



Policy on equality of opportunity through equal treatment at FiBL Switzerland

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Preamble – FiBL’s equality policy

As part of its self-concept, FiBL Switzerland seeks to create equality of opportunity for people who are of different gender or sexual orientation, have a physical, mental or emotional disability, are of different ethnicity, have different religious, cultural or democratic political convictions, are of different age or have a different social position. Equality of opportunity through equal treatment is also part of the foundation for successful and widely recognised work by FiBL in research, education and consultancy. The promotion of equality is therefore an integral component of the development of FiBL Switzerland.

At the same time, equality is a central pillar of FiBL Switzerland’s corporate culture. FiBL Switzerland makes active efforts to distribute opportunities fairly and to ensure equitable and gender-balanced participation in all departments and management functions. Equality is viewed as a task that applies across the board and it is mainstreamed in all departments. Achieving and implementing equality is one of management’s key tasks; this means that responsibility for it lies in particular with the directorate and the heads of department but also with the Foundation Council of FiBL Switzerland. FiBL Switzerland sets targets for equality and reviews achievement of them via an annual equality report that includes informative performance indicators on equality. For all employees of FiBL Switzerland, job requirement profiles, skills profiles, performance criteria and employment conditions are to be regularly reviewed to check whether they enable the participation and involvement of all employees of FiBL Switzerland on an equal basis. The members of committees are to be chosen in a way that effectively takes account of the issue of equality. The aim is to, as far as possible, achieve gender-equitable and equality-oriented representation in all departments and committees. FiBL Switzerland aims to use gender-neutral communication at all levels.

FiBL strives to implement equality and diversity management appropriately in all the above areas. The present version sets out the principles, guidelines and measures in relation to the equality of people of different gender. Other sections on equality in the other areas are being drawn up on an ongoing basis and the policy will be updated.

Section I: Gender equality

I.1 Gender-inclusive language

Gender-inclusive language that applies equally to people of different gender and does not discriminate is to be used in all written and oral communications by employees, including in FiBL Switzerland's internal documents. The use of gender-neutral language is recommended, or use of the gender asterisk * in German or the centred point · in French. In English, gender-neutral language can be achieved by using the plural, imperative or passive, or in some cases by omitting the personal pronoun. Further guidelines on gender-inclusive language in English can be found in the [recommendations of the European Parliament](#); for the French language the manual "[Gender-inclusive language in France](#)" (Mots-Clés, 2019) is available.

I.2 Equality in committees

In all committees of FiBL Switzerland, the aim should be to achieve proportional equality of the genders when making appointments. In committees with three members, each gender should be represented by at least one member after an appointment has been made. Deviations from the gender quota in committees are permissible only in specific justified cases and after an opinion from the equality officers.

I.3 Equality in management and coordination positions

In all management and coordination positions throughout FiBL Switzerland – directorate, department heads, group heads and interdisciplinary issue coordinators – parity in gender representation is to be sought when making appointments. In management committees with three members, each gender should be represented by at least one member after an appointment has been made. Deviations from the gender quota in management positions are permissible only in specific justified cases and after an opinion from the equality officers.

To promote equality, management positions can in justified cases be staffed by two people as co-managers, with 50% of the management function being assigned to each.

1.4 Appointment procedures

Professional and personal suitability are decisive when filling posts at FiBL Switzerland. At the same time, there is a constant need for action in order to achieve equality in all areas. The equality officers should therefore be involved throughout the appointment process for both internal and external appointments, in particular when appointments are being made to management positions. The equality officers should be informed of the planned appointment to management positions before the text of the job advertisement is produced. The equality officers must within seven days inform the directorate or the relevant head of department of the stages in the appointment process in which they wish to assert their right to participate. The equality officers always have the following participation rights in connection with appointments to management functions: with regard to maintaining gender equity and equality in the advertisement text, and when selecting applicants for interview, the approval of the equality officers should be sought wherever possible. However, the final decision lies with the directorate. If the decision is not in line with the equality officers' recommendation, it must be justified in writing. The equality officers have the right to participate in interviews for management positions and they comment on the selection panel's appointment proposal. If the equality officers' opinion differs from the selection panel's proposal, the directorate evaluates the opinions and then takes the final decision on the appointment or the continuation of the process.

