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Institute of Biology – Bucharest

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The Gender Equality Strategy and the Gender Equality Plan 2026-2029

for the Institute of Biology - Bucharest

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Contents

Introduction	5
I. Review of requirements, policies and case studies	5
II. Diagnosis (data collection and analysis)	6
II.1. Data collection	6
II. 2. Data analysis	8
III. GE strategy and GEP	10
III.1. GE Strategy 2026-2029	10
III.2. GE Plan 2026-2029	11
IV. Monitoring and evaluation of the GEP	19
Annex 3. List of sources used for the literature review	20

Abbreviations and definitions

GE	Gender equality
GEP	Gender equality plan
HoD	Head of Department
HR	Human Resources
GD	General Director
SD	Scientific Director
CD	Steering Committee (Comitet de direcție)
CA	Board of Directors (Consiliul de administrație)
Sex	Either of the two major forms of individuals that occur in many species and that are distinguished respectively as female or male especially on the basis of their reproductive organs and structures (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)
Gender	The behavioural, cultural, or psychological traits typically associated with one sex (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)
Sex vs Gender	A clear delineation between sex and gender is typically prescribed, with sex as the preferred term for biological forms, and gender limited to its meanings involving behavioural, cultural, and psychological traits. In this dichotomy, the terms male and female relate only to biological forms (sex), while the terms masculine/masculinity, feminine/femininity, woman/girl, and man/boy relate only to psychological and sociocultural traits (gender) (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/)

Introduction

The Gender Equality (GE) strategy for 2026-2029 was developed by the Institute of Biology - Bucharest on the basis of input from the entire research institute and takes into account everyone who works at our research institute. The GE strategy was built on the provisions of the European Charter for researchers and of the Code of Conduct in the process of the recruitment of researchers¹, 2015-2019, the European Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025² and the Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans³.

The motivation for developing the GE strategy is to ensure that our research institute is a safe place for everyone, and all activities and processes that take place respect the principles of equality, diversity, inclusiveness and non-discrimination.

Based on the GE strategy, the research institute developed the GE Plan (GEP) for 2026-2029, with concrete actions and measures, as well as indicators for measuring progress of its implementation and revisions.

Enforcing its mission and values, the GE strategy and the GEP of the Institute of Biology - Bucharest ensure and promote equality and diversity to knowledge and the acquisition of skills to all. The objectives of the GE strategy are implemented through specific actions that aim at safeguarding an equal and inclusive organizational culture and promoting gender-equality at all levels. As such, the GE strategy and the GEP will pro-actively enable, gender equality awareness raising, skills and competences; gender balance in decision-making structures and processes, including recruitment; gender equality in research; and integrating the gender dimension in the entire research process.

I. Review of requirements, policies and case studies

Prior to developing the GE strategy and the GEP, the management of the Institute of Biology - Bucharest appointed a working group to conduct a literature review of the existing requirements, policies, recommendations, examples and case studies pertinent to discrimination, inclusiveness and gender equality, with a special focus on research performing organisations (RPOs).

The resources used in this literature review study are presented in Annex 1.

¹ https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/ttf_goal_2_results_v1.0.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1>

II. Diagnosis (data collection and analysis)

II.1. Data collection

The following indicators were selected at the Institute of Biology - Bucharest as relevant for the discussion on gender equality issues:

- Staff numbers by sex/gender at all levels, by domains, function (including administrative / support staff)
- Numbers of women and men in research and administrative decision-making positions (e.g., top management team, boards, committees, recruitment and promotion panels);
- Numbers of staff by sex/gender applying for/taking parental leave, for how long and how many returned after taking the leave.

