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GENDER EQUALITY PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2026–2030 INSTITUTE OF SOLID STATE PHYSICS, UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA (ISSP UL)

INTRODUCTION

1. The Institute of Solid State Physics, University of Latvia (ISSP UL) is an internationally recognised leader in materials science and interdisciplinary research. ISSP UL combines world-class expertise with state-of-the-art facilities to conduct groundbreaking research that shapes the future of science, educate and inspire the next generation of scientists, and deliver innovative solutions tailored to industry needs. Our vision is to be a globally recognised centre of excellence and an outstanding place for research and innovation. Our mission is to create a dynamic environment for addressing global societal and technological challenges, strengthening the role of Latvian and European science in the world.
2. ISSP UL has developed the Gender Equality Principles and Implementation Plan for 2026–2030 (hereinafter – the Plan), based on gender equality as one of the fundamental values of the European Union and in accordance with the principles set out in the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2026–2030. The Plan has been prepared taking into account Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 500 of 18 June 2024, "On the Plan for the Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men for 2024–2027", as well as the legal framework of the Horizon Europe Programme (Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council), which establishes the presence of a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) as an eligibility requirement for public research organisations. The Plan is also based on the Horizon Europe GEP eligibility criteria (four mandatory process-related requirements and five recommended thematic areas), the European Commission's Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans (2021), the recommendations of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) GEAR Tool for research organisations, ISSP UL's previous experience in implementing a Gender Equality Plan, and its alignment with the Institute's Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Policy. During the implementation of the Plan, references to Latvian and European Union legislation, policy documents and guidance shall be reviewed when preparing the annual Plan implementation report. If the relevant framework is amended or replaced, including by the adoption of a new European Union framework programme for research and innovation for the period after 2027, the Plan shall be updated accordingly.
3. The Plan establishes ISSP UL's commitment to promoting gender equality, equal treatment, and an inclusive working environment by integrating these principles into the Institute's governance, human resources policies, research activities, and everyday operations. Particular attention is devoted to integrating the gender dimension into research and innovation by ensuring its systematic inclusion in research question formulation, methodology, data analysis, and interpretation of results in accordance with Horizon Europe requirements.
4. The objective of the Plan is to promote gender equality and ensure equal opportunities for employees and job applicants, preventing discrimination on the grounds of sex or any other personal characteristic. The Plan aims to foster a common understanding of gender equality issues in both the administrative and scientific activities of the Institute, strengthen the implementation of ISSP UL's core values, promote the development of an inclusive and

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supportive working environment, and encourage the active involvement of employees in implementing the principles of gender equality and equal treatment across all areas of professional activity.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

5. Compliance with and promotion of gender equality principles is the responsibility of all structural units of ISSP UL. Within their respective areas of competence, the designated responsible units shall ensure the implementation, monitoring, and coordination of the measures set out in the Plan.
6. All ISSP UL employees shall participate, within the scope of their responsibilities, in the implementation, maintenance, and evaluation of gender equality principles. The implementation of the Plan, including any necessary amendments, shall be supervised by the Deputy Director for Administration in cooperation with the Director of ISSP UL.
7. The preparation, approval, review and publication of the annual Plan implementation report, as well as the updating of the action plan for the following year, shall be carried out in accordance with Items 9.2 and 9.3 of the Plan.
8. The priority areas of gender equality are:
 - 8.1. promoting gender balance in leadership and decision-making;
 - 8.2. strengthening awareness and competence regarding gender equality;
 - 8.3. ensuring gender equality in recruitment, employment, and career development;
 - 8.4. ensuring equal pay and integrating gender equality principles into budget planning (gender budgeting);
 - 8.5. preventing violence and harassment, including gender-based violence, cyber violence, and risks associated with artificial intelligence;
 - 8.6. reducing precarious forms of employment in research and integrating the gender dimension into research content.

MEASURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

9. Promoting Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making: Gender balance in leadership and decision-making means ensuring equitable representation of women and men in leadership positions and governance bodies of the Institute. ISSP UL aims to ensure that by 2030, no less than 35% of leadership positions are held by representatives of each gender, while maintaining the principle of merit-based recruitment and making personnel decisions based on candidates' competence, qualifications, and recruitment results. Promoting gender balance contributes to equal opportunities and fair representation while ensuring that diverse perspectives are incorporated into the Institute's strategic and operational decision-making.

