

GENDER EQUALITY PLAN 2022-2025

In drafting a Gender Equality Plan (GEP), the Institute of Baltic Studies (IBS), aims to ensure equal treatment and opportunities for all its members, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, or biological sex. We view diversity as a resource for increasing the quality of social research by integrating views of social life from multiple backgrounds and perspectives. Thus, we strive to provide a collaborative environment characterized by open dialogue, mutual respect, and participation by increasing the awareness of issues associated with gender equality and diversity, utilizing evidence-based practices to address these issues within and outside of IBS, and providing support and opportunities for professional and personal growth for all individuals at IBS.

Gender Balance at IBS

IBS is a non-profit research organization that, as of the beginning of 2022, has 19 members, of which 65% are women and 35% are men. Figure 1, below, shows a detailed gender distribution by positions within IBS. The number of women is equal or higher than men at every position. The exception is board members, which is comprised of two male members and one female member. Equalizing this ratio is a goal of IBS that is described in greater detail below.

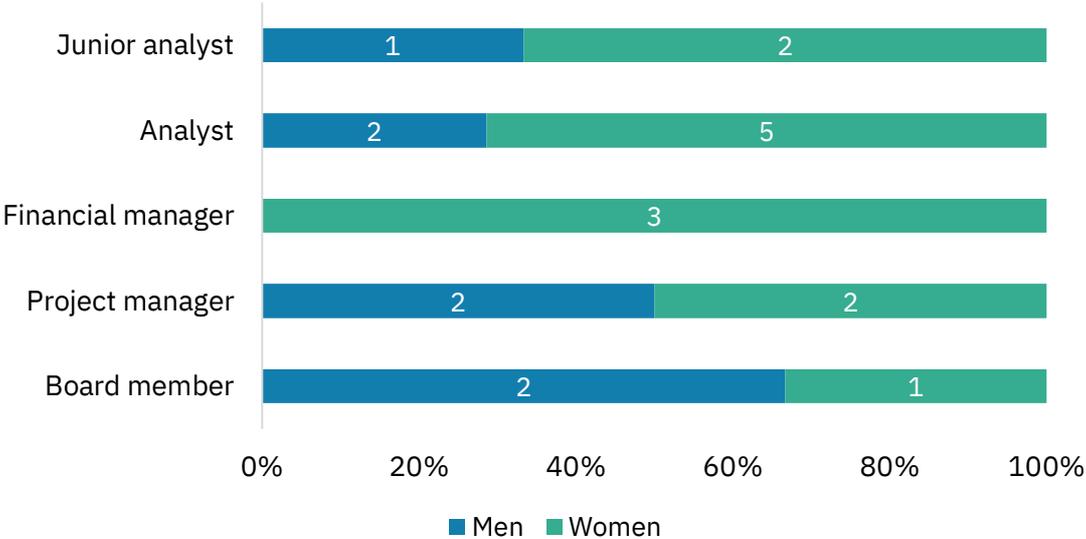


Figure 1. Gender distribution by positions within IBS (full-time positions)

IBS recruits its members based strictly on qualifications and competencies, aiming to keep the gender distribution balanced. Payment is based on members' experience and position, where both men and women are treated equally.

The status of gender equality is monitored and discussed collectively with the whole IBS team during the monthly staff meetings and bi-annual strategic seminars; as well as individually during the evaluation discussions with the members of the board (bi-annually), where everyone has an opportunity to voice their concerns or suggest modifications. Currently, employees are satisfied with the gender balance at IBS. However, to ensure a more

thorough approach, new measures to monitor the equality within IBS will be introduced as a part of this gender equality plan.

All members of IBS are responsible for ensuring gender equality. Our plan to maintain gender equality will be based on a study using internal, gender-disaggregated data, public recommendations, and discussions between IBS members during 2021-2022. Specific objectives and actions to achieve them will be stated in the action plans of the IBS board and annual reports (administrative and financial). The current plan will be updated annually.

