

**Gender Equality Plan
Institute of Biotechnology of the
Czech Academy of Sciences
2025 - 2027**



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Introduction

The Gender Equality Plan 2025–2027 builds on the previous strategic document and further deepens the systematic approach to addressing gender equality within the institution. The implementation of the previous plan has confirmed the importance of this agenda and has led to numerous tangible improvements in promoting equal opportunities. This updated plan (hereafter referred to as the Gender Equality Plan, or GEP) reaffirms the commitment of the Institute of Biotechnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, v. v. i. (hereafter referred to as IBT), to advancing gender equality as a key component of its organizational development and management strategy, further strengthened by its entry into the implementation phase of the HR Award.

IBT fully adheres to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers in all aspects of its activities, including freedom of research, ethical principles, professional responsibility and attitude, good research practice, dissemination of results, non-discrimination, gender balance, co-authorship, working conditions, job stability, career development, mobility, evaluation, and recruitment. At the same time, IBT emphasizes the high level of expertise of every individual.

The overarching goal of the GEP remains to establish equal conditions for men and women in science, ensuring that talent is not lost, the potential of women is not underutilized, and financial resources are used efficiently. This includes addressing the lack of suitable tools to support women’s education and scientific careers. In parallel, the GEP also focuses on integrating the gender dimension into research. This involves considering gender and sex-related insights in areas such as risk factors, biological mechanisms, disease causes, clinical manifestations, consequences, or different approaches to the treatment of illnesses or disorders.

The GEP continues to cover the following key areas:

- Work-life balance and workplace culture,
- Gender balance in leadership and decision-making,
- Gender equality in recruitment and career development,
- Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content,
- Measures to combat gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

The GEP includes a list of actions that address all the required thematic areas. Its ambition is to ensure that IBT meets all the standards of a modern research institute in the European Research Area and fulfills its commitments toward gender equality. The successful implementation of the previous plan, including the establishment of the Employee Ombudsperson position and improved information accessibility for all staff, confirms the validity of this direction.

IBT draws on EU recommendations (e.g., Horizon Europe guidelines on gender equality plans), national authorities’ recommendations (the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports; the National Contact Centre for Gender and Science at the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences), and other relevant sources.

Ensuring equal access is the responsibility of all IBT employees. This plan applies to both employees and students, who are collectively responsible for fostering a respectful and tolerant environment that emphasizes the prevention of any form of discrimination. Given the Institute’s significant involvement in tertiary education, it is considered crucial to create a community built on mutual respect.

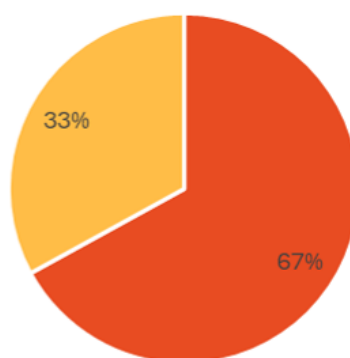
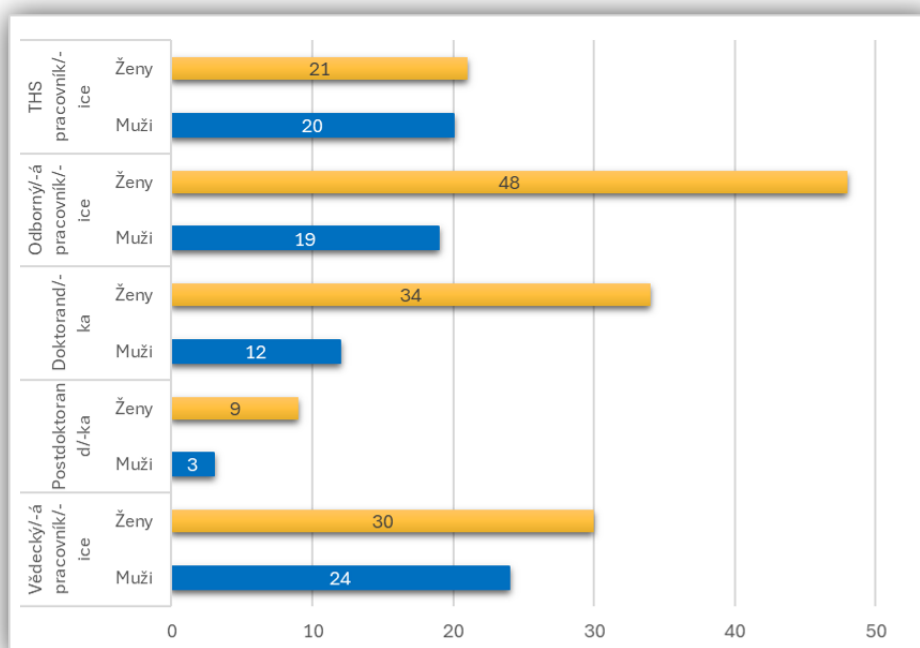
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1. Current Status and Objectives

