

EIT InnoEnergy

GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICY

The EIT – Making Innovation Happen

European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT)

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gender Mainstreaming Policy of EIT InnoEnergy is part of the overall Diversity initiative for the company, and in compliance with EU and other requirements. The Policy affects all employees and all operations and includes leadership at the highest level. Although the energy sector overall in Europe and worldwide has been highly male-dominated, EIT InnoEnergy is well-positioned to reach its goals for the participation of women at all levels.

The Policy is based on recognition of both the incentive and requirements for gender mainstreaming.

- (i) compliance with national and EU regulations,
- (ii) economic performance,
- (iii) well-being at work,
- (iv) attracting and retaining talent,
- (v) excellence and quality, effectiveness and efficiency of innovations and technology and as a leverage for organisational change.

The top-level Goals include:

- Demonstrating leadership in gender mainstreaming in the sustainable energy industry
- Building capacity and raising awareness including appointment of a Diversity Manager
- Achieving a gender balanced representation in staff and management
- Promote gender equality/women's participation in education, recognizing the historical under-representation of women in engineering education,
- Promote gender equality/women's participation in entrepreneurship and innovation

Implementation of the goals of the Policy include a 3-year Gender Mainstreaming Plan. Based on the assessment of the EIT InnoEnergy and relevant benchmarks in the sector, actions underway will be documented, enhanced, and strengthened.

2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

UNDERLYING LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The European Commission is committed to promoting gender equality in innovation and technology. This commitment is part of the **European Commission Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025**¹ which sets out the European Commission's broader commitment to equality across all EU policies.

In addition, the EU has a well-established regulatory framework on gender equality, including binding directives, which apply widely across the labour market including the innovation and technology sector.

In **Horizon Europe**, the European Commission reaffirms its commitment to gender equality in innovation, technology and research. The legal base sets gender equality as a crosscutting priority and introduces strengthened provisions.

¹ European Commission (2020) [A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#)



In particular, integrating the **gender dimension into innovation, technology and research content** is a requirement. **Gender action plans** will also gradually become part of the selection criteria for public bodies, research organisations and higher education establishments applying to the programme.²

Specific funding will be dedicated to gender and intersectional research, innovation and technology, developing inclusive gender equality policies in support of the new European Research Area, and **empowering women innovators**.³

The goal is to improve the European research and innovation system, create gender-equal working environments where all talents can thrive and better integrate the gender dimension in projects to improve the quality of innovation, technology and research as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies and innovations produced.

The European Innovation and Technology Institute (the **EIT**), as a body of the European Union and integral part of Horizon Europe, plays a vital role in supporting the EU's objectives of creating sustainable economic growth and jobs by enabling entrepreneurs and innovators to turn their best ideas into products and services for Europe. Consequently, the gender requirements in Horizon Europe are of significant importance for all EIT supported and funded activities, including the EIT Headquarter (HQ) as well as the EIT Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) such as EIT InnoEnergy.

In 2020, the EIT HQ adopted the **EIT Gender Mainstreaming Policy**.⁴ The overarching objectives are a gender responsive portfolio (encompassing education, entrepreneurship and innovation activities) and a gender balanced representation in staff and decision-making positions. The EIT Gender Mainstreaming Policy and its overarching objectives are applicable to the HQ, the KICs as well as to EIT Alumni.

RATIONALE: WHY CHANGE IS NECESSARY AND NEEDED⁵

There are many benefits to promoting diversity and gender equality in innovation and technology which can help build the case for gender equality policies. It is widely acknowledged that promoting gender equality in organizations brings positive impact with respect to:

- i. compliance with national and EU regulations,
- ii. economic performance,
- iii. well-being at work,
- iv. attracting and retaining talent,
- v. excellence and quality, effectiveness and efficiency of innovations and technology and as a leverage for organisational change.