IBS's main goals to guarantee gender equality in the organization can be found in this document.

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1. INCREASE GENDER AND DIVERSITY AWARENESS AMONG MEMBERS OF IBS

Awareness of gender equality and diversity is a fundamental step towards achieving all other goals. To increase IBS's members' awareness of gender equality and diversity, IBS members' will:

Action	KPIs
Disseminate GEP to all members of IBS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The GEP will be published on the IBS website ✓ Members of IBS will personally receive GEP via email
Attend recognized training courses pertaining to gender equality, awareness, unconscious bias, gender discrimination, or diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ IBS team members will virtually or physically attend min 2 trainings associated with maintaining gender equality that are provided by EU universities, the EU Commission, or Estonian Research Council
Share our awareness, knowledge, and best practices associated with gender equality and diversity within the IBS organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ After attendance of trainings the key take-outs in the form joint reflection workshop within IBS staff meeting will be held ✓ After attendance of trainings materials will be kept on common workspace (if sharing is allowed by the trainers) and/or the rest of the team will be informed about the key points in monthly staff meetings

2. INCORPORATE GENDER IN THE RESEARCH AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES OF IBS

Action	KPIs
Incorporate knowledge and best practices associated with gender equality and diversity into our research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Include gender and perceived gendered boundaries into a survey of organizational culture, and report gender dis-aggregated data ✓ Observe that research teams have a gender balance ✓ IBS team will be a partner in min 4 national or European projects where gender equality or diversity is emphasized. ✓ Prepare a practical guide on the generation and use of inclusive, non-sexist language in our research instruments and materials
Guarantee professional development for IBS people regardless of their gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continuously promote the performance of training actions that equally facilitate the development of knowledge, skills, and competencies, regardless of gender ✓ Guarantee equal access to the trainings

3. BALANCE GENDER IN MATTERS OF LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING

IBS seeks to have a gender balance among leadership, decision-making bodies, and staff positions such as board members, advisory committees. To this end, IBS considers **40%** as a benchmark indicator of a gender imbalance that compels effort to increase the representation of the underrepresented in the group of decision-makers. To achieve gender balance across leadership and decision-making groups, IBS will:

Action	KPIs
Evaluate the gender balance of all leadership and decision-making groups	✓ A report on the gender balance among the leadership, decision-makers and applicants will be included as a section in the annual report of IBS
Board members will strive to have equal representation	✓ Give preference toward inclusion of an underrepresented gender in leadership or decision-making groups when candidates are of equal standing
Draw decision-makers' and collaborators' attention towards the importance of gender equality and possible unconscious bias or gender imbalances	✓ Publish results of the gender equality trainings and incorporate this dimension to the research projects
Gender balance will be maintained among project managers	✓ Active projects are led by and new projects are planned keeping in mind proper gender balance among project managers

IBS has performed the following actions to achieve the abovementioned goals:

- **Studied** gender equality principles and best practices of gender equality plans.
- **Gathered details** for the creation of a separate section about gender balance to add to IBS's annual organizational survey. The template for the annual survey will be based on the template used in the IBS development project (funded by the National Foundation of Civil Society in 2021-2022) where two team self-reflection surveys were held.
- **Gathered details** about partnered activities of IBS with LGBTQA groups.
- **Prepared an overview** based on the current status of IBS gender balance and details gathered.

Recruitment at IBS

IBS has already incorporated gender equality principles into its recruitment processes; however, further steps need to be made to continue advancing in the implementation of the gender perspective to a greater degree in the recruitment and selection process in all its areas to guarantee equal opportunities:

- **IBS will make sure to utilize** inclusive and gender-neutral language when posing information associated with positions and opportunities, interviews, and selection of the candidate.
- **IBS will guarantee** that its selection processes are carried out by carrying out an assessment for the job based on experience, training competencies and capacities without considering the sex of the people who are candidates for it.
- **IBS will promote** a balanced representation of men and women in the different roles, divisions, areas, especially in those cases where they are underrepresented, according to our current distribution.

