



Gender Equality & Diversity Plan

Know Center Research GmbH

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1. Institutional Commitment (Statement of the CEO)

Know Center Research GmbH is a leading Austrian research and technology center located in Graz. It focuses on the intersection of human-centric technology, data science, and specifically trustworthy AI.

Achieving gender equality and more diversity is a joint responsibility. It requires collective effort and action by all stakeholders, and all available options must be utilized to improve gender equality and diversity.

Know Center recognizes gender mainstreaming and diversity management, with a focus on gender balance and equal opportunities for all its employees. We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities in the personal and professional development of our employees, supporting their professional ambitions, and enhancing their leadership and team management roles, and to fostering an inclusive organisational culture that enables full participation of all employees, including international staff.

Know Center strives to close gender gaps and to increase the participation of women and non-binary individuals in the labour market. We reject all discrimination and unfair disadvantages related to caring responsibilities. We fully align with the three objectives of the European Commission's strategy on gender equality in research and innovation policy:

- Fostering equality in scientific careers
- Ensuring gender balance in decision-making processes and bodies
- Integrating the gender dimension in research and innovation content

We base our actions on systematic data analysis, continuous monitoring, and evidence-based measures to ensure sustainable progress.

Know Center does not tolerate any conduct that constitutes discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, age, or sexual orientation, nor does it tolerate bullying, sexual harassment, or violence.

In this Gender Equality and Diversity Plan, in accordance with COMET and Horizon Europe requirements, we will lay out our analysis of the current situation and our plan to improve upon it.

2. Scope and Definitions

This Gender Equality and Diversity Plan (GEDP) applies to all employees of Know Center Research GmbH, including scientific staff, administrative staff, management and leadership positions, irrespective of contract type or working time model.

The GEDP covers recruitment and career progression, leadership and decision-making, work-life balance and care responsibilities, pay transparency, and the integration of the gender dimension in research and innovation. It also covers measures to prevent and address discrimination, and to promote an inclusive organisational culture as well as the reduction of language barriers.

The plan is embedded in the organisational structures of Know Center, through its implementation in HR Measures, by the work of the Gender & Diversity Working Group and supported by a dedicated governance framework.

The GEDP is valid for the period 2026–2030 and will be iteratively reviewed and improved on a regular basis. Progress will be documented in an annual Gender & Diversity Report.

The targets, action plans, and implementation tools for Gender Equality and Diversity at the Know Center should focus on the following key areas:

- **Overall Target:** Our mid-term goal is to increase the proportion of women and non-binary people to 50% across all organizational units, hierarchical levels, and functions.
- **Recruitment and Selection:** We ensure equal access to employment opportunities.
- **Working Conditions:** We ensure equality in all working conditions, with a specific focus on **parental responsibilities** and work-life balance.
- **Personal and Professional Development:** We ensure equal access to learning opportunities, skill development, and investment in personal and professional growth.
- **Career Progression and Advancement:** We ensure equal opportunities for career advancement and promotion across all organisational levels, and to increase the representation of women and non-binary individuals in leadership positions, by supporting fair and transparent career development processes and targeted development measures.
- **Pay and Social Benefits:** We ensure equal pay for equal work and equitable social benefits.

Given that the Know Center is dependent on external market factors (e.g., the number of women and non-binary students) and other variables beyond our direct control, we must

remain realistic when setting goals. These goals will be reviewed and evaluated periodically (see [Chapter 8](#)). Ultimately, our long-term objective is to achieve a 50/50 gender balance.

Key Concepts (working definitions)

- Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and expectations associated with women, men, and gender-diverse or non-binary people.
- Gender equality means equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities irrespective of gender.
- Diversity is understood in an intersectional way, including but not limited to gender, age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion and socio-economic background.
- The inclusive gender dimension in research refers to the systematic consideration of sex, gender, and intersecting diversity dimensions – such as age, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic background throughout research design, data collection, analysis and innovation processes, with the aim of generating inclusive, socially responsive and equitable research and innovation outcomes.

3. Organisational Context & Rationale

3.1. Organisational Profile and Policy Context

As Austria's leading research center for trustworthy AI and data, Know Center is committed to addressing the persistent gender imbalance in technology research.

This Gender Equality and Diversity Plan is developed in line with the mandatory requirements for Gender Equality Plans of the European Commission's Horizon Europe program and the Austrian COMET program guidelines, specifically addressing the three core pillars: Gender Balance in Decision-Making, Gender Dimension in Research, and Gender Balance in Staff and Careers.

