

Gender Equality Plan

Gleichstellungsplan

1 January 2024 – 31 December 2026
Max Planck Institute for Astronomy/
Max Planck Institut für Astronomie

1.0 Introduction

The mission of the Max Planck Institute for Astronomy (MPIA) is to unveil the nature of our universe, from planets and stars to galaxies and black holes, through world-class observational and theoretical research. We develop and implement cutting-edge instrumentation to enable this research, train researchers, foster their careers in astronomical research and beyond, and communicate our results to both the scientific community and the general public. To this end, MPIA aims to build a well-structured, effective, stimulating, intellectually intense, welcoming and supportive work environment for a diverse community of members.

However, as is typical for the physical sciences and engineering, the fraction of women and non-binary people in scientific and technical positions at MPIA remains below 50% at all career stages. This is representative of the field of astronomy as a whole: for example, women comprise only 21% of the membership of the International Astronomical Union (IAU), the largest professional organization for astronomers¹. Many factors contribute to this gender disparity, starting at young ages but continuing at every step of the scientific career, including bias in recruitment; uneven performance evaluation, work expectations, and rewards; and sexual harassment and assault².

This gender equality plan (GEP) focuses on one aspect of our broader effort to attract and retain the strongest candidates regardless of their ethnicity, gender, disability, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation or identity. At its core, it aims at increasing the number of women and non-binary individuals in areas, positions and career levels in which they are underrepresented - especially in the technical departments, research departments, and management positions.

The basis for the GEP is the law concerning the equality of all genders in the Federal Administration and in the Federal Government's enterprises and courts

¹ https://www.iau.org/public/themes/member_statistics/

² [Promising Practices for Addressing the Underrepresentation of Women in Science, Engineering, and Medicine: National Academies Press, 2020](#)

(Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz - BGleG), the GWK implementation agreement concerning equality of women and men in joint research promotion (Ausführungsvereinbarung Gleichstellung - AV-Glei) and the principles for equality of women and men in the Max Planck Society (fundamental principles of equality).

This GEP is organized as follows. Sect. 2 describes and analyzes the status of gender equality at MPIA. In Sect. 3, we define the focus of this GEP with specific fields of action and objectives. In Sect. 4 we present the measures designed to reach those objectives and an Outlook is given in Sect. 5.

2.0 Gender Equality at the Institute / Gleichstellung am Institut

2.1 Status Report

As of the reference date February 2024, MPIA has a total of 139 scientific staff (staff engaged in scientific research, distributed across three different departments) and 87 non-scientific staff (comprising all personnel outside of the three scientific departments), according to statistics from the HR department. Among the scientific staff, 32% are female, while 38% of the non-scientific staff are female (see top panels in Fig 1 and Fig 2), resulting in an overall fraction of female personnel at MPIA of 34%

Across all career levels among scientific staff, women comprise less than 50% of the personnel. The most significant gap, with only 24% of women, is observed at the group leader level, followed by the staff scientist level (encompassing all employees working within one of the three science departments, but who are neither group leaders nor postdocs). Women are most prominently represented at the post-doctoral level, at 40%

The gender balance is slightly better for non-scientific positions (positions outside the science departments) compared to the scientific departments, with 38% of the total non-scientific staff being women. However, when examining the various departments within the non-scientific areas, one can observe that the administration is predominantly female-dominated, while the technical departments are clearly male-dominated. In the technical departments, only 15% of the personnel are female. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning the trainee program of the mechanical workshop as a positive initiative, where over the last five years, 20-60% of the trainees have been female (with 40% being the typical proportion).

When looking at the long-term trends in hiring scientific personnel through the statistics related to the duration of stay at MPIA (see Fig. 3), one can note that female staff are moderately well represented between 2-4 years (typical duration of a PhD or postdoc).

Among the scientific staff who have stayed longer at the institute we observe a sharp decline in the number of females. Scientists whose duration of stay is 10 years or longer are overwhelmingly male. Duration of staff is more equitable in the non-scientific positions (see Fig 4) compared to scientific ones, with longer durations having more women than for the scientific staff. However, similar trends to the scientific positions with the longest stays being male dominated are also seen for non-scientific staff.

Similar trend as in the duration of stay is also seen in the salary levels (Figs 5 & 6), where higher salary classes are clearly dominated by male staff members for both scientific and non-scientific personnel. Similarly, from the 105 permanently hired staff members 38% are women (Fig. 7). However, the difference is large between the scientific and non-scientific staff. Only 21% of the scientific personnel have permanent contracts, and from these 25% are women. Over the last three years the gender balance in hiring has slightly improved, as 35% of the scientific hires and 64% non-scientific hires are female (Figs. 3 & 4). This is an improvement to the situation reported in the 2021 GEP where only 20% of the recent hires were female.

Everyone in the institute who is on a salary scheme (rather than a scholarship; postdoc level or higher) is eligible for performance bonuses. Here, out of the total 172 performance bonuses reported in 2021-2023, 37% were given to women. For the scientific positions 40% and for the non-scientific positions 36% of the bonus recipients were women (see Figs 8 & 9). This is a remarkable improvement to the situation reported in the previous Gender Equality Plan, where only 18% of the bonus were given to women in 2018–2020.

The access to further training is important for career development. In total 158 staff members participated in training courses during 2021-2023 (see Fig. 10). From these staff members 32% were female. For scientific staff the female participation in training courses was 43%. However, a large fraction of the training events were participated by the non-scientific staff members (73% of all the training courses).

The statistics for the scientific awards for the years 2020-2023 are given in Fig. 11. The internal awards include Patzer Prize and prizes awarded by the MPG, such as the Otto Hahn Medal. On the other hand, the external prizes include many different sources, among them ERC and AG prizes. In general, both prize categories have a very good fraction of female recipients with 64% of the internal grants and 47% of the external grants being given to women.

In Figure 12 the gender statistics of the Colloquium and group meeting speakers are given. The best gender balance is for the main scientific colloquium, Königstuhl Colloquium, where for the years 2021 and 2022 the gender balance was close to 50/50. However, for most of the events the gender balance is around 30/70, with female speakers always being underrepresented.

