

Gender Equality Plan SWOV

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SWOV



Report documentation

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Prevent crashes
Reduce injuries
Save lives

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Introduction

SWOV is the national scientific institute for road safety research in the Netherlands. It is our mission to use our knowledge from scientific research to contribute to safer road traffic. SWOV already has a strong gender diversity within its organisation (58% of its employees is female). SWOV strives to broaden our research scope and enhance the quality of our research by including gender diversity. As part of the European Commission Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the European Commission is committed to promoting gender equality in research and innovation. This is alongside the well-established regulatory framework within the EU on gender equality which applies widely across the labour market including the research sector.

Because of the peculiarities of the research sector, specific action is needed to overcome persisting gender gaps. Many structural barriers to gender equality in research and innovation persist. These barriers within research have been typically addressed through:

- > funding instruments such as Horizon Europe;
- > the European Research Area in collaboration with member countries and research organizations.

The European Commission is now making institutional Gender Equality Plans a precondition for securing funding from Horizon Europe, the framework program for research and innovation. The precondition is part of the plans drawn up by the European Commission for promoting gender equality (Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025; Gender Equality in the European Research Area). From 2022, every legal entity (government body, research, or higher education institution) must have a Gender Equality Plan in order to be eligible for funding from Horizon Europe.

As a participating research organization, SWOV Institute for Road Safety Research supports these strong actions as part of its commitment towards gender equality within its academic community and in the wider academic environment it resides in.

1 Approach

Diverse teams generate better problem-solving strategies and more creative ideas. They accelerate innovation for all. Therefore, SWOV aims to establish and maintain diversity in all its departments.

Various studies demonstrate that several different measures have to be taken with regard to gender diversity to become effective. A good infrastructure, sufficient resources, clear goals and a clear roadmap provide a solid ground for further measures. The first group of measures (see *Section 2.1*) aims at gender diversity in numbers, to optimise the promotion opportunities and prevent the departure of female researchers. Also the improvement of visibility of female researchers is one of the measures.

The second group of measures (see *Section 2.2*) aims at changing the different processes (cultural and long term) within the organisation which maintain or enhance gender inequality. The third group of measures (*Section 2.3*) aims at making the research and dissemination more inclusive.

Gender policy can only be effective when those three types of measures are taken.

In the monitoring phase (*Chapter 3*), the process and progress are regularly evaluated. The Gender Equality Plan will be disseminated through institution and published on the website (*Chapter 4*).

Gender is always linked to other social categories, such as ethnicity, functional impairment, age, sexual orientation, and social class. SWOV is just at the beginning but is moving towards a more intersectional approach in the years to come.

2 Measures

2.1 Gender Equality in numbers

This first group of measures is aimed at gender equality in terms of numbers: optimising recruitment, advancement, and retention of women academics. Achieving greater visibility of male and female academics is also part of this process. We strive to have gender balance in scientific, operational and management staff. This results in a good gender equality in numbers for the operational and scientific departments. For Communication there is a clear overrepresentation of women. The latter also seems to be the case for management but the two men are the managing and deputy director; the balance in management fte's is much better. The total balance male/female is 40/60.

Department	Male	Female	Total
Operational Management	4	6	10
Communication	2	7	9
Data and Analysis for Policy	4	4	8
Road User Behaviour	4	7	11
Human Factors and Vehicle Automation	3	4	7
Infrastructure and Traffic	6	4	10
Total	23	32	55
%	41,82%	58,18%	100%
Of which in Management Team	2	5	7
%	28,57%	71,43%	100%

2.1.1 Recruitment

SWOV aims to maintain the level of gender equality already achieved. Our human resources manager will help managers who are hiring staff to keep the right candidates captivated and ensure gender neutrality in the job description. SWOV wants to be a strong and welcoming organisation which promotes inclusiveness, equality, and cooperation. By providing a healthy work environment SWOV is able to retain employees for a long time. When employees stay for a longer time we are able to maintain all the necessary expertise and train young researchers on the job to obtain a senior and leadership position at SWOV. This approach has proven successful for SWOV. All female members of SWOV's management team started as (young) researcher at SWOV. Therefore we will continue this approach the coming years.

2.1.2 Training

SWOV offers many training possibilities to its staff. SWOV encourages staff to perform managerial and organizational responsibilities to stimulate their professional and personal development. Researchers are encouraged to invest in their professional career (knowledge-based) and obtain a doctorate. SWOV also provides resources for employees to invest in their skills to lead projects or a department. SWOV assigns a mentor to all new employees to stimulate their professional and personal development. In this way, the young researcher (the mentee) can exchange views on various topics they wish to discuss. The sparring partner is a senior researcher (the mentor) who is committed to mentoring on a voluntary basis. A mentor is also assigned to support staff when they start working at SWOV. This increases chances of a successful start and long career at SWOV.