3.2. Data-based Assessment

As part of this Gender Equality and Diversity Plan, we analysed employee, recruitment, and turnover data to pinpoint areas for improvement. Our analysis focused on:

- **Pay Disparities:** Comparing compensation between men and women and non-binary individuals.
- **Job Level Fairness:** Evaluating equity across job levels in Research, Administration, and Research Exploitation and Dissemination.
- **Demographic Patterns:** Investigating age and nationality data for potential bias.

In addition to the data analysis, we conducted three focus group interviews in collaboration with our partners from Johanneum Research, who facilitated and moderated the sessions as an external partner. The composition of the groups ensured diversity of perspectives (e.g., gender, age, department) as well as a balanced representation of hierarchical levels, enabling an open and constructive exchange. These sessions were designed to identify the specific topics regarding equality and diversity that participants consider most relevant to their daily work. The discussions provided multi-perspective insights and revealed shared perceptions of key challenges within the organisation, which informed the development of this GEP.

3.3 Current Gender Situation

By implementing gender-neutral job postings and launching internship programs specifically for women and non-binary people, Know Center has raised the proportion of women and non-binary staff in research roles to **37%** (in head count) as of December 2025. Currently, the overall workforce stands at **40%** women and non-binary individuals, marking a **6% rise** from the beginning of the year 2025. This progress was largely driven by actively recruiting diverse talent to fill open positions. However, the data indicates that further work is needed to improve diversity in Research Leadership (currently 14%) and leadership positions (currently 8%) throughout the rest of the company.

At first glance, the part-time employment rates at Know Center appear balanced: 50% of women and non-binary individuals work part-time, compared to 42% of men. However, this data requires important context. A significant portion of our workforce is also employed at TU Graz; consequently, many employees classified as 'part-time' at Know Center are actually working full-time hours in total. Due to the lack of consolidated data regarding their TU Graz employment, we are currently unable to provide a concise and comprehensive picture of actual working hours.

3.4 Identified Challenges

As previously noted, our workforce at the end of 2025 comprises 40% women and non-binary individuals overall (37% within Research). However, our analysis reveals that only 8% of them (14% in Research) holds a management position. The following graph (Figure 1) illustrates the distribution of these two groups across current employee levels:

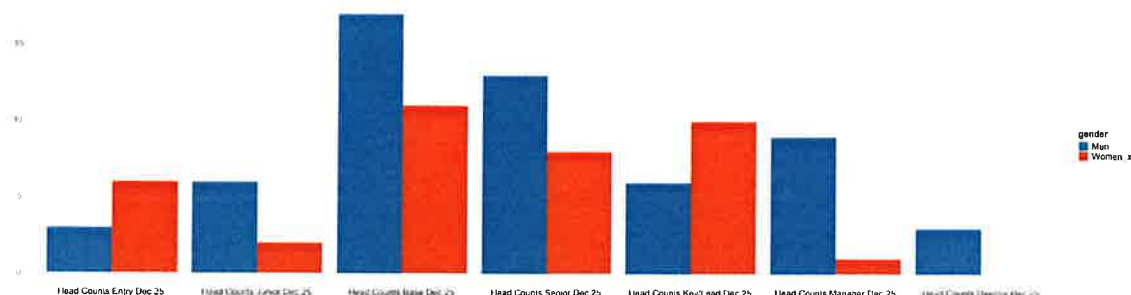


Figure 1: Gender Dispersion on Levels in the Company

This disparity is not merely a statistical observation; it was also a primary concern raised during our focus group interviews. Participants explicitly identified a critical need to increase the representation of non-men in leadership roles and decision-making processes, particularly in personnel decisions. They highlighted that the current lack of diversity at the top is a tangible barrier to an inclusive culture.

Our workforce includes 25% of employees from non-DACH nations (as of 31.12.25), a statistic that highlights language barriers as a critical area for improvement. This finding is corroborated by our focus group data, where participants explicitly identified language as a significant obstacle to inclusion. To ensure full participation and equitable access for all international colleagues, we are committed to establishing English as the primary language for our internal communication, documentation, and daily workflows.