1. Women and men in leadership positions

- **Table 1. Research institute management**

	Woman	Man
General Director		1
Deputy Director	-	-
Scientific Director	1	
TOTAL	1	1

- **Table 2. Other Heads of research institute structures / units (independent units, other than research):**

	Woman	Man
Chief accountant	1	
Head of Service – Resource	1	
Head of Service - Administration		1
TOTAL	2	1

2. Women and men – research staff

Table 3. Total number of research staff, per department

	Experienced researchers (CS I, CS II, CS III)	Early -stage researchers (CS and ACS)	Total women	Total men
Research department 1 (Taxonomy, Ecology and Nature Conservation)	/Total Number Women/ 12	/Total Number Women/ 10	22	
	/Total Number Men/ 4	/Total Number Men/ 3		7
Research department 2 (Microbiology)	/Total Number Women/ 11	/Total Number Women/ 5	16	
	/Total Number Men/ 1	/Total Number Men/ 2		3
Research department 3 (Development Biology)	/Total Number Women/ 6	/Total Number Women/ 4	10	
	/Total Number Men/ 1	/Total Number Men/ 2		3
Total women	29	19	48	
Total men	6	7		13

3. Women and men – administrative and support services

Table 4. Total number of women and men in administrative and support services

	Women	Men
Research technical support (Technical assistants)	/Total number/ 11	/Total number/ 2
Office administration support (secretaries)	/Total number/ 11	/Total number/ 3
Librarians	/Total number/ 1	/Total number/ 0
Building administration	/Total number/ 1	/Total number/ 3
TOTAL	24	9

As part of data collection and diagnosis, we conducted institute-wide surveys with the following indicators:

- Number of years needed for women and men to make career advancements
- Numbers of women and men candidates applying for distinct job positions
- Opinions on the work-life balance in the research institute
- Integration of the gender dimension into research content
- Perception of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment in the research institute
- Perception (opinion) regarding inclusiveness and discrimination at the research institute

II. 2. Data analysis

We conducted internal analyses of the data collected, and reviews of existing policies addressing gender equality and inclusiveness. The analyses took place in workshops, meetings and working seminars at all levels, with the gender equality function assigned for developing the GEP (Gender equality plan) and including the research institute management, research staff and representatives of research institute administrative and support services. Each and all working groups included even numbers of men and women.

The conclusions of the internal audit were then analysed in the Steering Committee, approved in the Scientific Council, and then communicated to the entire research institute staff.

With mandate from the Scientific Council, the Director committed to the development and implementation of the GEP for the Institute of Biology - Bucharest, for 2026-2029.

1. Quantitative analysis of data

The analysis of numerical data illustrated that:

- The number of women in leadership positions is more the number of men
- The number of women in research positions, i.e., experienced researcher and early-stage researcher, is high, reflecting good existing recruitment practices in the research institute.

