



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

# **GENDER EQUALITY PLAN**

## **2023-2026**

**The topic of gender equality is often taken for granted as a legal matter, and many people may not perceive the obstacles to achieving it. Despite decades of legal systems and other rules guaranteeing equality, the main causes of existing inequalities seem to be historical inertia in the functioning of institutions and an unawareness of privileged positions and one's own gender prejudices based on social stereotypes. Achieving lasting change in the functioning of institutions is therefore contingent on systematically eliminating or reducing the influence of these stereotypes and unconscious prejudices.**

This document represents the strategy of the Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the CAS, v. v. i., to achieve equality for all employees. The implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is also part of the [HR Award Action Plan](#), which the Institute was awarded in February 2022. The GEP was developed in accordance with the requirements of the European Commission:

- *publication*: the formal document is published on the [institution's website](#) and signed by the management of the institute;
- *resources allocated*: those responsible for the preparation of the gender plan have been trained in gender equality, and financial resources are allocated from the institution's overhead; resources and expertise in gender equality are also allocated for the implementation of the plan;
- *data collection and monitoring*: staff data will be disaggregated by gender from 2023 onwards, and statistics based on defined indicators will be published in annual reports;
- *training*: in the GEP Action Plan (see below), training sessions are planned for staff to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality and unconscious gender bias.

The gender equality plan of the Institute of Vertebrate Biology is based on an internal audit (an analysis based on gender-segregated data, a questionnaire survey conducted from 6 to 15 September 2023, and internal interviews). The plan covers the following areas:

1. gender balance in leadership and decision-making
2. gender equality in recruitment and promotion
3. work-life balance and organisational culture
4. integrating the gender dimension into the content of research and teaching
5. measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

The plan was developed by the HR Award working group, consisting of (members are listed in alphabetical order): RNDr. Radim Blažek, Ph.D. (R3 researcher), Mgr. Alena Fornůsková, Ph.D. (researcher R2, head of the Popularization and Media Communication Department), Mgr. Lenka Polačiková, Ph.D. (Senior Project Manager), Assoc. Mgr. Jan Zukal, Ph.D., MBA (Director of the Institute). Mgr. Barbora Pafčo, Ph.D. (R3 researcher, person in charge of handling complaints in the Whistle-blowing programme). The progress of the implementation of the GEP Action Plan will be monitored by the HR Award working group and also by the Board of the Institute (Steering Committee). The five recommended areas are discussed in separate sections below. These sections provide a summary of the activities planned or already implemented under the HRS4R project. The monitoring group will be responsible for checking the timely implementation of the planned actions and will meet at the end of each quarter.

The Equal Opportunities Plan of the Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the CAS, was approved by the Board of the Institute on 27 September 2023 and becomes effective on the date of the Director's signature.

27.9.23



**The aim of the GEP IVB is to:**

- ensure fair and transparent conditions for professional development and career advancement
- break down stereotypes and (often unconscious) prejudices that limit us in objectively assessing the reality around us
- achieve effective management and increased competitiveness of the institution
- ensure an equal division of labour in research teams
- reconcile work and family life
- create an environment where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making
- enhance employee satisfaction, motivation, loyalty, creativity, and efficiency
- reduce the risk of turnover and departures - i.e. sustainability of human capital management and governance

**1. GENDER BALANCE IN LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING**

Although the staff population is balanced in terms of gender (number: 56 F: 64 M, FTE: 41.6 F: 48.8 M), the management of the Institute of Vertebrate Biology recognises the under-representation of women in leadership and decision-making roles (Director and Deputy Director: 0 F: 2 M, Institute Council: 2 F: 7 M, Supervisory Board: 0 F: 5 M, Heads of Departments: 0 F: 3 M). The ratio of women to men is also skewed in favour of men among researchers, senior researchers, and postdoctoral fellows (see Table 1). Only in the position of PhD student is the gender ratio balanced. In the support sector (THS, PR department, project management), women are once again the majority.