Equal Treatment of All Individuals

As an organization, IBS supports the equal treatment of all individuals regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, cultural background, or nationality. IBS does not tolerate discrimination based on gender, whether that discrimination occurs directly or indirectly, through rule-based advantages given to specific groups. In particular, IBS pays attention to the influence of parental leave on members' careers. To ensure equal treatment of all individuals, IBS will:

- **Ensure** that the rules and regulations of IBS create equal opportunities and visibility for all members and strictly follow the national and wide recognized regulations on gender equality¹.
- **Create** flexible working arrangements, that support work-life balance regardless of gender.
- **Adhere** to the principles of equal treatment of all individuals when making decisions².
- **Collect** feedback associated with general gender equality and equal treatment in decision-making processes through our annual internal survey.

The prevention of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence at IBS

IBS rejects – and will not tolerate – all behavior and any action that causes or contributes to any form of sexual harassment, sex- or gender-based discrimination, or sexual violence. IBS firmly resolves to prevent, detect, and punish any and all such behaviour actions.

To that end, IBS will:

- **Make information** on equal treatment and gender discrimination **easily accessible** within IBS by publishing it on the website, focusing on preventing and solving of problems should they arise.
- **Train support personnel** responsible for advising IBS members on filing complaints associated with unequal treatment, discrimination, and harassment.
- **Formulate a neutral and independent committee** to monitor processes associated with gender equality and diversity and well as to track all formalized complaints regarding the extraordinary cases at IBS, should they arise.
- **Provide access** to a group of experts to resolve complex cases of discrimination, if they occur.
- **Improve the members' awareness** of equal treatment and sexual harassment by distributing the material published by the EC (European Commission) and to focus on preventing and solving of problems.

¹ Gender Equality Act of Estonia (2004)
<https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/516012019002/consolide/current>
 European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2025

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

² Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32000L0078>

4. THE GENDER EQUALITY COMMITTEE OF IBS

IBS has created a neutral and independent committee that is responsible for monitoring and ensuring gender equality in the organization. The gender balance in the Committee is strived to be achieved as well. **The following people are the current appointed members of the Committee:**

Role in the Gender Equality Committee	Name of the IBS team member
Coordinator of the Committee	Merit Tatar (Member of the Board)
Assistant to the coordinator	Maris Pihelgas (Financial Manager, Analyst)
Gender Equality Committee Management Board	Tarmo Kalvet (Technology and Innovation Unit)
	Kristjan Kaldur (Migration and Integration Unit)
	Maarja Käger (Programme Evaluation Unit)
	Pille Tsopp (Financial Manager, Expert on Equal Treatment and Violence Against Women)
	Andra Asser (Smart City and Sustainable Development Unit)
	David McBee (Research Design and Methodology)

IBS actions to fulfil the proposed Gender Equality Plan

To fulfil our Gender Equality Plan, IBS will:

1. Distribute this gender equality plan throughout IBS and post this statement on our website.
2. Create a formal Gender Equality and Diversity Committee that is empowered to create, implement, monitor, and modify this existing gender equality plan.
3. Fund this committee through the general cost budget of the organization.
4. Enable an evidence-based approach to monitoring and modifying our gender equality plan by utilizing existing information and collecting data about our organizational climate that supports gender-disaggregated analyses across all staff categories (annual survey, regular discussions on the topic in IBS staff meetings, on-demand discussions with members who find it necessary).
5. As part of their duties, the gender equality committee utilize evidence-based approaches to monitoring and modifying this gender equality plan. These approaches

include using company records and collecting data which support gender-disaggregated analyses across all staff categories, e.g., they will track gender parity during recruitment for all positions with the goal of actively encouraging applications from minority genders.

6. Provide regular/on-demand staff training about gender equality and diversity within the IBS organization and associated project activities, e.g., staff training on the concept of gender discrimination and its prevention.