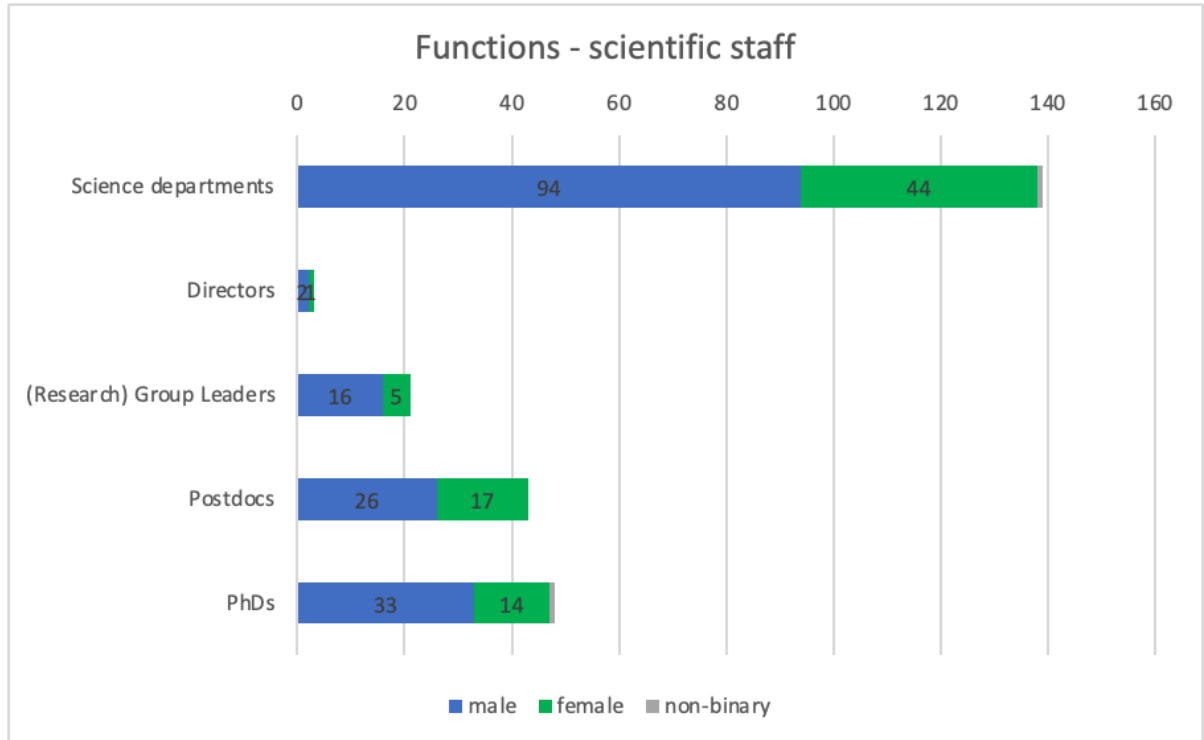


Figure 1 Total number of employees in the scientific departments

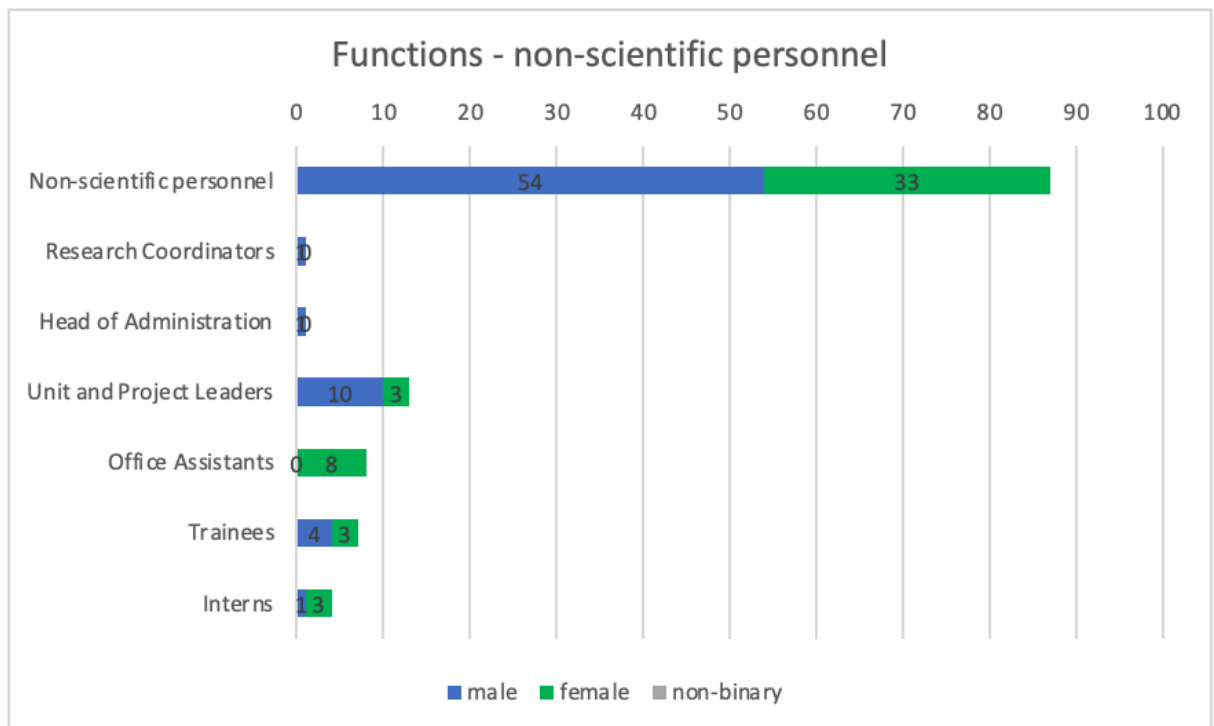


Figure 2 Total number of employees in the non-scientific departments

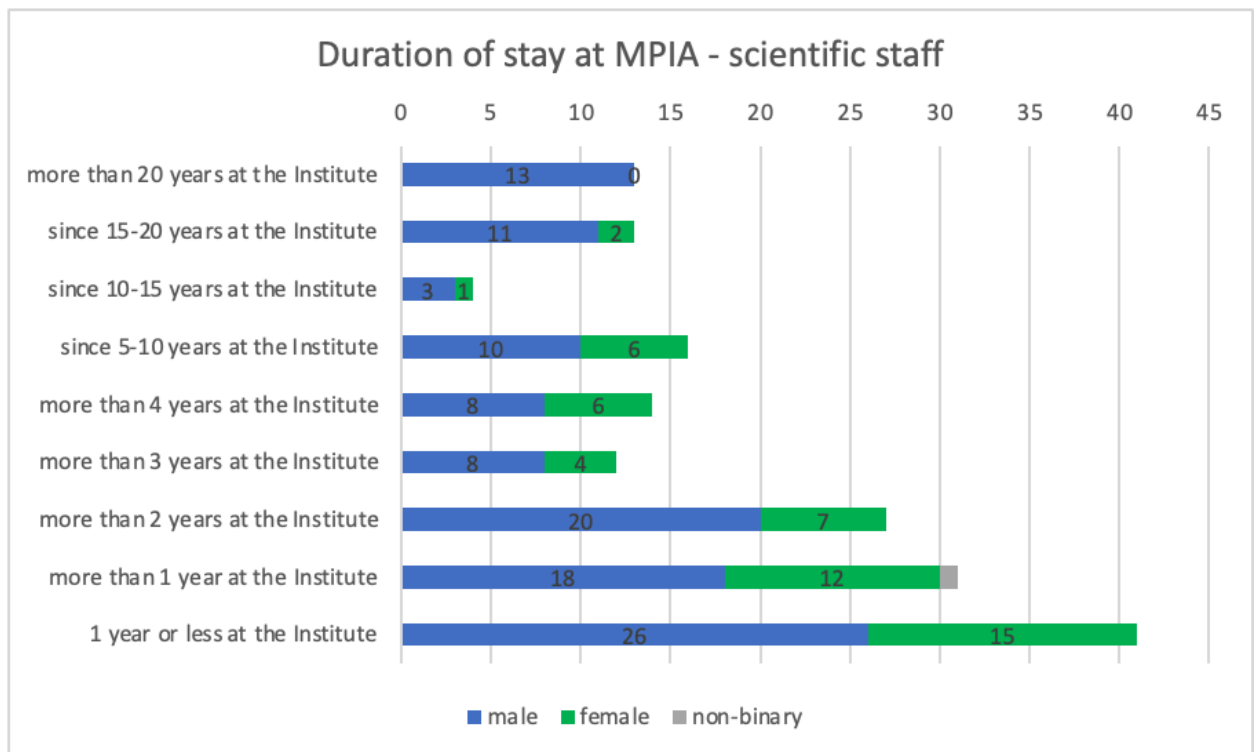


Figure 3 Duration of the stay at the institute for scientific staff

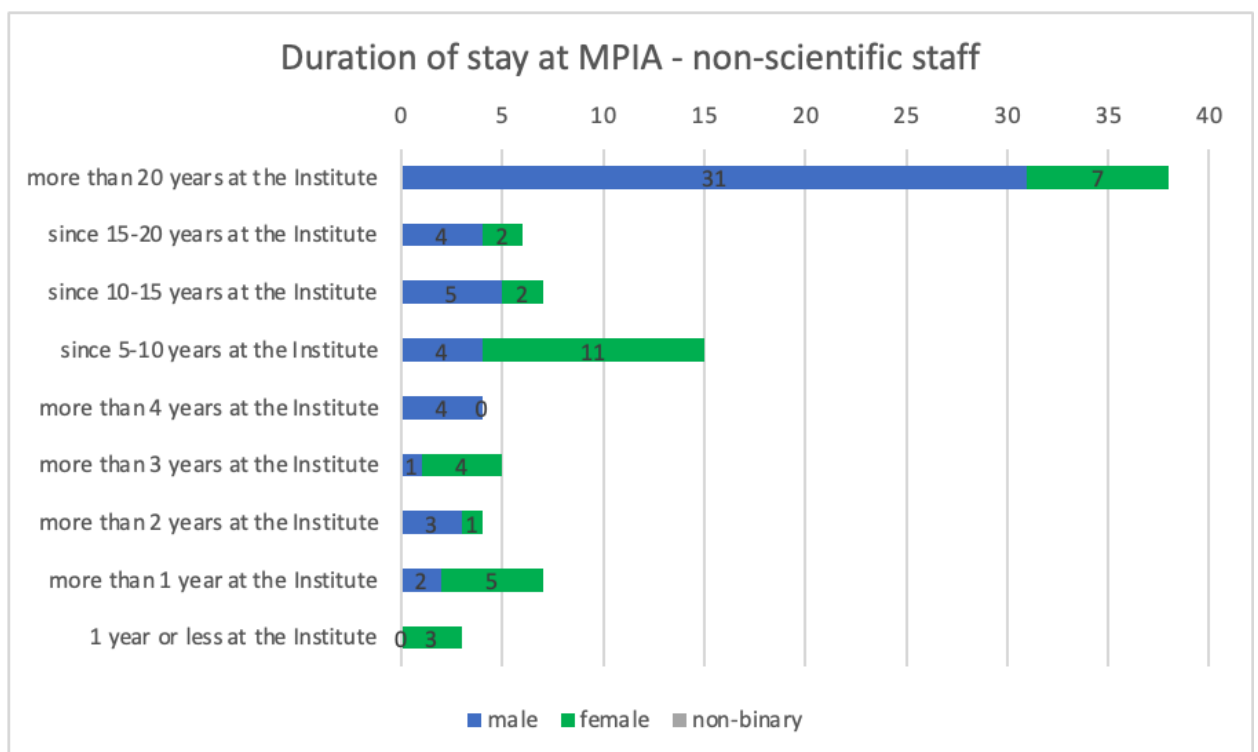


