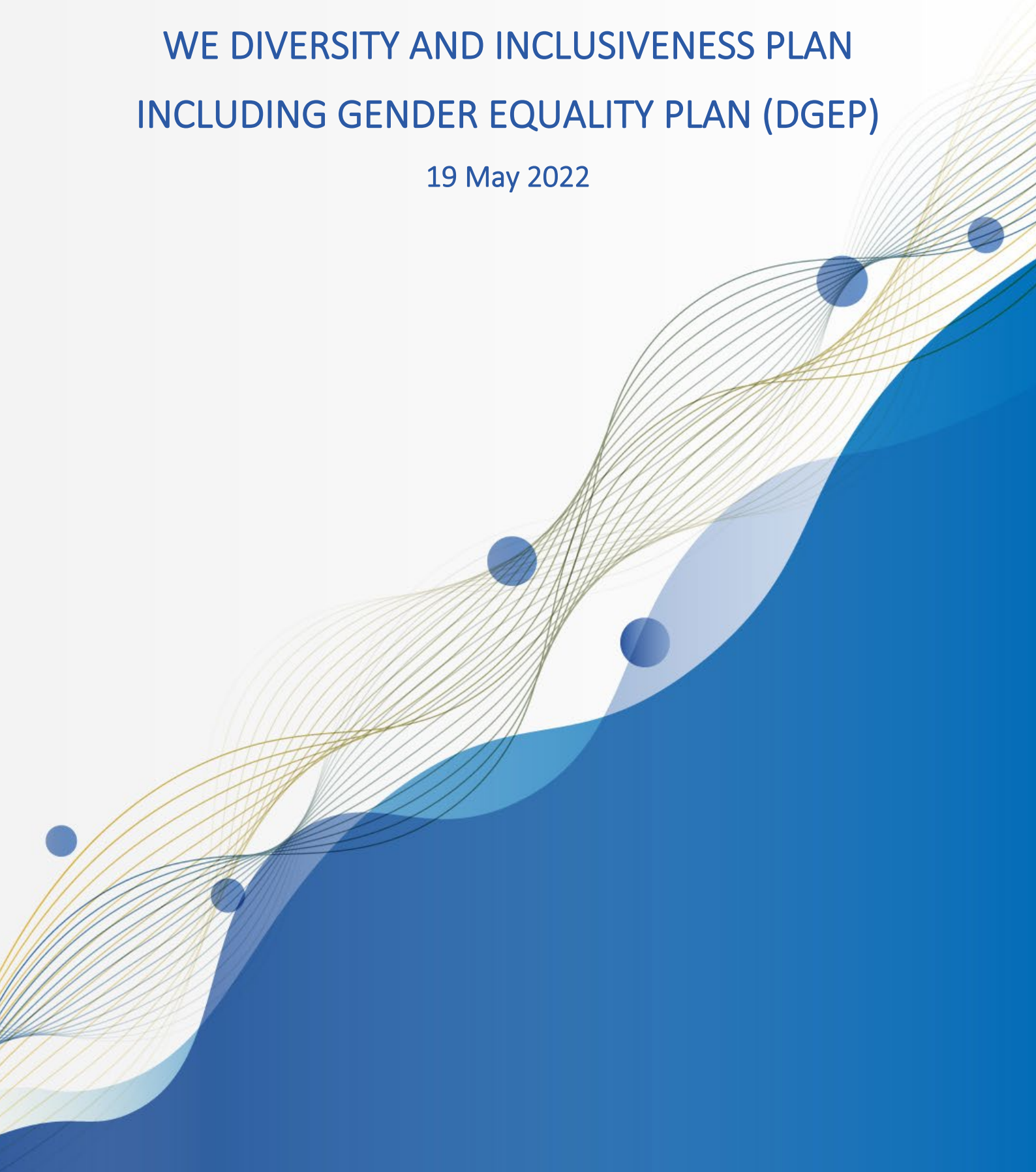




WE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVENESS PLAN INCLUDING GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (DGEP)