Our analysis of the gender pay gap reveals a disparity: the total difference in annual salaries across the entire workforce amounts to €44,367.40. When adjusted to Full-Time Equivalents (FTE) (standardizing for working hours to reflect a scenario where all employees work full-time) the gap narrows to €32,427.96.

Crucially, our data indicates that this gap is not uniform; it widens significantly at higher salary tiers. This trend is largely driven by the underrepresentation of women and non-binary individuals in Manager and Director levels. Consequently, the lack of gender diversity in senior leadership is a primary structural factor influencing the overall pay gap.

An analysis of employee age distribution across company levels reveals a distinct gendered pattern. Women and non-binary individuals are disproportionately represented in the Senior Levels at older ages compared to their male counterparts. In contrast, men in older age groups demonstrate higher vertical mobility, reaching executive and director levels more frequently. This suggests that women may face significant hurdles in progressing beyond the Senior and Key/Lead levels. The following two graphs illustrate this demographic distribution: the first depicts the age distribution of men across levels, and the second presents the corresponding data for women and non-binary employees.

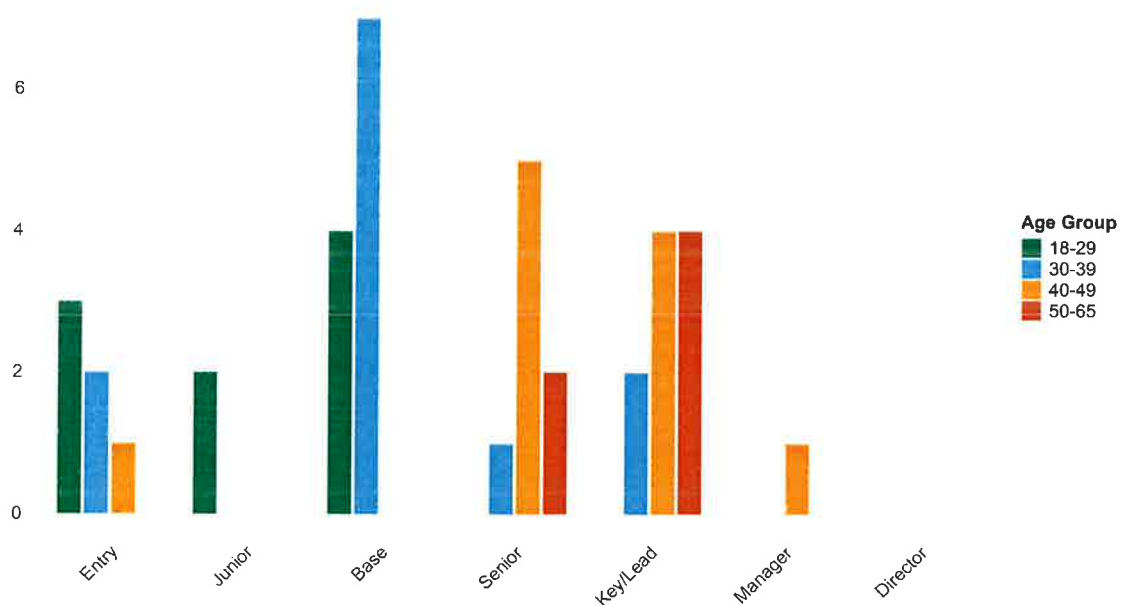


Figure 2: Age Groups of Women and Nonbinary People by Level

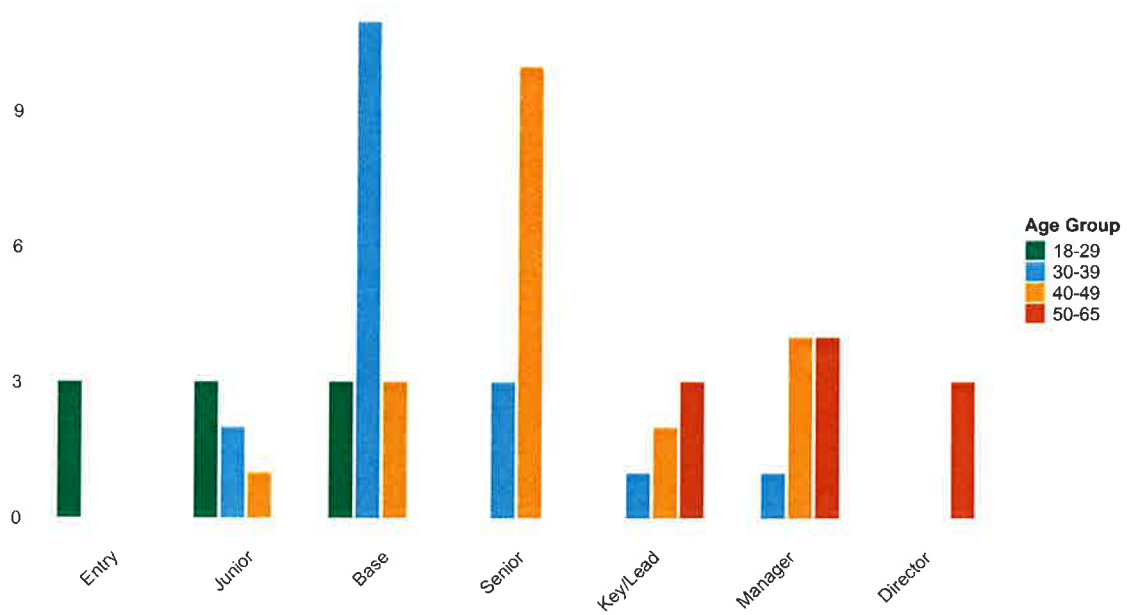


Figure 3: Age Groups of Men by Level

When analyzing the age distribution within each gender group, a distinct pattern emerges. The 18–29 and 30–39 age cohorts constitute a significantly larger proportion of the women and non-binary workforce compared to the male workforce. Conversely, men are disproportionately represented in the 40–49 age group. However, this trend shifts in the senior cohort, where the 50–65 age group is distributed nearly equally between genders.

Furthermore, a clear correlation emerges between age and gender composition: as the age groups increase, the proportion of men rises correspondingly. While younger cohorts have a higher percentage of women and non-binary individuals (52% among 18–29 year olds and 41% among 30–39 year olds), the share of men grows steadily with each subsequent age bracket. This trend peaks in the 40–49 age group, where men represent 71% of the workforce, followed by 60% in the 50–65 age group.