The job advertisement is to be formulated in gender-neutral language and in a way that maintains equality of opportunity. When pre-selecting candidates for interview, it should be ensured that all the candidates who belong to the under-represented gender and fulfil the job requirements are invited. If this is not possible because there are too many people of the under-represented gender, at least as many female applicants as male applicants must be invited. Selection panels are to be staffed in accordance with the rules on equality in committees. In the application process, everything possible should be done to attract suitable applications from persons of the under-represented gender. Special steps should be taken to achieve this, for example by advertising via (women's) networks, by conducting research in databases and in particular by ensuring wide circulation of the advertisement.

1.5 Developing the gender and diversity skills of employees, especially specialists and managers, and promoting young talent

In order to develop gender and diversity skills, employees of FiBL Switzerland – especially specialists and managers – undertake relevant training. To this end the directorate will regularly – and including at the suggestion of the equality officers and staff representatives of FiBL Switzerland – offer appropriate training programmes and/or workshops. Training in gender and diversity skills is thus an integral component of personal development programmes. In order to achieve equality, appropriate training programmes will also be offered specifically to young talent at FiBL Switzerland. When devising career development instruments, a specific weight will be attached to the development of women.

The visibility of female FiBL employees is to be further promoted both internally and externally. This applies, for example, to all types of printed and digital publications, media enquiries, representation on committees, and events.

1.6 Compatibility of work and family life

The compatibility of work and family life is a key component of equality. FiBL Switzerland strives – wherever possible – to offer people with family commitments (such as child care and care of relatives) employment conditions that enable them to have both a career and family life. FiBL Switzerland therefore supports internal initiatives, strategies and infrastructure measures that help achieve a balance between work and family life.

FiBL Switzerland aims to obtain certification as a “family-friendly company” or similar certification with an external audit. In terms of working hours, employment conditions at FiBL Switzerland should, as far as the legal framework permits, be structured in a way that enables the performance of work-related tasks to be combined with the tasks that arise in connection with parenting and child rearing and with caring for family members. Suitable models of work for this purpose, such as working from home, will be developed and will also cover management positions.

Upon the birth of a child, the statutory paid maternity and paternity leave can by agreement be supplemented by additional unpaid leave (usually two to three months). At the end of the period of leave, a return to work with the extent of employment adjusted by agreement is to be enabled. If a return to the person’s previous position is not possible, FiBL Switzerland endeavours to offer appropriate employment within FiBL Switzerland.

Via information services at Frick and Lausanne, FiBL Switzerland helps employees search for suitable childcare places for their children. It provides a room with the necessary infrastructure for nappy changing and breastfeeding children.

FiBL Switzerland endeavours to schedule internal meetings, events and committee sessions during the period between 8.30 a.m. and 5 p.m. to enable all employees to participate.

1.7 Equality officers

In a secret ballot, all employees of FiBL Switzerland elect two equality officers who work on equal terms and who each hold office for a term of three years. All employees of FiBL Switzerland have both the right to vote and the right to stand for election on this issue. Nominations must be submitted to the directorate of FiBL Switzerland at least 14 days before the election. The candidates who receive the largest and the second-largest number of votes are elected. In the case of a draw, the decision is made by lottery. The proper conduct of the election is the responsibility of the directorate of FiBL Switzerland. Re-election is possible.

The equality officers are given the opportunity to undertake further training.

1.8 The equality officers' tasks

Each of the equality officers of FiBL Switzerland undertakes their tasks and responsibilities as an official activity for which 10% of full-time working hours are allocated. FiBL Switzerland provides the necessary human and material resources from central funds.

The equality officers perform the following tasks:

- Acting as contacts for employees of FiBL Switzerland on all equality issues,
- Commenting on the findings of the external audits of the pay analysis that are regularly commissioned by FiBL,
- Publicising relevant information on equality issues for employees of FiBL Switzerland,
- Assisting with the organisation and running of equality training programmes,
- Contributing to staff development strategies,
- Producing strategies for the promotion of equality and equal opportunities at FiBL Switzerland,

- Commenting on matters of principle and general issues in relation to equality, family friendliness and diversity at FiBL Switzerland,
- Contributing to and commenting on internal and external recruitment and appointment procedures for management positions,
- Planning, supporting and evaluating measures that serve to make equality a reality at FiBL Switzerland,
- Commenting on the annual equality report produced by the directorate of FiBL Switzerland.

1.9 Equality report

By 31 March each year the directorate of FiBL Switzerland produces an equality report which quotes the relevant indicators, describes implementation that has taken place over the year under review and sets out the equality measures planned for the year that is commencing. Before being published internally the equality report is submitted to the equality officers for comment with the aim of publishing internally a report that has been approved jointly by the equality officers and the directorate.