No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
9.1.	Develop and implement recruitment and promotion policies that integrate gender equality principles. Ensure that recruitment and promotion committees are gender-balanced by including representatives of	Staff responsible for human resources in the	Q3 2028

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No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
	both genders, in accordance with the principles of Open, Transparent and Merit-based Recruitment (OTM-R). Target indicator: 100% of committees comply with the established minimum requirement for gender-balanced representation.	Administrative Department	
9.2.	Every January, compile sex-disaggregated data for the previous calendar year on staff composition, remuneration, recruitment, career development and other indicators specified in the Plan, and conduct an employee survey. Based on the data obtained, prepare an annual report on the implementation of the Plan. The report shall be submitted to the Director of ISSP UL for approval and to the ISSP UL Scientific Council for review.	Oversight – Deputy Director for Administration	Every January for the previous calendar year
9.3.	The report for the previous calendar year shall be published on the ISSP UL website in Latvian by the end of February of the following year, together with a summary in English. The report may be included in the ISSP UL Annual Report as a separate section or annex. If the ISSP UL Annual Report is published later, the Plan implementation report shall be published separately by the specified deadline. Based on the report findings, the action plan for the following year shall be updated.	Administrative Department	By the end of February each year

10. Building Gender Equality Literacy: The effective implementation of gender equality principles requires strengthening awareness and knowledge of gender equality in the workplace. Expanding knowledge in this area contributes to the development of an inclusive organisational culture, encourages representatives of all genders to apply for different positions and actively pursue their professional development across various career paths, thereby promoting gender equality throughout the Institute.

No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
10.1.	Provide advisory support, upon request, to heads of structural units on matters related to the promotion of gender equality. Support includes individual and group consultations on best practices for achieving gender-balanced representation, reducing unconscious bias, ensuring fair recruitment, and promoting career development. The consultations provide practical recommendations and strategies for strengthening an inclusive working environment while ensuring equal opportunities for all employees regardless of gender. Target indicator: the number of requests received, and the type of support provided are recorded.	Deputy Director for Administration	Upon request

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No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
10.2.	Develop and organise educational activities for employees and managers on gender equality. Topics shall include the importance of gender equality within an organisation, recognising and reducing unconscious bias, the impact of gender stereotypes on the working environment and career development, practical approaches to ensuring gender-balanced representation. Target indicators: at least one awareness-raising event is organised each year; a dedicated section on the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) and its importance for the Institute is included in the induction programme for new employees.	Administrative Department	Once per year

11. Gender equality in recruitment and career development means ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants and employees, regardless of gender. This requires an objective, transparent, and fair approach throughout all stages of recruitment, employment, and career progression, ensuring that decisions are based on qualifications, skills, and experience rather than gender or other factors unrelated to job performance.

No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
11.1.	Review and, where necessary, update ISSP UL policies governing recruitment, career development, remuneration, and other related human resource management and development processes to ensure the integration of gender equality principles and the implementation of fair, transparent, and inclusive procedures that promote equal opportunities for all employees regardless of gender. Ensure gender-neutral wording in job advertisements and job titles, standardised CV formats, and publicly available recruitment and evaluation criteria. Target indicator: from Q3 2026 onwards, 100% of job advertisements comply with the established requirements.	Deputy Director for Administration	Starting from Q3 2026
11.2.	Introduce and maintain a flexible work organisation model, including remote and hybrid work arrangements, enabling employees to balance professional and personal responsibilities while promoting job satisfaction and productivity. Target indicator: the relevant procedure has been approved, communicated to employees, and made publicly available through the Institute's internal and/or external communication channels.	Administrative Department	Ongoing
11.3.	Continue promoting employees' professional development and career advancement regardless of gender or other personal characteristics by ensuring equal access to training and career development opportunities. Further develop mentoring programmes by integrating gender equality	Deputy Director for Administration and Heads of Structural Units	Ongoing

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No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
	considerations into mentoring activities for early-career researchers. Target indicator: at least one lecture or seminar on mentoring, incorporating gender equality issues, is organised.		
11.4.	Monitor the use of parental leave by collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data. Target indicator: the data are included in the annual implementation report on the Plan.	Administrative Department	Ongoing

12. Ensuring equal pay involves targeted measures to prevent the risk of gender-based pay disparities. This includes the regular analysis and review of remuneration data to identify and eliminate unjustified differences in pay between women and men performing work of equal value with the same or comparable duties and responsibilities.