One critical insight emerged during the data analysis: the Key/Lead level exhibits significant internal inconsistency. This category currently aggregates two distinct groups: employees with direct management responsibilities and individual contributors recognized for specific key skills but without supervisory duties. Consequently, this level lacks homogeneity in both job responsibilities and compensation structures, making it difficult to derive accurate trends regarding career progression or pay equity for this group.

The analysis highlights an important-gender related pattern in voluntary and involuntary exits: a higher proportion of women and non-binary individuals experienced company-initiated departures, while men more often chose to leave on their own initiative. This insight provides a valuable opportunity for reflection and improvement. Our HR Team, the Works Council, and the Diversity Working Group are actively monitoring this development and are committed to a thorough review of these cases. Through this process, we aim to better understand underlying factors and further strengthen equitable practices, including identifying and addressing any potential unconscious bias or structural barriers.

While the quantitative data provided a baseline, the qualitative insights from the Focus Groups revealed deeper, systemic challenges. Participants identified a perceived disparity in treatment linked to gender, age, language proficiency, and employment contract type, suggesting that inequality is often experienced at the individual level. This was compounded by a clear need for more transparent career paths and job descriptions to ensure equitable progression.

A significant cultural barrier was highlighted regarding language and inclusion: although English is the official company language, internal communication and decision-making frequently default to German. This inconsistency creates an exclusionary environment for non-German speakers and undermines the company's international diversity goals. Furthermore, the inconsistent application of Work-Life Balance policies was noted; the ability to combine professional duties with care responsibilities varies significantly depending on the specific team or leader, indicating a lack of standardized support. Currently, there is also insufficient consideration for accommodating diverse religious backgrounds.

In response to these findings, participants expressed a need for a reliable, well-communicated reporting system for discrimination and harassment to ensure psychological safety and accountability.