Figure 4 Duration of the stay at the institute for the non-scientific staff

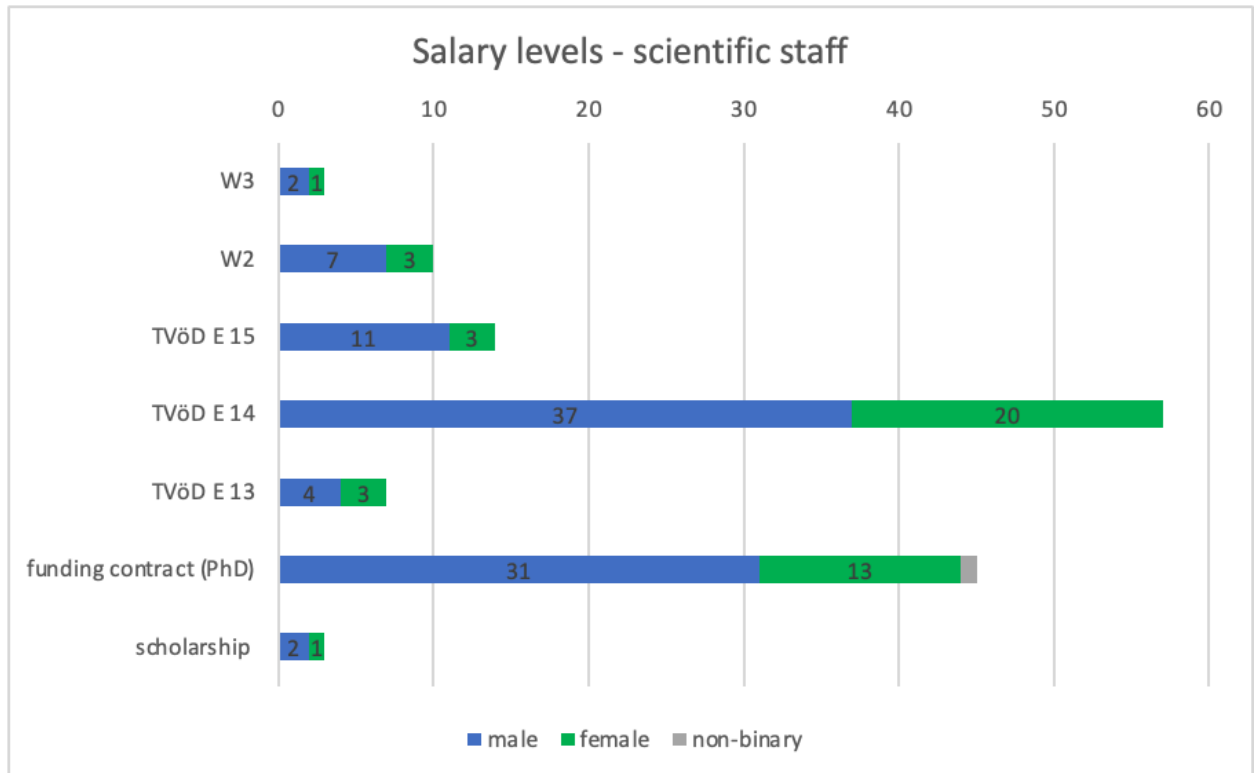


Figure 5 Salary levels for the scientific staff

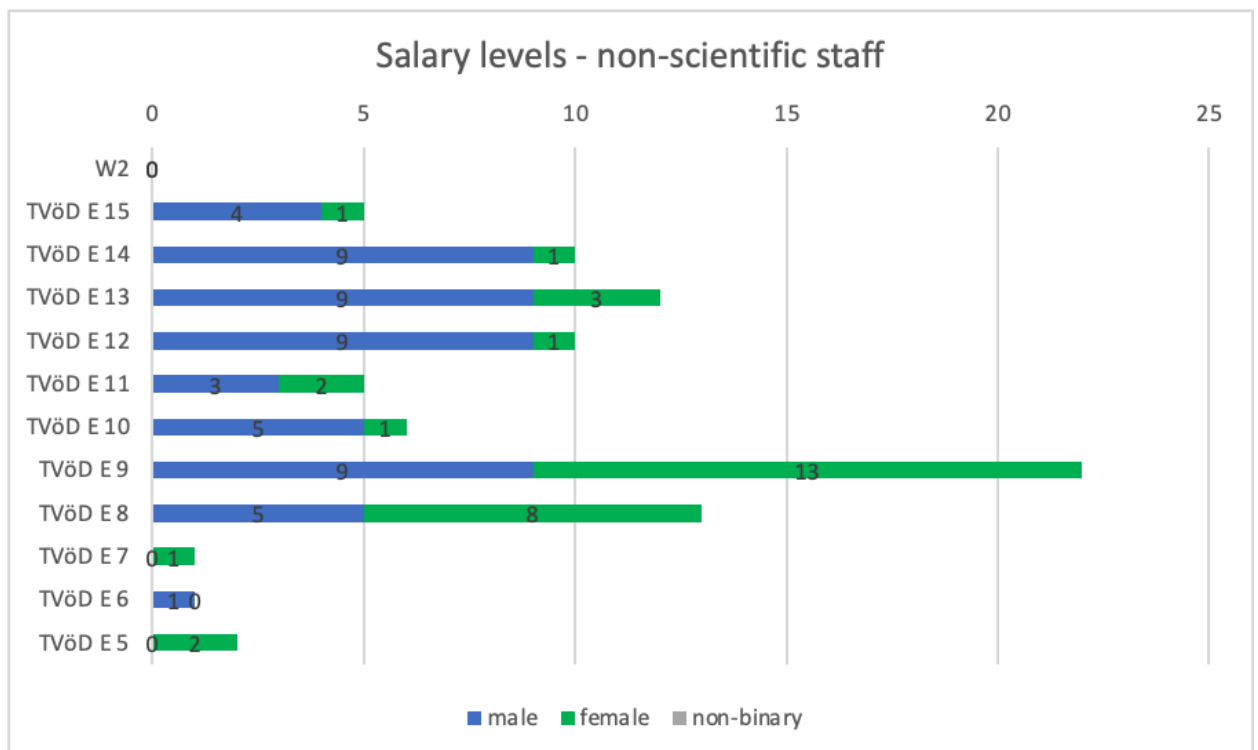


Figure 6 Salary levels for the non-scientific staff

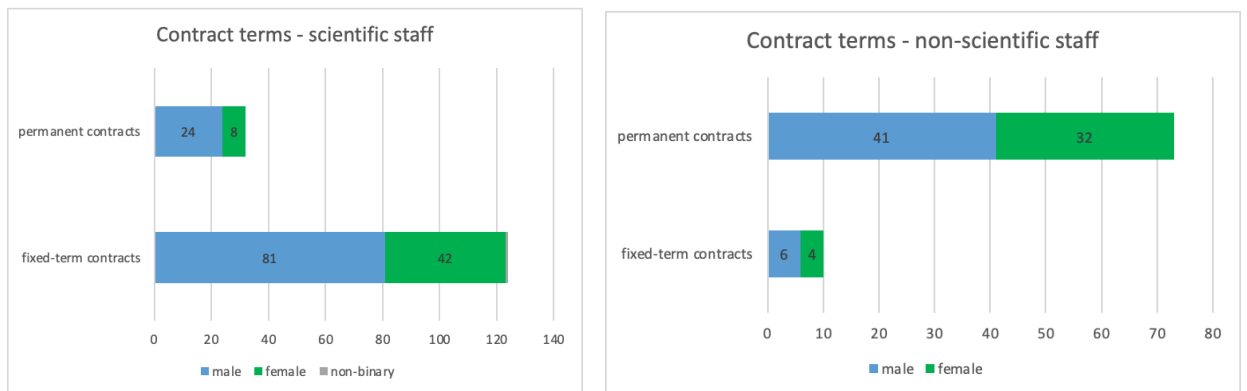


Figure 7 Contract terms for scientific staff (left) and non-scientific staff (right).

