

IOS Press Looking to the Future

Sustainable Development Goals



Introduction

In December 2020, IOS Press became a signatory of the UN [SDG Publishers Compact](#). In doing so, the company committed to develop sustainable practices and act as champions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), publishing books and journals that will help inform, develop, and inspire action in that direction.

An IOS Press **SDG** working group was established during the first quarter of 2021 with a task to set targets relating to specific SDGs. The SDG goals we decided to prioritize as a company in the first year were:

- SDG 5 (gender equality);
- SDG 10 (reduced inequalities),
- SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production);
- SDG 13 (climate action); and
- SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals).



Quarterly updates are announced at:
iospress.com/sustainable-development-goals



SDG 5 & SDG 10

Gender Equality & Reduced Inequalities

Our initial priorities related to SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities) in terms of diversity. The working group initially looked at what actions related to diversity and equality were already in place at company and journal levels. From there, a careful assessment of all IOS Press journals in terms of gender and geographic diversity has taken place.

In the third quarter of 2021, IOS Press joined the [Joint commitment for action on inclusion and diversity in publishing](#) with an aim to pool our resources, expertise, and insight to accelerate research culture change. We also have representation on ALPSP's working group on equality, diversity and inclusion.



Equal Publishing Opportunities

IOS Press is a partner of [Research4Life](#), benefiting institutions and researchers (both readers and authors) of selected lower-income countries. The project enables these countries to have free online access to the content of IOS Press' journals and books. Moreover, authors from countries included in the project may publish at no cost in journals that charge an article publishing charge, including full open access journals, depending on each journal policy.

IOS Press published a Diversity and Inclusion Statement (DIS) in the second quarter of 2021, and editors of all our journals are invited to support the DIS.

Diversity and Inclusion Statement

As a publisher, IOS Press is committed to promoting and enabling equal opportunity for all, regardless of gender identity, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, or disability status. We actively work on expanding our actions and more effectively promoting access and publishing opportunities for under-represented groups. We invite the Editors-in-Chief of our journals to add their support to this process and commit to this Diversity and Inclusion Statement, expanding inclusivity actions to their editorial boards, reviewers, and authors.



Assessment of IOS Press Journals

To incentivize journals' development towards equality in terms of gender and diversity, we initially collected geographic data from authors and editorial boards to assess the situation and establish a benchmark. Five journals were selected as case studies: [Bladder Cancer](#), [Environmental Policy and Law](#), [Information Polity](#), [Semantic Web](#), and [WORK](#). Gender data at a board level was also assessed for these five journals.

After assessing the results from the case studies, the working group expanded the geographical analysis of authors to cover all journals published by IOS Press. Our goal with such an action was to raise awareness, and that the working group's recommendations would become the starting point for discussions – at journal level, with editors, and at company level, among our colleagues and the company management – about actions that could be taken towards improved equality.

How do we collect geographical data from all authors?

The working group uses [LD Connect](#) to gather information publicly available in the articles published by IOS Press, such as authors' names and affiliations. The search tool allows us to gain an overview of all authors publishing in our journals throughout the years.

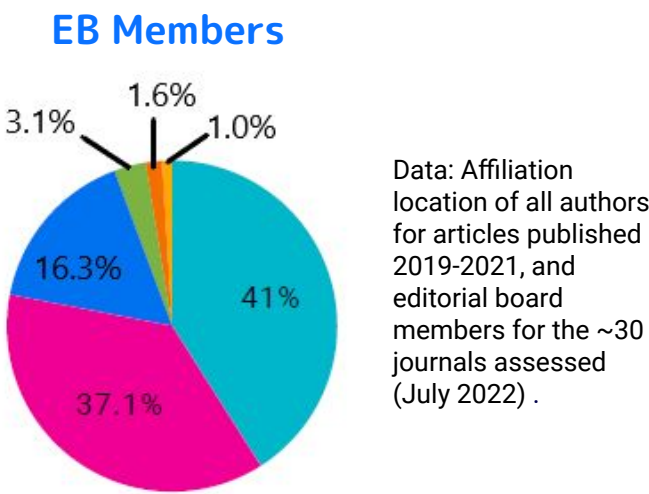
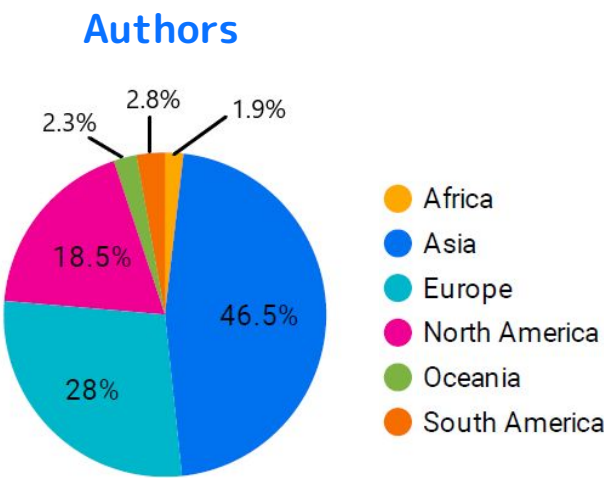


Geographical Distribution: Authors and Editors

Almost half of the authors publishing in IOS Press’ journals are affiliated with institutions in Asia (46.5%), while the other half is composed mostly of authors affiliated with European and North American institutions (28% and 18.5%, respectively). The remaining 7% is more or less evenly distributed between South America (2.8%), Oceania (2.3%), and Africa (1.9%).