3.5 Areas for Future Enhancement

While the current analysis provides a robust overview, several key dimensions warrant further investigation to ensure a comprehensive understanding of our workforce dynamics. Future reporting cycles will prioritize improvements in the following areas:

- **Time in Level:** We will extend the analysis to include the duration employees spend in specific levels. This will help identify if certain demographic groups tend to stagnate at particular tiers, preventing upward mobility.
- **Tenure at Exit:** Beyond the primary triggers for departure, we aim to analyse the length of employment at the time of exit. This will help distinguish between early-career attrition and long-term retention issues.
- **More precise Analysis of the Gender Pay Gap:** We will expand the analysis to include employment levels, assessing whether the gender distribution across job grades is equitable to identify if pay disparities stem from imbalances at specific levels.
- **Religious Diversity:** Currently, data on the dimension of religion is unavailable. We will assess the feasibility of including this metric to better understand our diverse workforce, ensuring that any collection method strictly adheres to privacy standards and avoids intrusion.
- **Side Employment:** Where data availability permits, we aim to incorporate fixed-term employment statistics to further refine our analysis of contract types and equity.
- **Parental Leave:** A more granular analysis of parental leave uptake and return-to-work rates is needed to identify specific structural barriers.

4. Strategic Objectives

The Know Center already boasts a strong foundation for gender equality, with a current representation of 40% women and non-binary individuals across the organization (37% in Research). While this exceeds the industry average, our commitment remains to achieve full parity. Our mid-term strategic goal is to increase the proportion of women and non-binary people to 50% across all organizational units, hierarchical levels, and functions.

Currently, while we have made significant progress, certain functional areas still lack gender diversity. Therefore, our focus shifts from simply increasing numbers to ensuring fair and equitable treatment for all. We are committed to:

- **Closing the Gap:** Actively increasing representation in under-represented units and functions to reach 50% by mid-term. We aim to increase the representation of women and non-binary individuals in Research by 5 percentage points by 2030.

- **Ensuring Inclusivity:** Encouraging that women and non-binary individuals are present in every department and at all levels of the organization.
- **Equitable Practices:** Moving beyond quotas to foster a culture where career progression, decision-making, and daily treatment are free from bias.

4.1 Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

The analysis reveals a significant decrease of women and non-binary individuals as organizational hierarchy increases. While representation stands at 62% at the Key/Lead level, it drops sharply to 8% among managers and reaches 0% among directors. This steep decline indicates the presence of a glass ceiling effect, where career progression is obstructed at higher management levels.

This disparity has critical implications beyond the gender pay gap. It also distorts strategic decision-making, particularly in areas like recruitment and policy setting, where the absence of diverse voices at the director level limits the organization's ability to foster an inclusive culture.

4.2 Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

In 2025, women and non-binary individuals accounted for 34% of all job applications. Notably, in the most recent recruitment cycle, 7 out of 10 successful candidates were women or non-binary individuals, a trend that has already begun to improve our workforce demographics.

To build on this momentum and ensure sustainable growth, we are planning to implement modern recruitment tactics in 2026 and beyond (see [Chapter 5.4](#)). These strategies will specifically target underrepresented groups, including non-men, to further increase the pipeline of diverse candidates and solidify our progress.

Furthermore, we are committed to ensuring equitable career development opportunities for all employees. By providing clear pathways for growth and advancement, we aim to retain the diverse talent we have successfully attracted, ensuring that our investment in recruitment translates into long-term organizational success.

4.3 Reduction of Language Barriers

We are committed to creating a level playing field for all employees, regardless of their country of origin or language proficiency. To achieve this, we will not only maintain our existing German language course offerings but also actively create opportunities for employees with limited English skills to improve their proficiency. Furthermore, we will uphold English as our official corporate language while implementing targeted measures to better integrate our international colleagues and ensure their full participation in all organizational activities.

4.4 Pay Transparency and Gender Pay Gap

As detailed in [Chapter 3.3](#), a significant gender pay gap persists between the observed employee groups. This disparity is primarily driven by the underrepresentation of women and non-binary individuals in senior leadership hierarchies, as previously noted.

Our strategic goal is to achieve a more balanced gender distribution across all levels (see [Chapter 5.3](#)). We anticipate that correcting this structural imbalance will have a direct, positive impact on narrowing the gender pay gap. To ensure accountability, we will rigorously monitor these developments and their correlation with pay equity. The findings from this ongoing analysis will be published to ensure full transparency regarding our progress.

4.5 Work-Life Balance and Organisational Culture

Our current workforce data shows a rather balanced split: 50% of women and non-binary individuals work part-time, compared to 42% of men. However, this statistic does not tell the full story. The unique nature of our research team — where many researchers are jointly employed by TU Graz — requires a nuanced approach to flexibility.

Consequently, our strategy moves beyond maintaining statistical balance. Our primary objective is to ensure that all employees, regardless of gender, have the genuine opportunity to fulfil their care responsibilities without penalty to their career progression.

