

VRI Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for 2022–2026

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1. Fundamental information about the VRI

HISTORY The **Veterinary Research Institute (VRI)** based in Brno was founded on 10 September 1955 by the decree of the Minister of Agriculture as an institution of the Czechoslovak Academy of Agricultural Sciences, with a state-wide authority. The 12 ha building plot was selected where 3 buildings with laboratories, an administration building, experimental animal facilities, residential buildings and miscellaneous buildings were constructed.



For several decades, the VRI research teams have tackled substantive research questions, including the control of the most common diseases of farm animals (leucosis, tuberculosis, brucellosis, mastitis, metabolic and reproductive disorders etc.) and built a significant reputation in veterinary medicine and animal production in the Czech Republic. In January 2007,

the VRI became a public research institution by decision of the founder, i.e. the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. The major infrastructural development of the Institute is linked to the reality of operational programme projects.

THE PRESENT TIME The importance of the Veterinary Research Institute and justification of its operation remain unchanged. Health disorders are the limiting factors to farm animal production and prosperity of farmers. A great deal of attention all over the world has been focused on the control of zoonotic diseases and other diseases; promotion of principles for herd production and preventive medicine; development of a methodology for collection, processing and use of data on disease prevalence; antimicrobial resistance; food safety guarantee; and development of vaccines and other professional activities. As a consequence, the VRI plays an indispensable role in this broad range of research fields in the Czech Republic. Due to the fact that global demand for food is increasing steadily because of the growing number of human population and mounting food consumption in developing countries, the strategic importance of foodstuffs will be increasing in the future. Developed countries strive to reach food self-sufficiency and promote the export of their surplus products, which together increases the growth and prosperity of their rural areas. These countries systematically support their own agricultural production and related important research fields. A similar approach is also promoted in the Czech Republic with the emphasis being put on farm animal health control and food quality. This helps justify the existence of VRI's operation. However, the Institute's core activity is delivering high quality research and dissemination of research results to both the academic community and practical users in the agricultural and food industry.



For more information about our Institute, see <https://www.vri.cz/>

2. Analysis of the existing situation

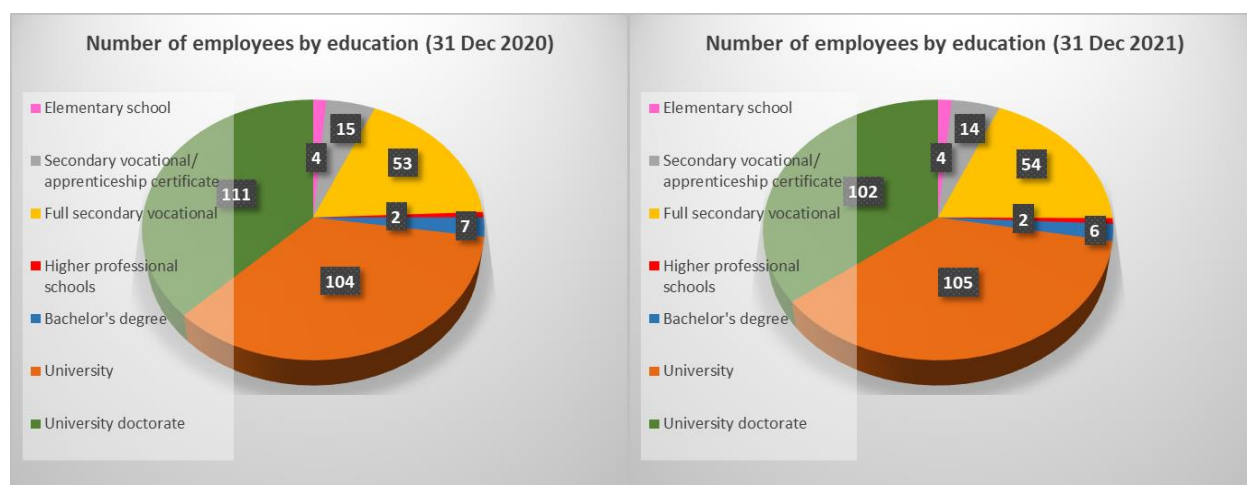
2.1 Existing situation: Statistical data

