

A photograph showing several hands of different skin tones stacked together in a circle on a wooden table. In the background, there are papers with charts and graphs. An orange rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the title text.

# Gender Equality Plan

**SETLabs Research GmbH**

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## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Gender &amp; Diversity.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1	Equal Opportunities Officer @SLR.....	5
2.2	Participation and collaboration with the parent company .....	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Employment/Recruiting .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Gender &amp; Diversity @SETLabs &amp; in Research and Innovation.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Gender-sensitive Language .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Awareness .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Gender &amp; diversity-relevant measures for 2023-2025.....</b>	<b>8</b>

## 1 Introduction

SETLabs Research GmbH (SETLabs) is a research center with currently around 15 employees. Our vision is to enable human well-being by digital technologies for trustworthy and sustainable systems. Our mission is to innovate these systems and solutions by bridging the gap between academic research and business development. As we are positioning ourselves in form of an independent and domain-open research center, humans' capabilities, knowledge, competences and their skills represent the ultimate assets of our company. Therefore, gender equality serves as a fundamental pillar regarding sustainable development of human capacity for provision of innovations to the industry. This way, our values are predefined in-line with our strategic orientation, fostering gender equality.

### The SETLabs corporate values:

- **Innovate** - applied research for constant introduction of innovative technology
- **Open** - network, team-up and collaborate in a domain open environment
- **Sustain** - holistic consideration for low cost of change
- **Agile** - foster new way of working in a living organization
- **Diverse** - acceptance of and benefit from individuals

Our corporate values place people at the focus of our attention. The ongoing and fast-paced changes in society are constantly placing new demands on people. Our goal is to identify these and integrate them into our research and development activities.

Through innovative work, our research centre generates new ideas and products. Our approach is to bring people together who have different professional backdrops and diverse skills to enable interaction and the explicit and implicit exchange of knowledge. By providing such a working environment, we foster the creativity of employees and support them in developing innovative ideas.

It is also important to us to guarantee our employees an appreciative and pleasant working environment. Our values are based on a gender-equal, diversity-oriented and discrimination-free environment for all employees. People from diverse backgrounds and of all sexes as well as diverse orientations and ideas should find a safe and open-minded workplace at SETLabs.

To achieve all this, SETLabs has created and follows the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) described below. To meet the objectives of this plan, the company focuses on equal treatment and opportunities and diversity is promoted in thought and action.

## The Gender Equality Plan (GEP):

The GEP is reviewed and updated annually to assure the ongoing process of gender balance.

The GEP is a flexible tool that considers the characteristics and needs of SETLabs. As the organization is constantly moving forward, the GEP is also constantly evolving and regularly updated.

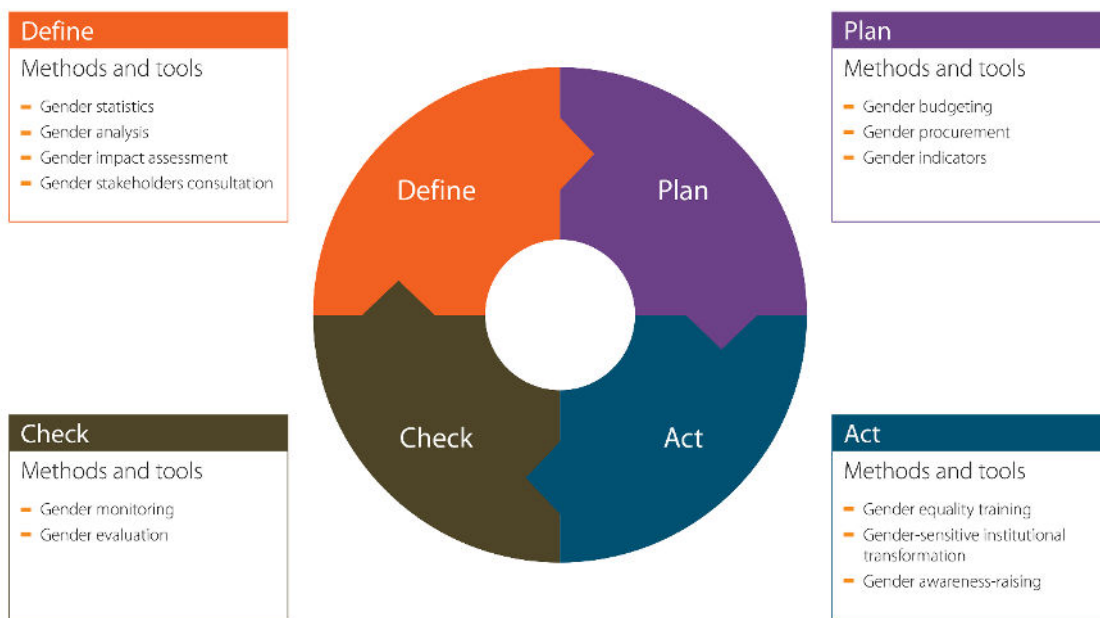
Monitoring the continuous implementation of the measures and the achievement of the set targets is done by the Equal Opportunities Officer.

