

Gender Equality Plan

Mission

nova-Institut für politische und ökologische Innovation GmbH is committed to providing an inclusive, respectful and equitable working environment in which all employees have equal opportunities regardless of gender, gender identity or expression.

This Gender Equality Plan establishes our commitment to promoting equality in recruitment, employment conditions, career development, leadership opportunities, remuneration and workplace culture.

As a small consulting company, we recognize that diversity strengthens innovation, improves decision-making and enhances the quality of services provided to our clients.

Sustainable implementation can only succeed if the management, works council and staff actively support the Gender Equality Plan and implement it on an ongoing basis. Gender equality is not viewed as a static state, but rather as a dynamic, collaboratively shaped process. The Gender Equality Plan provides important impetus for this and reinforces the company's strategic direction in this area.

Scope

This plan applies to:

- all employees
- management
- contractors where appropriate
- interns
- applicants for employment

Objectives

Given the high priority placed on equality, diversity, and fairness, nova pursues the following strategic goals:

- Preventing and eliminating all forms of discrimination and disadvantage,
- Recognizing and actively promoting diversity and the individual potential it represents,
- Equal opportunities for all genders
- Improving work-life balance,
- Encourage equal participation in leadership and decision-making processes,
- Ensure fair recruitment and promotion,
- Continuous and needs-based continuing education and training opportunities, taking into account individual development potential and internal company requirements,
- Taking family obligations into account in business and personnel decisions,
- A high degree of flexibility regarding work hours and location, within the limits of business requirements,
- Foster an inclusive organizational culture,
- Prevent harassment and gender-based violence,
- Monitor progress through measurable indicators.

Governance

The overall responsibility for implementation rests with the COO.

The COO will:

- oversee implementation,
- allocate sufficient resources,
- review annual progress,
- report findings internally.

Where appropriate, the work council will be consulted.

Resources

nova commits adequate resources by:

- allocating management time for implementation,
- providing annual equality training,
- reviewing HR procedures annually,
- collecting workforce statistics,
- considering equality impacts in policy decisions.

Public Availability

This Gender Equality Plan will be

- published on the company website,
- available to all employees,
- provided upon request to clients and funding bodies.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is a key indicator of quality in modern workplace culture and an essential factor in employees' long-term performance and satisfaction. As a responsible employer, nova is continuously developing measures to improve the balance between work, family, and caregiving. nova supports flexible working arrangements whenever operationally feasible.

Measures include

- hybrid working,
- flexible working hours,
- available spots in daycare centers,
- parental leave in accordance with national legislation,
- support for employees returning from parental leave,
- reasonable accommodation for caring responsibilities.

Managers are encouraged to evaluate performance based on outcomes rather than physical presence.

The goal is to provide long-term relief for employees, enable them to tailor work-life balance to their individual needs, and strengthen nova's position as an attractive, forward-looking employer. This requires regularly reviewing and adapting existing measures to meet employees' needs through dialogue with them.

Recruitment and Career Development

Gender-equitable and diversity-oriented recruitment and talent development are key prerequisites for sustainable success, innovation, and equal opportunity in companies. nova therefore pursues a human resources strategy that systematically promotes diversity and equality from the job posting through to professional development during employment.

Recruitment procedures will aim to ensure fairness and transparency.

nova will

- use gender-neutral language in job advertisements,
- evaluate candidates using objective criteria,
- encourage applications from underrepresented genders where appropriate,
- provide equal access to training,
- support career progression based on merit.

The goal is to make decisions that promote gender equality and equal opportunities throughout the entire employment cycle from job postings and onboarding to professional development and departure from the company.

Leadership and Decision-Making

nova seeks balanced representation in management and project leadership. Where vacancies arise, qualified candidates of all genders will be encouraged to apply. Leadership responsibilities will be assigned

transparently and based on competence.

Equal Pay

nova is committed to equal pay for equal work and work of equal value.

Salary decisions will be based on:

- role,
- responsibilities,
- qualifications,
- experience,
- performance.

Compensation practices will be reviewed periodically to identify potential disparities.

Inclusive Workplace Culture

nova promotes a respectful working environment.

Employees are expected to:

- treat colleagues respectfully,
- avoid discriminatory behavior,
- use inclusive language,
- contribute to an inclusive workplace.

Discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy or family status is not tolerated.

nova maintains zero tolerance for:

- sexual harassment,
- gender-based harassment,
- bullying,
- discrimination,
- intimidation,
- retaliation.

Employees may report concerns confidentially to management. Complaints will be investigated promptly, fairly and confidentially. Where appropriate, the works council will be consulted.

Retaliation against individuals raising concerns is prohibited.

Gender Dimension in Consulting Activities

Where relevant to client assignments, the company will consider whether:

- gender impacts project outcomes,
- stakeholder engagement reflects diverse perspectives,
- recommendations account for equality considerations,
- project teams include diverse expertise.

This principle will be applied proportionately depending on the nature of each consulting engagement.

Awareness and Training

Raising awareness of gender equality and breaking down unconscious gender-based biases are central components of a diversity-oriented organizational culture.

For this reason, all leadership and soft skills trainings are guided by the principles of equality and fairness. The aim is to prevent structural disadvantages, encourage reflection on gender roles, and promote discrimination-sensitive behavior in everyday professional life.

nova will provide periodic awareness activities covering topics such as

- unconscious bias,
- inclusive communication,

- respectful workplace behavior,
- anti-harassment,
- diversity and inclusion.

New employees will receive information on the Gender Equality Plan during onboarding.

The goal is to raise comprehensive awareness among all employees and managers regarding the importance and potential of the various dimensions of diversity with the aim of further developing nova as an inclusive, equitable, and high-performing company.

Data Collection, Monitoring and Review

These goals are implemented as part of an integrated equality and gender equality plan, in which specific measures and targets are defined, implemented, and regularly reviewed. The plan is supplemented by an annually updated Gender Action Plan (GAP), which documents implemented measures, such as awareness-raising presentations, workshops, and new or revised service agreements, in tabular form.

As part of our strategic development, we systematically examine both qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess the impact of our initiatives in an evidence-based manner.

The goal is to continuously strengthen nova's gender equality efforts, implement new initiatives as needed, and evaluate and further develop existing programs.

nova will collect anonymous data annually on:

- workforce composition by gender,
- recruitment,
- departures,
- salaries where meaningful,
- training participation,
- management positions,
- flexible working arrangements.

Results will be reviewed annually and used to improve policies.

Personal data will be handled in accordance with GDPR.

Data collection serves, in particular, to evaluate and strategically develop measures and takes place throughout the entire employment cycle.

Because nova is a small company, individual yearly figures may fluctuate significantly. Trends will therefore be interpreted over multiple years rather than relying on single-year comparisons.

Management will review this Gender Equality plan each year by

- assessing progress,
- reviewing workforce data,
- evaluating implemented measures,
- identifying improvement actions,
- updating objectives where necessary.

The revised plan will be communicated to all employees.

Hürth, 29 June 2026.