



**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT FOR BIOLOGICAL
SCIENCES**



APPROVED,

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**THE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY
AND
THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN
INCDSB
2022 – 2025**

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION

I.1. European Union's and Romania's Policy on Gender Equality

“In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women.” - Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

“Promoting gender equality is a task of the Union in all its activities, as provided by treaties. Gender equality is a core value of the EU, a fundamental right¹, and a key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights². It is a value representing us and, simultaneously, an essential condition for an innovative, competitive, prosperous European economy. Gender equality creates additional jobs and increases productivity³ – a potential that must be harnessed when preparing to **transition to a green economy and digitalization** and when we must face demographic challenges.”⁴

The objective of The European Union's Gender Equality Strategy 2020 - 2025 aims to achieve a **Union of Equality**.

Thus, by 2025, Europe's main aspiration is to become a continent where women are equal to men. The idea is for all Europeans - women or men, girls or boys - to enjoy the **freedom** to pursue their own path, to have equal opportunities to thrive, to be equal members of society, and to become **leaders** if they deserve it.

The main objectives of the EU Gender Equality Strategy are ending gender-based violence, eliminating gender stereotypes, reducing gender gaps in the labor market, achieving equal participation in various sectors of the economy, narrowing the gender pay and pension gaps, reducing the gender gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making processes and politics¹.

In Romania, ‘Equal opportunity and treatment for women and men is a fundamental principle of human rights, transposed both at the legislative and public policies level.

The issue of promoting equal opportunities in social life for both sexes is an essential requirement for Romanian society, being considered a crucial component of the efforts to respect the fundamental human rights and freedoms.

Romania has implemented the stipulations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW-1982). In legal terms, equal opportunities and treatment for women and men means taking into account the distinct capacities, needs, and aspirations of individuals of male and female sexes, and treating them equally.”⁵

Law no. 202/2002 on equality of opportunity and treatment for women and men, republished with subsequent amendments and additions, ensures legislative harmonization with international and community regulations for gender equality.

¹ See Article 2 and Article 3 paragraph (3) of the Treaty on European Union (TUE), Articles 8, 10, 19, and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE), and Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/social-summit-european-pillar-social-rights-booklet_ro.pdf.

³ By 2050, improving the gender equality situation is projected to result in an increase in the EU's GDP per capita by 6.1% to 9.6%, which translates to a growth of 1.95 trillion EUR to 3.15 trillion EUR
<https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/policy-areas/economic-and-financial-affairs/economic-benefits-gender-equality>.

⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

⁵ NATIONAL STRATEGY for Gender Equality for 2014-2017
<https://anes.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Strategia-Nationala-ES-si-VD.pdf>)

Based on the principle of equal opportunities for women and men, it is essential for Romania to effectively ensure equality of opportunities for women and men in terms of access to education, training, employment, and participation in public and political decision-making.

National legislation guarantees the equal rights of citizens to participate in economic and social life, to train and develop in a specific profession, to be employed, and to benefit from social protection in certain situations.

I.2. Gender equality in research – development for 2021 - 2025

Research and innovation (R&I) are key in the efforts toward smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth in Europe. This means that the EU must fully leverage its human capital, involving both men and women at all levels of research and innovation. Unlike direct and indirect gender discrimination, which limits research performance, promoting gender equality at all levels contributes to achieving excellence and efficiency. Therefore, promoting gender equality in the decision-making process is essential for Europe's sustainable growth.

One of the underlying objectives of the EC strategy on gender equality within Horizon 2020 is to ensure gender balance in the decision-making process. The strategy aims to achieve a participation rate of 40% of the underrepresented gender in panels and groups (50% for advisory groups). In its recovery plan, the European Commission proposes an inclusive strategy that addresses gender equality, for instance, through wage transparency.

From 2022 onwards, individual organizations applying to any part of Horizon Europe and belonging to the categories of legal entities established in EU member states or the associated countries mentioned above (Public bodies, Public and private higher education institutions, and Public and private research organizations) must have their own Gender Equality Plan (GEP), endorsed by the organization's leadership and published on its website.

The EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe (2021-2027), closely follows the objectives of the EU Gender Equality Strategy through the following requirements⁴:

- The gender dimension must be considered and integrated into the project proposal's actual research and innovation content, assessed by the expert evaluators under the "Excellence" criterion.
- From 2022 onwards, for all proposals submitted in Horizon Europe, the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is an eligibility requirement (!) for research organizations.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

I.3. Definitions and conceptual boundaries

“**Gender equality** is regarded as a human rights issue and a condition, an indicator of human - centred development and democracy.” - European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

“**Equality of opportunity** refers to the absence of explicit or implicit barriers in economic, political, and social participation based on sex and gender criteria. Such barriers are often indirect, hard to distinguish, caused and perpetuated by structural phenomena and social representations that have proven particularly resistant to change” (EIGE).

“**Equal opportunities**, as part of the set of gender equality objectives, are based on the reasoning that, to address deeply ingrained and persistent inequalities, a whole range of strategies, actions, and measures are necessary.” (EIGE).