19 May 2022



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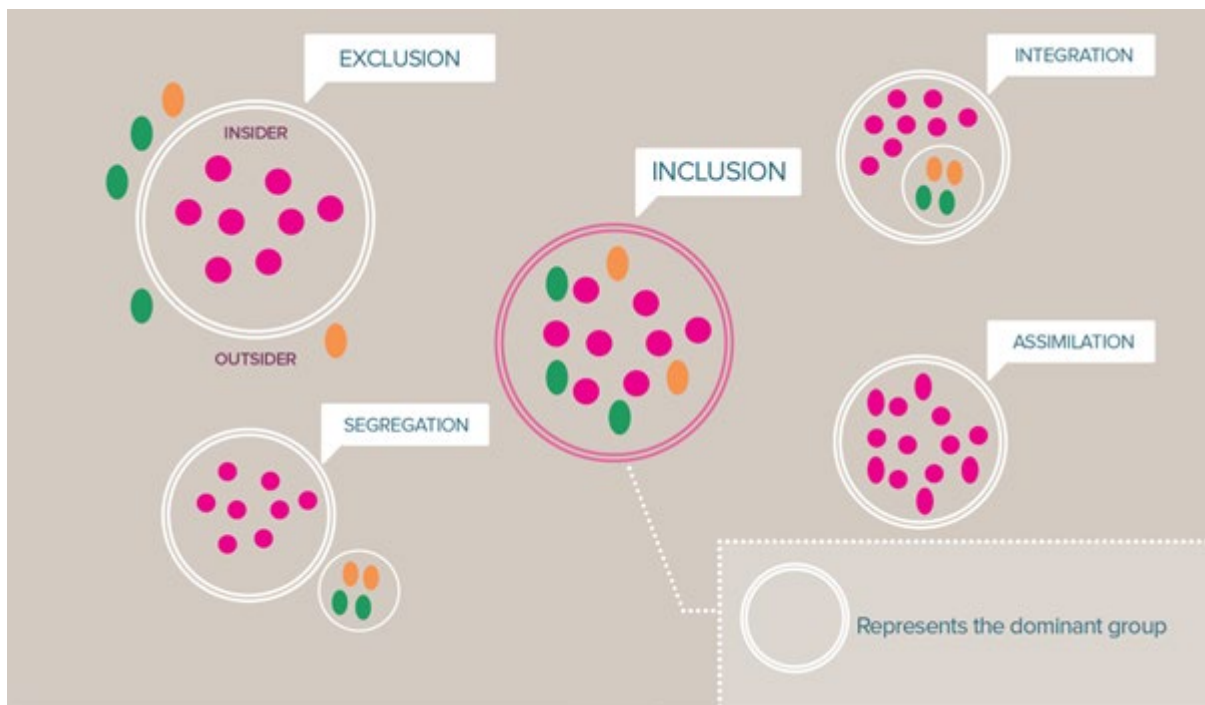
1. Introduction

WE is a value-based multi-stakeholder association with over 250 members representing the whole variety of the innovative water eco-system. All WE activities are guided by its Water Vision and the ambition to achieve a *Water-Smart Society*. As a membership-based organisation, WE provides many opportunities for its members' representatives to participate as volunteers in Water Europe and to take up responsibilities in its governance¹ as one of its WE Ambassadors. WE is supported by a small secretariat with 7-10 staff members located across Europe. In its meeting of October 2019, the WE Board formulated an ambition for driving a stronger diversity and inclusiveness in Water Europe.

1.1 What are we talking about?

Diversity is about differences in people. Translated to WE and diversity policy, it means recognising and positively observing differences between people who participate in Water Europe. It is about influencing the degree of diversity in the organization and the attitude of volunteers and colleagues in this. Differences include gender, age, sexual preference, cultural background, level of education, religion, height, physical and mental work challenge. Differences can be visible and invisible.

Diversity is different from inclusivity. In an inclusive organization, people have the space to be themselves, to feel safe and the same opportunities to develop. In addition, there is a realization that volunteers and colleagues are connected to each other and need each other. Where diversity is about recognizing and valuing differences from and between people, inclusivity focuses on a culture in which identity, safety, and connectedness are important.



Source: JUMP

¹ E.g., Leadership WE Working Groups and Vision Leadership Teams, WE Policy Advisory Committee, and WE Board.

