

APPROVED

by decision of the Scientific Council of LSFRI Silava at 7th of February, 2022
(protocol No. 4/2022)
(*in Latvian*)

The Gender Equality Plan of the Latvian State Forest Research Institute “Silava”

The aim of the Gender Equality Plan of the Latvian State Forest Research Institute “Silava” (hereinafter – LSFRI Silava) is to ensure equal opportunities for all male and female researchers. We are guided by the principles of gender equality in all our activities without compromising competence and quality. We want to support all LSFRI Silava researchers regardless of gender (as well as nationality, age and other individual characteristics) and believe that research will benefit society the most if the set researchers involved in studies is as diverse as possible and if gender aspect is also considered.

The state of gender equality in science in Latvia is not optimal. LSFRI Silava studies also do not fully ensure equality between men and women in terms of status and opportunities. There is a gender imbalance in academic positions, the proportion of women in senior positions is limited, although the situation has substantially improved in recent years and the proportion of women in academic positions has increased. In order to further improve gender equality, this issue needs to be addressed systematically. The goal of LSFRI Silava is to pay greater attention to gender aspects in all activities of the Institute and thus encourage the promotion of gender equality in forest science and related science sectors of Latvia.

Responsibility for ensuring and promoting gender equality is shared by the research groups, laboratories and administration of LSFRI Silava. The plan is based on interviews with leaders of research groups, analysis of the institute’s operational data and discussions with employees. Specific actions to achieve the stated objectives and the employees responsible for them shall be determined in the LSFRI Silava Strategy. The achievement of the objectives set should be reflected in the Institute’s annual reports.

Based on LSFRI Silava equality activities and opportunities for improving the gender situation, the main objectives of the Gender Equality Plan for the period 2022–2027 are as follows:

1. Raising awareness of gender equality among scientific and research support personnel;
2. Respecting for the principle of equal treatment;
3. Improving the gender balance of scientific and research support personnel;
4. Improving gender balance among applicants and beneficiaries of research grants, awards and funding;
5. Implementation of a gender sensitive communication strategy.

Raising awareness of gender equality among scientific, administrative and research support personnel

In order to make fair and inclusive decisions, a sense of gender equality, including awareness of potential problems caused by unconscious prejudice, is of paramount importance to scientific, engineering and administration personnel. Increased awareness helps to prevent

discrimination and ensures fairer decision-making. Understanding gender equality also contributes to the achievement of all other goals of LSFRI Silava's Gender Equality Plan.

In order to ensure a better understanding of gender equality among employees, senior members of the research groups and administration of LSFRI Silava shall:

- Improve their competences in the field of gender equality, including through participation in training courses;
- Integrate gender aspects into scientific publicity activities organised by the Institute;
- Collect existing and produce new needs-based information material on gender equality, including material on the importance of considering unconscious bias and on integrating the gender dimension into research;
- Share experiences, examples of good practice and developments in relation to gender equality at the Institute, including internal seminars, workshops, etc.

Respect for the principles of equal treatment

LSFRI Silava advocates equal treatment of all people, refraining from any form of discrimination based on sex (also from indirect discrimination that occurs when supposedly neutral rules benefit some researchers or target groups). Particular attention should be paid to the impact of parental leave on a researcher's career. In order to ensure equal treatment, the Institute shall:

- To look into internal rules of procedure and other regulatory documents to make sure they provide equal opportunities for all;
- Assess whether justified leave, such as parental leave or military service, is considered in the decision-making material;
- Respect the principles of equal treatment and decision making will be guided only by the criteria set;
- Collect feedback on compliance with the principles of equal treatment in decision-making processes.

Improving gender balance of scientific, administrative and engineering personnel

LSFRI Silava aims to achieve the highest possible gender balance of scientific, administrative and engineering personnel without compromising the competence of employees.

The Institute believes that the underrepresented gender representation across all personnel categories of at least 40% is a good gender balance. Another factor to be considered is gender ratios across different research groups; in research groups dominated by the same sex, the structure of employees should be formed in the same proportion as in the particular research direction of the country as a whole.

Scientific reviews (referees of scientific publications and conferences) and educational work (examination committees) should ensure an equal share of men and women, while not reducing the qualifications of experts.

In order to achieve a greater gender balance between reviewers and members of examination committees, the Institute shall:

- When choosing experts, deliberately pay more attention to gender;
- Give preference to an under-represented gender candidate if the candidates are equal;

- Ask other organisations responsible for nominating candidates from Institute's scientists to also nominate candidates of underrepresented gender to ensure gender balance;
- Ask experts who recommend reviewers or members of examination committees also recommend scientists with underrepresented gender, drawing their attention, if necessary, to the high gender imbalance among reviewers and members of the examination committee;
- Collect statistical reports and guidelines highlighting gender aspects in the search process for both reviewers and members of examination committees in order to better recognize the problem.

Improving gender balance among applicants for awards

LSFRI Silava aims to improve gender balance among applicants for research awards.

In order to achieve a greater gender balance between applicants for research awards, the Institute shall:

- Monitor gender distribution among applicants for research awards;
- The Institute's website will provide data on gender-specific recipients of research awards;
- Monitor the success rate of male and female applicants;
- Draw the attention of decision makers to potential unconscious prejudice and the importance of taking gender aspects into account.

Implementation of a gender sensitive communication strategy

One of the functions of LSFRI Silava is communication with the public, including exchange of information with researchers from other institutions and fields, and research and development institutions, as well as explaining the role of research among children and adults. We will also promote gender equality in scientific publicity activities. The Institute will continue to respect gender equality across all communication channels and:

- Monitor language usage and refrain from reproducing gender stereotypes;
- Monitor the representation of men and women in illustrative materials;
- The principles of gender diversity will be considered when writing press releases, news, profile articles, etc.;
- Seek to ensure gender balance between speakers at public events where possible;
- Highlight gender aspects in various publicity materials and statistics: data will be broken down by gender wherever possible;
- Will regularly publish key indicators of gender equality in research on the Institute's website.