Gender equality implies visibility, autonomy, responsibility, and equal participation of both sexes in all public and private life (1998 - Council of Europe, Integrated Approach to Gender Equality).

Equal treatment refers to a context in which there is no direct or indirect discrimination based on sex and gender criteria, including no less favorable treatment of women on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity: “Favorable provisions for the protection of women concerning pregnancy and maternity and positive measures aiming at achieving substantive gender equality shall not be considered contrary to the principle of equal treatment” (EIGE).

Equal treatment entails the absence of any form of discrimination. Acts of discrimination can originate from the employer, the employer’s management bodies, or other employees. EQUAL TREATMENT, within employment relationships, operates on the principle of equal treatment towards all employees and employers. (Labor Code; Article 5)

The gender pay gap refers to the difference in average gross hourly earnings between female and male employees (EIGE).

EIGE defines **gender equality** from the perspective of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys: “Gender equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and possibilities will not depend on being born as a woman or as a man.”

Gender equality entails considering the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men, thus acknowledging the diversity among different groups. Gender equality is not solely a women’s issue, but should fully involve and engage both men and women.”

Gender differences - In society, women and men do not have the same roles, resources, needs and interests. They do not participate equally in decision-making. The values assigned to “women’s work” and “men’s work” are not the same; these differences vary from one society to another, from one culture to another, and are referred to as “gender differences” (EIGE).

The integrated approach to gender equality doesn’t solely involve making efforts to promote equality and even implementing specific measures to assist women but also entails mobilizing all policies and general measures specifically aimed at achieving equality. It actively and openly considers, during the project phase, the possible effects on the respective situations of women and men (gender perspective). This involves systematically examining measures and policies and considering such possible effects in their definition and implementation.” (EIGE).

Participation rates - during the diagnostic analysis, we use the participation rates of specific groups - e.g., women, men, single parents, etc. - as a percentage of the total participation rate (European Commission, 1985).

Gender-disaggregated data - the collection and reporting of statistical data, considering the gender variable, to facilitate comparative analysis of the situation of men and women in various fields. (European Commission, 1986).

Occupational segregation

Horizontal occupational segregation represents the tendency to employ men and women in different occupations, creating feminized and masculinized domains.

Vertical occupational segregation represents the tendency to employ men and women in different positions within the same profession or professional field (EIGE).

Law 202/2002 regulates gender equality with general applicability to all individuals in the public and private sectors. It mandates employers to introduce provisions (in internal regulations and function procedures) prohibiting discrimination based on gender. Additionally, employees have a permanent right to be informed about their rights through visible displays, as follows:

a) **Direct discrimination** refers to the situation in which a person, based on gender criteria, is treated less favorably than another person has been, is, or would be treated in a similar situation;

b) **Indirect discrimination** refers to the situation in which a provision, criterion, or practice, apparently neutral, would disproportionately disadvantage persons of a certain gender in comparison to persons of another gender unless objectively justifies this provision, criterion, or practice, and the means of achieving this aim are appropriate and necessary.

Furthermore, Law 202/2002 includes provisions regulating maternity protection, harassment, or sexual harassment, as follows:

a) The special measures provided by law for the protection of maternity, childbirth, and breastfeeding, as well as positive actions for the protection of certain categories of women, **are not considered discrimination**. Differential treatment based on a sex-related characteristic is allowed when it represents a specific occupational requirement determined by the nature of specific professional activities.

b) **harassment** refers to a situation where unwanted behavior related to a person's sex is exhibited, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person in question and creating an environment of intimidation, hostility, degradation, humiliation, or insult;

c) **sexual harassment** refers to a situation where unwanted behavior of a sexual nature is exhibited, expressed physically, verbally, or non-verbally, with the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, especially by creating an environment of intimidation, hostility, degradation, humiliation, or insult;

d¹) **psychological harassment** refers to any inappropriate behavior that occurs over a period, is repetitive or systematic, and involves physical behavior, oral or written language, gestures, or other intentional acts that could affect a person's personality, dignity, or physical and psychological integrity;

d²) **by sex**, we refer to the set of biological and physiological traits that define women and men;

d³) **by gender**, we refer to the ensemble composed of roles, behaviors, traits, and activities that society considers appropriate for women and, respectively, for men;

e) **positive actions** represent those special actions that are temporarily undertaken to accelerate the actual achievement of gender equality between women and men and are not considered discriminatory actions;

f) **equal value work** refers to paid activity that, through comparison based on the same indicators and units of measurement with another activity, reflects the use of similar or equal professional knowledge and skills, as well as the expenditure of equal or similar quantities of intellectual and/or physical effort;

g) **discrimination based on the sex criterion** refers to direct discrimination and indirect discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment of a person by another person in the workplace or in another location where the person conducts their activity, as well as any less favorable treatment caused by rejecting such behaviors or subjecting the person to these behaviors;

h) **multiple discrimination** refers to any act of discrimination based on two or more discrimination criteria.