The situation in the field of human resources management and the status of equal opportunities (including gender equality) at the VRI was mapped in detail for the first time in 2020 through a questionnaire survey conducted to identify the current state of human resources management and the level of personnel work provided. The aim was to gain the existing data, which was used to conduct the GAP analysis, and to describe the strengths/weaknesses of the HR policy at our Institute. The survey conducted was one of the documents that helped us to prepare the follow-up important documents that were the basis for joining the HRS4R strategy with the application for the HR Award for our Institution. The results of the questionnaire survey, including other documents prepared during the process of the application preparation, are publicly available at <https://www.vri.cz/en/about-us/hr-award/documents/> in the Section About us – HR Award – Documents. Further data for the formulation of activities to promote gender equality was obtained as part of the internal equal opportunities analysis for the HR Award Action Plan 2022- 2026 [Internal assessment of the current state - Equal opportunities at VÚVeL 2022.](#)

The Action Plan was completed and internally approved in April 2022. Monitoring of basic data in the field of human resource development are published annually in the VRI Annual Report on the Activities.

Basic personnel data	2020	2021
Total number of employees as of 31 December	296	287
FTE personnel as of 31 December	230.91	226.2
Disabled personnel	12	9

Education	2020	2021
Elementary school	4	4
Secondary vocational/ apprenticeship certificate	15	14
Full secondary vocational	53	54
Higher professional schools	2	2
Bachelor's degree	7	6
University Master's degree programs	104	105
University doctorate	111	102

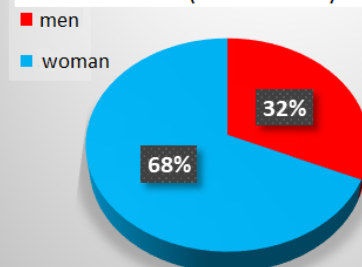


Note: The statistics monitored are listed in the Annual Report for the relevant year.

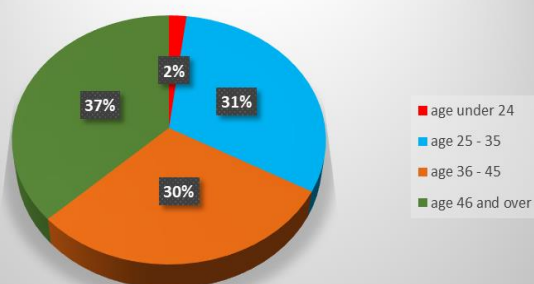
Female Employee Age Group Analysis

	2020	2021
age under 24	4	2
age 25 - 35	63	56
age 36 - 45	60	51
age 46 and over	75	87

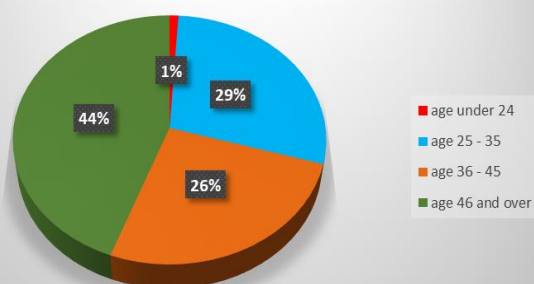
Distribution of men and women at VRI
(2020 - 2021)



Female Employee Age Group 2020



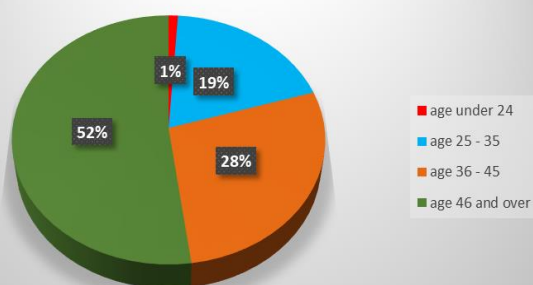
Female Employee Age Group 2021



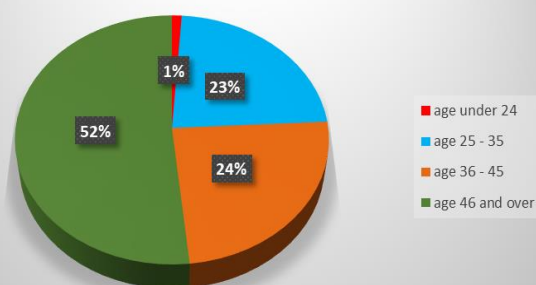
Male Employee Age Group Analysis 2020 2021

	2020	2021
age under 24	1	1
age 25 - 35	18	21
age 36 - 45	26	22
age 46 and over	49	47

Male Employee Age Group 2020



Male Employee Age Group 2021



Note: The statistics monitored are listed in the Annual Report for the relevant year.

