

BICC's Gender Equality Plan 2022-24

BICC's vision and mission is to strive for a more peaceful world. An implicit part of this vision is gender equality, which BICC strives towards in every aspect of its work.

While BICC has always been committed to gender equality, our commitment is made explicit in the following Gender Equality Plan (GEP). The GEP is effective immediately and will be evaluated every two years.

The following state- and federal level documents serve as the foundation upon which the GEP is based:

- \ The 2008 "[Research-Oriented Standards on Gender Equality](#)" of the German Research Foundation, renewed in 2017.
- \ The Implementation Agreement within the Joint Science Conference Agreement (*Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz, GWK*), where the federal and state governments have legally committed to supporting gender equality in their jointly funded research institutions and initiatives (*Ausführungsvereinbarung zum GWK-Abkommen über die Gleichstellung von Frauen und Männern bei der gemeinsamen Forschungsförderung, AV-Glei, § 1*).
- \ The State Equality Act (LGG) of 1999 and the Public Corporate Governance Code of 2016 of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. BICC is required to report annually on compliance with the Code. As of 1 January 2016, the Code requires that supervising bodies of corporate entities be composed of a minimum of 40 per cent of both sexes, in line with the Act on Equality between Women and Men in North Rhine-Westphalia (State Equality Act – LGG) of 1999.
- \ The Federal Equal Opportunities Act (*Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz - BGleIG*) of 2015, which provides a set of rules for equal opportunity that apply to non-university public research institutions (§ 19-36). § 11 of the Act obliges non-university public research institutions to issue a gender equality plan.
- \ The Federal Equality Foundation (*Bundesstiftung Gleichstellung*), agreed in May 2021. The Foundation is supported and monitored by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). It aims to strengthen gender equality by advising public administration, civil society, research and businesses on the development of solutions for better equality and their implementation.
- \ The [German Works Constitution Act](#) (*Betriebsverfassungsgesetz - BetrVG*). The Act defines the role of the Works Council with regard to gender-related issues. § 75 states that the employer and the Works Council must ensure that no one is discriminated against based on their gender and must further safeguard the untrammelled development of employees' identities. The Works Council must enforce gender equality and promote work-life balance at BICC (§ 87) and has advisory rights regarding gender equality in personnel planning and decisions (§ 92). § 45 obliges the employer to at least once a year report to staff on gender equality. The Works Council is also the body for receiving and addressing complaints from staff, including gender-related aspects (§ 84, 85).
- \ EU requirements for designing a Gender Equality Plan as a prerequisite for participating in the Horizon Europe programme.

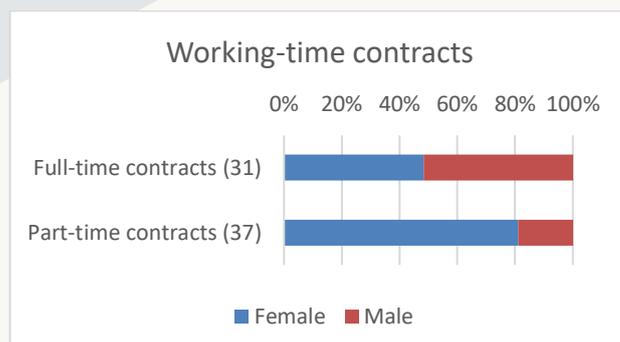
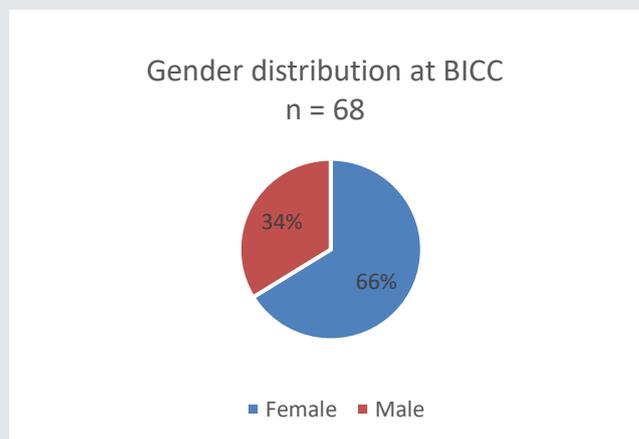
What we do: Gender equality at BICC