1.2 Our motivation – Why diversity and inclusion policy?

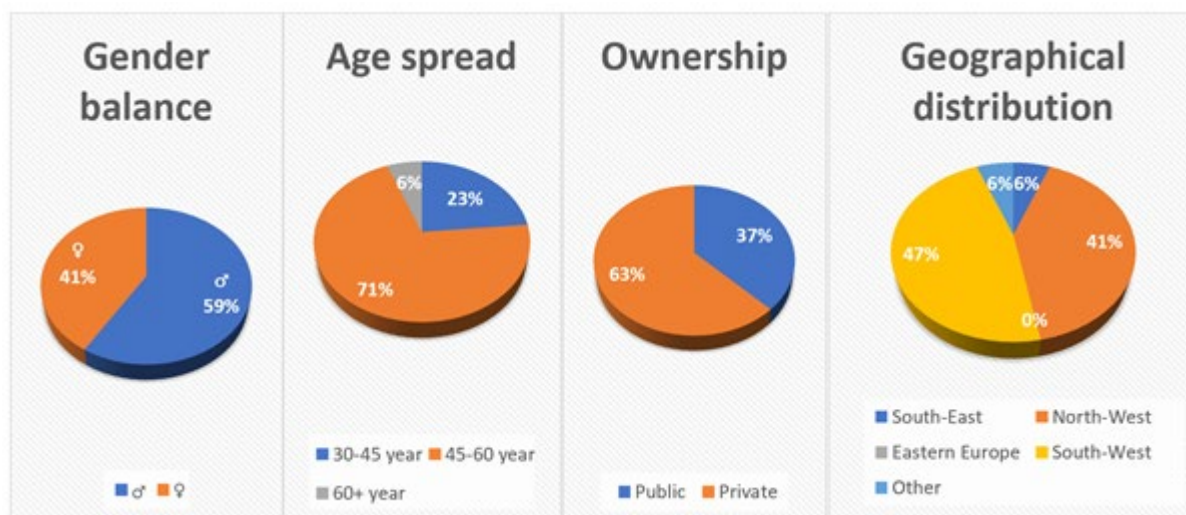
Why has WE made diversity and inclusiveness a strategic priority? The value of diversity and inclusion policies for our association lies in the following:

- ✓ Staff and volunteers who feel seen and valued in their individuality and quality experience trust. This increases job satisfaction and commitment. It also makes WE an attractive employer and association to participate in.
- ✓ The societal issues that WE is working on are complex, among other things, due to different perspectives of the parties involved. With a diversity of staff and volunteers, WE is better able to understand that complexity and drive the transition to a Water-Smart Society.
- ✓ With a diverse group of staff and volunteers and an inclusive culture, WE is better able to connect with our current and prospective members, stakeholders, and society at large, for the longer term in a meaningful way.
- ✓ Giving space to differences and interconnectedness increases the learning capacity, innovative power, and entrepreneurship of WE and its community.

Important principles in our diversity and inclusiveness policy are:

- ✓ A safe working environment
- ✓ Listening with an 'open mind' without prejudice
- ✓ Stimulating participation and engagement for all employees
- ✓ Appreciating, embracing, and learning from differences

2 Diversity parameters WE Board of Directors²



3 Gender Equality Plan

As mentioned in the introduction, diversity and inclusiveness have many components dimensions and Water Europe will approach these concepts with a broad-spectrum approach. Gender equality is one of these components. By drawing up, implementing, evaluating, and further developing a Diversity and Gender Equality Plan (D-GEP), we support the European Commission's Gender Equality

² March 2022

Strategy 2020-2025 and the Fifth Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations ('Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls'). To create the plan, we were inspired by the 'Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans' of the European Commission (2021) and various conversations with members in our network. The example of the GEP below should be considered as an example for other components and dimensions of diversity and inclusiveness.

On a proposal from the European Commission, the GEP consists of the following components. WE takes them as the basis for its own GEP:

1. Work-life balance and organizational culture
2. Gender equality in recruitment, career development, and in leadership and decision-making
3. Training
4. Integration of the gender dimension in research and education
5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment
6. Data collection and monitoring
7. Resources available

3.1 Work-life balance and organizational culture

Work-life balance and the organisational culture are key factors that contribute to an enabling environment. It is about creating the work-life circumstances and organisational culture all employees and volunteers, whatever their gender identity may be, need to have fulfilling careers and to have the same entitlements for a healthy work-life balance.

Our working conditions contribute to a healthy work-life balance of our employees:

- ✓ Our working hours are flexible.
- ✓ Our work location is flexible for all employees.
- ✓ In special circumstances, we provide tailor-made solutions for colleagues.