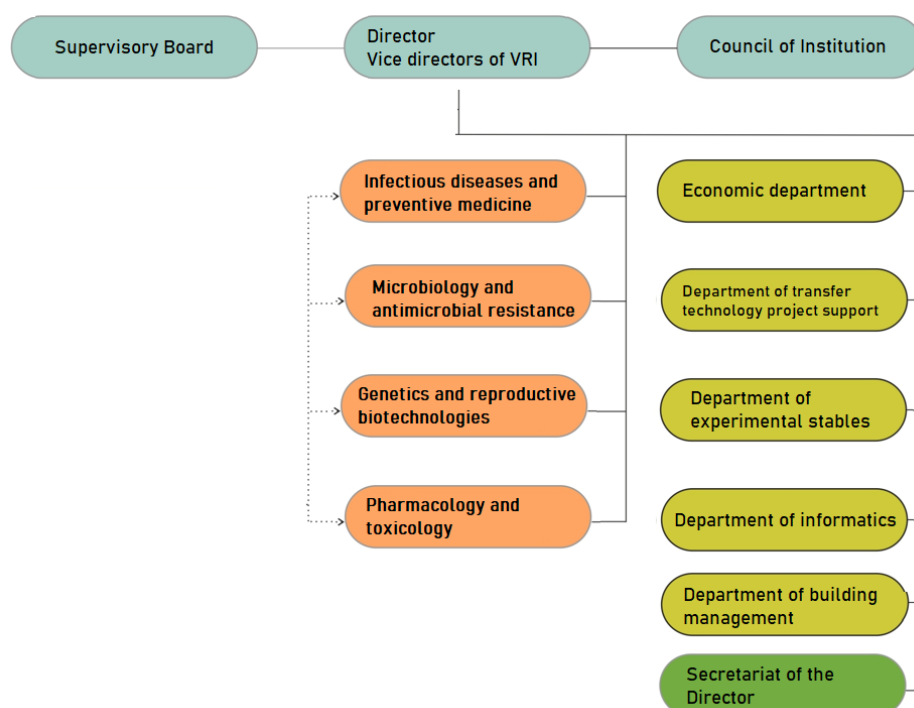
Proportion of men and women in management and leadership positions

Situation as of 31 December, 2021

	Number	Men	Women
Number of research departments	4	4	
- number of research (catalogue) groups	14	9*) 5	5
Number of administrative units	6	3	3

*) catalogue activities, including heads of research departments

The organizational structure of VÚVeL is divided into 10 organizational units (departments). Men head four research departments. The research departments are subdivided into specific research groups (14 research groups), of which only five women are group leaders. In addition to the 4 research departments, we have established 6 administrative support units which are considered support groups for researchers, of which three women are the heads of these units. The role of Deputy Director for Management and Strategy is held by a woman in the institution's leadership. Given the current ratio of male representation in leadership positions, we will consider options and ways to encourage more women to become involved in leadership positions. We will promote opportunities for equal participation of men and women in leadership, aiming for a balanced distribution and representation in tenure track, research departments, and research working groups.



