

Gender Equality Plan

2022 – 2026

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GENDER EQUALITY PLAN

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is a document covering the next three years in which the Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences defines basic areas, goals and events to strengthen diversity and tolerance in the institution, regardless of age, cultural or national affiliation, sexual orientation, religion, health disadvantage, multilingualism, etc. At a time when many of the old certainties and paradigms of our society have been shaken to their foundations, we appreciate the importance of an inclusive community that is also able and willing to do more, without discrimination. A community that sees differences between identities as an ethical value and a valuable source of inspiration that can bring positive benefits. Diversity in an institution's community brings benefits in the form of better use of human potential, more innovation, new experiences and new perspectives. In this regard, the GEP is an effective tool for analysing, evaluating and strategising an approach to the topic of potential discrimination and intolerance at the BC.

The issue of an inclusive society is being addressed by politicians both at the European level and in the Czech Republic. Gender equality in research and innovation is a priority of the European Research Area (ERA). Back in 2012, the European Commission set three objectives for cooperation between EU countries and support for institutional change: gender equality in scientific careers, gender balance in decision-making, and integration of the gender dimension into the content of research and innovation.

The European Commission's Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2025¹ sets out a vision, policy objectives and actions to make concrete progress on gender equality in Europe and to achieve sustainable development goals. The obligation for all research institutions in the EU and associated countries to develop a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) is an essential contribution to achieving these objectives. GEP is becoming an eligibility criterion for all research organisations in the EU and associated countries wishing to participate in Horizon Europe from calls with deadlines in 2022 and beyond.

GEP requirements from the European Commission:

- It must be a public document, signed by the top managers of the institution. The document must demonstrate a commitment to gender equality, setting out clear objectives, detailed actions and measures to achieve them.
- It must have dedicated resources for design, implementation and monitoring, including funding for specific positions.
- It must include measures, targets, indicators and an ongoing evaluation of progress.
- It must be supported by training and capacity building.

Equality between women and men is one of the fundamental values of the Czech Republic, as expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. In the Czech Republic, the topic is being dealt with by the Office of the Government. Currently, a second framework government document for the implementation of gender equality policy in the Czech Republic has been drafted. The first document was the Government Strategy for Gender Equality in the Czech Republic 2014-2020. The new strategy for 2021-2030 includes a total of eight areas of social life: work and care, decision-making, security, health, knowledge, society, external relations and institutions.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Equality Union: a strategy for gender equality 2020-2025, March 2020 EC Brussels



The Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, in preparing the measures for the Second Framework Document, developed background analyses on the topic of gender equality. The analyses showed that many gender inequalities persist in Czech society² Various international and European comparisons also show that the Czech Republic is one of the below-average countries within the EU in this respect. The main problems include inequalities in the labour market (including the high difference in average incomes between women and men), economic inequalities (women's higher risk of poverty), the very low representation of women in decision-making positions, horizontal gender segregation in education and the stereotypical division of roles in household and family care. A specific problem related to gender inequality is the incidence of sexual and domestic violence. Gender inequalities have a negative impact on the position of women in society. However, many of these inequalities also negatively affect men's lives. This is mainly in the area of health or gender stereotypes about men's roles. The pressure on men's earning power is one of the factors that contribute to the maintenance of horizontal segregation. In addition, pressure to perform can have negative effects on their mental and physical health. Similarly, there are other areas where men are disadvantaged. The Gender Equality Strategy also highlights the negative impact of gender stereotypes on men.

The Biology Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences (BC) is one of the largest ecologically oriented research institutions in Europe and its main focus is research in biological and biological-ecological fields. Equality and fairness are among their top priorities. The BC has long adhered to the principles of equality in relation to the Labour Code of the Czech Republic, the Code of Ethics of the CAS and the Code of Ethics of the BC. These are the principles of diversity, inclusion and equality. Gender equality indicators and the availability of disaggregated data play an important role in gender mainstreaming. Women and men have equal rights and self-determination in all aspects and phases of working life in the BC. The BC promotes mutual respect and appreciation and the free exchange of views, ideas and experiences. In the normal course of the institution, the BC treats all employees equally, taking into account all diversity (social, national, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious, economic, educational, health and age). The BC creates an equal working environment for all staff, from administrative, technical and early career researchers to experienced senior staff. The BC also supports the work-life balance of its employees.