5. Areas of Action and Implementation

This chapter outlines the strategic actions designed to address the challenges identified in the previous analysis. Each initiative is linked to a specific implementation timeline and details the resources required to ensure successful execution. Together, these measures form a roadmap for achieving our Gender Equality and Diversity goals.

5.1 Implementation Framework (Governance & Responsibilities)

To effectively execute this Gender Equality and Diversity Plan, we are reorganizing the Gender & Diversity Working Group to reflect our updated objectives and current team composition. This group will serve as the central hub for execution, working in tight exchange with the HR Department, the Works Council, and Management to drive the necessary changes and ensure rigorous monitoring of our progress.

The Gender & Diversity Working Group operates through a structured and collaborative process to ensure effective implementation of the GEP. Topics and proposed measures are identified based on data analysis, employee feedback, and strategic priorities, and are discussed within the Group in close coordination with HR, the Works Council, and Management. Decisions are prepared jointly and submitted to Management for approval.

where required. The implementation of agreed measures is coordinated by GDWG, with progress regularly reviewed in the quarterly meetings to ensure accountability and continuous improvement. At the final meeting of each year, the Group conducts a comprehensive annual review to assess the implementation status of the GEP, reflect on lessons learned, and define priorities for the following year. This iterative process supports continuous organisational learning and the ongoing development of the GEP.

To ensure the seamless integration of diversity measures into our scientific workflows, the group will maintain a close operational link with Research Area Heads. Complementing this structural alignment is a specialized Research Team, dedicated to advancing research in this field. This team provides the technical expertise necessary to translate our diversity goals into concrete, ethically sound AI solutions.

Topic	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Meetings	Establish Quarterly Review Meetings: Representatives from all four groups will convene every quarter to review ongoing measures, align on planned actions, and track progress against the Gender Equality and Diversity Plan.	September 2026, in new Constellation	GDWG, HR, Works Council, Management
Awareness - Publication	To ensure all employees are informed of the Plan and its strategic importance, we will disseminate key information through the upcoming All-Hands Meeting and the Know Center Bulletin, supplemented by targeted e-mail announcements.	August 2026	GDWG, HR
	Publishing this updated Gender Equality and Diversity Plan on our Website	August 2026	HR
Gender neutral Language	Enforce the use of gender-neutral language and non-stereotypical imagery across all internal and external channels. Additionally, launch an awareness campaign to educate employees on the correct usage of gender-neutral terminology and inclusive visual representation.	Ongoing	GDWG, HR, Works Council

5.2 Dedicated Resources

The implementation of this Gender Equality and Diversity Plan is a shared responsibility across five key pillars: the Gender & Diversity Working Group, the HR Department, the Works Council, Research Area Heads, and Management. To ensure these groups can fulfill their mandates effectively, a dedicated capacity of 150 hours per year has been allocated specifically to the Gender & Diversity Working Group. This time budget is earmarked for critical operational tasks, including the preparation of the annual Gender & Diversity Report, the organization and facilitation of quarterly meetings, and the development of educational materials.

While time is the primary dedicated resource, financial support is managed centrally by the HR Department. The HR Department holds the authority to distribute the Diversity Training budget, ensuring that funds are allocated efficiently to support the educational initiatives and training programs outlined in the Plan.

To embed diversity into our organizational culture at all levels, the Gender Equality and Diversity Plan establishes a new requirement for leadership. Effective immediately, Diversity Training will become a mandatory prerequisite for all positions with personnel responsibilities. This ensures that all managers and team leads possess the necessary knowledge and skills to foster an inclusive environment and lead their teams in alignment with our strategic goals.

5.3 Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making

Topic	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Strategic Partnerships for Leadership Development	To ensure our leadership team receives up-to-date, evidence-based, and unbiased training, Know-Center partners with leading academic and specialized institutions: TU Graz, Johanneum Research, and Gender Werkstätte.	January 2026, ongoing	HR, GDWG
Shared Leadership Positions	Know-Center will implement a formal Job Sharing model for leadership roles, allowing two qualified individuals to jointly occupy a position with equal authority, status, and decision-making power. This structure ensures that part-time employees can access senior roles without the arrangement being treated as a mere substitute or backup system.	2028	HR & Management