I.4. General principles regarding gender equality

Each measure included in this strategy and gender equality plan is aligned with the following principles:

a) **the principle of legality** in carrying out activities to promote and implement the principle of equal opportunities and treatment for women and men and prevent and combat domestic violence;

b) **the principle of respect** for human rights and fundamental freedoms;

c) **the principle of non-discrimination** and equality of opportunities and treatment for women and men;

d) **the principle of adequate financing** and responsible use of allocated financial resources for the implementation of identified measures to achieve the objectives;

e) **the principle of decentralization** in developing actions to promote and implement the principle of equal opportunities and treatment for women and men and in implementing measures to prevent and combat domestic violence;

f) **the principle of integrated approach** - involves coordination and cooperation between all departments involved in the process;

g) **the principle of public-private partnership** acknowledges the importance of involving civil society in implementing measures to promote and implement the principle of equal opportunities and treatment for women and men and in preventing and combating domestic violence.”

I.5. Specific internal regulations

The Internal Regulations of the National Institute for Research and Development in Biological Sciences contain provisions regarding gender equality in CHAPTER V (...**Equal opportunities and treatment for women and men**), which transpose the provisions of the Labor Code approved by Law 53/2003 with subsequent amendments and republished.

Thus, according to Article 53:

(1) „The Institute respects the legal provisions regarding non-discrimination and the respect for human dignity and applies the principle of equal treatment towards all its employees. Therefore, the employment relationships within the institute are not conditioned:

a) by participation in economic activity or the free exercise of a profession, by the employee's race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social category, beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, age, or membership in a disadvantaged category;

b) on the employment of a person due to their race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social category, or disadvantaged category, or due to their beliefs, age, sex, or sexual orientation ;

c) on the selection for a position, through an announcement or competition organized by the institute or its representative, based on race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, social category, disadvantaged category, age, sex, sexual orientation, or the beliefs of the candidates;

d) in providing social benefits to employees due to their race, nationality, linguistic community, ethnic origin, religion, social category, or disadvantaged category, age, sex, sexual orientation, or beliefs.

(4) All employees in the institute benefit from suitable working conditions for the conducted activity, social protection, occupational safety and health, and respect for their dignity and conscience, without any discrimination.

(5) Any discrimination based on sex regarding all elements and conditions of remuneration is prohibited for equal work or work of equal value”.

Art. 58. - (1) stipulates that “Maternity cannot constitute a reason for discrimination.”

Furthermore, all provisions concerning gender equality in the Internal Regulations of INCDSB are intended to provide a framework that regulates and enforces non-discriminatory treatment for all women and men.

The Code of Ethics of INCDSB provides in Article 14: “The freedom of scientific research must be within limits that ensure the respect for human dignity and rights.”

I.6. The Approach of INCDSB regarding Gender Equality

The Gender Equality (GE) Strategy for 2022-2025 is developed by **the National Institute for Research and Development in Biological Sciences (INCDSB)** based on the contribution of the entire institute's staff. It considers all those engaged in research and employees in research support structures. The GE Strategy is built upon the provisions of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers 2015-2019, the European Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025, and the Horizon Europe guidelines for gender equality plans. Additionally, it considers the implementation of provisions from the National Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence for the period 2021-2027.

The motivation behind the development of the Institute's Gender Equality Strategy lies in the necessity to provide a safe space for all staff members and the fact that all activities and processes adhere to equality, diversity, inclusion, and non-discrimination principles.

To implement the mission and values of the National Institute for Research and Development for Biological Sciences, the Gender Equality Strategy, and the Gender Equality Plan, the institute's management ensures and promotes equality and diversity in knowledge and skill acquisition for all employees.

The objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy are implemented through specific actions aimed at safeguarding an equal and inclusive organizational culture and promoting gender equality at all levels.

The Gender Equality Strategy and Gender Equality Plan of INCDSB proactively enable the increase of awareness, skills, and competencies related to gender equality, fostering an organizational culture that balances professional activities and private life, achieving gender balance in decision-making structures and processes, including recruitment, integrating a gender dimension throughout the research process, and implementing measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

II. DIAGNOSTIC ANALYSIS (DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS)

II.1 Data Collection Method

At the National Institute for Research and Development for Biological Sciences, data was collected from the Human Resources department and through an extensive questionnaire open from June to August 2022.

The data collected from the Human Resources department closely monitored the following gender equality indicators:

- The number of staff by sex/gender at all levels, by discipline, position (including administrative/support staff), and by contractual relationship with the organization;
- The number of women and men in research positions and administrative decision-making roles (e.g., leadership team, boards, committees, recruitment and promotion panels);
- The average number of years required for women and men to progress in their careers (by rank and discipline);
- The number of employees, by sex/gender, who have requested/taken parental leave, for how long and how many have returned after the leave.

Additionally, specific gender equality data relevant to research organizations (ROs) are also taken into consideration, which include:

- The proportion of women and men among employed researchers;
- The proportion of women and men applying for research positions among recruited individuals and the success rate, including by scientific field, academic position, and contractual status;
- The proportion of women and men in recruitment or promotion boards, heads of recruitment or promotion committees, and the proportion in decision-making bodies, including by scientific domains.