The commitment to equal access is also contained in the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the European Charter for Researchers, to which the BC subscribed in 2017. In connection with the HR Award effort, the BC conducted its GAP analysis, which found that employees perceive that they are treated fairly by their supervisors in the workplace, both in terms of access and financially. Furthermore, the GAP analysis revealed that the vast majority of employees did not experience any form of discrimination in the workplace.

In spite of this, the BC needs to focus on equal access issues. The table below shows that women (1.8%) predominate in the V1 position, starting employment immediately after completing their Master's degree. The data demonstrates the interest shown by women in pursuing a career in a scientific environment. Most of the time, these women are not unburdened by family or household responsibilities. In the V2 position, the numbers of women and men are equal with a slight predominance of men. From the V3 position onwards, the gap between the number of women and men in science begins to widen. The significant decline in the number of women in science towards higher career positions in the V5 and V6 categories means that the conditions for women and men are not entirely comparable and have not changed significantly over the years.

² Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030, February 2021 Office of the Government of the Czech Republic

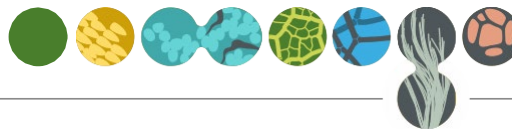


Table 1 Number of men and women (BC staff) in grades V1 to V6 in 2018-2021.

	2018			2019			2020			2021		
	wome n	men	ratio	Wome n	men	ratio	wome n	men	ratio	wome n	men	ratio
V1	36	20	1.80	39	26	1.50	45	24	1.88	41	24	1.71
V2	52	62	0.84	72	73	0.99	69	64	1.08	63	75	0.84
V3	40	56	0.71	57	54	1.06	45	58	0.78	48	60	0.80
V4	22	30	0.73	27	31	0.87	27	35	0.77	27	36	0.75
V5	26	60	0.43	26	63	0.41	27	62	0.44	30	64	0.47
V6	3	43	0.07	3	44	0.07	4	46	0.09	4	49	0.08
total	179	271	0.66	224	291	0.77	217	289	0.75	213	308	0.69

Source: BC Personnel Department

As part of its GEP, the BC has identified areas of focus over the next three years. This is a medium-term plan that will be updated and continuously monitored and evaluated annually. Individual key areas that are in line with the recommendations of both strategic documents, i.e. the European Commission's strategy document for 2020-2030 and the Czech Republic's strategy, are specified in more detail in the text below.

The BC has identified five core areas, within which a total of 13 equality and gender-related objectives have been specified.

- ❖ AREA 1: WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND COMBATING STEREOTYPES
- ❖ AREA 2: GENDER BALANCE IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS AND DECISION-MAKING BODIES
- ❖ AREA 3: GENDER EQUALITY IN RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION
- ❖ AREA 4: INTEGRATING THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO THE CONTENT OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
- ❖ AREA 5: PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The proposed areas and objectives include the establishment of one new instrument - the Equality Specialist post (0.1 - 0.2 FTE), which will systematically and specifically address equality in the BC. This position will prepare the institution's leadership for negotiations to change the playing field towards greater gender parity at BC. At the same time, they must align their agenda with existing agendas and organisational units already in place at the BC. These include a mentoring programme for early career researchers, an institution-wide training system, cooperation with the Director's Council, cooperation in the framework of the welcome-to-BC training, the establishment of admissions committees, the possibilities of grant rules and the evaluation conditions of individual funders.

In the direction from the BC, the Equality Specialist will network with other active institutes of the Academy of Sciences and universities in the implementation of the GEP and will be inspired by their experience. Thanks to the EC regulation, all institutions, i.e., grant successful ones, must have a GEP developed and operational.

The Equality Specialist will build on the collaboration of NCC Gender and Science, using their activities for its training and also to increase the attractiveness of opportunities for the BC.