Promotions	In cases where candidates possess equivalent qualifications, women and non-binary employees will be given priority for promotion if their gender group is currently underrepresented in that specific position. This measure is designed to actively correct historical imbalances and achieve a balanced workforce (parity) without compromising on merit.	Ongoing	HR & Management
Reworking the Level System	We will restructure our Job Level System to ensure that roles are clearly defined by their actual responsibilities and qualifications, reducing ambiguity in career progression. Special attention will be given to the Key/Lead Level to address its current lack of clarity, establishing transparent criteria that facilitate equitable access for all employees.	Second Quarter 2027	HR, Works Council
Review Exits and Exit Reasons by Gender	We will establish an annual review process for employee exits, conducted jointly by the Gender & Diversity Group, HR, and the Works Council. This review will analyze exit reasons and initiating parties to identify and eliminate potential structural discrimination, with findings reported in the annual Gender and Diversity Report (see Chapter 5.6).	October 2026	GDWG, HR, Works Council

5.4 Gender Equality in Recruitment and Career Progression

Topic	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Preferential Selection for Women and Non-Binary Candidates with Equal Qualifications	While women and non-binary individuals remain underrepresented in specific roles or departments (i.e., a ratio of less than 50%), Know-Center will grant preferential selection to candidates from these groups, provided they possess equal qualifications. This measure ensures that equal merit is recognized while actively correcting historical imbalances.	Ongoing	HR
Decision making (Hiring)	To ensure absolute equality of opportunity, the final decision regarding the employment of any candidate shall be made jointly by two parties: the Directors and an HR representative. This dual-signature requirement serves as a safeguard against unconscious bias and ensures that the final selection is made independently of age, gender, nationality, or any other protected characteristic. The process explicitly mandates that all evaluations remain focused on merit and suitability, free from discriminatory influences. We will use the Guidelines of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) to help us achieve this.	June 2026	HR & Management
Job-Adds	Based on current research regarding gender bias in recruitment, all new job advertisements will be reviewed and optimized using an inclusive language checklist. Key focus areas include: • Removing Gender-Coded Words: Eliminating masculine-coded terms (e.g., "dominant," "aggressive") and replacing them with neutral, skill-based language (e.g., "proactive," "collaborative") to broaden the appeal of the role. • Clarifying Essential Requirements: Clearly	2027	HR

	distinguishing between "must-have" and "nice-to-have" criteria. This prevents discouraging women and non-binary candidates, who statistically tend to self-select out of applications if they do not meet 100% of the criteria, whereas men are more likely to apply with fewer qualifications.		
Mentoring / Buddy System	Know-Center will implement a Buddy System designed to bridge the gap between current roles and future leadership positions. This program will pair employees from different levels or departments to facilitate knowledge transfer, networking, and strategic career planning. • For the Mentee: The system provides a dedicated advocate to navigate company structures, identify hidden career paths, and receive guidance on skill development, ensuring that underrepresented groups have equal access to advancement opportunities. • For the Mentor: The program serves as a formal leadership development tool, allowing experienced employees to practice coaching, gain diverse perspectives, and enhance their management capabilities. • Equity Focus: Pairings will be managed to ensure that high-potential employees from all backgrounds (including women and non-binary individuals) are matched with mentors who can provide critical exposure and sponsorship.	starting in Quarter 1 of 2027	HR

5.5 Reduction of Language Barriers

Topic	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Reinforce English as the Corporate Language	To strengthen English as the corporate language, Know-Center will offer targeted English language courses for employees seeking to improve their proficiency or address current gaps. The program will go beyond standard business grammar to include colloquial conversation training, ensuring staff can communicate naturally and confidently in both formal and informal workplace settings. This initiative aims to remove language barriers, foster inclusiveness, and empower all employees to participate fully in the company's dialogue.	2027	HR
Extend the Code of Conduct	Extend the Code of Conduct (see Point 5.3) to explicitly address workplace language usage, establishing clear guidelines to ensure greater inclusivity and accessibility for non-German speakers.	2029	GDWG, HR, Works Council

5.6 Pay Transparency and Gender Pay Gap

Topic	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Salary evaluations & Diversity Report	To ensure a unified and comprehensive perspective on Gender & Diversity fairness, the Gender & Diversity Working Group, in close collaboration with the HR Department and the Works Council, will develop and publish an annual Gender & Diversity Report. This report will be released by the end of October each year to provide transparent insights into our payment structure, pay gaps, progress, challenges, and strategic next steps.	October 2026	GDWG, HR, Works Council