An online questionnaire was conducted among INCDSB personnel in June-August 2022 as part of the data collection process. This questionnaire included questions about current employment status, career history, aspirations and professional developments, experience and perceptions regarding gender equality in the workplace, the balance between personal and professional life within the institute, and perceptions of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment.

II.2. Data Analysis

Based on the collected data, internal analyses and reviews of existing policies addressing gender equality and inclusion were conducted. These analyses took place during working meetings at all levels held between June and August 2022, for developing the GEP (Gender Equality Plan) and including the institute's leadership, research personnel, and support services representatives.

The internal audit conclusions are part of the Management Committee's analysis, approved by the Board of Directors, and then communicated to the entire research institute staff.

With a mandate from the Board of Directors, the Director General has engaged in elaborating, developing and implementing the GEP for the National Institute of Research and Development for Biological Sciences, for 2022-2025.

II.2.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

The indicators specified in section I.1 were collected based on the data provided by the Human Resources department, and the number of women and men in leadership positions is illustrated in the table below:

Table 1. Women and Men in Management Positions

Management position	Women	Men
President of the Board of Administration	x	
General Director	x	
Scientific Director	x	
President of the Scientific Council	x	
Economic Director	x	
Chief Accountant - INCDSB Bucharest	x	
ICB Cluj branch Director		x
Chief Accountant of ICB Cluj branch	x	
ICB Iași branch Director	x	
Chief Accountant of branch ICB Iași	x	
Director of branch CCB „Stejarul” Piatra Neamț		x
Head of Bioanalysis Center		x
Head of Bioinformatics Department	x	
Head of DANUBIUS Department	x	
Head of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Department	x	
Head of Applied Biotechnologies Department		x
Head of Cellular and Molecular Biology Department	x	
Head of Cellular Dynamics and Flow Cytometry		x
Head of Taxonomy and Ecology (T&E) Department - ICB Cluj	-	x
Head of Department of Experimental Biology and Biochemistry - ICB Cluj	x	-
Head of Experimental and Applied Biology Department - ICB Iași	x	-
Head of Plant and Experimental Biology Department - CCB "Stejarul" Piatra Neamț		x
Head of Ecology, Resources and Environment Department - CCB "Stejarul" Piatra Neamț		x
TOTAL	15	7

The data shows that:

- In the leadership positions of INCDSB, the gender ratio is nearly 50:50;
- There are 40% male members in the Scientific Council;
- The Executive Committee is predominantly composed of women (14% men);
- At the departmental level, leadership positions are held by women in a proportion of 55%.

Regarding research staff and administrative personnel, the situation at INCDSB is presented in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. Total Number of Research Staff by Department

Departments	Experienced researchers (CS I, CS II, CS III)	Early - stage researchers (CS and ACS)	Total women	Total men
Bioanalysis Center	11/16 Total Number Women	5/16 Total Number Women	16	3
	3/3 Total Number Men	0/3 Total Number Men		
Bioinformatics Department	1/3 Total Number Women	2/3 Total Number Women	3	8
	6/8 Total Number Men	2/8 Total Number Men		
DANUBIUS Departament	3/4 Total Number Women	1/4 Total Number Women	4	0
	0/0 Total Number Men	0/0 Total Number Men		
Arctic and Antarctic Research Department	3/4 Total Number Women	1/4 Total Number Women	4	0
	0/0 Total Number Men	0/0 Total Number Men		
Applied Biotechnologies Department	4/7 Total Number Women	3/7 Total Number Women	7	2
	2/2 Total Number Men	0/2 Total Number Men		
Cellular and Molecular Biology Department	9/20 Total Number Women	11/20 Total Number Women	20	1
	1/1 Total Number Men	0/1 Total Number Men		
Taxonomy and Ecology (T&E) Department - ICB Cluj	3/6 Total Number Women	3/6 Total Number Women	6	8
	8/8 Total Number Men	0/8 Total Number Men		
Department of Experimental Biology and Biochemistry - ICB Cluj	4/4 Total Number Women	0/4 Total Number Women	4	3
	3/3 Total Number Men	0/3 Total Number Men		
Experimental and Applied Biology Department - ICB Iași	11/12 Total Number Women	1/12 Total Number Women	12	3
	3/3 Total Number Men	0/3 Total Number Men		
Experimental and vegetable Biology Department / Ecology, Resources and Environment Department - CCB "Stejarul" Piatra Neamț	3/8 Total Number Women	5/8 Total Number Women	8	3
	2/3 Total Number Men	1/3 Total Number Men		
Biological Research Center from Constanța	0/1 Total Number Women	1/1 Total Number Women	1	0
	0/0 Total Number Men	0/0 Total Number Men		
Total Number Women	52	33	85	
Total Number Men	27	4		31

Table 3 - Total number of women and men in administration and research support services

Position	Women	Men
Administrative support staff	19 out of 27 total	3 out of 9 total
IT support staff	0 out of 27 total	1 out of 9 total
Building administration	1 out of 27 total	4 out of 9 total
Technicians	7 out of 27 total	1 out of 9 total
TOTAL	27	9

From the INCDSB research staff perspective, it is observed that it consists of 73% women and 27% men, of which 45% are experienced women researchers (CSI, CSII, and CSIII) and 28% are young women researchers. Meanwhile, 24% are men employed in research positions as experienced researchers and only 3% are young male researchers. The quota between female and male staff members is also maintained at the administrative level, where there are three times as many women as men.