One of the primary sources of information for the development of the GEP continues to be data on IBT employees. The following selection provides a basic outline of the current situation at IBT.

1.1. Employee Structure

As of the end of 2024, the gender distribution among IBT employees is 64% women and 36% men (142 women and 79 men out of a total of 220 employees). This trend of high female representation is evident across most job categories. In scientific positions, the gender ratio is relatively balanced (56% women to 44% men), as it is in administrative and technical staff positions (51% women to 49% men). However, women show a more pronounced majority in postdoctoral positions (75%), PhD positions (74%), and specialist roles (72%). Despite this, the representation of women in leadership roles remains disproportionately low, with women occupying only 33% of leadership positions (6 out of 18).



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The causes of these inequalities are complex and include persistent gender stereotypes in science, methods of evaluating scientific work, and traditional divisions of childcare and household responsibilities. IBT is aware of these challenges and is actively working to address them, including adherence to the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. Current studies indicate that a more balanced representation of women and men in decision-making positions enables

diverse approaches to problem-solving, utilizes a broader range of talents and life experiences, and can positively impact organizational performance.

An analysis of IBT's workforce by age shows that employees under 40 years old continue to dominate, accounting for 60% of the workforce. When including those under 50 years old, this group constitutes 84% of the total workforce. This age structure, along with the current number of approximately 10 employees on maternity or parental leave, highlights the importance of systematically supporting the balance between work and family life.

As a modern research institution founded in 2008, IBT currently implements several informal policies to support Work-life balance, including options for part-time contracts, flexible working hours, and remote work. The Institute recognizes the need to formalize and further develop these policies, as reflected in its project application under the OP JAK program, which focuses on improving the research environment. The goal is to establish a systematic framework to support the career development of all employees, including those with parental responsibilities.

2. Activities

2.1. Work-life balance and Workplace Culture

The area of Work-life balance remains one of IBT's strengths. Flexible work arrangements are actively utilized in positions where the nature of the work allows it, and their availability has further expanded since the previous period. While the management of maternity and parental leave currently operates satisfactorily on an informal basis, it is desirable to formalize this system to ensure its long-term sustainability.

During the past period, IBT has focused primarily on improving internal communication and information accessibility, resulting in the creation of an English version of the intranet and the introduction of a regular newsletter. Regarding ethical standards, the Institute continues to adhere to the Code of Ethics for Researchers of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Career Rules for University-Educated Employees of the Czech Academy of Sciences, with the development of its own IBT Code of Ethics planned for the upcoming period.

With the planned strengthening of HR personnel capacities, it will be possible to work more systematically on formalizing processes that have so far operated informally and on implementing new measures. Emphasis will be placed on creating clear and transparent procedures for managing maternity/parental leave and on systematically monitoring and evaluating the impact of the measures introduced.

Evaluation of Goal Fulfillment and Plans for the Next Period

Equality in Working Conditions

- ✓ Systematic monitoring of gender statistics has been initiated.
- ✓ Comprehensive educational materials for raising awareness about equal opportunities have been prepared.
- ✓ Partial implementation of transforming documents into gender-sensitive language has been achieved
- ✓ Certain goals, including the creation of an IBT-specific Code of Ethics and a methodology for managing maternity/parental leave, have been postponed to the next period

Communication

- ✓ A bilingual intranet and regular newsletter have been successfully introduced.
- ✓ New documents are systematically created in both Czech and English.