Compliance with domestic and EU regulations

EIT InnoEnergy respects legal obligations related to non-discrimination and gender equality. These regulations may vary across countries, and there is a cost for breaching them. This cost can consist of fines, legal prosecution and liability, damaged reputation, loss of attractiveness of the company or internal conflicts.

² European Commission (2021) [Gender equality: a strengthened commitment in Horizon Europe](#)

³ European Commission (2021) [Gender equality: a strengthened commitment in Horizon Europe](#)

⁴ EIT (2020) [EIT Gender Mainstreaming Policy](#)

⁵ This section is based on EIGE (2016) [Gender Equality in Academia and Research. GEAR Tool](#) and adapted to fit the reality and context of the EIT KICs.



Complying with the rules requires resources and know-how, which are often more easily secured when a gender mainstreaming policy is in place. Investing in gender equality and diversity (for instance, by collecting sex-disaggregated data or establishing monitoring instruments) helps organisations to comply with legal provisions more comprehensively and proactively. **EIT InnoEnergy will provide its data to its internal legal and administrative offices to ensure its ability to comply with legal provisions.**

Economic performance

The business case for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion is strong and growing stronger. Evidence points to companies being more successful if they are able to harness the innovation and creativity of women as well as men. As evidenced by multiple recent studies⁶, women's upwards advancement in the private sector brings benefits in terms of business economic results, as companies with higher gender diversity (including the composition of top management and boards) are more likely to have higher financial returns compared to national industry medians in their sector.

While social justice, legal compliance, or maintaining industry standard employee environment protocols is typically the initial impetus, EIT InnoEnergy regards gender and diversity as a source of **competitive advantage**, and specifically as a key enabler of growth.⁷ In addition to the greater diversity in perspectives for problem solving and other corporate activities, the greater inclusion of women in staff and leadership positions brings the expected advantage of more complete insight to the voice of the customer. Women play a major role in decision-making, investment decisions, and procurement of energy products as consumers and corporate buyers.

Creating better work environments

The EIT KICs are also work environments in which all staff should be able to freely develop their skills and fulfil their expectations. Since these work environments are made up of women and men, adopting a gender sensitive perspective in this regard is sensible.

Beyond mere compliance with existing rules, preventing verbal, psychological and physical gender-based offenses is a basic requirement for a safe, all gender-friendly work environment. Enabling work-life balance in the organisation, distribution, and planning of work, brings benefits for all. These benefits are relevant both to the individuals, in terms of well-being and motivation, and to the organisation, in terms of effectiveness. Balanced work environments contribute to retaining and attracting talents. They are part of a more sustainable management of human resources.

Attracting and retaining talent

Increasing Europe's ability to innovate relies on human capital. Finding and training qualified and creative people is costly, and bringing them up to their full potential takes time. As business, education and research organisations are involved in an intense competition for talent, it is necessary to address the full pool of talents, including women – even when those are under-represented.

⁶ McKinsey & Company (2018) [Delivering through Diversity](#); McKinsey & Company (2015) [Diversity Matters](#)

⁷ McKinsey & Company (2018) [Delivering through Diversity](#)



Making full use of human capital also requires retaining staff over time and giving them the opportunity to achieve their personal and professional objectives and potential. It has been shown that women encounter barriers that keep them in lower positions in the hierarchy and militate against women's access to top decision-making and managerial positions in an organization (so called "sticky floor" and "glass ceiling" phenomena). This can lead to a "leaky pipeline" where women are more likely to abandon their career in an organisation. Besides the impact on individual employees, this can have a considerable impact on the organization: a loss of knowledge, disruption to teams, groups, and a reduced and limited perspective in the organisation.

Excellence and quality

The quest for excellence and quality has become a major issue for business, education and research organisations. It is driven by an intense competition for skills, funding and innovations. Bringing a gender dimension in innovation and technology improves the overall quality of design, protocols and outputs in an ample variety of fields.

As innovation and technology are increasingly framed as working for/with society, reflecting the diversity of final users from the early research stage has become an absolute must.