No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
12.1.	Ensure equal remuneration based on employees' performance evaluations and job classification. Target indicator: in all job categories where an average pay difference between women and men is identified, that difference is justified on the basis of objective, gender-neutral criteria; unjustified differences are remedied.	Deputy Director for Administration and Laboratory Heads	Ongoing
12.2.	Carry out regular analyses of salary ranges for identical and equivalent positions to identify and reduce the risk of inequality. The process shall include the systematic collection and comparison of remuneration data across different job groups, with particular attention paid to potential gender differences. Plan/ monitor not only the hourly pay men/women, but also workload, which ultimately determines total remuneration (gender budgeting). In addition, conduct an in-depth analysis of the participation of women and men in scientific work and research projects by comparing career development opportunities in order to identify possible risks of discrimination, including those associated with career interruptions resulting from family circumstances, such as childbirth. Based on the findings, develop and implement corrective measures where necessary to ensure a fair, transparent, and performance-based remuneration system. Introduce a requirement that all job advertisements include the applicable salary range. Target indicators: the remuneration analysis is included in the annual implementation report; from 2027 onwards, 100% of job advertisements include the salary range.	Administrative Department	Once per year

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13. Measures Against Gender-Based Violence, Including Sexual Harassment: Measures to prevent gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, support a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in which violence and harassment are not tolerated.

No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
13.1.	Organise employee training and awareness activities to foster zero tolerance of gender-based violence and harassment, including cyber violence, and AI-enabled risks (e.g., deepfakes, digital manipulation). Strengthen understanding of its forms, consequences, recognition and prevention, and of support available to victims. Include bystander intervention training to help employees respond actively and responsibly to potential incidents. Target indicators: at least one event per year; by 2027, at least 60% of employees have participated in at least one relevant training activity.	Administrative Department, involving the designated ISSP UL trusted persons	Once per year
13.2.	Using the framework of the Ethics Committee, clearly distinguish between submissions concerning discrimination, harassment, violence, including cyber violence sexual harassment and other ethical misconduct; whistleblower reports concerning violations that may harm the public interest; and work environment and occupational safety matters in which employees are represented by a trusted representative. Ensure confidential handling of submissions, a clear referral procedure, and access to advisory and psychological support. Target indicator: by 31 December 2026, a unified reporting guide is published on the ISSP UL website and displayed on the Institute's premises, specifying the remit of each reporting channel, contact information, confidentiality conditions, and procedures for handling or referring submissions.	Deputy Director for Administration	By 31 December 2026

14. Integration of the Gender Dimension in Research: Horizon Europe excellence criteria require research project proposals to assess the gender dimension. ISSP UL promotes its systematic integration into research design, methodology and the interpretation of results, strengthening research quality and inclusive scientific practice.

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No.	Measures	Responsible Unit	Deadline or Frequency
14.1.	Train researchers on the gender dimension in research and reducing precarious employment in research by using European Commission and European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) resources, including Gendered Innovations and the GEAR Tool. Target indicators: one training session per year; at least 30% of researchers participate by 2028.	Development Department	From 2026, once per year
14.2.	Make gender–dimension assessment mandatory in the internal project proposal preparation and evaluation process. Address precarity through possible introduction of the tenure and tenure-track pathways according to the amendments in the Law on Scientific Activity Target indicators: European Commission guidelines are applied; from 2027, all new project proposals assess the gender dimension; criteria for tenure and tenure-track pathways elaborated and communicated	Development Department	From 2026
14.3.	By 31 December 2026, make European Commission, EIGE and other institutions' resources on the gender dimension available on the ISSP UL website. By 31 March 2027, consolidate them in a structured section and update it at least annually. Target indicators: Resources on gender dimension published and updated	Development Department	31 December 2026; 31 March 2027; thereafter at least annually

15. ISSP UL provides the human resources, expertise and, where possible, funding required to implement the Plan. Measures postponed or adapted because of resource constraints are reported in the annual Plan implementation report. The Head of the Administrative Department, together with the Director and Deputy Director for Administration, evaluates alternative solutions or external funding opportunities.

16. The Plan is published on the ISSP UL website in both Latvian and English.