**Table 1:** Representation of women and men in each job position as of 31 August 2023.

Category	Registration status			Converted staff (FTE*)		
	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men
103 POSTDOCTORAND	11,00	2,00	9,00	10,00	1,50	8,50
104 SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANT	3,00	1,00	2,00	1,65	0,50	1,15
105 RESEARCHER	25,00	8,00	17,00	20,85	7,20	13,65
106 SENIOR RESEARCHER	19,00	3,00	16,00	14,95	3,00	11,95
201 PROFESSIONAL WORKER.R&D	6,00	3,00	3,00	2,80	2,20	0,60
<b>Total</b>	<b>64,00</b>	<b>17,00</b>	<b>47,00</b>	<b>50,25</b>	<b>14,40</b>	<b>35,85</b>
202 DOCTORAND	15,00	8,00	7,00	7,35	3,40	3,95
300 PROFESSIONAL WORKER	3,00	2,00	1,00	3,00	2,00	1,00
400 VOCATIONAL WORKER, HONEYCOMB	24,00	16,00	8,00	16,80	10,00	6,80
700 THP WORKER	11,00	11,00	-	10,20	10,00	0,20

800	WORKER	1,00	-	1,00	1,00	-	1,00
900	OPERATIONS OFFICER	2,00	2,00	-	1,75	1,75	-
	Total	120,00	56,00	64,00	90,35	41,55	48,80

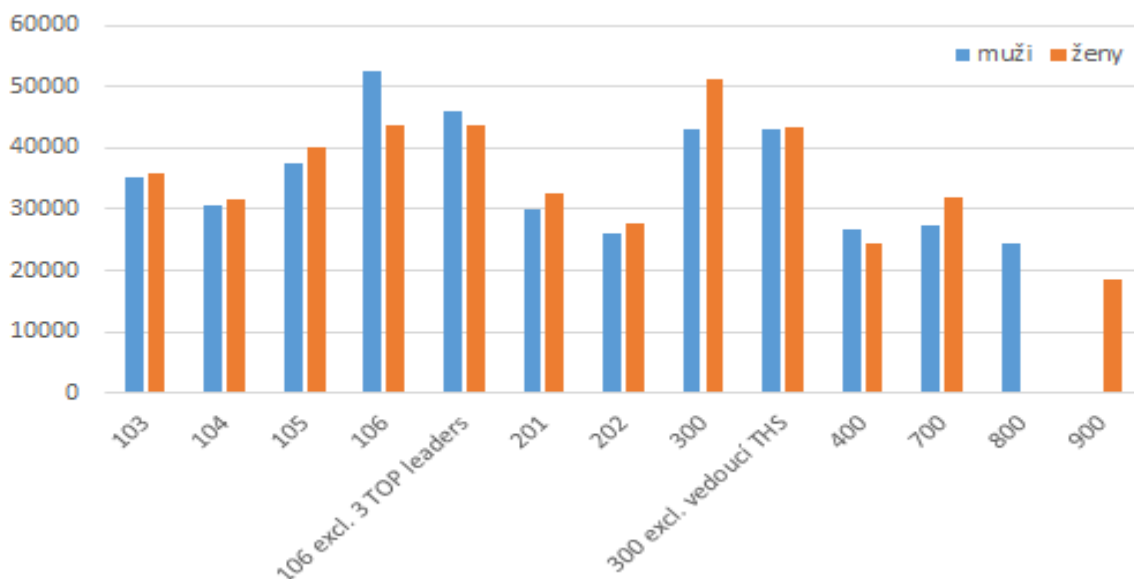
\*FTE - full-time equivalent

The similar representation of women and men is typical for the academic environment, so it is not directly related to the management of the institute but rather the consequences of the social and cultural setting, as seen in the research results on the [Status of Women in Science](#). In the Czech Republic, the representation of women in science is still very low; at 28%, it is one of the lowest figures in the EU. In addition to stereotypes, pay gaps, or challenges with reconciling work and family care, the general culture in science and research also plays a role. According to the European UniSAFE survey, in which the National Contact Centre participated, 66% of women studying and working in academia have experienced some form of gender-based violence and harassment. The questionnaire survey at IVB revealed that both male and female staff members have also experienced sexual harassment and bullying (see more in section 5, Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment). Encountering such behaviour contributes, among other things, to women leaving the scientific environment or not even choosing such a career<sup>1</sup>.

Activities that can stimulate women to apply for management and leadership positions may include the use of gender-sensitive language and the breaking down of gender stereotypes in the workplace. Additionally, placing a greater emphasis on safety and respect in science and academia. The proposed activities will aim to train male and female staff on gender-based violence in academia and breaking down gender stereotypes in the workplace. A mentoring course will also be offered to male and female staff, along with the opportunity for regular meetings of scientific team leaders to exchange experiences in leading groups.

<sup>1</sup> [https://genderaveda.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TZ\\_MDZDV-2023.pdf](https://genderaveda.cz/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/TZ_MDZDV-2023.pdf)

**Chart 1:** Comparison of average monthly salaries (excluding bonuses) for individual job positions.



The financial remuneration of staff at IVB is non-discriminatory. The graph of average salaries per full-time equivalent (1 FTE) shows only differences in the group of senior researchers (category 106) and university professionals (category 300). In both cases, this is due to the significantly higher salaries of those in top management positions with a long working history (heads of THS or top leaders of research teams). After excluding them, the difference in average salaries is less than 7%, and salaries are higher in almost all positions in favour of women.