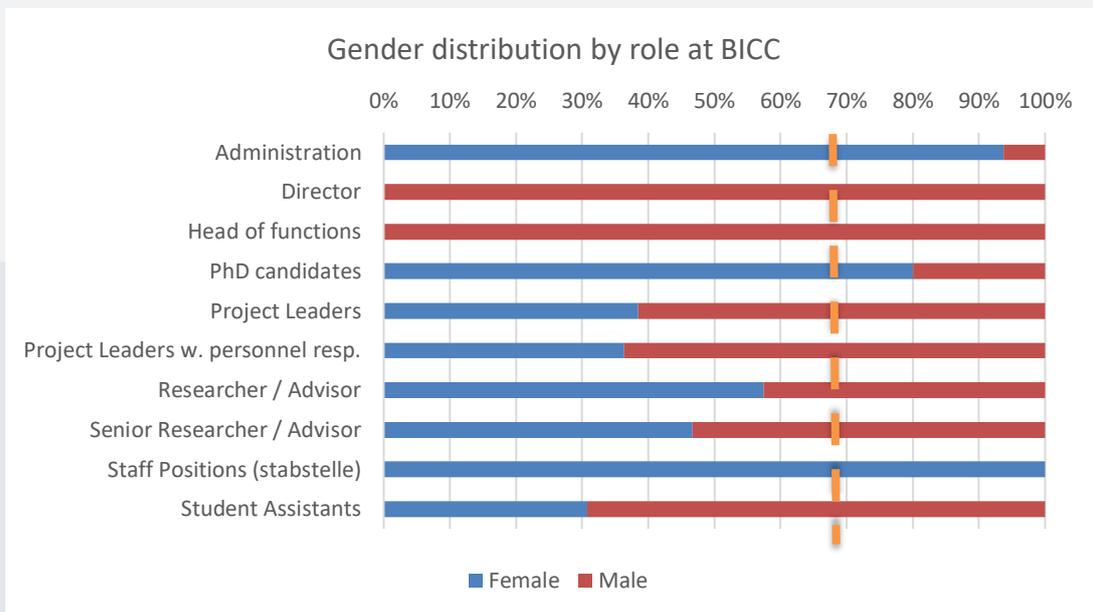
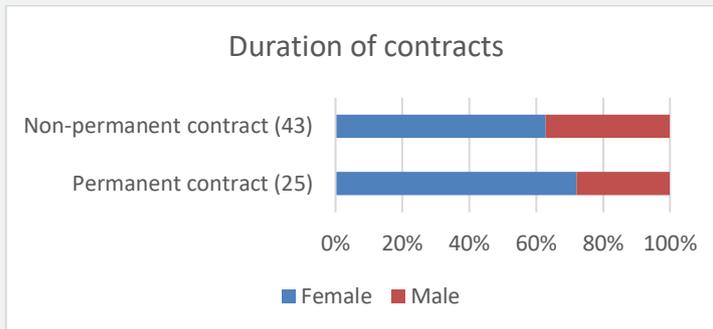
According to the [German Works Constitution Act](#) (*Betriebsverfassungsgesetz – BetrVG*), the General Duties of the Works Council (§ 80, 2(a)) assign the Works Council to “promote the implementation of actual equality between women and men, in particular, as regards recruitment, employment, training, further training and additional training and vocational advancement.” Sub-paragraph 2(b) commits the Works Council to “promote reconciliation of family and work”. The Works Council thus plays a fundamental role in promoting gender equality at BICC. The Works Council, elected in April 2022, consists of five members: a Chair (male), Deputy Chair (female), and three additional members (two female, one male).

[BICC’s Code of Culture](#) was adopted in 2017 following a participatory method involving staff, management and the Works Council. The Code enshrines the principle of non-discrimination and diversity and commits staff to treat all people equally regardless of gender, sexual orientation and marital status, among other things. BICC also uses gender-neutral language in all internal and external communications in English and German.

BICC reports annually on its compliance with the Public Corporate Governance Code, which includes compliance with gender equality and diversity. These reports are publicly available on the BICC [website](#) (dating back to 2014). BICC also provides gender disaggregated data annually to the Supervisory Board and makes this data public via the [Annual Report](#).

Gender disaggregated data at BICC: A baseline (as of 30.06.2022)





The dotted orange line in the graph above represents the proportion of female to male staff at BICC. Ideally, the gender distribution within each role would be as close to this line as possible. In some cases, this is true – but we also see that there is a lower proportion of females in decision-making bodies (see Gender equality in decision-making processes below). We nevertheless have a higher proportion of females in administration, PhD candidates, and staff positions (Stabstelle).

Not shown here is BICC’s International Board, which is a symbolic body that advises the Director and SMT on matters of research and policy. Members of the Board take on honorary roles and sit on the Board for a period of four years. The current Board was appointed in 2021 and is composed of six female (including the Chair) and four male members.