The Equality Specialist will be a collection/reporting point for negative experiences from across the BC. It will be the responsibility of the Equality Specialist to initiate a solution according to the rules approved by the management of the institution.

If necessary, the BC will have an external mediator who will assist with consultation, advice or personal interviews if requested by the Equality Specialist.

Description of Individual Areas and Objectives

AREA 1: WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE AND COMBATING STEREOTYPES

OBJECTIVE 1: PROMOTING A BETTER WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The low representation of women is also a problem in science, research and innovation. In general, women make up 60% of master's students and 44% of doctoral students in the Czech Republic. However, only 27% of researchers are women and their representation has been declining over the long term. This is mainly due to the difficulty of combining the scientific profession with childcare and the lack of opportunities to reconcile one's personal life and a demanding work life. Written and unwritten rules for career advancement, which are linked to the requirement for continuous publication and long-term mobility abroad, are also an obstacle. Given the need for the mobility of early career researchers, it is unlikely that other family members can help with childcare, i.e., the support system must be targeted directly at (both) parents of the child.

The BC strives to create conditions for a work-life balance. It offers a playgroup, allows part-time hours and flexible hours for both parents of the child. It has a social fund and also a catering service. Another component is the home office, a modern tool that has not been used properly and was not even enabled before the pandemic. The possibility of re-evaluating and setting it as a standard employee benefit is offered, especially for parents of young children, where in the case of illness it is impossible to predict whether it is a two-day virus or something more serious.

For quality and meaningful work-life balance solutions, we also need to actively monitor opportunities, show and promote examples of good institutional practice, invite successful women scientists to lectures, and engage with female talent in departments. Part of the solution to Objective 1 is also to include the issue of work-family harmonisation in the existing institution-wide training agenda and mentoring programme.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTING A BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND PARENTING AND/OR CARE GIVING ACTIVITIES

Due to maternal and parental responsibilities, women researchers have much less space than men to build and continue their own scientific careers. The careers of women researchers are marked by disruptions due to motherhood and parenthood, and women face more pressure than men to limit their mobility due to gendered expectations of family care. The BC creates the conditions for reconciling the possibility of working while caring for a young child or sick family member, even though this is very challenging in a research institution. Employees are helped by a children's group for children up to 3 years of age, flexible working hours, or the possibility of working part-time and its subsequent consideration in performance appraisals.

Promoting a work/parenting balance means, for example, factoring parenthood into assessments so that childcare is not a discriminatory factor for career progression. The principle of deferred evaluation should be applied again not only for women but also for men in all positions within the BC - scientific and administrative/support. Furthermore, home office should be allowed in the case of parents of young children, in cases the child is ill, as it is not possible to determine in advance whether it will be a short-term or more serious course of illness.



OBJECTIVE 3: STRENGTHENING A SHARED CULTURE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND THE VALUE OF INCLUSION

The inclusion of each individual in the work community is very important for the effective functioning of the whole institution. The socialization of the employee with respect for formal and informal social norms and rules of functioning is necessary as a prevention of conflicts based on different value systems. Scientific research institutions are multicultural environments where workplace conflicts may arise due to cultural differences and/or differences in interpretation of reality. The BC strives to ensure that each new employee shares the values of the institution and integrates into the work team as quickly as possible.

Every new employee undergoes welcome-to-BC training upon joining. The training introduces the functioning of the BC, introduces the different support team leaders and helps to get oriented more quickly in the new environment. The issues of sexual harassment, unconscious bias, gender and, for foreigners, cultural practices in the Czech Republic need to be implemented in the initial training and manual.

OBJECTIVE 4: COMBATING GENDER STEREOTYPES, INCREASING DIVERSITY AND SUPPORTING MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The BC, like Czech society as a whole, still faces gender and other stereotypes. There is also intolerance in other areas (e.g., nationality, age, religion, sexual orientation, education). The BC is committed to eliminating gender stereotypes, raising awareness of human diversity and increasing mutual tolerance.

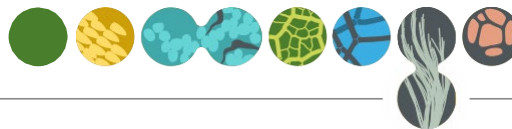
The BC will organise awareness seminars to improve information and raise awareness of the cultural customs of the countries of BC employees and Czech society.

