Gender Equality Plan

for the time between 2016 and 2020
Dear staff members,

In addition to excellent basic research, one of the primary goals of the Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology (MPIMM) is to promote young scientists. Despite the fact that we provide for all necessary preconditions at our Institute to promote the professional development of young talent, it is often the case that young women in particular decide against a scientific career, despite great talent and excellent achievements.

As the Board of Directors, we feel obliged to provide better support especially for young women, and to encourage them to pursue a career in science.

Work to promote gender equality at the MPIMM is intended to ensure that women and men feel equally well-supported in their professional development, and to allow them to plan their career, free from any gender-specific discrimination.

In the first step, the following gender equality plan is going to provide for an analysis of the degree to which gender equality is lived reality at the MPIMM. Furthermore, the plan sets out to identify targets for removing any discrimination or obstacles in the area of the reconciliation of career and family life.

Bremen in July 2017

Nicole Dubilier
Managing Director at the MPIMM
Preface

This gender equality plan is based on the Federal Equality Act (Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz (BGleiG)), the Law Relating to Equal Treatment (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz - (AGG)), the Implementation Agreement for Gender Equality by the Joint Science Conference (GWK), and the General Works Agreement of the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft and the General Works Council.

The General Works Agreement includes the following statement: “The Max-Planck-Gesellschaft has set itself the target to consider men and women in their differences and diversity in all decisions, and to prevent discrimination. Balanced employment levels of both sexes and the reconciliation of career and family life are promoted.”

The Max Planck Institute for Marine Microbiology (MPIMM) understands the term gender equality as referring to the promotion of all staff members regardless of their sexual identity, nationality, religion, any physical limitations, their cultural background and their age. For this purpose, framework conditions are established that allow for individual career advancement with a focus on the reconciliation of career and family life, aiming to ensure that our Institute is an attractive research facility. The excellent research work performed for the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, and therefore also for our Institute, is characterized by the staff members’ diversity. To be able to support and to further develop this diversity, it is essential that awareness is raised of the issue of equal opportunities.

Opportunities and offerings at our Institute are documented in this gender equality plan, and it can thus be used as a guideline for implementing gender equality measures.

It is valid for a period of four years (2016 - 2020). Following this period it shall be revised and adjusted to changing requirements.
Status quo

Proportion of women in different areas of work

A total of 323 staff members were working at the MPIMM in 2016, 178 of which were women (55.1 %). The share of women working part-time is 19.1 %.
Reconciliation of career and family life

Pregnancies in the laboratory

At the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft it is possible to balance scientific work with pregnancies and family life. The MPIM will always strive to realize the best individual solution possible, for any pregnant scientist. These solutions are implemented based on the MPG document “Guideline for maternity protection in the laboratory”.

Parental leave

Many staff members that become parents make use of the option to go on parental leave, and to return to their job afterwards. This option is used by women and men. The following figures are available for the time between 2011 and 2016:
Support in the field of childcare

It is very important for parents that their children are cared for close to their place of work. Just like many other companies, the Max Planck Institute has recognized this aspect early on, and was involved in establishing the “Technologiepark” nursery back in 2003, where the MPI also bought rights to childcare places for its staff members.

The Max-Planck-Gesellschaft pilot project “Successful research work with Max Planck - also as a parent” is intended to enable parents of very young children to spend time with their baby while they continue to pursue their scientific career at the same time.

The FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE program was set up in 2006 to prevent women with excellent qualifications from having to significantly interrupt, or even give up their promising careers in science, when they start a family. The goal of the program is to provide support to doctoral students and postdocs on their research career path, when it comes to the reconciliation of career and family life (MPIIMM award winner 2011: Judith Klatt).

Childcare costs for advanced training trips, other types of professional travel or training measures can be reimbursed. This arrangement is only available to staff members with a regular employment contract.

pme-Familienservice provides for regular or short-term childcare, back-up options or quick consultation services that are not limited to a certain location, as well as support in the case of illness or if nursing needs arise.