Proportions of men and women in the VRI Board (Council of the Institution)

Council of the Institution (created by election) In charge from 28. 1. 2022 to 27. 1. 2027			
	Number	Men	Women
Internal members	10	7	3
External members	5	5	

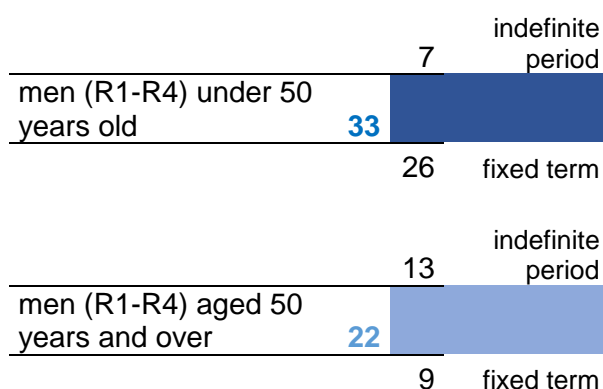
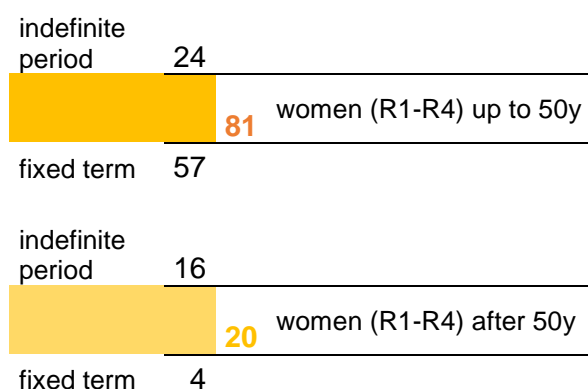
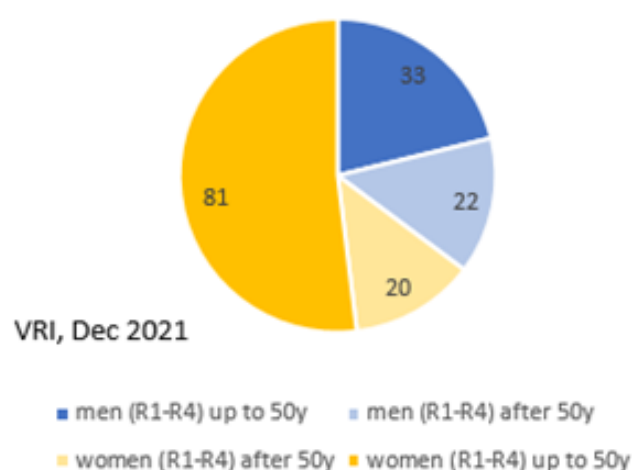
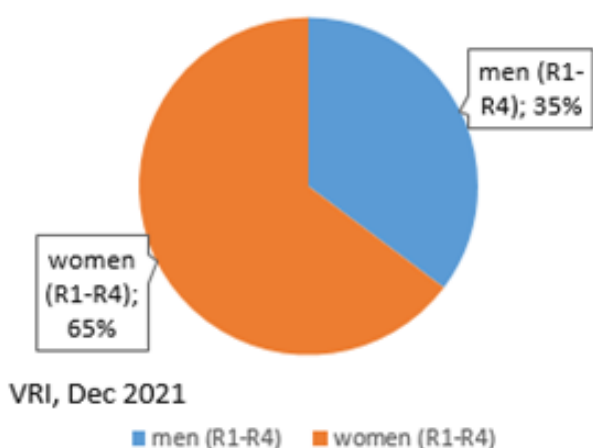
The composition of the Board and therefore the representation of women in the governing body of the institution (the VRI Council of Institution) is not equally distributed by the nature of the election method. Representatives to the Institutional Council are elected by the assembly of scientists and it is therefore not possible to categorise this body, to adjust its distribution or to influence directly the way how is elected or the representation of its members. Nevertheless, there is a need to strive for greater representation of women in such an important and significant body as the Institutional Council, where currently only three women are represented out of a total team of 15. Building on the opportunities for greater representation of women, we will encourage discussions on how to increase the number of women candidates put forward for election or how to motivate women voters and voters to vote.

Proportions of men and women in the VRI committees and advisory bodies

The Director will establish expert committees or responsible persons to ensure the ongoing activities necessary in the area of coordination, supervision and control. The Director designates their chairmen and members. The composition of the committee may be changed on request by the chairman or members of the committee in response to organizational needs.