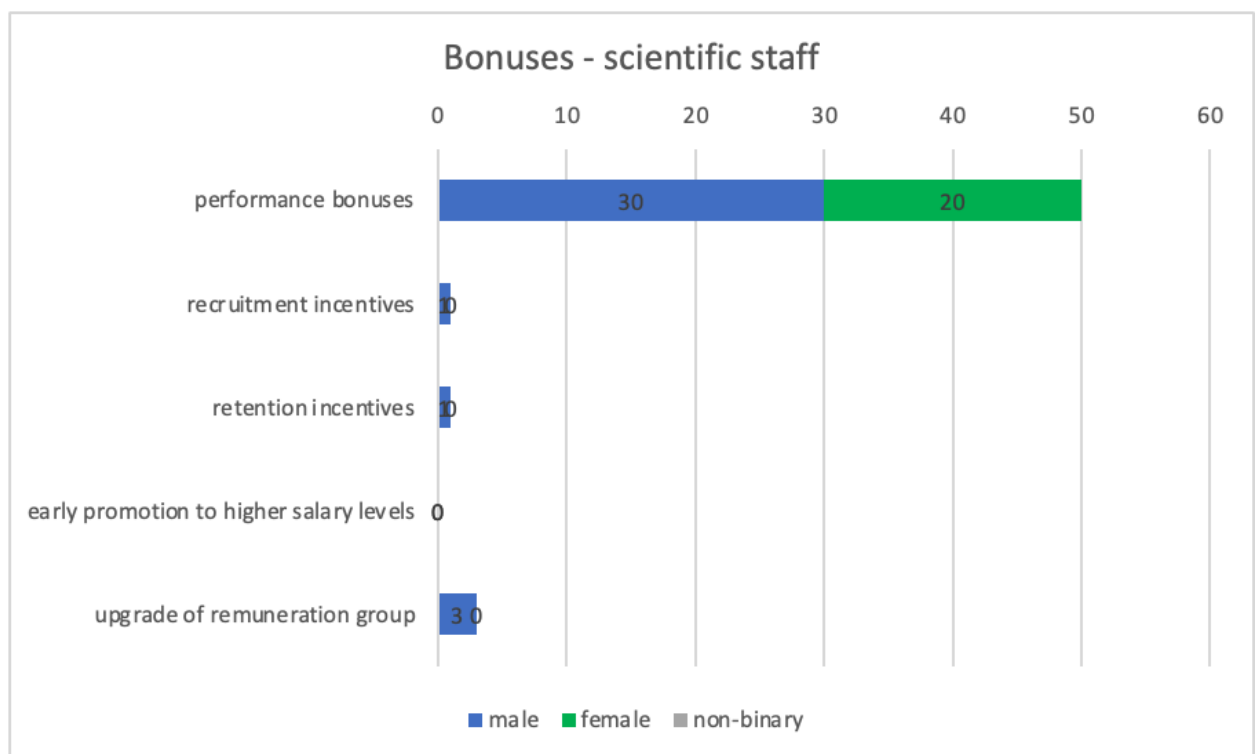


Figure 7 Bonuses and incentives for the scientific staff

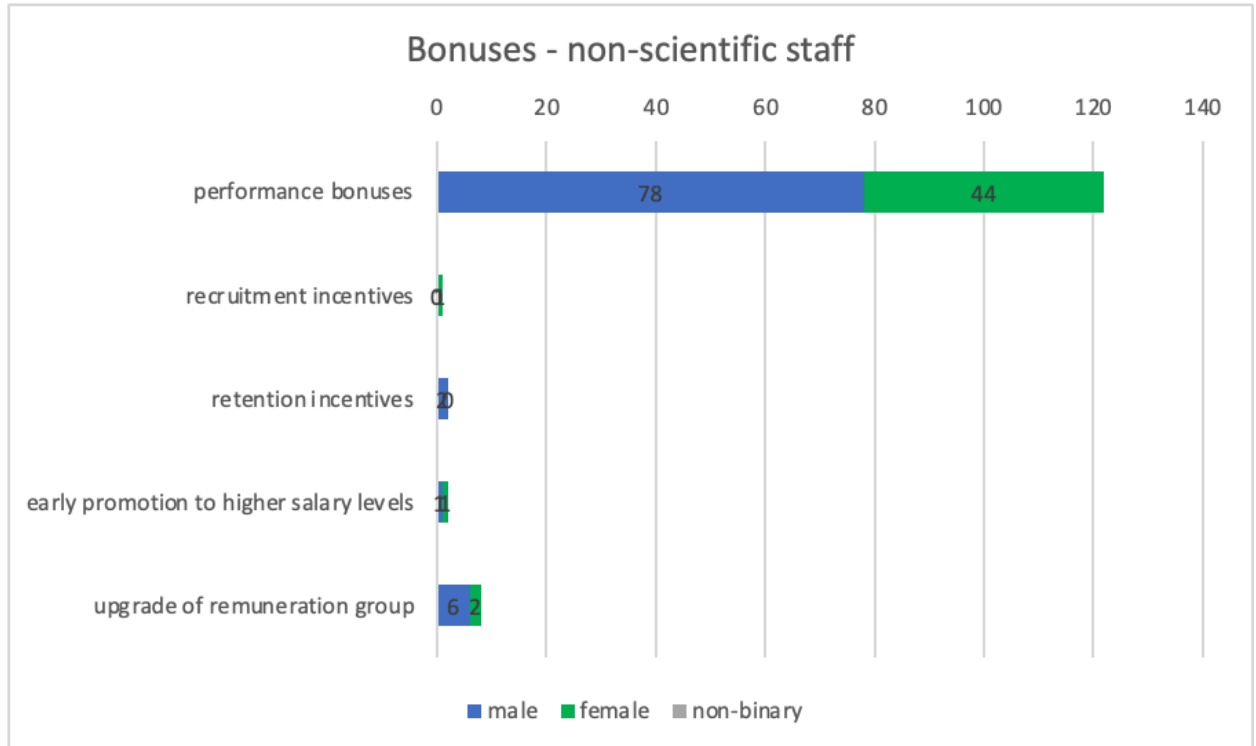


Figure 8 Bonuses and incentives for the non-scientific staff

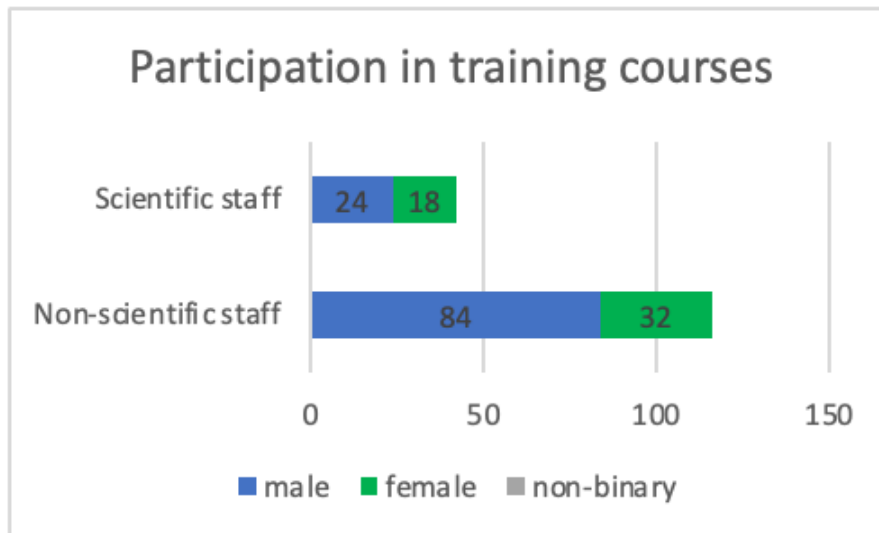


Figure 9 Participation in training courses for both the scientific and non-scientific staff

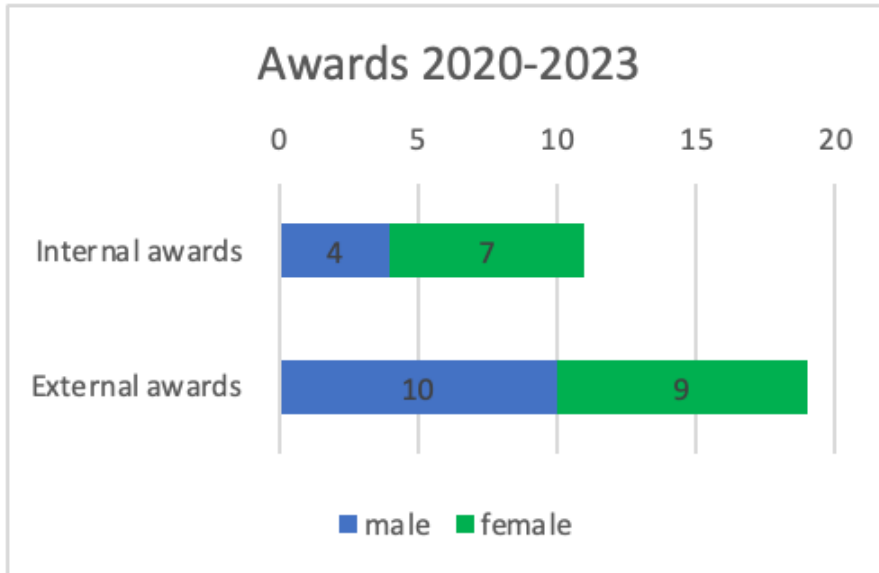


Figure 10 Internal and external awards for scientific staff

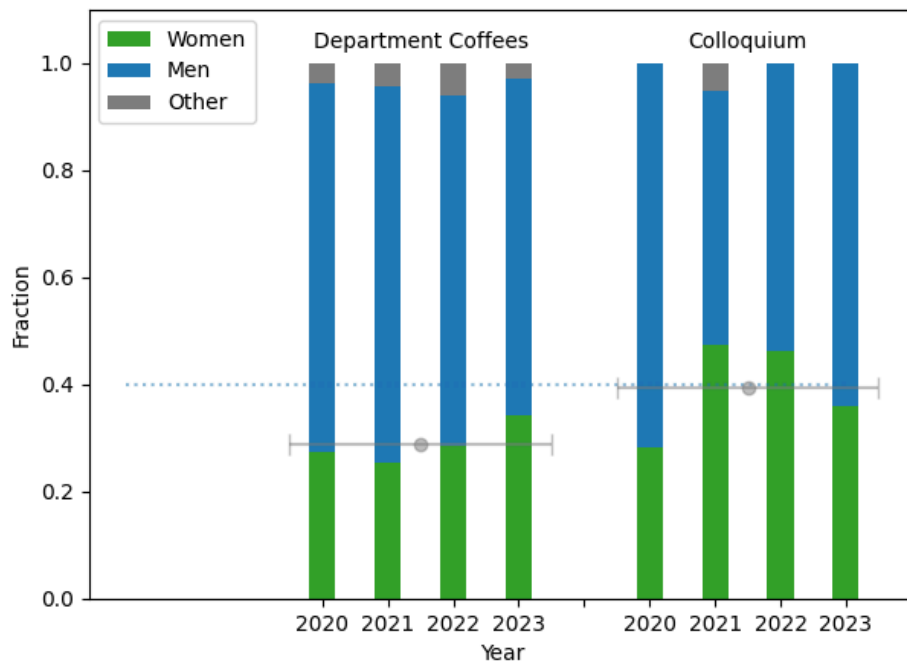


Figure 11 Speaker distribution in the Königstuhl Colloquium and scientific group meetings.

2.2 Status Report on Initiatives in the 2022 Plan

MPIA has had a long standing goal of achieving gender equality among the ranks of its staff and a number of initiatives are already in place. The 2022 Gender Equality Plan specifically focused on objectives related to hiring and retention of women and non-binary employees, increasing the number of female speakers, training, reaching a broader audience with discussions of gender equality issues and gender-neutral bathrooms. It also made the recommendation to set up a Gender Equality committee to assist the EOOs. In this section we review progress on the objectives set in the 2022 plan.

Increasing the number of newly-hired female and non-binary employees is the first key step in improving the gender balance of the institute. A number of successful steps have been taken in this direction as evidenced by the increasing number of new female employees (see previous section) . Most critically, the EOO has produced a set of hiring guidelines which is available [online](#) and sent to all hiring committees. These guidelines ensure that all committees are at least informed about the best hiring practices and that practices are consistent for all hiring campaigns. We have also added information about biases in hiring that we recommend committee members familiarize themselves with. The goal of having at least 40% representation of women and non-binary candidates at the long/shortlist stage is met during the majority of scientific hiring campaigns. Within the last year we have also added a reporting table to collect information from all hiring campaigns in a consistent manner. In the long run this will help us track improvements in our process. The goal of having at least 50% of women on hiring committees is also frequently met, especially for scientific hires.