'Gender blindness' (understood as the lack of consideration for gender-related aspects) often goes with neglecting other relevant social or experiential parameters. Challenging this blindness, on the contrary, creates awareness for a broader set of variables than the sole sex and/or gender.

While 'excellence' is often cited as reason to resist gendering business, education and research organisations, in reality it is the other way round: taking into account the gender dimension is vital for the (societal) relevance and quality of innovation and technology. Integrating sex and gender-based analysis is a matter of producing excellent innovations and technology to the benefit of all European citizens.⁸

Effectiveness and efficiency

Building gender diverse teams helps to secure a broader set of viewpoints, contributing to enhanced creativity and innovation – and thus also enhance the quality of innovation and technology. Such teams promote inclusiveness, experiment more and share and create knowledge.

In addition, teams with a balanced number of women and men tend to perform better and exhibit superior dynamics and productivity. Ensuring diversity in working teams (in terms of gender, race, nationalities, age, etc.) helps create an inclusive organisation, which improves its reputation, and contributes to retaining and attracting (new) talent.

A leverage for organisational change

The changes needed to achieve gender equality also bring benefits in terms of transparency and accountability, decision-making, career management and evaluation procedures. These benefit all staff as well as the organisation as a whole. Last but not least, addressing gender

⁸ European Commission (2020) [Gendered Innovations 2: How Inclusive Analysis Contributes to Research and Innovation](#)

(in)equality can be part of a broader strategic process aimed at enhancing the competitive edge and (inter)national profile.

KEY CONCEPTS

Gender mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated into all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policymaking⁹.

Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a way to make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

Gender mainstreaming is a complementary strategy and not a substitute for targeted, women-centred policies and programmes, gender equality legislation, institutional mechanisms for gender equality, and specific interventions that aim to close the gender gap.¹⁰

Gender equality

Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born female or male. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, thereby recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development.¹¹

Gender balance

In a scenario of gender equality, women and men are expected to participate proportionally to their share of the population. In many areas, however, women participate less than what would be expected based on the sex distribution in the population (underrepresentation of women), while men participate more than expected (overrepresentation of men).¹²

3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

1. Strengthening the lead role of EIT InnoEnergy in the community.

EIT InnoEnergy has the goal of demonstrating its leadership in gender mainstreaming in the sustainable energy industry and in the innovation and entrepreneurial community

⁹ Council of Europe (1998) [Gender Mainstreaming: Conceptual Framework, Methodology and Presentation of Good Practices. Final Report of Activities of the Group of Specialists on Mainstreaming](#)

¹⁰ EIGE (2021) [Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus](#)

¹¹ EIGE (2021) [Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus](#)

¹² EIGE (2021) [Gender Equality Glossary & Thesaurus](#)

more generally. It is leading by example and in the broader world, via benchmarking, is participating in effective international organizations and sharing its learnings etc. Communications include highlighted sections of such publications as the EIT InnoEnergy Annual Report (beginning with 2020 report release in Q2/2021)

2. Building capacity and increasing awareness in the internal organisation.

EIT InnoEnergy is designating a Diversity Manager and coordinating and promoting opportunities for training, awareness within the organization, especially using existing communications tools such as website, newsletters, reports and meetings. Representation and topics are considered as a regular enhancement for each modality.

3. Achieving a gender balanced representation in staff and management, including a human resources policy that supports this goal.

EIT InnoEnergy is monitoring and evaluating gender balance at both junior and senior employee levels, as well as executive and supervisory board levels. EIT InnoEnergy is setting long-term goals and intermediate goals to guide its progress, using each recruitment as an opportunity to make progress. HR policy is being revised to include guidance to include women candidates and women interviewers for all new recruitments to facilitate the goals of balanced representation.

4. Promote gender equality/women's participation in education.

EIT InnoEnergy recognizes the historical under-representation of women in engineering education and is focusing on female recruitment for its various M.S./M.Eng. programs with the goal of meeting or exceeding the proportion of women available in the undergraduate pool.