Regarding the online questionnaire, the response rate was only 47% (72 responses out of 152 possible). The questionnaire, which also addressed questions about family leave (maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, other caregiving responsibilities, or study leave), showed that 82% of the respondents have benefited from maternity leave, and among them, 40% opted for leave longer than 12 months. Notably, only women have requested maternity leave, and there were no cases where male employees requested paternity leave. The data is presented in the figure below.

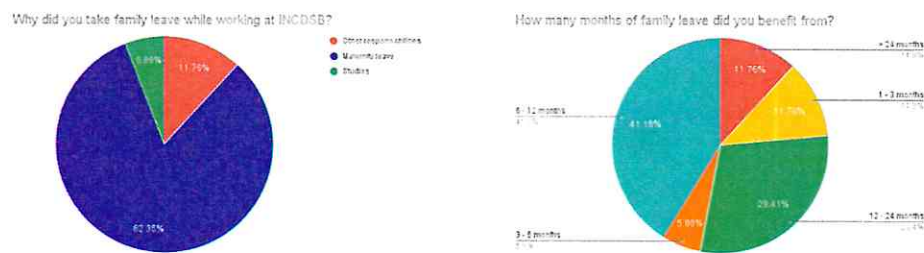


Figure 1. Type and Duration of Family Leave

Furthermore, during and after maternity leave, the institute supported the reintegration of beneficiaries into the workforce, as indicated in Figure 2.

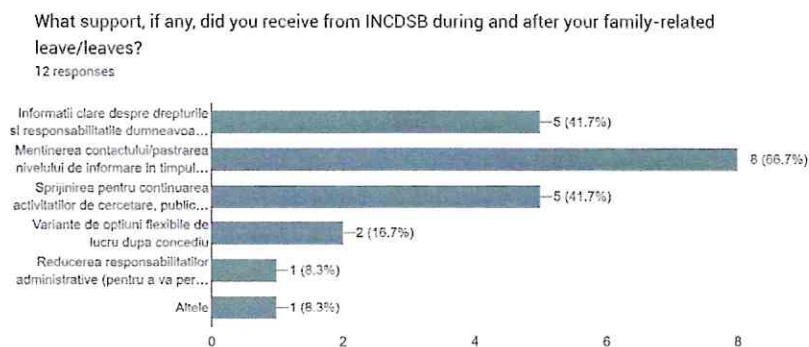


Figure 2. Support provided by INCDSB for reintegration into the workplace after family leave

Regarding the balance between professional and private life, the questionnaire data showed that over 90% of respondents consider that adequate funding and predictability of the research situation at the national level would lead to a balance between these two aspects. On a scale from 1 to 5, the balance between professional and private life within INCDSB is highlighted in Figure 3.

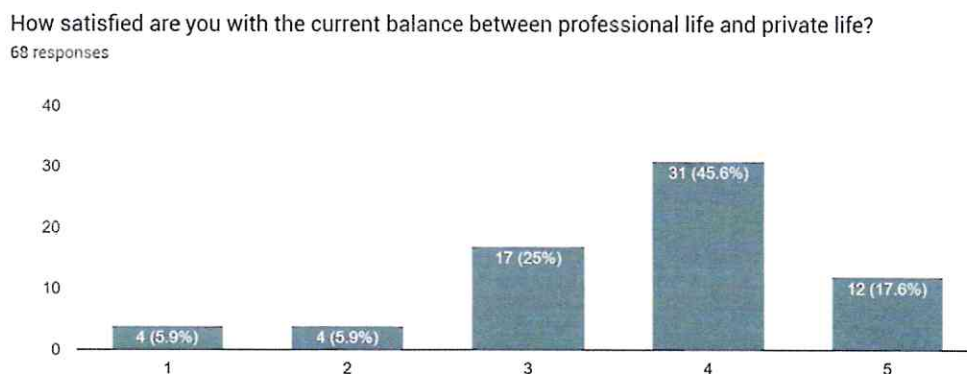


Figure 3. Level of satisfaction with professional-personal life balance

Furthermore, over 85% of questionnaire respondents emphasized that the working environment in their department/branch/institute is friendly, collaborative, supportive, cooperative, diverse, respectful, transparent, and non-sexist.

The figure below presents the extent to which questionnaire respondents rated that their department is committed to respecting gender equality:

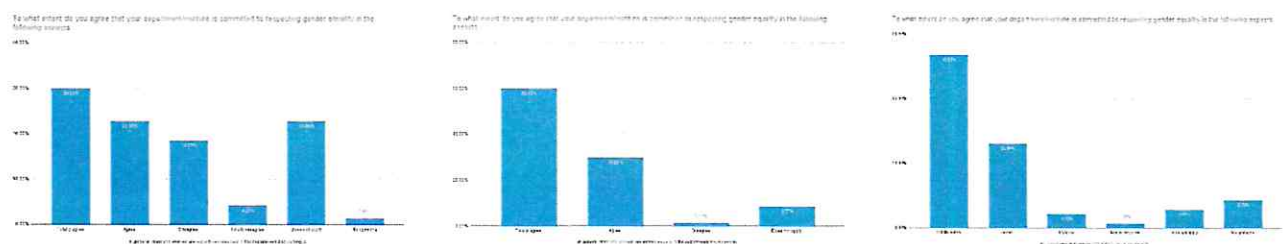


Figure 4. Level of conformity with gender equality

Thus, it is noted that the majority (90% and 78%, respectively) believe that at the departmental level, men and women are treated equally, and the department is receptive to gender equality concerns.

