



# The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

## Synergies between gender equality and climate action


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Comments paper – Germany



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# Gender equality and climate action in Germany

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Women Engage for a Common Future

## Abstract

While Germany has committed to climate change agreements and implemented various policies, achieving a just transition to net zero requires the formulation of gender-responsive laws and policies. This paper shows that the collection of gender-disaggregated and intersectional data on the transition is a key requirement for these tasks and needs urgent attention by the government. Furthermore, the ratio of women in STEM related professions and in general their proportion in leading positions is too low to have a significant impact on the outcomes. Structural barriers to equality must be overcome as well as specific actions are needed to promote women. Laws, as the climate adaptation law and the management positions acts contain good starting points but need more commitment by binding quotas and the long-needed gender analysis and gender impact assessment. On the societal level, good practices of training and mentoring programmes as well as networks show that awareness and skill sharing are successful tools.

## 1. Collection of gender-disaggregated data for a just transition

### 1.1 The situation in Germany concerning gender-disaggregated data for a just transition

The German Federal Statistical Office acting under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community (BMI) is collecting basic data on the economic and social situation in Germany, containing gender disaggregated data. However, these data do not take into consideration the intersection of sex and gender with other personal characteristics/identities and how these contribute to unique experiences of discrimination.

Germany's statistical office is not yet collecting (or reporting/monitoring) gender disaggregated data for a just transition other than Eurostat which is collecting data in order to measure the progress of implementation of the European Green Deal according to a set of [indicators](#) that contain gender issues. Furthermore, the UN has defined a [Global Indicator Framework](#) with 9 targets and 14 indicators for the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality) which are reported on partially by

Germany under its German Sustainable Development Strategy (DNS)<sup>1</sup>. The national [indicators](#) under Goal 5 and 13 do not reflect the gender and climate nexus. Understanding the impact of climate change on women, other genders and diverse groups as well as recognising their adaptation and mitigation potential needs a variety of data, such as income, housing, age, ethnicity, and education. The effort is not yet made and will require a robust methodology. But there is hope with the new gender equality report being prepared under the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). Every 3 years the government appoints an expert commission under the auspices of the BMFSFJ which produces a gender equality report with a specific thematic focus: 2025 the 4<sup>th</sup> gender equality report is expected<sup>2</sup>. The focus will be on the ecological transition leading hopefully to more evidence on the nexus of gender and climate change and to more gender disaggregated and intersectional data on the just transition.

## 1.2 Key results and remaining challenges

Gender disaggregated and intersectional data on the just transition, in particular with a view on climate change, are still rare in Germany. The recently presented draft update of the [National Energy and Climate Plan](#) (NECP) makes no link to gender, which might change after undergoing a public consultation process. The new climate adaptation law ([Bundes-Klimaanpassungsgesetz](#), 22.12.2023) foresees the adoption of a climate adaptation strategy with concrete measures, a climate risk analysis, and data collection. All activities would require a gender analysis and a gender impact assessment not being a legal prerequisite. The law itself serves as a framework for the federal states (Bundesländer) being mainly responsible for its implementation and provides a unique chance to executing federal states and communities to include gender concerns in their wider adaptation activities. It might also increase the pressure upon the BMI and the Federal Statistical Office for a comprehensive methodology to collect more gender disaggregated and intersectional data relating to climate change. Researching and documenting the nexus of gender with other relevant structural categories remains another important task for the future.

## 2. Women in STEM and Green Jobs

### 2.1 The situation in Germany

According to the International Labour Organisation jobs are green when they are decent and preserve or restore the environment<sup>3</sup>. This can be jobs in traditional industries, such as construction, but also in new and emerging sectors, such as renewable energy, thus we are looking here at STEM jobs in general.

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<sup>1</sup> [Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie, Weiterentwicklung 2021](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/aktuelles/alle-meldungen/lisa-paus-beruft-kommission-fuer-den-vierten-gleichstellungsbericht-222456>

<sup>3</sup> <https://libguides.ilo.org/green-jobs-en>

According to the [Institute of the German Economy](#) (IWD) at the end of 2022 1.1 million women worked in STEM jobs, which makes about 16% of all people employed in STEM. The proportion of women varies a lot according to regions, ranging from 13% to 22%. More data are available when looking at the energy sector:

	Women	Men/Others
<b>Oil and gas</b>	22%	78%
<b>Wind energy</b>	21%	79%
<b>Renewable energy in total</b>	32%	68%
<b>PV</b>	40%	60%

Taken from WECF/EUWES, 2023, [Mapping of German Gender and Energy Policies](#) based on data of IRENA and BMWK.