5. Promote gender equality/women's participation in entrepreneurship

EIT InnoEnergy's goal is for its portfolio companies to meet or exceed the representation of women who start companies or become CEO's in start-ups in the energy field. EIT InnoEnergy supports its female start-up founders and CEO's, tracking applicants and successful ventures entering its portfolio.

6. Promote gender equality/women's participation in innovation

EIT InnoEnergy's goal is to move towards gender balance in participation in its innovation activities, for example by meeting or exceeding the participation generally found in energy companies, and academia.

4 ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the gender mainstreaming policy, a Gender Action Plan spanning a period of 3 years is included in the policy. The European Commission defines a Gender Action Plan as a plan which aims to bring institutional change in operational and management activities and aims to:

- Conduct an impact assessment / audits of procedures and practices to identify if there is any gender bias
- Implement innovative strategies to correct any bias
- Set targets and monitor progress via indicators¹³

A Gender Action Plan can be broken up in different steps or phases:

- An analysis phase, in which a gender assessment is carried out to provide a baseline for the 3 year Action Plan. In this phase gender-disaggregated data is collected and analysed; procedures, processes and activities are critically assessed with a view to detect gender inequalities and gender bias. The assessment can be found in Annex 1: Status Quo Analysis.
- A planning phase, in which objectives are defined, targets are set, actions and measures to remedy the identified problems are decided, resources and responsibilities are attributed, and timelines are agreed upon;
- An implementation phase, in which activities are implemented and outreach efforts are undertaken so as to gradually expand the network of stakeholders;
- A monitoring phase, in which the process and the progress are regularly followed through and assessed. Findings from the monitoring exercise(s) allow the organization to adjust and improve interventions, so that results can be optimised. Monitoring forms the basis for the next generation Action Plan, which is built along the way to be ready as the previous Action Plan ends its 3-year-cycle.

4.1 3-YEAR ACTION PLAN

EIT InnoEnergy is developing and executing a 3-year action plan, shown in the table in the Annex 2. The Gender Action Plan is consistent with EIT InnoEnergy's broader Diversity initiative. A member of the Executive Board, Innovation Director Elena Bou is the initiative lead. A Diversity Manager, Cheryl Fragiadakis, has been appointed to work directly for the EB member, and work across all units and business lines. The Diversity Manager leads a Diversity Working Group which includes the head of HR and the head of Communications and Marketing, with other members added over time. The Diversity Manager serves as the Gender Mainstreaming Coordinator.

Some elements planned for the 3 year action plan (many of which have already been initiated by EIT InnoEnergy as noted):

- **Set long term goals with intermediate milestones. EIT InnoEnergy has made the following long-term commitments.**
 1. **Achieve at least 40% representation** of women in at all levels of the organization by the year 2027; with the interim target of 30% in senior management by 2024 (presently 20%)
 2. **Adopt** a 30% target for women's representation as **supervisory board members** by 2027 with the interim target of 30% by 2024 (25% by June 24,2021);
 3. **Modernize** policies to support attractive competitive working conditions, e.g. flexible work hours, telecommuting, working part-time etc.;

¹³ European Commission Communication on 'A Reinforced European Research Area Partnership for Excellence and Growth' (COM(2012) 392 final)

4. **Promote** and facilitate the exchange of the benefits of diversity, best practices and knowledge-sharing where possible.
- **Enact processes to support these and other goals**
 1. HR is supporting hiring managers to enhance recruitment by creating standards requiring **at least 30% female candidates** on the long list and at least one female member of every interview panel,
 2. HR is supporting hiring managers to increase reach to female candidates including using channels focused on women professionals.
 3. Diversity Manager is leading effort to become part of **Equalby30**, an international campaign to increase women's participation in the energy sector
 4. Head of Communications is using the Diversity Working Group to review communications and offer and ensure substantial female representation in web, print and social media
 5. Diversity Manager is acting as ombuds for employees with questions or concerns regarding gender bias and treatment.
 6. Data collection is the responsibility of the relevant departments; for example, the HR department collects data on employees demographics, as well as those of candidates for recruitments; the education department collects data on the demographics of the Masters and PhD students; the entrepreneurship and innovation participation by women is collected by those departments. Data is provided directly by them to the Diversity Manager, twice a year, who is providing consolidated reporting to the Executive Board.