Information about the existence of the EOO is included in all job advertisements and candidates are encouraged to reach to the EOO at any stage in the hiring process. Additionally information about equal opportunity resources are available on the [institute webpage](#). New employees are asked to introduce themselves to the EOO as part of their onboarding and we provide them with information about available resources.

Next step in improving the gender balance is retention. The main progress in the area of retention is the establishment of a mentoring program for postdocs. A mentoring program for incoming PhD students already exists. A peer-mentoring group for female staff scientists in Heidelberg also exists and meets monthly.

The gender balance of awards and bonuses has significantly improved relative to past years.

Also, an impressive improvement has happened in the female representation at events such as the Konigstuhl Colloquium (KoCo) where the average fraction of female speakers over the last 4 years is 40%. At least half of all speakers at these events are internal and it is therefore an excellent opportunity for MPIA staff to promote their work.

Increasing the fraction of female speakers was a specific target in the previous equality plan. The individual department coffee talks are also improving their gender representation and currently average ~30% female speakers.

The EOs are making an effort to promote work-life balance and personal development opportunities for women and non-binary staff, as well as members of the broader LGBT+ community. We particularly supported 3 events in 2023 which focused on the experiences of LGBT+ (including non-binary) staff. In May 2023, PhD students organized a talk on the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) which drew broad participation. An unconference session on the contributions and experiences of LGBTQIA+ staff was also organized by students and post-docs, including members of the Queer Buddies group, during the Galaxies and Cosmology Department retreat. Finally, PhD Students organized an outreach event for LGBT+ youth in Heidelberg during which they led a tour of the facilities, arranged short presentations on MPIA research including from several LGBT+ researchers and had a discussion session on Challenges and Opportunities in Academia. The event was very well attended and allowed staff to create connections to the wider Heidelberg community.

Training staff about unconscious bias, gender equity and transgender staff was another key goal of the 2022 plan. While there has been some action, specifically with the addition of bias training to the hiring guidelines, progress on this goal has been slow. There is currently no mandatory training for staff with supervisory roles and while MPG does provide some online resources, participation is voluntary and extremely rare. We commit to making more progress on this very important objective in the current plan.

The 2022 plan specified an action to make discussions on gender equity institute-wide. Insufficient progress has been made on this goal as well and we recommit to it in the current plan.

The MPIA has a gender neutral bathroom on every floor of the main building. These bathrooms are well-signed and known to the majority of staff members. This is a first step to accommodating non-binary staff. In this plan we hope to expand the effort towards making non-binary staff more comfortable at the institute.

Finally, the 2022 plan recommended the formation of an Equal Opportunity Committee to assist the EOs in tasks that do not require confidentiality. Such a committee was approved recently by our Works Council and appointed by the managing director. The committee represents the diversity of view and experiences of the institute and was consulted on the content of the 2024 Gender Equality Plan. In the future, this committee will be responsible for organizing events, bringing in speakers and leading other initiatives that support the Gender Equality Plan.

3 Focus and goals of the gender equality plan

Based on the statistics and analysis above, even if significant improvement can be seen in several fronts, women are still underrepresented in the scientific staff at all career and salary levels and in several aspects of life at the institute. In the non-scientific departments that look more balanced in the global statistics, there are large differences between the departments. In particular, the strong imbalance in the technical departments contrasts with the high percentage of women in the administration department. We have identified several specific fields of action where MPIA's gender equity can be improved and several objectives that we plan to achieve in the coming years.

3.1 IDENTIFIED FIELDS OF ACTION

1. **Hiring.** The representation of women in both science and non-science positions (with the exception of administrative staff) is ~30%. Specifically for the science staff, only at the postdoc level, female representation reaches ~40%. The fraction of both female PhD students and group leaders is below 30% and that of science department staff is ~32%. The fraction of women in non-science personnel is ~38%, but only 15% of the staff at the technical departments are women. A continued focus needs to be placed on equitable hiring. A specific focus should be the recruitment of science department staff, technical staff and PhD students.
2. **Retention.** Additional steps could and should be taken to ensure the retention of female qualified employees who want to stay in academia. While the gender balance has significantly improved in the awards and bonuses, additional work is needed to support the professional development of female and gender minority staff. Both continuing efforts and new initiatives are proposed below.
3. **Gender-diverse inclusiveness.** MPIA has a strong community of LGBTQIA+ staff however they lack support and experience a number of challenges. The lack of a consistent approach to allowing gender diverse staff and applicants to self-identify means that they are almost always not adequately represented in hiring and staff statistics. We identify this as a major field of action.
4. **Training and awareness.** Continued efforts are needed to educate staff on the best practices in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), specifically when they are in supervisory roles or part of the hiring process. Trainings are also critical for advancing the institute's mission and reflect its commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive community. So far participation in DEI training opportunities has been voluntary and no participation statistics have been tracked. Furthermore, training opportunities have been sparse due to lack of organizational capacity. Significant impact can be made by stepping up the effort to increase training availability and participation.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

1. **Hiring:** Under-representation in hiring refers to the lack of proportional presence of individuals from certain demographic groups in the workforce, particularly in relation to their presence in the field but also in relation to their presence in society in general. Equitable hiring practices are essential to address under-representation as they promote fairness, inclusivity, and diversity in the workforce. When certain groups are under-represented in hiring, it not only reflects systemic barriers and biases in the recruitment process but also leads to missed opportunities for organizations. By excluding qualified individuals from underrepresented groups, companies limit their access to a diverse talent pool, which hinders innovation, creativity, and problem-solving. Equitable hiring practices are crucial for fostering a work environment where all individuals have an equal opportunity to succeed based on their skills, qualifications, and potential contributions, rather than being hindered by factors such as gender, race, or other characteristics. Furthermore, promoting diversity through equitable hiring practices has been shown to enhance organizational performance, employee engagement, and overall success. By embracing equitable hiring practices and actively working to address under-representation, organizations can position themselves as employers of choice, attract top talent from all backgrounds, and demonstrate a genuine commitment to social responsibility and fairness. Ultimately, equitable hiring practices not only benefit individual job seekers and employees but also contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of organizations in an increasingly diverse and interconnected global academic workforce. MPIA will pursue the following actions in this equality plan (continuing and new actions are marked respectively):
 - a. Attract diverse candidates (**continuing**): Job advertisements need to be spread broadly and across multiple online platforms in order to reach applicants from underrepresented groups. This is especially critical for jobs where there is historic lack of diversity such as the technical departments. We will reach out to individual talented candidates from underrepresented groups and also expand the advertisements on social media and other platforms to encourage applicants from different backgrounds. Metric: Track the percentage of applicants from underrepresented groups in the initial applicant pool (also see point Collect Information below). The goal is to have at least 40% of underrepresented applicants.
 - b. Maintain up-to-date hiring guidelines and enhance their use (**continuing**): We already have a set of hiring guidelines (see appendix). These will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect the current recommended best practices. Hiring guidelines will be provided to all hiring committees in both English and German. They will also be available prominently on the intranet. Metric: Collect feedback on the use of the hiring guidelines from all hiring committees.