The issue of workplace sexual harassment was also addressed, and the results indicate that approximately 99% of respondents stated that they have not experienced or observed any of the following behaviors in the workplace:

- jokes, teasing, remarks, or questions with sexist undertones
- pressure from colleagues for meetings
- emails, phone calls, or letters with sexual content
- unwanted physical contact
- stalking
- physical or sexual aggressions

There were no respondents who reported experiencing sexual harassment in the workplace. However, it should be mentioned that there were opinions (1 out of the total respondents) that

indicated they had observed the presence of such behaviors related to harassment and gender-based violence.

Within the survey, discrimination based on gender and other criteria was also explored. The results indicate that no respondents have ever felt discriminated against due to gender or sexual orientation. However, there were opinions (4%) that indicated they have felt discriminated against based on other criteria such as age, religion, or due to pregnancy.

II.2.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis at the level of INCDSB has revealed that:

- within INCDSB, there are 73% of women and 27% of men employed (research and administrative roles), and the percentage remains the same in the research sector;
- the institute is generally perceived as a safe place, free from gender-based harassment or violence; there were no questionnaire respondents who confirmed experiencing such behavior;
- balancing work and family life – women more often declare that they are responsible for the majority of family duties;
- the research institute is generally perceived as inclusive; questionnaire respondents (1%) indicated that unspoken gender stereotypes and prejudices still exist;
- expectations regarding international mobility are more challenging for women in the childcare phase, but for those who are unmarried, mobility is not an issue; however, the majority of questionnaire respondents (over 88%) state that they travel for work purposes at least once or twice a year;
- maternal responsibilities, in general, do not delay research activities and do not discourage women from taking up administrative positions;
- women publish quite a bit, get involved in the department's social life, and choose to take up administrative or leadership positions;
- there is no culture of discrimination at INCDSB, where one gender or another is systematically favored;
- gender equality is integrated into the research processes at the National Institute for Research and Development in Biological Sciences;
- there is a lack of procedures and knowledge about gender equality, inclusion, and non-discrimination in the workplace;
- the questionnaire results did not demonstrate gender discrimination.

To summarize the questionnaire results, it is observed that all situations mentioned by respondents and situations analyzed at the institute level do not highlight significant factors of discrimination or inappropriate manifestations based on gender criteria.

The important conclusions of the internal analysis at the National Institute of Research and Development for Biological Sciences are:

- we need to review the existing policies and procedures, make gender relevant, and develop new ones that cover all identified areas of intervention;
- we need to train and educate our staff about gender equality;
- we need to actively and effectively communicate relevant gender-related actions and measures;
- we need to develop a Gender Strategy and a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for 2022-2025, with clear actions, targets, and responsible individuals.

III. THE GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY (GE) AND THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP) FOR 2022 – 2025

Based on the internal analysis, policies, and national and European requirements, the Board of Directors and the General Director of the National Institute for Research and Development in Biological Sciences have committed to approving the development and implementation of the Institute’s Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2022-2025 and the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) to operationalize the strategy.

The National Institute for Research and Development in Biological Sciences has decided to establish the position of Gender Equality Officer at the institute level, along with a Gender Equality Delegate in each department. The Gender Equality Officer has a proactive role, while the Gender Equality Delegates have a consulting role in implementing and monitoring the Gender Equality strategy.

Specifically, the Gender Equality Officer and the Gender Equality Delegates have the following responsibilities:

- contribute to the creation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP);
- provide practical support and tools to stakeholders involved in the implementation of the GEP;
- engage and cooperate with stakeholders at all levels to ensure the implementation of GEP actions;
- enhance awareness of the benefits of gender equality within the institute;
- evaluate progress in terms of gender equality within the institute.

The institute’s management has mandated Gender Equality roles (Officer and Delegates) at the institute level and dedicated working groups for each department to develop the Gender Equality Strategy and the GEP 2022-2025. The Gender Equality working group included male and female representatives from the research institute’s leadership, researchers, and representatives from the institute’s administration and support services.

