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**LATVIJAS
HIDROEKOLOĢIJAS
INSTITŪTS**

Gender Equality Plan of Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, Agency of Daugavpils University

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Introduction

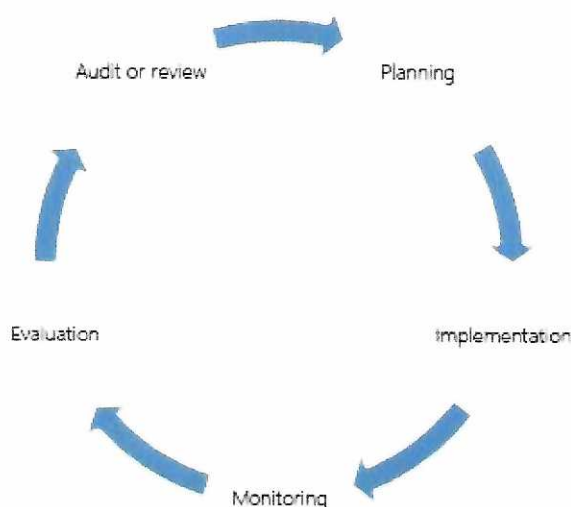
Latvian Institute of Aquatic Ecology, Agency of Daugavpils University (LIAE) is the leading institution in the field of aquatic environment research in Latvia and has an overarching objective to achieve scientific excellence in research through learning, cooperation and communication. The principles of LIAE's operation include equality and non-discrimination of all employees according to national regulations (Constitution, Section 91; Law on Scientific Activity, Section 3).

Gender Equality plan (GEP) is a public document, adopted by scientific board of the LIAE and approved by director of the LIAE. The GEP is available to everybody at the web page of LIAE www.lhei.lv. The objective of the GEP is to promote the gender equality in the LIAE and to ensure solving the issues of gender equality in effective, coordinated, and integrated manner. The content of the GEP thus includes information, principles, and activities for securing the implementation of the GEP. According to Horizon Europe Guidelines¹ the GEP addresses:

- Equal recruitment and career progression opportunities.
- Equal leadership and decision-making opportunities.
- Work-life balance as a part of LIAE's organisational culture.
- Baseline data and analysis.
- Actions for continuous promotion of gender equality.

Every gender has equal rights in the LIAE, as identical opportunities for progress are offered to all employees. Indifferently of gender or other features, employees have access to safe working environment and equipment, research information and data, necessary for implementation of tasks.

The suggested planning cycle by Horizon Europe Guidelines was applied in the LIAE when developing the GEP:



¹ Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (GEPs), ISBN 978-92-76-39184-5 doi:10.2777/876509

The first stage of development was the collection of data and analysis to estimate the status of gender equality in the LIAE. The next steps will include the planning of activities and tasks for gender equality implementation, together with timeline. The expected outcome of the implemented gender equality plan is to have a better understanding of gender equality principles and observation of these principles in the LIAE. The progress with the plan is to be evaluated by the scientific board of LIAE once a year.

Equal recruitment and career progression opportunities

When announcing a competition for a new position, LIAE addresses it to all potential employees indifferent to their gender. Education, experience, and skills necessary for the position are the criteria for choosing the candidate, never the gender. Job interviews are based on acquiring more information for the mentioned criteria and are in accordance with Labour Law.

In the LIAE an assessment system of employees, providing an individual assessment for each co-worker is in place. The assessment is based on achieved scientific results (research personnel) and progress in administrative competences (non-research personnel). The goal of the assessment system is to increase the quality of work, promote development of individual skills and thus drive the achievement of strategic goals of LIAE. The results of individual achievements serve as a basis for tools in financial and non-financial motivation. Besides, all employees have social guarantees and can receive additional financial support in specified cases.

Equal leadership and decision-making opportunities

Irrespective of gender, every holder of doctoral degree can be elected to the scientific board of the LIAE by general meeting of the scientists. Also, the heads of departments and laboratories are selected and elected based on their professional qualities not the gender.

Currently, the proportion between men and women in the scientific board is 1:4 with a Chair of the board being woman. The percentage of women at other leading positions is 75%.

Work-life balance as a part of LIAE's organisational culture

Work-life balance is one of the central components for promoting the gender equality. It is relevant for both women and men, therefore all employees should receive support for their work and career opportunities, as well as for their personal duties.

The employees of the LIAE can work remotely or outside regular office hours, when such a necessity occurs. The conditions of work are then arranged and decided between the employee and the project leader.

According to the national regulation, the employees of the LIAE can have parental leaves - both women and men. After the return from the parental leave the previous type of employment is secured.

The principle of equality is fully observed also when deciding on the salary of the personnel. LIAE has the inner policy and regulation how the level of salary is assessed and those follow respective principles:

- the initial level of salary is related to the average national indicators and is revised once a year;
- the salary is in accordance with the financial capacity of the LIAE;
- similar positions have similar initial level of salary;
- the individual salary is related to the individual results of the employee obtained via the assessment system.