### The Aims

of the SETLabs Gender Equality Plan:

- Promotion of equal rights/equal treatment of women and men in the company.
- Strengthening the role of women and expanding their participation at all levels.
- Eliminating gender inequalities in access to, control over and use of resources/career opportunities/ promotions, etc.
- Access and provision of up-to-date information on gender and diversity at SETLabs.

### General Gender Mainstream Circle<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Austin, A. E. and Laursen S. L., (2015), *Organisational change strategies in ADVANCE institutional transformation projects: synthesis of a working meeting*, pp. 3-5. (available at: [http://www.colorado.edu/eei/research/documents/workshopReportPUBLIC\\_113015.pdf](http://www.colorado.edu/eei/research/documents/workshopReportPUBLIC_113015.pdf)), European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Gender Equality in Academia And Research - GEAR tool, p. 18, 2016.

## 2 Gender & Diversity

### 2.1 Equal Opportunities Officer @SLR

In 2023, SETLabs implemented the role of an **Equal Opportunities Officer**. The scope of activities of this function includes establishing gender equality in the company with the aim of creating equal treatment and opportunities for all genders at all levels and intensifying the promotion of diversity. Furthermore, it is intended to analyze and address equal treatment and equal opportunities not only in terms of sex and gender, but also on other distinguishing characteristics of employees to create a pleasant and appreciative working atmosphere without exclusion or discrimination.

Tasks of the Equal Opportunities Officer:

- Coordination of gender- and diversity-relevant topics at the company
- Establishing and maintaining internal and external networks
- Communication with the management and reporting of activities
- Regular monitoring of implementation

It is also planned to establish an **Equal Opportunities Team** at SETLabs. Coordinated by the Equal Opportunities Officer some employees from different work areas should form a working group to support the EO-Officer with the topics of gender main-streaming, diversity management and gender & diversity in research and innovation. The team will monitor and evaluate the goals of the Gender Equality Plan with the implemented measures. The team members should be the link between their departments/work teams and the Equal Opportunities Officer. They will support the exchange of information regarding gender and diversity at SETLabs.

Functions/Tasks	Implementation
Gender Equality Plan	2023
Equal Opportunities Officer	2023
Equal Opportunities Team	Planned for 2024

### 2.2 Participation and collaboration with the parent company

SETLabs is a 100 % subsidiary of Virtual Vehicle Research GmbH. The participation of the SETLabs' EO-Officer at Virtual Vehicle's Equal Opportunities Team offers further opportunities to exchange and benefit from information and experience not only within the companies but also among themselves.



### 3 Employment/Recruiting

Even though the percentage of women in technical and scientific course of studies in Germany has improved, the amount in 2021 was still less than 30%<sup>2</sup>. This is one of the challenges SETLabs must face and wants to consider by the set measures in this GEP. The balance of all genders is one of the ultimate goals of SETLabs. This is why it is important to increase the number of female employees and support existing female employees through flexible working time and parental leave models within the company. In this way, SETLabs wants to contribute gender equality in the company and in general in the research sector.

Topic	Goals	Measures
<b>Job postings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender-sensitive formulations</li> <li>• Increase in applications from women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further implement analysis and adaptation of the templates used</li> <li>• Training for HR and managers on the topics of unconscious bias, language bias, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Parental Leave</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating the return to work</li> <li>• Promotion of paternity leave</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive information for all employees through HR</li> <li>• Flexible working hours, part-time etc. for the compatibility of family and career</li> <li>• Communication during absence (invitation to company events, access to current information, etc.)</li> <li>• Marginal employment during maternity leave</li> </ul>
<b>Diversity Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase understanding of gender and diversity</li> <li>• Identify and mitigate or eliminate language barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve onboarding by revising the mentoring process that takes gender &amp; diversity aspects into account</li> <li>• Internal training on interculturality, diversity, gender mainstreaming, etc.</li> <li>• Expand offers for intercultural exchange (e.g. national café, language tandems etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Work-life Balance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous improvement of the work-life balance with adaptation to the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of existing working time models regarding the changed life situations concerning COVID pandemic (care duties, home office, health promotion...)</li> <li>• Active support in career planning and professional development (information on further training opportunities, advice on part-time/parental leave, ...)</li> <li>• Promotion and expansion of team building and health-promoting measures (lectures, offer of sports activities, discounts ...)</li> </ul>
<b>Harassment and discrimination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of the working atmosphere based on appreciation and mutual respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nominate a person of trust to act as a contact point for those affected, offering discreet support and counselling.</li> </ul>