III.1. The Gender Equality Strategy for 2022-2025

The Gender Equality Strategy of the National Institute for Research and Development in Biological Sciences aims to address the following intervention areas and objectives for the period 2022-2025:

Area of intervention	Objective(s)
1. Work-life balance and organizational culture	Promoting a favorable environment for integrating professional life with family and personal life; Consolidating positive attitudes towards diversity and inclusion in all areas of INCDSB’s activities;
2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	Promoting gender equality in the institutional culture, processes, and practices; Ensuring gender balance in decision-making and management structures.
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Promoting processes of facilitation and support for recruitment, career advancement, and appointments at all levels.
4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content	Promoting a gender and sex perspective in the research process; Promoting the integration of gender and sex perspectives in research activities.
5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Raising awareness for the importance of equality issues and reinforcing positive attitudes towards diversity; Preventing any form of violence and/or moral or psychological harassment based on gender, including sexual harassment.

III.2. The Gender Equality Plan for 2022-2025

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) of the National Institute for Research and Development in Biological Sciences includes key actions and measures to achieve the specific strategic objectives of each intervention area. It targets specific groups for these measures, provides implementation timelines, identifies responsible individuals, and establishes indicators for measuring progress.

In the area of “Equal Opportunities and Treatment Policy between Men and Women” with the objective of “Promoting equal opportunities and treatment for women and men by eliminating direct and indirect gender-based discrimination,” the following activities are conducted:

Action/Measure	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible(s)
	2022	2023	2024	2025		
Appointment of Gender Equality Officer	X March 10th				Appointed Gender Equality Officer	General Director (GD), Human Resources (HR)
Appointment of delegates in departments/centers, with a proactive and/or consulting role, responsible for monitoring and ensuring that workplace procedures and practices adhere to gender equality	X March 10th				Appointed Delegates in Departments/Centers	General Director (GD), Heads of Departments (HoD) Human Resources (HR)
Elaboration of the Leadership Commitment regarding gender equality policy and gender equality plan (GEP)	X March 10th				A written commitment from the INCDSB leadership	General Director
Diagnosis - Conducting the analysis of the current situation (identifying the main issues)	X March 18th / September 14th				Analysis Report - completed	GEO, HR, Working Group
Development of Gender Equality Policy	X March 25th				Gender Equality Policy - completed	GEO
Completion of Gender Equality Plan	X March 25th / September 15th				Gender Equality Plan- completed	GEO
Implementation of Gender Equality Plan	X	X	X	X	Analysis of Compliance of the Gender Equality Plan with Existing and Approved Specific Strategies	GEO
Monitoring and Evaluation	X	X	X	X	Evaluation Reports	GEO

Area of Intervention 1 - Work-Life Balance and Organizational Culture
Objective:

- **Promoting the Integration of Work, Family and Personal Life**

Action/Measure	Target Group	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible (s)
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Availability of policies, procedures and services for promoting the integration of professional life with family and personal life.	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel		X	X	X	Policies, procedures, and services for integrating professional and personal life	General Director(GD), Human Resources (HR), Gender Equality Officer (GEO), Steering Committee (SC)
2. Feasibility plans for setting up new social assistance services, such as contractual arrangements between the institute and service providers for tasks ranging from family and household care responsibilities to childcare (elderly care) in case of conferences, congresses, or international mobility	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel		X	X	X	Policies, procedures, and services for integrating professional and personal life	GD, HR, SC, GEO
3. Implementation of ICT-based systems in order to enhance flexibility and improve work meetings schedules based on the needs of work-life balance (e.g., managing and communicating meeting schedules/times)	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel	X	X	X	X	Standard Procedure for Promoting the Use of ICT Systems to Support the Integration of Professional and Personal Life	GD, HR, SC, GEO, IT Department
4. Availability of flexible work arrangements, from part-time to remote work	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel	X	X	X	X	Policies, procedures, and services for integrating professional and personal life	GD, HR, SC, GEO

Area of Intervention 2 - Gender Balance in Leadership and Decision-Making
Objective:

- **Promoting Gender Equality in Culture, Processes, and Practices within the Institute**

Action/Measure	Target Group	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible(s)
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Routine review of any text, communication, and images, in line with gender equality and diversity perspective	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel	X	X	X	X	Gender equality policy and structures	GEO, Gender Equality (GE) Delegates
2. Promoting initiatives to facilitate a widespread gender competence at all levels of the organization, providing training for staff and researchers	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel	X	X	X	X	Policies, procedures, and services for integrating professional and personal life	GEO, Gender Equality (GE) Delegates

Area of intervention 3. - Gender equality in recruitment and career progression
Objective:

- **Promoting processes that facilitate and support gender-sensitive recruitment, career advancement, and appointments**

Action/Measure	Target Group	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible(s)
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Undertaking gender awareness initiatives, briefings, and creating guidelines for recruitment, career progression, and appointments of gender-sensitive individuals	Institute Management	X	X	X	X	Gender awareness initiatives and guidelines	General Director (GD), Human Resources(HR), Gender Equality Officer (GEO), HoDs
2. Gender equality courses and training	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel	X	X	X	X	Recruitment training courses Courses and training for career advancement Courses and training for management	General Director (GD), Human Resources(HR), Gender Equality Officer (GEO), HoDs
3. Dissemination and communication of best career practices - role models for women (scientists, researchers, and academics	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel		X	X	X	Initiatives to increase awareness for female role models Initiatives to increase awareness for gender diversity in research teams	Gender Equality Officer (GEO), HoDs, Gender Equality (GE) Delegates