Situation as of 31 December, 2021	Number	Men	Women
Investment Committee	7	5	2
Catering Committee	5	1	4
Committee for Protecting Experimental Animals	8	4	4
Committee for Social Fund Management	6	1	5
Health and Safety Inspection Committee	11	7	4

Distribution of researchers (R1-R4) by gender



Note: The statistics were created for the purpose of describing the structure of the research workforce for the HR Award application

2.2 Key areas of focus for creating gender equality

The VRI declares in the above-mentioned internal documents that, in accordance with the general principles of human rights protection, it does not tolerate discrimination, gender inequality, sexual harassment and gender-based harassment in any form in the workplace and other places and situations related to the activities of the research Institution. Our Institute fully supports a positive environment and respect for each individual.

The VRI complies with the principles of equality and non-discrimination within the framework of applicable legislation. In conformity with the general principles of human rights protection, we provide equal opportunities for women and men and rely on pillars such as education and moral integrity.

The general legal framework is set out by the generally binding legal regulations of the Czech Republic, European standards and EU legislation. In terms of the application of binding work procedures, organisational, work and safety rules, the internal regulations of the VRI are among the binding standards for all employees. At the national level, the area of equal opportunities is defined in the strategic documents of the Government Strategy for Gender Equality of the Czech Republic for 2021-2030. The key documents at the European level are the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Gender Equality Strategy for 2020-2025. The general labour law framework at the national level consists of Act No. 262/2006 Coll., the Labour Code, and Act No. 198/2009 Coll., the Anti-Discrimination Act.

The VRI internal regulations ensuring equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Organisation Rules and Employment Rules
- Regulations governing staff salaries

2.3 Steps taken so far in the implementation of gender equality

We see equal opportunities as one of the areas that must be taken into account and further developed within the framework of support for personnel development. We strive to promote equal opportunities at VRI. We use some of the support tools especially for young scientists and scientists (parents). Our institution allows part-time work for women/men (parents) with children by means of flexible working hours or with adjustments for home office options wherever this is possible with regard to the performance of the work and the requirements of the job.

Publicity and promotion of equal opportunities in science

Regular information support of significant moments that not only remind the important role of women in science and research, but also promote equal opportunities in research in general. As part of the regularly updated Internet section News, we publish and highlight important moments and present the achievements of our employees in this context.

Coordination of work and personal life

Taking into account the specific conditions of individual research departments and units and the particular nature of the employees' work, flexible working hours and other individual arrangements can be agreed upon if the nature of the work allows it. It is also possible to negotiate to work in another agreed location (working from home). At the same time, we allow (taking into account the specific conditions of the workplace) the return of parents after maternity/parental leave to part-time work, which allows them to better coordinate their family and work lives.

Benefits for the VRI employees:

- regular training of the employees to support their work performance,
- benefit card with a choice of activities and services in the form of a Cafeteria,
- contribution from the Social Fund,
- cultural events, promotion of visual arts, ,
- grounds with resting places for informal gatherings well-tended year-round,
- research presentations for children, summer camp, meetings with employees,
- meal allowances, including canteen meals.

In related areas, we mainly support the following activities:

- *Regular information on our Twitter, FB and website through the information section "News" about important events and successful study achievements and work outcomes (completion of PhD studies, successful dissertation defence by our male and female researchers).*
- *Publication of achievements and awards obtained not only by young researchers (successes in competitions).*
- *Selection of employees and recruitment is carried out in a non-discriminatory manner, we conduct open selection procedures - we advertise positions publicly and make an objective selection of the most suitable candidates according to non-discriminatory parameters of professional and work experience.*
- *Interviews with distinguished guests and inspiring employees working at our Institute in the form of short "PODCASTS" on specific topics.*
- *in cooperation with TV Zemědělec we organise TV discussions on current topics,*
- *Information reports on equal opportunities.*
- *Meeting of mothers and children.*
- *Annual Children Day and Employees' Meeting*

In September 2021, a VRI employee was appointed sectoral member of the Working Group on Gender Equality by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic. The group was established as a working team of The Research, Development and Innovation Council in the Czech Republic.