Structural integration of work to promote gender equality at the MPIIMM

Hiring process

The Gender Equality Officer (GEO) is informed about all advertised jobs to ensure that one gender is not under-represented. They are involved in the hiring process, if a job is advertised externally. They are presented with the text of the job posting for review, and are provided with an overview of the applicants (number and sex) and the invitations for interviews, and they may also take part in interviews.

Online presence

On the German MPIIMM website there is an “Equal Opportunities” page listing all relevant information, measures and events.
Scientific Advisory Board report

Work to promote gender equality at the MPIMM is mentioned in the Scientific Advisory Board report. No specific questions about the measures taken were raised during the on-site evaluation.

Zukunftsstag

Zukunftsstag ("Future Day", formerly Girl's Day) is held at the MPIMM every year. It is an occasion for girls and boys to experience little scientific projects. The program is coordinated by the press department.

Fields of action and targets

Based on the stock-taking above, we are now able to identify a range of targets that are divided into three fields of action with related measures.

Career development

One particular goal is to provide even better support to female junior scientist in their professional career. Career development is an important aspect in this context. Our goal is to maintain our very good gender balance of the qualification levels of MarMic students and doctoral students. In the area of postdocs it is essential that the gender balance is redistributed in favour of female researchers. The proportion of women also needs to be increased at the levels W2 and W3.

One approach for drawing female scientists’ attention to their potential and career options could be to focus on female speakers, when inviting guests for lectures or symposiums. (Responsibility: MD, secretaries’ offices, public relations, GEO)

Reconciliation of career and family life

Childcare

We are going to provide childcare services to enable scientists with children to take part in important events at the MPIMM. (Responsibility: GEO)
Family room

We are planning to set up a family room, to enable flexible childcare options for parents of young children, after they have returned to work. This room will be located in the new annex (scheduled for completion in 2020). Decisions about the room’s furnishings will be made later on. Among other things, the room must contain a functional work station to allow the parent to work, while the child is playing or asleep. (Responsibility: GEO)

pme-Familienservice

Representatives of pme-Familienservice should introduce the services at a staff or works meeting, as this childcare option has only been used once to date. (Responsibility: Works Council, GEO)

Works Agreement Telework

The Works Council is currently working on a new Works Agreement for telework. This agreement is intended to enable employees to continue their work from home, if no other suitable childcare options are available. (Responsibility: Works Council)

Visibility of work to promote gender equality

At the MPIMM there is currently little discussion of the issue of gender equality, and awareness of the issue is low.

Gender-inclusive language

Language has an influence on the way we think. Those who are not addressed in line with their gender, may feel that they are not considered relevant, that they are not addressed at all, or not taken seriously. This is why we would like to review and adjust all documents and forms used at the Institute that are addressed to staff members, to ensure that they are worded in a gender-equal manner. (Responsibility: public relations, GEO)
Information provided to staff members

At staff or works meetings and on the website, the GEO provides information regarding MPG-wide job postings and initiatives in the field of career development and the reconciliation of career and family life. Women as well as men are addressed in this context, in order to also raise awareness among men when it comes to the issue of career advancement for women. In the area of the reconciliation of career and family life, family work should be promoted. (Responsibility: GEO)

Zukunftstag

At Zukunftstag (Future Day), small projects will be offered for girls in particular in the field of IT and in the electronic and mechanical workshop. (Responsibility: public relations, GEO)

Website

The “Equal Opportunities” website should be translated into English. (Responsibility: public relations, GEO)

Evaluation

The gender equality plan is valid from 2016 until 2020. At the end of this period, the GEO is going to check whether the listed targets have been achieved, and how effective the measures have been. New targets and measures are then drawn up in coordination with the respective responsible individuals. The resulting new gender equality plan is submitted to the Central Gender Equality Officer of the MPG.

Bremen in July 2017

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-Managing Director-  -Head of Administration-  -Gender Equality Officer-