Proposed action	Responsible person	Date of implementation	Indicator/objective
1.1 Placing greater emphasis on safety and respect in science and academia	HR Award working group, Institute management	Q1/2024  Q1/2025	1.1.1. Training of male and female employees on issues of gender-based violence in the academic environment 1.1.2. Training of male and female employees in the elimination of gender stereotypes in the workplace
1.2 Support for research team leaders	HR Award working group, Institute management	Q4/2025 THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW	1.2.1. Mentoring course 1.2.2. Regular meetings of scientific team leaders to exchange experiences in leading groups

## 2. GENDER EQUALITY IN RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

Gender equality in recruitment and career advancement, the so-called Recruitment process at the Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the CAS is rooted in the principles of Openness, Transparency and Merit based recruitment (OTM-R recruitment) is one of the main pillars of the HR award process. Currently, a revision of the OTM-R policy is in progress at the IVB, aiming for ongoing improvement in the recruitment process., This includes the creation of the OTM-R website with all relevant information and the standardisation of recruitment rules (see [HRS4R Action Plan](#)). The existing rules need to be revised and updated, especially regarding the training of the selection committee and transparency during the recruitment process. However, potential male and female staff members at IVB are not subjected to discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, faith and religion, nationality, social or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, and social or economic status, in adherence to the Code of Conduct. The Selection Committee, appointed by the Director, actively considers gender balance when selecting members. Given that any researcher can become a committee member, comprehensive training in the principles of OTM-R is extended to all researchers. This training will be expanded to include the use of gender-sensitive language and the breaking down of gender stereotypes. At the same time, all documents related to OTM-R will be prepared with consideration for the use of gender-sensitive language.

Proposed action	Responsible person	Date of implementation	Indicator/objective
2.1 Training researchers in the principles of OTM-R, which will be expanded to include the use of gender-sensitive language and the breaking down of gender stereotypes	HR Award working group, Institute management	Q1/2024	2.1.1. Training for researchers on the principles of OTM-R and on the use of gender-sensitive language and breaking down gender stereotypes
2.2 Implementation of gender sensitive language in OTM-R related documents	HR Award working group, Institute management	Q4/2024	2.2.1. Processing OTM-R documents with regard to gender-sensitive language 2.2.2. Dissemination of information to male and female employees of the Institute

### 3. WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

The Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the CAS is among the public research organisations offering part-time work, flexible working hours, and home-office options. These measures significantly support the reconciliation of personal and professional life. Since 2022, the Institute of Vertebrate Biology of the CAS has initiated the implementation of resolutions from the [HRS4R Action Plan](#) (especially Activity 3\_D), related to work-life balance. These resolutions included the organisation of events aimed primarily at supporting work-life balance: the African Day at Brno Zoo 2022, Children's Day 2022, Summer Camp 2022 (organised at the same time as the ESEB conference), Biodiversity Day at Brno Zoo 2023, and Summer Camp 2023 (with financial support to the camp from the FSP), the active approach of the Institute's management in arranging a children's group in Brno, and efforts to set up places in the planned academic kindergarten in Brno for the Institute's staff. The questionnaire survey indicates that the employees are satisfied with the support and helpfulness provided by the Institute. However, they would appreciate the extension of activities to include additional events that contribute to the physical and mental well-being of the staff, as well as fostering team-building. As a part of the HRS4R initiative, a staff manual is currently in development. This manual will incorporate procedures, benefits, and information on the support available to staff. While a Code of Ethics exists for staff in the scientific departments at the IVB, a corresponding Code of Ethics is not available for staff in the administrative and support departments. It is therefore necessary to formulate and adopt a Code of Ethics for all staff.