The group deals mainly with the elaboration of methodological recommendations for R&D&I provider and coordinates the support of research organisations in this area, submits suggestions for further activities to the R&D&I Council, especially in the area of legislative and procedural stabilization or as individual recommendations for the implementation of Methodology 17+. The group continuously publishes examples of good practice and shares up-to-date information on equal opportunities for women and men in research. Publicity and communication of the Working Group is carried out through an special section on the website <https://www.vyzkum.cz/Default.aspx?lang=en>. The second area of work is primarily solving of practical problems (via the email address rzmv@vlada.cz). The aim of these activities is to achieve a good environment for research without unnecessary barriers and undue administrative burdens. In particular, emphasis is placed on equalization of opportunities for women and men in research and in the evaluation of research organisations according to Methodology 17+

3. Action plan for 2022-2026 and planned activities at the VRI in the field of equal opportunities

On the basis of the results obtained and the evaluation of the survey, we intend to focus in the future on removing possible barriers to parents' involvement in the work process, and on supporting and motivating young talented workers to work towards independently obtaining projects from individual grants. In addition, the necessary attention will be paid to open and equal access for women and men to senior research positions, including efforts to gradually soften the gender gap at all levels of the VÚVeL management, including decision-making bodies.

The GEP proposed areas where measures to improve gender equality should be directed in 2022-2026:

a) work-life balance

- support for flexible work forms (clear rules on the availability of flexible regimes, consideration of the needs of parents with young children when they are set up, formalised home office rules),
- development of technical infrastructures (VPN, other IT support tools),
- early career development (job orientation, adaptation plan, mentoring development, grant writing courses, support of the role of female and male principal investigator, support of developing leadership skills),

b) balance between men and women in leadership and decision-making

- increasing women's motivation to be represented in leadership positions,
- revision of the institution's VRI Board election rules, taking into account the reserves that could be the cause of the lack of active support and participation of women voters and electors, the number of proposals received from proposers, and, where appropriate, the revision of the options for the way absent workers and workers (fathers, mothers on parental leave) are elected,

c) gender-sensitive language in public spaces

- gender sensitive language adjustment (websites, job advertisements, communication with male and female candidates in selection procedures)
- open advertising of positions, gender neutral advertising

d) gender equality in recruitment and career opportunities

- information support and wider presentation of potential participation in selection procedures for leadership positions (campaign to promote women for leadership positions)
- targeted effort to represent both genders among applicants

e) training and development to promote equal opportunities

- prevention against gender-based violence, including mobbing, bossing, etc.
- providing of education and promotion of information exchange on equal opportunities

The planned activities are based on the current needs following from the internal analyses carried out for the purpose of formulating a strategy according to the HR Award parameters.

4. Implementation of GEP for 2022-2026 in relation to HRS4R

The GEP has been prepared in response to the HR Award application and complements the articulated objectives of the HRS4R Action Plan and Strategy. The HR Award Working Group monitors the progress and implementation of the activities described in the Action Plan. The progress of implementation will be monitored according to the timetable of each activity. Responsibilities and staffing are defined for specific activities. Progress in the implementation of each activity will be monitored, and controlled by the designated staff responsible for the implementation of the GEP (HRS4R Working Group and Steering Committee). Control mechanisms are set up in the form of regular monitoring of progress. The staff responsible for the implementation of the GEP will report on the implementation of each action. Progress will be monitored according to the timetable for the implementation of key outputs. If some actions cannot be implemented or completed or there is a time delay, the reasons and situations will need to be analyzed, justified and further measures proposed to address the situation.

