

Gender Equality Plan

Institute of Biophysics of the Czech Academy of Sciences

Gender status analysis

Equal job opportunities, regardless of gender, are an important priority and one of the basic pillars of the IBP as a winner of the HR AWARD focused on the improvement of conditions of its employees, including gender issues. In the long run, we try to improve the "work/life" balance for women in science. We allow part-time jobs for women (parents) with children under the age of 6, and we support women to become department heads or deputy department heads (see Action 5). In most departments, women have been appointed deputy heads of departments, and several women were established as group leaders. The management of the Institute also uses tools to support the activities of young scientists and women (parents) in science. We have organized a seminar on the topic of women in science. In this seminar, prominent scientists from Spain and the USA participated and scientists from our Institute had the opportunity to discuss their work with them.

Scientists returning after parental leave have a long-term problem with placing their children in preschool facilities, especially in nursery schools (for children aged 1 to 3). The management of the Institute, therefore, initiated the establishment and supported the functioning of a children's group directly in the Institute. According to an initial survey (GAP analysis for the HR Award), 8-10 employees are continuously interested in placing their children in such a preschool facility, and most employees support this activity. In addition, we have introduced Children Days (each year) and „School on Biophysics for Children “ (twice a year, see Actions 3 and 6).

In the initial GAP analysis for HRAW, we have also included gender analysis. We found that the status of women's positions at the IBP was very good; however, some improvements were possible. We focused on several points: 1. The recruitment policy improved substantially (see OTM-R Strategy in HR/Implementation web page) and, in addition to general rules, special attention is paid to gender balance. 2. The visibility of women researchers has been improved by introducing the web page „Successful Women of our Institute“ (<https://www.ibp.cz/en/about-ibp/gender-equality-plan>). 3. Gender and cultural diversity awareness have been improved by several courses on these issues (see Action 5 or 7). According to the initial HR questionnaire, women at the Institute do not feel any discrimination from any point of view.

The number of women/men in individual categories of professional classification (V1-V6) of researchers is similar with two exceptions: the lowest V1 category (the number

of men is substantially lower) and the highest V6 category (the number of men is substantially higher); the comparison of women's/men's salaries is very similar for all categories. It can be stated that the trend of recent years is a significant convergence of women's and men's salaries in all monitored categories. There is a statistical deviation in category V1 (R1) because it is represented by nine women but only one man.

The IBP structure is divided into ten departments, of which only one woman is the head of the department. However, the deputy leaders are women, which is related to lower responsibility and less workload being perhaps more favorable for women. Similarly, the current Council of the Institute does not involve a single woman. Representatives to the Council of the Institute are elected by the Assembly of Scientists; thus, it is not possible to question this authority. The director of the Institute is a woman.

Within the 2-year period of HR implementation (2022-2023) we have organized courses on gender issues covering several actions of our „Gender equality plan“ (GEP). The current state of the „Action Plan“ (AP) is described in subsequent sections. A new AP has been developed based on the current AP, improved gender state of the Institute, and new questionnaire analysis, which suggests that further appropriate raising awareness of gender issues, support of leading positions for women as well as considerations of the gender balance in research content are needed (see HR at our web page).

One of the most important problems are returns of women from maternal leave to the research laboratories. The gap in research activities means substantial delay in research career development. In order to help them we have started OP JAK project „Return to research at the Institute of Biophysics of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic after a career break“. The project has been granted and in the next years we will support women returning to the institute by means of providing grants for 2 year period.

Women returning to research after maternity leave will have their own mentor and a support team of up to 4 researchers. They will be able to travel for up to 4 weeks to a major laboratory and will have funds for further professional training, especially with regard to their leadership role in the project and in further research.

In addition, women on maternity leave who will not apply for a grant will also be significantly supported, e.g. they will participate in training courses and will be provided with means to enable contact via email or the internet (laptops).

General Objectives

Appropriate raising awareness of gender issues by means of courses and lectures will continue, and support of leading positions for women as well as considerations of the gender balance in research content will be continued. Despite the good status of women's position at the IBP, we would like to increase work/life balance for women (parents) in science, we will encourage women to become department leaders and/or deputy department leaders or to run for the Council. We will support the nursery (a kid's corner), continue with children's days (each year), and „School on Biophysics for Children“ (twice a year). To motivate women to get involved in cutting-edge research

in leading positions, we created the website "Successful Women of our Institute" (see the page: <https://www.ibp.cz/en/about-ibp/gender-equality-plan>) which will be further filled. The GEP consists of actions focused on improving practices related to gender bias. The general goal is the implementation of approaches, procedures, and strategies to improve any discrimination. The below-described objectives are related to all employees, R1-R4 categories, as well as technical or administrative positions.

Responsibility for the implementation of GEP

The Director of IBP makes management decisions and is responsible for the implementation of GEP. The already realized steps toward better gender issues have been performed during the previous implementation of HRAW (see the current state of gender issues). The Steering Committee for HR Award represents the supervisory body that monitors the Action Plan for GEP. It is responsible for all GEP objectives, activities, strategies, and reports. Working Group for HR Award (WG) represents the working body that is responsible for the implementation and execution of the Action Plan of GEP. The working group involves 29 members that represent all departments of the IBP; in addition, all categories R1-R4 are involved. HRS4R Admin is in charge of managing the organization of the WG for both HRAW and GEP. WG is responsible for the development, implementation, and execution of the GEP actions.

