants, the academic officers and personal assistants to the Directors, as well as project staff engaged in internal awarding processes and communications activities.



Appendix II

Appointment, tasks and competencies of the Gender Equality Implementation Officer

The Gender Equality Implementation Officer is tasked in particular with:

- Helping the Board of Directors to make gender equality and diversity more visible as strategic tasks;
- Advancing the implementation of gender equality principles;
- Supervising the implementation process to ensure that gender equality principles are put into practice;
- They are consulted on relevant strategic decisions, organisational development processes, staff recruitment, and efforts to make the institute more family-friendly;
- They inform the Board of Directors on a regular basis about the status quo (gender balance at the institute, implementation of measures, further development of the strategy, etc.) and areas where action should be taken;
- They are in close contact with the Works Council;
- As spokesperson of the Diversity working group, they convene the monthly meetings where needs are assessed, the implementation process reviewed, and further measures developed;
- They are the IASS point of contact for any issues in relation to gender equality and diversity;
- They decide on the themes of the biannual or annual internal IASS events (e.g. workshops, talks, etc.);
- Monitoring: They analyse staff numbers and the ratio of women to men in the different pay grades (quarterly).

Election and duties

- The Diversity working group elects the Gender Equality Implementation Officer from among its members.
- The rights and duties of the Gender Equality Implementation Officer are set out in a formal agreement between the Board of Directors and the Works Council.