5.7 Integration of the Gender Dimension in Research and Innovation

Topic	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Training for Employees	To ensure that Diversity and Gender considerations are systematically embedded into all research projects and the work life, Know-Center will develop and implement a targeted training program for the entire workforce with external support from Joanneum Research. This initiative will also feature specialized modules designed specifically for Researchers and Research Area Heads, equipping them with the tools to identify, analyze, and integrate gender and diversity dimensions into their scientific methodologies, project design, and data interpretation.	September 2026	HR & GDWG
Specific Research Team	A Research Team is dedicated to conducting specialized research into algorithmic biases and their specific influence on the development and deployment of AI tools. By identifying and analyzing how biases are embedded in data and models.	Ongoing	The specialized Research Team & Management

5.8 Work-Life Balance and Organisational Culture

Topic	Action	Timeline	Responsibility
Parental Leave for non-birthing Parents	We are dedicated to upholding the right to parental leave for all staff, ensuring that leave for non-birthing parents remains generous and accessible. To measure the effectiveness of this policy, we will track the utilization rate among non-birthing parents (including those expecting or welcoming a child) to determine how many take their full leave allowance. This analysis will guide future improvements to support work-life balance for all parents.	Ongoing	HR
Investigation into perceived differences	Investigate perceived gaps in the execution of Work-Life Balance Policies. The goal is to gather feedback on whether employees experience unequal application of these policies in practice and to determine the factors contributing to these perceptions (e.g., management style, departmental culture, or role type).	Ongoing	Works Council
Discrimination Reporting System	Deploy a reliable and clearly communicated reporting infrastructure designed to protect the well-being of employees. By ensuring anonymity and accessibility, this system will cultivate an environment of psychological safety while guaranteeing that all reports are addressed with strict accountability and in full compliance with the Plan's standards.	2029	HR, Works Council, GDWG
Code of Conduct	Develop a Code of Conduct to establish a shared understanding of expected behaviors toward colleagues, partners, and customers. This policy will serve as a clear standard to minimize inappropriate conduct and foster a respectful environment for all.	2029	HR, GDWG, Works Council
Flexible working conditions	At Know-Center, we provide flexible working conditions and clear teleworking guidelines that are accessible to everyone. Our framework is explicitly gender-neutral, guaranteeing that all staff members—regardless of gender—can effectively balance their professional duties with their	Ongoing	HR

	personal lives through tailored working arrangements.		
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6. Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

Once annually, the Gender & Diversity Working Group, in collaboration with the HR Department and the Works Council, will compile and publish a comprehensive Gender & Diversity Report. This document will be made accessible to all employees to ensure full organizational transparency. The report will provide an analysis of our payment structure and pay equity, employee turnover (fluctuation) rates, and a detailed breakdown of workforce diversity across age, gender, nationality, Job Level, and other relevant demographic factors.

This report will be dynamically updated to reflect any changes or amendments to the Gender Equality and Diversity Plan, ensuring that our monitoring mechanisms undergo continuous improvement and remain aligned with our evolving strategic goals.

7. Communication and Visibility

To ensure maximum visibility and accountability, this Gender Equality and Diversity Plan will be published publicly on our corporate website, linked prominently within our internal Intranet, and announced via the Know Center Bulletin. Complementing this external and internal communication, the Gender & Diversity Working Group will publish a comprehensive Gender & Diversity Report annually, ensuring that all employees have access to detailed insights on our progress, pay equity, and workforce diversity.

8. Review and Continuous Improvement

We recognize this Gender Equality and Diversity Plan as a living document that must evolve alongside our organization. The Gender & Diversity Working Group, in collaboration with all stakeholder groups, is committed to the continuous improvement, updating, and republishing of the Plan to ensure it remains aligned with our changing company landscape and strategic goals. This commitment is further reinforced by our ISO 9001 Certification, which underscores our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of quality and continuous improvement across all our initiatives, including our Gender and Diversity Plan.

During the quarterly meetings, the Group will not only review the status of ongoing measures and upcoming actions but also critically evaluate the Plan itself. This process allows for the identification and implementation of necessary changes, ensuring the strategy remains relevant, effective, and responsive to our organizational needs.

9. Entry into Force and Approval

Date of entry into force, formal approval and signature by top management, version control.

Graz, am 20.08.2026



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Für die Know Center Research GmbH