- c. Training for hiring committees (**new**): We will provide training materials for all potential hiring committee members on unconscious bias, gender equity, and transgender rights. Members of hiring committees are highly encouraged to complete the training and acknowledge in writing that they have done so. Metric: Track the percentage of hiring committee members who have completed the training. Also see Most Important Measures below.
- d. Diverse hiring committees (**continuing**): We will aim to achieve a better representation in all hiring committees. The goal is to have at least 40% gender minority members of hiring committees, so long as this does not pose undue burden on minority staff (e.g., less than 10% of their workload). In cases when senior staff members are unavailable, the help of more junior staff should be sought out. Metric: Monitor the percentage of gender minority members of hiring committees.
- e. Clear communication of equal opportunity policies (**continuing**): Clearly communicate equal opportunity policies and objectives to potential applicants via job advertisements and social media. We will include the contact information of the EOOs in all job advertisements. A summary of German law and institute policies will be provided on the EOO webpage and included in onboarding documentation. Metric: Collect information from administration on which offers are being used. Collect information from staff on awareness of various offerings.
- f. Ensure EOO representation on hiring committees for positions with historic underrepresentation (**new**): While EOOs are invited to sit on all hiring committees, in person presence is not always practical. We will prioritize participation in the hiring of permanent staff, leadership staff and staff in technical departments where the lack of under-represented staff is particularly stark. Metric: The EOO or deputy will actively participate in the hiring of permanent staff, leadership staff and staff in technical departments.
- g. Collect data (**new**): In order to collect accurate data on representation at various stages of the hiring process, we will begin collecting voluntary information at all stages of the process. The EOOs will work with institute administrative staff to set up methods for candidates to self identify their identity as an underrepresented minority as part of the application process. Additional data will be collected during the hiring process as each hiring committee will be asked to fill out the summary form attached in the appendix. Metric: Set up a system to collect data directly from candidates. Distribute form to all hiring committees and collect information.
- h. Continue tracking diversity in hiring: The EOOs will create an annual report based on the collected hiring data that summarizes both incoming applications and statistics during the hiring process. These will be compared to our current

recruitment and hiring goals and will guide future plans. Metric: Create annual reports and present them at the yearly all-hands meeting

By implementing these action items and tracking their associated metrics, the institute can make tangible progress towards increasing diversity in hiring over the next two years.

2. **Retention:** To increase representation of minority staff both at MPIA and in the field of astronomy as a whole, we also need to take actions to improve retention at MPIA. The retention of women and minorities in science institutes is crucial for fostering diversity and ensuring equal opportunities. In this area, we are planning a set of actions including mentorship programs, supportive work environments, professional development opportunities, flexible work arrangements, promotion and tenure policies, affinity groups, childcare services, diverse recruitment panels, exit interviews, and progress review. These strategies are aligned with best practices recommended by organizations such as the National Science Foundation in the USA. The following actions address retention (new and continuing actions are marked respectively):
 - a. Carry out a climate survey (**continuing**). In this context “climate” refers to the cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions of the organization as well as the patterns of behavior, schemas, attitudes, and feelings that characterize life in the organization. Such surveys are standard practice for organizations of our size. See Most Important Measures below for more details.
 - b. Create a supportive work environment (**continuing**): Foster an inclusive culture by organizing diversity training, workshops, and events. Metric: Conduct regular surveys to measure staff satisfaction and sense of belonging.
 - c. Mentorship programs (**continuing**): Pair women and minority staff with experienced mentors to provide guidance and support in their career development. Metric: Track the number of mentor-mentee relationships established and their impact on retention.
 - d. Diverse representation in professional opportunities (**continuing**). Significant progress has already been achieved. The specific goals we set for this period are:
 - i. Increase the diversity axes of KoCo speakers beyond male/female.
 - ii. Continue improving the gender balance of department coffee speakers.
 - iii. Start tracking the gender balance of conference committees and invited speaker lists for events organized at MPIA.

- e. Diversity of bonus nominations and awards (**continuing**): Continue tracking the gender diversity of bonus nominations and awards. Metric: Aim for 40% representation in bonus awards for female and non-binary employees.
- f. Establish and support affinity groups (**new**): Create networks for women and minority staff to connect, share experiences, and provide mutual support. Support events organized by the affinity groups. Metric: Measure engagement in these groups and their influence on retention.
- g. Offer professional development opportunities: Provide training, workshops, and funding for conference attendance to support career advancement. Metric: Track the number of staff participating in these opportunities and their subsequent career progression.
- h. Support flexible work arrangements (**continuing**): Continue offering flexible work hours and remote work options to accommodate diverse needs. Metric: Monitor the uptake of flexible arrangements and their impact on retention.
- i. Provide access to childcare and other parent support services (**continuing**): Support staff with childcare responsibilities by offering on-site or subsidized childcare facilities. Document and distribute information about services available for parents. Metric: Track the utilization of these services and their effect on retention.
- j. Review promotion and tenure policies (**new**): Make recommendations on promotion and review policies that would ensure equitable outcomes and recognize diverse contributions. Metric: Collect feedback from directors on recommendations. Analyze promotion and tenure data by gender to identify any disparities.
- k. Conduct exit interviews (**new**): Gather feedback from departing staff to identify retention challenges and improvement opportunities. Metric: Analyze common themes from exit interviews to inform retention strategies.
- l. The EOO will create a code of conduct for events organized by the institute staff and on the MPIA campus (**new**) in consultation with the institute leadership. Conferences and other events organized on the MPIA campus should follow this code of conduct consistent with the EO measures. Recommendations will be made on best practices for ensuring equitable participation in all organizational aspects.

By implementing these action items and monitoring the associated metrics, the institute can make significant strides in increasing the retention of women and minorities over the next two years.

3. **Gender diverse inclusiveness:** This includes transgender and/or non-binary, gender non-conforming, agender, and other people with gender identities and/or expressions that diverge from the expected cisgender and/or binary standard. Gender diverse inclusiveness is a critical issue in academic institutions due to the traditional cisgender, binary understanding of gender, which often overlooks or marginalizes individuals who do not identify within the male-female spectrum and/or their sex assigned at birth. This exclusionary framework can lead to a lack of representation, limited access to supportive resources, and a dearth of inclusive policies and practices. Academic institutions have a responsibility to create an environment that is welcoming and affirming for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity. Addressing gender diverse inclusiveness in academic institutions is essential for fostering a truly equitable and supportive learning environment for all members of the community. To increase gender diverse inclusiveness at the science institute over the next two years, it is essential to frame the issue as a commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for individuals of all gender identities. We plan to undertake the following actions to make MPIA more inclusive for gender diverse staff:
- a. Change policies to allow preferred names to be used in most cases (**new/continuing**): We plan to work with the administration to create a process that would allow individuals to use their preferred (first and last) names in situations where official legal names are not formally required. Examples include names on office doors, on the website, in email addresses. This benefits all individuals who prefer to use a name that differs from the (first) name on their passport (including nicknames, alternative spellings, different language/character preferences, gender diverse people, etc)
 - b. Work with the administration to allow employees to self-identify gender on intake forms and indicate optional preferred pronouns (**new**). This information can be used for statistical purposes and to correctly address staff.
 - c. Pronoun inclusivity (**continuing**): Encourage the use of gender-inclusive language and pronouns in all communications and interactions, including but not limited to in introductions of visitors, in personal introductions at events, in email signatures, in Slack profiles, on institute websites, on event/conference name tags. In all of those cases, staff and employees should always have the option to self-specify their pronouns and pronouns should always be optional. Pronoun recommendations should be included in the conference organization checklist. Metric: Frequency of gender-inclusive language usage in official communications.
 - d. Facilities and resources: Create a list of facilities and resources for gender diverse individuals in the same way we do for parents. Post and maintain this list on the institute website, linked by the EOO webpage and the Queer-buddies webpage. The list should include information about German and institute policies, leave policies, health care resources, legal resources, gender-neutral facilities, local BW and HD networks, etc. This list should be updated annually and included in the onboarding documents. Direct staff to refer individuals to

professional resources rather than giving advice based on personal experience. Metric: Survey staff to determine awareness and use of existing resources.

- e. Visibility and representation: Increase the visibility of gender diverse role models and their contributions in science and academia. Potential actions for this goal include: support of LGBTQI+ events (e.g., LGBTQ Stem Day and IDAHOBIT day), invitations to colloquium and department coffee for speakers proposed by the Queer Buddies, increase visibility of Queer Buddies on MPIA webpage, support for events organized by the Queer Buddies, representation of gender-queer staff on the Equal Opportunity Committee. Metric: Number of events or initiatives that highlight gender diverse individuals in STEM.
- f. Training: Identify at least one training event per year. Encourage the development of allyship programs and provide resources for individuals to become effective allies to gender diverse colleagues and peers. Metric: Number of individuals participating in training and allyship programs.