4.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

EIT InnoEnergy is monitoring its progress, and reporting to its Executive Board every six months, beginning 4Q 2021. The Diversity Manager is collecting the data tracked by various groups and departments and presenting the information as well as any recommendations for changes and improvements during the biannual reports.

4.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

Participation and responsibilities of various staff are outlined as follows:

1. the role of senior management and leadership posts:

EIT InnoEnergy Executive Board is responsible for setting policy, approving action plans, and monitoring progress.
2. the role of managers (in charge of the day-to-day management of departments):

EIT InnoEnergy managers are responsible for proactively recruiting new employees and making promotion and salary decisions using the gender mainstreaming policies and tools provided.
3. the role of operational and technical staff - including staff responsible for human resources and communications:

HR is responsible for drafting policies and procedures that implement the EB requirements, providing training and guidance to managers and staff, and tracking and reporting on the processes and results. Communications is responsible for regularly and extensively including representation of women especially those who are employees or other associates in various websites, newsletters, social media and conferences.

4. Other relevant actors (e.g. students, other stakeholders):
Other relevant actors, including students and collaborators, are informed directly or indirectly of the commitment and actions of EIT InnoEnergy to implement its gender diversity goals.
5. The role of the Diversity Manager
The Diversity Manager collects the data tracked by various groups and departments and presents the information as well as any recommendations for changes and improvements during the biannual reports to the Executive Board, beginning 2H 2021. Additionally the Diversity Manager
 - chairs a diversity working group,
 - reviews application lists to ensure targeted gender balance is achieved
 - acts as the ombuds for gender and other diversity issues

5 ANNEX 1: STATUS QUO ANALYSIS

The status quo analysis provides a base case to identify the current situation regarding gender equality as well as potential opportunities for improvement.

The status quo analysis performed in 2021 has created a baseline for the execution of the 3yr Gender Plan. The status quo analysis has revealed the following elements:

5.1 LEAD ROLE

EIT InnoEnergy operates in a traditional male-dominated industry. Some policy and practice it undertakes to promote gender equality include the following:

- Gender policy/ strategy/ objectives endorsed by top management and being actively implemented and followed up: the Executive Board has approved a Diversity Initiative with initial focus on gender diversity.
- Progress on Gender policy/ strategy/ objectives being regularly and systematically discussed at the highest management level: the Executive Board receives a biannual report on status and progress
- Gender stereotypes and implicit bias training is offered to all staff on the Precipio on-line training portal
- Foster role models and balanced representation in our communication and events
- Gender-sensitive language is used for marketing, communication and recruiting.



5.2 CAPACITY AND AWARENESS RAISING

Policies and practices in place to promote the EIT InnoEnergy structural capacity and awareness on the promotion of gender equality:

- Member of staff officially appointed as gender SPOC/gender mainstreaming coordinator: included in Diversity Manager position
- Diversity Manager seeks out training as required
- A Diversity Working group has been set up and meets regularly. It includes the Head of human resources, the Head of communication, and the Diversity Manager, with both men and women members.