Area of intervention 4. - Integrating the gender dimension into research content Objectives:

- Promoting a gender and sex perspective in the research process
- Promoting the integration of sex and gender perspectives in research activities

Action/Measure	Target Group	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible(s)
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Internal training seminars on the use of the sex and gender perspective in research to foster the recognition of its economic, social and innovation value	Researchers, the scientific community	X	X	X	X	Participation in training seminars on integrating sex/gender analysis methods, focused on gender and the research field	SD, Researchers, Gender Equality Officer (GEO),
2. Development, communication, and implementation of standards for incorporating gender and sex variables in research	Researchers		X	X	X	Participation in training seminars on integrating sex/gender analysis methods, specific to gender and the research field Perception of gender/sex variables in research content	SD, Researchers, Gender Equality Officer (GEO)
3. Institutional recognition within the research institute of those projects that have taken the gender dimension into account (e.g. awards)	Researchers, the scientific community		X	X	X	Awarded projects	GD, Head of Department (HoDs), Researchers
4. Dissemination and communication of good career practices - role models for women (scientists, researchers, and university staff)	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel		X	X	X	Initiatives to increase awareness of female role models Initiatives to increase awareness of gender diversity in research teams	Gender Equality Officer(GEO), HoDs, Gender Equality (GE) delegates
5. Workshops on integrating gender equality and diversity issues into research activities, as support for research personnel	Researchers		X	X	X	Training seminars or guidelines on integrating sex/gender in research activities	SD, HR, HoDs, Gender Equality Officer(GEO)
6. Courses and training tools in all departments and at all levels (experienced or early researchers) on sex and gender variables	Researchers		X	X	X	Courses on gender-related dimensions for each research activity within the department	SD, HR, HoDs Gender Equality Officer (GEO)

Area of intervention 5. - Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment
Objective:

- **Raising awareness of the importance of gender equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes toward diversity**

Action/Measure	Target Group	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible(s)
		2022	2023	2024	2025		
1. Training on discrimination phenomena (including discriminatory language), violence (including that based on sex or gender bias), and sexual harassment	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel		X	X	X	Participation in training by category Skills acquired to identify and respond to discrimination and violence phenomena	GD, HR, HoDs, Gender Equality Officer (GEO)
2. Development of an internal electronic tool (institute's website/platform) to support information and education, as well as to enable reporting of sexual harassment and discrimination	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel	X	X	X	X	Dedicated research institute website/platform, number of visits, number of real situations reported, and resolved	GD, HR, HoDs, Gender Equality Officer (GEO) IT Department
3. Reinforcing the institute's Code of Ethics with provisions against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel	X	X	X	X	Initiatives to raise awareness of female role models Initiatives to raise awareness of gender diversity in research teams	GD, HR, HoDs, Gender Equality Officer (GEO)
4. Awareness campaign highlighting diversity and inclusion in the scientific community and promoting the prevention of discrimination across various fields	Researchers, technical staff, and administrative personnel	X	X	X	X	Awareness campaigns	Gender Equality Officer(GER)

IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)

The implementation of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) within the National Institute of Research - Development for Biological Sciences, and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the Gender Equality Strategy are regularly evaluated through regular meetings.

Implementing of the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) will be continuously monitored by the Gender Equality Officer and the Gender Equality Delegates within the institute.

The Gender Equality Officer and the Gender Equality Delegates from each department are responsible for collecting data and inputs. They will initially analyze of the GEP progress (versus indicators), gather insights, and collect feedback.

The Gender Equality Officer and the Gender Equality Delegates from the institute will compile annual progress reports, which will be presented to the institute's management (General Director, Steering Committee) and debated. These meetings will provide valuable insights into the GEP implementation. Additionally, they will offer feedback and recommendations that will enable adjustments and improvements to the GEP interventions for the following year.

The periodic reports enable a continuous review of the GEP's impact and keep the broader community informed and engaged in the progress toward gender equality. The review of the progress reports encompasses qualitative and quantitative data, such as updates on gender-disaggregated human resources data and monitoring data to track the implementation of key actions.

After completing and adopting of all of those mentioned above by the institute's management (Board of Directors, General Director, Steering Committee), the periodic (annual) gender equality progress report is published on the institute's website and communicated to the entire scientific community.

V. Bibliography - List of sources used for the literature review (in alphabetic order)

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3. EU Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en
4. EUA - Universities' Strategies and Approaches towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, <https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/universities-39-strategies-and-approaches-towards-diversity-equity-and-inclusion.pdf>
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13. Science Europe - Practical Guide TO Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations, https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/se_gender_practical-guide.pdf
14. Student evaluations of teaching (mostly) do not measure teaching effectiveness, https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/science_open_research_student_eval_teaching_effectiveness.pdf
15. The national strategy for the promotion of equal opportunities and treatment between women and men and the prevention and combating of domestic violence for the period 2021-2027 (<https://anes.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Strategia-Nationala-ES-si-VD.pdf>)
16. The gender equality plan within the UEFISCDI (<https://uefiscdi.gov.ro/plan-egalitate-de-gen-uefiscdi>).