



SBA Research

Programme: COMET – Competence Centers for Excellent Technologies

Programme line: COMET-Centre K1

Type of project: Gender Equality, on-going

GENDER EQUALITY AT SBA RESEARCH

SBA Research has always been active in promoting Gender Equality. E.g., in 2018, we drafted a plan on addressing the shortage of women in leading positions. This plan already showed promising results, since we were able to increase our share of female employees in leading positions, in the management and in our research departments as well. But since there is still a general underrepresentation of females in the IT sector, there is still room for more improvements. To further our aims, we updated this plan and aligned it with the requirements of Horizon 2020. This public document meets various requirements regarding the process (dedicated resources, data collecting and monitoring and training) as well as focusing on special aspects of gender equality.

One of these aspects: We want to give young female talents the opportunity to get a glimpse of everyday working life in IT Security. This aim is especially helped along by the FFG funding program FEMtech.

Since 2020 (until now), over forty FemTech internships have been completed, and in March 2022, sixteen former FemTech interns are still working at SBA Research, not counting other female employees who stayed on after their internship and then left to work in the industry or other research institutions or universities.

An example for a possible career path of a female researcher at SBA is one of our key researchers, Johanna Ullrich: She initially took summer jobs at the software development team at SBA Research as well as with a company partner. Then she gained research experience as an FFG FEMTech intern. She wrote a project proposal, which was granted and enabled her to continue research into information security (FFG Bridge 1, CyPhySec). After completing her doctorate, she became a senior researcher, founding and supervising a new research group (ERIS – Networks and Critical Infrastructures Security

SUCCESS STORY

Group); finally, she became an SBA key researcher in January 2020 and is holding a senior researcher position at the University of Vienna.

SBA Research is also taking active steps to make women in ICT more visible. Female researchers take time to participate in initiatives such as techNIKE of TU Wien to hold workshops especially aimed at girls. Other activities include school visits, Wiener Forschungsfest, Young Researchers Day, etc. We also address the topic in our own events, e.g., at the sec4dev Conference & Bootcamp 2021 one of the special sessions was “Women in IT – we are no Aliens!” with more than 50 participants. In 2022, the sec4dev hosted a follow-up session called “Women in IT – we are here to stay” which also was a huge success. We are also engaged in various networks, like [WOMENinICT](#), [Austrian Chapter of Women4Cyber](#) and [Women in Privacy & Security Vienna](#).

Impact and effects

Diversity in thought and action, as well as diversity in the way challenges are viewed, are a great advantage, especially in a world as fast-moving as ours. This shows in various aspects of our working life, for example, teams consisting of different people are more likely to have a holistic view of problems. Furthermore, a balanced gender ratio leads to more stability and greater success.¹ Therefore, we are committed to address the issue of Gender Equality proactively and regularly.

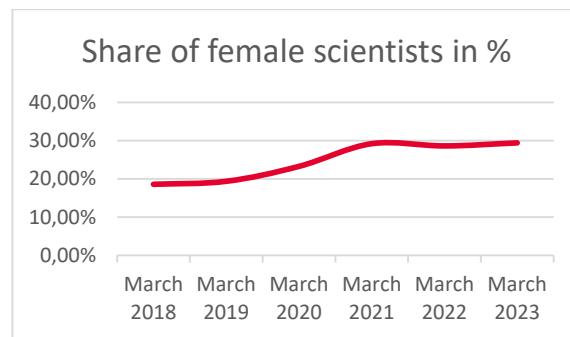


Figure: Share of female scientists at SBA Research

Project coordination (Story)

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¹ See R. Bendl, R. Hofmann: Frau + Mann gleich fördern = gewinnen! Gleichstellung als Erfolgsformel für Unternehmen. Stadt Wien, 2008:

[Gleichstellung als Erfolgsformel fuer Unternehmen.pdf \(femtech.at\)](#).