5.3 REPRESENTATION IN STAFF AND MANAGEMENT

1. Staff, by position in the hierarchy, disaggregated by gender

EIT InnoEnergy is in the sustainable energy industry. Energy as a sector has been and continues to be highly male dominated in terms of leadership and overall employment. For example, in traditional fossil fuel energy companies, the female participation in the sector is 10-22% depending on the survey. In renewable energy (a major subset of sustainable energy) the participation is reported as 22-32% overall—higher than in traditional fossil fuel, but still low in comparison to women in the workforce. In assessing the status quo, it is noted that as of May 1, 2021, EIT InnoEnergy features:

- Total employees: 103 Female – 101 Male (50.5% female)
- Executive Board (senior management/leadership team): 2 Female – 8 Male (20% female)
- Supervisory Board: 1 Female—11 Male; (by June 24 the Supervisory Board will be 3 Female and 9 Male members (25% female)
- Senior employees: 25 Female and 56 Male (31% female)

2. Human Resources policy and practice on work life balance, on care and family life and on recruitment and promotion result in:

- Flextime/flexible schedules: Flexible schedules are arranged between supervisors and employees based on the demands of the work
- Telework, based on the business needs of individual offices
- Monitoring of hiring process (percentage of women at all stages in the recruitment process): a target for minimum percentage of women on long lists are copied to Diversity Manager as independent reviewer
- Gender-Training for hiring committees: unconscious bias training is provided to hiring managers and other members of the hiring committees
- Gender balance in hiring committees: hiring committees are required to have at least one woman on the committee
- Gender-sensitive formulation of advertisements: HR develops or reviews all recruitment ads, including for gender-sensitive formulation.

- Active scouting of female candidates; HR supports the hiring goals of the company by joining networks focused on women in energy and developing targeted recruitments

5.4 EDUCATION

- EIT InnoEnergy recruits, educates and graduates students at the Master's and PhD levels as follows:
 - Since the beginning of the programme (cumulative graduates 2012-present)
 - 1019 male and 294 female MSc; and
 - 99 male and 27 female PhD students
 - For the graduates in 2020 it's:
 - MSc: 38 females and 138 males.
 - PhD: 7 females and 23 males.
- Some graduates form new startup companies. Start-ups created by EIT InnoEnergy labeled Msc/PhD programmes in 2020 were: by females: 1 , and by males_ 8.

5.5 ENTREPRENEURSHIP

EIT InnoEnergy recruits and brings in start-ups in the sustainable energy sector with resulting gender participation as follows (data from most recent reporting period, 2020)

- Supported start-ups/scaleups by CEO: Female: 5; and Male: 86.
- Investment attracted by EIT InnoEnergy supported start-ups / scaleups with CEO's who are: Female: 5,419,835 € ; Male: 656,938,936 €

5.6 INNOVATION

In 2020, one EIT InnoEnergy Innovation project featured a female CEO. Since 2012 EIT InnoEnergy has implemented 118 innovation projects. In three of these there are women founders/ PM.

6. Annex 2: 3-Yr Action Plan

Action	Responsible	Date to be completed	
Join Equal by 30 to facilitate the exchange of the benefits of diversity, best practices and knowledge-sharing in energy	Diversity Manager	2022 1H	
Add Diversity Statement to InnoEnergy Website	Communications Director	2022 1H	
Recruitments for new employees will include \geq 30% women candidates	Hiring managers and HR recruiters	2022 1H	
Hiring boards for new recruitments will include at least one woman	HR recruiters	2022 1H	
Align the procurement and diversity policy by including in every RfP an 'Equal Opportunities and Values' Section	Procurement Director	2022 1H	
Include gender diversity performance in EIT InnoEnergy Annual Report	Communications Director	2022 2H	
Begin tracking women entrepreneurs applying for support	Business Creation	2022 2H	
Announce specific goals within Equal by 30	Diversity Manager	2022 2H	
Training regarding bias available to managers	HR Director	2023 1H	
Analyse the gender responsiveness of the InnoEnergy procurement policy' The outcome of this action is a baseline to determine if indeed there is a gender bias in awarding contracts.	Procurement Director	2023 1H	
Support women entrepreneurs; >10% of new ventures supported to have at least one woman as a founder or CXO (CEO, CTO, CFO)	Business Creation	2023 2H	
Increase women graduates in MSc programs to 25%	Education director	2024 1H	
Supervisory Board will have \geq 30% women members	Executive Board	2024 2H	