ACTIONS

1. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression (lectures)

One of the most important commitments of the IBP in the frame of the HR Award obtained from EC on November 18, 2021, was the implementation of rules for open, transparent, and merit-based recruitment (OTM-R). The first goal of the GEP was to focus on the gender dimension of the OTM-R process where the committees are selected to be gender-balanced with a focus on gender-balanced selection of candidates. A systematic approach in focusing on career progression both for women and men should lead to balanced support for both to improve possible gender-related discrimination. One of the most important problems are returns of women from maternal leave to the research laboratories. We have started OP JAK project „Return to research at the Institute of Biophysics of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic after a career break” to improve the career progression of women in our Institute. The project has been granted and in the next years we will support women returning to the institute by means of providing grants for 2 year period.

Action 1.1: OTM-R-based recruitment applying GEP principles (lecture)

Responsibility: WG

Target: training of the staff responsible for recruitment

Indicators: number and % of trained employees participation in the recruitment procedures

Timing: last quarter of 2022

Remark: implemented, actions 5, 2, and 7, employees trained in the recruitment procedures (implemented also in the HR Award Action Plan)

Action 1.2: GEP in the career progression

Responsibility: WG, OP JAK project management

Target: women returning from the maternal leave will be supported to apply for a grant from OP JAK programme

Indicators: number of women participating

Timing: first quarter of 2026

Remark: continues

2 Gender-related inappropriate manners (lectures)

IBP is against inappropriate behavior, including gender-related (inappropriate comments or stereotypes) as well as any types of discrimination, bossing, mobbing, and inappropriate manipulation. We recognize that these problems are complex, and the cultural environment substantially influences the point of view. Particular types of behavior can be seen as inappropriate by some employees but not by others. The relations between women and men should be optimized in such a way that both feel well in a good working environment, which is transferred into a positive relationship with our Institute. Therefore, the approach should be optimal, not black and white. In extreme cases, the complaint possibility has been established in the form of whistleblowing supervision.

Action 2.1 Cultural habits in the Brno region (lecture and discussion)

Responsibility: WG

Target: elucidation of what is standard behavior in our region

Indicators: number of employees who participated

Timing: third quarter 2023

Remark: partially implemented, actions 1, 2, 5, and 7 contributed, however, not focused directly to this action, new due date: first quarter 2025

Action 2.2 Unconscious bias and inappropriate behavior (lecture)

Responsibility: WG

Target: to improve employee awareness of the possibility of unconscious bias or inappropriate behavior (including harassment, hidden discrimination, marginalizing behavior, etc.)

Indicators: number of employees participating

Timing: end 2023

Remark: implemented, actions 1, 2, 5, and 7, employees were notified of possible unconscious bias and inappropriate behavior

3 Changes at the cultural and institutional level

Motivate and attract more women, not discourage or exclude them.

Action 3.1 We will formalize the rules for tenders and the wording of advertisements (including sensitive language)

Responsibility: WG

Target: to improve the chances for women to be employed at IBP

Indicators: number of women employed at IBP, measurable indicator: the ratio of women/men employed at IBP

Timing: starting from 2022

Remark: implemented, actions 5 and 7, employees trained in the recruitment procedures, changes involved in the recruitment rules (implemented also in the HR Award Action Plan)

Action 3.2 In the advertisement for new positions, we will explicitly state that women are welcome in the position

Responsibility: WG

Target: to improve the chances for women to be employed at IBP

Indicators: number of women employed at IBP, measurable indicator: the ratio of women/men employed at IBP

Timing: starting from 2022

Remark: implemented, actions 5 and 7, employees trained in the recruitment procedures, changes involved in the recruitment rules (implemented also in the HR Award Action Plan)

Action 3.3 When promoting new positions, we will target selected female candidates

Responsibility: WG

Target: to improve the chances for women to be employed at IBP

Indicators: number of women employed at IBP, measurable indicator: the ratio of women/men employed at IBP

Timing: starting from 2022

Remark: implemented, actions 5 and 7, employees trained in the recruitment procedures, changes involved in the recruitment rules (implemented also in the HR Award Action Plan)

Action 3.4 We will put a "message" on the institution's website, which will present the interest in the higher representation of women in leading positions

Responsibility: WG

Target: to improve the chances for women to be employed at IBP in leading positions

Indicators: number of women employed at IBP as group leaders, department leaders, or deputy department leaders

Timing: end 2022

Remark: not implemented, new date: end 2024

Action 3.5 We will make successful female scientists visible (also from history) and present female role models, for example, on the website, on the premises of the building

Responsibility: WG

Target: to improve the attractiveness of science for women

Indicators: number of women employed at IBP, measurable indicator: the ratio of women/men employed at IBP

Timing: end 2023

Remark: implemented, web page has been introduced at:
<https://www.ibp.cz/en/about-ibp/gender-equality-plan>

Action 3.6 We will set the rules for the operation of the institution in such a way that we will not exclude, for example, mothers from some processes (work meetings will be

planned concerning parental responsibilities).