Organisational culture and work-life balance

As stated in BICC’s Code of Culture, the institute is deeply committed to ensuring the compatibility of family and career. BICC embraces a definition of family as anyone for whom an individual feels or is responsible. It strives to offer all possibilities for ensuring a healthy work-life balance within BICC’s legal, organisational, and financial frameworks. Staff are encouraged to take parental leave as well as parental convalescent care, as needed.

Towards this end, BICC offers a flexible work environment to promote work-life balance. An honour-based working time system allows staff to work their contractual hours when it best fits them, allowing freedom to also manage home and childcare duties. BICC does not have core working hours but rather relies on clear communication channels through which colleagues inform one another of their availability.

The Senior Management Team at BICC is working together with the Works Council to develop a new Works Agreement on remote work. Generally, all BICC staff have the possibility to work remotely, whether from home or another location. A formal agreement to this effect is planned to come into force in 2023.

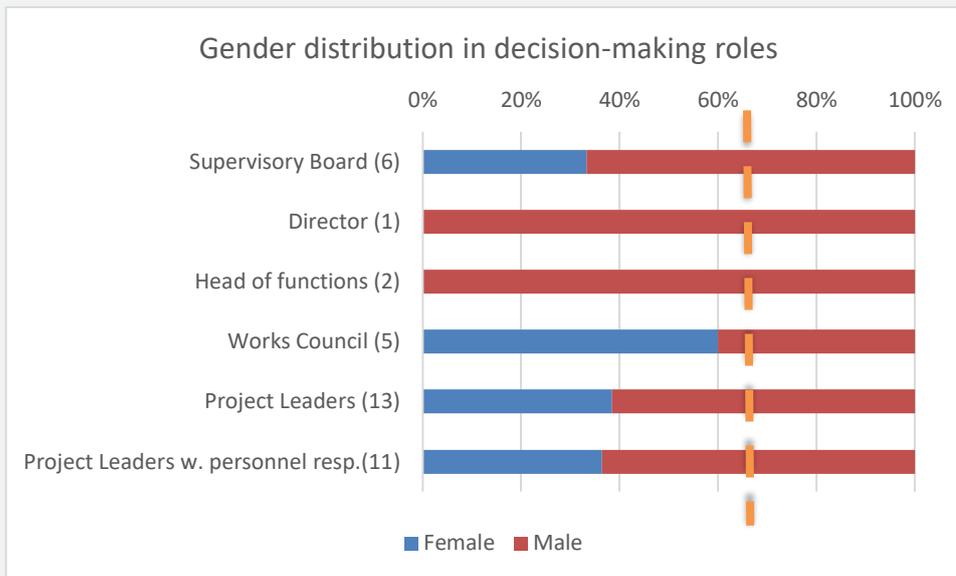
Gender equality in decision-making processes

Since 1 January 2021, BICC has a new management structure consisting of one Director and four Heads of functions, which together are known as the Senior Management Team (SMT). The Director and the SMT are responsible for making decisions at BICC. The four Heads of functions include a Head of Research (HoR), Head of Advice and Scientific Transfer (HoAST), Head of Research Infrastructure and Data (HoRID), and the Head of Finance and Administration (HoFA). Gender equality in the decision-making process at BICC can only be assured via the gender composition of this body. Currently, the Director is male, and the HoR and HoRID are also male. The remaining two Head of functions are vacant. Filling these positions with female candidates is a critical measure to ensure gender balance in the decision-making process.

Structural decisions (e.g., operations, personnel, etc.) made by the Director and SMT must be nevertheless approved by BICC's Supervisory Board to be legal. The Supervisory Board is currently composed of six members, two women and four men. This falls short of the required proportion of 40 per cent representation of both sexes for gender equality.

When it comes to issues of personnel, work-life balance, recruitment, career progression and working environment (among other things), the Works Council has a right of co-determination. This means that the Director and SMT must get the approval of the Works Council for the decision to be implemented. The Work Council, which itself is gender-balanced, is, therefore, a safeguard against gender blindness or bias in the decision-making process concerning staff.

When it comes to projects, Project Leaders are responsible for making decisions that influence the content and work environment of their project and team members. Some Project Leaders also have personnel responsibility over their team members for the duration of the project. Project Leaders are temporary roles that Researchers / Advisors can take on for a limited time (i.e., until the end of their project). The Director and SMT have an overview of gender balance in the project leader structure and actively strive for gender equality in the leadership and composition of project teams. The current gender distribution in decision-making roles is illustrated in the graph below.



Recruitment and career progression

BICC is deeply committed to gender equality when it comes to career development. BICC ensures—as best as possible—gender equality in the SMT and in appointing Project Leaders for which the Works Council has co-determination.