AREA 2: GENDER BALANCE IN MANAGEMENT POSITIONS AND DECISION-MAKING BODIES

OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORTING MEASURES FOR A BETTER GENDER BALANCE IN BC MANAGEMENT

Equitable representation of women and men in decision-making positions is one of the fundamental pillars of a functioning democracy. Women and men still have specific experiences and needs in many ways. And since decisions about the shape of the institution affect all staff, regardless of gender, it is important that both men and women are represented in the leadership and that these specific needs are met. The under-representation of women in decision-making may thus contribute to the fact that women's needs may be neglected, albeit unintentionally, in the institution. Equal representation is usually hindered by barriers that may not be fully visible. These barriers can include gender stereotypes and traditional ideas about women's roles, non-transparent rules for decision-making positions, and women's lack of confidence in their own abilities. The low representation of women in leadership positions has societal implications. There is an equal number of women and men working at the BC (409 women, 383 men), but a more detailed analysis shows that the higher the position, the lower the representation of women.

Therefore, the BC sees the need for greater involvement of women in the institution's leadership and other decision-making bodies. Measures must aim to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions, advisory bodies and selection committees. These measures must be chosen sensitively, as leadership positions cannot be artificial and without merit. In order for an institution to function effectively, expertise and qualifications are essential. The BC will take gender issues into account when filling leadership positions or appointing decision-making bodies by approaching or nominating at least one woman each time. The evolution of women in the institution's leadership and decision-making bodies will be monitored through an annual evaluation report. At the same time, a seminar for managers on unconscious bias will be prepared.



OBJECTIVE 2: PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AT THE BC, ORGANISATION OF EVENTS TO DISSEMINATE THE TOPIC OF EQUALITY

The promotion of gender equality has several sub-tasks. First, women's experiences and perspectives need to be incorporated into the functioning of science, research and innovation. Second, men and women face specific challenges and have specific needs that need to be addressed flexibly within the institution to avoid wasting staff resources. Third, an inclusive work environment can only be created if the values of equality are communicated within individual institutions. A good understanding of the content of gender equality requires the BC to take a proactive approach with its employees.

The BC will prepare a detailed analysis using demographic, staffing, grant and other available internal data for the past 10 years. The BC will organise training sessions on topics that will promote gender equality at the BC - part of the welcome-to-BC training, unconscious bias, imposter syndrome (refers to women who, for no good reason, often feel unqualified, unsuitable for a given position, insufficiently capable, lacking the personal qualities and aptitudes to perform well in a higher position), and cultural practices in the Czech Republic. Interesting opportunities will arise from the cooperation with NCC Gender and Science. The Equality Specialist will be the place to collect, evaluate and address suggestions. They can be contacted via the intranet form or by using the consultation hours. Compliance with the gender equality approach requires regular monitoring, therefore an annual evaluation report will be prepared each year and submitted to the management of the institution.

AREA 3: GENDER EQUALITY IN RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION

OBJECTIVE 1: PROMOTING GENDER BALANCE IN RECRUITMENT PANELS

The BC signed up for the principles of the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and the European Charter for Researchers in 2017. The BC defended its principles and won the HR Award. In the context of recruitment, it has developed a methodology for selection procedures with an emphasis on openness, transparency and retrospective evidence. The methodology includes the entire recruitment process, including the rules for appointing a gender-balanced selection committee, and has been practised at the BC since 2017. Clear rules for the functioning of the Commission lead to transparency in its appointment, problem-solving and decision-making.

The BC will strictly adhere to the adopted methodology for the Open Transparent Tender Rules (OTM-R). The members of the selection committees are continuously trained on the OTM-R rules. The appointment of a gender-balanced committee is one of the points of the rules.

OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORT FOR GENDER BALANCE MEASURES IN RECRUITMENT

The BC has standard terms and conditions for an open transparent tender. Discrimination in the recruitment process for any applicant is not feasible. Each candidate is evaluated by a gender-balanced committee according to pre-defined rules and criteria. The minutes of the recruitment process are drawn up and signed by all members of the committee. In the case of a candidate's complaint, all the records of the selection procedure are taken into account and the evaluation of all candidates is considered individually at the level of the management of the institution, including the final decision of the committee.