Action plan & HRS4R Strategy					
Nr. A	Name of activity	Responsibility for fulfilment	Aims	Indicators	Start of activity
6	Creation of a system for adaptation of new employees at the VRI (short-term goal)	HR coordinator HRS4R cooperating HR	T6.1. Help newcomers integrate systems into the work T6.2. Provide feedback and evaluation of the adaptation process T6.3. Provide useful information and assistance for new employee orientation	I6.1. Creation of a methodical procedure and system for the adaptation of new employees and their integration into the work process I6.2. Assessment of the adaptation process using new adaptation forms I6.3. Handbook for new employees before the start of work	22Q3
8	Sharing and access to recruitment information (long-term goal)	HR coordinator HRS4R cooperating HR	T8.1. Clearly processed and accessible information to new employees entering the working process T8.2. Handing over the information on the ways and useful methods in the field of the effective recruitment process T8.3. Getting acquainted with the tool and explanation of the possibilities for advertising and recruitment of foreign workers (publicity of the tool, description of the possibilities)	I8.1. Create an information point (section) for new employees I8.2. Establishment of an information section in the field of recruitment and counseling on the implementation and conduct of the selection procedure, including gender-sensitive language I8.3. Campaign for the use of the Euraxess Portal	23Q1
9	Improving working conditions and organisation of work (long-term goal)	HR coordinator HRS4R cooperating Managers	T9.1. Non-discriminatory communication in the recruitment process (gender-sensitive language) T9.2. Support employees and family members to meet outside the work activities, broadening of mutual understanding and communication T9.3. Systematically promote the organization's culture in the workplace and define positive communication and collaboration T9.4. Possibility to obtain and pass on information and assistance from professional advisors to ensure continuing education	I9.1. Include methods for non-discriminatory use of language in the recruitment process - monitoring and adjustment of the related web sections (on the website, recruitment applications, forms, etc.) I9.2. Implementation of meetings for parents and their families I9.3. Prevent violent forms of communication, including behavior that violates social norms (gender-based violence, mobbing bossing) I9.4. Provide access to online information and the educational platform stopper.cz	23Q2

10	Optimization of conditions for women's representation in the VRI advisory and decision-making bodies (long-term goal)	Director VRI Secretariat of the Director Managers	T10.1. Support for female representation in the Institute's advisory and decision-making bodies T10.2. Promotion of non-discriminatory rules for staffing of leadership positions and removing barriers leading to the under-representation of women in leadership positions	I10.1. Revision of the electoral rules (VRI Electoral Terms and Conditions) for the VRI Board and removal of barriers that could lead to under-representation of women in the advisory and decision-making bodies of the Institute I10.2. Adjusting internal regulations and recruitment strategy with regard to filling the leadership positions and removing barriers that could lead to the under-representation of women in leadership positions	23Q3
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5. Evaluation and regular monitoring

This Gender Equality Plan for 2022-2026 has been formulated on the basis of the revised Action Plan of HRS4R Strategy. The gradual implementation of the sub-activities will be monitored on a regular basis by the HR Award Steering and Monitoring Committee. The Working Group will be responsible for monitoring the timely implementation of the planned individual tasks.

The GEP is planned for 2022-2026 and, after its evaluation, a new plan will be prepared for the next four-year period. An internal evaluation will be carried out during the implementation process along with a review of the implementation of the Action Plan. The results will be compared with the implementation schedule. This process should allow the assessment of the progress and show further gaps that need to be addressed by the measures of the Action Plan for the next period.

Regular monitoring will focus on:

- arrangements to promote work-life balance,
- promoting gender equality in expert groups and evaluation committees,
- promoting gender equality in leadership positions,
- equality of male and female candidates in recruitment and in the communication of job opportunities,
- measures against gender-based violence, including socially pathological behavior in the workplace, including sexual harassment,
- implementation of the proposed action plan activities according to the timetable.

The HRS4R Working Group will be in charge of evaluating the GEP implementation and regular monitoring. The Working Group will evaluate the progress in the implementation of the measures according to the schedule and according to the set indicators. It will report on the implementation of the Action Plan to the Steering Committee.

The evaluation of the GEP implementation will take place at regular Working Group meetings twice a year.

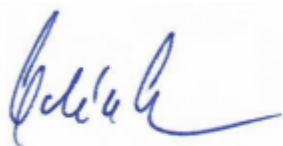
At the end of the period under consideration, a final report will be prepared by the HRS4R Working Group to serve as a basis for GEP preparation for the following four-year period.

6. Approval

VRI Gender Equality Plan (GEP) for 2022–2026

Prepared by: Ing. Jiří Kolísek, HR Coordinator, HRS4R Coordinator

Signature:



Date:

20.6.2022

Approved by: MVDr. Martin Faldyna, Ph.D., VRI Director

Signature:



Date:

20.6.2022

VÝZKUMNÝ ÚSTAV
VETERINÁRNÍHO LÉKAŘSTVÍ, v.v.i.
621 00 BRNO, Hudcova 296/70
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All employees in leadership positions and members of the HR Award Working Groups will be informed of the signed and officially approved GEP. The binding plan will be published and accessible on the Institute's website. All staff will be informed of the approved GEP.