Measures and targets:

- ✓ For the work-life balance of our colleagues, we will continue the path already taken with the measures for flexible working hours, flexible work location, and tailor-made solutions.
- ✓ In the area of organizational culture, we want to work to increase the awareness, knowledge and skills of volunteers and employees in the field of gender equality and other components of diversity and inclusivity.
- ✓ According to the needs of the organization and employees, training courses are given

3.2 Gender balance in recruitment, career development, and in leadership and decision-making

WE will continue to recruit new staff and WE ambassadors with an eye for diversity throughout the association. Important criteria for recruitment of staff, volunteers, and WE ambassadors include:

1. What does *the position* require in terms of education, skills, experience, and personality?
2. What does *the composition of the team* that this person will be joining require: what are we looking for in terms of diversity and stability of the team? Do we know which roles in the team are less well filled, and what can make our team a winning team?

3. What does *the organisation* need? What do we collectively need considering the organisation's strategy and the inclusive culture we are striving for³?

WE sees diversity in leadership positions as a contribution to the quality of decision-making and would like to set a good example, both for its own employees, its members, and its stakeholders. Since 2019 the female-male distribution in the Board has changed from 14%-86% to 41%-59%. There is also an increased balance in the composition and leadership positions of WE Working Groups, Vision Leadership Teams, and the Policy Advisory Committee.

Currently, the gender balance for the different bodies in Water Europe is as follows:

- ✓ WE Secretariat: 30% male - 70% female
- ✓ WE Ambassadors: 66% male – 33% female
- ✓ WE Board: 41% male – 59% female

Measures and targets:

- ✓ We are looking at how we can improve our recruitment for staff, and volunteer leadership positions and act accordingly. Examples include gender-neutral language in vacancies, consciously including team diversity in the selection process.
- ✓ We continue to pay attention to diversity in images on our socials and website.
- ✓ We continue to be mindful and improve the gender balance as well as diversity in general in our leadership positions. We strive for a combination of what is needed for the position, the team and in the WE context.

3.3 Training

Measures and targets:

- ✓ WE will actively stimulate dialogue on diversity and inclusiveness in its community and the water eco-system at large.

3.4 Integrating the gender dimension in research and education

The Integration of the diversity and gender dimension in research must ensure that the research work is not biased to a specific segment of society and applies to society as a whole. It is about the quality of the results and its impact.

Years of research have revealed that sex and gender bias are socially harmful and expensive. Gender bias leads to missed market opportunities. In engineering for example assuming a male as default can produce errors in machine translation, in city planning not collecting data on caregiving work leads to inefficient transportation systems, in medicine basic research failing use of appropriate samples of male and female cells and tissues yields faulty results.

³Organisational needs include considerations such as: Do we, at the level of the organisation, have challenges and tasks that we can hardly handle with the current population? Are we looking for innovation, entrepreneurship, rejuvenation or seniority, political-administrative sensitivity, or communication skills? Do we want more diversity in educational backgrounds, in value orientations, in cultural baggage? Do we only want people who went through their education with flying colours and many additional functions, or do we also look for people who have overcome setbacks and have got where they are by trial and error?

Measures and targets:

Objectives and approach up to and including 2025

- ✓ We are working more consciously in putting together diverse and inclusive project groups.
- ✓ In our activities in collaborative research and innovation projects such as communication & dissemination, policy work, networking, Water-oriented Living Labs, we also pay attention to diversity.

3.5 Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

WE management is alert to cases of undesirable behaviour in the context of its activities both regarding its staff and its volunteers. As regards staff undesirable behaviour is explicitly addressed

Measures and targets:

- ✓ We continue to monitor and discreetly discuss and help with common cases of undesirable behaviour.
- ✓ Measures to deal with undesirable behaviour have been included in our labour regulation

3.6 Data collection and monitoring

From 2022 onwards, we will report annually on the following data and indicators:

- ✓ Gender balance of staff members, and volunteers with a leading role.

3.7 Resources available

A more diverse and inclusive water sector is a condition sine qua non for achieving a Water-Smart Society and therefore one of the strategic priorities of Water Europe. It is also included in the implementation of the conclusion of the WE membership Journey Roadmap that was developed by Caggemini. The WE Board will closely follow to its implementation and require annual reporting. It will also appoint an advisor to the Board with expertise on diversity and gender equality. We see the further development of diversity and inclusivity as a joint responsibility of all of us.