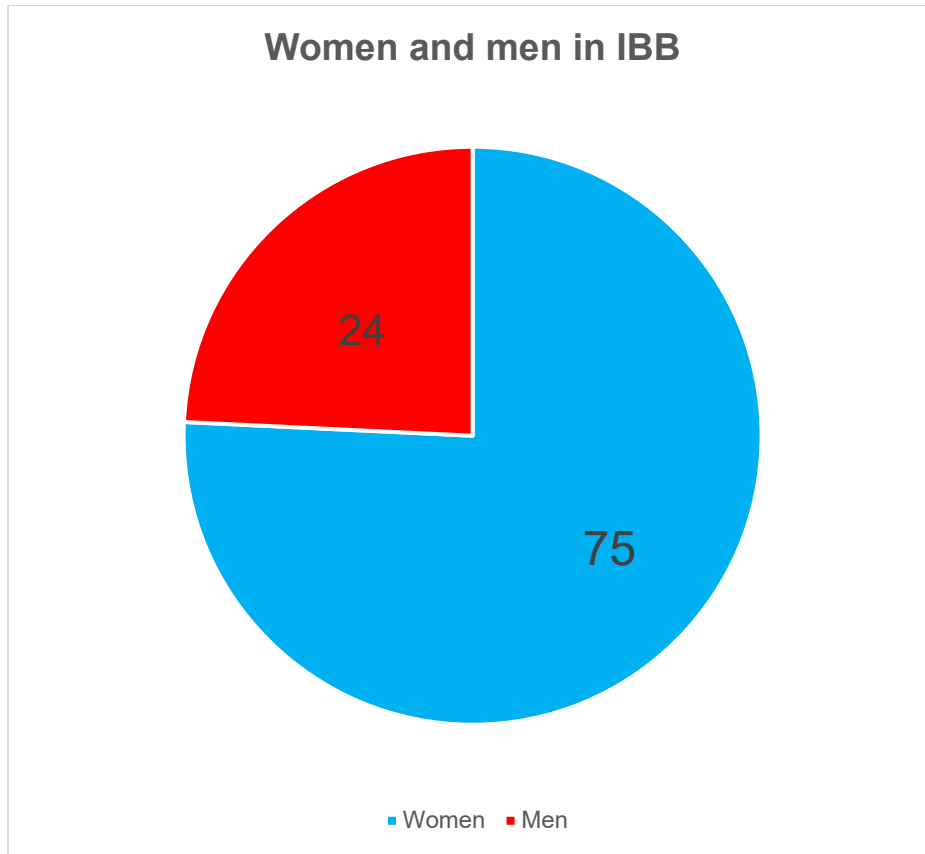


Fig. 1 - The number of women and men in Institute of Biology - Bucharest

2. Qualitative analysis of data

The qualitative research showed that:

- The gender dimension is well integrated in research
- The research institute is perceived as a safe place, without gender-violence
- The research institute is overall perceived as inclusive
- The strategies of the departments are rather unclear – cases are handled covertly; departments do not communicate that they act on gender equality in any way

To summarize the results of the studies, it can be noted that all the situations mentioned by the respondents and situations analysed at the institute are, to some extent, factors of discrimination or manifestations based on gender.

The important conclusions of the internal analysis at the Institute of Biology - Bucharest are:

- We need to revisit the existing policies and procedures, to make gender relevant, and develop new ones covering all identified areas of intervention

- We need to train and educate our staff on gender-equality
- We need to communicate gender relevant actions and measures actively and efficiently
- We need to develop a gender strategy and a GEP for 2026-2029, with clear actions and targets, and responsible persons

III. GE strategy and GEP

Based on the internal review and the national and European policies and requirements, the Board of Directors and the General Director committed to developing the institute strategy for gender equality for 2026-2029, and the corresponding GEP.

The Institute of Biology - Bucharest decided on creating the function of GE officer at the institute plus one GE delegate in each department. The GE officer has a proactive role, and the GE delegates have a consultant role in implementing and monitoring the GE strategy.

Specifically, the GE officer and GE delegates contribute to setting up, implement, monitor and evaluate the GEP; provide practical support and tools to the actors involved in the GEP implementation; cooperate with and engage stakeholders at all levels in order to ensure the implementation of the GEP's actions; raise awareness about the benefits of gender equality in the research institute; assess the progress towards gender equality in the institute.

The institute management mandated the GE functions (officer and delegates) at the institute and a dedicated working group to develop the GE strategy and the GEP 2026-2029. The GE working group included men and women representatives of research institute leadership and researchers, representatives of research institute administration and support services, and one external advisor (*UEFISCDI*).

III.1. GE Strategy 2026-2029

(Disclaimer: Please note that this template refers ONLY to Horizon Europe and its eligibility requirements for GEP. An organization GEP may be wider than these requirements and may cover other areas of intervention than those recommended by Horizon Europe – if you deem necessary.

For more information on a general GEP, please consult the European Institute for Gender Equality - EIGE⁴ and the UEFISCDI GEP⁵)

The GE Strategy comprises the following areas of intervention and objectives for 2026-2029:

Area of intervention <i>(These areas are those 'recommended' by Horizon Europe for GEP. They should be used in the GEP, however other areas may be considered, as needed)</i>	Objective(s) <i>(Please write your own objectives, as relevant for your own organization. Below are some examples that you may use, or replace with your own)</i>
1. Work-life balance and organisational culture	Promoting integration of work with family and personal life
2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making	Promoting gender equality in the institutional culture, processes and practice
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression	Promoting processes to favour and support gender-sensitive recruitment, career and appointments
4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content	Promoting a gender and sex perspective in research process Promoting the integration of a sex and gender perspective in research activity
5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Raising awareness about the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity

III.2. GE Plan 2026-2029

The GE Plan at the Institute of Biology - Bucharest comprises areas of intervention, objectives, key measures, target audience, timeline, responsible persons, and indicators to measure progress.