The BC will continue to follow and adapt the Open Transparent Tender Rules (OTM-R) based on current experience, with an emphasis on gender balance in recruitment.

OBJECTIVE 3: SUPPORT FOR GENDER BALANCE MEASURES IN CAREER PROGRESSION

The BC's career path for its employees is described in the Career Code, which has had defined career progression based on transparent and clearly defined rules since 2017. Compliance with the conditions does not include discriminatory items and therefore every employee has an equal opportunity to



advance in his/her career. Nevertheless, there are barriers, but they are not formal. These are gendered expectations that prevent women from asserting themselves. This objective is one of the essential ones in building the conditions for increasing the number of women scientists in the V5 and V6 categories.

The BC will take action to take into account career breaks in performance assessments due to starting a family or deferring an internal evaluation. The BC will develop an analysis from available data (possibly using the MLSA Logit tool) and define factors that affect career progression, also focusing on the imposter syndrome as a factor slowing down career progression. The imposter syndrome affects women's career advancement because women often do not feel qualified for a senior position, they think they were chosen by mistake, that they are not capable enough and that they lack some personal qualities and aptitudes to perform well in a senior position. The BC will promote gender balance in career advancement by incorporating the fact that parents of a young child temporarily have incomparably less time available. The BC will consider budgeting funds for targeted support - playgroup, nursery allowance, childcare up to age 3, etc. Individual points will be reflected in the evaluation system and annual evaluation report to the GEP.

AREA 4: INTEGRATING THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO THE CONTENT OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

OBJECTIVE 1: INTEGRATING THE GENDER DIMENSION INTO RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND EVALUATION

The issue of incorporating gender into the research itself is a relatively new requirement. The issue can be well illustrated in the area of health, which determines the quality of life of every person. Research conducted according to the male norm and the low representation of women in drug research and development does not take into account that women's and men's bodies are different from each other. Research needs to take into account that, for example, the dosage of medication, the course of illness and the symptoms of certain diseases often look different in women and men. Research that does not take this into account increases the risk of misdiagnosis and/or inappropriate treatment.

The BC takes into account the relevance of the gender approach in its research areas, in the selection of samples for testing, in the statistical processing of data and in the evaluation of the results obtained. The BC will maintain a gender approach in the research itself. The status will be monitored in the annual evaluation report to the GEP.

OBJECTIVE 2: DEVELOPING TRAINING TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

The BC sees tolerance, non-discrimination and the appreciation of diversity as important goals, so that prejudices, language barriers or cultural differences are not the cause of misunderstandings and conflicts in the workplace. For this reason, the BC will organise activities to increase the understanding of the issues and the knowledge and skills of its staff.

The BC will organise mutual meetings to highlight the differences between the Czech Republic and the home environment of employed foreigners. The meetings will focus on cultural differences and mutual diversity. A knowledge of diversity will prevent misunderstandings, facilitate the resolution of conflicts that have already arisen and help create a more integrated working environment.

AREA 5: PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

OBJECTIVE 1: SUPPORT ACTIVITIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO DIFFERENT FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



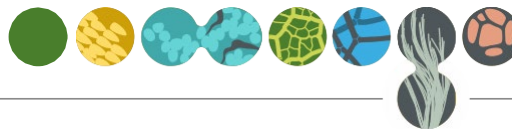
At the BC, issues of gender equality and non-discrimination against women are part of BC's internal documents (Career Code, Labour Code). Yet issues of sexually motivated violent behaviour, sexual harassment and other forms of inappropriate behaviour are not explicitly addressed at the BC. We need to start raising awareness about the issue of forms of gender-based violence.

The BC will reflect this in the induction training for all staff and the handbook. At the same time, they will prepare a short online training session, ending with a test.

OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORT MEASURES AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT

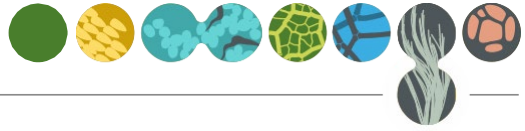
The BC recognises the need to protect employees against sexual and immoral harassment. Currently, the issue is not addressed in a systematic way. The BC will standardise processes that any employee will be able to use if they have an adverse experience in any of the areas of gender equality, non-discrimination and sexual harassment.

The BC will offer regular consultation sessions through the Equality Specialist where inappropriate behaviour can be discussed. The Equality Specialist will assess the seriousness of the inappropriate behaviour in question and recommend further action accordingly – resolution with the supervisor, resolution with the management of the institution or contacting the Czech Police. The whole procedure will be standardised and approved by the management of the institution. Another option will be an online form, available on the intranet. Here it will be possible to ask for advice either directly or anonymously.

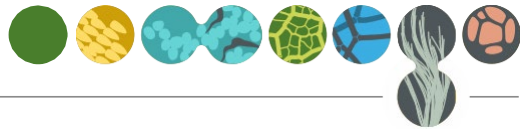


Summary of recommended actions for the three-year period 2022-2024

Events	Name	Description	Responsibility	Implementation of the objectives	Budget 2022-24	Timing	Output
1	Equality Specialist	EQ will coordinate, organise and implement the GEP activities (0.1-0.2 FTE).	Management of BC	all	408,000	Q1 2022	Contract
2	Preparation of the Audit	Gender audit carried out in cooperation with an external company, the output of which will be the basis for the new GEP	Equality Specialist, BC Management	all	250,000	Q3 2025	Document
3	Analysis of the status and development in the BC	Detailed analysis of the situation in the BC by each defined area over the last 10 years.	Equality Specialist, BC Management	all	0	Q2 2022	Document
4	Annual evaluation report	Preparation of an annual report based on monitoring and evaluation to be submitted to the management of the institution.	Equality Specialist, BC Management	all	6,000	Q4 2022, Q4 2023, Q4 2024	Document
5	Lectures by successful female scientists	Seek out, invite and implement meetings with successful women in science	Equality Specialist	O1C1; O1C2; O3C3; O2C2	6,000	1 per annum	Overview
6	Nomination of female talent	Nominate talented up-and-coming female talent each year	Management of the institution	O1C4; O2C1; O2C2	30,000	Q4 2022, Q4 2023, Q4 2024	List
7	NCC Gender and Science	Establishing cooperation and exploiting their potential	Equality Specialist	O1C4; O2C2; O3C3; O4C1	9,000	continuously	Overview of cooperation
8	Children's group	Keep it working for BC staff	Operational section	O1C2; O3C3	-	continuously	Documentation
9	Updates to onboarding training	Introduction to GEP, gender, sexual harassment, unconscious bias.	Equality Specialist, Human Resources	O1C1, O1C3, O4C1, O5C1, O5C2	0	Q2 2022	Presentation
10	Cultural practices of BC staff countries	Meetings to improve awareness of cultural practices	Equality Specialist	O1C3; O1C4; O4C2	3,000	Q2 2022, Q2 2023, Q2 2024	Attendance list
11	Cultural practices in Czech society	The training is designed to help foreigners integrate into the working environment of a Czech institution.	Equality Specialist	O1C3, O1C4; O4C2	3,000	Q2 2022, Q2 2023, Q2 2024	Attendance list
12	OTM-R	Training for members of selection committees on the principles of open and transparent selection procedures.	Personal Department	O3C1, O3C2, O3C3	1,000	continuously	Presentation



13	Unconscious prejudices	Preventing unconscious discrimination for managers	Equality Specialist	O2C1; O5C1, O5C2	9,000	Q4 2022, Q3 2023, Q3 2024	Attendance list
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13	Forms of gender-based violence	E-course on possible forms of gender-based violence	Equality Specialist	O5C1, O5C2	15,000	Q2 2022	Online course
14	Inappropriate behaviour in the workplace	Space for immediate reports of inappropriate behaviour	Equality Specialist, IT Department	O1C1; O1C2; O1C3; O3C3; O4C2; O5C2	5,000	Continuously	Form in virtual space; consultation hours, procedure manual