- ✓ Implementation of gender-sensitive language is ongoing during document updates.

The approach IBT will continue to take in this area is described in Table 1 – Work-Life Balance and Workplace Culture.

Table 1 - Work-life balance and Workplace Culture			
Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Deadlines
1. Equality in Working Conditions, Internal Policies, Documentation, and Processes	1.1 Develop IBT's own Code of Ethics	Draft and finalize the IBT Code of Ethics and present it to employees	4Q/2025
	1.2 Organization of training courses and seminars on general and scientific ethics.	Number of trainings and at least 60% of trained employees.	2Q/2026
	1.3 Introduce regularly recurring employee surveys to monitor satisfaction and loyalty and address any negative phenomena	Implementation of the first comprehensive employee satisfaction survey	2Q/2026
	1.4 Developing a methodology for maternity/parental leave management	Methodology for maternity/parental leave management	3Q/2026
	1.5 Gender statistics	Continuing to collect and evaluate gender statistics to provide relevant data for strategic decisions	Continuously
	1.6 Equal Opportunities	Implementation of prepared training materials	2Q/2026
	1.7 Creating a "Welcome Office "	Established and functioning Welcome Office to facilitate the active involvement of foreign IBT staff	1Q/2027
2. Communication and gender-sensitive language	2.1 Complete the translation of the remaining documents into English.	All relevant documents will be available in both Czech and English versions.	Continuously
	2.2 Improving the structure of the Czech and English versions of the intranet	Functional, user-friendly intranet in both Czech and English versions.	Continuously
	2.3 Update and implement the IBT graphic manual to ensure consistent communication across all channels.	New IBT graphic manual published	2Q/2025

2.2. Gender Balance in leadership and decision-making

There is still a gender imbalance in senior management positions at the IBT, with the overall proportion of men at management level standing at 67%. Although women make up most of the total staff (64%), their representation in senior management positions is significantly lower. This trend corresponds to a general phenomenon known as the 'glass ceiling', whereby women do not progress further once they reach a certain hierarchical level.

A positive sign is the increasing representation of women in important decision-making bodies of the institution. The IBT Council is headed by a woman and has a total of 2 women out of 11 members (18%), the Supervisory Board has 1 woman out of 5 members (20%) and the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) has 2 women out of 8 members (25%). The appointment of a woman as Secretary of the Institute is also a significant step.

The IBT is aware of this situation and considers a more balanced representation of women in leadership positions to be an important objective. It is therefore crucial for the coming period to develop specific motivational tools and systematic measures to support the career development of women in leadership positions. One of the planned steps is to carry out a feasibility study on the establishment of a nursery or playgroup at the workplace, which could make a significant contribution to better reconciling a scientific career with parental responsibilities.

Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Deadlines
3. Promote gender balance in leadership, decision-making committees and boards	3.1 Create motivational tools for potential candidates for leadership positions, decision-making committees and boards of the IBT	Motivational tools to support gender balance	4Q/2026

2.3. Gender Equality in Recruitment and Promotion

The IBT has made significant progress in formalizing recruitment and adaptation processes in the past period. A Work Code has been developed and is currently under comment, and the formats for advertising positions have been standardized. An important step was the introduction of systematic onboarding for new male and female staff.

Although staffing processes remain largely decentralized and implementation still varies to some extent across research groups, the IBT is moving towards greater standardization and professionalization in this area. Research group leaders who combine scientific and managerial activities will be systematically supported in developing their managerial competences in the coming period.

The steps that will lead to the formalization and centralization of personnel processes at the IBT are described in Table 3 - Gender equality in recruitment and promotion.