⁴ <https://eige.europa.eu/>

⁵ <https://uefiscdi.gov.ro/plan-egalitate-de-gen-uefiscdi>

Area 1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Objective: Promoting integration of work with family and personal life

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2026	2027	2028	2029		
1. Availability of policies, procedures and structures at the research institute for promoting integration of work with family and personal life	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Policies, procedures and services for work and personal life integration	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
2. Feasibility plans for the creation of new welfare services, e.g., contract arrangements made by the research institute with service suppliers from family care duties and house chores to child-care (elderly-care) in case of conference or congress, or international mobility	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Policies, procedures, and services for work and personal life integration	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
3. Implementation of ICT-based systems for enhancing flexibility and improving a better planning of working meetings accordingly to work life balance needs (e.g., management and communications of the meeting schedule/timing)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Standard procedure for ICT-based systems promoting work and personal life integration	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer, IT services
4. Availability of flexible working times arrangements, from part-time to remote working	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Policies, procedures and services for work and personal life integration	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer

Area 2. Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

Objective: Promoting gender equality in the institutional culture, processes and practice

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2026	2027	2028	2029		
1. Appointing delegates in departments/centres, with a proactive and/or consultant role to be responsible for monitoring and ensuring that workplace procedures and practices respect gender equality	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X			Gender equality policy and structures	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer, GE delegates
2. Routine revision of any text, communication, images, from a gender equality and diversity standing point	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Policies, procedures and services for work and personal life integration	GE officer, GE delegates
3. Promotion of initiatives to facilitate a widespread gender competence at all levels of the organization with provision of training to staff and researchers	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Awareness training on gender equality issues	GE officer, GE delegates

Area 3. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Objective: Promoting processes to facilitate and support gender-sensitive recruitment, career and appointments

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2026	2027	2028	2029		
1. Carrying out gender awareness initiatives, briefings and creating guidelines for gender-sensitive recruitment, career and appointments	Research institute management	X	X	X	X	Gender awareness initiatives and guidelines	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
2. Courses and training on gender equality	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Courses and training for recruitment Courses and training for career progression Courses and training for leadership	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer, GE delegates
3. Disseminate and communicate career good practices - role models for women (scientists, researchers and academics)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Initiatives for raising awareness on female role models	GE officer, GE delegates, HoDs

						Initiatives for raising awareness on gender diversity in research teams	
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Area 4. Integration of the gender dimension into research content

Objectives:

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

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2026	2027	2028	2029		
1. Internal training seminars on the use of sex and gender perspective in research, to foster the acknowledgment of its economic, social and innovation value	Researchers, scientific community	X	X	X	X	Participation in training seminars on integrating sex/gender analysis methods, by gender and field of research	SD, Researchers, GE officer
2. Development, communication and implementation of standards for the incorporation of the sex and gender variables into research	Researchers		X	X	X	Participation in training seminars on integrating sex/gender analysis methods,	SD, Researchers, GE officer

						by gender and field of research Perception of the gender/sex variables in research contents	
3. Institutional recognition within the research institute of those projects that have taken the gender dimension into account. (e.g., prizes)	Researchers, scientific community		X	X	X	Awarded projects	GD, HoDs, Researchers
4. Disseminate and communicate career good practices - role models for women (scientists, researchers and academics)	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Initiatives for raising awareness on female role models Initiatives for raising awareness on gender diversity in research teams	GE officer, GE delegates, HoDs
5. Workshops on the integration of gender equality and diversity issues in research activity, as support for research staff	Researchers		X	X	X	Training seminars or guidelines on integrating sex/gender in research activity	SD, HR, HoDs, GE officer