Proposed action	Responsible person	Date of implementation	Indicator/objective
3.1 Organisation of training and educational courses on work-life balance	Institute Management, HR Award working group	Q2/2024	3.1.1 Organisation of training and educational courses on work-life balance

3.2 Organisation of team-building activities	Institute Management, HR Award working group	THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW	3.2.1 Organisation of team-building activities
3.3 Support for non-work activities from the FCPS	Management of the Institute	THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW	3.3.1 New rules for the use of the FKSP by employees
3.4 Employee Handbook	Institute Management, HR Award working group	Q4/2023	3.4.1 Development of a Staff Handbook and its introduction into the recruitment process
3.5 Extension of the Code of Ethics to all employees of the IVB	Management of the Institute	Q4/2024	3.5.1 Updating the Code of Ethics to include all employees
3.6 Formalisation of home-office and sick day	Management of the Institute	Q1/2024	3.6.1 Introduction of a clause providing for home-office and sick-day options in the employment contract

#### 4. INTEGRATING THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO RESEARCH AND TEACHING CONTENT

Promoting the integration of the gender dimension into research content is part of the European Commission's strategy for gender equality in research and innovation and falls under one of the six priorities of the European Research Area. When submitting a project proposal under Horizon 2020, applicants must evaluate whether the gender dimension is pertinent to their project's content. If it deems relevant, they are required to describe how a sex or gender analysis will be implemented in the project. There is growing evidence across various fields suggesting that knowledge or innovations frequently fail to adequately consider potential physical differences between women and men, or their different experiences, perspectives, or needs. Examples include voice-activated devices that do not respond equally to lower and higher voice frequencies, or language correctors that systematically label female language forms as incorrect. Both the role of sex and gender are often overlooked<sup>1</sup>.

Taking the gender dimension into account in research and innovation means considering the potential influence of partial physical differences associated with gender or differences in certain gender patterns at all stages (from the design of the research project to the application of the results). Where relevant, to maximise the utility of the results, the diversity of users of the research results in terms of age, ethnicity, health status, etc. should also be considered. The phrase 'gender dimension of research' is usually used as an umbrella term for both the gender and sex dimensions<sup>2</sup>.

In the questionnaire survey, we investigated the awareness of female and male employees regarding this issue. We found that it varies from advanced knowledge to a complete lack of understanding. Yet for some projects at the IVB, reflection on sex and gender can be relevant. Based on these findings, there will be an effort at the Institute to communicate and justify bringing the gender dimension into research conducted at the IVB.

<sup>1</sup> While the term "sex" refers to the sub-biological differences between women and men, "gender" refers to the socially constructed differences between women and men, which have changed throughout history and also vary across cultures.

<sup>2</sup> The introductory text on this issue was taken from the TAČR manual: [https://www.tacr.cz/wp-content/uploads/documents/2023/02/06/1675688771\\_Gender%20dimenze%20v%20obsahu%20v%C3%BDzkumu.pdf](https://www.tacr.cz/wp-content/uploads/documents/2023/02/06/1675688771_Gender%20dimenze%20v%20obsahu%20v%C3%BDzkumu.pdf)

<b>Proposed action</b>	<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Date of implementation</b>	<b>Indicator/objective</b>
4.1 Raising awareness of the gender dimension in research among the working population	Management of the Institute	Q4/2025	4.1.1 Training on the gender dimension of scientific and research activities

## **5. MEASURES AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT**

Complaints concerning human resources, such as workplace discrimination, violations of the Code of Ethics for Researchers of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as the Code of Ethics), and team disputes, are dealt with under the Code of Ethics (which, however, has so far only addressed scientific positions). According to the instructions, disputes and complaints should be resolved at a level higher than the level at which they initially arose. According to the Work Regulations and the Organisational Regulations, staff members can refer to members of the management or disputes between teams should be resolved by their team leaders through mutual agreement. If no agreement is reached, the Director will make the decision. The Academy of Sciences has set up an Ethics Committee, which is the highest authority for resolving scientific disputes (<https://1url.cz/Qzhjv>). In September 2023, a Whistle-blowing system was launched at the IVB, where male and female employees can anonymously report cases of illegal or unethical behaviour. The questionnaire survey revealed cases of experiences of sexual harassment (two respondents) and discrimination or bullying (five respondents). When asked if they knew what to do if they encountered a similar case, most male and female respondents replied that they would know where to report their testimony (Whistle-blowing system, institute management, team leaders). When asked whether it would be a good idea to introduce an ombudsman position directly at the IVB, 55% of respondents said no, while 45% said they would welcome a position at the Institute, which is 5% more than in the 2021 survey. Some respondents said they would appreciate it if this person was outside the IVB structure, preferably at the CAS.



<b>Proposed action</b>	<b>Responsible person</b>	<b>Date of implementation</b>	<b>Indicator/objective</b>
5.1 Creation of the ombudsman position	Management of the Institute	Q1/2024	5.1.1 Creation and filling of the position of Ombudsman 5.1.2 Specification of the Ombudsman's activities in the Institute's internal documents
5.2 Staff training on discrimination, bullying and harassment	Institute Management, HR Award working group	Q2/2024	5.2.1 Training for all staff on discrimination, bullying and harassment