Table 3 – Gender Equality in Recruitment and Promotion			
Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Deadlines
4. Strengthen and formalize the professionalism of HR processes and standardize procedures	4.1 Establish IBT working rules	Finalization and implementation of the IBT Working Regulations	2Q/2025
	4.2 Update the format and structure of advertising for the whole IBT	Published unified ad templates for all types of positions	1Q/2025
	4.3 Update the onboarding process and convert relevant parts into electronic form	Onboarding system updated and implemented	4Q/2025
	4.4 Create a mentoring program for new hires	Mentoring program for new employees	4Q/2026
	4.5 Provide recruitment and selection training for selection panel leaders and others	Recruitment and selection training	1Q/2026
5. Anchor the vocational training system	5.1 Creation of an internal online training portal	Functional online portal	2Q/2027
	5.2 Revision of the attestation system	Updated and implemented attestation system	2Q/2026

2.4. Incorporating the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content

Incorporating a gender dimension into the content of research and teaching is an important aspect of scientific work that can significantly contribute to the quality and relevance of research results. Considering potential gender differences and specificities is particularly important in the field of biomedical research, where different factors may impact men and women differently.

In the previous period, the IBT took a first step in this direction by appointing a responsible person who receives specialized training in the implementation of the gender dimension in research. This step creates the basis for the systematic integration of gender aspects into research projects and methodologies in the following period.

For the period 2025-2027, the IBT plans to expand these efforts by:

- ✓ Sharing lessons learned and best practices in gender dimensions of research with research teams
- ✓ Systematic support in integrating gender aspects into upcoming research projects
- ✓ Creation of methodological materials for considering the gender dimension in research

Specific objectives and activities in this area are summarized in Table 4 - Incorporating the gender dimension into research and teaching content.

Table 4 – Incorporating the Gender Dimension into Research and Teaching Content			
Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Deadlines
6. Incorporating a gender dimension into research procedures, methodology, results and project design	6.1 Elaboration of gender equality issues in IBT research	Handbook for assessing the gender dimension in research content and innovation	2Q/2026
	6.2 Training on integrating the gender dimension into procedures, methodology, results and project design	Trained managers and scientific staff	2Q/2026

2.5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Although workplace relations and the overall atmosphere at the IBT have long been assessed as predominantly friendly, the Institute is aware of the importance of a systematic approach to preventing and addressing possible negative behavior. An important step in this area has been the establishment of an Ombudsperson to deal with any complaints of inappropriate behavior in the workplace.

IBT is aware that the relationship between gender and violence is complex and that gender inequalities in society can have a significant impact on behavior and relationships in the workplace. Therefore, for the period 2025-2027, it plans to strengthen preventive measures and raise awareness of this issue through several key actions.

Specific activities and objectives in this area are summarized in Table 5 - Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

Table 5 - Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment			
Objectives	Activities	Indicators	Deadlines
7. Raising employee awareness of unconscious bias and inappropriate behavior	7. 1 Establishing its own code of ethics that clearly declares the unacceptability of any form of derogatory behavior, bullying, sexism and harassment	Code of Ethics	4Q/2025
	7.2 Strengthen the prevention of the occurrence of the phenomena in question by including the issue in the education system through an external supplier	Number of trained employees	2Q/2026
	7. 3 Raising awareness of the role of the Ombudsman and procedures for dealing with potential incidents	Internal campaign implemented	2Q/2025

3. Conclusion

The Equal Opportunities Plan 2025-2027 builds on the experience of the previous period and further develops the activities already started in all key areas. The IBT has achieved several important successes in the past period, such as the creation of the position of Ombudsman, the improvement of the accessibility of information through the bilingual intranet and the introduction of systematic onboarding. At the same time, areas requiring further attention have been identified, notably the formalization of certain processes and the systematic promotion of career development for women in senior positions.

For the coming period, the IBT has set ambitious but realistic objectives in the field of equal opportunities. Achieving them will require the active involvement of all levels of the organization - from management to research teams to support units. Currently, 0.5 FTE of human resources are dedicated to the equal opportunities' agenda and related activities, with an increase planned during 2025. This reinforcement will enable more systematic work on the implementation of the planned actions and their ongoing evaluation.

The IBT is aware that creating equal opportunities is a long-term process requiring continuous attention and gradual systematic changes. This plan represents a further step towards a modern research institution that fully exploits the potential of all its male and female staff and creates an equitable and supportive environment for their professional growth.