Baseline data and analysis

LIAE has performed the data collection and analysis of the last 3-year period to reflect the current gender equality situation at the institution and to identify potential violations of gender equality issues. The data show the distribution between women and men in various aspects of organization's work. The analysis of gender equality will also provide option to assess strengths and weaknesses inside the LIAE and thus help with identifying goals and priorities regarding the gender equality issues.

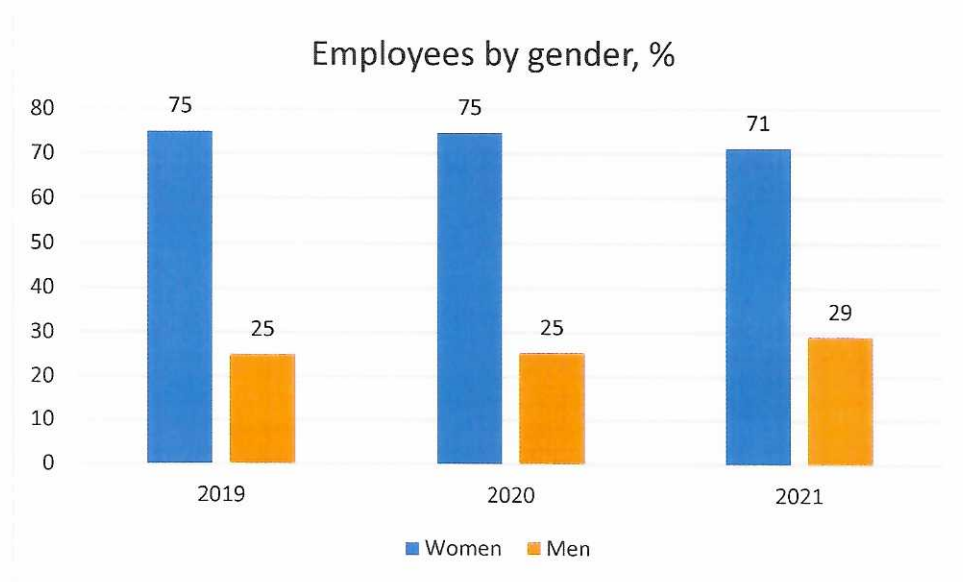


Fig. 1. Representation of the LIAE's employees by gender

The LIAE has always been having more female employees than male and the data for the last 3 years depict the same situation with considerable prevalence of women (Fig.1). Same statement is true regarding specifically the research staff (Fig.2).

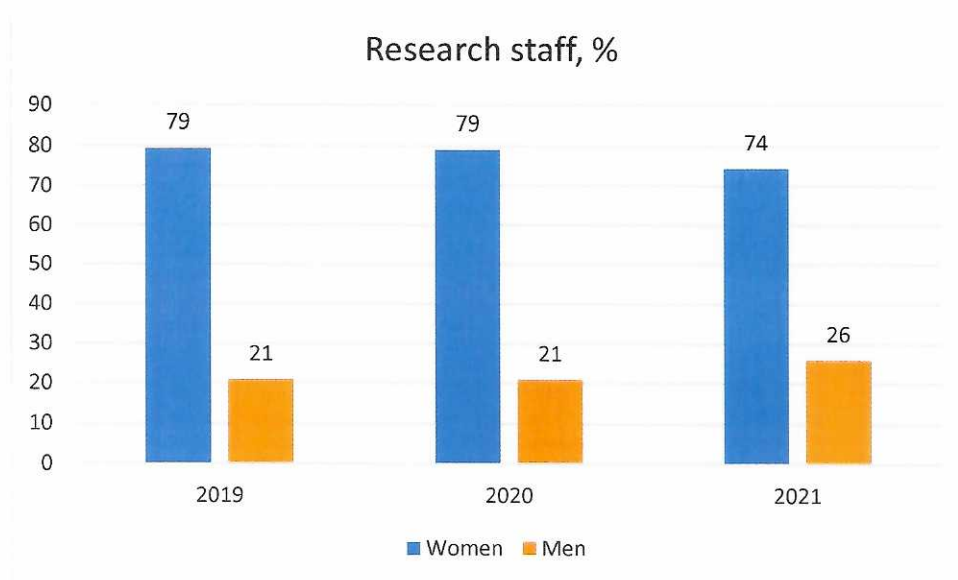


Fig. 2. Representation of LIAE's research personnel by gender.

Also, in the number of doctoral degree holders the same tendency is observed (Fig.3).