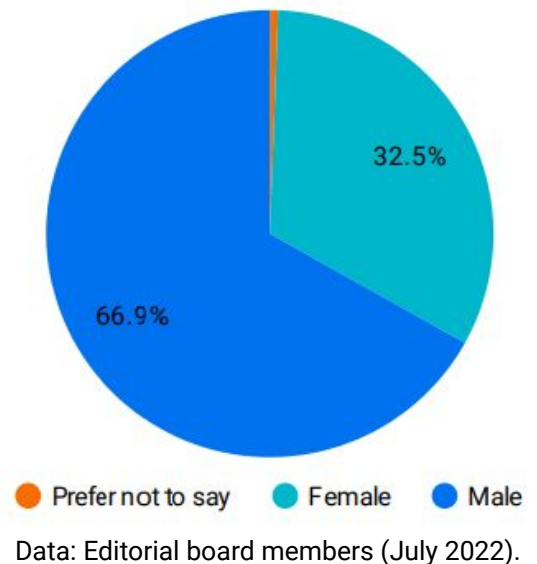
Most editorial board (EB) members of IOS Press journals are affiliated with institutions in Europe (41%) and North America (37.1%). The third most represented continent is Asia, where 16.3% of the editorial board members are affiliated. Oceania, South America and Africa sum together 5.7% (3.1%, 1.6%, and 1%, respectively).

In an effort to achieve a better balance worldwide, editors are being invited to expand editorial boards and establish partnerships with researchers in the least represented parts of the globe. At the same time, IOS Press makes sure that Research4Life access to publish is incentivized in journals that charge article publishing charges.



Gender Distribution: Editors

Research reveals that women are often under-represented at board level [1] and in the peer-review process [2]. At IOS Press, we invite editors to consider whether any actions could be taken for their journals. Approximately 40% of all our journals have been analyzed for gender balance, showing that the editorial boards of those journals are predominantly male. Men account for 66.9% of editorial board members, while women represent 32.5%, and 0.6% preferred not to say.



Call to Action

About 40% of the journals published by IOS Press already support the DIS and have diversity and inclusion actions under discussion. Such actions include, but are not limited to:

- Support access for authors, readers, and institutions from low-income countries via Research4Life
- Promote professional growth within the journal
- Promote geographical diversity among authors with punctual actions, including the promotion of publisher's actions for more equality
- Aim for a geographically and gender balanced panel of reviewers
- Consider gender-focused special issues
- Take gender into account when identifying guest editors and authors
- Promote journal/book content relating to SDG 5 and SDG 10 on IOS Press webpages
- Engage in a regular review and make this an ongoing conversation



SDG 12

Responsible Consumption and Production

Focusing on our priorities for SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), we have committed to drastically reducing the amount of paper that we print and are investigating moving to a more ecologically-sound approach of prioritizing electronic services.

The main target is to reduce print materials (journal copies and marketing materials). After assessing the current print situation of our journals, we have significantly reduced the number of print journal copies. Moreover, the working group reaches out to journal managers and editors to raise awareness about responsible consumption and production internally and reducing where possible.



Responsible Marketing

For any new projects, sustainability should be considered before new partnerships or contracts are initiated. We advocate for using “green”/eco approaches when opting for our newly branded letterhead/envelopes or business cards, and other materials for conferences. We recommend our conference booths to be stripped back: less paper; and little or no journal copies. The use of flyers and digital items on a booth will reduce the amount of paper waste and lessen our impact on the environment. Considerations about traveling to conferences will be undertaken in our next phase of investigation – in relation to any future recommendations linked to the environmental policy.



SDG 13

Climate Action

Looking ahead, we will start using a structured approach for our organizational focus on sustainability relating to SDG 13 (climate action). To achieve this goal, we have partnered with [Greencast](#) to assess and monitor IOS Press' carbon footprint in the coming years. Moreover, we are looking into:

- Using the globally recognized reporting tool GRI Standards to select, address, and report on our sustainability goals
- Implementing the UN Global Compact Communication Progress Standards to inform on our progress in reaching our goals
- Working towards joining [The Climate Pledge](#)
- Striving to make our publishing company Net Zero by 2040



SDG 17

Partnerships for the Goals

Having like-minded partners working with us is extremely important if we want to fully implement our sustainable development plan, hence the SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals) is a central point for us to start a successful journey.

We recommend that IOS Press prioritizes working with partners/suppliers that are like-minded in terms of an environmentally-focused approach and those for which sustainability is on the agenda. The SDG working group is assessing which current suppliers fall into this category. We also encourage those that do not have a public sustainability statement or environment policy to implement one.



Notes

1. "Gender Equity on Journal Editorial Boards" by Julie K. Silver, The Lancet (2019):
[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)31042-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)31042-6).

2. "Research: Gender bias in scholarly peer review" by Markus Helmer, et al., eLife (2017):
<https://elifesciences.org/articles/21718>.

More about the IOS Press SDG working group actions at:
iospress.com/ios-press-35#ios35sdg

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By IOS Press SDG Working Group,
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