It is important for SETLabs, that work-life balance is given and continuously improving. That is why home office was established and promoted even more since the COVID pandemic. The work time model can be customized depending on the life situations (e.g., health, care

<sup>2</sup> Statistisches Bundesamt 2022 [https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/forschung/gleichstellung-und-vielfalt-im-wissenschafts-system/mint-pakt/mint-pakt\\_node.html](https://www.bmbf.de/bmbf/de/forschung/gleichstellung-und-vielfalt-im-wissenschafts-system/mint-pakt/mint-pakt_node.html)

duties). SETLabs supports professional development through training opportunities and the health of the employees by sport offers, fruit baskets, etc. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated at SETLabs. The working atmosphere is based on appreciation and mutual respect. A person of trust can always be contacted if someone needs discreet support and counselling.

#### 4 Gender & Diversity @SETLabs & in Research and Innovation

At SETLabs it is important to respect and appreciate any kind of difference. By diversity there is meant inherited characteristics like gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, physical characteristics or age, as well as some acquired attributes (e.g. skills, knowledge) and preferences as for example work and living environment, lifestyle or care responsibilities. SETLabs sees it as a big benefit to have a team build of diverse people with different knowledge and characters to form a group of experts who can complement each other.

Every research team benefits from equality and gender balance. As the proportion of women in research centers is still low, SETLabs' goal is to increase the number of female employees and increase their visibility. The team is getting encouraged to do further training on the topic "Gender & Diversity in Research and innovation" with content tailored specifically to SETLabs requirements.

SETLabs wants also to support progress of equality and gender balance in research in general. For example, crash tests in cars where a long time only performed with male dummies, or vaccinations were tested only on white, male patients.<sup>3,4</sup> This leads to a gender bias, as the female anatomy is different to the mans. To make products safe for all genders, the research needs to include all genders and more ethnic groups.

Topic	Goals	Measures
<b>Equality and gender balance in research teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the proportion of women at the research centre</li> <li>• Raising awareness of the research teams regarding gender balance</li> <li>• Increasing the visibility of women</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage further training for all employees on the topic of "Gender &amp; Diversity in Research and Innovation" with content specifically tailored to the research centre.</li> <li>• Identification of topic-relevant external networks and promotion of participation for researchers of the company.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> Holdcroft A. Gender bias in research: how does it affect evidence based medicine? Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine. 2007;100(1):2-3. doi:10.1177/014107680710000102

<sup>4</sup> A. Linder & M. Y. Svensson (2019) Road safety: the average male as a norm in vehicle occupant crash safety assessment, Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, 44:2, 140-153, DOI: 10.1080/03080188.2019.1603870

## 5 Gender-sensitive Language

To raise awareness for gender-sensitive language, a guideline will be established at SETLabs.

Topic	Goals	Measures
<b>Guideline for gender-sensitive language</b>	Raising awareness for gender-equitable language use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a guideline for gender-equitable language for corporate communication (website, publications, etc.)</li> <li>• Promoting the application through awareness raising by the Equal Opportunities Team</li> </ul>

## 6 Awareness

The GEP is accessible to all employees and will be introduced and explained to them. All team members will be trained on how to follow the requirements during the implementation process. If the plan gets updated, the team will get notice of the changes. The staff needs to be made aware of the importance of gender equality and the unconscious gender biases. A work environment with mutual respect is the foundation of the elimination of discrimination. To support that, we will nominate a trusted person who could be contacted in any case of harassment and/or discrimination. This person will help with discreet support and counselling.

## 7 Gender & diversity-relevant measures for 2023-2025

The implementation and impact of the measures will be evaluated at the end of 2025. Based on this, the measures for the next two years will be developed and defined as Figure 1, "Gender Mainstreaming Circle", describes the process involved.

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