In 2022/23 the ratio of female students in STEM subjects was 32,4%: 190.779 women were enrolled in engineering and 158.447 women in maths and sciences<sup>4</sup>. Over the last 10 years more women started studying engineering, however, the number of female students in maths and science declined.

Reasons for the low rate of women in STEM professions and subjects are manifold: according to the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) women still earn 9% less than men in the energy sector in Germany. Generally, Germany is one of the countries with the largest gender pay gap among EU countries, with a rate of 17.6%<sup>5</sup>, therefore a difference of 9% seems relatively small. Germany has tried tackling the issue by introducing a pay transparency law in 2017<sup>6</sup> which shows slow progress. Gender stereotypes are barriers for women to take up positions in the STEM sector as well as other subtle hurdles, for example, sexist comments in the workplace, male-dominant speaking behaviour in meetings, lower appreciation of women's performance or different expectations of different genders in management positions. The challenge to balance paid work and unpaid care work is another obstacle faced by women bearing often the burden of care. On average, women in Germany perform around one and a half times as much unpaid care work as men: the gender care gap is therefore 50% on average across the entire population

<sup>4</sup> <https://de.statista.com/infografik/27761/anzahl-eingeschriebener-mint-studentinnen-an-deutschen-universitaeten-nach-jahr/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender\\_pay\\_gap\\_statistics#Gender\\_pay\\_gap\\_levels\\_vary\\_significantly\\_across\\_EU](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Gender_pay_gap_statistics#Gender_pay_gap_levels_vary_significantly_across_EU)

<sup>6</sup> In 2017, Germany introduced the Transparency in Wage Structures Act, which allows employees in companies with a workforce of over 200 employees to request information inter alia on the average monthly gross remuneration of colleagues. Employers with a workforce that usually consists of more than 500 employees who are required to file a management report must regularly disclose gender disaggregated data on total, full-time, and part-time employees as well as their efforts to foster gender equality and equal pay, though no sanction exists for non-compliance.

(Schäper, et al., 2023). Balancing these interests and mitigating the gaps and challenges are a precondition for enabling more women to participate in the STEM sector.

## 2.2 Good practices

Networks, mentoring programmes, and training courses contribute to strengthening women and other groups' interests in the job market and society and contribute to fostering change. Examples of such networks are Women in Green Hydrogen (WIGH)<sup>7</sup> and the Global Women's Network in the Energy Transition (GWNET)<sup>8</sup> which cooperates with the BMWK. The BMWK's digital communication campaign "Women Energize Women", launched in 2021, aims to get women around the world excited about careers in the energy transition and bring them together. Mentoring programmes and training courses enable women to share their experiences and strengthen their capacity, examples are run by projects, such as [W4RES](#) or the local [NGO Life e.V.](#) They offer specific trainings for women and other groups on STEM issues to enable them to participate and/or advance in the green job market. An example to challenge stereotypes and raise awareness in the working environment is the [EQT](#) by IKEM, a game that can be played by teams to reveal gender roles and discriminatory behaviours. Gender just energy cooperatives are another powerful tool to bring more women into the energy transition as producers, consumers, and decision-makers.

## 2.3 Key results and remaining challenges

The mobilisation of women for STEM-related professions and courses of study is seen as a key element in ending the shortage of skilled workers in the STEM sector which is most relevant for a just transition.

According to the OECD the transition to net zero is likely to worsen the overall employment position of women if nothing is done to change the current situation: the underrepresentation of women in the STEM sector is likely to increase if the sector as such is growing. A just transition aims for the opposite: better and inclusive governance and equal participation leaving no one behind. Remaining challenges are mainly structural barriers, such as the existing gender stereotypes, the gender pay and care gap and the working environment. The Work-Life-Balance Directive<sup>9</sup> had no major impact on German laws since many standards had already been in place, but the [European Care Strategy](#) might have an impact on better access to affordable care facilities in Germany.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://women-in-green-hydrogen.net/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.globalwomennet.org/about-gwnet/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1311&langId=en>

### 3. Increase of women in top positions to ensure a gender just green transition

#### 3.1 The situation in Germany

##### 3.1.1 Women in decision-making

The share of women in the current parliament (Bundestag, 20. Wahlperiode) accounts for 35.05% (April 2023<sup>10</sup>). One third of the parliamentary committees are led by women<sup>11</sup>. 7 federal ministries out of the 16 are led by women, the share of women in the various other positions of the federal ministries is the following:

	Share of women among employees	Share of women in leading positions
<b>Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</b>	56% 50% of the people sent to	51% (2022)
	German missions abroad (i.e., to development banks, IO, EU, embassies) are women	
<b>Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK)</b>	52% (2020)	43% (2022)
<b>Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, BMFSFJ</b>	73% (2022)	64% (2022)
<b>Federal Ministry of Education and Research, BMBF</b>	MD.	53 % (2022)
<b>Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, BMAS</b>	MD.	42% (2022)
<b>Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, BMUV</b>	MD.	46% (2022)

Taken from WECF/EUWES, 2023, [Mapping of German Gender and Energy Policies](#)

<sup>10</sup> <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1063172/umfrage/frauenanteil-im-bundestag-nach-fraktionen-in-deutschland/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/20061000.pdf>

This shows that women are quite well represented in the administration, also in leading positions, but less so in decision-making bodies, as the parliament<sup>12</sup>.

### 3.1.2 Women in economy

In 2022, 29% women worked in leadership positions in Germany (higher management and board level)<sup>13</sup> which makes Germany ranking 21<sup>st</sup> amongst the 27 EU members states.

The share of women in different positions in the energy market/energy companies is even lower as the table below shows (data from 2021):

Positions	Share of women	Share of Men
Leadership positions, in general	15,5%	83,5%
Steering Committee (Vorstand)	9%	91%
Executive board (Geschäftsführung)	6,5%	94%
Administrative and/or advisory board (Aufsichts- und Verwaltungsrat)	19%	81%
Prokura	14%	86%

Taken from WECF/EUWES, 2023, [Mapping of German Gender and Energy Policies](#)

## 3.2 Good practices

In the federal civil service, the government is aiming for equal representation in management positions by 2025. According to the government there was a positive development since the amendment of the Federal Equal Opportunities Act in 2015 and the Federal Act on the Appointment of Federal Committees. Whether this will be sufficient to reach the set goal in 2025 remains to be seen.

The campaign “[#ParitätJetzt](#)” calls for an equal representation of women and men in parliaments (federal and regional). In other countries, such as France, these regulations have significantly increased the proportion of women.

For the private sector the Second Management Positions Act (FüPoG II) has been in force since August 2021. It extends the First Management Positions Act (FüPoG I) from 2015 and aims to further promote equal rights for men and women in

<sup>12</sup> More data available here:

[https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Themen/Nav\\_Themen/2023\\_Fuepog\\_7.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile&v=5](https://www.bmj.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Themen/Nav_Themen/2023_Fuepog_7.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=5)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.destatis.de/Europa/DE/Thema/Bevoelkerung-Arbeit-Soziales/Arbeitsmarkt/Frauenanteil\\_Fuehrungsetagen.html](https://www.destatis.de/Europa/DE/Thema/Bevoelkerung-Arbeit-Soziales/Arbeitsmarkt/Frauenanteil_Fuehrungsetagen.html)



management positions. Since 2016, for example, a binding quota of 30% women has applied to supervisory boards of companies in which the federal government holds a majority stake and in public corporations. In the private sector, it only applies to supervisory board members of listed companies. Only target figures apply to the management taking decisions. The missing of binding quotas have been harshly criticized by Deutscher Frauenrat and the Unions (ver.di). Networking and mentoring remain important: in the energy industry, 20 women's networks are now promoting career opportunities for women as well as the exchange and expansion of business relationships with each other. These networks are also contributing to more women in top management positions<sup>14</sup>.

### 3.3 Key results and remaining challenges

Women are well represented in the government and the administration, but not very well in the parliament. The proportion of female managers in the energy sector is rising slowly but steadily<sup>15</sup>. However, women are still rarely to be found in the top management. Studies show that companies gain value and are sustainably more successful when more women are responsible for management roles and the management level is fundamentally more diverse. Thus, the challenge remains of combatting gender stereotypes, tackling the gender pay and care gap and to improve the working conditions in general. An enabling working environment does not only provide for care opportunities, flexible working hours and home office, but also needs to raise awareness about patriarchal managing structures and sexual harassment.

## SOURCES

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<sup>14</sup> [PWC, 2022](#)

<sup>15</sup> [PWC, 2022](#)