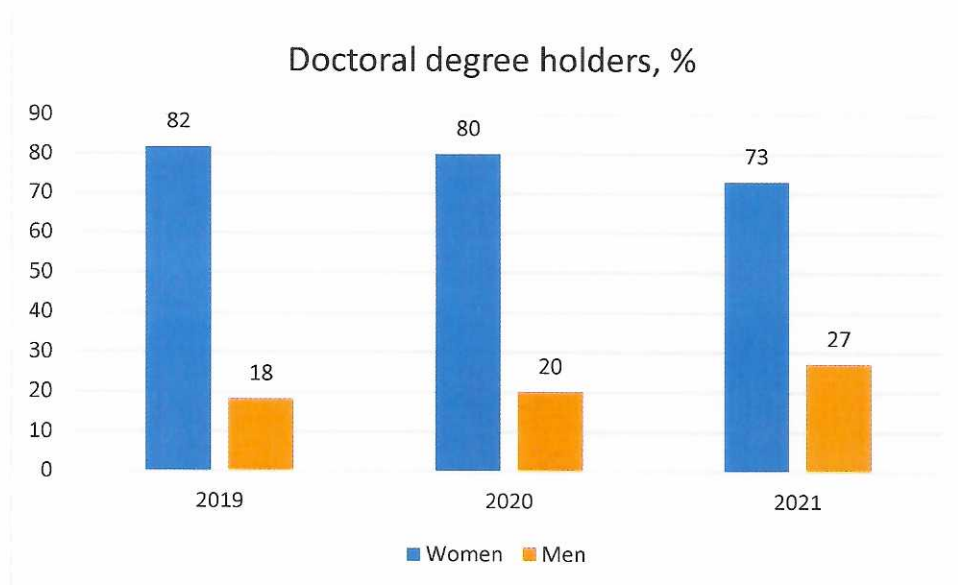


Fig.3. Representation of LIAE's doctoral degree holders by gender.

The salary levels have tended to increase for both genders, while the salary of senior women positions has been higher (Fig.4.).

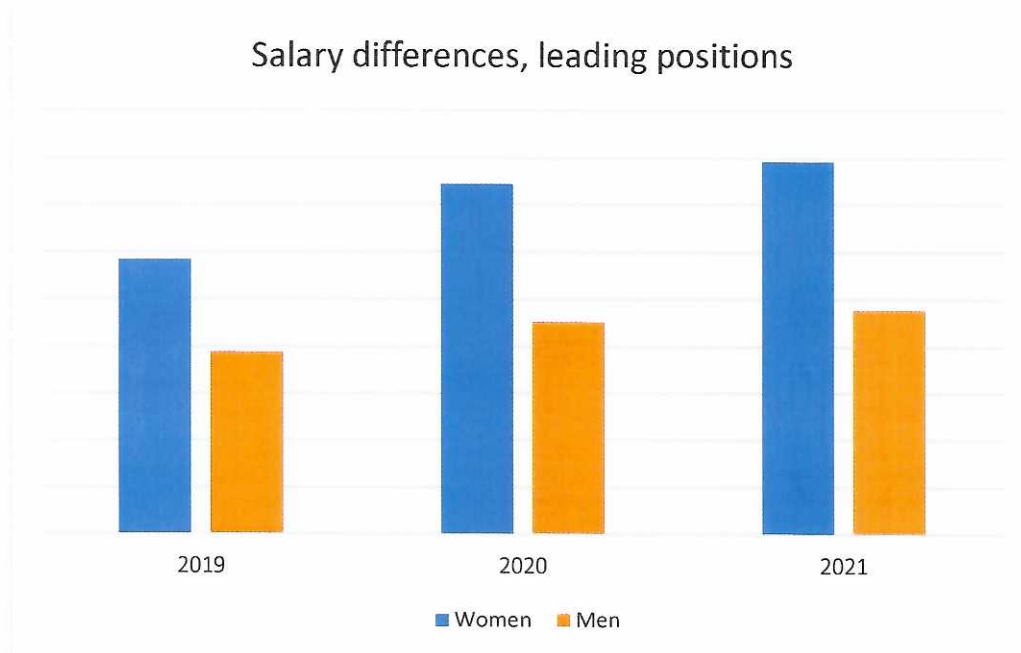


Fig. 4 Comparison of the average salary levels for leading positions at the LIAE.

Currently there are more women than men employed in the LIAE and more women are also having doctoral degrees. The average salaries are higher for women at leading positions (heads of departments, laboratories) of the LIAE.

Actions for continuous promotion of gender equality

For securing a further implementation of gender equality principles in the LIAE, following actions are proposed:

1. To nominate a person responsible for gender quality issues and implementation of the respective actions in the LIAE.
2. Publishing of the GEP at the website of the LIAE.
3. Hold a regular survey (once per 2 years) of employees on the need for additional literacy regarding gender equality topics. Use available opportunities for education on these issues, organised nationally or internationally.
4. Once per year assess the LIAE's statistical data on gender equality, inform the employees on the results of this assessment.
5. Provide the option for complains on gender equality violations with the existing tool for whistleblowing.