SWOV has an adequate budget for the training of employees. There is a wide variety of services in the field of career counselling and customized coaching trajectories (internal as well as external) to choose from. Moreover, there are several programs which aim at talented women who pursue an academic career. These programs for talented women scientists also have a positive effect for SWOV, as they increase the pool of candidates for new positions at SWOV.

2.1.3 Dissemination

Moreover, we acknowledge the importance that male and female scientists are equally represented and given a voice in the dissemination of their research to the wider public. For this reason, we will make sure that the gender distribution of our researchers in media appearances (print, radio, television) reflects the overall gender distribution within SWOV.

2.2 Gender Equality in organisation

The second group of measures is aimed at changing cultural and structural organizational processes that produce and sustain gender inequality.

Gender balance in academic ranks alone is not sufficient to create an inclusive and safe working environment. Measures to improve the numbers may be important, but they are ineffective if nothing is done about the structure and culture of the organization. Then, the so-called ‘revolving door effect’ kicks in; organizations succeed at bringing in under-represented groups, but fail to keep them in. This makes an inclusive structure and culture for all employees essential.

2.2.1 Transparency and equal opportunities in career policy procedures

SWOV has set out a clear career path for young researchers who start working at SWOV. They can choose to invest in their professional career (knowledge-based) and obtain a doctorate or to invest in their leadership skills and work towards obtaining a leadership position at SWOV. By setting up a clear program and defining “SMART”-requirements SWOV tries to improve the transparency and therefore equal opportunities for all staff when pursuing a professional career at SWOV.

2.2.2 Code of conduct

To create a safe work environment SWOV has set up a code of conduct. This code of conduct explains what employees need to do if they ever need to report a violation of company policy or any other form of engagement in misconduct (for example: gender-based violence), as well as showing staff what the consequences are. SWOV encourages everyone to first discuss an undesirable situation with the person it concerns. If this is not possible, staff can register a complaint with regard to inappropriate behaviour with the designated counsellor either independently or in consultation with the human resource manager or supervisor. It also describes the desired organizational culture.

2.2.3 Equal Pay

SWOV rewards employees of different genders equally for equal work.

2.2.4 Work-life balance

SWOV facilitates a healthy work-life balance for its employees by providing good conditions of pay and employment (such as pregnancy and maternity leave, parental leave etc)

2.2.5 Mobility

There are no differences in starting positions & pay, career progression speed, and promotions between men and women, a situation SWOV wants to sustain.

2.2.6 Leadership

SWOV is committed to creating a safe working and learning environment in which people feel welcome and motivated, can use their talents, are supported in their development, achieve results, are empowered and empower others. SWOV invests in having a culture that allows making mistakes on an individual level and the organisation learns from the mistakes made at an organizational level. When a high level of social security is reached, leadership can flourish.

2.3 Gender Equality with regard to knowledge

The third group of measures focuses on making knowledge production and dissemination (research and education) inclusive. Academic studies point to the exclusion of groups and perspectives from the content of research. Studies show that failure to acknowledge gender differences when setting up and carrying out a research project can lead to costly errors. When social groups structurally have limited access to science, this affects the level of knowledge. Reflecting on how knowledge production in one's own field is affected by such processes of exclusion should be a core feature of all academic practice.

2.3.1 SWOV staff

SWOV expects that by the measures taken (see *Section 2.2*), gender diversity in staff will be maintained. In addition, SWOV is working on a community that respects, appreciates, and fosters diversity, and on an inclusive learning environment that helps all staff to take ownership of their development and help them to shape their own personalized learning path. This means that it will be easier for staff with various backgrounds to work on their professional career at SWOV.

2.3.2 Gender Equality in research

There is a need for measures focused on making knowledge production and dissemination inclusive. For the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation the European Committee recommends the policy document "Gendered Innovations 2". This document includes refined methodologies on the integration of sex/gender-based analysis as well as intersectional analysis in research and innovation content. SWOV will raise awareness among its researchers and get inspiration from examples of the abovementioned "Gendered Innovations 2" policy document. In our field of work gender issues are certainly relevant, it is a well-known fact that young males have a (much) higher risk to be involved in a road crash because of biological and possibly cultural reasons. A substantial part of SWOV research was and is studying this. Within the projects commissioned by the European Union, that SWOV participates in, gender issues are an integral part of the research plan that is written. By taking gender into account in research from the start, scientific staff questions and considers gender norms and stereotypes, which allows a higher quality of research.

3 Monitoring

In the monitoring phase, the process and progress are regularly evaluated. SWOV will evaluate gender equality at least every three years. The findings from the monitoring phase make it possible to fine tune and improve any interventions that are made to achieve optimal results.

4 Communication

The Gender Equality Plan will be published on the SWOV website. Furthermore, it will be brought to the attention of the staff by sharing it on our Intranet, via discussions within our departments and organisation-wide meetings.

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