BICC ensures that all job advertisements are gender sensitive. We seek members of all gender orientations (male, female, diverse) to apply for advertised positions and expressly encourage members of underrepresented sexes to apply. The Works Council is a member of BICC’s recruitment panel within the mandate of §5 (3) BetrVG, and joint efforts are made to ensure that the recruitment process is gender sensitive.

Gender dimension in research and advice

In [BICC’s Concept Paper 2019 – 2023](#), BICC commits itself to conducting unbiased and gender-sensitive research. Staff is encouraged to “be aware of their own possible biases and those of others concerning gender, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, geographical location, class/caste and sexual orientation, among others” (p.17).

To better do so, ten members of staff established a Gender Issues Working Group within BICC in January 2022. The purpose of this Group is to engender awareness of gender issues at BICC, particularly as it relates to research and advice in our core themes, topics, and projects. The Working Groups is a voluntary group whose members meet on a semi-regular basis during working hours. The Group is currently coordinated by a female researcher and consists of seven female and three male staff members.

Preventing gender-based violence and harassment

The Works Council is available to receive complaints of gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace. Project Leaders touch base with members of their team in the field on a regular basis and have the authority to pull their members out of the field

should the security situation, including threat of sexual harassment, arise. However, BICC recognises the need for more awareness and training on incidents of sexual harassment and assault in the field and in Bonn. In July 2021, BICC commissioned a Gender Security Awareness Training for advisors travelling or seconded to the African continent. Nine members of staff were trained: three male and six female.

Objectives for 2022–2024

BICC recognises that, while many measures are already in place, more can be done to increase gender awareness and diversity within the institution and its work. We therefore identify the following priorities for action over the next two years and commit to providing the necessary resources during this time to meet the stated objectives.

A more 'gender aware' organisational culture and work-life balance

Objective: BICC commits itself to reflecting upon and overcoming gender binarism—the classification of sex into male/female, gender into masculine/feminine—in its organisational culture. Mindsets, structures, and practices will be reflected upon to identify opportunities for more non-binary modes of thinking and working at BICC.
Responsible: Works Council, SMT.
By: 2024.

Objective: Raise awareness about gender equality and inclusion through gender awareness and equality training for all staff at BICC.
Responsible: Human Resources.
By: 2023.

Objective: Institutionalise the oversight of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) within BICC. A dedicated body will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the GEP and evaluating progress at the end of the dedicated period (2024).
Responsible: SMT, Works Council.
By: 2022.

Objective: Introduce a new Works Agreement on remote work, codifying BICC's commitment to work-life balance without reproducing any gender stereotypes. The Agreement should be evaluated after one year.
Responsible: Works Council, Director.
By: 2023.

Gender diversity in decision-making

Objective: Gender equality in the Senior Management Team after filling the remaining vacancies in 2022.
Responsible: SMT, Works Council.
By: 2022.

Objective: Raise awareness of gender diversity of staff in decision-making roles by organising training for the Director, SMT and Project Leaders.
Responsible: Human Resources.
By: 2023.

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Objective: To establish clear titles for all content-related staff (research, advice) along with career progression criteria for those working full-time or part-time staff. Gender-related issues will be actively considered in this process.

Responsible: SMT.

By: 2024.

Gender dimension in research and advice

Objective: To reflect on gender research/advice at BICC within the Gender Issues Working Group and engage in an institution-wide discussion at BICC.

Responsible: Gender Issues Working Group.

By: Ongoing.

Objective: To ensure that each phase of the proposal-writing and project cycle intentionally and consistently considers the gender dimension by including this dimension in all standardised processes.

Responsible: HoR, HoAST, HoRID.

By: 2023.

Preventing gender-based violence and harassment

Objective: Organise training on sexual harassment for all BICC staff to ensure a gender safe and secure working environment at 'home' and abroad.

Responsible: Human Resources.

By: 2024.

Objective: Organise a Gender Security Awareness training for all staff travelling regularly to the field to equip staff with knowledge of how to prevent, avoid or remove themselves from threatening situations during fieldwork/secondment.

Responsible: Human Resources.

By: 2024.

Objective: To create a BICC policy on sexual harassment and discrimination and subsequent procedures for reporting and responding to such incidents. The policy should be aligned with BICC's Policy on Health, Safety and Security Policy.

Responsible: SMT, Works Council.

By: 2023.

Monitoring and evaluation of the GEP

A designated body at BICC will regularly monitor the implementation of the GEP and evaluate the extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved at the end of 2024. The results of this evaluation will be published online and will inform the next period of BICC's GEP.

Publication of BICC's Gender Equality Plan online confirms that it has been approved by the Director and SMT. It remains a working document that may be updated as needed.

Bonn, 12 September 2022