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 specific gender dimensions, per research activity (department)	SD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
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Area 5. Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

Objective: Raising awareness about the importance of equality issues and strengthening positive attitudes towards diversity

Action/Measure	Target	Timeline				Indicator(s)	Responsible
		2026	2027	2028	2029		
1. Training on discrimination phenomena (including discriminatory language), violence (including that based on prejudice or gender), harassment, and sexual harassment	Researchers, technical and administrative staff		X	X	X	Participation in training, per categories Skills acquired in relation to identifying and responding to discrimination and violence phenomena	GD, HR, HoDs, GE officer
2. Develop internal (institute) electronic tool (website/platform) supporting information and	Researchers, technical and	X	X	X	X	Dedicated research institute	GD, HoDs, HR, IT

education, as well as allowing the reporting of sexual harassment and discrimination	administrative staff					website/platform, number of visits, number of real-case situations reported and solved	services, GE officer
3. Reinforce de Code of Ethics of the institute with provisions against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Initiatives for raising awareness on female role models Initiatives for raising awareness on gender diversity in research teams	GD, HoDs, HR, GE officer
4. Awareness campaign highlighting diversity and inclusiveness in the scientific community and encouraging prevention of discrimination in various areas	Researchers, technical and administrative staff	X	X	X	X	Awareness campaign	GE officer

IV. Monitoring and evaluation of the GEP

The implementation of the GEP at the Institute of Biology - Bucharest, the progress against the GE strategy aims and objectives are regularly assessed, through periodic meetings. The implementation of the GEP will be permanently monitored by the GE functions (officer and delegates) at the institute. The GE officer together with the GE delegates within each department are responsible with collecting data and input. They will perform a first analysis of the progress of the GEP (against the indicators), gather knowledge and feedback.

The GE functions at the institute will conclude findings reports (once a year), which are then presented to the research institute management (GD, HoDs) and discussed. These meetings will provide valuable conclusions on the implementation of the GEP. These meetings will also provide comments and recommendations that will enable adjustments and improvements to interventions on the GEP for the following year.

The periodic reports allow the continuous review of the impact of the GEP as well as keeping the wider community informed and engaged in the progress towards gender equality. The review of progress reports includes qualitative information as well as quantitative data, such as updates on human resource data disaggregated by sex, monitoring data to keep track of the implementation of key actions.

After their conclusion and adoption by the research institute management (Board of Directors, GD, HoDs), the periodic (annual) GE progress report is published on the research institute website and communicated to the entire scientific community.

Annex 1. List of sources used for the literature review

(in alphabetic order)

Council of Europe Gender Equality Commission,

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/gender-equality-commission>

EU FESTA - Gender Issues in Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Processes – Recommendations for a Gender Sensitive Application of Excellence Criteria,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/festa_gender_issues_recruitment_appointment_promotion.pdf

EU Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025, https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

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>

EUCEN - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in European Higher Education Institutions,

https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/web_diversity%20equity%20and%20inclusion%20in%20european%20higher%20education%20institutions.pdf

European charter & code of conduct for the recruitment of researchers,

https://cdn2.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/ttf_goal_2_results_v1.0.pdf

European Institute for Gender Equality, <https://eige.europa.eu>

GARCIA – Mapping organizational work-life policies and practices,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/garcia_report_mapping_org_work-life_policies_practices.pdf

Guidelines for using gender-sensitive language in communication, research and administration,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/reutlingen_university_guidelines_for_using_gender-sensitive_language.pdf

Horizon Europe General Annexes, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf)

[tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf)

Horizon Europe guidance on gender equality plans, [https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1)

[/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1)

LERU - Equality, diversity and inclusion at universities: the power of a systemic approach,

<https://www.leru.org/publications/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-universities>

Science Europe - Practical Guide TO Improving Gender Equality in Research Organisations,

https://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/se_gender_practical-guide.pdf

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