By implementing these action items and tracking their progress using the suggested metrics, the science institute can work towards creating a more inclusive environment for gender diverse individuals within the next two years.

4. **Training staff + awareness.** To increase training and awareness of diversity issues at the science institute over the next two years, it is essential to frame the issue as a fundamental element of our workplace. This will advance the institute's mission and reflect its commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive environment where all members feel valued and empowered. This can be achieved through the following action items. Some repeat from previous sections as noted.

- a. Conduct a climate survey: 2a.
- b. Develop mandatory unconscious bias training for hiring committees: 1c
- c. Support mentorship programs: 2c
- d. Develop Tailored Training Programs e.g., training around non-binary issues: 2f. Create training programs that address specific diversity issues relevant to the institute's context. Metrics: Attendance, pre- and post-training knowledge assessments.
- e. Promote External Training Opportunities: Encourage staff and students to attend external diversity training programs. Metrics: Number of participants, feedback on application of learning.
- f. Establish EO committee: Establish a task force to oversee the implementation of diversity initiatives. Metrics: Task force meeting frequency, progress reports.
- g. Celebrate Diversity Events: Organize events to celebrate different cultural, religious, and social heritage observances. Metrics: Event attendance, participant feedback.

By implementing these action items and tracking their associated metrics, the institute can make significant strides in increasing training and awareness of

diversity issues over the next two years, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all members.

4. The Most Important Measures

1. **Title:** Training for hiring committees:

Description: Hiring is one of the most impactful processes on the gender diversity of the institute. For this reason, all individuals involved in hiring should be familiar with the best practices that uphold equitable hiring. While we currently do have hiring guidelines, compliance and even familiarity with them is voluntary. In many of our peer organizations, unconscious bias training is a prerequisite to participation in hiring. This type of training is crucial for the committee members because unconscious biases significantly impact the whole hiring process. Understanding the types and impact of bias and recognising that we all are biased helps to mitigate the impact in hiring decisions. Therefore, we will provide training for all the hiring committee members and strongly encourage them to participate.

Objective: Educate all members of hiring committees on avoiding unconscious biases

Milestones: Organise training for hiring committee members in September 2024 hiring round

2. **Title:** Collect data on gender diversity, including non-binary, during the hiring process

Description: Measuring out progress towards a more equitable workforce requires us to measure the statistics at many different points. We need to collect data on the gender of job candidates and we need to collect information on the genders of award and bonus recipients. In each of these situations, people should be allowed to self-identify as male/female/non-binary/other/ prefer not to answer. Neither our hiring nor our internal systems currently allow for self-identification.

Objective: Collect gender statistics for all incoming candidates and track the gender diversity at each stage of the hiring process.

Milestones:

- Collect self-identified information for all new open positions starting September 2024
- Collect data for all 2025 hiring campaigns.
- Report on diversity at different stages in the process in 2026.

3. **Title:** Carry out a climate survey.

Description: In order to promote productivity, collegiality, and the best possible chance of professional success for all members of a department, it is crucial that

the climate be equitable and welcoming for members at all career levels. A standard practice introduced recently has been to carry out a climate survey. In this context “climate” refers to the cultural values, beliefs, and assumptions of the organization as well as the patterns of behavior, schemas, attitudes, and feelings that characterize life in the organization. An organization’s climate impacts each individual’s sense of belonging, respect, value, equity, fair treatment, access to opportunity, and overall ability to achieve success. Not everyone in an organization experiences the same climate and marginalized and under-represented individuals may experience the climate differently than those in the majority. Since many aspects of climate are intangible and may be invisible from within, departments and organizations can expect to benefit from the wisdom of external evaluators even when the climate is already favorable. Previously MPIA participated in an MPG-wide climate survey, and carried out an online stress survey in 2020.

Objective: to obtain tangible and actionable recommendations for potential improvements in our climate that can be incorporated in the 2026 plan.

The target group for this measure are all employees in the institute.

Milestones:

- Identify organization to carry out such a survey: end of 2024
- Schedule and carry out survey: 2025
- Incorporate recommendations in the next GE plan: 2026

Responsible parties: The EOOs and the EO committee will take actions with the approval of the directors.

Costs: Some professional societies carry out this service free of charge but these services may not be available to MPIA. We expect to pay for the service out of our 2025 budget.

4. **Title:** Create procedures that allow employees to identify preferred name and pronouns during the intake process

Description: The MPIA internal system for collecting personal information when a new employee is hired uses their official information (e.g., contained in a passport) to identify their names and gender. This information is then propagated to all internal systems including e-mail, website, door signage. While it is clear that the official names are needed for certain functions (e.g., contracts, bank accounts, etc.) such an approach does not work in all cases. For a number of reasons, employees may not use their official names or identify with the gender in their official identification.

Objective: We propose to explore and formulate a procedure where employees can specify their preferred names, gender and pronouns at intake. Once the system is in place, it can be extended to existing employees who would like to update their personal information.

Milestones:

- Identify forms where such information can be collected: 2024
- Identify a process via which such information will be used internally: 2024

- Use new forms which collect the desired information: 2025
- Extend to current employees: 2026

Responsible parties: EOOs, administration, Queer Buddies group

5. Outlook

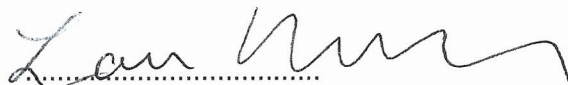
Women remain underrepresented at MPIA, particularly among the scientific and technical staff. To address this issue, we outlined a number of strategic initiatives (listed in Sections 3 and 4) to improve the recruitment and retention of female and non-binary employees. Top level responsibility for executing this plan is shared between the Gender Equality Officers and the institute management. The newly formed Gender Equality Committee also has an important role in implementing and monitoring the initiatives.

Achieving gender parity is a challenge that will require sustained effort over a period of years, and continuous evaluation of whether these efforts are succeeding. To check our progress, we will make a yearly update to the statistics on female representation at all employment levels (see Figures in Section 2). We will re-assess each point in the Gender Equality Plan to identify which initiatives work well, and improve those that do not. The Gender Equality plan will next be updated in 2026, taking these lessons into account. According to the MPIA mission statement, our institute aims to provide its diverse community of members a well-structured, effective, stimulating, intellectually intense, welcoming and supportive work environment. With the Gender Equality Plan outlined here, we are well prepared to achieve this goal.

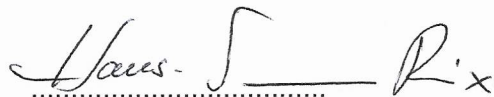
CONTACT PERSONS

Heidi Korhonen, Gender Equality Officer

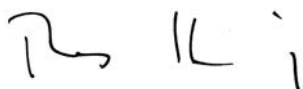
Ivelina Momcheva, Deputy Gender Equality Officer



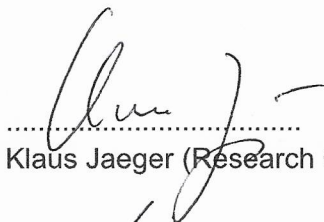
Laura Kreidberg (Managing Director)



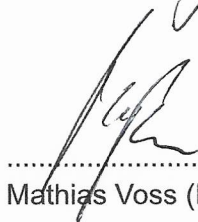
Hans-Walter Rix (Director)



Thomas Henning (Director)



Klaus Jaeger (Research Coordinator)



Mathias Voss (Head of Administration)



Heidi Korhonen (Gender Equality Officer)



Ivelina Momcheva (Deputy Gender Equality Officer)