Responsibility: WG, group, and department leaders

Target: to improve the participation of women in decision-making at different levels

Indicators: number of women participating

Timing: starting from 2022

Remark: implemented, meetings are planned concerning parental responsibilities, parents are allowed to work part-time, children can be involved in the child-corner, take part in children days and schools for children, group and department leaders take into consideration the restrictions of families with children

4. Gender-related research outputs (lecture)

Research topics at IBP (biological and chemical sciences) are, in most cases, sufficiently general to be advantageous for both women and men. In some cases, gender aspects may be involved (e.g., chromatin structure of eggs or spermatozoa, structure or positioning of X-chromosome in women and men, sex determination in plants, etc.). So far, scientists have not found any problems with such research. We are, however, aware that research can substantially impact the quality of life, which may bring different benefits for women and men. To take into account this question, we will organize action specifically focused on possible gender issues in the research outcome.

Action 4.1 Gender-dimension in research output (lecture)

Responsibility: WG

Target: training of scientists in possible gender-related issues in research outputs

Indicators: number and % of scientists participating

Timing: second quarter 2023

Remark: partially implemented, mentioned in the lectures of Mgr. Pavla Spondrova, however, a specific lecture should be held, new due date: end of 2025.

5. Gender-related improvements in leadership

As already mentioned, both women and men are involved in the leadership of IBP; however, the number of women in leading positions is substantially lower. In addition, there are no women in the Council, where the number of women among candidates was also low. Therefore, we have to stimulate the motivation of women to candidate for leadership positions, improve career development in women as well as influence the broader community in the Institute to elect women candidates.

Action 5.1 Taking care of women with the potential to achieve leadership positions

Responsibility: department leaders, mentors of the OP JAK project

Target: improve career management in talented women

Indicators: number of employees under special care

Timing: 2026-2029

Remark: partially implemented, mentioned in the lectures of Mgr. Pavla Spondrova, however, special care will be provided to women returning to the Institute after maternal leave

Action 5.2 Improve gender balance in leadership

Responsibility: WG

Target: increase motivation for female candidates for leadership positions

Indicators: number of motivated candidates

Timing: during recruitment to a leadership position or before elections

Remark: partially implemented, women are in the positions of deputy leaders, further improvement can be achieved in 2026

Action 6. Changes on the interpersonal level

We will modify the way teams are managed and the way management treats women and men.

Action 6.1 Support young women's joining international networks and contacts

Responsibility: WG, department heads

Target: improve participation of women in international research

Indicators: number of women participating in international collaboration

Timing: starting from 2022

Remark: not implemented, women are supported in their travel abroad, however, specific measures have not been introduced, new due date: 2026

Action 6.2 Ensure equal access and equal opportunities for women and men to present results at international conferences

Responsibility: WG, department heads

Target: improve participation of women in international research

Indicators: number of women participating in international collaboration

Timing: starting from 2023.

Remark: partially implemented, the opportunities are equal, however, no specific measures have been introduced

Action 6.3 Fairly distribute work and roles in the research team

Responsibility: WG, department heads

Target: improve balanced participation of women in laboratory work

Indicators: number of women satisfied with their role in the laboratory

Timing: starting from 2022

Remark: implemented, department leaders, have been notified about the fair distribution of the roles in the research between women and men, and there are no complaints in this regard

Action 7. Changes on the individual level

To allow everyone to work on their development and on breaking stereotypes about themselves (undervaluing themselves), but also about other people.

Action 7.1 Supporting the participation of women in summer schools and other programs for doctoral students

Responsibility: WG

Target: improve balanced participation of women in summer schools and other programs for doctoral students

Indicators: number of women participating, measurable indicator: ratio of women/men at summer schools and other programs

Timing: starting from 2022

Remark: women are supported in their participation in summer schools

Action 7.2 Participation of women in training and courses for leading scientists (overcoming gender stereotypes and prejudices, preparation of women for management and team management, etc.)

Responsibility: WG

Target: improve balanced participation of women in management and team management (leading positions)

Indicators: number of women participating, measurable indicator: ratio of women/men at summer schools and other programs

Timing: end 2023

Remark: not implemented, women are supported in their participation in training and courses for leading scientists, however, no specific measures have been introduced, new due date: end 2026

Action 7.3 Participation of women in mentoring and leadership programs and courses that aim to build competence, skills, responsibility, and self-confidence and help to engage in formal and informal networks.

Responsibility: WG

Target: improve balanced participation of women in management and team management (leading positions)

Indicators: number of women participating, measurable indicator: ratio of women/men in mentoring and leadership programs and courses

Timing: end 2023

Remark: not implemented, women are supported in their participation in mentoring and leadership programs, however, no specific measures have been introduced, new due date: end of 2026.

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August 6th, 2024

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